A textual study of Thomas Hardy's Life's Little Ironies (Part II)

Fouzia Rhissassi

How to cite this article: Rhissassi, Fouzia (1982). A textual study of Thomas Hardy's Life's Little Ironies (Part II). *Langues et Littératures*, 2, 141-157.
A TRAGEDY OF TWO AMBITIONS

The MS. of A Tragedy of Two Ambitious consists of 36 pages. In the upper left-hand corner of the first page the name of the magazine in which the story appeared is written: The Universal Review. This indicates that the story was sent to H. Quilter, by request, for publication in his magazine (Ey, 279). The original title of the story was «The shame of the Halboroughs», which is scratched out and replaced by «A Tragedy of Two Ambitions». The handwriting is neat and all the words are legible with the exception of three words: it is impossible to read under the crossing out, the version that Hardy has altered. The MS., which undoubtedly represents the original draft, is altered in many places by the crossing out of words and substitution of others, by fairly extensive rewriting and by changes consequent on such rewriting. There are several interlinear additions. However, there is no modification of the dialogue which proceeds with a great air of spontaneity.

As to changes in characterization. Hardy did not alter his conception of the protagonists. However, there are instances where certain additions and substituted modifiers contribute to a change in emphasis on the characters' traits.

There is one major change which affects the development of the plot: it involves the death of the Halboroughs' mother. The MS. shows that the author had second thoughts about the cause of her death, Mrs Halborough amassed a sum of seven hundred pounds with great exertion and self denial; and she intended with the «hoard» to indulge in the dearest wish
of her heart — that of sending her two sons to one of the universities. «But
she had died a year or two before his time, killed by the damp of the
millstream» (p. 3). Hardy crossed out the last sentence and wrote instead
«But she had died a year or two before this time, worn out by too keen a
strain toward these ends». One can account for the change in the
circumstances of the mother’s death by several reasons. It enables the
author to concentrate only on that portion of her life which is directly
related to the main situation. Hardy must have realized that the detail
about the mill — stream was wholly gratuitous information. Moreover, the
story centrally deals with «ambition» and to have such an incident only
destroys its unity of impression. There is no «room» in the story for what
happens to the mother in relation to other surroundings or for any thread
that is not definitely wanted for the pattern. The superiority of the revised
sentence can only be seen if we examine the opening of the story.

It begins with the sound of children playing outside. Immediately there
follows the sentence: «They were sitting in the bedroom... engaged... in the
reading of Greek and Latin». We realize that they stand in contrast with the
happy village children. A third person is introduced. She asked them to
came out and play with her. Then a man approached from the corner
reeling as he came. All the characters of the story are set before us in less
than a page and a half. No names are yet given — we soon hear the
characters speaking: the two brothers and their sister:

- «Did Rosa see him?»
- «No.»
- «Nor anybody.»
- «No.»
- «What have you done with him.»
- «He is in the straw-shed.»

This piece of dialogue is unsupported by any comment. One thing is
clear: the two brothers want to put their father into quarantine in their
sister’s interest as well as their own. A fourth character is introduced when
one brother exclaims: «How well she had estimated the sum necessary.»
At this point Hardy intervenes to say that the sum of money was left by the
mother for the university education of her sons. «But she had died... worn
out by too keen a strain towards these ends». Thus Hardy slips from one
character to another: while all the time holding one main direction Mrs
Halborough’s ambition for her son is heightened and hardened: the change
also serves to strengthen the brothers’ ambition for their sister. This
mobility as to detail combined with the unswerving general direction is a
great technical achievement.
The change in the cause of the mother’s death also creates a decidedly ironical situation: the action she undertook had opposite consequences to those she intended.

We may recall here that Mr Halborough fell into a stream and was carried under a culvert at the end of the story. Therefore, the change proves that one of the important things the author knew when he started to write the story is how it will end. This seems to indicate that Hardy did not compose without a written sketch or guide. Moreover, it shows that Hardy’s plan was a general one, not very detailed and not very effective in resolving the minor problems of the tale or in handling the less important turns of the intrigue. One notices that his working plot for A Tragedy of Two Ambitions omits details concerning Mrs Halborough’s death which he may have thought unnecessary or which may not have occurred to him until the actual writing.

Several changes in individual words and sentences occur in the MS. Of these word substitutions there are 59. It seems superfluous to quote all the page references, and impossible to give examples of more than a few of the most interesting. On every page there are such emendations as the following: «place» — «spot» > «village» (p. 7); «cognizant» > «conscious» (p. 11); «staring» > «inerradicable» (p. 11); «to give up» > «to relinquish» (p. 13); «they wanted» > «they were in want of» (p. 12); «temper» > «self command»; «life» > «existence» (p. 29). They all reveal Hardy’s search for the mot juste. Other changes show that he often replaced a vague word with a specific one: «We did meet one of that stamp» becomes «we did meet one unsteady in his gait» (p. 26). «the object of their request» is replaced by «the subject of their worry» (p. 26); «she intended with it» becomes «she intended with the hoard» (p. 3); «place» is deleted and replaced by «Narrobourne». Here Hardy is in search of a more exactly descriptive word. The essential quality of other substitutions is also precision. However, this precision is not intellectual, not a precision of definition but of emotional suggestion. The following examples illustrate this process. I place in brackets the deleted words:

«I fancy I hear him coming» he murmured [glancing at the window with misgivings] his eyes on the window (p. 1).

None knew of the fevered [ambition in two lads’ breasts within quiet moss covered... ] youthful ambitions that throbed in two breasts within the quiet creeper-covered walks of the millwright (p. 4).

By degrees the [screened] haunting trouble loomed again (p. 9).

The living [warmth foresook Joshua’s face] pulses on Joshua’s face (p. 9).
... and blast their sister's prospects... of the auspicious marriage which was just then [looming so near] hanging in the balance (p. 25).

If we take the first example, we see that «his eyes on the window» enabled Hardy to suggest the effect of the father's distant footsteps upon Joshua without making any direct statement about his emotions, and for that matter without using an emotional vocabulary. Thus «his eyes on the window», a detail convincingly specific in itself translates readily into a state of mind. The deletion of the comment «with misgivings» shows Hardy's practice of selecting a characteristic detail accompanying speech instead of interpreting by generality.

In the second example what we should note is the effect obtained from the modification of the sentence. While the two versions have the same meanings, the revised sentence conveys it more forcefully. Notice the way Hardy muffles the incidental sound effects in order to prepare for the «throbbing» of the Halboroughs' ambition. By placing the verb in a peak position in the sentence, he effectively throws into relief both the characters' aspirations and their feelings. Moreover, the verb co-operates and intensifies the feeling Hardy is trying to produce. The author replaces a word by one which carries the right degree of emotion and emphasis. We do feel as we read the MS. that Hardy's first choices were made spontaneously and at the first attempts whereas his second ones were conscious and deliberate.

Another group of substitutions shows Hardy's effort to replace a pompous word by a simple one: «He talked with the air of a mentor to Rosa» becomes «He talked with the air of a ruler in the land» (p. 19): «to renovate their attire is replaced by «to change their clothes» (p. 31).

The MS. presents a change which caught my curiosity and which is perhaps worth commenting upon. The change occurs in the description of Rosa's first visit to the Fellmers:

«A more unexpected king of a person for a curate's sister was never presented at a dinner. The surprise of Mrs Fellmer was un concealed. She had looked forward to a Dorcas, Rhoda or Tryphena... and a shade of misgiving crossed her face (p. 18).»

Hardy crossed out «Tryphena» and wrote instead «Martha». His relations with Tryphena Sparks deserve but a brief mention here. Hardy did not want to refer to his relationship (until recently quite unknown) with a woman he met when she was a young girl and he a young man of twenty-seven. They were engaged for five years; she bore him the only child he ever had; but they parted bitterly and he remembered her for the rest of his life. Louis Deacon assumes that Hardy created many of the women in his novels.
in Tryphena's image and that the most exact portrait of her is in **Jude the Obscure**, «Where incidents in the life of Sue Bridehead correspond closely with what we know of the girl»

Hardy never mentioned Tryphena’s name in his works. In the poems she is named only once, and then obscurely, in «Thoughts of Phena». He mentioned her name for the first time in the MS. under discussion; and the fact that he crossed it out gives rise at least to a presumption that he was uneasy about the relationship. I personally cannot think of any other reason for the change especially since Dorcas, Rhoda, Tryphena and Martha are all biblical names which are suitable for Hardy’s purpose.

The technique of substitution is not limited to changes of a single word or phrase. Hardy often reworks a long passage, carefully altering his diction to achieve a special effect. The deleted words are placed in brackets in the following examples.

«He's in the straw-shed. I got him with some trouble, and he has fallen asleep. I thought this would be the explanation of his absence! No stones dressed for [Dairy-man] Miller Kench, [the bakers out at Anglebury waiting for their flour] the great wheel of the sawmills waiting for new float-boards, even the poor folk [wanting their leaze-corn ground] not able to get their waggons wheeled (p. 1).»

«Already he found a difficulty in meeting his [liabilities and appeared in the markets only at uncertain intervals] men at weeks' ends and though they had been reduced in number there was barely enough work for those who remained (p. 4).»

The revised sentences have a different cast and an entirely different implication. Most of the changes introduced have more than a purely stylistic purpose; the result is that we have a far clearer idea than in the original sentences of the <<tragedy>> of the Halboroughs’ ambition. We realize how the father’s drinking habits have interfered with his business; the former thriving master-machinist is on the verge of bankruptcy and with the loss of his money goes all opportunity and hope of a university education for his sons.

Unlike the MS. previously discussed the MS. of **A Tragedy of Two Ambitions** does not present any important deletion of sentences or whole passages or scrambling of inappropriate matter. However, Hardy reorgan-

---

(1) Louis Deacon, p. 22.
(2) It is perhaps in the light of what I have said about Hardy's relations with Tryphena that we can read the diary entry made by Hardy in 1927: «continue to examine and destroy useless old MSS, entries in Notebooks and marks in printed books». **Hardy's Notebooks**, p. 117.
zed a considerable number of passages. Such rearrangements sometimes involved moving large portions of the text to more appropriate places in the narrative. This seems to support my view that he did not at once set down the story complete; that he only had what may be called a «skeleton» or working plot, and that all the artistic touches that make the story were part of the treatment, not of the plot. The rearrangement of these passages proves that the author knew that the technique of the short story requires the utmost care; it lacks the bulk of the novel which hides minor defects. It has a definite form which must be compact and which must have its parts properly proportioned and related.

«A Tragedy of Two Ambitions» appeared in The Universal Review, December 1888. Once more Hardy revised his MS. for the serial and again for the Wessex edition of 1912; in a letter to Mrs Florence Henniker Hardy writes:

«I could not take the «Desire» in hand till today, having been hunting up the tales I told you of («Two Ambitions» being one of them). They are now fastened together to be dispatched to the publisher.»

The differences between the three versions, though not trivial, are minor. The revisions between the MS. and the serial range from changes of single words to the recasting of entire sentences; and the fact that in many instances the wording is identical in both the MS. and the serial, but different in the Macmillan edition, indicates that the changes are final revisions made by Hardy while preparing for the definitive text. It is evident from the examination of the texts that he made no drastic changes in plot, characterization or theme; the revisions are mainly stylistic, with the exception of the re-writing of the conclusion for the edition of 1912 and the addition of a paragraph.

The move from the general to the specific is evident in some of the changes. In the MS. Joshua has «limited views of humanitarianism» (p. 4); and in the serial he has «limited human sympathies». The change reveals Hardy's distrust of an abstract word such as «humanitarianism». «His limited human sympathies» is a clear expression which points straight at its object. Other substitutions are admittedly insignificant; «moment» becomes «evening»; «heading» is replaced by «report».

Some words and phrases which appear in both the MS. and the magazine are changed for the Macmillan edition. I place in brackets the words common to both the MS. and the magazine in the following examples:

(3) E. Hardy and Pinion, One Rare Fair Woman, (Macmillan, 1972) p. 30.
«His father and his wife were shipped off to Canada where they were not likely to [do much harm to] to interfere greatly with his interests.»

«Joshua had for many years heard whispers that his father had [deceived] cajoled his mother.»

«The miller pushed up the bottom of the [bottle] wessel... »

«These, [the two souls] only two great ones of Narrobourne.»

«... They could hear [feeble] gurgling words: help — I'm drowned! Rosie! [It was thus that the discovery came] The discovery was made.»

The common element in the changes made is that the new word provides a sharper light of precision than the original one.

Occasionally the wording in the three versions differs. Joshua was told that his father would call on him. We read in the MS. that «the gloom of the idea spoiled his buoyancy... » (p. 10); in the magazine: «their conversation spoiled his buoyancy»; in the volume: «the theme of their conversation... » (p. 84). The treatment of the father's «disorderly conduct» is handled differently in the three versions. Both Joshua and Cornelius read in the newspaper that their father had been sent to prison for seven days for breaking windows. In the MS. Hardy writes that «the only good fortune attending the untoward incident was that «in so far as it appeared the millwright had withheld his name» (p. 23). In the magazine he revised it as follows: «But the only good fortune... was that the millright's name had been printed as Joshua Albury». In the definitive text «Joshua Albury» is replaced by Joshua Alborough. These are very slight; they do not in the least affect the style or the action. But they are perhaps all the more significant because Hardy took the pains to make alterations so minute for the sake of plausibility.

Another change of particular interest involves an addition of a passage in the Macmillan edition. Hardy expanded the description of the brothers' embarrassment when their father appeared at the theological college with a «step mother». The added passage is put in brackets. Joshua tells his brother:

«To succeed in the Church, people must believe in you first of all, as a gentleman, [secondly as a man of means, thirdly as a scholar, fourthly as a preacher, fifthly perhaps as a christian—but always first as a gentleman with all their heart and soul and strength» (p. 87).

The addition reflects Hardy's general indictments of the motives that attract the two brothers to the church; his attack on pretence and artificiality in religion is very clear. What is only hinted at in both the MS.
and the magazine is made explicit in the definitive text: that is, Joshua's religious hypocrisy. Moreover, the presence of the added sentences prepares for what is to come, the Halborough's fatal hesitation to save their father's life. The added piece of dialogue gives us more insight into Joshua's inner state, and considerably more information concerning the nature of his ambition. Notice that Hardy did not insert any statement about Joshua's personality. Joshua lives and breathes, and his very words reveal his character.

The final change takes place in the conclusion. As the conclusions are different, the final paragraphs are given in their entirety. Both Joshua and Cornelius were present for the christening of Rosa's son: and «among all the people who assembled on that day [they] were the least interested». Their minds were haunted by a spirit in kerseymere and in the evening they walked to the weir where their father had slipped. The following conversation between the two brothers follows:

From the MS.

«I often feel that I should like to put an end to trouble here in this self-same spot», said Cornelius.
«I have thought of it myself», said Joshua.
«Perhaps we shall some day», murmured his brother.
«Perhaps» said Joshua moodily, as they turned away.
With that contingency to consider in the silence of their steps homewards (p. 36).

From the serial:

«I see him every night,» Cornelius murmured. «Ah, we read our Hebrews to little account, Jos!»
«To have endured the cross, despising the shame — there lay greatness! But now I often feel that I should like to put an end to trouble here in this self-same spot.»
«I have thought of it myself», said Joshua... with that contingency
... they bent their steps homewards. (pp. 559-60).

From the volume:

«Why see — it was there I hid his walking stick!» said Joshua, looking towards the sedge. The next moment, during a passing breeze, something flashed white on the spot to which the attention of Cornelius was drawn. From the sedge rose a straight little silver poplar, and it was the leaves of this sapling which caused the flicker of whiteness.
«His walking stick has grown!» Joshua added.
«It was a rough one — cut from the hedge, I remember.»
At every puff of wind the tree turned white, till they could not bear to look at it; and they walked away.
«I see him every night,» Cornelius murmured...
Ah, we read our Hebrews to little account, Jos!
To have endured the cross... there lay greatness
... with that contingency, they bent their steps homewards. (p. 105)»

The changes between the three versions bring home the idea that Hardy with his artistic conscience shares the passion of any honest craftsman who will not rest until a piece of work is as good as he can make it. We notice that each change takes the form of an addition which consists of totally new material which was not in the MS. I have pointed out earlier that Hardy’s revision of his stories is not only a means of polishing, but also of compressing. He read his final draft and considered faithfully every paragraph, sentence and word, blacking out where requisite, and the more he read it, the more he found out that it would bear additional shortenings. Thus concision was Hardy’s virtue, and he undoubtedly knew it; but in his revision of A Tragedy of Two Ambitions he did not confuse it with laconicism. The conclusion present in the MS — and more particularly that of the magazine focuses our attention on the brother’s feeling of shame with associated feelings of guilt — emotions that have to do with the protagonists’ perception of their letting their father drown as discrepant from the right action required by the situation. After seeing the story in print in the Magazine, Hardy decided, and quite correctly that such an ending robbed the story of one of its primary effects by transferring the reader’s attention from the father to the cold realization in the nature of a vicious act which paralyses the two brothers and immediately submerges them in overwhelming remorse. Realizing the inadequacy of this treatment, Hardy expanded the conclusion by adding the incident of the «blooming stick». It is, above all, in the final stage of revision that the author’s conscious and critical reason played its most dominant part. It is necessary to examine the image of the stick in the context of the whole story since it is a part of a large structure of images.

Four closely linked aspects of the story must be briefly examined in order to grasp the superiority of the third version as a conclusion to the story: contrasts of light and dark, the repetition in an incremental pattern, symbol and irony.

The pattern of light and dark first appears as the millwright reels home drunk: «the dog day sun in its decline reached the low ceiling... and the shadows of the great goat’s willow swayed and intercharged upon the walls
like a spectral army manoeuvring» (p. 77). The shadow is briefly pierced by the light — hearted call of the sister; immediately followed by «a dull noise of heavy footsteps at the side of the house». This alternation of light and dark, bright sun and dark cloud, against an ever present grey, continues throughout the story, the sunny Rosa, the dark cloud of the father, and the grey (shading into black) of the brothers cut a vivid etching. In Part II, also an ominous shadow falls on the scene: «It was afternoon. All was as still in the Close as a cathedral — green can be between the Sunday services, and the incessant cawing of the rooks was the only sound» (p. 84). A few sentences later the boys’ father arrives with his gaudy new gipsy wife. In Part III the father appears at a critical point like a «cloud no bigger than a man’s hand» (p. 92). In Part IV Halborough’s stick appears for the first time: «The millwright moved on, waving his stick triumphantly, and the two brothers stood still’ (p. 99). They could see his «drab» figure stalking along the path; then «the staggering whitey-brown form» disappeared beside a weir. Evident throughout the story is Hardy’s awareness of the psychological implication of colour; the frequent appearance of the white and whitey — brown form is very effective in revealing the father’s character; it also intensifies the reader’s perception of him. Owing to the addition of the passage quoted above the father is ironically converted from a dark to a flowering white walking stick. To Hardy, Halborough was not a malefactor punished by a super refinement of poetic justice; he did not want his character to be misread. Hardy preferred not to leave the matter to chance and the acuteness of the reader; should he inadvertently miss the direction; the image points out the proper bearing. Moreover, the image of the walking «blooming stick» is a typical Hardyan touch — the dead man’s rough walking stick has taken root among the sedge and become a tiny sapling with grey silvery leaves. Thus the author’s perception of life’s devastating irony: «Fate» marks the place of death with a symbol of life.

However, the father is not a mechanical Nemesis. Each appearance is incremental. In Part I it merely arouses the boys’ concern for Rosa and their anger against the squanderer of the material legacy. His appearance in Part II is more critical, for Cornelius is a teacher, Joshua a theological student and Rosa has attended a «high class school» and is receiving a higher social polish in Brussels. The millwright has married a «gipsy woman». Christian gentlemen cannot afford this terrible vagabondage and the disreputable connection was shipped off to Canada. The threatened return of the father later comes at an even more critical time. Joshua is a successful curate, Cornelius is a theological student and Rosa has a successful début at the Manor house. The father’s return in Part IV is still more threatening, he has served a prison term and Rosa is at the moment accepting Fellmer’s
proposal. Even after death the father casts his shadow over the brothers' lives. His body is discovered, and Cornelius plants the seed of fear: «Do you think human hearts are iron cased safes, that you suppose we can keep this secret forever?» (p. 104). Joshua thinks so, but even his hardness weakens when he discovers the father's blossoming walking stick.

The stick becomes the culmination of a structure of irony. The reader, familiar with Joshua's character appreciates the irony in the sermon in Part III «O lord, be thou my helper!» The fact that the vain congregation is taken in by the fluent hypocrite sustains the ironic tone. In «Old fashioned Country places», Joshua believes; «the Church conferred social prestige up to a certain point at a cheaper price than any other profession.» He has yet, ironically, to learn how high the price will be. Unaware of the irony of his remark the father says — «But... I'm a match for ye now! I'll spoil you souls for preaching». Thus in the final version the entire story is encased in an ironic frame. It opens with the brothers' «plodding away at the... epistle to the Hebrews.» It ends with Cornelius' comment «Ah, we read our Hebrews to little account, Jos!»

I have commented at length on the episode of the stick because it shows that writing, to Hardy, was neither unpremeditated nor mechanical. It was a process of evolution and of discovery.

Macmillan's definitive edition throws a great deal of light on Hardy's method of revision. He did not regard revision as a superficial matter. On the contrary he thought it required the fullest use of the imagination. The MS. and the serial version show in embryo many of the characteristics to be found in the final text; there are, however, only flashes. Not until the final revision was Hardy to achieve an integrated design, to create a fabric of images to deepen and make complex the emotional and conceptual significance of the story.

FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE

The MS. consists of 24 pages. On the first page below the title are the words « by Thomas Hardy ». In the upper right hand corner the title of the volume appears — Life's Little Ironies, and in the upper left hand corner the author wrote « thos Hardy of M Gate, Dorchester, Dorsetshire ». The MS. is for the most part clean. There is some marginal rewriting and some interlinear additions, but neither to any great extent. It seems that Hardy took care in writing the MS. and that it is a fair copy intended for the printers.

The story is divided into three parts which bear the heading: I Sherton Street. II High Street — Exonbury. III London again.
There are a few slight alterations in the characterization of Mr. Millborne, which I am mentioning, but which I think are not particularly significant, interesting though they may be. Hardy first wrote that:

«Milborne had come to London as a young man in a banking house: had risen to be a manager and in course of time a post of responsibility; and having been fortunate in his private investments had retired from a business life somewhat early (p. 2)»

He revised the passage as follows:

«He had come to London as a young man in a banking house had risen to a post of responsibility: when by the death of his father, who had been fortunate in his investments, the son succeeded to an income which led him to retire from a business life somewhat early (p. 56)».

The change reflects Hardy's preoccupation with indolence: he always denounces indolences on the part of fortune or rank(4).

There is no evidence that any serious re-writing was done in the MS. The conclusion is the only section in which Hardy expanded: the passage was written in the margin. I place in brackets the portion added to the conclusion:

«But this momentary satisfaction was far from being happiness. As he formerly had been weighed with a bad conscience, so now was he burdened with weariness [of his fellow creatures — ever answering negatively as he sat and smoked among men, the inquiry in the Hippolytus «what reserved person is not hateful? And in the sociable is there any charm?»]

Why Hardy decided to expand the conclusion is a question which I am reserving for later consideration.

The revisions of the MS. are extensive but not drastic: they are mainly stylistic — word substitutions follow the trend: profession > business; to take > to assume; likeness > resemblance; clamour > bitter cry; large amounts > a comfortable sum; to end all my hopes > to dash all my hopes.

Conscious care is evidenced in their first and in their revised form:

(1) «One evening when he had been unwell for several days, his doctor came in from the adjoining street, and sat with him over a fire.»

(4) The short stories abound in example of idle people: Barnet in Fellow Townsmen, Von Xanten in The Adventures of a milkmaid, Mop Ollamoor in the Fiddler of the Reels and the nameless Lord in the Doctor's Legend. In both Barnets and Millborne's case idleness finds an outlet in ambitious projects which don't contribute to the good of the community.
«One evening when he had been unwell for several days, doctor Bindon came in, after dinner, from the adjoining medical quarter and smoked with him over the fire (p. 2).»

(2) «... And today I have been accidentally reminded of the thing that above all other events of my life causes that dissatisfaction which is the remorseful recollection of an unfulfilled promise made twenty years ago.»

«... And today I have been through an accident more than usually haunted by what, above all other events of my life, causes that dissatisfaction — the recollection of an unfulfilled promise made twenty years ago (p. 2).»

(3) «Whatever defects of hardness and ungentleness the years and his original treatment have developed in her.»

Whatever defects of hardness and acidity his original treatment and the lapse of years have to do with increased definiteness rather than with fact. Notice Hardy’s conscious use of verbs: consider the overtones of «smoked» as against «sat» over the fire.

In the second example it seems incredible that the man who wrote the first sentence, in which some words are so unfitted to the essential structure of the short story, should also have written the second in which every word is admirably distilled. One also notices that the revision of the sentence results not only in polishing, but also in compressing it.

Another example of refashioned phrasing occurs in the description of the conditions favorable for the revelation of elemental truth:

«Nausea... midnight watching, excessive fatigue, trouble fright, has this effect upon the countenance of bringing out the divergences of each person from the average type of his race... the expression becomes invested with the spectral presence of strange... ancestors.»

«Nausea... midnight watching, fatigue has the marked effect upon the countenance that it brings out strongly the divergences of the individual from the norm of his race... the expression becomes invested with the spectral presence of entombed... ancestors (p. 16).»

The revised sentence is calculated in an attempt to watch people «off guard». Moreover, the revision makes it quite obvious that Hardy is revealing to his reader, as well as to the young curate, a truth from the past: characteristically it is made truth from beyond the grave by the use of such adjectives as spectral and entombed.

Apart from the changes mentioned above the MS. does not show any important deletions.
There are not many differences between the MS. and the serial version, but several changes took place between the serial and the volume version. The fact that in many instances the wording is identical in both the MS. and the serial but different in Macmillan indicates that these changes are final revisions made by Hardy while preparing for the definitive text.

In the Macmillan the parts of the story are numbered but not named. The deletion of the headings though minor is not trivial. In Hardy's novels there are wide gaps of time and scenes between adjacent chapters: the chapters are given titles in all the novels. But in *For Conscience' sake* we have no such wide gaps of time: it allows for no chasms of thought, much less of part headings. Thus Hardy suppresses the titles but keeps the divisions which are necessary to indicate breaks but do not interrupt the coherence of the narrative. Despite the division of the story into three parts, it is essentially a unit. Most of the stories in *Life's Little Ironies* are deliberately divided and forced to appear in several parts when their plot and treatment make their unity very evident: and only because Hardy got an idea that such divisions are essential to a well-told story.

When compared to the Macmillan text the MS. differs in 27 instances. Once again the tendency toward the more specific is noticeable and there are many single word substitutions. In some of these the word that is in the final text was originally in the MS. and was scratched out — «A silver broth basin» is scratched out and replaced by «silver-pitch pipe» in the MS. which is used in the magazine but replaced by «silver broth basin» in the volume. Similarly Mr Cope is described as «a scantily whiskered young man» in the MS. this is deleted and replaced by «a smoothly-shaven young man» but Hardy used the scratched out sentence in the Macmillan text. It is noteworthy that Randolph in *The Son's Veto* is also described as «a young smooth-shaven priest». It is the form of publication that determined the difference. The magazine reader would not remember from one story to the next what Hardy had said and how he said it, but for the reader of a volume of stories, variety of expression was necessary. Hardy himself must have noticed that he had used «a young smoothly shaven priest» in the two stories only when he was preparing for the volume publication. He therefore cut out the repetition of words.

Hardy expended more care upon the passages describing the conditions favourable for the revelation of unexpected physiognomies than upon any other descriptive passage in the story; they show distinct alterations from one version to the other. I enclose in brackets the words common to both the MS. and the serial in the following passage:

«It was as if during the voyage, a mysterious veil had been lifted.
temporarily revealing [the realm of the unknown] a strange pantomime of the past (MS, 17) (MG, 377) (p. 68).»

«Family lineaments of special and exclusive cast, which in ordinary moment are masked [by regulation lines and curves] stereotyped expression and mien, start up with crude insistence to the view (MS, 18) (MG, 328) (p. 68).»

In using abstract words such as «the unknown», «regulation lines and curves» Hardy only names a situation instead of solidly presenting it and thrusting us into it as a palpable reality. The revision introduces the other Hardy style – the concrete style.

The conclusion presents significant alterations. I have mentioned above the quotation added in the MS. The addition is of particular interest although it does not affect the story directly: it involves the linking of Millborne’s fate with quotations from Greek Tragedies. The position of the addition indicates a pattern which may be familiar in Hardy’s writings. His first concern was to state what was most important to him as far as plot and character were concerned. Later he went over the work and tried to improve «how» he presented the material. The question as to why Hardy added the quotation remains to be answered. Several of Hardy’s critics have remarked upon the appearance in his work of allusions to the classics, and more particularly to Greek Drama. It is commonly accepted that the references to and quotations from Greek Literature are not particularly necessary but were made by Hardy in a quest for decorum and pedantic ostentation(5) or in the hope that they may result in an overall stylistic improvement.

In the volume Hardy omitted the quotation from the Hippolytus and reworked the whole passage. It reads:

«As he formerly had been weighed with a bad conscience, so now was he burdened with the heavy thought which oppressed Antigone, that by honourable observance of a rite he had obtained for himself the reward of dishonourable laxity (p. 74).»

W. Rutland is one of the few critics to examine Hardy’s readings in Greek literature; he points out that «there is no reference to Euripides in all his writings.»(6) Therefore the quotation from the Hippolytus in the MS. is the first reference made by Hardy to one of Euripides’ plays. It seems to me that

(6) W.R. Rutland, Thomas Hardy : A Study of His Writings and Their Background (Oxford, 1938), p. 44.
Hardy would have kept this quotation if he had thought that the introduction of a literary allusion would give him «dignity.» Moreover, he would have left it if he had attached undue importance to scraps of knowledge and undue importance to himself for knowing them, especially because it is the only first reference to Euripides in all his writings. Having said this I would like to point out some of the possible reasons for the reference to Antigone instead of the Hippolytus in the final text.

The omission of the quotation in the MS. provides an ultimate proof of the way Hardy thought and rethought his ideas till they were clear; put them in a logical order; tried not to say too many things at once; eschewed irrelevancies; and put himself with imaginative sympathy in his reader's place, since we find it more appropriate to interpret Millborne's «fate» in terms of its analogy with Antigone than with Hippolytus. Although the allusions to Hippolytus do extend the relevance of the episode, they are obtrusive and vague. Neat though they are, the inquiries from Hippolytus seem somewhat pompous while the reference to Antigone is hardly distinguishable from the texture of pure narrative. When revising his conclusion, Hardy saw that the original allusion to Euripides adds nothing much to the precision with which Milborne's feelings are expressed. and he deleted it «without compunction».

It is, I hope, by now apparent that the classical allusion which Hardy adds to his thought to make it completely effective is descriptive and precise, but in a peculiar way; that the descriptive precision at which he aims is not so much expository as creative. He is not really defining that is, enabling us to think, but compelling us to feel, in a certain way.

The interest of the reference to Antigone is not confined to its portrayal of Millborne's spiritual recesses; it has about it a «flavour» of the irony in which Hardy had steeped himself in his late literary career. Like the previous conclusions reworked for the definitive edition, the conclusion of For Conscience' Sake adds confirmatory evidence to the fact that Hardy became a convert to a «philosophy» which beheld the co-existence of incongruities. Once more Hardy was right to omit the inquiries from the Hippolytus, for what indeed have they to do with the masterful irony of the final words in the volume; a man risks his good name to repair an ancient wrong, only to see his act of reparation becoming obviously futile.

The change also shows, I think, that Hardy found more affinities with Sophocles than with Euripides, and that the former had left a deeper and more lasting impression than the latter. The significance of the change lies
in the effect that the study of Sophocles had in confirming the cast of his thought. For Conscience’ Sake, seems to me, to provide a strong evidence of the shaping of some of Hardy’s ideas by Sophocles. Having read the story, we understand what was in the author’s mind when he marked such a passage in his copy of the Antigone:

«... wrong that by day and night I see continually budding rather than withering 7»

Compare the quotation above with Millborne’s letter to his wife:

«I have learnt that there are some derelictions of duty which cannot be blotted by tardy accomplishment. Our evil actions do not remain isolated in the past, waiting only to be reversed: like locomotive plants they spread and re-root, till to destroy they original stem has no material effect in killing them (p. 73).»

It is very hard to resist the conjecture that it was especially of Antigone that he was thinking when he compared the power of past actions to overshadow everything to locomotive plants.

(7) Rutland, p. 41.