

**Far from the Madding Crowd**  
**HARDY'S VISION**

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*Useful for B.A. Part II English (Hons.) students  
Paper- IV*

Thomas Hardy lived in an age of transition when the industrial revolution was replacing the agricultural life in a newly emerging socio-economic order. And as the rural population was shifting from villages to towns, values were also changing. The old rural customs and traditions that had meant stability and security for the people were disintegrating. England was tasting the "ache of modernism".

Hardy's vision could not escape this 'ache'.

By his own submission Hardy was a 'meliorist'. His view of life fluctuates between fatalism and determinism.

Fatalism acknowledges that all action is controlled by Fate: an impersonal primitive force, absolutely independent of human will.

Determinism ascertains that human will is not free and human beings, in whatever way they try, have no control over their fate. Influenced by the ideas of Darwin, Hardy's works show that human life is shaped by chance and not by the designs of God.

Far from the Madding Crowd is the earliest novel of Hardy that shows human world in close communion with Nature and the animal world. But Hardy does not always draw a benevolent loving Nature. Instead, there are many realistic details of actual rural life where storms threaten, sheep die and misfortune haunts the pastoral life. Nature here is not merely a background co-ordinating the lives of the characters; it works as a force vast and indifferent to man's plans or action. The central characters Bathsheba and Gabriel Oak could survive only because they somehow succeeded in adjusting themselves to the laws of nature.

From the very early years, Hardy's fiction came to reveal man's constant struggle to survive in an uncontrollable scheme of Universe as an odd battle: and this often makes his vision dark and pessimistic.

# Thankyou