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Family and Anti- Family in Selected Novels by Thomas Hardy

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Abstract

This dissertation is an attempt to examine Thomas Hardy's Marxist ideas in tackling family issues. It implies that the author did not stand apart from the new thoughts brought by socialist philosophers, and venture to say that he was their mouthpiece. Hardy's questioning of the bourgeois family and the heralding of the Marxist views such as Engels' in *the Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, are conveyed by portraying families completely different from the Victorian cliché. Hardy's portrayal suggests his divergence from the views of that time. He seems against the idealisation of the family which he depicts as an economic institution governed by the patriarchal –capitalist ideology and man's dominance. I have tried to make it explicit that Hardy's criticism of the capitalist system and the Bourgeois family has known a gradual development. I have suggested that it is through the *Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* that one can trace the ways Hardy both scrutinizes and questions the Victorian family within a capitalist ideology by examining family kinship and human relationship. In addition, conjugal problems and family burden are two major elements tackled in the novels stated above. The analysis of the *Mayor of Casterbridge* is an attempt to show the author's anxiety about the system which gives the husband the absolute right to sell his wife and daughter. In the study of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, I have tried to render the author's overt protest against capitalism and patriarchy by which the lower class is exploited by the bourgeoisie and children by their parents. The analysis of *Jude the Obscure* is devoted to the examination of Hardy's overt attack on the marital laws and his seemingly advocacy of free cohabitation and the abolition of the family. Yet Hardy's confusing attitude can be grasped in the three analysed novels. In the *Mayor of Casterbridge*, the author presents the most striking scene in the Victorian literature; the wife Sale scene. It is thanks to this that one can notice his hostility towards the patriarchal system. Nevertheless the end of the novel reveals Hardy's enculturation of the same Victorian values. Indeed Farfrae's marriage with Elisabeth –Jane is a genuine picture of a bourgeois marriage. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the author portrays Tess as a fallen woman who deserves punishment, and in *Jude the Obscure*, though at the beginning, he exposes liberal ideas concerning women and family, at the end, the author reproduces the same Victorian ethics which he has criticised earlier. This is due to the weight of the rigid values which the novelist cannot transcend easily.

Introduction

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) is one of the most prominent figures in British literature. Though he belongs to the Victorian era, he is still widely studied and written about. Nowadays, a flood of academic essays and critical books in Britain and the United States are destined to the study of his works. In Algeria too, Hardy's novels have been the focus of a number of graduate and post graduate students. The concern on this author emerges primarily from his outstanding ability in creating striking characters that incarnate perfectly opposing values to the existing order.

His career as a novelist began with *The Poor Man and the Lady* (1867) and ended with *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Though he excelled in both poetry and fiction, he felt the necessity to abandon the latter because of the harsh criticism he had received after the publication of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1892) and *Jude the Obscure*. (1895). Through poetry, as he once said he "can express more fully... ideas and emotions which run counter to the inert crystallized opinion- hard as rock" (quoted in Rosemarie Morgan, 2004:105). Nevertheless, in fiction too, one can notice his commitment in challenging many Victorian Bourgeois assumptions concerning social issues and the pressure of class distinctions on marriage, love and family. Hence, in this work, I suggest a critical study of Thomas Hardy's fiction from a Marxist perspective.

Issued from "a race of labouring man" as it is stated in the British Quarterly Review and as Roger Ebatson reports in his article "Hardy and Class" (1994), Hardy examines the situation of the poor and their relation with the upper class. His fiction looks also at inter-class love relationship through his, to use Penny Boumelha's words, "cross-class romance" (Quoted in Joanna Devereux, 2003: xiii). The latter is Hardy's major theme although he has been subject to harsh disapproval throughout his career. *The Poor Man and the Lady* (1867), for instance, as it portrays a love affair between a heiress and a son of the soil, cannot be accepted for publication because it transgresses the Victorian ideas of the ideal marriage.

Moreover, through his realistic narratives, Thomas Hardy attacks the Victorian value system by questioning family issues and examining human social and economic relationships. Further, in his examination of class issues, Thomas Hardy alludes to questions of gender, too.

In this context, Roger Ebbatson states:

In his fiction and poetry Hardy is alert not only to general questions of class formation but also to sexual difference conceived not simply as “natural” but read as socially implied with gender, sexuality and the family. Inequalities of class are matched and echoed ..., by inequalities of gender (Roger Ebbatson, 2003:113)

Thus Hardy’s examination of class issues and disparity is also meant to question gender inequity.

As the title suggests and as Widdowson attests, *the Poor Man and the Lady* (1867) treats the theme of the struggle between the classes. “The motive behind writing the novel is to point forward to those over cross –class sexual relationship at the heart of Hardy’s fiction” (quoted in Sebastian Mitchell, 2000: 346). Soon after, a number of novels have been written, upholding the same preoccupations. They deal with middle class ideology characterized by materialism and self-interest which negatively affect human relationships. Family ties based on property and the maintaining of it, I believe, is thus one of the major issues accurately treated in his fiction. Indeed, in order to maintain one’s social status, people try to strengthen family ties with the Bourgeoisie by marriage and Hardy seems to look at this behaviour and examine the problems which may emerge from it. Thus, one can notice that account of society’s structure, inequalities, forces of domination, and evidence of the class struggle prevail almost all Thomas Hardy’s novels. *The Hand of Etherbertha* (1875) too, tells the story of a girl from the working class who enters aristocratic society by marriage. Havelock Ellis maintains that it is in this novel that “Hardy begins by accepting what may be called an impossible situation, and then works it out ad labitum” (quoted in R.G. Cox, 1979: 116).

“(I)impossible situation” because lower class Victorians were not allowed to court ladies from the upper class as they gave much importance to class segregation.

What distinguishes Hardy from his contemporaries is not only the description of these social problems but his transgression of the moral code of behaviour and his attempt to change society for the benefit of the mass. His novels are deeply entangled with the issues of the time. The shift from the agrarian to the industrial world, the quick moving of the classes and the negative aspects of industrialization are the major themes of his Wessex novels. Moreover, his treatment of two major issues such as love and marriage is totally different from the Victorian conception. One can notice, in fact, his suggestion to adjust the Victorian family code which can not give satisfying results under the established Victorian system. The love story is often linked with class struggle since the couple, most of the time, belong to different classes. This situation makes the couple face many obstacles to reach their happiness.

Therefore, Hardy’s fiction can hardly be restricted to romantic tales of lovers ending routinely with marriage and children. It rather implies delicate social issues such as poverty brought by the economic system of the period as well as social stratification and gender inequalities. It also explores the problems of sexuality, a key element of human existence largely overlooked in the previous literature. Besides, descriptions of the dispossessed people, their wretchedness, their poverty as well as their hopes and dreams prove the author’s interest in social issues and his attempt to make changes in family values. Hardy’s novels can be viewed as comments on the macrocosm of the human race and as observations of human relationships. In addition, his examination of the effect of both nature and society on the individual, still appeal to many critics who view him not only as a poet and a novelist but as an anthropologist and a social critic as well. His presentation of families completely divergent from the Victorian cliché is but a way to divulge the actual situation of Victorian household.

The wife is no longer portrayed as the ideal submissive one neither; is the husband the paternal responsible one. In addition, Hardy's characters are endowed with traits strikingly distinct from the Victorian stereotypes. Thus his novels are truthful reflection on the situation of 'Man' in the Victorian era and promising works that give new insights to focus deeply on man and woman's future conditions .Hardy can be viewed as an avant- garde writer in questioning the western form of family .

It has already been stated that Hardy's novels challenge the Victorian beliefs namely, what concerns morality and the ideal bourgeois family viewed as an economic unit .*The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) plainly dispute the patriarchal family particularly, in the wife sale scene. Nonetheless, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1892), and *Jude the Obscure* (1896) are the most representative of this challenge: Though Tess's actions prove to be hostile to the Victorian sense of respectability, Hardy refers to her as 'a pure woman'. *Jude the Obscure* too, has turned the cliché of the Victorian patriarchal family upside down through Jude's experiences with both Arabella Dean and his socially illicit relation with his cousin Sue Bridehead. Furthermore, the tragic end of the above cited novels would seem to offer little hope within the Victorian family. In reality, by presenting a converse case, in comparison with the ideal Victorian families, Thomas Hardy shows ambivalent ideas concerning this social unit. His investigation of the Victorian family ties can make the reader think that Hardy to some extent seems to suggest the abolition of the family, an idea which would seem implicitly embedded in *Jude the Obscure*. (1895).

Hardy's novels are basically the expression of the anxieties of the Victorian era, marked by severity and conservatism. Much ink has been spilt on Hardy's works as yet and many theories have been applied to his work. In particular, issues of gender and class found expression through feminist and Marxist interpretations; as such the most influential feminist study is Penny Boumelha's *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual and Narrative Form* (1982).

She is considered as the first critic who writes a post-structuralist analysis of gender ideology in Hardy's fiction. Boumelha is also a socialist feminist plainly influenced by Althusser. As Peter Widdowson argues in "Hardy and critical theory", Boumelha's ideology reflects post-1968 feminism. It fixes relations of power and dominance, and mainly that of male supremacy. In her work, she tries to associate the "experimentalism" of all Hardy's fiction with its radically revolutionary presentation of sexual relations, pointing to the vagueness of narrative focus, "the "void" of character, textual dislocation and self interrogation of the novels own narratives strategies, as evidence of a radical break "in which Hardy's texts tackle their own informing ideology" (quoted in Dale Kramer, 1999:83)). The strength of his representation of women resides in "their resistance to reduction to a single and uniform ideological position". (Ibid). In this article, Widdowson wonders whether Hardy's radicalism is just an interpretation of the radical post structuralist reading of a modern feminist critic.

In *Hardy the novelist*, David Cecil argues that Hardy took human life in its fundamental facet as the main theme of his novels. Individuals are treated as representative of doomed species. His theme, the critic insists, 'is mankind' for Hardy debunks subjects which concern both man and woman. That is to say, all human existence with its contradictions and aspirations is embodied in the character of Jude Fowley, Tess, Henchard and others. But those characters are conditioned by environment and doomed to fate. Thus they are helpless and the majority of them undergo a tragic end. In face of fate, both men and women go through the same sufferings. Thus, Hardy's treatment of the male and female characters and their relationships show his interest in human life which is restrained by convention.

The idea of environment is also treated by Herbert B. Grimsditch M.A in *Character and Environment in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (1925). The author's aim in this work is to consider the main characters of the novels and examine Hardy's reading of them and his management of plot and situation. In a chapter entitled 'Intellectual and Artistic Influence'

the critic analyses some characters and their intellectual side. He considers Sue as strikingly educated women. This fact is displayed, according to the critic, in her admiration of the pagan thoughts and institutions. In another chapter entitled 'Convention: Social, Theological and Moral', the author argues that Hardy's works challenge the Orthodox beliefs namely in the theological and moral sides. Such idea can be found particularly in *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

Shirly A. Stave in *The Decline of the Goddess/ Nature, Culture, and Women in Thomas Hardy's Fiction* (1995) points at Hardy's use of Myth and his setting up "a bipolar opposition between Christian and pagan thought (Shirley A Stave, 1995 :3). The author insists on Hardy's fusion of myth with the New Testament messianic narrative which views the antagonist of the Great Goddess as a Christ figure. She also points at the interaction of the oldest myth of culture (sky) with an Earth Goddess. Their struggle reflects not only the agrarian/industrial tension as the previous works state, but also "gender tension that contains within it an exploration of the parameters of patriarchy and an impassioned longing for a world governed by its logic and its economy "(Ibid)

According to the author, Hardy's novels deal with the role of Christianity in creating and maintaining an immoral and ultimately disparaging system of both the spirit and earth. That is why, as the author asserts, he preaches the originality of the agrarian, natural, the non patriarchal and the mythic rather than the cultural, Christian, the patriarchal and the historical world. So the author points at the distinctiveness of Hardy's paganism and his devotion to the natural. The natural can be found among Wessex folks characterized by a new construction of gender, different from the Victorian one. This pagan unity is constructed by both man and woman; the latter is thus empowered. Nevertheless, Shirly. A. Stave avoids using the term "matriarchy". She states that in the pagan world, the two sexes are equal. Men and women are, therefore, equally vital to the continuation of the world.

Sexuality is perceived as positive; consequently, it deserves celebration and affirmation. Hardy, indeed, opposes daringly the Victorians who consider sexuality as source of guilt and shame. He also criticizes the western culture which gives a total authority to man since it is male focused and male directed. The critic exposes the mythic overtones to the struggle of gender. She examines the main female characters in Hardy's novels that treat the celestial confrontation between the Great Goddess (the natural) and her Judeo-Christian antagonism (culture). The critic analyzes the most prominent novels and shows how the characters represent that struggle caused by patriarchy.

Patriarchy is also treated by Joanna Devereux in *Patriarchy and its Discontents. Sexual Politics in selected Novels and Stories of Thomas Hardy* (2003). She assumes that patriarchal values are not only questioned by Hardy but also affirmed. She argues that males are fascinated by women and attracted by those belonging to the middle class, the gentry and the aristocracy. This is due to the connection between gender and social class instabilities of the Victorian age. Men, yearning for distinctiveness, try to court women from the upper class and marry them to affirm themselves. This is noticeable in *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Throughout the chapters, the author tries to examine a number of novels and short stories and see how the male protagonist functions and develops: the poor men like Egbert Mayne and Stephen Smith; the heroic figure of Gabriel Oak, the tragic failed figure of Henchard, the tragic comic Giles Winterbone, and the complex character of Jude Fowley. She endeavours to shed light on Hardy's conception of patriarchy which he denounces, but can't help affirming since he is the product of the Victorian society.

In my review of the literature, I have already argued that all the critics above agree on the fact that Hardy's portrayal of woman and family within the patriarchal system is totally different from the Victorian stereotype. I endeavour to complete these critics' views by assuming that through his treatment of gender and class issues explored through the portrayal

of family as an economic institution and instrument of social advancement, Hardy gives a harsh critic not only of patriarchy but of capitalism also. I attempt to argue that contrary to the bourgeois ideas that view marriage as the only and the best way to form respectable families and a healthy society, Hardy's novels show his pessimism about this institution by portraying families that are unable to function as a social unit.

Hardy also shows the effect of socio-cultural forces like class, economics, and gender roles on the family. The misery of most of his families permits little hope within the existing order. Hardy's questioning of the Victorian family values and his criticism of the divorce law is a way to rebel against the prevailing social and economic system. Moreover, his outspokenness about the relation between the sexes in this period, has paved the way to the rethinking of man-woman relationship within marriage institution. In his literary works Thomas Hardy implies that consciousness might arise and would change the actual society and family conduct.

I put forward that Hardy's ideas do not stand apart from the new thoughts brought by socialist philosophers at that time and dare say that he is their mouthpiece. He does not speak directly of the plight of the working class as Engel's did in *Condition of the Working class* (1845) but he prefers giving the shortcoming of capitalism by focussing on family issues. That is why he takes the family unit as his focal point. He portrays families completely different from the ideal conception of the Victorians. I maintain that Hardy is against viewing family as an economic institution governed by capitalist and patriarchal ideology. Besides, as bourgeois family reinforces gender and class inequalities, Hardy suggests modifications in favour of more gender and class equalities. His portrayal of miserable families in his fiction offers a plain criticism of the marriage institution based on economic interest. Hardy's praising of the agrarian natural world, as Shirley. A. Stave states

above, is but an admiration of the communist world where neither classes nor disparity exist in both the family and the society.

I suggest that his criticism of the Victorian family has known a gradual development throughout his novels but it was through *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1892) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) that he shows his radicalism. He seems to require the abolition of this institution, clearly question it, and sometimes to have anti-family ideas. It is in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*(1886) , *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*(1892) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) that one can trace the ways Hardy both scrutinizes and questions the Victorian bourgeois values by his investigation on family kinship and human relationships . In the novels stated above, Hardy is alert to the ways in which property is contingent on class and family ties. He conveys his scepticism about the family within a capitalist system and points at the consequences of marriage under the control of property.

Hardy's extended interest in the societal structure and the injurious elements within bourgeois society is displayed by his questioning of inter-class relationship via, family in these three works. The two first novels circle around the issue of the relations of reproduction by portraying a society infused with the agrarian capitalism which governs the lower classes and display the relationship of the workers with the landlords. Moreover, the author points at the British laws concerning marriage and divorce which do not take into account the happiness of the family but rather regard the transmission of property. *Jude the Obscure*, as it is set in town, gives more details about the city and the effect of industry on both nature and the individual's life. It is also a forceful condemnation of the Victorian sacred institutions mainly "marriage institution". In this novel, Hardy not only attacks the British laws concerning the economic system but also gives a harsh criticism of marriage and divorce laws. The treatment of Hardy's clear mistrust and notable radicalism concerning the Victorian social code is going to be analyzed with reference to the three novels cited above.

The present work then, is an attempt to study Thomas Hardy's evolution of the conception of family considered chronologically through *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, and I endeavour to demonstrate the extent to which Hardy's ideas converge with the socialists views as they are brought by Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) I hope to reach the conclusion that Hardy in his criticism of Victorian family values gives a socialist standpoint by advocating the abolition of patriarchy and capitalism and by championing anti family ideas. I hold Shirley's view that Hardy doesn't want a patriarchal society but a society governed by both man and woman. I argue on behalf of these ideas in order to reach the conclusion that Hardy is neither preaching patriarchy nor matriarchy. He is rather trying to portray a world where man and woman can lead a free life which is not bound to marriage contract as it was viewed by the Victorians.

As the research I am conducting is a study of Hardy's novels through a socialist standpoint, I suggest a Marxist ideology as a paradigm for my analysis The relevance of Marxian theory to the following research is based on the fact that both Marx and Engels prove that class inequalities are the feature of bourgeois society which can be got rid of by the abolition of private property so that a socialist society could be created. According to them, these inequalities within the family are thus caused by private property. This idea is extensively discussed in Fredrick Engels' *the Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884). The book, as it is stated in the preface, was written in the light of the anthropological researches of Lewis H .Morgan and based on notes by Marx to Morgan's book *Ancient society* (1877). In his preface to the first edition of his work, Engels refers to researchers such as Bachofen, Morgan, Marx, and Darwin's investigations which revealed that human society does not know a fixed pattern. It rather develops with man's growing control over the environment, particularly what concerns food, shelter and clothing.

In *the Origin of the Family, private Property and the State* (1884), Engels alludes to Morgan's views. Family is dynamic; it is in gradual progression from the lower to the higher just like society itself. Engels declares that the history of family dates from 1861 when Bachofen published *Mutterrecht* (maternal law). The book deals with the period when people of antiquity knew unrestricted 'sexual intercourse'. Thus ancestry was only traced by the female line in conformity with maternal law. Mothers' status was elevated because they were the only known parents of younger generations. Though the book starts with the tracing of the various stages of human development as they were brought by Bachofen and Morgan, Engels' comments reveal the importance of social and power control over material resources rather than the primitive psychological development. Morgan, Engels states, divides history to three stages: savagery, barbarism and civilisation. Likewise, Fredrick Engels takes the same division and argues how the control over the products and the means of production influence family organization and rules. The first period, "Savagery", is known by man's control of products in their natural state. In the second, "Barbarism", man learnt to breed domestic animals, practice agriculture, and acquired methods of increasing the supply of natural products by human activity. It is in the last period, "civilisation", that man learnt a more advanced application of work to the products of nature, the period of industry proper and of art.

In the chapter about family, Fredrick Engels argues that these transitions have an impact on the change of the definition of family and the rules by which it is governed. Like Morgan, He maintains that the consanguine family is the first stage of the family where the husband and wife relationships were directly and reciprocally assumed among members of the same generation. The only taboo was the sexual relationship between two generations i.e. father and daughter, grandmother and father. With passing time, the humanity knew the punaluan family in which the separation of paternal and maternal lines required a division into

“gens”. In this family, the taboo on sex was extended to include sexual intercourse between siblings and cousins of the same generation. The pairing family was found in the household where the husband had one primary wife. Marriage between two family members who were even just remotely related was forbidden.

It is with the pairing family that property and economics began to play a larger part in the family; it had responsibility for the ownership of specific goods and property. This kind of family, Engels, maintains, was also found among the kabyles in Algeria. Child’s legitimacy became important, thus polyandry was no longer common among women since their fidelity was meant to ensure the legitimacy of their children. Women had still a superior role in the family as keepers of the household and guardians of legitimacy. But, while the husband showed importance to the legitimacy of his children, his heritage was given to his “gens” rather than his children when he died. At this point, Engels refers to this economic advantage for men which women could not claim possession, neither for herself nor for her own children, because of the downfall of mother’s rights. Property thus is «the world historical defeat of the female sex”(Fredrick Engels, 1902: 89). For Engels, ownership of property created the first significant division between men and women in which the woman is inferior.

Engels sustains that the passage from maternal to paternal law is due to purely economic reasons. The monogamous family, as Engels states, is the by- product of private property which appears with the development of the means of production. Evolved out of the pairing family, the monogamous family is developed when the means of production begins to be held by man. Engels views the monogamous family as far from being a sacred institution of ‘the union of souls” but an institution where the ethics of property are applied. It is also the subjugation of female sex to the male since in the measure of increasing wealth; man takes power and becomes superior. He overthrows the traditional law of inheritance in favour of his children. That is why fathers are alert in producing children of unquestionable paternity. This

situation leads to an antagonism between the sexes which had never existed before. Comparing the husband to the bourgeoisie and the wife to the proletariat, Engels asserts “in the family, he is the bourgeois, the women represent the proletariat” (Engels, 1902:88)

Woman’s chastity, virginity and obedience are rigorously required. The wife has become more submissive and the dissolution of the marriage is only possible by the will of the husband. In this context, Engels says: “the men seized the reins also in the house, the women were stripped of their dignity, enslaved tools of men’s lust and mere machines of the generation of children (Ibid.p.70). While the monogamous family is not yet based on "sex-love", and is better referred to as heteristic, its emphasis on legitimacy and inheritance forms the basis for the monogamous relationship. In reality, the supremacy of man is shown in the form of “patriarchal family” in which, under the paternal authority of the head of the family, a number of free and unfree persons are organized. Engels argues that male control starts with the development of private property in agricultural societies. Man’s power is reinforced with the industrial revolution and the development of capitalism.

Patriarchy is but a miniature of capitalism since the head of the family take hold of all the property of the household. Engels emphasises that the Roman family embodies this feature and the word “familia “in latin does not have the sense of sentimentality and domestic strife the Victorian tried to give but was applied to the slaves alone. He adds that at the time of Gjus, the familia id patrinonium (paternal legacy) was still bequeathed by testament. The expression was invented to designate a new social organism. The head of the family has a wife, children and a number of slaves under his paternal authority. Household is viewed as an institution which functions to support patriarchy and encourage exploitation. The sexual inequalities within the family are displayed by the fact of maintaining women in the house to ensure family subsistence, emotional support and reproduction.

The Marxists view of family as a suitable ground on which capitalism exploits labour and helps maintain the stability within an oppressive system of inequality. That is why Engels advocates the abolition of the private property. He adds that “the first class antagonism appearing in history coincides with the development of the antagonism of man and wife and the first class oppression with that of the female by male sex (Ibid.p.79). Engels argues that “the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole family back to public industry and thus the view of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society is going to be abolished”(Ibid). He is, indeed, against the bourgeois conception of marriage based on economic relationship and the safeguarding of inheritance. This kind of marriage leads to the proliferation of immorality and prostitution. The couple indeed has no choice in choosing the partner. For Engels, a relationship based on property rights and forced monogamy only leads to failure. In this perspective, Some Marxists like Zoretzky state that family must be abolished. They ask for a more socialisation of house work with women able to participate in the public sphere. Potentially, under communism, the division between public and private would disappear and this can form the basis for sex and gender equalities as well as class equalities.

Indeed, the foundation of the family in the propertied class is dominated by economic considerations which are far from being related to freedom or love. So, the family is more important for the bourgeois people rather than for the proletariat. Accordingly, inheritance, female chastity, unemployed wives and the reproduction of legitimate heirs become important for the capitalists. Contrary to the bourgeoisie, since the proletariat does not possess property, man and woman’s relations are not submitted to the bourgeois values. It is, in fact, based on liberty and equality. Engels argues that within the proletarian families, husbands have no material basis for oppressing their wives. Thus, in his opinion, the proletariat is the only class, which is free from the restraints of property. It is also free from the danger of moral decay

since it lacks the monetary means that are the foundation of the bourgeois marriage. Hence, without property to consider, the proletariat (male and female) is free to enter as well as dissolve any marriage whenever they wish to. Therefore, for the proletariat, monogamy is obvious since it is a deliberate sex-love relationship. The proletarians are concerned only with sex- love not with property and inheritance.

It is this kind of union that Engels strongly advocates. This can be reached by a social revolution that is about to happen. The revolution is going to eliminate class differences, and therefore the need for prostitution and the enslavement of women. This is going also to allow more indulgent opinion regarding reputation, virginity and feminine decency. Thus the solution to ending women oppression, Engels sustains is to eliminate property rights and abolish the bourgeois family. By transferring the private housekeeping into public industry, private property is going to lose its impact on human relationship since the means of production is going to be transformed into common ownership. Moreover, Engels attests that the care of children ceases to be a private affair; it becomes public. All children whether they are legitimate or not, are going to be a public matter. Moreover, the transfer of the domestic work into domestic industry is going to free women from the bound of house work and pave the way to their ambition and freedom.

Thus, Engels' *The Origin of the Family, private Property and the State* (1884) is the material selected in approaching family issues in Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbrige* (1886), *Tess of the d'urbervilles* (1892) and *Jude the Obscure*. (1895).Consequently, the present work is divided into four chapters. As Marxist criticism claims that context is the appropriate way to understand literature, the first chapter entitled "Historical Background" deals with an account of the socio- cultural context of Hardy's production, to help examining his views regarding the Victorian patriarchal bourgeois family considered as an economic institution. The three remaining chapters are concerned with Hardy's evolution of his ideas viewed

chronologically through the novels stated above. Chapter two, entitled “Anxiety about the capitalist –patriarchal system in the *Mayor of Casterbridge*”, is a study of Hardy’s concern about the patriarchal system and his ambiguous position towards bourgeois family. The third chapter entitled, “Attack against capitalism in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*”, is an attempt to shed light on Hardy’s harsh criticism of the capitalist system and its effects on the English family portrayed by the D’Urbeyfields. Finally, the last chapter, “Hardy’s overt attack on the Victorian marital laws in *Jude the obscure*” is an attempt to focus on Hardy’s radicalism as far as family values are concerned and his apparently support of the abolition of the bourgeois family.

Historical Background

I- Victorian Age (1837- 1901)

The present chapter deals with the outlining of the immediate historical background which gave rise to Hardy's narratives. There is, in fact, a general agreement that each artist is the product of his context and Thomas Hardy is a case in point. In this context, David Cecil states, "we cannot understand Hardy without knowing something of his age and his character" (David Cecil, 1943: 11). Since Hardy lived in the Victorian era known by its conservatism and rigidity, he not only reflected the events and the socio-cultural atmosphere of his time but often showed his hostility towards the Victorian ideology and revealed the paradoxes of the society in general and the family in particular.

Victorian England was, characterized by a constant and rapid change in the economic field owing to the Industrial Revolution and peace that the Victorians had enjoyed at that time. In social customs and intellectual atmosphere, the period knew a great interest in religion. England remained conservative and Christian, and Evangelicalism which Queen Victoria herself approved, was the dominating doctrine of that period. The movement worked in the 1780s for the renovation of manners in England. It preached a society governed by paternal power and strict behaviour towards the citizens. Victoria's ascension to the throne in 1837 confirmed the emergence of a new ethic of restraint, probity, and decency. In addition, "The Victorian morality", a phrase frequently linked with negative connotations such as hypocrisy, prudery, sexual repression, and rigid social control, involved also positive features such as self help and work. Both features were, for instance, the themes of Samuel Smiles' works in *Self Help* (1859), *Thrift* (1875) and *Duty* (1887.) These works came to exemplify the Victorian values for the modern reader. The author, however, was subject to some criticism in his own time from socialists because of his emphasis on individual success and his overlooking of the community.

Smiles praised business men and industrialists whose achievements, he believed, came from perseverance, practical experience and difficulty. Unlike the socialists who thought that poverty could disappear by building a socialist nation, Smiles maintained that it could be got rid of by work. Thus it was viewed as a stimulus for work and the achievement of a respectable standard of living. Besides, Evangelical values of exertion helped also the promotion and the growth of business as well as the advance of middle class men. Moreover, hard work was seen also as a moral good in itself and if it was followed by wealth it was fitted recognition of man's virtues. The era knew also the rise of bourgeois class issued by the Industrial Revolution and social revolt. People belonging to this new class were fully imbued with the virtues of middle class existence which they tried to show in their daily life in order to emulate the nobility.

Nevertheless, the British economic prosperity gave birth to notable changes in society. The Industrial Revolution, in fact, brought wealth to a few people who exploited the great majority. The number of the poor had increased and the exploitation of children and women was so harsh. The latter, worked, for short wages, in mines and factories between twelve and fifteen hours a day under bad conditions. More than that, the rivalry and the desire to maintain an important position changed the individuals to mere selfish competitors of whom Engels says "the brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest is the more repellent and offensive". (Fredrick Engels, 1902:69). Though at the surface the Victorian era seemed the most flourishing one, it was in reality the most agitating one. Changes in politics, economics, and society and even in culture were implicitly the focus of scholars who became aware of the injustice of the government. In addition, class mobility affected the stability that the people had once enjoyed. The middle class was growing rapidly particularly between 1851 and 1871. The new middle class men were worried to put at risk their position. Similarly, those longer established were anxious to differentiate themselves

from the “*arrivistes*” and tried to work hard and tried to emulate the gentry and aristocracy. It was also a time of rapid mobility with many opportunities. Middle class man could either make or lose fortune. Besides, there was awareness that as it was likely to rise in status it was also possible to go down

The rise in status was possible for anybody on condition he could hold some capital. People issued from the lower class attempted to reach the upper class by working hard or by marriage .In this context, some writers such as Max Weber attest that class was determined by the position man took up as a possessor or non possessor of capital. So it was capital (money) which distinguished the upper class from the lower one. Consequently, many Victorians internalized the chauvinistic view that the individual identity was to be defined in terms of superiority and domination. This assumption rendered the individual obsessed by money to such an extent that human relationships and family relationships had develop into material interest.

More to the point, in social manners, the wealthy upper classes attempted to share the old aristocrat’s way of life and that of the bosses of industry. In front of them, there was the obscure wretched working class who lived in insecurity. Yet, persuaded by the Victorian morality of ambition, perseverance and work, some people of the lower class tried to join the more fashionable established church and endeavoured to pass into the rank of upper class by self assertion or by marriage. By doing so, one could reach social recognition since he would conform to the approved social pattern, especially when one felt that he was marrying into a circle that was beyond one’s own. In fact, English society in the nineteenth century was highly stratified and the bourgeoisie gained a higher status to such an extent that it shared the Victorian administration with the aristocracy. Moreover, the influence of the bourgeois ethics, virtues and even its prejudices were also incarnated in Queen Victoria herself.

Nonetheless, as Sally Mitchell states in *Daily Life in Victorian England* (1996), class was revealed not only in the amount of money people had but chiefly in manners, speech, clothing, education and values. The classes lived in separate areas and observed different social conduct in religion, courtship and even in the names and hours of their meals. Furthermore, the Victorians believed that each class had its own way of life and they were expected to conform to the rules established by their own class. For instance, it was wrong to behave like someone from a class beyond or beneath one's own. Respectability which Thomas Hardy and his contemporaries such as Oscar Wilde, Samuel Butler and others harshly criticized was in fashion at that time. It was regarded as more important than class line. Among the poor, it was a way to maintain self-respect and public reputation. In the ideology of the period, people from all classes could move up in the world and become independent and respectable. That is to say, being self-sufficient, and having a respectable house and work, an interesting income, educated children and an "ideal" wife. Hence, to be respectable in the Victorian ethos is to be issued from a highly regarded family and form a decent one as well.

The Importance of the Family in the Victorian Age

Family in the Victorian era had a very important position. Taking as models Queen Victoria, Prince Albert and their nine children, the Victorians regarded the family as the basis for a healthy nation. Reverend. W. Arthur states: "in all countries the purity of the family must be the surest strength of a nation" (Quoted in Elisabeth Langland, 1995: 64). Besides, in 1867, the historian Walter Bagehot brought into light the effect of the wifely and maternal women like Queen Victoria on the general population. He states "a family on the throne is an interesting idea. It brings down the pride of sovereignty to the level of petty life. (Ibid). Besides, Queen Victoria was so fond of her husband, Albert, that after his death in 1861, she refused to appear in public and isolated herself. More than that, she "refused ever again to

wear the robes of state, appearing in versions of widow weeds" (Ibid). The queen of England held great impact on the representation and function of bourgeois women and became the fundamental incarnation of middle-class family values.

The Victorians insisted on one "right" form of family and sustained that a deviation from this form would carry great risks for society and the nation itself. A stable marriage and child rearing, gender division of roles, as well as the confinement of sexuality to the permanent married heterosexual unit were the concern of the Victorian government that supported this pattern through its policy. The patriarchal monogamous nuclear family composed of a husband, a wife and children living together was idealized. Definitely, the middle class home and family represented the essence of morality, stability and comfort. Imitating Victoria's career, women's work was to be oriented to the wellbeing of their families. The labour of bourgeois women was in the management of their own house for the benefit of the household from the servants to the husband. Bourgeois women's satisfaction was not on the amount of money they could gain but in managing to get social harmony. Just as Victoria ran the nation Victorian women, too ran their households and communities and taught their children the principles of middle class society. In addition, to help women managing their houses, productions of household- help manuals came into view and were widely spread among the feminine population.

Moreover, the Bourgeois family had patriarchal power relations and gender- based inequalities. These family values were considered as natural, normal, and ideal and were clearly institutionalized in the legal system. The direct association made between the health of the nation and the health of families as it is stated in *Changing Family Values* (1999) edited by Gill Jagger and Caroline Wright, made of the latter a terrain on which the practices of the state might legally be worked out. Families which did not conform to this normative type could be depicted as national menace and their women were subject to condemnation,

inspection and moral re-education. Remarkably, while there was a ruling class and a working one within the English society, there was also this class division inside the bourgeois families. Hence, the patriarchal system incarnated in the family further solidifies the class divisions in the Victorian society.

Additionally, “‘Home! Sweet home!’ was a continuing theme of the period”, (ASA Briggs, 1983: 281). Ruskin, for example, viewed the family as “a place of peace” and also “a refuge from the often fierce competitiveness of business life” (Ibid.P.282). The Victorian gentleman paid much importance to his home. He often insisted on building a nice home and marrying a beautiful, “pure”, obedient, and “ideal woman”. Men married late because they could not think of marriage if they were not financially ready. And a woman also could not be interested in a man who had not a decent standard of living. Besides, girls issued from middle class insisted on marrying a gentleman as it is portrayed in Jane Austen’s novels such as *Sense and Sensibility*. (1811) and *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)

A gentleman is the masculine equivalent of the ideal woman. Gentlemanly manners in the Victorian society as Sally Mitchell argues in *Daily life in Victorian England* (1996) were an obligation, but they were not necessarily a natural inheritance for a man of a certain class. The idea that being a gentleman was in behaviour not by birth combined the aristocracy and upper middle class into single ruling elite. In reality, The Victorian conception of “gentleman” opened the way to class mobility and encouraged persons who were not issued from the aristocracy to elevate their social position and behave like the aristocrats. Thus People came up to use the word gentlemanly to describe a man’s ethics regardless of his class or profession.

The harsh system of class in the period hindered inter -class marriage in order to maintain one’s position in society as it can be observed in the novels written at that time.

Nevertheless, not all marriages proved to be successful; although they were within the same class, some ladies, despite the fact that they belonged to the Upper Class, “were living devitalized and cut off from life and its interest” (Roy Porter, 1990: 502). They had to be under their husbands' control since they were financially dependent on them also even if women from the lower class succeeded in getting jobs, they were harshly exploited by their bosses. They were badly paid and cruelly treated by them. Living in such conditions, women were deprived from their liberty. They might lead an unhappy life but could not do any thing to change their situation because of religious, cultural or, most of the time, economic reasons.

The Hierarchical Structure of Bourgeois Families

Husband- wife Relation in the Victorian Bourgeois Family

In the Victorian era, it was offensive to live with a person of the opposite sex without marriage. The latter was, indeed, sacred and the regular church wedding was the exclusive proof of it. Actually, British laws emphasized that women ought to be married and that it was the duty of their husbands to take care of them. This holy status of marriage took place well before the Victorian age as it was stipulated in Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act 1753. Since then, the Victorians, being more religious than ever, had imposed this system. They argued that the sacred marriage would give birth to respectable families and honourable children. Besides, Middle class women did not work outside their house for the well being of their household as it was believed at that time. Moreover, before the 1882 Married Property Act, women's capital was passed automatically to their husbands. They also could not hold a job unless it was that of a teacher or domestic servant. Worst of all, though they managed to hold those selected jobs, they could not receive their wages since they did not have the right to own checking or saving accounts. In short, Victorian women were financially dependent on their husbands.

Wives lived in difficulties because of the vision of “the ideal woman”, an idea widely spread over a large population among the Victorian society. Many Victorian essays about women’s delicacy and fragility were written by men to prevent them from practising sports, studying Latin and mathematics or planning to practise medicine when they grew up .In addition, many stereotyped depictions of women’s role were class bound; they applied only to a narrow segment of society. For instance, bourgeois women’s work was limited to run associations to help the poor or the ill people. This is true for the notion that woman could not do any paid work.

In marriage, British law strengthened the dominating position of the husband and the couple was seen as one person. This idea is clearly stated in the eighteenth century jurist Sir William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England*

The husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during her marriage, or at least is incorporated or consolidated into that of her husband, under whose wing, protection and cover, she performs everything.

The husband was considered as a “bread winner and had a legal and economic control over the entire household (his wife, children and servants). The wife was viewed as a “home maker”. She did not bring in money but worked inside her home. Her task was to follow her husband’s instructions in managing the house. She had no right to contradict him in his decisions, and had to live with him wherever he chose. Moreover, she could not sign a contract or make a will. She could not stand before a court in any legal action because in the eyes of the law, she and her husband were one.

Women’s work was limited to domestic matters. For the Victorians the rightful house manager was indisputably a woman and her paramount importance can be exemplified by the science called Domestic economy which was developed at that time. It aimed at teaching woman how to manage her house and rear her children. Definitely, it was on woman that the

family depended for food, clothes, cleanliness and comfort necessary to health and for good nursing necessary in sickness. For the Victorians, it is from well managed home that go forth happy, healthy, wise and good men who could help building a vigorous, noble and prosperous society. This idea of separate spheres of man and woman is also clearly stated in Alfred Tennyson's poem the Princess (1847)

Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
Man for the sword, and for the needle she
Man for the head and woman for the heart
Man to command and woman to obey.

(Quoted in Sally Mitchell, 1996:267)

Alfred Tennyson's poem reflects Evangelical ideas as they are illustrated in Sarah Lewis *Women's Mission* in 1859 in which she argues that women are instruments of God's purpose. She asserts that they (women) have to avoid academic education and underlines the development of their consciousness and their affections to fit them for the whole of their married life.

Thus, woman's civil status was thoroughly changed once married. Viewing husband and wife as one person and this person was the husband; woman had no independent legal existence. Every thing she did, owned, inherited or earned was her husband's. Besides, as woman had no right even on her own person, she behaved, dressed and spoke as man urged her to do. As her body was considered as "pure", it was forbidden to wear short clothes or any kind of cosmetic or advertise herself to other men. Her sexuality was denied as Oscar Wilde records in his *The Women of no Importance*, (1892) "It is not customary in England for a young lady to speak with enthusiasm of any person of the opposite sex"(Oscar Wilde, 1996: 3).The taboo on sex, as Walter Allen states, represented the triumph of the women in the Victorian mentality. Yet it was actually a means to dominate and oppress her. This is also shown in the language itself. The word "leg", for example, could not be pronounced in the

presence of the opposite sex. The idea of limiting wives to domesticity, hence to be devoted mothers, docile and faithful to their husbands is plainly stated in the title of a long poem written by Coventry Patmore: *The Angel in the House* (1854-61) in which it is described the happy, virtuous state of the wife.

In the Victorian outlook, the wife should “preserve the higher values, guard her husband conscious, guide her children training, and help regenerate society through her daily display of Christianity in action”(Sally Mitchel,1996:266) .If she successfully made of the home a place of peace, her husband and sons would not want to leave it for an evening’s entertainment elsewhere. The wife had to be also “the household general” as Isabella Beeton states in her manual *Book of Household Management*. (1861), the most famous cookery book which defended the traditional English house and solid Victorian values.

Issued from the middle class, Beeton incarnated the bourgeois values. She compared the mistress of a household in bourgeois families to the commander of an army or a leader of an enterprise. The wife should perform her duties in order to secure the happiness of her family. She had to give instructions to her servants particularly in organizing dinners and parties to bring prestige to her family, meet new people and establish economically new relationship. Victorian wives should also take care of their children and improve their own abilities and cultural knowledge. Moreover in case of illness of any member of her family she should take care of him till he or she recovers.

Moreover, once married, upper and middle class women could not quit their husbands even though they did not lead a joyful life. It was extremely difficult for a woman to obtain divorce. Still The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 gave man the right to divorce if he proved that the wife was adulterous, a right that the wife did not have. The disloyalty of the husband, though it was punished by parliament, was not a convincing proof for woman to

ask for divorce in the British laws. Worst of all, once divorced, the mothers could be prevented from seeing their children. Nonetheless, wives belonging to lower class did not have the same habits and manners as women from the upper class. Though they were exploited by their bosses and mistresses, they enjoyed some liberty since they worked in light industry, in taverns, and in different places as domestic servants where they gained their living. Those women, thanks to industrialisation and urbanisation, seemed more independent. In this perspective, Bronte as well as Nightingale argued "...the independent factory hand earning her own bread was setting an example that might be of value to the lady" (quoted in Walter Allen, 1991:142). The term "lady" in Bronte's view is not limited to women from the upper class. Those who worked out of the house deserved also this designation. Nightingale also was thankful that her father lost his money because it was an opportunity for her to work, gain her living and lead an autonomous life.

Sally Mitchell also argues in her book that strict values were also imposed on the husband. The latter had to yield to the stricter moral standards of the middle class which even influenced the upper and the working class. By the end of the period, if a man was proved to have extramarital relations, he would lose his place in parliament. Moreover, there were also guides who helped young women to inquire about probable husband's personal habits as well as his family's medical history. Victorians knew that Alcoholism or tuberculosis was a danger since they could be inherited and that such illnesses as gonorrhoea and syphilis could lead to the children malformations. In sum, the Victorians were interested in the family's health which meant also the nation's health.

Though there were many happy families living under this code of behaviour, a number of Victorian wives suffered from their husbands' unfaithfulness and cruelty. Within the couple, wives were injured both by the British laws and by the restrictions of their own

family. Considered as an eternal minor who needed protection, it was viewed unsafe and indecent for them to work out of the house or have friendly relations excepting their families. Wives gradually acquired some legal standing between 1839 and the end of the century, but unmarried women still had far more rights than married women. After several sensational cases and a great deal of public pressure from well organized women's groups, married women gained control of their own earnings in 1870. A further Women Property Act in 1882 secured possession of all other property they held or inherited. But even the law cannot really defend a woman from the emotional and physical pressure exerted by a husband who might want to get his hand on her money. To save from harm their daughters, rich men arranged marriage settlement. It was a contract signed by the man before marriage by which he laid down a sum of money for his wife. Thus the woman would feel that she had an independent income which would help her in case her husband died or went bankrupt. The sum of money could not be used to pay his debts but can be inherited by his sons. Even with the publication of a guide to everyday law in 1864 which asserts: 'no prudent woman should marry without this provision', settlement was commonly applied when there was extensive property, among the aristocracy, the gentry and the wealthy middle class. In sum, the wife did not enjoy the advantages the husband had in the Victorian era. She was rather submitted to his power and sometimes his cruelty.

Children – Parents' Relation in the Victorian Bourgeois Family

The sentimental idealization of childhood is a striking characteristic of Victorianism. Yet, as Sally Michell states in *Daily life in England* (1996), despite Victorian interest in family values and motherhood; most middle class women did not do much child care. Parents confide their children to nurses in order to free themselves for their own pleasures and responsibilities as well as to foreign travel that were an expected part of the aristocratic life.

Children were taken care of by other persons in the household. Parents often delegated the entire care of the children to the nurse, the nanny and the governess. Children were separated by adults to give them a sheltered and structured routine to train their character. The nanny was a professional who had full charge of the children. Since mothers recognized their own amateur status, they relied on nanny's training and experience in the up bringing of their own children. For the first month after a child was born, a specialist monthly nurse was hired so she could bring the child to the mother to be breastfed at night. After the monthly nurse left, the children were moved to the nursery where they were taught other subjects. The firm life of the nursery was to the children, control, obedience and discipline. Nanny took care of their cleanness and manners. She made sure they treated their parents with respect. Still, despite their absolute authority nannies used 'Miss' or 'Master' when speaking of the children or to them. Thus class differences were maintained and inculcated in the children and middle class hegemony was ensured.

Truly, the ideology of the middle class house reflected that of the society. The nurses worked under their master's or mistress' control and the nursery children knew they were socially superior to the people who took care of them. Hence, middle class wife incarnated the idea of social class and was, so to speak, maintaining the class stratification within the family to prepare her children to behave adequately in the stratified society of England. In this context, Elisabeth Langland states:" It is in the home with its select, few workers, each in the surveillance of another in a rigid hierarchic chain, that the moral dimensions of class could be most fully and effectively articulated and enforced" (Elisabeth Langland, 1995:14) Yet though the mother had authority over the servants, nurses and governesses, she had no authority even over her own children; like her children, she remained subordinate and obedient to the head of the family.

Children were under their parents' or more exactly their father's authority until they had enough training and experience to make their own way in life. This was applied to boys because girls with a very few exceptions stayed at home until they got married. Many girls were sacrificed to the education of their brothers and the few girls who managed to enter schools did not benefit from the same subjects, as co-educational schools had not existed yet. Consequently, superior education was forbidden to girls because the education in secondary school was mediocre. Indeed, girls were deprived from learning Greek and Latin which were the keys to enter the university. Their studies were limited only to the artistic knowledge. More than that, Sisters, as the Victorian ethics claimed, should sacrifice their life to their brothers who were given more prospects in studies and work by the parents. Sisters thus were injured and underwent the injustice of their parents who gave all the opportunities of success to the brothers and tried to limit their daughters' life to domestic works. Girls were inculcated the patriarchal views that they needed the protection of men to live an honourable life. Sisters, thus, should take care of their brothers as they should take care of their future husbands. They, indeed, depended on male family members who would protect them and solve their problems in case their husbands treated them badly or they did not marry at all.

British laws considered Children as the property of the father and the divorced mothers were prevented from seeing or keeping them. Though the Infants Custody Act of 1886 stipulated that the welfare of the children was the determining factor in deciding questions of custody, the father remained the legal guardian. He had the right to train, educate and trace his children's life as he wished. Hence, the father's right to custody was, so to speak, absolute. He could make any agreement by which he gave them to his wife, in the case of a friendly separation. But if he died before the children were grown, and before naming his wife as a guardian, they became in charge of the court and the mother would lose them.

Caroline Norton was a writer and one of the mothers who, was just about to lose her children, in addition to her sufferings from her husband's cruelty as it is expressed in "A Letter to the Queen on Lord Chancellor Cranworth's Marriage and Divorce Bill" (1854)

We have been married about two months, when, one evening, after we had all withdrawn to our apartments, were discussing some opinion Mr. Norton had expressed; I said, that "I thought I had never heard so silly or ridiculous a conclusion" This remark was punished by a sudden and violent kick; the blow reached my side; it caused great pain for several days, and being afraid to remain with him, I sat up the whole night in another apartment (Caroline Norton, 1854)

This is an account of her husband's abuse of power which she published in order to review the position of married women under British laws. Being conscious of this unjust situation she published in 1837 *Natural claim of a Mother to the Custody of her child as Affected by the common law Right of the father*, a pamphlet which accelerated the vote of the Infant Custody Bill of 1839. And later she wrote *English law for Women*. From then on, a number of male and female thinkers began to question Victorian ideology which was reflected in the contradictory family values of that time.

Family Issues and Victorian Thought

The development of press and science caused the spread of an atmosphere of religious doubts. It goes without saying that scientific books played a vital role in developing new ideas concerning man's life and his evolution. Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1833), Bachofen and Morgan's anthropological works on the evolution of family as well as Herbert Spencer's *the Social Statics* (1851) can be considered as a great step towards a radical change in perception of man and his universe. Herbert Spencer insisted on individual liberty and the importance of supreme science. A few years later, Charles Darwin based the principles of his theory of evolution on Spencer's and challenged the subjective religious thoughts of the Victorians. He believed that earth was older than the Bible and not created in six days. His *The Origin of the Species* (1858) challenged the existence of God. It questioned the ethics of

the time and defied the dogma of Christianity itself. It had so a great influence that most Victorians started to inquire about the ideas they had about themselves. This shift of ideas, though it took long time to be accepted, managed to change subsequent thoughts and the literature of the period.

Ideas of selection and the survival of the fittest in life, brought by Charles Darwin had influenced the socio- economic life of the Victorians. As industry developed, people became more materialistic and anxious for their survival in the competitive life of the late 1800s. Economic capital dominated the Victorians and property was the concern of the great bosses of industry. While society became materialistic, some thinkers who were influenced by the idealism of the German tried to shed light on the consequences of this materialism and regret the old form of the society. For instance, Thomas Carlyle (1795 –1881) had foreshadowed the dreadful cost of industry in 1828. In his is essays, “Signs of the times” he had predicted this development. Moreover, he had not only called the nineteenth century the age of machinery but protested that a mechanistic emphasis was starting to control every aspect of life, even the “ internal and the spiritual». His theme of the dehumanisation of society was pursued in later books. In *Past and Present* (1843), Carlyle sounded sceptic about the Victorian system of life as Matthew Arnold and John Ruskin could later be. For Carlyle, the simple community was unified by human and spiritual values, while modern culture deified impersonal economic forces and abstract theories of human 'rights' and natural 'laws'. Communal values were collapsing into isolated individualism and ruthless laissez-faire capitalism, because of what he called the "dismal science" of economics.

The ideas expressed by Thomas Carlyle were not new in English literature. Quite Earlier, William Thompson (1775-1833), belonging to the socialist tradition, published *An Inquiry into the Principles of the Distribution of Wealth* (1824), a work against the injustice in the repartition of fortune. In 1825, he wrote in collaboration with Anna Doyle Wheeler, a

friend of Bentham and Charles Fourier, “Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, Women against the Pretensions of the Other Half Men” to retain them in political and domestic slavery. The work aimed at advocating political equality for all the citizens (women and men). At that time, Hegelian philosophy and American transcendentalism appealed to Victorian thinkers, poets and novelists since it reflected the problems that the Victorians lived at that time. The romantics such as Coleridge, Shelley and Byron, de Quincy, Marian Evans and others found in Germany and America hints of their own criticism of the industrial materialistic society. Besides, earlier than the above stated authors, William Wordsworth, regretted nature in his poetry.

Side by side with the inquiries about the origin of man, there were researches about the origin of family. The latter was intensified by the anthropological works of Johann Jakob Bachofen (1815- 1887), the theoretician of matriarchy and the American Lewis Henry Morgan. The former, basing his theories on Greek mythology, argued that the mother had once enjoyed supremacy, the idea he defended in his single work *Das Mutterrecht* (the mother’s right) published in Stuttgart in 1861. As for the latter, he was the most prominent founder of anthropology. He was known by his works on feminine relationships, but it was his theory on the evolution of humanity which was most controversial. He assumed that history has developed through three stages: savagery, barbarism, and civilisation. As for the family, he stated that it moved from the consanguine one, when there was no prohibition of the incest towards monogamy.

Morgan provided opposing arguments to the earlier theories on the origins and development of the family. At first, as Ann Taylor Allen argued in her article, the theories supported typically Victorian narratives of progress that affirmed western form of family as the culmination of human development (Ann Taylor Allen, 1999). Yet as Frederick Engels commented in *the Origin of Family Private Property and the State* (1884), Morgan

attributed the rise of patriarchal family to the accumulation of property in the hand of man, as it has already been stated in the introduction. In fact, there were important intellectual controversies about the origins of the family, patriarchy and the subordination of women and anthropology played a vital role in questioning the Victorian family ideals in which capitalism is grounded as the Marxists suggested in their literature.

The Questioning of the Victorian Family went together with the inquiries made about the capitalist system particularly by the Marxists. Socialist ideas were permeating political thought at that time with Friedrich Engels' writing of his *Condition of the Working Class* (1845) and William Morris writing of the early socialist utopian novel *News from Nowhere*. Besides, Karl Marx, in *Das Kapital* (1867), based the work largely on British experience, plainly states that England is used as a chief illustration of the development of his ideas. Together with Engels, he thought that the bourgeoisie was born when they replaced their predecessors in power and that capitalism caused many trouble to the people. As such the working class should rebel and overthrow the bourgeoisie and its institutions.

If Morgan said that a man living in a village would be much better than if he lived in the crowded cities, Engels maintained that man would be better if he managed to get rid of his boss's exploitation. He considered the new order of cities such as Manchester's as "feudal" and sustained that it would end in the industrial cities by a successful proletarian revolt. He advised workers to think for themselves and ask for a fuller life in the human society. He urged them to carry out a revolution as it is displayed in *The Manifest of the Communist Party*. (1848), this book represented a call for the solidarity of the working class. "Prolétaires de tous les pays unissez-vous" (quoted in Encarta, 2007); the phrase became famous and involved ideas which will be stigmatized in *The Capital*. (1867). The historical vision of economy, the struggle of the classes and the conditions of exploitation of the proletariat put off the veil on the drawbacks of the capitalist regime. Poverty was apparent at

that time and the working conditions were alarming as it can be noticed in Engels' *Conditions of the Working Class* (1845). These facts strengthened the important role the proletariat would hold in revolution and the destruction of the capitalist institutions among them the family.

As it has already been stated in the introduction, the Marxists viewed family as a definite means for the capitalists to ensure their eternal success in business. It was indeed the big consumer of goods which they had to pay for. As long as the family keeps on existing, people would continue buying products and the bourgeoisie would go on doubling its money. Marxists pointed at the fact that it was the housewives who were producing the new generation of the proletariat and thus would fill the jobs of the retiring ones. As such, Karl Marx advocated the socialisation of domestic labour by weakening the role of woman within the family. These measures, he argued, could help getting rid of the oppressive functions of the family unit and open up new possibilities for human development that substitute narrow individualism with human solidarity and oppression with liberation. Marxist ideas reached the English population and the idea of revolution and social reform found an echo not only among the intellectuals but also among the working class. Thus workers (men and women) began to unite in groups and the trade unions movement started to protest and ask for more rights and for social insurance. Social reform had become the primary concern of the Member of Parliament and Disraeli himself spoke of two nations in England, the poor one and the rich one.

One can not close the list of the most important thinkers of Victorian England without mentioning John Stewart Mill, one of the most famous advocates of human rights to liberty. He wrote essays in which he opposed the idealist thoughts and relied on experience. In his *System of Logic* (1846), he attacked intuitionism as "the greatest speculative to the

regeneration so urgently required of man and society” (Otter, 1996:16). Besides, in his *Economic* (1878) together with his *Essays on Liberty* (1859), he attacked social conformity and preached individual liberty in society. He was aware that this liberty could not appear in society unless it was enjoyed within one’s family. That is why he wrote *The Subjection of Women* (1869) whose focal idea is the liberty of wives within the family. Mill advocated an extended right for wives and believed that the legal subordination to one sex to the other is wrong in itself, and viewed as one of the chief hindrances to human improvement. He claimed equality between men and women and denounced the Victorian view on the subordination of the latter. In order to achieve liberty Mill asked for radical changes in the legal treatment of women in marriage by endowing married woman control over her person, her property and her children. Mill denounced overtly violence and brutality of which many women like Caroline Norton had experienced. He opted for a harmonious family where there is no notion of hierarchy.

If the Marxists maintained that the liberation of women could be reached by the abolition of property and family, Mill started by asking for women’s right to property as a way to their liberation. In Mill’s opinion, the power of earning could also be a step to women’s independence and thus their liberty. If women chose to be admitted in all public functions and occupations, they would have the right to participate in the suffrage. He asserts

I believe that equality of rights would abate the exaggerated self abnegation which is the present artificial ideal of feminine character, and that a good woman would not be more self sacrificing than the best man: but on t(he other hand, men would be much more unselfish and self sacrificing than at present, because they would no longer be taught to worship their own will as such a grand thing that it is actually the law for another rational being . (Quoted in Jane Rendall, 1985:288)

Mill played also an important and significant role in the political sphere. Elected as a member of parliament in the house of common, in 1865. He was the spokesman of the reform

ballot concerning vote for women. He presented many petitions to the parliament. He was also the author for the amendment of the new Reform Bill to include vote for women. The role that John Stuart Mill played in favour of women's vote was an important episode in feminist struggle and in reviewing the status of Victorian family members. Thus was the development of Victorian thoughts concerning man and society which also found expression in the novels of the period.

The novelist's debunking of such themes as family, marriage and class did not come out of a vacuum. They were certainly the outcome of the changes and the controversial ideas of the Victorian period. The socio-cultural and historical context contributed so much in shaping the Victorian novelists in general and Thomas Hardy's works in particular. Yet Hardy's aim in fiction would seem not only to expose and examine the Victorian reality but went a step further and tried to put off the veil on the hidden features regarding family values which had been, among other themes, Hardy's focal point since the publication of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886). Thomas Hardy was not the only one in this enterprise, since a number of thinkers and novelists either influenced him or shared his ideas.

There was a massive literature on the theme of women's and children's situation in England. Themes of moral certainties about family life and its hidden features were issued. The novels of Charles Dickens, for instance, though some of them portray happy families celebrating Christmas surrounding a table stuffed with food, outline also the misery and poverty in the dark terrifying urban slums. The age was transitional and changes in politics, law, economics, and society affected the life of the individual in many aspects. The relationship between the members of the family was among other subjects, the main theme of many novelists of the Victorian age. Outraged by Puritanism, corruption and poverty caused by industrialization, a number of novelists denounced the reverse side of the glorious Victorian society. Charles Dickens, author of an abundant social literature destined to a

popular public could be considered among the most representative of that period since he gave a critical analysis of actual society. His novels deal with the social transformations caused by the industrialisation and urbanisation and their effects on familial relationships especially in *Bombey and Son* (1846). The author also examined the plight of the poor and their bad condition in the industrial world. *David Copperfield* (1850), for instance, embodies the sufferings of a poor orphan left to the cruelty of the Londonian industrial world. . In the same way, Lewis Carroll through a magic story seemed to be destined to children divulged the hypocrisy of the world of adults in *Alice in the Wonderful Land* (1865). Oscar Wilde, Samuel Butler adding to Jane Austin and Elisabeth Gaskell and the Brontes denounced the social and moral conventions of the Victorian society which badly influenced men and women.

Though historians divided the period into early, middle and late Victorians, Walter Allen in his *The English Novel* (1954) spoke about the early and late Victorian novelists. He argued that the former novelists were the spokesmen of their age. They incarnated the values and morality of the age without questioning them. So did Charles Dickens who, in the novel stated above, incarnated the Victorian conception of the ideal family and women. F.R Leavis states in *Dickens the Novelist* (1970) that “Dickens theme in *David Copperfield* is an inquisition into the Victorian assumption that in a woman a loving heart is better than wisdom” (F.R Leavis ,1970: 107); the critic made a parallel between Tolstoy and Dickens. Both of them treated the bourgeois ideal of marriage. They tried to endow women with the spiritual values that men lacked. They also shared the idea of culture based family. The setting is often the country side. As yet there was not a question of the emancipation of women from domesticities or from male dominance. The late Victorians, however, dared to question the Victorian rigidity and conservatism. Yet Jane Austin and Mrs Gaskell perfected closely observed satire on the British bourgeois manners. They were often critical of the

assumptions and prejudices of upper-class England. They were also realistic in depicting England in which social mobility and class –consciousness were strong. Jane Austin, for instance, gave a real image of women from smaller gentry and upper bourgeoisie who had nothing to do but to read poetry and gossip or await the attention of man. The *Watsons* (1804), for instance, is a story of an invalid clergyman with little money whose four unmarried daughters are desperately seeking husbands. It also focuses on the economic security that went with marriage, before their father died. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the character of Jane Bennet is the perfect image of Victorian woman. She is beautiful, charming and endowed with a little intelligence, qualities which allow her to be a good wife. It is this sexist ideal of the time that women are only good for wives that was satirized by Jane Austin.

Elisabeth Gaskell not only pointed at women's position in the family and society but also dealt with the plight of the poor in almost all her novels. The condition of England and the clash between capital and labour could be viewed as her main theme. *Mary Barton* (1848) subtitled "a tale of Manchester life" is a detailed account of the life in the town where a great number of people were unemployed. The novel gives actual details of the consequences of this situation on the starving urban families. As it is stated in Fraser's Magazine, the novel answered questions about why poor men hate the law and order, Queen, Lords and Commons, party and Corn law league alike – the rich in short (ASA Briggs,1968:98). Gaskell was conscious of the injustice of the inequalities of fortune. In *North and South* too, the critic of the British class system is embedded. The female character Margaret remarks, for example: "It won't be division enough on that awful day that some of us have been beggars here, and some of us have been rich, — we shall not be judged by that poor accident, but by our faithful following of Christ."(Elisabeth Gaskell, 1855) Throughout the novel, Margaret undergoes a harsh struggle within class system and its effects. Thanks to her relationship with Higgins and Bessy, she becomes aware that people are equal whatever their social positions

are. It is by creating such characters that Elisabeth Gaskell expresses her thoughts in favour of equality between human beings within the society and its institutions.

As far as Victorian family is concerned, its hidden features are revealed in the works of some distinctive thinkers and novelists. In the 1870s many writers tried to focus on the Victorian family pattern. Well before this period Dr Acton's *Functions and disorders of the Reproductive organs in youth in adult life and in advanced life* (1870) considered in physiological, social and psychological relations, gave new insights concerning the development of human being. He attacked the moralising attitude towards sex. Similarly, Havelock Ellis, born in 1859, considered that sex "was not merely the instrument by which race maintained and built up" but "the foundation on which all dreams of the future must be erected" (ASA Briggs, 1968:98). With such works and with passing times, sexuality became part of social consciousness and novelists tried to treat it though it was a taboo at that period.

Hardy's Contemporaries and their Views of the Victorian Family

Thomas Hardy's contemporaries were many, but I confine myself to those male and female writers and thinkers who articulated a constant rejection of morality and ethics of the era. Oscar Wilde, one of Hardy's most representative contemporaries, gave a faithful image of the English manners and hypocrisy in almost all his works. In "The Soul of Man under Socialism" written between 1891 and 1892, he spoke on behalf of the rights of women working people, and together with the socialist playwright George Bernard Shaw, he attested: "The best among the poor are never grateful. They are ungrateful, discontented and rebellious. They are quite right to do so" (Ibid.p.257) Hence, the author understood perfectly the plight of women and the poor and justified their rebellious nature. Besides, before writing the above cited essay, Wilde accepted the editorship of a fashionable lady's journal which he converted into an intellectual women's magazine. Besides, a harsh critic is also displayed in *Salomé* (1891), date also of the publication of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

The former, however, was banned on charges of blasphemy. In addition, Wilde's humorous plays ironized bourgeois customs and morals. He mocked moderation, self sacrifice, industry and thrift. He also viewed the bourgeois ideal of marriage as an exercise in the mean spirited preservation of prosperity. More than that, he questioned a man's right to dispose of a woman as a sexual object and overtly announced his homosexuality. In *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1894), he ironised the seriousness of the Victorians.

In the same way, Samuel Butler, earlier than Wilde stood apart from the Victorian ethos in *The Way of All Flesh* which as G.D.H. Cole in *Samuel Butler and The Way of all Flesh* (1902), states is one of the great novels in which the author satirizes earnestness that was the Victorian moral virtue through the main character ironically called "Earnest". In this context, Asa Briggs argues "the novelist Samuel Butler would treat the Christian name Earnest more ironically still in *The Way of all Flesh*" (Asa Briggs, 1990:257). Set in a thoroughly bourgeois environment, the novel gives a real picture of the consequences of the conservatism and the severity of the patriarchal father –son relationship branded by lack of communication and dictatorship in which the son had to obey his father even in the most private things of his life. Earnest's conception of his father as an unkind, unjust and as an uncountable power that continually frustrated him is but a harsh rejection of the family values of the middle class. A system which leads to his downfall since Earnest is not the man his father yearns to have. He indeed enters prison and frequents and marries a person from the lower class. Like his contemporaries, Butler was acquainted with Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1858) and felt the impact of the new wave of religious doubt. Thus the novel can be considered as an attack on Christian theology just like Wilde's works. His theme is also self determination to get rid of those rigid and harsh principles of his family and demolish the repressive law –church, hence the Victorian social institutions. In Earnest's family, the father is the leader and the mother Christina's image is that of a thoroughly silly woman but not

nasty .This image is the portrayal of a woman as the Victorians view her. Butler, in fact, did not agree with the Victorian conception of family as he took as a task the scrutinizing and the criticism of Middle Class snobbish behavior even in other works like *Erewhon* which though a utopian novel, it satirizes many aspects of Victorian society. In short, Samuel Butler showed his particular dislike of the religious hypocrisy which he depicted as "Musical Banks». Accordingly, he examined the bad features of the Victorian family and its consequences upon children through the character Earnest.

The rebellion against the Victorian economic and social system showed itself firstly in women then in men's writings. Mary Shelly followed her mother Mary Wollstonecraft's ideas who questioned women's subordinate status within the Victorian family and gave critical views on the institution of marriage. Some female writers adopted male pen names to make their voices be heard. Such as Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell which were the Brontes pen names and Mary Ann Evans known as George Eliot. Indeed, Charlotte, Emily, and Ann Bronte were three prolific writers who anticipated the anti-Victorian ideas. They wrote their novels in the prevalent mode of their time, that is to say Gothicism. But the latter for them can hardly be restricted to the sensationalism of Horace Walpole because it is deeply intertwined with the issues of the time such as class mobility and the individual struggle for a descent, respectable and free life. They have appropriated Gothic literature to better debunk the prejudices that Victorian gentlemen have elaborated about what they call their subordinates, the working class and women. Emily is the most prominent figure though she is less prolific than her sisters.

Emily enjoyed celebrity thanks to one single novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and some poetry. The way it is written displayed Emily's genius and her isolation from contemporary events. She had indeed innovated not only in themes but also in form when she

used flash backs at the beginning of the tale. She had anticipated, indeed, the modern views towards what we call minorities, by the creation of such character as Heathcliff (race) and (Catherine) gender. Catherine's relation with Edgar (belonging to the upper class) and to Heathcliff (the inferior beings as regards his skin and social position) is the ground on which Emily's disapproval of social inequalities was expressed. Emily Bronte's interest in the life of the helpless gipsy poor Heathcliff and his social mobility denotes her interest in the life of the poor, their alienation and their aspiration to assert themselves. Class mobility is portrayed by Heathcliff status as a wealthy gentleman and the Earnshaws loss of their fortune. Emily Bronte made Heathcliff move to the upper class not only by money but also by marriage. Moreover, Catherine Earnshaws transgression of the Victorian moral code concerning domestic life is but a way to rebel against class differences and a means to ask for one's liberty in choosing one's partner regardless of his social class or economic position.

Charlotte Bronte shared her sister's views on women. *Shirley* (1849), for instance, incarnates women's concern such as male- female antagonisms, mistrust of marriage as well as fear of singleness. Though it ends as a comedy, its outstanding tone is gloomy with regard to the sexual relations. Charlotte Bronte can be regarded as a rebel against the predestined place of the Victorian middle class unmarried women. The novel deals also with the ability of woman to influence the course of social and industrial events. Moreover, *Jane Ere* shakes remarkably the traditional convention in Victorian England as it reflects the rebellion against the societal norms of marriage. The author showcased the feminist view by contradicting the view that women are ignorant of their sexuality and passion. Charlotte Bronte created the character of Jane to confess that women are capable of being passionate and experiencing fulfillment in marriage where the two partners are equals. Jane is the embodiment of a woman who is able to experience passion and have the ability to acquire knowledge. In short, by endowing Jane with qualities distinct from those of other women of her age, such as her

struggle for her independence, Charlotte Bronte gave an antithetical image of Victorian women in the family and challenged the cliché of women as being dependant on man, ignorant, passive, reserved, and obedient.

Years later, Olive Shreiner's Lyndall heralded the era of the "new woman" .She did not only point at the problems of the Victorian family but dared to question and hugely criticize the marriage institution. Besides, Mona Caird's article on 'the Morality of Marriage' in the fortnightly review in 1890 was one of the first to formulate the anti- marriage principle. In her view, dependence is the curse of marriages of homes and of children who are born of women who are not free even to refuse to bear them. She also argued that if women claimed lives and incomes of their own, marriage as we know it would cease to exist.

Such ideas were also articulated by Hardy's younger contemporary George Gissing. In his article "Remembering George Gissing"(2004)),Judy Stove states that some critics named him in the 1890s, as one of England's three leading novelists, together with George Meredith and Hardy. Although Gissing's books treat the problems caused by poverty, he seems doubtful about the right procedure for change. Yet in his novel, *The Odd Women* (1893), he reveals his concern not only in men but also in women who do not possess economic security. Woman's question was not, for Gissing, the subject of superficial jesting. The book inquires about future roles for women, and the future of marriage. The female character Rhoda Nun is a woman who regards her task in life to prepare herself for active role apart from marriage, as a fundamental way towards her emancipation. Gissing felt that it was profoundly wrong that woman or the working class had hard and squalid lives, and he had a deep sympathy for those who found society against them. Opportunity for the working class is Gissing's vital theme. Besides, his concern with social reforms is clearly shown in *Demos*

(1886) subtitled “A story of English Socialism”. The work is thoroughly about politics and the corruption exerted by power.

This is a brief overview of the historical and the literary context of Hardy’s fiction. The former traces the major issues of the period and focuses particularly on family structure and its relation with society and law. It also points at the economic system of the period and its effect on the individual. As for the literary context, a selection of some Victorian novelists and essayists is done to show how the intelligentsia reacted to the events and social issues of the time. This selection is not meant to weaken the importance of such novelists as Thackeray and Meredith, or to overlook their significant works, but it is due to the richness of the literary production of the period which is difficult to trace in a short chapter like this one.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine Hardy's anxiety about patriarchy and the economic system in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886). Jean L. Cohen argues in *Class and Civil Society: the Limits of Marxian Critical Theory* that capitalism in Marx's views "would stamp its form on all social relations" (Cohen, 1982:18), namely, social, political, private and legal institutions. As a matter of fact, this chapter is an attempt to examine Hardy's treatment of family issues within this system, through the analysis of characters and setting as well as themes in order to show his scepticism and anxiety about family ties and their future. The analysis points also at his retained or rather his ambiguous ambivalent position towards the bourgeois family.

The Mayor of Casterbridge(1886), tells the story of an unemployed hay trusser called Michael Henchard who frees himself from family burden by selling his wife and daughter, an event that has really happened in Somerset as it is reported by the newspapers of that time. David Cecil states in *Hardy the Novelist* (1943) that in the spring of 1884 Hardy coincidentally read copies of the Dorset county Chronicle for the period 1826-30 to collect material for his new novel. In addition, Geoffrey Harvey states in *The Complete Critical Guide to Thomas Hardy* (2003) that the author "came across incidents such as a wife selling in Somerset, information about fluctuations in the corn trade in Dorset during the early years of the century, and an account of the fleeting visit to Dorchester of Prince Albert in July 1849" (Geoffrey Harvey, 2003:32). Hardy opens his tale with the wife sale scene in Wyden Prior. Telling a story with such an offensive opening is but a way to point at the hidden realities of the capitalist system, based fundamentally on buying and selling. Amazingly, the author has often had clashes with the editors who, at each time, order the censorship of some offensive scenes. Yet no one asks for the exclusion of the wife sale scene, may be because Hardy allows the sale to happen when Henchard is drunk. Being poor and looking for job, the family is the only "capital" Henchard possesses and thus can sell. Moreover, though the bargain happens

when the main character is drunk and while it becomes clear that Henchard is not joking and means what he says, no one in the fair intervenes to forbid it. Obviously, the author, wishes to point at the offensive power of patriarchy in the Victorian society. Both wife and children are the property of the husband, thus, he can do any transaction he chooses with his “goods”.

Once he gets rid of his family, Michael Henchard, still haunted by remorse and regret, manages to confine his energy to business and commerce. He becomes a successful corn merchant and due to the capitalist system with its “laissez faire” policy, gains fortune and occupies an important place in Casterbridge as a mayor. Hence, the character rises in position and enjoys the advantages of the upper class. That the narrator does not give us account of the course of Henchard’s work to gain such a position is probably meant to point at the speedy mobility of class at this period. Yet despite the position Henchard gains, he never taste a real enjoyment neither in his private life nor in his professional one. His relation with Lucetta ends badly because of the appearance of Farfrea in her life, and although he manages to reunite with his family for sometimes, Susan dies after a short time of his remarriage and Elisabeth Jane is proved to be Newson’s daughter. It is after these succeeding disappointments, Henchard goes through and his loss of his position as a man of business that he finishes his life badly; he loses his position and dies miserably.

The novel was published in 1885-1886 in weekly instalments. It appeared first as a serial in the *Graphic* from 2 January to 15 May 1886. It is Hardy’s tenth novel and his first masterpiece as some critics qualify it. The novel confirms Hardy’s immersion in the issues of the time and his challenge of the Victorian cliché of family in the wife sale scene. Yet one might notice some elements which reinforce them especially with the novel’s ending. His interest in history and the social facts in his own society are proved to be a credible material for his works. Indeed, nearly all the Marxist critics view Hardy’s fiction as repository of

various kinds of historical information since the core of the events is based on real incidents in Dorchester.

It is stated in Thomas Hardy's General Preface to the collected "Wessex" edition of 1912 that the novel is one among his "Novels of Character and Environment", along with *The Return of the Native* (1874), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, (1892), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Thomas Hardy defines this kind of novels as those "which approach most nearly to uninfluenced works; also one or two which, whatever their quality in some few of their episodes, may claim a verisimilitude in general treatment and detail" (Quoted in Nemesvari, 2003: 59). Thus, one can say that the novel is a real presentation of the societal problems in Victorian England. In addition, "Hardy explores the forces of historical change and their impact on a rural community in his treatment of the conflict between Henchard and his *protégé*, the young Scotsman, Donald Farfrae"(Geoffrey Harvey,2003 :32). Harvey points also to the Subtitle 'A story of a man of Character' which he interprets as showing Thomas Hardy's attention to the psychological complexity of Michael Henchard. Thus the author's focal interest is in this character. That is why, one can notice that the setting is not highly developed.

Analysis of Characters

One can suggest that the way Hardy handles his characters is meant to shed light on the effect of patriarchy and its economic system based on property on human relationships in general and on the family in particular. Accordingly, the analysis of the male characters in opposition to the female ones would show clearly the effect of the capitalist system and its institutions on the family. The latter, which the Marxist in general and Engels in particular, view as a creation of the capitalists to assure a free labour force and maintain the means of production, thus assure their powerful position in society.

Male Characters

Mickael Henchard: the Capitalist

Michael Henchard is a hay trusser who is looking for a job at a difficult time as the commentary of the turnip hoer reveals. Descriptions of a man from the lower class miserably dressed carrying with him a material and approaching the large village of Weydon Priors looking for a job, are but an allusion to the economic situation of rural England and its effect on the life of the individual at that time. To focus on the miserable situation of the common man and his personal life in England, Hardy makes Henchard look for a job carrying with him his family. The wife “virtually ... Walks the highway alone, save for the child she bore” (Hardy, 1994: 2). The way the man is walking with his wife and child reveals the man’s self disgust and his revulsion from the family burden as well as his incapacity to manage the household. Besides, though she is walking with her husband side by side and sometimes touches his shoulder, Susan does not think of taking his arm and the husband does not have the idea to offer it. Besides, The silence between the couple reveals what sort of life they lead and what kind of relation the wife and husband have. At the last but not least chapter, Henchard reveals the cause of his silence “....And I speaking to her hardly at all because of my cursed pride and mortification at being poor” (Ibid.p.367). Poverty then, is the major cause of Henchard’s conjugal problems. Besides, Hardy’s portrayal of Henchard as dispossessed and miserable, disparately looking for job reveals his sympathy with so many people in English country side who finds it difficult to find employment.

Worst of all, this silence seems natural to Susan, almost certainly, because the couple rarely converse. As for Henchard’s relation with the child, contrary to what it can be noticed in his relation with his pretended daughter, Elisabeth Jane, and contrary to the mother’s connection with her daughter, it is that of apathy and indifference. Has the child been a boy, Henchard probably would not have shown this disregard. As a patriarch, indeed, he seems never let his son go with his mother because it is him who can perpetuate his name.

Thomas Hardy endows his main character Henchard with the Victorian principles of ambition and work. He elevates his social position in the early chapters, bestowing him with capitalist features from the beginning. Despite his state as a drunkard in the firmity, the readers can hardly exonerate him for selling his wife. Besides, to declare that his discourse is due to the effect of alcohol and pretend that he is talking rubbish is, beyond doubt, not persuasive at all. His discourse is, in fact, that of a true capitalist. He is not among the better class of traders yet reacting as an experienced merchant. He successively manages to sell his wife with the wanted price. Moreover, to manage his business Henchard dares to ask his wife to exhibit her self just like the horses and other articles in the fair are exhibited.

Henchard is a well-informed business man, presenting his skills in commerce while auctioning his wife. His concern with money and his awareness about trade is also shown in the following declaration “saying is one thing and paying is an other.” (Ibid.p.11). Furthermore, he is aware of what is happening in business in other places as he states, referring to the wife sale: “it has been done elsewhere and why not here” (Ibid.p.12). More than that, to move up the social scale, Henchard, considering family as the obstacle that holds him back and destroys his ambition as a business man, gets rid of her but by gaining money in return. Interestingly, Henchard’s desire to sell his wife has been expressed more than once, as his wife has affirmed. He has often threatened her in public places. Besides, his desire for upper position and money is expressed when he challenges “England to beat me in the fodder business” (Ibid.p.7) but promises success if he manages to free himself from the bound of family “troubles”. In addition, he does show any sentimentality or affection neither to the wife nor to the child. As a true capitalist he does not leave room for sentiments because they do not go with business. For instance, when his wife expresses her exasperation about the sale he said ‘all I want is a buyer’ (Thomas Hardy, 1994:9), thus succeed in his business and gets

property whatever the means. In addition, his feature as a real capitalist is displayed by his patriarchal relationship towards his wife and child throughout the novel.

Henchard's capitalist spirit is exposed throughout the novel. His entrance as a successful business man in the fifth chapter shows a clear opposite image to the man in the first chapter. He is displayed as an organiser of a great public dinner for business men. At that moment, he is not a miserable man who is yearning for a job but a gentleman enjoying leisure time with people. The mayor is sitting on the chair like a very important person. He changes his way of clothing "he is dressed in an old fashioned evening suit, an expanse of frilled shirt showing his broad breast; jewelled studs and a heavy gold chain" (Hardy, 1994: 36). Gold refers to his status as a wealthy person which in the Victorian ethics meant a powerful gentleman since money is synonymous to property and power.

Henchard internalizes also the Victorian ethics of respectability as it is portrayed in his relation with the female characters and the workers. Yet Henchard is not as powerful as he seems to be. In the first scene of our acquaintance of him as a successful businessman he shows some anger and fear from the people's criticism of his bread. His anxiety of losing his position is clearly displayed in his reaction to those complainers. As a matter of fact, he seeks a man to help him in managing his business and maintain his position. The narrator is also alluding to the capitalist principle of "quality» in order to maintain one's position in the competitive economic market. As a true capitalist, Henchard does not overlook that, and writes an advertisement looking for a manager. Once more, Henchard's awareness about how the economic market functions is clearly revealed in this chapter. Production of goods of quality and their conservation becomes Henchard's concern which he successfully manages to do thanks to Donald Farfrae.

Michael Henchard: the patriarch

Sylvia Walby defines patriarchy as “a system of social structure in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (quoted in Joanna Devereux, 2003: xiv) The definition, in fact, applies to Henchard who by internalizing the Victorian patriarchal system, as a husband gives himself the right to sell both his wife and daughter Henchard’s exploitation and oppression of his wife is revealed by his threat to sell her more than once. In addition, the Victorian view that the wife and children are the property of the husband is also revealed in the reaction of the spectators in the Fair who do not do anything to forbid the sale, though they have already noticed that the husband is drunk and does not know what he is doing. This idea is expressed by the man in the tent which is quoted at length to capture its entire nuances:

For my part I don’t see why men who have got wives and don’t want ’em, shouldn’t get rid of ’em as these gipsy fellows do the old horses ...why Shouldn’t they put ’em up and sell ’em by auction to men who are in need of such articles .(Thomas Hardy,1994: 8).

The wife who is considered as an object is ,accordingly, bared of her humanity as it is revealed by Henchard who refers to her as “articles’ or “goods” or that man in the tent who authentically incarnates the Victorian views on women as it is clearly demonstrated in the quotation above.

Susan reveals after the sale that she has never led a happy life: “Mike,’ I’ve lived with thee a couple of years and had nothing but temper (Ibid.p.12).Despite witnessing tyranny and poverty on the part of the husband, and though Henchard does not play his role as ‘a bread winner’ as the Victorian ideology suggests, Susan is not able to separate from him. By focusing on such a situation, Hardy is probably alluding to British marriage laws which bound the couple to an eternal life together and which presented women as subjected to male supremacy. Hardy, however, is not endorsing this view but he is rather questioning this ideal conception of marriage as it will be extensively demonstrated in the analysis of themes.

Moreover, in Henchard's opinion, like the majority of the Victorian husbands, children are viewed as their own possession and the mother has no right over them. His bitter regret to let the child go with her mother, few minute after the transaction, is an allusion to the Infant Custody Act which stipulates that children should stay with the father, and also to the law which sustained male privilege and power. Henchard states: "And if it were the doing again she shouldn't have her" (Ibid.p14). Throughout the portrayal of this event and of Henchard character as an irresponsible husband and father, Hardy distorts the Victorian assumptions that man is the fitting leader of the house. The character is far from being that needed father for the upbringing of a child since he considers both wife and daughter as an immense burden. Moreover, the concept of property seems to be recurrent in his discourse as he uses the word "own" to allude to Susan and his daughter and even when he speaks about Lucetta .Once again, Thomas Hardy is pointing at the power of property and its effects on human relationships. Further, Henchard's laments to marry young echoes also the Victorian gentlemanly behaviour that the man should succeed in business first then think to marry. Besides, the commentary of the spectators who assume that with Newson, Susan and her daughter are going to be happy since the buyer seems wealthy reveals the Victorian vision of money as a way to happiness. More than that, Henchard's regret to let his child go might be because he wants to let an heir after becoming a successful business man since he gets rid of his wife.

As for Henchard's relation with Whittle, it is that of a worker and his boss. It is a patriarchal relation in paid work That is to say, the subordination of the working class to bourgeois class, and the exploitation and the ill- treatment of the latter to the former. This is embodied in Hardy's description of Whittle Abel arriving late to work and Henchard's harsh scolding of him. He appears too severe with him to such an extent that he gives himself the right to fetch him in his house and orders him to go to work half naked. Besides, the desolate

material situation of Whittle is revealed by his letting the door of his house open since “the inmate have nothing to lose” (Ibid.p.112). More than that, Whittle’s calling Henchard “worshipful” exposes clearly a subordinated relationship and the power that he exerts over him being his master and the source of gaining his bread. Focusing on that scene, the author is representing the situation of the working class and the injuries of the bourgeoisie. Though Whittle does not work in factory his condition can be compared to the workers of whom Engels says in *The condition of the working class*(1845) “In truth, they were not human beings; they were merely toiling machines in the service of the few aristocrats who had guided history down to that time” (Engels,1845:37)

As a boss in the world market, Henchard gives himself the right to treat Whittle less than a slave and tries to humiliate him in the presence of other workers. This echoes Engels representation of the hardships of the working class caused by the bourgeoisie when he states: “Under the brutal and brutalising treatment of the bourgeoisie, the working-man becomes precisely as much a thing without volition as water, and is subject to the laws of nature with precisely the same necessity; at a certain point all freedom ceases.”(Engels, 1845) All in all Henchard’s desire for capital forces him down not only to forget about his humanity and sell his family but also continue to be indifferent to such helpless man as Whittle. In sum, through this character, Hardy is questioning the power of patriarchy as he does with Donald Farefrae.

Donald Farfrae: the Victorian Gentleman

Contrary to Henchard’s presentation at the beginning of the novel Farfrae’s, is attractive. He is portrayed as an ambitious and generous Scottish man .He also shows his will to help Henchard. Farfrae intends to “try his fortune in the great wheat growing districts of the west” (Hardy, 1994:49). He has also inventions useful to the trade which he thinks that it cannot be developed in Casterbridge. But like Henchard he has a remarkable potential to become a successful business man. Being as much a capitalist as Henchard , his meeting with

the latter is meant to juxtapose the two individuals in order to show the anxieties of class struggle and the consequences of the spirit of competition as well as the unpredictable moving of social groups. Henchard's ruin begins to take place with Farfrae's appearance in Henchard's life and business. As a capitalist, he not only takes his business but also his house and his woman, Lucetta. More to the point, Hardy shows the delicate move of the classes by portraying Henchard as a worker in Farfrae's property which has been his own formerly. Henchard's subsequent downfall is not due only to the revelation of his past but is basically the consequence of economic misjudgement as he resorts to a fortune teller in taking decision about his business. Farfrae, however, shows more confidence and practicability in business affairs.

As a practical man, one could assume, Farfrae gains a high status and begins a new business similar to Henchard. His importance as a successful business man doubles with the introduction of the new seed drill machine, an allusion to the effect of industry which paves the way to people, though not aristocrats to rise in status and gain the advantages of the upper class. It is at this point that Henchard shows his irritation and considers his earlier friend as a bourgeois "*arriviste*" since he begins to work as a corn and hay merchant on his own account. The hostility has extended as Farfrae becomes a mayor and marries Lucetta. That business and money effect negatively human relationship is displayed by the turning out of Henchard's and Farfrae's relationships. Though the latter has never missed the opportunity to recall Henchard's help and kind behaviour, the former views him as an opportunist and the main cause of his ruin.

Farfrae's relation with Lucetta can be seen as one of his business transactions. The woman is an heir of an amount of money and Farfrae, with his mercantile spirit, can hardly lose this opportunity to double his material possessions. One can argue that marriage is a business affair with Lucetta and is far from being a relation based on love as it is clearly

noticed after her death. Internalising the Victorian ideals that one should succeed in business then think to marry, and after “an exceptionally fortunate business transaction (Hardy, 1994:181)” which ... “revealed to him that he would undeniably marry if he chose” (Ibid) Farfrae courts Lucetta. He has at first thought of Elisabeth Jane but when he sees Lucetta with her visible middle class virtues, he immediately forgets about her. The latter internalizing the same values (as it will be noticed in the analysis of her character) is attracted by him and immediately forgets about her sense of moral duty to Henchard.

It is clearly stated that before meeting Lucetta, Farfrae has been courting Elisabeth Jane, Henchard's step daughter whom Farfrae, with his capitalist views, thinks that she is his legitimate lone heir for all Henchard's property. It is at the moment that Farfrae expresses the will to marry Elisabeth Jane that he encounters Lucetta. By doing so, Thomas Hardy makes Farfrae choose between two women, the poor Elisabeth after her step father's disgust of her, and Lucetta the rich woman, in order to reveal the power of money in human relationships. In addition, the power of money in the life of Farfrae is made known by his refusal to leave Casterbridge. When Lucetta requires him to go away from Casterbridge, he says that “a man live where his money is made” (Ibid.p.182). Throughout the novel, it is money which traces Farfrae's life and it is property which dominates both his business and personal life. After marrying Lucetta He does not show any sympathy to Elisabeth- Jane. His indifference is revealed in his agreement to live in the same roof with her.

As to Farfrae's relation with the workers, he puts himself in good term with every body and does not show cruelty in the behaviour with them as Henchard has already done with whittle. But his relation with them is based on interest as it is shown by the reduction of their wages. If Hardy does not give us any account of the workers' complains about their situation, it might be due to the fact that the author tries to avoid any problems with the publishers, who at each time try to satisfy the bourgeois readership. Despite this, the author

cannot help sympathising with this class as it can be noticed in creating such characters as Whittle and the furnity woman. Besides, Class disparity is also shown in the behaviour of the campaigners in the Three Mariners towards Farfrae. In fact, when he becomes a successful business man, common people ceases to see him as the man who sings Scottish songs and enjoy happy moments in the hotel as he has done in the Three Mariners. By doing so, Hardy reveals the effect of class difference on human relationship and behaviour.

Also, his relation with Elisabeth Jane is not better than that with Lucetta. It is indeed based on interest as the bourgeois marriage meant to be. Indeed Newson appears and looks for his daughter, the only heiress of his money. Thus Elisabeth becomes rich and now is the convenient wife after Lucetta's death. Farfrae's subsequent marriage with Elisabeth presents an authentic image of the conception of woman and family in the Victorian age. By doing so, the author seems to endorse the same principles, yet he has already questioned them in the wife sale scene. It is here that one can notice his ambiguous position towards Victorian family values. Farefrae's marriage with Elisabeth –Jane contrasts the wife sale scene in many aspects and seems to reveal or somewhat endorse the Victorian assumptions concerning men's relation with women which should end with a beneficial marriage.

Female Characters

Susan: Victim of the Patriarchal System

Susan is also the incarnation of these same Victorian patriarchal values displayed not only in the wife sale scene but continues to be so throughout the novel. She powerfully conforms to the requirement of the male and passively accepts the sale. Hardy points at her compliance to the Victorian ethics in all her behaviour from the wife sale scene until her death. In the wife sale scene, Susan though annoyed by the transaction, submits to her husband's order and accepts it as a legal contract. But at the same time, while submitting she has already been aspiring for a better life with the other man. An idea wide spread among the

feminine Victorian thought that one could gain 'entré' to the upper class by marriage. As Susan is disappointed by Henchard, she tries to renew the experience with Newson, as she cannot see any other manner to get rid of her miserable state. This situation alludes to the social mobility of women at that time which is done basically by marriage although in Susan's case the relation with Newson is illegitimate. Susan moves with Newson wishing that this behaviour is going to be of profit (good business) to both her and her daughter. Thus in Susan's view like in other Victorian female characters in the novel (Lucetta and Elisabeth-Jane) , marriage is a means to reach social stability. Besides, by throwing the ring to her husband, she frees herself from the bound of the former marriage and seeks better prospect in her relation with Newson.

Once again Hardy alludes to the Victorian prejudices which looks at women as inferior creatures and limit their freedom by denying their individuality. Also, that women cannot have a flourishing future unless they get married and thus are under man's protection is a view widely spread among the Victorians. Amazingly, Susan does not realise that her relation with Newson is illegal just a few years later. The question that it would be asked in this situation is whether this is true or simply done to justify her "outrageous" behaviour. One cannot give a clear answer. In reality the narrator seems too sympathetic with Susan to such an extent that he always finds justifications for her "foolish" behaviour which is due either to her ignorance or just to her helplessness in the severe Victorian society. What is sure, however, is the fact that Hardy, thanks to his creation of the character of Susan, is referring to such women who confine themselves to the Victorian patriarchal values which ironically lead up to their ruin. In fact, Susan is sold like an animal to a man, loses her legitimate daughter and gives birth to an illegitimate one. After that she returns back to Henchard, and dies. By so doing, Hardy is focusing on the hidden features of the Victorian family ideology which considers wives together with their children the husbands' property.

Therefore, Susan can hardly be compared to such women as Austasia Veye, Sue Bridehead or, Etherbertha. These characters, indeed, express their rejection of the Victorian ideology and their rebellion against the existing order, but Susan passively adheres to the Victorian prejudices. She not only follows the Victorian values but also tries to perpetuate them in her daughter's personality. Like Mrs Bennett in Jane Austin *Sense and sensibility*, she focuses on the marriage market and tries to hunt a husband for her daughter. The author is thus aiming at portraying the power of the Victorian patriarchal values and the strong influence they had on the individual. From the beginning, Susan is that a wretched wife who undergoes injuries within her marital life. Actually, the narrator does not provide us with details about Susan's first meeting with Henchard. Furthermore, if he gives us an account of their second meeting, one cannot notice any emotional description. Further, their second meeting is bared of any sentimentality. They only express regret and think about a plan to maintain one's respectability by forgetting the past and renewing their marriage not out of love but rather out of decency. Besides, in her complain to Henchard, Susan does not make allusion to her dreams or to her future life. Contrary to Henchard, in the Wife scene, who declares that his misery is the consequence of his marriage young, Susan's life is limited to her sacrifice for the sake of her daughter. In this context, Rosemarie Morgan argued that Hardy's female Characters' private dreams collapse when "the man made superimposes upon them its own curbing shape" (Quoted in Christopher Lane, 1999:121). Hence Henchard plays the major role in Susan's miserable state.

Indeed under the British patriarchal system women are, most of the time, viewed as lower creatures. They are injured by their husband's abusive power and the wife sale is but an evident proof of it. Susan has really been auctioned together with the remaining inferior animals. Further though leading a wretched life, she is unable to assert her desire for separation from her husband. Besides, when he threatens to sell her, though annoyed, urges

her husband to return home. Susan is thus the embodiment of a generous wife who is ready to sacrifice herself in order to save her household. These features are noticed in her return back to Henchard and her agreement to remarry him not out of love but rather out of a plain interest, as she is thinking of Elisabeth's own future. She says to Henchard "I came here for the sake of Elisabeth" (Thomas Hardy, 1994: 84). Thus Susan, looking for her interest and her illegitimate child's, uses the latter to gain profit from Henchard whom, she not really forgives since when he asks her whether she forgives him, she finds it hard to answer. Thus, because she is looking for stability, Susan accepts to live with the man who has been cruel to her and hides his daughter's death. Additionally, Susan's stoicism is but an expression or the embodiment of so many Victorian women, who suffer stoically under the patriarchal system. Susan's inculcation of the same principle to Elisabeth probably aims to point at the solemnity of the situation which needs a radical change in all the social institutions to get rid of the patriarchal capitalist system.

Lucetta and Elisabeth Jane: Incarnation of the Victorian Values

Lucetta and Elisabeth Jane resemble each other in many aspects. Both of them are looking for respectability by marrying a successful gentleman. Besides, both suffer from a miserable past. The latter, as an illegitimate child and the former because of her "dishonest" relation with Henchard. In fact, Both Lucetta and Elisabeth have similar views on marriage. In their opinion, it is, indeed, the only way to gain *entré* in the upper class and be respectable. The former, after her legacy from an aunt (matriarchy) has changed even her name to Mrs Templeton as a means to escape her own name and its wrongs as she states in the letter she sends to Henchard in Casterbridge. She tries to begin a new life by marrying the man who has already injured her vis-à-vis her reputation in Jersey. Lucetta faces many problems related to her paternity and suffers a lot from her status as an illegitimate child as it can be noticed by Henchard's treatment of her, when he discovers that she is Newson's daughter. Yet, after

meeting another man and by the change of her situation, Lucetta forgets about her previous plan as it is noticed by her conversation with Henchard. She refuses to be the slave of the past and that she can direct her life as she wishes as she is no more the poor girl and her “circumstances have altered” ” (Thomas Hardy, 1994: 226), she is “hardly the same person. (Ibid) Yet in her decision she can scarcely hide her trepidation about her past. Reputation becomes more important as she can rise in status and marries the mayor of Casterbridge. (When she met Henchard for the first time she does not show any interest to her reputation).

It is Lucetta’s fear for her respectability which causes her death. By doing so, Hardy points at the heaviness of the power of property on Lucetta’s life. Indeed by becoming a bourgeois woman she must adhere to the middle class values, the thing that she can hardly manage because of her exaggerated fear from her past. The latter empowers Henchard over her to such an extent that, at one point, she accepts to marry him against her will. Moreover, when she secretly marries Farfrae, she does not lead a quiet life since she is always haunted by Henchard threat to reveal her past. Lucetta’s interest in appearance is also revealed by her way of dressing just like Elisabeth. The latter’s interest in respectability is shown in the first chapters of the novel. She is Susan’s daughter; she does not share her simplicity and humble character. She is attracted by the” unexpected social standing” in King’s Arms. More than that, she embodies the Victorian values of earnestness and respectability as she admires Farfrae’s “serious light in which he looked at serious things” (Ibid.p.62). Moreover, the word respectable is recurrent in Elisabeth discourse when she depicts Henchard and Farfrae. As regards her mother’s behaviour when she arrives at Weydon Priors she does not miss the opportunity to say to her mother it is not respectable to do that and so on.

The yearning for respectability is noticed not only in Elisabeth’s hope to marry Farfrae but also in her concentration on cultivating herself by taking a variety of cultural equipment from books. She, thus, tries to improve her language by avoiding dialect and also by wearing

clothes that fit her status as the mayor's step daughter. Her attention to Farefrae is noticed at the first time she sees him, and her desire to "hunt" him is revealed by her will to work in the hotel, in order to keep in touch with him. Elisabeth hunting of a husband begins at the moment the reader is acquainted with her. Her mother too assumes that her daughter's happiness lies in finding a suitable companion. Both mother and daughter considered Farfrae as an appropriate one. The mother's encouragement for Elisabeth and Farfrae's relation is displayed when she sends an anonymous letter to make them meet. Obviously the meeting is welcomed by Elisabeth.

What is remarkable about Elisabeth is her stoicism. When her hopeful husband chooses Lucetta rather than her to be his wife, she accepts the fact serenely and lives with the new couple in one house. Hardy, in fact, is alluding to the helpless situation of this girl who does not have any power within the Victorian values. She does not dare even to speak and make reproaches to Farfrae. Her relation with Lucetta is surprisingly good even though it is she who causes her sadness, since at one moment she loses Farfrae. Moreover, her restraint is shown by her shame to reveal her sentiment, as the perfect Victorian woman should do. Contrary to Lucetta, who even tries to seduce Farfrae at the first encounter with him, Elisabeth is a reserved person. She is the portrayal of the ideal woman of the Victorian era and the one who, in the Victorian ethics, succeeds in marriage enterprise in comparison with the other women character in the novel.

Her stoicism is also shown by her relation with Henchard and her desire to respond to his demand even in the way of speaking thus she avoids using dialect and accepts quietly his verbal abuse. (Knowing that she is not his illegitimate child). Elisabeth similarity to Lucetta is revealed by the narrator's description of her "the personage was in morning like herself, was about her age and size, and might have been her wraith or double" (Hardy, 1994:153). Their

resemblance is also revealed by their preference for the same man. The Victorian woman's conception of the ideal man is one, as the three women agree that Farfrae is a good husband.

As regards their material situation Lucetta becomes rich thanks to her aunt who bequeathed some of her property to her. In the same way, Elisabeth becomes rich thanks to her father's money. Neither women gain money by work as it is noticed in Hardy's later heroines like Sue and Tess. Thus Hardy's female characterization in this novel echoes the Victorian cliché of the bourgeois values. He portrayed them as submissive dependent on man and stoic. Features of which, Hardy attributes to Elisabeth and her conventional marriage. Yet he points at matriarchy in Lucetta's legacy from her aunt just like Bathsheba in *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

Setting: Casterbridge of the 1820s and 1840s

The setting is not highly developed because Thomas Hardy seems to put emphasis on characters particularly Henchard. This is displayed in the title of the novel as he called it the Story of a Man of Character. What is noticeable in the setting is the half real and half mythic Wessex, in which the author faithfully records the agricultural situation of English country side and its historical development. As Geoffrey Harvey argues, the county of Wessex was created in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) and developed into setting in the majority of Hardy's fiction and poems. The old Wessex is located in south England. In British history, it is known as the Saxon kingdom after the Roman occupation. Thomas Hardy uses the name "Wessex" and centres it in his native county of Dorset (South Wessex), it includes the county town of Casterbridge. It is an agricultural region known by distinctive local cultures. It comprises the University of Christminster, the barrack city of Melchester, as well as the seaside resorts of Sandbourne and Budmouth. Hardy also points at the variation of the cultural history of his selected regions. The latter are not only known by their agriculture and folk tales and superstitions as we can notice in almost all his novels, but they are also modern as

he argues in his Preface to *Far from the Madding Crowd*. It is ‘a modern Wessex of railways, the penny post, mowing and reaping machines, union workhouses, Lucifer matches, labourers who could read and write, and National School children’. (Quoted in Geoffrey Harvey, 2003:50)

Thomas Hardy faithfully records the economic foundations of rural life, the working of the rural economy, the subsistence level of the labourer, and the socio-economic relations between these workers and their landlords. He also records the process of change brought by efficient mechanised farming. Besides, as Widdowson argues Hardy seems to understand this historical process at work in rural Wessex and points at poverty, exploitation, the dispossession of people from their homes, rural depopulation and urbanisation which accentuate social injustice.

Casterbridge is described as “the complement of the rural life around; not its urban opposite” (Hardy, 1994: 67). Thus it is not really an urban city like Melchester but a region in which Henchard prospered and becomes rich. There, economy is still based on agriculture. The years of the novels setting 1820’s and 1840’s knew agricultural deflation as well as the growth of rural population. The period is also that of intense class mobility, and as Engels notes, many farmlands become day labourers under new conditions as they feel that they begin to lose their peculiarities as class. Citizen revolted at this period and Joseph Arch, for instance, founded the Agricultural Union Movement which began in Warwickshire to ask for more privileges such as the increasing of wages. The period witnesses also the Chartist Movement and the passing of the Reform act, the Swing riots, and the repeal of the Corn Laws, which imposes heavy duties on imported corn and intends to protect English farmers and merchants. Chartist and socialist ideas, were also spread among the intellectuals at that period.

Hardy's aim in writing this novel is to reach historical accuracy especially in the staging of the market town of Casterbridge conceived as the centre of a firmly knit Wessex community. (Geoffrey Harvey,2003:31).The wife sale and the visit of Prince Albert together with the uncertain harvests which precede the repeal of the Corn Law are also real events to which Hardy makes reference. Moreover, as Hardy states in the preface. The novel recalls "the days... of the home Corn Trade on which so much of the action turns" (Thomas Hardy, 1886: V). He also points at the Corn trade at the time setting of the novel. It is around these real events that the author builds his tale. At that epoch, it was hard for a day labourer to find job and keeping it. This situation worsened by the working of both the old and new poor law which opened up severe fracture and separation in agrarian society. In the novel, Hardy also reports the socio- economic relations between the workers and the landlords. Although some of the above cited elements are not noticeably displayed in the wife sale scene, they are referred to and are going to be developed as the novel progresses. As it can be noticed the focus is on the temporal setting rather than the spatial one. The author indeed puts emphasis on the main character, particularly, Henchard and the working of his mind, his hardships, success and finally his downfall. In fact, the setting, thus, is meant to shed light on the character's behaviour.

The wife sale scene which takes place in "Fair Day" business is an allusion to the mercantile spirit of that time and the importance of money. The period turns around the early nineteenth century when a radical change in economy occurred. Trade became an efficient way to gain money and import and export of goods were the job of many businessmen. Though the place is rural as it is shown by the selling of animals, the outcome of industry is later revealed by Farfrae's introduction of the new seed drill machine. Hence, Henchard unemployment and later his progression as successful merchant imbued by the mercantile

spirit of competition portrayed in his relationship with Farfrae is the way Hardy used to treat such themes as family, marriage, love and commerce in his fictional county of Wessex.

Analysis of themes:

Hardy's novels are, indeed, thematically rich. Yet the concern in family, its structure and its rules at the time he wrote the novel, suggest the analysis of the theme of family, marriage and, the theme of commerce and love. The latter is recurrent in Thomas Hardy's narratives yet its treatment in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is somehow distinct from the early novels. This difference is also noticed in the novels that followed the above cited one.

Conjugal Discontent and Economic Vulnerability

Based loosely on the events of the economic depression of the early nineteenth century, Hardy's novel challenges the idealist conception of the working of society and economy in Victorian England. Though there is no real description of the revolt of the working class, Hardy's allusion to the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the working class is noticed by portraying a poor family and the consequences of its poverty. Thus the focus on family structure is meant to give a critical eye to not only the conjugal problems but also to the economic system. The contempt for the existing social order is revealed by Henchard's transgression of the Victorian laws by selling his wife and daughter. Most obvious, the offences against the law in its extreme form are the way Hardy used to serve his purpose of pointing at the drawbacks of the capitalist system.

Built on real events, the theme of family is treated realistically. The novel opening is but a revelation of Hardy's concern in contemporary issues, and his portrayal of the poor one is a way to challenge class stratification at the same time. In addition, Hardy provides controversial ideas about capitalist ideology which confines the individual to the material interest and overlooks the personal happiness. His view on property is thoroughly different from the middle class conception, and though he has not known Karl Marx, he seems to share

his ideas. Thus property as a basis for the capitalist system is viewed as negative since it is the major cause of the deterioration of human relationships. If the capitalists consider property as essential to human stability and to the happiness of the family, one can venture to say that Hardy regards it as a cause of human cruelty. Moreover, He gives a negative view of all the capitalist institutions. Noticeably, marriage institution governed by the patriarchal system is also explored in the same novel. Actually, it is in the opening chapters when Henchard threatens the marriage institution by selling his wife to another man that Hardy points at trade (capitalism) and its derogatory effects on personal relationships. And by doing so, Thomas Hardy is not only attacking family in the first scene but he is also asking for reforms as regard man-woman relationships within the family. In this sense, Showalter comments that “the wife sale scene embodies a powerful male fantasy: Henchard is able to throw off the yoke of marriage by means of simple financial transaction with another man” (Quoted in Joanna Devereux, 2003: 53). Including this striking scene, Hardy means to attack the abusive power of the patriarchal system and its economy. Moreover, “The family group presented at the beginning of the novel, trudging across a generalised and timeless landscape” (Geoffrey Harvey, 2003: 11) can be viewed as the representation of conjugal discontent and economic vulnerability.

The Mayor of Casterbridge portrays family member which as Engels says the husband “hates the sight of them”. As the novel opens, family life is impossible for Henchard within the social order. It is considered as a burden from which he tries to free himself. In his opinion it is the family which hinders his mercantile projects and social advancement. Remarkably the author portrays him as a successful business man after getting rid off his wife and daughter. Yet despite the high status he has managed to reach, he is haunted by remorse and regret .He feels lonely and tries to flee loneliness by killing time in business.

Throughout the novel, Henchard struggles to maintain his position but his struggle ends with his downfall. Henchard's embodiment of the capitalist principles, though they seem beneficial to him at the surface, they are in reality the major cause of his sadness, his anxiety and death at the end of the novel. Besides, Hardy's portrayal of Henchard's family at the opening of the novel sheds light on the hidden side of the Victorian family in general. It tells us how the capitalist system threatens human relationship and diminishes individual freedom. In fact, it is Henchard's unemployment and desolate situation that urges him to get rid of his family members

It is in the wife scene that the Victorian idealisation of family is challenged. Skirting the moral ground on which the family- as the Victorian ethics suggests is built, Hardy focuses instead on the day to day reality of Henchard's family which is the representation of the lower class. Husband and wife ends in separation but at the same time with the forming of the new 'unconventional' family .Newson has already bought Susan and makes of her his wife just after Susan's approval. Yet, Thompson argues that the wife sale should not be seen as a "brutal chattel purchase" (Quoted in Roger Ebbatson, 1994: 49) but as a form of divorce and remarriage since it has been approved by the wife. In fact though the union proves to be unconventional, the people in the Fair foresee it to be a happy one. That is what happens indeed with Susan who later reveals that Newson has been kind to her and led a peaceful life with him. She is also faithful to him without marriage. This situation suggests that Hardy is challenging the conventional family in which its members are locked up within marriage institution. The family unit is seen as a structure which threatens the individual and thus should be dissolved whenever the couple feels that life together is impossible. Henchard and Susan are, indeed, abominable and thus a separation should take place. Yet there is immediately a formation of the new unconventional family.

By doing so, Hardy seems to point at the fact that woman and man can live freely, can lead a happy life and have children without the bounds of marriage. Besides he points at the power of money in the capitalist system which allows wealthy persons to take advantage of the poor one even in what concerned their proper wife. Newson's association with money throughout the novel alludes to this fact and his return to look for his daughter is but a clear evidence of the internalization of the capitalist values. The narrator clearly states that Newson has too much money which is destined to Elisabeth- Jane after his death. Besides he neither speaks about affection nor about love for Susan. Moreover just like Henchard he has been far from his family and it is at that moment that he doubles his wealth. This idea echoes, indeed, Engels conception of the family as a unit which serves more the capitalist system than the individual. As he argues, it is developed as a result of economic and social changes within human society. Thus both Henchard and Newson feel the need for their daughter to inherit their wealth. Noticeably the then poor Henchard does not feel the need for his family and easily gets rid of it. Yet after being a wealthy man, he shows attention to his pretended daughter.

As we have already argued Hardy's harsh questioning of the monogamous family is plainly developed in the opening of the novel. Besides, Hardy's questioning of marriage institution might be grasped in the opening chapters of the novel. It is with the wife sale scene that Hardy criticises this institution. Henchard's poverty as he states is due to his early marriage. And the wife sale scene is a shaken sample of the power of patriarchy. The other unions in the novel do not provide a much more optimistic picture of man -woman relationships under marriage institution. Interestingly as it is stated in the analysis of characterization marriage is the concern of both man and women though questioned by Hardy at the beginning of the novel. All the female characters embody the Victorian conception of marriage which is viewed as a publicly advertised bargain, a social contract, between male

and female whereby they bind their lives and fortunes to one another. Each of them, normally, comes from a family structure of their own with the purpose to form the beginnings of a new family structure. The husband is the dominant controlling figure and the wife is supposed to be quiet and submissive to her husband wishes. This conception is embodied in Susan who submissively obeys her husband and accepts the sale. As the novel progresses, Elisabeth, and Lucetta are the actual portrayal of submissive women. Neither woman work nor try to gain her bread as they regard marriage as their inevitable role in life and welcome it as both materially and emotionally satisfying. It is also regarded as an emancipating experience, as it is displayed in Lucetta's desire to marry Farfrae whom, she thinks, would liberate her from her past and offers her a new life.

For Susan, Marriage is sacred, although she has lived away from her legitimate husband. Despite the hurtful experience she goes through with him, she accepts to return back to him and marry again. Their relation, after their remarriage is not that of natural connection between husband and wife. Henchard remarries her just to relieve his conscious and Susan for a pure material interest, i.e. assure her illegitimate daughter's future. She lives in a bourgeois house with a servant in it but she does not taste a genuine happiness. "He was so kind to her as a man a mayor and churchwarden should be" (Hardy, 1994:100) and not as a husband should be. The question to be asked here is whether there has been a real marriage between Susan and Henchard.

Henchard shows more interest to Elisabeth than to Susan. And his wife's life does not change. In fact there has been no affection neither in the past nor in the present, they rarely converse and despite her illness and death, her husband does not show any emotion. Conversely, with Newson Susan seems to be happy By depicting such a situation, the author is probably alluding to the fact that marriage sometimes does not equal happiness. Susan

shows happiness with Newson rather than with Henchard. She also ethically thinks that he deserves her fidelity. Despite the fact that the narrator does not provide us with details about their relationships, a sexual relationship, regarded as adultery in the Victorian ethics, is revealed in Susan's daughter, Elisabeth Jane.

Moreover, Susan's degrading health is displayed on the day of her second wedding to Henchard. Hardy's descriptions reveal the reality of the Poor Victorian Woman who suffers the hardships of work together with her daughter to win her bread and her pitiful situation within the existing order. Moreover it might be considered as an allusion to the woman and child labour and its consequences. If the woman has been well paid she would not have asked the help of the man who has injured her and would be proud and avoid demanding charity or lie to secure her daughter's life.

The people's commentary too, reveals the Victorian mentality concerning marriage. For the people of Casterbridge the bride is not the ideal woman a mayor deserves. In their opinion it must be a secret behind this union and it really is. These remarks are the embodiment of the Victorian thought about marriage built on interest. Yet Hardy conveys another view on marriage institution in the firmity woman's opinion when she says: "I have not (a husband). Nor another to beat me ...Ah yes Cuxson gone..." (Ibid.p.96); she adds "It isn't worth my old while to think of another husband' ...And yet I'll lay my life I' am as respectable born as she' (Ibid).These words reveal the situation of some women who are injured within the institution of marriage. The woman recalls her husband beating her and her deception in her married life. She, therefore, articulates a purely feminist discourse which says that women can stand by themselves and do not need a man to be respectable. By contrasting two opposing ideas, the first which is transmitted by Lucetta and Susan and the rebellious one which is revealed by a common woman in Casterbridge, Thomas Hardy is

reporting the controversial ideas of the period and his endeavour to challenge the conventional ones.

The bourgeois views on marriage are embodied in Lucetta and Elisabeth Jane also. Lucetta's relation with Farfrae is the portrayal of a marriage based on appearance and business concern. They were attracted to each other by their social status: Lucetta, thanks to her middle class status and behaviour and Farfrae by being a wealthy successful gentleman. Her decision to marry him is a means to free herself from a previous relation with Henchard whom she once wishes to marry. Yet being aware of his changed situation as a wealthy woman, favours Farfrae; thus marriage for her is meant to elevate her social class. Lucetta's marriage with Farfrae takes place far from Casterbridge to avoid any recalling of her past. Lucetta avoids revealing her relation with Henchard to Farfrae because she is afraid to lose him. She gives an ideal image of her and insists on appearances "to hunt" him. She is the portrayal of the Victorian woman who relies on appearances to assure and trace her future in the marriage market. This is displayed by her own words when she attests that Henchard was not worthy of her after his bankruptcy. Thus money and power become two important elements in her life. In addition, Hardy's portrayal of Lucetta as a wretched person despite her wealth reveals that capital should not be the major basis in human relationship. It, indeed, affects negatively the spiritual side of the individual. Her former love relation with Henchard has been freed from social restrains, at least from her part since she does not pay attention to her reputation. However with her changing status she distorts her principles and becomes very careful about her reputation. She expresses her will to be forgotten as the women of Jersey by calling herself Miss Templeton. In short thanks to the portrayal of the female characters Hardy expresses his loath of the Victorian values.

Love and commerce:

Love in general is interrelated with commerce in the novel and Hardy is insisting on the triumph of money over love as we can notice with Lucetta's relation with Henchard and Farfrae. Lucetta's attraction to Farfrae is due to his wealth and his to her is far from being a love at the first sight. It is indeed a relation based on interest. Farfrae's first encounter with Lucetta makes him wish there is no business in the world. Ironically he is actually preparing for a business transaction because love for him is associated with interest. By doing so, Hardy is examining the hypocrisy of the capitalists and their endeavour to gain profit by exploiting human feelings. This idea is confirmed by Farfrae's indifferent feelings towards Lucetta's death and his immediate wish to marry Elisabeth.

The novel does not involve a romance as it is viewed by the romantics and as it can be noticed in *The Return of the Native* or *Two on a tower*. It is rather a realistic presentation of the characters working of mind concerned in their business rather than in their sentimental life but of their business. Despite the female characters association of Farfrae with romanticism, one can observe an interest in money rather in love. Like Henchard he has little success in love, and the reader's acquaintance with him is more as a businessman than a lover. His courting of Lucetta and Elisabeth Jane is just a forced means to succeed in his business transaction. In the same way Henchard courting of Lucetta articulates more a business rivalry than love; she is indeed an object of struggle to Henchard and a means to double wealth for Farfrae. Moreover, Henchard's revelation that he was a woman's hater is but a clear evidence of this claim; as a matter of fact, one can share the view of many critics that say there is absence of real romance, since the narrative goes along with commercial combat.

The effect of commerce on human relationship is revealed in the opening chapters when Henchard sells his wife. It is this sale that destructs the family and his attempt to repair what he has once done is not profitable. In reality Susan accepts to return to remarry him not out of love but out of material interest. In the same way, Henchard courts Susan "with

business like determination” (Hardy, 1994:93). Susan accepts to remarry him for the sake of his daughter’s reputation. This foreshadows Elisabeth real parenting and confirms Susan anxiety about the future of her illegitimate daughter.

This situation suggests the importance that money holds in personal relationships and its effect on the individual. Henchard cannot tolerate the loss of his social standing war of prices, thus make of Farfrae his enemy. Thus, love is transformed into hatred and rivalry. Moreover, Susan’s feigning of the real paternity of her daughter and her insistence to reveal it just after her marriage, articulates the Victorians ethics of the fact that woman must take the name of her husband. Thus whether illegitimate or not Elisabeth is going to forget her father’s name and take the name of her husband. Surprisingly, Henchard discovers the reality of her step daughter in the same night he is planning to give her his name. His desire to let Elisabeth Jane bear his name reveals his yearning to possession; she is his own daughter as Susan is his own wife and Farfrae his own manager. This desire for possession referred to by Engels when he speaks about the origin of the family. Family indeed becomes important with the development of private property; it is, thus, built on the principle of capitalism. When Henchard discovers her reality he cannot help showing his repulsive behaviour towards her. His reaction was so harmful that he does not miss the opportunity to humiliate her. This behaviour is undoubtedly due to his discontent but it also articulates the Victorian views on illegitimate children who are not considered as respectable members of the Victorian society but as source of shame.

The apprehension towards name and its association with money is revealed here; being not his daughter Henchard loses his family members who would inherent him. He begins to feel despaired and lives hard moments. Ignorant of what is happening with Henchard, Elisabeth tries to be kind to him but his disgust of her urges her to quit the house. Henchard anxiety is revealed when despite of his disappointment offer to help her with a sum of money.

Love is once again expressed by giving money as he did with Lucetta while he announces his marriage to Susan.

Hardy's association of money with love is also revealed by Lucetta calling herself Miss Templeton, she becomes, in fact, the latter's heiress and wants to forget about her former name and prefers to be called by a name that is associated with money. More than that, it is after adopting this name that Lucetta distorts her way of looking at things and her conduct. Astonishingly Henchard and Lucetta witness the same tragic end. Hardy's presentation as a wealthy powerful business man in chapter five is immediately followed by tracing the steps of his downfall. The fact of selling his wife and daughter makes him suffer all his life. Besides, despite his encounter with Susan and his seeming remarriage with her, the main character has never lived a moment of peace, and all his actions and his obstacles concerning his business seems to be retribution for his deeds.

His misery reaches its peak with his bankruptcy and the revelation of his secret. This situation can be interpreted by the fact that the author is questioning the Victorian ethics of the importance of money in the stability of the individual and the society; thus money becomes the source of nuisance rather than happiness. It is because of his greed for it that he loses his humanity, the people whom he loved and also the respect of his community. After his death a letter is given to Elisabeth in which it is written:

That Elisabeth and Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on
account of me;
That I be not bury'd in consecrated ground.
That no Sexton be asked to toll the bell.
That nobody is wished to see my dead body.
That no mourners walk behind me at my funeral
That no flour be planted on my grave
That no man remember me
To this I put my name

'Michael Henchard'(Hardy; 1994: 384)

His Solitude is caused by his disillusionment about the Victorian ethics which begins to appear as Henchard wishes death and attempts to commit suicide. The effigy reveals to him that he must continue his life. Yet the months that succeed this episode have been heavy to him. He disbelieves in every thing the Victorians hold dear and his wish to never remember him is the revelation of the shameful life he has led to such an extent that he thinks that he is not fit for a descent funeral as a respectable man. Thus, Henchard ends tragically while Farfrae prospers in both the personal and the professional life. His success in professional life is due basically to the introduction of industry in agriculture. Indeed Farfrae is acquainted with the principles of the capitalist system to be wise to preserve his place in the mercantile market, the thing that Henchard overlooks (the survival of the fittest), As a matter of fact social ambition seems more important than human relationship.

From the analysis of male and female characters and the themes of the novel, one can notice Hardy's examination of the effects of the Victorian capitalist ethics on both men and women. The effect on children however is not as developed as we can notice in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* or *Jude the Obscure*. But it is worth mentioning that together with the wife, child witnessed almost the same situation within the family; child and mother are sold in the opening of the novel. Neglect of the children, as Engels argued is only too common among the English working-people, and leads, for instance, to Elisabeth Jane's death after three months following her sale. Moreover, the exploitation of children is articulated by Susan's use of her daughter to reach her aim. Henchard, yearning for success and material prosperity, gets rid of his wife and child and later loses all the persons whom he cherishes. He suffers from loneliness and ends tragically. Lucetta's desire for respectability causes her depressing anxiety which leads to her death, too. As for Hardy's portrayal of Farfrae and Elisabeth's relation as wife and husband, it might be considered as the representation of the Victorian family on the ground of which the capitalist system is built and maintained. Despite

Henchard's tragic end, Hardy seems to perpetuate the capitalist system in Farfrae. This opposition with Henchard might be considered as a reflection on the powerful place capitalism held in England at the time. Nevertheless Hardy's startling and unexpected shift in conception in the coming chapters makes us wonder whether he is really challenging this system or is rather endorsing it. Henchard's tragic end, Farfrae's success as a patriarch and his marriage with the wealthy Lucetta, adding to his success as a capitalist at the end of the novel make one deduce that his position towards capitalism lacks clarity. He basically represents two contradictory lines of arguments which make the work ambiguous as regard his views of the Victorian social and economic system. Yet Hardy's ending of the novel might be just a response to the editors demand in order to sell it .Hardy, indeed, once reveals to William Dean Howells that he did not write the story as it was in his mind. As such class conflict, poverty and social problems are widely treated in Hardy's later novels, *Tess of the D'Uurervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* which are going to be studied in the coming chapters. Each novel can be grasped as an attempt to develop solutions or alternatives to problems concerning society.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the effects of patriarchy and capitalism on the poor families who serve the bourgeoisie and how the latter exploit them. Taking as a paradigm the economic burden of Tess's family and its hardships, I attempt to focus on Hardy's concern with social class and contemporary issues caused by these inequalities. Thus the novel is going to be seen as an expression of the author's revulsion of the existing order. The monogamous poor family of Tess is going to be treated as the portrayal of the lower class which is subject to abuse, neglect and ill-treatment. The latter is exerted not only by the bourgeoisie towards the lower class but also by parents towards children, because of economic deprivation.

As Frederick Engels states in *The Condition of the working Class* (1845), the nature and attitude of the parents, the size of the family and the general home conditions in which the child is brought up must inevitably have an impact on his life. This issue is observed in Tess's family. For instance, the impact of alcoholism on the family is portrayed in John D'Urbeyfield who, among other reasons, because of his abuse in drink makes his family suffer. Besides, to shed light on this miserable situation of such families as the D'Urbeyfields, I attempt to consider Tess as a child and as a premature mother and insist on her social class and her function as a day labourer. Moreover, the study of her relation with her family together with middle class families, the D'Urbervilles and the Clares, is going to illustrate how such themes as class, family, love, and sexuality are tackled.

Tess's story might be viewed as an account of a deep and large experience, not only of a single individual but of the poor in general.-Thus one can infer that the story bears a social criticism, and venture to say that it is a reliable document which any historian or sociologist can use. The novel tells the story of Tess D'Urbeyfield, a beautiful country girl "the daughter of a fatalistic mother and a shiftless father" (Frank.R.Giordono.Jr, 1982:126). As the novel opens, we are first acquainted with her father and learn of her noble lineage. D'Urbeyfields is

the lineal representative of the ancient and Knightly family of the d'Urbervilles. Tess's tragedy starts after blaming herself to be guilty of the killing of the horse, the only bread winner of the household. Her situation is becoming worse and worse especially with her father's degrading health. Consequently, Tess decides to take care of her father and mother, as well as her sisters and brothers, despite her young age.

The novel, as one can notice, traces Tess's tragedy caused by economic problems which lead parents to sacrifice their own children just to get money. The mother Joan, indeed hands her to the life and the pity of the bourgeoisie in order to gain a living and help overcome poverty. Unfortunately, for the victimized girl, she becomes the prey of a young bourgeois gentleman, her employer, Alec D'Urbervilles, who is supposed to protect her as he is believed to be her relative. Tess returns to her home in Marlott, and becomes a "spouseless mother" (Thomas Hardy, 2005:113). There she goes out of the house and works in fields taking the child with her without any embarrassment. After her child's death, she decides to begin a new life and look for a job. She moves to Talbothays and works as a milker in a great dairy where she takes pleasure in befriending three of her fellow milkmaids, Izz, Retty, and Marian and meets again the man of the May Dance already seen at the opening of the novel, Angel Clare. The latter is fond of farming and comes to learn this business in this same farm.

Angel is attracted by Tess who seems to him as the "ideal" woman he can marry and help him in farming. Tess also idealizes Angel and profoundly loves him. Despite her past, she is persuaded to engage herself to him. Attempts at revealing her secret have been numerous, but it is until their marriage night that Angel hears the confession. At the same night, Angel has already told Tess about a relation with an old woman in London, a deed that Tess pardons at once. Yet despite Angel's seeming liberal views, he is proved to be unable to overcome the Victorian prejudices against a "ruined woman"; he gives up his wife after giving her some money and goes to South America.

Tess leaves the village towards Flint comb- Ash where she attempts to gain a living. She is employed with other women because she can be paid less than men. Though she is exploited by her master, she accepts stoically the situation since she is enlivened by a hope that Angel will return back someday. Unfortunately, she meets again her old seducer and finally approves to become his mistress, since it is the only way to solve her family from starvation. The D'Urbeyfields have been, so to speak, obliged to leave the house after John's death; for they have held it just for his life time. More than that, they are not accepted in the village owing to the parents' behaviour and more particularly after "the shame" brought by their daughter, Tess.

It was indeed quite true that the household had not been shining examples either of temperance, soberness or chastity. The father and even the mother had got drunk at times, the younger children seldom had gone to church and the eldest daughter had done queer unions. By some means the village had to be kept queer (Ibid.p. 445)

The decision to go back to Alec is taken when Tess loses any hope to see her husband again. Contrary to what she has expected, Angel does come and finds her while she is living with Alec. In her agony, she kills him and flees towards the New Forest where she hides herself with her husband. But they are soon taken by the police and Tess pays the penalty of her crime. Tess's last word to Angel is to marry her little sister Liza- Lu, a deed which is common in Marlott as she declares. The novel closes with Angel and Lisa- Lu walking together and the narrator's reflection "'Justice' was done, and the president of the immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess" (Ibid.p.506).

The novel's publication took place in 1891, a time of difficult social change as England was witnessing a slow and severe transition from an agricultural nation to the modern industrial one. The period also was that of intense debates of gender arrangements and social justice. It also witnessed the printing of books about women marriage and social and sexual equality. Despite the fact that the feminist movement began in the 1850's, almost

all the female population became more aware of the injustice of which they were victims in the last years of the nineteenth century (1890s). Many elements contributed to this consciousness.

The consequences of urbanisation and industrialisation and the development of press together with the ideological atmosphere of religious doubts favoured the spread of new ideas about women and men in general. The feminist movement at that time managed to snatch some important rights; for instance in the same year the novel was published the High Court denied the husband the right to imprison his wife in pursuit of conjugal rights. Besides, in work, women sided with men in requesting equal wages for equal work and supported them to improve their working condition and their claim to have the right to vote. Hence the Reform ACT OF 1884 and the Redistribution Act of 1885 which attributed the right to vote to agricultural labourers were passed and the claim of property was elided.

Though the novel was published in this context of supposedly liberal ideas, it was subject to a harsh criticism because of its transgression of the Victorian moral code concerning sexuality. It was also subject to several revisions and censorship (the last edition took place in 1912). A year before the novel's publication, Hardy has written "Candour in English fiction" where "he laments the damage done to novels in England by the power of censorship" (Geoffrey Harvey, 2003:57). He also denounces and attacks prudery, considering it as "the enemy of artistic and human sincerity" (Mathews Adrian, 1992:119) since the novelists are obliged to create characters who act contrary to their nature.

The harsh disapproval and bad reception of the novel, particularly after adding the challenging subtitle "pure woman" to the first edition can be exemplified by M.A. Oliphant who reacted strongly to the words "a pure woman faithfully presented":

(A pure woman) is not betrayed into fine living and fine clothes as the mistress of her seducer by any stress of poverty or money ...we do not believe for one moment that Tess would have done it ...we do not believe him ...whoever that

person was who went straight from the endearments of Alec d'Urbervilles to those of Angel Clare...Mr Hardy must Excuse us for saying pointedly and firmly that she was not Tess , neither was she a pure woman. (M.E.Oliphant, 1896:138)

Despite such condemnation the novel has been sold excellently and its celebrity has reached both England and America. The story is so attractive that it has been filmed in America three times, but a recent successful television production is made by BBC (1998).As far as literary criticism is concerned, many approaches have been applied in the analysis of the novel. As my dissertation is an attempt to show Hardy's examination of the working of society and the development of its economic and social institutions, I shall mention some essays on the context of Marxist and historical criticism that views literature as a source of knowledge about society, its structure, inequalities, oppressions and the class struggle.

The humanist Marxist critic Arnold Cattle's book *An introduction to the English novel* (1953) examines Hardy's faith in the agricultural order, his disdain for the "deraciné" individual and his belief in the goodness of nature. Besides, by giving a socio agricultural dimension of Tess's work and her status and function as a farm labourer, issues of class are treated. Her tragedy, he maintains, is not due to her personal actions but to merely economic forces in which she and her peasant economy are caught in the Dorset of the 1890's. Arnold Cattle considers Hardy's narrative as a thesis novel and a social document. It traces the process by which the peasantry is disintegrated because of the extension of the capitalist system. The author views Tess as the symbol of the destruction of the peasants' independence and their own native nature.(Quoted in Geoffrey Harvey, 2003:175).He also argues: "the subject of Tess of the D'Urbervilles ... is stated clearly by Hardy to be the fate of a "pure woman" in fact it is the destruction of the English peasantry" (Ibid) .

Besides, Douglas Brown's *Thomas Hardy* (1954) records the outcomes of free trade, poor harvests and the import of cheap food .He focused on Hardy's agrarian society and the drawbacks of industrialisation and the invasion of the urban culture.He is concerned with Tess

as less an individual than with her representative function as the agricultural community in its moment of ruin caused by the economic and the spiritual invaders of country life. Besides Clare is seen as “an impassive instrument of some will, some purpose stemming from the disastrous life of the cities ... and doomed to destroy the worthiness, innocence and vitality of country life” (Harvey, 2005: 76). Following the same thread of Marxist ideas, I am going to focus particularly on Hardy’s representation of family issues and the effect of the bourgeois values on the poor individual. Hence, I Attempt to shed light on Hardy’s attack against capitalism and its principles by analysing, characters, and Tess’s mobility in different spaces along with her struggle. I endeavour also to examine Hardy’s denigration of the system of class and the Victorian family values.

Analysis of Characters

Each character in the novel is relevant and serves Hardy’s preoccupation in questioning poverty, class disparity and capitalism. As it has already been stated, Tess is the central character that bears an authentic presentation of the reality of the poor in late Victorian England. Other characters present the same real image but seem to be created for the sole purpose to focus on Tess’s tragedy caused not by fate, as some critics maintain, but by purely economic troubles and family burden. Thus, it is through this character that the author questions the Victorian family values.

Tess: Victim of the Patriarchal -Capitalist System

Tess is definitely the central character of the novel that bears her name. The novel opens by a chapter entitled “the Maiden”. The latter refers to Tess, she is described as “a fine and handsome girl – not handsomer than some others, possibly- but her mobile peony mouth and large innocent eyes added eloquence to colour and shape. (Thomas Hardy; 2005:10). She is thus physically represented as a common girl. She is also proud, too proud to ask favour from her admirers and too ashamed to let anyone know the reasons of her father’s inability to

go to work. Though she attends school, and passes the Sixth Standard of the National Schools, she speaks dialect and the Standard English at the same time.

Tess is, thus, the embodiment of a country girl with all qualities of simplicity and humbleness and the one who is more intelligent and more educated than her parents. Yet her social position as a poor girl has prevented her from following her studies. She is also innocent and closely resembles the “wench” described in Wordsworth’s poetry. Furthermore, the narrator makes it clear that “To almost every body she was a fine picturesque country girl and no more.”(Ibid.p.2).This depiction reveals Tess’s physical attraction and foreshadows her tragedy.

Tess is more aware about family duties than her parents, the peculiarity that gives her a spiritual superiority that is missing in her family. She is the embodiment of a child, born in a poor family and forced to work and be responsible. As a girl –mother, as the narrator states, Tess assumes her mother’s and father’s role in taking care of the children. She becomes a bread winner instead of her father who proves to be not effective in his role as a family leader. She takes the initiative to take the beehives by herself. It is at that moment that she judges herself to be responsible of the killing of the horse, the single resource to get bread for the family. Hardy’s portrayal of such a family can be meant to give an antithetical image of the Victorian household and shed light on the reality of the lower class.

Tess’s exaggerated responsibility to retrieve her family fortune urges her to accept her mother’s scheme to be put in a way of a grand marriage. The D’Urbeyfields’ claiming kin via their daughter is believed to be the only way to escape poverty. Thus her mother simply offers her to the bourgeois family and the girl submissively accepts her mother’s plan. By creating such a situation, Hardy is alluding to poverty which urges the head of the family to use his own children to gain a living. This idea can also be illustrated by Abraham’s words when looking at the stars and asking whether the one he is living in is the blighted or the sound one.

As Tess answers that they are living in the blighted one, he sadly attests that if he is living in the sound one Tess “will be a rich lady ready made, and not have had to be made rich by marrying a gentleman” (Thomas Hardy; 2005:32) in this quotation Abraham might be considered as Hardy’s mouthpiece. In reality, one can suggest that through the boy’s utterances the author expresses his hatred of the existing order which forces an innocent young girl to offer herself to the mercies of the Bourgeoisie.

Tess’s younger age and gender reveal her innocence and ignorance as well as her helplessness in the Victorian world. She is the portrayal of a neglected child, who lacks wise parenting, and a premature mother to both her illegitimate child, “Sorrow”, and her own sisters and brothers. The girl ignores many things about human nature, owing to her younger age and her mother’s neglect to teach her. This is the main reproach Tess makes to her mother “Why didn’t you tell me that there was danger in men-folk? Why didn’t you warn me?” (Thomas Hardy, 2005:101). Noticeably, Joan has already scolded her daughter “Why didn’t ye think of doing some good for your family instead o’ thinking only of yourself?” (Ibid) Ironically, it is Joan’s self-interest which is revealed here. And her neglect to teach her seems to be not out of ignorance but done on purpose. Though a child, Joan prepares her to appear as a woman ready to “marry” or more exactly, as some critics imply, ready for prostitution.

Tess is now a girl-mother of a child whom she loves even if she hates its father. Regardless of how she might be viewed in the village, she goes out and works in harvesting taking the child with her. The scene described recalls Nathaniel Hawthorne’s account of Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*. Yet despite this similarity, one can hardly associate Tess with Hyster since the latter’s relation with her lover is deliberate and Tess’s is proved to be against her will. She accepts her situation calmly while her father is ashamed of her and forbids the coming of the parson to baptize the child “prying into his affairs, just then, when, by her shame, it had become more necessary to hide them (Ibid.p.115). By doing so, Hardy

points at the forces of patriarchy by which class and sexual behaviour determine a woman's worth. Though, as one can notice, John is the cause of her downfall, he does not question himself about his girl's situation neither does he express regret to let her leave home at an early age. Through Tess, the author questions the Victorian values and put off the veil on some parents who do not deserve to have children.

Time and again Tess displays a starting capacity to attempt to forget her bygones and become financially independent, thus help her family survive. She persuades herself that "The recuperative power which pervaded organic nature was surely not denied to maidenhood alone" (Hardy, 2005: 124). In her struggle, she displays courage, resistance and a strong determination to begin her life anew. Nevertheless, the Victorian patriarchal forces prove to be stronger than her. Consequently her ideal love story with Angel can not end happily. Angel is the product and the portrayal of these same values which he cannot escape. Tess's relation with Angel is, thus, not better than that with Alec. Indeed, both of them destroy her. Therefore, the patriarchal system of which Tess is a victim is the element that Hardy is questioning here. It is not the fault of Tess that she is issued from a poor family, it is neither her fault if she is trapped in the Chase and dishonoured but it is her parents' blunder caused by their failure in supporting their own household. It is also unfair to let Tess pay for a thing she is not responsible of. Hardy clearly pays Tess tribute by calling her a 'pure woman'. He is thus challenging the Victorian appropriation of woman's sexuality through the glorification of virginity and chastity. Besides, he also explores the role that the capitalist economic system plays in Tess's tragedy as she is forced to trade her flesh.

John and Joan D'Urbeyfield: Tess's Family Burden

Hardy represents a weak and reckless parental figure exemplified by John. He is Tess's powerless father since family responsibilities prove to be too great for him. He becomes dreamy, particularly when he hears about his ancestry. He follows his wife's scheme

as blindly and helplessly as a child. This challenge of the stereotyped Victorian father's figure is meant to break the Victorian values and give an authentic image of what was happening within some Victorian families. The narrator starts by describing him at the moment he discovers that he belongs to a noble family. The scene is one of the rising actions of the novel. It is, indeed, from then on that John loses any sense of effective responsibility for his family, and begins to drink heavily.

While the Mayor's opening scene locates Henchard within a family context, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the novel begins by portraying John alone, discovering the secret of his family ancestry. This might be done in order to focus on the importance of the class and names in the Victorian era. The news makes him reflect in this way 'and here I have been knocking about, year after year, from pillar to post, as if I was no more than the commonest feller in the parish' (Thomas Hardy, 2005:3). The reflection suggests John's disgust about his situation as a hard poor worker. Hence, the news seems to relieve him and give him some hope to have happy days and respectable place not only within his own family, but also in the village. He, thus, feels proud, and regrets the fact that he has not been aware of his present status earlier.

As soon as John hears the news, he begins to behave as a wealthy authoritative man as he calls the youth "boy" and ordered him to take the basket home. He also gives him instructions about the meal he wants to eat. This ironic scene reveals John's naivety and his ignorance of the economic and political changes in late Victorian era. Names without money have no importance as the parson says "It is a fact of some interest to the local historian and genealogist, nothing more" (Ibid). It means that money rises above nobility and becomes the only means in class distinction. John has not understood that and considers the name as a way to wealth and prosperity.

The reader is acquainted first, with John's daughter and later with his wife Joan and the other children: The old brother Abraham and her sister Liza-Lu of twelve and a half, the youngest ones Hope and Modesty, a boy of three and finally a baby who has just completed his first year. John has already lost two other children who died in infancy. As it can be noticed, John's family is large and his income is meagre to feed all these souls. Besides, Hardy's presentation of John as a drunkard is meant to reveal the plight of the working class which owing to their bad condition looks for refuge in the inns and in drinking. Moreover, though he does not work in industry, the latter affects him in a way or in another. The goods of the agrarian country side had witnessed a harsh competition with the imported ones especially when the roads were built and trade prospered. Hence, like Henchard, John suffers from poverty. Though John experiences the same situation of deficiency and helplessness as Michael Henchard, his reaction to the situation is totally different. While the latter gets rid of all his family, lived alone and works hard to be rich, the former refuses work and rely on his ancestry and his daughter to help him survive. Both he and his wife received the news of their noble ancestry with enthusiasm and think about promising days of comfort and happiness. In fact, the submitting poor class is portrayed in the D'Urbeyfields' household. Tess's parents can be considered as victims of the Victorian social and economic system. They are also responsible of their daughter's tragedy. Joan indeed as the narrator comments 'makes her (Tess) appear as a woman when she was not much more as a child'(Ibid.p.55) As it has already been stated, they use their daughter to gain a living, and when she returns home as a lone mother, she is not welcomed and scolded by both.

I have already pointed at Joan's selfishness and John's irresponsibility in the analysis of Tess's character. What can be added is the fact that the author in his description of Tess's parents, is pointing at the fact that not all parents can educate and feed their children within the existing order. Moreover the numerous children can also reveal Tess's parents'

unconsciousness and their selfishness which is intensified by using their minor daughter to bring bread to the large household, a responsibility which is supposed to be theirs. By presenting this reverse case, Hardy records the gloomy reality of some Victorian families, particularly among the poor.

Besides, the hierarchical relation between the couple is totally different from the Victorians. John is not the bread winner and it is Joan who thinks and decides about the future of the household and the husband has now to approve his wife's scheme. More than that, Joan's selfishness is meant to point at the fact that there are many children who suffer in the family unit. Joan's recklessness and irresponsibility is revealed in the narrator's comment:

This going to hunt up her shiftless husband at the inn was one of Mrs Durbeyfield still extant enjoyment in the muck and muddle of rearing children...to sit there for an hour or two by his side and dismiss all thought and care of the children during the interval, made her happy.(Thomas Hardy,2005:21)

By considering this situation, the author is certainly asking for some reforms to protect children from their own parents. The family is thus far from being this ideal one which may give birth to happy children and which build a healthy nation. Besides, John's news concerning his family brings him nothing but disaster. This situation reveals Hardy's concern in class mobility and the importance the Bourgeoisie holds in society thanks to money with which she bought not only products but names also. Thus, what had been called nobility at one point of the history of England, lost its consideration and paved the way to another class, the bourgeoisie which behaved, lived and died to gain and maintain a great amount of money whatever the means. The bourgeoisie is presented by Alec d'Urbervilles.

Alec D'Urbervilles: the Embodiment of the "nouveaux riches"

The bourgeois ethic and laissez-faire capitalism of the modern world is presented by the nouveau riche, Alec, the usurper of an ancient name. His Family name is not D'Urbervilles. Old Simon Stoke, his money lender father, has adopted the name after making

a fortune as an honest trader and wants to carry on with it in order to make people forget about his work as a smart tradesman. Alec “inherits with his father's wealth the power and sensual brutality that go with the medieval robber baron's name. He employs this violent power on Tess,” (Simon GATRELL, 1988: xv). Alec’s physical presentation is that of a bourgeois. He is portrayed as a tall man and the way he puts the cigar to his mouth, together with his gig and spirited horse adding to his comments when seeing Tess reveal his superficiality. The narrator adds “he had an almost swarthy complexion, with full lips, badly moulded, though red and smooth, above which was a well groomed black moustache with curled points (Ibid.p.43). Alec is a manipulative, young man who tries to seduce an inexperienced girl who works for his family then rapes her at the end. His proprietarily address to Tess “my beauty” reveals his quality of a proprietor, not only of the home where he is living but also of the ones who work in his mansion. His characteristics of trickery seducer and an opportunist and his manners towards Tess seem from the onset to be a scheme to make of her his prey: “supposing we walk round the grounds to pass the time, my pretty Coz? He says. Besides when she speaks about her situation and her looking for a job he warns her about mentioning the fact that she is his relative; because, he is, certainly, ashamed of her status as a poor girl.

Alec’s call for Tess to work in his mother’s house is not an innocent behaviour at all. His bad intention towards the poor girl is foreshadowed from the beginning. In his way to Trantridge with Tess , he tries many times to approach her and kiss her. Besides, of his family relation to her he does not tell a word to his mother. She is rather presented as the employee who is going to look after the birds. In chapter nine, the narrator makes it clear that Tess is doing many jobs with the birds, yet for Alec, Tess must assume another function; that of a mistress for which her mother has already prepared her. He knows that his status as a wealthy gentleman is going to seduce all the family, and this helps him get what he wants from the

innocent girl. Joan observes that he wears a beautiful diamond ring, and from then on the mother cherishes the hope to be her daughter's "husband".

Moreover Alec's disdain of the lower class, which, as he pretends, are born to serve him, as any other bourgeois, can be noted in the following "what am I, to be repulsed so by a mere chit like you? (Ibid) More than that, the author stresses the fact that it is Alec who has caused Tess's tragedy from the beginning to the end of the novel. The hypocrisy of this class is also portrayed in his conversion to Evangelism and his work in the church, then his withdrawal from it as he encounters Tess. He makes Tess swear that she will never tempt him in the future, the thing that Tess does. Alec's behaviour is, in fact, justified by the Victorian prejudices concerning women temptation towards man. Noticeably, Alec's power over Tess is significant from the beginning when he gives her "a kiss of mastery". He indeed does not regard her as his relative but rather as an object of desire and one of his country conquests.

It is worth mentioning that, at first, the magazine reader was informed of a fake marriage by which Tess was entrapped, instead of the seduction of Tess by Alec. The thing that Hardy changed in his novel in order to examine the reality of the working class and the cruelty and the power of the bourgeoisie towards the poor. Indeed Alec exploitation of Tess is representative of middle class exploitation to the lower one. The latter is experiencing tension of the intractable materiality of the social and economic world in which it lives. In short, Tess's murder of Alec may reveal Hardy's desire to get rid off the bourgeoisie and form a classless society.

Angel Clare: the Portrayal of the Victorian Prejudices about Woman

It has already been mentioned that women are given no rights within the capitalist system both in their own family and in the society. And, to recall Marx's ideas, they are free labour hand which helps the capitalist acquire more power and money. To reach this materialistic aim, the Victorian family values requires man to marry a submissive wife and a

virgin one as a way to assure the procreation of legitimate heirs and thus perpetuate their name and double their capital. These same ideas are embodied in Angel Clare himself.

The reader is acquainted with Angel in the opening chapters of the novel (chapter two), together with his two brothers. While the two brothers express their snobbism, “dancing in public with a troop of country boys- suppose we should be seen “(Ibid.p.12), they say. Angel regrets the fact that he does not dance with Tess yet “she was so modest, so expressive, she had looked so soft in her thin white gown that he felt he had act stupidly. (Ibid.p.14). Tess also is attracted by him, his way of speaking appealed to her so much. Alec reappeared in phase the third (The Rally), after Tess’s violation and her son’s death, exactly in chapter seventeen but now as a dairyman’s pupil learning farming in all its branches. Nevertheless, while Tess works in Mr Richard Crick’s farm to gain a living as a milker, Angel is learning how to become a land owner and a successful farmer.

Angel is the intellectual, free-thinking son of a clergyman, “quite the gentleman born” (Ibid.p.140) whom Tess loves with her whole being. In fact, Hardy describes him as that “sample product of the last five and twenty years, a man who follows John Stuart Mill and Mathew Arnold’s. His desire for equality is shown by his choice to marry a woman from the lower class and also in his changing behaviour observed by his family when he pays them a visit to ask about marrying Tess. Unlike his brothers who call her Agricultural girl, Angel maintains his opinion about the farm girl and refuses the lady proposed by his mother. Unfortunately, despite his love for Tess, he deserts her as soon as he hears, of her earlier misadventure. He has, indeed, an ideal perception of her “What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!” (Hardy, 2005:150). He also calls her Artemis and Demeter. This idealisation has soon melted away after hearing his wife’s confession. Angel’s strict Victorian religious education is stronger than any liberal thought that he has read in John Stewart Mill

or in Mathew Arnold's books, and the Victorian values weighs heavily on his accounts of his love to Tess.

Angel's rough application to Tess of the hypocritical Victorian double standard of sexual morality and the importance given to virginity reveals his strong adoption of middle class values, even though he shows opposition to his father to be religious man like his elder brothers. Consequently, it is the decision to quit her on the ground of her 'impurity' that re-engages Tess in a fresh cycle of suffering on the bleak upland farm at Flintcomb-Ash, directing her to her re-encounter with Alec and his murder. Angel too is responsible of Tess's tragedy as he abandons her and thus lets her live in bad conditions that push her to prostitution. He is capable to love her passionately even though she belongs to the lower class, but he is also able to quit her for conventional concerns. Thus the heroine is once again victim of convention. Nonetheless, and after years of separation, Angel manages to get rid of the Victorian prejudices and believes in Tess's entrapment. He pardons her and returns to reunite with her. His shifting ideas reveal that convention is not always right and is far from being the laws of nature. Unluckily, When Angel realizes this fact, it was too late.

Tess's mobility and struggle for bread

The novel is set in 1880s and 1890s. Similar to *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the events take place in the fictional county of Wessex that is viewed by most humanist critics as a timeless place which reveals the permanent truths of human nature. It is also based on real events. As it is stated in *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, several experiences took part in its composition. "Poverty and starvation were wide spread in the country in the first two decades of Hardy's life "(Frank.R.Giordono.Jr, 1982:20). England witnessed a difficult social change as it moved slowly and painfully from the traditional agricultural nation to the modern industrial one. Businessmen and "new money" enjoyed a high social status and joined the ranks of the social elite. Nevertheless, some aristocratic families or "old money," lost their

status and were obscured by the bourgeoisie. Tess's story is but a representation of this change, since Tess's parents, and their tragedy is caused by hearing the parson's news about their noble ancestry and their dream like vision of belonging to an ancient, aristocratic family. Like in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the opening of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is suggested by real events in Hardy's life. Florence Hardy reports that the author has overheard a drunkard on the street corner of Dorset town singing about his Norman ancestry and family vault. Other details such as the killing of the horse and the blood stain in the ceiling when Alec is stabbed are drawn from reports in the local newspaper, the Dorset county chronicle. It is also stated that Hardy has witnessed the execution of a woman for the murdering of her husband.

The novel is also set in contemporary agricultural troubles caused by the driving out of the community to the urban individual life. Similar to Henchard we are acquainted with John D'Urbeyfield as a drunkard. But while the former sells his wife and daughter and gets rid of his family and its burden, the latter offers his daughter to the pity of the bourgeoisie in order to help his family survive. It is because of the abuse of alcohol which is extended after hearing the information that he belongs to a noble family that he becomes weak, dreamy and cannot work. John's and Joan's interest in the upper class position which they may get by using their daughter is the portrayal of a rapid mobility of the classes at that time and the individual paramount interest in money to reach such an advantageous place.

The time setting of the novel is thus characterized by years of poverty and the rising of bourgeois *arrivistes* who tightly hold the power of patriarchy by controlling and directing both women and workers. The latter's hardships they go through and their anxiety are portrayed by Tess's mobility from one space to another in her struggle to get bread. The novel opens by a description of Marlott, the nineteenth century rural beautiful landscape:

THE VILLAGE OF MRLOTT LAY amid the north-eastern undulations of the beautiful Vale of Blakemore or Blackmoor aforesaid, an engirdled and secluded region, for the most part untrodden as yet by tourist or

landscape- painter, though within a four hours journey from London (Hardy, 2005:7)

The village is thus isolated and neglected by people since they become attracted by the life in cities rather than villages. The narrator also describes some of the old customs of the village such as The May Day dance when women are dressed beautifully, walk and dance in nature. This description may reveal Hardy's nostalgia about the simple common life of country men and women. It may also serve as a contrast with what is coming later in the novel to help illustrate the effects of the economic changes of the period on the natural life of country men and women. Tess has lived in this atmosphere until the age of fifteen or sixteen when she has felt obliged to work for her family's survival. In her quest for money, Tess has to move through three places: Trantridge , Thalbothays and Flintcomb-Ash. Though she bears a supposedly noble name, she is far from being an independent farmer, for she has, indeed, led the life of the most wretched proletarian. Moreover she suffers not only from the helplessness of her sex, but also from a callous economic order.

Tess's journey to Trantridge is perceived as the only way for the survival of her family, yet it is this journey which causes her tragedy. Indeed it is here that she experiences her eventual sexual abuse by Alec. The experience can be viewed as an example of so many working class women who, because of poverty, have no safety against sexual harassment of their bosses. Now Tess is compelled to suffer degradation at the hand of a wealthy man. Her return to her village with a fatherless baby expresses her disillusionment about her class in the society. She courageously faces people and works in harvesting. After that, she works as a milker in Thalbothays, a decision she takes after her child's death. The setting is rural portrayed by the cows and milking together with the rustic descriptions. There is also another activity in Thalbothays which is trade, it is exemplified by Angel and Tess's selling milk. Thus the relation between the dairy industry of Dorset and the market in London is emphasised when Angel and Tess take the milk to the railway station. Besides "Tess's

speculation about the anonymous London customers for their milk situates her within a larger economic and cultural world” (Geoffrey Harvey, 2005:85)

It is in Flintcomb-Ash that Tess endures the hardships of the brutal exploitation of human labour. She is selected by Groley for her strength and quickness in feeding the threshing machine. The latter reveals the introduction of the modern farming methods by Farmer Groby’s use of the new mechanical threshing machine under the supervision of its engineer. An accurate description of the hard work in using the machine is given in chapter forty seven

Close under the eaves of the stack, and as yet barely visible, was the red tyrant that the women had come to serve – a timber framed construction- with straps and wheels appertaining- the threshing machine which, whilst it was going, kept up a despotic demand upon the endurance of their muscles and nerves (Thomas Hardy,2005:407)

One can suggest that the powerful threshing scene stands for the dehumanised relationship of the new capitalist form. The machine is described as “red tyrant “and the women working class as subject to despotic behaviour from the employer.

Thus the setting reveals the position of working women which becomes more dreadful with the industrial revolution. Women are, in fact, thrown on the labour market in the industrial centres working in horrifying condition. As far as Tess is concerned, though she undergoes hardship in this farm, she prefers a job that assures her independence and stoically bears her boss’s ill-treatment rather than yielding to Alec’s scheme. Yet to demonstrate realistically the harshness of the economic system i.e. capitalism and its domineering position it takes on the social life of the individual, the author makes Tess yield to Alec’s scheme and sells her body for prostitution, which is one of the major outcome of capitalism. By doing so the author is depicting how the social and economic subordination of Tess (working women) equals the sexual one, an idea the author alludes to from the start.

Hardy’s Commitment to Social Inquiries

The richness of Thomas Hardy's themes and his presentation of the experiences of the individual, together with his realistic technique in narration make of him a significant critic. The themes fit the changes that happened in the late nineteenth century. For instance, his sympathy with the lower class is manifest in the previous novel but it is particularly in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, that one can notice his investment and explicit compassion with the poor. A full analysis of the theme of Class, Family, as well as love and Sexuality is going to evidence not only the author's concern with social problems but it also shows his commitment to delicate social enquiries.

Denigration of the System of Class

This novel can be read as the presentation of the complexity of class in the Victorian Age. Changes in the definition of class occurred in the nineteenth century and Tess's, Alec's and Angel's experiences are but an embodiment of the bewilderment they undergo. If Tess lives in the middle Ages, she is not going to be exploited since at that time class distinction was defined by blood rather than by property. Tess's blood does not serve the family now, as it is meant to be just a genealogical detail as the parson maintains. Yet it serves the bourgeois *arrivistes* Simon Stoke who purchases the name and passes of what the authentic family was.

Nonetheless, as a bourgeois *arriviste* Alec too is not at ease within this class as it can be noticed by his conversion and later his retirement from the church. He justifies the former behaviour by her mother's death. Yet there is no allusion to any affection between the mother and son. He also justifies his retirement from the church by Tess's s physical attraction which he finds stronger than Christianity itself. Moreover his portrayal as a lusty man suggests his divergence from the nobility ethics which he cannot purchase with the name. This negative portrayal of Alec reveals Hardy's revulsion from the bourgeoisies and his denigration of their behaviour. One might argue that Alec's contradictory behaviour is but a picture of the

misunderstanding of his position in the society and the malaise he feels within this system of class. .

Middle Class is portrayed in the Clares also. The mother's snobbish behaviour and her assertion to make Clare forget about Tess whom she qualifies as simple and an impoverished girl reveals the importance she gives to social class. For Mrs Clare a suitable wife is the one who has a social financial and religious background. She, indeed, hopes that Angel would marry Mercy Chant, the daughter of a friend of the Reverend Clare. But Angel maintains his choice and does not take into consideration these norms. Angel seems to rebel against this system by refusing the privileges of Cambridge education and choosing an agricultural girl to be his wife

The allusion to two classes is meant to shed light on the conflicts and the problems of human relationships within this system. The narrator alludes to the Clares brothers as "three young men of a superior class "(Thomas Hardy, 2005: 12). This is significant because it paved the way to more important issues caused by this system. Notice that within the same class of society and the same family the conception differs. From the beginning, Angel seems to reject this system by allowing himself to mix with country girls and dance with them. His position becomes clear by his selecting a job far from church or teaching, he tries to flee the strictness and the hypocrisy of the middle class or of a clerical family.

Yet Angel's choice to work in the farm and his plan to become a land owner might suggest his yearning to business and money. At the surface, indeed, Angel seems to reject the bourgeois values and class but if we go deeper in analysing Angel's comments and behaviour we notice his anxiety and uneasiness or simply his confusion which can also be noticed in Tess and Alec. Angel tells Tess:

For your own sake I rejoice in your descent. Society is hopelessly snobbish, and this fact of your extraction may make an appreciable difference to its acceptance of you as my wife, after I have made you the well read- woman that I mean to make you. My mother too, poor soul, will think so much better of

you on account of it. Tess, you must spell your name correctly – d’Uerbervilles- from this very day (Hardy, 2005:236-237)

Hardy refers to Tess’s nobility as a positive point in Angel’s opinion which is shown by urging her to be proud of being a D’urbervilles and asks her to articulate the name correctly as he thinks that this fact would rejoice his mother and all the family. By doing so, the author is alluding to the rigid Victorian values that are difficult to transcend and to the hypocrisy which he tries to denounce throughout Tess’s struggle. Besides, both Angel and Clare exploit Tess’s nobility for their own sake. The former does not clearly questions this system of class but he rather seems endorsing the rigid principles of the middle class as it appears in his reaction to Tess’s confession. Alec too approves the same values which give him the right to exploit the innocent girl. In short, Hardy’s denigration of class system is revealed in portraying characters’ malaise and anxiety.

Hardy’s Criticism of the Victorian Family

In this novel too, the author challenges the idealist conception of the working of society and economy in Victorian England. Throughout the D’Uerbeyfields’ experiences, he questions family conditions and insists on the failure of Tess’s family to uphold its function as a unit in society and as a structure which should help giving birth to happy children and build a happy nation. Thus the focus on one family with numerous helpless children is meant to give a critical eye to, not only the problems of the household but also to the socio-economic system.

All these young souls were passengers in the D’Urbeyfield ship- entirely dependent on the judgement of the two D’Urbeyfield adults for their pleasures, their necessities, their health, even their existence. If the heads of the Durbeyfield household chose to sail into difficulty, disaster, starvation, disease, degradation, death, thither were these half dozen little captives under hatches compelled to sail with them(Thomas Hardy,2005:41)

Thus Tess’s family is far from being the one which is going to ensure a peaceful life for children. Within the capitalist system, the family is rather the structure by which the weak are

exploited. By presenting this situation the author is questioning family values which let children to the mercies of their parents, despite their poor status and their carelessness. The narrator goes on saying “ - six helpless creatures who had never been asked if they wished for life ...on such hard conditions as were involved in being of the shiftless house of D’Urbeyfield”(Ibid). Thus, one can say that Hardy seems to ask for reforms by which children are going to be protected.

The contempt for the existing social order is revealed also by making Tess take the family burden instead of her parents. This is an example of a family structure and rules that diverge from what was presented by the Victorians. This reverse situation is probably used to serve Hardy’s aim at pointing at the realities of the capitalist system and its drawbacks on the family. Besides, throughout the novel, while Tess struggles to get bread and help her family survive the reckless parents unburden themselves from their responsibilities and use their elder daughter to feed the children. Moreover the poverty of the family intensifies Alec’s desire to exploit Tess and possess her body, the desire that he manages to fulfil by helping the family economically. This is a real picture of such families which, owing to their helplessness or ignorance or particularly their selfishness, offer their children to be exploited. Hardy’s presentation of Tess’s efforts to gain a living refers to some parents’ resignation to accomplish their role within the family. The novel treats also the plight of the working class and its hardships within the capitalist system. The latter not only threatens human relationship and diminishes individual freedom but exploit the weak in work. It is indeed the D’Urdeyfields’ economic crises which urge them to send their daughter to the mercies of the bourgeoisie.

The focus on Tess’s family does not mean that the author is criticising the poor families only. One can argue that it serves as a motif to serve Hardy’s questioning of the capitalist system by which the exploitation of the poor on the part of the rich seems a natural

right of any wealthy person. Moreover, the Victorian idealisation of family is challenged not only within the lower class but in the upper class also. Mrs D'Urbervilles, for instance, is not better than Joan, yet she is issued from the bourgeoisie. If Tess's mother shows recklessness and selfishness by neglecting her children and seeking pleasure in the inn with her husband, Alec's mother too is totally absent in the management of the household. She simply prefers taking care of the animals rather than her son, her maid Elisabeth or Tess. Besides, her ignorance to Tess whom she qualifies as "an impoverished girl" just like Mrs Clare reveals the prejudices of the middle class and their shallowness. One might argue that, by portraying these two families the author is putting stress on the fact that family is not as efficient as it was pretended by the Victorian ethics. The D'Urbervilles gives birth to an importunist, lusty man who is killed at the end, and the D'Urbyfields give birth to numerous children without taking into consideration how they can feed them. In short, the portrayal of these families might suggest the parents' resignation or helplessness in holding family matters.

Moreover, by portraying Tess's relation with the two men Alec and Angel, Hardy is challenging the conventional family values. This idea is revealed when Tess refuses to marry Alec after the chase scene, though any woman could have done it. Indeed, In the Victorian Values a ruined woman might retrieve her status by marrying the man with whom she has got a relation. Thus forming a family in which the child lives with his own parents. But by making Tess refuse the marriage bond with Alec despite her circumstances; the author challenges the cultural construction of women which consists on confining their life within the family. Moreover, Tess's refusal to form a family with Alec is but a denunciation to the fact that the loss of virginity means essentially the loss of one's value as Ann Mickelson states (Quoted in Stave, 2003). It is, in reality, this experience which renders Tess more independent and stronger. Indeed, she gives birth to her child in her parents' house and works in harvesting taking the fatherless child with her without feeling any shame. She even refuses to make the

father know about his child and prefers to educate him alone. Moreover, after her child's death, she decides to move to Thabothays where she enjoys working and makes friends.

Yet Tess's chastity is required by Angel Clare, as he yearns for a pure wife in order to form a happy family. And it is her loss of it that makes of her a deserted wife. This idea is thus contrasted with Tess's view that virginity cannot be the basis upon which the value of a woman can be measured. Moreover, by opposing two families the conventional one (Tess with Angel) and the unconventional one (Tess with Alec) the author sheds light on the drawbacks of the Victorian values. Indeed despite her legal marriage, the heroine instead of leading a happy life she witnesses hardship and exploitation. It is, in fact, the Victorian prejudices about women and family that cause Tess's tragic end.

As for Angel's family, it is portrayed as one of the middle class. The head is a poor parson and the children seem to be from a superior class. Their superiority is not revealed by the material side but by their intellectual level. Their Bourgeois culture is also revealed in their opposition to Angel to marry an "agricultural girl" and the mother's emphasis to make her son marry a lady, though she is aware that a lady cannot help him in farming. Angel's family is meant to portray the middle class which does not necessarily exploit the weak but cannot get rid of its prejudices about the working class and which does not manage to forget its narrow-mindedness as we can notice in Angel. In short, by portraying these families, whether poor or rich, Hardy is rather questioning the efficiency of this nuclear social unit based on marriage institution.

Definitely, it is inconceivable to build a Victorian family without marriage. The latter is the basic element to form a respectable household. As it is seen by both the D'Urbeyfields and the Clares, the family is a means to move forwards in society or maintain once position. In Joan's view, Tess's marriage with Alec is perceived as a means to ensure economic stability and Mrs Clare opposes Angel's desire to marry an agricultural girl. Marriage is also

the alternative Alec resorts to in order to seduce Tess and let her come back to him. It is also the means by which Angel can have the right to embrace Tess. This institution seems to be of a paramount importance to every character in the novel. Yet the way the story is written meant to present ideas perfectly different from the Victorian values. The author seems to express less confinement to the laws and values of marriage institution.

Hardy's questioning of this institution is significant by the exploration of Tess's relation with Alec and Angel. The latter's rejection of Tess as a ruined woman unworthy of the Victorian code of behaviour, and his failure to preserve his love and happiness is but a clear example of the unfair laws of this institution. The latter is presented as a means to gain economic profit and a bound by which women are considered as object for the procreation of legitimate children. In Tess's case it is the laws of this institution which urges her to commit a crime. Inculcating the Victorian values, Angel feels the impossibility of a happy marriage since Tess is not the woman he imagines; she is a "MAIDEN NO MORE". Though Tess is trapped to a sexual relation with Alec, Angel believes that she is "this other's man in nature, as he attests, and thus refuses to consummate their marriage. Besides, though marriage is official Tess's suffers a lot.

Additionally, Thomas Hardy tries to record the Victorian reality of some children through his portrayal of the D'Urbyrfields' household. It is in fact an attempt to distort the Victorian view that the family is the unique social unit in which the child can live and prosper.

When Tess grew older, and began to see how matters stood, she felt quite a Malthusian towards her mother for thoughtlessly giving her so many little sisters and brothers, when it was such a trouble to nurse and provide for her. (Ibid.P.39)

Hardy's allusion to Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), the Anglican economist Pastor, reveals his concern in the economic situation of England, and Tess's utterances would seem to be his own. He is, indeed, alluding to the problems of the relation between production and

population. One can also grasp Malthus plan of birth control which helps families live a descent life and as such prevent them to explore the elder children to feed the younger ones or simply avoid sacrificing their innocent daughters to live as a prostitute or rich man mistress. It is, in reality, The D'Urbeyfields' bad economic plight and also their selfishness which urge Tess to gain bread, or essentially, to let her marry a gentleman in order to rise in status. Unfortunately, contrary to what her family expects Tess could only be Alec's mistress and not his wife because of the Victorian vision that each class should maintain its position. Hardy's concern in children would seem to converge with Engels idea that children should be the concern of every one in the society not particularly their families. Consequently, he creates Tess's experience in a Victorian family to question this full authority of the parents over children who exploit them as it happens with Tess. Childhood, thus, should be protected and reforms should take place to protect the kids from some parents' cruelty. One can also argue that by creating Tess as a woman worker, the author is alluding to the miserable economic life of the proletariat.

Love and Sexuality within the Victorian Conventions

Tess's experiences of sexuality and love epitomize Hardy's criticism of the social conventions and laws viewed as arbitrary and artificial constructs that are far from human nature. With both Alec and Angel, Tess's love relation is submitted to the patriarchal power and male dominance. Although the heroine seems active about what concerns her economic life, she displays much passivity particularly in her intimate relationship. Tess's relationship with Alec is merely a sexual one and Alec's patriarchal power exerted over her is revealed from the beginning of the novel. The relation began when Tess expresses her will to work and gain her bread to support her family .As a proletarian, and being in need for work, Tess readily takes care of the birds and carries out Mrs D'Urbervilles instruction even if they seem foolish sometimes. Alec, however, is not interested in her work but in her body. He does

not miss the opportunity to approach her. Therefore, the relation is based essentially on Tess's physical strong charm and Alec's impulsive instinct. But the heroine is also driven with a strong desire to help her family that is why she yields to Alec's advances. His self determination to let Tess fall in his trap is intensified in the Chase scene. The latter is one of the most controversial scenes in Hardy's fiction because both of the ambiguity about what has really happened and Tess's ambivalent feeling about Alec as Frank.R.Giordono. Jr states in *I'd Have My Life Unbe: Thomas Hardy's Self-Destructiv Characters* (1984).The ambiguity is revealed in the foggy setting which makes the scene not as clear as it can offer a plain explanation of what has really happened. Nonetheless, "the earlier versions of the text portray her sexual initiation unambiguously as a seduction, unlike the final version which has led some critics to believe Tess was raped (Shirley A. Stave, 2003: 103).

As it has already been mentioned, Tess's rape happened in a time of a harsh economic deprivation. Hence, it might be considered as a clear example of the patriarchal- capitalist domination .To illustrate this domination the author contrasts Alec's well experience as a seducer with Tess's ignorance of "male folk". Actually, whether Tess is seduced or raped, her economic conditions have played the major role in this relation. Following her mother's scheme, Tess finds herself obliged to submit also to Alec's advances. She feels herself thankful for the help he offers to his deprived family to such an extent that she becomes unable to rebuff him. It is indeed at that moment that he informs her that some toys and a new cob were sent to her family. Thus Alec relation with Tess emerges as an economic exchange by which the family can survive rather than love. Therefore, through Alec's outrageous behaviour and Tess's submission, the author reports the power of the capitalists to exploit the proletariat. In addition, Alec's interest in Tess's body exemplifies the behaviour of the capitalists who can exploit woman sexually. Accordingly, it can be noticed that there is also an insinuation to prostitution which is the by- products of the system.

The patriarchal power is also revealed in her decision to return back to Alec as a mistress as it becomes clear that he cannot marry her since she is married to Angel. Once Again, Alec is portrayed as an instinctive, impulsive man who cannot control himself, and who is able to do anything for his momentary pleasure. In making Tess pay the consequences of the sexual act alone, intensifies the criticism of the social system by which the rich tries, at every moment, to take profit from the poor and squeeze them. Alec's behaviour is thus a typical example of the Bourgeois biases. Hardy's rendering of him reveals his views on this class as despots. To get rid of these despots the author seems to call even for violence as it can be illustrated by Tess's use of a patriarchal tool "The knife" to kill Alec and ends his despotism. As such the ending of the novel might suggest the author's desire to put an end to the bourgeoisie and its injustice by using violence typified by Tess's murder.

In contrast, Angel shows self control as he interiorizes the middle class conception of gentlemanly manners. In his opinion, Sexual relation can be only within marriage. Besides, while Alec considers Tess's physical features and beauty, Angel assimilates her to purity and to the mythological figures as he draws an ideal picture of her. She is viewed as the perfect woman who can manage the house of a successful farmer. To depict Angel's love to Tess one can recall Thomas Hardy's sentences in the *Woodlanders* in defining Human love as "a subjective thing...it is a joy accompanied by an idea which we project against any suitable object of the line of our vision" (Quoted in Christopher Lane, 1999:119). Thus Angel sees her as he wants her to be and not as she really is. He often associates her with Goddesses such as Demeter and Artemis, which reveals his idealization of her. Yet at each time she hears calling her by those names, she tries to affirm her identity by saying for instance "call me Tess". Nonetheless, though she shows some discomfort about calling her by those names that she ignores, she seems too tolerant with him and idealizes him particularly when she compares him to Alec:

She had not known that men could be so disinterested, chivalrous, protective, in their love for women as he. Angel Clare was far from all that she thought him in this respect; absurdly far, indeed; but he was, in truth, more spiritual than animal ... and was singularly free from grossness... less Byronic than Shelleyan; could love desperately, but with a love more especially inclined to the imaginative and ethereal; it was a fastidious emotion which could jealously guard the loved one against his very self. This amazed and enraptured Tess, whose sight experiences had been so infelicitous till now; and in her reaction from indignation against the male sex she swerved to excess of honour for Clare (Thomas Hardy, 2005:242)

Thus is Angel's power over Tess which dominates her in an inconceivable way. He denies her identity by calling her by names which she ignores and worst of all forget his love and promises, at the moment she confesses her secret. His injury is revealed when he judges that his relation with the old woman cannot be equalled with Tess's misadventure, yet it was against her will. Thus he has applied the same double standards of values on her and quit her to Brazil.

Hardy's juxtaposition of both Angel's and Tess's confession about their previous relation with the other sex meant to focus on the Victorian injustice upon woman's behaviour. Moreover, by portraying Tess inculcating the same patriarchal definitions of the status of woman as an inferior being in comparison with man, Hardy emphasizes the power of patriarchy and its effects on the individual. Truly, despite Angel's injuries, Tess continues to love him and even tries to hide her beauty to avoid attracting other men. She even offers to be his servant .Moreover; she rejoices to think that Angel considers her as his possession. Tess's love for Angel destroys her as it does with the other female characters such as Retty who tries to kill her self out of her love for Angel, and Marian who takes refuge in drinking for the same reason. In short, the author's portrayal of love and sexuality is characterised by man domination and power over woman. One might suggest that the author is giving an authentic image of how the Victorian men dominate women in the sexual and sentimental life and how the Victorian society obstacles the couple to live their love without restraints.

Yet, despite Tess's submission to the Victorian ethics, she distinguishes herself from her contemporaries by her notion of love and sexuality. As Stave states, Tess is somewhat "one whose experience and consciousness are essentially different from those of her would be peers" (Shirley. A. Stave, 2003: 101). This peculiarity is meant to challenge the patriarchal power and break the chains that confines love and sexuality within an institution. Tess considers love as an end in itself and does not need a formal vow to endorse what she feels. Moreover, While Angel views love as a prelude to marriage, Tess considers the latter as the end of love. She tells Angel "I don't want to marry! I have not thought of doing it" (Hardy, 2005:214). Actually, Tess expresses her refusal to marry Angel though she loves him. This behaviour would seem unwise from the Victorians point of view as it can be noticed in Angel himself replying to Tess "Then I ought not to hold you this way-ought I" (Ibid.p. 219). Love, in Angel's opinion must lead effectively to marriage and Tess's love for him can not be lived unless she accepts him as a husband. In contrast Tess's refusal to marry him is not considered as repulsion to his love .She says "I don't repulse you, I like you to tell me you love me-and never offend me". Thus, Tess refuses to connect mechanically love with marriage. She rather considers that one can freely live with the person he loves without confining oneself to marriage institution. Besides, one can also argue that, by creating Tess as a woman worker, the author is alluding to the miserable economic life of the proletariat but also to their free sexual relation as they have no property. This is Engels idea about the free union and Hardy seem to endorse the same view. The union of the couple should be far from being the economic unit of the society but rather a free and deliberate relationship freed from middle class ethics. This idea is also expressed by Angel in Brazil.

In closing then, this discussion has sought to explore Hardy's investment in opposing the capitalist system which limits the individual freedom. His portrayal of Tess's poor situation, adding to her social and sexual exploitation as well as her loss of the only man she

loves because of the Victorian prejudices and her execution at the end reveal the author's overt protest against this system and his attack on the dominant Victorian values. Hardy seems to advocate the transgression of the boundaries of conventional family which restrain man and woman's liberty and affect negatively children as it is illustrated in Tess's family. The anxiety about the capitalist institutions as marriage is intensified in *Jude the Obscure* (1896) in which Hardy shows his radicalism, his suspicion and pessimism by creating such characters as Jude and Sue and also by portraying little father time killing himself and then his brothers.

This chapter is an attempt to exemplify Hardy's radical ideas concerning the patriarchal family. The novel is going to be seen as a realistic image of actual social circumstances embodied in the characters attempts to overcome the Victorian social pressures. I endeavour to demonstrate that it is in this novel that Thomas Hardy shows more audacity in questioning the Victorian marriage institution and its laws. Through Jude Fawley's marriage with Arabella Dean and Sue Bridehead's with Phillotson, the novel sheds light on the weight of the Victorian capitalist system and the Victorian ethics on the individual's personality and freedom. The analysis is an attempt to read the novel as a paradigm of the economic, social and even sexual troubles of the individual and as an attack on the stereotyped household. It is going to be argued that both unions meant to be antithetical to the supposed Victorian ideal marriage in order to explore the drawbacks of the sanctity of marriage vow and also by challenging dominant social institutions like church .It is my intention also to demonstrate that Jude is the embodiment of the plight and predicament of a pitiful social segment in the Victorian society. Hardy's sympathy towards this class is revealed in recording the plight of the poor ambitious Jude whose ideals are fragmented because of his wretched social class.

Jude the Obscure tells the story of a lower class young orphan who lives and grows in a small village, Marygreen. He is exploited by his aunt who does not miss an opportunity to humiliate and scold him and even hopes his death. Jude indeed is seen as a burden to his aunt. In this bad family life conditions , Jude takes pleasure in seeing the lights of Christminster at night and hopes and conceives the idea of going there and study in order to reach social advancement and affirm himself. He has been influenced by an admirer teacher, Mr Phillotson, and dreams of the life of a scholar. As he is poor he can not study in school but his will to go to the university is so strong that he learns languages by himself while he has been working for his aunt's bakery.

Jude lives for sometimes within this atmosphere of hope and work. Yet, he falls victim to the tricks of the sensual Arabella who traps him to marry her. His hopes thus are ruined and his dream to become a scholar is abandoned. It is after he has quarrelled with Arabella and the latter has left him that he goes to Christminster and asks for admission to the university. But he has not received any encouragement from the officers. At Christminster, the economic necessity requires Jude to work as a stone mason rather than pursue his studies. Meanwhile he meets his older master Philotson and also Sue Bridehead, his cousin. Jude falls in love with Sue whom he cannot court owing to his situation as a married man. He becomes desperate as he notices that Philotson shows interest in Sue. He disgraces himself in the inn and returns to Marygreen. He fails again, abandons his dream of being a scholar and decides to be a humble man of religion.

At Melchester (Salisbury) he works at his trade and studies seriously the Greek New Testament. There he meets Sue again, now a pupil at a Teachers' Training School. She is engaged to be Philotson's wife and foresees to be his helper in work. Despite their situations as engaged man and woman they live on terms of sentimental relationship which causes her being dismissed from the Training school. This turns out to be the reason of Sue's marriage to Philotson. Subsequently, to avoid people's gossip and her discharge from the Training school adding to Jude's confession of being a married man, Sue hastens to marry Philotson. The union turns out badly and short time later, the kind husband frees the wife who cannot bear his embraces and divorces her, knowing that she is going to live with her lover Jude. Sue shares the same house with Jude without marriage. This is the reason why Jude abandons his dreams of being a Christian priest since such profession is contradictory with his "unholy" love to Sue who proves to be unconventional. Though she is divorced and can easily marry Jude, she refuses to be neither his mistress nor his legal wife, because she seems to hate sexual relations. It is just out of jealousy that she leads to Jude's passion and after he divorces

Arabella makes an effort to marry him. Yet “these lovers cannot bring themselves to enter what seems to them the sordid estate of legal matrimony” (Joseph Warren Beach, 1922:220) and suffer from social isolation. Jude renews his interest to go to Christminster and tries to lead the life of a scholar. He is now in charge of three children, the oldest the son of Arabella, born in Australia.

Little Father Time is strikingly a precarious child characterized by his pessimism and disillusionment. Abandoned by his mother, he has noticed that he and his brothers are source of trouble to their parents. So he decides to put an end to his bothers and his own life particularly when he learns that Sue is waiting another baby. This dramatic situation makes Sue change her previous views on marriage as inhuman, unnecessary and degrading arrangement and feels guilty about what has happened to the children as she considers this as a curse from heaven owing to her illegitimate relation with Jude. Hence she comes to view marriage as a sacred bond which cannot be dissolved. She comes to consider that in the eyes of God. She is Philotson’s wife and must remain his. Therefore she goes to his house, first as a companion yet at the end “with great loathing, to make the supreme sacrifice of wifely duty” (Ibid.P. 221).At the end, because of his despair and sickness, Jude falls into the authority of Arabella by marrying her again. His health is degrading and finally dies alone while his wife is enjoying herself on a university holiday.

Like *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) and *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, (1892) the novel has been written in Dorchester. It has first appeared in Harper’s Magazine in an abridged form as it is stated in the preface. Hardy compares it to *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1892) in the sense that it contains a haunting love story. It has been heavily criticized by the critics not only for its immorality but also for its unconventionality and the breaking of the social code of behaviour.Called "Jude the Obscene" By some reviewers, the publication of the novel has aroused many debates. Margaret Oliphant, for instance, presumes “...nothing so

coarsely indecent as the whole history of Jude in his relations with his wife Arabella has ever put in English print” (quoted in Nemesvari, 2004:50). Besides Patrick M .Yaker considers the novel as a rewriting of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* since it stresses also on the weighs of conventionality on the individual. There are those, however few in number, who have read the novel positively and think that Hardy deliberately attempts to challenge the conventions of his society. This idea has already been expressed in the preface to 1912 edition when Thomas Hardy describes the novel’s theme as “the shattered ideals of the two chief characters as their instinct are forced by society into moulds that do not fit them” (quoted in Ebbatson, 2004: 89). It focuses principally on the theme of Sex and marriage.

In addition, the main characters, in their movement from place to place, function as victims of temporary oppression and representatives of the changes that occurred in the 1990’s. The analysis is going to shed light also on the interconnection between class and gender through the examination of Jude as a man issued from the lower class and Arabella and Sue as women victim of their gender. Philotson is also going to be analysed as he plays a great role in shedding light on the delicate problems of the couple in the Victorian Age. Additionally, the setting though it is not as developed as in *Tess of the D’urbervilles* is going to be examined, putting stress on the temporal one rather than the spatial .

Character Analysis

The novel seems to focus on Jude’s plight as an individual issued from the lower class and the obstacles he faces in his endeavour to reach higher standards of education. It also explores his experiences of love, marriage and sexuality. Jude and Sue might be regarded as the embodiment of the problems, the ambiguities and the anxieties of the late 1890’s. Sue, particularly, is an enigma not only to Jude but continues to be so in contemporary critics’ eyes. Each character in the novel is relevant and his juxtaposition with the main characters are

meant to show the struggle and also the injuries the central characters go through in their attempt to rebel against the Victorian ethics.

Jude Fawley: Jude is unquestionably the central character of the novel that bears his name just like Tess in the previous novel. He is a young stonemason of common working-class origins who is persuaded that he can reach a higher class position thanks to education. The reader is acquainted with him in *Marygreen* as a wretched unwanted orphan. Jude suffers from poverty and humiliation on the part of his aunt. The latter says: “it would ha’ been a blessing if Goddy-mighty had took thee too, wi thy mother and father, poor useless boy!” (Thomas Hardy, 1994:9). Jude is thus a great burden to the aunt so she is “obliged to let him earn any money he can” (ibid). Jude is also idealistic and romantic, his love for nature and his sensitiveness towards animals and plants are evident as it can be noticed in the following quotation:

He had never brought home a nest of young birds without lying awake in misery half the night after, and often reinstating them and the nest in their original place the next morning .He could scarcely bear to see trees cut down or lopped , from a fancy that it hurt them; and late pruning, when the sap was up, and the tree bled profusely , had been a positive grief to him in his infancy.(Thomas Hardy ,1892: 13)

Jude is an ambitious boy determined to become a student at Christminster, and gain a respectable place in the society. He is encouraged by Phillotson who fosters his fondness for books and sets up in him a fascination for the university at Christminster. Therefore he attempts to work hard and tries to study alone. Year by Year, he becomes , as Elisabeth Langland argues, “ influenced by the idea of the gentleman/ scholar to such an extent that he judges his own worth in terms of how well he measures up to that ideal”(quoted in Joanna Devereux,2003:121). Unfortunately despite his hard struggle to fulfil his ambitions he is thwarted by a snobbish and cruel social system which gives no opportunities to the helpless individuals.

The examination of Jude's life from infancy is meant to record the day to day life of the wretched individuals in the rigid Victorian society and helps shedding light on the helplessness of the poor orphaned children at that time and the injustices they undergo. From a Marxist point of view, Jude can be considered as the outsider who is deprived of access to improvement and social advancement. His disillusionment begins in Christminster where he feels the barbarism, rottenness and the defectiveness of the place. Throughout that first day he stays alone and starts to realize how far away he is from the object of his interest. Thus one can suggest that through Jude Fowley, the author displays the growing gap between the individual's ambitions and the bleak reality of the Victorian capitalist system. It is this gap that causes his tragic end. Noticeably, the narrator has foreshadowed this end from the opening pages of the novel: "he was a sort of man who was born to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life", he says :(Thomas Hardy, 1892: 13). To say the truth, Jude's personality, virtues and ambitions do not go with the Victorian capitalist society which is based on interest and power.

Jude tries to overcome this situation of an intellectually frustrated individual by working as a stone mason and gaining a living in this urban city. Nevertheless he cannot get rid of his fixed ideal vision of Christminster as "a city of light" (Thomas Hardy, 1994:24), and a place where "the tree of knowledge grows" (Ibid). This idea is also recorded by Sue:

Christminster is a sort of fixed vision with him, which I suppose he'll never be cured of believing in it. He still thinks that it a great centre of high and fearless thought, instead of what it is, a nest of commonplace schoolmasters whose characteristic is timid obsequiousness to tradition (Ibid.p141..)

The narrator's opposition of Jude's idealisation of Christminster to Sue's realistic views can be meant to emphasize the middle class views on the city (Christminster) which are determined rather by class, social and economic restrictions rather than by the amount of knowledge the individuals can have. Sue has indeed realised that. She tells Jude "You are one

of the very men Christminster was intended for when the colleges were founded; a man with a passion for learning but no money, or opportunities, or friends. But you were elbowed off the pavement by the millionaires' sons (Thomas Hardy, 1994:181). It is only when his death becomes imminent that he realizes the reality of Christminster. He tells Arabella that the famous man of letters is laughing at him.

The narrator makes it clear that Jude's failure to fulfil his dreams is due not only to his status as a poor individual living in a rigid class system but also because of his relation with two women. Throughout the novel Jude's dream of Christminster "is constantly cut across by the earthiness of Arabella's expedients and the transcendent logic of Sue's ideas. (Devereux, 2003:129). Besides, one can share Frank R. Giordano Jr's description of Jude as "something of a simpleton, a dreamer, a recalcitrant, a heart insurgent; his fate is to take the fictional form of a "tragedy of unfulfilled aims" as he experiences within himself the "deadly war waged between flesh and spirit." (Frank R., 1984:117). These ideas are going to be developed in the following analysis of Arabella Donn and Sue Bridehead and their relation with him.

Jude and Arabella Donn

Jude's yearning for education is at each time hindered by the appearance of a woman in his life. It is in Marygreen, while Jude is filled with enthusiasm to persevere in order to go to Christminster that he encounters Arabella. She is a well built and coarse woman. She is also uneducated and very common in her taste and interest to such an extent that Jude considers her as inferior though they are issued from the same class. She does not show any interest in books or learning and is often annoyed about Jude's yearning for education. She urges him to "throw aside those stupid books" (Thomas Hardy, 1994: 66). The narrator, indeed, insists on her sexuality. He says: "She was a complete and substantial female animal - no more, no less" (Thomas Hardy, 1994:42). Arabella has also an instinct towards

artificiality portrayed in her false hair and artificial dimples. Her sexual attributes are her power with which she has trapped Jude to marry her. Jude's relation with her is also based essentially on sexual desire. He tells himself when he meets her: "It was better to love a woman than to be a graduate or a parson; ay or a pope!"(Ibid.p54). Arabella, too, desires Jude, as she clearly states: "I shall go mad if I can't give myself to him altogether!"(ibid.P 56) Her determination to marry him pushes her to attract him and even to simulate pregnancy. Definitely, "No other Hardy woman is as blatantly sexual as Arabella when she falls on her back under a leafy tree and pulls Jude down to her--on the pretext of looking at a pretty caterpillar".(Shirley A.Stave, 2003:131). She indeed uses her sexual attributes as a means to make him care for her as it is shown in her discussion with her friends. She says: "I've got him to care for me" (ibid).Indeed, one can share Enstice's account of Arabella as "a symbol of the hypocrisies and self- interest of society" (quoted in Shirley A. Stave, 1995: 128). She is thus portrayed as a scheming woman who wants to flee her unsatisfactory life as the daughter of a pig breeder and hunts a husband who is going to offer her security and a comfortable sexual life since she considers her union with Jude as an economic exchange. Thus Jude is intrigued by Arabella and abandons his dream of being a scholar.

Arabella's selfishness and her lack of feelings are revealed at the moment she quits Jude for Australia, as she realizes that her marriage is disappointing. Moreover, in Australia, she dares to lead a bigamous life. She has indeed married a second time without any suspicions about its validity. Arabella is a woman who adheres to the Victorian social forms and sees in the marriage market the only issue for her survival. Her conception of the marriage institution contrary to Sue Bridehead's, at least until her children's death, is ultimately Victorian. Moreover she defends the patriarchal relation of Husband-wife as long as it is convenient to her to do so. This is shown in her discussion with the religious schoolmaster who lets Sue deserts him to live with her lover, she states: "you were too

quick about her. I shouldn't let her go! I should have kept her chained on" (Thomas Hardy, 1994: 379) she adds "there is nothing like bondage and stone deaf taskmaster for taming as women". (ibid) Her conviction of the dominating position of the husband is also revealed when she attests: "You've got the laws on your side ... Then shall the man be guiltless; but the woman shall bear iniquity" (Ibid).

From Arabella's utterances one can notice her justification of the Victorian code as long as it serves her. Her discourse is that of the woman who can do anything although against her gender in order to survive. Indeed she seems to be for wife beating, but one can imagine the consequences if any man who dares to beat her. She is thus the embodiment of the Victorian capitalist world in which the individual is urged to do anything to survive. In reality, As Shirley. A. Stave states, Arabella sacrifices her soul in order to survive. She exploits her sexual attribute "seeking not" (Shirley. A. Stave, 1995:128). only " pleasure but respectability in the form of marriage and social status".(ibid) In addition, her status as a mother does not change her views .She does not show any happiness of being a mother and does not display any affection to the child. She sees "the poor thing" as a burden from which she must get rid off. After her husband's death she takes up religion but her sexual impulse towards Jude pushes her to abandon her new found faith she says: "After all that's said about the comforts of this religion, I wish I had Jude back again" (ThomasHardy,1994:375). This situation recalls Alec d'Urbervilles desire for Tess. As Alec can find comfort only by putting Tess into his bed rather than in preaching, so too Arabella thinks that the comforts of religion can not be compared with the comforts of a man in bed.

Tess, indeed, is dominated by the power of patriarchy portrayed in both Alec and Angel who exploit her socially and sexually yet Jude can hardly be compared with the two men. It would seem that he is represented as bereft of the patriarchal principles. In his relation to Arabella, it is she who seduces him and incites him to the sexual act. It is also she who

traps him to marry her. Moreover it is Arabella who decides to quit him as soon as she realizes that she is not happy with him. Jude passively obeys Arabella and does not show anger or refusal for the decisions she takes. This situation represents a converse case in comparison with the Victorian ideal families where the husband takes a domineering position within the household. In Jude's case it is Arabella who dominates the household. In this sense Stave comments: "his helplessness in dealing with women of his own social class, with his own wife in the case of Arabella, sets him apart from other male victims of classism who at least assume patriarchal authority within the home" (Shirley A. Stave, 2003:144). Jude is presented as acted upon rather than acting to emphasize his lack of virility. Arabella's plans to trap him to marriage again are also successful at the end of the novel. Yet when she is disappointed by his degrading health owing partly to the hard work he does and essentially to his love for Sue, she seeks to satisfy her sexual drives with doctor Vilbert, her future victim. Arabella's carelessness is shown throughout the novel and reaches its peak at the end since while Jude is dying she is enjoying her time outside.

The above analysis portrays Arabella as a tricky woman embodying all the defects, vices, lust and the hypocrisy to which Jude has fallen victim. Yet one can suggest that Hardy's portrayal of this character in this way does not mean to attack women but is rather a protest against conventional gender relations in which the man is supposed to be the leader of the family and woman his slave. A number of critics view Arabella "as a sort of liberated triumph for Hardy" (Judith Mitchell, 1994:206), Patricia Ingham, is a case in point. She sees in her the picture of "a fallen woman who refuses to fall; . . . Unlike all her predecessors . . . she is guilt free," (Ibid). Indeed while Lucetta died at the end and Tess, after harsh hardships accepts and welcomes her fatal end, Arabella struggles and is determined to live another experience with another man and overcome the obstacles. Accordingly Arabella's behaviour breaks the notion of "the Angel in the house" and displays an active, practical woman who

tries to do anything in order to survive. For that reason she can be viewed no more than the by-product of the Victorian culture which does not give the unmarried woman any status. Arabella is thoroughly aware of that, and uses all the means, even the immoral ones to hunt a husband, hence to affirm herself, or more exactly to survive.

Jude and Sue Bridehead

In 1969 Kate Millet wrote that Sue Bridehead is “an enigma, a pathetic creature, a nut, and an iceberg” (quoted in Mallet, 2004:191). Critics have been trying hardly to understand her as yet, but it seems that neither Jude nor Philotson or any character in the novel comprehends her. Many questions can be asked as regards her conservatism or modernity as well as investigations about her relation with men and her feelings for them are still made. One can, in fact, share Shirly A Stave’s view that:

“...it is impossible to read Sue as emotionally healthy or balanced within herself, and her internal fractures are what make her so annoying. Dealing with Sue as a character is very similar to dealing with a neurotic person outside of fictions and texts –it can quickly drive one to distraction (Shirley. A. Stave, 1995: 133).

Nevertheless, it is clear that she is such a cerebral character that functions as the embodiment of the female intelligentsia of the 1890’s owing to her good standards of education, her status as an independent woman working as “an artist or a designer of some sort in what was called an ecclesiastical warehouse” (Thomas Hardy, 1994:104), adding to her daring discussion with men in general and with Jude in particular about the sacred institutions like church and marriage. Nevertheless, the reader can notice her wavering attitude as concerns the Victorian family values. Sue seems to function, as a free spirit character hostile to the oppressive, conventional social order but sometimes she gives the impression to be conventionally Victorian. Her radical opinions about marriage institution as a "sordid contract" and a "hopelessly vulgar" permit her to be ranked together with the feminists such as Mona Caird. However her shrinking from the physical and her revulsion from sex is an evident example of

her being ultimately Victorian. Truly, Sue's complexity as a character makes some critics such as Katherine Rogers refer to her as "at once Hardy's major contribution to feminism and the expression of his doubts about it" (quoted in Judith Mitchell, 1995:198) as he stresses on her ambivalent behaviour and contradictory opinions especially at the end of the novel. She is also attributed some basic qualities of the pure and chaste Victorian woman who should be shameful of sexual relation as it is shown in her discussion with Arabella when she notices her pregnancy.

Sue can be viewed as Arabella's antithesis in the sense that the latter is portrayed as thoroughly sexual, without any interest in feelings or spirituality. Sue instead is described as "ethereal", "aerial" and also Shelleyan. Besides While Arabella attracts Jude and the other men in the novel by her sexual attribute, Sue fascinates Philotson and Jude by the amount of books she has read. She is acquainted with Boccaccio, Sterne, Defoe, Smollett, Fielding, Shakespeare and the Bible. But her heroes are John Stewart Mill and Gibbon whom she often quotes to sustain her arguments. She has also read the Latin and Greek literature in translation. Noticeably, to emphasise Sue's spirituality and ethereality, Hardy creates a strong contrast between Sue and Arabella which, as most of the critics suggest, portray the conflict that exist between the flesh and the spirit as Thomas Hardy reveals in his preface to the novel

Yet, Hardy's handling of the character of Sue as Terry Wright states, is "portrayed mainly through man's eyes, as seen by the narrator by Phillotson, and, most of the time by Jude; but she is mainly mis-seen, and again most of all by Jude" (Ibid). The latter sees her in a photograph " a pretty girlish face, in a broad hat with radiating folds under the brim like the rays of a halo"(Thomas Hardy,1995:92) this description , one would suggest ,associates her with an angel, a patriarchal vision of how a woman should appear. Besides, Sue remains, for Jude, "more or less an ideal character" (Ibid) just like Christminster Jude calls her also "an

urban miss is what you are” (Ibid.p.177). In fact, as Philip Mallet suggests in his article “Hardy and sexuality” (2005) Jude is attracted by Sue because she represents the culture to which he aspires (Phillip Mallet, 2005:192). Indeed being acquainted with the middle class manners, Jude avoids letting Sue see him “in his rough working-jacket and dusty trousers” (Thomas Hardy, 1994:105).He is also ashamed about his relation with a woman whom a middle class lady can never admire. He becomes convinced that it is with this middle class woman that he can fulfil his dream. His vision of the ideal woman he associates with Christminster is intensified after meeting her. He addresses her “you spirit , you disembodied creature , you dear sweet, tantalizing phantom—hardly flesh at all; so that when I put my arms round you I almost expected them to pass through you as through air!” (Ibid.p.292). Jude insists on her spirituality while telling her “you... are such a phantasmal, bodiless creature...who...has no little animal passion in you” (Ibid.)

Hardy’s opposition of Sue to Arabella can also be meant to prove that women are not only sexual objects with whom men can satisfy their desire but they are also able to be educated and well read. She is a woman whose intellect was to Jude like a star to a benzoline lamp as he states. Phillotson too talks of her intellect which as he states, sparkles like diamonds while his smoulders like brown papers. Indeed some critics argue that she belongs to the New Woman Movement since she rejects ‘Stifling social convention” (Kramer, 1999:170), and is interested in “alternatives to marriage including divorce and free love” (ibid).Yet Sue does not manage to break totally from the Victorian values concerning women. It is true that she dares to reject the traditional Victorian family but at the same time she seems perfectly conformed “to the most rigid Victorian notions of female sexuality” (Judith Mitchell, 1994:372).Her contempt of Arabella as “fleshy and coarse” and a “low-pensioned woman. And her shrinking from the sexual relations is but a clear argument. Indeed women’s sexuality has been denied throughout the Victorian period and sexual attraction and

gratification has long been the right of man and the woman has only to respond to man's advances. In this sense, Sue informs Jude that "an average woman . . . never instigates, only responds" to sexual advances (Ibid). thus Sue voices the patriarchal notion of sexuality in a manner Arabella does not.

Sue's wavering attitudes with Jude and her unpredictability reveals the complexity of this character that one can hardly understand. But what is apparent is the bad impact this character has with the male characters of the novels. Her relation with the undergraduate student with whom she shares the same house but never yields to his passion, with Phillotson who loses his job and essentially with Jude with whom she seems so cruel. Indeed Jude's hopeless relations with Sue drive him to blasphemy. He says: Sue--kill me--I don't care! Only don't hate me and despise me like all the rest of the world" (Thomas Hardy, 1994:147) Jude's utterances reveal how much he loves Sue but the latter's love for him is still ambiguous. It is just out of jealousy that Sue passively yields to his passion and gives birth to illegitimate children. Besides as Judith Mitchell records in her book *The Stone and the Scorpion the: Female Subject of Desire in the Novels of Charlotte Brontë, George eliot, and Thomas Hardy* (1994) Sue's lacking desire can be seen as "threatening in her potential ability to control the male through the manipulation of his own desire" (Judith Mitchel, 1994:202). By resisting Jude, Sue makes him servant for her sake just like Arabella. Thus, whether fleshy or spiritual, Women in Jude's life cause him only disaster.

Nonetheless, one can hardly view Sue as a cruel character, the narrator sympathizes with her and the reader cannot help doing so. As her portrayal is from the male eyes, one cannot trust the descriptions given and may venture to say that she is, indeed, a victim of the Victorian values. Her shrinking from the sexual and at the end the sacrifice she makes when choosing to live with Philotson as an obedient wife reveals her status as a victim of the Victorian values. Sue's warped sexuality is but an evidence of my saying. Throughout the

novel Hardy records her shrinking or rather her ignorance about sexuality as most middle class women at that time would do. Besides, though she experiences a sexual relation with Jude, it is just a forced act and the narrator seem to be reserved and does not give us an account of her feeling or her real relation with Jude. Worst of all though at the beginning she seems to have modern values she accepts at the end of the novel to return to Phillotson and accomplish her duty as a wife. She cannot bear the society's alienation and is not able to be faithful to her liberal principles especially after her children's death. By making Sue's struggle end in this way, the author would seem to reveal the heaviness of the Victorian rigid values which one cannot transcend though he reaches the highest level of intellectuality. The working of mind is, in fact, far from the bleak reality. Jude also can be viewed not as a victim of Arabella and Sue but rather as a victim of the Victorian system as concerns class and gender.

Richard Phillotson

What is noticeable in *Jude the Obscure* is Hardy's character development of Jude Fowley, Sue Bridehead , Arabella and even Richard Phillotson , which makes the novel seem more realistic and carry a certain profundity. "Although not nearly so well developed a character as either Sue or Jude, Phillotson is nevertheless an intriguing and complex character, a testimony to Hardy's genius in particular" (Shirley A. Stave ,2003:151). He plays a significant role in Jude's personality and life since his infancy. The novel in fact opens by showing Phillotson's departure from Marygreen towards Christminster and the impact of this removal on Jude the infant. "Sorry I am going Jude" (Thomas Hardy, 1995:4) he says. Thus he salutes him and advices him to be good to animals and birds and urges him to read all he can. He also informs him about his scheme to be a university graduate. From than on Jude cherishes the dream to go to Christminster and join his ideal "master". Some critiques would suggest that Phillotson might be seen as a surrogate father for Jude the

orphan. Indeed as a child Jude is amazingly attached to Richard to such an extent that he works too hard to join him in Christminster. Besides, he also resembles Jude in his honesty, decency, loyalty, and also in his human qualities.

Once in Christminster, Jude has been looking for his old master and he finds him but, he is not the man he wishes to see. Phillotson has, in fact, failed to fulfil his dreams to be a graduate. It is at that moment that Jude begins to be disappointed. Moreover Phillotson becomes in Jude's eyes no longer the ideal teacher or the surrogate father but his dreadful rival as concerns his cousin. Indeed, Phillotson marries Sue although he has noticed that she is interested in Jude. By doing so, the author tries to exemplify the weighs of the conventional marriage on both man and woman and thus criticises the marriage institution based on economic or cultural bases rather than the natural ones. Nonetheless, although Phillotson seems conservative and old fashioned regarding the Victorian ethics, he shows some understanding towards Sue and her illicit relation with Jude. Hence, it is his reaction to Sue's rebellious behaviour that confirms the complexity of his character. His marital relation with Sue is characterized by sexual difficulties and disgust on the part of his wife who refuses any physical contact with him. Yet he continues living with her for sometimes to avoid gossip. In reality Sue treats him quite wrongly and she is aware of that, since she herself preaches his kindness and tolerance, "he's as good to me as a man can be and gives me perfect liberty . . . which elderly husbands don't do in general" (Ibid.p.227). He is also affected as his marriage with Sue fails and bravely set her free because he does not want to live with her by force. His friend, Gillingham is astonished about this reaction as he knows him as a conservative "respectable" man. His unconventional decision he takes costs him a lot. It, indeed, causes his social and financial ruin; He loses his work and becomes subject to gossip in his community. But he is perfectly convinced that he is the person to blame since he attests that Sue 'was a pupil-teacher under" him. He "took advantage of her inexperience

and took her out for walks and got her to agree to a long engagement before she well knew her own mind."(Ibid.p.274.)

Phillotson's generosity and protectiveness are also displayed when he sends Jude a note to urge him to be tender and kind to her. More than that, he recognizes Jude and Sue's love when he confesses "You are made for each other--it is obvious, palpable to any unbiased older person. You were all along the shadowy third in my short life with her." (Thomas Hardy, 1995 : 280) His critics on marriage are clearly stated in the following "I was and I am the most old-fashioned man in the world on the question of marriage – in fact I had never thought critically about its ethics (ibid. 281). In giving his wife her liberty he functions as advocate of women freedom in love but in society's views, he is just "condoning her adultery" (Ibid, 295) Despite the sacrifices he has made he seeks at the end of the novel to regain some social standing by remarrying Sue and though he has agreed for a marriage in name only he finishes by exercising his right of a Victorian husband by sharing his bed with Sue knowing that she has never loved him. It is at that point that the narrator points at Phillotson's patriarchal old fashioned ethics. And it is here that he loses his moral principles. In this sense Shirly A Stave says "Phillotson signifies the patriarchy in both its realms and hence stands in opposition to the natural. (Shirley A Stave, 2003: 151). He thus exemplifies many Victorian marriages which instead of being a celebration of love and sex they are just social contracts for the purpose of social propriety. In this context the narrator attests at the beginning :

Essentially an unpractical man, he was now bent on making and saving money for a practical purpose-that of keeping a wife, who, if she chose, might conduct one of the girl's school adjoining his own , for which purpose he had advised her to go into training she would not marry him off-hand (Thomas Hardy,1994:199)

From the start, the narrator insists on portraying phillotson as a Victorian man. Yet his challenging tone when speaking with his friend is so clear he indeed even at a moment

defends patriarchy as he states to Gillingham “I don’t see why the woman and the children should not be the unit without the man” (Thomas Hardy,1994:277). Nevertheless at the end of the novel, Phillotson regains his wife. By making Phillotson take this decision, the author points at the power of patriarchy which is so stronger to adjust. Therefore, equally to Jude, Phillotson functions as a victim of the Victorian ethics. In short through Phillotson’s character, the author offers a meticulous critique of the Victorian sense of marriage.

Sue’s and Jude’s Quest for Freedom

The time setting of the novel is characterized by years of change in the way of life because of the improvement in industry and also in thoughts brought by some thinkers. The novel can be seen as the expression of the new thoughts brought by John Stewart Mill and the feminists such as Elisabeth Cady Stanton, Matilda Joslyn Gage, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Victoria Woodhull and Emma Goldman. In 1890’s The Victorian views became directed to a new philosophy of freedom, liberty, and emancipation. John Stewart Mill’s (1806-1873) ideas expressed in his essays *On Liberty* (1859) and *the Subjection of Woman* (1869) are clearly stated in the novel. In both works, the author insists on the freedom of the individual and attacks Victorian oppression he states “every individual should be free to do as he likes in his own concerns; but he ought not to be free as he likes in acting for another, under the pretext that the affairs of the other are his own affairs (Mill, 1975). He adds that moral oppression can lead to the distortion of one’s personality. As such one of the social institutions Mill vehemently criticizes is that of marriage. According to him, the institution of marriage as the Victorian conceived it is but tyrannical. He adds that it must be a “voluntary contract” devoid of any economic or social motives (Ibid.). He argues “engagement by which a person should sell himself or allow himself to be sold as a slave would be null” (Ibid) Mill further maintains that if the couple are unhappy within this institution it must be dissolved for human happiness is more important than social institutions.

Mill's critic of marriage institution is intensified in *the Subjection of Women* (1869). He further discusses the issue of marriage by examining the position of wives in the household as regards children, divorce and remarriage. He compares the wife's position to the slave's and sometimes considers woman slave's position as better than the wife since she can enjoy some rights. For example in Christian countries a slave can refuse an order to her master, the thing that the wife cannot do with her husband since she must be submissive and obedient. Indeed as it has already been stated in the first chapter, caught up in the holy bound of marriage woman had little chance to free herself from the chain of wifehood. Mill's challenging voice is a prominent one in the Victorian debate about family and Hardy owes much to this thinker whose ideas are defended in the novel by quoting him intensively.

The 1890's also knew the extension of the feminist ideas brought by many female thinkers such as Elisabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joselyn Gage whose positions are still considered as the most radical ones. The latter's *Women Church and State* (1893) is regarded as the most powerful piece of feminist theory written in the nineteenth century. As to the former her *Women's Bible* published in two parts in 1895 and in 1898, adding to her article "The Matriarchate" (1891) are a harsh critic on Christianity and patriarchy. Gage argues that one should get rid of the old fashioned standpoints by condemning the entire Christian tradition as Sue Bridehead in the novel would seem to reveal. Another prominent figure is Charlotte Perkins Gilman whose work is based on the principles of social Darwinism. In her *Women and Economics* (1898), she refuses women's dependence on man which she regards as a threat to the whole race. She bitterly declares that women are reduced to the level of prostitution to survive. In her opinion marriage is a form of prostitution since women assure their food and shelter by having sexual relation with men as it is portrayed by Arabella's behaviour. Besides, some thinkers as Victoria Woodhull and Emma Goldman ask for a socialist arrangement to substitute marriage. Both of them espouse women sexual freedom.

They also believe in women's right to sexual gratification and advocates as Stanton has done earlier, a voluntary motherhood. This theory has been developed more in the twentieth century. Indeed, it is within this tone of challenge against the old Victorian thoughts, that Hardy sets his novel.

Set in Wessex just like the two previous novels, and similar to *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Jude the Obscure*'s landscape is not highly developed because Thomas Hardy focuses principally on the characters' behaviour especially those who try to break the bounds that confine them to the Victorian ethics. Contrary to *Tess of the D'urbervilles*, descriptions of the place the characters live are not accurately detailed. The setting is depicted as the characters see it rather than as it really is. Christminster for example is described as a place of lights as it is seen by Jude's imagination. I tried to make it explicit that the setting in *Tess* is significant in the sense that it gives information about the environment Tess lives in and the impact of nature on her actions and also the effects of industry on her life. Hardy's love of nature and nostalgic tone is also revealed here. In *Jude the Obscure* (1896) the main character is also described while he lives in many places just like in *Tess* but while the narrator is describing Tess's economic hardships and her exploitation from the capitalists. The narrator in *Jude*, emphasises the characters attempt to break free from social conventions. He also put stress on their believes and their disillusionment as their ideals seem to appear before time. Indeed, Jude's ideals cannot be fulfilled in the society of 1890's which is characterized by Darwinian thoughts and social injustice caused by the capitalist system. Within this atmosphere of disillusionment, the narrator portrays the characters inner conflicts and ambiguous actions. The events take place in different settings, and Jude's movement from Marygreen to Chitsminster towards Melchester and Shaston and other places such as Aldbrickham and his return to Christminster is meant to trace Jude's struggle for living a life freed from social restraints and his endeavour to improve his situation by learning.

Unfortunately the main character does succeed neither in education nor in his attempt to ignore the social Victorian code of behaviour.

The spatial descriptions would seem to be secondary since the author is emphasising the tragedy of the characters. Stress is thus put on the characters inside, the problems of personality they have and the impact of the socio - economic troubles on them. The novel is divided into six parts; each is centred on a particular town or village. Part one is set in Marygreen where Jude is brought up by his aunt. He is portrayed as an ambitious young boy with an obsession for a university education. In Marygreen the descriptions of the landscape are meant to show Jude's love for nature to portray his sensitivity and delicacy. Marygreen is also viewed by the inhabitants as a place that does not fit them and almost all of them seem to glorify Christminster which is viewed as modern urban setting. One can agree with Shirley A. Stave who states:

In its outward form, the day-to-day life of the residents of Marygreen resembles that of the Weatherbury folk; however, the residents of Marygreen , and particularly Jude, view their home through modern eyes—in Jude's case , eyes that are focused on the spires and towers of Christminster. (Shirley. A. Stave, 1995:124)

Such a vision indeed seems to privilege the urban life and architecture rather than the rural natural life. Leaving the rural life of Marygreen Jude's mobility from the village to the urban city of Christminster is viewed as the best decision he has taken as he believes that it is going to offer him opportunities for social advancement

In Marygreen, Jude has lived for 19 years. He has lived first with his aunt who has never missed any opportunity to urge him to go to Christminster since she has noticed his love for books. From his infancy, Jude has always tried to gain a living by doing any work and, while living in the village, Jude never ceased to think of Christminster and the prospects he can find there. Thus, though he works hard, he tries to find time to read books in order to go to Christ minister. The latter is viewed as an enlightened place of learning associated with his

dreams of higher education and social position. In the description of Marygreen and Christminster one can notice the opposition that the narrator does with these two settings. The former, for Jude, is a village in which he hardly can live in particularly when his admirer teacher leaves it to go to Christminster and goes to the university. Moreover “Jude has already constructed Christminster as a heavenly Jerusalem, in opposition to ugly utilitarian Marygreen” (Philip Mallet,2004:192). Though his encounter with Arabella gives him a temporary happiness, he comes to believe that his journey to Christminster is the best way for success especially when Arabella leaves him to go to Australia. His decision is intensified as he sees Sue’s portrait in his aunt’s house. Yet it is in Christminster that Jude begins to witness hard times of disappointment and harm. He feels sorry to discover that his admirer teacher has not fulfilled his dreams to be a scholar. It is also his failure to be subscribed in the university that makes of him a pessimistic man. Jude’s experience as a refused individual to study in Christminster reveals the injustice that privileges the upper class to education in comparison with the lower one. Thus this episode can be viewed as an example of the poor who cannot have access to higher education though they do not lack ambition or aptitudes.

Disappointed, Jude like Henchard at the end of the novel, finds refuge in drink. His recitation of Latin to some workmen and undergraduates shows his intellect which is juxtaposed to his outer appearance. Thanks to his intellectual abilities Jude is reassured by the belief that though he has failed in entering the university he can become a clergyman through apprenticeship. Unfortunately his ambition cannot be fulfilled just like in Marygreen because of a woman who seems to be different from Arabella but more dangerous than her, owing to her ambiguous behaviour with him. In Marygreen, he has been trapped by marriage with the sensual Arabella but with Sue he lives hard moments because of her excess of spirituality as some would suggest. His love for Sue has prevented him to become a clergy man as he dares to live with her without marriage contract and have children with her. At one moment Jude’s

conception of Christminster turns to be a place of darkness and obscurity; so he leaves her for Malchester

Jude's move to Melchester is also motivated by Sue who works there in the Theological college with Philotson. There Jude begins to enjoy his work in cathedral and takes pleasure in reading theological books to prepare for his career he also likes his walk with his cousin. But one day when she goes in a walk with Jude she finds herself obliged to spend the night outside the school with Jude since it is too late to go back to Menchester. This event causes bad reputation to Sue who is punished by the administration. Gossip about her behaviour is spread in the school, the situation that urges her to marry Philotson whom she does not love soon. But she separates from him and decides to live with Jude.

Jude and Sue's movement to different cities, Shaston, Aldbricken and the other urban cities is meant to show their struggle in living without restraint together. But they fail to reach their aim and suffer from the prejudices of the strict society which is not indulgent to such behaviour. Though the setting is modern people continue to have old fashioned ideas about class and gender. Shaston are also shown as being degenerate. the corruption of the town is summed up in the following quotation : "it was a place where the churchyard lay nearer heaven the church steeple, where beer was more plentiful than water , and where there were more wanton women than honest wives and maids"(Thomas Hardy,1994:238) The narrator describes it as a city of dream just like Christminster. It is also modern " it was the resting -place and headquarters of the proprietors of wandering vans, shows, shooting-galleries and other itinerant concerns, whose business lay largely at fairs and market.(Ibid.p.239). It is in this city that Philotson and Sue live and teach but the couple does not lead a happy marital life because Sue loves Jude and finds Philotson not attractive at all. It is also there that Jude and Sue lead an unconventional life. But the couples realize that they cannot live in Shaston because of gossip. so they have left for Aldbrickenham. Here also though

they obtain divorce they try to live together without marriage but it becomes too difficult for them to assume. Finally they return to Christminster where their relation ends tragically. A detailed analysis of themes is going to elaborate more the author's ideas of freedom and his over attack on social injustice adding to his scepticism about marriage institution.

Themes of social order and marriage

The novel involves two major topics. The theme of social order and class is clearly treated in the first part. And the theme of social conformity, particularly the institution of marriage is daringly tackled. The author not only denounces the tyranny of the system of class which restricts the opportunities for education but also daringly attacks its institutions. Moreover, the author criticizes the institution of marriage by portraying the hardships of families in the novel and seems to preach free unions and plea for divorce.

Thomas Hardy makes it clear that the rigid Victorian society is tyrannical and unjust in its reaction to Jude's aspiration to become a university graduate. Since he is a character without property or a socially acceptable family, Jude struggles for social and cultural belonging by attempting self-improvement. Unfortunately, his life is a series of cumulative material and social disasters owing to his position as a poor man. In this context Mary Rimmer states: "Jude ...turns on discoveries of the bad fit between individual cultural aspiration and the material barriers to it" (Mary Rimmer, 2004:149). Throughout Jude's struggle, the author reveals his sarcasm towards the class order in which the bourgeoisie takes hold of capital and hinders the improvement of such people from the working class who are often thwarted by this conservative order. "...had Jude not been poor, had he lived in other times, his career might have been very different" (Herbert B. Grimsditch, M.A., 1962:23). In fact, Jude's attempt to education and his patient struggle bring him only disillusionment and pain owing to his situation of "a man with passion for learning but no money" (Thomas Hardy 1995:181) Hardy brings into light the unfairness of the educational

and social system which makes Jude expelled from the academic scene despite his will, aptitudes and hard work. The bourgeois society as it is portrayed in Jude's experience is so harsh that just because he is issued from a miserable class cannot improve himself. In short, Jude is the embodiment of the members of the working class who are not only denied access to improvement but are also viewed as outsiders. In short, Christminster and Marygreen are about the condition of the working class. Hardy's sarcasm is intensified at the end of novel when he portrays the lonely Jude dying whilst the celebrations of Remembrance Day occur outside. By treating such a theme one can call Hardy a socialist and think of him as simply heralding the great collectivist revolt against Victorian individualism and capitalism.

The criticism on the social code and order is intensified by overtly attacking the institution of marriage. Thomas Hardy, in fact had been charged since 1895 with a large responsibility for the present "shop-soiled" condition of the marriage themes as he attests in the preface to his last novel. Marriage, so to speak, has already been treated in the earlier works. Yet the way he handles the theme in his last novel dramatically exemplified by Jude's relation with two women goes on to develop this idea further by revealing the hidden social and sexual problems of the Victorian couple within the patriarchal capitalist values .

The critic on the values based on the patriarchal relation within the household has been already treated in the previous novels *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. What is distinguishable in *Jude the Obscure* is the author's overt scepticism about the Victorian marriage institution and obviously about the Victorian family values, adding to his examination of the sexual problems of the characters and their internal conflicts. Though some critics as Margaret Stonyk does not view the novel as a serious argument against the convention of marriage, one can venture to maintain that Hardy's portrayal of the family is but an attack on marriage institution. It is indeed the failure of

marriage institution to build ideal families as it is portrayed by the tragic end of the story which reveals Hardy's radicalism as concerns family ethics.

Thus the author claims the right and the ability of the couple to dissolve marriage as soon as they feel that life is impossible without taking into account neither the economic interest of property nor social conformity. These ideas are examined by his portrayal of the day to day life of the couples in the novel: Jude and Arabella, Sue and Phillotson and Sue with Jude. The investigation of the couple's sexual and social problems has been somewhat pointed at in the previous novels yet it is in this last novel that Hardy tries to explore the internal problems of the couples.. He deals with two conceptions of marriage in his novel the traditional conservative one and the modern liberal one.

There are no contented marriages or satisfied couples but rather frustrating imposing marriages in the novel. Hardy makes Jude and Arabella's marriage and Phillotson and Sue's seem as a trap rather than a holy union between man and woman. As it has already been stated in the analysis of character, Arabella tries to seduce him and she has succeeded in doing so she uses all her sexual attributes and even her tricky behaviour of pretending pregnancy to make him care of her, which is a traditional view of marriage. As a tricky woman Arabella is aware that she can marry by pretending pregnancy. Marriage is thus "caught in a gin, which would cripple him if not her also for the rest of a lifetime. (Thomas Hardy, 1994:72). Moreover Jude is somewhat conscious before the marriage that Arabella is not the type of woman he wants. Yet he marries her and becomes the victim of her trap and the Victorian system which entangled him in lifetime engagement with her .This marriage is not a free decision taken by both partners but it comes as a means to save reputation. By doing so Hardy confirms the unfairness of this institution which condemns a person to live eternally with a woman with whom he has a momentary relation.

The author also denounces the “holiness” of this institution as he represents Arabella’s and Jude’s marriage as based on lies and hypocrisy. It is indeed a forced decision for the sake of respectability. In this case, then marriage is no more than a social contract which is based on the forced social conformity. The narrator clearly states that Arabella is for Jude a woman with no respect so how it comes to be his wife. In addition to criticize the Victorian conception of marriage as being sacred, the author associates Arabella’s lie with a holy place (church) Where they swore “that at every other time of their lives till death took them, they would assuredly believe, feel and desire precisely as they had believed, felt, and desired during the few preceding weeks” (ibid.p.66). These utterances are far from being truthful since the marriage is a forced one. More than that, while officially married with Jude, Arabella marries another man in Australia without questioning its validity. This situation, divulges Hardy’s sarcasm about the hypocrisy of the Victorian ethics. Jude and Arabella’s marriage for Jude is meant to cover an immoral behaviour and for Arabella is just a means to attain social conformity.

Likewise Sue’s marriage with Phillotson’s is done out of conformity. It is without doubt an authentic example of disastrous unions. Sue’s decision to marry him is taken to avoid people’s gossip. Yet in Jude’s opinion it is a reaction to his own marriage, a kind of revenge. Sue regrets her decision just after the ceremony as it is shown by her frightened eyes. But it admits her wrong doing a month later when she states that I ought not to have married. Moreover, Sue has always denied marriage as a sacrament as she has already told Jude and she has overtly articulated her loath of it in the letter she writes to Jude well before marriage ceremony.

“ I have been looking at the marriage service in the Prayer-book, and it seems to me very humiliating that a giver away should be required at all According to the ceremony as there printed, my bridegroom chooses me of his own will and pleasure; but I don’t choose him. Somebody gives me to him like a she –ass or she_goat , or any domestic animal” (Thomas Hardy,1974:203)

Despite this, forced by the Victorian convention rather than by revenge as Jude pretends, Sue marries Philotson fitting the society's demands. As marriage takes place for the societal rather than natural reasons it ends badly and becomes a burden for Sue and an agonizing situation for Philotson.. Indeed Sue as it has already been argued in the analysis of character shrinks from physical contact and she hardly accepts him. That is why he tries to set her free despite Gillingham's advice to be firm with her.

Thus Philotson, at the beginning, is portrayed as being far from the cliché of the Victorian tyrannical husband since he shows a singular comprehension, patience and respect to Sue's feelings. Sue also is far from the Victorian conception of "the Angel". She indeed cannot sacrifice herself to Philotson because of morality and daringly quit him to join his lover. Philotson's liberal ideas are also articulated when he takes into consideration Sue's aspiration and feelings. He says to Gillingham "she is another man's except in name and law" (ibid.p301) he adds I ought to dissolve the legal tie altogether".(Ibid) Divorce thus imposes itself on Philotson and is ready to do it " What's the use of keeping her chained on to me if she doesn't belong to me...it will be better for her to be independent "(Ibid) he argues. Despite Philotson's divorce which affects his social status and makes him lose his job, he does not change his decision and let Sue live with Jude and have children. By portraying Philotson losing his job and his respectable place in the society, the author alludes to the rigid obstinate society which pilloried the individual by its bigotry.

Yet Philotson proposes marriage again to Sue after losing her children and she accepts. Now one can notice a Victorian Philotson who claims that he is going to use "a little judicious severity" (Thomas Hardy,1994 :439) to control her, he adds that he is going to take his Vicar advice to restrain her "with a wise and strong hand" (Ibid).These utterances reveal the bad position of women within patriarchy: women are in the same level with animal that are owned, beaten and tamed. Sue's remarriage at the end of the novel reveals the power of

the rigid society on the individual and the failure to rebel and ignore conventionality or the prejudices of the society. For Philotson, remarriage helps him regain his place and his job. It is done without taking into consideration Sue's psychological state after the death of her children. In this context Shirley A Stave states

“her guilt and the determination to mortify the flesh lead her to embrace the traditional view of the indissolubility of marriage. She remarries Phillotson, whom she does not love, simply to punish herself and to exorcise her guilt over the children's deaths. But neither the church nor civil law decrees that marriage is a punishment. As Jude points out, this marriage will be a "fanatic prostitution." (Shirley A stave ,2003: 142)

Thus Sue's liberal and independent views on marriage are changed; she accepts to sacrifice herself to her legitimate husband and ignores her happiness. The narrator gives as an authentic image of numerous Victorian women who were not happy in marriage but submissively live with their husbands. By doing so, the author is denouncing this institution and rejects the traditional family.

The adjustment Hardy suggests is free cohabitation without marriage as it is exemplified by Sue's and Jude's relation and their struggle to maintain their life together. At the beginning of the novel Sue seems to be the embodiment of liberal ideas. She even differentiates herself from the other conservative women by frequenting men and discussing intellectual and philosophical matters. She tells Jude “I have in fact no fear of man or of their books. I have mixed with them –one or two of them particularly –almost as one of their own sex” (Thomas Hardy, 1995:177). Here the author presents Sue as equal to man and capable of learning and maintaining discussions. As for her criticism of marriage, she once tells Jude “how helplessly vulgar institution legal marriage is – a sort of trap to catch a man (Ibid.p. 322)

Sue's rebellious nature is also revealed when she lives with a friend without marriage, a behaviour that troubles her father. Her views on marriage anticipate her own time. She argues that: "it is foreign to a man's nature to go on loving a person when he is told that he must and shall be a person's lover."(ibid) She also shows a loathing to the ordinary church wedding. She sees the bride as a sacrifice to the bridegroom "the flowers in the bride's hand are sadly like the garland which decked the heifers of sacrifice in olden times."(ibid) Sue's views on marriage are rather excessive. She even tells Jude that marriage would kill love. That is why she renounces to marry him. Jude does not find any obstacle to a natural marriage and have children. Yet it is this illicit relationship that causes much trouble to the couple and their children. Society indeed does not tolerate this behaviour and the couple keeps moving from place to place to live peacefully. Little father time is always scolded at school and Jude is refused to work and Sue is always subject to a cruel gossip and looked at as a "fallen" woman.

The author points at the rigid attitude of the society towards the unconventional and the unmarried couple. Any deviation from the Victorian code causes disaster for the individual. Yet the tragedy of Sue's and Jude's children is not the consequence of the couple's decision to live together without marriage contract but it is the social code which denies their right to work and shelter. By portraying Jude and Sue's experience Hardy suggests that "social laws should evolve from natural laws" (Shirley .A. Stave, 2003:154). Following the same thread of ideas, Shirley reports Goetz interpretation of the novel which demonstrates that "civil marriage sanctioned by society may find itself at variance with a more natural form of marriage, one that does not depend on social conventions to validate it" (bid). Without the weight of convention Jude and Sue would lead a happy life and their children would not be killed. More over Sue would not make the sacrifice to be Philotson's wife against her will. Thomas hardy expresses clearly this opinion in Heart's magazine (1912) attesting that "the

English marriage laws are ...the gratuitous cause of at least half the misery of the community”
(Frank.R.Giordano.jr, 1982: 190)

In sum, the analysis of *Jude the Obscure* reveals the author attempt to attack marital laws by rendering Jude, Phillotson, Sue and Arabella’s experiences within “marriage institution” the latter is proved to be somewhat cruel to both men and women. For Jude marriage causes him only disaster and for Sue is just a way to respectability and conformity. Marriage thus is not a natural union of souls but is rather confined to a strict code of behaviour which is imposed by the Victorian ethics. Through Jude’s “illicit” relation with Sue, Thomas Hardy suggests a new kind of union freed from the Victorian restrictions and which is based fundamentally on human love. Yet even this kind of a free union is destined to failure because people cannot get rid of the values that they have incarnated for centuries. Even the author, though he attempts to show his hostility towards the Victorian values he cannot help producing the same ethics by portraying Sue as submissive to her husband.

All in all it should be evident that Hardy’s last novel daringly challenges the Victorian capitalist Patriarchal system by focusing on family values. He attacks particularly marital laws and breaks the cliché of the ideal family that associates women with submission, emotionality and obedience and epitomizes instead a ‘modern’ vision of the female in the character of Sue. He also challenges the patriarchal power in the character of Jude by portraying him as sensitive, helpless and even weak. Hardy’s condemnation of the marital laws is epitomized in the couple’s sufferings within “marriage institution” and their attempt to break free from it. Yet his ambiguous attitude towards the issue is revealed particularly at the end of the novel while portraying the couple’s failure in their attempt to overcome the Victorian social pressures and Sue’s yielding to the "fanatic prostitution”. But in the end Sue underwent a change of heart; and it was the sacerdotal view of marriage as an indissoluble bond which led her back to Phillotson and brought about the final sordid ending”(JosephWarren

Beach,1922:237). Hardy's ambiguous attitude towards the Victorian family is revealed particularly at the end of the novel while portraying the couple's failure in their attempt to overcome the Victorian social pressures and Sue's yielding to the "fanatic prostitution" .

Conclusion

This dissertation is an attempt to deal with the evolution of Thomas Hardy's conception of the family analysed chronologically through *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. Through The study of these three selected novels in the light of a Marxist perspective exemplified by Fredrick Engels *the Origin of the Family Private Property and the State* (1884), I have tried to make it explicit that Hardy's opinions converge with the Marxists ideas. The attack on the capitalist-patriarchal system and the views on the bourgeois family are epitomized in Hardy's presentation of shattered miserable families. The portrayal of such families is but an expression of hostility and disgust from the Victorian sexist, stratified society. Hardy's presentation of his pro –Marxist ideas has known a gradual development as it can be noticed in the analysis of the novels.

The first chapter attempts to show that family held a paramount importance in the Victorian era and a major role in inculcating the Victorian values to the citizens. The chapter also offers a detailed description of the Victorian household and its rules. It puts stress on the social and political laws regarding family members. Accordingly, the examination of the Victorian family values proves that the Victorians sanctified "marriage institution" to such an extent that any deviation from this form of union is despised and proved to be illegal. Yet as the following chapters have illustrated Thomas Hardy seems to support a totally different view of the traditional family and tries to revolutionize and suggest free cohabitation.

The outcome of the study of the *Mayor of Casterbridge* proves that Hardy is anxious about the system that gives the husbands absolute rights over their wives and children. It is, indeed, in the wife sale scene that his hostility and disgust over the patriarchal system are displayed. Property indeed triumphs over morality and characters become obsessed by money to such an extent that they forget the human principles. Interest becomes the concern of Henchard , Farelrea , Susan, Lucetta and even, Elisabeth Jane. The unions of those characters

are based mainly on property rather than on love. The analysis of characters proves that they have indeed the sense of economic self-preservation. Hardy's attack on capitalism that holds money the only motto for the life of the individual is clearly displayed in the characters reactions to business and human relationships. In the analysis of themes I have tried to make it explicit that Hardy is anxious about family ties within the patriarchal system

The analysis of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* has been devoted to Hardy's attack against capitalism and patriarchy, embodied in Tess's struggle to gain her bread and her attempt to make her family survive. Tess's tragedy is caused not only by the upper class exemplified by Alec but also by her own family's selfishness and irresponsibility. The examination of the novel through a Marxist perspective shows that the author is against the capitalist- patriarchal principles which are based on exploitation and the subjugation of the lower class to the upper one or the female sex to the male. Here the author emerges as a pro-Marxist since he renders the reality of many Victorian poor who suffer a lot from this system.

Tess's family is a paradigm of numerous families, which because of poverty encourage their children to work for them. At this point, Hardy's portrayal of Tess as "a prostitute" echoes Engels' views on capitalism and patriarchy particularly what concerns children. The Marxists propose that the children must be the concern of the state rather than their families in order to avoid exploitation. By doing so, it is going to be more socialisation of house work and women are going to be free to participate in the public sphere. Moreover, illegitimate children and lone mothers are not going to endure Tess's and Sorrow's alienation and rejection on the part of the society. In short, Hardy's criticism of the class system and family values by which the bourgeoisie has primacy over the lower class, seems to reveal a socialist view of equality in opportunities and freedom.

As far as *Jude the obscure* is concerned, it has been focused primarily on Hardy's overt attack on the Victorian Marital laws and his seeming advocacy of more rights to

women and adjustments for the divorce laws. Hardy's rendering character mainly breaks the Victorian cliché of the husband as a bread winner and the wife as an "angel in the house". Thus, he records the reality of so many husbands and wives who marry just for the sake of respectability as Sue and Jude have done. He portrays frustrated marriages and sexual difficulties which a few Victorian novelists dare to deal with. He also portrays Jude as the mouthpiece of the lower class in his struggle for social advancement and his criticism to the education system which does not give equal opportunities. Sue, also advocates equality in revealing the hardships of her gender. Thus through Jude and Sue Hardy points at both the issue of gender and class. In his treatment of the two he also emerges as a pro-Marxist and his radicalism is revealed by Jude's struggle and failure to fulfil his dreams within the class system.

Through his relation with Sue, the author seems to encourage free cohabitation. He also seems to rebel against the Victorian education for girls which is confined to prudery and which denies their sexuality in Sue's character. The latter endures a lot from this kind of education which makes her waver between the Victorian reasoning and the modern logic and which leads to anxiety and disillusionment at the end of the narrative. By doing so, the author is epitomising the heaviness of the Victorian ethics on characters. Actually, those ethics weigh not only on the characters but in the author himself.

Hardy's ambiguous attitudes towards the bourgeois family are shown in all the novels treated in this dissertation. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, in fact, his attack on the patriarchal family is very well done and vividly rendered in the wife sale scene, but as the novel progresses, one would have the impression that the author is replicating the same ideology. He seems to articulate his belief about the rightness of the bourgeois family values in making the novel end by Farfrae and Elisabeth Jane's marriage. He reproduces the myth of "the Angel in the house" in the character of Jane and the bread winner in Farfrae. In addition Jane's

stoicism, obedience and prudery are but qualities of which the Victorians have been proud. Elisabeth does her best to emulate the bourgeois manners and rise in status by marriage not by work.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles is the novel in which the author reveals his hatred towards the capitalist patriarchal system and family values. He also conveys his support of the lower class thanks to his open condemnation of the class system by which the upper class exploits the poor one. Yet though he denounces the Victorian prejudices about women, he makes Tess be sanctioned to death though a victim. This last point, one would suggest, reveals that the author still enculturates the same prejudices about the fallen woman who ought to be punished. His picture of Tess also is not far from the Victorian stereotype, especially in her relation with Angel Clare as it has been argued in character analysis. Thus, still in this novel one can notice that the author cannot distance himself from the Victorian ethics. These ideas are intensified in *Jude the Obscure*.

Though in *Jude the Obscure*, Thomas Hardy shows audacity in attacking the Victorian marital laws and their prejudices about women, one can notice also his reproduction of the same Victorian ethics regarding women and family. This is clearly revealed at the end of the novel by portraying Sue feeling guilty and depressed. Sue's reconsideration of her previous liberal opinion about natural marriage and her transgression of the Victorian values reveal the author's ambivalent ideas about the issue. Her return to live with Philotson would suggest Hardy's emphasis on the rightness of the Victorian values without which children would end tragically as it happens with Jude's children. The author would seem to reveal that the children are killed in a tragic way because they are born within an illicit relation.

The author's approval of the Victorian values is also exposed in his characters within the three selected novels. In the *Mayor of Casterbridge*, Susan, Lucetta and Elisabeth Jane are proved to be the incarnation of the Victorian stereotypes about women. As for Henchard

and Farefrae, as character analysis has already illustrated are patriarchs and capitalists. Besides, all the characters in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* are the embodiment of the Victorian features. Though Tess tries to isolate herself from the others she hardly manages, she, indeed, falls victim and is hanged at the end. In her relation with Angel she reveals an image of an obedient faithful wife despite being far from her husband, and in work she accepts exploitation stoically.

In *Jude the obscure*, Characters incarnate the Victorian values. Arabella is portrayed as a woman searching in the marriage market a way to a descent life. Philotson's desire to marry Sue despite the difference in age is but a reproduction of Victorian conception to marriage that does not take into consideration this detail. His sexual problems with his wife are sometimes understood as a simple coyness of a woman because the Victorians denied women's sexuality. In addition, though some critics refuse to rank him with the Victorian man owing to his weak nature, Jude incarnates also the Victorian principles of work and the same prejudices about woman like the other male characters in the novel. This can be grasped by his marriage with Arabella for the sake of respectability. Besides, his attempt to improve his social status by education and his attraction to Sue as a girl of the middle class whom he associates with Chrisminster reveal his Victorian values. Moreover, Though Sue can be viewed as the only woman who seems to rebel against the Victorian values, she does not follow through with her liberated ideas owing to the death of her Children. Accordingly, though the novel voices a protest against conventional gender and class relation it does not totally breaks free from the Victorian values.

To sum up, thanks to the analysis of the *Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the obscure* it can be observed that Hardy's attempt at reacting against the capitalist- patriarchal system has known a gradual evolution. In the first, he expresses his anxiety and even his criticism to marriage institution. In the second, he

thoroughly attacks the capitalist system under which the children and the lower class are exploited and women are reduced to mere prostitutes. Finally, in the third, he seems to espouse Anti- family principles and suggest the abolition of the family by encouraging free cohabitation. Yet, Hardy's ideas are not as clearly rendered as it can be noticed in Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Indeed, in his attempt to rebel against conventionality Thomas Hardy cannot totally break free from the rigid principles of the Victorians and sometimes reproduces the same values. This ambivalence can be attributed to the Victorian atmosphere, which despite the changes in views brought by philosophers and scientists, particularly at the end of the period, still distress novelists who are unable to break free of the patriarchal psychic configurations which they have incarnated for centuries.

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RESUME

Ce mémoire est une tentative de confirmer les idées marxistes de Thomas Hardy dans son traitement des affaires de familles. Elle implique que l'auteur prend part des nouvelles pensées véhiculées par les philosophes socialistes et oser d'annoncer qu'il est leurs porte-parole. La remise en question de la famille bourgeoise et son adoption des positions marxistes, tels que les idées de Frédéric Engels exprimées dans son œuvre *L'origine de la famille, la propriété privé et l'état* sont traduites par la présentation des familles complètement différentes du cliché Victorien. Cette présentation suggère sa divergence par rapport à la pensée de cette époque. Il parait contre l'idéalisation de la famille qui est considérée comme une institution économique gouvernée par l'idéologie patriarcale et capitaliste, ainsi que la domination de l'homme. J'ai essayé d'étaler que la critique de Hardy concernant le système capitaliste et la famille bourgeoise, a connu un développement graduel. J'ai suggéré qu'à travers *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of D'Urbervilles* et *Jude the obscure*, qu'on peut tracer la manière dans laquelle Hardy examine et remet en cause la famille victorienne gouvernée par le système capitaliste et ce, par le biais de son observation des relations familiales et humaines. En outre, les problèmes conjugaux et les fardeaux de la famille sont deux éléments majeurs traités dans les romans sus-cités. L'analyse de *The Mayor of Casterbridge* est une tentative de montrer l'anxiété de l'auteur par rapport au système qui octroie le droit absolu au mari de vendre sa femme et sa fille. Dans l'analyse de *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, j'ai essayé de traduire la protestation explicite de l'auteur contre le capitalisme et le patriarcat par lesquelles la classe inférieure est exploitée par la bourgeoisie de même que les enfants sont exploités par les parents. L'analyse de *Jude the Obscure*, est consacrée à l'attaque de l'auteur des lois conjugales et ses réclamations pour l'union libre et l'abolition de la famille. Pourtant, l'attitude de Hardy parait ambivalente dans les trois romans sus-cités. Dans *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, l'auteur présente la scène la plus choquante dans la littérature victorienne « Wife sale scene ». C'est grâce à cette scène qu'on note l'hostilité de Hardy à l'égard du système patriarcal, néanmoins, le dénouement du roman révèle l'enculturation des valeurs victorienne par l'auteur. Le mariage d'Elisabeth et Fairfrea est une image authentique d'un mariage bourgeois. Dans *Tess of d'Urbervilles*, l'auteur présente Tess comme une fille perdue (fallen woman) qui mérite la punition. Dans *Jude*, l'auteur exprime des idées libérales concernant la femme et la famille au début du roman, mais on a constaté qu'à la fin, l'auteur reproduit les mêmes éthiques victorienne qu'il a déjà critiquées au paravent. Cela est dû au poids des valeurs rigides victorienne qu'il ne pouvait pas transcender facilement.

ملخص

تعتبر هذه الأطروحة كمحاولة التأكيد على الأفكار الماركسية لدى توماس هاردي في معالجته لقضايا العائلة. إن الأديب لم يكن يتجاهل الأفكار الجديدة التي أتى بها الفلاسفة الاجتماعيون، وقد يعتبر ناطقا باسمهم. إن تساؤلات هاردي بخصوص العائلة البرجوازية و تبنيه أفكارا ماركسية كالتى أتى بها فريديريك أنجلز في كتابه "أصل العائلة، الملكية الخاصة و الدولة" (1884)، تتجسد في رواياته التي في معظم الأحيان، تروي قصة عائلات مختلفة تماما عن الكليشي الفيكتوري. هذا ما يوضح تعارض هاردي مع آراء الفيكتوريين. اتضح لنا أنه ضد العائلة المثالية الفيكتورية التي اعتبرها مؤسسة اقتصادية تحت سيطرة الرأسمالية و الابيسية المتمثلة في سيطرة الرجل. لقد حاولنا تبیین نقد توماس هاردي للنظام الرأسمالي و العائلة البرجوازية الذي في رأينا قد عرف تطورا تدريجيا و فرضنا أنه عبر تحليلنا لثلاث من رواياته :

The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Jude the Obscure. يمكن دراسة الخطوات التي سلكها هاردي في محاولته نقد النظام الرأسمالي عامة و العائلة البرجوازية خاصة و هذا بمعالجته للعلاقات العائلية و الإنسانية تحت الايديولوجية الرأسمالية بالإضافة على تسليط الضوء على المشاكل الزوجية و أعباء العائلة اللذان حظا بأهمية كبيرة في رواياته. تحليل رواية " رئيس كستربريج" تعتبر محاولة إيضاح قلق الكاتب من النظام الذي يمنح للزوج الحق المطلق في بيع زوجته و ابنته، و تحليل كتاب "تاس أوف ذو دبرفلز" هي محاولة توضيح معارضة الكاتب للنظام الرأسمالي الابيسي الذي يجعل البرجوازية تستغل الطبقة الفقيرة و الآباء يستغلون أبناءهم. تحليل رواية "جود ذو أبسكيور" مخصص لتدديد هاردي للقوانين الزوجية و تعزيزه للعلاقات الحرة و استئصال العائلة.

رغم كل هذا نتج عن هذا التحليل أن هاردي لم يوضح تماما موقفه في رواياته الثلاث المدروسة أعلاه. في الأولى قدم الأديب الصورة الأكثر اذهالا في الادب الفيكتوري ألا و هي صورة بيع الابنة و الزوجة . بفضلها لاحظنا حقد هاردي على النظام الابيسي و لكن نهاية الرواية تفسر تبنى هاردي لنفس الأفكار الفيكتورية. حقا زواج "اليزابات" ب " فرفي" يمثل صورة واقعية عن الزواج البرجوازي و رواية "تاس" جسد هاردي "تاس" كامرأة تستحق العقاب و في رواية جود رغم أننا لمسنا تبنى هاردي للأفكار الليبرالية فيما يخص العائلة و المرأة إلا أنه تبنى نفس الأفكار الفيكتورية التي نقدها في الأول و قد يعود هذا الى ثقل القيم الفيكتورية الصارمة في شخصية الكاتب التي لا يمكن تجاوزها بسهولة .