

# THE CREATOR AND THE CREATED IN VICTORIAN SOCIETY: EXPLORING THE IMPORTANCE OF A PERCEPTION OF MORAL CONSISTENCY BETWEEN THE TWO

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**Abstract:** This is a reflection on connections between a passage taken from the novel, *Jude the Obscure*, by Thomas Hardy (1895),<sup>1</sup> and a section of a stained glass window in the parish church of All Saints, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire, designed by Simeon Solomon (completed in 1865). Contemporary critical opinion on the matter of whether the aesthetic qualities of a created object may be distinguished from the moral position of the creator suggests that the two are inextricably linked. The artefacts examined below address this point from the perspective of both fiction and reality.

Society...practises a social tyranny more formidable than many kinds of political oppression, since...it leaves fewer means of escape, penetrating much more deeply into the details of life, and enslaving the soul itself.<sup>2</sup>

When *Jude the Obscure*, a novel of ‘anti-marriage doctrines’, was published in 1895, controversy and widespread moral outrage<sup>3</sup> swiftly followed: Hardy (then aged 55) was so affected and exasperated by the criticism his latest novel had provoked, that it became his last (though he lived to the age of 87), turning instead to poetry. As John Sutherland writes, ‘After publishing it, [Hardy] seems to have given up fiction as a bad job’.<sup>4</sup>

When the ‘brilliantly precocious’<sup>5</sup> artist, Simeon Solomon (1840-1905), was arrested in February 1873, aged 32, in a London public lavatory, and charged with indecent exposure and attempting to commit sodomy,<sup>6</sup> it led to the immediate demise of his hitherto thriving career, and a rapid slide into relative obscurity. As Colin Cruise writes, ‘disgrace, infamy and poverty replaced respectability, fame and financial security’.<sup>7</sup> Solomon lived during his final years, intermittently, in St Giles’s Workhouse, London, as a ‘broken-down artist’, until he collapsed and died aged 55, reportedly ‘from bronchitis and alcoholism’.<sup>8</sup>

These two instances highlight both the power of public opinion - or ‘society’ - in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, radically to affect a man’s career, and the ‘centrality of religion in Victorian life and thought’:<sup>9</sup> signalling that any apparent attempt to challenge accepted moral boundaries was futile.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2000). (Subsequent references within the text to ‘*Jude*’ are to this edition.)

<sup>2</sup> John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1974), p.63. First published 1859. (Subsequent references to ‘*On Liberty*’ within the text are to this edition.)

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, A. N. Wilson, *The Victorians* (London: Hutchinson, 2002), p.432.

<sup>4</sup> John Sutherland, *The Longman Companion to Victorian Fiction* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2009), p.343.

<sup>5</sup> Christopher Wood, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson Ltd., 1981), p133. (Subsequent references within the text to ‘Wood’ are to this edition.)

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Colin Cruise, *Love Revealed: Simeon Solomon and the Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Merrell Publishers Limited, 2005), p.9. (Subsequent references within the text to ‘Cruise’ are to this edition.)

<sup>7</sup> Cruise, p.9.

<sup>8</sup> Cruise, p.185. ‘May 1905: Solomon collapses in the street in High Holborn and is taken back to St Giles’s Workhouse, suffering (as the coroner’s court was told at the subsequent inquest) ‘from bronchitis and alcoholism’.

<sup>9</sup> Colin Matthew, *The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.196. (Subsequent references within the text to ‘Colin Matthew’ are to this edition.)

Yet what is remarkable and ironic about *Jude* (epitomised in the excerpt in the Appendix to this essay) and the work of Simeon Solomon (exemplified in the East window at All Saints, Middleton Cheney), is that both Jude and Solomon had been tangibly directing their talents to *maintaining* the religious fabric of their times.

The adverse reactions to *Jude* seem driven by a sense that this novel challenged religious, as well as moral, boundaries, which is made clear in the language used by its critics. Harry Thurstan Pick, writing in *The Bookman* (New York) in 1896, describes *Jude* as purveying ‘dirt, drivel and damnation’.<sup>10</sup> As D. H. Lawrence observes (in connection with the characters of Hardy’s novels) ‘if one wrote everything they gave rise to it would fill the Judgment Book’;<sup>11</sup> Walsham How, Bishop of Wakefield, was so appalled by its contents that, according to Hardy, he burned a copy in disgust.<sup>12</sup> Arguably, as Rosemarie Morgan suggests, Hardy’s clear intentions with *Jude* were to be subversive, and ‘less to do with recalling pastoral idylls of the Golden Age than with calling attention to the sexual codes and practices of the Victorian Age’.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps his purpose was less direct than this, being more interested in creating an ‘impression’ than an ‘argument’.<sup>14</sup>

Hardy himself indicates, in his ‘Author’s Preface’, that his book is an attempt to deal ‘with the fret and fever, derision and disaster, that may press in the wake of the strongest passion known to humanity... a deadly war waged with old Apostolic desperation between flesh and spirit’.<sup>15</sup> The author, thereby, deliberately foregrounds the theme of religion as it impacts upon Jude’s deepest sense of self and resulting behaviour, and so, in creating *Jude*, Hardy contributes to a wider understanding of the effect of a fluctuating spirituality and its inextricable links to one’s demonstrable sense of morality. More than this, he highlights the seemingly overwhelming challenge of being accepted by ‘society’ that faced couples in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, seeking to live outside the constraints of legal marriage.<sup>16</sup> Whatever the nature of Hardy’s precise intentions - Ensor describes them as ‘stark pessimism’ - Jude *himself* could be regarded as multi-faceted, and even ‘post-heroic and post-Christian ... a Job figure whose patience and suffering brings no final reward’,<sup>17</sup> conveying the impression that he is somehow caught in an attempt to live a moral life, but in the absence of any benign, divine presence.

The excerpt I have chosen is set in the time when Jude lives with Sue, unmarried to each other and separated from their previous partners, struggling to survive on a paltry income. The passage seems to emphasise Jude’s now curiously humble acceptance of his impoverished situation: ‘We’ll get nice lodgings, wherever we go. I shall be moving about probably – getting a job here and a job there’.<sup>18</sup> Given the passion with which he earlier expressed his ambitions:

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<sup>10</sup> See Introduction to Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (London: Wordsworth Editions Ltd, 2000), p.v. (Subsequent references within the text to ‘*Jude*’ are to this edition.)

<sup>11</sup> Bruce Steele (ed.), *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of D. H. Lawrence: Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), .

<sup>12</sup> See Robert Slack, *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, ‘The Text of Hardy’s “Jude the Obscure”’, 11(4), March 1957, pp.261-275.

<sup>13</sup> Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.110. (Subsequent references within the text to ‘Morgan’ are to this edition.)

<sup>14</sup> This suggestion is made in the Introduction to J. B. Bullen, *Thomas Hardy: The World of His Novels* (London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2013), p.10. (Subsequent references within the text to ‘Bullen’, are to this edition.)

<sup>15</sup> Author’s Preface in *Jude*.

<sup>16</sup> See generally, Ginger S. Frost *Living in Sin: Cohabiting as Husband and Wife in Nineteenth-Century England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

<sup>17</sup> Introduction to *Jude*, p.xvi.

<sup>18</sup> *Jude*, p.263.

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 ... “[Christminster] is a city of light”, he said to himself. ... It is what you may call a castle, manned by scholarship and religion,<sup>19</sup>

the change is striking. And yet it seems clear that his deeply felt connection with religion, or at least the sense of being at ease with it - notwithstanding the unconventionality of his faith - continues, as he readily undertakes a commission to re-letter the Ten Commandments ‘in a little church they’ve been restoring lately in the country near here’.<sup>20</sup>

Simeon Solomon was similarly involved in the restoration of country churches, although his skills were considerably more advanced than those of Jude. Solomon was a leading painter of the Pre-Raphaelite group of artists. Christopher Wood writes that the work of Solomon, with its ‘classical and aesthetic elements, combined with his own personal interest in Jewish history and ritual’ illustrates perfectly how complex Pre-Raphaelitism had become.<sup>21</sup> Cruise notes Solomon’s considerable influence, describing him as ‘central to two thematic strands in nineteenth century British painting: the emergence of Jewish art and the tentative development of an openly ‘gay’ imagery’.<sup>22</sup> Clearly, Solomon was extremely highly-regarded amongst his peers and, despite the unconventionality of his lifestyle in an age in which ‘the containment of sexuality within legal matrimony became the key-stones of social stability and moral progress’<sup>23</sup>(exemplified also by the overriding themes of *Jude*), Solomon enjoyed support and patronage – at least for so long as he remained discreet about his sexuality. However, his career never recovered after his arrest and his swift and ‘tragic’<sup>24</sup> demise in 1873, which is in manifest contrast to the continued enormous popularity of other members of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. And so, in spite of Solomon’s highly significant contribution to the body of Pre-Raphaelite work, he remains, even today, a marginalised figure.

Eight years prior to his arrest, Solomon had been working in a village church near Banbury – All Saints, Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire, which dates back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In 1864-5, major renovation work was being undertaken by the Gothic revivalist, George Gilbert Scott, and various other prominent Pre-Raphaelites were involved, including William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, Ford Madox Brown, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, through the firm Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company.<sup>25</sup> Pevsner writes,

what makes Middleton Cheney a place of unforgettable enjoyment is the stained glass by the William Morris firm. It is so beautiful and so important that it deserves a detailed record. It was put in during the incumbency of W. C. Buckley, a personal friend of Burne-Jones. The E. window was designed in 1864 and fitted in 1865 as a memorial to William Croome, who died that year. In it, below the small figures in the tracery lights, a frieze of the white-robed twelve Tribes of the

<sup>19</sup> *Jude*, p. 19.

<sup>20</sup> *Jude*, p.263.

<sup>21</sup> Wood, p.95.

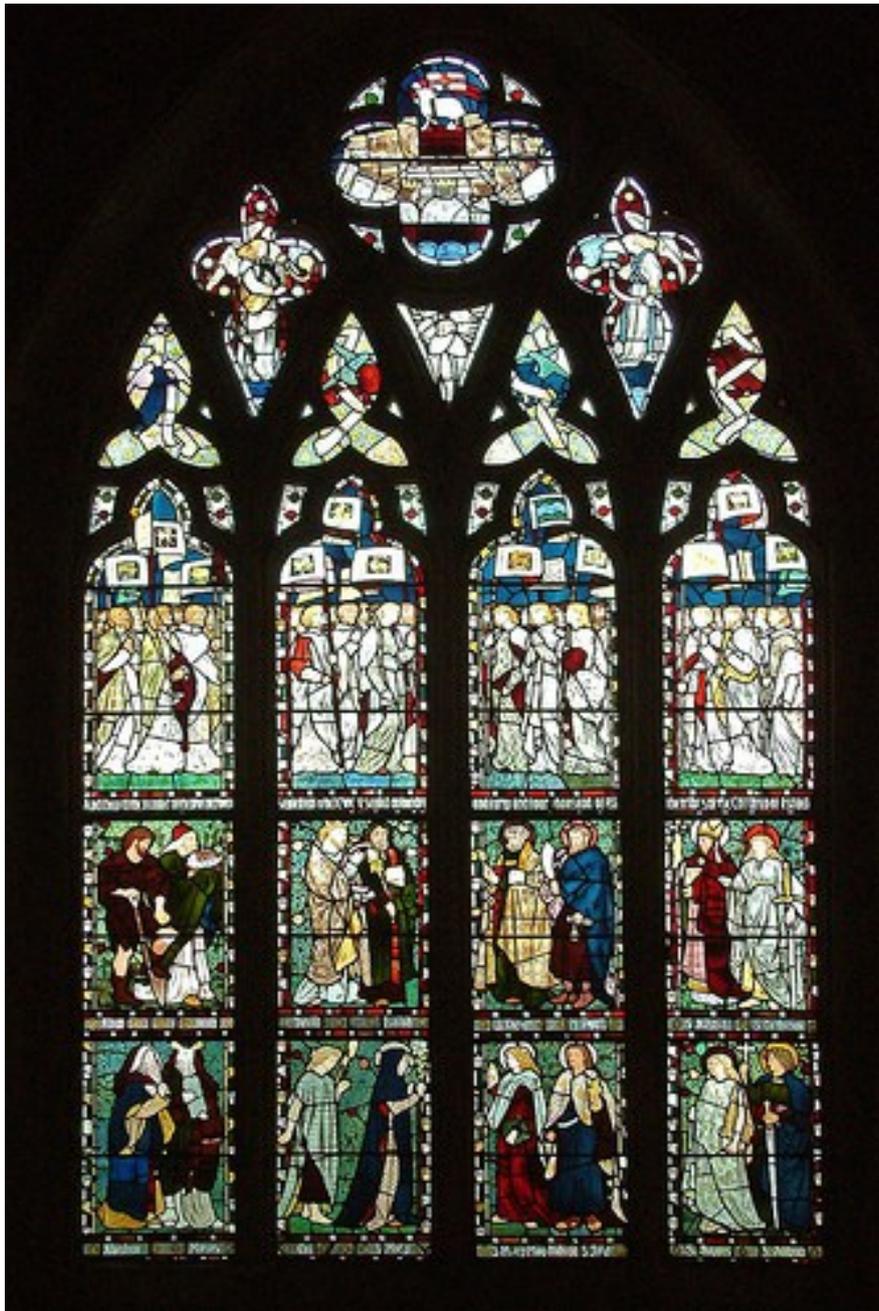
<sup>22</sup> Cruise, p.9.

<sup>23</sup> Colin Matthew, *The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Tragedy is a word which frequently appears in reference to Solomon, see for example, Cruise, p.9.

<sup>25</sup> Founded as Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company in 1861 by the socialist artist and designer **William Morris** along with **Ford Madox Brown**, Dante **Gabriel Rossetti**, Peter Paul Marshall, Philip Webb, Charles James Faulkner, and **Edward Burne-Jones**. The company initially concentrated on ecclesiastical decoration including stained glass, and architectural carving from premises in London’s Red Lion Square, but moved to Queens Square, Bloomsbury in 1865.

Apocalypse and then, again below, Adam, Noah, David, Isaiah, St Peter, St Paul, St Augustine and St Catherine, and below once more, Abraham, Moses, Eve, the Virgin, the Magdalene, St John, St Alban and St Agnes. The Censing Angels, the Seraph, St Peter, St Augustine, St Catherine, Eve, the Virgin, the Magdalene, and St Agnes are by Morris, the four beasts and the twelve banners by Philip Webb, the Adoration of the Lamb and St Alban by Burne-Jones, St Paul and St John by Ford Madox Brown, the twelve Tribes, David, Isaiah, Abraham and Moses by Simeon Solomon.<sup>26</sup>



*The East Window, All Saints, Middleton Cheney.*

Solomon's artistic contribution to Middleton Cheney portrays an image of the twelve tribes of Israel (the traditional divisions of the ancient Jewish people), together with David,

<sup>26</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Northamptonshire* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973), pp.305-6.

Isaiah, Abraham and Moses: each image conveying separate Biblical themes through the numerous symbols used to adorn the stained glass<sup>27</sup> whilst embodying the message of God's everlasting covenant with the nation of Israel.<sup>28</sup> It is surely significant to note that Solomon was involved in the portrayal of these Old Testament figures, rather than those from the New Testament. Brought up in an artistic Jewish family, it seems likely that Solomon was choosing to use his skills to underline his own heritage, notwithstanding that he did so within a Christian place of worship. Solomon's motives are a matter for speculation – perhaps the aesthetic nature of his task was sufficient to divert him from the significance of the precise location; perhaps he was so in awe of Gabriel Rossetti (see below) and his fellow Pre-Raphaelites that he was only too delighted to be involved in any of their projects; or perhaps his agenda was altogether more subversive. Whatever the truth of his position, the stained glass window remains today to form the inspiring backdrop for generations of worshippers as they receive communion.

Jude Fawley, meanwhile, is content to repair the Ten Commandments so that all worshippers may see them more clearly, seemingly without ever questioning whether the words that he is working *physically* to illuminate, he would wish *intellectually* to expound. As he examines the extent of the work required, he perceives that 'a portion, crumbled by damp, required renewal; and when this had been done, and the whole cleansed, he began to renew the lettering'.<sup>29</sup> It is possible to construe in these words an allusion to Jude's own belief – partly crumbling and yet with an underlying basis still intact, in need of spiritual cleansing and renewal, though Jude himself appears to make no conscious connection. However, given the religious themes which firmly underpin the narrative, the heavily symbolic nature of his task for the reader seems indisputable.

Jude's employment as a stone mason, often involved in church business, is initially suggestive of a solid, practical, conventional man, belying his underlying spiritual uncertainty. Ironically, when Jude first meets Sue, she works in a 'church-fitting'<sup>30</sup> shop and paints illumined texts, though her faith is far more volatile than Jude's. Hardy draws attention to the incongruity of the situation in which the two now find themselves, when Sue observes in a moment of rare light-heartedness,

It is droll, [...] that we two, of all people, with our queer history, should happen to be here painting the Ten Commandments! [...] And with her hand over her eyes she laughed [...] till she was quite weak.<sup>31</sup>

But Hardy, perhaps aware of the potentially subversive implications of portraying an apparent atheist ('Cathedral?...I think I'd rather sit in the railway station. That's the centre of town life now. The Cathedral has had its day!'<sup>32</sup>) delighting in her task of restoring such sacred words, quickly diverts his characters from this work, as Jude shortly loses his commission. The illegitimacy of their relationship renders their inclusion in such a project impossible, or at least socially undesirable. Regarded as potentially scandalous, it is feared that 'decent people'<sup>33</sup> would be offended to think of such a couple being so employed. Consequently, just as Jude is unable to complete his task of renewing the lettering, so his own faith continues to crumble. The sub-text

<sup>27</sup> Richard Taylor, *How to Read a Church* (London: Random House, 2003) provides detailed explanations of many of the symbols used in the Middleton Cheney window.

<sup>28</sup> Genesis, chapters 12-17.

<sup>29</sup> *Jude*, At Aldbrickham and elsewhere, ch. 6, p.264.

<sup>30</sup> *Jude*, At Aldbrickham and elsewhere, ch. 6, p.264.

<sup>31</sup> *Jude*, At Aldbrickham and elsewhere, ch. 6, p.267.

<sup>32</sup> *Jude*, At Melchester, ch. 1, p.116.

<sup>33</sup> *Jude*, At Aldbrickham and elsewhere, ch. 6, p.266.

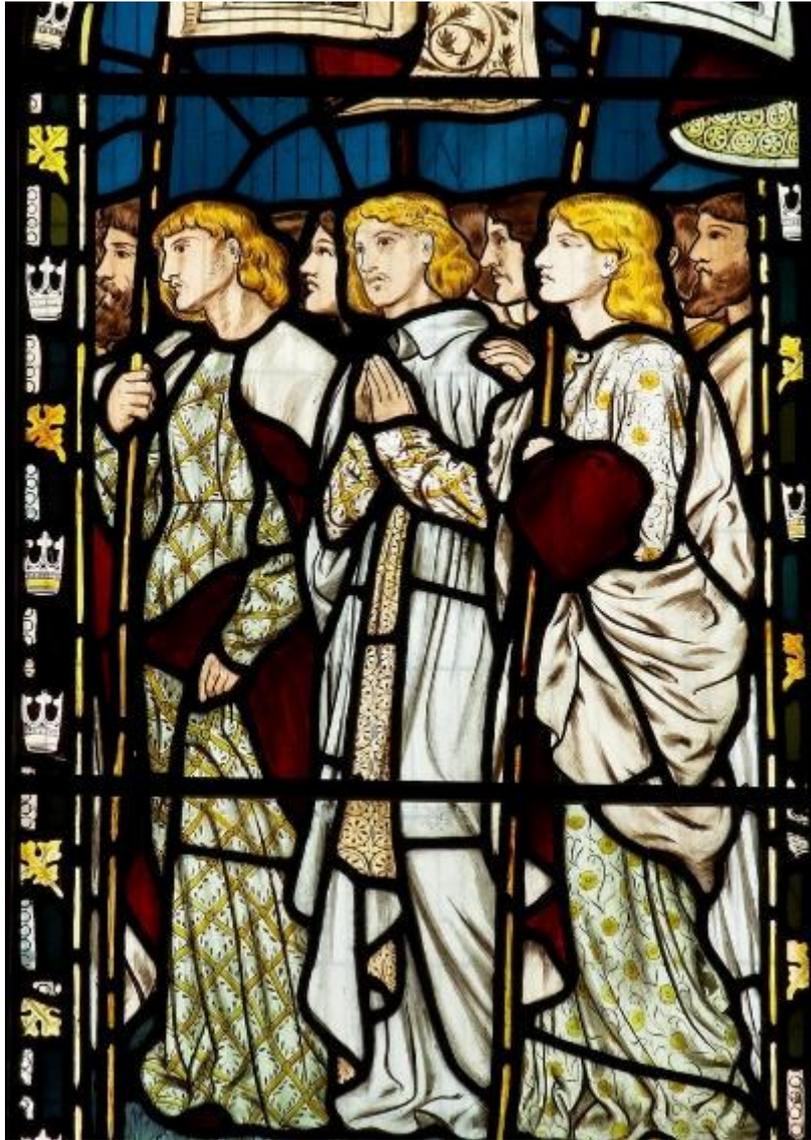
implies that Jude and Sue are living in a time of religious renewal (in very tangible terms - restoring a parish church), and indeed historically the Victorian age was a time of innumerable ecclesiastical renovation projects – but it is a renewal in which they cannot play a part. When the apparent nature of their intimacy is revealed, Jude and Sue are asked to leave, as the contractor says, ‘to avoid all unpleasantness’.<sup>34</sup> Jude’s skills as a craftsman cannot, in Hardy’s portrayal, be severed from his morality: evidently, the *creator* and what he *creates* (or in other words, the craftsman and his craft) are (at least in this fictional narrative), in the mind of Victorian society, intrinsically linked.

Wood argues that Gabriel Rossetti was a corrupting influence on the young Solomon encouraging him to ‘explore the forbidden subjects of homosexuality and lesbianism, both of which feature, more or less overtly, in his work’.<sup>35</sup> Wood draws particular attention to Solomon’s *Sappho and Erinna at Mytelene* (which depicts Sappho embracing her fellow poet Erinna in a garden on the island of Lesbos), which is dated 1864 – notably the same year in which Solomon was designing the stained glass for Middleton Cheney. On close examination of the East window, one of the figures, although apparently masculine, bears striking resemblance to Fanny Cornforth, Rossetti’s mistress at the time. The blurring of boundaries between the genders seems unmistakable, opening to speculation the question of how Solomon may have related to his task on a personal level.

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<sup>34</sup> *Jude*, At Aldbrickham and elsewhere, ch. 6, p.267.

<sup>35</sup> Wood, p.133.



*East window detail, 1865: The Tribes of the Children of Israel, by Simeon Solomon. The blond figure on the furthest right appears feminised.*

There is a further significant link between the fictional narrative of *Jude* and the reality of Gilbert Scott's architectural projects. George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) was prolific in his architectural career, producing many iconic buildings such as the Midland Grand Hotel at St Pancras station, in addition to his work on countless village churches, including Middleton Cheney. He also undertook significant work on buildings in Oxford. The ecclesiastical architecture of Hardy's 'Christminster', widely accepted to be Oxford<sup>36</sup> is frequently referred to within the novel as having a profound effect on Jude: 'ever since his first...vision of Christminster...Jude had meditated much'<sup>37</sup>. Gilbert Scott's projects in Oxford include the Martyrs' Memorial (the very first place where Jude and Sue arrange to meet is 'at the cross in the pavement which marked the spot of the Martyrdoms'<sup>38</sup> and Gilbert Scott was commissioned to build 'the memorial proper around the corner in St Giles'<sup>39</sup>), the Radcliffe Infirmary, Exeter

<sup>36</sup> See generally Bullen, chapter 6.

<sup>37</sup> *Jude*, At Marygreen, ch. 4, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> *Jude*, At Christminster, ch. 4, p. 85.

<sup>39</sup> Bullen, p.192.

College Chapel and Christ Church. Hardy must surely have expected Jude to have seen the architectural work of George Gilbert Scott amongst the many buildings which so inspired him even from boyhood, 'Whenever he could get away from the confines of the hamlet for an hour or two...he would steal off to...the hill and strain his eyes persistently; sometimes to be rewarded by the sight of a dome or spire, at other times by a little smoke, which in his estimate had some of the mysticism of incense'.<sup>40</sup> As Bullen writes, Christminster for Jude 'persists as an illusive alternative to the prosaic utilitarianism of daily life'.<sup>41</sup> Perhaps Solomon too was pursuing such an 'illusive alternative' when engaged with his work at Middleton Cheney.

John Stuart Mill championed freedom for the individual, objecting to what he called the 'tyranny of the majority'<sup>42</sup> and, as Bullen argues, throughout his life he 'strongly supported the idea that men and women should exercise rational control over their lives'.<sup>43</sup> Arguably, both Jude Fawley and Simeon Solomon, despite their considerable respective talents and intellect are unable to exercise this 'rational control', highlighting the seemingly insurmountable challenge facing each of them in attempting to bridge the gap between the created object and its creator. Certainly, both Jude and Solomon are ultimately thwarted from pursuing their aesthetic ideals, by the pressures of the society in which they exist, because of the manner in which they lead their personal lives. Hardy wrote that the 'grimy' fictional features of [*Jude*] 'go to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, & the squalid life he was fated to lead'.<sup>44</sup> The reality of Solomon's arrest does the same.

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<sup>40</sup> *Jude*, At Marygreen, ch. 3, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Bullen, p.187.

<sup>42</sup> John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 63.

<sup>43</sup> Bullen, p.190.

<sup>44</sup> Bullen, p.204.

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## APPENDIX

### EXCERPT FROM *JUDE THE OBSCURE*, PART V, CHAPTER VI

There was a knock at the door, and Jude answered it. Sue could hear the conversation:

"Is Mr. Fawley at home? ... Biles and Willis the building contractors sent me to know if you'll undertake the relettering of the Ten Commandments in a little church they've been restoring lately in the country near here."

Jude reflected, and said he could undertake it.

"It is not a very artistic job," continued the messenger. "The clergyman is a very old-fashioned chap, and he has refused to let anything more be done to the church than cleaning and repairing."

"Excellent old man!" said Sue to herself, who was sentimentally opposed to the horrors of over-restoration.

"The Ten Commandments are fixed to the east end," the messenger went on, "and they want doing up with the rest of the wall there, since he won't have them carted off as old materials belonging to the contractor, in the usual way of the trade."

A bargain as to terms was struck, and Jude came indoors. "There, you see," he said cheerfully. "One more job yet, at any rate, and you can help in it - at least you can try. We shall have all the church to ourselves, as the rest of the work is finished."

Next day Jude went out to the church, which was only two miles off. He found that what the contractor's clerk had said was true. The tables of the Jewish law towered sternly over the utensils of Christian grace, as the chief ornament of the chancel end, in the fine dry style of the last century. And as their framework was

constructed of ornamental plaster they could not be taken down for repair. A portion, crumbled by damp, required renewal; and when this had been done, and the whole cleansed, he began to renew the lettering. On the second morning Sue came to see what assistance she could render, and also because they liked to be together.

The silence and emptiness of the building gave her confidence, and, standing on a safe low platform erected by Jude, which she was nevertheless timid at mounting, she began painting in the letters of the first Table while he set about mending a portion of the second. She was quite pleased at her powers; she had acquired them in the days she painted illumined texts for the church-fitting shop at Christminster. Nobody seemed likely to disturb them; and the pleasant twitter of birds, and rustle of October leafage, came in through an open window, and mingled with their talk.

They were not, however, to be left thus snug and peaceful for long. About half-past twelve there came footsteps on the gravel without. The old vicar and his churchwarden entered, and, coming up to see what was being done, seemed surprised to discover that a young woman was assisting. They passed on into an aisle, at which time the door again opened, and another figure entered - a small one, that of little Time, who was crying. Sue had told him where he might find her between school-hours, if he wished. She came down from her perch, and said, "What's the matter, my dear?"

"I couldn't stay to eat my dinner in school, because they said - " He described how some boys had taunted him about his nominal mother, and Sue, grieved, expressed her indignation to Jude aloft. The child went into the churchyard, and Sue returned to her work. Meanwhile the door had opened again, and there shuffled in with a business-like air the white-aproned woman who cleaned the church. Sue recognized her as one who had friends in Spring Street, whom she visited. The church-cleaner looked at Sue, gaped, and lifted her hands; she had evidently recognised Jude's companion as the latter had recognized her. Next came two ladies, and after talking to the charwoman they also moved forward, and as Sue stood reaching upward, watched her hand tracing the letters, and critically regarded her person in relief against the white wall, till she grew so nervous that she trembled visibly.

They went back to where the others were standing, talking in undertones: and one said - Sue could not hear which - "She's his wife, I suppose?"

"Some say Yes: some say No," was the reply from the charwoman.

"Not? Then she ought to be, or somebody's - that's very clear!"

"They've only been married a very few weeks, whether or no."

"A strange pair to be painting the Two Tables! I wonder Biles and Willis could think of such a thing as hiring those!"

The churchwarden supposed that Biles and Willis knew of nothing wrong, and then the other, who had been talking to the old woman, explained what she meant by calling them strange people.

The probable drift of the subdued conversation which followed was made plain by the churchwarden breaking into an anecdote, in a voice that everybody in the church could hear, though obviously suggested by the present situation:

"Well, now, it is a curious thing, but my grandfather told me a strange tale of a most immoral case that happened at the painting of the Commandments in a church out by Gaymead - which is quite within a walk of this one. In them days Commandments were mostly done in gilt letters on a black ground, and that's how they were out where I say, before the owld church was rebuildd. It must have been somewhere about a hundred years ago that them Commandments wanted doing up just as ours do here, and they had to get men from Aldbrickham to do 'em. Now they wished to get the job finished by a particular Sunday, so the men had to work late Saturday night, against their will, for overtime was not paid then as 'tis now. There was no true religion in the country at that date, neither among pa'sons, clerks, nor people, and to keep the men up to their work the vicar had to let 'em have plenty of drink during the afternoon. As evening drawed on they sent for some more themselves; rum, by all account. It got later and later, and they got more and more fuddled, till at last they went a putting their rum-bottle and rummers upon the Communion table, and drawed up a trestle or two, and sate round comfortable and poured out again right hearty bumpers. No sooner had they tossed off their glasses than, so the story goes they fell down senseless, one and all. How long they bode so they didn't know, but when they came to themselves there was a terrible thunderstorm a-raging, and they seemed to see in the gloom a dark figure with very thin legs and a curious voot, a-standing on the ladder, and finishing their work. When it got daylight they could see that the work was really finished, and couldn't at all mind finishing it themselves. They went home, and the next thing they heard was that a great scandal had been caused in the church that Sunday morning, for when the people came and service began, all saw that the Ten Commandments wez painted with the 'Nots' left out. Decent people wouldn't attend service there for a long time, and the Bishop had to be sent for to re-consecrate the church. That's the tradition as I used to hear it as a child. You must take it for what it is wo'th, but this case today has reminded me o't, as I say."

The visitors gave one more glance, as if to see whether Jude and Sue had left the Nots out likewise, and then severally left the church, even the old woman at last. Sue and Jude, who had not stopped working, sent back the child to school, and remained without speaking; till, looking at her narrowly, he found she had been crying silently.

"Never mind, comrade!" he said. "I know what it is!"

"I can't *bear* that they, and everybody, should think people wicked because they may have chosen to live their own way! It is really these opinions that make the best intentioned people reckless, and actually become immoral!"

"Never be cast down! It was only a funny story."

"Ah, but we suggested it! I am afraid I have done you mischief, Jude, instead of helping you by coming!"

To have suggested such a story was certainly not very exhilarating, in a serious view of their position. However, in a few minutes Sue seemed to see that their position this morning had a ludicrous side, and wiping her eyes she laughed.

"It is droll, after all," she said, "that we two, of all people, with our queer history, should happen to be here painting the Ten Commandments! You a reprobate, and I - in my condition... Oh dear!" ... And with her hand over her eyes she laughed again silently and intermittently, till she was quite weak.

"That's better," said Jude gaily. "Now we are right again, aren't we, little girl!"

"Oh, but it is serious, all the same!" she sighed as she took up the brush and righted herself. "But do you see they don't think we are married? They *won't* believe it! It is extraordinary!"

"I don't care whether they think so or not," said Jude. "I shan't take any more trouble to make them."

They sat down to lunch - which they had brought with them not to hinder time - and having eaten it were about to set to work anew when a man entered the church, and Jude recognised in him the contractor Willis. He beckoned to Jude, and spoke to him apart.

"Here - I've just had a complaint about this," he said, with rather breathless awkwardness. "I don't wish to go into the matter - as of course I didn't know what was going on - but I am afraid I must ask you and her to leave off, and let somebody else finish this! It is best, to avoid all unpleasantness. I'll pay you for the week, all the same."

Jude was too independent to make any fuss; and the contractor paid him, and left. Jude picked up his tools, and Sue cleansed her brush. Then their eyes met.

"How could we be so simple as to suppose we might do this!" said she, dropping to her tragic note. "Of course we ought not - I ought not - to have come!"

"I had no idea that anybody was going to intrude into such a lonely place and see us!" Jude returned. "Well, it can't be helped, dear; and of course I wouldn't wish to injure Willis's trade-connection by staying." They sat down passively for a few minutes, proceeded out of the church, and overtaking the boy pursued their thoughtful way to Aldbrickham.