



Narrative Discourse Construction in Thomas Hardy's Novels

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Abstract

The study is designed to concentrate on the narrative discourse construction in Thomas Hardy’s novels, based on close reading and textual analysis of the related works. Hardy ingeniously manipulates diverse discourse patterns merging the epistolary construction and dramatic presentation into his fiction. Epistolary construction enables Hardy to create intimacy between his characters and the readers, while dialogic structuring and dramatic monologue are applied to psychological description and analysis. It is concluded that both in time span and narrative discourse Hardy transcends the 19th century Victorian norms. In this sense, Hardy may be also acknowledged as a modernist writer for his proficiency in the manipulation of polyphony in discourse construction.

Key words: Narrative discourse; Epistolary construction; Dramatic monologue; Dialogic structuring

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INTRODUCTION

Narrative discourse is a crucial element in fiction analysis. While appreciating Thomas Hardy’s novels, prudent readers may perceive the diverse discourse patterns Hardy ingeniously manipulates in the novel, which is reflected in

the form of epistolary construction, dramatic monologue, and dialogic structuring. In this aspect, Hardy’s last and greatest novel *Jude the Obscure* can be recognized as an outstanding text which merges the application of 18th century epistolary form and basic elements in drama—dialogue and monologue into his fiction. Hardy took the lead in employing interior monologue to describe the stream of consciousness in the minds of the protagonists, notably *Jude*. Thus Hardy may also be identified as a pioneering twentieth-century modernist writer more than merely a Victorian realist. So this study mainly focuses on Thomas Hardy’s narrative discourse construction in his novels.

1. EPISTOLARY CONSTRUCTION

An effective narrative technique used by Hardy is the use of letter writing. As a 19th century novelist, Hardy, to some extent, adopted in part the narrative method of epistolary form which prevails in the 18th century fiction. Richardson, the leading figure of epistolary fiction, once said that “one technical advantage of the epistolary form, in addition to its “novelty”, was that in contrast to narration, letters use the present tense, thus inducing in readers a sense of immediate involvement and anticipation (Martin, 2006, p.129). In addition, as Anna Barbauld noted in 1804, “it makes the whole work dramatic, since all the characters speak in their own persons” (Allot, 1959, p.260). She conceded that traditional narration had other advantages: By entering the minds of characters, the author can “reveal the secret springs of actions.... He can be concise, or diffuse, as the different parts of his story require it.” Knowing everything, he can reveal things not known to any of the characters and comment on the action. But narration as such may become tedious; “all good writers therefore have thrown as much as possible of the dramatic into their narrative” (Ibid., p.259). For this reason, Victorian novelists rarely pick up the epistolary

form. However, reversely, Hardy makes a positive comment on this form: One advantage of epistolary form is that readers are greatly tempted to illicit the receiver's real feelings and see if he or she identifies with theirs (Ibid., p.260).

By employing the form of letter-writing with greater skill in *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy designs to achieve particular effects. Letters, especially those addressed to others, constitute an irresistible attraction to the reader. Therefore the novelist does not have to worry much about arousing and holding the reader's attention. Letters, especially those to intimate friends and relatives, are windows to the innermost soul of the characters concerned. Therefore, the novelist does not have to devise other ways to reveal the characters' minds. Whereas, totally different from the 18th century norms of lengthy and abundant epistolary form, in *Jude* letters exchanged between the characters are marked by much brevity and conciseness within one to five sentences while bearing profuse meaning and significance. The use of letter writing in *Jude the Obscure* enables Hardy to create a more intimate relationship between his characters and the readers, allowing the readers to understand the character's behavior and their rationale. In the text, letters are exchanged, for the most part between Jude Fawley and Sue Bridehead to describe the hidden background knowledge about the triangular love entanglement between the protagonists, functioning as catalyser to the love tragedy especially the one between Jude and Sue:

First, Jude's triumphant spotting of Sue just results from a letter from Aunt Fawley:

- (1) At this time he received a nervously anxious letter from his poor old aunt, on the subject which had previously distressed her—a fear that Jude would not be strong-minded enough to keep away from his cousin Sue Bridehead and her relations. Sue's father, his aunt believed, had gone back to London, but the girl remained at Christminster. (Ibid., pp.88-89)

This letter is in indirect speech with no more than 50 words. As can be seen from the letter, Miss Fawley attempts to warn Jude against any potential discourse with his cousin Sue in that the Fawleys are all doomed to failure in marriage. But reversely, it is also this very letter that stimulates his surge to find her and “the clue to her whereabouts” merely facilitates or accelerates Jude's scheme: “With an altogether singular pleasure he walked at his earliest spare minutes past the shops answering to his great-aunt's description; and beheld in one of them a young girl sitting behind a desk, who was suspiciously like the original of the portrait.” (Ibid., p.88) And the moment he saw her, he was thoroughly tempted by her beauty: “She was so pretty that he could not believe it possible that she should belong to him” (Ibid., p.89). This time, Jude—the “dreamy scholar”, “the Knight”

succumbed to sexual passions and transformed into “a villain”. A burning passion was seizing him. Thus a sense of irony and tragic effect is attained with this letter, which can serve as the commencement of their love tragedy.

Then, Jude's burning passion loomed deeper as he received a “simple and commonplace” letter from her cousin—Sue:

- (2) Sue's was the most artless and natural kind. She addressed him as her dear cousin Jude; said she had only just learnt by the merest accident that he was living in Christminster, and reproached him with not letting her know. They might have had such nice times together, she said, for she was thrown much upon herself, and had hardly any congenial friend. But now there was every probability of her soon going away, so that the chance of companionship would be lost perhaps for ever. (Ibid., p.100)

What is the would-be result of this “commonplace letter”? The author has told us with his or her omniscience in the preceding paragraph:

- (3) When he reached his lodging he found a note from her—a first note—one of those documents which, simple and commonplace in them, are seen retrospectively to have been pregnant with impassioned consequences. The very unconsciousness of a looming drama which is shown in such innocent first epistles from women to men, or VICE VERSA, makes them, when such a drama follows, and they are read over by the purple or lurid light of it, all the more impressive, solemn, and in cases, terrible. (Ibid., p.100)

Thus, Sue's well-intentioned letter of friendship or *companionship* as well as *kinship* in indirect speech has transformed into a *love catalyst* in Jude's eyes. The last sentence which indicates her future departure and the chance of losing companionship forever in Sue's letter spurs him to write all the more quickly to her and meet her that very evening. Immense intimacy is established notably from Jude's side, and this intimacy is potentially further development of their tragedy.

Also Sue's capricious and inconsistent attitude to Jude is betrayed in her letter to Jude. After she said to Jude at parting “*You mustn't love me. You are to like me—that's all!*” (Ibid., p.161), a letter came from her saying:

- (4) What I really write about, dear Jude, is something I said to you at parting. You had been so very good and kind to me that when you were out of sight I felt what a cruel and ungrateful woman I was to say it, and it has reproached me ever since. IF YOU WANT TO LOVE ME, JUDE, YOU MAY: I don't mind at all; and I'll never say again that you mustn't! Now I won't write any more about that. You do forgive your thoughtless friend for her cruelty? And won't make her miserable by saying you don't? —Ever, SUE. (Ibid., p.161)

This letter is from the impulsive and sensitive Sue regretting her cruelty to Jude with a clear sign of consenting to Jude's love for her. But this permission of love soon transforms into mere friendship:

- (5) Forgive me for my petulance yesterday! I was horrid to you; I know it, and I feel perfectly miserable at my horridness. It was so dear of you not to be angry! Jude please still *keeps me as your friend and associate*, with all my faults. I'll try not to be like it again. I am coming to Melchester on Saturday, to get my things away from the T.S., &c. I could walk with you for half an hour, if you would like? – Your repentant SUE. (Ibid., pp.164-165)

As can be seen from the two letters, both written in direct speech allowing its writer speaking in her own voice, an intimacy is established between the reader and letter-writer. Thus readers can easily read Sue, her intricacy and contradiction in personality, as well as the instability in her relations with Jude. All this also leads to their tragic love.

Then another influential letter from one of the University masters struck like a bolt from the blue leaving Jude in mere despair:

BIBLIOLL COLLEGE.

- (6) SIR, —I have read your letter with interest; and, judging from your description of yourself as a working-man, 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. That, therefore, is what I advise you to do. Yours

T. TETUPHENAY.

To Mr. J. FAWLEY, Stone-mason. (Ibid., p.120)

This well-intentioned letter is a clear marker of Jude's impractically abortive university dream. It means that for all his intelligence and morality, which outwit the "learned" gentlemen at Christminster, the university is closed to those, like Jude, who could benefit most from it, because he was born into the *wrong class*. Hence a sense of irony is achieved with his letter (Merryn, 2005, p.99).

2. DIALOGIC CONSTRUCTION

In order to create a more intimate relationship between the characters and his readers, dialogic structuring is also skillfully manipulated by Hardy. How a character speaks and what they say allow a greater insight into the nature of their individuality. It permits the reader to judge the characters on the basis of their own communication with other characters rather than on Hardy's own interpretation of their converse. Dialogue also informs the reader of a specific character's thoughts and feelings as well as their intentions and rationale for previous actions. This section is designed to analyze Hardy's manipulation of dialogue as a discourse type in terms of dialogic criticism.

Dialogic Criticism is modeled on the theory of the Soviet Critic Mikhail Bakhtin who, although he published his major works in 1980s, when translations of his writings gave him a wide and rapidly increasing influence. To Bakhtin a literary work is not (as in various post-structural theories) a text whose meanings are produced by the play of impersonal linguistic or economic or cultural forces, but a site for the dialogic interaction of multiple voices, or modes of discourse, each of which is not merely a verbal but a social phenomenon, and as such is the product of manifold determinants that are specific to a class, social group, and speech community (Abrams, 2004., p.63). A person's speech, composed of languages from diverse social contexts, does not express a ready-made and autonomous individuality; instead, his or her character emerges in the course of the dialogue and is composed of languages from diverse social contexts. Each utterance, furthermore, whether in actual life or as represented in literature, owes its precise inflection and meaning to a number of attendant factors—the specific social situation in which it is spoken, the relation of its speaker to an actual or anticipated listener, and the relation of the utterance to the prior utterances to which it is (explicitly or implicitly) a response.

Bakhtin's prime interest was in the novel, and especially in the ways that the voices that constitute the text of any novel disrupt the authority of the author's single voice. In *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* (1984), he contrasts the monologic novels of writers—which undertake to subordinate the voices of all the characters to the authoritative discourse and controlling purposes of the author—to the dialogic form (or "polyphonic form") in which the characters are liberated to speak "a plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses, a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices" (Bakhtin, 1984, p.63). In Bakhtin's view, however, a novel can never be totally monologic, since the narrator's reports of the utterances of another character are inescapably "double-voiced" (in that we can distinguish therein the author's own accent and inflection), and also dialogic (in that the author's discourse continually reinforces, alters, or contests with the types of speech that it reports).

In an essay on "Discourse in the Novel" (1981), Bakhtin develops his view that the novel is constituted by a multiplicity of divergent and contending social voices that achieve their full significance only in the process of their dialogic interaction both with each other and with the voice of the narrator. Bakhtin explicitly sets his theory against Aristotle's *Poetics*, which proposed that the primary component in narrative forms is a plot that evolves coherently from its beginning to an end in which all complications are resolved. Instead, Bakhtin elevates discourse (equivalent to Aristotle's subordinate element of diction) into the primary component of a narrative work; and he describes discourse as a medley of voices, social attitudes, and values that are not only opposed,

but irreconcilable, with the result that the work remains unresolved and open-ended (Bakhtin, 1981, p.241).

Don Bialostosky, a chief spokesman for dialogic criticism, has voiced its rationale and ideal:

As a self-conscious practice, dialogic criticism turns its inescapable involvement with some other voices into a program of articulation itself with all the other voices of the discipline, the culture, or the world of cultures to which it makes itself responsible....Neither a live-and-let-live relativism nor a settle-it-once-and-for-all authoritarianism but a strenuous and open-ended dialogism would keep them talking to themselves and to one another, discovering their affinities without resting in them and clarifying their differences without resolving them. (Atkins & Morrow, 1989, pp.223-224)

Just as Bakhtin contends, the use of dialogue endued fiction with polyphony. Guerin makes his own observation on Bakhtin's definition of polyphony:

Bakhtin's definition of the modern polyphonic, dialogic novel made up of a plurality of voices that avoid reduction to a single perspective indicates a concern on his part about the dangers of knowledge, whether inside or outside a text. That is, he points toward a parallel between issues of knowledge and power among the characters and those between the author and the reader. In both cases, knowledge is best thought of as dialogic rather than monologic, as open to the other rather than closed, as addressing rather than defining. (Guerin, 1999, p.351)

In *Jude the Obscure*, a large proportion of dialogues between Jude and Sue as well as those between Jude and Phillotson are cases in point to highlight this polyphonic feature of the novel. They are utilized to indicate a more intimate intercourse between them. It permits the reader to judge the characters on the basis of their own communication with other characters, transmitting to the readers the intricacy of one's thoughts. Dialogue also informs the reader of specific characters' thoughts and feelings as well as their intentions and rationale for previous actions.

Upon the commencement of the novel, the reader is introduced to a dialogue between a schoolmaster—Philloston and his irregular pupil before the departure of the teacher.

(7) "Sorry I am going, Jude?" asked the latter kindly.

The boy awkwardly opened the book he held in his hand, which Mr. Phillotson had bestowed on him as a parting gift, and admitted that he was sorry.

"So am I," said Mr. Phillotson.

"Why do you go, sir?" asked the boy.

"Ah—that would be a long story. You wouldn't understand my reasons, Jude. You will, perhaps, when you are older."

"I think I should now, sir."

"Well—don't speak of this everywhere. You know what a university is, and a university degree? It is the necessary hallmark of a man who wants to do anything in teaching. My scheme, or dream, is to be a university graduate, and then to be ordained. By going to live at Christminster, or near it, I shall be at headquarters, so to

speak, and if my scheme is practicable at all, I consider that being on the spot will afford me a better chance of carrying it out than I should have elsewhere." (Hardy, 1991, p.4)

Here, the dialogue between young Jude and Mr. Phillotson first unfolds to us the uncommon intimacy between them. Apart from being teacher and student, they seem to be bosom friends who share the common ambition for a promising scholarly career as well. Then Phillotson's dream of being a university graduate and ordained later at Christminster is exposed enthusiastically to Jude, and this very dream became a most direct motivation and inspiration for Jude to step on the same career of academic life. It may account for the rationale of Jude's succeeding action, i.e. his decision to leave Marygreen for Christminster. This scheme turns out to be the prime cause resulting in his personal tragedy.

If the dialogic relationship between Jude and Mr. Phillotson is established on a scholarly or academic basis, the one between Jude and Sue may be based on their bisexual and affectionate contact:

(8) They stood rather miserably together on the platform; and it was apparent that he wanted to say more.

"I want to tell you something—two things," he said hurriedly as the train came up....

"What?"

"You mustn't love me. You are to like me—that's all!" (Ibid., pp.160-161)

Here the utterance comes from Sue after her breaking the school regulation by overstaying her time outside the school. It indicates the predicament in their intercourse: he may like him rather than love him in that she is to make herself a wife of other by the bondage of marriage, that is, "as Phillotson's PROTEGEE and betrothed" under the pressure of the school authority at that moment.

Another dialogue is an effective marker of their comradeship or congenial friendship:

(9) "It is odd," she said, in a voice quite changed, "that I should care about that air; because ..."

"Because what?"

"I am not that sort—quite."

"Not easily moved?"

"I didn't quite mean that."

"Oh, but you *are* one of that sort, for you are just like me at heart!"

"But not at head." (Ibid, p.212)

This dialogue conveys to the readers that Jude and Sue have much in common. Their love is more based on their life-long comradeship and friendship. Such love should deserve a happy union in the end. But on Sue's side, all too often her head or sense prevails over her heart or sensibility at the mercy of the Victorian conventions. This accounts in part for their thwarted or handicapped love for which Sue is more to blame.

However, this love based on comradeship comes to nothing in the end after Sue has witnessed the very scene of child-murder:

(10) "Dear friend, I see marriage differently now. My babies have been taken from me to show me this! Arabella's child killing mine was a judgment—the right slaying the wrong. What, *what* shall I do! I am such a vile creature—too worthless to mix with ordinary human beings!" (Ibid, p.369)

Under harsh social conventions, Sue's head prevails. Her feeling completely gives way to cruel reality and conventions:

(11) "I don't dislike you, Jude," she said in a sweet and imploring voice. "I love you as much as ever! Only—I ought not to love you—any more. Oh I must not any more!"

"I can't own it."

"But I have made up my mind that I am not your wife! I belong to him—I sacramentally joined myself to him for life. Nothing can alter it!"

"But surely we are man and wife, if ever two people were in this world? Nature's own marriage it is, unquestionably!"

"But not Heaven's. Another was made for me there, and ratified eternally in the church at Melchester." (Ibid, p.370)

The above conversation is, no doubt, a vivid sign of the sharp contrast between *Nature's* own marriage and *Heaven's*. Had there been no interference of Heaven—the child-killing massacre, they would have been a right and blissed match. Hence the irony of fate or destiny foreshadows the final staging of the doomed couple: the end of Jude's frustrated and wretched life and the continuation of Sue's unpeaceful, meaningless life. Just as Arabella said, "She may swear that on her knees to the holy cross upon her necklace till she's hoarse, but it won't be true!" "She's never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's as he is now!" (Ibid, p.431)

3. DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE

Monologue serves as a most significant approach to reveal the inner world of a fixed character, which is applied to psychological description and analysis. Both monologue and dialogue are dramatic presentation in the novel. A monologue is extended uninterrupted speech or poem by a person. The person may be speaking with his or her thoughts aloud or directly addressing other people, e.g. an audience, a character, reader or an inanimate object. It is common in dramatic genres (plays, film, animation, etc.) and also found in prose fiction. The term can be applied to poems, which usually take the form of the thoughts or speech of a single individual. In everyday usage, a long speech by a conversation partner can also be called a monologue.

Jude the Obscure is a perfect combination of fiction writing and drama. As it were, the narrator presents Jude from the inside, and in the text monologue is a useful device for Hardy to allow the readers to penetrate into the minds of the male protagonist Jude, thus putting the character of Jude across to the readers clearly. In brief, there exist two main types of monologue to describe the psychological process of Jude: exterior monologue and interior monologue.

First, exterior monologue allows the character to speak his or her thoughts aloud by directly addressing other people. Readers can see into Jude's mind through the monologue he uttered in his thoughts. At the end of Part Second: At Chriminster, an external monologue is used to voice Jude's own speculation on his first frustrated dream:

(12) "Now I know I have been a fool, and that folly is with me," "And I don't regret the collapse of my university hopes one jot. I wouldn't begin again if I were sure to succeed. I don't care for social success any more at all. But I do feel I should like to do some good thing; and I bitterly regret the Church, and the loss of my chance of being her ordained minister." (Ibid, p.128)

With a deep insight into the status quo of Victorian England, Jude sees clearly his humble class status acts as an insurmountable barrier to his university hopes. His mind resumes to peace and another hope burns in his heart alternatively. This time the innocent and naïve Jude aspires to obtain a chance to serve the people religiously with his knowledge and morality. In this case a simple, kind-hearted, innocent and somewhat impracticable young man sinks in to us. We can't resist asking ourselves: "Could he make it this time?"

Second, interior monologue is another technical device in narrative texts which is also called quoted stream of consciousness. It renders a character's innermost thoughts in the present tense, omitting speech markers such as verbs of action and inverted commas. Although the terms are often confused, it can be distinguished from the stream of consciousness by its relatively structured syntax and possibility of the monologist's addressing himself. The device allows a rendition of a character's innermost thoughts and emotions more intimately than traditional forms of narration, since all readers learn what the characters only say to themselves.

Hence, interior monologue is one particular kind of *stream of consciousness* writing which aims to provide a textual equivalent to the imagined stream of consciousness in the mind of a fictional character. Writers wanted to display for readers' inspection, in a way that is impossible in real life, their characters' private inner lives. These were imagined as containing many different kinds of "mind stuff" (as it was called by William James, the psychologist who coined the term "stream of consciousness"): verbalized thoughts, subliminal thoughts, perceptions, images, sensations and so on. Interior monologue, or

quoted stream of consciousness, presents characters' thought streams exclusively in the form of silent inner speech, as a stream of verbalized thoughts. Being thus restricted, interior monologue cannot be said to fully present the stream of a character's consciousness. In fact, every form of stream of consciousness writing implicitly makes a selection from, or focuses mainly upon, some aspects of characters' inner lives and excludes others. Interior monologue represents characters speaking silently to themselves and quotes their inner speech, often without marking this with speech marks. The inner speech is presented in the first person and in the present tense and employs deictic words ("here", "now", "this", and so on) as a way of signaling to the reader that the passage should be interpreted as presenting the character's own present orientation and location, and not that of a narrator.

Interior monologue, as a rule, also attempts to mimic the unstructured free flow of thought, presenting it as shifting abruptly among topics, jumping by association from one thing to another, and proceeding by incomplete sentences. It is this that can give interior monologue its apparently mimetic quality, its vividness and liveliness. Authorial use of interior monologue varies greatly, from many pages of uninterrupted thoughts streams to merely a few words. In most cases, the interior monologue is to be found in the context of third-person narration and dialogue, and these frames provide the reader with additional information about the characters' experience without which an uninterrupted interior monologue would be unintelligible.

Hardy's use of interior monologue is somewhat special in that at times it is in the past tense or even with free indirect speech. The following paragraph is a case in point:

(13) Jude went out, and, feeling more than ever his existence to be an undemanding one.... Growing up brought responsibilities, he found. Events did not rhyme quite as he had thought. Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for. That mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony. As you got older, and felt yourself to be at the centre of your time, and not at a point in its circumference, as you had felt when you were little, you were seized with a sort of shuddering, he perceived. All around you there seemed to be something glaring, garish, rattling, and the noises and glares hit upon the little cell called your life, and shook it, and warped it. If he could only prevent himself growing up! He did not want to be a man. (Ibid, p.13)

This interior monologue gets across to the readers the predicament or dilemma Jude encounters in the course of growing up. It indicates an incompatible conflict between man and nature which is "much grimmer here than in his

earlier novels"; as a child, he already felt the prick of life. "Jude's job is scaring birds in a lonely ploughed field and when he lets himself show sympathy for them the farmer beats him. He has no parents and there are no village traditions to which he can attach himself." (Williams, 2005, p.98) Feeling his existence to be an undemanding one: Beaten by Father Troutham, left out in the cold by her aunt and his neighbors in Marygreen, young Jude gradually bred a pessimistic attitude towards life, even sooner than an adult. This gloomy outlook lays a latent basis for his decision to leave Marygreen and his own class for a more intellectual and more moral life.

Then, Jude has left his own class without joining another, but he is hoping to rise in the world. This is not only ambition, although that has something to do with it; it is much more the yearning for a life which is intellectually and morally better than the one he is expected to lead. Hardy makes it clear that no sensitive person could endure life in Marygreen (Ibid, p.98). Jude's alienation has gone so far that the one light on the bleak horizon appears to be Christminster, the University City based on Oxford, on the extreme border of Hardy's Wessex:

(14) It had been the yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to—for some place which he could call admirable. Should he find that place in this city if he could get there? Would it be a spot in which, without fear of farmers, or hindrance, or ridicule, he could watch and wait, and set himself to some mighty undertaking like the men of old of whom he had heard? As the halo had been to his eyes when gazing at it a quarter of an hour earlier, so was the spot mentally to him as he pursued his dark way. (Ibid, p.21)

"It is a city of light," he said to himself.

"The tree of knowledge grows there," he added a few steps further on.

"It is a place that teachers of men spring from and go to."

"It is what you may call a castle, manned by scholarship and religion."

After this figure he was silent a long while, till he added:

"It would just suit me." (Ibid, p.21)

Here the narrator presents an excellent combination of exterior and interior monologue. The first part with free indirect speech interprets Jude's intellectual or scholarly aspiration. In his heart, religious beliefs (Oxford) are his "intellectual Mecca for which he cherished a lifelong aspiration". From his first sight of it on the horizon to his hearing the sounds of the holiday coming in his window as he lay on his deathbed, Christminster represented to him all that is desired in life. The "city of life" acquires a hold in his life. He believed that it is a place, which well suits him (Zhang, 2002, p.135). Like all true Hardy heroes, Jude wants to find something greater than himself

to which he can give himself totally. Jude belongs to a generation for whom work on the land has become irrelevant; instead he strains himself to the limit in the struggle to be a learned man who can find a home in the Christminster colleges. But the reality of Christminster, as he finds out when he actually gets there, is that of a bigoted, cruel and sordid city. Hence, Jude's monologue displays nothing but "a childlike yearning for the one being in the world to whom it seemed possible to fly—an unreasoning desire—an unreasoning desire...." (Hardy, 1991, p.125)

In addition, the fantasies Jude had when he was so eager for Christminster, and the imagination and association he had when he first came to Christminster in excitement and his wandering among the ancient buildings alone like a dreamer, are the outward presentations of the character's complex and profound inner mental activities.

CONCLUSION

Therefore, epistolary construction enables Hardy to create intimacy between his characters and the readers. With interior monologue and dialogue structuring as technical devices, the narrator displays vividly the characters' mental activities or even the flow of consciousness in their innermost minds as if the readers were standing face to face with them in person, which is, undoubtedly, a forcible approach to psychological description. Thomas Hardy explores a way of conveying a mode of experiencing in narrative discourse, in which the characters' conscious, subconscious and unconscious are fused together, thus truly reflecting the unfathomable human psychology. By noting these vivid descriptions of mental activities it may be concluded that Hardy anticipates the psychological analysis in modernist novelists such as James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence.

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