STYLE IN THE POETRY OF THOMAS HARDY

by

Alice C. Neil

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STYLE IN THE POETRY OF THOMAS HARDY.

I

THOMAS HARDY

A field of daffodils lay yellow on the hillside. To the nursery man, who had put them there, so many thousand at so much, the yellow splash represented merely an adventure in dollars and cents, and a possible profit. A child wandering along the roadway saw a sudden glory and wished to take it home, and a trail of drooping blossoms marked his way. Another saw the field as light and noted the effect of sunshine upon yellow as it merges into green and presently, the field foreshortened, and in squared limits reappeared on canvas, more yellow than it was. The fourth who passed, remembered, and long after wrote a poem.

When spring time comes my soul lifts up
Like yellow daffodil its cup.

There were, it seems obvious to remark, four distinct reactions: the first a purely practical one, the second, childhood's pagan joy in the moment's sensation which years unfortunately destroy, the third a field of daffodils in terms of light and color only, and the fourth an extension of a moment's emotion into a significance outside itself.

The field, until it withered, was the same, but its significance varied with each beholder. The poet whom we are about to discuss has said in this regard that "The poetry of a scene varies with the mind of the perceiver. Indeed, it does not lie in the scene at all." (1) Whether or not one agrees, this problem of vision leads directly to the main core of that difficult subject, Style, which varies with each poet and each critic which refuses classification and baffles analysis.

Every poet whose work attains to any coherence or body reaches consistency in his general attitude towards emotional experience. This attitude of the poet must of necessity exhibit itself as distinctly as possible if the exact experience is to be recreated for others. An effort to recreate a particular experience of a particular personality leads to a distinct method of expression. This in turn exhibits the personal idiosyncrasy of the poet and creates the confusion which pertains to the term style. This term is sometimes applied to the formal means of expression which is a heritage from the past which must be adapted and used by the poet if anyone is to understand him at all. At other

(1) Florence Emily Hardy: Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 66
times it is used to signify the whole poetic experience and expression of that experience by the poet.

Most searchers into the true inwardness of the term's meaning agree that Style, along with the experience comes from within and that true unity of expression demands an essential likeness between the two.

There is a striking pronouncement from Bedford gaol, which bears on the subject: "I could have enlarged much in this my Discourse on my Temptations and Troubles for Sin; as also, of the merciful kindness and working of God with my soul: I could also have stepped into a Stile much higher than this, in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more than here I have seemed to do, but I dare not: God did not play in tempting of me; neither did I play, when I sunk as into the bottomless pit when Pangs of Hell caught hold upon me; wherefore I may not play in relating of them but be plain and simple and lay down the thing as it was. He that liketh it let him receive it; and he that does not, let him produce a better." (1)

John Bunyan's dream was a peculiar moulding of the English Bible and the man himself into what is sometimes called the first English novel and has, fittingly enough, a blended flavor both of God and tinker, which is the essence of Bunyan's Style.

The natural style is difficult of attainment since it approximates somewhat closely to the normal mode of experience and since the experience of most writers and artists tends away from, rather than towards the usual one. A good style, however, need not of necessity be "natural", if it be true, for, "All style is artificial in this sense, that all good styles are achieved by artifice." (2)

This question of a true style seems inextricably mixed up with poetic truth generally and since this paper is to deal with the particular in so far as it may be extricated from Hardy's work, rather than with the general, I do not propose to deal exhaustively with poetic truth excepting as it appears from time to time as the stone to which style is anchored. We will for the present deal only with true poets and suppose that idiosyncrasy hardened into mannerism and theory jostling emotion have disappeared into limbo, -- and hold with Bunyan that the emotion and the "Stile" must be and are of the same kind.

If this account of the origin of true style in an individual mode of experience be accepted as inherently true, it follows that the success or failure of that style rests

(1) John Bunyan: Preface: Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners:
(2) J. Middleton Murry: The Meaning of Style: p. 18
in the author's ability to compel language to conform and minister to his particular mode. Technique in all its phases is simply the process of making language conform to the particular poet's mode of experience. The poet's lordship over conventional form and usage, together with his own contribution, if he makes one, completes his effort and forms his style. This necessitous technique is the arbitrarily artificial element which has been mentioned.

Style then is really a term which we use to express a very delicate poetical or artistic adjustment which we are constantly called upon to recognize. It represents the building up of the poet's structure by his own particular means. It is partly, if we wish to call it so, his mortar and it cements and binds and firmly holds, giving pattern and stability to the whole. It is integral, intimate and essential harmony.

This being so, one may judge of a poet's style only from within the poetry itself, "within" in the sense of having arrived at as thorough a knowledge of the poet and his poetry as can be obtained. The bounds of success in this particular vary with the reader but granted that one has gained the essential knowledge, the willing submersion of one's own personality in that of the poet may bring some degree of success.

There are several reasons why the contemporaries of a poet refuse to suspend their own judgment. One is a lack of perspective; the saturation of the reader in the commonplace of the day makes anything different seem unsubstantial. Another reason is that a poet's work is not finished until his death and so cannot in his life time be judged as a whole. A further cause of misunderstanding lies in the difficulty that writers have in moulding their genius to the popular form. A writer whose genius is epic may appear in the century of the psychological novel.

Much of the adverse criticism with which the age of Hardy loaded him came from faulty knowledge, emphasis on one phase of his work to the exclusion of others equally important and the utter refusal of readers to suspend their own judgment.

The poetry of Thomas Hardy, which we are about to consider, voices more clearly than is usual to poets, a particular mode of experience. It is steady, consistent and unchanging in many apparent ways. It is possible in his case to see fairly clearly the influence and tendencies which make for this consistency, for his life was lived in steady sequence and in a limited environment, which he has himself made it somewhat easy to understand. He is not the sort who bares his soul. It is perhaps matter for regret that he has
been so reticent, but in the mass of his productions both prose and poetry, the conjoining emphasis which comes from three sources, the man, the country and the century is consistently apparent.

The moment that one tries to form a mental picture of the man himself the canvas becomes crowded, for round the central figure cluster the people he has made, who owe their very breath to him and who arise unbidden when we speak his name. Like Shakespeare in his scarlet cloak he seems always heading his own parade and just as Falstaff, Bardolph, Benedick fall merrily into step, so do the Men-of-Wessex join the procession which moves more slowly to Hardy's tune. Hardy's world is the world of reality, more real than the actual, which Chaucer and his Pilgrims knew. Hardy refused to have glamour thrown about him. His passion for truth and his extreme humility are nowhere more apparent than in the brief anecdotal notes and comments, which Mrs. Hardy's autobiography contain. One learns much concerning the sincerity and the simplicity of the man. Often too, there are notes which bear on his poetic ideals, for example: "My opinion is that a poet should express the emotion of all ages and the thought of his own." (1) "The poet takes note of nothing that he cannot feel emotively." (2) These notes are so frequent as to prove beyond a doubt that poetry was always the one absorbing interest in his life. The point need not be labored since the poetry is in itself proof of the fact, but it is satisfying to find tangible evidence in Hardy's own hand. In one of his prefaces Hardy states that he considered his verse the most individual part of his "literary fruitage" for here nothing interfered with freedom of expression either in form or content, poetry being less localized, while broader in area than prose. He goes on to say "One is reminded.........how much more concise and quintessential expression becomes when given in rhythmic form than when shaped in the language of prose." (3) He is speaking in 1912 and is looking back upon his own poetic and prose productions. This expression "concise" and "quintessential" makes one think of the economy of phrase which is so suggestive, in lines such as,

"There to reach a rotting berry
Toils a thrush." (4)

.........................."free
From that long drip of human tears
Which peoples old in tragedy

(1) Florence Emily Hardy: Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 188
(2) Florence Emily Hardy: Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 133
(3) Tess of the D'Urbervilles: General Preface
(4) The Reminder: Time's Laughing Stocks: p. 252
Have left upon the centuried years." (1)

In these lines the uselessness of effort rises up a spectre from the rotting berry and the sorrow of the ages seems intensified not only by the figure used, but by the instinctive pause after "drip", which the metre demands. This leads to the very "quintessential" -- that is, the essence of sorrow solidified in the piling up of years into centuries.

"The poetry of so profound a poet as Mr. Hardy," says J. E. Barton (2), "is not an accomplishment nor an adjunct, but the one central thing in him." This seems profoundly true, for Hardy was a poet all his life. The impulse of which Domicilium (3) is the first extant result continued unabated for sixty years and although Wessex Poems was not published until 1898, many of its poems date as early as 1865. The years of novel writing lessened the output of poetry but they did not stop it and many of the later poems are revisions, or taken from old notes subjected to mature approval. Many poems in the later volumes are undated and were written years before. This makes a chronological survey almost without significance excepting in so far as it may serve to emphasize the poetical freshness and vigor which the poet attained at the first and which with astounding vitality he carried into old age.

Thomas Hardy had a remarkable sense of rhythm, no matter what its form (2) He has himself told how profoundly some airs moved him in childhood, and has enlarged on the subject in a short story, The Fiddler of the Reels (4) and in a poem The Fiddler (5). He tells also of the fascination dancing had for him and dwells with delight on the musical performance of the three Hardys as members of the parish choir, "Mellstock." In the novels, music and dancing are an integral part of country life. Granfer Cantle hornpiping on the heath, "in the form of a three-legged object among the rest" (6) has an almost demoniac vitality of his own, which links him suddenly with the Heath and the mystery of existence, and seems almost a personification of the life force, grotesquely persistent. Eustacia Vye and Wildeve on the Green at East Egdon are illustrative of the place which

(2) J. E. Barton: The Poetry of Thomas Hardy, in Johnson, The Art of Thomas Hardy: p. 263.
(3) Domicilium: Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 4.
(4) Florence Emily Hardy: Early Life of Thomas Hardy: Chap. 1 passim.
(5) The Short Stories of Thomas Hardy: p. 399.
Hardy gives to rhythmic sound and motion as decisive influence on action. He says — "A whole village full of emotion, scattered abroad all the year long met here in a focus for an hour"........"The enchantment of the dance surprised her. A clear line of difference divided like a tangible fence her experience within this maze of motion from her experience without it." (1) A very powerful application of the same idea occurs in the episode of Troy and his sword. In this instance the flashing movement of Troy's sword is partly a visual, partly an audible rhythm. It places the reasoning powers of Bathsheba completely in abeyance and raises her emotional powers accordingly........ "She felt like one who has sinned a great sin.......He had kissed her." (2)

The same awareness carries into the outer world and the magnificent description of "a face on which time makes but little impression," has made Egdon Heath the symbol of Hardy's whole attitude to nature. It is not only that he senses the actual music of wind and tree, but the larger and greater rhythms, the recurrences of years and cycles seem to beat upon his senses and on ours. There is a steady closing in as if a revolving landscape became suddenly inverted and rolled over one. The passage is too steady and too perfect to break. The great Prelude must be left to speak for itself while parts of the closing paragraphs only are quoted, for aside from its sense of time and cycles there is a personal note in the excerpt. It comes in the word "irrepressible."

"To recline on a stump of thorn in the central valley of Egdon, between afternoon and night as now,......... and to know that everything around and underneath had been from prehistoric times as unaltered as the stars overhead, gave ballast to the mind adrift on change and harassed by the irrepressible New. The great inviolate place had an ancient permanence which the sea cannot claim. Who can say of a particular sea that it is old? Distilled by the sun, kneaded by the moon, it is renewed in a year, in a day, or in an hour. The sea changed, the fields changed, the rivers, the villages and the people changed, yet Egdon remained." (3)

There is another passage concerning Egdon in which Eustacia Vye appears. It runs "It might reasonably have been supposed that she was listening to the wind, which rose somewhat as the night advanced and laid hold of the attention. The wind indeed seemed made for the scene, as the scene seemed made for the hour. Part of its tone was quite special; what was heard there could be heard nowhere else. Gusts in innumerable series followed each other from the North-West.

(1) The Return of the Native: Bk. l, Chap. III.
(2) Far from the Madding Crowd: Chap. XXVIII.
(3) The Return of the Native: Chap. I.
and when each one of them raced past the sound of its progress resolved into three. Treble, tenor and bass notes were to be found therein. The general ricochet of the whole over pits and prominences had the gravest pitch of the chime. Next there could be heard the baritone buzz of a holly tree. Below these in force, above them in pitch a dwindled voice strove hard at a husky tune which was the peculiar local sound alluded to. Thinner and less immediately traceable than the other two it was far more impressive than either. In it lay what may be called the linguistic peculiarity of the heath. Throughout the blowing of these plaintive winds that note bore a great resemblance to the ruins of human song which remain to the throat of fourscore and ten. It was a worn whisper, dry and papery, and it brushed so distinctly across the ear, that, by the accustomed, the material minutiae in which it originated could be realized as by touch. It was the united products of infinitesimal vegetable causes, and these were neither stems, leaves, fruit, prickles, lichen, nor moss.

They were the mummied heath-bells of the past summer, originally tender and purple, now washed colourless by Michaelmas rains, and dried to dead skins by October suns. So low was an individual sound from these that a combination of hundreds only just emerged from silence, and the myriads of the whole declivity reached the woman's ear but as a shrivelled and intermittent recitative. Yet scarcely a single accent among the many afloat tonight could have such power to impress a listener with thoughts of its origin. One inwardly saw the infinity of those combined multitudes; and perceived that each of the tiny trumpets was seized on, entered, scoured and emerged from by the wind as thoroughly as if it were as vast as a crater." (1)

This like the Prelude, defies dissection. In any case I think it unnecessary to point out anything more than that Hardy's sensitive ear, tuned to rhythmic sound and phenomena generally, here invades the world of actual unclassified sounds, sorts and marks them out. It is complete mastery of material, and it is the result of intense, concentrated and interpretative attention.

I have been speaking thus far of rhythm as a significant part of life, so used by Hardy and not in its formal musical sense, although he has, as is natural to one with the gift, sometimes used music as its expression.

Superficial references to dance and song both in the novels and the poetry are too numerous for more than allusion and would in themselves form an interesting study. A few instances as they occur naturally in the study of the

(1) The Return of the Native: Chap. VI.
poems will be noted later. There is, undoubtedly, a formal musical element also. It will be considered under the head of Metre.

The intense interest which Hardy had in Art, intensified by his architectural training gave him a feeling for form almost as striking as his sense of rhythm. He notes how the edges of objects cut across the vision. He has an innate sense of proportion and balance. He depends upon mass and outline for his effects rather than upon detail.

Prose form does not concern us here, but it is tempting to note that in *The Return of the Native*, the perfectly drawn plot lifts one up and toward the central consummation of event, throwing the characters into strong relief in a light so intense as to burn. It is a beautifully unified dramatic entity, like a long sigh or a perfect cadence. Only a strongly dramatic feeling would have placed the solitary figures, first of Eustacia, then of Clym, on the Heath as the point of rest at the beginning and end of a drama. It is also significant that Eustacia, who hated the Heath, disappears, and that Clym, who loved it, remains. It is poetic justice, an almost Greek note more strongly sounded here than in *The Dynasts*, where the supernatural machinery denies justice.

I have spoken of the scope of rhythmic vision, which is typical of Hardy's sensitive mind. In June 1876 he writes "If it be possible to compress into a sentence all that a man learns between twenty and forty it is that all things merge in one another, good into evil, generosity into justice, religion into politics, the year into the ages, the world into the universe; with this in view the evolution of species seems but a minute and obvious process in the same movement." (1) It is again, the large view, the relation of one phase to another, which the episode of Knight and the trilobite illustrates. (2) This rhythmic sense notes the timeless panorama of the past and the relative insignificance of the present moment. The rhythmic sense appears as a main characteristic of many lyrics; it becomes a dominant factor in the very structure of *The Dynasts*.

The marked individualism, which we are considering, highly accented and intensified by life in the country, was deepened by a consistently tragic conception of man and nature. The result is an almost ruthless tragedy softened in one way only, that is by a sense of pity, which in its broadest and most comprehensive phase breathes in the very conception of Tess, and which in its lesser significance, speaks in a love for animals which is not only conscious of

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(1) The Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 146.
(2) A Pair of Blue Eyes: Chap. XXII.
them but of their sufferings also.

Of the lesser phase, examples multiply. There is the tragic instance of the long sufferings of D'Urberville's horse; there is the more cheerful one of Gabriel Oak's dog, there are the numerous allusions to suffering war horses, which occur in the stage directions of The Dynasts; there is The Robin (1), The Blinded Bird (2) and the triolet:

The Puzzled Game Birds

"They are not those who used to feed us
When we were young -- they cannot be
These shapes that now bereave and bleed us?
They are not those who used to feed us
For did we then cry, they would heed us.
If hearts can house such treachery,
They are not those who used to feed us,
When we were young, they cannot be!" (3)

This pity for suffering carries over to man as distinguished from the animal although it is sometimes drowned to the casual ear by echoing notes of ironic laughter. Many poems which reflect it are too long for quotation but The Sailor's Mother (3) and The Woman in the Rye (4) are short and perfect poems of their kind, the former intensely dramatic.

There is the most abject human suffering -- no irony -- no laughter, only the deepest sympathy and understanding without intrusion or comment.

The Sailor's Mother.

"O whence do you come,
Figure in the night-fog that chills me numb?"

"I come to you across from my house up there,
And I don't mind the brine-mist clinging to me
That blows from the quay,
For I heard him in my chamber, and thought you unaware.

"But what did you hear,
That brought you blindly knocking in this middle-watch so drear?"

(1) Moments of Vision: p. 485
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 418
(3) Late Lyrics and Earlier: p. 627
(4) Satires of Circumstances: p. 338
"My sailor's voice as 'twere calling at your door,
And I don't mind my bare feet clammy on the stones,
And the blight to my bones,
For he only knows of this house I lived in before."

"Nobody's nigh,
Woman like a skeleton, with socket-sunk eye."

"Ah—nobody's nigh! And my life is drearisome,
And this is the old home we loved in many a day
Before he went away;
And the salt fog mops me. And nobody's come!"

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The Woman in the Rye.

"Why do you stand in the dripping rye,
Cold-lipped, unconscious, wet to the knee,
When there are fire sides near?" Said I.
"I told him I wished him dead" said she.

"Yea, cried it in my haste to one
Whom I had loved, whom I well loved still
And die, he did. And I hate the sun,
And stand here lonely, aching, chill;

"Stand waiting, waiting under skies
That blow reproach, the while I see
The rooks sheer off to where he lies
Wrapt in a peace withheld from me."

The larger question of Hardy's tragic genius is more difficult to illustrate excepting at some length, for it is so essentially a part of the man and his mode of experience that it provides the strong threads of the texture which do not ravel. He looked closely at life and saw its pain-senseless it seemed to him. He saw blind forces operating without heed for man, but saw also that man intensified the misery. Hardy's tragic theme in general was based on the emotional capacity of man to suffer, or on the sentient and insentient. Tragedy came about through the struggle of emotional man with oblivious natural forces. The tragic point of view developed in two ways, as an attitude toward man and his actual everyday life, chiefly his emotional life, and as a corresponding attitude towards the forces of the universe. The latter developed into metaphysics and was expressed in The Dynasts; the former presents itself in various ways in the tragic novels. (1) It appears

(1) The Mayor of Casterbridge: The Return of the Native:
Tess of the D'Urbervilles: Jude the Obscure.
also in poem after poem as I shall later try to show. The world to Hardy was at best an unhappy place for man to be in since human emotion and mechanical forces must inevitably clash.

"How people will laugh in the midst of a misery! Some would soon get to whistle in hell."

The material which Thomas Hardy used was Dorset. In the youthful years of keen and sensuous perception the spirit of the country side was absorbed by his consciousness. Here in "Wessex" he found his media, the characteristic types, the men and women, "humanity hand in hand with trouble," which we know. Here he found also, the pastoral spirit, the Napoleonic legends, the folk-song, lore and story, which he has made immortal. Here too the poet William Barnes, whose pages murmur the softly slurred syllables of the Dorset dialect, was his friend. Old England and the peasant chorus, pastorals gay and sad by turn and tragedy stark and compelling all emerged in Hardy's work as a result of the "Wessex" environment.

Thomas Hardy at twenty-one went to London to study architecture and remained there from 1862 to 1867.

There is no need in this paper for any resumé of the Victorian period. It suffices to say that the whole thought of the country was in flux and that the thinkers of the day, hurt and confused, reacted according to their varying personalities. Two very splendid theses have been written which deal thoroughly among other things with the influence of science and the century's thought on the genius of Hardy. One, having analyzed exhaustively, makes a very pertinent comment, to the effect that Hardy, having grasped the whole scientific attitude, compressed it and reduced it, in the last analysis, to society as represented by a small group man and woman, guardians of the species and creatures of instinct. Hedgcock (2) summarizes Hardy's choice of subject thus: "Les thèmes; la réaction d'un sexe sur l'autre; les mouvements de la force vital grâce à la quelle la race continue; la lutte entre l'intelligence de l'homme et le vouloir - vivre de l'univers. Sés thèmes étant universels, et non sociaux il n'a pas besoin de

(1) 1859 Origin of Species
1860 Wilberforce and Huxley Debate
1860 Modern spirit in Essays and Reviews.
1863 Reaction, Oxford Movement.

(2) F. A. Hedgcock; Thomas Hardy, Penseur et Artiste, p. 288 - 290
l'agitation des grandes villes utilité du cadre rustique pour renforcer la leçon de son oeuvre."

"L'amour, la base de tous ses ouvrages; cette passion n'est pas ideal usée chez lui -- elle est surtout une attraction sexuelle."

Madeline de Cazamian in the concluding chapter of her book gives Hardy and Gissing supreme place as the great disillusioned of the century and notes that the critical spirit in philosophy, observation in social and natural science, realism in art, had carried away the idealistic and passionate feeling of the Romantic era and had left in its place the individual stoic, a sad resigned pessimism -- and intellect. (1) If we accept this statement the century has to its credit the final word of prose in Jude the Obscure and that conception of man as a conscious part of an insentient will, working ruthlessly and crushing man -- even itself, which is The Dynasts.

"I do not think," said Hardy, "that there will be any permanent revival of the old transcendent ideals; but I think there may gradually be developed an idealism of fancy; that is an idealism in which fancy is no longer tricked out and made to masquerade as belief, but is frankly and honestly accepted as an imaginative solace in the lack of any substantial solace to be found in life." (2)

A note written December 31, 1901 is interesting; it says: "After reading various philosophic systems and being struck with their contradictions and futilities, I have come to this. Let every man make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience. He will not be able to escape using terms and phraseology from earlier philosophies but let him avoid adopting their theories if he values his own mental life. Let him remember the fate of Coleridge and save years of labour by working out his own views as given him by his surroundings." (3)

Hardy was the only Victorian to go straight to logical conclusions without compromise. At twenty-one he had lost the beliefs, which had carried the older men of literature into maturity. He fought his battle through; he was able to consolidate his position. Moving onward fifty years and surviving the World War, he buried his century. He stands squarely with the Moderns. His vision is the modern one. "He that liketh it, let him receive it, and he that does not, let him produce a better."

(1) Madeline de Cazamian: Le Roman et les Idees en Angleterre, Chap. VI passim.
(2) Florence Emily Hardy: The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, p.90
(3) Florence Emily Hardy: The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, p.91
In Thomas Hardy, the unleashing of a powerful imagination found its supreme expression in lyrical poetry. Those who hold that the essential lyric note is joy may and do question the pronouncement. When they do so they are forsaking true poetic principles and substituting standards which belong to other things. The lyric note may vary, does so infinitely, but it is primarily the expression of intense emotion and such emotion in our world and Hardy's may or may not be joy. To be communicable it must be powerful. With Hardy it is powerful and it happens that it is most so when confronted by the tragic aspects of life — which lead us, we know, to sorrow. Joy and sorrow are not, however, in themselves the measure of a poet's greatness. They are deeply potential or poetical, because they are common to all men in some degree and so possessed of the essentially universal qualities which make permanence of the work possible. As I tried to make clear in the beginning, however, they are not in themselves poetic or unpoetic. In the final analysis, poetic quality is an attribute of the poet. It is true that joy in poetry, as in life, has a lifting effect on the spirit which in a more ideal world might be consistent but which in ours cannot be reconciled with fact. It is not in the nature of the northern mind to be continually lifted up. Joy, by its very nature, wears itself out. What is more exhausting than the long uninterrupted paean? Who, for instance, has sat through the thousand Hallelulias of the great chorus, magnificent as the performance is, without a treasonable dryness of the throat and contraction of the ear drums?

In Hardy the note is not joy, neither is it the sudden agonized discord of pain. It is by comparison almost monotonous, like the slow chanting of a sacrificial chorus; there is intense feeling, intense pain, but it is artistically controlled. It is toned to a certain pitch, which the rising and falling voice tends to emphasize, since the main chant holds to its few chosen notes in the minor key, and the antiphony is but echo.

"In Vision I Roamed."
To--

In Vision I roamed; the flashing Firmament, So fierce in blazon that the night waxed wan, As though with awe at orbs of such ostent; And as I thought my spirit ranged on and on.
In footless traverse through ghast heights of sky,
To the last chambers of the monstrous Dome,
Where stars the brightest here are lost to the eye;
Then, any spot on our own Earth seemed Home!

And the sick grief that you were far away
Grew pleasant thankfulness that you were near,
Who might have been, set on some foreign sphere,
Less than a want to me, as day by day
I lived unaware, uncaring all that lay
Locked in that universe taciturn and drear. (1)

This sonnet illustrates, not only the negation
under discussion but also the method of obtaining negation,
which Hardy used. The night view of the stars, and age­
long inspiration to the poet, here finds in the compacted
terseness of the sonnet form an entirely new treatment. The
poetic vision, confronted by the vastness of space, "ranged
on and on," but the initial wonder yielded to awed numbness.
There is no rhapsody; night like an unpainted face under
intense light looked "wan". Infinity stretches before one
in "ghast heights of sky", where distance has become so
great that stars no longer shine. This is the:.-characteristic
range of vision, before which the years unroll. It im­
mediately links itself with the present and man in his
intimate relations in the Earth as Home. Then comes sorrow,
changed by this vision of the universe from "sick grief" to
"pleasant thankfulness" at the thought that the loved one
might, in an insentient scheme of things have arrived at
life on a far universe in the infinitude of stars, and that
the lover would have been denied even the negative joy of
longing now his, which had in the first place disturbed.
Behind this denial of joy is Hardy's philosophy in general.
The immediate effect in the poem is gained by the unusual
significance of night, the contrast implied between the
"monstrous Dome" and its huge world, with our small one
consequently dwarfed to a purely local significance and the
loved one as no positive force at all. The specific words
and phrases, which intensify the effect are "wan", "ghast",
"monstrous", "less than a want to me", "unwear", "uncaring".
Three derive their potential meaning from, the context,
three are negative in themselves. In the octave the
thought reaches its climax, sets out its limits, soars, as
it were; in the sestet it reaches its conclusion and sinks
to the individualized essence of the experience. Eight
lines to the firmament, -- but six to the suffering lover,
-- the sky how far, -- the man how close at hand!

Negation in its most perfect form is expressed
in a lyric, so exquisitely wrought that it clings and haunts

(1) Wessex Poems. (1866)
as does the first memory of sorrow.

Neutral Tones.

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

Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles of years ago;
And some words played between us to and fro
On which lost the more by our love.

The smile on your mouth was the dearest thing
Alive enough to have strength to die;
And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing........

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

The poem has the visual greyness that hangs in
the mist of an Inness landscape, but unlike landscape in
fog or mist the outlines are clear. There is one single
intensification only, that is the suggested black of "an
ominous bird a-wing", and that is completely satisfying,
the one accent needed, and even it is but a difference in
degree. It is as if one drop of the black had splashed on
the canvas undiluted; it is as if color had never been.

In spite of this fact the pictorial qualities
of the four stanzas are arresting. The first establishes
the background, the general tone, the figures in outline
against it; the second, though I may be wrong, calls up the
dead centuries and the unseeing eyes of the sphinx, staring
in eternal question; the third might be termed, Portrait of
a Lady, while the last is like the first in composition
excepting that the woman is alone, the man outside the
picture. Perspective has deepened. It is very subtle, very
intense for all its grayness. Here, by pictorial means
Hardy reaches in four stanzas the essential situation and
tone that Meredith achieves psychologically in the sonnet
sequence.

It is, I think, unnecessary to dwell in further
particularity on the leaden qualities of the imagery, the
chidden sun, the gray and withered leaf. They are obvious,
but it is impossible to leave the lyric without a look at
the metre, since Hardy has both intensified and relieved
monotony by its use. The verse is in ascending four foot rhythm with masculine ending, but the foot breaks continually from iamb to anapest. It is this constant breaking pattern which relieves the monotone, which intensified by the setting of one half of the verse over against the other in fairly even balance by the middle cesural pause, is again relieved when that balance breaks, giving way to the more sweeping rhythm of the fourth verse.

The tiny love poem, The Comet at Yell'ham (1) is a simple voicing of the same art, but aims at nothing greater than a little impression, brief and fleeting. Death, it is true, looms near but it is not overpowering in its shadow. The note is one of sweetness, rather unusual.

I
"It bends far over Yell'ham Plain,
And we, from Yell'ham Height,
Stand and regard its fiery train,
So soon to swim from sight.

II
It will return long years hence, when
As now its strange swift shine
Will fall on Yell'ham; but not then
On that sweet form of thine."

In this little lyric negation is less implicitly emphasized than in Neutral Tones but the last line, suggesting the long unbroken rest of death, life having lost all significance, shows how consistently Hardy discounted the present.

One more poem, entirely different in subject and treatment is interesting. It is more generalized and its negation appears in almost direct statement, which would be ugly were it not for the natural analogy which forms the accompaniment, or the key note, as one desires. Nature speaks from the first verse in each stanza. A lack, terrible in all its negative phases, claims the other three. Excepting for the trochaic feet which open verses one and four, the iambs follow in regular sequence, broken but once in the second last verse of the poem. The rhythm, however, arising from the combination of two and three foot verse carries with it a sense of completion, of satisfying absolute pause at the end of each stanza, making each stand out like the stroke of a huge hammer, which by mere cessation completes a rhythm, - "Waits -- in unhope." The poem is in three parts and for Hardy, rather long. The first part, of which the other two are extensions and elaborations is com-

(1) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 138
plete in itself; it sets forth an attitude that I quote:

In Tenebris.

I

Wintertime nighs;
But my bereavement-pain
It cannot bring again;
Twice no one dies.

Flower-petals flee;
But since it once hath been,
No more that severing scene
Can harrow me.

Birds faint in dread;
I shall not lose old strength
In the lone frost's black length;
Strength long since fled!

Leaves freeze to dun;
But friends cannot turn cold
This season as of old
For him with none.

Tempests may scath;
But love can not make smart
Again this year his heart
Who no heart hath.

Black is night's cope;
But death will not appal
One who, past doubtings all,
Waits in unhope.

In spite of the consistent level which has been noticed in Hardy's emotional expression in general, there are at the same time two very apparent extremes in his lyric gift. Two illustrations of this point are Weathers (1), the simple charming little song of fair day and down pour which is Hardy in a purely "Wesser" mood and that tragic grim retreat from Moscow (2), which under Hardy's touch becomes not gold but desolation. The Retreat extends in significance from personal defeat and disappointment to national disaster and from the practical efforts of man struggling with environment to imaginative metaphysic in its widest significance. It is a long flight and few could have made it. The fact that Hardy has done so is in itself evidence of amazing power and genius. These two mark the limits; they are as the southern and the northern poles and

(1) Late Lyrics and Earlier: p. 533
(2) The Dynasts: Part III, Act I, Scene 9
the balance of poetic achievement is distributed in infinite gradation between them.

In Weathers Hardy subjects himself to Nature's mood. There is absolutely no intrusion of the poet's personality. In the first stanza brightness and sunshine reign over nestlings, loungers and maids. The imagery is homely and usual in "little brown nightingale", consummately artful in "sprig-muslin". In the second stanza everything drips, the whole mood of the stanza culminating in the homing rooks. The music of the swiftly moving song-like rhythm is in perfect keeping. Now "In Time of the Breaking of Nations"(1) the smell of Wessex earth still rises, but here there is an utter lack of elaboration. The visual actual landscape speaks. Like Neutral Tones it is pictorial but the subtlety of that poem is here swept away. Nothing could be simpler but the primitive pursuits and emotions of man appear in their most significant forms as the basis of meaning in life. Though the approach is different, a similar emotion tinges the reflections of the soldier in a lesser poem, The Man He Killed.(2)

In Postponement (3) emotion is more personal. It is an early poem, slight but effective, with a simple refrain which repeats the alternating notes of the theme, but it serves, however, to show an occasional playful lyricism, suited to the shallower or more transient emotions which Hardy sometimes affects.

"I planned her a nest in a leafless tree,  
But the passers eyed and twitted me,  
And said: 'How reckless a bird is he,  
Cheerily mating!'  

'Tear-filled, I stayed me till summer-tide,  
In lewth of leaves to throne her bride;  
But alas! her love for me waved and died,  
Wearily waiting.'"

This ripling lyric note is also perfectly expressed in the abbreviated lines and phrases of Lizbie Browne. (4)

The direct antithesis both of emotion and expression comes in intense personal cry of pain in a Broken Appointment. (5) It is heart-rending, but it is not

(1) Moments of Vision: p. 511  
(2) Times Laughing Stocks: p. 269 (1902)  
(3) Wessex Poems: p. 8 (1866)  
(4) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 119  
(5) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 124
a wail. Hardy's grief is not of the dust and ashes type. It arises from a conscious upright acceptance, which, world-conscious and world-weary as it is, yet occasionally defies Fate. The magnificent verse, "and marching Time drew on and wore me numb," leads with inevitable surety to the blasted "hope-hour" and "you did not come." There is nothing forced or peculiar. The long sweeping rhythm of the regular iambic verses is heightened by four run-on lines, unusual bounty in an end-stopped world. The regular beat of the iambics is broken once sharply, by a tremendously powerful inversion with ensuing pause: "Grieved I, when as the hope-hour stroked its sum." There is a sense in which Hardy the modern thinker may be deemed a Romantic at heart. This peculiarity has two manifestations, in one, the homely country loving, Wessex-bound man clings to the past and the old people, old things that he has known; in the other a modern mind, trained to the habit of modern thought is perpetually intrigued by the emotion of love. Frequently, but not always, modern philosophy intrudes. It is then that the ironic pitiless break, which in Hardy separates the romantic and modern attitude to love occurs. The latter phase will be dealt with later. It is part of Hardy's gargoyle mood. The shift from one extreme to the other sometimes occurs in a single poem, sometimes there is pause at a middle phase where love is subjected to merciless scrutiny as part of the scientific interpretation of universal forces. The scientific attitude towards love which Hardy had is more properly discussed in a survey of his philosophy. At the moment it is the more conventional love theme that I consider. There has been over-emphasis on the disillusioned Hardy, who at seventy-four wrote what were as far as I know, his first words of self-praise, -- strange words too:

"Whatever his message -- glad or grim --
Two bright-souled women clave to him,
Stand and say that while day decays,
It will be word enough of praise." (1)

To go backward in time there is a lilting song-like little poem, When I Set Out for Lyonesse (3) which mirrors the carefree moments of love, before it is wiser, that was written in a personal sort of way about 1870. Its mate is A Student's Love Song (4) but the most poignantly lyrical love expression is found in the group of poems partly of the

(1) Satires of Circumstance: A Poet: p. 390
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 429
(3) Satires of Circumstance: p. 293
(4) Satires of Circumstance: p. 293
moment, partly retrospect, known as Poems of 1912 - 13: \textit{Veteris Vestigia Flammæ}. (1) Here the love theme is Hardy's own. It is the one time when poetically, he puts aside his perpetual reticence and writes of his own emotion, undisguised. Most of the poems are beautiful. \textit{The Going} (2), \textit{Beeny Cliff} (3), and \textit{The Phantom Horse Woman} (4) are superbly so. In all there are phrases and images profoundly moving — which yet deprived of their context are naked and shrinking. A few are bolder. Such is the powerful figure of death in life which bereavement made.

"I seem but a dead man held on end," (5) the powerful figure of death in life which bereavement made, or the note of absolute finality in "You are past love, praise, indifference, blame," (6) The final stanza of the \textit{Phantom Horse Woman} has the same lyric beauty that the huntsman of the arras, with greater elaboration, embodies in an older poem. (7)

Here there is an absolute avoidance of ornament, which makes the figure of the rider stand out clearly etched, one overpowering perception excluding all else, an insistent throbbing, repeat, beating upon the brain.

"A ghost-girl-rider — and though, toil-tried,
 He withers daily,
 Time touches her not,
 But she still rides gaily,
 In his rapt thought
 In that shagged and shaly
 Atlantic spot,
 And as when first eyed
 Draws rein and sings to the swing of the tide."

\textit{Beeny Cliff}, an exquisite and more elaborate treatment of a somewhat similar theme is set in hurrying tercet form, which in spite of its end-stopped lines sweeps along from phrase to phrase in almost even cesural balance until the voice drops at the strophe's end. It is very melodious, and the natural beat of the metre with its four heavy stresses encased in a steady patter of unstressed syllables is intensified by an intricate pattern of vowel and l sounds, in which as the l lifts, the vowel lowers the pitch.

(2) Poems of 1912 - 13: p. 319
(4) Poems of 1912 - 13: p. 333
(6) Your Last Drive: Poems of 1912 - 13: p. 320
(7) Matthew Arnold: Tristram and Iseult: Part II
The accompanying imagery is magical, the epitome of art, for experience and landscape blend and condense in a series of cameo-like impressions, in this case delicately colored, which stand out -- perfect -- from a golden setting.

III
"A little cloud then cloaked us, and there flew an irised rain,
And the Atlantic dyed its levels with a dull misfeatured stain,
And then the sun burst out again, and purples prinked the main." (1)

The homely mood in Hardy's lyric gift which tempers the harshness of scientific fact -- by a wistful clinging to old things and customs, expresses itself in such lyrics as Old Furniture (2), To My Father's Violin (3) and Night in the Old Home (4). The first, an expression in poetic form of the charm of association which almost everyone feels at times was intensified in Hardy by his life-long allegiance to one place. It seems to have become a comforting and inspiring part of his life. The tone of the charming poem is set by "the hands of the generation." This same charm of association becoming more specific and personal in the verses to a father's memory, evoked by a violin, draws on to regard the end, which comes to all things, in the way inevitable to Hardy -- the violin worm-eaten, its owner dust.

The last poem of the three chosen to represent the larger group of which they form a part, introduces the return of the spirits of the dead to their old haunts, a favourite and fanciful diversion of the facts. One is struck immediately by Hardy's words regarding the solace of fancy in life when a solace of reason is denied. In this particular instance a direct contrast between old beliefs and new is brought out. The ghosts wear a "strange upbraiding smile", and advise their modern descendant to "let be the wherefore." Subject to the gargoyle mood the same theme of return and times that change, grins and chuckles from "the mead of Memories" in the ironic verses of The Dead Quire. (5)

A modern ballad in the Lucy Gray manner called Her Immortality, probably marks an extreme both of romantic solace and ballad content. The manner is entirely simple

(2) Moments of Vision: p. 456
(3) Moments of Vision: p. 423
(4) Times Laughing Stocks: p. 252
(5) Times Laughing Stocks: p. 240
but the fanciful theme, which in poets less austere might be
given a setting correspondingly romantic is here treated
in the rustic everyday fashion typical both of the ballad
and of Hardy. The poem rests upon the idea that the dead
are immortal only as long as they live in memory in the minds
of the living. The ballad form for such a subject is un-
usual; the old ballad world of actual unhappy event having
given way to a world of shadow, the shadow of mid-morning,
which is only a patch of grey and without deep contrast.

Her Immortality (1) is not the sort of thing that anyone
else would have written. It represents a phase of Hardy's
temperament as it adjusts a powerful philosophy to the
everyday needs of man; for the old belief in immortality
with its comfort gone, Hardy substitutes an immortality
which passes with its generation, the only one he could with
consistency grant -- a substitution which just suffices and
little more. In His Immortality (2) and The To-Be-Forgotten
(3) the same point of view is more implicitly clear, that
the longer one is gone, the deeper death becomes. In the
final reckoning the only ones to achieve immortality are
the Immortals. In these two explicit statements the ro-
mantic aura is gone -- and science dominates.

The Well-Beloved (4) cast in the same mould as
Her Immortality is like it an idealization, in this case of
love. The characteristic Hardian touch is the suggestion
of the impossibility of any hope of realizing the ideal in
the actual. The muted note of lyric grief in the final
stanza is a modulation. When Hardy passes this stage of
sorrow he expresses it by using ironic or dramatic con-
trasts.

"If I have seen one thing
It is the passing preciousness of dreams,
That aspects are within us; and who seems
Most kingly is the king." (5)

These words form a most fitting conclusion to
some of the lyric expressions which we have been considering
and lead quite naturally to a different side of Hardy's
genius, which speaks of those "most kingly", not in the
formal elegiac mood, which has been the immortalization of
poetic bereavement, but in the simplest way of friendship
and admiration. An unseeing critic has quoted Shelley's
Skylark (6) in an effort to give body and substance to his

(1) Wessex Poems: p. 48
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 130
(3) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 131
(4) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 120
(5) A Youngman's Exhortation: Late Lyrics and Earlier: p. 569
(6) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 92
thesis that Hardy is no poet. The words "A pinch of unseen, unguarded dust", called up for Hardy the ceaseless panorama of nature's renewal. It also emphasized the passing preciousness of dreams, since "a little ball, of feather and bone" "all life, in fact, must be transient and the skylark has its immortality, not in itself, nor even in its song, but in the poem. There it lives forever.

"Go find it faeries, go and find That tiny pinch of priceless dust, And bring a casket, silver-lined And framed of gold that gems encrust, And we will lay it safe therein And consecrate it to endless time, For it inspired a bard to win Ecstatic heights in thought and rhyme."

It is not only a subtle appreciation of another poet's art; it is almost a poet's creed, a pronouncement of faith. Hardy carries his appreciation of other poets into his own generation with his praise of the poet Meredith. (1)

The most apparent fact concerning these simple and friendly words is the entire absence of any desire to make poetical material out of an old friendship. Hardy mentions a few ways in which Meredith meant much to him. He speaks as a man, rather than as a poet. It is appreciation pure and simple. "His words wing on, -- as live words will."

Somewhat the same attitude governs The Last Signal (2) written when William Barnes died; but the gaze is deeper, there is a stark awareness of the dead man in his coffin, which is heightened by "a wave of his hand", the sun glinting in Hardy's eyes from the glass of the coffin. It makes one blink.

The death of Swinburne in 1909 moved Hardy deeply. He had known and admired Swinburne for many years. Like him, he had felt the scorching flames of Victorian prudery. His admiration is expressed in A Singer Asleep (3) not only the most beautiful of the immediate group under discussion but a full and rounded poem, deeply musical, vaguely reminiscent in the sweep of its long iambic lines, of Swinburne himself, trenchantly critical in a few perfect phrases. The poetic qualities of this exquisite tribute are the fruits of a ripened and natural genius. In the very

(1) George Meredith: Times Laughing Stocks: p. 278
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 444
(3) Satires of Circumstance: p. 304
first verse, the sea, which had stirred the imagination of Swinburne to some of its finest efforts rises up as the mighty "unslumbering" sentry of his longest rest. It is the perfect note and immediately attunes the receptive spirit to the melody that follows. The stately pace of the sentry sets the rhythmic beat of the poem which, possibly yielding to Swinburne's spirit, is rather regular in its music, the fifth stanza being the metrical skeleton of the whole, complete to the last bone. The skeleton, however, is not apparent. A few magic words and phrases completely clothe it. They are "brabble", "Still one", "fire of tongues" and "spindrift".

In stanzas one, three and nine the initial theme beats persistently, the final stanza being an elaboration and completion. In stanza two, the second theme breaks in. Into the rhythm comes an inverted foot and the perfect and startling figure of the Nun and the Swinburne "leaves upon the formal middle time." The continuing melody in stanza four is a perfectly complete short critique upon Poems and Ballads with a summing up in the verses following of the poet's career, from the storm raised by his unconventional attitude to the triumph of his later years. The third and final theme carries through three consecutive stanzas and is a very beautiful figure of the poet as the disciple of Sappho, which brings out vividly the likeness in the spirit of the two poets. These three stanzas make the melody. Here and there are the typical rhythmical breaks, the subtle differences that mark Hardy's mastery of rhythm and poetic form. Swinburne's melodic smoothness copied by Hardy, is intensified by such subtleties in stanza one as the repetition of "all", the internal y rhymes; the assonant o's, the balanced l's of "pillowed eternally", and the changing of the noun sentry to a striking verbal use in "sentrys". In the nun's stanza, consummate in pictorial art, the verse "in fulth of numbers freaked with musical closes", by virtue of its own odd sound glides in its rhythmic setting to a perfect light-syllabled end -- "roses", -- "closes"......... "hot sighs, sad laughters, kisses, tears", is an echo of Swinburne, as are also the grand and sounding words of the melody's end, which, however, acknowledge their modern master in the cosmic scope which lies between "constellations" and "dull subterrene reverbrations". The sound shows Swinburne's influence; the meaning given to the poem is typically Hardy's.

There are other words which, since they occur, may be mentioned here in their context rather than in the isolation of a later chapter. Of these, "brabbles", is an obsolete word of obscure derivation but so apt in its phonetic application to multitude that it looks new and startling, as if coined on the spot from "babble" and "rabble", the two inter-related mob words. "Spindrift" is the southern
form of a modern adaptation of spoondrift, the other form of which is spendrift. "Hydro sphere", frankly modern, is the sea's damp air about Sappho and Swinburne. "Orts" is rather unusual, rustic in flavor; "incarnadine" is Shakespearean. One finds in addition a group of compounds in perfect visual balance. This visual balance frequently occurs and is an evidence of Hardy's architectural training.

Hardy's gaze is the outward one. His emotion has been most intense when aroused, not by the personal accidents of life in immediate effect upon the single individual poet, but when engaged by the widest phenomena of the organized universe, both in its abstract and its applied significance. Here he has been the master; here he has forced poetic convention to stand aside while he bent forms and language into a framework suited to the new material. He has carried the modern scientific and evolutionary view of the world and of life upon it straight to the poetic realm and he has done so successfully. Further he has forced his strange material, unbending and unyielding as it sometimes is, into the very forms around which the poetic haze has hung most closely; witness the philosophical sonnets, which boldly proclaim a new allegiance, while dead ghosts hover unhoused in the background. It is not that philosophy appears in Hardy, for the first time as poetic material. Poets are frequently philosophical in one way or another; sometimes a particular philosophical bias has almost wrecked the superb poetic gift with which it journeyed, two variant examples being Shelley and Wordsworth. There are some who think that Hardy's darker side makes of him the perfect third. It is not so. Hardy, as I said before, consolidated his position. He stands as firmly upon the modern scientific interpretation of the universe as Milton stood upon the moral one. There was in each case, a will and the energy to support it. Hardy not only accepted modern thought but so absorbed it that it formed the very threads of his tapestry; and the figures and the illusions which he wove within it were but the finer strands of poetic imagination wholly dependent upon the heavier body for stability and strength.

In reaching this solidarity Hardy achieves an enlargement of poetic bounds just as Shakespeare achieved it by sweeping humanity in the mass within the young romantic drama. The gesture is, as it well might be, triumphant. It includes in both cases, the slow creeping progress of generations, culminating suddenly in the genesis of a century's genius.

Strangely enough this starkly modern philosophy pushes more easily to its logical conclusions in poetry than in prose. In Jude the Obscure there is a human relationship
which is barred from the sonnet Hap (1). The theme is no
darker but the appeal of Hap, being more purely to the
intellect, arouses less pain than does the unrelieved suf­
ering of Jude the Obscure. The novel carries theory to
extreme limits and characterization and "illusion" both
suffer thereby.

In order to consider the philosophical poetry
more easily, I have divided it into two ranks. In the
first stand the more abstract and intellectual phases of its
expression, in the second are the men and women or the
application of philosophy in poems dealing with men and
women. In the first phase, the tone is consistent and level.
In the second it runs in wide schematic range through lyric,
dramatic and ironic verse.

In making this somewhat arbitrary division, I
in no wise imply that it is absolute or that the so-called
abstract philosophy appears as such. I refer merely to the
poems where, although vitalized by concrete imagery and by
its subservience to metre, it appears most clearly as the
entire body of the poem, where intense interest centers on
the philosophy rather than on the person of a man or woman.
In the case of men and women, its working out is peculiar
and requires a separate and individual attention.

An acceptance of the evolutionary theory such as
the present century is called upon to make leads inevitably
to a criticism of the scheme of things wherein the fittest,
if any, survives where the mere carrying out of universal
laws leads to suffering and pain, where the occasional
happy interlude is apt to turn at any moment into the darkest
sorrow. In the much quoted Hap (2) Hardy faces the question
squarely, finding that it is easier to bear any of the old
beliefs in a jealous or avenging god, knowing that some
power willed the misery, rather than in the stark blankness
left by modern knowledge and its indifferent forces. The
thought is maddening. There might have been happiness, but
there is not. The same idea carries further in a second
sonnet of the same year, called, At a Bridal (3); but there
evolutionary progress is not only a matter of indifference
but progress of any kind is left to the merest chance. Hap
is the better sonnet, for the lyrical intenseness of the
pain expressed in the octave is made definite in the suc­
cession of imagery called up by the powerful last six lines,
the challenging "why unblooms the best hope ever sown?" and
the figure of "dicing Time".

(1) Wessex Poems: p. 7
(2) Wessex Poems: p. 7
(3) Wessex Poems: p. 8
There is a further compelling impersonation of Time, in *The Lacking Sense*. In that poem personified Time says that the powerful forces of the universe, typified as the mighty mother and in the following verses makes an appeal to man.

"While she plods dead-reckoning on,  
In darkness of affliction,  
Assist her where thy creaturily  
Dependence can or may  
For thou art of her clay."

This inevitably suggests the metaphysical framework of *The Dynasts* and the interpretative function of the Spirit of the Years, or the world's cumulative experience. Its final stanza draws man into the scheme as part of the life force, a creature with will and feelings capable of ameliorative effort but in the end dominated by the force. Napoleon exhibits both faculties.

The long slow moving septenary verses give to the poem almost insensibly a mesmeric effect as of one working under a spell, which is at times extended by an extra light syllable which runs the verse on to an even longer rhythm. There is an occasional opening light syllable as well. When these, as in verses one and two of the first stanza, occur together they really amount to a substituted dactylic foot, forming a break in the even tempo - which is varied otherwise only by the strophic pause caused by the three-footed final verses. The pitch is toned to the desired evenness of unconscious motion by the almost constant reiteration of vowel sounds, which in a verse such as "She whispers it in each pathetic strenuous slow endeavour",halt and drag the line to an even longer sensuous flow. A sudden assonant t or alliterative b's may break the rhythm and slightly change the tone as in

"The sense of ills misdealt for blisses blanks the mien most queenly."

The possible regret of a Force which created a world so ill, forms the theme of the *The Sleep Worker* (2), a sonnet, and of a longer poem, *By the Earth's Corpse* (3).

"How wilt thou bear thyself in thy surprise?  
Wilt thou destroy in one wild shock of shame,  
Thy whole high heaving firmamental frame,  
Or patiently adjust, amend, and heal?" asks the

(1) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 106  
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 110  
(3) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 115
"That I made Earth, and life, and man,
It still repenteth me",
is the reply given by the other poem.

What is in some ways the most terrible presentation of this blind world impulse is found in Doom and She (1). The overwhelming gloom of the conception is embodied in the symbolism of the marriage between the mother and Doom. Questioned by the blind weaver as to how the world is getting along, insentient Doom counters by asking what is "Right", "Wrong", "Feeling", "Pain"? They have no meaning for him. They are merely sounds. Here the discord which mars the universal harmony jangles as the clash between man in his world of emotion and the unheeding forces of the universe becomes apparent. Nor does the discord end with the one inharmonic crash. It continues as a determined breaking minor into the outer world of Nature, man’s immediate environment. "The leaden sky", the freezing "north", the spirits of "Death" and "Sickness", in The Subalterns (2) link the cosmic force irretrievably with man’s natural world while the birds of the wood, in The Bullfinches (3) acknowledge, serve and question the same dominance. There’s neither scheme nor pity, only the slow, resistless and enveloping Fate.

This brings us to the point where man and philosophy meet and swim together in the pool of tears. Being concerned for the time more expressly with lyrical expression, I must disregard the dramatic poems in which man’s struggle with existence is most vividly portrayed and cling to the frequent notes of rebellion, compromise and pain, which are found in the lyrics.

There is no better beginning than the poet’s cry "O life with the sad seared face", as the hobbling wearied old player enters. In four short stanzas, life as it appears to Hardy is personified. Knowledge, with its Death, Time, Destiny, is admitted and the possible compromise which man may make with these forces is suggested. The tone of the first two stanzas is governed by the "dragged" figure of Life; but the rhythm, which in the final stanzas appears in its perfect metrical frame, is subtly handled to point the significance. The two light syllables between "Life" and "sad" put the emphasis heavily on those two words, while the anapests of the single four stress verse with the cesural

(1) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 108
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 110
(3) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 111
pause break it into two emphatic images which are linked to the extended significance of the second stanza by the wrenched accents of "pleasantry" and "Destiny", in the rhyme scheme abab cbcb. The irrecoverable significance of "Death Time, Destiny" is accentuated by rhythmic pauses after the first two, if one wishes as the commas suggest, to read it so, while the perfect regularity of the final stanzas lightens the tone to tune with its more artificial mood of mocking joy.

A Sign Seeker (1) with its suggestive name takes a long querying pilgrimage through all the byways of existence. It has the true Hardian scope. First is registered passing time -- then such widely separated cosmic phenomena as "lightning-blade, the leaping star, The Cauldrons of the sea in storm, ...............abysmal fires and snow-cones", followed by a rapid summary of astronomic science which gives way to a survey of humanity. That I shall quote since it appears again in The Dynasts both as magnificent stage direction and as ethereal speculation in lyrical metaphysic.

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

Then follows the query: Is there life after death? Does Heaven enscroll the wrong? -- and a summary of religious tenets as "heights of trance-like trust", In the whole there is no suggestion of affirmative answer........"When a man falls he lies."

In For Life I Had Never Cared Greatly (2), the actual passing of one man's span is subject to the same merciless survey, as the poet, "unwon by its style", turned from the reading of Life to Solitude and contemplation. From that vantage ground fired by the brilliance of a star as it burst through its enveloping "fog-damps" he determined not to let his "pilgrimage fail". It is the spirit courageous, tempered by the stoic mind.

The same tempering of courage breaking from a more dismal background in the voice of a peasant, governs the plaint of one "bed-ridden", to his "unknowing god" (3),

(1) Wessex Poems: p. 43
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 505
(3) The Bedridden Peasant: Poems of the Past and Present: p. 113
speaks in a more indignant mood in the poet's invocation 
To An Unborn Pauper Child (1), and reaches its final stoic 
note of veiled defiance in the almost unhoped wishes of 
The Blow (2). While from In a Kiss (3) and A Commonplace 
Day (4) two poems as different, both in style and content 
as they well can be, there comes a slight relief in a gleam 
like the evasive fire ball of the marshes -- vanishing al­ 
most as it comes. It is the merest suggestion that no act 
is lost, that softly, the echoing sound of a kiss travels 
eternally, that the dullest moment may have given birth to 
an act or thought of general significance.

"Yet, maybe, in some soul, 
In some spot undiscovered on sea or land, 
Some impulse rose 
On some intent upstole 
Of the enkindling ardency from whose 
Maturer glows 
The world's amendment flows:"

The same suggestion comes in the song which breaks from a 
thrush who as winter beats upon him still sings joyously --

........"an aged thrush, frail gaunt and small, 
In blast-beruffled plume," 
Had chosen thus to fling his soul 
Upon the growing gloom, 
So little cause for carollings, 
Of such ecstatic sound 
Was written on terestial things 
Afar or nigh 
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew 
And I was unaware." (5)

The pathway has widened. It is faintly sugges­ 
tive of ameliorative evolution, the note which ends The 
Dynasts and which after the sounding blares of winds and 
brasses in that mighty orchestration, trembles into the 
stilling air as one thin and plaintive sound.

The significance of Hardy's philosophy both in 
itsel and in some phases of its application to man has 
passed in review. Now come The Convergence of the Twain (6) 
wherein the powerful conception of man, in himself part of 
the life force, proud in accumulated knowledge and the cun­

(1) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 116 
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 449 
(3) Moments of Vision: p. 438 
(4) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 104 
(5) The Darkling Thrush: Poems of the Past and Present: p.137 
(6) Satires of Circumstance: p. 288
ning of centuries, himself becomes a creation and launches his triumph. It is the final word as far as the lyric is concerned. Philosophy in its next appearance is metaphysic.

Here, the ultimate expression of man's triumph over his environment goes down before the unrelenting scheme of the Immanent Will, as "the twin halves of one august event" unite. Here blind aimlessness gives way to an almost malignant will.

There is something in the theme itself, in the slow fashioning of two mighty bodies, one the cold and elemental iceberg, lumplike, mountainous, the other, gleaming, finished material completely subservient to man's genius and knowledge -- that sets the twentieth century in direct contrast to all the ages past. How terrible the crash when it comes! How significant the shaking of "hemispheres"!

Hardy has arranged his tercet verse as a combination of three-stress and Alexandrine, the latter sometimes breaking sharply on a consonant before the cesural pause. This verse division is used consistently to throw the two forces into sharp contrast, as in:

"Steel chambers late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrid and turn to
Rhythmic lyres."

Or into ironic contradiction as in:

"Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The Sea-worm crawls -- grotesque, slimed,
dumb, indifferent"

where the primitive and supreme sophistication mingle.

The whole treatment is cool, detached almost intellectual, but it is redeemed by the sense of relentless force which pervades it and by the terrific potential meanings of such words as "salamandrine", "moon-eyed fishes", "vaingloriousness", "twin-halves". One feels the power -- one waits. It is a case of the "glittering eye".

There is but one more step and with it we leave ground levels and ascend to the regions surrounding the earth. What we have considered as a philosophy blending with life and with poetry, is now given concrete if ethereal body, and we are confronted, not only with a world in flattened and diminished perspective but by a whole galaxy of personifications, which speaking now from the present, now from far eons of time, recount and interpret action as it
takes place. Sometimes the comment comes in chant or recitative, at times it is language only, strangely earth-flavored, but always the spirits build up the ghostly framework in which embedded philosophy appears in its new guise, the metaphysical framework inside which the earth-action of drama plays, -- the world a stage. The blending of this superstructure with the drama of earthly significance is superbly handled in an episode of Napoleon's disastrous Moscow venture. (1)

There is a stage setting in prose, "the point of observation opens and shuts", the earth is "a confused expanse merely", spirits and shades appear, one called a Pity notices:

"An object like a dun-piled caterpillar, Shuffling its length in painful heaves along, Hitherward."

We had not known it, but there went the hero. The dreadful Lithuanian road comes nearer. The snow drifts down, and souls "enghosted" leave their little lumps upon the plain. There is terrible significance in that flake of snow which covers a people. Endless time drags on. It is a strange and unfamiliar medley, this mixture of prose and poetry, aerial chant and colloquial English. It admits no rules and no limits save and except the genius of its master, but if there is anything more magnificent in English I have yet to find it. From pole to pole -- a supreme genius in its passing has touched the fleeting mood, the far ranges of thought, the sufferings of men and women, the world in fact in all its phases and with one astounding feat of the imagination has gone outside it all to create an interpretative ideal in a "possible" metaphysic.

"Art" writes Thomas Hardy, "is a changing of the actual proportions and order of things so as to bring out more forcibly than might otherwise be done that feature in them which appeals most strongly to the idiosyncrasy of the artist."

Who dares object to the "quintessential" expression of an "idiosyncrasy" such as his?

(1) The Dynasts: Part III, Act I, Scene 9, p. 354
III

TRUTH

"The bitter old and wrinkled truth stripped naked."

James Thompson.

The soil of "Wessex" permeates the whole work of Hardy. In the novels it is integral but there is a decided earthy flavor in many lyrics, while the gritty musk of plowed fields and the naive simplicity of country fashions pervade a great body of dramatic and narrative verse. Earth and the life close to it, elemental passions and emotions, suggestions of Christmas festivity, old and homely superstitions, an occasional scene in a country tavern, the continuous lilt of country songs and dances, these showing themselves either as topic or image, build up the general impression of rusticity and life at its simplest which Hardy gives.

The statement in no wise contradicts those concerning scope and vision which have been made previously. The view is cosmic but the application, universal in its significance, is narrowed in its human bounds to men and women as they are affected by the more elemental emotions. Hardy believed that the individual life stripped of its sophisticated trappings settled down to its basic significance as part of the unending cycle of universal being, and he believed further that such significance had its working out and its most apparent application in the relations of men and women as the instruments and expression of the life urge of the universe. One phase of life interested him particularly. To that he applied his genius. He flipped his coin, an old and rusted one, which he found in his youth and which he carried with him to the grave. The figures which he found on either side were of a man and woman blindfold and a god with a javelin. These he deciphered as Sex and Chance. At a toss the working of elemental forces in the lives of men and women were sure to fall roughly under the spell of one side or the other. Chance, or coincidence of event, the so frequently criticized structural weakness of several novels, was always present in life, -- no telling which way the coin would fall, -- but it was frequently present also as an augmentation of the complex situation and difficulties caused by the life urge of the universe. This accounts for the constant appearance of love as the theme of both novels and poems. It accounts also for the various phases in its presentation, the most powerful single factor in man's existence being his emotional response to this force, with which Joy and Sorrow walk hand in hand and behind which in the background is the eternal Dance of Death. It is this stripping of life, this exposure of its
stark realities that forms one of Hardy's themes and one characteristic of the accompanying dramatic method.

The conviction that essentially men and women are alike victims of Fate, regardless of sex, station, or nationality has made "Wessex" a stage sufficient for all the world, has made "Wessex" scenes and atmosphere a background for the life drama as Hardy conceives it. This limitation of subject is deliberate. If it has resulted in a slight lessening of power, as I believe it has, it has also intensified certain sides of Hardy's art, which he meant to intensify. He exercised his prerogative; he placed his stresses where he wanted them.

The embodiments of this bias, or as Hardy might himself say, the concrete presentation of these truths, stalk in a long procession through the dramatic and narrative verse, while the more starkly drawn figures make no pretense at a world of reality and take frank refuge in the ironic mood. There is happiness and sorrow, disillusion and frustration, the frankly physical and the spiritualized ideal, all subjected to a keen sense of dramatic values. If there is action it is rapid. Always there is a sudden tense knitting together, one moment of bright light, or an immediate contrast, or a swift climax of emotion.

The method is that of the theatre, from high light to high light. The scenes stand out as vivid impressions flashed on a screen or in the sharp cut lines of certain etchings, or the characters may be in silhouette, two black figures opposing each other. There is always the small tense dramatic group in which all interests centre. Failing that there may merely be the group itself, a unit such as the Mellstock Quire or the company of the dead in Voices of Things Growing in a Churchyard. Even then there is a certain sparseness of treatment. There is no superfluous detail, nothing to soften or blur the outline. Everything which does not concern the moment and the act is ruthlessly left out. One misses the accompanying trappings of the usual scene, the color and warmth which are the result of less austere treatment, but to Hardy these are non-essential; the figure and its predicament are everything.

It is simple to choose at random from any number of poems which have the "Wessex" flavor in one form or another. Some poems are completely made of it but there are more in which it appears in a rustic image or illusion, which immediately flavors the moment. It appears almost unheralded in one of the most dramatically moving passages in The Dynasts

(1) When Captain Hardy, watching Nelson die, thinks of his "Wessex" home.

(1) The Dynasts: Part I, Act V, Scene 4, p. 97
"Thoughts all confused, my lord: - their needs on deck, 
Your own sad state, and your unrivalled past; 
Mixed up with flashes of old things afar -- 
Old childish things at home, down Wessex way 
In the snugvillage under BlackdonHill, 
Where I was born, the tumbling stream, the garden, 
Marking unconsciously this bloody hour, 
And the red apples on my father's trees, 
Just now full ripe."

This is a breath of England, like to Arnold's "spray of honeysuckle flowers", and the "May evening" of Balder Dead. It comes in more earthy form in the occasional speech of soldiers and camp followers in Wellington's English army. The choice of theme in The Dynasts is in itself a manifestation of the English spirit, since Hardy thought the English side of the Napoleonic wars had never been given the proper proportions and consequently proceeded to block them in; for the inspiration and interest of the theme were first stirred by its "Wessex" echoes. The common man, when he appears in that huge panorama and escapes the mesmerism of its larger currents, is apt to be a "Wessex" peasant in a little local flare of patriotism or if not, an average Englishman commenting on some side of his country's struggle. Weathers, the poem with which this survey opens, speaks for the same spirit in a purely lyric form, while The Oxen (1) exquisite in its simplicity, wistful in its ending, brings back an old legend on Christ's nativity long remembered in country places, localized for Hardy in the "lonely barton by yonder coomb," which he remembered from childhood.

Inarticulate country natures and the somewhat dumb acceptance of events which characterizes them are illumined in a few dramatic flashes in such glimpses into life as appear in The Announcement (2) with its two figures and their slow silence -- or in The Slow Nature (3) with its strong emotional climax, while in Vagg Hollow (4), theme, setting and language all unite as the haunts vanish at a wagon's creaking and the fearful country man turns to his "flagon", while the small boy, untouched by superstition, plods along with his horses.

There is, however, no more consummate illustration of the country influence in its varied phases than the group of poems called A Set of Country Songs. Some are intensely dramatic, some are in dialect, others are songs,

(1) Moments of Vision: p. 439
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 439
(3) Wessex Poems: p. 611
(4) Late Lyrics and Earlier: p. 614
but they set forth one after another simple pictures of country types and situations.

In the more dramatic verses the language is colloquial; such dialect words as "lissom", "drongs", "leazings", "fancy-men", "causey kerb", such suggestions of rustic occupation as occur in "honey and apples", "hurdled", "market-danes"; such dramatic turns of language as "the cider made to-year will be as wine", with its archaism, or the ungrammatical reproach in "Never once did you say you was promised, Rose Ann"; the proverbial tang in "Make a spouse in your pocket and let the men be"; and the downright agricultural suggestions of "down-home I was raising a flock of stock ewes" -- all these devices deepen the country atmosphere.

Sometimes an ancient custom sets the tone. Bedside preparation of mourning is the back drop of Julie's stage from which she is soon to exit, but even that cannot dampen her vitality. She is the personification of a somewhat franker acceptance of the facts of life that sometimes characterizes country groups. Julie-Jane was a wanton, wanton in the pagan sense, for pagan joy in life marks even her death day, against the sombreness of which Hardy with consummate art throws the picture of her vivid, pulsing personality.

"Sing; how 'a would dance!

Dance, how 'a would dance!
She would hold out her coats give a slanting glance,

And go round and round,"

A younger and less crafty wife of Bath, she who was losing life exulted in it for its own sake. Hardy in this case takes the time to point out the archaic custom around which he wrote his poem and the provincial archaic use of "coats" for petticoats.

The freedom with which dialect is handled is admirably illustrated in The Home Coming, which while not strictly speaking in the Dorset tongue, is yet the very essence of rustic idiom and usage. Its easy colloquialism races on from verse to verse, building up the characterization and the atmosphere. The rough kindness of the husband, the terrible nostalgia of the little bride, the sense of loneliness and isolation given by the wind in the refrain and the old farm house setting all blend in perfect unity. The refrain is interesting. The rather heavy word quality of conventional English, with the added rhythmic values of somewhat evenly balanced alliterative syllables, give an even flowing phrasing to the verses of the old seven stress
metre, which is in direct contrast to the intimate colloquial lore of the farmer's words. These words have the same stresses but a different quality, the long vowels being absent, the words short and the movement speeding up as the more unrelated consonants rattle along. This contrast offsets the monotony which might otherwise result from identical rhymes and even metre.

It is difficult to make even broad divisions in the phase of Hardy's work under consideration, to treat for instance dramatic qualities without a look at the irony which is often with them, or to speak of narrative verse as such since frequently it is dramatic in tone.

If there is in Hardy's poetry one quality which insists above all others on absolute recognition it is its cumulative effect. To dissect Hardy is disastrous. He has not the particular gift of apt phrase nor does he load his lines with the "last statement" and the final word. He is a craftsman and he weaves slowly, depending upon the last thread to complete his pattern. Virginia Woolf (1), says of him "He sprang up effortlessly, unconsciously, like a heather root under a stone, not by imposing his views or by impressing his personality, but by being simply and consistently himself. Everything that he wrote, it is a quality that makes up for a thousand faults, had this integrity engrained in it." This binding quality which is the man's justification to himself, and his own sense of truth and worthiness are always present in his work. They are, however, so integral a part of his expression that it becomes almost impossible to quote briefly in illustration of them, since in brief quotation the thing that one seeks is lost and the excerpt "stretched like a warp without a woof" seems bare and attenuated.

Since the question of Dorset speech has arisen through The Home Coming, the first dramatic narrative which I shall consider will be the poem inspired by an incident of the Napoleonic wars, Valenciennes (2), one of the few poems which falls into the dialect group. Although the Dorset dialectal influence is here more apparent the language treatment remains an idealization achieved by combining colloquial idiom and speech rhythms with actual and suggested Dorset forms. "Corpel" lives in a silent world, but his memory stirs at the one romantic episode in his life and his narrative, -- racy, rapid, discursive -- reveals not only the simple characteristic of the man but a typical Dorset reaction to event and a naive sense of actuality in spiritual affairs vaguely reminiscent of the Miracle plays.

(2) Wessex Poems: p. 15
"Good Lord, if Nick should bomb the walls
As we did Valenciennes!"

The consonant shift from like to like which is
typical of the Dorset dialect, occurs in such substitutions
as d for th in "ninety-dree", z for s, in "zilver", together
with the broadened vowel sounds of "wounded" and the
diaeresis or stretching of vowels in "Valenciennes", "fleen".
There is constant speech elision of syllables in such
abbreviated forms as "wi" and "O", while contractions like
"thereence" from there whence are very evident. Survival of
the old Anglo-Saxon an, as in "an hununge", remains as an
archaic survival in the Dorset forms used by Barnes, "a-
rumblèn" and "a-trickled". The same forms appear in Hardy's
"a-topperèn" and "a-thart" (1) while the old form "thik"
serves to show a dialectal and immediate language influence
which Hardy was to discard in his later poems as he came to
depend for his rustic effects (as in The Home Coming) more
upon rhythm, atmosphere and turn of phrase than upon Dorset
language proper.

Evidence of this nature is supported by The
Bride-Night Fire, where the dialect deals in narrative fashion
with a purely local story and "skimmity-ride" rather than
with memories. Such subject-matter as might be expected
increases the number of Dorset words to such an extent that
Hardy has appended a short glossary giving their meaning.
It is purely humorous verse, rather ludicrous in parts and
for that reason of less general significance than either
Valenciennes or The Home Coming, which serve, I think, to
show the direction in which Hardy's idealization of "Wessex"
and its language forms tends.

(1) Footnote
From "The Athenaeum", Nov. 30, 1878, Dialect in Novels.
"A somewhat vexed question is re-opened in your criticism of
my story, The Return of the Native; namely, the representa-
tion in writing of the speech of the peasantry, when that
writing is intended to show mainly the character of the
speakers, and only to give a general idea of their linguistic
peculiarities.
"An author may be said to fairly convey the spirit of in-
telligent peasant talk if he retains the idiom, compass, and
characteristic expressions, although he may not encumber the
page with obsolete pronunciations of the purely English words,
and with mispronunciations of those derived from Latin and Greek.
In the printing of standard speech, hardly any phonetic prin-
ciple at all is observed; and if a writer attempts to exhibit
on paper the precise accents of a rustic speaker, he disturbs
the proper balance of element; thus directing attention to a
point of inferior interest and diverting it from the speaker's
meaning, which is by far the chief concern where the aim is to
depict men and their natures rather than their dialect forms."
Thomas Hardy.
The Peasant's Confession (1) a long narrative, dramatic in both spiritual and martial significance, is cast in the monologue form. Through many stanzas, a plain tale, which stretches out in monotone, sketches the background against which the real drama of the peasant's remorse is growing. This drama, unelaborated, stark with the reality of the old ballads, is shown in a few bold strokes in such stanzas as:

"I hid him deep in nodding rye and oat  
His shroud green stalks and loam;  
His requiem the corn-baldes' husky note ——  
And then I hastened home.........

.....................
Oh Michael, John, and Holy Ones in rest,  
Entreat the Lord for me!"

In spite of the rustic background and the presence of "The King's-Own-Cavalry", a direct antithesis in mood and measure is found in The Dance at the Phoenix (2), a narrative in which the tragic and dramatic elements lie in the passing of time and the youthful spirits which sometimes continue in old bodies. Jennie and her husband are touched by a slight note of pathos; but Jennie, out for her last fling, decked in "two bows of red", is a somewhat incomplete Granfer Cantle, for, being feminine, she lacks his staying power.

The three poems which I have been discussing all exhibit the rather striking regularity of metre which was typical of the earlier poems which fall vaguely under the Barnes spell. The facility and the slightly shallow feeling which one senses in parts of the earlier narrative efforts are in direct contrast to the lyrical poetry of the same date, especially that phase of the lyrical poetry which deals with the cosmic universe.

This contrast forms one basis of judgment in any attempt at arriving at what is Hardy's main experience as it affects style.

In the early sonnets Hardy is, for instance, completely successful in what Mr. George Bernard Shaw calls "assertion", the main Shavian element of style, which is simply the inner experience clamoring for expression and pushing through to completion. The powerful, almost terrible urge which accomplishes this in such lyrics as The Lacking Sense (3) and Neutral Tones is, one feels, absent in some of

(1) Wessex Poems: p. 26
(2) Wessex Poems: p. 38
(3) Wessex Poems: p. 23
his narrative work. When Hardy lags, there is a reason and only one that is a slackened interest. Narrative is, strictly speaking, story, and Hardy's experience is never as unified in narrative as it is in drama. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, The Return of the Native, and Far From the Madding Crowd, are proof of the statement. The narrative poem Leipzig and the presentation of the same theme in The Dynasts (1) are added evidence. When in a few later poems Hardy reaches heights of narrative art it will be noticed that the significance of the poem is not in the event as story so much as in its dramatic application to human life. This applies to the two poems, both intensely dramatic in subject, A Tramp Woman's Tragedy (2) and Panthera(3). The first was to Hardy his most successful poem (4). It is in the Wessex setting, the folk tradition, a ballad or plaint sung by a woman, with a changing but reiterated refrain, all set in the minor key to the themes of "murder", "death", "baby", "ghost". The group is small, tense and dramatic.

"My fancy-man and jeering John,
And Mother Lee, and I."

No other figure enters. Dramatic tension mounts until the tragedy takes place, but the theme remains dark to the end, the only person alive being the one who had been the tragic motive, -- now wandering alone.

"Yea as I sit here, crutched, and cricked and bent,
I think of Panthera."

This is the dramatic introduction to a glorious setting of an old second-century legend which is so beautifully and simply moulded into a conversation between two old Romans retold by one of them, that one cannot but regret that such form and subject were not used again, that Hardy did not choose to exercise his gift of characterization more freely. One is sorry too that Hardy's humanity, I am speaking only of the poems which deal with sex, -- so seldom escaped the bonds which held it, that the chains as they dragged so often clanked.

Panthera not only treats of its difficult holy subject in a dignified and beautiful manner but, as it builds up the character of Panthera, it blocks in also the whole traditional background of the legend. The blank verse of Panthera's narrative flanked by the rhymed verses of the second Roman, strengthens and unifies the whole conception

(1) Part III, Act III, Scenes 1, 2, 3, 4. p. 377
(2) Time's Laughing Stocks: p. 182
(3) Time's Laughing Stocks: p. 262
(4) The Later Years of Thomas Hardy: p. 93
as time sweeps along from strophe to strophe. It is magnificent.

In the motley group of dramatic characters which Hardy models, the woman in *A Wife and Another* (1) stands in rather rigid relief, Hardy using her figure as the emotional centre of the familiar triangular complex, which in this instance works out to an unusual if dramatic climax. It is remarkable that in a drama so austerely arranged there should be feeling so intense as this --

"Her heavy lids grew laden with despairs,  
Her lips made soundless movements unawares"

or that words so usual, so common should bear the tragic significance of these --

"We two stood,  
He came, my husband, --  
As She knew he would."

or that the whole emotional experience of a woman's life should wrap itself in a single moment of vision and be "As if my soul had largened, conscience-capped". --Which makes the final note of renunciation upon which "the scene shuts" dramatically consistent.

"One dying of a purple feaver"(2) - rare justice that -- speaks in a monologue and, as he does so, gay and abandoned, the chorus trots in -- it is the exposal scene in *The Beggar's Opera*; it is the Captain and his maids, for the mood and scene are identical in spite of a sad decline in the social status of the actors.

The Chapel Organist (3) is a monologue of an entirely different sort, wider in dimension, the tragedy of which comes about through the meeting of two strong forces in a woman's life, the spiritual and the physical, the complication being an intolerant and narrow social environment. Such a theme, is typical of Hardy who says again and again, "These things have always been."

It is the stuff of a novel, and characters and background might have been rendered more effectively in that longer and more expansive form which Hardy did not use after 1896. This poem, published in *Late Lyrics and Earlier* in 1922 is the single return to the theme of *Jude the Obscure*.

(1) *Time's Laughing Stocks*: p. 246
(2) *One Ralph Blossom Soliloquizes*: *Time's Laughing Stocks*: p. 271
(3) *Late Lyrics and Earlier*: p. 598
The organist is but a feminine portrayal of the same clash in temperament and the same adverse fate that Hardy put forth in Jude. Perhaps she had more freedom of choice. The Chapel organ was her Christminster, the deacons typified social forces. Her tragedy lay, like Jude's, in the stifling of all finer impulses by malignant people and circumstances. The poem's unity lies in the dominance of a single personality and in the musical background to which one must constantly attune the reverie as the organ peals echo back and forth and as the memory of her struggles passes through her mind. It is slightly like Knight and the vision of ages as he clung to the cliff and "Time closed up like a fan" before his mind. It is ironic in that intolerance stalks where kindness should be found. It is the panorama which Hardy loved. It is also the last word in the modern and psychological in that the whole dramatic sequence is entirely within the mind and consciousness of one person, even to the actual tragic moment, the final collapse visualized as the poison is taken.

There are shorter, more fleeting impressions, which one may cite as further manifestations of Hardy's sense of drama. One (1), scarcely more than a silhouette, shows a woman and a sexton as she chooses her husband's grave and places him beside, -- the other woman. This withdrawal even in death, from an unfaithful husband is a physical and psychological feminine reaction. Hardy's intuition is subtle. The man is dead, she discards him, she is free.

The well-known In the Servants' Quarters (2) is a characterization, set in homely surroundings and limited by the sacred legend of which the theme of Peter's denial is part. It is really a one-act play and, given five actors, could be produced by bracketing three lines in the first stanza and the final two as stage direction, without a change in a single word.

Poetic dramatization such as this leads, however, to only two actual plays, both one-act and unified in time and place. One, in its compressed single scene scarcely longer than "In the Servants' Quarters is a Greek play in Hendecasyllabics, called Aristodemus the Messenian (3). It is traditional in subject but the old and classic theme of a daughter's sacrifice was complicated in Hardy's play by the introduction of a lover and his attempt to save the girl. Enveloping Fate, however, allows no escape and the proof of chastity which an outraged father demands is in itself the sacrifice of the original Delphic demand.

(1) Her Late Husband: Poems of the Past and Present: p. 150
(2) Satires of Circumstance: p. 359
(3) Winter Words: p. 30 - 40
Whether because of the difficulty with which English always accommodates itself to the classical mould or because of a deliberate roughness which Hardy had to impose because of the harshness of his theme, the inversion, "Weigh can greater with Zeus than she my offspring?" is awkward and forced while the following verse "Shall these Spartiats sway to save me reavement?" seems, with its headless bereavement and its stoic mangling of the term Spartan, more Hardian than Greek. There is also more than a suggestion of cumbersome celestial machinery in phrases like "Thus and now it adumbrates", and "Dungeoned in an eternal nescientness", which clashes with the tragic fact --

"Horror...............He's ripped her up -- yea, With his sword! He hath split her beauteous body To prove her maid!"

The unities which Hardy observes in his treatment of the old Tristram and Iseult legend places the action entirely in Cornwall and so limits time that the whole action, although there are twenty-four short scenes, covers perhaps an hour or even less.

This shifting scene is little more than regrouping but it gives the effect of tableaux rather than of drama, especially since the constant change brings the rapid appearance of the two Iseults, Tristram, Andred and King Mark in a sequence which allows for little development of contrast or of emotion.

Hardy takes many liberties with the romance; by intensifying the Cornwall setting, by introducing the Arthurian brachet found in Cornwall in 1831, as a slight element in the plot and by placing everything outside the moment, as retrospective narrative in the mouths of a sort of chorus, composed of Dead Cornish men and women. He also tones the language of blank verse and poetry to what seems an almost provincial level. Iseult's words --

"One bleeds no more on earth for a full-fledged sin -- Than for a callow,"

fall on the ear with a resonant house-wife idiom more consistently characteristic of the wife of Bath than of romantic love-wracked, torn, Iseult.

The contraction necessary to unify the long legend in a one-act form has probably had something to do with this lessening of romantic feeling. It has also resulted
in an entire change of tradition in that the plot sequence is
totally different in its compressed form. King Mark kills
Tristram; Iseult stabs King Mark and then, as Iseult of the
White Hands appears, throws herself over the cliff. There
are passages in the Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall
which strike the old romantic chords; Tristram's song in
scene 9 is one, but in immediate discord comes "the voice of
King Mark (in liquor)" and Tristram's harsh dismissal of
Iseult of the White Hands. One cannot deny that the theme is
too great for the form which holds it, that the one-act com­
pass disallows the slow building up of the mediaeval at­
mosphere, the romantic distance or the poetical beauty which
a long tradition demands.

Her Death and After (1) and The Tree (2) are two
of the longer poems that should at least be mentioned be­
cause of the dark and grimmer tragedy that they sustain,
which is the last phase of tragic genius as it shifts to
irony. The first does not need analysis since in spirit it
is somewhat akin to A Wife and Another already discussed,
but to the renunciatory note a sinister element is now added
when the revengeful and unforgiving husband casts out the
child. It is at this point that irony enters, for the child
is his. In the poem The Tree the darkness deepens. The
tree furnishes a setting, the trysting place, and the hole
in its branch hides a note. Chance brings about a new
tragedy by discovering this note which pertains to an old
one. As in Her Death and After the tragedy is retrospective,
brought back by the uprooting of the old oak. When the drama
of memories is played out to its deadest and darkest, and
when the ironic last words have sounded —"Twas said for
love of me", -- the properties too must be taken down: "Cart
off the tree." The stage is clear, the house is dark but
ghostly whisperings and muffled movements drift to the
empty pit. The Company of the Dead, The Friends Beyond (3)
and The Dead Quire (4), the Souls of the Slain (5) and the
Christmas ghost (6) are rehearsing their act, "all night
eerily." (7)

In such dramatic irony as is found in Friends
Beyond and Voices From Things Growing in a Churchyard, the
mood is a mocking one. Time the leveller is triumphant and
the stressful life above ground is made ludicrous by the long

(1) Wessex Poems: p. 35
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 149
(3) Wessex Poems: p. 53
(4) Time's Laughing Stocks: p. 240
(5) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 84
(6) A Christmas Ghost Story: Poems of the Past and Present:
p. 82
(7) Voices from Things Growing in a Churchyard: Late Lyrics
and Earlier: p. 590
indifference of the dead and the final moulderiog of even the house of ambition. It is laughter; but it is not unkind.

The Souls of the Slain strikes a deeper note, the ghosts being vague and undifferentiated, the irony verging on pathos as the military glory, which had taken life fades, leaving only one survival, the memories of those who cared. There is a vague metaphysical suggestion in the movements of this great company of souls; there are at times suggestions of an almost unearthly beauty of expression which culminates in the final division of souls into those forgotten or remembered.

"And towering to seaward in legions
They paused at a spot
Overbending the Face --
That engulphing, ghast, sinister place --
Whither headlong they plunged
To the fathomless regions
Of myriads forgot.
And the spirits of those who were homing
Passed on, rushing by,
Like the Pentecost wind;
And the whirr of their wayfaring thinned
And surceased on the sky, and but left in the gloaming
Sea-mutterings and me."

The sudden pinning down of a vague and imaginative subject by the terrible reality of the swallowing adjectives with which the unremembered vanish and the attenuated subsidence given by "thinned and surceased" is magnificent control of language.

The Christmas ghost is only "the mouldering soldier" who appeared to Hardy one Christmas Eve(1), a question on his lips -- the "I would know" which tries to reconcile the continuance of wars with the term of Christ's rule upon earth. The question was not answered as the ironic fragment Christmas: 1924 attests. (2)

"'Peace upon earth!' was said, we sing it,
And pay a million priests to bring it.
After two thousand years of mass
We've got as far as poison-gas."

In some forms governed by the ironic mood Hardy frankly and openly laughs not at life as it ends in death, but at life as it is while it lasts. It is in these that the mood is most contagious, as everything of deeper significance fades and the surface of human life and character presents its wrinkled face. Who can escape the humour in the characterization of The Ruined Maid (3)? Who fails to

(1) A Christmas Ghost Story: Poems of the Past and Present: p. 132
(2) Winter Words: p. 171
(3) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 145
visualize the preceding forty years which culminate in The Curate's Kindness? (1)

"I thought they'd be strangers aroun' me
But she's to be there!
Let me jump out o' waggon and go back and drown me
At Pummery or Ten-Hatches weir."

It is perfection of a sort, and, as Hardy so often protests, must be taken for what it is, a purely humorous presentation of certain phases of life.

What might be termed, a satiric review of my century's progress, is summed up in The Respectable Burgher (2) with its amusing survey of the field over which dissension waged so hot. The stream of ludicrous allusion and contrast is continuous, and pointed distinctly by such double rhymes as "giant-slayer", "God-obeyer", "banjo-player", and the accent of alliteration, and in one instance deepened by the strident suggestion of an actual blare.

"And Balaam's ass's bitter blare;
Nebuchadnezzar's furnace-flare,
And Daniel and the den affair
And other stories rich and rare,
Were writ to make old doctrine wear
Something of a romantic air."

The constant reiteration of the single rhyme so monotonous in the excerpt tends to sink into the general effect of the whole, as a heightening of absurdity.

Hardy has left a few odd notes which throw some light on his own convictions concerning humour. In one of these he says, "A man would never laugh were he not to forget his situations; or were he not one who never had learnt it after risibility from comedy, how often does the thoughtful mind reproach itself for forgetting the truth? Laughter always means blindness, -- either from defect, choice or accident." (3)

In the case of Thomas Hardy it was certainly neither from defect or accident; it was deliberate, a shutting of the eyes perhaps from things too painful, a break in the tragic tenseness of a situation or the sudden perception from long observation of the ludicrous nose on the face of malevolent chance. Human misery in all its forms was painful to him, but he saw that there was a great dividing

(1) Time's Laughing Stocks: p. 194
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 146
(3) Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 148
line between the alliance of tragedy, with its great moments of intense emotion, its catharsis on the one hand, and the more permanent union of man with the aching dull pain of continuous misery on the other. It was from the latter that he turned when he said "A man's grief has a touch of the ludicrous unless it is so keen as to be awful." (1) It was from this that he sought relief in the ironic chuckles of the gargoyle mood. Irony has been called an excrescence, so has the gargoyle. With Hardy irony is scarcely that. It is a sudden change of feeling abrupt and gnomic. It is the outstuck tongue of the beaten urchin, but it is still part of the anatomy. It is not loose -- and just as the gargoyle pushes out in Gothic architecture from amid expressions purely beautiful, yet is withal carved from the self-same stone, so Hardy's gargoyle has its being beside exquisite lyric tracery and towering walls of dynastic scope.

If one happens to think of Hardy, Ruskin and architecture long enough, the solution of a minor problem becomes clear. It is the question of what to do with that small proportion of poems, which do not matter, being few, to those who look for anything but flaws, but which completely darken the world of those critics who, like the three old women of Tanglewood Tales, having but one eye among them, wander in groping darkness as the eye changes hands. The solution is simple. Make of it an "Ugly Pillar" (2), which, having the usual dimensions, will not be noticed in the long arcade.

The flaws in Hardy's work in general being more than offset by the power and range of his genius, this particular moment is concerned only with those poems which really are ugly either from an excess of irony too harshly stated, the too utilitarian and prosaic use of words or a theme which is so unelaborated that it has the dull and single tone of dry bones rattling.

The Dame of Athelhall (3) and The Statue of Liberty (4), fall into the latter class. Both, having themes with great possibilities, fail to bring the dramatic qualities out because they neglect characterization. The plot is unsupported and in spite of its rapid movement has the effect of mere outline. The poems suffer in this respect as does the novel, Two on a Tower, which reads like a working outline or scheme.

A story of dramatic import must of necessity

(1) Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 73
(2) In Arcade South side of the Cathedral of Ferrara: see The Seven Lamps of Architecture: John Ruskin: Chap. V
(3) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 141
(4) Moments of Vision: p. 424
have some motivation in the characters which sustain it if it is to be artistically true. In these poems the motivation is present but it is undeveloped and so lacking in any softening background that the ironic contrasts which develop seem unbearable. If developed more fully the characters would in themselves become the opposing forces which make great tragedy, and the justice and relief which we demand would be satisfied. The Dame of Athelhall, slight as the sketch is, has latent dramatic value as the preponderantly sentimental feminine type; her husband is the dramatic opposite, but these contrasts are neglected and the lover also, -- that wraith-like individual appearing in the generalized masculine formula -- "He was wroth."

One feels of course that the Statue of Liberty should not be washed. The suggestion of prosaic everyday street cleaning as applied to that symbol of human delusion is in itself scarcely a poetic subject. The statement rests, I know, on a false foundation since we have agreed with Hardy that the subject does not make the poem. What I wish to point out is that the changing of a statue that is dirty and grimy but nevertheless significant of aspirations and hopes, to a form spotlessly pure and white yet for the purposes of the poem, significant of the deepest degradation, is not a poetic process. The ironic contrast between fatherly delusion and reality is too starkly unresolved. It is disintegration rather than idealization, the demand upon human credulity is too terrible. What is, is too triumphant; what only seems -- is lost.

The final stanza makes this clear. It is a bleak statement of fact without potential meaning. The strictly utilitarian words clothe no poetic image, make no suggestion.

"Answer I gave not, of that form
The carver was I at his side;
His child, my model, held so saintly
Grand in feature
Gross in nature,
In the dens of vice had died."

Two shorter poems of the tableau type show their subjects at a single tragic moment as the blow falls. Owing to their time unity and pictorial qualities they are more bearable than the longer ones but in both the shock is too sudden, ironic fate at a harshly cruel moment leers too triumphantly. A Wife in London (1) has no relief whatever. The Newcomer's Wife (2) is of the same type, two realistic and terrible moments which beat upon the mind in the same way

(1) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 83
(2) Satires of Circumstance: p. 344
that the unbearable decline of a man's memories and a woman's character are hammered home by My Cicely. (1)

Sometimes the fault is found in a single verse such as the refrain of The Five Students (2), which might far better be, "One little, two little", anything rhythmical, rather than the oddly enumerated pronouns "he", "she", "I", which really ruin an otherwise beautiful poem. How different, "sea-mutterings and me!"

Another type of poem in which I consider Hardy failed to unify his form and material is the satire on kingly glory, called The Coronation, which -- somewhat redeemed by its final verse, "Clamour dogs kingship; afterwards not so!" -- still falls short of real satiric power. It is too superficial and transient; each character appears for too short a time with his one well-worn tag. What might in the hands of Swift, who loved to be cruel, have been a terrific and damning conception of the human qualities of kings, here degenerates into doggerel and burlesque.

The fault is not in the material; it is in its use; the unyielding substance conquers and no design in any way suggestive of beauty appears upon its surface. It remains to the end, the cold grey stone, lacking the warmth of its carver's feeling. Like Ruskin's pillar it puzzles and offends. Fortunately it is not the only art in Ferrara.

Words, the media of poetry, are less plastic than some other means of art. They are part of the great tradition which each generation inherits from the last. Their meanings, spelling and pronunciation change. There is, in fact, a constant flux in language but in spite of that fact, any poet at any time, regarding the possibilities of his medium, finds that words have an exact significance which is "kinetic" at that particular time; with this exact and utilitarian phase of language he cannot tamper. It is only by association, by context, allusion and image that he can raise about a word the exact aura which he wishes. In doing this, which is but giving them their deepest "potential" significance as suggested by his own experience, he encounters the atmosphere which already adheres to the word from its traditional poetic use. Unless his personal idiosyncrasy prove stronger than the poetical aura he must give up the particular word in question.

In this way words as mere sound are more limited than the tones of music. Music is pure sound and in its regard association comes only through familiar sound combinations. It does not pertain to the single note of the scale.

(1) Wessex Poems: p. 45
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 463
Granted the tonal harmonies to which the ear is accustomed, the intervals and so on, the single note is left free for artistic manipulation. In the Sonata in F, Opus 57 Beethoven represents the invocation, "Oh my God" (1), or a mood which represents that invocation by the musical phrase A.

He has often used the triplet figure B. to represent Fate knocking on the door. In the triplet the timing actually achieves an onomatopoeic likeness, which is the accomplishment of tempo and reiterated tone. The actual note need not have that expressly particular sensuous reaction. The same argument applies to phrase A. Probably an invocation of some sort expressed the rhythm and melody to the composer but even in combination the sounds call up no particular visual image such as flashes on the mental retina at the utterance of the single word tree. The words of the invocation, the parenthesis of the musical phrase are limited in various ways, "Oh", as a symbol of exclamation, "my" as the possessive ego, while "God" is a highly potential word with a long traditional association from which it is impossible for our minds to separate it.

The late Sir Walter Raleigh defined style as the mastery of the fluid elements of speech. (2) If this be true it follows that any use of words which successfully communicates through various adaptations of these fluid elements, is good style. Hardy's eclectic choice of words has caused a great deal of discussion; it has been for some a stumbling block, for others one of the most intriguing features of his style. It is, certainly, regardless of the way in which one sees it, a main element.

In an interview with William Archer (3) Hardy is reported to have said, and his poetical usage certainly supports the statement, "I have no sympathy with the criticism that would treat English as a dead language, a thing crystallized at an arbitrarily selected stage of its existence, and bidden to forget that it has a future. Purism whether in grammar, or vocabulary, always means ignorance. Language was made before grammar, not grammar before language and as for the English Vocabulary, purists seem to ignore

(1) Edited (with essay) Felix Borowski and Ignace Paderewski.
(2) Walter Raleigh: Style: Chap. I
(3) Harold Brennecke: The Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 139
the lessons of history and common sense." I have already touched on the freedom with which Hardy used dialect, in its idealized form as a material to be moulded if he wished. It was an individual freedom upon which he insisted, which gave him sonorous and sounding Latinisms, modern technical vocabulary, old and archaic survivals and a large body of strange and unconventional forms, arranged by himself in the double association values of his compound words.

The technical words, that is, the terms of architecture, music and painting which occur sometimes in their technical connotation merely, frequently appear in the novels, in the body of an image. In one instance a face is described as similar to a Gothic shield and one knows that Hardy thinks of the sudden jutting out of that angular form from a wall or pillar. The likening of Under the Greenwood Tree, to "A Rural Painting of the Dutch School", and the constant comparison of feminine beauty with technical qualities in the paintings of the old masters, are, I consider, much less apparent in the body of the poetry. In the poetry ornamentation for its own sake is studiously avoided and the general effect rests not upon vague comparisons but in definite imbedded association of idea and image.

There are, it is true, many words such as "ogive", "arch" and "freize" which are directly architectural, such as "umbrous" and "ochreous", which are adjectival suggestions of an artist's palette. There are others which are musical, "dampered", and "efts". Terms like "whetting", and "harrowing", are agricultural, while the technical military terms and suggestions of the modern age of invention are found in "armaments" and "steel chambers". There are as well a rather complete vocabulary of the dance as in Hardy's day, which gives the terms "poussettes", "reels", "jigs", "flings", and "allemanding" but in the majority of cases these terms are in their native and appropriate setting, in poems which in themselves have that environment. I do not consider that such use of the words is in any way unusual or peculiar etymologically, but poetically it is significant because it reflects the intense interest which Hardy had in the arts in general and which, expressed in the poem Rome Sala Delle Muse (1), asserts a belief in their essential unity.

When, however, Hardy deserts the merely technical for a more symbolic use of these kindred arts the whole matter is vastly different.

"When the wind scraped a minor key,
And the spent west from white
To gray turned tiredly, and from gray
To broadest bands of night."

(1) The Casual Acquaintance: Late Lyrics and Earlier: p. 647
Here the words are of the simplest, only three being longer than one syllable, but they are very suggestive. Consider for instance "minor", "spent", "tiredly", "gray", "broadest", "night", all words which suggest sadness, exhaustion or dark, with the one exception "broadest", which is used to deepen the effect of "night's shadow". "Minor" in this case carries a suggestion of eerie wind which is deepened by the deadening of all pictorial tone. Similar suggestions are found in "antiphonic breeze" and "This dumb dark stowage after our loud melodious years."

With Hardy's love of freedom, with his modern and untrammelled point of view goes, as I have mentioned, a sentimental clinging to old association in all its forms. This is true even of words, for in rather startling contrast to his own strongly hewn vocabulary are such well worn favorites of poetic diction as "damsel" and the Elizabethan affectation "yclept", and old plural in "syne", a contraction of "yester" and "even", which wears a somewhat musty air, "yestereen" and the archaic forms "wis", "wot", "wist". Occasionally also, the pungent flavor of old strong verbs lingers in forms like "up clomb" and "up swum", while the pomp of heraldry returns in "blazon". In such use of archaisms there is an absolute absence of sentimentality. They appear in context which has not the slightest suggestion of any diction other than Hardy's own. Such words as "passeger", which alludes to a bird in flight and "eyesome", which copies an old form, comparisons such as "beautifuller", and "closelier", the combination "withoutside", "withinside", "withoutdoors", strangely uncompounded, the adjectival use of "childing" and the kenning "earthtrack", which takes the place of lifetime are, for, anything that I can discover, Hardy's own.

He is fond also of making verbs from nouns, adjectives and adverbs, in the manner of "easted", "gloomed", "littles", "upped", "ups". He has in fact rather a partiality for verbs which has been analyzed in regard to his prose by Vernon Lee. (1) There is a further singularity in his system of word coinage which has much to do with the establishment of the level tone and lack of color that characterizes his style in general. It is the use of the negative prefix "un" with even more than its usual negative sense in combination with words which have meant growth or fruition in the absolute negation of utter denial. The verb "unbe", is its most definite form, but "unconscienced", "unblooms", "unhope", "unrecognize", "unsight", "unvision" are more typical. In what seems to be personal preference he sometimes hyphenates a prefixed syllable, sometimes does not. (2) The prefix "en" is also rather characteristic in words

(1) The Handling of Words: Chap. VI
(2) Examples of both given in Glossary.
like "enarch", "enchased", and "enghostings".

It is possible, if one wishes, to sort out a few odd grammatical constructions such as the refrain quoted in "The Ugly Pillar" and the inversions.

"Cherish him can I while the true one forth come."

or

"As had fired ours could even have mingled we,"

but they are not frequent and the first of these in which the words seem pushed and shoved into place is in Sapphics, a difficult form at best.

Hardy's sentences, straightforward, medium in length, usually possess an admirable continuity and the force of sincere utterance. There is little description for its own sake. Faults if any, are austerities, such as the omission of ornament or a statement too bald, but usually rhythm and image overcome such faults.

The linguistic mode of expression most consistently characteristic of the Hardy genius was the compacting one, for he carries it along with the "Wessex" flavor and sounding words of Latin origin into the lyrical poetry of The Dynasts. In the place of piled up image, perpetual allusion and poetic diffusion, he has put his powerful and massive compounds with their weighted significance and double emphasis.

The combinations made from two parts of speech are endless. The most numerous class of compounds is that of the double nouns such as "art-beginnings", "baby-child", "birth-hour", "burgher-throng", "brine-mist" and so on. There are many combinations of participle verb forms with nouns, "church-chiming", "copse-clothed", "earth-clogged", "glance-giving", "bending-ocean", to cite a few. Then come in almost endless variety nouns with adjectives, nouns and adverbs, adjectives and adjectives in combinations too numerous and diversified to mention. In a few instances a whole phrase, "all-earth-gladdening-law-of-Peace" is compounded. Sometimes three or four compounds appear in a single line, "white-shouldered", "broad-browed", "brown-tressed". Frequently too there is alliteration as in "day-down", "deep-delved", "flit-fluttered".

An idiosyncrasy almost as consistent is the constant imagery of death: "Sweet Loves sepulchring", "the silent bleed of a world decaying", "old Headsman Death", "a dead man held on end I sink down soon", and "the rotten rose is ripped from the wall", all these present only death
or decay. As I have pointed out such quotation may be used to illustrate a definite point, but it is really misleading since in its summary dismissal of context it destroys poetic balance. Sometimes Hardy breaks his austere and self-made rules and describes in adjectives, as do other men, "A pensive smile, on her sweet, small, marvellous face", or writes the scarcely typical colorful verse, "The rich, red, ruminating cow."

Imagery of a certain kind is, however, at the same time both typical and magnificent. It is found in the glory of

"Like a full-robed priest
The irradiate globe that vouched the dark as done,"

or the perfection of

"the chill old keys
Like a skull's brown teeth
loose in their sheath,"

or in the beauty of

"One quick timorous transient star,"

the agony of

"A miles-wide pant of pain," and the precision of

"The Roman Road runs straight and bare,
As the pale-parting line in hair."

This is what Virginia Woolf calls Hardy and "moonshine" (1). Such instances give a slight indication of the scope and power of Hardy's vocabulary and imaginative genius. They show the restraint and reserve of his manner and expression. In context their significance as the concrete manifestation of a powerful vitality and imagination becomes immediately apparent as a great thinker, clothing his ideas in phrase and image, gives them the emotional significance which his intense experience demands. "Strong writers are those who, with every reserve of power, seek no exhibition of strength. It is as if language could not come by its full meaning save on the lips of those who regard it as an evil necessity. Every word is torn from them, as from a reluctant witness. They come to speech as to a last resort when all other ways have failed.........With words literature begins, to words it must return...........So the elementary passions, pity and love, wrath and terror, are not in themselves poetical; they must be wrought upon by the word to become poetry. In no other way can suffering be transformed to

(1) Half of Thomas Hardy:
pathos, or horror reach its apotheosis in tragedy." (1)

The rhythms and metres which Hardy uses are as diversified as his words. He has explored all of the old forms; he has invented fresh ones and he has varied the old by the use of inverted feet or metrical pauses. In speaking of his own methods he says: "I have long held, as a matter of common sense, long before I thought of any old aphorism bearing on the subject: 'ars est celare artem'. The whole secret of a living style and the difference between it and a dead style, lies in not having too much style -- being in fact a little careless, or rather seeming to, here and there. It brings wonderful life into the writing............otherwise your style is like worn half-pence, all the fresh images rounded off by rubbing and no crispness or movement at all. It is of course simply a carrying into prose the knowledge I have acquired in poetry -- that inexact rhymes and rhythms now and then are far more pleasing than correct tones." (2)

The subject of rhythm in Hardy's poetry is a large one. I do not intend in this paper to make any attempt to go into the question thoroughly. My object is merely to instance a few examples of his metrical skill which will show the variety and scope of its application.

The changes in style which mark the passing of years are less noticeable in Hardy's work than in that of most poets. He kept a remarkable freshness and vitality even to the end. Nowhere is this vitality more apparent than in his rhythmic skill. He experimented continuously and upon his death left among his papers, page upon page of metrical skeletons -- rhythms which he had heard, adapted from music or made for himself. Much of the earlier verse is smooth and flowing. Hardy may have been influenced by Tennyson and Barnes. But a comparison of the effects obtained through the use of the same measure by Barnes in The Wife A-Lost (3) and by Hardy in The Darkling Thrush (4) shows the difference in their poetic gifts clearly. Barnes is pastoral and idyllic. Hardy is powerful.

"Since I noo mvore do zee your feáce,
Up steárs or down below,
I'll zit me in the lwonesme pleáce,
Where flat-bough'd beech do grow:
Below the beeches' bough, my love,
Where you did never come,
An' I don't look to meet ye now,
As I do look at hwome."

(2) The Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 138
(3) Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect: p. 295
(4) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 137
This poem of Barnes opens on a note of contemplation which the second and third stanzas only repeat but which resolves into a conventional hopeful ending in the fourth stanza. The perfectly regular iambic verses alternating in four and three feet run along musically, unbroken by any dissonant note. The even rhythm is greatly intensified by the softly slurred Wessex syllables which are repeated from stanza to stanza. All these elements combine to give a soporific and non-thought-provoking effect. Hardy's The Darkling Thrush is the same metre exactly and even has the same number of stanzas. It opens upon the same note of contemplation in the out-of-doors and closes with a faint note of hope. It is not an early poem but it does meet the Barnes ideal in its regularity. Because of this slight similarity of content and actual similarity of metre, it is as close an analogy as one can produce in the poetry of poets so different. A stanza from The Darkling Thrush follows:

"I leant upon a coppice gate
When Frost was spectre-gray,
And Winter's dregs made desolate
The weakening eye of day.
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky,
Like strings of broken lyres,
And all mankind that haunted 'nigh
Had sought their household fires."

In the case of both poems the rhyme scheme is abab cdcd. Just as Barnes softens his effect by vowel sounds, Hardy intensifies his by ending abruptly on a consonant. "I leant" in the first verse gives the sense of suddenness to what is usually a gentle movement. "Outleant" in the second verse of the second stanza has the same effect which is immediately strengthened by "crypt". The result is that two very strong accents occur close together having, although the metre does not change, almost the effect of a break. When Hardy's metres are regular he varies their monotony by the use to which he puts words. The two verses following may make a little clearer what I am trying to point out.

"The blessed damozel leaned out;"
"The Century's corpse outleant;"

In the first verse Rossetti's long flowing syllables break suddenly on "out"; in the second the breaking sound is doubled by "outleant", while the vowels are correspondingly shortened by the loss of d, caused by the shortening of the verb form. Hardy breaks even his smoothest rhythms in some such subtle way.

Hardy is an absolute master of the sonnet form. I have previously pointed out the new content which he uses. The compression of the form seemed especially suited to the expression of his cosmic philosophy. He uses both the
Italian and the Shakespearian forms of the sonnet. The latter appears in a poem called *A Confession to a Friend in Trouble* (1) I have compared it with Shakespeare's Sonnet LXVIII which has the regular rhyme scheme ababaddaefefgg. This form does not have the ebb and flow of the Italian form but mounts steadily to a climax in the final two verses. The final concentration Hardy achieves in verses thirteen and fourteen of his sonnet when he said

"Yet comrade old can bitterer knowledge be,
Than that though banned, such instinct was in me!"

Hardy's rhyme scheme varies from that of Sonnet LXVIII only in the sestet which substitutes cecfgg for the Shakespearian efefgg. Shakespeare uses substituted trochaic feet at the beginning of verses eleven and twelve. Hardy makes a similar metrical change in verse six and uses anacrusis in the first foot of verse twelve thus:

"The unseemly instinct that had lodgement here;"

The *Sleep Worker* (2) is in the Italian form. The metre is regularly iambic except for the trochee in verse twelve and the missing strong beat in verse five.

"Wilt thou destroy, in one wild shock of shame"
"Wherein have place, unrealized by thee."

The irregularities noted occur in the words "wilt" and "unrealized".

There are at least two general characteristics of Hardy's metrical method which should be commented upon. The first of these is his fondness for rhyme. By the means of rhyme he explores nearly every verse form ancient and modern, usually with success. The second characteristic is his addiction to the end stopped line. It naturally accompanies the rising iambic metres which he so frequently uses but he varies his rhythms by the light syllabled ending less frequently than one would expect. Run on lines, although they occur, are not usual even in his blank verse. The strongly end stopped lines of *The Darkling Thrush* (3) will serve to illustrate in the cast of serious content:

"The ancient pulse of germ and birth
Was shrunk:en hard and dry,
And every spirit upon earth
Seemed fervourless as I."

The following quotation shows the less serious

(1) Wessex Poems: p. 9
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 110
(3) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 145
"We late-lamented, resting here,  
Are mixed to human jam,  
And each to each exclaims in fear,  
I know not which I am!" (1)

The excerpt also exhibits a common metre, consisting of four and three stress verses rhyming abab, which Hardy often uses. It is the metre of Lucy Gray. The Ruined Maid (2) which is a superb piece of irony, provides an interesting example of anapestic four foot verse with initial truncation and the rhyme scheme aabb, cobb, ddbb and so on.

"O 'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!  
Who could have supposed I should meet you in town?  
And whence such fair garments, such prosperity?" —  
'O didn't you know I'd been ruined? said she?"

The light syllables of these verses, the regular accent and the short word all combine to give the poem especially rapid movement. The wrenched accent on "prosperity" gives an immediate emphasis to the rhyme which carries through each stanza in a sort of colloquial and diversified refrain on the single word "she".

Strongly end stopped blank verse occurs throughout The Dynasts. In the following speech of Wellington there is intense feeling. A similar intenseness in Shakespeare would have resulted very likely in run on lines. With Hardy there are none.

Wellington

"I know, I know, It matters not one damn!  
I may as well be shot as not perceive  
What ills are raging here."

Hill

"conceding such  
And as you may be ended momentarily  
A truth there is no blinking, what commands  
Have you to leave me, should fate shape it so?"

Wellington

"These simply: to hold out unto the last,

(1) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 144  
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 145
As long as one man stands on one lame leg
With one ball in his pouch: then end as I." (1)

The end stopped line and definite rhymes of
which I have been speaking are typical. True to his con-
viction that variety makes rhythms more charming, Hardy
occasionally varies his custom by using a feminine ending —
in He Prefers Her Earthly (2) there are examples.

"This after-sunset is a sight for seeing,
Cliff-heads of shaggy cloud surrounding it.
-- And dwell you in that glory show?
You may; for there are strange strange things
 in being,
 Stranger than I know."

In these verses the regular iambic beat of the
five, four and three stress verses is varied only by the
feminine endings in "seeing" and "being".

Leaving the question of rhyme and end stopped
verses, I turn to the poem A Sign Seeker (3) in which Hardy
uses the Alexandrine with success. The poem is in the usual
rising metre but its verses rhyming, abba, are in five, four
and six beat forms, the Alexandrine being used to vary the
rhythm and intensify the meaning. Some of these six foot
final verses are regular as in:

"And trodden where abysmal fires and snow-cones
 are."

Others are drawn out to greater length by the
substitution of anapests as in the second and third foot of
the following:

"And hear the monotonous hours
 Clang negligently by."

This verse begins with a trochee.

"Pallidly rising when the summer
 Droughts are done."

One or two others are broken by a central cesura
thus:

"And Nescieuce mutely muses: When a
 Man falls he lies."

(1) Part III, Act VII, Scene 7, p. 506
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 466
(3) Wessex Poems: p. 43
In spite of these variations the form of the long line holds, marking off the stanzas in a series of long rhythmic phrases thus:

"Or, when Earth's Frail lie bleeding of his Strong,
If some Recorder, as in writ,
Near to the weary scene should flit
And drop one plume as pledge that
Heaven inscrolls the wrong."

In a poem called The Lacking Sense (1) the rhythmic units are even longer, being unbroken by short verses. The stanzas are regularly formed of four seven-stress or Septenary verses completed by one three stress verse.

"IO Time, whence comes the mother's moody look
amid her labours,
As of one who all unwittingly has wounded,
where she loves?
Why weaves she not her world-webs to according lutes and tabors,
With nevermore this too remorseful air
upon her face,
As of angel fallen from grace!"

These long unbroken verses carry the rhythm through to the strophic fall and pause which the short fifth verse effects, there being no other pauses than the essential ones which come with a breath at the end of each long verse. The same long verses are found again in combination with three stress verses in A Commonplace Day. (2) In that poem, however, the five verse stanzas have only two longer seven-stress verses, the second and the fifth thus:

"The day is turning ghost,
And scuttles from the kalendar in fits and furtively,
To join the anonymous host
Of those that throng oblivion: ceding his place, maybe
To one of like degree."

In this poem the effect of the long line is different, for the verse tends to break between the fourth and fifth foot on a cesural pause which is accentuated by the balance and pattern of the verse. This pattern is formed by such alliterative syllables as occur in "scuttles" and "kalendar", and "fits and furtively". The cesural pause in verse four is intensified by the trochee which immediately

(1) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 106
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 104
follows it. I have quoted these two poems because they illustrate so aptly the skill with which Hardy handled metre and the many ways in which he varied his usage to obtain either sustained or broken rhythms.

In many of his later poems he attained extremely flexible and rolling rhythmic effects. The falling metre of the poem In Front of the Landscape (1) illustrates this point.

"Plunging and labouring on in a tide of visions, Dolorous and drear, Forward I pushed my way as amid waste waters Stretching around, Through whose eddies there glimmered the Customed landscape Yonder and near."

Here Hardy has used dactyls and trochees in combination with two, three, four and five stress verses. The feminine ending of verses two and three actually allow the rhythm to carry through to the end of the next verse. The rhythm thus slows as it ends the phrase with iambic feet in the shorter verses.

There are several highly conventional French forms such as the Villanelle and the Triolette which Hardy uses frequently. They appear rather quaintly against the sombre background of his more serious verse. Hardy is clever, however, in the management of the repeated verses, which build up these forms. A poem called The Caged Thrush Freed and Home Again (2) is a Villanelle.

"Men know but little more than we, Who count us least of things terrene, How happy days are made to be! Of such strange tidings what think ye, O birds in brown that peck and preen? Men know but little more than we!"

There are nineteen lines and two rhymes and the repeat verses are:

"Men know but little more than we"

and

"How happy days are made to be."

I have previously quoted from a triolet called

(1) Satires of Circumstance: p. 285
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 134
The Puzzled Game Birds (1) and an almost identical poem is named Birds at Winter Nightfall (2).

"Around the house the flakes fly faster,  
And all the berries now are gone  
From holly and cotoneaster  
Around the house. The flakes fly faster  
Shutting indoors that crumb-outcaster  
We used to see upon the lawn  
Around the house. The flakes fly faster,  
And all the berries now are gone!"

These poems are slight. Their chief charm lies in the metrical agility which the forms demand. There is a suggestion of musical phrasing and of the repetition of a single theme about them which probably accounts for Hardy's use of the forms.

I do not propose any discussion of those experiments in classical prosody, the sapphics and Hexametres, which Hardy undertook. I do not understand the original forms sufficiently for that. In general he seems less successful in such poems as The Temporary the All (3) and Aristodemus the Messenian (4) than is usual with him in poems of a serious nature. The probable explanation of this fact is that Hardy refused to give up an individualized vocabulary in favor of word forms more amenable to the classical rules of quantity.

It is impossible to read Hardy's poems consistently without becoming conscious of a musical undercurrent which goes back to Hardy's environment, old folk tunes and his own musical gift. There are many ballads and songs in his lyric poetry. In almost all of these the influence of old English music is apparent, but in some poems not obviously musical the metres have been inspired by folk music. This folk music was an actual part of Hardy's poetic consciousness. A poem called In the Small Hours (5) proves this beyond a doubt. The two first stanzas of the poem follow.

"I lay in my bed and fiddled  
With a dream land viol and bow  
And the tunes flew back to my fingers  
I had melodied years ago.  
It was two or three in the morning  
When I fancy fiddled so  
Long reels and country-dances,  
And hornpipes swift and slow.

(1) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 135  
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 135  
(3) Wessex Poems: p. 5  
(4) Winter Words: p. 30  
(5) Late Lyrics and Earlier: p. 613
And soon anon came crossing
The chamber in the gray
Figures of jigging field folk --
Saviours of corn and hay --
To the air of "Haste to the Wedding",
As after a wedding-day;
Yea, up and down the middle
In windless whirls went they."

This poem was written by the poet, who as a small
boy fiddled at country dances and who, in his later years,
ever forgot the melodies and rhythms of the old folk tunes
which he played at that time. (1)

Before passing to the consideration of some of
Hardy's songs I am examining two poems which are based on
folk rhythms. The first called, The Wind's Prophecy (2)
follows:

"I travel on by barren farms,
And gulls glint out like silver flecks
Against a cloud that speaks of wrecks,
And bellies down with black alarms.
I say: "Thus from my lady's arms,
I go; Those arms I love the best!"
The wind replies from dip and rise,
'Hay; toward her arms thou journeyst.'"

This stanza does not appear to be a folk measure
at first glance but there is an old Dorset folk-song called
The Rambling Comber (3) which is similar in metre. The song
follows in part:

"You combers all, both great and small,
Come, listen to my ditty,
For it is ye and only ye
Regard my fall with pity.
For I can write, read, dance or fight,
Indeed its all my honor,
My failing is I drink strong beer,
For I'm a rambling comber."

Both the folk-song and the poem have five eight-
verse stanzas and somewhat similar rhyme schemes. The poem
rhymes abbaadcc. Both have rather uniform four stress
iambic verse but the folk measure has a missing strong beat
in the last foot of the verses. This missing beat is the
only essential difference in the rhythms.

(1) Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 25
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 464
(3) Folk Songs of England: ed. Cecil J. Sharp: Folk Songs of
Dorset: p. 27
A Tramp Woman's Tragedy (1) has been called a new metre by many critics. Its similarity to an old lament written about a shrine makes me think that both poems were inspired by some old folk metre. The Shrine of Walsingham was demolished at the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538. Many contemporary ballads have references to it. A tune called Walsingham appears in all the old collections of music. This tune, however, is not used by Hardy. The Bodleian Library has a small quarto volume in the handwriting of Philip, Earl of Arundel, eldest son of the Duke of Norfolk, which contains A Lament for Walsingham (2). This lament is in the ballad form as follows:

"Weep, weep, O Walsingham!
Whose days are nights;
Blessings turned to blasphemies --
Holy deeds to despires.
Sin is where Our Lady sat
Heaven turned is to hell;
Satan sits where Our Lord did sway;
Walsingham oh, farewell!"

If this Lament is compared with A Tramp Woman's Tragedy it will be seen that the number of stresses in the verses are almost identically the same.

"From Wynyard's Gap the livelong day,
The livelong day,
We beat afoot the northward way
We had travelled times before;
The sun-blaze burning on our backs
Our shoulders sticking to our packs,
By fosseway, fields and turn pike tracks
We skirted sad Sedge-Moor."

The two poems differ in the way in which the refrain is used. The older one uses Walsingham in the first and last verses; Hardy's poem repeats part of verse one in verse two as refrain. In A Lament for Walsingham three stress verses are six and eight; in A Tramp Woman's Tragedy they are four and eight. Both have two stresses in the second verse and four verses of four stresses each which represent the average verse of the poems. The Lament has initial truncation in each verse. These differences occurring between a poem of the sixteenth century and a modern poem are no greater than the difference in poets and subject might demand. Their similarities may be taken as suggestion that some old folk measure was the source of the rhythms in both.

(1) Time's Laughing Stocks: p. 182
(2) Old English Popular Music: ed. H. E. Woolbridge Chappell: p. 70
In addition to poems which are founded on folk measures there are many songs in the lyrical poetry; some of these are frankly labelled, "Written to an old folk-tune" or "Echo of an old song." One called "Timing Her" (1) has the very typical "0" refrain.

"Lalage's coming:
Where is she now, O?
Turning to bow, O,
And smile, is she,
Just at parting,
Parting, parting,
As she is starting.
To come to me?"

The repetition of characteristic phrases typical of folk music is easily traced in the little song just quoted. Sitting on the Bridge (2) was composed by the poet from somewhat fleeting memories of a half-forgotten song. One of the most interesting fragments of actual folk music is the rather sinister little song from the short "Wessex" story, The Three Strangers (3). The theme of the The Stranger's Song may have been suggested by the old ballad called The Sheepstealer (4). The rhythm was built up by the poet from an old one which he discovered in an incomplete form. Hubert H. Parry (5) says that the folk tunes of England have little strong emotional expression. They are simple and direct. Like the German airs they often repeat an opening phrase once or twice, then introduce a contrast and again return to the first phrase. The Stranger's Song seems to bear out these generalizations. It states the facts with a certain grim humour but there is no emotion. The subtle psychological contrasts which the story presents have nothing to do with the song itself although the song helps to produce them. One stanza will exhibit the rhythm.

"Oh my trade it is the rarest one,
Simple shepherds all --
My trade is a sight to see;
For my customers I tie, and take
'Em up on high,
And waft 'em to a far countree."

This is a hangman's song. The victim is to be a sheep stealer. These figures alone are sufficient to build up the old ballad atmosphere which so often involved a crime.

(1) Moments of Vision: p. 416
(2) Moments of Vision: p. 428
(3) The Short Stories of Thomas Hardy: p. 9
(4) Folk Songs of England: p. 1
(5) The Evolution of the Art of Music: Chap. III
or something pertaining to it. The repetition of phrases is quite apparent in verses one and three while the refrain, "Simple Shepherds all", is found in each stanza. In addition the familiar combination of three and four stress verses is consistent with the traditions of old folk music.

One might go on discussing almost endlessly these rather absorbing questions of Hardy's songs and his use of folk measures. In the scope of this paper, however, only a few songs which bear out the general remarks which have been made can be mentioned. The Going of the Battery (1) (a wives' lament), A Song of Hope (2), The Sacrilege (3) (a ballad tragedy) and the fickle lover's song I Said and Sang Her Excellence (4), are poems which show Hardy's passion for music in all its forms. This passion never abated as the many songs and other musical forms of The Dynasts show. The Drinking Song (5) was a very late poem. Two lyrics from The Dynasts which may be mentioned are Budmouth Dears (6) and The Night of Trafalgar (7) while the magnificent chant Albuera (8) is an almost perfect conception of what Mr. Samuel Chew calls "the terror and pity and splendour of fiery gallantry." (9)

Before leaving the subject of rhythm I wish to note the rather peculiar and striking effect that Hardy has obtained in a scene in The Dynasts. (10) In this scene there are two characters only and they speak in a whisper for they are English spies. The rhythms of their whispered speech are like those of the church of England services. The characterization obtained in the case of the First English Spy, as he mutters away in monotone, is excellent. The long explanations of the other man represent the responses of the congregation. To the spectator the general impression is exactly that which would be received if one were immediately outside the church while a service was in progress. In a scene that is entirely spectral Hardy carries his use of liturgical rhythms to a more poetical conclusion in the Antiphonal Chants of the Rumours. (11)

(1) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 80
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 120
(3) Satires of Circumstance: p. 375
(4) Moments of Vision: p. 437
(5) Winter Words: p. 155
(6) The Dynasts: Part III, Act II, Scene 1, p. 366
(7) The Dynasts: Part I, Act V, Scene 7, p. 106
(8) The Dynasts: Part II, Act VI, Scene 4, p. 301
(9) Thomas Hardy: Chap. VI, p. 173
(10) Part II, Act I, Scene 6, p. 168
(11) Part II, Act I, Scene 2, p. 149
Such example as I have quoted show, somewhat inadequately, the diversity of rhythmic effects which Hardy obtained and the absolute freedom with which he adapted both rhyme and metre to his particular needs. They are typical also of that musical gift of which the poet made constant poetical use. The fact which any survey of Hardy's rhythms, however brief, makes most strikingly apparent is the perfect unity of his poetic expressions. He was able to make an extreme individualism subservient to the demands of rhyme and metre. He moulded an austere type of language into a restrained expression of his personal idiosyncrasy. He made his emotion language and rhythms one.
IV

THE DYNASTS

The Dynasts, a new and powerful art form, massive in dimension and astonishing in construction, is the outstanding artistic achievement of its century. It is in three parts, nineteen acts and one hundred and twenty-two scenes. Nothing in the least like it has been seen, heard or imagined before. Within its enveloping cloak, peasants, kings, nations and philosophies shelter. It ranks with Paradise Lost and The Divine Comedy, but is like neither. The single achievement which the century gives for comparison is The Ring and the Book and even that magnificent slice of life falls short of the universal and metaphysical scope of The Dynasts.

The author calls it An Epic-Drama of the War with Napoleon. The subtitle is interesting for the Napoleonic wars immediately become definite and actual as the action centres in epic fashion in a central figure.

The theme simmered in the poetic consciousness for twenty years. At the end of that time the many elements had emerged in a composite, an amalgum which had the tenacity of epic, the strength of drama and the resistent qualities of a non-corrosive and unworldlike substance-metaphysic.

Hardy's life-long absorption in form stood him in good stead as he moulded his bulky and unwieldy subject into a unified and consistent whole; as he swung the stories of peoples and the drama of forces about in an ever revolving kaleidoscopic vision which the whole intricate scheme before the mental retina at once. He thus gave drama a new and extended form, adding panorama of almost infinite scope to the properties of dramatic opposition and finally wrapping humanity's drama in an outer shell of abstraction. The view is triplicate, there being three layers of vision. The first is the author's as he senses and arranges the inner relationships of the movements of nations and cosmic forces. His is the idealizing and motive view of the whole performance. The second is the nation's, or humanity's, as it feels itself drawn into the vortex of time. This is the view within the action. The third is the commentary or infinite view, that of the ideal spectator as expressed in lyric or ironic mood by the personifications of world tendencies or forces.

In thinking about the novel and its possible extension as an art form Hardy once made a memorable annotation which he never applied to that form, but which he did apply to The Dynasts. He explains that all art must progress
if it is to be truly expressive, and he outlines the means of progress thus:

"The human race to be shown as one great network or tissue which quivers in every part when one point is shaken, like a spider's web if touched, abstract realism to be in the form of spirits spectral, figures etc............. The realities to be true realities of life, hitherto called abstractions." (1)

The fact that he applied this imaginative addition in a combination of drama and narrative rather than in either one alone is but proof of an innate sense of form which realized the difficulty of blending such abstract and unearthly realism with the more concrete realism of the modern novel. This same sense of form saw that a narrative long enough to embrace the Napoleonic struggle could not maintain the necessary unity unless the national, epical elements were in some way equalized. There was no way of achieving this since Napoleon as a figure towered high above all others. Hardy's triumph was achieved when he made Napoleon the dramatic vortex of, to use his own figure, the spider of the web to which the other national heads drew in. Another element of his success was the use which he made of the "actual realities". These were the supernatural personages, who, being outside the human drama, saw it as a whole. They expressed the ultimate view, while the human drama expressed the immediate one.

I propose, since the subject is so large, to consider it first in its Epic, Dramatic and Panoramic aspects attempting to bring out the essential unity of the whole in a final survey of its poetical and metaphysical values.

"And I heard sounds of insult, shame and wrong, And trumpets blown for war."

In the epic phase of drama which is now considered the quotation above which appears upon the title page is intensely significant. It is not from the glorious or romantic point of view that the ten years of war is to be considered. It is a "Great Historical Calamity or Clash of Peoples, artificially brought about some hundred years ago." As such Hardy regarded it; as such it is presented. War to Hardy was no glorious adventure, no sailing off into uncharted seas to deeds of daring; it was a stark reality of horror brought about by unreconciliable forces in which the particular was sacrificed to the general. He has put this rather clearly in a poem which deals with the fading glory of the old conception, called The Sick Battle-God. (2) When he strips his subject

(1) Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 232
(2) Poems of the Past and Present: p. 38
of martial glamour Hardy takes the first step, inevitable for him, away from the epic tradition, but when he discards the epic atmosphere he clings to the theme. It is still national, but the national element is not limited as regards the action, to a single sequence, or, as regards the atmosphere, to that of one nation. The epic sequence is progressing in segments as England, France, Austria, Prussia, Spain and Russia sweep into the struggle. The story of each is told. The unity of the chronicle depends not on a single national consciousness and its fusion with events but on the separate portrayal of the consciousness of each of the five nations. This consciousness finally centres in intense concentration of the one common menace. The epic story of each nation rises to emotional climax on that consciousness. It is one source of both narrative and dramatic unity. As each struggle continues the foci of each national consciousness merges with the European one. It is then that epic and drama merge as the growing force of each national being turns from itself and fronts Napoleon. There is one sense, however, in which the epic singleness of nationality is maintained. The subtitle, "An Epic-Drama of the War with Napoleon", has a slightly provincial flavor. To each country "the War" meant actually the war as it concerned that particular nation. It is a typical human reaction; it is an expression of the national consciousness that allows a nation to marshall its own diversified interests in a single bold stand against the enemy. In the mouth of an Englishman it could have but one meaning and such it has in Hardy's. He considered and states in his Preface, that the English side of the Napoleonic struggle had never been presented in its true proportions. His emphasis was to be on the English element. The Foescene and Act I. consequently set forth two points of view supremely important throughout the drama. They are cosmic and English and they typify two extremes of the Hardian genius which I have tried perhaps feebly to set forth by means of the novel and the lyric poems. In the sense that the whole motivating idealization comes through English eyes, the old epic tradition of unification holds. In the sense that one country after another comes into the narrative, yet triumphantly maintains its own national significance, the tradition breaks and there are six elements instead of one. The older epics swing into a straight recital of deed upon deed, without the complication caused by new and unknown personages. The Dynasts, combining many elements, departs from vertical construction, if I may speak in that way, of unified narrative sequence, and substitutes an ingathering or concave movement in which the segments of narrative converge at a central point. Given a visual form there is no illustration which more aptly fits this converging narrative than the one of the spider's web which Hardy used.

The first and original conception of a scheme of construction was a long ballad sequence, based on separate
episodes in Napoleon's career, such as The Hundred Days and The Retreat from Moscow, -- "An Iliad of Europe from 1789-1815." This note is dated 1875. (1) In two years the idea had advanced from ballad sequence to grand drama. Finally it was resolved in an individual way as Epic-Drama. It was revolutionary in that its performance was to be a mental one.

As drama The Dynasts is a widening and expanding of all dramatic limits. The epic scale of the action is the first extension. Since the days of the Chronicle Plays we have become accustomed to a constant thinning of dramatic material as it was subjected to the weakening demands of convention and the accelerating tempo of life. The tendency has been towards crystallization, and towards situations that could be put within the compass of moments high in dramatic value. Diffused themes and spreading elongated forms have passed. No drama written specifically for the modern stage has even a suggestion of the scope of The Dynasts. Time and space prohibit. Hardy was forced either to give up his theme or to adapt some form to his needs. I have tried to show that the epic form could not unify such diversified elements as Hardy used. By making his drama a mental one he escaped completely from the time and spacial limitations of the theatre into a world of his own in which he could do what pleased him. In this world he could make his setting Europe and his opposing forces armies and nations if he wished. With such heavy material there could be no bickering over moments and inches. The scale of the drama had to be raised to accomodate armies and nations.

In speaking of his method Hardy said that his "Chronicle piece made no attempt to completely coordinate action with the closely-webbed development of character and motive, which are demanded in a drama strictly self-contained. As a panoramic show-like the present is a series of historical "ordinates" (to use a term in geometry): the subject is familiar to all: and foreknowledge is assumed to fill in the junctions required to combine the scenes into an artistic unity. Should the mental spectator be unwilling or unable to do this, an historical presentation on an intermittent plan, in which the "dramatic personae" number some hundreds, exclusive of crowds and armies, becomes in his individual case unsuitable." He makes his point clear and justifies it by referring to the Attic Drama and the traditional background in the minds of the people against which the action of the Greek plays moved.

"Ay: begin small and so lead up to the greater. It is a sound dramatic principle." (2)

(1) The Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 140
(2) Part I, Act I, Scene 1, p. 8
This observation by the Spirit Sinister must have been one which Hardy had pondered well, for he opens his drama with entirely minor characters in "Wessex", striking an essentially English note and merely suggesting the forces which are gathering in opposition to his main character. For five scenes he builds up successively the English spirit and the Napoleonic legend before he brings Milan Cathedral, pomp and splendour, Napoleon and the Empress into the drama. There are many scenes in which national forces of both sides draw themselves together in what is really little more than elaborate stage setting. These give, however, a general impression of each nation which is essential and provide a means whereby the different national entities slide into focus. The real action begins in Part I Act I Scene 4, but in England there is political disension, which weakens the force of her military threats. Austria falls a victim in her first appearance to the victorious Napoleon. The essential dramatic check to Napoleon comes with Trafalgar, and an act which, saving the tragic demise of Villeneuve, is entirely English. Such coherence of plot structure as there is rests in the steadily rising English resistance which, weakened by the death of Pitt and the reverses in Spain, rises to a final apex at the end of Part III Act 4, when Napoleon is conquered and goes to Elba. The German and Russian campaigns which occur in the meantime may be called part of the general drawing in of forces, but compared with England's resistance that of the other nations is sporadic.

Napoleon, the motivating dramatic force, steadily expands his influence and triumphs from the time of the Milan ceremony to that of the Moscow invasion, excepting for one major check at Trafalgar and a minor one in Spain. His dramatic climaxes are Ulm, Austerlitz and Jena. His personal characteristics and ambitions are shown in the Austrian marriage and his desire to found a dynasty, which stands out in ironic relief as he leaves his son and heir to invade Russia. His downfall, like his triumph, has three dramatic climaxes, Trafalgar, Moscow and Waterloo. The Elba imprisonment marked a dramatic level for all forces concerned, following which they all joined in the movement towards Waterloo.

The unity of The Dynasts does not rest upon plot structure. It is achieved by extending drama to the scope of panorama and by presenting the relentless forces and tendencies which are behind all human action in the guise of metaphysical conceptions. Within the human drama there are, however, two unifying forces, which are Napoleon and the English national consciousness. These enter into characterization and as such will be somewhat expanded. The other unifying element is History. In that particular, the author has been most painstaking and careful. The drama is historical not only in its main action, but also in personage, document, detail and setting.
In general the world which Hardy presents is satisfying. Man is in his correct position; varying types are presented in relative importance. Infinite numbers of actors, shown individually and in the mass, build up an impression of swarming humanity which is clearly held, and which is so held in its true proportions. No single hero holds the stage for longer than his lines permit. Character of necessity receives the scanter attention that panorama demands. Napoleon as the subject of burning ambition is shown in the scenes which concern the Austrian marriage and the divorce of Josephine. His ingratitude to Villeneuve and Ney is accompanied by an absolute indifference to suffering. The latter quality is shown through the scenes which follow his abandonment of the remnants of the army which invaded Russia, and his unbending ruthlessness towards the conquered. Once or twice only, he shows human weakness. He is almost won over by Louise of Prussia. He is willing to sacrifice a dynasty to the Life of Marie Louise. When he finds that the dynamic force which is within him has reached its downfall, he is for the time dazed and crushed in the manner of more ordinary men. His terrific vitality, however, and the sense of ruthless force which that vitality gives, is all pervading. The mental picture of the conqueror is hard to blot out, but it is weakened dramatically by Hardy's philosophy. This philosophy interferes with the purely dramatic elements of The Dynasts. Again and again there are references to the compulsion which unseen forces bring to bear upon the actors. This philosophy puts the lines "Life's curse begins I see, with helplessness!" (1) in the mouth of Napoleon. It flavors somewhat the human side of Napoleon's aspirations as they are shown in a magnificent passage in the last act of the human drama.

"I have nothing more to lose
  But Life!
  ............I should have scored
A vast repute, scarce paralleled in time,
As it did not, the fates had served me best
If in the thick and thunder of today,
Like Nelson, Harold, Hector, Cyrus, Saul,
I had been shifted from this jail of flesh,
To wander as a greatened ghost elsewhere,
Yes, a good death, to have died on yonder field;
But never a ball came passing down my way.
So, as it is, as miss-mark they will dub me;
And yet -- I found the crown of France in the mire,
And with the point of my prevailing sword
I picked it up! But for all this and this
I shall be nothing............
To shoulder Christ from out the topmost niche

(1) Part III, Act VII, Scene 6, p. 504
In human fame, as once I fondly felt,
Was not for me. I came too late in time
To assume the prophet or the demi-god,
A part past playing now. My only course
To make good showance to posterity
Was to implant my line upon the throne,
And how shape that, if now extension nears?
Great men are meteors that consume themselves
To light the earth. This is my burnt-out hour."(1)

Josephine is, like Marie, a pawn, but her history
and a certain pathetic character value are greatly
strengthened in her final scene. There is, in fact, some­
thing about her pathetic loyalty and her refusal to believe
evil of Napoleon that makes one think of Falstaff and Henry.
She is dying.

First Lady: "I think I heard you speak, your majesty?"
Josephine: "I asked what hour it was -- if dawn or
eve?"
First Lady: "Ten in the morning, Madame, You forget
You asked the same but a brief while ago."
Josephine: "Did I? I thought it was so long ago!....
I wished to go to Elba with him much,
But the Allies prevented me! - And why?
I would not have disgraced him, or
themselves
I would have gone to him at Fontainebleau,
With my eight horses and my household
train,
In dignity, and quitted him no more.....
Although I am his wife no longer now,
I think I should have gone in spite of
them,
Had I not feared perversions might be sown
Between him and the woman of his choice
For whom he sacrificed me."

She speaks of Marie Louise and of Napoleon's
son thus:

"I also said
That when my arms were round him, I forgot
That I was not his mother. So spoke I,
But oh me -- I remembered it too well!
He was a lovely child: in his fond prate
His father's voice was eloquent."

She goes on thinking of her flirtations and, re­
gretting them, attempts to write to Napoleon to tell him so
-- but cannot. As her strength fails, she says:

(1) Part III, Act VII, Scene 9, p. 519
"Tell him these things I have said -- bear him my love --
Tell him -- I could not write!" (1)

The passage is superb characterization.

But there are few complete feminine characterizations in the drama. Marie Louise is never more than a pawn. The English women appear spasmodically and are given no vital parts. Louise of Prussia is a striking figure but her personal traits are not brought out clearly. The two women who are somewhat completely characterized are Josephine and the Parisian prostitute. (2) In the case of the latter the impression is fleeting but strong. Hardy has done a great deal with a few lines. The parenthesis in the following excerpt is an illustration of the point.

Woman

"But she's in straits. She's lost her Napoleon now,
(A worthy man; He loved a woman well!) George drools and babbles in a darkened room,
Her heaven-born minister declines a pace;
All smooths the Emperor's sway."

I have quoted from the words of Napoleon and Josephine rather at length in an effort to show Hardy's skill in characterization. The scope of the drama allowed little detail in that regard but what there is is excellently handled. Hardy achieves a great deal with few words. The characterizations of Wellington, the Prince Regent and Prince Kutuzof, the Russian Field Marshal, are instances in point. An equal skill has built up what might be termed a clear conception of each nation's characteristics. The method used is different, for having accomplished individual characterization in a few bold strokes, Hardy builds up national character by adding detail to detail. The scenes which are not specifically panoramic or dramatic in effect are devoted mainly to this purpose. They vary greatly; some are of high life; some are of low. There are Parliamentary debates, palace scenes and street scenes. There is the glitter and pomp of station and the fatigue and misery of the common soldier. The diversity of which I speak is shown by the scene in London, in the "Old House of Commons" as Sheridan and Pitt debate. (3) It is shown by diversified types of the Military Review on the "Down" (4) when the King and his retinue appear and when curious "Wessex" spectators watch

(1) Part III, Act IV, Scene 7, p. 422
(2) Part I, Act VI, Scene 7, p. 132
(3) Part I, Act I, Scene 3, p. 18
(4) Part I, Act II, Scene 4, p. 46
the Review. Prussia emerges nationally through scenes on the "Streets of Berlin" (1) and in the scene designated as "A Room overlooking a Public Place" (2), from which Napoleon's triumphant entry is observed. The same painstaking care builds up each nation's character. There are balls such as the famous one in Brussels (3) and the one which Napoleon attended in Paris (4), and there is a fete at Vauxhall Gardens (5) and a scene at the Opera (6). I have alluded previously to street scenes in both Paris and London.

The wide survey of humanity which is taken in the scenes I have instanced is the tangible manifestation of one phase of Hardy's genius. The same phase was exhibited in the note which follows -- "To insects the twelve month has been an epoch, to leaves a life, to tweeting birds a generation, to man a year." (7) This shows the sense of relationship and proportion which sorted out and presented the many types of people and the diversified backgrounds of The Dynasts. This same sense of proportion and relation gives the knowledge, in architecture and poetry alike, which makes the basic structure strong enough to carry the vaulted heights of the completed work. This sense of proportion was integral in Hardy. It was part of the inner-experience which made his poetry. It gave that poetry cohesion and strength. It resolved into a sense of form which is one of the distinguishing qualities of his style.

The opening prose stage direction "two columns of ships appear in full sail, small as moths to the aerial Vision" (8) with the lines which follow, shows not only a sense of perspective but a sense of propriety as well. It is the latter which I am considering. The chant of the intoning Recording angel immediately places the spectral forces outside the actual drama of life yet makes their concentrated wisdom a sort of prophecy as to the outcome of the struggle. The sense of propriety immediately shifts the point of view to the very middle of the action as the fleets draw in to battle. At the same time the poetic expression shifts from the lyrical monotone and musical rhymed verse of the unearthly beings to the rhythms of actual speech which make the colloquial blank verse spoken in the actual drama. This blank verse marks a change in both rhythm and character, for

(1) Part II, Act I, Scene 3, p. 153
(2) Part II, Act I, Scene 5, p. 160
(3) Part III, Act VI, Scene 2, p. 454
(4) Part II, Act V, Scene 1, p. 253
(5) Part III, Act II, Scene 4, p. 372
(6) Part III, Act IV, Scene 8, p. 424
(7) The Early Life of Thomas Hardy: p. 72
(8) Part I, Act V, Scene 1, p. 81
Hardy synchronizes speech and national characteristics in such uncouth images as this --

"The overcrowded sails
Bulge like blown bladder in a tripeman's shop
The market-morning after slaughter day!"......

It is a French view of English insolence but a petty officer's muttered response makes the image sinister.

"It's morning before slaughterday with us,
I make so bold to bode!"

This sense of propriety keeps the character of Nelson clear and consistent in spite of the din of battle. It also puts the idiom of a nation of gourmants in keeping with the nation's characteristics, in phrases which speak of food and the "cook's skimmer" as the fleets engage. It carries "Wessex" into action with a young officer as he says to Nelson:

"That fellow in the mizzen-top, my Lord,
Who made it his affair to wing you thus,
We took good care to settle; and he fell
Like an old rook, smack from his perch,
Stone dead!"

How perfect! How consistently and truly "Wessex"!

As the time of Nelson's passing nears emotional tenseness increases in the words of all who speak; the blank verse becomes more broken in the rhythm. Finally -- the Chaplain's

"Yes..............
he has homed to where
There's no more seal!"

raises the old and universal image of a closing life about which Requiem and Crossing the Bar have thrown the spell of their exquisite music. The passage is perfect and satisfying and in that the moment is so simply put, in that no poetic glamour blurs the image, in that the noun has changed to verb, it is consistently typical of Hardy.

The consummate art which with a few bold strokes characterizes both Nelson and Captain Hardy so perfectly also presents the metaphysical personages superbly. The rapid, broken speech rhythms of blank verse, which have been used for the human action give way to more stately verses as the spirit of the Pities speaks. This Spirit put forth shortly the flaw in worldly arrangements against which Hardy rebels. It is done in a blank verse speech of fourteen lines which contends that a mechanized universe should not govern an emotionalized man. The lines are filled with what might be
termed a cosmic vocabulary since with Hardy the vocabulary arises at the moment when his view changes from the human sphere to cosmic relations. The words used are longer, usually of heavier vowel content; sometimes they are scientific or nearly so as in "mechanized", "coil", "pivots"; they are frequently typical of the philosophy as "necessitation" and "governance" prove; sometimes they sound the note of revolt which the strange phrase "thorough sphered melodic rule", suggests when in its proper context. These same words are nearly always muted to the note of negation which was mentioned as typical of the lyric mood, by some such word as "inexist", or by the direct expression of insentient will which comes with passages like the following:

"The cognizance ye mourn, Life's doom to feel,  
If I report it meetly, came unmeant  
Emerging with blind grognes from impereipience  
By listless sequence -- luckless trigical chance,  
In your more human tongue."

The words which directly or indirectly give the effect of negation in this passage are "unmeant", "impereipience", "listless", "luckless". These words added to "cognizance", "doom", "blind grognes", and "trigical chance" make up the cosmic vocabulary of the passage.

Hardy's humour is nowhere more characteristic than in the scene, mainly prose, which marks the return of Nelson's body to his native land. The typical Englishman of the lower middle class is here shown as boatman and burgher meet in an inn (1) and as two London citizens chat on the street, (2) in scenes which are laid in "South Wessex" and "The Guildhall, London." The following well-known passage will serve to illustrate:

First Boatman (lowering his voice)
"But what happened was this. They were a long time coming, owing to contrary winds, and the "Victory" being little more than a wreck. And grog ran short, because they's used near all they had to peckle his body in. So--they broached the adm'l."

Second Burgher.
"How?"

First Boatman.  
"Well; the plain calendar of it is, that when he came to be unhooped, it was found that the crew had drunk him dry. What was the men to do? Broke down by the battle, and hardly able to keep afloat, 'twas a most dependable thing, and it fairly saved their lives. So he was their salvation

(1) Part I, Act V, Scene 7, p. 106
(2) Part I, Act V, Scene 5, p. 100
after death as he had been in the fight. If he could have
knowed it, 'twould have pleased him down to the ground!
How'a would have laughed through the spigot-hole. "Draw on,
my hearties! Better I shrivel than you famish! Ha-ha!"

Second Burgher.
"It may be dependable afloat; but it seems queer
ashore."

Such humour is not elevating but it is amusing
and the effect which it gives is similar to that obtained by
the rustic chorus in Far From the Madding Crowd. The humour
changes to stark reality in a later scene, that of the
drunken deserters in Spain, (1) which has but one redeeming
contrast, that furnished by the heroic coughing sergeant. (2)
This same realism carries through a great number of scenes
dealing with the Spanish campaign. It furnishes high relief;
it is dramatic but it is scarcely poetry. It shows the
absolute freedom, however, with which Hardy manages his
material and it is one of the means by which he maintains a
sense of reality sufficient to support a theme and action so
extensive.

It is impossible to analyze The Dynasts without
complete tediousness since the scope of the drama almost
insists that it be its own argument. I have been seeking
merely to show the consistency with which Hardy kept his
main threads clear. In general the national entities emerge
clearly. While there is a certain sparseness in characteri-
ization the few characters who are clearly differentiated are
astonishingly alive. The battle which in older dramas has
been behind the scenes, or if present has appeared as mere
burlesque becomes magnificent spectacle in The Dynasts. It
becomes a main motif of plot as converging military force
almost too gigantic to visualize marches into our con-
sciousness.

The final success of this dramatic process which
unfolds in such startling fashion rests upon its panoramic
character, upon the fringes of which we have touched. Even
the heavens enlarge:

"The nether sky opens and Europe is disclosed as
a prone and emaciated figure, the Alps shaping like a back-
bone, and the branching mountain-chains like ribs, the penin-
sular plateau of Spain forming a head. Broad and lengthy
lowlands stretch from the north of France across Russia like
a grey-green garment, hemmed by the Ural Mountains and the
glistening Arctic Ocean.

(1) Part II, Act III, Scene 1, p. 206 - 210
(2) Part II, Act III, Scene 1, p. 207
"The point of view sinks downward through space, and draws near to the surface of the perturbed countries, where the peoples, distressed by events which they did not cause are seen writhing, crawling, heaving and vibrating in their various cities and nationalities."

"A new and penetrating light descends on the spectacle, imbuing men and things with a seeming transparency, and exhibiting as one organism the anatomy of life and movement in all humanity and vitalized matter included in the display." (1) Such is the setting, not only panoramic but suffused by a strange and unearthly light which makes vitalized matter transparent and which reveals the inner and animating Immanent Will. A setting of this kind is essentially poetic. By the ruse of illusion Hardy conveys in a strikingly visual conception the essence of the abstract ideas that express universal truths to him. In extending the limits of the action to vast heights of sky he not only gets the cosmic relativity which he desires but he attains a visual comprehensiveness which could be obtained in no other way. The imagination of Thomas Hardy has achieved in literature what aerial photography achieved for science. It gives a far and diminishing view and like photography presents a spread out flattened geography in which the eye, accustomed to both natural and carefully arranged perspective, finds no vanishing point. This quality of flatness gives a strange lateral sameness which would be deadening were it not relieved by the contrasts provided by cosmic and natural relations. When, as he sometimes does, Hardy steps from the natural environment to that of a god or a modern machine he gives himself a poetic license that has not been taken since Dante descended into Hell and Milton ascended to the Heavens. It is the peculiar prerogative of great genius to see thus out of the actual world into a world without bounds made by the mind for itself.

The panoramic scene is used to show movements of armies -- far and near. It invariably intensifies the true dramatic action. An instance in point is the scene in which General Mack surrenders his sword to Napoleon after the Battle of Ulm. (2) The Austrian officers lay down their swords. Then follows the long filing past of the Austrian soldiers which is suggested by ever lessening prose directions through an entire long scene which includes both actual and spectral personages. The filing past marks a perpetual movement before Napoleon and his staff which signifies both the power of the man and the colossal tragedies which he causes. It gives an almost monotonous sense of inevitability and calls up unconsciously the automatic functioning of the human will

(1) Part I, Forescene, p. 6
(2) Part I, Act IV, Scene 4, p. 74
which Hardy wishes to emphasize. An exhibition of the same kind comes in dumb show as Napoleon urges his armies over the Danube. (1) At the field of Waterloo the extended view shows actual dramatic conflict as one army surges against the other. Throughout the entire last act of the drama the viewpoint perpetually hovers above the French and English positions in such a way as to present the entire action simultaneously. (2) Such a viewpoint overcomes not only distance but time.

The poetry of *The Dynasts* is simply a carrying on of the tendencies which have been noted in the lyric and dramatic verse. The blank verse has been criticized sometimes for its lack of distinction and its level tone. I have tried to show that the colloquial language in some parts has been one means of personal and national characterization. The level tone has, I think, been adopted consciously as a means of throwing the lyric poetry of the metaphysical superstructure into striking relief. The blank verse, while lacking in the thundering glory of the language of Tamburlaine, is still adequate for the purposes of the poet. Hardy does not sing a glorious world nor of some one, compelling, vital urge within man such as the lust of power in Tamburlaine or the greed of knowledge in Dr. Faustus. He is presenting an idealization which deals with man in phases of his experience which show his powerlessness before cosmic forces and which thwart his efforts at enforcing his own will. Napoleon's lust for power drove him on and on but Hardy makes it an attribute not only of Napoleon but of cosmic forces as well. Napoleon is sometimes an automaton. In the first act of Part III, he muses thus:

"Napoleon (with sudden despondency)
That which has worked will work! -- since Lodi
Bridge

The force I then felt move me, moves me on
Whether I will or no; and oftentimes
Against my better mind....Why am I here?
-- By laws imposed on me inexorably!
History makes use of me to weave her web
To her long while aforetime -- figured mesh
And contemplated charactery: no more.
Well, war's my trade; and whence soever springs
This one in hand, they'll label it with my name!"(3)

Constant insistance on this particular phase of man's existence naturally tones the verse to a similar key. Enthusiasm, hope and exultation in their extremes would seem out of place in Hardy's world where a certain uselessness of

(1) Part II, Act IV, Scene 2, p. 234
(2) Part III, Act VII, p. 484
(3) Part III, Act I, Scene 9, p. 330
effort makes itself apparent. To express the more idealistic sides of drama he does so by using the spectral personages. Sometimes, however, in scenes such as the one I have already instanced of the Retreat from Moscow, Hardy obtains a magnificent effect by mingling rather unimaginative blank verse with prose stage directions and spectral comment. Sometimes the poetic flavor is imbedded in the prose while the blank verse is merely expalnatory or explanatory.

Spirit of the Pities.

"The strange, one-eyed, white-shakoed, scarred old man, ruthlessly heading every onset made, I seem to recognize."

Spirit of the Years.

"Kutúzof he:
The ceaselessly -- attacked one, Michael Ney, Again as stout as thou, Earth, ever has twirned! Kutúzof, ten years younger, would extirp The invaders, and our drama finish here, With Bonaparte, a captive or a corpse. But he is old;" (1)

The most intensely poetical suggestions in the scene under discussion lie in the significance of the "flake of snow" and the likening of the retreating army to a "caterpillar", and the rabble which followed it to "an articulated tail". These are imbedded in stage directions which precede and follow the passage quoted. The passage is a typical one. It has the usual smattering of compounds in "one-eyed", "white-shakoed", and "ceaselessly-attacked", and frequently shortened verbal form in "extirp", but it has little significance in itself. In its context it is the one note of human drama even though it comes from a spirit. The general tone is set by panorama and metaphysics. In the next scene, however, there is no blank verse whatever. The whole scene is spectral. The verses are couplets and tercets, which form a beautiful and unearthly comment.

Chorus

"Then women are seen in the waterflow -- limply bearing their infants between wizened arms stretching above; Yea, motherhood, sheerly sublime in her last despairing, and lighting her darkest

(1) Part III, Act I, Scene 9, p. 352
Declension with limitless love." (1)

The Chorus is the spectral comment as the bridge over the Beresina goes down. The long sustained rhythms of the eight-stress anapestic verses give way to the shorter verses of the tercets wherein anapests and dactyls mingle thus:

Semi Chorus I of the Pities' (aerial music)

"What will be seen in the morning light?
What will be learnt when the spring breaks bright,
And the frost unlocks to the sun's soft sight."

Semi Chorus II

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

Chorus

"Pale cysts of souls in every stage,
Still bent to embraces of love or rage, —
Souls passed to where History pens no page." (2)

In the following scene there is greater realism;
again there is blank verse.

First Soldier (dazed)

"What -- gone, do you say? Gone?"

Straggler

"Yea, I say gone!
He left us at Smorgoni hours ago.
The Sacred Squadron even he has left behind,
By this time he's at Warsaw or beyond,
Full pace for Paris." (3)

**************

This rather uninspired passage results in the macabre and perfect "Mad Soldier's Song."

"Ha, for the snow and hoar:
Ho, for our fortune's made:
We can shape our bed without sheets to spread,

(1) Part III, Act I, Scene 10, p. 356
(2) Part III, Act I, Scene 10, p. 356
(3) Part III, Act I, Scene 11, p. 357
And our graves without a spade.
So foolish Life adieu,
And ingrate Leader too.
-- ah, but we loved you true!
Yet -- he-he-he! and ho-ho-ho! --
We'll never return to you.

What can we wish for more?
Thanks to the frost and flood --
We are grinning crones -- thin bags of bones
Who once were flesh and blood.
So foolish life adieu
And ingrate leader too
-- oh but we loved you true!
Yet -- he-he-he! and ho-ho-ho! --
We'll never return to you." (1)

There is something about the rapid movement and the strong beat of dactyls in the opening feet of the first two verses which enables this song to give both an audible and visual impression. The soldier's wild dance of death is symbolic of the whole Retreat from Moscow. With the characteristic habit of refrain stanzas the verses vary in length but the single long verse might be broken into two shorter ones since there are interior rhymes in "bed" and "spread", "crones" and "bones". The continuous shifting of iambics, anapests and dactyls in the rhythm, which yet retains the strong beat suggestive of stamping feet, makes one conscious of some old dance tune. There is no poet who does this as often as Hardy does. He not only uses dance and song in their usual way but he frequently uses their rhythms as the basis of other poems. It is with true consistency that he expresses the terrible results of the Moscow invasion in a song and dance. For the Frenchmen it was a dance of death. The prose stage directions which follow complete the act as far as the French are concerned. They read thus:

"..........the frost stiffens. The fire sinks and goes out; but the Frenchmen do not move. The day dawns and still they sit on.

"In the background enter some light horse of the Russian army, followed by Kutuzof himself and a few of his staff. He presents a terrible appearance now --bravely serving though slowing dying, his face puffed with the intense cold, his one eye staring out as he sits in a heap in the saddle, his head sunk into his shoulders. The whole detachment pauses at the sight of the French asleep. They shout; but the bivouackers give no sign."

(1) Part III, Act I, Scene 11, p. 358
Kutuzof

"Go, stir them up! We slay not sleeping men."

"The Russians advance and prod the French with their lances."

Russian Officer

"Prince, here's a curious picture. They are dead."

Kutuzof (with indifference)

"Oh, naturally. After the snow was down
I marked a sharpening of the air last night
We shall be stumbling on such frost-baked meats
Most of the way to Wilna."

'Officer (examining the bodies)

"They all sit as they were living still, but stiff as bones
And even the colour has not left their cheeks,
Whereon the tears remain in strings of ice,
It was a marvel they were not consumed:
Their clothes are cindered by the fire in front,
While at their back the frost has caked them hard."

Kutuzof

"'Tis well, so finish Russia's enemies!"

"Exeunt Kutuzof, his staff, and the detachment of horse in the direction of Wilna; and with the advance of day the snow resumes its fall, slowly burying the dead bivouackers." (1)

In the scenes from which I have been quoting Hardy achieves the most complete and awful realism, but that realism mingles with the lyric beauty of the spectral chants. The flakes of snow which signalled the approach of the Russian winter are still falling as the scene closes. Nature intensifies the suffering. Nature is, as Hardy always insists -- indifferent.

I have tried to illustrate the methods by which Hardy achieves his dramatic effects. I have alluded to his rather utilitarian use of blank verse and to the unexalted level tone which it achieves. Earlier in the paper I quoted passages which concern the deaths of Nelson and of Josephine in an attempt to show both characterizations and the occa-

(1) Part III, Act I, Scene 11, p. 359
sional heights of beauty to which this same verse can rise. The lyrical gift and the musical backgrounds of which I have previously spoken are in this passage represented by the chants, and *The Mad Soldier's Song*.

The imagery and the allusions which color the poetry of *The Dynasts* either typify the "Wessex" influence or the reserve which is always an attribute of Hardy's poems. A few examples such as the following will serve to illustrate.

"The river coops them semi-circle-wise,  
And we shall have them like a swathe of grass,  
Within a sicle's curve!" (1)

This is the very essence of rusticity, from the peculiar use of the word "coops" in connection with a river, to the "swathe of grass" and the "sicle's curve". An equally rustic note is struck by an allusion to cock fighting in "It claps a muffler round this cock's steel spurs", (2)

An intensification of the same quality which, however, embodies an ironic note as well, occurs in a prose stage direction thus:

"Cocks crow thinking it is sunrise ere they are burnt to death."

The first quotation is also illustrative of the flair for form, that love for the clear cut edge of things which is so noticeable in Hardy's imagery. He uses the "sicle" in an enveloping sense, but one is conscious of the image of the "sicle" by itself. He notes its curve just as he has noted the curve of the moon's edge, or as he notes the outlines of a face in,

"Yes, by God,  
His face as clear-cut as the edge of a cloud  
The sun behind shows up." (3)

In addition to this rustic allusion and imagery frequent proverbial expressions are found. The Spirit Sinister, having it seems, less culture than the other spectral beings, uses them frequently.

Lord

"Yet thereby English folk are freed him,  
Faith, as ancient people say.  
It's an ill wind that blows good luck to none!"

(1) Part III, Act I, Scene 3, p. 337  
(2) Part I, Act IV, Scene 1, p. 66  
(3) Part III, Act VI, Scene 8, p. 482
Minister

"Who is your friend that drops so airily
This precious pinch of salt on our raw skin?" (1)

Lady

"Something uncanny's in it all, if true,
Good Lord, the thought gives me a sudden sweat,
That fairly makes my linen stick to me!" (2)

Spirit Sinister

"Small blame to her, however; she must
cut her coat according to her cloth,
as they would say below there." (3)

It will be observed that both the Lord and the Minister of the first excerpt speak with a pungent country idiom and that the lady of the second does not mince her words in any courtly fashion. The proverbial remark of the Spirit Sinister is typical of the homely phrases which he often uses.

In direct antithesis to these downright and frank expressions of the rustic viewpoint and idiom are the more austere phrases which mark Hardy's reserve. Such are illustrated by

"the remoter bald grey brow of the Isle of Slingers." (4)

This rather stark description occurs in a stage direction and is unelaborated. A more typically poetic expression of the reserve of Hardy is found "Save for a sliding tear", (5) which depicts Josephine and the self-control which she exercised as Napoleon divorced her. An example of the effect obtained by the austere limitation of words occurs in the Spirit's speech to the Parisian street-woman

Spirit

"Right! Lady many-spoused, more charity
Upbrims in thee than in some loftier ones

(1) Part I, Act I, Scene 5, p. 30
(2) Part I, Act I, Scene 5, p. 31
(3) Part I, Act I, Scene 6, p. 34
(4) Part I, Act III, Scene 3, p. 63
(5) Part IV, Act I, Scene 5, p. 162
Who would not name thee with their white-washed tongues

Enough." (1)

In this passage, which is packed with meaning, the whole effect is gained by the use of these words, "many-spoused", "upbrims", and "white-washed tongues". One cannot help but notice the similarity between this part of the interview and that of Christ and Mary Magdalene.

The love and pity for animals which is exhibited so many times in Hardy's novels and poems is found in *The Dynasts* also. There are constant references to the army horses both in battle and retreat. The two which follow are typical. The first is a stage direction. "Nature is mute. Save for the incessant flogging of the wind-broken and lacerated horses there are no sounds." (2) In this passage the suggestion of complete silence subtly intensifies our consciousness of the suffering of the horses. The following quotation is taken from the speech of the Spirit of the Pities. It is but a further expression of Hardy's pity for suffering whether found in man or beast.

**Spirit of the Pities**

"But mark that roar,
A mash of men's crazed cries entreating mates
To run them through and end their agony;
Boys calling on their mothers, veterans
Blaspheming God and man. Those shady shapes
Are horses, maimed in myriads, tearing round
In maddening pangs, the harnessings they wear
Clanking discordant jangles as they tear!
It is enough. Let now the scene be closed."
(The night thickens). (3)

I do not feel that there is need for much further comment as regards the quality of pity which Hardy expresses so often. It was an integral part of the man's experience. It was one of the emotions which governed his whole attitude towards life and the universe. The intensity of the emotion was largely responsible for the philosophical beliefs which could explain the world's sufferings in no way were they not the exhibition of an insentient will.

Before passing to a discussion of the metaphysical personages and their significance in the drama I wish to instance an example or two which will exhibit the poetic form

(1) Part I, Act VI, Scene 7, p. 131
(2) Part III, Act I, Scene 9, p. 354
(3) Part III, Act I, Scene 6, p. 345
which their expression takes. The first is from the scene which immediately precedes the Battle of Quatre-Bras.

Spirit of the Pities

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

Spirit of the Years

"Thou dost indeed. It is the Monster Devastation. Watch." (1)

This vision of Napoleon's army carries the panoramic viewpoint into the very conception of an image. The Biblical reference is made more pointed and given an ironic significance in the prose direction which follows and which explains that the fighting takes place about a church. This passage illustrates the change in imagery and in the general use of words which occurs in Hardy's poetry as he enters the cosmic world. A recitative, used to explain a military movement, which occurs with great effect between two prose passages will further illustrate this lingual change.

Recording Angel

"The fury of the tumult there begun Scourged quivering Ligny through the afternoon: Napoleon's great intent grew substantive, And on the Prussian pith and pulse he bent His foretimed blow. Blucher, to butt the shock, Called up his last reserves, and heading on, With blade high brandished by his aged arm, Spurred forward his white steed. But they outspent, Failed far to follow. Darkness coped the sky, And storm, and rain with thunder. Yet once more He cheered them on to charge. His horse, the while, Pierced by a bullet, fell on him it bore, He, trampled, bruised, faint, and in disarray Dragged to another mount, was led away. His ragged lines withdraw from sight and sound, And their assailants camp upon the ground." (2)

The difference in tone between this recitative blank verse and the colloquial passages which I have quoted

(1) Part III, Act VI, Scene 5, p. 474
(2) Part III, Act VI, Scene 6, p. 477
previously is at once apparent. Phrases which make it so are such as these: "grew substantive", "pith and pulse", "foretimed blow" and "to butt the shock". Such language is typical of Hardy in his cosmic moments when he deserts the more usual forms of expression and makes a vocabulary which is peculiarly his own. The combinations of words and the new forms which he invents have an odd unearthly significance which seems to answer his purpose and which vitalizes the abstract realism which he seeks to obtain. Words such as "outspent" and the verb "coped", formed from a noun, would be characteristic of any phase of his poetry but the accumulation of such terms and the use of one after another in rapid succession is typical of his cosmic point of view only.

One further illustration will serve to show not only the lyrical beauty of some of the unearthly choruses but the difference in tone which they achieve. Contrast for instance the recitative blank verse which I have just considered with the following:

Chorus of the Years (Aerial Music)

"The eyelids of eve fall together at last,
And the forms so foreign to field and tree
Lie down as though native and slumber fast!"

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

Trodden and bruised to a miry tomb
Are ears that have greened but will never be gold
And flowers in the bud that will never bloom."

Chorus of the Pities

"So the season's intent, ere its fruit unfold,
Is frustrate, and mangled, and made succumb,
Like a youth of promise struck stark and cold!"
Chorus of Sinister Spirits

"And each soul sighs as he shifts his head
On the loam he's to lease with the other dead
From tomorrow's mist-fall till Time be sped." (1)

This lyrical passage with its perfect portrayal of the smaller forms of animate life is typical of Hardy in many ways. The exquisite image, "The eyelids of eve fall together at last", brings a mood of quiet and calm which makes the contrast to come in the Battle of Waterloo all the more striking and terrible. The exact knowledge of small animals and even lower forms of life which these verses show, is but another manifestation of the keen observance and awareness which Hardy always gave to nature. The detailed analysis of the sounds of Edgon Heath, which was instanced at the beginning of this paper, illustrates the same powers of observation and differentiation. The "coney" could not be more perfectly described in a dozen lines than in "their white scuts flash at their vanishing heels"; nor could frustrations be better expressed than by the two instances which Hardy gives in the "ears that have greened but will never be gold" and the "flowers in the bud that will never bloom." Hardy here drives home his analogy in the words of two choruses, those of the Pities and the Sinister Spirits. It is in those that the real significance of the verses is intensified and applied to man. There is an analogy between the lives of the world of nature and the lives of men. One is reminded of the sonnet In Vision I Roamed (2) which has been analyzed, and of the way in which the cosmic and abstract ideas of the octave were applied definitely to man in the sestet. In the case of these choruses the same effect is gained by using man's immediate environment for the subject of the chorus of the Years and man himself as the subject of the Chorus of the Pities and the Chorus of Sinister Spirits.

In this somewhat inadequate survey of a few of The Dynasts' poetic qualities I have meant to show that the epic drama does not differ essentially from the other poetry. Its scope is so great that it necessitates a greater freedom. This freedom Hardy has achieved in both verse forms and language. He shifts from rhyme and lyric to blank verse and drama or from either into prose as it pleases him. The individualistic language forms which are typical of his poetic style in general are carried into The Dynasts and there extended as I have tried to show. The varied verse forms are used in combination with panorama or set to a musical accompaniment. Hardy seems able to achieve any effect he wishes. If poetry will not give it, he uses prose. He could

(1) Part III, Act VI, Scene 8, p. 483
(2) Wessex Poems: p. 7
not have been as successful as he is in either medium alone. The effect of poetry in The Dynasts is cumulative. It builds up a background and an atmosphere. At times it intensifies dramatic effects, at others it softens them. It always assists in creating the illusion or the "willing suspension of disbelief", which according to Coleridge constitutes poetic faith. As the lyric expression of metaphysical abstractions it encases the whole human drama in an outer poetic shell which is suited to both Hardy's philosophy and the dramatic expression of that philosophy in human action. In this regard Hardy himself says: -- "In point of literary form, the scheme of contrasted choruses and other conventions of this external feature was shaped with a single view to the modern outlook, and in frank divergence from classical and other dramatic precedent which ruled the ancient voicings of ancient themes." (1)

The "phantasmal Intelligences" which constitute the new dramatic material of the The Dynasts, shaped to express "a modern outlook" consist of four leading spirits. They are the ancient Spirit of the Years which represents the "passionless insight of the ages", the Spirit of the Pities which approximates to "the universal sympathy of human nature, the Spirits Sinister and Ironic and the Spirit of Rumour. Each of them has a chorus. There are in addition the Shade of the Earth, Spirit-Messengers and Recording angels. The Spirit of the Pities is something like the ideal spectator of the old Greek Chorus. It is swayed hither and thither by events. The Spirits Sinister and Ironic approximate roughly to Chance, as it is understood from the novels, and to the Ironic mood of the poems. The Foescene and the Afterscene are placed in the overworld. It is in the chants and choruses of these two scenes that Hardy's philosophical tenets are most clearly set forth, although as I have pointed out they run as a comment throughout the drama. The problem over which Hardy pondered for so many years is set forth as the opening words of The Dynasts. "What of the Immanent Will and its designs?" The Spirit of the Years replies "It works unconsciously." (2) Then the various suppositions as to the nature of this unconscious will, to which the poems Hap (3), The Blow (4), Nature's Questioning (5) and The Convergence of the Twain (6) have made us accustomed, are set forth. There is, it appears, no scheme of things; the evolution of Will was itself unconscious. The Shade of the Earth replying to the Pities' hope unconsciously.

(1) Preface: p. 9
(2) Foescene: p. 1
(3) Wessex Poems: p. 7
(4) Moments of Vision: p. 449
(5) Wessex Poems: p. 58
(6) Satires of Circumstance: p. 288
may develop an ameliorative evolution, puts the matter thus:

"They may come, will they I am not averse
Yet know I am but the ineffectual Shade
Of her the Travailler, herself a thrall
To It; in all her labourings curbed and kinged!"(1)

The Foescene closes with the magnificently visual presentation of the working of the Immanent Will which is disclosed in the vision of the skeleton of Europe. In the Afterscene the discussion, now vitalized by the actual events which are embodied in the drama, continues, but the Spirit of the Years has found no proof that the Will is becoming conscious. There is nothing in the tragedies of Life to show that it is doing so.

"Yet but one flimsy riband of Its web
Have we here watched in weaving-web Enorm,
Whose furthest hem and selvage may extend
To where the roars and splashings of the flames
Of earth-invisible suns swell noisily,
And onwards into ghastly gulfs of sky,
Where hideous presences churn through the dark --
Monsters of magnitude without a shape,
Hanging amid deep wells of nothingness.
Yet seems this vast and singular confection
Wherein our scenery glints of scantest size,
Inutile all -- so far as reasonings tell"

The Spirit of Pities however argues that:

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

(2)

There is little in this chanted discussion to prove that the universe may ever reach volition. There is, however, one faint note of hope which the Spirit of the Pities presents and which the final chorus chants.

Chorus

"But -- a stirring thrills the air
Like to sounds of joyance there
That the rages
Of the ages
Shall be cancelled, and deliverance offered from

(1) Foescene: p. 3
(2) Afterscene: p. 522
The darts that were
Consciousness the will informing, till It fashion
All things fair!" (1)

These are the last words. Hardy has put his whole theory into artistic form. The faint hope is considered inconsistent with Hardy's general viewpoint by some critics. There is, however, some evidence of the same hope in the poetry. The Darkling Thrush provides one example. In the novels Diggory Venn, (2) Gabriel Oak (3) and Marty South (4) represent Hardy's confidence in man. This same confidence in character is suggested by Nelson (5), Pitt (6), Ney (7) and the "coughing Sergeant" (8) of The Dynasts. Such characters support the general ideal of slow ameliorative evolution which the Pities expound, for in spite of tragic circumstances they manage to reconcile their personalities and their environments. Hardy did not think that he had evolved a complete philosophy. He hoped to provide a solace of fancy which would take the place of old religious beliefs until such time as a more satisfactory philosophy might be evolved. In a letter to a friend who had commented on The Dynasts Hardy wrote "Yes: I left off on a note of hope. It was just as well that the Pities should have the last word, since, like Paradise Lost, The Dynasts proves nothing." (9)

This present and modern generation is still too near to Hardy's own day to be able to judge of the position which he will ultimately hold as a poet. There is no doubt of the position which he will hold as a thinker since he has been the first and only man in his century to carry the ideas involved in the advance of science to their logical conclusions in relation to life. He has not only done this, but he has been the only poet who has used those ideas as the inspirational basis of poetry. If style be defined as the full rendering of the intended impression, Hardy has succeeded as a poet, for a close study of the poet's life, his letters, notes and comments makes one thing clear. His poetry gives the impression that he, the poet, intended. Hardy made a note in 1899 which says: "No man's poetry can be truly judged till its last line is written. What is the last line? The death of the poet. And hence there is this quaint consolation to any writer of verse that it may be imperishable for all that anybody can tell him to the contrary;

(1) Afterscene: p. 525
(2) The Return of the Native.
(3) Far From the Madding Crowd.
(4) The Woodlanders.
(5) Part I, Act V, Scene 4, p. 95
(6) Part I, Act VI, Scene 6, p. 128
(7) Part III, Act VII, Scene 4, p. 497
(8) Part III, Act III, Scene I, p. 207
(9) The Later Years of Thomas Hardy: p. 275
and that if worthless he can never know it, unless he be a greater adept at self-criticism than poets usually are." (1) When Hardy died in 1928 "the last line" was written. It cannot yet be judged -- but Hardy the poet was consistent to the end. In his last two days of life he was still pondering on the problems of existence. He would listen only to poetry, the last verses which he asked for being these:

"Oh Thou, who man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake;
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blackened—man's forgiveness give -- and take!"

(1) The Later Years of Thomas Hardy: p. 275
The following list does not pretend to be complete and contains only books that I have read in connection with the actual preparation of this paper. I have not had access to a uniform edition of Hardy's works and do not in the case of the novels give page references.

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This glossary does not rest upon a definite or absolute scheme of selection. The words have been chosen somewhat arbitrarily as being in some way typical of Hardy's vocabulary and Style. Some are archaic, others are unusual either in form, application or meaning; many are original compounds made by Hardy. The list of compounds is fairly complete, that of varying characteristic words much less so. These differences in selection the context will make clear.
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