

Chapter – II

Desperate Remedies

After the rejection of his first novel The Poor Man and The Lady Hardy wrote after on Meredith's advice 'a story with a plot'. He structured the novel on the sensational genre and published it anonymously. 'Desperate Remedies was modeled mainly on Collin's Basil and The Woman in White, although there are echoes of Lady Audley's Secret, but it also contains much that is uniquely Hardyian '(Seymour Smith:1994,122).

Desperate Remedies, Hardy's first published novel, needs a closer attention than hitherto accorded, since it affords us an opportunity to examine the author's first exploration into the condition of women in the patriarchal society. Desperate Remedies initiated the process that culminated in Jude the Obscure. But for a long time the novel failed to attract critical attention and was relegated to the status of a minor novel. The novel is centred on the experience of a sensitive, beautiful, orphan girl, Cytherea Graye, in the patriarchal society. The author shows her vulnerability to the society's economic, sexual and marriage codes. She is represented as a passive victim to the forces of the society that circumscribes her inner aspirations. The Victorian conventional ideology proves stronger in her, she has to submit to it and her struggle proves to be ineffectual against its forces. Hardy through the defeat of Cytherea shows ironically her victimisation to the existing power-relations of the society. "The tragic trajectory can be said to have moved from a willingness to internalise and accommodate herself to patriarchal expectations of the feminine to an 'unfeminine' desire for freedom of choice over her own destiny" (Ingham: 1989, 33). Through the passive victimisation of Cytherea the novelist appears to interrogate society's gendered ideology which he attacked more bitterly in his later novels. He shows in this novel how the institution of marriage frustrates the inner feeling and aspirations of woman, while in his later novels he attacks the hypocrisy and double-standard of marriage ideology. In fact, Cytherea anticipates some of the themes of radical womanhood in a veiled form. A new entrant in the literary market,

Hardy did not want to jeopardize his prospect as a novelist by coming directly in clash with the conventional ideologies of the society. Rather he tactfully represented Cytherea to evade the conventional scrutiny of the critics. He deployed in the narrative structure the voice of a conventional narrator who endorses the conventional ideology in Cytherea and at the same time denounces her unconventional role. This camouflage on the part of the author renders Cytherea's representation ideological. But in his later novels Hardy freed himself from these constraints and represented womanhood more radically. The plot of Desperate Remedies like other Hardy novels constantly keeps its eye riveted on Cytherea Graye, an orphan penniless girl, and on her experience in the patriarchal society. The narrator describes the tragic demise of her father, Ambrose Graye and her resultant destitution. In his Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist Millgate observes that 'the helpless orphan victim is common enough but the early presentation of Cytherea's father suggests that he has almost willfully precipitated her into that position through his casualness about money and personal safety' (Millgate: 1971,33). The narrator informs us that

the undoubted truth, that they were the children of dreamer who let slip away every farthing of his money and ran into debt with his neighbours -that the daughter had been brought up to no profession-that the son who had, had made no progress in it might come to the dogs - could not from the nature of things be wrapped up in silence in order that it might not hurt their feelings; and as a matter of fact, it greeted their ears in some form or other wherever they went (Desperate Remedies 18, hereafter referred to as DR).

Cytherea along with her brother leaves their native village 'to avoid the exchange of ideas' (DR, 19) about them. They leave for Creston in search of livelihood and Owen Graye finds employment under an architect's office. Cytherea, in absence of any suitable occupation for women, accepts the role of a lover. She has learnt since her childhood that love and marriage are the supreme goal of womanhood. The author shows love relationship between Cytherea and Edward Springrove, a colleague of Owen Graye. The relationship is basically structured in the mould of Victorian ideology. The narrative stresses Cytherea's 'idealized inferiority' (Ingham,1989) and her

feminine weaknesses as lover. She is described by the narrator not as an individual but in terms of an essentialist ideology of womanhood. As Patricia Ingham observes:

True-Wittenberg admits, Cytherea's sexist lover Springrove is implicitly criticised by the narrative as unlikely to offer 'the full fledged regard and intellectual equality she obviously desires'. But another, if less visible controlling male figure...the Hardyian narrator keeps the heroine in her subordinate place by 'intrusive generalisations about women - most of which seem condescendingly designed to reduce the struggles of Cytherea and other female characters to the stereotypically female and thus to undermine and reader's regard for them as individuals (Ingham:1989,2).

George Wotton in his book Thomas Hardy: Towards a Materialist Criticism observes that,

In so far as the aesthetic project is the writing of a discourse which will reveal the true, we are meant to see Cytherea's action in a certain light. In effect the attentive reader should see that 'women's prescriptive infirmity' which appears to the distracted gaze as vanity is in fact a condition of her existence which she can't help or alter. What writing 'cannot see' is that when Cytherea or any other woman fetishises her appearance she acts not instinctively but ideologically, surveying in her appearance the image men have of her . As an ideological subject, Cytherea is subjected to and dominated by the masculine gaze, a subjection and domination which she experiences as guilt (Wotton:1982,130) .

Cytherea's encounter with Springrove is described by the narrator in a highly erotic tone. The narrative becomes tinged with sexuality when Springrove abandons his oar and sits next to Cytherea. Their every movement, gesture and talk becomes highly charged with eroticism. As the narrator describes, 'He put his left hand behind her neck till it came round upon her left cheek: it was not thrust away. Lightly pressing her, he brought her face and mouth towards his own; when, at this very brink, some unaccountable thought or spell within him suddenly made him halt-even now, and as it seemed as much to himself as to her, he timidly whispered 'May I?'' (DR, 50).

Cytherea's second meeting with Edward Springrove imparts the narrative a highly sensuous tone, 'It was the supremely happy moment of their experience. The bloom and the purple light were strong on the lineaments of both. Their heart would hardly "believe the evidence of their lips" (DR, 50). J.B. Bullen in his book The Expressive Eye; Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy(1986)observes: "In the little world created by their'mutual attraction, colour plays an integral part in generating ' the supremely happy moment of their existence"(Bullen:1986, 37). Cytherea learns that Edward has been engaged to his cousin Adeleade Hinton for a year.

She leaves her lover and tries to live an independent life by seeking employment. As Jane Thomas in her book Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent observes, "Cytherea being alienated by her sexist lover seeks 'self empowerment by seeking employment" (Jane Thomas:1999, 61) . The author shows that the scope for women to find employment in the contemporary society was nonexistent. The social ideology did not allow women to provide self empowerment through employment. The scope for women's employment was limited to the post of governess or lady's maid etc. As Francoise Basch observes:

From the seventeenth century onwards the evolution towards a capitalist mode of production was deeply affecting woman's role in society. The industrial revolution and capitalist concentration broke up the family productive unit within which women had played an important part. The decline in home industry and increasing specialization meant among other consequences that female labour began to be devalued, and this became increasingly so during the first part of the nineteenth century. In the struggle to survive, women found themselves in the following dilemma: to work for starvation wages in dying sectors of the economy or to depend financially on a family to which they could not easily make a financial contribution. The latter solution was increasingly approved by a society which prescribed for a woman in the home an ornamental, metaphysical and morally inspiring role (Basch: 1974, 103).

Cytherea's independent self could not tolerate the idea of being a dependant on his brother's income. Cytherea gives advertisement in local newspaper seeking the situation of a 'governess' or 'lady's maid'. However,

her illusion of autonomy through employment is shattered when she fails to elicit any suitable response from any employer. Cytherea found that her attempt to seek employment was futile and ended in futility due to the gendered ideology of the society. Hardy shows Cytherea's emergence from the conventional pattern of femininity to advanced womanhood. As Peter J. Casagrande observes:

But Cytherea's strength is not her innocence; her strength is her unsentimental resolve to get on with life in spite of misfortune and loss. Speaking to Owen of the intense joy of loving Springrove, she can yet dismiss it. 'With dignity': 'What is he to me? Nothing I must dismiss such weakness as this-believe me, I will. Something far more pressing must drive it away. I have been looking my position steadily in the face, and I must get a living somehow (Casagrande:1982, 76).

However, Cytherea's advertisement for lady's maid was responded to by Miss Aldclyffe, an aristocratic middle aged woman. The narrator describes her appearance: "There was severity about the lower outlines of the face which gave a masculine cast to this portions of her countenance. Womanly weakness was nowhere visible save in one part - the curve of her forehead and brows -there it was clear and emphatic" (DR, 57). Hardy says:" Both the women showed off themselves to advantage as they walked forward in the orange light ; and their mutual attraction is conveyed when each showed too in her face that she had been struck with her companion's appearance" (DR, 57).

Cytherea being appointed by Miss Aldclyffe as a lady's maid is called to attend to her: to remove her dress and 'stockings and black boots', and help her to wear 'silk stockings and white shoes'. Cytherea's inexperience causes Miss Aldclyffe fall into a 'smouldering passion'. Miss Aldclyffe's imperious behaviour invites a quarrel between Cytherea and her employers. Cytherea feels humiliated by and calls her 'ill-tempered' and unjust', and she is promptly dismissed from her job. On returning to her room, Cytherea contemplates, "Starvation itself should not compel her to hold such a humiliating post for another instant" (DR, 80). While undressing Cytherea looked "... in the glass for an instant at the reflection of her own magnificent

resources in face and bosoms and to mark their attractiveness unadorned, was perhaps but the natural action of a young woman who had so been children whilst passing through the harassing experience of decorating an older beauty of Miss Aldclyffe's temper" (DR, 80). As Jane Thomas explains "In reality both women are involved in a struggle to appropriate for their own use the ideologically sanctioned subject position of 'lady' the female role which appears to offer the most effective agency "(Jane Thomas:1999, 61). The author shows how terrible could be the social and individual pressure on Cytherea for being penniless and orphan. Her inner conflict is narrated in the following lines when she forced by poverty adopts the role of a lady's maid:

She was thinking that nothing seemed worthwhile; that it was possible, she might die in workhouse, and what did it matter? The petty, vulgar, details of servitude that she had just passed through her dependence upon the whims of a strange woman, the necessity of quenching all individuality of character in herself, and relinquishing her own peculiar tastes to help on the wheel of this alien establishment, made her sick and sad (DR, 67) .

However, relationship between Cytherea and Miss Aldclyffe grows to be erotic. Hardy boldly depicts the lesbian scene between Miss Aldclyffe and Cytherea. Miss Aldclyffe entering into Cytherea's bed asked to be hugged and kissed with increasing passion. The narrator informs that "the instant they were in bed Miss Aldclyffe freed herself from the last remnant of restraint. She flung her arms round the young girl, and pressed her gently to her heart. "Now kiss me" she said (DR, 83). When Cytherea reveals to Miss Aldclyffe that she has a lover, she is pressed by Miss Aldclyffe, "to love her more than she loves him She says: "I love you more sincerely than any man can. Do Cythie: dont any man stand between us: O I can't bear that" (DR, 86). Miss Aldclyffe's frustrated outburst against Cytherea is tinged with sexual jealousy when she comes to know about the existence of Cytherea's lover. "Find a girl, if you can whose mouth and ears have not been made a regular highway by some man or another" (ibid). Hardy represents the sexuality of two women boldly in the conventional society. As Kristin Brady observes:

Miss Aldclyffe does not consistently isolate herself, moreover, from patriarchal construction of her sexuality. First, she is attracted to Cytherea partly as the daughter of her lost male lover. Second her passion for vicarious pleasure eventually takes the form of forcing a marriage between Cytherea and her son, the living proof of her ruined state. Here the maternal impulse seen as so central in woman by Victorian culture and by Hardy's narrator overtakes Miss Aldclyffe's desire to find a love outside patriarchal definitions (Kristin Brady:1993, 93).

Hardy incorporates the lesbian scene in the novel to challenge the male construction of female sexuality and hints at the re-structuring of gender relationship in the patriarchal society. J. Charvet comments that 'the overthrow of patriarchy requires a complete sexual revolution which would destroy the traditional taboos on homosexuality' (Charvet:1982,123) .

Through this sensational fiction Hardy explores not only criminality and aberrant behaviour but also explores the ideological pressure on the vulnerable Cytherea not only by the people closest to her but also by the society in general .The conventional idea of duty, self-renunciation, exploits Cytherea and she as an individual had been brought to bear different social pressures. Michael Millgate observes that "Cytherea certainly anticipates Tess in her combination of sexuality and passivity" (Millgate: 1994, 33). He expresses his sentiment against the social ideology and marriage institution that exploits the womanhood and denies the right for self assertion.

Hardy wrote Desperate Remedies to please the publishers who rejected his previous novel, and on Meredith's advice' to write a story with a plot '(L, 66) he structured the novel in the sensational genre. Hardy successfully weaves the different heterogeneous elements into a single strand and projects a unified vision about the oppressive codes of the society. Hardy incorporated into the novel the Gothic atmosphere giving the plot of Desperate Remedies a complex and melodramatic twist. To maintain a suspense necessary for a mystery novel he unfolds the plot gradually. Aeneas Manston, the illegitimate son of Miss Aldclyffe, is moulded in the form of a Gothic villain and whose identity and activities are shrouded in mystery and suspense. Miss Aldclyffe blackmails Cytherea to be the wife of her

illegitimate son, Aeneas Manston. In keeping with the spirit of sensational genre Hardy portrays Aeneas Manston as a man "connected with deeds of darkness rather than light" (DR, 116). Though the narrator does not disclose the real identity of Mr. Manston, he comments that 'some secret bond of connexion existed between Miss Aldclyffe and her companion' (DR, 117). Miss Aldclyffe shapes the situation in such a way as to force Cytherea to accept Manston as her husband. Miss Aldclyffe sends Cytherea to Manston's house to collect subscription for a lady's charitable fund. Cytherea finds Aeneas Manston 'dark in outline' and 'of towering height his eyes penetrating and clear'. Cytherea's first encounter with Manston places Cytherea before the eyes of Manston as a sexual prey. Manston tempts Cytherea to fall in love with her. The encounter scene is tinged with sexuality: "Thus the touch of clothes, which was nothing to Manston sent a thrill through Cytherea, seeing moreover, that he was of the nature of mysterious stranger" (DR, 136). "Cytherea was swayed into emotional opinions concerning the strange man before her, new impulses of thought came with new harmonies and entered into her with a gnawing thrill" (DR, 139). T.R. Wright in his book Hardy the Erotic (1989) observes:

The erotic atmosphere of the novel grows even more humid as Manston takes advantage of a storm, whose outer raging acts as a clear index of Cytherea's inner turmoil to impress her with the power of his organ. . . His reverberating tones cut through her surface personality, stirring hidden depths of passion: they shook and bent her to themselves, as a gushing brook shakes and bends a shadow across its surface she finds herself literally speechless, reduced to a silent admiring gaze, 'Looking with parted lips at his face' (167-8). Her sense of identity, the stable image she had of herself as a coherent personality, has been shattered (Wright: 1989, 42).

The author very skillfully weaves into the narrative the sexual scene so that the fastidious tastes of the critics and readers may not be outraged. As Penny Boumelha observes, "by exercising this kind of imaginative precensorship of his own Hardy managed on the whole to retain the sexual character of such episodes, at the same time preserving the decencies of the three-decker". (Boumelha: 1982, 30).

The plight of Cytherea worsens as Aeneas Manston, the illegitimate son of Miss Aldclyffe falls in love with her. She is compelled by her brother's illness and Springrove's desertion to embrace Manston. The author stresses economic vulnerability of Cytherea. She in spite of herself submits to the economic manipulation of Manston. The narrator brings out Cytherea's gradual exposure to Manston's blackmailing, and she comes to think, "To marry this man was obviously the course of commonsense to refuse him was impolitic temerity. There was reason in this. But there was more behind than a hundred reasons - a woman's gratitude, and her impulse to be kind" (DR, 229).

Hardy shows emotional conflict in Cytherea at its height as she was pressurized to choose Manston. The narrator informs that "the matter had come to a crisis: she must once and for all choose between the dictates of her understanding and those of her heart" (DR, 232). These emotional conflicts characterize Hardy's latter heroines. The author shows that Cytherea is forced to take up the stereotypical role of Manston's wife. As Jane Thomas observes, "In the absence of a viable alternative self conceits she is reduced to the helplessness and enforced abnegation of desire which was to characterize Hardy's later tragic novels" (Jane Thomas :1999 , 64). Hardy shows Cytherea as the society's victim of economic and social pressure upon her. She is forced by her brother's lameness to be blackmailed by Aeneas Manston. Cytherea finding no other way submits to Manston. This passive victimization of Cytherea anticipates Tess's submission to the aggressive sexuality of Alec D'urbervilles. Both Cytherea and Tess are victim of society's ideology of womanly duty and self sacrifice. The narrator stresses her ideological role when Cytherea denying her inner feelings for Springrove,

Persuades herself that a kind of heroic self-abnegation had to do with the matter, she became much more content in the consideration of it. A willful indifference to the future was what really prevailed in her, ill and worn out as she was, by a perpetual harassments of her sad fortune, and she regarded this indifference as of her gushing natures will under such circumstances, as genuine resignation and devotedness (DR, 233).

The author shows Cytherea as passive, self-effacing and with abnegation of desire. Hardy in his earlier novels upholds the ideology of womanhood in spite of his original intention to expose the victimization of her. He rather tactfully imposes a conventional narrator's voice to evade the searching and orthodox eyes of the critics. The narrator endorses womanly virtues of family duty, self sacrifice and self effacements in Cytherea. Hardy, after the rejection of his first novel, was careful about pleasing the orthodox critics and readers. He seems to have compromised his position by Cytherea's conventional role. The narrator supports Cytherea's self-sacrifice for the benefits of the family and comments that "by a slight sacrifice here she would give happiness to atleast two hearts whose emotional activates were still unwounded. She would do good two men whose lives were far more important than hers" (DR, 233). The author rather ironically shows the oppressive nature of Institutionalized codes of marriage when Cytherea supports her decision to marry Manston. "Yes," she said again, "even Christianity urges me to marry Mr. Manston" (ibid). As George Wotton observes:

Women live their subjection in ideology through the roles which have been assigned to them as the Other. Captured by the masculine gaze, interpellated as subject, subjected to the myth of being the weaker sex and recognizing themselves in that image, they behave accordingly. Sometimes they appear to behave, as though in expiation of their inner guilt of being woman, 'perversely' and even masochistically, as they 'court their own discomfiture by love' like Eustacia, or like Grace Melbury who took her scourging to their exquisite extremity', or Sue who acts 'for the odd and mournful luxury of practicing long-suffering in her own person' (Wotton:1982,127).

The Victorian institutionalized values of marriage destroy Cytherea's integrity as a woman. Hardy exposes the religious code that reinforces the Victorian ideology of marriage. The conventional religion remains ingrained in Cytherea's mind. The narrator informs that the illogical power found in women "not only of kissing, but of delighting to kiss the rod by a punctilious observance of the self-immolating doctrines in the sermon on the Mount" (DR, 217). The observation satirizes "the illogical power" in general, but the narrator focuses on the spiritual resources for the ethics of self-sacrifice.

Hardy questions the religious impact of marriage on the personality of a woman. In his last novel Jude the Obscure he came to attack the institution of marriage more vehemently.

Through the melodramatic plot of the novel Hardy expresses his anger and dissatisfaction against the Victorian code of marriage that circumscribes the freedom of choice between, "the dictates of her understanding and those of her heart" (DR, 232). He shows Cytherea powerless against the patriarchal marriage ideology and she is unable to rebel against the society. This powerlessness of Cytherea against the social codes imparts to her representation a tragic colour. Hardy attacks the institution of marriage in this novel. The marriage ideology the author shows stifles the individuality of women and denies any self fulfillment. Hardy's view of the marriage codes became more and more gloomy in each of his successive novels, and especially in his last three novels he bitterly attacks the conventional marriage laws that deprives women of their autonomy and individuality. The narrative shows excruciating conflict in her mind when by accepting certain conventions as norms of her life, Cytherea is unable to recognize the constructive nature of society which conditions men, women and all discourses to maintain women as "willing slaves". As Margaret Mead observes, "Society assigns different roles to the sexes, surrounds them from birth with an expectation of different behaviour, play out the whole drama of courtship, marriage, and parenthood in terms of types of behaviour believed to be innate and therefore appropriate for one sex or for the other" (Margaret Mead in Alice Rossi (ed) 1973, 659).

Her brother, Graye, reminds her sister about her duty to society and tells her to disregard her emotions about Springrove. He urges her to marry Aeneas Manston, "Act in obedience to the dictates of commonsense and dread the sharp sting of poverty" (DR, 241). Neglecting the dictates of her heart for Edward Springrove Cytherea decides to follow Owen's selfish advice. Cytherea anticipates Tess in her economic vulnerability and sexual passivity. Owen Graye's crippling illness propels Cytherea on the verge of mental break down and she readily accedes to Manston's blackmailing. Miss

Aldclyffe being inspired by Cytherea's change of mind towards Manston advises her to court Manston and thus to avoid the jaws of poverty. The narrator brings out Cytherea's gradual surrender to Manston's clutch. When she finds her ailing brother recuperating from illness with the financial help of Manston she thought, "To marry this man was obviously the course of commonsense to refuse him was impolitic temerity. There was a reason in this .But there was more behind than a hundred reasons - a woman's gratitude and her impulse to be kind "(DR, 229). The narrative shows extreme mental conflict in Cytherea's mind before her submission to Manston's marriage proposal .The narrator asks "Considering his kindness to her brother, his love for herself, and Edward's fickleness, ought she to forbid him to do this?"(DR, 330). The narrator informs, ' "She could dally with her perplexity, evade it , trust to time for guidance , no longer . The matter had come to a crisis: she must once and for all choose between the dictates of her understanding and those of her heart" (DR, 232).

At the marriage ceremony she catches sight of Edward and her old passion for him comes back. For a moment she forgets herself and declares, "I love Edward Springrove with all my strength and heart, and soul. You call me a wanton for it, don't you? I don't care I have gone beyond caring for anything" (DR,250). Owen Graye insists on her disregarding her own feeling for Springrove and if needed practicing hypocrisy for the sake of social respectability. He advises Cytherea, "Your duty to society and those about you, requires that you should live with (at any rate) all the appearances of a good wife and try to love your husband" (DR, 251). However, Cytherea's sensibility revolts at the selfish advice of her brother. She found selfish motive behind her brother's advice to marry Manston. Cytherea quickly realizes her situation and exclaims, "Marrying for a home- what a mockery it was" (DR, 249). Her individual cry against the exploitative code of the society is shown by the author in the following lines:

"Yes, my duty to society" she murmured 'But ah, Owen it is difficult to adjust our outer and inner life with perfect honesty to all! Though it may be right to care more for the benefit of the many than for the indulgence of your own single self, when you

consider that the many and duty to them, only exist to you through your own existence, what can be said? What do our own acquaintances care about us? Not much. I think of mine. Mine will now (do they learn all the wicked frailty of my heart in the affair) look at me, smile sickly, and condemn me. And perhaps far in time to come, when I am dead and gone, some other's accent or some other's song, or thought like an old one of mine will carry them back to what I used to say and hurt their hearts a little that they blame me so soon (DR,251).

This emotional conflict is more prominent in his later novels. We find that the heroines of Hardy's later novels are broken down mentally and physically by the hypocrisy and oppressive codes of the social institutions. Broken down mentally, they are either to compromise their ideas or court death. The heroine of Hardy's first novel is weak to resist the ideological pressure upon her. She ultimately resigns to her brother's point of view and marries Aeneas Manston, the man whom she detests. Cytherea like Tess accepts sexual aggression of Aeneas Manston passively. Cytherea is rewarded at the end with a husband and the novel ends with a conventional marriage that provides the happy ending. Her passivity against the injustices and inequalities of the society is stressed. She can not come out of her stereotypical role. As George Wotton observes, "When women experience their sexual domination and exploitation ideologically as the inevitable consequences of their natural inferior position they are deprived of the ability to defend themselves" (Wotton: 1982, 128). This shows Hardy's compromise with the Victorian values, although those values themselves are not left unscrutinized.

It is evident that Cytherea's unhappiness grows out of her forced marriage to Aeneas Manston. She stifles her love for Edward Springrove. As Patricia Ingham observes, "In spite of the male narrator's theology of woman, he allows another discourse to emerge which speaks of how a sensitive woman may experience social and individual pressure upon her. Through him not polemic but her new perceptions, begin to speak" (Ingham: 1989, 21). Cytherea's weak personality before her marriage with Manston is traced. An autonomous desire may yet be detected in her outcry against the social pressures. However, the Victorian ideology demands she must be divested of

her desire for autonomy and self assertion. After the death of Aeneas Manston she is shown to choose her inconstant lover Edward Springrove. Cytherea is shown to have accepted the traditional role as the wife of Springrove. This is the Victorian ideal of womanhood.

The ending of the novel shows the traditional closure. It ends with a conventional marriage that provides the happy ending. Hardy compromised with the conventional Victorian ideology in spite of the manipulation of Cytherea. A girl who has lost her virginity though unwillingly is stigmatised by the society as a fallen woman. The narrator stresses on Cytherea's miraculous escape from the clutch of her sexual oppressor. This is in keeping with the demands from the literary decorum and tastes of the conventional readers. As Catherine Neale in her essay "Desperate Remedies; The Merits and Demerits of Popular Fiction" observes that 'throughout the details of train timetables, telegrams, hotel proprietors and lawyears, Hardy manages to avoid spelling out the unspecified disgrace, that she will have lost her virginity before Edward and Owen reach her' (Neale :1993,115 -22).

The Hardy narrator interprets Cytherea's role in terms of contemporary discourse on femininity and female sexuality. The contemporary scientific discourse on femininity identified woman with the biological role. She was considered an instrument of production, and hence her intellectual activities remained subordinated to her reproductive role. Herbert Spencer identified woman with her biological entity. He argued that the reproductive role of women diminishes the intellect in them. Irrationality, inconstancy and capriciousness predominate in women's nature. Therefore, they were assigned the role within the domestic sphere, whereas the male members were given the role of intellectual activities and adventurous jobs. This contemporary discourse on female sexuality stresses their sexual passivity and inborn inclination towards motherhood. This discourse of femininity reinforced the inferior status of women in the society.

In Desperate Remedies the narrator projects Cytherea as weak, fragile and hysteric. The narrator's anti-woman generalisations are scattered

throughout the novel. Cytherea's womanly weakness at the marriage ceremony and her hysteric outburst at the sight of his beloved Springrove establish her essentiality as woman. Cytherea's representation, therefore, contradicts with the authorial narrative voice. Hardy in spite of himself represented Cytherea's submission to the social pressures. A contradiction is observed in Cytherea's representation. Though Cytherea's ideological submission is shown by the author, a new perception is also discerned in Cytherea. As Patricia Ingham points out, "In Hardy's early novels women begin occasionally to experience themselves as well as others with a sense of enhanced, not diminished self. In the later novels this struggle for autonomy is more extensive and more explicitly articulated" (Ingham: 1987, 7). Through this melodramatic novel, however, Hardy projects his gloomy vision of the predicament of the helpless women in the society. Cytherea's inner aspirations find no space in the male - dominated society .Cytherea's flexible personality becomes an easy prey to the power game of the society and her desires and womanly aspirations are controlled by the male dominated ideology of the society. In this novel Hardy indirectly accuses the values of the patriarchal society that expects self -sacrifice only from women and fails to provide fulfillment to them.

However, Cytherea, despite her traditional role is shown slowly to have moved away from a static state towards a new identity and new dimension, thereby appearing to be much more challenging than their perfectly angelic counterparts. Cytherea, Hardy's first woman character, developed positively towards a more complete awareness of the potentialities as a woman, but she also shows Hardy's awareness of the social situation of the day. The social situation, along with the economic and the legal implications finds a critical exposure through Cytherea. Hardy's presentation of Cytherea's unhappiness in life has been well documented in terms of the legal systems of the society. Hardy believed that in a society where social conventions were in conflict with the inner aspirations and natural inclinations of the women, there is little chance of happiness for them in such a society. The development of Cytherea's character is marked by changes in her emotional states resulting from the changing circumstances of her life. She is provided by Hardy with the

power of self -exploration that characterizes the later heroines of Hardy. Her powerlessness becomes more poignant with the development of the plot of the novel. The plot of the novel develops in parallel with her transition from one state of awareness to another- her traumatic childhood, her relationship with Miss Aldclyffe and her changing relationships with her selfish brother Owen and her lover Springrove. Compromising with the traditional closure of the novel, Hardy has shown Cytherea's acceptance of the bond of marriage with her selfish lover Springrove. The author has already demonstrated disillusionment in her about the institution of marriage. Cytherea's tragic awareness of the true nature of marriage is noted by the author. Pointing out with irony, Hardy states that women are forced to embrace marriage and matrimony in a male dominated society. Throughout his career as a novelist Hardy's attacks against the institution of marriage became more acute and it culminated in the Jude the Obscure. No wonder, in his next novel A Pair of Blue Eyes Hardy subverts the traditional plot showing Elfride accepts death rather than the bonds of matrimony, and thus she escapes the inequities of the codes of marriage. Cytherea's struggle to find a place in society is carried forward by Elfride in the next novel! A Pair of Blue Eyes.