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<https://doi.org/10.15760/etd.2027>

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Russell E. Borland for the Master of Arts
in English presented July 23, 1973.

Title: Thomas Hardy: A Study: Suffering, Human Will, and Grace
in the Major Novels.

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Sam A. Yorks, Chairman

David A. Holloway

Ivan Curcin

This thesis concentrates on human relations and the potential for man's beatitude in Hardy's major novels through an exploration of suffering, human will, evolutionary meliorism, and Grace, discussed in separate chapters. Chapter I is devoted to an introduction of the major elements of what is here called Hardy's vision. Relying largely on Florence Emily Hardy's The Life of Thomas Hardy and on references to some of the novels, a compilation of impressions is arranged into what seems to represent accurately the basic nature of the world and human relations in Hardy's novels. The emphasis and the thrust of the vision are the ways in which human doings interrelate.

Chapter II explores suffering largely in terms of its causes. Through descriptions of individual characters and their relations with other characters, the principal shortcomings of man in his human doings are categorized into two rather basic expressions of human will, self-assertion and self-restraint. It is the extremes of self-assertion, enacted through extreme passions or extreme intellectuality, and the extremes of self-restraint, expressed through passive acquiescence and social imitation, which are demonstrated as the major causes of suffering in human relations.

The use of suffering for influencing the human will is the thrust of Chapter III. After reviewing some critical views of the potential of the human will to affect the human condition in Hardy's novels, examples from the novels of the ways in which suffering influenced decisions and actions are discussed. An awareness of suffering and the consequent sympathy are evinced as bases for actions and decisions which work to lighten some of the suffering or possible suffering of other characters.

Chapter IV concentrates on Hardy's concept of evolutionary meliorism. Using T. H. Huxley's comments as a background definition of evolution, it is seen that the ethically better characters tend to survive and to replace characters with non-adaptive, non-ethical tendencies. Hardy's novels tend towards evolving an amelioration of man's condition. An investigation of the characters and of the narrative point of view reveals some bases for sadness and sympathy for all of the characters, making Hardy's view of evolutionary meliorism different from Huxley's view of evolution in human society in that Huxley

emphasizes imitation while Hardy seems to emphasize variety as a necessary adjunct to evolutionary meliorism.

A discussion of the Old Testament concept of Grace as analogous to what seems to be Hardy's hope for man is the topic of Chapter V. Loving-kindness as the motive of human will in actions and decisions is seen as the result of man evolving a more intense consciousness of the causes of human suffering. As man may evolve an instinctual will to act through loving-kindness, so may the Universal Will through its interrelation with man's will, based on connections discussed in Chapter I, also develop a consciousness, sympathy, and a new concept of Grace in which a conscious, sympathetic Universal Will urges, hopefully mercifully, the processes of the universe in place of the biblical concept of God's Grace.

The concluding chapter summarizes the major emphases of the preceding chapters into a discussion of the moral importance of the use of human will for alleviating as much suffering as possible in human lives and society. The pains and the potential of human life which Hardy demonstrates in the novels becomes the basis for using the worst consequences and possible consequences to motivate mankind to attempt to afford every man as much relief from suffering as possible.

TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH:

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July 25, 1973

THOMAS HARDY: A STUDY
SUFFERING, HUMAN WILL, AND GRACE
IN THE MAJOR NOVELS

by
RUSSELL E. BORLAND

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
ENGLISH

Portland State University
1973

PREFACE

This study was engendered out of a response to Thomas Hardy's fiction which parallels Wilson and Helen Thomas Follett's observation that Hardy's idyllic novels "are marked by a sense of the insubstantial character of the wall that shuts men and women out of their beatitude."¹ It seemed that not only the "idyllic" novels, but the later, "darker" novels shared a sense of the possibility of man's beatitude; that is, the possibility of life with happiness and little or no suffering. A wrong choice hastily made, the pressures of jealousy and the desire to possess, the overriding guidance of emotion seemed rather often to be the causes of failure and of suffering.

At first, it seemed too easy to categorize Hardy's characters into "good" or "bad" types; and if there seemed to be a larger proportion of "bad" characters than in the novels of Dickens' time, it seemed only a natural and realistic extension of the world of the novel in its depiction of "life." If characters like Sergeant Troy, Felice Charmond, Alec D'Urberville, or Arabella Donn could be classified as finally too impulsively "bad" and as almost wholly responsible for a series of events which brought suffering to others, the response became complicated when faced with characters like Michael Henchard and Eustacia Vye. Each of these characters played a substantially central role in their

¹ Wilson and Helen Thomas Follett, Some Modern Novelists: Appreciations and Estimates (1918; rpt. Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries, Inc., 1967), p. 131.

respective novels, yet were responsible for a great deal of suffering. Is Henchard to be taken as an "anti-hero?" Add to the list Bathsheba Everdene, Clym Yeobright, Sue Bridehead, Angel Clare, Fancy Day, Richard Phillotson, and George Melbury, all of whom are involved in causing some suffering while being essentially non-malevolent, and the complications of choosing villains and heroes and moral guideposts became confusing.

As a provisional step towards a better classification of the characters, the characters were divided into four groups in terms of Will defined as Self-Control which displays charity to oneself and to others: characters who possessed a Will; characters who had a perverted Will; characters who had no Will, except as they lived through another's Will; and "innocent" characters who were searching for a Will while trying to retain their innocence. Recognizing that many of the "innocents" were tainted, and recognizing that those who had perverted Wills were not always selfish and evil, the categories blurred and seemed finally to be inadequate for interpreting how Hardy's fiction operated. Again, the classification was too easy.

Taking into consideration Hardy's caution not to throw away the whole because the superfluities are extravagant,² a question concerning human will arose; "If Hardy's characters could help themselves to go beyond their suffering, is not the largest stumbling block the Will to make things better?" The answer was equivocal. Some characters seemed capable of adjusting and of performing the necessary actions to ward off

² Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders, Anniversary ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1920), p. 154.

or to overcome disasters; principally, Gabriel Oak and Donald Farfrae. Meanwhile, other characters tried but failed to ward off or avoid disaster, principally Tess Durbeyfield, George Melbury, Jude Fawley, and Clym Yeobright. Other characters succeeded partially, as did Diggory Venn and Grace Melbury. Still other characters seemed to desire disaster, as with Sergeant Troy, Felice Charmond, Dr. Fitzpiers, and Damon Wildeve. Michael Henchard and Farmer Boldwood did not want disaster, but found it anyway.

One point seemed fairly certain. To blame disaster on a "malignant universe," an "Immanent Will," or "Fate" seemed naive. The sufferings of the characters seemed almost wholly a product of their own or of others' actions, decisions, emotions, stratagems, and interests. This observation would seem to support Edward Wagenknecht's statement that human beings were at the center of the universe in Hardy's fiction.³ So it would also seem to follow that human beings were largely responsible for their Fate, and that their Fate was their character;⁴

the gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions, by reason of the characters taking no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by the said passions, prejudices, and ambitions.⁵

³ Edward Wagenknecht, "Pessimism" in Hardy and Conrad, College English, 3 (1942), 546-54.

⁴ Thomas Hardy, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Anniversary ed. (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1920), p. 131.

⁵ Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1928 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962), p. 120. Hereafter cited as Life. See Richard L. Purdy, Thomas Hardy: A Bibliographical Study (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 273, who ascribes the major portion, except most of the last four chapters, to Thomas Hardy's own construction, making this work largely an autobiography.

This view of human existence in Hardy's novels is not, however, widely shared by Hardy critics. In his book The Victorian Sage, John Holloway works from the view of Hardy's work which is shared by a number of other critics. Holloway sees determinism in Hardy's works, specifically natural determinism; "a system of rigid and undeviating law."⁶ Human life and consciousness, Holloway concludes, are "wholly subject to the control of Nature...."⁷ Because the whole world and all of life are determined and controlled, Holloway can see signals of the inevitable in the novels in the form of "proleptic images" which "hint at the whole determined sequence of things."⁸

Holloway is not alone in his stand on determinism. Perry Meisel in his study of Hardy's major fiction sees determinism in Hardy's fiction as both external and internal. There are forces of nature and the universe which externally frustrate man's aspirations beyond acquiescence. Within a man there are limitations of character and temperament which determine also the outcome of man's attempts to rise above simple ways and aspirations.⁹

The views which result from seeing determinism in Hardy's works are that life is basically futile;¹⁰ that man's will is almost certain

⁶ John Holloway, The Victorian Sage: Studies in Argument (1953; rpt. London: Archon Books, 1962), p. 252.

⁷ Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 265.

⁸ Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 270.

⁹ Perry Meisel, Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed: A Study of the Major Fiction (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 6.

¹⁰ J. Hillis Miller, The Form of Victorian Fiction (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 117.

to be frustrated;¹¹ that the tragic flaw in life is the universe which makes men as flies to gods, and life a mockery;¹² and that man is born to unhappiness, and is helpless and without means of escape.¹³ So human will is always contradicted by the powers of the world; man must obey the general will of existence.¹⁴ The best plan in Hardy's world, as Albert Pettigrew Elliott sees it, is resignation.¹⁵

In addition to these basically philosophical aspects of determinism, there are certain factors in Hardy's novels which seem to have a determining influence on the characters' decisions and actions. Among these determining factors may be included such aspects as poverty, social class, Time, and Change. Poverty, for example, may constrain a character to act contrary to his or her feelings, sensibilities, or desires. One instance is Tess Durbeyfield who, seeing herself as guilty for the death of the family's horse through negligence, feels that it is necessary to submit to her mother's plan to go to the D'Urberville estate to try to help her family solve, at least in part, their problems of penury. Later, Tess submits to Alec's advances and becomes his mistress in order to keep her family from starvation and vagrancy.

¹¹ James R. Baker, "Thematic Ambiguity in The Mayor of Casterbridge," Twentieth Century Literature, 1 (1955), 13-16.

¹² Bonamy Dobree, The Lamp and the Lute, 2nd ed. (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1964), pp. 19, 23, 34.

¹³ Patrick Braybrook, Philosophies in Modern Fiction (1929; rpt. Books for Libraries, Inc., 1965), p. 39.

¹⁴ Lascelles Abercrombie, Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study (London: Martin Secker, 1912), pp. 21, 26.

¹⁵ Albert Pettigrew Elliott, Fatalism in the Works of Thomas Hardy (1935; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), p. 36.

Another example of poverty determining aspects of life would be Marty South in The Woodlanders who always had to sacrifice desire to obligation (W, p. 174). Similarly, Jude Fawley was informed that he ought to stay with stone masonry rather than attempt the university examinations; that is, he ought to stay with his poor social class.

"Time glides away every day..."(UGT, p. 161). With the gliding away of Time comes Change which appears in Hardy's novels as inevitable, if even at times very slow and sometimes as too slow as in Jude the Obscure in which Jude and Sue's "modernism" appears to be sacrificed because of their too rapid advances in social behavior. To try to resist change as Michael Henchard seemed to do, as contrasted to Donald Farfrae's embracing of change, is to bring suffering on oneself. At the same time, changes in social structure, for example the change from leaseholds to migrant contracted labor as seen in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, can also bring suffering and inconvenience while failing to solve the problems of poverty and injustice perpetuated by social class structures.

Human beings and human will have no control, individually, over these determining factors. Quite often it is equally impossible to control or to influence the effects of these factors. However, Elliott does not stop at simple resignation. Elliott suggests that while resignation may not bring relief to man's condition, resignation is Hardy's way for man to live by a higher ethical code than man's maker, whoever or whatever it may be.¹⁶ As was seen in the reference to Perry Meisel

¹⁶ Elliott, p. 36.

above, there are internal factors in man which help to determine his outcome. This study does not attempt to argue whether or not there are factors in the lives of the characters which are sometimes beyond the control of the individual and which may, therefore, be seen as deterministic. The emphasis of this study differs from the critical concentration on Hardy's determinism and determining factors in the novels, which are more pervasive than indicated here, in that this study concentrates primarily on the aspects of existence over which human will may exert some influence or control; on the nature of human relations as they are explored and demonstrated in Hardy's seven major novels; on the causes and the reasons why the men and women are shut out of their beatitude and on the ways in which Hardy indicates that men and women might overcome the conditions which shut them out.

The question of the modern relevance of Hardy's novels has been raised in an article by John Holloway, "Has Hardy Dated?" Holloway claims that Hardy's novels show the reader the limitations nature and man's lack of knowledge of nature place on man. In the Twentieth Century, while man has limits to his intelligence and his capabilities to manipulate the elements of his condition which are seen as only inconveniences, if man overcomes these limitations, then Hardy will be dated.¹⁷

Since this study concentrates on human relations rather than on determinism, and since it seems apparent that twentieth-century man has not advanced beyond the problems of suffering in human relations nor has

¹⁷ John Holloway, "Has Hardy Dated?" Spectator (Dec. 17, 1965), 812.

man achieved a recognizable beatitude, a study of Hardy in human terms apart from determinism would seem not to be dated. In the investigation of suffering, human will, evolutionary meliorism, and the possibility of a condition analogous to biblical Grace, the evolution in man of an instinctual will to act through loving-kindness in Hardy's novels, it is hoped that the exploration might prove not only relevant but illuminating in terms of human relations as well as Hardy's art itself.

The exploration of suffering, human will, evolutionary meliorism, and Grace will be discussed in separate chapters. Chapter I is devoted to an introduction of the major elements of what is here called Hardy's vision. Relying largely on Florence Emily Hardy's The Life of Thomas Hardy and on references to some of the novels, a compilation of impressions is arranged into what seems to represent accurately the basic nature of the world and human relations in Hardy's novels. The emphasis and the thrust of the vision are the ways in which human doings interrelate.

Chapter II explores suffering largely in terms of its causes. Through descriptions of individual characters and their relations with other characters, the principal shortcomings of man in his human doings are categorized into two rather basic expressions of human will, self-assertion and self-restraint. It is the extremes of self-assertion, enacted through extreme passions or extreme intellectuality, and the extremes of self-restraint, expressed through passive acquiescence and social imitation, which are demonstrated as the major causes of suffering in human relations.

The use of suffering for influencing the human will is the thrust

of Chapter III. After reviewing some critical views of the potential of the human will to affect the human condition in Hardy's novels, examples from the novels of the ways in which suffering influenced decisions and actions are discussed. An awareness of suffering is seen as arousing sympathy for the sufferer. The awareness of suffering and the consequent sympathy are evinced as bases for actions and decisions which work to lighten some of the suffering or possible suffering of other characters.

Chapter IV concentrates on Hardy's concept of evolutionary meliorism. Using T. H. Huxley's comments as a background definition of evolution, it is seen that the ethically better characters tend to survive and to replace characters with non-adaptive, non-ethical tendencies. Hardy's novels tend towards evolving an amelioration of man's condition. An investigation of the characters and of the narrative point of view reveals some bases for sadness and sympathy for all of the characters, making Hardy's view of evolutionary meliorism different from Huxley's view of evolution in human society in that Huxley emphasizes imitation while Hardy seems to emphasize variety as a necessary adjunct to evolutionary meliorism.

A discussion of the Old Testament concept of Grace as analogous to what seems to be Hardy's hope for man is the topic of Chapter V. Loving-kindness as the motive of human will in actions and decisions is seen as the result of man evolving a more intense consciousness of the causes of human suffering. As man may evolve an instinctual will to act through loving-kindness, so may the Universal Will through its interrelation with man's will, based on connections discussed in

Chapter I, also develop a consciousness, sympathy, and a new concept of Grace in which a conscious, sympathetic Universal Will urges, hopefully mercifully, the processes of the universe in place of the biblical concept of God's Grace.

The concluding chapter summarizes the major emphases of the preceding chapters into a discussion of the moral importance of the use of human will for alleviating as much suffering as possible in human lives and society. The pains and the potential of human life which Hardy demonstrates in the novels become the basis for using the worst consequences and possible consequences to motivate mankind to attempt to afford every man as much relief from suffering as possible.

For the purposes of this study, Hardy's seven major novels are Under the Greenwood Tree (1872), Far from the Madding Crowd (1874), The Return of the Native (1878), The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), The Woodlanders (1887), Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891), and Jude the Obscure (1895).¹⁸ These seven novels are designated as "major" because they are the novels about which the bulk of criticism has been published. Lascelles Abercrombie claims that these seven named novels are the novels of Hardy's greatest genius.¹⁹ In The Victorian Sage, John Holloway indicates that the "Novels of Character and Environment" express Hardy's outlook most fully.²⁰ Holloway names as the best seven

¹⁸ The dates are the dates of publication.

¹⁹ Abercrombie, pp. 48-49.

²⁰ Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 245.

novels those novels here indicated as major.²¹ Harold Orel, editor of Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings, writes, "for the Wessex Edition, Hardy prepared a classification of his novels, a schema. 'Novels of Character and Environment' were by far the most important category, consisting of nine volumes...."²² Orel includes two volumes of short stories in the grouping in addition to the seven major novels.

All references and quotations from the novels are taken from the Anniversary Edition of the works of Thomas Hardy (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1920). The Anniversary Edition is an American reprint of the American Autograph Edition, 1915, which was Harper and Brothers' issue of the Wessex Edition in America. According to Richard L. Purdy, Hardy's bibliographer, "This edition..was partially printed from the English plates and partially reset in America (in the case of volumes already copyright there)." The English plates are of the Wessex Edition which is "in every sense the definitive edition of Hardy's work and the last authority in questions of text."²³

For reasons of convenience and appearance, the quotations and references to the texts of the novels will be given in an interlinear system using the following short title references followed by the page number or, in the case of multiple, contiguous references spread over several pages, by the chapter number:

²¹ Holloway, The Victorian Sage, pp. 288-89.

²² Harold Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1966), p. xi. Hereafter cited as Orel.

²³ Purdy, p. 286.

UGT -- Under the Greenwood Tree
FGC -- Far from the Madding Crowd
RN -- The Return of the Native
MC -- The Mayor of Casterbridge
W -- The Woodlanders
Tess -- Tess of the D'Urbervilles
Jude -- Jude the Obscure

This short title reference system follows a reference method often employed in journals and critical studies in the field.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ideas and the issues which led to this project were first aroused in my mind during the course of Dr. Sam A. Yorks' class on Thomas Hardy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Yorks, my thesis advisor and committee chairman, for his encouragement and his interest which originally started me and later sustained me in this project. During the course of the research and the writing, his unwavering faith in my capabilities has provided the control without control which helped me through a project undertaken largely independently.

I would also like to thank Mr. David A. Holloway and Dr. Ivan Curcin for agreeing to read this thesis and for the hints and the helps which they provided.

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CHAPTER I

HARDY'S VISION

In the General Preface to the Novels and Poems in the Wessex Edition, Thomas Hardy denied that his books were designed to show a consistent philosophy; rather, he reported that the books were "mere impressions of the moment."²⁴ In the preface to Winter Words, a volume of poetry published posthumously, Hardy wrote, "no harmonious philosophy is attempted in these pages—or in any bygone pages of mine, for that matter."²⁵ In the same vein, the preface to Jude the Obscure reports that this novel is "an endeavor to give shape and coherence to a series of seemings, or personal impressions, the question of their consistency or their discordance...being regarded as not of the first moment."²⁶

Despite these, and other repeated denials of having described a consistent philosophy, critics have attempted to label Hardy's works as pessimistic, deterministic, and fatalistic.²⁷ This chapter is not an attempt to categorize Hardy's novels into a specific philosophical system. It is, rather, an attempt to describe the nature of the world, especially the nature of human relations, in the major novels. The description of the vision of a work—its values and attitudes; its ways

²⁴ Orel, p. 48.

²⁵ Orel, p. 61.

²⁶ Orel, pp. 32-33.

²⁷ See preface, pp. vi-ix above.

of informing the reader's consciousness, expanding, contracting, altering, or reinforcing; its expression of what is known, thought, and felt in the experiences which the work describes--is a description of the shaping principle of the work. This chapter, by using references to the Life and the major novels, attempts to describe the basic interrelated nature of the universe as Hardy seems to have seen it. This description is basically philosophical, but it is not necessarily a coherent, consistent system. For the purposes of clarity, the ideas which Hardy scattered throughout the various writings cited have been brought together to show that Hardy did seem to see that various aspects of existence are, if only imperfectly, related; and that the most important aspect of the interrelations in Hardy's novels and for this study is the interrelations among men which take the shape of a "great web of human doings" (W, p. 21).

The nature of the Universe for Thomas Hardy was basically a vast unity animated by the Universal Will. Although Hardy admitted that "Will" did not accurately describe the animating force of the universe, he used it in place of words like Power, which implies control; or Impulse, which implies spasms; neither term was accurate. The Universal Will was seen as "a vague thrusting or urging internal force in no pre-determined direction."²⁸ The unlimited power of this Will was described as being either a blind creative force or as an automatic force without control.²⁹ Consequently, the Will moves in the direction of the

²⁸ Life, p. 334. Reliance on the Life throughout this study is based on its basically autobiographical nature (see note 5 above).

²⁹ Life, p. 315.

least resistance.³⁰

Hardy reflects ideas which seem to parallel some Victorian scientific thought; such as the creative procedure is a result of expressions of will;³¹ all animals and plants descended from some one prototype;³² and man, physical, intellectual, moral is as much a part and a product of the cosmic process as the humblest weed.³³ Hardy seems to imply that man may be equally a part of nature as the humblest weed because Nature's creative force is unconscious, blind or uncontrollable, and so neither supports man nor hates man, but neglects him.³⁴

The unpredictability and negligence of nature bring suffering to man, or at least do not prevent man's suffering. There is no Providence in nature which will extricate man from a mess just because he is himself, whether good or evil.³⁵ A spot in nature may have beauty, grandeur, salubrity, and convenience, but without memories, it falls into loneliness for man (W, p. 146). It is a part of the "Unfulfilled Intention" in nature which seems to promise so much beauty, health, and even,

³⁰ Life, p. 368.

³¹ Robert Chambers, Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation, 3rd ed. (London: John Churchill, 1845), p. 159.

³² Charles Robert Darwin, The Origin of the Species, Author's authorized ed. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1873), II, pp. 298-99.

³³ Thomas Henry Huxley, Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays, 1902; rpt. as vol. 9 of Collected Essays (New York: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1968), p. 11.

³⁴ Life, p. 48.

³⁵ Roy Morrell, Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1968), p. 17.

at times, happiness. The Unfulfilled Intention seems to be, at times an apparent perversity; when there was a birth in a lonely and inaccessible place, it happened at night (W, p. 136). Most often, nature is simply negligent, unheeding.

In Under the Greenwood Tree, a rainstorm at an inopportune moment brings Fancy Day to the brink of breaking her engagement with Dick Dewy. The storm does sponsor a situation from which feelings arise to produce "a secret she would never tell" (UGT, p. 211). In Far from the Madding Crowd, a storm comes and destroys Farmer Boldwood's crop while he is in the throes of depression about Bathsheba Everdene's marriage to Sergeant Troy. During this same storm, Troy and his workers are celebrating the marriage. Not only weather, but Gabriel Oak's younger sheep-dog manifests blind natural impulse and runs the sheep so thoroughly that he drives them into a pit, ruining Gabriel's chances as a sheep-farmer.

In The Return of the Native, a hot sun tired Mrs. Yeobright on the day that she went to visit Clym and Eustacia for a reconciliation. During her return home, she lay down on a furze-faggot, fell asleep, and was bitten fatally by an adder. On the night of Eustacia's attempted flight from the Heath and Clym, the rainy darkness rendered the landscape unrecognizable, and she fell into a weir. The weather neither helped Eustacia's escape nor prevented Clym's loss of a wife and a mother. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, the rains on a festival day ruined Henchard's festivities, but promoted Farfrae's. The harvest weather, first sun, then rain, sealed Henchard's financial ruin, and Farfrae's success.

In The Woodlanders, a stranger coming to Little Hintock at

summer's decline would not have known that a woman's fate hung in the balance. Giles Winterborne died from consumption aggravated by sleeping in the rain on the night when his sympathy and scrupulosity moved him to give his hut to Grace Melbury. In Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Dame Nature gave Tess an "exceptional physical nature" which incited her being raped, yet was no help in itself against Angel Clare's rejection of her. In Jude the Obscure, the rains on the day of his last visit to Sue Bridehead aggravated Jude's consumption fatally.

Although weather is the most obvious of Nature's oblivious manifestations, as in these above instances, Gabriel's dog, Tess's and Arabella Donn's physical endowments, the movements of the stars (by which Gabriel told time), seasonal changes in plant and animal life, and the tides are equally important manifestations of Nature's general negligence of human interests and affairs. The influence which the agents of nature have on the outcome of human doings may really seem often to be malevolent because of the timing of the natural phenomena coincides with the failure or the disaster of a particular character. Yet, as with Donald Farfrae, the events which brought disaster to others worked to help him. More importantly, because Hardy concentrates on the individual's reaction, feelings, and thoughts, when natural elements strike a blow, the tendency of the reader is to see the natural events as the scapegoat for failings. Perhaps more accurately, natural phenomena may be described as contributing to the extremity of man's sufferings in circumstances which an additional blow seems unjust and therefore malevolent.

Yet, because Hardy saw the forces of nature as either blind or

uncontrollable, that is without effective consciousness of their actions, to ascribe malevolence to coincidence in situations in which the characters obviously take no account of the possibilities and the actualities of natural phenomena is to circumstantially ascribe a characteristic which is not necessarily consistent with the nature of the forces. Finally, in most of the cases in which natural impulses, including weather but not man's impulses, contribute to the extremity of the consequences, human-caused suffering is already present and sometimes was the agent which drove the character into the circumstances in which weather, for example, could have an affect on the outcome.

Despite Nature's neglect of man which often brings him suffering, Hardy demonstrates the interrelation and the basic unity between man and Nature in the description of Egdon Heath in The Return of the Native. Egdon Heath is related to Time; it "added half an hour to evening; it could...retard the dawn, sadden noon...", and contribute half of the night's darkness. The Heath anticipates storms and receives and adds intensity to tempests and mists; "the storm was its lover, and the wind its friend"(RN, Bk. 1, Ch. 1). Human elements are related to the Heath also. A Celtic burial barrow "formed the pole and axis of this heathery world." At the beginning of the novel, a human figure was standing atop the barrow. The human figure completed the symmetry and the unity of the Heath.

Such a perfect, delicate, and necessary finish did the figure give to the dark pile of hills that it seemed to be the only obvious justification of their outline. Without it, there was the dome without the lantern; with it the architectural demands of the mass were satisfied. The scene was strangely homogeneous, in that the vale, the upland, the barrow, and the figure above it amounted only to unity. (RN, pp. 13-14)

In addition to the interrelation of man, weather, and inanimate nature in an universe unified throughout, later in The Return of the Native, Clym Yeobright explained another relation between man and nature, admitting that the Heath, to his mind, was "most exhilarating, and strengthening, and soothing"(RN, p. 220). In Far from the Madding Crowd and The Woodlanders, the interrelations of nature and man are expressed in other animated relations. In Far from the Madding Crowd, Gabriel Oak told time by the sun and the stars. Gabriel forecast the weather from Nature's indications. A heated breeze, bouyant clouds, a lurid metallic-looking moon, and the imminence of thunder warned Oak of a coming storm. Besides these warnings in the sky, Oak observed that the sheep walked head to tail, the rooks behaved confusedly, the horses moved with timidity and caution, a toad sat on a footpath, and a garden slug and some spiders took shelter in his hut. The behavior of the animals "was Nature's second way of hinting to him that he was to prepare for foul weather"(FMC, pp. 274-79). In The Woodlanders, Giles Winterborne was described as the "fruit-god" and the "wood-god"(W, p. 335). Giles had the touch that brought freshly planted trees to quick root. In turn, the trees seemed to share a sense of life equivalent to humans; "they sigh because they are very sorry to begin life in earnest---just as we be"(W, pp. 72-73).³⁶ The animating force of man, plants, and animals would seem to be kindred.

Egdon Heath, the animals, the plants, and man are manifestations

³⁶ For a catalogue of Hardy's use of human anatomy in his descriptions of nature, as a further indication of the interrelation of man and nature, see John Holloway's essay on Hardy in The Victorian Sage.

of Nature's organic and sentient unity. "The discovery of the law of evolution...revealed that all organic creatures are of one family...."³⁷ Since Hardy believed that man's will is a part of the unity of the Universal Will, and since the will of man and some animals is already conscious, Hardy could see the possibility of a tendency for the whole to develop as these parts have; for the Universal Will to become gradually more conscious and, hopefully, sympathetic.³⁸ Until the Universal Will does evolve into consciousness and sympathy, if it ever does before the destruction or the exhaustion of man or the globe,³⁹ it is important for man to develop his consciousness and his sympathy in an altruism for the whole conscious world collectively in the hope of eventually informing the Universal Will.⁴⁰ Since, however, the questions of the existence of God and of the earth's movement through space are too large to be important in human affairs,⁴¹ for Hardy, the most important aspect of Nature's vast organic unity was always man. In showing human life against the background of a vast universe, Hardy wanted "to impart to readers the sentiment that of these contrasting magnitudes the small might be the greater to them as men."⁴² As Edward Wagenknecht points

³⁷ Life, p. 346.

³⁸ Life, p. 335.

³⁹ Thomas Hardy, "Apology to Late Lyrics and Earlier," Collected Poems (New York: MacMillan, 1958), p. 527.

⁴⁰ Life, p. 346.

⁴¹ Life, p. 282.

⁴² Orel, p. 16.

out, in Hardy's novels, the focus of the universe is on man.⁴³ However, the energy which drives man's passions and intellect can be as negligent of human affairs and interests as the unconscious Universal Will. A measure of the negligence of man's natural impulses is evident to the degree that a person believes himself right because he is himself, and other people are wrong because they are not he.⁴⁴ Man needs to understand his natural relation to his fellows. Therefore, Hardy displays a concentration on man in the novels in various ways.

Just as the universe has an organic unity, the human race is "one great network or tissue."⁴⁵ In The Woodlanders, Hardy calls the interrelations of humans a "great web of human doings."

Hardly anything could be more isolated or more self-contained in the lonely hour before day, when grey shades, material and mental, are so very grey. And yet their lonely courses formed no detached design at all, but were part of the pattern in the great web of human doings then weaving in both hemispheres from the White Sea to Cape Horn. (W, p. 21)

Hardy recognized the autonomy of individual lives, often lonely and isolated. At the same time, the actions of an autonomous being affect the lives of other autonomous beings. It is the reciprocal influence among individual lives which forms "the great web of human doings."

As one manifestation of the "web of human doings," Hardy has the major and minor characters meet and remeet in recurring situations and places. In Under the Greenwood Tree, Fancy Day is enmeshed with all of the characters. Her coming to Mellstock parish involved her with the

⁴³ Wagenknecht, p. 548.

⁴⁴ Life, p. 165.

⁴⁵ Life, p. 177.

displacement of the Quire. She was the love and, later, the wife of Dick Dewy. She had a brief entanglement with Parson Maybold. She was the object of Farmer Shiner's attention who, as a churchwarden, pressed for Fancy's installment as organist in place of the Quire. Her strategy of starvation, designed to overcome her father's resistance to her desire to marry Dick Dewy, involved, at least financially, a butcher, a baker, and a dairyman. The web of incidents in the novel reflect continually Fancy's presence in the parish. No incident or event transpired which was not in some way related to Fancy.

What is true of Fancy's role in Under the Greenwood Tree is true of the central character in each of the other novels. In Far from the Madding Crowd, the events are related, at least indirectly, to Bathsheba Everdene; in The Return of the Native, to Clym Yeobright; in The Mayor of Casterbridge, to Michael Henchard; in The Woodlanders, to Grace Melbury; in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, to Tess Durbeyfield; in Jude the Obscure, to Jude Fawley. While the relation of events to the central character is not unique to Hardy's fiction, in many ways it is a very normal and standard procedure, Hardy would see the method as a correlative of human relations outside of fiction, and more as a correlative of the relations among parts of the whole of natural and universal organic unity, especially the "web of human doings." Hardy's novels are "a busy world of events and processes and interrelations."⁴⁶

The "web of human doings" is seen as further reflected in a man-made habitat by John Paterson, Howard O. Brogan, and Bert G. Hornback

⁴⁶ Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 254.

who discuss, in separate articles with separate emphases, a manifestation in Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge of the organic web of the universe. Paterson suggests that Casterbridge stands in a "virtually religious interdependence" with man.⁴⁷ Brogan explores the physical details of the city showing the relations among the types of physical features--inns, bridges, houses--and the social classes of the inhabitants. Brogan contends further that the city's physical features represent "visible essences" of "abstract thought," social and individual.⁴⁸ Hornback, working from his consideration of time condensation in Hardy's novels, shows Casterbridge as a place full of the past and its influences. The graves of Roman soldiers, the amphitheater, and the history of human life in the city are seen as impinging upon the present.⁴⁹ These critical views of the novel support the idea that through the interrelations of man, physical feature, social structure, and history Casterbridge, as a setting, becomes a form of the world in the novel. Indeed, only two major events occurred outside the vicinity of Casterbridge; Henchard's sale of his wife, and Henchard's death. In any concept of a moral world as represented by Casterbridge, these events are outside that world. At the same time, the interdependence of time, place, and man brought even these outside events into the

⁴⁷ John Paterson, "The Mayor of Casterbridge as Tragedy," Victorian Studies, 3 (1959), 151-72.

⁴⁸ Howard O. Brogan, "'Visible Essences' in The Mayor of Casterbridge," ELH, 17 (1950), 307-23.

⁴⁹ Bert G. Hornback, The Metaphor of Chance: Vision and Technique in the Works of Thomas Hardy (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1971), pp. 83-108.

center of the Casterbridge world, as further indication of the "web of human doings."

The web of reality, as these manifestations of the interweaving of human doings which are at the center of the world of the novels might be called, permeates all of the major novels additionally in the forms of coincidents and recurrances. If the world may be seen as wholly interrelated while being populated by individual, isolated beings, then coincidents become an expression of the connecting points of otherwise independent lives and actions. Dick Dewy met Parson Maybold, by coincidence, on the road to Casterbridge in Under the Greenwood Tree. This chance meeting was partially responsible for saving Dick's courtship, marriage, and apparent happiness. Parson Maybold had started on his walk to Casterbridge to post a letter prompted by Fancy Day's inordinate acceptance of his marriage proposal. Maybold had not known of Fancy and Dick's unannounced engagement. Dick knew nothing of Maybold's proposal and Fancy's acceptance. Dick was going to Casterbridge on hauling business. The chance meeting brought together, coincidently, the independent, yet related interests of the two men, connected one step back through Fancy, thus weaving their lives into the whole web of the novel's human doings more fully.

Gabriel Oak reappeared in Bathsheba Everdene's life in Far from the Madding Crowd through the coincidence of a rick fire. Thomasin Yeobright's marriage in The Return of the Native was finalized through the contingencies of the coincidence of her cousin Clym's return to the Heath from Paris. Dr. Fitzpiers' infidelity to Grace Melbury in The Woodlanders received added impetus from the coincidence of his childhood

encounter with Felice Charmond. Jude's early and later related troubles began with his coincident encounter with Arabella Donn. In the bringing together of lives and actions which are otherwise seemingly independent, the connection of human doings is intensified into a representation of the effects and the influences which one person or one portion of the family of organic life can have upon the whole of the family.

On the whole, the coincidents which arise from the webbing of lives are basically neutral in character. The coincident events which reveal the webbing give only opportunities for effects, either positive or negative. Yet, in a world in which a shock in one quarter reverberates throughout the whole organism,⁵⁰ it becomes very difficult to avoid any negative effects of the organic unity of the world. In addition, the negative effects of any one action can recur. Henchard's sale of his wife became associated with his decline in Casterbridge through the reappearance of the furmity woman in his life. The horrors of Tess's rape and illegitimate child recurred in Angel Clare's rejection of her, a psychological rape, on their wedding night. Arabella Donn returned to Jude Fawley's life continually, especially through their child. Fanny Robin's seduction returned to haunt Sergeant Troy. The desire for material advancement sponsored by her father, returned to Fancy Day in Parson Maybold's proposal. Thus, the coincident events which reveal the "web of human doings" appears to be inescapable.

The patterns of recurrence become a form of entrapment. Jude Fawley was never able to escape Arabella, stone masonry, or his dream

⁵⁰ Life, p. 177.

of Christminster and the university. Tess became a caged animal, as indicated, for example, in her learning to whistle from Alec D'Urberville who stood outside the hen coop with Tess sitting inside, thus paralleling Tess's duty to teach caged bullfinches to whistle airs (Tess, Ch. 9). Philip Griffith indicates that the trapped-animal image is reinforced throughout the book through coincident, parallel experiences with animals.⁵¹ No character was able to escape effectively from Egdon Heath in The Return of the Native. The characters were unable to escape the influence of their human and natural environment. Likewise, a character cannot avoid influencing the lives of others. Tess's past sent Angel to Brazil. Marty South's decision to sell her hair in The Woodlanders, the result of George Melbury's plans to marry his daughter with Marty's hoped-for lover, Giles Winterborne, influenced in part Dr. Fitzpiers' complicity with Felice Charmond, and wholly, their final separation. Small and large actions influence others similarly, Hardy seems to indicate.

If individual lives and actions occur in a context of a "great web of human doings," giving and receiving influences to and from each others' lives and actions, then the lives and actions become less free. As the shocks and pains which one member introduces into the organism circulate and return to the giver, the precautions against initiating shocks become more sensitively established. The moral sensitivity of the individual grows as man sees the pain "in others' reactions on

⁵¹ Philip Malone Griffith, "The Image of the Trapped Animal in Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles," Tulane Studies in English, 13 (1963), 85-94.

ourselves, as part of one body."⁵² As moral sensitivity grows and the influence of individual actions on others becomes more a part of the individual consciousness, decisions and actions become more limited in their scope and use. At the same time, the decisions which remain become more important because they affect more lives. If there may be any wholly or largely free decisions in a world of organic unity, decisions which do not reciprocate influences in individual lives and decisions, then they must be made in isolation.

There are occasions on which an individual may decide. Hardy believed that when the forces which permeate the world, which includes man, are in equilibrium, free will was at its zenith. This may or may not be often.⁵³ Hardy was interested in showing that "the intense interests, passions, and strategy that throb through the commonest lives,"⁵⁴ give individuals a disequilibrium which sponsors the "gradual closing in of a situation that comes of ordinary human passions, prejudices, and ambitions...."⁵⁵ It seemed to Hardy that, because of these human passions, prejudices, interests, ambitions, and strategies, there was an "inevitableness of character and environment in working out destiny...;"⁵⁶ given a definite character in a given situation, a certain result is nearly inevitable. Since the forces which permeate the world

⁵² Life, p. 224.

⁵³ Hardy, Collected Poems, p. 527.

⁵⁴ Life, p. 153.

⁵⁵ Life, p. 120.

⁵⁶ Orel, p. 118.

include the passions, the intellect, and the will of man, when a time of possible decision arises, if the individual is under the influence of excessive passions or excessive intellect, that is, not in equilibrium, the human will loses much of its ability to choose effectively.

Michael Henchard decided to drink rum in the furmity tent, decided to try to sell his wife, and, after several chances to rescind his decision to sell, decided to let the sale stand. The first decision was the only one made while not under the influence of the alcohol which had heightened his normally impassioned character. Similarly, later in the novel, when Henchard decided to fire Donald Farfrae, his accountant and foreman, this decision was made in a passion of indignation. The freedom of Henchard's decisions was limited by his character.

Tess Durbeyfield vacillated between encouraging and discouraging, accepting and rejecting Angel Clare's love suit. She wanted to marry Angel for the acceptance and love she believed marriage would offer in contrast to her experience with Alec D'Urberville. She wanted not to marry Angel because she felt guilty and tainted because of her past. In either case, her decision had to come under the influence of the past.

It seems appropriate to conclude that if, as with Tess and Henchard and many of the other characters, the contingencies of character, the past, and the lives, actions, and decisions of others influence each new situation, the times are therefore seemingly few when the forces which permeate the world and affect human lives are in equilibrium, allowing uninfluenced decisions or actions. For, in an universe which is characterized by an organic and sentient unity, in which Time,

place, weather, man, animals, plants, and inanimate nature are inter-related, the "web of human doings" brings individual, autonomous, and apparently isolated lives into constant juxtaposition, thus making the individual life and the human will subject to a multitude of influences, past and present, in every situation. The suffering which may arise and be transmitted in the "web of human doings" to affect human life and will is analyzed at its sources in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

SUFFERING

For Hardy, "pain has been, and pain is...."⁵⁷ Suffering is a fact of human existence. Just how much suffering may be attributed to the nature of the world and how much to purely human causes seems to be beyond calculation. Yet if it is considered that human beings form the focus of the novels, then it may be also considered that the sufferings of humans and the human causes of suffering form an important central aspect of Hardy's novels. Since Hardy seems to regard pain as an established fact of human existence, as indicated above, knowing the causes of pain and suffering, particularly the human causes, becomes central to any desire or attempt to alleviate suffering. In Hardy's novels, the human causes of suffering may be divided into extreme self-assertion, either through extreme passions or extreme intellectuality, and extreme self-restraint which leads to passivity and acquiescence both to the natural order and to the man-made order of society.

Hardy was concerned with "how to afford the greatest happiness to the units of human society during their brief transit through this sorry world...."⁵⁸ He proposed that mankind should "magnify good works, and develop all means of easing mortals' progress through a world not worthy

⁵⁷ Life, p. 315.

⁵⁸ Orel, p. 20.

of them."⁵⁹ Pain "shall be kept down to a minimum by loving-kindness, operating through scientific knowledge, and actuated by the modicum of free will conjecturally possessed by organic life...." To acquire scientific knowledge for man's betterment, man is required to take "a full look at the Worst" which entails an "exploration of reality, and its frank recognition stage by stage along the survey....," including answering such "obstinate questionings" and "blank misgivings" which arise. The exploration is the first step towards the betterment of soul and body if man keeps an eye on "the best consummation possible: briefly, evolutionary meliorism."⁶⁰ To the extent that Hardy's works take man "forwards, even if not far, rather than backward"⁶¹ as "a lesson in life" and "mental enlargement,"⁶² the works may be seen as a part of a survey of the sources of suffering and an exhibition of the means, and the possible results, of keeping pain to a minimum and affording "the greatest happiness to the units of human society...."

Perhaps the worst aspect of human life, for Hardy, is suffering. Within the vast context of interrelations in which mankind lives, the sources of suffering can be as extensive as the number of individuals. In the major novels, the sources of suffering may be seen as the outgrowths of excessive self-assertion and of excessive self-restraint. One of the forms of excessive self-assertion appears in behavior guided

⁵⁹ Life, p. 332.

⁶⁰ Hardy, Collected Poems, pp. 526-27.

⁶¹ Hardy, Collected Poems, p. 175.

⁶² Orel, p. 114.

by the emotional excesses of jealousy, selfishness, pride, possessiveness, desire, or impatience. Another form of excessive self-assertion appears in behavior guided by intellectual principles which do not temper general principles with specific instances, judge deeds by the will, or combine reason with emotion and action. Excessive self-restraint appears in the form of negligent passivity, either in the present or to the past, and engenders imitation of unjust, insensitive, and unvirtuous social conventions.

The extremes of self-assertion, most evident in decisions and actions based on emotional motives, are the most noticeable causes of suffering. Jealousy, selfishness, pride, possessiveness, desire, and impatience are the forms of negative passion which most often lead or contribute to suffering. There is hardly a major character in the seven major novels who is not at some time ruled by some extreme of passion. To show the several ways in which the extremes of passion operate in the novels, it is necessary to review some of the characters who are most swayed by passionate extremes.

Sergeant Troy, for example, appears in Far from the Madding Crowd as a product of rootless, military, and industrial acquisitiveness. Troy is a character who flaunts social restraints. The instinct of unlimited self-assertion which he brought into the world as each newborn child does,⁶³ has never learned the necessary self-restraint and renunciation. Troy is all burning desire; his emotions work like lightning (EMC, p. 201); he enjoys the pleasure of letting his feelings out "on

⁶³ Huxley, p. 44.

the spur of the moment"(EMC, p. 196). He wanted to have, to hold, and to conquer; but he was inconsiderate and non-reciprocating. He is a character of irresponsible freedom; an "erratic child of impulse" (EMC, p. 202).

The first encounter with Troy in the novel is his relation with Fanny Robin. He captured her heart and her body, but he was unconcerned about lending support to Fanny's needs. He delayed marrying Fanny. When Troy did finally offer to marry her, but she went to the wrong church, the minimal self-restraint which led him to offer to marry subsided in a passion of embarrassment and pride. After having waited alone before the church altar under the inquisitive gaze of the parishioners, Troy told Fanny, "I don't go through that experience again for some time, I warrant you!"(EMC, p. 131).

After his experience with Fanny, Troy fell on Bathsheba Everdene. Troy's passionate nature gave his personality a flashy attraction which drew Bathsheba to him. The sword exercise scene in Chapter 28 in which Troy dazzled Bathsheba with the "circling gleams," the "keen rush," and a "scarlet haze" of his "aurora militaris," displays Troy's attractiveness to Bathsheba. While "Troy's reflecting blade...seemed everywhere at once, and yet nowhere specially"(EMC, p. 211), Bathsheba "felt powerless to withstand or deny him"(EMC, p. 213). Troy left the Army, which he had joined originally to escape the constraints of his background, to marry Bathsheba as another escape from restraints. At the estate he did not need to work, nor did he worry about estate business. He could let the grain rot in the ricks while satiating himself with alcohol. Having conquered Bathsheba, represented by their marriage, Troy

reciprocated no emotional support to Bathsheba. As Fanny Robin before her suffered and eventually died in the unionhouse, Bathsheba suffered from the caprices and self-indulgence of her nominal husband. Troy's life was a life of aimless, passionate freedom which had no control, sustaining power, or charity. Troy's extreme self-assertive passions were responsible for much of the suffering in Far from the Madding Crowd.

Similar to Troy is Eustacia Vye in The Return of the Native who has the dark eyes of passion.

She had pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries and their light.... Assuming that the souls of men and women are visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flamelike. The sparks from it that rose into her pupils gave the same impression. (RN, p. 76)

Only occasionally was her passion cooled, and then only for a moment when the object of her passion appeared defective.

Whenever a flash of reason darted like an electric light upon her lover—as it sometimes would—and showed his imperfections, she shivered.... But it was over in a second, and she loved on. (RN, pp. 73-74)

Thus, when Clym Yeobright returned to Egdon Heath, Eustacia saw Paris arise on her horizon. Eustacia's sphere of passion expanded into a dream vision of higher passion through Society (RN, p. 79). Paris was her Mecca where she longed to feast on the grandeur of flashy, showy circles of people who could, she believed, excite her passions eternally. To this end, she set out, quite appropriately as a heathen knight, to conquer Clym whom she believed to be her passport to the passions of Paris. She had no real, lasting desire for Clym. She wanted Paris and was willing to sacrifice him for her self-gratification. When Clym did

not fulfill her passion for Paris, Eustacia made her own plans and attempted to run away with a former lover. Eustacia was driven variously by her pride (in her disdain for Clym's furze-cutting), her jealousy (in her fear that Clym would marry Thomasin), and her great desire "to be loved to madness." The result of Eustacia's wild passions was the deaths of herself and two others, and the near-death of another who spent the remainder of his life in lonely, self-recriminating isolation. Eustacia's wild, passionate longings, jealousies, and pride involved her at the center of the causes of suffering in the novel.

Michael Henchard's passions take a different form in The Mayor of Casterbridge; possessiveness. He desired to have a firm, controlling grasp on the situation and on the people around him. One of many signs of Michael's possessiveness is the selling of his wife which was the act of a merchandiser selling his wares. Michael's desire to have Elizabeth-Jane take the name of Henchard is just one indication of his attempts to possess people. For with his name attached to her, she would be more readily recognizable as his appurtenance. Michael's possession of Casterbridge is in part indicated by the sign boards throughout the city with his name on them. The mayoralty is not only the culmination of his climb from the time when he possessed nothing, but is necessary to signify his possession of Casterbridge. As a result of his possession and his desire to possess, Henchard hired Donald Farfrae to maintain and to increase his possession of the area's business.

Ironically, Henchard never possessed himself. The self-assertion which drove his desire to possess made it impossible for him to control his self-assertive passions. The oath he swore, not to drink for twenty

years, derived its power from the same fund of self-assertion as his desire to possess. His ready relinquishment of the restraint at twenty-years' end is a sign of his never having achieved self-possession. The passionate alterations of Henchard's nature which made him, for example, warm and friendly to Farfrae at first then hostile and disdainful, rendered Henchard unable to face adverse circumstances.

As a result of his possessiveness, Henchard was jealous when customers preferred Farfrae's crop valuations, when the Royal Personage visited Casterbridge, and when Farfrae courted Elizabeth-Jane and Lucetta, Henchard's former mistress. So that he would not lose Elizabeth-Jane, Henchard lied to Newson, her real father, when he came to Casterbridge to find her. The effect of his possessiveness was Henchard's alienation from everyone and everything. Indirectly, his desire to possess led to the deaths of Susan, his wife; Lucetta, his mistress; and himself. Almost all of the forces of evil in the novel are either Henchard's or are a result of Henchard's doings; his possessive instincts are the cause, directly and indirectly, of most of the suffering.

Felice Charmond, in The Woodlanders, is an example of how extreme passions can affect the mind and the behavior of a character. She is a woman with

passions of no mean strength--strange, smouldering, erratic passions, kept down like a stifled conflagration, but bursting out now here, now there--the only certain element in their direction being its unexpectedness. (W, p. 233)

She complained, "O! why were we given hungry hearts and wild desires if we have to live in a world like this!" (W, p. 237). Felice is a woman

of perversities who likes "mystery in her life, in her love, in her history"(W, p. 234). Her soul was "slowly invaded by a delirium... losing judgment and dignity under it, becoming an animated impulse only, a passion incarnate"(W, p. 281). Because of her delirium of passion, Felice could not keep faith with Grace Melbury and so finally eloped with Grace's husband, Fitzpiers, causing misery for Grace and her father. Felice was killed by a former victim of her passionate caprices, thus displaying how the suffering caused by extremely passionate behavior and introduced into the "web of human doings" can recur in human life.

Similarly, Alec D'Urberville, in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, displayed a continual passionate desire, most often centered on Tess. Alec's passion involved him in affairs with his farm maids, and led him to rape Tess. He was too proud and too self-assertive to help or to support Tess except as her support might further his possession of her. After Tess went to Talbothays, eventually to marry Angel Clare, Alec turned to extreme evangelism. The same self-assertion which fed Alec's desire for Tess drove his evangelism. His assertiveness was merely launched towards new objects, temporarily. When he met Tess again, he reverted easily to chasing her. Now he was also jealous of Angel Clare because Angel had Tess's heart. Because Alec was impatient to have Tess, he pushed against her continually to sever her bond with Angel, trying to destroy Angel in Tess's heart; an attempted emotional rape similar to the earlier physical rape. Alec offered to house Tess's mother and siblings to gain possessive, physical control over Tess. Finally, the workings of Alec's self-assertion brought him violent death

and led to Tess's death. Alec's passion lay behind much of Tess's, and subsequently Angel's misery and suffering, putting Alec's passionate assertions among the central causes of suffering in the novel.

Arabella Donn, in Jude the Obscure, displayed her passionate extremes in the manner of an earthy creature. Her passionate nature is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in her throwing the pig's pizzle at Jude; "the characteristic part of a barrow-pig, which countrymen used for greasing their boots..." (Jude, p. 41). The "characteristic part" being of "a soft, cold substance," it is characteristic of Arabella's passion. Her desire for Jude had a sensual aspect which was cold in its lack of reciprocity; she had a selfish instinct for love. As D. H. Lawrence indicates, because of her selfish passions, Arabella refused Jude's purpose. Arabella did not want Jude, she only wanted the sensation of herself in contact with him.⁶⁴ When Jude seemed unable or unwilling to satisfy her desires, Arabella embarked for Australia and took on a new lover there. When she returned, she pushed her son by Jude onto Jude and married a second husband. When the second husband died, Arabella directed her passions, like Alec D'Urberville, into fervent religion. Seeing Jude again, she cast off religious passion for sexual passion and retrapped Jude into a second marriage. When Jude was too sick to satisfy Arabella, she left him on his deathbed to join the sensuous festivities of the boat races where she consorted with a quack doctor who sold love philtres. Arabella's passionate

⁶⁴ D. H. Lawrence, "Study of Thomas Hardy," Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence, ed. Edward D. McDonald (New York: The Viking Press, 1936), pp. 493, 495.

comings and goings in Jude's life are a part of "the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, and the squalid real life he was fated to lead."⁶⁵ Arabella, in her passionate comings and goings, was one of the major causes of the squalid misery of the novel.

While these characters of extreme self-assertive passions brought about their own demise through forces they unleashed, their avoidance of death and the deadly situation was strong. Their self-assertion seems to have driven the characters to seek pleasure and to avoid suffering for themselves without regard for the suffering which they might cause others; to have given them a selfish passion for life. Sergeant Troy struggled heartily to survive being consumed in the sea. Eustacia Vye struggled to survive Egdon Heath by trying to escape it. Henchard's oath against alcohol was part of his attempt to survive. He needed to avoid drink if he was to have any chance to survive the erratic nature of his passions. Henchard struggled also against suicide when he saw his own dead figure in the weir. Felice Charmond tried to escape a disappointed lover and the disapprobation of Hintock in Europe. Alec D'Urberville tried to hide away from the contingencies of the possible return of Angel Clare at the seashore. Arabella Donn was the only character of extreme passions who successfully maintained the survival-orientation which the other characters displayed but could not maintain. Despite the selfish passion for life which extreme self-assertive passions gave them, these characters suffered from their own passions just as other characters did.

⁶⁵ Life, p. 272.

Self-assertion appears in other characters in both conventional and contorted forms. George Melbury in The Woodlanders had the conventional desire to assert himself through his daughter, Grace, and so to raise her into Society. He sent her to training school and then married her to a doctor of an old, but fallen family. The "intense consciousness" which Grace received from the schooling and the capricious nature of her husband brought her suffering. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, on the other hand, Lucetta Le Sueur displayed a contorted self-assertion which appeared as a desire to be possessed, and to be the primary possession. She plotted her affairs so that she married the rising Farfrae rather than the declining Henchard, her former lover. Her plottings brought sadness and chagrin on herself, on Elizabeth-Jane, and on Henchard. Boldwood's attempt at self-assertion in Far from the Madding Crowd ran to insanity. Having been inflamed by a Valentine, Boldwood neglected his business affairs in longing and remorse for Bathsheba. He became totally unbalanced, buying great stores of clothing and trinkets for the woman whom he could not be sure he might marry. When Bathsheba's husband returned from a mysterious absence during which he was assumed to be dead, Boldwood shot the husband and surrendered himself at the county jail. Whatever form the self-assertive passions took, and the forms were numerous in Hardy's novels, when those passions were allowed to operate without consideration of the consequences or without regard for others, the result was invariably suffering for the others and the impassioned one, and included death.

In contrast to the characters who seem ruled by extreme passions,

there are several characters who are basically very intellectual, who seem to lead their lives as rationalists. The rational characters found little comfort in Christianity because of the errors in its logic and its premises. In many ways, the apparently rational characters display negative attitudes towards society and people as well as religion. These negative attitudes tend to promise improvement for man and for society. A rational approach to situations and problems seems to avoid the excesses of passion which are selfish, possessive, or jealous. Additionally, a rational approach has, for Hardy, an "accessibility to new ideas" as well as, with its tendency to find errors in traditional thought which give rise to negative attitudes towards such errors, a corresponding "emancipation from those [ideas] which reveal themselves to be effete."⁶⁶ At the same time, Hardy shows the reader that the excesses of intellect may be similar to the extremes of passion and so may cause suffering as much as excesses of passion.

The intellectually oriented Angel Clare in Tess of the D'Urbervilles is the youngest son of a parson. While his two older brothers studied at Cambridge for positions in the church, Angel decided that he could not honestly be ordained a minister as long as the church refused "to liberate her mind from an untenable redemptive theolatriy" (Tess, p. 149). Angel wanted to use his intellect and his education for "reconstruction;" for "the honour and glory of man..." (Tess, p. 150). His studies led him "to evince considerable indifference to social forms and observances" (Tess, p. 150). Family name and history and

⁶⁶ Life, p. 318.

material distinctions were considered worthless without "good new resolutions." Angel valued intellectual liberty most (Tess, p. 151).

Intellectual liberty is subject to the same problems as the freedom of the human will discussed above. If an intellectual life is to have any beneficial importance, it must consider the context of the "web of human doings." A man's mind may be capable of rational, intellectual liberty, bounded only by its capacity. However, actions based on intellectual liberty to be beneficially important must be considerate of others. This consideration places a limit on the actions which may be derived from rationality. Therefore, full intellectual liberty without painful consequences appears to be possible only in the isolation of the individual mind in the world of Hardy's novels.

Within the remote depths of [Angel's] constitution, so gentle and affectionate as he was in general, there lay hidden a hard, logical deposit, like a vein of metal in a soft loam, which turned the edge of everything that attempted to traverse it. It had blocked his acceptance of the Church; it blocked his acceptance of Tess. Moreover, his affection itself was less fire than radiance,...when he ceased to believe he ceased to follow—contrasting in this with many impressionable natures, who remain sensuously infatuated with what they intellectually despise. (Tess, p. 308)

With this "logical deposit," Angel faced Tess's revelation of her past not as "a question of respectability, but one of principle!" (Tess, p. 308). As Tess recognized, Angel's consistency was too cruel (Tess, p. 309). When Angel decided that they must separate and awoke the following morning with the intention intact, he regarded it as standing "on a basis approximating to one of pure reason..." (Tess, p. 320). Angel's consistent intellectual liberty, carried into action, became cruel injustice. Excesses of intellect untempered with loving-kindness, the result of applying general principles without regard to specific

cases, resulted in suffering.

Sue Bridehead in Jude the Obscure displayed a combination of spiritual and intellectual qualities. Sue's intellectual qualities parallel Angel Clare's to a certain extent. "Her intellect sparkles like diamonds..."(Jude, p. 276). She is described as a "Voltairean" (Jude, p. 182) who reads Gibbon, J. S. Mill, Shelley, Humboldt, and Swinburne. Sue rearranged her New Testament chronologically to make it "more interesting and more understandable"(Jude, p. 152). Her respect for Christminster was for its intellectual side only.

This "nature not so passionate" which was the "spirit of Sue," a mind incarnate, is "all nervous motion." She had a nervous quiver, a nervous lightness, and a nervous quickness. When her face was set, it was nervously set. She stood like a vision but was as anxious as a dream. Sue's combination of spiritual and intellectual qualities, rather than being pure rationalism, are closer to what Hardy called, in The Woodlanders, "modern nerves."

Sue's intellect is housed in an almost amorphous body. She is described throughout the novel in terms like "light and slight," "light-footed," "quick, light voice," "slight figure," "soft glance," "thin lips," "slim and fragile being." Sue is an "aerial being." As such, Jude described her as a spirit, a disembodied creature, a tantalizing phantom, hardly flesh at all: "When I put my arms around you I almost expect them to pass through you as through air!" When Sue described herself from Shelley's "Epipsychidion"—

There was a Being whom my spirit oft
Met on its visioned wanderings far aloft.

* * *

A Seraph of Heaven, too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of woman...

--Jude replied, "It is you, dear; exactly like you!"(Jude, p. 294).

Sue's intellectual and spiritual nature, marked by intense nerves, is "the ethereal, fine-nerved, sensitive girl, quite unfitted by temperament and instinct to fulfill the conditions of the matrimonial relation with...possibly scarcely any man..."(Jude, p. 263).

The ethereality of Sue's nature lent her a prudery. She had a physical objection to her husband, and, apparently, to all men. She had lived with a man in London for fifteen months without sexual relations. Jude and Sue lived together a year before their first consummation. Public conjecture in the novel described her as cold-hearted and sexless. She hated herself when she felt a "meanly sexual emotion," and immediately afterwards assumed a frigid pride. It was Sue's lack of touch with physical reality which rendered her ostensibly frigid on the one hand and unable to have the courage of her convictions on the other. "Sue's logic was extraordinarily compounded,...things which were right in theory were wrong in practice." The nature of Sue's compound logic is one that lives in the mind but not in the world (Jude, pp. 262-63).

Because of her disembodiment and lack of courage to practice her theories in physical reality, Sue brought suffering into the lives of Jude, Richard Phillotson, and the former student with whom she had lived in London for fifteen months. The former student died of what appears to have been melancholy, derived from a prolonged and sexless proximity with Sue, coupled with consumption (Jude, pp. 177-78). Phillotson lost

his position as a teacher and was blackballed from teaching when, largely because of Sue's physical revulsion and intellectual arguments, he freed her. Jude was left to the lonely aimlessness of his crushed dreams after the deaths of the children when Sue returned to Phillotson because the ugliness of physical reality was unbearable for her, and so she sought succor in severe, almost monastic spiritualism. Even Sue could not escape the sufferings caused by her temperament. Sue's spiritual, nervous intellectuality ended in physical scourgings for herself. The extreme intellectuality displayed in Sue's disembodied spirit and intellect is, then, a dissociation from reality which because the dissociation precludes effective consideration of the physical circumstances of existence, causes suffering.

Sue's nature, which was "so vibrant that everything she did seemed to have its source in feeling" (Jude, p. 120), reveals another aspect of extreme intellectuality represented by Dr. Fitzpiers in The Woodlanders. Dr. Fitzpiers had a "keenly appreciative, modern, unpractical mind" which directed its attention to objects of the inner eye. Fitzpiers' appearance "bespoke the philosopher" who, as a modern man of science, had a social and intellectual interest. During the course of a year, his mind travelled through "the zodiac of the intellectual heaven," studying alternately alchemy, poesy, astrology, astronomy, German literature and metaphysics, anatomy, and abstract philosophy. His constant meditation on the Muses or the philosophers seemed to err in the possession of too many ideas. While Fitzpiers was to a "distinct degree scientific," he was primarily an idealist who felt that behind the imperfect, the perfect lay (W, Ch. 17). Not being a practical man,

Fitzpiers preferred the discovery of principles to their application (W, p. 119).

The result of Fitzpiers' intellectual pursuits is to make him, in his own words, inhuman and supercilious. "Let me tell you that Everything is Nothing. There's only Me and Not Me in the whole world." With this attitude, Fitzpiers believed that "no man's hands could help what they did, any more than the hands of a clock..." (W, p. 55). He believed that men are only "miserable creatures of circumstance" (W, p. 138), and that the human will is powerless against predestination (W, p. 227). Fitzpiers referred to himself as doomed and to events as part of destiny and doom. Having embroiled himself in these deterministic ideas, Fitzpiers' aspect seemed to say that he had "suffered a certain wrong in being born" (W, p. 296).

In a deterministic world, "the secret of happiness lay in limiting the aspiration..." (W, p. 160). Accordingly, Fitzpiers, following his study of Spinoza, believed human love to be subjective; a certain joy combined with an idea projected on some object within view. He could be in love only with something in his head not with a thing-in-itself outside (W, p. 138). Similarly, he felt that sadness and sickness at heart was the end of love according to Nature's law (W, p. 232). So marriage ought to be made into as short and simple a civil contract as buying a house or making a will (W, p. 198). Later, during his marriage to Grace, his manner took on the "scrupulous civility of mere acquaintance" (W, p. 241). Fitzpiers' intellectual attitudes rendered him apparently incapable of concern about the human causes of suffering. Hence, he would be unaware of his own involvement as a source of

suffering and unaware of the dangerous consequences of not uniting theory and practice which he displayed.

Just as Fitzpiers was highly intellectual and educated, he was also capable of being led by passion. His affair with Felice Charmond, sponsored in part by her social position and in part by their idyllic, dreamy childhood encounter, was based in no way on intellectual pursuits or reasoning. It was the result of blind passion. The practical shallowness of Fitzpiers' intellectual nature, made the more shallow through his idealism and determinism, brought suffering into Grace's and her father's lives. Hardy seems to be indicating through Fitzpiers and Sue Bridehead that highly intellectual pursuits, whether theoretical philosophy or intense, modern, ethereal nervousness, can bring not only suffering, but that the energy of self-assertion behind the intellect is similar to, if not the very same as, the energy behind the grosser passions. Sue's modern nerves made her capable of passionate reactions, specifically her jealousy of Arabella. Fitzpiers' intellectual idealism turned into extreme, adulterous passion with Felice. Whether intellect and passion are illuminated with the same energy or with different energies, the results of self-assertion in either intellect or passion are clearly, in Hardy's novels, suffering.

Although the characters who display the extremes of passion or intellect would seem to be all "bustling movement and struggle," Hardy recognized that "a more imposing feature of a human mass is its

passivity;"⁶⁷ a tendency to take "no trouble to ward off the disastrous events produced by [ordinary human] passions, prejudices, and ambitions...."⁶⁸ Just as Jude observed that feelings rule human thoughts and actions, feelings are often allowed to rule human will. Not only does the human will fail to ward off disastrous results caused by human passions, prejudices, and ambitions, the will is allowed to acquiesce to the original impulse which sponsors the passions, prejudices, and ambitions. In so far as the characters who display extremes of passion or intellect fail to attenuate their extremes, they may be seen as passive.

There are other characters for whom passivity represents the most noticeable aspect of their personalities. At times they are capable of strong feelings. They are often, at least nominally, educated. Despite education and strong feelings, these characters have a passivity which is the result of either severe self-restraint or temperamentally instinctual restraint. The same self-restraint which hinders a character from working actively in a particular situation, lends itself quite readily to social subordination, especially in the form of imitation of social conventions, including those which have no inherent value. Extreme self-restraint will allow a character to suffer social and personal injustices and to acquiesce totally to the processes of nature and "fate."

In Under the Greenwood Tree, it is the wife of a tranter who

⁶⁷ Evelyn Hardy, ed., Thomas Hardy's Notebooks (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1955), p. 30. Hereafter cited as Notebooks.

⁶⁸ Life, p. 120.

advises Fancy Day that it is best to say "'Tis to be, and here goes!" "I will carry a body through it all..." (UGT, p. 196). Generally, the rustics follow the roll of the seasons and the ups-and-downs of life. Anything which is "dissociated from these normal sequences" of the "regular terrestrial roll" is "foreign to local knowledge" (W, p. 53). The general attitude of the rustic characters seems to be "the curious mechanical regularity of country people in the face of hopelessness..." (W, p. 144); as victims of Time, they seem "always doomed to sacrifice desire to obligation" (W, p. 174). The limits of their aspirations is "conterminous with the margin" of the community. As the rustics of Egdon Heath observed when Clym Yeobright proposed his idea of a school to broaden the horizons of the heath natives, "for my part, I think he had better mind his business" (RN, p. 202). Hardy's rustics are the widest spread example of passivity in all facets of life in the novels.

Passivity is not always a matter of rustic ignorance, poverty, or prejudice. Tess Durbeyfield had been to school through the sixth form. She was sensitive and seemingly intelligent. She was marked with an extreme passivity, as seen in an early view of Tess the day of the "club-walking," a May Day dance. The girls danced without male partners until Angel Clare came by. After dancing with several of the girls, Angel left but not without first noticing Tess with whom he had not danced, "owing to her backwardness" (Tess, p. 16). Tess's backwardness may be taken as shyness or modesty. More accurately, Tess's modesty and shyness were symptoms of her mother's family background as "waiters on Providence."

Tess's "backwardness" came to be a definite passivity in the face

of adversity. When the family horse was killed, Tess accepted the full guilt. Subsequently, she accepted the full responsibility for the family's welfare and went to the Slopes, the D'Urberville farm, in an attempt to aid her family. Her passivity in the company of Alec D'Urberville led to her being raped. When Angel later rejected Tess because of the rape, Tess accepted the separation as her just punishment (Tess, p. 308). Later, Tess went to Flintcomb-Ash farm and accepted the harshness of its life. When she finally decided to see Angel's parents for help, she overheard Angel's two brothers talking and, accepting their judgment of her, returned to Flintcomb-Ash and her suffering without visiting the parents who, it is made clear, would have helped her. When Angel returned from South America, he found Tess living with Alec D'Urberville in fulfillment of her reassumed responsibility for her family's welfare. Her killing Alec was the final definitive assumption of Angel's guilt for his unjust violation of her innocence which violation was a reaction to Alec's guilt. Tess accepted the final sacrifice to social conventions by hanging.

As Roy Morrell writes, Hardy shows that often "man fails through neglecting chances of success."⁶⁹ The reader is reminded at least three times (twice in Chapter 36, pp. 308, 311-12; and again in Chapter 37, p. 324) that Tess could have perhaps persuaded Angel to accept their situation through the use of tears or her "exceptional physical nature." She remained passive. The result of her passiveness was, for Tess, one experience of suffering after another--the rape, an unfortunate child,

⁶⁹ Morrell, p. 88.

a ruined marriage, harsh farmwork, her denegration as Alec's mistress, and her death.

Giles Winterborne in The Woodlanders is passive through severe self-restraint rather than through impulse as with Tess. Giles had an "imperturbable poise" which came from "a somewhat rare power in him—that of keeping not only judgment but emotion suspended in difficult cases." He did not feel inordinately proud because he did not regard his inner self spectacularly (W, p. 37). Giles did not let incidents (the loss of his leaseholds; the loss of Grace Melbury, his loved one) affect his outward conduct (W, p. 112). After one outburst to Felice Charmond, Giles kept his feelings entirely to himself. When Giles' love-wound was reopened, he preserved his calm. When Giles first heard about George Melbury's plans for getting a divorce for Grace, "a subdued tremulousness about the mouth was all the response that Winterborne made..."(W, p. 327). "To act promptly as Melbury desired him to act seemed, indeed, scarcely wise, because of the uncertainty of events" (W, p. 334). Giles' conscience forbade him to lead Grace into a pitfall for her happiness.

It was these virtues of resignation and acquiescence which gave Giles "a certain laxity" after his double loss, leaving him "lying on his elbow under a tree, with a cynical gaze at surrounding objects"(W, p. 206). Giles felt "that the fates were against him;" that "Fate, it seemed would have it this way, and there was nothing to do but to acquiesce"(W, p. 130). Giles had a character made of a purity of nature, a freedom from the grosser passions, and a scrupulous delicacy which brought him to a "strange self-sacrifice"(W, p. 379). Giles'

severe self-restraint, his acquiescence, and his passivity in loss and other difficult cases brought him fatal illness. Had Giles been more active in his relations to Grace early in the novel, he might have also spared much of the suffering of her marriage to Fitzpiers. Had Giles been active enough to peruse his leasehold papers sooner, he might not have lost the leaseholds, and spared himself, as well as Grace, much suffering. Giles' passivity in the face of the reverses of supposed Fate was largely responsible for suffering in three lives.

The problems of the extremes of self-assertion and self-restraint are not limited to the present moment in the novels. In conjunction with the present moment, there is what Perry Meisel calls "The Return of the Repressed;" a reintroduction into the present of past experiences which a character has often tried to escape.⁷⁰ The convergence of previous moments of passion, intellectuality, or passivity, acting as influences on the present situation, serves to limit the extent to which disastrous consequences may be avoided. In "the great web of human doings," the past is very much a part of the present. To constantly bring the past into the present, Hardy uses settings like Casterbridge, full of relics and history; allusions to historical and mythic figures like Cain, Hercules, Noah, Venus, Satan, Jeremiah, Judas Iscariot, Samson, and St. John; and former events, actions, and decisions in the lives of the characters.

⁷⁰ Perry Meisel, Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed: A Study of the Major Fiction (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972). See also Chapter I, pp. 12-14 above for the introductory discussion of recurrences of past events.

Fancy Day remembered the secret which she will never tell Dick Dewy, her husband, because the secret might ruin her marriage. Troy returned to claim Bathsheba, causing her to suffer shock and Boldwood to shoot him and to go to jail. Fanny Robin returned to haunt Troy and to begin the agonies which end in his death. Wildeve and Eustacia's love affair returned several times to bring suffering to Thomasin, Mrs. Yeobright, and Clym. The furmity woman appeared in Casterbridge to renew Henchard's horror over the sale of his wife. Newson returned to find Elizabeth-Jane, leaving Henchard in the misery of isolation and loneliness. The childhood encounter between Felice Charmond and Dr. Fitzpiers surfaced to bring suffering to Grace, Giles, Mr. Melbury, and Felice. It becomes evident from the catalogue of past experiences recurring in the lives of the characters to what extent other persons in an individual's environment can affect suffering in life.

People affect each other not only in person. Through the agency of social institutions and conventions, which form a part of the individual's psychic environment, suffering is transmitted from other people into individual lives. Felice Charmond cried out against "the terrible insitencies of society" complaining,

how severe they are, and cold, and inexorable--ghastly towards those who are made of wax and not of stone...a stab for this error, and a stab for that--correctives and regulations pretendly framed that society may tend to perfection.... (W, p. 237)

Sue Bridehead questioned in like manner, "What is the use of thinking of laws and ordinances,...if they make you miserable...?" (Jude, p. 268).

The misery caused by marriage laws and conventional social attitudes towards marriage is nowhere more evident than in the lives of Sue

Bridehead and Jude Fawley who were each married to partners who differed greatly in temperament. The scorn for "Justice" at the end of Tess of the D'Urbervilles is not so appalling because Tess killed a man, but because the very act which finally released her to partake in charity and freedom, especially freedom from self-recrimination, is the act for which society demands her death rather than the act which brings her life. Society is supposed to promote the cultivation of man.⁷¹ Too often in Hardy's novels, it seems that laws and conventions are the result of a confusion of conformity and uniformity for the good and the ethical. Acquiescence and passivity in the form of imitation of the dictates of such mistaken laws and conventions are a way of continuing the injustices which bring suffering, even unto the innocent.

The processes of society seem to have gone awry not only for Tess, Sue, and Jude, but for Clym Yeobright as well. Working for a diamond merchant in Paris, serving the highly cultivated, Clym perceived that his business "was the idlest, vainest, most effeminate business that ever a man could be put to" (RN, p. 202). The societal conventions which condemned Tess to the gallows and brought Jude and Sue so much misery, made Clym feel impotent as an individual in much the same way as Felice felt frustrated. So if social imitation does not bring specific suffering, it may bring frustration and impotence; the subjugation of the individual to the whole and the exceptional to the average.⁷²

Society made laws, but has not had a second intention and

⁷¹ Huxley, p. 43.

⁷² Orel, p. 127.

execution to eliminate evils and defects.⁷³ Grace Melbury's situation in The Woodlanders stands out as an example of this kind of societal failure. Grace cried, "cultivation has only brought me inconveniences and troubles!" Grace's educational and social attainments, which refined her into "something quite different" from the Hintock folk, alienated her from any effective contact with the world. She was too refined for Hintock, yet her background disenabled her to move readily into society.

Her failed marriage taught Grace that exceptional attainments and base aspects of humanity can co-exist in one person. She felt revulsion for attainments. Giles Winterborne's death forced on Grace the realization of "how little acquirements and culture weigh beside sterling personal character"(W, p. 404). Grace had become an

impressionable creature, who combined modern nerves with primitive feelings, and was doomed by such co-existence to be numbered among the distressed, and to take her scourgings to their extremity. (W, p. 358)

Education and cultivation had given Grace an "intense consciousness," yet she retained her "active emotions." Caught between two worlds, she was unable to go forwards or to go back. As Matthew Arnold wrote in Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse, she was "Wandering between two worlds, one dead,/ The other powerless to be born"(ll. 85-86).

To remain passive and to acquiesce to the social processes and conventions can, then, be as painful as acquiescing to the natural processes. As long as the education which society offers does "little to

⁷³ Life, pp. 148-49.

modify human impulses,"⁷⁴ as in the cases of Fitzpiers, Sue, Angel, Troy, and Eustacia, society cannot do more than try to regulate behavior on general principles and so commit injustices which lead to suffering. However, society is not an autonomous being, rather it is the aggregate of individuals who either support or acquiesce to the conventions, laws, and processes which are propounded in the name of society and the commonwealth. Consequently, any suffering which society contributes to human lives is just as attributable to human causes as the individually caused suffering which may come from extreme passions or extreme intellectuality. All of the causes of suffering investigated in this chapter—extreme self-assertion in passions and intellect, extreme self-restraint in passivity or social imitation—are, then, a result of human doings and ought to be subject to human control, if man has the will to eliminate, as much as possible, the human causes of suffering. In Hardy's novels, does man have the will, does he have the capability to will to alter the conditions in his existence which through his own doings cause suffering? This question forms the basis for the discussion of human will in the next chapter.

⁷⁴ Orel, p. 124.

CHAPTER III

HUMAN WILL

Recognizing the multitude of possible sources of suffering, it seemed to Hardy that the possibilities for human will to influence man's condition are limited. Hardy observed that "the will of man is... neither wholly free nor wholly unfree."⁷⁶ Considering the influence of an individual's own limitations, the limitations imposed by the influence of others, and the influence of the past in an individual's life, is there a basis for believing that within the world of Hardy's novels human will could effectively influence the course of human doings and man's condition?

To effectively answer this nettlesome question which seems to be the implied focus of much of the critical controversy over determinism, pessimism, fatalism, and human capabilities in Hardy's novels, it seems appropriate to begin with some critical statements which, even though often couched in the nests of negative attitudes towards human potential in Hardy's novels, would seem to indicate that human will does have some powers. Then, turning to the novels in question, a look at the results of some characters' consciousness of another's sufferings will reveal how human sympathy, linked with that consciousness, can motivate certain characters to try to alter the conditions which have caused or may cause suffering, and thus seem to indicate that there are

⁷⁶ Life, p. 335.

possibilities for the human will to influence human doings and man's condition.

When one turns to the criticism which has been published about Hardy's works, the immediate impression is that many critics see Hardy's writings as pessimistic, fatalistic, or deterministic. At the same time, very few critics are able, finally, to deny that humans are not so trapped as the philosophical tag-words would suggest. The general critical reticence to see man as fully a sport of Hardy's fictive universe may be only the critics' personal hope of at least a modicum of freedom for men showing through what is regarded as otherwise dark and brooding inevitability. Whatever the reasons for seeing at least "a pinhole of light"⁷⁷ in the "darkling plain"⁷⁸ of Hardy's fiction, no critic denies that humans are the focus of Hardy's concern in the universe of his fiction.⁷⁹

Robert B. Heilman suggests that "Hardy treats his characters far less as victims than as moral beings whose histories are congruent with their natures...."⁸⁰ J. O. Bailey's analysis of The Return of the Native sees the characters not as victims of fate, rather as victims of themselves.⁸¹ Donald A. Dike claims that while Hardy sees man as

⁷⁷ Follett, p. 131.

⁷⁸ Harvey C. Webster, On a Darkling Plain: The Art and Thought of Thomas Hardy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947).

⁷⁹ Wagenknecht, p. 548.

⁸⁰ Robert B. Heilman, "Hardy's 'Mayor' and the Problem of Intention," Criticism, 5 (1963), 199-213.

⁸¹ J. O. Bailey, "Temperament as Motive in The Return of the Native," English Fiction in Transition, 5 (1962), 21-29.

incapable of changing his character, man can control his character.⁸² Only when the characters do not attempt to ward off disaster are they defeated, suggests Duane Edwards.⁸³ Roy Morrell sees that in Hardy's novels man fails only because he neglects the opportunities for success.⁸⁴

Despite a belief that Hardy subscribes to a natural determinism, John Holloway can still see that "the potentialities of change are in the people."⁸⁵ Other critics see man's potentialities in the form of his consciousness. George S. Fayan sees experience as the materials of a consciousness which can be used for forming decisions and destinies.⁸⁶ Roland A. Duerksen claims that Hardy agrees with Shelley that "there must be a 'consciousness' and an effort by mankind if amelioration is to be expected."⁸⁷ Bert G. Hornback seems to put the effort and the consciousness together when he claims that for Hardy "will as consciousness fulfills man."⁸⁸ Consciousness of life's suffering becomes the basis for action. Ernest Brennecke writes that "the basis of all

⁸² Donald A. Dike, "A Modern Oedipus: The Mayor of Casterbridge," Essays in Criticism, 2 (1952), 169-79.

⁸³ Duane Edwards, "Chance in Hardy's Fiction," Midwest Quarterly, 11 (1970), 427-41.

⁸⁴ Morrell, p. 88.

⁸⁵ Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 250.

⁸⁶ George Siemers Fayan, Jr., "Hardy's The Woodlanders: Inwardness and Memory," Studies in English Literature, 1 (1964), 81-100.

⁸⁷ Roland A. Duerksen, Shelleyan Ideas in Victorian Literature (The Hague: Mouton and Company, 1966), p. 165.

⁸⁸ Hornback, p. 8.

willing is pain, need, and deficiency" in Hardy's universe.⁸⁹ H. L. Weatherby sees will as Hardy's life force.⁹⁰

Frederick Pilkington observes, "All is not gloom in the Hardy outlook for despite the waywardness of Wessex people, faith in human endeavor is retained...."⁹¹ Barry N. Schwartz sees Jude the Obscure as a celebration of human endeavor.⁹² Even though Bonamy Dobree sees Hardy's characters as largely controlled, he does admit that "in at least three novels the events seem to flow from human will."⁹³ Seeing Hardy as having embroiled his characters in a determinism which was derived from Darwinism, Perry Meisel can claim that the small, insignificant individual's response to his environment is the key to the movement of life.⁹⁴ John Holloway sees that if man moves with events rather than against them, "human choice can exert some influence at least on the course of things...."⁹⁵ Duane Edwards is more positive, believing that chance can be affected by human intention or imprudences. J. Hillis Miller argues that it is through willing, feeling, doing that

⁸⁹ Ernest Brennecke, Jr., Thomas Hardy's Universe: A Study of a Poet's Mind (1926; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), p. 130.

⁹⁰ H. L. Weatherby, "Old-Fashioned Gods: Eliot on Lawrence and Hardy," Sewanee Review, 75 (1967), 301-16.

⁹¹ Frederick Pilkington, "Religion in Hardy's Novels," Contemporary Review, 188 (1955), 31-35.

⁹² Barry N. Schwartz, "Jude the Obscure in the Age of Anxiety," Studies in English Literature, 10 (1970), 793-804.

⁹³ Dobree, p. 32; Dobree's italics.

⁹⁴ Meisel, p. 17.

⁹⁵ Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 281.

man "takes part in the endless physical changes of the world...."⁹⁶

Albert Pettigrew Elliott, who believes in fatalism in Hardy's works, sees, all the same, that "convention can be directed by enlightenment;" and that "society can outgrow destructive morality if it will...."⁹⁷

Few critics seem to be as hopeful as the lines from Prometheus Unbound which Hardy double-underlined in his copy of Shelley:

To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.⁹⁸

Few critics are as positive as Roy Morrell who believes that those characters who decide to act could avoid suffering if they assure the fulfillment of their intentions because while "anything could happen,... what did happen could change."⁹⁹ Most critics, however, even some who are convinced that Hardy believed in fatalism, pessimism, or determinism, seem to see at least a modicum of potential for man to exercise his choice and to influence to some extent his environment. It is necessary to look to the novels now to see human will, motivated by sympathy and loving-kindness learned through suffering, being exercised.

If man has a potential to influence the course of things, then Grace Melbury's state of "intense consciousness" and "primitive feelings" would seem to be a paradigm of what man may and should become. Despite her suffering which is basically a result of the waywardness of

⁹⁶ Joseph Hillis Miller, Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 18.

⁹⁷ Elliot, pp. 103, 105.

⁹⁸ Phyllis Bartlett, "Hardy's Shelley," Keats-Shelley Journal, 4 (1955), 15-29.

⁹⁹ Morrell, p. xi.

the human community in removing its defects and evils, Grace appears to be for Hardy, as for her father, the "worldly hope;" a distinction she does not want because of its contingencies which eventually brought her suffering and isolation (W, p. 104). It is, however, only through the kind of consciousness which Grace had coupled with her primitive sympathy that the "Golden Rule" and similar ideas will advance into the conscience of man as a guideline for actions and decisions. As the "great network" of the whole united corporeal human race becomes more intensely conscious of the suffering of its parts, the "Golden Rule" ascends as a mode of ethical, social behavior. The consciousness of suffering comes through both the individual's own suffering and a growing awareness of others' suffering. Suffering becomes the basis for an ever expanding consciousness which, evolving into conscience, becomes the motivation of the human will to express sympathy and loving-kindness. Hardy believed that with a greater consciousness of suffering and its causes, a greater sympathy would also arise.¹⁰⁰

In the novels, a consciousness of suffering produces several different responses. In Grace Melbury's situation, her realization of Giles' suffering and sacrifice led her to a remorse for her inconsiderateness. Bathsheba Everdene, at the end of Far from the Madding Crowd, had learned the danger of sudden erratic impulses. Having suffered herself from her impulsive marriage to Troy and having seen the suffering which Fanny Robin experienced and the suffering which her flirtatious impulsiveness incited in Boldwood, Bathsheba was less quick to

¹⁰⁰ Life, p. 335.

respond lightly. Her intensified consciousness of suffering made her wary. Similarly, Giles Winterborne "maintained his abeyant mood not from want of reciprocity, but from a taciturn hesitancy taught by life as he knew it"(W, p. 328).

In Jude the Obscure, Richard Phillotson realized how seriously Sue was suffering and acted sympathetically. His recognition of her suffering prompted him to release and, later, to divorce her. Through Sue he learned "that it is wrong to so torture a fellow creature..." (Jude, p. 277). Through his own suffering in a South American jungle, and through his gradual realization of the misery his actions brought on Tess, Angel Clare learned to judge a person less for their deeds than for the will behind the deeds (Tess, p. 473). Similarly, Michael Henchard realized through the process of his ruination, suffering, and eventual isolation that his life was like Cain's and that because he ought to have acted more sympathetically and considerately than he did, he deserved his punishment (MC, p. 361).

Suffering can give a character more than remorse, wariness, abeyance, or sympathetic feelings and actions. Suffering can also make a character aware of the need for the human will to adjust and compromise. In The Return of the Native, Clym Yeobright's consciousness of other people's interests and desires was borne out of his mother's death, his wife's attempted escape and resulting death, his own physical loss of vision, and the Heath natives' reluctance to accept a school which would attempt to raise them "to serene comprehensiveness without going through the process of enriching themselves..."(RN, p. 204). Clym learned from these experiences of suffering and resistance to alter his

aspirations to the needs of the situation. He became an itinerant open-air preacher, a role which was more nearly adapted to the needs and the interests of the Heath dwellers than his school plan.

In Far from the Madding Crowd, Gabriel Oak lost his sheep. He was momentarily in a stupor, but recovering, he was first thankful that he was not married. His thankfulness is the first indication that he will not be overcome and so will try to make the best of his disaster. As a first step, he settled his debts and then, adjusting his aspirations, searched for a job as a hired shepherd. At Bathsheba's estate, he was hired and thrown into close relations with the woman he loved but could not marry. Even though his juxtaposition with Bathsheba caused him emotional distress, he maintained control, and worked as well as he could for her. He advised Bathsheba occasionally in her relations with Boldwood and Troy. This advice was an attempt to act on his consciousness and to influence the situation for the better. Whatever emergency arose--the rick fire, the bloated sheep, the storm, Fanny Robin's funeral--Gabriel was able because of his ability to adjust to the demand of the moment, learned through his own losses, to produce the best possible results in the circumstances; his experience and his loving-kindness helped him to adapt his will to the situation.

A consciousness of the sources of suffering was also the basis of another character's attempts to influence situations for the better. Diggory Venn, who loved Thomasin Yeobright, Clym's cousin, but had been rejected as her suitor, tried to help in whatever ways he could to promote and to protect Thomasin's happiness, even when she decided to marry Wildeve in The Return of the Native. Venn gambled with Wildeve to win

back the money sent by Mrs. Yeobright for Thomasin's own use. When Wildeve continued to visit Eustacia Vye, his former lover, Venn intercepted him, giving him warning signs against treacherous conduct. Even though Venn could not marry Thomasin, he readjusted his energies to try to preserve Thomasin's marriage and happiness, rather than allowing sorrow for his loss to sour the sympathy and loving-kindness he felt for Thomasin. Not only with regard to Thomasin, but for other characters too did Venn try to help as much as he could. On the night of Eustacia's attempted flight from the Heath and her husband, Venn rescued Clym and attempted to rescue Wildeve and Eustacia from the weir. Venn asserted his will to try to aid others and to make the best of the situation as much as possible through his sympathy and loving-kindness which gave him a desire to try to prevent suffering at its causes.

In addition to the realm of human relations, suffering may be alleviated in other aspects of life through an application of human will actuated by sympathy and loving-kindness. Donald Farfrae in The Mayor of Casterbridge had a sympathy which prompted him towards the best possible consummation. Farfrae used scientific knowledge and modernized methods to effect changes for the better in Casterbridge. Donald reconstituted ruined grain. He placed the books and dealings of Henchard's business on equable and efficient terms. Later, as a grain dealer in his own business, Donald introduced a mechanical seeder to ease the work of seeding as well as to increase efficiency. When it was time for a fair in Casterbridge, Farfrae considered the possibility of inclement weather and set up his festivities under cover, thus assuring an enjoyable holiday. Farfrae was equally sympathetic in his direct relations

with people. He insisted that Abel Whittle not be made to suffer the embarrassment of driving through the streets half-dressed. When Donald opened his own grain trade after Henchard fired him, Donald refused to deal with Henchard's most recent and lucrative customers. After Henchard's financial ruin, Farfrae bought Henchard's house and furnishings and gave some of the furnishings to Michael because "maybe it's worth more to you than it is to me," being "endeared to ye by associations, or particularly suited to your use"(MC, p. 262). Farfrae was able to adjust, to compromise, and so to alleviate suffering through scientific knowledge and loving-kindness, and he used his will to effect the best in the situation.¹⁰¹

"Scientific knowledge" of suffering and its causes, of the needs and wants of others, and of the most efficient and equable methods forms the basis for actions of the will. Suffering, their own and others', can give characters a "scientific knowledge" of the causes of suffering and of the actions which a situation might require for the best possible consummation. It is a knowledge, based on the results of experience, from which the characters seemed to learn when to use their wills for self-assertion, as with Farfrae's introduction of the mechanical seeder, or Phillotson's release of Sue; and when to use their wills for self-restraint, as with Clym's limiting of his aspirations, or Giles' taciturn hesitancy when he heard about Grace's plan to divorce. Neither excessive self-assertion nor excessive self-restraint will work in

¹⁰¹ For an interesting study of Susan Henchard--the poor, weak, ignorant wife of Michael--and her manifestations of a strong will in certain situations, see Robert B. Heilman's article, "Hardy's 'Mayor' and the Problem of Intention," Criticism, 5 (1963), 199-213.

every situation. No one, consistently applied mode of behavior seems appropriate for all of the circumstances and contingencies in the novels. There needs to be a dynamic balance between self-assertion and self-restraint; that is, an adaptability which involves adjustment and compromise according to the situation so that the best possible consummation will result. This adaptability seems to be learned from experience with suffering and appears to be the result of the human will acting through a consciousness of suffering which can give the characters remorse, wariness, abeyance, and sympathy, but most important a motivation to bring about the best possible consummation. The best possible consummation is the key to another factor operating in Hardy's novels; "briefly, evolutionary meliorism." Evolutionary meliorism, which depends on the human will for beneficent functioning, is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

EVOLUTIONARY MELIORISM

Hardy describes the gradual process of the intensification of consciousness, of the expansion of sympathy, and of the learning to adapt the assertion and the restraint of the will, leading towards the gradual betterment of man's condition, as evolutionary meliorism. In order to see clearly what the nature and the process of evolutionary meliorism means in social terms and in terms of human passions, intellect, and relations, it seems advisable to approach the topic from several avenues. One avenue is to look to T. H. Huxley's essay "Evolution and Ethics." This is not to say that Hardy read Huxley's essay, though he could have; and it is certainly not possible to say that Hardy followed Huxley's essay when writing his novels.¹⁰² There are also some seemingly significant differences. For the most part, as far as evolutionary meliorism may be seen as topically present in Hardy's novels, the tendency of the novels is parallel to Huxley's essay. The second avenue is, then, to review the tendency of the novels in terms of the outcomes which seem to evolve from the series of circumstances. In addition to the overall tendency of the novels, there seems to be support from an element of the narrative technique for another aspect of the process of evolutionary meliorism. With the tendency of

¹⁰² Huxley's essay was first published in 1893. While Hardy lived until 1928, all of the major novels had been published, except Jude the Obscure, by 1893.

the process to eliminate the undesirable units of human society in the novels, those units which are responsible for extensive suffering, there goes the apprehension that some of the variety of human life may be sacrificed and made extinct through ethical selection. To reveal this background apprehension and apparent attendant sadness, it will be necessary to look critically at the function of point of view in the novels.

In his essay "Evolution and Ethics," T. H. Huxley discusses the nature of evolution in society and explains how evolution can ameliorate man's condition. In the struggle for existence, man is aided by his instinct for self-assertion.¹⁰³ The fund of energy man derives from self-assertion, coupled with a superior intellect, is "competent to influence and modify the cosmic process"(p. 84). Man's energy and intellect have produced combinations of material bodies, states of art, which are impossible in the state of nature (p. 10). In the development of a state of art, men cultivate themselves also. The "gardening of man" is the creation of conditions which "facilitate the free expansion of the innate faculties of a citizen [which are] consistent with the general good"(p. 43). In relation to society, the "horticultural process" becomes the "ethical process." Social progress, the measure of man's success in adopting the ethical process and developing a state of art, depends upon man checking the cosmic process and promoting the survival of those persons who are ethically the best (p. 81).

¹⁰³ Huxley, pp. 51-52. Unexplained page numbers in the text of this brief description of Huxley's ideas refer to Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays (see p. 3, note 33 above).

The organic necessities of society are mutual affection, sympathy, and imitation (p. 28). The ethical process becomes an evolution of the feelings of mutual affection, sympathy, and imitation into the human conscience (p. 30). As the ethical process refines civilization towards social perfection and worth, self-assertion becomes a defect. A man may use his self-assertion against his neighbor. Social progress increases the importance of sympathy. To curtail self-assertion, ethical man develops laws to "restrain the self-assertion of each man within the limits required for the maintenance of peace"(p. 18). While self-assertion helps man to maintain society against the cosmic process, self-restraint helps man to maintain society against itself. The evolution of society is a process in which

the motive of the drama of human life is the necessity, laid upon every man who comes into the world, of discovering the mean between self-assertion and self-restraint suited to his character and his circumstances. (p. viii)

In marked similarity to Huxley's essay, Hardy's major novels show that those self-assertive characters who display strongly non-adaptive, non-ethical tendencies do not generally survive their experiences. If society does not eliminate these characters, in part what happens to Henchard, they are just as likely to aggravate their own destruction ultimately. The tendency in the novels is towards some degree of social or cultural improvement. Those characters who are ethically better within the world of their novel tend to survive, although not without some suffering.

In Far from the Madding Crowd, for example, Sergeant Troy was incapable of adapting himself to the needs of anyone or anything beyond

himself. His ethical unadaptability clashed with Boldwood's passionate distraction, an inability to adapt to Bathsheba's marriage to Troy, resulting in Troy's death and Boldwood's confinement. The adjustable Oak and the conscious Bathsheba survived. Likewise, Eustacia Vye's undeterable pursuit of higher passions in The Return of the Native drove her to attempt to flee Egdon Heath in any way possible. She could not adapt to life on the Heath or to its customs. The adjusted, compromising characters, Clym and Venn, did survive.

In another, yet similar vein, Henchard's unyielding desire to possess the situation and the people around him in The Mayor of Casterbridge made him incapable of adapting to uncertain contingencies, partial successes, or reverses. He was left in isolation. Through isolation he was removed from the society so that an ethically better man, Farfrae, could replace him. Another aspect of passionate unadaptability which is eliminated is Felice Charmond, the "passion incarnate" in The Woodlanders, who could not adapt her feelings and sensibilities either to the Hintock woodlands or to the restrictions intended to perfect society. Her unadaptability disturbed Grace and Fitzpiers' marriage and left a rejected lover who destroyed her. The ethically better Grace and a seemingly more sympathetic and ostensibly repentant Fitzpiers survived her. Similar to Felice's unadaptability is Alec D'Urberville's single-minded pursuit of passion which prevented him from directing his energies effectively into any channel other than chasing Tess. This unadaptability of aims placed him in a position in which he aggravated his own death. The ethical convert, Angel Clare, survived. The Angel Clare who rejected Tess and sent her through much

suffering was eliminated in the South American jungle. Thus, Hardy's novels have an overall tendency towards evolving a better humanity.

This general tendency in the novels results in the ethical process of evolutionary meliorism tending to effect average emotions and long-range views which allow better and easier adaptation. As sympathy becomes more important to society, the extremes of self-assertion, emotional and intellectual, which cause suffering, and the extremes of self-restraint which neither prevent nor avoid suffering, need to be attenuated. Since the results of the extremes might first appear later rather than immediately, as often occurs in Hardy's novels, one needs to have a long-range view of possible consequences when one surveys the "Worst." Long-range views, guided by sympathy, reduce necessarily the range of self-assertion and self-restraint.

Donald Farfrae exhibited a long view when he bought grain cautiously while Henchard bought, and the farmers sold, recklessly. The result of Farfrae's caution was that he prospered from the unpredictable harvest while Henchard and the farmers placed themselves in penury. The average emotions upon which Farfrae acted allowed him to accept the death of his wife Lucetta without paralyzing grief. The social result of Farfrae's long views and average emotions was that the farmers who sold, and later his workers, suffered less from Farfrae's dealings. Farfrae's ascendancy in Casterbridge becomes a foreshortened evolution of society away from extreme self-assertion and suffering towards a balance of self-assertion and self-restraint "consistent with the general good."

Another of the effects of evolutionary meliorism took place in

the South American jungle where Angel Clare learned to temper his strict adherence to general principles according to the particular instance.

"What arrested him now as of value in life was less its beauty than its pathos." "The beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses..."(Tess, p. 434). Angel learned to judge constructively rather than biographically (Tess, p. 473). The sudden alteration in Angel's outlook is the sort of alteration which evolutionary meliorism is expected to induce gradually in the human race.¹⁰⁴

However, the difficulty of man's condition is not always conducive to easy choices, making a general process of the extinction of apparently unethical characters arbitrary and perhaps unsympathetic. Besides the multitude of possible influences in any situation which may make the ascription of the source of the cause of suffering difficult, there are times when some things are both good and antagonistic.¹⁰⁵ As Clym saw in The Return of the Native, "three antagonistic growths had to be kept alive: his mother's trust in him, his plan for becoming a teacher, and Eustacia's happiness,...two of the three was as many as he could hope to preserve"(RN, p. 237). As a further complication, there is also often sorrow under the grandest things and grandeur under the sorriest.¹⁰⁶ As often happens, the substance of a situation is judged and

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Hornback, p. 24; "Hardy is concerned with finding and showing man's potential." Hornback observes that Hardy intensifies the World and Time in the novels to make them a testing ground.

¹⁰⁵ Life, p. 282.

¹⁰⁶ Life, p. 171.

retained or rejected on an estimate of the superficialities (W, p. 154), when perhaps a more sympathetic and ethical judgment ought to consider all aspects.

In Under the Greenwood Tree, the Mellstock Quire was to be replaced by an organist. Parson Maybold summarized the situation:

I see that violins are good, and that an organ is good; and when we introduce the organ it will not be that fiddles were bad, but that an organ was better. (UGT, p. 87)

* * *

I consider it more proper and feel justified in endeavoring to introduce it.... (UGT, p. 85)

The Parson and the Quire agreed to a compromise date between an immediate change and a change in the distant future which the Quire requested. In this situation, it was impossible to use both good forms of music in the church, and a temporary compromise between the two antagonistic forms was enacted, keeping the general unhappiness to a minimum yet failing to satisfactorily sustain all that was good.

Eustacia Vye is an example of a mixture of grandeur and sorriosity.

Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with little preparation. She had the passions and instincts which make a model goddess, that is those which make not quite a model woman. Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for a while, had she handled the distaff, the spindle, and the shears at her own free will, few in the world would have noticed the change of government. There would have been the same inequality of lot, the same heaping up of favours here, of contumely there, the same generosity before justice, the same perpetual dilemmas, the same capricious alteration of caresses and blows that we endure now. (RN, p. 75)

* * *

Thus we see her in a strange state of isolation. To have lost the godlike conceit that we may do what we will, and not to have acquired a homely zest for doing what we can, shows a grandeur of temper which cannot be objected to in the abstract, for it denotes a mind that, though disappointed, forswears compromise. But, if congenial to philosophy, it is apt to be dangerous to the commonwealth. (RN, p. 81)

Since Eustacia was responsible for causing suffering because of her extreme passions, her extreme behavior needed to be attenuated for the commonwealth. Yet, because the very aspect of her nature which caused suffering had a grandeur, the reader seems to be invited to wonder if there at least ought to be a way to preserve that grandeur while avoiding the related suffering. Such questionings may tend to arouse an ambivalence in the reader; emotional sympathy, yet reasoned rejection.

The alloyed nature of characters which may tend to arouse ambivalence in the reader towards any one of the characters is supported in the novels through Hardy's control of point of view. The editorially omniscient narrator¹⁰⁷ ranges over the characters and events, shortening and lengthening perspective distance, choosing which one pattern in a multiplicity of patterns to follow,¹⁰⁸ and choosing the time and point of concentration. It is important to know not only the perspective of the narration, but the focus of attention. By changing the perspective, the distance, and the focus of the point of view, the reader's reactions to any one character or event are complicated. It becomes difficult, in these terms, to judge with unqualified conviction. The reader seems to be put into the sort of dilemma which Parson Maybold describes:

It is often said how difficult a matter it is to act up to our convictions and please all parties. It may be said with equal truth, that it is difficult for a man of any appreciativeness to have convictions at all. (UGT, p. 87)

¹⁰⁷ Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept," PMLA, 70 (1955), 1160-84. The term is Friedman's.

¹⁰⁸ Life, p. 153.

When the reader notices the perspective and focus of point of view in Under the Greenwood Tree in relation to Parson Maybold, it will be noticed that only twice in the story are events or circumstances seen from his perspective. Both times relate to his affection for Fancy Day. The first time is the first Sunday on which Fancy plays the organ in the Church. The reader learns of Maybold's affection for Fancy and his unsuccessful attempts to stifle the affection. The second occasion is the day after his proposal to Fancy when he writes a letter requesting an exchange of parishes. Maybold met Dick Dewy on the road to Casterbridge. The reader, having followed Maybold to this encounter, hears Dick tell the Parson (and the reader who knows already) of his engagement and pending marriage with Fancy. By focusing the reader's attention on Maybold, the reader can feel the shock of Maybold's recognition while feeling that events will most likely resolve well. When the reader sees Maybold shred his letter, the reader knows that Maybold has acted rightly, yet feels the sadness of Maybold's disappointment. The result for the appreciative reader is that there is a slight undercurrent of resentment for Dick as an intruder despite the fact that the reader has been struggling with Dick through the difficulties of his courtship.

Similar manipulations of point of view in other novels make it difficult for the reader to finally condemn or praise any one character completely. Sergeant Troy, the reader feels, ought to stand condemned for his treatment of Fanny Robin and Bathsheba. Such is the manipulation of point of view that the reader feels some sympathy and even cooperation with Troy. After Fanny's death, the reader participates in

Troy's anguish and chagrin. Troy's care of Fanny's grave is commendatory. The reader shares Troy's frustration when the down spout ruins the grave. When Troy swims in the sea, the reader struggles with Troy to escape the tide. The reader's attitude towards Troy has been completely reversed from the sword-exercise scene in which the reader sees the flash and blur of sword and arm as it overwhelms and confuses Bathsheba.

In The Mayor of Casterbridge, the reader's sympathy abides with Henchard as he slips lower into ruination while understanding that Henchard's behavior is in many ways reprehensible. Within one scene, the reader is made to feel the ridiculous yet pathetic nature of Henchard's situation. When the Royal Personage is scheduled to visit Casterbridge, Henchard requests the city council to be allowed to participate in the reception. From following Henchard's unfortunate decline, including an agonizing hour on a bridge known for suicide, the reader feels inclined to give Henchard permission. The council refuses. The reader feels Henchard's indignation yet balks at his determination to participate to spite the council. When Henchard does greet the Royal Personage, the reader's perspective and distance is moved back to a grand-stand seat beside Elizabeth-Jane with whom the reader shares a shocked, almost horrified disbelief, while the ridiculous posture which Henchard displays strikes the reader as ludicrous. When Farfrae pushed Henchard roughly aside, the pathos of this lonely, despised, and neglected man resounds through the reader's consciousness.

In effect, the point of view concentrates the reader's attention more on the contingencies and the consequences than on the fact of an

incident or a character (W, p. 104). Any event is only important in terms of the characters it affects. It is not so much the force of the blow which counts, "as the nature of the material that received the blow."¹⁰⁹ The focus of the point of view in any one novel is directed towards the character who receives the greatest shock from the blow. In cases where a blow strikes relatively equally more than one character, the focus will shift, lighting on one character and then the other, as in the scene in Far from the Madding Crowd in which Fanny Robin's coffin is seen first by Gabriel Oak, then by Bathsheba, and then by Troy (FMC, end of Ch. 42 and Chs. 43 and 45). Such shifting of focus and, at times, distance gives the reader an appreciation of the multiplicity of contingencies and consequences any event may have and so serve to complicate any easy judgment of good and evil, right and wrong, cause and effect.

The mixture of grandeur and sorrow and the focusing of the reader's sympathy through point of view point towards some sources of sadness in Hardy's attitude towards evolution, social improvement, and the function of human will. In part, Hardy's sadness seems to arise from the necessity for human beings to regulate themselves through scientific knowledge. Basically, Hardy cared more for a life of emotion than a life based on the science of climbing.¹¹⁰ "Thomas Hardy was always a person with an unconscious or rather unreasoning tendency...."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Life, p. 415.

¹¹⁰ Life, p. 53.

¹¹¹ Life, p. 384; Hardy's italics; see Purdy, p. 273.

It would be possible, he felt, that in time man might regard every object or movement, not as this or that material or motion, but as "varying proportions of pleasure and pain."¹¹² Appropriately, his idea of religion and the religious was "nobler feelings towards humanity and emotional goodness and greatness...."¹¹³

However, Hardy felt himself faced with the necessity of "having to carry on his life not as an emotion, but as a scientific game."¹¹⁴ It is not only that the "scientific game" must be carried on, but that the effects of the game seem to form another part of Hardy's sadness. Hardy seems to see good and bad in situations and people as well as antagonism. Hardy wants the best consummation possible, but he does not want to lose grandeur because it is alloyed with sorrow.

As the ethical process evolves in society, the extremes of passion, intellect, and passivity become ameliorated into average emotions and long-range views. The loss of passionate extremes which cause suffering may well entail a corresponding loss of the higher affections.

Sergeant Troy, being entirely innocent of the practice of expectation, was never disappointed. To set against this negative gain there may have been some positive losses from a certain narrowing of the higher tastes and sensations which it entailed. (FMC, p. 190)

Similarly, the result of Bathsheba's experience in Far from the Madding Crowd was that she "never laughed readily now"(FMC, p. 463). Bathsheba had learned to control her impulses so that they were less likely to cause suffering, but she is also less likely to enjoy so much. As Hardy

¹¹² Life, p. 217.

¹¹³ Life, p. 332.

¹¹⁴ Life, p. 104.

pointed out in Chapter 2 of Tess of the D'Urbervilles, "the habit of taking long views had reduced emotions to a monotonous average."

Clym Yeobright limited his teaching aspirations, but the results of his itinerant open-air preaching were ambiguous and unspectacular. With the lowering of aspirations, the attempt was lost to give the heath eremites knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence. To avoid disastrous consequences which bold strokes may bring if they fail, bold strokes are not attempted. The avoidance of extremes of emotion or intellect which might bring suffering entails the lowering and limiting of higher possibilities.

The tendency of evolution through the ethical process is to evolve, Huxley informs us, in addition to mutual affection and sympathy, imitation into conscience. While a society should facilitate "the free expansion of the innate faculties of the citizen....," the expansion must remain "consistent with the general good." To this end, selection towards an ideal must be enacted through laws, moral precepts, and the social pressure of opinion.¹¹⁵ Selection towards an ideal is the "increasing of the proportion of persons who possess [courage, industry, and co-operative intelligence], and diminishing that of persons devoid of them."¹¹⁶ Imitation by individual units of society of the mode of behavior which will best conduce to the survival of the ethically best is a means of social progress.

Despite his hopes for evolutionary meliorism and the lessening of

¹¹⁵ Huxley, p. 82.

¹¹⁶ Huxley, p. 19.

pain, Hardy does seem to regret that the betterment of man may involve some losses of positive values. If imitation is indeed a necessary mode of behavior for the improvement of man's condition, Sue Bridehead expressed a sharp doubt about its value:

She, or he 'who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation.' J. S. Mill's words...!

Phyllotson replied to this woman who was always seeking new sensations with the other aspect of the argument. "What do I care about J. S. Mill! I only want to lead a quiet life!" (Jude, p. 269).

Hardy seems to be concerned that in the process of improving society, that there is not a corresponding and tragic loss of individuality and variety. Sue Bridehead added to her observation, "To produce 'Human development in its richest diversity'...is to my mind far above respectability" (Jude, p. 270). In the change which replaced the Mellstock Quire with an organ, it is apparent from the Preface as well as the perspective of the novel that Hardy lamented that the Quire was replaced. The loss of the zest and the flavor of these musicians was, for Hardy, almost wholly indefensible and sad (UGT, p. viii).

During the reading of The Mayor of Casterbridge, the reader senses the pathos of Henchard's decline to ruination. The sense of Henchard's utter isolation following the decline breaks over the reader nowhere more strongly than in the plaintive tone of his will and the loneliness of his death.

Michael Henchard's Will

That Elizabeth-Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or
be made to grieve on account of me.
& that I be not bury'd in consecrated ground.

& that no sexton be asked to toll the bell.
 & that nobody is wished to see my dead body.
 & that no mourners walk behind me at my funeral.
 & that no flours be planted on my grave.
 & that no man remember me.
 To this I put my name.

Michael Henchard (MC, p. 384)

With the passing of Henchard from Casterbridge, "the rugged picturesque-ness of the old method disappeared with its inconveniences" (MC, p. 103).

While Hardy seems to feel and wants the reader to feel a certain sadness at the passing of the "picturesque," it is also necessary that the reader understand that the "inconveniences" and the suffering must stop. Even though high aspirations and hopes and ecstatic joy may be lost in the evolution of a better world, Hardy recognized that individually "the passions ought to be proportioned as in the world itself."¹¹⁷ It is equally possible, perhaps probable, however, that evolutionary meliorism might induce variability¹¹⁸ rather than imitation. The foregoing examples would tend to indicate that Hardy would lean towards this position, at least emotionally, which would be a difference from Huxley's view of evolution in society. Yet, even if variability seems a less likely possibility as passions become proportioned to the world itself, Hardy saw, too, that ecstatic joy and high aspirations could become defined differently. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, Elizabeth-Jane pointed to a new range of variability; an adaptation of the emotions to a proportion "as in the world itself:"

As the lively and sparkling emotions of her early married life

¹¹⁷ Orel, p. 127.

¹¹⁸ Walter Bagehot, Physics and Politics (1872; rpt. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), p. 64.

cohered into an equable serenity, the finer movements of her nature found scope in discovering to the narrow-lived ones around her the secret (as she had once learned it) of making limited opportunities enduring; which she deemed to consist in the cunning enlargement, by a species of microscopic treatment, of those minute forms of satisfaction that offer themselves to everybody not in positive pain; which, thus handled, have much of the same inspiriting effect upon life as wider interests cursorily embraced. (MC, p. 385)

The new emphasis of the emotions has to become a concentration on intensity rather than on extensivity. As Matthew Arnold wrote in Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse,

...an age,
More fortunate,...
Which without hardness will be sage,
And gay without frivolity (ll. 157-60).

Until that age comes, man must recognize his suffering and use it as the motive of the will to change for the better.

For, the difficulties of social progress are not limited to "picturesqueness" versus "inconveniences." Elizabeth-Jane's experiences had taught her about another problem in life:

Her experience had been of a kind to teach her, rightly or wrongly, that the doubtful honour of a brief transit through a sorry world hardly called for effusiveness, even when the path was suddenly irradiated at some half-way point by daybeams rich as hers. But her strong sense that neither she nor any human being deserved less than was given, did not blind her to the fact that there were others receiving less who had deserved much more. (MC, p. 385)

Hence, with the slow, gradual improvement of society and man, there can be disasters along the way. The horrendous experiences which Tess Durbeyfield had to suffer so that one individual might be improved were indeed sad. To waste the unselfish purity of Tess's sensibilities and impulses seems hardly worth the corresponding gain, either individually or socially. Tess's death becomes an indictment of society's wrong-headed attempts towards improvement, in addition to the obvious need

for control of passionately and intellectually extreme impulses.

If Tess's predicament was tragic, Jude Fawley's was anguishing. Through his experiences with Arabella and Sue, Jude learned the delicate balance between self-restraint and self-assertion. Jude had tender feelings of altruism, not only for birds, worms, and rabbits, but for Sue and Arabella as well. When Arabella came to Jude because of her troubles, Jude responded sympathetically to Arabella's needs and cared for the child of their dissolved marriage. When Sue and Jude began to live together, Jude avoided pressing sexual relations onto her. Jude was able to readjust his aspirations for an university education and to accept the happiness of the moments he and Sue shared, as at the flower show (Jude, pp. 357-58). When the children's deaths struck a severe blow in their lives, it was Jude who was able to see that they were fighting only "against man and senseless circumstance," not against "all the ancient wrath of the Power above..."(Jude, p. 413). These "pioneers" of virtue, refined sensibilities, and innocence were sacrificed as much to the gradual improvement of mankind as to the general unimproved state of man and society.

So while the process of evolutionary meliorism may not be able to salvage the full variety of human life, and that inability is apparently a source of sadness for Hardy, any arresting or failure to promote the betterment of mankind, society, and the human condition may have far more disastrous results. Passivity, lethargy, or general unawareness may account for the loss of individuals who, despite the great disadvantages which the present human condition places on them, overcome, at least temporarily, the obstacles to their beatitude. These heroes of

man's struggle seem to be meant as incentives for man to work towards evolving something better for himself in his existence in this world.

CHAPTER V

GRACE

The cases of Giles Winterborne, Grace Melbury, Tess Durbeyfield, Sue Bridehead, and Jude Fawley indicate as strongly as any idea or belief which Hardy penned elsewhere, the need for mankind to work towards better conditions for man's existence. Their situations and experiences indicate that it is not only the individual excesses which cause suffering for humans, but the cumulative effect of the general tendencies of the whole "web of human doings." As long as the "web of human doings" deters rather than promotes evolution towards better conditions, the exasperation of the virtuous, expressed as "the coming universal wish not to live" (Jude, p. 406), will remain.

In the world of Hardy's fiction, the evolution of better conditions is largely a function of loving-kindness. For mankind to improve his conditions of existence and to maintain that improvement, loving-kindness, working with scientific knowledge, and performed through the human will, becomes the means towards betterment. Once a man leads his life with constant reference to this mode of behavior, he achieves individual betterment. If more of mankind becomes motivated through a growing consciousness of suffering, their own and others', to behave with loving-kindness, the gradual evolution of mankind will be towards a general betterment which may eventually evolve into conscience so that man's natural impulses urge sympathy and loving-kindness rather than

unlimited self-assertion.

Through evolutionary meliorism, the extremes of self-restraint or of self-assertion may attenuate and merge into a balanced adaptability. Mankind may be expected to assume the patience, the steadfast loving-kindness, and the adaptability to situations of Gabriel Oak. Diggory Venn's attempts to prevent suffering may become linked with Donald Farfrae's sustained judgments and efficient methods. The cardinal virtues of "Self-Control, Perseverance, Wisdom, and Love..." (W, p. 167), which Giles Winterborne displayed as honesty, goodness, tenderness, and devotion, may become a part of the conscience of man, urging his impulses to temper general principles with tenderness for the specific case and to judge the deed with a consideration of the will. Societies for the relief of suffering would then become a part of a "general growth of altruism" which would tend to remove isolation and to ameliorate man's condition.¹¹⁹

What seems to have happened to these characters is a tendency for their experiences with suffering, their own and others', to evolve into behavior which arises almost instinctively, particularly in the cases of Donald Farfrae and Gabriel Oak. With little apparent effort, they seem to know what actions are right for the situation. They might be said to be in a state of existence which is analogous to the biblical state of Grace.

T. H. L. Parker traces Grace to two Old Testament Hebrew words.

¹¹⁹ Life, p. 306; Orel, pp. 74-75.

One of the words defines Grace as loving-kindness or mercy.¹²⁰ Admittedly, the biblical concept of Grace refers to the God's mercy to man. In a century which began to doubt and then to turn from Judeo-Christian religious tradition, the possibility of God's mercy to man became less tenable. The gradual deterioration of Hardy's faith in the efficacy of the Christian religion¹²¹ turned his attention from the skies towards man.

With Hardy's attention apparently focused more strongly on this world than another, he hoped for a time when the exchange of international thought, backed by a global patriotism, might bring about the salvation of the world.¹²² If, through the process of evolution such a condition might arise, the beginnings of which are apparent in the fact of a consciousness in higher animals which is not apparently a part of the vaster whole of the universe, then it might also be possible, since it is possible to believe that what takes place in a part may spread to the whole, that the Universal Will could become conscious, sympathetic, and an aid to the betterment of man's existence. In that condition, the Universal Will would shed loving-kindness and mercy on mankind, thus evolving a new, yet similar concept of Grace.

When such a state of Grace might be expected to arise is a

¹²⁰ T. H. L. Parker, "Grace," Baker's Dictionary of Theology, ed. Everett F. Harrison, et al. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1960), pp. 257-58. Cf. F. L. Cross, ed., The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 576-77, which indicates, along with a historical survey of the various doctrines of Grace, that Grace is essential to performing good works.

¹²¹ Notebooks, p. 77.

¹²² Life, p. 419.

difficult question. In many ways, Jude Fawley exemplifies individual betterment, as do Gabriel Oak, Diggory Venn, and Donald Farfrae; a condition which might be seen as analogous to Grace. Tess Durbeyfield and Giles Winterborne approach close and seem to be held back only by an excess of self-restraint, but their feelings and unselfishness are right. Since the "great web of human doings" is a part of the family of all organic life, and since man's will is a part of the Universal Will, it seems appropriate to assume that "human affairs illustrate the same necessitated slowness as the affairs of Nature."¹²³ George Wing observes of Hardy that "in his creative work the meliorism seems to be a long time in evolving...."¹²⁴

For Hardy, the possibility of man using his experience to evolve better conditions was intrinsic. "Had the teachings of experience grown cumulatively with the age of the world, we should have been ere now as great as God."¹²⁵ He recognized, too, that "the remedy tarries long." In a nation which could develop so much politically and economically as England did during his lifetime, Hardy saw that there was not an equal advancement of real civilization. People were not more humane, and disinterested kindness was less in his later years than in his youth.¹²⁶ With the material advances of Victorian England, there were also advances in knowledge—under the leadership of Lyell, Darwin,

¹²³ Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 269.

¹²⁴ George Douglas Wing, Hardy (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1968), p. 109; Wing's italics.

¹²⁵ Life, p. 55.

¹²⁶ Life, pp. 405-06.

Huxley, Marx and Engels, Spencer, and others—but without the advancement of real civilization, Hardy saw "how very far conduct lags behind the knowledge that should really guide it."¹²⁷

The decline of humane and disinterested kindness seems to indicate a failure of human altruism; an acquiescence of human will to self-assertion rather than a directing of the will towards loving-kindness. Because each new child born will bring an instinct for unlimited self-assertion into the world,¹²⁸ the evolution towards the new concept of Grace will necessarily be slow and faltering. Even if man or mankind approaches a condition apparently like Grace, the unforeseen may still cause problems which may bring suffering. Despite her general contentment and her ability to enjoy small moments of pleasure intensely, Elizabeth-Jane believed still in the possibility of unforeseen suffering while wondering at its persistence (MC, p. 386). Jude Fawley approached an individual condition which approximated Grace, but the unforeseen deaths of the children brought frustration and anguish into his life again, and with them, death.

In order to better himself, it becomes necessary for man to know as fully as possible the possible influences and effects which any decision or action may involve. Ideally, man would need to be omniscient. Since man is neither omniscient nor is likely to become omniscient, it is necessary for him to concentrate his will on maintaining a balance between self-assertion and self-restraint. As far as man can

¹²⁷ Life, p. 152.

¹²⁸ Huxley, p. 44.

know the influences and the effects of a situation, he must adapt his will towards preventing and avoiding suffering. In situations in which man cannot prevent or avoid suffering, he must adapt his will towards keeping pain to a minimum. Betterment becomes a dynamic process of continual precaution, balance, and consciousness of the contingencies of actions and decisions; an active process of working towards the best consummation possible.

With the persistence of the unforeseen which may arise from Nature in its unconsciousness and negligence of man and from people who do not act through loving-kindness and from social conventions and structures which are insensitive to the individual, weariness of conflict with adversity may make people reject their passions, desires, and aspirations.¹²⁹ When the children died in Jude the Obscure, Sue Bridehead rejected all of her former ideas and aspirations to begin mortification of the flesh (Jude, p. 416). The necessity of constant vigilance and adaptation demands a great exertion of human will and a corresponding loss of settled ideas, philosophy, or religion which try to make the world comfortable for man. Man's experience shows that pain, sorrow, and wrong are realities.¹³⁰ It is not until man ceases to try to escape pain and sorrow for himself alone, a manifestation of excessive self-assertion, and begins to see himself in a new way, as a modifier of the conditions of man's existence, that man may hope to abate suffering in

¹²⁹ Samuel Johnson, The History of Rasselas: Prince of Abissinia, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson and Brian Jenkins (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 127.

¹³⁰ Huxley, p. 71.

the world. In that way, man would work to help all men escape pain and sorrow.

Indeed, when the characters in Hardy's novels who had a strong passion for life tried selfishly to escape pains and sorrows for themselves only, the results of their attempts were unsuccessful. Sergeant Troy increased rather than decreased suffering when he disappeared after Fanny Robin's death. Eustacia Vye brought sorrow to Clym and death to herself, Wildeve, and Mrs. Yeobright trying to avoid the pain of confronting Mrs. Yeobright and later Clym. Angel Clare found fever and debilitation trying to escape and avoid the pain of Tess's past. Whenever characters attempted to protect themselves only from suffering, they brought additional suffering to themselves and left others in a morass.

It is not, then, a simple solution to man's suffering which Hardy proposed. It is a painful process which recognizes and confronts suffering, and the possibilities of additional suffering in order to advance faltering man a step or two at a time through his will. Even Jude Fawley recognized that his individual accomplishment was too bold a step in a world that evolves slowly. "Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us" (Jude, p. 484). Whether some of the early steps towards the evolution of a new Grace--global patriotism, the exchange of international thought, and the salvation of the world--are possible "before the year 10,000 is of course what skeptics may doubt."¹³¹ The outbreak of "monstrosities of human actions explicable

¹³¹ Life, p. 419.

by no known law which appertains to sane beings..."¹³² throughout human history is an indication of the "tendency to the reintroduction of the cosmic struggle into...the artificial fabric...and destroys that peace which is the fundamental condition of the maintenance of the state of art against the state of nature."¹³³

¹³² Life, p. 117.

¹³³ Huxley, p. 21.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

If human will seems to be not wholly effective in improving man's condition immediately, he does seem to have moments when he can act. These choices may seem insignificant in terms of the whole process and movement of life. They are still significant morally in human terms. Hardy does not seem to be arguing whether man lives by free will or by necessity (for him there was apparently some of both), rather the moral question of how man uses his choices. Even if man has only a choice between two unfortunate possibilities, the choice he makes at that point is finally important morally because of its possible effect on subsequent situations. In Under the Greenwood Tree, Fancy Day had a choice between marrying either Dick Dewy or Parson Maybold. The reader is led to feel, by implication, that if she had chosen Maybold, a suitor more equal to her and her father's expectations, then the results of the marriage would have been disastrous. The choice was between incomplete fulfillment of expectations and suffering; both choices involved an unfortunate aspect, but one choice was implied to have been ethically better.

Adaptability becomes important. Fixed ideas, ideals, philosophies, and religions will die because they cannot adapt. The survival of man in the modern age will depend on adaptation through loving-kindness. To adapt properly means taking a full look at the Worst, even anticipating the worst circumstances and consequences, then responding

to the circumstances to keep pain and suffering to a minimum, not only for oneself, but for others; an altruism of loving-kindness.

The process of adaptation is a process of will. To suspend emotional as well as intellectual judgment in difficult cases is not easy and can be quite painful. To give up ideas, ideals, philosophies, or religions which are comfortable, self-serving, or otherwise flattering in order to adapt may be quite painful, at least psychically. The pain can develop, Hardy suggests, into the "coming Universal wish not to live." In an existence in which stasis is deadly, in which constant adaptation is required, and in which constant change leaves every man rootless, life may be tiring and debilitating. A man may decide that the need for constant adaptation is too exhausting and wish for the peace, rest, and stasis of utopian ideas and philosophies or, on a less intellectual plane, simply his daily habits. Hardy had his utopian idea also, though but shortly entertained.¹³⁴ At that point when utopianisms can no longer be entertained, existence may seem less attractive than death which, at least in Hardy's vision, is the only static state in the modern age.

The loss of fixed, transcendent ideas is a basis for Hardy's sadness. Hardy's novels and other writings show his lament for the destruction of old relics, churches, and antiquities. The replacement of the old with the new in the modernization of the rural order to the industrial order is a sign of the permanent loss of static elements in

¹³⁴ Life, p. 258. Briefly, Hardy's utopian idea was to organize society into groups based on temperament which, he felt, would give individual spontaneity and promise better chances for happiness than a curbed and uniform society.

society and life. Hardy saw, at once, the need for change and adaptation, and the sadness of the loss of stasis. The changes are inevitable, even desirable if toil, hardships, and suffering are to be alleviated. The romantic nature of the old postillians and other rural workers must not halt the alleviation of their suffering.¹³⁵ The changes can be deadly, however, if man does not adapt with loving-kindness. Without loving-kindness, man may destroy some of the rich variety of humanity which does not cause suffering, but without which progress in civilization may not be possible.¹³⁶

"Grace" is the human will, evolving into instinct, to act through loving-kindness. Loving-kindness is not enough in itself. Grace Melbury felt loving-kindness for Giles Winterborne; and Giles for Grace. Their failure to act upon their feelings led to Giles' death and Grace's scourgings. There needs to be a balance between self-assertion and self-restraint. The consciousness to know when either one motivation or the other is needed is an aspect of man's betterment towards the new "Grace." This consciousness comes through suffering, the individual's and others'. Suffering can be, then, the basis for man's betterment.

The exploration of reality and the recognition of its worst aspects, especially suffering, and the evolution of an intense consciousness of the sufferings of others through the network or tissue of mankind, give man a knowledge of suffering and its causes upon which he may act with loving-kindness. Suffering can give man the information

¹³⁵ Notebooks, pp. 46-48, 61-62.

¹³⁶ Bagehot, pp. 60-61.

and the motivation he needs to adapt his will towards the Better. If man can evolve towards ameliorating the conditions of his existence in his relations with other men, the influence of his will may affect the Universal Will, of which man's will is a part, and bring the Universal Will to consciousness and sympathy. If evolutionary meliorism extends beyond man to the Universe, then the Universe, too, could come into Grace, making existence itself a state of Grace. The creative force might be reinstated as the new, beneficial Providence. Until that happens, if indeed it may before the exhaustion or the destruction of the world or man, man must exert his will to make his portion of the world as painless as possible. Man must will "to afford the greatest happiness to the units of human society."¹³⁷

¹³⁷ Orel, p. 20.

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