

**Men and 'Presence':
Constructions of Masculinity in Selected Novels of Thomas Hardy**

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Abstract

The novels of Thomas Hardy have long been the subject of gender analysis, resulting in a voluminous body of fruitful criticism; comparatively few critics, however, have focussed on the issue of masculinity in these novels. This study aims to contribute to the work so far written on Hardy and masculinity by providing a new reading of six of Hardy's novels, investigating their portrayal of masculinity in the light of social-constructionist theories of masculinity and Foucauldian theories. The novels which will be examined (in chronological order) are *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *Two on a Tower* (1882), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *The Woodlanders* (1887), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

The male characters in these novels are shown to constitute themselves through the gender and class structures and discourses of their time. What is less clear, however, is the extent to which they are constrained by these forces and the extent to which they resist them. Hardy's novels, as this study demonstrates, recognise the determining role of social structures in the construction of masculinity. To term themselves 'men' Hardy's male characters have to operate within the domain of contemporary social structures and discourses, which have already delineated the ways in which they should formulate themselves. Governed by the prevailing discourses of masculinity, these characters appear mainly to define themselves in terms of power but the novels expose the limitations of such a construction of masculinity. These constraints are underscored more forcefully as Hardy moves towards the end of his writing career, which explains the growing tragic vision of the novels.

Although they are restricted by social structures, however, Hardy's male characters are not completely trapped in them. Rather, the relationship between these structures and characters is portrayed to be a dynamic one; the structures which constitute the characters are actually shaped by them through their gender practices. The possibility of a limited resistance to these social forces therefore exists, as this study reveals. This research situates the exploration of masculinity in Hardy's novels in the context of his philosophy, attempting to highlight Hardy's perception not only of the ways in which gender is formulated but also of the mechanisms of change. The prevailing structures of masculinity are thus shown to be open to gradual change.

To my parents

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Chapter 1

Introduction

John Stuart Mill, one of Thomas Hardy's favourite philosophers (to be discussed in more detail in the following chapter), argues that '[w]hat is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing—the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others'.¹ For Hardy, it can be argued, if femininity is a construction, so is masculinity, a production of social structures and regulative discourses.

Even though in Hardy's novels biological factors and destiny may play a role in the shaping of individual lives, social forces are the key determinants of subjectivity and human life. That masculinity in Hardy's novel is a social construct is a point on which critics concur, certainly since the late 1970s, when feminist debates and revisionary readings of gender began to make their impact. It was in 1979 that Elaine Showalter wrote her seminal analysis of the effect of social conventions on the formation of Henchard's character. For her, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886) was an attack on the patriarchal codes of masculinity which regarded men's dissociation from the 'feminine' as a way of entering the world of men. The novel showed that the possibility of experiencing a full human life lay in the reconciliation of the masculine with the divorced 'feminine' self.² In another early analysis of masculinity in Hardy's novels, Susan Beegel,³ like Showalter, discussed Hardy's criticism of certain versions of masculinity. Her work on *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) is primarily an examination of male sexuality through the exploration of its imagery and figurative language. She argues that Hardy in this novel is critical of the kinds of love expressed by Boldwood and Troy towards Bathsheba, love in the form of ownership and passion, and is endorsing Oak's version of love, which takes the form of friendship.

Hardy's attitude towards the changing gender roles at the turn of the century has been the subject of a number of critical works. Annette Federico, for instance, provides a discussion of the crisis of masculinity as experienced by Hardy's male characters and

¹ John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1869), pp. 38-9. Phillip Mallett also opens his article with this quotation; see 'Hardy and Masculinity: A Pair of Blue Eyes and *Jude the Obscure*', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 387-402.

² Elaine Showalter, 'The Unmanning of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', in *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Dale Kramer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 99-115 (pp. 102-3, 112).

³ Susan Beegel, 'Bathsheba's Lovers: Male Sexuality in *Far from the Madding Crowd*', in *Sexuality and Victorian Literature*, ed. by Don Richard Cox (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984), pp. 108-27.

the ways they cope with such a crisis. Examining portrayals of masculinity in the novels of Hardy (and Gissing) in their historical context, she investigates the ways changes in the perceptions of masculinity in the late nineteenth century – mainly under the impact of the feminist movement – led to a crisis of identity in men. These authors created male characters who were in a state of ‘ambivalence’ — suggestive of the ambivalence of the authors themselves — perplexed how to deal with the changes in sexual roles and notions of masculinity and with the New Woman. Though aware that they need to change, they cling to more ‘reliable’ patriarchal stereotypes of masculinity.⁴

Hardy’s ambivalent standpoint towards patriarchal ideals of masculinity has since been explored by several other critics. Joanna Devereux, for example, investigates the ways in which patriarchal values are examined in Hardy’s novels through the portrayal of male protagonists. While for Showalter, Hardy is critical of patriarchal codes of masculinity, Devereux contends that he takes a hesitant position with regard to these codes, specifically the gentlemanly code of honour and heroism, both endorsing and questioning these values. Devereux also investigates the relationship between ‘social class and sexual identity’ in Hardy’s fiction, seeing social and romantic aspirations of the male characters intertwined. She discusses ‘the ways in which the male protagonist attempts either to insert himself into a certain class or to come to terms with the failure of his social/sexual ambitions’.⁵

Hardy’s dissatisfaction with conventional models of masculinity is linked by Tim Dolin with Victorian realist forms of narrative, which he sees as inherently masculine, recounting stories of male self-development. *Jude the Obscure* (1895), in particular, can be seen to undermine the *Bildungsroman*, invoking and finding unsatisfactory both the myths of transformation and the ‘ideal of realist narrative development’ through its hero’s incessant disillusionment and its episodic plot.⁶ The novel cannot portray Jude as the New Man, becoming the man Sue demands, ‘the sexual *new*’, because there is no myth to make such a transformation comprehensible and readable; male sexuality for the Victorians was a fact, fixed and unchangeable. The novel’s ‘failure’ ‘to accommodate stories of men seamlessly to the life of one man’, however, ‘succeeds, ironically enough, in making “man” a question’, ‘[i]nvolving a

⁴ Annette Federico, *Masculine Identity in Hardy and Gissing* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1991), pp. 16-8.

⁵ Joanna Devereux, *Patriarchy and its Discontents: Sexual Politics in Selected Novels and Stories of Thomas Hardy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), pp. xi-xx.

⁶ Tim Dolin, ‘Jude Fawley and the New Man’, in *Jude the Obscure*, New Casebooks Series, ed. by Penny Boumelha (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 209-27 (p. 214).

space, however confined, to imagine other stories about men, and hence to imagine other men'.⁷

Hardy's criticism of nineteenth-century norms of masculinity also appears in the works of Richard Nemesvari. His essay on *Desperate Remedies* (1871) explores the insecurity of masculine identity, the ways masculinity is confirmed, undercut and reaffirmed in this novel, particularly in relation to 'the feminine and the female'. It focuses specifically on the ways such issues are examined by means of the narrative structure, which involves erotic triangles. Nemesvari states that the novel voices 'growing Victorian anxieties about masculinity', about what constitutes masculinity or femininity, arguing that all characters, with the exception of the female protagonist, who 'acts as a catalyst' for others, 'vacillate between gender roles', incorporating both feminine and masculine traits. The construction of 'correct' masculinity in this novel entails the achievement of a clear-cut man/woman (as well as male/female) distinction, by 'controlling both the feminine and the female'.⁸ Such a construction of masculinity is questioned by Hardy, however, as 'the "successful" working out of the distinction' relies on 'the first subordinating the second'.⁹

In his discussion of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), which he compares with Melville's *Billy Budd*, Nemesvari once more looks at masculinity both as constructed by the characters and as examined by the narrative structure.¹⁰ He discusses the ways masculinity is constructed, undermined and reconstructed in relation to the central female character and the desire for her, arguing that love triangles, situations of rivalry, have been employed to echo the late Victorian concerns about the threat of desire to the male gender identity. According to Nemesvari, the novel examines and criticises late nineteenth-century versions of masculinity, which was either constructed in terms of sensuality or sexual restraint; the vulnerability of male gender identity, its being threatened by desire, becomes destructive for the female character, who is the one who pays for her lovers' reaffirmation of masculinity.

Andrew Radford's work provides another exploration of Hardy's condemnation of Victorian models of masculinity. In his article on *The Woodlanders* (1887), Radford discusses the male characters, Giles and Fitzpiers, as the embodiment of two conflicting

⁷ Ibid., p. 223.

⁸ Richard Nemesvari, "'Is It a Man or a Woman?': Constructing Masculinity in *Desperate Remedies*", in *Human Shows: Essays in Honour of Michael Millgate*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan and Richard Nemesvari (New Haven: The Hardy Association Press, 2000), pp. 67-88 (p. 68).

⁹ Ibid., p. 86

¹⁰ Richard Nemesvari, "'The Thing Must Be Male, We Suppose": Erotic Triangles and Masculine Identity in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Melville's *Billy Budd*", in *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

forces, two different kinds of masculinity, which can be found in the images, rituals and myths which inform the story. He reads the story as an attack on the codes of chivalry and sexual restraint to which Giles adheres. ‘Unmanned’ by a socially-formulated mentality, Giles fails to play his traditional role as the ‘fertility figure’ and the ‘guardian’ of the woods, allowing the urban intruder, Fitzpiers, to assault the rural community and its culture.¹¹

Hardy’s uneasiness about gender norms, his examination and questioning of cultural configurations of masculinity, also informs Judith Mitchell’s exploration of the similarity between the presentation of masculinity in Hardy’s novels, *Jude the Obscure* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and the 1990s film adaptations of these works, arguing that both reflect anxieties about gender. Like Hardy’s texts, these adaptations depict the ‘inadequacy’ of norms of masculinity and the impossibility (or, at least, difficulty) of living up to the cultural models of masculinity by portraying male protagonists as failures, as men who are ‘literally’ fallen.¹²

Another area of Hardy’s fiction which has been critically explored is the treatment and presentation of male same-sex relationships in these novels. Tod E. Jones, for instance, explores male homoerotic desires in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Drawing upon discussions of the Victorian and Hellenistic conceptions of relationships between men, he suggests that Henchard’s ‘misogyny’, desire to strengthen his bonds with the male community, ‘masculine insecurities and aggressive hyper-masculinity’, ‘ambivalence towards heterosexual activity’ and his unusual attachment to Farfrae, reflect suppressed homoerotic desires.¹³ Jones sees Henchard’s tragedy as the consequence of ‘acting under the influence of desires that are unacknowledged, unidentified, and thus certainly unaccepted’.¹⁴

Another discussion of male same-sex liaisons, which focuses on the question of masculinity as investigated by narrative structure, is presented by Richard Dellamora. His essay reads *Jude the Obscure* in the context of Victorian pedagogical culture of male friendship (especially that between mentor and protégé), discussing the erotic implications of such relationships. Jude’s desire for male friendship (for mentors) and

¹¹ Andrew Radford, ‘The Unmanned Fertility Figure in Hardy’s *The Woodlanders* (1887)’, *Victorian Newsletter* 99 (2001), 24-32 (pp. 24-5, 29).

¹² Judith Mitchell, ‘All Fall Down: Hardy’s Heroes on the 1990s Cinema Screen’, in *Thomas Hardy on Screen*, ed. by T. R. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 76-95 (pp. 77-80).

¹³ Tod E. Jones, ‘Michael Henchard: Hardy’s Male Homosexual’, *Victorian Newsletter*, 86 (1994), 9-13 (p. 10).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

for Sue — who also functions in the text as a quasi-male mentor — reveals not solely ambition but also a yearning for emotional communication and intimacy.¹⁵

A more recent investigation of manly love in *Jude the Obscure* is provided by Jane Thomas. In her essay, published in 2007, she discusses *Jude the Obscure* in ‘the historical context of the attempts to constrain and orientate the expression of male same-sex desire’ at the turn of the century, exploring Hardy’s awareness of and his response to the debates concerning relationships between men. For Thomas, Sue’s and Jude’s attempted comradeship ‘can be read as paradigmatic of a male same-sex relationship in which “the sense of sex” functions as a defining problematic’.¹⁶ The novel’s emphasis on the clash between flesh and spirit is reflective of the same tension experienced by other late-Victorian men of letters, with whom Hardy was acquainted, who struggled with forbidden desires, attempting to define manly love as spiritual and inspirational rather than sensual. Hardy’s novel, however, as Thomas argues, remains doubtful about the possibility of a purely spiritual or intellectual comradesly love.

The most recent examination of the male-male relationship in Hardy’s fiction emerges in the work of Phillip Mallett. Mallett’s 2010 essay compares two of Hardy’s novels written at the early and late stages of his career as a novelist, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) and *Jude the Obscure*, highlighting the similarities of the two. He maintains that both novels discuss the ‘processes of becoming a “man”’; in both, the plot is organised around the mentor/pupil relationship and ‘both, albeit in different ways, explore the boundary between the homosocial and the homoerotic, and in doing so call into question received notions of masculine identity’.¹⁷ The essay examines male characters’ endeavours to enter the world of men through the acquisition of culturally-defined masculine attributes, arguing that the novels are interrogations of conventional ideals of masculinity and present alternative ways of becoming a man.

Some critics have applied post-structuralist approaches to the discussion of masculinity in Hardy’s novels. Marjorie Garson, in her Lacanian approach to a selection of Hardy’s novels, argues that these novels express ‘what might be called “somatic anxiety”—anxiety about bodily integrity, fear of corporeal dissolution’; the novels express concerns ‘about wholeness, about maleness, and particularly about woman’.¹⁸ In her chapter on *Jude the Obscure*, she explores what Jude wants as a man. According

¹⁵ Richard Dellamora, ‘Male Relations in Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*’, *Papers on Language and Literature*, 27 (1991), 453-72.

¹⁶ Jane Thomas, ‘Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* and “Comradely Love”’, *Literature and History*, 16.2 (2007), 1-15 (p. 2).

¹⁷ Mallett, p. 390.

¹⁸ Marjorie Garson, *Hardy’s Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp. 1-3.

to Garson, Jude's desire for Christminster, Arabella and Sue is a desire for achieving 'wholeness', a desire which is intrinsically unattainable.¹⁹ But the text holds the female figures responsible for its thwarting, reflecting the narrator's (Hardy's) anxiety about the threat of the woman.

Elizabeth Langland also explores the construction of masculinity in *Jude the Obscure*. Drawing upon Teresa de Lauretis, Linda Alcoff and Mikhail Bakhtin, she examines the role of 'authoritative discourses' in the formation of Jude's masculine identity, Jude's internalisation of them and their becoming 'internally persuasive'.²⁰ Sue is examined in this article not as a character in her own right but as the incarnation of Jude's 'internally persuasive voice', 'the feminine' in him, and an alternative to the unsatisfactory cultural constructions of masculinity.²¹ Langland asserts that Jude's desire for Sue reflects his desire for a more satisfying masculine identity outside the domain of culture yet his re-embrace of authoritative discourses at the end of the story undercuts the very idea of self-determination.

Stephan Horlacher, like Langland, examines the constructedness of masculinity in *Jude*, but whereas Langland attributes Jude's failure to the inescapability of patriarchal discourses which form one's identity, Horlacher relates Jude's failure to his 'deficient understanding' of the ways 'signs work'. Taking a psychoanalytic Men's Studies approach which draws upon Lacan, deconstruction and discourse analysis, he investigates Jude's formation of masculinity within 'discourses and sign systems'. He argues that masculinity in the novel is presented as a linguistic construct and Jude's "'tragic" fate' lies in his inability to recognise this fact, his seeking after 'a transcendental signified', a fixed identity.²² Hardy's novel in his view can be read in a 'positive' way: Jude's failure is an 'example of how not to construct one's identity' and an evidence of 'the freedom of the individual' in the formation of subjectivity.²³

The existing critical work on Hardy and masculinity can thus be seen to address issues such as Hardy's criticism of or ambivalence towards patriarchal ideals of masculinity, his challenging of conventional gender roles and the precariousness and

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 152-7.

²⁰ Elizabeth Langland, 'Becoming a Man in *Jude the Obscure*', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. by Margaret R. Higonnet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 32-48 (p. 45).

²¹ Ibid., pp. 32-4, 38.

²² Stefan Horlacher, "'The Letter Killeth but the Spirit Giveth Life': Masculinity in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*", *Proceedings of the Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English*, vol. XXVI, ed. by Lilo Moessner and Christa M. Schmidt (Trier, Germany: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2005), pp. 171-82 (p. 172).

²³ Ibid., p. 173.

destructiveness of nineteenth-century male gender identity. Scholarly discussions also embrace examinations of masculinity in relation to desire and the feminine, homosocial and homoerotic relationships and discursive and linguistic constructions of masculinity.

Class and work and their relation to masculinity is referred to in some of these works but these structures are not examined as constituent and determinant of masculine subjectivity; we are not provided with the ways characters construct their masculinity through them. Devereux's discussion of class is more an exploration of social mobility and its conflation with romantic aspiration than of the ways male characters construct and negotiate gender and class identities. The significant role of power in the shaping of masculine subjectivity is another issue not sufficiently addressed by the scholarly work on Hardy and masculinity which this thesis aims to examine.

The analyses of masculinity in most previous criticism of Hardy are mainly concerned with the ways characters acquire masculine qualities, their internalisation of ideologies or insertion into a specific class system; masculinity is also discussed in terms of attribute and temperament. Critical works on Hardy and masculinity do not, in my view, pay sufficient attention to the complex ways in which characters position themselves in relation to contemporary discourses or the simultaneous construction of masculinity within different class discourses. They do not always recognise the ways in which male characters' gender practices both constitute social structures and are constrained by them. The dynamic relationship between social structures and individuals, in other words, has not been fully examined.

The present research aims to explore these issues by applying social-constructionist theories of masculinity and Foucauldian theories to those novels of Thomas Hardy to which they appear most relevant: *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Two on a Tower*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Woodlanders*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. The application of these theories, whose perception of the ways individuals are constituted through social forces resembles Hardy's, as we shall see, can provide a new reading of the novels, by allowing us to see the ways through which male characters construct themselves through (or are constructed by) social structures. For even though scholarly works on Hardy and masculinity have treated masculinity as a social construction, they do not sufficiently examine the ways in which the male characters formulate themselves; social-constructionist theories of masculinity, which can be useful tools for such an analysis, have not yet been employed for the discussion of masculinity in Hardy's novels. This investigation of masculinity in Hardy's fiction also takes into account Hardy's philosophy, his conception of determinism and free-will

and his notion of resistance and change. It is important to place his representation of masculinity within his wider world-view because it helps to explain both the tragic dimension of his work (his recognition of the extent to which individuals are constrained by contemporary discourses) and the space he allows for hope in the possibility of change.

Hardy's male characters can be seen to be constrained by gender and class structures and discourses, which severely delineate the ways in which they can formulate themselves. These social forces do not, however, operate externally on characters but rather constitute them, shaping their subjectivities and their gender practices from within. This allows a certain flexibility in the ways they react to, modify or even resist such discourses. Such a portrayal of the ways social forces construct individuals, it can be argued, stems from Hardy's philosophy. His determinism (which is spelled out in more detail in the next chapter) incorporates the conception of power more as a force inherent in phenomena rather than operating above them; he calls this force 'Necessity', 'Causality' or 'Immanent Will'. Power, as he conceives it, governs individuals not in a repressive manner but by pervading their very existence. Hardy's kind of determinism, therefore, as Jane Thomas argues, bears resemblance to

a more modern system of thought which stresses the role of power in the constitution of individual subjectivity – not as a force negatively applied from outside but as something which permeates the body and is itself embodied in every thought, gesture and social interaction.²⁴

This is a perception of power developed by Michel Foucault, as we shall see. Hardy's characters sometimes conceive of themselves as victims of a prohibitive external power, unaware of the extent to which they themselves have played a role in the reception of these forces.

Hardy's philosophy of existence, in other words, though highly deterministic, does not verge on fatalism as for him the relationship between social structures and individuals is a dynamic one. Social forces do not determine subjects mechanically; both for Hardy and for more recent theorists of gender, social structures and discourses constitute individuals but it is individuals who bring those forces into existence by

²⁴ Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent: Reassessing the 'Minor' Novels* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 1-2.

formulating themselves through them. The probability of change to these forces is envisioned by Hardy and these theorists owing to such dynamics.

The following review of a number of social-constructionist theories of gender is designed to provide a framework for discussing Hardy's novels. The point is not, of course, to suggest that Hardy could have been influenced by these theories although I intend to point out the similarity of Hardy's perception of gender formation to the discussions of gender provided by these theories. The analyses of the novels in the light of these theories can help bring to the fore Hardy's intuitive and often unconscious understanding of the ways in which gender is formulated.

Andrew Tolson, for example, the pioneer of sociological works on masculinity, specifically touches on some of the issues which Hardy examines in his novels. Tolson discusses the role of patriarchy and capitalism in the formation of masculinity. He investigates the ways in which working-class and middle-class masculinities are constructed within institutions, such as the family, work-place, school and peer-groups. Tolson conceives of work as the key constituent of masculine subjectivity and social class as a determining factor involved in the making of male gender identity. For him, the definitions of masculinity in terms of work and success provided by patriarchal and capitalist discourses are 'limitations of masculinity': at work, men 'are condemned to a quest for personal rewards which they cannot hope to realise', and at home, '[s]ocial prestige becomes a psychological barrier, limiting their potentiality for personal relationships'.²⁵ The cultural and social constructions of masculinity, in other words, adversely affect men themselves. In an attempt to achieve a sense of manhood, men are obliged to align themselves with paradigms of masculinity which do not always accord with their capabilities and desires.

The formation of masculinity within social institutions, the interrelatedness of masculinity and class and the importance of work as constitutive of masculine identity are all issues which, as we shall see, Hardy explores vividly in his novels. Hardy's men, of course, are not simply representative of their class; rather, they interact with class norms, demonstrating a complex relation of resistance to and/or compliance with them. The problems and limitations which the construction of masculinity in accordance with the socially and culturally privileged models of masculinity creates for men are also notably investigated by Hardy.

²⁵ Andrew Tolson, *The Limits of Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 1977), p. 13.

In Hardy's novels, as I have suggested, masculinity is not automatically determined by social structures; rather, structures which delimit the construction of masculinity are themselves constituted through the gender practices of individuals. This is a point emphasised by R. W. Connell, in his attempt to improve and develop arguments such as Tolson's. While Tolson's emphasis is on the ways in which patriarchal and class structures determine the construction of masculinity, Connell is more interested in the ways in which individuals interact with these structures. Connell argues that a discussion of gender should pay attention to the 'interweaving of personal life and social structures', exploring 'what people do by way of constituting the social relations they live in'. He does not underestimate 'the structure of social relations as a condition of all practices',²⁶ but he insists that structure and practice are not separate from each other; 'the structure of gender relations' — arrangements that constrain gender practice — 'has no existence outside the practices through which people and groups conduct those relations'; gender structures are constituted through social practice; '[i]f we don't bring it into being, gender does not exist'.²⁷ Yet practice itself is conditioned by those very structures; it cannot 'float free; it must respond to, and is constrained by, the circumstances which those structure constitute'.²⁸

That gender practice is constrained does not suggest that individuals are trapped in these structures; structures do not 'mechanically' determine people's actions. Structures operate by defining 'possibilities and consequences of action' and individuals formulate their gender, considering these possibilities.²⁹ People do not passively internalise 'gender-specific behaviours'; rather, they engage with them; gender is learned in 'the situations of everyday life'; 'it needs not be explicitly named as gender — it might be thought of as "sports I enjoy", "fights with my parents", "jobs I am suited for", etc'. Individuals 'negotiate the gender order', learning 'how to distance themselves from a gender identity' and 'how to adopt' one.³⁰

In the construction of gender, Connell considers both the 'agency' of individuals and 'the intractability of gender structures'; '[g]ender patterns develop in personal life as a series of encounters with the constraints and possibilities of the existing gender order. In these encounters the learner improvises, copies, creates, and thus develops

²⁶ R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 1987), pp. 61-2.

²⁷ R. W. Connell, *Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), pp. 54-5.

²⁸ Connell, *Gender and Power*, pp. 62, 92-95, 17.

²⁹ Connell, *Gender*, p. 55.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

characteristic strategies for handling situations in which gender relations are present'.³¹ The diversity of masculinities is indicative of such a negotiation.

For Connell, the main structures which constrain and condition the formation of gender are 'the sexual division of labour' (the allocation of jobs and differentiation of tasks according to one's sex), 'power' (the construction of masculinity in terms of the domination of women or other men) and the structure of 'cathexis' (a term he borrows from Freud to refer to 'emotional attachment' or 'emotional relations').³² By this last category, Connell refers to the social patterning of emotional attachments and relationships. This structure incorporates different kinds of emotional relationships but specifically involves the definition of the 'objects of desire [...] by the dichotomy and opposition of feminine and masculine'; men and women, for instance, tend to attract each other through behaviour and appearance.³³ Following Freud, Connell argues that emotional attachment to people can be 'affectionate' ('favourable'), 'hostile' or 'ambivalent', that is, 'hostile and affectionate at the same time'.³⁴

By constituting themselves as breadwinners, decision-makers and husbands, lovers or fathers, men formulate their masculinity within these structures. Such structures of gender relations do not operate separately but are usually interwoven with each other and mainly interact with other structures, such as social class.³⁵ Connell also recognises the role of discourse as another structure involved in the formation of the conceptions of masculinity and femininity but his emphasis is more on the exploration of the first three structures.

Such structuring of gender relations, according to Connell, can be found, more or less, in all social institutions as well as in society at large; he terms the gender arrangement of a particular institution as the '*gender regime*' of that institution, which itself is a 'part of wider patterns' that he calls 'the *gender order* of society'. Even though the 'gender regimes of institutions usually correspond to the overall gender order', they 'may depart from it';³⁶ this is the place where change can develop.

The applicability of Connell's discussion to Hardy's novels relates to the ways in which their male characters' practice of masculinity can be seen to emerge out of such structures. By taking masculine careers, providing for their families, asserting their

³¹ Ibid., p. 82.

³² Connell, *Gender and Power*, pp. 99-112; *Gender*, 58-64.

³³ Ibid., pp. 112, 181-2.

³⁴ 'Cathexis' in Freud refers to 'a psychic charge or instinctual energy being attached to a mental object, i.e., an idea or image.' Connell generalises the term to apply 'to the construction of emotionally charged social relations with "objects" (i.e., other people) in the real world'. *Gender and Power*, p. 112.

³⁵ Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Polity, 2005 [1995]), p. 75.

³⁶ Connell, *Gender*, p. 54.

authority and engaging in matrimonial and romantic relationships, they reveal the ways in which their gender practice is conditioned by the structures described by Connell. Hardy's characters are not passively affected by these structures; rather, they constitute these structures through their practices. For Hardy, as for Connell, the negotiation of different versions of masculinity is possible; his characters may adopt or distance themselves from certain masculine and class identities; they cannot, of course, operate outside the domain of structure and discourse.

In Hardy's novels, masculinity can be seen to be constructed also through individuals' interaction with each other and this is the point also made by sociologists of masculinity. David H. J. Morgan, in his book *Discovering Men*, argues that masculinity and femininity are constructed 'in relation to each other through everyday social interaction'. From this 'relational or interactionist' viewpoint, 'what it feels like to be a man can only fully be answered in the context of gendered encounters', encounters 'in which men and women meet'. For Morgan, masculinity is both shaped out of and shapes such encounters.³⁷ That men construct their masculinities through interaction with others, however, does not mean that they are free to practise any version of masculinity; rather, their gender practice is strictly regulated by 'the demands of the particular situation' and by 'the array of masculinities that may be available and privileged'.³⁸ Whether they assert themselves through forcefulness, intimidation or gentle behaviour depends on the kinds of circumstances in which they find themselves and the gender practice they encounter in others. But in whatever way they constitute themselves, the kind of masculinity they practise is necessarily chosen from a range of models of masculinity already provided by their culture and society.

For Hardy, gender is constructed not only by structure but by its intertwined element, discourse. Foucault's discussion of the ways individuals formulate themselves through regulatory discourses proves useful here. According to Foucault, in order to constitute themselves as subjects, individuals need to fit themselves 'into certain games of truth' — 'rules by which truth is produced'.³⁹ These come in the form of sciences or discourses promoted by institutions of power. Individuals acquire their sense of self by taking an already-defined subject position in discourse; the subject, according to

³⁷ David H. J. Morgan, *Discovering Men* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 203.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-4.

³⁹ Michel Foucault, 'The Ethics of the Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom', in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, vol. I of *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, ed. by Paul Rabinow, trans. by Robert Hurley and others (London: Penguin, 2000), pp. 281-301, (pp. 281, 290, 297). Interview conducted in 1984.

Foucault, is an ‘empty function’ that ‘can be filled by virtually any individual’.⁴⁰ Discourses provide ‘speaking persons subject positions from which to make sense of the world while “subjecting” speakers to the regulatory power of those discourses.’⁴¹ Hardy’s characters, as we shall see, constitute themselves in similar fashion through the discourses of masculinity and class which are provided by their society.

In Hardy’s novels, the construction of masculinity is not, of course, a matter of entire acceptance or refusal of the prevailing norms of masculinity. His male characters may have a paradoxical or conflicted relationship with these norms. This is an issue highlighted by post-structuralist discussions of masculinity such as those developed by Margaret Wetherell and Nigel Edley. Their discursive psychoanalytic analysis of masculinity explores the ways men ‘negotiate regulatory conceptions of masculinity in their everyday interactions’, arguing that men ‘position themselves in relation to conventional notions of the masculine’ in a paradoxical way.⁴² Their research demonstrates how men rarely consider themselves to be constructed by hegemonic ideals of masculinity,⁴³ such as ‘strength, boldness, winning challenges’ or ‘cool toughness’. Most men tend to assume that they are free from the regulatory power of discourse. But someone who describes himself as ‘ordinary’, an ‘independent man who knows his own mind’, is paradoxically ‘most hegemonic’ in being ‘non-hegemonic’. Such a man is still ‘enmeshed by convention; subjectified, ordered and disciplined at the very moment he rehearses the language of personal taste, unconventionality and autonomy, or ordinariness and normality’. Negotiating hegemonic masculinity is not therefore a matter of either following or defying the norms; rather, men can be ‘hegemonic and non-hegemonic, complicit and resistant at the same time’.⁴⁴ Hardy’s male characters, I will argue, demonstrate a similarly complex, at times paradoxical, relationship of simultaneous resistance to and compliance with the norms of masculinity. They apparently defy certain discourses while practically constituting themselves through them.

⁴⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1974 [French, 1969]), p. 93.

⁴¹ Chris Barker and Dariusz Galasinski, *Cultural Studies and Discourse Analysis: A Dialogue on Language and Identity* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), p. 31.

⁴² Margaret Wetherell and Nigel Edley, ‘Negotiating Hegemonic Masculinity: Imaginary Positions and Psycho-Discursive Practices’.

<<http://www.linguistics.ucsb.edu/faculty/bucholtz/conference/WetherellPaper.pdf/>> [accessed 15 Dec. 2007]; also in *Feminism and Psychology*, 9.3 (1999), 335-56 (pp. 3-7).

⁴³ The notion of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is developed by Connell, by which he means a kind of masculinity which is ‘culturally exalted’ with the aim of guaranteeing ‘the dominant position of men and the subordination of women’. *Gender and Power*, p. 79.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-33.

Foucault's discussion of the ways in which mechanisms of power and regulatory discourses are involved in the formation of subjectivity is applicable to Hardy's novels for the two men hold similar conceptions of the ways in which power operates. Both conceive of power not as a negative force operating above individuals and society but rather immanent in them, a kind of power which is constitutive of human subjectivity. Foucault states:

When I think of the mechanics of power, I think of its capillary form of existence, of the extent to which power seeps into the very grain of individuals, reaches right into their bodies, permeates their gestures, their posture, what they say, how they learn to love and work with other people.⁴⁵

Hardy's characters, as I attempt to show, are governed by such a mechanism of power; power of discourse pervades them, governing their thoughts and actions.

In *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Foucault explains that the power he describes is not a monolithic form of dominance, repressive power on the one side and the subjugated individual on the other, but a 'multiplicity of force relations', scattered throughout the entire social network.⁴⁶ Power, he argues, is not an entity, not something that can be 'held' or 'acquired'. It is not external to but 'immanent' in all kinds of relationships, economic scientific or sexual. Power 'is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere'.⁴⁷

For Foucault, power is not always negative and repressive; rather, it should be perceived of as a 'positive' mechanism as well. Power is productive for it creates knowledge and discourse. The emergence of the knowledge of sexuality in the nineteenth century, for instance, is an effect of power. The aim of the bourgeois machinery of power was not to suppress sex but to produce the 'true discourse' about it in order to manage and regulate it for the maintenance of the power of the dominant class. This mechanism of power, which, as Foucault argues, first emerged in the eighteenth century with the aim of governing the population, operates not through 'law' and by means of 'punishment' but through 'normalization' and by means of 'control'.⁴⁸

But power also produces resistance. Power cannot always get what it wants; for 'where there is power, there is resistance' to it. Resistance, as Foucault argues, is an

⁴⁵ Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London: Routledge, 1980), p. 217.

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. I, *The Will to Knowledge*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990 [French, 1976]), p. 92.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 93-8.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3, 69, 85-9.

indispensable accompaniment of any relation of power; ‘points of resistance’ can be found all throughout ‘the power network’. In the same way that power relations form ‘a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities’.⁴⁹ Change for Foucault can be realised when points of resistance are codified and unified. A similar conception of the mechanism of power and resistance, as we shall see, can be found in Hardy’s contemporary, Herbert Spencer, and in Hardy himself.

In his earlier work, *Discipline and Punish* (1975), Foucault argues that one form that power takes is that of discipline, which is a mechanism for producing useful, docile subjects. This machinery of power operates through mechanisms such as the gaze and ‘normalizing judgement’,⁵⁰ the techniques through which individuals are constantly supervised by other members of society and by themselves. The mechanism of the gaze allows the machinery of power to operate in the most efficient manner by distributing the act of supervision among all members of society, accordingly making everybody feel her/himself under constant supervision. For Foucault, Bentham’s ‘panopticon’, an ideal model of prison, best suggests the ways the act of surveillance can operate in a society.⁵¹ In the nineteenth century, Jeremy Bentham designed the panopticon as a circular-shaped prison-building, divided into cells, with a tower at the centre and with the inmates placed in cells and a supervisor in the tower. The individuals in such a structure are subjected to the power of the gaze, which is both ‘visible’ and ‘unverifiable’. Such a machinery of power is effective since it makes the observed exercise power over him/herself: the one who ‘is subjected to the field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself’.⁵² Conscious that he is watched constantly, the observed takes upon him/herself to check his/her conduct all the time; surveillance takes the form of self-surveillance and the gaze becomes a gaze at oneself.

Hardy, as I will demonstrate, was conscious of similar mechanisms of power operating in society, constituting individuals. It is not just Hardy’s female characters who are subjected to the disciplinary power of the gaze; his male characters are also

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 95-6.

⁵⁰ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1991 [French, 1975]), p. 170.

⁵¹ Michel Foucault, ‘Truth and Juridical Forms’, in *Power*, vol. III of *The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984*, ed. by James D. Faubion, trans. by Robert Hurley and others (New York: The New Press, 2000), pp. 1- 89 (p. 58). Lecture given in 1973.

⁵² Foucault, *Discipline*, pp. 200-7.

affected by the mechanism of surveillance. They, likewise, are scrutinised for their compliance with the norms of masculinity, such as work, success, acceptance of the role of provider or assertion of authority. The disciplinary power operates on them, making them constantly check their own conduct, to avoid transgressing the norms of the discourses of masculinity through which they have constituted themselves.

In a disciplinary society, Foucault argues, individuals are regulated not only by the power of the gaze but by that of ‘normalizing judgement’, which accompanies the gaze. The disciplinary system has its own system of evaluation; in this system the norm is the law and individuals are punished for deviation from the norm. Individuals are compared with each other, differentiated according to the degree of their compliance with the ‘overall rule’, evaluated on their level of ‘conformity’ and (if they fail this test) finally excluded in order to be corrected. The normalizing judgement, therefore, works through a system of dividing and ‘branding’ or naming, dividing individuals into categories and labelling them accordingly.⁵³ Hardy, as I will show, portrays his men as subjected to similar disciplinary power; they are judged (or judge themselves) according to their degree of conformity with the norms of prevailing discourses of masculinity and are branded (or brand themselves) as manly or unmanly, successful or failed.

As the primary aim of the disciplinary system is to normalise, punishment in this mechanism is ‘essentially *corrective*’. Although making use of punishment in the negative sense, in the form of ‘fines’, for example, the disciplinary system also advocates positive ‘punishments that are exercise – intensified, multiplied forms of training, several times repeated’.⁵⁴ Punishment, in this sense, is a form of education. It is not always inflicted by others; rather, individuals subject themselves to chastisement as well. The struggles of Swithin and Jude for the acquisition of knowledge, for instance, can be seen as examples of punishment in the form of exercise; they subject themselves to hard work in order to gain qualifications and define themselves as men of knowledge.

As the main end of the discipline is to train, to produce specific subjects, punishment, in a disciplinary mechanism, is always accompanied by rewards; in fact, punishment ‘is only one element of a double system: gratification-punishment’; individuals are punished for non-conformity and rewarded for their achievements. Rank is the functioning instrument of this double system, being employed as both ‘reward’ and ‘punishment’: ‘Discipline rewards simply by the play of awards, thus making it possible to attain higher ranks and places; it punishes by reversing this process.’ The

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 178-83, 199-200.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 179.

disciplinary system differentiates individuals according to their qualifications and assigns them a rank accordingly; each individual is 'defined' according to his/her rank, that is, 'the place one occupies in a classification'. What makes the rank a valuable disciplinary tool is that it does not guarantee the individual a 'fixed' status: 'It is a perpetual movement in which individuals replace one another in a space'. Individuals are evaluated, and evaluate themselves, constantly; those holding lower ranks can improve their position by acquiring qualifications and those of higher ranks descend into lower positions if they prove unworthy.⁵⁵

It can be argued that characters in Hardy's novels discipline themselves in this manner in order either to ascend to higher ranks (if we define 'rank' as a space or subject status in discourse) or to maintain their present ranks and thus avoid descending to lower positions. Working through a system of punishment and gratification, the disciplining power of discourse makes male characters work on themselves in order to gain certain qualifications and be awarded certain subject positions. The self-discipline they undergo is accompanied by the gratification of winning a specific rank to which they aspire, for example, that of a man of knowledge. Since rank is not a fixed status, to maintain a specific rank (subject position) requires the male characters' constant, life-long pursuit of certain norms. The moment they cease following those norms, they will lose the subject status which is awarded to them in return for their compliance with those norms. A man may immediately lose his status as a 'man' if he fails to live up to the norms of the discourses of masculinity within which he has constituted himself.

Hardy's novels will be seen to demonstrate some of the ways in which the exercise of such power over oneself and others serves to construct masculinity. In patriarchal discourses, femininity is delineated as a passive mode of being while masculinity is associated with acting; as Berger observes, conventionally '*men act* and *women appear*'⁵⁶ or, in D. H. Lawrence's words, '[t]he male exists in doing, the female in being',⁵⁷ a conception of gender which Hardy's novels both portray and challenge, as we shall see. Masculinity in such systems of signification is associated with the incorporation and the exercise of power. As John Berger states,

[a]ccording to usage and conventions which are at last being questioned but have by no means been overcome, the social presence of a woman is different

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 180-2, 145-7.

⁵⁶ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin, 1972), p. 47.

⁵⁷ D. H. Lawrence, 'Study of Thomas Hardy', in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. by Edward D. McDonald, (London: Heinemann, 1936), pp. 398-516 (p. 481).

in kind from that of a man. A man's presence is dependent upon the promise of power which he embodies. If the promise is large and credible his presence is striking. If it is small and incredible, he is found to have little presence. The promised power may be moral, physical, temperamental, economic, social, sexual—but its object is always exterior to the man. A man's presence suggests what he is capable of doing to you or for you. His presence may be fabricated, in the sense that he pretends to be capable of what he is not. But the pretence is always towards a power which he exercises on others.⁵⁸

A man's 'presence', in other words, according to patriarchal discourses, is associated with power.

Relating Berger's argument to the discussion of the social construction of masculinity, Tolson states that 'presence' is 'a certain style of behaviour, an outward presentation' which 'becomes part of an internal self-image'. A man should have 'presence' to understand himself as 'man'. The 'promise of power', as Tolson argues, is associated with certain 'conventional masculine characteristics', such as 'authority, self-assertion, competitiveness, aggression' and 'physical strength'.⁵⁹ Supporting and providing for the family are other ways of constructing masculine 'presence'. The definition of 'presence', of course, varies from one class discourse to another; while manhood for the middle classes is defined more in term of 'achievement' and 'professionalism', for working-class men it is more linked with 'toughness' and 'aggression'.⁶⁰

Hardy portrays a range of definitions of 'presence' offered by various discourses of masculinity. His male characters may attempt to assert their 'presence' intellectually and socially (the Bishop of Melchester, Swithin or Jude), financially and socially (Henchard or Melbury), morally (Gabriel Oak or Giles Winterborne), physically (Henchard) or by reliance on sparkling appearance and verbal techniques (Troy or Alec). The domination of women either by providing for, deciding for and supporting them or by intimidating and possessing them can also be seen as examples of the other ways through which the male characters construct their 'presence'. Hardy's men need to have 'presence' (even if 'presence' is fabricated) if they are to be termed 'men'. The undermining of a position of supremacy, in any of these senses, can undercut the male characters' masculine subjectivity.

⁵⁸ Berger, pp. 45-6.

⁵⁹ Tolson, p. 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 81, 40, 43.

‘Presence’ defined in terms of dominating others, specifically, proves to be quite vulnerable because the person dominated can respond in unpredictable ways. All the characters’ interactions with each other can be seen as relations of power in the Foucauldian sense of the term. For Foucault, any human relationship is a relation of power in the sense that ‘one person tries to control the conduct of the other’. A relation of power, however, far from being one-sided and fixed, is ‘mobile’, modifiable and ‘reversible’, for the person on whom power is exercised is capable of resistance.⁶¹ Hardy demonstrates that it is the presence of resistance in any relation of power which makes the task of the constitution of masculinity in terms of the assertion of authority demanding and renders masculine subjectivity insecure.

However, ‘presence’ in the novels of Thomas Hardy is not always associated with the exercise of power on an external object, as masculine ‘presence’ is conventionally described. Oak and Giles, for instance, may assert their manhood by helping others (when the power they embody is towards an external object and thus in line with conventional definitions of masculine ‘presence’); mainly, however, they construct their ‘presence’ by means of dissociation from external objects. Their practice of self-sufficiency is not the means of impressing others but a mode of life, associated with their Stoic inclinations, as will be discussed. As such, they can be seen to resist the dominant gender and class discourses of their time, formulating their subjectivities in alternative ways.

Even though supremacy is what most of Hardy’s men seek in the private domain, it is not all that they need. An important point which Hardy emphasises in his novels is that men, like women, long for emotional fortification, a need not reflected in the definitions of ‘presence’ offered by prevailing discourses of masculinity. They want to be loved and cared for, a desire which they are taught to suppress if they want to be termed ‘men’. That Hardy’s men are sometimes empowered not merely through the assertion of authority but by finding themselves the object of affection (as is apparent in the case of Jude) undermines the conventional delineation of masculine ‘presence’, presenting a definition of the term which incorporates the so-called feminine characteristics.

With patriarchal discourses accentuating the significance of men’s ‘presence’ in the public arena, defining men in terms of employment, social standing or financial success, men find it essential to assert themselves in this domain. One important way of

⁶¹ Michel Foucault, ‘The Ethics of the Concern of the Self’, pp. 291-3.

establishing ‘presence’ in the social sphere, for men, is work, which is the main constituent of masculine subjectivity.⁶² Men are obliged to define their masculinity in terms of work, as Tolson argues, “‘becoming someone’ through working, ‘making something of yourself’”. The conflation of masculinity with work and success, articulated by patriarchal and bourgeois discourses, can be problematic for men; unemployment can signify emasculation for them and the need to assert themselves through achievement makes them follow ‘a mirage of success, an ever-retreating image of having “made it”’.⁶³ Hardy’s novels provide a critique of such delineations of masculinity, revealing their limitations. For Hardy’s men, the construction of ‘presence’ in the public domain — whether by means of work, financial and social standing, acquisition of knowledge or renown — proves to be a priority. Their entire lives may become a desperate struggle to achieve success while failure undermines their sense of masculinity. Though sometimes aware of the oppressiveness of the norms of masculinity, Hardy’s characters are rarely able to defy them, to constitute themselves in alternative ways.

Hardy’s novels, however, envisage the possibility of limited resistance to the prevailing discourses of masculinity and class. The practice of Stoicism, for instance, as I suggest, is, for Hardy, a way of self-fashioning outside the domain of these discourses, a point to which Foucault also alludes. In his later works, Foucault suggests that one way of formulating one’s subjectivity in ways other than those demanded by the regulative discourses is through ‘technologies of the self’,

which permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality’.⁶⁴

He conceives of the formation of the self, as accomplished by the ancient Greeks and Romans, as an example of resisting the dominance of regulatory discourses. He argues that in antiquity, ‘the care of the self’ was ‘an ascetic practice’, ‘an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempt[ed] to develop and transform oneself and to

⁶² David H. J. Morgan, p. 120.

⁶³ Tolson, p. 13.

⁶⁴ Michel Foucault, ‘Technologies of the Self’, in *Ethics*, ed. by Rabinow, pp. 223-51 (p. 225). Seminar given in 1982.

attain a certain mode of being'.⁶⁵ For the Stoics, for instance, the emphasis was on 'mastery over oneself', to develop independence in relation to 'the external world'.⁶⁶ For the ancients, 'the care of the self', the government of oneself and one's appetites, was associated with ethics and regarded as the practice of freedom. The care of the self was also considered as 'a way of limiting and controlling' one's power over others, for the power one exercised over oneself could 'regulate one's power over others'.⁶⁷ Foucault states that, for the Greeks, the 'work on the self with its attendant austerity' was a matter of 'personal choice, of aesthetics of existence' and 'not related to any social — or at least legal — institutional system'. Individuals decided whether to constitute themselves in terms of morality or not.⁶⁸

Even though the Stoics constituted themselves through such practices of the self, Foucault does not suggest that this was autonomous self-formation on their parts. For these practices are 'not something invented by the individual himself'; 'they are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, and his social group'.⁶⁹ Foucault's discussion nevertheless supports Hardy's conception of Stoicism as an alternative mode of being in the world. Gabriel Oak and Giles Winterborne, whom I will discuss as Stoics, are able to resist the dominant gender and class discourses of their time, through their practice of self-sufficiency, abstaining from constructing their masculinities through social and material achievement or in terms of sexuality and the overpowering of the beloved. Giles, however, is still partly governed by the prevailing discourse of social decorum, as we shall see. Both nevertheless can be seen to develop alternative ways of being a man even though these alternatives are still discursively determined.

The possibility of resistance to social structures and discourses is limited in Hardy's novels. For Hardy, as for social-constructionist theorists of masculinity and Foucault, there is no possibility of functioning outside the domain of structure and discourse. But the development of alternative ways of self-formation within that domain is assumed to be possible. Hardy's novels present male characters who are constrained by social structures and discourses but they are not mechanically determined by these forces; rather, it is the characters who bring these elements into existence by practising them. This study attempts to examine the ways masculinity is formulated in Hardy's

⁶⁵ Foucault, 'The Ethics of the Concern of the Self', pp. 282-4.

⁶⁶ Foucault, 'Technologies of the self', p. 240.

⁶⁷ Foucault, 'The Ethics of the Concern of the Self', pp. 284-8.

⁶⁸ Michel Foucault, 'On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress', in *Ethics*, ed. by Rabinow, pp. 253-80 (p. 263). Interview conducted in 1983.

⁶⁹ 'The Ethics of the Concern of the Self', p. 291.

novels, the ways male characters constitute themselves through gender and class structures and discourses, the extent to which they are constrained by these forces and the extent to which they can escape their dominance.

Before I proceed to a discussion of the novels, however, I need to articulate Hardy's general philosophy in terms of his own reading and explicit statements. This will clarify his standpoint on the issues of freedom, determinism and the possibility of change, which are crucial to an understanding of the construction of masculinity. This is the task which the next chapter hopes to accomplish.

Chapter 2

Hardy's Philosophy: The Question of Freedom

Hardy's views on the ways in which gender and class structures and discourses constrain and constitute individuals can be seen to be associated with his deterministic philosophy. His dark view of existence is rooted in the conviction that humans are governed by forces which permeate their mind and body and govern their actions, precluding the possibility of any autonomous self-formation. For Hardy, the governing power of the universe is not external to the universe but inherent in it; he calls this power 'Necessity', 'causality', 'First cause' or 'Immanent Will'. Hardy's thoughts in this area were nourished by deterministic thinkers of his time, such as Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer and Arthur Schopenhauer but he was also interested in Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill, both of whom envisage the possibility of humans' effecting change in themselves and in the social order.¹ Hardy's interest in these diverse thinkers and philosophers reveals a tension in his world-view; at times, he appears deterministic, while at others, he allows for a certain degree of freedom. In spite of his deterministic philosophy, in other words, he envisages a limited degree of freedom which can instigate change and ultimately lead to the amelioration of the human condition.

Darwin's influence on Hardy has long been recognised. His autobiography acknowledges that '[a]s a young man he had been among the earliest acclaimers of *The Origin of Species*'.² The gloomy vision of the novels has its roots in Hardy's writing in the post-Darwinian world, where mechanical, indifferent forces were assumed to be behind world phenomena. In Darwin's world, Nature and its laws determined the development of species, a process which 'was utterly indifferent to the emotions of men'.³ Darwin substituted, however, the view of the universe as 'a fixed order' with that of 'an organic structure'⁴ which, though highly deterministic, incorporated the element

¹ Hardy himself acknowledged the affinity of his views with those of Darwin, Spencer, Comte and Mill. In his 1911 letter to Helen Garwood, he complained that she had put too much emphasis on Schopenhauer's influence on him: 'My pages show harmony of view with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Comte, Hume, Mill, and others, all of whom I used to read more than Schopenhauer'. Quoted in Walter F. Wright, *The Shaping of the Dynasts: A Study in Thomas Hardy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), p. 38.

² Thomas Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy* by Thomas Hardy, ed. by Michael Millgate (London, Macmillan, 1984), p. 158.

³ Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1967 [1966]), p. 28.

⁴ Hardy quotes Leslie Stephen's discussion of Darwinism. Lennart A. Björk, ed., *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1985), I, 132.

of progress and change. For Darwin, living beings were not created in ‘their present forms’ but evolved throughout the course of time from some primary forms of life.⁵

Darwin contends that living beings play no role in developing their own characteristics; rather, individual traits are determined by heredity and the laws of nature. Generations are connected lineally, with biological characteristics transmitted from one generation to another. He regards ‘the inheritance of every character whatever as the rule, and non-inheritance as the anomaly’.⁶ For Darwin, the rigid laws of biology are susceptible to change, however; environmental changes are able to modify the course of inheritance; they can trigger ‘variations’ in living organisms which, if preserved by Nature, will be inherited, giving rise to new forms of life.⁷

For Darwin, individual characteristics are determined not only by heredity but by the laws of nature. Sexual Selection and Natural Selection specify which characteristics are preserved and inherited. He argues that ‘[s]exual selection depends on the success of certain individuals over others of the same sex, in relation to the propagation of the species; whilst natural selection depends on the success of both sexes, at all ages, in relation to the general conditions of life’.⁸ According to his theory of Natural Selection or ‘the Survival of the Fittest’ — a phrase he borrows from Herbert Spencer — in the struggle for survival, only those who can develop characteristics which make them stronger in the battle with others and those who can ‘adapt themselves with the changing conditions’ will be chosen by Nature to survive. Those unable to adapt to changes in the environment are doomed to extinction.⁹

Inspired by Darwinian ideas, Hardy’s novels portray biology as a key determinant of human destiny.¹⁰ For Hardy, it is not the individual but heredity which specifies human characteristics, as Peter Morton demonstrates.¹¹ But individuals in these novels are not solely determined by biological factors; social structures and discourses play an even more significant role in the formation of subjectivity and human life, as we shall see. As Angelique Richardson observes, Hardy’s interest in both

⁵ Antony Flew, *Darwinian Evolution*, 2nd edn (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997 [1984]), p. 11.

⁶ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1910 [1859]), p. 10.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-45, 59.

⁸ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (London: John Murray, 1992 [1871]), p. 939.

⁹ *Origin*, pp. 45, 47.

¹⁰ See Roger Robinson, ‘Hardy and Darwin’, in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Bell & Hyman, 1980), pp. 128-50.

¹¹ See Peter Morton, ‘*Tess of the d’Urbervilles*: A Neo-Darwinian Reading’, *Southern Review*, 7 (1974), 38-50.

Darwin and Mill demonstrates that for him '[h]umans were part of nature, but that did not preclude their capacity to make up stories about nature'¹² and even to improve it.

The operation of laws of Nature and their role in the preservation and elimination of individuals also inform Hardy's novels, which illustrate the survival of the fittest and the elimination of the weakest. Those characters who are unable to adapt to the conditions of their lives are eradicated. But Hardy's sympathy often lies with the unfit individual – Boldwood, Henchard and Jude, for instance – for the *fittest* is not necessarily the *best*. He copied an extract from the *Examiner* in 1876: 'Science tells us that, in the struggle for life, the surviving organism is not necessarily that which is absolutely the best in an ideal sense, though it must be that which is most in harmony with surrounding conditions.'¹³ It is clear that Hardy did not simply accept Darwinian ideas without a certain reluctance and even resistance.

The other evolutionary thinker who might have influenced Hardy's perspective on life is Herbert Spencer. Hardy's literary notes demonstrate his extensive reading of Spencer¹⁴ and Hardy himself acknowledges his interest in Spencer's *First Principles*¹⁵ even though '[w]hat Hardy found in Spencer's *First Principles*' is 'conjectural', as Walter F. Wright maintains.¹⁶ But Spencer could have 'provided the germ of Hardy's later notions about Immanent Will', the idea that the governing force of the universe is not external but inherent in phenomena.¹⁷ Jane Thomas argues that '[f]or both Hardy and Spencer the power that constitutes the human individual in terms of docile and resistant bodies is immanent and all-pervasive as opposed to extra-social'.¹⁸

¹² Angelique Richardson 'Hardy and Biology', in *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 156-79 (p. 175).

¹³ *Literary Notebooks*, I, 40.

¹⁴ In Hardy's literary notes, there are references to Spencer's works, including *Principles of Psychology* (London, 1890) and *First Principles* (London, 1880). He also had a copy of Spencer's *Essays: Scientific, Political and Speculative* (London, 1865) and his *Autobiography* (London, 1904). See Björk, *Literary Notebooks*, I, 336. *Life* also contains references to Spencer; see pp. 214, 400.

¹⁵ In his 1893 letter to Lena Milman, he described Spencer's *First Principles* as 'a book which acts, or used to act, upon me as a sort of patent expander when I had been particularly narrowed down by the events of life. Whether the theories are true or false, their effect upon the imagination is unquestionable, and I think beneficial'. Thomas Hardy, *Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), II (1980), 24-5.

¹⁶ Walter F. Wright, p. 34. Björk also notes that '[d]espite Spencer's undoubtedly strong impact on Hardy [...] there are only a few explicit and demonstrable traces of it in Hardy's writing'. *Literary Notebooks*, I, 335. The impact of Spencer on Hardy is discussed by Roger Ebbatson in *The Evolutionary Self: Hardy, Forster, Lawrence* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1982). Jane Thomas also explores the similarity between aspects of Spencer's philosophy and Hardy's; see *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent: Reassessing the 'Minor' Novels* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 13-5.

¹⁷ Howe, p. 13.

¹⁸ *Femininity*, p. 13.

For Spencer, all phenomena in the world are the ‘manifestation of some Power’.¹⁹ This ‘Ultimate Cause’, which lies behind every phenomenon, however, is by no means graspable by human mind, hence his calling this Power ‘The Unknowable’. This Power is the guiding force of the universe, whose persistence is the cause of constant transformation and progress.²⁰ For Spencer, evolution is the invariable law of the universe; in the same way that a seed necessarily becomes a tree, the whole universe, including human society, necessarily progresses towards perfection: ‘progress’ is ‘not an accident, not a thing within human control, but a beneficent necessity’.²¹

Spencer’s evolutionary model allows no space for individual autonomy; the role of individuals is just to play their parts in the overall process of advancement. Social changes, apparently implemented by great men, are in fact ‘parts of the general developmental process’ which necessarily occurs in all phenomena, including human society. If great men shape their societies, they are also shaped by their societies; they are the effects of ideas and beliefs to which they are exposed so social changes are in fact the work of ‘the social causes which produced these individuals’.²² He thus highlights the role of society in the formation of subjectivity, an idea Hardy also shares. In Spencer’s highly deterministic world-view, change occurs as a part of the process of evolution and through the human mind. The ‘Unknown Cause’, which is immanent in individuals, creates in them both docility and resistance, both ‘conservative’ and ‘progressive’ opinions. Contrary opinions, therefore, produced by the Unknown Cause, should be expressed for they can eventually instigate change.²³ This is a conception of change to which Hardy also adheres and which anticipates Foucault’s discussion that it is through the convergence of points of resistance that change occurs.²⁴ This is an issue to which I will return in my conclusion.

A philosopher who provided Hardy with further ideas about the possibility of change is Comte.²⁵ Comte held a deterministic view of existence yet he recognised the

¹⁹ Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1862), p. 99.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 109-13, 497.

²¹ Herbert Spencer, *Essays: Scientific, Political, and Speculative*, 3 vols (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904 [1858]), I, 60.

²² *Essays*, I, 268-9.

²³ *First Principles*, pp. 122-3.

²⁴ See Thomas, *Femininity*, pp. 14-5.

²⁵ Though it is difficult to determine the extent to which Comte inspired Hardy, his ‘overall influence’ is certain. Lennart A. Björk, ‘Hardy’s Reading’, in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and his Background*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Bell & Hyman, 1980), pp. 102-27 (p. 112). Hardy had a copy of Comte’s *A General View of Positivism*. Björk, *Literary Notebooks*, I, 311. There are also numerous references to Comte in *Life* and in *Literary Notebooks*. Hardy himself observes: ‘I am not a Positivist, but I agree with Anatole France when he says, [...] that no person of serious thought in these times could be said to stand aloof from Positivist teaching & ideals’. *Letters*, III (1982), 53. For a discussion of the influence of Comte

possibility of the improvement of society by human effort. For Comte, the phenomena of the external world are mainly governed by rigid laws and thus cannot be altered in the least degree yet there are certain phenomena, those related to human life and society, which can be modified by humans. The ‘natural order’, therefore, for him, ‘amounts to a fatality admitting modifications’. With regard to the fundamental phenomena, humans are unable to effect any change and should therefore submit to them but in relation to those phenomena which can be modified, humans can and should take action. Human fate for Comte is thus ‘a compound of resignation and action’,²⁶ resignation to what cannot be changed and action where change is possible.

Comte contends that the order of the universe is far from perfect and that is the reason why humans have to ‘[struggle] against difficulties of every kind’.²⁷ But that is also the reason why humans can participate in its improvement. The advancement of humanity, in particular its moral nature, for Comte, is what humans are capable of accomplishing. The progress of human race lies in ‘the subjection of Self-interest to Social-Feeling’,²⁸ that is, in the cultivation of altruism. This is the objective which Positivism hopes to achieve with the help of women who, according to Comte, represent the victory of love over self-interest and can help in the cultivation of social affection in society as a whole.

Comte’s argument that humans live in a world which is governed by laws over which they have no control and that there only exists a limited possibility for human action accords with Hardy’s worldview. For Hardy, as for Comte, the world is not ‘a comfortable place for man’²⁹ and ‘the only remedy for this lies in resignation to the inevitable, combined with determined action toward the progress of the race’.³⁰ Although Hardy could not wholly share Comte’s optimism, he did believe in the gradual amelioration of human society through the development of altruism.³¹ By fellow-feeling, we are able to alleviate suffering; we certainly should not add to the misery of the world by oppressing each other. As he notes in his interview with William Archer in 1901,

on Hardy see T. R. Wright’s *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

²⁶ Auguste Comte, *The Catechism of Positive Religion*, trans. by Richard Congreve (Clifton: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1973 [French, 1852]), p. 44.

²⁷ Auguste Comte, *A General View of Positivism*, trans. by J. H. Bridges (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1957 [French, 1844]), p. 32.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

²⁹ Florence Emily Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928), p. 234.

³⁰ T. R. Wright, *The Religion of Humanity*, p. 209.

³¹ Walter F. Wright, p. 30; Björk, ‘Hardy’s Reading’, p. 112.

What are my books but one plea against ‘man’s inhumanity to man’ – to woman – and to the lower animals? [...] Whatever may be the inherent good or evil of life, it is certain that men make it much worse than it need be. When we have got rid of a thousand remediable ills, it will be time enough to determine whether the ill that is irremediable outweighs the good.³²

Much that is wrong with society, in other words, is capable of rectification.

John Stuart Mill was another thinker whose belief in the possibility of improving the human condition Hardy admired; he states that in 1865 he knew *On Liberty* ‘almost by heart’ and in 1868 he writes of the chapter on ‘Individuality (in *Liberty*)’ as one of his ‘[c]ures for despair’.³³ Hardy is in general agreement with Mill in most areas though he is perhaps not quite so optimistic about the extent of human freedom of action.

Mill highlights the impact of society on the formation of human character and the human condition yet he contends that both society and human character can be modified through the exercise of liberty. *On Liberty* condemns ‘the tyranny of the majority’, ‘the tendency of society to impose [...] its own ideas and practices as rules of conduct’ on individuals, ‘[preventing] the formation, of any individuality not in harmony with its ways’ and demanding that all ‘fashion themselves upon the model of its own’.³⁴ An Individual should be responsible for those actions which concern others but in what ‘merely concerns himself [*sic*]’ he should be allowed to assert himself as he desires: ‘Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.’³⁵ When complying with the rules of conduct laid down by others, one has no chance of developing his/her own faculties, a development which is required both for ‘happiness’ and ‘the individual and social progress’.³⁶ Mill regards the coexistence of a multiplicity of opinions and modes of self-articulation as necessary for the advancement of society. His is a more liberal model for the amelioration of the race than Comte’s.

Hardy, like Mill, underlines the importance of giving freedom of expression to various opinions and allowing for the formation of various forms of subjectivity, criticising the ‘necessity of conforming to rules which in themselves have no virtue’.³⁷

³² Quoted in James Gibson, ed., *Thomas Hardy: Interviews and Recollections* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

³³ *Life*, pp. 355, 59. Hardy’s own copy of *On Liberty* demonstrates his arduous reading of Mill. See Björk, *Literary Notebooks*, I, 368.

³⁴ John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1859), pp. 13-4

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

³⁷ *Life*, p. 114.

He writes in a letter to the *L'Ermitage*, in 1893: 'I consider a social system based on individual spontaneity to promise better for happiness than a curbed and uniform one under which all temperaments are bound to shape themselves to a single pattern of living.'³⁸ Hardy is thus closer to Mill than to Comte, in this respect.

Both Mill and Comte proclaim the necessity of the suppression of egotism and the development of altruism for the progress of society. Individual freedom, even Mill accepts, should be constrained in matters which are related to the good of all. This limitation of liberty can be fruitful as 'the restraint put upon the selfish part' of human nature can lead to 'the better development of the social part',³⁹ cultivating the sympathy which is required for the general good and happiness.

For Mill, society is imperfect and responsible for much human suffering; if individuals do not have their portion of happiness in life, the 'present wretched education, and wretched social arrangements' are to be blamed.⁴⁰ Yet, these social arrangements, if modified and improved by humans, can become the means of removing social evils. Owing to the important role that society plays in the formation of 'human character', it can help to foster in individuals motives which concern the good of all: 'laws and social arrangements should place the happiness, or [...] the interest, of every individual, as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest, of the whole'.⁴¹ It is through the development of fellow-feeling and even self-sacrifice, renouncing one's own happiness for the happiness of others, that society can improve. In Mill, therefore, as well as Comte, Hardy could find inspiration for his belief in the amelioration of the human condition through fellow-feeling.

Mill's discussion of the importance of opinion and social arrangements in the formation of 'human character' anticipates, to some extent, twentieth and twenty-first century systems of thought which underscore the role of social institutions and discourses in the constitution of subjectivity. In *The Subjection of Women*, a critique of the subordination of women to men, Mill continues to explore the same line of argument, maintaining that what is assumed to be women's true nature is socially determined; women are made to believe by all sorts of social institutions and ideologies that the ideal femininity is associated with 'submission' and that 'it is the duty of women' 'to live for others [...] and to have no life but in their affections'.⁴² Though he

³⁸ Ibid., p. 274.

³⁹ *On Liberty*, p. 114

⁴⁰ John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1863), p. 19.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 25.

⁴² John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1869), pp. 40, 27.

does not discuss masculinity, it can be inferred from his discussion of femininity as artificially shaped, that what we regard as man's nature is also socially constructed.

Mill suggests that society, which has created women, as they are, can help by granting them liberty to demonstrate their real capabilities. Mill's optimism stems from his belief in the existence of 'a unique self subject to social constraints', which can be liberated once the constraints are removed.⁴³ Hardy, however, is less optimistic about such liberty. For him, subjectivity is socially constrained and constructed. His male characters might be able to defy the dominant discourses of their time, itself a difficult task, but they still have to operate within the domain of discourse.

Hardy's deterministic worldview and his reservations about the possibility of freedom seem to have been intensified by his reading of Schopenhauer, in whom he found both a system of thought closely similar to his own and a new phraseology for expressing more vividly his own dark view of life.⁴⁴ His *Literary Notebooks* contain quotations from Schopenhauer dating back to the late 1880s and early 1890s, copied from *Encyclopedia Britannica* and Schopenhauer's *Studies in Pessimism* respectively.⁴⁵ He also read James Sully's 1877 book on *Pessimism*, which, according to Björk, 'alone can account for the many traces of Schopenhauer's philosophy found in Hardy's works' before the late 1880s.⁴⁶ Hardy himself, of course, denied that he was highly influenced by Schopenhauer, though he does mention him as one of the philosophers who had his 'respect'.⁴⁷ For Hardy, what 'governs the universe' is 'Necessity', an 'indifferent and unconscious force, at the back of things, "that neither good nor evil knows"'.⁴⁸ In the course of his writing career, he employs different terms to refer to this governing Force; in 'Hap', written in 1866, he calls it 'Crass causality' and in his later writing, he terms it 'First Cause' and eventually the 'Immanent Will',⁴⁹ a concept which appears most fully in *Tess* and *Jude* and which is thoroughly explored in *The Dynasts* (1904-8).

⁴³ Thomas, *Femininity*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ As Millgate states, '[t]he darker, more sceptical strain in Hardy's thinking continued to be fed' by his reading of 'articles on such figures as Schopenhauer'. Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 246. Hardy owned Schopenhauer's *Two Essays*, trs. Madame Karl Hillebrand (London, 1889). Björk, *Literary Notebooks*, I, 374.

⁴⁵ *Literary Notebooks*, I, 203; *Literary Notebooks*, II, 28-31.

⁴⁶ *Literary Notebooks*, I, 389. The earliest notes from Sully's book in Hardy's *Literary Notebooks* occur in 1886; see *Literary Notebooks*, I, 170-1.

⁴⁷ Harold Orel, ed., *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 58. The impact of Schopenhauer on Hardy is fully discussed in works such as Helen Garwood's *Thomas Hardy: An Illustration of the Philosophy of Schopenhauer* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Press, 1911) or Ernest Brennecke's *Thomas Hardy's Universe: A Study of a Poet's Mind* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966).

⁴⁸ Florence Emily Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy 1892-1928* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 128.

⁴⁹ See Brennecke for the discussion of the development of Hardy's phraseology, pp. 35-53.

For Schopenhauer, the creative power of the universe is ‘not *transcendent*’ to phenomena but ‘*immanent*’ in the latter.⁵⁰ All phenomena are the manifestation of the Will, which Schopenhauer characterises as Immanent, Unconscious, Groundless, Aimless and Endless. Will is ‘the inner nature’ of everything in the universe; it ‘appears in every blind force of nature, and in the preconsidered action of man’.⁵¹ It guides our actions, our mind and our body movements, our whole existence; ‘everyone carries it in himself, indeed it is himself’.⁵² Hardy draws his conception of the Immanent Will from Schopenhauer and, like Schopenhauer, conceives of the Will as Unconscious and autonomous.⁵³

Since Will permeates human body and mind, Schopenhauer allows for no freedom of will and action. Every human action is subjected to the laws of ‘necessity’. Will, operating as character and motives, determines human action. Although in every situation an individual is ostensibly capable of taking a number of actions and apparently offered a variety of choices, he necessarily takes the action which is most strongly recommended by ‘his character’ and ‘his motives’.⁵⁴ The decision he makes, though apparently the act of reflection, is the effect of the Will and thus not under his control. That humans are guided not so much by intellect but by irresistible forces which are not under their control is something that Hardy accepts, as revealed, for instance, by his depiction of characters who fail to resist their emotional and bodily impulses.⁵⁵ For Hardy, however, as I will show, the power which pervades humans and determines their subjectivity also takes the form of discourse.

For Schopenhauer, suffering is the end of existence, as willing, which constitutes the essence of all phenomena, entails suffering: ‘the basis of all willing is need, deficiency, and thus pain’.⁵⁶ Man suffers so long as he wills, for willing is nothing but continuous striving for the satisfaction of the wants, which can never truly be satisfied.

⁵⁰ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, trans. by R. B. Haldane and J. Kemp, 3 vols (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964 [1883] [German, 1818]), II, 216.

⁵¹ *World and Idea*, I, 153, 142-3.

⁵² *World and Idea*, II, 389.

⁵³ Hardy underlines Schopenhauer’s conception of the will, as ‘unconscious, automatic, or reasonless’ in his *Literary Notebooks*, taking interest apparently in ‘the irrationality’ of the Will, and its immanence, its pervasion of ‘all processes, from attraction and gravitation to motivation’. *Literary Notebooks*, II, 107. Hardy took this quotation from W. Caldwell, ‘Schopenhauer’, *Chambers’s Encyclopaedia* (1892) IX, 221-2. See Björk, *Literary Notebooks*, II, 518.

⁵⁴ *World and Idea*, I, 146, 372.

⁵⁵ See Brennecke, p. 122. In his *Literary Notebooks* Hardy quotes Schopenhauer’s elaboration of the Will: ‘[The irrational will <under> lies action which does] “not proceed from a mental initiative”’. *Literary Notebooks*, II, 107. The quotation is taken from W. Caldwell, “‘Schopenhauer’”, *Chambers’s Encyclopaedia* (1892) IX, 221-2’. Björk, *Literary Notebooks*, II, 518.

⁵⁶ *World and Idea*, I, 402.

For Hardy, likewise, '[p]ain has been, and pain is'.⁵⁷ He quotes Schopenhauer in his *Literary Notebooks*: 'so long as the will to live remains unbroken, happiness in the true sense is impossible'.⁵⁸ His characters suffer as long as they will.

Though suffering is experienced by all animals and humans, according to Schopenhauer, it is highly intensified by the 'power of deliberation' and knowledge; humans therefore suffer more than brutes and sensitive and gifted individuals more than duller minds: the 'frustration of the will, if it is to be felt as pain, must be accompanied by knowledge'.⁵⁹ Hardy also highlights the role of reflection in the suffering of his characters. An unthinking character, such as Troy, for example, suffers less than the more gifted, sensitive Jude.

The suppression of the will to live, according to Schopenhauer, is the only way to escape pain, the only means of attaining serenity and in fact the only act of freedom available to humans. Through the knowledge of the nature of the will, acquired through a knowledge of one's own nature, that willing is an endless futile striving, which incorporates anxiety, care and suffering, one can resist the will. Asceticism, the renunciation of worldly attachment and suppression of bodily desires, as practised in Christianity as well as by the Stoics, for Schopenhauer, is the way through which one can reject one's own will. Ultimately, though, it is annihilation alone which can put an end to all human strife and suffering. For Hardy, however, there is the possibility that the Will becomes conscious and grows sympathetic; this is the task which conscious humans can accomplish through the exercise of sympathy. For Hardy, although the human will is governed by the Will, there are moments when the mind can disentangle itself from the power which permeates it and think in alternative ways; these moments offer the potential for change. This is another issue to which I will return in my conclusion.

Though Hardy does not acknowledge the affinity of his thoughts with those of the Stoics, his fictional works reveal his sympathy with this ancient philosophy. He had knowledge of the Stoic philosophy before writing his first novels. He owned a copy of *The Thoughts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius*, which was given to him by Horace Moule on New Year's Day, 1865.⁶⁰ Though not agreeing with all the Stoic tenets, for

⁵⁷ *Life*, p. 339.

⁵⁸ *Literary Notebooks*, I, 203.

⁵⁹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms*, selected and trans. with intro. by R. J. Hollingdale (Middlesex: Penguin, 1970 [Taken from Schopenhauer's *Parerga and Paralipomena*, published in 1851]), pp. 44-6.

⁶⁰ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 84, 89. The book which reflects the Stoic philosophy as presented by Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor (A.D. 121-180), 'became one of Hardy's treasured possessions; he marked and wrote comments

instance that the universe is governed by a benevolent power and that happiness is achievable, he finds certain of their doctrines interesting enough to explore in his novels and to embody in his characters, Gabriel Oak and Giles Winterborne.

For the Stoics, ‘the order and harmony’ of the universe suggest the existence of ‘a First Cause and Governing Mind’ behind all phenomena. They conceive of this Cause, or creative power, as both transcendent to phenomena and inherent in them. ‘Spoken of as active power He is God, but as the sum of his emanations and effects he is the world’.⁶¹ Their emphasis is, of course, more on the Power being immanent in, and not distinct from, phenomena. It is one and all-pervasive: there is ‘one god who pervades all things’; as there is ‘one light of the sun’, there is ‘one common substance’ and ‘one soul’ although it is apparently divided among indefinite animate and inanimate objects; it permeates all beings, ‘[carrying] everything along with it’, ‘like a winter torrent’.⁶² This conception of the Cause pervading all phenomena, including human mind, is in harmony with Hardy’s own perception of the power permeating the human subject. But while for Schopenhauer and Hardy, the governing power immanent in the universe is unconscious and irrational, for the Stoics it is both conscious and rational, as the creation of ‘conscious creatures’, humans, and the order of the universe demonstrate.⁶³

According to the Stoic philosophy, a ‘universal reason’, or ‘law’, determines everything in nature, whose main goal is to maintain the unity, order and perfection of ‘the whole’, of which human being is ‘a part’. Everything happens the way ‘providence’ and ‘necessity’ demand. Since individuals have no role in the formation of their destiny, their happiness and in fact their tranquillity lie in their acquiescence in the law of the universe, ‘the voluntary acceptance of the things which are assigned to thee [them] by the common nature’,⁶⁴ trusting that whatever happens is the best as can be for the benefit of the whole.

For the Stoics, human rationality is the same as the reason of the universe — it is ‘the Deity which is planted’ in man — and as the universal reason wants what is best for creatures, man’s well-being lies in harmonising himself with this Reason. Happiness

in it, quoting it several times in his own writing’. Ralph Pite, *Thomas Hardy: The Guarded Life* (London: Picador, 2006), pp. 97-8. Marcus Aurelius wrote his work under the influence of Epictetus, the Stoic philosopher. Hardy’s literary notes also reveal that he had read *The Dialogues of Plato* in 1876, which was probably the source of his knowledge of Socrates. There are direct references to the Stoic philosophy and Epictetus in his literary notes as well, dating back to 1876. See *Literary Notebooks*, I, 294, 47, 119.

⁶¹ W. W. Capes, *Stoicism* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1880), p. 38

⁶² Marcus Aurelius, *The Thoughts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, trans. by George Long (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1890), pp. 174, 280, 223.

⁶³ Capes, p. 38.

⁶⁴ Aurelius, pp. 174, 96, 237.

consists in living according to ‘nature’ and such a life involves living in accordance with ‘reason’. As a rational creature, man should live as his true nature, his rationality, demands and govern the bodily desires, impulses and appetites which he shares with other animals.⁶⁵ By taking rational action, man is in fact acting as the divinity within him demands so for the Stoics, rational action is moral action or ‘virtue’.⁶⁶ According to Socrates, whom the Stoics followed, ‘virtue’, as the ‘knowledge of what is best for the agent’ is ‘necessary and sufficient to guarantee right conduct in whatever aspect of life that knowledge is applied to’.⁶⁷ Virtue, to know what kind of rational action to take according to circumstances, is ‘the only good’ and enough for happiness; all other things are “‘indifferent”, that is, neither good nor bad’.⁶⁸ ‘[A]dvantageous things’, such as ‘health, pleasure, social standing’ and so on, are ‘preferred but not good’. Material possessions and ‘romantic attachments’, in the same manner, are not essential for happiness; they are ‘worth having’ but one should not be obsessed about them.⁶⁹ *The Thoughts of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, which, as we have seen, was one of Hardy’s ‘treasured possessions’,⁷⁰ is pervaded by such Stoic teachings. For Aurelius, happiness and serenity can be achieved only by leading a rational life, being ‘indifferent’ towards the things which are ‘indifferent’,⁷¹ renouncing pleasure and any kind of passion and living a simple and modest life without caring for wealth, luxury, and fame. This, as I shall demonstrate, is the way Hardy allows his Stoic characters to live.

For the Stoics, compliance with the reason of the universe is not a passive obedience but a decision made voluntarily and willingly by ‘a careful study of our capabilities and limitations’.⁷² Although humans are constrained by the laws of necessity, they can choose whether to follow their nature (reason) or not and it is this decision which determines their happiness or failure.⁷³ In other words, happiness is bound up with the recognition of the domain of freedom. We have freedom of action only in the domain of things over which we have control: ‘Certain things are *ours*’ and certain ‘things are *not ours*’; ‘[o]urs are things in *our power*, under our control. Not ours

⁶⁵ Aurelius, pp. 108-10, 174, 184.

⁶⁶ Capes, p. 45.

⁶⁷ C. C. W. Taylor, *Socrates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 63.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁶⁹ Brad Inwood, ‘Stoicism’, in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Donald M. Borchert, 2nd edn, 10 vols (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2006 [1967]), IX, pp. 253-8 (p. 257).

⁷⁰ Pite, pp. 97-8

⁷¹ Aurelius, p. 259.

⁷² Dorothea Frede, ‘Stoic Determinism’, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. by Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 179-205 (p. 205).

⁷³ Capes, pp. 46, 48, 44.

are things *not in our power*, not under our control'.⁷⁴ According to the Stoic philosopher Epictetus, the only thing that is ours is our 'volitions', by which he means 'our essential selves', our 'mental faculties, consciousness, character, judgements, goals, and desires'. This is the only thing that we own; we do not 'even [...] own our bodies'. Individuals have freedom only in the domain of their 'volitions'. Those who make 'a mistaken attachment', '[identifying] themselves' with what is not theirs, such as 'their bodies and all manner of external things — other persons, commodities [...] and so forth', 'are constrained, thwarted, and emotionally enslaved'. Freedom and happiness, according to Epictetus, lie in '[transferring] all wants, values, and attachments away from externals and [situating] them within the scope of one's volition', as 'the locus of all that truly matters to humans who have understood cosmic order and their own natures and capacities'.⁷⁵

Those male characters of Hardy who make such false attachments can be found to face similar psychological problems; detachment is the task which only Hardy's Stoic men, Gabriel Oak and Giles Winterborne, are able to accomplish. These characters are able to dissociate themselves from the things which are not under their control. For the Stoics, '[t]he wise man' is 'free' as he is not entangled in the bondage of the 'things external to himself': 'There will be nothing for him then to fear, for unreason is the only evil; nothing to desire beyond himself, for his happiness of intellectual balance is quite self-contained.'⁷⁶ The sense of self-sufficiency should therefore be seen as a Stoic attribute.

For the Stoics, although rationality is embedded in humans, to constitute oneself as rational requires working on the self by practising asceticism. Their emphasis is on self-cultivation, as the idea of 'perfection' of 'volition' suggests.⁷⁷ The 'ascetic life' is 'a course of training', 'a series of experiments to test the soul's native power to resist temptation'.⁷⁸ The cultivation of subjectivity, as practised by the Stoics, is referred to by Foucault as 'the care of the self'.⁷⁹ While, for the Stoics, 'volition' is the only thing

⁷⁴ Paul Elmer More, *Hellenistic Philosophies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1923), pp. 102-3.

⁷⁵ A. A. Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 28-9. For Aurelius, 'a rational nature goes on its way well [...] when it confines its desires and aversions to the things which are in its power' (p. 196).

⁷⁶ As Capes elaborates, the wise man, of course, 'is not free, has indeed less sense of freedom than the careless crowd, for he can recognise the general law of destiny within which all things revolve. His will, he knows, is mysteriously linked to the long chain of natural causes, but he seems free in that he can willingly obey the dictates of his nature without being helplessly determined by things external to himself. He decides on that which reason points to, and he acts under no sense of constraint or irksome pressure, for his will and universal intellect are one' (pp. 46-8).

⁷⁷ Long, p. 29.

⁷⁸ Capes, p. 57.

⁷⁹ See Chapter 1, pp. 20-1

humans own, for Hardy one cannot claim to own even that, since subjectivity is shaped by discourses, whose power is difficult to escape.

Yet, it can be argued that the ways in which Stoics constitute themselves is something Hardy admires. He perceives the formulation of the self in the manner of the Stoics as a way of self-fashioning beyond the domain of prevailing gender and class structures and discourses. Hardy's Stoic characters, Gabriel Oak and Giles Winterborne, are able at least partly to resist the dominant discourses of masculinity, through their Stoic renunciation and government of desires, substituting passion and sexuality with friendship and fellow-feeling, presenting alternative ways of being a man. They also defy the discourses of class offered to them by institutions of power by detaching themselves from materialistic concerns.

In *The Thoughts of Marcus Aurelius*, we can also discern some passages highlighting the importance of benevolence and justice which are in harmony with Hardy's belief in the significance of fellow-feeling. From the conception of 'the universe as one living being', having 'one substance, and one soul', the Stoics construe that humans are parts of one body; all are 'of one kin' and should naturally be benevolent and just towards each other.⁸⁰ They recommend, of course, only reasonable kindness and not sympathy in the form of excessive passion since, for them, vice is the only evil and all other things which we regard as evil, such as 'hardship, poverty', 'pain' and 'death' are in fact 'indifferent'; it is our opinion and our fantasy that makes them appear as evil.⁸¹ For Hardy, however, as we saw, pain is a very real evil.

Hardy's belief in the constraints on human beings makes him sympathetic to the Stoic philosophy; in the highly deterministic world-view of the Stoics, the only act of freedom is resignation to reason (the reason of the universe). Like the Stoics, Hardy sees resignation to one's fate as a way of attaining equanimity and an act of wisdom, as his interest in the words of Marcus Aurelius indicates: 'This is the chief thing: Be not perturbed, for all things are according to the nature of the universal'.⁸² Yet Hardy finds it difficult to achieve this goal in practice.⁸³ His sympathy remains with those

⁸⁰ Aurelius, pp. 130, 164, 114.

⁸¹ Capes, pp. 48, 46. According to Aurelius, 'everything is opinion'; '[i]f thou takest thy opinion about that which appears to give thee pain, though thyself standest in perfect serenity' (pp. 274, 205).

⁸² Aurelius, p. 195. This quotation, according to Millgate, becomes one of 'Hardy's principal watchwords'. *A Biography Revisited*, p. 84. Björk also refers to the same point; see *Literary Notebooks*, I, 313-4.

⁸³ This is the task which Hardy himself apparently intended to perform. Pite alludes to Hardy's Stoic inclinations: 'keeping your distance from things, avoiding entanglements and the seductions of the world, all chimed with Hardy's character'. Hardy's 'reading of Aurelius', as Pite argues, was one of the factors which 'helped to bring these traits to the fore': 'his personal reticence, his passivity, his hunger for calm, even his fair-mindedness, which could sometimes prove relentless' can be seen as his inclination to

individuals who are unable to conform to reason (the reason of the universe) and thus suffer.

In Hardy's novels, the lives of the characters are determined not so much by Providence, however, as by society and man-made discourses and human affliction is largely attributed to the latter. Hardy perceives most human suffering to be the result of 'man's inhumanity to man' and to 'woman', as we saw above. He distinguishes between 'irremediable' and 'remediable' aspects of existence;⁸⁴ the former does not accept modification but the latter can be rectified. With regard to what is out of man's control, resignation is virtue but in relation to that aspect of existence which is related to society, and thus under man's control, he believes, concurring with Comte and Mill, that improvement is desired. The Stoic practices of renunciation and government of desires and the substitution of egotism with fellow-feeling are perceived by Hardy to be among the ways to improve oneself and subsequently society.

Hardy's philosophy clearly determines the ways he presents the construction of gender in his novels. Having a conception of power as a force which governs individuals by permeating them, he portrays male characters who are ruled by social forces, forces which pervade them, formulating their thoughts, mentalities and their gender practices. But despite his deterministic view of gender formation, Hardy, in accordance with his general philosophy, does not depict his characters as passively dominated by social structures; rather, the novels demonstrate that these structures are shaped through social practice. It is individuals who bring these structures into existence and are therefore capable of modifying them. This makes the amelioration of gender relations conceivable. The analysis of Hardy's novels which follows demonstrates in more detail how this might come about.

pursue Stoic discourses (p. 98). Hardy apparently did not share, however, the optimism which is latent in the Stoic philosophy. That he depicts most of his male characters as troubled figures and that he refers to this quotation in 1885 when he was 'in low spirits', as Björk argues, suggest that Hardy 'could accept Aurelius's advice philosophically but not emotionally'. *Literary Notebooks*, I, 313.

⁸⁴ See p. 28 above.

Chapter 3

Far From the Madding Crowd:

The Limits of the Construction of Masculinity

Compared with Hardy's earlier works, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, first published in serialised form in 1874, attracted warmer critical attention. The work was a success as Leslie Stephen, who edited the manuscript, confirmed in a letter to Hardy.¹ According to Michael Millgate, *Far from the Madding Crowd* not only brought 'professional recognition' for Hardy but 'impelled him forward into the front ranks of contemporary novelists'.² It is 'the most organically sound and ambitious work of Hardy's early career', as Robert W. Clarke observes.³ Even though incorporating a degree of optimism which is absent in Hardy's later works, the novel engages with some of the same issues to be examined in the fiction following it. Behind the serene surface of the novel lurks a gloom, mainly rooted in the entanglement of individuals in the forces which determine them, which presides over his more overtly tragic novels, a fear that complex problems of gender and sexuality are not ultimately resolvable.

Far from the Madding Crowd reveals that from the early stages of his writing career, Hardy was preoccupied with the effect of society on the formation of subjectivity, particularly with the question of the social construction of gender. The discussion of the role of society in the shaping of human character was topical at the time, especially discussed by John Stuart Mill (as examined in Chapter 2).⁴ For Hardy, it is social structures and discourses which mainly determine the ways in which his male characters should formulate themselves. These characters' practices of masculinity can be seen to be constrained by gender structures, such as the sexual division of labour, power and emotional attachment, which R. W. Connell regards as the delineators of gender practice.⁵ Hardy's male characters need to define themselves through 'games of truth', discourses which are provided by their society, in order to acquire a 'rank' (subject position) of a 'man'.⁶ To be termed 'men', these characters should have 'presence'; John Berger explains that a man's 'presence' is associated with the 'promise of power' which he embodies. If the 'promise of power' is large, a man has striking

¹ Florence Emily Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928), p. 129.

² Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 149.

³ Robert W. Clarke, 'Hardy's Farmer Boldwood: Shadow of a Magnitude', *West Virginia University Philological Papers*, 17(1970), 45-56 (p. 45).

⁴ See Chapter 2, p. 29.

⁵ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

⁶ See Chapter 1, pp. 12-3, 16-7.

‘presence’, otherwise he is found to have little ‘presence’. The ‘promised power’ can be social, moral, physical or sexual ‘but its object is always exterior to the man’; to have ‘presence’ a man should be capable of exercising power over others.⁷ Andrew Tolson defines ‘presence’ as ‘a certain style of behaviour, an outward presentation’ which is conventionally constructed through authoritativeness, assertiveness, aggression or physical strength.⁸

In his portrayal of Boldwood, Hardy investigates the ways in which social forces become the determinant of one’s subjectivity. Boldwood formulates himself through the gender and class structures and discourses of his time, which have delineated the ways he should constitute himself. When introduced to the reader, Boldwood has already defined himself through the sexual division of labour (one of the structures which, as Connell explains, conditions the practice of gender),⁹ constructing his masculinity in terms of commerce and work. As Tolson explains, work is a major determinant of masculine identity.¹⁰ By defining his masculinity in terms of profession and the achievement of financial and social status, by becoming a ‘gentleman farmer’,¹¹ Boldwood can be seen also to be operating within class structures. For the Victorian bourgeoisie, success and manhood were conflated; ‘business prowess’ was what middle-class men were expected to incorporate, as Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall note.¹² Boldwood has worked on himself, complying with the middle-class norms of masculinity, to achieve success and thus a ‘rank’ as a middle-class man.

Enjoying a strong sense of manhood in the public arena, Boldwood has not envisaged constructing his ‘presence’ in the private domain, through marriage, which was ‘the economic and social building block for the middle class’ even though ‘[t]he goal of all the bustle of the market place was to provide a proper moral and religious life for the family’.¹³ The structure of emotional attachment (another delineator of gender practice, according to Connell),¹⁴ which demands that a man finds a mate, in other words, has not yet conditioned his practice of masculinity: ‘I had never any views of myself as a husband in my earlier days, nor have I made any calculation on the subject

⁷ See Chapter 1, pp. 17-8.

⁸ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁰ See Chapter 1, pp. 9, 20.

¹¹ Thomas Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan and Shannon Russell (London: Penguin, 2000 [1874]), p. 61. All subsequent page references are from this edition and are given in parentheses, after quotations in the text.

¹² Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), p. 21.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 322, 21.

¹⁴ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

since I have been older', he mentions to Bathsheba later in the story (p. 111). His pursuit of material and social status and his renunciation of sexuality and marriage demonstrate a formulation of masculinity according to the '[b]ourgeois industrial' discourses which equated 'manliness' with success in the public domain and which demanded the containment of sexuality as a way of achieving success. Inspired by monasticism, such discourses conceived of 'maleness' as 'a potent dangerous energy' which needed to be controlled and disciplined if success was to be achieved.¹⁵

Boldwood could have also been governed by another bourgeois discourse which allowed the assertion of sexuality but restricted it to marriage. According to Mark Girouard, 'muscular Christianity' and nineteenth-century chivalry defined purity not in terms of renouncing sex completely, in the manner of monks, but in terms of '[confining] it to marriage'; prior to marriage sexuality needed to be contained.¹⁶ Annette Federico has discussed Boldwood's sexual restraint in relation to this model of masculinity.¹⁷ Boldwood's celibacy appears initially to be in line more with the former discourse, 'industrial manhood'; later, however, once deciding to marry, he redefines himself and pursues the latter discourse, Christian manliness.

The suppression of emotions and desires can be read as the discipline Boldwood has undergone in order to win a 'rank' as a thriving man. He is a reserved, dignified man who has frustrated 'all girls gentle and simple' in the neighborhood who futilely 'courted and 'tried' him (p. 67). For him, 'women had been remote phenomena rather than necessary complements' whom he 'had not deemed it his duty' to think of seriously. Bathsheba's Valentine reminds him, however, of alternative ways of constructing his masculine 'presence', through an intimate relationship. He is now experiencing himself in a new way and as a sexual being: 'Adam awakened from his deep sleep, and behold, there was Eve' (p. 102). His bizarre behaviour upon receiving the Valentine and his fantasies about the woman who might have sent it reflects the awakening of powerful dormant emotions and exposes the insufficiency of the discourses of manliness/success through which he has previously formulated himself. He gradually begins to be oppressed by a desire for possession over which he has little control: 'the spherical completeness of his existence' is 'slowly spreading into an abnormal distortion in the particular direction of an ideal passion' (p. 87).

¹⁵ Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 4, 13.

¹⁶ Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 143.

¹⁷ Annette Federico, *Masculine Identity in Hardy and Gissing* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1991).

Boldwood's infatuation with Bathsheba, of course, suggests a state of 'mental derangement'. At the beginning of the story, the text alludes to his peculiar nature: 'his was not an ordinary nature'; underneath the 'stillness which struck casual observers more than anything else in his character and habit' 'was the perfect balance of enormous antagonistic forces – positives and negatives [...]. The equilibrium disturbed, he was in extremity at once' (p. 105). After the murder of Troy, the narrator clearly considers the possibility of 'insanity' in Boldwood, endorsed by evidences such as his purchasing of articles for Bathsheba, all 'labelled "Bathsheba Boldwood"' and all dated 'six years in advance' (p. 338). In the serialised version of the novel, there is a reference to madness as an inherited disease: in reply to Troy's inquiry, 'if insanity has ever appeared in Mr Boldwood's family', Coggan replies that he has heard 'that an uncle of his was queer in his head'.¹⁸ Steve McCarty explains that even though 'the legal question of madness as an inherited disease became prevalent in the early 1870s, the idea in English literature had been implanted well before then (e.g. twenty years earlier in *Jane Eyre*, through Bertha Rochester's twisted family tree)'.¹⁹ By bringing in the discussion of an inherited mental illness, Hardy can be seen to examine the determining role of Darwinian heredity, side-by-side with the social forces, in the constitution of individuals; both these forces, it is suggested, combine to determine Boldwood's fate.

Oppressed by sexuality, Boldwood renounces the discourse of celibacy to redefine himself according to the discourse of Christian manliness, which allows him to practise sexuality within the framework of marriage. He acknowledges the insufficiency of the norms of masculinity which he has so far pursued and expresses his zeal to define himself in a new way: 'my present way of living is bad in every aspect. Beyond all things, I want you as my wife' (p. 111). His practice of masculinity from this point onwards can be seen to be conditioned by the structure of emotional attachment which demands that a man pursues the object of desire, attract and win her. The structure of matrimony calls into play other structures as well, such as the sexual division of labour and power (another structure which circumscribes gender practice, as Connell observes),²⁰ which specify the ways in which Boldwood should construct his masculinity. As a husband, he is expected to have a career in the public domain through which to provide for his wife and should be the one who accepts the superior role of a protector. Once deciding to become a husband, therefore, he simultaneously thinks of

¹⁸ Morgan and Russell, notes to their edition of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, p. 379.

¹⁹ Steve McCarty, "'That We Can Talk of Another Time': Boldwood's Madness and Victorian Law", *The Thomas Hardy Journal* 21 (2005), 94-102 (p. 97).

²⁰ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

accepting roles as breadwinner and supporter, to ‘take care’ of her, ‘protect and cherish’ her (p. 112). For the Victorian middle classes, masculinity incorporated the ability ‘to manipulate and control property in order to support dependents’.²¹

The construction of masculinity within these terms allows Boldwood to define himself as the dominant figure, the one who has authority over the object of desire, socially and sexually. In the discourse of chivalry, which now permeates Boldwood, ‘the husband was expected to be reverent and protective, but he was also undoubtedly superior’.²² The experience, though initially welcome by virtue of its novelty, leads to the weakening of Boldwood’s ‘presence’ in the public domain: he does not protect his hay from the storm, which Oak likens to ‘a sailor forgetting he was in a ship’ (p. 224). He even intends to forsake the social realm altogether, ‘to retire from the management’ of the farm once he marries Bathsheba (p. 320). His subject position as a ‘gentleman farmer’, a ‘successful man’, becomes irrelevant in the face of the imperative to define himself as a husband.

The construction of masculinity through a matrimonial relationship, however, is not something that Boldwood can accomplish by himself for he requires Bathsheba to define herself within the same structure, which, of course, she is reluctant to do. Governed by patriarchal and capitalist discourses and conceiving Bathsheba as an object which he can possess or purchase, he disregards this fact. That his love is not reciprocated does not matter to him; what is important is that she is ‘a *very beautiful woman*’ (p. 328) [my emphasis]. The consolidation of his position as a ‘man’ now depends on his ability to possess the woman he desires.

Boldwood’s gender practice in relation to Bathsheba is conditioned by the structure of power which requires him as a ‘man’ to take the dominant role in relation to the opposite sex, hence his endeavour to govern her actions, to dictate the rules and win her. However, their relationship, an example of a Foucauldian relation of power,²³ is far from being stable, that is, Boldwood is unable to maintain the position of power permanently. Linda M. Shires is correct in arguing that Hardy ‘does not believe in a dialectical theory of power where one sex oppresses the other, but rather in power as shifting, as attained and lost by multiple negotiations that cross gender, age, and class’; she states that in Hardy’s novels ‘the male’ is not always associated with ‘power’ and

²¹ Davidoff and Hall, p. 211.

²² Girouard, p. 199.

²³ See Chapter 1, p. 19.

‘the female’ with ‘victimization’.²⁴ Even though at the beginning of the story, when still not constrained by desire, Boldwood is able to constitute himself as a self-sufficient, dignified man and unknowingly overpower Bathsheba by his ‘presence’, the relationship undergoes drastic changes once he becomes governed by sexuality. By sending the Valentine, Bathsheba is able to turn the ‘dignified’ man, who passed her on the road ‘unconsciously and abstractedly as if she and her charms had been thin air’ (pp. 81-2), into a desperate lover.

Despite his infatuation with Bathsheba, Boldwood attempts to appear as a self-sufficient man. When coming to speak to her at the barn, at the time of ‘sheepwashing’, he ‘[bade] her good morning with such constraint that she could not but think he had stepped across to the washing for its own sake’. But as soon as he addresses her, he betrays the change in himself: ‘His tone was so utterly removed from all she had expected’; ‘[i]t was lowness and quiet accented’ (p. 110). When proposing to her, he is not a man speaking from the position of power but a helpless suitor: ‘My life is not my own since I have beheld you clearly. Miss Everdene – I come to make you an offer of marriage’ (p. 111). He is unable to impress Bathsheba, however. Despite the fact that Boldwood’s ‘standing’ is ‘sufficient’, and ‘his qualities’ are ‘even supererogatory’ in her eyes, and though she ‘esteemed and liked him’, ‘she did not want him’ (pp. 113-4). Boldwood’s large ‘presence’ in terms of financial status and social prestige carries little weight with someone who is already the ‘absolute mistress of a farm and house’ (p. 114). One problem for her is that his marriage offer suggests that they should constitute themselves through the conventional structure of the sexual division of labour, which defines social and domestic domains as masculine and feminine spheres respectively; she needs not be concerned about outdoor duties but become ‘a household goddess’, as Susan Beegel argues.²⁵ Such a marriage offer is not attractive to Bathsheba for it ‘involves total reduction to the domestic sphere’.²⁶ What Boldwood, as a ‘man’, requires here to win Bathsheba is the technique of seduction, which he lacks, and his rival, Troy, practises faultlessly; as the narrator suggests, ‘[i]t was a fatal omission of Boldwood’s that he had never once told her she was beautiful’ (p. 145). Federico suggests that Boldwood’s adherence to ‘the gentlemanly arts of winning a woman

²⁴ Linda M. Shires, ‘Narrative, Gender, and Power in *Far from the Madding Crowd*’, in *The Sense of Sex*, ed. by Margaret R. Higonnet, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 49-65 (p. 51).

²⁵ Susan Beegel, ‘Bathsheba’s Lovers: Male Sexuality in *Far from the Madding Crowd*’, in *Sexuality and Victorian Literature*, ed. by Don Richard Cox (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984), pp. 108-127 (p. 112).

²⁶ Fred Reid, ‘Art and Ideology in *Far from the Madding Crowd*’, in *The Thomas Hardy Annual*, vol. IV, ed. by Norman Page (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), pp. 91-126 (p. 116).

properly' makes him 'handicapped placed against the win-her-at-any-cost mentality of the less patient seducer'.²⁷ Unable to develop characteristics to attract the opposite sex, he is not selected by Sexual Selection, that is, by Bathsheba.

Pervaded by the discourses of masculinity which require a 'man' to define himself in terms of winning the object of desire, however, Boldwood is unable to renounce Bathsheba. He is eventually able to govern her conduct, gaining her assent, at least, to consider his proposal, by reinforcing his entreaties and working on her conscience. Overawed by Boldwood, she is unable to utter an emphatic 'No'. Her practice of femininity is, to this extent, responsible for his practice of masculinity, reflective of David H. J. Morgan's argument that masculinity and femininity are constructed in relation to each other and through everyday social interaction.²⁸ By appearing hesitant, conscientious and yielding, she allows Boldwood to practise assertiveness. Upon receiving Bathsheba's letter of refusal, however, Boldwood becomes a very different man. The 'favourable' emotional attachment, which, up to this point, has conditioned his practice of masculinity, becomes a 'hostile' one; Connell explains that emotional attachments to people can be 'favourable', 'hostile' or 'ambivalent' (that is, both favourable and hostile).²⁹ Assuming that unless he possesses the woman he loves, he cannot term himself a 'man', he resorts to forcefulness and threatening, emphasising that his feeling for her is '[a] thing strong as death. No dismissal by a hasty letter affects that' (p. 176). Such an insistence on his ownership of Bathsheba is also rooted in his idealisation of her, as Beegel and Federico observe,³⁰ which is itself the corollary of suppressed sexuality: for him Bathsheba is not someone who 'lived and breathed within his own horizon', 'a troubled creature like himself', but a creature from another sphere (p. 109).

In his inability to satisfy the demands of the prevailing discourses of masculinity, to constitute himself as the possessor of the one he desires, Boldwood feels he cannot term himself a 'man'. The power of normalising judgement operates on him, rendering him 'visible' to the power of the gaze: 'now the people sneer at me — the very hills and sky seem to laugh at me till I blush shamefully for my folly'. The fact that he can conceive himself a 'man' only if society recognises him as such is evident by his being prepared to have been 'jilted secretly, and the dishonour not known, and my

²⁷ Federico, p. 65

²⁸ See Chapter 1, p. 12.

²⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

³⁰ Beegel, p. 111; Federico, p. 58.

position kept!' (p. 179). What bothers him now is that he has lost not only his masculinity as a lover but also his social status as an independent man.

Boldwood's final strategy for redefining himself a 'man' is to govern his rival's conduct. Here, Hardy portrays a power struggle between the two male characters, where Troy displays his power both as the man who has already won Bathsheba and as a man not entangled in the discourse of honour. He undertakes to emasculate Boldwood completely: playing with him, teasing him, deceiving him and humiliating him. At the beginning of this encounter, Boldwood, who has the advantage of being physically the stronger man, manages to intimidate Troy by his forceful practice of masculinity, making him think it is better 'to be civil' to the farmer (p. 199). Once able to govern Troy's conduct to the extent of obliging him to listen to him, Boldwood constitutes himself as a businessman, attempting to eliminate his rival by bribing him to marry Fanny. By situating himself in the position of need, however, Boldwood unknowingly provides the young man with the opportunity to swindle him. By asking Boldwood to listen to his conversation with Bathsheba, Troy emasculates the older man further: 'there was a nervous twitching of Boldwood's tightly closed lips, and his face became bathed in a clammy dew' (p. 202). When Troy labels Bathsheba a 'deluded woman', Boldwood readily abandons his once desired subject status as Bathsheba's husband, allowing the young man to take the position (p. 203); he is now ready 'to sell Bathsheba's fertility to Troy, who has already assumed physical and contractual ownership'.³¹ In the bourgeois discourses within which Boldwood has constituted himself, 'the husband of a deluded woman' is not a socially acceptable subject position. His immediate renunciation of the long-sought-for status and even ironically his insistence on his rival's taking it demonstrate the extent to which his subjectivity is shaped by such discourses. His sexual desires are suppressed so that his 'rank' as a 'gentleman' may be maintained.

By declaring himself Bathsheba's husband and by his 'contemptuous' throwing of Boldwood's money on the road, Troy completes the process of the emasculation of his rival. The picture of Troy inside Bathsheba's house, lit up by a candle and Boldwood outside the house, in the dark road metaphorically represents Troy's victory over Boldwood; it is Troy who has succeeded in establishing his 'presence' in the private sphere, with Boldwood barred from entering by a chain (pp. 205-6). Boldwood refuses to accept his status as an emasculated man, however, by pretending still to be

³¹ Joe Fisher, *The Hidden Hardy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 58-9.

powerful. He describes himself to Oak as a man whose ‘constitution is an iron one’ (pp. 223-4).

With the disappearance of Troy and the news of his death, Boldwood recommences another series of efforts to redefine himself as Bathsheba’s would-be possessor. Her subject position is changed from that of the socially-invalid ‘deluded woman’ to the legitimate status of a ‘married woman’ and then a ‘widow’, which means that he can once more dream of defining himself as her husband. At the Christmas party, Boldwood succeeds in eliciting a positive reply from her, mainly because of Bathsheba’s decision to become more considerate to the one who has once wronged. Once she accepts the ring, ‘the seal of a practical compact’ (p. 329), Boldwood becomes a man of large ‘presence’, imagining himself the winner of the object of desire.

Boldwood’s project of constructing his masculinity through marriage finally fails with the reappearance of Troy. With his ‘mechanical laugh’, Troy mocks the farmer’s status as a husband. He nevertheless pays a high price for depriving Boldwood of such a position. Robbed of the desired status as a possessor of Bathsheba, Boldwood undertakes to dispossess his rival of that status as well. Feeling emasculated, this time under the direct gaze of patriarchal society — people observing his humiliation — Boldwood undertakes to re-establish himself as a ‘man’ by subduing another man, physically eliminating him. He resists constituting himself as a defeated man at the end by assuming the air of a dignified hero: he ‘crossed the room to Bathsheba’, ‘kissed her hand’, ‘put on his hat, opened the door, and went into the darkness’, ‘passed into the high road’, headed towards ‘the gaol’, pulled the bell, and ‘entered’ (pp. 332-3).

Though witnessing the futility of his endeavour to construct his ‘presence’ in terms of the possession of the loved one, Boldwood is unable to constitute himself within alternative discourses. Incapable of adapting to the conditions of his life, insisting on pursuing ‘perfectly consistent conduct in a world made up so largely of compromise’ (p. 34), Boldwood is eliminated both by Natural Selection and by society. With his portrayal of Boldwood, Hardy demonstrates the difficulty of resisting the discourses that permeate the subject. Boldwood’s tragedy is depicted as the result of discourses which define masculinity either in terms of the containment of sexual desires or in terms of possession of the object of desire. He pursues these norms of masculinity until the end, unable to stand outside the structures of class and gender and their pertinent discourses. In this respect, he anticipates Hardy’s growing preoccupation with the ways in which such discourses constrain individuals, causing their suffering.

Hardy portrays Troy in sharp contrast with Boldwood; in the young man's case, reserve gives way to flamboyance, codes of honour to deceitfulness and sexual restraint to debauchery. Troy's masculinity, of course, like Boldwood's, is constrained by the prevailing gender and class structures which specify the way he should formulate himself. In choosing a career which is exclusively masculine, he too constructs his masculinity within the structure of the sexual division of labour. In situating himself in the position of supremacy over the opposite sex, furthermore, he can be seen to define himself through the structure of power. His sensuousness, his defining his 'presence' in terms of sexual assertiveness, also suggests a practice of masculinity delimited by the structure of emotional attachment.

'A doctor's son' in name, but of noble blood in reality (pp. 144-5), being 'an earl's son by nature' (as the serialised version of the novel reveals),³² Troy is apparently exposed to both middle-class and aristocratic discourses (Merryn Williams refers to his 'professional and aristocratic connections').³³ Troy's masculinity, however, is not conditioned by bourgeois class structures; he is neither a professional, a breadwinner nor a husband; instead he has copied the models of masculinity provided by the aristocracy. While in middle-class discourses, manliness is defined in terms of 'hard work', the formation of family life and morality, in aristocratic discourses, which determine Troy's gender practice, manhood is associated with 'hedonism, sensuousness' and 'idleness'.³⁴ By exchanging the stable life of a professional with the unstable, but more enjoyable, life of a soldier, he has distanced himself from middle-class models of masculinity. As Boldwood comments, Troy, though a 'clever fellow and up to everything' — as a 'copying clerk' who 'might have worked himself into a decent livelihood of some sort' — has spoiled his opportunities by '[indulging] in the wild freak life of enlisting'. By constituting himself as a philanderer, Troy moves even further from middle-class paradigms; for Boldwood, Troy is not an honourable man and thus 'not one to build much hope upon' in a case such as Fanny's (p. 100).³⁵ For Troy,

³² Morgan and Russell, notes to their edition of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, p. 373.

³³ Merryn Williams, *Thomas Hardy and Rural England* (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 117.

³⁴ As Lynne Segal elaborates in her discussion of the bourgeois and aristocratic ideologies of masculinity, 'aristocratic hedonism, sensuousness, idleness and effeminacy', as opposed to the bourgeois 'ideology of hard work', were the attributes of which the Victorian middle classes were critical. Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (London: Virago Press, 1990), p. 105. As Davidoff and Hall also observe, 'gambling, duelling' or 'sexual prowess' were among the 'skills' of 'aristocratic' men (p. 205).

³⁵ 'Middle-class codes of respectability differentiated them from [...] the aristocracy, who were deemed morally decadent and irresponsible'. Simon Gunn and Rachel Bell, *Middle Classes: Their Rise and Sprawl* (London: Cassell, 2002), p. 65.

by contrast, it is the practices of hedonism, sensuality and amorality that make one a 'man'.

Soldiering is of significance to Troy not only because it allows him to formulate himself according to upper-class ideals of 'hedonism', 'idleness' and 'sensuousness' but also because it is associated with another aristocratic discourse which associates manliness with 'military honour'.³⁶ Williams observes that 'Troy's links are [...] with the army and the aristocracy'.³⁷ Joe Fisher also describes Troy as the 'aristocratically-descended Trojan invader' whose identity 'is military'.³⁸ The discourses through which Troy identifies himself, however, are in tension with each other: one defines masculinity in terms of 'hedonism' and the other in terms of 'heroism'. Unable to pursue both discourses simultaneously, Troy constitutes himself through the first, as a hedonist, while playing the role of a warrior. His subject status as a 'warrior' is an imaginary one; he does not fight in any war and lacks the heroism of mythical warriors; as Fisher observes, 'Troy's name is purely ironic: Virgil and Homer both describe their Trojans as truthful, brave, patriotic and confiding'.³⁹ Troy, who displays none of these qualities, only simulates the large 'presence' and the dazzling appearance of a warrior: the costume, the armour and the art of sword play.

Constituting himself more as a hedonist than a military man, Troy forsakes the army for a life of comfort he can enjoy as Bathsheba's husband. He has no intention of exchanging his subject status as a soldier for that of a middle-class husband and farmer, however; rather, he aims to remain a soldier (both a hedonist and a hero in name), while adopting the new roles as well: '[having purchased] his 'discharge' from the army 'to attend to the new duties awaiting' him at Bathsheba's house and farm, he intends to 'continue a soldier in spirit and feeling' (p. 210). His subject positions as a breadwinner or professional, nevertheless, are false ones: he remains a 'soldier under the yeoman's garb' (p. 227). The scene where Troy talks of betting and 'horseracing' amid conversation about farming and weather, when he is walking beside Bathsheba's 'gig', as her 'husband' and 'in a farmer's marketing suit', best reveals the incongruity between the man he is and the man he pretends to be (p. 226). Permeated by hedonist discourses, he is incapable of practising a different version of masculinity with any conviction.

Though we witness the vulnerability of Troy's 'presence' at certain points in the story (as will be discussed below), he generally possesses a strong sense of manhood,

³⁶ Segal, p. 106.

³⁷ *Thomas Hardy*, p. 131.

³⁸ Fisher, p. 57.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

evident from his 'sanguine' mood (p. 277) and his self-confidence. Hardy defines him as 'the most fortunate of his order' for his living in the 'present', only 'caring for what was before his eyes', giving no thought to the 'past' and the 'future': he is a 'man to whom memories were an encumbrance and anticipation a superfluity' (pp. 145-6). Even though Hardy does not seem to have encountered Schopenhauer until the late 1870s,⁴⁰ and certainly not at the time of writing *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the resemblance of the portrayal of Troy to Schopenhauer's depiction of a fool reveals the affinity of the world-views of the two men. For Schopenhauer, only brutes and dull minds enjoy such cheerfulness: 'thinking about absent and future things' is 'the origin of care, fear and hope which once aroused, make a far stronger impression on men than do actual present pleasures or sufferings'. The animal suffers less: '[lacking] the faculty of reflection, joys and sorrows cannot accumulate in the animal as they do in man through memory and anticipation.'⁴¹ The brute's 'consciousness is restricted to what is clearly evident and thus to the present moment', hence 'its peaceful, untroubled enjoyment of the present'.⁴² This unthinking model of masculinity is also invoked by Hardy in his *Literary Notebook*, where he copied a passage from Schopenhauer, claiming: 'I have made one now unalterable mistake in my life – I have not been a fool. I wish to God I could be!'.⁴³

Living in the 'present' time, it can be argued, Troy constructs his 'presence' upon the power he can exercise on whatever object he has 'before his eyes' (p. 147). Once he hears no news of Fanny and instead encounters Bathsheba, he attempts to assert his manhood by winning the woman he now has before him. He constructs his 'presence' in terms of the possession of any, and not an exclusive, object of desire. Troy, therefore, as the narrator observes, is 'vulnerable only in the present' (p. 145); whether or not he can win the one he desires ostensibly provides him with or deprives him of a sense of manhood. Even if he is unsuccessful, the pain is only transitory.

It can be argued that if Troy's masculine subjectivity appears to be more secure, as suggested by his placid mood, it is also because he is quite at home with the discourses of masculinity which have permeated him. While Boldwood has to renounce or discipline his sexuality, suppress emotions and adhere to the codes of honour,

⁴⁰ Hardy read James Sully's 1877 book on *Pessimism* but the quotations he copied from this book in his *Literary Notebooks* date back to 1886. See Chapter 2, note 46.

⁴¹ Arthur Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms*, selected and trans. with intro. by R. J. Hollingdale (Middlesex: Penguin, 1970 [Taken from Schopenhauer's *Parerga and Paralipomena*, published in 1851]), p. 44.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 45. Hardy copied this Schopenhauerian argument in his literary notebooks in 1891. See Lennart A. Björk, ed., *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1985), II, 28.

⁴³ *Literary Notebooks*, II, 143.

morality and hard work in order to be awarded the rank of a 'man', Troy does neither of these and is still regarded as a 'man'. The discourse of masculinity which he follows demands that he gives free play to his sexual desires and passions, asking for no self-control and not requiring him to constitute himself in terms of honour and morality or hard work. He can be sensual, amoral and idle and still be a 'man'. Since he does not equate manliness with honour and scruples, Troy is immune from the threats to masculine subjectivity which honourable men experience in the case of dishonour. As the narrator suggests, Troy's 'moral' 'poverty' makes him appear as a strong man, not because he is really so, but because 'what Troy had never enjoyed he did not miss' (p. 146), that is, morality. In fact, it is in his liberation from the codes of morality that Troy defines himself as a 'man'. For him, Fanny becomes the means of the assertion of his manliness, priding himself on his capability to play with her and renounce her. His contentment with the hedonist discourses which he has internalised is evident from his satisfaction with the kind of man he is, from the fact that he conceives himself as the 'hero of his story' and has never '[envied] other people their condition', never desired to be another man (p. 277).

It can be argued, however, that although free from the constraints of discourses of honour and morality, Troy is subject to other prevailing discourses of his time, those which associate masculinity with sexuality; his debauchery cannot be read as the sign of his freedom from social conventions but rather his being enmeshed in them. In his pursuit of Bathsheba also he is functioning within the conventional structure of emotional attachment which demands that a man employs techniques to attract and win the opposite sex. Devoid of Boldwood's financial and social 'presence' and Oak's moral 'presence', Troy fabricates himself a 'presence' through a sparkling appearance and flattery, which surpasses Boldwood's and Oak's. While, in their proposals, his rivals talk of what *they* can do for Bathsheba, Troy describes what *Bathsheba* can do to him, the way she enchants him. In Troy's language, Bathsheba is the subject of the sentences: *she* has a 'beautiful face', *she* is a 'charming woman', *she* is a 'beauty' (pp. 143-4). Troy overpowers Bathsheba by empowering her, praising her. His 'knight-service' for her, his coming for 'haymaking' in her farm (p. 148) and his show of sword-play are among the other techniques he employs to govern her conduct, to allure her: 'he was altogether too much for her' (pp. 162-3). Here, Hardy criticises Bathsheba for her false perception: she sees Troy's 'embellishments [which] were upon the very surface' and is unable to discern his 'deformities [which] lay deep down from a woman's vision', in the same way that she does not see Oak's 'virtues [which] were as

metals in a mine' but his 'defects [which] were patent to the blindest' (p. 165). In J. B. Bullen's words, Bathsheba 'suffers from what Ruskin calls "false taste"', where 'self-preoccupation and subjectivity, clouds the judgement'.⁴⁴ Through a fabricated 'presence', Troy thus manages to transform Bathsheba from a proud, independent woman to a desperate lover and ultimately a wife.

Even though he initially resists constituting himself through matrimony, drawing a strong sense of manhood from his capability to overpower any object of desire, Troy ultimately defines himself through that structure. His marriage to Bathsheba, of course, echoes neither his love, nor his desire to accept a role as a breadwinner; rather, it is an attempt to assert himself as a capable man who can simultaneously win a wife and a chance of leading a life of leisure. For him, Bathsheba is a 'handsome' woman (p. 303) 'with plenty of money, and a house and farm and horses, and comfort' (p. 321). His construction of masculinity through marriage thus strengthens his sense of manhood. Conceiving himself as both a soldier and the possessor of Bathsheba and her wealth, he perceives himself as a man of impressive 'presence'.

The way Hardy portrays him on the first morning of his married life best reveals this: he emerges at the window of Bathsheba's house in his soldier's uniform, in his typically sanguine mood, addressing Oak and Coggan as the master of Bathsheba's house and farm. Troy's sense of large 'presence' is further manifested on the night which he, as Bathsheba's husband and the master, has chosen for the 'harvest supper and dance', when he assumes the position of power in relation to his wife and the work folk, ordering her to leave the room and deciding that the ricks need not be protected against the storm. His practice of masculinity is revealed to be determined by the structure of power which demands that a 'husband' constitutes himself as the decision-maker and the dominant figure in relation to his wife and household. Authority, as Tolson argues, is one way of constructing 'presence'.⁴⁵ The institution of the family has already specified the roles and duties that a husband and a wife should assume; Bathsheba has to give up her role as the head of the farm, allowing her husband to take it instead. Troy's show of power in this scene can also be read as an attempt on his part to establish his authority in the eyes of the workers, as a compensation for the kind of 'presence' he lacks as a breadwinner and a professional man. As Beegel observes,

⁴⁴ J. B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), p. 76.

⁴⁵ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

Troy's financial dependence on Bathsheba 'seems to typify the sexual power struggle of their marriage'; he 'fears and resents Bathsheba's proud independence of character'.⁴⁶

Since he is not equipped with the power which a husband or a professional usually embodies in terms of financial autonomy, and therefore lacks a strong sense of 'presence' in these roles, Troy abandons them altogether to constitute himself once more as a bachelor and a soldier. The kinds of jobs he takes after forsaking the matrimonial relationship as a 'Professor of Gymnastics, Sword Exercise, Fencing, and Pugilism' are all in accord with his desired subject position as a soldier. Yet none of these sources of income can grant him the financial power he requires to constitute himself as an idle man; he therefore returns to the idea of marriage, not necessarily with Bathsheba.

Possessing a strong sense of manhood and professing not to care if Bathsheba or other Weatherbury people recognise him in his low position as a circus clown, he 'recklessly' comes to play in a place near Weatherbury Farm. His 'confusion' upon seeing Bathsheba among the audience, however, and the 'sense of shame' he experiences 'at the possibility that his attractive young wife' should see him 'in so mean a condition' (p. 300) reveal the vulnerability of his masculine subjectivity. As the one who is concerned with what is 'before his eyes', he is 'vulnerable only in the present' (p. 145): overpowered by Bathsheba's beauty, he feels the shrinking of his 'presence'. Bathsheba reminds him of the kind of man he was and the kind of man he is now. Although in this scene it is Bathsheba who is physically visible, it is Troy who is subjected to the power of the gaze. The normalising power operates on him, making him judge himself according to norms of aristocratic discourses through which he has constituted himself. As Joanna Devereux argues, 'Troy is anxious not to be remembered as ridiculous, as a ludicrous, comic figure, instead of a dashing hero'.⁴⁷ His concern about the possibility of his being 'nicknamed "Turpin" as long as he lived' (p. 304) suggests the constructedness and fragility of his subjectivity; he can conceive of himself as 'Sergeant Troy' only if society defines him in this way. In order to reconstitute himself as a husband, he needs to have his former 'presence' in the eyes of his wife so 'these few months of his existence must be entirely blotted out' (p. 304).

Troy never questions the validity of the discourses which he has internalised yet Hardy at one point in the story suggests the possibility of a different identity constructed through fellow-feeling. Fanny's death enables him to experience love and sympathy,

⁴⁶ Beegel, p. 111.

⁴⁷ Joanna Devereux, *Patriarchy and Its Discontents: Sexual Politics in Selected Novels and Stories of Thomas Hardy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 25.

making him momentarily distance himself from the aristocratic norms of masculinity (and Schopenhauer's folly). As soon as he relates himself to the past and future, he becomes acquainted with misery and frustration; he experiences 'grief' at Fanny's death and 'disappointment' on witnessing the thwarting of his attempt to compensate for his past actions by planting flowers on her grave. Suffering enables him to query the norms of masculinity which he has previously pursued; he becomes no longer the man who 'had laughed, and sung, and poured love-trifles into a woman's ear' but 'a miserable man' who 'wished himself another man', who 'hated himself' (p. 277). He is unable, however, to sustain this new identity or to resist the discourses which have previously permeated him. For 'a man who has spent his primal strength in journeying in one direction has not much spirit left for reversing his course'; once his flowers are swept away by the rain he does not attempt to replace them but simply gives up on the whole enterprise (p. 278). His conspiracy with Pennyways for the repossession of Bathsheba and her properties, at end of the story, marks a return to the former subjectivity.

With his portrayal of Gabriel Oak, however, I would argue, Hardy examines the possibility of alternative ways of being a 'man'. Oak's masculinity, like other characters', is conditioned by the structures of gender and class but he is not as constrained by these structures as other characters are; rather, he is able, to some extent, to resist constituting himself through these structures. It can be argued that Oak is able to improvise his own version of masculinity by defying the dominant Victorian discourses of sexuality, success and power.

In taking masculine jobs as a shepherd and a farmer, Oak has formulated himself through the structure of the sexual division of labour. The kinds of occupations he pursues further suggest that he has defined himself through his social class structures, which have delineated the kind of masculinity he needs to practise. As the son of a shepherd, Oak is brought up in a working-class family and social context. Though introduced to us as 'Farmer Oak', he used to be 'a shepherd only tending the flocks of large proprietors from his childhood with his father'. He has endeavoured to improve the conditions of his life, of course (as his 'venture, unaided and alone, into the paths of farming as master and not as man' demonstrates), but he still lives as a working-class man, dwelling in a cottage and tending his sheep by his own hand (p. 10). He sees himself as working-class throughout the story, as his contentment with his way of life as a worker and his enthusiasm for work suggest. Even though he defines himself in terms of work, material achievement alone does not determine his masculine subjectivity. In taking interest in 'work' per se, whether he does it for himself or someone else, whether

he is well-paid or not, he formulates himself through working-class discourses, which conceive of work as the means of living and not the ladder to success, as is the case with middle-class men, as Tolson notes.⁴⁸ Oak's readiness to do any kind of job, though associated with his working-class subjectivity, also hints at certain Stoic inclinations. He is a self-governed, self-possessed man throughout the course of the story, a strong man not subdued by the loss of material possessions, his position as a farmer and his beloved. It can be argued that in portraying Oak as a man who is able to shun worldly attachments (whether fortune, position or beloved), govern his passions, live according to his reason, conform to destiny and therefore lead a self-sustained life, Hardy depicts Oak as a Stoic.⁴⁹

Oak's mentality, his behaviour towards others and his reaction to the events of his life, which distinguishes him from other characters, can be seen to indicate a tendency on his part to formulate himself through Stoic discourses. I am not suggesting, of course, that Oak consciously pursues such discourses; rather, it is Hardy who invests his shepherd with Stoic attributes, ostensibly to examine the possibility of alternative modes of being in the world and alternative ways of practising masculinity. He portrays Oak as a man who is capable of governing his desires and a man who acts rationally. Hardy explicitly endows him with 'wisdom' in the scene where Oak encounters Fanny on the road: he 'fancied that he had felt himself in the penumbra of a very deep sadness when touching that slight and fragile creature' but he thought 'wisdom lies in moderating mere impressions, and Gabriel endeavoured to think little of this' (p. 46). As Bullen notes, 'through the personality of Gabriel Oak, he [Hardy] infers that right judgement *can* be made, and that such judgments *should* be made'.⁵⁰ It appears that for Oak, to act rationally, to do what is right according to circumstances is the real good, the virtue at which he should aim, and all other things, including appearance, luxury, wealth, and beloved are inessentials.⁵¹ It is not the external phenomena but living in accordance with reason which provides him with a sense of self. A dashing appearance or a luxurious life is of little significance to him. He is a man who does not rest 'his valuation [...] upon his appearance'; even his way of walking suggests that he has 'no great claim on the world's room' (p. 4). He readily accepts a drink from a dirty cup the rustics offer him and, at the end of the story, despite his better financial condition, he still '[lives] in no better style than before, occupying the same cottage, paring his own

⁴⁸ See Chapter 1, pp. 18, 20.

⁴⁹ For my discussion of Stoicism see Chapter 2, pp. 33-5.

⁵⁰ Bullen, p. 81.

⁵¹ See Chapter 2, p. 34.

potatoes, mending his stockings, and sometimes even making his bed with his own hands'. That he is 'provokingly indifferent to public opinion' (pp. 290-1) echoes his sense of self-sufficiency, acquired by his conviction that to live rationally is enough for happiness.

By virtue of living in accordance with reason, Oak knows that whatever is external to him is not his and attachment to it, therefore, is a mistake. If he maintains his equanimity in the midst of misfortune, it is because he recognises his limitations as a human being and does not attempt to take into possession the things over which he has no control. For him, as a Stoic, wealth and romantic relationships are 'preferred' but 'indifferent' things; that is, he would be pleased to have them but is able to do without them. Though sad under the burden of calamity, he is not subdued: he has 'passed through an ordeal of wretchedness' but has gained more than he has lost in this process: 'a dignified calm he had never before known' (pp. 34-5). Despite his 'inward melancholy', he makes himself a bed of hay in a wagon, lying on it, 'feeling physically as comfortable as ever he had [been] in his life', '[summoning] the god [of sleep] instead of having to wait for him' (p. 37). His acquiescence in fate resembles that of a Stoic who '[viewing] the world as a system that is both deterministic and providential', '[finds] it irrational and pointless to wish that things might be otherwise than what' he 'actually [experiences]'.⁵² Geoffrey Thurley describes Oak as 'passive': 'he must endure until the end of the book'.⁵³ But it can be argued that for Oak, as a Stoic, compliance with fate is itself a rational action. He is acting rationally in not attempting to control what is out of his control. To know one's place in the order of the universe is the 'simple lesson' which other characters have 'not yet learnt' but he has mastered: he 'meditatively looked upon the horizon of circumstances without any special regard to his own standpoint in the midst' (p. 257). His happiness, and in fact his survival, lies in his ability to harmonise himself with the law of nature, that is, destiny.⁵⁴ For Hardy, apparently, resignation to what is out of human control is a virtue for it can liberate one from anxiety and sorrow.

Hardy's interest in depicting Oak as a Stoic is also evident from the portrayal of the serenity of his shepherd's cottage and his equanimity. We see Oak sitting in his

⁵² A. A. Long, *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2002), p. 22.

⁵³ Geoffrey Thurley, *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels: The Nervous and the Statuesque* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1975), p. 76.

⁵⁴ Marjorie Garson points out Oak's affinity with Mother Nature, arguing that the novel suggests 'that "nature" and "human nature" could form a kind of continuum, and that sanity and happiness lie in catching nature rhythms'. Marjorie Garson, *Hardy's Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), p. 48.

cottage with the peace of a man who, by virtue of his dissociation from worldly possessions, is free from worries and anxieties: 'The shutters [of his cottage] were not closed, nor was any blind or curtain drawn over the window' for 'neither robbery nor observation [...] could do much injury to the occupant of the domicile' (pp. 257-8). He is seen as a man who possess the calmness which other characters, including Bathsheba, 'sadly [lack]', as 'the atmosphere of content' within his 'little dwelling' echoes and as his act of '[kneeling] down to pray' reveal (p. 258). It is significant that in her hour of need, Bathsheba feels the need to learn 'stoicism' from him: 'What a way Oak had, she thought, of enduring things' (p. 257). If he does not undergo the psychological problems which other characters experience, if he is described by critics as 'well-adjusted'⁵⁵ or 'a balanced and integrated figure',⁵⁶ it is because he has been able to grasp the reason of the universe and the domain of his freedom and has, accordingly, avoided making false attachments. Later in the story, when Bathsheba and Boldwood, the owners of the farms which Oak manages, are 'sitting in their [...] homes in gloomy and sad seclusion', Oak can be seen 'mounted on a strong cob', 'daily trotting the length and breadth of about two thousand acres in a cheerful spirit of surveillance, as if the crops all belonged to him' (p. 290). He has nothing but he is content, for he needs nothing.

In his equanimity, Oak aligns himself with one of the Stoic principles Hardy was fond of quoting, as alluded to in Chapter 2: 'This is the chief thing: Be not perturbed: for all things are according to the nature of the universal'.⁵⁷ These are the very words Angel Clare utters at the time of misery, as we shall see. Among Hardy's male characters, Giles Winterborne is the other main character who seems able, to some extent, to live according to this principle. Hardy's other men lack the serenity of a Stoic; neither Henchard nor Jude can live up to this doctrine, and Angel, even through equipped with the knowledge of Stoicism, fails to achieve equanimity. In all of these examples, Hardy can be seen to explore the possibility of practising such a Stoic doctrine. But the fact that he portrays most of his male characters, especially in his later novels, as perturbed, reveals the difficulty of living according to reason. For most men are ruled by aspirations, desires and emotions.⁵⁸ His portrayal of Oak, however, implies that, at least at this stage of his writing career, he conceives the task of shaping one's subjectivity as a Stoic as viable.

⁵⁵ Thurley, p.79.

⁵⁶ Garson, p. 28.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 2, p. 36.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 2, note 83.

Oak's practice of masculinity can be seen to be mainly determined by his subject position as a Stoic, through which Hardy examines an alternative way of being a man. Oak does not define his 'presence' in the public sphere in materialistic terms. Although he has worked hard to improve the conditions of his life, he does not associate his sense of manhood with success. John Goode (along with Fisher and Devereux) reads Oak's success at the end as a bourgeois ideal yet this reading is unable to explain Oak's indifference towards, and his renunciation of, worldly possessions.⁵⁹ Though success is achieved at the end, it is not constitutive of Oak's masculinity. He resembles, I would suggest, a Stoic who 'has no need of things external to him, although he may [...] use them'.⁶⁰ When seeing that 'the ewes lay dead at his foot', his 'first feeling' is 'one of pity for the untimely fate of these gentle ewes and their unborn lambs'; it is only later that he recognises that 'all savings of a frugal life had been dispersed at a blow' and that 'all his hopes' for becoming 'an independent farmer' are lost (pp. 32-3). He is not defeated by his loss as for him worldly possessions and social status are 'indifferent' things. The loss of his subject position as a farmer does not undermine his masculine subjectivity; he readily offers himself as a bailiff and a shepherd; he even thinks of enlisting in the army and eventually earns his day's wage by playing his flute (pp. 34-6). I do not, therefore, concur with Shires that unemployment signifies loss of power and masculinity for Oak.⁶¹ It can be argued that, through the practice of self-sufficiency, Oak manages to resist the prevailing discourses of masculinity, especially those provided by the bourgeoisie, and shape his masculinity in an alternative way. Foucault argues that, for the Stoics, the 'work on the self' through the practice of asceticism was a way of self-formation which was not dictated by institutions of power.⁶²

If Oak's masculinity is not undermined by the loss of fortune and position, it is also because he relates his 'presence' in the public sphere to his capabilities, his intuitive power, his skill and even his musical talent, the things which cannot easily be taken from him. He possesses the 'intuition' to 'ascertain the time of night from the altitude of the stars' (p. 12), to read the weather and predict the storm (p. 209), capabilities which enable him to assert himself in the public domain as a 'man'. His sensitiveness to weather, for instance, 'is to his advantage as a worker', as Goode

⁵⁹ John Goode, *Thomas Hardy: The Offensive Truth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 28; Fisher, p. 61; Devereux, p. 30.

⁶⁰ Andrew Erskine, *The Hellenistic Stoa: Political Thought and Action* (London: Duckworth, 1990), p. 45.

⁶¹ Shires, p. 53.

⁶² See Chapter 1, p. 21.

notes.⁶³ Oak also has the expertise of a shepherd and that of a farmer. He can '[lamb] the ewes' (p. 10) and is the only one who can rescue Bathsheba's flock. Hardy admires Oak's skill, describing his 'trochar' as an 'instrument of salvation' (p. 124). Oak also possesses the art of playing the flute with 'Arcadian sweetness', an art he shares with pagan gods. Unemployment does not undermine his sense of manhood for he has such a talent to rely on: in the midst of his misfortunes, he 'drew his flute and began to play [...] in the style of a man who had never known a moment's sorrow' (p. 36). His art allows him to resume defining himself as a man for he is still able to earn his living.

Oak's 'passivity' and lack of aggression, which have made critics see him as 'sexless' and 'abnormal' or even feminine,⁶⁴ is in accord with his Stoic inclinations. For him, a romantic relationship, like material success, is a 'preferred' but 'indifferent' matter; that is, marriage to Bathsheba is not essential for his happiness. His pursuit of Bathsheba suggests that he has constituted himself through the structure of emotional attachment yet he is also able to resist that structure for he has not associated his masculinity with the possession of the beloved. He speaks to Bathsheba's aunt about his proposal not as a passionate lover but as a Stoic who views marriage as an indifferent issue: 'In short I was going to ask her [Bathsheba] if she's like to be married'; 'if she would I should be very glad to marry her' (p. 24). And when he is told that Bathsheba has 'a dozen' 'hanging around her', though disappointed, he does not insist: 'Well, there's no use in my waiting, for that was all I came about' (p. 25). When Bathsheba runs after him, Oak, by virtue of his love for her, momentarily departs from his subject status as a Stoic and speaks 'appealingly' to her but upon noticing the futility of his insistence, he resigns and reconstitutes himself as a self-sufficient man: "'Very well," said Oak, firmly [...]. "Then I'll ask you no more"' (pp. 28-9). He accepts Boldwood and Troy as Bathsheba's possible husbands and even sympathises with his rival, Boldwood, speaking 'with the repose of a man whom misfortune had inured rather than subdued' (p. 225). He is dismayed but not emasculated by his defeat in love for it is through renunciation that he feels himself a man.

Even though interested in formulating himself through marriage, Oak can still shape his masculinity without it. He pursues the object of desire but, as a Stoic, he is aware that it is irrational to have any claim over the things which are external to him. Accordingly, he does not associate his masculinity with the possession of the beloved but primarily in terms of detachment from and renunciation of her. He constructs his

⁶³ Goode, p. 27.

⁶⁴ Albert J. Guerard, *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 114; Shires, p. 53.

masculinity, of course, also in terms of helping her, regardless of his own interests. Through the government of his desires, he is able to resist the discourse of sexuality. In his substitution of sexuality and egotism, the desire for possession of the woman he loves, with friendship and loving-kindness, Oak offers an alternative practice of masculinity.

Devereux reads Oak's helping Bathsheba as emblematic of his 'insertion into the patriarchal, chivalric tradition' which is based on female inferiority⁶⁵ yet we can argue that, in his depiction of Oak as a supporter of Bathsheba without making him a proprietor and a husband, Hardy is modelling his shepherd according to Positivist ideals. Lennart A. Björk sees Oak as 'a paragon Positivist hero'.⁶⁶ Hardy himself refers to his reading of 'Comte's *Positive Philosophy*, and writings of that school' at the time of the writing of the novel.⁶⁷ Oak specifically urges Bathsheba to practise 'true loving-kindness' in relation to Boldwood, not to play with his emotions (p. 118). Even in the Stoic philosophy, fellowship has been admired; for the Stoics, individuals are part of one body and should naturally be benevolent to each other; they do not, of course, approve of passion.⁶⁸

Instead of possessing Bathsheba, Oak undertakes to construct his masculine 'presence' by means of helping and supporting her. He wants Bathsheba to be happy even though with someone else for Oak's love towards her is more of the nature of friendship than passion, as critics such as Beegel have argued.⁶⁹ When finding out that he has lost all his material possessions, '[i]t was as remarkable as it was characteristic that the one sentence he uttered was in thankfulness: 'Thank God I am not married: what would *she* have done in the poverty now coming upon me!' (p. 33). Here, Oak demonstrates that he cares for Bathsheba's happiness more than ownership of her. He remains Bathsheba's supporter throughout the story: he '[watches] her ['homestead'] affairs as carefully as any specially appointed officer of surveillance could have done' (p. 140); he runs after her to Bath and is relieved to see her back 'safe and sound', forgetting 'all grave reports' about her being seen there in Troy's company (p. 197); he accepts his rival, Troy, as a 'kindness to her he loved' (p. 207); he risks danger in

⁶⁵ Devereux, p. 29.

⁶⁶ Lennart A. Björk, *Psychological Vision and Social Criticism in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell International, 1987), p. 94. Michael Millgate also refers to 'those broadly Positivist values—services to others, compromise, and "loving-kindnesses"—which had been specifically celebrated in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 203.

⁶⁷ Florence Emily Hardy, *Early Life*, p. 129.

⁶⁸ See Chapter 2, p. 36.

⁶⁹ Beegel, p. 116.

rescuing Bathsheba's ricks, dismissing the fact that she is not his (p. 213). To be of any help to Bathsheba apparently provides Oak with a sense of large 'presence'. Once he has saved Bathsheba's ricks, though 'drenched, weary, and sad' 'he was cheered by a sense of success in a good cause' (p. 223). At the end of the story, he decides to leave Bathsheba, despite his own wishes, in order to save her 'good name' (p. 347). In constituting himself as protector and advisor to Bathsheba, Oak can be seen to have supported her in the manner of a 'husband', even though he was not nominally one. If, at the end of the story, he speaks of her as his 'wife' with the air of a man who has been married for years (pp. 352-3), it is because practically he has taken the role a husband is expected to take, '[arguing] on her side when all the rest of the world was against her' (p. 344). The roles of husband and friend are here conflated.

Although Oak constructs his 'presence' in terms of helping Bathsheba and even though at some point in the story his 'presence', as far as he comes to relate it to supporting Bathsheba, appears to be vulnerable (when, for instance he is enraged by hearing the rustics criticising Bathsheba), his sense of manhood is not tied up with helping her. Apparently, for Oak, as a Stoic, supporting Bathsheba, like marriage to her, falls into the category of 'indifferent' things, that is, he endeavours to support her, as the hardship he undergoes for her sake suggests, but his masculine subjectivity is not undermined once he does not have the chance to help her. He is ready to leave her if she wishes it. Oak shapes his masculinity mainly by practising self-sufficiency and by doing what he rationally and morally regards as right.

The structure of power also does not totally condition Oak's practice of masculinity. In his relationships with other characters, he refrains from dominating them. As a Stoic who is able to govern himself, he is able to govern his behaviour towards other characters, not seeking to overpower them. For the Stoics, as Foucault explains, the power a man exercised over himself could control his power over others.⁷⁰ Oak mainly maintains his tranquillity in relation to other characters for they cannot really harm him.

It can be argued that what determines Oak's attitude towards other characters is his moral judgement of their conduct. He evaluates them according to their adherence to ethical codes and, accordingly, demonstrates a different practice of masculinity in relation to them. He respects Boldwood, whom he conceives as an honourable man, disregarding the fact that he is his rival. The relationship between the two men is more or less a balanced relationship; Oak does not attempt to subdue Boldwood, and the older

⁷⁰ See Chapter 1, p. 21.

man, witnessing no threat from Oak's side, respects him. In relation to Troy, however, Oak is a different man. Troy's amorality degrades him in the eyes of Oak, allowing him to constitute himself as Troy's superior, regardless of Troy's higher social and financial status, as Bathsheba's husband and as his master.

In relation to Bathsheba, again it is Bathsheba's observance or lack of observance of the codes of proper conduct which determines Oak's behaviour towards her. In this relationship, he constitutes himself in different ways, as a lover, an assertive man, an advisor or a resigned Stoic, based on the situation in which he finds himself and on Bathsheba's conduct. He mainly, however, behaves as a Stoic, practising self-sufficiency and self-government. Since the possession of the beloved is not constitutive of his masculine subjectivity, Oak does not attempt to overpower Bathsheba by flattery, persistence or forcefulness. When proposing to her, he speaks about what he can do for her and the kind of life he can provide for her — a practice of masculinity demarcated by the social structures which demand a husband to take the role of breadwinner and protector. Devoid of a glittering appearance and the skill of flattery, he does not have a striking 'presence' in the eyes of Bathsheba, hence the time it takes to become her husband.

With the transformation in the material and social conditions of both Oak and Bathsheba, both demonstrate different gender practices. Upon noticing that he has to ask a 'woman farmer' for a job, Oak feels humiliated, suggesting that despite his resistance to patriarchal discourses, he is still governed by the rhetoric which defines the public domain as masculine territory. Here, Hardy modifies the conventional structure of the sexual division of labour by allowing a woman to take the culturally-defined masculine role. Oak's sense of manhood, although not threatened by unemployment and material loss, appears to be challenged once he notices that the farmer is a woman and that the woman is Bathsheba, as his reluctance to ask her for an employment suggests: 'Do you want a shepherd, ma'am?' he asks, 'in an abashed and sad voice' (p. 43). Yet his readiness to work for a woman demonstrates that he is not deeply entrenched in such rhetoric. He does not conceive himself, however, as Bathsheba's inferior, as his inward reprimanding of her arrogance demonstrates: 'staggered by the remarkable coolness of her manner', he thinks 'her air was the inevitable result of the social rise which had advanced her from a cottage to a large house and fields' (p. 72). For Oak, who perceives worldly possessions as 'indifferent', such a change in Bathsheba by virtue of financial and social rise is not rational.

Upon witnessing Bathsheba's transgression of what Oak considers the codes of right conduct, 'playing pranks upon a man like Mr. Boldwood, merely as a pastime', Oak rewrites his relationship with her, constituting himself as an assertive man, boldly criticising her: 'Leading on a man you don't care for is not a praiseworthy action'. Caring for Bathsheba and sympathising with Boldwood, Oak intends to govern Bathsheba's conduct, not to win her but to maintain her reputation and, ironically, to prevent her from harming his rival. The text thus initiates a power struggle between the two, where both attempt to govern the conduct of the other, to make the other person the one s/he desires, a submissive worker and desperate lover or a considerate and gentle woman; both refuse, however, to be governed by the other. Once dismissed, for criticising Bathsheba, Oak does not entreat or apologise but 'took his shears and went away from her in placid dignity' (p. 118).

Bathsheba's urgent need for Oak to rescue her sheep reinstates him in a position of power, making her entreat for his return. He accepts her request only once she has written to him politely: '*Do not desert me, Gabriel!*' (pp. 122-3). Though at the end we see Bathsheba as a grateful woman, Oak's victory is a transitory one. By flirting with Boldwood, when he comes to the shearing barn, Bathsheba endeavours both to emasculate Oak, '[trifling] with himself [Oak] in thus feigning that she had trifled with another' (p. 133) and to undermine his ability to govern her conduct. She further emasculates Oak by speaking to him harshly in the presence of others when Oak happens to cut an ewe while shearing it — overcome, 'momentarily', by his love for her. Though succeeding in exposing the vulnerability of Oak's masculinity as far as it is associated with his love for her, she is unable to undermine his masculinity for Oak quickly resumes his work 'in an unmoved voice of routine' (p. 130).

Bathsheba soon comes to recognise Oak's virtues (as when he rescues her ricks, for instance). From this point on in the story, she no longer attempts to subdue Oak, even '[beginning] to entertain the genuine friendship of a sister' for him, indicative of the more balanced shape their relationship has taken. With Troy's mortification of Bathsheba and the concomitant diminishing of his 'presence' in her eyes, Oak's 'presence' looms larger, to the extent that she imagines for a moment 'what life with him as a husband would have been like' (p. 240). Bathsheba ultimately regards Oak as an equal, consulting him, for instance, about Boldwood's proposal after Troy's death, hoping that Oak will now offer himself as a lover. He continues, however, to practise self-sufficiency. The reversal of power is complete when Bathsheba comes to Oak's cottage to ask him to stay with her.

At the end of the novel, Hardy appears to be endorsing a kind of gender relationship which is based on '*camaraderie*' (p. 348) and not the subjugation of one side by the other. The fact that they marry makes Devereux read the ending as a patriarchal fantasy⁷¹ yet the husband-subjugator role is replaced by the husband-friend role. Hardy apparently believes that even within the matrimonial structure, a balanced, more satisfying, relationship is possible if friendship takes the place of desire.

In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Hardy engages with issues which are developed in his later works: the determining role of gender and class structures and discourses in the formation of masculinity and their link to human suffering and the possibility of fashioning alternative modes of being a man. The novel depicts the impossibility of defining oneself outside the domain of contemporary structures and discourses; even Oak has to shape himself within their domain. Yet Hardy, at this stage of his writing career, is able to envisage other ways of formulating masculinity than those offered by the prevailing discourses of his time, ways less destructive to men themselves and to others, ways which can lead to less suffering and provide one with more tranquillity. The survival of Oak, Hardy's exemplar of a nobler mode of being a man, allows the novel to embrace a degree of optimism, although the tragic end of Boldwood and Troy heralds the emergence of a pessimism which pervades Hardy's later works.

⁷¹ Devereux, pp. 30, 32.

Chapter 4

Two on a Tower:

‘Presence’ in the Social Domain

Contemporary reviewers did not regard *Two on a Tower* (1882) as an improvement on Hardy’s previous fiction, criticising it for an improbable plot and odd characters.¹ Hardy himself, in his 1895 preface to the novel, describes the story as a ‘slightly-built romance’. For him, the interest the novel possessed, which he felt was unnoticed by contemporary readers, lay in its ‘[setting] the emotional history of two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe’ and its suggesting that ‘of these contrasting magnitude, the smaller might be the greater to them as men’.² Hardy’s contrast invokes the Comtean distinction between universal phenomena (which were unchangeable) and what is related to human society (which was modifiable).³ For Hardy, it is not so much the impersonal universe which causes human suffering: ‘[a] cyclone in the sun’ does not affect the ‘terrene life’.⁴ Rather, it is human society which is mainly responsible for the misery of individuals; this, however, can be modified and improved through human effort, in particular through the development of sympathy.⁵ The novel specifically addresses the issue of gender, the limitations of contemporary social constructions of gender and the problems they cause for men and women.

Two on a Tower investigates the role of social structures and discourses in the formation of masculinity. The kind of masculinity practised by the male characters can be seen to be mainly conditioned by the gender structures which R. W. Connell enumerates: the sexual division of labour, power and emotional attachment.⁶ The gender practice of the male characters is simultaneously constrained by class structures which delineate the kind of masculinity they need to practise. Male characters need to constitute themselves through ‘games of truth’, to use Foucault’s term, the discourses provided by their social class and society, in order to attain the ‘rank’ or subject status of a ‘man’.⁷ Despite their different practices of masculinity, all of these characters

¹ R. G. Cox, ed., *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 97-103.

² Harold Orel, ed., *Thomas Hardy’s Personal Writings: Prefaces, Literary Opinions, Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 16.

³ See Chapter 2, p. 27

⁴ Thomas Hardy, *Two on a Tower*, ed. by Sally Shuttleworth (London: Penguin, 1999 [1882]), p. 8. All subsequent page references are from this edition and are given in parentheses, after quotations in the text.

⁵ See Chapter 2, pp. 27-8.

⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

⁷ See Chapter 1, pp. 12-3, 16-7.

associate masculinity with power; they align themselves with the conventional definition of masculinity emphasised by John Berger, that a man's 'presence' relies on 'the promise of power' which he incorporates. The 'promise of power' should be large for a man to have striking 'presence'.⁸ Andrew Tolson's recognition of the role of class in the formation of masculinity, regarding ambitiousness and achievement as ways of constructing 'presence' for middle-class men, is also relevant to this novel, in which the male characters, permeated by upper-class discourses, define their manhood in terms of social attainment and renown.

For these men, the construction of 'presence' in the public domain is the priority; matrimony is conceived to be an obstacle to the achievement of this aim. Constituting themselves as upper-class (the Bishop and Sir Blount) or aspiring to become so (Swithin), they define their manhood in terms of the pursuit of knowledge. Knowledge is not, of course, sought simply for its own sake; rather, for them, knowledge — whether it is in astronomy, religion or geography — turns into a tool for formulating a large 'presence' in the social realm. In portraying the ways intellectual and social achievement becomes constitutive of masculine identity, *Two on a Tower* anticipates *Jude the Obscure*.

Hardy portrays class structures and discourses as playing key roles in the shaping of Swithin's masculinity. Swithin is introduced to the reader as a man with 'two stations of life in his blood', 'linked, on the maternal side, with a local agricultural family' and on his clergyman father's side with the upper-middle classes (p. 12). He is brought up by his rustic grandmother but has been sent to Grammar School which, as Sally Shuttleworth notes, 'would have [...] set Swithin apart, socially and educationally, from his contemporaries in Welland'.⁹ Hardy here highlights the role of school as a social institution in the formation of Swithin's class subjectivity: 'the "other station of life that was in his blood" [...] had been brought out by the grammar school' (p. 15). The educational institution has exposed him to the discourses linked with the upper classes and thus has helped to reinforce his ties with 'his academic father' (p. 172). Exposed to two different discourses, Swithin has attempted to constitute himself as upper-class by defining his masculinity not in terms of physical labour and toughness (the working-class ideals of masculinity, as Tolson notes)¹⁰ but through intellectual and social achievement and mental power. His 'scientific attainments, and cultural bearing' (p. 12) reveal this point. He has negotiated the models of masculinity available to him and has

⁸ See Chapter 1, pp. 17-8.

⁹ Shuttleworth, notes to her edition of *Two on a Tower*, p. 264.

¹⁰ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

adopted the one which has more strongly suggested itself. Ironically, this also reconciles Lady Constantine to their relationship, making him seem more worthy of her love.

Swithin's pursuit of astronomy is emblematic of his effort to renounce his working-class subjectivity. The tower itself acquires a metaphorical significance in terms of social climbing. Michael Millgate argues that as 'the offspring of a socially incongruous marriage', Swithin 'is suspended between two worlds'; 'the tower offers him at least the illusion of escape' from this dilemma.¹¹ The tower, as the emblem of his social aspirations, can provide him with a sense of dissociation from his working-class origins and association with the upper classes. His attempt to distinguish himself from the working classes is also demonstrated early in the novel by his initial refusal to touch his grandmother's half-eaten pudding or to join the village choir gathered in his grandmother's cottage.

Swithin has succeeded in differentiating himself from his village folk for the conviction that he is not one of them is held not only by Swithin but by the rustics. Mrs. Martin criticises him for not doing 'something that's of use' (p. 15). Amos Fry, likewise, conceives him as 'good for nothing': 'He mopes about – sometime here, and sometimes there; nobody troubles about en' (p. 12). Masculinity being associated with work in the working-class discourses, Swithin fears that he will be labelled as 'visionary' if his interest in celestial bodies is disclosed (p. 15). The way his behaviour is scrutinised by the working-class community can be seen as an example of the way Foucault's disciplinary mechanism of dividing and 'branding' operates on individuals. Swithin is compared with others in his group, evaluated according to the level of his conformity with the norms of working-class discourses, recognised as a transgressor of those norms and therefore not a member of that class. He is unable to abandon his working-class subjectivity entirely, however; he still, on some occasions, perceives himself as rustic, as his self-consciousness about the social gap between himself and Viviette or the Bishop reveals.

Swithin's gender practice is nevertheless mostly governed by the discourse of masculinity offered by the upper classes. He intends to construct his 'presence' in the public domain in terms of knowledge, status and reputation, '[aiming] at nothing less than the dignity and office of Astronomer Royal' (p. 10) and determined 'to be the new Copernicus' (p. 28). This is an aim which he thinks he has attained with his first discovery, which could establish his 'fame [...] for ever' (p. 59). Swithin's ambition reflects his desire to incorporate a strong sense of manhood, suggesting that he does not

¹¹ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (London: The Bodley Head, 1971), p. 190.

find his 'presence' as a working-class boy to be large. His strenuous study can be seen as the discipline he undergoes in order to attain the necessary qualification for occupying a subject position as a famous astronomer and accordingly a man of standing. His hard work, punishment in the form of exercise, is accompanied by a feeling of 'gratification' at winning his desired status, suggestive of Foucault's discussion that disciplinary power works through a system of 'punishment' and 'gratification'.¹² He replies to Viviette's concern about his health, 'cheerfully': 'I have [...] been up a little late this last week [...]. But what does that matter, now I have made the discovery?' (p. 62). Although, at this stage, he is unable to attain the 'rank' of a discoverer, his labour is rewarded by Jocelyn St Cleeve, later in the story. The offer of the legacy can be seen as a proposal from upper-class society to define him as one of them. While his father has been excluded from his class for his deviance from its norms in allying himself with a working-class wife, his son is offered the 'rank' of the upper-class on condition that he renounce women for the sake of intellectual and social accomplishment.

Swithin's misery upon finding out that his 'object-glass' is broken reveals the extent to which achievement has become the main determinant of his masculine subjectivity. For a man who has defined himself in terms of making a name for himself in the field of science, 'to have the means of clinching a theory snatched away at the last moment' matters a lot (p. 37). He perceives himself as the victim of 'adverse fate' — 'It is I against the world' — unaware that his suffering is the effect not of an external power operating on him from above but of discourses which he has internalised. The news that 'another man had forestalled his fame by a period of about six weeks' undercuts his sense of being entirely by shattering his self-conception as a man of renown, making him contemplate 'annihilation' (pp. 62-3). Hardy here examines the problems the association of masculinity with success creates for men, the very issue Tolson would later theorise.¹³

Hardy portrays Swithin as a perturbed character. Ironically, the restlessness Swithin demonstrates when witnessing the thwarting of his social goals is at odds with his claim earlier in the story that the 'study of astronomy' can '[reduce]' anxiety 'by reducing the importance of everything' (p. 31). He studies the grandeur of the universe but, unlike Oak, is unable to grasp his place in the order of the universe. He acts 'the reverse of stoical' as he himself confesses (p. 42). Hardy here demonstrates the difficulty of renouncing the discourses which govern one; for Swithin is unable to resist

¹² See Chapter 1, p. 16.

¹³ See Chapter 1, pp. 9, 20.

the pervasive discourse of successful masculinity. He only recovers a sense of self when he can once more visualise defining himself in terms of achievement: the promising news of the coming of a comet '[lends] him a new vitality', a 'strenuous wish to live and behold the new phenomenon' (p. 67). He has a second chance to make his name.

Subjected, ostensibly, to upper middle-class discourses which define masculinity in terms of achievement and which regard career and feminine association to be irreconcilable — the kind of discourse reflected in Jocelyn St Cleve's letter (p. 114) — Swithin has never considered defining himself through an intimate relationship. The structure of emotional attachment (which demarcates the practice of gender, as Connell suggests),¹⁴ in other words, has not yet conditioned his practice of masculinity. Women have no place in the life of this 'guileless philosopher':

His parted lips were lips which spoke, not of love, but of millions of miles; those were the eyes which habitually gazed, not into the depths of other eyes, but into other worlds. Within his temple dwelt thoughts, not of women's looks, but of stellar aspects and the configuration of constellations. (p. 39)

His 'impatient wave of the hand' upon hearing female footsteps in the midst of his astronomical observation, when Viviette first intrudes his scientific seclusion (p.7), echoes, as Jane Thomas argues,

the cruder misogyny of [...] Sir Blount Constantine, and Swithin's uncle Jocelyn St Cleve, which seeks to contain women within the 'inferior' realm of sexuality, the senses, emotion and imagination, and to ward off the perceived threat that realm represents to the 'superior' masculine world of reason and the Sciences.¹⁵

Though not yet exposed to the misogynistic words of his uncle, Swithin appears already to have internalised this particular masculine discourse.

For Swithin, at this stage, masculinity is conflated with intellect and achievement and not with sexuality: 'His heaven at present was truly in the skies and not in that only other place where they say it can be found, in the eyes of some daughter of Eve' (p. 40). Not yet subjected to the discourse of sexuality, he is unconscious of

¹⁴ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁵ Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent: Reassessing the 'Minor' Novels* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 115-6.

‘their differences of sex’ (p. 56); he does not see Viviette as a member of the opposite sex or a sexual object but as a friend. He is, on most occasions, quite oblivious of her and her feelings for him. When she comes to speak to him about her troubles, ‘abstracted by his grand theme’ he does not ‘heed’ what she says (p. 27). When she asks him to go to London to make enquiries about her husband, he declines to do so: ‘It might ruin the whole of my year’s labour if I leave now!’ (p. 33). He agrees to go only on condition that Viviette assume responsibility for observing the stars and upon his return his first question is about the stars (pp. 35-6).

The villagers’ words about his relationship with Viviette remind Swithin, however, of other ways of constructing masculinity, rendering Viviette as a sexual object (pp. 79-80). He is no longer able to define Viviette as a friend and ‘fellow-watcher’; she is now ‘a handsome woman’ (p. 84). He constitutes himself therefore through the structure of emotional attachment, attempting to assert himself through a romantic relationship. He acknowledges that to have ‘presence’ in the public sphere is not all that he wants: ‘In thinking of the heaven above, I did not perceive [...] the better heaven beneath’ (p. 81). Though ‘intellectually able, Swithin is ‘sexually retarded’, as Richard H. Taylor notes: ‘he needs to be cured of’ his excessive infatuation with science and the task of ‘his sexual awakening is achieved through Viviette.’¹⁶ The discourse of success, which up to this point has governed him, loses its control over him when the opposing, more powerful, discourse of sexuality begins to pervade him: ‘The alchemy’ has ‘transmuted an abstracted astronomer into an eager lover’ (p. 85). The text defines Swithin a ‘man’ only once he constitutes himself in terms of desire: in Viviette’s eyes ‘he had become a man’ with a ‘maturer light in his eyes’ (p. 86).

The power of the upper-class rhetoric of success, however, still operates on him; he has no intention of sacrificing his public ambitions for ‘presence’ in the private domain; rather, he is concerned about the displacement of his grand ‘intentions’ by ‘this affection’ (p. 93). Unable to defy either discourse, he thinks of accepting a role as a husband as a way through which he can assert himself both in the domestic and social domains (p. 95). He surmises that by becoming a husband he can constitute himself as the proprietor of a worthy love object while maintaining his position as a would-be famous astronomer, unaware that in so doing he is undermining the discourse of success which stresses the incompatibility of matrimony and achievement. He proves not to be

¹⁶ Richard H. Taylor, *The Neglected Hardy: Thomas Hardy’s Lesser Novels* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 141-2.

as strong and as self-sufficient as he thought, no longer a man to whom ‘a beloved science is enough wife’ (p. 56) but a man in need of emotional ties.

At this stage, under the imperative to define himself as a husband, he rejects Jocelyn St Cleeve’s tempting bequest and defies this particular upper-class discourse which demands that he should not marry (certainly not a woman older than himself) and recommends that he should ‘avoid’ women in general until his fame is established. If he is able to resist the dominance of these discourses, it is, of course, partly because ‘the caution and bribe’ — the threat of punishment and the promise of reward, to use Foucault’s terms — ‘came too late, too unexpectedly, to be of influence’. Had he received the letter sooner, he might have been affected by it as ‘a young man whose love of celestial physics’, his social ambitions, ‘was second to none’ (p. 115). The postponement of his return to Viviette, later in the story, suggests that he is regulated by such discourses. At this stage, however, as a man desirous to construct his ‘presence’ as a sexual proprietor, ‘he was satisfied to his heart’s content with his prize’ upon seeing Viviette in the station: ‘If his great-uncle had offered him, from the grave, a kingdom instead of her, he would not have accepted it’ (pp. 113-6). He is empowered to find himself the possessor of the woman he desires.

Without economic power and by virtue of his age and his social class, however, Swithin is devoid of the sense of power and the large ‘presence’ a husband conventionally enjoys. But although his powerlessness as a husband depresses him, it does not undermine his sense of manhood for he has other subject positions to rely on. He is displeased with the unwanted separation from Viviette, owing to her reluctance to introduce him as her husband, yet is not desperate. After the confirmation ceremony, he is ‘depressed’ when he finds himself deprived of the pleasure of accompanying his wife but his ‘gloomy thoughts’ are soon dispelled when ‘he remembered with interest that Venus was in a favourable aspect for observation that afternoon’ (p. 147). The sense of self supplied by his subject status as a scientist comes quickly to his rescue.

Swithin never has much sense of his status as a husband. He is able quickly to renounce the role, fortified by the hope of constructing his ‘presence’ in the social domain through the pursuit of knowledge. He succumbs quickly to Viviette’s insistence on his acceptance of the bequest. The upper-class discourse of achievement once more takes hold of him; with his departure to the Cape and his practical entrance into the masculine world of success, he forfeits his status as a lover. His ‘absorbed attention’ to the new world is accompanied by

a corresponding forgetfulness of what lay to the north behind his back, whether human or celestial. [...] Viviette, who till then had stood high in his heaven, if she had not dominated it, sank lower and lower with his retreat like the North Star. (p. 244)

Not keen to define himself as a husband or father, he is not subdued by the news of Viviette's strategic marriage to the Bishop: 'the big tidings rather dazed than crushed him' (p. 247). His indifference towards his emotional ties reveals the extent to which he is permeated by the discourse of success. Though pondering briefly the sad chapter of life with Viviette, he 'could not long afford to give to the past the days that were meant for the future' (p. 248). He remains similarly indifferent to the news of the Bishop's death, '[living] on as before' (p. 252). He returns to England only when he feels he has taken the preliminary steps in the process of establishing himself in the social sphere:

His work at the Cape was done. His uncle's wishes [...] had been more than observed. The materials for his great treatise were collected, and it now only remained for him to arrange, digest, and publish them, for which purpose a return to England was indispensable. (p. 252)

In his prioritisation of career over love, he acts as demanded by his uncle's upper-class discourse.

Even after success has been achieved, Swithin is still reluctant to construct his 'presence' in the private domain as a husband and father. Having returned to Welland, he is not eager to see Viviette and remains apathetic when seeing his child. He postpones his visit to her and, accidentally encountering her on the tower and beholding her 'worn and faded aspect' (p. 259), he abandons his subject position as her lover for good. Being constituted by patriarchal discourses which define a woman as a sexual object rather than a companion or friend, he is unable to develop any other feeling towards Viviette. Hardy criticises him for his failure to see beyond the appearance to the 'more promising material beneath', his inability to resist the discourse of sexuality and define himself in terms of sympathy (p. 259). He is given a moment of recognition, a glimpse of the possibility of formulating his masculinity through 'loving-kindness', which causes him to return to Viviette, but her sudden death deprives him of the chance of such drastic self-redefinition. The image of Tabitha Lark 'skirting the field with a bounding tread' (p. 262) suggests the possibility that Swithin might ultimately define himself through matrimony and sexuality but Hardy himself was inclined to see him

resume defining himself in terms of loving-kindness in relation to Viviette. In his response to Florence Henniker's enquiry about the ending of the novel, Hardy speculated that after Viviette's death, Swithin might grow 'passionately attached to her again, as people often do'.¹⁷ But that, of course, is not suggested by the novel itself.

In taking a job which is masculine by definition, Swithin is operating within the structure of the sexual division of labour (one of Connell's delineators of gender practice). But he deviates from this structure in not assuming a role as a breadwinner. His practice of masculinity is not mainly circumscribed by the structure of power either (another structure which, according to Connell, delimits the practice of gender)¹⁸ for he does not define himself in terms of authority. In relation to his family, of course, Swithin can be seen to function within this structure. The power of gender, combined with the power of knowledge and class, allow him to constitute himself as the superior figure in relation to his grandmother, who is uneducated, female and working-class. He contradicts her and makes his own decisions, whatever she may say. The kind of masculinity he practises is a response to the demands of the situation in which he is located and the gender practice he encounters, in line with David H. J. Morgan's discussion of masculinity.¹⁹ With upper-class characters, he shapes his masculinity differently.

The way Swithin formulates himself in relation to Viviette demonstrates that he does not mainly constitute himself through the structure of power; he is not a decision-maker and nor is he the dominant figure in their relationship. Lacking the power of class, age and social and economic status, the very things which usually situate a man in the position of dominance over his female counterpart, Swithin accepts a subordinate role first as an acquaintance, then as lover and finally as husband. Whenever science is the issue, however, he constitutes himself as the superior figure, feeling 'contempt for the state of [...] Viviette's knowledge' (p. 10). At these moments, empowered by his knowledge and his self-conception as a would-be prominent scientist, he becomes oblivious of differences of class and age, perceiving himself as a man of large 'presence'. With Swithin taking the position of power, she has to accept a subordinate position, begging 'to be enlightened' by his knowledge (p. 11). In social situations, however (for instance when he visits Welland house for the first time and is overawed by the grandeur of the place and thus reminded of his working-class subjectivity), he

¹⁷ Thomas Hardy, *Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), VI (1987), 45.

¹⁸ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 12.

distances himself from his subject position as an astronomer. His awareness of the social distance between them, intensified by the atmosphere of the place, makes him forget the elevated image of himself and fall into ‘a speechlessness that socially was a defect in him’ (p. 47). On the tower, the domain of science, he is an upper-class scientist, but in the manor house he is a subordinate, working-class youth. Only when astronomy becomes the subject of their discussion can he regain his position of supremacy.

As a lover and a husband, however, Swithin remains mainly passive, allowing Viviette to determine what sort of action should be taken. When proposing to her, he assents to her ‘conditions’, not to intrude in her house and not to announce their marriage without her consent; having ‘no personal force to speak of in a social point of view’, ‘he was as docile as a child in her hands wherever matters of this kind were concerned’ (p. 140). He is unable to contradict her wish that he should be confirmed or prevent her from reading his uncle’s letter; he then succumbs to her demand about accepting the bequest. There is only one occasion on which Swithin undertakes to overpower Viviette on a personal matter and this is when he intends to persuade her into marrying him. Only when he thinks of himself as a husband does he play the conventional masculine role, taking the initiative and attempting to impress her. He tries to govern her conduct and define himself as her husband by threatening to desert her if she refuses to marry him.

Swithin’s practice of masculinity, however, is far from being forceful. Negotiating the versions of masculinity available to him, he has distanced himself from aggressive models of masculinity and adopted a gentle version; this resonates with Connell’s argument that the construction of gender is not a matter of passive internalisation but negotiation of the gender patterns.²⁰ Though lacking the emotional depth and sensitiveness of Jude, he anticipates Hardy’s later male protagonist in his docility towards his female counterpart, his expression of need and in the way he defines himself in terms of mental rather than physical power. For Swithin, as for Jude, masculinity is not understood in sharp contrast with femininity; he expresses need and acts submissively yet still feels himself a man.

Neither is Swithin’s practice of masculinity associated with the exercise of power in relation to the Bishop. In the hierarchical relationship between the two men, the Bishop, as Swithin’s senior and the holder of a high social position, dominates the relationship. Overawed by the Bishop’s striking ‘presence’, Swithin is unable to practise

²⁰ See Chapter 1, p. 10.

masculinity in an assertive manner. The situation in which he finds himself, in other words, requires that he adopts a gentle version of masculinity.

Initially, Swithin interests the Bishop not only as a ‘handsome young man’ but also as ‘a man of talent’ (p. 149). The young man’s ‘presence’ wanes in the eyes of the Bishop, however, upon the revelation of the presence of a woman behind the curtain of his cabin. With the undermining of Swithin’s honour, his subject position as a gifted astronomer is replaced by that of an immoral man, allowing the Bishop to overpower him. Swithin is rendered visible to the power of the gaze, in this case, that of the Bishop, representative of the Church and the Victorian society: ‘he gazed upon Swithin from the repose of his stable figure’, reprimanding him for ‘infringing the first principles of social decorum’ (pp. 162-3). Swithin’s age and his working-class origin make him particularly susceptible to the disciplinary power of normalising judgement as the Bishop tells him, ‘I have sent for you here to see if [...] a direct appeal to your sense of manly uprightness will have any effect in inducing you to change your course of life’ (p. 163). Judged against the norms of social decorum, Swithin is recognised as a transgressor, not eligible to retain his subject position as an honourable man. The Bishop punishes him by depriving him of this ‘rank’, assigning him the lower position of a depraved man — anticipating Foucault’s argument that ‘rank’ can be employed as a disciplinary tool. Rank, in a disciplinary system, is the means of both ‘reward’ and ‘punishment’ because it offers individuals only a temporary status; the rank awarded to an individual for his/her qualifications will be taken from him/her once s/he proves unqualified.²¹

The Bishop clearly succeeds in subduing Swithin: ‘The voice of Swithin in his next remark showed how tremendously this attack of the Bishop had told upon his feelings’ (p. 163). By questioning his respectability, the Bishop challenges the young man’s elevated conception of himself, ‘his air-built image of himself as a worthy astronomer, received by the world and the envied husband of Viviette’ (p. 174). Recognising the Bishop as the representative of an institution of power which has the authority to define him, Swithin finds it hard to resist his judgement: ‘for a man in the Bishop’s position’ to regard ‘him immoral was almost as overwhelming as if he had actually been so’ (p. 174). Accordingly, he is relieved at the end of the story to hear from Mr Torkingham that ‘the Bishop was not a perfect man’ (p. 253); with the undermining of Bishop’s status as a spiritual figure, his judgement of Swithin loses its validity, allowing the young man to redefine himself as an honourable man.

²¹ See Chapter 1, pp. 16-7.

In spite of his class superiority to Swithin, the Bishop resembles him in defining his masculinity in terms of achievement and the avoidance of women. That the Bishop remains a bachelor at the age of ‘five and forty’, for example, suggests that he is governed by these principles: he has conceived of ‘a wife’ as ‘an impediment to a bishop’s due activities’ (pp. 188-9). For him, the pursuit of religious knowledge is a means of attaining social eminence, as his ‘arrogance’ (p. 253) or, in Taylor’s words, his ‘immoderate obsession with his worldly dignity’,²² demonstrates. The discipline he has undergone, his years of learning and leading a life of solitude, can be seen to be rewarded by the distinguished social status and sense of manhood he has acquired.

Viviette reminds the Bishop of other ways of formulating his masculinity, however. He recognises that to have ‘presence’ in the public domain is not sufficient, betraying his loneliness and his need for an emotional relationship, as revealed in his letter of proposal which looks forward to ‘a discontinuance’ in his ‘domestic life of the solitude of past years’ (p. 188). Once he decides to constitute himself through matrimony, he practises masculinity according to the structure of emotional attachment, which requires his pursuing the object of desire, and brings with it the sexual allocation of tasks and the relation of power — the kinds of structures which can be found in almost all social institutions, including the family, as Connell states.²³ The Bishop should thus be the dominant figure both in the domestic realm, where Viviette should accept the subordinate role of providing emotional support, and in the public sphere, where she should strengthen his social position:

Your steady adherence to church principles and your interest in ecclesiastical polity [...] have indicated strongly to me the grace and appropriateness with which you would fill the position of a bishop’s wife, and how greatly you would add to his reputation, should you be disposed to honour him with your hand. (pp. 188-9)

Like her first husband, Sir Blount, and her brother Louis, in other words, the Bishop objectifies Viviette, evaluating her in term of her contribution to the construction of his masculinity. As Edward Neill points out, the Bishop is not different from these men in

²² Richard H. Taylor, p. 133.

²³ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

this respect; all three ‘in fact bring an unholy trinity of patriarchal impingements on Viviette herself’.²⁴

Although the Bishop’s proposal attempts to conceal his emotional needs by highlighting the importance of his career, he desperately needs to define himself as the possessor of a woman, the object of desire. Once in love, he proves not to be a strong, self-sufficient man and certainly not a spiritual figure but ‘an earthly sort of man’ (p. 192). His writing to Viviette twice, allowing himself to be deceived by Louis and then going to her in person all indicate the urgency of his need to constitute himself as a proprietor. His ‘presence’ becomes vulnerable since she can undermine his sense of manhood by refusing to be his. His mind’s ‘sensitive fear of danger for its own dignity’ echoes the fragility of his masculine subjectivity. As he tells Louis, he only proposed to her because he was assured that he would be accepted: ‘it is a great grief and some mortification to me, that I was refused’ (p. 238).

Ironically, at the end, while priding himself on his ability to win the object of desire, the Bishop is in fact participating in his own emasculation, by allowing himself to be deceived by both Viviette and Louis. It is clearly absurd that he attributes Viviette’s acceptance of his second proposal not to her desperate condition but to the effect of his masculine power of persuasion and ‘logical reasoning’ (p. 243). Louis comments that ‘the Bishop was as abjectly in love as only pompous people can be’ (p. 241), while Mr Torkingham sees the Bishop’s ‘marriage’ as ‘the result of red-hot caprice’ and ‘hardly becoming to a man in his position’ (p. 254). These discourses thus deprive him of his subject position as a spiritual man and define him as a foolish, worldly man. The power of sexuality, which now governs him, has obliged him to distance himself from his spiritual subjectivity.

More than any other character in *Two on a Tower*, Sir Blount demonstrates a practice of masculinity circumscribed by gender structures such as the division of labour, power and emotional attachment. Whereas the ‘gender regime’ (the term Connell uses to refer to the gender arrangement of any social institution)²⁵ of Swithin’s/Viviette’s relationship departs from the ‘gender order’ of society in that Swithin accepts a role of a husband without being a breadwinner and a decision-maker, the ‘gender regime’ of the Constantine family copies the more usual gender pattern of society. Sir Blount has constructed his ‘presence’ in the public domain as a lord and in the private domain as a husband, the provider and the dominant figure in the marriage.

²⁴ Edward Neill, *The Secret Life of Thomas Hardy: ‘Retaliatory Fiction’* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), p. 67.

²⁵ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

Sir Blount is a domineering and abusive husband, as Viviette's reveals to Mr. Torkingham (pp. 22-3) and as her horror even on beholding his garments (as worn by Swithin) confirms. His forceful practice of masculinity in relation to Viviette unveils the extent to which he has associated his manhood with the exercise of power. Authority, as Tolson observes, is a way of constructing masculine 'presence'.²⁶ Having constituted himself through the structure of power, which demands a husband to dominate his wife, Sir Blount dictates the way Viviette, as his wife, should act: she should 'not so behave towards other men as to bring the name of Constantine into suspicion' and should 'avoid any levity of conduct in attending any ball, rout or dinner' (p. 23). Permeated by Victorian discourses of masculinity, he defines a wife as the property of her husband; in the nineteenth century, as Merryn Williams explains, 'the power of a husband over his wife' was supported by 'public opinion, religion and the law'.²⁷

Even this support, however, has failed to provide Sir Blount with a strong sense of manhood, as his abandonment of his role as a husband would imply. His 'mania for African lion-hunting, which he dignified by calling it a scheme of geographical discovery', and his zeal 'to make a name for himself in that field' (p. 23) indicate his dissatisfaction with the kind of man he is and his desire to shape his masculinity in alternative ways. Although an aristocrat and a man of eminence in the social domain, he does not conceive his 'presence' to be large. He is a lord but without the power of the old lords; in Taylor's words, Sir Blount is a 'decadent representative' of the aristocracy.²⁸ It can be argued that Sir Blount, in the decline of the aristocracy, beholds the waning of his own masculine power; his great-grandfather is described as 'a respectable officer who had fallen in the American war', a man in whose memory a column had been erected; Sir Blount, however, lacks the large 'presence' of his great-grandfather (p. 4). Devoid of the power and the status of his forefathers and unable to assert his manhood the way they asserted theirs, on the battlefield and through heroism and valour, he envisages fabricating a situation through which he can rival his ancestors. If he is unable to construct his masculinity through military practice, he assumes he can do so through hunting lions; and if he is unable to establish his fame as a warrior, he dreams of making a name for himself as a discoverer. The kinds of vocations he adopts are all overtly masculine ones, suggestive of the extent to which he formulates himself through the sexual allocation of tasks.

²⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

²⁷ Merryn Williams, 'Hardy and "the Woman Question"', in *The Thomas Hardy Annual*, vol. I, ed. by Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 44-59 (p. 58).

²⁸ Richard H. Taylor, p. 138.

These attempts to bolster his masculinity are nevertheless unable to grant him the strong sense of manhood he desires: he is still not a contented, cheerful man. Although the reader is not provided with much information about his life as a hunter and adventurer, what is evident is that he establishes his name not as a renowned figure in the field of geography but as an 'eccentric wanderer'. Having failed to acquire a sense of power from his upper-class subjectivity, he forsakes it, '[dropping] his old name altogether' in order to constitute himself as the husband of a 'native princess', hoping that this formulation of masculinity can empower him (p. 195). But this masculine role is again unsatisfactory. Despite his claim that 'he was living very happily' with the princess and that he was now 'in a land which afforded him greater happiness than he could hope to attain elsewhere', his distressed mood speaks of his discontentment (pp. 195-6). His resort to drinking and his depression 'at his position' reveal his failure to achieve a sense of manhood. His suicide is a final demonstration of his inability to become the kind of man he desires to be (p. 196).

Like Sir Blount's, Louis's practice of masculinity is strictly delimited by patriarchal gender structures. That he has constituted himself through the sexual allocation of tasks is evident in his choice of a masculine career; his profession also suggests that he is operating within class structures. For Louis, as it is for the other male characters, the formation of 'presence' through social and economic achievement is of importance; he attempts, however, to achieve this goal effortlessly. Though 'in the diplomatic service' and having had a position as an 'attaché at Rio Janeiro', 'he has resigned the appointment' (p. 121), conceiving it to be a 'harness', with the intention of finding 'another vent for his energies' (p. 104). He aims to construct his masculinity in the social domain through his sister's 'alliance' with 'one of the local celebrities'. By marrying 'a genial squire, with more weight than wit, more realty than weight, and more personality than realty (considering the circumstances)', he writes, she can 'make a position' for herself and, more importantly, for him (p. 105). Viviette becomes the means through which he can consolidate his social and economic position.

Defining himself also through the structure of power, Louis attempts to take the dominant position in relation to his sister, intimidating her and deciding everything for her. His power over her is evident from her fear of facing him with a mark on her face, preferring to remain 'a captive in the cabin', until the mark disappears (p. 122). Of course, he is unable to govern her conduct to the point of preventing her marriage to Swithin; by marrying Swithin, she resists the dominance of both his brother and the discourses which aim to define her as a commodity. Unaware of her marital status,

however, Louis endeavours to engineer a marriage between Viviette and the Bishop. He ultimately manages to define himself in the way he desires by resorting to complex strategies to win ‘the campaign’ (itself a very masculine, military metaphor), inviting Bishop Helmsdale to Welland House, demanding Viviette to ‘agree, like a good sister, to charm the Bishop’ and scheming to eliminate Swithin (pp. 170-3). Trapped in class and patriarchal discourses, Louis never considers constituting himself as a supporter and a friend to his sister.

With *Two on a Tower*, Hardy places great emphasis on the restricting power of social structures and discourses. None of the male characters in this story is capable of standing outside the contemporary structures of gender and class. Permeated by discourses of success and sexuality and overcome by self-love, these characters are unable to envisage defining themselves through fellow-feeling. In this respect, the pessimism which has passed fleetingly over *Far from the Madding Crowd* gains in strength.

It is only Viviette who is able to constitute herself according to the Comtean ideal of ‘altruism’, to substitute ‘self-love’ with ‘benevolence’ (p. 227).²⁹ T. R. Wright and Jane Thomas have discussed Viviette in relation to this Positivist ideal.³⁰ In defying her sexual desires and ‘her love of her own decorum’, liberating Swithin to pursue the path of success, Viviette defines herself in terms of ‘altruism’. By ‘rising above self-love’ (p. 215), she ‘posits a new role for herself in which sexuality no longer plays a major determining role’,³¹ a nobler mode of being a woman for Hardy:

Love between man and woman, which in Homer, Moses, and other early exhibitors of life, is mere desire, had for centuries past so far broadened as to include sympathy and friendship; surely it should in this advanced stage of the world include benevolence also. If so, it was her duty to set her young man free.
(p. 215)

The passage invokes Hardy’s concept of evolutionary meliorism in its associating the improvement of the relationship between men and women with the development of benevolence.

Viviette is unable to remain the exemplar of ‘altruism’, however, because of the urgency (necessitated by her pregnancy) to define herself as a respectable woman (p.

²⁹ See Chapter 2, p. 27.

³⁰ T. R. Wright, *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 212; Thomas, *Femininity*, pp. 126-8.

³¹ Thomas, *Femininity*, p. 126.

227). Her project of constituting herself in terms of altruism is thwarted by the society which, according to John Stuart Mill, obliges individuals to formulate themselves according to the limited models it offers.³² Viviette's defeat and the male characters' inability to escape the dominant discourses of their time lend the story a sombre tone. Yet, in its visualising, at least, the possibility of alternative ways of being a woman and a man, suggested by both Viviette's self-renunciation and Swithin's final gesture of benevolence, the novel offers a faint glimmer of hope for the amelioration of gender relations.

³² See Chapter 2, p. 28.

Chapter 5

The Mayor of Casterbridge: The Pervasive Power of Discourse

The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), more than any other novel by Hardy, focuses on the issue of masculinity. It explores the ways in which masculinity is constructed through social structures and discourses, how an individual subjects himself to the disciplinary power of discourse in an attempt to acquire a 'rank' (subject position) as a 'man'.¹ In this novel, Hardy underlines his protagonist's 'character' as the shaping element of his life. The subtitle of the novel is *The Life and Death of a Man of Character* and in his preface to the 1895 edition of the novel, Hardy describes the story as 'a study of one man's deeds and character'.² The narrator associates Henchard's fate with his character: 'Character is Fate, said Novalis'.³ Elaborating this point, Michael Millgate explains that the tragic fate of Hardy's hero 'derives directly from his own actions, or that these proceed in turn from his whole personality'.⁴ Hardy's emphasis on 'character' as the determinant of one's deeds and accordingly one's destiny suggests that, for him, the power which governs one's thought and actions, and therefore one's destiny, is not external to the individual but inherent; power is not 'negatively applied' on the individual from outside but is pervasive.⁵ This is a conception of power which may derive, in part, from Schopenhauer, for whom the governing power of the universe is immanent in phenomena, including humans. The Immanent Will, operating as 'character' and 'motive', governs one's actions; a decision one makes, although apparently freely taken, is recommended by one's character, that is, by the power which permeates the individual.⁶ But Hardy's novels also demonstrate the power of discourse, the ways contemporary discourses of gender and class govern Henchard, determining his subjectivity and destiny.

The emphasis on the constraining power of social structures and discourses, which have already emerged in Hardy's previous works, appears more forcefully in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Henchard, Hardy's most powerful man, appears to be

¹ See Chapter 1, pp. 12-3, 16-7.

² Harold Orel, ed., *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings: Prefaces, Literary Opinions, Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 18.

³ Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, ed. by Keith Wilson (London: Penguin, 1997 [1886]), p. 112. All subsequent page numbers are from this edition and are given in parentheses, after quotations in the text.

⁴ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (London: The Bodley Head, 1971), p. 227.

⁵ See Chapter 1, pp. 8, 14.

⁶ See Chapter 2, p. 31.

inextricably entangled in gender and class structures and discourses. Henchard can be seen to be constrained specifically by discourses of masculinity which associate's a man's 'presence' with the 'promise of power' which he incorporates, a definition of masculinity which John Berger underlines.⁷ Henchard is obsessively preoccupied with the construction of his 'presence' in the public domain by means of success. This construction of masculinity is severely attacked in the novel.

The first few pages reveal that Henchard's practice of masculinity is conditioned by the structures of gender relations which R. W. Connell describes. The opening scene explicitly portrays a gender practice delimited by the sexual division of labour, one of Connell's delineators of gender practice,⁸ where the masculine (public) and feminine (domestic) spheres are sharply demarcated. Henchard carries his bag of tools (the instruments of masculine work), and Susan holds the baby. As a 'man', Henchard is clearly expected to define himself in terms of work rather than domesticity.

In choosing a wife and defining himself through matrimony, Henchard can be seen to have constituted himself through the structure of emotional attachment (another gender structure discussed by Connell),⁹ which demands that a man pursues and wins a member of the opposite sex. His marriage to Susan suggests an initial 'favourable' emotional attachment to her; at the stage we know him, however, the emotional relation is a 'hostile' one. Connell argues that the emotional attachment to people can be 'favourable', 'hostile' or 'ambivalent' (that is, simultaneously hostile and favourable).¹⁰ Henchard's attachment to Susan (and other characters, as will be discussed) can be seen to be more of the ambivalent kind. His hostility towards his wife, suggested by his offering her for sale and his oppressive attitude towards her, reveals that his practice of masculinity is delimited by misogyny, which Connell defines as an emotional relationship in which 'hostility [...] is directed at a whole gender category'.¹¹ These notions are not exclusive to Connell, of course, but are part of the whole structure of emotional relations which he outlines.

The wife-sale scene strongly indicates also that Henchard has formulated himself through the structure of power (the other gender structure Connell underlines),¹² constituting himself as the superior figure in relation to his wife, whom he construes as

⁷ See Chapter 1, pp. 17-8.

⁸ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁰ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹¹ R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 113.

¹² See Chapter 1, p. 11.

subordinate. It is Henchard who leads the relationship; he has authority over his wife even to the extent of selling her. But although he occupies a position of power in relation to his wife, Henchard feels his 'promise of power' to be small and that accordingly he has 'little presence' as a 'man'. As Berger observes, it is only when a man's 'promise of power' is large that he has striking 'presence'.¹³ Matrimony does not seem to accord with Henchard's desires; he does not enjoy a strong sense of manhood from his role as possessor. As a breadwinner also he does not have a sense of large 'presence' owing to unemployment and poverty. He abandons, therefore, his role as a husband and a father in order to construct his 'presence' in the public domain by means of work and achievement of success: 'She shall take the girl [...] and go her ways. I'll take my tools, and go my ways' (p. 11). The distinction he makes here between his child and his 'tools' reveals once more that his practice of masculinity is conditioned by the sexual division of labour. For him, it is through the renunciation of the private that he can assert himself in the social realm: once 'a free man', he can become 'worth a thousand pound' (p. 9). Work and success, for Henchard, become the main determinants of his masculine identity, anticipating Andrew Tolson's contentions.¹⁴ Implicit in this renunciation, of course, is his scorn for his female dependents. Since they thwart his chance of constructing his 'presence' in the social domain, he intends to get rid of them as one gets rid of one's horses.

Henchard abandons matrimony in order to construct his masculinity in terms of success, a bourgeois ideal of masculinity, according to Tolson.¹⁵ If an early marriage has led to 'the extinction of his energies' (p. 9), he hopes that 'a chaste life will rekindle them', as Elaine Showalter observes.¹⁶ His putting up his family for auction and his oath 'to avoid all strong liquors for the space of twenty years to come' (p. 18), a self-disciplinary act, suggest his inclination to employ 'male energy' for 'productive' work. As Herbert Sussman argues, '[t]he definition of manhood as self-discipline, as the ability to control male energy and to deploy this power not for sexual but for productive purposes was clearly specific to bourgeois man.'¹⁷ In Foucauldian terms, Henchard becomes an example of a normalised, disciplined individual. The discourse of success holds him in its grip, making him exercise power on himself, scrutinising his practice of

¹³ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

¹⁴ See Chapter 1, pp. 9, 20.

¹⁵ See Chapter 1, pp. 18, 20.

¹⁶ Elaine Showalter, 'The Unmanning of the Mayor of Casterbridge', in *Critical Approaches to the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Dale Kramer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 99-115 (p. 105).

¹⁷ Herbert Sussman, *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 11.

masculinity for its aptness to the norms of such discourses. Hardy explores the limitations of such practices of masculinity, the dangers of defining oneself exclusively in terms of achievement, at the expense of human ties, affection and emotion. By selling his wife, Henchard not only dissociates himself from the female community but also ‘divorces his own “feminine” self’, as Showalter terms it, ‘his own need for passion’ and ‘tenderness’.¹⁸

Social class structures have already determined the kind of masculinity Henchard needs to practise in the social domain; he should earn a living through manual work. Such a construction of masculinity, however, does not provide him with much sense of power. He finds his ‘promise of power’, as a working-class man, to be small. In Juliet M. Grindle’s words, ‘he is in many ordinary respects a powerful man, full of unused and unapplied energy, who, however, experiences himself as absolutely powerless’.¹⁹ Henchard is strictly governed by the conventional discourses of masculinity which associate a man’s ‘presence’ with the power he incorporates. His problem lies in his perception that he has little ‘presence’ as a labourer and is therefore not ‘man’ enough. His desire to become somebody in the public domain can be read as a desire for incorporating a strong sense of power and manhood. Subjected to the alternative discourses of masculinity which emerged with the advent of the bourgeoisie, he intends to define himself through economic power and social status, assuming that such a configuration of masculinity can provide him with a large ‘presence’.

His discontentment with his social class is evident from the very moment he steps on the scene, a ‘stern’ man whose manner of walking speaks of ‘a dogged and cynical indifference’ (p. 3). J. C. Maxwell describes Henchard as a ‘very exceptional member of his community’²⁰ and this, apparently, is the way Henchard also perceives himself. As a skilful and educated man — as his reading from a ‘ballad-sheet’ demonstrates (p. 3) — he does not define himself as belonging to the rustic community. His superior manner of speaking to ‘the turnip-hoer’, whom he meets on the road (p. 5) and his keeping distance from the working classes in the course of the story indicate his inclination to differentiate himself from them. The aloofness he demonstrates in relation to Susan at the beginning of the story is partly because of her rustic origins. Governed by the disciplinary power of bourgeois discourses, Henchard has worked hard to acquire the qualifications, economic and social status and achieve the ‘rank’ of a middle-class

¹⁸ Showalter, p. 103.

¹⁹ Juliet M. Grindle, ‘Compulsion and Choice in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*’, in *The Novels of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Anne Smith (London: Vision, 1979), pp. 91-106 (p. 91).

²⁰ J. C. Maxwell, ‘The “Sociological” Approach to *The Mayor of Casterbridge*’, in *Hardy: The Tragic Novels*, ed. by R. P. Draper (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 148-157 (p.151).

man. The next time we see him, he has become a 'successful merchant' (p. 35), the 'Mayor of the town', a 'church warden' (p. 72), a 'magistrate' (p. 197), a member of the council and 'quite a principal man in the country' (p. 35), chiming in with Foucault's argument that 'punishment' (here self-discipline) is always accompanied by 'gratification' (here winning the class subjectivity one desires).²¹

Henchard, however, finds it difficult to maintain his middle-class status, perpetually afraid that his working-class origins will be revealed. He conceives anything that can relate him to his rustic background as a threat to his 'rank' as a gentleman. He postpones his marriage to Susan in order to make her appear 'genteel' (p. 73). He chides Elizabeth-Jane for her 'occasional' 'use of dialect', mixing with the maids and the working folk or her inability to write 'ladies'-hand' (pp. 127-9). His doggedness in wearing 'the remains of an old blue cloth suit of his gentlemanly time', even when he is a 'journeyman', further echoes his insistence on differentiating himself from the working classes (p. 226).

Despite his effort to distinguish himself from his social class, Henchard still constitutes himself through working-class discourses. As Margaret Wetherell and Nigel Edley argue, the way men position themselves in relation to the norms of masculinity can be paradoxical; they may claim not be a specific kind of man but are so in practice.²² Although sharing the assertiveness and ambition of middle-class men, Henchard defines his masculinity in terms of toughness and aggression, which, as Tolson notes, are working-class ways of constructing masculine 'presence'.²³ This undermines his whole attempt to construct a middle-class subjectivity. His aggressiveness (demonstrated, for instance, by his humiliation of Abel Whittle) is responsible for the loss of his popularity among the townspeople and the waning of his 'presence' in the public domain. Casterbridge people prefer Farfrae to be 'the master instead of Henchard,' believing the former to be 'better tempered' and a more 'understanding man' (pp. 98-9). His inability to control his temper in the council room also adversely affects his social position: having achieved his social status 'under the reign of self-control', he deprives himself of his office by demonstrating the 'unruly volcanic stuff beneath the rind of Michael Henchard' (p. 110). He fails to become a gentleman, for he has 'quitted the ways of vulgar men without light to guide him on a better way' (pp. 111-2). Hardy here shows the determining role of institutions such as family and social context in the formation of masculinity; Henchard is unable to practise

²¹ See Chapter 1, pp. 16-7.

²² See Chapter 1, p. 13.

²³ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

masculinity as a middle-class man would do for he was not brought up in a middle-class environment; working-class discourses, to which he has been directly exposed, still govern his deeds.

Since his masculinity has not been shaped within a bourgeois context, Henchard fails to constitute himself as a capitalist and this is another reason for his being excluded from the middle class. In the Darwinian sense, he is devoid of the means of competition in the world of success. He lacks business sophistication, rationality and emotional detachment, the very qualities his rival, Farfrae, possesses. Henchard is not calculating or political, as a man of business needs to be in order to guarantee his success. His spontaneous liking for Farfrae and his disclosing of his heart to him serve to weaken his social position (pp. 75-6). He is not ingenious enough to think of reinforcing his financial status by 'buying over a rival', 'encouraging' Farfrae 'to become his son-in-law' (p. 112). He competes with Farfrae not rationally and wisely but impetuously, not primarily to make more benefit but to 'grind him into the ground – starve him out' (p. 182). His act of basing his business decisions upon probabilities rather than rational calculations is not that of a capitalist. He makes heavy losses as a result of his resort to a weather prophet, Mr. Fall, for making such decisions, in whom ironically he does not have a firm conviction (first acting according to his advice and then ignoring it). In his inability to pursue the norms of bourgeois discourses of masculinity, to remain a 'flourishing merchant and Mayor and what not', he loses his 'rank' (subject status) as a middle-class man and becomes 'a day-labourer' again (p. 226). Rank, in a disciplinary system, as Foucault argues, functions both as 'reward' and 'punishment'. Individuals will be deprived of their ranks, temporary statuses offered to them for their qualifications, once they do not qualify for those statuses.²⁴

Henchard's failure in the public domain, however, is also linked with the exclusion of emotional relations from his life which, although the cause of his success for some time, ultimately brings about the means of his catastrophe by making him desperately seek love and affection. Having established his position in the public domain, he recognises that this is not all that he wants; he needs to have somebody in his life, someone he cares for and someone who cares for him, exposing the insufficiency of the norms of masculinity which associate manhood with the suppression of emotion and need, attributes conventionally defined as feminine. Showalter argues that '[t]he return of Susan and Elizabeth-Jane' is 'a return of the

²⁴ See Chapter 1, pp. 16-7.

repressed, which forces Henchard gradually to confront the tragic inadequacy of his codes, the arid limits of patriarchal power.’²⁵

Henchard’s sense of loneliness, of course, is not a novelty; his dissatisfaction with his life is evident from the first moment the reader encounters him. He is incapable of emotional communication with his wife because of his conception of women as inferiors. He has been unable, likewise, to develop a strong emotional relationship with Lucetta, as he reveals to Farfrae. He describes himself to Farfrae as ‘a woman-hater’ who ‘[has] found it no hardship to keep at a distance from the sex’ (p. 76) and has in fact intentionally maintained such a distance. Governed by the discourses which define femininity in terms of inferiority and weakness, as Dale Kramer points out,²⁶ he has dissociated himself from whatever is related to femininity in order to attain a ‘rank’ as a ‘man’. He ostensibly prides himself on being termed by Casterbridge people as a ‘masterful, coercive’ man who is known for his ‘haughty indifference to the society of womankind’ and ‘his silent avoidance of converse with the sex’ (p. 80). In the same manner, he looks down at anything which connotes femininity. Despite admiring Farfrae’s ‘brightness of intellect’, he is contemptuous of what he finds feminine in him, from physical aspects such as ‘the slim Farfrae’s physical girth, strength, and dash’ (p. 88) to cultural acquirements such as his ‘penmanship’. Having himself received ‘the education of Achilles’, he pities Farfrae’s attention to ‘finikin details’ (p. 74).

Henchard’s ‘abandoning the “feminine” world of feeling’²⁷ succeeds only in producing a desperate longing for emotional relationships, as his sudden attachment to Farfrae and his delight upon discovering the return of Susan and Elizabeth-Jane demonstrate. He is now keen to constitute himself as a friend, a husband and a father. Initially, however, he regards both Farfrae and his female associates as objects to fill the void of his life. He insists on Farfrae’s staying with him, assuming that the young, intelligent man can fortify his ‘presence’ in the public sphere, helping to ‘keep’ his business ‘established’ by his ‘judgement and knowledge’ (p. 48). But his liking for Farfrae suggests more an inclination on his part to define himself in terms of male friendship. In his ‘somewhat lonely life’ (which mainly owes to his inability to define himself through a romantic relationship), Henchard ‘evidently found the young man as desirable for comradeship as he was useful for consultations’ (p. 87). In need of affection, he is impressed by what he conceives to be Farfrae’s kindness, helping him

²⁵ Showalter, p. 103.

²⁶ Dale Kramer, *Thomas Hardy: The Forms of Tragedy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), pp. 86-7.

²⁷ T. R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 73.

without expecting anything: “I sha’n’t soon forget this,” he said. “And from a stranger!”” (p. 47). That he is ready to give Farfrae ‘a third share’ of his business to convince him to stay with him, that he feels relieved when the young man agrees to stay and that he immediately confides his secret to him reflect the depth of his need for ‘some friend’ to whom he can emotionally relate and ‘speak’ (p. 75-9).

Hardy’s description of Henchard’s ‘affection for the younger man’ as ‘tigerish’ (p. 88) indicates the depth of his attachment to Farfrae. In the wrestling scene, which will be examined below, he explicitly admits his love for the young man, ‘[discovering] the depths and complexity of his emotional needs’.²⁸ By portraying a ‘[f]riendship between man and man’ (p. 95), Hardy suggests a radical redefinition of gender norms and an alternative mode of being a man, a redefinition further explored in *Jude the Obscure*. Hardy’s critics have different views on the implications of Henchard’s love for Farfrae. Showalter describes Henchard and Farfrae’s friendship as ‘homosocial’; for Joanna Devereux, too, Farfrae is a ‘love object’ although there is nothing ‘sexual in Henchard’s attraction towards Farfrae’.²⁹ Robert Langbaum states that by portraying Henchard’s love for Farfrae, Hardy suggests not so much homosexuality but ‘the inevitable homoerotic element in the male bonding’.³⁰ For other critics, however, this manly love contains a clear, if unacknowledged, ‘sexual component’.³¹ Hardy was aware of the contemporary controversy over the implications of male friendship, as valorised by the ancient Greeks. Jane Thomas has argued that many male intellectuals of Hardy’s time found male friendship as an alternative way of self-assertion, attempting to define it as intellectual and spiritual while struggling with the illicit desires.³² Whatever the implication of Henchard’s interest in Farfrae, he clearly finds in male friendship an alternative way of practising masculinity.

Henchard simultaneously defines himself as a man through emotional relationships with the opposite sex. With the appearance of Susan and Elizabeth-Jane, he begins to negotiate identities, ceasing to define his manhood in terms of detachment from the female sex, allowing women to enter his life, recognising his need for them. That his ‘keenly excited interest in his new friend the Scotchman’ is now temporarily

²⁸ Ibid., p. 77.

²⁹ Joanna Devereux, *Patriarchy and Its Discontents: Sexual Politics in Selected Novels and Stories of Thomas Hardy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 62

³⁰ Robert Langbaum, ‘The Minimisation of Sexuality in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*’, *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 8.1 (1992), 20-32 (p. 22).

³¹ T. R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic*, p. 76; Tod E. Jones, ‘Michael Henchard: Hardy’s Male Homosexual’, *Victorian Newsletter*, 86 (1994), 9-13 (pp. 10, 12).

³² Jane Thomas, ‘Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* and “Comradely Love”’, *Literature and History*, 16.2 (2007), 1-15.

‘eclipsed’ (p. 67) by the news of the return of his long-lost family attests to his zeal to constitute himself through matrimony and filial relationship, accepting the roles as husband, father, breadwinner and supporter, the roles he had once renounced. However, the husband role, for Henchard, does not incorporate sexuality; rather, it is more out of loneliness and an attempt to redefine himself as an honourable man — ‘to make amends’ to Susan (p. 70) — that he re-enters the relationship. He intends now to be a breadwinner and supporter rather than a possessor; he is unable to develop any emotion towards Susan, feeling no ‘amatory fire’ for her, and can only be ‘as kind to her as a man, mayor, and churchwarden could possibly be’ (pp. 81-4). The emotional structure of their relationship thus departs from the normal model defined by society in that Susan becomes a wife without being an object of desire.

In marrying Susan without loving her, Henchard is able to distance himself from the oppressive model of masculinity which he had previously adopted; yet he still constitutes himself as the dominant figure in relation to his wife, both as a decision-maker and the one on whom she should rely for provision. He is the one who decides on their reunion while she accepts the subordinate role of a wife, remaining ‘quite’ at his ‘hands’ (pp. 72-3). He also assumes the masculine role of a provider, to whom she should ‘[l]ook [...] for money’. Henchard is also still governed by the discourse of class, still conceiving her as socially inferior: he ‘[castigates] himself with the thorns which these restitutory acts brought in their train; among them the lowering of his dignity in public opinion by marrying so comparatively humble a woman’ (p. 81). That after her death he thinks that ‘his wife *was dissevered* from him’ (p. 119) [my emphasis], however, reveals that he needed her at least as a companion in his lonely life.

Henchard finds himself in need of defining himself as a father as well, providing for Elizabeth-Jane and offering her ‘the shelter of his paternity’ (p. 124). For a short period of time, Henchard enjoys a strong sense of manhood in the domestic domain by assuming the roles of friend, husband and father. In all of these roles, of course, he is the one in the position of authority — assertion of authority, is one of Tolson’s ways of constructing masculine ‘presence’.³³

Henchard’s sense of large ‘presence’ does not last long, however. His persistence in constructing his masculinity in terms of power and possessiveness injures his ‘presence’ in the domestic (as well as in the social) domain and deprives himself of the love he so desperately craves. His association of masculinity with power precludes the possibility of forming entirely ‘favourable’ emotional relationships with others, to

³³ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

employ Connell's discussion of different kinds of emotional relations. Henchard's attitude towards others becomes 'hostile' once they threaten his position of power. In his relationship with other characters, which can be seen in terms of Foucauldian power relations, Henchard attempts to govern their conduct in order to define himself in the ways he desires, as a friend, a husband or a father. The maintenance of the position of power is a necessary condition for him but he discovers that other characters are capable of resistance and this threatens his masculine subjectivity.

Henchard's practice of masculinity in relation to Farfrae can be seen to be conditioned by the structure of power. Perceiving himself to be older, manlier and of a higher financial and social status, Henchard defines himself as the superior figure in relation to Farfrae. Conceiving Farfrae to be the means of strengthening his 'presence' in both the public and the private spheres, through his knowledge and his friendship, Henchard initially adopts a gentle practice of masculinity in order to govern the young man's conduct. When succeeding in achieving his aim, the older man perceives himself a man of large 'presence, his 'face' '[beaming] forth a satisfaction that was almost fierce in strength' (p. 63). Henchard deprives himself of the young man's friendship in his 'tendency to domineer', however (p. 88). He regards Farfrae as a friend only as long as he remains a compliant man who succumbs 'gracefully' to the older man's wishes (p. 75). He loses him as a friend, therefore, the moment Farfrae objects to Henchard's mortification of Whittle, an act which for Henchard signifies the young man's rejection of his friendship and affection as well as the undermining of his authority. Farfrae's defiance affects Henchard's practice of masculinity; the older man constitutes himself through a hostile, and no longer a favourable, emotional relation. Either way, '[l]oving a man or hating him, his diplomacy was as wrongheaded as a buffalo's' (p. 112).

Farfrae undermines Henchard's sense of large 'presence' in the private domain by resisting the emotional relationship Henchard favours, male friendship. Farfrae poses a threat also to Henchard's 'presence' in the public domain. Henchard learns that he is no longer 'the most admired man in his circle', that Casterbridge people wish Farfrae to be their 'master' (pp. 98-9). In his attempt both to reclaim his 'presence' in society and to punish Farfrae for not reciprocating his affection, he gradually brings about the means of his own catastrophic end. His competition with Farfrae over the organisation of an entertainment fails; driven as it is by rivalry, Henchard ignores the possibility of rain. Not only does everybody go to Farfrae's event but all attention is diverted to the young man: women praise him and his fellow-men ascribe Henchard's success in business to his manager. Feeling his 'presence' — 'the character and standing that he's

built up in these eighteen years' (pp. 100-4) — to be under imminent threat, he dismisses Farfrae, hoping to find himself once more the centre of attention.

With Farfrae's further social advancement, his becoming one of the council, Henchard attempts to defeat his opponent in business, an enterprise, which, like his rivalry over entertainment results in financial losses and the further shrinking of his 'presence' in the public realm. By marrying Lucetta and by accepting the mayoralty, Farfrae eclipses Henchard even more. Henchard's intruding on the King's visit ceremony is a desperate attempt to show that he is still the one in the position of power, that he is still a man: 'I'll welcome his Royalty, or nobody shall!' (p. 260). But this inflicts a critical blow to his sense of manhood. Farfrae vividly emasculates him under the gaze of society, '[shaking]' him at the collar like 'a vagabond in the face of the whole town' (p. 266).

Henchard's wrestling with Farfrae — a practice of masculinity circumscribed by both the structure of power and hostile emotional attachment — is viewed by Henchard as a means of reclaiming his 'rank' as 'man' and punishing the young man. Like his former endeavours, however, it is doomed to failure. Overwhelmed by his affection for Farfrae, he is unable to practise violence by taking his life. In his inability to define himself in terms of power he feels emasculated, quite feminised: 'So thoroughly subdued was he that he remained on the sacks in a crouching attitude, unusual for a man, and for such a man. Its womanliness sat tragically on the figure of so stern a piece of virility.' The departure from the conventional norms of masculinity, his inability to define himself in terms of power, though tragic (even horrific, from his own point of view and that of the narrator), enables him to formulate himself in a new way, to express love for the first time: 'no man ever loved another as I did thee at one time' (p. 271), he tells Farfrae. Showalter reads this positively: 'unmanned', he 'has finally crossed over [...] to the long-repressed "feminine" side of himself', '[declaring] love for the first time to another person'.³⁴ Devereux, however, argues that 'Henchard's loss of manhood is meant to be taken as a tragedy, not as a sign of renewal or rebirth into a new identity'. The transition to his feminine side 'suggests a profound loss of power and control, not any hope for future regeneration'.³⁵ Trapped in conservative notions of masculinity, Henchard is unable to celebrate emotional vulnerability.

³⁴ Showalter, pp. 111-2.

³⁵ Devereux, p. 62.

The image of Henchard crushed by class and gender structures, I would suggest, is meant to be tragic; Judith Mitchell has called Henchard Hardy's fallen hero.³⁶ He is punished for his failure to meet the norms of class and gender. Yet, concurring with Showalter, I would also argue that Henchard is able to redefine himself in a new way. His expression of love for Farfrae (which also suggests manly love) indicates the possibility of a major change in him, an inclination on his part to construct his masculinity in terms of affection and sympathy rather than power and oppressiveness. The 'remorse', 'shame and self-reproach' he experiences after his attempt to kill Farfrae reveals that he has begun to question the discourses of masculinity which he has internalised (p. 271). The reformulation of subjectivity is not, of course, an easy task for him; he is not confident about his new subjectivity, probably still lamenting his loss of power. Liberating himself from the power of discourses which have for long permeated him proves too difficult.

Henchard endeavours, however, to constitute himself in the new way, to redefine himself in relation to both Farfrae and the female characters. He begins to formulate his masculinity through loving-kindness and friendship. That he thinks of 'winning pardon' from Farfrae indicates his desire to define himself as a friend (p. 271). He runs after Farfrae's gig, 'bowed down with despair', pleading for him to return home to Lucetta's bedside. Witnessing his failure to constitute himself in terms of compassion, 'his exertions for Farfrae's good [having] been in vain', Henchard 'cursed himself', 'as a vehement man will do when he loses self-respect' (pp. 282-3). He hates himself in the manner Troy hates himself when he is unable to formulate himself in terms of sympathy. For Henchard, however, this is the beginning of a re-negotiation of identity beyond anything of which Troy is capable.

Henchard's relationship with Lucetta also reveals the extent to which he is constrained by the structure of power. In his inability to define himself through male comradeship or filial relationship, and no longer having Susan in his life, Henchard thinks of formulating himself through matrimonial relationship with Lucetta. While he claims that his decision to marry her is taken out of a sense of obligation to 'put her in her proper position', he in fact 'unconsciously [craves]' to fill the 'emotional void' of his life. He does not regard Lucetta as a sexual object, not having 'strong feeling' for her (p. 145). But he is impressed by her social rise, indicating that he is still governed by the discourse of class: 'the possibility that Lucetta had been sublimed into a lady [...]

³⁶ Judith Mitchell, 'All Fall Down: Hardy's Heroes on the 1990s Cinema Screen', in *Thomas Hardy on Screen*, ed. by T. R. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 76-95 (p. 92).

lent a charm to her image which it might not otherwise have acquired' (p. 146). Marrying a lady of affluence can provide him with a sense of large 'presence' both in the domestic and public domains. Having decided to constitute himself through matrimony, he defines himself through the structure of emotional attachment, pursuing the object of desire and attempting to win her.

The main gender structure which demarcates Henchard's practice of masculinity in relation to Lucetta, however, is the structure of power which demands that he defines himself as the dominant figure in relation to her. For him, Lucetta, like other characters, is subordinate. When she refrains from seeing him, he decides not to call again, waiting for her to beg him for a visit. Yet with Lucetta now having turned into a love object, he is unable to practise self-sufficiency: 'a slight inaccessibility and a more matured beauty' render Lucetta a worthy companion and even an object of desire, 'the very being to make him satisfied with life'. His 'mouldering sentiments towards Lucetta' therefore fan 'into higher and higher inflammation' (p. 174). With Henchard's position weakened by virtue of his desire for her he is obliged to adopt a different practice of masculinity. Seeing no hope of 'bringing her round by holding aloof', 'he [gives] in, and [calls] upon her again', only for her to prove distinctly cool towards him and for him to experience 'a perceptible loss of power' (pp. 174-5).

As a man who has associated his 'presence' with power, Henchard finds Lucetta's rejection of him a threat to his masculine subjectivity. Her undermining his position of power brings into play the structure of hostile emotional relations, making him act aggressively. He attempts to impose on her a role as his wife, not so much out of love but mainly in competition with Farfrae: 'had Lucetta's heart been given to any other man in the world than Farfrae he would probably have had pity upon her at that moment.' His forcefulness suggests a construction of masculinity severely circumscribed by the structure of power, which situates men in a position of supremacy over women: 'unless you give me your promise this very night to be my wife, before a witness, I'll reveal our intimacy – in common fairness to other men!' (p. 196). He formulates himself as an oppressor even when Lucetta is already Farfrae's wife, attempting to blackmail her. Governed by discourses of power and male superiority, he is unable to define himself as a friend to Lucetta. She is only able to govern his conduct, making him return her letters and 'wash his hands of the game', once she has restored his superior status by playing the role of an inferior and beseecher: 'Such a woman was very small deer to hunt'; he 'no longer envied Farfrae his bargain' (p. 248). Henchard is

ultimately able to practise loving-kindness in relation to Lucetta, demonstrated by his well-wishing act of informing Farfrae of his wife's illness and her need for him.

It is not only as a friend, a husband and a lover but as a father that Henchard formulates himself through the structure of power. He loses Elizabeth-Jane owing to a practice of masculinity characterised by authoritativeness and proprietorship. He could have resumed terming himself her father at least until the appearance of Newson, had he not insisted on her taking his surname. Unable to see that his 'own flesh and blood' is named after another man (p. 86), he is tempted to reveal to Elizabeth-Jane the secret of her birth as he conceives it. In need of love, he wants Elizabeth-Jane to offer him the sort of whole-hearted affection a daughter can demonstrate towards her real father, the kind of warmth she now feels towards Newson: 'I'll be kinder to you than *he* was! I'll do anything, if you will look upon me as your father!' (p. 121). In his materialistic treatment of what should be a human relationship, he deprives himself of the subject status of a father and subsequently of Elizabeth-Jane's compassion, once he becomes aware that she is not his. Now he is unable even to 'endure the sight of her', because of her resemblance to Newson (p. 124). The favourable emotional relation, which so far had determined his practice of masculinity in relation to Elizabeth-Jane, becomes a hostile one. He turns into an indifferent, cold man, expelling her from his house. His need for her, however, obliges him to practise masculinity differently; once seeing that she has obeyed his command, he begs her not to 'go away' from him (p. 143) — experiencing the same kind of remorse he feels after the banishment of Susan and Farfrae.

Henchard is eventually able to define his masculinity in terms of benevolence in relation to Elizabeth-Jane, having already negotiated identities in relation to Farfrae and Lucetta. He undertakes to constitute himself as her father, seeing her as 'a daughter of whom he could feel as proud as of the actual daughter' (p. 289). From this point onwards, his practice of masculinity is no longer delineated by the structures of power and the hostile emotional relation; he is no longer domineering and forceful but caring and compassionate. The 'gender regime' of this newly-shaped family deviates from that of the dominant 'gender order' of the Victorian society, to use Connell's terms,³⁷ in that Henchard, as a father, accepts a secondary role; he is not the authoritative figure and the decision-maker. The sexual division of labour is also reversed; he prepares breakfast for her once she comes to see him at his cottage 'with housewifely care'. Hardy here offers an alternative, nobler, mode of being a man, which incorporates the so-called feminine

³⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

attributes of compassion and love and the assumption of a more passive role. Henchard now links his 'presence' to caring for and fathering Elizabeth-Jane and being loved by her, 'as though that way alone could happiness lie' (p. 286). By portraying Henchard as a man who is fortified not by overpowering others but by receiving love and attention, Hardy undermines the conventional definition of masculine 'presence'.

The return of Newson, however, threatens Henchard's newly-attained sense of 'presence'. In his urgent need to remain a father, in the 'greedy exclusiveness' he feels 'in relation to her [Elizabeth-Jane]', he once more formulate himself as a proprietor, deceiving Newson: 'the sudden prospect of her loss had caused him to speak mad lies like a child, in pure mockery of consequences'. The thought that Newson may come back and 'carry his last treasure' — with which he now relates his sense of self — 'away' (p. 289), causes him to contemplate suicide, making the pool 'his death-bed' (p. 292). It is only the hope that he might be able to maintain his position as her father, that Newson might not return, that allows him to start his life anew: once it is arranged that she should live with him, he 'shaved for the first time during many days, and put on clean linen, and combed his hair; and was as a man resuscitated thenceforward' (p. 294). According to Showalter, he is now 'humanly reborn',³⁸ his discarding of the clothes associated with success, power and dominance signals the abandonment of his former subjectivity and an attempt to define himself in terms of love.

By virtue of his emotional reliance on his step-daughter, whose 'sympathy' was 'necessary to his very existence', Henchard humbly accepts the seed shop from Farfrae (p. 296). The relation of power is now to Elizabeth-Jane's advantage; 'her word' is 'law' and Henchard is turned to a 'netted lion, anxious not to pique her in the least' (p. 297). The demands of the situation make him practise a gentle version of masculinity and accept a more passive role. Fearing that 'an antagonistic word should lose for him such regard as he had regained from her by his devotion' and thus lead to the loss of his newly-constructed subjectivity as a father, Henchard avoids assertiveness, '[schooling] himself to accept her will, in this and other matters, as absolute and unquestionable' (p. 299). His need for her unmans him; instead of confronting her and asking her about the state of affairs, as a father might do, he stealthily scrutinises 'the progress of affairs between Farfrae and his charmer' with 'his telescope', only to learn that he has lost her both to Farfrae and Newson, when the lenses revealed not 'Farfrae's features' as he 'expected' but those of Newson (p. 304). Henchard has to relinquish his 'rank' as a father. Aware that his loss of Elizabeth-Jane is the consequence of his own deeds, he

³⁸ Showalter, p. 112.

finds himself worthy of punishment and banishment: 'I – Cain – go alone as I deserve – an outcast and a vagabond. But my punishment is *not* greater than I can bear!'. His need for Elizabeth-Jane's affection is dramatised by his giving way to 'a convulsive twitch, which was worse than a sob' (p. 307).

While in the auction scene Henchard had made a distinction between his female child and his basket of masculine tools, now his basket contains 'Elizabeth-Jane's cast-off belongings, in the shape of gloves, shoes, a scrap of her handwriting, and the like; and in his pocket he carried a curl of her hair' (p. 312). As a suffering individual, he is able to gain insight into the conditions of existence, to recognise the inadequacy of the norms of masculinity he had pursued: 'in looking back upon an ambitious course' he discovers 'that what he has sacrificed in sentiment was worth as much as what he has gained in substance' (p. 313). Though enlightened by the knowledge, he has no 'zest' to make 'another start on the upward slope', to start a life anew (p. 314). He remains obsessed with the image of Elizabeth-Jane, linking his sense of himself with having her in his life, unable to detach himself from Casterbridge. His going to her wedding is his final endeavour to regain her affection. In this moving scene, Hardy portrays Henchard as a humble man, bringing 'a caged gold-finch' for Elizabeth-Jane as her wedding present, asking her to 'save a little room' for him in her heart, a request which she repudiates (pp. 373-7). This is the end for Henchard. To see that he is despised as a man whose sense of self rests on his being loved signifies annihilation, hence his putting an end to his life by walking in the rain. His will can be seen to be that of a man who condemns himself for the way he has constituted himself throughout his life, for the kind of man he has been, one not worthy of remembrance. By portraying his hero's defeat and his tragic end, Hardy attacks the constraints of class and gender structures and discourses which cause human suffering. Henchard, like Boldwood, is unable to escape the dominance of discourses which have pervaded him, until it is too late. His pursuit of the norms of masculinity which demanded his dissociation from the feminine ultimately brings about his calamity.

Hardy depicts Farfrae in sharp contrast with Henchard. Although resembling Henchard, operating within the domain of his contemporary gender and class structures and discourses, he is not as governed by them as Henchard is. Farfrae's practice of masculinity is defined by the structure of the sexual division of labour, according to which he should pursue a career and earn a living. Pervaded by bourgeois discourses, like Henchard, Farfrae intends to construct his 'presence' in the public domain by means of success; he is introduced to the reader as a man who has left his native land

and is on his 'way to [...] the other side of the warrrld to try [his] fortune' there. Farfrae's ambitiousness reveals his internalisation of middle-class discourses: he has 'some inventions useful to the trade, and there is no scope for developing them heere' (p. 46). He decides to stay with Henchard only when he is assured of the possibility of progress. His determination to stay in Casterbridge, once he is offered 'the Mayoralty' later in the story, despite Henchard's enmity towards him (p. 240), also indicates his social aspirations.

For Farfrae, however, having a large 'presence' in the public sphere is not the *sine qua non* of his existence. His light-heartedness when he is nobody — when we first see him at the King of Prussia — demonstrates that he does not relate his sense of self with success. He is not desperate to 'become someone' through work, to use Tolson's phrase;³⁹ he demonstrates no inclination to defeat Henchard in business as a way of strengthening his economic position. He opens his business at a 'spot' as far as possible from Henchard's stores, in an attempt to '[keep] clear of' Henchard's 'customers', thinking that 'there was [...] room for both of them to spare' (p. 112). It appears that he does business primarily for economic success and not for impressing others — although the latter can naturally evolve out of the former. He is indifferent to public opinion. When holding an entertainment, he is not only heedless of appearance but also considers an entrance fee, an act which could damage his popularity. His indifference about winning people's admiration is, paradoxically, the key to his success for he can think and act rationally.

Farfrae owes his prosperity to his ability to create a balance between the world of feeling and commerce, mainly, of course, owing to his 'shallow emotions' which, according to Langbaum, 'are an advantage for succeeding in the acquisition of money and power'.⁴⁰ There is a 'melancholy fatality in his voice' when talking about his going 'to foreign countries' yet he thinks that for establishing himself in the social domain, this is a step that should be taken: 'Never a one of the prizes of life will I come by unless I undertake it!' (p. 54). Whereas Henchard falters through his excessive attachment either to the public or the domestic sphere, Farfrae prospers in his ability to maintain a kind of equilibrium between the two domains:

³⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 20.

⁴⁰ Langbaum, p. 27.

the curious double strands in Farfrae's thread of life – the commercial and the romantic – were very distinct at times. Like the colours in a variegated cord those contrasts could be seen intertwined, yet not mingling. (p. 158)

For him, the construction of 'presence' in the public domain is the priority but he also considers defining himself through an intimate relationship.

Initially, he is not keen to construct his 'presence' in the private domain as a husband. He is so inattentive to Elizabeth-Jane that he does 'not [recognise] her as the girl in the inn', when he meets her in Henchard's office the following day (p. 62). The importance of work to him is further demonstrated in the scene where he and Elizabeth-Jane are brought together in the granary by a note. His mind being engaged with business, he fails to detect the romantic implication of the note, regarding it as a 'trick' and a 'waste' of 'time' (p. 92). After 'blowing' 'wheat husks' from her clothes and her hair, however, he begins to see her as an object of desire; now he 'seemed in no manner of hurry to be gone' (pp. 92-3). Once he regards Elizabeth-Jane as a sexual object, he defines himself through the structure of emotional attachment, attempting to win the woman he desires. He does not intend, of course, to sacrifice his social position for love for 'by setting up a business in opposition to Mr. Henchard', he in fact '[endangers] his suit' (p. 109). Not associating his masculinity primarily with possessing the love object, once forbidden by Henchard to see Elizabeth-Jane, he easily allows 'the incipient attachment' to be 'stifled down' (p. 113). He intends to take a role as a husband only when he has economically established himself in the public domain and has the means of providing for his wife: 'I wish I was richer', 'I would ask you something in a short time' (p. 108). This suggests a practice of masculinity conditioned by the sexual division of labour, which requires a man to have economic power before defining himself as a husband. He decides to marry Elizabeth-Jane only when a 'fortunate business transaction [has] put him on good terms with everybody, and revealed to him that he could undeniably marry if he chose' (p. 156). His choice of wife is that of a bourgeois businessman: Elizabeth-Jane can be a wise choice not only because she is 'pleasing, thrifty, and satisfactory in every way' but also because his alliance with her can lead to 'a reconciliation with his former friend' (p. 159).

The significance of the construction of masculinity in the public sphere for Farfrae is also evident in his first encounter with Lucetta, where he finds himself in a dilemma whether to constitute himself as a businessman or a lover. Though he is overpowered by her beauty, the thought of '[losing] a customer' makes him forsake his

subject status as a lover: 'Business ought not to be neglected' (p. 160). He eventually fails to constitute himself as a completely rational man, of course, allowing himself to be impressed by Lucetta's appearance. His decision to marry her, although rational from a capitalistic point of view, is somewhat recklessly taken, being the result of love at first sight.

Despite his affection for Lucetta, Farfrae is not crushed by her loss for his sense of manhood is not tied up with the possession of an exclusive object of desire. He is not one of those 'men whose hearts insist upon a dogged fidelity to some image or cause, thrown by chance into their keeping'; yet, for that very reason, the narrator does not categorise him with 'the band of worthy' (pp. 296-7). Once forsaking Elizabeth-Jane for Lucetta, he now easily returns to Elizabeth-Jane. Such an easy exchange of the object of desire, his flexibility and adaptability, though echoing his 'emotional limitations',⁴¹ is the means of his survival; for Hardy, though, the one who survives is not necessarily the better individual.⁴² With Lucetta's death, while he has the chance to enlarge his 'presence' in the social domain by allying himself with one of 'the daughters of the professional men, or private residents', he chooses to marry Elizabeth-Jane, not regarding his alliance with a homely wife to be a blow to his social status. He is not normalised by class discourses to the extent Henchard is. He does what he thinks is to his benefit, not caring that the public opinion assumes that he has 'stoop[ed] so low'. Having once married for money and appearance and having found his 'wife' to be 'no credit to him', he now wants to make a rational choice, to marry 'a sensible piece for a partner' (p. 302).

Farfrae's survival can be attributed to the kind of masculinity he practises. While he is an assertive and self-confident man, he is not aggressive and domineering. Connell argues that the configuration of gender is a matter of negotiation rather than mechanical internalisation of gender attributes.⁴³ Offered various versions of masculinity, Farfrae has adopted a gentle practice of masculinity. It is such gender practice which is mainly responsible for winning the heart of the Casterbridge community and, with it, professional and social status. Ordinary people prefer to deal with him rather than with Henchard while the 'aldermen' choose him as their fellow councilman and mayor (pp. 133, 240). The structure of power does not totally delimit his practice of masculinity; he does not attempt to dominate or oppress others, whether men or women. His masculine subjectivity is more secure than Henchard's as it is not associated with the exercise of

⁴¹ Kramer, p. 85.

⁴² See Chapter 2, p. 25.

⁴³ See Chapter 1, p. 10.

power over individuals who are always capable of resistance. Since he does not relate his sense of manhood to the shunning of women's society and the denial of the so-called feminine emotions, he is a more contented man than Henchard. The discourse of masculinity which constitutes Farfrae does not define masculinity in sharp contrast with femininity and does not demand the suppression of emotion; he can cry, sing and dance and still be a man. Not perceiving women as inferiors, he is able to associate with them and assert his masculinity through intimate relationships.

Yet for Hardy, Farfrae is not superior to Henchard; for him the difference between the two is that between 'the ordinary' and 'the exceptional', to use Devereux's terms.⁴⁴ Farfrae survives mainly because of his moderation and his ability to adapt himself to the conditions of his life but Hardy's sympathy remains with the unfit and the eliminated one. Henchard is eradicated because of his rigidity and inadaptability, his stubborn insistence on pursuing the norms of masculinity and class. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy portrays a darker picture of life, depicting more vividly the crippling constraints of social structures and discourses. Yet the novel envisages, though dimly, the possibility of escape from these man-made structures by portraying a change in Henchard. Redefinition of gender norms and alternative ways of self-formation (and accordingly the improvement of gender relations) are conceivable but difficult to attain. Hardy's protagonist in this novel, unfortunately, is not allowed to survive to formulate himself in a new way.

⁴⁴ Devereux, p. 52.

Chapter 6

The Woodlanders: Defying Social Structures

Though beginning work on *The Woodlanders* in November 1885, Hardy had written the ‘original plot’ in 1874 or early 1875,¹ immediately after the publication of *Far from the Madding Crowd* which may explain certain similarities between the two novels. Like its predecessor, *The Woodlanders* portrays the ways in which men of different social classes construct their masculinities, questioning the bourgeois and aristocratic configurations of masculinity and sympathising with the working-class man. Again, as with *Far from the Madding Crowd*, this novel explores the possibility of resisting the dominant gender and class structures and formulating masculinity in alternative ways. The woodland story differs from its earlier counterpart, however, in its more complicated rendering of the material and the darker vision of life it depicts.

The Woodlanders, like all Hardy’s works, can be seen to examine the ways in which male characters function within gender and class structures which delineate the kinds of masculinity they should practise. An analysis of the male characters through the gender structures which R. W. Connell identifies (i.e. the sexual division of labour, relations of power and emotional attachment)² as well as the structure of class reveals the extent to which their practices of masculinity are restricted by these structures. In the Foucauldian sense, these characters need to define themselves through contemporary discourses in order to make sense of themselves; they pursue the norms of the discourses of masculinity and class in order to acquire a ‘rank’ (subject position) as a ‘man’ and as a member of a specific social class.³ Pervaded by prevailing discourses of masculinity, for example, Hardy’s men (especially his bourgeois and upper-class characters) associate manhood with power. A man’s ‘presence’, as John Berger explains, is linked with ‘the promise of power’ he incorporates.⁴ Such a configuration of masculinity, however, reveals itself to be problematic and destructive, as the novel demonstrates.

¹ Thomas Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 105, 182. Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (London: The Bodley Head, 1971), pp. 249-50.

² See Chapter 1, p. 11.

³ See Chapter 1, pp. 12-3, 16-7.

⁴ See Chapter 1, pp. 17-8.

With Melbury, Hardy portrays a man who constitutes himself unquestionably within the dominant frameworks of gender and class. Melbury's practice of masculinity can be seen to be demarcated by the sexual division of labour, which is one of the structures identified by Connell as conditioning gender practice.⁵ As a man, he is expected to define himself in terms of work, which, according to Andrew Tolson, is the main determinant of masculine identity.⁶ Working-class structures also have delimited the kind of masculinity Melbury needs to practise; he should assert himself through physical labour; the young Melbury used to '[handle] trees and timber'.⁷ Melbury, however, like Henchard, does not enjoy much sense of power from his working-class subjectivity; as a child, he was humiliated at the hands of an upper-class boy because of his ignorance. Melbury finds his 'promise of power' as a working-class man to be 'small'; he has 'little presence', to draw upon Berger; for having a striking 'presence', the 'promise of power' a man embodies should be large.⁸ Subjected to the discourses of masculinity offered by the bourgeoisie, which he has ostensibly found more empowering, he has undertaken to define himself in terms of success. Work, for him, becomes the means of acquisition of economic and social status. The narrator describes Melbury as a 'self-made' man; his hard work can be read as the discipline he has undergone to gain qualifications and win a 'rank' (or subject status) as middle-class. He is thus introduced to the reader as a timber-merchant, a 'successful petty-bourgeois'.⁹ Unlike Boldwood and Henchard, however, Melbury has not eschewed romantic relationships for the construction of his 'presence' in the public domain; he has already defined himself through the structure of emotional attachment (which Connell regards as another delineator of gender practice),¹⁰ constituting himself through matrimony.

Melbury's determination to provide for Grace's education can be read as a practice of masculinity circumscribed by the sexual division of labour, which requires him to assume the role of a provider; it also implies a formulation of masculinity according to bourgeois discourses. For the Victorian middle classes, children's education was of high significance; it was 'one of the main ambitions of middle-class parents'; '[t]he purpose of girl's education was different from that of their brothers',

⁵ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

⁶ See Chapter 1, pp. 9, 20.

⁷ Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders*, ed. by Patricia Ingham (London: Penguin, 1998 [1887]), p. 31. All subsequent page references are from this edition and are given in parentheses, after quotations in the text.

⁸ See Chapter 1, pp. 17-8.

⁹ Joe Fisher, *The Hidden Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1992), p. 140.

¹⁰ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

however.¹¹ As June Purvis explains, ‘the content of education for middle-class girls tended to stress ornamental knowledge that might attract and impress a suitor’.¹² Pervaded by bourgeois discourses, Melbury regards his daughter’s education as an investment which will be rewarded by a marriage which can lead to further social advancement not only for his daughter but for himself. Grace has ‘cost [him] a good deal, like the horses and wagons and corn’ but, as a capital investment, she will ‘yield a better return’ (p. 88). Fitzpiers’s proposal is the ‘return’ he receives for his investment, as he insists to Grace: ‘Haven’t I educated you for it?’ (pp. 157-8). For Melbury, Grace’s union with a man of high rank signifies the enlargement of his ‘presence’ in the public domain.

Desirous to define himself as upper-class, Melbury attaches great significance to Fitzpiers’s aristocratic origin, that ‘his daughter’s suitor was descended from a line he had heard of in his grandfather’s time as being once among the greatest’. That they no longer hold any significant social status does not concern him; what is important is the ‘rank’ he can attain through Grace’s union with ‘such a romantical family’ (p. 161). His life-long endeavour to acquire the necessary qualifications, making a ‘lady’ out of his daughter, has been rewarded by the subject status he is going to win as the father-in-law of an aristocrat. He therefore reconsiders Giles’s engagement to his daughter; to approve of such a matrimonial tie would be to reformulate himself as working-class. This is what he specifically discerns at the dinner party Giles hosts, where he views his friendship with Giles as an association with the lower classes: ‘That’s the sort of society we’ve been asked to meet’, he complains (p. 77). Perceiving this to be a shrinking of his ‘presence’ in the public domain and the loss, even, of his current subject status as a member of the petty-bourgeoisie, he rejects Giles as a son-in-law. Giles’s fear early in the story is thus realised: ‘would’ Melbury’s ‘ambition which had purchased for her [Grace] the means of intellectual light and culture far beyond those of any other native of the village,’ Giles wondered, ‘conduce to the flight of her future interests above and away from the local life’? (p. 62). Hardy demonstrates the extent to which Melbury, like Henchard, is governed by class discourses which define masculinity in terms of ambition and success. He exchanges human ties for success.

Melbury’s treatment of his daughter as a commodity and a subordinate suggests a practice of masculinity conditioned by the structure of power, another structure which,

¹¹ Simon Gunn and Rachel Bell, *Middle Classes: Their Rise and Sprawl* (London: Cassell, 2002), pp. 123, 127.

¹² June Purvis, *A History of Women’s Education in England* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991), p. 64.

according to Connell, demarcates the practice of gender.¹³ He situates himself in the position of power in relation to his daughter, deciding for her and supporting her. In line with conventional definitions of masculinity, he constructs his ‘presence’ in the private domain upon the power he embodies by dominating Grace; authority is a way of constructing masculine ‘presence’, as Tolson observes.¹⁴ Both Melbury and Grace accept the roles required by the institution of the family. Melbury, as a father, takes the authoritative role, determining what she should do, sending her to the boarding school, making her encourage or discourage Fitzpiers or Giles, while she accepts the subordinate role of a compliant daughter; once invited to Giles’s party, Melbury ‘knew very well that Grace, whatever her own feelings, would either go or not, according as he suggested’ (p. 69).

The ‘gender regime’ of the institution of the family here, of course, does not always copy the ‘gender order’ of society (to use Connell terms)¹⁵ for Grace is not always docile and Melbury is not always in the position of power. Their relationship, like all Foucauldian relations of power, is unstable and fluid.¹⁶ She succumbs to her father’s decisions only as long as they chime in with hers. If she agrees to be educated, to encourage Fitzpiers or discourage Giles, it is because she, like Melbury, desires to constitute herself as upper-class. She tells Giles, ‘[m]y father says it is better for us not to think too much of that – engagement [...]. I, too, think that upon the whole he is right’ (p. 93). That she is subjected to the same class discourses which have governed Melbury is further revealed when, as Mrs. Fitzpiers, she comments on the working-class Giles, whom she beholds in the market: ‘No – I could never have married him! [...]. Dear father was right’ (pp. 176-7). Yet she undermines Melbury’s dominance as a father whenever his decisions do not accord with hers. Doubting Fitzpiers’s faithfulness, she opposes her father: ‘I wish not to marry Mr Fitzpiers. I wish not to marry anybody’. His intimidation of her on this occasion — his telling her ‘if you refuse, I shall for ever be ashamed and weary of ’ee as a daughter, and shall look upon you as the hope of my life no more’ (p. 168) — indicates that his power over her is not absolute. The limit of his power becomes more evident when he has to resort to Fitzpiers to help him to change her mind.

Melbury becomes unable to define himself in terms of power as soon as Grace begins resisting bourgeois discourses, renouncing her ambitions for a cultivated life.

¹³ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁴ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

¹⁵ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 19.

When he wants Grace to save her marriage by going to Mrs. Charmond, she not only refuses to do so but undermines Melbury's subject status as a father by 'deprecating those attainments whose completion had been a labour of years and a severe tax upon his purse' (p. 222). She questions his idea of educating her and his ambitions for her cultivation: 'I wish you had never, never thought of educating me. [...] I hate genteel life' (p. 221). From this point onwards, Melbury's 'presence' as a father, constructed upon the domination of his daughter, begins to diminish.

Melbury's authority over Grace is severely undercut when she flees the house to avoid Fitzpiers, despite his father's command that she should reconcile herself with her husband. Upon finding her in Giles' cottage, he accepts the worst: 'In the face of this there is nothing to be said' (p. 324). He is practically unable to govern Grace's behaviour. His 'presence' as a dominating father further shrinks when she goes to see her husband and stays with him without consulting his father. On finding her after a long search, Melbury encounters a daughter who is more concerned about the 'large partnership' her husband is going to take than her father's worries. At this point in the story, Melbury ceases to constitute himself through the structure of power, no longer deciding for Grace: 'you are your own mistress' (p. 362). The 'embarrassment' he suffers 'under the eyes of strangers' suggests that he is sensitive to the power of the gaze, aware that he has failed to satisfy the demands of patriarchal society, to dominate his daughter. The loss of his authority over his 'child' (p. 363) signifies the undermining of his status as a father and a 'man'. Though deprived of paternal power, he does, of course, regain the 'rank' (or subject status) of an aristocrat's father-in-law.

The structure of power also delimits Melbury's practice of masculinity in relation to other characters. Initially overawed by Fitzpiers's large 'presence' as an aristocrat and a doctor, Melbury takes a subordinate position. When Fitzpiers proposes to marry Grace, for example, Melbury assumes the role of a humble man who, unable to hide his joy upon hearing Fitzpiers's proposal, speaks his thoughts 'before they were weighed, and almost before they were shaped' (pp. 155-7). The 'strain' on Melbury when Fitzpiers comes to his house also demonstrates that he is overawed by the Fitzpiers's larger 'presence'. His reading a book on medicine and about 'practitioners that have risen in history', with the aim of holding 'a conversation' with the doctor (pp. 162-3), can be read as a tactic he employs to strengthen his position in relation to Fitzpiers.

In relation to Mrs. Charmond, Melbury also constitutes himself as subordinate, practising a gentle version of masculinity. Overpowered by her higher social standing,

Melbury appears as a courteous man, taking off his hat when running into her on the road. His deference, however, is not entirely due to his sense of inferiority but also to a strategy to win her favour, as part of his plan to enlarge his 'presence' through Grace's connections with the upper classes. Fitzpiers and Charmond's love affair, however, changes Melbury's practice of masculinity in relation to them for it undermines not only his subject position as the father-in-law of an aristocrat but as a caring, protective father and an honest man: the sense that 'his darling child was being slighted' and that 'his ingenuousness has been abused' makes 'an almost miraculous change in Melbury's nature', turning him from an 'ingenuous countryman' into a 'furtive' man (p. 216). From this point onwards, he attempts to dominate these characters and to govern their conduct. The 'favourable' emotional relation thus far shaping his gender practice in relation to these characters gives way to hostility, to employ Connell's discussion of different kinds of emotional attachment.¹⁷ He decides 'to fight his daughter's battle', which is simultaneously *his own battle*, in order to win Fitzpiers back and thereby affirm himself as a caring father. Melbury has the hard task of confronting 'two sophisticated beings', however, who are 'armed with every apparatus of victory'. Finding himself in an asymmetrical relation of power, 'the homely timber-dealer felt as inferior as a savage with his bow and arrows to the precise weapons of modern warfare' (p. 214).

For Melbury to win his battle entails targeting Mrs. Charmond first: 'the point of attack should be the woman' (p. 218). That she has 'been a bit of charmer in her time' provides Melbury with the tool he requires to strengthen his position, allowing him to challenge her. No longer regarded as a respectable woman, she loses her power over him, allowing him to practise forcefulness. It is now Melbury who commands: 'Forbid him your presence, ma'am'. Her moral lapse weakens her position by exposing her to the power of the patriarchal gaze, reducing her to 'faintness' (p. 231). By convincing her to keep Fitzpiers at a distance, Melbury succeeds, if only temporarily, in governing her conduct.

Melbury also defines himself as the superior figure in relation to Fitzpiers. With Fitzpiers's 'presence' shrinking in the eyes of Melbury owing to his infidelity, Melbury can become an authoritative father-in-law. His flinging of Fitzpiers to the ground, where he is literally looked down upon by Melbury on his horse, reverses the hierarchy between the two, verifying Foucault's assertion that relations of power are mobile and

¹⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

unstable.¹⁸ Melbury thus switches from a practice of masculinity defined by affection to a hostile emotional relation.

Melbury also formulates himself as a domineering man in relation to Giles Winterborne, conceiving the young man as an inferior. Empowered by his large 'presence', his higher financial and social status and more importantly because of the fact that he is the father of Giles's beloved, Melbury attempts to dominate Giles. The relationship between the two men alters, however, over the course of the story. With Fitzpiers's infidelity, Melbury '[loses] faith in his own judgment' and decides 'to consult' Giles, feeling a 'strong need of some friend of his own sex to whom he might unburden his mind' (p. 223). That he regards Giles as a 'friend' suggests the more balanced shape their relationship has taken. That he can now regard Giles as a potential son-in-law, if only out of exigency, to rescue his daughter from the 'anomalous position' in which she will be situated after her divorce (p. 277), demonstrates a significant shift in the balance of power between them.

The portrayal of Melbury, in other words, demonstrates the potential destructiveness of class and gender structures and discourses. Melbury's insistence on defining himself as upper-class and constructing his masculinity in terms of domination prove destructive to Grace and Giles. Although severely critical of his character's practice of masculinity, Hardy allows him to survive, however, probably because of his flexibility. The timber-merchant does not persist in formulating himself as upper-class or as a dominant father once these goals prove unachievable.

The presentation of Fitzpiers involves further investigation of the determining role of class in the formation of masculinity. The kind of masculinity the aristocratic Fitzpiers needs to practise is dictated by his social class but whereas Melbury rejects the models of masculinity provided by his class, Fitzpiers is keen to align himself with them. As an aristocrat, he desires to lead a life of leisure, to construct his 'presence' in terms of wealth, social status and intellectualism. But such a practice of masculinity is not possible for him without the economic power of the old gentry for his 'family' are no longer the 'lords of the manor' (p. 161). Unable to define himself in the public domain simply by virtue of his aristocrat name (as he has no economic power), he has undertaken to assert himself by pursuing a profession — a middle-class way of shaping masculinity, as Tolson observes.¹⁹ He has formulated his 'presence' in the public sphere

¹⁸ See Chapter 1, p. 19.

¹⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

by means of education while simultaneously relying on the power he embodies as an aristocrat. He constitutes himself, in other words, within two different discourses.

The problem for Fitzpiers, however, is that his middle-class subjectivity as a professional is perceived to be lower than his upper-class one. That the 'rank' (or subject position) of a professional is lower than that of an aristocrat is a view held not only by Fitzpiers himself but also by other characters. To Grammer, for example, 'though he belongs to the oldest, ancient family in the country, he's stooped to make himself useful' (although there is clearly an irony in the verb here). Similarly, to Mrs. Charmond, Fitzpiers is merely the 'medical man' of her 'own parish' (p. 61). That it is out of financial exigency that Fitzpiers has defined himself in terms of profession is suggested by his contemptuous way of talking about his career: 'I was made for higher things' (pp. 48-9). He does not feel empowered by his middle-class subjectivity, finding his 'presence', as a doctor, to be little. That he spends his time reading 'philosophy' and 'poetry' (p. 30) indicates his attempt to associate himself with upper-class pursuits. He takes no great pride in his profession, as Grace observes: 'Fitzpiers was a man of too many hobbies to show likelihood of rising to any great eminence in the profession he had chosen, or even to acquire any wide practice in the rural district' (p. 124). He is a doctor who is interested in German metaphysics and who '[prefers] the ideal world to the real' (p. 112). His 'medical practice' interests him only in so far as it provides him with the means of 'investigation and experiment' (p. 115); he looks at his patients as potential case studies, examining Old South's brain and even purchasing Grammer's. He describes himself as 'a man of education', a scientist and a friend of poets (p. 255) rather than a professional doctor. It seems that Fitzpiers desires to shape his masculinity through the nineteenth-century upper middle-class discourses which define a 'gentleman' as a man who lives without 'working', a man whose 'leisure' allows him 'to cultivate the style and pursuits of the gentlemanly life'.²⁰ Fitzpiers is clearly reluctant to constitute himself as a professional but in the absence of the wealth which can provide him with a life of leisure, he has to remain one.

Pervaded by upper-class discourses, Fitzpiers aspires to constitute himself as a genuine aristocrat, by marrying an upper-class lady, hence the 'mild radiance' in his 'somewhat dull sky' on imagining Grace to be Mrs. Charmond (p. 112). He thinks of having an 'advantageous marriage' 'with a woman of family as good as his own, and of purse much longer' (pp. 134-5). He cannot imagine marrying Grace once he knows of

²⁰ Robin Gilmour, *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), p.7.

her 'origin' (p. 117): 'Socially' they 'can never be intimate', for any 'matrimonial intentions towards her' would be at odds with his 'other aims on the practical side of my [his] life' (p. 134). As soon as Grace becomes the object of desire, however, he defines himself through the structure of emotional attachment as a husband. He attempts to justify this decision to remain a country doctor: 'Why should he go further into the world than where he was? The secret of quiet happiness lay in limiting the aspirations' (p. 137). The fact that he still wishes that she was not 'quite so cheap for him' (p. 155), nevertheless, reveals that he is still governed by upper-class discourses. Ultimately, it is the thought of Melbury's 'few golden hundreds' that helps him 'remove his uneasiness at the prospect of endangering his professional and social chances by an alliance with the family of a simple countryman' (p. 171). He will at least be able to strengthen his financial status through this alliance.

At this stage, Fitzpiers's love for Grace and her accomplishment as a 'lady' overshadows her 'origin' in his eyes, making him oblivious to the fact that by aligning himself with the Melburys he is undermining his upper-class subjectivity. He has constituted himself as an aristocrat by differentiating himself from the working classes, as his words to Grace demonstrate: 'I dare say I am [...] contemptibly proud of my poor old ramshackle family; [...] I feel as if I belonged to a different species from the people who are working in that yard'. He also notices that Grace, although 'refined and educated', is not 'radically different' from Giles. By marrying Grace, in other words, he has ranked himself with the lower classes: Grace's 'blood', as she herself admits, 'is no better than' those in the yard (p. 179). Once in Melbury's house, and among the working folk, he further realises that he has become one of them. He repeats Mrs. Charmond's words, which, for him, reflect the opinion of the aristocratic society, that through this marriage he has 'spoiled his opportunities'. These words 'haunted him like a handwriting on the wall' (pp. 182-3). The power of normalising judgement operates on him; he has, in the words of the Book of Daniel 5:27 alluded to here, been 'weighed on the scales and found wanting'. Aware of his deviation from aristocratic norms, he feels deprived of his 'rank' (subject status) as an aristocrat. Foucault describes 'rank' as a disciplinary tool which serves both as 'reward' and 'punishment'.²¹ Fitzpiers will lose his 'rank' as an aristocrat once he proves unqualified for maintaining that position.

Fitzpiers is unable to define himself in an alternative way, as a country doctor, a middle-class professional; liberating himself from the power of upper-class discourses

²¹ See Chapter 1, pp. 16-7.

which have constituted him proves difficult. He resists the new discourse, the new community and the new way of life and strives to reconstitute himself as upper-class by distancing himself from the rustics: ‘no mixing with your people below’, he orders Grace (p. 183). But maintaining a physical distance cannot differentiate him from the villagers for he is ‘no longer regarded as an extrinsic, unfathomed gentleman of limitless potentiality, scientific and social’ ‘but as Mr. Melbury’s compeer, and therefore in a degree only one of themselves’ (pp. 183-4). For them, he is no longer a man of large ‘presence’, no longer ‘a superior hedged by his own divinity’. Even his ‘presence’ as a doctor has shrunk after his marriage: ‘as doctor he began to be rated no higher than old Johns, whom they had so long despised’ (p. 184). Discovering that ‘to keep aloof’ is not sufficient to restore to him his lost subjectivity and large ‘presence’, he decides to leave the ‘place for ever’ by buying a practice elsewhere (pp. 183-4). His interest in Mrs. Charmond and his inattentiveness to his wife can also be read as attempts to categorise himself with the upper classes. Fitzpiers dreams of a tangible rupture with the village community (through Grace’s death) that can provide him with the opportunity to become a genuine aristocrat: if he were ‘free’ again, he believes, ‘with her [Mrs. Charmond’s] fortune’ behind him, he would have the ‘chance of satisfying an honourable ambition’ and his ‘fame, and happiness would be insured!’ (p. 256).

Since his role as a husband fails to endow him with a sense of power as breadwinner and protector, Fitzpiers, like Troy, abandons matrimonial duties for a life of leisure and pleasure. His promiscuity reveals a practice of masculinity strongly conditioned by the structure of emotional attachment (which demands that a man possess the object of desire) as well as by his social class discourses. While, for the middle classes, sex is to be limited to married life,²² in the aristocratic discourse of masculinity which governs Fitzpiers, masculinity is defined in terms of sensuality and hedonism.²³ Like Troy, he associates his ‘presence’ with the power he embodies in terms of a sexual assertiveness which transgresses the codes of morality, a construction of masculinity disapproved by Hardy. It is only his villains, Troy, Fitzpiers and Alec d’Urberville, who constitute themselves in this way.

Later in the story, Fitzpiers attempts once more to redefine himself through matrimony. His return to the village, his desire to reunite with his wife and the interest he takes in his ‘professional practice’ (p. 317) reflect his wish to become a husband, a

²² See Chapter 3, p. 40.

²³ See Chapter 3, note 34.

breadwinner and ‘a practical man’. His asking Grace to ‘[m]ake a bonfire’ of his ‘philosophical literature’, ‘plays’ and ‘French romances’ suggests a forsaking of his aristocratic subjectivity (pp. 344-5). The story ends, however, with uncertainty about the new roles he has adopted (as a husband and a professional), his becoming the kind of man Grace desires: ‘She’s got him quite tame’, as one of the villagers suggests, ‘[b]ut how long ’twill last I can’t say’ (p. 365). Hardy himself wrote in his letter to J. T. Grein, who had asked permission to adapt the novel for the theatre, that ‘the ending of the story—hinted rather than stated—is that the heroine is doomed to an unhappy life with an inconstant husband’.²⁴ Fitzpiers, in other words, is unlikely to maintain his new husbandly role.

Even though it is the structure of emotional attachment which mainly conditions Fitzpiers’s practice of masculinity in the private domain, his gender practice can also be seen to have been delimited by the structure of power. He certainly defines himself in terms of power in relation to Grace. Initially, he is able to overpower her by his intellectual and social ‘presence’; that so ‘modern a man in science and aesthetics’ belongs to ‘ancient’ families ‘lent him a social and intellectual interest which she dreaded’ (p. 162). Overawed by his large ‘presence’, she defines herself as a subordinate: being ‘cleverer, greater than herself, one outside her mental orbit, as she considered him, he seemed to be her ruler rather than her equal’ (p. 166). Empowered by his position of intellectual and social superiority, he allows himself to lead the relationship, to decide the course of the action. He opposes any idea of marrying in a church. Yet even at this stage, when Fitzpiers is apparently her ‘ruler’, Grace is able to resist his dominance, insisting on a church wedding. This is partly, of course, because his position of power has been further weakened by his infidelity, his fear that his affair with Suke Damson might be revealed. After their marriage, however, he constitutes himself as an authoritative husband on most occasions, treating Grace as an inferior. Later in the story, though himself transgressing his duties as a faithful husband, he allows himself to reprimand Grace for her lapse in her responsibilities as a wife; being notified upon his return home that Grace has gone to visit a friend, ‘Fitzpiers considered that Grace ought to have let him know her plans more accurately before leaving home in a freak like this’ (p. 248). Even when he communicates with her to express a desire for a reunion, he does so in a commanding manner, writing in a ‘frigid’ way, ‘briefly and

²⁴ Thomas Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 230.

unaffectedly', that 'living quite alone' made him 'think that they ought to be together' (p. 295).

Fitzpiers's desire to define himself once more as a husband, however, obliges him to adopt a more gentle practice of masculinity. It is now Grace who takes the position of power, deciding and leading the relationship, and Fitzpiers has to accept the passive role of a subordinate: 'It is for you to do and say what you choose. I admit, quite as much as you feel, that I am a vagabond – a brute' (p. 321). Grace undermines his subject positions as a husband and a man by banishing him from her father's house and making him '[walk] about the woods that surrounded Melbury's house, keeping out of sight like a criminal' (p. 332). Grace's revelation that Giles has been her 'betrothed lover' and that she has 'encouraged' him severely undermines Fitzpiers's status as a husband: he 'winced visibly'; 'dominated' by her, 'he could not bear to hear her words' (pp. 345-6). The 'gender regime' of their relationship departs from the dominant gender arrangements of society in that the husband accepts a subordinate role, allowing the wife to lead the relationship.

It is Fitzpiers's gentler practice of masculinity at the end of the novel, ironically, which enables him to govern his wife's conduct: 'His suave deference to her lightest whim on the question of his comings and goings, when as her lawful husband he might show a little independence, was a trait in his character as unexpected as it was engaging'. He owes his victory, of course, to a change in Grace, her inclination to constitute herself through discourses which demand that she becomes a dutiful wife. Having re-read the marriage-service in a prayer-book and been reminded of the 'awfully solemn promises' she has made to her husband, she is 'quite appalled at her recent offhandedness' (p. 354). She ultimately redefines herself as an obedient wife, allowing Fitzpiers to reclaim the position of power and define himself as a husband: "'You are mine – mine again now'". She gently owned that she supposed she was' (p. 357). The 'gender regime' of their relationship once more imitates the prevailing gender patterns of society as they both accept the roles a husband and a wife are expected to undertake.

Fitzpiers thus survives and, like Melbury, he owes his survival to his adaptability; having once failed to constitute himself in specific discourses, he pursues others. At the end, he is able to redefine himself as a husband and a possessor (chosen by Sexual Selection) owing to his ability to attract the opposite sex and his persistence in pursuing the object of desire. Radford argues that 'Hardy perceives the sexual force

inhibiting Fitzpiers to be the dominant natural energy at play in human affairs'.²⁵ Though ultimately chosen both by Natural Selection and by society, Fitzpiers remains Hardy's villain as for Hardy the one who survives is not always the better individual.²⁶

According to J. B. Bullen, the characters in *The Woodlanders* are 'more shadowy and less palpable' than those in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* for 'between the two novels Hardy's interest in fictional characters has shifted from matter to mind'. In *The Woodlanders*, characters 'are distinguished by their mental attitudes'.²⁷ If Hardy's characters are less palpable in this novel, it can be argued that of the three male characters, Giles Winterborne is the most difficult to grasp. Giles is a man 'with a 'reserve in his glance, and restraint upon his mouth' (p. 21), whose 'taciturnity' (p. 106) makes the task of analysing him a complicated one.

Contemporary reviewers admired Giles; an unsigned reviewer writing in the *Saturday Review* (2 April 1887) commented: 'Mr. Hardy has not often drawn a more sympathetic character than that of the undemonstrative, patient, and self-denying Giles Winterborne.'²⁸ Recent scholars, however, have criticised Giles's passivity and resignation, describing him as a 'resigned stoic', a 'subdued' man or a 'sufferer' who 'pursues doggedly a downward path to a miserable grave'.²⁹ But the question is why Giles remains so inactive and resigned. If he loves Grace, why doesn't he act as a man in love usually acts? What makes him endure the loss of Grace? Why does he accept his material loss so easily? And why does Hardy continue to praise him in spite of his passivity and resignation?

One way to explain Giles's behaviour, of course, is to read him as a stoic. But Giles is a stoic not simply because he is passive or resigned but because he is a Stoic in the way ancient Greeks understood the term. Hardy portrays Giles in contrast with the bourgeois-minded Melbury and the aristocratic Fitzpiers. Giles shapes his subjectivity, I would argue, according to the models of behaviour provided by the ancient Greeks, the Stoics. This, of course, does not suggest that he consciously follows the Greek models

²⁵ Andrew Radford, 'The Unmanned Fertility Figure in Hardy's *The Woodlanders* (1887)', in *Victorian Newsletter*, 99 (2001), 24-32 (p. 31).

²⁶ See Chapter 2, p. 25.

²⁷ J. B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp.172, 170.

²⁸ R. G. Cox, ed., *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 152.

²⁹ Radford, p. 24; Joanna Devereux, *Patriarchy and Its Discontents: Sexual Politics in Selected Novels and Stories of Thomas Hardy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p.73; Geoffrey Thurley, *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels: The Nervous and the Statuesque* (St. Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1975), pp. 107, 106.

of self-formation; rather, it is Hardy who attributes classical characteristics to his character.

Giles's lack of interest in financial matters, his modest manner of living, his ability to dissociate himself from the things which are external to him, his practice of self-sufficiency and his self-control can all be read as Stoic inclinations. He, like Oak, lives according to reason, harmonising himself with the reason of the world, which is fate. Knowing his place in the order of the universe, he does not attempt to bring under control the things over which he has no power and accepts things as they happen. For him, wealth and romantic attachments are 'preferred' but 'indifferent' and therefore not necessary for happiness.³⁰ For the Stoics, as a contemporary of Hardy observed, '[t]here is no loveliness on earth to be compared with the moral excellence of virtue, no freedom like the peace of perfect self-control, no wealth like that of wisdom'.³¹

Giles is certainly indifferent towards money matters. He loses his houses through his negligence in finding 'the true conditions of his holding' and although his only option is to write to Mrs. Charmond and ask for her 'generosity', he 'would rather not' do so. He writes to her only because of Melbury's insistence (p. 104) and because he is aware that in losing the houses, he will lose Grace. For Giles, material possessions appear to fall in the category of 'indifferent' things; he would be happy to have them but can do without.

For Giles, romantic relationships are also matters of indifference, for which he does not demonstrate much enthusiasm, as his lack of 'elation' and 'discomposure' when he goes to Sherton Abbas to fetch Grace demonstrates (p. 34).³² Hardy portrays Giles as a man who adheres to the Stoic principles of wisdom and the government of passions and desires. Giles treats the issue of his marriage with Grace rationally. Noticing the difference of the newly cultivated Grace from himself, he is inclined to reconsider their engagement: 'If he should think herself too good for him, he must let her go, and make the best of his loss' (p. 62). His failure in love makes him 'cynical' towards the world (pp. 172-3) but not helpless. His misfortunes, which include the loss of Grace, his houses and his job, make him '[retire] into the background of human life and action' (p. 109). But he is able to resume his life, detaching himself from the things over which he has no control and recognising the domain of his freedom, which is to

³⁰ See my discussion of the Stoic philosophy in Chapter 2, pp. 33-5.

³¹ W.W. Capes, *Stoicism* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1880), p. 50.

³² In the manuscript and serial, Hardy wrote, 'though he [Giles] cherished a true and warm feeling towards Grace Melbury, he was not altogether her fool just now'. Ingham, notes to her edition of *The Woodlanders*, p. 384.

acquiesce in his fate. When Melbury asks him to woo Grace, later in the story, when Grace is still Fitzpiers's wife, Giles strives not to act emotionally, thinking it is 'scarcely wise' to approach Grace 'because of the uncertainty of events'. He regards Melbury's wish as an 'unreasoning desire' (p. 277). All these are classic Stoic attitudes.

Perhaps the most characteristic Stoic quality Giles displays is the strength he finds in suffering. As Grace describes him, Giles is 'a man who despite his misfortunes, had, like Hamlet's friend, borne himself throughout his scathing "[a]s one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing," investing himself thereby with a real touch of sublimity' (p. 219). For the Stoics, suffering, hardship, poverty and even death should not be viewed as evil; it is our fantasy that makes these appear as evil; they do not cause unhappiness for the Stoic who has harmonised himself with the reason of the universe and knows that he owns nothing, not even his own body. The only thing that brings about unhappiness is failing to act in accordance with one's reason.³³

Hardy's portrait of Giles as a Stoic, however, unlike that of Gabriel Oak in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, is not entirely positive. *The Woodlanders* questions the possibility of reaching happiness by acquiescence in the reason of the universe. Giles is a melancholic and even rather cynical Stoic, lacking 'Oak's equanimity', to use Geoffrey Thurley words.³⁴ Submission to fate and renunciation entails suffering for Giles. In comparison with Oak, Giles finds the regulation of his emotions more difficult, as his loss of self-control, showing anger or desire, on some occasions, reveals. He is also far from 'indifferent' to the social gap between the Melburys and himself, as is evident at his dinner party; he has a 'self-deprecatory sense of living on a much smaller scale than the Melburys' do (p. 69). In his relationship with other characters, however, he appears 'indifferent' to their social and material standing.

Giles's Stoic inclinations certainly affect his practice of masculinity. Although he formulates himself through the gender and class structures of his time, his Stoic subjectivity determines the ways he engages with these structures. As a working-class man, he is expected to define his masculinity in terms of manual labour. Though constructing his 'presence' in the social sphere in terms of work, he regards work not only as a means of living but more importantly as a skill. Hardy's emphasis on Giles's tools and Marty's immortalising them by employing them after Giles's death indicate the significance attached to Giles's skill. Giles's work is an art for 'he had a marvellous power of making trees grow [...] there was a sort of sympathy between himself and the

³³ See Chapter 2, pp. 33-5.

³⁴ Thurley, pp. 107, 124.

fir, oak, beech that he was operating on' (p. 63). For Giles, work is not a means of achieving success, a bourgeois ideal, in Tolson's terms.³⁵ As a Stoic, he is indifferent towards material gain. The narrator observes that Giles is 'not a very successful seller either of his trees or of his cider, his habit of speaking his mind when he spoke at all militating against this branch of his business' (p. 36). The calamity of losing his houses makes him 'discomposed' (p. 106) but is unable to crush him. He not only survives but reconstructs his life by means of his skill: while everyone 'expects to find [him] starving', he '[becomes] one of the busiest men in the neighbourhood' (p. 224). His masculine subjectivity is not undermined by his financial losses for he has constructed his 'presence' in the public domain by relying on his capabilities and his skill, which cannot easily be taken from him; if he is no longer a 'yeoman', he is still a skilful worker.

In emotional relationships, likewise, Giles acts as a Stoic. In defining himself as a lover, he is operating within the structure of emotional attachment, which demands that he, as a man, pursues and wins the opposite sex. Yet his practice of masculinity is not completely circumscribed by this structure for he defines himself not primarily in terms of sexuality, persistence and possessiveness but in terms of renunciation, governing his desires. His sense of manhood is not exclusively tied up with the possession of his beloved but with helping her and supporting her (as will be discussed below), which for Hardy represents an alternative way of being a man. The structure of power does not delimit his gender practice, either; he does not attempt to dominate Grace for in his ability to govern himself, he is able to govern his conduct in relation to his beloved.³⁶ His lack of forcefulness can also be linked to his inclination to constitute himself in terms of friendship rather than ownership.

Since he does not define his masculinity primarily in terms of sexuality and proprietorship, Giles does not attempt to govern Grace's conduct, making her interested in himself, by means of his appearance. He is aware how

external phenomena – such as the lowness or height or colour of a hat, the fold of a coat [...] – may have a great influence upon feminine opinion of a man's worth [...]; but a certain causticity of mental tone towards himself and the world in general had prevented to-day, as always, any enthusiastic action on the strength of that reflection. (p. 37)

³⁵ See Chapter 1, pp. 9, 18, 20.

³⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 21.

The things inessential for Giles, however, are essential for Grace; his Stoic practice of masculinity is not therefore to his advantage here. He is unable to impress Grace, who evaluates a man through his physical 'presence'.

Since he regards romantic relationships as 'indifferent', Giles is not insistent on the pursuit of the beloved. He owns three of the four 'cardinal virtues' as Fitzpiers discovers them in 'Schleiermacher': 'Self-control', 'Wisdom' and 'Love'. He does not show 'much perseverance' (p. 142)', however, which is what Grace cares for most and what Giles's Stoic discourse of masculinity does not allow him to practice. Giles is not pathetic in his acquiescence, of course, for his renunciation is the deliberate renunciation of a man who intends to define himself as self-sufficient and who does not find it essential to constitute himself through matrimony. He is not 'wretched', as Thurley describes him, for the very reason that he is the 'dogged Giles'.³⁷ When Grace wants him not to think of their engagement any longer, he does not insist; rather, he takes the position of resignation and indifference: 'Very well', he tells her: 'I cannot say anything till I've thought a while!' (p. 94). Once noticing that Melbury wishes to cancel the engagement and once reading the handwriting on his wall, thinking that Grace also shares his father's wish, Giles writes a note to Melbury in a 'determined manner', cancelling the engagement (p. 107). On Midsummer eve, in the same way, 'adhering to the off-hand manner of indifference which had grown upon him since his dismissal', he deliberately chooses not to step forward to win Grace: he '[disdains]' to shift his position, allowing Fitzpiers to '[capture] Grace (pp. 147-8), for to step forward is to express need and thus to undermine his sense of manhood. Such a construction of masculinity is not favoured by Grace, however, and he is not therefore selected as her husband. In the Darwinian sense, Giles is not chosen by the Law of Sexual Selection operating through Grace; lacking physical embellishments, techniques of flattery and perseverance, he is unable to attract the opposite sex.

Hardy scholars have criticised Giles for his lack of aggressiveness and persistence, his passivity and the suppression of his sexuality, regarding such characteristics as responsible for his failure in love, his unhappiness and his ultimate tragic end.³⁸ Joanna Devereux argues that Giles's sexual restraint is an example of the

³⁷ Thurley, pp. 107, 121

³⁸ Albert J. Guerard, *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and Stories* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), pp. 114-17; T. R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 81-2; Annette Federico, *Masculine Identity in Hardy and Gissing* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1991), pp. 71-3; Radford, p. 24; Devereux, pp. 77-9.

'self-denial demanded by the ideal of the gentleman' in the nineteenth century.³⁹ Andrew Radford, likewise, reads Giles's 'repression of sexual appetites' as a pursuit of codes of chivalry.⁴⁰ While in most of these discussions the emphasis is on Giles's suppression of powerful sexual desires, it appears that his disavowal of sexuality is more a matter of renunciation or government of desires than forceful suppression. Sexuality is simply not central to his masculine subjectivity. His caressing the flower on Grace's bosom and his kissing her, of course, suggest the depth of his love for Grace. Yet, apart from these two occasions, he is not described as a passionate lover; as Frank R. Giordano notes, despite his love for Grace, 'there is something bloodless in that love, something that keeps him from expressing any heat or passion for her'.⁴¹ On most occasions he is ready to renounce Grace and this indicates that the possession of the beloved is not an urgent need for him. He does not persist because, as a Stoic, he attempts both to govern his desires and to view romantic relationships as matters of indifference.

Giles's lack of perseverance can also be attributed to his inclination to define himself in terms of friendship and loving-kindness in relation to Grace. This is particularly evident when he thinks of refusing her for her own happiness. When allowed to woo her for the second time, aware of their social differences and the unlikelihood of her being happy with him, he thinks: 'Move another step towards her he would not. He would even repulse her' for her own 'dear sake' (p. 287). He departs from the prevailing structure of emotional attachment which requires his asserting himself through sexuality. It is by constituting himself as a Stoic that Giles is able to resist the dominant discourses of his time, refusing to define his masculinity in terms of the possession of the beloved.

However, though resisting the contemporary discourse of sexuality, Giles is governed, to some extent, by another prevailing Victorian discourse, that of honour, when he thinks of social propriety. By '[clasping] in his arms her he had watched over and loved so long' and kissing her, although aware that Grace is 'wedded irrevocably to Fitzpiers', he feels he has undermined his subject status not only as a self-governed man but as an honourable man (p. 291). His self-reproach for 'not telling her what he knew' (that she cannot be divorced) suggests his concern about the probable loss of this latter subjectivity (p. 292). His attempt to help Grace without compromising her once she

³⁹ Devereux, p. 69.

⁴⁰ Radford, p. 30.

⁴¹ Frank R. Giordano, 'The Martyrdom of Giles Winterborne', in *The Thomas Hardy Annual*, vol. II, ed. by Norman Page (London: Macmillan, 1984), pp. 61-77 (p. 70).

resorts to him in the woods is partially an effort to define himself as a righteous man, '[wiping] out that reproach from his conscience' (p. 301).

Giles's self-sacrifice in giving his shelter to Grace, however, cannot be entirely read as an endeavour to define himself in terms of honour. His altruistic act reflects also his attempt to renounce sexuality and constitute himself in terms of fellow-feeling, which for Hardy is apparently a nobler mode of being a man. It is, mainly, his Stoic inclinations, his ability to master his desires and perceive romantic attachments as indifferent, that enable him to formulate himself in this alternative way. He attempts to assert his manhood by helping the beloved:

If ever Winterborne's heart chafed his bosom it was at this sight of a perfectly defenceless creature conditioned by such harsh circumstances. He forgot his own agony in the satisfaction of having at least found her a shelter. (p. 303)

Now, for the first time, he really feels himself a 'man', a 'man' on whom a beloved has relied for help; that among all other men, Grace has trusted him is enough to provide him with a sense of large 'presence': 'There was one man on earth in whom she believed absolutely, and he was that man' (p. 304). Proud and contented with his large 'presence', his helping his beloved, he does not heed the possibility of his imminent death. As a Stoic, he does not mind hardship and even death. He therefore does not allow Grace to 'see his face by daylight, for its thinness would inevitably betray him' (p. 305). His generosity subsequently brings about his death. By surpassing self-love, sacrificing himself for the well-being of the beloved, Giles, like Viviette, becomes an exemplar of Comtean 'altruism'.

Critics have questioned the value and logic of Giles's self-restraint and self-sacrifice, whether it is for the sake of Grace's or his own honour. For Giordano, for instance, who has discussed Giles's death as 'martyrdom', 'Giles's needless and wasteful death is a pointless sacrifice'.⁴² Devereux argues that Giles's death suggests 'the inordinately high price to be paid for gentlemanliness in the later decades of the century'.⁴³ But as Michael Millgate observes, 'awareness of the ironies surrounding Giles's death—ironies perceived and emphasised by Hardy himself—should not prevent it from being recognised as an extraordinary act of courage, loyalty, and love.'⁴⁴ Hardy's narrator makes no explicit judgement on Giles's self-sacrifice. What can be

⁴² Giordano, p. 77.

⁴³ Devereux, p. 69.

⁴⁴ *His Career*, p. 258.

inferred from the text, however, is that Hardy laments Giles's death while admiring his practice of masculinity, his ability to master his desires and constitute himself through altruism. He has earlier commended him for his 'chivalrous and undiluted manliness' (p. 206) and for his 'honesty, goodness, manliness, tenderness' and 'devotion' (p. 219). After his death, he continues extolling him through Grace: 'Nothing ever had brought home to her with such force as this death how little acquirements and culture weigh beside sterling personal character' (p. 334). Hardy even makes his villain admire Giles: learning about 'Giles's generosity to Grace in giving up his house to her at the risk, and possibly the sacrifice, of his own life', Fitzpiers 'almost envied his chivalrous character' (p. 333). For Hardy, Giles is able to achieve a noble mode of being a man even though it leads to his tragic death.

What Hardy explicitly questions, however, is the value of the person for whom Giles has sacrificed himself: is Grace 'worth such self-sacrifice'? Grace herself believes that she is not (pp. 308-9). There is certainly a bitter irony in her return to Fitzpiers, her valuing her 'brush and comb' (p. 359) and forgetting all about Giles and even her promise to deposit flowers on his grave. Yet the fact that the bourgeois-minded Grace forgets Giles does not detract from the force of his actions. Hardy ends the story not with Giles being left to oblivion but with his immortalisation through the words of his true heroine, the understanding and sympathetic Marty South: 'If ever I forget your name let me forget home and heaven! [...] But no, no, my love, I never can forget' ee; for you was a *good* man, and did good things!' (p. 367). Giles becomes Hardy's '*good* man' for constructing himself the way Hardy admires, through '[t]he purity of his nature', 'his freedom from the grosser passions' (p. 314), his benevolence and altruism and his Stoic power of renunciation. The picture of masculinity Hardy portrays and praises stands far removed from the conventional picture of masculinity characterised by power, forcefulness, sexual assertiveness and ambitiousness. Giles is pictured as a man who has succeeded in formulating himself in ways other than those demanded by the prevailing social structures and discourses of his time.

Giles's practice of masculinity is further explored in his relationship with Marty, where he defines himself in terms of friendship. Both have rejected not only sexual differences but sexuality to constitute themselves in an alternative way, as friends. Giles is unconscious of the sexual difference between them: concerned about Marty's hands which are hurt by work, 'he took hold of one and examined it *as if it were his own*' (p. 22) [my emphasis]. He does not perceive her as an object of desire: as Marty tells

Grace, '[i]n all our outdoor days and years together', 'the one thing he never spoke of to me was love; nor I did to him' (p. 331).

Marty is distinguished from Hardy's other female characters; as William Wallace, Hardy's contemporary reviewer, wrote in the *Academy*: 'we have an entirely new creation in Marty South'.⁴⁵ She is portrayed as an individual who has renounced sexual differences as well as sexuality for an alternative, nobler, mode of being in the world. Hardy does not depict Marty as a representative of the female sex. At the opening of the story, she is portrayed doing a masculine job, her father's, making spars. The distinguishing feature of femininity, her long hair, is also renounced when she loses her hopes of defining herself as a beloved, when she hears Melbury's words about the attachment between Giles and Grace. Her selling of her hair also suggests her renunciation of sexual desires.⁴⁶ Marty's rejection of sexual differences is further revealed at the end of the story, when she identifies herself with Giles, polishing his tools and intending to 'get his apple-mill and press' as well to 'travel with it in the autumn season as he had done' (p. 333). At the end of the story, she is completely divested of feminine features: 'the contours of womanhood' are 'so undeveloped as to be scarcely perceptible' in her (p. 366). Devereux argues that Marty, in this scene, 'is described as almost sexless'.⁴⁷ By depriving Marty of feminine attributes throughout the story, the text presents her and Giles as perfect friends, without the complications of sexual difference. The description of Marty in the final scene and her eulogy over Giles's grave suggest this alternative way of being in the world. Marty is described as a 'being who had rejected with indifference the attribute of sex for the loftier quality of abstract humanism' (p. 366). They are no longer man and woman but fellow members of humanity.

Marty can also be seen as a Stoic. It can be argued that she, like Giles, has harmonised herself with the reason of the universe, acquiescing in her destiny. Resembling a Stoic who knows the domain of her freedom, she does not attempt to bring under control what is out of her control. She is capable of renunciation, dissociating herself from the things which are external to her. In Marjorie Garson's words, '[w]hen their love seems hopeless, Marty abjures Giles and Giles abjures Grace with the kind of resigned stoicism for which Hardy apparently feels deep moral

⁴⁵ Cox, p. 154.

⁴⁶ Ingham, notes to her edition of *The Woodlanders*, p. 382.

⁴⁷ Devereux, p. 80.

approval.’⁴⁸ Marty disavows not Giles, of course, but her desire for him. She wants her beloved to be happy even if it is with someone else. In the midsummer night, she arranges for Giles to catch Grace, ‘always doomed to sacrifice desire to obligation’ (p. 148) — for Hardy, such Stoic renunciation, though morally valued, entails pain. It is arguably Marty’s Stoic subjectivity that enables her to abandon her sexual desires (and with them any claim over Giles) and define herself as a friend.

Though Hardy’s heroine, Marty, survives, his hero finds no chance of survival. Contemporary reviewers of *The Woodlanders* criticised Hardy for allowing Fitzpiers to live (and win Grace) and Giles to die. A reviewer in the *Athenaeum* commented on the novel: ‘The good man suffers; the bad man not only prospers, but, what is almost worse, shows signs of amendment without having been adequately punished.’ R. H. Hutton, in his review in the *Spectator*, thought that the novel offered ‘a picture of shameless falsehood, levity and infidelity, followed by no true repentance, and yet crowned at the end with perfect success’.⁴⁹ For Hardy, there is a bitter irony in the survival of Fitzpiers and the elimination of Giles, which is part of the increasingly tragic vision of his novels. If, in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, the worthy individual (Oak) survives and the unworthy (Troy) is annihilated, in *The Woodlanders*, it is the better individual who is doomed to extinction. It can be argued that Giles is eliminated for abstaining from formulating himself in the ways a man ‘normally’ constitutes himself (through assertiveness and sexuality) and for his lack of egotism (not prioritising his own interests above that of others). Already not chosen by Sexual Selection (by Grace), he is eventually discarded by Natural Selection. For Hardy, Giles’s alternative mode of being a man, renouncing sexuality and defining himself in terms of virtue and altruism, is not approved by and consequently not preserved by nature or by society. Yet with his very portrayal of Giles (and Marty), Hardy seems to suggest that resistance to the dominant gender discourses of his time through the practice of loving-kindness is not only conceivable but possible. It may not benefit the individuals concerned but it may (in the long run) improve the race.

⁴⁸ Marjorie Garson, *Hardy’s Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), p. 82.

⁴⁹ Cox, pp. 142-3.

Chapter 7

Tess of the d'Urbervilles:

Tyrannous Practices of Masculinity

With *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), the role of social structures and discourses in the shaping of masculinity, already underlined in Hardy's earlier fiction, is presented even more clearly. While in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy explores the destructive effects of entanglement in gender and class structures and discourses upon the male individual, in *Tess* he focuses on the consequences of such entanglement for the female character. *Tess* could be said to be even more distressing than the former novel since the destruction of others is even more tragic than self-destructiveness.

In *Tess*, as in Hardy's other works so far discussed, the male characters can be seen to formulate themselves through discourses of masculinity, pursuing their norms in order to be awarded a 'rank' (subject position) as a man.¹ They necessarily constitute themselves through the structures of gender and class, which have already set the framework within which they can operate. Permeated by patriarchal discourses, they associate masculinity with power; 'presence', to use John Berger's term, is what they need to possess in order to identify themselves as men. As Berger explains, traditionally a man's 'presence' is linked with 'the promise of power' which he incarnates. It is only when 'the promise is large and credible' that his 'presence is striking'; when 'it is small or incredible, he is found to have little 'presence'.² It is in the process of the attempted acquisition of 'presence' (a rank as a 'man') that Hardy's men ruin the female protagonist, Tess.

With his presentation of Jack Durbeyfield from the opening part of the novel, Hardy examines the problem of the conflation of masculinity with power along with the consequences of losing such a sense of power for a man and those in relation to him. Jack constitutes himself in the domestic domain through the structure of power, which R. W. Connell considers one of the delimiters of gender practice.³ Jack defines himself as the head of the household, making decisions for his dependents. Yet despite his relatively large 'presence' in the private sphere, he does not enjoy much sense of power in the public arena. His defining himself in terms of work indicates a practice of masculinity conditioned by the sexual allocation of tasks, which, according to Connell,

¹ See Chapter 1, pp. 12-3, 16-7.

² See Chapter 1, pp. 17-8

³ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

is another delineator of gender practice.⁴ Class structures have further demarcated the way he should assert himself in the social domain; he should define himself in terms of manual labour. Yet he does not find his ‘presence’ as a labourer and working-class to be large enough, as the way he is described demonstrates: he is a ‘haggler’ with ‘rickety’ legs.⁵ Without strong economic power, he is devoid of a strong sense of manhood. Work, as Andrew Tolson argues, becomes so constitutive of masculine identity that, for men, lack of success in work or unemployment signifies the undermining of their masculinity.⁶

Jack’s readiness to discard his subject status as ‘plain Jack Durbeyfield’ and adopt one as ‘Sir John’ and his frantic attachment to this imaginary subjectivity reflects the smallness of ‘presence’ he experiences as a common man (p. 7). As soon as he assumes the title of Sir John, he categorises himself with the higher classes. That the d’Urbervilles are ‘extinct – as a county family’ (p. 9), that they live nowhere, have no ‘mansions’, ‘estates’ and lands does not concern him. What matters to him is that he has found a way of strengthening his sense of manhood, associating himself with his mighty ancestors. Devoid of a striking social and economic ‘presence’, he fabricates a ‘presence’ for himself as a nobleman, tenuous though this is.

This new subjectivity confers power on him, allowing him to conceive himself a man of large ‘presence’: ‘luxuriously’ lying on ‘the bank among daisies’, he speaks peremptorily to the boy whom he meets on the road, ordering him to ask for ‘a horse and a carriage’ to be sent to him ‘immediately, to carry me [him] home’ (pp. 10-11). Then, ‘leaning back’ in the carriage, he is described

with his eyes closed luxuriously, [...] waving his hand above his head, and singing in a slow recitative –

“I’ve-got-a-great-family-vault-at-Kingsbere – and-knighted-fore-fathers-in-lead-coffins-there!” (p. 15)

From this point onwards, he lives an imaginary life as a nobleman; we no longer see him in the real world. When his wife speaks to him in the public house, he looks at her ‘as through a window-pane’, as if she were in a different world, before going on ‘with his recitative’ (p. 26). He deliberately shuns the reality of his life; when coming home,

⁴ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

⁵ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, ed. by Tim Dolin, intro. by Margaret R. Higonnet (London: Penguin, 1998 [1891]), p. 7. All subsequent page references are from this edition and are given in parentheses, after quotations in the text.

⁶ See Chapter 1, pp. 9, 20.

‘at sight of the smallness of his present residence’ — a reminder of the smallness of his real ‘presence’ — he strives to ‘fortify his soul’ by identifying himself with his forefathers, repeating the recitative (p. 29). For him, the fictitious world becomes a means of escape from reality and the bitter sense of powerlessness he suffers there.

Jack’s subjectivity as a nobleman collides with those he experiences as a father and a breadwinner, however, and in the clash between the two, the former, the one which provides him with a stronger sense of manhood, prevails. His going to a public house to ‘celebrate his ancient blood’ till late at night, of course, prevents him from carrying out his duty as the supporter of a family, for example taking the beehives for sale (p. 24). Similarly, when offered ‘a very few shillings’, by ‘the knacker and tanner’ for the carcass of Prince, his assumed nobility makes him refuse the offer, which could have been of some use to his family: ‘When we D’Urbervilles was knights in the land, we didn’t sell our chargers for cat’s meat. Let ’em keep their shillings!’ (pp. 34-5). Associating his horse with his subject status as a knight, he honours its carcass: ‘He worked harder the next day in digging a grave for Prince than he had worked for months to grow a crop for his family.’ Once distress ‘loomed in the distance’, following Prince’s death on which ‘[t]he haggling business’ ‘had mainly depended’ (p. 35), instead of striving to provide for his family, he prefers living the imaginary life of a nobleman. He does not so much like the idea of sending Tess to the d’Urbervilles to ‘claim kin’, not because he does not wish to put ‘more of the family burdens’ on his daughter’s ‘young shoulders’ (p. 37) but because as ‘the head of the noblest branch of the family’ he ‘ought to keep’ himself ‘up’ rather than make his children ‘beholden to strange kin’ (p. 36). Though forfeiting his role as a provider, he continues to define himself in terms of authority in relation to his family, which, according to Tolson, is another way of constructing masculine ‘presence’.⁷ His subject status as a breadwinner, which is already vulnerable — he is known to be ‘a slack twisted fellow’ (p. 35) — is weakened further under the influence of the new subjectivity; he has now ‘more conceit than energy or health’ (p. 47).

When his wife is sick and Tess is away, at the end of the story, Durbeyfield abstains from working and providing for his family, reasoning that it is ‘wrong for a man of such a high family as his to slave and drave at common labouring work’ (p. 344). For him, to work is to undermine his subjectivity as Sir John. Though it is the ‘season for planting and sowing’ and ‘the garden and the allotment of the Durbeyfields were behindhand’, instead of working on his land he prefers to mull over ‘a rational

⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

scheme for living' on his aristocratic ancestry. He writes 'to all the old antiquarians' in this part of the country, 'asking them to subscribe to a fund to maintain' him (p. 346). He never ceases conceiving of himself as a nobleman for it is only through such self-perception that he feels himself a 'man'. Tess's plight, therefore, though more directly instigated by her two lovers, can be seen to have been initiated by her father's practice of masculinity. She pays the price for his sense of powerlessness and subsequently his living an imaginary life, abrogation of his roles as a caring father, a provider and a supporter.

Alec d'Urberville's upper-class subjectivity is no less fictitious than Jack Durbeyfield's. Alec is the son of a bourgeois upstart, 'a money lender', whose wealth has allowed him to fabricate a subject status as a nobleman for himself and his descendents: 'conning for an hour in the British Museum the pages of the works devoted to extinct, half-extinct, obscured, and ruined families', he has chosen d'Urberville to 'be 'annexed to his own name for himself and his heirs eternally' (p. 39). Empowered by this imaginary aristocratic subjectivity, Alec, like Jack, constitutes himself as a man of large 'presence'. He is presented as a man who incorporates the prestigious social power of a county squire and the economic power of a bourgeois. His dandy dress, his cigar smoking and his patronising manner of speaking to Tess demonstrate the strong sense of manhood he enjoys.

As a man, Alec is constrained by the sexual division of labour, expected to construct his 'presence' in the public domain in terms of taking a masculine vocation. Further constituted by class structures, he has chosen the kind of vocation his social class requires him to take. Formulating himself through upper-class discourses (and relying on inherited money), he associates his masculinity not with work but with the ownership of property and with leading a life of leisure and 'idleness',⁸ a construction of masculinity to which aristocrat Troy and Fitzpiers also aspire.

Alec's practice of masculinity in the private domain can be seen to be significantly defined by the structure of emotional attachment (another structure which conditions the practice of gender, as Connell argues),⁹ which requires his pursuit of the opposite sex. For someone of his class position, the structure of emotional relations demands that he constructs his masculinity not in terms of matrimony and sexual restraint prior to marriage (the middle-class definitions of masculinity)¹⁰ but through

⁸ See Lynne Segal's discussion of aristocratic masculinity in Chapter 3, note 34.

⁹ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁰ See Chapter 3, p. 40.

‘sensuality’ and promiscuity.¹¹ D. H. Lawrence, in his discussion of Alec as an aristocrat, states that ‘[f]or many generations’, people of ‘old descent’ ‘have been accustomed to regard their own desires as their own supreme laws. They have not been bound by the conventional morality’.¹² Like Troy and Fitzpiers, Alec associates his ‘presence’ with sexual assertiveness, entrapping women and abusing them. He prides himself on his renown as ‘a reckless gallant and heart-breaker’ (p. 83). When he finds in Tess another prey ‘a pleased gleam’ appears on ‘his face’ (p. 44); it is in constituting himself as ‘a damn bad fellow’ (p. 77) that he feels himself a ‘man’.

Governed by the structure of power, Alec constitutes himself as a superior in relation to Tess; he is a man and upper-class while she is a working-class sexual object. As Connell observes, the couple relationship is based on inequality; a woman is defined as a sexual object while a man is not.¹³ Alec undertakes to overpower her by demonstrating both an assertive and a gentle practice of masculinity. By forcefully inserting strawberries into her mouth and covering her with blossoms, he is asserting himself both as a domineering master and as a seducer. He is able to make her accept his mother’s (in fact his) offer of work by personally coming for a reply and complimenting her: she ‘must be worth’ her ‘weight in gold’ (p. 46). He also attempts to attract Tess through the techniques of flattery and an arresting appearance (his smoking and his dandy appearance), the techniques he needs to master if he wants to be chosen by Sexual Selection, that is, by the opposite sex. He is further shown to be a man who associates masculinity with aggressiveness. His ability to manage a horse provides him with a sense of power and more importantly with a means of impressing the object of desire. His galloping down the slope with an unmanageable horse becomes, for him, an assertion of masculinity: ‘If any living man can manage this horse I can’ (p. 54).

Yet Alec’s show of power fails to impress Tess, who has no inclination to define herself through the structure of emotional attachment, as a beloved. His ‘kiss of mastery’ in the gig, when taking her to his mansion, makes him feel a man of large ‘presence’ but ‘[h]is ardour was nettled’ once she wipes away the kiss on her cheek (p. 56). That he is not willingly chosen by Tess undercuts his masculine ‘presence’ or ‘his masculine sense of self’, in Richard Nemesvari’s words.¹⁴ By refusing to constitute

¹¹ See Chapter 3, note 34.

¹² D. H. Lawrence, ‘Study of Thomas Hardy’, in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. by Edward D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1936), pp. 398-516 (pp. 486-7).

¹³ R. W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), p. 113.

¹⁴ Richard Nemesvari, “‘The Thing Must Be Male, We Suppose’”: Erotic Triangles and Masculine Identity in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and Melville’s *Billy Budd*, in *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 87-109 (p. 91).

herself as a subordinate, although she is only a 'farm girl', she further undermines his position of supremacy as an upper-class man; she escapes from her captivity in his gig, pretending that her hat has blown off. His fury at 'her trick' and his attempt 'to drive back upon her', to 'hem her in between the gig and the hedge' (p. 57) are futile attempts to reassert himself. His relationship with Tess, which can be interpreted in terms of Foucauldian power relations,¹⁵ is not stable; he is unable to maintain his dominance because Tess will not act as he demands. His emotional relationship with Tess accordingly becomes 'hostile', to employ Connell's contention that emotional attachments can be 'favourable', 'hostile' or ambivalent;¹⁶ he has to resort to force in order to reclaim his dominance.

Alec tries to define himself as the winner of the object of desire by playing the role of a supporter (rescuing her from her vulgar companions) and by constituting himself as a well-wisher and a friend to her family (buying them another horse). When these strategies fail, he resorts to drugging and then raping her (in the first edition; in subsequent editions, he merely takes advantage of her semi-conscious mood). Then, as soon as he succeeds in asserting himself as her sexual possessor, he no longer yearns for her. Like Troy, in other words, he associates his masculinity with sensuality and not love. When taking her back home, he is quite a different man, forgetting 'his struggle to kiss her' and speaking to her 'coldly' (p. 76). Though managing to dominate her, he is unable to enjoy a strong sense of 'presence' in that regard for he has mastered her physically and not emotionally. As Rosemarie Morgan argues, Tess's 'spirit remains self-governing and unyielding'.¹⁷ By refusing to love him, she undermines his image of himself both as a man and as a member of the gentry: 'He emitted a laboured breath, as if the scene were getting rather oppressive to his heart, or to his conscience, or to his gentility' (p. 78).

Failing in his attempt to retain possession of Tess, Alec attempts to construct his masculinity in an alternative way. The next time we see Alec, he is 'a converted man' with 'words of Scripture' upon his mouth (p. 305). Exposed to religious discourses by Parson Clare, he has undertaken to constitute himself as a man of God, aiming to 'devote' himself 'to missionary work in Africa' (p. 315). Alec's new subjectivity is, nevertheless, fragile, easily undercut by Tess's looks. For even though '[t]he inferior man was quiet in him now', 'it was surely not extracted, nor even entirely subdued' (pp.

¹⁵ See Chapter 1, p. 19.

¹⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁷ Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 95.

309-10); it therefore rebels against the newly-assumed religious subjectivity. He attempts to 'fortify himself' by reading Mr. Clare's 'warm and encouraging letter [...] on the path of life he has chosen', as well as 'some passages from his Bible' (p. 312).

If Alec's subject position as a preacher is a fabricated one, there is, however, a real change in him in terms of his emotions for Tess; sexual desire still exists but now he loves her as well, as his inclination to define himself through matrimony indicates. Determined to become her husband, he feels emasculated when she declares herself the wife of another man: 'he stopped dead' on hearing the news (p. 316). His endeavour, until the end of the story, is to win Tess from his rival and therefore to define himself as the one in the position of power: "I was your master once! I will be your master again. If you are any man's wife you are mine!" (p. 332). According to Nemesvari, Alec's 'renewed assault on Tess' is mainly motivated by 'the desire to defeat Angel and the version of masculine identity he represents', which is constructed in term of sexual restraint, as opposed to Alec's sensuality.¹⁸

To reinstate himself in the position of power (and accordingly to reconstruct his 'presence), Alec needs to prevent Angel from taking that position, enticing Tess from him. He therefore employs a range of techniques to attract and impress her. By constituting himself as a friend and a provider, Alec eventually succeeds in taking the position of dominance, as Tess's possessor. Permeated by the prevalent discourses of his time, which associate masculinity with power and sexuality, he is unable to envisage formulating himself in an alternative way, through loving-kindness in relation to Tess. The price he pays for his practice of masculinity is nevertheless heavy, both his own life and hers.

That Hardy's protagonist, Angel Clare, is a complicated character is a view shared by both contemporary and recent critics of Hardy. A reviewer in the December 1891 issue of the *Pall Mall Gazette* commented that Angel was a 'difficult type [...] to present'.¹⁹ William Watson, writing in the *Academy* in February 1892, also found Angel a 'perplexing and difficult character'.²⁰ For later Hardy scholars, likewise, Angel is a complex character. Rosemary Sumner describes him as a man of 'unresolved conflicting views'²¹ and for Ellen Lew Sprechman, he is 'a young man of uncertain philosophies'.²²

¹⁸ 'The Thing Must Be Male', pp. 103-5.

¹⁹ R. G. Cox, ed., *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 180.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

²¹ Rosemary Sumner, *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist* (London: Macmillan, 1981), p. 131.

²² Ellen Lew Sprechman, *Seeing Women as Men: Role Reversal in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1995), p. 93.

The problem with Angel is that he is a man with multiple contradictory subject statuses. Hardy seems to examine in him the possibility of the formation of masculinity outside the domain of prevailing Victorian gender and class structures and discourses. Angel refrains from constructing his masculinity in terms of sexuality, success, ambition and religious practice and instead strives to construct new subjectivities for himself as an intellectual, a philosopher, a rationalist and a self-governed man. The only status he appears to maintain is his class subjectivity, which is perhaps what undermines his entire project of self-formation.

When he first appears in the story, Angel is described as ‘a desultory tentative student of something’ (p. 16), apparently looking for some ‘games of truth’ through which to constitute himself.²³ He is a middle-class man, the son of an Anglican parson, who is expected to follow the family, class and religious discourses to which he is exposed, to become ‘a minister of the Gospel’ (p. 115). Despite his ‘warmest affection’ for the Church, however, he questions certain of its doctrines, believing that religion requires ‘reconstruction’ (pp. 115-6). Having conceived himself as a ‘stickler for good morals’ and desired to become a ‘teacher of men’, he is disappointed to find himself logically incapable of accepting ordination (p. 224). Though not specifically alluded to, it can be argued that the alternative discourse that Angel the moralist is inclined to pursue is that of Stoicism. The book he has ordered is described as ‘a system of philosophy’ and the most ‘moral’ one (p. 115). The text does not clarify what precise philosophy Angel pursues; it might be the Positivist philosophy, as T. R. Wright suggests,²⁴ but it could also be Stoicism. Angel’s preference to work for the ‘honour and glory of man’ rather than for the ‘honour and glory of God’, his belief ‘that it might have resulted far better for mankind if Greece had been the source of the religion of modern civilization, and not Palestine’ (p. 158) and his quoting the Stoic emperor at the time of his distress, as we will see below, suggest his substitution of Christianity with this pagan philosophy.²⁵ His indifference towards economic and social success, his having ‘himself well in hand’, his being ‘free from grossness’ and his being ‘rather

²³ See Chapter 1, pp. 12-3.

²⁴ T. R. Wright, *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 213.

²⁵ Hardy’s note, highlighting the differences between Christianity and Stoicism, supports my argument that Hardy has Stoicism in mind as Angel’s chosen discourse: ‘The Stoics represented the old Pagan ideal of virtue in its highest form: it was *teres atque rotundus*, based on a self-complacent faith in the perfection of human nature & the dignity of man, & taking no account of that sense of sin & need for repentance & pardon which lay at the root of the Evangelical system of ethics. ... No real recognition of responsibility to a higher Power, of the guilt of offending him, & of a future judgment. ... The worldly code of respectability & honour ... was held synonymous with the highest virtue.’ Lennart A. Björk, ed. *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1985), I, 47. Hardy’s elaboration of ‘Greek morality’ also appears on p. 65 of the same volume.

bright than hot' (p. 193), though interpretable in various ways, can also be read as Stoic inclinations.

Angel's 'desultory studies, his undertakings and mediations', are carried out in order to acquire the theoretical knowledge which can help him constitute himself in the manner of the Stoics, as a philosopher. His developing 'considerable indifference to social forms and observances', his scorn for 'material distinctions of rank and wealth' and his lack of interest in 'the good old families' (p. 116), along with the 'austerities' he undergoes, can be conceived as the effect of the Stoic system of thought on him.²⁶ This austere morality, however, is unable to provide him with a strong sense of self. That he is 'tossed by doubts and difficulties like a cork in the waves' (p. 225) — suggesting that he still suffers from 'the ache of modernism' (p. 124) — that he leaves his life of austerity for a new experience in London and that he '[plunges] into eight-and forty hours' dissipation with a stranger' (p. 225) demonstrate his inability, at this stage, to constitute himself as a Stoic, either in terms of the development of a sense of equanimity or in the government of his desires and impulses. Despite this lapse, he nevertheless attempts to formulate himself as a Stoic, as the way of life he has led after this episode demonstrates.

Owing to his 'early association with country solitudes' and affected by the pagan worldview, Angel the philosopher, develops an 'aversion to modern town life', an 'aversion' which 'shut him out from such success as he might have aspired to by entering a mundane profession in the impracticability of the spiritual one' (pp. 116-7). He is thus left perplexed as to how to construct his 'presence' in the social domain, without losing his desired subject status as an intellectual and a philosopher. As a man he is expected to define himself in terms of economic power. Farming (a choice of profession which suggests a construction of masculinity within the structure of the sexual division of labour) is what he thinks of pursuing. It is a profession which, although 'anticipated neither by him nor by others' (p. 114), can be the means of acquiring financial 'independence, without the sacrifice of what he valued even more than a competency – intellectual liberty' (p. 117). It may appear to his family a step down in class, but in refraining from constructing his 'presence' in terms of success, a determinant of middle-class masculinity, as Tolson notes,²⁷ Angel rejects their values.

The main purpose of his sojourn at Talbothays, of course, is to achieve the necessary qualifications for the construction of his 'presence' in the public domain as an

²⁶ See my discussion of the Stoic philosophy in Chapter 2, pp. 33-5.

²⁷ See Chapter 1, pp. 9, 18, 20.

agriculturalist, and hence to achieve a 'rank' (subject position) as a 'man'. But he also continues to formulate himself as a philosopher. His knowledge of human nature, up to this point, has been theoretical, obtained mainly from books; 'he soon preferred', however, to obtain some practical knowledge, 'to read human nature by taking his meals downstairs in the general dining-kitchen, with the dairyman and his wife and the maids and men' (p. 117). Yet his sense of class-consciousness demonstrates that he is still governed by middle-class discourses. He feels his '[s]itting down at a level member of the dairyman's household' to be 'an undignified proceeding' (pp. 117-8), a feeling at odds with the Stoic teachings (which regard social status as a matter of indifference) and with his subject position as an intellectual. His sitting at a separate table, though arranged by the dairyman's wife's, suggests that he is constituted by class structures.

Gradually, however, Angel begins to distance himself from his class subjectivity and to align himself with the workers on the farm: 'The longer he resided here the less objection had he to his company, and the more did he like to share quarters with them in common' (p. 117). He is able to disentangle himself from class structures and regard the working-folks as 'fellow creatures'. By virtue of his living in close contact with Nature, while studying human nature, he achieves a fresh perspective on life: 'He grew away from old associations and saw something new in life and humanity' (p. 118). As soon as he detaches himself from middle-class mentality, equipped as he is with Stoic knowledge (and its optimistic view of the universe),²⁸ he begins to experience himself in a new way, to find himself 'wonderfully free from the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races with the decline of belief in a beneficent Power' (p. 118).

It is at this time that Tess enters Angel's life, a test of his liberal-mindedness, his heterodoxy and his Stoic self-government. He is first attracted to her fluty voice and then to her beauty and her mentality — she shares his pessimistic view of life, which he is now only beginning to overcome; a task in which he has not apparently been so successful, as his description of life as a 'hobble' demonstrates (p. 123). Initially, he does not constitute himself entirely through the structure of emotional attachment, which demands that a man asserts himself by pursuing and winning of the opposite sex. His attraction to Tess is more spiritual than physical. The narrator describes him as 'less

²⁸ Hardy, in his literary notes, refers to '[t]he Hellenic character – a native joyousness, & exultation in life'. *Literary Notebooks*, I, 48. For Hardy, the 'zest for existence which was so intense in early civilizations' has been substituted in later centuries by 'the view of life as a thing to be put up with'. Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, ed. by Tony Slade, intro. by Penny Boumelha (London: Penguin, 1999 [1878]), p. 67. This point is also made by Björk in *Literary Notebooks*, I, 298. See also my discussion of Stoicism in Chapter 2, p. 33.

Byronic than Shelleyan', 'more spiritual than animal' and his love as more 'ethereal' than physical (p. 192). Angel can be seen as a man whose 'presence' depends on the power he embodies in terms of self-government rather than sexual assertiveness.

Angel's self-discipline can be seen as a configuration of masculinity according to the Victorian model of the gentleman.²⁹ This model of masculinity, as James Eli Adams argues, was constructed by middle-class men as a response to accusations of effeminacy. During the nineteenth century, there were concerns about the feminisation of British men mainly assumed to be caused by industrialism and concomitant cultural and social transformations. The gendered division of spheres required the separation of fathers from sons, with sons being raised in the domestic (feminine) domain. The pursuit of career and economic success also entailed the postponement of marriage and the practice of 'sexual restraint', conventionally a feminine characteristic. The attempt to differentiate 'masculine self-discipline' from 'feminine self-denial', describing the former as active and 'aggressive self-mastery' and the latter as passive 'surrender of the will to external authority', was part of this reconstruction of masculinity.³⁰

Angel's attempt to build himself as an intellectual and a philosopher, constructing his 'presence' in terms of the power of mind rather than body, can be seen as part of this cultural redefinition of masculinity. Tess, for example, describes him as a 'bookish, musical, thinking young man' (p. 124). But his self-discipline is also a specifically Stoic attribute. Stoics, after all, were those who placed most emphasis on the practice of asceticism and self-mastery as a way of being in the world.

Angel's asceticism is evident in relation to Tess whom he refuses to treat as a sexual object. His 'preoccupation' with her, he insists, is 'no more than a philosopher's regard of an exceedingly novel, fresh and interesting specimen of womankind' (p. 129). His much discussed idealisation of Tess,³¹ his rendering her as an abstraction, as 'a divinity', as 'Artemis and 'Demeter' (p. 130) can also be read as a refusal to see her simply as another working-class girl. He refrains from thinking of her as a woman of flesh because for him to desire a milk-maid signifies the undermining of his class subjectivity.

²⁹ Nemesvari, 'The Thing Must Be Male', p. 96.

³⁰ James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 2, 8-9.

³¹ T. R. Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 116; Marjorie Garson, *Hardy's Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), p. 142; Joanna Devereux, *Patriarchy and Its Discontents: Sexual Politics in Selected Novels and Stories of Thomas Hardy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 116.

But Angel is unable to resist defining himself in terms of sexuality. Despite his endeavour to see Tess as 'ethereal', she becomes more and more corporeal, appearing as a 'dazzlingly fair dairymaid' (p. 131), exuding 'real vitality' and 'real warmth' (p. 150). He is eventually obliged to define himself through the structure of emotional attachment, to constitute himself as a 'man' and regard Tess as a sexual object. Overcome by his desire for her — 'burdened inwardly by a waxing fervour of passion' for her (p. 149) — he abandons his subject positions as a self-governed Stoic and a middle-class man to assert himself as a lover. Noting the beauty of her facial features, when she is milking a cow, he forsakes '[r]esolutions, reticences, prudences, fears', 'jumped up from his seat, [...] went quickly towards the desire of his eyes, and kneeling down beside her, clasped her in his arms' (p. 151). His infatuation with her renders Angel a sensual man after all. On an earlier occasion, Hardy employs a Schopenhauerian metaphor to suggest the strength of the sexual attraction of Angel and Tess towards each other: 'All the while they were converging, under an irresistible law, as surely as two streams in one vale' (p. 129). They cannot resist defining themselves through the structure of emotional attachment.

As soon as he betrays his emotion, Angel is distressed; his new subjectivity as a passionate lover has destabilised his conception of himself as a self-governed man, a rationalist as well as a middle-class man: 'his heart had outrun his judgement' (p. 152). Having associated his masculinity with his power to govern his desires, he does not know how to define himself, 'what to think of himself'; 'the novelty, unpremeditation, mastery of the circumstance disquieted him' (p. 153). His restlessness, however, is not entirely because of his failure to control his impulses but because he desires a woman who is conceived to be a social inferior and thus a threat to his class subjectivity.

In an attempt to regain his sense of manhood, as far as it is associated with the containment of his desires, he undertakes to 'hold aloof', to avoid seeing her for 'flesh and blood could not resist it'. Yet his craving for her is more powerful than he imagines: 'He was driven towards her by every heave of his impulse.' Keen to define his masculinity in terms of possessing Tess without undermining his subject status as a rationalist, he strives to find a logical reason for marrying her: 'Would not a farmer want a wife?' He finds the answer to this question a 'pleasing' one (p. 155) for the view of a probable marriage with her in this practical way allows him to become a lover while defining himself as a man who acts according to his reason rather than simply his emotions.

To assert himself as a rational man, however, is not sufficient to restore to him his sense of self; he needs also to confirm his class subjectivity, which requires his rendering the object of desire middle-class. He resorts therefore when visiting his parents to a set of reasons which attributes to Tess the values of his social class. He describes her as 'equally pure and virtuous as Miss Chant', 'a regular church-goer', 'virtuous as a vestal' and 'a lady' 'in feeling and nature' (pp. 163-4). His 'rank' as middle-class man will be taken from him if he proves no longer to be qualified to maintain that position. As Foucault has argued, in a disciplinary system, 'rank' is used both as 'reward' and 'punishment'; 'rank' is a temporary status offered to individuals according to their qualifications. It is withdrawn from them once they lose the necessary qualifications for maintaining that position.³² Despite the 'sense of luxury' Angel enjoys as an intellectual, a man who has '[thrown] off splints and bandages' (p. 168), he still formulates himself as middle-class, suggestive of Margaret Wetherell's and Nigel Edley's discussion that one can simultaneously be resistant to and compliant with discourses.³³ Angel is unaware of the extent to which he is disciplined by class discourses; he does not term himself conventional or middle-class but in practice he is both.

Once persuaded that his assuming a role as Tess's husband will not undercut the self-conception he has so far developed, Angel proposes marriage. As soon as he thinks of constituting himself through matrimony, he practises masculinity as defined by the structure of emotional attachment, pursuing Tess and attempting to persuade her into marrying him. He now associates his 'presence' (and even his sense of self) with owning the object of desire. He is unable to imagine a negative reply from her. Angel the lover overshadows the self-governed, upper-class Angel: you have 'made me restless, I can't read, or play'; 'I want to know [...] that you will some day be mine' (p. 174). He acts contrary to the Stoic lessons he has learned; he is obsessed with his beloved and regards her as essential for his happiness.³⁴

Angel's yearning for Tess is ostensibly rooted in her reinforcing his sense of manhood, conferring power on him in various ways. Primarily, he longs for her purity. Marrying Tess can empower him by allowing him to feel himself a man who possesses a previously-unpossessed object of desire. But this is not all Tess's purity can bestow on him. As a man proud of himself as a moralist, a man who 'loved spotlessness, and hated impurity', marriage to the untainted Tess implies the regaining of his own lost subject

³² See Chapter 1, pp. 16-7.

³³ See Chapter 1, p. 13.

³⁴ See Chapter 2, p. 34.

status as a chaste man. As Sumner argues, 'he needs her to be the embodiment of the purity which he feels he has lost'.³⁵ His desire to embrace purity through Tess reveals the way that he continues to constitute himself through middle-class discourses of morality. As Patricia Ingham argues, according to nineteenth-century middle-class discourses, 'by uniting himself in marriage to a satisfactory exponent of femininity', the middle-class man 'could subsume her identity into his, and become possessed of her [...] purity, along with a domestic haven of comfort'.³⁶ It is in this sense, I would suggest, that Angel regards Tess as 'the great prize' of his 'life' (p. 224).

Tess also situates Angel in the position of power by accentuating his elevated image of himself as an intellectual, a philosopher and a social superior. This is evident from his relating the grounds for her refusal to 'her sense of incompetence for the position of wife to a man like himself' (p. 175). By looking up to him and absorbing his thoughts and manners, she provides him with a sense of large 'presence': she addresses him respectfully as 'Mr Clare'; she regards him as 'a guide, philosopher', 'a saint' and 'a seer' (p. 192); she has caught 'his vocabulary, his accent, and fragments of his knowledge' (p. 175). In Angel's love for Tess, according to Margaret R. Higonnet, 'a certain narcissism' is discernable.³⁷ With Tess, he feels himself a 'godlike' figure (p. 181), a man whose 'promise of power', to use Berger's words, is large.

By constituting herself as his lover and the one dependent on him, moreover, Tess helps to enlarge Angel's 'presence'. That he cares for the strength of her love is evident in his rejection of Izz after having learned that Tess 'would have laid down her life' for him (p. 270). In Brazil, he expects her to write to him, despite his having forbidden her to do so, and rushes to her once he reads the passionate letter she has written from Flintcomb-Ash, when he finds himself reinstated in the position of power. Her reliance on him is another factor involved in strengthening Angel's sense of manhood; he is aware that 'she depended for her happiness entirely on him' (p. 196): 'how utterly and irretrievably this little womanly thing is the creature of my good or bad faith and fortune? [...] What I am, she is. What I become she must become. What I cannot be she cannot be' (pp. 217-8).

The knowledge of her being a d'Urberville fills Angel with further sense of power. He is 'extremely interested in the news' (p. 188) for this means the

³⁵ Sumner, p. 137.

³⁶ Patricia Ingham, *The Language of Gender and Class: Transformation in the Victorian Novel* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 22.

³⁷ Margaret R. Higonnet, 'A Woman's Story: Tess and the Problem of Voice', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. by Margaret R. Higonnet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 14-33 (pp. 23-4).

reinforcement of his class subjectivity: ‘Society is hopelessly snobbish, and this fact of your extraction may make an appreciable difference to its acceptance of you as my wife’ (p. 189). This, again, demonstrates the paradoxical relationship between the subject and disciplinary discourses, as elaborated by Wetherell and Edley;³⁸ he denies class discourses while pursuing them. As Joe Fisher observes, ‘[t]he snobbery which makes him [Angel] impressed that Tess is really a d’Urberville also makes clear his continuing attachment to the class structure which makes Mrs Crick seat him apart from the workfolk to eat’.³⁹ Her ‘belonging to such a family’ is the ‘grand card’ he is going to reserve ‘for a grand effect’ on his family, once they are married (p. 194). All this suggests his being constrained by the structure of class as well as of power; he treats Tess as a subordinate, deciding everything for her and never asking her opinion.

Angel hastens their marriage in order to turn Tess, as much as possible, into a middle-class woman. Feeling that he has been able to develop in her his social class values, to make her the kind of woman he and his society demand — ‘she had caught his manner and habits, his speech and phrases, his likings and his aversions’ (p. 204) — he is reluctant to leave her ‘anywhere away from my [his] influence’ (p. 203). Her living with him for ‘a couple of months’, he assumes, ‘would be of some social assistance to her at what she might feel to be a trying ordeal – her presentation to his mother at the Vicarage’ (p. 204). Despite his claim that ‘[h]er unsophisticated open-air existence required no varnish of conventionality’ (p. 165), he intends to varnish her, thereby proving the failure of his efforts to constitute himself as a liberal-minded man.

The ways in which Angel is enmeshed in contemporary structures of class and gender is explicit in his reaction to Tess’s confession. Her revelation of her past experience devastates him by undermining his whole perception of himself. Having defined his masculinity in terms of possessing a pure object of desire, when he is robbed of her purity, he feels robbed of his sense of manhood: ‘his face withered’ under the news (p. 228). He judges himself according to the norms of contemporary discourses of masculinity and finds himself unqualified for maintaining his ‘rank’ (subject position) as a ‘man’. That Tess has been possessed sexually by another man proves that the position of dominance is held not by him but by his rival. She is now a tainted object, whose possession can provide him with no sense of power and manhood: ‘the woman I have been loving is not you’ but ‘another woman in your shape’ (p. 229).

³⁸ See Chapter 1, p. 13.

³⁹ Joe Fisher, *The Hidden Hardy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), p. 170.

Angel's judgment of Tess's lapse and his own by two different standards — forgiveness applies to his case but not to hers — reflects the effects of patriarchal discourses, especially middle-class ones on him: 'In a patriarchy, a man can be forgiven what a woman cannot.'⁴⁰ As Ingham observes, in Victorian society, '[t]here was a tacit but universal acceptance of men's fairly ungovernable sexual appetites which were natural enough. Female sexuality, however, was deviant'.⁴¹ A woman is defined as a sexual object, not equal to a man and therefore not to be judged according to the same standards. Though aware that she is 'more sinned against than sinning' (p. 232), Angel is unable to resist the discourses which have pervaded him: 'It isn't a question of respectability, but one of principle' (p. 241).

Tess's confession also undermines Angel's subject position as a middle-class man. With her purity, his main criterion for marrying her, gone, her rusticity is left bare. She becomes only 'an unapprehending peasant woman' (p. 232). Having '[given] up all ambition to win a wife with social standing, with fortune, with knowledge of the world' to 'secure rustic unsophistication as surely as [...] pink cheeks' (pp. 237-8), he now finds himself deprived of both. His choice of wife having been proved to be an unreasonable one — as he sees it — further undercuts his image of himself as a rational man. He has allowed himself to be governed by emotions rather than reason. He views himself as victim of deceit, beholding 'her as a species of impostor; a guilty woman in the guise of an innocent one' (p. 229).

While the possession of Tess cannot reinstate him in the position of power, the renunciation of her, he assumes, can. Nemesvari argues that Angel avoids possessing Tess because his 'gentlemanly self-control' cannot rival Alec's 'aggressive sensuality'. He denies his desire for her in order to 'reconfirm the validity of his conception of masculinity, and avoid any sexual comparisons to Alec that might threaten his'.⁴² Whether or not Angel feels effeminate in relation to Alec, he certainly finds his position of power as Tess's sole possessor severely undermined. The suppression of his desire for her certainly empowers him by allowing him to conceive of himself as the one who can decide whether or not to possess the object of desire. It also enables him to regain the lost subject positions as a self-governed man, a rationalist and a middle-class man. He therefore undergoes punishment, '[d]esperately smothering his affection for her' (p. 231). He succeeds in restraining his desire for her: 'his face' was that of 'a man who was no longer passion's slave' (p. 235). He is no longer the 'gentle and affectionate'

⁴⁰ Fisher, p. 162.

⁴¹ Ingham, p. 23.

⁴² 'The Thing Must Be Male', pp. 103-4.

Angel but a rationalist once more: the ‘hard logical deposit’ which ‘had blocked his way with the Church’ now ‘blocked his way with Tess’ (p. 241). He attempts ‘to subdue the grosser to the subtler emotion, the substance to the conception, the flesh to the spirit’, an undertaking which the narrator describes as ‘the tyrannous wind of his imaginative ascendancy’ (p. 245) for it incorporates oppressing the loved one even more than himself.

Angel’s effort to formulate himself outside the domain of contemporary religious and class discourses thus fails, indicating the difficulty of resisting the discourses which one has internalised. Despite ‘all his attempted independence of judgement’, ‘this advanced man’, as the narrator remarks, remains enslaved ‘to custom and conventionality’ (p. 265); ‘like Sue, he boasts of being an intellectual radical without having the true courage of his convictions’.⁴³ His subject positions as an unorthodox intellectual and a Stoic philosopher prove to be spurious; he remains at heart a middle-class defender of traditional Christian morality. In Tim Dolin’s words, ‘Angel is much more deeply the son of his Pauline father than he realizes’.⁴⁴ According to Michael Millgate, he ‘does even greater damage to Tess’ than does Alec.⁴⁵

The ‘favourable’ emotional relation, which up to this point has conditioned Angel’s practice of masculinity in relation to Tess, gives way to hostility (to employ Connell’s discussion of different kinds of emotional relations)⁴⁶ once she undercuts his position of power as a man. He is apathetic towards her suffering and scolds her when she offers to do what he orders: ‘there is a want of harmony between your present mood of self-sacrifice and your past mood of self-preservation’ (p. 230). Unable to define himself in terms of power by possessing her, he attempts to assert his supremacy by constituting himself as an authoritative husband: dictating what she should do: ‘if it is desirable, possible – I will come to you. But until I come to you it will be better that you should not try to come to me’ (p. 253). Assertion of authority, As Tolson observes, is a way of constructing masculine ‘presence’.⁴⁷ Ironically, his forceful practice of masculinity is at odds with his earlier definition of himself as a husband who will never ‘neglect her, or hurt her, or even forget to consider her’ (p. 218). In allowing himself to be governed by anger and hatred, he violates the Stoic doctrines, proving himself to be a slave of passions. His oppression of Tess is also incompatible with the Stoic teachings

⁴³ Merryn Williams, *Thomas Hardy and Rural England* (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 179.

⁴⁴ Dolin, notes to his edition of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, p. 440.

⁴⁵ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (London: The Bodley Head, 1971), p. 276.

⁴⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

⁴⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

according to which humans are parts of one body and should naturally be benevolent towards each other.⁴⁸

However, the renunciation of Tess bestows upon Angel no sense of power or manhood, as his restless and ‘desultory’ conduct demonstrates. He attempts to act as ‘recommended by’ the Stoics: “‘This is the chief thing: be not perturbed,’” said the Pagan moralist. That was just Clare’s own opinion. But he was perturbed’ (p. 259).⁴⁹ His endeavour ‘to pursue his agricultural plans as though nothing unusual had happened’ also proves futile. He relates his ‘desolation’ to his betrayal of ‘his principles’: ‘When he found that Tess came of that exhausted ancient line [...], why had he not stoically abandoned her [...]?’ he asks. But his agony is the effect of his inability to grasp the most basic Stoic doctrine, not to attach himself to the things which are external to him and therefore not his. He has linked his sense of manhood (and his sense of self) with possessing Tess: ‘the notion of having Tess as a dear possession was mixed up with all schemes, words, and ways’ (pp. 259-60). While Gabriel Oak and Giles Winterborne manage to live in accordance with the Pagan philosophy, unconsciously and with no theoretical knowledge of that system of thought, Angel, though equipped with that knowledge, fails to do so.

Devoid of a sense of self, Angel desires an ‘escape’, hence his decision to go to Brazil in ‘a fit of desperation’ (p. 340). So desperate is he to define himself in any possible way that he even undertakes to constitute himself as a philanderer, asking Izz to join him in his trip to Brazil. This momentary impulse suggests a rebellion against the constraints of social structures, an act of retaliation to intentionally undermine them: ‘He was incensed against his fate, bitterly disposed towards social ordinances; for they had cooped him up in a corner, out of which there was no legitimate pathway. Why not be revenged on society by ruling his future domesticities himself [...]?’ (p. 269). It is only the knowledge that he has ‘a loving wife’ that brings back to him a faint sense of power (and thus manhood), allowing him to reconstitute himself as a serious man, reproaching himself for his ‘levity’ (p. 271).

Angel’s life in Brazil involves so much re-thinking of his values that he ‘mentally aged a dozen years’. He questions the moral discourses which he had internalised, coming to ‘discredit the old appraisements of morality’, feeling that ‘they wanted re-adjusting’. He now believes that ‘[t]he beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses’. From this perspective, Tess

⁴⁸ See Chapter 2, p. 36.

⁴⁹ The quotation is from Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic Roman Emperor; see Chapter 2, p. 36.

could be conceived as pure after all; ‘a regret for his hasty judgement’ thus ‘began to oppress him’ (p. 340). The Englishman whom he meets on his journey helps to accelerate the process of his self-redefinition by making him acquainted with alternative discourses of morality. Dolin argues it is only when his protagonist is away from England that Hardy can portray a change in him; for the Victorians, such a change would have been incomprehensible.⁵⁰

It is only once exposed to alternative discourses of morality and masculinity that Angel recognises this. To the ‘cosmopolitan mind’ of the Englishman, ‘such deviations from the social norm, so immense to domesticity, were no more than are the irregularities of vale and mountain-chain to the whole terrestrial curve’. From his viewpoint, ‘what Tess had been was of no importance beside what she would be’; Angel, therefore, has been ‘wrong’ in leaving her. ‘The cursory remarks of the stranger’ thus provoke a dramatic change in Angel’s outlook, causing him to cease being Tess’s ‘critic’ and become ‘her advocate’ (p. 341). Liberated from the dominance of domestic discourses, he is now able to envisage alternative ways of seeing the world and formulating himself as a man.

Still constrained by the structure of power, conceiving himself to be superior to Tess, Angel does not rush to her once he is back home. Reading her second letter first, in which Tess has bitterly reproached him, he assumes that he is no longer a man of large ‘presence’ for Tess, no longer her superior, or even loved by her. He therefore postpones his visit to her, fearing ‘bitter words’ and probable rebuke from a rustic family, which for him signifies the undermining of his social position. Tess’s first letter, however, written from Flintcomb-Ash, transforms Angel: ‘The unexpected sentences unmanned him quite’. Forsaking his manly ‘pride’ with ‘eyes’ ‘blinded with tears, he [sprang] wildly up to go and find her immediately’ (p. 370). Tess’s passionate language may have ‘unmanned’ him in terms of rationality and self-control but has also empowered him, allowing him to feel himself loved and admired after all. It is only once re-offered the position of power that he readily goes to her.

Angel now hopes to reconstitute himself as a husband, unaware that he has long ceased to have such status. Nowhere is he able to find Tess as his possession, as ‘Mrs Clare’ (p. 372). He is initially ‘glad’ to find out that she ‘passed as a married woman,’ as ‘Mrs D’Urberville’, not discerning that this signifies her capitulation to Alec (p. 377). His subject position as a man is already undermined: he has transgressed the norms of

⁵⁰ Tim Dolin, ‘Jude Fawley and the New Man’, in *Jude the Obscure*, New Casebooks Series, ed. by Penny Boumelha (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 209-27 (p. 222).

patriarchal and middle-class discourses of masculinity by neglecting his duties as a husband and a supporter; society accordingly has deprived him of his 'rank' as a husband. Marian has questioned his gentlemanliness; for Alec, he is 'a mule' under the name of a 'husband' (p. 331) and even Tess has renounced him as her 'husband' once hopeless of his return (p. 349). Now, with Tess's return to Alec, the process of Angel's emasculation is complete.

Tess's stabbing of Alec, however, and her return to Angel, restores, at least temporarily, his sense of manhood. With the newly-formulated subjectivity, which he has adopted during his absence — which allows him to judge her act not by its 'achievement' but by its 'aims and impulses' (p. 340) — he is able once more to constitute himself as her husband. Now he is determined to construct his masculinity in terms of protecting 'this deserted wife of his' by all his 'power': 'Tenderness was absolutely dominant in Clare at last' (p. 385). He is eventually able to surpass self-love and define himself in terms of loving-kindness. His subject statuses as a 'protector' (p. 386) and a husband, nevertheless, are precarious ones and might be abandoned if he continues to live with Tess, as she predicts: he may 'despise' her in the course of time (p. 390). The Victorian discourses of morality might govern him again.

In the final scene of the novel, Tess is portrayed 'lying on an altar' (p. 393), becoming a sacrifice not to the pagan gods but to society and to the configurations of masculinity it propagates. She is not the 'sport' of 'the President of the Immortals', as the narrator suggests (p. 397), nor the victim of biology or heredity (as Peter Morton, for instance, argues)⁵¹ so much as the victim of the social structures and discourses which have formulated the subjectivities of the men responsible for her fate. *Tess* presents a tragic picture of life by underscoring the power of these forces and the difficulty of escaping them.

With *Tess*, Hardy portrays the oppressiveness of a masculinity, characterised by egotism rather than loving-kindness. It is only Tess who is capable of practising altruism (Joanna Devereux has referred to 'her constant focus on others besides herself'),⁵² sacrificing herself for the well-being of her family. Angel eventually defines himself in terms of benevolence but sympathy emerges in him too late to be of any positive effect. In *Tess*, therefore, we witness a weakening of the Comtean worldview, of the belief in the possible improvement of the human condition. The novel illustrates how hard a task it is to defy the prevailing social structures and discourses which

⁵¹ Peter Morton, 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Neo-Darwinian Reading', *Southern Review*, 7 (1974), 38-50.

⁵² Devereux, p. 119.

constitute individuals. Yet it also makes the reader ponder whether this suffering is not avoidable, if the 'remediable ills' that bring about human pain are not greater than the 'irremediable' ones.⁵³ If gender relations are socially constructed, the novel implies, could they not eventually be changed?

⁵³ See Chapter 2, p. 28.

Chapter 8

Jude the Obscure:

Alternative Models of Masculinity

Hardy's last words of his novelistic career are his bitterest, a powerful critique of gender and class structures and discourses which constrain individuals, defining the ways in which they should constitute themselves. In *Jude the Obscure* (1895), he depicts the predicament of a boy, and then a man, who on the one hand realises the necessity and the inevitability of defining himself through the discourses his society offers him and on the other hand finds those discourses unsatisfactory, not reflective of his capabilities and desires. To acquire a 'rank' (subject position) as a man or a member of a particular class, Jude needs to define himself through the Foucauldian 'games of truth', the discourses of social institutions,¹ which associate masculinity mainly with power. Conventionally, as John Berger has argued, a man's 'presence' is linked with the 'promise of power' which he incorporates. If the 'promise of power' is large a man has striking 'presence'; if it is small, he deems his 'presence' to be little. The 'promised power' can be physical, economic, social or sexual 'but its object is always exterior to the man'; a man should be able to exercise power over others.² As Andrew Tolson argues,³ 'presence' is associated with characteristics such as authority or assertiveness, which Jude finds hard to accept.

Critics have suggested that a sense of quest pervades *Jude*. Marjorie Garson, for instance, argues for Jude's 'logocentric desire'; 'constituted in lack', he 'seeks to be made whole'. Stefan Horlacher has discussed Jude's search for 'the presence of signified, a fixed meaning in life'.⁴ These, and other critical works, have also underlined the process of construction of masculinity in *Jude*, his moving from one masculine discourse, master-narrative or paradigm of masculinity to another.⁵ In line with such

¹ See Chapter 1, pp. 12-3, 16-7.

² See Chapter 1, pp. 17-8.

³ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

⁴ Marjorie Garson, *Hardy's Fables of Integrity: Woman, Body, Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 153, 155. Stefan Horlacher, "'The Letter Killeth but the Spirit Giveth Life": Masculinity in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', *Proceedings of the Conference of the German Association of University Teachers of English*, vol. XXVI, ed. by Lilo Moessner and Christa M. Schmidt (Trier, Germany: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2005), pp. 171-82 (p. 175).

⁵ Elizabeth Langland, 'Becoming a Man in *Jude the Obscure*', in *The Sense of Sex: Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, ed. by Margaret R. Higonnet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 32-48. Tim Dolin, 'Jude Fawley and the New Man', in *Jude the Obscure*, New Casebooks Series, ed. by Penny Boumelha (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 209-27 (pp. 210, 223). Phillip Mallett, 'Hardy and Masculinity: A Pair of Blue Eyes and *Jude the Obscure*', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 387-402.

arguments, it can be said that what Jude seeks is the incorporation of a sense of power which can provide him with a sense of 'presence'. Jude has to formulate himself through gender and class structures and discourses if he wants to become definable yet his relationship with these structures remains a combination of compliance and resistance. For instance, he tries to constitute himself through the sexual division of labour, power and emotional attachment, the gender structures which R. W. Connell sees as circumscribing the ways gender needs to be practised.⁶ Yet, at times, he resists these structures.

The construction of masculinity through prevailing discourses of masculinity and class is not the only thing Jude seeks, however. He also longs for a more satisfactory way of self-formation which he assumes he can achieve through an emotional relationship; he desires to see himself loved and cared for, a practice of masculinity which departs from the conventional definitions of masculine 'presence', which associate masculinity with the exercise of power over others, and makes him more feminine. Throughout the course of the story, the two projects are pursued simultaneously, eventually bringing about Jude's destruction.

Jude is a working-class child who finds himself incapable of living up to the ideals of masculinity, physical strength, toughness and aggressiveness, which Tolson describes as working-class ways of constructing masculine 'presence'.⁷ Jude's physique is not that of a working-class boy; for his slim frame even the task of drawing water from the well is hard; he is therefore assigned a kind of job, scaring birds, which does not require much vigour. Jude's gender practice also deviates from the working-class norms of masculinity: he is gentle and tender-hearted — he cannot 'bear to hurt anything'.⁸ He is kind to animals, shy and meek — bearing every criticism he faces — and is interested in reading books. Jude's practice of masculinity is not recognised as valid by his community; his aunt defines him as a 'useless boy' (p. 12) and Farmer Troutham punishes him for his inability to practise aggression towards the rooks. In the Foucauldian sense, Jude is subjected to the power of the normalising judgement (which functions through a mechanism of dividing and 'branding'), evaluated according to the level of his conformity with working-class norms of masculinity and is found to be wanting.

⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

⁸ Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. by Dennis Taylor (London: Penguin, 1998 [1895]), p. 17. All subsequent page numbers are from this edition and are given in parentheses, after quotations in the text.

With his specific characteristics, Jude also departs from the normative definitions of masculinity; gentle behaviour and tenderness are conventionally defined as feminine attributes.⁹ Jude, therefore, can be seen not to be passively determined by gender discourses; rather, he negotiates the models of masculinity which are available to him, distancing himself from conventional forms.¹⁰ Phillip Mallett argues that Jude's is a new mode of being a man which combines masculine attributes with feminine traits such as tenderness.¹¹ Jude's resistance to the dominant discourses of class and gender, however, renders him obscure, leaving him with no clear sense of self. For there is nothing outside discourse and its dominance cannot be escaped. Without the endorsement of these discourses, he cannot term himself a man. His gender practice is simply not recognisable: his kindness is defined as 'weakness of character'. With such a practice of masculinity, he does not have much chance of happiness or survival; as the narrator comments, 'he was the sort of man who was born to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain on his unnecessary life' (p. 17).

Unable to constitute himself as demanded by the prevailing discourses of masculinity, finding them incongruous with his inclinations, Jude does not 'want to be a man', desiring himself out of a world to which he cannot adapt (p. 18). Here, Hardy provides a critique of gender norms which do not suit all men, lamenting the impossibility of formation of alternative modes of being a man. Jude's tragedy stems from the fact that his 'life does not coincide with the stories of men'.¹² As Victor J. Seidler argues, '[i]f we live in a 'man's world', it is not a world that has been built upon the needs and nourishment of men. Rather, it is a social world of power and subordination in which men have been forced to compete if they are to benefit from their inherited masculinity.'¹³ Jude himself describes 'the man' against whom some women complain as 'the other victim', 'the helpless transmitter of the pressure upon him' (p. 287).

In the private domain, likewise, Jude is devoid of a sense of self, mainly owing to his failure to practise working-class masculinity; he is respected, wanted and loved by no one. This makes him long for affection, attention and sympathy. He needs somebody to give him a sense of self-worth by caring for him; his attachment to Phillotson reflects

⁹ Laura Green, "'Strange [In]difference of Sex": Thomas Hardy, the Victorian Man of Letters, and the Temptations of Androgyny', *Victorian Studies*, 38.4 (1995), 523-49 (pp. 545-6).

¹⁰ See Chapter 1, p. 10.

¹¹ Mallett, p. 402.

¹² Dolin, p. 211.

¹³ Victor J. Seidler, *Rediscovering Masculinity: Reason, Language and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 21.

this need. In the opening pages of the story, Jude attempts to constitute himself through an emotional relationship with his teacher, the only one who cares for him and approves of his version of masculinity, which resembles his own. The teacher offers him affection and friendship, telling him at the time of his departure that he will not ‘forget’ him and that ‘if ever you come to Christminster remember you hunt me out of old acquaintance’ sake’ (pp. 10-11). But being empowered only by finding himself the object of attention and affection, conventionally a feminine attribute, undermines the delineations of masculine ‘presence’.

Jude’s attachment to Phillotson assumes an almost romantic shape, which is explicitly suggested in the scene where he imagines seeing his teacher in Christminster. He thinks of him as a beloved, breathing in the wind which he assumes has touched Phillotson’s face and which he has inhaled (p. 23). Jude’s affection towards Phillotson can be seen to depart from the conventional structure of emotional attachment (one of the delineators of gender practice, as Connell observes),¹⁴ according to which romantic feelings are definable only between the members of the opposite sex. Richard Dellamora discusses Phillotson and Jude’s relationship as a mentor/protégé one, a form of pedagogic eros. He explains, following Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, that in the late nineteenth-century England, male connections in the form of friendship or teacher/student relationship were considered as the means of educational and social advancement for young men but such relationships ‘existed in a double bind’; while male connections were encouraged, the associated homoerotic relationships were prohibited. Jude’s friendship with Phillotson, Dellamora argues, combines ambitious and erotic wishes.¹⁵ The erotic implications of Jude’s relationship with Phillotson can be inferred but what is explicitly suggested by the text is Jude’s desire for love and affection. It is this need that initially attracts Jude to Phillotson; later, of course, he thinks of his teacher as someone who can help realise his social aspirations as well. But the constitution of subjectivity through emotional relationships (whether with male or female characters) remains Jude’s preoccupation until the end of the story.

Jude then is unable to remain outside gender and class discourses. He may resist one discourse of masculinity or class and choose another but he cannot escape being a man of a specific class. He thinks, therefore, of constituting himself through the discourses with which he feels more affinity. The middle-class discourses of masculinity, pursued by his patron and teacher, become a means of self-formation for

¹⁴ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁵ Richard Dellamora, ‘Male Relations in Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*’, *Papers on Language and Literature*, 27 (1991), 453-72 (pp. 454, 462-5).

him. It is Aunt Drusilla, who hints at this possible way of constructing masculinity with her humiliating words, ‘why didn’t go off with that schoolmaster of thine to Christminster or somewhere?’ (p. 18). By going to Christminster, he assumes he can shape his class subjectivity and his masculinity as well as constituting himself through friendship with Phillotson. Christminster ‘acquired a tangibility, a permanence, a hold on his life’ both because ‘the man for whose knowledge and purpose he had so much reverence was actually living there’ and because it is the residing place of ‘the more thoughtful and mentally shining ones’ he so admires (p. 22).

Christminster is described by a carter, as the city of ‘noble-minded men’ who ‘earn hundreds by thinking out loud’, a place where Jude can construct his ‘presence’ through the power of the mind, rather than the body, and accordingly through social and financial achievement (p. 25). ‘It is the city of light’ and ‘knowledge’, ‘a castle, manned by scholarship and religion’ where he can constitute himself in the manner of upper classes. Once he finds some discourses through which to define himself, ‘something to anchor on, to cling to’, he gains in confidence. He is no longer afraid of darkness and no longer reluctant to become a man (pp. 25-6). The word ‘THITHER’ he inscribes on a milestone along a road — as we later learn — specifies the direction to the place which can offer him a sense of self, a rescue from obscurity. With no prospect of the immediate formulation of his subjectivity in the way he desires, he constructs an imaginary subject position for himself as a scholar. From this point onwards, he leads an imaginary life alongside his real life, the former rendering the latter bearable.

Exposed to and governed by the discourse of success, Jude undertakes to gain qualifications for winning a middle-class ‘rank’ (subject position). His learning of Greek and Latin is the first step forward towards the formation of his subjectivity as a man of knowledge. He is made miserable by the realisation that there is no easy rule for learning these languages, ‘that every word in both Latin and Greek was to be individually committed to memory at the cost of years of plodding’ (p. 30). This ‘crushing recognition’, shattering his self-image as a scholar, robs him of his sense of self; finding himself once more outside class and gender structures, still obscure and indefinable, he wishes ‘himself out of the world’ (p. 31). He undertakes, nevertheless, to learn these dead languages despite their difficulties for to withdraw from his project of self-formation would signify a return to obscurity. Jude’s ‘frustration indicates’, however, as Dellamora argues, ‘just how unlikely he is – by either “cipher” or

“plodding” – to learn the “art” of the “foreign” language of the upper middle classes’.¹⁶ Yet Jude is unable to recognise this fact. His assiduous study of languages and his later combining of study and work, depriving himself of any rest, are the disciplines (punishment in the form of exercise)¹⁷ he undergoes to acquire the necessary qualification to be ranked as a scholar.

Jude is unable to function outside any social class structures; situated in a working-class context he has to define himself in terms of manual labour. Such a construction of masculinity is conditioned also by the sexual division of labour (another structure which circumscribes gender practice, as Connell argues),¹⁸ which demands that a man defines himself in the social domain through a masculine job. Jude conceives of work, of course, only as ‘a prop to lean on while he prepared those greater engines [of scholarship] which he flattered himself should be better fitted for him’. Among the professions available to him, he chooses ‘freestone-working’ and the repairing of church buildings (p. 35) because working on churches and colleges allows for a stronger identification with the ideal image of himself as a scholar. He is unaware of the tension between his actual profession and this ideal image, that as a worker he is doomed to remain outside the walls which he helps to repair. As Tim Dolin observes, despite Jude’s intellectual and spiritual aspirations, ‘it is really only ever the material and subsisting life that he attains.’¹⁹ His ‘rough’ hands (p. 133) and ‘the stone-dust’ in his hair (p. 77) indicate that he can never escape being working-class.

Jude is ultimately able to envisage himself as a Christminster man, assuming that he has acquired enough knowledge to ‘[knock] at the doors of one of those strongholds of learning of which he had dreamed so much’ (p. 36). His self-discipline is rewarded by a sense of ‘gratification’, in the Foucauldian sense,²⁰ suggested by the ‘warm self-content’ which pervades him when he looks back at his progress so far (p. 36). In his imaginary world, he constructs further fictitious subject positions as a Doctor of Divinity and a ‘bishop’, with which he identifies. His obsession with attaining a ‘large ‘presence’ in his imagination, however, only indicates his actual powerlessness. The kinds of roles he imagines for himself are masculine ones (of an upper-class kind, suggestive of his being constrained by the structure of the sexual division of labour). But his reference to Christminster, a masculine world, as ‘Alma Mater’ (and not as a father) and to himself as ‘her beloved son’ (pp. 37-8) reveals that alongside his effort to

¹⁶ Dellamora, pp. 460-1.

¹⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 16.

¹⁸ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

¹⁹ Dolin, p. 221.

²⁰ See Chapter 1, pp. 16-7.

constitute himself through prevailing discourses of masculinity, he also desires to formulate himself through an emotional relationship and in terms of affection, to become the object of love. Joanna Devereux argues that Christminster ‘represents for Jude a kind of ideal woman—specifically a mother figure—such as he has never known in his own life’.²¹

The construction of masculinity in terms of knowledge and success proves difficult for Jude, who is also governed by the more powerful discourse of sexuality. Struck by a pig’s ‘characteristic part’ thrown by Arabella, he is reminded of an alternative way of practising masculinity, to construct his ‘presence’ in terms of sexuality. This can provide him with an immediate and real sense of manhood, as opposed to the imaginary sense of ‘presence’ provided by his dream world: ‘he felt as a snake must feel who has sloughed off its winter skin, and cannot understand the brightness and sensitiveness of its new one’ (p. 43). He now defines himself through the structure of emotional attachment, desiring the opposite sex. Jude abandons, therefore, his imaginary subject statuses as ‘a graduate, or a parson’, or ‘a pope’ (p. 48), and the whole project of constructing his masculinity in terms of knowledge, to constitute himself as a lover and possessor. In the ‘war waged between flesh and spirit’,²² the latter is defeated. In his letter to Edmund Gosse on November 10, 1895, Hardy wrote: ‘[t]he “grimy” features of the story go to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead.’²³ In the novel itself, his ideals are quickly vanquished: ‘The intentions as to reading, working, and learning, which he had so precisely formulated only a few minutes earlier, were suffering a curious collapse into a corner, he knew not how’ (p. 41).

The novel attempts to justify Jude’s sexuality by rendering it as natural and inevitable through the employment of Darwinian and Schopenhauerian metaphors: Jude is attracted to Arabella ‘in commonplace obedience to conjunctive orders from headquarters, unconsciously received by unfortunate men when the last intention of their lives is to be occupied with the feminine’ (p. 39). It is as if ‘a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him’, something that ‘seemed to care little for his reason and his will’ and ‘moved him along, as a violent schoolmaster a schoolboy he has seized by the collar in a direction which tended towards the embrace

²¹ Joanna Devereux, *Patriarchy and Its Discontents: Sexual Politics in Selected Novels and Stories of Thomas Hardy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 122.

²² Harold Orel, ed., *Thomas Hardy’s Personal Writings: Prefaces, Literary Opinions, Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 32.

²³ Thomas Hardy, *Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), II (1980), 93.

of woman for whom he had no respect' (p. 44). Hardy employs such imagery to underwrite the power of the 'the strongest passion known to humanity', as he describes it.²⁴ Jude is simply unable to stand outside the structure of emotional attachment which defines the male and female relationship in terms of sexuality.

Jude's desire for Arabella, of course, is also a desire for affection. The relationship allows him to construct his 'presence' in terms of sexuality but it also enables him to define himself in terms of loving and being loved by her. He reads Arabella's 'missile' (pp. 38-42) as the sign of attention and feels a 'void' 'in his heart' in her absence (p. 49). Rosemarie Morgan argues that '[o]rphanism and, presumably, maternal deprivation have wrought in him a desperate need for a reassuring, nurturing love object which he might idolise, to which he might cling, on which he might become completely reliant'.²⁵ This is apparent in Jude's relationship with Sue as well.

The 'gender regime' of Jude and Arabella's relationship can be seen to depart from the 'gender order' of society, to use Connell's terms,²⁶ in that the structure of emotional attachment is not entirely constituted; it is not the man but the woman who chooses and pursues a mate. The concomitant structure of power (which Connell discusses as another structure which conditions the practice of gender)²⁷ is accordingly not conventionally shaped because Jude assumes a role as a subordinate. During their courtship, Jude follows Arabella 'like a pet lamb' (p. 53). Anne Z. Mickelson argues that 'Jude's defence against his fears is submissiveness in order to win love from a partner whom he can lean on and look up to'.²⁸ It is Arabella who takes the active role in her relationship with Jude throughout the story, seducing Jude, marrying him, deserting him, re-entrapping him and re-marrying him. Jude does not define himself in accordance with the prevailing norms of masculinity as a superior, a decision-maker or an authoritative lover or husband. Mickelson and Ellen Lew Sprechman see him as feminine, taking a passive role a wife conventionally takes.²⁹ For Judith Mitchell, too, Arabella (and Sue) are masculine figures, 'more active and decisive (Sue intellectually and Arabella sexually) than the more passive Jude'.³⁰

²⁴ Orel, p. 32.

²⁵ Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 138.

²⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

²⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

²⁸ Anne Z. Mickelson, *Thomas Hardy's Women and Men: The Defeat of Nature*, (Metuchen: The Scarecrow Press, 1976), p. 138.

²⁹ Mickelson, p. 140. Ellen Lew Sprechman, *Seeing Women as Men: Role Reversal in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1995), p. 103.

³⁰ Judith Mitchell, 'All Fall Down: Hardy's Heroes on the 1990s Cinema Screen', in *Thomas Hardy on Screen*, ed. by T. R. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 76-95 (pp. 84-5).

The practice of masculinity as a lover and a possessor does not provide Jude with a sense of 'presence' for long. What he seeks from an emotional relationship is not just sexuality but friendship, emotional fortification and mutual understanding, which Arabella is unable to provide. With the loss of his sense of power, he once more thinks of reconstructing his 'presence' in the public sphere, a project which needs to be cancelled under the imperative to define his masculinity through 'the gentlemanly code of honor'.³¹ Pervaded by the discourse of honour, which promises him a 'rank' as a man, Jude undertakes to become Arabella's husband, despite his awareness 'that Arabella was not worth a great deal as a specimen of womankind' and that this signifies 'a complete smashing' of his 'plans' (p. 57).

Though apparently provided with a sense of manhood by defining himself as a husband and an honourable man, Jude experiences the shrinking of his 'presence' upon realising that he has married far lower than he has imagined: he is shocked to discover her false hair, practised dimples and job as a barmaid. He also learns that her pregnancy, the very reason which has justified their marriage, was not genuine. The constitution of his subjectivity through the discourse of honour thus proves to be destructive: he is 'caught in a gin [his matrimonial tie] which would cripple him' (pp. 59-62). Deprived of his imaginary subject position as a scholar and with no alternative way of defining his masculinity, he is left once more with no sense of self, hence his attempt at 'self-extermination', walking and jumping on a frozen pond (p. 71).

Not constituting himself through the structure of power, Jude does not act authoritatively; 'he never considers divorce'.³² He remains passive at Arabella's hands, waiting for her to take action. It is only when Arabella is gone (and with her, Jude's role as a husband) that he is able to return to the project of constructing his masculinity as an upper-class man. The sight of the incised 'THITHER', the embodiment of all that has once given him a sense of self, on the milestone along the road, still 'unimpaired', 'lit in his soul a spark of the old fire', restoring to him his earlier sense of self as a scholar (p. 73). In Christminster, he identifies himself once more with 'the worthies who had spent their youth within these reverend walls', 'speaking out loud, holding conversations with them, like an actor in a melodrama who apostrophizes the audience on the other side of the footlights' (pp. 80-1).

³¹ Devereux, pp. 123-4.

³² Horlacher, p. 176.

Jude has to rely, however, on a working-class practice of masculinity, manual labour, to formulate his upper-class subjectivity, an incongruity which he gradually recognises. He begins to discern that to become ‘a son of the university’, he needs first to belong to the upper classes of society, to possess strong economic or social power, which he lacks. For the ‘happy young contemporaries of his with whom he shared a common mental life’, he is ‘a young workman in a white blouse’ and not one of them. When passing him, ‘they did not even see him, or hear him, rather saw through him as through a pane of glass’. Yet, for him, to abandon the invented subject position as a scholar is to forsake the means of self-definition, hence his reluctance to relinquish his intellectual ambitions (pp. 86-7). Masculinity, as Tolson observes, makes men pursue ‘a mirage of success’.³³

Permeated by such a dream, Jude is unable to envisage another way of self-formulation. His momentary recognition that his skill might be ‘as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study’ is lost ‘under the stress of his old idea’. Exposed to newer (middle-class) discourses of masculinity, Jude is reluctant to constitute himself through older (working-class) ones: ‘This was his form of the modern vice of unrest’ (p. 85). Faced with the question of ‘whether to follow uncritically the track he finds himself in [...] or to consider what his aptness or bent may be, and re-shape his course accordingly’, he tells the crowd watching the procession on Remembrance Day (p. 326), he chooses the latter, more ambitious option. Formulation of masculinity through mental, rather than physical, power, ‘accumulating ideas and imparting them to others’, he assumes, is what he is most capable of accomplishing (p. 393). The text itself suggests the value of craftsmanship by describing the workyard where he seeks employment as ‘a little centre of regeneration’, only to undercut its suggestion by calling the work done there ‘at best only copying, patching and imitating’ (pp. 84-5). ‘Jude’s trade’, as Michael Millgate opines, ‘is one which ties him to old buildings, churches, and graveyards — to the restoration of the past and the perpetuation of precisely those influences and traditions which bar his educational and social aspirations and menace the privacy of his life with Sue.’³⁴

Once his sense of power as a scholar begins to diminish upon realising the difficulty of the task of constructing his ‘presence’ in that field, he thinks more of his other source of acquisition of a sense of power, his cousin Sue, ‘whose presence somewhere at hand’ fortifies him. Even her photograph is able to provide him with a

³³ See Chapter 1, p. 20.

³⁴ Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (London: The Bodley Head, 1971), pp. 330-1.

sense of power, making him feel ‘more at home’ (p. 85). Constituting himself through an emotional relationship with his cousin becomes Jude’s alternative way of self-definition since ‘the particular man Jude [...] wanted something to love’ (p. 97). Jude’s relationship with Sue, as Elizabeth Langland observes, becomes ‘a means of self-fulfillment’, ‘an alternative to the frustrating constructions of masculinity that his culture holds out’.³⁵

Jude discerns himself in Sue, recognising in her voice ‘certain qualities of his own voice; softened and sweetened, but his own’ (p. 88). His seeing her as the feminine version of himself suggests that he regards her as both a feminine and a masculine figure. She is both like and unlike him; Laura Green has discussed Sue as androgynous.³⁶ The identification he feels with Sue suggests, for him, the possibility of an ideal friendship which incorporates emotional and mental fortification. He conceives of her as a socially superior version of himself; she is like him but ‘quite removed from the rusticity that was his’ (p. 90). Marjorie Garson argues that he ‘[desires] in her not only the woman but the cultivation she embodies — the kind of culture which exposure to Christminster has apparently already given to her’.³⁷ Constrained by moral and religious discourses, he attempts to conceive of her ‘as someone to be proud of, someone one to talk and nod to’, someone who can help him to constitute himself both emotionally and socially, ‘a tender friend’ and ‘a companion in Anglican worship’ (pp. 88-91). Still he is governed by his desires, however, for he is forced to recognise that ‘his interest in her’ was ‘unmistakably of a sexual kind’ (p. 97).

Jude’s speaking of Phillotson, in his first meeting with Sue, curiously enough, reveals that he still seeks to constitute himself as a middle-class male through friendship with his teacher. But seeing Phillotson, he immediately forsakes him as a mentor and a friend. He is not a superior social figure, ‘a reverend parson’ (p.85), as he had assumed, but a failure. More importantly, Jude’s feelings for the older man are not reciprocated; the teacher does not even recognise his former pupil. The loss of Phillotson as a friend makes Jude more reliant on Sue as a substitute. The romantic attachment between Sue and Phillotson, however, deprives Jude of the chance of self-formation through association with Sue. Observing the romance formed between the two, Jude sank ‘into the hedge like one struck with a blight’ (p. 109). Left once more with no sense of self, he flees to his aunt, the (ironically, unsympathetic) mother figure, who remains his resort throughout the story for escaping a sense of failure.

³⁵ Langland, pp. 33, 38.

³⁶ Green, p. 543.

³⁷ Garson, pp. 162, 52.

Jude still has his fabricated subject position as a scholar to rely on for an acquisition of a sense of manhood but ‘the imaginary world’ and the ‘abstract figure, more or less himself’, residing in it (p. 114) should soon be relinquished. The letter from the head of Biblioll College cancels the project of constructing his ‘presence’ through the acquisition of knowledge. The upper-class society does not approve of such a configuration of masculinity by a member of the working classes; Jude is ‘a working man’ and should ‘[remain] in [his] own sphere’ (p. 117). Divested of the chance of constituting himself both as a scholar and as a friend — ‘[d]eprived of the objects of both intellect and emotion’ — he finds himself once more denied the means of self-definition, still obscure, which is why he goes to ‘an obscure and low-ceiled tavern’ (p. 119) to define his masculinity in terms of drinking. His speech in Latin, his unconscious attempt to envisage himself as a scholar, is unable to restore to him a sense of self. Jude’s fleeing to Sue, pleading with her not to ‘hate’ and ‘despise’ him ‘like the rest of the world’, reflects the agony of a man who finds himself excluded from class discourses, rejected and unwanted by the world (p. 123).

Though Jude deviates from the norms of masculinity in his desperate fleeing to a woman, he still defines himself through these norms; he feels embarrassed to face Sue the next morning. His constraint by gender norms is even more evident in his refusal to cry: ‘If he had been a woman he must have screamed under the nervous tension which he was now undergoing. But that relief being denied to his virility, he clenched his teeth in misery’ (p. 124). Hardy here criticises the restrictive norms of masculinity; as Annette Federico argues, he ‘appears to regret that men must stifle expressions of emotions’.³⁸

Obligated to define himself through the structures of class and gender, Jude seeks another way of constructing his ‘presence’ in the public domain. The pursuit of an ‘ecclesiastical and altruistic life’, ‘[doing] good to his fellow-creatures’ by becoming a curate, is the way of self-definition which he now envisages. Such a practice of masculinity suits him as it necessitates the power of mind rather than body. The kind of vocation he thinks of pursuing indicates that he is functioning within the structure of class as well as the sexual division of labour, the career being a middle-class, masculine one. He immediately constructs an imaginary subject position for himself as a spiritual man, a substitute for his previous one as a scholar. He identifies himself with Christ: ‘he might so mark out his coming years as to begin his ministry at the age of thirty – an age

³⁸Annette Federico, *Masculine Identity in Hardy and Gissing* (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1991), p. 106.

which much attracted him as being that of his exemplar when he first began to teach in Galilee' (pp. 129-30). This is perhaps the grandest of the models of manhood to which he aspires.

But Jude has not abandoned the idea of formulating himself through an emotional (and intellectual) relationship with Sue and this renders the practice of masculinity as a student of religion difficult. He finds a chance of self-definition through such a relationship when Sue asks him to go to her, complaining of loneliness. They constitute themselves temporarily outside the Victorian structure of emotional attachment, which defines the couple relationship in terms of matrimony, '[o]utside all laws except gravitation and germination' (p. 142). Their gender practice not being approved by society, however, Sue, who, as a woman, is more susceptible to the power of the gaze, is punished by the Training-School authorities for her deviance from their norms.

Jude further envisages the possibility of constituting himself through friendship with Sue when she escapes from her college and resorts to him. The scene suggests the possibility of Jude defining himself through a romantic relationship with Sue. Her cross-dressing, her putting on Jude's clothes and thus effacing their sexual differences, however, departs from the conventional structure of emotional attachment (which demands that a man directs his desires to the opposite sex), seeming to fit better into the masculine model of constituting oneself through Greek manly love or male-male comradeship.³⁹ Here, Sue is depicted as a masculine figure; Jude regards her as a 'being masquerading as himself' and the landlady assumes her to be 'a young gentleman' (p. 145-6). Sue is also described as 'boyish as a Ganymedes' (p. 154); the substitution of 'Cupid', in the Manuscript, with 'Ganymedes', 'Zeus's beautiful mortal cup-bearer',⁴⁰ further underlines Hardy's suggestion of homoeroticism here. As Jane Thomas explains, for late Victorian men of letters, the Greek legend of Ganymede was associated with both noble and sensual kinds of manly love.⁴¹

The idea of male friendship is further conveyed by Sue's description of her relationship with the undergraduate as a masculine one: 'We used to go about together – on walking tours, reading tours, and things of that sort – like two men almost' (p. 148). Sue herself assumes the role of mentor to Jude,⁴² desiring to 'ennoble some man to high aims' (p. 153). For Sue, sexuality has no place in such a relationship. Her reference to

³⁹ Dellamora, p. 462; Dolin, p. 222; Jane Thomas, 'Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* and "Comradely Love"', *Literature and History*, 16.2 (2007), 1-15 (pp. 5-7); Mallett, pp. 400-1.

⁴⁰ Taylor, notes to his edition of *Jude the Obscure*, p. 438.

⁴¹ 'Comradely Love', p. 6; see also Mallett, pp. 400-1.

⁴² Dellamora, p. 465.

'Venus Urania' indicates her preference for an ennobling kind of love in which 'desire plays, at least, only a secondary part' (p. 168). The Greeks associated Venus Urania with 'spiritual or intellectual rather than sexual love'.⁴³ She insists that she is not herself 'sex-less' but desires to transcend sexuality, to sublimate it, to be 'self-contained' in the manner of 'the most passionate poets' (p. 149). Jude too attempts to 'get over the sense of her sex' (p. 153), to suppress his desire for her, yet 'the novel is deeply sceptical as to the possibility or even the advisability of maintaining a purely platonic relationship in such circumstances.' Sue's emphasis on the spiritual rather than sensual kind of love, as Thomas has shown, reflects late nineteenth-century attempts by male intellectuals to define such love as inspirational. Jude's desperate struggle to transcend sexuality, however, reflects the difficulty of the enterprise.⁴⁴

Jude appears to be seeking a new mode of being a man which deviates from the hegemonic structure of emotional attachment. But he is also inclined to formulate himself through that structure, forming an intellectual and emotional relationship with the opposite sex. With Sue's marrying Phillotson, however, this way of self-formation also needs to be relinquished. At this point, Jude's newly-constructed subjectivity as a spiritual man is unable to sustain him, to give him a sense of manhood. Drinking and sexuality, the conventional ways of practising masculinity, become his only means of formulating himself. 'Jude's weakness for women', as Langland observes, becomes an 'important evidence of manliness. When Jude fails to live up to other discursive formulations of his masculinity, this one never fails him'.⁴⁵ Such practices, however, win him only the status of a 'feeble' man (p. 184), who has succumbed to his desires, and that of a sinner, since Arabella is another man's wife.

Jude begins to doubt his ability to constitute himself as a curate, feeling that he was 'a man of too many passions' to 'make a good clergyman'. Caught in the war between 'flesh and spirit' (p. 193), his desires and his ambitions, he longs for advice and emotional support. His inclination to visit the music composer, whose piece of music has moved him and whom he perceives to be a man with a 'soul' (p. 195), demonstrates, in Dellamora's words, a desire 'for understanding, for guidance, and for friendship': Jude seeks 'help in his struggle for education; but he also seeks emotional communion with a sharer of "yearning"'.⁴⁶ Perhaps the composer can play the role of a mentor for Jude, a substitute for Phillotson and Sue. But Jude's desire for defining himself through

⁴³ Thomas, 'Comradely Love', p. 5; see also Mallett, p. 401.

⁴⁴ 'Comradely Love', p. 7.

⁴⁵ Langland, p. 36.

⁴⁶ Dellamora, p. 457.

such a friendship is thwarted again; the composer is not as sympathetic or as soulful as Jude had assumed.

This way of self-definition not being possible, Jude returns once more to Sue as his other, or his last, alternative. Kissing Sue is the 'turning point' for Jude, a practice of masculinity which transgresses social norms and provides him with strong sense of manhood, revealed by his 'look of exaltation'. Dennis Taylor defines such spiritual 'moments of joy' as 'exceptions to the various letters of the law'.⁴⁷ Jude ultimately abandons the scheme of configuration of his masculinity as a 'soldier and servant of religion', making a bonfire of all his 'theological and ethical works' (pp. 216-7). He abandons the construction of his 'presence' in terms of social achievement to define himself through an intimate relationship with Sue. He even deserts his already ordinary social 'presence', his stable job as an artisan, and the possibility of 'progress' in his 'trade', becoming an itinerant worker. He is even ready to '[desert] more than that' for the more satisfactory mode of being a man as Sue's lover (p. 237).

Neither Jude nor Sue feels any affinity with the models of gender subjectivity provided by their society, the matrimonial roles which are assigned to them. As Sue insists to Jude, 'the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns' (p. 205). They renounce the subject positions of husband and wife to fashion themselves in the way they desire. Here, Hardy, voicing John Stuart Mill, sees happiness to lie in the construction of subjectivity as the individual desires and not in accordance with the models prescribed by society.⁴⁸ Sue herself quotes Mill to justify her rejection of all laws and conventions: 'She, or he, "who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation"' (p. 223).

Jude intends to construct his masculinity not simply through emotional and 'mental communication' (p. 352), as Sue desires, but through sexuality, not realising that Sue has no intention of defining herself as a sexual object. He 'disclaims all masculine ambition' by 'burning his books' but 'has forgotten' that Sue 'prefers the masculine world of intellect and friendship which overtly at least is not sexual'.⁴⁹ Jude defines himself, therefore, as Sue demands, as a comrade. Jude's practice of masculinity, however, since it is formed outside the conventional gender structures is not definable, not capable of expression. This period of life is therefore not depicted

⁴⁷ Taylor, introduction to his edition of *Jude the Obscure*, p. xxxii.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 2, p. 28.

⁴⁹ Garson, pp. 172-3.

since Jude, as the new man, who has '[reformed] himself as a sexual being', in Dolin's words, has no story to tell; Jude's transformation has no '*mythos*' to support it.⁵⁰

Jude is unable, however, to stand outside the structure of emotional attachment, unable to forgo sexuality, obliging Sue to formulate herself through that structure. He is not content with an intellectual, inspirational and emotional relationship; Sue has 'elevated' him but he desires to construct his 'presence' in terms of sexuality as well (p. 266). In the clash between flesh and spirit, therefore, the former is again victorious. Jude attempts to justify himself by describing sexual desires as 'natural' and thus irresistible. This justification is validated later in the story when Sue describes Jude's sexuality as 'the natural man's desire to possess the woman'. Both Jude and Sue, however, also refer to sexuality (specifically male sexuality) as wicked and gross (pp. 260, 352). There is a tension in the text between its rendering of male sexuality as 'natural' and 'right' and its rejection as wicked.⁵¹

Hardy opens this section of the story with the words of Marcus Aurelius, ostensibly to suggest the difficulty of the task of elevating oneself by mastering desires, as recommended by the Stoics: '*Thy aërial part, and all the fiery parts which are mingled in thee, though by nature they have an upward tendency, still in obedience to the disposition of the universe they are overpowered here in the compound mass the body*' (p. 256). Hardy seems in the novel to question the possibility of self-formation in the manner of the Stoics, finding the desires which govern individuals to be too powerful to be governed.

By constituting themselves in terms of sexuality, Jude and Sue construct themselves through the structure of emotional attachment. But they deviate from this structure, as defined by the Victorians, in formulating themselves through the couple relationship without taking the roles of husband and wife. For a period of time, they live in 'a dreamy paradise' (p. 272), experiencing 'Greek Joyousness' (p. 297), outside social norms and laws, fashioning themselves the way they desire. Their behaviour at the Wessex Agricultural Show demonstrates the happiness and satisfaction they experience in their present modes of self-formation, as lovers and comrades with 'complete mutual understanding' between them (p. 292).

Jude's and Sue's resistance to the prevalent Victorian gender discourses nevertheless renders them obscure and marginalised. Jude is gradually removed from the social domain. He is unable to get orders, dismissed from his job, 'the relettering of

⁵⁰ Dolin, pp. 212-3, 221.

⁵¹ Mallett, p. 397.

the Ten Commandments, and banished from ‘Artizans’ Mutual Improvement Society’ (pp. 300-5). They are subjected to the Foucauldian power of the gaze, judged according to the norms of Victorian moral and religious discourses, labelled deviants and excluded.⁵² This whole episode illustrates ‘the tyranny of the majority’ of which Mill complained.⁵³ Jude is driven more and more into the margins of the public domain, forced to leave Aldbrickham and lead a ‘shifting, almost nomadic life’, doing occasional ‘freestone work’ (p. 309). He is ultimately obliged to leave the public arena altogether. By the end of the story, he is entirely confined to his room, no longer a skilful artisan but an invalid.

Jude’s deviant practice of masculinity leads to loss of his ‘presence’ in the public domain and his ‘rank’ (subject position) as a man. With Jude remaining in the domestic domain and Sue taking the role of a breadwinner (the ‘gender regime’ of their relationship departing from the gender patterns of society), Jude is no longer able to define himself through the structure of the sexual division of labour. Unable to formulate himself in accordance with the prevailing discourses of masculinity (in terms of work or social achievement), he feels he is deprived of an important means of self-definition. He resorts, therefore, to the dream world he had inhabited earlier in the story, attempting to acquire a sense of manhood from his imaginary subject position as a Christminster scholar.

From the outset, Jude has endeavoured to constitute himself in terms of both social achievement and emotional relationships. The constitution of his subjectivity through friendship with Sue, accordingly, is not sufficient to provide him with the sense of manhood he requires; he needs to define himself through the dominant discourses of masculinity and class. His decision to be in Christminster on the Remembrance Day and his identification with the graduates reflect his need for at least an imaginary sense of self as a scholar. To ‘see the procession’ held for the graduates and to ‘catch a few words of the Latin speech’ through the open windows allow him to identify himself with the young scholars (pp. 323, 328). His reading of the Latin inscription on ‘the façade of the nearest college’ for those around him and his speech to the crowd, relating his failure to become a son of the university to his ‘poverty’ (pp. 325-6), suggest a continuing wish to define himself as one of the graduates. In Langland’s words ‘to see his failure is also to see [...] that he might have become “a son of the university”’.⁵⁴

⁵² See Chapter 1, p. 16.

⁵³ See Chapter 2, p. 28.

⁵⁴ Langland, p. 44.

Jude recognises that he has no chance of entry to the upper classes of society, that he will be ‘an outsider’ till the end (p. 328) and that Christminster ‘hates all men like me’ (p. 320). This recognition and the aversion he has developed towards Christminster dogmas, caused by his awareness that ‘the values the college walls protect are themselves hypocritical and debased’,⁵⁵ are unable to liberate him from the dominance of the discourses of masculinity and class which have pervaded him; he simply cannot define himself outside them. Here, Hardy also criticises class structures which deprive individuals of the chance of formation of their subjectivities according to their capabilities: ‘there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas’ (p. 327), as Jude says. Jude’s inability to stand outside the structures of gender and class, his clinging to his fictitious subject position as a scholar, divests him of his last means of self-definition, his roles as Sue’s comrade and lover. His preference for his dream world over the real one contributes to his neglect of his family.⁵⁶ The animosity of their community, of course, plays a role in bringing about the catastrophe; punished for their deviant modes of self-formation, Jude and Sue are refused accommodation.

Both Jude and Sue are forced to abandon their resistant practices of gender, their roles as ‘pioneers’ (p. 352), and conform to social norms. In the Foucauldian sense, they are marginalised and punished for their transgression from the norms, in order to be corrected and normalised.⁵⁷ But Jude and Sue are unable to formulate themselves in the ways others do. Earlier in the story, Jude describes himself and Sue as ‘sensitive’ individuals: while ‘the intention of the [marriage] contract is good, and right for many, no doubt; but in our case it may defeat its own ends because we are the queer sort of people we are’ (p. 286). Their deviant modes of self-fashioning have no chance of survival, of being chosen by Natural Selection or by society. As Jude tells Mrs. Edlin, ‘the time was not ripe for us! Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us’ (p. 400).

Sue believes in the operation of an external power on them, ‘the ancient wrath of the Power above us’ (p. 342), ‘something external to us that says, “You Shan’t!”’ (p. 337). She does not, of course, recognise the power of the discourses which have constituted her, governing her thoughts and mentality. When Jude tells her, ‘we are acting by the letter; and “the letter killeth!”’ (p. 388), he is not only quoting St. Paul but subverting him. The letter here can be seen to signify religious discourses.⁵⁸ The

⁵⁵ Millgate, *His Career*, p. 329.

⁵⁶ Garson, p. 167.

⁵⁷ See Chapter 1, p. 16.

⁵⁸ Taylor, introduction to his edition of *Jude the Obscure*, pp. xx-xxi.

tragedy, for Hardy, lies in the fact that their attempted resistance to the discourses which they have internalised proves difficult; in Langland's words, 'the destructive cultural self-constructions [...] are always already within, crucial to the formation and development of individual subjecthood and therefore perilous to reject'.⁵⁹ Sue believes in the artificiality of social conventions but is unable to act according to this knowledge, not having 'the courage of my [her] views' (p. 251). Jude too is unable to disentangle himself from the discourses of class. With Sue and Jude, Hardy depicts the tragic fate of defiant individuals who have resisted defining themselves according to the prevailing social norms, suggesting 'the virtual impossibility of any individual defining himself in opposition to the dominant culture of his or her society'.⁶⁰

With Sue's return to religious conformity, Jude too has to conform, to reconstitute himself in the ways his society demands, as Arabella's husband. Drinking, sexuality and practice of honour are his only remaining ways of self-definition. But these conventional practices of masculinity fail to provide him with a sense of self. He goes, therefore, to Sue either to redefine himself as Sue's lover or to '[finish]' himself. Failing to reconstitute himself in the way he desires, he welcomes death, walking back home in the wind and rain. The view of the carved THITHER, on the milestone, 'nearly obliterated by moss', for him signifies the end of his hopes for achieving a sense of self (p. 390). He continues his walk in the rain, allowing 'the deadly chill' 'to creep into his bones (p. 391), in a final act of self-annihilation.

Unable to formulate himself either through the prevailing discourses of class and masculinity or outside them, Jude is left with no means of self-definition; he is as obscure at the end as he is at the beginning of the story. He finds himself in a world with which he is not in accord, a world that does not want him, that has excluded him, hence his wishing himself out of it, invoking Job's curse of the day he was born: '*Let the day perish wherein I was born and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived*' (p. 403). With Jude's defeat, Hardy provides a cutting critique of the gender and class structures which subdue individuals, underscoring 'the difficulty of conforming to cultural constructions of masculinity'.⁶¹ Jude's final 'prone position' implies his 'crushing defeat by a gender as well as a class system' in which he 'can find no place' for himself.⁶²

⁵⁹ Langland, p. 46.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Mitchell, p. 90.

⁶² Ibid., p. 92.

In his portrait of Phillotson, too, Hardy can be seen to depict the impossibility of self-formation outside the domain of the prevailing gender and class structures and discourses. Phillotson's career as a teacher reveals a practice of masculinity conditioned by the sexual division of labour as defined by the middle classes. His desire to enlarge his 'presence' in the public domain by means of social achievement further indicates his being constrained by his social class; achievement, as Tolson observes, is associated with the middle-class construction of masculinity.⁶³ Phillotson aspires to get 'a university degree', 'the necessary hallmark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching', to become 'a university graduate, and then to be ordained' (p. 10). His desire to shape his masculinity in these ways echoes his inclination to incorporate a large 'promise of power', to become a man of striking 'presence'. Yet he is not governed by the discourse of success to the extent that Jude is. He renounces his social aspirations once they prove unattainable. He is even ready to abandon the idea of entering the church as 'a licentiate' (his alternative way of enlarging his 'presence' in the public domain): 'he was comfortable in his present position' as a teacher (p. 102). He has attempted, nevertheless, to strengthen his 'presence' by engaging in some scholarly research, the 'investigation' of 'Roman-Britannic antiquities', which he defines as a 'hobby', of course (p. 160).

The structure of emotional attachment has not conditioned Phillotson's practice of masculinity since he has not constituted himself through sexuality. Pervaded by the middle-class discourse of success, he has eschewed marriage and intimate relationships in order to construct his 'presence' in the public domain.⁶⁴ Meeting Sue, however, he thinks of formulating himself through matrimony, which indicates the insufficiency of the discourses of masculinity which he has pursued earlier. He regards Sue as an object of desire; when giving 'her private lessons', he 'was not really thinking of the arithmetic at all, but of her' (p. 105). Since his distance from the opposite sex is 'forced upon him by his academic purpose, rather than a distaste for women', he constitutes himself as a lover, kissing 'the dead pasteboard [of Sue's photograph] with the passionateness and more than all the devotion, of a young man of eighteen' (p. 162).

Phillotson is not, however, as constrained by the structure of emotional attachment as Jude. He renounces his desire for constituting himself as the possessor of his wife when Sue refuses to be defined as a sexual object, hiding in a closet and jumping out of the window to avoid him. He becomes 'a pitiable object' but does not

⁶³ See Chapter 1, p. 18.

⁶⁴ See Chapter 3, p. 40.

find his masculinity undermined (p. 227). The ‘gender regime’ of their relationship does not copy the dominant gender arrangements of society in that Phillotson becomes a husband without being a possessor. In allowing Sue to go to her lover, Phillotson further deviates from the dominant gender structures of his society. He resists the ‘doctrines’ he is ‘brought up in’, which demand that he defines his masculinity in terms of possessing a wife and dominating her, putting her ‘under lock and key’ (p. 230), in order to construct his masculinity in terms of loving-kindness. Phillotson’s action invokes the Comtean ideal of altruism, the victory of benevolence over self-love.⁶⁵ Although he ‘would have died for her’, he does not want to be ‘cruel to her in the name of the law’ (p. 235).

Phillotson refers to his act both as ‘chivalry’ (p. 231) and ‘an act of natural charity’ (p. 247) and ‘loving-kindness’ (p. 359). His reference to his act as one of ‘chivalry’ can be read as an attempt on his part to define himself within the domain of dominant (valid) discourses of masculinity and therefore to maintain his ‘rank’ as a man, which he discerns might be in jeopardy owing to his eschewing the power a husband is expected to exert over his wife. The formation of his masculinity in accordance with his feelings and human ‘instinct’ provides Phillotson with a strong sense of manhood: ‘His mild serenity at the sense that he was doing his duty by a woman who was at his mercy almost overpowered his grief at relinquishing her’ (pp. 230-2). That he is helping the one who relies for her happiness on him provides him with a large ‘presence’, specifically because he reads his liberation of Sue as ‘manliness’ (p. 231). Mallett refers to Phillotson as a ‘New Man’ for his acting according to his ‘instinct’ rather than ‘principles’.⁶⁶

Phillotson’s alternative mode of being a man is not, however, found acceptable by Victorian society. He is subjected to the disciplinary power of the Foucauldian gaze and normalising judgment, operated by the educational system and religious community, and is conceived to be the transgressor of the norms of morality. Accordingly, he is punished, deprived of his ‘rank’ (subject position) as a respectable man and is assigned a lower ‘rank’ in discourse as a dishonourable man — ‘rank’ in a disciplinary system is employed as both ‘reward’ and ‘punishment’.⁶⁷ He is labelled eccentric and immoral, stripped of his social and subsequently financial status and repudiated by ‘the respectable’ community (p. 247). But this punishment does not make him conform; he insists on the construction of his masculinity in terms of benevolence

⁶⁵ See Chapter 2, p. 27.

⁶⁶ Mallett, p. 398.

⁶⁷ See Chapter 1, pp. 16-7.

in relation to Sue, '[dissolving] the legal tie altogether', to 'open up a chance of happiness for her' (pp. 252-3). As with Jude, Phillotson's refusal to formulate himself through the prevailing discourses of masculinity of his time leaves him obscure. His new subjectivity is not definable; his life as a new man is not portrayed because masculinity as loving-kindness has no discourse to support it — to follow Dolin's discussion of Jude.⁶⁸

Phillotson is unable to maintain his new mode of being a man. By depriving him of his 'presence' in the public domain — '[h]e had been knocked from pillar to post' and 'had been nearly starved' (p. 357) — the power of normalising judgement obliges him to conform with the norms. He has to formulate himself according to the dominant discourses of his time, as a husband and an authoritative man, if he wants to regain his 'rank' as a man and his social position. For there is no possibility of self-formation outside these discourses. Though aware of the insufficiency of these norms of masculinity, he believes it is 'necessary to act under an acquired and artificial sense of the same, if you wished to enjoy an average share of comfort and honour; and let the loving-kindness take care of itself' (p. 359). He can reconstruct his 'presence' in the public domain, 'resume his old course, perhaps return to the Shaston school, if not even to the Church itself as a licentiate' (p. 358) if he conforms. He abandons, therefore, his new subjectivity, substituting loving-kindness with 'selfishness' and cruelty (pp. 365-6). He marries Sue in spite of his awareness of the torture she undergoes, abandoning the ideals of Comtean altruism and Millite self-determination.

Alternative modes of being a man, as constructed by Jude and Phillotson, are not favoured by society; the time is not ripe for them. While Phillotson, in his ability to adapt himself to the conditions of his life, survives, Jude is eliminated. Hardy's sympathy remains with the unfit and resistant subject, who for him is the worthier individual. Hardy's last novel is his most pessimistic in underlining the constraints of the dominant social structures and the difficulty of escaping them. Hardy's characters are obliged to operate within the domain of gender and class structures and discourses to understand themselves; any effort at self-formation outside these structures proves to be futile. *Jude* demonstrates conformity to be unsatisfactory and resistance improbable. Yet there remains a glimmer of hope: Hardy's emphasis throughout the story that his characters are ahead of their time suggests the possibility of a future when alternative ways of self-formation will have become a possibility. This may not afford much comfort in the present but it does hold out some hope for future change.

⁶⁸ See p. 159 above.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

The study of selected novels of Thomas Hardy reveals an engagement with certain common issues relating to masculinity. From the early stages of his novelistic career (as, for instance in *Far from the Madding Crowd*), Hardy can be seen to be preoccupied with the question of determinism versus free will; his novels explore the constraints of social structures and discourses which constitute individuals as gendered on the one hand and the possibility of resistance to these structures and the formation of alternative modes of being on the other.

Hardy's novels, though portraying fate and biological factors as significant determinants of the characters' lives, emphasise the role of social forces in the shaping of subjectivity, forces which pervade them, governing their thoughts and actions (resembling the Foucauldian conception of power), forces which appear in the form of discourses.¹ Such a conception of the constitution of subjectivity by social forces was partly inspired by the philosophical discussions of the time; for two of Hardy's favourite thinkers, Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill, despite their different world-views, individuals were the effect of society, that is, ideas and beliefs.² But I have argued that Hardy also anticipates later discussions of the social construction of gender and subjectivity. His male characters are shown to operate, by necessity, within the domain of gender and class discourses and structures (for instance, the gender structures which R. W. Connell enumerates, the sexual division of labour, power and emotional attachment),³ which define the ways in which they should practise masculinity. Subjected to the Foucauldian power of the gaze and normalising judgement, Hardy's male characters assume the task of exercising power on themselves, disciplining themselves to attain the necessary qualifications for acquiring the 'rank' (subject position) of a 'man' or a member of a specific social class.⁴ The definitions of masculinity provided by their society, however, are not always in accordance with their desires or capabilities; the prevailing norms of masculinity and class of their time prove to be constraining, unsatisfactory and difficult to pursue. What distinguishes Hardy's earlier works from the later ones is the more critical tone the latter assume, their more radical interrogation of the dominant discourses of masculinity and class. In Hardy's

¹ See Chapter 1, p. 14.

² See Chapter 2, pp. 26, 29-30.

³ See Chapter 1, p. 11.

⁴ See Chapter 1, pp. 16-7.

novels, the association of masculine ‘presence’ with power (which John Berger considers a conventional way of constructing masculinity)⁵ and the construction of masculinity through the suppression of emotion and need (a point also noted by contemporary sociologists of masculinity, such as Andrew Tolson)⁶ prove confining, inadequate and destructive. The increasingly dark vision of the novels, I would argue, stems from the recognition of the fact that the prevailing gender and class structures and discourses are necessary for an acquisition of a sense of self. There are therefore difficult to escape or to renounce. Those who recognise the inadequacy of these discourses of gender and class are unable to articulate alternatives; they are bound by them at the most fundamental level. To stand outside these discourses, as Jude discovers, is to become obscure and indefinable. This is at least part of his tragedy.

Hardy’s novels, however, do envisage the possibility of a limited resistance to the prevailing gender and class structures of his time. The construction of masculinity in the manner of the Stoics (rejecting materialistic and worldly attachments and physical impulses), is for Hardy, one possible way of self-definition outside the domain of these structures, an alternative, nobler way of being a man. Yet the hope in the practicability of such a reconfiguration of masculinity and its ability to confer tranquillity and happiness on the individual, I would suggest, weakens in his later works. Hardy seemingly finds defiance of the dominant social discourses and the very act of renunciation to be difficult. Discourses of masculinity and class, which permeate individuals, prove too powerful to be resisted. In his later (tragic) novels, Hardy still sees resignation to what is out of one’s control as a way of attaining equanimity yet the protagonists of these novels are unable happily to acquiescence in their lot for they feel their destiny, or rather the social order, is far from being perfect and just.

The construction of an alternative masculinity through loving-kindness and altruism is portrayed in the novels as another way of resisting the dominant discourses of masculinity. This mode of being a man, however, although possible, is difficult to achieve and hard to maintain under the pressure to fashion subjectivity in accordance with the models society offers. But Gabriel Oak and Giles Winterborne manage to constitute themselves both as Stoics and through loving-kindness and friendship. Swithin and Angel, however, fail to define themselves through fellow-feeling while Phillotson abandons this mode of self-formation because his altruism clashes with Victorian social norms. Yet Hardy himself, I would argue, retains his conviction in this

⁵ See Chapter 1, pp. 17-8.

⁶ See Chapter 1, p. 9.

mode of self-definition despite the failure of his characters. The Comtean ideal, the hope in the advancement of human society through the development of altruism, may wane in the course of Hardy's novelistic career but does not entirely vanish.

So, even though Hardy's novels do not portray change, they depict the potential for it. The novels anticipate contemporary social-constructionist theories of masculinity in suggesting that social structures do not determine individuals mechanically; rather, gender and class structures are constituted through the practices of individuals, who can, over time, modify those structures. The possibility of change lies in this dynamic relationship between structure and practice. R. W. Connell argues that gender structures which delimit gender practice 'do not continue, cannot be "enduring", unless they are reconstituted from moment to moment in social action'.⁷ These structures moreover are themselves historical constructions and therefore inherently susceptible to change. Changes to these structures can be instigated by alterations in external circumstances, which can be social, cultural or economic but the structures themselves also 'develop *crisis tendencies*, that is, internal contradictions or tendencies that undermine current patterns and force change in the structure itself'.⁸ That 'gender regimes' of institutions do not always imitate the overall gender patterns of society suggests the potential for the modification of the wider structures in the long run.⁹

In Hardy's novels too, I would suggest, gender structures are shown to be capable of modification once individuals refrain from constituting themselves through them. This is evident, for instance, in the construction of masculinity through the practice of Stoicism or in terms of loving-kindness or whenever the male characters do not constitute themselves as authoritative figures or as possessors. The structure of power specifically is resisted in *Jude the Obscure*, where the male characters do not define themselves in terms of authority and assertiveness (although Phillotson does return to conformity with that structure at the end). The structures of the sexual division of labour and power are also shown to be resisted at the end of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, where Henchard plays the role of a housewife and caretaker and assumes a subordinate role.

Hardy wrote in an intellectual atmosphere dominated by deterministic and evolutionary ideologies which severely limited the possibility of freedom. In Charles Darwin's highly deterministic world (which was governed by the laws of heredity and Nature), individuals played little part in the development of the characteristics of their

⁷ R. W. Connell, *Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), p. 55.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

species. Yet, for Darwin, transformation in the conditions of life could cause ‘variability’ in living beings which if preserved by natural selection could lead to the formation of ‘new species’.¹⁰ In Spencer’s world-view too, where the Unknown Cause determined everything in an absolute manner, change was conceived to be indispensable to evolution, being triggered by the very power which permeated and determined humans and society.

Spencer, as we have seen, contends that individuals may not be the cause but are the medium through which social evolution occurs. Opinion is the ‘the agency’ by means of which the Unknown Cause operates: it ‘is a unit of force, constituting, with other such units, the general power which works out social changes’. The expression of opinion, therefore, whether ‘conservative’ or ‘progressive’, is important for the progress of society. By expressing the views which might appear to be ‘in advance of the time’,¹¹ an individual is in fact participating in the overall process of evolution:

He, like every other man, may properly consider himself as one of the myriad agencies through whom works the Unknown Cause; and when the Unknown Cause produces in him a certain belief, he is thereby authorized to profess and act out that belief.¹²

Opposing opinions or units of force, when converged, can instigate change in the social conditions which evolution requires. Spencer’s view of power as a force which produces both resistance and conformity in the individual bears resemblance to Foucault’s notion of power, as Jane Thomas argues. For both, power creates resistance and for both modification to the external conditions is possible through the convergence of points of resistance, that is, the unification of opposing opinions or discourses.¹³

For Foucault (as discussed in Chapter 1), power is not repressive but productive, creating resistance; resistance is an inevitable accompaniment of all relations of power. Points of resistance can be found all throughout the power network, which, if unified, can lead to changes in the conditions of life.¹⁴ Foucault argues that power produces discourse and simultaneously counter-discourses: ‘discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes

¹⁰ Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: John Murray, 1910 [1859]), pp. 79, 97, 100.

¹¹ Herbert Spencer, *First Principles* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1862), pp. 122-3.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹³ See Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent: Reassessing the ‘Minor’ Novels* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 14.

¹⁴ See Chapter 1, pp. 14-5.

it possible to thwart it'. Discourse can be 'a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy'.¹⁵ Reverse discourses, once unified, can become dominant, giving rise to new ways of thinking, acting and being in the world. Hardy can be seen to hold a conception of power and of the mechanisms of change similar to those of Spencer and Foucault.¹⁶ For him, as for them, opposing opinions articulated by resistant subjects can eventually gain dominance. This allows for the emergence of new (equally but differently determined) modes of being in the world. This may take time and cause individual pain, as it does for Jude and Sue, who are portrayed as fifty years ahead of their time. But the implication is that change will eventually occur.

The surfacing of the deviant discourses of masculinity in the late nineteenth century, as voiced by some intellectuals of the time, who offered a definition of masculinity constructed through manly comradeship,¹⁷ can be seen as an example of the emergence of reverse discourses of masculinity and modes of being a man. Such a resistant configuration of masculinity, departing from the conventional structure of emotional attachment, which defines desire in the framework of the gender binary, is hinted at in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Jude the Obscure*. These two novels appear to imply the susceptibility of gender structures to change. Jude's and Sue's alternative modes of self-definition also indicate points of resistance taking shape alongside the conventional Victorian modes of being a man and a woman.

Hardy's mainly deterministic view of existence appears to renounce the notion of freedom, portraying individuals as governed by the social forces which pervade them. Yet it suggests that the potential for change at a fundamental level exists. Departing from Schopenhauer's highly deterministic philosophy, which envisages the possibility of escaping the Immanent Unconscious Will only in annihilation, Hardy hopes that the 'Unconscious Will of the Universe' can eventually become 'aware of Itself', for

what has already taken place in fractions of the Whole (i.e. so much of the world as has come conscious) is likely to take place in the Mass; & there being no Will outside the Mass—that is, the Universe—the whole Will becomes conscious thereby; & ultimately, it is to be hoped, sympathetic.¹⁸

¹⁵ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. I, *The Will to Knowledge*, trans. by Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990 [French, 1976]), p. 101.

¹⁶ See Thomas, *Femininity*, pp. 14-5.

¹⁷ See Jane Thomas, 'Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* and "Comradely Love"', *Literature and History*, 16.2 (2007), 1-15.

¹⁸ Thomas Hardy, *Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), III (1982), 255.

Conscious humans can affect the unconscious Will, making it conscious and, hopefully, sympathetic. This shapes the core of his melioristic philosophy: the development of sympathy which can gradually improve the human condition.

Here Hardy attempts to address 'the question of Free-Will v. necessity'. For him, the human will is 'neither wholly free nor wholly unfree'; 'as a subservient part' of the 'Universal Will', it is 'swayed' by the Will and to that extent not free but

whenever it happens that the rest of the Great Will is in equilibrium the minute portion called one person's will is free, just as a performer's fingers will go on playing the pianoforte of themselves when he talks or thinks of something else & the head does not rule them.¹⁹

It is in these moments of emancipation, when the individual's mind is not ruled by the Will, that he or she can think alternatively and eventually become the means of change.²⁰

Hardy's characters, then, are shown to be largely constrained by the pervasive power of discourses but there are moments when sensitive, critical subjects, such as Jude (and Sue), who are unable to adapt themselves to the conditions of their lives, are capable of gaining a superior insight into the conditions of existence, calling into question the social norms and discourses which have constituted them. Even though these characters are unable to move forward enlightened by that insight, for Hardy, such moments have the potential for change and the amelioration of conditions of life. The alternative ways of thinking (points of resistance) produced by the resistant subject can eventually give rise to new discourses and new ways of being in the world.

From the early stages of his novelistic career, Hardy portrays the conventional models of masculinity alongside emergent, less conventional (less virile) models, which associate masculinity with power of the mind rather than the body. Swithin *St Cleeve*, *Angel Clare* and *Jude Fawley* all attempt to construct their masculine 'presence' in terms of mental power. These characters also practise gentler versions of masculinity and, with the exception of *Angel Clare*, they are not so authoritative and assertive. But it is in *Jude* that Hardy depicts a mode of masculinity which departs radically from the normative Victorian definitions of masculinity in its incorporation of the conventionally-defined feminine attributes of emotionality, sensitivity and tenderness.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hardy's discussion of the Will and its relation to human will and of the ways the mechanisms of change work for Hardy are also explored by Thomas; see *Femininity*, pp. 24-6.

With such a presentation of masculinity, in which gender boundaries are blurred, the novel anticipates the emergence of a kind of masculinity which embraces more mutuality between the masculine and the feminine.²¹ Jude's gentle version of masculinity, although ahead of his time, may find a chance of survival in the future.

Hardy's novels can be seen to be an interrogation of the configuration of masculinity based on the maintenance of a rigid distinction between the masculine and the feminine, as propagated by the prevailing gender discourses of the Victorian era. For Hardy, as is evident in his novels, the incorporation of benevolence and sympathy in the construction of masculinity is of great significance. The formulation of masculinity in terms of loving-kindness, fellow-feeling and altruism (feminine attributes, as Comte contends)²² rather than egotism and oppressiveness (conventionally masculine traits), if preserved by society, is seen to promise an eventual amelioration in gender relations. Hardy's novels thus suggest that the structures of gender and class are capable of being formulated in alternative ways, allowing for the shaping of less confining and less destructive modes of being a man.

²¹ Phillip Mallett, 'Hardy and Masculinity: *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and *Jude the Obscure*', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 402. See also Laura Green, "'Strange [In]difference of Sex': Thomas Hardy, the Victorian Man of Letters, and the Temptations of Androgyny', *Victorian Studies*, 38.4 (1995), 523-49.

²² See Chapter 2, p. 27.

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