Christian Hope
and
the Evolutionary Meliorism
of Thomas Hardy

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Under the Supervision of –
Dr. P. K. Mukherjee
Professor of English
North Bengal University
Darjeeling.

Submitted by—
Amitesh Maulik
Lecturer in English
University B. T. & Evening College
Cooch Behar, W.B.

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INTRODUCTION

By way of defining the scope and nature of this dissertation, it should be said that it attempts no comprehensive study in any particular form of Thomas Hardy's writings - his fiction, short story, poetry or poetic drama, but concentrates on the author's view of the world and life expressed in them. The object is to prove that Hardy's own term "evolutionary meliorism" sums up his view more appropriately than the term "Pessimism" used by the critics and reviewers.

Hardy rejected Christian theology with its stress on the benevolent nature of the Creator and hope of deliverance from misery, as part of the divine plan, with the coming of the kingdom of God. His view of life as evil is partly due to his rejection of the theological idea of Christianity, but chiefly due to his concept of the blind Immanent Will controlling the world. Hardy's Immanent Will is much similar to Schopenhauer's Will to live and Nietzsche's Will to power. Metaphysically, it is the First Cause, or the irrational element of the World ground, which made the blunder of starting the creative process,giving rise to the miseries of existence. Practically, it is the desire to live, or to live more fully, present in every form of life, expressing itself as passion, desire, ambition, rivalry and combat, and producing suffering and destruction. As sexual desire it procreates life, and as social strife and war it produces new social order,

institution and dynasty, destroying the old ones. The blindness of the Will is the unpurposiveness of this continual process of creation and destruction. This view of Will made pessimism unavoidable to Hardy, and he was a pessimist. But the critics so concentrate on Hardy's pessimism that his success in overcoming the pessimistic mood and becoming a meliorist goes unnoticed. Pessimism is nearer than optimism to meliorism, and Hardy turned a meliorist by adapting his idea of the Will to the evolutionary idea of the metaphysicians like Schelling and Hartmann.

Metaphysically, the evolution of the First Cause is the dawning of consciousness on the Unconscious or the World ground, by which the initial error of creating life and life's misery is remedied. Practically, it is the spread of reason or promotion of consciousness in the world of beings, hastening its realization about the deceptive and destructive nature of passion and desire and helping it, conquer the Will to live by developing the wish not to live.

The melioristic implication of Hardy's evolutionary idea is that, with the gradual spread of reason, the tendency to work by instinct will decrease, and strife and rivalry, plight and pain, will diminish, till the whole of the world comes to be ruled by reason and all passion and pursuit cease to exist. But passion and pursuit being the essence of life, what remains when they disappear? Nothing.

This is Hardy's view of the end of the evolutionary process. For him, meliorism means the lessening of misery during the process and the coming of peace and rest with the extinction of life at the end. Hardy's meliorism promises no fulfilment, no joy and no happiness, but only peace. In respect of the ultimate attainment, Hardy's view partly resembles Buddhist nirvāna and differs widely from the christian view of the coming of eternal joy and happiness in the kingdom of God.

Hardy's view clearly shows his rejection of Christian theology, but to call his views un-Christian on that ground is to miss his never-failing faith in what he understood to be the essence of Christianity —Christ's teaching about the essential goodness of man and its value in bringing about amelioration of the world and its deliverance from misery. Hardy thought of amelioration in his own way and relied on the power of reason in effecting deliverance, but he never failed to stress that goodness of human soul is indispensable for urging individuals to work for the spread of reason. Reason and love — the intellectual and the moral and emotional capacity of man, must work together in order to effect deliveracne. Reason alone, without love is impotent. Hardy may not have been a christian in his belief, but he was a true Christian in his faith in Christ's teaching about human potentiality.

The dissertation concludes with an estimate of Hardy's evolutionary meliorism. Hardy's idea is unique in character and positive in ideal. It is thoroughly consistent and logical. Above all, it is essentially modern in its rejection of everything supernatural and occult and in its stress on human potentiality.

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CHAPTER - I

Christian Message and Hardy's Responses

I

Thomas Hardy is generally called a pessimist, and his pessimism is often ascribed to his loss of faith in Christianity. This is, however, an inadequate explanation of Hardy's view of life. In order to get a comprehensive idea of Hardy's view, it is necessary to consider certain other things. First, Hardy rejected Christian theology but valued the Christian idea of the coming of a rejuvenated world through the good deeds of men. Secondly, he was not only a pessimist, but also a meliorist and, though the rejection of christian theology was the immediate cause of his pessimism, the deeper cause was his idea of the blind Will as working in the world — an idea which, modified on an evolutionary line, was at the basis of his meliorism, too. Finally, his evolutionary idea of the dawning of consciousness on the irrational Will combined itself with his Christian faith in man — the essential goodness and potentiality of human nature, and gave his melioristic vision a sound basis. To substantiate these supplementary ideas and show Hardy to be an essentially christian soul is the object of the present dissertation. The contentions will be examined in the order in which they have been presented here; so the question of Hardy's rejecting christian theology is examined first.

II

Christianity entered the world with the joyful tidings of the coming of the kingdom of God. The hopeful message Christ and the apostles announced to the hearing of the world was about the imminence of the coming of the divine kingdom. In the Apocalyptic books of the Jewish race there appeared repeatedly the figure of the Son of Man, the Anointed one (Messiah), appointed before the beginning of creation, to the task of judging the earth and establishing the reign of righteousness on earth. The Jewish people living in travail under the tyrannical rulers of Palestine were eager to believe in any prophecy about the coming of the Messiah and Kingdom of God. John the Baptist was a messenger heralding the coming of one greater than himself and discovered in Jesus of Nazareth the divinely appointed agent sent to establish the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus, himself a Jew, shared in the belief of his race in the speedy, cataclysmic end of this world and the coming of a new world where the humiliated and oppressed would be given joy and happiness. He had little doubt in his predestined role of the Messiah. So, on the shores of the sea of Galilee he preached about the coming of the divine kingdom : "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent Ye and believe in the gospel"[1].

Jesus died on the Cross, but that was no cause for the believer's disillusionment, for they remembered Isiah's prophecy that the chosen

servant of God would be wounded for the transgression of his people and bear their inequities. So they only waited for Jesus's return to establish the promised kingdom on earth. That Jesus would speedily return to restore all things was the sum and substance of the teaching of the disciples. They roused hope in people by proclaiming boldly that the ascended Christ would return to judge the world and inaugurate the kingdom of Heaven :

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : And before him shall be gathered all nations and he shall separate them, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on the right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"[2].

This is the hopeful message, the gospel, christianity brought to mankind. The deliverance of the souls entering the heavenly kingdom is given in the Revelation : "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away"[3].

But, what will give man an access into the divine kingdom? What will make him worthy of being chosen for the eternal bliss of

the kingdom of God? The believers would say : Faith in Christ; belief in the gospel.

This message gave the early Christians the strength to endure cheerfully the persecution that broke out on them, and it gives the believers of all ages the courage to face the trials and tribulations of life. But, what is this hope built upon? Faith. The kingdom is not fashioned by human hands; it descends all complete from on high. The deliverance from suffering and pain is not achieved through human might or power, but by the spirit of the Living God who broods as it were over the whole process of creation, redemption and restoration. There is an undercurrent of supernaturalism in this view of deliverance of mankind. This message of the heavenly kingdom is based on christian theology and has its appeal to the believers, but to one who has renounced Christian theology and refuses to believe in the supernatural it means nothing. Here it must be mentioned that a rational interpretation of the gospel is quite possible, and such interpretation does not make the christian message any less forceful and convincing, but it has ever been opposed by the orthodox who assert that "the contents of the christian doctrine is not only above reason, but also, in a certain sense, contrary to reason". The orthodox cling to the theological interpretation of the message and take the gospel of the coming of the kingdom of God in a literal sense, but the rational-minded christians delight in scoffing at the belief of the credulous.

The so-called un-Christian views of Thomas Hardy are but the reactions of the rational mind to the credulity of the orthodox. The charge of rejecting Christian faith generally brought against Hardy is only partly true, for he renounced christian theology, but the more important aspect of christianity viz. christian ethics, remained with him the infallible guide for human conduct. We shall see in course of our discussion that the means of amelioration suggested by him is fundamentally based on the christian ethics. He was a christian in spirit, though not in faith. That he renounced christian theology and, with it, the orthodox, literal interpretation of the message of the coming of the divine kingdom is, however, true enough. The following passages deal with this point.

Christian theology conceives of God as a Personal Power, and speaks of the divine sonship of man, and Hardy rejects these views. In the poem A Dream Question, we hear God say,

> Another such a vanity
> In witless weak humanity
> Is thinking that of those all
> Through space at my disposal
> Man's shape must needs resemble
> Mine, ..."[4]

The poem hints at the absurdity of the anthropomorphic view of God and theomorphic view of man, expressed in the biblical phrase "God made man in His own image". The words God speaks here are aimed at demolishing the ideas of the theologians.

Again, as to the divine sonship of man, Hardy writes in Drinking Song,

Next this strange message Darwin brings,
(Though saying his say
In a quiet way);
We all are one with creeping things,
And apes and men
Blood-brethren
And likewise reptile forms with stings"[5].

Hardy, who had been among the earliest acclaimers of the Origin of Species and referred so enthusiastically to Darwin's View of the origin of human species, can hardly accept the orthodox view of the divine sonship of man.

Secondly, God is regarded in Christian theology as Omnipotent and Eternal and Hardy scoffs at it. In the poem A Plaint to Man God is presented as a man-created being, fearing the doubt and disbelief of the modern times threatening his very existence:

Wherefore, O Man did there come to you
The unhappy need of creating me —
A form like your own — for praying to?
"Such a forced device", you may say, "is meet
For easing a loaded heart at whiles:
Man needs to conceive of a mercy-seat,
Somewhere above the gloomy aisles
Of this wailful world, or he could not bear

The irk no local hope beguiles".
—But since I was framed in your first despair
The doing without me has had no play
In the minds of men when shadow scare;
And now I dwindle day by day
Beneath the decided eyes of the seers
In a light that will not let me stay,
And to-morrow the whole of me disappears,
The truth should be told, and the fact be faced
That had best been faced in earlier years[6].

In God's Funeral this man-created God is dead, and the poet presents a view of the procession of the mourners bearing the dead God. D. Schwartz comments on this poem, "The God of Christianity is being escorted to his grave by a long line of mourners who are described in Dantesque lines and who have thoughts which are overheard by the protagonist of the poem which rehearse the history of monotheism from the standpoint of a higher criticism of the Bible"[7].

E.F. Hardy writes that the poem is about the gradual decline and extinction in the human race of a belief in an anthropomorphic god.

Thirdly, Christ is believed by the christians to be the Son of God, and the birth of Jesus is, therefore, shrouded in mystery. Hardy rejects this view, too. In Drinking Song he reminds us,

"And when this philosopher had done
Came doctor Cheyne :

Speaking plain he

Proved no virgin bore a son
  Such tale, indeed,
  Helps not our creed
He said, A tale long known to none"[8].

This is Hardy's views of God and Son of God. If we examine his views of the Bible, we shall see that what he appreciates in the Bible is not the authenticity of the chronicles, but the art of narration. While admiring the literary quality, he makes the very art of narration an argument for the inference that the narratives are not true. He writes,

"But in these Bible lives and adventures, there is the spherical completeness of art. And our first and second feeling that they must be true because they are so impressive, becomes a third feeling, modified to 'Are they so very true, after all? Is not the fact of their being so convincing an argument, not for their actuality but for the actuality of a consummate artist ...?'"[9]

Hardy's poetry, notes and prefaces show his departure from the views of the orthodox Christians, and his novels indicate the same thing. The publication of Tess of the D'Urberville in 1891 was the occasion that "started a rumour of Hardy's theological beliefs, which lived and grew, so that it was never completely extinguished"[10]. What incensed the believers most was Hardy's authorial observation in Tess: "The President of the Immortals had

ended his sport with Tess"[11]. Once these blasphemous words about God came to be noticed, the critics and the commentators started their attack on Hardy's un-Christian Views. Jude the Obscure came out in the final book form in 1894 and Bishop of Wakefield announced in a letter to the papers that he had thrown Hardy's Jude into the fire. Edmund Gosse, a friendly critic of Hardy's, exclaimed in the Cosmopolis, an International Review, in January 1896, "What has Providence done to Mr. Hardy that he should arise in the arable land of Wessex and shake his fist at his Creator"? [12] These reactions of the readers and reviewers clearly show how unwelcome his un-Christian views were to them.

Some incidents of his life also lead to the same inference about Hardy's rejection of christian theology. We may remember here Hardy's being present to witness Leslie Stephen's signing the deed of renunciation of the Holy Order. E.F. Hardy quotes from Maitland's Life of Leslie Stephen Hardy's own account of it. (See E.F. Hardy's Life p. 122). Commenting on this event G.D. Klingopulos writes in Hardy's Tales : Ancient and Modern, "... it may seem at first a little incongruous, but the scepticism of the countrymen was the compliment of the intellectuals. Probably Stephen saw in Hardy the spokesman of continuities which would survive an age of change"[13].

Whereas Stephen renounced the Holy Order, Hardy, abandoned the desire to enter it for some conscientious reason, though he cherished the desire early in life. Emile Hardy tells us, "This scheme fell through less because of its difficulty than from a conscientious feeling, after some theological study that he could hardly take the step with honour while holding the views which on examination he found himself to hold. And so he allowed the curious scheme to drift out of sight...."[14]

Thus both Hardy's writings and the incidents of his life afford instances supporting the contention about his rejection of the theological beliefs of the orthodox Christians. Hardy himself speaks on it very clearly in the poem The Impercipient.

> That with this bright believing band
> I have no claim to be,
> That faith by which my comrades stand
> Seem fantasies to me,
> And mirage-mists their Shining Land,
> Is a strange destiny.
>
> Why this my soul should be consigned
> To infelicity
> Why always I must feel as blind
> To sights my bretheren see,
> Why joy's they have found I cannot find
> Abides a mystery.

Since heart of mine knows not that ease
    which they know; since it be
That He who breathes All's Well to these;
    Breathes no All's Well to me,
My lack might move their sympathies
    And Christian charity !

I am like a gazer who should mark
    An inland company
Standing upfingured with Hark ! hark !
    The glorious distant sea !"
And feel, "Alas, 'tis but yon dark
    And wind-swept pine to me !"

Yet I would bear my shortcomings
    With meet tranquility,
But for the charge that blessed things
    I'd liefer not have be.
O, doth a bird deprived of wings
    Go earth-bound wilfully ![15]

The poet's comparison of the loss of faith to the falling of a bird "deprived of wings" points to the impossibility of the revival of faith. It is, however, clear that Hady will bear the loss and pain calmly.

Little more is needed to prove Hardy's rejection of the theological belief of the orthodox Christians. It comes as a corollary, therefore, that the orthodox interpretation of the coming of the kingdom of God, which is inextricably related to this theological

belief must have appeared meaningless to him. Christian theology offers the teleological view of creation which is that the All-merciful Heavenly Father has created the world with the ultimate purpose of leading mankind through trials and tribulations to some celestial bliss. No wonder, Hardy finds this view of the theologians a subject fit for ridicule. Sent by people on earth, the poet approaches God for the amelioration of human lot and is bewildered to see that God has totally forgotten having created anything like the earth. When, after raking His mind for a long time, He remembers something dimly about it, He hastens to the conclusion:

> "Haply it died of doing as it durst".

It needs the poet to remind him,

> "Lord, it existeth slill".[16]

God then seeks to justify His indifference to the earth : "It lost my interest from the first", and seems rather vexed by mankind's solicitation for help:

> "And it is strange though sad enough
> Earth's race should think that one whose call
> Frames, daily, shining spheres of flawless stuff
> Must heed their tainted ball".[17]

As shown in this poem, God is too busy to come to the succour of men who are "by hopes distraught, and strife and silent sufferings".[17] Then, what point is there, Hardy would ask, in comforting ourselves by the thought of God's noble purpose behind Creation? What divine help can people hope for, when God has forgotten all about having created the earth? Needless to say, the poem is a sarcastic comment on the absurdity of the theologians' teleological view. It is clear from our discussion that Hardy rejected Christian theology, whether under the impact of the scientific and rationalistic thoughts of his age, or because of his own sceptic temperament. But does it amount to his rejection of christian faith? It is hard to think so.

III

Hardy's rejection of christian theology was a protest against the orthodox belief in the occult and supernatural, mystery and miracle, gathering round the life and teaching of christ and making the truth of christianity obscure. What he wanted was weeding out the spurious elements and holding forth the essence of christianity. An observation of E.F. Hardy has some bearing upon the point. Referring to the Preface to Late Lyrics and Earlier the biographer writes,

"An interesting point in this preface was his attitude towards religion. Through the years 1920 to 1925 Hardy was interested in conjectures on rationalizing the English Church. There had been rumours for some years of a revised Liturgy, and his hopes were

accordingly raised by the thought of making the Established Church comprehensive enough to include the majority of thinkers of the previous hundred years who had lost all belief in the supernatural".

"When the new Prayer Book appeared however, his hopes were doomed to disappointment and he found that the revision had not been in a rationalistic direction, and from that time he lost all expectation of seeing the church representative of modern thinking minds"[18].

This observation helps us understand what Hardy expected of the custodians of religion and why he set himself to exposing the absurdities of the orthodox beliefs. It also shows that he must have discovered beneath all superstitions and make-believes the truth of Christianity and would have it revealed.

While making notes on an article to be written Hardy writes, "Religions, religion, is to be used in the article in its modern sense entirely, as being expressive of nobler feelings towards humanity and emotional goodness and greatness, the old meaning of the word — ceremony or ritual having perished or nearly"[19]. This is Hardy's idea of religion, and we shall not be greatly mistaken if we assume that he found in christianity what he considered the essence of religion. Here is another note justifying that assumption: "Christianity, nowadays, as expounded by christian apologists, has an entirely different meaning from that which it bore when I was

a boy . If I understand, it now limits itself to the religion of emotional morality and altruism that was taught by Jesus Christ, or nearly so limits itself ...."[20]

The apologists' interpretation of christianity Hardy gives here stresses the ethical aspect of Christianity — Jesus's Sermons on the Mount and St. James's preaching about the need of good work. Jesus said, "If you love me keep my commandments .... If you keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love"[21]. There is in these words of Jesus a demand of ethical conduct on the part of his followers. Again, faith — an unquestioning acceptance of the Scriptures,is regarded by the orthodox as the only thing expected of the Christians, but St. James stresses the need of work ; "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man may say he hath faith and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, and be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye gave them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath no works, is dead, being alone".[22] The stress on charity and philanthropy is obvious enough in these words.

Hardy would have the Church preach about love and charity as the essence of Christianity. He wanted people to learn the teaching of the Bible : "Judge ye not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn

not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven"[23]. He was shocked to see the uncharitable attitude of the christians towards one another and in his Birthday notes, dated 2nd June,1920 he referred to this loss of "disinterested kindness" in people. He wrote, "People are not more humane.... Disinterested kindness is less. The spontaneous goodwill that used to characterise the manual workers seems to have departed ...."[24] Again, replying to a birthday letter he wrote, "All development is of a material and scientific kind — and scarcely any addition to our knowledge is applied to objects philanthropic and ameliorative ...."[25] Hardy's polemics in the novels against society and the ecclesiastical Order was, in reality, his denunciation of the apathy and unconcern of the christians towards the distressed and afflicted. He found the Sues and the Judes struggling hard with passion assailing them and people watching them with indifference, scorn or wrath. He knew that no help could practically be given to men and women in their struggle with passion, and their own strength alone would decide their success or failure; but people could, at least, lessen their suffering by treating them with pity and compassion. But the custodians of morality condemned them, and people held them in scorn. Hardy denounced their callousness and cruelty, and by doing it, urged them to prove true Christians in their thoughts and deeds. Hardy's writings are a long, persistent plea for practising the christian virtues — tolerance, compassion and charity.

Hardy's defending the cause of Tess, a helpless seduced girl, by calling her "A Pure Woman" shows his Christian spirit. His treatment of Tess may remind the reader of the story of Jesus and the woman brought to Him on the charge of adultery. Jesus words to the woman were, "Neither do I condemn thee ; go and sin no more"[26]. With his view of men and women as victims of passion,Hardy would perhaps use "natural weakness" instead of 'Sin', but there is hardly any doubt that his attitude to Tess was exactly that of Jesus to the woman — the attitude of pity, compassion and forgiveness.

Hardy's tragic novels are a fervent plea for practising Christian virtues in our everyday life, and his war poems are a strong argument for understanding among nations as the remedy for war. The war-craze of the Christian countries shocked him and in Christmas: 1924 he wrote,

> Peace upon earth ! was said. We sing it
> And pay a million priests to bring it.
> After two thousand years of mass
> We've got as far as poison gas[27].

He was shocked and pained, still with Christian hopefulness he looked forward to the time when "men shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more"[28]. He did not lose his Christian faith in the better elements of human nature and

in the poem entitled Cry of the Homeless, while wishing the Prussian invaders of Belgium a "richer malediction", he wrote,

> Rather let this thing befall
> In time's hurling and unfurling
> On the night when comes thy call;
> That compassion dew thy pillow
> And bedrenched thy senses all
> For thy victims,
> Till death dark thee with his pall[29].

This faith in the essential goodness of human heart was instilled into him by his religion — Christianity. The impact of the Victorian thoughts and his own "obstinate questionings" made it difficult for him to retain his belief in the orthodox view of the Creator and the Creation, but faith in man, which I understand to be the essence of Christian teaching, lay ensconced in his heart with undiminished lustre. Christ had a great faith in man's moral capacity, otherwise, the commandments would not have been there; and, the same argument proves that Hardy's plea for the christian virtues undoubtedly shows his Christian faith in the goodness and nobility of human heart. Hardy was in this respect a true christian.

This faith in man — the essential goodness and immense potentiality of human heart, kindled in him Christian hopefulness, of course, in an unorthodox way. Like all unorthodox Christians, he

regarded the message of the coming of the divine kingdom as meaning the process of making the internal external and found it quite practicable. Like the other unorthodox Christians, he viewed the coming of the kingdom of God as the natural result of man's using his innate goodness and nobility. Jesus's faith in man — in the goodness and potentiality of human soul, led him to believe that the seed of the kingdom he was sowing would sprout and grow silently and steadily into a mighty tree that would shelter under its spreading branches everything on earth. This is the rational interpretation of Christian message, and it is corroborated by Jesus's Sermon on the Mount and St. James emphasis on "good works". If Jesus's moral teachings are regarded as practical propositions and rules of conduct, the kingdom of God on earth seems possible of attainment. It ceases to be a miracle and supernatural occurrence and proves the natural outcome of the good deeds of man. None with a faith in man would reject this vision of Jesus about a rejuvenated world as a figment of imagination, nor did Hardy. He believed in the prophecy of Jesus and proved a true Christian. It is in a Christian spirit that he wrote,

> The truth should be told, and the fact be faced
>
> *　　　　*　　　　*
>
> The fact of life with dependence placed
> On the human heart's resource alone,
> In brotherhood bonded close and graced
> With loving — kindness fully blown,
> And visioned help unsought, unknown[30].

Hardy is a true Christian imbued with Jesus's faith in man and recognising human potentiality as the only thing that can make the coming of the kingdom of God possible.

IV

The discussion on Hardy's loss of Christian faith, therefore, reaches the conclusion that he was a Christian in spirit, though not in belief. And, if his rejection of christian theology resulted in his taking a gloomy view of life, his faith in the human and moral aspect of christian teaching gave him good reasons to be hopeful about the future. But, as we shall presently see, his attitude to life, whatever it is, cannot be explained wholly in terms of his religious belief or disbelief. Neither is his rejection of orthodox belief solely responsible for his gloomy view, nor is his faith in man alone capable of supporting his hopefulness. Belief or disbelief is a contributory factor, a very powerful factor, in shaping his view; but there are factors other than this, conditioning his outlook. Hardy's outlook and its causes is examined in the following chapter.

R E F E R E N C E S

1. Mark 1.14
2. Matthew 25.31-34
3. Revelation 21.1
4. Pieces Occasional and Various
5. Winter Words
6. Satires of Circumstances
7. Poetry and Belief in Thomas Hardy. D Schwartz
   A Collect of Critical Essays.
8. Winter Words
9. Lif. F.E. Hardy, p 171
10. Life. F.E. Hardy, p. 243
11. Tess ch. 59
12. Thomas Hardy E. Blunden p 87
13. History of Eng. Lit Volume ed. Boris Ford
14. Lif - 376
15. Wessex Poems and other Verses
16. Wessex Poems and other Verses
17. Wesses Poems and other Verses
18. Life. F.E. Hardy, p. 415
19. Life. F.E. Hardy, p. 333
20. Life. F.E. Hardy, p. 330
21. John 15.10
22. James 11.14-17
23. Luke 7.37
24. Life. F.E. Hardy, p 406
25. Life. F.E. Hardy, p. 389
26. John i. 2-11
27. Winter Words
28. Isiah 2.4
29. Poems of War & Patriotism
30. Satires of Circumstances

CHAPTER - II

Hardy's Outlook and its Causes

Hardy's outlook is generally summed up in the word "pessimism". He is said to have taken a gloomy view of the world and life, and his writings seem to bear out this contention. Pessimism does not, however, adequately describe Hardy's view, for his pessimism developed into meliorism, and he had both the vision of a better state of things and the ideas of the means of amelioration. But it is better to start our discussion on Hardy's vision with the contention about his pessimism and its cause.

Hardy's view of life is said to be well-reproduced in his poem Shelley's Skylark. On this poem A.C. Ward comments,

"Most people think of Shelley's bird as a creature immortal in itself, alive and ever in flight. Not so Hardy. He thought of it as a thing perished; it

> "Liv'd its meek life, then one day fell-
> A little ball of feather and bone; ..."

and is now a pinch of "unseen unregarded dust"[1]. In opposition to Shelley's idea of the everlastingness of joy, Hardy maintains that everything is transient, nothing endures.

Again, Hardy contradicts Browning's idea of the victory of right over wrong and writes in his notes, "Browning said (in a line cited against me so often),

> 'Never dreamed though right were worsted
> wrong would triumph'

Well, that was a lucky dreamlessness for Browning. It kept him comfortably unaware of those millions who cry with the chorus of Hellas (Shelley's Hellas, line 940)

> 'Victorious wrong with vulture scream,
> Salutes the rising sun'

or with Hyllus in Trachineae (Sophocles, 1266)

> 'Mark the vast injustice of the gods' "[2]

Preoccupied with the miseries of life, Hardy writes in his diary, "A man would never laugh were he not to forget his situation, or were he not one who never has learnt it. After risibility from comedy, how often does the thoughtful mind reproaches itself for forgetting the truth? Laughter always means blindness — either from defect, choice or accident"[3].

Another note (Oct 15, 1888) written in the same spirit reads; "If you look beneath the surface of any farce you see a tragedy; and , on the contrary, if you blind yourself to the deeper issues of a tragedy you see a farce"[4]. Nowhere does Hardy find a comedy, only a

farce or a tragedy shows itself to him.

Of Hardy's characters, Tess views this world of ours as a "blighted apple", and Clyme Yeobright sees the creation "groaning in pain". In his notes and entries in the diary,Hardy expresses that gloomy view of life which the characters of his tragic novels hold forth. A survey of Hardy's writings confirms the contention about his gloomy view of life.

Hardy's tragedies are nearly twice as many as his comedies, and even in his pastoral romances the tragic elements are more numerous than the gay ones. The happy endings appended to some of his romances are out of tune with the rest of the narrative in each, and Coventry Patmore's comment on the ending of The Woodlanders that it strains credibility too much applies to most of his romances. Under the Greenwood Tree remains, however, one of the liveliest idylls of English literature, showing Hardy's appreciation of the joy and fun of life, but even the great popularity of the book and Swinburne's desire for "another admission into an English Paradise under the Greenwood Tree" could not induce Hardy to write another of its kind.

Hardy was too preoccupied with the "hobble of being alive" and "the cruel satires that Fate loves to indulge in" to give us happy narratives. So the novels he gave us became increasingly gloomy, and any trace of happiness found in Tess was completely lost in Jude. The Well-Beloved, published after Jude, was welcomed by the readers

chiefly because of its freedom from the oppressive gloom hanging over his later novels; but whatever mood of the author may have been expressed in this novel, it encourages no conjecture about the change of the author's attitude, for the novel was sketched many years before its publication, when Hardy was a comparatively young man interested in Platonic love. Hardy bids farewell to novel writing with _Jude the Obscure_, and in this novel and its predecessors the atmosphere is that of Arnold's "darkling plain", with all love and charity barred by ill-chance and despotism of social formulas.

Hardy has given us some fine stories. _The Withered Arm_, _The Distracted Preacher_, _On the Western Circuit_, _For Conscience's Sake_, and _A Tragedy of Two Ambitions_ are best-known of them. They exhibit the author's wide range of power — ironic, humorous, grim, sardonic or eerie. Mr. Eliot thought that stories like _The Withered Arm_ and _Barbara of the House of Grebe_ had been written solely to provide a satisfaction for some morbid emotion. Whether these stories of hanging and maiming evoke a world of pure evil or merely supply examples of life's abundant strangeness is a matter of opinion, but it must be admitted that the picture of life reproduced in them is not very cheerful.

The bulk of Hardy's poetry presents a vision of life not much different. The verses are occasional glances at the sordidness of life treated in greater detail in the short stories and novels. In poetry he writes mostly about the bed-ridden peasant, the pauper child, the

caged goldfinches, the portrait of a woman about to be hanged, men and women made homeless by war, and the country churchyards and spectres that grieve. His poetry speaks largely of cold and hunger, depravity and bondage, transitoriness and decay, suffering and sorrow.

This is the view of life reproduced in Hardy's writings, and it is no wonder that critics have described this view as pessimistic. The following excerpt from W. Durrant's essay entitled Disciple of Destiny shows the critics' estimate of Hardy and his writings.

"Mr. Hardy is the modern exponent of the guiding principles of ancient Greek tragedy. The root and theme of that phase of drama, it has been eloquently said, is the anger of fate foredoomed or avenging And this is the root and theme of Mr. Hardy's greatest novel, Jude the Obscure.

"But strikingly enough, if Hardy in his outlook on art resembles the typical ancient Greek, so in his outlook on life he resembles the typical ancient Hebrew. And Just as the story of Jude the Obscure is constructed upon the principles that guided the pen of Aeschylus, so it is permeated by the dispiriting pessimism that saddens the pages of the Ecclesiastics.

"The great Oresteian trilogy, as it has been so admirably said, is constructed upon the principle of leading the sympathising spectator through scenes of pity and terror, as stations in a journey, but finally to a goal of moral peace and harmonious reconciliation. Not in Hardy's novels do we find the plot moving towards moral peace and harmonious reconciliation.

*　　　　*　　　　*

"Hardy's genius, like that of Cassandra, the fatal prophetess, is most wise and most wretched; and in his eyes, as in hers, human life is for ever yoked to calamity. For this reason, it is not the harmonies of life that appeal to him so much as its discords. In the scheme of life set forth in his tragedies, he seems to have grimly excluded the existence of beneficient accident.[4(d)]

This piece of criticism may be regarded as representative of the general estimate of Hardy's outlook. As to the estimate of this type I would only say that, since Hardy's tragic scheme is much different from that of Aeschylus, what appears to be the futile struggle of the tragic characters from the Aeschylean point of view may not seem so from the Hardyan viewpoint. It is rather difficult to treat the futility and frustration of Hardy's men and women as sure signs of the author's "dispiriting pessimism". The failure and the meaninglessness of the sufferings of Hardy's characters have been emphasised in this piece of criticism as indicating the author's pessimism, but their utmost effort and unyielding spirit to conquer what baffles them,

which may have made their struggle and suffering quite meaningful in Hardy's tragic vision, are hardly recognised.

We shall take up this question in our discussion on Hardy's idea of evolutionary meleorism (cahpter IV) and leave it for the present, as we note it in passing that a different interpretation of the seemingly meaningless suffering of Hardy's tragic characters is quite possible. If, however, "pessimism" is taken in the philosophical sense, as meaning only the view that the world is bad rather than good, without any suggestion of the mood of despair, the term pessimism applies to Hardy. The mood of despondency is associated with the view of the badness of the world in the popular meaning of the term, on the groundless assumption that one is a corollary to the other. Hardy is a pessimist in the philosophical and not in the popular sense.

While explaining the term 'pessimism' Hardy himself has suggested that even a pessimist may come to find a better state of things replacing the worst. A note of his, dated January 1, 1902 reads:

"A pessimist's apology. Pessimism (or rather what is called such) is, in brief, playing the sure game. You cannot lose at it; you may gain. It is the only view of life in which you can never be disappointed. Having reckoned what to do in the worst possible circumstances, when better arise, as they may, life becomes child's play"[5].

What prompts these words is not a dispiriting mood, but manly hopefulness which looks forward to the better while enduring the worst

with perseverance. Hardy's own words show that a pessimist is not necessarily a despondent soul; and as for Hardy, I believe, pessimist as he was, he was not wanting in hope. But we must hear him further on this point.

Hardy himself thinks that the term "meliorism" is more appropriate to his view than pessimism. Time and again, he asserts his claim to be called a meliorist. In a conversation with William Archer in 1904, Hardy said,

"... my pessimism, if pessimism it be, does not involve the assumption that the world is going to the dog .... On the contrary, my practical philosophy is definitely meliorist"[6].

Again, in reply to a circular letter (Sept. 1918) presenting a horrible picture of what future wars must be and asking him to assist in bringing home to people the horror of another world war, Hardy writes,

"However as a meliorist (not a pessimist as they say) I think better of the world"[7].

Hardy was rather surprised to see that the critics failed to understand his melioristic intention, and often tried to explain it in his notes and prefaces. An entry in his diary, dated Jan 16, 1918 reads:

"As to pessimism my motto is first carefully diagnose the complaint, in this case, human ills, then set out about finding a remedy if any exists. The motto or practice of the optimist is empirical panaceas to suppress the symptoms"[8].

Another such attempt is found in the Preface to Late Lyrics and Earlier, Hardy writes, "If I may be forgiven for quoting my own words, let me repeat what I printed in this relation more than twenty years ago, and wrote much earlier in a poem entitled In Tenebris

> If way to the Better there be, it exacts a full
> look at the Worst.

that is to say, by the exploration of reality and its recognition stage by stage along the survey, with an eye to the best consummation possible : briefly evolutionary meliorism. But it is called pessimism, nevertheless, under which word, expressed with condemnatory emphasis, it is regarded by many as some pernicious new thing ...."[9]

In these excerpts Hardy has admirably justified his claim to be called a meliorist by stating that it is just for the purpose of finding a remedy to the ills of life that he has examined in his writings the ills themselves, and if the critics concentrate on his picture of the evils without discerning his quest for the remedy, and call him a pessimist accordingly, it is they who are at fault. The

relation between pessimism and meliorism has been precisely stated in these notes. Pessimism is the view that the world is bad; meliorism suggests that the world can be made better. Pessimism and meliorism are not, therefore, mutually exclusive; on the contrary, the former is at the basis of the latter, for it is only what is bad that needs bettering . The desire for bettering the world arises in one who views it as bad; the idea that it needs bettering hardly comes to one who, like the optimist, regards it as the best possible place. Pessimism has, therefore, a close relation to meliorism, while optimism has none. A meliorist is initially a pessimist. Let us hear John Dewey on this point. Dewey writes, "Meliorism is the belief that the specific conditions which exist at one moment, be they comparatively bad or comparatively good, in any event, may be bettered. It encourages intelligence to study the positive means of good and the obstruction to their realization, and to put forth endeavour for the improvement of the conditions. It arouses confidence and a reasonable hopefulness as optimism does not. For the latter in declaring that good is already realized in ultimate reality tends to make us gloss over the evils that concretely exist ...."[10]

Dewey's definition reveals three important things : first, meliorism is the belief in the possibility of bettering the condition of the world; secondly, it has at its basis the recognition of the ills of life; and thirdly, it is in direct antithesis to optimism. Hardy has emphasised precisely these three things in the exposition of his own views. Why, then, should he not be called a meliorist? True,

his claim need be supported by the intention revealed in his works, and that makes it necessary to examine his writings. But, till we do it, we may concede, at least, that his being a pessimist does in no way rule out the possibility of his becoming a meliorist, that his very pessimism may have urged him to look for the means of amelioration and also that while viewing the ills of life, he may have discovered the remedy for those ills, too.

The apparently contradictory opinions of the author and the critics regarding the former's attitude to life are not really irreconcilable. Dewey's observation shows that pessimism and optimism are not diametrically opposite or mutually exclusive; meliorism may be the development of pessimism. But this is possible if the same factor lies at the basis of both. The basic factor remaining the same, some adjustment or modification of that factor may change pessimism into meliorism. We shall, therefore, look into the cause of Hardy's pessimism.

II

The general view is that Hardy's pessimism is the inevitable result of his rejection of Christian doctrine. David Cecil has written in Hardy the Novelist that the christian teachers have always said that there was no alternative to Christianity but pessimism, that if Christian doctrine was not true, life was a tragedy, and Hardy agreed with them. David Cecil's observation reflects the general view of the cause of Hardy's pessimism, and this view is not surely groundless.

Hardy's characters ascribe their miseries to God, and very often the author himself does the same. Besides that blasphemous words in the authorial observation in Tess, Hardy writes in The Return of the Native.

"The gloomy corner into which accident as much as indiscretion had brought this woman might have led even a moderate partisan to feel that she had cogent reason for asking the Supreme Power by what right a being of such exquisite finish had been placed in circumstances calculated to make of her charms a curse rather than a blessing"[11].

No christian view of God is expressed here. Again, in the same novel Hardy writes, "Human beings in their generous endeavour to construct a hypothesis that shall not degrade a First Cause, have always hesitated to conceive a dominant power of lower moral quality than their own; and even while they sit down and weep by the waters of Babylon invent excuses for the oppression which prompts their tears"[12]. What Hardy seems to mean here is that if human beings do not make the First Cause responsible for their miseries; it is owing to the fact that they themselves are nobler and more gnerous than the author of their miseries. The critics are not to blame if they find the writer taking sides with the impious men and women in their rebellion against God. The characters and the authors fail, the critics contend, to see the divine justice, and it is this that accounts for their inconsolable grief and blasphemous utterances; faith in Providence would make them accept the miseries cheerfully and hope about the future. This is the general view of the cause of Hardy's pessimism.

This view is hardly tenable, for many of the Victorian thinkers lost their faith in Providence but did not turn pessimist on that score. Take, for einstance, Leslie Stepehn, who describes God as "but a Frankenstein's Monster of our own making". His view of God did not, however, lead him to view the world as bad, for in this world he discovered "the glimpses of a Godhead, consubstantial with so many exquisite human hearts, in the perfection of whose goodness all evil ... is dissolved and neutralised away"[13]. In the midst of all natural evils of life, Leslie Stephen discovered man as the source of all delight and hope, and that prevented him from being a pessimist. The thoughts of the Victorian thinkers — T.H. Huxley, Stuart Mill, Leslie Stephen and others, prove that mere loss of faith in a benevolent personal God does not necessarily make one pessimistic.

Hardy's faith in man was not any less than that of these Victorian thinkers, still it could not prevent him for from professing pessimism. H.C. Duffin writes, "Indeed, no writer who presents human kind so worthily can be a thorough-going pessimist. Your true pessimist is he who like Swift depicts man himself as degraded and contemptible. From Hardy's dark canvas there stand out the heroic forms of a mighty Adam and a beauteous Eve. With him man is far from God-like, but still a moral being rich in interest and of high capacity". The exalted notion of human worth could have really saved him from pessimism, had he not used the concept of the blind Will as the Supreme Power. This view of the Will rendered his faith in man too powerless to resist pessimism. The Victorian thinkers could avert

pessimism by their faith in man, even after rejecting all theological belief in a benevolent personal Power; but Hardy could not, and the chief reason was that he was not, an agnostic like T.H. Huxley or Leslie Stephen.

The agnostics speak of the limitation of human knowledge and view the Supreme Power as Unknown and Unknowable. They refuse to believe in the theological idea of God but, true to the agnostic theory, hazard no conjecture about It. God-substitute has no room in the agnostic thoughts. With them the First Cause is simply inscrutable. It is here that Hardy departs from the agnostic belief. He was not a rationalist but an imaginative writer, and with the instinct of a poet-novelist, he put forth his own idea of the First Cause in place of the Christian view of It. The First Cause was for him the Immanent Will. As the First Cause or God-substitute the Will is invincible, and man cannot be shown as conquering It, however great his power may be. The exalted notion of human potentiality, therefore, proved for Hardy no help in resisting pessimism. The concept of the Will has something peculiar to it which takes away the force of all belief and conviction and makes pessimism inescapable. It did so in case of Schopenhauer who viewed the world as Will and, therefore, as evil. It did the same in Hardy's case. The real cause of Hardy's pessimism is not his rjection of the Christian view of God; it is his using the Will as God - substitute. This also explains his revolt against the First cause which appeared to be blasphemy to the believers.

The concept of the Will is responsible for his pessimism; again, this concept, with certain adjustment, forms the basis of his meliorism, too. It has been said early in this cahpter that pessimism may develop into meliorism provided the same factor forms the basis of both; certain adjustment and modification of the factor makes this development possibe. We shall subsequently see how Hardy's initial concept of the irrational Will, modified by incorporating into it the idea of evolution, placed his melioristic vision on a sound basis. It will be found that in claiming to have been a meliorist Hardy put forth no extravagant claim. But I shall take up Hardy's idea of the evolution of the Will and its melioristic implication after discussing his concept of the Will in the following chapter.

R E F E R E N C E S

1. Twentieth Century Eng. Lit. A.C. Ward ch IV
2. Life. F.E. Hardy p 383
3. Life. F.E. Hardy p 112
4. Life. F.E. Hardy p 215

4(a) Fortnightly Review No DX New Series, June 1, 1909.

5. Life. F.E. Hardy p 311
6. Thomas Hardy E. Blunden ch V
7. Life. F.E. Hardy p 387
8. Life. F.E. Hardy p 383
9. A History of Modern Philosophy F. Myer p 543
10. Return of the Native ch III. Book p 262
11. Return of the Native ch I. BK. Sixth 387
12. The need to Believe. The Fortnightly Review Volume LXVI July 1899.
13. Pessimism : Hardy's view of Life — A study of Wessex Novels etc. H.C. Duffin, ch v.

CHAPTER - III

Immanent Will in Hardy

I

Hardy substituted the First Cause for the personal God of Christianity, and his giving it such names as the "Supreme Mover", "the Colossal Prince of the World", "the President of the Immortals" and "the Moulder of Monarchies, Realms, peoples, plains and hills" is to be explained in terms of literary convention.

In a letter to Alfred Noyes, dated December 19, 1920, Hardy writes,

In my fancies, or poems of imagination I have, of course, called this power all sorts of names — never supposing they would be taken for more than fancies. I have even in prefaces warned readers to take them as such - as mere impression of the moment ....[1]

Hardy's own words being sufficient to remove all confusion about the names, attempts may be made now to examine the nature of the First Cause. The concept of the First Cause pertains to the deterministic theory which is that every action has its antecedent. Every effect is related to some cause, which is, in its turn, related

to another cause, and that to the third cause and so on. Every human and other-than-human action of the universe can, therefore, be traced back to the First Cause which through a series of cause and effect determines it. Such is the function of the First Cause in a deterministic view of the universe.

The First Cause is a concept belonging to metaphysics, not to literature and, in order to understand a concept taken into literature and adapted to its need, the concept should be examined first as it exists in its original sphere. Although the concept has been treated by a number of metaphysicians in various ways, their treatment resembles either the treatment by Spinoza or that by Schopenhauer. It will, therefore, suffice to discuss the treatment of the concept by these two philosophers in order to form an idea of the function of the First Cause in the deterministic theory.

Spinoza conceives of Nature under a double aspect, as active and vital process, "nature begetting" (natura naturans) and as the passive product of the process, "nature begotten" (natura naturata). The nature begetting is also called the "law of the necessities of survival" and "effort for self-preservation" (conatus sese preservandi). According to Spinoza, in the living beings the necessities of survival determine instinct, instinct determines desires and desires determine thought and action. The origin of every thought and action can, therefore, be traced back to a desire and that of a desire to an instinct. Now, instinct being the device developed by nature begetting (the law

of necessities of survival, or the effort for self preservation) to achieve its own end of creation, and preservation, nature begetting will be ultimately found to be the cause of every thought and action. Nature begetting (natura naturans) is, with Spinoza, the First Cause.

What is nature begetting to Spinoza is the Will to live to Schopenhauer. Will Durant says, "... it was form conatus sese preservandi, the effort to preserve one's self, that Fichte's Ich was born, and Schopenhauer's "will to live", and Nietzsche's "will to power" and Bergson's elan vital"[2].

Schopenhauer's Will is an incessant impulse; it appears as an impulse in unorganised and vegetable nature and their laws and also in the vegetative part of our life. The Will is the thing in itself, the inner content, the essence of the world. The visible world, the phenomenon, is only the mirror of the Will, its objectivity. Since what the Will wills is always life, it is all one, if, instead of simply saying the Will, we say the Will to live. The Will to live which Schopenhauer treats as the universal cause is, therefore, nothing other than the effort for self-preservation which Spinoza treats as the First Cause.

Now to Hardy's view. One of the names Hardy gives to the First cause is the Immanent Will, and we can form an idea of Hardy's view of it from the following correspondences.

Hardy writes to Edward Wright, 'I quite agree with you in holding that the word "Will" does not perfectly fit the idea to be conveyed — a vague thrusting or urging internal force in no predetermined direction. But it has become accepted in philosophy for want of a better, and is hardly likely to be supplanted by another unless a highly appropriate one could be found, which I doubt. The word that you suggest — Impulse — seems to me to imply a driving power behind it; also a spasmodic movement unlike that of, say, the tendency of an ape to become a man and other such processes....'[3]

Hardy returns to the concept of the Will in his letter to Edward Clodd and writes,

'What you say about the Will is true enough if you take the word in its ordinary sense. But in lack of another word to express precisely what is meant, a secondary sense has gradually arisen, that of effort exercised in a reflex or unconscious manner. Another would have been better if one could have it, though "Power" would not do, as power can be suspended or withheld, and the forces of Nature cannot ....'[4]

As revealed in these letters, Will is, for Hardy, a convenient term to denote "a vague thrusting or urging internal force in no predetermined direction" or "an effort exercised in a reflex or unconscious manner". The idea of the Will thus phrased by Hardy forms the basis of all analyses and inferences of the present discourse, and references will be made to it subsequently.

What brings Hardy's Immanent Will very close to Spinoza's "natura naturans" and Schopenhauer's "Will to live" is, of course, its function as the force of creation. Hardy's Will, "a vague thrusting, urging internal force in no predetermined direction", works only to the end of creation, its want of pre-determined direction meaning not only the want of purpose but also the heedlessness to the consequences. The terms, "purblind", "unconscious", "unweeting", so often used by Hardy with reference to the Will, actually imply its recklessness and unconcern for the consequences of its operation. This point will be taken up later, the more important point being the function of the Will as the creative force.

In the poem <u>Cave of the Unborn</u>, the Will is described as driving the shapes from the Cave into the world:

> And they came helter-skelter out,
> Driven forward like a rabble rout
> Into the world they had so desired
> By the all Immanent Will[5].

The tragic novels give us a better idea of the responsibility of the Will, conceived as sex impulse, for the creation of beings. Creation takes a more concrete form as the process of procreation. Little Sorrow, Tess's illegitimate child by Alec; Father Time, the unfortunate child of Arabella and Jude; the children born of Sue and Jude out of their "natural marriage"; Thomasin's child by Wildeve;

— all are products of the blind impulse of youths and maids. Again, because of her passion for Fitzpiers, Felice Charmond has her shame to hide, and despite his great love for Tess, Angel Clare cannot accept her as his wife, for he feels uneasy about the future disgrace to the children to be born to them. Thus, children or the thoughts about them are always part of Hardy's treatment of sexual passion. In some cases, the passion of the youths and maids has found a social sanction in marriage, and in others it has not; but, in either case, offsprings are born, or likely to be born. Love has been the chief theme with many a writer, but few have so emphasised the procreative function of love as Hardy. Sexual passion, which acts as the instinct for self preservation of the species, is for Hardy one of the diverse forms of the Will; hence the stress on its creative, rather procreative function.

Hardy's view of sexual love as the Will to live finds its parallel in Schopenhauer's view of it, and the following excerpt from the Essays of Schopenhauer is much to the point.

"What manifests itself in the individuals' consciousness as the instinct of sex in general, without being concentrated on any particular individual, is very plainly in itself, in its generalised form, the Will to live. On the other hand, that which appears as instinct of sex directed to a certain individual is in itself the will to live as a definitely determined individual.

"The real aim of the whole love's romance, although the persons concerned are unconscious of the fact, is that a particular being may come into the world; and the way and manner in which it is accomplished is a secondary consideration. However much those of lofty sentiments, and especially of those in love, may refute the gross realism of my argument, they are in the wrong.

* * *

"Finally, it is the will to live presenting itself in the whole species which so forcibly and exclusively attracts two individuals of different sex towards each other. This will anticipates in the being of which they shall become parents, an objectification of its nature corresponding to its aims"[6].

Thus, with Schopenhauer, every affair of love is the working of the Will to live aiming at begetting a being in order to perpetuate the Will to live through the species, and Hardy's view is not much different from it. This explains why the birth of children or the thought of their being born is inseparably related to Hardy's treatment of sexual love.

The similarity between Schopenhauer's treatment of the sexual love and Hardy's treatment of it rests not only on the end, but also on the means of achieving that end. According to Schopenhauer, that mandate of the will which objectifies itself in the species, presents

itself in the consciousness of the lover under the mask of the anticipation of an infinite happiness which is to be found in his union with this particular woman. This idea of happiness as an illusion used by the will to lure the individuals on to its own end is present in Hardy's novels, too.

While explaining the reanimation of Tess after the depression born of her distress, Hardy writes,

"It was unexpected youth surging up anew after its temporary check and bringing with it hope and the invincible instincts towards self-delight"[7].

Hardy stresses elsewhere the lure of happiness as the motive force in sexual love:

"The irresistible automatic tendency to find sweet pleasure somewhere, which pervades all life from the meanest to the highest had at length mastered Tess"[8].

This is dealt with again in the account of Tess's passion for Clare.

"The appetite for joy which pervades all creation, that tremendous force which sways humanity to its purpose, as the tide sways the helpless reed, was not to be controlled by vague lubrications over social rubric"[9].

The power of the illusion to make the individuals blind to the consequences of passion is fully expressed in the authorial observation on Tess's response to Clare's declaration of love. Pressed by Clare for an answer, Tess begs him to let her alone and then flings herself upon a quiet place as much to give herself the happiness of feeling the momentary shoots of joy as to endure her fear and anxiety. Hardy comments:

"In reality, she was drifting into acquiescence. Every see-saw of her breath, every wave of her blood, every pulse singing in her ears, was a voice that joined with nature in revolt against her scrupulousness"[10].

Thus, in respect of treating sexual passion as the will to live working to the end of procreation by using the lure of happiness to urge the individuals on to that end, Hardy stands very close to Schopenhauer. But sexual love is just one of the forms in which Hardy sees the Immanent Will work in the world of beings; another form in which the will works is the desire for power. In the first case, the will acts as the begetter of beings; in the second, it acts as the "Moulder of Monarchies, Realms, peoples, plains and hills", as the "empire making lust". It must be understood here that this latter desire is not essentially different from the desire for life, manifested in sexual love; if sexual love is but the will to live, the "empire making lust" is only the will to live more fully, the desire

for more life. Napoleon's lust for power is the same as Eustacia's desire for "what is called life — music, poetry, passion, war and all that beating and pulsing that is going on in the great arteries of the world"; one differs from the other in degrees, not in kind.

The idea of the Will to power that came to Nietzsche was not different from Schopenhauer's will to live. Here is W. Durrant comenting on Nietzsche's will to power:

"At Frankfort, on his way to the front, he saw a troop of cavalry, passing with a magnificent clatter and display through the town; there and then, came the perception, the vision out of which was to grow his entire philosophy.

" 'I felt for the first time that the strongest and highest will to Life does not find expression in a miserable struggle for existence, but in a Will to War, a Will to Power, a will to overpower' "[11].

Nietzsche's own words in W. Durrant's quotation suffice to show that his will to power is basically the same as Schopenhauer's Will to Live, and it is quite natural that in the treatment of the Will Hardy proceeds from the Schopenhauerian sphere to the Nietzschean.

The Will to Power which Hardy has phrased as the "empire making lust" guides the footsteps of Napoleon, and the man, whom the world

calls the Dictator, is an helpless an instrument of the Will as Eustacia Vye and Jude Fawley. Here is an excerpt from the scene on the banks of the Niemen, near Kowno (Part III, Act 1 Sc. 1) with Hardy's anatomy of the Will:

"An unnatural light usurps that of the sun, bringing into view, like breezes made visible, the films or brain-tissues of the Immanent Will, that pervade all things, ramifying through the whole army, Napoleon included, and moving them to Its inexplicable artistries.

"Napoleon (with sudden despondency)
That which has
worked will work ! - Since Lodi Bridge.
The force I then felt move me moves on
whether I will or no; and oftentimes
Against my better mind .... Why am I
here?
— By laws imposed on me inexorably !
History makes use of me to weave her
web
To her long while aforetime - figured
mesh
And contemplated charactery; no more.
Well, war's my trade; and whencesoever
springs
This one in hand, they'll label it
with my name"[12]

The same sense of being a helpless instrument of the Will is voiced in Napoleon's mutterings in his sleep at the vision of the mutilated corpses gazing reproachfully at him:

> "Napoleon (in his sleep). Why, why should
> this reproach be dealt me now?
> Why hold me my own master, if I be
> Ruled by the pitiless Planet of Destiny?
> (Part III, Act vi, Sc 111)[13]

Needless to say, the "Planet of Destiny" is, like the "President of the Immortals" in Tess, only a figurative expression used for the driving Force of the World, which is, for Hardy, the Immanent Will. The craving for power which Hardy sees as working through Napoleon is just a form of the Immanent Will which works in another form, viz. sexual love, in the lives of Hardy's lovers and mistresses. If Hardy's tragic novels illustrate the Schopenhauerian treatment of the Will, his epic drama illustrates the Nietzschean, and it is the same concept of the Immanent Will that links his tragic novels with his poetry and epic drama.

II

It has been said about Hardy's treatment of the Will that it runs parallel to both the Spinozistic treatment of the Effort for self-preservation and Schopenhauerian treatment of the Will to live, but that is true upto a certain point. In fact, the parallel between

Spinoza and Schopenhauer cannot be stretched far because of the basic difference between the concept of the "Effort for self-preservation" (conatus sese preservendi) and the "Will to live". Both "Effort" and "Will" act as the creative force; but, while Schopenhauer treats the Will as also responsible for destruction, Spinoza's "Effort" has no part to play in the destruction of beings. Hardy's stress on the creative function of the Will, therefore, likens his treatment to the treatment of both Spinoza and Schopenhauer, but his emphasis on the destructive aspect of the Will diverts his treatment from the Spinozistic line and directs it along the Schopenhauerian one.

As already stated, the difference between the systems of Spinoza and Schopenhauer is owing to the difference between the concepts of the Effort and the Will. In the Spinozistic system, the "Effort for self-preservation", or instinct, or "nature begetting" is all one with reason. Reason operates in the human mind as the Effort for self-preservation helping the individuals overcome the chaotic flux of his own desires which arises from the influence of the external causes, and determine what is really conducive to their existence. According to Spinoza, an individual's instinct for self-preservation is not anything, alien to reason.

"Will and understanding are not elements of man's spiritual nature which, though closely related and continually acting and reacting on each other, are yet different in nature and function. Will and

understanding are one and the same"[14].

Spinoza asserts that to act absolutely according to the laws of one's own nature is to live under the guidance of reason, and, since reason helps us avoid the harmful and find the good, it cannot lead an individual to evil or destruction. Instinct or the Effort which is reason itself, therefore, does not only create beings, but also shows them the way to happiness; if they come to suffer, it is not for their following the dictates of instinct or Effort for self-preservation, but for their ignoring it, under the influence of the desires arising from the external causes.

Schopenhauer contradicts Spinoza on the identification of instinct for self-preservation with reason and takes a different line. His view of the matter is as follows:

"It seems to have been the dependence ... of the human power of deliberation upon the faculty of abstract thinking, and thus also of judging and drawing conclusions, that led both Descartes and Spinoza to identify the decision of the will with the faculty of asserting and denying (the faculty of judgement). From this ... Spinoza concluded that the will is necessarily determined by the motives, as the judgement is by the reason. The latter doctine is in a sense true, but it appears as a true conclusion from a false premise"[15].

Spinoza's identifying the will with reason appears to Schopenhauer to be a false premise, and it is on this point that the essential difference between the concepts of Spinoza and Schopenhauer lies. Schopenhauer's Will is "a blind impulse"; it is "without knowledge". Schopenhauer's Will is explained by W. Durrant in the following way:

"Under the conscious intellect is the conscious or unconscious will, a striving persistent vital force, a spontaneous activity, a will of imperious desire. The intellect may seem at times to lead the will, but only as a guide leads his master; the will is the strong blind man who carries on his shoulder the lame man who can see. We do not want a thing because we have found reason for it; we find reason for it because we want it ....

* * *

Men are only apparently drawn from in front; in reality, they are pushed from behind; they think they are led by what they see, when in truth they are driven on by what they feel — by instincts, of whose operation they are half the time unconscious. Intellect is merely the minister of foreign affairs; nature has produced it for the service of the individual will. Therefore, it is only designed to know things so far as they afford motives for the will, but not to fathom them or to comprehend their true being"[16].

Schopenhauer contradicts Spinoza's identification of the instinct or effort for self-preservation with intellect or reason, and regards the will which he substitutes for the Instinct or the Effort, as irrational, and views it as predominating man's intellect or understanding. This difference between the concepts of Spinoza and Schopenhauer leads to two opposite outlooks and attitudes. But leaving it aside for the moment, the question whether Hardy stands closer to Spinoza or to Schopenhauer in his view of the rationality of the Immanent Will is discussed here.

The Immanent Will, the force of creation is often described in Hardy's poetry as the Mother, and in the poem The Lacking Sense (Poems of Past and Present) Time explains that the "fearful unfulfilments" — that "red ravage through her zone whereat all creation groans", is all owing to the Mother's "veiled deficiency", her "sightlessness". The treatment of the Immanent Will as Mother recurs in Genetrix Laesa (Human Shows), and there also Hardy ascribes the miseries and sufferings of the world to the Mother's unawareness.

It is to be noted that whenever, the Immanent Will, the Force of creation, is conceived as the Mother, the poet stresses her sightlessness or unawareness and makes it responsible for the miseries of the creatures, and this blindness or unconsciousness of Nature or the Mother can only mean a certain limitation of the Immanent Will — its irrationality, its want of understanding or consciousness. The poem Doom and She in which the Mother is shown as "unlit with sight"

and her Lord as "vacant of feeling" corroborates the contention about Hardy's view of the limitation of the Immanent Will.

The question of blinoness or irrationality is associated with Hardy's concept of the driving Force of the world from the very beginning. In Hap, an early poem, (1886) Hardy, writes,

> How arrives it joy lies
> slain,
> And why unblooms the best hope ever
> sown?
> — Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and
> rain,
> And dicing Time for gladness casts a
> moan ....
> These purblind Doomsters had as readily
> strown
> Blisses about my pilgrimage as pain[17].

A number of conjectures as to the cause of the creatures' sufferings have been made in Nature's Questioning, another early poem by Hardy, and the thought of the unconsciousness of the Power responsible for the creation and propulsion of the world is one of those conjectures:

> Has some Vast Imbecility
> Mighty to build and blend
> But impotent to tend,
> Framed us in jest, and left us now
> to hazardry?

Or come we of an Automaton
Unconscious of our pains? ...
Or are we live remains
Of Godhead dying downwards, brain
and eye now gone?[18]

The idea of the blindness of the driving Force or Power, or the Will,found in Hardy's early poems recurs in The Dynasts written in his advanced years. The Spirit of the Years says to the Spirit of the Pities about this limitation of the Immanent Will:

Nay, blame not ! For what judgement
can ye blame?
In that immense unweeting Mind is
shown
One far above forethinking; processive,
Rapt, superconscious; a Clairvoyancy
That know not what It knows, yet
works therewith[19].
(Part First. Act v. Sc IV)

Again, towards the close of the drama, when Napoleon's defeat is complete, the same Spirit comments,

Thus doth the Great Foresightless
mechanize
In blank entrancement now
as evermore
Its ceaseless artistries in Circumstance
Of curious stuff and braid, as just
forthshown[20].
(Part Third. After Scene)

The view of the blindness or unconsciousness of the Force or Will so frequent in Hardy's poetry expresses itself in the following notes:

"Feb 5, 1898. Write a prayer, or hymn, to One not Omnipotent, but hampered ..."[21]

"May 29, 1922. Poem I - First Cause, omniscent, not omnipotent — limitations, difficulties etc. from being only able to work by Law (His only failing is lack of foresight)"[22].

The question of the blindness of Hardy's Will may be finally settled by referring once again to the author's own definition of the Will as "a vague thrusting or urging internal force in no pre-determined direction", or "an effort exercised in a reflex or unconscious manner". This question being thus settled, it may be logically inferred that Hardy's concept of the Immanent Will is similar to Schopenhauer's view of the "Will to live" and much different from Spinoza's "Effort for self-preservation".

But, what does this blindness of the Will mean? And how does the world of beings created by the Will suffer for its blindness? Sexual love and lust for power being the two manifestations of the Will, the answers to the questions may be sought chiefly with reference to them. It has been said early in this chapter that blindness implies,

in this case, the heedlessness to consequences, the absolute indifference of the Will to the result of its operation in the lives of the individuals. Apparently, this blindness of the Will implies its unconcern for the miseries and ruin of those who are its instruments. A deeper probe into Hardy's thoughts, however, shows this blindness to be something more than mere indifference. It is not just a matter of attitude; it is rather a certain limitation or deficiency. To be more precise, it is the want of consciousness, intelligence or rationality. The Will works on to the end of creation, but what point is there in creating new beings, institutions, ideas and values, if every act of creation necessitates the ruin and extinction of the existing individuals or things. The process seems interminable, and all that exist are to perish through pain and suffering in order to make the birth of new beings and things possible. What are born through suffering, pain, death, and destruction will themselves perish in producing newer individuals, institutions and ideas. This will go on, with nothing to make the process purposeful and meaningful. No definite goal of the creative process is discernible. The Will, the driving force behind the process, is blind in as much as it is without the intelligence to understand the pointlessness of the whole thing. The blindness of Hardy's Immanent Will means its want of consciousness or intelligence, and what appears to be its indifference to the suffering of the beings is only the sign of this deficiency.

The Will is blind and its blindness is obvious from its heedlessness to the consequences, its absolute indifference to the result of its working in the lives of the individuals. But how does this blindness account for the individuals' miseries? It has been said that in viewing the Will as urging the individuals to the end of procreation by using the illusion of infinite happiness as the incentive Hardy resembles Schopenhauer, and it may be added that even in their views of the consequences of the working of the Will, the novelist stands close to the philosopher. This point will be discussed with reference to two of the divergent forms in which the Will works in individuals' lives, namely, love and war.

Schopendhauer's view of the responsibility of sexual love for the miseries of men and women may be summed up in the following points : first, love, if unfulfilled, produces in the lovers the sense of having missed a great happiness, and it makes them miserable; secondly, requited love proves, in no time, to be without that happiness which it once seemed to possess, and the result is disillusion and despair; thirdly, love turns the eyes of the lovers to the future, i.e. to the birth of a new being, and makes them ignore the present which, once the spell of love is over, forces itself upon their attention again with all its wretchedness, and remorse is the result. In short, unrequited love makes the lovers unhappy, and unhappiness is the result of love requited. What remain for the lovers are death, suicide and murder; jealousy, rivalry, bitterness and frustration.

Hardy's tragic novels illustrate Schopenhauer's view of love's responsibility for human miseries. The thought of suicide visits Eustacia's mind, and her death by accident brings her freedom from miseries. Wildeve, her lover, dies in his attempt to save her, and Clym, her husband pulls on with the drudgery of being alive. Bathsheba, too, views suicide as the means of escaping her miseries, though she lives on, with all her zest for life lost. Boldwood kills Sergeant Troy, his rival for Bathsheba's love. Fanny Robin, the girl seduced by Troy, dies in child birth, destitute and afflicted. Then, Giles Winterborne dies a disappointed lover; Marty South lives resigned. Felice Charmond, Fitzpier's mistress, comes to rouse in him disgust and is, finally, killed by an old lover of hers. Jude finds Arabella, his wife, a hateful companion for life, bears the torment of being deserted by Sue, his beloved, and finally, lying in his death-bed, curses the day he was born. Sue atones for the "wickedness" of her passion for Jude by living with Phillotson, the husband she hates. And Tess is hanged for having murdered Alec, her seducer, in her attempt to be re-united to Angel Clare, her dear husband. The incidents of death, suicide, murder, rivalry and frustration suffice to show the disaster wrought by sexual love in the lives of men and women, and corroborate Schopenhauer's view of love's responsibility for human miseries. Individuals are faced with their ruin, physical or spiritual; but it cannot stop the relentless working of sexual passion, — the instinct or the Will. In working to the end of perpetuating the will to live of the species through procreation, it remains heedless

to the plight and disaster it brings to the individuals; it works on blindfolded.

The working of will to live is shown in other spheres, too, and with the same consequences. It works in the vegetable world :

"Here as everywhere, Unfulfilled Intention which makes life what it is was obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper was interrupted, the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling"[23].

The will to live working in the world of trees and plants is at work in human society producing clashes and disaster. The will of the individuals sometimes expresses itself collectively in the form of group or class-interest, and there are hostility and rivalry between classes — the yeomen class of small holders or peasants and the land-owning capitalists (The Woodlanders), or the farmers or traders and the working-men (Tess). The force responsible for the clashes is the Will - the will to live or the will for more life, and the result is always the same - suffering and ruin of one or the other individual or class.

The strife and struggle is sometimes shown on an interspecific plane. In Hardy's novels we see the hunter and the hounds chasing the wounded birds, the farmer and his dogs engaged in rat-killing on the

threshing floor, and men catching and carrying away pigeons and setting gins for rabbits. It is always the scene of suffering, pain, or death.

The working of the Will is shown on a much larger scale in the war-poems and The Dynasts, where man preys on man, and in the frenzied working of the Will to Power, man and Nature suffer alike. The Spirit of the Pities relates :

"But mark that roar —
A mesh of men's crazed cries encreating
mates
To run them through and end their agony;
Boys calling on their mothers, veterans
Blaspheming God and man. Those shady
shapes
Are horses, maimed in myriads, tearing
round
In maddening pangs, the harnessing
they wear
Clanking discordant jingles as they
tear ! "[24]
(Part Third Sc ii)

Later, the chorus of the Years reports :

"yea, the coneys are scared by the thud of
hoofs,
And their white scuts flash at their vanishing
heels,
And swallows abandon the hamlet-roofs
The mole's tunnelled chambers are crushed
by wheels,

The larks eggs scattered, their owners fled;
And the hedgehog's household the sapper unseals.
The snail draws in at the terrible tread,
But in vain; he is crushed by the felloe-
rim;
The worm asks what can be overhead,
And wriggles deep from a scene so grim,
And guesses him safe; for he does not know
What a foul red flood will be soaking
him !
Beaten about by the heel and toe
Are butterflies, sick of the day's long rheum,
To die of a worse than the weather-foe.
Trodden and bruised to a miry tomb
Are ears that have greened but will never
be gold,
And flowers in the bud that will never bloom"[25].

(Part Third Sc XII)

Such is the scene of massacre and devastation in which the "will to power", "the will to overpower" goes on working. Horror and pain are regnant, but the will works on relentlessly through the Dictator, its instrument. It works on to the end of creation - creation of new dynasty, new empire and new social order, institutions, ideas and values, but of the destruction it causes while working to that end it remains unaware. This explains how the blindness or irrationality of the Will is responsible for the miseries of the world.

The foregoing discussion on Hardy's Immanent Will may be summed up as follows:

the Immanent Will is the First Cause or World ground and a substitute for God as the Force of creation and destruction;

secondly, It is omnipresent, and sexual passion creating beings through procreation and spirit of war bringing forth, through changes, new regimes, institutions and ideas are two of Its diverse forms;

thirdly, the Will is blind i.e. irrational, and Its blindness means Its absolute indifference to the miseries of the individuals through whom It works, and also Its unawareness of the pointlessness and purposelessness of creation and destruction;

fourthly, man and nature are Its products and also Its helpless instruments; and

finally, as the Force of creation, It resembles Spinoza's natura naturans (nature begetting), Schopenhauer's Will to live and Nietzsche's Will to power; but the stress on Its irrationality and responsibility for miseries and ruins brings It closer to Schopenhauer's than to Spinoza's concept.

This is Hardy's view of the Immanent Will, and my contention is that it is this view of the Will, and not the mere rejection of the

christian view of God as a benevolent personal Power that accounts for his pessimism. I give my reasons. First, consider the dismality of the situation. How bleak a picture of the Will-ridden world ! How terrible a vision of strife and rivalry, death and disastre ! Words like "pity" and "fear" seem too inadequate to convey the excruciating pain, heart-breaking sighs, frenzied struggle and slow but sure process of decay and waste. The vision is something more than tragic; it is pessimistic. But its pessimistic character consists not in the intensity of the sufferings or in their pervasiveness, but also in the seemingly irremediable nature of the sufferings. Mere loss of faith in benevolent Christian God cannot create so appalling a vision; for, God or no God, man alone is capable of ameliorating his condition. The atheists, the agnostics, the sceptics — all discover the way to amelioration in man. But, for all his faith in human potentiality, Hardy could not suggest the idea of amelioration through man; for, to show man as conquering the Will would be to show the triumph of the creation over the Creator, of microcosm over macrocosm, and that would be absurd. Those who refuse to believe in God, or have doubts in His existence, or simply views Him as Unknowable and dismisses all thoughts about Him, have no such difficulty, but Hardy had. He used the Will as God-substitute, and the Will made all prospect of amelioration through man absurd. Hardy was well-aware of the absurdity and suggested no idea of amelioration by man till he modified the concept of the Will. Hardy, too, found the way out of the quandary the world was in by the operation of the Will, and he too, discovered the way to amelioration in man, but not until he incorporated the idea

of evolution into the concept of the Will. This will be discussed in the chapter on evolution. Here, however, it can be reasonably said that Hardy's view of the Will has something about it to make the pain and suffering of the world look irremediable and, give Hardy sufficient reason to be pessimistic. Here we have arrived at an important point in the discussion on Hardy's outlook. Those who call Hardy a pessimist stop at this point, and refuse to proceed further. Viewed from this point, Hardy will surely appear to be a pessimist, but one step ahead, and this pessimist will be found to have discovered the means of amelioration. We shall go further in our quest and get sufficient evidences in support of our contention that Hardy was a pessimist turned meliorist.

R E F E R E N C E S

1. Life. F.E. Hardy p 409
2. The Story of Philosophy. ch IV. See VI
3. Life. F.E. Hardy p 324
4. Life. F.E. Hardy p 318
5. Wessex Poems & Other Verses
6. Essays of Schopenhauer. S.H. Dricks p 173
7. Tess ch 16
8. Tess ch 30
9. Tess ch 30
10. Tess ch 28
11. The Story of Philosophy. W. Durrant
12. The Scenes from the Dynasts ed. J.H. Fowler p 63
13. The Scenes from the Dynasts ed. J.H. Fowler p 90
14. Spinoza John Caird ch IX
15. The Philosophy of Schopenhauer. Fourth Book p 2300
16. The Story of Philosophy. W. Durrant ch VII See IV. p 312
17. Wessex Poems and Other Verses
18. Wessex Poems and Other Verses
19. Scenes from the Dynasts ed J.H. Fowler, p. 36
20. Scnes from the Dynasts. J.H. Fowler p 112
21. Life. F.E. Hardy p 297
22. Life. F.E. Hardy p 417
23. The Woodlanders ch VII
24. Scenes from The Dynasts ed. J.H. Fowler p 66
25. Scenes from the Dynasts ed. J.H. Fowler p 95

CHAPTER - IV

Hardy's Idea of Evolution

Hardy himself said (see Ch II) that he had examined the ills of life only in order to find the remedy. We have followed him in his survey of the ills and their cause; and now we shall examine his quest for the remedy. Hardy's postulating the blind Will in place of God made the sufferings of the world seem not only appalling and pervasive but also irremediable, and this put him in a dilemma. He could neither accept the world's miseries as interminable and human effort as meaningless, nor justify his hope of amelioration without abandoning his concept of the blind Will as the Supreme Power. The only way out of the dilemma was bringing in the idea of the evolution of the Will from impercipience to percipience, from blindness to the recovery from it. If the Will could be shown as gradually gaining consciousness, becoming aware of the disastrous consequences of its working and, therefore, mending its ways, the idea of amelioration would find a firm basis. And this is exactly what Hardy did. Whether the idea was his own or borrowed from others we do not know, but we have evidences of Hardy's interest in philosophical studies and of his acquaintance with the evolutionary theory of Von Hartmann (see H.C. Duffin's list of Hardy's collections). But, what is the idea of evolution!

The scientific theory of evolution developed by Lamarck and Charles Darwin does not involve the World-ground or the First Cause in the process, but concentrates on the facts of the world of beings — plants and animals. It makes no conjecture about the culmination of the process, except that the fittest will survive the struggle for existence. But the metaphysical theory encompasses the world-ground, or the First Cause, and views the evolution of the phenomenal world as the manifestation of Its evolution. The Gnostics of the second century were the first to expound the metaphysical theory of evolution. Valentinus offered the theory of the unfolding of the deity and explained the creation of the world out of this unfolding. This theory of the creation is opposed to the Christian view of it as an uncaused production from the Will of God; but creation is regarded here not as a continuous process but as a fact in time that occurred once for all. The Gnostic theory cannot be likened to the modern theories of evolution; for, while the former regards the evolution of the Supreme Being or World-ground as having reached its culmination in the creation of the earthly world, the latter views the process as still continuing to some inconjecturably remote end. Still the Gnostic theory is important, for it is here that we get, for the first time, the idea of the Supreme Power — the World-ground, not as a changeless entity but as a changing, developing Force, unfolding itself from the darkness of primeval essence to complete revelation.

Of the exponents of the modern theory of evolution, we shall discuss only Schelling and Von Hartmann. As the Gnostics conceived of the World-ground as the darkness of primeval essence, Schelling regarded it as a dark striving, an infinite impulse, or an unconscious will. But, whereas the Gnostics employed their theory only to explain the creation of the world, Schelling used it to hold forth a vision of the ultimate return of the world to God. He recognised two kinds of unity of God. The not yet unfolded unity of the beginning (God as Alpha) he termed indifference or groundlessness; the more valuable unity of the end, attained by unfolding, (God as Omega) was called identity or spirit. The groundless divided into two equally eternal beginnings, nature and light, or longing and understanding, in order that the two may become one in love. The process of creation started when longing separated itself from the world ground and produced the world of sense. The light or understanding of the World-ground revealed itself in reason. The world of sense later strives to return to the World-ground and is aided by reason in its striving. At the culmination of the evolutionary process the world of sense will submerge in the Absolute and the unrest of striving will cease and peace will rest over the All.

An important aspect of Schelling's theory of evolution is the idea that the seed of consciousness, later, manifested in man, guiding his longing towards the Absolute, must have been present in the essence of the World-ground which he calls Unconscious. The state in which the Unconscious or the World-ground, comprising both light

and dark principles, understanding and impulse, exists is a state of "higher consciousness" and not an unconscious state, and the term "higher consciousness" is used to indicate the initial condition of the World-ground in Von Hartmann's The Philosophy of the Unconscious (1869). Hartmann regards the World-ground as a complex resultant of the irrational Will (cf. Schopenhauer and Hardy) and the logical Idea (Schelling).

According to Hartmann, creation is an error of the World-ground. The creation of the world started when the blind Will in the World ground drew to itself, in its irrational striving after existence (Will to live), the logical Idea, the only content which is capable of realization. But this latter seeks to make good the error committed by the Will, by bringing consciousness into the field as a combatant against the insatiable, ever-yearning, never-satisfied Will, and this consciousness will one day force the irrational Will back into latency, into the blessed state of not-willing. The goal of the world development is deliverance from the misery of existence, the return from the Will and representation, to the original harmonious equilibrium of the two functions which has been disturbed by the origin of the world. The error of the alogical Will of the World-ground in creating the world of sense will be amended this way. This is Hartmann's view of the evolution of the World-ground or First Cause in its outline.

We shall now see if Hardy really adopted this idea of evolution into his concept of the Will. In a letter to Caleb Saleeby Hardy writes, "The assumption of the unconsciousness in the driving force is, of course, not new. But, I think, the view of the unconscious force as gradually becoming conscious i.e. that consciousness creeping further and further back towards the origin of force had never (so far as I know) been advanced before The Dynasts appeared"[1]. Hardy claims to have been the first to present the evolutionary idea and writes in a letter to Edward Clodd "The idea of the Unconscious Will becoming conscious with the flux of time is also new, I think, whatever it may be worth. At any rate I have never met with it anywhere"[2]. Hardy's own words quoted above sufficiently show that he was not only interested in the evolutionary idea but also treated it in his own writings, and he may have been the first to treat this idea in literature. The question of Hardy's treating the evolutionary idea in his writings being thus settled, attempts will be made now to trace the points of contact between Hardy's ideas and the theory of the metaphysicians.

First, Hartmann regarded the creation of the world as an error of the First cause, and Hardy did not view it otherwise. In the poem By the Earth's Corpse, God is seen reflecting remorsefully on the error of having created the earth:

> That I made Earth, and life, and man
> It still repenteth me[3].

Secondly, the metaphysical idea is that all miseries arise from the working of the Unconscious, and Hardy treats it in the poem The Lacking Sense. About the Will personified he writes

> "That sightless are those orbs of hers? — which
> bar to her omniscience
> Brings those fearful unfulfilments, that red
> ravage through her zones
> whereat all creation groans"[4].

This idea of the Creator's blindness as responsible for life's miseries recurs in the poem Doom and She. Here the "Mother of all things made", "unlit with sight", is heard musing,

> "Sometimes from lairs of life
> Methinks I catch a groan,
> Or multitudinous moan,
> As though I had schemed a world of strife,
> Working by touch alone"[5].

It is, therefore, clear that Hardy was at one with the metaphysicians as regards the responsibility of the irrationality of the Will for the miseries of life.

Thirdly, Hartmann spoke of the original error of the World-ground being amended by the dawning of consciousness on the Unconscious, and Hardy's view was not much different. The idea of the ultimate

triumph of intelligence over the irrationality of the First Cause, of reason over impulse, is the very basis of Hardy's melioristic belief. This idea is expressed in the poem, Xenophanes The Monist of Colophon:

> Yea, on, near the end,
> Its doings may mend;
> Aye, when you're forgotten
> And old cults are rotten
> And bulky codes shotten
> Xenophanes ![6]

A clearer expression is given in the poem The Blow:

> Time's finger should have stretched to show
> No aimful author's was the blow
> That swept us prone
> But the Immanent Doer's that doth not know,
> Which in some age unguessed of us
> May lift Its blinding incubus
> And see and own
> It grieves me I did thus and thus ![7]

It is, however, in the poem, Sapphic Fragment that the idea is conveyed most clearly;

> Perhaps thy ancient rote-restricted ways
> Thy ripening rule transcends;
> That listless effort tends
> To grow percipient with advance of days,
> And with percipience mends[8].

The idea occurring now and then in Hardy's poetry has been treated in greater detail in the epic-drama The Dynasts. The note of hopefulness arising from the idea of the Will becoming conscious rings in the words of the Semichorus of the Pities in Scene xvi, The Overworld, Part Third:

> "Semichorus : 'We hold that thy unscanted scope
> Affords a food for final Hope,
> That mild eyed Prescience ponders nigh
> Life's loom, to lull it by and by.' "[9]

Finally, with all cries and clangour of the battle stopped, the epic-drama ends with the Chorus's hopeful song:

> "Semichorus I of the Pities
> 'Nay ; — shall not Its blindness break?
> Yea, must not Its heart awake,
> Promptly tending
> To Its mending
> In a genial germing purpose, and for
> Loving-kindness sake' !
>
> "Semichorus II
>
> 'Should It never
> Curb or cure
> Aught whatever
> Thus endure
> Whom It quickens, let them darkle to
> extinction swift and sure'.

"Chorus

'But — a stirring thrills the air
Like to sounds of joyance there
That the rages
Of the ages
Shall be cancelled, and deliverance offered
from the darts that were,
Consciousness the Will informing, till It
fashion all things fair !"[10]

The instance given above may be sufficient to prove that the metaphysical idea of the dawning of consciousness on the irrational Will was very much present in Hardy's views of the First Cause and Its evolution. This is the third point of contact between Hardy's evolutionary idea and the metaphysician's theory of it. But, is the end of evolution the same for Hardy and the metaphysicians? We shall examine the question.

Schelling maintains that the final purpose behind Creation is the reconciliation of the finite things with God and the cessation of their self-subsistence. To Hartmann, the goal is the restoration of the original equilibrium of the two functions of the World-ground and the cessation of the creative process. The goal is deliverance from the misery of existence, and the peace of non-existence. All metaphysical theories of the evolution of the First Cause meet on the common point that the goal of the evolutionary process is the extinction of earth and life. Hardy agrees with the metaphysicians.

There is the suggestion of the extinction of the earth in the lines of the poem, By the Earth's Corpse, quoted earlier. The end will reach when flesh and herb will be fossils, and all will be extinct, and their piteous dust will remain.

To the metaphysicians expounding the theory of evolution this extinction of the earth and life is the submergence of the world of sense, a product of the Will, in the World ground, the All; this is for them only amending the error the Will made by starting the process of creation. And for Hardy this is the Great Adjustment taking place. Hardy who once saw the "Powerful Wrong" trample the "feeble Right", later, writes,

> " 'Men have not heard, men have not seen
> Since the beginning of the world
> What earth and heaven mean;
> But now their curtains shall be furled,
>
> 'And they shall see what is, ere long,
> Not through a glass, but face to face;
> And Right shall disestablish Wrong
> The great Adjustment is taking place' "[11].

For Hardy, professing the view of the blind Will as working to the end of creation and increasing the miseries of life, "Adjustment" could hardly mean anything but the dawning of consciousness on the Will and consequent cessation of the process of creation. view of this similarity on the essential points, it can be reasonabl

said that Hardy's idea of the evolution of the First Cause, the Will, closely resembles that of the metaphysicians.

We have examined Hardy's view of the evolution of the Will and its similarity to the metaphysical theory; but, what does this evolution of the Will really mean? Is it something supernatural occurring in some remote region, like heaven, far away from the world of beings? Does it occur even without the world striving for it? Has it any relation to the change and development taking place in this world? These are some of the most important questions relating to the idea of the evolution of the Will, and we can understand the idea better by trying to answer them. It must be clearly understood that the evolution of the Will is all one with the evolution of beings — their mental and moral development. The Immanent Will is but the Collective Will of the individuals and Its evolution means only the changes that the individual will suffers. For Hardy, as for the metaphysicians, the Will has no existence outside Life — life of human and other-than human species. Since Life is the only sphere of the working of the Will, it is only in the various forms of Life that Its evolution can take place. The evolution of the Will is, therefore, the same as the evolution of the world of beings. It starts when there emerges in the individuals an opposite force, namely, reason, and it progresses in propertion as this force gains in strength in them . The result of the development of reason is obviously the weakening of the blind impulse, and this process is termed the evolution of the World ground or First Cause. The exponents of the evolutionary theory hold that, through its development in the individuals, rationality will spread in the species and, finally, in the world of

beings, and, consequently, the blind Will or impulse will grow less powerful, till, at least, reason or consciousness holds its sway over the whole of the world and the Will or impulse becomes too weak to function. Freedom from the working of the Will is the deliverance of the world from pain and sufferings. This is what the evolution of the First Cause means.

Hardy's view of the evolutionary process is found in the letter to Mr. Clodd where Hardy writes, "In a dramatic epic — which I may perhaps assume The Dynasts to be — some philosophy of life was necessary, and I went on using that which I had denoted in my previous volumes of verse (and to some extent prose) as being a generalised form of what the thinking world had gradually come to adopt, myself included. That the Unconscious Will of the universe is growing aware of Itself, I believe, I may claim as my own idea solely — at which I arrived by reflecting that what has already taken place in a fraction of the whole (i.e. so much of the world as has become conscious) is likely to take place in the mass — that is, the Universe — the whole Will becomes conscious thereby : and, ultimately, it is to be hoped, sympathetic"[12]. The spread of reason from the fraction to the whole i.e. from the individual to the mass is what Hardy described in the letter to Caleeb Saleeby as "consciousness creeping further and further back towards the origin of force", and "the unconscious force gradually becoming conscious". This is what Hartmann described as consciousness forcing the irrational Will back into latency, into the blessed state

of not-willing, and Schelling as the submergence of the world of sense in the Absolute. Neither the metaphysician nor Hardy regarded the dawning of consciousness on the Unconscious as part of divine plan — a supernatural occurrence which the coming of the kingdom of God is with the orthodox Christians.

Hardy's idea of the spread of consciousness (reason) from the individual to the mass is expressed in the following lines

> "Part is mine of the general Will,
> Cannot my share in the sum of sources
> Bend a digit the poise of forces,
> And a fair desire fulfil?"[13].

The evolution of the First Cause is, then, the spread of consciousness in the world with the consequent weakening of the Will, and this is to start from mankind. There are, however, two things about this idea which need some explanation. First, how has man, a product of the irrational Will, come to be endowed with reason ! Secondly, how is this reason to spread from mankind to the species that do not possess intelligence and act only by instinct? Metaphysics explains the existence of reason in man by assuming that in the process of creation the irrational striving after existence to (the Will to live) draws to itself "the logical Idea, the only content which is capable of realization", and thus reason enters the beings

created by the Will. Intelligence or reason is, therefore, present in every form of life, though at the present stage of evolution it is in mankind alone that it has been manifested. Hardy too, explains the growth of reason of man in terms of evolution. The idea that the creator has given man consciousness without being aware of it is treated in the poem, New Years' Eve . Here God wonders at the appearance of reason in man and exclaims,

"... 'My labours — logicless
    You may explain not I :
Sense - sealed I have wrought, without a guess,
That I evolved a Consciousness
    To ask for reasons why

'Strange that ephimeral creatures who
    By my own ordering are,
Should see the shortness of my view,
Use ethic tests I never knew,
    Or made provision for !' "[14]

Similar idea is presented in the poem God's Education, where the First Cause is shocked to hear the poet complain about His cruelty, and admits,

"... 'The thought is new to me
Forsooth, though I men's master be,
Theirs is the teaching mind ! "[15] .

The idea that man's consciousness is the Working of Time over which God has no control is given in the poem A Philosophical Fantasy. God describes man's consciousness

> " 'As something Time hath rendered
> Out of substance I engendered,
> Time, too, being a condition
> Beyond my recognition' "

and conjectures about some further development of human mind:

> " 'Being unconscious in my doings
> So largely, (where my rucings); —
> Aye, to human tribes nor kindlessness,
> Nor love I've given, but mindlessness
> Which state, though far from ending,
> May nevertheless be mending' "[16]

The word "Time" being regarded as meaning the evolutionary process, man's intelligence may be explained as resulting from the process of evolution in a way, not anticipated by the Creator — God, or the Will.

Now, to the second problem. In order to complete the evolutionary process, consciousness or reason is to spread, not only in the human race but also in the other than human beings; but how is it to occur? Every form of life being the product of the Will, some portion of the "logical Idea" which the Will harnesses to Its purpose of creating beings, must be present in it. In this respect, the lower forms of life

resemble mankind. At the present stage of evolution "the germ of consciousness" has been manifested in man alone, but in some remote time, however remote it may be, the same thing will take place in the other forms of life. Consciousness will start functioning in them, as it has done in man, making them aware of the disastrous working of the Will and urging them to resist it. Consciousness will spread in this way in the whole of the world, weakening the irrational Will and leading to the completion of the evolution of the First Cause. Some such assumption has necessarily to be made; otherwise, the culmination of the evolutionary process remains inconceivable. Neither Hardy nor the metaphysicians have been quite clear on this point. Hartmann's view of the co-existence of irrational Will and logical Idea in the world ground and his view of Will as harnessing Idea to the end of creation suggest the presence of the logical element in every being and the possibility of its growing conscious in course of time. Hardy hazards no conjecture about the way reason is to develop in the now insentient beings and leaves it a matter of conjecture. This does not, however, prevent him from professing the view of the evolution of the First Cause, and in a way characteristic of an imaginative writer he says,

"... what we call the First Cause should be called First Causes, ... Assume a thousand unconscious causes — lumped together in poetry as one Cause or God — and bear in mind that a coloured liquid can be produced by the mixture of colourless ones, a noise by

the juxtaposition of silences etc. etc. and you see that the assumption that intelligent beings arise from the combined action of unintelligent forces is sufficiently probable for imaginative writing, and I have never attempted scientific ....[17]

The fact is that, though the spread of reason in the whole of the world is the most important premise for the theory of the evolution of the First Cause, Hardy concentrates only on the development of consciousness in mankind, and leaves the question of its development in the rest of the world for the reader to settle.

Man has come to be endowed with consciousness, and the moral task of an individual is to promote consciousness in the human race and thus accelerate the evolution of the First Cause, the Immanent Will. Hartmann explains it sufficiently clearly. According to him, "... the moral task of man is not personal renunciation and cowardly retirement, but to make the purpose of the Unconsciousnes his own, with complete resignation to life and its sufferings, to labour energetically in the world process, and by the vigorous promotion of consciousness, to hasten the fulfilment of the redemptive purpose, the condition of morality is insight into the fruitlessness of all striving after pleasure and into the essential unity of all individual beings with one another and with the universal spirit, which exists in the

individual but, at the same time, subsists above them"[18]. The moral responsibility of the individual is, for Hartmann, "disillusioning" i.e. "gaining an insight into the fruitlessness of all striving after pleasure".

Hardy held the same view of individual's responsbility for accelerating the process of evolution by spreading consciousness in the world, but he relied not only on the power of reason but also on that of love for the furtherance of the evolutionary process. Reason gives man a breadth of vision; it enables him to view the world as the objectification of the Will and see through the illusion of the Will. It may rouse in him either the desire for freedom from the illusion, or simply bitter despair and resignation. But how is the evolution to progress unless the individuals feel in them the urge for working to the end of deliverance of others by teaching them what they themselves have learnt? Reason can give them knowledge but not the desire to come to the aid of others. This latter is the function of love which, through pity and compassion, rouses in the individuals to the urge to help others attain their freedom from the illusion of the Will. Love for the fellow-sufferers - the victims of the Will, stirs the individuals out of their passivity, despair and resignation and urge them to help others' understand the disastrous nature of the Will and struggle for their own deliverance and also for in that of others. Thus love takes the process beyond individual's

personal realization and endeavour and binds together an ever-increasing number of individuals in the collective effort for deliverance. About the function of love Hardy wrote, "Altruism, the Golden Rule, or whatever Love your neighbour as yourself may be called will ultimately be brought about, I think, by the pain we see in others reacting on ourselves as if we and they were part of one body. Mankind, in fact, may be and will be viewed as member of one corporeal frame"[19]. Love and compasion creates the sense of oneness of the human race and rouses the individual's desire for the deliverance of the race from the working of the Will.

In Hardy's view of deliverance through evolution the power of reason is combined with the power of love as a supplementary force. And this is, perhaps, the most important thing in Hardy's evolutionary ideas. His ideas are the product of both metaphysics and Christian faith; for whereas the former taught him about the immense power of reason, the latter taught him about the great power of love. It has been said earlier that Christianity instilled into him his love of man and faith in man's moral and emotional capacities, but that could not give him a sound basis for hopefulness (Ch I). When this faith in man came to be combined with his metaphysical speculation on the function of human rationality counteracting the irrationality of the Will, they together formed the basis on which his hopeful vision could rest. Indeed, his melioristic vision falls into pieces if we take away from it either his Christian faith or his metaphysical speculation;

in absence of one, the other proves inadequate to support his hopeful vision. With this idea of Hardy's evolutionary views we shall now proceed to see how far this idea of Hardy's evolutionary views is borne out by his writings.

R E F E R E N C E S

1. Life. F.E. Hardy, p. 449
2. Life. F.E. Hardy p 454
3. Wessex Poems and other Verses
4. Wessex Poems and other Verses
5. Doom and She. Wessex Poems and other Verses.
6. Human Shows, Far Phantasies etc
7. Moments of Visions
8. Wessex Poems and other Verses
9. The Dynasts Part Third Scene XVI
10. The Dynasts Part Third Scene XVI
11. There seemed A Strangeness. Human Shows, Far Phantasies etc
12. Life. F.E. Hardy p 335
13. He Wonders About Himself. Moments of Vision
14. Wessex Poems and other Verses
15. Wessex Poems and other Verses
16. Winter Words
17. Life. F.E. Hardy p 411
18. History of Modern Philosophy
19. Life. F.E. Hardy p 224

CHAPTER - V

Evolutionary Process in Hardy's Works

I

The struggles and sufferings of Hardy's men and women and their pain, bitterness and resignation, which are generally regarded as unmistakable proofs of Hardy's "dispiriting pessimism", are, in reality, definite signs of the progress of evolution in mankind. The struggle and strife of the individuals with passion, or the Will, result from the spread of consciousness in human race, and their bitterness, and sense of resignation are indicative of the disillusionment occurring with evolution. The greater the promotion of consciousness in mankind the more widespread is the individuals' struggle with passion; the greater the futility of the individuals' searching for happiness, the keener is the disillusionment of mankind. The most "hopeless" of Hardy's novels is, in a sense, the best, testimony to the progress of evolution through individuals' disillusionment. These evidences of the progress of evolution are present, not only in the tragic novels, but also in the Dynasts, and we shall examine them now.

If the spread of consciousness in human race is studied with reference to the characters in Hardy's tragic novels, it will be found to occur at three stages viz. their prevision of life as miserable,

their becoming conscious of the working of the Will and struggling to conquer it, and, finally, their conquering the Will to live by the wish not to live. The first is seen in the characters' premonition, fear, misgivings and a general view of Life as miserable; the second in their discovering sexual passion, ambition and spirit of war to be the cause of life's misery; and the third in their being sick with the horror of existence and losing all zest for life, even committing suicide, or in their conquering all passion and desire by self-mastery and resolving to teach others about the illusion of the will and means of conquering it. Consciousness thus works to the end of "disillusioning" which is for Hardy, and for Hartmann, the end of existence.

The characters of Hardy's tragic novels show a strange obsession; they are full of fear and forebodings. True, their circumstances have much in them to justify their misgivings and apprehensions, but the view of life they express even in ordinary circumstances makes us feel that they would hardly show the unrestrained joy and mirth of the other youths and maids even if their circumstances were not unfavourable.

Hardly has the novel begun when Eustacia Vye in The Return of the Native is heard expressing this depressing view of life. After the mumming at Clym's house on the Christmas Eve, she is discovered by Clym to be a woman in the guise of a mummer, and the conversation quoted here follows:

'Do girls often play as mummers now? They never used to'.

'They don't now'.

'Why did you'

'To get excitement and shake off depression', she said in a low tone.

'What depressed you?'

'Life'.

'That's a cause of depression a good many have to put up with'.

'Yes'[1].

Put this attitude to life beside that expressed in the conversation between Tess and Angel Clare at Talbothays dairy farm, and the similarity becomes obvious. This conversation occurs as Clare notices Tess, a dairy-maid, listening to him singing and then trying to move off.

> 'What makes you draw off in that way, Tess? said he. Are you afraid?'
> 'Oh no, Sir - not of outdoor things; especially just now, when the apple-bloth is falling and everything so green.'
> 'But you have your indoor fears - eh?'
> 'Well - Yes, Sir'
> 'What of?'
> 'I couldn't quite say.'
> 'The milk turning sour?'
> 'No'
> 'Life in general?'
> 'Yes, Sir'

'Ah - so have I very often. This hobble of being alive is rather serious, don't you think so?'
'It is - now you put it that way.'
'All the same, I shouldn't have expected a young girl like you to see it so just yet. How is it you do?'
She maintained a hesitating silence[2]."

To these instances may be added another - that of Marty South's conversation with Giles Winterbourn in The Woodlanders. It occurs as Marty is planting together with Giles the young pines.

" 'It seems to me', the girl continued, 'as if they sigh because they are very sorry to begin life in earnest - just as we be'.

'Just as we be'? He looked critically at her. 'You ought not to feel like that, Marty' "[3].

Eustacia, Tess, Clare and Marty have only voiced the sickness with life and a vague apprehension about it, which are common to Hardy's men and women, and expressed, one way or another, at some part of the novels.

This is the characters' view of life, in general; and their view of love - the guiding force of life, is not much different. The following excerpt bears out this contention.

In the Woodlanders the sight of the two birds quarrelling and falling into hot ash under the tree and getting singed prompts Marty's involuntary observation : "That is the end of what is called love"[4]. Similar view of love comes from Fitzpiers when, on meeting Felice Charmond at Hintock, he remembers her to be the girl whom he loved and lost through her mother taking her away:

" 'Suppose my mother had not taken me away?' She murmured, her dreamy eyes resting on the swaying tip of a distant tree.

> 'I should have seen you again'.
> 'And then?'
> 'Then the fire would have burnt higher and higher. What would have immediately followed I know not, but sorrow and sickness of heart at last'.
> 'Why?'

'Well-that's the end of all love, according to Nature's law. I can give no other reason"[5].

This Schopenhauerian view of love is shared by the youths and maids of Hardy's novels; but,what makes them take this view of love? This sombre view of love and life seems to have come less from the characters' personal experience than from their intuition. Eustacia and Marty have seen too little of life to reach such inferences. What Hardy tells us about Fitzpiers past has nothing about it to account for this view of his. Tess has, of course, some

reason to take a gloomy view of life and love; but, that the incident of her early life should so instil into her the fear of life as to make her lose all hope of future happiness seems rather unusual. The gloomy view of life and love, so often expressed by Hardy's characters, does not appear to have its root in their personal experience; nevertheless, it is so ingrained in them that it does not seem spurious or imposed. It may not be, therefore, wrong to suppose that Hardy has presented his characters' view of life and love as a matter of intuition rather than a product of personal experience; his suggestion may have been that the individuals have come to acquire this gloomy view through generations of human suffering. It is the wisdom of the human race that is voiced by the individuals, without their being fully aware of its implication. It acts in the individuals as a vague apprehension, till their own experience gives a support and confirmation to it.

The explanation of the characters' gloomy view of life as arising from the experience of the human race gives us an important point pertaining to Hardy's idea of evolution. The seemingly futile struggle and suffering of mankind through ages is not really meaningless; it has produced in the succeeding generations a consciousness, however vague, about the illusion of love and life. The disillusion about love and life has become part of individuals' attitude, and though it needs to be confirmed by the individuals' own experience in order to grow into

a conviction, it conditions, rather imperceptibly, all their thoughts and deeds from the very beginning of their life. The sufferings of human race thus contribute to the gradual spread of consciousness in mankind which is, according to Hardy, the only means of furthering the process of evolution. On the spread of consciousness and consequent disillusion about life, Hardy in his authorial observation says,

"The view of life as a thing to put up with, replacing the zest for existence which was so intense in early civilisations must ultimately enter so thoroughly into the constitution of the advanced races that its facial expression will become accepted as a new artistic departure....

'The truth seems to be that a long line of disillusive centuries has permanently displaced the Hellenic idea of life, or whatever it may be called. What the Greeks only suspected we know well; what their Aeschylus imagined our nursery children feel. That old-fashioned revelling in the general situation grows less and less possible as we uncover the defects of natural laws, and see the quandary that man is in by their operation"[6].

The defects of the natural laws, the discovery of which is, according to Hardy, the cause of the loss of the zest for life, are the blindness of the natural impulses and the irrationality of the Will. The thing which is more to the point is, however, the author's belief in the gradual disillusionment about Life continuing through

ages. The process of disillusionment continues through a long line of "disillusive centuries", and the disillusion effected in a certain generation passes on to the next generation in the form of vague apprehension, and predisposes the individuals to look at life rather critically. Hardy's novels illustrate the gradual disillusionment through generations, and one of the phases of this disillusionment in the individual's life, viz. inheriting from the past generations a critical attitude towards life, has been discussed here. The next two phases, viz. his becoming conscious, through personal experience, of the disastrous nature of the Will (sexual love, ambition) and miseries of existence and struggling to conquer the Will, and, then, his becoming fully disillusioned about Life and developing the desire not to live, will be discussed hereafter.

II

The prevision of Life's miseries does not, however, help the individuals avoid the miseries; they become instruments of the Will, are led by aspiration and ambition and seized with passion and desire and get involved in rivalry and strife and, finally, know the miseries of existence.

In Far From the Madding Crowd, an early novel by Hardy, the struggle in Bathsheba Everdene hardly begins till she falls in love with Sergeant Troy, a profligate. Till then she is a proud, triumphant woman. Once a milkmaid, she has become, through inheritance, the owner

of a farm. She has rejected Gabriel Oak, a shepherd, as a suitor unworthy of her and graciously condenscended to marry Boldwood, the richest farmer of the locality. But the unexpec ..d appearance of Troy unsettles her. Although unable to free herself from the bewitching spell of Troy, she can hardly ignore the rumour about Troy's morals. She is in the grip of the irresitible passion called love, which is but the Will to live, and her helplessness has been suggested symbolically by her daze during Troy's performance with the sword. She feels "like one who has sinned a sin" when Troy kisses her. Later, as she confides her secret to Liddy, her maid-servant, she says,

"O how I wish I had never seen him ! Loving is a misery for women always. I shall never forgive God for making me a woman, and dearly am I beginning to pay for the honour of owning a pretty face"[7].

Chapter XXIX opens with an account of Bathsheba's struggle. Her struggle with passion is dwelt upon in greater detail in cahpter XXXII. Bathsheba is not blind to Troy's wileful tendencies; but, with all her knowledge of his character, she cannot help loving him. Passion proves irresistible. She does what none but a rash and impulsive woman would dare — starts at night in her gig to meet Troy at Bath, not knowing for certain whether she means to ask him to renounce her or to commend herself to him. She returns to Weatherbury as Troy's wife.

Shortly after the marriage, she understands that Troy married her for money. Her misery is increased by a series of incidents — meeting a beggarly woman in a journey with Troy, discovering a lock of hair preserved by Troy as a keepsake, hearing about the death of Fanny Robin, a seduced girl of the village, at Casterbridge Union House, getting her coffin brought to Weatherbury, and discovering, to her great distress, Fanny Robin to be the possessor of the lock of hair and the mother of a dead child by Troy.

The violent quarrel beside the coffin ends in Troy telling Bathsheba that a ceremony before a priest does not make a marriage and that he is morally Robin's and Bathsheba is nothing to him. Troy leaves Weatherbury and is heard to have been drowned.

Bathsheba's struggle remains abated for the time being, and after some hesitation, she yields to Boldwood's persuasion to marry him. In Boldwood's party on the Christmas Eve, arranged chiefly to settle the question of Bathsheba's marrying him, Troy bursts upon the scene and wants Bathsheba to go with him. This is the tensest situation in Bathsheba's life and it leaves her stunned. Whether it is joy, surprise, or despair, or utter confusion and mixture of all these diverse feelings that passes in her mind at the moment we do not know. What goes on in her heart is hard to conjecture, and quite appropriately has the author refrained from describing it. All we are told is that "she was in a state of gutta serena; her mind was, for the minute, totally deprived of light". Her stupor was broken by

the report of Boldwood's gun, and she sees Troy fall dead.

The rest of the novel presents no struggle in Bathsheba, and that is either because the need for struggle has ceased to exist, or because she has lost her will to struggle and feels resigned. Her marriage to Oak, which is said to have been devised to comply with the readers' request, is an attempt on her part less to seek the happiness of life than to find peace and rest. The zest for life seems to have been extinct in her. Hardy himself has distinguished the 'good fellowship-comradrie', growing up between Bathsheba and Oak, from sexual passion, and there is no point in analysing it further, for our purpose is to explore the working of sexual passion, a form of the Will to live, in the lives of the individuals. All we need to note here is that the woman has not yielded to the Will without struggle, and her defeat and distress has left her exhausted and disillusioned, with the zest for life extinct in her.

The Return of the Native presents the tragic complications arising from the passionate love of two men for a woman. The return of Clym Yeobright, a native of Egdon Heath, from Paris turns Eustacia Vye's attention to him. She rejects Wildeve, her former lover, and makes him marry Thomasin, Clym's cousin. Clym, who nourishes the idea of working as a teacher of the ignorant natives of the Heath, marries Eustacia, although it leads to a quarrel with and separation from his mother.

Here we may pause to examine the causes that led to the marriage. Clym's argument that this marriage brings him the opportunity of obtaining the assistance of an educated girl in materialising his plan of starting a school is all words. He has doubts, even on the eve of marriage, if Eustacia will really give up insisting on his returning to Paris and taking up the old job of the manager of a diamond merchant. It is, therefore, quite clear that he marries for love, i.e. passion - the irresistible working of the will. As for Eustacia, the desire to escape the boredom of the life in Egdon Heath and to settle in Paris is no less responsible than her passion to predispose her to the marriage. The reason of her interest in Clym has been sufficiently explained in her own words and in the authorial observations. Early in the novel Hardy tells us

"To be loved to madness-such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than any particular lover"[8].

Her longing for love in its abstraction is not essentially different from the other women's love for some particular person; for, even in her case, her passion needs to be directed to a particular lover. Love, in both cases, is the sexual passion, the working of the Will to live. In Eustacia's case, however, the longing for love has less possibility of being fulfilled, for the man she wants now may

not be desired by her later.

We are told, "Fidelity in love for fidelity's sake had less attraction for her than for most women; fidelity because of love's grip had much. A blaze of love and extinction was better than a lantern glimmer of the same which should last long years"[8(a)].

Explaining Eustacia's inclination towards Clym, Hardy writes,

"She had loved him partly because he was exceptional in this scene, partly because she had determined to love him, chiefly becaus she was in desperate need of loving somebody after wearying of Wildeve"[9].

With her never-satisfying craving for love, Eustacia seems to have incarncated the insatiable sexual passion — the relentless Will to live. In this lies the cause of her tragedy. She has lost all interest in Wildeve and feels drawn to Clym, and it is quite natural that Clym, too, will cease to interest her. She is not without moral scruples, and would not break her marriage vow, but this scrupulousness only intensifies her struggle and leads her to the tragic end.

The Will to live expresses itself in Eustacia not only in the desire for love but also in her ambition.

Love and ambition are just two manifestations of the same Will and, if one is the Will to live, the other is the Will to live more fully - the desire for more life. With love and ambition as the two impulses controlling her life, Eustacia resembles another complex character of Hardy's tragic novels, viz. Jude Fawley. This aspect of Eustacia's character should be taken into account while considering her inner struggle. The following snatch of conversation between Eustacia and Wildeve on the occasion of his meeting her secretly in Clym's house help us understand her ambition which, combined with love made her marry Clym.

" 'Many women would go far for such a husband. But do I desire unreasonably much in wanting what is called life - music, poetry passion, war and all the beating and pulsing that is going on in the great arteries of the world? That was the shape of my youthful dream; but I did not get it. Yet I thought I saw the way to it in my Clym'. 'And you only married him on that account !' 'There you mistake me. I married him because I loved him, but I won't say I didn't love him partly because I thought I saw a promise of that life in him' "[10].

In her longing, Eustacia is not much different from the others; if anything distinguishes her, it is only that, while, with others, the greatest happiness is in possessing the person loved, in her case, happiness lies in enjoying, together with her lover, the thrill and excitement that life affords.

Now, to the story again. Fate in the form of chance-happening intervenes in the course of events : Clym becomes partially blind and takes to the humble task of furze-cutting. Wildeve's interest in Eustacia is revived. Mrs Yeobright, Clym's mother, comes to Clym's house for reconciliation at a time when Clym is asleep and Wildeve is inside the house. After much hesitation, Eustacia opens the door to find Mrs. Yeobright gone. She returns with the idea that her son has refused to let her in. On her way home she dies, partly because of the exhaustion of the journey on the hot summer day, partly because of the adder bite. Clym is wild with grief and remorse.

The circumstances in which Mrs. Yeobright went to Clym's house become gradually known. Clym accuses Eustacia of inhuman cruelty and also of her illicit connection with Wildeve. The quarrel ends in Eustacia leaving her husband's house and returning to Captain Vye, her grandfather, with whom she stayed before her marriage.

Wildeve meets her, and her Will to live, which may have languished through distress, re-asserts itself, and her conscientious struggle begins. When Wildeve offers to help, conscience speaks through her:

"I didn't send for you - don't forget it, Damon. I am in pain but I didn't send for you ! As a wife, at least, I have been straight".

Pressed by Wildeve, she expresses her desire to escape from

Hintock and to go to Budmouth and thence to Paris, if possible. Wildeve readily agrees to help her. She is glad; but, to Wildeve's importunate question if he might be allowed to accompany her, she remains silent. On a stormy night she leaves her grand-father's hous in an attempt to flee from Egdon. But, then, she has the shuddering realisation of her helplessness, and the struggle between conscience and desire, so typical of Hardy's tragic characters, ensues. Hardy reveals her inner struggle :

"Money : she had never felt its value before. Even to efface herself from the country means were required. To ask Wildeve for pecuniary aid without allowing him to accompany her was impossible to a woman with a shadow of pride left in her : to fly as his mistress - and she knew that he loved her - was of the nature of humiliation"[11].

She stands at Rainbarrow, exposed to the storm and rain of the night, struggling with herself :

" 'Can I go, can I go?' she moaned. 'He's not great enough for me to give *myself* to — he does not suffice my desire.... If he had been a Saul or Bonnaparte — ah ! But to break my marriage vow for him - it is too poor a luxury ! ... And I have no money to go alone. And if I could, what comfort to me? I must drag on next year, as I have dragged on this year, and the year after that as before' "[12].

She stares aghast at the bleak future awaiting her. Will has brought her to a position which fully reveals to her the futility of desire, the illusory nature of happiness. She has desired much only to suffer immensely. With all means of escape denied her, she revolts against destiny:

" 'How have I tried and tried to become a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me ! ... I do not deserve my lot ! she cried in a frenzy of bitter revolt. 'O, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conveived world. I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond by control. O, how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all' "[13].

What brings Eustacia to her miserable state is, for her, destiny, Heaven, or things beyond human control, and we understand it to be the Will to live, or the Will for more life — love or ambition. Eustacia, like every other individual, is goaded by the Will, and miseries come to her, as to all others, from the struggle between the Will and conscience. We see this struggle and the miseries attending it in all the principal characters of Hardy, — Grace, Felice, Tess, Sue and Jude. What renders these characters helpless in the face of the odds of life is their conscience. Eustacia, for instance, would have enough money to get an access to the life of ease and comfort, if she could bring herself to asking Wildeve for it, but she cannot, and that accounts for her miseries.

It is at Rainbarrow on the night of storm and rain that we see Eustaçia last. It will never be known whether her death by falling into the pool of Shadwater Weir is an accident or an act of suicide. Wildeve's leaping into the pool to rescue her brings him death. Clym is rescued from the Weir alive; but death spares him to prolong the miseries of being alive.

Hardy is fond of treating ideas symbolically, and if the burning of the moth in the lamp in Eustacia's room during Wildeve's secret visit to her is one example of symbolical treatment of the individual's ruin in the grip of sexual passion, another is the falling of Eustacia, her husband and her lover into the Shadwater Weir. The pool looking like a terrible "boiling cauldron" with a woman floating dead, and two men struggling for life is an appropriate symbol suggesting the helpless struggle of men and women with the tremendous force called passion, which we understand to be the Will.

The tragedy arising from the passion of two men for a woman, who is, in her turn, seized with a "desire for more life" ends. Clym contemplates on the life of "an itinerent preacher of the eleventh commandment". Thomasin lives with her baby, and it being necessary for the author to change the original plan of the novel, marries Diggory Venn, her old, patient lover, and looks again for life's happiness. But for this marriage, the novel remains a tale of miseries,

and sufferings and also of disillusion on the part of those that perish or survive.

The typically Hardyan theme of tragedy which we understand to be the working of violent passion in individuals' life leading them irresistibly to disaster is well illustrated by another novel viz. The Woodlanders. Into the texture of the novel are interwoven four sub-plots,each of which illustrates the working of passion in a particular way. The four sub-plots rest on the Marty-Giles relation, Grace-Giles relation, Grace-Fitzpiers relation and Felice-Fitzpiers relation.

However pathetic a subject, the unreturned love of Marty South for Giles Winterborne has little in it to make a tragedy. She loves Giles, but the moment she hears Melbury's words to his wife about his plan of marrying Grace, her daughter, to Giles, she feels resigned and thinks "Giles Winterborne is not for me". Giles is very much affectionate to her, but is never aware of her passion for him. She never expresses her feelings till Giles is in his grave, and she visits the tomb to place flowers on it. Marty is "always doomed to sacrifice desire to obligation". Passion hardly finds in her heart the rich soil to thrive on.

The Grace-Giles relation has enough in it to make a sad tale of futile love, but it gives passion little opportunity to show itself in its tremendous force. It is a quiet story of "unfulfilled intention".

Giles and Grace have been friends since their childhood, and Mr. Melbury's plan of making reparation to Winterborne, the father, by marrying Grace to Winterborne, the son, is not unknown to them; but they have never been free enough from their scruples on questions relating to the difference of their position, education and culture to profess their love unhesitatingly. Their struggle is of a nature much different from that of the passionate lovers. They strive not so much to get each other as to bring themselves to believe that the obvious differences of taste and education will not prevent their being happy, if they are married. Early in the story Giles is found to say to himself:

"If she should think herself too good for him, he must let her go, and make the best of his loss".

Giles attitude to Grace is not much different from Marty's attitude towards Giles. Partly for his own hesitation and partly for the appeal of Melbury, who now thinks of marrying Grace to Mr. Fitzpiers, a physician and man of position, he gives Grace the freedom to marry the man of her father's choice. Grace,with that gentleness in her "that might hinder sufficient self-assertion for her own good", is persuaded by her father to marry Fitzpiers. Fitzpiers proves faithless on account of Felice Charmond, and Grace's thoughts turn again to Giles. Her renewed interest in Giles comes from her disillusion about the sophisticated class. Hardy writes:

"Honesty, goodness, manliness, tenderness, devotion, for her only existed in their purity now in the breasts of unvarnished men; and here was one who had manifested such towards her from his youth up".

Grace's interest in Giles is increased by subsequent incidents - Fitzpiers' leaving Hintock with Felice, Melbury's plan of gaining Grace's freedom by obtaining a divorce from Fitzpiers and then marrying her to Giles, and his advising Grace to encourage Giles. Circumstances make Grace and Giles believe in the prospect of their marriage. But, even now Giles cannot free himself from his scruples:

"He feared anew that they could never be happy together, even should she be free to choose him. She was accomplished; he was unrefined. It was the original difficulty which he was too thoughtful to recklessly ignore as some men would have done in his place"[14].

But even a person of Giles's restraint betrays on one occasion a "man's weakness". There are long embracing and passionate kisses.

"Since life was short and love was strong - he gave way to the temptation, notwithstanding that he perfectly knew her to be wedded irrevocably to Fitzpiers"[15].

Melbury comes to tell them that divorce cannot be obtained, for Fitzpiers' conduct had not been sufficiently cruel to Grace to enable

her to snap the bond". Grace comes to learn from her father what Giles has already learnt from another source.

Giles has self-reproaches for his weakness. As for Grace, "she mentally blamed her ignorance, and yet in the centre of her heart, she blessed it a little for what it had momentarily brought her". The weakness and inner contentment of these two persons whom we know to be perfectly conscientious and possessing a sound sense of prpriety, only show the tremendous power of passion, the Will, which sets at nought all restraint and control. Passion makes her so bold as to brush aside the question of propriety and declare to her father's hearing her love for Giles:

" 'I don't mind what comes to me', Grace continued, 'whose wife I am, or whose I am not ! I do love Giles: I cannot help that; and I have gone further than I should have done if I had known exactly how things were' "[16].

Here we have glimpse of that terrible passion which completely dominates the other women in love — Eustacia, Felice, Bathsheba, Lucetta, Felice, Tess and Sue — the tremendous will that defies all sense of propriety, and moral scruples, and sets aflame and consumes the heart it possesses. In Grace, however, it burns for a moment to be ruled again by her sense of decorum. In yielding to this irresistible passion and doing what Giles understands to be a sin, he becomes for a moment the counterparts of Fitzpiers and Jude. But, then the

mutiny of the heart is quelled, and their keeping apart shows that they have mastered their passion.

Fitzpiers returns to Melbury's house; Grace leaves her house unnoticed with the intention of going to her school friend at Exonbury and is held up on way by rain; she takes shelter in the one-roomed cottage of Giles. Giles leaves the cottage for her sake, takes shelter in the neighbourhood, is drenched in the incessant rain for days together and falls ill, without Grace knowing about it. She leaves the cottage to look for him and finds him in an unconscious delirious state. She forgets for a moment all about propriety and people's opinion, carries him to the cottage, and nurses him. She calls Dr. Fitzpiers to attend him, and sees him die.

Her womanly feeling and love are fully manifested in her care and anxiety for her dying lover, and her declaration to Fitzpiers, "He is everything to me" shows her indifference to scandals and slander. This scene shows all this, but the blaze of passion which we noticed on the earlier occasion is absent here. What lies at the basis of her conduct is her wild grief at the conscientious thought that Giles has sacrificed himself to keep her reputation undefiled. Her admiration for Giles is much greater than before, and her realization of his worth is fuller; still it is admiration and not passion. It is no use enquiring if one is worthier than the other, the only relevant thing is to understand the difference.

In fact, passion does not work the same way in every heart; Hardy uses the word "stoical" with reference to both Giles (Ch XLI) and Grace (XLII), and that helps us understand their responses to love. That they have known passion is clear from their momentary weakness, but their self-mastery and stoic fortitude prove stronger than passion, and they refuse to make themselves instruments of the Will.

The Fitzpiers-Grace episode ends rather happily : after some quarrel and heart-ache, the estranged couple are reunited. Even on assuming that the novel was not originally intended to have a happy ending, it is difficult to understand how their story could end tragically, when their passion for each other had never become violent enough to wreck disaster. Grace is married to Fitzpiers, but he is won over by Felice Charmond. This does not, however, stir her jealousy, and she is amazed at "the mildness of the anger", and "absence of hot jealousy" at his faithlessness. In her relation to both her husband and lover, she shows little of impulse and passion, and her immunity comes, not, as in Sue's case, through struggle with passion, but through that aspect of her disposition that makes her less susceptible to violent passion. Quite aware of it, Hardy describes her as a woman who "had more of Artemis than of Aphrodite in her constitution" (XLII). Towards the close of the novel Grace and Fitzpiers are re-united, but we have not much reason to believe, that they would suffer terribly had not their reconciliation occurred.

These quiet tales of "unfulfilled intentions" contrast with the love-story of Fitzpiers and Felice with its tremendous passion, ceaseless struggle and disastrous consequences. On their first meeting at Hintock House they remember each other as old acquaintances. The memory of an episode of their early life, when she was a girl and he a student at Heidelberg, flashes upon them and brings them forthwith to the position of lovers. Felice and Fitzpiers love each other, and their love is not just a matter of sudden impulse or wantonness; it is, as Felice calls it, the revival of her "girlhood romance". The recollections of Felice and Fitzpiers have been reproduced with dreamlike charm and delicacy. The passion of a boy and a girl has been given an exquisite tenderness and a poetic sublimity by dwelling upon the joy of love and the pang of separation,early in their life. A snatch of conversation between Felice and Fitzpiers on their first meeting at Hintock will help us understand it better.

" 'Do you remember, when you were studying at Heidelberg, an English family that was staying there, who used to walk —'

'And the young lady who wore a long tail of rare-coloured hair - ah, I see it before my eyes ! — who lost her handkerchief on the Great Terrace — who was going back in the dusk to find it — to whom I said, 'I'll go for it', and who answered, 'O, it is not worth coming all the way up again for'. I do remember, and how very long we stayed talking there : I went next morning, whilst the dew was on the

grass; there it lay, a little norsel of damp lacework with "Felice" marked in one corner. I see it now ! I picked it up, and then ...'

'Well?'

'I kissed it', he rejoined, rather shamefacedly.

'But you had hardly ever seen me except in the dusk!'

'Never mind. I was young then, and I kissed it. I wondered how I could make the most of my trouvaille, and decided that I would call at your hotel with it that afternoon. It rained, and I waited till next day. I called, and you were gone'.

'Yes' answered she with dry melancholy. 'My mother, knowing my face was my only fortune, said she had no wish for such a chit as me to go falling in love with an impecunious student, and spirited me away to Baden. As it is all over and past, I'll tell you one thing; I should have sent you a line had I known your name. That name I never knew till my maid said as you passed up the hotel stairs a month ago, there's Dr. Fitzpiers'.

'Good God', said Fitzpiers musingly. 'How the time comes back to me ! The evening, the morning, the dew, the spot, When I found that you really were gone it was as if a cold iron had been passed down my back. I went up to where you had stood when I last saw you — I flung myself on the grass, and — being not much more than a boy — my eyes were literally blinded with tears. Nameless, unknown to me as you were, I couldn't forget your voice !'

'For how long?'

'O- ever so long. Days and days'.

'Days and days ! Only days and days? O, the heart of man !
Days and days !'

'But, my dear madam, I had not known you more than a day or two.
It was not a full blown love — it was the merest bud — red fresh,
vivid, but small. It was a colossal passion in embryo. It never
matured'. 'So much the better perhaps'.

'Perhaps. But see how powerless is the human will against predestination ! We were prevented meeting; we have met' "[17].

I have quoted this rather longish conversation for two reasons - first, it is one of the rare instances of Hardy's treatment of love between a boy and a girl, of 'passion in embryo' ; secondly, it contains many a point which will serve to illustrate our contention about Hardy's treatment of passion.

The "revival of girlhood romance" seems to have proved for Hardy a useful device to express his view of the working of passion, or the Will. This antecedent in the life of Felice and Fitzpiers invariably reminds the readers of similar incident in the life of Tess. The unexpected meeting of the old lovers at Hintock has its parallel in the meeting of Tess and Clare at Talbothays Farm. But, what justifies the inclusion of these antecedents into the plots? The obvious justification is that it serves to illustrate Hardy's view of the working of the Will — "Once victim always victim".

Passion has its pain no less than joy and, when Fitzpiers describes the love of their early life as "not a full blown love" but the "merest bud" — "a colossal passion in embryo" — it is the memory of that pain that makes Felice observe : "So much the better, perhaps". When chance brings them together again, and passion re-asserts itself, it is, again, the same memory that makes Felice apprehensive and starts the struggle in her heart.

A few days have passed after their first meeting at Hintock House as patient and physician, when Dr. Fitzpiers betrays his weakness while nursing her wound. Startled by the tender touch of Fitzpiers's breath upon her face, Felice exclaims,

"Ah none of that, none of that, I cannot coquete with you.... Don't suppose I can consent to for one moment. Our poor, brief youthful hour of love making was too long ago to bear continuing now. It is as well that we should understand each other on the point before we go further"[18].

She understands the impropriety of renewing her girlhood romance and, if one of the things which make it seem inadvisable is her prick of conscience, the other is the dread of the miseries she has learnt passion to bring with it. But, for all that, she cannot resist her desire — the terrible Will working through her. Torn between passion, on the one hand, and the dread and conscience, on

the other, she cries out,

"O why are we given hungry hearts and wild desires if we have to live in a world like this? Why should Death alone lend what life is compelled to borrow — rest?"[19]

Melbury's appeal to Felice to withhold her spell over Fitzpiers for his dear daughter's sake intensifies her struggle. Melbury's charges rouse her with a shock to the realisation of her helplessness as a prey to passion. Hardy writes, "She had never so clearly perceived till now that her soul was being slowly invaded by a delirium which had brought about all this; that she was losing judgement and dignity under it, becoming an animated impulse only, a passion incarnate. A fascination had held her on"[20].

Here Felice has the realisation of her position as a victim of the Will — "an animated impulse", "a passion incarnate". The same realisation comes, as we shall subsequently see, to Tess and Sue, and, in each case, it makes the victims' struggle harder than before.

On a later occasion, as Eustacia meets Grace, the former says in all sincerity.

"And I'll do my best not to see him. I am his slave, but I'll try".

The thought of the separation from Fitzpiers is unbearable; still she resolves to leave him. Revealing her thoughts, Hardy writes,

"One thing was indispensable : she must go away from Hintock, if she meant to withstand further temptation. The struggle was too wearying, too hopeless, while she remained".

Her struggle did not remain concealed and people around her did not fail to notice that she has been all as if her mind was low for some days past - with a sort of fret in her face as if she chid her own soul".

Felice tries hard to conquer passion, but her defeat is made inevitable by Fitzpier appearing one night, half-dead, after the quarrel with Melbury, and asking her for shelter and assistance. In a mood of despair, she muses much like Eustacia, "How all things conspired against her keeping faith with Grace ! "[21] On the futility of Felice's struggle Hardy observes:

"By this time Felice's tears began to blind her. Where were now her discreet plans for sundering their lives for ever?"

With her conscience stifled by passion, Felice leaves Hintock with Fitzpiers for foreign land. She is shot by an old lover of hers in Germany. Felice dies a victim of passion. Felice's tragedy with

its impact on the lives of the innocent - Grace, Giles and Marty, ends, and the tragedy shows not only the working of passion but also the hard struggle of a woman trying to conquer it.

It has been already said that the typically Hardyan theme of the working of passion to disastrous end finds its best expression in the relation between Felice and Fitzpiers. The reason is that of all characters of this novel, these two are most susceptible to the working of passion. Felice's is "a passion of no mean strength — strange, smouldering, erratic passions, kept down like a stifled conflagration, but bursting out now here, now there— the only certain element in their direction being its unexpectedness"[22]. As to Fitzpiers, there is the author's observation on his "double and treble barrelled hearts" which can "spread some conjoint emotion over a number of women at a time"[23]. Felice is destroyed by passion, but Fitzpiers seems to escape unhurt. It seems that he is immune to all sufferings, pain and remorse. That is not, however, really true of him; the miseries of love are not unknown to him. This is evident from his words in the conversation with Felice.

In fact, none that has known passion can avoid knowing miseries. Fitzpiers, Giles, Felice, Marty and Grace — all suffer, each according to his or her capacity for suffering — the intensity of passion and wakefulness of conscience. A greater misery is, therefore, the proof of a fiercer struggle and a more vigilant conscience. Individuals differ in their extent of affliction and pain; but each suffers; for

none is without passion, and conscience is common to human mind. That every love story is a tale of conscientious struggle ending in miseries and pain is borne out by another tragic novel of Hardy viz. Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

The struggle in Tess starts the moment she meets Angel Clare at Talbothays farm and remembers that he was the pedestrian who had joined in the club-dance at Marlott - "the passing stranger who had come she knew not whence, had danced with others but not with her, had slightingly left her and gone on his way with his friends". Tess's love for Clare is, like Felice's love for Fitzpiers, a renewal of girlhood romance. In both cases, this love of early life remains undeclared, and the boy and the girl part with a vague feeling of sadness. But, when chance brings them together again, this undeclared love of their early life finds the most eloquent expression in no time, and the struggle begins.

"Tess's heart ached. There was no concealing from herself the fact that she loved Angel Clare .... Tess's honest nature had fought against this, but too feebly, and the natural result followed"[24].

The man she loved in her innocent girlhood comes when she no longer considers herself worthy of him. She knows that her seduction by Alec d'Urberville and her loss of maidenhood and becoming the mother of an illegitimate child have rendered her unworthy of Clare, and she can neither respond to his protestation of love, nor deny

herself the ecstasy of being loved by him. Her conscience is vigilant, but passion — the Will, often proves irresistible. The painful struggle in her between passion and conscience has been presented with all the compassion Hardy has for the victims of passion. To Clare's marriage proposal, Tess says,

"And I would rather be yours than anybody's in the world .... But I cannot marry you".

To explain her reasons is too difficult for Tess, and she only mutters out helplessly,

"I feel I cannot - never, never"[25].

She struggles to conquer passion, but fails. Hardy writes:

"The struggle was so fearful; her own heart was so strongly on the side of his - two ardent hearts against poor little conscience — that she tried to fortify her resolution by every means in her power. She had come to Talbothays with a made-up mind. On no account could she agree to a step which might afterwards cause bitter rueing to her husband for his blindness in wedding her. And she held that what her conscience had decided for her when her mind was unbiased ought not to be overruled now."

In the struggle between conscience and passion or Will, the latter emerges triumphant, and she yields to her desire. We have the author's observation:

"In reality, she was drifting into acquiescence. Every sea-saw of her breath, every wave of her blood, every pulse singing in her ears was a voice that joined with nature in revolt against her scrupulousness. Reckless, inconsiderate acceptance of him; to close with him at the altar, revealing nothing and chancing discovery; to snatch ripe pleasure before the iron teeth of pain could have time to shut upon her - that was what love counselled; and in almost a terror of ecstasy Tess divined that, despite her many months of lonely self-chastisement, wrestlings, communings, scheme to lead a future of austere isolation, love's counsel would prevail"[26].

Tess's circumstances are peculiarly her own, so are those of the other tragic characters of Hardy's novels. But, allowances being made for their respective circumstances, their struggle will be found to be the same. Tess's struggle is not essentially different from that of Grace, Eustacia, Felice or Sue. This is so, because Hardy's men and women are presented less as individuals than representatives of the human race, and their struggles are viewed as that of all men and women in the grip of violent passion. Struggle is caused in each case by the illusion of happiness, with which the Will lures men and women on to

further miseries. Hardy stresses the need of viewing Tess's struggle from this general standpoint:

"The 'appetite for joy' which pervades all creation, that tremendous force which sways humanity to its purpose, as the tide sways the helpless weed was not to be controlled by vague lubrications ever the social rubric[27].

Tess is married to Clare and, true to her apprehension, her miseries multiply. According to an agreement made rather lightly that they will tell their faults to each other and make confessions, Tess relates all about her seduction by Alec and, contrary to her expectation that she will be pardoned, Clare acts from the conviction that she does not belong to him. Estrangement follows, and circumstances compel her to live as Alec's mistress. During her separation from Clare, she may have comforted herself by falling back upon her former notion of happiness as an illusion, but struggle starts afresh on Clare's return and meeting her at the Herons, the lodging house at Sandbourne, where she lives with Alec. She struggles, and this time not with her passion, but out of it. Happiness, however short-lived and illusory, has come to her again, and she must grasp it, whatever it may cost her. Tess is now a woman totally different from what she has been. Scruples, timorousness, mercy — nothing can desist her; she must have the man she loves. A woman, who never could bear to hurt a fly, kills Alec and joins Clare.

Is Tess here blinded by passion? Does she forget what she has learnt through experiences about the illusory nature of happiness? It does not seem so. Tess's act of killing Alec to get Clare back is not an inexperienced girl's blind pursuit of happiness; it is rather a woman's last attempt to end her struggle, one way or the another. The thought that happiness is a fleeting thing, appearing and losing itself in the gloom of life, is not absent from Tess's mind for a moment; she knows very well that she will lose Clare again, either through her being convicted for the murder, or, if escape is possible, through Clare's despise for her as a murderess. She asks Clare repeatedly if he will come to hate her some day, and her fear that he will is enough to repudiate the contention that she has acted blindly with no idea of the consequences. She strives to get Clare and is ready to pay the price. She does not expect this happiness to last long, and she knows it cannot. Content with what she achieves, she utters her final words, when she finds herself surrounded by men coming to take her to the goal, where she is to be hanged:

"It is as it should be", she murmured, "I am almost glad — yes glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough, and now I shall not live for you to despise me!"[28]

What Tess strives for is peace, and freedom from struggle rather than happiness. It is not the zest for life but the weariness of being alive and the desire to end it that prompt this last act of hers.

The struggle with passion and extinction of the Will to live is presented with greater intensity in Jude the Obscure. Jude Fawley's story begins with his passion for Arabella, a coarse-grained sensuous woman, and progresses through their marriage, quarrel and separation. Jude muses sorrowfully on how he has been diverted from his purpose by an unsuitable woman. The bitterness of his experience, however, gives him no immunity to passion and miseries. Passion stirs him to his depth as he meets Sue Bridehead, his cousin, and his struggle with himself begins.

Jude understands his passion for Sue to be immoral, and tells himself that he should think of Sue "with only relation's mutual interest in one belonging to him". He reflects on the error of his past life as he attends the service in the cathedral church of Cardinal College.

He resolves not to fall into the same error again, and keeps on struggling with passion. He decides not to stand in Phillotson's way when he wants to marry Sue. But circumstances go against him. Sue flees from Melchester Normal School, meets Jude and goes to Shaston, making it quite clear that her passion for Jude is not any less than his for her. The prohibitive words she spoke to Jude at the time of her departure : You mustn't love me. You are to like me", are made useless by the concession she makes in her letter : "If you want to love me, Jude, you may : I don't mind at all; and I'll never say again that

you mustn't !"[29] Later, Jude tells her about his having a married wife, and her distress to hear about it fully exposes her deep love for Jude. Still she marries Phillotson, and Jude is not mistaken in thinking that she does it by way of a retaliation on him. Sue's marriage does not kill her passion for Jude; her position of a married woman only makes her struggle harder. She meets Jude several times and, if sometimes she is cold with him, at other times, she is exceedingly passionate. On one such occasion she says,

"Some women's love of being loved is insatiable, and so, often is their love of loving; and in the last case, they may find that they can't give it to the chamber-officer appointed by bishop's license to receive it"[30].

Sue is torn between her passion for Jude and her duty to Phillotson, her husband. Jude suffers no less. He receives a letter from her asking him to think no more of her than he can help, and replies,

"I acquiesce. You are right. It is a lesson in renunciation which I suppose I ought to learn at this season"[31].

They keep apart till their meeting at Aunt Drusila's funeral. She is obviously unhappy, but she admits it to be due to her own wickedness. Her self-reproaches are evident when she says,

"If I were unhappy, it would be my fault, my wickedness; not that I shall have a right to dislike him"[32].

Conscience, however, proves powerless against passion, and, before they part company, there are passionate kisses and embraces. They cannot obviously conquer passion, nor can they remain heedless to the voice of conscience. While abandoning his idea of preparing for the calling of a Clergyman, Jude reflects remosefully,

"Strange that his first aspiration — towards academic proficiency - had been checked by a woman, and that his second aspiration — towards apostleship — had also been checked by a woman"[33].

What more is needed to prove Jude's awareness of the deterrent nature of sexual passion? And yet he is unable to free himself from it. The same is true of Sue. She finds herself to be on the wrong track, still she persuades Phillotson to give her the freedom to live with Jude. They live together as friends,till Arabella reappears and asks for Jude's help, and jealousy makes Sue enter into such relation with Jude as exists between man and wife. Arabella joins her second husband, and Little Jude, Arabella's child by Jude, nick-named Father Time, comes to live with Jude and Sue. Two children are born to them. The impediments to their happiness are the uncertainty of earning a living, people's hints and innuendos as to the probable relation between them

and the perpetually gloomy countenance of Little Jude; still they are happy in possessing each other. While moving round the Wessex Agricultural Exhibition Sue exclaims,

"I feel that we have returned to Greek joyousness and have blinded ourselves to sickness and sorrow and have forgotten what twenty five centuries have taught the race since their time"[34].

We have been told in the authorial observation in The Return of the Native what new knowledge "the long line of disillusive centuries has brought to the human race", and we feel that Sue's forgetting it is simply owing to her freedom from the painful struggle between passion and conscience. Conscience is stifled, passion triumphs, and there is no struggle and, therefore, no pain. They are happy, but happiness is a mere illusion by which the Will leads men and women to greater misery, and it takes them no time to understand it.

After the short-lived happiness comes the appalling "tragedy of children" — Little Jude's killing Sue's children and also himself, because the best thing for him is to be out of this world. The catastrophic incident all but kills Sue and shakes Jude terribly. Another child is born to Sue, but it is born dead, and we are relieved to think, another probable incident of suicide has been made unnecessary. Until now passion has ruled unopposed in Sue, but the terrible shock rouses conscience again and the most painful struggle ensues. Horror

stricken, she cries out,

"O my comrade, our perfect union — our two-in-oneness — is now stained with blood"[35]. Sue discovers instinct to be the cause of all misery. She says,

" '... and yet little more than a year ago I called myself happy ! We went about loving each other too much — indulging ourselves to utter selfishness with each other ! We said — do you remember? — that we would make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature's intention, Nature's law and raison d'etre that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us — instincts which civilisation had taken upon itself to thwart. What dreadful things I said ! And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word !"[36].

The whole of chapter III, Part Sixth, is an account of the searching for the cause of misery by Sue and Jude. Like Sue, Jude discovers Nature - instinct and passion, to be the cause of misery; what he cannot understand is why it should be so. He argues, "But human nature cannot help being itself". Jude's confusion reminds us of Eustacia's perplexity :

"Why are we given hungey hearts if we have to live in a world like this?"

The question arising in Eustacia and Jude is, in fact, that of every man and woman who follows Nature and, consequently, meets with disaster. The question has found no answer yet, and the thing can be explained only in terms of the original error of the First Cause — letting the irrational Will start functioning. Faced with disaster and confused, each individual seeks to solve the problem in his or her own way. For instance, Sue catches at the idea of renunciation and self-abnegation. She continually muses on it:

'Our life has been a vain attempt at self-delight. But self-abnegation is the higher road. We should mortify flesh — the curse of Adam !"

* * *

'We ought to be continually sacrificing ourselves on the altar of duty'.

* * *

Self-renunciation - that's everything' "[37]

While Sue thus clings to the idea of renunciation and acts accordingly, Jude finds no way out of his misery. In utter confusion he ascribes their misery sometimes to Nature and, at other times, to society and senseless circumstances. Sue's discovery of the means does not, however, lessen her affliction; on the contrary, it only intensifies her struggle with unconquerable passion. Jude the Obscure

is regarded as the most hopeless of Hardy's novels, and the unmitigated sufferings of Jude and Sue, and the characters' utter confusion as to the root cause of their sufferings and the means of avoiding them justify, in a sense, this description of the novel.

Penitent and broken, Sue returns to Phillotson; Arabella possesses Jude again. Sick and half-dead, Jude meets Sue, and at his unexpected visit, passion proves stronger in her than self-restraint. After a fit of uncontrollable passion, she pulls herself together and promises never to see Jude again. Jude returns and lies in his death-bed muttering in a state of delirium, "And I here. And she defiled". The story of Jude and Sue ends here with the characters' recognizing sex impulse — the Will to live, as the cause of life's misery and also with their total disillusionment about Life.

All this is about sexual love, a form of the Immanent Will; but what of its other form viz. war? The study of Hardy's writings makes one feel that what is true of love is also true of war. The desire for more life, or the Will to live more fully, which causes war, leads to the same disillusion as love. Nations and individuals learn that little is gained through war, though much is lost. The conquering nation broods over what freedom costs, and the vanquished one learns, to its great horror and dismay, that all is lost.

Hardy's view of war is best expressed in his epic drama The Dynasts, and it reveals the disaster that "the empire-making lust" leads to. The untold misery brought by war is dwelt upon by the Spirit of Years and the Spirit of Pities. Nature becomes a scene of desolation, and the battlefield one of woe and suffering. The soldiers march, "each with the air of one who is himself a tragedy"; the whole atmosphere is charged with premonition, awe and despair. In the midst of all this, the Chaplain's prayer at the burial of Sir John Moore at Coruna takes on a greater significance.

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeteth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay"[38].

With the Chaplain's prayer is heard the roaring of the enemy's cannon fire, the threat of the power-drunk Dictator; but the Chaplain's words, a reminder of common human lot, are heard again through the din of the battle.

"We therefore commit his body to the ground. Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust"[39].

The way the burial scene is laid in the midst of the combatants' frenzied display of power is excellent; the Chaplain's prayer proves a terse comment on the emptiness and folly of human vanity.

The Dictator himself presently becomes aware of the futility of his lust for power. After the crushing defeat in the battle of Waterloo, Napoleon is seen standing alone muttering some exclamation, which the Spirit of years announces to our hearing :

> "He says, 'Now all is lost ! The
> Clocks of the world
> Strike my last empiry hour' "[40].

The instances of the individuals' recognising the Will to live — sexual love, ambition and war, to be the cause of life's miseries, their utmost but futile struggle with the Will working through them, and their complete disillusionment about life may be multiplied; but assuming that the contentions have been sufficiently established, I would rather pass on to the discussion on the final phase of the process of deliverance, namely, the growth of the individuals' wish not to live, which alone can resist the working of the Will to live.

III

Fatigue and weariness born of ceaseless struggle leads to the characters' loss of the zest for life and their doubt "if breath be worth the taking". The ultimate result is the growth of the individuals'

wish not to live. Death-wish comes to Bathsheba when, after the quarrel beside Fanny's coffin, Troy goes away from Weatherbury, leaving her in the humiliation of a deserted wife. Hardy writes, "Bathsheba indulged in contemplation of escape from her position by immediate death, which, thought she, though it was an inconvenient and awful way, had limits to its inconvenience and awfulness; whilst the shames of life were measureless"[41].

Eustacia's thoughts also turn longingly to suicide when, after the quarrel with Clym, she returns to her grandfather's house. In that lonely house Eustacia's eyes fall on a brace of pistols in her grandfather's room. " 'If I could only do it : she said. 'It would be doing much good to myself and all connected with me, and no harm to a single one' ". She contemplates suicide, but the fear of death prevails and she leaves the room in horror. Death with its lure of escape entices her again and brings her back to the room. This time "a certain finality was expressed in her gaze and no longer the blankness of indecision". But, meanwhile, the pistols have been removed by Charlie who observed Eustacia's reactions. Later, she meets Charlie and demands the pistols, and he refuses. In great distress she cries,

"Why should I not die if I wish? ... I have made a bad bargain with life, and I am weary of it — weary"[42].

Neither Bathsheba nor Eustacia has committed suicide. At critical moments, the characters of Hardy's novels are seized with the

desire to end their lives; but either circumstances, or the lure of future happiness which is the working of the Will, make them shun that desire, and they live on, only to find the miseries of existence more insuffuerable. They regret missing the opportunity of escape. Death - wish under the stress of sorrow and suffering is not, however, anything peculiar to Hardy's characters; many of us look upon death as a welcome relief, and some of us court it. This inclination is common to men and women; but the persistence with which Hardy presents it in his tragic novels merits special attention.

The disillusion about life sometimes expresses itself another way — in the characters' wishing not to have been born. Torn between her passion for Clare and the conscientious thought that she does not deserve being his wife, Tess says,

> But, oh, I sometimes wish I had never been born ![43]

The same sentiment has been expressed by Little Jude, nick-named Father Time. When the landlady objects to Sue living in her house with the children, Little Jude remorsefully reflects:

> "I ought not to be born, ought I?"

Later, in his conversation with Sue, he returns to the point:

"It would be better to be out o' the world than in
it, wouldn't it?
'It would almost, dear'.
'Tis because of us children, too, isn't it,
that you can't get a good lodging'.
'Well, people do object to children sometimes'.
'Then, if children make so much trouble, why do people have them
'O — because it is a law of nature'
'But we don't ask to be born?'
'No, indeed' "[44].

Little Jude puts to Sue the most baffling question about the dilemma of being born and Sue's attempt to explain it as a law of nature gives him no solution to his problem. In the perplexity of an immature mind he seeks the solution in death, and kills Sue's little children and also himself. Hardy seems to have been a bit too obtrusive in treating Little Jude's obsession with the "noble of being alive", and the critics do not miss the opportunity of flinging at him an innuendo by nicknaming Little Jude "baby Schopenhauer". Hardy is, however, too mindful of the quandary of human life to heed to the question of probability, and refers, through Jude, to the doctor's view of Little Jude's act:

"The doctor says, there are such boys springing up amongst us — boys of a sort unknown in the last generation — the outcome of the new views of life. They seem to see all its terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them. He says it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live"[45].

Hardy's view of the growing disillusionment about life and spread of the wish not to live seems to have been epitomized here; but it is perhaps at the end of the novel, in Jude's delirious utterances in his death-bed, that the horror of existence and the wish not to have been born have found the most telling expression. Alone and in a state of delirium, with death approaching him, Jude mutters out Job's curse on himself:

"Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night it was said, There is a man child conveived.

Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?"[46]

Faith in God's mercy revives in Job, but Jude leaves the world complaining about the misfortune of having been born. The horror of existence and the wish for death appearing in Hardy's early novels become most pronounced in his last tragic novel, Jude the Obscure, making it a document of the author's discovery of the will not to live spreading in mankind.

Hardy's tragic novels show now the characters' premonition about the miseries of life grow through personal experience into a conviction, and results, through struggle, disillusionment and horror, in their wish not to live. The death wish or the wish not to

have been born is based on the characters' personal experience and knowledge that to live is to suffer, whereas the premonition about life's sufferings which they possess early in their lives is only a notion, a matter of intuition, based on the wisdom of the human race working unconsciously in the individuals through ages. The former is naturally more deep-rooted than the latter, and less changeable. The death wish is founded on a belief and not a mere impression. One is, however, related to the other by causal connection, and with the premonition at the beginning, the struggle and disillusionment at the middle, and the coming of the death wish at the end, we find a complete picture of the evolution of consciousness in the lives of the individuals. Hardy's tragic novels thus prove their relevance as illustrations of the author's idea of the progress of evolution of consciousness in mankind.

The disillusionment about life and the growth of the wish not to have been born appear in Hardy's poetry not infrequently. Birth is, as Sue says to Little Jude, a law of nature. The Will attains the goal of perpetuating itself through procreation, and beings are born, as a matter of necessity. This idea is treated in the poem Unborn Pauper Child. Hardy says,

"Had I the ear of wombed souls
Ere thy terrestrial chart unrolls,
And thou wert free
To cease, or be

Then would I tell thee all I know
And put it to thee; Wilt thou
take life so?"[47]

The poet feels that, willing or not, the unborn must come into the world, and, therefore, only wishes him well. Again, the ding-dong of the jack-o-clock in the poem Copying Architecture in an Old Master seems to the poet to warn, the unborn against the misfortune of being born:

Or perhaps they speak to the yet unborn,
And caution them not to come
To a world so ancient and trouble-torn,
Of foiled intents, vain loving kindness
And ardours chilled and numbed[48].

The disillusionment about life rouses the desire not to have been born. In the poem Epitaph on a Pessimist this desire is worded thus;

I'm Smith of Stoke, aged sixty odd,
I'have lived without a dame,
From Youth time on; and would to God
My dad had done the same[49].

If we turn from Hardy's tragic novels and poetry to his epic drama The Dynasts, the Dictator will be found to have been seized with

the same wish not to live. Defeat has roused in Napoleon the longing for death, and suicide is not far from his thought:

> Why did the death-drops fail to bite
> me close
> I took at Fontainebleau ! Had I then
> ceased,
> This deep had been unplumbed; and
> they but worked,
> I had thrown threefold the glow of Hannibal
> Down History's dusky lanes ! Is it too
> late?
> Yes. Self-sought death would smoke but dampy here !
> If but a Kremlin cannon - shot had met me
> My greatness would have stood : I should have scored
> A vast repute, scarce paralleled in time.
> As it did not, the fates had served me best
> If in the thick and thunder of to-day,
> Like Nelson, Harold, Hector, Cyrus,
> Saul,
> I had been shifted from this jail of flesh,
> To wander as a greatened ghost elsewhere,
> — Yes, a good death, to have died on yonder field;
> But never a ball came passing down my way ! [50]

In the Dictator's words is heard the death-wish of Eustacia Vye and Grace Melbury. Difference is there. Tired of life, Eustacia and Grace seek in death what life denies them — rest and peace; but, with his craving for fame undiminished, the Dictator looks for an eternal glory in death. Despite this difference, the Dictator

is at one with the afflicted women in recognising that life does not keep its promise and never offers what it holds out to the individuals.

Eustacia and Grace do not kill themselves, nor does the Dictator. The women live on to know further miseries, and whereas Eustacia fully realises before her death life's deception, Bathsheba loses all her zest for life. Hardy does not tell us what the Dictator, exiled to Elba after his fresh attempts for power and fame, thought about life in his last days, but in this epic drama he concludes his view of life with the expression of sick despair, disillusionment and wish for death.

IV

The development of individual's consciousness through three stages — prevision, struggle and disillusionment, and the growth of the wish not to live, is suggested by Hardy's writings, but that is not all; the innate goodness of human nature working conjointly with consciousness (reason) in furthering the evolutionary process is also shown by them.

To be more precise, his writings show the working of reason as dependent on the working of the noble sentiments of man viz. compassion pity and lovingkindness. The Woodlanders gave us a fine example. Discovering that Felice does not flirt with Fitzpiers, but loves him desperately, Grace says to Felice,

"Since it is not sport in your case at all, but real, O, I do pity you more than I despise you, for you will suffer most.... You may go on liking him if you like — I don't mind at all. You'll find it, let me tell you a bitter business for yourself than for me in the end. He will get tired of you soon, as tired as man can be — you don't him as well as I — and then you may wish he had never seen him".

She concludes, "I thought that what was getting to be a tragedy to me was a comedy to you. But now I see that tragedy lies on your side of the situation no less than on mine, and more, that if I have felt trouble at my position, you have felt anguish; that if I had disappointments, you have had despair. Philosophy may fortify me — God help you"[51].

There is something unique about the meeting of Grace and Felice. Rival women have often met in the world of fiction to settle their claim to a man, but seldom have parted so gracefully as these women. As victims of the same passion each women needs the other

to understand her, and the scene shows how perfect that understanding is. The knowledge of an individuals' helplessness in the grip of passion makes all jealousy, contempt and hostility meaningless and rouses in the rivals only pity and sympathy. Hardy emphasises the point further by giving us the storm scene which follows their meeting. Storm and rain come when both have lost their way in the woods. They meet, by chance, and each clasps the other close to herself as if to protect both herself and her rival from Nature (another name for the Will) that is hostile to them. Hardy is fond of treating ideas symbolically, and the storm scene is an excellent example of such treatment. This scene reproduces in miniature Hardy's vision of mutual helpfulness of the individuals to alleviate the pain and suffering arising from the working of the Will. But the scene has been referred to here not so much to show the good gestures of the rivals as to indicate how pity and compassion urge an individual to come to the rescue of the other by stimulating that other's reason. There is in Grace's words not only her urge to save Felice from the distress she herself has known, but also her caution against Felice's error and her attempt to help Felice take a rational view of the matter i.e. use her reason and see the misery awaiting her. Here we have an instance of what we have called (Ch IV) the innate goodness of human nature helping the spread of consciousness in mankind. This aspect of Hardy's evolutionary idea may be illustrated also by Sue's attempt to unblind Jude about the real cause of their miseries. Great is their eagerness to help each other, but neither knows how to help. At last, Sue comes to

discover the truth, and there begins her utmost effort to make Jude view "nature" or instinct (Will) as the real cause of their affliction. Once she has found the way out, she must help the fellow-sufferer find it; hence her repeated stress on the need of renunciation and self-abnegation. What acts behind her persuasion and insistence is clearly her compassion for Jude which does not give her peace till she has rescued her fellow-sufferer. The attempts of Grace and Sue are but two of the instances in Hardy's novels of how pity and compassion serve to urge individuals to persuade others to use reason to discover the real cause of pain and sufferings. These instances justify the contention (Ch IV) that in Hardy's evolutionary ideas feeling and reason supplement each other to make the spread of consciousness possible. Consciousness or reason is, no doubt, the remedy for blindness, but the "sure, unhasting, steady stress of Reason's movement" is possible, Hardy suggests, only when there is compassion and comradely love to rouse an individuals' desire to stimulate reason in others.

Freedom from the illusion of war will come, as that from the illusion of sexual passion, when reason is at work in mankind, but the thing needed to spread reason and open man's eyes to the meaninglessness of war is compassion for the victims of war. Hardy wrote,

"The exchange of international thought is the only possible salvation for the world, and though I was decidedly premature when I wrote at the beginning of the South African War that I hoped to see

patriotism not confined to realms but encircling the earth, I still maintain that such sentiments ought to prevail".[51(d)]

Hardy discovered the display of "such sentiments" in the warring people. He found the soldier viewing the whole of the world as his home and wondering.

"... What is there to bound
My denizenship? It seems I have found
Its scope to be world-wide

I asked me : Whom have I to fight,
And whom have I to dare,
And whom to weaken, crush and blight?
My country seems to have kept in sight
On my way everywhere[52].

He discovered the innate, indestructible goodness of human heart even in the midst of the frenzy of war, as he wrote,

"Often when warring for he wist not what
An enemy soldier passing by one weak,
Has tendered water, wiped the burning cheek
And cooled the lips so black and clammed and hot"[53].

The recognition of the imperishable nobility of human soul made Hardy believe that the urge for fighting the fenzy of war was ever present with man and it would work to disillusion man about war.

It has been said in the discussion on Hardy's idea of evolution that he viewed the progress of evolution as the simultaneous working of both the intellectual and emotional capacities of man, and the analysis of Hardy's works made here gives confirmation to that contention. The life of men and women showed him that love and reason were really working together to promote consciousness in certain matters, and that gave him grounds to hope that, urged by compassion, reason would start working to the end of disillusioning even in those spheres which were still beyond its domination. It may not be unreasonable to close this chapter on the analysis of Hardy's works on the inference that Hardy's evolutionary ideas rest on his notion of the power of reason and the power of love, which came to him, as discussed earlier (CH. IV) from his metaphysical studies and his Christian faith, respectively.

R E F E R E N C E S

1. The Return of the Native ch VI
2. Tess ch 19
3. The Woodlanders ch VIII
4. Ibid, ch XIX
5. Ibid., ch XXVIII
6. The Return of the Native BK 3rd. ch I
7. Far From the Madding Crowd ch XXX
8. The Return of the Native BK I, ch VII

8 (a) Ibid, BK 1st ch VII

9. Ibid, BK 2nd ch VI
10. Ibid., BK. 4th ch VI
11. Ibid., BK. 5th ch VII
12. Ibid., BK. 5th ch VII
13. Ibid., BK. 5th ch VII
14. The Woodlanders ch XXXIX
15. Ibid., ch
16. Ibid., ch XXXIX
17. Ibid, ch XXVI
18. Ibid., ch XXXVII
19. Ibid., ch XXXVIII
20. Ibid., ch XXXII
21. Ibid., ch XXXVI
22. Ibid., ch XXVII
23. Ibid., ch XXIX
24. Tess, ch 23
25. Ibid., ch 27
26. Ibid., ch 28
27. Ibid., ch 30
28. Ibid., ch 58
29. Jude, Part Third ch V
30. Ibid, Part Fourth ch I
31. Ibid., Part Fourth ch II

32. Jude, Part Fourth ch II
33. Ibid., Part Fourth ch III
34. Ibid., Part Fourth ch V
35. Ibid., Part Sixth ch II
36. Ibid., Part Sixth ch II
37. Ibid., Part Sixth ch III
38. The Scenes from the Dynasts ed. J.H. Fowler p 52
39. Ibid., p 53
40. Ibid., p 108
41. Far From The Madding Crowd, ch XLIII
42. The Return of the Native BK. Fifth ch IV
43. Tess, ch 30
44. Jude, Part Sixth ch II
45. Ibid., Part Sixth ch II
46. Book of Jab 3.3,20
47. Wessex Poems & other verses
48. Moments of Vision
49. Human Shows, Far Phantasies etc
50. The Scenes from the Dynasts, p. 111
51. The Woodlanders ch XXXIII

51(a) Life. F.E. Hardy p 419

CHAPTER - VI

Melioristic Implication of Hardy's Evolutionary Ideas

I

Hardy's evolutionary ideas having been sufficiently discussed in the preceding chapter, we shall now see what melioristic implication those ideas may have. Hardy believed that compassion and reason would work together against passion and desire and stop their working; but what amelioration, did he think, would come of it? Hardy held that with the subjection of impulse to reason, rivalry and combat, mad pursuit of pleasure and consequent frustration and disappointment — all arising from the working of passion and desire, would disappear; the "Tragedy of unfulfilled Intention" would cease to occur; the Tesses, the Judes and the Sues would not wreck themselves in the pursuit of happiness; the Troys and the Alecs would not allow themselves to be destroyed by passion; the world would not be threatened by the empire-making lust of the Great Dictators; and, freed from all struggle and strife, the world would know peace and rest. Peace, not happiness, was, for Hardy, the goal of the evolutionary process, and by amelioration he understood attaining freedom from misery. This is, in its outline, Hardy's view of the amelioration to come through the evolution of the First Cause.

But, what amelioration has mankind achieved till now? To be more precise, how many of Hardy's men and women have attained freedom from misery? Hardy's novels show that human achievement in this respect is very little and the individuals attaining freedom are very few. Can we, then, regard it as a limitation of Hardy's view — a sign that the real life of the world, as he viewed it in his tragic novels, did not bear out his melioristic belief? Is it that the ideas, which seemed quite sound theoretically, did not seem so, when viewed in the context of real life? No such inference can really be made. What can be inferred from the fewness of instances in Hardy's tragic novels is that freedom is hard to attain.

It is not that Hardy's men and women do not attain freedom from misery. There are moments in their lives when they feel delivered from the working of passion. Take, for instance, Bathsheba's frame of mind sometime after the catastrophic event in Boldwood's house leading to the death of Troy and imprisonment of Boldwood. During a solitary walk in this state of tranquility she hears the choir in a church singing : Lead kindly light; amid the encircling gloom; Lead thou me on". Her emotions are stirred and her tears flow plenteously. While listening to the choir she outgrows her grief and remorse and feels composed. This is a moment when she gains her freedom from passion.

Take, again, the repose Clym attains after Eustacia's death. To describe his freedom from passion Hardy writes, "Every pulse of loverlike feeling which had not been stilled during Eustacia's lifetime had gone into the grave with her". Grief and pain fill his heart for a time, but he outgrows his bitterness and reaches a serene state of mind. He finds his vocation in the career of an itinerant open-air preacher. Early in his life, he had the plan of working to teach people "how to breast the misery they are born to", and now he devotes himself to the fulfilment of his mission. What Clym achieves, through struggles and sufferings, are freedom from passion and the satisfaction of having contributed his mite to the promotion of consciousness in mankind. The achievements of Bathsheba and Clym show that Hardy did not view freedom from misery as unattainable.

To attain it is, however, difficult, and that is clear from the striving of most of the characters of Hardy's tragic novels. Let us take, for example, the struggles of Jude and Sue. There are moments in Jude's life when reason triumphs over desire and he understands the impropriety of his passion for Sue and is freed from tormenting passion. Such moments come in Sue's life, too. The excruciating pain caused by her loss of children is assuaged by her frequent visits to the cathedral, and she finds all passion stilled in her. Thus, they, too, know respite in life; but how short-lived it proves in their case. Jude meets Sue again, and desire rises in him

anew to destroy his peace. Sue's serenity results from a catastrophic incident, and is, therefore, expected to be more enduring; but, contrary to all expectation, it is lost, and she is drawn again into the vortex of desire and strife. Instances of the loss of hard-won freedom may be multiplied by referring to the lives of Eustacia, Felice and Tess. In fact, the recesses in the lifelong struggles of these characters are moments bringing them freedom from misery, but their freedom is lost in no time. Why? What makes fresh struggle and suffering unavoidable? The reason is that, though reason has subdued passion in one partner of love, it works on unabated in the other. Amelioration being, from Hardy's view point, a collective process, it is attained through co-operation and mutual helpfulness of the individuals. Freedom from misery, the sign of amelioration, does not, therefore, come, in case of sexual love, through the subjection of passion to reason in either soul; it comes through the triumph of reason over passion in both. Unless passion is subdued in both the maid and her lover, the desire of one will set the heart of the other ablaze and the respite attained by either will be lost. The strength of one soul is not enough to resist passion; both must join their strength to conquer it. The freedom attained by Bathsheba and by Clym prove enduring, for, in their cases, the stimulus to provoke passion is withdrawn by the death of Troy and that of Eustacia. In case of the other men and women, it is still present and stirs up passion in the tranquil heart and mars its freedom. In his tragic novels Hardy showed this difficulty in the characters' preserving their freedom against a fresh upsurge of passion, and here

he shared the common view of all thinkers about the difficulty of attaining immunity from passion and preserving it.

We may remember here W. Durrant's observation on the want of peace and harmony in Hardy's fictions (Ch II), which he regards as the main point of difference between Hardy and Aeschylus. This difference is owing to the difference of the tragic schemes of the Greek dramatist and the Victorian poet-novelist. In the Aeschylean scheme, suffering results from the character's defiance to the moral order or the law, and freedom from misery comes through his realization of the error and submission to the law. Here error brings miseries, and correcting error through remorse or penance brings the peace of deliverance. Hardy's view of the tragic force is totally different — it is not the order or the law, but the irrational Will i.e. blind passions and impulses inherent in every human being, that causes suffering, and an individual's responsibility for conquering it and gaining the peace of deliverance is rather limited. Individual strength is too weak to conquer the Immanent Will, and deliverance depends upon the collective effort of the individuals. Naturally, therefore, Hardy cannot show his tragic characters attaining peace and harmony in the Aeschylean way. Aeschylean peace and harmony is wanting, not only in Hardy's novels, but also in the tragedies of Euripides, another Greek dramatist. The despair and complaint with which Hippolytus leaves the world do not show the Aeschylean spirit, and the reason is the peculiarity of Euripides's tragic scheme, in which the tragic forces are the inscrutable arbitrarily working forces

of nature. In fact, if any Greek dramatist affords a parallel to Hardy's treatment of life's misery and its cause, it is Euripides. Nevertheless, there is some difference between them. Euripides left human sufferings a mystery, Hardy's melioristic belief led him to the discovery of the remedy, which is, as we have learnt, the spread of compassion and reason in mankind. If the instances of individuals attaining freedom from passion are few, the reason is that the promotion of consciousness in mankind has not been sufficient to resist the working of the Will i.e. passion. Hardy has never suggested that release from freedom is impossible; if that were his contention, Sue's insistence and persuasion to awaken reason in Jude and make him realise the need of self-mastery and self-abnegation, and Felice's cautioning Fitzpiers against the blunder of reviving their lost romance, would not have been there. The words of Sue and Felice show that they are free from the domination of passion and guided by reason; but their freedom is lost, for consciousness is not still awake in Jude and in Fitzpiers. All this shows that the individuals fail to preserve their freedom, because consciousness is not still awake in a great part of mankind, and the impulses of those that are still subjected to passion assail the liberated souls and spoil their freedom.

This view applies not only to the deliverance from sexual passion but also to that from the spirit of war. War is stopped by treaties and truces, but it starts again by fresh aggression, and

the reason is that the treaties are inspired less by compassion and reason than by the spirit of retaliation in the conquering nations. Hardy's war poems show this to be cause of man's failure to stop war. War broke out when

> "Philosophies that sages long had taught,
> And selflessness, were as an unknown thought
> And Hell ! and shell ! were yapped at Loving-kindness"[1].

But the warring nations freed themselves from the frenzy of war and

> "Calm fell. From Heaven distilled a clemency;
> There was peace on earth, and silence in the sky"[2].

Yet this peace did not last, and faced with the threat of another war, Hardy discovered the cause to reside in the Treaty of Versailles. The outbreak of the World War II has proved that reason has not yet conquered passion in mankind, and Hardy was right in contending that war would stop only to resume, till the larger part of mankind was not guided by reason.

In his treatment of sexual passion and war, Hardy stressed the loss of hard-won freedom in the life of the individuals and nations. He showed that freedom was not unattainable, but it was hard to preserve. Immunity from a fresh onrush of passion would be poosible, if reason had controlled the larger part of mankind and consciousness proved strong enough to stem the working of blind passion.

II

Till now we have discussed what, according to Hardy, is possible of attainment during the evolutionary process, and we have found that in this respect his view does not differ much from the general view of it. But his view of the things to come at the culmination of the evolutionary process may not agree with that of the majority of people. In popular thoughts the deliverance from misery is associated with the advent of happiness; not so in Hardy. For him, happiness is unreal — an illusion of the Will to lure man on to further misery, and it cannot exist at the end of the evolutionary process where Will is extinct. What, then, will be there at the end of evolution? Nothing. Through centuries of weakening of Will by the promotion of consciousness, ambition and rivalry, strife and struggle, will gradually diminish. But these are the very things that constitute life; what remains if these things cease to exist? Nothing. Passion, impulse and desire being the life-fôrce, their cessation means only the wish not to live.Hardy contends that with the spread of reason in mankind this wish grows in strength. Hardy has shown through his tragic fictions how men and women lose their zest for life and are seized with the wish not to live. This will continue, he contends, through ages to some inconjecturably remote time,till the triumph of reason over the Will is complete and the whole of mankind is seized with this wish. This is,for him, the final stage of the evolutionary process, and at this stage,reason of man is powerful enough to resist passion and desire, and the wish not to

live succeeds in conquering the Will to live which is responsible for birth and, therefore, for the miseries of existence. The creative or procreative function will stop, and beings will attain deliverance from the miseries of life through the extinction of life.

In terms of the evolution of the First Cause, it is the stage at which the rational element of the World-ground is strong enough to combat the irrational element — the Will, and the equilibrium between the opposites in the First Cause is reached. The creative process having started when the original equilibrium of the First Cause was disturbed by the alogical Will becoming active and logical Intellect remaining passive, it will naturally stop when the equilibrium is restored. Creation being a blunder of the First Cause (Ch V), its amendment by the promotion of reason can mean only the cessation of the creative process. Since the evolution of the First Cause is, as we have seen (Chapter V) , little other than the spread of reason in the world, we get the same vision of the culmination of the process, namely, extinction of life, whether we interprete the world-process as the evolution of the First Cause or the evolution of human mind.

The creative process will come to a standstill with the fullest dawning of consciousness on the First Cause, that is, the total spread of reason in the world of beings. Life will become extinct and nothingness will prevail. This is a state hard to conceive of and harder to define. Life being extinct, there will

be none of the sentiments, feelings and emotions pertaining to Life — neither sorrow, nor joy, nor the sense of bondage, nor that of freedom. Suffering, despair and pain, and delight, contentment and joy — all pertain to life-experience, and none can exist where Life is extinct. What, then, survives the annihilation? Peace and rest. All movement and stir having stopped with the cessation of the evolutionary process, the only thing that can possibly exist is peace and rest. It is a state of extinction rather than that of attainment. This is the vision of the ultimate stage, Hardy's evolutionary meliorism holds forth. What is to be achieved is only deliverance from miseries of existence — the peace of non-existence. Contrary to the general idea that the end of misery is the advent of happiness, Hardy views deliverance from misery as the only achievement possible, with no other prospect beyond it. Hardy suggests no prospect of fulfilment and happiness, no possibility of attaining a state of joy and contentment, but only freedom from misery. To be born is to suffer, and the greatest achievement is, in his view, attaining the state in which there is no birth and, therefore, no misery of existence. It must be clearly understood that all that Hardy's evolutionary meliorism means is the lessening of miseries during the process of evolution and deliverance from miseries at the end of the process. In stressing the state of nothingness instead of that of fulfilment and joy as the end of of all struggle and strife, Hardy has, no doubt, contradicted both the popular expectation and the vision of eternal joy and bliss in the kingdom of God believed in by the credulous Christians.

The view of annihilation or extinction as the end of the evolutionary process is well-reproduced in Hardy's writings. The words and attitude of the characters of Hardy's tragic novels discussed in Chapter V indicate the gradual spread in mankind of the wish not to live. The knowledge of the deceptive and disastrous working of the Will leads to the disillusionment about life and to the realization that freedom from the working of the Will is possible only through self-denial and self-abnegation. The zest for life thus comes to be replaced by the wish not to live. This mood and spirit of the characters is emphasised in all tragic novels, most of all in Jude the Obscure.

In poetry, the idea of annihilation is treated in such pieces as According To The Mighty Working, Going And Staying, The Absolute Explains, An Inquiry, The Coming Of The End etc. In one of them he wishes that "this spinner's wheel onfleeing" were stopped, and in another, he feels Nature respond to his own wish :

" 'What do you think of it, Moon,
As you go?
Is life much, or no?'

'O, I think of it, often think of it
As a show
God ought surely to shut up soon
As I go' "[3]

Sometimes he muses on the mystery of "crowning Death the King of the Firmament"[4], and, at other times, contemplates on the evolutionary idea of the return of the finite to the Infinite, and sees Past and Future ever abiding in the All, nothing passing out of continuity, and perceives that in a same purview,

> "All things are shaped to be
> Eternally"[5].

As to the future of the earth, he reproduces the words of the Absolute :

> The Future? — Well I would advise
> You let the future be
> Unshown by me.
>
> 'Twould harrow you to see undraped
> The scenes in ripe array
> That wait your globe-all worked and shaped;
> And I'll not, as I say,
> Bare them to-day[6].

At another place, he has the vision of this orbit smoothly begun coming to an end quite silently without convulsion, without jerk. In still another, he sees

> "... his ghostly arms revolving
> To sweep off woeful things with prime,
> Things sinister with things sublime
> Alike dissolving"[7].

The vision of the end,

"when flesh
And herb but fossils be
And, all extinct, their piteous dust
Revolves obliviously"[8]

occurs in his poetry. The clearest expression of the idea that Life will some day become extinct on the earth is, perhaps, contained in the poem I Said to Love. The poet wants sexual love, which is responsible for procreation and, therefore, for life's misery, to depart:

'Depart, then, Love !
—Man's race shall perish, threatenest thou
Without thy kindling coupling vow,
The Age to come the man of now
Know nothing of?
We fear not such a threat from thee;
We are told in apathy
Mankind shall cease — so let it be,
I said to Love"[9].

III

The idea of the extinction of Life, therefore, recurs in Hardy's writings, indirectly in his tragic fictions and explicitly in his poetry. The thought that "Man's race shall perish" is as important in Hardy's view of evolution as Schelling's idea of the "cessation of self-subsistence" and Hartmann's idea of the "peace of non-existence" are in theirs. The idea suggested by Hardy and the

metaphysicians named here is surely something more than mere death and destruction; it is annihilation — a state of nothingness. Hardy's view of the end of the world process is seldom found outside the realm of metaphysics, for it is quite incompatible with the popular notion of a divine purpose behind Creation. A parallel to it may, however be found in the Buddhist concept of nirvāna, and the reason is, perhaps, that Buddhist doctrine is agnostic and does not involve God and His noble purpose in the creation and extinction of life. A reference to the concept of nirvana may help us understand Hardy's idea of the dissolution of the world of sense and extinction of Life better.

In Pāli, nibbāna literally means "blowing out", and it is in this sense that Goutama, the Future Buddha, understood it. H.C. Warren writes "When the fire of lust is extinct, that is Nirvāna ; when the fires of hatred and infatuation are extinct, that is Nirvāna; when pride, false belief and all other passions and torments are extinct, that is Nirvāna"[10]. Extinction of all passions and desires means an escape from the trammels of samsāra from the misery of existence, and nirvāna in the sense of extinction, therefore, means annihilation or passing into nothingsness. Of course, there are other interpretations of nirvāna. It is sometimes interpreted as "everlasting being", or "eternal felicity" - an ideal not much different from "moksa" of the Upanishada. Nirvana is also interpreted as a state when the passions and limited interests of common life have been extinguished and a person leads a life of perfect ease and equanimity. According to this interpretation, nirvāna is a state of "passionless serenity" attainable in this

earthly life.

In whatever way 'nirvāna' is interpreted, it finds its counterpart in Hardy's view of the evolutionary process. As annihilation and the state of "everlasting being" or "eternal felicity" it corresponds to the final stage of the evolution, and as "passionless serenity" it comes close to Hardy's idea of the individual's attainment during that process — a state which Clym Yeobright in The Return of the Native may be said to have attained.

Again, in both Buddhist doctrine and Hardy's views, deliverance is a matter of human achievement. Buddhist doctrine is agnostic; it professes no view of the Supreme Power and accepts It as Unknowable. Naturally, therefore, it does not involve the Unknown either in the origination of evils or in the deliverance from it. Both the cause of misery and the means of deliverance are regarded as lying in man himself. Passion and desire arising from man's ignorance are the cause of miseries, and knowledge or prajñā (consciousness in Hardy) is the means of deliverance. Hardy involves the First Cause or Will in the evolutionary process, and views the miseries of life as arising from Its working in the form of passion and desire; but he regards, the deliverance from it as a matter of human achievement. Deliverance is not, for him, part of divine plan; it is the attainment of the created beings. In viewing deliverance as independent of the purpose and function of the Supreme Being Hardy's ideas stand close to the Buddhist doctrine.

This similarity between the two should not lead us, however, to overlook the basic difference between them. In the Buddhist doctrine nirvāna is a matter of personal attainment, something to be attained by an individual for himself; there is no such thing as nirvāna of the community, of mankind, or of the world. Deliverance in Hardy's view~~s~~ is, on the other hand, the result of co-operation among individuals for the spread of consciousness in the world, and it is to come, according to him, to the whole of the world of beings. No individual can attain it for himself; all he can possibly attain is the foretaste of the peace of deliverance. This is not the only point of difference; Hardy's ideas stand wide apart from Buddhist ~~Buddhist~~ doctrine which includes such things as renunciation, rebirth and reincarnation. But, as our object is not to compare and contrast the two, we end our discussion on this matter, taking note of the fact that Hardy's idea of deliverance resembles Buddhist idea of nirvāna as a state of extinction or that of passionless serenity — a state to be attained by human endeavour through conquering passions and desires by knowledge or consciousness.

IV

The similarity between Hardy's ideas and Buddhist thoughts in respect of the nature of deliverance should not lead us to overlook Hardy's adherence to what he understood to be christ's teaching about the means of deliverance. Hardy's idea of the blind Will as responsible for life and life's miseries and his view of the evolution

of the Will from blindness to consciousness, amending the error of starting the creative process and leading to the annihilation of the world of beings and deliverance from the misery of existence, show his departure from Christian theology. In both its premise and conclusion Hardy's view of deliverance stands wide apart from the Christian view of the world process which assumes the existence of a benevolent Being controlling the world and offers the vision of a rejuvenated world at the culmination of the process. This difference is there, and because of this difference, a believer naturally reacts adversely to Hardy's view. Since the believer's mind is nurtured on the hope of future happiness, he views the hazards of life as necessary to reach another world — the world of fulfilment and happiness, and finds the trials and tribulations of life justified by the ultimate bliss awaiting the soul. No wonder, Hardy's view of the earthly life and his vision of the end of the world process seem to him horrible and repelling. The idea that nothingness awaits all this plight and pain of life is, for him, simply appaling. Naturally, therefore, he turns his eyes away from this vision of the state of nothingness and seeks refuge in the comforting thought of the coming of the kingdom of God. The least he can say of Hardy's view is that it is un-Christian and sickening. It is true that Hardy's view is not supported by christian theology, but it may not be quite

correct to describe his views as un-Christian. While trying to present a view of the world and life, he has relied more on logic than on faith, and the view he presents is hardly compatible with the christian view; but what forms the basis of his hopefulness about the deliverance is the same as that which is there at the basis of the christian hope about it; this common basis is an exalted notion of human worth, of man's moral and emotional capacity. His faith in man is as great as that of any true Christian, and it is on this faith that he builds his vision of the deliverance of the world. His boundless love and compassion for man and also his persistent emphasis on the Christian virtues — perseverance, courage, fortitude, meekness, compassion and love as necessary for deliverance show him to be a true christian. His idea of deliverance was entirely his own and much different from the Christian view of it, but he could not have nourished the hope of deliverance, if he had no faith in Christ's teaching about the essential indestructible goodness of human soul. He saw the gradual spread of consciousness in mankind, but he also realized that it was man's courage, perseverance, compassion and love that made the spread of consciousness possible. When he found the promotion of consciousness falling short of expectation, he understand the want of love and compassion to be the cause. He wrote,

> "Religion is good for all who are meek;
> It stays in the Bible through the week
> And floats about the house on Sundays,
> But does not linger on till Mondays,

The ten Commandments in one's prime
Are matter for another time,
While griefs and graves and thing allied
In well-bred talk one keeps outside"[11]

and

"Peace upon earth !" was said. We sing it,
And pay a million priests to bring it.
After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison-gas[12].

Who but a true Christian would thus deplore the neglect of Christian teaching? In poetry Hardy mentioned charity as "the greatest of things"[13] and the " resources of human heart" and "loving-kindness fully blown"[14] as the only help to mankind. In his tragic fictions he sought to awaken the noble sentiments and feelings of man with a zeal no less than that of a devout Christian. This stress on Christian teaching is part of Hardy's meliorism. He believed that love and compassion must work together with reason — the intellectual power together with the moral and emotional capacity - to make deliverance possible. The idea of the blind Will as the Force controlling the world, the view of the spread of reason as an essential factor in attaing deliverance and, above all, the idea of deliverance through the annihilation of the world of beings give Hardy's thoughts an un-Christian character, but his abiding faith in the essential goodness of human soul and his recognition of the great power of love in effecting the promotion of consciousness indicate his adherence to Christian ideas. The difference

in respect of the cause of miseries and the nature of deliverance shows his rejection of Christian theology, partly under the impact of the rationalistic spirit of the age; but his faith in Christian ethics,which was little impaired by the spirit of the age,had a great part in forming his melioristic ideas. To describe Hardy's views as un-Christian is, therefore, to miss the author's abiding faith in the teaching of Christ. Hardy was un-Christian in belief, but a true Christian in spirit.Hardy was a true christian in his hope about the deliverance of mankind. The greatest value of christianity lies in its spirit of hopefulnees, and, despite the fact that Hardy interpreted deliverance in a way much different from the way it is interpreted in christian theology, his hope of deliverance was as great as that of any pious christian.

R E F E R E N C E S

1. And There Was a Great Calm. Late Lyrics and Earlier
2. Ibid.
3. To The Moon. Moments of Vision.
4. An Enquiry. Human Shows, Far Phantasies etc.
5. The Absolute Explains. Human Shows, Far Phantasies
6. Ibid.
7. According To The Mighty Working. Late Lyrics and Earlier.
8. By the Earth's Corpse . Wessex Poems and Other Verses
9. Wessex Poems and Other Verses
10. Buddhist Discourse. H.C. Warren Ch 1.
11. Lady VI. Human Shows. Far Phantasies
12. Christmas. 1924. Winter Words
13. Surview. Late Lyrics and Earlier.
14. A Plant To Man. Satires of Circumstances

CHATER - VII

An Estimate of Hardy's Evolutionary Meliorism

I

The evolutionary ideas of Hardy has never been given a serious attention in the author's life-time, or later. Although much has been said on Hardy's story-telling technique, interest in humble rustic life, treatment of Nature and, of course, sombre view of life, the idea of evolutionary meliorism underlying his writings has seldom interested the critics and reviewers. Presuming that the present dissertation can claim to have justified the need of giving some attention to Hardy's evolutionism as the idea unifying the various pieces of his compositions, an attempt will be made to weigh its worth and judge its relevance in present times. The object is to see if the Victorian author, called a pessimist, could really offer any remedy, agreeable to the rational thinking of the present century, for the miseries of life. But, before any such attempt is made, it is reasonable to enquire if Hardy himself held fast to the idea till the end of his literary career, or allowed it to drift away after nourishing it for a period.

We may refer in this connection to E. Blunden's account of Hardy's conversation with Professor Albert Cock around 1920. Blunden writes,

"Professor Albert Cock, who visited him ... was speaking of the optimism found in the closing chorus of the Dynasts and he was naturally praising that finale. But Hardy 'shook his head, as he replied, I shouldn't write that now'. 'Not write those lines of hope again, why not?' I eagerly questioned. Came the brief, the pregnant, the unanswerable reply : 'The Treaty of Versailles'."

Then Blunden comments, "But should we ever take a detached saying of Hardy's as comprehending all that he had in his mind? It was never his instinct to abandon all hope, and, whatever the broad aspect of history, past and future, might seem to him, he was not going to say that he or anybody else could calculate the chances of good or evil with certainty. ... While Hardy was impressed with the gathering phenomena of grim things to come, he remained sedulous in the minor affairs of life; and he balanced his dismay at certain immense historical generalities with a living respect for man as a modest, enduring, trusting wayfarer".[1] Blunden, therefore, refuses to believe that Hardy could give way to despair, abandoning all his faith in man, and it is hard not to agree with him[2].

But E.F. Hardy writes in the <u>Life</u>

"It may be said here that the War destroyed all Hardy's belief in the gradual ennoblement of man, a belief he had held for many years, as is shown by poems like <u>The Sick Battle God</u> and others. He said he would probably not have ended the <u>Dynasts</u> as he did end it, if he had foreseen what was going to happen within a few years.

"Moreover, the war gave the coup de-grace to any conception he may have nourished of a fundamental ultimate Wisdom at the back of things. With his view on necessitation, or at most a very limited free-will, events seemed to show him that a fancy he had often held and expressed that the never-ending push of the Universe was an unpurposive and irresponsible groping in the direction of the least resistance, might possibly be the real truth"[2].

F.E. Hardy seems quite convinced of the utter dismay that the War caused to the poet-novelist, but she does not tell us if this mood of despondency proved enduring and too hard for him to outgrow. She does, however, tell us that in the poem A Philosophical Fantansy, published in the Fortnightly Review in 1927 "a ray of hope is shown for the future of mankind"[3]. The year of the publication of the poem is important, for it is much later than the year of the said conversation with Albert Cock which makes the author of the Life believe that Hardy abandoned his hope of amelioration.

The opposite views of Blunden and F.E. Hardy on Hardy's abandoning his hope of amelioration are quoted in order to show the difficulty in reaching a conclusion as to whether Hardy nourished his hope of amelioration till the end of his career. It seems more reasonable to say that, though often weakend by circumstances, his hope had the power of reviving itself, and because of his boundless love of mankind

and his earnest desire to see it delivered from miseries, he would never completely abandon the ideas sustaining his hope. As to the war, he sincerely wished the warring nations to show one another that spirit of understanding and respect which is necessary to prevent war, and the Treaty of Versailles disappointed him, for in it he may have seen, like many others of his time, the want of that spirit and also the possibility of another war. Still he would not abandon all hope; for, quite contrary to the general opinion that he had a liking for the gloomy side of life, his yearning for a ray of hope amidst the gloom is obvious enough, and it is rather the intensity of his longing for light that made the life of the suffering men and women appear to him darker and more piteous than what it really is.

II

Now, an appraisal of Hardy's melioristic claim in the context of his evolutionary view. To speak the truth, the Victorian critics and reviewers hardly acknowledged his claim. They hailed him as a fine story-teller with a first-hand knowledge of Wessex topography and the rustics, a gift for reproducing the pastoral atmosphere, some idea of the contemporary social changes and current issues like Marriage Bill, a sense of humour and an infinite sympathy for the distressed; but when it came to the appraisal of his concept of the Immanent Will or his melioristic claim, they simply put it aside with a grin. Miss Helen Garwood brought out her doctoral dissertation

Hardy's Novels as an Illustration of Schopenhauer's Will in Hardy's lifetime and sent him a copy of it. Later, Edmund Blunden published his critique on the Dynasts (1937). J.O. Bailey's Hardy and the Cosmic Mind was published in 1956. All these authors dealt with Hardy's idea of the First Cause or Immanent Will in their respective ways, but little was done to review Hardy's melioristic claim in the context of his idea of the evolution of the Will, and Hardy's claim as a meliorist has remained unsettled.

The indifference of the critics and reviewers is not hard to understand. The English are practical rather than visionary. Besides, materialism received a fresh lease of life in the Victorian Age. James and Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism was much to the Victorian liking. T.H. Huxley's Agnosticism which dismissed God as Unknowable and turned all attention to man and nature and used cosmodicy instead of theodicy to explain the miseries of life was agreeable to them because of its practical nature. Darwin's Evolution of Species by means of Natural Selection took no time in gaining the popular approval because of the tangible proofs it was founded upon. In Literature, Swinburne's blasphemy was liked by the Victorians because of its zeal and spirit of revolt. Fitzgerald won their heart by his manly pessimism. Carlyle's censure and Thackeray's satire were confined to the social and political spheres, and they understood them. They accepted the pessimism of Francis Thomson's City of Dreadful Night as a matter of temperament and personal experience. Tennyson was

popular with the Victorians, because he sang of the triumph of scienc and its infallibility as a guide to national progress. Mathew Arnold gave them an uneasy feeling, but they listened to him with that reverence which a thinker's scholarship generally commands. Browning was warmly received for what is called his robust optimism, and Meredith for his simple faith in God as a benevolent power. With varying degrees of admiration and enthusiasm the Victorians heard the thinkers and writers of their age. They readily placed Hardy in the rank of the greatest novelists of their time, but they did not understand how to judge the worth of the poet-novelist's concept of the Will, except by describing it as something un-English and transplanted from the Greece of the 4th century B.C. (Euripides) or from the 19th Century Germany (Schopenhauer). They wondered how one of their contemporaries could use such enigmatic phrases as the "misery of existence", "evolution of the Will", "deliverance from the hobble of being alive" or "peace of non-existence". Never before had the English authors produced such unintelligible ideas, and the Victorians with their preference for the plain and practical suggestion did not find anything worthwhile in Hardy's idea of deliverance from the misery of existence through the extinction of life. His meliorism seemed no more intelligible than his concept of the Will. To be a meliorist you must write like Dickens, suggesting practical measures of reforms that can be materialised by Parliamentary Bill. But, if you profess deliverance by extinction of life and annihilation of the world, and yet claim to be a meliorist, you simply baffle us. Such was the victorian reaction to Hardy's claim as a meliorist.

Hardy's responsibility for the matter was not any less. The idea of the Will and its evolution is naturally complex, and while the metaphysicians tried to make the idea as intelligible as possible Hardy went the opposite way, making the idea still more complex by personifying the Will and ascribing the seemingly endless series of mischances and accidents in the lives of his men and women to It. Consequently, Hardy's Will appeared to the readers to be merely a substitute for God — omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal and absolute like Him, but with all His noble attributes replaced by the evil ones. The Will appeared to be a malevolent Power that creates only in order to destroy, and holds forth the prospect of happiness only to lure man on to further miseries. This Power being omnipresent and eternal, the miseries of mankind were supposed to prove interminable, and irremediable. What more was needed to show that Hardy was a pessimist? What we gather from the contemporary views about Hardy's ideas and attitude makes us feel that this was the Victorian appraisal of Hardy's attitude towards the world and life.

What make Hardy's claim as a meliorist seem untenable are, perhaps, his view of the miseries of life and that of the extinction of the world at the culmination of the evolutionary process. In reality, however, neither interferes with his melioristic ideas and has nothing to make his claim unreasonable. Hardy's stress on the miseries of life does not contradict his melioristic ideas; for, as discussed earlier, a gloomy view can change into a melioristic

one by discovering the means of amelioration. In a sense, pessimism is nearer than optimism to the melioristic vision (see Ch. II). Hardy himself understood it and, therefore, little objected to the critics calling him a pessimist, though he had put forth his claim as a meliorist. He said to William Archer, "People call me a pessimist; and if it is pessimism to think, with Sophocles, that not to have been born is best, then I do not reject the designation. I never could understand why the word 'pessimism' should be such a rag to many worthy people"[4]. Hardy did not see how his being a pessimist could prevent his becoming a meliorist. There is, indeed, no cogent reason to believe that his picture of sorrows and sufferings, however harrowing, contradicts his claim as a meliorist.

What, then, remains to contradict his claim is the view of the extinction of the world at the end of the evolutionary process. It is, perhaps, his idea of the deliverance from the miseries of life by the extinction of life that counts most with Hardy's readers and critics in rejecting his claim. The contention that the only way of removing the defect of a thing is to remove the thing itself is not generally accepted as a convincing one. It seems rather absurd when the thing concerned is Life itself — the very existence of beings. There is no denying that in the ordinary context it is rather absurd, but in the context in which Hardy makes this proposition it does not seem so. What, if Life is viewed as a blunder of the First Cause? Von Hartmann holds that in such a context the extinction of Life is

the only remedy : "Life is a mistake and, therefore, must be eradicated he declared, and with it all desire, all emotion, and all thinking. In other words, the universe ends with nirvāna; it ends with complete nothingness, through which consciousness ceases and existence is abolished"[5]. Hardy's view of creation as mistake of the First Cause is expressed in his poetry and notes (see Ch V). What we learn from them is that like Hartmann, Hardy viewed the creation of Life as an error of the First Cause, and believed that, the tendency to erradicate error being inherent in the very process of evolution, the initial error of creating Life will be remedied through the extinction of Life. It is difficult to see any inconsistency between Hardy's premise and inference. It may be argued that the very idea of creation as an error is indicative of Hardy's pessimism; but even in that case, the idea of the error being corrected justifies his melioristic claim.

In fact, Hardy's view of the extinction of Life is no better a ground than his view of the blindness of the Will to reject his claim as a meliorist. The future of the world is inconjecturable; it is difficult to predict what awaits this planet of ours — whether it will exist or perish after millions of years. Neither religion, nor metaphysics, nor science speaks of the everlastingness of the earth. Science which is supposed to construct its hypothesis on sufficient proof and reason suggests that not only the earth but also the whole of the vast solar system may someday come to dissolve.

It is, indeed, hard to find a system of thought that speaks of the eternalness of the earth. But that has not prevented men from entertaining melioristic ideas. There are the devouts who believe in a noble purpose behind Creation and urges men to commend themselves to divine mercy; yet they recommend a set of moral practices to mitigate the ills of life. There are, on the other hand, the non-believers of our time, for instance, the Existentialists, who under the impact of World War II, have suffered disillusionment, discern no noble purpose behind Creation and are haunted by the "waste-land feeling". But their want of belief has not led them to resignation or a passive acceptance of life; they have a definite view of human responsibility for bettering the present state of things. It can, therefore, be said that the melioristic ideas are independent of the views about the beginning of the world and its destiny. A writer may avoid all conjectures and speculations about how the world came to exist and what will ultimately happen to it, and yet be a meliorist. If however, he professes these views and also claims to be a meliorist, we can reasonably expect him to be consistent throughout. Hardy professes these views and is quite consistent. According to him, Creation is an error and this error will be remedied through the extinction of Life at the final stage of evolution. Amelioration under these circumstances means only hastening the remedy of the error by working, under the guidance of reason and spirit of benevolence, to cause individuals' disillusionment about life. The wish not to live will grow out of this disillusionment and gradually spread in an increasingly greater number of individuals, making the extinction of the

world of beings possible. Before the final deliverance from the misery of existence through the extinction of Life, amelioration of human condition will show itself in the lessening of man's struggle and strife, rivalry and competition. The gradual lessening of miseries will culminate in the attainment of peace. This is Hardy's evolutionary meliorism in its outline, and neither the idea of the blindness of the Will nor that of the extinction of Life can make it unsound.

III

Hardy was an imaginative writer, not a metaphysician. His writings are the records of his impressions of world and life. The ideas, views and attitudes of his own time and of the past may have influenced his thoughts, but the things that chiefly inform his impressions are his own prepossessions, inclinations and interests. This is true not only of Hardy but also of the other poets and novelists. In considering the vision that a writer reproduces, it is, therefore, senseless to judge if it is right or wrong, and the really important thing is to see if the writer has succeeded in presenting it consistently and convincingly. We have seen that Hardy's vision is consistent; let us now see if it is convincing, too.

Hardy saw men and women struggling and suffering and also growing disillusioned about life, and our own observation of the life of the world leads to the same inference. We see people becoming more and more disillusioned about life, viewing happiness as something

unreal and unattainable. To them love and marriage mean nothing, and war is a bloody business bringing nations untold miseries. Strife, competition, clash and conflict have increased and, consequently, bitterness and weariness have become part of man's existence. Our own experience corroborates Hardy's vision of widespread strife and growing disillusionment and makes it sufficiently convincing.

Hardy felt that amelioration had not been achieved to the desired extent and the reason was the want of sympathy and compassion among the suffering individuals. Disillusionment was still confined to the individual's own life, ending in frustration and bitterness, and not followed by the desire to work for spreading consciousness in mankind. Hardy found that while reason had been working to make the individuals free from the illusion of the Will, the altruistic spirit had been failing in urging them to work to the end of amelioration by promoting consciousness among the fellow-sufferers. This explains why there is not much evidence in Hardy's writings of the progress of ameliorative work. Hardy's writings bear out our own observation of real life. There is nothing straining credibility in Hardy's fictions. His view of the growing disillusionment under the guidance of reason and of the want of sufficient initiative to unite the spirit of love and compassion to the functioning of reason and thereby change all bitternees caused by disillusionment into the determination to mitigate the miseries of life does not contradict our own experience. Again, his wish to see people use their innate nobility and goodness to accelerate the amelioration of the existing condition is the wish of all who refuse to abandon all hope about the future of mankind. Hardy's ideas

are, therefore, no idiosyncrasy; they are sufficiently practical and convincing.

IV

Hardy's ameliorative ideas are unique, logical and positive. The Victorian literature shows two opposite moods — complacency and resignation. Side by side with the exaltation of the material prosperity of the nation, there is resentment at circumstances and growing ills of the society. The latter gave rise to a mood of bitterness and melancholy. One of the books hailed by the Victorians was the Rubāiyāt of Omar Khayyam, the 12th century Persian poet, rendered into English by Fitzgerald (1859). It gave the sombre thoughts of the Power that holds man responsible for the actions of a nature, not determined by himself. There is, therefore, no hope of divine mercy:

> And that inverted bowl they call the sky,
> Whereunder crawling coop'ed we live and die
> Lift not your hands to It for help,for It
> As impotently moves as you or I[6].

This view of the Power does much to make human attempts seem futile and life meaningless. Intertwined with these thoughts and feelings is the hedonistic desire to snatch the utmost of pleasurable sensation from the passing moments, "the desire to enjoy while it is day the fleeting loveliness of the light". Whatever this hedonism may be worth, it has much in it to turn one's eyes from one's fellowmen and the ills of life demanding remedy.

The sense of resignation engendered by the *Rubaiyat* is reinforced by another powerful work, *The City of Dreadful Night* by James Thomson, appearing in the National Reformer, March-May, 1874. The trend towards pessimism evident in Thomson's earlier work, *The Doom of a City* (1857) seizes hold of the poet's heart in *The City of Dreadful Night*. Here, a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope or resistance in which everything is to be endured, nothing to be done. The poem ending with the description of the great statue of Melancholia brooding over the City as the enblem of despair, remains one of the most brilliant piece of pessimistic literature.

While these minor poets were expressing unreservedly their pessimistic attitude towards life, the more important ones were trying to find some anodyne for their melancholy and despair. Owing to his scepticism Arthur Clough lost that joy and hope which come from the belief in Providence. He accepted the Carlylean counsel "to do the duty that lies nearest thee", though he could suggest no criterion by which duty was to be recognised. Carlylean Gospel of Work did not satisfy Matthew Arnold and, in his doubt and disbelief, he tried to preserve a stoic resignation and a serene acquiescence, looking not for joy but peace. But he could not always maintain that serene frame of mind, and in his poems "there is a despair as desolating as James Thomson's". Thus a spirit of pessimism was instilled into Victorian poetry by the major and minor poets of the day, and a different note is struck in Hardy's poetry.

Hardy was undoubtedly affected by the pessimistic spirit of his age, and that to a very great extent, but he overcame it. It is, indeed, heartening to hear, in the midst of Victorian sighs and moaning, a voice singing out,

> And Right shall disestablish Wrong
> The Great Adjustment is taking place[7].

Hardy's singularity among the Victorian writers does not however consist in his being the only writer urging people to cherish hope about the future; Meredith, too, did it, and perhaps in a more charming way. But, while Meredith merely wanted people not to moan over the dark side of life, but fight it with "blood and brain and spirit", Hardy tried to present an idea of the cause of the ills and also of the way to combat them. Meredith's appeal is winning, perhaps more so than Hardy's, and the reason is the author's hearty cheerfulness. Hardy's appeal is as much to the head as to the heart, and, as a result, it has provoked a lot of criticism and censure. Comments, both favourable and adverse, have been made about Hardy's ideas, and the easy appeal of Meredith's writings is wanting in Hardy's. But Hardy is perhaps the only Victorian writer to present through poetry and novels a consistent view about the possibility of amelioration. This gives him a unique position among the Victorian writers.

Secondly, Hardy's ideas are rational. They may seem fantastical if his Immanent Will is viewed as something super-natural and dawning of consciousness on the Unconscious as an occultation;

but, viewed as Hardy would have us view them, it is difficult to see anything illogical about them. Life's miseries are, indeed, owing to the working of the Immanent Will, or the Will to live or to live more fully. And the way to amelioration through the dawning of consciousness on the Immanent Will, is just bettering the present state of things through the spread of reason and intelligence and love and compassion in mankind. Who would refuse to believe in the power of intelligence and love? There is actually little irrationality about Hardy's ideas of the cause of the ills and their remedy, and if we find Hardy's ideas mere poetic fancy, the reason is, perhaps, that we are unwilling to interpret Hardy's ideas from the author's viewpoint.

Thirdly, Hardy's ideas are positive. He does not speak of the everlastingness of the world, nor of the coming of happiness in the final stage of the world's evolution; on the contrary, he describes happiness as an illusion, and the last stage of the world's evolution as passing into nothingness. But even with this vision in his mind he finds much in human life worth-doing. Miserable as this life is, it is not meaningless. Man's struggle is not futile, nor is his suffering pointless. Through struggle and suffering man co-operates with the First Cause, World-ground or Immanent Will, in its evolution. Consciousness coming through the sufferings of one generation reinforces the struggle with passion in the succeeding generation and thus helps the furtherence of the world's deliverance from the working of the Will. Man's moral responsibility consists in working

to spread consciousness and enabling more and more individuals to see through the illusion of the Will. Thus Hardy gives a definite goal and purpose to human endeavour and makes life's struggles and sufferings meaningful. Religion gives a justification to human sufferings by the prospect of happiness in the life beyond death. Hardy suggests no such prospect, for what awaits mankind is, according to him, not happiness but peace. But, since this peace is not for the individuals themselves, but for all — the whole of mankind, the attainment of peace through human effort proves a worthy goal of life, and to work for it makes the otherwise passive suffering an active endeavour for the world's deliverance.

What is specially noticeable about Hardy's idea of deliverance is that he has made it chiefly dependent on man. The deliverance is to come not as a supernatural occurrence through divine intervention, but as the natural result of man's persistent, courageous struggle, by the exercise of all his gifts —intellectual,moral and emotional. In a note, dated April 13, 1909, Hardy wrote, "On Man : Save his own soul he hath no star"[8]. The view of amelioration by human means which informs the whole of Hardy's writings is epitomized in this note. The editor's comment on the note that Isiah had said before him : 'Mine own arm brought salvation unto me' shows that Hardy grasped the truth that revealed itself to the Jewish prophet. Religious belief changes, but the truth is eternal and awaits the discovery by the discerning

mind. Hardy discovered the truth and his writings are a testimony to it. In his melioristic vision he rejected all belief in the supernatural and regarded human powers and resources as the only important thing.

All these aspects of Hardy's ideas — their unique, logical positive character and their human relevance, should be considered in judging the worth of Hardy's evolutionary meliorism. Interpreted in the right way, Hardy's views are sure to interest us. Shorn of all belief in the benevolent Being, we are eagerly looking for some human means of amelioration, and in Hardy we are sure to discover a soul, very much like ourselves, refusing to yield to despair and struggling to discover some human means of alleviating the miseries of life.

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