THE ROMANTIC TRADITION IN THOMAS HARDY'S MAJOR NOVELS

DISSERTATION

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One of the most encouraging signs of the recent criticism of Thomas Hardy has been its increasing recognition of his elusive resistance to schematic classification. Attempts to define and limit Hardy's art have been frustrated by its unexpected sources of meaning and energy. The result is paradoxical, for with an immense bulk of Hardy criticism behind us, we are now in a better position for a fresh appreciation of Hardy's work, for immediate contact with its intense individuality. It has become impossible (or at least very reckless) to accept unreservedly the conventional portrait of Hardy as a pessimist, a fatalist, an ironist—to take for granted that view of Hardy which went without question and without exploration for nearly half a century. This is not to say that our reading of Hardy's fiction has not profited from those who saw deeply into his determinism or who traced painstakingly the grimness of its world view. Rather, we must agree with Richard Carpenter that Hardy is "bound to be problematic, showing new sides to new generations...." Hence, "We may cheerfully admit that the conventional view of Hardy is not in error but at the same time
maintain that it misses the point.1 Probably no single
point of view can comprehend the whole of Hardy's art. Yet
it is that sense of its range that returns us to it, that
inspires us to gather more and more of its light into our
understanding.

"What do we really feel," one of the most recent books
on Hardy is obliged to ask us, "what is our true response,
in reading The Return of the Native?"2 Clearly, our answer
depends on our judgment of what is most true about The Return
of the Native. Those who stress Hardy's determinism or fatal­
ism generally point to Mrs. Yeobright's visit to Eustacia as
the critical moment of the novel. The very day Wildeve
nerves himself to visit Eustacia openly, Mrs. Yeobright
chooses for her long-delayed forgiveness and recognition of
the marriage. If Mrs. Yeobright had not stopped to rest on
Devil's Bellows, she would have preceded Wildeve to the
cottage, with results surely happier than those which occur.
If her knocking had only aroused Clym in time for him to
admit her, or if Eustacia had not lingered so long in the
garden after Wildeve's departure—if all the circumstances
of the scene had settled themselves more favorably to
Eustacia's needs and desires, the closed door would have
opened and the reconciliation been made. But the circum­
stances go against her. One after another the wrong cards
fall to her hands; and it is tempting indeed to see her
trapped by those circumstances, helpless before the cards
facing her—as tempting for us as it is for Eustacia to lay
"the fault upon the shoulders of some indistinct, colossal
Prince of the World, who had framed her situation and ruled
her lot."³

It is as tempting and as dangerous. For the critical
moment in The Return of the Native is not Mrs. Yeobright's
visit to Eustacia, but Eustacia's refusal to open the door
to her, not the circumstances upon which Eustacia must act,
but the way she acts upon them. Of course the circumstances
make it hard to do the right thing; but does that mean that
Eustacia is absolved from the obligation of doing what is
right? She is, only if you take her word for it, or if you
force her fatalism back upon Hardy. Herbert J. Muller has
wisely observed that even if Hardy's novels "explicitly"
state "a gospel of despair," they "eloquently" represent "a
deep faith: a natural reverence for man, an illogical ideal
belief that he is superior to the forces that destroy
him...."⁴ I am not prepared to accept Hardy's belief as
"illogical," for it has fundamental congruence with what
is most important in his art. But the time has surely come
to consider whether Hardy does, in fact, absolve Eustacia
from the responsibility that fate has made almost unendur-
able—or whether he demands that she rise to the heroism
needed to endure it.

I will discuss The Return of the Native more fully in a
later chapter. The approach to that and to Hardy's fiction,
as a whole must first consider this: what happens if we consider the climax of the novel to be Eustacia's decision not to open the door? Among other effects, the principal one is to refocus our attention away from the circumstances necessitating a decision to the decision itself, to the mind in its act of decision. The novel takes on, as its primary center of interest, the spiritual history of the growth and relative strength of Eustacia's and Clym's inner lives. And though it is generally assumed that Hardy was deeply concerned to portray the mental, moral, and spiritual lives of his characters, earlier attempts to categorize his thought into one or another species of philosophical pessimism have blurred and distorted the inspiration and the mastery of his portraits. Such attempts fail to account for the full range of Hardy's mental life and particularly for his interest in man's quest for self realization, an interest Hardy did not drive from the scientific determinism current in his age. It is the involvement in that very quest, moreover, that makes the Wessex novels the powerful literary experience they continue to be. And that, too, is why recent critics have begun to search beyond the admittedly important influence of Darwin for an inspiration or an affinity more coherent to and suggestive of the Wessex novels as literary experiences. Among those who have thus broadened our understanding of Hardy, I believe the most suggestive contribution has been made by Jacques Barzun, who points out that critics have erred about Hardy because
they took him to be first a representative Victorian, contemporary with Darwin and Bismark, and then a modern Phoenix, newly risen from the ashes of his own novels, to become a contemporary of Yeats and Henry James.

Hardy belongs to neither school. Spiritually and intellectually, Hardy is a Romanticist.6

Hardy the Romanticist emerges when we define the climactic moments of his novels to be within the passions, motives, and decision-making powers his characters bring to the world of circumstances.7 If Hardy is vitally concerned about the spiritual growth of his men and women in a world that offers no support or direction for their development—and I intend to show that he is concerned—then his thought takes its shape and impetus from the example and inspiration of his most immediate and important literary background, from the great Romantic poets whose work saturated the reading of his entire life.8

Regrettably, Barzun does not carry his view beyond the point of simple assertion; nor does the fact that Hardy spent a lifetime reading Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats prove anything, except perhaps that he disagreed with them as much as they did with each other. Still, the assertion has the potential of commanding serious regard, of becoming necessary, and other critics have increased its potential without actualizing it.9 Morton Dauwen Zabel, for instance, shows that Hardy developed an aesthetic to counteract the
notions about human experience which his age derived from scientific determinism and which appear in a "literal reading" of his own work. Ted R. Spivey recognizes that "Hardy's tragic heroes...are romantic heroes worthy to be ranked with the most memorable heroes of the great Romantic tradition of the nineteenth century." His essay is especially illuminating in its understanding of Hardy's approach to tragedy, but it does not organically relate Hardy's special qualities of vision to those that dominated the first half of his century. Hence, Eugene Goodheart, in a somewhat later article, can argue just as emphatically that "Hardy was a Romantic tragedian without a stage for his tragedy." Hardy's Romanticism, in other words, is not yet a critical position drawn from a detailed examination of his work. It has remained an assumption or an intuitive response to those qualities in him that have proved intractable to the more traditional, scientifically-oriented approaches to his art. But if Hardy is a Romantic in any meaningful way, the vital interests of his work should parallel the vital interests of early nineteenth-century English poetry. That poetry should be an emotional bias for, a shaping influence upon his mind and imagination. Hardy must be Romantic in the way he views nature and in the way he dramatizes the possibilities of human identity in nature. I hope to show that he is, and that his novels endure because of his demand that man prove his spiritual superiority to the forces that physically destroy him.
We are not likely to underestimate Darwin's impact upon late nineteenth-century thought. The Origin of Species is one of our most frequently used landmarks for the plotting out of man's historical conceptions of nature. Before 1859, we speak of Romantic (or Wordsworthian) nature; closer to the present, nature is post-Romantic, evolutionary. It is not surprising that Hardy's views have been classified almost totally with those deriving from the Darwinian premise. This case is made most persuasively by Harvey Curtis Webster, in his study of the development of Hardy's thought. Darwin had written:

We behold the face of nature bright with gladness, we often see superabundance of food; we do not see, or we forget, that the birds which are idly singing round us live mostly on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life; or we forget how largely these songsters, or their eggs, or their nestlings, are destroyed by birds and beasts of prey.

Upon quoting the above, Webster goes on to conclude that "this struggle also applied to man. If Hardy accepted the Darwinian hypothesis, he would be compelled to change entirely his previous conception of the law which governed the universe." Hardy, that is, had crossed the landmark of 1859, where a harsh naturalism forced him to discard the warmer, more responsive nature of his youth—"to change entirely" a vision at once personal to him and collective to the mind.
of the first half of the century. But was the crossing immediate and complete—was it ever complete? David Lodge, I think, provides a more accurate, because more complicated, view of Hardy's attitudes towards nature: "Hardy's undertaking to defend Tess as a pure woman by emphasizing her kinship with Nature perpetually drew him towards the Romantic view of Nature as a reservoir of benevolent impulses, a view which one side of his mind rejected as falsely sentimental. Many Victorian writers, struggling to reconcile the view of Nature inherited from the Romantics with the discoveries of Darwinian biology, exhibit the same conflict, but it is particularly noticeable in Hardy."^{15}

The traditional distinction between Romantic and Darwinian persists—I will return to that in the next section of this chapter. But Hardy is no longer clearly distinguished from the Romantics, though the implication is that he is a Romantic against his better judgment. Yet Lodge has touched on one of the most subtle, perplexing problems to be found in Hardy, his conception of and feelings for nature. Critics have grappled with the problem ever since Lionel Johnson revealed its full dimensions by asking, in his pioneer study The Art of Thomas Hardy: "What is this 'Nature,' of which or of whom, Mr. Hardy speaks? Is it a Natura naturate, or a Natura naturans? Is it a conscious Power? or a convenient name for the whole mass of physical facts?" (p. 232).

It has been sixty years since, and Johnson's question remains unanswered. He grasps more fully than Lodge the
possibility of opposite concepts in Hardy, but most critics choose to defend the exclusiveness of one, trying to impose understandably enough their own coherence upon Hardy's work. Does Hardy present nature as offering a guide for human conduct from which man has been perverted, to his own unhappiness, by the arbitrary rules of his civilization? In his important study of Hardy's concept of nature, John Holloway argues that he does: "The single abstraction which does most to summarize Hardy's view is simple enough: it is right to live naturally. ...to live naturally is to live in continuity with one's whole biological and geographical environment." Nature is Natura naturans, then, the formula of things as they should be. After all, Hardy's rustics—men who live close to the soil and who abide by the traditional values and habits which they derive from their closeness to it—are among his happiest, most stable and innocent characters. Are not his noblest specimens of humanity those characters who, though more fully developed, approximate most closely to the rustic life: Gabriel Oak, Diggory Venn, Giles Winterborne? Hardy's "whole concept of good and bad," Holloway accordingly argues, "follows these lines and is perfectly simple: people are to be admired as they have continuity with nature more or less completely, and those whom he stresses as on a false track in life are those who have lost it, and pursue some private self-generated dream instead" (p. 283). In Desperate Remedies and Far From the
Madding Crowd, nature is "the Great Mother" sending messages and warnings to her troubled and perplexed children, Cytherea Graye and Gabriel Oak.

But the most powerful scene of A Pair of Blue Eyes describes Henry Knight's frantic struggle upon the Cliff without a Name against "Nature's treacherous attempt to put an end to him...." Nature is now anonymous, hostile to man's life, at the least indifferent to the meaning and quality of that life. Knight is brought face to face with a fossil crustacean, and a Darwinian panorama of history spreads across his mind as he reflects upon the geological eras embedded in the layers of slate before him: "The immense lapses of time each formation represented had known nothing of the dignity of man. ...He was to be with the small in his death" (p. 241). Is Hardy being ironic when he speaks of "the dignity of man" and contrasts that dignity to so stupendous an inanimation? Or is he about to demonstrate human dignity by showing that men can prove themselves superior to nature and can provide the necessary corrective force to the rude operations of things as they are, to nature fallen and brutal, Natura naturata?

Elfride and Knight not only win the struggle for existence but enter a higher level of union because of their actions against nature. There can no longer be any possibility of Elfride's return to Stephen. My point is that this concept of nature and of man's relation to it
has practically nothing in common with the concept defined by Holloway, just as his is not included in the entire change of mind predicated by Webster. What does it mean to "live naturally" when nature is out to destroy you? That kind of problem leads Roy Morrell to refute at length Holloway's position and to set up another in direct opposition to it: "In Hardy's world, in short, man sometimes can and should strive against the natural flow of things...." In short, Hardy demands that man use his "distinctively human intelligence" to resist and apparently amend things as they are. Both critics argue forcefully because both can point to specific details and obvious implications of the texts under their analysis. Yet we are left, in one of the most recent works on Hardy, with the question posed in one of the earliest—what is Hardy's nature? We can judge Hardy, Morrell writes, as "opposed to Nature and all her promptings"; and we can "assume that Hardy worshipped Nature" (pp. 90-91).

Ambivalent feelings can be aesthetically fruitful in the creation of tension and conflict. They can also tempt the critic to oversimplifications and trap even a creative genius in banalities. What are we to do with Hardy's indictment of nature in Jude: "[Jude] projected his mind into the future, and saw her with children more or less in her own likeness around her. But the consolation of regarding them as a continuation of her identity was denied to him,
as to all such dreamers, by the wilfulness of Nature in not allowing issue from one parent alone. ...And then he again uneasily saw, as he had latterly seen with more and more frequency, the scorn of Nature for man's finer emotions and her lack of interest in his aspirations" (p. 212)? Unfortunately, this is an indictment of nature and not an ironic comment on "all such dreamers" as Jude. The novel has by this time in its plot thoroughly developed the conflict between natural facts and moral or rational ideals, and Hardy's commitment to the latter is perfectly clear. Callous and self-seeking like the nature she represents, Arabella has already scorned Jude's finer emotions in her complete uninterest for his aspirations. But can anyone speak seriously of nature's wilfulness "in not allowing issue from one parent alone"?

We cannot, however, dismiss the passage simply as banal, for it is at the same time audacious in the demands it makes upon nature. Daring to evaluate the operations of Natura naturata according to the norms of Natura naturans, it reveals the simultaneous presence of two natures in Hardy's consciousness. As Holloway notes, Hardy turns to nature as a guide for conduct; yet Morrell is right to argue that Hardy imposes a moral burden upon man because nature is lawless. To understand the significance of the passage from Jude we must place it in the context of Hardy's long and sometimes indecisive conflict between opposing
visions of nature. As I hope to show in the chapters that follow, the development of that conflict plays a crucial role in the growth and direction of Hardy's major fiction. It helps us to see how Hardy modified his conceptions of man's primal relationships to the external world and to himself. A normative nature in the earlier novels imposes upon Hardy's characters the duty of abiding by an external order and of identifying their moral selves with a given pattern of right and wrong. A lawless nature forces the characters in the later novels to survive in the absence of order and to create their own moral identities. There is no neat chronological division between the two attitudes in Hardy's work. Though the second begins to dominate after *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Hardy frequently suspends the development of one to explore new possibilities in the other. Nor do the attitudes split into the customary camps of Romantic and post-Romantic. Hardy is not Wordsworthian against the better judgment of Darwin. Within its ambivalence, his thought develops coherently. Moreover, if these two attitudes are vital for an understanding of Hardy, they are just as vital for, because equally present in, Wordsworth and Keats.

When Lodge speaks of the Romantic view of nature inherited by the Victorians and threatened by the discover-
ies of Darwinian science, he is referring to the view expressed in such poems as "Lines Written in Early Spring" and the Intimations Ode. The first describes the living, sensitive nature of flowers, birds, and twigs, enjoying the pleasure of their lives in their appropriate places. The poet feels his own life most fully when he is united with the living community of nature, and he grieves that man sometimes acts outside of nature, in disregard of its guiding plan, to his own sorrow and loss—a moral loss, since nature's plan is "holy," sent from heaven; and a personal loss, a loss of identity, since only within nature can one experience fullness of life. The Intimations Ode provides a theoretical structure and a dramatic movement for the lyric's simple assertion. Now it is Wordsworth himself, or his representative speaker, who broods over his isolation from nature's plan and seeks to define himself in relation to it—to be, despite his apparent isolation, integrated after all. As this personal drama unfolds it reveals an attitude towards nature that is best characterized by the term, "ceremonial." The ceremonial vision is one of obeisance to nature's laws; it is Wordsworth's attitude as a "worshipper of Nature."

In the Intimations Ode "natural" man is "Nature's Priest"; when they attune themselves instinctively to the source of his being, his actions perform the "simple creed/Of Childhood." And it is the loss of this ceremonial vision uniting him to nature, and through nature to his own spiritual
existence, that leads the poet to attempt and affirm recovery of an attitude of "Perpetual benediction" to that vision and the order of life it represented.

The mind ceremonially involved with nature as a guide for or a source of life—of man's conception of his own identity—is perhaps the most abiding impression we have of Romanticism. Yet there is another kind of mind, also characteristic of Romanticism, which has been recognized as such, while it has remained unreconciled to the mind we normally characterize as Romantic. After describing a "quiet eve" on the beach, among "silent" rocks and a silver-foamed sea, Keats says that he was "at home"—has identified with a peaceful, ordered nature—and that he "should have been most happy"—like the birds and flowers of Wordsworth's lyric. But a dramatic reversal occurs, as another kind of vision displaces the ceremonial:

...I saw
Too far into the sea, where every maw
The greater on the less feeds evermore.—
But I saw too distinct into the core
Of an eternal fierce destruction,
And so from happiness I far was gone.18

The ceremonial vision had lamented those human actions that do violence to nature's ways. Keats is questioning the violence of nature's ways, nature's estrangement from the human consciousness:

Still do I that most fierce destruction see—
The Shark at savage prey,—the Hawk at pounce,—
The gentle Robin, like a Pard or Ounce,
Havening a worm,...

In a strikingly parallel image in 1859, Darwin will advise us to look at the idle "songsters" if we want to discover mutual destruction.

Keats has looked over his soul's Pequod deep down into the sea and cannot assure himself that he believes. Once he has recognized nature as a mechanical process of big fish eating little fish, he can no longer return to nature as a quality constitutive of his human identity. "The quiet, unconcerned beauty of nature, which had always been Keats's refuge against unhappiness," Aileen Ward correctly observes, "now seemed to hold no assurance of any triumph over suffering, or even of any meaning in pain and death..." Keats can no longer return to the ceremonial attitude towards nature and must seek the meaning and the make-up of his own self through another mode of vision.

The very structure of the "Epistle to Reynolds" balances opposing views of nature, just as its dynamics move the poet from the one view to the other. The ceremonial vision is evoked by nature seen as the "material sublime," the garment of a magic, supernatural life, projected ultimately from the mind and longings of the poet as a means of consoling the ailing Reynolds. Natural objects come alive, as though they formed "a lifted mound/Above some giant, pulsing underground." They are brought together and understood through
the important image of the Enchanted Castle:

You know the Enchanted Castle,—it doth stand
Upon a rock, on the border of a Lake,
Nested in trees, which all do seem to shake
From some old magiclike Urganda's sword.

It is a "Merlin's Hall, a dream"; representing nature, it
has an inherent life and power: "The doors all look as if
they op'd themselves...." Take away the Gothic trappings
and a level of vision comparable to that of Wordsworth's
Ode can be seen attempting to dramatize itself through a
kind of imagery that in less than two months will brilliant­
ly synthesize into the Chamber of Maiden-Thought. That
Chamber, this Castle, nature harmonized and related to the
human spirit--this is what men identify by and see before
they look too deep into the waters, "whose lives have
patent wings,/And thro' whose curtains peeps no hellish
nose...." This is man's anthropocentric bias that Hardy
frequently criticized and could not always escape. But
the Enchanted Castle vanishes in the evolutionary convul­
sion of the eternal fierce destruction, and with it goes
the ceremonial communion with nature, forced to give way
to an unsettling recognition of man's isolation, the
first step towards Keats's formulation of the world as a
"vale of Soul-making."

That vision of the world clearly prefigures Hardy's,
particularly that of his later novels. In the "Epistle
to Reynolds"--and we must remember that it is not a care­
fully finished poem—Keats can do no more than register the experience of his displacement, the fact that nature falls short of man's consciousness, which can no longer accept it as a guide for human conduct. With no plan external to him by which to estimate his life, Keats stumbles "in a sort of Purgatory blind," where he "Cannot refer to any standard law/Of either earth or heaven." He does not yet rise to the vision creative of its own law, to a sense of identity despite the lawlessness of nature. He laments that his imagination has seen beyond the "bourn" of ceremony, spoiling his enjoyment of summer skies and the Nightingale's song. Unable to reconcile things to will he does not commit himself fully to "will," as Tess is to do. Yet he will himself prepare her way when he writes to his brother George of the necessity of spirit creation in a world in which man achieves his identity as the maker of his own soul.

My reading of the poems and letters of Wordsworth and Keats and of Hardy's major fiction must, of course, stand or fall by what it has to say about the poems and novels. But a further clarification of the attitudes towards nature I have just distinguished may be in order here, to suggest both the necessity of such a distinction and the principal difficulty attending it. Only by recognizing its two modes of vision can we take from Hardy's
fiction its full portrait of life. Yet it is not possible to impose a fixed set of terms upon the two attitudes without risking imprecision or misappropriation of meaning. This is especially true of the second attitude, the vision of nature as lawless. The first attitude lends itself more easily to definition as a "ceremonial vision," because that term conveys explicitly an awareness of nature as a system, as proceeding in some way or another from intelligence, at least intelligible in its proceedings. I equate the ceremonial vision with what we normally conceive of as the mythological, because it sees nature as alive and as cognizant of and centered on man. Man's role is to discover nature's plan and relate himself to it: his life, properly lived, becomes a ceremony to active powers outside of him, by whom or from whom he will achieve the highest condition possible to man—whether that be defined religiously or naturalistically—or who will deny him that achievement, as in the ceremonial vision of Eustacia Vye. The ceremonial vision assumes that man's soul is given to him and that spiritual values are already pre-existing in nature for man's direction.

No one term serves so satisfactorily for the second attitude, by which I mean not so much a vision into nature as a quality of being experienced by man outside of and despite nature. I have already tested and rejected several possibilities as not fully definitive of the human mind
engaged in the process of soul making. "Orphic vision" evokes a singer who must journey to hell, endure the frustration of his dreams, and yet survive and continue singing. It has particular applicability for some one like Clym Yeobright, whom we can see as a modern Orpheus, but the same allusion would stand in the way of an understanding of Tess or of Keats's Moneta. "Monetic vision" suggested itself since Moneta's face is an image of the life experienced by Hardy's characters, but Moneta is not so all-inclusive of those characters as the use of such a term would imply. Of course there are the more familiar epithets—"modern," "naturalistic," "circumstantial"—but these terms already carry more meaning than they can conveniently dispose of. If euphonic value were the sole consideration, I would use the term "charismatic vision" to emphasize by its similarity in sound its dissimilarity in meaning from ceremonial vision. In fact I have retained "charismatic" whenever I could to designate the vision and power of self of those characters who have survived the loss of the ceremonial attitude—whenever, that is, it clearly designates that a character has attained the power of soul making. But I do not consider it a completely satisfactory term because in its denotation and in contemporary usage it refers to human qualities which have little to do with those I have chosen to study. Hence I have had no other recourse at times but to return to Keats's own terms and to oppose ceremonial vision with "soul-making vision"
or the "power of soul making."

But the vision so difficult to name is readily experienced. It supplies much of what is most meaningful to us in the literature of the last century and a half. The Orphic or the charismatic or the soul-making power is one which accepts nature as systemless, unintelligible, and without plan. Spiritual values do not pre-exist: only man can create meaning and value in a meaningless world, and to create them man must recognize his freedom from the objects of ceremonial vision. Man grows to the power of soul making when he asserts his freedom and spiritual value after encountering the sufferings and physical destruction of the world. The charismatic man does not reject the "Purgatory blind" or the chaos of principles that Jude Fawley finds himself in, but sees in the absence of law his own human potential. His self realization may be described mythologically, as in Keats's *Fall of Hyperion*, but the vision behind it must be distinguished from myth, which sees life characteristically as a product dependent upon external forces, which assumes the soul to be already made. Some of the greatest moments in Hardy's novels, as I hope to show, are those that derive their meaning from the Romantic idea of life as process and their inspiration from the attempts of Wordsworth and Keats to image the spiritual life of man in its making.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER I

1 Thomas Hardy (New York, 1964), pp. 15, 37. The best survey of Hardy criticism is George S. Fayen, Jr.'s, section on Hardy in Victorian Fiction: A Guide to Research, ed. Lionel Stevenson (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), pp. 349-87. Other, somewhat less objective comparisons between modern and traditional approaches can be found in Albert J. Guerard, Thomas Hardy (Norfolk, Conn., 1964; first published in 1949), pp. 1-45; and Roy Morrell, Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 1-28. I am indebted to both studies and cite them frequently. Guerard bases his distinction mainly on matters of technique, realist versus non-realist (i.e. modern) canons. He holds to the deterministic view of Hardy's characters, against which Morrell's entire book is a much needed, though somewhat limited, polemic.


3 The Return of the Native (London, 1964), p. 353; pp. 337-38. Throughout this study I have used The Greenwood Edition of Hardy's novels (formerly named the Library Edition). Whenever possible, I will confine my references to them to my text. The Greenwood Edition includes Hardy's final revisions and is substantially the same as the definitive Wessex Edition.

4 "The Novels of Hardy Today," The Southern Review, VI (1940-41), 222.

5 In 1889, Hardy quoted with approval from Browning's headnote to Sordello: "'Incidents in the development of a soul! little else is worth study'..." Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928 (London, 1962), p. 223.

6 "Truth and Poetry in Thomas Hardy," The Southern Review, VI (1940-41), 190.

7 For an excellent discussion of Romanticism as a movement concerned with "self-articulation," see Robert Langbaum, The Poetry of Experience (New York, 1963; first published in

8

Though all recognize Hardy's devotion to Romantic poetry, the tendency has generally been to treat Hardy's reading of the Romantics as an act of leisure, amusement, or escape and to deny that it had any formative significance (except for undesirable Shelleyisms) upon his own work. William R. Rutland establishes Hardy's early interest in the Romantics, in *Thomas Hardy: A Study of his Writings and their Backgrounds* (New York, 1962; first published in 1938), pp. 13 ff. References to the Romantics abound in Hardy's autobiography, printed under his wife's name. To be sure, critics who see Hardy as a pessimist, determinist, or evolutionary meliorist often speak of Hardy's characters (particularly his idealists) as satiric portraits of misguided Romantics, without enlightening anyone's notion of the Romantic hero.

9

Of course Barzun is not the first to make the connection. Lionel Johnson, in *The Art of Thomas Hardy* (New York, 1928; first published in 1894), provides an extended comparison between Hardy and Wordsworth, though with the object of distinguishing between their two world views (pp. 167-73). David Cecil, though his work follows Barzun's, writes independently of it, I believe, in stressing the Romantic bias and inspiration of Hardy's mind—as seen in Hardy's subjective, emotive apprehension of landscape. Cecil makes the comparison a misleading rather than a helpful one, however, by identifying "the romantic type" as "sublime, irregular, quaint, mysterious and extravagant...." See *Hardy the Novelist* (New York, 1943), p. 72; pp. 66 ff.

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The evolutionary thesis had its own long evolution, of course; and I am not suggesting that a dramatic reorganization of thought occurred in one year. An excellent account of the history and impact of evolution can be found in Loren Eisley, *Darwin's Century* (Garden City, New York, 1961; first published in 1958). See also D. C. Somerville, *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1929), pp. 123-26; and Lionel Stevenson, *Darwin Among the Poets* (Chicago, 1932), pp. 17-29—a brief survey of pseudo-evolutionary thought extending back to the Greeks.

Both the reference to Darwin and Webster's conclusions are in *On A Darkling Plain* (London, 1964; first published in 1947), p. 41.


Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way, p. 15, original italics.


In the book cited above, Evert finds sinister implica-
tions even here, in the imagery clustered around "Merlin's Hall." This does violence, I feel, to the logic of the poem. Evert's remarks on the quality of vision present in the "Epistle" can be corrected through the distinction between participator- and observer-attitude towards nature, as defined by R. A. Forsyth, "The Myth of Nature and the Victorian Compromise of the Imagination," ELH, XXXI (June, 1964), 213-40.
CHAPTER II

THE MAKING OF THE ROMANTIC SOUL

"I believe in God, not from what I see in Nature, but from what I find in man."

---Tennyson to the Bishop of Ripon.

I think my darling girl is more beautiful than ever. The sorrow that has been in her face—for it is not there now—seems to have purified even its innocent expression, and to have given it a diviner quality.

---Bleak House.

Keats wrote the "Epistle to Reynolds" in the agony of watching his brother slowly die. It was at about this period that he returned to his reading of Wordsworth with a wider, more objective understanding of the older poet's genius. He must have sensed that he was returning to the one poet most congenial to his immediate needs, for Wordsworth, always aware of human suffering and of the need to work through that suffering to some coherent pattern for human existence, had passed through a major crisis in his own mental and moral life a decade earlier in the death of his brother, John.
The shock of John's drowning was profound. Its immediate
effect, and the one most relevant to my purposes, was that it
led Wordsworth to question and doubt the sufficiency of the
external world to meet the demands of the human mind for the
appearance of a rational order in the external nature of
things. Man suddenly appeared morally superior to anything
he could experience outside of him, and to be at once thwarted
and threatened by that external world. "Alas! what is human
life," Wordsworth cries out in his first anguish at hearing
the news. Then, a month later, more collected but no less
insistent, he probes the limitations and possibilities of
human life in one of the most crucial letters in the history
of his intellectual development:

A thousand times have I asked myself... 'Why
was he taken away?' and I have answered the
question as you have done.... Why have we a
choice and a will, and a notion of justice
and injustice, enabling us to be moral agents?
Why have we sympathies that make us so afraid
of inflicting pain and sorrow, which yet we
see dealt about so lavishly by the supreme
governor? Why should our notions of right
towards each other, and to all sentient
beings within our influence, differ so wide-
ly from what appears to be his notion and
rule, if everything were to end here."

The terminating qualifier, with its hesitant "if," hardly
lessens the force of what precedes it--questions revealing
Wordsworth's awareness of man's moral superiority to and
isolation from the operations of the natural world and from
the theories advanced to explain them. Facing, in a sense,
the age-old problem of the existence of evil, he does so in a way that resonates throughout the century, constructing his own "Purgatory blind" between what man's intelligence and will know to be right and what is offered from without by which to achieve the right. Why is man a moral agent, Wordsworth asks, in a world manifesting itself as amoral? And it is not only the world, physical nature, that Wordsworth calls to the bar, but the ultimate laws governing it and the supreme governor himself:

Would it not be blasphemy to say that, upon the supposition of the thinking principle being destroyed by death, however inferior we may be to the great Cause and Ruler of things, we have more of love in our nature than He has? The thought is monstrous; and yet how to get rid of it, except upon the supposition of another and a better world, I do not see.

We can all see the incipient Christianity behind the outburst, yet the dominant tenor of his thought is anything but orthodox. It is troubled, skeptical, and bitter. He has confronted a cosmic heart of darkness, and he is now trying to grope his way towards authentic light. Moreover, this dilemma is a modification of one he had just escaped, when he solved an aesthetic problem of comparable scope in the *Intimations Ode* by finding in the meanest flower a pledge of continued spiritual life. Now, faced with a problem pre-eminently moral and again spiritual, he finds no immediate guarantee or satisfaction. Quite the reverse occurs. There
is nothing like the positive intimation that he once affirmed of "Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," of "the soothing thoughts that spring/Out of human suffering." Instead, he recognizes that he must replace the ceremonial with another vision, that the spiritual values he assumed must be created. This recognition and the vision it generates bring together two of the fundamental veins of Romantic thought: the insufficiency of this earth to satisfy our claims on life, and the ironic discrepancy between man's moral growth and his subjection to a physical power of questionable morality. The first attitude states simply that this world is not enough, that if there is not another and a better world then man is forced by his deepest awareness of things into blasphemy or into the creation of that world—"it is the insight imaged by Shelley in the stained-glass window of Adonais, the lesson of Moneta in The Fall of Hyperion, the conflict that destroys Catherine Earnshaw in Wuthering Heights, and the pattern of spiritual triumph and tragedy in The Woodlanders and Jude the Obscure. It is a premonition of things fulfilled, not overthrown, by Darwinian evolution.

But it is the second attitude, or rather the alternate expression of the same attitude, that Wordsworth emphasizes in his letter to Beaumont and in the poems most immediately associated with it. If man must create another and a better world to supplant the limitations of this one, he must do so in a world that appears increasingly hostile or at least
indifferent to him, a world characterized for Wordsworth at this period by the ironic overthrow of expectations. At least, nothing so dominates his thoughts of John as the fact that he had everything to live for at the moment he ceased to live. In a letter to James Losh, Wordsworth reflects that "We have lost him at a time when we are young enough to have been justified in looking forward to many happy years to be passed in his society and when we are too old to outgrow the loss" (The Early Letters, p. 466). John himself had written sanguinely of his expectations for this voyage, hoping to be soon enabled to retire in comfort near his brother and sister. The catastrophe, then, becomes all the more poignant and tragic, as Wordsworth universalizes its significance: "Poor blind Creatures that we are! how he hoped and struggled, and we hoped and struggled, to procure him this voyage. He wrote to us from Portsmouth in the highest spirits, and then came those dismal tidings!" (The Early Letters, p. 477).

Seeing the nobility of human aspirations, and seeing too those aspirations destroyed by gratuitous and inexplicable evil, Wordsworth proclaims in the Beaumont letter, man's love to be greater than that of the "great Cause and Ruler of things," who yet holds man in an unremitting physical bondage.

Yet that bondage is physical only, and from the conflict between man's power of love and the indifferent actions of the universe, Wordsworth learns to define human greatness and heroism. He draws upon the concept of duty, which he sees
exemplified in John's death and upon which he constructed his
two most important poems of the following decade, The Excur-
sion and The White Doe of Rylstone. It was a concept, per-
haps, that engaged Wordsworth from the very beginning; and
it never leaves the background of my discussion, though I do
not present the poems as apostrophes to it. John's death
forced Wordsworth to expand his thoughts upon duty, to clarify
his definition of it, and to create a meaning for human life
out of it. John's final actions became an embodiment of the
performance of duty—a resolute adherence to an internal law
in the face of an external chaos. "...what nobler spectacle
can be contemplated," Wordsworth writes in the Beaumont letter,
"than that of a virtuous man with a serene countenance in such
an overwhelming situation?" (p. 462). John supplies a pattern
for man by morally controlling the circumstances physically
controlling him; he contributes to the portrait of the happy
warrior, one who

makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:...?

Like John, the happy warrior maintains his moral being
inviolate, and can thus define his own heroism and selfhood
on those external powers controlling him on the one hand and
subjected to his higher control on the other. The better world is created here, in the private, individual consciousness of men as moral agents.

Michael will immediately come to mind as a man, a hero, sworn to duty and resolute in the face of the most tragic adversity. He is all this and emerges a powerful figure. But Michael embraces and is embraced by nature’s holy plan, is soothed by the thoughts that spring out of human suffering, and though shocked and worn by what his son has made of himself, he has a recourse and a refuge denied to those who have contemplated blasphemy. He reflects the finest elements of Wordsworth’s ceremonial nature wedded to man. I am concerned with the displacement of that vision by the one that found expression in two equally significant and characteristically Wordsworthian poems—“Resolution and Independence,” and “Elegiac Stanzas Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle.” In both, a contrary vision destroys the enchanted castle refuge of nature and creates out of that loss new possibilities for human life and growth.

Antedating by about three years the death of John, “Resolution and Independence” expresses a very similar loss of harmony between man’s aspirations and awareness and the operations of the external world. The poem opens with the familiar evocation of an animated nature, throbbing with an inner life projected by the poet. “The sky rejoices in the morning’s birth”; and on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;  
And with her feet she from the plashy earth  
Rises a mist; that, glittering in the sun,  
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

Shorn of Keats's Gothic trappings, the image here of nature is precisely that of the first half of the "Epistle to Reynolds." The poet has retreated from "all the ways of men" to, if not an enchanted ground, at least a place of comfort and harmony, where he should, like Keats, have been most happy, where he was in fact for a moment "as happy as a boy." The pleasant season did his heart employ. Nature appears to be all that he longs for it to be, a level of awareness that is distinctly characterized by the innocence and ignorance of childhood, the only state at which the illusive harmony is reality: "Even such a happy Child of earth am I;/Even as these blissful creatures do I fare..." (31-32). His whole life he has "lived in pleasant thought,/As if life's business were a summer mood..." (36-37). The central crisis of the poem is the darkening of that chamber of pleasant thought and--to continue the parallel with Keats--the inauguration of the poet into the process of soul-making.

The chamber darkens from the poet's deep look into his own mind. On the other side of our highest moments of happiness there is a corresponding dejection, bringing "fears and fancies...Dim sadness--and blind thoughts,"--from where? He does not know from where, only that his
imagination has overleapt itself, gone beyond, in a sense, its proper bourn. Though he should have been most happy, walking "far from the world...and from all care," he is transfixed by the vision and by the thought it brings that "there may come another day to me--Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty" (34-35). He has already seen through the ceremonial attitude. Life is not a summer game, nor is he a child to whom "all needful things would come unsought...." What there is for him to have he must work and struggle for, and yet to what end:

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills; And hope that is unwilling to be fed; Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills; And mighty Poets in their misery dead.

Contrasting "the fear that kills" with "the faith that looks through death" of the Intimations Ode gives us an idea of the range of Wordsworth's thought, and of the intensity and honesty of his belief and his despair. Even Chatterton and Burns are rejected as prototypes for man. Though deified, they found no preservation from the operations of natural law. And Wordsworth must pass from their childlike innocence to his experience, to the creation of spirit out of the fear that the world is as purposeless as his deepest reflections have shown it to be, and dominated rather by suffering than happiness.

The Leech-gatherer contradicts none of this vision. He embodies at a stroke all of Wordsworth's deepest fore-
bodings. He has not anticipated or feared cold, pain, and labor, but has made them a part of his permanent being. He has looked deep into the sea and has remained whole, not happy, but in control of those forces, the fears and fancies and recognitions controlling Wordsworth. He is at once the expression of the blind thoughts Wordsworth "knew not, nor could name," and the means of transcending them. He provides charismatic power to replace the now broken communion with nature's disenchanted castle.

Characteristically Wordsworthian, what the Leech-gatherer does is deceptively simple: he endures what no man ought to endure; he maintains the ethic of his life in the face of that struggle with nature which only disharmony can provoke. Even the leeches "have dwindled long by slow decay," yet still he perseveres—out of necessity perhaps, but with a state of mind, at a stage of being, that "Turns his necessity to glorious gain." He is, like the happy warrior, a prototype of what Wordsworth came to conceive of John and therefore an image for all men, one that succeeds where Burns and Chatterton apparently have failed. Forced into a situation at total variance from what human love and morality would have provided for him, the Leech-gatherer achieves heroism by controlling morally the situation that controls him physically. He is that noble spectacle Wordsworth wrote of in the Beaumont letter; he keeps his inward serenity in an overwhelming situation.
He looks upon the muddy water "As if he had been reading in a book"; his speech is "courteous," "measured," and "stately"—the look and speech of a man strong and enduring in his spiritual self-possession.

As such, he represents in stark outline the charismatic man that received more specific and completed features from the later Wordsworth, from Keats, and from Hardy. "Resolution and Independence" is not a revolution from the thought of "Tintern Abbey"; it deepens and darkens the levels of awareness of that thought. Wordsworth was still to write most of The Prelude, was still capable in his lyrics of joining the daffodils in a cosmic dance of harmony between mind and nature. The darkening thought has here removed the partner from the dance, has made the inward eye prophetic of continued hardship rather than retrospective of former joy. Instead of pleasure from nature, the poet reaches for a "help and stay secure" from the human self dignified by its victory over nature and its eternal loneliness within it. The Leech-gatherer figures-forth the Solitary and Emily Norton and Clym Yeobright, who also had to achieve dignity and spiritual selfhood as he bent double over an unyielding earth. An even closer parallel is Keats's Moneta. Like the priestess, the Leech-gatherer has transcended suffering without escaping it, without removing its traces from his body and face, though the traces are not nearly as marked here as in The
Fall of Hyperion. He must carry "A more than human weight" (70), and from this he rises to a language "above the reach/ Of ordinary men..." (95-96). He is sorrow eternalized and subdued. He becomes almost a priest, surely a spiritual guide, "a man from some far region sent" (111); Wordsworth thinks of him as "one whom I had met with in a dream..." (110). His lesson anticipates the whole initial action of the second Hyperion: it is that a new and more authentic life must follow and draw from the fear that kills--and contain it.

That lesson--that faith cannot look through death without looking at death--and the implications it carries for man's relations to nature figure just as prominently in the "Elegiac Stanzas," where the poet's spiritual growth is again measured and charted by a division, a transformation, in his perception of nature. Anticipating Keats's "Epistle to Reynolds," that division is between a ceremonial enchanted nature and a nature amoral, alienated.

With the natural world around it, Peele castle is presented--and this is surely one of the more important, if minor motifs of Romantic poetry--as a retreat, a haven endowed with a soothing, inner life:

How perfect was the calm! It seemed no sleep; No mood which season takes away, or brings: I could have fancied that the mighty Deep Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Nature is in communion with the human spirit. Had Wordsworth
painted the picture of the castle in his youth, or before the death of John, it would have been a picture of lasting ease,

Elysian quiet, without toil or strife;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

He calls the castle "a treasure-house divine...a chronicle of heaven," making it in the first half of the poem an image and a guarantee of eternity and timelessness:

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air!
So like, so very like, was day to day!
Where'er I looked, thy Image still was there;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

It transcends the seasons; it has not only life but eternal life, and it seems to promise the poet that spirit is to be discovered within nature, as a counterpart to man.

But Wordsworth must now teach himself the lesson of the Leech-gatherer. The sea, the gentlest of all gentle things, has devoured his brother, and the light he would have given it in his painting, and did give it in his imaginative response to the scene, is a "light that never was, on sea or land..." (15). His whole ceremonial approach, with its assumption of an indwelling eternal life, was a "fond illusion" of his heart. Loss and death as facts of nature have displaced violently the "treasure-house divine," the "chronicle of heaven." The "deep distress" of the recognition of loss and death "hath humanized [his] Soul," and he must initiate
himself to a new attitude towards nature and a new awareness of himself:

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been.

Because he has seen too deep into the sea he must reconcile himself to a vision that he cannot shake off.¹³

Thus, he rejects the picture he would have painted and accepts Beaumont's--"this pageantry of fear," with its violent, angry sea, and ship laboring "in the deadly swell." Necessarily, he transforms the image of the castle from one of retreat to eternal life to one of confrontation with death; and in its fortitude and endurance, he makes it resemble his portrait of the Leech-gatherer (who, in turn, was first seen as a "huge stone... Couched on the bald top of an eminence"):

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling waves

—facing, that is, with the same spirit as the old man's, the very elements that destroyed John. From this dramatization of that catastrophe Wordsworth tries to elicit some meaningful pattern for human life that will fit the insistent tragedies of that life. He has learned that Beaumont's violent picture is more truthful than his of repose, and he senses that a corresponding truth must pervade his own actions and
being as a man. He must, as Stein was to tell Lord Jim, submit himself to the destructive element:

Farewell, farewell the heart that lives alone, Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind! Such happiness, wherever it be known, Is to be pitied; for 'tis surely blind.

As we have already seen in Keats, and will further see in Hardy, happiness contradicts the existing state of things. It is purchased at the cost of growth—of growth to manhood and to spiritual perception. The heart that dreams alone is capable of creating treasure-houses divine, of giving to nature—and, it goes without saying, in poetry that is of the highest order—a spiritual life and purpose as one of its realities. Submitting to a new control, to the destructive element, Wordsworth faces the task of creating in himself a spiritual life and purpose out of a spirit-annihilating vision and the immediate bracing of himself for that task. Through "fortitude and patient cheer,/And frequent sights of what is to be borne!" (57-58), he accomplishes the latter here. The creation of spiritual life, the exploration of the hope for which we suffer and mourn, supplies the plan and purpose to The Excursion and The White Doe of Rylstone.

The Excursion may seem at first glance the one poem by Wordsworth least apposite to the world of Hardy. Too often, the vision of "Resolution and Independence" and of the letters
and poems immediately following John's death falters behind
exhortations and sermons on the faith that looks through
death, not at it. Of the many instances of the renunciation
of all that is disturbing in nature, perhaps none is more
striking than one in the eighth book of the poem, the poet-
speaker's description of the trout caught by the two boys
at the parsonage. The fish are "Dead—but not sullied or
deformed by death,/That seemed to pity what he could not
spare." There is no call for Wordsworth to recognize the
fish as losers in the struggle for existence, or even to
emphasize their deadness. But to deny or rationalize the
very fact of death, to gloss it into a sentimental abstrac-
tion—surely this reveals the extent to which he has returned
to a communion with nature and has abandoned the tentative,
searching efforts of his estrangement. And surely nothing
can be more opposed to Hardy's work than this kind of wishful
transfiguration of what things ought to be into what things
are, particularly if we contrast this response to death with
that of Tess, when she breaks the necks of the wounded
pheasants to relieve them of their misery.

This contrast, moreover, is only partially relieved
by the numerous insights in The Excursion that find an im-
mediate and direct analogy in Hardy—by the fact that
Wordsworth's narratives, like Hardy's, concern themselves
unremittingly with the fact of suffering, with the sudden
overthrow of fair prospects, with disillusionment and hopes
that soared too high, and with man's helplessness before the biological traps of sickness and old age. There is no essential difference between Margaret's devotion and decline and Jude's. Giles Winterborne's self-sacrifice and death would surely have warmed the Pastor's heart had he had the pleasure of telling them. Like Hardy, the Solitary is convinced that life for many of us is often "fashioned like an ill-constructed tale..." (V, 432). Such resemblances both in the overall patterns of the narratives and in their specific phrasings could be accumulated into an independent study, yet that would not prove the relationship between the two writers that I am arguing for. It would show that both writers were aware that life is often a hard lot and difficult burden, and that Hardy very likely derived from Wordsworth some of the specific images or other material for his portraying of this. It would not show conclusively that Hardy and Wordsworth shared a slant of vision into the essential concerns of human life, that both drew from and contributed to a larger context of thought informing that vision. Both writers were concerned not with the presence of suffering in the lives of a Margaret or a Tess, but with the causes and ends of suffering. Both undertook as a primary purpose of their writings to examine how far that suffering could explain itself or be related to some pattern coherent to human sense and reason. The relevance of that examination in The Excursion to Hardy's is that it
falls in its primary aim: the poem ends, necessarily, with suffering's purposelessness.

The Excursion leaves the rationale of suffering still irrational because the Solitary never embraces the principles, advice, or frame of reference of the Wanderer and the Pastor. That, as Wordsworth's final lines tell us, must be the subject of a succeeding poem. The poem was never written, and hence the honesty and self-integrity of this one become more manifest. For the Solitary is not, as one critic has intimated, a Satan threatening to become the hero of the piece, despite its author's intentions. He is an authentic voice in the poem, providing critical alternative views which though often contradicted are never disproved by the Wanderer and the Pastor. As such, he functions principally to mitigate and qualify Wordsworth's return to ceremonial nature. Despite the difficulties, he does keep alive the spirit of the Leech-gatherer; he also insists on seeing too deep into the sea and on shaping his own mode of vision.

Critics generally agree that "Wordsworth projects himself into both the Wanderer and the Solitary" so that the one self could argue the other self "back to faith, serenity, and cheerfulness...." The Solitary is argued back to neither, not even to cheerfulness for very long. Rather, his entire presence stands as a flat denial of the treasure-house, enchanted-castle view of nature asserted by Wordsworth's other speakers. The poet, for example, viewing the Solitary's
vale from a comfortable distance, mythologizes it into an Eden, "an image of the pristine earth, / The planet in its nakedness..." (II, 360-61). Were this man's only abode in the breathing world

It could not be more quiet; peace is here
Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale
Of public news or private; years that pass
Forgetfully; uncalled upon to pay
The common penalties of mortal life,
Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.
(II, 363-69)

As the immediate answer to this— and Wordsworth surely must have intended the irony here— the sounds of the funeral dirge announce the payment of the most common penalty of mortal life. When the Wanderer tries to restore the threatened image by glossing over the death and incorporating it into his own comforting system of purpose and benignity—

Oh! blest are they who live and die like these,
Loved with such love, and with such sorrow mourned!
(591-92)

-- the Solitary tells the story of the old man damned to constant struggle, first with the housewife for his crust of bread and then with the forces of the storm for his life itself. The vale is no Eden, no retreat or haven from the demands of life: "...perpetually we touch / Upon the vulgar ordinances of the world..." (II, 736-37).

The opposition between the ceremonial and the charismatic visions, between communion with and estrangement from nature,
continues in the contrasting responses of the Wanderer and the Solitary to the secluded nook within the secluded vale. The Wanderer sees the nook evincing a world of design, centered on man, and he evokes Wordsworth's vision of Peele Castle as a chronicle of heaven. The rocks bear a "semblance strange of power intelligent/And of design not wholly worn away" (III, 83-84). They show "a chronicle survives/Of purposes akin to those of Man..." (89-90). The nook intimates eternity, and is a retreat from time and the fetters incumbent upon human limitations (110-12). Again, after the three study the nook with minuter care, the Solitary denies any evidence of design, purpose, or safety in what he sees:

The shapes before our eyes
And their arrangement, doubtless must be deemed
The sport of Nature, aided by blind Chance
Rudely to mock the works of toiling Man. (124-27)

The point is not which view Wordsworth espoused; nor am I aware of any deep psychic split in his personality. The point is that he was aware of two approaches to man's place in nature, urged both upon our attention, and did not, in this poem, allow himself the comfort of the one, because he was always aware of the disturbing presence of the other. 17

That conclusion holds even if it is true that both views express a state of mind projected upon nature, if the Solitary's rejection of Edens and divine chronicles is as much the result of what he wanted or needed to see as is the
mythological assumption of their presence. A full investiga-
tion of such a possibility would have to deal directly with
Romantic epistemology. I am interested in Wordsworth's
moral concern for the right way to live, for dealing with
those forces controlling the possibilities of human life.
He cannot settle the question. He presents one view, the
ceremonial, as accepting the world of design as given, and
another view, the charismatic, as accepting the need to
create a design out of and for a world without design. He
suggests quite clearly the close relation between ceremonial
nature and human mythology in the Wanderer's long account,
in Book IV, of the growth (actually a decline) of religious
worship, with its miraculous vision of nature as embodying
deity and its ancient mythologies. At first man walked and
heard "the articulate voice of God; and Angels to his sight
appeared" (634-35). After the Fall and banishment from
direct contact with God, man still recognized His presence.
Hence, Jew, Persian, Chaldean, and Greek recreated that
presence in their religions or, more precisely, their
mythologies of nature, which enabled them to perceive,
as they reverenced a "cloud of darkness," or the moon and
stars, or "The planetary Five," "emanations...and acts/of
immortality, in Nature's course..." (738-39). And here is
one of several examples of a view of nature that the Wanderer
presents as typifying his own; indeed, it is the genesis of his:

The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart
Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
That timely light, to share his joyous sport:
And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,
Across the lawn and through the darksome grove...

Swept in the storm of chase.... (861-69)\(^18\)

As other gods and goddesses are created, nature becomes for the Greeks literally a chronicle of heaven, a treasure-house divine. It is, for the Greeks and for the Wanderer, if not perpetual Eden, perpetually miraculous, and Protestant Christianity differs from the ancient mythologies only in degree. Both look outside of man for the pattern of human life: "Beyond their own poor natures and above/They looked; and were humbly thankful for the good" (935-36) bestowed upon them by nature. This nature, mythologized or Christianized, becomes a miraculous system of design and purpose, a choir to and of the eternal, leading to and containing spirit. Through this nature, and this is the Wanderer's critical point, we build up "the Being that we are..." (1264).

If the mythological vision stresses the miracle of nature, the charismatic or soul-making vision stresses its machinations. When the Solitary turns to ancient Greece--and the parallelism is close enough to be considered deliberate--he goes not to its Dianas and Pans but to Prometheus and Oedipus. In applying these materials to
his immediate purpose, he insists (and nothing could be more close or more relevant to Hardy's major insistence) on a tragic awareness. Change the superficial features of things, he says, and even among these shepherds the tragic Muse

Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs, are ready; the dread strife
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny.

(VI, 551-57)

If Wordsworth intended the Solitary as a clay pigeon, he made no serious attempt to shoot his arguments down. On the contrary, he gives the Solitary the most comprehensive statement in the poem, brings him the closest to a vision synthesizing all the elements and materials of nature:

...if the thing we seek
Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in mind
How from his lofty throne, the sun can fling
Colours as bright on exhalations bred
By weedy pool or pestilential swamp,
As by the rivulet sparkling where it runs,
Or the pellucid lake.

(VI, 593-99)

If the Solitary's despondency has been corrected, it has led to something higher than the powers possessed by his companions. He alone is prepared to accept the sparkling rivulet and the swamp as facts equally present in nature, and he knows that while a genuine knowledge must recognize the pleasant, ivy-clustered cottage, it must also open the door into the cold hearth and ignorance within.
But the Solitary only comes close to the synthesizing vision; he does not fully achieve soul-making power, which needs to seek no guide but its own informed self; he is no Ishmael fusing Ahab into Starbuck, and *The Excursion* is not Ishmael's eagle that can both plunge to darkness and soar to light. The Solitary does have a moment of intense light, his vision of glory, of "the revealed abode/Of spirits in beatitude," in Book II, immediately after his discovery of the old man in the abandoned chapel. And he tells us, eliciting the miracle of nature not from its bright rivulets but from its swamps, that "By earthly nature had the effect been wrought/Upon the dark materials of the storm/Now pacified..." (II, 846-48). But though there is nothing in the Wanderer's abstractions to equal this in intensity or immediacy of presence, the Solitary can make nothing of it. He does not possess it as the expression of his being, and thus his vision of the enchanted castle, authenticated "Upon the dark materials of the storm," remains the highest goal of man's state and vision without revealing the means by which it is to be experienced. The Solitary clings to his vision of a purposeless universe and to his insistence on naturalistic fact. What, he asks,

if nowhere
A habitation, for consummate good,
Or for progressive virtue, by the search
Can be attained...?

(III, 220-23)

Six books later, the Wanderer provides an answer,
discovers that habitation and sketches a means towards its attainment. With images closely resembling those of the *Intimations Ode*, the Wanderer describes the passage from youth to age as a loss of direct contact with the spiritual forces of nature until the final eminence of age is reached, when that contact but with purified energy and greater reality is renewed. To modify Keats's terms, he makes life move from the vale of soul-losing to soul-attainment, and he creates, out of the very materials of loss and severance, a "Fresh power to commune with the invisible world..." (IX, 85). The Wanderer's language and root meaning are of course still mythological, we "commune with the invisible world," but the miracle of nature, the enchanted castle, has now become something to be striven for, to be worked towards. It is, in fact, no longer a state in nature at all, but a quality of being achieved by and in man. I should have made it clear already that I do not think the Wanderer has earned this vision. That doesn't make the vision any less valid or relevant to the total movement of the poem. Neither does its failure to resolve the central conflict of the poem. It sketches a pattern for human life, without a necessary shirking of what the Solitary has seen. And it becomes all the more relevant because, briefly sketched here, the Wanderer's vision of soul-making receives full dramatic treatment through the story of Emily in *The White Doe*.21
But there is a fundamental difference between the two poems. The White Doe remains faithful to the prospectus Wordsworth wrote for The Excursion; it recognizes, that is, that nothing in nature or in the mythologies of nature "can breed such fear and awe" as the human mind, which it makes "the main region" of its song. The Wanderer contributes to an understanding of the human mind throughout, and especially in his last powerful argument. He is at the frontiers of the land of Soul-making, but he never crosses. I cannot believe that he commits himself to what he makes us see. Indeed, in his defending superstition and the ancient Greek response to nature, in suckling himself "in a creed outworn," he begs the question of the poem's inquiry. In The White Doe, the old creed has dried up, and Emily is left with only her developing self. Hence, she does not make man's highest life only a thing to be striven for; she lives it. And whereas The Excursion fails in its intention because it does not provide a coherent, satisfying explanation for the necessity of suffering, 22 The White Doe portrays a mind that by accepting the necessity rises to a point above systematic explanation. Emily becomes her own system, her own explanation for suffering.

The concern with and acceptance of suffering are both clearly illustrated in the epigraph to The White Doe:

Suffering is permanent, obscure and dark,
And has the nature of infinity.
Yet through that darkness (infinite though it seem
And irremoveable) gracious openings lie,
By which the soul—with patient steps of thought
Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer—
May pass in hope, and though from mortal bonds
Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
Even to the fountain-head of peace divine. 23

Here is the darkness faced and forced to supply the materials for soul making and selfhood. And though the poem draws from Christianity, it does not limit itself to Christianity. If anything, it incorporates the Christian scheme into its own and quite different, comprehensive pattern—not without subjecting Christianity and the mythological approach it has come to typify to as severe a questioning as anyone could desire. 24 Indeed, if Christianity and its mythological ancestors predicate a world of design purposefully unfolding and of harmonious relationships between man and the external world, The White Doe stresses at each critical juncture the blind vacancy of trust in that design and the ironic reversals overthrowing it.

Old Norton, led to revolt by faith, uses that virtue to persuade his leaders to persevere as he draws from it a vision of nature as miracle:

We yield
(And can it be?) an unfought field!—
How oft has strength, the strength of heaven,
To few triumphantly been given! ...

Must Westmoreland be asked with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Nevill's Cross?
When the Prior of Durham with holy hand
Raised, as the Vision gave command,
Saint Cuthbert's Relic—far and near
Kenned on the point of a lofty spear.... (809-32)
Is there any difference between the validity of this appeal and that of the Wanderer, when he preferred superstition to the Solitary's rationalism? To say that Norton's Catholicism led him astray is beside the point that he is tricked to death through his dependence on a world view predicated for him by faith. It is faith that is questioned, not a particular sect. Norton, we are told, descends his horse to stand triumphantly "upon the grassy sod,/Trusting himself to the earth and God" (730-31). In no uncertain terms both fail him.

If faith misleads, so too does hope; it is at least as fruitless in guiding our actions. "Hope," the old man counsels Emily, "must abide/With all of us, whate'er betide" (1092-93). There are many places where her father and brothers can hide until the revolt is over. Leaving her with this assurance, he seeks Norton, praying "that the Moon which shines this night/May guide them in a prudent flight!" (1117-18). The ironic reversal following this pious wish offers one of the most revealing insights into Wordsworth:

But quick the turns of chance and change,
And knowledge has a narrow range;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain.  

(1119-22)

"The Moon may shine," as a last ironic touch, for Norton is already captured. As if the irony of life were not already clear enough, Wordsworth forces it again on our attention—
too bluntly perhaps, but leaving little doubt as to the kind of universe in which Emily must live—in the old man's second counsel to Emily, equally futile and more bitterly suggestive of what can only be seen as the cosmic darkness surrounding life:

"Yes—God is rich in mercy," said The old Man to the silent Maid,
"Yet, Lady! shines, through this black night,
One star of aspect heavenly bright;
Your brother lives—he lives—is come
Perhaps already to his home...." (1354-59)

Francis arrives on his bier. The black night is unrelieved by light, and the supposed mercy of God disappears within it.

The mercy never reappears. It has become only a word, as have faith and hope, mocked by the actuality of the events contradicting them. The external universe contradicts human desire. Francis' prophecy in Canto II, "The time is come that rings the knell/of all we loved, and loved so well:/Hope nothing" (528-30), has proved true in a far more comprehensive sense than he perhaps intended. The physical frame of the poem, its opening with the broken Priory and closing with the ruined castle, suggests literally the overthrow and abandonment of treasure-houses divine and human. More emphatically, the internal movement of the poem, the process of destruction and abandonment, tells of the irretrievable loss of the vision that found expression in such surroundings. "Hope nothing" (Francis repeats
the warning)—the world is not miraculous, not the mythological counterpart to man's hopes and desires. And yet it is the world in which we find our being, or we find it not at all:

Be strong;—be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place;
A Soul, by force of sorrows high,
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity! (583-87)

Keats says the world is a vale of Soul-making. And no more than Keats does Wordsworth here rely on the grace of God. Emily achieves her soul, her identity, not only by growing through suffering but by never forgetting the infinity of suffering. As the epigraph says, we may rise to peace divine, "though from mortal bonds/Yet undelivered,..."

We are never free of our limitations, even though we glorify them; nor could we glorify them were we free of them—that way lies the mythological retreat, not the golden city of the Solitary's vision, built on the materials of the storm. Emily, Wordsworth says in the Fenwick Note to the poem, achieves beatification. In the poem itself, she fulfills Francis' expectations of her, but with a significant difference that only her deeper experience of the truths of human life can give. She is

By sorrow lifted towards her God;
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed mortality. (1851-53)

"Mortality" clarifies and narrows our insight into Francis's
"humanity," and it underscores the truth that man cannot be free from death, that he can achieve his highest state only through his inward control over death. Out of ironic mishap, thwarted aims, and heartbreak, all defining conditions of the nature of things of which man too is a part, Emily achieves her highest identity, the spiritual transfiguration of her life.

After his capture, Norton had said to Francis, that he had hoped for "A renovation from the dead,/A spring-tide of immortal green..." (1263-64). He is thinking of the universe as an enchanted castle where the dead are not really dead, of nature beatified, of an Edenic return to innocence. When Emily returns, it is to see that the ravage at Rylstone Hall "mocks the gladness of the Spring!" (1578). Neither has she found in all her wanderings any haven or retreat to soothe her inward turmoil: "Sea, desert, what do these avail" (1565). The only effect of time, the "deep recess of years," has been to give her a tenuous, trance-like hold on herself—self-isolation rather than self-possession:

Her soul doth in itself stand fast,
Sustained by memory of the past
And strength of Reason; held above
The infirmities of mortal love;
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable. (1623-28)

She is lost "in a sort of Purgatory blind," ravaged within by her sufferings, yet unable to ascribe to or formulate any meaningful pattern that can reach through that suffering to
continue life beyond it. She has reached the blank Stoicism
of the Solitary; she holds herself above the infirmities
of mortality, not undisturbed within her mortality. She
has not yet secured over her "pain and grief a triumph
pure" (1072). She has reached the position of the Solitary.
She must now become her own Wanderer.

How she does so involves one of the most complex
moments in Wordsworth's poetry, one that is as illusive in
its simplicity as its closest counterpart in literature--
the ancient mariner's blessing of the water snakes. She
"melted into tears" at the sight of the doe, allowed it to
accompany her, and hence was enabled to "restore/Herself,
in spots unseen before" (1708-09). She stops striving,
stops escaping, and begins to be. She accepts herself
and is now able to unify what she has been with what she
is by receiving "This lovely chronicler of things/Long
past, delights and sorrowings" (1674-75). The doe may
well be a symbol of nature and a messenger from heaven;
it is almost literally, however, the embodiment of her
past life and the means of transcending the past. Like
the water snakes, it allows man to widen the limits of
his identity to include the external world. The mytho-
logical world of design or faith in nature is not restored;
Emily achieves a charismatic life without that restoration.
She creates within herself the eternal spring that her
father had sought through Catholicism. Returning to the
wasted groves of Rylstone, she "Received the memory of old
loves,

Undisturbed and undistrest,
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring-day of holy,
Mild, and grateful, melancholy....

(1754-58)

In her "undisturbed mortality," Emily, like Moneta and the Leech-gatherer, grows through suffering, not out of it. She makes her soul come full circle to its own spring-day and transfigures the doe into a "Daughter of the Eternal Prime!"

She does so with no tangible aid from orthodox religion and without that communion with nature that still remembers the splendor in the grass. She has had to undergo the antithesis of that communion, falling from the innocence of youth to the disillusionment of experience, to recreate not that communion but a habitation for consummate good within herself. She has taken the Solitary's path to the Wanderer's final eminence of age. Though she has been dead, she is yet "to live again on earth,/A second and yet nobler birth...how high/The re-ascent in sanctity!" (1844-47).

That she is at last set free from earth and goes to heaven is redundant to her having achieved sanctity "on earth"--at least, heaven can offer no more than a continuation of the spiritual life she has already created. She created that life in a way that must have been very satisfying to Wordsworth, for it allows him to continue his love for nature and yet honor his experience of severance and loss.
For despite all I have said, I am not about to advance an heretical view of Wordsworth. Perhaps he never saw that the blood of tooth and claw stained indelibly nature's holy plan. He saw the blood, revised his liturgy, and continued to believe, attempting in one of his most beautiful poems not to evade the blood, but to cleanse it by making Emily become a child again. The inscriptive legend, "God us ayde," and her grandfather's name remain on the bells of Rylstone, and Emily had often "in her childhood read the same" and "slighted" them:

But now, when such sad change was wrought,  
And of that lonely name she thought,  
The bells of Rylstone seemed to say,  
While she sat listening in the shade,  
With vocal music, "God us ayde;"  
And all the hills were glad to bear  
Their part in this effectual prayer.  

(1768-76)

She has contained her sufferings in a more comprehensive experience of life than she possessed without them. Because of what she has become, she can endow nature with an harmonic tone in the commingled hymn of devotion. It chants again as it did in the *Lyrical Ballads*, but with a voice the more authentic for having been silent.

3

A coherent pattern begins to emerge from the poems just discussed, from the progressive stages of awareness in "Resolution and Independence," "Peele Castle," the narratives
in *The Excursion*, and Emily's ascent to spirit in *The White Doe*. In each, the pattern opens with the assumption of innocence that subsequent events will cohere to lines set down by human values or desires, that the physical world, nature, and the internal world of mind, conscience, and will complement each other, pre-exist in a harmony established by the design of an ennobling interchange. In each, the violent discovery of a world at right angles to the line of human aspirations (the sight of the Leech-gatherer, the news of Francis' death) destroys the foundations of that innocence and forces it to come to terms with a world contradicting the assumptions made for it. In each, the disappearance of the values predicated upon the mythological assumption of spirit within nature necessitates the power of soul making for the life of estrangement—for the growth to spiritual selfhood in the spiritless void. Such is the dignity of Emily's achievement: she could make those values exist for her that she had once assumed existed in themselves. Hence it was "fit that from this mortal state" she should "by some unlook'd for change/Be spiritualized."

The application to Emily of Cynthia's words in *Endymion* suggests a similar pattern is to be found in Keats, Wordsworth's pupil on matters of the human heart. I have already had recourse to Keats to illustrate one of the clearest insights of Romanticism into the antithesis between nature as
a designed enchantment and nature as unregenerate savagery. It is not necessary for the importance of this insight to claim it as the primary interest of either Keats or Wordsworth. Keats especially was concerned with problems of aesthetics, with the organic unity of intuition and heightened sensation, with the product and process of poetry. His major poems turn on the animated tension he created between the "native hell" of man's "habitual self" and the transcendence of self in man's "fellowship with essence." But within that turn and helping to control it is the pattern I am concerned with—the pattern that allows Endymion to create his own spiritual life. For Keats, like Wordsworth, and like Hardy at his greatest moments, faces the problem of how man is to achieve immortality in a world of natural mortality.

Keats gives the Romantic pattern of human life its paradigmatic formulation when he calls the world a "vale of Soul-making," a "system of Spirit-creation," but as preparation for this final synthesis of Keats's thought, I want to recall a few of the salient points in his definition of life as a "Mansion of Many Apartments," written almost a full year earlier than the journal letter to George. Within the two we should be able to see more clearly the experimental approaches Keats made to explore the full possibilities of soul-making, after his painful and somewhat inchoate attempt in Endymion.
When Keats compares life to a "Mansion of Many Apartments," his mind is full of Wordsworth in an attempt to evaluate and characterize the nature of that poet's achievement. The comparison involves a pattern comprising three stages of growth very similar, though not identical, to those I have described. The first stage is that of infancy or thoughtlessness, "in which we remain as long as we do not think" (I, 280). Characterized, like its parallel in "Tintern Abbey," by unconscious sensuous appetite, this is hardly a major stage in the growth of the individual and neither poet lingers in it. When we step into the second chamber, the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, we step as it were into consciousness, at least into a consciousness that is conscious of itself, into a legitimate level of awareness defining the world and its own relations to it. This is the innocence that sees nature as an enchanted castle, that lives its whole life "in pleasant thought,/As if life's business were a summer mood;..." Keats says, "we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight" (I, 281). It is the unspoiled, because untested, Edenic consciousness willing and able to take the smiling surface of nature as the pledge of its inner life because it has not yet looked too deep into the sea. Nor yet thought too deep--into itself or nature; for "among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart
and nature of Man—of convincing ones nerves that the World
is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, sickness and oppres-
sion—whereby This Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradual-
ly darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many
doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark pas-
sages—We see not the ballance of good and evil" (I, 281).
The harsh and oppressive world, the opposite of what its
surface promised, violently opposes man's dreams and values.
It is a world where a man will counsel you to trust to God
for your brother's life when your brother is already dead.
The enchanted castle has become a tomb. There is no evi-
dence of an unfolding moral law; we are in a moral "Mist."
But the implied injunction, the third stage in the pattern
of consciousness, is equally clear—it is to work one's way
back to light, not to maiden thought, but to charismatic
thought. Man must create, develop, and enact his own
system of salvation. 30

Keats never embodied the complete experience of spirit
creation in any one of his poems. If he had done so in
Endymion, 31 it is not likely that he would have returned
to the question in each of the three poems I wish to
examine. The Eve of St. Agnes, Lamia, and The Fall of
Hyperion share the mansion of life; neither occupies it
totally. Experimental in nature, they set up certain
conditions, possible schemes for the reality of things,
and trace the destinies of man through the terms of those
conditions. But they form an organic integrity in Keats's thought and are interdependent commentaries on each other. They measure the paces of Keats's growth through the mansion of life from maiden thought to identity.

The *Eve of St. Agnes* enacts the consciousness of the chamber of innocence. To consider it as a drama of conflict between the transcendent actions in Madeline's room and the boisterous revelry in the halls below is to introduce a tension in the poem that is not, I believe, justified by the poem itself. The noise of revelry does make one entrance into the inner chamber, but this hardly comprises a test of Porphyro's fidelity or a serious temptation to abandon the prescribed ritual. He does not shut the music out; the hall door does, and the music itself has only entered "in dying tone" (XXIX, 9). Clearly, Porphyro cannot descend to the halls of his foemen; and to enter mentally into their sensuality would reduce his character to that of Angela, who had assumed his motive to be carnal. The music is already dying when it reaches the inner chamber, which is an apt description of it since all life in the poem, except that in the inner chamber, is either dead or soon to be dead or haunted by death. The beadsman saying his rosary among the "sculptur'd dead" will sleep in his own ashes that night; Angela will die "palsy-twitch'd"; the Baron and his guests will dream of "witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm" (XLII, 5). Secured from all this, a haven from it, enchanted and enchanting, is the chamber which Keats has made an
embodiment of reality, not an escape from it. Everything else is dying of its own temporality; only this has meaning, is real. The innocence of maiden thought is real, not illusory, and Keats is determined to see how far he can extend its range and limits.

Keats wants to make the dream of the enchanted castle come true, and he wants to make the enchanted castle a quality of being in man, possessed by Madeline and sought by Porphyro. Madeline is as secured from the revelry even when she is within it as she is in her own chambers. She scarcely hears the music when she is in the midst of it; she heeds no one; she is dead to everything ("all amort") but to the St. Agnes vision, which Keats has premised to be in this poem the only source of life. That premise, I think, should be the animating principle of our criticism of the poem, for Keats is granting here and experimenting with the image of life he denied a year earlier in his "Epistle to Reynolds." St. Agnes works only because the dream comes true, only because there is a spiritual state pre-existing that Madeline and Porphyro can step into. They glide through the halls at the end of the poem "like phantoms"; they have spiritualized themselves. But what was Madeline before the spiritualization and transcendent union? She was dead to everything but the life of spirit, innocent of any other life. She has "maiden eyes divine" (VII, 3); she is "all akin/To spirits of the air" (XXIII, 3-4);
she is "like a saint;/She seem'd a splendid angel, newly
drest,/Save wings for heaven" (XXV, 6-8). Madeline does
not achieve spirituality—it is granted her as her initial
defining condition. Porphyro accepts the paramount reality
of spirit, and he melts into that reality without testing
it against a nature where big fish eat the little. In the
defining conditions of the poem, as in the chamber itself,
that nature does not exist; and Madeline, in both soul and
body, is "Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain...As
though a rose should shut, and be a bud again" (XXVII, 6-9).

The point is we never see the rose full blown. Madeline
does not become a child again. She does not contend with a
vision of the Leech-gatherer or with the sight of Francis
in his grave or even with an Indian maid forlorn. That would
be to darken the chamber of maiden thought, and The Eve of
St. Agnes wants the apotheosis of maiden thought, of the
life of maiden thought, supposing this chamber to be the
one real presence on the earth. Hence, we have not spirit-
creation, but the efficacy of ceremony in the pursuit of
spirit. If the enchanted castle were real, this would be
real. The beauty of the poem is to make the enchanted
castle real, to define reality and human destiny through
Madeline's chamber and not the chamber through the reality
and the destiny. The failure, if we can call it that, is
that Keats cannot make the enchanted castle perpetual; the
rose must wither (Emily comes from a "blasted family")
before it can become a bud again. Bathed in spirit from her first entrance into the poem, Madeline does not enter life as upon a vale of Soul-making. Instead, she must be included under Keats's plan for the salvation of children: "In them the Spark of intelligence returns to God without any identity—it having had no time to learn of, and be altered by, the heart—or seat of human Passions" (Letters, II, 103). That heart and its passions must be "schooled" in "a World of Pains and troubles." The mind must darken before it can see.

The darkening occurs in Lamia, but not before the light itself is recast from a slightly different angle. The episode of Hermes and the nymph provides a close parallel, as Wasserman has noted, to the central action of St. Agnes (The Finer Tone, pp. 158-60). Hermes must travel in secret to find his nymph in her "secret bed" (I, 30). The physical world blends with the visionary, as Hermes enters the dream existence of the nymph (I, 126-27). He must perform a ceremony to see the nymph, who is herself "self-folding like a flower/That faints into itself at evening hour" (I, 138-39). Finally, the lovers retreat into an enchanted nature. We are still in the chamber of maiden thought, but now that chamber is frankly mythological and not a condition of man at all. It is for gods and goddesses who need not create their spiritual life but are continually living it. The dream is still real, but because it is a god who dreams,
and his dream is not the controlling reality of the poem. The question of that controlling reality remains, in fact, open and unresolved.

The ambiguous character of reality permeates the main narrative. Is Lamia serpent or woman? Is she human or divine? Is the enchanted palace she builds for Lycius in Corinth an illusory or actual thing? We never question whether the experience in Madeline's chamber is real or illusory, because the context of St. Agnes forces the union of the two. The context of Lamia keeps them in a tenuous and mutually destructive stand-off. After Hermes has applied his charm for instance, Lamia begins to undergo transformation to a woman's shape. Is she undergoing a transformation to her real (that is, ideal) self or to her real (that is, monstrous) self?

Left to herself, the serpent now began
To change; her elfin blood in madness ran,
Her mouth foam'd, and the grass, therewith besprent,
Wither'd at dew so sweet and virulent;
Her eyes in torture fix'd and anguish drear,
Hot, glaz'd, and wide, with lid-lashes all sear,
Flash'd phosphor and sharp sparks, without one cooling tear. (I, 146-52)

"She writh'd about, convuls'd with scarlet pain," and her brilliant colors dissolve into a uniform "volcanian yellow." When Madeline undresses (St. Agnes, XXVI), it is to unveil her real, visionary beauty: she is like a mermaid and her ornaments ("warmed jewels") take their beauty from hers.
When Lamia "undresses," it is a violent, unnatural raping. Surface beauty does not dissolve and reveal the real, visionary beauty, but is convulsed and torn until "Nothing but pain and ugliness were left" (I, 164). With ceremonial vision, Madeline can identify herself with a pre-existing system. With a sciential, intriguing brain, Lamia fabricates a system to belie the systemless universe. The beauty that an enchanted castle or chamber could have at one level now becomes illusory, a superficial snake-skein wound around an inner reality of blight and horror. Given the aura of sensuality around Lamia and Lycius—the Circean allusion, the eve of the Adonian feast—the suggestion is that they belong with the revelers in the Baron's hall. They seek enchantment in their sensual life.

The character of Lamia herself and her effects on Lycius are the clearest indications of this. When she first encounters Lycius, she toys with him, lies and doubles her lie, imprisons him in his senses and proclaims her slavery to her own. Are there "palaces" on earth, she asks, "Where I may all my many senses please,/And by mysterious slights a hundred thirsts appease?" (I, 284-85). After Lycius has swooned for losing her,

*The cruel lady, without any show Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woe,*

(I, 290-91)

kisses and restores him to life. The effect upon Lycius of
Lamia's entrancement is the very reverse of the vision of a Porphyro or Endymion. He is "blinded" (I, 347), and significantly at the very moment that he has entered fully the chamber of maiden thought. As priestess of maiden thought Madeline was "Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain." That was essential to her beauty and her glory. Priestess of the darkening of that thought, Lamia was

A virgin purest lipp'd, yet in the lore
Of love deep learned to the red heart's core:
Not one hour old, yet of sciential brain
To unperplex bliss from its neighbor pain;
Define their pettish limits, and estrange
Their points of contact, and swift counterchange...
(I, 189-94)

She does not free herself from the emotions of mortality; she tries to free them from each other. That falsifies the nature of things, and it prepares us for the collapse to come.

The chamber of maiden thought must darken of itself; to arrest it in light is to arrest one's growth to maturity: "However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man, of convincing ones nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak..." (Letters, I, 281). Two months before this passage, Keats had written in the "Epistle" that he "was at home,/And should have been most happy," and had recognized "It is a flaw/In happiness to see beyond our bourn,..." The flaw is indelibly human;
and for "truth's sake" Lamia must continue beyond the stage of maiden thought to tell "What woe afterwards befel" the lovers (I, 395). For the woe is inherent in the flaw. Though the trumpets' sound has fled, it "left a thought a-buzzing in his head," and Lycius for the first time since entering the palace feels his spirit pass "beyond its golden bourn/Into the noisy world almost forsworn" (II, 29-33). Lycius, of course, is not motivated to extend his mind beyond its proper bourn by any noble searching after truth. He does not look too deep into the sea—until too late. Indeed, the triviality of this appearance of the noisy world and of Lycius's reasons for introducing it into his chambers underscores ironically the failure of maiden-thought consciousness to satisfy man. He is literally in the enchanted castle, and it not only fails to satisfy him but actually perverts him—or rather it has no means of coping with or of helping him to cope with the harsher realities of his nature. Hence he turns savagely on Lamia when she questions his plans: "His passion, cruel grown, took on a hue/Fierce and sanguineous..." (II, 75-76). He wants to make his "foes choke" with envy or fury. He is governed, simply, by pride and selfishness, human analogues to the savagery of nature, realities extending beyond the enchanted castle and darkening its chambers from within. Apollonius merely put the finishing touches on a life or a reality that was destroying itself and that was questionable
in its very origins. Lamia founded her love upon a lie, ultimately upon a lie about human nature, and she tried to make the lie truth. More precisely, Keats has now come to view the enchanted castle as something as eerie and as ambiguous as Spenser's bower of bliss: he has made it a "purple-lined palace of sweet sin..." (II, 31).

The reason for the ruin of the enchanted castle remains, nonetheless, one of the most controversial enigmas in Keats. Wasserman is right to view Lycius as "the cause of his tragedy," but to attribute that cause to a "weakness inherent" in human nature is to presuppose that Keats approached the enchantment in Lamia as though it were a repetition simply of the enchantment in St. Agnes. I find it to be no such thing. The repetition occurs in the Hermes episode, where the enchantment is the same but the nature of those enchanted changed. In the main narrative Keats is concerned to test the power of the enchantment, now reapplied to man, and to define human nature according to the success or failure of the enchantment. It is the enchantment, at least as much as human nature, that is found wanting, for it has failed here to create its own viable reality, its own living frame of reference. The beauty and innocence of Madeline's chamber, when viewed against the background of Lamia's castle, become the beauty and innocence of childhood that the mind must pierce, not because of weakness but growth. Of course Lycius fails to
reproduce the experience of Hermes. But that is because the enchantment has failed to release human life from the necessary and implacable terms of its progress.

Once again the contrary visions of the "Epistle to Reynolds" provide the diagram, as the drama in Lamia moves man from innocence to the loss of innocence, from enchantment to disillusionment. Before his fall and while the enchantment is still upon him, Lycius sees in Lamia the projection of himself, looking into "her open eyes,/Where he was mirror'd small in paradise..." (II, 46-47). To stretch a point perhaps, though not beyond the allowance of the text, Lamia herself synthesizes the enchanted castle imagery. She represents the wish-fulfillment, the yearning that things may actually be as they appear; and it is the image of man mirrored in and by a paradisiacal nature that must give way to a darker, dehumanizing vision. The critical moment of the fall is dramatized by the disappearance of man from the world outside him:

Poor Lamia answered not.
He gaz'd into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gaz'd: his human senses reel:...
There was no recognition in those orbs.

(Poor Lamia answered not.
He gaz'd into her eyes, and not a jot
Own'd they the lovelorn piteous appeal:
More, more he gaz'd: his human senses reel:...
There was no recognition in those orbs.)

There is a suggestive play of associations between the "human senses" searching for themselves and the distancing, unreflective "orbs." Lycius has, figuratively, left paradise--he is
no longer the focus of a man-centered universe. Literally, he has lost that level of consciousness enchanted by its own vision of the world. Newtonian science has, of course, just entered the poem to do violence to the rainbow. However we want to view the term "Philosophy," it is clearly not a simple evil, nor is its appearance gratuitous or arbitrary. As the larger analogue for a level of mind, it empties "the haunted air, and gnomed mine" (II, 236), that is, demythologizes the universe, removing "the faery broods" (I, 1), "the Dryads and the Fauns" (I, 5) and the world they represent which made possible Hermes' triumph. It removes the conception of nature that Lamia embodied, leaving Lycius in that perilous state that Keats found himself in when he saw his enchanted castle fissured by a world devouring itself. The mythological consciousness, the hypothetical enchantment, has failed the experiment. It could not endure the vision that "look'd and look'd again a level" (II, 304), that sees beneath the placid surface too deep into the sea, and speaks what it sees: "A serpent."

Lycius' tragedy is that he fails to survive the failure of the enchantment; he cannot see through the desolated dream to the necessity for spirit creation. He is suspended in a "Purgatory blind," unable to reconcile his vision of and hopes for life with life's naturalistic facts. But the experiment itself was not a failure, no more than the darkening of the
chamber of maiden thought is a failure. Rather, it was necessary to Keats's ascent to the power of reilluminating the chamber, to the ascent from purgatory to divinity that is attempted in The Fall of Hyperion.\(^{37}\)

**Lamia** ends with ruin, with the discovery of the inevitableness of ruin. **The Fall of Hyperion** opens its vision within the ruin, with the ruin as the given, measuring with utmost brevity the experience and loss of the life of sensuous innocence.\(^{38}\) We are again within a castle, but now one that emerges as the prototype of desolation and decay:

...what I had seen
Of grey cathedrals, buttress'd walls, rent towers,
The superannuations of sunk realms,
Or Nature's rocks toil'd hard in waves and winds,
Seem'd but the faulture of decrepit things
To that eternal domed Monument. (I, 66-71)

And yet, from within the ruin itself is figured-forth an eternal and a beatified life: "...that lofty sacrificial fire...spread around/Forgetfulness of everything but bliss..." (I, 102-04). Tending the fire is, of course, Moneta-Mnemosyne, carried over to this revision from Book III of the first Hyperion. In the earlier fragment she had assisted Apollo, by the "wondrous lesson" he reads in her "silent face," to achieve divinity--the fragment breaking off with the achievement. Keats was unable to proceed past Apollo's becoming a god because Apollo, like Hermes, is a god to begin with;
that is the donnée of his mythological identity. Like Madeline's, his spiritual existence is pre-supposed, not forged out of the existence of its contraries, not emblematic of life as a vale of Soul-making. In Lamia, Hermes succeeds and Lycius fails; in The Fall of Hyperion, Keats, a mortal man, carries through successfully the fragmented progress of the god.

Forcing himself to take the place of Apollo is the closest Keats comes to creating a poetic myth for the doctrines of human life he expresses in the journal letter to George. It is his most successful transfiguration of the ceremonial into the charismatic world. For in The Fall of Hyperion the gods themselves appear in a radically different perspective from what we have just seen. The defining condition of Hermes and his nymph was that they grew not pale, "as mortal lovers do" (Lamia, I, 145). They transcend the sorrows of life and death without ever experiencing them. Their polar opposite is Moneta, who far from escaping decay has eternalized it; she has transcended the sufferings of life by incorporating their presence eternally in her face. Keats's description of her, a Romantic poet's face to face confrontation with godhead, is surely one of the most significant indexes of the forces governing and the insights controlling the entire Romantic movement. He
The conditions of eternal life behind the veil—an image used so often to depict the infirmities of our mortal vision—these are entirely transformed. One ascends not to joy but to sorrow, not to bliss but to desolation. This is the level of consciousness that Keats himself has ascended to—Moneta's face functioning at once as the emblem of that consciousness and the boon granted to it—when he is reborn upon the flight of stairs. Almost frozen at the bottom, just as Lycius is chilled when he touches Lamia under the stare of Apollonius (Lamia, II, 251), Keats learns from Moneta the essential conditions requisite to his achievement and to the highest level of consciousness:

"None can usurp this height," returned that shade, "But those to whom the miseries of the world Are misery, and will not let them rest. All else who find a haven in the world, Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days...

Rot on the pavement where thou rotted'st half."

(I, 147-53)

Keats had to act upon that awareness of the world Moneta embodies, upon the recognition that the world is insufficient to the purposes of man and that the life it provides for him
is one of misery.

Thus, we have restated, in a higher context, the blank naturalism of the "Epistle to Reynolds," a charismatic injunction to recognize the darkness and the suffering, charismatic because out of this injunction emerges a pattern beyond; out of the recognition of the facts comes a transcendence of, not an escape from, the facts. The penalty for failure to mount the stairs, for professing oneself unversed in the litany of sorrow, withholds from man his spiritual identity:

If thou canst not ascend
These steps, die on that marble where thou art.
Thy flesh, near cousin to the common dust,
Will parch for lack of nutriment—thy bones
Will wither in few years, and vanish....

(I, 107-11)

To mount the stairs, which are like Jacob's ladder on which "once fair angels...flew/From the green turf to Heaven" (I, 135-36), is to release oneself, at least temporarily, from the penalties of mortal life: it is "to die and live again before/Thy fated hour" (I, 142-43), just as Emily has done. Like that heroine, Keats was able to create his spiritual life because he lifted his foot out of a life frozen in the void of spirit. He has become Apollo. He has seen in Moneta the fusion of suffering and calm, of eternal decay and eternal purpose, and seen too the strength and the light that survive the overthrow and the darkness. He is now
ready to explore the dark passages leading through the mansion of life, for he now has the means of casting authentic light upon them from his power "To see as a god sees" (I, 304), to look again a level and contain what he sees and through it grow beyond it.

What does he see? I have considered the three poems as thematically related, the second growing from the first and the third from both, so that what was granted to Madeline and denied to Lycius Keats must achieve. And yet, in another sense, they come full circle. The Eve of St. Agnes opens with the beadsman saying his rosary among the "sculptur'd dead." Canto I of The Fall of Hyperion modulates its conclusion upon the figures of Saturn and Thea, "postured motionless, /Like sculpture builded-up upon the grave /Of their own power" (I, 382-84). But loss and death and the infirmities of life are not truly real in St. Agnes and irrelevant to its central experience. The central experience in The Fall of Hyperion, an experience that is itself an act of seeing, could not have come to man without them.

In the previous chapter, I noted that Webster turns to The Origin of Species to illustrate what he believes to be an essential influence on the formation of Hardy's world view: "'...we do not see, or we forget, that the
birds which are idly singing round us live mostly on insects or seeds, and are thus constantly destroying life....' By an implication widely accepted, this struggle also applied to man. If Hardy accepted the Darwinian hypothesis, he would be compelled to change entirely his previous conception of the law which governed the universe" (On a Darkling Plain, p. 41). I hope I have demonstrated that if Hardy awoke from his dream of a benevolent universe to the disillusionment occasioned by his awareness of savagery, at least two important Romantic poets had anticipated and themselves experienced that fall from grace and its stunning impact. "The more we know," Keats wrote, "the more inadequacy we discover in the world to satisfy us...." (Letters, II, 18). That the Romantics were preoccupied with suffering and with the radical limitations inherent in mortal existence has perhaps been obvious to all. But where our knowledge of Hardy has gone astray has been in the insistence that his parallel pre-occupations resulted inevitably from his inheritance of a different world view from that of the Romantics, as though Hardy and Keats had begun with different images of the universe and then turned to the suffering individuals within it. If they did, it was to a small degree only. We fully comprehend their literature when we trace the mind of each from its first encounters with individual suffering to the attempt to formulate some pattern, some image, that will comprehend
the suffering into a larger framework of meaning and synthesis. In the chapters that follow, I intend to show that Hardy not only began where the Romantics began, with the fact of suffering and defeated purpose, but demanded of man precisely what the Romantics demanded: heroism and spiritual life. Keats and Wordsworth saw a Darwinian universe; Hardy saw the necessity for a Wordsworthian and Keatsian human nature.

Hardy could do so because Keats strips away all illusions from that human nature and accepts the implication that the struggle for existence "also applied to man." In the March 19th section of the journal letter to George, about a month before he wrote the vale of Soul-making passage, he explains the impossibility of pushing to its extreme his ideal of disinterestedness. To do so would force the hawk to lose "his Breakfast of Robins and the Robin his of Worms. The Lion must starve as well as the swallow" (Letters, II, 79). Fully accepting his vision of nature disenchanted that had troubled him in the "Epistle to Reynolds," Keats works with both the threat and the promise of man generated and governed by the same law governing the rest of the universe: "The greater part of Men make their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the Hawk." The hawk and the man want and procure their mates, their lodgings, and their food "in the same manner" (II, 79). He proceeds to equate (and that is not too strong a term) man ("The Creature") with "a stoat
or fieldmouse"—each "has a purpose and his eyes are bright with it" (II, 80). Despite such critics as John Middleton Murry, the animalism through which Keats defines human nature is here, I think, unmistakable. 41 Indeed, as D. G. James points out, 42 unless man recognizes his inherent animalism he cannot rise to what Keats demands that he rise—"some birth of new heroism." For the injunction which Keats places upon man is as demanding and emphatic as the naturalistic conditions necessitating it. Man must create, out of the "rubbish" of his animalism, the "pearl" of spiritual selfhood.

The process by which the pearl emerges from the rubbish provides the basic pattern for Keats's formulation of the world as a vale of Soul-making. Again the antagonistic conditions from which heroism evolves are described, and in terms very similar to those he used in March: "The whole appears to resolve into this— that Man is originally 'a poor, forked creature' subject to the same mischances as the beasts of the forests, destined to hardships and disquietude of some kind or other" (II, 101). Man does not begin as a god, nor his process to manhood within an enchanted chamber or castle. Nature includes ice and desert, "Whirlpools and volcanoes— Let men exterminate them and I will say that they may arrive at earthly Happiness— The point at which Man may arrive is as far as the parallel state in inanimate nature and no further."
Hardy does not state more emphatically, though sometimes more crudely, the determining effect of environment. He closes *The Mayor of Casterbridge* with Elizabeth-Jane's recognition that "happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain" (p. 386). Yet, though each writer sees the determining effect of environment upon happiness, neither limits the possibilities of the inner life and growth of man to what he finds in "the parallel state in inanimate nature." In neither is internal life necessarily passive before its external conditions. It is precisely because his happiness is thwarted by a world inadequate to his purposes that man must turn to the possibilities within him and to his spiritual self possession. In the absence of a providential nature, man, in both Keats and Hardy, like Wordsworth's Emily, must become his own providence.

"...how then are Souls to be made?" Keats asks. "How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them?" (II, 102). The system he outlines, a system which he "seriously" thinks "may have been the Parent of all the more palpable and personal Schemes of Redemption" (II, 103), follows the pattern already suggested in his mansion of life letter; and it expresses most fully my notion of the charismatic life. Man, now viewed solely from within, begins in elemental innocence, he is a spark of the divinity, his consciousness inhabits the chamber of maiden thought. But he has not yet his self; he has no identity because he has
not yet created his own spiritual life, his own divinity. The pearl must come from the rubbish. The chamber of maiden thought must darken. "...how then are Souls to be made? How but by the medium of a world like this?" Spirit must be created within because it is absent without; it must see through its absence to create its being: "Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul? A Place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways!" So suffering and pain are inevitable and necessary, but not because they are only partial evils subserving some universal good, not because they will meet with their heavenly rewards and opposites. Simply because nothing exists outside of man but pain and suffering, only they can test his inward force and being; only they can supply the materials by which the higher life is forged. And once identity is forged, once the darkened chamber is reillumined, there is an end of it. It is charismatic because it is entirely self-sustaining and because it plots out the total destiny of man's spiritual significance within the limitations imposed by mortal life—because man is capable of overpowering from within the conditions of this world, its chances and circumstances, that limit and define his external being.

But it is very hard to find a pearl in the rubbish, to maintain one's spiritual bearing in the spiritless void,
to know one's identity. In the Wessex Novels it will be all but impossible, yet the very greatness of characters like Clym Yeobright and Giles Winterborne and Tess is that they rescue the process and incorporate it from the verge of impossibility. Hardy's greatest novels are such because they attempt to encompass within this world the terms and conditions of man's supernatural life projected to another world by "the more palpable and personal Schemes of Redemption." Whether they succeed in the attempt will have to be seen. A complete estimate has to recognize that the attempt touches the essential heart of Romanticism.

Yet Hardy is not simply a fourth-generation Romanticist, riding the coattails of Wordsworth and Keats. He is not concerned with spirit creation in precisely the same way as Keats; and he hardly allows the soul of any of his characters to follow Emily's "to the God from whom it came!" He demands that man persevere in his inner life despite all external mishaps, but he often defines that inner life in terms of its moral rather than its strictly spiritual dimensions. He participates in the essentially Romantic awareness of the threat to and absence of human values in nature, but he redirects the human role in that nature from its quest for spiritual selfhood to his insistence that man remain responsible to himself in an immoral universe. The world in which he enacts his dramas is no different from that of the Romantics, but
his concern is with the nature of human culpability in that world, with a right awareness of the nature of human crime and punishment. He insists that man do the right thing and that the right thing is often the hardest and, in nature, the most unprecedented of things.

In his moral concern, Hardy is typically Victorian; his Romanticism will allow him to create a new morality. Yet the fundamental Romantic cosmos has been lost, and only in *The Woodlanders* and *Tess* does Hardy rise to partially recapture it. The Romantic worldview persists in Hardy, but its perspective has collapsed, and its shrinking was almost simultaneous with its widest expression. Emily and Moneta and Keats fuse joy and suffering, incorporate and transcend them, and they see as a god sees. In perhaps the most Romantic work of them all, Heathcliff transforms himself almost by an act of will from the limitations of his earthly life to spiritual union and existence with Catherine. He is tied so faintly to this earth that he has to remind himself to breathe, and he has created out of his own inner needs his own heaven and hell.

In her essay "The Butterfly," Emily Brontë passed from an awareness that "All creation is equally insane," an "inexplicable puzzle" existing on "a principle of destruction," and symbolized by the caterpillar hidden in the flower—she passed from this to the life and beauty born of destruction, to the butterfly, the ancient symbol for
The Romantics, disillusioned by the savagery of nature, took the place of its Creator, fashioning their cosmos in the image of their sensitivity to beauty and intuition of spirit. Their cosmos, so long as it was self-possessed and possessing nature, enabled them to diagram imaginatively the course of human destiny. Yet Bronte concludes her powerful essay with a paean to the mercy of God, and Hareton struggling to achieve his identity by learning to trace out the letters of his name repeats in a conventional tone the finer existence of Heathcliff and Catherine.  

In a letter already cited, Wordsworth can avoid blasphemy only by the supposition of another and a better world—and he was no blasphemer. Even Keats, the most naturalistic and least religious of the three, who had worked back to "the Parent" of the world's religions, finally despaired of the self-possession of charismatic or soul-making power and came to see the inadequacy of this world not as a test of the adequacy of man but as the promise for a better to come. "Is there another Life?" he writes to Brown. "Shall I awake and find all this a dream? There must be we cannot be created for this sort of suffering" (Letters, II, 346). His dreaming Adam has fallen, and with him the Romantic attempt to explain on its own terms the necessity of human suffering. Hardy is left with the fragments of that attempt, with intense but fitful illuminations into the totality of its organic scheme. Significantly, Angel Clare is silent.
when Tess asks him if they shall meet again after death:
"O, Angel— I fear that means no!" (Tess, p. 503).

Yet those fragments allow Hardy to touch a purer form of Romanticism after all. We understand him and his Romantic vision, when we see that where Tess is, in those final days of her life, there is heaven. If Hardy accepts the finitude of human life, the failure of any orthodox pattern to incorporate suffering and rise through it to selfhood, he turns not to determinism but to determination and to an almost evangelical fervor that man abide by that only which can grace him with human purpose and being— his conscious moral life enacting itself upon the duties of the moment. Those who surrender that life, who lay down the cross of will and spiritual being, are destroyed by the mechanisms of chance and instinct that had only awaited the opportunity surrender offered. Man in Hardy is as responsible for his moral life as he is in Keats and Wordsworth for his spiritual life. Almost a paradigm of what Hardy was to insist on in his greatest novels, in such scenes as Mrs. Yeobright's visit to Eustacia and Clym, occurs in his first, when Cytheria and Mrs. Aldclyffe are watching the swans float across the lake:

"They seem to come to us without any will of their own— quite involuntarily— don't they?" said Cytheria, looking at the birds' graceful advance.

"Yes, but if you look narrowly you can see their hips just beneath the water, working with
"I'd rather not see that..." (Desperate Remedies, p. 242).

Too many of Hardy's critics have followed Eustacia's refusal to see the inner forces self-directing her actions. We cannot fully know any of his characters until we see that Hardy did not float them along by external forces, but experimented deeply with the idea that the destinies of men are traceable to what men are and will to be— that he forces us to look more narrowly at the drama of his novels to find, "working with the greatest energy," those qualities of man that are only more obviously on the surface in Wordsworth and Keats.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER II


3 Joseph Warren Beach provides an authoritative background to Wordsworth's belief in a world of design, in The Concept of Nature in Nineteenth-Century English Poetry (New York, 1936; first published in 1936), pp. 156-72. I am willing to accept his notion of Wordsworth's benevolent nature as a safe, general guide, but I would challenge its all-exclusiveness and particularly its application to The Excursion (p. 159). The idea of nature's "holy plan" is aggressively challenged in the interesting but over-extended approach of Carson C. Hamilton, Wordsworth's Decline in Poetic Power (New York, 1963), who refutes the traditional notions and argues for the presence of a "malignant" nature in Wordsworth. See especially pp. 166-69, 177-78, 199.


5 The Early Letters, pp. 460-61. I shall refer to this, written March 12, 1805, as the "Beaumont letter." In the next quotation the italics are Wordsworth's.

6 De Selincourt considers John's death as forming the "turning point" from Wordsworth's naturalism to his orthodoxy. See The Prelude, ed. Ernest De Selincourt (Oxford, 1926), p. 608. Alice P. Comparetti says that "John's death had provoked a crisis in Wordsworth's religious thought; questions arose that could not be dismissed without answer." The White Doe of Rylestone, A Critical Edition (Ithaca, New York, 1940), p. 23. I am perhaps stressing a commonplace: that the orthodoxy did not come easily, and that Wordsworth's questions are as important as their answers to our understanding of his thought.

This is denied by Hamilton, who takes an extreme position. See Wordsworth's Decline in Poetic Power, pp. 212-13.


Townsend ("John Wordsworth And His Brother's Poetic Development," ??) considers the loss of power "which nothing can restore" to refer to the fading of creative imagination, which Wordsworth "equated" with the inspiration of John. I hesitate to ascribe to this view, but am concerned, at any rate, not with different degrees of imaginative insight, but with qualitatively different moral formulations of the operations of the universe. Hartman considers lines 35-36 "the darkest...that Wordsworth ever wrote..." (Wordsworth's Poetry, p. 14).

The Excursion, VIII, 570-71.

Hamilton, Wordsworth's Decline, p. 332.

Moorman, The Later Years, p. 79. Hamilton speaks of
"Wordsworth's idealistic self in the Wanderer, and his realistic self in the Solitary..." (p. 211). Both are usurped by "his Anglican self in the Pastor,..." I find the Pastor and the Wanderer embodying the same fundamental attitudes, which are simultaneously present with the Solitary's in a dialectic without synthesis. Hazlitt, of course, had recognized from the first that "The recluse, the pastor and the pedlar, are three persons in one poet." The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, ed. P. P. Howe, IV (London, 1930-1934), 113.

17 At least he continues the debate, unresolved, until the very end of the poem and, if anything, with a concession by the Wanderer to the Solitary. Education, the Wanderer says, is vital if England is going to redeem its rural youth from their slavery to nature and make them morally responsible beings (IX, 293 ff.). He is attempting to answer the Solitary's charge (VIII, 391-433) that even the plowboy of the better class is "sluggish, blank, and ignorant" if given as his teacher and guide nature only. The assertion and its success are not in themselves startling, certainly not unWordsworthian. They merely indicate how strongly Wordsworth participated in the Solitary's view that man must work from within to achieve his destiny—his highest human reality—and that he must do so in a world not designed for him, but threatening to degrade him.

18 Hazlitt praised this section as a "splendid" description of "the habitual tendency of the human mind to endow the outward forms of being with life and conscious motion" (The Complete Works of William Hazlitt, IV, 115)—and he provides us, in turn, with a good description of the mythological mind. The charismatic mind creates its inward life in the face of external lifelessness.

19 The contrast between the living brilliance and completion of the city in the Solitary's vision and the abandoned, broken relics of religion he has just left is highly suggestive, but one can only conjecture what Wordsworth intended by it. A more pregnant contrast is that between this vision, self-sustaining and inexplicable, and that of the assembled group on the hillside in Book IX, 590-633, which is degraded below the level of authentic vision by the Pastor's insistence on explaining it as a type of the "paternal splendours, and the pomp" of beatitude.

20 The same materials of the storm of nature appear in the opening lines of "Resolution and Independence" and help
to authenticate the vision to come.

21

Comparetti sees the one poem as the culmination of the other: "The solution of The White Doe is militant, the mediated solution of The Excursion triumphant." "...the action within Emily's soul," is described by the Wanderer's speech in Book IV, beginning "'One adequate support/For the calamities of mortal life/Exists..."


22


23


24

The White Doe is often read as Wordsworth's return to the Christian fold, a view that is substantiated, perhaps, more by his biography than by his poem. See Hamilton, pp. 315-22; and Hartman, pp. 324-28, who confuses matters by arguing that Wordsworth contrasted his own Protestant vision with the Catholicism of the Nortons. An approach more congenial to my own is taken by James A. W. Hefferman, "Wordsworth On Imagination: The Emblemizing Power," PMLA, LXXXI (October, 1966), 389-99.

25

If Norton's methods are wrong, his ultimate aim—to construct a system leading to eternal life—is surely blameless.

26

The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, III, 543. Comparetti lists all of the important references to The White Doe made by Wordsworth, his associates, and his critics (pp. 247-64). Wordsworth, in the two important letters to Coleridge (April 19, 1808) and Wrangham (January 18, 1816), stresses the spiritual character of his narrative and the dependence of both the Doe and the Banner for their meaning upon the human mind(s) beholding them. See The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, The Middle Years, ed. Ernest De Selincourt, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1937), I, 197-98; II, 704-05.
In itself, it is no more than a Doe, symbolic of nothing—a tabula rasa upon which Emily's mind must write. Such at least is the import of the two letters referred to in the preceding footnote. The Doe and the Banner have nothing inherent in them, Wordsworth writes Wrangham, and "the poetry...proceeds...from the soul of Man, communicating its creative energies to the images of the external world." Emily, in relation to herself and the Doe, is a spirit creator.

The two letters (to J. H. Reynolds, May 3, 1818; and to George and Georgiana Keats, Feb. 14–May 3, 1819) have guided many studies of Keats. I have used the discussions of the relationship between the letters and the poetry in Clarence Thorpe, The Mind of John Keats (New York, 1926), pp. 43-47, 80-87; and in Earl R. Wasserman, The Finer Tone: Keats' Major Poems (Baltimore, 1953), pp. 116-25. Lionel Trilling uses the letters to show Keats's very deep concern with the problem of evil. See "The Poet as Hero: Keats in His Letters," The Opposing Self (New York, 1959; the essay first appeared in 1951), pp. 3-49. All references to Keats's letters are to The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1958).

Wasserman notes the correspondence between the stages outlined here and "the three implicit in 'Tintern Abbey'..." (The Finer Tone, p. 118). Thorpe cites earlier criticism in which the correspondence is made (The Mind of John Keats, p. 47, n. 9).

See Wasserman's insight into what he calls Keats's "metaphysics." Keats "did not accept the world as symbolic per se; things require an ardent pursuit by man's spirit to make them 'ethereal'—symbolic. Only in man's spiritual self do presences become essences, being in themselves only real or semi-real things, or nothing. Man, not God, is the etherealizer, the symbolizer" (pp. 135-36).

Evert, who devotes nearly a third of his book to Endymion, considers it "the swan song of the aesthetic that had sustained the poet up to this point in his career, but which he was soon to find no longer tenable" (Aesthetic and Myth in the Poetry of Keats, p. 89).

33 All references to Keats's poems are from The Poetical Works of John Keats, ed. H. W. Garrod (London, 1956).

34 Evert is more severe on Lamia than I am. He finds her association with Lycius to have a "sinister quality"; she is a "sorceress" who has convinced Lycius of truth which was no truth but mere illusion" (pp. 275, 273).

35 The Finer Tone, pp. 169-70.

36 See M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (New York, 1958; first published in 1953), pp. 303-08, for the background to the growing alienation between science and poetry and the scientific threat to the poetic mode of apprehending truth. As Keats "sets up the story, Apollonius...was right" (p. 307).

37 D. G. James provides a provocative and imaginative analysis of Keats's purposes in both Hyperions and of the necessary modifications of the first in the second. See The Romantic Comedy (London, 1948), pp. 74, 80, 85, 140-51.

38 Though even here, before the poet drinks the full draught that is the parent of his theme, the feast "seem'd refuse of a meal/By angel tasted or our Mother Eve..." (I, 30-31; my italics).

39 Dickens is not as faithful as Keats to the dynamics of the charismatic self, as can be seen in the quote from the final chapter of Bleak House used in the epigraph to this chapter. Ada's face has been purified by her sufferings into a "diviner quality." But the sorrow "that has been in her face...is not there now...."

40 Dorothy Van Ghent interprets the statuary image in Keats to represent immortal life, the resolution of conflicting opposites, "identity." This hardly accords with Keats's more obvious and conscious purposes. See "Keats's Myth of the Hero," Keats-Shelley Journal, III (Winter, 1954), 7-25.

41 See Keats and Shakespeare (London, 1925). Murry takes no note of the Darwinism implicit in the hawk-man equation. Rather, he sees it as a resolution of the
contradiction between the beauty of the world and its pain, as representing "the harmony which unites man to the animal universe..." (p. 120). The fierce, glassy image evoked by a creature's eyes bright with purpose is sufficient to dispel any suggestions of a benevolent "harmony" between man and beast.

42 James makes excellent use of this passage to illustrate and defend Keats's "naturalism." The Romantic Comedy, pp. 112-13.

43 An extensive examination in Emily Bronte of the themes I have been exploring in Wordsworth and Keats is tempting, but it would tend to swell rather than advance the preceding analysis. For an excellent discussion of the quest for self-fulfillment in Wuthering Heights, driven by a sense of the destructive principle in nature and the inadequacy of isolated self, see J. Hillis Miller, The Disappearance of God (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 157-211.


45 From Five Essays Written in French, trans. Lorine White Nagel (Austin, Texas, 1948), pp. 17-19. Miller's discussion of the essay is thorough, as is his application of its vision to that of Wuthering Heights (The Disappearance of God, pp. 163 ff.). Suggesting John Wesley's sermon on "The Great Deliverance" as a source, Miller makes no mention of the close parallels in thought and image between this essay and the passages I have cited from Darwin (in Webster) and Keats. Only the last, short paragraph relies directly upon Christianity for an explanation of suffering; the rest traces naturally the course of suffering itself. In its image of a transcendence that is an incorporation of suffering, it comes much closer to Keats's Moneta than does Bleak House: "It is true that there is a heaven for the saint, but the saint leaves enough misery here below to sadden him even before the throne of God" (p. 18).


47 Miller argues that the Romantics tried to "re-establish
communication" with a God no longer present in nature and growing more and more remote as the century progressed (pp. 13-15). Hardy, in a sense, takes his final step from Keats, accepting his abandoned condition as irrevocable.
CHAPTER III

HARDY'S GROWTH TO THE CEREMONIAL METHOD

1

Hardy's own apology for the complicated and contrived plot of his first published novel is that it was written "at a time when he was feeling his way to a method."\(^1\)

Meredith's advice to him to write a novel "with a purely artistic purpose" backfired into the elaborate scheming and detection of the second half of the novel where we are treated to the flagrant melodrama of such a scene as that in chapter XX, when the "maddened desperado," Manston, chases Cytherea around the table.\(^2\) There is very little anywhere in the novel to suggest the coherent presentation of theme and the sustained concussion of dramatic passions characteristic of Hardy's greatest work. Yet the method he was feeling for here he possessed totally by the time of Far From the Madding Crowd. And if he refined that method and abandoned its more obvious tricks, he yet retained and further explored main lines of thought and definitions of the human dilemma incipient in and enlivening Desperate Remedies.\(^3\)
The principal device organizing the novel, and its most obvious legacy to the later tragedies of Henchard and Tess, turns upon secrets of the past haunting three of the main characters and forcing them into new roles and new levels of moral being according to their suppression or revelation of something definitive of their past identities. Springgrove hides from Cytherea his engagement to Adelaide Hinton, Manston his marriage to Eunice, and Mrs. Aldclyffe her "illegitimate" relation to Manston. The individual suppressions project each character into a self-revealing, self-defining relation with Cytherea, who unlike these is defined not by what she has been in the past, but by her innocence from being, that is from selfhood, in the past. Her role is to pass from a state of spotlessness to the world of corruption that the secrets contain and to the consequences that at once purify and intensify the secrets eliciting them. At the beginning of the novel, just before her father's accident on the scaffolding, Cytherea "unknowingly stood, as it were, upon the extreme posterior edge of a tract in her life, in which the real meaning of taking thought had never been known. It was the last hour of experience she ever enjoyed with a mind entirely free from a knowledge of that labyrinth into which she steeped immediately afterwards—to continue a perplexed course along its mazes for the greater portion of twenty-nine subsequent months" (p. 9). As with Tess and Bathsheba, Hardy uses Cytherea to investigate and dramatize the necessary and
fructifying progression from childhood to adulthood. The later novels show a far more superb grasp of the progression as cyclical. Here, Hardy seizes on one of his comprehensive images to distinguish the innocent mind from that committed to an exploration of the darkening chambers of life. Cytherea has watched her father and the workers through the window in the town hall, separated from them not only physically but conceptually: the five men seemed to her "entirely removed from the sphere and experiences of ordinary human beings" (p. 11). When Mr. Graye falls to his death he removes the barrier isolating Cytherea from the conditions necessary to the fulfillment of her identity.

Two of those conditions, which bear only obliquely upon Cytherea though they form the context for what she confronts directly, involve a dialectic between moral and immoral commitment and between the loss of innocence and the longing for innocence—the first revealed in the actions of Springrove and Manston towards Cytherea and what they have kept from her, the second in Mrs. Aldclyff's passionate attachment to the daughter of her true and innocent lover. Each provides at once a new complication to and new light for the labyrinth Cytherea must travel upon the birth of the thinking principle within her.

The actions of Manston and Springrove parallel and morally reflect upon each other. Both begin by concealing from Cytherea the complete and therefore true condition of
their being: Edward is engaged and Manston married. From this point on, however, the lines of their relationship form, if this is not considered too literally, a capital X—Springgrove rising in moral capacity and self-fulfillment as Manston declines to moral and self-negation. The opposition of their earlier actions is succinctly described by Mrs. Aldclyffe, in her attempt to persuade Cytheara to accept Manston as her lover: "There's nothing in the past for you to regret. Compare Mr. Manston's honourable conduct towards his wife and yourself, with Springgrove towards his betrothed and yourself, and then see which appears the more worthy of your thoughts" (p. 243). There is considerable retrospective irony here, of course, since Manston has already committed murder, and since Mrs. Aldclyffe has concealed "just beneath the water, working with the greatest energy" her own deliberate stratagem against Edward's father and her dispatch to Edward of Cytheara's note to Manston. But there is truth and point to what she says. Edward himself recognizes that he has acted dishonorably, that he has allowed a spontaneous impulse to overrule his responsibility to an abiding commitment. "I had no right to love you," he admits to Cytheara, though even now his honesty is not strong enough to face the full dimensions of what he has been, of how the engagement has defined his life: "Something forbade me—till the kiss—yes, till the kiss came; and now nothing shall forbid it! We'll
hope in spite of all" (p. 52). He hopes to define himself anew, free from what he has been. Never ceasing wholly to love him, and giving him openings for a reconciliation in her letter of dismissal (pp. 158-59), Cytherea cannot help but define him according to what he has been and therefore to what he now is morally: "The meaning of all his allusions, his abruptness in telling her of his love, his constraint at first, then his desperate manner of speaking, was clear. They must have been the last flickerings of a conscience not quite dead to all sense of perfidiousness and fickleness" (pp. 104-05). The incidents and tenor of the novel emphatically support her insight that duty must be adhered to and self forged out of selflessness.

Edward's error in allowing impulse to negate duty is thrown into stronger relief by the villain Manston's commitment to a duty far more galling and ominous—by his embodiment of a moral principle that Edward has yet to attain and that it is Manston's tragedy to lose. Despite his diabolic kinship to thunder and lightning and over-powering spells, Manston becomes the villain and undergoes a tragic fall only when he kills his wife—not when he keeps his marriage a secret from Cytherea. Again, Edward recognizes that during the interval preceding the night of the fire his rival has acted with circumspection and honor, never allowing the impulse of his desire to displace the demands of his duty. What held him back from Cytherea,
Manston says, "was just one thing—a sense of morality..." (p. 213). Hence, the failure of that sense to operate at the critical juncture of the novel is not gratuitous or ironic or the result of circumstance only. It is tragic, for a moral sense did exist in Manston and gave him a stature that belied the accidental features of his villainy. That he could exercise the power under an intense pressure implies that he chose not to exercise it under another, not that much more intense—if the murder was an act of passion, yet he deliberately exploited that deed to gain the selfish ends he had already proved himself capable of renouncing. The result is that Manston crosses the X downwards, and as he gets more and more involved in his deception with Ann Seaway, he continually widens the gap between his make-believe and his actual self, until the accidental features of his marital fidelity help to reveal his essential villainy.

Mrs. Aldclyffe's villainy is of a far more subtle texture, and precisely for that reason it is at once less definable and more pervasive. It entails, not so much her single act of sin, but rather the enduring and absolute consequences of a fall from innocence. Mrs. Aldclyffe's experience is the antithesis of Cytherea's maiden vision, a contrast which, if unduly neat, accounts for the irresistible attraction felt by the older woman and the mingled fascination and fear of the younger. Hardy was
aware that he had to do here with qualitatively different levels of man's moral being—not merely with sinner and virgin, but with a consciousness stained by its ineradicable deeds and with Edenic passionlessness. A contrast very like that is suggested by the elaborate color symbols that fix the tenor of and provide the backdrop for the first meeting between the two women. Cytherea is waiting in one chamber while Mrs. Aldclyffe takes possession of another. Cytherea's room reflects back to her those images of coldness, paleness, thinness, traditionally associated with unstained innocence, the spotless maidenhood of moonlight or dawn: "The prevailing colour of the walls, curtains, carpet, and coverings of furniture, was more or less blue, to which the cold light coming from the north-easterly sky, and falling on a wide roof of new slate...imparted a more striking paleness" (p. 57). She stands, in a more than fanciful sense, in Keats's chamber of maiden-thought. She has already outgrown, upon the death of her father, the level of infant thoughtlessness, and if she does not now anticipate simply a life of "pleasant wonders," she is innocent of those motives and designs lurking beneath the placid and alluring surface of things.\(^5\) She even pictures "a wonderful paradise" on the other side of the door--in Mrs. Aldclyffe's room. That her innocence has seen only what it has created for itself to see and what was necessary for it to see--this is even more
evident in the imagery Hardy employs to effect the transition of consciousness from one chamber to another. Underneath the door of the second room "gleamed an infinitesimally small, yet very powerful, fraction of contrast—a very thin line of ruddy light, showing that the sun beamed strongly into this room adjoining" (p. 57). The ruddy, red light of full maturity and experience contrasting with the "striking paleness" of original innocence. Keats, of course, signaled the fall from innocence by darkening the chamber of maiden-thought; despite the difference in detail, Hardy provides an analogous formulation of a central romantic problem. Cytherea moves to what she thinks is the "only cheering thing visible in the place" (p. 57). It will tempt her into a moral wilderness.

When Cytherea crosses to the second chamber (the second time a physical barrier has been removed between her and conceptual levels of experience), it is not to find the paradise she pictured, nor even an increase of light. "The golden line" has vanished like a "phosphorescent streak," leaving only an aura of crimson and burning, the appropriate context for its single, central object, Mrs. Aldclyffe: "The stranger appeared to the maiden's eyes—fresh from the blue gloom, and assisted by an imagination fresh from nature—like a tall black figure standing in the midst of fire" (pp. 58-59). The accumulated images—and there is no need to stress or even to rely on their
satanic associations—clearly emphasize a level of experience at total variance from what Cytherea has known of life and from what that knowledge has led her to anticipate of life. A veil has been withdrawn, and Cytherea must shade her eyes and "retreat a step or two" before she can see Mrs. Aldclyffe's face (p. 59).

Yet within the opposition is a prevailing sense of synthesis and completion, as though the innocence of the one acted upon the experience of the other as a positive upon a negative pole. As unresponsive as she is, Cytherea remains loyal to Mrs. Aldclyffe, bound to her by some special kinship that allows the older woman's spirit to appear to her at the moment almost of Mrs. Aldclyffe's death—the spirit imaged as "wan," entreating, clothed "in the grey time of dawn" (p. 444), not the opposite of Cytherea, but a reincarnation of her very condition at their first meeting. Clearly, it was a longing to return to innocence that formed the chief impulse of Mrs. Aldclyffe's absorption in Cytherea. The older woman, obsessed by her knowledge of corruption within the superficially pure, seeks in Cytherea the embodiment of her own past self, of the self as yet unfallen into the knowledge of good and evil. "I have met deceit by deceit," she tells the girl as they lie in bed, "till I am weary of it—weary, weary—and I long to be what I shall never be again—artless and innocent, like you" (p. 90). The longing is principally for a return
to a level of consciousness, to maidenhood itself perhaps, and more clearly to maiden thought. It is a longing that appears in various forms throughout the novels that follow this. It manifests itself here, specifically, in Mrs. Aldclyffe's desire to erase the effects of time, the experience time brings, the inevitable progression of human development. In Keats and Wordsworth, we saw the longing backward glance at nature's dissolving ceremonies. Mrs. Aldclyffe too wants to be a child again, "far nearer heaven than I am now" (p. 91).

As with the Romantics, moreover, the road back to a condition free from time necessitates further and more dangerous travel through time—all illusions must be destroyed and innocence created not assumed. Mrs. Aldclyffe must learn that even Cytherea, apparently innocence incarnate, is not untouched, even worse, not unkissed. And she reacts violently to an act that has changed, at least modified qualitatively, Cytherea's identity: "You are not, after all, the innocent I took you for" (p. 93). She changes for Mrs. Aldclyffe (only momentarily, of course) from the symbol of innocence to that of the universal loss of innocence; "... women are all alike. I thought I had at last found an artless woman who had not been sullied by a man's lips, and who had not practised or been practised upon by the arts which ruin all the truth and sweetness and goodness in us" (p. 93). "A wicked old sinner like me!" Mrs.
Aldclyffe exclaims to Cytherea's asking her if she still says her prayers. Yet the wicked sinner, groping through the innermost coil of thought and experience, finds her strongest emotions and needs in the recollection of the Edenic life on the other side of the labyrinth's entrance.

But Desperate Remedies generates its fullest power when Cytherea herself steps into the darkest turn in the labyrinth of her thinking life, and when it explores that turn with principles drawing from Wordsworth their most significant expression:

I, loving freedom, and untried;  
No sport of every random gust,  
Yet being to myself a guide,  
Too blindly have reposed my trust:...  

Throughout the "Ode to Duty" Wordsworth balances the two claims upon him, the possible alternatives by which he might achieve self-fulfillment. He rejects the "smoother walks" of his own choosing for the "mandate" in his heart choosing for all men, an internal vision no less than an external voice prompting completion in a Self outside of self, in "a second Will more wise." 

That second Will, the "Stern Lawgiver" Duty, "doth preserve the stars from wrong" (l. 47), and Wordsworth, to an extent, is searching for an external pattern or system, for ceremonial nature. Yet he has not abandoned the position of "Resolution and Independence" or the position he was to take in The White Doe. He wants to escape ego, self-isolation, the life of unregenerate
impulse ("chance-desire"), and to find the preservative power within a new conception of self, one that is forged out of its engagement with intractable reality and the identities of others—the self he embodies in Emily and in the heaven which she can create within herself on earth. That self finds fulfillment and enlargement in relationships to others; and because those relationships translate so easily into norms, codes of behavior, we learn to apprehend the self they express by formulating the concept of Duty—though the concept is only a means of abstracting a concrete self-possession. Hardy is thinking analogously when he has Edward wonder whether his "independence" is really "selfishness" (p. 231), and when he has Cytherea reflect upon "those who are more valuable than I" (p. 267).

Therefore, Edward and Cytherea grow in moral strength and in strength of identity as they learn to define the self with larger, more encompassing terms. But the self conflicting with duty must make a final assertion before its extinction, and Hardy forces the conflict to its fundamental issue. Freed by Adelaide's marriage to Farmer Bollens, Edward arrives too late to prevent Cytherea's marriage, yet he activates within her a potential force of human nature that threatens her with a new mode of being: "It might almost have been believed that a transmutation had taken place in Cytherea's idiosyncrasy, that her moral nature had fled" (p. 277). She has become, for the moment, a new
and different person, with an expression on her face that Owen "had never seen there before..." (p. 277). The moment is as intense as it is brief, providing the hinge upon which the spiritual drama of the novel turns and the one effective utterance of her part in it by Cytherea. When Owen reminds her of her "duty to society," Cytherea looks through that concept to its own blank negation, the immutable reality of self-isolation:

"Yes—my duty to society," she murmured. "But ah, Owen, it is difficult to adjust our outer and inner life with perfect honesty to all! Though it may be right to care more for the benefit of the many than for the indulgence of your own single self, when you consider that the many, and duty to them, only exist to you through your own existence, what can be said?" (p. 278).

The deepest point in the labyrinth of thought is the rejection of an abstract system that could not be made to derive from a radically unique and isolated self or ego, with its terrifying compression of a whole life to merely a point of thought in another's mind. There is the need to integrate, and there is the insistent experience that "Nobody can enter into another's nature truly, that's what is so grievous" (p. 279).

How "to adjust our outer and inner life," the claims of duty and of self, "with perfect honesty to all"; how to "enter into another's nature truly" as a means to complete possession of our own—these are questions that bear more or less directly upon all of Hardy's major novels to constitute much
of their Romantic texture. It is Cytherea's failure here to resolve them that removes her to the opposite pole of her original innocence, the disappearance of her moral nature. Keats had looked too deep into the sea to discover the relation of life to life; Cytherea, for precisely the same purpose, had looked too deep into herself. Yet, if there is a law morally binding man to man, it can be discovered only after the deeper vision has been made permanent and incomplete, only when the "Shades of the prison-house" have hardened into man's absolute self and have awakened the need to pass through to the self beyond it.

Perhaps the artistic failure of Desperate Remedies results from Hardy's inability or unwillingness to trace fully the progression out of the center of the labyrinth to whatever may lie at the completion of its circuit, a failure the more remarkable because Hardy clearly implies the necessity of that progression. The only scene, however, devoted to an examination of the validity of Cytherea's despair of entering into another's nature is that which immediately follows the despair, when on opposite sides of a river Cytherea meets Edward. Physically separated, their positions seem fully to substantiate the truth of her insight, but by a careful pacing the scene traces their progress to a union achieved out of and despite their separation. At first, hiding behind a bush, Cytherea realizes that her image is reflected back to Springrove, just as his is to her: "He was looking at her in the
water" (p. 281). Then follow the long explanations by both, unnecessary to the progress and understanding of the narrative, but necessary for the full participation of each in the consciousness and past of the other. The climax to the scene is, in a very real sense, the climax to the spiritual drama of the novel—the tense, metaphorically powerful attempt to clasp each other's hands across the water: "They came near—nearer—nearer still—their fingers met. There was a long firm clasp, so close and still that each hand could feel the other's pulse throbbing beside its own" (p. 285). The movement is from ego to self, from separation to union with the world outside; and it parallels Cytherea's movement to a "second Will more wise" to the recovery of her moral nature, as she says of her marriage to Manston: "The act is mine, after all" (p. 284).

Yet the novel fails nonetheless to make Cytherea equal to the auspicious step she has taken or even actively resolve the confusion of her identity as Manston's wife. She becomes "Cytherea Springrove" (p. 452); she and Edward reenact, now in total innocence and possession of each other, the scene of their first kiss—but this is due entirely to Manston's crime and to the energies of Owen, Edward, and Mr. Haunham. When the novel returns to the conflict between self and duty, Cytherea reacts not out of the courage that grasped Edward's hand across her vision of darkness, but out of her personal and girlish fear of Manston; and it is Mr. Haunham
who resolves the issues along the lines Cytherea should have taken had Hardy continued to develop her. Cytherea pleads with Baunham not to write to Manston for legal proof of her freedom and to conceal the information she and Owen have given him (that the woman living with Manston is not his wife):

"Conceal it," she still pleaded.

"We'll see—but of course I must do my duty."

"No—don't do your duty!" (p. 377).

In her earlier crisis Cytherea had actively balanced two opposing forces—the demands of her inner and of her outer life—and having isolated the first had worked to join it to the second. Now she retires entirely from the effort, unable to see duty as her only chance of discovering self. Baunham realizes "his duty must be done" because nothing else will lead to Cytherea's positive station and identity. The critical argument persuading his mind and uniting the two forces again is the realization that had first led Cytherea to hold them in opposition: "She had but one life..." (p. 378). Cytherea has shrunk back to a self-imposed prison house, in her despair over her weakness and uncertainty. Baunham has seen, in her uncertainty and in the limitations of her mortal life, the need to achieve her identity, and his duty reaches across to find her life's fulfillment.10
The conflict between duty and self, between the context surrounding man and his radical isolation, if implicit and submerged at last in *Desperate Remedies*, controls explicitly the narrative scheme of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Hardy's third novel and in some surprising ways one of his most tragically frustrating pictures of human life. Unlike Cytherea, Elfride is not allowed to withdraw from the issues: she finds no retreat, no Baunham-like scapegoat for those decisions that will determine either the fulfillment or the extinction of her identity. That Hardy is using her for his own formulation of the issues raised by Wordsworth's ode is patently revealed by Elfride's actions and thoughts upon learning of Stephen's imminent return from India: "...she looked her duty steadfastly in the face; read Wordsworth's astringent yet depressing ode to that Deity; committed herself to Her guidance; and still felt the weight of chance desires" (p. 228). Ostensibly, her conflict is between the duty of her plighted word to Stephen and the overpowering impulse of her love for Knight; or, to frame the conflict in uncompromising abstractions, between the claims upon her of convention and those of her single brief chance for happiness. I say ostensibly, however, because what the novel dramatizes is not Elfride's failure to resolve that conflict (in fact, she does resolve it), but her failure to understand the true nature of her duty and its role in her progress towards
self-fulfillment.

Like *Desperate Remedies*, and anticipating such novels as *Two on a Tower* and *Tess*, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* spreads its crisis over a prolonged mental dilemma: should Elfride reveal or suppress the secrets of her past life. In later novels, Hardy deepens and darkens the implications of such secrets; here, he deliberately lightens them, removing the pressures of concealment from the area of prescriptive social norms to the workings of the individual conscience. As Stephen summarizes to Knight the story of his aborted elopement with Elfride, he concludes, and probably rightly enough: "Nobody who really knew all the circumstances would have done otherwise than smile. If all the world had known it, Elfride would still have remained the only one who thought her action a sin" (p. 412). The result, I think, is not so much to decrease the influence of society upon Elfride's actions—Hardy has sufficiently emphasized the isolation of Endelstow from all social intercourse—but rather to intensify the significance of Elfride's moral consciousness. Hardy was always suspicious of society's norms as unstable and arbitrary; and though this novel has little of the invective of his later work, I think we can best understand its meaning by tracing Hardy's exploration of Elfride's own moral consciousness as the only force fit to control her actions and define her being. Characteristically, he sees this force in the context of
another more comprehensive force, that exerted by one's past self upon the possibilities of full entrance into and possession of one's present and total self.

Elfride's elopement with Stephen radically changes her nature, her very identity as a woman. She had been innocent throughout the whole of their courtship, as innocent as Stephen himself was and essentially remains. The two are clearly reflections of each other—the innocence of one going out not dialectically to its antithesis and complement, but centripetally around its own image and image substitute. Elfride's "manner was childish and scarcely formed." Though nineteen or twenty, "she was no further on in social consciousness than an urban young lady of fifteen" (p. 1). Stephen, a native of Endelstow, was still "a youth in appearance, and not yet a man in years." His face and complexion, "as fine as Elfride's own," "could never even have seen anything of 'the weariness, the fever, and the fret' of Babylon the Second" (p. 10). As Elfride remarks, emphasizing their union in innocence, "His face is—well—pretty; just like mine" (p. 11; original italics). Disillusioned, of course, by the subsequent actions of Elfride and Knight, Stephen never rises above this level of maiden consciousness, and is thus unable to keep pace with Elfride's growth to deeper levels of awareness and newer stages of existence. Even before the culminating act of their courtship, Elfride has begun to emerge as something less simple, and there-
fore less innocent and undeveloped, from what she had been. Even in her girlhood, she had "the motions, without the motives, of a hoiden" (p. 28), so that her innocence is made to suggest, if not exactly to merge with, its opposite. She says, referring literally to the loss of her earring and symbolically to the effect upon her of their first kiss, "I remember a faint sensation of some change about me, but I was too absent to think of it then" (p. 70). She identifies, significantly enough, with La Belle Dame sans merci (p. 59), and we find that she has indeed filled that role, and more so than she is willing to acknowledge: Stephen chooses the tomb of her first lover, for instance, as the seat of his confession to her. As she waits for the day of her secret marriage, her radically simple union of life breaks down, and for "the first time...she had an inner and private world apart from the visible one about her" (p. 115). The worm of experience has gradually entered the bud of her innocence irretrievably to change it. She has left the womb of maiden thought to become a woman, with her elopement bearing directly upon the question of her new identity: "You don't seem the same woman, Elfie, that you were yesterday." She answers Stephen, "Nor am I" (p. 130). "Elfride was as if she had grown years older than Stephen now" (p. 127).

Hence, Stephen loses his claim upon Elfride by what she has become. But by concealing her change Elfride loses
Knight, and the concealment—the result of her fear of change, of the process to experience—extends almost to herself. Her first attempt to arrest her growth within the limits of her present innocence led to her decision to marry Stephen secretly: "All we want," Elfride says, "is to render it absolutely impossible for any future circumstance to upset our future intention of being happy together; not to begin being happy now" (p. 106). An attempt to collapse consciousness to its innocent fragment shrinks to a momentary extinction of consciousness, on the road to St. Launce's, when Elfride fluctuates between her desires to return and to proceed: "This miserable strife of thought now began to rage in all its wildness. Overwrought and trembling, she dropped the rein upon Pansy's shoulders, and vowed she would be led whither the horse would take her" (p. 121). No other Hardy character so obviously relinquishes his powers of human action to the blind forces of external circumstance and chance; yet the tragedies of Henchard and Eustacia only refine the fundamental human weakness revealed here—man's willful turning from the moral obligations involved in his nature as man. Elfride is already trying to escape the future; now, critically, she tries to escape from herself: "All she cared to recognize was a dreamy fancy that to-day's rash action was not her own" (p. 122). But obligations are inherent to her human nature because the evasion of choice is not a dissolution of the effects of choice, nor
of the hasty choice itself that Elfride makes upon reaching London. In attempting to escape from self, Elfride lays upon herself the duty of returning fully to herself in her second and parallel courtship and in her identity to Knight. Hardy reveals the nature of that duty by adopting one of his most characteristic—and more controversial—techniques: the unfavorable combination of chance events that brings Mrs. Jethway to the station at the moment of Elfride's return with Stephen. Accidental as it appears, the meeting is surely symbolic; indeed, throughout the novel Mrs. Jethway functions less in her own right than as the external embodiment of Elfride's conscience and of that past self which urges itself as a part of her present identity. If the abortive trip to London and its violent return form a turning point in Elfride's life, balancing her upon the curve from original innocence to a new and incompletely defined experience, then Mrs. Jethway emerges as the standing testimony to Elfride of the reality of guilt and regret in her consciousness. She is the milestone which Elfride must pass and which it is her tragedy to detour—she represents at once Elfride's opportunity to confess and the temptation to refrain from confessing. Hardy tells us that Elfride was "one of those who sigh for the unattainable" (pp. 227-28); the logic of his novel shows that marriage with Knight is unattainable because Elfride fails to act upon the test offered her in the person of Mrs.
Elfride's first reaction to her enemy at the station is understandable enough. Distraught by recent events, she hides from the woman, hoping to pass unrecognized. Yet the pattern beginning to establish itself--failing to decide at the time of decision upon the horse, she must decide when it is too late for decision upon the train--suggests that the recognition of self evaded now will continue to insist itself, and Hardy is methodical enough to construct the moral crisis of the second courtship upon the figure who embodied its success or failure at the close of the first. Elfride, of course, needs no external sign to know that she has betrayed Knight by not telling him of Stephen. "But I am not good," she tells her father, though she is relieved that "the responsibility of her fickleness seemed partly shifted from her own shoulders to her father's" (pp. 292, 293). Yet external signs appear, forcing her fluctuating feelings to an issue, one they cannot resolve precisely because they rely on the external signs to present the issue that is theirs alone. After the meeting with Stephen in the Luxellian vault, Elfride resolves to confess, but obliges Knight to "fix an hour, because I am weak, and may otherwise try to get out of it" (p. 304). The fixed hour arrives, and still Elfride weakens, afraid to risk a present happiness which she knows is dishonest and which she cannot possess fully unless she makes it
honest. She lacks the fiber necessary to do just that: "The moment had been too much for her. Now that the crisis had come, no qualms of conscience, no love of honesty, no yearning to make a confidence and obtain forgiveness with a kiss could string Elfride up to the venture" (p. 307).

Elfride attempts retreat, but she must confront different assumptions and a very different world from Cytherea's. Knight's idiosyncrasies intensify the burden of her retreat. A man of thirty who has never yet kissed a woman in love, Knight in ironic resemblance to Mrs. Aldclyffe searches for radical, absolute innocence, which he believes Elfride possesses and which she, by withholding her true identity from him, allows him to assume. Indeed, in her substitute confession, she leads him to believe that she is even more innocent than he thought, and he identifies her not with her real self, but with what she is pretending against herself to be: "...Elfride, there is one thing I do love to see in a woman—that is, a soul truthful and clear as heaven's light. I could put up with anything if I had that—forgive nothing if I had it not. Elfride, you have such a soul..." (p. 307). Like the "Knight at arms," Knight aspires for the unattainable. That doesn't remove the fact that Elfride promotes his delusion—and necessitates her tragedy—by concealing from him the soul that she has.

She has lied, and thus failed the test to reveal her identity. Immediately afterwards, Mrs. Jethway appears with an image of Elfride precisely opposite to Knight's and just
as false: "'Yes, Miss Swancourt,' she said in an excited whisper, 'you killed my son!'" (p. 309). The fact is that no one knows who or what Elfride is and—I am not claiming a direct causal relation—that she has not yet embodied in her actions and her being her true self. Mrs. Jethway enters to give concrete reference to the deception Elfride has just practiced and which she has made the pattern of her life. If Mrs. Jethway judges wrongly, it is only because she has judged too morbidly and because Elfride has not coherently built up a self by which to refute her. She once relinquished her moral decision to the chance actions of her horse; she now challenges Mrs. Jethway to reveal the truth that she has just suppressed. When Mrs. Jethway finally does reveal the fact of the elopement, Elfride's power of action over the image of her identity slips entirely from her hands. More than that, in rejoining Knight, she plunges headstrong into a line of development predicated upon what she is not and necessitating a continual withdrawal from what she is. The day of the abortive confession is the day of her first kiss from Knight, of his proposal which, "coming on the very day of Mrs. Jethway's blasting reproaches, painted distinctly her fickleness as an enormity" (p. 315). Yet she continues to live divided from herself and to increase the division, "enjoying as truth what she knew to be flattery" (p. 317). And when caught in an unguarded moment of truth, "Ah, we must be careful! I lost the other earring
doing like this," she shows her adeptness in the art of disguising it:

"Doing like what?" said Knight, perplexed.

"Oh, sitting down out of doors," she replied hastily (p. 317).

The pattern she has chosen moves inevitably to that other earring and to that other self she has concealed with it.

Of course we are aware that Elfride magnifies her guilt, and that much is made of little. We have only to think of Tess, however, and of her abortive confession to Angel to see, not only Hardy's growth in imaginative power, but also the continuity of interests exercising that power. But with this fundamental difference: Hardy endows Tess with a profound capacity for spiritual existence; he symbolizes Elfride in the earrings that she values more than Knight's offer of a library of fine music (pp. 205-06). If Guerard is right in claiming that Elfride wins Hardy's unreserved sympathy only after "the prudish Knight" has renounced her (Thomas Hardy, p. 71), then I think we have to read the main outlines of her character in the shallow, satiric terms of Hardy's original impression of her. Hardy's implication, I believe, is that Elfride never achieves identity because she never rises to an inner life worthy of the name. 16 She is almost all surface glitter. Deceiving Knight about what is most important to him, she is yet vitally concerned that he prefer in women her color of eyes and hair (p. 317).
Though she has just left Mrs. Jethway and her violent accusations, she is alarmed at the prospect of losing her hair. Suggesting the trait as typically feminine, Hardy goes on to make a pointed comparison between Elfride's involvement in superficial and fundamental issues: "Perhaps to a woman it is almost as dreadful to think of losing her beauty as of losing her reputation. At any rate she looked quite as gloomy as she had looked at any minute that day" (p. 312)—as she looked, that is, when confronting the widow or attempting to confess to Knight. She goes further yet, to equate the appearance of beauty with its real possession: "'Poor Miss Handsome—does cuts but a sorry figure beside Miss Handsome—is in every man's eyes, your own not excepted, Mr. Knight, though it pleases you to throw off so,' said Elfride saucily" (p. 313).

That is a fatal misreading of his character, as fatal as her attempt to dissolve what she has done in what she seems. She has, after all, been brutally unthinking of Stephen and of his feelings; and, as events in the second courtship take on a closer and closer parallel with those of the first, when she returns with Knight to the cliff where she had lost her earring while kissing Stephen, she reveals her crucial inability to direct the neutral events of chance to moral ends. They arrived at that time of day when the sun's "level rays did Elfride the good or evil turn of revealing the lost ornament." "Her instinctive
act was to secure it privately" (p. 352). Of course she fears explaining the matter to Knight. But the story of her life and the imagery here suggest a motive even more complex and subtle. She once looked at Knight's earrings "as Eve may have looked at the apple" (p. 218). The comparison is devastating, because the implied fall has nothing whatever to do with the love behind the earrings. On the cliff with Knight, when she seems to have become a sadder and a wiser woman, her "instinctive act" is to possess a beautiful trinket, irrespective of the past it represents. That she has to do so privately is a fact no more than equal to the securing.

Evading her duty, Elfride fails the test of her identity, for her duty lay not between Stephen and Knight. After she has rescued her second lover from death, there can be no question of returning to the first. Her duty is to herself, to the formation of her inner life, which she refuses to develop, and which would have given genuineness and self-command to all that she did and was. She apparently sacrifices herself to her family interests in her marriage with Lord Luxellian, but she develops none of the inner strength of, say, her successor, Bathsheba Everdene. Two especially revealing insights into her character contain almost all of that character's dimensions and meaning. One occurs when she first puts on Knight's earrings and looks at her reflection in the water until Knight asks, "And how much longer
are you going to look in there at yourself?" (p. 317). The second takes us back to her earlier courtship, to her pride of innocence, when she triumphs over Stephen and quotes from Keats:

"Fancy yourself saying, Mr. Smith:

'I set her on my pacing steed,
    And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend and sing
    A faery's song....
She found me roots of relish sweet,
    And honey wild, and manna dew;

and that's all she did" (p. 59).

She leaves behind a succession of men, palely loitering, in and out of the grave--Jethway, Stephen, Knight, Lord Luxellian--and she suffers much. But she suffers most because she wants to retain the innocent condition of "La Belle Dame" after events have dissolved it, to convince herself of the lie, "that's all she did," and because she retreats from committing herself to the elfin grot of full experience. 19

Desperate Remedies weaves an inherently tragic issue into a mechanically imposed comic framework. External agencies--external to Cytherea in the form of Baunham and Hardy's elaborate plotting--resolve her internal conflict between the claims of self and the claims of duty. The result is not simply sensationalism, but a falsification of the logic of the implied premise. Cytherea does not
earn the higher state of innocence granted to her, because she does not herself pass through the full course of its antithetical experience: she shrinks from the discovery of her identity as Manston's wife. In *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, a tragic framework controls an inherently comic issue, and the result is artistic frustration. Elfride, conceived as light, shallow, vain, juggling one lover against another, suddenly finds herself in that process towards selfhood that defines identity out of duty and achieves innocence in experience. Her failure reveals the struggle Cytherea was spared. In *Far From the Madding Crowd* Hardy successfully allows the comedy of self-fulfillment to grow from the tragic spectacle of the world as a vale of Soul-making. In doing so he writes a novel that, though inferior to the later tragedies, fuses most successfully the various demands his artistic vision places upon the possibilities of human life and growth. From this novel his later work takes its direction; it is the norm to which that work refers, even as it pushes forward into different and more troubled qualities of experience.  

I am using "comic" and "comedy" of course to refer to that literary formula that evolves resolution and union out of discord and isolation, that older and purer form of comedy Hardy would be familiar with in such works as *As You Like It*. Hardy's remark on Meredith (to Priestly) suggests clearly enough the sense I want to convey of his
attempt and achievement in Madding Crowd. Meredith did not.

Hardy writes, "'when aiming to represent the "Comic Spirit", let himself discover the tragedy that always underlies Comedy if you only scratch it deeply enough.'" Hardy maneuvers Oak and Bathsheba from their original, incipient union, through an absolute, polar separateness, to final fulfillment, a union "strong as death" (p. 457). He conducts them into the elfin grot to make their Edenic dream come true. But he recognizes too the dream turned nightmare, and although Madding Crowd fulfills the coherence of high comedy, Hardy's probing of its surface left scars that only his finest art could heal.

The most disruptive force influencing the movement to personal and social fulfillment and union is, of course, the novel's villain, Sergeant Troy. Melodramatic or not, his function in the novel is to serve as an antithesis to Oak, both as an individual character and as a distortion of values. Troy is the surface illusion belying its reality; Oak is the essential innocence perceived only by a vision mature enough to see through the rough exterior.

"...Troy's deformities lay deep down from a woman's vision, whilst his embellishments were upon the very surface; thus contrasting with homely Oak, whose defects were patent to the blindest, and whose virtues were as metals in a mine" (p. 215). Hardy pushes the contrast to define the lines upon which heroism and identity are to be realized: Oak's
selflessness—"...among the multitude of interests by which he was surrounded, those which affected his personal well-being were not the most absorbing and important in his eyes"—and Troy's self-isolation: "He had not minded the peculiarities of his birth, the vicissitudes of his life... because these appertained to the hero of his story, without whom there would have been no story at all for him..." (pp. 338; 364). Oak thinks instinctively of others--of Bathsheba, and Boldwood--and can relate his consciousness to large areas of time, as he remains patiently faithful to Bathsheba. Troy's egotism lacks authentic consciousness and hence moral identity: "Simply feeling, considering, and caring for what was before his eyes, he was vulnerable only in the present" (p. 190). He is Hardy's portrait of what happens to man when he allows himself to become a bundle of sensations only, when he makes his inner powers of mind and will dependent upon "whatever object chance might place in their way" (p. 191)—when he wantonly destroys, that is, the possibilities of an inner (a moral or spiritual) life and the self-possession resulting from it. Because the movement of his life has been inward to self-content and not outward to self-exploration, sensual display and not imaginative possession, Troy's fitful attempt to make restitution to Fanny Robin's memory fails its first test to prove an inner resolve stronger than external circumstance. Troy had "faintly reversed" his course; "but the merest opposition
had disheartened him" (p. 364). It is out of the opposition that disheartens him that Oak gathers strength to endure.

Troy's influence over Bathsheba is even more significant to the thematic movement of the novel. If he is the opposite of Oak, then her union with him is Bathsheba's furthest remove from Oak and from the full possession of herself. The details of their first meeting, "about to occur in the darkest point of her route, even though just outside her own door" (p. 184), modulate between and finally combine literal and symbolic meaning. Bathsheba is blinded, first by the night and the "low, naturally formed hall" of the interwoven trees, and then morally by what she can see: Troy's "brilliant" apparition "in brass and scarlet" (pp. 183, 184). Though their entanglement is the result of accident at first, it is prolonged by Troy, physically and, until they marry, emotionally and spiritually. Not far from her own door, from the concrete, familiar testimony of what has made her strong, she must encounter the most serious threat to that strength, a threat the more alarming because of the response which it produces within Bathsheba herself. Troy is the opposite of Oak, not of Bathsheba; he is, rather, an intensification, a simplification of capacities or tendencies within her. He is the embodiment of her weakness, of what she might become if her growth is arrested or distorted. Our first sight of Bathsheba has already revealed the control over her of ego, of self-absorption. Sitting alone in her cart,
in the middle of the country-side, she surveys "herself attentively" in her mirror and imagines herself, Hardy suggests, the center of various Romantic dramas (pp. 4, 5). Oak's initial judgment of her fault as "Vanity" is more than borne out by her reactions to Troy. The soldier appeals to her surface image of herself; she is clearly excited by Troy's flattery of her appearance, and Hardy tells us, reading Bathsheba's mind: "It was a fatal omission of Boldwood's that he had never once told her she was beautiful" (p. 189). Troy most assuredly does, and wins her, skillfully enough, by exploiting her attachment to purely surface values. His dazzling broadsword exhibition entrances her, prepares her for their first kiss. And her explanation to Gabriel of the reasons for her sudden marriage completes her (temporary) encirclement by ego and its superficial values: "...I was coming away, when he suddenly said he had that day seen a woman more beautiful than I, and that his constancy could not be counted on unless I at once became his" (p. 290). It is an absurd and self-defeating reason for marriage, and Bathsheba knows it. But Troy has stirred within her the powerful forces of ego and impulse, and for the moment she gives in to the temptation to allow those forces to obliterate all others. "He was not to blame," she explains, in what begins as an absolution and ends as a condemnation, "for it was perfectly true about--about his seeing somebody else..." (p. 290).
To some degree, clearly, she participates in Troy's abandonment to impulse, looking for reasons and for values no further than the day before or after and no deeper than the surface. Troy fails in Hardy's scheme for the necessary partner for her union, because he illustrates only the self gratifying itself, divorced from the self-fulfillment of duty. Boldwood fails because he provides the force of duty only, and in such a way that it looms as the negation and not the transfiguration of the instincts of ego and impulse. More than any other character in the novel, Boldwood is transformed violently from one condition of being to another. Having never thought of women or even noticed Bathsheba, after receiving the valentine he can think of nothing else. His self-composure becomes self-abandonment; he loses his identity as a farmer (loses it to Oak who succeeds him) when he allows his wheat to be destroyed on the night that Oak saves Bathsheba's. As a character first sinned against, and who is throughout his destruction noble, generous, and sensitive (he is appreciative of Oak's trying role as his unsuccessful rival and tries to acknowledge it), he readily commands a good deal of the reader's and, we may suspect, Hardy's sympathy. But his role is carefully adjusted to the novel's schematic logic. He is at first the prey of Bathsheba's vanity--she sends him the valentine because he did not look upon her in the market as she looks upon herself in the mirror--only to
become the predator of her moral consciousness. He beckons as insistently to one half of her being as Troy does to the other. Again and again, as Bathsheba contemplates her commitment to him, it is with an open recognition of the debt she owes and an alarming sense of the threat to something vital within her the payment would bring. She does not love him, yet she cannot get him off her conscience (p. 409). She pleads with him, as he presses, forces her to engage herself to him for nearly six years: "I want to be just to you, and to be that seems to be wronging myself, and perhaps it is breaking the commandments" (p. 430)—an equation that reveals indeed the growth of her conception of self. Yet Boldwood, though he has been an active agent in the growth of her moral sensitivity, has failed himself to participate in and partake of that growth. 24 Rather, as he forces her to the engagement, suppressing his passion and feigning a business-like coolness, his dimensions as a man shrink, until he becomes January courting May, to whom because of what he is he has no right. For he is now less conscious of his duty than she is.

Troy fails in his attempt to work out of impulse to a sense of duty; Boldwood mutilates his sense of duty with his suddenly inflated ego until he becomes passion's slave. More fundamentally, he has failed the test of experiencing life's sorrow and loss. He progresses from absolute to
absolute, not from complements to synthesis. "I had some faint belief in the mercy of God," he says, "till I lost that woman. Yes, He prepared a gourd to shade me, and like the prophet I thanked Him and was glad. But the next day He prepared a worm to smite the gourd and wither it; and I feel it is better to die than to live!" (p. 295). He abandons the process to identity, which demands that one live with and beyond the worm and the withered expectation—as Hardy clearly depicts Oak and Bathsheba to do. Troy and Boldwood appear as polar forces mutually destroying each other, as they do, of course, almost literally—yet capable of fusion in the one identity possessing, in itself and in another's self, a corporate fulfillment. Bathsheba, trying to choose between them, allowed herself "to dwell upon the happy life she would have enjoyed had Troy been Boldwood, and the path of love the path of duty..." (p. 246). Because she does not flinch from following each separately, she learns to unite them.

In doing so, she has to partake of the forces destructive to her identity and purge them in the achievement of her identity. "Do you not see," Keats asked, "how necessary a world of pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a soul?" Bathsheba, perhaps, does not at first appear as an undeniable spark of the divinity in millions. Her consciousness of the world is circumscribed to the image reflected back to her by her looking glass—this is
the vision of her childhood innocence. But like the Eve whom she resembles here, she must fall from self-adoration to rise to the innocence of self-abnegation. "I am too independent," she tells Gabriel, when he first proposes to her (p. 34). Another face must press itself upon her when she looks to the mirror. Her innocence must purify itself in the crucible of other lives, as her consciousness of self stretches to the suffering and madness on the other side of the mirror.

Significantly, it is a thoughtless act that propels her into a state of agonized decision. She sends the valentine to Boldwood because of piqued vanity and because, still a child, she has yet to learn to enter fully another's existence. "Of love as a spectacle Bathsheba had a fair knowledge; but of love subjectively she knew nothing" (p. 111). She colors all things, Boldwood's inner feelings, in the superficial glitter of her own self-projection—in the image that Troy so adroitly and flatteringly reflects back to her, so as to enthrall her with herself as well as with him. Yet Bathsheba proves herself equal to the unlooked-for consequences in Boldwood, and she evolves through her original thoughtlessness to deep moral reflection. "O, I am wicked to have made you suffer so," she admits to Boldwood; and Hardy, measuring her moral growth by her developing awareness of her involvement in the lives of others, tells us that "she had a strong feeling that, having been the one who began the game, she ought in honesty to accept
the consequences" (pp. 146, 149). Boldwood's reaction to the valentine is excessive, almost absurdly so, but that should not blind us to Bathsheba's blindness to and unconcern with any reaction he might have had. The looking-glass widens to include a troubled image that enters with precisely the effect that Hardy demands of his heroine—to trouble her own. Bathsheba grows as she partakes more feelingly of Boldwood's decline, as she learns to define her image by what his has become. The "most mournful reason" and "the true reason" why she will assent to Boldwood's second proposal is that she knows him now so intimately as to realize her refusal will drive him "out of his mind" (p. 408). She has acquired a moral power in her ability to take on another's existence as her own and to see in that life values and realities that eclipse the values and realities of the surface: "If I had never played a trick upon him, he would never have wanted to marry me. O if I could only pay some heavy damages in money to him for the harm I did, and so get the sin off my soul that way!" (p. 409). Like Elfride, she exaggerates her crime, but only according to norms external to the inner power that can alone define and achieve her being. Elfride fails to possess Knight by evading the full possession of what she has been. Bathsheba achieves Oak and returns to herself because she realizes that only by becoming what Boldwood has lost can she make restoration to him. To be Bathsheba Oak, she must
first become "Bathsheba Boldwood."

In fact, to come full circle, she must appear to progress linearly, her identity to Oak evolving not only through Boldwood, the penultimate state of duty triumphant over original impulse, but also through Troy, back to her original thoughtless innocence: she is, in the progressive stages of the novel, Bathsheba Everdene, Bathsheba Troy, Bathsheba Boldwood, Bathsheba Oak. The stage in which she assumes Troy's name and identity stands in clear enough opposition to her link with Boldwood—she completes the path of impulse, then embarks on that of duty. But before the face in the mirror can become Oak's, even before her own reflection takes on fully the distortion of Boldwood's, Hardy forces Bathsheba to hold up the mirror, to look into herself, and see no face at all.

Whatever other purpose Fanny Robin may have in the novel, her most dramatically relevant one is to force Bathsheba's progress to identity to its most serious crisis and to prepare it, as it passes that crisis, for the later stages of its fulfillment. Nowhere does Hardy indicate more clearly that identity necessitates a full, participating consciousness of others, that to achieve self one must lose ego. In her first moments of jealousy at seeing the lock of yellow hair in Troy's watchcase, Bathsheba is still on the ego side of her growth, creating Fanny in her own image, not hers in Fanny's (she does not yet know, of
course, who Troy's former lover was):

"Is she pretty?"
"Yes."
"It is wonderful how she can be, poor thing, under such an awful affliction!"
"Affliction--what affliction?" he inquired quickly.
"Having hair of that dreadful color" (p. 313).

This exchange, following immediately upon Fanny's tragic journey "On Casterbridge Highway," underscores heavily and ironically Bathsheba's failure to come to full terms yet with that part of life that Fanny Robin has lived. She is speaking like an Elfride here, oblivious of the real issues in her absorption with the superficial. But events move with a breathless intensity to remove her to a profoundly different insight. She watches her marriage collapse, and by the time she learns of Fanny's death, "Bathsheba had begun to know what suffering was, and she spoke with real feeling" (p. 317). Suffering is necessary because it is the only humanizing force, because the only alternative to it is the very real brutality implicit in the assumption that the wrong color of hair could be an "awful affliction."

Or, more simply, Bathsheba cannot earn the happiness she finally achieves until she too has made Fanny's journey of pain and frustration unto death. She must imagine her rival triumphant over her (p. 341). She must, Hardy intimates, suffer what Fanny suffered, but in a more
"absolute sense" (p. 344). She must make a full retreat from the egotism in which she admired herself in the mirror: "Bathsheba became at this moment so terrified at her own state of mind that she looked round for some sort of refuge from herself" (p. 342). In the critical moment, when the mirror turns blank, she must cry, "what--am I?" (p. 345). And to be reborn, to regain her identity, she must die with Fanny, become "pallid as a corpse on end" (p. 342), and enter, not her specific individuality, but their common womanhood: her appeal was "such an unexpected revelation of all women being alike at heart, even those so different in their accessories as Fanny and this one beside him, that Troy could hardly seem to believe her to be his proud wife Bathsheba." She rises indeed through identification with the individuality most antagonistic to her: "Fanny's own spirit seemed to be animating her frame" (p. 344).25

This is the most awful and necessary affliction of all, the annihilation of ego to prepare the materials for identity. The rest of the novel prepares slowly but inevitably for the final union of Bathsheba and Oak, and for the sudden transfiguration of the line of development into the self-fulfilling circle as the actual and original generation of the novel's movement. Oak himself has had to undergo physically the transformation that Bathsheba experiences spiritually. He is first introduced as "Farmer
But when he loses that station he must function first—at the nadir of his fortunes, the furthest remove from his original state—as a musician (p. 45), and then gradually reascends to "Shepherd" Oak, to bailiff, and finally to "Farmer Oak" again (p. 461)—a movement that not only restores his identity but authenticates his right to it by testing extensively his service in the lower ranks. But Gabriel differs from Bathsheba in that he was in full possession at the start of those qualities by which Hardy defines heroism. In his selflessness and generosity, he is what Bathsheba must become; and he is the norm by which Bathsheba measures her own condition and that of others. I have already mentioned his contrast to Troy's egotism; Bathsheba contrasts him to Boldwood's self-absorption, and one of the minor motifs of the novel is Oak's gradual rise to superiority over her—from hired hand to master—in the purely practical affairs of life. Thinking of him, she realizes, "That was how she would wish to be" (p. 338). The fulfillment of the novel is the confirmation of that state of being.

And to be like Oak, I am convinced, is to fulfill Hardy's program for complete human selfhood; it is to rise to an inner life that is at once self-contained and responsive to all other life, to love one woman deeply enough to urge her to marry the better of two rivals, and to read with feeling the pain in the pulse of another woman, to
him a stranger and the recipient of all he could spare (p. 58).

Oak's apparent passivity is in reality the calm of absolute self-possession, the aura of an intensely active spiritual life that does not manifest itself, because it controls internally all external mishap: it is the power of growing morally from the neutral acts of nature. As a result of the loss of his sheep, he "sunk from his modest elevation as pastoral king into the very slime-pits of Siddim; but there was left to him a dignified calm he had never before known, and that indifference to fate which, though it often makes a villain of a man, is the basis of his sublimity when it does not. And thus the abasement had been exaltation, and the loss gain" (pp. 43-44).

Gabriel's indifference to fate was not that of a man surrendering morally to fate (Boldwood) or substituting for morality the operations of fate (Troy), but a positive alternative to fate: his moral vision of his nature and his obligations. In rewarding this vision with the attainment of its appropriate object, Hardy creates the most fundamentally Romantic of his novels. Both Oak and Bathsheba grow through suffering, loss, and severance to union. The dream is tested and comes true; and because they have suffered they become innocent again, seemingly "moved back...to the days when they were strangers" (p. 454), strangely and yet naturally shy and self-conscious in each other's presence. Bathsheba now courts the possession of
that life which she had not seen in Oak years before when he came to court her. They have come full circle, and they have retained and sublimated the marks left by each step along the way.26 Like Wordsworth's Emily, Bathsheba has grown not out of suffering, but through it; and Hardy connects her explicitly to Keats's Madeline, drawing upon The Eve of St. Agnes for the image that best expresses the movement he has completed here: "As though a rose should shut and be a bud again!" (p. 462). But this time the "rose" has survived the winter of life's experience before becoming "the girl of [Gabriel's] fascinating dream," wearing her hair the morning of their wedding "as she had worn it years ago on Norcombe Hill..." (p. 462).

This controlled modulation of its central characters from the loss of their original innocence to ultimate union and innocence again imbues Far From the Madding Crowd with motifs and themes that profoundly animated the imaginations of Wordsworth and Keats—and it is partly for this reason too that I consider it a watershed in the stream of Hardy's major fiction. But there is a further consideration to attend to, one that radically influences a final assessment of the novel's stature as a charismatic rendition of the materials of human life—one, in fact, that keeps the novel from being charismatic in the context I have given to that word. I refer to the control maintained throughout the modulation of consciousness. Bathsheba does indeed earn the
condition given to Cytherea and out of Elfride's reach. But she synthesizes rather than transcends their lives, and that is what Hardy has done with his two earlier visions of man's potential. In Desperate Remedies, where order and union come to man mechanically from without, there is still a "plan" in nature, in that life, holy or not, external to the consciousness of man. The novel operates thus on a ready-made level of mythology: the order is assumed to exist without being tested, a Madeline's dream come true within the chamber of maiden-thought alone. Elfride, like Lamia, retreats to a feigned innocence that drains whatever strength she may have had to suffer through experience. No mythological order is assumed; nor is life maintained in its absence. Now Bathsheba does not carry us forward to the face of Moneta and its lesson for the dreamer. Her career verges on the charismatic only to heighten and perfect ceremony. She feels the burden of the mystery that gradually lightens as she explores the dark passages of life. But the power illuminating those passages is, finally, not hers, but Hardy's.

That illumination comes from Hardy's control over and presence in the novel, and nowhere else, perhaps, does he make his control and presence so felt as a pledge of the novel's final outcome, as he continually keeps the reader and himself from full involvement in the turmoil of any given moment. From our very first acquaintance with Oak--
and particularly with the peculiarities of his watch and the maneuvers Gabriel must undertake to draw the instrument up "by its chain, like a bucket from a well"—we are placed in a position at once clearly superior to and amused with his, a position geared to the expectations of a comic outcome that the novel fulfills. Indeed, it continually reinforces such expectations at precisely those moments when they seem most in peril. Morally significant as Boldwood's entrance is, its prelude establishes the same comic distancing from the immediate events back to the controlling presence of the author. "A woman jilted him," is Liddy's explanation to Bathsheba of Boldwood's abstracted air:

"People always say that—and we know very well women scarcely ever jilt men; 'tis the men who jilt us. I expect it is simply his nature to be so reserved."

"Simply his nature—I expect so, miss—nothing else in the world."

"Still, 'tis more romantic to think he has been served cruelly, poor thing! Perhaps, after all he has."

"Depend upon it he has," Liddy agrees, and the two continue to fill out the full comic dimensions of Hamlet's "Very like a whale" repartee with Polonius (pp. 105-06). The same technique cushions Troy's villainy in satiric allusions to "the devil" smiling "from a loop-hole in Tophet" (p. 197) and in ludicrous comparisons between the sergeant's feature's and "John Knox's in addressing his gay young queen"
(p. 198). It keeps reminding us that the potential tragedy is authentic comedy, as when Bathsheba bursts in upon the conversation concerning her and Troy, and freshens at the thought of "owning a pretty face" while confessing the miseries of love to Liddy (p. 225). Liddy herself brings "a few more tears into her own eyes, not from any particular necessity, but from an artistic sense of making herself in keeping with the remainder of the picture..." (p. 226). When Oak plays the disinterested party to her love and gives Bathsheba "the very advice she had asked for—it ruffled our heroine all the afternoon" (p. 410). The technique, of course, is of a piece with Hardy's usual rendering of his rustic caricatures, of whom Henery Fray is by far the most interesting as a satiric portrait of the fatalist: "...a man...who laid it down that the law of the world was bad, with a long-suffering look through his listeners at the world alluded to, as it presented itself to his imagination" (p. 63). Akin to Liddy, he "retained several marks of despair upon his face, to imply that they would be required for use again directly he should go on speaking" (p. 119)—and the effect is that the atmosphere of Warren's Malt House is made to permeate to the farm and through almost all the events of the novel. Wailing at his failure to become bailiff, Henery signified "wasted genius by gazing blankly at visions of a high destiny apparently visible to him on Billy Smallbury's smock-frock. 'There,
'twas to be, I suppose. Your lot is your lot, and Scripture is nothing..." (p. 119)—a clearly satiric dismissal of an attitude that at least one critic has argued was Hardy's own. A more fundamental effect of the technique, and one inherent in any satire, is to direct us first to the language for its own sake and its comic play with words, and then to the author revealing his presence through his language. "That's my fist," Oak declaims, as he rises to the defense of Bathsheba: "Here he placed his fist, rather smaller in size than a common loaf, in the mathematical centre of the maltster's little table, and with it gave a bump or two thereon, as if to ensure that their eyes all thoroughly took in the idea of fistiness before he went further" (p. 122). That is language highly self-conscious of itself as an art, a deliberate, unmistakable pledge of Hardy's control over his fictional events as he molds them to the order he has conceived for his narrative. Not that Oak, Bathsheba or any of the major characters dances to the tune of a puppet-master. Indeed, my thesis leads to precisely opposite conclusions. Each works out from within himself the controlling patterns of his life, and his success or failure results from what each is as a man or woman. But the vision they represent is not one that renders life's materials charismatically. To do that, the novel would have to be the discovery of order for and to Hardy, the process itself creating the order, awakening him to see as a God sees. But Hardy, from the first page
on, is already a God, arranging his materials to construct
the order contemplated for them, and the result is not the
process of soul making but ceremonial product—a design for
life, completed first and then broken down for the enjoy­
ment of reweaving. The later novels never quite reach this
kind of comprehensiveness, and yet they go beyond it. They
sacrifice this ceremonial resolution of innocence and experi­
ence to attempt soul making in irresolution, in a kind of
negative capability as the first imaginative requisite for
being. The later novels make the process of searching for
and discovering order their product.
1 Hardy's "Prefatory Note" to *Desperate Remedies* (London, 1960), p. v. He freely admits that the "principles observed in its composition are, no doubt, too exclusively those in which mystery, entanglement, surprise, and moral obliquity are depended on for exciting interest;..."

2 Hardy is aware that he took Meredith's advice "too literally." See Florence Emily Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928* (London, 1962), p. 63; pp. 60-64. Lawrence O. Jones sees the decline of intensity in the second half of the novel as a result of Hardy's surrender of his personal impulse to "the conventional sensation pattern...." *"Desperate Remedies and the Victorian Sensation Novel," Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, XX (June, 1965), 47.

3 This first is, probably, a better novel than such later failures as *The Trumpet Major* and *A Laodicean*. I am considering its relation to the major novels only, those that draw from it rather than revert back to or below it. Albert J. Guerard, among his other valid insights into the novel, sketches convincingly the growth and continuity of character from Cytherea Graye through Bathsheba to Eustacia. *Thomas Hardy* (Norfolk, Conn., 1964), p. 140.

4 Later on, Hardy intrudes his explanatory comment to much the same effect: "Springrove...was clearly awakened to a perception of the false position in which he had placed himself, by keeping silence at Budmouth on his long engagement. An increasing reluctance to put an end to those few days of ecstasy with Cytherea had overruled his conscience, and tied his tongue till speaking was too late" (p. 200).

5 And she still is, in the passage I quoted at the end of my preceding chapter from a later section of the novel. It is Mrs. Aldclyffe who sees beneath the familiar surface to the hidden forces "working with the greatest energy" (p. 242).

6 I do not discount Guerard's explanation for the strange fascination Cytherea exerts upon Mrs. Aldclyffe—though I have to argue that if Lesbianism be there, it is isolated from the main business of the novel. See *Thomas Hardy*, pp. 104-06.


This phrase occurs in a stanza appearing only in the 1807 edition of his poems, but restored by Darbishire as "a valuable link in the thought." The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, IV, 418-19.

A clear antithesis to this reconciliation of the outer and inner life is Manston's story of "a man, I know, who always had no other god but 'Me'" (p. 357). Manston's own actions, of course, impose the laws of egotism upon the selfless ethics of duty—it is the natural consequence of this that he finds "man's life to be a wretchedly conceived scheme..." (p. 432).

And see too Hardy's authorial comment on "Elfride's simplicity in thinking herself so much more culpable than she really was..." (p. 382). Yet it is more than possible that Hardy is trying to retrieve Elfride from the reproaches of the more circumspect among his readers. Both lovers, as they return to St. Launce's, view the threats to Elfride's name and reputation darkly and honestly enough. And one has only to remember St. Ogg's judgment of Maggie Tulliver, after her closely parallel elopement in The Mill on the Floss, to question the attempt at social extenuation here.

Roy Morrell provides an interesting analysis of Hardy's thought along these lines, by showing his relationship to Sartre and Existentialism. See Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 140-41.

My reading of Hardy depends largely on the premise that such "accidents" in his novels have not been fully understood. I intend, by stressing Hardy's determination morally to test his characters, to keep a middle course between the two extreme positions summarized by Guerard
in his contrast between his own and "post-Victorian" criticism of Hardy: "Mr. Chew's generation...saw Hardy's deliberate anti-realism (his juxtaposition of implausible incident and plausible human character) as a perverse continuation of the Victorian sensation novel. But we now accept Hardy's extreme conjunctions, in the best novels at least, as highly convincing foreshortenings of the actual and absurd world" (Thomas Hardy, p. 3). I do not deny, of course, that Hardy sometimes descends to the sensationalistic, sometimes dramatizes the absurdity of the universe. I do not see that he emphasizes either. For a brief, but valid, questioning of Guerard's premise, see Benjamin Sankey, The Major Novels of Thomas Hardy (Denver, 1965), pp. 8-9. A good representative example of the earlier criticism, one differing greatly from my own, is Joseph Warren Beach, The Technique of Thomas Hardy (Chicago, 1922). After stressing Hardy's reliance on chance, coincidence, and other such manipulations of plot, Beach declares, "...they have no moral significance; they throw no light upon human nature or the social order" (p. 234). For a view closer to my own, see the next footnote.

14 Morrell stresses even more than I do Hardy's belief in the culpability of his characters, arguing that tragedy occurs because the various characters fail to act upon the "reprieves" Hardy offers them to avoid tragedy—reprieves being opportunities to exercise human intelligence to order and control random circumstance. See Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way, pp. 50, 51-52, 53, 55.

15 Guerard also overstates the matter when he says that Elfride first "sharpened her feminine claws on Felix Jethway..." (Thomas Hardy, p. 70).

16 Yet she comes close to doing so when she rescues Knight on the Cliff without a Name. As Morrell notes (and Hardy too, see footnote 18), the scene does register the final passage of Elfride's obligations from Stephen to Knight (Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way, p. 66). And it surely illustrates Elfride's potential for decisive action.

17 Thus, I disagree with Morrell, who sees Knight's present of the earrings as forcing Elfride to choose between her two lovers (p. 147)—though I consider his general assessment of this kind of scene in Hardy to be an excellent one: "It is a common criticism that Hardy's interest in chance led him to ignore character; but the
truth is that he often defines character in terms of chance, in terms of a man's ability to stamp a design upon the neutral chances that touch his life" (p. 55; original italics).

18

Hardy devotes a bitter irony to Knight's failure to recognize this (p. 390).

19

I am alluding from her back to Keats's Knight, though they are complements rather than parallels. Elfride destroys herself by maintaining the illusion of innocence; the Knight fails to become innocent again after his vision of experience. Neither achieves identity. A recent article by Robert Langbaum offers me unconscious support for the context I am trying to establish for Hardy's novels. Langbaum shows Wordsworth's insistence on a total possession of one's past life as requisite to the achieving of soul or identity—that is precisely what Hardy insists on here. See "The Evolution of Soul in Wordsworth's Poetry, PMLA, LXXXII (May, 1967), 265-72.

20

I choose, arbitrarily perhaps, not to analyze Under the Greenwood Tree—a novel not seriously in need of it. Yet one event in it plays a significant role in the steps Hardy has taken in his early fiction to his first masterpiece. Fancy Day encounters a situation parallel to Elfride's, but devoid of tragic potential. Though she succumbs to the "temptation" of Maybold's proposal, and thus violates her commitment to Dick, she becomes her own Widow Jethway in her self-prompted letter of confession and full revelation of identity. The conflict is but momentary, as the desire in conflict with duty is but superficial.

21

The Life of Thomas Hardy, p. 439. Beach mentions "the imaginative demesne of As You Like It" as the "third range of association" to which Madding Crowd makes appeal (The Technique of Thomas Hardy, p. 52). And Lascelles Abercrombie recognizes the comedy of Madding Crowd to be a "comedy that searches life as deeply as tragedy itself." See Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study (New York, 1927), p. 79.

22

Howard Babb sees in the gargoyle scene an image of nature operating as a moral force, judging and condemning the amoral Troy. "Setting and Theme in Far From the Madding Crowd," ELH, XXX (June, 1963), 158. Babb warns that he is dealing with a concept of nature "unique" to this novel in Hardy. I cannot agree fully with either of his statements, Hardy's conception here and elsewhere being anything but simple or clearly defined. I read the gargoyle incident
to present again that nature which tests man's moral capacity by giving him a white sheet upon which to inscribe it—the nature that revealed for "good or evil" to Elfride her lost earring and that exposes Oak's inner fiber on the wheat ricks during the storm.

23 Babb presents a convincing analysis of Boldwood's fall from his original state and of nature's judgment of him ("Setting and Theme in Far From the Madding Crowd," 154). Less convincing is Guerard's criticism of the characterization as "wooden" (p. 151), "stiffly" obedient to its role as "a victim of sex repression..." (p. 69).

24 He is bordering on insanity. In a deeper sense, he represents the terrible consequences of the failure to achieve a higher innocence. He has retrogressed to the second childhood of senility. He tries to guarantee the future by isolating within the present Bathsheba's powers of will and action. He retreats from life, just as Elfride and Stephen do when they attempt to bind and control each other in precisely the same way.

25 That she has to undergo morally Fanny's journey is made even more evident by the scene immediately preceding her decision to open the coffin. "Like a homeless wanderer she lingered by the bank," longing for the warmth and security in Gabriel's room and absent from her own life. She is isolated, groping in the dark for some personal contact. And her sufferings, as Hardy intimates, are more severe than Fanny's, for no last-minute aid comes to her: "She must tread her giddy distracting measure to its last note, as she had begun it" (p. 339).

26 Alan Friedman is very helpful for an understanding of the technical properties of what he calls the "al capo" ending of Madding Crowd, "a variant" of the traditional "closed" ending. The Turn of the Novel (New York, 1966), pp. 47-50. He considers Tess and Jude to be "open" novels: their endings refuse to contain or round out their flow of moral experience (pp. 33-34).

27 Carl J. Weber reads this passage and Boldwood's view of Troy as "the impersonator of Heaven's persistent irony" to be Hardy's "judgment of heaven and censure of God." Hardy of Wessex: His Life and Literary Career, rev. ed. (New York, 1965), p. 95. The mis-reading is the more astonishing because Weber is fully aware of the comic tone of the novel, and because Hardy has made it perfectly clear
that Boldwood has no right to condemn Bathsheba to his "bliss" and "delight" (Madding Crowd, p. 433).

Beach (The Technique of Thomas Hardy, p. 13) and David Cecil, Hardy the Novelist (New York, 1943), pp. 53-58, place Hardy in the Fielding tradition. As that tradition is defined by Ian Watt in The Rise of the Novel (Berkeley, 1959), pp. 262-64, I consider it a principal source for Hardy's narrative artistry in Madding Crowd.
CHAPTER IV

TRAGIC CEREMONIES: RETURN OF THE NATIVE AND JUDE

1

Hardy's elaborate celebration of Egdon Heath in the first chapter of The Return of the Native has elicited from his critics both scorn at its "pretentious meditation" and praise for its rhetorical power.1 The temptation—and it is an understandable one—has been to grant the heath a leading role, if not the leading role, in the novel's drama.2 I will disagree with this attribution of an active power to something outside of man, for this is Eustacia's mistake, the cause of her decline from an heroic humanity. But first, it is imperative to recognize a quality of the heath about which there can be little disagreement: its role as synecdoche or foreshortened image for all of nature, for the universe of things external to and defined by man.3 Nature, of course, has already appeared in critical scenes in Madding Crowd and as the Cliff without a Name. Now, however, for the first time in Hardy, it appears in all its ambiguity and complexity, and not as a dominant actor in the novel, but as a sustained influence exciting Hardy's
imagination. It remains so in the four major novels I will discuss in this and the following chapter. In the first of those novels, it most distinctly emerges as process, as something which obtains character and meaning only as it reflects an internal growth by man to identity and being.

Eustacia's tragedy, Abercrombie tells us, is her "mistaking the indifference" of "[material fate]...for malignity...." The insight is an important one as far as it goes, but it does not go far enough to reveal either Eustacia's character or the relationships developed between human and non-human agents by the novel. Nor does it recognize Hardy's emphasis upon individual character precisely as it is developed and revealed through its relationship with the non-human, with nature imaged by the heath—a technique that recalls the example of Wordsworth's revelation of character in the dialogue of Wanderer, Solitary, and Pastor with the world outside them. At least, Hardy uses methods parallel to Wordsworth's in *The Excursion* for similar ends. To stress the antithesis between Thomasin and Eustacia, Hardy turns to their different visions and conceptions of the heath: "To [Thomasin] there were not, as to Eustacia, demons in the air, and malice in every bush and bough. The drops which lashed her face were not scorpions, but prosy rain; Egdon in the mass was no monster whatever, but impersonal open ground" (p. 433). Thomasin's essential innocence is established, partly at least, by her need not to animate (mythologize) nature—to celebrate it as a plan or system
somehow conscious of her actions. Her vision reveals her innocence; there is no need to speculate upon her lack of imagination or sensitivity, just because she can love the heath as it is, make it the appropriate context of her being (p. 471), and unite finally with Diggory Venn, the man in closest harmony to it.

Of course, Hardy had already used this technique to reveal the central contrast between his characters, has made inevitable the tragedy of Clym and Eustacia by constructing it upon their contrasting relationships to nature. Their marriage splits upon a clash of identities, as the spiritual life which the man creates out of the heath stands in an everlasting rebuke to the woman's. Eustacia's hatred of the heath, her sense of alienation from it, is too strongly emphasized to need much comment. So is Clym's love for the heath, his sense of identity with it. Hardy is almost over-anxious in forcing the opposition upon our notice and in requiring us to accept it as the controlling pattern behind the identities of both: "Take all the varying hates felt by Eustacia Vye towards the heath, and translate them into loves, and you have the heart of Clym. He gazed upon the wide prospect as he walked, and was glad" (p. 205). Regardless of which view is the more sound or rational, Hardy has shown vision to be a quality of being, with these visions isolated from each other and destroying each other. "You have the heart of Clym" if you see the heath as he does, which is exactly what Eustacia does not do and why she never
has his heart. And in this respect, at least, Clym is her fellow sinner. He wants to commit her to the life she is least capable of. Listening to Clym's conversation fade into the darkness on the night of his return, Eustacia wonders, "What could the tastes of that man be who saw friendliness and geniality in these shaggy hills?" (p. 137; original italics).

Clearly, then, Eustacia's hatred of the heath is more than the conventional revolt of a passionate nature against the drab and the countrified. Expanded to its cosmic dimensions, it becomes the only feeling left to one who performs the role of prosecutor and judge of life, who has denied the terms upon which life has been given to men--more particularly, as it has been given to her. For Eustacia is not Prometheus. She does not revolt against the cosmos; she inflates her personal dissatisfactions to cosmic proportions, an act that always betrays one's littleness of character. Her hatred of the heath is, after all, of a piece with her insensitivity to all life, with her lust for power, with her view of man as an object only, to be manipulated for her private ends. Her first action in the novel is to command Johnny Nonsuch to tend the fire that is commanding Wildeve to her presence. "I determined you should come; and you have come," she tells Wildeve. "I have shown my power" (p. 73). Thomasin is merely someone who has come between her and her "inclination, and now that she finds herself rightly punished she gets you to plead for her!" (p. 106).
Most fatally, of course, she views Clym only as a ticket to Paris and, in effect, discards him for Wildeve when he persists in his refusal to return. Her hatred of the heath expands to an absolute negation of all things and to an arraignment even of man, whose nobility she denies and whom in her hatred she cannot see as a fellow sufferer.

She suffers from pride, of course. She hates the heath because it is unconscious of her charms and because the heath folk are beneath her. She demands recognition—hence her posturing on the top of Bainbarrow, forcing all eyes upon her as the completion and center of the world—and she becomes a vigorous mythologizer to obtain it. And her mythology brings her its own peculiar relief and justification, for by it she can place herself at the center of a universal system devoted to her, though it be devoted to her destruction.

"...instead of blaming herself" for Mrs. Yeobright's fate, "she laid the fault upon the shoulders of some indistinct, colossal Prince of the World, who had framed her situation and ruled her lot" (p. 353). The implications are, I think, quite clearly, these: Eustacia refuses to recognize that she is free, that nothing can soften or remove the burden of that freedom; the ceremonial vision has become for Hardy the instrument of that refusal, a means of escaping the burden. Though he may sympathize with the desire to escape, he is unrelenting in his analysis of the consequences of attempting to. For what are the results of Eustacia's insistence on
external causes for her dissatisfaction and of her fabrica-
tion of "certain creatures" responsible for her failings, "the chief of these being Destiny..." (p. 79)?

The fundamental result is her failure to achieve being, a full contentment with and possession of the only life she will ever have. She destroys herself spiritually first, then physically, just as she is attempting to escape not merely the heath but the demands of her spiritual existence. "The world seems all wrong in this place," she tells Clym. He answers, significantly, "Well--if we make it so" (p. 345). She has just made it so, irrevocably, by keeping the door closed against Mrs. Yeobright, by doing one thing when she could have done the other. In fact, the rightness or wrongness of the world must attend, to a very considerable degree, upon those right and wrong human actions continually remaking the world. Paris can offer no liberation of spirit if one has not recognized his spirit to be free, and Eustacia ultimately realizes that neither Paris nor Budmouth can relieve the oppression Egdon did not cause. That oppression is within; the power relieving it must be created from within--from within herself, in the spiritual freedom of her human identity. She could have reached Paris easily enough with Wildeve. Her despair is of rising to an inner life once there.?

Closely related to this is her failure to experience suffering as a humanizing force, to create out of the necessary pains of life a spiritual existence here on
earth. To say no everlastingly is a limited gesture at best, and hence paradise is always someplace where she is not. The affirmation of the universe always lacks something of the emotive power of the negation, yet Clym stands his ground against Eustacia. Properly considered, he is the true rebel of the novel, despite his acceptance of things, and he is very clearly the greater human being for his ability to create out of guilt and suffering a higher innocence and level of being. Both see into the universal coil of things, but Clym does not demand that it unravel itself for him, or that the darkened chamber and the mystery of life supply the light that it is his duty to shed.

Hence, his actions and his inner qualities almost eliminate the need for an answer to the question he put to his mother, "what is doing well"? (p. 208)—what is the moral life? what is the full possession of being? Having rejected the superficialities of Paris, the "glittering splendours" enchanting Eustacia, he returns to enact his readjustment of values and his matured commitment to life. Like Moneta's face, his is decayed with thought, with the intensity of his commitment to the pains and pleasures of his species, which his face proves he has made his own. In direct contrast to Eustacia, he has returned to create his manhood out of his engagement with suffering: "Talk about men who deserve the name, can any man deserving the name waste his time in that effeminate way, when he sees half the world going to ruin
for want of somebody to buckle to and teach them how to breast the misery they are born to?" (p. 207). When shortly afterwards, he tells Eustacia that it is useless to hate people, that "if you hate anything, you should hate what produced them," and she asks, "Do you mean Nature" (p. 219), he is clearly expanding this thesis, and she is very wide of his mark. He fully accepts nature. He has come to reform and to rebel, but his object is man, human conditions and qualities, the superstition and ignorance that prevent the heath folk from acting in that freedom that is theirs fundamentally as men, despite "the misery they are born to." We have seen Eustacia's hatred turning men into objects; Clym's love, as a counter movement to Eustacia's mythological haven from freedom, attempts to spiritualize them. Man is not reborn, as we know, yet that doesn't detract from the power of Clym's soul-creating alternative to Eustacia's self-centered myth.

Eustacia, Hardy tells us, "was the raw material of a divinity" (p. 75). Her projection of a ceremonial system causes her failure to refine that material into what she could have become. We have to picture her "on Olympus" or "in heaven" to imagine her attaining the divinity potential in her. Clym has the same potential: "...the deity that lies ignominiously chained within an ephemeral human carcass shone out of him like a ray" (p. 162). In the self-effacement of his new vocation, in his persistence
under physical hardship and emotional stress, in his intense
agony of conscience after his mother's death, he figures-
forth the creation of spirit in a vale of soul-making. I
have compared his face to Moneta's because like hers it
bears the "legible meanings" of sorrow and progressive
"disease" (p. 162). Through Moneta's ruined exterior, "a
benignant light...beamed like the mild moon,/Who comforts
those she sees not..." (The Fall of Hyperion, I, 265-70);
through Clym "deity...shone like a ray." Both images
stress the necessity of light, life, and spiritual being
originating from within man to illuminate the universe.
Both stress the necessity of suffering, of its palpable
presence, as the source material of that being and irradia-
tion. Both are spiritually incandescent. The one is a
prototype for the charismatic being the other is trying
to be. And Clym's attempt is so nearly successful that
it allows Hardy one of his most delicate and expansive
images of the vision he is trying to define--half-blind
and gathering furze in the afternoon heat, Clym turns
lyricist and sings (p. 299). He is in heaven, not on the
way there: he possesses his spiritual life. If Dostoyevsky
had written the scene, Clym would have embraced the earth
and kissed it. It is this radically human quality of Clym's
that Eustacia cannot understand and bitterly attacks.10 It
is not merely ironic, but a revealing stroke of the contrast
in being between them that "Clym, the afflicted man was
cheerful; and he even tried to comfort her, who had never felt a moment of physical suffering in her whole life" (p. 303).

Thus Clym creates a higher level of being out of his inner resources and interaction with the heath, just as Eustacia creates her destruction and annihilation. The heath, nature, can receive the impress of both and more. But the "ceremonial" first chapter adds a further insight to this—namely the necessity, not merely the possibility, of recreating nature through the vision internal to man. The heath is darkness and mystery, an "untameable, Ishmaelitish thing..." (p. 6). It is also permanent and enduring, beyond time and change; what it "now was it always had been" (p. 6). It destroys all attempts to civilize it, yet "was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature..." (p. 6). It suggests the primal origins of man and of all life, manifests the presence of that primal source in the contemporary effect, calls up "the ancient world of the carboniferous period, when...no bird sang" (p. 241). Yet its principal quality is perhaps its formlessness, its fluid resistance to any single, coherent definition. It has limitless potentiality and can assume the features given to it by Clym's love and Eustacia's hate. In this respect, surely, it is very like the white whale, which is also infinite and yet plastic to man's attempt to define it (in the root sense of that term) and create it
in his own image. It is futile to ask whether the heath be antagonistic to man—for despite its lashing winds and rain, it is radically passive, because it is unalive until human vision creates its life. Continually becoming what men see it to be, it is a demon to Eustacia while affording Clym a deep look and continued faith. The heath is heaven and hell, because heaven and hell are first internal; from there they embrace all things.

And the heath is Hardy's vision of the darkened chamber of life, made to include all of nature, radiant or gloomy according to the power of vision it calls forth. It is the systemless void, taking away the life that was Eustacia's own to live, only because she insisted on systematizing it into life—because she turned to an invective of life when Clym lyricized in himself his power to live.

Like the heath, its principal antagonist provokes various, sometimes contradictory responses. John Paterson even wonders whether Eustacia is the "apotheosis" of the heath, its "natural product," rather than an exile conflicting with it. Knowing as we do now the successive changes Hardy made from manuscript to serial to novel, his conception of Eustacia evolving from that of "satanic antagonist to romantic protagonist," we must question the more closely, I think, whether Hardy effected a complete transforma-
tion and whether, granted her Romantic affinities, Hardy subjects Eustacia to a criticism that is itself fundamentally Romantic in its moral outlook and spiritual inspiration. Whether we see Eustacia as heroine or villainess, as tragic victim or willful destroyer, depends upon which of the two Eustacias Hardy offers us we can prove him to have emphasized and made the more coherent to the scheme of his novel as we have it.

In The Making of The Return of the Native, Paterson associates Hardy's original conception of Eustacia with "romantic Byronism" (p. 21): "...freed of Byronic excesses and vulgarities, she was clearly made, nevertheless, in the Byronic image" (p. 84). That may be true. Nevertheless, I think Hardy's inspiration for her character goes deeper into the Romantic ethos than the somewhat derogatory epithet "Byronism" suggests. In her protest against the life given to her, and in her yearning for a life just beyond her grasp, Eustacia belongs in the company of those for whom this earth is not enough, who imagine a perfection, a quality of existence, that the very conditions of their human nature deny them. Yearning from the center of the heath for Budmouth or Paris, Eustacia strives to pass from the imperfect to the perfect world and from alienation to union. The dynamics of her position are clearly analogous to the drama between finite poet and immortal song in the "Ode to a Nightingale"; they repeat the quest of the poet
in "Alastor" for the vision of perfection that is immanent in and transcendent to him. She is like the Shelley of "Adonais," despairing to break the stained glass window to the region of life and light beyond except by death. In this role she clearly arouses Hardy's sympathy and admiration; if her Byronic diabolism has been cleansed, she emerges almost as a Romantic visionary--on an altogether different level from that held by Wildeve, "the Rousseau of Egdon" (p. 254), with his idle longings and unstable desires. Hardy often labels as "Romantic" courses quite different from those he dramatizes as Romantic. Characters like Wildeve, Troy, and Fitzpiers seek, flaccidly enough, various forms of sensual or sentimental gratification. Eustacia's command over our sympathetic interest results from her desperate need to thrust herself into a new mode of being.

But there, still generalized, the Romantic analogy ends. Just as he is the novel's true rebel, so Clym is its more authentic Romantic, one of "those to whom the miseries of the world/Are misery, and will not let them rest" (The Fall of Hyperion, I, 148-49). I have already mentioned some of the reasons for Eustacia's failure to achieve being: she seeks the fulfillment of her life in conditions outside of her, and she makes nature hateful by hating it. The Romantic seeks his spiritual life here and now and within himself. The potentially Romantic Eustacia is effaced by a far more aggressive figure, one who postpones and denies
what is most essential to man's spiritual life—the development of her moral conscience and sympathetic identification with men. Hardy demands that she prove her heroism to become the novel's heroine, and step by step she balks at the process and fails the test.

That test is none other than to demonstrate her power to discard egotism and rise to selflessness and freedom. She throws away several chances, for instance, to leave her hated Egdon, refusing Venn's offer of an easy employment in Budmouth and forgetting her rendezvous with Wildeve to leave for America. If her vision is of a life unattainable, it is surely subordinate to a petty, inflated ego and to an unfeeling indifference to others. Her capacity for emotion, admittedly intense, operates in the narrowest of circuits. Indeed, Hardy is almost too direct in his attempt to persuade his readers to her condemnation, inserting his comments at times that suggest no other possible reason. "Who was to know," he asks, lest we misunderstand her motives, "that she had grown generous in the greediness of a new passion, that in coveting one cousin she was dealing liberally with another, that in her eagerness to appropriate she gave away?" (p. 181). What might have been generosity in another sprang from her selfish interests. She does not recognize the existence of any other kind. Matching her egoistic ploys with selfless acts of love, Venn remains a literal mystery to her. "What a strange sort of love to be entirely free from that quality
of selfishness," Eustacia reflects, thinking Venn's "disinterestedness" to be "absurd" (p. 178). Yet what has Venn done but demonstrate his freedom despite the events that have gone against him.

Eustacia's egotism leads to a denial of her freedom, when Eustacia refuses to implicate herself morally in the consequences of her actions. In an earlier chapter, I suggested that the crisis of the novel is not the conjunction of Mrs. Yeobright's visit with Wildeve's, but Eustacia's refusal to open the door to her. The simultaneous visits, a chance conjunction of circumstances, only make the crisis possible. Nothing determines its outcome but Eustacia herself. That Hardy was aware of this and sought to reinforce its meaning becomes apparent when we compare his final revision of the scene with the version that appears serially. In The Greenwood Edition, which prints the authorized and final text, we see Eustacia to be a free agent:

"No," she said, "we won't have any of this. If she comes in she must see you--and think if she likes there's something wrong! But how can I open the door to her, when she dislikes me--wishes to see not me, but her son? I won't open the door!" (p. 337).

Had Hardy left the serial version intact, he would have given Eustacia considerably more justification for her habit of placing her moral burden on another's shoulders. Here is
the above paragraph as it appeared in 1878:

"No," she said; "we won*t have any more of this. If she comes in, she must see you—I have done no wrong. But how can I open the door to her, when she wishes to see not me, but her son?"17

The italics are mine, underscoring what I consider to be the fundamental contrast between the versions. Hardy's novels, as we know, are almost always closer to his original purpose and design than are the often mutilated serials. In 1878, Eustacia is allowed an absolute proclamation of her innocence: she has done no wrong. The novel clearly emphasizes her guilt because it forces her to a decision, to a moral act: "I won*t open the door." We cannot avoid the implication that Hardy sees clearly into Eustacia's freedom of being at this point and that he has revised his text accordingly to justify the tragedy of Eustacia's continued evasion of that freedom. It is only after she has decided not to open the door that she believes Clym awakened by the knocking. Supposing that he had been, would that have changed the nature of her act, or have lessened its crime?18 Clym creates a moral being out of his actions, as Eustacia must from hers. His opening the door would not effect her salvation. She not only makes her choice, moreover, a choice between love and hate, but abides by it, throwing the blame for the calamity that follows on her "Prince of the world," the place she lives in (p. 345), even Mrs. Yeobright's motives for coming.19 It would have taken heroism—that is, the power to love
and the power to be free—to have cast off the egotistic pressures of her situation and embraced Mrs. Yeobright—yet that act would have created her innocence and raised her to freedom.

Eustacia has denied her freedom to make herself free, and thus she is defeated by the circumstances that Hardy has brought together to test her moral stature. Similar events occur throughout the novel (the "rencounter by the pool" for instance) to form its controlling pattern. The pattern concludes with what is perhaps the most revealing instance of Eustacia's failure to act as the human being Hardy insists she be. She knows immediately the possible effect of Charlie's surprise bonfire, yet allows it to burn, lingers near it, and finally ascends the earthbank. Of course Wildeve immediately appears, and Eustacia immediately cries: "I did not light it. ...It was lit without my knowledge" (p. 404). The effect is almost one of grim humor. The effect upon Eustacia is that, having denied her freedom for so long, she finally loses it. In her last flight across the heath, she has neither the power of choice nor the power of evading choice. She has, in a very real sense, already ceased to be.

Perhaps Hardy does not reconcile his two Eustacias, but he does suggest his sense of their relationship. He shows how the Romantic Eustacia betrays itself in its allegiance to the egotist—though we have already seen how far short even the Romantic Eustacia falls from Clym's selflessness.
under the most severe hardships. Her last words are uttered "in a frenzy of bitter revolt": "I do not deserve my lot!... 0, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world! ... 0, how hard it is of heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to heaven at all!" (p. 422). Can we seriously accept this as a Promethean arraignment of a Law or System morally inferior to man's noblest conceptions? Rather, isn't Eustacia another Manston, with "no other god but 'Me,!'" making a last desperate attempt to find excuses for herself? If I have loaded the questions I have done so, I believe, in conformity to Hardy's attitude, as it reveals itself in one of the most terrifying and powerful scenes of the novel.

Immediately following Eustacia's curse of the external forces controlling her life, we are brought into the presence of what at first glance appears to be such a force--Susan Nunsuch and her witch's incantation. It is almost as though we were brought to witness a reenactment of the human creation, as Susan carefully molds the wax doll, paints and dresses it, until it takes the shape of and becomes Eustacia Vye. With its terrible imagery of fiendish torture (the pins) and destruction (the fire), the scene very nearly vindicates Eustacia's vision of her helpless innocence in the grip of some pitiless, external power--or god. I say it "almost" reenacts the creation and "very nearly" vindicates Eustacia, because of course it does nothing of the
kind. A grossly superstitious act, the product of her ignorance, Susan's ritual is Hardy's reduction of the ceremonial vision to its absurdity, where it becomes a devastating satire upon Eustacia's belief that any such external force could work malignantly against her. That belief, with its protest against the heavens, has the same validity as, for it is of a piece with, this voodooism. I think J. O. Bailey is too generous in his conclusion that Eustacia comes to a "true vision of herself" as "a thing of wax and ribbons," because we must judge her as having lost the capacity for such vision, that power drained by her refusal to love. Surely she never rises to the truth that she showed Mrs. Yeobright, from within the closed cabin, a sight worse than that of any destiny she has fabricated for herself——"'a woman's face looking at me through a window-pane'" (p. 339).

There is no question that The Return of the Native represents a significant departure from the vision of Far From the Madding Crowd. In the earlier novel, nature was legible; Oak could interpret its signs to prepare for and pass victorious through the violent storm. The plot itself works methodically, mythologically, to cancel out Boldwood and Troy and achieve individual and social harmony. There is no sense of aesthetic sacrifice, because Hardy's
vision unfolds through its appropriate form and artistic pattern. I have considered the achievement as high comedy. But *The Return of the Native* is tragic; its cosmos—nature imaged through the heath—is illegible, the darkness only man can illuminate by seeing into and possessing himself. It is the systemless reality, reducible to no formula, within which man must construct the internal pattern of his self possession, and in the midst of which he can sing. Eustacia fails to possess her self because she fails to awaken that self into song, into the vital and spontaneous act of itself living—because she rejects Hardy's insistence on the charismatic vision and turns to mythology in a world where myths are no longer possible.

She had "the raw material of a divinity," but it is Clym who was the lyricist of being in the prostrating torpor of the heath. The fundamental question, then, is whether he comes to possess fully the deity that shone from within him like a ray. Remarkably—though in a limited sense only—we must seek our answer in the sixth book that Hardy objected to and had not originally planned. As his own note makes clear (p. 473), the last book was Hardy's concession to the public demand for a happy ending. Ostensibly it is that. Diggory Venn, who has performed acts of selfless love throughout the novel, throwing into lurid contrast Eustacia's egotism and hate, achieves his reward and creates harmony and union out of the wreckage of Book V. The sub-plot, that is, has
assumed the dominant position, though why Hardy should consider the actions of Book VI as less "consistent" than any others is difficult to determine. In the second chapter of the novel and in the last chapter, Diggory and Thomasin are together on a road in the heath. The difference between the two situations is that the characters have had to endure and overcome an emotional barrier and separation to make their final union a lasting and a true one. Like Bathsheba, Thomasin has had to grow to a recognition of values more enduring and beneath the surface—though the artistry depicting that development wobbles badly when it literally transfigures Venn from his appearance to his reality. Hardy's protest, however, can be more easily understood when we realize that he has had to recreate the form of Madding Crowd for a radically different artistic interest. The bulk of his novel stresses Clym, not Diggory; and if we assume that he gives the same emphasis to Book VI, we can see that he remained more true to his original vision than has yet been suggested. 22

For it is only in the sixth book that we experience the full dimensions of Clym's tragedy, his failure to survive as a singer the guilt he feels for the deaths of his mother and wife. Though he is broken and torturing himself at the end of Book V, there is still something of dignity and honesty in his ability to look into himself and condemn what he sees and in his recognition that he alone possesses the moral
system capable of such judgment: "...my great regret is that for what I have done no man or law can punish me!" (p. 449). To use Hemingway's distinction, he has been destroyed, but not defeated. He is still fully conscious of himself as a free agent and of man as responsible for the world he makes. But if Eustacia's tragedy teaches us that man cannot evade the guilt that is his, Clym's tragedy involves the more harrowing lesson of a man who cannot live with the guilt he has appropriated as his.

"At the end of the novel," Leonard Deen writes, "Clym remains emptied of his force, a diminished and pathetic victim." Indeed he has lost his vitality, his power of song, attempting no more to fill each moment of his life with its full range of being. Like Keats's Knight at arms, he is stunned and paralyzed by the horrors of his vision in the elfin grot of man's responsibility. Though life goes on and cycles return, Clym absents himself from the Maypole festivities to be supplanted by Diggory. He has made himself a fossil, living in the past, consecrating the present to the dead of his memory. More critically, he allows the dead—external to him and to all living things; hence irrelevant to the moment here and now—to guide and design his life. Love for his mother is one thing; his diseased resolution to do his duty to her wishes by marrying Thomasin is quite another and, as he recognizes, potentially disastrous (pp. 468-69). His duty was to ignite the deity within him
to a brighter glow out of his engagements with unresolved suffering, not turn it off as a payment for resolution. His life becomes a ceremonial ritual devoted to the proposition that these dead may not have died in vain, so long as he uses them to dictate his feelings and actions. He almost parodies his mother's pride when he reacts snobbishly and peevishly to Thomasin's choice of Venn as a husband. But nowhere does he appear so tragically as when outside the windows of his house, listening to the wedding festivities with Charlie, to whom he has just given a relic of Eustacia. Are they drinking my health, he asks: "Do any of them seem to care about my not being there?" (p. 482). It is the note of self-pity, the hint of egotism, that is so tragic to hear coming from Clym. He has isolated himself on the wrong side of the window of human life, and, like Eustacia, he has drained the strength that would open the door.

He has chosen to seek that strength outside him, in his recreated image of his mother, in "a hypothesis that shall not degrade a First Cause" (p. 455), even in the homiletic tracts that make up his sermons on the system of things and that have replaced his song. His mythology has replaced Eustacia's, just as he stands in her place on top of Rainbarrow. He has suffered as much as Moneta, but his face is Moneta's face no more—no internal light illuminates its lines of grief. The power of soul making is to see as a God sees; Clym has surrendered that to his attempt to see God.
Jude the Obscure is unquestionably Hardy's fiercest novel. Its bitter tone, the unrelieved iron-grey grimness of its atmosphere and aftertaste, its failure to contain artistically Hardy's lashing protests against the contradictory demands of nature and society upon human life—these at once raise the work to the highest powers of Hardy's rhetoric and place it beyond the patience of some of his most sympathetic readers. One can almost understand the bishop's reasons for burning the book, since so perceptive a critic as Arthur Mizener has argued forcefully against Jude's claim to tragedy and even to inner consistency. Though Mizener's thesis has its points, there is something to be learned from reading Jude and relating it to a larger question of consistency—that of the organic (rather than simply chronological) vision of Hardy's fiction as a whole. As Evelyn Hardy points out in her Critical Biography, Jude reverses the pattern of Tess (p. 251). What it does more emphatically, I believe, is intensify the situation and position taken in The Return of the Native. Jude destroys whatever hope might have lingered in Hardy for a mythological ordering of experience.

Just as both novels trace the tragic fall to a ceremonial substitute for a life man must possess fully from within, so the straightforward Clym and Eustacia can
enlighten our reading of their complicated counterparts, Jude and Sue. Jude combines qualities from both. He dreams of escaping a sterile land for a city of light and learning, but the motives for his aspiration are essentially noble, humanitarian, and visionary. He must compromise his dream continually, far beyond the point granted to Clym, though he has worked as hard to prepare himself for his desired vocation. An even more important parallel is established when Sue, like Clym, fails to survive her guilt and seeks Clym's way of shading its presence. Clym's "First Cause" is now explicitly identified as the Christian God, and the ceremonial projection of an order of things centering on Him is revealed in all its awesome destruction of the only life possible to man. But Sue's failure to survive the final crisis results from her Eustacia-like resistance all along to live free, to possess herself as a morally free agent.

Her portrait takes Hardy's thought to the antithesis of its earlier concepts of duty and self. His earlier characters either achieve or deny the fullness of their lives according to their responses to the duties inherent in their various situations. Elfride loses Knight because she refuses until it is too late to reveal herself as she really is; Oak, in the steady performance of his duty, finally wins Bathsheba. For both, the possession of identity waited upon the performance of duty, the proof of one's commitment to a moral law—but to a moral law pre-existing, incorporated in and transmitted by their respective cultures.
It is not until The Return of the Native that Hardy unequivocally places moral law within the character struggling for identity. The concept of Wordsworth's "Ode to Duty," read by Elfride to brace herself for action, the concept of "a second Will more wise" preserving "the stars from wrong," is even in Madding Crowd not fully internalized. Even with Bathsheba's identification with Fanny, there is still an external scheme--at once natural and religious--defining the morality of her actions. Only with Clym singing out of his blindness and suffering do we get a totally new morality and a new identity--both created from within to fill an external void, in the manner of Emily Norton and the Leech-gatherer. In that one moment of Clym's, duty and identity fuse in an act of mutual creation: the possession of self dictating the duty of self-possession. In The Woodlanders, Hardy sees more clearly the possibilities of that moment; in Tess, he widens it to spiritual epic. With Sue Bridehead, the moment breaks down, duty conflicts with self, and Clym's meek acceptance of an external scheme becomes Sue's terrific vehicle of self-annihilation.

Already questioned in Book VI of The Return, the ceremonial vision now becomes a ceremonial horror, a portent of the mind's inability to accept its human freedom. Seized with "uncontrollable" grief upon the death of her children, Sue exclaims to Jude: "There is something external to us which says, 'You shan't!'" (p. 407). Sue needs a God, an
external and absolute seat of judgment and authority, something that she can appeal to for meaning and justification. Without God, the children's deaths are unendurable because utterly senseless. Hence Sue mythologizes the tragedy, offers it ceremonially to what she makes herself believe is its preordained purpose. "My children—are dead," she says, "--and it is right that they should be! I am glad--almost. They were sin-begotten. They were sacrificed to teach me how to live!" (p. 439). We have known all along, of course, and from Sue's own lips, that she has never had the courage of her convictions, and Hardy has carefully and neatly foreshadowed her return to Phillotson. 26 But to affirm the rightness of the deaths is to deny their tragedy by placing them in a providential scheme that draws good from evil; and the ceremonial vision—the children were "sacrificed," a ritualistic means to an end—now occupies the threshold to insanity, as Hardy makes it into a sign of the looming breakdown of Sue's mind. As a desperate attempt to escape tragedy, it becomes a cancellation of life itself.

Thus, in doing her duty to Phillotson, Sue makes explicit what was implicit throughout: her inability truly to be. She never fully possesses herself, nor rejects what is not herself—whether it be pagan versus Christian ideals, the unmarried versus the married state. Whereas Eustacia projected an external scheme to explain why things went
wrong. Sue needs a parallel system mainly to assure her that all is right. Yet even when the assurance comes, she cannot be certain. She can never feel free. Not having committed adultery, she wonders if her freedom from Phillotson "has been obtained under false pretences!" If "the truth...had been know, the decree wouldn't have been pronounced." "Therefore," she asks, "is my freedom lawful, however proper it may be?" (p. 310). She is waiting for her freedom—for permission to act morally and to be—to come from outside her. All of this, of course, is perplexing to Jude, who does not need a decree to act and to feel as he thinks fit, and who recognizes and tells her "that under the affectation of independent views you are as enslaved to the social code as any woman I know" (p. 290).

Even her enlightened attitudes towards marriage assume the cast of self-defeat and denial of life. With all of her talk about the sordidness of the marriage contract and the perversity of mechanizing emotions spontaneous by nature, there is nothing sordid or mechanical about her marriage to Phillotson, except what her mind creates as such—just as there are no demons on the heath but those Eustacia places there. Surely Phillotson, one of the truly generous spirits in the novel, deserves better treatment from her. But though she claims the passions should be free, we never see her freely passionate even with Jude. If she were free, would she quail before the marriage license, as though that would
enslave her? But it is her fear of sex, of course, that is fundamental to her actions and the most intricate of her characteristics, for she does not want to grow up and accept the flux of change from innocence to experience that one enters by intimate contact with another human being. When Jude was a boy he too wished that he might never grow up (a natural enough sensation for a troubled child). But Sue carries the same fear of change into her womanhood: "...I would much rather go on living always as lovers, as we are living now, and only meeting by day" (p. 311). Earlier, at Melchester, she craves to "get back to the life of [her] infancy and its freedom" (p. 165; my italics).

One of the most telling aspects of her personality is her need for division, for a closed door isolating and securing her from contact with mankind: "Now that the high window-sill was between them...she seemed not to mind indulging in a frankness she had feared at close quarters" (p. 246). That wall is like the decree of freedom: an external substitute for internal strength of life.

Thus her attitude towards sex is not simply one of timidity or hypersensitivity—it involves her attitude towards life. Unable to be, to act or love freely, to speak openly to Jude when there is no wall between them, Sue abhors the sexual act because it is the means of bringing forth life, a hideous multiplication of "weltering humanity" (p. 345). Seeing that life must suffer, she does
not grow to cherish life, but to wish it away, and her future ideal appears to be human extinction. She is but a step behind the nihilistic paralysis of Father Time, who in executing the children merely puts her precepts into practice. Both have denied the value of life in a troubled world; both argue that if there is suffering there should be no life. Their dialogue before the disaster is almost an overture to annihilation:

"It would be better to be out o' the world than in it, wouldn't it?"

"It would almost, dear."

...

"Then if children make so much trouble, why do people have 'em?"

"O--because it is a law of nature" (p. 402).

Not because they are wanted or loved—what an incredibly cruel thing to say to a boy already convinced he is unwanted and unloved. After the tragedy, her denial of man becomes absolute as she rejects with Calvinistic horror the "terrible flesh" of man, "the curse of Adam," and human nature "vile and corrupt." She would like to prick herself "all over with pins and bleed out the badness that's in [her]!" (pp. 416-17). She has denied the dignity of man, sees him only as depraved, and regrets, not merely his failings, but his very presence.

That denial causes her ruin and Jude's, for it leads
her to look for a source of goodness outside of man. She does not recognize that in a meaningless world only man can achieve meaning, that the darkened chambers of life demand that man become his own light, or that the grossness of the sexual act compels man to etherealize it. One of the paradoxes of her paradoxical nature is that, though continually identified with spirits and ethereal natures, she never succeeds in creating her spiritual existence—and principally because she never frees herself from her need for system, because she needs a mental enclosure as desperately as she needs a wall or a separate bedroom. When she revolts against the Christian system, she does not oppose it with herself but with another system, Mill's, or that of classic Greece.

But is it Venus or The Virgin who jumps out of the window to avoid Phillotson? Although she observes brilliantly that "the social moulds civilization fits us into have no...relation to our actual shapes" (p. 247), she resists the very hard effort needed to create her actual shape from within, and confesses to Phillotson whenever she acts freely and from within her actual being with Jude. This is no longer a question, as it was in A Pair of Blue Eyes, of her being perfectly honest with the man, but of her being dishonest to herself. She has to relieve her conscience of these sins of acting freely. She has straddled systematic explanations of life, but she has never freed herself from system, and hence her inevitable tragedy is to substi-
tute for what actual shape she might have developed a mecha-
nically imposed external mold.

Thus, the effect of her children's deaths—a grotesque,
sensational piece of plot machinery—is to tip the balance
of Sue's mental life to a mode of consciousness it has never
freed itself from. Though logically attributable to her
lessons to Father Time, the deaths are meaningless, inexpli-
cable. Jude can see and suffer their meaninglessness and
try to mature beyond it. Sue feels compelled to explain
and give them meaning. As I have already suggested, she
deflects the isolated tragic reality into a scheme of
religious intervention, a proof for the existence of God:

"We must conform!" she said mournfully. "All
the ancient wrath of the Power above us has been
vented upon us, His poor creatures, and we must
submit. There is no choice. We must. It is no
use fighting against God!"

"It is only against man and senseless circum-
stance," said Jude (p. 413).

Her actions take the shape of what Henry A. Murray calls
a "deterrent myth," for by "continually sacrificing
[herself] on the altar of duty" (p. 416) she hopes to
appease "the Power above us" and to prostrate herself
totally before it. "It is my duty" (p. 480)—her final
words, as Phillotson carries her to bed, apologize at the
other end of the spectrum from Eustacia's for her self-
annihilation. Even more so than with Clym, her commitment
to a Providential scheme has become a substitute for self
and for her other "duty" as a man: to be a free and responsible agent. But Sue has made freedom and duty mutually exclusive alternatives—she says, "There is no choice." One can see the appeal of her position. If her children's tragedy is God's way of bringing her to His mold, then the way out of her responsibility is much clearer. She can be "almost glad" the children are dead, because it "blots out all that life of mine!" (p. 479). Ironically, she is free from her only chance for freedom—which was to see the tragedy in its context of "man and senseless circumstance" and to relieve the burden of its mystery by absorbing it in the growth to her mature selfhood.

Failing to do this, her duty becomes a mode of non-being, a means of escape from an identity capable of surviving in the inexplicable and of committing itself to the dignity of man enveloped in mystery. Given her sense of man's corruption, what could she do but hope that another Power might cleanse her—just as she waits until the very end, pathetically indeed, to be liberated from her own chains. Unable to hear Phillotson's breathing, she gasps, "Perhaps he's dead!...And then—I should be free..." (p. 478; original italics). For thinking of Phillotson's death as somehow requisite for her to begin living, she does penance by giving her life unto death.
Perhaps the strongest evidence for my contention that Sue fails "to be" is her inability ever to fully reveal herself—either to Jude or the reader. She has a "common trick," Hardy tells us, of "putting on flippancy to hide real feeling..." (p. 181). During the important scene of Jude's confession of his first marriage, she speaks "with a gentle seriousness which did not reveal her mind"; she speaks "learnedly" as a means of controlling herself; and at the end of their interview, Jude "felt that he did not even now quite know her mind" (pp. 201, 202). He never does quite know her mind, nor realize that her unwillingness or inability to reveal herself openly does reveal indirectly her own unquiet feelings about herself. Indeed, much of the psychological power of the novel results from Sue's continual fending off Jude's attempts to penetrate to a full knowledge of her. Unable to confront and be reconciled to the mystery of life, she destroys herself—and at the same time she presents an everlasting mystery to Jude, an epitome of the mystery of his world, which tests and sometimes even augments his power to be and to achieve self-possession.

Referring to Jude's speech at the Christminster Remembrance Day procession, Frederick McDowell concludes that Jude "like Sue...is symbolic of spiritual malaise
and lacks a firm substratum of moral and intellectual values.\textsuperscript{34} The analysis of the situation is correct; the negative evaluation of it implied by "malaise" is highly misleading. The primary insight of Jude's speech is that there is no moral law and no logic external to man by which he can guide his actions: "I am in a chaos of principles—groping in the dark—acting by instinct and not after example. Eight or nine years ago when I came here first, I had a neat stock of fixed opinions, but they dropped away one by one; and the further I get the less sure I am" (p. 394). If this is sickness then Jude shows considerable strength in living with it, precisely that strength Sue wanted when she tried to reduce the moral chaos of the world into a system of fixed opinions. Jude's position here, in fact, is clearly analogous to and provides an important historical commentary on Keats's insight in the "Epistle" to Reynolds and the darkened chamber image of the Mansion of Life letter. Jude is in "a sort of Purgatory Blind" of consciousness, from which he "Cannot refer to any standard law/Of either earth or heaven" ("Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds," 80-82). Hardy is at the very center of Romantic thought when he gives us a character who manifests that quality which Keats recognized man must develop if he is to exist in the kind of world which he and Jude experienced: "I mean \textbf{Negative Capability}, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties,
Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason. The highest point in the arc of Jude's spiritual life is his fulfillment in the Christminster speech of Keats's vision of a new human nature. Recognizing the systemless uncertainty of the world, he does not mythologize. His speech is ceremonial only in the sense that its object is man's charismatic being.

His life is a continual attempt to discover itself within the mystery that is its personal and cosmic situation. Sue is an enigma to him, yet he never stops loving her, even when he declares her unworthy of his love. As he sees into her more deeply, he becomes more involved in the mystery and frustration of life. He must discover that the actual Sue contradicts in all important particulars: the image of the idealized Sue that he had placed among the blessed. He must endure her return to the Sacramentalism that he, under her teaching, so painfully discarded. He must hear her reject his claim to be her husband. We hear often enough that they are like two halves of one whole and of their "two-in-oneness"; but the fact is that we never see Sue fulfilling Jude's hopes for her as the partner, complement and perfection of his dream. On the contrary, he must always adjust his dream and his vision according to some new revelation from the mystery he is trying to accommodate to. That he can do so proves his mind to be as elastic as and withall more coherent than the elusive illogic by which Sue
tests it. The mystery of life that debilitated her contributes to his growth.

But not beyond a certain point. For Jude is defeated, of course, and perhaps inevitably by the mystery in Sue that prevents him from fully incorporating himself into her and from relieving the radical isolation that is the condition of his being.37 As Alvarez notes ("Introduction" to the Signet Classic Edition, p. 412), loneliness "is the one condition without which the book would show none of its power." That concept has to be expanded and made to apply to the total area of Jude's life. He is always on the other side of the wall from Christminster; he cannot enter the seats of learning there, nor the seats of love in Sue--her mind, heart, and soul--at least not fully enough to overcome the isolation he was born to and to achieve the sense of context, the attraction of which provides the controlling force of his dream. His power of negative capability is, in fact, a last resort, what is left to him after his failure to achieve a relationship with the world that would render such a quality unnecessary. His failure to achieve that kind of relationship with Sue is Hardy's way of concretizing the drama of his failure to achieve a larger, cosmic context in an isolating universe.

When he was a boy, he let the birds feed in Farmer Troutham's fields because "They seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which did not want them" (p. 11).
Phillotson, his best chance (so he thinks) for human relationship, has already deserted him; his aunt does not want him. When Troutham punishes his generosity and "fellow-feeling" with the birds, his "sense of harmony" sickens at its disparity from "Nature's logic" (p. 15). The universe, like an expanded, distorted image of Sue, is a frightening enigma to him, and he does not want to grow up to the responsibility of dealing with its ways and of viewing from "the center of [his] time" the actions of his life. I have already spoken of the wish as normal enough for a child. Anyway, Jude outgrows it. What he does not outgrow is the isolation that prompted the wish and the miraculous vision that it immediately gave rise to.

That vision, of course, is Jude's apocalyptic experience in the third chapter. Christminster is "the heavenly Jerusalem" for Jude before he even sees it; and when it does appear, "either directly seen, or miraged in the peculiar atmosphere" (p. 19)—both objective reality and subjective emanation—it becomes at once the promise of his eternal place in a cosmic, all-fulfilling context. The heavenly Jerusalem is, after all, in the Christian formulation of man's historical journey, heaven itself, man's final, everlasting abode as a member of the one flock under one shepherd. It is the reclamation of the earth and the universe out of isolation from God to union with God. For a sensitivity mauled by its contacts with nature's horrid logic, such a need and its expression
can be just as powerful as Hardy makes them to be. "It would just suit me" (p. 25), Jude concludes. It would satisfy, that is, "the yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to—for some place which he could call admirable" (p. 24). It would situate him, give him a role and a purpose and contact: he caresses the breeze coming to him from Christminster, for having already touched Mr. Phillotson's face and bringing that touch to his own (p. 21).

In effect, we witness Hardy's ceremonial vision in its most powerfully intense moment of expression. Jude's imagination transfigures nature until Christminster becomes not a place, but the aura of a place, crowned by a halo and offering incense—just as Sue, who replaces Christminster, is not so much a woman as an idealized essence of woman for Jude. The only parallel to this scene in the literature I have discussed is the apocalyptic vision of the Solitary, in Book II of *The Excursion*—but with the critical omission here of what was so important there: "...the dark materials of the storm..." (II, 847). This omission should tell us at once that Hardy has doomed Jude's quest in its very outset; and he is indeed questioning the ceremonial vision in this his highest expression of it. Jude's idealism is rudely balanced against the coal-carter's praise of a city he knows only through his friend the boot black. Equally suggestive are his fears, after his first vision, of "giants, Herne the Hunter, Apollyon" and the other fairy-tale, legendary
demons that Jude no longer believes in, but that he runs away from through the darkness home. Is Hardy saying that Jude's apocalypse and the Christian scheme of salvation are of a piece with his fear of imaginary spooks? We can't know absolutely. The question is further complicated by the fact that Hardy has touched upon one of the root mechanisms of man's mythological impulse. Jude can react emotionally to what his mind has already rejected—just as he reacts to Christminster almost to the very end, though totally disillusioned with it, and to Sue, though fully aware of the reasons for not loving her. If Herne the Hunter can really exist—and he does—in the logic of emotion, or in the racial consciousness of fable, though not in the logic of intellect, can Christminster-Apocalypse exist in precisely the same way? Not as mere wishfulfillment, but as a part of the primal experience of man? Can heaven with its fulfillment of Jude's identity exist, because Jude's emotions and imagination respond so ardently to its existence?

Such questions, of course, take us to the very heart of the comparative study of religion and myth. Hardy's position, at least his intention, I believe, is relatively clear. He means to attack the very propensity in man that makes for ceremonial myth. Even without the bathetic parallel between the heavenly Jerusalem and Herne the Hunter, the actual Christminster and Sue progressively unfold in an ever greater contrast to Jude's idealization of them. Apocalypse demands
the destruction of things as they are— it is heaven outside of Jude, a future goal to which he travels from the hell or purgatory of his present state. Jude and Sue continually project themselves into a future perfect, in which the "social formulas" of marriage and education will accord with the highest ideals of liberal thought. They were the "pioneers" of that future (p. 425): "It takes two or three generations to do what [they] tried to do in one..." (p. 393). I do not deny in the least the nobility or prophetic value of Jude's attempt at reform, but the implication is that his inner aspirations need external embodiment for realization and sustaining power. He gives up the search for heaven to another generation when it fails to take shape around him—as though that generation will have better luck in securing a retreat from the isolated self, either cosmically in divine love, or personally in human love. Jude is doomed precisely because he is always searching for heaven, imagining himself as on the way there, instead of actually creating and living whatever heaven means when translated into human experience; and it is perfectly consistent with Hardy's thought that Jude's final words echo the bitter invective of Eustacia's. The tragic failure of his aspirations was nowhere more clearly foretold or defined than in the scene of his first meeting with Arabella, where, while he rehearses the litany of his apocalyptic ambition, she strikes him with the pig's pizzle, Hardy's rude reminder that the world of flesh rejects spirit-
ualization anywhere else.

"Hardy's people," Katherine Anne Porter, says in her excellent essay, "suffer the tragedy of being..." 41 Clym and Eustacia but even more so Jude finally suffer the tragedy of the will-not-to-be. No light has been given to the mystery of life, no relief for its burden, and Jude dies in the isolation of his youth—it had been better not to have been. The conclusion is powerful and, given its harshness, strangely irresistible, yet I am convinced that it is not Hardy's final or most definitive assessment of human life. Nor need we go to The Dynasts for that assessment, a work that seldom rises to the quality maintained in Jude. Hardy's last novel portrays a world in which mythology no longer serves as an avenue for the creation of man's spiritual life, in which there is no hope outside of himself to relieve Jude's isolation, in which the external religious system he had longed for becomes the vehicle of Sue's annihilation. I see Jude, however, not as a denial of the possibilities of spiritual life, but as a denial of those possibilities existing outside of man. Hardy is, in a sense, conspicuously throwing his thought into shadow, for in the two novels written previously to Jude he had concentrated his energies upon the development of those possibilities from within man. I think he had to write Jude, among other reasons, to justify the position he had taken in Tess, to show that he was fully aware that a good man who is a sinner can be
damned, even while a sinner who is a pure woman reaches beatitude.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1
Guerard argues that the modern critic is "left indifferent by what charmed [an] earlier generation...the pretentious meditation on Egdon Heath...." See Thomas Hardy (Norfolk, Conn., 1964; first published in 1949), p. 6.

2

3
In Hardy the Novelist (New York, 1943), p. 23, David Cecil uses terms synonymous to Taylor's in the above footnote to define the role of "nature" in all of Hardy's books.

4

5
This is perfectly clear to Sam, the turf-cutter, who answers Clym's question, "Do you think she would like to teach children?" with "Quite a different sort of body from that, I reckon" (p. 212).

6
I am expanding upon a point made by Abercrombie in Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study, p. 77.

7
Hardy, of course, knew Coleridge and Carlyle and is echoing, perhaps unconsciously, the fundamental Romantic insights of both. Eustacia fails, has no recourse but suicide or despair, because she never rises to the vision that sees nature in our life alone ("Dejection: An Ode") and that sees America here or nowhere ("The Everlasting Yea"). I return to the more clearly moral implications of this failure in section 2 of this chapter.

8
Her vision is creative of Hell: "Egdon was her Hades..." (p. 77).
For a different, very interesting analysis of this scene and dialogue, see Benjamin Sankey, *The Major Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Denver, 1965), p. 29.

I disagree entirely on this point with Charles C. Walcutt, who sees Clym as "bent on his own self-destruction" and who criticizes Clym's singing for adding "outrage to injury" to Eustacia, already suffering sixteen hours of "wilful neglect" because Clym has chosen to work. Yet Walcutt's reading of the novel is on the whole a valuable one. See "Character and Coincidence in *The Return of the Native,*" Twelve Original Essays on Great English Novels, ed. Charles Shapiro (Detroit, 1960), pp. 105, 109.

His relationship to her is analogous here to that of the Leech-gatherer to the poet in "Resolution and Independence." The charismatic power results from one's ability to suffer and remain free.


J. O. Bailey calls the heath "passive," though in a somewhat different context. His article, "Temperament as Motive in *The Return of the Native,*" English Fiction in Transition, V (1962), 21-29, is an important attempt to refute the notion that Hardy's characters are "what they frequently call themselves, victims of a malevolent Fate, destiny, or external circumstances" (21).


Though I can't go quite as far as Leonard W. Deen, who says of Eustacia, "She is a romantic (she is a whole history of romanticism) seen romantically." See "Heroism and Pathos in Hardy's *Return of the Native,*" Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XV (December, 1960), 210.
"The Return of the Native," Belgravia, XXXVI (September, 1878), 264. I do not recall that Paterson discusses this revision.

Hardy does not appear to think so. "She had certainly believed that Clym was awake, and the excuse would be an honest one as far as it went; but nothing could save her from censure in refusing to answer at the first knock" (p. 353). Her crime, moreover, is made to appear as one against all humanity, when Mrs. Yeobright compares herself to a "weary wayfarer" (p. 340).

At least she uses her suspicion of those motives to refrain from opening the door at once. Mrs. Yeobright has come on a mission of love, but as with the heath, Eustacia creates in the image of her own hatred (p. 337).

M. A. Goldberg states this position well: "[Eustacia's] assumptions about causality... are certainly no more valid than those of Susan Nunsuch... There is no Heaven operating as a force within the novel, no Jupiter hurling thunderbolts, no Pallas Athene intervening in the ways of man..." See "Hardy's Double-Visioned Universe," Essays in Criticism, VII (October, 1957), 381. Richard Carpenter, in Thomas Hardy (New York, 1964), p. 100, presents the opposing view, that Hardy does suggest a connection between the wax-doll ritual and Eustacia's death; but this is not a tenable position.

"Heroism and Pathos in Hardy's Return of the Native."

William R. Rutland, for example, in Thomas Hardy: A Study of His Writings and Their Backgrounds (New York, 1962; first published in 1938), finds that Jude leaves "a nasty taste in the mouth" (p. 249), and he criticizes Jude's falseness to life and art (pp. 256-57). Evelyn Hardy goes even further, in her Critical Biography, claiming that "Jude verges on the pathological..." (p. 246). Yet, A. Alvarez is by no means alone in his judgment of Jude as "Hardy's... finest novel." See his "Afterward" to Jude the Obscure (New York: Signet Classic Edition, 1961), p. 404.


She cannot feel free from her husband even after their divorce. With all her radicalism, she exclaims, "It is a crime," when hearing of Arabella's Australian marriage. Robert B. Heilman rightly observes that Sue's emotions cannot transcend the community her mind endeavors to reject." See "Hardy's Sue Bridehead," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XX (March, 1966), 322.

This is quite clearly a biographical element in the novel, as Hardy describes precisely the same feeling in his own boyhood. See Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928 (London, 1962), pp. 15-16.

Frederick P. W. McDowell provides other insights into the "group of symbolic incidents...concerned with action taking place at windows or casements"—in one of the best essays on Jude: "Hardy's 'Seemings or Personal Impressions': The Symbolical Use of Image and Contrast in Jude the Obscure," Modern Fiction Studies, VI (Autumn, 1960), 233-50, esp. 242.

In arguing that Father Time shares Sue's vision, I am in disagreement with Alvarez, who feels that the child represents what "was already embodied in fully tragic form in the figure of Jude" ("Afterward" to the Signet Classic Edition, p. 414), but in agreement with McDowell (242). A fine study of Hardy's use of the vision and experience of

30

Allusions to Sue's fleshlessness occur throughout the novel. In his "Preface," Hardy identifies the conflict as "a deadly war waged between flesh and spirit" (p. vi)—or the demands of Arabella and Sue upon Jude's nature. But though Sue is something of an ideal, we cannot overlook the damning implications of Jude's fierce retort: "You are upon the whole, a sort of fay, or sprite—not a woman!" (p. 426).

Hence she is not, as Phillotson argues, Shelley's Cythna (p. 279), but a Lamia enticing the mind rather than the senses.

31

She "must" tell Phillotson that she and Jude have already been to the church and marched to the altar (p. 208)—that the practice marriage manifests an unconscious desire is sufficiently obvious. She must confess that Jude held her hand (though not that he kissed her) and that he kissed her (though not that she called him "my darling Love") (pp. 263, 479).

32


33

I have avoided discussing the psychoanalytic reasons for Sue's willful self-destruction—a topic outside my abilities and interests. Guerard provides a shrewd analysis of the problem in Thomas Hardy, pp. 111-14.

34

"Hardy's 'Seemings or Personal Impressions': The Symbolical Use of Image and Contrast in Jude the Obscure," 247.

35


36

Sue laments the loss of "our two-in-oneness" (p. 408); Phillotson considers them "one person split in two" (p. 276), an idea corroborated by Hardy (p. 352). Unquestionably, this is their ideal—a single identity and union formed from disparity and separation. Sue's destruction of this, by returning to Phillotson, expands the notion of self—annihilation.
Hardy, speaking of Jude's sexual relations with Sue, says that "He has never really possessed her as freely as he desired" (The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928, p. 272). I merely expand this metaphorically to include their more critical spiritual intercourse, substituting the sense of "fully" (quantity) for that of "freely" (frequency).

One of Hardy's reflections has a particular value in this context: "Half my time... I 'believe' (in the modern sense of the word) not only in the things Bergson believes in, but in spectres, mysterious voices, intuitions, omens, dreams, haunted places.... But I do not believe in them in the old sense of the word any more for that" (The Life of Thomas Hardy: 1840-1928, p. 370).

I have constructed my argument here upon material provided by Joseph Campbell in "The Historical Development of Mythology," Myth and Mythmaking, pp. 19-45.

But we must be wary of exaggerating or misapplying Hardy's condemnation of Jude's idealism, a fallacy that Kathleen R. Hoopes commits when she dismisses Jude's vision of the city as simply not true, "a dream fantasy in which no real men could reside." While her argument is valid in so far as Jude's vision neglects what she calls the "gross 'reality'" of the city--the point I tried to make with reference to The Excursion--she apparently does not recognize what Hardy implies throughout: that Christminster should have been what Jude imagined it to be. See "Illusion and Reality in Jude the Obscure," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XII (September, 1957), 154-57. Emma Clifford, in "The Child: The Circus: and Jude the Obscure," provides a sounder, more comprehensive analysis of the Christminster vision. Miss Clifford also stresses the fairy-tale atmosphere and analogues of Jude's Christminster ideal (542-43), but she recognizes that his vision "remains a glorious vision...a vision that is both sustained and destroyed in the garish atmosphere of Thomas Hardy's special kind of hell" (542).

"Notes on a Criticism of Thomas Hardy," The Southern Review, VI (1940-1941), 158.
Numerous critics have spoken of the difficulty of finding the proper place for The Woodlanders among Hardy's other major novels. Of them, it is certainly the least read; with its stiff characters and inconclusive plotting, it is perhaps the most flawed. Yet Hardy himself preferred it to his other novels as a story, he said, because of "the locality and scenery of the action, a part I am very fond of." Certainly The Woodlanders is enriched by some of Hardy's most beautifully drawn and organically integrated descriptions of nature, and in his portrayal of Giles and Grace at the former's hut, Hardy for once achieves all the intensity of pathos that he requires without the aid of melodrama. He is in almost full control of his art when, in the final paragraphs with Marty at Giles's grave, he effects the catharsis his drama demanded. There is, nevertheless, an uneasy irresolution about the novel, the effect of purposes crossing against each other. It is as though
Hardy, who described himself in the "Prefatory Note" to Desperate Remedies as "feeling his way to a method," had grown dissatisfied with what he had found and, without entirely abandoning that, had begun searching for more.

His search takes him, of course, to Tess and Jude, and of both of these The Woodlanders is proleptic. In Sue, Hardy gives us a full-length portrait of the mental and spiritual deterioration consequent upon her resorting to the ceremonial view of life. In the voodoo doll scene of The Return of the Native, he had already attacked Eustacia's fatalism, her stubborn ceremonial projection to the external world of the forces ruling her life. Marking the passage between the two, and reducing both to their elemental proportions, is the symbolic and suggestive drama between John South and the tree outside his window. Unlike Eustacia and Sue, South has no known need to project his source of life to something external to him. His need apparently derives from something deeper than a desire to transfer or evade responsibility or guilt. His projection is compulsive and irrational, partaking of the archetypal response of man to his universe. Eustacia's demonology and Sue's Christianity raise to the level of abstracted sophistication this primitive tension between South and the tree, which expresses the Ur-ceremony of both and which contains Hardy's grimmest portrait of a man draining the life out of his own consciousness into a fixed mythology.

Surely in South the ceremonial vision has become de-
ranged—the anthropomorphic projection of life into nature an act of madness and self-destruction in its very core and origin. And it is an act, of course, that places South at the furthest extreme from soul making, from the human power which emanates life and establishes value. South must destroy himself in his ceremony of "abject obedience" to the power projected, the tree, which has become the self alienated. The tree's shape "seems to haunt him like an evil spirit," Marty says. "He says that it is exactly his own age, that it has got human sense, and sprouted up when he was born on purpose to rule him, and keep him as its slave" (p. 121). The tree is his "fugleman" (p. 108), his model of imitation, more precisely the power pulling the strings to which he puppet-like responds. "As the tree waved South waved his head...." When the tree dies, South dies—because he has made the tree his source of life. Unable to sustain his life in itself alone, he must like Eustacia mythologize the universe into something that recognizes and controls him; like Sue he must seek a reason for, a power behind, the events of his life. And yet, although we must be wary of the post hoc fallacy of attributing Eustacia's death to the melting of the wax-doll image, South does die because the tree has been cut down. He fails to survive the loss of recognition and reason. In a pitiful and paradoxical way South is an egotist, frightened of his life and yet grasping onto it, and hence compelled to project it upon the tree. And when he sees through his
window only a blankness and not the pillar that supported
him and the rod that struck, the implications are clear
enough of what effects mythic ceremonies can have upon the
human consciousness.

No one else in the novel approaches South's extreme,
archetypal position; nor even develops a coherent ceremonial
view. But the major characters--Mrs. Charmond; Fitzpiers,
Grace, Marty, and Giles--can be ranked in terms of the
degrees of their abilities charismatically to possess
their lives. Surely Hardy intends a comment by placing
at the opposite end of the novel from South's obedience to
the tree his daughter's devotion to a man. Much closer to
South in her moral and spiritual weakness is Mrs. Charmond,
who also seeks in an external force a substitute for her
self. "If only Heaven would give her strength," she thinks
(p. 318), which is somewhat like South asking the tree to
let him alone. Like South's obsession, her listlessness
is a variety of egotism, a means of escaping the demands of
her identity. South makes himself the center of his universe;
Mrs. Charmond would like the universe to center on her. She
bewails the "terrible insistencies of society--how severe
they are, and cold, and inexorable--ghastly towards those
who are made of wax and not of stone" (p. 237). Yet what
has she suffered but a frustrated selfishness, which she
relieves easily enough by arranging for Fitzpiers to meet
her on the Continent. Yet those who have legitimate cause for
complaint—Giles, Marty, Grace—and whom Mrs. Charmond has
injured also have the strength to keep silent. It takes a
Fitzpiers, who like her is one of "the genuine subjects of
emotion" to second her mood: "But see how powerless is the
human will against predestination!" (p. 227). But we have
already seen the reductio ad absurdum of this attitude and
its failure of self in the tree-fatality of John South.

As in his earlier novels, Hardy devotes himself here
to the contrast between the self-centered and the selfless
person, to the loss and the achievement of identity. He
works perhaps too obviously in establishing that contrast.
When Grace has restored the dying Giles back to his hut,
Hardy reminds us that six months earlier, "a scene, almost
similar in its mechanical parts had been enacted at Hin-
tock House.... Outwardly like as it had been, it was yet
infinite in spiritual difference; though a woman's devotion
had been common to both" (p. 380). Fitzpiers arrives at
Mrs. Charmond's window just as that lady has begun her
frantic preparations to flee the temptation of seeing him.
It is Hardy's characteristic situation. The forbidden
fruit appears immediately upon the resolve to abstain.
And just as characteristic is the opportunity Hardy offers
us of estimating his character's moral stature—we are
involved here with the same issues that presented themselves
in the closed-door scene of The Return of the Native. Mrs.
Charmond does not break her resolve because her inner strength
has been wrung to its last grasp. She falls, simply, because she has never resisted whatever her whim or desire has placed before her. More significantly, she runs away with another woman's husband, not because she has discovered a higher moral law in doing so, but because she has never risen to the identity capable of creating any morality at all.

That failure is of the greatest importance, for we know that Hardy never accepted fully the moral injunctions of his society as they were given to him. Even with an Elfride Swancourt, the issue is not whether an arbitrary convention must be followed in her confession to Knight of the abortive elopement with Stephen. More important is the fact that Elfride defines herself in terms of her society's codes, and thus it is a social etiquette that is a part of her identity that is at stake. As Hardy matured, he learned to conceive of his characters' morality in terms larger and more comprehensive than those contained in society or nature. At least Tess rises above both, and his greatest characters are those who rebel upwards out of the given codes into their own commanding vision of good and evil, whether that be consistent with or dissonant to the morality they inherit. As though to throw this movement into stronger relief, Hardy places it against the constricting atrophy of John South's moral hypnosis and the aimless drifting into scandal of Mrs. Charmond. Emphasized by the contrast is the attempt of Giles and
Grace to create their unique measure and quality of being.

2

The important scene at the hut culminates that attempt, but it began in earnest when Giles and Grace met in the Abbey at Sherton Abbas. Hoping that the new divorce law will set Grace free, they yet recognize that only here and now are there the possibilities for life—or at least Giles does, in an insight that takes us back to Mr. Raunham and Cytherea Graye: "If one of us were to die before the formal signing and sealing that is to release you have been done—if we should drop out of the world and never have made the most of this little, short, but real opportunity, I should think to myself as I sank down dying, 'Would to God that I had spoken out my whole heart—given her one poor little kiss when I had the chance to give it!'" (pp. 340-41). This is a consciousness that is establishing its own morality by seeking within its own conditions the freedom necessary to act. Now is the time to kiss, since they love one another and that love will create the purity of the act. But though Grace cannot feel "morally bound to anyone else after what has taken place," she is not yet ready to create her own binding morality: "...I wish to keep the proprieties as well as I can" (p. 340).

Hardy, as we know, greatly admired Mill and sympathized with Mill's position against social conformity and his
attack upon the "ape-like faculty of imitation." Sue quotes that phrase when pleading with Phillotson for freedom to live with Jude. Social formulas as such, however we define them, have much less to do with Grace than with Sue, though, and society hardly plays a dominant role in the deliberately remote setting of the novel. Even allowing for the effects of her education, Grace's concern for the "proprieties," for correct conduct, cannot be convincingly traced to society's pressure that she conform to its laws. That is merely the machinery by which Hardy probes the more fundamental reason for her failure to give herself fully to Giles. He is concerned with her social dimensions only as they relate to and reveal her spiritual dimensions, and in the Abbey she has not yet risen to the identity that can create its own morality and make the kiss a return to innocence from the wreckage of her marriage. His material is admittedly that of the conventional love story—will the fated lovers rest their all upon the kiss?—but with it he accomplishes considerably more than a simple fulfillment of the demands such a story would make.

In fact, he enters upon a new dimension of his thought, redefines the object and the purpose of his thinking. In Far From the Madding Crowd, Hardy's bias against Troy expressed itself in his portraying the Sergeant as a man indifferent to time: "Simply feeling, considering, and caring for what was before his eyes, he was vulnerable
only in the present" (p. 190). This is Hardy's way of telling us that Troy, living only in his senses, is incapable of any moral life at all. His clear parallel in *The Woodlanders* is Mrs. Charmond. On another level altogether are Giles and Grace who, in declaring their love, also commit themselves fully to the present. Although he fights "valiantly against himself all this while," Giles seizes the opportunity to be himself in the embrace that allows self-expression to be self-possession: "Indeed, he cared for nothing past or future, simply accepting the present and what it brought, deciding once in his life to clasp in his arms her he had watched over and loved so long" (p. 351). Hardy speaks ironically of "man's weakness" and "temptation," using the measure of another morality to show its inadequacy before a moment vitally lived—the moment, we could say, that Giles and Grace have finally become themselves. As distinguished from Troy, they commit themselves to the present, not because they are oblivious to the past and the future. This commitment results from their consciousness of both. Aware of Melbury's failure with the solicitor, Giles refuses to let that stop him from making Grace his own. Grace herself, "by a sort of inspiration," recognizes the issue: "'O, I suppose,' she stammered, 'that I am really free?—that this is right? Is there really a new law?'" (p. 351, original italics). Knowing the dimensions of their act, Giles could have answered that she has just been free, has enacted the
law. In *Tess*, with a daring avowal of the full truth of his idea, Hardy makes the liberating act the murder of Alec d'Urberville. But even in *The Woodlanders*, it is superfluous to ask for Grace and Giles to live happily ever after, since the ever after could bring them no more than they are now.

Nor is Hardy content here to leave Grace but partially aware of what she is doing or becoming. She knows that she has struck through the proprieties to her own mode of living, yet she is too quick to keep her guard up. Why doesn't her father come home, she asks, and let her know clearly what she is (p. 351). She has not yet emerged from the need of people like Cytherea Graye and Sue for an external identification and assurance. She is, nevertheless, growing from that dependence to the charismatic power of self. Learning of Melbury's failure, she exercises that power and symbolically relives the moment of the embrace: "I don't mind at all what comes to me...whose wife I am or whose I am not! I do love Giles..." (p. 354). She would not have kissed Giles had she known—the law extends that far. But it no longer molds her inner being.

The remarkable fact about this scene of the lovers' embrace is that it has very little to do with the *carpe diem* motif, is the very reverse of hedonistic, and recognizes identity without self-glorification. Their embrace is creative of innocence, not because it does despite to the social codes, but because it is the only vehicle by which
the lovers can be what they truly are. They have transcended individual codes because they have transcended self--Giles fully, Grace tentatively. She lapses back to an egoistic mode of thinking when she allows Giles to sleep outside in the rain while she occupies his cabin. But as soon as she rises again to the level of self-awareness implicit in the embrace, realizing that she "was not worth such self-sacrifice" (p. 372), she becomes her own judge, empowered by a new and ardent ethical consciousness: "I have been wicked--I have thought too much of myself!" (p. 373). Unlike other moments of self-torment in Hardy, Grace's results in a dramatic upward revolt into the full charismatic possession of her own identity: "I don't mind what they say or what they think of us any more" (p. 374, original italics).

Carpenter is right to say that Giles's death is the climax of the novel. It is certainly the climactic moment of Grace's development, the culmination of the spiritual history of her life that the novel has traced thus far--and that will undergo a radical transformation to the comic mode in her reconciliation with Fitzpiers. Recognizing in the dying Giles his full value as a man, his spiritual superiority to her, the woman who once rejected the lowness of the only life he could offer her now accepts the need to "frustrate her plan of flight, and sink all regard of personal consequences" (p. 381). In the Abbey, because of an external code she did not kiss Giles, though she wanted to badly.
In the hut, because of an inner code, she does not neglect the opportunity of Fitzpiers' aid, though she wanted to badly. The difference is fundamental to Hardy's conception of her and of all his important characters. It is the difference between postponing and living. To live self-expressively now is to achieve personal identity and, when it is called for, the highest pitch of selflessness."

3

In its concern with a higher level of self-awareness and the inner dynamics of man's moral life, the scene at the hut involves us in the process of soul making. So long as Hardy keeps to this theme, the organization of his novel remains coherent and powerful in its impact. Almost from the very first, Giles appears as man's closest approximation to the spiritually perfect life, a bearing he maintains the better for saturating his life in the processes of nature. As Gabriel Oak was to Bathsheba, he is what Grace must become. When she enters fully into his level of consciousness, when she translates her life into his and opens the cabin door for him to enter, a dramatic movement has been satisfied in a way that easily survives the obvious sentimentality of the situation. There is something of the ballader's art in the directness with which Hardy approaches and develops his lovers; and isolated scenes from the novel—the spoliation of Marty's hair,
South's terror of the tree--create a folk-tale atmosphere of yarns homespun and told by the fireside. Yet, as I have already noted, there is something askew in the novel forcing us to suspect an irresolute imagination behind its composition. Part of the difficulty can be understood, perhaps, by considering the very time of its composition.

In character and character relationships, in mood, setting and atmosphere, The Woodlanders has its closest affinity with Far From the Madding Crowd. In the earlier novel, the proud heroine throws herself away upon the flashy intruder and discovers the merits of the humble, patient countryman. The result was a comic masterpiece. Given the bent of Hardy's mind, we would expect to follow this a tragic masterpiece, in which the proud heroine throws herself away upon the flashy intruder and destroys herself and the patient countryman. But adverse personal criticism and the fear of being stereotyped influenced Hardy in 1875 "to put aside a woodland story he had though of (which later took shape in The Woodlanders), and make a plunge in a new and untried direction." He wrote The Hand of Ethelberta. We can only conjecture what "shape" The Woodlanders would have taken in 1875, though there is every reason for believing that Hardy learned the value of abiding by his original impulse as he matured in his art. I think we must conclude, then, that he was not sufficiently aware of the impulses generating the novel as we have it. With Madding
Crowd fresh in his mind, he would have all that he needed to retell its story from the tragic point of view or to repeat, from the wisdom of his experience, its comedy. Thirteen years later, he was able to accomplish neither fully, nor even to settle conclusively for one.

The result is puzzling. The characterization of Giles is cross-grained against itself—he is at once the patron saint and the clown of the novel, as though the inspiration of Oak had combined in Hardy's memory with that of Boldwood. Giles is much less static in his perfection than Oak was. He must actively create his freedom and his spiritual life by submitting to Grace's "temptation" to be himself and kiss her. Though only an anticipation of Tess, he nonetheless deliberately violates an external code because of the necessity of creating one internally. And he progresses markedly from a man of robust physical presence—"like Autumn's very brother" (p. 246)—almost to fleshlessness, to sublimity. The hardships he endures, while destroying him physically, allow him to create a higher existence. In the novel's last paragraphs, perhaps the most moving Hardy ever wrote, Giles has reached apotheosis. His charismatic example has replaced for Marty her father's mythological need for the tree. Giles was a good man, and he did good things. He had become selflessness. When Grace calls to him to return to the cabin, his answer has the profundity of a man speaking from the other side
of life: "It is not necessary for me to come" (p. 374, my italics).

Perhaps the novel should have ended there. It is somewhat degrading to Giles to allow Grace to use his memory as a block between herself and Fitzpiers, and one can not help sympathizing with the latter's objection to Grace's refusal to let the man lie dead. But this very difficulty—the incongruous juxtaposition of the man-trap scene with the scene at the hut—is precisely what the novel has had to compass from its beginning. Hardy has to struggle to keep Giles from becoming one of the great comic figures of our literature. The sublime man is also absent-minded and blundering. At the timber auction he has no idea what he is bidding for and discovers that "Hundreds of faggots, and divers lots of timber, had been set down for him, when all he had required had been a few bundles of spray..." (p. 62). To top it off, and as though the error had not been sufficiently exaggerated, Winterborne must discover that he has been bidding against Grace's father and "picking up his favorite lots in spite of him" (p. 62). The failure of the Christmas party has serious consequences for Giles, but Hardy can not resist describing the frantic preparations and the unexpected arrival of the Melburys with comic relish. What do we say about a Winterborne who "did not know that he was eating mouthfuls of bread and nothing else, and continually snuffing the two candles next to him till he had reduced
them to mere glimmers drowned in their own grease" (p. 87)?

What animates the scene of the first meeting between Giles and Grace, the lady returning from a smart, fashionable academy, the man standing in the muddy square holding up an apple tree and forced to oblige the lady to wade to him?

These are scenes that almost insist on becoming great comedy at the same time that they display the incongruity of the comic mode to the issues they raise. The Woodlanders is not a repeat performance of Far From the Madding Crowd; there is no controlling vision present from the start, pledging an inevitable outcome. The clown in Giles does not contribute to the epic of his spiritual history. He achieves apotheosis, but is not the more sublime because he is absent-minded. At least we must question Hardy's ability to fuse in this novel two of the paramount certainties of his work: that tragedy is inevitable to those who are most conscious of life, that life has the power to affirm itself from within tragedy and progress beyond it. In making a shrine out of Giles's grave, Marty allows him the full measure of devotion to which he is due, but Hardy has removed him from an advancing cycle of life that has already gone past the frontiers of Giles's relevance. The tragic impulse of the story has worked itself out. Separately, and almost in another arena, the comic impulse follows Grace and Fitzpiers.

Hardy was undoubtedly aware of his troubles. "You have probably observed," he wrote to J. T. Grien, "that the ending
of the story—hinted rather than stated—is that the heroine is doomed to an unhappy life with an inconstant husband. I could not accentuate this strongly in the book, by reason of the conventions of the libraries, etc. ¹⁰ We are asked to believe that convention forced him to disguise his thoroughly consistent tragic vision: the proud lady's tragic error does destroy the patient countryman and herself. Isn't this asking considerably more than we can grant? Does Hardy's disclaimer help to explain the clownish antics he forces Giles into or the elaborate care by which he achieves his comic fulfillment in the man-trap scene? At the end of that scene, the Grace who a short time before had called out to Giles from a new recognition of life's meaning and necessity can now remark matter-of-factly to Fitzpiers, "I did not like to be seen in such a pickle, so I hid away" (p. 431). We are even further from whatever inspired Hardy to give Giles that final estimate of his life, which I quoted earlier: "It is not necessary for me to come" (p. 374).

These conflicting inspirations have, of course, a great deal to do with each other, precisely because the realities of life in the Wessex Novels are its tragedy and its on-going affirmation. Hardy pursues both in The Woodlanders (and does so with eminent art), but he keeps the streams divided, not one current. The man-trap scene is a brilliantly deployed symbolic piece; it very nearly merges the two impulses. "Midway between husband and wife
was the diabolical trap, silent, open, ready" (p. 429). Here
is literally the machinery of a fate working to destroy the
central characters; metaphorically, it stands for all the
unexpected traps that man must survive if he is to attain
what his life can give. It is the inescapable past, the
payment of Fitzpiers' infidelity with Suke, demanding a
wife for a mistress. But from these potentials of horror,
Hardy activates his comic resolution. And to suggest an
ending he was not permitted to write is to ignore the
sincerity of Fitzpiers' grief before he learns of Grace's
safety. It is the mantrap, with all of its implications,
that reunites husband and wife and that almost affirms (and
most certainly suggests) life's progression out of the
jaws of death. This is a very high achievement. The split
running through the novel almost closes. All that was left
for Hardy to do was to make someone like Tess step fully
within the trap before progressing again with life to her
own beatitude.\[11\]

4

Hardy's attitude towards nature, his conception of
the normative value of its laws, is most pronounced in Tess
of the d'Urbervilles. This is one reason for considering
this novel as climactic in Hardy's development. It is of
all the Wessex Novels the one most free from the mythological
impulse, which finds expression in the Manichean struggle
of flesh and spirit in *Jude*, as well as in the pre-established harmonious design of *Far From the Madding Crowd*. This is to say that it is Hardy's most explicit record of the world as a vale of soul-making, of man's charismatic, soul-making power. Moreover, it is Hardy's boldest attempt to push past the moral boundaries which for centuries had formed the prescriptive limits of man's behavior. He allows Tess to attain the charismatic power when she murders Alec in his bed. Jealous of its boundaries, society punishes Tess the law-breaker. Hardy celebrates Tess the law-maker. Nature sets the trap of sexual instinct; Tess in its teeth creates a new kind of innocence.12

*Tess* clearly reveals that neither natural instinct nor the social formulas for restraining instinct can offer to man a system of regulating his actions comprehensive enough to encompass his possibilities for action. To be true to nature or society, the human actor must in a measure be false to himself, who is greater than both, false to his human reality. The limitations of the social mode of evaluating conduct are frighteningly obvious in Angel's reaction to Tess's confession. Among its more brutal results is Angel's blindness to Tess's identity itself, in its dimension beyond the social stigma of her act. In one of the many outbursts expressive of her process to identity, Tess appeals to her husband, "I thought, Angel, that you loved me--me, my very self!" (p. 293). Angel can only see her as
"a species of impostor; a guilty woman in the guise of an innocent one" (p. 293). His error, as I shall develop below, is to make a radical division between the guilt and innocence in the human nature necessarily compounded of both. It is an error which Tess protested against when she asked the Vicar of her church for Christian burial for her child: "Don't for God's sake speak as saint to sinner, but as you yourself to me myself--poor me!" (p. 122). Yet Tess herself has shared the same social attitude towards her act and has suffered for it.

Criticizing society's provincial view of the girl seduced in The Chase and its limited justice to the woman captured at Stonehenge, Hardy does not turn from artificial postures to natural passions as a viable alternative. If Clare is wrong in his arbitrary notions of purity, if Tess is wrong to look "upon herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence" (p. 108), it is because nature is no more innocent than she is guilty. "She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly" (p. 108). Society's laws are arbitrary conventions. But nature has no "law" at all. To reject the social for the natural assessment of one's life is to accept the view of a Joan Durbeyfield or an Alec d'Urber-ville--the absolutely amoral consciousness. With a house-ful of children and no way to support them--and with nothing
for them to rely upon but their physical attractiveness (Tess's "trump card" like her mother's is her face)—Joan Durbeyfield embodies nature's prolific, unforeseeing impulse. Her principal concern is preservation of her species, the concern that prompts her advising Tess not to confess. Clare's bitter words are not totally unjust in their attribution of Tess's failure to confess before the wedding: "You are very good. But it strikes me that there is a want of harmony between your present mood of self-sacrifice and your past mood of self-preservation" (p. 294).

Of course Tess can relate to far more than her self-preservation, but that means that she measures larger than any standard found in nature. The special charm of her friends, the dairy maids, arises from the fact that, tormented by the sexual impulse of nature, they do not take the egoistic road of self-preservation. Generous to each other, they are tormented, not encompassed, by nature's instinctive energies. Though in a greatly reduced sphere, they try to maintain their personalities in the midst of the morally chaotic external world. Abandoning society's artificial mores can lead to the freedom which comes from possessing one's identity—it can be, that is, a revolt upwards. But it can also lead to deterioration, with such results as Angel's proposal to Izz that she accompany him to Brazil. "Hang it," Alec d'Urberville says, "I am not going to feel responsible for my deeds and passions if
there's nobody to be responsible to; and if I were you, my
dear, I wouldn't either!" (p. 421). Such license is as far
from freedom as egoism is from selfhood.

In fact, there is no fundamental opposition between
society and nature, the arbitrary and the universal--especially
if the universal is arbitrary too. It is a man more
versed in the ways of society than Angel who gives him just
the right advice in Brazil to change his thinking about
Tess, who teaches him to relate properly the social fact
to the natural pattern. Hardy is counseling, not the
rejection of one or the other as a guide to behavior, but a
recognition of the limitations of both when placed besides
the dimensions of man's behavior. Neither nature nor
society concerns itself with the individual welfare of a
Tess, but against both, Tess has to make her own spiritual
life. It was because no answer was to be found in either
that Clym asked, "Mother, what is doing well?" He answers
himself in conclusively in his own subsequent acts. Angel
enlarges upon the problem and gives it, I think, its right
perspective:

Having long discredited the old systems of
mysticism, he now began to discredit the old
appraisements of morality. He thought they
wanted readjusting. Who was the moral man?
Still more pertinently, who was the moral
woman? The beauty or ugliness of a charac-
ter lay not in its achievements, but in its
aims and impulses; its true history lay, not
among things done, but among things willed
(p. 433).
Who is the moral man, the moral woman—it is a question central to all great literature. Like the Romantics, Hardy approaches the problem from the recognition that no answer can be had outside the human consciousness behind "things willed." This is the recognition that the world is a vale of soul-making, in which man must create his own moral existence because none is to be found in the "discredited... systems of mysticism," the social formulas that attempt to mythologize nature. Hardy's achievement in Tess is to suggest the possibilities of organic moral growth from within the amoral propensities of nature and the rigidity of social law. His method entails his most profound study of the meanings of guilt and innocence, of past and present self, as the moving forces in the process to identity.

_Tess_ opens upon a question of identity. Before learning of his d'Urberville heritage, Tess's father says, "I be plain Jack Durbeyfield, the haggler" (p. 4)—a direct statement of identity by an essentially simple man. Several paragraphs later, enthralled by the past, Durbeyfield interprets his individual identity through its associations with a lost and unrecoverable ancestry: "...where do we d'Urbervilles live?" Parson Tringham's answer is ominous of the struggle for identity which engrosses Tess: "You don't live anywhere. You are extinct—as a county family" (p. 5). This is the first of many assertions
made in the novel about the deadness of the past—all of them evasions of a reality that is never fully confronted until Tess plunges a knife into Aleo d'Urberville.

Although Tess resists the identification of herself with her family's past history, her d'Urberville ancestry is in fact part of a larger past in which she is continually involved. We first see her performing the "disguised" rituals of the May-Day dance, and we leave her upon the sacrificial altar at Stonehenge. In both, however, her involvement with something at once outside of her and a part of her is an unconscious one: in the first because she has not yet risen to a realization of self, and in the last because she has transcended self. As a May-Day dancer and as a sacrificial victim, Tess is internally whole. The dynamics of her development partake of the fundamental Romantic pattern. Tess exists in union with herself, she undergoes division, she must achieve union again. The thematic framework of the novel consists of two chambers of innocence at opposite ends of the darkened mansion of Tess's life.

The first level of union, of selfhood whole and at one with itself, is the level of unconscious innocence; Tess is not aware of an opposition between the principles constituting life. The past, mythic or personal, blends with the present—she herself effortlessly combines them: "Phases of her childhood lurked in her aspect still" (p. 13). The red ribbon distinguishing her from her companions
complements naturally her white dress, though it forbodes the conflict to come. Her elemental innocence does not recognize a motive or an action that is not as simple as itself, and "being heart-whole as yet, she enjoyed treading a measure purely for its own sake" (p. 18), not comprehending the "pleasing pains," the fusion of joy and sorrow that becomes the necessary condition of her later love. Untouched as yet by experience, her consciousness is a step away from the moment of taking thought and of defining itself apart from the external world. Simply innocent, she can present to the world no particular identity: "...to almost everybody she was a fine and picturesque country girl, and no more" (p. 14). She carries as yet no depth, is only a "white shape...apart" (p. 16) when Angel looks back at the dancing green from a distance. Angel had not even noticed her when choosing his partners for the dance.

Maiden innocence being untested innocence, Tess "at this time of her life was a mere vessel of emotion untinctured by experience" (p. 13). Even the accident with her father's horse does not disturb the essential character of her consciousness—though it is indicative of the development of the novel that, regarding herself "in the light of a murderess" for this act, she does not consider herself as such after the death of Alec. By leaving Marlott for Trantridge, however, to alleviate the hardships caused by the accident, Tess leaves the innocent world she has known for a world unknown. It is the first of her journeys to
the world of the d’Urbervilles, and the outcome is that she discovers, not only the illusion of Alec's association with her past, but the essential illusion of her past innocence itself. This knowledge disrupts the original unity of her being and imposes a consciousness of self through the discovery of a division within the self. Tess—and this is crucial—passes from one level of being to its antithesis: "An immeasurable social chasm was to divide our heroine's personality thereafter from that previous self of hers who stepped from her mother's door to try her fortune at Trantridge poultry-farm" (p. 91). At the moment of seduction, she is still "practically blank as snow...." When she returns from Trantridge, the defining impressions of sexual experience upon her nature, she is a different person: "Verily another girl than the simple one she had been at home was she who, bowed by thought, stood still here, and turned to look behind her. She could not bear to look forward into the Vale" (p. 96). Whether Hardy is speaking for himself here or giving voice to Tess's thoughts, the distinction made between what Tess was and what she is corresponds exactly to Angel's when he hears her confession.

It is a new consciousness of self that creates the difference and the identity, and Tess can not go home again because she can not reenter the level of consciousness she left behind her. She has learned that opposites exist, that there are "pleasing pains" which she had been unconscious of before: "...since her eyes last fell upon
it [the Vale] she had learnt that the serpent hisses where the sweet birds sing, and her views of life had been totally changed for her by the lesson" (p. 96). Her condition closely approximates Keats's in the "Epistle to Reynolds," when savagery shows itself just beneath the apparently tranquil sea. Like Grace Melbury, she might well wonder now "if there were one world in the universe where the fruit had no worm" (The Woodlanders, p. 245), precisely because she has mentally just left that world. Her views of life are totally changed, moreover, because her view of herself has changed to self-damnation and obsession with guilt. When we first see Tess after the self-imposed exile preceding the birth of her baby, we approach her as we would approach someone for the first time. Hardy assumes her to be a stranger: "This morning the eye returns involuntarily to the girl in the pink cotton jacket, she being the most flexuous and finely-drawn figure of them all" (p. 111). And only after several paragraphs of particular details does Hardy synthesize his description into an identity that is, in its very wording, a questioning of identity: "It is Tess Durbeyfield, otherwise d'Urberville, somewhat changed—the same, but not the same; at the present stage of her existence living as a stranger and an alien here, though it was no strange land that she was in" (p. 112). Since Marlott is the focus of her memories of innocence, she is an alien to what she was, "that previous self of hers."

Conscious more of the change than of the continuity
of existence, Tess cannot incorporate her innocent past with what she conceives of as the present. She sees herself "as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence" (p. 108). As stated above, Hardy dismisses this notion as false to the amoral lawlessness of nature, but a more fundamental, more pertinent implication involves the falsity of regarding guilt and innocence as mutually exclusive absolutes. Tess has been "making a distinction where there was no difference. Feeling herself in antagonism she was quite in accord" (p. 108). The lines ostensibly refer to the apparent and the real relations between Tess and her animal neighbors; they are far more indicative of the make-up of Tess's mind. By opposing her guilty present to her innocent past, Tess reveals her own misunderstanding of self as a process. Without pretending that Hardy's ideas on the matter are as precise as we could wish, the suggestion is that man is the coherent unity of the superficially opposing principles of his existence. Certainly the novel works to the point where Tess, in achieving identity, achieves that union. Maiden and Maiden No More—the synthesizing life will resolve these opposites into complements of self, though not before Angel separates them again, on the wedding night, by insisting in his turn that the present be dislocated from the past.

Changing "almost at a leap...from simple girl to complex woman" (p. 125), Tess is already in the process to identity, for she is experiencing in its totality what she had been
unconscious of in her total innocence. But she begins to realize the complexity of her nature only when she begins to bring the opposites of her being into what is at first a hesitating union. Thus, while she believed that "to escape the past and all that appertained thereto was to annihilate it" (pp. 125-26), and while her strongest desire was to separate herself from the past which she now associates with her guilt, she still "wondered if any strange good thing might come of her being in her ancestral land..." (p. 127). A past that she once sorrowed to lose becomes a past that she labors to forget, and she attempts to do so by taking her second journey to the world of the d'Urbervilles. The most forceful indication of her developing identity, however, is her need to be recognized as an individual and not as a "figure of Guilt." In imploring the clergyman to speak, not "as saint to sinner, but as you yourself to me myself" (p. 122), she manifests an awareness of herself as something greater than the guilt or innocence of her actions. It is her individual identity that she offers to Angel when she confesses and it is precisely that which he cannot accept.

Angel's appearance at Talbothays Dairy reevokes that complex past, now clearly emerging as the secret to Tess's identity. Always aware that he must someday learn of her guilty past, Tess establishes with Angel a state of being parallel to that of her earlier past, in which he had been a momentary figure. At Talbothays, Tess achieves a higher
realization of the innocence which she felt she had lost at Trantridge— an innocence that is rich and compelling because it is comprehensive of the knowledge of evil. Tess (as none of her friends does) sees the full implications of the story of Jack Dollop—and sees them because of her own experience. By a provocative juxtaposition Hardy affirms his notion of innocence and defines Tess's expanding consciousness by placing her, the fallen woman, in Eden: "Being so often—possibly not always by chance—the first two persons to get up at the dairy-house, they [Angel and Tess] seemed to themselves the first persons up of all the world. ...The spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light which pervaded the open mead, impressed them with a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve" (p. 167).15 Her love for Angel has operated as a redemptive force upon Tess, fallen and innocent: it is an enrichment of self, just as the experience of guilt had been a discovery of self. Her nature, divided by d'Urberville's exploitation of her innocence, strives for a higher union with Angel, for a further expanse of consciousness, "a new horizon" (p. 194). She has experienced the possibility of innocence after guilt. Before she can achieve union with Angel, however, she must first be at union with herself. To bring to her love her total being, she must reveal what she had tried to forget.16

Hence the climactic significance of Tess's confession: it is her attempt to unite the opposing realities of her
self, to enunciate to herself and Angel every intonation of the "me, my very self" (p. 293). To have concealed her guilt would have not only made her marriage a lie— it would have been a tacit acknowledgment of the power of her past act over her present state. Hardy had already shown the career of this kind of self-concealment in Elfrida Swancourt, and he makes Tess move beyond it to attempt the fullness of her self identity by overcoming the division which Alec had inflicted upon her. During her courtship she had resisted the need to confess by denying the reality of the past: "She dismissed the past— trod upon it and put it out, as one treads on a coal that is smouldering and dangerous" (p. 246). And she feels lighter in heart when she shifts the responsibility for not confessing to her mother (p. 246). But she cannot dismiss the past, for it is not only a part of her consciousness, but an objective reality: the Trantridge man who recognizes her at the inn, to say nothing of Alec himself. 17

Although she has been afraid to confess because of Angel's possible reactions, and though she cannot philosophize on the necessary fusion of guilt and innocence in the total personality, Tess knows that to divide the past from the present is to distort the identity which she must give in her love: "'O my love, my love, why do I love you so!' she whispered there alone; 'for she you love is not my real self, but one in my image; the one I might have been!'" (p. 273). She is "more truly Mrs. Alexander d'Urberville"
(p. 273), because Alec is a part of her guilt, of her "real
self"—while Angel, ignorant of the guilt, cannot be fully
aware of the reality. Angel's confession, surprising the
reader, is a release for Tess: "0 Angel--I am almost glad--
because now you can forgive me!" (p. 286, original italics).
She understands that their union on the level of innocence
will be completed on the level of guilt. What other reason
can there be for including Angel's confession than to reveal
the universal humanity in the make-up of Tess's nature.18
Brittally rejecting her, Angel fails to see in his wife his
fellow sufferer, while Tess seizes upon his confession as
a chance for total unity through the total possession of
identity. Confessing in the house of her ancestral past,
she again encounters her personal past.

Like the seduction, the confession results in division
and, through division, in development. Its most immediate
effects are seen in Angel, who must repeat the development
of Tess up to this point in the novel. As Tess did, Angel
committs himself entirely to the division rather than to the
union of opposites. Tess becomes another woman to him.
Since he had conceived of her as absolute innocence, he can
see her now only as absolute guilt (an exact parallel, as I
have said, to her own conception of herself after leaving
Trantridge): "You were one person; now you are another.
My God--how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque--presti-
digitation as that!" (p. 292). It is easy to condemn Angel
as narrow-minded, hypocritical, prudish, but I suspect that
Hardy has a good deal more in mind here than the double standards of social morality. Angel has been shocked out of the illusion of absolute innocence as a condition possible to man. He has tried quite literally to mythologize Tess into an embodiment of spiritual values pre-existing. He thought that human nature would be purer on the farm than in the city. "He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names half teasingly, which she did not like because she did not understand them." She would answer him, "Call me Tess..." (p. 167). But he has to go to Brazil to learn that there is greater possibility for spiritual life in the myth Tess is creating from herself than in the mythology he tried to relate her to.

For Tess, who probably does not see that Angel could not love her "very self" until he was possessed of it, the confession leads to the most radical division she must experience. I refer not to her parting from Angel, but to the quality of her inner life at their moment of reunion. Angel has "a vague consciousness...that his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognize the body before him as hers--allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will" (p. 484). The physical Tess is subject to natural urges and social censures, and Tess has abandoned "it" to the amoral, arbitrary flow of events in nature and society. But her living will is, as Angel realized in Brazil, the only source and the only measure of her moral and spiritual life. In his descrip-
tion of this division, then, Hardy portrays the extreme of isolation, that between consciousness as a process (or act) and the human condition which is its only field for process. Tess has isolated her spiritual from her physical powers, her innocent from her experienced nature, just as she distinguishes her unconsummated marriage from her relations with Alec. By one of the boldest strokes in his art, Hardy breaks through the isolation at each level of meaning; and physical and spiritual powers, experience and innocence, body and will unite in a soul-making identity. The means of this fulfillment is Tess's killing Alec.

The following outline of Tess will be helpful, I think, in understanding the full significance with which Hardy has invested the killing of Alec. Not intended as a summary of the plot, the résumé will perhaps clarify the psychological and moral growth of Tess's identity at various stages in the plot.

Phase The First: Tess is innocent in her present and past selves, which are united in a continuum or flow from girlhood to maidenhood. She has only the potential for identity, in this, the pre-Edenic stage, where innocence is illusory. In this phase she journeys to the home of the illusory d'Urberville.

Phase The Second: Tess is fallen and divided, identifying her present self with guilt and her "previous self" with innocence. The seduction has replaced the unconscious process of life with the conscious, isolated self. This phase ends with the journey to
Talbothays, the second exploration of the d'Urberville past.

Phase The Third, Phase The Fourth: Tess is in Eden, innocent again in her present self, but still divided from her past self, her "real self"—which is guilty, "implacable," and which she attempts to escape. She identifies herself as "Mrs. Angel Clare" and "Mrs. Alexander d'Urberville," is both in part but neither in full. The phases draw her to her third journey to the d'Urberville past, her confession in the home of her ancestors.

Phase The Fifth, Phase The Sixth: Tess is expelled from Eden, condemned to wander in an alien land she cannot identify with. Hiding all traces of her marriage, she accepts herself as guilty and her hardships as her due penance, even disfiguring herself to conform physically to what she is conscious of morally. Talbothays becomes only the memory of innocence, and Tess comes to see herself as Mrs. Alexander d'Urberville, though to do so she must create an absolute division between her will which is still Angel's and her body which is Alec's. The radical quality of the self-division results in no self, or death; hence, the phases climax in the fourth journey to the d'Urberville past, the meeting of Tess and Alec in the d'Urberville vaults.

Phase The Seventh: From death and absolute division, Tess rises to the life of absolute union, to the selfhood that finds full realization inside of now, where guilt is a quality of innocence and the past one life with the present. United and innocent, as in Phase The First, Tess is beyond all phases now, having fulfilled her potential in her performance. Her final journey is to Stonehenge, a place "older than the d'Urbervilles."

These are the steps to her fulfillment: she is innocent and united; she divides a guilty present from an innocent past; she divides an innocent present from a guilty past; she despairs of union and becomes guilty; she is innocent and united.
Schematic divisions never tell the whole story, but viewed as such—and Hardy invites this approach with his suggestive term "phases" and his divisions—Tess quite clearly becomes a process novel exploring the possibilities of regaining innocence after its loss, and it becomes just as clearly a Romantic process novel, as it relates that achievement to the moral growth of a simple country girl to an integrated woman possessed of her identity. After the light goes out in the forest-scene of the seduction, Tess must roam the darkened chambers of her consciousness, as so many of her forerunners in Hardy's fiction have had to do, but only she enters fully into the third chamber. That chamber is within reach of Giles and Grace, when Grace calls out to the dying man from the cabin, but they do not close themselves upon it with anything like the fullness of Tess. Hardy had yet to achieve full control over his art and full awareness of its mission. Giles's answer to Grace, "It is not necessary for me to come," is that of a man who has achieved sainthood. It is what the ascetic would say after he has freed himself from his humanity. Profound and from the other side of life, Giles's words must be compared to Tess's to see how Hardy has clarified his insight. Their marriage consummated, Tess can tell Angel out of the fullness of her experience in and with the past: "I am not going to think outside of now" (p. 497). She has achieved
womanhood, and she is speaking out of her power to transform humanity's side of life.

And we must think again of Troy, of his inability to react to what was not "before his eyes," and of Hardy's portrait of him as a man deficient of consciousness. Tess reacts, not to what is before her eyes, but to what is present to her mind in its full consciousness. "I am not going to think outside of now," she says, because she already possesses everything that she can be. Troy dies without ever having begun the progress to identity; Giles is worshipped as having attained the impossible sublime alternative to it; Tess achieves her identity in its own human sublime.

She achieves that because her last act with Alec is not an escape from the past or the present, but a full acknowledgment of both that immediately frees to her the power to create both. There can be no doubt that killing Alec is the rightest thing she can do—and for somewhat complicated, though very sound reasons. Killing Alec, she admits to herself in the most explicit of ways her former guilt with the man; having confessed the murder to Angel, she can no longer pretend an unalloyed, absolute, or separate innocence in her "very self"; nor can she separate one self from another. Because she can no longer pretend innocence, however, does not mean that she can no longer be innocent. Explain it how we will, the fact is
that she is innocent again, from the moment she appears on
the road Angel has taken to the moment the authorities over-
take her at Stonehenge. What is the murder, though, but a
recognition that Alec was a part of her self and (simultane­
ously) a purgation of him—an act, that is, which, in
recognizing self, is creative of self. Contrasting with
the long weeks of hesitation and self-uncertainty at
Talbothays, her confession now is unprompted and immediate.
Whereas she had used Angel's confession as a crutch to her
own, she has now not the slightest doubt of his participa-
tion in what she has done and in what she is as right and
entire in themselves (p. **93)* Her actions are those of a
child, more precisely, of one who has risen to guiltless-
ness. Having attempted escape for so long from what she
was, her innocence and self-union are most clearly marked
now by her oblivion of any need to escape. She and Angel
wander vaguely throughout the day: "...neither one of them
seemed to consider any question of effectual escape, dis-
guise, or long concealment. Their every idea was temporary
and unforfending, like the plans of two children" (p. 494).
As her more than composed bearing at Stonehenge suggests,
she is absolutely fearless: nothing can disturb what she
is. Even the caretaker who discovers them in the abandoned
house was "struck with their innocent appearance..." (p.
499).*

Of course Hardy lashes out at a society that could
execute so pure and noble a woman, just as he laments those natural impulses that entangle her to the point where she transgresses social law. But this criticism is the negative subordinate to the positive affirmation of Tess; the quality of being Tess achieves. To miss the emphasis here is to make Tess the prelude to Jude, instead of what it is in fact: the experience by which we measure Jude. The qualitative difference between the two becomes evident when we consider the final moments of each. Jude dies denying the value of his life, in the bitterness of self-negation. Sue prostitutes herself to a grotesque notion of duty, dividing herself into the body that she owes to Phillotson and the will that can never leave Jude. In that agonizing moment before Phillotson's door, she presents the very condition that Angel finds in Tess when he overtakes her in Sandbourne. And similarly Tess experiences the full disillusionment of Jude. Almost from the very first, she questions the meaning and necessity of her life, in stronger and more emphatic terms until, meeting Alec in the d'Urberville vaults, she asks aloud, indicating her obvious wish, "Why am I on the wrong side of this door!" (p. 465).

But out of the full depth of Jude's self-negation and Sue's self-annihilation, Tess rises to affirmation and creation. The final pages of Tess record her fullness of happiness, her repose, her tranquility on the hard,
stone bed where the authorities find her. With her and Angel now, everything was "affection, union, error forgiven; outside was the inexorable" (p. 498). They have created their peace out of discord and moral chaos. They have created within themselves that human condition which Keats and Wordsworth symbolized as the enchanted castle. In an even larger sense, they have seen every reason for denying life—and Hardy himself, particularly in the early chapters, expresses the will-not-to-live when brooding over the Durbeyfield houseful of children (p. 24)—yet Tess's feeling for her brothers and sisters grows to "an affection that was passionate" (p. 446). Her final wish is to continue her life with and love for Angel through the person of her sister, 'Liza-Lu. If 'Liza-Lu were to become Angel's, "it would almost seem as if death had not divided" them (p. 503). Within the totally non-mythic universe of Hardy's later fiction, all this is to say that Tess represents the full achievement of the charismatic self.

In Keats's terms, she comes to see as a God sees, and like so much nineteenth-century literature, this novel explores the human possibilities in a God-forsaken universe. Hardy asks explicitly, at the moment of the seduction, "where was Tess's guardian angel? where was the providence of her simple faith?" (p. 91). And that he is not asking rhetorically only is clear from the careful pacing of his
answer. Tess, who does not quite "know the Lord as yet" (p. 134), is in the process of becoming the Lord, her own Providence. She must act first as priest in baptizing her child and finally as sacrificial offering on the altar at Stonehenge. In between, listening to the younger Durbeyfield children sing their Sunday-school hymn of pain on earth and peace in heaven, Tess comes to full grips with the fundamental dilemma and resolution of her life. Where was her Providence, Hardy had asked. He allows Tess to answer: "If she could only believe what the children were singing; if she were only sure, how different all would now be; how confidently she would leave them to Providence and their future kingdom! But in default of that, it behoved her to do something; to be their Providence..." (p. 456).

And she becomes no less. The killing of Alec is her providential act; it is Hardy's way of presenting the issue of the moral life in an amoral world in its widest possible dimensions. Socially Tess is a law breaker; morally she is the law maker. She has taken the law into her own hands, because there were no other hands fit to take it. If there is no holy plan pre-established to guide his actions, then man must create his own morality. Doing just that, Tess rises to soul-making power—it is not lawlessness the murder demonstrates, but man's need to supply in himself the providential scheme he has lost. Though "'justice' is done," Tess is not done-for. In the abandoned house, at Stone-
henge, she has reached the fullness of life, is living now all that she could have lived had she lived happily ever after. Becoming innocent again, she has achieved her spiritual existence, for in the broken arcs of Stonehenge, of her human condition, her self has its own perfect round. "The first thing that strikes me on hearing a Misfortune having befallen another is this," Keats once said, "'Well it cannot be helped—he will have the pleasure of trying the resources of his spirit'...."\(^{20}\) It is the power of growing spiritually out of adverse circumstances that is most important in characters like Emily Norton, the poet of the second Hyperion, and Tess; and Hardy, moreover, completes his Romantic epic. The identity Tess has achieved she can confer, as a boon, upon 'Liza-Lu, the sister that will continue her life, who is "a spiritualized image of Tess..." (p. 506). A spiritualized image of the radically human—that is what I believe Hardy made his finest novel to be.
FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER V


2 Though I disagree with Guerard's assertion that The Woodlanders comes to "a definite conclusion" and has to be "awkwardly restarted," there is little doubt of a conflict of impulses behind the animating vision of the work. See Thomas Hardy (Norfolk, Conn., 1964), pp. 49-50.


4 I don't see any evidence to support the claims of critics like Guerard and William H. Matchett that Mrs. Charmond speaks with "the eloquence of her creator's sympathy" or that hers is "the most perceptive insight in the book...." See Thomas Hardy, p. 29; and "The Woodlanders, or Realism in Sheep's Clothing," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, IX (March, 1955), 252.

5 Jude the Obscure, p. 269. For Mill's influence on the creation of Sue see William J. Hyde, "Theoretic and Practical Unconventionality in Jude the Obscure," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XX (September, 1965), 155-64. For Hardy's knowledge of On Liberty, see The Life of Thomas Hardy, pp. 58, 330.


7 Matchett argues that "this pure girl's finest act" is her lie to Fitzpiers about her purity ("The Woodlanders, or Realism in Sheep's Clothing," 251). The lie reinforces the idea that Hardy has brought his characters to a recognition of the internal origin and structure of their moral life and of the laws that direct it.

8 A good analysis of the balladry in Hardy's art is provided by Donald Davidson, "The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction," reprinted from the Hardy Centennial
9 The Life of Thomas Hardy, p. 102. After speculating on The Woodlanders as already thought of in 1875, Matchett admits, "It is concerning this laying aside and picking up later that we know least and would most like to know" ("The Woodlanders, or Realism in Sheep's Clothing," 245-46).

10 The Life of Thomas Hardy, p. 220.

11 John Holloway uses the man-trap scene to distinguish The Woodlanders from Tess, where we "are in a much different world, a world that has not skipped over the waiting man-trap." And he sees in Grace's reconciliation to Fitzpiers "something of the essentially trivial." This view neglects the organic development between the two novels. Tess's world is not "much different" from Grace's; it is the same world more coherently true to itself. See "Hardy's Major Fiction," reprinted from Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad in Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Albert J. Guerard, p. 57.

12 Though attempting to offer my own sustained reading of Tess, I have been helped by many excellent studies of those issues in the novel that I feel are crucial and not yet adequately understood. Dorothy Van Ghent regards the conflict of Tess to be between a naturalistic pattern of events and a moral consciousness that cannot accept the pattern as given—"On Tess of the d’Urbervilles," The English Novel: Form and Function (New York, 1961), pp. 195-209. Very important insights into the thematic development of Tess can be found in Alan Friedman, The Turn of the Novel (New York, 1966), pp. 51-65. Friedman speaks of Hardy's "obsessive" attention to the "conception of innocence" and of his "notion of Tess's Ur-innocence" (pp. 52-54). A close analysis of the style in certain important passages of Tess allows David Lodge to reveal the conflicting images or concepts of nature within the novel. See his Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel (London, 1966), pp. 164-88, esp. pp. 168-73.

13 In a recent article suggesting that Hardy does favor the natural code, David J. De Laura also notes that "Hardy's complex and inconsistent treatment of 'Nature' deserves a closer examination than it has yet received." See "The
It is because Tess is still innocent that her description to Abraham of "splendid" and "blighted" worlds rings false and forced. An intrusive author, not his character, is speaking here from within a blighted consciousness (pp. 33-34).

For the parallels between Tess and Paradise Lost, see Allan Brick, "Paradise and Consciousness in Hardy's Tess," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XVII (September, 1962), 115-34. Brick is particularly good when describing the tension between real and ideal modes of perception.

Roy Morrell touches on this point: Tess "knows in her heart that unless she is frank with Angel, she must not marry him: and yet this is just what she finds herself drifting into doing." Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 151.

In a very good, short essay, "Moral Perspective in Tess of the d'Urbervilles," Robert C. Schweik points out that "Paradoxically, if within her own mind Tess is innocent, she is also most guilty there...." College English, XXIV (October, 1962), 18.

Arnold Kettle regards Angel's confession as an error. He does not believe that Angel could be so "morally obtuse as to see no affinity" between his confession and Tess's. I find it less difficult to believe, and if Hardy employs an obvious device here (something akin to the clay-pigeon technique of Fielding), it is nonetheless effective. See An Introduction to the English Novel, II (London, 1953), 60.

There are, of course, many able accounts of the murder that conflict with mine. Critics tend to see the act as one of moral deterioration or of frantic desperation. J. O. Bailey compares the killing to Sue Bridehead's self annihilation, and Elliot B. Gose, Jr., places it on the same moral level as that of the seduction in The Chase. See "Hardy's Visions of the Self," SP, LVI (January, 1959), 90-93; and "Psychic Evolution: Darwinism and Initiation in Tess of the d'Urbervilles," Nineteenth-Century Fiction, XVII (December,
William H. Marshall argues that, by murdering Alec, Tess contributes to her own tragedy, and Alan Friedman describes the total movement of Tess's experience as "downward...from near-zero to zero." See "Motivation in Tess of the d'Urbervilles," Revue des Langues Vivantes, XXIX (1963), 224-31; and The Turn of the Novel, p. 57. Though fully aware of Hardy's attitude towards society, none of these critics can see the absolute irrelevance of conventional social norms to an understanding of the murder. I suspect that they also fail to see the line of thought extending from Tess's murder to, say, Meursault's in Camus' The Stranger.

20

To Benjamin Bailey; November 22, 1817. The Letters of John Keats, 1814-1821, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, I (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), 186. In the preceding sentence of the text, my allusion was to Browning's "Abt Vogler."


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