

The Application of Lyotard's Concept of Multiplicity of Ideas on Jude the Obscure

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Abstract

Humanity as a whole has diverse and varying social norms and regulations that govern day to day interactions of individuals to others and also stipulate their expected association with those around them, which may be other similarly socially constructed societies or those with different rules and regulations governing the social and religious lifestyle. This paper intends to analyze the effects, influence and ultimate changes due to multiplicity (with applying Jean Francois Lyotard's concept of multiplicity) in the mid and late Victorian era by using Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure as a template to look back at the social construction of that era. In a world with the tolerance of diversity, it is accepted and tolerated that people are different; they think differently, they judge differently, they make different choices, they speak differently and they live differently. In this world people know that ideas could be unlike and different from each other but they could be reasonable and true. In this world, people can make different choices, live differently and they can be embraced and tolerated easily. In this world, people can make their own rules and justices as long as they do not harm others. In this world, the notions like good, bad, wrong, right are relative and different for each individual and all these concepts can change according to time, place and circumstances.

Keyword: Lyotard, Multiplicity of Ideas, Jude the Obscure

INTRODUCTION

Humanity as a whole has diverse and varying social norms and regulations that govern day to day interactions of individuals to others and also stipulate their expected association with those around them, which may be other similarly socially constructed societies or those with different rules and regulations governing the social and religious lifestyle. This paper intends to analyze the effects, influence and ultimate changes due to multiplicity (with applying Jean Francois Lyotard's concept of multiplicity) in the mid and late Victorian era by using Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* as a template to look back at the social construction of that era. This paper therefore aims to establish how individuals in the Victorian era were able to interact with each other in light of the differences in ideologies and social constructs (religious beliefs, family among the rural class, diversity, social justice, and free will of determination, class structures and social hegemony) and how these differences were resolved, assimilated or discarded. The Victorian era was one marked by increase in information dissemination as books and educative materials became abundant but this also posed a major challenge as more and more individuals began to question authority and pre-established norms. However, as pointed out by Bergson (1935, 195), established societies in the nineteenth century maximized in maintaining a closed morality that often identified with itself at the expense of others, that is, the survival of one's society was given priority than others, but as he goes on to assert, offshoots occur when different ideologies begin to interact, resulting in a push and pull situation where two choices arise, to either be compromised and have an open morality or resist the changes and remain a closed morality (closed morality offers strict guidelines on behavior and religion while open morality allows free association and religious practices, that is, in the former, liberty is controlled while in the later, individuals are free to do whatever they want).

METHODS

With this, the major question that arises is, were individuals free to express themselves socially and individually? What were the sacrifices that had to be made by those who opted to go against the norms of their societies, how did ideologies interact and lead to the final changes that we experience now. In answer to this, this paper presents the argument that humanity is social but different, and this differences should not be a source of conflict but rather acceptance and compromises; that is, the rejection of moral and religious practices that are considered unfit for the survival of the society as a whole and incorporation of practices that are considered harmless to the society. This paper asserts that individual or societal differences should not be a basis of conflict but rather that of tolerance and acceptance. This papers tries to demonstrate these diversities in characters of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and present what their different beliefs and judgments were based upon.

Since people are different, there are different ideas, perceptions, judgments, religious beliefs, so on and so forth. By using Lyotard's concept of multiplicity as a guideline for reading *Jude the Obscure*, it would be demonstrated that although there were some pre-set rules and conventions, some people behaved against those norms of society and different people had different judgments and different attitudes toward different situations. This paper argues that all these differences could be accepted and tolerated unless those differences harmed others. In agreement with Lyotard's theory of multiplicity, different voices, ideas and standpoints should have the chance to be expressed freely and live side by side with liberty, tolerance and respect. Each person with different voices should have the rights to be heard. When people communicate with one another, they understand that the world looks very different to different individuals. People do not always hope to form commonality of perspectives but they should hope to understand different people with different perspectives. Different perspectives of each individual are also related to the status and position they have in time and space and also different perspectives are related to each person's

interests and background knowledge. Sometimes people's judgments are restricted to their society's criteria and principles.

RESULTS

This paper mainly aims to demonstrate multiplicity in Jude the Obscure's characters and show that their different beliefs, judgments, attitudes were related to their personal ways of thinking and their own understanding and they behaved in relation to their personal frame of mind. And they were mostly judged poorly when they disobeyed norms and conventions.

It will be argued that multiplicity is not in harmony with universalism and conventionalism because universal and conventional rules and norms force people to think and judge in line with the pre-constructed norms and conventions and limit individuals. Acceptance and tolerance of different and free ideas, judgments, justices and religious ideas make limiting clichés and norms lose their significance because each person is entitled to think, judge, behave differently and not merely in line with restricting norms and clichés. It will be illustrated that some of Hardy's characters in Jude the Obscure especially Sue and then Jude thought outside the box and thought, judged and behaved outside the limits of norms and conventions of society and chose their path by paying attention to their own frame of mind and their own different and free choices. It will be demonstrated that not obeying the norms and conventions of society in the nineteenth century England and merely considering personal and different free choices, had created difficulty in lives of those free and different people. There was not the era that all people were capable of accepting and tolerating different and opposite ideas which were in contrast to norms of society. But if the conception of acceptance and tolerance of differences could be applied in the lives of nineteenth century people of England, their lives would have been easier and more at peace and in harmony. This might seem as a romantic, ideal and utopian notion and it did not exist in the nineteenth century England. This utopian idea suggests that different and opposite ideas and ways of living are tolerated and accepted. With multiplicity, all opinions even those that contradict each other could coexist. In harmony with Lyotard's concept of diversity, all the differences including those which are in opposition to established rules should be tolerated. Although this could have made Jude the Obscure's characters live easier and although this could have justified Hardy's characters who behaved contrary to the traditions, it might seem to be not realistic to accept and tolerate each and every person who behaves against the norms of society. This concept seems mostly utopian and not completely applicable in the world.

If there were tolerance and acceptance of differences, the lives of those who behaved against the conventions would not have become miserable. But because norms and conventions create regulation, structure and orderliness in the society, not obeying them can create anarchy as well. However because of diversity of people, some of individuals had acceptance and tolerance of differences and this paper intends to show this multiplicity and diversity in Jude the Obscure to justify and validate Hardy's characters in their lights.

The root of most of the behavioral diversities comes from the differences between ideas and beliefs because with different ideas, people make different choices and live differently.

Multiplicity of Voices and ideas. Lyotard believes in multiplicity and interplay of voices (Lyotard 1988, p.74). According to him, people could express their ideas, listen to others' ideas, and learn from each other. Lyotard states that 'pluralism in opinions are held to be fundamental values' (Lyotard 2003, p.36). Thus, to Lyotard, communication of different voices could be beneficial for the world. According to Lyotard, all ideas have the same value and as a positive characteristic of the liberal world, different and opposite ideas would be tolerated and respected. Hardy's characters especially Sue communicated her free and different opinions even those which were against

religious and social conventions freely and sometimes her ideas influenced those around her especially Jude.

DISCUSSION

Although some people are from the same community, religion, social class,..., they may think differently. People who have diverse identity may think alike and people who are members of 'the same race, age, gender, religion, and social class' may think differently (Page 2007, p.14). Some of Jude the Obscure's characters somehow came from the same society or background but they had different beliefs and ideas. Even those characters who thought very differently from majority of people should have had the rights to keep their beliefs and live by those beliefs.

Communication between different or oppositional ideas and beliefs would eventually help a society to improve. Since different voices and ideas would be heard and different voices would have influence on each other, new and different ideas and perspectives would be created. When different ideas are heard freely, more free and important ideas can be generated. For instance, when Sue freely discussed her different perceptions regarding religion, marriage, norms and institutions, her ideas had influenced Jude's perspectives and made Jude change some of his old and limiting beliefs and also helped him change his life style from a traditional and conventional life to a more liberated one.

Interaction between contradictory ideas would indeed provide individuals with profound insight and help them develop deeper ideas and cross limits of their minds. When people with different perspectives and opinions debate and contribute ideas, they share their wisdom and even though their opinions might be opposite of others, it is better than having just idea of oneself without being open to listen to ideas of others. It is evident that approval of diversity advocates communicating and having discussion which results in advocacy of freedom of expression and thought which is against single-voicedness and dictatorship. When Hardy's characters did not have enough freedom to pursue their personal beliefs and live accordingly, it seemed like conventions and authorities who made those conventions, created a non-free society for them that they could not easily live according to their free ideas without judgments and scorns of others. Lyotard, as an intellectual who believed in diversity of ideas, pointed out

Express yourselves freely, have the courage of your ideas, of your opinions, communicate them, enrich the community, enrich yourselves, set yourselves to it, converse, there is nothing but good in making use of your rights since it takes place in respecting the rights of others, circulate, everything is possible within the limits fixed by laws or rules. And besides, these rules can themselves be revised... Why didn't you do this, say that, you had the right. (Lyotard 1993, p.118, 119)

As voices and ideas are diverse, each individual should be free to express their ideas. 'let speech run, give free rein to all the 'ideas', figures, scenes, names, sentences, as they come on to the tongue and the body, in their 'disorder', without selection or repression'' (Lyotard 1991, p.30). Each person regardless of their different opinions should have right and freedom to convey their ideas without suppressing them as did some of free-spirited characters of Hardy's novels.

Lyotard argues that since there is something dreadfully wrong with the epistemology of the enlightenment, pluralism is not to be intellectually despised. Pluralism can be, by this account, an opportunity to engage in dialogue, admit disagreements, respect differences, explore contrary opinions, and allow a divergence of opinion to flourish. (Hawkins 1997, p.64)

Therefore the notion of multiplicity advocates tolerance and respect for different ideas and encourages dialogues between contrasting ideas and lets contrasting ideas to grow and develop. This could justify free characters especially Sue who expressed her opinions freely.

Different opinions exist because different people with different world-views, experiences and knowledge exist. Each individual sees and experiences the world in different ways because each individual has different understanding. All individuals are different in how they see and interpret things and they should be able to express those different world- views and standpoints freely. Even people in the same situation can have different perceptions and experiences and they should be free to openly discuss their different outlooks. This can be said about Jude the Obscure's characters as well. As an example, each one of Hardy's characters had different views and perceptions about the same concept of marriage and some of them freely discussed their different perceptions about marriage and they also chose different paths regarding marriage.

Although the rural working class of the Victorian period had firm beliefs on the importance of secure and stable families as a necessary part of their community (Schoenfeld 2005, p. 25), some of Hardy's characters had very different beliefs about the concept of marriage. On the one hand, there are those who believed that getting married was the moral thing to do irrespective of whether there is love or not and there is the other school of thought that believes in the idea that morality can only exist if there is love and equal treatment of all people. And also for some, marriage was a sacred institution which no one was supposed to break out of once a couple got married while for others, the factor of divorce was always a viable option if the marriage did not work.

Hardy reveals the diversity that forms the basis behind decisions to marry. Whereas marriage is an important part of the society, the reader comes to see the multiplicity of motives that individuals in these unions possess. For example, Hardy exacerbates the multiplicity of ideas in the Victorian society by comparing Sue with Arabella.

The multiplicity of this Victorian society is also seen in the relationships between individuals. In the case of Arabella, against her own will she follows the advice of her friends to marry the simple Jude. Whereas Arabella is considered rough around the edges, she is surprisingly better received than Sue. The reason being, Sue is aware of her capability and unable submit to marriage merely to gain good standing in public. Based on this confused understanding one may question whether society merely wants obedience or improvement. Indeed, in many ways Jude and Sue relate much better than Jude and Arabella.

Unlike Sue who is determined to challenge the societal conventions in pursuit of her liberties, Arabella is the direct opposite and believes that individual liberties can only be enjoyed by those who conform to the society's norms. In the same way, Sue gives up and agrees to marry Philoston even though she does not agree with the principle of conventional marriage. Arabella marries Jude to have a secure home and a man to buy her nice clothes. In Sue's marriage, she is not physically attracted to Philoston and the reader is informed that her motive for marriage was career advancement or revenge because she understood Jude was married to Arabella. It would be expected in a society that held marriage so dear that individuals would share a common motive for entering these unions.

This multiplicity in the Victorian society surprisingly continues even after Jude and Arabella separate, and a new relationship has begun with Sue. Whereas during the society was willing to turn a blind eye to Jude's first questionable marriage, his relationship with Sue is ironically not regarded sacred simply due to lack of an official ceremony. It would appear that, unions between couples blessed in religious ceremonies remained sacred regardless of public opinion. This is

evident in the fact that in novel in many cases Arabella visits Jude after remarrying but in this town is permitted the privileges of a bride. In some parts of the novel, the two continue to have sexual relations after this, suggesting a multiplicity in relation to marriage and the question is marriage sacred or not. However, the consequences for Sue leaving her husband and staying together with Jude was not socially acceptable, not that cousins would not marry, but the fact that these two individuals thought that their society would accept their independent decision to stay together when not being married was unacceptable at the time. As a result of their free choice, Jude loses his job and they live as nomads moving from place to place. This clearly depicts how the Victorian era treated those who were considered dissidents to the approved code of conduct within the society, the threat of alienation was real and most individuals were forced to conform to the expected standards. This also is evident when Sue, after her children being hanged by Jude's son 'Father Time' decides to leave Jude and get remarried to Phillotson. This was done in order to escape the dangers that they thought would continue to befall them if they went on with their unholy union. Through these characters and through the scenarios presented by Hardy, we are able to see multiplicity in the manner that different people understand marriage. In this case, Sue's belief in marriage changes from time to time which explains her decision to remarry. Multiplicity on ideas can thus be said to have extended to beliefs on marriage. In this, we are also able to point out the influence of religion in the establishment of moral codes within a society, no one wanted to be on the wrong side of the Church (Wolffe 1997, p 130), but we are also able to see the impact of social norms on individuals perception and beliefs, the two characters (Jude and Sue) view on marriage as an institution shifts from their initial willingness to live together while unmarried to finally having to abandon their personal feelings and do what was expected of them by the society. This diversity in ideas is not of their own making but rather, a push to conform to the rules that governed the Victorian society. However, it is not always the case that those who challenge conventionalism are defeated by norms or by those who conform to the norms. Hardy uses the characters in his novel to suggest that although it is difficult to defeat the societal conventions in search of individual liberties, it is not entirely impossible.

Hardy demonstrates conflict in the understanding of conventional religious and moral codes as they existed in the Victorian society. Multiplicity in opinions is manifested in matters that regarded morality and religion, with almost all individuals either being rigid or more dynamic in their interpretation of ideas. There is a conflict in the way that some people understand morality as that which is in tandem with the religion and with the law- these are the individuals who pursue conventionalism. There are other characters who believe morality to be based on the principle of individual happiness and equality for all. This highlights the multiplicity that existed in the Victorian society (Moseley, 8). Through such resistance to multiplicity and other schools of thought that did not conform to the standards of the day in the Victorian era, it would be relevant to point out that morality and religion are relevant to the point where they do not oppose the already pre-established norms (Wolffe 1997, p 130). As pointed out by Wolffe (1997, p 129), the Victorian era was one of religiousness with the Church dictating what would be acceptable to the masses, thus through such efforts, the Church opposed the advancement of such theories as those by Darwin that tried to bring about a new understanding of evolution.

It reveals to Jude in the novel how little faith Sue has in the obligatory religious bond of marriage. This difference in perception towards marriage appears to suggest that not all Victorian society was fascinated by the convention of marriage as it is defined by the Church.

Multiplicity in Victorian England was manifested in not only the concept of marriage but in different social constructs, this was due to the relatively increasing number of those who could access education and reading materials hence more and more individuals were exposed to various scholarly works, some of which did not conform to the current views and opinions at the time.

Hardy demonstrated the diversity in the level of education in his works. For instance, Sue Bridehead overcomes nearly insurmountable odds in search of her intellectual freedom. As a result of her advanced education and exposure to intellectual writings, Sue and Jude do not agree with norms and they refuse to the societal conventions. They are more enthusiastic about pursuing their individual liberties as compared to the rest of the characters who had little exposure to the education. Sue becomes a rebel as a result of the interactions she has had with Mill's reading (Blake, 212). Mill wrote to enlighten the society on the need for human beings to pursue individual happiness. This brings out the relativism in the Victorian society that had been made possible by the interactions members of the society were having (Merriman, 115). It also demonstrated the crucial role that other thinkers such as philosophers played in making the Victorian society more accommodative of individual liberties.

In harmony with individual liberties and in line with a contemporary reading of *Jude the Obscure*, people should have individual freedom to express their different ideas and beliefs and they should be able to criticize society's conventions as long as they are not in violent ways which could harm society. In line with individual rights, each and every individual are free to gather in groups or not and they can be as individuals or as a member of a group speak any way that they want, attend Church or not, speak about their loyalty to their culture, tradition, religious faith, ethnicity or they can criticize them as long as they do not harm society's sensibilities (Lapidoth 1996, p.x). The Church preached that marriage was a huge factor to prevent fornication. But in *Jude the Obscure*, Jude and Sue's lifestyle contradicted the Church's rules as they lived together without the marriage contract and they had illegitimate children together. Sue whom disobeyed the Church's law, tried to justify and defy their unaccepted behavior by saying that because of their pure love, they had a 'natural marriage' or 'marriage in heart' which was in fact in contrast to the Church's rules (Hardy 1895, p. 254). Sue was an epitome of fornication in the eyes of the Church. Unlike what the church was trying to impose, Sue firmly believed that a consensual relationship with emotional attachment was much better than those who conformed to the norms of legalizing their relationship through a contract. But this clearly rejected the conventions of the Church and though the Church prevented fornication through marriage institution, Jude and Sue challenged this union by living together outside marriage and having children out of wedlock.

Hardy who questioned the Church's convention of marriage in his novels, showed the vows and promises of Jude and his wife Arabella (Hardy 1895, pp.61-62), to show the temporary feelings and for criticizing the religious dogma of marriage because even those who thought they would be together permanently, might end up realizing their feelings were temporary. Jude told Sue that "People go on marrying because they can't resist natural forces, although many of them may know perfectly well that they are possibly buying a month's pleasure with a life's discomfort." (Hardy 1895, p.306). Sue Bridehead also considered marriage as a 'sordid contract' and an institution which was 'hopelessly vulgar' and she thought this contract ruined all affection between lovers (Hardy 1895). Therefore, Hardy showed his criticism of the Church's concept of marriage via his characters.

One of the reasons that made people attend the Church less was that the Industrial Revolution disjoined people from God. All the new discoveries, inventions and industrial developments of the era including the railways and agricultural machinery distracted people and made them get caught up in themselves and prevented them from concentrating on God and religious beliefs (Plietzsch 2003, p.1). People were more involved with the modernization and changes in the way of living and this made them lose interest in the concept of God. This had effect on the fact that they attended Church less because they were more attracted to the new inventions and industrial advancements rather than God and religious beliefs. As an example in Hardy's works, Sue in *Jude the Obscure* uttered "Cathedral? Yes. Though I think I'd rather sit in the railway station... That's the centre of the

town life now. ... The cathedral was a very good place four or five centuries ago; but it is played out now ... I am not modern, either. I am more ancient than mediaevalist, if you only knew.' (Hardy 1895, p.135). Hence Sue thought that religion was outdated and it might have been good for a few centuries ago but it was not significant in the era with industrial developments. During the time, Hardy became agnostic too and few of his characters especially Sue Bridehead were agnostic and questioned religion and religious norms as well. Jude also wished for a life without God and said "Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it" (Hardy 1895, p.551). Hence some of Hardy's characters preferred agnosticism or atheisms and preferred a life without God and religion. However, Sue goes back to Phillotson just because she feels divinely compelled to avoid further bad luck. This supports Malk's (2006, p 87) view that the Victorian era was marked by religious pluralism but that which only extended to the men, as women had few rights and were more subject to male chauvinism. Multiplicity of opinions in this era was not so much that they involved extreme shift in ideologies, rather the society was able to tolerate some individuals decisions and choice to live freely because they did not pose a serious threat to the social construct of the society.

Multiplicity of Judgments. Lyotard believes in multiplicity of judgments and judgments 'without concepts' and criteria (Lyotard 1985, p. 82). To him, there should not be any absolute and universal judgement or consensus (Lyotard 1985, p. 82). He thinks that there should be multiplicity of judgments without any fixed criteria and nothing should be considered as the only valid. This could justify Hardy's characters because the society judged them with the single criteria of religious or societal conventions but in line with Lyotard's concept, people should judgment criteria should not be universal or fixed and judgments could be multiple. Hence each individual should have the freedom to judge by their own personal criteria.

Lyotard claims, 'without it [universal judgment], there would be no experience of obligation and no problem of justice ... The ability to judge does not hang upon the observance of criteria' (Lyotard 1985, p.17). This could show that when Jude the Obscure's characters were judged according to social and religious norms, this was the exercise of obligation and there was not a real justice. Lyotard believes that different judgments are related to different ideas, sets of mind and decisions. Hence it is better to judge Jude the Obscure's characters in line with different opinions and not in line with fixed criteria for judgment.

In line with Lyotard's concept each person should be allowed to freely evaluate, analyze and judge different values and issues but not merely according to global fixed criteria. Different judgments are related to different ideas, sets of mind and decisions. Each individual should be free to think, decide, choose and judge for themselves without paying attention to the norms and standards and consensus criteria for judgment and this could be said about Jude the Obscured characters as well. Because majority of characters judged those who behaved against social and religious conventions very harshly, it shows that they judged based on fixed criteria and not based on their own personal and different opinions.

Lyotard asserts, ' In every instance, one must evaluate relations: of force, of values, of quantities, and of qualities; but to evaluate them there are no criteria, nothing but opinions' (Lyotard and Thebaud 2008, p.27). This could show that Hardy's characters could have the rights to judge conventions differently and they should have had the rights to criticize and judge social and religious norms as well. Hence Sue who questioned norms a lot for be justified in this light.

It seems that Lyotard (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985, p. 115) believes universal labels like the concept of good or bad, better or worse, wrong or right are man- made and arbitrary hence these labels should not exist and each person should judge without the universal norm of good or bad, wrong or

right and instead he/she should decide and judge autonomously. As a matter of fact, universal labels would potentially limit people and do not allow them to experience for themselves. These global labels merely affect people's perception of right and wrong, and their permission to freely experience. Thus, these labels would impose some ways and attitudes on people and limit their freedom to act and choose the way that they prefer. Hence Lyotard's rejection of fixed and universal criteria and labels would create liberty and freedom for any and every individual. We could apply this to Hardy's characters because they were treated poorly when they disobeyed conventions but there should not be really any label as good or bad, right or wrong. Hence Hardy's characters who contrasted conventions should not really be judged that harshly.

Lyotard (Lyotard and Thebaud 2008, p.87) states, the judgment is not absolutely undetermined ... it is presupposed that this idea is the idea of totality. Whereas the problem that faces us, even if it is put in terms of idea and reflective judgment, is that it is no longer a matter, for us, of reflective upon what is just or unjust against the horizon of a social totality, but, on the contrary, against the horizon of a multiplicity or of a diversity.

Obviously, all people could not think alike, therefore authorities' judgments could not include every one's ideas but merely some of them. As a result, diversity of judgments and individual liberty would not be respected in this way and it might lead to dictatorship. In the contrary, Lyotard thinks of acceptance and tolerance of all kinds of judgments of any and every individual. It seems that Lyotard believes judgments should be personal and his idea of multiplicity of judgments would respect individual rights to decide and choose for themselves and this process sounds to be subjective. Hence if Jude the Obscure's characters only judged characters who behaved in contrast to conventions in line with the criteria of fixed conventions, they only obeyed authority's rules and authority's rules are not the opinions of most of people but some of them. But it would have been more liberal if each person were more understanding and judged personally rather than being like slaves of authorities and accepting their rules and conventions obediently.

Lyotard's notion of multiplicity shows that each individual's point of view has equal value to others' and there is no single norm or measure – no ideal – that can be used to label something as better or worse. Hence it is not fair to judge Jude the Obscure characters only in line with conventions.

Each of Jude the Obscure's characters could have been their own measure to judge situations. But instead some of them judged others and situations by the pre-set criteria of society. If Hardy's characters thought and decided by their own distinctive values and if they accepted differences and different choices of others, they would not merely judge those characters who behaved against conventions, according to the society's values; instead they judged them diversely with their own personal opinions and criteria. Because judgments are personal and individuals could think, evaluate, judge and behave freely and differently without necessarily considering universal norms and conventions.

Firm criteria for judgment at the Victorian era seemed to be male-dominated. These criteria are man-made and arbitrary and they do not let each person judge with their own perceptions. As a matter of fact, solid criteria potentially force some ways of thinking and limit people and do not allow them to judge autonomously. On the contrary, rejection of firm and Universal criteria and labels creates liberty and freedom for any and every individual. Diverse judgments without established criteria give people freedom to evaluate and judge in the way that they choose and prefer. Diversity is in line with judgments with reflection, which does not evaluate certain cases according to general and conventional rules, but, in contrast, tries to find or even create those rules each time afresh, following from case to case (Brons 1995, p. 787). That is kind of freedom of

thought, freedom to choose, i.e. choose not what authorities oblige people to choose, but choose what each individual likes to choose.

Multiplicity in social understanding created problems for various characters and some are illustrated in *Jude the Obscure*. In the case of Jude, after he begins to cohabit with Sue, he gets fired from his job because he broke a convention and encounters so much difficulty in finding work and all reject him because he was living with a woman without being married to her and he is forced to relocate (Hardy 1895). The same treatment is imposed on Philostone who loses his job for accepting that his marriage was unhappy and allowing his wife to leave his home. It would appear that whereas both individuals made sound and free decision based on logic, society merely responds with norms and conventions that appear to have been cast in stone. This multiplicity in perceptions and judgment leads the reader to question the purpose of these social norms. Whereas norms help bring unity in society can they be supported with total disregard to reality and freedom.

It may be suggested that the individuals who form the basis of *Jude the Obscure* introduced new concepts to the Victorian society and paid a very heavy price for their decisions. It is surprising that whereas the society should embrace multiplicity, the decisions of these individuals were completely rejected. The society on one hand embraces families and their role in society. On the other hand rejects families that differ even slightly from the ingredients used to create the unions. One may question which is more important, the union or the ingredient?

Religious justices restricted Hardy's characters lives hence if there were diversity of justices, their lives would have been more free. In harmony with Lyotard, it is significant to accept 'the idea of a justice that would at the same time be that of a plurality', to have justice not 'under a rule of convergence but rather a rule of divergence' (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985, p.88). In line with Lyotard's beliefs, when there is not a universal criteria and instead there is a 'multiplicity of small narratives', the real important issue is how to 'distinguish between what is just and what is not just' (Lyotard and Thebaud 1985, p. 88). In consonance with Lyotard, 'Every one of us belongs to several minorities, and what is very important, none of them prevails. It is only then that we can say that the society is just' (Lyotard and Thebaud 2008, p.95). This means that all ideas and perspectives are valid. It could be concluded that when people judged Hardy's characters mainly based on conventional or religious criteria for judgment, it was not completely just. Sometimes people's freedom should be put under perspective and their individuality should be considered, hence in this case, only conventional and religious justice could not define and explain Hardy's characters but individualism and multiplicity of justices could justify them because these characters did not harm others but they lived a life against cliches and norms of society.

In *Jude the Obscure*, Sue, who questioned religious conventions and lived her life freely without considering religious norms, had lost her children because of how the society judged and treated them. Because Jude and Sue had illegitimate children and they lived together as a couple without being married, nobody rented them a house. As a result Jude's child killed all their illegitimate children and he himself committed suicide after killing his siblings. Hence their life became miserable and Sue thought it was all because of not obeying God and his rules (Hardy 1885). Hence Hardy who questioned God and religion, showed tragic endings in some of his pieces for the ones who did not obey religious rules and had difficulties living freely without considering religious norms in the nineteenth century.

CONCLUSION

The pre-set rules and conventions come with obligation in the shape of prescription and authority which instructs and commands (Rojek, Turner and Lyotard 1998, p.52). But in harmony with

diversity, these prescribed rules and conventions could be neglected and ignored, instead those rules and conventions could be re-examined by each individual and they are allowed to have their different and personal perspectives and they are allowed to behave in harmony with their own personal thoughts with the condition that they do not harm others. The concept of diversity is in harmony with the idea that there is no fundamental essentiality for the existence of prescriptions, commands and absolute rules (Lyotard 1985, p.18). In the actual fact, each person could be their own prescriber and even such prescriptions might change in agreement with different circumstances and time (Lyotard 1985, p. 27). In line with multiplicity, each individual could be considered as his/her own ruler and governor. In harmony with autonomy, each person has a power to decide and govern by oneself, through their own logical will, positive freedom or self-government and self-mastery. If we apply the concept of self-government to Hardy's characters, they could be validated because those characters were creating their own rules which were in contrast to the firm rules of society or religion. They were autonomously creating prescriptions and laws for their own life. But of course Hardy's characters were living in the Victorian era with firm rules hence they had difficulty living by their personal rules which neglected rules of society.

Although Hardy's characters thought and behaved diversely, they were not living in a society with acceptance and tolerance of diversity and plurality. There is a need for tolerance of differences and respect for other cultures and different belief systems (Krausz 2010, p. 38). Possibly we as readers should have respect for nineteenth century England's society but we as twenty-first century readers might criticize some norms and conventions of the Victorian era and relate to those characters who broke the conventions more and try to justify them with our open perspectives.

In a world with the tolerance of diversity, it is accepted and tolerated that people are different; they think differently, they judge differently, they make different choices, they speak differently and they live differently. In this world people know that ideas could be unlike and different from each other but they could be reasonable and true. In this world, people can make different choices, live differently and they can be embraced and tolerated easily. In this world, people can make their own rules and justices as long as they do not harm others. In this world, the notions like good, bad, wrong, right are relative and different for each individual and all these concepts can change according to time, place and circumstances. When different ways of thinking, judging, and living are embraced, all people could co-exist with respect and toleration. For this reason, Hardy's characters who questioned God and had different frames of mind which were in contrast to norms and conventions could be tolerated and accepted in a world with the acceptance of diversity. But because Hardy's characters lived in a world with restrict and firm social and religious conventions, they did not have their freedom and they were judged and treated poorly and they had struggles and conflicts with norms and conventions and with people who followed those norms and conventions.

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