

The Dominant Structures of the Times: Late Victorian Tragedy as Critique of Romantic Ideology

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Abstract

In their attempt to move beyond the Enlightenment, Romantic writers formulated a worldview which recreated the theological unity of being on the plane of immanence. This intellectual unity was imposed on the deeply divided Victorian society which was described by Benjamin Disraeli, the British prime minister, as “the two nations.” Imposing a unified intellectual framework on a sharply divided society without being able to develop it from within is bound to merely cover the division with an ideological smokescreen. This study explores how romantic ideology manifests itself in the dominant form of Romantic realism in the fiction of early Victorian writers. It, then, investigates the dominant form of late Victorian fiction in order to prove that it functions as ideology critique. Romantic fiction in the early Victorian period, on the one hand, attempts to unify the individual and society, man and nature and the different social classes through showing how they are permeated by a unifying spirit. The form of late Victorian tragedy, on the other hand, which shows the opposition between the individual and society, man and nature and the social classes is the result of debunking the faith in unity as merely ideological. When unity is exposed as merely ideological, what remains is the opposition in which the individual is defeated in his struggle against a greater power, creating, thereby, the distinctive form of tragedy. Late Victorian tragedy is, hence, the exposition of oppositions without unification.

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“Society, in short, is fast falling in pieces; and a time of unmixed evil is come on us.”

(Thomas Carlyle, “Signs of the Times” 59)

Of all the diverse ways to describe the Victorian Age, Sir Henry Holland, a nineteenth century thinker, chose to call it “an age of transition” (1). What he witnessed was “a period when changes, deeply and permanently affecting the whole condition of mankind, ... [were] occurring more rapidly, as well as extensively, than at any prior time in human history” (1). Many scholars and intellectuals, from Thomas Carlyle, Matthew Arnold and John Stuart Mill in the nineteenth century to Walter E. Houghton in the twentieth, accept this description of the Victorian Age (Houghton 1; Mill, *Subjection* 21-22; Arnold 122). Commenting on the demands for more inclusive democratic representation, Mill describes the era as an “age of change” (“Claims” 502). The transitional nature of the age underlies titles like Carlyle’s *Past and Present* in which he asks: “This English Nation, will it get to know the meaning of *its* strange new Today?” (11). When the nature of the age as a culture of transition is not stated clearly, it is implied in the division of its intellectual products, like fiction, into early and late Victorian (Allen 139, 218).

While the social setting and themes handled by early and late Victorian novelists are not very different since they deal with the same themes of love, marriage, poverty, class differences, individual success and social mobility, there is a line of demarcation between the optimistic tone of early Victorian fiction and the pessimistic tone of late Victorian novels. The difference in tone is only a symptom of a deeper change in the reception of the ideas of Romanticism and the continuing presence of Enlightenment hopes. While early Victorian writers accepted, and were even shaped by, the Romantic vision of a reconciled society and the Enlightenment hope for a better future

based on rationality and the discovery of the scientific laws of nature and society, the late Victorians had enough time to reflect on these ideas and see their failure. The tragic form of late Victorian fiction is, nevertheless, not the mere result of the pessimism resulting from this failure. It is, as this study proposes, a reflection on, and examination of, the Romantic form of reconciliation and the Enlightenment vision of the ineluctability of progress. When the Romantic reconciliation of the opposition between the individual and society, as manifested in the form of resolution, is debunked as ideological, nothing remains but the opposition which is laid bare in tragedy. The transition taking place from the early to the late Victorian Age was not only one from a hopeful vision to its disappointment, but was also a move from the Romantic attempt to ideologically recreate the unity of being to the tragic demystification of Romantic unity as ideological.

The various thinkers who view the Victorian Age as an era of transition do not necessarily see eye to eye on any other issue. The issues which divided them so sharply were the Chartist demands for democratic representation, the 1932 Bill of Rights and the concomitant need for better social conditions. Conservative thinkers like Carlyle and Arnold, on the one hand, saw the demands and the transition as the coming of anarchy (Arnold 149). Carlyle, quoting the German Romantic writer Jean Paul, calls it “a chaos of conflicting times” (Carlyle, *Critical II* 55). Liberals like John Stuart Mill, on the other hand, consider them as an unprecedented opportunity for the previously victimized and marginalized classes to change their position. Throughout European history, it was not very common for people to change their social condition. In *The Subjection of Women*, Mill describes the social change which appalled Carlyle and Arnold in a totally different manner.

[H]uman beings are no longer born to their place in life, and chained down by an inexorable bond to the

place they are born to, but are free to employ their faculties, and such favourable chances as offer, to achieve the lot which may appear to them most desirable (19).

Prior to the nineteenth century, people were “born to a fixed social position” which they could not change both because the law forbade this change and, most importantly, the means to do so were not available (21). They were born slaves or free men, patricians or plebeians, nobles or commoners. A slave or serf could never free himself except by the will of his master. Craftsmen could practice a certain profession only if they were members of a guild or admitted into it by its members. Manufacturers could not employ any new methods, technical or otherwise, in their work and were harshly punished if they did (22). In short, “the transition of an individual ... from one social position to another” or the phenomenon which came to be known in the twentieth century as “social mobility” was hardly, if at all, possible (Sorokin 133). The “inheritance of the social position of the parents by the children” was the norm in past societies in which the avenues to a higher social position were blocked by social and legal impediments (184). The ascending social mobility of an individual from one class to another through education, work or marriage is a relatively new phenomenon of the twentieth century. Its beginning in nineteenth century Europe due to the industrial and democratic revolutions was accompanied by great social upheavals.

This social phenomenon, on both individual and group levels, was regarded with horror by conservative thinkers, even sympathetic ones like Carlyle, due to the unrest behind it and the disintegration of the social structure and the cultural framework that it caused. These massive social changes in nineteenth century England were the result of the Chartist agitation for a reform act which was finally passed in 1832 and followed by two others in 1867 and 1884. The

Great Reform Act of 1832 gave the right to vote to shopkeepers, small land owners and tenant farmers. By extending suffrage in such a manner, the reform act changed the structure of the English society by bringing about the end of feudalism. Until the early nineteenth century, the power to make laws was in the hand of the landed aristocracy. The extension of suffrage led to the birth of the democratic society which not only transferred power from the aristocracy to the people but led also to the rise of manufacturers and bankers to power (Houghton 4). Carlyle calls the Chartist protests, the reform bills, the radical ethical theories introduced by the utilitarians and the liberal economic principles of Laissez-Faire “our French Revolution” (Carlyle, *Chartism* 34). Unlike Mill who regarded free trade and liberal government with relief, if not enthusiasm, Carlyle was apprehended by the rise of democratic culture and the “chaos” to which it was bound to lead (76). “The Working Classes cannot any longer go on without government; without being *actually* guided and governed; England cannot subsist in peace till, by some means or other, some guidance and government for them is found” (40). He finds this guidance in the aristocracy. A “real Aristocracy” which consists of the “Best, of the Bravest” is the only way to forestall the impending chaos (44).

In *Sybil, or, The Two Nations* (1845), Benjamin Disraeli, the British prime minister, addressed the condition of England question which Carlyle raised earlier in *Chartism* (1839). As a condition of England or industrial novel, *Sybil* shows the rich and the poor not only as two classes separated by a chasm but as two nations. Like Carlyle before him, Disraeli found the answer to the question to be a “real aristocracy” by which he means an aristocracy enlightened enough to lead the society out of what he deemed to be its crisis (233). For both Carlyle and Disraeli, hence, the end of the feudal hierarchy, the coming of democratic society and the liberal politics of *Laissez-faire* created a chaotic condition which can be remedied only by an enlightened aristocratic class endowed with money and

education and able to guide the nation. The culture of this newly rising society of manufacturers and workers, of bourgeoisie and proletariat, which departs from the medieval feudalism of the landed aristocracy, is the middle class “Philistinism” which Mathew Arnold abhorred due to its practicality, technicality and lack of the “sweetness and light” of true culture (Arnold 17; Trevelyan 530). Through education, true culture should replace upper class barbarism, middle class pretentious Philistinism and working class anarchy. Arnold’s culture, hence, plays the same role as Carlyle’s and Disraeli’s enlightened aristocracy in putting limits to the newly rising society of producers and consumers, curbing their “mechanical and material” nature, unifying the deeply divided society and guiding the nation (Arnold 37). The function accorded to the aristocracy by Carlyle and Disraeli is, hence, to be served by the presumably unclassed concept of culture. However, since Arnold uses the word “anarchy” to describe the culture of the newly rising working class and sets it in opposition to true culture which is the “love” and “study of perfection” (34), the term is not as neutral as it seems. Culture gains the “authority to counteract the tendency to anarchy which seems to be threatening us” (61). Culture, hence, functions as an ideological curb to contain the demands for a democratic society.

In such an extremely divided society and culture, any intellectual product cannot be said to have one and the same value for all parties, classes and intellectuals. The attempt to construct one cultural totality or hermeneutic context where intellectual products can be situated would only repeat the old historicist mistake of construing culture as an undivided whole. Historicism is “concerned with discovering a single political vision, usually identical to that said to be held by the entire literate class or indeed the entire population” (Greenblatt 5). This hermeneutic practice would interpret cultural and intellectual products from the point of view of the dominant ideology which is the thought system or mind frame of

the ruling class or, rather, with this ideology passed by the dominant class as that of the whole society.

Rather than constructing a hermeneutic totality and interpreting different texts from a single perspective, this study traces the transition taking place in nineteenth century culture by situating early and late Victorian fiction in their context which is torn apart by its internal contradictions. It seeks to prove that tragedy as the dominant form of late Victorian fiction functions as critique of the Romantic ideology of early Victorian fiction. The first part of the article recasts Friedrich Schiller's distinction between naïve and sentimental literature in terms of Karl Mannheim's theory of ideology. Mannheim's sociology of knowledge does not adopt a certain theoretical approach – feminist, Marxist or ecological for instance – but regards all kinds of knowledge and literary forms as products of their social context and its contradictory forces. Reinterpreting Schiller's distinction between naïve and sentimental literature in terms of Mannheim's theory of ideology offers a criterion for distinguishing between early and late Victorian fiction based on their relation to the dominant ideology of the age. In the second part, it makes use of Roman Jakobson's concept of "the dominant," not in service of a formalist study of narrative structure for its own sake, but to discover the dominant form of early Victorian fiction, exemplified by Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre inter alios*, and relate this form to the naïve or rather simple acceptance of Romantic ideology. The third part seeks to determine the dominant form of late Victorian fiction and to read Thomas Hardy's tragic realism, exemplified by *Jude the Obscure*, as critique of Romantic ideology. In both parts, the paper proceeds by laying bare the basic structures of a few early and late Victorian novels to reveal their dominance before it focuses on one particular novel in order to investigate the functioning of this structure and interpret its meaning by relating it to the social production of knowledge. Interpreting the dominant forms of early and late Victorian fiction as manifestations

of ideology and its critique avoids the historicist construction of a cultural whole and reveals the warring forces of Victorian culture. The paper shows that literary form is a social product which serves a social function. The form characteristic of Romantic realism as an instance of simple literature is produced by a certain class and expresses its interest in maintaining social unity. The form of tragedy exposes this unity as an ideological tool to contain the rising demands for a more egalitarian society. In showing literary form to be a social product, this study adopts neither a purely formalist approach which regards literary form as a thing in itself nor a sociologically reductive approach which regards the work of art as a direct reflection of society.

As rich a field as Victorian Studies is, it has been mostly dominated by certain trends of research. Many studies seek to examine the rise of a certain phenomenon in Victorian fiction. An early forerunner of this kind of studies is John Holloway's *The Victorian Sage* which does not focus on fiction exclusively but follows the figure of the sage in the fictional and intellectual writings of the age (244). Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's classic study, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, in which they unearth the figure of the mad woman is another instance. They offer a feminist reading of the misogynistic representations of the female in Victorian fiction. F. David Roberts investigates paternalism as a form of authority in *The Social Conscience of the Early Victorians*. In *Green Victorians*, Vicky Albritton and Fredrik Albritton Johnson explore the formation of the concept of simple life as opposed to industrial city and the fear of the rise of industry. The ideas of progress and evolution are examined in Peter J. Bowler's *The Invention of Progress*, marriage in Talia Schaffer's *Romance's Rival* and gender roles in Sharon Marcus' *Between Women*. The common denominator of all these studies is that they investigate a given phenomenon and follow its development in Victorian fiction. Another common form of studies is reading a certain novel or novels

from a theoretical perspective. “The Return of the Poor Man: *Jude the Obscure* and Late Victorian Socialism” reads Hardy’s novel from a Marxist perspective. *The Industrial Novels* follows the famous Victorian theme of industry and working class conditions in Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley*, Charles Dickens’ *Hard Times* and Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South*. Unlike these studies, this paper does not adopt Marxism or feminism as a critical perspective to tackle fictional works. In order to avoid determining – or at least coloring – the result to be reached in advance, this study does not adopt any of the above-mentioned theories but rather approaches fictional works through cultural sociology which regards all forms of knowledge, intellectual products, philosophical treatises and literary forms as products of the conflicting forces of the social context. Mannheim’s cultural sociology takes these products as objectifications which point beyond themselves to totalities of meaning (Hamilton 124). Instead of tracing the rise of a given phenomenon, reading a novel from a theoretical perspective or following a certain theme in Victorian fiction, this paper seeks to discover, as mentioned above, the dominant forms of early and late Victorian fiction and interpret them as manifestations of the conflicting ideologies of the times. If “the easiest way to understand the mind of a culture is to understand its stories,” perhaps it is also the easiest way to trace its changes and to understand the disintegration of mind frames and the makeup of new ones (Graesser *et al.* 229). The late Victorian mind frame which produced tragedy with its characteristic form of opposition functions as critique of the early Victorian Romantic mind frame which produced the form of the reconciliation of opposites.

The Ideological Nature of Naïve Literature:

Following Immanuel Kant’s idealist theory of the mind which rejects the simplistic empiricist vision and investigates the structure of consciousness and how it relates to external reality, Friedrich

Schiller introduces, in his classic study “Naïve and Sentimental Poetry,” a literary theory that accounts for literature in terms of the relation between the mind and the world. On ground of this relation, Schiller classifies literature as either naïve or sentimental, which are not meant in any pejorative or evaluative sense and should, perhaps, be replaced with the merely descriptive ‘simple’ and ‘reflective’ as some translations render them. Due to the vast, accumulative increase in human self-consciousness through history, writers do not always assume a direct relation to their cultures. They have become aware that there have been a lot of changes in history and that their culture is only one among many others which preceded it. Owing to the increasing awareness of the nature of the mind, its distinct structure and separation from, as well as belonging to, its surroundings, some writers could no longer take the basic ideas of their age for granted. They reflect on them and on their own relation to these ideas and assumptions. Schiller introduces his distinction between naïve and sentimental literary production in order to examine the relation of literature as an intellectual product to the culture which produced it. While the historical development of human consciousness plays a role in determining the nature of literature, he refuses to classify classic literature as naïve and modern literature as sentimental and indicates that the distinction is not chronological, providing examples of both kinds of literature in all eras (Schiller 280). The difference is that naïve poets, on the one hand, accept their relation to their world and their age in the sense that they take its basic ideas for granted as, for instance, Homer does with the idea of heroism. The naïve poet “follows simple nature and his feelings, and restricts himself merely to reproducing the external world” (Travers 60). Sentimental poets, on the other hand, reflect on their relation to their age and examine its basic presuppositions. The sentimental poet “reflects about the impression that objects make upon him, and the emotion that moves him and us comes solely out of that process of reflection” (60). Rather than taking the ideas and

premises of his age for granted, he examines them. His literary production is the result of this reflection and examination.

The naïve or simple writer “is not conscious of any rift between himself and the external world or within himself” (Sharpe 176). This writer reflects the vision of his age. In contrast, the sentimental or reflective writer, due to his examination of the premises of his age from an idealist standpoint, has an “indirect relationship to external reality” (176). Sentimental literature springs from the contrast between the real and the ideal, what things are and how they should be. Due to this idealist dimension in the writings of reflective authors, they tend to be more critical of their age. Schiller identifies certain forms which characterize reflective literature. The writer tends to be “satiric” if he emphasizes “the shortcomings of the real” (182). If in the separation between the real and the ideal, he is aware of the inadequacies of the former and shows yearning for the latter, he tends to be “elegiac” (185).

In unconsciously accepting the premises and the worldview of his own age to be true, the simple writer conflates the real and the ideal. He takes the thought system of his own age to be true without examination. Karl Mannheim refuses this conflation of the real and the ideal as ideological and defines ideology as “the collective unconscious of certain groups [which] obscures the real condition of society both to itself and to others and thereby stabilizes it” (Mannheim 36). Ideology is, hence, the system of thought, with all its presuppositions and unconscious premises, through which a certain group or class sees the world. In obscuring the real condition of society, this group or class sees the world in a way which conflates its real conditions with their own interests, with an image that is ideal for them or, at least, the best of all possible situations. What happens is that “ruling groups can in their thinking become so intensively interest-bound to a situation that they are simply no longer able to see certain facts which would undermine their sense

of domination” (36). Since it is a system of thought which confirms the existing order in service of the interests of the social elite, ideology is not an unbiased representation of social conditions. In its acceptance, repetition and, hence, confirmation of the basic ideas and premises of its age, naïve literature is ideological *par excellence*. It confirms the authority of the dominant group or class which produced the dominant ideology of the age. Being a product of culture that confirms it, naïve literature and ideology keep reproducing each other.

Any interpretation of social conditions is colored by the perspective and interests of the group or class which produces it. Since the dominant ideology is shaped by the interests of the ruling class, it necessarily deforms the actual living conditions and reinterprets them from its perspective. Mannheim adopts Georg Lukács’ definition of ideology as “false consciousness” (Lukács 50; Mannheim 85) and explains it as the “incorrect interpretation of one’s own self and one’s role” (Mannheim 85). As instances of false interpretation, Mannheim mentions

the cases in which persons try to cover up their ‘real’ relations to themselves and to the world, and falsify to themselves the elementary facts of human existence by deifying, romanticizing, or idealizing them, in short, by resorting to the device of escape from themselves and the world, and thereby conjuring up false interpretations of experience (86).

Through reinterpreting or reimagining the real social conditions in a romanticized and idealized manner, one falsifies them and renders them consistent with his own ideological vision which, in turn, confirms it. Since ideology confirms the existing social order, it results in the “routinization of the social world” (B. Turner 721). This routinization renders the existing social conditions seemingly natural. This is why individuals accept it unquestioningly and depict

it in their literary production which is bound to be simple literature in Schiller's typology. Due to its lack of critical consciousness of the presuppositions of the age, naïve literature keeps reproducing ideology. Put differently, ideology keeps reproducing itself in naïve literature due to the latter's harmony with, and acceptance of, the premises of its age.

In his reflection on the premises of his own age and on his relation to his social conditions, the sentimental writer departs from the simple acceptance and confirmation of the dominant ideology of his time. Through his self-conscious distance from his social conditions, the reflective writer does not assume their naturalness. By rejecting routinized perception and the naturalization of the social, reflective literature adopts the critical distance required for ideology critique. The reflective writer's indirect relation to the real is permeated by his awareness and pursuit of the ideal. This is why he is aware of the distance between the real and the ideal and refuses to conflate them. His literary output, consequently, does not take the presuppositions of his age for granted. In reflecting on the real rather than merely reproducing it, his writings, hence, function as ideology critique. His adoption of the forms of satire and elegy, which stems from his realization of the distance between the real and the ideal and of the shortcomings of the former, shows the utopian dimension in his thought. While this utopian dimension may not appear positively in the form of the depiction of an actual utopia, it becomes manifest in the critical stance he adopts towards the real. Defined in negative terms, ideology is "the absence of a positive utopia" (B. Turner 721). In the absence of an actual utopia, the consciousness of the privileged tends to equate the real condition with what it regards, from its own perspective, as the ideal, producing, thereby, ideology.

In contradistinction to ideology, utopian thought is "incongruous with the state of reality within which it occurs" (Mannheim 173). While ideological thought is produced by the

dominant group or social class whose best interest is to keep the status quo, utopian thought, on the contrary, is produced by the marginalized. Two types of utopian thought produced by those “on the margin of society” are Romanticism and Marxism (220). The difference between the ideologists and the utopians, hence, apart from belonging to dominant and marginalized social groups respectively, is that the former tend to conflate the real and the ideal while the latter keep them apart. As a result, while ideological thought is conservative, utopian thought tends to be radical (Hamilton 121).

It is precisely the awareness of the distance of the real from the ideal and depiction of the real as it is without idealization that shapes the divided consciousness of the reflective writer. This critical depiction of the real, reflection on the thought system which justifies it and examination of the routinization which makes it seem natural in reflective literature function as ideology critique. Due to its realization of the distance between the real and the ideal, reflective consciousness is in a disharmonious relation to its society. In the images of disharmony, rupture, social fragmentation and unity dissolving into disintegration, it does not only deliver criticism of the ideology justifying the status quo but also expresses yearning for a better condition. It negatively conjures up a vision of utopia without descending to idyllic images. In its critical stance, reflective consciousness, hence, leans more towards utopia without presenting it as a real condition which would render it ideological.

The transitional nature of the Victorian Age is accompanied by the development of consciousness of the changing conditions of the times. Early Victorian novelists produced their literary output in the romantic atmosphere which characterized the early part of the nineteenth century. Mannheim classifies Romantic thought as one form of utopian mentality (233). Living in the deeply divided nineteenth century English society, Romantic poets like William

Wordsworth and S. T. Coleridge were utopians. In his early life, Coleridge preached the principles of pantisocracy, “equal government of all,” and aspheterism, “the generalization of individual property,” and sought to establish a pantisocratic colony in America (Sister Eugenia 1071). After the failure of the project due to lack of funding, he retreated to Lake County with Wordsworth in the latter’s mansion (1080). The failure of the first project and the success of the second show that freedom from economic constraints is actually economic freedom. One cannot retreat out of social antagonisms unless he has the means to do so. Other “great Romantics ... instead of turning away from the world in disgust, turned *towards* it in disgust and fought it with its own weapons. In them realism as an aesthetic creed was born” (Allen 140). While leveling their criticism of society through realistic depiction of class conflict and careful attention to the details of daily life, those writers accepted the Romantic frame of mind. It is this “sense of identity with their times” which characterized early Victorian novelists (140).

And this points to another main difference between the novelists of the first half of the Victorian age and those of the second half. The former were at one with their public to a quite remarkable degree: they were conditioned by it, as of course any novelist must be, but for the most part were willingly conditioned by it. They identified themselves with their age and were its spokesmen. The later novelists, however, were writing in some sense against their age. They were critical, even hostile, to its dominant assumptions(139).

The developing consciousness of the nature of their age, of its assumptions and failed promises, renders late Victorian writers critical not only of their living conditions but also of the early

Romantic novelists and the way they depicted these conditions in their writings which propagated the Romantic frame of mind and its ideology. The early Victorian novelists' acceptance of the ideology of their time renders them simple or naïve novelists. The critical consciousness of the late Victorian novelists and their awareness not only of the deeply divided society but also of how this division and antithetical social conditions were covered over in Romantic ideological fiction render them sentimental or reflective writers.

The Dominant Form of Romantic Realism:

The Romantics found the idealist separation of the mind and the world, of the ideal and the real intolerable. In their attempt to heal the rift created by Enlightenment rationalism, they had to show that the world is rational and that the rational is also real. Yet in so-doing, they had to demonstrate that the historical course of the world not only takes a rational course but also reaches a rational conclusion. This means that every negativity encountered in the historical course of the world has to be interpreted as a step towards a higher positivity into which it is finally overcome. Yet, in this purposive hermeneutics of history, they had to justify all the absurdities taking place in reality as steps towards a higher rational goal. Since the rational and the real have to be finally unified, every negativity in the world must be justified as a step towards an ultimate positivity which will redeem all the negativities.

In their attempt to unify the mind and the world, to prove the rationality of the world, the Romantics sought to recreate the unified religious worldview set asunder by rationalism.

[S]ince they lived, inescapably, after the Enlightenment, Romantic writers ... undertook to save the overview of human history and destiny, the experiential paradigms, and the cardinal values of their religious heritage, by reconstituting them in a way that would make them

intellectually acceptable, as well as emotionally pertinent, for the time being (Abrams 66).

The Romantics sought to present the content of the religious worldview in a natural and human world. Against the idealist belief in the transcendence of God and reason, they engaged in creating a “participatory ontology” in which they “began to synthesise a new position from the two wherein all individual being, including the self, inhered and participated in absolute being” (Hampton 6-7). In a world that functions only according to its own soulless mechanical laws and lacks the schema of participation, a world which lacks providential guidance, there is nothing to guarantee the meaningfulness of human action, existence, history or the unity of society. The meaningfulness of the whole, whether social or historical, is lacking. In this post-Enlightenment world, it is the function of the Romantic writer to create the framework of participation on the plane of immanence. Yet, in infusing the world with spirit, in showing the real to be suffused with divine presence and in showing the course of history to be guided by a rational goal, the Romantics also had to see the world, with all its absurdities, justifiable. Their hermeneutics of history actually turns out to be apologetics.

The mission of the Romantic writers was not an easy one. They lived in a post-Kantian world ruled by the mechanical laws of science which made the world thinkable only in mechanical terms. Everything in the world starting from the formation of ideas to explaining natural and social phenomena has to be done purely in terms of causality and the mechanical laws of nature. Any explanation appealing to a supernatural or even scientifically unproven hypothesis must be excluded. All the previous understandings and explanations of the world, natural phenomena and society that are not in harmony with the mechanical framework have no validity. The discovery and employment of these laws led also to the Industrial Revolution which reshaped society into its

modern form with its inbuilt division between the bourgeoisie and the working class. This division was not only accepted by Victorian thinkers but was also regarded as natural and theorized by Thomas Malthus (1766 – 1834). Malthusian theory explains poverty in mechanical terms as the inescapable result of the geometric increase of population which is bound to outgrow the arithmetic increase of the means of subsistence and lead inevitably to famine (Malthus 5). This is the “Mechanical Age” in which everything is explainable exclusively in terms of scientific laws and which Carlyle describes as a time of “unmixed evil” (“Signs” 58-59). In a society that is “fast falling in pieces,” the mission of the Romantic writers is to recreate the required unity in order to rejoin not only the spiritual and the material but also the two nations (58).

The necessary yet contradictory mission of recreating the lost unity on the plane of immanence in a sharply divided society fell upon the shoulders of the Romantic writers (Hampton 7). While the creation of intellectual unity may serve social and political needs, it remains an imposition of a unified frame on a divided society which lacks it. The romantic unity of being does not emanate from or express the state of society but merely covers it. It does not serve the actual need of unifying the conflicting social forces but merely glosses over it with an ideological smokescreen. The Romantics regarded the suffering of the individual, and of all society, in the divided condition as a temporary negative situation to be overcome in the positive unification of man and nature, man and woman, the individual and society and of the separate classes.

[T]he course of human *Bildung*, in the individual as in the race, is a fall from the paradisaical unity of being into division and conflict between the self and the outer world, which turns out to have been a necessary departure on the way back to a higher reunion with alienated nature (Abrams 237).

The vision of the world and of the course of history, which structures Romantic fictional creations, moves from man's alienation from God and nature in society in its current state to the restoration of the unity of being which characterized the world prior to the division. The goal is to end the state of "estrangement, conflict, and a master-slave relationship between the self and nature" through overcoming this negativity in the restored unity of being (238). M. H. Abrams quotes Friedrich Hölderlin's preface to *Hyperion* in which he describes this theological vision of history as the structure of his novel.

To end that eternal conflict between our self and the world, to restore the peace that passeth all understanding, to unite ourselves with nature so as to form one endless whole—that is the goal of all our striving (238).

In its attempt to overcome the rationalist mechanical vision of the world, the Romantic vision seeks to restore the theological unity. Yet this restoration has to recreate the theological structure on the plane of immanence, of history and society, in the realm of human affairs without reference to a transcendental God. It imposes a theological vision on a secular world torn apart by its internal contradictions.

Romantic pantheism renders the presence of God immanent in the world not transcendental. Coleridge's interest in, and frequent recourse to, Spinoza is justified by the need for the presence of God in the post-Enlightenment mechanical world. This is why he is at pains to render Spinozist pantheism harmonious with traditional faith (Coleridge 176). The pantheistic faith in the immanence of God in the world and in all creatures leads to the unity of all beings since they are all permeated with the spirit of God. The Romantic world is one in which "we are participants, as finite beings interconnected with an immanent God" (Berkeley 2006, 458). Since God is

immanent in everything, this should lead to the unity of all opposites; man and woman, man and nature, individual and society and the different social classes. This means that all such oppositions and antitheses merely prevail in a temporary condition waiting to be resolved in a future unity. Yet, by the same token, if opposition is not overcome or if any evil remains in the world, this threatens the Romantic faith in the immanence of God (Berkeley 2005, 11). The Romantic worldview recasts the old problem of evil in a new way that endangers belief in an immanent God in a way that never threatened the traditional religious faith in the transcendental God or the Enlightenment faith in the transcendental *Deus Otiosus*.

This faith in the unity of being follows from an intellectual argument that comes as a response to a philosophical problem created by the discovery of the mechanical laws of the world in the Enlightenment. Moreover, it responds to the separation of man from nature which occurred due to the flow of peasants into cities because of the Industrial Revolution and enclosure, the rhythm of which increased in the 1830s (M. Turner 219). While the rise of industry and enclosure led to this flow, they also consolidated the power of landed aristocracy, the wealth of the bourgeoisie and the poverty of the working class, increasing, thereby, the sharp class division described by Carlyle *inter alios*. The idea of unity, hence, comes from an intellectual response to a philosophical problem and is necessarily required by the social condition. Yet it does not express the divided state of society itself. Since unity has not been developed out of the divided condition, it is an ideological cover imposed by writers in their intellectual and creative works on the social condition they depict.

The dominant form of Romantic fiction manifests this metaphysical unity. In every age viewed as a whole and in every literary genre, one feature gains more salience than all others to the extent that it becomes the determinant component of the texts

produced in this era. Roman Jakobson terms this most salient feature “the dominant” which may be defined as “the focusing component of a work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant which guarantees the integrity of the structure” (41). There is a “leading value” which could be an internal component of the work or an external function served by it which dominates all others and exerts a shaping influence on them (42). A quick survey of early Victorian fiction shows that, notwithstanding their different styles, political outlooks, genders and social and economic backgrounds, Victorian novelists display a strong penchant for unity. While unification takes many different forms in early Victorian fiction like the success of the poor individual and the resolution of his conflict with an adversarial society, like Pip in Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations* (1861), the most common style of unification takes the form of resolving class opposition through marriage between lovers separated by class differences. This common plot line shared by many novels takes the form of resolving the antithetical social positions and backgrounds through love stories.

The power of feeling is the element in the marriage plot that is supposed to unify the lovers from different classes and resolve the social antagonism. As an industrial novel, *Sybil, or The Two Nations* (1845), vividly depicts the miserable conditions of the working class and the sharp contrast between their life and that of the aristocracy. Set against the background of the Catholic emancipation of 1829 and the Chartist demands for political representation which finally succeeded in 1832 and which Disraeli, the Tori, regarded as a triumph for the Whigs, the novel registers the huge changes that were taking place in the Victorian era (Jupp 138-9). The Catholic emancipation was regarded by Disraeli as a “breakdown of traditional continuity in English society” (Clausson 456). Charles Egremont, a young Anglican aristocrat, falls in love with Sybil, the poor daughter of a Catholic Chartist leader and proposes to her.

They first meet in Marney Abbey, which is associated with the medieval past of the aristocracy and lies in the estate of his older brother, Lord Marney. Prior to their meeting, he overhears a conversation between two strangers about the Abbey, its “exquisite beauty” and the charitable role it played in the lives of the people before the Reformation (Disraeli 89). The two strangers lament the passage of the feudal times. “[I]f the world only knew what they had lost!” says one of them (89). In contrast to the current day Whig liberal economic policy which Disraeli regards as the reason behind abject poverty and social division, medieval society is an organic unity. Disraeli finds in this benevolent aristocratic spirit the answer to the current social problem. Later on, Egremont meets Sybil in the ruins of Marney Abbey and is enchanted by her angelic voice singing a hymn to the Virgin. Although his first marriage proposal is rejected, Egremont, after making a fervent speech in the parliament in favor of the Chartist demands, is regarded as a hero and proposes again to Sybil who, after inheriting an enormous wealth, accepts. The marriage of Egremont and Sybil represents the unification of the two nations, and the integration of the Catholics into the Anglican Church, led by an enlightened and socially responsible aristocrat.

The romantic structure of *Sybil* unifies the Chartist antithetical position with the aristocracy through the synthesis of the two opposites in an organic unity which maintains the medieval aristocratic position. The Romantic form absorbs the Chartist position into the benevolent aristocratic spirit. Since the organic unity of the medieval aristocratic past is maintained in the Romantic resolution of the opposition posed by modern liberal politics to it, Disraeli’s Tory conservatism expresses itself in the Romantic form which prevents the breakdown of traditional continuity.¹

The relation between Romanticism and conservatism is not coincidental. This is not to say that all Romantics were conservative either. Yet, unlike the utopianism of Wordsworth and Coleridge,

“some important conservative thinkers manifest Romantic tendencies, and vice versa” (O’Hear167). Due to their reaction against rationalism and its severance of the unity of being as well as their awareness of the irrational aspects of mankind which need to be put under check, many of the late Romantics, on the one hand, were conservatives. Apprehended by the enlightenment faith in egalitarianism, conservative thinkers, on the other hand, accepted the Romantic critique of the Enlightenment. In the case of Disraeli, this provided a suitable ground for the continuity of aristocratic elitism. Thus, the Romantic critique of the mechanical view of life, compelling as it is, provides an ideological façade for the conservative counter-Enlightenment attitude of reactionary aristocracy. The Romantic faith in the unity of being and rejection of mechanical theories – the laws of which make no distinction between people on ground of birth – is suitable for the conservative interest in maintaining the privileges of the aristocracy. Thus, the coexistence of Romanticism and conservatism is more of a symbiotic relation or an elective affinity than an organic unity.

Another industrial novel is Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South* (1854), which also raises the condition of England question. The sharp topographic contrast between the quiet, rural yet backward southern village of Helstone where the aristocracy still dominates and where Margaret Hale comes from and the northern industrial city of Milton, where Mr. John Thornton lives, determines the themes of the novel. Unaware of its disastrous and unstable nature, the industrial north is overtaking the country. During the worker agitations and strikes in Milton, which refers to Manchester, the arrogant Mr. Thornton decides to replace his factory workers with others from Ireland. Although he falls in love with Margaret, she resents him due to his arrogant and coarse way of dealing with the laborers. During the agitations, she saves him yet she gets hit in the head by a stone. He proposes to her and she declines his offer. Later on, her feelings for him start to develop when he saves her from an

accusation of perjury. She also notices that he developed a more humanitarian attitude towards his workers. Nevertheless, Mr. Thornton's business fails due to the strike. He faces bankruptcy and decides to sell it. Having inherited a large amount of money, Margaret decides to lend him some in order to keep him in business. Realizing that Margaret's feelings changed, Mr. Thornton proposes again and they marry. Margaret realizes that the north is not without its virtues and that the south is not as wonderful as she used to think. Mr. Thornton comes around to the same conviction. In their marriage, the benevolent spirit of the rural south is maintained in the northern modern industrial society. Through the permeation of the real, divided society by the ideal spirit of unity, Romantic unification ideologically covers the social division.

These two early Victorian novels, and many others, share the same structure which unifies two lovers from different social classes through love and marriage. In *The Courtship Novel*, Katherine Green registers that between 1740 and 1820, about two dozen writers employed the marriage plot in their fictional writings which pushed the courtship novel from a subgenre to the mainstream (2). While not all of them employ the marriage plot to resolve class conflict, many of them do. The marriage plot, familiar since medieval romance, was not invented by Victorian novelists. However, it was reformulated in the Victorian Age to function as a tool for class unification. Discussing the role of the romantic marriage plot in medieval romance, Robert B. Burlin finds that it is restricted to the ladies and knights of the "aristocratic milieu" (2). The reformulation of the plot in the Victorian Age extended it to inter-class marriage in order to resolve the opposition between the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, to unify the two nations, to fictionally resolve the contradiction troubling the real society. The nation which could not achieve unity in reality had to ideologically create it in its fictional products. This common structure does not reflect or express a real social unity but rather covers the antithetical

social condition with a fictional one. Through the love story and the marriage plot, it offers a fictional solution to the real social problem. This structure, predominant in early and mid-Victorian fiction, determines all the elements of the novels – including *Deus ex machina* devices like the handsome inheritance which the heroines come into – and harmonizes them to render unity possible. The cultural creation of a unified Romantic framework is a form of false consciousness emanating from a society which seriously lacks it yet badly needs it. This ideological resolution contains the conflict by uniting the social forces in an organic unity with the enlightened aristocracy which restores its “paternalist” authority (Roberts 10). Through its form, these cultural products work as an ideological tool to contain the change towards the more democratic, religiously tolerant and inclusive society which came to prevail in the twentieth century. This change which manifested itself in The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and The Great Reform Bill of 1832 – both of which conservative thinkers like Carlyle and Disraeli regarded with apprehension – had to be contained in a unified organic culture which guides the new classes and emancipated Catholics by the Anglican Church and the enlightened aristocracy. The dominant Romantic structure is, in short, an ideological bulwark set against the rising democratic tide.

Reference to *Sybil* and *North and South* may hint that the use of this Romantic structure in order to resolve the condition of England dilemma may be restricted to industrial novels. While it is true that other industrial novels like Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley* (1849) share the same structure, the resolution of class conflict through Romantic unification is not limited to the condition of England novels. Apart from the overt political aims of Disraeli’s *Sybil*, Romantic ideology works on more subtle and unintentional levels.

Set in a rural atmosphere distant from the big city struggles of industrial novels, *Jane Eyre* (1847) subscribes to the same Romantic

vision. It has the same structure of the poor individual who stands against a society that oppresses and marginalizes him or her. In the face of such an adversarial society, the poor individual manages to achieve success. S/he is, thereby, unified with society. The novel, moreover, has the fairytale plotline of the poor plain girl marrying prince charming who prefers her for her honesty and simplicity to his formidable aristocratic acquaintances. As an orphan in Gateshead Hall, Jane Eyre is forced to leave her relatives' house because she refuses to be bullied by her cousin. She is sent to an orphanage in Lowood where she learns to control her temper. She learns tolerance from her friend Helen Burns and grows to resent the severity of Mr. Brocklehurst's evangelicalism. She stays at Lowood School until she is 18 at which point she decided not to stay any longer. She goes to Thornfield where she meets and falls in love with Mr. Rochester. She first sees him riding his horse in open nature. Later, she is tormented with jealousy when she compares herself to his aristocratic friend Miss Blanche Ingram only to be surprised that he prefers her simplicity and honesty to this milieu in which he has lived for long. As he is about to marry her, a stranger appears to declare that Mr. Rochester is still married to his sister Bertha Mason and cannot, therefore, marry again. This is when Jane discovers the secret behind the strange sounds she has been hearing in the mansion. Bertha Mason is locked in the attic due to her madness. Having learned to control her passion at Lowood, Jane refuses to live with Mr. Rochester out of wedlock. She decided to go away. As she rides her horse away from Thornfield Hall, a storm forces her to go to Moore House where she meets Diana, Mary and St. John Rivers who turn out, very conveniently, to be her distant cousins. St. John offers to marry her because she is suitable for the tough life of a missionary's wife in India. Again, she refuses to marry him. She comes into a good inheritance. In Lowood, she hears Mr. Rochester's voice coming out of the air calling her. She realizes that he must be in trouble and decides to go back to Thornfield Hall. She

knows that Bertha Mason managed to escape from her attic imprisonment, burned the house and died. Mr. Rochester is now half blind and crippled. She agrees to marry him and he starts to regain his eye sight and ability to walk.

Jane Eyre narrates the development of the eponymous heroine until she reaches maturity which is manifested in the decisions she makes. Jane refuses to live with Mr. Rochester out of wedlock which signals that she has learned to rationally control her passionate nature. Yet she refuses to marry St. John Rivers without love and lead a life of duty as a missionary's wife. Jane's maturity is manifested in the balance she achieves between passion and reason. "Nowhere is the dialectic of desire and bodily curtailment more clear" (Bowen 205). In the fiction of Charlotte Brontë, John Bowen finds a balance between Romanticism and realism. The Brontës "measured the tropes and idioms of their Romantic precursors against the mundane realities of daily existence" (207). This balance is not achieved in the fiction of earlier Victorian novelists such as Disraeli and other writers where "we often find the energies of Romanticism heightened into absurdity or cliché. It is a testament to the Brontës's gifts that they can control, ironize, and discipline those energies to such a telling purpose" (206). *Jane Eyre* achieves balance between passion and reason, desire and control, realistic depiction of society and Romantic pursuit of a more fulfilling life. The balance achieved in the novel manifests itself in Jane's maturity which shows itself in the choices she makes. It is also this balance which drives the novel to its conclusion. Nevertheless, in order to reach this satisfying conclusion which brings the two lovers from different classes together, *Deus ex machina* devices such as the sudden inheritance, falling off the horse right in front of cousins' house and the pathetic fallacy of hearing Mr. Rochester's voice out of the air have to be employed. Without these unrealistic fictional devices, romantic unification would not be possible.

As a Bildungsroman, *Jane Eyre* relates the successful development of the heroine toward a balanced personality. This successful development depends on the balance Jane achieves which is manifested by, and embodied, in her choices. Without this balance Jane cannot be a successful person by the standards of her time and the novel could not have been successful in the market. Yet this balance between the realistic depiction of social conditions and the Romantic unification of oppositions is not likely to occur without resorting to unrealistic textual devices. The unification is forced on the social conditions. Albeit a tuning down of the exaggerations of earlier Romanticism, Brontë's balance is still tilted to the Romantic side. The success of the novel and the development of the bildungsroman toward a balanced character are both dependent on a unity which has to suppress one of its opposite constituents to maintain itself. *Jane Eyre*'s version of the successful Victorian self is dependent on a disharmonious balance, on conditions which it cannot control. What guarantees that Jane will achieve her goal and that the Bildungsroman will develop to maturity and success is that the novel subscribes to a "Providential aesthetic" which is an "economy where poetic justice prevails, where there is deep suspicion of social solutions, where 'nature' supports the individual will and is morally organized" (Ermarth 8). This providential aesthetic is a manifestation of the Romantic faith in the immanent absolute. Without the Romantic immanent absolute and its justification of the good will of the universe, all the coincidences employed for the unification of opposites would be unjustifiable.

Jane's character is formed mostly by the choices she makes. Yet, as a poor female individual in a male-dominated society, the choices she makes are mostly dictated by the situation she finds herself in. She refuses to be mistreated by her bullying cousin and is, therefore, expelled from Gateshead and forced to leave to Lowood. She refuses to stay at school and moves to Thornfield Hall from which she receives the only response to the advertisement she put in

the newspaper. She refuses to stay with Mr. Rochester without marriage which is why she has to move away. She refuses to marry St. John whom she does not love and has to move away again. As she hears Mr. Rochester's voice coming out of the air, she returns to Thornfield. Her choices are mostly refusals of conditions she does not find appropriate. She does not belong to a certain place by positive action or work but only by refusing all the other options. Her alienation from society and non-belonging anywhere do not come to end by any action she takes. She does not own any of the places she goes to and is always an alien until she marries Mr. Rochester in the end. This is when she can finally have a place where she belongs. Her alienation from society comes to end only through marriage which endows her, for the first time, with a place she could belong to. The inner self is connected to the outer world only through selection for marriage by a suitor. The alienation of the little rebellious girl who revolts against the bullying male cousin and the puritanical dogmatism of Mr. Brocklehurst, resents the ostentatious aristocratic demeanor of Miss Ingram and the loveless life of St. John comes to end only when she becomes the bourgeois "Jane Rochester" by being selected for marriage by her rich employer (Brontë 220). The suffering of Jane Eyre as an individual in an adversarial society makes sense only when told from the vantage point of Jane Rochester. All her suffering is justified – and the negativities of society condoned – as necessary steps toward the formation of the positive mature character. It is only from the vantage point of the higher positivity – i.e. Jane Rochester – that social negativities and the suffering sustained by Jane Eyre make sense and are, consequently, accepted. Without being harmonized and organized in the form of a bildungsroman or the autobiography of a successful woman, all these negativities would be depictions and condemnations of real conditions but not steps to success. They are justified only as means to a successful mature person. The resolution of the protagonist's conflict with society renders these

negativities justifiable as necessary steps towards the creation of the balanced character, for without them Jane Rochester could not be who she is or achieve success. The form of resolution renders social negativities justifiable and acceptable.

Jane Eyre's unification with society does not depend on her effort as an individual or ability to find a place but on being accepted as a character that fits into the profile of a good wife. Society does not change. Jane has to fit into one of the roles accepted by society to be part of it. In other words, the development of the rebellious, orphan Jane Eyre to the composed and affluent Jane Rochester does not depend on a positive action she takes but on being selected for marriage by a bourgeois man – who gets his wealth from his in-laws' plantations in the Caribbean – because she fits the role of a good wife. Her unification with society does not depend on society's making space for a successful individual but on her ability to fit herself into it. Unification does not take place through a process of mutual harmonization in which society changes a little to make space for a hardworking individual. It imposes the accepted social standards and roles on the individual. Unification does not take place through harmonization. It is forced.

By the standards of the Victorian era, *Jane Eyre* may seem to be a revolutionary novel. Despite the myriad novels showing heroines marrying out of love, this form of marriage is itself a break with familiar marriage, a confirmation of the independence and individuality of the hero or heroine. In "The Theoretical Importance of Love," (1959) William J. Goode explains that the way societies view love and its relation to marriage should better be regarded as a continuum than a dichotomy. "At one pole, a strong love attraction is socially viewed as a laughable or tragic aberration; at the other, it is mildly shameful to marry without being in love with one's intended spouse" (41). "[U]rban middle classes of contemporary Western society" are found toward the latter pole (41). Thus, while

love and attraction have always existed and influenced marriage decisions, whether they are regarded by society as the primary reason for marriage or not varies in different cultures and ages. In *Novel Relations*, Ruth Perry registers a “seismic shift” in the concept of family from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. The family unit changed from the consanguineal axis, based on blood line, to the conjugal axis based on marriage. The “biologically given family into which one was born was gradually becoming secondary to the chosen family constructed by marriage” (2). The shift from extended multi-generational family to nuclear family may be ascribed to many reasons. The rules of primogeniture, whereby land passes only through patrilineal descent to the oldest male, and coverture, whereby a woman’s legal status is voided upon her marriage and all her rights pass to her husband, helped create a lot of disinherited daughters and younger sons, all of whom were on the search for wealthy partners. The pursuit of financial and familial security in marriage led the disinherited sons and daughters to pursue out-marriage. This helped change the nature of family from the consanguineal to the affinal axis which gave affection a primary role in the making of the new relation. This huge change led to the movement along Goode’s scale from the view that love is not a sufficient reason for marriage in the eighteenth century to the idea that it is essential for marriage in the nineteenth which is the basis of the dominant form of resolution in *Sybil*, *North and South*, *Jane Eyre*, Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and many other Victorian novels. As a result, the fictional representation of the role of women as “wives and mothers” assumed a preponderance which their roles as “sisters and daughters” did not (34). The prioritization of the role of woman as a wife or beloved and the predominance of the marriage plot in nineteenth century fiction are totally steeped in their legal and economic contexts.

In *Romance’s Rival*, Talia Schaffer indicates that an alternative notion of marriage to that based on love and attraction, is the more

traditional one grounded in familiarity, family ties, neighborliness, the contiguity of estates or in-law relations. While familiar marriage prioritizes social ties, romantic marriage expresses individual self-interest. Schaffer traces the familiar marriage of the nineteenth century back to the eighteenth century notion of “companionate marriage” (2). Although romantic or affectionate marriage is riskier in relation to familiar or arranged marriage which is more stable and rationally calculated, it usually occupies the center stage while the latter serves as “a dark background to the blazing light of the romance plot” (121). Affective marriage, thus, came as a nineteenth century revolution against the older and more traditional familiar marriage. Although *Jane Eyre* follows the familiar storyline of the marriage plot in which a period of courtship ends up with marriage after hardships, it is revolutionary by the standards of its age. Jane Eyre’s wish to marry out of love expresses a more modern and individualistic idea of marriage based on personal satisfaction rather than family ties. It seems revolutionary in comparison with other heroines who engage in familiar marriage. Therefore, in choosing to marry for sentimental reasons, Jane rejects the familiar marriage to her cousin St. John which was regarded as the cultural norm. She opts for marriage along affinal ties against the consanguineal relation still predominant in the nineteenth century. This exogamy or out-marriage rather than endogamy, in-marriage, is revolutionary by the standards of mid-nineteenth century. Yet it conforms to the marriage plot structure which functions as a unifying tool. While seemingly defying the social norms of familiar in-marriage, *Jane Eyre*, in working to satisfy the social and economic needs of her age required by primogeniture and coverture and fulfilled by sentimental marriage, confirms its ideology. In its “sentimentalization of marriage,” nineteenth century Romantic fiction normalized the idea of affective marriage in contrast to the arranged marriage of the eighteenth century (Munich 33). The normalization of affective marriage took place due to the social need for unification. In this

normalization of romantic marriage, early and mid-Victorian fiction naturalized a deeply historical and cultural practice. This practice found universal popularity due to the rise of modern individualism and the need to make personal choices in marriage. The rise of individualism – as a result of enclosure, industrialization, urbanization, the consequent migration to cities, the Romantic belief in the value of the individual and the Protestant stress on individual consciousness – contributed greatly to the disintegration of extended family and, consequently, to the popularization of romantic marriage based on the affinal axis and the depopularization of familiar marriage based on the consanguineal axis. While love and marriage have been correlated throughout history, Goode's analysis shows that the former has not always been a sufficient reason for the latter. In its romanticization of marriage which came as an ideological resolution of an English socioeconomic problem, Victorian fiction redefined marriage world-wide and globalized a practice steeped in the social and economic conditions of nineteenth century British culture. This ideological normalization of a cultural practice that came as a resolution to social division naturalized it worldwide. What Goode regarded in 1959 as the cultural norm of the West had been normalized about a century earlier.

Taking the Romantic faith in the unity of being for granted, early Victorian novelists molded their realist vision of society and detailed description of its conflicts in a framework of unity which integrates the antithetical forces of society. In accepting the presuppositions of the age, they produced naïve or simple literature which unconsciously reproduced the Romantic ideology in the form of the marriage plot. While this synthetic mold helped them give form to their novels, it also forced an imaginary unity on a society which lacked it. As a result, it forced the writers to resort to *Deus ex Machina* devices like unexpected inheritances, improbable coincidences and hearing imaginary voices from the sky to make unified form possible; i.e. to fictionally integrate the divided society.

Albeit realistic, the plot develops and the novels reach conclusion in a contrived manner. The later development of Victorian fiction shows the realistic description of antithetical social forces breaking free of the Romantic mold ideologically imposed on them to give the novels conclusions satisfying to their readers. This ideological, dream-like, satisfying quality justifies their market success.

Unlike the utopian Romanticism of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the Romantic realism of Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell, Benjamin Disraeli and other early Victorian novelists does not show some escapist retreat from society. It ideologically resolves the opposition between the individual and society, on the one hand, and the different classes on the other. *Jane Eyre* shows the emancipation of the heroine and her success as a poor woman and individual in the adversarial bourgeois male-dominated Victorian society. She becomes a model of the successful individual. By giving an example of success in this culture, the novel confirms it. By resolving the antithetical relation between the individual and society, man and nature, and the different classes, it intellectually guides its reader to a form of resolution which maintains the status quo. It functions in a manner similar to Carlyle's and Disraeli's "enlightened aristocracy" and Arnold's true culture. In its acceptance of the Romantic ideology and its presupposition of unity as a way to resolve the marriage plot, *Jane Eyre* is an instance of naïve or simple literature which accepts the ideology of its age and reproduces it. Romantic realism did not only maintain and cover the class division of Victorian society but also naturalized the solution it proposed to this problem; i.e. it globalized the cultural and historical idea of romantic marriage.

The Dominant Form of Tragic Realism as Critique of Romantic Ideology:

Romantic realists sought to create a frame of unity which ideologically reconciles the different social forces. The impossibility

of achieving this ideological reconciliation in reality led to the rise of a new form of fiction in the late Victorian Age which, in its portrayal of the actual opposition, reflected on the form of early Victorian fiction and debunked its ideological form and function.²

In a deeply divided society, no positive utopia can be posited. Utopia can only be negatively hinted at by showing its absence. The absence of the possibility of a positive utopia, or at least of a harmonious society, is manifested in late Victorian fiction by the dominance of tragic realism in many novels by George Eliot, Henry James and Thomas Hardy. The absence of a positive utopia is not covered by the attempt to conflate the real and the ideal as the Romantic realists do. The tragic form of their novels can be read as critique of the Romantic ideological unification of the individual and society, man and nature and social classes. Without the Romantic resolution of conflict, what remains is the struggle of the individual against society, the alienation of man from nature and the clash of classes unmitigated by any unrealistic unifying devices. The struggle of the individual to achieve success in an adversarial society or his attempt to gain ascending social mobility through marriage into a higher class is foiled by the sharp social division. Met with such resistance, the actions of the individual result in the opposite of the desired goal, creating, thereby, the ironic structure characteristic of tragedy. When stripped of the Romantic unifying devices, what remains is the opposition. By manifesting the practical impossibility of integrating the individual and society and unifying classes in the Victorian Age, tragic realism offers criticism of the ideology of Romantic realism.

The tragic form of Hardy's late fiction is not reached haphazardly or because he holds a pessimistic view of human existence – i.e. the result of a subjective attitude. It is the logical outcome of removing the ideological Romantic unifying vision and its fictional devices. When removed, nothing remains but the clash,

the bare opposition between human consciousness with its hopes and ambitions and the indifferent mechanical laws of an uncaring universe. Hardy's tragedy is reached via the development of the form of resolution into its opposite due to debunking Romantic unity as ideological.

Enlightenment thinkers conceived of a world functioning according to unchangeable scientific laws. Their nineteenth century heirs extended the mechanical vision to the human world. Under the influence of thinkers like Mill, Auguste Comte and Ludwig Feuerbach, Hardy moved beyond the Romantic worldview (Schweik 68).

Hardy conceives of a world governed by deterministic laws, such as those of the Immanent Will, Darwinian sexual selection, materialist laws of determinism, and the principle of heredity. Humanity is part of this deterministic universe, but possesses an evolving consciousness which allows the individual to glimpse the harshness of his situation, and also use his free will to attempt of overcome [sic] those forces, both internal and external, that dictate their behaviour. This creates the tragic tension that lies at the centre of Hardy's tragedies (Asquith 285).

Although Hardy moves beyond the Romantic worldview in his late fiction, he does not totally endorse the mechanical vision. He believes that the development of human consciousness makes man able to transcend his material condition. Nevertheless, he does not accept the optimistic tone of the mechanical vision of the world based on the belief that science is going to lead to endless progress. This vision is endorsed by Mill's liberalism, Comte's positivism and the conclusion to Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, all of which show belief in the continual progress of man (Schweik 62; Mallett 22-23). Hence, the pessimistic tone of his fiction is the result of a dual

rejection; first his rejection of the ideological unification of opposites which is the result of the Romantic recreation of the transcendental on the plane of immanence and, second, his inability to hold on to the optimistic faith in progress endorsed by the Enlightenment mechanical vision of the universe which manifests itself in utilitarianism, liberalism, positivism and evolutionary biology. Hardy holds a vision of free human consciousness in the face of an uncaring universe ruled by mechanical laws. If the world is ruled by mechanical laws, it cannot be guaranteed that the outcome is necessarily in favor of man's best interest.

The selfless mechanical laws of the universe play the role of the Greek fate, *Moirai*, in Hardy's material world. They are the system of the world or the "immanent Will" ruling it (Valakis 433). Although Hardy gives this power many different names like the "President of the Immortals," for instance, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1892), a phrase which he borrows from Aeschylus (420), he warns the reader against personifying it (F. Hardy 409). The loss of the Romantic faith in a sympathetic world imbued with spirit left Hardy with nothing but the cold mechanical universe which gives man no special place. This is implied in the Darwinistic vision of man as a byproduct of the mechanical process of evolution regulated by the laws of natural selection and the survival of the fittest. Devoid of the sympathetic Romantic immanent Absolute, the individual runs up against the laws of nature, economy, market, and class society in his attempts to achieve his ambitions. In this clash between human consciousness and the uncaring, selfless mechanical laws of the universe, the individual will and the "immanent Will", the inevitable result is the defeat of the former. The conflict between human desire, ambition or will and the overwhelming selfless system of the world results in tragedy. Tragedy is, hence, the necessary result of an inevitable clash that has been merely covered but not resolved by the Romantic ideological unification of man and nature, the individual and society and the different classes.

Unlike Jane Eyre, the physically attractive Tess is not chosen for marriage by her aristocratic seducer and presumed cousin Alec d'Urbervilles. In a Darwinian world ruled by the natural laws of sexual selection and the social rules of class society, her ambition is to combine physical attraction with spiritual love with a man from a higher class. She finds this unification in her relation with Angel Clare, a rich educated progressive man, who marries her but finds himself unable to condone the fact that she was raped by Alec. He leaves for Brazil and she is forced to seek employment with Alec one more time out of poverty. When her husband returns and forgives her, he finds her living with Alec whom she comes to regard as the cause of all her misery and murders him. The inexorable laws of sexual desire and class society as well as the series of unfortunate coincidences cause her downfall. The immanent absolute of Romanticism which guarantees the providential economy of events that saves Jane is replaced by the uncaring mechanical laws of nature or the "immanent Will" of the material world. As her hopes for unification with Angel Clare and social ascending mobility are frustrated and she is led to the gallows, the cold universe looks apathetically. The novel comes to end with the chilling words "the President of the Immortals ... had ended his sport with Tess" (420). There is no design to guarantee that coincidences will be orchestrated to lead to a happy conclusion in which all the negativities will be lifted into a higher positivity.

In the absence of the immanent absolute, this clash takes different forms in Hardy's fiction all of which posit the individual will against the mechanical laws of the world. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), these laws are those of nature and historical progress. "The farmer's income was ruled by the wheat-crop within his own horizon, and the wheat-crop by the weather" (184). The natural laws of the weather, "the god of the weather," control the life and fate of farmers (185). In expectation of bad weather predicted by old traditional means, Michael Henchard, the mayor, buys a lot of

grain which he is forced to sell cheaply, making a great loss, when good weather causes the prices to fall. As he loses a substantial amount of money, the predicted bad weather comes in and pushes the prices up again, ruining Henchard's wealth and status. Donald Farfrae, who is asked by Henchard himself not to travel to America and to stay at the village, introduces new scientific methods of salvaging damaged grain. As Henchard's fortune keeps deteriorating, Farfrae buys his business. In spite of his best intentions to make up for the mistakes of the past and keep his dignity, the mayor's inability to deal with the inexorable laws of nature and scientific progress ruins his life. He dies expressing a will that no one ever remembers his name.

The structure of Hardy's tragedy is that of the individual will which, in its attempt to achieve its ambition, runs up against the uncaring, impersonal 'immanent Will' ruling the universe and ends up defeated. The absence of a principle of harmonization excludes the resolution of the opposition. In *The Return of the Native*, nature is totally deprived of the benign character with which the Romantics endowed it. Egdon Heath is a large area of land isolating the valley and its inhabitants from the rest of the world. It is nature in its raw and permanent state which has not changed since the beginning of creation. "The sea changed, the fields changed, the rivers, the villages, and the people changed, yet Egdon remained" (6). In its resistance to any kind of change, Egdon Heath stands not only for the permanence of natural laws but also for the rejection of change characteristic of the rural mind. It stands against the intentions of Clym Yeobright, the native, who returns from Paris with the modern ideas of the Enlightenment and plans to start a school in order to modernize people. The ensuing clash crushes Clym's ambitions and ruins his marriage to Eustacia Vye who marries him out of hope that he will realize the absurdity of his goals and return to Paris again. When she realizes that he will not leave, she attempts to escape and drowns. Her fate has been sealed by some "colossal Prince of the

World, who had framed her situation and ruled her lot” (369). Any attempt to change Egdon Heath or leave is not only impossible but even punishable by death. This is not the benign nature permeated by divine presence conceived of by the Romantics but the Darwinian nature which functions according to its own laws and determines who survives and who dies with no regard to human existence.

In *Jude the Obscure* (1895), the immanent laws of the world are those of man’s sexual nature and class society. In his attempt to achieve ascending social mobility, Jude runs up against both and ends up defeated. Unlike the heroes and heroines of Romantic fiction – like Disraeli’s Sybil, Dickens’ Pip and Brontë’s Jane – he neither comes into inheritance nor marries into a higher class. The only realistic way of achieving his goal is education which appeals to the academically oriented poor child. Yet, running up against the rules of a society in which university education is preserved for the privileged, Jude’s attempts to achieve progress revert against themselves, creating the ironic structure of tragedy.

Like *Jane Eyre*, the novel is structured by the spatial progress of the protagonist from one place to the next in his developmental journey. Yet unlike it, *Jude the Obscure* does not show the successful resolution of the contradiction between the hero and society but rather the destruction of the hero in his attempt to rise to a higher social position through education. Unlike *Jane Eyre* which comes to conclusion with “Reader I married him,” it does not follow the marriage plot but rather chronicles the failure of marriage (382). *Jane Eyre* is narrated from a first person perspective emphasizing the subjective point of view of the little poor girl in an alienating society. This also emphasizes the Romantic idea that all knowledge starts from a subjective position. The point is to overcome – and maintain – this subjective position into unity with society. This unity is achieved by Jane Rochester who is the narrator of the novel and the product of unity. The successful development of Jane Eyre into

Jane Rochester and the narration of the events that lead to this mature character from a first person perspective is dependent on the ideologically contrived integration of the individual hero and society and unification of classes. The absence of this ideological unification and integration leaves *Jude the Obscure* with no vantage point from which his suffering is to be recollected and organized into a successful narrative of development, a bildungsroman. It takes the form of an anti-bildungsroman.

Hardy's novel is narrated from a third person perspective which emphasizes the objective laws of nature and society that stand in the way of Jude's subjective goals. Though the narrator shares some of Jude's outrage, the difference between the mimetic dialogues in which Jude expresses his hopes, ambitions and beliefs and the diegetic third person narrative emphasizes the opposition between Jude and the inimical world with its objective mechanical laws. Indeed, Jude, who has always been isolated due to his lack of any connections to society, attempts throughout the novel to be unified with it in different ways; he hopes to join the academic community at Christminster; he longs for love and searches for his cousin; he hopes that Sue could link him to community. Marjorie Garson realizes Jude's hope to "make the individual whole, and unite him creatively with an organic community" yet she also registers that this hope remains "intrinsically unrealizable" (460). Thus, while the novel posits harmony, unity and successful development as the constituents of an ideal condition, it stresses the impossibility of achieving this ideal in actual society. It does not conflate the real and the ideal but merely leaves the ideal as a standpoint from which the real is to be criticized. Hardy's novel stands opposed to the form of resolution characteristic of Romantic fiction. In its reversal of the distinctive topoi of the Romantic form – the successful development of the protagonist narrated in the form of bildungsroman, the harmonization of the individual and society, bridging the class gap and the successful marriage plot – it reflects not only on the deeply

divided society but also on the Romantic ideology produced by bourgeois writers to gloss over the division. As reflective fiction, it departs from the simple acceptance of the premises of Romantic ideology.

Reflection on Romantic ideology is not the only ideology critique *Jude the Obscure* offers. It is equally critical of the ideological claims to the inevitability of progress held by the upholders of the Enlightenment like Comte and Mill. In his Essay “The Dorsetshire Labourer,” Hardy writes:

[A] result of this increasing nomadic habit of the labourer is, naturally, a less intimate and kindly relation with the land he tills than existed before enlightenment enabled him to rise above the condition of a serf who lived and died on a particular plot like a tree. (Hardy, *Life and Art* 36)

Hardy describes the migration of laborers from the countryside to cities as alienation from land made possible by the Enlightenment, industry and the rise of big cities. Yet this migration did not fulfill the promise of better life it made. The developmental Enlightenment vision offered by Comte which holds altruism as the inevitable outcome of human development cannot be regarded as the necessary outcome of the struggle for survival (Mallet 23). Mill’s defense of individual’s liberty to choose his “plan of life,” which Sue Bridehead, Jude’s cousin and beloved quotes, is not necessarily allowed or rewarded by society (Hardy, *Jude* 215). Interestingly, those who act like most people and fail or decline to choose are compared by Mill, in a Darwinian note, to lower species like apes (Mill, *On Liberty* 124). The distinguished individuals who choose their “plan of like” like Jude and Sue are, nevertheless, thwarted by society as their tragic fate unfolds. A utopian vision cannot be necessarily affixed to a materialist philosophy like positivism or liberalism. The tragic form of the novel is a critique of the

ideological hopes of the Enlightenment as well as of Romantic unification, both of which conflate actual society with an image of utopia.

As a child, Jude starts his life working for farmer Troutham, scaring away birds from his field. Yet the kind-hearted child feels sorry for the hungry birds and decides to let them feed a little. "Nature's logic," as he precociously finds out at Marygreen, is indeed "horrid" (12). He realizes that "what was good for God's birds was bad for God's gardener" (10). The satisfaction of the farmer means the hunger of birds and the satisfaction of birds is the hunger of the farmer. In order for one to feed, the other must hunger. The sympathy Jude feels for the birds shows, as Phillip Mallet argues, not only their belonging together in one long hierarchical chain but also Jude's altruistic feelings for fellow creatures which Comte stressed (Mallet 28). Yet the beating he receives from the farmer and expulsion stress the lack of this altruism in a materialistic world. In a materialistic world functioning by mechanical laws, there is nothing to guarantee that good human feelings will accompany the more developed creatures. In this eat-or-be-eaten world, Comtean altruism as a characteristic of the more developed species cannot be necessarily affixed to Darwinian struggle. The latter may simply exclude the former. If the altruistic cover is simply shed as ideological, the natural opposition between creatures is laid bare. This Darwinian world with which the novel starts departs from the benign nature conceived of by the Romantics. It poses direct challenge to it with a bleak materialist vision. Moreover, it holds that the mechanical vision does not necessarily have a better future in store for humanity. The separation of the mechanical vision from the melioristic ideology foreshadows, and manifests itself in, the Malthusian suicide note of Little Father Time at the end.

As he grows, Jude, while contemplating studying to join university, is hit on the head by a pig's pizzle thrown at him by

Arabella. They get to know each other and she convinces him to marry her by pretending to be pregnant. Jude's academic ambitions are threatened by his natural need for sex. As an honest man, he decided to marry Arabella yet they end up leading a miserable life. She leaves him to go to Australia.

This opposition between human ambition and natural law is carried over to the social level when Jude departs for Christminster to pursue academic education. Inspired by his teacher Mr. Phillotson, Jude teaches himself Greek and Latin and leaves Marygreen for Christminster – Oxford in reality – in order to join university to study theology and become an archdeacon. Yet there is no providential economy of events to guarantee that his pursuit of ascending social mobility through education is bound to succeed. He sends a letter explaining his situation and ambitions to a dean of Christminster and how he worked as a mason in order to support himself while preparing to join university. He gets a response crushing his dreams and advising him to remain as he is. His ambition runs up against the educational system of the class society which reserves the best educational opportunities at Christminster to the well-educated elite not an autodidact like Jude. He is “elbowed off the pavement by the millionaires' sons” (Hardy, *Jude* 144). Like his hero, Hardy was forced to abandon his dream of joining Cambridge for financial reasons (Millgate 93).

With his wife Arabella in Australia and the marriage of his cousin Sue and Phillotson falling apart, Jude asks his former teacher to let his wife go with him. Phillotson agrees and, as his decision is made known, loses his job. Sue, as a free-minded new woman, lives with Jude without marriage. As a result of their chosen plan, they are evicted and live on the move from town to town. Jude is not only alienated from his roots in rural Marygreen but also from the society of Christminster. In contrast to Jane Eyre who is unified with Mr. Rochester and gains social status upon her return to Thornfield,

Jude, having returned to Christminster, is forced into further alienation. Jude and Sue live in Mildew Lane, “a narrow lane close to the back of a college,” but separated from it and has “no communication with it” (319). He is alienated from the academic society to which he has always hoped to belong. The house he lives in is “darkened to gloom by the high collegiate buildings” (319). Ironically, Jude is so close yet totally separate from his freely chosen plan of life. In spite of his hard work, his attempt to be unified with society – the Romantic realist ideal – is totally frustrated.

The day Jude returns to Christminster, he encounters the procession of graduates and discerns his former friends. Having failed to acquire education and climb to a higher social class and ended up in poverty and misery, Jude says that if there is any good he can do before he dies, it would be to serve “as a frightful example of what not to do.” Sue reminds him that he did nothing but try “to acquire knowledge” (316). Addressing the crowd, Jude says “I perceive there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas” (317) and that “[i]t takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one” (316). The laws of society and the educational system render Jude’s hopes impossible to achieve.

Living with Sue out of wedlock with their two children and Little Father Time – Jude and Arabella’s son whom Sue altruistically decides to bring up as her own – they suffer from extreme poverty. Sue constantly complains and the very sensitive and precocious Father Time overhears her saying: “All is trouble, adversity and suffering” (322). He asks her if it had been better if he and the other children had not been born at all. Tired and unaware of how concerned about her and Jude’s fate Father Time is, she confirms that children make life harder. She overhears him say “[i]f we children was gone there’d be no trouble at all!” (324). He comes to believe that he and his two siblings are the source of the family’s woes, kills his brothers and commits suicide by hanging. He leaves a

note which reads: “*Done because we are too meny*” [sic] (325). Relating their poverty and misery to their large number, Little Father Time’s suicide note has clear Malthusian overtones. Moreover, he commits the murders and suicide not out of a malevolent will but out of an altruistic desire to make Jude and Sue’s life better. Faced with the inexorable laws of society, economy and demography, the altruism ascribed by Comte to advanced species has little to offer. In the face of the Malthusian laws of population, the most altruistic act is, perhaps, not to exist at all, to leave space for others to exist. Similarly, Jude and Sue’s Comtean altruism and choice of a liberal plan of life find no place in a society which crushes every hope they have. Their liberal vision and altruistic feelings run up against the mechanical laws of population and economy and are crushed. Society cannot accommodate the individual. The opposition is not resolved into unification. The suicide and terrible fate are not rendered a single isolated event or the result of some ill fortune. The doctor who comes to attend to the dead children discerns in the suicide an attitude common in the new generation; it is a symptom of “the coming universal wish not to live” (326). Unlike Jude who has lost his faith, the liberal-minded Sue comes to regard this terrible fate as God’s punishment and converts to Christianity. She returns to Phillotson as a self-inflicted punishment and leaves Jude who understands the problem as the clash of their ideas and plan of life with society. “Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us. And so the resistance they met with brought reaction in her, and recklessness and ruin on me!” (388). *Jude the Obscure* is structured as a system of reversals in which every action taken by Jude and Sue to achieve happiness or progress runs up against either a natural or social law and reverts against its intended goal, leading them to utter misery. Tragedy is the result of the clash of their individual wills against the mechanical laws of nature and society in the absence of a providential economy.

David Lodge reads in Jude's departure from *Marygreen* to *Christminster* a reverse image of Jesus's journey to Jerusalem (200). Indeed, during his monotonous drudgery, Jude equates the city which he can see only "on a clear day" with "the heavenly Jerusalem" and continues to do so throughout the novel (Hardy, *Jude* 14-15). Unlike Jesus, Jude's pilgrimage does not end up with transcendence. It ends with an utter crushing defeat that leads him, on the moment of his death, to curse the day he was born. On his death, Jude does not quote Jesus but Job saying: "Let the day perish wherein I was born" (392). Unlike the classical tragic heroes, the modern individual is not redeemed after his defeat by the material world. There is neither transcendence nor redemption. Unlike *Jane Eyre*, there is no higher positivity from the vantage point of which social negativities would be recollected and organized as steps towards unification with society and, thereby, justified. Social negativity is condemned as thus and is not accepted or covered as a necessary step towards an ideologically contrived positivity.

Hardy chronicles the struggle and failure of the individual to achieve success in an adversarial society functioning according to indifferent laws. Put in Hegelian terms, *Jude* as an antibildungsroman consists in the failure to reconcile "the poetry of the heart" with "the opposing prose of circumstances and the accidents of external situations" (Hegel 1092). The tragic form of *Jude* and the similar fate of the eponymous hero are the result of a vision of the Romantic reconciliation of opposites and Enlightenment faith in inevitable progress, though affixed to scientific laws, as ideological. The failure to reconcile individual mobility with social progress levels criticism against both actual society and the ideological reconciliation of the opposition. The late Victorian form of tragedy is a critique not only of Romantic ideology but also of the Enlightenment.

Although *Jane Eyre* was regarded as a revolutionary text by the standards of the Victorian Age for championing romantic marriage, it was not slandered or rejected. It actually achieved market success which shows that it was accepted by its contemporary audience (LeFavour 113). This success shows that it confirms, or agrees with, the ideological premises of the age. In contrast, *Jude the Obscure* was publicly burned and withdrawn from public libraries (Hardy, *Jude* xlv; Slack 261). Not only did it show the failure of Victorian society and institutions, but it also departed from the accepted ideological premises of the age.

Conclusion:

The ironic structure of tragedy in which the protagonist's actions lead to the opposite of the desired goal keeps the individual and society as well as the different social classes apart. This ironic structure is the result of undoing Romantic unity. In contradiction to the Romantic resolution of the contradiction between the individual and society, the ironic structure characteristic of tragedy shows how the individual's actions lead to the opposite of their intended goal and fail to unify him with society. This does not lift social negativities into a higher positivity but lets them be what they are; negativities that need to be criticized not justified or ideologically covered. Tragic realism shows Romantic unification to be imposed on a divided society not an expression of social unity. It debunks providential economy as the result of the immanentization of the Absolute which may be best described in Abrams' words as "natural supernaturalism" (65). When the fictional use of the Romantic metaphysical frame is exposed as ideological, the result is the tragic form which manifests oppositions without forcing unity on them. Tragic form, hence, functions as ideology critique. In debunking Romantic unity and the unwarranted Enlightenment faith in progress as ideological, Hardy's fiction reflects on both and rejects the simple acceptance of both ideologies.

The form of ideas is, perhaps, more revealing than the ideas themselves. The social production of the form of resolution – whether it takes place through coming into inheritance, inter-class marriage, education or a combination of some of them – absorbs whatever departs from unity. The bourgeois production of harmonious form accepts the ideological framework of culture and integrates any dissenting voice into it. It, thereby, creates simple literature which stems from a conservative position eager to maintain the status quo. The bourgeois interest in maintaining the status quo produces the Romantic unification of opposites in order to contain and guide the increasing demands for democratic representation and ascending social mobility by a cultural and literary form that plays the role of Carlyle’s and Disraeli’s “enlightened aristocracy.”

By acting as the determinate negation of Romantic ideology, late Victorian tragedy performs a different process. In negating the ideological unity of the Romantic structure, it reveals not only the social forces producing its unified form but also the social opposition covered by this ideological smokescreen. The tragic undoing of resolution through the ironic form, which shows how the individual’s actions produce their opposite, retains and manifests whatever departs from the presumed harmony and, in so-doing, offers criticism of ideological unity. If action results in the opposite of its intended goal, it lays bare some disharmony in the social context which causes the ironic reversal. When not clad in ideological unity, the Victorian antithetical condition manifests itself in the ironic structure of tragedy. Irony is a sign of the wrong state of affairs.

In its reflection on the simple form of resolution, Hardy’s tragedy functions as ideology critique. While the social production of simple literature expresses an utterly bourgeois desire to maintain the status quo through harmony, the production of reflective

literature comes out of a marginalized consciousness eager to overcome it, which is why it keeps the distance between the real and the ideal. It ironizes the real and shows how it fails to reach the ideal. Rather than ideologically conflating them, it reflects on the former and levels critique of it from the standpoint of the latter. In questioning the presuppositions of every age and debunking their claims to validity and naturalness, the historical development of consciousness moves beyond the simple forms of art – which will, nevertheless, exist in every age due to the ideological acceptance of unexamined presuppositions – and towards more reflective ones. Due to its transitional nature, history itself functions as ideology critique.

Notes

- 1) Disraeli's aristocratic attitude manifested itself in his support for protectionism when he rejected Sir Robert Peel's Free Trade policy. This policy sought to rescind the infamous Corn Laws during The Irish Famine in 1846 in order to allow the importation of grains to save people's lives. From a Malthusian classical economic perspective, the importation of corn and all other grains to reduce the danger of famine threatens the British corn agriculture owned by landed aristocracy. It does not ultimately solve the famine problem because the people who will survive the famine will increase in number and consume the means of subsistence. During the Irish Famine (1845 – 1849), Peel sought to repeal the protectionist laws to ameliorate the condition that led to the reduction of the population by over 25 per cent (Kinealy 2). Although Disraeli supported Free Trade before the famine in 1842, he sided with landed aristocracy in 1846 and rejected it in order to get rid of Peel (Jenkins 27-29). Despite his success, the role he played in supporting The Corn Laws and rejecting Free Trade stands in sharp contrast to the Romantic image of the enlightened aristocrat who is supposed to be unified with the people and lead them.

While Disraeli's ideological solutions did not manage in the long run either to maintain the power of the aristocracy or to keep the Romantic frame work intact, in the short run they achieved their goal successfully. Employing utilitarian principles, the Whigs, in office at that time, managed to pass a number of laws to ameliorate the conditions of the poor in the 1830s (Boone 11-13). Believing in the greatest good for the greatest number of people, Whig Benthamites also attempted to pass a law to introduce public education in England yet failed due to fierce Tory opposition (11). Through his conservative critique of Utilitarianism as a kind of opportunism in *Sybil* and laying the blame for the deteriorating conditions of England on Whig liberal economic policy and the mechanical laws of Benthamism and liberalism, Disraeli finally managed to hold the Whigs – some of whom were factory owners

– responsible for the increasingly worsening conditions. In spite of his fierce opposition to the first Reform Act of 1832 (Phillips and Wetherell 623), he, believing that the people would vote for the Tories out of disappointment with the Whigs, drafted and championed the second Reform Act of 1867 which extended franchise to workers (Blake 457). Although his wager was not very well calculated, he became Prime Minister in 1868 (487). Disraeli's Romantic conservatism overcame Whig utilitarian liberalism. The point here is not to prove Disraeli's political opportunism. It is neither to show that his political decisions contradicted his proclaimed opinion nor that, when in a position to make political decisions, he sided with the interests of the aristocratic elite against those of the masses. The point is to show that the opposition between the interests of the aristocracy and those of the masses is at odds with the idea of a harmonious Romantic unity, which renders it a mere ideological cover hiding the real conflict. The attempt to render the real one with the image deemed ideal by the aristocracy is manifestly ideological. This study regards the intellectual relation between conservatism and Romanticism as an elective affinity; the conservative interest in maintaining the continuity of the past and the privileges of the aristocracy feeds the Romantic faith in unity and vice versa. Politically and economically, the interests of the aristocracy are at odds with those of the workers. Thus, Romantic unity is a mere ideology which glosses over the division.

- 2) On the social level, the condition to which the Romantics responded is the sharp division created by the advent of industry, urbanization and the consequent alienation of the individual from society. On the intellectual level, they responded to the mechanical vision of the world created by the Enlightenment. The intellectual and social levels are not separate. Both divisions are manifestations of the mechanical vision which came to dominate the post-Enlightenment world. Analyzing the loss of faith in the transcendental, Carlyle writes:

The truth is, men have lost their belief in the Invisible, and believe, and hope, and work only in the Visible; or, to speak it in other words: This is not a Religious age. Only the material, the immediately practical, not the divine and spiritual, is important to us. The infinite, absolute character of Virtue has passed into a finite, conditional one; it is no longer a worship of the Beautiful and Good; but a calculation of the Profitable. Worship, indeed, in any sense, is not recognised among us, or is mechanically explained into Fear of pain, or Hope of pleasure. Our true Deity is Mechanism (74).

What the Romantics could restore, nevertheless, is not the transcendental level. Romantic pantheism immanentized the absolute and rendered it material. This is manifest in both utopian Romanticism which attempted to create an ideal pantisocratic society on earth by withdrawing from real society and ideological Romanticism which attempted to conflate the real and the ideal. While utopian Romanticism withdrew from the social division, ideological Romanticism attempted to fictionally heal it. Another type of thought classified by Mannheim as utopian is Marxism which attempts to activate social conflict to create utopia in the future. All these intellectual manifestations of social division deny transcendence and confirm the materialist immanentization of the absolute.

The Victorian choice is not easy. On the one hand, there are the materialist philosophies which function within the mechanistic mind frame. On the other hand, there is Romanticism which, in its revolt against the Enlightenment, offers an alternative organic vision. What both the organic and the mechanical visions share is the exclusion of the absolute. Carlyle's analysis of the materialist nature of the mechanical vision and its denial of transcendence does not offer a viable alternative for it is tied to an archaic, elitist vision of heroes as saviors of society. "We figure Society as a 'Machine,' and that mind is opposed to mind, as body is to body; whereby two, or at most ten, little minds must be stronger than one great mind. Notable absurdity!" ("Signs" 75). Carlyle's analysis and condemnation of the mechanical

vision leads him to a pro-fascist vision of heroes as distinguished individuals who can save society.

A machine is made of many parts and so is society. By rejecting the mechanical metaphor, Carlyle also rejects the equality of minds and the principle of democracy. He finds that one great mind is better than what he regards as little minds. This inclines his arguments towards the worship of heroes which is manifest in one of his historical studies. It also shows his support for feudalism, aristocratic rule and pro-fascism (Jessop 145).

Carlyle's rejection of the mechanical vision is organically related to his pro-fascist vision. In short, rejecting the mechanical vision in favor of an organic alternative leads to one of two choices; either utopian Romanticism or pro-fascist heroism. Accepting it, on the other hand, may also lead to disasters. The Marxist mechanical vision, for instance, is related to the attempt to create a material utopia on earth and all the disastrous consequences this has led to. None of the choices seems to work. "That the world is out of joint is shown everywhere in the fact that however a problem is solved, the solution is false" (Adorno 176). The social production of knowledge in such a deeply divided society renders all intellectual products flawed. Carlyle's pro-fascist attitude is produced from an aristocratic position appalled by the rising masses and worried about losing power. Marxism is produced from a proletarian position eager to put an end to the privileges of the bourgeoisie and bring about the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. As expressions of an extremely divided society, each philosophy expresses one half of the broken whole and, in doing so, imposes its vision on this whole. This is bound to lead to totalitarianism. The fascist and socialist dictatorships of the twentieth century are not deviations resulting from mistaken applications of sound theories but the inevitable results of class biased intellectual products. By reflecting on the form of Romantic fiction, Hardy's tragedy lays bare its ideological nature. By manifesting the ideology of Enlightenment philosophies, it offers criticism of the claim that they necessarily lead to utopia.

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البنى المميزة للأزمنة: التراجيديا في العصر الفيكتوري المتأخر كنقد للأيديولوجيا

الرومانسية

ملخص

قام المفكرون والكتاب الرومانسيون بتشكيل رؤية للعالم أعادت خلق وحدة الوجود النيولوجية في نطاق دنيوي محايث، وذلك في إطار محاولتهم للثورة على رؤية عصر التنوير العقلانية. وتم فرض هذه الوحدة الفكرية والشعورية على المجتمع الفيكتوري المنقسم لأقصى درجة حتى أن الكاتب الروائي ورئيس الوزراء الإنجليزي بنجامين دزرائيلي وصفه بأنه "أمتين مختلفتين". إلا أن فرض إطار فكري موحد على مجتمع منقسم دون خلق هذه الوحدة من داخل المجتمع نفسه لا بد وأن ينتهي به الحال ليكون مجرد ستار أيديولوجي يغطي الانقسام. تستكشف هذه الدراسة كيفية كشف الأيديولوجيا الرومانسية عن نفسها في الشكل المهيمن للواقعية الرومانسية في العصر الفيكتوري المبكر. ثم تقوم بعد ذلك بفحص الشكل التراجيدي المميز للرواية في العصر الفيكتوري المتأخر لتثبت أنه نقد للأيديولوجيا الرومانسية. تسعى الرواية الرومانسية في العصر الفيكتوري المبكر لتوحيد الفرد والمجتمع، والإنسان والطبيعة والطبقات الاجتماعية المختلفة عن طريق الكشف عن الروح أو المبدأ الذي يتجسد فيهم جميعا ويوحدهم. على النقيض من ذلك، تعد البنية المميزة للتراجيديا في العصر الفيكتوري المتأخر والتي تكشف عن الصراع بين الفرد والمجتمع، والإنسان والطبيعة، والطبقات الاجتماعية المختلفة نتاجا لكشف الوحدة الرومانسية على أنها مجرد وحدة أيديولوجية. وعندما يتم الكشف عن الوحدة الرومانسية على أنها مجرد أيديولوجيا، لا يتبقى سوى التناقض الذي يهزم فيه الفرد في صراعه ضد قوة أكبر منه، مما ينتج الشكل المميز للتراجيديا. الكلمات المفتاحية: نقد الأيديولوجيا، الأدب البسيط والتأملي، سوسيولوجيا المعرفة، الشكل السائد، الرواية الفيكتورية، التراجيديا.