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 "disheartening 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 proportion 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 make 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 unexpected 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 need 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, destir 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 Eustacia 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 had 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 morsel 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 victim's 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 suncering 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 pain 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 women 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].

They 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, nicknamed 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 loding'.
'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 "hobble 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, t 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 how 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 [redacted] 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 woman 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