THE DYNASTS AND THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in English

by

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ABSTRACT

THE DYNASTS AND THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

by

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Master of Arts in English

In this thesis I interpret The Dynasts as a work of realism and argue against perceiving it as a product of deterministic idealism. Thus the Immanent Will stands as metaphor for a collective unconsciousness—the political, social and moral unconsciousness of humanity—as opposed to a reified abstraction that aimlessly but deterministically controls men's wills. This thesis explores the way in which consciousness as it is depicted in The Dynasts (or rather as it is implied, since it is unconsciousness that is really depicted) may be interpreted so as to provide an understanding of present-day reality in which man's unconsciousness has brought him to the brink of self-annihilation.

The problem of interpretation resolves itself into the following areas: Victorian consciousness in its largely
cosmopolitan aspect; the formation of Hardy's consciousness, which I perceive to be dialectical in nature; an examination of *The Dynasts* as a synthesis of Hardy's consciousness; and finally the question of meliorism—whether it is to be thought of in passive terms, as a process of evolution, or whether it is subject to human action.

I perceive Victorian consciousness as a consciousness of class status in which the idea of progress and social Darwinism in a variety of manifestations combined to form its ethical foundation. I see Hardy's consciousness as evolving from his experience as a member of a disintegrating social class and the Victorian intellectual current. *The Dynasts* represents a clash of the dominant forces in Hardy's consciousness, the Spirit world representing forms of pure intellect and the human world its testing ground. The world of pure intellect is found wanting and the problem of meliorism is man's own to solve. Finally, I find Hardy's notion of "evolutionary meliorism" to be a reflection of his post-war pessimism and not the meliorism presented in *The Dynasts*. "Evolutionary meliorism," however, places the responsibility for man's fate—self-annihilation or amelioration—in his own hands.
Chapter 1

THE PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

...if way to the Better there be, it exacts
a full look at the Worst
"In Tenebris II"

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.
"In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations.'"

O Gods! Who is't can say "I am at the worst?"
I am worse than e'er I was
And worse I may be yet; the worst
is not
So long as we can say "This is the worst."
King Lear

The year that saw the publication of Part First of The Dynasts was also the year in which Leopold Bloom took his momentous walk through Dublin. W. B. Yeats was already in print with Crossways (1889), The Rose (1893), and The Wind among the Reeds (1889), and was about to have published In the Seven Woods (1904). By the time Part Third of The Dynasts was published in 1908, Ezra Pound was about to emerge as a published poet with A Lume Spento (1908) and Personae (1909). Only a few years away lay such important works of Modernist poetry as Yeats's The Green Helmet and Other Poems (1910) and Responsibilities (1914), Pound's Canzoni (1911),
Ripostes (1913), Cathay (1915), and Lustra (1916), and Eliot's Prufrock poems (1917).

To those unacquainted with The Dynasts, but who know that it is a work by Thomas Hardy, it comes as a shock to realize that its publication was contemporary with the emergence of Modernist poetry. But to one who has read deeply in the work what is indeed shocking is the awareness of the oblivion into which it has been cast, if not from the day of its publication, then surely since the end of the First World War. Those critics who have read the work seriously and paid it the attention it deserves attest to its importance as a work of art and its deserving of a rank among the greatest of the language. Thus W. R. Rutland, writing in 1938, considered The Dynasts the "greatest of Hardy's writings" standing "head and shoulders above everything else produced in English poetry since The Ring and the Book."¹ Harold Orel considers the work "one of the glorious achievements of English literature"² and does not hesitate to compare it seriously with Paradise Lost and with Goethe's Faust. Amiya Chackravarty believes The Dynasts to be the seminal work of what ought to be the central concern of modern literature: the awakening of the collective human unconscious, not only toward self-consciousness per se, but toward the further end of transforming passive attitudes toward suffering such as prayer and stoicism "into concrete form, into preventive, remedial and creative actions."³ F. R. Southerington sees The Dynasts as "the least-read
great poem in the English language"; and as if to empha-
size Southerington's assertion, The Dynasts, at the present
writing, is out of print.

Much of the responsibility for the undeserved fate of
The Dynasts must be placed with those modern critics who,
from the end of the First World War to the nineteen-sixties,
were mesmerized by the Modernist outlook into believing
that the only way to understand human consciousness was in
egoistic terms. The Dynasts presents a world in which such
a view of consciousness is impossible; but because the im-
ages and metaphors of Hardy's world were derived from the
philosophic and scientific concerns of the Victorian era--
from Mill and Comte, from Spencer, Darwin, and Huxley, from
Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, among others--critics were
too quick to read these signs literally and consign the
work to an underworld of the obsolescent.

But if there was ever a work whose time has finally
arrived, The Dynasts is surely that work. We now live, in
the nineteen-eighties, in a world in which continuing human
existence is by no means assured. Humanity has never been
faced with such imminent, universal and complete catastro-
phe. In its face all fictions pale into insignificance as
well as all attitudes which embrace separate worlds: we
exist primarily in a concrete world of imperfection, whether
it be the best of all possible worlds or the worst; but
whichever one it is, the extinction of the human mind
entails the extinction of every one of its flowerings.
Such an imminent possibility could never have been felt or imagined either by Hardy or the Modernist poets. However, when against such a background of universal holocaust one compares the Modernist outlook, whether manifested as in Yeats, Eliot, Pound or Stevens, to that of The Dynasts, the former impresses one ultimately as irresponsible solipsism while the latter emerges, in terms of appropriate consciousness, as extremely pertinent to present concerns. Thus The Dynasts appears in our time as more modern than Modernist poetry and does so because of its concept of consciousness which implies that concern for the human condition, humanity in the collective sense as opposed to an elite, precedes concern for the ego; in fact, that primary and sole concern for the ego is a manifestation of unconsciousness.

In this thesis I propose to explore the way in which consciousness as it is depicted in The Dynasts (or rather as it is implied, since it is unconsciousness that is really depicted) may be interpreted in such a way as to provide us with an understanding of our present reality. Fundamental to such an interpretation is an examination of the concept of meliorism—whether we are to think of meliorism in passive terms, as being impervious to real and immediate human needs and desires, or whether it is subject to human action. The starting point of the exploration has to be the culture into which Thomas Hardy was born and in which he took his intellectual and spiritual
nourishment. That time is not as far in the past as one would think. The industrial capitalistic ethos that formed the framework of its concepts is the same that forms ours and there is still a great overlap of ways in which the world is perceived.

Thus the problem of interpreting the consciousness embedded in The Dynasts resolves itself into the following areas:

1. Victorian consciousness in its largely cosmopolitan aspect. The two major but interrelated ideas that went to form the later Victorian outlook as it affected Hardy were social Darwinism in a multitude of aspects and the idea of progress. These ideas must be examined in some detail as they emerged in such writers as Hardy read; not only Comte, Mill, Spencer, Darwin and Huxley, but in a rather large number of other Victorian philosophers, theologians, anthropologists, politicians and social reformers. To distil from The Dynasts what is most pertinent to present concerns, however, these ideas must be criticized in the light of modern scientific knowledge as well as the social experience that enables us to link them to the dominant capitalist ideology of the time. These ideas were never really acceptable to Hardy. Given the intellectual tools available to him, the means of refuting them logically were not at hand; but even if they were, it is not likely he would have done so in the prose of science or philosophy. Instead, his refutation took the more powerful form of an aesthetic
turn in which he brought to bear all the intuitive humanitarianism that seems to have been his from earliest childhood.

2. The formation of Hardy's dialectical consciousness. Any aesthetic consciousness that could synthesize imagery taken from such antithetical sources as Comte versus Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann; these three versus the Biblical, even Old Testament, concept of loving-kindness; this concept versus the terrifying image of man in the mass, mass-man, an image even more terrifying in our century than in Hardy's--any such consciousness, a consciousness which I believe The Dynasts amply reveals, must be considered dialectical in nature. Here a very important consideration must be Hardy's rural origins and background. Hardy was born in one of the most depressed rural areas of nineteenth-century England. Far from being the pastoral ideal of popular belief, it was the arena in which Hardy witnessed and felt the intense suffering brought about by the breakup of the rural economy in the first half of the nineteenth century. Hardy was born into a class of village artisans and small entrepreneurs. What he witnessed during his early years was the destruction of this class brought about intermittently by rural depression and the encroachment of the larger farms seeking to expand their holdings. His observation of artisans and small entrepreneurs, the retainers of a centuries-old cultural tradition and heritage, being reduced to the status of itinerant farm laborers and industrial
proletarians left him with an indelible impression that was antagonistic to all forms of class attitudes and especially class oppression. This impression, coupled with a compassion which seems ultimately inexplicable to any analysis, worked against the Victorian class consciousness and optimism of London and attracted him to the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann. But attraction for Hardy by no means signified acceptance. Instead, one must perceive a dialectical tension developing in Hardy's consciousness between a rural outlook dominated by a compassion unique to Hardy the man, an outlook in which cooperation, mutual help, sociability, neighborliness (and therefore real human concerns) are the dominant modes of life (albeit the modes of a now-vanished class) and an urban one which stressed jungle-like competition, mutual hostility, and egocentrism, together with the hopelessness and pessimism these implied for "losers." Thus it is misleading in analyzing Hardy's consciousness to see as pervasive any mode of formal thought, whether it be the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, the optimism of Comte, Mill and other carriers of the idea of progress, or the social Darwinism of Spencer, Huxley and others. What must be emphasized instead are the points at which Hardy differed from the philosophers and purveyors of these ideas and what these differences signify.

3. "The Dynasts" as a synthesis of Hardy's consciousness. This synthesis must be conceived as being manifested
in poetic terms, the argument of poetry being Hardy's primary mode of thought. Thus in The Dynasts Victorian science and metaphysics are transfigured by imagery and metaphor into new qualities of thought and feeling, and it is pointless and fruitless to persist in discovering Comte, Schopenhauer, Von Hartmann or Darwin in every line. Vestiges of their thought indeed remain, but they serve merely as traces of the transfiguration that has occurred.

Hardy's concern in The Dynasts is with the human condition as it is experienced in real, earthbound life. Thus the problem of consciousness is conveyed on two levels. On one level it emerges in terms of unconsciousness, unconsciousness being another metaphor for human suffering. On this level the structure of The Dynasts is based primarily on the battle scenes and the overwhelming feeling of senseless suffering these convey. The rest of The Dynasts is a superstructure growing out of this vast base of human misery.

The second level of consciousness is that which is developed or awakened in the watchers of the drama. Here the question is how we are to understand the consciousness developed in the Spirit World, especially that of the Spirit of the Pities. The Spirits, of course, are not to be thought of as superhuman, but as representatives of human conscious thought. Is the final prayer of The Dynasts, then, addressed to some extrasensory or abstract but reified entity called the "Immanent Will"? This interpretation
would violate the metaphorical concept of the drama presupposed. Thus it must be addressed to what the Immanent Will stands for as metaphor, namely the earthbound human consciousness (unconsciousness) that tolerates in its somnambulism unspeakable horrors and sufferings. The drama thus ends with a clear implication for the modern reader whose consciousness is the first to be awakened.

4. "The Dynasts" and modern consciousness. Finally, what must be examined are the implications of a modern consciousness awakened by The Dynasts. The question of meliorism is all-important here. The drama, as noted above, implies that unconsciousness is a self-imposed human condition, and so is not deterministic. On the other hand it will not disappear as if by magic. Unlike the situation depicted in The Dynasts, however, the present human condition under the imminent threat of extinction has become critical. Under such circumstances meliorism, if it has any meaning for us, implies taking things into our own hands to better our condition and make a future possible. Thus collective action is implied at every level of human concern. But The Dynasts presents us at every turn with the terrifying image of mass-man. Is a meaningful meliorism even possible if the collective effort of awakened individuals changes (as historically speaking seems to be the case) at some quantitative stage of its growth into the quality of its demonic opposite—a mass of unconscious humanity existing only to oppress and be oppressed? The
Dynasts by no means points to a convenient solution, certainly not a passive one, but this is a tribute to its realism.

In conclusion what must be examined is the contrast between the concept of consciousness as developed by Hardy and that of Modernist poetry. Hardy's makes a human future possible, no matter that the path to that future is extremely difficult; that of the Modernists forecloses it and, ironically, makes real and literal that which in The Dynasts is metaphorical, namely unconsciousness in the guise of consciousness.

Before embarking on a more detailed study of the areas of consciousness noted above, however, something must be said about The Dynasts in its concrete form, its genesis, and especially the extant criticism relative to it and to Hardy's works in general. It is in the light of this criticism that the direction I am taking in this thesis and the presuppositions I am making will be clarified.

I. "The Dynasts" and Its Genesis

The Dynasts is a very large-scaled work of art, being the equivalent in length of at least two full-sized novels. Dramatic in form (Hardy decided to call it an "Epic-drama" in 1909, a year after publication of Part Third), it is structured in three parts, nineteen acts, and 130 scenes. As a drama, however, The Dynasts is really not performable and was intended by Hardy "simply for mental performance and not for the stage." The time span covered is a
decade of the Napoleonic Wars, 1805 to 1815. Its place of action is virtually all of Europe, from London to Moscow, from Gibraltar to Lithuania. In historical significance, in terms of sheer numbers—of peoples and nations involved, of battles fought, of slain and wounded, of sufferings endured—the wars comprise in actuality the first world war in history. Twenty separate battles and military operations are depicted, some of these, such as The Battles of Leipzig and Waterloo and the invasion of and retreat from Russia, filling almost entire acts. Each battle is described with a wealth of detail pertaining to military logistics, strategy and tactics, and each with a variety of bloodletting unique to itself.

Part First covers a ten-month period, from March 1805 to January 1806: Napoleon's preparations for the invasion of England, the Battle of Trafalgar which frustrates his plans, his self-coronation as Emperor, his turning eastward to defeat the Austrians at Ulm and the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz, and finally the death of Pitt. Part Second seems at first glance chaotic and disorganized in the multiplicity of its themes. Napoleon is still in the ascendancy, but political maneuvering and his ambition to found a dynasty are interwoven with military victories and, for the first time, military defeats in Spain and Portugal. The time covered is a seven-year period, from 1806 to the eve of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. Part Third concentrates on Napoleon's fall. Starting with
the disastrous invasion of Russia which costs 600,000 French lives, the slaying and bloodletting mounts with the Battles of Leipzig and Waterloo to intimations of apocalypse. The poem ends with Napoleon wandering aimlessly in a wood after the Battle of Waterloo and with the Spirits of the Overworld intimating that the Immanent Will, the unconsciousness that underlies men's actions and drives them, is finally becoming morally conscious.

The drama contains an enormous cast, with eighty speaking characters in Part First and approximately 125 in each of the next two parts, and presents "a variety of moods for which an astonishing variety of meters (thirty, not to mention the blank verse and the deeply rhythmical prose) is used." According to a line count I have made, The Dynasts has a total of 15,283 lines of which 9,409 are in verse and 5,874 in prose, the latter including stage directions and dumb shows. If the blank verse is subtracted from the total number of verse lines, the number of verse lines remaining equals, according to my count, 2,514, including 118 lines of ballads and songs. The variety of moods and meters used thus pertains primarily to the lines spoken by the Spirits. These relatively few lines are not enough, obviously, to carry the full weight of the poetic burden, and so a good deal of the poetic impact of The Dynasts is made by the "deeply rhythmical prose" of the stage directions and dumb shows. In other words, the poetry in The Dynasts and the emotional force of the work as a
whole are not necessarily centered in what the Spirits say, important as this may be. Of equal, possibly greater, importance is the imagery associated with depicting men, beasts, all living things, indeed the planet itself, suffering under the oppression of murderous drives that are seemingly unconscious and out of men's control.

Despite the fact that a great deal is known about Hardy's reading and the historical, diplomatic, journalistic and even verbal source material he used in writing The Dynasts, there is rather little known relative to its actual genesis from idea to epic-drama. This should not surprise us, since it involves the process of creation itself, the most private and ultimately the most inexplicable aspect of an artist's creative output. The accounts given by Wright and Orel are marred, in my opinion, by an aprioristic bias which conceives Hardy as a thoroughgoing determinist. Examination of the source material they use does not warrant this assumption nor the conclusions drawn from it.

Hardy was attracted to the history of the Napoleonic Wars from his childhood on. He grew up in an area of southwestern England where the threat of invasion in 1805 had been very real and about which, in the 1840s, people still talked. The area had also been King George III's favorite summer residence during the wars, and a distant relative of Hardy's, Thomas Masterman Hardy, had been Nelson's flag-captain at Trafalgar. His first attraction
was of a romantic nature, the desire of a schoolboy to recapture in his imagination the glory and glamour of a just-vanished era. As early as 1848 he was reading about the wars in an old periodical of the period belonging to his grandfather and was beginning to form "a train of ideas that led to The Trumpet Major and The Dynasts."\(^{17}\)

In 1868 Hardy outlined a poem about the Battle of the Nile which he never finished but which indicated his interest in Napoleon as a fit subject for poetry.\(^{18}\) In 1870, after the outbreak of war between France and Prussia, he paid a visit to Chelsea Hospital in London to visit veterans of Waterloo and the Peninsula.\(^{19}\) He repeated the visit in 1875,\(^{20}\) and as his interest in Napoleon and the wars increased, he made periodic visits to Waterloo, Paris and Italy, and to veterans' hospitals to get the actual feel of the scenes of battles and historic events and to observe and listen to the men who actually took part in them.\(^{21}\) Since these visits could not have provided him with information he did not already have, they indicate that his search was for the impressionistic, that impressions weighed at least as much in his aesthetic mind as empirical facts.

The first real evidence that Hardy was on the path that led, finally, to The Dynasts, is revealed in a note he made on March 13, 1874, thirty years before publication of Part First: "Let Europe be the stage and have scenes continually shifting."\(^{22}\) The note indicates that his concept
had broadened considerably since the note of 1868 and that he was now thinking of Napoleon as but one of several characters.

In June of 1875 Hardy recorded what he later believed to be his first reference to the substance of *The Dynasts*:
"Mem: A Ballad of the Hundred Days. Then another of Moscow. Others of earlier campaigns—forming altogether an Iliad of Europe from 1789 to 1815." The note is important for indicating the direction of his poetic inclination. He had no intention of simply describing the decade of wars as history. Linking the proposed work to the Iliad shows that he was already thinking of it as in some way epic in scope. His proposing at this point a series of ballads, a scheme about which he was to change his mind several times, indicates that one of his persistent problems was to be the discovery or invention of a genre adequate to the scope of shifting scenes and movements of masses of people that he had in mind. For the time being, he thought of a series of ballads as the appropriate form of an Iliad-like epic.

By June of 1877 he had discarded the idea of a ballad or ballad-sequence in favor of a "grand drama, based on the wars with Napoleon, or some one campaign, (but not as Shakespeare's dramas). It might be called 'Napoleon' or 'Josephine,' or by some other person's name." The note indicates definite progress toward the final form of *The Dynasts*, but vagueness as to its content and theme. His
concentrating on the individualistic also indicates that he was still thinking in terms of traditional epic.

In March of 1881 Hardy was back to the idea of a ballad as the proper form: "A Homeric Ballad, in which Napoleon is a sort of Achilles, to be written." But a few days later this idea was superseded by the following:

Mode for a historical Drama. Action mostly automatic; reflex movement, etc. Not the result of what is called motive, though always ostensibly so, even to the actors' own consciousness. Apply an enlargement of these theories to, say, "The Hundred Days!"

Walter Wright comments with regard to this note, "Here we have the first hint of fusion of deterministic philosophy and historical fact." If Wright is attributing, on the basis of this note, a deterministic philosophy to Hardy, his argument is not well taken. The note, it seems to me, is the note of an artist to himself, advising himself on how to handle the action of certain dramatic scenes. It implies that the action is to be shown impressionistically. Looking ahead to _The Dynasts_, the action depicted is appropriate to the way _The Spirit of the Years_ observes and presents the drama to the other Spirits and, of course, to the audience as well. Thus, if a deterministic philosophy is to be perceived, it must be understood as the philosophy of the Spirit of the Years and not necessarily Hardy's. To maintain that the Spirit of the Years speaks for Hardy, or is meant to be identical with Hardy, or is the oracular voice of _The Dynasts_, is a critical position which I do not
think can be upheld. I will come back to this argument in Chapter 4.

On February 16, 1882 Hardy recorded a note that would seem to undercut to some extent the determinism that Wright alleges: "Write a history of human automatism, or impulsion—viz., an account of human action in spite of human knowledge, showing how very far conduct lags behind the knowledge that should really guide it." The note seems to be a continuation of the thought of the previous one and surely indicates that knowledge should guide action and that action could be free if that were so. If anything, it implies that action to free the flow of thought is what is necessary to liberate men's actions in general; thus, human automatism is a metaphor for an ideological bondage rather than a deterministic one. Under this interpretation, the note emerges as expressing a belief in man's ability to improve his condition and so strikes a note of hopefulness. In other words, it describes in terms of metaphor a condition that can be remedied. Wright interprets the note as an indication that Hardy was philosophically indecisive at this time. "Hardy could not resolve his philosophic difficulty by unreservedly embracing determinism, and he was to face it again more than twenty years later."30

By 1886, some eighteen years before Part First appeared, Hardy was spending his spare time in London "in the British Museum Library and elsewhere, considering the question of The Dynasts."31 In December of that year he
recorded an impressionistic view of the way people move in certain social contexts: "I often view society--gatherings, people in the street, in a room, or elsewhere, as if they were beings in a somnambulistic state making their motions automatically--not realizing what they mean." He was to use this impressionistic image throughout The Dynasts.

A note of 1887, however, indicates how still far from settled were his plans for the epic-drama he was to write. He recorded a new outline scheme for The Dynasts "in which Napoleon was represented as haunted by an Evil Genius or Familiar, whose existence he was to confess to his wives." This was soon abandoned in favor of another scheme "in which Napoleon by means of necromancy became possessed of an insight, enabling him to see the thoughts of opposing generals." This, too, he abandoned, but in December of the same year he recorded a note relating to the diction of The Dynasts. Following Coleridge, he adopted the principle "that a long poem should not attempt to be poetical all through."

At about this time Hardy copied from the December 12, 1887 number of The Times a long quotation from the historian A. J. Balfour's address to the students of St. Andrews. Balfour considered the writing of history to be one of the arts, and after describing the processes of history in the sort of impressionistic terms that would attract Hardy's attention, the quotation ends on the deterministic note "--fate, meanwhile...working silently..."
towards the deterministic end—all these form together a subject the contemplation of wh. need never weary."  

Wright's comment is that Balfour's overview of history was remarkably close to Hardy's own as it was to unfold in The Dynasts. Here again Wright seems to be making the fallacious deduction that since Hardy may have used Balfour's way of describing historic processes in The Dynasts, Hardy's view of history was very close to Balfour's. It is the sort of deduction one would not have dared to make with regard to Shakespeare, for example. The gap between belief and art, or if one will, fiction and non-fiction, is simply too broad for this kind of easy leap. Again it should be pointed out that the unfolding of historic processes in The Dynasts belongs to the outlook of the Spirit of the Years. This Spirit is simply not to be identified with Hardy; there is much in the poem that undercuts and even contradicts the Spirit's deterministic outlook. As I have noted, the poem is, in my opinion, dialectical in its development, and the view of the Spirit of Years is but one of the terms of the antithetical tension.

A note of September 21, 1889 indicates that Hardy had advanced somewhat closer to the final idea of The Dynasts: "For carrying out that idea of Napoleon, the Empress, Pitt, Fox, etc., I feel continually that I require a larger canvas....A spectral tone must be adopted....Royal ghosts ....Title: 'A Drama of Kings.'" The terms "spectral tone" and "royal ghosts" would seem to indicate that Hardy
was vaguely hinting at the use of ghosts as in Shakespeare, but they could also indicate his conception of a different poetic diction for the non-human beings in the drama and that these were not to be thought of as divorced from humanity. The note also indicates that he had been reading Robert Buchanan's *The Drama of Kings*, but there is not much he seems to have received from this work, except, possibly, some ideas for the general structure of *The Dynasts*, in particular the choral parts.

In March or April of 1890, Hardy recorded the following observation:

> Altruism, or The Golden Rule, or whatever "Love your Neighbour as Yourself" may be called, will ultimately be brought about I think by the pain we see in others reacting on ourselves, as if we and they were a part of one body. Mankind, in fact, may be and possibly will be viewed as members of one corporeal frame.

It is not clear that this note is indicative of any structural or substantive advance in the epic-drama's development. Its sentiment, however, implying collective concern and action for the betterment of mankind is surely what *The Dynasts* is all about and forms the moral foundation for the note of meliorism upon which the poem ends. In short, the note implies that Hardy's attitude was the opposite of passive determinism. Wright, however, makes the curious comment, "The essential element in the frame would be, of course, the nervous system," implying that the note refers only to a structural device or metaphor that Hardy was contemplating, and then turns his back on the obvious
anti-deterministic sentiment of the note by stating, "It is to his credit that, though he did make use of a supernatural network of nerves, he did not preach his theory obtrusively in the action of his poem."

The next few notes relating to The Dynasts, made between 1890 and 1892, are extremely terse. A note of April 26, 1890 states, "View the Prime cause or Invariable Antecedent as 'It' and recount its doings." It is interesting that this note should have been written just after the completion of Tess of the d'Urbervilles and its forcible dismemberment for publication. The note removes any idea of an anthropomorphic Immanent Will from The Dynasts and any possibility of attributing benevolence or malevolence to It: a theodicy is ruled out.

A year later Hardy was still not sure of the poem's form or title. He seems to have been primarily concerned at this time with the publication of Tess:

Though Hardy was at this time putting the finishing touches to Tess he was thinking of "A Bird's-Eye View of Europe at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century....It may be called 'A Drama of the Times of the First Napoleon.'" He does not appear to have done more than think of it at this time.

A third note, recorded on June 26, 1892, reads, "Considered methods for the Napoleon drama. Forces; emotions; tendencies. The characters do not act under the influence of reason." Hardy is here obviously speaking of the technique to be used in conveying a certain impression, but
Wright once more persists in reading Hardy's determinism in the note, maintaining that it "brings us closer to the fusion of historical fact and Hardy's belief in determinism." 49

It does not appear that Hardy recorded any notes pertaining to The Dynasts between 1892 and 1896. In 1896 he again visited Waterloo, and at Brussels wrote the following:

Europe in Throes
Three Parts. Five Acts each.
Characters: Burke, Pitt, Napoleon, George III, Wellington...and many others 50

In addition to a new title, this would indicate that he was thinking of Napoleon's career as a whole, that his conception was still of an "Iliad of Europe," rather than the period of 1805 to 1815, since Burke died in 1797. 51

A note written a few days later indicates that Hardy, still bitter over the reception of Jude the Obscure, was deciding to turn away from prose and devote himself to poetry. 52 Hardy's notes became fewer after 1896 and nearly ceased after 1900. This would seem to indicate that he had finalized the concept of the poem to his own satisfaction and was working on it much more concentratedly than before. A note of 1898 states that he was working on The Dynasts in the British Museum and had discovered certain materials which had caused him to digress and write the poems "The Peasant's Confession" and "Leipzig" both relating to the Napoleonic wars. 53

The remaining records bearing on The Dynasts seem for
the most part to be notations of progress. In the second half of 1902 Hardy was "working more or less on the first part of The Dynasts." In July of 1903 "he sat down to finish the first part of The Dynasts, the MS. of which was sent to the Messrs. Macmillan at the end of September," and in December Part First was in print. During May of 1904, Hardy was "reading at the British Museum on various days--probably historic details that bore upon The Dynasts." Part Second was completed in September of 1905 and sent to Macmillan in the middle of October. In June of 1906 Hardy was again at the British Museum "verifying some remaining details for The Dynasts, Part Third." The draft of Part Third was finished on Good Friday Eve, 1907, and the final manuscript on September 25. Part Third was published on February 11, 1908.

When Part First was concluded, Hardy had appended a table of contents for the next two parts. Parts Second and Third, however, did not adhere to this original plan. Hardy omitted three scenes marked "Erfurth" from Part Second and four scenes from Part Third. But he added many more scenes than he deleted and expanded a number from what they had been.

If this account of the genesis of The Dynasts reveals anything, it is that the available sources, the notes and memoranda Hardy made pertaining to the poem, are but minimally useful in tracing the modes of his thought involved in its creation. The poem in essence was written between
1896, when, after the negative reception of Jude, he turned in bitterness from the writing of prose to the devoted writing of poetry, and 1907 when Part Third was completed. This is precisely the period in which his notes are extremely sparse and rather uncommunicative as far as his changing concepts are concerned. That his aesthetic concepts of the poem changed radically during this period becomes evident when the finished work is compared with the notes recorded prior to 1896. As for Hardy's personal determinism being revealed in The Dynasts, such a contention is simply not supportable by the sources.

II. The Critical Background

The most disheartening aspect of the extant criticism of The Dynasts in particular and of Hardy's work in general is the persistence of critics in perceiving Hardy as reflecting a Victorian philosophy of determinism. With a few very notable exceptions Hardy has been seen as a fatalist of the Greek school, particularly that of Aeschylus, a pessimistic follower of Schopenhauer, a pessimistic follower of Von Hartmann, a neutral Darwinian, an optimistic Spencerian, an optimistic Comtist. These are the reflections of the serious studies. The less serious, especially of The Dynasts, tend to be hasty, shallow, downright misunderstanding, sometimes frivolous and sometimes biased by fear of the new in art or by personal animosity toward the religious and social views expressed in Hardy's later novels.
Of course it is only the serious criticism one need be concerned with, but booklength studies of *The Dynasts* are very few indeed and one must read general books of criticism on Hardy as well to discover possible viewpoints contrary to the prevalent one which perceives Hardy as a determinist, for the most part pessimistic, sometimes optimistic. What must be kept in mind regarding criticism pertaining to Hardy's "philosophy" is a sentiment he expressed often but which is most explicit in a letter he wrote to Alfred Noyes on December 19, 1920. Replying to Noyes's reference to Hardy's pessimistic "philosophy," Hardy stated that he "should not have to remind him [i.e., Noyes] of the vast difference between the expression of fancy and the expression of belief." A good deal of this type of criticism becomes refutable, it seems to me, if one pauses to inquire, regarding any alleged philosophical expression, first, which character expresses the philosophy; second, whether Hardy can be identified with that character; and third, whether the character's expression of truth can be taken at face value. A good example is the much-quoted passage at the end of *The Dynasts* in which the Spirit of the Years addresses the defeated Napoleon wandering in the wood of Bossu after Waterloo:

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Such men as thou who wade across the world
To make an epoch, bless, confuse, appal,
Are in the elemental ages' chart
Like meanest insects on obscurest leaves
But incidents and grooves of Earth's unfolding;
Or as the brazen rod that stirs the fire
Because it must. (Pt. III. VII. ix)
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Can this passage be construed as an expression of Hardy's philosophy? I think not. Consider its implications. It implies that after all the reader (i.e., the awakened consciousness) has witnessed—the destruction of 600,000 Frenchmen in the invasion of and retreat from Russia, the holocausts at places like the Bridge of Beresina, the great slaughters of Trafalgar, Austerlitz, Albuera, Borodino, Leipzig, Waterloo and many battles more—he is to consider that Napoleon, the central mover of all that has occurred, is no more important than an insect. This view of Napoleon is simply unacceptable to the human earth-bound consciousness. Human experience, especially of pain and suffering, rejects it. The passage also implies that criminals such as Napoleon, later on Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and others too numerous to list, are really blameless and innocent of wrongdoing; they acted only as they were forced to act. The passage, as far as Napoleon is concerned, is actually trivial, since what the Spirit says is very much the way Napoleon saw himself—as driven against his will, even though he thought he was more important in the universe than an insect. Its only effect on Napoleon, therefore, turns out to be the trivial one of deflating his ego. Contrasted with what needs to be expressed in terms of compassion for the countless sufferers of the drama, the evils of dynastic wars, war in general, etc., the speech fails miserably to effect the necessary catharsis. This would seem to indicate, if anything,
Hardy's rejection of the philosophical position of the Spirit, especially its lack of human concern. In other words, the philosophy of the Spirit, while compatible with a certain deterministic outlook, of astronomy say, or an idealist form of evolution, or idealistic monism in general, can not be identified as Hardy's. And yet this is the basic contention of critics who perceive Hardy's philosophy as expressed in The Dynasts to be deterministic. It is only through the eyes of the Spirit of the Years that the world seems so.

The criticism of The Dynasts written between the publication of Part First in 1904 and Part Third in 1908 is relatively unimportant. In general it took the form of hasty one- or two-page reviews and, since it dealt with only a part of the work, was understandably amiss or hesitant in its judgments. The following survey is a random sampling of the positive criticism since 1908. Since this thesis shares the view that The Dynasts is a great work of art, I wish to clarify what my differences with the positive views are and go on from there. I include in this survey the most important booklength studies of The Dynasts published to this date (1984).

Harold Child, in a 1908 review of The Dynasts published in the Times Literary Supplement, is appreciative of Hardy's artistic accomplishment, and marks the hopeful note of the poem's ending. The deeper poetic reaches of the work, however, its significant challenge to
man in terms of developing consciousness, its philosophical and political implications, are not explored.

In a review of 1909, Henry Newbolt expresses the viewpoint of strong English nationalism. As a nationalist he feels that poetry should express national concerns and interests above all else. This bias leads him to extol *The Dynasts* for the wrong reasons. Thus he conceives "the British nation" to be the hero of the work and describes the poem in hedonistic terms as holding out an enticing variety of tastes and sensations. Newbolt's most important perception is to question Hardy's giving "the name of 'Will' to that which never wills." Without realizing it he is on the brink of discovering a major tension in the dialectic of the work, but he fails to explore the implication further.

Thomas H. Dickinson's 1912 review is strong in its generic criticism, but weak, I believe, in its perception of meaning. He believes *The Dynasts* to be an "art creation of the first magnitude" and links it to a tradition of "Epoch-Drama" which includes such works as *The Oresteia* of Aeschylus, Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*, and the first part of Goethe's *Faust*. "Epoch-Drama" is defined as the dramatization of an era for the purpose of performance. With the second part of *Faust*, however, "Epoch-Drama" is transformed into "Dramatic Epic," a combination of the forms of epic and drama. The conflict between epic content and the limitations of dramatic form in epic-drama preclude the
possibility and even the desirability of performance. *The Dynasts* as epic-drama, therefore, must be thought of as fundamentally opposed to performance; it is not merely a question of technical capability.

Dickinson's perception of *The Dynasts* is limited by his inability to perceive the central concept of the work, that the Immanent Will or Unconscious and the Spirits of the Overworld are to be understood in metaphorical terms as qualities reflecting real human existence, especially human collective experience. Instead, he takes them to be part of a supernatural machinery imposed upon man in the Greek manner. This limitation of view prevents him from perceiving the working of free will and the growth of human consciousness possibly "informing" the Will and turning it toward consciousness. Ignoring the possible growth of consciousness, Dickinson must implicitly view the poem as completely deterministic and pessimistic. In this light it is transformed into a Greek anachronism, a Greek epic-drama.

Agnes Stewart's 1924 review of *The Dynasts* was one of the first to call attention to its psychological, social, and political implications. She perceives the poem as having a "Janus" aspect which is lost upon those critics who contend that Hardy, having no message or will to creation, had produced a work that was a monument to nineteenth century pessimism. *The Dynasts*, according to Stewart, crystallizes the philosophical speculations of one epoch while at the same time illuminating the thought of a
later and distinctly different period. While the work seems to emphasize, on an intellectual and speculative plane, the futility of free will and choice, the predominant action implies the actuality of free will and choice in every instance. Thus, in the field of demonstration the idea of a mechanical evolution gives way to the idea of creative evolution in which the emergence of consciousness is not only entirely possible but inevitable. Stewart thus mistakenly links the "philosophy" of The Dynasts to the dualism of Henri Bergson, whose optimistic philosophy Hardy rejected as being capricious and fanciful, without any rational argument to uphold it. 71

Patrick Braybrooke's Thomas Hardy and His Philosophy, published in 1928, 72 is a rather old-fashioned book, and echoes the type of shallow review published in the late nineteenth century and first decade of the twentieth. The book lacks depth, and Braybrooke's contentions that Hardy is a fatalist, determinist, and complete pessimist, that none of his characters exhibit free will, is nowhere explored to any real depth.

Albert P. Elliott, in his book Fatalism in the Works of Thomas Hardy, published in 1935, 73 also casts Hardy as a pessimistic determinist, but examines the thesis in much more depth than Braybrooke. Elliott traces the germination of Hardy's pessimism to a hypochondria that was a congenital abnormality. 74 Thus all of Hardy's insights are reduced to a matter of temperament over which he had no
Hardy's fatalism is linked to Aeschylus (the difference being that in Aeschylus Fate is just, from the standpoint of the gods, while in Hardy's Immanent Will the concept of justice is absent), to Schopenhauer, and to Von Hartmann. Elliott examines Hardy's claim that he was a meliorist, but believes Hardy's meliorism merely tempered to some extent his basic pessimism. The difference between fatalism and determinism, according to Elliott, is that fatalism "is that view of life which insists that all action everywhere is controlled by the nature of things, or by a power superior to things," while determinism is the scientific parallel of fatalism. Hardy is considered to have been both a fatalist and a determinist. Thus it is not character which is the controlling factor in Hardy's tragic works, but a power beyond man and deliberately opposed to his will. The Immanent Will is "Hardy's attempt to comprehend that force which rules the universe, and which has brought it so much misery and woe." Elliott connects the idea to Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann. The Immanent Will of The Dynasts is thus a "manifestation of Determinism in a transcendental rather than a mechanistic form." The philosophy of The Dynasts, and presumably Hardy's as well, is held to be "Idealistic Monism": it rejects both a dualism of spirit and matter as well as the concept of materialism. Thus by Elliott's reasoning, Hardy's monism must be a monism of spirit only, and so must be distinguished from that of Schopenhauer or Von Hartmann.
only in degree.

Lionel Stevenson, in his book Darwin Among the Poets, emphasizes the role of Darwin's theory of evolution in the formation of Hardy's philosophy. In his view Hardy's pessimism had been formed long before he encountered Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, and was based in a temperament that could not perceive any glimmer of optimism in a natural system that produced the consciousness of man, a consciousness that led only to the endurance of pain and suffering. What was of gravest importance in life to Hardy was the prevalence of sorrow and suffering inflicted undeservedly on all sentient beings and the foreclosure of any possibility of altering the direction of evolution. Stevenson sees the Immanent Will as the hero in The Dynasts. The Will causes evolution but does not determine its direction. Hardy is much closer in his conception to Darwinian theory than any of his poetic contemporaries. By denying purpose to the creative force in the universe "he nullifies the great nineteenth-century confidence in progress." At the same time Stevenson acknowledges that in The Dynasts "the Will is only the aggregate of all individual wills and if the human contingent in this force were to act in unison, appreciable effects might be wrought upon the whole." This would seem to contradict his contention that Hardy was primarily Darwinian in his outlook. Stevenson thinks that Hardy believed that collective human wills could change the force behind evolution, a theory of biology let us remember,
so that pain and suffering could be eliminated. The idea is so wrapped in mystery that there is no possibility of making sense of it, unless the Will can be imagined as becoming anthropomorphistic, as being itself evolutionary. In other words, one is pressed to ask what is the force behind the force behind evolution. Stevenson's contradiction is solved when one realizes that the only force that could subject the Will to the processes of evolution is human in nature. In other words, the Will is a creation of human consciousness and not the other way around.

Two of the most important accounts of The Dynasts to appear during the 1930s were Amiya Chakravarty's "The Dynasts and the Post-War Age in Poetry" and William R. Rutland's Thomas Hardy: A Study of his Writings and their Backgrounds. Chakravarty was one of the first critics, if not the very first, to consider The Dynasts from the standpoint of the problem of consciousness which it presented. The Dynasts, according to Chakravarty, starts where Darwin's theory ends, at the evolution of consciousness. Consciousness injects a new variable into all the processes affecting human life. The problem of consciousness in its further evolution now requires active participation to dissipate the hold that unconsciousness still maintains over most of mankind—-not the unconsciousness associated with biological and physical necessity, but social unconsciousness whose major symbol in The Dynasts is war. Thus, the linking of social unconsciousness with metaphysical
necessity, as in the case of Napoleon when he attributes his actions to a Will over which he has no control, must, in the modern era, be construed as bordering on the criminal. It is no longer possible to blame blind Fate or an Immanent Will, at least not in the social arena. If consciousness means anything, it means this ability, and indeed the responsibility in the light of this ability, to alter the universe as it affects man's social being. It is this concept of the problem of consciousness as it relates to unconsciousness that Hardy, in *The Dynasts*, was the first to confront and to present as the paramount problem of modern literature.

For Chakravarty, the Spirits represent human consciousness in the epic-drama and reflect the theme of an evolution of higher consciousness, with feeling (the Pities) finally modifying pure reason (the Spirit of the Years). At the same time the human world is depicted as one not entirely governed by the unconscious Will; on the contrary, we must perceive in it different levels of consciousness. The view of the unconscious as gradually becoming conscious, by which is meant that consciousness is creeping further and further back toward the origin of force—toward the elimination of force, violence, oppression—had never, according to Chakravarty, been advanced in literature before *The Dynasts* appeared. If this image is a proper one to hold with respect to *The Dynasts*, what Hardy has done is to use a concept of Von Hartmann's to transcend Von Hartmann's
ultimate pessimism in the latter's vision of universal
annihilation.

Rutland's most important contribution is a meticulous
and scholarly examination of the historical and literary
sources Hardy used. Hardy's private library of histories
dealing with the Napoleonic Wars alone comprised almost
one hundred volumes in both English and French. Rutland
renders an immense service by describing in minute detail,
almost line by line, using Act V of Part First as an exam­
ple, how Hardy took the raw materials of this vast histori­
cal mine and by imaginative power alone converted them into
a poetic work of very high order. Hardy's most direct
literary sources, Rutland shows, were Shelley's Prometheus
Unbound, which suggested the whole spirit machinery of The
Dynasts, and Hellas. Rutland insists that the epic-drama
is for the imagination only, pointing out that in the
prose passages of the stage instructions and dumb shows
Hardy's careful selection and juxtaposition of sights,
sounds, smells, and tactile qualities can not be grasped by
sight and sound alone; that a dramatic presentation would
lose entirely the necessary detail of selection that only
a written sequence of words, amounting to a poetic form,
could contain.

But Rutland provides no important insights to the
meaning of The Dynasts. He complains that Hardy's concept
of the Immanent Will is inconsistent. It is a rather minor
point and is based on the error common to those critics who
attempt to glean Hardy's "philosophy" from the work by identifying it with the scenes presented by the Spirit of the Years. None of the Spirits are meant to be consistent. The Spirit of the Years, representing human thought, is as vulnerable as thought.

A most important work of the 1940s was Harvey C. Webster's *On a Darkling Plain: The Art & Thought of Thomas Hardy*. Webster is concerned mainly with discovering Hardy's "philosophy" and searches in vain through the intellectual sources available to Hardy, both the things he read and could have read, to find the cause of his unique pessimism. The core of this pessimism, Webster believes, was an extreme sensitivity to the pain and suffering in the life around him which existed in a being who was born with a great capacity for enjoyment and who, in his childhood, saw the universe as benign and lovely. Hardy's search for a justification of suffering led him to disillusionment after disillusionment. His pessimism was never complete in the metaphysical sense. Whatever he read that pushed him toward pessimism, whether *Essays and Reviews*, Darwin, Schopenhauer, or the "survival of the fittest" ideology of Spencer, it was his sense of human worth and potentiality that provided him with an obstinate hope for betterment that refused to be crushed. Hardy came closest to a fatalistic or deterministic philosophy in the years between 1878 and 1885, but paradoxically, he was more melioristic in this period than before. His attacks on foolish or
cruel conventions indicate a belief that social conditions could be changed for the better. Thus, _Jude the Obscure_ "is at once the most outspoken expression of Hardy's pessimism and his most significant attempt to make the future a time in which man's life will be more endurable."\(^8^5\) Webster, however, believes finally that much of the greatness of _The Dynasts_ is due to "the consistency and relative accuracy of the philosophy it illustrates."\(^8^6\) But he can think so because he believes Hardy to be a transcendental idealist. This amazing turnabout really throws Hardy back into determinism; but now the determinism is of a transcendental optimistic kind which Hardy had rejected at least all of his adult life. Thus, in the long run, although Webster perceives very well that the anti-pessimistic essence of Hardy had its basis in realism, in earthbound life, he forecloses the possibility of _The Dynasts_ having relevance for our time by consigning it, unknowingly, to the musty attic of Victorian idealist philosophy.

James O. Bailey's booklength study of _The Dynasts_, _Thomas Hardy and the Cosmic Mind: A New Reading of "The Dynasts,"_\(^8^7\) reflects an era of Hardy criticism (1956) when critics were concerned with defining the poet's "philosophical pessimism." The prevalent critical opinion up to that time, with the notable exception of Webster, was that Schopenhauer was the philosopher who dominated Hardy's philosophy and art. Bailey's study of _The Dynasts_ is an attempt to refute this contention. Using Eduard von Hartmann's
Philosophy of the Unconscious as his basic reference, Bailey tries to show that Hardy's concepts of the Immanent Will, free will, evolutionary meliorism, and much else in Hardy's art and thought may be attributable to Von Hartmann. Von Hartmann's influence on Hardy, however, has been greatly exaggerated by Bailey. And by making Hardy such a close adherent of Von Hartmann, Bailey inevitably turns the poet into a determinist of the idealist school. Moreover, in order to accommodate Hardy's evolutionary meliorism to Von Hartmann's philosophy, Bailey must gloss over the glaring contradiction between the two outlooks: for the pessimism of Von Hartmann was deeper even than Schopenhauer's. The logical culmination of the growth of consciousness was, in his system, the universal annihilation of consciousness, the mass death of all mankind.

Harold Orel, in his 1963 book on The Dynasts, believes the influences of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann have been exaggerated. Hardy was more immediately influenced by John Stuart Mill, whose Essays on Religion raised in his mind the concept of evolutionary meliorism at least fourteen years before he read Von Hartmann. But in addition to Mill, Hardy was thoroughly acquainted with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and Comte. According to Orel, Hardy's commitment was to a determinism which had scientific sanction in his day. Orel links up Hardy's pessimism and determinism with a Victorian post-Darwinian mood that ran through such diverse writers as Arnold, Clough, Fitzgerald, Swinburne,
the Pre-Raphaelites, and Meredith among others. He em-
phasizes Hardy's aesthetic view of there being a "vast dif-
ference between the expression of fancy and the expression
of belief." Thus the Immanent Will is best understood as
a metaphor for the meaning of existence and not some kind
of illuminated anatomy in which Hardy literally believed.

Orel advances what seems to be a unique and contro-
versial idea, namely that Edmund Burke was the major aes-
thetic influence on The Dynasts. Orel gives no concrete
evidence that Hardy had read Burke's essays on aesthetics
or had expressed any thought relating to them. The chief
value of The Dynasts is thus held by Orel to rest not with
the observations made by the Spirits or with the philos-
ophies they expound, but with the epic-drama's scope, its
sublimity arising from the aesthetic principles laid down
by Burke in 1757 and 1759. This view rests on the assump-
tion that the work lacks structural unity and that its
internal disorder is the ground upon which this Burkean
sublimity is built. Orel's contention is refutable by a
demonstration of the poem's unity.

Chester A. Garrison's study of The Dynasts, although
published in 1973, was written at about the same time as
Orel's book. Garrison, too, is much concerned with the
aesthetic problem of the poem, but differs from Orel in
perceiving it as a unified and carefully structured work.
This concentration on the formally aesthetic, however, has
led him to a too-easy assessment of the work's meaning as
being pessimistic and deterministic and thus to ignoring the problem of consciousness it seems to present. Garrison links Hardy's thought with the social Darwinism of Huxley and Spencer: "The drama, of course, is not a study of Darwin's evolution of the species, but a universal application of the theory." This leads him to the kind of opinion that has done most to relegate The Dynasts to the dust bin of literary history: "In its amalgamation into a frame of reference of the prevailing notions about evolution, mechanization, and monism, The Dynasts represents the Victorian Age."

Walter Wright's view of Hardy as a thoroughgoing pessimist has been alluded to above. Nevertheless his work on The Dynasts remains the best source book to date on how Hardy's reading, literary sources and historical materials combined to produce the unique structure of the epic-drama.

George W. Sherman, in his book The Pessimism of Thomas Hardy, takes up what may be termed a Marxist position in Hardy criticism. His analysis of Hardy's works concentrates always on the factual, linking it to actual social and political developments in Victorian society and the world in general. He discovers a great many parallels between Hardy's humanitarianism and meliorism and various Marxist positions. These parallels have a cumulative effect and seem too numerous to shake off; and yet Sherman can offer no concrete evidence that Hardy was acquainted with Marxist writings. Upon reflection, this does seem to be an
intriguing question. How is it that Hardy, who was well acquainted with just about all that was being written and discussed in Victorian intellectual circles, seems never to have read Marx or to have expressed any direct views on Marxism? The question becomes even more intriguing when one realizes that he and Marx had a mutual friend in the person of the Comtist Professor Edward S. Beesly who chaired the 1864 meeting establishing the Marxist International Workingmen's Association. That Hardy was not antipathetic to socialism even as late as 1908 is revealed in a letter he wrote to Frederic Harrison in which he stated, "My quarrel with Socialists is that they don't make it clear what Socialism is. I have a suspicion that I am of their way of thinking, but I don't know for the above reason."95

The landmark work of Hardy criticism is, in my opinion, Roy Morrell's Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way.96 In light of this work it is no longer possible to see Hardy as a logical pessimist or determinist; that whatever seems to be pessimistic or deterministic in his work has the logical finality of formal thought. Hardy's art can not be reduced to a transmutation of the thought of Darwin, Comte, Spencer, Schopenhauer, Von Hartmann, etc. According to Morrell, Hardy's look at the worst does not imply that the worst must happen, but that it could; anything could happen, and even what happened could be changed by human agency into something else. Hardy was a "pessimist" in the sense that
he saw that life was not easy. But between saying "that life is difficult and saying that it is impossible, there is not a slight difference of degree, there is all the difference in the world." Thus in Hardy's novels the point of narration is not only to depict events, but to indicate possibilities. In all circumstances, under all happenings, there is always some choice, some possibility of action to mitigate things or change them for the better. Human agency, free will, is at the center of Hardy's world rather than ruled out of it. Coincidences occur but have little effect on those committed to a course of action. Next to the pattern of what happens, there is another, clearly visible pattern of what ought to be happening. In short, determinism, insofar as it denies the possibility of actions being different from what they are, is always implicitly rejected in Hardy's novels. Chance, in Hardy, is never "blind." His characters are defined "in terms of chance, in terms of a man's ability to stamp a design upon the neutral chances that touch his life." 98

Challenging those critics of Hardy who contend that The Dynasts is the key for a true understanding of the novels, Morrell takes the contrary view, that the novels constitute a key for understanding The Dynasts. This view leads him to a questioning of whether human beings in the epic-drama are depicted as always and necessarily puppets of the Immanent Will, or whether there is some suggestion that they ought to have and could have a measure of freedom
under governance of an "Immanent Will."

Concentrating on the text of *The Dynasts*, Morrell brings to the surface meanings and implications easily lost by a too-ready inclination on the part of the reader to accept the Immanent Will as an overwhelming presence whose prime quality is negation. On the contrary, Hardy blames man for choosing to be a puppet; he is not made a puppet by the Will. This leads to a questioning of the actual role of the Will in both *The Dynasts* and in actual life. Morrell points out that the Will is, in a very important sense, irrelevant to the drama. If it represents the collective unconsciousness, this can only mean the collective unconsciousness of all mankind at a particular time. Thus the Will is an abstraction: it is real only to the extent that abstractions are and has no real power to affect events as an independent and external force. The Will, then, should be conceived not as a Prime Mover or imposition on the affairs of men, but, on the contrary, subject to the consciousness of man. The question of whether the Will can ever be conscious is thus the poet's way of asking whether men have the will and the fortitude to change the conditions of their lives. Morrell cites numerous examples in *The Dynasts*, positive as well as negative, of men making free choices that directly affect events and their own lives, choices both wise and unwise, pragmatic and idealistic, stoical and defeatist, but never made as mere puppets of a mere abstraction.
This account of Hardy's realism brings the poet close to modern French Existentialism, particularly Sartre's. What Hardy and Existentialists have in common is that they are concerned less with problems about the nature of the world as with subjective questions as to how the individual is to live in it. This may be an important insight, but the emphasis on individual actions encounters conceptual difficulties when applied to The Dynasts. Morrell implies that the qualities in free choice that lead to "success" (and Morrell seems to imply that individual success or the overcoming of some obstacle or catastrophe in one's life is equivalent to a change in the collective unconsciousness) are essentially pragmatic in nature. This would seem to reduce the cosmic meaning of The Dynasts to rather meager proportions.

Thus Morrell seems to have destroyed one extreme position only to adopt another. Having rejected with good reason the idea that the Immanent Will is completely deterministic in its rule over men's lives, he embraces the opposite view that it is completely powerless in human affairs. By focusing on individuals supposedly making completely free choices, Morrell comes close to turning The Dynasts into a tract on how to succeed in war. Without realizing it, he has made war acceptable and legitimate, and the suffering human beings it rolls over and leaves in its wake have only themselves to blame.

Morrell's conception of the Immanent Will is thus
highly questionable. Even if the Immanent Will may be conceived as the collective unconsciousness of all mankind, it is a vast oversimplification to equate it with the arithmetic sum of all the individual unconsciousnesses in the world. At some point in the addition it emerges as a force in and of itself, a force that does, in actuality, drive men to some extent in their actions.

I believe this problem of emergence, or the equivalent Hegelian/Marxist problem of quantity being transformed into quality is the major problem of consciousness in The Dynasts as it pertains to our time. Hardy uses the image of the problem time and again in his depictions of moving masses of men and of crowds and mobs acting under the control of drives that supersede individual consciousness.

Morrell was correct, I believe, in destroying the idealist conception of Hardy's art, which had turned him, for critics, into a pessimistic determinist. But Morrell's "optimism" fails to come to grips with Hardy's terrifying image of mass-man which, I believe, has turned out to be the major problem of our century. Hardy's realism involves a certain pessimism that is not easily removed by an existentialist philosophy that focuses on the isolated individual—nor by Marxism for that matter, for the problem that Hardy projects, it seems to me, is the very same problem that has faced Marxism since its conception. Hardy alludes to the problem in a note of December, 1920 in which he tries to explain to Alfred Noyes (using the third person singular)
the notion of a Cause of Things that could be less than the thing caused:

But if he would discern that what we call the first Cause should be called First Causes, his difficulty would be lessened. Assume a thousand unconscious causes—lumped together in poetry as one Cause or God—and bear in mind that a coloured liquid can be produced by the mixture of colourless ones, a noise by the juxtaposition of silences, etc., etc., and you see that the assumption that intelligent beings arise from the combined action of unintelligent forces is sufficiently probable for imaginative writing, and I have never attempted scientific.

In summary, it would seem that there are two main schools of thought in Hardy criticism. The more traditional, which tends to repeat the early criticism of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, perceives Hardy as essentially a pessimistic determinist, an idealist in philosophy who, like most idealists, reified an abstraction and placed it over and against men's consciousness. The second and more recent school, which includes such critics as Morrell, Chakravarty, Marxists such as Sherman, and possibly, to a minor extent, Webster, perceives Hardy as antideterministic, as a realist who understood that men created the Immanent Will and not the other way around. I align myself with the latter group for two main reasons; first, because I believe Hardy's central concern was with earth-bound human life. It was a concern which was expressed not so much in terms of a depiction of human victimization as in the deep sense of loss of man's potentiality, his deprivation of channels leading to the enjoyment of life.
Behind every description of pain and suffering in Hardy there is the implied image of what might have been. The projection of such images of possibility could not have been the work of a determinist. His objection to the art of Zola and the "slice of life" realists is another expression of his anti-determinism, for it was precisely this school of realism that was applying what it interpreted as scientific determinism to the art of the novel.  

The second and more important reason has to do with the possibility of the development of collective consciousness. An idealist interpretation of Hardy removes the possibility of such development from being effected by men's actions and places it in the power of a deterministic abstraction over which men have no control. In the 1980s such a view seems to violate one's deepest intuitions. Being faced with the real possibility of human extinction not in some remote or even near future, but today, the psyche rebels at the fatalistic notion that there is nothing men can do to avert catastrophe, especially when the possibility of catastrophe is so obviously man-made. Thus the development of a collective consciousness, or if one will, the dissipation of collective unconsciousness is the primary concern of our time, and The Dynasts is the only imaginative work of the last century at least that directly addresses this problem.

There is one more problem of Hardy criticism which must be faced and that is the meaning of "evolutionary
Both the idealist and anti-idealist critics take it for granted that the concept, whatever it is, is applicable not only to *The Dynasts*, where it supposedly emerges as the hopeful note upon which the poem ends, but to much of Hardy's prose and poetry written many years before *The Dynasts*. And yet it seems that Hardy used the phrase for the first time in 1922, almost four years after the end of the First World War. I have not been able to find a single use of the phrase prior to that date, although Hardy openly acknowledged himself a meliorist. The date of the phrase's first use is highly significant, as it occurs during a period when Hardy, deeply disillusioned by the First World War, took a long step toward pessimism. The insertion of the word "evolutionary" before the word "meliorism" would therefore seem to indicate not optimism as such, but a growing pessimism that humanity would soon become conscious by its own actions. The process is now reverted to an evolutionary time scale in the Darwinian sense. But even so Hardy took pains to distance himself from the determinists: the process of awakening consciousness was still in the hands of men. Thus, while the anti-idealist critics dissipated the logical pessimism of the determinists, the optimism of their criticism must be tempered not only by the pessimism of Hardy's last years, but by the observation linked to it that mankind has never been as close to annihilation as it is today. I will return to this problem in Chapter 5.
Chapter 2

VICTORIAN CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS

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

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

"Or is it that some high Plan betides?
As yet not understood,
Of Evil stormed by Good,
We the Forlorn Hope over which Achievement strides?"
"Nature's Questioning"

and their groans of despair reach the ears
of the watchers like ironical huzzas

The Dynasts

Each for himself, his family, his heirs;
For the wan weltering nations who concerns, who cares?

The Dynasts

The central paradox of Victorian social life was that rigid class attitudes were maintained while class barriers were never before so easily surmountable. This paradox would seem to explain the non-violent form of the vast economic, social and political revolution that took place in nineteenth-century England. It was non-violent, however, only in a political sense, for the physical, mental, and psychic violence done to the lowest strata of Victorian society—the new industrial proletariat and the rural laboring classes—was on a scale that would have made a Reign of Terror seem mere child's play by comparison. Thus
the statement regarding social mobility must be qualified in at least one important particular: it was much easier to move upward among the various strata of the middle class, or indeed from the middle class to the gentry, than it was for the lowest class to move into the class immediately above it, to skilled artisan say, or to tenant farmer in the rural areas.

The record of Victorian thinking, then, is the record by and large of a new middle class whose growing predominance and rise to power constitute the social and intellectual aspect of the industrial revolution. Until the industrial revolution, the middle class was primarily the class of merchants, prosperous shopkeepers, and professional men which had been steadily growing since Elizabethan times. Both the Protestant Reformation and the Puritan Revolution had been middle-class movements, and the liberal spirit that gave rise to them, though modified by changed conditions, was fundamentally the same spirit that moved the Victorian middle class in its ascendancy.

With the coming of industrialization the old middle class began to expand rapidly both in numbers and in the strata that had structured it. The first major influx was by manufacturers. Close behind came the emergent entrepreneurs associated with them: commodity brokers, financiers, foreign traders, providers of consumer goods and services. With the new class of factory owners, managers and bankers, came the clerks, accountants and lawyers. The
demands of a rapidly changing technology and, concomitantly, the opening of new scientific fields and the increasing specialization within existing ones created new categories of engineers, technicians and other professionals.

Thus in the course of the nineteenth century the middle class multiplied itself several times over and came to comprise a large number of sub-classes, of classes within classes, arranged in a tier-like structure. The class as a whole, since it had not overthrown the aristocracy and continued to recognize its legitimacy, adopted an internal ideology and outlook that tried to imitate the aristocratic. Each sub-class defined itself and came to be accepted in terms of status symbols involving social prerogatives and attitudes, material comforts and other appurtenances which clearly set it off from the class below, the entire structure being held together by a code of values which all shared and which gave the structure its meaning. At one extreme was the rich manufacturer or banker who could, and many times did, insinuate himself into the gentry with the purchase of a landed estate from an impoverished "gentleman-by-blood." At the opposite extreme, the independent skilled artisan, clinging to the lowest rung of the middle-class social ladder, was strongly attracted by the social values and the mode of life of the classes above him. "The prospect of enjoying some of the physical comforts associated with middle-class life and, no less important, the feeling of status that those possessions
brought with them, was the most effective upward stimulus the age knew."  

The wide range of groups and sub-groups covered by the term "middle-class" was divided according to income, occupation, education and religion, although there was no national pattern. The distribution of points of division and the nuances of distinction within groups varied from region to region. Divisions within classes, for example among doctors, clergymen and teachers, created "superior" and "inferior" grades which were determined by such factors as family lineage, education, professional success, and the social standing of one's clientele. The social gap between society physicians and country practitioners, or between a teacher at Eton with a degree from Oxford and a London slum-born schoolteacher was almost unbridgeable. Physicians ranked higher than dentists, solicitors lower than barristers. Sheer gentility was enough to elevate one occupation over another. Thus a lawyer's clerk assumed he was superior to a publican, a male assistant in a retail shop believed he outranked a skilled wheelwright, and employers of labor felt a degree above self-employed craftsmen.

Religion also made a difference in social standing. An Anglican mill owner ranked far above a Nonconformist or Dissenting mill owner of equal income, as did of course an Anglican over a Methodist minister. "The worst social handicap an ambitious member of the middle class had to labor under was a double one--being a Dissenter and
earning one's money 'in trade;' that is, in any kind of commercial occupation producing or selling goods, especially at retail...."^4

The political rise of the new middle class lagged to some extent behind its ascendancy to economic power. Prior to 1832, political power was almost entirely in the hands of the landed gentry. The passage of the Reform Bill of 1832 enfranchised the more affluent half of the middle class, leaving the rest, as well as the great mass of urban workers and farm laborers, without a political voice. It was only with the passage of the Reform Bill of 1867 that the remainder of the middle class along with most town laborers were enfranchised.

Although this rise to political power reflected a rising tide of democracy in England, the class position with regard to democracy was ambivalent. Prior to 1832, when it had no direct representation in Parliament, the middle class allied itself with the working class in the agitation for political reform. Once its political future was assured, however, even before 1867, it began to distance itself from the working class and to conjure up images of revolution to defeat or forestall the granting of civil and especially economic rights to the workers.\^5

This account of the Victorian middle class is not intended to provide even the thinnest of thumbnail sketches of its social history. My intent has been rather to emphasize the self-consciousness of its class outlook. The
individualistic nature of this outlook was reflected in one form or another by the greatest of its thinkers, even those who rejected the pervasive self-confidence and optimism so characteristic of the class as a whole.

The roots of this peculiar self-consciousness lay in legitimizing the idea of self-interest as it was expressed in the motivating principle of industrial capitalism: laissez-faire. Society was conceived as the sum of its individual members, each of whom, "led by an invisible hand" (a phrase understood by every deist), was motivated by a self-interest of which he was himself the best judge. The free pursuit of that self-interest, it was held, could not help but benefit society at large.6

The material goods of industrialism—the better life it brought to the vast majority of people, even, eventually, to the lowest class of workers—together with the conquest of nature by science, imbued the class outlook with self-confidence and a deep sense of purpose. This sense was enhanced by a new perception of time, not only with respect to the shrinking of distance in terms of speed, but to vistas of an immensely long past as revealed by new discoveries in geology, paleontology, astronomy, and finally biological evolution.7 The new perception of time and the awareness of its own unique accomplishments led the Victorian middle class to embrace the idea of evolutionary progress decades before the publication of The Origin of Species. At the same time confidence in the inductive
methods of the physical sciences led it to believe that these methods could be applied to a study of society as a whole and thus place on a scientific basis what was only a nebulous hypothesis. With the emergence of Darwinian evolution, the attempt was made to assimilate biological theory to the science of society, resulting in a sociology that was thoroughly social Darwinist.

I. The Idea of Progress

That the idea of progress seems to have gotten a stronger hold on Victorian England than on any other nation of that era was undoubtedly due to a growing consciousness that the advances in material well-being and man's mastery of his environment, so evident wherever one looked, were embodiments of its truth. By mid-century this consciousness became more deeply rooted with the importation of Comtian Positivism through Bentham, Mill and the other Utilitarians. Prince Albert, in a speech delivered at the Great Exhibition of London in 1851, was able to foresee a time when civilization, having eliminated the material causes of war everywhere, would culminate in the "realisation of the unity of mankind," all of this advance being made possible by the "great principle of division of labour." And Tennyson in his public voice had expressed the same view nine years earlier in "Locksley Hall" where he too foresaw an end to war in terms of man's unity:

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle flags were furled,
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world. Obviously such views served not only to justify the predominant capitalist ethos of laissez-faire, but to dampen hope for any immediate or large-scale improvement in the lot of the worst-off members of society. Their misery could be tolerated a while longer for the sake of progress toward a utopia now set, for the first time, in a distant future rather than a distant place or an abstract universe.

It would be a mistake, however, to exaggerate the predominance of the idea. It belonged primarily to the town-based, rapidly rising middle class whose base of wealth lay in the expansion of industry and technology, and whose outlook was liberal. It was not held by the rural-based, conservative, tradition-bound landowning class—the aristocracy and gentry—and it was opposed by a wide range of important Victorian voices such as Carlyle, Arnold, and Ruskin. On the other hand, it would be a mistake to exaggerate the strength of the views opposing it. As the century wore on, the idea of progress gained greater strength even as skepticism and disillusionment grew in the finest minds as they viewed the cultural and moral manifestations of the age. While pessimism with regard to man's importance in the universe may be said to have reached its nadir with the emergence of Darwin's theory of evolution, it was precisely the assimilation of this theory with Positivist views of society and Spencer's theory of social evolution that induced adherents of the idea of progress to see it both as a
universal law and as a source of faith. This confluence of religious faith and universal law, religious faith emerging from the prediction on rational grounds of the conquest of war and everlasting peace, gave the idea of progress an aura of invincibility that only the cataclysm of world war could bring into question.

The history of the idea of progress starts with the glimmer of a concept in the mind of Roger Bacon and culminates in the social Darwinism of Herbert Spencer. But while the progress of the idea may be said to begin and end in the minds of Englishmen, it was as a French idea that it gained its first steady light.

The French thinker who most affected the Victorian idea of progress up to mid-century was Auguste Comte. While Comte's thinking was indebted to Saint-Simon, his immediate predecessor and mentor, his "Positive" philosophy, by which he meant a philosophy or outlook based on fact rather than conjecture, went far beyond anything Saint-Simon had conceived. Comte shared Saint-Simon's view that civilization had entered the era of "Positive" philosophy and so the establishment of a really scientific study of social phenomena was possible. But he rejected Saint-Simon's theories as premature and unwarranted by historical fact, and proceeded to form his own. His theory of the progress of human knowledge is embodied in his "law of the Three Stages." According to the "law," man's attempts to explain natural law occurred historically in three stages. In the first stage, man
attempted to explain nature as being under the control of imaginary deities. This was the "theological" stage. In the second, or "metaphysical" stage, man sought to interpret nature by abstract concepts arrived at by reasoning speculatively. In the third and highest stage, the "scientific," man finally came to see that natural phenomena could only be understood by scientific methods of observation. The crucial move that Comte makes, which reveals his fundamentally mechanistic bias, is to presuppose that social phenomena are a form of natural or physical phenomena. Thus he is able to see man's history as essentially a history of his opinions and that these are subject to the fundamental psychological law which can now be formulated in a positivist framework.

The basic science that governs all progress, therefore, is, according to Comte, that of social phenomena or sociology. This science could not enter the positivist stage until now, until the prior development of the physical sciences, biology and chemistry had reached this stage. Comte actually modeled his sociology on a mechanistic physics and biology, and like these it had its statics or "Theory of Order," which was governed by the "law of consensus or cohesion"—the law that proclaimed political, moral and intellectual progress to be inseparable from material progress—and it had its dynamics or theory of progress which was governed by the "law of the Three Stages."

Although a more detailed account of Comte's philosophy
lies outside the scope of this thesis, several general points may be listed as they pertained to Hardy's thinking and *The Dynasts*. First, Comte's philosophy is thoroughly deterministic. The progress of man's mind through the three stages is a necessary one. This is because all phenomena, including human phenomena, are subject to invariable natural laws. Second, man's feeling as well as his intellect, is related to the "stage" he is living in. In the industrial or positive epoch his social instinct, under the unifying influence of science and industry, takes the form of love for humanity in general. Thus Comte is able to claim that the third basic form of social organization is inherently peaceful. The unification of mankind, promoted by industrialization and common scientific knowledge, and guided by a scientific elite, brings about a peaceful society in which difference is settled by rational discussion.

Comte is not able to explain why an increase in scientific knowledge must lead to the moral improvement of mankind or why an industrial society must be more peaceful than a non-industrialized one. After all, he is not saying what ought to happen but what will happen. This leads one to suspect that his law of the three stages is at bottom an expression of faith or of a "teleological philosophy of history in the light of which the historical data have to be interpreted." A third point of Comte's philosophy is that while human social progress is predictable, he does allow room, as he
must, for human initiative and action. Human action can
not alter or change the natural laws that govern society,
but can operate to initiate and accelerate the progress.
Another point he makes is that progress is never linear but
"oscillatory," in the sense that it covers instances of
retardation and even retrogression as occurrences in the
general movement of advance.\(^{15}\)

A final and most important point is that Comte was
anti-individualistic: he had little sympathy with liberal
insistence on the alleged natural rights of individuals.\(^{16}\)
The basic reality for Comte was humanity; it was individual-
ity that was the abstraction. He was confident that the
development of industrial society, when properly organized,
would bring about a moral regeneration in which concern for
the welfare of humanity would replace concern for the in-
dividual's private interests. For Comte, the highest form
of the moral life consisted in the love and service of
humanity.

But the proof of a science lies in the accuracy of its
predictions, and the subsequent outbreaks of numerous wars,
the deadly struggle between capital and labor, the failure
of Catholicism to grow weak and disappear not only falsi-
fied most of Comte's predictions, but brought into question
the basic premise that social phenomena could be treated as
physical phenomena.

Comte's positivism entered England by way of Mill's
*System of Logic*, but gave way before the supreme scientific
achievement of the age, Darwin's theory of evolution. In Comte's system man's nature remained fixed and immutable by the forces of evolution; he still maintained "his glory as a rational being specially created to be the lord of the earth,"\textsuperscript{18} but evolution stripped him of that, degrading man by tracing his pedigree back to the single-celled organisms of the remotest past. At the same time, the theory of evolution provided the means of establishing the idea of progress on the most solid foundation it would ever have. As a scientific theory, evolution is neutral regarding the question of whether man is moving toward a desirable goal; this despite the optimism of Darwin himself. The theory is compatible with either optimism or pessimism.

Its interpretation in an optimistic sense was primarily the work of Herbert Spencer who was a social evolutionist long before Darwin announced his discovery. The great appeal of Spencer's thought lay not only in the way it was seen as compatible with a scientific theory of man's evolution, but in the way it equated individual happiness with the progress of mankind as a whole and in its organicist conception of history which rejected revolution in favor of evolution as the method of social progress, a concept which legitimized the dominant class of industrial capitalism and opposed working class movements for economic and social betterment. Organicism conceived society in terms of the biological image of a growing organism. The organism (society) could evolve through history so long as its internal structure
was not violently disrupted at any point in its evolution. A conservative view of organicism suggested first, the necessity of a hierarchy in society (a controlling and directing center), and second, the interdependence of the various parts of society. The latter idea implied that changing the organic structure was impossible without disturbing the whole. Doing so could lead to the morbidity or death of the social organism.  

Spencer was influenced by Comte in the sense of adopting the idea of a social science, but unlike Comte he rejected the notion that human nature was constant and unchangeable throughout history. He believed it was precisely man's changeability that was required for perfectibility. The problem for Spencer, until Darwin came along, was that of assimilating his theory to a theory of biology or other physical science. Until he could do so, his theory was fatally flawed from a positivist point of view. With Darwin's discovery, Spencer's sociology was able to achieve a "scientific" status. But it was scientific only by analogy to biological evolution.

However, by linking social evolution to biological evolution he was able to establish the actual progression of humanity as a necessary fact; and by showing that this progression involved the increasing happiness of mankind, he established, or thought he did, the idea of progress as a universal law. Spencer's theory of social evolution depends finally on the assumption that parents transmit to their
children faculties and aptitudes which they themselves have acquired. This was a common assumption of Victorian social Darwinism and was not refutable until the later development of genetics. If acquired characteristics can be transmitted from parent to child, it would seem, from the standpoint of genetics if not from a strict Darwinian one, that these characteristics would have to be of a physical or biological nature, that they would have to be embodied potentially in the human gene. But if a change has to occur in the gene, it would seem that what is acquired and inheritable during one's life is an invisible and unfelt change in the gene and not in one's outer and visible social characteristics. On the other hand, to conceive of a social characteristic being transmitted, one would have to conceive of physical entities such as genes having, for example, potential moral qualities. An analogous mistake is to conceive a metaphor of poetry, in the very act of its creation in the poet's mind, as being identical with some brain wave observed on an oscilloscope. Such conceptions are simply gross category mistakes.

Another objection to Spencer's theory has to do with his conception of an ultimate harmony between man and his environment. If the environment were stable, it is conceivable that human nature, whatever it is (and it seems to have acquired the status of an abstraction in Victorian thought), since it is conceived by Spencer to be changeable over time, could gradually adapt itself to it. But the environment is continually changing due to man's very efforts to adapt
himself. Every attempt made by man to harmonize his needs and conditions produces a new discord and confronts him with a new problem. Thus there is no reason to believe that social harmony can ever be achieved or that as the character of the discords changes, the suffering which they cause diminishes.

A third argument against Spencer's theory is that a study of history does not reveal any steady, continuous psychical improvement in man's nature. Every great civilization of the past seems to have progressed to a certain point beyond which it could progress no further. It then either stood still, declined, and became the prey of younger societies, or if it survived, it stagnated.

In the 1870s and 1880s the idea of progress was becoming a general article of faith and part of the general mental outlook of educated people. Despite the fact that the idea was never to be established as a scientific hypothesis, its value as dogma produced at least one important ethical principle: consideration for posterity assumed, logically, a preponderating importance. The center of interest was transferred to the life of future generations who were to enjoy conditions of happiness denied the present one, but which were to be brought about by present labors.

As noted earlier, the optimism inherent in the idea of progress was by no means universally shared. As the century wore on, the persistence of poverty and social unrest
led to the idea among the more liberal thinkers and social reformers that poverty was a necessary concomitant of modern progress. But there were other grounds for questioning progress that were unrelated to the evidence of social injustice. In general, men of letters and poets could not accept the smug confidence of the proponents of progress. Carlyle, Ruskin, the later Tennyson, Arnold, Swinburne, James Thomson, not to mention Thomas Hardy, were all skeptical of the idea. Mill, who had never accepted the theory of evolution, was the first to doubt that all the mechanical inventions of the century had enriched the life of anyone. In other words, the skepticism of these thinkers had to do with the moral quality of the human products of material progress.

This attitude is best summed up in a comparison of the liberal Huxley with the conservative Spencer. Both men saw society as a collection of individuals rather than in terms of the collective humanity of Comtian Positivism. Spencer was concerned with an increase of happiness, or eudaemonic progress. He tended to be optimistic that man was evolving toward ever greater happiness. He saw Darwinian evolution in an optimistic light and believed that the present happiness of some individuals had to be sacrificed toward the greater happiness of unborn generations. Huxley, on the other hand, was concerned with ethical progress and tended to be pessimistic with regard to the implications of Darwinism. He believed that Darwinism had
to be "fought" with the power of evolved consciousness in order for men to progress ethically. But conservative and liberal alike, even socialists to some extent, overwhelmed by Darwin's discoveries at a time when a theory of genetics had not yet appeared, tended to be social Darwinist in their views of society.

II. The Social Darwinism of Victorian Social Thought

Social Darwinism was, and still is, a complex intertwining of politics, philosophy and the social sciences. It emerged in the Victorian era when Darwinism, which, from the standpoint of the natural sciences, was essentially a theory of natural selection, became fragmented into natural selection, a theory of human development, and a philosophy of social evolution. According to the biological theory of natural selection, individuals tend to inherit characteristics from their parents, but from time to time variations occur. Some of these variations are inheritable and some (phenotypic variations) are not. Each individual exists in an environment composed of other individuals of the same species, other species, a particular geographical and climatic area, a particular set of food resources, etc., all of which may exert pressure on its survival. According to Darwinism, the most important pressure is that of population increase. Under the influence of all these environmental pressures, "those variations which give an individual a better chance of surviving and leaving more descendants will tend to be perpetuated (selected is the
word most often used)."26 This process of selection leads to certain evolutionary changes which enable new species and varieties within species to emerge.

It is important to emphasize that Darwin's theory of natural selection does not incorporate the principle of genetics. This principle emerged only with the Mendelian theory of heredity in the early part of this century. Lacking a genetic principle, Darwinism was open to the kind of fragmentation that produced social Darwinism. Thus when Darwin (as well as his contemporary Alfred Russel Wallace) were confronted with problems lying outside of biology per se, for example human mental development, they began to borrow from contemporary philosophy, in particular from the British empirical tradition, the notion of the role of sensation and experience in creating ideas.27 Moreover, the particular cultural and historical milieu in which Darwinism emerged enabled a reinterpretation of Darwinism that extended its application to man's consciousness and to society. A great deal of pre-Darwinian social thought had been deterministic. That society and nature should have taken the form that they did was believed to be inevitable. Notions of order and design in nature were paralleled by similar conceptions about social order and constituted defenses of the role of God in the natural and social worlds. Social Darwinism "removed God but reinstated the idea of order, equilibrium and hierarchy, this time in a social context. It therefore 'naturalised' the social order."28
It substituted natural, scientific process for God as the guarantor of social order, greatly enhancing thereby the status of science in society and thus repeating some of Comte's ideas to a certain extent.

Thus, in a certain sense, social Darwinism existed prior to Darwin, and the notion of the "survival of the fittest" was widely held before Darwin.29 Spencer, although generally seen as anticipating Darwin, was actually perpetuating ideas already held, that elimination through a struggle for survival preserved the "type" of the species. Struggle, by eliminating the impure specimens of a race, led to constantly improving the "type." "This was not transmutation of the species; rather immanent evolution. Out of the existing material of the race, the 'ideal' of that species was attained."30

The idea that evolution was a realization of the archetype was rejected by Darwin. In Darwinism, Spencer's idea of the "unfit" could very well become the successful progenitor of a new species. Although Darwin and Spencer shared Malthus's theory of the pressure upon subsistence caused by the growth of population, Darwin regarded such pressure as but one of the mechanisms of evolution. In contrast to Malthus (and Spencer) who saw population pressure in conservative terms—as leading to the preservation of society in its present form—Darwin saw it as promoting evolutionary change rather than inhibiting it. Thus social Darwinists, to the extent that they saw population increase
as playing a conservative role in evolution, and these included T. H. Huxley as well as Spencer, Malthus, Galton, Pearson and others, reasserted many of the traditional ways in which survival of the fittest and population pressure had been used before Darwin. "The idea of 'fitness' tended to be imbued with conventional notions of the desirable and valuable. Change and evolution became the means by which ultimate order and the realisation of these 'ideal' faculties and types was achieved." 31

The Descent of Man, published in 1871, was Darwin's attempt to link the theory of natural selection to a theory of social and human evolution. Except for the theory of sexual selection, the ideas expressed were not his own but constructions of the generally accessible intellectual ideas of his time. 32 The Descent was an attempt to answer the objections of some critics to his theory of transmutation. These critics were not convinced that natural selection itself could explain human development and the vast gap that existed, given all these developed (intellectual) characteristics, between man and the primates. If the theory of natural selection were true, they held, a being much inferior to man would still have been far superior to the primates.

One of the props Darwin used to construct his theory of social development was anthropomorphism. He argued that the germs of complex human faculties were to be found in animals in an admittedly undeveloped form. Thus he not
only claimed that there was a genetic continuity between human mental attributes or "faculties" and animal behavior, but also provided a sketchy prototype of human behavior rooted in an historical beginning. This permitted the faculties to undergo an evolution in terms of natural selection. But this theory also implied that the correlations in physical structure between, for example, man and the primates were paralleled by psychological correlations.

A second prop that Darwin used was associationist psychology as the mechanism by which the initial animal attributes became the sophisticated apparatus of human faculty. Associationism explained the origin of ideas as an interaction between the senses and the environment. It presupposed that ideas were derived in some way from experience of an external reality. Later developments in associationist psychology linked it to the physiology of nerve reflex and to the belief that a reaction of faculty with environment produces a memory of itself that could be incorporated into the individual's heredity.

Thus the Descent itself was to a large extent an expression of social Darwinism. By assuming complex mental faculties as pre-given, by using history as the means by which this complexity was achieved, and by describing the process as one of graduated evolution, Darwin fell into the trap of progressive development; in other words, he became implicitly a proponent of the idea of progress. This position unfortunately implied a racialist anthropology
that Darwin did not hold. It led to a "comparative psychology of man in which the 'savage races' had to be found a place on the lower rungs of a graduated evolution." 35

After the publication of the Descent, it became common to integrate social evolutionary theory with Darwinism. For example, one of the precepts of the Descent was that morality had a functional character. Moral behavior depended for its existence upon another primary fact of development, social organization, and its function was to cement and maintain social solidarity. The aesthetic sense also had utility in that it was linked to the function of sexual selection and thus to the reproduction of the species. Darwin also argued that the development of rationality meant that moral behavior became less instinctive and naturalistic as evolution progressed and more open to reflection and conscious choice.

These ideas were seized upon by Walter Bagehot to develop the notion that social organization was at the forefront of human evolutionary development and was closely linked to the moral and ethical character of societies at different stages of development. 36 This hypothesis gave rise to one of the more influential schools of social Darwinism, which concentrated on those ideas in the Descent that emphasized the genesis of moral codes and their social utility. This school developed along strongly organismal lines in contrast to other social Darwinisms. For underlying the notion of social utility suggested by Darwin was the
rationale first, that ethical codes were required for social solidarity, and second, that they placed an obligation upon the individual to serve the social organism as a whole.

Social Darwinism, despite its connotations for a later era, was at first liberal in tone. Darwinism was used from the beginning as a defense of laissez-faire capitalism, but it was also used to attack the remaining areas of special social and political privilege in British society. Social Darwinism thus reflected the ideology of the dominant industrial capitalist class. The idea that society could be divided between the "fit" and the "unfit" was used by writers such as W. R. Greg, the Manchester economist, and Francis Galton, the founder of eugenics, both to attack aristocratic privilege and landed property and to moralize about the disastrous effects of a high birth rate among the working classes upon evolutionary progress. Their attack on the aristocracy as a haven for the idle and unproductive in society, who held their status by reason of birth rather than achievement, was really an attack on those obstacles that blocked upward social mobility. 37

But Darwinism was also used by liberals to raise major issues of intellectual and social freedom. Huxley, in his debate with Bishop Wilberforce, was seen as the protagonist of intellectual freedom and intellectual inquiry struggling against religious obscurantism and intuitionism in general. Intuitionism was a philosophy that could be used to defend
the idea that thought and religious belief were divinely inspired. Its basic argument that human nature was immutable and that human ideas had a divine origin was perceived by liberals as an obstacle to progressive improvements in society.

The three aspects of Darwinism which came to be part of liberal belief were as follows:

(1) The right of Darwin to propagate the theory of natural selection and to imply that man's origin ought to be examined from a strictly scientific basis. This right was defended by Mill even though he himself was not convinced that Darwin had demonstrated the operation of natural selection.

(2) The use of Darwinian analogies to defend political liberalism and to attack privilege.

(3) The explanation of the origin of man's faculties by reference to the relation between sensation and environment.38

Out of a combination of the second and third emerged a major school of social Darwinism which attempted to place ethics upon a scientific foundation. The development of ethics was seen as the social equivalent to the process of natural selection. This group of social Darwinists included such figures as Huxley, Frederick Pollock, W. K. Clifford and Leslie Stephen. The central idea of the group as set forth by Clifford was that "Society is an organism, and man in society part of an organism; according to the
definition, in so far as some portion of the nature of man is what it is for the sake of the whole--society." 39 Thus the Darwinism of the Descent was tied to the older biological analogy of organicism. But in contrast to conservative organicism which permitted no tampering with the structure of society, the liberal view was that while a violent disruption of the "vital tissue" binding society was to be excluded, it was still possible to envisage major social changes taking place paralleling natural change. Moreover, what bound society together was not some central authority and political sovereignty, but moral and social sentiment which required the diffusion of democratic and civil sentiment throughout society. According to Stephen, the transmission of this sentiment was centered in the family.

In the liberal social Darwinism of Bagehot, however, biology was harnessed to a theory of politics in which the preservation of society was the first duty of society, a view which seemed to lead to an intellectual authoritarianism: "To keep up this system, we must sacrifice everything. Parliaments, liberty, leading articles, essays, eloquence, all are good but they are secondary." 40 Bagehot, however, defended liberal democracy by use of a Darwinian analogy. He emphasized cultural rather than individual selection and tried to prove that evolutionary progress would be guaranteed by the institution and practice of liberal democracy.

Thus the basic move of such liberal social Darwinists as Bagehot and Stephen was to transform by analogy Darwin's
natural selection of biological variations into a theory of selection of social variations in social evolution. These social variations could take the form of a new technology, a cultural advance, a new political institution, or even an intellectual discovery such as Stephen's opinion that ethics and religion were not interdependent. The political conclusion to be drawn from a theory of selection of social variations was that only a society that permitted some degree of intellectual freedom would give rise to social variations. Thus from the standpoint of social evolution the best political institutions were liberal ones.

This liberal school of social Darwinism, emphasizing the role of reason and morality in social evolution, while it stood opposed to the most vulgar forms of self-interest, was nevertheless anchored in the industrial capitalist ethos of the age. Thus Clifford, Stephen and Bagehot would not accept the view that their precepts of moral evolution or organic solidarity led logically in the direction of social reform or collectivism. On the contrary, they believed their views justified economic competition. Economic competition led to economic innovations and such innovations were among the variations that contributed to social evolution. Stephen in fact criticized Huxley for the latter's view that moral evolution had suspended the struggle for existence. 41 Stephen, as well as Bernard Bosanquet, another liberal social Darwinist, also denied that morality enjoined society to provide any kind of
social welfare, or that moral evolution implied movement towards collectivism. Bosanquet, in fact, argued that the role of morality in society was not to promote social reform, but to combat poverty by producing a moral improvement among the poor by way of moral regeneration. Such viewpoints implied a strong connection between the moral evolutionists and the earlier evangelical movement. They also implied that there was a moral as well as an intellectual elite who could and should bring under control those judged to be morally "unfit."

In summary, these social Darwinist versions of liberalism represented the two sides of liberal politics. On the one hand, they provided reasons for intellectual and political freedom and for the dismantling of anti-progressive social and political constraints existing in mid-nineteenth century Britain. They also defended the possibility of an ethics without religion, and fought against the intuitionist notion of an unchanging and pre-ordained human nature. On the other hand, they took up a class-conscious stance against the working class in their justification of a moral and social hierarchy, moral superiority, and social order that was in basic opposition to social reform.

The political controversies centering around the increasing militancy of the working class in the 1880s and after were expressed in two opposing social Darwinisms, one that justified individualism and self-interest, the other
social reform and collectivism. In this controversy the liberal social Darwinism of Bagehot, Stephen, and Bosanquet, among others, gave way before the conservative social Darwinism of Spencer and the left-liberal social Darwinism of the Webbs, Fabians, and socialists. As noted above, liberal social Darwinists had accepted a degree of competitive individualism in society, but they also felt that social behavior could not be reduced to vulgar self-interest. In the 1880s severe economic distress among the working class and their demands for amelioration carried the debate far beyond this essentially intellectual and moral one. Sidney and Beatrice Webb had raised the question of direct state action to alleviate poverty and provide social welfare. Spencer's reply was that state intervention would prevent future social progress. His argument was based on attributing to economic competition the same role that Darwin had given natural selection. Economic competition, according to Spencer, weeded out the "unfit" or economic failure from the "fit" or economic success. This implied that laissez-faire capitalism offered the best conditions under which economic competition and thus social evolution could take place and also that there was some form of natural acquisitiveness in man. Spencer's argument against "collectivism," actually shared by many liberals, was to the effect that there was no reason to believe that collectivism was the necessary end of moral evolution.

Spencer's attack on "collectivism" gave rise to a
debate on the relationship between Darwinism and social reform. Among the social Darwinists who opposed to a greater or lesser degree the emphasis on individual self-interest in Spencer's philosophy were such figures as Patrick Geddes, D. G. Ritchie, Huxley, and L. T. Hobhouse. Ritchie, in fact, in order to justify state intervention to alleviate poverty, had to fall back on the older conservative organicist view of society in which the social "organism" has a hierarchy and a directing center. Hobhouse in justification of social reform argued that "society was more than a mere aggregate of individuals" and saw society "as a living whole." Still embracing the organicist analogy, he tied social reform to Darwinism: "Now we fully agree with the evolutionists in their main position. It is desirable that the fit should succeed and the unfit fail; we are ready to exclude the utterly unfit from society altogether by enclosing them in prison walls...." But there was nothing implicit in organicism or moral evolution that pushed it towards collectivism, and liberal individualism did not succumb to the argument. In 1906 C. W. Saleeby echoed the liberal social Darwinism of the 1870s in his assertions that evolutionary progress lay in social variation and that the condition that favored it was a free, uncontrolled (laissez-faire) environment.

The two strands of late-nineteenth century British socialism--a small revolutionary contingent and the much larger reformist--both supported Darwinism and claimed that
the precepts of socialism were in accordance with, or at least not in contradiction with, the laws of natural selection. Both factions were hostile to Spencer and identified individualism as the main enemy to socialism. Marx and Engels supported Darwinism wholeheartedly for its bringing the history of human faculty under scientific treatment and for dispelling the theological dogmatism that had surrounded it. They were also attracted by the notion of objective forces moving independently of "will" or direction since it supported the possibility of constructing a history by the application of such principles. But they were not prone to the fallacies of social Darwinism. They did not see in natural selection a reflection of the image of class struggle; on the contrary, they dissociated themselves from any notion that the historical reconstruction of nature and society were based on the same principles. The reliance of Darwin on Malthus worried Marx and Engels who saw in individualism as applied to sociology and economics an ideological tool to hide the real relationships of capitalism. And Engels provided as many examples of cooperation in nature as of competition.

British socialism, however, as distinct from Marxism, based its precepts on the idea of moral evolution and a regenerated human nature. The socialism that developed into the British Labor Party had its beginnings in a positivist social Darwinism that was linked to certain aspects of classical liberalism. This was the position of Enrico
Ferri, an Italian socialist, among whose assertions were the propositions that human inequality existed and that only the "fit" should survive, but that the constitution of modern society prevented this from happening. Only under conditions of social equality—the abolition of inherited wealth and advantages—could this take place.

On the whole Ferri was taken up by the socialists to the extent that he merged with the existing tradition not of socialism, but of the liberal radical view of evolution. Thus Huxley, Ritchie, and Geddes, and Stephen's view of evolutionary development exerted the main influence on the mainstream of the socialist movement.

Other varieties of social Darwinism came to the fore in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but these cannot be dealt with here. These movements were all extensions of the basic premise of social Darwinism, that the study of society can be reduced to an analogy with evolutionary biology. The two most important varieties were the eugenics movement started by Francis Galton in the 1860s and carried forward by Karl Pearson and others into the twentieth century, and the attempt to replace Darwin's _Origin_ with Lamarckianism or use-inheritance.

What all of the social Darwinist movements had in common, whether they were extreme rightist, liberal or socialist, was the idea that the class relationships of (capitalist) society could not be altered. Revolution as a mode of justified redress was ruled out _ipso facto_. Thus the
movement in all its variations reflected to a greater or lesser extent the ethos of the dominant class in Victorian society and its historical memory of the French Reign of Terror.
Chapter 3

THE DIALECTICAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF THOMAS HARDY

An object or mark raised or made by man on a scene is worth ten times any such formed by unconscious Nature. Hence clouds, mists and mountains are unimportant beside the wear on a threshold, or the print of a hand.

Early Life

Wherefore, O Man, did there come to you The unhappy need of creating me-- A form like your own--for praying to? "A Plaint to Man"

"World-weaver! what is Grief? And what are Right, and Wrong, And Feeling, that belong To creatures all who owe thee fief? Why is Weak worse than Strong?"... "Doom and She"

Early in The Dynasts the Shade of the Earth, despondent over her "vain travaillings," which have produced only more fodder for never-ending war, bemoans her fate and concludes:

Howsoever wise
The governance of these massed mortalities,
A juster wisdom his who should have ruled
They had not been.
(Pt. I.I.ii.)

It is the kind of deduction a sensitive and intuitive reader of Eduard von Hartmann could draw and indicates that Hardy was probably familiar with that philosopher's metaphysics when he wrote The Dynasts. But the implied pity for the "massed mortalities" and the obverse implication,
equally sad, of the sweetness and goodness of life left unsavored are entirely Hardy's own. And it is indeed this dimension of feeling, so adamant and persistent that it penetrates all intellectual barriers, that sets off Hardy, finally, from any and all those influences that are said to have shaped his artistic output.

What is even more important is the realization that the origin of this feeling cannot be traced to intellectual sources at all, that it seems to have been born with Hardy himself. Michael Millgate describes Hardy's outlook at the height of his fame as follows:

Where he differed from so many of his contemporaries was in the absoluteness, the literalness, with which he believed that not to be born was best, that consciousness was a curse, and that while death might be distressing to the bereaved, the dead were not themselves to be pitied.¹

How does one explain such a belief in a man who from all outward appearances was a success not only in artistic terms but in material and social as well (he had gone from being the son of a rural artisan to being accepted by the most prominent figures of the middle class and the aristocracy)? It cannot be explained by the unhappiness of his marriage; its forcefulness persuades one that the same belief would have been expressed even in the midst of a happy and fruitful marriage. In other words, it does not depend on the presence or absence of happiness.

Well, then, does his belief imply a death wish for all humanity or does it express a private anguish? Even a
moderately sensitive reader of Hardy soon perceives that Hardy does not wish to see humanity annihilated or the world disappear as if it never existed. There is every indication in his work that the evil that men suffer—and this is the vast gap that separates him from the metaphysicians—is not imposed upon them from above nor does it emanate from mysterious inner compulsions, but has its source in the give and take of social relationships, no matter how these are perceived in the consciousness of the sufferers themselves: inhumanity is a man-made product. That the desire not to have been born is a sincere cry of private anguish is indicated by this further description of Hardy's views:

Whatever their formal austerity, Hardy's views did not teach him stoicism. That extraordinary capacity for imaginative identification which gave such strength to a novel like Tess was liable, at the level of everyday living, to take the form of an almost morbid sensitivity to the suffering of others, and especially to the sufferings of animals.

Hardy's "extraordinary capacity for imaginative identification" can scarcely be overstated. It is the force that makes his sensitivity to the sufferings of animals not the mere quirk of an eccentric, but in an important sense the foundation of his moral point of view and his ultimate belief that the development of human consciousness was a "mistake." In other words, his belief was not caused solely by the bleak view he had of the human lot; this was but one aspect of awareness in a much wider and deeper consciousness
that embraced all living things in a sympathetic brotherhood. It was formed rather by his awareness that human consciousness was not only the cause of human suffering, but also the emergent quality that justified the victimization of all living things, human, animal, the living earth itself. Given the evolution of human consciousness, it was impossible to live free of guilt, to avoid having some part in the suffering of others. His wish not to have been born was not, however, the mere desire not to know of the sufferings one causes, but the wish not to be able to cause them.

The almost central point that animal life has in Hardy's consciousness emerges in a variety of aspects throughout his work. In his rather emotional and assertive "Apology" to Late Lyrics and Earlier, written in 1922 when, as a result of the First World War he had turned toward a more pessimistic outlook on life, his last vestige of hope, "evolutionary meliorism," carried the rather forlorn plea

...that whether the human and kindred animal races survive till the exhaustion or destruction of the globe, or whether these races perish and are succeeded by others before that conclusion comes, pain to all upon it, tongued or dumb, shall be kept down to a minimum by loving-kindness, operating through scientific knowledge, and actuated by the modicum of free will conjecturally possessed by organic life....

Hardy's optimistic view of Darwinism, far from being Spencerian, was actually based on the rare notion (for Victorian times) that The Origin of Species had expanded
the moral horizon to include the animal world:

Few people seem to perceive fully as yet that the most far-reaching consequence of the establishment of the common origin of all species, is ethical; that it logically involved a readjustment of altruistic morals by enlarging as a necessity of rightness the application of what has been called "The Golden Rule" beyond the area of mere mankind to that of the whole animal kingdom. 4

It is interesting to note that this view of Darwinism parallels that of Marx to a certain extent. Marx saw in scientific evolution a political as well as a moral tool for dissipating class ideologies that were based on various categories of supernaturally-given rights. 5 It is also worth noting at this point that Hardy's ethical system, based primarily on his "capacity for imaginative identification," anticipates by several generations the modern temper which conceives the planet Earth as one ecological system, a system whose death would be assured by a nuclear war, if not in the blind pursuit of self-interest.

The novels provide numerous instances in which the relationships of animals to humans transcends the conventional to become the complex problem of ethics and consciousness that Hardy was unique in perceiving. Gabriel Oak, "an intensely humane man," bothered by the consciousness that his flock of sheep always ended as mutton, is forced to shoot his dog for having driven the sheep to their death (to the sheep of course it mattered not how they died). The dog, whose training Oak is also responsible for, has done his job of rounding up the sheep "too well" and is
described as making "signs implying that he expected some great reward for signal services rendered." The humane but guilty Oak lives on; the dog must die.

In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the victimization of Tess is seared into the reader's consciousness by the inferential description of the wanton slaughter and mutilation of pheasants. Like Tess in her torment

> many badly wounded birds had escaped and hidden themselves away, or risen among the thick boughs, where they had maintained their position till they grew weaker with loss of blood in the night-time, when they had fallen one by one as she had heard them.  

In the bleak, polar atmosphere of Flintcomb-Ash, Tess and Marian are given their only recognition as human beings by a pair of Arctic birds, "great spectral creatures with tragic eyes" who had witnessed "cataclysmic horror in inaccessible polar regions." But in their relationship to the women

> they dismissed experiences which they did not value for the immediate incidents of this homely upland--the trivial movements of the two girls in disturbing the clods with their hackers so as to uncover something or other that these visitants relished as food.  

Jude, whose sensitivity to suffering seems to parallel Hardy's own, cannot bear to deny birds the new-sown seeds from a farmer's field or to lengthen the suffering of a slaughtered pig to enhance the quality of its meat. The pig in its agony crosses over into a universal realm of suffering recognizable but not unique to humans:
The dying animal's cry assumed its third and final tone, the shriek of agony; his glazing eyes riveting themselves on Arabella with the eloquently keen reproach of a creature recognizing at last the treachery of those who had seemed his only friends.

And in an ironic undercutting of social Darwinist hubris that had tied Darwinism to the idea of progress, the pathetic struggle of Mrs. Yeobright against heat and exhaustion occurs in the midst of a teeming insect life that thrives in the same environment that kills her. Against this natural failure of an individual of the "highest" species, Hardy then raises the cool, refreshing, life-asserting image of a heron that had flown up "dripping wet from some pool in the valleys, and as he flew the edges and lining of his wings, his thighs, and his breast were so caught by the bright sunbeams that he appeared as if formed of burnished silver."

What Hardy seems to be doing in such instances is projecting subjectivity on to the non-human world in juxtaposition with keenly observed fact. He is thus using the method of pathetic fallacy to create a more immediate sense of the real than would have been the case had he limited himself to externally observed fact. The subjectivity projected is not actually that of the character in focus—for example, Oak, Tess, Jude or Mrs. Yeobright—but it and the character in focus have a sort of symbiotic relationship.

In Hardy's novels images showing concern for animals
are widely separated and submerged in a much larger human-centered drama. But in his poems animals are often used as protagonists of a consciousness and a sense of rightness that the human species seems to have lost. This comes out most forcefully in "The Darkling Thrush" where, in a world seemingly condemned to death by a passive humanity, in which

The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunken hard and dry
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I,

the assertion of life must be entrusted to the active consciousness that understands it, no matter how brief its tenure. The thrush takes on the consciousness forfeited by man:

At once a voice arose among
The bleak twigs overhead
In a full-hearted evensong
Of joy illimited;
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt and small,
In blast-beruffled plume,
Had chosen thus to fling his soul
Upon the growing gloom.12

This is not really a poem of endurance or survival; it opposes the idea of passive stoicism with the only kind of optimism that is realistic: active struggle. The frailest of creatures, presented in starkest realism, has this "consciuosness," if one will, as part of its natural heritage, and man is found wanting by comparison.

The sense of a sympathetic brotherhood of all living things is strongly brought out in "An August Midnight" which communicates a fine respect for the "consciousness" of lower forms of life:
I
A shaded lamp and a waving blind,
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor:
On this scene enter--winged, horned, and spined--
A longlegs, a moth and a dumbledore;
While 'mid my page there idly stands
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands....

II
Thus meet we five, in this still place,
At this point of time, at this point of space
--My guests besmear my new-penned line,
Or bang at the lamp and fall supine.
"God's humblest, they!" I muse. Yet why?
They know Earth-secrets that know not I.13

Under the thin coat of an absurd rough fellowship lies a
serious concern that recognizes a deep responsibility to
non-human life, a concern that erects, finally, an ethical
barrier to optimistic philosophies of progress: to both the
solid core of self-interest in Spencer's social Darwinism
and Comte's elevation of an abstract humanity to the status
of a religion.

In "Wagtail and Baby" man is conceived as the universal
predator. The small bird tolerates without flying away a
series of seeming threats to its existence: a bull, a stal-
lion, a dog. But as soon as "A perfect gentleman" nears,
"The wagtail, in a winking,/with terror rose and disap-
ppeared."14 "Nature's Questioning," which in three short
stanzas challenges the major moral precepts of Victorian
thinking, achieves its poignancy by presenting as question-
ers the non-human (but yet human) victims of these pre-
cepts:

When I look forth at dawning, pool,
Field, flock, and lonely tree,
All seem to gaze at me
Like chastened children sitting silent in a school;
Their faces dulled, constrained, and worn,
As though the master's ways
Through the long teaching days
Had cowed them till their early zest was overborne.

Upon them stirs in lippings mere
(as if once clear in call,)
But now scarce breathed at all)---
"We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us here!"

The destructiveness of war in terms of the mute vulnerability and helplessness of that living portion of Earth that is not human has probably never been better expressed than in this lyric from The Dynasts; the scene in Waterloo:

Yea, the coneys are scared by the thud of hoofs,
And their white scuts flash at their vanishing heels,
And swallows abandon the hamlet roofs.
The mole's tunnelled chambers are crushed by wheels,
The lark's eggs scattered, their owners fled;
And the hedgehog's household the sapper unseals.
The snail draws in at the terrible tread,
But in vain; he is crushed by the felloe-rim;
The worm asks what can be overhead,
And wriggles deep from a scene so grim,
And guesses him safe; for he does not know What a foul red flood will be soaking him!

Beaten about by the heel and toe Are butterflies, sick of the day's long rheum, To die of a worse than the weather-foe.

Trodden and bruised to a miry tomb Are ears that have greened but will never be gold,
And flowers in the bud that will never bloom. (Pt. III. VI. viii)

If this aspect of Hardy's consciousness--the ethical structure that is implied by his great sensitivity to the sufferings of animals--places him at a considerable
distance from the optimistic philosophies of Spencer, Comte (farther, actually, from Spencer than Comte), and other adherents of the idea of progress, then his even greater sensitivity to suffering humanity places him at an equally far distance from the pessimism of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann. For the other side of this concern is the vision of an ethical universe centered on man both in the collective and individual senses. The belief in the possibility of such a world not only implies some notion of progress towards it and stability at it, it drives against the logic of annihilation either of the individual as in Schopenhauer's metaphysics, or of collective humanity as in Von Hartmann's.\(^{16}\)

Without man, nature and the universe have no meaning. Man is the source of all value, including the values placed on nature and the natural, on history and the historical, on religion and God. Without the evidence of man's presence, everything loses meaning. This idea has a dogged persistence in all of Hardy's utterances, his autobiography, his letters and essays, his novels and poetry.

Placing man at the center of all value changes drastically the conceptions of art and the artist, in particular the conception of nature, which now can no longer enjoy the pre-eminence it had for Wordsworth and the other Romantic poets and their Victorian descendants. "An object or mark raised or made by man on a scene is worth ten times any such formed by unconscious Nature," he wrote in 1877.
"Hence clouds, mists, and mountains are unimportant beside the wear on a threshold, or the print of a hand." The comparison is highly significant. The heretofore insignificant—the anonymous traces of the humblest of men—are enough to "bring to its knees," so to speak, the natural sublime; the romantic perspective is radically altered. The attention of the artist is now to be diverted from looking upward and outward from humanity to looking, by association, downward and inward toward humanity, to real social relationship. Thus he holds that "the beauty of association is entirely superior to the beauty of aspect, and a beloved relative's old battered tankard to the finest Greek vase." 

This idea of the centrality of humanness, the idea that all human values, even the profound sympathy that Hardy felt for suffering humanity, spring by association from actual, lived experience, is present throughout his writings. His often-repeated dictum "To find beauty in ugliness is the province of the poet" and his belief that "Nature is played out as a Beauty, but not as a Mystery," reflect this new aesthetic focus and the subjective life that the associations of experience bring. The presence of humanity imparts beauty to the "ugliest" of natural scenes, and it is by association that mystery is imparted to nature.

The bleak setting of Egdon Heath attains its beauty and its mystery through the eyes of the narrator, but only in terms of the human beings who move across it, frail,
pathetic, and almost insect-like as these are observed in
the vast panoramic views. In an aesthetic turn-about, the
heath attains meaning only as it intertwines with their
lives, in the actual work that they do, in their going and
coming across it, in their agonies and frustrations as
these are played out against the setting of the heath.

One of the bleakest scenes in Tess is described as
follows:

...the whole field was in colour a desolate
drab; it was a complexion without features,
as if a face from chin to brow should be
only an expanse of skin. The sky wore, in
another colour, the same likeness; a white
vacuity of countenance with the lineaments
gone. So these two upper and nether vis­
ages confronted each other all day long, the
white face looking down on the brown face
and the brown face looking up at the white
face without anything standing between them
but the two girls crawling over the surface
of the former like flies.21

The phrase "the two girls crawling" imparts the entire sub­
jective meaning of the scene. Although the girls are phys­
ically insignificant as flies, nature is still made subject
to their humanity. This is a device Hardy used many times
and reaches its height of significance in The Dynasts.
Natural scenes of beauty are deliberately left out of Jude,
but all the places that Jude and Sue go to—Christminster,
Melchester, Shaston, Aldbrickham; the place-names them­
selves—attain a subjective but nonetheless timeless mean­
ing because of the associations they raise about the two
who had been there.

Hardy is not really interested in the objective
qualities that belong to any natural scene. These qualities seem to change in accordance with the emotional impact he wishes to make. And this impact is derived from the human center of the scene, reflecting the emotions of the perceiver. In the poem "Neutral Tones" the bleakness of the natural setting belongs to the emotions of the narrator who is experiencing the breakup of a love affair:

We stood by a pond that winter day,
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
--They had fallen from an ash and were gray.

This emotional aspect of the scene is thereafter raised by association whenever the kind of experience occurs that first produced it:

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with grayish leaves.

In other poems the natural, the historical and conventional, the intellectual, are superseded by a human living presence. In "Genoa and the Mediterranean" the narrator anticipates seeing the Mediterranean at Genoa, fully conscious of the classical associations the sea has. As his train approaches the city, his anticipation mounts until

Out from a deep-delved way my vision lit
On housebacks pink, green, ochreous--where a slit
Shoreward 'twixt row and row revealed the classic blue through it.

But now just as his anticipation is to be fulfilled, a living humanity's presence forces itself into his life:
And thereacross waved fishwives' high-hung smocks, Chrome kerchiefs, scarlet hose, darned underfrocks; Often since when my dreams of thee, O Queen, that frippery mocks.  

A similar awareness is evoked by "The Roman Road."

Against scholarly historical and deductive reconstruction of the ancient culture associated with the Roman Road, the narrator poses his own associations drawn from personal experience. This has the effect of erasing or at least superseding whatever meaning the road has as historical evidence of a dead culture:

But no tall brass-helmed legionnaire
Haunts it for me. Uprises there
A mother's form upon my ken,
Guiding my infant steps, as when
We walked that ancient thoroughfare, The Roman Road.

In "At Castle Boterel" the evocation of a human presence is achieved against a geological expanse of time in which, from an intellectual standpoint, the life of a man is supposedly reduced to the ephemeral:

Primaeval rocks from the road's steep border
And much have they faced there, first and last
Of the transitory in Earth's long order;
But what they record in colour and cast Is--that we two passed.

The central position of humanity in Hardy's consciousness is so strong that in a poem like "To an Unborn Pauper Child" he seems to contradict that part of his consciousness that held the belief that not to have been born were best; or rather he realizes that the belief is rendered
meaningless by the onrushing of new life:

Thou wilt thy ignorant entry make
Though skies spout fire and blood and nations quake.

But rather than wishing the child the shortest possible life in view of the torment that awaits it, a wish consistent with the narrator's rationality, the poet's humanity—and here again Hardy places himself in opposition to the pessimistic metaphysicians—transcends this rationality to seize on an irrational hope:

And such are we—
Unreasoning, sanguine, visionary—
That I can hope
Health, love, friends, scope
In full for thee; can dream thou'lt find
Joys seldom yet attained by humankind!27

In summary, Hardy's tremendous capacity for imaginative identification, his sensitivity to the sufferings of others, human and non-human, seems to involve a paradox. The sincere belief that not to have been born is best, that consciousness is an evolutionary mistake, seems to place him in opposition to such adherents of the idea of progress as Mill, Comte, Spencer, and social Darwinism in general. On the other hand, the central concern for man seems to turn him away from pessimism and the wish for annihilation and places him in opposition to such pessimists as Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann. The contradiction, if contradiction it is, appears so only if Hardy is read in terms of the philosophical positions he is alleged to have held. It disappears when he is read first and foremost as the poet he was,
whose wide reading served to provide a source bed of metaphor. It is in this light that one can better understand his reply to Helen Gardner who, he claimed, had overemphasized Schopenhauer's influence on him: "My pages show harmony of view with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Comte, Hume, Mill and others, all of whom I used to read more than Schopenhauer." Few critics if any have noted the importance of the phrase "harmony of view." Hardy is not claiming a philosophical harmony, since such an achievement among the writers mentioned is a logical impossibility. He is therefore thinking, one would presume, in other terms; that is, in terms of the impressions he received from these writers as well as from Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann. The harmony he speaks of, therefore, has primarily an aesthetic meaning and would seem to entail—especially in a work like The Dynasts, and given the contradictory philosophies mentioned—a harmony of tensions, of contradictory impressions, none of which is true in itself, but all taken together providing an insight to man's predicament.

The question that now arises is how to explain Hardy's extraordinary consciousness, if it can be explained at all. And if his sensitivity and capacity for imaginative identification are ultimately inexplicable, can we at least trace the historical development and the outlines of what I have taken to be the ethical content of that consciousness? This development would seem to involve the running together of two main streams of thought and feeling. One
springs from the class consciousness of Hardy's social inheritance, his birth and upbringing in a family of rural artisans belonging to a class that was in the process of disintegration through most of the nineteenth century. The second stream is the consciousness developed by education. Its effect was essentially the transformation of inherited, class-based rural pessimism into an art of realism.

I. The Consciousness of Class

Michael Millgate describes Hardy's mother as having "inherited in full measure the ancient pessimism of the rural poor, their perpetual imagination of disaster...."\(^{29}\) This rather glosses over the real and immediate causes of "pessimism" by placing it in a timeless rural landscape, and patronizes a feeling of real apprehension as being imaginative. Thus the pessimism of the nineteenth-century English rural poor is naturalized and made to seem identical with the pessimism of, say, the poor of the ancient Roman countryside, and we find ourselves once more in the realm of pastoral, although now tinged with a romantic pessimism.

The fact is that Hardy's parents, although having suffered intense poverty prior to their marriage, were relatively well off when Hardy was born. Thus the continued pessimism of his mother, rather than being part of a timeless cultural inheritance, really reflected a fear of being reduced to her former poverty. The fact that such transitions could occur in a single lifetime indicates that the countryside did not reflect a society of changeless class
relationships, but on the contrary, was experiencing a rather violent disruption of these relationships. It is in these changing relationships that the pessimism or fatalism affecting Hardy's outlook is to be found and not in a time­less rural environment in which natural disaster is the sole cause.

The rural economy was based on a capitalist agriculture with a clearly defined class system. By the eighteenth century almost half of the cultivated land was owned by five thousand families—a quarter by four hundred families—in a population of between seven and eight million people. By 1873, four­fifths of the land was owned by fewer than 7,000 persons. The basic structure of the system was composed of a class of landowners, a class of tenant farmers, and a class of landless laborers. A peasantry had long ceased to exist, having disappeared into the class of laborers.

This basic economic structure was complicated, however, by the presence of two other classes that were part of rural village life before the intensification of the capitalist mode of production. The first was a class of smallholders or "family farmers," which occupied smaller units, poorer land, or both. By 1873 they were still as numerous as the tenant farmers, although throughout the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth their relative importance had been diminishing. The second, an intermediate class that was part of an older village economy, was made up of village artisans of all sorts and small entrepreneurs.
It was into the latter relatively independent class that Thomas Hardy was born. In this intermediate class a family's social status was based on the long-term lease it had on a house and surrounding garden, the most common type being a life-hold; that is, the lease was good for the lifetimes of three successive heads of family. Although the family could be forced out at the end of three lifetimes, the lease was generally renewed by the landowner. Thus, unlike the landless laborers, who had no permanent dwelling and were forced to change domiciles at the end of every contract or who could be evicted at the whim of the farmer, the intermediate class was the most stable in the community. Residing in the same village for generations, they became the conscious carriers of a cultural tradition that connected the distant past with the present. In Under the Greenwood Tree, the village tradition of church music is seen to be in the hands of a group consisting of a shoemaker, mason, nightschool teacher, tranter (carrier), and so on.

Despite the fact that in material terms all that separated the farm laborer from the intermediate class was the matter of a permanent residence and the fact that the village artisan or trader was self-employed and the laborer was not, these facts were enough to erect an insurmountable social barrier between the two. Hardy, looking back in 1927, described the narrow gradations of class and status as a caste system:
Down to the middle of the last century, country villagers were divided into two distinct castes, one being the artisans, traders, "liviers" (owners of freeholds), and the manor-house upper servants; the other the "work-folk," i.e., farm labourers... The two castes rarely intermarried, and did not go to each other's house-gatherings save exceptionally.32

But Hardy had relatives from both sides of his family in the second or lower caste, and his sympathy for the suffering knew no class barriers. At any rate, it is the disintegration of this intermediate class, the uprooting of its members and their forced mobility as new farm laborers or urban proletarians that forms the social, moral, and psychological milieu of the Wessex novels.

The steady development of agrarian capitalism from Elizabethan times through the eighteenth century was accelerated during the early nineteenth as it transformed itself to meet the demands of a national market rather than a local one. But the method of consolidating the land into ever larger holdings continued a process begun in the sixteenth century by the landed aristocracy. Although an aristocracy in political terms, "it lived by a calculation of rents and returns on investment of capital, and it was the process of rack-renting, engrossing and enclosure which increased their hold on the land."33 The method of consolidation amounted to a form of legalized seizure of small holdings enacted by representatives of the large landowning class. Between, roughly, 1725 and 1825, nearly four thousand Acts of Parliament enabled more than six million acres
of land, one quarter of all cultivated acreage, to be appropriated by the politically dominant landowners.\textsuperscript{34} The number of landless, which was large as early as 1690, increased further to a proportion of five landless laborers to every two occupiers in 1831.

As capitalist agriculture became more dominant, the intermediate class came under severe pressure from two directions: first, from the standpoint of the land it occupied, so that life-holds were not renewed when the third lifetime expired; second, from the external competition of a manufacturing urban economy which effectively cut out those craftsmen who relied on a local market.\textsuperscript{35} The steady encroachment of capitalist social relations, although not exclusive, exerted pressure on all who did not belong to or fit in with them. The effect on the intermediate or residual class was to dispossess, undercut or pauperize a majority of its members.

Hardy's great concern is with the members of this class in their uprootedness, not only in terms of their new social mobility, upward as well as downward, but also in terms of new questions which emerge regarding the meaning of upward mobility. The disintegration of his class leads him implicitly to question the moral content of all class relationships. "The defects of a class," he noted in 1866, "are more perceptible to the class immediately below it than to itself."\textsuperscript{36} In terms of the centuries-old village traditions its members carried and its relative
independence, he was convinced that a very valuable class of people had been forced to vanish. Unlike the farm laborers and the urban proletariat into which they disappeared, these people were strongly individualistic and from them came most of the early trade-union leaders and organizers. Thus this class feeling of Hardy's is enough in itself, it would seem, to place him at some distance from the easy optimism of the idea of progress, whether of the Spencerian school whose doctrine of the survival of the fittest could have only sounded ironic to him, or of the Comtian school with its rigid doctrine of sacrificing the individual for the sake of the collective.

The radicalization of the "intermediate" people, a radicalization which Hardy shared but which never led straightforwardly to the socialist demands of an industrial proletariat, is indicated in his essay on "The Dorsetshire Labourer":

The system is much to be deplored, for every one of these banished people imbibes a sworn enmity to the existing order of things, and not a few of them, far from becoming merely honest Radicals, degenerate into Anarchists, waiters on chance, to whom danger to the State...is a welcomed opportunity....The cause of morality cannot be served by compelling a population hitherto evenly distributed over the country to concentrate in a few towns, with the inevitable results of overcrowding and want of regular employment. But the question of the Dorset cottager here merges in that of all the houseless and landless poor, and the vast topic of the Rights of Man, to consider which is beyond the scope of a merely descriptive article.38

Hardy's meliorism begins here; it emerges from direct
experience. He did not have to be led to it by Mill, Comte, or Huxley, nor did he consign it to the time scale of a mystical evolutionary process as in Von Hartmann.

The sadness and bitterness of the process of "banishment" is described in Tess:

Cottagers who were not directly employed on the land were looked upon with disfavour, and the banishment of some starved the trade of others, who were thus forced to follow. These families, who had formed the backbone of the village life of the past, who were the depositories of the village traditions, had to seek refuge in the large centres; the process, humorously designated by statisticians as "the tendency of the rural population towards the large towns," being really the tendency of water to flow uphill when forced by machinery.\[39\]

With the disintegration of this intermediate class, its members hovered at the fringes of the classes immediately above their own or immediately below. After Under the Greenwood Tree, their mobility, in fact mobility in general as it pertained to a wider group who were essentially rendered classless, became the dominant theme of the Wessex novels. Gabriel Oak begins at the edge of capitalist farming after rising from being a skilled shepherd for absentee owners. But struck by a single disaster he is uprooted from his native village and forced to offer himself for any kind of labor at the hiring-fair. Eventually he becomes a shepherd again and moves upward to bailiff and then farmer, completing the cycle.

In The Mayor of Casterbridge mobility is stressed in the confrontation between the uprooted member of the
intermediate class and the country town. Henchard begins as a skilled laborer, a hay trusser, moves up through dealing in corn to become a substantial merchant. Ruined, he goes back to being a hay trusser. But Hardy is indicating the range of possibilities as well as the rapid bi-directional movement.

Tess is not originally a "peasant"--the class no longer existed in rural society--but the daughter of a haggler, an itinerant trader. Existing at the extreme edge of the intermediate class, the working capital of the family is a horse. When it is killed, the only alternative is for Tess to go into the labor market. The last claim to membership in the intermediate class is cancelled when life-tenure to the cottage is lost with the death of John Durbeyfield. Tess moves from light labor in looking after poultry, to being a milk maid, and finally to heavy work in the fields. But she is in the special position of being a woman laborer and as a woman is exposed to another range of possibilities and pressures of the market: seduction, marriage, desertion, kept mistress. Her history thus mirrors the limits and pressures of a declining intermediate class. A similar pattern is traced in The Woodlanders with Giles Winterborne and Marty South repeating the decline of the class as their life-holds are lost.

Jude, in Jude the Obscure, also exemplifies the history of this intermediate class. On the basis of his great-aunt's owning a bake shop he is able to get an
apprenticeship and becomes a skilled mason. But because of his desire to get a university education—which amounts to a leap in mobility beyond the scale permitted the intermediate class—and also because of the changing conditions of craftsmen within the rural economy, he moves into the urban working class, the actual future of the majority of these semi-independent craftsmen. But in Jude, Hardy stresses the role of education in mobility, and stresses it in such a manner as to reveal the wide, unbridgeable gap that existed between the possibility of a limited upward movement and the rigid class structure that reserved a university education as a status symbol of ruling class dominance. This is symbolized in the description of the lodgings Jude and Sue take up at Christminster:

- a narrow lane close to the back of a college, but having no communication with it. The little houses were darkened to gloom by the high collegiate buildings, within which life was so far removed from that of the people in the lane as if it had been on the opposite sides of the globe; yet only a thickness of wall divided them.40

The moral problem implicit in upward mobility, even if this mobility were easier than it was (can anyone really imagine Jude as a clergyman allied with the landed gentry?) is brought out in The Return of the Native. The questions Hardy raises go to the heart of social consciousness. Take this exchange between Clym and his mother:

"I am astonished, Clym. How can you want to do better than you've been doing?"...
"But I hate that business of mine, and
I want to do some worthy thing before
I die...."

"After all the trouble that has been
taken to give you a start, and when there
is nothing to do but to keep straight on
towards affluence, you say you will...It
disturbs me, Clym, to find that you have
come home with such thoughts as those.
I hadn't the least idea that you meant to
go backward in the world by your own free
choice...."

"I cannot help it," said Clym, in a
troubled tone....

"Why can't you do...as well as others?"

"I don't know, except that there are
many things other people care for which I
don't...."

"And yet you might have been a wealthy
man if you had only persevered....I suppose
you will be like your father; like him, you
are getting weary of doing well...."

"Mother, what is doing well?"

Clym's question is a radically moral one, challenging
the moral content of self-interest and thereby the entire
justification of class differences and class oppression.
But only the member of a disintegrated class, a mind di-
vested of class ideology, can ask it. The question is un-
answerable because it is raised by that aspect of Hardy's
consciousness that is centered on man and man's suffering
as opposed to self-interest:

Altruism, or the Golden Rule, or what-
ever "Love thy Neighbour as Yourself"
may be called, will ultimately be
brought about I think by the pain we
see in others reacting on ourselves, as
if we and they were a part of one body.
Mankind, in fact, may be and possibly will
be viewed as members of one corporeal frame.

This may be in harmony with Comte, and Clym's question
may be derivable from Positivism, but the sentiment orig-
inated in prior social experience; Hardy was not led to it
by an intellectual argument.

At any rate, given the prevailing state of social consciousness, Clym's alternatives are doomed to failure. For Clym's question also reveals the false consciousness at work wherever visions of upward mobility are present. In Tess it takes the form of Tess's aristocratic ancestry; in Jude, Jude's dream of becoming a clergyman; in The Woodlanders, George Melbury's dream of Grace's rise to the gentry. Henchard in his blaming others as well as blind fate for his ruin, Napoleon in his wish "only to succeed" but declaring he is driven by a force outside himself, and even the Spirit of the Years, who dodges the pertinent question of justice and compassion raised by the Spirit of the Pities by referring them to the Immanent Will—all of these attitudes are revelations of false consciousness, the purpose of which is to cover up the real social relationships that are being worked out.

II. Hardy's Reading: Idealism vs. Realism

Lennart Bjork, after discussing Hardy's ambiguity about democracy, states that "the evidence in the 'Literary Notes' indicates he was still more hesitant about socialism." He then goes on to say, "In fact he seems to have accepted the hostile approach taken by Herbert Spencer in an article entitled 'The Coming Slavery.'" As evidence for this conclusion he cites certain entries copied by Hardy from Spencer's article and then goes on to say
If such entries reflect Hardy's own ideas—and there is no evidence to the contrary—we have yet another reason to de-emphasize revolutionary or progressive politico-economic issues in Hardy's fiction—socialism being after all, the main politico-economic question at the time.  

This is a rather astonishing argument, if indeed one can unravel an argument out of it. Among the claims Bjork is making are, that the mere copying of an entry in a notebook is enough to indicate Hardy's political and social ideas; that the existence of such an entry copied from Spencer indicates he accepted Spencer's ideas; that there is no evidence that Hardy was opposed to Spencer's ideas on socialism, which were, by the way, that socialism and slavery are synonymous, that trade unionism and strikes must be suppressed, that the conditions of the working class must not be ameliorated, and so on; and that Hardy's hesitancy about socialism left him no alternative but to accept Spencer's views.

None of these claims has the slightest evidence to back it up, and what Bjork has revealed is the occupational hazard scholars are sometimes subject to when they forget the purpose of their scholarship. One would think that the purpose of examining an artist's notes is to supplement what is already inherent in the artistic output and not to cancel that output to create an industry of note analysis for its own sake. Hardy, in fact, was not all that anti-socialist, and his "hesitancy" about it may have been due to a simple lack of information. In a letter written to
Federic Harrison, dated November 3, 1908, he stated "My quarrel with Socialists is that they don't make it clear what Socialism is. I have a suspicion that I am of their way of thinking, but I don't know for the above reason."  

The proper perspective for viewing Hardy's notetaking and his reading in general, it seems to me, is indicated in a letter he wrote in 1893 in which he referred to Spencer's *First Principles* as

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a book which acts or used to act upon me as a sort of patent expander when I had been particularly narrowed down by the events of life. Whether the theories are true or false, their effect upon the imagination is unquestionable, and I think beneficial.
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If this attitude can be extended to the other writers that Hardy read, it is evident that his first concern was his art. His reading in general served an educational function, but of the emotions rather than the intellect. Its purpose was to establish a scaffold in the imagination from which experienced reality could be reconstructed in terms of a synthesis of impressionistic images. Thus an entry copied from Spencer, for example, could serve a multitude of purposes without indicating any belief whatever.

It seems that the only positive effect Spencer actually had on Hardy's art was in the conception of the Immanent Will in *The Dynasts*. Spencer's term, which Hardy uses as one of the names of the Immanent Will, is the "Unknowable;" but Spencer's conception, which comes close to Von Hartmann's at this point, disappears into the latter's
pessimism which provided the more adequate impression for Hardy.48

What must be reiterated, however, is that the Immanent Will, whether described in impressions taken from Von Hartmann, Spencer, or Schopenhauer, represents but one of the ways in which reality is conceived, namely that of the Spirit of the Years. This is not the only way in which reality can be perceived, nor indeed is it the most important. It is, in fact, a false view of reality, and amounts to a display of false consciousness on the part of the Spirit of the Years. At any rate, if there is any character in Hardy who may be said to represent Spencer or Von Hartmann, that character is the Spirit of the Years. As far as Spencer's philosophy is concerned, there is no evidence in the novels or poetry that Hardy shared it. Jude the Obscure and Tess of the d'Urbervilles certainly reject vigorously the doctrine that the fittest survive.

A similar argument can be made with regard to the effect of Hardy's reading on his religious views. Webster contends that the two books that destroyed Hardy's traditional Anglicanism and turned him toward a pessimistic agnosticism were Darwin's Origin of Species and Essays and Reviews, especially the latter, both of which he read between 1860 and 1865.49 Webster's argument, however, depends on distilling Hardy into an intellectual essence that is alterable by the written word alone. Separating Hardy's intellect from his social experience as a member
of a disintegrating class takes Webster down the path of idealism that leads inevitably to a Hardy who is a transcendental idealist.

When Hardy's life is viewed as a whole, however, in which his reading is but one part of a wider experience, a different aspect of his religious attitude emerges. What seems to have drawn him to religion from his earliest days was its dramatic appeal rather than its dogma, and one of the pictures he gives us of his early childhood is his wrapping himself in a tablecloth at home, standing on a chair, and playing the role of a parson. His attraction to the church seems always to have depended on the emotional appeal of its rituals—its music especially and its high-sounding language—rather than upon intellectual conviction. His participation in church activities fulfilled at first an aesthetic and emotional need, and was his earliest exposure to the poetic. Later on he also perceived the church as a possible avenue of social and especially educational advancement, and was urged in this direction by his mother. Although his Anglicanism was automatic and largely unexamined, by 1865, when he still thought of following a career in the church, his fundamental beliefs were pervaded with a pessimism he had derived from his mother and the social experience of being a member of a disintegrating class. This class-based pessimism, sophisticated by exposure to Marcus Aurelius, found little difficulty in accommodating itself to the prevailing religious
pessimism of the post-Darwinian intellectual world which he entered as a young man. The erosion of his religious convictions was thus a gradual process rather than the consequence of a single moment of crisis. Hardy probably never did experience a "loss of faith" of the classic Victorian kind. But he never lost entirely "his imaginative adherence to the church, his love of its music and its services, and his belief in its civilizing functions." 53

Thus what appears to be a dramatic loss of faith if Hardy's intellect is separated from his social being, turns out to be the maturation of a poetic sensibility along with a rationalist outlook. The tension between his rationalism and the imaginative emotionalism that required for its fulfillment a direct experience is revealed in the poem "The Impercipient." The poem is not really about a loss of faith, but a loss of the ability to feel and perceive in certain ways, an inability which a purely intellectual awareness brings in its train. The last two full stanzas dramatize the tension:

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

Yet I would bear my shortcomings
With meet tranquility,
But for the charge that blessed things
I'd liefer not have be.
O, doth a bird deprived of wings
Go earth-bound wilfully! 54

Even as late as 1922, during the most pessimistic
phase of his life, he wrote in the "Apology" to Late
Lyrics and Earlier:

In any event poetry, pure literature in
general, religion-- I include religion,
in its essential and undogmatic sense, be­
cause poetry and religion touch each other,
or rather modulate into each other; are
indeed often but different names for the
same thing.... 55

Orel points out "that this concept of the relationship be­
tween religion and poetry is Arnoldian, and echoes passages
in Culture and Anarchy" and Essays in Criticism, Second
Series, 56 but Hardy's experience preceded his reading of
Arnold and verified it. Hardy always distinguished re­
ligion and poetry from religious dogma, and when Arnold
attempted to defend established Church doctrine, he noted
that "When dogma has to be balanced by such hair-splitting
as the late Mr. M. Arnold's it must be in a very bad
way." 57

Hardy's rationalist outlook was affected not only by
Darwin, nor even primarily by Darwin, but by Mill and Comte
as well. It was in Mill that he found a way to transform
his class-based "pessimism," by means of an inductive sci­
entific skepticism, to the idea of liberal social action.
It was probably as a result of reading Mill that he became
a Liberal in politics. At any rate, it was by anchoring
his rationalism in Mill's science, in Mill's inductive
logic, that he was able to examine and judge theologies and
systems of metaphysics. This seems evidenced by his re­
jection of Newman's Apologia on logical grounds: a note of
July 2, 1865 reads:

Worked at J. H. Newman's Apologia....
Style charming, and his logic really human, being based not on syllogisms but on converging probabilities. Only—and here comes the fatal catastrophe—there is no first link to his excellent chain of reasoning and down you come headlong....

His rejection of Bergson had a similar basis: Bergson's élan vital "seems less probable than single and simple determinism... because it is more complex; and where proof is impossible, probability must be our guide." This requirement of logical proof or at least probability of occurrence must be borne in mind when examining Hardy's attitudes toward any philosophical system.

From Mill, too, Hardy probably received reinforcement for his rejection of nature as a moral guide and an argument for meliorism. But Mill's precept that "No one can be a great thinker who does not recognize that as a thinker it is his first duty to follow his intellect to whatever conclusions it may lead" applies to Hardy's thinking about Mill. In the long run he had to reject Mill's utilitarianism and his adherence to the idea of progress—the notion that man's lot was improving, that "there is a preponderance of evidence that the Creator desired the pleasure of his creatures." Hardy's social experience, as we have seen, rejected that view, and The Return of the Native undercut the moral premises of utilitarianism.

Comte's importance to Hardy lay in his humanism rather than in his science of society. Comte provided a
rationalistic basis for Hardy's placing man at the center of his concern.\textsuperscript{63} The most important idea he seems to have derived from Comte was that man was the creator of all value in the universe. This served to fill the intellectual vacuum left by his rejection of Christian dogma. Thus God, as in the poem "A Plaint to Man," is conceived as being the creation of man rather than man's creator. In the poem God does not complain about having been created, but about having been made so poorly:

\begin{quote}
Wherefore, O Man, did there come to you
The unhappy need of creating me--
A form like your own--for praying to?

My virtue, power, utility
Within my maker must all abide,
Since none in myself can ever be.
\end{quote}

The dying God tells man he has no need to create a poor image of himself to rule over him; man has the resources to shape a brotherhood devoid of self-imposed suffering:

\begin{quote}
The truth should be told, and the fact be faced
That had best been faced in earlier years:

The fact of life with dependence placed
On the human heart's resource alone,
In brotherhood bonded close and graced

With loving-kindness fully blown,
And visioned help unsought, unknown.\textsuperscript{64}
\end{quote}

Although Positivism greatly reinforced Hardy's meliorism, "loving-kindness," a phrase he used many times, connects his meliorism to his religious feeling and subjective sensibility. While it connotes a consciousness of collective man and a rejection of self-interest, loving-kindness
implies a human attribute that is equal to self-interest in strength but applied in the opposite direction. But this attribute cannot be imposed upon man by a scientific elite nor can it emerge in the rigidly controlled society Positivism requires. This is one of the ways in which Hardy diverged from Comte.

However there is no denying the strength of Comte's humanism on Hardy's outlook. At one point it seems to have completely supplanted his Christianity. On the death of George Eliot, who was a strong supporter of Comte, he noted:

> If Comte had introduced Christ among the worthies in his calendar it would have made Positivism tolerable to thousands who, from position, family connection, or early education, now decry what in their heart of hearts they hold to contain the germs of a true system.\(^{65}\)

Far from the Madding Crowd has many features compatible with Positivism, but between that novel and The Return of the Native, Hardy's Comtian ardor seems to have cooled considerably. The Comtian optimism, based on a necessitarian view of progress, is rejected in the latter novel not only for the reasons I have outlined above, but probably also because of the realization that Comte's Religion of Humanity was as oppressive a construction as doctrinaire Christianity.

This certainly did not prevent Hardy from using Comtian precepts in his later works. Frederic Harrison, a leader of the English Comtists and a friend of Hardy's, declared upon his reading of Tess of the d'Urbervilles in
1891 that it was "a Positivist allegory or sermon." And in a letter to Harrison regarding a review of Part First of The Dynasts in 1904, Hardy wrote:

"You will have seen the Times review & how it is ruled by the odium theologicum (though carefully disguised.)--the Positive view of the Universe in the book being the unforgivable sin...."

This is a rather important comment on The Dynasts, since the meliorist ending of the drama had not yet been written. The "Positive view" can only be that of the Spirit of the Pities, and so this is more evidence that no character in the Spirit world is meant to hold a philosophy of Hardy's. For in a letter to Lady Grove written in 1903 he was able to declare:

"I am not a Positivist, as you know, but I agree with Anatole France when he says... (though he is not one either) that no person of serious thought in these times could be said to stand aloof from Positive teaching & ideals."

Even as late as 1922, in the midst of the pervading gloom of the early post-war years, Hardy uses a Comtian figure of speech to express his enduring belief in meliorism:

"But if it be true, as Comte argued, that advance is never in a straight line, but in a looped orbit, we may, in the aforesaid ominous moving backward, be doing it pour mieux sauter, drawing back for a spring."

The importance of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann on Hardy's thought has been greatly exaggerated. There is no real evidence that Hardy shared either of their views as he seems to have shared, to a limited extent certainly,
the views of Mill and Comte. The importance of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann lies in the role they had in Hardy's shaping of The Dynasts, and even here, primarily in the way the universe is perceived by the Spirit of the Years. This view, as I have stated several times, is not Hardy's, and if it may be taken as one of the theses of the drama, other views, both explicitly and implicitly, form antitheses to it. Walter Wright perceives, rather reluctantly, since he is convinced that Hardy was a pessimistic determinist, part of what is going on in The Dynasts:

It is not possible to say definitely in what respects Hardy found Comte inadequate. Much depends on what one feels is assumed by Hardy in, for example, any possible bringing of the Will to consciousness at the end of The Dynasts. If this requires human effort, as it would appear to do, then to that extent it is in agreement with the Positivists. To that extent, too, the poem is not monistically determinist. In general, however, Hardy could not share Comte's optimism.70

Wright overlooks the fact that Comte was a determinist too, but allowed free will a greater role in speeding up or slowing down the necessary process than did Schopenhauer or Von Hartmann. At any rate, Wright has indicated that at least two antithetical views are present in The Dynasts: a pessimistic view which may be assigned to the Spirit of the Years, and a Positivist view which is represented by the Spirit of the Pities.

What seems to have attracted Hardy to Schopenhauer was first, his pessimism, which undercut the Hegelian idealist notion that the universe was working out a
preordained design in which man was approaching ever nearer the Absolute Good, the City of God; and second, that Schopenhauer's Will functioned in all living things, animal as well as human, varying only in degree. Schopenhauer's assertion that "understanding is the same in all animals and all men" harmonized nicely with Hardy's ethical belief that there is an inherent kinship of man and animal nature.

Schopenhauer's Will, as it emerges in living things, is a universal force of pure self-interest and thus the cause of all suffering. Schopenhauer's pessimism, as it emerged in the awareness that intense human suffering was incompatible with optimism, reinforced Hardy's own feelings derived by observation and experience independent of a metaphysics. But he diverged sharply from Hardy with regard to the possibility of meliorism. In Schopenhauer's view meliorism was an impossibility since it depended on collective action and collective action, any purposeful action, was merely a manifestation of the Will. All human social institutions were likewise manifestations of the Will. Thus all the individual could do to negate the Will, assuming he is the rare person who actually becomes conscious of it, was to transcend the will to live—not by suicide, since this too was an act of the Will, but by engaging in an introspective search for it and by opposing it with thought alone. Since all instinctual life was a manifestation of Will, this introspective negation led inevitably to a denial of life and to spiritual annihilation.
Schopenhauer's views on the art of tragedy were compatible with Hardy's, but Hardy seems to have arrived at his conception independently.\textsuperscript{72}

What Hardy tried to get from Von Hartmann was the idea of an unconscious Will that could be made conscious by man's awakening consciousness. The awakening to consciousness of the Will (in Hardy's imagery) was to transform it from a mindless, undifferentiated "It" into an anthropomorphic universal so that pain and suffering could be ameliorated. The implications of The Dynasts are first, that the awakening and transformation of the unconscious Will were in the hands of men, and second, that once the Will was awakened and suffering ameliorated, life would continue on an elevated plane and the fruits that the Earth had to offer would be fully enjoyed.

In Von Hartmann's system however, consciousness, or the emergence of idea, is a contamination of the Unconscious. The Unconscious had somehow become embarked on a process that led to conscious idea and in order to recover its original pure passive state, idea or consciousness had to be negated. This could only happen when the growth of consciousness became universal--consciousness apparently being equated with pain and suffering by Von Hartmann. Once consciousness (pain) became more or less universal, all manifestations of it--all of humanity, all life, the world of phenomena--would be annihilated in an instant. Von Hartmann assimilated a Lamarckian theory of evolution
to his metaphysics in order to permit an evolutionary growth of consciousness.

Thus what Hardy got from Von Hartmann at most were suggestions of imagery that would reflect certain emotional perceptions in *The Dynasts*. Hardy's and Von Hartmann's conceptions of humanity, society, the desirability of life, were diametrically opposed.

Walter Wright asks, with reference to *The Dynasts*, how the Immanent Will was to be "informed by consciousness," and concludes that this problem "was to remain for Hardy the impenetrable mystery." Wright seems to miss the significance of his question. In a very large sense the problem of consciousness is and always has been the problem of mankind. It is the problem of the great religions, of ethical systems, of conceptions of human betterment that emerged before Socrates, of liberal democracy, of Marxism, of all sorts of utopias. Almost every system that conceives of a state in which man lives a free, harmonious, peaceful and fruitful life with a minimum of pain and suffering depends precisely on the growth of consciousness to bring it about. *The Dynasts* of course could not venture an answer to the problem; what it did was to present the problem with such new force and such implications for our time that facing it can no longer be delayed nor can it be swept under the idealist rug.
Chapter 4

THE DYNASTS AS A SYNTHESIS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

War alone brings up to its highest
tension all human energy and puts the
stamp of nobility upon the peoples
who have the courage to face it.
-Benito Mussolini

My brain has only one wish—to succeed!
-Napoleon in The Dynasts

Mother, what is doing well?
-Clym Yeobright in The Return of
the Native

Prior to observing a debate in the House of Commons,
near the beginning of The Dynasts, the Spirit of the Pities
makes a suggestion to the Spirit of the Years:

Let us put on and suffer for the nonce
The feverish fleshings of Humanity,
And join the pale debaters here convened.
So may thy soul be won to sympathy
By donning their poor mould.
(Pt. I. I. iii)

The significance of this passage lies in its implication
that the Spirits are not capable of human feeling. They
are not subject to pain and can not suffer as humans do.
Even the Spirit of the Pities derives his sympathy and com-
passion indirectly, by observation: it is impossible for him
to suffer as a human being does. The Spirits are thus
meant to represent modes of conscious thought and feeling
derived not from direct experience, but from such mental
activities as deductive and inductive logic, introspection,
possibly imaginative reasoning. As the Spirit of the Years

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describes himself and the other Spirits at the close of Part First:

Our incorporeal sense,
Our overseeings, our supernal state,
Our readings Why and Whence
Are but the flower of Man's intelligence.
(Pt. I. VI. viii)

Hardy describes them very briefly in the "Preface:"

These phantasmal Intelligences are divided into groups, of which one only, that of the Pities, approximates to "the Universal Sympathy of human nature--the spectator idealized" of the Greek chorus; it is impressionable and inconsistent in its views, which sway hither and thither as wrought on by events. Another group approximates to the passionless Insight of the Ages. The remainder are eclectically chosen auxiliaries whose signification may be readily discerned.¹

Although the opposition of a purely intellectual consciousness to a consciousness derived from direct human experience, as well as the tensions such opposition gives rise to, must be kept in mind when reading The Dynasts, it is equally important to understand that the Spirit world is not really separate from the human world; its thought is human thought. This is part of what Hardy meant in his usage of the term "Monistic theory of the Universe": "The wide prevalence of the Monistic theory of the Universe forbade, in this twentieth century, the importation of Divine personages from any antique Mythology as ready-made sources or channels of Causation...."²

Since the Spirits are of the same substance as human life in general, their thought is not infallible. The inconsistency of the Spirit of the Pities is apparent; but
even the self-assurance and certainty of the Spirit of the Years are not above question. Recalling the remarks made in Chapter 3 regarding the centrality of human concerns and direct experience in Hardy's consciousness, the last appeal of intellectual pronouncements must be to real life, the earthbound life of ordinary people.

The problem with The Dynasts is that the consciousness it seems to convey is that of the Spirit World. But if the Spirit of the Pities represents "the spectator idealized," the implication for the reader is that another consciousness exists in the drama, and this one cannot be reached through the eyes of the Spirits. The problem with reaching this consciousness is that it is depicted in terms of unconsciousness. It is as yet an unawakened consciousness, one which does not awaken explicitly in the drama, but might do so in the world of the reader. Thus if the melioristic implications of the drama have to do with the awakening of unconsciousness, it is obvious that they cannot be constrained by the thought of the Spirit of the Pities, but reach out into the reader's world, because the consciousness the reader is concerned with is ultimately not that of the Spirit of the Pities, but that which he reaches by circumventing the idealistic Spirit world. In this respect The Dynasts has direct connection with such prior works of Hardy's as Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure.

The problem for the reader is how to reach this other consciousness. The Spirit of the Years, who is the master
showman of the drama, attempts to convince the other Spirits as well as the reader that war and the suffering it entails are predetermined: there is nothing humanity can do about it and humanity counts for very little in the universe anyway. Human beings are completely devoid of free will and their every action is determined by a mindless, universal energy, neither malevolent nor benevolent, which blindly acts only to create new phenomena: "artistries in Circumstance." On this level of perception the theme of The Dynasts seems to have links not only to Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, but to Spencer as well. The drama as it unfolds seems to take on the aspect of a Spencerian struggle of the survival of the fittest. War becomes a symbol of such struggle expanded to cosmic proportions, and the fact that the wars depicted are dynastic, adds the necessary Spencerian element of self-interest; as the Chorus of the Pities chants after the Battle of Austerlitz: "Each for himself, his family, his heirs;/For the wan wreters nations who concerns, who cares?" (Pt. I. VI. v.). Napoleon, who is the epitome of self-interest, is unfit, finally, to survive, and this unfitness is symbolized in his physical deterioration which accompanies his decline as a military strategist. In Spencerian terms, the optimism of The Dynasts lies not in the possibility of making the Immanent Will conscious, but in the necessary defeat of Napoleon. But Spencerian optimism is swallowed up in the larger pessimistic theme against which only the Comtian Spirit of the
Pities and, to a much lesser extent, the Spirit Ironic inveigh.

The Spirit of the Pities, despite his sympathy and compassion for suffering humanity, is yet misleading on this intellectual level. His pity is so diffuse that criminal and victim, oppressor and oppressed alike, share in it indiscriminately. The meliorism he envisions is an idealistic one in which dynasts and dynasties remain fixed in place as heretofore, as well as all social relationships. In other words, if the self-interest of dynasts is perceived as the cause of war, the solution is to transform or replace it with collective altruism. Thus the action that seems to be called for is purely mental and involves the rulers or an intellectual elite who, by a change of attitude alone, can ameliorate the suffering of the mass of mankind. Humanity at large remains passive in its amelioration. Whatever change for the better occurs is imposed upon it from above. Thus the growth of consciousness that the Pities envision is that of an intellectual elite.

The Spirit Ironic, who is inclined to see war and social relationships in more realistic terms than either the Spirit of the Pities or the Spirit of the Years, is passive in his attitude. He tends to be sympathetic to the Spirit of the Pities, but his skepticism precludes a belief in meliorism.

It is in opposition to this intellectual edifice that the reader must discover a consciousness that has no
spokesman to represent it. This consciousness, however, cannot be arrived at by thought alone. It is a matter more of feeling and of personal experience than of pure thought and would seem to involve that faculty for imaginative identification that Hardy possessed to a remarkable degree. Once discovered, it must be ranged against the purely intellectual consciousness of the Spirits to perceive the latter's shortcomings in terms of real human experience.

At any rate, if this consciousness exists in The Dynasts, it is to be discovered in the world of human action as distinct from the Spirit world of the intellect. The central experience of this world is war. All of man's seemingly timeless suffering, whether its source is external to man or resides in man himself, is concentrated and symbolized in the human activity of war. Thus the unconscious Immanent Will of the intellect is transformed on the level of human action into mindless war. The Spirit of the Years would persuade us that all human action, and thus war itself, is predetermined and out of the control of humanity. His argument really is not that war (suffering) will never end, but that if it does, it will occur accidentally and not by human volition. In this light the melioristic ending of The Dynasts becomes ambiguous: what the Spirit of the Pities implies to be the result of collective human action may be nothing but deterministic actions taking new form, one of the Immanent Will's artistrys in
Circumstance. Thus the major question posed to a seeker of the second consciousness is whether the Spirit of the Years is correct in his insistence that the control of men's destinies does not lie in the hands of men.

Over twenty battles and scenes of military operations are presented in *The Dynasts*. Hundreds of thousands of lives are engaged in murdering or being murdered, maiming or being maimed, imposing pain or enduring it. War as immediate human experience forms the emotional as well as the structural foundation of the drama. All else--the debates in the Spirit world, the Parliamentary debates, the diplomatic maneuvering, Napoleon's attempt to establish a dynasty--form a superstructure that loses its meaning in the absence of the concentrated and persistent suffering depicted in the battle scenes. This suffering is the real manifestation of unconsciousness and the problem is to discover the germs of consciousness in it. This involves first perceiving the human world in terms of intellect alone, in other words, the way the Spirits see it, and then descending to the level of the actual human world of experience to see if the judgments of the Spirits can be verified.

I. The Consciousness of Pure Intellect: The Spirit World

The central mind of *The Dynasts* is the Spirit of the Years who forcefully establishes his intellectual dominance through his seemingly intimate knowledge of the Immanent Will; he is in fact a sort of pope of the Will.
Answering a question regarding the nature of the Will, he states without fear of contradiction:

It works unconsciously as heretofore,
Eternal artistry in Circumstance,
Whose patterns, wrought by rapt aesthetic rote,
Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,
And not their consequence.
(For Scene)

The temptation in perceiving a link to Von Hartmann in this speech and links to other metaphysicians in other speeches is to attribute a formal philosophy to this Spirit and to establish this philosophy as the framework of The Dynasts. Then criticism is reduced to the sterile enterprise of either discovering internal inconsistencies in the Spirit's pronouncements or of making The Dynasts as a whole fit the Procrustean bed of the philosophy. But Hardy has warned that the Spirits are to be taken by the reader for what they may be worth as contrivances of the fancy merely. Their doctrines are but tentative, and are advanced with little eye to a systematized philosophy warranted to lift "the burthen of the mystery" of this unintelligible world. The chief thing hoped for them is that they and their utterances may have dramatic plausibility enough to procure for them..."that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith."3

The important idea is that the doctrines of the Spirits are tentative. But tentative in what sense? Since they are not advanced as a systematized philosophy, they are tentative in the sense that they must be verified and this verification can take place only in the human world, in actual human experience.
The most powerful case for the Spirit of the Years's determinism is made by way of six pictorial images that depict humanity as part of a vast brainlike organism that controls its every movement. The first occurs in the Fore Scene:

A new and penetrating light descends on the spectacle, enduing men and things with a seeming transparency, and exhibiting as one organism the anatomy of life and movement in all humanity and vitalized matter included in the display.

The image is essentially physiological. The "waves" and "winds grown visible" that the Spirit of the Pities perceives are explained by Years as "tissues" of the Will:

These are the Prime Volitions,—fibrils, veins, Will-tissues, nerves, and pulses of the Cause,
That heave throughout the Earth's compositure.
Their sum is like the lobule of a Brain.
(Fore Scene)

Humans believe their actions free because they are unaware of the presence of the Will:

the while unguessed
Of those it stirs, who (even as ye do) dream
Their motions free, their orderings supreme;
Each life apart from each, with power to mete
Its own day's measures; balanced, self complete;
Though they subsist but atoms of the One
Labouring through all, divisible from none.
(Fore Scene)

The central image of humanity linked physiologically to a greater organism does not really come from Von Hartmann or Schopenhauer, but from Comte's Social Physics. And the figure of men believing themselves to be acting freely while in reality their actions are completely determined is from Schopenhauer. Thus the "philosophy" of Years, or
rather the imagery that takes the place of philosophy, is a curious blend of ideas derived and transformed into metaphor from sources that would seem to be incompatible with each other: Von Hartmann, Schopenhauer, and Comte.

The second presentation of the vision occurs when Napoleon places the Lombard crown on his head, making himself King of Italy. The act seems a paradigm case of a free, independent will in action whose self-interest is to result in war between Austria and France. In reply to the indignation of the Spirit of the Pities, Years tries to undercut the notion that Napoleon was acting freely:

The scene assumes...preternatural transparence...and there is again beheld as it were the interior of a brain which seems to manifest the volitions of a Universal Will, of whose tissues the personages of the action form portion. (Pt. I. I. vi)

But the Spirit of the Pities is unable to square what he has perceived as free will with the vision: the observed human action is too immediate to be negated. The question of moral responsibility cannot be so easily shrugged off: "And yet for sorriness/I cannot own the weird phantasms real!" (Pt. I. I. vi).

A third presentation is given at Austerlitz. The Spirit of the Pities prays to the "Great Necessitator" that whatever slaughter is necessary should be done quickly so that the suffering will not be drawn out. Years once more projects an image in which

The controlling Immanent Will appears...
as a brain-like network of currents and ejections, twitching, interpenetrating, entangling, and thrusting hither and thither the human forms.

(Pt. I. VI. iii)

What is significant about this occurrence is that the battle at Austerlitz is described with none of the graphic details of slaughter and bloodletting that are part of the emotional shock in such depicted battles as Albuera, Borodino and Waterloo. Thus the reader is ready to accept the vision, and its reiteration has the effect of developing a strong thesis in favor of pessimistic determinism.

What is also noteworthy is that the vision is not presented in the earlier and much bloodier naval battle at Trafalgar. In fact, for the four full scenes of Trafalgar the main Spirits appear significantly only at the end of the fourth. Meanwhile the reader has been given such gory scenes of the battle as:

The spot is covered now with floating men,
Some whole, the main in parts; arms, legs, trunks, heads,
Bobbing with tons of timber on the waves,
And splinters looped with entrails of the crew.

(Pt. I. V. iv)

Swab down these stairs. The mess of blood about
Makes 'em so slippery that one's like to fall
In carrying the wounded men below.

(Pt. I. V. ii)

The whole crew is in desperate action of battle and stumbling among the dead and dying, who have fallen too rapidly to be carried below.

(Pt. I. V. iii)

Moreover, Nelson is presented in such terms of willful
action as to defy any notion that it is predetermined. Nelson's bravery, dedication, and compassion are juxtaposed with what seems to be a powerful death wish. His refusal to take even the most common-sense precautions for his own safety indicates a will that is both free and free of self-interest.

When the Spirits appear at the end of the battle, the concern of the Pities is that Nelson's suffering was too drawn out. He expresses a powerful moral indictment of the Immanent Will to which Years replies in a tone that is not quite as pessimistic as before:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Nay, nay, nay;} \\
\text{Your hasty judgments stay,} \\
\text{Until the topmost cyme} \\
\text{Have crowned the last entablature of Time.} \\
\text{O heap not blame on that in-brooding Will;} \\
\text{O pause, till all things all their days} \\
\text{fulfil!}
\end{align*}
\]

(Pt. I. V. iv)

If there is a hint of optimism here it does not lie in the idea that the Will might become conscious in some far distant future, but that in its blind gropings for the sake of aesthetic novelty alone it will design some "artistry in Circumstance" in which pain and suffering are alleviated.

What seems to be developing in The Dynasts so far are two opposing theses: free will is being demonstrated not only in certain strong individuals such as Napoleon, Nelson, and Villeneuve, but in the Pities as well; at the same time the reiteration of the Years's vision of an interpenetrating Will has strengthened the case for a pessimistic determinism.
It is not until Part Third, at the start of Napoleon's disastrous Russian campaign, that the physiological image of the Immanent Will is presented again. It has not appeared through all of Part Second during which six battles have occurred including "the most murderous struggle of the whole war," Albuera. As a result, instances of what seems to be free will have multiplied without challenge, and the Spirit of the Pities has become bolder in his opposition to the Immanent Will. The strongest expression of determinism that occurs in Part Second takes place, curiously enough, not apropos of any scene of human suffering or of willful action, but at the beginning of a rather comedic scene centering on the antics of the Prince of Wales. Here the Spirit of the Years states, much too severely for the occasion:

So the Will heaves through Space and moulds the times,
With mortals for Its fingers! We shall see
Again men's passions, virtues, visions, crimes,
Obey resistlessly
The mutative, unmotived, dominant Thing
Which sways in brooding dark their wayfaring!
(Pt. II. II. iii)

It is almost as if the Spirit were reluctant to confront the concreteness of human experience.

A scene in which Napoleon forces Josephine not only to accept divorce so that he can wed Marie Louise, but to openly declare it was she who was the guilty party, overturns, or seems to, the entire concept of the Immanent Will
as presented by Years. For it seems that in this case Josephine is dominated by the will of Napoleon and not the Will.

It is significant that the fourth presentation of the Will should occur at the beginning of the Russian campaign, since another iteration of the theme strengthens a concept that is to undergo its severest test, during which the reader is supposed to accept as predetermined what seems to be the senseless destruction of over a half-million men for the sake of a single man's ambition.

The next presentation occurs during the Peninsular battle at Vitoria. Here its purpose seems to be to indicate that the British generals, including Wellington, are as much part of the Will as the French:

There immediately is shown visually the electric state of mind that animates Wellington, Graham, Hill, Kempt, Picton, Colville, and other responsible ones on the British side; and on the French King Joseph...surrounded by a numerous staff.... This vision, resembling as a whole the interior of a beating brain lit by phosphorescence, in an instant fades again back to normal.

(Pt. III. II. ii)

The implication is that the Will is neutral in the battle and that the victory of the British has no moral or other significance whatever.

The last presentation is the most forceful and significant and occurs at the height of the fighting at Waterloo:

A transparency as in earlier scenes again
pervades the spectacle, and the ubiquitous urging of the Immanent Will becomes visualized. The web connecting all the apparent separate shapes includes Wellington in its tissue with the rest, and shows him, like them, as acting while discovering his intention to act. By the lurid light the faces of every row, square, group, and column of men, French and English, wear the expression of those of people in a dream.

(Pt. III. VII. vii)

The purpose of the presentation at this point is to undercut any idea that the actions not only of Wellington, Napoleon, Ney, and the other generals, but the many thousands of plain soldiers as well, which seem to be almost superhuman in their intensity and purpose, are actions of free will. It is almost enough to shake the Spirit of the Pities out of his concern for Wellington, but it is not enough, ultimately, to convince the reader. The actions he has mentally witnessed, especially the strong sense of immediacy they evoked, are anything but dreamlike and automatic. Too many individual choices have been made, too many alternatives to actions presented and not taken, too many lives wantonly destroyed, too much blood allowed to flow, for him to believe it was all predetermined.

The judgment must ultimately be made on moral grounds. The ethical dimension is absent in all the presentations of the Will made by the Spirit of the Years because free choice is absent. It is the conviction that the moral sense is a distinguishing characteristic of humanity that finally convinces the reader of the existence of free choice and thus leads him to the belief that men have the power within
themselves to alter their lives for the better.

The Spirit of the Years is totally devoid of compassion and this lack points to the absence of a moral sense. At Walcheren, thousands of soldiers die of fever for no purpose whatever. The campaign was ill-conceived and badly carried out so that these soldiers, heroes of the Peninsular campaign, die not in patriotic battle, but passively and needlessly. After a long lyric in which the Spirit of the Pities expresses his sympathy and compassion for the dying men, the Spirit of the Years replies:

Why must ye echo as mechanic mimes
These mortal minions' bootless cadences,
Played on the stops of their anatomy
As is the mewling music on the strings
Of yonder ship-masts by the unweeving wind...
--Men pass to dark corruption, at the best,
Ere I can count five score: these why not now?
The Immanent Shaper builds Its beings so
Whether ye sigh their sighs with them or no!
(Pt. II. IV. viii)

When the Spirit of the Pities protests the suffering that King George is undergoing, the Spirit of the Years replies:

Mild one, be not too touched with human fate.
Such is the Drama: such the Mortal state:
No sigh of thine can null the Plan Predestinate.
(Pt. II. VI. v)

The determinism of Years, it must be emphasized, is shaped not only by the pessimistic metaphysics of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, but by science as well. He expresses not only the prevalent outlook of Victorian science, but also the essentially deterministic outlook of science regardless of era. In his eyes there is no essential difference in the scheme of things between the lower forms of
life, or even inert matter, and human life. In his final speech to Napoleon, the defeated dynast is

Like meanest insects on obscurest leaves
But incidents and grooves of Earth's unfolding;
Or as the brazen rod that stirs the fire
Because it must.

(Pt. III. VII. ix)

The amorality expressed in this climactic speech is expressed several times in the drama, but at this point it must awaken the reader's consciousness to a vigorous rejection of the entire deterministic outlook of the Spirit. And the rejection is made on moral grounds emerging from life's experience: it is impossible for a person to see himself in the light that Years sees him—as a mere puppet without moral choice—and it is impossible to think of Napoleon, the fountainhead of so much bloodletting, pain and suffering, as insignificant, because if he is, so too is all the bloodletting, pain and suffering he caused—and what kind of "spectator" would see the suffering as insignificant?

The Spirit of the Pities is at the opposite extreme from the Spirit of the Years. He seems to be nothing but sympathy and compassion, and while he seems to have a strong moral sense, this sense is sometimes overridden by misplaced pity. This profound sense of pity is derived at first from an acceptance of the deterministic outlook of the Spirit of the Years. He accepts as given the notion that humans are but puppets of the Immanent Will. His complaint, and the driving force behind his pity, is an awareness of the cosmic injustice of bestowing the capacity
to feel pain and to suffer upon automatons. In his reply
to a description of the Immanent Will as being incapable of
feeling, that "It is impassible as glacial snow" (Pt. I. IV.
v), he protests: "But O, the intolerable antilogy/Of making
figments feel!" (Pt. I. IV. v). This feeling becomes more
impassioned at the death of Nelson:

    Things mechanized
    By coils and pivots set to foreframed codes
    Would, in a thorough-sphered melodic rule,
    And governance of sweet consistency,
    Be cessed no pain, whose burnings would
    abide
    With That Which holds responsibility.
    (Pt. I. V. iv)

The speech points to the beginning of revolt against
the Immanent Will, and the Pities' concern for and identi-
fication with humanity thereafter. This Promethean theme
indicates it has taken a Positivist direction at the death
of Fox:

    Here, then, ends
    My hope for Europe's reason-wrought repose!
    He was the friend of peace--did his great
    best
    To shed her balms upon humanity.
    (Pt. II. I. ii)

At first his concern for humanity is in terms of pain and
suffering alone, so that he appears blind to their real
cause, which resides in man himself. Thus when war in all
its sordidness and brutality is realistically seen but ex-
pressed in ironic terms by the Spirit Ironic as "Quaint
poesy, and real romance of war!" (Pt. II. III. ii), Pities
replies heatedly, "Mock on, Shade, if thou wilt! But
others find/Poesy ever lurk where pit-pats poor mankind!"
This idealization of humanity leads inevitably to misjudgments and a blurring of moral distinctions as I will indicate in a moment. But at the same time his anti-war sentiment is extremely strong even though it tends to be expressed in terms of the suffering entailed rather than the real causes of war. Although he recognizes to a limited extent the dynastic nature of war, the self-interests that have brought it about--

I see red smears upon the sickly dawn,
And seeming drops of gore. On earth below
Are men--unnatured and mechanic-drawn--
Mixt nationalities in row and row,
Wheeling them to and fro
In moves dissociate from their souls' demand,
For dynasts' ends that few even understand!
(Pt. II. VI. iv)

--his most powerful voice is raised to protest the sheer, mindless suffering. During the retreat from Moscow, the horror at the Bridge of Beresina is evoked in this outcry by the Pities:

So loudly swell their shrieks as to be heard above the roar of guns and the wailful wind,
Giving in one brief cry their last wild word on that mock life through which they have harlequined!
To the other bridge the living heap be-takes itself, the weak pushed over by the strong;
They loop together by their clutch like snakes; in knots they are submerged and borne along.

The women are seen in the waterfall--limply bearing their infants between
Napoleon refuses. The Spirit of the Pities, moved by her tears, expresses his own concern: "Still read the Queen./One grieves to see her spend her pretty spells/Upon the man who has so injured her" (Pt. II. I. viii). Yet it was the queen who, in a foolhardy spirit of jingoism, had led her people into a war it could not win. And the queen, in her desire for Magdeburg, is less concerned about her people's welfare than her own happiness. Both the queen and Napoleon are dynasts and as such have been the cause of scores of thousands of deaths. And perhaps the most ludicrous of the Spirit's concerns is for Napoleon, who, at the end of Waterloo, is excused his crimes because he has suffered enough: "Peace. His loaded heart/Bears weight enough for one bruised, blistered while!" (Pt. III. VII. ix).

The Spirit dwells in essentially the same determinism as the Spirit of the Years. The difference is that the intolerable injustice "of making figments feel" has driven him to revolt and to embrace an idealized humanity; but this revolt is powerless to effect change except through hope—and a rather weak logical argument:

Men gained cognition with the flux of time,
And wherefore not the Force informing them,
When far-ranged aions past all fathoming
Shall have swung by, and stand as backward years?
(After Scene)

The hope is practically null, since it is placed on an astronomical time scale, and on such a scale everything is possible, even the elimination of pain by the Will through
its unconscious gropings.

The ending of *The Dynasts* seems to indicate that the possibility the Pities had hoped for--the awakening to consciousness of the Immanent Will--will become actuality:

> But--a stirring thrills the air  
> Like to sounds of joyance there  
> That the rages  
> Of the ages  
> Shall be cancelled, and deliverance offered  
> from the darts that were,  
> Consciousness the Will informing, till It  
> fashion all things fair!  
> (After Scene)

The implication seems to be that the Will can only become conscious by the collective actions of conscious men. In other words, the Will is nothing but the collective unconsciousness of men. This results in an anomaly in the consciousness of pure intellect. If men do not have free will, as the Spirit of the Years alleges, the vision of the Pities can be explained as above--the Will can bring about painlessness by sheer, blind groping alone, given enough time. But if the Will can be made conscious by men's conscious actions, then obviously the Spirit of the Years has been wrong all along. Men do have, and always have had, free will; it was only their not exercising it that made it seem they were mere puppets of blind energy.

The Spirit Ironic, who plays a minor role in *The Dynasts* as compared to the Spirits of the Years and the Pities, is yet the only realist in the Spirit world. His sentiments are consistently expressed not only in opposition to war and the dynasts, but to the Immanent Will as well.
wizened white arms stretching above;
Yea, motherhood, sheerly sublime in her
last despairing, and lighting her darkest declension with limitless love.
(Pt. III. I. x)

At the end of the battle at the bridge, a vision is called up to reveal what the next coming of springtime will uncover under the ice and snow:

Death in a thousand motley forms;
Charred corpses hooking each other's arms
In the sleep that defies all war's alarms!

Pale cysts of souls in every stage,
Still bent to embraces of love or rage,--
Souls passed to where History pens no page.
(Pt. III. I. x)

The idealization of humanity which results from a narrow focusing on pain alone leads the Spirit to perceive such figures as King George, Queen Louisa of Prussia, and Napoleon in essentially the same light as their nameless and countless victims. His compassion for the suffering King George--

The tears that lie about this plightful scene
Of heavy travail in a suffering soul,
Mocked with the forms and feints of royalty
While scarified by briery Circumstance,
Might drive Compassion past her patiency.....
(Pt. II. VI. v)

--leads him to forget that the king had driven Pitt to his death, was responsible for Walcheren, and as a dynast, was responsible for the ongoing wars.

Much the same holds for Queen Louisa. After the defeat of the Prussians at Jena, the Queen pleads tearfully with Napoleon for the retention of Magdeburg, which
In a tirade against the injustice of the Will's "Darwinism" he undercuts Spencerian optimism:

He of the Years beheld, and we,
Creation's prentice artistry
Express in forms that now unbe

Beheld the rarest wrecked amain,
Whole nigh-perfected species slain
By those that scarce could boast a brain;

Heard laughters at the ruthless dooms
Which tortured to the eternal glooms
Quick, quivering hearts in hecatombs.
(Pt. I. VI. iii)

His comment on Queen Louisa after the defeat of Jena undercuts the sentimentality that her flight from Berlin gives rise to: "This monarchy, one-half whose pedestal/Is built of Polish bones, has bones home-made!/Let the fair woman bear it. Poland did" (Pt. II. I. vi).

After Leipzig, he brings the victorious allies into a focus that does not distinguish them from Napoleon:

The Battle of the Nations now is closing,
And all is lost to One, to many gained;
The old dynastic routine reimposing,
The new dynastic structure unsustained.

Now every neighbouring realm is France's warder,
And smirking satisfaction will be feigned:
The which is seemlier?--so-called ancient order,
Or that the hot-breath'd war-horse ramp unreined?
(Pt. III. III. v)

At the height of Waterloo, his reply to the hand-wringing distress of the Spirit of the Pities' "Is this the last Esdraelon of a moil/For mortal man's effacement?," is:
Warfare mere,
Plied by the Managed for the Managers;
To wit: by frenzied folks who profit naught
For those who profit all!
(Pt. III. VII. viii)

He is not without compassion, and at the close of
Waterloo he comments sadly on the doings of the Immanent
Will:

a fixed foresightless dream
Is Its whole philosopheme

Just so; an unconscious planning,
Like a potter raptly panning!

Are then, Love and Light Its aim—
Good Its glory, Bad Its blame?

Nay; to alter evermore
Things from what they were before.
(Pt. III. VII. viii)

Most significantly he rejects the Spirit of the Years's
insinuation to Napoleon, after Waterloo, that the latter's
every action had been moved by the Will. To Napoleon's
admission (and excuse) that he had indeed been so moved:
"Yet, 'tis true, I have ever known/That such a Will I
passively obeyed!," the Spirit Ironic replies:

Nothing care I for these high-doctrined
dreams,
And shape the case in quite a common way,
So I would ask, Ajaccian Bonaparte,
Has all this been worth while?
(Pt. III. VII. ix)

The Spirit, despite his realism, which serves as a
connecting link to the actual world of human experience, is
inconsistent in his thought. He is determinist to the ex-
tent that he accepts for the most part the picture of the
Immanent Will that the Spirit of the Years presents, and
yet, more than any of the other Spirits, he allows for the existence and exercise of free will among men.

II. The Consciousness of Experience: The Human World

The Spirit Ironic's epithet, "Ajaccian Bonaparte," pointing to the bourgeois origin of Napoleon, and his question, "Has all this been worth while?" echoing Clym Yeobright's question in The Return of the Native, "Mother, what is doing well?" throws into relief one of the major underlying themes of The Dynasts, the question of class relationships in capitalist society. Napoleon, like Henchard, like Jude, is a member of a disintegrated class who is placed on the track of upward mobility in post-revolutionary France: "My brain has only one wish--to succeed!" (Pt. I. III. i), he exclaims before embarking on his campaigns. His ambition to become a legitimate dynast is essentially the same as Jude's desire for a university education. Both are intent on breaking through the barriers that separate them from what they conceive, consciously or unconsciously, to be the highest class of society. Jude tries to obtain on his own an education that only money and class position allowed in the mistaken impression that an acquired attribute alone could be separated from or could overthrow the prerogatives of inherited position. Napoleon establishes his right to dynasty in the same manner as the founders of the dynasties he defeats, by military conquest: as an Austrian officer remarks after the
Battle of Austerlitz, "Ay! There be Satschan swamps and Pratzen heights/In royal lines, as here at Austerlitz" (Pt. I. VI. v). But he is unable to penetrate the invisible wall of aristocratic inheritance. His dynasty ends at Waterloo.

The difference between Jude and Henchard on the one hand and Napoleon on the other is essentially the difference between a self-interest that can be isolated to a single life, in which case tragedy can take on its traditional aspect, and a self-interest that destroys the "corporeal frame" of mankind, in which case tragedy transcends concern for the individual protagonist and raises consciousness to a concern for the world that nourishes him only to become his victim. In the first case if any moral issues are raised, they affect the protagonist primarily and the reader only indirectly. In the second case moral issues are raised immediately and affect the reader primarily, since he is in the world that nourishes the protagonist and is one of his victims.

Thus the moral issue raised by The Dynasts, which stems from Clym Yeobright's question, goes to the heart of the capitalist ethos: the legitimacy of self-interest and a laissez-faire ethic. The Napoleonic Wars, legitimized by the absence of any condemnation of war, are a demonic representation of the ethic. The moral issue thus raises the question of responsibility, not only of the individual to humanity, but where this responsibility is not acknowledged,
the responsibility of humanity for having produced the individuals who victimize it. The hundreds of thousands of victims of Napoleon and the other dynasts have a share in their victimization. It is really humanity's unconsciousness of collective responsibility to itself that is represented on the intellectual level of consciousness in The Dynasts as the Immanent Will.

Although the theme of class consciousness in the drama is not often overt, it does surface enough times to indicate the mass of dynastic class feeling that underlies the political and military struggles against Napoleon. How the class consciousness of the dynasts has pervaded even the lower classes is shown in a coach-passenger's reply to the suggestion that King George reply to Napoleon's letter requesting peace:

What! Encourage this man in a shameless presumption, and give him the pleasure of considering himself the equal of the King of England--whom he actually calls his brother!

(Pt. I. I. i)

And an officer at the Battle of Austerlitz remarks upon seeing the defeated Emperor Francis negotiating with Napoleon:

An Emperor--in whose majestic veins
Aeneas and the proud Caesarian line
Claim yet to live...
To bend with deference and manners mild
In talk with this adventuring campaigner,
Raised but by pikes above the common herd!

(Pt. I. VI. v)

King George, in the process of rejecting Pitt's request
to allow the liberal Fox a share of government, refers to Napoleon as "This wicked bombardier of dynasties/That rule by right Divine..." (Pt. I. IV. i). General Mack, at the Battle of Ulm, justifies his attempt to protect Archduke Ferdinand from capture so

That none of your Imperial Highness' line
Be pounded prisoner by this vulgar foe,
Who is not France, but an adventurer
Imposing on that country for his gain.
(Pt. I. IV. iii)

Marie Louise, ironically unconscious of her future marriage to Napoleon, refers to him as "a bourgeois Corsican" (Pt. II. IV. i), and the Empress-Mother of Russia, "affronted" by Napoleon's rejection of her daughter, perceives in him a character "Wherein the bourgeois quality of him/Veraciously peeps out" (Pt. II. V. vii). And the Prince Regent, referring to Napoleon's infant son, the so-called King of Rome, indignantly remarks, with unintended satire, "Call him a king--that pompous upstart's son-/Beside us scions of the ancient lines!" (Pt. II. VI. vii).

The most pathetic and yet truest picture of this class feeling is the rejection of Napoleon's son by his grandfather, Emperor Francis. In his view Marie Louise had married beneath her and so her son had no status as a dynast.

One of the problems Hardy faced in The Dynasts was how to traverse the internal separation of pure intellect from actual experience. In the drama this separation is converted into the vast physical distance that separates
the Overworld of the Spirits from the earth. The Overworld exists so far above the earth that the entire continent of Europe may be seen by the Spirits in a single glance.

Hardy uses an insectile and molluscan imagery both to provide the feeling of physical distance and to convey the emotions of the perceivers, particularly those of the Spirit of the Years as he surveys humanity. The imagery is dramatically thrown off as the lower life-forms become men in action and is thus shown to be false. This transformation symbolizes a change in values in which human concerns become central, and the metaphysical universe that is at the center of the Spirit of the Years's consciousness is seen to have meaning only insofar as there are humans in it.

From the height of the Spirit world the movement of the white-clad Austrian army towards Ulm is "as molluscs on a leaf" and then becomes "The silent-creep of the Austrian column towards the banks of the Inn" (Pt. I. III. ii). The English and French ships in full sail off Cape Trafalgar are "small as moths to the aerial vision" (Pt. I. V. i), but the illusion is destroyed immediately when the French officers are named and Villeneuve demonstrates free will in action as he makes the fateful choice to disobey Napoleon—to fight Nelson rather than make for Toulon.

The description of the carriage procession taking Marie Louise to France and marriage with Napoleon proceeds in reverse order. First the procession is described from an earth-level position and then the point of view ascends
slowly towards the Spirit World from where it "looks no more than a file of ants crawling along a strip of garden matting" (Pt. II. V. v). This reversal reflects the emotions of Marie Louise in her abject submission to the momentary political convenience of her father. As if to verify her spiritual decline she undergoes a symbolic transformation: at the frontier of France, "Maria Louisa becomes Marie Louise and a Frenchwoman, in the charge of French officials" (Pt. II. V. v).

The soldiers working on the huge fortifications at Torres Vedras are "busying themselves like cheese mites," and the movement of the English army entering the lines "seems peristaltic and vermicular, like that of three caterpillars" (Pt. II. VI. ii).

During the retreat from Moscow, as pain and suffering increase in a mindless, spiritless movement in which the psyche declines almost visibly toward oblivion, the Spirit of the Pities perceives the French army as

An object like a dun-piled caterpillar,
Shuffling its length in painful heaves along,
...Yea what is this Thing we see
Which, moving as a single monster might,
Is yet not one but many?
(Pt. III. I. ix)

The slow progress of the army as it advances toward the viewer through a snowstorm is described as follows:

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

(Pt. III. I. ix)

Here the perspective of the Spirits is emotionally inverted so that the insectile imagery, instead of diminishing humanity, actually serves to increase concern for it. Hardy's technique in such instances is similar to that used in Tess where Tess and Marian are described as creeping across the bleak, wintry swede field "like flies."

At Waterloo the insignificance of life in the coming battle (and yet the concern for it) is signalled by a description of the English soldiers rising from their bivouacs in which "They move stiffly from their wet rest, and hurry to and fro like ants in an ant-hill" (Pt. III. VII. i). At the height of the battle Napoleon's desire to see the arrival of Grouchy's army leads him to describe his illusion of its approach as "I see a darkly-crawling slug-like shape/Embodying far out there...." (Pt. III. VII. ii), and Wellington's aides are described as "house-flies dancing their quadrilles" (Pt. III. VII. ii).

Sometimes the imagery transcends the relatively harmless and passive world of insect life to take on a much more sinister and menacing aspect. The movement of the allied armies towards France after Leipzig is likened to the movement of "scaly serpents" which "glide on...mostly snake-shaped, but occasionally with batrachian and saurian outlines" (Pt. III. IV. i). As Waterloo looms, "From all
parts of Europe long and sinister files are crawling hi-
therward in serpentine lines, like slowworms through grass.
They are the advancing armies of the Allies" (Pt. III. VI.
i). At Ligny the Spirit of the Pities presents a terri-
ifying image of an army in battle:

I see an unnatural Monster, loosely jointed,
With an Apocalyptic Being's shape,
And limbs and eyes a hundred thousand strong,
And fifty thousand heads; which coils itself
About the buildings there.

To which the Spirit of the Years replies:

Thou dost indeed.
It is the monster Devastation.
(Pt. III. VI. v)

This image is closely tied to the crowd images Hardy
uses elsewhere and signifies an emotional paradox which I
will discuss in Chapter 5. Although humanity, singly and
collectively, is always at the center of his concern, it is
the vision of a mass of people moving mindlessly, somnam-
bulistically, relentlessly, seemingly unconscious of itself,
that frightened him and in late life, I believe, made him
qualify his belief in meliorism.

Hardy uses the imagery of lower life-forms in a
variety of ways, sometimes to create a sinister and menac-
ing figure of a humanity that is bent on destroying itself,
but most of the time to emphasize the pathos of human life
and its vulnerability.

The various strands of Hardy's consciousness--the idea
that social experience is prior to pure thought, that con-
cern for collective humanity supersedes self-interest, that
humanity, the animals, and the living earth form a sympathetic brotherhood, a moral unity which cannot be broken without peril to all, and finally that pain and suffering can be ameliorated by the exercise of collective action—are woven together in the battle scenes of The Dynasts to form a unified but, it must be emphasized, implicit consciousness. The consciousness that is created belongs manifestly to the reader and it rejects vigorously the idea that war without end, pain and suffering without end, is man's fate.

Each of the battle scenes is unique. Hardy is not interested in depicting the horror of war for its own sake. Instead, out of the commonality of war's horror he chooses very carefully the details he associates with each battle. And as always the details are associated with the emotions of the perceivers and the context in which the battle occurs. In Part First, although the battles at Ulm and Austerlitz involved more men and were far bloodier and costlier in lives than Trafalgar, it is the latter battle that is described in the most explicit terms. In the battle at Ulm Hardy was mainly interested in depicting the stupidity of the Austrian generals, and its mood is sounded by the unimaginative Mack's distress at Napoleon's tactics: "The accursed cunning of our adversary/Confounds all codes of honourable war" (Pt. I. IV. iii). The feeling of war is thus placed on the mute battlefield itself:

Its white-walled monastery, its bridge
over the Danube, recently broken by the irresistible Ney, wear a desolated look, and the stream, which is swollen by the rainfall and rasped by the storm, seems wanly to sympathize.

(Pt. I. IV. iv)

Austerlitz is treated much the same way as Ulm, except that now it is the stupidity of the Russian generals that is depicted. Napoleon is in his military ascendancy, but cannot resist a sadistic desire for more blood. He directs his artillery to fire on a frozen lake over which Russian troops are fleeing:

The Emperor watches the scene with a vulpine smile....A ghastly crash and splashing follows the discharge, the shining surface breaking into pieces like a mirror, which fly in all directions. Two thousand fugitives are engulfed, and their groans of despair reach the ears of the watchers like ironical huzzas.

(Pt. I. VI. iv)

The gory details of Trafalgar serve a number of purposes. The first is for their shock value, to destroy the romantic British myth surrounding the battle. Since the battle follows that at Ulm, the latter had to be deliberately subdued in tone to emphasize the psychological impact of the former. The shocking details serve as the reader's initiation into war and to awaken the consciousness to the true nature of war. Another purpose is to underscore how needless was the loss of life. Had Villeneuve obeyed Napoleon's order, there would not have been any battle. A third purpose was to provide the emotional context of Nelson's death. Nelson's death wish is granted as Villeneuve's
is not, but Nelson's death is not made easy for him. The scene in which he is lying wounded is described as follows:

The wounded are lying around in rows for treatment, some groaning, some silently dying, some dead. The gloomy atmosphere of the low-beamed deck is pervaded by a thick haze of smoke, powdered wood, and other dust, and is heavy with the fumes of gunpowder and candle-grease, the odour of drugs and cordials, and the smell from abdominal wounds.

(Pt. I. V. iii)

As the "ironical huzzas" reaching Napoleon at Austerlitz are associated with Napoleon's emotions, so are the details of this scene associated with Nelson's. Nelson is the noblest of the characters in The Dynasts, but his nobility is severely undermined, if not rendered meaningless, because of the context in which it must be displayed—as a warrior in the service of a dynast—and this makes his death pathetic.

There are only three battles depicted in Part First. The battles increase in number and in ferocity and pathos in Part Second, and reach a height of mindless slaughter in Part Third. Nine battles are described in Part Second, the bloodiest occurring in the Peninsular War. In describing the battle at Vimiero, Hardy adds a new detail; the suffering of animals is juxtaposed to the suffering of men and the scene of slaughter is contrasted ironically with the serene natural setting, thus highlighting the unconsciousness of warfare. The French cavalry rushing on a few squadrons of English dragoons...cut them to pieces. A dust
is raised by this ado, and moans of men and shrieks of horses are heard. Close by the carnage the little Maceira stream continues to trickle unconcernedly to the sea.

(Pt. II. II. vii)

Horses, of course, have been wounded and have shrieked in all the land battles, but Hardy chooses to select that detail to create this unique emotional impression that distinguishes Vimiero.

The scene following Vimiero in The Dynasts depicts the retreat of the British from Astorga in the middle of winter. With this scene the area of suffering is greatly widened. Hardy now reveals that women and children are part of the contending armies. The armies in their train carry soldiers' wives and mistresses, prostitutes and camp followers, and the children of these women:

Enter...a straggling flock of military objects, some with fragments of shoes on, others bare-footed, many of the latter's feet bleeding. The arms and waists of some are clutched by women as tattered and bare-footed as themselves.

(Pt. II. III. i)

The reader is again made conscious of the suffering of horses as an English mounted soldier enters

bestriding a shoeless foundered creature whose neck is vertebrae and mane only. While passing it falls from exhaustion; the trooper extricates himself and pistols the animal through the head.

(Pt. II. III. i)

As the scene continues more details of the suffering of women and animals are added:

Retreat continues. A train of six-horse
baggage-waggons lumbers past...Among the baggage lie wounded soldiers and sick women...An interval. More English troops pass on horses, mostly shoeless and foundered.

(Pt. II. III. i)

In the next scene, as Napoleon enters behind the retreating British, he notices the dead horse. The accompanying officer remarks:

We have counted eighteen hundred odd
From Benavente hither pistoled thus.
Some we'd to finish for them: headlong haste
Spared them no time for mercy to their brutes.

(Pt. II. III. ii)

The fighting at Talavera starts at nightfall, and the shifting battle in darkness recalls "Dover Beach." The next day the battle resumes, but at noon both sides are exhausted. The soldiers of both armies go down to the stream to slake their thirst, and as they face each other there they shake hands, "Sealing their sameness as earth's sojourners" (Pt. II. IV. v).

On the morning of the battle at Albuera

The birds in the wood, unaware that this day is to be different from every other day they have known there, are heard singing their overtures with their usual serenity.

(Pt. II. VI. iv)

Hardy fixes the reader's sight on the motionless battlefield during the height of the battle:

Hot corpses, their mouths blackened by cartridge-biting, and surrounded by cast-away knapsacks, firelocks, hats, stocks, flint-boxes, and priming-horns, together with red and blue rags of
clothing, gaiters, epaulettes, limbs and viscera, accumulate on the slopes, increasing from twos and threes to half-dozens, and from half-dozens to heaps, which steam with their own warmth as the spring rain falls gently upon them.

(Pt. II. VI. iv)

It is interesting to note at this point how the structure of The Dynasts is used to convey a bitter irony associated with Albuera. The battle scene is placed between two pathetic pictures of dynasts. In the first, Napoleon, now concerned with establishing a dynasty, cannot stand to witness the pains of Marie Louise in childbirth. In the second, the insane King George, now a pathetic, cringing creature who is frightened of being bled by his doctors, is told that the victory won at Albuera is his.

In Part Third, the mindless slaughter of war increases crescendo-like. At Borodino

The redoubt becomes the scene of a large massacre. In other parts of the field also the action almost ceases to be a battle and takes the form of wholesale butchery by the thousand, now advantaging one side, now the other.

(Pt. III. I. v)

And at the end of the battle the Spirit of the Pities listens to the sounds coming from the battlefield:

But mark that roar--
A mash of men's crazed cries entreating mates
To run them through and end their agony;
Boys calling on their mothers, veterans blaspheming God and man. Those shady shapes
Are horses, maimed in myriads, tearing round
In maddening pangs, the harnessings they wear
Clanking discordant jingles as they tear!  
(Pt. III. I. v)

The retreat from Moscow is an unending detailing of horror:

The marching figures drop rapidly, and almost immediately become white grave mounds...Nature is mute. Save for the incessant flogging of the windbroken and lacerated horses there are no sounds.... There is something behind the regular columns like an articulated tail, and as they draw on, it shows itself to be a disorderly rabble of followers of both sexes....The soldiers themselves, like the rabble, are in motley raiment, some wearing rugs for warmth, some quilts and curtains, some even petticoats and other women's clothing. Many are delirious from hunger and cold.  
(Pt. III. I. ix)

At Vitoria, the beauty and nostalgia of peace is called up prior to the battle:

A warm rain succeeds the fog for a short while, bringing up the fragrant scents from the fields, vineyards, and gardens, now in the full leafage of June.  
(Pt. III. II. ii)

Leipzig, with almost four hundred thousand men facing each other, representing nations from remotest Asia as well as western Europe, is the dynasts' Armageddon. The sound of battle "becomes a loud droning, uninterrupted and breve-like, as from the pedal of an organ kept continuously down"  
(Pt. III. III. ii).

At Waterloo mass insanity seems to take hold of the armies:

Ney's charge of cavalry...has been three times renewed without success....The glittering host again ascends the confronting slopes over the bodies of those previously left there, and amid horses
wandering about without riders, or crying as they lie with entrails trailing or limbs broken.

(Pt. III. VII. vi)

The battle continues...with concussion wounds, smoke, the fumes of gunpowder, and the steam from the hot viscera of grape-torn horses and men.

(Pt. III. VII. vii)

Both sides can conceive of no alternative but to fight to the last man. Wellington, when asked what was to be done in case he were killed, advises:

        to hold out unto the last,
        As long as one man stands on one lame leg
        With one ball in his pouch!--then end as I.

(Pt. III. VII. vii)

This does not happen to Wellington but does to remnants of French Guards under Cambronne. At the very end of the battle, "In the vast and dusky shambles black slouching shapes begin to move, the plunderers of the dead and dying"

(Pt. III. VII. viii).

What emerges from the battle scenes is a picture of the autonomous consciousness of modern man. The actions of men in battle, certainly at Waterloo, cannot really be thought of as mechanical, as deterministic, despite the propaganda of the Spirit of the Years. At the same time, the fact that battles take place indicates that men are driven to act against their own best interests. This is the real unconsciousness of the Will as it emerges on the level of social experience. Men, as distinct from dynasts, don't go to war because they have a will to do so, but in spite of a will not to do so. The hope that the Will can
be made conscious thus devolves on the exercise of free will, the existence of which cannot be denied. Thus the melioristic ending of the drama, on the level of social experience rather than pure thought, has a foundation in reality, in life as it is really lived. This conclusion is both trivial and revolutionary. It is trivial in that it must be taken for granted in any conception of human betterment. It is revolutionary in that it implies the overthrow of any false ideology that prevents betterment. The method of betterment, or the awakening of political and social consciousness is, of course, the question of the ages. The importance of The Dynasts is not that it offers a solution—it doesn’t—but that it presents the problem of consciousness with an immediacy for our time as no other work of art does and which we ignore not only at peril to ourselves, but to the planet.

The problem that remains to be considered is the figure of Napoleon. His freedom of choice is the overriding fact of The Dynasts. Yet he refuses to take responsibility for his actions. Much of this refusal is a demonstration of the false consciousness that is part of his character, but is all of it? When he refuses Queen Louisa the gift of Magdeburg, a gift which is clearly his to give, he claims:

Some force within me, baffling mine intent,
Harries me onward, whether I will or no.
My star, my star, is what’s to blame—
not I.
It is unswervable!

(Pt. II. I. viii)
This is a clear demonstration of his false consciousness, an idealization of self-interest. The same conclusion holds relative to his desire to establish a dynasty. His telling Josephine of his wish for divorce that "'Tis not for me, but for France" (Pt. II. II. vi) and "'tis the Empire dictates this divorce" (Pt. II. V. ii) is again an idealization of self-interest.

Such idealization occurs when he is in the ascendancy of power. It emerges again at the start of the invasion of Russia, when his excuse for the invasion is that Russia "offers us the choice of sword or shame" (Pt. III. I. i). When his fortunes are declining, the blame also is placed elsewhere. The disaster of the Russian campaign is first blamed on a Russian minister who supposedly dragged Alexander and himself into a war neither desired; then on the elements: "Not Russia but God's sky has conquered me!"; and then on "The Genius who outshapes my destinies" (Pt. III. I. xii).

Yet there is a sense, an intuition, that he does not belong where he is, that somehow history has made a huge mistake. Prior to Waterloo he has a nightmare in which the corpses and skeletons of men killed in his various campaigns confront him. He cries out, "Why hold me my own master, if I be/Ruled by the pitiless Planet of Destiny?" (Pt. III. VI. iv). A similar feeling had come over him at the start of the invasion of Russia in which he questioned himself:
Why am I here?
--By laws imposed on me inexorably!
History makes use of me to weave her web
To her long while aforetime - figured mesh
And contemplated charactery: no more.
(Pt. III. I. i)

There really is a sense in which Napoleon is a product
of unconsciousness, but it is the political and social un-
consciousness of living men that has produced him, not a
mysterious cosmic energy that pervades all things, living
and inert, and drives them deterministically. Napoleon
cannot exist in a world wakened to consciousness, one for
example, in which a collective concern for humanity super-
sedes pure self-interest.
Calm fell. From Heaven distilled a clemency; 
There was peace on earth, and silence in the sky; 
Some could, some could not, shake off misery: 
The Sinister Spirit sneered: "It had to be!" 
And again the Spirit of Pity whispered, "Why?"
'And There Was a Great Calm''

Hardy's first big success, Far from the Madding Crowd, was thought by some of its early critics to be from the pen of George Eliot. Hardy was perplexed by this criticism, and could offer no reason for it but the conjecture that both he and Eliot had been influenced by Comte's Positive Philosophy. But Hardy distanced himself from Eliot by claiming "she had never touched the life of the fields: her country people having seemed...more like small townsfolk than rustics."¹ Both writers were meliorists and both had been influenced by Comte; but while Eliot's meliorism was centered in the intellect and was optimistic and necessitarian, Hardy's was centered in the social experience of a disintegrated class and tended to be neither optimistic nor necessitarian, but rooted in realism. At the center of Hardy's meliorism was the conviction first, that the quality of humanness, which lay in the productive life of humanity, its productive classes, would endure whatever blows chance and the social environment dealt it,
and second, that this quality tended not to be stoical merely, but activist, seeking human betterment even under the worst conditions. The endurance of this bedrock of humanity was the obstacle, finally, on which the logical pessimism of Schopenhauer, Von Hartmann and others founder-ed. As late as 1915, during the worst slaughter of the First World War, this side of Hardy's meliorism emerged in "In Time of 'The Breaking of Nations'":

Only a man harrowing clods
   In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
   Half asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
   From heaps of couch-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
   Though Dynasties pass.

Yonder a maid and her wight
   Come whispering by:
War's annals will cloud into night
   Ere their story die.²

The feeling emerges in The Dynasts in the "Wessex" scenes, particularly Part First, Act V, Scenes iv and v and Part Third, Act V, Scene vi. Sometimes the Wessex folk are transformed into French servants and rustics as in Part Third, Act IV, Scene iii and Part Third, Act V, Scene vi. In what may be termed an "anti-dynast" mode of expression, a mode, incidentally, that runs through The Dynasts and is not restricted to the rustics, one of the Wessex folk expresses his feelings on what would happen if King George were captured by the French:

Lard, Lard, if 'a were nabbed, it wouldn't make a deal of a difference! We should
have nobody to zing to, and play single-stick to, and grin at through horsecollars, that's true. And nobody to sign our few documents. But we should rub along some way, goodnow.

(Pt. I. II. iv)

The wars, though of immediate concern to these people, since it is from their ranks that the fighting men come, do not impress them with the urgency exhibited by the dynasts or by those doing the fighting. Their feeling is that no matter which dynast wins, life will be little changed for them and certainly not for the better. When Marie Louise and her entourage flee Paris before the advancing allied armies, abandoning the house servants to their fate, the following conversation takes place:

FIRST SERVANT
Sacred God, where are we to go to for grub and good lying to-night? What are ill-used men to do?

SECOND SERVANT
I trudge like the rest. All the true philosophers are gone, and the middling true are going. I made up my mind like the truest that ever was, as soon as I heard the general alarm beat.

THIRD SERVANT
I stay here. No allies are going to tickle our skins....Now there will be a nice convenient time for a little good victuals and drink, and likewise pickings, before the Allies arrive, thank Mother Molly!

(Pt. III. IV. iii)

The servants exhibit not only the quality of endurance, but the quality of trying to better their condition. This is also brought out in Part Third, Act VII, Scene v, which opens on a women's camp behind the English position.
at Waterloo. Here, finally, the necessary function of the camp-followers is revealed. The soldiers' wives, mistresses, prostitutes, and children turn out to be not the parasitical dredges of humanity one had supposed, but the only nurse corps the armies had, a function, incidentally, that the women created and performed voluntarily.

In Hardy's meliorism, life as he felt and perceived it being lived in its hard reality always had priority over philosophical systems. "The business of the poet and novelist," he wrote, "is to show the sorriness underlying the grandest things, and the grandeur underlying the sorriest things;" and, "To find beauty in ugliness is the province of the poet." Applied to politics, his meliorism emerged as a common-sense liberalism:

Conservatism is not estimable in itself, nor is Change, or Radicalism. To conserve the existing good, to supplant the existing bad by good, is to act on a true political principle, which is neither Conservative nor Radical.

His realism made him understand that a collective consciousness, that is, a consciousness that was not self-centered but turned toward humanity, was a necessary condition for human betterment. But an early apprehension appeared that such a consciousness was not easily attainable:

London appears not to see itself. Each individual is conscious of himself, but nobody conscious of themselves collectively, except perhaps some poor gaper who stares round with a half-idiotic aspect.
What confuses the issue of Hardy's meliorism is that it seems to contradict his pessimism. But one needs to understand that "pessimism" was the label pinned by critics on to his realism, and that his belief in meliorism was quite compatible with his realistic outlook on life. This note is struck quite strongly as late as 1901, at a time when he was fully engaged with The Dynasts:

But my pessimism, if pessimism it be, does not involve the assumption that the world is going to the dogs, and that Ahriman is winning all along the line. On the contrary, my practical philosophy is distinctly meliorist. What are my books but one plea against "man's inhumanity to man"--to woman--and to the lower animals?...Whatever may be the inherent good or evil of life, it is certain that men make it much worse than it need be. When we have got rid of a thousand remediable ills, it will be time enough to determine whether the ill that is irremediable outweighs the good.7

Even as late as January, 1918, after almost three and a half years of the First World War, the same strong note is sounded, but now in vehement opposition to "blind optimism:"

As to pessimism. My motto is, first correctly diagnose the complaint--in this case human ills--and ascertain the cause: then set about finding a remedy if one exists. The motto or practice of the optimists is: Blind the eyes to the real malady, and use empirical panaceas to suppress the symptoms.8

Thus far there is no hint that Hardy thought of meliorism as being linked somehow to Darwinism through social Darwinist notions of social evolution. Human betterment,
and by this he meant the collective betterment of humanity, humanity as a whole, he believed possible in measurable increments in a single lifetime, and a good deal of betterment in a relatively few lifetimes.

There is no doubt, however, that the advent of the war destroyed much of his vestigial Comtism and that a period of disillusionment set in that deepened into pessimism. Germany's invasion of Belgium "led him to despair of the world's history thenceforward. He had not reckoned on the power still retained there by the governing castes whose interests were not the people's." And later that year he added a note that the war destroyed all Hardy's belief in the gradual ennoblement of man, a belief he had held for many years....He said he would probably not have ended The Dynasts as he did end it if he could have foreseen what was going to happen in a few years.\footnote{10}

In September, 1918, replying to a letter which predicted that the next war would be even more horrible than the present one, Hardy stated, "I do not think a world in which such fiendishness is possible to be worth the saving. Better let Western 'civilization' perish, and the black and yellow races have a chance." But he ended the reply on a note of hope: "However, as a meliorist (not a pessimist as they say) I think better of the world."\footnote{11} His meliorism at this point did not permit him to accept as inevitable another world war.

The first indication of Hardy's long step towards his
final pessimism emerges from a letter written to John Galsworthy in April, 1920:

The exchange of international thought is the only possible salvation for the world: and though I was decidedly premature when I wrote at the beginning of the South African War that I hoped to see patriotism not confined to realms, but circling the earth, I still maintain that such sentiments ought to prevail.

Whether they will do so before the year 10,000 is of course what sceptics may doubt.  

For the first time an "evolutionary" time scale appears in his thought, but betterment even on this scale seems to require human action. It does not seem to be achievable at all in terms of the blind forces of evolution.

The same idea is finally given expression as "evolutionary meliorism" for the first and last time in the "Apology:"

If I may be forgiven for quoting my own old words, let me repeat what I printed in this relation more than twenty years ago, and wrote much earlier, in a poem entitled "In Tenebris":

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

that is to say, by the exploration of reality, and its frank recognition stage by stage along the survey, with an eye to the best consummation possible: briefly, evolutionary meliorism. But it is called pessimism nevertheless....

What Hardy has done most remarkably by using the phrase in this context is both to undercut his earlier, pre-war meliorism--which was, incidentally, the meliorism of The Dynasts--and by so doing, to present the problem
of consciousness in a new urgency to later generations. By linking the phrase to his earlier realism, a realism that was much more optimistic than his post-war outlook, he transformed that realism into a greater apprehension of modern social and political problems. The earlier realism, as noted above, had taken on faith the continued existence of humanity. By the end of the First World War, Hardy could already sense that this faith was no longer tenable. Mankind had moved backward rather than forward in falling into war. If this backward movement continued (as indeed it has) the prospect for meliorism would grow dimmer. By placing the goal of man's betterment in the year 10000, Hardy removed the assurance of immediate betterment and introduced as a possibility the extinction of human life. Everything depended on man himself. Thus, even in this bleakest of his outlooks, he hoped that mankind was only "drawing back for a spring," and he was careful to distance himself from pessimistic determinism: "I repeat that I forlornly hope so, notwithstanding the supercilious regard of hope by Schopenhauer, von Hartmann, and other philosophers down to Einstein...."¹⁴

In summary, the meliorism of The Dynasts is not "evolutionary meliorism"; the latter conception comes from a much more pessimistic outlook. The ending of The Dynasts precludes future wars; "evolutionary meliorism" foresees their possibility. The one positive implication that can be drawn from "evolutionary meliorism"--and this is
probably its most important implication—is that man's fate is in his own hands. He has sole responsibility for both his extinction and his amelioration.

The problem that remains to be explored is the reason for Hardy's radical shift into pessimism in the post-war years. The fact of the war and its monumental slaughter were necessary conditions, but, I believe, not sufficient ones. I would suggest that the reason goes much deeper, that what drove Hardy into his final pessimism was the feeling that the collective action necessary to save mankind, if not to ameliorate its condition, was still politically and socially so unconscious as to drive it in the opposite direction. This feeling had remained latent in his mind through most of his life, and in his notes and in The Dynasts as well it takes on a fearful imagery of crowds, of people moving in crowds. In the fighting at Ligny, before Waterloo, the Spirit of the Pities perceives the French army taking on a monstrous shape as it moves through the town:

I see an unnatural Monster, loosely jointed,
With an Apocalyptic Being's shape,
And limbs and eyes a hundred thousand strong,
And fifty thousand heads; which coils itself
About the buildings there.
(Pt. III. VI. v)

The Spirit of the Years calls this "the Monster Devastation." The image recalls one of Hardy's feelings about the crowds in London, in fact a feeling about London itself,
"which sometimes haunted him, a horror at lying down in close proximity to 'a monster whose body had four million heads and eight million eyes.'”

This haunting dread seems to have originated during his first residence in London when, at the age of twenty-one, he was almost crushed to death by a crowd on the occasion of the Prince of Wales's marriage. Six people, he noted, had been killed in the crush. The image reaches its most bestial aspect in this note of 1879:

As the crowd grows denser it loses its character of an aggregate of countless units, and becomes an organic whole, a molluscous black creature having nothing in common with humanity, that takes the shape of the streets along which it has lain itself, and throws out horrid ex­crescences and limbs into neighbouring alleys; a creature whose voice exudes from its scaly coat, and who has an eye in every pore of its body. The balconies, stands, and railway-bridge are occupied by small detached shapes of the same tissue, but of gentler motion, as if they were the spawn of the monster in their midst.

In *The Dynasts*, besides the insectile and similar images already noted as relating to moving armies, Hardy presents numerous scenes of crowds and mobs in action as instances of collective humanity out of control. The frustrated mob that breaks into the palace of Godoy, the Spanish "Prince of Peace," begins "knocking the furniture to pieces, tearing down the hangings, trampling on the musical instruments, and kicking holes through the paintings they have unhung from the walls" (Pt. II. II. ii). The jingoistic fervor of
the Berlin crowds endorses the foolish war with Napoleon that devastates Prussia. The equally jingoistic French crowds cheer Napoleon's return from Austerlitz, thus paving the way for the coming disasters in Russia, Spain, and at Waterloo. Wellington's undisciplined army becomes a destructive mob after Vitoria:

The soldiers ransack the King's carriages, cut from their frames canvases by Murillo, Velasquez, and Zurbaran, and use them as package-wrappers, throwing the papers and archives into the road....It begins to rain, and a private who has lost his kit cuts a hole in the middle of a deframed old master, and, putting it over his head, wears it as a poncho.

(Pt. III. II. iii)

When not moved to violence and wanton destruction, people in crowds acted as if in a somnambulistic state:

I often viewed society-gatherings, people in the street, in a room, or elsewhere, as if they were beings in a somnambulistic state, making their motions automatically --not realizing what they mean.18

It was probably this personal experience and observation of crowds in action, especially in an urban environment which cut across the grain of his rural and individualistic class experience, that prevented him from seeing the growth of a politically conscious proletariat in any but pessimistic terms. This attitude emerges from a note on crowds in the British Museum:

Crowds parading and gaily traipsing round the mummies, thinking to-day is forever, and the girls casting shy glances at young men....They pass with flippant comments the illuminated MSS.--the labours of years--and stand under Rameses the Great,
joking. Democratic government may be justice to man, but it will probably merge in proletarian, and when these people are our masters it will lead to more of this contempt, and possibly be the utter ruin of art and literature.}

It is hard to know whether a comment such as this represents a well thought-out position or momentary irritation; for it seems to contradict that aspect of Hardy's thought in which the living presence of humanity took precedence over intellectual activities pertaining to a long-dead era, as, for example, in the poems "Genoa and the Mediterranean" and "The Roman Road."

At any rate there can be little doubt that for Hardy the collective consciousness he believed so necessary for the alleviation of man's suffering always seemed to become transformed in practice into the somnambulistic monster, mass-man. He could not transcend this image in The Dynasts despite its melioristic ending, and with the coming of war it led inevitably to a deeper pessimism. Apparently the collective action required for man's amelioration depended increasingly on a politically conscious proletariat, and he could not see the proletariat in terms other than the fearful images that his London experiences awakened in him.

In The Dynasts this quality of unconsciousness in mass-man becomes the metaphorical image borrowed from Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, the Immanent Will. It is in this metaphorical sense that his letter of June, 1907 to
Edward Wright should be read:

This theory, too, seems to me to settle the question of Free-will v. Necessity. The will of a man is, according to it, neither wholly free nor wholly unfree. When swayed by the Universal Will (which he mostly must be as a subservient part of it) he is not individually free; but whenever it happens that all the rest of the Great Will is in equilibrium the minute portion called one person's will is free, just as a performer's fingers are free to go on playing the pianoforte of themselves when he talks or thinks of something else and the head does not rule them.20

Man in the mass is ruled by his political unconsciousness; it is only when he is free of mass influence that his rational self emerges to combat unconsciousness. The political problem thus becomes one of education—to so roll back the unconsciousness in individual men that the unconsciousness of mass-man will no longer prevail.

It is interesting in this respect to compare Yeats, Stevens, Eliot, and Pound, to name the greatest of the Modernist poets, with Hardy. The basic difference between them and Hardy is ideological. Both they and Hardy emerged from a realization of "God's death," but where Hardy turned his face toward living humanity and a reality that had meaning only in terms of concrete human existence, real pain and suffering, the Modernists fled from it. Hardy was able to perceive his alienation as class-rooted, as having its origin in the disintegration of a social class. The Modernists would not or could not perceive the source of their alienation so objectively. Perceiving alienation
subjectively, they could only see symptoms of it everywhere confirming their feelings. They could not see its cause as lying in the structure of society itself; instead, they saw the structure of society disintegrating under a frightening mass alienation of which it was unconscious and which had the same source as theirs. Separating themselves from a mass culture they perceived as threatening, they created fictional structures they could persuade themselves to believe in and then escaped into them. Their poetry is basically the poetry of twentieth-century alienation reduced to a strategy of escape from reality.

But their poetry can also be viewed as a failure of nerve. According to this view they did indeed perceive the source of alienation in the structure of society, but were unable to face the revolutionary implications. When, at the end of the First World War, they had to choose between the repressive class in power and the emerging political consciousness of the oppressed peoples world-wide, they felt their first loyalty to be to the class in power. No matter that they had distanced themselves from the dominant philistinism of this class, they were terrified of the class that had seized power in Russia and threatened the rest of Western Europe as well.

Their poetry then turned into what Fredric Jameson has called a "strategy of containment." The strategy takes the form of allowing "what can be thought to seem internally coherent in its own terms, while repressing the
unthinkable...which lies beyond its boundaries." Its purpose, conscious or unconscious, was to avoid the ultimate consequences of looking at social relationships as they really exist.

Since Hardy died, a second world war with horrors even he could not have imagined has come and gone and an even worse third one looms on the horizon. But the problem of consciousness that Hardy perceived almost a hundred years ago remains unsolved. If Hardy were living today, there is no doubt that his belief in meliorism would be strained to the breaking point, but as long as he could perceive an awakening consciousness somewhere in humanity, as indeed he could, a few strands of his belief would remain intact.

The awareness of the problem of consciousness as I have described it in this thesis has its modern origin in Hardy. None of the writers of his generation nor of the following one of Modernist poetry was able to perceive what has become the central problem of our time. The problem can no longer be thought of as solvable in individualistic terms. In the face of imminent extinction only a collective consciousness--consciousness of the collective--offers the possibility of a human future. This implicity forms the modern momentum of *The Dynasts* and hence its re-emergence in our day as the emblem of a potential and major turn in modern poetry.
NOTES

Chapter 1. The Problem of Consciousness

1 William R. Rutland, Thomas Hardy: A Study of His Writings and Their Background (1938; New York: Russell & Russell, 1962) 269

2 Harold Orel, Thomas Hardy's Epic Drama: A Study of The Dynasts (Lawrence, KS: U of Kansas Publications, 1963) vi

3 Amiya Chakravarty, The Dynasts and the Post-War Age in Poetry (1938; Folcroft, PA: Folcroft Press, 1969) 40. Chakravarty also believes that The Dynasts "provides a clear statement of the modern problem"; that with Hardy "the idea of the Unconscious entered modern poetry" (8).

4 Frank R. Southerington, Hardy's Vision of Man, New York: Barnes, 1971) 152

5 See Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy (New York: Macmillan, 1967) 147-59. Howe's reading of The Dynasts seems to me to be uncharacteristically hasty and careless. At the time of his writing there were enough serious studies of the work available to refute most of his negative assessments or at least to cast them into serious doubt.

6 The most extensive study to date of Hardy's reading and the influence it had on The Dynasts is that by Walter Wright. See Walter Wright, The Shaping of The Dynasts: A Study in Thomas Hardy (Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1967). This work supplants Rutland's study (see note 1), which is still a valuable source for understanding the quality of Hardy's achievement. Wright's work must also be supplemented by: Michael Millgate, Thomas Hardy: A Biography (New York: Random, 1982); Lennart A. Bjork, "Hardy's Reading" in Norman Page, ed., Thomas Hardy: The Writer and his Background (New York: St. Martin's, 1980) 102-27; and by Harvey C. Webster, On a Darkling Plain: The Art and Thought of Thomas Hardy (1947; Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1964). A most important source of information regarding Hardy's reading is still the two-volume biography by Florence Emily Hardy, now understood to be largely autobiographical. See Florence Emily Hardy, The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891 (New York: Macmillan, 1928) and The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928 (New York: Macmillan, 1930).

7 Excellent accounts of Hardy's rural background and how it affected his aesthetic sensibility as it pertained to his class consciousness may be found in: Merryn Williams,

8 An estimate made by Irving Howe. See Howe, 149-50.

9 Thomas Hardy, preface, The Dynasts: An Epic-Drama of the War with Napoleon, by Thomas Hardy with Introd. by John Wain (New York: St. Martin's, 1977) xxvi. All references to The Dynasts hereafter will be to this edition.

10 Preface, The Dynasts, xxvi

11 See Orel, Thomas Hardy's Epic-Drama, 55

12 This count is fairly close to the estimate made by Elizabeth Cathcart Hickson as noted by Orel, 111, note 12. Hickson estimated that of the 10,553 total number of lines in The Dynasts, only 1,470 are in prose and the total does not include stage directions and dumb shows. Therefore by simple subtraction her total number of verse lines comes to 9,083. The discrepancy between her estimate and my count has to do of course with how one counts lines, especially prose lines; for example, what is the minimum number of words that constitute a prose line? The discrepancy also has to do with the edition used for counting.

13 See Wright, 124-286, and Rutland, 268-352. Rutland's analysis of Act V of Part First in the light of the sources Hardy used is especially recommended for its revelation of a side of Hardy's genius not usually given much attention.

14 The best account in my opinion is that by Walter Wright. See Wright, 98-123. But see also Orel, Thomas Hardy's Epic Drama, 40-49. Any account must rely to a great extent, however, on the biography by Florence Hardy.

15 See note 14.

16 See preface, The Dynasts, xxiii

17 Early Life, 21

18 Early Life, 76

19 Early Life, 103

20 Early Life, 140

21 See Wright, 103-104; Early Life, 161-62, 212, 256; Later Years, 57.
22 Wright, 101
23 Early Life, 140
24 See Orel, Thomas Hardy's Epic Drama, 43
25 Early Life, 150
26 Early Life, 191
27 Early Life, 191. Hardy's emphasis
28 Wright, 105
29 Early Life, 197-98
30 Wright, 105
31 Early Life, 240
32 Early Life, 241
33 Early Life, 266
34 Early Life, 266
35 Early Life, 266
36 See Wright, 109
37 Quoted in Wright, 110
38 See Wright, 110
39 Early Life, 290
40 Cf. Wright, 111
41 See Wright, 111. There is some controversy as to the importance of The Drama of Kings as a source for The Dynasts. In contrast with Wright's assessment, see for example, Chester A. Garrison, The Vast Venture: Hardy's Epic-Drama The Dynasts (Salzburg, Aus.: Institut fur Englische Sprache und Literatur, 1973) 55-67.
42 Early Life, 294
43 Wright, 113
44 Wright, 113
45 Early Life, 294
46 See Early Life, 290-91
47 Early Life, 306
48 Later Years, 9
49 Wright, 114
50 Later Years, 56-57
51 See Wright, 115
52 See Later Years, 57-58. But Hardy seems to have clearly foreseen by September of 1892 that Jude would be his last work of fiction. See Millgate, 329.
53 See Later Years, 74; Wright, 116.
54 Later Years, 100
55 Later Years, 100
56 Later Years, 101
57 Later Years, 107
58 See Later Years, 114
59 Later Years, 120
60 Later Years, 123, 127
62 For a fuller description of deletions and additions see Wright, 117-18.
63 Cf. Orel, Thomas Hardy's Epic Drama, 46-47
64 Later Years, 216-17
65 For a survey of the criticism of this period, see Garrison, 11-19.
66 See, also, Garrison, 20-25


71 See Later Years, 167-68, 270-73.


74 Elliott, 22

75 Elliott, 23

76 Elliott, 31

77 Elliott, 53

78 Elliott, 53


80 Stevenson, 284

81 Stevenson, 295

82 See note 3

83 See note 1

84 See note 6

85 Webster, 183

86 Webster, 210

87 James O. Bailey, Thomas Hardy and the Cosmic Mind: A New Reading of The Dynasts (Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina P, 1956).

88 See, for example, Garrison, 80n33. With regard to the philosophies of both Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann, Garrison states that although Hardy knew the writings of both, "it is wrong to conclude that Hardy--the novelist, poet, and dramatist--had appropriated as his own the formal philosophy of one or both of them to the extent that all else was merely relative." Garrison goes on to say that "despite Bailey's impressive interpretation, the reader
with a knowledge of Hardy's individuality can only revolt against the picture (probably unintended by Bailey in his attempt to displace the precedence of Schopenhauer) of Hardy's studying the minutiae of Von Hartmann's theory in order to make every phase and phrase of his drama fit the philosophy of another man, no matter how much Hardy found it palatable...."

89 See note 2
90 See note 41
91 Garrison, 69
92 Garrison, 77
97 Morrell, 17
98 Morrell, 55
99 Morrell, 139
100 Later Years, 219
103 Even as late as September, 1918, Hardy, although much more pessimistic than before the war, saw himself as a meliorist (see Later Years, 190). Contrast this late statement with an earlier statement made in 1901 to William Archer: "But my pessimism if pessimism it be, does not
involve the assumption that the world is going to the dogs, and that Ahriman is winning all along the line. On the contrary, my practical philosophy is distinctly meliorist. What are my books but one plea against 'man's inhumanity to man'—to woman—and to the lower animals?...When we have got rid of a thousand remediable ills, it will be time enough to determine whether the ill that is irremediable outweighs the good." See William Archer, Real Conversations (London: Heinemann, 1904) 46-47. See, also, Millgate, 450.

104 See Harold Orel, The Final Years of Thomas Hardy, 1912-1928 (Lawrence, KS: UP of Kansas, 1976) 121-37.

Chapter 2. Victorian Class Consciousness


2Altick, 27.

3Altick, 28.

4Altick, 31.

5How much the Victorian middle class under Gladstone feared the potential political strength of the workers during the maneuvering around the Reform Bill of 1867, and thus really opposed it, is described in Gertrude Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds (New York: Knopf, 1968) 333-92. Himmelfarb stresses the fact that the Conservatives were more realistic than the Liberals in believing that the newly enfranchised workers, far from being radical in their politics, would vote Conservative, and concludes that "the Reform Act was a Conservative measure, initiated and carried by a Conservative government" (363).

6See Altick, 128.


9See Bury, 24-29. Bury's book is a history of the idea of progress. Many of the factual points I make in my account of the history of the idea are borrowings from Bury, but all conclusions are my own.
Saint-Simon sought a social law that was as valid as the physical law of gravitation; i.e., a law that could serve as the basis for predicting and controlling social phenomena. Claiming to have discovered such a "law," he believed that social and political predictions could now be made. Human knowledge, he held, had now entered a stage which was no longer conjectural, but positive, and the control of human behavior towards its betterment could be exercised. (See Bury, 282-89.)


Copleston, 110.

Copleston, 111.

Copleston, 114.

Copleston, 109.

Copleston, 114.

Copleston, 115.

Bury, 335.

See Greta Jones, Social Darwinism and English Thought: The Interaction between Biological and Social Theory (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities, 1980) 40-41. See also Buckley, The Triumph of Time, 15.

See Bury, 344.

See Bury, 342.


See Buckley, The Triumph of Time, 56.

See Jones, ix. Much of my account of Victorian social Darwinism is based on Jones's book.

Jones, x-xiii

Jones, xi

Jones, xii

Jones, xiii

Although the phrase is Spencer's, the idea was expressed as early as 1844 in the Bridgewater Treatises of
William Kirby. At that time the notion was compatible with an anti-evolutionary position. See Jones, 5-6.

30 Jones, 6
31 Jones, 8
32 Jones, 11
33 Jones, 14
34 Jones, 17
35 Jones, 18
36 Jones, 23
37 See Jones, 35-36
38 See Jones, 38-39
39 Quoted in Jones, 39
40 Quoted in Jones, 42
41 See Jones, 49-50
42 Quoted in Jones, 62
43 Quoted in Jones, 62
44 Jones, 63
45 See Jones, 64-65

Chapter 3. The Dialectical Consciousness of Thomas Hardy

1 Millgate, 411. To his friend Edward Clodd, Hardy insisted that he wished he had never been born and that "but for the effort of dying, would rather be dead than alive" (quoted in Millgate, 411).

2 Millgate, 411-12.

3 Orel, ed., Personal Writings, 53.

4 Later Years, 141. Hardy's emphasis.

5 See Jones, 64.

6 Thomas Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd, ed. with introd. and notes by Ronald Blyth (Harmondsworth, Mxse: Penguin, 1978) 86.

8 *Tess*, 307.


12 *Complete Poems*, no. 119.

13 *Complete Poems*, no. 113.

14 *Complete Poems*, no. 241.

15 *Complete Poems*, no. 43.


17 *Early Life*, 153

18 *Early Life*, 158

19 *Early Life*, 279

20 *Early Life*, 242

21 *Tess*, 304

22 See Paulin, 18-19. As early as 1865 Hardy had noted, "The poetry of a scene varies with the minds of the perceivers. Indeed it does not lie in the scene at all" (*Early Life*, 66).

23 *Complete Poems*, no. 9

24 *Complete Poems*, no. 65

25 *Complete Poems*, no. 218

26 *Complete Poems*, no. 292
27 Complete Poems, no. 91

28 Quoted in Wright, 38

29 Millgate, 21


31 Merryn and Raymond Williams, 30

32 Quoted in Millgate, 26

33 Raymond Williams, The Country and the City (New York: Oxford UP, 1973) 60

34 Raymond Williams, 96-98

35 Merryn and Raymond Williams, 31

36 Early Life, 72

37 Merryn and Raymond Williams, 30

38 Orel, ed., Personal Writings, 189

39 Tess, 376

40 Jude, 402

41 Return of the Native, 233-34

42 Early Life, 294

43 Bjork, 118

44 Bjork, 119

45 Collected Letters, vol. 3, 304-05


47 This view is reinforced by Wright: "Hardy looked into scientific works and read the philosophers or commentaries on them not as a methodical student of science or of metaphysics, but as a poet looking for help in synthesizing his own sensations of reality and in giving them harmonious articulation" (Wright, 26).

48 See Rutland, 56-58; Wright, 34-35
49 See Webster, 33-44
50 Early Life, 19
51 See Millgate, 91
52 Cf. Millgate, 91
53 Millgate, 91
54 Complete Poems, no. 44
55 Orel, ed., Personal Writings, 56
56 Orel, ed., Personal Writings, 267-68
57 Early Life, 281
58 Early Life, 63-64
59 Later Years, 272
60 See Wright, 31-32
61 Quoted in Rutland, 66
62 Quoted in Wright, 32
63 Cf. Rutland: "He naturally read Comte but it is doubtful whether he took anything from him" (Rutland, 84-85).
64 Complete Poems, no. 266
65 Early Life, 189
66 Quoted in Millgate, 319
68 Collected Letters, vol. 3, 53
69 Orel, ed., Personal Writings, 58
70 Wright, 30
71 Quoted in Wright, 43
72 Wright, 45
73 Wright, 70
Chapter 4. The Dynasts as a Synthesis of Consciousness

1 Preface to The Dynasts, xiv
2 Preface to The Dynasts, xxiv
3 Preface to The Dynasts, xxiv
4 See Patrick Gardiner, ed., Theories of History (New York: The Free Press, 1959) 77
5 See Wright, 43
6 Wright, 205
7 Early Life, 294
8 Cf. Wright, 191-94

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1 Early Life, 129
2 Complete Poems, no. 500
3 Early Life, 223
4 Early Life, 279
5 Early Life, 191
6 Early Life, 271. Hardy's emphasis
7 Archer, 46-47
8 Later Years, 183
9 Later Years, 162
10 Later Years, 165
11 Later Years, 190
12 Later Years, 230
13 Orel, ed., Personal Writings, 52
14 Orel, ed., Personal Writings, 58
15 Early Life, 179
16 Early Life, 48-49
17 Early Life, 171
18 Early Life, 241
19 Early Life, 309
20 Later Years, 125

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