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Time in Tess of the D'Urbervilles

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the nature of time in Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy. Based on an analysis of the novel's text, it discusses the nature and influence of four distinct time patterns, namely, of the individual, of history, of prehistory, and of nature. Hardy's treatment of these patterns reveals the nature of the novel's determined world which prevents the central figure from leading a happy life. The deterministic qualities of these time patterns is evident in their graphic representation by means of the line for the individual, history, and prehistory and by means of the cycle for nature. Hardy invests Tess with the ability to remove herself from the deterministic times of society and nature. This propensity alleviates her tragedy by allowing her some degree of fulfilment outside conventional time at Bramshurst Court. Her final defeat at Stonehenge indicates the impossibility of escaping permanently from the determined world.

Time in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

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by

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"If you knew Time as well as I do, you wouldn't talk about wasting it. It's him."

"I don't know what you mean," said Alice.

"Of course you don't!" the Hatter said, tossing his head contemptuously. "I dare say you never even spoke to Time!"

"Perhaps not," Alice cautiously replied; "but I know I have to beat time when I learn music."

"Ah! That accounts for it," said the Hatter. "He won't stand beating. Now, if you only kept on good terms with him, he'd do almost anything you liked with the clock. For instance, suppose it were nine o'clock in the morning, just time to begin lessons: you'd only have to whisper a hint to Time, and round goes the clock in a twinkling! Half-past one, time for dinner!"

("I only wish it was," the March Hare said to himself in a whisper.)

"That would be grand, certainly," said Alice thoughtfully; "but then — I shouldn't be hungry for it, you know."

"Not at first, perhaps," said the Hatter: "but you could keep it at half-past one as long as you liked."

Chapter I: Introduction

> The nature of life throughout presents itself to us as intended and calculated to awaken the conviction that nothing at all is worth our striving, our efforts and struggles; that all good things are vanity, the world in all its ends bankrupt, and life a business which does not cover expenses.
> — Arthur Schopenhauer

In the preface to the fifth and later editions of Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Thomas Hardy writes: "Nevertheless, though the novel was intended to be neither didactic nor aggressive, but in the scenic parts to be representative simply, and in the contemplative to be oftener charged with impressions than with convictions, there have been objectors both to the matter and to the rendering."[1] A few sentences later, he re-emphasizes this point: "Let me repeat that a novel is an impression, not an argument" (p. viii). This position, something that most of his critics have too readily claimed was a ruse whereby he attempted to deny an important aspect of his work, recurs frequently in Hardy's critical writings throughout his life. In April 1917, in a reply to Courtney's article in the Fortnightly, Hardy wrote:

> Like so many critics, Mr. Courtney treats my works as if they were a scientific system of philosophy, although I have repeatedly stated in prefaces and elsewhere that the views in them are seemings, provisional impressions only, used for artistic purposes because they represent approximately the impressions of the age, and are plausible, till somebody produces better theories of the universe.[2]

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[1] "Preface to the Fifth and Later Editions," p. viii. The text is that of MacMillan and Co., Limited: Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman (London, 1925). Subsequent references will be to this edition.

[2] Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928 (London, 1965), p. 375.

With this distinction between scientific systems of philosophy and theories of the universe as background, this thesis analyzes the nature of time in Hardy's novel, Tess of the D'Urbervilles. Unlike other recent and similar investigations in Hardy's fiction, this study makes no attempt to establish that Hardy purposefully wrote a particular work in order to demonstrate his predilection for the time theories of a particular philosopher, of, for example, a Bergson or a Schopenhauer. To say this, of course, is not to deny that some part of the views of these philosophers appears in the novel. What, it is hoped, will be remembered is that these philosophies can only contribute to the kind of novels that Hardy claims he was writing as certain valid parts of an overall impression. Relying primarily on a textual analysis of Tess of the D'Urbervilles, this thesis attempts, by means of the time structures evident in the novel, to reveal Hardy's purpose and to suggest the scope and relevance of the novel as a whole. Anyone attempting to show that the novel is, for example, Bergsonian, is best checked by a quotation from Hardy's fiction itself. The passage concerns the fate of Gabriel Oak's dog that has just shepherded his master's flock over a precipice:

> George's son had done his work so thoroughly that he was considered too good a workman to live, and was, in fact, taken and tragically shot at twelve o'clock that same day — another instance of the untoward fate which so often attends dogs and other philosophers who follow out a train of reasoning to its logical conclusion, and attempt perfectly consistent conduct in a world made up so largely of compromise.[3]

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[3] Thomas Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd (London, 1924), p. 42.

An analysis of Tess of the D'Urbervilles reveals that four distinct aspects of time function in the novel. These aspects are the times of the individual life, of history, of prehistory, and of nature. The first three have the attribute in common of being representative of a spatial time concept that is best made graphic in terms of the line. The time of nature, although basically different from the other three, can be represented in terms of a spatial concept as well: namely, that of the circle and the spiral. John Kenny Crane, in his unpublished doctoral thesis, "The Psychological Experience of Time in the Novels of Thomas Hardy," has dealt at length and with clarity concerning the ramifications of these spatial time patterns on the thought and action of many of Hardy's characters. His attempt to prove, however, that Clym Yeobright, the hero of The Return of the Native, embodies the happiest man in all the novels because he upholds the Bergsonian view of non-spatial dynamic time is presented in what become too strict terms. Crane unfortunately falls victim to the danger inherent in time analysis of regarding a particular novel or character too exclusively in terms of the meaning of time at the expense of such aspects as the existence of other characters and the social background. By producing a theory of time that was not dependent on graphic illustration, Bergson performed the function for his age of separating clearly and distinctly the two worlds of time and space. He had, however, to admit that most people lead their lives upon the basis of a linear time concept, upon a belief

in seasonal pattern and upon a faith in the order of cause and effect. Nowhere is the horror of inevitable consequence made more vivid than in Tess of the D'Urbervilles. The inescapable influences of the several patterns of time disrupt the homogeneity of life and continually destroy man's chance for happiness. The basic time conceptions, existing side by side in the novel, provide a metaphor for this destruction.

This thesis is organized as a discussion of the various kinds of time in an order that reveals more clearly the nature of Tess's tragedy and triumph. The tragedy is basically social, and the triumph, a personal one made possible only because of a natural propensity in Tess's character whereby she is able, however briefly, to emerge from the destructive sequence of things. As Crane has written, "Of all the novels Hardy wrote the power of the past to damn the future is seldom more emphasized than in Tess."[4] "As an attempt to give artistic form to a true sequence of things" (p. v), the novel leads ultimately to the conclusion that, because the sequence of things is incontrovertible, it seems to be the nature of life not to provide the material for happiness. Philosophically, this view of life leads to Schopenhauer's ideal: the achievement of the universal will not to live. In terms of the individual life, however, it means that the only possible triumph is one whereby the individual can, if even only for five days, free himself from the intolerable sequence. Happiness comes only after the

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[4] John Kenny Crane, "The Psychological Experience of Time in the Novels of Thomas Hardy" (Ph. D. thesis, Pennsylvania State, 1966), p. 42.

abandonment of historical and natural determinism as impediments to the making of a satisfactory life. Most critics minimize, and some even miss altogether, this triumph of Tess Durbeyfield. The triumph that informs Tess's tragedy comes only when she is able to share with Angel an experience that is essentially out of time. In such an interpretation, the climax of the novel comes with the scenes at Bramshurst Court rather than at Stonehenge. An examination of the various threads of time in the novel and of Hardy's treatment of the central character in relation to these temporal patterns reveals the nature and importance of these scenes.

It seems best to begin the analysis of the novel in terms of the time pattern that reveals most closely the meaning of the individual life. Basically, the time of the individual life cannot be measured accurately by means of the conventional measurement of time. Its totality is not specified by an arbitrary period or span of time. This aspect of time is particularized in Hardy's treatment of Tess's baby: "a waif to whom eternal Time had been a matter of days merely, who knew not that such things as years and centuries ever were; to whom the cottage interior was the universe, the week's weather climate, new-born babyhood human existence, and the instinct to suck human knowledge" (p. 123). In the simplest terms, these are the dimensions of the individual life. In actual terms, however, this simultaneity of experience is suspended by the adult apprehension of passing events. As a result, over and over in Hardy, one event in

life comes to stand in relation to the rest of the individual's life as if it were a ferocious beast caught permanently in the act of attack. In Tess of the D'Urbervilles, this one event is informed with power to destroy by the social order in which Tess must carry out her life. Tess's awareness of this power colours her outlook as she is continually forced to submit to a sequence of events. Her interpretation of time is thus forced into the spatial concept of the line, and Tess's life becomes an attempt to recover her past. Time, in these terms, becomes her enemy — forever moving her, as she sees it, further away from her ideal of innocence. In this way, the novel's great tension is defined by the pressure of idealism thrusting itself upon actuality. This pressure, however, is never strong enough to break down the pattern that society has established, and Tess's only hope rests, not in the recovery of innocence, but in the escape from the irrevocable and ever condemnatory sequence of days that provides the temporal metaphor for her hopeless position. Examination of Tess's individual time pattern reveals, however, that Hardy is carefully balancing this sequence of things with the development of Tess as an individual susceptible to moments of great potential fulfilment that exist essentially out of time. Most of her great moments with Angel, for example, come at what Hardy tries to present as a neutralized moment (pp. 109-110). The second chapter of this thesis examines both these aspects of Tess's own temporal conceptions. Tess's ability to strike these neutral moments is essentially her own

innate capability, whereas the apprehension of time as a moving thing that neither forgets nor forgives is a learned concept that Tess adopts as she moves abruptly from innocence to experience.

The third chapter moves to that aspect of time that is at one remove from the personal life, namely, the time of history. Historical time, as Hardy develops it, is based in a linear concept that leads inevitably to a determined view of things. As in most of the novels, Hardy establishes in Tess of the D'Urbervilles a scale of events as large as civilization. In this case, the theme of historical time is given focus in the history of the noble family of the d'Urbervilles. The analysis of this aspect of the novel shows how this symbolic use of time becomes the actual progenitor of Tess's tragedy. By a careful development of the nature of the d'Urberville nobility, Hardy is able to demonstrate that the roots of the individual's tragedy can be traced to the historical apparatus of society and, in this way, he is led to an indictment of everything for which that society stands. This realization is the primary result of the examination of history in the novel and shows how Hardy presents the historical pattern in such a way as to reveal his virulent condemnation of the Victorian social order. A further aspect of this temporal pattern is presented by means of the introduction of a theory of civilization based on a sequential deterioration of man in time. Evident in the ironic repetition of the idea that a potentially

fulfilling order of things has gone awry merely through a sense of bad timing, Hardy's view of the passing of time in history resembles an old watch that gradually wears out: "We may wonder whether at the acme and summit of the human progress these anachronisms will be corrected by a finer intuition, a closer interaction of the social machinery than that which now jolts us round and along; but such completeness is not to be prophesied or even conceived as possible" (p. 50).

If we extend the line of history, we move beyond Christianity and the Greeks to prehistory, where man was closer to nature and his innate self and to those instincts that within him now stir only as ghosts. The examination of this aspect of linear time in Tess of the D'Urbervilles necessarily assumes a double focus: a consideration of the importance and relevance of prehistoric references before the scenes at Bramshurst Court and a separate discussion of the meaning of the experience at Stonehenge in light of the happiness that Tess and Angel experience immediately before going there. As an extension of history, the time of prehistory, linear by nature, serves, to a degree, in the same way as the time of history, to demonstrate the nature of the determined universe. The difference lies in the fact that prehistory, because it is considerably removed from the present, is that much less harmful and malicious. On the positive side, the linear time pattern makes it possible for man to appreciate his tie to his ancestors in their simpler life. On the negative side, however, the very distance and inaccessibility of this past, with its

old-time heliolatries instead of dogmatic Christianity, with its relative proximity to natural man still untainted by society, underscore the hopelessness of modern life. The comparison of the experiences of Bramshurst Court and Stonehenge provides the juxtaposition of the experiences of an escape from time and a seeming recession into time. This recession, in fact, will be seen to be impossible. The analysis of prehistoric time in Tess of the D'Urbervilles shows that these two experiences are qualitatively different, and that there is no small significance in the fact that Tess finally succumbs to the will of society on the altar stone of what she ultimately recognizes to be her terrestrial home (p. 511).

There remains only the time pattern of nature. In this case, as John Kenny Crane suggests,[5] the graphic representation of natural time is the circle, a pattern that recurs. Hardy is aware of the value of this pattern that recalls Schopenhauer's "Throughout and everywhere the true symbol of nature is the circle, because it is the schema or type of recurrence."[6] The importance of this graphic representation of time, however, is relevant to Hardy only insofar as it demonstrates the influence of time conceptions on individual characters. An analysis of Hardy's use of the idea on the natural cycle in Tess of the D'Urbervilles reveals that even this kind of temporal apprehension, despite the fact that

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[5] Crane, p. 86ff.

[6] Will Durant, The Story of Philosophy: The Lives and Opinions of the Greater Philosophers (New York, 1953), p. 243.

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theoretically, unlike the times of the individual, of history, and of prehistory, it exists beyond man, does not provide a pattern for happiness or fulfilment on an individual basis. It may do so for primitive societies, and potentially for modern man insofar as he is linked with his progenitors, but ultimately, for Tess and the people who share her experience, the symbol of the cycle of regeneration only provides recognition that nature, on an individual basis, does not restore as much as it takes away. When man is immersed in the experience of natural time as Angel and Tess are at Talbothays, everyone can recognize the beauty that potentially could come about if man were able to remain in step with natural time. What the analysis of nature in the novel ultimately points out is that the individual is only one minute part of the natural scheme of things and that only a failure in reasoning can lead him to posit his life and all of nature as analogous parts of a valid time equation. It is part of the irreconcilable contradiction of social man that, insofar as he is part of nature, he is of no more value than a tree or a stone or a bird and, insofar as he is not part of nature, he is actively denying part of him that allows no denial. The analysis of Hardy's treatment of the temporal cycle of nature both as image and symbol reveals that man's position is completely untenable. The basis of life is prevented fulfilment by means of what man has built for himself as a social creature and what man has created has destroyed the possibility that he will ever realize the potential of his natural self. Ultimately, man's apprehension of the meaning of time in reference to these

two poles of his existence becomes a metaphor for his failure.

The final chapter of this thesis attempts to show how Tess Durbeyfield is able to confront these impossible odds and achieve for herself a triumph which knows none but temporal bounds. Her success seems perfectly in keeping with what Georges Poulet so convincingly suggests is the mood of the end of the nineteenth century:

> And so the century ends by turning away with horror from duration, and the epoch which sees the first book of Bergson appear is none the less that which sees everywhere the failure of things to endure and to be, and which claims to see in the vacancy left by the failing world one inexpressible image: the formless image of a timeless and being-less perfection. To create "the notion of an object, escaping, that fails to be," is the longing of Mallarmé.
> A longing for non-creation.[7]

It has already been pointed out that the examination of this victory will begin with an analysis of that aspect of Tess's character that makes her the kind of individual who can triumph over the patterns of time to which, living in the nineteenth century, she is heir. In this regard, it will be necessary to look carefully at the character of Angel Clare with whom she shares her final experience to see that he has to abandon a conventional view of the nature of time and existence in order to share Tess's experience. Neither Tess nor Angel could have extricated themselves from the enmeshing social and natural patterns without the other's assistance. The final irony, of course, rests in the fact that, in achieving the consummation of their love, they never become invulnerable to the social and natural forces that time carries with it while they seek their

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[7] Georges Poulet, Studies in Human Time, Elliott Coleman, trans. (Baltimore, 1956), p. 34.

neutral world, out of time and almost out of space. As a result, the final period of fulfilment is informed with a sense of despair rather than hope. The poignancy and bittersweet quality of Angel and Tess's triumph lie in its ephemerality, its ultimate pointlessness in the natural and social scheme of things, and its determined effort to shut out what can be recognized only as reality. All havens are ultimately encroached upon.

Chapter II: The Time of the Individual

> Footfalls echo in the memory
> Down the passage which we did not take
> Towards the door we never opened
> Into the rose garden.
> — T. S. Eliot

Although the time of the individual shares with historic and prehistoric time the common property of linear representation, it differs from them by the fact that it concerns the conscious apprehension of the meaning of time. The important thing here will be the actual personal and conscious analysis that an individual undertakes when he confronts the meaning of his temporal existence. For Tess of the D'Urbervilles, this discussion naturally centres on the central figures of Tess and Angel who are the only characters in the novel presented in terms of an active conscious attempt to understand time. As the events of her life unravel, Tess is forced more and more to submit to a sequence of things dictating the meaning of her life. Hardy's treatment of Tess is based on an attempt to show how she is forced into thinking in terms of duration by the immutable social forces that confront her with the fact of the birth of her illegitimate son. Because of an innate faculty to disregard the passing of time, however, Tess is able to establish some plan of attack whereby she attempts to overcome these social pressures. Nevertheless, she gradually realizes the hopelessness of overcoming these social forces; this awareness of the essential unimportance of the individual in the social framework provides her, in turn, with a brief opportunity for fulfilment outside its

pattern of duration. Angel's case differs from Tess's insofar as the lesson that Tess learns from her experience becomes Angel's only after an analysis of the problem. The novel is, of course, primarily about its central figure; Hardy's detailed treatment of Angel Clare, at least in terms of the novel's time patterns, seems to function most as a necessary commentary on the thoughts and actions of Tess herself.

Hardy's own personal apprehension of the meaning of the individual life makes a good beginning here. In the novels, Hardy repeatedly denies the validity of the notion that the essence of the individual can be manifested only in terms of duration. Again, Poulet supplies a clue: "As the romantics experienced the powerlessness of the creature to create itself in the moment, so the postromantics realize the equal impotence of the creature to make of itself a being in duration."[1] For example, in the case of Tess Durbeyfield, both the social and metaphysical orders, organized in a linear time pattern, prohibit her from realizing her potential. Hardy revealed an idea similar to Poulet's in at least three of his novels. One of the first explicit statements comes in the early novel, A Pair of Blue Eyes: "Measurement of life should be proportioned rather to the intensity of the experience than to its actual length."[2] Later, in The Return of the Native, he reiterates, "The number of their years may have adequately

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[1] Poulet, p. 34.

[2] Thomas Hardy, A Pair of Blue Eyes (London, 1924), p. 316.

summed up Jared, Mahalaleel, and the rest of the antediluvians, but the age of a modern man is to be measured by the intensity of his history."[3] Then, in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, in reference to Angel's perplexity concerning Tess's advanced thought and language, Hardy writes, "There was nothing to remind him that experience is as to intensity, and not as to duration" (p. 162). These three passages have been quoted because they reveal a basic assumption of Hardy's apprehension of experience: that existence does not depend upon a concept of duration for its essential being.

This view of the meaning of the individual life provides a fundamental concept necessary to the interpretation of the scenes at Bramshurst Court as a triumph that transcends life in purely linear terms. In denying the linear nature of time, however, Hardy was concerned with only the psychological interpretation of one individual life. He never for a moment attempted to claim that this was the collective interpretation of the mass of men or that life in society was ordered on any basis other than that of a linear time concept. Hardy's own personal realization, opposing as it does the organization of social forces, reflects the inherent tragedy of mankind. It is important in this regard to point out that Hardy was not necessarily adopting a Bergsonian point of view. John Kenny Crane has summarized Bergson's position as follows:

> I have derived the term "dynamic" from the Time-philosopher who most consistently employs it and develops it, Henri Bergson. This is Time as it really is experienced by man's mind rather than under the guise of myth or the regulation of numerical succession. In short, it is the Time of psychological intensity

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[3] Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native (London, 1924), p. 167.

rather than physical duration.

Bergson would agree with Vico that chronological Time has no use except as a social necessity, a system upon which all men, though they experience Time individually, can passively agree. Rather, says Bergson, man does not experience events and moments in his life in the homogeneous succession chronology demands. Neither does he experience it in cycles except in the dictates of seasonal requirements. Therefore, both Linear and Cyclic Time equate Time with Space. Since Space deals with material objects and man's thoughts are immaterial, man's true experience of Time is not congruous with spatial orientation except by conceptual fallacy. The truth is, however, when man experiences something at a present moment, immediately it exists, not as a chain of events, but completely interpenetrated with a given number and set of previous experiences in such a way that none of the component members of the total mental construct can be clearly distinguished. In short, conscious states permeate one another — past and present are formed into an organic whole.[4]

This passage is of value in this interpretation of Tess of the D'Urbervilles for what it says in general about the concept of non-durational time. Where the novel differs from Bergson, of course, is where literature and philosophy differ; the passage only emphasizes that Hardy's concern with the thought patterns of the individual had to consider those aspects of life beyond philosophy. It seems obvious that Bergson and Hardy are men of the same age because of the similarities in their approach to the meaning of existence. Crane's attempt, however, to analyze Tess of the D'Urbervilles from the point of view that Hardy was writing it upon reading Bergson's Time and Free Will is unnecessary and lacks sufficient documentation. Again the quotation comes from Crane:

In chapter nineteen, Hardy says: "... experience is as to intensity, and not as to duration." In chapter two of Time and Free Will, Bergson says: "... experience ... is measured by intensity rather than duration." Unfortunately this appears to be as certain a lump of evidence as can be amassed; but the coincidence of dates of publication, the similarities of ideas, and most of all the congruency of

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[4] Crane, pp. 10-11.

phraseology — all these are difficult to deny.[5]
In the light of the quotations from A Pair of Blue Eyes and The Return of the Native, it is also difficult to substantiate. Time and Free Will was not published until 1888, whereas the novels mentioned above were published in 1873 and 1878 respectively. Obviously Hardy was not expressing views any more Bergsonian at the time of Bergson's book than he was more than a decade earlier. As a philosopher contemporary with Hardy, Bergson provides valuable terms of reference for an exposition of Hardy's view of individual time. The important aspect of Hardy's similar view of life, however, in terms of his art, is that Hardy put forward his idea not for its own sake but for the way in which it informs the novelistic world with an internal recognition of one of the essential forces of the human situation.

In Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Hardy carefully modifies his introduction of his own view of individual time by pointing out the vulnerability to which this view is subject. Tess, of course, is not alone in the misconception that she is owed something because of the simple fact of her existence. As Hardy points out, "She was not an existence, an experience, a passion, a structure of sensations, to anybody but herself" (p. 117). As time passes, it soon reveals the essential unimportance of one man's life, despite its being all that man has in the overall scheme of things. Eventually, this constant destruction of the individual's non-

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[5] Crane, p. 143.

durational view of life leads to a realization that even coming into existence is accidental. For example, the Durbeyfield children are

> six helpless creatures, who had never been asked if they wished life on any terms, much less if they wished for it on such hard conditions as were involved in being of the shiftless house of Durbeyfield. Some people would like to know whence the poet whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound and trustworthy as his song is breezy and pure, gets his authority for speaking of "Nature's holy plan" (p. 25).

Tess herself concludes that birth is "an ordeal of degrading personal compulsion, whose gratuitousness nothing in the result seemed to justify, and at best could only palliate" (pp. 461-462). Analysis of the individual time scheme of the novel from phase to phase will reveal the development Tess undergoes in realizing this truth.

Hardy organizes Tess of the D'Urbervilles to reveal the impossibility of the individual's maintaining full control of his life's unity, the inevitable corollary to the concept of non-durational time. In the first of the novel's seven sections, he undermines the validity of a linear interpretation of time and its resultant determined view of life. He clearly presents Tess herself as a sum total rather than a series of episodes. At the May-Day walking, "phases of her childhood lurked in her aspect still. As she walked along to-day, for all her bouncing womanliness, you could sometimes see her twelfth year in her cheeks, or her ninth sparkling from her eyes; and even her fifth would flit over the curves of her mouth now and then" (p. 14). In terms of the temporal pattern, this passage indicates that, as the novel begins, Tess has not been forced to submit to a linear unwinding of things.

Importantly, she is not alone in this attribute. Upon the death of Prince, Hardy writes that "When Abraham realized all, the furrows of fifty years were extemporized on his young face" (p. 37). Clearly, for these innocent people, experience is as to intensity rather than duration. On another level, the irony for the reader is that Hardy chooses to express the intensity of Abraham's emotion by reference to the conventional method of time measurement. This picture, then, of a situation in which one does not reckon the meaning of an individual in terms of a specified elapsed period of time provides the background for the seduction which occurs at the end of the section. Tess, in the first section, of course, is very young and has not yet been forced to think out the terms of her experience. As a result, her reactions to conventional time will reveal the way in which she innately perceives things. In this regard, an important passage concerns the night of the trip on which Prince is killed. Very tired and unhappy about her parents' behaviour, Tess falls asleep as she drives along the road. Hardy chooses to represent what takes place in temporal terms that will be repeated several times in the novel and will culminate in the scenes at Bramshurst.

> The mute procession past her shoulders of trees and hedges became attached to fantastic scenes outside reality, and the occasional heave of the wind became the sigh of some immense sad soul, conterminous with the universe in space, and with history in time.
>
> Then, examining the mesh of events in her own life, she seemed to see the vanity of her father's pride; the gentlemanly suitor awaiting herself in her mother's fancy; to see him as a grimacing personage, laughing at her poverty, and her shrouded knightly ancestry. Everything grew more and more extravagant, and she no longer knew how time passed. A sudden jerk shook her in her seat, and Tess awoke from the sleep into which she, too, had fallen (pp. 35-36).

Symbolically, this passage is crucial because it represents, in microcosm, the emprisoning circumstances that eventually will destroy any chance Tess has for personal happiness inside society. The indictment here goes as far as the natural world. That all around her is "conterminous . . . with history in time (p. 36)" establishes clearly the linear nature of the time scheme in which she is now forced to carry out her life. The road over which she is travelling provides another metaphor for her situation. Importantly, even at this early point, Tess's reaction to this determining principle is to avoid it. Of course, time passes whether Tess knows it or not. By falling asleep, however, she is able to perform the symbolic act of removing herself from that knowledge and the impossible system on which it rests. Significantly, this act of falling asleep, despite its symbolism, is the direct cause of the accident which motivates Tess to carry out her parents' wishes and go to the home of the Stoke-d'Urbervilles at The Slopes.

With the seduction, Tess's world is split into two distinct parts. At the end of the first section, Hardy points out: "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" (p. 93). As Bert G. Hornback, in his thesis, "History, Time, and Timelessness in the Novels of Thomas Hardy," suggests: "Tess's tragic fault is her seduction by Alec d'Urberville. This mistake intrudes throughout the novel,

actually as well as metaphorically, to insist upon her destruction."[6] The linear sequence has now been set in motion and there is no longer a chance that Tess will be able to free herself from the linear time scheme of the society of which she is part. In the novel's second section, "Maiden No More," Tess has the opportunity to attempt some understanding of the meaning of the events that have just taken place in her life. Her reaction is based on the assumption that life is still worth living.

> A resolution which had surprised herself had brought her into the fields this week for the first time during many months. After wearing and wasting her palpitating heart with every engine of regret that lonely experience could devise, common-sense had illumined her. She felt that she would do well to be useful again — to taste anew sweet independence at any price. The past was past; whatever it had been it was no more at hand. Whatever its consequences, time would close over them; they would all in a few years be as if they had never been, and she herself grassed down and forgotten (pp. 116-117).

This realization, coupled with the recognition that "she was not an existence . . . to anybody but herself" (p. 117), indicates favourably that Tess is going to be able to salvage some kind of modified well-being from the potential ruin of her life.

Sorrow's death, however, radically alters this possibility. Completely, alone again, Tess "almost at a leap . . . thus changed from simple girl to complex woman" (p. 127). In her grief, she gives up hope and passively places herself in a linear sequence of things that makes of her life nothing

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[6] Bert G. Hornback, "History, Time, and Timelessness in the Novels of Thomas Hardy" (Ph. D. thesis, Notre Dame University, 1964), p. 103.

more than the working out of the motions of some kind of automaton. Hardy emphasizes very clearly what this surrender means in terms of Tess's own conception of the temporal meaning of her life:

> She philosophically noted dates as they came past in the revolution of the year; the disastrous night of her undoing at Trantridge with its dark background of The Chase; also the dates of the baby's birth and death; also her own birthday; and every other day individualized by incidents in which she had taken some share. She suddenly thought one afternoon, when looking in the glass at her fairness, that there was yet another date, of greater importance to her than those; that of her own death, when all these charms would have disappeared; a day which lay sly and unseen among all the other days of the year, giving no sign or sound when she annually passed over it; but not the less surely there (pp. 126-127).

Clearly, this assumption of a linear interpretation of time is the result of reflection after particular events have taken place. There is evidence in the first section that Tess did not view time in this way before her seduction. In other words, her interpretation of time as something not truly represented in a linear way is an innate faculty whereas her apprehension of life as an unfolding of a sequence of events is a learned concept forced on her by experience in society. By the end of the second section, then, Hardy has already indicated the opposed nature of these two views of time and he has established them both as active forces in Tess's story.

The novel's third section, "The Rally," traces the way in which Tess reacts to her first psychological subjection to a destructive linear time pattern. The conclusion of the second section had indicated that she was going to attempt some kind of rally to free herself from the threatening forces.

Yet Hardy had provided the clue that she was not really free by the fact that Talbothays Dairy, where she elects to go, "stood not remotely from some of the former states of the d'Urbervilles" (p. 128). Although her choice of destination indicates she is not completely free of linear time, she still has not forfeited her faculty to understand life beyond that level. Hardy presents this ability in terms which point out its rich potential for fulfilment when he writes:

> The irresistible, universal, automatic tendency to find sweet pleasure somewhere, which pervades all life, from the meanest to the highest, had at length mastered Tess. Being even now only a young woman of twenty, one who mentally and sentimentally had not finished growing, it was impossible that any event should have left upon her an impression that was not in time capable of transmutation (p. 136).

Despite the warning that Hardy offers by placing Talbothays in d'Urberville country, Tess's going to Talbothays, especially since she meets Angel there, becomes a migration to a land where she can live unchatteled by the interdependence of passing events. In going to Talbothays, Tess seems to be unconsciously preparing herself for a suspension of time, an obliteration of time future as much as time past. When she descends "the Egdon slopes lower and lower towards the dairy of her pilgrimage" (p. 125), she enters what she hopes will be a haven sheltered from both the space and time outside. She could be happy at Talbothays in a neutral situation, an absolute and constant now. That this is the intention of the Talbothays experience is indicated in Tess's reaction to Angel both in her thoughts and words. Consider, for example, the

following passage. It comes when Tess hears Clare's harp without his knowledge that she is listening.

> Tess was conscious of neither time nor space. The exaltation which she had described as being producible at will by gazing at a star, came now without any determination of hers; she undulated upon the thin notes of the second-hand harp, and their harmonies passed like breezes through her, bringing tears into her eyes. The floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible, and the dampness of the garden the weeping of the garden's sensibility (p. 160).

Unlike the time she fell asleep behind Prince, Tess here is fully awake as she gets out of time. Hardy suggests as well that this experience, produced in this case by Angel's music, had come to Tess previously by a simple act of will. Tess herself clarifies the meaning of the experience in her subsequent conversation with Angel. It is an explicit comparison of the threat of linear time and the shelter of undimensional time:

> "And you seem to see numbers of to-morrows just all in a line, the first of them the biggest and clearest, the others getting smaller and smaller as they stand farther away; but they all seem very fierce and cruel as if they said, "I'm coming! Beware of me! Beware of me! . . . But <u>you</u>, sir, can raise up dreams with your music, and drive all such horrid fancies away" (pp. 161-162)!

This passage clearly adumbrates the five days that Tess and Angel spend together at Bramshurst. It also provides a necessary definition of Tess's and Angel's relationship in terms of the way they will be able to consummate their love at the novel's conclusion. Tess's frame of mind in the third section of the novel, then, carries an awareness of the temporal struggle in which she is engaged, the struggle between society's ordering of life in strict terms of cause and effect in a linear time pattern and her own innate ability to get out of time into

a kind of ecstasy. At Talbothays, Tess is still able to express her essential lack of interest in the former: "'what's the use of learning that I am one of a long row only — finding out that there is set down in some old book somebody just like me, and to know that I shall only act her part; making me sad, that's all'" (p. 164).

The fourth section continues to oppose the two temporal concepts as the power of linear time becomes greater and greater. Its title, "The Consequence," clearly indicates that, with the change in the neutral state Tess and Angel achieved at Talbothays, the couple have entered on a series of actions that depend for their interconnections on belief in linear time. Importantly, Angel, as the more socialized of the two, attempts to force Tess, ultimately with success, into a commitment that sets up a series of events including engagement and marriage. This pattern is clearly rooted in social traditions and, for this reason alone, Tess's reluctance to commit herself indicates an awareness of the condemnation of her past history that society will inevitably register. Despite the recognition of what Tess's life means to her (p. 201), Angel unknowingly destroys the possibility of fulfilment at this time in his relationship with Tess, because he forces it into a linear pattern of events that, as Tess suspects, means the end of their love.

Ironically, it is Tess's appetite for joy that leads her to commit herself to Clare. Angel, however, has given her no alternative: "to snatch ripe pleasure before the iron teeth

of pain could have time to shut upon her: that was what love counselled . . ." (p. 230). At this stage in the novel, Tess is torn between the two conflicting time patterns and what they mean in terms of her life. On the one hand, she urgently throws herself into the sequential interpretation of her life. She quite frantically says to Angel, "'But my history. I want you to know it — you must let me tell you — you will not like me so well'" (p. 243)! On the other hand, this desire to face Angel's disapprobation is fairly easily scotched: "The 'appetite for joy' which pervades all creation, that tremendous force which sways humanity to its purpose, as the tide sways the helpless weed, was not to be controlled by vague lucubrations over the social rubric" (p. 246). This innate power, of which a non-linear apprehension of time is part, is still sufficiently strong in Tess to enable her to continue to avoid the consequences of a linear time that is clearly connected, in the above passage, to the existence of a social norm. Recklessly, Hardy says, "she dismissed the past — trod upon it and put it out, as one treads on a coal that is smouldering and dangerous" (p. 249). In terms of the temporal pattern, the situation, extant until after Tess's revelation on her wedding-night, has been established.

Tess is aware all the time that her option to live according to the appetite for joy is continually threatened and will ultimately be overcome. "A spiritual forgetfulness co-existed with an intellectual remembrance. She walked in brightness, but she knew that in the background those shapes

of darkness were always spread. They might be receding, or they might be approaching, one or the other, a little every day" (p. 252). This double awareness leads Tess to pose her version of the question that expresses the perplexity that leads only to regret and is so much a part of Hardy's view of the world: "Why didn't you stay and love me when I — was sixteen; living with my little sisters and brothers, and you danced on the green" (p. 253)? This question indicates how thoroughgoing is Tess's realization that, despite her attempt to deny a sequential order of events, she is now no longer psychologically immune to the ravages of time. "Tess was now carried along upon the wings of the hours, without the sense of a will. The word had been given; the number of the day written down" (p. 262). Hardy's choice of the last day of December as the wedding day and the night of Tess's revelation clearly indicates that the events of this day constitute an end rather than a beginning. Although determined to deny the power of conventional time, Tess has had to capitulate. Her only reaction, in her despair, is to succumb; nevertheless, she still wants to get away from the order of things that has destroyed her chance for happiness.

> With the shortening of the days all hope of obtaining her husband's forgiveness began to leave her; and there was something of the habitude of the wild animal in the unreflecting instinct with which she rambled on — disconnecting herself by littles from her eventful past at every step, obliterating her identity, giving no thought to accidents or contingencies which might make a quick discovery of her whereabouts by others of importance to her own happiness, if not to theirs (p. 353).

Tess has not really changed. Now her only refuge lies in her ability to escape to where she is able to live her life,

ever so quietly, on her own terms. To this point, the fifth of the novel's seven sections, Angel is still too much a man of conventional aspect to be able to help Tess achieve fulfilment in terms of her innate self. And it is clear that, for Hardy, Tess cannot do so while she remains alone. While alone, however, Tess never completely abandons her apprehension that her only possible happiness lies in an experience outside of time. That she cannot get there alone provides an interesting comment on Hardy's view of the man-woman relationship that will be examined, along with the changes that Angel Clare undergoes in South America, in the last chapter of this thesis.

The analysis of the time pattern of the individual in Tess of the D'Urbervilles has revealed a juxtaposition of two irreconcilable ways of looking at the world. Every human being expects and hopes for happiness and fulfilment. Hardy expressed this tendency, in one way, as an inherent attribute of a conception of life that does not depend on the rigours of a linear time pattern. By eliminating this pattern of consequences, Hardy, in his presentation of non-dimensional time, provides a metaphor for the potential homogeneity of experience that a spatial time concept necessarily prohibits. In direct opposition stands society which exercises its power in linear terms; this power to destroy the unity of the individual life provides a constant menace to personal fulfilment based on the innate appetite for joy. Hardy presents Tess's struggle against her past as the conflict between this innate faculty to interpret time as a simultaneous totality and the force of

a linear time pattern behind which lies all the power and strength of society. He establishes this polarity as one way to demonstrate the virtually untenable situation of the individual and the inevitable nature of each man's tragedy. How society comes to be informed with the destructive pole of linear time will be examined in the following chapters on the time patterns of history and prehistory.

Chapter III: The Time of History

> For all the compasses in the world, there's only one direction, and time is its only measure.
>
> — Tom Stoppard
> Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead

The most important non-personal time scheme that Hardy establishes in Tess of the D'Urbervilles is the time of history. Hardy's handling of historical time clarifies the destructive nature of the society in the novel. Necessarily, examination of this subject takes a double focus. First, Hardy provides in the d'Urbervilles a symbol for the nature and meaning of history as it effects Tess's story. In temporal terms, Hardy presents this symbol as both spatial and linear and, therefore, conducive to a determined view of things. The investigation into historical time, however, is not limited to the d'Urberville theme alone. Ultimately, Hardy's canvas includes the time of all human history. In accordance with this background, he develops a theory of civilization, clearly linear in temporal terms, that functions as a touchstone in his description of particular characters. In brief, he bases this theory on a belief that the great ages of the past have degenerated to the condition of modern times. Hardy focusses on this process in his symbolic treatment of the d'Urberville family. He invests the modern d'Urberville condition with the full weight of the county's history and with the accumulation of eight hundred years of time. Only in a linear time scheme can this past history of a noble family have an influence on modern people. As with individual time, the view of interpreting events of the past, whether poor Tess's illegitimate

motherhood or some medieval ancestor's mysterious act of murder, in terms of relevance to the present condition, requires a linear apprehension of time. On the individual level, Tess's tragedy develops directly from her seduction by Alec d'Urberville. On the historical level, Hardy takes us beyond the merely personal to point out that all of Tess's tragedy can be traced to the discovery that Durbeyfield was once spelled d'Urberville. The novel's very title suggests the great attention that the d'Urberville theme deserves. The whole question of a family's nobility is necessarily a social one; analysis of the linear time pattern of its history reveals the theme to be Hardy's primary literary vehicle whereby he condemns all that the Victorian society of mid-nineteenth-century Wessex represents.

Crane and Hornback, the two critics to concentrate on the temporal aspects of Hardy's fiction, discuss at some length the nature of historical time. Crane, in particular, clearly points out the ramifications of the interpretation of historical time as representative of the true meaning of time. Like Hornback, he neglects to establish the link between society and historical time in definite terms, but he does suggest, in his general statements, the way in which the d'Urberville story functions as one of society's weapons against Tess. He writes:

> The whole course of historical time is nothing more than an infinite row of standing dominoes being toppled by a continuous and unpreventable chain of ultimate destruction.
> The important point for the present study is this: determinism demands a linear ordering of events in Time — each has

> its separate position in an endless chain. Time is a mere sequential mechanism, and to measure its passage man has established yardsticks which are merely hypothetical and functional — clocks and calendars. Time philosophers, many of whom investigate the concept of Time almost entirely to attempt to relieve the deterministic implications of it, refer to such Time with such terms as Mechanical Time and Linear Time. Most admit that Time is a deterministic and tragic concept if Linear or Mechanical Time is really a true representation of what Time really means to the life of man.[1]

In Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Hardy informs the theme of the d'Urberville lineage with this power of historical time. Here the toppling row of dominoes is not necessarily infinite, and Tess herself seems to be the last in a row. To reveal the accumulative nature of linear time, the crush she feels bears the weight of all that preceded her. It is obvious that Hardy's primary concern in the novel was not to demonstrate the nature of historical time. His recognition of its nature, however, manifest in his recreation of the d'Urbervilles and its influence on the minds of individual characters, becomes one of the essential elements in Tess's tragedy. It is one means whereby he is able to delineate the determining principle that rules s society and with which society ultimately creates its individual tragedies. As Crane points out, "The major reason . . . why Linear Time tends to be pessimistic and eventually deterministic and nihilistic is that man's being becomes merely a function of Time and is completely relative to the context, order and direction of the historical process."[2] To live your individual life as a continuation of the historical process is another way to destroy the homogeneity and unity

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[1] Crane, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., p. 35.

that, at least potentially, in the case of a Tess Durbeyfield, seems possible. Tess's role in the process is, of course, not of her own devising, but, alone, she is too weak to overcome what the social order claims as an essential part of her existence. As Tess shows, it is an avenue that offers no real and lasting escape.

Hardy presents the theme of historical time from the very beginning of the first chapter. His insistence on the determined nature of things is revealed when Parson Tringham tells Jack Durbeyfield of the latter's descent from the noble d'Urbervilles. The scene takes place on a road that operates symbolically to suggest the determined linear lives led by the people who walk along it. Hardy's setting of the opening scene is one way whereby he indicates the nature of the narrative he is telling. That the person who sets everything in motion, who, to borrow Crane's image, topples the first domino, is a member of the clergy indicates from the beginning the link that Hardy will establish between the determining factors of society and Christianity. The images of the glorious past that Tringham, as he spills his secret, conjures up contrast strikingly with the description of Durbeyfield and suggest the process of deterioration that is reflected everywhere in modern society. Hardy's introduction of Jack Durbeyfield is worth noting:

> The pair of legs that carried him were rickety, and there was a bias in his gait which inclined him somewhat to the left of a straight line. He occasionally gave a smart nod, as if in confirmation of some opinion, though he was not thinking of anything in particular. An empty egg-basket was slung upon

his arm, the nap of his hat was ruffled, a patch being quite worn away at its brim where his thumb came in taking it off (p. 3).

The portrait is a series of very fine touches that indicates Hardy's mastery of characterization. Hardy suggests, for example, that the mannerism of the smart nod is merely a pretension to thoughts that are not there. This pretension on Durbeyfield's part will prove to be one of the main forces in his character that lets him lose all sense of proportion when he learns of his noble ancestry. The final touch of the hat shows, in its implication of frequent subordination, the downfall, in the light of Parson Tringham's description, of the once mighty d'Urbervilles: "'Don't you really know, Durbeyfield, that you are a lineal representative of the ancient and knightly family of the d'Urbervilles, who derive their descent from Sir Pagan d'Urberville, that renowned knight who came from Normandy with William the Conqueror, as appears by Battle Abbey Roll'" (p. 4)? By establishing the link between the present condition of Durbeyfield and the past condition of d'Urberville, Hardy has clearly set up a pattern of history that operates in linear temporal terms.

Very carefully, however, Hardy warns that there is promise of neither greatness nor goodness in the linear principle. Although he is moved deeply by the romance of history, Tringham clearly points out to Durbeyfield that his revelation is merely "'a useless piece of information (p. 5)'" and that the d'Urbervilles "'are extinct as a county family'" (p. 6). As a

Victorian, Durbeyfield's first thought is in possible financial benefits in the form of lands and mansions. In fact, Tringham shows that d'Urberville is virtually a dead name in his picture of them, "at Kingsbere-sub-Greenhill: rows and rows of you in your vaults, with your effigies under Purbeck-marble canopies" (p. 6). Hardy, then, initiates the action of the novel with Parson Tringham's disclosure to John Durbeyfield of the latter's noble ancestry. Irony lies first in the fact that a clergyman makes the revelation. As the theme develops and the sham d'Urbervilles become involved, the irony increases; a true d'Urberville is socially ruined by a sham one who has managed to buy his Victorian respectability. The Durbeyfields in their credulity are really pawns of their own ignorance, examples of what happens when underdeveloped social men get involved in the complex structure of society. The examination of the time scheme shows that only a linear interpretation of history establishes a necessary connection between d'Urberville and Durbeyfield. Importantly, this is the way that Victorian society sees it, and Alec, typical of one kind of Victorian man, shows how the history of the society can be manipulated for personal gain.

As the novel's first phase develops, Hardy continues to elucidate the meaning of history in Tess's story. An important statement comes early and makes explicit the point that Victorian society, at its most decadent, uses its historical apparatus in a way that allows the rich to exploit the poor.

The people of the lower social strata, such as the Durbeyfields, see historical time in linear terms and are thus able to connect their own petty and grovelling present to a glorious past. In this way, they salvage their pride. Yet this very act, committed in full and unquestioning faith, becomes the means whereby the wealthy industrialists, as personified in Alec, use the dead historical attachments for their own ends. As Hardy writes, "Pedigree, ancestral skeletons, monumental record, the d'Urberville lineaments, did not help Tess in her life's battle as yet, even to the extent of attracting to her a dancing-partner over the heads of the commonest peasantry. So much for Norman blood unaided by Victorian lucre" (p. 17). Hardy further points out that the d'Urberville story has no real relevance whatsoever to the present scene when he shows that Tess's beauty, which attracts Alec so magnetically, is due to her mother's side: "the personal charms which Tess could boast of were in main part her mother's gift, and therefore unknightly, unhistorical" (p. 21). In this section as well, Hardy expands the symbolic implications of the Durbeyfield lineage by describing Tess's father, the most seriously duped by Tringham's disclosure, as suffering from "fat around his heart" (p. 23).

In the first section, Hardy clearly shows that the discovery of Tess's noble ancestry is directly responsible, given the characters of the people around her, for all her trouble. The members of her own family, in particular her father, apprehend a nobility in themselves because their

linear concept of historical time establishes a direct and unquestionably valid link for them with the past. Hardy drops sufficient clues (for example, Tess's maternally inherited beauty, the Stoke's purchase of the d'Urberville name) to show that he does not see the connection. His blame, however, does not rest primarily in the guileless gullibility of Jack and Joan Durbeyfield; rather, he blames the avaricious and calculating Victorian classes for whom money is the real social criterion and who deliberately use the conventional temporal apparatus of society for their own gain. References to this perception of things abound in the first section. Society's view of history has victimized, in a deeply ironic way, the intentions of poor Tess Durbeyfield: "Doubtless some of Tess d'Urberville's mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time" (p. 93). In a way, Alec is free of the spatial apprehension of time that causes Tess and Angel so many difficulties. Implicit in Hardy's working of Alec's relation to history and its condemning forces is the fact that Alec's impunity is due merely to his wealth and not to any innate faculty. Victorian society is ordered in such a way that he can literally afford to disregard consequences. Whereas Tess and Angel strive to get away from their past and future and grow with this striving into a neutral present, Alec lives in a present condition, still basically linear in the way it moves from one moment to another, that neither aspires beyond physical comfort nor regrets past deeds that

have caused damage in one way or another. In every way, Alec is the product of the effete and completely terrestrial society of the Victorian wasteland.

Another aspect of the meaning of the degeneration in time from d'Urberville to Durbeyfield is expressed in Angel Clare's understanding of the situation. Tess herself thinks that her lineage may impress Clare (pp. 166-167), but she is mistaken. Interestingly, however, Clare interprets history in linear terms, too; only for this reason is he able to see Tess as the natural result of a dissipated power. Angel points out to Retty Priddle, of the defunct and noble Paridelles, that "'All your skill was used up ages ago in Palestine, and you must lie fallow for a thousand years to get strength for more deeds!'" (p. 166)! The reference to Palestine links up the ancient families with the Crusades and, in turn, with Christianity. Hardy's treatment of this religion, closely linked to the d'Urbervilles and others, is then linked with his treatment of history. Hardy expressed this view earlier in his treatment of the scripture-painter's words: "They seemed to shout themselves out and make the atmosphere ring. Some people might have cried 'Alas, poor Theology!' at the hideous defacement — the last grotesque phase of a creed which had served mankind well in its time" (p. 103). Hardy presents Angel as a spokesman for this particular concept of the historical process. In terms of temporal apprehension, analysis will reveal the source of Angel's difficulties in his relationship with Tess. His faith in the validity of a linear

interpretation of history ultimately supplies the motivation for his rejection of Tess. Hardy deals at some length with Angel's relation to the historical process:

> He held that education had as yet but little affected the beats of emotion and impulse on which domestic happiness depends. It was probable that, in the lapse of ages, improved systems of moral and intellectual training would appreciably, perhaps considerably, elevate the involuntary and even the unconscious instinct of human nature; but up to the present day culture, as far as he could see, might be said to have affected only the mental epiderm of those lives which had been brought under its influence (p. 214).

Such a passage is important because it depicts Angel Clare as a meliorist who sees no proof for his optimism in his social environment. Combined with his view of the degeneration of nobility, this aspect indicates the complex and perhaps confused nature of Clare himself. What both contradictory views have in common, however, is an assumption that interpretation of history is valid only in terms of a linear time pattern. It will be one of the assumptions that Clare has to unlearn in Brazil. This central conflict in Angel's character is summarized in the words, "'Politically I am sceptical as to the virtue of [old families'] being old. . . . but lyrically, dramatically, and even historically, I am tenderly attached to them'" (p. 215). The phrase, "even historically," casts a heavy irony when it reflects on Angel's repulsion at Tess's confession: "'I cannot help associating your decline as a family with this other fact — of your want of firmness. Decrepit families imply decrepit wills, decrepit conduct'" (p. 299). Tess replies, "'You find such as I everywhere; 'tis a feature of our county, and I can't help it '" (p. 300). The final words

only point out that, in terms of her historical background, Tess is victimized by the linear and, as a result, determined way in which most of society, from Angel Clare to Jack Durbeyfield, interpret the historical past. In the somnambulant burial of Tess at the Cistercian Abbey (pp. 320-321), Angel shows that, even in his subconscious state, his view of Tess as a d'Urberville, and thus dead, is unchangeable. As Angel places Tess in the empty stone coffin, Tringham's early picture of the d'Urbervilles as entombed in "rows and rows . . . in . . . vaults" (p. 6) is recalled. Clare, in his reactions, joins Alec as a typical man of his time:

> With all his attempted independence of judgment, this advanced and well-meaning young man, a sample product of the last five-and-twenty years, was yet the slave of custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings. No prophet had told him, and he was not prophet enough to tell himself, that essentially this young wife of his was as deserving of the praise of King Lemuel as any other woman endowed with the same dislike of evil, her moral value having to be reckoned not by achievement but by tendency (p. 340).

One way in which Hardy expresses the conventionality of Angel Clare is to illustrate that he believes historical time operates linearly. Angel's condemnation of Tess on a personal level is merely another manifestation of his view of the degeneration of Wessex nobility. Ultimately, for Angel, the romantic aspect of old families is outweighed by their encroachment into his own life. In the end, the romantic aspect has the least retentive power and is of the least importance. Hardy couples his introduction of this idea with Angel's conversion in Brazil: "It was a fact that would soon be forgotten — that bit of distinction in poor Tess's blood and

name, and oblivion would fall upon her hereditary link with the marble monuments and leaded skeletons at Kingsbere. So does Time ruthlessly destroy its own romances" (p. 441). Implicit in this last sentence is the important recognition that time itself (not necessarily linear in terms) has no respect for what has gone before. It seems to suggest a flaw in the reasoning of Angel and his society when they condemn Tess on the grounds of either her personal or her historical past.

The novel's sixth section, "The Convert," shares with the first a concentration on historical concerns. In it, Hardy further expresses his understanding of the relation of the past to the present. The fall of the Durbeyfield family is completed, and Alec's exploitation of the family's historic past is renewed. Appropriately, Hardy sends the family, after the loss of the house in Marlott, to Kingsbere, the symbolic intention of which needs no clarification. The scenes in the church aisle are ludicrous and degrading as the four-poster bed is erected in close proximity to the monuments to the knights and ladies of the noble line of d'Urberville.

> Within the window under which the bedstead stood were the tombs of the family, covering in their dates several centuries. They were canopied, altar-shaped, and plain; their carvings being defaced and broken; their brasses torn from the matrices, the rivet-holes remaining like martin-holes in a sand cliff. Of all the reminders that [Tess] had ever received that her people were socially extinct there was none as forcible as this spoliation (p. 469).

Hardy indicates that the scene constitutes only another reminder to Tess of what she and the reader, recalling

Parson Tringham's early statement, have known all along. As it is treated in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, the theme of history really shows no development. Hardy sets up the order of things that is revealed in the linear nature of its time patterns and he lets it stand. When he places Alec on a slab in Kingsbere Church, he is only reminding his reader further of the fact that the d'Urberville greatness, despite its seeming connection in linear terms, has no real connection with the present situation. As Alec says, "'The little finger of the sham d'Urberville can do more for you than the whole dynasty of the real underneath'" (p. 470). Money, it is clear, constitutes the real source of power in this society. The time of history, linear by nature, is useful insofar as it serves as one means whereby money can wield its power for its own selfish purposes. Alec uses the fall of the d'Urberville family, valid only in a linear interpretation of historic time, as one of his major arguments in his final seduction of Tess. Led to expect something good to result from her noble ancestry, Tess succumbs finally to the sham d'Urberville because her family needs the money. In one way, the development of historic time in the novel makes of Tess, in social terms, little more than a prostitute. That Hardy's view differs is evident in the novel's subtitle, "A Pure Woman."

It has been suggested that Hardy's primary technique in his presentation of historic time in Tess of the D'Urbervilles is symbolist in essence. The nature of the d'Urberville story provides a metaphor for the condition of society's

historical apparatus and deterministic basis. Hardy cleverly focusses this aspect of the d'Urberville theme in a Gothic legend concerning the family. By so doing, he is able to express clearly, in metaphoric terms, Tess's relationship to the time of history. As a result, he illustrates the inevitability of her murder of Alec. Interestingly, the first mention of the mysterious legend comes in a conversation between Angel Clare and his father. Angel refers to the d'Urbervilles as "that curiously historic worn-out family with its ghostly legend of the coach-and-four" (p. 215). The next mention of the legend comes after Tess's revelation of her background to Angel at Talbothays. Unaware of the legend, Tess seems to be acquainted with it through her dreamlike association with the carriage in which they are sitting. Yet Hardy makes it clear, that this is not necessarily the case but rather only the interpretation of Angel, who has already spoken of the legend to his father. Tess informs her lover that she does not know the story, and he begins to tell it:

> 'Well — I would rather not tell it in detail just now. A certain d'Urberville of the sixteenth or seventeenth century committed a dreadful crime in his family coach; and since that time members of the family see or hear the old coach whenever — But I'll tell you another day — it is rather gloomy. Evidently some dim knowledge of it has been brought back to your mind by the sight of this venerable caravan' (p. 275).

The important thing here is that the words of the text do not necessarily indicate that Tess's intuition has attached itself to the d'Urberville legend. Hardy is not writing a supernatural novel. His introduction of the legend ingeniously provides a symbol, in microcosm, for what the

whole history of the d'Urbervilles does to Tess. That Angel introduces Tess to the legend suggests the extent to which he is responsible for Tess's tragedy. This is true despite the fact that he shares her triumph with her and, to a degree, makes it possible. Before he will do this, however, he will have to go to South America.

When the legend is further expanded in the scenes at the mansion in Wellbridge, Tess finally makes her confession almost within the sight of the portraits of the two d'Urberville women (p. 280). The legend then disappears from the novel until Alec meets Tess again on the eve of Old Lady-Day in Marlott. In symbolic terms, it is interesting to note that Alec carries on the story from where Angel had left off:

> 'It is that this sound of a non-existent coach can only be heard by one of d'Urberville blood, and it is held to be of ill-omen to the one who hears it. (...) One of the family is said to have abducted some beautiful woman, who tried to escape from the coach in which he was carrying her off, and in the struggle he killed her — or she killed him — I forget which' (p. 457).

When Tess murders Alec later at Sandbourne, she is living the legend of her family. Hardy has created the legend whereby he focusses Tess's role in the novel's treatment of history. By the juxtaposition of the legendary murder and the murder of Alec, Hardy has posited an image that reveals the extreme extent to which Tess's historic background, and its linear, deterministic time patterns, have forced her into a certain mode of action. The full weight of the past, bearing down in the form of the legend, suggests that Tess could not have escaped her doom to thrust that knife into Alec

d'Urberville's heart in the upstairs room of a boarding house at Sandbourne. Tess is helplessly trapped in the linear passage of time that has destroyed her freedom. It is the time of history and prehistory. Hardy's linking of the two was one way whereby he demonstrated the polluted and destructive atmosphere of the society in which Tess had to try to live.

Chapter IV: The Time of Prehistory

> By nature [the primitive man] worries neither over the past nor over the future. Such anxieties are at once the white man's greatest strength and greatest weakness in his eternal search for happiness.
>
> — Raymond de Coccola and Paul King
> Ayorama

When Tess and Angel accidentally come upon Stonehenge near the end of the novel, they symbolically re-enter the deterministic world of duration. Most critics tend to concentrate on Stonehenge as if it were the novel's climax. While not wishing to diminish the power of this truly great scene, this thesis suggests that the novel's climax occurs at Bramshurst Court and that Hardy uses the ruins at Stonehenge symbolically to show the incontrovertible nature of human tragedy that he has presented already in his treatment of the individual life and of the time of history. Stonehenge, belonging as it does to the time of prehistory, seems to be removed from the clearly linear social concepts of the individual and of history. Careful examination, nevertheless, reveals that this distance does not free prehistory from its inevitable durational links to history. By setting the scene of Tess's arrest, which leads in turn to her execution, at Stonehenge, Hardy indicates the thoroughgoing nature of his vision of the deterministic universe.

Hardy's apprehension of the linear link between prehistory and history comes first, and very eloquently, in the novel, A Pair of Blue Eyes. The passage to be quoted comes from the scene in which Knight, one of the novel's

central figures, awaits rescue as he is trapped on a Cornish cliff face.

> Time closed up like a fan before him. He saw himself at one extremity of the years, face to face with the beginning and all the intermediate centuries simultaneously. Fierce men, clothed in the hides of beasts, and carrying, for defence and attack, huge clubs and pointed spears, rose from the rock, like the phantoms before the doomed Macbeth. They lived in hollows, woods, and mud huts — perhaps in caves of the neighbouring rocks. Behind them stood an earlier band. No man was there. Huge elephantine forms, the mastodon, the hippopotamus, the tapir, antelopes of monstrous size, the megatherium, and the myledon — all, for the moment, in juxtaposition. Further back, and overlapped by these, were perched huge-billed birds and swinish creatures as large as horses. Still more shadowy were the sinister crocodilian outlines — alligators and other uncouth shapes, culminating in the colossal lizard, the iguanadon. Folded behind were dragon forms and clouds of flying reptiles: still underneath were fishy beings of lower development; and so on, till the lifetime scenes of the fossil confronting him were a present and modern condition of things.[1]

The important assumption behind such a passage is the clear apprehension in spatial temporal terms of the modern man's link to all his ancestors and natural predecessors. It posits prehistory merely as an extension of history and, ultimately, creates the same position for man that history does. In these terms, such monuments as Stonehenge in Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Mai Dun in The Mayor of Casterbridge are linked to the present condition of man by means of the linear nature of historic and prehistoric time.

Only Hornback, of the critics, gives this assumption anything like full recognition. Carl J. Weber, one of Hardy's most prolific critics, sees in the Stonehenge episode the "artistic harmonizing of man and nature."[2] He writes of Tess

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[1] A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 253.

[2] Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex: His Life and Literary Career (New York, 1965), p. 173.

in his biography of Hardy:

> When despair overtakes her and she saves her wretched family by selling herself, she moves to the town of 'fashionable promenades,' Bournemouth. And finally Stonehenge is chosen for that most beautiful and most pathetic of all the scenes Hardy ever invented — that of Tess falling asleep on one of the Druid stones in that place of ancient sacrifice. This artistic harmonizing of man and nature runs through many of the Wessex novels, but it was never more poetically handled than in Tess.[3]

It is difficult to grasp what Weber really means by this observation of "artistic harmonizing." What is interesting is that, in his brief summary of the novel's last section, the one, after all, called "Fulfilment," Weber moves from the scenes at Sandbourne to those at Stonehenge without any mention whatsoever of Bramshurst, the scene of the actual fulfilment. Implicit in the oversight is a tendency to misinterpret the Stonehenge scenes, to fail to recognize them as a symbolic gathering of the forces of time and space to which Tess and Angel return as they flee north from Bramshurst.

Even Dorothy Van Ghent, in her excellent essay, seems to miss the emphasis of the Stonehenge scenes by failing to see all the implications of Tess's return home. She writes:

> That [Tess] goes, in her wandering at the end, to Stonehenge is an inevitable symbolic going — as all going and doing are symbolic — for it is here that the earthiness of her state is best recognized, by the monoliths of Stonehenge, and that the human dignity of her last gesture has the most austere recognition, by the ritual sacrifices that have been made on these stones.[4]

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[3] Weber, pp. 172-173.

[4] Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (New York, 1953), p. 254.

The analysis of the Stonehenge scene will suggest that Hardy's presentation of it reveals a broader goal than Miss Van Ghent's comment recognizes. Tess's sacrifice takes place ultimately at Wintoncester in the county jail rather than on the altar stone of Stonehenge. Her arrest at the latter place provides a metaphor for the destructiveness of the deterministic and durational pattern of society even back in the dark shadows of its remembrance. Stonehenge takes the human tragedy beyond the time of the individual and history to suggest an even more profound picture of the inevitability of human defeat and hopelessness.

Hornback suggests that one of the functions of the "prehistoric context"[5] of the Wessex setting of Hardy's novels is "to establish the sense of continuity in the ages of man, which ties us all to a common fate."[6] The recognition of the use of prehistoric imagery and setting frees the tragedy of Hardy's figures from relevance only to the Victorian situation. Later, Hornback states his view of the Stonehenge scenes exactly. He, too, is guilty of neglecting to even mention those at Bramshurst:

> The scene at Stonehenge is the most important in the whole novel. Hardy concentrates his whole effort here, to insist on the size of his heroine and the greatness of her tragedy. The scene is the final and climactic representation of Hardy's point of view, as Tess is sacrificed on the symbolic altar stone of all time.[7]

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[5] Hornback, p. 9.

[6] Ibid., p. 9.

[7] Ibid., p. 114.

The time to which Hornback refers is the linear concept of time that traps and destroys Tess and forces her to seek her fulfilment elsewhere. And indeed this is Hardy's intention in his use of Stonehenge: to give a metaphor larger than Tess herself and larger than her d'Urberville past for the impossibility of her situation. Hornback feels that Stonehenge is too large a concept for the novel. By pointing out what he thinks is Hardy's failure, he may be missing Hardy's main point. There seems to be an attendant irony in the juxtaposition of the Stonehenge symbol with the symbolic use of the d'Urberville theme. In doing so, Hardy is playing with the reader's assumptions about such things as nobility and paganism. As a result, the critic must take care to prevent his own assumptions from operating too strongly in his examination of Hardy. In the context of the novel, the reader's conception of Stonehenge, with "its immensity in time and its incomprehensible towering existence,"[8] undergoes a direct and intentional reduction in significance. When Tess declares she has returned home, at least part of the symbolic intention of the remark must be its hint through irony that, once again, she has returned to the temporal treadmill of her life in society. That her mother's people had once been shepherds on the Salisbury Plain does not mean that Tess has regressed in time via her experience at Bramshurst. Ultimately, Tess is trapped by both her noble paternal and her pastoral maternal backgrounds. Her link to Stonehenge is not

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[8] Ibid., p. 116.

different in kind from her link to Kingsbere-sub-Greenhill; in the same way, the time of prehistory is not different from the time of history.

This view of the Stonehenge scene is corroborated by Hardy's unidealistic references to prehistoric and primitive life throughout the novel. On the one hand, there is a tendency to trace, as one looks backward upon prehistory, a simplification in life, and thus a growing homogeneity the further one is removed from the complexity of the present situation. Hardy expresses this seeming pattern in two ways: the intrusion of the simple past on the present and the present existence of the past's simplicity in the lives of the novel's least socialized and least complex characters.

Hardy's use of clock imagery, although infrequent, suggests the comparative simplicity of earlier ages. He has carefully provided his setting with a substratum that reflects the primeval past. For example, his description of Marlott, as Tess sets out to fetch her parents from Rolliver's inn, is worth noting: "'Liza-Lu then went to bed, and Tess, locking them all in, started on her way up the dark and crooked lane or street not made for hasty progress; a street laid out before inches of land had value, and when one-handed clocks sufficiently subdivided the day" (p. 26). The simple image of the one-handed clock, especially in its suggestion of a sundial, leads to Hardy's positive view of pagan religion which he instils in his depiction of the women of Blackmoor Vale: "women whose chief companions are the forms and forces of

outdoor Nature retain in their souls far more of the Pagan fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systematized religion taught their race at later date" (p. 137). They are part of a world on which the sun shines and life itself has a wholeness and consistency not to be found in modern society. The image of the sun, becoming, as it does, a means of time measurement, is one of the most beautiful in the novel.

> The sun, on account of the mist, had a curious sentient, personal look, demanding the masculine pronoun for its adequate expression. His present aspect, coupled with the lack of all human forms in the scene, explained the old-time heliolatries in a moment. One could feel that a saner religion had never prevailed under the sky. The luminary was a golden-haired, beaming, mild-eyed, God-like creature, gazing down in the vigour and intentness of youth upon an earth that was brimming with interest for him (p. 111).

This glorious, nourishing source of life is not the same that provides the first glimmer of light at Stonehenge so making Tess's arrest as inevitable as the passing of the night. Something has happened during the ages that prevents Stonehenge, when the police surround it to trap Tess, from partaking of the bountiful sun of the old-time heliolatries. In modern life, religion, namely Christianity, has somehow drained the sun of its life-force. By indicating that the sunrise will become an essential instrument of Tess's capture, Hardy creates a metaphor for the destruction man has wrought on what seems, in retrospect at least, to have had all the potential in the world. Tess's capture at Stonehenge indicates how far man has removed himself from his origin more than it suggests that Tess has achieved some kind of fulfilment by going there.

Through the use of imagery of mistletoe, associated as it is with the Druidic cult, Hardy treats this deterioration and reversal in another way. The first reference comes when he presents The Chase as "a truly venerable tract of forest land, one of the few remaining woodlands in England of undoubted primaeval date, wherein Druidical mistletoe was still found on aged oaks, and where enormous yew-trees, not planted by the hand of man, grew as they had grown when they were pollarded for bows" (pp. 43-44). As in the treatment of the sun, Hardy has introduced in this passage an aspect of prehistoric and primitive man that presents life as more unified and fulfilling than it is for Tess and her contemporaries. That primeval yew-trees and sprays of mistletoe exist in Tess's time seems to provide the link between modern and prehistoric man that a linear time pattern allows. As in the case of the heliolatries, the imagery of mistletoe shows that the line runs only one way; the regression to the former condition of fruitfulness and fulfilment from the present degenerated condition seems impossible.

Hardy makes this suggestion long before the Stonehenge scene presents it explicitly. For example, the major recurrence of mistletoe imagery comes with the wedding-night scenes. Tess has already confessed.

> In removing the light towards the bedstead its rays fell upon the tester of white dimity; something was hanging beneath it, and she lifted the candle to see what it was. A bough of mistletoe. Angel had put it there; she knew that in an instant. This was the explanation of that mysterious parcel which it had been so difficult to pack and bring. . . . How foolish and inopportune that mistletoe looked now (p. 300).

Soon after, she tells Angel that she had thought of committing suicide "'under your mistletoe'" (p. 307). The pronoun is important; clearly, in terms of its connection with Druidical mistletoe, Angel's becomes only a bizarre reminder of something in the past. If Stonehenge has a Druidical connection, then Angel's mistletoe, because of what Tess does with it, suggests a time when Tess will give herself up to death at the hands of others. The two references to mistletoe in the novel indicate the nature of the time of prehistory as irrecoverable in terms of the linear time pattern of which it is a part. Mistletoe serves in the present as a possible suicidal decoration.

Hardy introduces prehistoric references to the novel with a dual, and seemingly paradoxical, purpose. On the one hand, prehistoric men, isolated in the past, seem, to modern men at least, to have led lives of happiness and self-realization in a simple age. On the other hand, fragments of these ancient times exist now in a bizarre and almost hideous way as cruel reminders of the impossibility of regaining the potentiality manifest in primitive peoples. They seem to function as leftovers, stale and mouldy, from some wonderful banquet now dust-covered and infested with crawling insects. Stonehenge and mistletoe and old-time heliolatries serve only as such reminders; they do not, for a moment, signify a possible compression or regression of time to a period when the feast was still in progress.

One other type of prehistoric reference requires

comment before the examination of the Stonehenge scene. Hardy includes aspects of prehistoric and primitive men in his description of actual contemporaries of Tess. On the one hand, these people evoke a series of images of fecundity and pastoral festivities. On the other, Hardy includes images of primitive savages as a reminder of the dual nature of primitive and prehistoric man. One of the best images of pastoral festivities comes in the description of the Trantridge folk whom Tess will call a whorage (p. 84).

> Of the rushing couples there could barely be discerned more than the high lights — the indistinctness shaping them to satyrs clasping nymphs — a multiplicity of Pans whirling a multiplicity of Syrinxes; Lotis attempting to elude Priapus, and always failing.
>
> At intervals a couple would approach the doorway for air, and the haze no longer veiling their features, the demigods resolved themselves into the homely personalities of [Tess's] own next-door neighbours (pp. 78-79).

This passage is one of several in the novel that presents the labourer class of rural Wessex in relation to some basic truth that is best implied by reference to the pagan mythologies. These references express the same idea that Hardy later evokes in his description of the youthful sun; it is worth noting that one of the novel's important themes concerns the destruction of these Pans and Syrinxes by the urban values of the machine age that is disrupting the rural way of life. Even if Hardy's description of them in mythical terms is apt, the progress of modernism will soon destroy them and stamp out the last living link in Wessex with the simple life of primitive man.

Hardy recognizes another primitive man that balances

idealized heathens of the past. The reference comes at the symbolic climax of the novel as Tess commits a kind of suicide by killing the wounded pheasants. The passage concerns the hunters:

> [Tess] had occasionally caught glimpses of these men in girlhood, looking over hedges, or peering through bushes, and pointing their guns, strangely accoutred, a bloodthirsty light in their eyes. She had been told that, rough and brutal as they seemed just then, they were not like this all the year round, but were, in fact, quite civil persons save during certain weeks of autumn and winter, when, like the inhabitants of the Malay Peninsula, they ran amuck, and made it their purpose to destroy life (p. 356).

The allusion to the Malay hunters is at once puzzling and fascinating. Suddenly Hardy has linked the hunters, a symbol for modern man, with some underdeveloped, instinctual man who goes berserk every year at a certain time. For a post-Darwinian, Hardy makes the obvious recognition. Is it also the recognition of a possible flaw in reasoning to see in prehistoric man a unity and homogeneity that modern man does not have? Images of a positive and beautiful past obviously have their appeal. Yet Hardy is too honest an artist to let it go at that. His recognition, by means of the linear time pattern, of the link between modern and prehistoric man has already been shown. The reference to the Malay hunters comes in one of the novel's most crucial passages. Through it, Hardy subtly suggests that the chaos and injustice of the present situation are derived, as they must be derived if the linear time pattern holds, from some essential quality of human nature present as much in the hearts and minds of the builders of Stonehenge as in our own. The possibility that prehistoric men did not lead lives of fulfilment opens the tragedy of Tess,

and of everyone, to a great and new dimension. Blackmoor Vale is not only a fertile valley: "Superstitions linger longest on these heavy soils. (...) The harts that had been hunted here, the witches that had been pricked and ducked, the green-spangled fairies that 'whickered' at you as you passed; — the place teemed with beliefs in them still, and they formed an impish multitude now" (pp. 445-446).

The Stonehenge scene, then, has as background a multiplicity of references all of which have their particular relevance. The scene deserves close attention. Hardy presents it carefully, taking care as always to represent the Wessex geography faithfully. The city of Melchester, or Salisbury, lies in the path of Angel and Tess as they head north still without a destination more particular that some northern port. Hardy uses the proximity of Stonehenge and Salisbury Cathedral, certainly two of England's, and probably Europe's, most important structures, to full advantage. Remarks he was to make on a visit to Wiltshire in 1898 are relevant to his treatment of the setting in these final scenes. Stonehenge leads him to write succinctly and sensitively: "The misfortune of ruins to be beheld always at noonday by visitors, and not by twilight."[9] On the same visit, August 10, 1898, he writes at length about the cathedral:

> Went into the Close late at night. The moon was visible through both the north and south clerestory windows to me standing on the turf on the north side. . . . Walked to the west front, and watched the moonlight creep round upon the statuary of the facade — stroking tentatively and then more

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[9] Florence Emily Hardy, p. 296.

> and more firmly the prophets, the martyrs, the bishops, the kings, and the queens. . . . Upon the whole the Close of Salisbury, under the full summer moon on a windless midnight, is as beautiful a scene as any I know in England — or for the matter of that elsewhere.[10]

To the visitor, the proximity of Stonehenge and Salisbury is overwhelming as the two great monuments, within twenty miles of each other, represent two irreconcilable ways of life, one instinctual and earthy, the other spiritual and redemptive.

Hardy plays down the contrast, and his relative neglect of Salisbury Cathedral follows consistently his treatment of Christianity in the novel. After the experience at Bramshurst, Tess and Angel literally have no time for churches. They rush past the cathedral in their need to escape. "The graceful pile of cathedral architecture rose dimly on their left hand, but it was lost upon them now" (p. 509). The moon has now sunk and Hardy clearly points out that neither Angel nor Tess expect to come upon Stonehenge. It first appears as something against which they almost strike themselves (p. 510). As they discover it in the dark, Tess is afraid and only Angel speaks, asking and answering his own questions. Like the identification of the d'Urberville legend, Angel identifies Stonehenge for Tess. She does not recognize it herself. He describes it to her as "'older than the centuries; older than the d'Urbervilles'" (p. 511)! And when Tess says that she wants to stay, he points out that, by day, in the light of the sun, it is the most vulnerable spot on the entire plain. Somehow the place overcomes Tess. She has had her period of fulfilment

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[10] Ibid., p. 296.

and now is ready to await the consequences. She deliberately chooses to wait at Stonehenge, and her recognition of it as her home suggests, in the light of what will happen there, the hopelessness of the human situation. Stonehenge has become a symbol for duration; Tess is able to link herself to it only by means of the pattern of linear time. She says, "'One of my mother's people was a shepherd hereabouts. . . . So now I am at home'" (p. 511). Tess clearly undergoes no change at Stonehenge and, if anything, her words only corroborate how much she is a woman of her own time and not a heathen. Her final concern for 'Liza-Lu and her interest in the possibility of meeting Angel in an after-life do not suggest that Tess has gone back in time. Stonehenge does not indicate a regression to a more primitive state of being; even if it did, Tess would not understand it as she depends on Angel for all the answers to her inquiries about the place. The final scene, with the light of the dawning sun waking her from her sleep, reveals an irony similar to Angel's wedding-night gift of mistletoe. "All waited in the growing light, their faces and hands as if they were silvered, the remainder of their figures dark, the stones glistening green-gray, the Plain still a mass of shade. Soon the light was strong, and a ray shone upon her unconscious form, peering under her eyelids and waking her" (p. 514).

Morning does not bring Tess to a celebration of the goodness of the sun. This one-time temple of the winds becomes the scene, not of Tess's triumph, but of her final defeat. In

terms of Tess's life, Stonehenge signifies only one event in an inevitable sequence of things. Even it could not save her. In the life of Tess Durbeyfield, Stonehenge is just as much a symbol for the destructive and deterministic linear time pattern of modern society as the legend of the d'Urberville coach. By the end of the novel, Tess has moved through nature and history to the still condemning time of prehistory.

Chapter V: The Time of Nature

> We are the happy legion, for we know
> Time's but a golden wind that shakes the grass.
> — Siegfried Sassoon

"It may be questioned if Nature, or what we call Nature, so far back as when she crossed the line from invertebrates to vertebrates, did not exceed her mission. This planet does not supply the materials for happiness to higher existences. Other planets may, though one can hardly see how."[1] This notebook entry of April 7, 1889, summarizes Hardy's view of nature in relation to the society which man has erected upon natural foundations. It presents Hardy in his blackest mood and suggests only one aspect of his treatment of nature and natural time in Tess of the D'Urbervilles. Unlike the times of the individual, history, and prehistory, the time of nature cannot be represented graphically by a line. Its spatial pattern is that of a cycle. Hardy presents the influence of this cycle on the characters of his novel in two ways. On the one hand, he reflects its positive influence on the novel's least socialized characters, the folk at Trantridge and the labourers at Dairyman Crick's at Talbothays. On the other hand, he shows how the natural cycle of time is really irrelevant to the lives of the more complex and socially elevated characters of Angel and Tess.

As in his presentation of prehistoric time, Hardy does not idealize natural time. More often than not, he is aware that the coincidence of events in nature and in individual

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[1] Florence Emily Hardy, p. 218.

lives (for example, Tess's and Angel's love affair and the summer at Talbothays) is purely accidental. As a rule, he implies that the characters least sullied by social conventions lead the best life possible, but he never suggests that this life is completely fulfilling and happy. Like the metaphysical universe, nature does not depend on man or man's knowledge of it to continue to function. It owes nothing to the individual. One of man's basic false assumptions lies in his persistent attempt to see the complete natural process as a metaphor for his own individual life. Somehow he puts himself parallel to the process instead of as one part of it, neither better nor worse than any other. "Was once lost always lost really true of chastity? [Tess] would ask herself. She might prove it false if she could veil bygones. The recuperative power which pervaded organic nature was surely not denied to maidenhood alone" (p. 128). In this case, Tess fails to recognize that, on an individual basis, nature does not necessarily recuperate.

Of the critics, John Kenny Crane concentrates most on the problem of natural time in Hardy's novels. Crane's interest, however, is focussed primarily on the meaning of natural time for the socially simple characters. He calls cyclic time "the oldest Time experience that mankind possesses, having been part of the archaic ritual long before pseudo-scientists ever decided upon clocks and calendars."[2] Later he suggests, "The cyclic Arcadia in Tess provides an interesting contrast . . . between the rustic and tragic figures."[3] His really important

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[2] Crane, p. 8.

[3] Ibid., p. 122.

observation about cyclic time, however, is more general: "in the long run the psychological benefits offered by Cyclic Time remain the same. It allows the primitive mind to live in a continual present. Nothing new can happen in the world since everything is a repetition of either a primordial archetype or a seasonal necessity."[4]

What this analysis means in terms of Tess of the D'Urbervilles is evident in Hardy's presentation of the folk at Trantridge and Talbothays. By presenting these characters in terms of a continual present that ignores the past and the future, he provides the reader with another important standard whereby he can understand the nature of Tess's tragedy and the reason that her final fulfilment must occur outside conventional time, either natural or social. Clearly, the Trantridge women are not aware of any dichotomy between themselves and nature.

> They followed the road with a sensation that they were soaring along in a supporting medium, possessed of original and profound thoughts, themselves and surrounding nature forming an organism of which all the parts harmoniously and joyously interpenetrated each other. They were as sublime as the moon and stars above them, and the moon and stars were as ardent as they (p. 82).

Much later, for the second time, Tess encounters Dark Car and her sister, two Trantridge women, who "showed no recognition of her, and possibly had none, for they had been under the influence of liquor on that occasion, and were only temporary here as there" (p. 372). In the light of the vehemence of the argument that Tess and Dark Car had on the earlier occasion, the liquor does not seem an adequate reason for the latter's forgetfulness. One implication of the later scene is that Dark Car, with a name

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[4] Crane, p. 86.

that sounds like a stellar constellation, lives in a continual present without memories.

To a degree, the Talbothays labourers share this position. Talbothays Dairy, the inhabited natural world, is the kind of place where the odds of an invalid social machine are somewhat lessened. The position of the dairymen and dairymaids at Crick's "was perhaps the happiest of all positions in the social scale, being above the line at which neediness ends, and below the line at which the convenances begin to cramp natural feelings, and the stress of threadbare modishness makes too little of enough" (p. 167). Yet Hardy is unable to present even these people in harmony with the cycle and rhythm of nature. As soon as he considers the individual case, he realizes that the implications of cyclic time apply only to the general, that is, to the species, and not to the particular, even someone as insignificant as Retty. Talbothays may be the setting of Angel's and Tess's courtship, but it is also the setting of the heartbreaks of Izz, Retty, and Marian. Their unhappiness is rooted in the intrusion into their environment of Angel, with his penchant for study, and Tess, with her Sixth Standard education. Tess's and Angel's courtship, as outsiders, symbolizes for the Talbothays folk the inevitable disruption, even on the simplest level of life, of the potential unity expressible by means of the seemingly regenerative temporal cycle of nature. "The season developed and matured. Another year's instalment of flowers, leaves, nightingales, thrushes, finches, and such ephemeral creatures, took up their positions

where only a year ago others had stood in their place when these were nothing more than germs and inorganic particles" (p. 167). The cycle of nature provides only two metaphors, those of the day and the year, neither an adequate temporal metaphor for the life of the individual because each is followed by another of its kind in a never-ending cycle.

Only with society and its damnation of the natural do future considerations begin to wreak their havoc on individual lives. The sexual instinct, nature manifest in man, is concerned only with the present.

> Its lack of everything to justify its existence in the eye of civilization (while lacking nothing in the eye of Nature); the one fact that it did exist; ecstasizing [Izz, Retty, and Marian] to a killing joy; all this imparted to them a resignation, a dignity, which a practical and sordid expectation of winning [Angel] as a husband would have destroyed (p. 190).

The destructive clash between nature and society becomes, in temporal terms, the contradictory concepts of time as a continual present opposed to time as a present involved more with the past and future than itself.

Dorothy Van Ghent suggests Tess's and Angel's positions in this structure. Part of their tragedy results from their inability to lead lives that respect the continual present of the cyclic time of nature. Their social prejudice, especially Angel's, prevents them from maintaining the relationship they realize during their early days together at Talbothays. As Miss Van Ghent writes,

> . . . it is the sports, the deracinated ones, like Tess and Clare and Alec, who are morally individualized and who are therefore able to suffer isolation, alienation, and abandonment, or to make others so suffer; the folk, while they

remain folk, cannot be individually isolated, alienated, or lost, for they are amoral and their existence is colonial rather than personal . . . Their fatalism is communal and ritual, an instinctive adaptation as accommodating to bad as good weather, to misfortune as to luck, to birth as to death, a subjective economy by which emotion is subdued to the falling out of event and the destructiveness of resistance is avoided. In their fatalism lies their survival wisdom, as against the death direction of all moral deliberation. . . . Tess's tragedy turns on a secret revealed, that is, on the substitution in Tess of an individualizing morality for the folk instinct of concealment and anonymity.[5]

This passage has been quoted at length because it summarizes Tess's and Angel's positions as they live through the experience at Talbothays. In the temporal terms of society, the linear concept of viewing life in terms of consequences is inescapable despite Tess's realization that, in natural terms, she has always acted purely. Hardy points out this quite clearly at the beginning of the novel's second phase: "She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly" (p. 110). As pointed out earlier, Tess, because of her seduction by Alec, assumes a totally untenable position in society. After she recovers from her grief upon Sorrow's death, her idea is to start over. To do this, she chooses to immerse herself totally in the processes of nature at Talbothays. She fails to recognize that the move, representative in temporal terms as a move from linear to cyclic time, only takes her to another kind of determined life.

Angel goes to Talbothays with a similar purpose and is confronted there, for the first time in his life, with the possibility of living wholly in the present, immersed in the

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[5] Van Ghent, pp. 250-251.

cycle of natural growth and regrowth.

> Considering his position he became wonderfully free from the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races with the decline of belief in a beneficent power. (...) He grew away from old associations, and saw something new of life and humanity. Secondarily, he made close acquaintance with phenomema which he had before known but darkly — the seasons in their moods, morning and evening, night and noon, winds in their different tempers, trees, waters and mists, shades and silences, and the voices of inanimate things (pp. 154-155).

This experience at Talbothays is Angel's first encounter with the possibilities and potentialities of life outside his particular social level. It will provide the necessary first step that allows him finally to overcome his social temporal prejudice and move out of time with Tess at Bramshurst. In the Var Vale, he sees "only Life . . . only the great passionate pulse of existence, unwarped, uncontorted, untrammelled by those creeds which futilely attempt to check what wisdom would be content to regulate" (p. 205). This exposure to a life in the present moment is an essential part of his education. That he is unable to immerse himself in it without contemplation of the past and the future is not so much its fault as his own.

This contemplative force drives Angel to destroy what he has achieved with Tess at Talbothays. He is unable to accept the relationship in only a present context; by demanding Tess accept his hand in marriage, he himself begins the destruction of their love by moving it out of the present into a future sequence of predetermined events. Hardy presents a gradual reduction of nature's fecundity as Tess moves to make her decision. Her reluctance to decide shows how much more developed than Angel's is her propensity for neutral time. "The season

meanwhile was drawing onward to the equinox, and though it was still fine, the days were much shorter" (pp. 235-236). The garden scene (p. 160), in which Tess had moved out of time to the music of Angel's harp, gradually fades into the past.

Hardy carefully suggests, however, that, until Tess finally accepts Angel's demands, the couple continues to live in a kind of continual present moment that belongs, in general terms, to cyclic time.

> Thus, during this October month of wonderful afternoons, they roved along the meads by creeping paths which followed the brinks of trickling tributary brooks, hopping across by little wooden bridges to the other side, and back again. They were never out of the sound of some purling weir, whose buzz accompanied their own murmuring, while the beams of the sun, almost as horizontal as the mead itself, formed a pollen of radiance over the landscape.(p. 250).

As Angel continues to press Tess to establish the date for the wedding, it becomes clear that their attempt to live in a continual present is doomed in two ways and that neither the linear time of the individual nor the cyclic time of nature will permit them to maintain the Talbothays condition of their love.

Immediately before Tess accepts Angel, she says to him, "'That it would always be summer and autumn, and you always courting me, and always thinking as much of me as you have done through the past summertime'" (p. 261). The passage is important because of the recognition Tess makes with it of the untenability of life in nature as well as society. The cycle continues to move and, as Crane and Van Ghent say, the primitive mind, the person who really lives in nature's continual present, accepts the bad weather with the good. Not mentally primitive, Tess is unable to accept the coming winter just as surely as

she suspects her failure to do so, and her subsequent submission to Clare, will mean the end of their love. By this point in the novel, it is clear that Tess's desire for a neutral moment and her ultimate achievement and fulfilment with Angel do not belong to the natural cycle of time as distinctly as they are not part of the linear time of society.

Hardy adds one final dimension to his presentation of natural time with the scenes at Flintcomb-Ash. Just as Flintcomb-Ash is diametrically opposed to Talbothays, so are Marian's and Tess's experiences there as opposed to their earlier ones. Where once they had been living completely in the present, now they have given themselves over to the past. Marian and Tess "were both young, and they were talking of the time when they lived and loved together at Talbothays Dairy, that happy green tract of land where summer had been liberal in her gifts; in substance to all, emotionally to these" (p. 367). There is no longer any question for these women of living according to the cycle of nature. Instead of accepting the winter at Flintcomb-Ash, "a starve-acre place" (p. 365), they ignore it. Into this world of cold winter and warm memories, Hardy injects an important symbol:

> After this season of congealed dampness came a spell of dry frost, when strange birds from behind the North Pole began to arrive silently on the upland of Flintcomb-Ash; gaunt spectral creatures with tragical eyes — eyes which had witnessed scenes of cataclysmal horror in inaccessible polar regions of a magnitude such as no human being had ever conceived. . . . These nameless birds came quite near to Tess and Marian, but of all they had seen which humanity would never see, they brought no account. The traveller's ambition to tell was not theirs, and, with dumb impassivity, they dismissed experiences which they did not value for the immediate incidents of this homely upland . . . (p. 369).

The passage comes just as Marian and Tess are immersed in memories of what for them was a time when they felt close to nature. Hardy, with these birds, shows that natural time exists beyond human beings and implies that romantic notions of wonderful summers cannot be isolated from the natural cycle of time. If they are, their essence changes and they become memories. These birds have no articulated memories; they suggest that nature is essentially indifferent to man, individual or otherwise. It should be remembered that the milk and butter at Talbothays Dairy can be, and was, ruined by some wild garlic which the cows had eaten in the pasture (pp. 179-180). Such an event bears witness to the fact that Hardy is aware of the complexity of the world and is not merely making the naive suggestion that nature is positive in a scheme in which society is negative.

Hardy is consistently aware of the indifference of the natural world to man regardless of his level of existence. The northern birds are another manifestation of Hardy's awareness of man's unimportance in the actual scale of natural events and the cycle of natural time. This cycle operates in Tess of the D'Urbervilles as another indication of the hopelessness of the human situation. Strip modern social man of society and history and nature will remain to drive him out of time in his eternal search for happiness.

Chapter VI: Conclusion — Out of Time

> 'Time, with his wings, hour-glass, and scythe, coming nearer and nearer to me — grinning and mocking: then he seized me, took a piece of me only.'
>
> — Thomas Hardy
> Desperate Remedies

The linear and cyclic time patterns in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, and the deterministic view of life they reflect, reveal the extensive nature of Hardy's interpretation of determinism. As ordered in nineteenth-century England, life offered no possible fulfilment for the thinking individual. In fact, this sterility is not limited simply to Tess's surrounding environment; Hardy goes as far as to suggest that the bounds and pressures destructive of Tess also influence and determine the lives of every individual in every era. Yet the novel's last section is called "Fulfilment." Near the conclusion of the tragedy, Tess achieves an important personal victory through which she is able to emerge from the determining patterns of society and nature. She moves out of conventional time into a moment that does not involve a concept of duration. For Hardy, Tess's triumph becomes possible only with the assistance and participation of the man she loves. John Kenny Crane says that "Tess finds relief only by escaping reality totally into a timeless state of being."[1] What Tess finds, of course, is more than relief. With the scenes at Bramshurst Court, her life takes on a new dimension; she has lived to a purpose and her triumph, as momentary and fragile as it is, palliates, if only on a personal level, the world of unfulfilment and unhappiness

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[1] Crane, p. 170.

that everywhere abounds.

Tess's propensity for moments out of conventional time was considered in the second chapter of this thesis.

> She knew how to hit to a hair's breadth that moment of evening when the light and darkness are so evenly balanced that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralize each other leaving absolute mental liberty. It is then that the plight of being alive becomes attenuated to its least possible dimensions (pp. 109-110).

The ability to remove herself from the normal and continuous passage of time is one of the major elements in her happy love affair with Angel at Talbothays. Hardy frequently presents Angel and Tess in scenes occurring either at dawn or at dusk. "They met daily in that strange and solemn interval, the twilight of the morning . . ." (p. 168). During the time before commitment at Talbothays, Tess is able to give herself over to Angel and the present and to forget her past, to move away from the linear interpretation of her life that condemns her seduction by Alec.

> Her affection for [Angel] was now the breath and life of Tess's being; it enveloped her as a photosphere, irradiated her into forgetfulness of her past sorrows, keeping back the gloomy spectres. . . . She knew that they were waiting like wolves just outside the circumscribing light, but she had long spells of power to keep them in hungry subjection there (p. 252).

With Angel's love, Tess is able to realize all the potentiality of her own personal tendency for neutralized time in which both the past and the future seem cancelled out of the present as if they were opposed polar qualities. As Tess will later write to Angel, in this scheme of things the past becomes "a dead thing altogether" (p. 434).

Angel's failure to share fully in Tess's neutralized

moments at Talbothays has been analyzed earlier in this thesis (Chapter V). Where Tess was content to live only in the present, Angel implanted his love for Tess at Talbothays firmly into a linear sequence of events. Only after he has been able to discard the assumptions that history is meaningful in linear terms and that the individual's life is only an accumulation of actions can he share with Tess her final triumph. This change does not take place until his experience in Brazil. The South American expedition shows the harsh side of nature and physical environment to Clare for the first time, and he somehow relaxes his inflexible principle. Clare rethinks his view of individual man. He has always realized that, as he is to himself, other people are to themselves (p. 201), but, even in these terms, he still sees man as only the sum total of his experiences. This view alters in Brazil:

> What arrested him now of as value in life was less its beauty than its pathos. Having long discredited the old systems of mysticism, he now began to discredit the old appraisements of morality. He thought they wanted readjusting. Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman? The beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses; its true history lay, not among things done, but among things willed (pp. 438-439).

In this view, Tess is pure by any standards. Clearly, Angel has given up his linear interpretation of time. No longer will he be able to condemn Tess on the grounds he did after her wedding-night confession. Only now can he share Tess's fulfilment.

In Brazil, Angel "had asked himself why he had not judged Tess constructively rather than biographically, by the

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In Brazil, Angel "had asked himself why he had not judged Tess constructively rather than biographically, by the

will rather than by the deed" (p. 479)? When he returns to England, he is ready to accept Tess as his wife. The misfortune in Angel's case is that the willingness comes only after society's deterministic time structure has wrought its damage and Tess has sold herself to Alec and all he represents. Both Tess and Angel are so hurt by their encounters with society and its consequent modes of thought that they can seek only momentary happiness before society, through its police, enters their lives once again and destroys everything they have, or could have had. Hardy suggests, with their fulfilment in seclusion, that once individual man has been influenced by society's view of itself or of nature, he cannot expect durable happiness or fulfilment. Tess and Angel manage to extricate themselves temporarily from the social mesh, but they cannot maintain their neutral world indefinitely in the face of social forces. Together at Bramshurst Court, they are able to free themselves from the entanglement of the deterministic spatial time of society and nature and move out of time.

Angel's disappointment at seeing Tess with Alec almost surprises him back to his earlier way of thinking. When Tess, "at last content" (p. 500), catches up with him on the road outside Sandbourne, she has regained faith in him as her lover and protector. For a moment, however, Angel hesitates. The murder "was very terrible if true; if a temporary hallucination, sad. But, anyhow, here was this deserted wife of his, this passionately-fond woman, clinging to him without a suspicion that he would be anything to her but a protector" (p. 501).

Angel, at this stage, is, despite his new interpretation of life, still on the side of the law with the possibility of giving Tess up to the authorities. Fortunately, when he realizes that Tess cannot possibly suspect him to be other than her protector, "Tenderness was absolutely dominant in [him] at last" (p. 501). He then makes the avowal without which the experience at Bramshurst cannot occur: "'I will not desert you! I will protect you by every means in my power, dearest love, whatever you may have done or not have done!'" (p. 501)!

Tess loses all sense of duration with Angel's acceptance of her. "'I could walk for ever and ever with your arm round me!'" (p. 502)! Time loses its dimensions and Tess and Angel together move out of the linear pattern of time. "Neither one of them seemed to consider any question of effectual escape, disguise, or long concealment. Their every idea was temporary and unforfending, like the plans of two children" (p. 502). Their mutual avoidance of any long-term plan to save Tess from the consequences of the murder is a tacit recognition that they have no hope for fulfilment in a sequential view of things. Subsequent references reveal this position to be much more thoroughgoing on Tess's part than on Angel's. Even their decision to enter the deserted mansion of Bramshurst Court lacks any sense of urgency; they at first pass it by without any thought for the kind of shelter it will provide (p. 503).

On their first night, Tess says to Angel what will become a description of their whole time together at Bramshurst: "'Don't think of what's past! . . . I am not going to

think outside of now'" (p. 506).

> They were indisposed to stir abroad, and the day passed, and the night following, and the next, and next; till, almost without their being aware, five days had slipped by in absolute seclusion, not a sight or sound of a human being disturbing their peacefulness, such as it was. . . . By tacit consent they hardly once spoke of any incident of the past subsequent to their wedding-day. The gloomy intervening time seemed to sink into chaos, over which the present and prior times closed as if it never had been. Whenever he suggested that they should leave their shelter, and go forwards toward Southampton or London, she showed a strange unwillingness to move (pp. 506-507).

Unlike the Talbothays experience, however, Angel does not press his demands; after all, they are the only man and woman on earth. The description recalls that earlier time when "the spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light which pervaded the open mead, impressed them with a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve" (p. 169).

Of course, they are not alone and, while Tess lives out of time, she is aware that, outside her and outside Bramshurst Court, the inexorable, undeniable time patterns of society persist. "'All is trouble outside there; inside here content'" (p. 507). And, for the first time, Angel takes the lead from Tess; he "peeped out also. It was quite true; within was affection, union, error forgiven: outside was the inexorable" (p. 507). Even when society, in the symbolic form of the old caretaker, comes right into the mansion after her, Tess is unwilling to leave (pp. 507-508). Angel, however, still sufficiently believes in the linear connection of the present to the future to convince her to try an escape. The escape, of course, takes Tess to Stonehenge and thrusts her helplessly into the pattern of duration outside of which she

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had been able finally to find some measure of happiness.

In the only way possible, Tess overcomes the deterministic nature of the world exemplified in the cyclic pattern of natural time and in society's linear time patterns of the individual, history, and prehistory. Tess gains heroic qualities when, despite her awareness of the deterministic nature of society and driven by despondency to the murder of Alec, she makes one last attempt, and this time with success, at happiness and fulfilment. Much more helpless and unarmed than Clare, her triumph has the strength and sweep of grandeur about it. Of course, it is not an infinite moment; it is, in essence, one last shoring of the ruins of time and space to give herself for a brief, yet absolutely meaningful moment, some sense of the beauty of life. Her triumph, in the face of such great odds and so heavily circumscribed by the pressures of life on every level, does not offer any formula to overcome the determining principle. The beauty and power of Hardy's vision in the scenes at Bramshurst Court lie in the intense personal nature of Tess's fulfilment and reflect ultimately on Hardy's impression of life: "The Scheme of Things is, indeed, incomprehensible; and there I suppose we must leave it — perhaps for the best. Knowledge might be terrible."[2]

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[2] Florence Emily Hardy, p. 410.

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