CHAPTER III

DELIVERANCE FROM PASSION

Hardy's philosophy of love between sexes and marriage
Preliminary Statement of the Argument

Pierre D'Exideuil is right in stating that Hardy's novels embody chiefly the vision of "the sidereal immensity covering with its starry tent the microcosm of passion," and exhibit a profound, stirring and disquieting study of the human pair. There is hardly a scholar or critic of Hardy who has missed this point or disputed it. Yet, it seems, his views on "the fiery phenomenon" to be gathered from his novels and organised systematically with critical effort, have, like all his unique thought, puzzled his students and eluded their grasp. It is, therefore, necessary to refute what is misconstrued of his philosophy of love, to state his correct position, and to stress particularly his generally overlooked ameliorative concepts of conjugal camaraderie and almost sexless devotion to the image of the beloved in abstract which develops positive mystical depth in the 'extrovertive' sense of the word.

According to Hardy, sexual passion driving man to woman and vice versa for the realization of happiness deceptively promised by Nature, is most difficult to resist and impossible to root out quite. It is the strongest of all urges that
confront the silent universe in absurd strife because it is, in fact, the extension of the will to live, the elemental force that by procreation and proliferation of the species perpetuates the sad pattern of conscious existence. In man it often takes the delusive form of romantic fancy in the objective, or obsessive poetic love commanded by one person alone, or even Platonic idealism of abstract Beauty, while all the while it is essentially the inward push of the instinct. Hardy sees it, not as a blessing of Nature to rejoice in, but as its curse to be got rid of. He has suggested two ways of achieving deliverance from it: one by taming its force, and the other by transmuting its nature into mystical devotion for the ethereal image of the beloved.

Hardy does not regard romantic infatuation as the right kind of love. It is little more than biological urge under mask for the continuance of the species, and is usually as short-lasting as it is intense. "Passion spent and Nature's purpose served, love ends." It promises excessive joy but in the consequence of its gratification gives only satiety and weariness. Its foam and bubbles do not prove to be durable basis of happy marriage. The right basis is affectionate comradeship that can outlast the evanescence of passion. Sex is as much psychological as it is physiological, and the sort of tender friendship that can develop between man and woman after the raging passion is quenched during the first few years of
marriage, can never prevail between two members of the same sex. It is the solid form of love for the good qualities of the beloved's soul which survives even when the surge of passion expires and the beauty of her body wanes. Such conjugal love is Hardy's ideal. Sex is tamed in it and reduced to the minimum but still allowed its due place. Hardy observes near the end of *Far from the Madding Crowd* with reference to the nature of love between stoical Gabriel Oak and chastened Bathsheba:

"This good-fellowship - camaraderie - usually occurring through similarity of pursuits, is unfortunately seldom superadded to love between the sexes, because men and women associate, not in their labours, but in their pleasures merely. Where, however, happy circumstance permits its development, the compounded feeling proves itself to be the only love which is strong as death - that love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown, beside which the passion usually called by the name is evanescent as steam."\(^5\)

But Hardy's philosophy of sex in wise marriage has never been recognized in this light. He was castigated by his contemporaries as the prophet of promiscuity owing to his sympathy for the victims of passion in its base animal form as of all the other forces of heartless Nature. An anonymous reviewer of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* describes it as the "sad story of sin and shame,"\(^6\) and Hardy's method of writing "more dangerous to the moral fibre of young readers than the
Some of the twentieth century critics have for the same reason hailed him as the first emancipated modern. According to Desmond Hawkins, for example, Hardy's greatest innovation was "that he discovered and charted the desert island of sex in the ocean of social confusion." He describes Hardy's characters Angel, Jude and Clym as "the fathers of what we have come to speak of as 'the sex novel,'" while D. H. Lawrence and the critics like him find Hardy yet sitting on the fence constrained from complete emancipation inspite of his essential modernity on account of his temperament timidity which still deferred the Victorian code of conventions in his weak defence of passion, and not fully modern in his treatment of sex.

But all this is 'sound and fury signifying nothing'. Hardy's critics have generally eulogised or inveighed against him for doing what he neither did nor sought to do. Sexual desire, according to him, is the agent of Nature seated in the soul of man, and has nothing of sin or vice about it. But he did not therefore glorify passion or plead for permissive licence. On the contrary he concurred with the traditional thought that this animal ingredient in man must be reduced to the minimum, duly regulated and, if possible, sublimated. He did not question the sanctity of marriage as such. He only resented its sanctimonious inviolability under every circumstance and in every hard case. Marriage, he felt, should be
held as sacramental only when the couple find themselves temperamentally suitable to each other, when their relationship is founded on common tastes, pursuits, and stable feeling of friendship. Hence, allowance must be made for trial and error in finding a proper mate, and for realizing conjugal camaraderie in which sex is not the 'substance' but a mere 'superaddition'. A natural youthful error as that of Jude should not be punished with life-long condemnation to the hell of misery and degradation. Sue in Jude the Obscure voices the feelings of her creator when she says:

"It is none of the natural tragedies of love that's love's usual tragedy in civilised life, but a tragedy artificially manufactured for people who in natural state would find relief in parting."

And again:

"I am certain one ought to be allowed to undo what one has done so ignorantly. I dare say it happens to lots of women; only they submit and I kick."

Hardy, moreover, refused to regard a casual indulgence in sex before marriage as immoral or sinful. It was, to him, a venial lapse, just amoral. Tess, in spite of her lapses, is a pure woman, and even a man who preaches chastity by precept and practice, like Angel Clare's elder brothers, may be a monster of inhumanity. Hardy could not understand why a
sexual commerce which is regarded as normal within the monogamous marital limits, should seem so outrageous when it is premarital. What could be approved within wedlock as legitimate should at least seem tolerable without it. David Cecil, when he describes love in Hardy's fiction as "a blind, irresistible power" of Fate, "intoxicating in its inception, but, more often than not bringing ruin in its train," fails to note that Nature's deceit, harmless in itself and even after disillusionment, alone would not have ruined Tess or Lucetta, Jude or Fanny if they had not been also either the victims of bad and indissoluble marriage or deviators in their lapses or wilful action from the norms of customary behaviour. Irrational social code scorning those who do not conform spells their ruin. Hardy's attack, consequently, was directed against the institution of marriage of his times that did not allow its prisoners to escape, and against the set of social inhibitions that sought to repress the healthy natural urge of man even when it did not harm his fellows.

Hardy never advocated lawless indulgence in sex as a sure escape from the pains of the predicament. He, on the contrary, sought deliverance from it as from all the other desires in order to resolve the absurd into harmony. Obviously just as Hardy's aggressive atheism has misled the critics into
thinking that he was a heretic, his attack on the naive and rosy optimism to the charge that he was a pessimist, so also his tolerance of passion, even vigorous defence of it against the orthodox moralists, has misled some of the critics to the assumption that he pleaded for permissive sex. Chastity and fidelity were as precious virtues to him as they have been to the traditional Christianity. Referring to the incident of Bishop of Wakefield's throwing Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* into fire Mrs. F. E. Hardy writes:

"The only sad feature in the matter to Hardy was that if the bishop could have known him as he was, he would have found a man whose personal conduct, views of morality, and of the vital facts of religion hardly differed from his own."  

Conjugal love thus characterized by friendship and fidelity tames the force of passion and delivers man from its tyrannous yoke. It also delivers him from the sense of spiritual isolation felt amid the crushing cosmic mechanism by achieving perfect communion with another being live like himself and fulfilling his want.

Hardy has shown also the transmutation of passion into pure and spiritual devotion for the beloved which becomes almost mystical in character. R. C. Zadzner describes mysticism as "the sense of rising superior to the 'ego' and what Huxley calls being a 'not-self'." 14 E. G. Browne has described it
as essentially "an enunciation more or less clear, more or less eloquent, of the aspiration of the soul to cease altogether from self, and be at one with God." 

That kind of ceasing from the ego-self characterises the selfless, almost sexless love of Hardy's ideal characters although the difference is that the beloved, often only her abstracted image, becomes in it the substitute of God. Eustacia Vye wonders at Diggory Venn's complete escape from self in his steadfast devotion to Thomasin: "That a strange sort of love, to be entirely free from that quality of selfishness which is frequently the chief constituent of the passion, and sometimes its only one!" 

Marty South in _The Woodlanders_ worships the grave of Winterborne with the religious fervour of a saint for the Divine. Hardy had lost belief in God and hence, his passionate spiritual longing not knowing where to settle for rest often assumed the form of unrelieved anguish. It was, however, not always so, and while his longing coupled with complete dissatisfaction with the earthly conditions of existence, took on the one hand the road to inwardness arriving in his affirmative resignation very near the introvertive mystical state of serene consciousness cleansed of all content as discussed in the Second Chapter of this thesis, it found on the other hand the ethereal image of the actual person of the beloved in flesh and blood a suitable object safely to perch on like in all 'extrovertive mysticism.'
Hardy's ideal lover shifts the centre of his gravity from himself and implants it in the object of his love. He is anxious for her well-being, not for his own happiness, and illustrates in his conduct what William Blake, the mystic poet and painter, wrote in his *The Clod and the Pebble*:

"Love seeketh not itself to please,  
Nor for itself hath any care,  
But for another gives its ease,  
And builds a Heaven in Hell's despair."  

His apparent loss and disappointment only conduce to the deepening of his disinterested feeling that ever offers, never asks for, and is yet positively satisfied in the loftier sense. The image of the beloved is enshrined in his heart and worshipped. Such communion with the ideal in the abstract as deeply felt real and more satisfying than the concrete flesh is almost mystical. If the Divine, unsubstantial in the objective sense though understood otherwise by those who believe, can be regarded and realized subjectively as the universal Well-Beloved, beautiful and benign, as in the Sufi cult of Islam, or in other forms and relationships as in different faiths, the ethereal image of the actual lover or beloved conceived with the same ardour, can also be similarly realized in the abstract. Mysticism is the name we given not to the belief in the objective spirit which could be easily refuted, but to the intense, steadfast and self-fulfilled feeling the authenticity of which cannot be
questioned. It delights the soul in the spiritual sense and delivers it from the narrow prison of the ego-self. Hardy would not, of course, describe Marty South's steady ardour for Winterborne even after he was dead, in The Woodlanders, or Gabriel's love for Bathsheba before he could marry her in Far from the Madding Crowd, or Charley's for Eustacia Vye and Diggory Venn's for Thomasin in The Return of the Native, or John Loveday's for Anne Garland in The Trumpet-Major, or, as we learn authoritatively from Loas Deacon, his own silent, secret, sublimated passion for Tryphena Sparks, as mystical in the slightest, for he like his contemporaries confused religious belief with mysticism. But what else, then, is the nature of the feeling? It is related to the basic sexual urge as a lotus is related to its mud-bed. It is the transmutation of passion as against the taming of its force in the ideal conjugal love discussed before.

Hardy, as exhibited in his The Well-Beloved, was critical of the Platonic philosophy of love, for it fails in his view, it seems, to see and pronounce boldly the gross biological basis of the passion and isolates the essential Beauty in the realm above the stream of temporal change in order to flatter wishfully our futile quest for a beautiful form of woman whom age cannot wither nor custom stale. He concurs with Schopenhauer's metaphysic of sex as basically 'the sense of the species', the
Nature's project for the next generation manifest in various forms from ethereal romanticism to barbaric lust, in so far as our own unbiased observation testifies to the truth of that metaphysic, and in so far as it is acceptable even to science. But whereas Schopenhauer was a pessimistic metaphysician proceeding in his ratiocination from the observation of the phenomenon to the deduction of its ultimate and essential nature as irremediably evil, Hardy in the existential manner refused to go into metaphysical deduction of this kind beyond the observation and description of the phenomenon. Hardy was a meliorist seeking with the exercise of will and wisdom the deliverance from the passionate sex drive which proves ruinous in frustration and satiating, sickening in satisfaction. Curious though it may seem, in spite of his apparent resemblance with Schopenhauer, Hardy has, in fact, tended towards the sexless mysticism of love akin to Plato's in abstracting almost the object of love from its concrete counterpart, different from it only in that while Plato worships the general Idea of beauty, Hardy's lovers, some of the greatest of them at least, adore the image of the particular beloved. Knowledge of the material, even evil nature of the universe cannot undermine or deter our craving for the spiritual, the craving which if well disciplined and sufficiently powerful, can work out its own fulfilment independently. Hoodwinking the self into believing the metaphysical being of
that ideal which is longed for, is not at all necessary, for imagination can create successfully what honest reason discovers to be non-existent. It is quite possible to have a philosophy of love that satisfies soul's ethereal longings in spite of a gross metaphysic that contradicts it. And so Hardy has shown himself to be a near kin to Schopenhauer in his seemingly morbid ontology, and also to Plato and his like in the mystical tendency of his love without being absolutely at one with either. Hardy's philosophy of love in relation to Plato's on the one hand and Schopenhauer's on the other, therefore, will have to be considered in necessary detail in its proper place.

The assumption that Hardy regarded love as the sumnum bonum of life is quite misfounded. There is nothing in the novels to substantiate Patrick Braybrook's observation that "Love for Hardy, is the supreme end of all things in the sense that any other consideration must be discarded so that its greedy appetite be satiated."18 Hardy, on the contrary, as we have considered earlier, has sought deliverance from the yoke of the passion of love as from all the other less powerful desires that conflict with the universe, in order to consummate the spirit of affirmative resignation and resolve the absurd into harmony. He, moreover, has extolled the sacrifice of love, whatever its form, romantic fancy or sublime sexless devotion,
for the larger humanitarian good of many, as the noblest of virtues. Cytherea Graye in *The Desperate Remedies* marries Manston whom she does not love just for the sake of serving her sick and penniless brother. Ethelberta in *The Hand of Ethelberta* renounces Christopher Julian whom she sincerely loves, and schemes to marry the old Lord Mountclere just with a view to helping her poor parents and brothers and sisters. Clym Yeobright in *The Return of the Native* turns to teach his fellows the secret of happiness as he has found it with missionary zeal after the storm of his love and unfortunate marriage has blown over him at the end. Jocelyn Pierston undertakes various humanitarian activities at the end of *The Well-Beloved* after his aesthetic quest for the ideal incarnation of Beauty dies. Hardy's ideal characters readily sacrifice the luxury of love for 'the greatest good of the greatest number' which they prize as a far higher value. Hardy's humanitarian ethics, however, is not our concern in this chapter. It is to be elaborately discussed in the next chapter under the caption *Anguish of the Social Absurd*.

So much must suffice for the preliminary statement of Hardy's philosophy of love and marriage as we gather it from his novels. In the pages that follow is attempted the analytical study of some of the novels thought relevant and
important for our purpose of substantiating the points briefly stated here.

II

The Well-Beloved

Hardy's philosophy of love vis-a-vis Platonic Mysticism of Beauty and Schopenhauer's Metaphysic of Sex.

It would be right to begin with the study of The Well-Beloved, the novel which in its finally revised form as published in March 1897 may be described as Hardy's last, although it was originally written and serialized earlier than Jude the Obscure. Lascelles Abercrombie is quite justified in calling it a work of its own kind distinguished alike from Hardy's major and minor novels, for unlike elsewhere he has employed somewhat consciously here events and situations, incredible, even absurd in themselves, for the purpose of illustrating his ideas and attitudes concerning love and marriage. Abercrombie observes:

"It is the only novel of Hardy's in which the symbolic purpose, instead of appearing as the result of a certain ordering of the material, appears, on the contrary, to be drawing the material somewhat unwillingly after it...."
In a word, The Well-Beloved is frankly fantastic: it must be read just for the sake for its idea, not for the verisimilitude of its substance."10

Yet less attention is paid to this novel than it deserves. Abercrombie himself, instead of deriving and defining that idea carefully, has devoted only two pages to the novel. Patrick Braybrooke treats it merely as the story of "a somewhat harmless but rather pitiful philanderer." 20 D.H. Lawrence dismisses it as "sheer rubbish, fatuity." 21 and most of the critics have refused even to touch it in their learned treatises on Hardy.

The Well-Beloved, to quote Hardy's own words from his letter to Swinburne, is "a fanciful exhibition of the artistic nature." 22 But sex-drive is basically the source of artistic inspiration, and therefore, the brooding spirit of Hardy in trying to comprehend it wholly, naturally brought into play the views of Plato, the first philosopher of love and physical beauty, and the views of Schopenhauer, the first philosopher after Plato, who gave a systematic metaphysic of sex antithetical to the Platonic idealism. These together with other points stated briefly in the preliminary statement emerge from this novel unmistakably and are well-exemplified. The tendency towards what we have called a kind of extrovertive mysticism akin to Plato's, however, is but barely hinted at, while his
passionate revolt against the irrational institution of marriage is quite excluded.

It is necessary to summarise critically the novel before attempting a discussion of Hardy's views on love and marriage derived from it.

Jocelyn Pierston is an inspired sculptor in search of ideal feminine beauty that endures fresh for ever. She, his Well-Beloved, is "a spirit, a dream, a frenzy, a conception, an aroma, an epitomised sex, a light of the eyes, a parting of the lips," an abstract principle as it were, manifest now in this woman, then in that, steady nowhere. Yet he desires to see and possess her incarnation in flesh, and strives for this only to discover that she flits from woman to woman and is embodied in none for long. "Each shape, or embodiment, has been a temporary residence only, which she has entered, lived in a while, and made her exit from, leaving the substance, so far as I have been concerned, a corpse, worse luck!" Jocelyn tells his friend Somers. To him his quest is not a wanton game of pleasure, but rather "a curious curse" which he cannot escape. He tells Somers:

"To see the creature who has hitherto been perfect, divine, lose under your very gaze the divinity which has informed her, grow commonplace, turn from flame to ashes.
from radiant vitality to a relic, is anything but a pleasure for any man, and has been nothing less than a racking spectacle to my sight."26

This curse has started operating in him since he was nine.27 But the first of his serious love-affairs presented in the novel is with Avice Caro, "a 'nice' girl; attractive, certainly, but above all things nice - one of the class with whom the risks of matrimony approximate most nearly to zero. Her intelligent eyes, her broad forehead, her thoughtful carriage, ensured one thing, that of all the girls he had known he had never met one with more charming and solid qualities than Avice Caro's. This was not a mere conjecture - he had known her long and thoroughly; her every mood and temper."28 But Pierston did not want to win in wise marriage a devoted wife, a fair and affectionate friend. He wanted to possess for ever a woman whose beauty would bring without satiating a lasting satisfaction to his aesthetic instinct. So, not the solid qualities of Avice that could guarantee quiet, contented conjugal life, but only the momentary appearance of the Well-Beloved in her, allured him. He was engaged to her, but broke the engagement when the Beloved was discovered to have migrated from her body to the person of Marcia Bencomb.
Marcia, the daughter of his father's bitterest enemy, was spoilt with over-indulgence. Her profile was "dignified, arresting, that of a very Juno. Nothing more classical had ever been seen." Under the mood of momentary fascination he decided to marry her. Marcia initially assented to his proposal, but soon showed temper and peevish pride which separated the lovers before they could formally marry. Avice, then, married her cousin Jim Caro, and Marcia, later, married one Mr. Leverre, a Jersey gentleman. Jocelyn had a feeling of regret that he had wronged little Avice, of relief that he was yet a bachelor free to pursue his delusive Well-Beloved, but not of grief or disappointment of a rejected lover, for he craved for beauty in abstract and no body in particular.

He beheld, then, his conceptual Well-Beloved, flitting from one to another in myriad female forms, and sought to create in marble with the skill of his chisel what God's 'Primary Imagination' had failed to create in concrete flesh. The fire that consumed his being fed his art. "He prospered without effort. He was A.R.A." He won fame, wealth and honours, but not, of course, the satisfaction of his heart's desire, and years thus elapsed on.

Twenty years after he had seen Avice last, he learnt the news that she, who then was a widow, had died. Old
sentiments revived for a while, and he went to attend her funeral. There "he seemed to see Avice Caro herself, bending over and then withdrawing from her grave in the light of the moon."31 She was, in fact, not the dead Avice but her young daughter Ann, also nicknamed Avice, who looked an exact copy of her mother's youth. ".....but Avice the Second was clearly more matter-of-fact, unreflecting, less cultivated than her mother had been. This Avice would never recite poetry from any platform, local or other, with enthusiastic appreciation of its fire. There was a disappointment in his recognition of this; yet she touched him as few had done: he could not bear to go away."32 Jocelyn discovered that his ideal Well-Beloved had concretised in more alluring shape than ever in this crude washer girl who had in her little more than abundant sex-appeal. She obsessed his mind even after he returned to London. "The phantom of Avice, now grown to be warm flesh and blood, held his mind afar. He thought of nothing but the isle, and Avice the Second dwelling therein - inhaling its salt breath, stroked by its singing rains and by the haunted atmosphere of Roman Venus about and around the site of her perished temple there. The very defects in the country girl became charms as viewed from town."33 She made him forget charming Mrs. Nichola Pine-Avon, a rich widow of rare artistic tastes and sensibility, who had been the latest residence of his ideal Well-Beloved.
Pierston's passion had now perceptibly lowered from its aesthetic state to the romantic level which exhibited clearly its basic sexual character. Emphasizing this is the fact that while most of the women he had found in his career periodically adorned with the glow of the ideal Well-Beloved, were distinguished ladies endowed with wit, talent, even genius, with high social standing and refinement of mind and manners, this new impersonation of beauty on which his heart seemed to have settled more steadily than ever before "had apparently nothing beyond sex and prettiness." Now the body of the woman was identified at last with the essence that informed it. He tells Somers, his friends, explaining this new development:

"To have been always following a phantom whom I saw in woman after woman while she was at a distance, but vanishing away on close approach, was bad enough; but now the terrible thing is that the phantom does not vanish, but stays to tantalize me even when I am near enough to see what it is! That girl holds me, though my eyes are open, and though I see that I am a fool."55

Avice's beauty had clearly the quality of sexual desirability, a fragile foundation for conjugal relationship. He knew this. Yet "Did he really wish to proceed to marriage with this chit of a girl? He did: the wish had come at last."56 He had long eluded the clutch of Aphrodite during his aesthetic
wanderings. But now, it seemed, he was almost caught, and
"he dreamt that he saw dimly masking behind that young
countenance 'the Weaver of Wiles' herself, 'with all her
subtle face laughing aloud'."57

Pierston wooed Avice the Second with great passion.
To his great surprise and a little shock he discovered that
she was also suffering from the haunting vision of the ideal
'Well-Beloved' whom she failed to find in any concrete male
form. She had loved many, but had not loved any one long.
She tells Pierston:

"'Tis because I get tired of my lovers as soon as
I get to know them well. What I see in one young
man for a while soon leaves him and goes into
another yonder, and I follow, and then what I
admire fades out of him and springs up somewhere
else; and so I follow on, and never fix to one,
I have loved fifteen already:'.......I can't
help it, sir, I assure you. Of course, it is
really, to me, the same one all through, only
I can't catch him."38

Ann Avice's quest was essentially the same biological urge as
that of Jocelyn Pierston. Yet there was a difference. In the
case of Pierston the raw sex was refined and rarefied into an
aesthetic emotion. It was, however, only half-transformed
state of hanging between earth and heaven and belonging nowhere.
Complete sublimation of the sensual into the spiritual longing,
the dogged pursuit of the Well-Beloved with perfect form and
no flesh at all, could have accomplished as in Plato and Sufi mystics of Persia, sure transport to the world of her heavenly image. But Pierston, from his mid-way aesthetic position, looks, not up towards heaven, but down towards the earth. Torn in the paradoxical nature of his passion for the ideal in earthy, he keeps on wandering long and creating all the while his works of art. He is an artist, above the normal human beings, and below the mystics of Beauty. But Ann Avice's inconstant passion remains pure and undisguised sex. She could not consequently wander long or creatively, and at the age of nineteen, while ignorant Jocelyn was wooing her with fervour, she had already married secretly one Isaac Pierston in order to make right and lawful her premarital affair with him. Jocelyn was deeply hurt when he learnt of her marriage. The failure for the first time brought the pangs of thwarted desire to him. He was now about forty and yet unmarried.

Twenty more uneventful years passed. Jocelyn had now crossed sixty. His curse had aged, but it was not extinct. He received, then, Ann Avice's letter informing the news of her husband's death, and asking him to see her if possible. He still had smouldering desire and affectionate regard for her, and thought that she might mean to marry him now that she was free again to do so. He perceived in the nature of
his own quest a sure change. "Once the individual had been nothing more to him than the temporary abiding-place of the typical or ideal; now his heart showed its bent to be a growing fidelity to the specimen, with all her pathetic flaws of detail; which flaws, so far from sending him further, increased his tenderness. This maturer feeling, if finer and higher, was less convenient than the old. Ardours of passion could be felt as in youth without the recuperative intervals which had accompanied evanescence."89 In his love for Avice the Second, as we saw earlier, the aesthetic vapours had solidified into plain desire for sexual gratification. Now added to this is longing for comradeship which could deliver him from his growing sense of isolation in the ripe old years to come. While the passion now was to blaze up briefly for the final flare up of the dying flame, the quest for the compade was to emerge chastened and pure to be fulfilled.

Jocelyn met Ann Avice only to discover the worn resemblance of her previous youthful self. She had called him to offer in marriage not herself as he had suspected, but her young daughter, also called Avice. She had learnt from her own bitter experience that boiling passion subsides and is almost exhausted within brief period of licensed gratification in marriage to leave the couple satiate, apathetic, even hostile to each other if nothing stronger and spiritual binds them together in emotional harmony. Passion
evaporates, but the shackles of marriage it leads to cannot be undone then and have to be endured. Since passion misguides maids under its power and makes them ignore the solid kind of conjugal well-being, parents, she felt, must arrange for their marriage with the persons that could guarantee it. She also understood that Jocelyn was such a good man, that he was a "fickle lover in the brief, faithful friend in the long run." His advanced age was no disqualification at all in her eye. So in choosing him for her daughter she was sacrificing her own self-interest for the daughter's.

But Ann Avice had not to say anything to Jocelyn. He himself discovered the final incarnation of his Well-Beloved in the person of Avice the Third who was more educated and well-refined than both her mother and grand-mother. Being too old to woo this girl of nineteen, he proposed for her hand to the mother who agreed at once. But the daughter, though docile and obedient, could not be persuaded to renounce her young lover Henri Leverre. She eloped with him, and so the arranged marriage could not take place. This shocked the ailing mother so much that she died. Jocelyn Pierston was left lonely as ever.

He then suffered for certain days in London from high fever symbolizing as it were the dying agony of his cursed quest for concrete beauty. He recovered when he did recover not only
from the fever of the body but also from the subtle 'sickness' of soul "that had led him such a dance" just after a Will-o'-the-wisp. Jocelyn's sexual urge was rarefied so much into the aesthetic form that he had never felt the gross compulsion of the raw instinct. Therefore, it was natural for him to think that his quest had nothing to do with flesh, and it was true that "he had never knelt low to that. Not a woman in the world had been wrecked by him, though he had been impasioned by so many." But it was nonetheless essentially and basically nothing but sex. It is clear beyond a shadow of doubt in his love for youthful Avice the Second. He had needed the purificatory process of marriage which could have cured him of his curse through long and legitimate gratification of flesh far earlier, and saved him from the strain and tension that followed his aestheticism. Somers, his friend, and Avice the Second in this novel had taken this cure, and were saved consequently from the mischief of passion played through all its masks, romantic or aesthetic or even Platonic. The ripe advanced age, the wisdom born of introspection, the final disappointment of his feverish desire, and the bodily fever he suffered from in London itself, however, delivered him without marriage though belatedly from the clutches of passion masquerading as the aesthetic quest.

Jocelyn Pierston had no ambition to bring him misery in its frustration. There were no petty desires for paltry prizes
of life found in average man to work up in his mind irksome noise. All his concentrated mental energy was directed in the sex-based aesthetic quest. Therefore, when his curse was lifted, when his one all overwhelming desire was finally denatured, the serene state of affirmative resignation was accomplished in his soul. While yet convalescing in bed after his fatal illness in London "When he passed the crisis, and began to know again that there was such a state as mental equilibrium and physical calm, he heard a whispered conversation going on around him, and the touch of footsteps on the carpet." It was Marcia talking to the nurse, Her arrival just at the moment after the extinction of his curse is a significant coincidence. It is stated before that the desire for comradeship was slowly but steadily growing within him as the force of the aesthetic quest was fading. It was discernible in his love for Avice the Second as a side-current though chiefly manifest in it was the elemental force of sexual desire unmasking itself. It was quite obvious in his later love-affair with Avice the Third reducing sex merely to a side-current. The death of the ideal Well-Beloved now synchronised with the appearance of Marcia - once in youth also adorned with the touch of the ideal, now an old woman worn and wise, - who had come with the promise of life-long-lasting conjugal affection which alone remained valuable to the heart of Pierston which had aged at last.
The very source of his artistic inspiration dried up along with the termination of his pursuit of the Well-Beloved.

"He was no longer the same man that he had hitherto been. The malignant fever, or his experiences, or both, had taken away something from him, and put something else in its place.

"During the next days, with further intellectual expansion, he became clearly aware of what this was. The artistic sense had left him, and he could no longer attach a definite sentiment to images of beauty recalled from the past. His appreciativeness was capable of exercising itself only on utilitarian matters, and recollection of Avice's good qualities alone had any effect on his mind; of her appearance none at all.

"At first he was appalled; and then he said 'Thank God'."

Looking at his own masterpieces he cried out:

"No- I don't like them!....They are as ugliness to me! I don't feel a single touch of kin with or interest in any one of them whatever."

He retired as an academician, settled down on his placid island and married old Marcia with a view to becoming a lawful guardian to Henri, her son, and Avice the Third, his wife, and also to giving Marcia and getting from her, not love, but feeling of comradeship:

"I have no love to give, you know, Marcia..... But such friendship as I am capable of is yours till the end."
His one and only great longing now having ceased to be, the harmony was established between his being and the world. The strong and stoical heroes of Hardy, successful in terminating with melioristic effort the strain of the cosmic absurd, usually turn to altruistic activities of alleviating others' sufferings and sorrows for reducing to the extent possible for them the anguish of the social absurd in the little human world around them. That is what Jocelyn Pierston also undertakes to do at the end of the novel.

(i)

Beauty and Love: Hardy vs. Plato

It is obvious that Hardy has considered critically in this novel the phenomenon of love between sexes as inspired by the physical beauty and the Platonic interpretation of it. Plato's position apropos this must be stated before attempting to clarify Hardy's criticism of and difference from it.

To Plato, Beauty is an eternal being beyond the reach of senses. It, however, partakes of and adorns periodically
with its glow the human beings and other things of the earth. In our quest of it we meet with failure because we mistake a beautiful man or woman for Beauty itself, the concrete flesh and form for the essence that informs it, the imitation for the original Idea. Discreet philosopher should pledge his steadfast love and loyalty, not to one single corporeal frame, but to immutable Beauty there and everywhere so long as it appears rejecting ascetically from all its myriad ever changing manifestations the foul earthly associations subject to birth, growth, decay and death. Its appearance in the world of time is valuable only in so far as the appearance kindles in us the longing for the transcendental real. Love or pursuit of Beauty thus conceived and shifted to contemplative plane leads ultimately to the lucid vision of its effulgent, absolute being.

The following passage from Symposium wherein Socrates, Plato's mouthpiece in all his Dialogues, explains the philosophy of love and Beauty as it was taught to him by Diotima, is thought self-explanatory and sufficient for our purpose of presenting in brief the Platonic position:

"He who has been instructed thus far in the things of love, and who has learned to see the beautiful in due order and succession, when he comes toward the end will suddenly perceive a nature of wondrous beauty (and this, Socrates, is the final cause of all our former toils) - a nature which in the first place is everlasting, not growing and decaying, or waxing and waning; secondly, not fair in
one point of view and foul in another, or at one
time or in one relation, or at one place fair, at
another time or in another relation or at another
place foul, as if fair to some and foul to others,
or in the likeness of a face or hands or any other
part of the bodily frame, or in any form of speech
or knowledge or existing in any other being, as
for example, in an animal, or in heaven, or in
earth, or in any other place; but Beauty absolute,
separate, simple, and everlasting, which without
diminution and without increase, or any change, is
imparted to the evergrowing and perishing beauties
of all other things. He who from this ascending
under the influence of true love, begins to perceive
that beauty, is not far from the end. And the true
order of going, or being led by another, to the
things of love is to begin from the beauties of
earth and mount upwards for the sake of that other
beauty, using these as steps only, and from one
going on to two, and from two to all fair forms,
and from fair forms to fair practices, and from
fair practices to fair notions, until from fair
notions he arrives at the notion of absolute
beauty, and at last knows what the essence of
beauty is. But what if man had eyes to see
the true beauty - the divine beauty, I mean, pure
and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the
pollutions of mortality and all the colours and
vanities of human life - thither looking and
holding converse with the true beauty simple
and divine? Remember how in the communion only
beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he
will be enabled to bring forth, not images of
beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an
image but of a reality), and bringing forth and
nourishing true virtue to become the friend of
God and be immortal, if mortal man may. Would
that be an ignoble life?"

**Hardy, it is clear, subjects this Platonic doctrine to**
critical examination. **Jocelyn Pierston's trouble is that his**
**essential Well-Beloved "had not remained the occupant of the**
**same fleshly tabernacle in her career so far."**
mournful emptied shape stands ever after like the nest of some beautiful bird from which the inhabitant has departed and left it to fill with snow."49 He tells Somers: "As flesh she dies daily, like the Apostle's corporeal self; because when I grapple with the reality she is no longer in it, so that I cannot stick to one incarnation if I would."50 And again when the latter had remarked that he was regarding with extraordinary interest the person of Avice the Second, a mere pretty little washer girl, Pierston said: "Behind the mere pretty island girl (to the world) is, in my eye, the Idea, in Platonic phraseology - the essence and epitome of all that is desirable in this existence."51 The three Avices in his view "were interpenetrated with her essence"52 which he loved.

But whereas Plato envisages deliverance from the tiresome game of hide-and-seek which Beauty plays with its seekers with the culmination of the quest into mystic communion with the absolute essence abiding above time, Pierston perceives no possibility of such an end to his pursuit of the elusive Beloved. Hardy seems to conclude that the Platonic metaphysics seeking to abstract essences from the associations is false, that it posits wishfully the being of that which is ardently desired, and that it cannot be true unless desire itself were a proof of the being of its object. Aesthetic quest is fruitless since nothing ethereal or earthly exists in the objective
sense to fulfil it. Beauty is a subjective illusion endowed to the figure of the beloved by the refined and unconscious sexual desire of the lover which discovers her suitable for gratification. It inspires art but wins for the artist prolonged strain and restlessness. Hence, the quest of Beauty must be abandoned like all assertive desires for the realization of the inward serenity of affirmative resignation and reconciliation with the world which responds positively to none of the desires.

Hardy, however, fails to see that Platonism could be defended as mysticism despite its untenable ontology. Perhaps, owing to his bias towards the scientific notion of the true as objective and empirical, he could not see how creative intuition could realize in sound subjective experience what is wished for, what discursive thought would dismiss as a delusive fancy, an Idea abstracted from varying particular shapes that vaguely suggest it. The only definition of truth that could be universally acceptable is that it is experience, whatever its nature, and its criterion is authenticity. In every variety of 'extrovertive mysticism' subject itself creates its object imaginatively, and yet the authenticity of experience in it cannot be doubted. Plato may be wrong in presuming ideal objective being of Beauty awaiting as it were to be intuitively realized. And yet the steady ardour for the vision of Beauty
as such can accomplish the experience within the consciousness of the aspirant. The longing characterised by the faith in the transcendental being of Beauty or any similar ideal itself blossoms into Beauty or the like in intuition even if the inquisitive reason discovers the essences nowhere and honestly concludes that they do not exist. It does not matter whether the quest of Beauty is basically the sexual urge in disguise, for it concludes in consummate mystical experience when the urge is absolutely sublimated and the disguise is transmuted into reality. Socrates is presented in Symposium as an ideal sexless lover of divine Beauty who loves it without losing equanimity in all its transient manifestations, and mounts with dogged determination as explained in Plato’s passage already quoted at length, from the gross associations to the finer ones, and from there ultimately to the invisible essence "beholding beauty with the eye of the mind". "Love alone/ By tearful prayer and fiery longing fed,/ Reveals a knowledge schools have never known."55: writes Jalaluddin Rumi, the Sufi mystic and poet of ancient Persia. Sufies, like Plato, were mystics of Beauty who held that "Sensual desire is a barrier huge and stout,"54 on their way towards the esoteric essence, that "woman is a ray of God,"55 and that beyond the stench of flesh and sense shines resplendent the heavenly Beloved as the essential Beauty.
Hardy has misunderstood Platonism if he considers Pierston's quest as quite Platonic although Pierston also had never knelt low to flesh and loved only the elusive beauty shifting endlessly from body to body. It is, in fact, an artist's aesthetic quest of paradoxical nature for the actual endowed with the ideal, and may best be described as half-baked Platonism which is always foredoomed to failure. Pierston hangs somewhere between heaven and earth strung under the tension of equally powerful opposed pulls, unable to mount steadily upward in the Socratic manner, dissatisfied with the perishable earthly beauties and yet looking back in vain upon the earth for the impossible embodiment of the essential Beloved in concrete flesh, for the general notion in the perfect particular shape, for the changeless image in the stream of change. The sexual desire in his quest is only half-transformed, not fully sublimated, and almost drops the aesthetic mask in his love-affair with Avice the Second. Pierston, moreover, does not have faith in the being of the essence. But in order that the steady ardour of the aspirant for the essence could accomplish its creative experience in intuition, the essence must exist at last in faith if not in fact as well. Hardy is wrong, therefore, if, as it seems, he interprets Platonism in terms of Pierston's quest and concludes that Platonic mysticism which realises or seeks to realise imaginative truth, is false simply
because Platonic metaphysics gives no objective truth and seems wishful from the rational point of view.

Hardy, however, does not err where his own experience informs, and love as the selfless, almost sexless devotion to the beloved, as discussed briefly in the preliminary statement to this chapter, bears curious resemblance to the Platonic mysticism, and is possibly what he himself had felt for Tryphena Sparks if Lois Deacon's research in Providence and Mr. Hardy's is reliable. It is a kind of idealistic love that needs no indulgence, serves the loved one unconditionally, possesses for ever his or her spiritual image, and matures by its constant ardour into its own inward fulfilment. Such transmutation of passion in its consummate form is presented in the character of Marty South in The Woodlanders who adores whole-heartedly the image of the dead Winterborne and worships his grave with the regularity of a saint visiting a shrine. In The Well-Beloved also such love is hinted at, though not elaborately illustrated. It is seen in Pierston's affection for the first Avice immediately after she was dead. "He loved the woman dead and inaccessible as he had never loved her in life."57 "She had been another man's wife almost the whole time since he was estranged from her, and now she was a corpse. Yet the absurdity did not make his grief the less:
and the consciousness of the intrinsic, almost radiant, purity of this new sprung affection for a flown spirit forbade him to check it. The flesh was absent altogether; it was love rarefied and refined to its highest attar. He had felt nothing like it before. "The divinity of the silver bow (the pale young moon) was not more excellently pure than she, the lost, had been." But in the case of Jocelyn Pierston this passing feeling is not consolidated into a permanent state of mind, and has in it also the grief of bereavement which is not ideal. He is, moreover, as yet the victim of the aesthetic quest for the perfect embodiment of the essential Beauty, and so, symbolically enough, finds bending over the grave of the first Avice under the moon light, the fresh and enticing form of her daughter, the new incarnation of his Beloved, and then pursues her with insatiable hunger.

The only difference between such loftier love of Hardy's notion when the transmutation of passion in it is complete, and the Platonic love is that the first clings steadfast to the spiritual image of an actual individual, whereas the second vows allegiance to the essence of Beauty in general. In both the beloved is abstract and incorporeal. Flesh has equally no place in either, and the raw instinct in both is sublimated into something divine. Passion in its instinctual compulsive form is considered to be a tyrant by both Plato and Hardy, and both
alike seek deliverance from it. Plato recounts in *The Republic* how old Cephalus tells Socrates of the use of age which delivers men from passion and brings him peace:

"Take the poet Sophocles, for example. I was with him once, when someone asked him: "How do you stand, Sophocles, in respect to the pleasures of sex? Are you still capable of intercourse?" "Hush, sir," he said. "It gives me the greatest joy to have escaped the clutches of that savage master." I thought then that he spoke wisely, and I think so still, for certainly old age brings great peace and freedom from passions such as these. When the desires grow less intense and slacken, most certainly it is as Sophocles says: it means release from masters many and raving."60

Pierston also in this novel feels greatly relieved when his sex-based aesthetic quest terminates with the dawn of wisdom brought about by long experience and ripe old age. He exclaims:

"Thank Heaven I am old at last. The curse is removed."61

(ii)

Sex, Love and Marriage: Schopenhauer and Hardy

Schopenhauer is the first great philosopher of love after Plato. Hardy has not even once referred to his name in *The Well-Beloved* which studies the phenomenon of love in terms of
fiction, and there is hardly any critic who has noted that Hardy has yet largely sided with Schopenhauer while showing himself consciously critical of Plato. It might even appear to the reader acquainted with Schopenhauer's philosophy of love that *The Well-Beloved* does no more than provide scenes and situations, not quite without verisimilitude in themselves, for substantiating what is theoretically affirmed in *The Metaphysics of the Love of the Sexes*, so pervasive and obvious is his influence here. Hence, a summary of Schopenhauer's basic position is felt necessary in order to understand the extent of Hardy's agreement with and difference from him.

According to Schopenhauer, beauty has no essential being in the objective sense. Its appearance is projected in a person by the subjective sexual urge that selects her for gratification. Sexual passion is as it were Nature's secret agent seated in the soul of man assigned with the task of ensnaring man for its purpose of procreation. It assumes "very skillfully the mask of objective admiration" and creates "a voluptuous illusion which leads the man to believe he will find a greater pleasure in the arms of a woman whose beauty appeals to him than in those of any other; or which indeed, exclusively directed to a single individual, firmly convinces him that the possession of her will ensure him excessive happiness." But Nature's end is not to make the human pair that unite in love happy. It is always
"the composition of the next generation" under the false promise of happiness to the present one. "The dramatis personae who shall appear when we are withdrawn are here determined, both as regards their existence and their nature, by these frivolous love affairs."64 "Hence, then, every lover, after the ultimate consummation of the great work, finds himself cheated; for the illusion has vanished by means of which the individual was here the dupe of the species."65 All this is true no less of what is called Platonic love than of the romantic infatuation. These are the various masks which passion puts on to disguise its animal nature, and they drop and disappear after it is quenched leaving man satiate and weary. Until then, however, the pent up force of passion continues to hold the soul in tension and trouble although it may also flower creatively into beautiful art or poetry.

Hardy is at one with Schopenhauer in regarding passion for woman, not as a pull of Beauty but as a push of the instinct by means of which Nature seeks to preserve the species. Jocelyn Pierston's aesthetic mask has nearly dropped in his love for Avice the Second. Hardy comments when he is talking to her about the washing of his linen:

"All this time Pierston was thinking of the girl - or the scientific might say, Nature was working her plans for the next generation under the cloak of a dialogue on linen."66
The crude washer girl endowed with "a voluptuous illusion" of Schopenhauer's description by Pierston's high surge of sexual urge, seems to him the only impersonation of happiness which he must possess. She drives everything out from his mind and becomes its sole occupant. Hardy observes of Jocelyn standing at the top of "the bare and lofty convex of the isle" and beholding entranced the small figure of Avice the Second:

"How incomparably the immaterial dream dwarfed the grandest of substantial things, when here, between those three sublimities - the sky, the rock, and the ocean - the minute personality of this washer-girl filled his consciousness to its extreme boundary, and the stupendous inanimate scene shrank to a corner therein."67

But the intensity of such high passion is by its very nature brief. The edifice of lasting relationship of marriage which ought to prove comforting to the parties concerned in the sad journey of life must not be built on such evanescent foundation. All the temperamental differences of the couple which the surge of emotion obscures surface once more when it subsides and conflict for ever. That is why Schopenhauer observes: "Not only, however, has the unsatisfied passion of love sometimes a tragic issue, but the satisfied passion also leads oftener to unhappiness than to happiness."68 For love "flings itself upon persons who, apart from the sexual relation, would be hateful, contemptible, and even abhorrent to the lover."69 And Marcia
Bencomb echoes Schopenhauer in this novel when she tells Pierston, her youthful lover then and the son of her father's enemy, of Romeo and Juliet:

"It was a fortunate thing for the affections of those two Veronese lovers that they died when they did. In a short time the enmity of their families would have proved a fruitful source of dissension; Juliet would have gone back to her people, he to his; the subject would have split them as much as it splits us."  

If the marrying couple have nothing in common with each other except the desire for sexual indulgence under whatever disguise, they would either part after disenchantment, or live together disgusted with each other like a cat and a dog. That is what happens in the case of Avice the Second and her husband Isaac Pierston. The same story is repeated in the marriage of Avice the Third and Henri Leverre. The lovers feel cheated in each other after passion is spent.

Ideal conjugal love is that which stands constant the test of time. It is the durable feeling of friendship between man and wife which usually emerges in its pure form only after "the sense of species" flags in force or ceases to operate. Schopenhauer maintains that in a rare instance of happy marriage "passionate sexual love associates itself with a feeling of an entirely different origin - real friendship based upon agreement of disposition, which yet for the most part only appears when
sexual love proper is extinguished in its satisfaction."71 To Hardy such marriage, generally found to be a happy accident, is an ideal to be realized. It was promised to Jocelyn Pierston in the person of the first Avice, for "his affection for her was rather that of a friend than of a lover."72 "He had known Avice Caro so well of old that his feeling for her now was rather comradeship than love."73 But his aesthetic quest which is no more than refined sexual urge had misled him. However, after his curse is lifted and he is delivered from passion in the final phase of his life, he wants only a friend and finds her in Marcia Bencomb, now Mrs. Leverre, a widow of advanced age, no longer a Juno-like Beauty of her youthful days. He retired as an academician, took a house on his native island and decided to pass his last lonely years in peace. "A growing sense of friendship which it would be foolish to interrupt led him to take a somewhat similar house for Marcia quite near, and remove her furniture thither from Sandbourne. Whenever the afternoon was fine he would call for her, and they would take a stroll together towards the Beal, or the ancient Castle, seldom going the whole way, his sciatica and her rheumatism effectually preventing them, except in the driest atmospheres."74 Age, infirmity and ailments which repel passion, served to strengthen their friendship. And as time went on, he thought "how needless it was that she should be put to this inconvenience by their occupying two houses, when one would
better suit their now constant companionship, and disembarrass her of the objectionable chimneys. 75 So they formally married to live together in the same house.

Such comradeship which develops after passion is silenced or subdued achieves communion with another human being and delivers man from the sense of isolation. But Hardy's characters are usually led into an error under the drive of passion in contracting ill-advised marriages. In many cases, however, the error is rectified after the surge of passion subsides and when another opportunity is afforded. True love grows as its false semblance wanes in the chastening process of suffering. Thomasin, for example, in The Return of the Native marries inconstant Wildeve rejecting Venn's fidelity and devotion, and comes to grief. Schooled in the suffering of a bad marriage, however, she learns to value Venn's goodness and marries him after Wildeve's death. Dazzled by Troy's dexterity, his manly bearing and magic tongue, Bathsheba in Far from the Madding Crowd marries him only to realize a foe instead of a friend. Then chastened she becomes a fit companion for kind and constant Gabriel Oak after Troy was murdered. In most cases we find that first marriages are a failure. Only second marriages prove wise and successful. Or as in the case of Grace and Fietzpiere in The Woodlanders, the first phase of the married life is a failure, and the later phase when cool sanity has superseded the heat of passion, is happy. Where,
however, no opportunity is afforded to rectify the initial error, the life is ruined as in the case of Jude. Jocelyn Pierston also, it is clearly suggested, had won an ideal comrade in old Marcia although, perhaps because, he had married at the age above sixty when the curse of flesh was already removed.

In love marriage passion or "the sense of the species", blind to the consideration that really matter in the long run for happy conjugal life, is misled in the selection of the mate by her beauty which is properly speaking sexual desirability in the initial short run. That is why Schopenhauer maintains that "love marriages, as a rule, turn out unhappy; for through them the coming generation is cared for at the expense of the present...... The opposite is the case with marriages contracted for purposes of convenience, generally in accordance with the choices of the parents. The considerations prevailing here, of whatever kind they may be, are at least real, and cannot vanish of themselves."76 Hardy voices the same views. Ann Avice who herself "had made an unhappy marriage for love"77 in this novel did not want to allow her daughter Avice the Third to hazard her happiness similarly under the heat and haste of blinding passion. Therefore, she arranges in the light of her wisdom and experience the latter's marriage with Jocelyn Pierston who, she had discovered, was a "fickle lover in the brief, faith-
ful friend in the long run, and who, though now too old to become an ardent lover of the young girl would yet prove a kind and good husband to her. She tells the daughter:

"Here is Mr. Pierston, and he wishes to be your husband. He is much older than you; but, in spite of it, that you will ever get a better husband I don't believe. Now, will you take him, seeing the state I am in, and how naturally anxious I am to see you settled before I die?"

Hardy himself comments:

"She had no apprehensions about this marriage. She felt perfectly sure that it was the best thing she could do for the girl."

Yet "the sense of the species" prevails against the wise maternal counsel when the sanguine girl, otherwise docile and obedient, is driven to defy the mother in eloping with her young lover Henri Leverre. Their elopement in a boat without oars tossed about in troubled waters of stormy currents of the ocean suggests in obvious symbolism the character of love-marriage that sails precariously through the floods of passion without being equipped to steer clear towards a premeditated direction. The wisdom of the parents supplies to the boat both oars and the sense of direction which passion-possessed Avice the Third refused to accept. She consequently comes to grief after disenchantment and even desires separation from Henri, her husband, though
Pierston does not allow her to do so.

Schopenhauer advises the aggrieved parties to acquiesce in their fate and achieve possible reconciliation with each other when conjugal comradeship is not realized after passion that only cares for the species has pushed them into a bad marriage. "Brought together by this aim, they ought henceforth to try to get on together as well as possible," he writes. He does not question the indissolubility of the wedlock or suggest divorce as a remedy. Hardy also does no more in this novel than asking the victims of bad marriage, not to fret and fume in vain against what is difficult to undo, but to realize "that kind of domestic reconciliation which is so calm and durable, having as its chief ingredient neither hate nor love, but an all-embracing indifference." Avice the Second and Isaac Pierston succeed in doing so. Jocelyn Pierston tells Marcia when the latter shows him third Avice's letter expressing her wish to be separated from Henri, her husband:

"'Separated? What does the child mean?' Pierston read the letter. 'Ridiculous nonsense!' he continued. 'She doesn't know what she wants. I say she shan't be separated! Tell her so, and there's an end to it. Why - how long have they been married? Not twelve months. What will she say when they have been married twenty years!'"

He emphatically advises Avice the Third herself:
"Avice, your mother did this very thing. And she went back to her husband. Now you are to do the same."84

All this, however, does not mean that The Well-Beloved does nothing more than illustrating in terms of fiction The Metaphysics of the Love of the Sexes while criticizing the Platonic idealism of Beauty. The basic difference between Schopenhauer and Hardy is that while the former is a metaphysician of the Will, Hardy refuses as stressed frequently in the previous chapters, to go inferentially beyond observation to any kind of ultimate being in the abstract, and attempts no metaphysics. Schopenhauer, therefore, sees in the guilt associated with the act of sex the confirmation of his thesis that the individual in the sexual union plays against his personal will in the hands of the general Will seeking to make immortal the pattern of mortal agony upon the earth. He observes that in the midst of tormented existence "we see the glances of two lovers meet longingly: yet why so secretly, fearfully, and stealthily? Because these lovers are the traitors who seek to perpetuate the whole want and drudgery, which would otherwise speedily reach an end; this they wish to frustrate, as others like them have frustrated it before."85

But passion does not appear guilty in The Well-Beloved, and in other novels, notably in Tess and Jude, Hardy has shown that such guilt and shame are not natural but artificial product
of the long consolidated customary morality. Hardy, as we shall consider later in our study of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, is quick to grasp what Schopenhauer in his anxiety to justify his metaphysical position has overlooked, that shame in sex which is a peculiar character of the civilized humanity, is not universally observed in all the forms of life. It is therefore not natural and can point towards no transcendency of Schopenhauer's description.

There is, besides, a basic difference between the mind of Schopenhauer and the mind of Thomas Hardy. The first was decidedly a pessimist, "a somewhat morbid and neurotic type"86, who derived strange satisfaction from thinking that the evils of life are irremediable. Hardy, as we have discussed in the Second Chapter of this thesis, had sane and serene mind affirmatively resigned to the chance changes of the world. Seeing and describing the cosmic predicament of man with lucidity does not make him a pessimist. He was definitely a meliorist in thinking that the misery of man's lot could be alleviated if certain unruly impulses are duly disciplined, if right kind of attitude to the neutral natural world is cultivated, and if the arbitrary apathetic social code of conduct is reasonably amended and made sympathetic to the erring individuals. Schopenhauer, consequently, sees passion that cannot be put out itself as an evil, and fails to see that the misery born of bad marriage is not irremediable. Hardy, on the contrary, finds sexual passion
harmless and amoral in itself, and bad marriage which fails to realize conjugal comradeship as a social evil which could and should be remedied. In the present version of *The Well-Beloved* Hardy has suggested the acquiescence of the bad marriage with the spirit of resignation without expectations for the warmth of friendship as a mild remedy somewhat after Schopenhauer's own suggestion considered earlier. In *Jude the Obscure*, however, he has expressed open revolt against such marriage and obviously pleaded for its dissolution. The original version of *The Well-Beloved*, as F. B. Pinion tells us, also contained similar reflections on the marriage law which Hardy removed from its final book-form on account of the violent attack on *Jude the Obscure*.87 Hardy's philosophy of love is, in short, unlike Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the instinct, principally the ameliorative philosophy of marriage. And there is no suggestion in the essay of Schopenhauer of the transmutation of passion into the sexless selfless devotion exhibited by Hardy as discussed earlier.

Schopenhauer confuses the natural end of the sexual passion with the consciously considered aim of man's ethical endeavour when he observes with fervour in answer to the possible criticism of his philosophy:

"Now, however loudly persons of lofty and sentimental soul, and especially those who are in love,
may cry out here about the gross realism of my view, they are yet in error. For is not the definite determination of the individualities of the next generation a much higher and more worthy end than those exuberant feelings and supersensible soap bubbles of theirs? Nay, among earthly aims, can there be one which is greater or more important?"88

But Schopenhauer's reasoning here is absurd and illogical, for the natural end of the sexual passion cannot be treated at the same time as an ideal end, 'what is' is never the same as 'what ought to be', the terms being mutually contradictory. Since Nature's end is what it has ever been and can never change, it can at the most be stated plainly in the scientific language, but it cannot be described in the valuational terms as either worthy or unworthy. Moreover, in describing it as the worthiest of ends, Schopenhauer contradicts his own basic position discussed earlier that submission to the compulsion of passion is an act of treachery which furthers Nature's cruel procreative end of perpetuating the pattern of mortal agony, "the whole want and drudgery", and causes therefore in man the feeling of guilt and shame. It is difficult to understand how the same end seeming once cruel becomes worthy again.

Hardy does not thus confuse the natural with the ideal. Child-bearing, of course, is the end of Nature, which whether we will it or not will be naturally realised. But the aim of the volitional human effort in love must be the noble happiness
as steady as possible of the human pair of the present generation to be realized by the deliverance from passion through proper gratification, and from the sense of isolation in the affectionate conjugal comradeship. The child, when born, must be treated, of course, with great care and compassion which the new entrant in the human tragedy deserves more than the rest of the actors already on the stage. But he is never the consciously meditated end of the lovers in Hardy's novels. Pierre D'Exideuil is quite right when he observes:

"In Hardy's work the child is an accident rather than an end in itself. Except for poor Tess's offspring so speedily carried off and Jude's children all doomed to die, the child plays no role in Wessex Novels and Poems."89

(iii)

Humanitarian goodness as a greater value than love

There is no justification for the view that Hardy regarded the gratification of passion or even the most sublimated form of love as the summum bonum of life. He, on the contrary, pleaded for deliverance from passion, as from all other desires that constitute the active term of the absurd, by taming its force or transmuting its nature. When the harmony as discussed in the Second Chapter is established between a man and the world of
indifferent Nature, it is the proper time for him to turn his attention to the weak-willed humanity still torn in the absurd strife, and to provide them as much help and support as possible. That is what Jocelyn Pierston does after his curse is lifted and he is at peace.

"His business was, among kindred undertakings which followed the extinction of the Well-Beloved and other ideals, to advance a scheme for the closing of the old natural fountains in the Street of Wells, because of their possible contamination, and supplying the townlet with water from pipes, a scheme that was carried out at his expense, as is well-known. He was also engaged in acquiring some old moss-grown, mullioned Elizabethan cottages, for the purpose of pulling them down because they were damp; which he afterwards did, and built new ones with hollow walls, and full of ventilators."

Humanitarian love, also compassion for all forms of life, and acts of service to them, are superior to all the other ends of human life, according to Hardy. That is amply borne out as much in Hardy's personal life as in the lives of his noble characters - Tess, Ethelberta, Jocelyn and Clym.
Hardy's view of guilt in Sex and Customary Sex-morals

The Mayor of Casterbridge
and
Tess of the D'Urbervilles

Hardy, it is contended earlier, does not see like Schopenhauer in the guilt associated with the act of sex any vague and unconscious feeling that such an indulgence is a treachery on the part of the pair to the generation yet to be born, for when the custom permits or marriage sanctions it the guilt disappears. The mind of an individual in society is so conditioned from infancy upwards by the ideas and opinions hammered upon his ears from all around, that he himself like those who condemn him, treats as guilty any transgression of custom under provocative circumstances. Such guilt is unknown among the lower forms of life. It could be accounted for only as the artificial product of the code of correct conduct worshipped by the society as valuable in itself.

Lucetta's death in The Mayor of Casterbridge is a social tragedy. Her relationship with Henchard which arose from the longing to be delivered from loneliness in both before his wife's arrival, was normal in the natural sense though irregular in the social sense. Yet the worm of guilt consumed her heart. She
dreaded, not without reason, that the revelation of that affair would someday poison her happy conjugal life with Donald Farfrae. The sight of hers and Henchard's effigies, therefore, caused her to reel and cry:

"It is of no use! He will see it, won't he? Donald will see it! He is just coming home - and it will break his heart - he will never love me any more - and O it will kill me - kill me."

The shock, finally, leads to her collapse and death.

Mr. Paterson's observation that "in rejecting her old lover (Henchard) and electing to marry Farfrae, she has refused, once again like her more heroic male counterpart, to recognize and make restitution for her crime," and that her death restores "the reality of an order whose indignation, once provoked, can neither be appeased nor controlled," seems to have no substance at all. She succumbs to the false view of customary sexual morality entrenched deep within her own consciousness, and preached without understanding its rights or wrongs by a society which has received it passively from tradition. Consider, for instance, her revolt against it in the following dialogue between Henchard and her:

"" ....... I come with an honest proposal for silencing your Jersey enemies, and you ought to be thankful."
"How can you speak so!" she answered, firing quickly.
"Knowing that my only crime was the indulging in a foolish girl's passion for you with too little regard for correctness, and that I was what I call innocent all the time they called me guilty, you ought not to be so cutting! I suffered enough at that worrying time, when you wrote to tell me of your wife's return and my consequent dismissal, and if I am a little independent now, surely the privilege is due to me."94

Her argument has full force of Hardy's revolt against the false code of morality. It becomes evident from Hardy's own comment:

"For though hers had been rather the laxity of inadvertence than of intention, that episode, if known, was not the less likely to operate fatally between herself and her husband."95

Tess, in a way, is the reincarnation of Lucetta under different circumstances in another novel. An episode, trivial from every point of view, operates fatally in her life when it becomes known to Angel, her husband. The punishment comes, not to crime, but to innocence, not from Fate which being blind in Hardy is indifferent, but from society which being cruel in its callousness inspite of its human character, rouses Hardy's ire. Hardy comments on Tess's feeling of guilt at having lost virginity, reading reproach to her conduct in the Nature surrounding her being:

"But this encompassment of her own characterization, based on shreds of convention, peopled by phantoms and voices antipathetic to her, was a sorry and mistaken creation of Tess's fancy - a cloud of
moral hobgoblins by which she was terrified without reason. It was they that were out of harmony with the actual world, not she. Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence. But all the while she was making a distinction where there was no difference. Feeling herself in antagonism she was quite in accord. She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly.  

And again:

"Moreover, alone in a desert island would she have been wretched at what had happened to her? Not greatly. If she could have been but just created, to discover herself as a spouseless mother, with no experience of life except as the parent of a nameless child, would the position have caused her to despair? No, she would have taken it calmly, and found pleasures therein. Most of the misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations."  

H. C. Duffin writes in criticism of Hardy's position in these passages:

"I cannot but think this dangerous and false. To allow the great law of chastity no deeper roots than in the conventions of society is superficial; to insist solely upon a mere natural, animal, unspiritual environment is no less short-sighted."  

But Duffin fails to understand Hardy's point of contention. The author who regarded the sexual passion as a distraction to be
rid of, and has presented earlier in his fiction the sturdy pictures of stoical virtue, would never elevate a natural inclination to the level of an ethical ideal, or question the intrinsic value of chastity when it is genuine accomplishment as distinguished from the hypocritical appearance. Hardy only wanted that conventions, the human laws, unlike the indifferent laws of Nature, should be informed with the spirit of sympathy and must not lose sight of the human need to be happy. They may regulate and civilize the animal instinct. But they must also generously excuse when escaping all conditioning it pushes a person occasionally into an irregular indulgence. The case of Tess, moreover, is different. Her first lapse is the betrayal by Alec of her innocence, almost ignorance of sex and the 'danger in man-folk'. Her final fall which is an act of self-immolation for the sake of her starving family, could have been averted if Angel had not deserted her, the social scorn had not harrassed her beyond endurance for her first venial lapse, and she had been allowed the opportunity to improve. Hardy explains:

"By experience," says Roger Ascham, "we find out a short way by a long wandering." Not seldom that long wandering unfits us for further travel, and of what use is our experience to us then? Tess Durbeyfield's experience was of this incapacitating kind. At last she had learned what to do; but who would now accept her doing?"99

"But for the world's opinion those experiences would have been simply liberal education."100
"Was once lost always lost really true of chastity? She would ask herself. She might prove it false if she could veil bygones. The recuperative power which pervaded organic nature was surely not denied to maidenhood alone." 101

There can be, in fact, no realization of virtue without lapses from it into its opposite kind during the period of conscious striving after it or ignorance of its value. The moral will fails frequently in the struggle against the natural human weaknesses to establish control over them, and gains in strength with every fresh exercise of its power before the final accomplishment of virtue born of the wisdom of long experience. Goethe's Lord says in Faust:

"While Man's desires and aspirations stir, He cannot choose but err." 102

This principle is recognised usually in regard to every other virtue. What is, then, unique about chastity - especially for a woman - that it should be treated as lost for ever if it is once casually lost owing not to 'intention' but merely 'inadvertence'? But conventions care to answer no questions and condemn irrationally every deviation brought to light. The custom-born part of Tessa's mental being reproached her essential purity for guilt when not she but Alec had sinned in betraying her. The same part of Angel Clare's being more powerful than his superficial idealism, condemned her without crime to the lone struggle for existence under the heartless heaven and in the midst of the hostile society. Hardy
revolted against such rigidity of the customary morals and rejected only the formal correctness of virtue as so very valuable.

Phillotson in *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy's next novel, does not err like Angel Clare, welcomes remorse-struck Sue and regards her experience with Jude as a necessary education. Phillotson writes to his friend Gillingham:

"As to her having lived with and had three children by him (Jude), my feeling is (though I can advance no logical or moral defence of it, on the old lines) that it had done little more than finish her education."

But Angel Clare in this novel learns such wisdom only after it is too late to save Tess.

Arnold Kettle is quite fair when he observes:

"The positive value to which Hardy appeals in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is life, 'the great passionate pulse of existence, unwarped, uncorrected, untrammelled by those creeds which futilely attempt to check what wisdom would be content to regulate'. The purity of Tess, warm and natural, is contrasted with that of Mercy Chant, cold and class-bound. Tess is pure because in the central quality of her life and feelings she is, in this sense, natural."

While Hardy's wisdom resents the negative creeds and customs seeking to stifle the passionate pulse of existence and the impulse of sex which is the central part of that pulse, he also
sees the necessity of regulating it. It is wrong to assume as Mr. Duffin does that Hardy allowed the law of chastity "no deeper roots than in the conventions of society".

Although the central motif of this novel is Tess's deflowered virginity and her resultant tribulations, it has larger significance from the point of view of Hardy's thought. We gather from its pages Hardy's philosophy of affirmative revolt in response to the social absurd which is not so irresolvable as the cosmic absurd. The full analytical study of Tess of the D'Urbervilles, therefore, is attempted in the next chapter under the caption Anguish of the Social Absurd.

IV

Hardy's Affirmative Revolt against the Evil of Bad Marriage and a Plea to rectify the Institution

Jude the Obscure

Hardy wrote about Jude the Obscure:

"The book is all contrasts - or was meant to be in its original conception. Alas, what a miserable accomplishment it is, when I compare it with what I meant to make it: e.g. Sue and her heathen gods set against Jude's reading the Greek testament; Christminster academical, Christminster in the slums; Jude the saint, Jude the sinner; Sue the Pagan, Sue the saint; marriage, no marriage; etc., etc."105
That is why it often gives the impression that it "is too elaborately conceived and too inclusive to be wholly satisfying as a work of art."106 But, though stuffed to the full with polemics touching social ills, religion, marriage, and other ideas, it is not a fully representative work of Hardy's philosophy since it omits singularly the ideal relationship of harmony to be established between man and the world in place of the actual absurd strife, as also certain positive points of his philosophy of love. All the contrasts and controversies as presented here, however, are welded up skillfully into a harmonious whole of a novel. Ian Gregor is partially right when he observes of Jude the Obscure:

"The total effect the novel makes is of massive coherence, a coherence arising less, however, from the substance of the book than from its mood and tone."107

The mood, however, is not, as it seems to Mr. Gregor, that of impassioned inquiry as to whether "the universe makes — or ought to make — rational sense."108 The stage of inquiry is long past, and the conclusion arrived far earlier that it does not and will not make sense although it ought to. The mood manifest in the style and tone here that endows unity to the novel is that of affirmative revolt against the society which is more cruel in consequence of its callous apathy, even antipathy towards the deviators from long-established customary ways
of behaviour, and towards the needs and aspirations of its individual members, than the universe that stands only neutral to the cries of life, superfluous to its mechanical mutations and movements. There is, moreover, the substantial unity and the philosophical coherence as well which Mr. Gregor has overlooked, or at least not emphasised.

But Hardy's treatment of "marriage, no marriage" problem which forms an inextricable part of the whole substance, was more free and frank than his countrymen could tolerate. The readers and reviewers, therefore, alike received the book with an instant outcry of outraged modesty at what they thought was Hardy's obscene plea for permissive sex and abolition of the institution of marriage. R. T. Tyrrell, for example, wrote in the *Fortnightly Review* voicing the popular sentiment:

"The book is steeped in sex. The aspirations of the stone-cutter Jude towards a University career form quite a subordinate underplot. The main theme is an elaborate indictment of marriage as being necessarily the death of pure passion and even of healthy sexual desire."109

And a bishop burnt it "probably in his despair at not being able to burn me."110

But there were a few voices of wise dissent from the general chorus of angry curses that could see and pronounce the moral purport of the book. Hardy writes:
"One incident among many arising from the storm of words was that an American man of letters, who did not whitewash his own morals, informed me that, having bought a copy of the book on the strength of the shocked criticisms, he read on and on, wondering when the harmfulness was going to begin, and at last flung it across the room with execrations at having been induced by the rascally reviewers to waste a dollar-and-half on what he was pleased to call 'a religious and ethical treatise'."

Reserving the larger issue of the anguished, affirmative revolt in response to the recognition of the social absurd for elaborate treatment in the next chapter, it is attempted to show in this chapter that the American has read *Jude the Obscure* rightly, that Hardy favoured fidelity, not free love, as the ideal, that he was essentially a Christian in seeking deliverance from the clutches of passion though he had disowned all dogma, that he sought, not to abolish, but only to rectify the institution of marriage, and that all this must not be overlooked simply because he pleaded for the dissolution of marriage when it is bad.

(i)

Compulsive Surge of Sexual Passion
and Bad Marriage based on it

Hardy's views on the nature of the sexual passion, here as elsewhere, are the same as Schopenhauer's. Hardy shows here
more poignantly than ever before that this elemental force, when it asserts itself, is irresistible and blinding in its blaze to the issues and aspirations of far greater consequence in making life happy and comfortable. It, however, does no substantial harm to the pair of lovers under its possession if its intoxicating period is allowed to pass out until sanity is restored. It does not, as some of the critics think, prove hostile to man, or to woman for that matter. A careful reading of this much misunderstood novel will easily show that Elizabeth Hardwick is wrong when she observes of Jude the Obscure:

"The price of sex is destruction for every fulfilment, and often destruction without fulfilment."

What is really harmful and destructive is the marriage contracted hastily under the powerful spur of the sexual passion by an individual who has nothing in common with his beloved except that.

Schopenhauer observes that happy marriage is based upon the agreement between the couple of the tastes, temperaments, etc., and that

"On the other hand, in the case of difference of disposition, character, and mental tendency, and dislike, nay, enmity, proceeding from this, sexual love may yet arise and exist; when it then blinds us to all that; and if it here leads to marriage it will be a very unhappy one."
And again:

"But so much more powerful is the will of the species than that of the individual that the lover shuts his eyes to all those qualities which are repellent to him, overlooks all, ignores all, and binds himself for ever to the object of his passion - so entirely is he blinded by that illusion, which vanishes as soon as the will of the species is satisfied, and leaves behind a detested companion for life. Only from this can it be explained that we often see very reasonable and excellent men bound to termagants and she-devils, and cannot conceive how they could have made such a choice. On this account the ancients represented love as blind."\(^{114}\)

Hardy has exemplified this thesis in Jude's marriage with Arabella. Jude meets her at a crucial moment when in spite of his poverty he seemed in enthusiastic mood "to see his way to living comfortably in Christminster in the course of a year or two, and knocking at the doors of one of those strongholds of learning of which he had dreamed so much."\(^{115}\) He was returning from Alfredston to Marygreen all the way dreaming about the higher and happier life of a D.D. or even a bishop that his learning would enable him to lead when suddenly the distraction came:

"In his deep concentration on these transactions of the future Jude's walk had slackened, and he was now standing quite still, looking at the ground as though the future were thrown thereon by a magic lantern. On a sudden something smacked him sharply in the ear, and he became aware that a soft cold substance had been flung at him, and fallen at his feet.

"A glance told him what it was - a piece of
flesh, the characteristic part of a barrow-pig, which the countrymen used for greasing their boots, as it was useless for any other purpose.

The pig's pizzle thrown at him by Arabella is the symbol of sex. It signifies that there were to be nothing in their relationship other than the short lasting surge of animal instinct. Jude's youth like all youth was already in the inflammable state of dormant passion which is usually ignited when the first woman, whatever her kind, breaks through the reserve of modesty and comes into contact with him. It was Jude's misfortune that this first woman was not of a finer kind, not of a kind that could promise sweet conjugal comradeship through life's rough journey, or encouragement in his difficult course towards a goal far distant and far higher than his present position. "She was a complete and substantial female animal - no more, no less." Hardy observes again:

"The unvoiced call of woman to man, which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella's personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention - almost against his will, and in a way new to his experience."
This was sufficient to work up gradually what Schopenhauer calls "voluptuous illusion", the false conviction that her possession would lead to sublime ecstasy. Arabella asked Jude to keep visiting her on Sundays, and on the first Sunday that came after this casual meeting, he weighed for a while whether to spend the afternoon in reading or call for her, and then blinded to all her coarseness, was driven towards the girl.

"In short, as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him—something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hither to. This seemed to care little for his reason and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions, and moved him along, as a violent schoolmaster a schoolboy he has seized by a collar, in a direction which tended towards the embrace of a woman for whom he had no respect, and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality."120

"He talked the commonest local twaddle to Arabella with greater zest than he would have felt in discussing all the philosophies with all the Dons in the recently adored University, and passed the spot where he had knelt to Diana and Phoebus without remembering that there were any such people in the mythology, or that the Sun was anything else than a useful lamp for illuminating Arabella's face. An indescribable lightness of heel served to lift him along; and Jude, the incipient scholar, prospective D.D., Professor, Bishop, or what not, felt himself honoured and glorified by the condescension of this handsome country wench in agreeing to take a walk with him in her Sunday frock and ribbons."121

"It was better to love a woman than to be a graduate, or a parson, ay, or a pope."122
It need not be repeated what is stressed frequently in the preceding parts of this chapter that such compulsive upsurge of the sexual passion usually dies after a short duration of free satisfaction, is not vicious in character and would not prove ruinous if it did not lead to marriage or rouse social scorn towards irregular indulgence. But, unfortunately, for Jude, Arabella was a schemer for marriage. She wanted to trap him for a husband. Acting under the advice of Anny, her friend, "Nothing venture, nothing have," she induced Jude into physical relationship which continued, it is suggested, for about two months at the end of which he was disillusioned and wished that "somethings had never begun!" and that "it is never too late to mend." But Arabella's pretended pregnancy compelled the tender-hearted Jude to marry her for protecting her honour. It was an instance of bad marriage foredoomed to failure binding as it did in self-mocked solemn union the persons of such antagonistic natures as Arabella, the coarse and pitiless butcher-girl, and Jude whose heart bled even for crawling earth-worms. Between the husband and wife here there was "no more unity than between east and west."

In *The Well-Beloved*, as we considered earlier, Hardy, in concurrence with Schopenhauer, has suggested "all-embracing indifference" to love, and absorption into practical affairs as a remedy to reduce in degree the misery of bad marriage. It is
a sort of resignation to the ills of misalliance, an attitude which seems wise in view of the fact that an individual fuming and fretting against the laws in force cannot alter them. But in *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy is decidedly in the revoltive mood. Sue, the wife of Phillotson, tells Jude:

"And it is said that what a woman shrinks from — in the early days of her marriage — she shakes down to with comfortable indifference in half-a-dozen years. But that is much like saying that the amputation of a limb is no affliction, since a person gets comfortably accustomed to the use of a wooden leg or arm in the course of time."126

Hardy does not see any justification in her words in defence of her own capricious desertion of Phillotson, for her marriage was not really bad. But if put in Jude's mouth or spoken for him, these words of revolt will have force and approval of the author, for his marriage with Arabella was irrevocably bad and had unnecessarily crippled him.

"Their lives were ruined, he thought; ruined by the fundamental error of their matrimonial union: that of having based a permanent contract on a temporary feeling which had no necessary connection with affinities that alone render a life-long comradeship tolerable."127

Hardy does not simply sorrow over such unions pessimistically like Schopenhauer. He asks whether they are irremediable like the sexual passion itself which prompted them. Consider Jude's thoughts after having contracted the marriage for saving
Arabella's honour:

"As to the point in question he was compelled to accept her word; in the circumstances he could not have acted otherwise while ordinary notions prevailed. But how came they to prevail?

"There seemed to him, vaguely and dimly, something wrong in a social ritual which made necessary a cancelling of well-formed schemes involving years of thought and labour, of foregoing a man's one opportunity of showing himself superior to the lower animals, and of contributing his units of work to the general progress of his generation, because of a momentary surprise by a new and transitory instinct which had nothing in it of the nature of vice, and could be only at the most called weakness. He was inclined to inquire what he had done, or she lost, for that matter, that he deserved to be caught in a gin which would cripple him, if not her also, for the rest of a life-time?"128

And again:

"'Is it,' he said, 'that the women are to blame; or is it the artificial system of things, under which the normal sex impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who want to progress?'"129

Hardy's questions, cast in revolting tone, mean emphatic affirmation that such 'ordinary notions' regarding chastity as lost for ever if it is once lost, regarding children born of sexual lapses before the ritual of marriage as sin-begotten, ought not to have prevailed, have no justification at all, and must not condemn a man or woman to the life-crippling gin of bad marriage. A gin confining within it a bleeding rabbit with lacerated leg
"bearing its torture till the morrow, when the trapper would come and knock it on the head,"130 is the central symbol of bad marriage in the book. Sex-morals, Hardy pleaded, must be meaningfully reconstructed, and bad marriage must be made easily dissoluble. He quotes approvingly J. Milton for an epigraph in the Part Fourth of the novel:

"Whoso prefers either Matrimony or other Ordinance before the Good of Man and the plain Exigence of Charity, let him profess Papist, or Protestant, or what he will, he is no better than a Pharisee."131

(11)

The First Marriage of Sue and Phillotson and its dissolution

Sue is 'epicene', ethereal creature, bright and beautiful. Phillotson is a truly noble and generous character least subject to passion's sway. Their marriage is certainly not bad in Hardy's view.

"'O, he's too old for her - too old!' cried Jude in all the terrible sickness of hopeless, handicapped love."132 His words are those of a defeated rival. Jude, moreover, is too young to understand that the same age or small age difference
between the marrying couple is the standard desirable from the point of view of sexual satisfaction, and that steady conjugal companionship can yet exist between the couple such as Phillotson and Sue. Hardy observes: "Phillotson was perhaps twenty years her senior, but many a happy marriage had been made in such conditions of age."133 Sue herself says: "If you think I am not happy because he's too old for me, you are wrong."134 We have also considered earlier that Avice the Second in *The Well-Beloved* finds Jocelyn Pierston worthy for her young daughter despite his advanced age due to the inherent goodness of his soul. Phillotson, though a bit older than Sue, has similarly shown that "inherent wish to do rightly by all,"135 and is constant in his kind affection to her all through the novel. His only wish is to settle down in quiet conjugal life with a woman who could share his work and interests.

Yet why did Sue desert him? There are reasons which have little to do with what may be called objectionable in his person or character. First, she had natural aversion for sex which does have its place, however subordinate, in marriage. D. H. Lawrence rightly observes: "She must, by the constitution of her nature, remain quite physically intact, for the female was atrophied in her, to the enlargement of the male activity."136

Secondly, although she is herself almost sexless, she needs
hot and constant passion from her male partner. She, as Lawrence writes, "wanted some quickening for this atrophied female......That the new rousing might give her a sense of life. But she could only live in the mind."137 Phillotson's dispassionate behaviour naturally could not quicken in her that sense of life.

Sue, finally, is a supersensitive neurotic case, not a healthy individual fit for agreeable social existence. "There is no order or regularity in your sentiments,"158 Phillotson tells her. She herself admits as much when she tells Jude that she is "a woman tossed about, all alone, with aberrant passions, and unaccountable antipathies."159

Sue does not feel that her marriage with Phillotson is a life-crippling gin of bad marriage as Jude felt in his own case. Marriage itself being "destructive to a passion whose essence is its gratuitousness,"140 is bad according to her. Phillotson who could put up with all her eccentricities, alone, however, was a proper match for her if at all there was any.

Owing to all these reasons and others to be discussed in the next section Sue desires to stay away from him and, if he permitted, to stay with Jude. Phillotson after brief mental conflict shows heroic moral courage and goodness unstained with jealousy when he generously complies with her request:
"You may go— with whom you will. I absolutely
and unconditionally agree."141

He tells Gillingham, his friend, later:

"I would have died for her; but wouldn't be
cruel to her in the name of the law. She is,
as I understand, gone to join her lover. What
they are going to do I cannot say. Whatever
it may be she has my full consent to."142

He writes even to Jude without any ill-will for him:

"I make only one condition— that you are tender
and kind to her. I know you love her. But even
love may be cruel at times. You are made for
each other: it is obvious, palpable, to any
unbiased older person. You were all along 'the
shadowy third' in my short life with her. I
repeat, take care of Sue."143

He dissolves the marriage for her sake and leaves her legally
free to marry Jude if she chose since Jude was also then freed
from Arabella. The conventional society, however, brought him
low to misery for his sin of magnanimity. He was dismissed from
the school.

"I have hopelessly ruined my prospects because
of my decision as to what was best for us,
though she does not know it; I see only dire
poverty ahead from my feet to the grave; for
I can be accepted as a teacher no more."144

Even after suffering from penury, privations and virtual ostracism,
he is mentally unshaken, and does not regret his generous action.
He tells Arabella far later:

"I am convinced. I did only what was right, and just, and moral. I suffered for my act and opinions, but I hold to them; though her loss was a loss to me in more ways than one."145

Phllotson is the noblest character in this novel and the strongest. D. H. Lawrence gives uncharitable picture of him when he writes:

"He was a human being as near to mechanical function as a human being can be. The whole process of digestion, masticating, swallowing, digesting, excretion, is a sort of supermechanical process. And Phllotson was like this. He was an organ, a function-fulfilling organ, he had no separate existence. He could not create a single new movement or thought or expression. Everything he did was a repetition of what had been."146

Lawrence fails to see that Phllotson's kindness and compassion, magnanimity and selflessness are the virtues which Hardy himself valued highly. In his views on marriage and morals, in his courage to go against conventions, Phllotson appears not mechanical but truly creative from the ethical point of view. He stands alone in the face of worst misfortune and yet survives sane and self-possessed. There is some truth in what Arabella observes of him: "A contented mind is a continual feast."147

Added to his heroic power of endurance are the elements of mental resignation, nearly affirmative, to the workings of fate, and
defiance to the customary ways of thinking more in deed than in words which amount to moderate and affirmative revolt against the matrimonial ills of social making. What is usually overlooked is the fact that in the simplicity and steadfastness of love he belongs somewhat to the category of characters like Diggory Venn and Gabriel Oak who wait, watch, wish well, suffer loss without the loss of dignity and win in the end.

Sue deserted Phillotson. But she was never reconciled to this act. The guilt continued to haunt her simply because he was as faultless as a man could be. Her conscience never fully forgave her, and in remarrying him later she only tried feebly to repair the wrong she had so capriciously inflicted on him.

Jude's feeling for Sue after he had seen her once or twice was "unmistakably of a sexual kind," although he sought to deceive himself into believing that it was something higher and different. He says to himself:
"'After all,' he said, 'it is not altogether an erotolepsy that is the matter with me, as at that first time. I can see that she is exceptionally bright; and it is partly a wish for intellectual sympathy, and a craving for loving-kindness in my solitude.' Thus he went on adoring her, fearing to realize that it was human perversity. For whatever Sue's virtues, talents or ecclesiastical saturation, it was certain that those items were not at all the cause of his affection for her."149

This reminds us again of Schopenhauer who said:

"While, therefore, the lovers speak pathetically of the harmony of their souls, the heart of the matter is for the most part the agreement of suitableness pointed out here with reference to the being which is to be produced and its perfection, and which is also clearly of much more importance than the harmony of their souls, which often, not long after the marriage, resolves itself into a howling discord."150

Jude had felt when Arabella had worked up transitory allurement in him that it was better to love a woman than to be a parson or even a pope. He feels similarly that "With Sue as companion he could have renounced his ambitions with a smile."151

Sue's declaration, on the other hand, that she longed only for "mental communion" with Jude in ideal friendship, is equally self-deceptive or at least ambivalent, although the sexual urge, 'the will of the species' is abnormally inoperative in her. She could have found a friend as much in Phillotson if not more, as in Jude, and friends are not jealous as she is of
Arabella. Her love is not of the mystic sort ceasing altogether from self in order to be at one with the lover in one ceaseless flow of feeling towards him, but of the selfish kind that seeks to draw insatiably from the lover, without herself satisfying him in the least, the constant flow of passion towards her. There is justification in Jude's complaint that "intimate as they were, he had never once had from her an honest, candid declaration that she loved or could love him."152

Her requirement of love and inability to return it, usually disguised under the cloak of friendship and the like, however, become clear to her occasionally as when she tells Jude as to why she married Phillotson:

"I didn't marry him altogether because of the scandal. But sometimes a woman's love of being loved gets the better of her conscience, and though she is agonized at the thought of treating a man cruelly, she encourages him to love her while she doesn't love him at all."153

But such flashes of self-awareness are rare in her, and it must be said in her defence that she is always sincere in what she consciously says or does. She hates hypocrisy.

She has, before she appears in this novel, mixed freely with men and frequently had lovers. Of these she speaks in some detail of a Christminster graduate with whom she had stayed in the same room for fifteen months without submitting herself
physically to him or agreeing to marry.

"He wanted me to be his mistress, in fact, but I wasn't in love with him - and on my saying I should go away if he didn't agree to my plan, he did so.... He said I was breaking his heart by holding out against him so long at such close quarters; he could never have believed it of woman. I might play that game once too often, he said. He came home merely to die."^155A

She never is, in fact, in love with anyone. The 'love of being loved': this Hardy's italicised phrase explains the nature of her feeling. She enjoys unconsciously the torture of thirst for her in the lover and is struck temporarily with remorse only when she realizes the cruelty of her tantalizing him.

Phillotson's steadfast affection does not satisfy her. Her decision to desert him finally came because he lacked passion, and Jude had no passion for her which she needed and which, she feared, would again be diverted towards Arabella who had returned from Australia. This is clearly suggested in the following dialogue between Sue and Jude about his holding her hand:

"Well - are you sure you mean it only as my cousin?"
'Absolutely sure. I have no feelings of love left in me.'
'That's news. How has it come to be?'
'I've seen Arabella.'
She winced at the hit; then said curiously, 'When did you see her?'
'When I was at Christminster.'
'So she's come back; and you never told me! I suppose you will live with her now?'
'Of course - just as you live with your husband.'
She looked at the window pots with the geraniums
and cactuses, withered for want of attention, 
and through them at the outer distance, till 
her eyes began to grow moist."154

Jude is not false to his feeling when he says that no 
love is left in him, for he had stayed a night with Arabella 
which had spent up for a brief period his pent up passion that 
had principally caused his adoration for Sue. Moreover, the 
possibility of gratifying sex whenever it surged disturbingly 
had arisen since Arabella was still his legal wife. The 
"geraniums and cactuses withered for want of attention" as 
'equivalent' in the external of Sue's inward feeling signify 
that she needed impassioned attention exclusively directed to 
her, or she would likewise wither away.

While Sue's smiling brilliance urged Jude all the while 
to rejoice like a pagan in the instinctive joys afforded by 
Nature, her repugnance to sex kept his hunger for her alive 
and unrequited. She tantalized and drew him on. She thus 
satisfied her love of being loved at the cost of Jude's 
passionate love which included sex. Despite darning constant 
attendance on her, Jude, aware of "the germs of every human 
infirmity" in him, would have been entirely like the graduate 
Sue's second victim "in such a torturing destiny" if jealousy 
had not compelled her to sacrifice her epicene virginity in 
order to prevent Jude from going to Arabella who had called to
tempt him away. Submitting to his appetite was then the only course left to her to maintain his passion for her hot as ever.

But it would be wrong to assume that she submitted whenever he wished even after this. Hardy himself wrote in a letter after the publication of *Jude the Obscure*:

"One point.....I could not dwell upon: that, though she has children, her intimacies with Jude have never been more than occasional, even when they were living together (I mention that they occupy separate rooms, except towards the end, and one of her reasons for fearing the marriage ceremony is that she fears it would be breaking faith with Jude to withhold herself at pleasure, or altogether, after it; though while uncontracted she feels at liberty to yield herself as seldom as she chooses). This has tended to keep his passion as hot at the end as at the beginning, and helps to break his heart. He never really possessed her as freely as he desired."155

But she was not aware that she never loved Jude or anyone else. Even when she emphatically maintains towards the end of the novel that she loved Jude although duty called her back to Phillotson, the truth is that she still loved being loved by him as ever. Arabella is right when she remarks: "I am inclined to think that she don't care for him quite so much as he does for her."156

Jude's ill-gratified passion kept him adoring Sue. She wanted nothing more. That was one bond that held them together.
But otherwise there was little of what both Schopenhauer and Hardy have described as the agreement of disposition which is a fundamental requirement in happy marriage. It will not escape the notice of a careful reader that while Jude's intellectual aspirations are genuine despite his actual achievement far short of them, Sue's intellectualism despite her vast reading and sharp talent is confined largely to sophistry against marriage as such and rarely strays beyond it to touch any serious moral or metaphysical issue. While Jude regards passion not as an end in itself, but as an encumbrance in his way towards learning, to Sue her love of being loved is an end in itself of life. While the characteristic of Jude's heart is compassion towards all creatures, and while it promptly goes out to others in need of his help, Sue is just indifferent to even those who suffer on her account. He consciously sacrificed his happiness and ambition in marrying Arabella just to save her honour. Sue, on the other hand, was responsible for the graduate's death and Phillotson's misery. The former's entreaties on his death-bed or the latter's illness after his dismissal from the school under the general scorn of the people of Shaston could not move her much to pity. She feels, of course, certain guilt and remorse, but that is not sufficient to change her instinctive rejoicing in tantalizing the lover. Yet Jude adored her and she was satisfied with his ardent
attentions. Passion, we have considered earlier, does not allow the temperamental or other differences to surface so long as it burns hot and bright. Sue does not allow it to be extinguished. It was one strong bond that kept them united. Another was their common opposition to society in their unconventional living. The twin bonds would have soon dropped if they had married. There is no justification in thinking that Sue and Jude would have made ideal comrades if they had married. It would, on the contrary, have been another bad marriage. Jude has as it is suffered the tragedy of frustrated passion for Sue. He would have, if he had married her, suffered the tragedy of satisfied passion.

(iv)

Sue's return to Phillotson: reaffirmation of marriage

The turning point in Sue's life and philosophy comes when Father Time, Arabella's child, kills Sue's children and hangs himself.

"Arabella's child killing mine was a judgment - the right slaying the wrong."157
It is, symbolically as Hardy seems to have meant, however, not the right killing the wrong, but the wrong killing the equally wrong. In Jude's marriage the child was not only not contemplated but neglected inhumanly after he was born. Jude was, of course, not to be blamed for this. He says after Time was entrusted to his care:

"I feel that, anyhow, I don't like to leave the unfortunate little fellow to neglect. Just think of his life in a Lambeth pothouse, and all its evil influences, with a parent who doesn't want him, and has, indeed, hardly seen him, and a stepfather who doesn't know him. "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived." That is what the boy - my boy, perhaps, will find himself saying before long."158

The child has, in fact, already learnt to have no zest for life, to wish not to have been born at all, and Arabella certainly is to be blamed for this though her vulgar sensuality refuses to accept any responsibility. Bad marriage breeds no healthy individuals physically or mentally.

Sue's case is not much different. She only loved like a pagan joys for herself in the existence, though her joys are different and finer than the gross pleasures of Arabella, and hated marriage just to preserve intact her love of being loved passionately for ever. She never paused for a while to think what misfortune the poor accidents born of her pleasures and
Jude's would suffer life long if brought up in domestic disorder and misery. Hence, her children and Arabella's child were equally the unwanted fruits of lawless indulgence, not the issues of responsible passion brought up with tender care. They were, therefore, not the right killing the wrong but the wrong killing the equally wrong and irresponsible.

Hardy defended passion as natural and therefore amoral in itself. But he never pleaded for the maintenance of the appetite that it may be perpetually fed for the pleasure of indulgence. He does not, of course, as observed earlier in the section dealing with *The Well-Beloved*, suggest that the human end in the love between man and woman should be the same as Nature's end which is to bring forth the new generation. The end should be the deliverance from passion, the cure of this sickness of soul that cannot be helped, not by the ascetic self-denial, but by the legitimate quenching of its fire in settled domestic life so that the serene conjugal comradeship with far nobler aims than frivolous foam and bubbles of passion may ultimately flower to liberate from the sense of alienation in this world. Nature is sure to bring forth children although man may never want them. But when they are born it is parent's prime duty to look well after them, to treat them with most tender compassion, for the price of pleasure must be paid. Not soulless custom or social institution, but new souls growing up under the heartless heaven require somewhere in the land of
exile a home with parental affection. 'No-marriage' promiscuity can provide no such home to the children, and therefore, it is inhuman and selfish. Sue, who in her strong aversion to love under the 'Government stamp' was invincible in the polemics on the marriage issue, is silenced ultimately when faced with the mute and vague despair of the neglected children voiced out most eloquently by the 'Octogenarian' child Father Time.

The following dialogue between him and Sue deserves close examination:

"'Tis because of us children, too, isn't it, that you can't get a good lodging?'
'Tell - people do object to children sometimes.'
'Then if children make so much trouble, why do people have 'em?'
'O - because it is a law of nature.'
'But we don't ask to be born?'
'No indeed.'
'.........I oughtn't to have come to 'ee - that's the real truth. I troubled 'em in Australia, and I trouble folk here. I wish I hadn't been born.'
'You couldn't help it, my dear.'
'I think that whenever children be born that are not wanted they should be killed directly, before their souls come to 'em, and not allowed to grow big and walk about.'"159

Sue's information to him that there was soon to be another baby in the family to increase their tribulations foments finally Time's despair into desperate death-wish.

Time's questions are born, not of healthy curiosity for knowledge, but of the anguish of neglected existence which drives
one to suicide. Sue had answers to a child's curiosity which Time is not old enough to understand, but none to the undercurrent of anguish which makes what formally appears to be the questions for knowledge substantially the cries for love and happiness. Her guilt lay, not as Jean Brooks suggests in "creating life doomed to death," but in not bringing up children well with whole-hearted affection after they were born according to the law of nature.

Hardy never felt that there was anything wrong in opposing the antipathetic society for right reason. But what inspired Sue and Jude to defy the established institution and the conventional order? It was surely not injustice, but the lawlessly selfish desire for indulgence in the sort of love they believed in. It did not, however, matter much in so far as their deviation from the social code brought them to self-courted misery. But in so far as it brought adversity to the children, it ceased to be amoral and became positively immoral. Opposing the institution of marriage which if healthy has useful functions just for the sake of opposing or for the mere sake of self-love assumes the character of negative revolt. Hardy never thought that the alternative to irrational order is complete disorder, or no marriage at all to the marriages which are likely to prove bad.
Father Time's hanging of himself and her children drives the lesson home to Sue that hers was not love but sheer self-love shorn of the responsibility it entails, that her revolt having no reasonable target was negative, that Christian ethics of self-renunciation dissociated from the Christian dogma, not her long-cherished Hellenic zest for enjoyment, is the right value to live for. She now becomes transfigured into an 'authentic being' in the existential sense of the word standing not by lawless impulses but by right will regulating them.

She liked to live with Jude and be loved by him. But she did not will to continue the indulgence for which her children had to pay heavily with life. Marriage with Jude would have terminated her indulgence and been as much a penance as marriage with Phillotson. But her feeling as wife being neutral and disinterested in either case, she thought, it was her duty to reaffirm vow to be loyal to Phillotson which she had broken for sheer self-love. Moreover, the sense of guilt at having wronged one who was all generous and steadfast love for her without passion had always haunted her, and the feeling had been intensified after she had seen Phillotson a little before the ghastly disaster of her children's murder, on the Remembrance Day. Therefore, she must marry him if any one at all. That she was sacrificing in this her own sort of strong instinct and the pleasures it afforded, is patent. Jude's impassioned entreaties and expostulations
do not prevail to change or shake her determination.

Sue's lying prostrate before the cross in St. Silas' church has symbolic value. The following passage deserves to be considered carefully:

"High overhead, above the chancel steps, Jude could discern a huge, solidly constructed Latin cross - as large, probably, as the original it was designed to commemorate. It seemed to be suspended in the air by invisible wires; it was set with large jewels, which faintly glimmered in some weak ray caught from outside, as the cross swayed to and fro in a silent and scarcely perceptible motion. Underneath, upon the floor, lay what appeared to be a heap of black clothes, and from this heap was repeated the sobbing that he had heard before. It was his (Jude's) Sue's form, prostrate on the paving."161

Our values have no metaphysical justification. They have no roots in reality or reasons in the objective sense. The so-called God-ordained certitudes of theology, the moral commandments, though pragmatically useful, sink into the sea of nihilism with the dawn of naturalistic world-view and when rationally questioned. There is never a reason why we should deprive ourselves of happiness in order that others may be happy, or suffer ourselves that others may not have to suffer. Yet, even when the illusory light of religion has ceased to illuminate, and the sceptical thought groping in the darkness discovers no reason for the moral conduct which puts others before the self, the
common human need to be happy comes up to lend reason and new light to our ethical endeavour. The Cross is dissociated from the dogmatic Christianity, and therefore it hangs suspended in the air as it were, with its precious jewels shining in the dark. It is silent and yet speaks eloquently. It is solidly constructed and cannot be dispensed with even in a sceptical age. Obviously it is the symbol of self-sacrifice born of compassion, the value that is self-justified and eternally valid. The humanity wrapped in the black clothes of anguish of the cosmic absurd, determined to resolve the not so irremediable social absurd, must still turn with reverence to it for light. That is what Sue, suddenly made aware that she had sinned in following irresponsibly her impulses, does. Supporting this interpretation are the words of Sue:

"We went about loving each other too much - indulging ourselves to utter selfishness with each other. We said - do you remember? - that we would make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature's intention, Nature's law and raison d'être that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us - instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart. What dreadful things I said! And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word."

And again:

"I have thought that we have been selfish, careless, even impious, in our courses, you and I. Our life has been a vain attempt at self-delight. But self-
abnegation is the higher road. We should mortify the flesh - the terrible flesh - the curse of Adam.\textsuperscript{163}

To quote once more:

"We ought to be continually sacrificing ourselves on the altar of duty. But I have always striven to do what has pleased me. I well deserved the scourging I have got."\textsuperscript{164}

But Jude does not understand this new development in her from the vindication of impulses, to the vindication of the regulating moral will, from self-indulgence to self-renunciation. He fails to see that she has turned only to Cross, not to "Christianity, or mysticism, or Sacerdotalism.\textsuperscript{165} He thinks that she has turned almost insane through affliction in deciding to return to Phillotson. Hardy's critics likewise have failed to understand the real nature of her change. H. C. Duffin, for example, writes:

"From her old free thought she moves to ritualistic religion, and she becomes totally oblivious of her old sane (though unsteady) reasoning on the marriage question."\textsuperscript{166}

D. H. Lawrence observes:

"The last act of her intellect was the utter renunciation of her mind and the embracing of utter orthodoxy, where every belief, every thought, every decision was made ready for her, so that she did not exist self-responsible."\textsuperscript{167}
Neither Jude nor Hardy's critics as represented by Duffin and Lawrence have grasped the essential point that instead of ceasing to be self-responsible she has now exhibited the existential 'authenticity' which as Edith Kern says is the awareness of "freedom and responsibility of choice,"\textsuperscript{168} which Hector Hawton defines as "an act of will rather than an act of intellect."\textsuperscript{169} Her intellect is in its proper place. Only now it has to shed light on the path of ethical will. But she fails to explain it all to Jude. When he said that he could not understand her extraordinary blindness to her own old logic which regarded their union as Nature's marriage, or see any reason why she should return to Phillotson, her answer is:

"Ah, dear Jude; that's because you are like a totally deaf man observing people listening to music. You say "What are they regarding? Nothing is there." But something is."\textsuperscript{170}

Her conscience is awakened, and in obedience to the murmur of its 'still small voice' she returns to the altar of her duty and penance, to stand by her vow and commitment to Phillotson in 'authentic' living: "I sacramentally joined myself to him for life. Nothing can alter it."\textsuperscript{171} Her marriage to him was in no sense bad, and she owed him reparations for the wrong she had inflicted on him for no reason. The following dialogue while they are on their way to the church for remarriage, is significant:
"'Where is the church?' said Sue. She had not lived there for any length of time since the old church was pulled down, and in her preoccupation forgot the new one. 'Up here,' said Phillotson; and presently the tower loomed large and solemn in the fog. The vicar had already crossed to the building, and when they entered he said pleasantly: 'We almost want candles.'"172

The old church stands for the traditional faith which was demolished in Hardy's heart, and Sue has never returned to it although it seems so to Jude. She has embraced only Cross, not any creed. Phillotson is obviously the right guide to take her to the church of the Cross. "No man had ever suffered more inconvenience from his own charity, Christian or heathen, than Phillotson had done in letting Sue go. He had been knocked about from pillar to post at the hands of the virtuous almost beyond endurance; he had been nearly starved, and was now dependent entirely upon the very small stipend from the school of this village (where the person had got ill-spoken of for befriending him)."175 The vicar also is the worthy priest of the new church still existing in the misty vision, not fully realized, wherein dogma if not altogether dispensed with, is subordinated at least to the human need. He had given refuge in his school to the candour, courage, compassion and magnanimity ostracised by the Christian community and embodied in the person of Phillotson. In this church, still in the making,
the vicar stands with lost certitudes of theology, needs light and so wants candles.

Reinforcing what is stated in the section dealing with The Well-Beloved that usually in Hardy's novels the second marriages or the later phase of the conjugal life if the marriage does not dissolve in disaster earlier, prove good and durable, while the first passion-based unions erroneously contracted in haste prove bad and fatal, is the instance here of the chastened Sue's return to Phillotson. She has learnt schooled in suffering like Thomasin and Bathsheba before her to appreciate the steady lantern glimmer of true love, if not also to enjoy it like them as yet, and returned to a man who could ever wish well and endure misery for her sake. One difference, however, is that her passion has never been sexual in the gross sense and has assumed as in a rare psychological case the form of love for others' passion for her. It is an abnormality which proves in its consequences more cruel and selfish than plain and normal sex, not only to her lovers but also to her children. It is also more difficult to subdue or extinguish. That is why while Thomasin and Bathsheba are later emotionally satisfied respectively with Venn and Oak, Sue is merely trying to love Phillotson with the exercise of will. The sexual passion, 'the will of the species', can be extinguished by free
gratification for certain period, and ever after when it surges up disturbingly in settled conjugal life. But no period of continuously passionate attentions from the lover can ever extinguish Sue's sort of abnormal love of being loved thus, excluding altogether from the relationship its normal physical side. Self-denial, in her case, with the power of will is the only way to subdue it. That is what she has ultimately undertaken to do.

The concluding dialogue between Mrs. Edlin and Arabella on Sue over the dead body of Jude is significant:

"'Well - poor little thing, 'tis to be believed she's found forgiveness somewhere.' She said she had found peace.'

'She may swear that on her knees to the holy cross upon her necklace till she's hoarse, but it won't be true,' said Arabella. 'She's never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's as he is now.'"174

Sue, as reported by Mrs. Edlin, is as right as Arabella, though neither of the latter two would believe her. Arabella is right so far as the pagan in Sue, whom she had previously known, is concerned, the pagan which Sue is fighting heroically but has not yet subdued quite. Arabella is too gross to understand Sue's existential transfiguration into 'authentic' being. But Sue's words that she had found peace express half-truth, the
other half the determination to find peace, but do not reflect what Ian Gregor sees as her "self-deception". She is left at the end of the novel as the blood-drenched battle-ground of the opposed forces of indulgence and abnegation, and it is suggested that abnegation will gradually gain the upper hand and prevail at last leaving her reconciled to her life of duty and in a state of the continual feast of contentment as in her husband's case. That will be the victory of will over her irregular sentiments. The Cross will conquer the heathen gods that were hitherto allowed free play.

(v)

Jude's Love-tragedy and relapse into Bad Marriage

Jude's remarriage to Arabella is absurd and inexplicable. It is neither probable in view of Jude's despairing experiences of bad marriage, nor necessary in this novel of complicated pattern. Ian Gregor is right when he observes:

"His remarriage with Arabella is black parody of Sue's with Phillotson, the one made possible only by will, the other through torpor."
His strength after Sue's desertion of him was broken. But his clarity of mind was intact. Sue's now reversed logic that marriage was a sacrament, however true in her case, was certainly wrong in his, and he never believed that he ought to return to Arabella. He had learnt from Sue earlier that bad marriage was no marriage, and although he had never rushed to the extreme 'no-marriage' conclusion of the pagan Sue, he would not even when tipsy trust Arabella again or be duped into marriage with her.

It was not necessary even to complete Jude's tragedy. Significantly, even after the remarriage Arabella plays no role at all in intensifying his despair and is in no way responsible for hastening his end. He was already heart-broken, and his vitality was steadily fading. The only woman he loved, the only one whose beauty had allured and intellect fascinated him, who satisfied the soul, he thought, and could, when she chose, satisfy body as well, had left him and so life too was leaving him.

There is, however, nothing inevitable in tragedy, and fate can accomplish nothing if the human will does not collude with it consciously or unconsciously. Jude also, we feel, could have been saved if he was wise enough to understand that neither Arabella nor Sue could be his suitable wife, his comrade
in the conjugal life. With Sue lost and Arabella no longer
to obstruct his way, if not to Christminster, to knowledge
at least and a job comparatively more suitable to his talent,
he could have worked, read and waited for a suitable comrade
who could deliver him from passion and assist him in his work,
for he was still quite a young man. Then his love-tragedy
at least could have been averted. But he did not understand
that Sue's glory in his view was just what his unrequited
passion had endowed her with, that she was after all as good
as, if not less than, any other woman not so bad as Arabella.
Consequently, he pined and repined and died young.

Sue, similarly, could have saved Jude though she did
not. She finds herself after her transfiguration into the
'authentic' being in a situation not unlike one of Shaw's
Candida, and errs while Candida does not. It is because she
takes into consideration only the candour of motive, the sin-
cerity of purpose, and not also the nature of consequences her
action might entail. Guilt-haunted that she had done Phillot-
son a cruel wrong, that the flowers of her folly, the children,
had to wither young solely on her account, and determined to
mortify the flesh, the sort of abnormal passion that character-
ized her, for the reparation of the wrongs of her doing so far
as possible, she could not see that she was now doing a greater
wrong, though without intention, to Jude who had so absolutely trusted her power of thinking which had robbed him of the religious consolations, and who had almost acquiesced in her every wish and whim. Both Phillotson and Jude are good men, noble and upright. Both alike are lone travellers in the world with none to look after them. But there is the strength of mind in Phillotson, the stoical power of endurance, which helps him survive all his misfortune with complete sanity and self-possession, immune from the passion's vulgar sway and without needing the support of soul-numbing drink. Sue was a beautiful dream in his life which had disappeared long back, and he was now reconciled to his life of drudgery and want. He would have lived on ascetically and peacefully without Sue. But Jude, the weaker human being, harassed by the sexual passion and ambition, driven now and then to drown his grief in drink, was more in need of feminine care and tenderness to keep him sane and serene, and would not possibly survive long her desertion of him.

If Sue had weighed the question with Candida's composure and objectivity, she would have found that having gone so far with Jude, her duty at that juncture lay in living not with Phillotson, but with Jude, not with the stronger of the two but the weaker, when both were at heart equally good men and loved her sincerely. Marriage, to her, was not the consummation of
love, but the termination of man's passionate attentions to her which she loved. Whether with Phillotson or with Jude, it was equally the form of penance to mortify herself and meant no indulgence. It was no less a dry duty with the other as with the one. Even if she loved Jude like an average woman and liked to marry the lover, the morality of her marriage would not have been vitiated, if her perception of the greater duty to Jude had been clear, sincere, and unbiased, for Kant, the German philosopher, was certainly wrong in thinking that the sense of duty is always unpleasant, and that the moral action loses its spirit when the element of pleasure enters it.

But Sue, Hardy's new-woman, is temperamentally the reverse of Candida, Shaw's new-woman. Sue lacks calm judgment and dispassionate thought. She is impulsive as a pagan, and her later 'authenticity' as in all such existential characters known to us, is passionate, fierce and firm. Naturally, she could not coolly examine all the aspects of the problem, and rushed to action trusting entirely the motive of renunciation. In point of motive Sue's return to Phillotson is noble and unimpeachable. But in point of consequences which count considerably in judging of moral action, it is wrong. With the same sincere motive of duty, she could have saved Jude's life, even ennobled it, but she erred in not choosing to do so, and proved responsible for Jude's death, not by will which is right and moral, but in effect which was never contemplated.
If Sue were kinder to him, or if he were stronger, he could have lived. The whole blame can be apportioned between the two. But what is the contribution of Arabella to the acceleration of his end then? Her first marriage with him was significant. Her shrewd comments here and there even after the dissolution of that marriage are relevant. But her remarriage is quite redundant. It is not even probable.

(vi)

Hardy's Position on the Marriage issue:
Concluding Note.

Hardy's mood in this novel is aggressive and satirical. It seems at first that he has overstated the case against marriage in such caustic comments as one on the ceremony of Jude's marriage with Arabella in the church:

"And so, standing before the aforesaid officiator, the two swore that at every other time of their lives till death took them, they would assuredly believe, feel, and desire precisely as they had believed, felt, and desired during the few preceding weeks. What was as remarkable as the undertaking itself was the fact that nobody seemed at all surprized at what they swore."
Or in Sue's words such as when she tells Phillotson:

"It is as culpable to bind yourself to love always as to believe a creed always, and as silly as to vow always to like a particular food or drink."  

But Hardy, in fact, has no case to make out against marriage as such. He would never have concluded with Kierkegaard, the father of disturbing existential thought, as when the latter observed:

"One must never enter into the relation of marriage. Husband and wife promise to love one another for eternity. This is all very fine, but it does not mean very much; for if their love comes to an end in time, it will surely be ended in eternity. If, instead of promising for ever, the parties would say until Easter, or until May-day comes, there might be some meaning in what they say; for then they would have said something definite, and also something that they might be able to keep."

Hardy's angry comments and sarcasms flung casually at "the antipathetic, recriminatory mood of the average husband and wife of Christendom," in anguished sympathy for the sufferer must not be interpreted as carefully worded statements of his thought. Sensitive Sue's extremist utterances represent herself more than her author. Hardy's own position on the marriage issue emerges from the strife of contrary views conducted here with the skill of a problem-novelist. It is substantially the same as what he plainly stated in an article in June 1912:
"I can only suppose, in a general way that a marriage should be dissolvable on the wish of either party, if that party can prove a cruelty to him or her, provided (probably) that the maintenance of the children (if any) should be borne by the bread-winner." 180

That is to say that Hardy revolts only against the indissolubility of bad marriage. On account of the disturbing nature of his treatment of the theme, however, it must not be overlooked that he valued marriage as a means of achieving deliverance from passion and the sense of utter isolation when the conjugal relationship was characterized by what Cleave calls in Two on a Tower "warm friendship with one of kindred pursuits." 181 J. I. W. Stewart observes: "He (Hardy) showed our aspirations as being of more account than our appetites, and the fidelity of noble men and noble women as being stronger than the grave. This is the portrait of Hardy." 182 It is true as much of Hardy's other novels as of Jude the Obscure.

V

Sublimation of Passion into the Mystic Devotion for the Beloved

(1)

Far from the Madding Crowd

In this novel there are three kinds of love: Troy's
profligate levity, Boldwood's infatuated passion and Oak's disinterested devotion centred upon beautiful Bathsheba who represents as much herself as the coquettish character of life in general. It is unnecessary to repeat what is discussed in the previous chapter of Boldwood's passion and Troy's. Oak's love, however, requires a little elaborate study.

Virginia Woolf is right, when she says of Oak: "He is stable in his temperament, steadfast in his affections and capable of open-eyed endurance without flinching." George Wing similarly sums up his character in a sentence: "Gabriel Oak is a study in self-effacement and humility." What is missed by them and others is his triumphant resolution of the cosmic absurd into a harmony by the power of affirmative resignation as considered in detail earlier in this thesis. He has achieved "a truce with trouble" and won inward serenity which the ever changing spectrum of circumstances cannot ruffle. He has exhibited a state of mind akin to although not so perfect as the thoroughly accomplished mystical consciousness in the 'introvertive' sense of the word, cleansed of all the disturbing desires, satisfied for ever with what fate brings and independent of what is withheld or withdrawn.

But there is in Oak mingled with the affirmative resignation another tendency no less powerful, of compassion for all beings in general and all absorbing devotion to the beloved in
particular. This takes an upward turn towards the accomplishment of a durable feeling satisfied with its intrinsic warmth, demanding no response from the loved one, a deep and even flow of feeling which may be described as mystical in the 'extrovertive' sense of the word. It need not be repeated what is discussed earlier in this chapter as also in the preliminary statement to the previous chapter that 'extrovertive' mysticism is the name we give not to the belief in a supernatural being or beings, but to the feeling that is a reward in itself and needs no possession of the objects in concrete to satisfy it. Such feeling, to quote C. F. E. Spurgeon, "is the flame which feeds his (mystic's) whole life; and he is intensely and supremely happy just so far as he is steeped in it."\(^5\) It delivers man from the narrow prison of the ego-self and sense, and ennobles him spiritually. That is what, it seems, Oak's self-effacement in love for Bathsheba, and the spirit of renunciation, amount to.

Oak's blunt proposal for marriage to Bathsheba was lightly refused. But his disappointment serves only to dissociate his devotion from the desire for possession and to sublimate gradually his passion into a finer emotion. Her subsequent departure from Norcombe for Weatherbury and the consequent period of separation helped rather than hindered the deepening of his love into a disinterested feeling ever content and self-fulfilled as in the 'extrovertive' mysticism of love for God or Goddess
or such a product of creative imagination:

"It may have been observed that there is no regular path for getting out of love as there is for getting in........ Separation, which was the means that chance offered to Gabriel Oak by Bathsheba's disappearance, though effectual with people of certain humours, is apt to idealize the removed object with others - notably those whose affection, placid and regular as it may be, flows deep and long. Oak belonged to the even-tempered order of humanity, and felt the secret fusion of himself in Bathsheba to be burning with a finer flame now that she was gone - that was all."186

The 'finer flame' of his love burnt higher and steady without a flicker. He settled down in Weatherbury on Bathsheba's farm after chance-guided he arrived there once just in order to be near her and to serve her with complete renunciation of the hope of ever marrying her. His one determination was:

"I will help to my last effort the woman I have loved so dearly."187

He, however, is anxious for her solid happiness, and does not care to satisfy her every wrong wish that could lead her into trouble. He is there as a self-appointed guardian angel to warn, to guide and to protect her. He does not hesitate to be outspoken at the risk of incurring her displeasure if necessary. When Bathsheba, lured by Troy's magic tongue and smart personality, was drifting towards precipitating into marriage with him
forgetting her duty to wronged Farmer Boldwood, Oak tells her boldly:

"Are ye not more to me than my own affairs, and even my life? Come, listen to me! I am six years older than you, and Mr. Boldwood is ten years older than I, and consider - I do beg of 'ee to consider before it is too late - how safe you would be in his hands?"188

And despite her insulting words in response and refusal to heed the wisdom of his counsel, he continues to stay with her and says with rugged candour ringing in his voice:

"Sometimes I say I should be as glad as a bird to leave the place - for don't suppose I'm content to be a nobody. I was made for better things. However, I don't like to see your concerns going to ruin, as they must if you keep in this mind....But you know well enough how it is, and who she is that I like too well, and feel too much like a fool about to be civil to her."189

His "grim fidelity", his disinterested devotion, the solidity of his character standing like a rock unshaken in the face of storm and rain fortifies her soul against the weary sense of isolation in the alien world as it saves her harvest once from complete destruction. He alone was her real comrade even when she was Troy's wife as also after Troy was reported to have been drowned. To him alone she could confide everything without the least fear and with every hope for light and consolation. Her relation with Troy was based merely on ephemeral passion, and
their marriage when passion shortly cooled afterwards and the flowers of Troy's tongue withered, turned out to be a 'howling discord'. To Boldwood, she felt, she owed the reparation of the wrong she had inadvertently inflicted on him. Oak, however, was right in thinking that she would have been happier with him than with Troy, for Boldwood was honest, elderly, upright and a worthy gentleman who worshipped her most ardently. But Oak was consistently a disinterested comrade to her. It is noted earlier in the previous chapter of this thesis that "among the multitude of interests by which he was surrounded, those which affected his personal well-being were not the most absorbing and important in his eyes." Others' sorrows and troubles were his greater concern and those of Bathsheba his first. If as Troy says "A ceremony before a priest doesn't make a marriage," and if the purpose after marriage is or ought to be conjugal comradeship, that ideal ostensibly existed without, of course, the sexual relationship which the ceremony authorizes officially, between Oak and Bathsheba.

Yet it was not essentially comradeship, for the affection, gentle and steady, flowed from Oak to Bathsheba. It did not return in Oak again from her as it ought to in ideal conjugal love. Upto nearly the end of the novel Oak maintains that even flow of love that is its own fulfilment. It was entirely free from the stench of flesh and did not need reciprocation. Even if
Troy had been really drowned, Boldwood was allowed to marry Bathsheba, and Oak had emigrated to California as he proposed to do, he would have carried with him in his heart her memory consolidated into an animate and luminous image and loved her ever the same. Nobody could dispossess him of that. In that event we could imagine Oak also long later in his ripe old age uttering with some qualification which his character, situation and history might impose, the words of Anatole France's Sylvestre Bonnard, the old historian, enshrining in his heart, the image of his young love of youthful days who had refused his suit even as Bathsheba had initially refused Oak's:

"A looking-glass! a looking-glass! a looking-glass!" Really, it would be curious to see what I look like now, with my white hair, sighing Clementine's name to the stars! Still, it is not right to end with sterile irony the thought begun in the spirit of faith and love. No, Clementine, if your name came to my lips by chance this beautiful night, be it for ever blessed, your dear name! and may you ever, as a happy mother, a happy grand mother, enjoy to the very end of life with your rich husband the utmost degree of that happiness which you had the right to believe you could not win with the poor scholar who loved you! If — though I cannot even now imagine it — if your beautiful hair has become white, Clementine, bear worthily the bundle of keys confided to you by Noel Alexander, and impart to your grand children the knowledge of all domestic virtues!"182

But Hardy did not want to end the novel that way. The English readers of his times also could not tolerate without grumbling such grim fidelity as Oak's go unrewarded into oblivion. The
end as it is, moreover, is quite satisfactory. Oak's love was never passionate. Bathsheba's passion after her tragic experiences is nearly spent. Stoical Oak and now chastened Bathsheba are fit companions for each other in the stable conjugal life. "They spoke very little of their mutual feelings; pretty phrases and warm expressions being probably unnecessary between such tried friends. Theirs was that substantial affection which arises (if any arises at all) when the two who are thrown together begin first by knowing the rougher sides of each other's character, and not the best till further on, the romance growing up in the interstices of a mass of hard prosaic reality."195 Theirs, consequently, is 'camaraderie' which is 'strong as death' and which is Hardy's ideal.

(ii)

The Hand of Ethelberta

It is subtitled 'Comedy in chapters', or "more accurately, satire" on society as Hardy calls it in the postscript added to the preface in August 1912. It tells the story of clever and beautiful Etherberta, a butler's daughter, anxious more for her family's well-being than for her personal happiness, sacrificing
her sincere love for Christopher Julian in order to give her younger brothers and sisters better education and brighter chances in life. The central motif of the story is the ethical choice between the marriage for love which would please the pair and marriage that could be practically useful in lifting her household from the low-class life of poverty and ignorance. Etherberta resolves her dilemma ultimately by electing to marry the old Lord Mountclere for the sake of her responsibilities.

The side theme not so conspicuously developed, however, is Christopher's love for Etherberta which resembles Oak's devotion to Bathsheba despite certain obvious difference of character between the two men. It deepens clearly in Christopher into the even flow of disinterested feeling towards her image in the abstract. Hardy observes:

"What he had learnt was that a woman who has once made a permanent impression upon a man cannot altogether deny him her image by denying him her company, and that by sedulously cultivating the acquaintance of this Creature of Contemplation she becomes to him almost a living soul. Hence a sublimated Etherberta accompanied him everywhere - one who never teased him, eluded him, or disappointed him: when he smiled, she smiled, when he was sad she sorrowed. He may be said to have become the literal duplicate of that whimsical unknown rhapsodist who wrote of his own similar situation -"
By absence this good means I gain,
That I can catch her,
Where none can watch her,
In some close corner of my brain:
There I embrace and kiss her;
And so I both enjoy and miss her. 194

"......he felt that he ought to be thankful
that a bright memory of her was not also
denied to him, and resolved to be content
with it as a possession, since it was as much
of her as he could decently maintain."195

Constant and faithful to this image in the abstract, Christopher
also craved to do some service to her physical counterpart that
was never to be his possession. But it remained usually a sin­
cere craving merely, for Ethelberta herself is a more 'clever
hand at contrivances' than him as than most of the male and
female characters in Hardy's fiction, and Christopher does not
have either the opportunity enough to serve her like Venn and
Oak or their shrewd assertiveness. Only once after her marriage
with Mountclere when the first Lady Mountclere was discovered
to be alive, she needed somebody's help to run away to a safe
place from where she could negotiate with Mountclere her terms
and conditions for a return, and she asked it of Sol, her
brother. But as obstinate Sol, offended with what he thought
was his sister's bad marriage against the wishes of everyone
in the family, refused to oblige her, Christopher decided to go
in his stead "with the manner and movement of a man who after
a life time of desultoriness had at last found something to do."196
He tried as directed. But he could do nothing and had to return in despair as Mountebere cunningly upset their whole arrangement.

Christopher remaining single at the end of the novel and in company of his 'Creature of Contemplation' would have been a proper conclusion. But Ethelberta contrives his marriage with her younger sister Picotee who loved him as whole-heartedly as she herself did. The end, consequently, here as in Far from the Madding Crowd comes in serene conjugal relationship of love.

(iii)

The Return of the Native

It is stated in the Second Chapter while discussing the philosophy issuing from Far from the Madding Crowd that the character of Gabriel Oak reappears split into two in The Return of the Native: Clym Yeobright representing in himself the spirit of affirmative resignation resolving the absurd into the harmony of existence, deepening positively into the profound serenity of the 'introvertive' mysticism, and Diggory Venn whose love for Thomasin flowers into a feeling that could be described
as mystical in the 'extrovertive' sense of the word. There is also in addition the character of Charley whose attachment for Eustacia Vye is similar to Venn's for Thomasin although he is allowed to play a limited role in this novel. Clym's philosophy is considered at length in the Second Chapter. The sort of love Venn and Charley bear for the beloved is to be dealt with here.

Diggory Venn is in many ways like Oak, and his love story seems to be nearly a copy of Oak's. He is a handsome looking young man. There is, however, certain weirdness about his appearance arising from "sinister redness" or redde that covers him from top to toe. His eyes keen like those of a bird of prey and blue as autumn mist bespeak the depth of feeling and cleverness of mind. The only ambition of his life is like Oak's the impractical one of becoming useful to his beloved in some ways. We are given to understand that before the commencement of the narrative in this novel he had proposed for marriage to Thomasin Yeobright without, we may guess, the necessary art of pleasing the woman and flattering her vanity. But his silent devotion fails initially where inconstant Wildeve's show of affection succeeds as she responds to the latter's advances.
This disappointment, however, instead of working up despair in Venn's consciousness, deepens his emotions into the disinterested feeling dissociated from the desire for physical possession. He took to the reddle-selling occupation solely for the emotional reasons: "To be in Thomasin's heath, and near her, yet unseen, was the one ewe-lamb of pleasure left to him." He was indifferent to his personal well-being, and wanted to make her happy at any cost. Therefore, with ever diligent and vigilant devotion he works clever stratagems one after the other to accomplish the marriage of Wildeve and Thomasin. He says to Eustacia: "I would sooner have married her myself......But what I feel is that if she cannot be happy without him (Wildeve) I will do my duty in helping her to get him, as a man ought." This kind of attitude seems naturally strange and silly to those who consider indulgence as happiness and the abnegation of self-interest as courting trouble without sound reason. "Eustacia looked curiously at the singular man who spoke thus......The reddleman's disinterestedness was so well deserving of respect that it overshot respect by being barely comprehended; and she almost thought it absurd."

"His occupation tended to isolate him, and isolated she was mostly seen to be." Yet, there is no evidence that he
felt the ache of isolation. He had established the spiritual
communion with the beloved, and found the meaning of life
in the selfless service to her counterpart in flesh. There
were no powerful desires in Venn which could spell the absurd
and alienate his being upon the earth, and the force of passion
which could prove ruinous in frustration was sublimated in him
into a sort of love resembling a sufi-mystic's devotion to the
Divine Beloved content with the inward realization.

Helped by Venn's kind care for her and skill in contriving the situations as also by Eustacia's shifting of interest from Wildeve to Clym, Thomasin could marry Wildeve. But Wildeve was not the sort of man that could make any faithful woman happy. "To be yearning for the difficult, to be weary of that offered; to care for the remote, to dislike the near; it was Wildeve's nature always."201 Sad experiences with him and later his death leave her thoroughly chastened as similar experiences had chastened Bathsheba in Far from the Madding Crowd. Thomasin who had rejected Venn's suit earlier says to Clym near the end of the novel:

"I am sure, say what you will, that I must marry Diggory, if I marry at all. He has been kinder to me than anybody else, and has helped me in many ways that I don't know of."202

She has learnt to value Venn's fidelity, and they get married at last.
But Hardy unlike in *Far from the Madding Crowd* intended here originally Venn's devotion and patience to go altogether unrewarded in the material sense. Hardy writes in a footnote at the end of the Fourth Chapter of the last section of this novel captioned *Aftercourses*:

"The writer may state here that the original conception of the story did not design a marriage between Thomasin and Venn. He was to have retained his isolated and weird character to the last, and to have disappeared mysteriously from the heath, nobody knowing whither — Thomasin remaining a widow. But certain circumstances of serial publication led to a change of intent. "Readers can therefore choose between the endings and those with an austere artistic code can assume the more consistent conclusion to be the true one."203

The ending of the original conception would not have satisfied those like Hardy's contemporary readers who demand poetic justice in fiction though they cannot help its absence in the actual life, who fail to see the mystic character of fulfilment in Venn's devotion, and cannot recognize any virtue as worthy if it brings no reward in the material sense. Yet it would not have mattered much to Diggory Venn who was ever in possession of the spiritual Thomasin and never felt lonely in his ostensibly isolated condition of existence. In his ever active service for her, especially after her marriage with Wildeve, he never had an eye to winning anything extrinsic to his pure feeling
even in some distant future date. He could never have been divested of his devotion which satisfied him as a reward in itself. His disappearance from the heath would have consummated his mystic self-effacement, and made him look superhuman in renunciation.

But whatever the circumstances that led to the change of intent, the conclusion as it is, is not inconsistent. Instead of emphasising at the end the sublimated love, Hardy had obliged his readers by ending the tale, as in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, with the emphasis on his another ideal - the chastened conjugal camaraderie wherein the "lantern glimmer" of strong affection burns steady and long unlike the momentary blaze of blinding passion - that is all.

A note on Charley's character will not be superfluous here. Eustacia Vye is to him the centre of all existence. His self-effacement in the service of the beloved is complete. He allowed Eustacia to go in disguise to play in his stead the role of the Turkish Knight along with other mummers in the performance at Mrs. Yeobright's on Clym's return from Paris. She allowed Charley in return for his favour to kiss her hand and hold it for fifteen minutes. This fond touch of the beauty otherwise far beyond his reach was the only reward he got in the material sense in his life:
"Charley had always regarded Eustacia as Eustacia had regarded Clym when she first beheld him — as a romantic and sweet vision, scarcely incarnate. He had been shut off from her by the dignity of her look and the pride of her speech, except at that one blissful interval when he was allowed to hold her hand, that he had hardly deemed her a woman, wingless and earthly, subject to household conditions and domestic jars."

He served her most tenderly when she returned to her grandfather's house heart-broken, after a fierce quarrel with Clym, and prevented her from committing suicide by removing from before her a pair of pistols.

"Charley's attentions to his former mistress were unbounded. The only solace to his own trouble lay in his attempts to relieve hers. Hour after hour he considered her wants: he thought of her presence there with a sort of gratitude, and, while uttering imprecations on the cause of her unhappiness, in some measure blessed and result...... Having once really succoured her, and possibly preserved her from the rashest of acts, he mentally assumed in addition a guardian's responsibility for her welfare."

But Eustacia did not stay long, and soon after plunged into the pool at the foot of Shadwater Weir to die. Clym appreciated Charley's affection for Eustacia and gave him as her sacred memory one of her "two or three undulating locks of raven hair" which he himself possessed. Charley, it is suggested, must have preserved it and worshipped it as the relics of the saints are worshipped by the religious devotees.
Hardy observes of Grace who feels forlorn after Fitzpier's infatuation with Mrs. Charmond in this novel: "There was, in truth, a lovebird yearning to fly from her heart; and it wanted a lodging badly."208 It is so with Fitzpiers, Mrs. Charmond, Giles Winterborne and Marty South too. All of them seek in their own ways to realize the lodging for love and fail or succeed accordingly.

J. Hillis Miller observes in his *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*:

"Love is the urgent theme of his fiction and of his poetry. The experience of an "emotional void" within, a distance of oneself from oneself, drives his characters to seek possession of another person. To possess the beloved would be to replace separation by presence, emptiness by a substantial self."209

But usually the possession of the beloved is sought not to fill the inner emotional void but merely to gratify the sexual passion that stirs and surges at her sight, works up the illusion of beauty in her form and figure, and bursts into even sublime poetry of love when she is distant and tantalizing. The genuine desire for comradeship that could fill the void often does not exist, and is usually confused with 'the will of the
species' operating irresistibly for the procreative purposes. Fitzpiers in this novel tells Winterborne when the latter asked him if he was in love with Grace:

"No - I am not that, Winterborne; people living insulated, as I do by the solitude of this place, get charged with emotive fluid like a leyden jar with electric, for want of some conductor at hand to disperse it. Human love is a subjective thing - the essence itself of man, as the great thinker Spinoza says - ipsa hominis essentia - it is joy accompanied by an idea which we project against any suitable object in the line of our vision, just as the rainbow iris is projected against an oak, ash, or elm tree indifferently. So that if any other young lady had appeared instead of the one who did appear, I should have felt just the same interest in her, and have quoted precisely the same lines from Shelley about her, as about this one I saw."

That is to say that love for Fitzpiers is pure physical passion and the only suitability which he considers is sexual desirability, for every woman who appears "in the line of our vision" cannot be a qualified comrade of kindred pursuits to lift the soul from the state of isolation and to fill the inner void with durable affection.

Fitzpiers finds buxom Suke Damson beautiful enough in the hour of excitement. "In the moonlight Suke looked very beautiful, the scratches and blemishes incidental to her outdoor occupation being invisible under these pale rays."
While they remained silent on the hay the coarse whirr of the eternal night-hawk burst sarcastically from the top of a tree at the nearest corner of the wood. The mild moon-rays that conceal the scratches of a woman's body are a lure that hungry passion of the lover endows her with, and 'the eternal night-hawk', the bird of prey, with its sarcastically 'coarse whirr' symbolises the gross passion's claws and beak that have duped and devoured the individual human beings in order to preserve for ever the species and pain.

He similarly feels that in Grace's beauty "Nature has at last recovered her lost union with the Idea." But the free gratification of desire shortly after their marriage disenchants him, and he discovers her to be the same flesh other women are made of. The Idea has disappeared and what is left is the regret that he blindly obstructed his ambitious course towards material riches and higher knowledge by marrying in a class socially inferior to his.

Tired of Grace Fitzpiers is drawn irresistibly towards Felice Charmond, the woman who is as passionate as himself, and whose beauty has the additional fascination of rank and wealth. She is in the words of Giles Winterborne "A body who has smiled where she has not loved, and loved where she has not married." Away from Hintock, upon the continent, they
move freely and live like more than man and wife. The evanescent passion, the only bond that bound them, consequentially, gets extinguished, and their relationship ends tragically.

Fitzpiers, however, is aware that the fruits of passion are weariness and satiety. Consider the following dialogue between Mrs. Charmond and him:

"'Suppose my mother had not taken me away?' she murmured, her dreamy eyes resting on the swaying tip of a distant tree.
'I should have seen you again.'
'And then?'
'Then the fire would have burnt higher and higher. What would have immediately followed I know not, but sorrow and sickness of heart at last.'
'Why?'
'Well - that's the end of all love, according to Nature's law. I can give no other reason.'

Hardy explains symbolically the end of passion such as Fitzpiers' while he is ardently courting Grace:

"A diversion was created by the accident of two large birds, that had either been roosting above their heads or nesting there, tumbling one over the other into the hot ashes at their feet, apparently engrossed in a desperate quarrel that prevented the use of their wings. They speedily parted, however, and flew up, with a singed smell, and were seen no more."

"'That's the end of what is called love', said someone (Marty South)."

Love that could really deliver from the sense of isolation as distinguished from the deceptive promises of passion, arises
and exists durably between chastened Fitzpiers and Grace whose simple nature never knew the heat of passion. Grace had no love at all in any sense for Fitzpiers, and whatever regard she had for him was as transient as his incipient passion. It could not prove a durable basis for a happy and healthy conjugal relationship.

"In truth, her ante-nuptial regard for Fitzpiers had been rather of the quality of awe towards a superior being than of tender solicitude for a lover. It had been based upon mystery and strangeness - the mystery of his past, of his knowledge, of his professional skill, of his beliefs. When this structure of ideals was demolished by the intimacy of common life, and she found him as merely human as the Hintock people themselves, a new foundation was in demand for an enduring and staunch affection - a sympathetic interdependence, wherein mutual weaknesses are made the grounds of a defensive alliance. Fitzpiers had furnished nothing of that single-minded confidence and truth out of which alone such a second union could spring;..."

The first phase of their marriage, consequently, is turbulent and brings no happiness to either. But in the later phase the 'second union' develops when Fitzpiers is purged of his erratic passions as a result of his miserable experiences, and Grace accepts him once more after being fully convinced of the sincerity of his repentance and the authenticity of his conversion.
'It is a different kind of love altogether,' said he. 'Less passionate; more profound. It has nothing to do with the material conditions of the object at all; much to do with her character and goodness, as revealed by closer observation. "Love talks with better knowledge, and knowledge with dearer love."' 

There is, then, Giles Winterborne's grim fidelity to Grace Melbury. His devotion to her is more powerful than his desire for her. But desire is still strong in him. It is not transmuted into a feeling that could be described as mystical. There is in him, unlike Oak who had renounced all wish to possess Bathsheba, and Venn who was to disappear from the heath as mysteriously as he had arrived there, the feverish longing to possess Grace even after she was married off to Fitzpiers. It was thwarted desire which broke his iron constitution. He was struck with malignant fever, typhoid as Fitzpiers diagnosed it later, which was wearing away life from him. He would have died even if the final exposure to rain and weather owing to Grace's occupying his hut, had not accelerated his pace towards grave. He did not have affirmative resignation to fortify himself against the blows of fate. There was, however, the power of manly endurance in him. Although he could never convert his material loss into a spiritual gain that could be lasting and luminous in itself, he bore with dignity his fate, and laid down his life for the honour and comfort of the beloved.
There is, finally, Marty South's sublime sexless devotion to Giles Winterborne. She is the picture of poverty and want living her utterly neglected lonely existence in Hintock. She stood steadfast by Winterborne in all his outdoor work and proved his trusted friend and companion. She loved and initially wished to marry him, but renounced this desire on learning that he loved Grace, and that Grace was promised to him in marriage. She never expressed to him in words her profound and positive feelings. She told Grace after his death: "In all our outdoor days and years together, ma'am........the one thing he never spoke to me was love; nor I to him." She went on loving silently and supernormally. Her devotion flowed constant and steady. Nothing could disturb or diminish its depth. Even the death of Wintervorne made her feel no loss though she was grieved a little for his sake and sorrowed in sympathy for Grace's genuine sense of bereavement, for the spiritual Winterborne was ever alive in her heart and would not die so long as she lived.

"On Marty's part there was the same consideration; never would she have been his. As no anticipation of gratified affection had been in existence while he was with them, there was none to be disappointed now that he had gone."

She preserved all his tools as holy relics. Her normal activities of toiling for bread would continue with her heart full
of devotion which is almost religious in character and satisfying in itself. "She would travel with it (his cider-press) in the autumn season as poor Giles had done, she said. She would be quite strong enough, with old Creedle as an assistant."220

"Twice a week the pair (Grace and Marty) went in the dusk to Hintock Churchyard, and, like the two mourners in Cymbeline, sweetened his sad grave with their flowers and their tears."221 But after Grace was reconciled to Fitzpiers and settled down in serene conjugal life with him, she ceased to be as regular as Marty. At the end of the novel, consequently, Marty alone is left worshipping the grave of Winterborne uttering words: which make one of the most memorable poetic passages in the novels of Hardy:

"Immediately they had dropped down the hill she entered the churchyard, going to a secluded corner behind the bushes, where rose the unadorned stone that marked the bed of Giles Winterborne. As this solitary and silent girl stood there in the moonlight, a straight slim figure, clothed in a plaitless gown, the contours of womanhood so undeveloped as to be scarcely perceptible in her, the marks of poverty and toil effaced by the misty hour, she touched sublimity at points, and looked almost like a being who had rejected with indifference the attribute of sex for the loftier quality of abstract humanism. She stooped down and cleared away the withered flowers that Grace and herself had laid there the previous week, and put her fresh ones in their place.

"'Now, my own, own love,' she whispered, 'you are mine, and only mine; for she has forgot 'ee at last, although for her you died.' But I -
whenever I get up I'll think of 'ee, and whenever I lie down I'll think of 'ee again. Whenever I plant the young larches I'll think that none can plant as you planted; and whenever I split a gad, and whenever I turn the cider wring, I'll say none could do it like you. If ever I forget your name let me forget home and heaven! .........But no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee; for you was a good man, and did good things.'"222

David Daiches seems to take only the outward conditions of her life into account when he reads in this passage the concluding height of the current of pathos and sorrow running through the novel:

"But it (The Woodlanders) contains some of Hardy's best writing, and if he wrings pathos rather than tragedy out of poor Marty's unfulfilled and un-declared love for Giles, this current in the novel does flow strong and deep, and makes possible the final paragraph, where Marty is at last alone with Giles, laying fresh flowers on his grave."223

But David Daiches overlooks the inward state of her mind which is serene rather than sad, and of fulfilment rather than of despair. Ian Gregor seems to be nearer to the truth when he observes:

"Her most intense life is to be lived as story, as filling the vacancy of the present with the heroism of the past. For Marty it is a past already serenely in her possession, and it is her serenity rather than her desolation, that the book finally conveys."224

Nearer still is Lascelles Abercrombie when he comments:
"Sorrow and bitter hard work, and humiliation have been with her all her life; but the sweetness of her mind and the iron endurance of her spirit are not to be hurt by such things. Her sense of coming tragedy is utterly different from Eustadia's; she quietly knows that pain will reward such love as hers; but she will neither try to escape it nor go to meet it; whatever happens, her unutterable love is her own."225

But all these critics have equally missed the real significance of Marty's love. The 'love bird' fluttering within her breast craves for a lodging, and it finds a nest safe and lasting in the incorporeal, immortal Winterborne who is a memory more satisfying to her feeling than the concrete flesh could ever have been, even like the God of religion who, though a mere figment of imagination to those who do not believe and love, is, when passionately conceived more than real Father or Mother or Beloved to the devotee. In both cases there is no objectivity of the object. But that is beside the point since the feeling which the subjective image generates is real, positive and profound fulfilment in itself. We may dispense with all notions of Divinity and dogmatic theology. Yet the need of such mystical feeling will always be felt. Auguste Comte who was himself a confirmed atheist and the founder of new religion of Humanity, could not do without such feeling. Only he substituted in the manner of Marty South the memory of Madame Clotilde de Vaux, his beloved, for God as the object of his
devotion. William Kelley Wright observes in his *A History of Modern Philosophy*:

"While she esteemed Comte as a friend, Clotilde did not love him, and she was a virtuous woman who would in no case have entered into an irregular relation. Comte was absolutely devoted to her while she lived, and he cherished her memory for the rest of his life. Every morning and evening he spent a regular time in imaginary communion with her which he called prayer, and every week he visited her tomb."228

Marty South is the most perfect mystic of love in Hardy's novels. Love discovers for her in this alien land of ours someone ever living, though physically dead, to commune and converse with, delivers from the ache of isolation, and makes the life of toil not only endurable but happy in a manner mysterious to us. Sex-urge here as in all mysticism has ceased to operate in its gross form, and is fully sublimated.

VI
Recapitulation

Lord David Cecil observes:

"His (Hardy's) men and women would find it possible to walk the bleak road from the cradle to the grave resignedly enough; they might endure life fairly easily, even if they did not enjoy it,
The discussion of various novels in this chapter, it is hoped, is sufficient to prove that this widely shared view of David Cecil is mistaken. The sexual passion in Hardy's novels has sickening effect in satisfaction. But it is never ruinous. What is really destructive is custom's cruelty to those who lapse into irregular indulgence, and bad marriage which condemns the parties who have nothing in common except the brief initial blaze of passion, to live together in the soul-stifling state of conjugal discord. The storm of love is tamable in good marriage and legitimate indulgence. The friendship that grows later between man and wife fortifies against the sense of isolation in the indifferent natural world and apathetic social world. The storm is also transmutable into a sort of sexless mystical feeling. It is true that the sexual urge is the strongest of all the desires that confront the universe in absurd strife. But if handled with delicate care this weakness could be rid of or transformed into a sustaining strength. When that is done the spirit of affirmative resignation is consummated, deliverance from all the desires is achieved, and harmony with this world is established.