

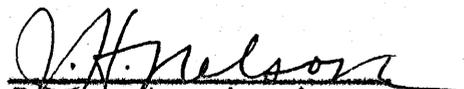
The Relationship between Thomas Hardy's
Novels and His Poetry

by

Esther L. Holcomb
A.B., University of Kansas, 1925

Submitted to the Department of
English and the Faculty of the
Graduate School of the University
of Kansas in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts.

Approved by:


Instructor in charge


Chairman of the Dept.

August 10, 1930.

Contents

	Page
Preface	
Chapter I---Introductory	1
Chapter II---The Immanent Will, a Showman.	
Directing the Puppet, Man	12
Chapter III---Human Nature--a Puppet-String.	39
Chapter IV---Chance--a Puppet-String	87
Chapter V---Time--a Puppet-String	117
Chapter VI---The Will of the Puppet.	130
Bibliography	155

Preface

The following study has been made under the direction of Dr. J. H. Nelson, for whose patient help I wish to express the most sincere gratitude. I wish to thank, in addition, Dr. W. ^{S.}_A Johnson, who aroused my interest in Thomas Hardy's poetry through his course in Twentieth Century Poetry and who gave me helpful suggestions for this study; and the librarians of Watson Library, who have co-operated by placing books at my disposal.

Chapter I

Introductory

There is an undeniably strong relationship between the novels of Thomas Hardy and his poetry. It is not the relationship of a primary to a secondary form of literary creation, but rather the relationship between two great and equal vehicles of thought for the expression of a powerful mind. Though Hardy gave up the writing of poetry in his twenty-seventh year to devote his energies to fiction for twenty-seven years, and though he did not resume the writing of poetry until he had abandoned fiction, the comparatively equal importance of the two and their close kinship cannot be denied. It is absurd to think of the poetry as merely a vocational by-product of his old age and youth. It is equally absurd to think of the period of novel writing as an interlude in the life of the poet. The two are bound up in one great Hardy-esque unity.

"The poetic spirit," writes J. E. Barton, "inhabits almost every page of Mr. Hardy's prose. And the novels and poems are so inseparable and complementary in their effect on the mind, that it would be idle to analyze their unity of power, in the hope of discovering where the novelist ends and the poet begins."¹ No one can read the novels

¹

Johnson, Lionel, The Art of Thomas Hardy, pp. 259-260.

and the poetry without being impressed by the unity, the common flavor, the very Hardy-esque quality, of the literary creations of the man. There is perhaps a part of this oneness which is indefinable, intangible, elusive. Yet there is much that can be analyzed and defined without marring the effect of essential wholeness which his work gives.

There is first of all a certain grayed coloring-- a predominance of half-tones--a sombre twilight atmosphere-- which suffuses both novels and poetry. Arthur Symons once wrote of Poems of the Past and Present: "Nearly the whole book shivers with winter."² The same might be said of the other volumes of verse, and it is significant of the tone of much of his fiction. Of course, to say that such a novel as Under a Greenwood Tree shivers with winter would be absurd; it fairly glows with rich autumnal tints. It, like a few poems, is a splash of color--a sudden reddening of the clouds. But the novels and the poetry as a whole do not shimmer in white sunshine and prismatic dewdrops. They are toned down to the grayness of Egdon Heath at nightfall, to the spectral darkness of woodlands at midnight, to the dim shadowiness of farmlands before dawn.

But the moon is a sorry one, sad the bird's tune,³

² Symons, Arthur, "Thomas Hardy," Dial, 68: 67.

³ Works, XXI, p. 18.

And the Apple-tree shadows travel along.

Soon their intangible track will be run,

And the dusk grow strong

And they have fled.⁴

Now a cold wind blows,⁵

And the grass is gray,

These and a hundred other lines suggest the leaden coloring of the poetry which touches the very nature of Jude the Obscure, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, The Return of the Native, the course of events in Far from the Madding Crowd and A Pair of Blue Eyes, and even the ironical ending of the lighter The Trumpet-Major.

There is a kinship of incidents: The lighting of the warning fires for the coming of Napoleon in The Trumpet-Major and The Dynasts; the husband's permitting the wife to go with her lover in Jude the Obscure and "The Burghers";⁶ the sending of a moth to a flame as a signal in The Return of the Native and "The Moth-Signal."⁷ There is kinship in⁸ the use of Wessex material. Such poems as "Valenciennes"

⁴ Works, XXI, p. 19.

⁵ Ibid, p. 39.

⁶ Works, XVIII, p. 30.

⁷ Ibid, XXI, p. 191.

⁸ Ibid, XVIII, p. 23.

and "The Homecoming"⁹ are utterances of the very folk of Wessex who speak in the whole galaxy of novels. There is use of characters from the novels in "The Pine Planters"¹⁰ and "Tess's Lament."¹¹ There is the same protest against the crushing results of conventional marriage in "The Conformers"¹² and "The Christening"¹³ that appears in Jude the Obscure. There is the repeated use of architecture in such poems as "The Abbey Mason"¹⁴ and "Copying Architecture,"¹⁵ that there is in Desperate Remedies, A Pair of Blue Eyes, and The Laodicean. There are these and many other kinships; but these are only fragmentary. In them there is nothing all-embracing, nothing primary and fundamental. It is in his world-view--in the realm of ideas--that one finds the primary relationship between the novels and the poetry. "That Thomas Hardy is not a novelist who tells stories merely for the diversion of his audience, nor a poet who delights merely in the sensuous and suggestive appeal of cleverly built emotional word-structures, is apparent even to the most superficial of

9

Works, XX, p. 356.

10

Ibid, p. 388.

11

Ibid, p. 319.

12

Ibid, XX, p. 319.

13

Ibid, p. 371.

14

Ibid, XXI, p. 210.

15

Ibid, XXI, p. 22.

his readers," Ernest Bronneke writes in his Thomas Hardy's Universe. "One recognizes, inevitably, that Hardy's underlying aim has always been the conveyance of ideas, and that he has throughout his literary career drawn from the depths of a definite and fairly consistent world-view."¹⁶

It would, however, be unjust and false to intimate that this was Hardy's conscious intention. He speaks in the preface of the 1901 and 1903 editions of the Wessex Poems of the lack of cohesion of thought in the volume. And in the closing sentence of the preface, he gives us the key to his treatment of thought: "Unadjusted impressions have their value, and the road to a true philosophy of life seems to lie in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomena as they are forced upon us by chance and change."¹⁷

His poems, and more particularly his novels, are, as he says, diverse readings of the phenomena of life; yet they are based upon certain ideas as firmly as buildings stand upon foundations. They are earthen jars ranged upon his shelves bearing the golden honey of his meditations. "He has warned his readers," Harold Child states, "against the idea that he wrote in order to set forth any philosophy of life. Had he done so, he would scarcely be the artist that he is. He set himself to record, in various moods and from various points

¹⁶

P. 13.

¹⁷

Works, XVIII, p. VI.

of view, life as he saw it. But that philosophy--a monistic philosophy, as they call it--was the condition of his seeing. And, in the end, it is the very spirit of the world he creates, emerging finally from his work as the soul emerges from a picture or a piece of music."¹⁸

This spirit which emerges from the Hardy world is manifest somewhat dissimilarly in the novels and the poetry. In reading the novels, one does not acquire the sharp and well-defined concept of the Hardy-esque ideas that he acquires from the poetry. This is due to the naturally dissimilar vehicles of thought. The novels are indirect in presentation; the poems are direct. The novels are long and leisurely; the poems are brief and swift-moving. The novels are occasionally forced and consequently less successful in presenting Hardy's thoughts as truths. The verse, though it "often halts, or dances in hobnails,"¹⁹ is so hard and firm and packed with thought that it drives truths home from its own sheer weight.

The desire to convey ideas, to give expression to thought, has affected the nature of his poetry. He is not a poet singing lovely, lilting, evanescent lyrics for the mere joy of singing. He is not a brother of the Elizabethan lyricists, nor of the Cavalier poets. He is not one of those poets who sing of a "lyric love" which "is the creation of the poetic

¹⁸ Child, Harold, Thomas Hardy, pp. 11-12.

¹⁹ Symons, Arthur, "Thomas Hardy", Dial, 68:68

imagination, which never comes into touch with the hard facts of life, and finds utterance only in the golden world of Arcadian fancy." ²⁰ Hardy's poetry possesses a greater intensity and solidity. It does come in contact with life. It deals with the very stuff of humanity. As a result, it is a verse of ideas, not a verse of passing mood, whimsicality, and clever turns. Arthur Symons goes so far as to suggest a questioning of the true lyric quality of Hardy's poetry when he says, ". . . as far as it is possible to be a poet without having a singing voice, Hardy is a poet, and a profoundly interesting one." ²¹ It is not in place here to discuss Hardy's singing voice; but the implication in this statement is again that Hardy is first of all a poet of ideas. He is one who has thought long and deeply upon life, the world, the universe-- upon the ways and destiny of man.

The gradual development of a system of ideas went on during the period of the writing of fiction, revealing itself beneath the surface of events of which he wrote, in the lives of his men and women, in the irony of the situations he presented, until it reached expression--concrete, pointed, and firm--in the poems which followed, until it came to a final gigantic, sweeping expression in the The Dynasts--the final justification of all his works, "the towering acme of the

20

Moorman, F. W., Robert Herrick, A Biographical and Critical Study, p. 170.

21

Symons, Arthur, "Thomas Hardy," Dial, 68:68

complete design, a roomy, elaborate bulk of structure to which all the preceding series of novels lead up, as nave leads to quire."²² It is in The Dynasts that we find the most lucid and final expression of the ideas manifest in the poems and the novels. Lascelles Abercrombie speaks of The Dynasts as²³ "a great summation of the significance of the novels."

Indirectly through the novels, and directly through the poetry, there runs the expression of the following ideas-- ideas with which are connected many passing thoughts and keen observations--ideas which are inescapable in any comprehensive study of Hardy:

I. A Will--immanent, autonomous, aimless, unconscious, and indestructible

. . . like a knitter drowsed

Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness

forever directs the destinies of men.

II. The Will, working through certain phases of human nature-- particularly: the ability of the individual to think, the tendency to follow ideas and ideals, the natural weakness of character, and the urge of the human passion-- brings suffering to men.

22

Abercrombie, Lascelles, Thomas Hardy, A Critical Study, p. 94.

23

Ibid, p. 207.

- III. The Will works through elements of chance, accident and coincidence, in directing the lives of men.
- IV. The Will affects the lives of men profoundly by the changes that are wrought by the passing of time.
- V. The individual struggles in vain against the working of the Will.

These are crystalizations of the major ideas which are scattered in more or less loose form through Hardy's writings. It is only fair to this great Victorian writer to point out again that in no one place does he set these ideas forth in words, saying, "Now, I shall present this thought, now that." In no place does he imply that he wishes to thrust a new philosophy, or an old philosophy couched in new terminology, on the world. He himself wrote to Mr. Edward Wright in June, 1907, after the publication of the last part of The Dynasts: "In a dramatic epic--which I may perhaps presume 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 generalized form of what the thinking world had gradually come to adopt, myself included."²⁴

In the same letter he admits that there is weakness in his terminology--that "the word 'Will' does not perhaps per-

fectly fit the idea to be conveyed--a vague thrusting or urging internal force in no predetermined direction." But for lack of a more exact word he found it necessary to use the term "Will" for that which he wished to describe.

In view of the fact that this is a comparative study of two vehicles of thought, Hardy's explanation of the more lucid and direct expression to be found in the poetry is interesting and significant. In a note dated Oct. 17, 1896, he made the following statement: "Perhaps I can express more fully in verse ideas and emotions which run counter to the inert crystalized opinion--hard as rock--which the vast body of men have vested interests in supporting. To cry out in a passionate poem that (for instance) the Supreme Mover or Movers, the Prime Force or Forces, must be either unlimited in power, unknowing or cruel--which is obvious enough and has been for centuries--will cause them merely a shake of the head; but to put it in argumentative prose will make them sneer, or foam, and set all the literary contortionists jumping upon me, a harmless agnostic, as if I were a clamorous atheist, which in their crass illiteracy they seem to think is the same thing. . . . If Galileo had said in verse that the world moved, the Inquisition might have let him alone."²⁵

This statement reveals Hardy's consciousness not only of

the difference between the possibilities of verse and prose, but his awareness of their kinship. When the world reviled him for the thoughts expressed in Jude, he began to utter the same thoughts in poetry, and the world accepted them--at least, to a degree.

Chapter II

The Immanent Will, a Showman Directing the Puppet, Man.

I

The Immanent Will as Hardy conceives of it cannot be defined in a few words. Even in The Dynasts where the most lucid and definite expression is given to the idea, to grasp the true thought in its entirety, one must rise to the dizzy heights from which the Spirits of the Overworld view the prone and emaciated figure of Europe; he must stumble upon soldiers frozen to death beside their campfires in the snows of Russia, and smell "the fumes of gunpowder, and the steam from the hot bodies of grape-torn horses and men";¹ he must look through the strange unnatural light which exhibits "as one organism the anatomy of life and movement in all humanity and vitalized matter . . ."² By these paths only may he enter the gate of Hardy's thought world. In these ways only may he grasp the true significance of the fundamental thought of the poet-- that of the nature of the Immanent Will, the force which forever weaves the destinies of men.

To Thomas Hardy, the Will is not a beneficent god; it is not a jealous god demanding worship; it is not a far-away indifferent god lending

¹ ~~The Dynasts~~, Part III, Act VII, Sc. VII, p. 235.

² Ibid, Fore Scene, p. 14.

. . . its head

3

To other worlds, being wearied out with this.

It is rather an inherent force—unconscious, aimless, autonomous, indestructible. It is a force within men, yet beyond men. The wills, the acts, the desires of men are parts of it. It is something moving on and on, shaping characters, directing events, weaving destinies. Of its nature, G. R. Elliott once wrote: "Consider this 'Will,' this anomalous Being that stretches, cadaverously, along the background of Hardy's total work in prose and verse. He has attached names to It, often too awkwardly—the names of God, Earth, Nature, First Cause, Immanent Will . . . In reality this Being is a nameless figment of his imagination followed from youth to old age. It lends an extraordinary unity to his scene. The Thing looks inert, yet it is instinct with innumerable movements. Limbs of it grow into his stories; fibres of It twist in his rhythms, putting out sudden wry tendrils of phrase. His images 'retract' (his own word), leering back upon It in recognition of kinship. His best poems are sturdy shoots of It, assiduously carved, but kept in position as they grew, like a row of tree-trunks on a moor made into wonderful totems."⁴

3

Ibid, p. 8.

4

Elliott, G. R. , "Spectral Etchings in the Poetry of Thomas Hardy," Publication of the Modern Language Association, XLIII, p. 1165.

Though it be but a figment of the Hardy imagination, that it is "instinct with innumerable movements" cannot be denied--instinct in a much broader sense than that suggested by G. R. Elliott. It is movement, for it is force behind all human life, all courses of action, all series of events. It is that which determines cause and result. It is at once the will of an individual and the will of the universe. It is the showman pulling the puppet-strings of loose-jointed, stiffly moving marionettes.

"As the creative principle," writes Ernest Brenneke, "the Will is at the bottom of all great world-movements, upheavals of nations, and careers of dynasties. Wars are but 'whirlwinds of the Will,' the Grand Army of France in retreat is moved by 'That Within It,' and the Spirit of the Years, in introducing the second visualization of the Will, declares, that it shows 'the all-inhering Power,' which, by working from within, determines the course of events. And so it does not behoove the Spirits of the Pities, much less men, to criticize the Will according to man-made standards. It stands above all the catagories of human thought, completely beyond the conceptions of good and evil, of the desirable and the undesirable, of joy and pain."

5

Brenneke, Ernest, Thomas Hardy's Universe, p. 69.

And he adds later, "As the great world-movements are manifestations of the Immanent Will, so every individual action flows from the universal 'inhering Power.'"⁶

Of the characteristics of the Will, Hardy himself gives ample suggestion in line after line in The Dynasts. Though many of the shorter poems are concerned with the nature of the Will, nowhere is given such direct and complete description as is to be found in the great epic drama which opens with the words:

What of the Immanent Will and Its designs?⁷

To this questioning of the Shade of the Earth, The Spirit of the Years then wisely makes answer:

It works unconsciously, as heretofore,
Eternal artificeries of Circumstance,
Whose patterns, wrought by rapt aesthetic note,
Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,
And not their consequence.⁸

To ^{this} ~~which~~ the Chorus of the Pities replies in disconsolate mood:

Still thus? Still thus?

⁶ Brenneke, Ernest, Thomas Hardy's Universe, p. 69.

⁷ The Dynasts, Fore Scene, p. 7.

⁸ Ibid, p. 7.

Ever unconscious!

An automatic sense

Unweeting why or whence?

Be, then, the inevitable, as of old,
 Although that so it be we dare not hold!⁹

And again the Spirit of the Years makes ruthless
 answer:

Hold what ye list, fond unbelieving Sprites,
 You cannot swerve the pulsion of the Eysse,
 Which thinking on, yet weighing not Its thought,
 Unchecks Its clock-like laws.¹⁰

In later speeches the Will is called "the viewless,
 voiceless Turner of the Wheel,"¹¹ "This Intractable,"¹²
 "The Prime Mover,"¹³ and again and again the impersonal
 "It"—until "a new and penetrating light descends on the
 spectacle, enduing men and things with a seeming transpar-
 ency, and exhibiting as one organism the anatomy of life
 and movement in all humanity and vitalized matter included
 in the display." Then we hear the Spirit of the Pities
 murmur:

⁹
The Dynasts, Fore Scene, p.7.

¹⁰
Ibid, p. 8.

¹¹
Ibid, p. 8.

¹²
Ibid, p. 9.

¹³
Ibid, p. 13.

Amid this scene of body substantive
 Strange waves I sight like winds grown visible,
 Which bear men's forms on their innumerable coils,
 Twining and serpentine round and through,
 Also retracting threads like gossamers—
 Except in being irresistible—

14

Which complicate with some, and balance all.

The Spirit of the Years explains these strange retracting
 threads thus:

These are the Prime Volitions,—fibrils, veins,
 Will-tissues, nerves, and pulses of the Cause,
 That heave throughout the Earth's compositure.
 Their sum is like the lobule of a Brain
 Evolving always what it wots not of;
 A Brain whose whole connotes the Everywhere,
 And whose procedure may but be discerned
 By phantom eyes like ours; the while unguessed
 By those it stirs, who (even as ye do) dream
 Their motions free, their orderings supreme;
 Each life apart from each, with power to mete
 Its own day's measures; balance; self-complete;
 Though they subsist but atoms of the One
 Labouring through all, divisible from none;

But this no further now. Deem yet man's deeds self-done. ¹⁵

Then "The Anatomy of the Will disappears." ¹⁶

Thus in the Fore Scene of The Dynasts, Hardy makes explicit statement of his primary idea. The Will is to him, first of all, an unconscious force weaving patterns through the artifices of circumstance. It has no aim, for its interest (if an unconscious force can be said to have an interest) lies in the weaving only--never in the beauty of the patterns woven. It is nothing to the Will if its functioning brings sorrow and tragedy to man. It is nothing that man is twitched ¹⁷ "into a lonely grave" by the puppet-strings of the Will. It is nothing that men

. . . dream

Their notions free, their orderings supreme;

though they are only floundering, gyrating puppets. It moves on its unconscious, purposeless, indifferent way--ruthlessly, aimless, heedlessly cruel. It is autonomous and indestructible, having woven its web ever the same

15

The Dynasts; Fore Scene, p. 14.

16

Ibid, p. 14.

17

Ibid, p. 13

18

Since life first was; and ever will so weave.

It is an immanent force "whose whole connotes the Every-
 where." ¹⁹ Individual wills "subsist but atoms of the One." ²⁰

The same conception may be found in the shorter poems--
 directly or indirectly expressed. That man cannot but act
 as he acts is illustrated in "At the Word 'Farewell'":

She looked like a bird from a cloud

On the clammy lawn,

Moving alone, bare-browed

In the dim dawn,

The candles alight in the room

For my parting meal

Made all things withoutdoors loom

Strange, ghostly, unreal.

The hour itself was a ghost,

And it seemed to me then

As of chances the chance furthestmost

I should see her again.

I beheld not where all was so fleet

That a plan of the past

Which had ruled us from birthtime to meet

18

The Dynasts, Fore Scene, p.9.

19

Ibid, p. 14.

20

Ibid, p. 14.

Was in working at last.

No prelude did I there perceive

To a drama at all,

Or foreshadow what fortune might weave

From beginnings so small;

But I rose as if quickened by a spur

I was bound to obey,

And I stepped from the casement to her

Still alone in the gray.²¹

Thus the Will works from beginnings small, pricking men with spurs, and they are "bound to obey." They do not perceive that the Plan is only working itself out from the past; they do not see what the Plan is to bring in future dramatic performance; they can only step from the casement at the bidding of the Will.

In the poem above there is a less grave utterance of the thought of Marie Louise who reflects upon the event of her marriage with Napoleon:

A puppet I, by force inflexible,

Was bid to wed Napoleon at a nod,--²²

²¹

Works, Vol. XXI, p. 11.

²²

The Dynasts, Part III, Act V, Sc. 4, p. 152.

No matter from what men the nod came, it came as an expression of the "force inflexible." Though a queen of Austria, Marie Louise was only a puppet at the command of the Showman.

Similarly Napoleon cries out in a moment of despair:

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?

23

In these lines there is the typical ironical pathos of Hardy. These are utterances of those who have caught glimpses of the workings of the Will. They have learned something of its relentless force--its inexorable, pitiless, ruthless way.

Similar cognizance of the Will is shown in lines from "A King's Soliloquy":

Something binds hard the royal hand,

As all that be,

And it is That has shaped, has planned

My acts and me.

24

Although in "New Year's Eve" Hardy applies the name "God" to the force which directs destinies, the ultimate

23

Ibid, Part III, Act VI, Sc. 3, p. 183.

24

Works, XXI, p. 152.

"The sense of waiting here strikes strong;
 Everyone's waiting, waiting, it seems to me;
 What are you waiting for so long?--

What is to happen?" I said.

"O we are waiting for one called God," said they,
 (Though by some the Will, or Force, or Laws;
 And, vaguely, by some, the Ultimate Cause;)
 Waiting for him to see us before we are clay.

Yes, waiting, waiting, for God to know it.". . .

"To know what?" questioned I.

"To know how things have been going on
 earth and below it:

It is clear he must know some day."

I thereon asked them why.

"Since he made us humble pioneers
 Of himself in consciousness of Life's tears,
 It needs no mighty prophecy
 To tell that what he could mindlessly show
 His creatures, he himself will know.

"By some close-cowled mystery
 We have reached feeling faster than he,
 But he will overtake us anon,

If the world goes on."

This idea of a possible dawning consciousness of the Will is one upon which Hardy likes to speculate, though none too hopefully. The same idea appears in the After Scene of The Dynasts when the Spirit of the Pities questions:

Men gained cognition with the flux of time,
 And wherefore not the force informing them,
 When far-ranged actions past all fathoming
 Shall have swung by, and stand as backward years? 28

But as usual the Spirit of the Pities, voicing the cry of humanity, questions from a sense of the rightness of things as they should be. The hopeful and cheering thought has nothing to do with the nature of the Will as it is. The Spirit of the Years, having seen no such awakening in the past, can promise none for the future. The Semichorus I of the Years sings in reply to the query of the Spirit of the Pities:

Last as first the question rings
 Of the Will's long travailings;
 Why the All-mover,

Why the All-prover

Ever urges on and measures out the droning
tune of Things.

And the Semichorus II sings on:

Heaving dumbly
As we deem,
Moulding numbly
As in dream,

Apprehending not how fare the sentiment subjects
of its scheme.²⁹

Thus the Will is as it is--all-powerful, dumb, unfeeling,
unapprehending. Its present nature remains the same though
the Pities feel a stirring in the air and look hopefully
toward its dawning consciousness. Though man may wish that
it were a "vengeful god"³⁰ laughing at man's sorrow that he
might have a hated being against whom he could hurl his
wrath, though he may know that then he could die

Steeled by the sense of ire unmerited;³¹

such wishings are vain. He must know that

²⁹
The Dynasts, After Scene, p. 252.

³⁰
"Hap", Works, XVIII, p. 6.

³¹
Ibid

Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
 And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan . . . 32

The utter hopelessness of man in these lines finds expression again in "Doom and She,"³³ where the "blind Mother of all things made" meditates upon the meaning of Grief and Right and Wrong and Feeling--of which she can understand nothing. When it sometimes occurs to the poet to reflect upon man's responsibility to this Great Dame--this Mother through whom the Will works--he can find no reason for repentance for mistakes, because of her utter indifference and lack of comprehension. When man mourns that he must let her know why high purposings were not fulfilled, he is forced to say;

34

What will she answer? That she does not care

In "The Lacking Sense," where the poet again reflects upon the workings of the Will through the blind Mother, he would

Deal, then, her groping skill no scorn, no note of
 malediction;

for

Yet her primal doom pursues her, faultful, fatal is

32

Works, XVIII, p. 6.

33

Ibid, XVIII, p. 165.

34

Ibid, XVIII, p. 8.

she ever;

Though so deft and nigh to vision is her facile
finger-touch

35

That the seers marvel much.

Hardy finds a certain comfort--a kind of assuaging of the sense of injustice--in knowing that Nature, Misfortune, and even Death are but puppets of the Will. When he hears their assurance that their slavery is like his own, he says,

We smiled upon each other then,

And life to me had less

Of that fell look it wore ere when

36

They owned their passiveness.

In "The Blow" he is again thankful that

Time's finger should have stretched to show

No aimful author's was the blow

That swept us prone,

37

But the Immanent Doer's That doth not know.

And he is able to speculate coolly upon the possible results

35

Works, XVIII, .p.163.

36

Ibid, XVIII, p. 163.

37

Ibid, XXI, p. 102.

of the awakening of the Will—"The Sleep-Worker"—if the day should come when it might feel "Life's palpitating tissues." He wonders how it would bear itself then. He asks of it,

Wilt thou destroy, in one wild shock of shame,
Thy whole high heaving firmamental frame,
Or patiently adjust, amend, and heal?³⁸

Thus Hardy gives with many speculations and meditations his conception of the Will. Thus "fibres of It twist in his rhythms, putting out sudden wry tendrils of phrase."³⁹ Thus his best poems are "sturdy shoots of It, assiduously carved, but kept in position as they grew, like a row of tree-trunks on a moor made into wonderful totems."⁴⁰

II

Equally true is it that "Limbs of It grow into his stories." In them, however, the expression of the idea is less direct and concise, especially in the earlier novels. This is the

38

Works, XVIII, p. 169.

39

Elliott, G. R., "Spectral Etchings in the Poetry of Thomas

Hardy," P. M. L. A., XLIII, p. 1185.

40

Ibid.

natural result of the place of novel-writing in the life of a man who wished above all to be a great poet and who was obliged to postpone the writing of poetry for twenty-seven years while he devoted himself to fiction. It is natural that the best expressions of his basic philosophy should occur in the literary vehicle which he most loved. It is equally natural that the most consummate expression of his ideas should be given to the world in his later years after a long period of thinking and observing. In his novels he recorded certain processes of life as he saw them; such recording led to the gradual formation of a definite series of ideas which he crystalized in verse form.

It is, however, noteworthy that there should be rather clear flashes of these ideas in the very earliest of his novels. Even before he had arrived at the summation of the idea of an Immanent Will through the observation of processes of Human Struggle and Chance and Time, he anticipated the final lightning-white statements in The Dynasts.

His first novel, Desperate Remedies (1871), a story of intrigue and device, is concerned quite largely with the effects of certain chance conditions upon the lives of the main characters. Yet even in this first novel--where the machinery of the story-teller creaks gratingly--there are definite references to a force at work behind coincidences. Cytherea is thinking upon this strange force when she says to her brother, " . . . two disconnected events will fall

strangely together by chance, and people will scarcely notice the fact beyond saying, 'Oddly enough it happened that so and so were the same,' and so on. But when three such events coincide without any apparent reason for the coincidence, it seems as there must be invisible means at work."⁴¹

In the second novel, Under a Greenwood Tree (1872), there is comparatively little reference to an "invisible means," yet in the utterances of the rustics there are certain fatalistic convictions. Mr. Penny resignedly comments upon the misfortunes of his daughter with the words, "However, 'twas to be, and none can gainsay it."⁴² And later when Fancy Day with maidenly shyness wonders how she will be able to "go through" the difficulties of the approaching wedding, the best advice that Mrs. Penny can give her is that she must think, "'Tis to be, and here goes!"⁴³ In these homely phrases, Hardy suggests a kind of feeling for that which he later terms the Immanent Will.

In the third novel, "A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873)," the agents of the Will are more certainly the very stuff of the story. The whole novel is woven about a mass of coincidences and accidents and chance events. The reader begins to feel more surely the movement of the puppet-strings of the Will--not as handled by an artificial and stiff story-teller but as

⁴¹

Works, XIV, p. 168.

⁴²

Ibid, VII, p. 10.

⁴³

Ibid, VII, p. 196.

guided deftly by an artistic hand. That Hardy was growing more and more conscious of the relation of chance to the Will is quite evident. In the movement of circumstances, the characters are powerless. There is a strong sense of irony in the consequences of the workings of the agents of the Will. In such sentences as "Stephen was powerless to forsake the depressing, luring subject,"⁴⁴ Hardy directly anticipates his conception of a force that overrides the individual will "as a whole its parts in other entities."⁴⁵ The individuals are seen to be ". . . but thistle-globes on Heaven's high gales,⁴⁶ And whither blown, or when, or how, or why" they cannot choose.

In the fifth novel--the faulty and more or less artificial "Hand of Ethelberta" (1875)--there is reference, in the words of Christopher Julian's advice to Ethelberta in regard to business and ambition, to the idea that regardless of her strivings she will receive perhaps the opposite of that for which she strives. He adds with a certain cynicism, "So impish are the ways of the gods."⁴⁷ "The gods" are simply fate, the power beyond man, the Will, or whatever one wishes to call it. Christopher Julian is saying--with less serious

44

Works, X, p. 401.

45

The Dynasts, Fore Scene, p. 11.

46

The Dynasts, Pt. II, Act II, ScVII, p. 256.

47

Works, XI, p. 132.

conviction--what Napoleon says to General Mack,

"War, General, ever has its ups and downs,

And you must take the better and the worse

As impish chance or destiny ordains."⁴⁸

In The Return of the Native (1878), the sixth of Hardy's novels to be published, there is a powerful feeling on the part of Eustacia against a hostile destiny. The vivid splash of color which she makes against the grayness of Destiny is ultimately blurred over by events until it disappears in the drab nothingness of her surroundings. It is as though she felt the chill twilight hue of fate creeping over her vibrant young body--her high white brow and crimson lips. Her soul cries out against the force that seems to plot against her. She even contemplates death "if the satire of Heaven should go much further."⁴⁹ And Hardy adds: "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 reasons 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." Whether or not he approves of the attitude of

48

The Dynasts, Pt. I., Act IV, Sc. 5, p. 97.

49

Works, IV, p. 305.

the rebellious girl toward this blind fate--this strange Supreme Being, there is a strong sympathy beneath his treatment of her. It is evident that he does not blame her very severely, when he says, "Yet, instead of blaming herself for the issue she laid the fault upon the shoulders of some indistinct colossal Prince of the World, who had framed her situation and ruled her lot."⁵⁰ Although this is Eustacia's idea rather than Hardy's own, it is so similar to that of the Spirit of the Years in saying,

I say, as I have said long heretofore,
I know but little freedom. Feelst thou not
We are in its hand, as he?--Here, as elsewhere,⁵¹
We do but as we may; no further dare.

that the relationship is at once apparent.

And how very much the same in thought is Eustacia's cry: "O, the cruelty of putting me in into this ill-conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control!"⁵²

In Two on a Tower (1882), there occurs the phrase, "But the whirligig of Time, having set Viviette free,"⁵³ suggesting in slightly different language the exclamation of the Chorus of

⁵⁰ Works, IV, p. 353.

⁵¹ The Dynasts, Pt. I, Act II, Sc. III, p. 57.

⁵² Works, IV, p. 422.

⁵³ Ibid, XII, p. 320

Intelligences in The Dynasts:

54

If Time's weird threads so weave!

In The Woodlanders (1837), there are repeated references to the relentless governing force in the lives of men. Dr. Fitzpiers in conversation with Mrs. Charmond says, "But see how powerless is the human will against predestination!"

55

In another place there is a reference to the "Unfulfilled Intention". . . "which makes life what it is" --a prose utterance of

56

Something binds hard the royal hand,

As all that be,

And it is That has shaped, has planned

57

My acts and me.

The line, "till the finger of fate touched her and turned her to a wife," might have been written of Queen Marie Louise as well as of Grace Melbury. It would simply be another way of saying that she

59

Was bid to marry Napoleon at a nod

54

The Dynasts, Pt. I, Act III, Sc. 3, p. 82.

55

Works, VI, p. 227.

56

Ibid, p. 59.

57

Ibid, XXI, p. 152.

58

Ibid, VI, p. 208.

59

The Dynasts, Pt. III, Act V, Sc. 4, P. 15.

as the queen said when she called herself a puppet.

In Tess of the D'urbervilles (1891), the feeling against the inexorableness of fate is strong. Tess is one of the most appealing of all the puppets jerked about on the stage by the showman--the ruthless Will. The whole story is permeated with the idea of the Crass Casualty. "In Tess," writes Ernest Brenneke, "although he still expresses his notion of the Dominant Casualty as Time, as relentless Nemesis, or Fate, and as Nature (as seen in the whole Fromm Valley farm episode), Hardy's favorite vehicle for the conveyance of his intellectual convictions is the idea, or association of ideas, grouped by Shopenhauer under the term 'Will'."⁶⁰

Specific references to the idea are to be found in the following passages:

So the two forces were at work here as everywhere, the inherent will to enjoy, and the circumstantial will against enjoyment.⁶¹

The gaiety with which they had set out had somehow vanished; and yet there was no enmity or malice between them. They were generous young souls; they had been reared in the lonely country nooks where fat-

60

Brenneke, Ernest, Thomas Hardy's Universe, p. 47-48.

61

Works, I, p. 365.

alism is a strong sentiment, and they did not blame her. Such supplanting was to be.⁶²

Tess was now carried along upon the wings of the hours, without a sense of a will . . . Her naturally bright intelligence had begun to admit the fatalistic convictions common to field-folk and those who associate more extensively with natural phenomena than with their fellow creatures; and she accordingly drifted into that passive responsiveness to all things her lover suggested, characteristic of the frame of mind.⁶³

The relationship between the idea behind these passages and that of the poems already referred to is too obvious to necessitate detailed discussion. In them Hardy's characters manifest their acceptance of the idea of the Will—at least, of a Will of some kind over which they have no control.

In Jude the Obscure (1896), the last of Hardy's novels, the expression of the idea is frequent and forceful. Jude says to Sue, in a spirit of resignation, "Things are as they are, and will be brought to their destined issue."⁶⁴ This is again the idea of the All-mover measuring out

62

Works, I, p. 186.

63

Works, I, p. 259.

64

Ibid, III, p. 409.

65

"the droning tune of Things" --the idea that

66

You cannot swerve the pulsion of the Byss.

In Sue's cry to Jude, there is the awful sense of injustice that appears again and again in Hardy's poems: "There in something external to us which says, 'You shan't!' First it said, 'You shan't learn!' Then it said, 'You shan't labor!' Now it says, 'You shan't love!'" ⁶⁷ This feeling toward the cruelty of the blind force that directs their lives grows upon Sue until she feels that they are actually fleeing from a persecutor. It is in harmony with the thought of "Yell-ham Wood's Story," suggested in the lines:

It says that life would signify
A thwarted purposing:

That we come to live, and we are called to die. 68

Thus in the novels as well as in the poetry we catch glimpses of the Showman who pulls the puppet strings--the strange, purposeless, blind Will--autonomous, indestructible. That the same idea permeates the two is evident, but that the idea is more definite, more clearly expressed,

65
The Dynasts, After Scene, p. 252.

66
Ibid, Fore Scene, p. 8.

67
Ibid, III, 407.

68
Ibid, XX, p. 424.

more surely and purposefully handled in the poetry is equally evident. The two are one, however, in the Hardy-esque quality of presenting the basic idea of his thinking. They are one in that the basic concept, as set forth in the two, is essentially the same.

Chapter III

Human Nature - - a Puppet-String

I

It has been pointed out in the previous chapter that according to Hardy's scheme of ideas an autonomous, aimless, unconscious, and indestructible Will is the directing force in the lives of men; this he reveals in his verse and his fiction. The question how this force works, through what channels it reaches men, what the nerve-fibres are by which the impulses originating in this unconscious brain travel to the muscles of the organism remains to be considered. In this chapter the first of these paths of impulse will be discussed--that of human nature as a medium of the transmutation of the urgings of the Immanent Will into the lives of men.

II

The very stuff of which men are made serves as an agent of the Immanent Will, bringing in the ruthlessness of its functioning suffering to men. The particular phases of human nature with which Hardy seems most concerned as channels through which the Will works are: the ability of the individual to think, the tendency to follow ideas and ideals, natural weaknesses of character, and the urge of the human passion, love.

In connection with this idea, Ernest Brenneke points out that "as the Autonomous Will in the sphere of nature determines the course of events through the operation of irresistible causes, so in the sphere of human life it determines the course of action through the operation of irresistible motives. Schopenhauer's attempt at the solution of the age-long problem may be summed up in one sentence: Man always does what he wants to do; but he must want to do what he wants, because he is what he is. Every action is the necessary result of the combination of character and motive."¹

Were man only an unreasoning creature, the results of the tyrannical operation of the Will might be less ironically sad. But man is endowed with the power to think—to see motives—to observe the inadequacies and injustices of life. He is given the power to understand the significance of his own desires, only to find that they can never be adequately realized. He thinks, but he must think sadly because he must learn that there is no benevolent force directing his destiny. Through realization comes sorrow. Knowledge brings disillusionment.

Being a thinking creature, man possesses a sense of perfection. He must be forever comparing life as he finds it with life as he imagines it might be. This power of

¹ Brenneke, Ernest, Thomas Hardy's Universe, p. 89.

idealization raises him above animals, but it does not take from him kinship with animals. It drives him on to goals he cannot reach. It gives him dreams that must vanish in the face of the realities of life. It makes a god-and-goat being of him--the god never able to escape from the goat, the goat never able to free himself from the dreams of a god.

Being made of something earthy, something less than divine, man is a creature of weaknesses and flaws. Heredity, environment, and chance enter into the making of him and leave their marks upon him. These marks are flaws which affect his whole life. He cannot escape the series of events set in motion by acts prompted by a weakness in character. As inevitable as their existence is their effect upon his life. Through them the Will brings suffering to man--for they are a part of the Will.

Strongest of all human emotions is love. Because of its strength it is one of the most powerful forces in the life of a man--a force that urges him on down a long series of actions that lead him through sorrow and suffering--sometimes to content, more often to unhappiness. Because of its great power, the individual is subject to its dictates. Strive as he may he cannot escape it. Through it the Will is inexorable.

These elements are most frequent material for Hardy's direct and indirect discussions of the suffering brought to man by the Immanent Will working through the channels

of human nature.

III

It may be pointed out that those persons in Hardy's novels who have received a certain amount of education suffer more than those humble folk of the Wessex countryside who do not attempt to widen the horizon of their thinking. Those who have begun to question life find it sad. Those who accept it unquestioningly are satisfied with it. They do not see its injustices. Dick Dewy and Fancy Day, simple Wessex characters, accepting life as they find it, do not undergo nearly as intense a conflict as do Swithin St. Cleeve and Lady Constantine, or Grace Melbury and Dr. Fitzpiers, or Clym and Eustacia.

A typical example of young men whose learning brings sadness to themselves and others is Swithin St. Cleeve. Even in his youth, he seems to realize to a certain degree that this is true. Because of this realization, he refuses to show the stars to Lady Constantine excepting at her express request. And when she insists that she wishes to be enlightened, his reply is, "Let me caution you against it."² To her query, "Is enlightenment on the subject then so terrible?" he answers, "Yes, indeed!" In the course of later conversation, Swithin remarks with more sadness than

²

Works, Vol. XII, p. 10.

cynicism that "whatever the stars were made for, they were not made to please our eyes. It is just the same in everything; nothing is made for man." Whereupon Lady Constantine wisely observes that astronomy has made him "feel human insignificance too plainly."³ As her first lesson in astronomy proceeds, she remonstrates against further information with the plea that it overpowers her and makes her "feel that it is not worth while to live." She is unable to talk of her own troubles because they are dwarfed beside the grandeur and magnitude of astronomy. Swithin admits that the study has led men to discover "Impersonal monsters, namely, Immensities"⁴ and suggests that "those minds who exert their imaginative powers in the depths of "the stellar universe merely strain their faculties to gain a new horror."⁵ His final advice is: "If you are cheerful, and wish to remain so, leave the study of astronomy alone"; and he adds, "It is better—far better—for men to forget the universe than to bear it clearly in mind!"⁶

In this conversation lies the key to the problems of the whole novel, Two on a Tower. For Swithin St. Cleeve the importance of everything is reduced in his

³ Works, XII, p. 32.

⁴ Ibid, p. 33.

⁵ Ibid, p. 34.

⁶ Ibid, p. 35.

study of astronomy. When complications in living arise later, they come from subconscious conflict between the attitudes he has acquired through study and through the practicalities of life. Had the love of science not so completely taken possession of him, he would never have consented to the postponement of his legal marriage with Viviette. The consequence of such possible action is obvious. His son would then not have been born as the supposed son of another man; Lady Constantine would not have become an old woman at the age thirty-three; she would not have known the years of resigned suffering; she would not have died while still a young woman. Life would have followed a simple course for them both. In his youthful remarks about the effect of the study of science upon the individual mind, he anticipates the train of sad events which come to him and to Viviette.

In a different manner the learning that Olym Yoebright acquires abroad affects indirectly the lives of those living on Egdon Heath. When weary of what he calls "the idlest, vainest, most effeminate business that ever a man could be put to,"⁷ he returns to the heath and the people he loves, he sets in motion a sequence of events which ends in the dismal drowning scene at the end of a drama of conflict. To Eustacia he symbolizes the world beyond the

7

Works, IV, p. 202.

remote rural district to which she is confined. She is attracted to the "young and clever man" . . . "coming into that lonely heath from, of all the contrasting places in the world, Paris."⁸ Had Clym never left Egdon to be educated he would be as any other young rustic to Eustacia. In that case the threads of their lives would not be woven in the same pattern, and both would escape the tragedy that awaits them.

Jude is the most typical example of a man's struggling to acquire learning, but meeting with defeat in all attempts at adjustment in life. As he goes for his Saturday walk from Alfredson to Marygreen his mind is so occupied with thoughts of Euripides, Plato, and Aristotle that he does not at first hear the "Ha! ha! ha! Hoity-toity!"⁹ which marks the beginning of the life-long conflict for the young man. Were he not the sensitive, thinking individual that he is, his life with Arabella would probably be one of growing more coarse and callous, but also one without the unhappy disastrous period which follows his marriage with her. Christminster, symbolizing, as it does, the learning for which he yearns, attracts him as a magnet draws an iron filing. In an hour¹⁰ of despair, he sees "what a curious and cunning glamour"

⁸ Works, IV, p. 127.

⁹ Works, III, p. 41.

¹⁰ Works, III, p. 136.

the place has for him. He decides that "It would have been far better for him in every way if he had never come within sight and sound of the delusive precincts."¹¹ This moment of disillusionment remains with him to the end of his life. When in later years he and Sue return to the place, Sue sees that he is getting "into one of his tempestuous and self-harrowing moods" until in bitterness he tells those who remember him as a young man, "I may do some good before I am dead--be a sort of success as a frightful example of what not to do; and so illustrate a moral story . . . I was perhaps, after all, a paltry victim to the spirit of mental and social restlessness that makes so many unhappy in these days!"¹²

The thinking of both Sue and Jude brings them only unhappiness. Through it, they become at once heroic and cowardly. Because they are able to see the crushing effects of conventions, they dare to follow the unconventional course, only to bring upon themselves the more crushing effects of no conventions. Because they realize that saying a few words before a clergyman or a clerk cannot add to the beauty and reality of love, they plunge themselves into a maze of events that steal from love its beauty and leave it groping and helpless. Though in their thinking they strive to

11

Works, I, p. 390.

12

Works, III, p. 393-394.

approach truth, they find only unhappiness. The Will is ruthless as it works through and against the desire for learning--the desire to think independently.

Among the women in Hardy's novels who are urged along a path of difficulties because of the acquisition of a little learning or of advanced views are Sue Bridehead (who has been discussed), Grace Melbury, Lady Constantine, and Bathsheba. Grace Melbury, returning to her father's home after a period of schooling, is too refined and dainty a creature to be happy in the love a man who has retained the uncouthness of the people of the soil. Bathsheba is independent enough to set out in paths untravelled by the women about her, but in doing so she weaves a chain of events which bring suffering to those about her. Lady Constantine's superficial interest in astronomy, prompted by interests other than those of learning it is true, ends disastrously.

Most of the so-called villains of Hardy's novels are men who have at least a certain worldly knowledge. Dr. Fitzpiers is a man with scientific interests and a philosophic mind. Wildeve is one whose sophistication stands in contrast to the simplicity of the Wessex folk. Alec D'Urberville has worldly poise which makes him sure of himself in all difficulties. With these men one may contrast the heroic characters of Giles, Oak, and the Reddleman, all simple, humble persons satisfied with the meagre amount of

learning of the folk among whom they are born. While they are often drawn into the nets of complications woven about others, they retain through it all a certain solidarity and equanimity. They do not grow hysterical and attempt to rebel against the force that directs their lives.

In these characters and others Hardy presents the idea that a thinking mind finds and creates suffering in life. These men and women must think as they do; being what they are, they cannot do differently. Thus the Immanent Will directs them along a path of unhappiness.

The idea is quite differently treated in the poems. This is natural on the grounds of the very nature of poetry and prose as vehicles for conveying any thought. It would hardly be fitting in poetry to discuss the endeavors of a youth like Jude to secure an education. There is hardly poetic material in Clym's precociousness as a child and his career in Paris. Even Swithin St. Cleeve's thinking is at times rather foreign to the substance of poetry.

There is, however, a striking similarity between the thought of "In Vision I Roamed" and some of the thoughts uttered by Swithin in his conversation with Lady Constantine.

In vision I roamed the flashing Firmament,
 So fierce in blazon that the Night waxed wan,
 As though with awe at orbs of such ostent;
 And as I thought my spirit ranged on and on

In footless Universe through ghastr heights of sky,
 To the last chambers of the monstrous Dome,
 Where stars the brightest here are lost to the eye:
 Then, any spot on our own Earth seemed Home!

And the sick grief that you were far away
 Grew pleasant thankfulness that you were near
 Who might have been, set on some foreign Sphere,
 Less than a Want to me, as day by day
 I lived unaware, uncaring all that day
 Locked in that Universe trackless, distant, drear. 13

The thought of the last stanza is not suggested in any of Swithin's youthful remarks because he has before this time known nothing of love, but the thought that human life seems infinitessimally small to one who grasps the idea of the magnitude of the universe appears in his words as in the poem. One arrives at this peculiarly lonely and cheerless position only through thinking. In his study of the science of astronomy, Swithin approaches the position of the philosopher-poet who "in vision" roams "the flashing firmament." A peculiar detachment comes to both—a dreary loneliness. Both "feel human insignificance too plainly." ¹⁴ Both might say, "It is better

13

WORKS, XVIII, p. 7.

14

WORKS, XII, p. 32.

. . . for men to forget the universe than to bear it too
clearly in mine." ¹⁵

The words of the Sign-Seeker reveal the inadequacies of thinking. Another young astronomer might have written the words:

I learn to prophesy the hid eclipse,
The coming of eccentric orbs;
To mete the dust the sky absorbs,
To weigh the sun, and fix the hour each planet dips.

.....

But that I fain would wot of shuns my sense— ¹⁶

This same groping for a comforting and cheering truth is evident in "A Meeting with Despair":

The evening shaled I found me on a moor
Sight shunned to entertain;
The black lean land, of featureless contour,
Was like a tract in pain.

"This scene, like my own life," I said, "is one
Where many glooms abide;
Toned by its fortune to a deadly dun--
Lightless on every side."

¹⁵
Works, XII, p. 35.

¹⁶
Works, XVIII, p. 60.

I glanced aloft and halted, pleasure-caught
 To see the contrast there:
 The ray-lit clouds gleamed glory; and I thought,
 "There's solace everywhere!"

Then bitter self-reproaches as I stood
 I dealt me silently
 As one perverse—misrepresenting Good
 In graceless mutiny . . .

Against the horizon's dim-discerned wheel
 A form rose, strange of mould:
 That he was hideous, hopeless, I could feel
 Rather than could behold.

"'Tis a dead spot, where even the light lies spent
 To darkness!" croaked the Thing.
 "Not if you look aloft!" said I, intent
 On my new reasoning.

"Yea—but await awhile!" he cried. "Ho-ho!—
 Look now aloft and see!"
 I looked. There, too, sat night: Heaven's
 radiant show
 Had gone that heartened me.

The poem expresses essentially the same thought as the words of Little Time at the Wessex Agricultural Show--where Jude and Sue chat among the flowers, sensing even in their mood of happy playfulness "the one immediate shadow."¹⁸ Little Time's sad words are: "I should like the flowers very much, if I didn't keep on thinking they'd all be withered in a few days!"¹⁹ The child with his strange faculty for thinking is typical of the Hardy conception that one finds unhappiness in thinking. Throughout the novel, his precocious utterances are always to the effect that one can find no happiness and no consoling truth in the world. As Jude explains to Sue: "The doctor says there are such boys springing up amongst us--boys of a sort unknown in the last generation--the outcome of new views of life."²⁰ Utter pessimism is expressed in the sentence, "He says it is the beginning of the coming universal wish not to live."²¹ This is the reply to the "new reasoning"²² of the thinker who looks aloft to see the light of the evening sky--then to find it gone. This is the vanishing

18

Works III, p. 358.

19

Ibid., p. 358.

20

Ibid., p. 406.

21

Ibid., p. 406.

22

Works, XVIII, p. 70.

of "Heaven's radiant show."²³ This view of life's terrors
is also identical with the vision of the mature sign-seeker:

I witness fellow earth-men surge and strive;
Assemblies meet, and thro, and part;
Death's sudden finger, sorrow's smart;
All the vast various moils that mean a world alive.

But that I fain would wot of shuns my sense--²⁴

That man finds less beauty--though more truth--in the
world as he becomes a more highly developed thinking creature
is suggested in "The Mother Mourns." Sadly Nature reflects
upon man who has such "compass and brightness of a brain"

"As to read my defects with a god-glance,

Uncover every vestige

Of the old inadvertence, annunciate

Each flaw and each stain!"²⁵

She regrets that she did not check "man's mountings of the
mind-sight" because he no longer sees the "sun as a Sanct-
shape," the "moon as the Night-Queen." She has discovered
that he thinks that he with the same matter could have

23

Works, XVIII, p.76.

24

Works, XVIII, p. 60

25

Ibid, p. 155.

evolved "a creation

More seemly, more sane."

This thinking creature of whom she speaks is akin--
not to Giles and the Reddeman and Oak--but to Sue and Jude,
Little Time, Dr. Fitzpiers, and those men and women who
question the ways of life and nature. Such men and women
find only a mirror

Which makes of men a transparency

Whose magic penetrates like a dart

.....

And throws our minds back on us, and our heart,
26
Until we start.

Ironical moments of vision come to Clym, Eustacia, Sue,
Jude, Swithin, Little Time, Christopher Julian, and others
as they grope their way through the maze of life.

Those who think hear "The Voice of Things"--in youth:
The waves huzza'ing "like a multitude below,"

In the sway of an all-including joy
27
Without a cloy--

26

"Moments of Vision," Works, XXI, p. 1.

27

Ibid, p. 2.

but in old age: "the waters wagging in a long ironic laughter"

At the lot of men, and all the vapoury

Things that be.

.....

They are like the moon who has

. . . mused on, often mused on

Growth, decay,

Nations alive, dead, mad aswoon,

and who has wondered "at the sounds"... "of the human tune"
and thinks of it

As a show

28

God ought surely to shut up soon.

To this pessimism, thinking may lead men. True, it does not lead all of Hardy's thinking men to this exact attitude. But it does not bring any of them real happiness, and to many it brings sorrow. Yet they cannot help thinking. It is in their natures to think. Thus the Will works.

The idea is most clearly presented in the novels perhaps; at least, it is differently presented there and at greater length. In the poems there is a more vague and

abstract treatment. Kinship between the novels and the poetry cannot, however, be denied even here where the treatment is dissimilar.

IV

Man, being a thinking creature and possessed of a sense of perfection, is made profoundly aware in life of the difference between the actual and the ideal. Even though to some men this difference is apparent, they do not suffer greatly because of it. In others the idea of the ideal is so strong that they are unable to make happy adjustments to the actual world. To such men Schopenhauer's "Die Welt ist meine Vorstellung" ²⁹ is applicable, but not consoling. They may "in vision" roam "the flashing Firmament," ³⁰ but they find it a lonely place. They may follow dream-phantoms, but when the flesh and blood of their own natures calls out to the dream-phantoms they will find them whitely ³¹ hasting away. This is the idea that Hardy presents in certain of his novels and poems, together with the idea that these dream-followers are led on and on by the promptings of the Will that has made them idealists so that they cannot escape the consequences of maladjustment.

29

Brenneke, Ernest, Thomas Hardy's Universe, p. 24.

30

Works, XVIII, p. 7.

31

Ibid, XVIII, p. 203.

The Well-Beloved presents the most obvious treatment of the idea. Here a man follows an ideal through life; he is always unable to escape it; and he is never quite able to face the actualities of life because of it. The result is unfulfillment for himself and sorrow for others. Jocelyn describes his experience with idealism thus: "To see the creature who has thither-to been perfect, divine, lose under your gaze the divinity which has informed her, grow commonplace, turn from flame to ashes, from a radiant vitality to a relic, is anything but a pleasure for any man, and has been nothing less than a racking spectacle to my sight . . . I have been absolutely miserable when I looked in a face for her I used to see there, and could see her there no more."³² It is evident from these words that Pierston was aware at an early age of the unhappiness which comes to idealists.

Jude is an idealist, always finding "that a vast gulf divides the ideal from the real universe."³³ His early dream of being a student is never quite forgotten. It haunts him—sometimes making him bitter, often "tempestuous and self-harrowing."³⁴ If he were less an idealist and more

32

Works, XIII, p. 38.

33

Brenneke, Ernest, Thomas Hardy's Universe, p. 24.

34

Works, III, p. 390.

a practical man, he would abide by the conventions, marry Sue, and save them both from the suffering to which they are submitted.

If Sue were less an idealist, she would not be the coward she is about performing the marriage rites. She would see the consequences of attempting to thrust unconventionalism into a conventional society. She would realize that she is adding to the sorrows of life for herself, Jude, and her children.

These two idealists, living together, find unhappiness in life because of the way they choose to live, but they choose to live as they do because they are as they are and cannot do otherwise. In this way the Immanent Will directs their lives.

Certain phrases and sentences appear in the novel which bear out the theory that idealism affects their lives profoundly and unhappily. Hardy writes of Sue: "She thought of the strange operation of a simple-minded man's ruling passion, that it should have led Jude who loved her and the children so tenderly, to place them in this depressing pur-³⁵ lieu, because he was still haunted by his dream." Earlier in the book there occurs this sentence: "His idea of her was the thing of most consequence, not Arabella herself,

he sometimes said laconically." ³⁶ These sentences and others serve as small guide-posts in a novel centered about a conflict between idealism and actuality.

Swithin St. Cleve is an idealist, possessing the "one ruling passion" ³⁷ in his love of astronomy. Being a dreamer, he is perplexed, not agitated, by the whims and moods of Lady Constantine. He is so engrossed in scientific thought that he does not attach any particular significance to the words she utters. So lost is he in the world of ideas that he is not even aware of her love for him until he overhears certain of the rustics talking of it. Possessed by his ideal of becoming a great astronomer, he permits Lady Constantine to persuade him go away to study, thus postponing their legal marriage. His idealistic nature brings sorrow to Lady Constantine, ending finally in her death; yet he is unable to change his nature.

Eustacia is a dreamer who does not find happiness in life. If she were not a dreamer, she would be satisfied with Egdon Heath and its people. As it is, her imaginings of the outside world will not let her be in peace. The dream that she has after hearing Clym's voice for the first time so takes possession of her that "the perfervid woman

36

Works, III, p. 65.

37

Ibid, p. 401.

38

was by this time half in love with a vision." Hardy goes on after this statement to speculate on how she might act if she had less pride and more self-control along with her failing for falling half in love with a vision. This does not, however, alter the way in which she does act. She does what she does because she is what she is—because she does possess pride and impetuosity and idealism. A certain combination of traits makes her what she is and makes her do what she does.

Clym is a typical idealist, forsaking the Parisian life of success to serve his fellow-men on Egdon Heath. This action brings unhappiness to his mother who has dreamed of his success in the world, and to Eustacia who cannot understand his ideal of service and simple living. It is one of the threads woven in the pattern of the tragedy of their lives by the Immanent Will.

The various young architects in Hardy's novels are idealists who must go through difficulties and sorrow because they are such. Some of them are George Somerset, Edwin Springrove, and Stephen Smith. Christopher Julian is a dreaming musician. Even the practical Henchard is possessed by an ideal in his desire to be honored and respected and loved. Of him Hardy might have written the line in "The Two Men":

39

And hope extinct, decay ensued.

In certain of his poems Hardy deals very definitely with the idea of idealism. The thoughts on the subject which are presented in the novels are put in crystalized form in his verse.

The poem, "The Well-Beloved," suggests immediately the novel by the same name. In the poem, a man, going to meet his bride, meets a spirit with features like those of his loved one and hears the words:

"Thou lovest what thou dreamest her;
I am thy very dream!"⁴⁰

But when he would wed the lovely dream-creature, she vanishes with

"I wed no mortal man!"

When the bridegroom reaches his bride, he finds her shrunk-en and pale as though her spirit has died.

Hardy, sadly reflecting on life, has discovered the truth that dreams cannot be wed with mortal beings. In the poem this truth is brought out more strikingly and vividly than in the novel, The Well-Beloved, because there is not the artificiality in the former that there is in the latter.

39

Wessex Poems, Vol. XVIII, p. 102.

40

Works, XVIII, p. 187.

The means of presentation is not forced and is therefore more effective.

"The Dream-Follower" also might have been written of Jocelyn Pierston as he returns to the island to find the first Avicé an old woman.

A dream of mine flew over the mead

To the halls where my old Love reigns;

And it drew me on to follow its lead;

And I stood at her window panes;

And I saw but a thing of flesh and bone

Speeding on to its cleft in the clay;

And my dream was scared, and expired in a moan,

And I whitely hasted away.

"The Phantom Horse-Woman"⁴² is another presentation of the idea that a dream may completely possess a man, triumphing at intervals over actuality and over the ravages of time.

In "The Church-BUILDER"⁴³ is told the story of tragedy which may come with the giving of one's life to an ideal. The architect has one dream which he attempts to put into material form in the building of a church—a gift to God.

41

Works, XVIII, p. 203.

42

Works, XXI, p. 125.

43

Works, XVIII, p. 248.

In the end he finds that he has lost his wealth and his friends. He ends his life by hanging himself by a rope attached to the cross.

None of the architects in Hardy's novels experience quite such tragedy in their lives of loyalty to the ideals of art, but they are all brothers of this church-builder. They know what it is to suffer through their idealism.

The poem suggests also "The Abbey Mason,"⁴⁴ another pathetic story of the futility of dream-following. It is interesting to note that Hardy does not disparage idealism; although he sees the uselessness of following dreams and the sorrow that comes to those who do follow them, he always sees the beauty of the dreams. The reader senses this in the pathos of "The Abbey Mason" more keenly than he senses it in any of the novels unless it be in Jude.

One of the most poignant expressions of the tragedy of idealism, and one which has no close parallel in the novels, may be found in "Satin Shoes."⁴⁵ A girl who is obliged on her wedding day to doff the satin shoes of which she has always dreamed for a pair "thickest boots" goes sadly through life until her "wrecked dream" finally causes her to lose her mind, and she is taken to the madhouse. To persuade her to go, her friends bribe her with a pair

44

Works, XXI, p. 210.

45

Ibid, p. 224.

of satin shoes, and she departs with "a face elate," babbling incoherently.

In "My Cicely,"⁴⁶ a man who has thought his sweetheart dead learns that she is alive and sets out to find her. When he sees her coarsened by life, he returns without revealing himself, preferring to think that she—as he has dreamed of her—lies dead. Even in the face of the facts of life and death, he holds his dream. He is another who learns that a gulf divides the ideal from the real—but, being an idealist, he refuses to acknowledge the existence of the real.

In these poems and novels Hardy deals with the tendency of individuals to follow ideals and with the consequent unhappiness they find in life. This tendency is a part of human nature, a puppet-string of the Immanent Will.

V

The Immanent Will works not only through man's capabilities—his capacity for thinking and idealizing—but through his weaknesses as well. It makes use of negative faculties as well as positive. If those phases of human

46
Works, XVIII, p. 62.

nature which are distinctly above animal nature should lead man through suffering, naturally the lower nature in him cannot escape the working of the Will. Through his ability to perceive the force of the impulses of his lower nature, while he is unable to avoid obeying its dictates, his suffering is doubled and trebled. Again Ernest Brenneke's presentation of the Schopenhauer idea applies. "Man does what he wants to do; but he must want to do what he wants because he is what he is."⁴⁷

Being what he is, he is a creature of weaknesses. Because of the flaws in his character, he cannot live the ideal life of which he dreams. He must always be a puppet obeying in unguarded moments the impulses of a lower nature.

In Hardy's novels the illustrations of this idea are numerous. They are, of course, entangled with illustrations of other phases of the working of the Immanent Will. They do not stand out in either the novels or the poetry as fables with attached morals at the ends. They are subtly interwoven with illustrations of the working of chance and accident, idealization and thinking, and the passing of time. But the novels are, nevertheless, replete with them.

Michael Henchard is an embodiment of the idea. In his early life he possesses one great flaw—a taste for liquor. When he becomes drunk in a moment of weariness and depress-

ion, he sells his wife and baby to another man. About this one act, prompted by a flaw in his character, the action of the novel revolves. It is responsible for his vow to touch no liquor for twenty years. This vow is, in turn, responsible for a sober, industrious life which gives him an opportunity to attain success in Casterbridge. This, in turn, is responsible for his becoming mayor. But new consequences of his original sin arise when his wife returns to find him. His subsequent re-marriage with her is the natural and only possible result of her return, but this brings new difficulties in his relationship with Lucetta, terminating ultimately in the skimmity-ride. And so the train of events moves on--having been set in motion by one original flaw in character.

Similarly Jude's two weaknesses--in regard to women and liquor--drive him relentlessly through a maze of sorrowful difficulties--almost starkly ugly. The desire for Arabella overcomes the passion for learning which is ever urging him toward Christminster. As Lina Wright Berle puts the situation, he has "three vices, . . . wine, women, and Christminster. Physically he is at the mercy of the first; physically and spiritually at the mercy of the second; and spiritually at the mercy of the third."⁴⁸ This combination of "vices" results in his unhappy life with Arabella, which

is responsible for his later fear of marriage with Sue. Avoidance of the marriage contract brings social stigma which causes him to be a failure in his work. It leads ultimately to a pathetically lonely death. But for his taste for liquor to which he turns to forget his failures, Arabella could not ensnare him so easily the second time, dragging him as she does into her house while he is drunk, and holding him from the force of circumstances. But for it, he would not lie dying there while she goes pleasure-seeking.

In Sue, there is, as in many of Hardy's women, a wavering character. She is, however, a stronger individual than Jude. In her very weaknesses there is strength. The veering about in her attitude from extreme unconventionalism to extreme conventionalism, an act of weakness, has strength in it, for she ruthlessly drives herself to do that against which her whole nature rebels. In this and in her repeated unsuccessful attempts to face marriage there is wavering--weakness. Yet it is a different type of weakness from that of Jude, who remains an anaemic person throughout his life. The flaws of the two personalities together cannot but bring them suffering.

One of the weaknesses that Hardy seems most concerned with is that of fickleness, particularly in women. Hardy's women never seem to know what they want for any great length of time. Elfrida is one of the most obvious illustrations

of fickle perversity. Because of this weakness, three men stand mourning at her grave at the close of her life. If Bathsheba were more steady in her affections, she would not transfer her heart from one to another, causing Gabriel Oak to suffer in stoical resignation until she decides to bestow it upon him. If Anne Garland were not a little weather-cock in her affections, John Loveday would not go marching away at the end of the story of The Trumpet Major with sorrow in his heart.

In less central characters there are many flaws which affect their lives and the lives of others. These are most obvious, naturally, in the so-called villains, but many appear in other minor men and women. Wildeve's weakness drives him to seek out Eustacia after her marriage with Clym and his own with Thomasin. His presence at the cottage of Clym and Eustacia is responsible for the failure of Eustacia to open the door to Mrs. Yoebright. The feeling which the closed door brings to Mrs. Yoebright, together with her walk across the hot heath, causes her death. In this way the weakness of Wildeve leads to tragedy. Fitzpiers' weakness in regard to women brings unhappiness to Grace Melbury, her father, Giles Winterborne, and Marty South. Their relationships and their reactions to one another are all connected with the weakness of one man. Captain De Stancy's sin gives him a son who drags him through a long series of unhappy events, which affect Paula, Charlotte, and George Somerset. The sin

of Miss Aldclyffe and the weakness of her son are at the bottom of the melodramatic action of Desperate Remedies. Troy's lack of a sense of responsibility and fair play and his sexual desires are responsible for the tragedy of Fanny Robin's life. Alec D'Urberville, one of the blackest of Hardy's villains, is responsible in his lack of moral sense for the death of Tess and the suffering she experiences in life.

That Hardy thinks a weak character is always essentially the same is evident in his description of Alec D'Urberville after his conversion:

. . . the former curves of sensuousness were now modulated to lines of devotional passion. The lip-shapes that had meant seductiveness were now made to express supplication; . . . animalism had become fanaticism . . .

The lineaments, as such, seemed to complain. They had been diverted from their hereditary connotation to signify impressions for which nature did not intend them. Strange that their very elevation seemed to falsify.⁴⁹

In these words, Hardy suggests again that man acts as he acts because nature has made him as he is—a nature that

is blind to the consequences of his being so. In them he suggests, too, that man's basic character does not change. He is always what he is in spite of outward appearances. In a time of crisis these vanish and leave the soul of a man in the nakedness of its original state. It is always a part of the Will.

In the poems, as in the novels, one finds men and women revealing the weaknesses of their characters.

The poem, "The Inconsistent," deals with the fickle perversity of woman. A man stands beside the grave of a girl and murmurs, "She was as good as fair," but he knows that in the vestry-nook her name stands linked with that of another to whom.

" . . . she breathed the tender vow
 She once had breathed to me."⁵⁰

⁵¹
 "The Dame of Athelhall" suggests the wavering of a woman in choosing what she desires. The sight of a bracelet that has been a gift from her husband brings her thoughts that call her back from the flight with her lover. It is true that she goes back from a sense of duty rather than from an uncertainty of love; yet a wavering character is shown in her lack of strength to follow through the

⁵⁰
Works, XVIII, p. 191.

⁵¹
Ibid, p. 223.

course chosen. Her decision to return suggests Sue's similar decision, just as the mourning of the lover by the grave of one who has not been true to him in "The Inconsistent" suggests the mourning of Elfride's lovers.

The tragic consequences of the weather-cock nature of a woman's heart are reproduced in "The Rash Bride." ⁵² Here a woman drowns herself because of the harsh words of her husband upon his discovery of her attachment for another immediately before her marriage with him. Such a story is not to be found in the novels, but the woman seems closely related to Elfride and others who are not sure of their own hearts.

In "The Vampirine Fair" the utter shallowness of a woman is responsible for the ruin of a man. With his awful irony, Hardy reveals the nature of such women:

Yet though I now enjoy my fling,
 And dine and dance and drive,
 I'd give my prettiest emerald ring
⁵³
 To see my lord alive.

These are the words of one who has brought death to a man. "My prettiest emerald ring" is symbolic of the artificiality of the character of a woman who can bring life-long suffering to others and go on dining, dancing, and driving.

52

Works, XX, p. 362.

53

Works, XX, p. 379.

Again the cruelty of the fickleness of woman is revealed in "At the Altar Rail,"⁵⁴ the story of a man who waits at the altar for his bride only to receive a telegram, telling him that she has changed her mind because she prefers a "swift, short, gay life."

In "The Dual"⁵⁵ a husband fights to defend his wife's honor while she waits in disguise as a page to flee with her lover when he has killed her husband.

In these poems, Hardy gives, in bold strokes, pictures of fickle and shallow women who are doomed from their very natures to bring suffering into the world.

In the poem, "In Church,"⁵⁶ the shattering of an ideal is the result of the discovery of the human weakness, vanity, in an idealized one.

That sin is followed by its natural result is shown in "On a Death-Bed"⁵⁷ —the story of a man's losing the love of a woman because she suspects the truth, that he has killed a man to gain her.

"The Newcomer's Wife"⁵⁸ tells of the natural consequences of sin. A man hears a conversation about the former life of his bride. The next morning he is found dead beside

54

Works, XXI, p. 67.

55

Ibid, XXI, p. 39.

56

Works, XXI, p. 60.

57

Ibid, p. 71.

58

Ibid, p. 142.

the harbor wall "with the crabs upon his face." In this tragedy it is evident that the weakness of one may bring sorrow to another. While sin must result in unhappiness, there is no justice in the awarding of the unhappiness; it may fall upon those who have done no wrong. Thus the Immanent Will works in its ruthless way.

A poem revealing that suffering does sometimes come to those who have sinned--that wrong-doing does not necessarily affect only others than the wrong-doer--is "A Conversation at Dawn." Here the consequences of fear are shown starkly and vividly. A wife confesses to her husband that she has belonged to a lover before her marriage, that she has married her husband only through fear, and that having heard tidings of the lover she wishes to go to him. Her husband refuses her request, and she answers quietly,

"I'll yield in silence,"

and when her husband grimly tells her that she shall

" . . . pine and pine

With sighings sore,

"Till I've starved your love for him; nailed you mine!"

she answers not but lies listlessly

With her dark dry eyes on the coppery sea,

That now and then

Flung it lazy flounce at the neighboring quay.

59

In this silent resignation to suffering, she is like Lady Constantine, who has married the Bishop through fear.

There is no story in the novels like that in "The Peasant's Confession", but the idea is that of the unhappy consequences of a cowardly act, which occurs in various forms in the novels. In his old age the peasant cries,

"O Saints, had I but lost my earing corn
 And saved the cause once prized!"⁶⁰

In The Dynasts, the English king spurns Bonaparte's peace overtures because of pride and prejudice. The Spirit Sinister notices the action with the words:

I saw good sport therein, and paen'd the Will
 For leaving lax so stultifying a move!
 Which would have marred the European broil,
 And sheathed all swords and silenced every gun
 That furrows human flesh.⁶¹

Upon human weakness hung the destiny of nations. Because the king was a man of weakness, thousands of men were killed.

Likewise the weaknesses of Napoleon brought disaster to multitudes of men and women besides himself and his family. In his lust for power, he was responsible for his

60

Works, XVIII, p. 38.

61

Part I, Act I, Scene I, p. 21.

the horrors of war, the death of hundreds of men, the devastation of counties. Yet so powerful was this force within him that he could not but follow the dictates of the Will working through it.

In The Dynasts Hardy treats the idea of the cruelty of the working of the Will through human nature in a most stupendous fashion because upon the weakness of one man hung destinies of nations. In the comments of the spirits of the Overworld upon the actions of Napoleon, the reader sees that the great man is only a little man in the hand of a gigantic force that directs him--a force that has made him what he is--that will not let him be. From the stuff of his nature, the Immanent Will sends out fibres into the remote corners of Europe; none escape its workings.

VI

Because of its great strength, love is one of the most relentless forces through which the Will works. It is an important element in every one of the novels and in many of the poems. So prominent a part does it play that Lina Wright Berle is led to make the statement: "Hardy's stories are of the mating, mismating, and unmating of men and women, ignoring the existence of any other motives as determining factors in human intercourse." ⁶² In another

place she writes, "There are few studies in his novels which are free from that hall-mark of decadence, sexual perversion." ⁶³ This is undoubtedly an exaggeration, yet it is true that Hardy is greatly concerned with the suffering caused by the force of passion.

In Desperate Remedies, passion has created the difficult situation in which the characters find themselves. It has driven Miss Aldclyffe to sin, and it drives Aeneas to commit murder. In Under a Greenwood Tree, its consequences are not so fatal. Although Dick Dewy and Fancy Day go through difficulties because of it, they do not suffer for long. In A Pair of Blue Eyes, the passions of three men are aroused by a blue-eyed girl who does not seem to know which of them she loves. When she dies three men mourn for her. In Far from the Madding Crowd, passion is responsible for the death of Farmer Boldwood and of Fanny Robin.

The story of The Return of the Native moves about the desire of Wildeve for Eustacia. The consequences of his weakness in this regard have been pointed out. It leads to their dismal death on the night of their elopement. Swithin St. Cleeve's awakened passion brings about his postponement of astronomical study for a time and ends in sorrow and tragedy for Lady Constantine. Her love for Swithin

urges her to take up the study of astronomy, thus weaving the threads of their interests more and more closely so that the consequences are inescapable.

Henchard's desire for Lucetta brings them the disgrace of the skimmity-ride. Through this, the death of each is hastened.

In The Woodlanders, Fitzpiers advances the following interpretation of love: "Human love is a subjective thing-- the essence itself of man, as that great thinker Spinoza says--*ipsa hominis essentia*--it is joy accompanied by an idea which we project against any suitable object in our line of vision, just as the rainbow iris is projected against an oak, ash, or elm tree indifferently. So that if any other young lady had appeared instead of the one who did appear, I should have felt just the same interest in her, and have quoted precisely the same lines from Shelley about her, as about this one I saw. Such miserable creatures of circumstance are we all!"⁶⁴ This theory is illustrated in his own treatment of love, bringing, in his projecting of the "subjective thing" against more than one young lady who chances to cross his path, unhappy difficulties for them all. Whether one accepts the idea or not, the fact remains that Hardy's idea, as shown in the action of the novel, is that one cannot help projecting this "Joy

accompanied by an idea" against suitable (or unsuitable) objects. Human passion is behind all the action of the story of The Woodlanders. The poignancy of the suffering it brings is shown in the last scene in the book where Marty South weeps at the grave of Giles, murmuring,

"Now, my own, own love, you are mine, and only mine; for she has forgot 'ee at last, although for her you died! But I--whenever I get up I'll think of 'ee, and whenever I lie down I'll think of 'ee again. Whenever I plant young larches I'll think that none can plant as you planted; and whenever I split a gad, and whenever I turn a cider wring, I'll say none could do it like you. If ever I forget your name let me forget home and heaven! . . . But no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee; for you was a good man, and you did good things!"⁶⁵

The human passion, love, is the force that brings destruction into the life of Tess. In its crudest form it drives Alec d'Urberville to seduce Tess and to bribe her to return to him later. In a nobler form it draws Tess and Angel Clare together. It goes hand and hand with chance and circumstance to bring about the tragedy of Tess's life. It leads her down a stony road to the tower where the raising of the black flag signifies at last that "'Justice' was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean

phrase, had ended his sport with Tess." ⁶⁶

In the story of Jude and Sue, passion is at the back of nearly all the action. It is the essence of the story—too completely so perhaps. In Jude it leads to deterioration, in Sue to a hysterical cry against God and nature, and to final self-repression.

Love causes the difficulties of the relationships between Jocelyn Pierston and the three Avices—love complicated by idealism.

The place of the human passion in the themes of the novels is too evident to need further explanation. In the poems, the idea that it is inexorable in its functioning, is equally inescapable. Hardy seems almost too conscious that

. . . winning love we win the risk of losing,
 And losing love is as one's life were riven;
 It outs like contumely and keen ill-using
 To cede what was superfluous when given. ⁶⁷

From many of his men and women might come this cry
 could they foresee what love would bring them:

66

Works, I, p. 508.

67

Works, XVIII, p. 15.

Let me then never feel the fateful thrilling
 That devastates the love-lorn wooer's frame,
 That hot ado of fevered hopes, the chilling
 That agonizes disappointed aim!

The helplessness of the individual to preserve and
 guide love is reflected in "Unknowing":

When, soul in soul reflected,
 We breathed the aethered air,
 When we neglected
 All things elsewhere,
 And left the friendly friendless
 To keep our love aglow,
 We deemed it endless . . .
 --We did not know.

When panting passion-goaded,
 We planned to hie away,
 But unforeboded,
 All the long day
 Wild storms so pierced and pattered
 That none could up and go,
 Our lives seemed shattered . . .
 --We did not know!

The pain of love itself—its temporary quality—the inability of the individual to retain it as it is—all cry out in the words, "we did not know." They might have been uttered by Jude or Sue, who find love such a devastating force in their lives. They, too, plan to hie away, but the storms of life pierce and patter until they are "helpless lying."

"Four Footprints" is similar to a scene in Desperate Remedies where Edwin and Cytherea meet by the brook—to say farewell—just before Cytherea's wedding with another. In the poem the meeting follows the marriage of the girl with another and the man reflects later:

. . . And today I pass the spot;
 It is only a smart the more to endure;
 And she whom I held is as though she were not,
 For they have resumed their honeymoon tour.⁷⁰

The attitude of the men and women of Hardy's tragedies is seen in "only a smart the more to endure." Many of them, like Tess, Jude, Sue, Marty South, Giles, Lady Constantine, Eustacia, and Clym, have learned that

The paths of love are rougher
 Than thoroughfares of stone.⁷¹

70

Works, XX, p. 312.

71

"The End of the Episode", Works, XX, p. 315.

They might have answered:

But--after love what comes?

A scene that lours,

A few sad vacant hours,

And then, the Curtain. ⁷²

None of the men in the novels express exactly the following thought, yet many of them might have, had circumstance and their own natures been only slightly different:

Make me forget those heart-breaks, achings, fears;

Make me forget her name, her sweet look--

Make me forget her tears. ⁷³

That even in the moment of the enjoyment of love men and women sense a sadness in it is suggested in "The Sigh"--

Little head against my shoulder,

Shy at first, then somewhat bolder,

And up-eyed;

Till she, with a timid quaver,

Yielded to the kiss I gave her;

But, she sighed. ⁷⁴

And although she loves him truly and staunchly throughout life he can never forget that she had sighed. In this

72

"He abjures Love," Works, XX, p. 332.

73

"The Ballad-Singer," Ibid, XX, p. 338.

74

Ibid, p. 316.

dainty treatment of the idea, Hardy suggests subtly what he openly and boldly says in other poems—that love brings a certain sadness to those who experience it.

More tragic consequences of love are depicted in such poems as "Julie-Jane," where the peony lips and dancing form of a girl bring her through love to death. As the other girls sit about her bed, making ~~the~~ ^{garments} mourning, she urges them to leave her and go to their lovers instead of engaging in such dismal work.

"I suppose," with a laugh she said,

"I should blush that I'm not a wife;

But how can it matter, so soon to be dead,

75

What one does in life!"

76

"A Wife and Another" shows to what sorrow a woman may be submitted by the desire of her husband for another woman. The situation suggests that of Grace Melbury, Dr. Fitzpiers, and Grace Charmond.

In "The Christening" there is the cry against the demands of society for conventional marriage that one hears in Jude the Obscure. The unmarried mother repeats the words of the father:

76

Works, XX, p. 348.

76

Ibid, p. 375.

"But chained and doomed for life
 To slovening
 As vulgar man and wife,
 He says, is another thing:
 Yea: sweet Love's sepulchring!"⁷⁷

With his customary irony, Hardy treats the subject in
 "The Conformers," ending:

When down to dust we glide
 Men will not say askance,
 As now: "How all the country-side
 Rings with their mad romance!"
 But as they graveward glance
 Remark: "In them we lose
 A worthy pair, who helped advance
 Sound parish views."⁷⁸

One might go on and on, pointing out poems which reveal
 the unhappy consequences of the human passion to which men
 are slaves. The most concise statement of Hardy's point of
 view—and one which is borne out in the contrast between
 such loves as that of Dick and Fancy, and that of Clym and

77

Works, XX, p. 371.

78

Ibid, p. 319.

Eustacia--is to be found in the poem, "The Face at the Casement Window";

Love is long suffering, brave,
 Sweet, prompt, precious as a jewel;
 But O, too, Love is cruel,
 Cruel as the grave.

There is no decided difference between Hardy's treatment of the idea in the poems and in the novels. Naturally the poems are a little more direct and concise, but basically they are like the novels. Most of them deal with small episodes (of enormous significance) which might be enlarged into short stories or novels. Rarely is the idea treated abstractly. There is a dramatic quality in the poems dealing with love which makes them obviously akin to the novels.

VII

In conclusion, it can only be repeated that Hardy regards human nature as a puppet-string of the Immanent Will in directing the destinies of men. Man has been allotted a certain nature by a power, blind and indifferent to the consequences --a nature which man cannot change-- a nature which prompts him to act in certain unavoidable

ways. The novels and the poems are closely related in setting forth this idea.

The presentation of the idea that the Will brings unhappiness to man through the thinking faculty is more concrete and definite in the novels than in the poems; that of the idea that the Will brings unhappiness or maladjustment through the tendency to idealize is more frequently clear and definite in the poems than in the novels, but is indisputably evident in both; that of the idea that the Will brings suffering through the weakness of human nature is equally frequent and clear in the novels and the poems; and that of the idea that the Will is a devastating force in its functioning through the human passion of love is prominent in all the novels and a great many of the poems.

Chapter IV

Chance--a Puppet-String

I

Hardy's novels and his poetry are closely related in their presentation of the idea that the Immanent Will works through the channel of chance and coincidence in directing the destinies of men.

At first glance, this seems a flat repudiation of the idea that the Will works through the medium of human nature--that men do what they do because they are what they are. That men do what they do because chance thrusts itself into their lives is obviously an opposing idea. Yet the two appear side by side among Hardy's most prominent ideas. Paradoxical as it may seem, the two are found, upon closer scrutiny, to work together without contradiction of the original idea of the character of the Will. Man's nature prompts him to behave in a certain manner; but chance suddenly gives a peculiar twist to events; then man reacts in a specified manner because his nature prompts him to react thus in the face of circumstances. The chain of thought goes back to the basic conception of the nature of the Will without the discrepancy which at first seems obvious and inescapable. Man is affected by chance, which like a capricious guide is forever leading him into unforeseen paths, but the fact that the paths are unknown and unforeseen does not alter his bodily movements as he follows them. He responds to the

sights and sounds about him as nature bids him respond; chance has merely furnished new, and often strange, stimuli.

Hardy is, however, so greatly impressed by the fact that chance, capricious and unaccountable as it is, should act as a guide to man through this strange jungle of life that he makes frequent and ironic use of it in all of his writings. The first work to revolve quite completely about the idea was A Pair of Blue Eyes. In discussing the prevalence of the thought in this novel, Samuel Chew writes: "Chance is certainly overworked, and the artist, several times barely escaping the farcical, has not sufficient mastery to render acceptable so formidable a conglomeration of its freaks. But one must bear in mind the part that 'Hap' plays in Hardy's scheme of things and perhaps regard these strangely juxtaposed events as extreme illustrations of the whimsicality of chance disposing of human affairs. 'Hap' does not change character, it alters the course of events."¹ Recognizing the parallel functioning of human nature and chance in the Hardy scheme of things, he adds, "There are whims and aberrations of chance that are external to human nature."²

These two agents of the Will--human nature and chance--

¹ Chew, Samuel, Thomas Hardy, Poet and Novelist, p. 28.

² Ibid.

are contrasting forces, the latter affecting the functioning of the former but in no sense changing its original character. Human nature is an inherent force, chance an external force. The one is recognizably a part of man, the other distinct from man. When they are conflicting forces, "the dice of the gods are loaded and man is bound to lose."³ Human nature has little chance against the force of events—accidental and capricious.

To those who criticize Hardy's excessive use of the element of chance in the manipulation of his stories, Joseph Warren Beach makes the following reply: "His lavish use of accident is not unnatural in one of his philosophical bias. He seems always to have been impressed with the ironic tendency of circumstances to thwart the happiness and good intentions of men; and character and circumstance continue throughout his novels to collaborate in the production of tragedy."⁴

Ernest Brenneke suggests that Hardy's taste for the dramatic and the ironic accounts for his lavish use of chance. "The unhappy lot of man," he writes in his chapter on "Earth's Jackaclocks" in Thomas Hardy's Universe, "in a scheme of things ruled by an Autonomous Will whose workings appear as freakish pranks of chance and time is a theme that can be found in almost anything that Hardy has

3

Beach, Joseph Warren, The Technique of Thomas Hardy, p. 226.

4

Ibid, p. 16.

written since his discovery of its wonderful and unlimited possibilities of drama and irony in A Pair of Blue Eyes.⁵

Hardy is not unlike Christopher Julian of whom he wrote in The Hand of Ethelberta: "Unable like many people, to enjoy being satirized in words because of the irritation it caused him as aimed-at victim, he sometimes had philosophy enough to appreciate a satire of circumstance, because nobody intended it."⁶ This is exactly what Hardy does. He delights in satires of circumstance which nobody has intended. He possesses that very philosophy, attributed here to Julian, which causes him to be interested in chance arrangements of events. So keen is his own enjoyment of quaint and bazaar patterns woven by the introduction of stray, oddly colored threads that he sometimes seems to forget that others may not have a taste for such strange designs.

This is especially true of the poorer novels, where his use of chance is identical with a kind of sensational melodrama. Even in the greater novels the faculties of the reader are sometimes put to a strain to accept the plausibility of some of the accidental happenings. "Sensational events and coincidences are too frequently resorted to in order to sustain the interest," writes Samuel Chew of A Pair of Blue

⁵ p. 97.

⁶ p. 97.

Eyes, adding that the use of coincidences is so frequent as to "stretch the reader's willing suspension of belief."⁷ He later attempts to justify this fault on the grounds that Hardy deliberately exaggerates the place of chance in human affairs in order to impress his idea on his readers. "Hardy senses," he writes, "and in the endeavor to bring it home to the readers exaggerates, the factor of chance in life. His indictment against life is that it is so ordered that such chances as occur again and again in the novels dictate often the misery or happiness of human creatures."⁸

This indictment against life goes back essentially to his indictment against the Immanent Will which tyrannically rules life.

II

To enumerate all of the uses of chance as a determining agent in Hardy's novels would be impossible. Only a few of them can be discussed here.

Among the most interesting and plausible chance incidents which he uses are those of nature--especially as they affect the lives of folk living close to the soil. Such incidents are numerous in Far from the Madding Crowd, Return of the Native, and Two on a Tower, and are frequent in Under the Greenwood Tree and A Pair of Blue Eyes.

⁷ Chew, Samuel, Thomas Hardy, Poet and Novelist, p. 28.

⁸ Ibid, p. 118. (The 1921 edition)

Hardy is ever aware of nature's power as an external force affecting men's lives and carrying out her own allotted schedule of growth and decay, of beauty and ugliness, of harmony and discord. There is something fascinating in her for him. He seems to be almost one of those "musing weather-beaten West-country folk" of whom he writes, to whom "Nature seems to have moods in other than a poetical sense: predilections for certain deeds at certain times, without any apparent law to govern or reason to account for them. She is read as a person with a curious temper; as one who does not scatter kindnesses and cruelties alternately, impartially, and in order, but heartless severities and overwhelming generousities in lawless caprice. Man's case is always that of the prodigal's favorite or the miser's pensioner. In her unfriendly moments there seems a feline fun in her tricks, begotten by a foretaste of her pleasure in swallowing her victim."

Yet he is different from those who look on nature in this manner, for in his philosophical meditations, he has discovered that nature herself is helpless in such an order of things; she but obeys impulses for which she is not accountable. Arthur Symonds has defined his attitude thus: "Here is a poet who is sorry for nature, who feels the earth and its roots, as if he had sap in his veins instead of blood, and could get closer than any other man to the

things of the earth." ¹⁰ Such sympathy in one who can see the harshness of the ways of nature must come from his ability to see beyond the harshness to the helplessness.

In Far from the Madding Crowd, nature's tricks are both kindly and unkindly. Considering the final outcome of events for Oak and Bathsheba, it would seem that as a mass they accumulate toward kindness, yet it is difficult to see them so in the long period of patient suffering to which they submit Oak. The romance begins with the accidental loss of Bathsheba's hat by a whiff of

wind. ¹¹ Gabriel's finding the hat leads to their first conversation. Later a sudden change in the weather helps to

develop their friendship. ¹² As Hardy puts the situation:

"The acquaintanceship might, however, have ended in a slow forgetting, but for an incident which occurred at the end of the same week. One afternoon it began to freeze..." ¹³

The subsequent incident of Oak's rescue from suffocation by Bathsheba and its effect upon him are the results of the fact that "one afternoon it began to freeze." The accident in which the sheep break into a field of green clover and would consequently die but for Oak's skill, ¹⁴ draws the two together after an estrangement.

10

Symons, Arthur, "Thomas Hardy," Dial, p. 68:67.

11

12. 15.

13. 21-22.

13

P. 21-22.

14

P. Ch. XXI.

The approaching storm which threatens to destroy Bathsheba's harvest---while her husband's men lie useless in drunkenness---again throws the two into juxtaposition and reveals Oak's sterling character to the woman he loves.¹⁵ Thus, throughout the book, chance elements of nature play a major role in the romance. There is no straining of situation, no forcing of happenings, in Hardy's use of them. They occur in the story, as they occur in the lives of folk of the soil, as inevitable elements in the drama of their existence. These people live close to nature and cannot but be affected by all she does.

In Under a Greenwood Tree one of the most obvious and interesting nature incidents is that of the rain, which affects the mood of Fancy Day to such an extent that she takes a step which, had not other events entered in to counteract it, might have brought unhappiness to herself and Dick. Such a mood of loneliness and depression takes possession of her that when Dick comes to her window, a sorry figure in the rain, she greets him laconically and sends him on his way; but, when Maybold comes promising gaiety and society if she will accept him, she gives him her promise to marry him.¹⁶ If the sun were shining, the birds singing, and all nature cheerful with color and light, Fancy would probably laugh at the passionate plea of Maybold and stoop from her window to kiss

15

Ch. XXXVII.

16

P. 183.

the blushing brow of Dick Dewy; then she would escape the difficult situation in which she places herself and the two suitors. So powerful is nature in coloring the moods of men.

More portentous are the effects of incidents of chance in nature in Two on a Tower, Return of the Native, and A Pair of Blue Eyes.

In Two on a Tower, the sudden appearance of a comet 17 saves Swithin's life by giving him a new interest in living. But for its appearance, he would probably die, and although Viviette would be grieved, she would not have the future years of suffering to live through. But for the comet, there would be no story. Again, chance plays a part in the development of romance. While Viviette is with Swithin at the tower "a cloud which nobody had noticed, arose from 18 the north overhead, and large drops of rain began to fall." This sends servants in search of Lady Constantine and complicates her secret return to the house. The necessity of protecting her from the weather and from discovery fosters Swithin's feeling of responsibility for her, and his awakening infatuation. They have a new community of interest in the problem of escaping from a difficulty together. Later a storm brings destruction to his grandmother's cottage on the very

17

P. 79-80.

18

P. 99.

19

eve of his departure to obtain a license for their marriage. This necessitates his sending Viviette, who is later sensitive over the fact that she has had to play the aggressive role in their courtship. This feeling is partially responsible for her sending him away when she learns of his uncle's letter. Nature plays an important part in the tragedy of her life.

In The Return of the Native, nature is so blended in the stuff of the background of the novel that it is the essence of the very unity of the drama of life portrayed. The whole is tinted by the tones of Egdon Heath. There is a kind of symphony of light and dark playing over the steadily shifting scenes. There is an indefinable something in the marvelous blending of nature coloring and human life that can come only from the hand of an artist.

Specific examples of chance in nature as it affects the course of events may be found in the episode of Mrs. Yoebright's walk to the home of Clym and in the storm scene at the end of Eustacia's life. Hardy gives the following description of the weather on the day of Mrs. Yoebright's journey:

Thursday, the thirty-first of August, was one of a series of days during which snug houses were stifling, and when draughts were treats; when cracks appeared in gardens, and were called 'earthquakes' by apprehensive children; when loose spokes

were discovered in the wheels of carts and carriages; and when stinging insects haunted the air, the earth, and every drop of water that was to be found.

"In Mrs. Yoebright's garden large-leaved plants of a tender kind flagged by ten o'clock in the morning; rhubarb bent downward by eleven; and even stiff cabbages were limp by noon.

" . . . She had hoped to be well advanced in her walk before the heat of the day was at its highest, but after setting out she found that this was not to be done. The sun had branded the whole heath with his mark, even the purple heath-flowers having put on a brownness under the dry blazes of the few preceding days. Every valley was filled with air like that of a kiln, and the clean quartz sand of the winter water-courses which formed summer paths, had undergone a species of incineration since the drouth set in.

"In cool fresh weather Mrs. Yoebright would have found no inconvenience in walking to Alderworth . . . 20

Here lies the significant fact. Had nature offered a different influence, events would have developed differently. This is a typical Hardy-esque situation--this would-have-been idea. Some external force thrusts itself in man's way, and his intentions become merely would-have-beens or might-have-beens. As it is Mrs. Yoebright plods home with

the sun shining "directly in her face, like some merciless incendiary, brand in hand, waiting to consume her."²¹ Nature plays its part in causing the death of Clym's mother. Nature and human nature act side by side in the drama of life.

A typical Hardy-esque scene occurs toward the end of the novel where the terrific storm thwarts Eustacia's final effort to escape by binding her forever to the hated heath, in death.²² Here is manifest the irony and despotism of a conscienceless nature obeying a conscienceless Will.

Again, Nature takes a hand in romance in A Pair of Blue Eyes. Ironically it works through as light and insignificant a medium as a puff of wind, though the train of events following leads to sorrow.²³ As Knight and Elfride stand on the cliff the wind blows the young man's hat over his face and he slips, in his effort to rescue it, into a very precarious position, from which he is rescued by the the blue-eyed bit of femininity at his elbow. The consequence is naturally increased interest and respect on his part. That this should happen at the precise moment in which she is watching for the ship bearing her lover is typical of Hardy's irony.

These are only a few of the appearance of the nature-chance element in the novels. They serve as examples of

21

P. 342.

22

Bk. V, ch. IX.

23

P. 234.

the treatment which Hardy gives the idea, although they are so few that they do not suggest the impressiveness that results from sheer force of numbers. So numerous are such incidents that one recognizes at once that Hardy does not use them merely incidentally. He is attempting to show as he has observed it the working of the Will through the blind forces of Nature.

Similarly in the poems he shows the blindness of nature by depicting the utter indifference of nature to man's happiness or unhappiness. He tells how he has seen that the sun

. . . beamed

As brightly on the page of proof
That she had shown her false to me

24

As if she had shown her true--

He has seen that nature can have no interest in man's joys or sorrows because she has no mind and no heart. She is a thing without feeling or understanding. He has found that it is not true that

.....each songster, tree, and mead--

is

All eloquent of love divine--.

He sadly remarks:

25

Such keen appraisement is not mine.

He has discovered that, after all, the favorite dog of a woman digs on her grave after she has died, not from grief but only "to bury a bone, in case" he should be hungry near the spot.
26

The poems show not only Hardy's awareness of the indifference of nature, but his knowledge of the strife and struggle in her own activities. "The Ivy-Wife" embodies the idea of selfishness and cruelty in the plant world. The ivy speaks with bitter cynicism--

. . . with my soft green claw

I clamped and bound him as I wove . . .

27

Such was my love: ha-ha!

This is the love Hardy sees in nature. Can one expect such a nature to heap love on man?

The seriousness of the consequences of her thrusting her tricks on man is seen in "Satin Shoes,"²⁸ where a woman's mind and life are shattered because it chances to rain on her wedding day, making it necessary for her to give up a life-long dream. Although there is no similar

25

"The Rambler," Works, XX, p. 384.

26

"Ah, Are You Digging on my Grave?" XXI, p. 54.

27

"The Ivy-Wife," Works, XVIII, p. 69.

28

Works, XXI, p. 224.

incident in the novels a reader cannot help thinking at once of the storm which occurs on the day of Cytherea's marriage to Aeneas Manston, which would have been a kindlier stroke of fortune had it prevented the wedding. The poem suggests too, in the interplay of the chance of nature and idealism, the storm which throws Marcia and Jocelyn together, postponing in the subsequent events his union with Avice. Likewise the tricks of nature which drive Bathsheba to Oak for his assistance go to prove to her that her ideal of womanly independence can never be realized.

One of the daintiest treatments of the idea of the play of chance through nature to be found in the poetry occurs in "A Thunderstorm in Town." ²⁹ Quite significant of the whole Hardy-esque treatment are the closing lines:

I should have kissed her if the rain
Had lasted a minute more.

It has been pointed out that nature often plays a role in romance in Hardy's novels. The slight poem above suggests the examples previously cited and others. The arbor scene in The Laodoccean, and the storm scene in which Cytherea takes shelter under Manston's roof come to mind at once.

In The Dynasts nature plays its part as a puppet-string along with other chance elements in wrecking dynasties and dealing out sorrow to men. A typical illustration occurs

in one of the Russian scenes:

What has floated down from the sky upon the army is a flake of snow. Then come another and another, till natural features, hitherto varied with the tints of autumn are compounded, and all is phantasmal grey and white.

The caterpillar shape still creeps laboriously nearer, but instead of increasing in size by the rules of perspective, it gets more attenuated, and there are left upon the ground behind it minute parts of itself, which are speedily flaked over, and remain as white pimples by the wayside.

Then the Spirit of the Years speaks:

Those atoms that drop off are snuffed-out souls
Who are enghosted by the caressing snow.

As the storm continues we come closer and see more men in
rage "delirious from the cold."

In another scene we see that:

The French Snappers are working
up to their shoulders in the
water at the building of the
bridge. Those so immersed

work till, stiffened with ice
to immobility, they die from
the chill, when others succeed
them.

Then the Semichorus I of the Pities wonders

What will be seen in the morning light?

What will be learnt when the Spring breaks bright

And the frost unlocks to the sun's soft light?

And the Semichorus II replies

Death in a thousand motley forms;

Charred corpses hooking each other's arms

To the sleep that defies all war's alarms. ³¹

To this do the tricks of nature bring man. Such scenes in The Dynasts, depicting nature's freakish workings on a gigantic scale, showing nature as she slays men by the hundreds, is simply an enlargement of the closing scenes of The Return of the Native, which in turn is akin to scene at the end of the "The Robin" ³² where the bird lies a "cold, stiff, feathery ball" after the storms of winter have wrought the will of the Immanent Will.

Thus the idea remains essentially the same in the

31

Pt. III, Act I, Sc. 10, Dumb Show, p. 42.

32

Works, XXI, p. 181.

novels and the poems, although the poems express more poignantly the sadness of the poet over an order of things where blind chance through conscienceless nature works its unweeting way. In the poems the irony is more biting because the expression is more compact.

III

Accident and chance frequently appear, in the Hardy scheme of ideas, in the form of insignificant and coincident acts of men which may affect the course of men's lives profoundly.

In the minor novels, there is a less skillful use of such chance incidents than in the greater novels, where it seems less a forced literary device. Such weak use of the idea occurs in A Laodoccean. In chapter XIII, there is the following passage in regard to an invitation to a party:

" . . . it was purely by accident that you received your invitation so late. My aunt sent the others by post, but as yours was to be delivered by hand it was left on her table, and was overlooked." The incident is quite probable, yet it seems somehow merely a device of the author for throwing the hero and heroine together and developing their friendship by making an apology necessary. This is especially true after the reader has discovered ^{that} some months later again the hero barely misses an invitation to the Hunt Ball by accidental delay. There is too evident a use of the idea throughout the novel. Evidence of Hardy's consciousness of

the union of human nature and chance as guiding factors in human affairs occurs in the words of Mr. Power, speaking in self-defense: "For which I am to blame. Yet not I, but accident and a sluggish temperment."³³ These words might be uttered with equal truth by any one of a number of the characters in the different novels.

In The Trumpet Major, chance again strains the faculty or credulity, but remains, nevertheless, an essential element in the development of plot, which reflects Hardy's acceptance of its importance. A typical example of the use of accident in the novel is that of the meeting of Festus Lerriman and Miss Johnson after the theater.³⁴ The details are exceptionally forced. In the first place, Miss Johnson would hardly happen to be talking to herself as she watches her rival; in the second place, it is unlikely that Festus should happen to hear her; and in the third place, it is highly improbable that the two should happen to feel such confidence in each another on this brief acquaintance that they should plot revenge together. These consequences of a chance meeting are all those of the mind of an author, not those of life. Yet, they illustrate the thought that chance is an agent of the Will in Hardy's scheme of ideas.

33

Works, XVI, ch. X, p. 280.

34

Ch. XXX, p. 269.

More plausible and natural chance incidents appear in the better novels.

In Jude, the fact that Jude's aunt asks him to go by the flour-mill causes him to "come out of town by a round-³⁵about route which he did not usually frequent." It is purely by chance that she should make this request on the very day that Arabella and her companions happen to be kneeling by the brook washing "pig's chitterlings."³⁶ But because the two incidents happen to fall on the same day, Jude's life-long conflict of desires is begun. Again chance steps in to molest his happiness when he happens to go to the particular bar at which Arabella is employed after her return from Australia.³⁷ This accidental meeting marks the beginning of the second period in Jude's life in which Arabella figures as a degrading influence.

In Tess chance alone is responsible for her meeting with Alec after her estrangement from Angel Clare.³⁸ It is partially accident in the form of sickness and suddenly increased poverty that drives her to accept help from him.³⁹ It is by chance that Angel receives the letter from Tess while he is abroad "after considerable delay"⁴⁰ through his being inland; he

³⁵ Bk. I, ch. VI, p. 39.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Bk. III, ch. VIII, p. 215.

³⁸ Phase V, ch XLVIV, p. 386.

³⁹ Ch. LI.

⁴⁰ Ch. LIII, p. 471.

himself says that but for this accident he would have returned sooner. The fact that he has not returned sooner throws Tess into a net of complicated realities which finally close over her in death. Accident and chance accumulate throughout her life to such an overwhelming mass that they finally crush her from sheer weight.

In Two on a Tower,⁴¹ Swithin learns of Lady Constantine's love purely by chance; he is obliged to remain at home and send his fiancée to secure the license for their marriage--⁴² through an accident; the stroke of Viviette's brother's whip chances to fall upon Viviette's cheek, forcing her to remain in Swithin's hut for several days;⁴³ her discovery of the letter from Swithin's uncle with its stipulations in regard to his marriage is an accident;⁴⁴ even the Bishop's sudden death before Swithin's return seems a chance event,⁴⁵ freeing Viviette from the cat's paw of the will only to cause her to be snatched back in its clutches in her own death.

A list of some of the chance happenings in A Pair of Blue Eyes is given by Samuel Chew: "Mr. Swancourt chose the same day for his secret marriage that his daughter selected for hers. The one person whom Elfride and Smith met on

41

P. 97.

42

P. 123.

43

P. 144-147.

44

P. 245.

45

Ibid, p. 301.

their return from London was the old woman whose hatred of Elfride made that meeting doubly unfortunate. Knight, the person who befriended Smith, was the reviewer of Elfride's romance and was also the second Mrs. Swancourt's cousin. Elfride found her missing ear-ring, looked for previously in vain, at precisely the most awkward moment possible. The church tower fell just after Elfride had indicated it as the very symbol of steadfastness. Mrs. Jethway, Elfride's enemy, was buried beneath its ruins. Knight and Smith, acting independently, returned to Devonshire by the same train that carried the body of their loved one.⁴⁶ These are the threads of the course of events which determine the happiness and unhappiness of the men and women of the story. They are more important and active as directing agents than any other one element unless it be the two phases of human nature, vacillating character and love, which play important roles in the drama of events. Chance, however, has the upper hand, thrusting itself, as it does, into the very elements of human nature, twisting them this way and that in ironic design.

Many of the shorter poems are built about incidents of chance, and the element is prominent in The Dynasts, where it affects nations as well as individual lives.

Life, as seen through the mirror of Hardy's poetry, becomes comedy or tragedy--by chance, Love is kindled, is thwarted, prospers, suffers, dies--by chance. Death itself may be at the beck and call of chance. This prominent play of caprice has been noted in the novels. The only difference in its appearance in the verse lies in the directness and compactness of phrasing there.

In the last four lines of "The Market Girl," he tells a story which he might have enlarged into another Under the Greenwood Tree or a simpler Far from the Madding Crowd:

But chancing to trace her sunburnt grace that morn-
 ing as I passed nigh,
 I went and I said, "Poor maidy dear!--and will none of
 the people buy?"
 And so it began, and soon we knew what the end of it all
 must be,
 And I found that though no others had bid, a prize had
 been won by me.

The scene suggests scenes in The Woodlanders, The Mayor of Casterbridge, and Far from the Madding Crowd where men and women meet in the market-place under the guidance of cupid-chance.

Equally suggestive of the quaint pastoral flavor of these novels, and especially of Under a Greenwood Tree, is "A Church Romance," in which at the chance turning of a girl's head toward one of the members of the choir, "their hearts' bond began."

Direct statement of the action of the Will through chance occurs in "The Torn Letter" with the light and dainty beginning:

I tore your letter into strips

No bigger than the airy feathers

That ducks preen out in changing weathers

Upon the shifting ripple-tips.--

but with the ironic ending:

I learnt I had missed, by rash unheed,

My track; that, so the Will decided,

In life, death, we should be divided,

And at the sense I ached indeed.

It is true that another element enters into the functioning of the Will, that of the "rash unheed," the impulsive temperament of the speaker. Yet it is by chance that the name is lost while the other parts of the letter are restored. Chance again works with human nature, and against it, for the same impulsive hand which destroyed it would restore it,

but chance prevents. Such a frail might-have-been idea of romance cannot because of its nature appear in an important place in the novels, yet it is only a negative form of the chance-romance which is used in the novels again and again.

It has been pointed out that Hardy's delight in the use of chance was probably connected with his delight in irony. Typical of the irony of the tricks of chance is the story of "Panthera."⁴⁹ By chance, a young Roman soldier meets a beautiful girl beside a fountain in the Holy Land near which the troops are for a time stationed. By chance, the troops are ordered away before she has given birth to their son. By chance, he returns to the country at a time, years later, when a young man is to be crucified for saying that he is king of the Jews. By chance, the man sees the mother in the crowd and recognizes that his own son is on the cross. Afterward as an old man, when he tells the story, he exclaims, "Ay, in sooth, Jove shaped it so!" The Old Roman's Jove is essentially the Immanent Will shaping life in bazaar ironic forms with a queer tool "Hap."

In the little episode described in "Outside the Window"⁵⁰ chance for once plays into the hand of man. By the mere accident of returning to get his forgotten walking-stick, a man discovers

49

Works, XX, p. 400.

50

Ibid, XXI, p. 65.

the true character of the girl he has intended to marry. Again the idea of revelation through chance occurs in "The Newcomer's Wife,"⁵¹ where chance leads to tragedy. If the man had not happened to enter the particular bar he entered, at the particular time he entered it, he would probably not have overheard the conversation about his wife's character. Identical incidents do not occur in the novels, yet chance exposes secrets again and again. Those of Miss Johnson, Felice Charmond, and Arabella are examples.

Most forceful in the expression of the idea of the tragedy which may result from chance, outside the realm of love, is the poem, "The Convergence of the Twain," ending:

Alien they seemed to be:
 No mortal eye could see
 The intimate wedding of their later history,

 Or signs that they were bent
 By paths coincident
 On being anon twin halves of one august event,

 Till the Spinner of the Years
 Said "Now!" and each one hears
 And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

51

Works, XXI, p. 142.

52

Ibid, p. 9.

No foresight on the part of man, no planning could have avoided the "Now!" of the Spinner of the Years. It was to be so. Two paths were coincident, the consummation of the scheme of the Will came, and the world stood in awe before the tragedy.

Similarly in the little incidents that go to make up life, man accepts, not what he would choose, but what chance gives him. In "The Temporary the All," the poet tells how

Change and chancefulness in my flowering youthime

53

Set me sun by sun to one unchosen;

and though he accepted this arrangement for a temporary substitute of that of which he had dreamed, he soon found "the temporary the all." By a chance allotment of insignificant events life is moulded.

In The Dynasts, the reader finds Hardy's habitual philosophy applied to the working out of the facts of history. The following significant report is made by Decres to Napoleon:

"Such news is what I had hoped . . .

. . . But events

Have proved intractable, it seems, of late;"⁵⁴

53

Works, XVIII, p. 3.

54

Pt. I, Act III, Sc. 1.

and he later makes the following enumeration of "intractable events":

" . . . at the very juncture, when the fleets
 Sailed out from Ferrol, fever raged aboard
 'L'Achille' and 'L'Algeciras': later on,
 Mischief assailed our Spanish comrades' ships;
 Several ran afoul of neighbors; whose new hurts,
 Being added to their innate clumsiness,
 Gave hap the upper hand; and in quick course
 Demoralized the whole; until Villeneuve,
 Judging that Calder now with Nelson rode,
 And prescient of unparalleled disaster
 If he pushed on in so disjoint a trim,
 Bowed to the inevitable . . . "

Here chance takes the form of disease, misfortune, and accident. Through these, the inevitable descends upon the strongest of leaders, and they must bend beneath its blows.

Most inescapable of all blows of the chance is that of death. In war the death of a leader may turn the whole tide of battle. After Sir John Moore has fallen, Colonel Anderson utters the following significant words:

" . . . Had Fate but left

This last blow undecreed, the hour had shone

A star amid these girdling days of gloom!"⁵⁶

In the death of England's minister who has struggled for peace, the Spirit of the Pities sees a removal of a last obstacle in the course of the Will toward the horrors of war:

. . . Here then ends

My hope for Europe's reason-wrought repose!⁵⁷

Hardy's taste for the irony of chance and coincidence, as noted in the plot of A Pair of Blue Eyes, especially, and in other novels, is evident in the words of the Spirit Ironic:

"It is only that Life's queer mechanics chance to work out in this grotesque shape just now. The groping tentativeness of the Immanent Will (as grey old years describes it) cannot be asked to learn logic at this time of day! The spectacle of the instruments, set to riddle one another through, and then to drink together in peace and concord, is where the humor comes in, and makes the play worth seeing!"⁵⁸

Hardy might well have written these words in the preface

56

Pt. II, Act III, Sc. 3, p. 273.

57

Pt. II, Act I, Sc. 2, p. 192.

58

Pt. II, Act IV, Sc. V.

to almost any one of his novels, so typical is it of his attitude toward the irony of the place of chance in the Will's programme of events.

In the novels and the poems the idea is an ever-recurring one that the Will works through the channels of chance and coincidence in directing the destinies of men. Sometimes chance appears in the form of natural phenomena, sometimes in the insignificant acts of men or the simple convergence of two otherwise unimportant events. In the embodiment of the idea there is little difference, other than that of compactness and directness of expression, resulting from the difference in the form of verse and fiction.

Chapter V

Time—a Puppet-String

I

The Immanent Will reaches the lives of men through the channel of time in addition to the channels of human nature and chance, which have been discussed in the two preceding chapters. This third master puppet-string is closely allied with the other two. Time is so entangled with the functioning of the various phases of human nature that it cannot be completely separated from it even though it often works counter to it, thwarting its natural tendencies and desires. It is, likewise, so closely related to chance and coincidence that it is not always possible to differentiate between them. This unique position accounts for its occurring last in a discussion of the three major channels of the Will.

The particular manner in which it is to be treated here, however, concerns, not so much the fact that it plays upon human nature and through chance as the fact that it brings physical changes which affect men's lives profoundly. Hardy seems always to have been impressed by the injustice with which time deals with man--by the unfairness of the fact that

. . . We come to live, and we are called to die!¹

¹ "Yell'ham Wood's Story," Works, XX, p. 424.

He gives the idea a prominent place in at least three novels, a more subtle and hidden place in several more, and a very definite and frequent place in his poetry. Kinship between the novels and the poetry is evident through his treatment of the idea.

II

The three novels most concerned with a portrayal of the role that time plays in life are: The Well-Beloved, Two on a Tower, and The Mayor of Casterbridge. Less obvious treatment occurs in The Return of the Native, Tess, and Jude.

The Well-Beloved is built about the passing of time and the continuance of an ideal. Time brings physical change to Fierston and those whom he knows, yet his ideal remains with him unchanged by the shifting years. He is shocked by the death of the first Avice because to him she is as he has dreamed her. He is perturbed at his meeting with the second Avice because he sees a faded woman instead of the dream-creature who has haunted him from time to time. In the shrinking of the third Avice from him--her evident reluctance to become his wife--the irony of the tricks of time strikes home.

In the narrative of his meeting with the second Avice there occurs this passage, indicative of Hardy's perception of the irony of time in the order of things:

The widow in mourning who received him in the front parlour was, alas! but a sorry shadow of Avice the Second. How could he have fancied otherwise after twenty years? Yet he had been led to fancy otherwise, almost without knowing it, by feeling himself unaltered. Indeed, curiously enough, nearly the first words she said to him were: 'Why—you are just the same!'

'Just the same. Yes, I am, Avice,' he answered sadly; for this inability to ossify with the rest of his generation threw him out of proportion with the time. Moreover, while wearing the aspect of comedy, it was of the nature of tragedy.²

In these few sentences Hardy gives the reader glimpses of his attitude and thoughts regarding the play of time. He finds man unable to adapt himself to the physical changes of so devastating a force; in his heart he retains the emotions, the tastes, the dreams which go with an age of enthusiasms and high ideals. These are toned down to a greyness to match that of the aging body only through the force of circumstances; and in giving them up man can experience only sadness. There is no comedy in such a necessity. Man has to struggle to acquire the attitude of Pierston which is shown in a later passage:

2

Works, XIII, p. 150.

The feeling that he really could be thus content was so convincing that he almost believed the luxury of getting old and reposeful was coming to his restless wandering heart at last.³

Even here there occurs the word "almost" before "believed." This implies an exertion of the individual will to believe which does not bring belief at all, but resignation to inexorable facts.

The bitterness of one who comes to know the injustice and cruelty of time before youth has really departed is seen in Viviette, with whom time has played most unfairly. When Swithin returns, she knows at a glance that he has ceased to love her. As Hardy puts it: "Viviette saw it all, and knew that Time had at last brought about his re-⁴venges." There is more than pathos in her cry: ". . . now I am an old woman, and you are still a young man; so how can you love me? I do not expect it. . ."

And then the inevitable appears in the words: "Sympathize with her as he might, and as he unquestionably did, he loved her no longer. But why had she expected otherwise? 'O woman,' might a prophet have said to her, 'great is thy faith if thou believest a junior lover's love will last five

3

Works, XIII, p. 152.

4

Works, XII, p. 311.

years!"⁵

In The Mayor of Casterbridge, Henchard finds time playing strange tricks in sending his wife back to him after nearly twenty years, and after he has ceased to love her. It is, consequently, with resignation to a sense of duty that he prepares to re-marry her. "He pressed on the preparations for his union, or rather reunion, with this pale creature in a dogged unflinching spirit which did credit to his conscientiousness."⁶ This "pale creature" is one who has had to bow to the bludgeonings of time. It has dealt more kindly with Henchard, leaving him a ripe, hearty individual with a zest for life while making of Susan a wan, faded person, unattractive and lonely.

Less obvious treatment of the idea that time is a puppet-string of the Will occurs in the other novels. In The Return of the Native, Eustacia is a victim of time as well as of circumstance in her bondage on Egdon Heath, both before her marriage and after. In Tess, time is an alleviating element in the process of Angel Clare's development from a narrow-minded man to a nobler individual. It is a relentless force in the direction of events in the household of Tess's mother and father. In Jude, the passing of time affects the sprite-like Sue, partially, it is true,

⁵ Works, XII, 312.

⁶ Works, V, p. 95.

through the agents of chance and human nature. It, acting with circumstance and weakness of character, makes of Jude a pathetically weak person tottering to his death.

III

One might enumerate a long list of poems dealing with the idea that the Will affects men's lives profoundly through the changes wrought by time. Expression of the idea in verse is much more frequent than in the novels. It will be possible to mention, in this short space, only a few of the references to thoughts on the subject that may be found in the poetry.

In "God's Education" Hardy utters his typical cry for a reason for the injustice's of the Will, in this case under the cognomen of God. He tells how

I saw him steal the light away
That haunted in her eye⁷

and "all the lily tincts and rose" until she is but a faded creature. Then he asks God if he is taking all these bits to loveliness to save them, and is told:

"They charm not me; I bid Time throw
Them carelessly away."

Here is the injustice of time. Why should the loveliness of life be stolen, Hardy is forever asking, only to be

⁷
Works, XX, p. 398.

thrown away?

Similar expression is found in "Amabel":

I marked her ruined hues,
Her custom-straitened views,
And asked, "Can there in dwell
My Amabel?"

I looked upon her gown,
Once rose, now earthen brown;
The change was like the knell
Of Amabel.

.....

—I felt that I could creep
To some housetop, and weep
That Time the tyrant fell
Ruled Amabel!

In these two poems love grows sad through the changes wrought in a loved one by time which steals beauty for naught but pastime.

In other poems Hardy suggests that love dies through the ravages of time—essentially the idea revealed in Two on a Tower, The Mayor of Casterbridge,

and The Well-Beloved, especially in Two on a Tower.

Some of these are: "In the Night She came," "Her Father," and "Honeymoon-Time at an Inn."

In the first of these, he shows that fear of an ending of love in the processes of time lurks in the human heart.

I told her when I left one day
 That whatsoever weight of care
 Might strain our love, Time's mere assault
 Would work no changes there:
 And in the night she came to me,
 Toothless, and wan, and old,
 With leaden concaves round her eyes,
 And wrinkles manifold.

The next day this dream casts a shadow over their love; it is the shadow of fear.

In "Her Father" fear again lurks in the young lover's heart for he hears a voice telling him that the father who seems grim and cold will go on loving his daughter when time has laid its hand upon her, while the lover's love may vanish with the fading of her ^{Warm colors.} The voice seems to say:

"You love her for her pink and white;
 But what when their fresh splendours close?"

His love will last her in despite
Of Time, and wrack, and foes." ¹⁰

In the third the Spirits Ironic laugh behind the
wainscot at the breaking of the Mirror in the bridal
chamber, while the Spirits of the Pities sigh. Both
know

" . . . they will fade till old
And their loves grow numbed ere death, by the cark of care." ¹¹

The experience of a lover ^{of} poetry—a dreamer and idealist—
with time and love is described in the brief little poem, "Her
Initials." ¹²

Upon a poet's page I wrote
Of old two letters of her name;
Part seemed she of the effulgent thought
Whence that high singer's rapture came.

—When now I turn the leaf the same
Immortal light illumines the lay,
But from the letters of her name
The radiance has waned away! ¹²

10

Works, XX, p. 309.

11

Ibid, XXI, p. 177.

12

Works, XVIII, p. 13.

Although different in detail this is not unlike the experience of Jocelyn Pierston, excepting that he retains the radiance of his dream until time shows him changes in the embodiment.

There are those who, recognizing that time will steal love in stealing physical beauty, accept the facts of existence unflinchingly, and would adjust themselves by a substitution of friendship for love. This idea is presented in "She, to Him":

When you shall see me in the toils of Time,
 My lauded beauties carried off from me,
 My eyes no longer stars as in their prime,
 My name forgot of Maiden Fair and Free;

. . .

Remembering mine the loss is, not the blame,
 That sportsman Time but rears his brood to kill,
 Knowing me in my soul the very same--
 One who would die to spare you touch of ill!--
 Will you not grant to old affection's claim
 The hand of friendship down Life's sunless hill?

13

The lack of logic in time's deeds is seen by man, who finds that ^{it} works ~~it~~ in a haphazard kind of way, bringing maladjustments in such situations as that suggested in "The Inquiry":

and the Semichorus of the Years, as well as in the speeches of the other spirits observing the spinning of the years. In the Fore Scene and the After Scene, there are significant lines as to the unchanging nature of the Will through the ages. These go back to the unity of the whole Hardy-esque scheme of ideas, that of the unvarying character of the Will through the various channels of human nature, chance, and time.

In a speech of the Spirit of the Years in Part III, Act I, Sc. IX, the joint play of time of chance and time is commented on:

... Kutuzof he;

The ceaselessly-attacked one, Michael Ney;

A pair as stout as thou, Earth, ever hast twinned!

Kutuzof, ten years younger, would extirp

The invaders, and our drama finish here,

With Bonaparte a captive or a corpse.

But he is old; death even has beckoned him.

And thus the so near-seeming happens not.

Time, like the other agents of the Will, remains not only a ruthless force but an aimless one. This is seen in many of the shorter poems and in the sadness which it brings to the men and women of the novels. The injustice of its inconsistency is suggested in "I Look Into My Glass":

But Time, to make me grieve,

Part steals, lets part abide;

And shapes this fragile frame at eve

With throbbings of noontide.

In the poetry these are more poignant cries against the injustice of time as an agent of the Immanent Will than in the novels, yet there is no essential difference in the basic idea as revealed in the two. In both, time is simply another a great puppet-string of an aimless, conscienceless, all-powerful force directing the lives of men.

17

Works, XVIII, p. 107.

Chapter VI

The Will of the Puppet

I

That an all-powerful, unconscious, aimless force directs the destinies of men through the channels of human nature, chance, and time has been shown to be the all-embracing idea in the poetry and the prose of Thomas Hardy. The idea that this directing force is inexorable is evident in the lives of the men and women whom his imagination has given to the world, as well as in the abstract utterances of the poet. Yet, the question of man's reaction to the workings of the Will, of the exercise of the individual will, of the struggle toward self-expression, remains to be answered. Because in the course of the ages man has acquired a consciousness which has given him the power to think and plan and dream, he cannot be a mere mechanic contrivance under the direction of the Immanent Will. As long as man thinks and dreams and plans, he is going to struggle. Possessing a will of his own, he is going to exert it even against the Immanent Will of which it is a part. That the struggle of the individual will against an all-powerful force will of necessity be futile is the final and most significant of the major ideas of Hardy's works. It is the one idea which colors nearly all of his poetry and prose. It is that which gives the pathetic and tragic tone to his utterances. It is the idea to which all other ideas, previously mentioned in this discussion, naturally lead.

II

It is in the prose tragedies, the short poems of disillusionment, and the colossal epic drama that Hardy expresses most completely the idea that the individual struggles in vain against the workings of the Will. Faint suggestions of the thought may be perceived in the lighter novels and in many of the purely philosophical poems, but the thought is so essentially predominant in the works mentioned as to be immediately evident.

Randall Williams points out that "the dominant idea of most of his novels is the inevitable struggle between mortals and inexorable Necessity. 'Some people would like to know,' he [Hardy] writes in Tess of the D'Urbervilles 'whence the poet, whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound and trustworthy as his song is breezy and pure, gets his authority for speaking of "Nature's holy plan" '—words which in substance are but a re-echo of 'Nature's Questioning' where he wonders whether an imbecility has

'Framed us in jest, and left us to Hazardry.' Hardy accepts as an axiom of life, the limitation of human activity owing to the existence of powers higher and stronger than human forces, and unseen by men, intelligible and at times inimical to them. . . . In his darkest moods, then, the incomprehensible laws of life constitute the underlying theme. Birth, death, and the intermediate living time are hard facts, the last being the hardest because therein do we find the operation of a force creating for protagonists, at any rate, an inscrutable

injustice. This is the philosophy of Jude the Obscure, Tess of the D'Urbervilles, and The Return of the Native. In his lighter novels, Under the Greenwood Tree and The Trumpet Major, life is taken in an unquestioning spirit, and the result is happiness: when, however, man begins to struggle against, or alter, the course of Necessity, misgiving, sorrow, and tragedy are the result, and an impenetrable veil of Doubt and Despair obscures the ultimate end of life.¹

This statement is questionable in the assumption regarding the actual happiness of the ending of The Trumpet Major, but in general it is true. Hardy is at his best in recording the sadder, the more ironical, aspects of life. He is at his best when he is setting forth certain strong convictions in regard to the hopelessness of human endeavor. As he himself wrote in the General Preface to his works, in October, 1911: "Some natures become vocal at tragedy, some are made vocal by comedy, and it seems to me that to whichever aspects of life a writer's instinct for expression the more readily responds, to that he should allow it to respond. That before a contrasting side of things he remains undemonstrative need not be assumed to mean that he remains unperceiving."²

It is evident from this statement that Hardy was aware that an individual is not necessarily always engaged in a losing struggle with the aimless, unconscious Will. He was

¹ Williams, Randall, The Wessex Novels of Thomas Hardy, p. 131-132.

² Works, I, Preface, p. XII.

aware that there is comedy--there is happiness--among men. But the fact also remains that he was most impressed by, most interested in, and most successful in recording those struggles which are waged in vain. The very fact that the individual struggles at all in Hardy's way of thinking is indicative of failure and consequent unhappiness, for he cannot "swerve the pulsion of the Byss."³

There is an element of truth in the somewhat exaggerated statement of Lina Wright Berle: "Hardy's characters never pass from a lower to a higher spirituality, as George Eliot's frequently do; they are bound on the wheel of life which inexorably breaks them in its revolutions. Self-control is an impossibility, and indeed unnecessary, for where fate is all-powerful, control and intemperance are alike unable to avert catastrophe or determine happiness."⁴

Lascelles Abercrombie says that conflict between the personal and the impersonal is "the inmost vitality of all Hardy's noblest work."⁵ The impersonal is essentially the Immanent Will--indifferent, unconscious, purposeless. In another place he writes: "Hence throughout these two books [Tess and Jude], the atmosphere is charged with a fierce indignation against the fundamental injustice of man's existence,"⁶

³ The Dynasts, Fore Scene, p. 8.

⁴ Berle, Lina Wright, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, p. 37.

⁵ Abercrombie, Lascelles, Thomas Hardy, A Critical Study, p. 152.

⁶ Ibid, p. 137.

implying that Hardy is concerned with the thought that "the dice of the gods are loaded and man is bound to lose."⁷ Harold Child expresses the same thought when he says that Hardy writes about "the struggles of the individual human wills against the power that rules the world."⁸

So strongly is the idea impressed upon readers that Frank Harris thinks it interferes with the artistic perfection of his prose writings. In Latest Contemporary Portraits, he writes: "He is too far divorced from reality; too much an idealist and poet and at heart overpowered by the tragedy and the fleeting show of human life."⁹ One does gain the impression from both the novels and the poetry that Hardy is overpowered by his perception of tragedy in the world--by his observation that

mortals moan

10

Against a ruling not their own.

He knows only too well that men cry out in moments of failure:

My God, my God, how can I talk thereon!

A plan well judged, well charted, well up-reared

To end in nothing!¹¹

⁷ Beach, The Technique of Thomas Hardy, p. 226.

⁸ Child, Harold, Thomas Hardy, p. 11.

⁹ Harris, Frank, Latest Contemporary Portraits, p. 165.

¹⁰ The Dynasts, I, VI, 3, p. 151.

¹¹ Ibid., I, III, 1, p. 78.

In his novels and in his poetry he again and again repeats the thought that the great and the insignificant men

. . . who wade across the world
 To make an epoch, bless, confuse, appal,
 Are in the elemental ages' chart
 Like meanest insects on the obscurest leaves
 But incidents and grooves of Earth's unfolding;
 Or as the brazen rod that stirs the fire
 Because it must.¹²

III

In the last of Hardy's novels, Jude the Obscure, there occurs the most powerful expression of the idea that the individual will is powerless against the Immanent Will that may be found among the novels. The whole story of Jude's thwarted life is one long series of frustrations. His early desire for learning, his ardent longing for the life of study at Christminster, is thwarted by the unexpected desire for Arabella and the subsequent humiliating and degrading events. Lack of funds and low social position are heavy fogs through which Jude cannot find his way to that which he desires. His love for Sue, his fear of marriage, his lack of common sense in practical adjustment to life drag him farther and farther from his goal. Unforeseen accidental events drive him into strange difficulties from which he seems powerless

to free himself. Through all of these he struggles futilely, weakly, hopelessly. He knows that he might as well be re-
 signed to the fate which he describes as "senseless circumstance."¹³
 In him there is not as strong a spirit of rebellion as there is in Sue. With her questioning mind she can find no adequate explanation for the endless thwartings of life. In bitterness she cries: "And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word!"¹⁴ And in despair she exclaims, "We must conform! . . . All the ancient wrath of the Power above us has been vented upon his poor creatures, and we must submit . . . It is no use fighting against God!"¹⁵

Jude and Sue are embodiments of the truth of the statement of Herbert L. Stewart in the North American Review, October, 1918: "It is not only man-made convention that will thwart your instincts. Your instincts will thwart and nullify one another, so that when any of them seems to be on the point of winning its reward a second will obtrude to spoil it. The things we do for the best turn out to have been for the worst, and those we thought to benefit we manage in our ignorance deeply to wrong."¹⁶

¹³
Works, III, p. 143.

¹⁴
Ibid, p. 409.

¹⁵
Ibid, p. 413.

¹⁶
North American Review, 208: 590.

The same statement applies equally well to Tess--another of those birds "snared and tangled in a net" that "cower down, very still, with bright wild eyes, then flutter desperately,"¹⁷ Tess must struggle against poverty, environment, heredity, ignorance, accident, villainy, shame, love, prejudice, misunderstanding, bigotry, circumstance, and finally the law. All the forces that a malignant fate could possibly devise are pitted against this one poor struggling individual who has no other desire than to live a simple, good, happy life. She struggles bravely--more bravely and honestly, and less hysterically Jude and Sue--against the force that rules her until it takes from her life itself. Her simple acceptance of a broken life Hardy reflects in the poem Tess's Lament."¹⁸

I would that folk forgot me quite,

Forgot me quite!

I would that I could shrink from sight,

And no more see the sun.

Would it were time to say farewell,

To claim my nook, to need my knell,

Time for them all to stand and tell

O' my day's work done.

. . .

It wears me out to think of it,

To think of it;

17

Johnson, Lionel, *The Art of Thomas Hardy*, p. 1 97.

18

Works XVIII, p. 255.

directed less against human beings than against certain creatures of her mind, the chief of these being Destiny, through whose interference she dimly fancied it arose that love alighted on gliding youth—that any love she might win would sink simultaneously with the sand in the glass.²⁰ In a frenzy of bitter revolt, she cries out: "O, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world! I was capable of much, but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control! O, how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all!"²¹

Clym, like Jude, in the time of complete frustration and sorrow is calmer than Eustacia and Sue. "He did sometimes think he had been ill-used by fortune, so far as to say that to be born is a palpable dilemma, and that instead of men aiming to advance in life with glory they should calculate how to retreat out of it without shame. But that he and his had been sarcastically and pitilessly handled in having such irons thrust into their souls he did not maintain long. It is usually so, except with the sternest of men. 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

20

Works IV, p. 79.

21

Ibid., p. 422.

of Babylon, invent excuses for the oppression which prompts their tears."²² In these words Hardy suggests the idea that though the Immanent Will is unscrupulous, harsh, and oppressive, it is not ordinarily admitted to be so. It tortures men by thrusting irons into their souls, and men magnanimously sit down and invent excuses for such torture.

Typical of men who try to rise in spite of the decrees of this blind, relentless tyranny is Michael Henchard. He is followed to his grave by a long series of events (set in motion by a foolhardy act performed in drunkenness) which overthrow him each time he climbs to success and happiness. He secures wealth, only to lose it. He receives homage and respect from his fellow-towns-men, only to have them later despise and humiliate him. He is loved as a father by the beautiful Elizabeth-Jane, only to find her growing indifferent in new interests. For wealth, honor, and love he struggles-- to lose them all. In a time of deep humiliation, Elizabeth-Jane hears him murmur, "Who is such a reprobate as I! And yet it seems that even I am in Somebody's hand!"²³ Though this strange hand has always snatched from him the things he desires.

Strangely inconsistent is this reigning force which deals more kindly with a part of Elizabeth-Jane's life. Having observed the cruel tyranny of fortune in the lives of those

²²
Works, IV, p.455.

²³
Works, p. 345.

about her as well as in her own life, she is surprised to find that chance capriciously doles out happiness and contentment later. She had a "strong sense that never she nor any human being deserved less than was given," yet this "did not blind her to the fact that there were others receiving less who had deserved much more. And in being forced to class herself among the fortunate she did not cease to wonder at the persistence of the unforeseen, when the one to whom such unbroken tranquility had been accorded in the adult stage was she whose youth had seemed to teach that happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain."²⁴

Whether Hardy tells of Elizabeth-Jane's happiness to satisfy certain readers or from a sense of fairness in the treatment of his conception of the workings of the Immanent Will is not clear; yet one conclusion is inescapable; this statement does not in any way contradict his basic idea; the Will deals Elizabeth-Jane happiness capriciously, not from a sense of justice or mercy or kindness. The nature of the Will remains the same. Perhaps Elizabeth-Jane typifies that group of individuals who do not struggle against the dictates of the Will. She is a passive creature, accepting unquestioningly the blows of an unkind fate in her youth as she later accepts the gifts of a seemingly more gracious fate.

In The Woodlanders, Marty South and Giles Winterborne struggle feebly--rather hopelessly--to find love in life.

The end of the struggle for both is depicted in the scene of a lonely wraith-like woman in the misty hours of dawn, weeping over the grave of a man who has died in an effort to serve the one he loved. To Marty South, one of the most noble of Hardy's women, the Will has given nothing but unkindness. There is no reward for virtue in its dealing with her. There is terrible irony in the picture of the helplessness of these two unassuming, resigned creatures, Marty and Giles struggling feebly to extricate themselves from the net that enmeshes their lives.

Fanny Robin, Farmer Boldwood, Viviette, John Loveday, Stephen Smith, and Christopher Julian—all represent frustration of hopes and desires and dreams by a power beyond themselves—a relentless force which will not let them receive the little they struggle for in life.

IV

By the device of looking upon humanity from the Overworld, Hardy is able to impress upon the readers of The Dynasts the smallness of each individual bit of humanity, the powerlessness of each individual will. Through the use of Dumb Shows throughout the poem, he presents forcefully the inevitable movements of masses of men, directed by a Will of which they understand nothing. Through them the reader senses the insignificance and impotence of each individual atom. Typical of this type of presentation of the idea is the Dumb Show in scene 1, Act IV, Part III:

At first nothing--not even the river itself--seems to move in the panorama. But anon certain strange dark patches in the landscape, flexuous and riband-shaped, are discerned to be moving slowly. Only one movable object on earth is large enough to be conspicuous herefrom, and that is an army. The moving shapes are armies.

. . .

All these dark and gray columns, converging westwardly by sure degrees, advance without opposition. They glide as if by gravitation, in fluid figures, dictated by the conformation of the country, like water from a burst reservoir; mostly snake-shaped, but occasionally with batrachian and saurian outlines. In spite of the immensity of the human mechanism on its surface, the winter landscape wears an impassive look, as if nothing were happening.

In the Dumb Show of scene 2, Act III, Part I, where the River Inn winds like "a silver thread" and the Danube like "a crinkled satin-riband," the vast Austrian Army creeps dully "in the form of detached masses and columns of a whitish cast." Then the Recording Angel speaks of it as

The movement as of molluses on a leaf,
Which from our vantage here we scan afar.

In such scenes where even the vast movements of armies of men are so diminutive as to leave a landscape impassive-appearing, what can be the significance of one individual will? Thus indirectly and subtly Hardy prepares his readers

for the acceptance of the idea of the futility of individual struggle. Only the spirits of the Overworld realize that man is

Moved like a figure on a lantern-slide,
 Which, much amazing uninitiate eyes,
 The all-compelling crystal plane but drags
 Whither the showman wills.²⁵

They see

. . . marching men come, band on band,
 Who read not as a reprimand
 To mortal moils that as 'twere planned
 In mockery of their mimic fray
 The skies fling flame.²⁶

The whole gigantic record of Napoleon's meteor-like career ending in final obliteration is a statement that the individual struggles in vain against an Immanent Will. Paradoxical as it may seem, Napoleon is at once urged by the Will to act as he acts and thwarted by the same force. He could not have acted differently had he tried. though the course he follows is destined to bring him to ruin. Like the humbler Mayor of Casterbridge, he rises only to fall.

25

The Dynasts, XIX, Part I, Act IV, sc. 5, p. 99.

266

Ibid, Pt. III, Act I, sc. 3.

Just as Henchard's wife, Elizabeth-Jane, Lucetta, and Farfrae are dragged into the net of Henchard's career, so are Josephine, Marie Louise, the great generals of both armies, the soldiers, their wives and sweethearts dragged into the net of Napoleon's career as he wades across the world.²⁷

Human beings plan to take the clay of life into their hands and mould of it vessels of beauty; they do not know that another force than their own moulds for them crooked, distorted shapes in which there is no beauty. In youth they dream that love is endless; they do not know—they can not know until experience has taught them—that it is as transitory as a breath upon a glass. In the passions and pleasures of early dreams they plan to escape from the world; they do not know that "wild storms" will pierce and patter until none can "up and go."²⁸ Not until they have tasted of the last bitter disillusionment do they "feel and know."²⁹

This theory, as set forth in "Unknowing"³⁰ and "Middle-Age Enthusiasms,"³¹ is essentially the same as that advanced in Jude the Obscure. The thought of the poems is virtually the story not only of Jude but of Henchard with his aspirations

²⁷

The Dynasts, XX, Pt. III, Act VII, Sc. 9, p. 260.

²⁸

Works, XVIII, p. 72.

²⁹

Ibid.

³⁰

Ibid.

³¹

Works, XVIII, p. 60.

and longings turned to bitter mockery--of Sue with the daring and independence of her youth vanishing as she mercilessly drives herself to accept the repulsive fate meted out to her--of Marty South longing for love, but in the end weeping hopelessly at the grave of Giles--of Clym Yoebright with his belief in the love of Eustacia turned to bitter knowledge. All of them come to "feel and know" that their own dreams and longings and aspirations are as chaff before the winds.

That human sorrow means nothing to the force that frames events is suggested in "To a Motherless Child," where the Will is given the cognomen of Nature. The poet has learned that

To her mechanic artistry

32

My dreams are all unknown.

In "Nature's Questioning" he wonders if

. . . 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

33

Unconscious of our pains?

32

Works, XVIII, p. 84.

33

Ibid, p. 85.

Such thoughts are the natural results of the observance of the lives of such struggling men and women as Sue , Eustacia, Clym, Henchard, Jude, Fanny Robin, Farmer Boldwood, Stephen Smith, Knight, and Elfride. Any one of these individuals might have uttered the cry to love:

Why cast he on our port

A bloom not ours?

Why shaped us for his sport

34

In after hours?

And this cry to love is only another cry against the workings of the Will.

Utter disillusionment is expressed in "Heiress and Architect,"³⁵ where the soul asks for traceries of birds and buds and bees in the palace the architect is to build for her, only to be refused by the arch-designer who advises more prudence and practicality; where she asks for crystal glass to show the world her light and laughter, only to be refused because she will soon want to hide from the world; where she requests "a little chamber"... "engrailed with rare device of reds and purples" for Love, only to learn that such will turn to mockery; where she begs for a little turret

34

"At An Inn," Works, XVIII, p. 89.

35

Works, XVIII, p. 101.

"To reach a loft where I may grieve alone"
 only to hear the chill voice of the arch-designer saying:
 "I must fashion as the rule declares
 To wit: give space (since life ends unawares)
 To hale a coffined corpse down the stairs;
 For you will die."³⁶

Here again is the answer to the men and women of the novels who wish to build their life-castles according to a simple plan of their dreams. An arch-designer--grim and cold--refuses their requests. Of each of them one might say

Hope was his only drink and food,³⁷
 And hope extinct, decay ensued.

³⁸
 In "The Two Men" two individuals who planned life differently--the one altruistically, the other greedily--who live according to their plans, and strive to carry them out, find that they plan in vain. The aims of the one come to nothing as do the aims of the other. There is suggested in the irony of the closing stanza the futility of their struggles. Just such two men are Clym and Wildeve, or Giles

³⁶
Works, XVIII, p. 101.

³⁷
Ibid, p. 104.

³⁸
Ibid, p. 103.

Winterborne and Dr. Fitzpiers. Perhaps they do not occur in pairs in the other novels. But who could be a more perfect example of the one who plans greedily than Alec d'Urbervilles? His life ends in tragedy. Who lives less selfishly than Marty South? Her life goes on unhappily. Again and again the story is told in the novels. It is not virtue that is rewarded. Nor is it vice. Reward has nothing to do with good or evil. The Will is not concerned with the aims of man and his efforts to attain his aims.

39

"The Blow" shows man utterly powerless before the force that sweeps him prone--a force that sends "a foul crash our lives amid"--a force that hurls a stone

Into the sunshine of our days!

The misfortune of Tess's early life is such a blow. The narrowness of Angel Clare is such a blow in her later life. The discovery of the illegality of Viviette's marriage with the young astronomer comes as a stroke of misfortune into her life, affecting her whole future existence, even to her death. The closed door brings death to Mrs. Yeobright and hastens the tragedy of Eustacia's life. The appearance of Susan Henchard in Casterbridge brings sudden complications into the life her husband from which he is powerless to

free himself.

It is rather curious that the few who sense the impotence of man in this vast scheme of things should go on struggling--even more passionately than those who are not "of the few . . . who discern the workings of the Will."⁴⁰ Napoleon utters fatalistic convictions from time to time, yet his whole life is one of pushing on toward a self-set goal. Words which show a penetrating insight into the nature of events come from him before the Russian campaign:

That which has worked will work!--Since Lodi Bridge
 The force I then felt moves me 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 afore-time-figured mesh
 And contemplated charactery: no more.⁴¹

Ernest Brenneke points out the expression of the same thought in Napoleon's words to Queen Louise of Prussia:

Know you, my Fair,
 That I--ay, I--in this deserve your pity.--
 Some force within me, baffling mine intent,

⁴⁰
Works, XIX, Pt. III, Act I, Sc. VIII.

⁴¹
Ibid, XX, Pt. III, Act I, Sc. I.

Harries me onward, whether I will or no.

My star, my star is what's to blame--not I.

42

It is unswervable!

Here is a man, whose struggles have moved nations, who voices the same thought as that of the lonely girl on Egdon Heath who cries out that she has been "injured and blighted and crushed" by things beyond her control. Napoleon placidly says, "I--in this deserve your pity," where Eustacia hysterically cries, "O, the cruelty of putting me in this ill-conceived world!"⁴³ Though the manner in which they express their realization of their own subservience to the "pitiless Planet of Destiny"⁴⁴ is quite different, both realize to a certain extent, that

You cannot swerve the pulsion of the Byss⁴⁵

and both struggle rather gloriously, though blunderingly, toward the tragic end which the Will has set for them.

Hardy shows throughout the poetry and the prose the highest regard for man. He does not despise the individual even though his struggles are weak and futile. He does not

42

Brenneke, Ernest, Thomas Hardy's Universe, p. 104.

43

Works, IV, p. 422.

45

Ibid, XX, Pt. III, Act VI, Sc. IV.

44

Ibid.

46

Ibid, XIX, Fore Scene.

scorn "the twitchings" of the puppet, man

47

As he with other figures foots his reel.

It is those of his men and women who struggle most who appeal most strongly to his readers. Eustacia, vivid in rebellion, Marty, pathetic in self-sacrifice, Tess, appealing in her simple desire for the good, Henchard, pitiful in lonely striving--these are the ones who receive the greatest pity from the readers of the novels, just as Julie-Jane, bravely smiling in the presence of death, the Men Who march away, the soldier's wives courageously smiling farewell, and the others who fight bravely make the strongest appeal to the readers of the poetry. Human struggle, though vain, is not despicable. The poet is only sad that he hears "an ache in his laughter" when man laughs "in the sun."⁴⁸ When he writes in the words of the Spirit of the Pities:

It irks me that they thus should Yea and Nay
As though a power lay in their oraclings,⁴⁹

he is not expressing disdain for the men who speak, but dis-

47
Works, XIX, Forescene, p. 13.

48
"The Love-Letters," Winter Words, p. 14.

49
Works, XIX, Pt. I, Act I, Sc. III.

satisfaction with a state of affairs wherein the voices of men are raised in vain. His own voice is heard again and again throughout The Dynasts in the speeches of the Spirit of the Pities, uttering a cry of compassion for man.

Of this attitude of the poet and novelist, Harold Child writes: "I remember how, after reading the first part of The Dynasts on its separate publications, I felt that this conception of celestial machinery must dwarf the human story and deprive the great human deeds, good or evil, of all heroism and grandeur. The complete work not only reveals the apprehension to be groundless but directly falsifies it. The Immanent Will is, after all, each man's will, so long as each man believes it to be his; and man, though a "painted shape," a figment, can yet feel. Nothing in the human story is belittled; but the whole is folded in pity for this great and little human nature working out, magnificently or meanly, its destiny under the impulse of a power which it has not even the satisfaction of being able to curse and to defy as a malignant enemy."⁵⁰

Among the most significant of all Hardy's lines are those from "Yell'ham Wood's Story":

It says that life would signify
A thwarted purposing

That we come to live, and are called to die.⁵¹

This is a summation of the thoughts of all his greater novels, of much of his lyric poetry, and of The Dynasts. Knowing that life is a thwarted purposing, he can feel only sorrow, and for man only compassion.

V

Thus in the poetry and in the novels Hardy illustrates the idea that the individual will is powerless before the workings of the Immanent Will. In his novels he tells of lives of men and woman whose efforts are brought to naught; in his poems of disillusionment he lets us know that bitter experience has given men knowledge of the futility of struggling; in the gigantic epic drama he gives a superb example from history of the struggle of a mammoth individual will which is swept into nothing by the workings of an Immanent Will—as ever, unconscious, autonomous, aimless, and indestructible.

51

"Yell'ham Wood's Story," Works, XX, p.424.

Bibliography

Works of Thomas Hardy

The Writings of Thomas Hardy in Prose and Verse.
New York, London: Harper Brothers, 1920.
Anniversary edition, 21 vols.¹

Winter Words, New York: Macmillan Co., 1928.

Biographical and Critical Books

Abercrombie, Lascelles. Thomas Hardy, a Critical Study.
London: Martin Secker, 1912. 224 pp.

Beach, Joseph Warren. The Technique of Thomas Hardy.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1922. 255 pp.

Berle, Lina Wright. George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.
New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1917. 174 pp.

Brenneke, Ernest. Thomas Hardy's Universe, a Study of
a Poet's Mind. London: T. Fisher Unwin Ltd, 1924. 153 pp.

Chew, Samuel C. Thomas Hardy, Poet and Novelist.
New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1929. 196 pp.

Chew, Samuel C. Thomas Hardy, Poet and Novelist.
Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Bryn Mawr College, 1921. 257 pp.

Child, Harold. Thomas Hardy. New York: Henry Holt and
Co., 1916. 128 pp.

Hardy, Florence Emily. The Early Life of Thomas Hardy.
N. Y. : Macmillan Co., 1928. 327 pp.

Hardy, Florence Emily. The Later Years of Thomas Hardy.
N. Y. : Macmillan Co., 1929.

1

All references in the footnotes to the volumes in this edition are made under the heading Works.

2

Unless otherwise specified all references are to the 1929 edition.

Harris, Frank, Latest Contemporary Portraits,
(N. Y. , 1927) , pp. 150-161.

Johnson, Lionel. The Art of Thomas Hardy. London:
John Lane, the Bodley Head, Ltd, 1923. 259 pp.

Williams, Randall. The Wessex Novels of Thomas Hardy.
London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, LTD., 1924. 157 pp.

Periodicals

Elliott, G. R., "Spectral Etching in the Poetry of Thomas
Hardy," Publications of the Modern Language Association
of America, XLIII (February, 1929), 1185-1195.

Stewart, Herbert L., "Thomas Hardy as a Teacher of His Age,"
North American Review, CCVIII (Oct., 1918), 589-596.

Symons, Arthur, "Thomas Hardy," Dial, LXVIII (Jan., 1920), 66-70.