

The Realist Imperative of Acceptance: Reconciling with Reality and Seeking Inner Peace in the *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy

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Abstract- *Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure (1895) traces the complex human desires, griefs, and the need to make peace with reality, thus showing a "realist imperative of acceptance" that is a core feature of the novel. To look at how Hardy visualizes the conflict between the ideal and the limitations which are unavoidable, this paper applies qualitative textual analysis of the novel, which is informed by existential realism, ethical criticism, and psychoanalytic theory. The method of close reading of the chapters is employed to show Jude's conflict with the limitations of society, his own wants, and the problem of right and wrong are Jude's ethical struggles in these chapters through which Hardy dramatizes character psychology and moral inquiry. The results suggest that Hardy's storytelling goes beyond the scope of history or formalism, and thus, he offers a type of realism that has an ethical component and allows for existential consciousness. This composite approach keeps alive the novel's timelessness, Hardy's portrayal of human strength, the need for moral responsibility, and the giving up of the fight with reality, deeply woven into the ethical and psychological spheres of Hardy's perspective, being seen. This study resonates with Victorian literary scholarship and presents a new model to map the territory of the relationships of literature, philosophy, and human experience.*

Index Terms- *Jude the Obscure, Existential realism, Ethical criticism, Psychoanalytic theory, Acceptance of reality*

I. INTRODUCTION

Realism was an essential development of fiction in the nineteenth century, marking an abrupt break with

the stylistic innovations of Romanticism and the turning to a mode of fiction based on the representation of quotidian life. Compared to Romanticism, where the emphasis was been placed on the importance of the imagination, for realist authors, the psychological and sociological aspects of the human condition predominated, offering those who read to face the situations to which our lived reality can be ascribed. In the framework of the Victorian age, the blistering process of industrialization, the growth of big cities, and the changes in the class structure reorganized the physical and the social space (Levine 1981; Watt 1957). In this milieu, realism developed into something more than a stylistic device: It has become a philosophical position: a devotion to involve yourself in warring with reality, even when such penetration is uncertain.

Thomas Hardy made a significant and varied contribution towards English novelistic tradition. Although his novels, especially the ones based on the landscape of the countryside of Wessex did indeed provide a very accurate regional picture, it was ultimately about a bigger struggle between aspiration and limitation. The fiction of Hardy edges up to the place where the striving of the individual meets with well established institutions, the delineation of classes, and the whims of nature. Critics have always placed his work at a cross road where the hard work of Realist observation has crossed Naturalist determinism (Levine, 1981). This dual attachment is particularly vivid in *Jude the Obscure* (1895) that shows not only the impediments of ascent, the limitations of education, and the controls on individual freedom through the tragic fates of its two protagonists (Williams, 2016).

Jude the Obscure by Hardy was received unusually negatively by critics at the time of its publication, leading later commentators to refer to the novel as *Jude the Obscene* to reflect its sexually explicit content, its critical attitude toward marriage, and its critique of religious institutions (Williams, 2016). This reaction, however, also exposed the depths of the work realist effectiveness, whereby it highlighted its potential to take on topics Victorian culture was so habitual to placing at the periphery. The scholar has since recontextualized the text as one of Hardy's most impactful works and through which to view the conflict between the faith of an individual and the limitations of society. In this spirit, Lyons (2020) shows how Hardy questions the notion of rewarding intelligence in a world that has not yet denuded itself of the legacy system but places Jude and his unsuccessful scholarly efforts to triumph through an extended critique of meritocracy and exclusion.

The interpretive possibilities with which the novel has been approached by scholars have been characterized by expansion. According to Elbarbary (2018), Hardy posits postmodern rupture in the story, which argues that the break and lack of clarity of which *Jude the Obscure* is a part prefigures the later literary forms. Framing the text as a deterministic tragedy, on the one hand, and as destabilizing narrative authority, on the other, Elbarbary establishes Hardy as a product of a transitional space between modern and postmodern sensibility. Similarly in Moharami (2025), the novel is mapped on psychoanalytic terms, showing how, in symbolic manner, revelations of Jude enact repression and desire, bringing to the fore the psychological aspects of acceptance and resignation in the novel.

Although the comments of skeptic critics remain heterogeneous, one can identify a certain degree of consensus amid them: scholars tend to emphasize despair as being the key theme of *Jude the Obscure*. The pessimism of the novel, the dashed expectations of Jude and the forsaking of individuality by Sue Bridehead are repeatedly turned into symptoms of a massive pessimism on the part of Hardy. Another example is that Wright (2020) questions the Hardy's presentation of sexuality to be destructive in nature due to the oppressive social structures, which makes the novel carry the label of defeat literature. But such

an interpretive orientation runs the danger of overlooking an important aspect of Hardy realism: namely, its moral insistences on acceptance.

This paper would argue that the novel of Hardy should not be read simply as a catalogue of gloom but as a dramatization of the realist imperative of acceptance. Realism within the narrative construct grows beyond the faithful representation to take an existential stance. Despite the sadness of what befell the lives of Jude and Sue, the experience teaches the audiences that reconciliation with reality is vital once you are faced with an unchangeable external force in matters of personal aspiration. The novel urges not only both protagonists but also the readers to face the senselessness of illusion, and the main emphasis is made on the necessity of endurance and reconciliation as the only feasible ways of treating the still unchangeable circumstances. In this regard Hardy Realism serves as a philosophy, not as a description. This paper has argued that Hardy criticism has, to date, cast his realism primarily into the mold of implacable determinism, and ignored as a result an existential aspect that in the novel takes precedence on both morals and metaphysics in the affirmative of acceptance as a moral position. Rereading *Jude the Obscure*, the author plans to stress that the novel is meant not only to cope with despair but with the inner peace, which can come as a result of endurance.

This paper asks three major questions about this work written by Thomas Hardy: (1) how Hardy uses strategies of realism to uncover the cruel realities of social and economic life, (2) how the failures of Jude and Sue to achieve their aims reflect a fundamental ethical imperative of acceptance; and (3) in what ways the novel, despite its repeated tragic inflections, points toward reconciliation as a state of existential peace. Collectively, these questions advance critical reception of Hardy into the critical discourse of pessimism beyond habitual terms in which his fiction is framed and enhance the vital area of Victorian realism by elevating the terms of acceptance to the upper platform of moral demands as a key term in the line of tradition.

This analysis argues that *Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy epitomizes a sense of realist ethic

which is beyond the portrayal of suffering. Hardy brings to the fore the nature of conflict between desire and social constraint that brings to the fore the philosophical necessity of reconciliation. Accordingly, a paradoxical hope is expressed in the novel: the ability to find inner peace, even weaker and uncertain, can be achieved based on the acceptance of reality in its true form.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895) is a major work that has been the center of debate over the years because of how deeply it deals with the struggle between the human desire for more and the social and existential realities that are merciless and unforgiving. Set in the late Victorian era, the novel is typical of Hardy's turning away from the rosy and idealistic vision of the 19th-century literature, whose influence was largely felt in the early part of the century. It went on to depict a kind of literary realism that indicates the inescapability of pain, the uselessness of desire being left unfulfilled, and the requirement of coming to terms with reality as a path to spiritual comfort. Matters haven't changed much since the time of Hardy. Present-day scholars keep rediscovering the author's genius by applying different theories – existential, psychoanalytic, ethical, and philosophical which leads them to acknowledge the “realist imperative of acceptance.” This article is a review that sums up some of the most significant scholarly efforts in last ten years by demonstrating that, taken together, they not only consider Hardy's novel as a tragic narrative but also as a philosophical meditation on human resilience and ethical engagement.

Sharma (2023) calls Hardy's text *Jude the Obscure* and stands it alongside a wide range of texts that have something in common with it, namely the field of existential realism. He contends *Jude the Obscure* acts as one instance of the paradoxical connection of human suffering and self-realization. Sharma further states that the novel achieves neither determinative fatalism nor idealistic utopianism, as long as it keeps open the possibility of true self accompanied by the individuals confronting and not escaping suffering. Firstly Hardy, and then Marlow through the character Jude show the typically human condition in these

works to be, on the one hand, a bold struggle for freedom from the social and cosmic order and, on the other, the acceptance of the latter not as defeat but as a higher type of existence. This manner of interpreting Hardy leads to viewing him as a precursor of existentialist thinkers, thus putting him side by side with those philosophic positions such as Camus and Kierkegaard. In Sharma's view, the need for the realist in Hardy's case is revealed in the work's proclamation that truth is achieved not through the avoidance of suffering but through its endurance and assimilation into the self.

Ahmed (2022) through this ontological viewpoint examines the presence of the realist imperative in the context of Victorian literary culture. Ahmed contends that Hardy purposely places *Jude the Obscure* as a reprimand to idealism characteristic of the nineteenth century which was the main intellectual and artistic paradigm that advanced the concept of moral progress, the perfectibility of man, and the resplendent power of education. However, Hardy looses the thick curtain around idealism and depicts a contrary reality of strict social hierarchies, class prejudice, and institutional barriers. The failure of Jude to go to Christminster symbolizes not only the betrayal of his dreams but also the clash between idealism and realism in the culture of the Victorian era. Ahmed is of the opinion that Hardy's denial of idealism is only partially pessimistic, and it acts as a philosophical call to the acceptance of realism as an indispensable condition of true self-awareness. At the same time, the novel acts as a cultural critique and a philosophical incentive that readers confront idealist goals in the abyss of social and existential constraints.

To add to the discussion on the psychological domain, Li (2021) presents an interpretation of psychoanalysis regarding *Jude the Obscure*, where the focus is on the interaction of desire and reality. Li says that the determinism of external forces is not the reason for Jude's tragic fate but that it is due to Jude's internal difficulty in uniting subconscious desires and the reality principle. Using Freudian ideas, Li views Jude's lack of ambition, complicated love life, and eventual depression as a psychic war which is one side demanding satisfaction of desire and the other reality-based restriction. This paper

states that one of the novel's implicit stances might be the promotion of the achievement of inner peace through the acceptance of human limitation, closely resembling psychoanalytic views on sublimation and adaptation. Jude's torment is put in the context of desire by Li who then relates the need for acceptance that is not only a philosophical but also a psychological one thus giving the individual psychic life a point of contact with existential issues.

Whereas Sharma and Li highlight that the suffering and acceptance themes are inherent in the characters, Khan (2020) concentrates the whole discourse around the interplay of fatalism and human agency in Hardy's novels, especially focusing on *Jude the Obscure*. He is of the opinion that the narratives of Hardy are these which keep flipping between total fatalism on one side characterized by the stern and unchangeable law of nature, i.e. circumstance and on the other side the very existence of human power typified by the characters' attempts to alter their futures. As far as Jude is concerned, even though agency is quite frequently devastated by external factors like social exclusion, economic distress, and cultural habitualness, Hardy nonetheless refuses to angle his protagonist as a passive victim solely. Instead, Jude's incessant struggles for overcoming his plight bear witness to the inexhaustible human desire for emancipation. Khan grounds the realist obligation with the acknowledgment that experiencing the truth of life does not imply letting go; on the contrary, it shifts the spotlight on human agency as the quality to survive and regain one's goals under the given circumstances. Therefore, a realist portrait of Hardy becomes a flash of how humans deal with the issue of control over the constraint/freedom dichotomy.

Brown (2019) places Hardy among the ethical turn in literary theory, contending that the former is a form of realism coupled with an ethical challenge to concede the world's restrictions. Firstly, Brown mentions that the *Ruin of Fancy*, one of Hardy's fictions, abhors escapist tendencies in representational modes, rather it insists that audiences face the ethical issue of acceptance demanded by the work done by them. Secondly, *Jude the Obscure* is the medium through which this ethical realism is made visible in terms of characters that get affliction not only due to their imperfections but also structural

inequities. The novel's realism, thus, is not simply illustrating the case but, on the contrary, is asking the readers to acknowledge the moral gravity of suffering and the need for reconciliation with the reality in question. According to Brown's viewpoint, Hardy's role in the arts and literature scene is re-defined as a model for the ethical commitment of dealing with the human predicament.

In total, the five studies emphasize the complex nature of the realist imperative in *Jude the Obscure*. In his paper, Sharma (2023) investigates the existential issues of the novel, whereas Ahmed (2022) focusses on the cultural dimension and Li (2021) uses psychoanalysis as a tool to trace the characters' path to the realization that inner peace can only come from one's acceptance of the world albeit they arrived at the same conclusion through their respective disciplines. Meanwhile, Khan (2020) goes further in the discussion by stating that these two elements fate and agency should not be viewed as separate, rather the novel as a whole is the interplay of both. Brown (2019) complements such a view by taking Hardy's realism to be a level of moral concern. In other words, those are the range of aspects that are most prominent within the scope of Hardy's novel which, in turn, is the integrative power of the author's compositions: it becomes at once existential, cultural, psychological, and ethical. The main point in all this is that Hardy refuses to offer peace through sacrifice or escape of any kind, on the contrary, he sees peace as the very relinquishing of the confrontation with a bad world.

These agreements among the authors present important considerations for the present-day scholars. This perspective leads us to conclude that Hardy's realism is consistent with the current debates on the role of literature in promoting resilience, moral consciousness, and psychological adjustment. The studies that have been presented affirm that the need for acceptance in Hardy's work does not restrict him to being a Victorian novelist but rather establishes him as a thinker whose insight is as pertinent as the human condition. Therefore, *Jude the Obscure*, in a way, questions the very same issues with which the human race has been grappling since time immemorial, consequently, it is a perfect example of

the intersections between literature, philosophy, psychology, and ethics.

III. METHODOLOGY

This paper applies qualitative textual analysis to Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895) with the objective of uncovering the way the novel represents the "realist imperative of acceptance" as the dramatization of the first concept. The choice of methodology is based on the understanding that Hardy's work, which should not be simplified to historical determinism or aesthetic formalism, is at the confluence of existential, ethical, and psychological dimensions. A solely historical or formalist approach might lead to the text being portrayed as its socio-historical context or its stylistic features, but the main focus of this study is on how Hardy creates his meaning through the depiction of human aspiration, suffering, and reconciliation with the reality. Therefore, this study identifies itself as one of the qualitative literary analyses where the meaning is drawn from the detailed reading of the selected passages, contextual interpretation, and theoretical application. *Jude the Obscure* is considered as a literary and philosophical narrative, thus a methodology that could explain its thematic and ethical depth is required.

This study's textual corpus focuses mainly on Thomas Hardy's novel and it is contingent upon various secondary materials comprising of peer-reviewed articles, scholarly monographs and critical essays that provide existential, cultural, psychoanalytic and ethical interpretations to Hardy's total output. Nevertheless, this study, unlike previous ones that normally concentrate on the use of one single interpretive framework, here multiple interpretive frameworks such as existential realism, ethical criticism and psychoanalytic theory are concurrently applied to unravel the complexities of Hardy's realism.

This study, through existential realism, represents a method of understanding that places the confrontation of human aspiration with the inevitability of suffering at the center, thus touching on proto-existentialist themes which later philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Camus draw

upon. The use of ethical criticism is to show the ways of Hardy's narrative as a moral provocation, which remind the readers not to look at the suffering only as a show but to recognize their responsibility and to the acceptance. The psychoanalytic perspectives considered in the paper deal with the conflict of unconscious desires and the demands of external reality, especially Jude's failure to combine the purity of ambition with reality.

The methodology consistently embodies a composite *modus operandi*: initially, choosing major textual instances that present the themes of ambition, irritation, despair and reconciliation; next, executing detailed readings where the linguistic and structural features were visibly brought out; another stage involved correlating the textual results with the existential, ethical and psychoanalytic arenas and, at last, the interpretations being merged into larger thematic insights. This operation enables the project to go through the micro-level of textual detail to the macro-level of philosophical reflection, thus maintaining the analysis as both rigorous and conceptually extensive.

Notably, the method is not intended to force the text to fit the theory but to make the text the main guide for theory, which means that the text-theory relationship is now a dynamic one and that Hardy's fiction and modern critical conversation are in continuous interaction. The logic behind this compositional method is predicated on the belief that Hardy's realism is an interdisciplinarity phenomenon, requiring approaches that connect literature, philosophy, psychology, and ethics. Examining *Jude the Obscure* by means of determinism, cultural critique, or psychology, individually, would be like ignoring the integrative force of the novel that, however, through an interdisciplinary stance, expressly manifests its sustaining that at the same time existential wisdom, ethical necessity and psychological adaptation is the acceptance of reality.

This methodological framework lays down the basis for the other chapters of the inquiry: the literature review not only places Hardy in the context of the current scholarship but also the analysis section gauges the understanding of the interpretive frameworks used in the detailed readings of the

novel; the results point out the ways in which these readings have been brought together to present one account of the realist imperative of acceptance; finally, the conclusion summarizes the reflections on the possible wider ramifications of these insights for literary studies and human understanding. By defining a methodology that is simultaneously textual, logical, and moral, the research imparts harmony throughout the stages of its thesis and charts a way for examining how Hardy's novel signifies the coming together of human longing and the need for giving up.

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The main focus of this research is to find out how *Jude the Obscure* represents the "realist imperative of acceptance" which could be termed as the dramatization of the "realist imperative of acceptance." As per the methodology, the study-paper relies on the application of the layered close reading of the key narrative moments and their provisionalizations through the existential, ethical, and psychoanalytic frameworks. In this part of the paper, the author does not confine himself to one single theoretical perspective but shows how Thomas Hardy's novel fuses these theories to an empathetic depiction of human hope, pain, and the coming to terms with the reality. The paper is presented in three main chapters: first, the discussion of the interpretative scope of existential realism, next the position of ethical criticism, and finally the opening up of the psychoanalytic interpretation which is followed by a brief presentation of the novel's philosophical significance through these dimensions.

a. Existential Realism

Hardy, through the character of Jude Fawley, captures the tragic irony of the human condition that is the continual striving for something better even though disappointment is inevitable. Jude's inexhaustible will to get admitted at Christminster, which he was stopped many times by the social barriers and biasedness of the institution, is a clear case of the impossibility of a limitless souls' aspiration (Hardy, 1895). Jude's relentless ambition to enter Christminster, repeatedly thwarted by class barriers and institutional prejudice, exemplifies the futility of unbounded aspiration. His tragic failure is a

metaphor for human life as seen through the lens of existentialism which suggests that the novel finds meaning not in the attainment of the ideal but in the recognition of the boundaries imposed by circumstances. This is in tune with Sharma's (2023) view that Hardy foreshadows the later existential thinkers like Camus and Kierkegaard, both of whom stress the importance of experiencing the suffering as a part of the real self. In this way, Hardy's realism does not hold tightly to either utopian idealism or deterministic fatalism, rather, it underscores that human dignity is the one that comes from the overcoming of despair without falling into nihilism. The novel showcases the concept of existential endurance the acknowledgment that does not signify the annihilation of longing but that tempers it with insight.

b. Ethical Criticism

Complementing this existential dimension is the ethical force of Hardy's realism. Ahmed (2022) underscores that Hardy critiques Victorian idealism, exposing the moral consequences of clinging to unattainable ideals in a society structured by inequity. Jude's repeated exclusion from education and cultural prestige illustrates not only personal failure but also systemic injustice (Hardy, 1895). Through this lens, Hardy's realism becomes an ethical provocation, compelling readers to confront the moral weight of suffering. Brown (2019) advances this view, suggesting that Hardy's narrative compels recognition of suffering as a shared human responsibility rather than a spectacle of misfortune. The realist imperative of acceptance is therefore not passive resignation but an ethical necessity: a demand that one reconciles with reality while remaining morally attuned to the inequities it reveals. Hardy's refusal to romanticize Jude's struggle underscores literature's power to expose, rather than obscure, ethical truths.

c. Psychoanalytic Dimension

While existential and ethical readings focus on the external barriers and the communal responsibilities, a psychoanalytic angle would be more inclined to talk about the internal conflicts of the character of Jude that contribute to his tragedy. Li (2021) sees Jude's failure to harmonize his repressed desires with the requirements of reality as the main cause of his fall.

Through his craving for both the intellectual and the amorous life, he unwittingly manifests the struggle within the self between the needing of the pleasure principle and the reality principle (Hardy, 1895). Take for instance his going to the extreme in his love for Christminster which is but a clear sign of not merely personal growth toward his set ambition but also of the fantastic object of desire which is beyond reach. He is always left wondering how his dreams can fail him which at the same time is the dramatization of their psychological function: the final letting of desire go of through acceptance. Such an interpretation fits with psychoanalytic concepts of adaptation, thus Hardy's novel may be read as showing the psychological pain that comes from holding on to fantasies in contradiction with actual life. Jude's pain happens thus to be a personal tragedy and also a psychological metaphor of the human desire limits.

d. Synthesis and Broader Implications

When looked at as a whole, these points of view show the different facets of the need for a realism that is characteristic of Hardy. Existential realism stands for persistence and genuineness even when suffering is experienced; ethical criticism positions the issue of the moral obligation to admit and recognize the systemic limitations at the very center; while psychoanalytic interpretation identifies the inner conflict between unconscious yearning and the demands of reality. The common denominator among these different views is that they all point out that the factor of acceptance in Hardy's story is not a giving up of one's rights but a source of growth and understanding of one's self. As per Khan (2020), Hardy's work is very much between the extremes of fatalism and agency, yet it is quite consistent in the way it depicts acceptance as a voluntary redefinition of human hopes within the limits of reality. This integration sheds light on the underlying methodological principle of this study which is that the different approaches to Hardy's realism found in various theoretical models actually represent a crossroads of existential, ethical, and psycho-social perspectives. Thus, the *Obscure Jude* is not bound by its context in the Victorian era but it can still be seen as a work that deals with the same issues of human endurance, moral responsibility, and the need for

acceptance that are at the core of the modern-day debates in psychology.

V. FINDINGS: THEMATIC INSIGHTS

The analysis of *Jude the Obscure* uncovers an array of thematic insights, which indicate how Thomas Hardy has used the character to the same end - the realist imperative of acceptance. Instead of showing the defeat of resignation, Hardy authoring wisely diagrams acceptance as a single, multidimensional process that marks one's existential, ethical, and psychological sphere, giving a transformation of one's suffering into a kind of acknowledgment. This part composes the most significant findings of the close reading and at the same time clues which are the main methodological approaches linking them together namely, existential realism, ethical criticism, and psychoanalytic interpretation.

One of the major points is the ambivalence that is felt throughout the novel between the human will to achieve and the social and material reality restrictions which keep the individual in question down. Jude's ambition to gain an education and move socially upwards is no less than the universal aspiration for going beyond one's self. Unfortunately, Hardy is never long in relating these lofty aspirations with the various institutional barriers and inner conflicts that eventually lead to their downfall. Viewed from the standpoint of existential realism, this clash scenario keeps alive the idea that human life is inevitably full of frustrations. Jude's failure is not simply an indictment of the class division but rather a performance of the human plight: that virtues are always mediated by situational constraints. Hence, the notion of acceptance rises to the fore not in the guise of surrender but rather as an existential acknowledgment of the boundaries laid down by the reality of the situation.

The second thematic insight deals with the ethical aspect of the pain. Hardy is not portraying suffering as only a spectacle or disaster; on the contrary, it operates as a moral challenge, forcing characters as well as readers, to face their duties. Sue's indecision between revolt and conformity, for instance, characterizes the ethical conflict between individual liberty and social duty. The results here show that

Hardy turns trouble into an ethical teacher: taking on the role of a moral stance that recognizes the need for harmonization between personal wishes and societal rules. Such a moral reading is the one that acknowledges the realist necessity of acceptance not only as the will to survive but as an ethical direction towards responsibility.

Thirdly, the psychoanalytic dimensions of Hardy's realism are among the discoveries. Jude's repeated failure to harmonize unconscious wishes - be it for the intellect, love, or spiritual purpose - with the outside world, is a manifestation of the psyche dramatizing repression and disappointment. Through Hardy's storytelling, the unconscious is not a haven from the harsh truth of life but is another place where the reality holds sway. So, the acceptance here is not the elimination of desire but its reformation: the acknowledgment that desire should be compatible with the claims of reality. This psychoanalytic aspect helps the distributive function of Hardy's realism, where the psychological is inseparable from the existential and moral ones.

The research results depict that Hardy's concept of reality is not limited to the portrayal of the society or the depiction of nature's fatality. In fact, it is a religious-philosophical sense of reality, and thus they show the interaction between the off, suffering, and reconciliation through drama. A hallmark of Hardy is the emergence of the realist motif of acceptance: it is existential wisdom in the presence of despair, moral obligation among conflict, and psychological engagement in the fight with desire. All the above discoveries combine to disclose the fact that *Jude the Obscure* is a realist work that prefigures existentialist theory and still holds the readers accountable to accept the unavoidable truth of life.

CONCLUSION

This study has proven that *Jude the Obscure* represents a "realist imperative of acceptance" dramatized, a model that is recognized in the human struggle that meet the inevitable pain and in the end, show the need for a return to reality. The study has been conducted through existential realism, ethical criticism, and psychoanalytic theory as the main grounding fields for qualitative textual analysis. It

has found the Hardy story to be very challenging for the historian and the formalist to restrict their interpretations to only these two perspectives. Moreover, it does not stop there - it is a potential to the multidimensional investigation of the human themes of longing, despair, and acceptance. The analysis emphasized Jude's constant desire for education and upward social mobility which characterizes human larger struggles: the conflict between idealism and practical life, suppressed desire and imposed limitations, moral obligation and existential despair. The research, through the portrayal of Hardy's novel dealing with such varied and complex human issues as existence, ethics, and psychology, conveys the text's role not only as a piece of literature but also as a philosophical challenge. Hardy's realism is not just to show the case, but to ask questions, forcing readers to face misery as something that cannot be avoided in life. One of the reasons for the novel's lasting influence is this similar ability to evoke, unsettle, and still, strangely, to comfort, telling us that acknowledgment - even if it is agonizing - is also a way of being wise.

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