

أسباب الخطيئة في رواية "جود المغمور"

طالبة الدراسات العليا: هيفاء فرزات

قسم اللغة الانكليزية - كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية - جامعة البعث اشرف
الدكتور: ابراهيم السماعيل

ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث لدراسة أسباب الخطيئة التي دفعت المذنبين لارتكابها في رواية "جود المغمور" ل توماس هاردي. ويسلط البحث الضوء تعريف الخطيئة وعلى الأساليب التي عامل بها المجتمع المخطئين وكيف أثرت هذه المعاملة على حياتهم سلباً. كذلك يركز هذا البحث على دور القوانين والعادات في المجتمعات ذات الصلة. ويناقش مسؤولية تلك المجتمعات في تدمير حياة المذنبين. وينتهي هذا البحث بإظهار مصير المذنبين وكيف أن حياتهم محكومة بالدمار دون أي أمل ليعيشوا حياة طيبة.

كلمات مفتاحية: المجتمع, المذنبين, العادات, العلاقات المحرمة, العقاب, و المغفرة.

Causes of Sin in *Jude The Obscure*

Abstract

This research aims at studying the reasons which lead sinners to commit sin in Hardy's *Jude The Obscure*. It sheds light on the definition of sin and the ways that communities treat people with, and how badly this treatment affects their lives. This research also focuses on the role of laws and traditions of the respective societies. It discusses their responsibility in destroying sinners. It ends up by clarifying how sinners are doomed to be ruined with no hope of having a peaceful life.

Key Words: Society, sinners, traditions adultery, punishment, and salvation.

This research explores the causes of sin in *Jude the Obscure*. It discusses the definition of sin and how far a human being can be considered a sinful creature. It also explains the circumstances that oblige sinners to do wrong.

Sin is defined as the disobedience of God's rules and commands. God teaches humans the ways they must follow in order to experience life happily and ,therefore, win the heavens. Thus, losing the compass of God's pathway makes people suffer. Sin can be actions, desires, or even intentions. This is what Peter Addi-Mensah, a Catholic priest, defines sin in his article "A Theological Reflection on the Concept of Sin in Christianity":

Sin is any action or inaction that goes against what is expected from humankind by the Creator and mars the relationship with God. The *New Dictionary of Theology* describes sin as a deliberate violation of a precept of God by going beyond what the limit defined by the precept. (107)

In this definition Peter Addi-Mensah makes it clear that the disobedience of God is what can be considered sin. Thus, God, not

anyone else, is the only one who has the right to punish the sinners. Furthermore, Peter Addi-Mensah divides sin into two types: original sin and actual sin. The original sin is the one that every human being inherits from Adam when he disobeyed God. So, every person is judged as a sinner by birth since he/she is Adam and Eve's descent. While the actual sin is the one that people commit individually such as stealing, telling lies, cheating etc... and this sort of sin can be forgotten easily by people. Peter Addi-Mensah argues: "Original sin is seen as one inherited as human being from Adam and Eve and it affects every person while actual sin is more committed personally by every human being" (Mensah 107). Not all sins are of a big deal that some can be easily pardoned by society, but others lead sinners to their ultimate end not because they are serious but rather because they are unforgivable by society. According to our Creator all sins require penance and people can simply have another chance living a good life again.

The society initializes the responsibility of either destroying or engaging sinners in their societies and tries to make use of them in the proper way.

People are meant to make mistakes, so they ask for God's forgiveness. They are exposed to many kinds of desires. Besides, God creates people in a certain way that they are weak in some specific sides and this may vary according to people and their personalities. Even though we are copies of the Creator, still we will not reach His degree of perfection. Otherwise, we will be another copy of God and this is impossible as He is the one and the only Creator of this universe. Almost everyone has his own vices and sins, but no one is clear of them. This is the rule God follows to regulate the universe. So that His complete perfection can be easily recognized.

Moreover, the existence of bad or corrupt people is essential that they, along with good or virtuous people, perform the perfection of our world. Goodness cannot be recognized without being contrasted with bad things. This does not necessarily mean

that bad things are completely bad. They may introduce benefit to the world. Rudi te Velde, in his article "Evil, Sin, and Death: Thomas Aquinas on Original Sin" speculates on this idea:

But even corruptible things contribute to the perfection of the universe as a whole, and their existence is therefore required by that perfection. Without the existence of corruptible and corporeal things, the created universe would not be complete. (146)

Then even bad things could be good in the process they make in order to form a perfect world. Every human being has a body (flesh) and a soul (spirit). The bodily part may lead people to the bad sphere that exists in this universe. This does not clarify that they are completely corrupt but rather, they have mistaken the proper way to relish this earthy experience. Once human beings experience evil acts, they take a step away from their inner goodness created by God within them. Maybe they only need a kind of special help to come back to the accurate way.

This research shows that in, *Jude The Obscure*, the main characters Jude and Sue go through many circumstances that lead

them to commit sin. To start with, *Jude The Obscure* talks about a young man who has a great passion towards knowledge. Since his childhood, he tries all means to get any source of education. J.I.M. Stewart points to this in his book *Thomas Hardy* and mentions: "Jude Fawley, a poor orphan who finds rural Marygreen ugly and sleepy, sets his heart on going to Christminster, a great university city just visible on the horizon. He devotes his boyhood to solitary study directed to this end" (186). This quotation shows the eagerness towards education which Jude obtains. Thus, he owns a good spirit with a great ambition. Jude makes a deal with Vilbert, an itinerant quack-doctor, that he will recommend the quack's medicine at every house of the village for a Latin grammar book which the quack pretends to own. Jude does exactly as required, but to his surprise the quack does not meet his promise which causes the first shock to Jude. "There was to be no intellectual light from this source. The leaves dropped from his imaginary crown of laurel; he turned into a gate, leant against it, and cried bitterly" (Hardy 25). This shows the sadness and deep misery Jude feels when he loses a chance of gaining a source of learning. This disappointment forms

the beginning of Jude's doubts about the potentiality of achieving his dreams. His depression is the first reason beyond his sin because he tries to release pain with wrong relations.

However, Jude does not give up, he secretly sends a letter to Mr. Philotson asking him for the grammar book in Christminster . Jude, the child, is seeking education alone facing all kinds of difficulty starting with his aunt Drusilla ending with the whole society. "To tell his aunt of his intention would be to defeat it. It was necessarily to act alone" (Hardy 25). He tries by, all means, to study even without a school or a teacher in order to achieve his goal and go to Christminster University. Some critics assume that Jude's ideal beliefs lead him to a complete destruction. The typical image of life he draws is faced by the hypocrisy and severity of reality. In this respect, John Alcorn insists in his book *The Natural Novel From Hardy to Lawrence* that "Jude is associated from the beginning of the novel with the life of nature: yet he is also endowed with a naive belief in the sanctity of institutions: the church, the university, the sacrament of marriage: and these

institutions mercilessly crush him"(18). Unfortunately, Jude gets obstructed by a young lady, Arabella, whose main interest is to get herself a husband. Arabella plans to marry Jude making use of his admiration towards her. So, she pretends that she is pregnant to fulfill her target. Later, Jude discovers the truth and has troubles with her.

After leaving to Christminster, Jude meets another woman who completely changes his life. This woman is his cousin, Sue Bridehead, is the woman whom he falls in love with. This idea is supported by Irving Howe in his article 'A Distinctively Modern Novel'. He notices that 'Between Jude and Sue there is a special closeness, and this too has been historically conditioned. It is the closeness of lovers, but more than that. It is the closeness of intellectual companions' (Howe 398). However, Jude's emotions towards Sue may be considered as the second reason beyond his sin. His love leads to his tragic end and he loses his dream of education. Women were the main obstacles that prevent Jude from being the person he likes to be in his life. Although he tries hard to

stay in the proper way to achieve his dreams, his love to Sue is greater than expectations. Throughout the novel, Jude proves to be a moral man with a good behavior: 'There was not the least doubt that from his own orthodox point of view the situation was growing wrong' (Hardy 94). Jude is not a sinner by birth, yet he tries to prove himself the wrong way. Falling in love is not a crime to blame people for. But the consequences of love are what matters in the story of Jude and Sue. Humans are always in need of relations to feel safe and to protect themselves from loneliness. This is exactly what Jude is looking for in his relation with Sue. He is in a severe need of belonging to somebody since he had been abandoned throughout his life. This idea is supported by A. Alvarez in his article "Jude the Obscure". He argues:

He is isolated from society because his ambitions, abilities, and sensibility separate him from his own class while winning him no place in any other. He is isolated in his marriage to Arabella because she has no idea of what he is about, and doesn't care. He is isolated in his marriage to Sue because she is frigid (120).

This quotation shows different kinds of ignorance that Jude faces in his life. He is not welcome among his people nor among the educated ones since he is not of an equal social class. This issue may be considered as the third cause that leads Jude to sin. Actually, every human being has a deep fear of being deserted by others so he/she needs to be seen by any possible way. Fearing of abandonment is one of the main core issues that Lois Tyson refers to in her book *Critical Theory Today A User- Friendly Guide*. She asserts: " Fear of abandonment - the unshakable belief that our friends and loved ones are going to desert us (physical abandonment) or don't really care about us (emotional abandonment)" (16). Thus, carrying such an anxious feeling all the time may lead people to do anything that will reduce their pain or provide them safety, even though they may commit sin.

Moreover, the need of belonging is not the only cause which leads Jude to commit sin. The fourth and most important cause, if one may say, is his/her surrounding, his/her neighborhood, and finally the society as a whole entity. Once the villagers know about

Jude's ambition, they try to discourage him by telling him that he will never reach his goal according to some social commands. This is what one of the villagers assures him "Just what we thought! Such places be not for such as you- only for them with plenty o' money" (Hardy 108). Everything around him emphasizes that he is an inferior fellow who does not even deserve to get his right of education like others. No doubt, others' opinions will affect him and his judgment of himself. He lacks high self-esteem. He criticizes himself and the letters he sends to some appreciative men for the possibility of studying at the university, telling himself that "It is just one of those intrusive, vulgar, pushing, applications which are so common in these days" (Hardy 110).

Even when Jude tries to communicate with the university looking for a chance to study there, the answer comes to assure what the villagers have said "I venture to think that you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course" (Hardy113). This response resembles a turning

point in Jude's life. It leaves him with a great deal of misery. His destruction provokes him to have an illegal relation with Sue in order to gain self-respect as an effective person. Thus, his ambition turns into a nightmare which causes him humiliation. Walter Allen in his book *The English Novel* points to the great damage Jude is exposed to because of his dream "What brings him down are the intellectual ambitions beyond his station, his dream of the student's life at Christminster" (255). To express his great anger Jude writes the following statement on the wall of the college "I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?" (Hardy114). Such a behavior refers to the inner power that exists deep inside him. His main dilemma is the lack of support by which he is deeply affected and loses trust in himself. Later, Jude says the 'Article of his Belief' in the Latin tongue in front of some undergraduate students without hesitation. Even the students do not understand what he has said "You pack of fools! He cried. which one of you knows whether I have said it or no?" (Hardy118). All these behaviors show clearly that Jude is a

well-educated man and not a mere craft man. Is it reasonable that this self-educated person is refused by the intellectual society only because of his poverty? By doing so, this faked society takes a complete responsibility of Jude's deviation.

People in general make achievements as a result of the chances they have got and the encouragement they have received from their surroundings. So, Jude cannot be judged as a bad person just because his community did not provide him with the required circumstances to be a good useful man. He is always faced with negation simply because he is an obscure man. Throughout his novel, Hardy criticizes the system of the English universities that welcome people according to their social rank. Even Sue reveals the vanity of Jude's ambition as she mocks Christminster and its theological and educational system. Robert Gittings shows this clearly in his article "Sue as a Girl of the 1860s". He asserts "When Jude is in his phase of studying to be a clergyman, as Hardy was in 1865, she ridicules the theology of Oxford which, she says, is anti-intellectual. She condemns Oxford and its orthodox religious

beliefs" (429). This also reveals the pagan tendency of Sue which changes by the end of the novel as we will see later.

After losing his passion of being at the University of Christminster, Jude becomes psychologically destroyed. He goes to Sue his only hope of giving some of his vanished dignity back "O, do anything with me, Sue- kill me- I don't care! Only don't hate me and despise me like all the rest of the world!" (Hardy 119). His only need now is to gain a worthy life by getting Sue's love. However, a sensitive person like Jude cannot endure the reality of revealing his weakness for his lover. He chooses to go back to an obscure place, Marygreen, where he can feel his complete sadness away from people's eyes: "His fixed idea was to get away to some obscure spot and hide, and perhaps pray; and the only spot which occurred to him was Marygreen" (Hardy 119). This shows clearly that Jude belongs to a vague place by birth and the whole world would not accept him. Merryn Williams puts this clearly in *A Preface to Hardy*: "Hardy makes it clear that no sensitive person could endure life in Marygreen. Nature is much grimmer here than in his earlier

novels" (108). There, in his town, Jude can hide his sadness, misery and failure. Lance St John Butler refers to the status of the city in his book *Studying Thomas Hardy* "Thus Marygreen, which (being the smallest and most old-fashioned place in the novel, and the earliest mentioned) ... is described in the most dismal and even sarcastic terms" (59). Jude is lost with a collapsible life both in love and education: "It was hell- 'the hell of conscious failure', both in ambition and in love" (Hardy 120). Jude loses his desire of gaining any advancement in his social life which again leads him to commit sin. No one sees Jude's struggle to be a good educated man. People only fight him because of his adultery after his psychological destruction.

Moreover, the fifth reason that leads both Jude and Sue to the wrong way is fearing a formal marriage. They have been ill-advised to get married since they belong to a family known for its tragic marriage experiences. Jude's aunt, Drusilla, advises him not to get along with Sue because this will lead to bad consequences "It was always impressed upon me that I ought not to marry- that I

belonged to an odd and peculiar family- the wrong breed for marriage" (Hardy 164). Sue, in her turn, was told the same by her father. One more time the poor couple are a victim of the society's norms as Hardy shows through the novel "They stood possessed by the same thought, ugly enough, even as an assumption: that a union between them, had such been possible, would have meant a terrible intensification of unfitness – two bitters in one dish" (Hardy 164). Such belief is stored in their minds, especially Sue, and forms a great fear not to get married. Sue's fears along with her jealousy from Arabella carry her to marry Mr. Phillotson the foolish thing she has ever done. She realizes lately that she is mistaken by taking such a decision. In his article "Male and Female" D.H. Lawrence hints to Sue's conduct that "deep instinct made her avoid the consideration. And the duality of her nature made her extremely liable to self-destruction" (412). However, Sue is an open minded girl who thinks laws must be followed only if they contribute to a person's happiness as she tells Phillotson "What is the use of thinking of laws and ordinances if they make you miserable when you know you are committing no sin?" (Hardy 219). She feels very

miserable because of the society's laws and traditions which force her to live with a person she does not love. This is the matter that she cannot endure. For Sue to pretend fake feelings or to be obliged to live with somebody is what must be considered as a sin no matter how the laws deal with it. This belief ruins her life. She tries to convince Phillotson with her thoughts "For a man and a woman to live on intimate terms when one feels as I do is adultery, in any circumstances, however legal" (Hardy 219). Maybe she cannot be condemned for such thoughts. It is only that she was not lucky enough to justify her deeds properly. Telling lies or pretending love should be considered a sin as well. But the society has the ultimate power to punish and exaggerate issues in such a way that suits its traditions. However, Sue is a courageous woman to face all these norms and act the way she likes. She confesses this truth which she is proud of "I daresay it happens to lots of women; only they submit, and I kick" (Hardy 212). She asks Phillotson to allow her to live with Jude and he submits without caring about the troubles they all may face.

Normally, the couple cannot sustain the consequences of living against religious and traditional laws. Besides, they are unable to follow the correct way again simply because of the heavy thoughts stored deep in their unconscious. Thus, they experience lost and suffering along their lives as Howe describes:("Jude and Sue are lost souls; they have no place in the world they can cherish or to which they can retreat; their goals are hardly to be comprehended in worldly terms at all. Lonely, distraught, rootless, they cling to one another like children in the night") (398). Sue is still afraid that marriage will destroy her relation with Jude according to her family belief. She shares her fears with Jude ("Jude do you think that when you *must* have me with you by law, we shall be so happy as we are now? The men and women of our family are very generous when everything depends upon their good-will, but they always kick against compulsion") (Hardy 267). Sue thinks that she will lose Jude's love once they are connected with a legal relation. This fear plays a crucial role in turning them into sinners. Even when they are allowed to marry after everyone gets divorced, Sue takes a step back and stays incapable to make a decision. It is a

great ambivalence in her personality. She can easily make bad decisions and encounter the whole surrounding while at the same time, she cannot prove her good will and live a proper life like others. She thinks that marriage is nothing but a mere contract that holds people together pressing upon them a type of relation they do not belong to. Sue's hesitations and fears are described by Stewart:

When Jude and Sue are at length free to marry, Sue hangs back. Having already, while Phillotson's wife, concluded marriage to be 'only a sordid contract, based on material convenience in householding', been 'certain one ought to be allowed to undo what one has done so ignorantly', and suggested that ... she is chary about submitting one more to the unreformed institutions of her country. (Stewart 193)

This passage shows the amount of damage infected by society and forced upon Sue who draws a terrified image concerning marriage in her mind. Thus, the community contributes in making a sinner out of her. Furthermore, Sue is afraid of engaging in another marriage contract especially with, Jude, a member of her family. She is possessed with an idea that she will lose love after marriage:

I suppose, dear, we *must* pluck up courage, and get that ceremony over? It is no use struggling against the current, and I feel myself getting intertwined with my kind. O Jude, you'll love me dearly, won't you, afterwards! I do want to be kind to this child, and to be a mother to him; and our adding the legal form to our marriage might make it easier to me. (Hardy 274)

The word 'must' in the previous passage is written in italics maybe to indicate that it is something the couple is obliged to do. It should be noted that Sue is a mature lady with a childish heart. She does not commit any sin due to an evil nature but rather she rushes by her innocent creature to experience things the way she likes.

Finally , and as to conclude, we see that the reasons mentioned previously reveal clearly the motives behind turning Jude and Sue into sinners. However, they try to repent, but their fears defeat them every time. We may sympathize with Jude because he goes to adultery after being refused and neglected by the poor community as well as the rich one.

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