

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THOMAS HARDY'S THE DYNASTS

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Abstract

Thomas Hardy's advantage lies chiefly in "non-rationalistic" subjects, since non-rationality seems, for Hardy, the dominant principle of the Universe. By non-rationality, Hardy does not mean foolishness, but rather a principle lying at the indifference point between rationality and emotionality. The present paper explores Hardy's doctrine of non-rationality in *The Dynasts*, an epic-drama on the Napoleonic Wars, his magnum opus. The paper also illuminates Hardy's idea of the growing consciousness of the Will, which comes very close to Spinoza's philosophical concept. Hardy makes use of the Platonic philosophy in elaborating his own philosophical doctrine.

Key Words: epic-drama, Immanent Will, consciousness, phantoms, hope, pain, choice.

Although *The Dynasts* is a historical epic-drama, as evident in the subtitle, it is also the epic-drama which has its philosophical scope: the main philosophical issue is raised in "Fore Scene", which puts forward the Overworld and its "Phantasmal Intelligences", the Ancient Spirit and Chorus of the Years, the Spirit and Chorus of the Pities, the Shade of the Earth, the Spirit Sinister and Ironic with their Choruses, Rumours, Spirit-Messengers, and Recording Angels. These Phantom Intelligences discuss the principal question of "the Immanent Will and Its design", which is raised by The Shade of the Earth and with which the epic-drama opens. Thus, the subject-matter of *The Dynasts* is clearly stated in its opening line. The eldest Phantom, the Spirit of the years, suggests an important issue: the Immanent Will works, as before, unconsciously by completely engrossed aesthetic rote, with Its aim in Itself and not in the consequence:

It works unconsciously, as heretofore,
Eternal artistries in Circumstance.
Whose patterns, wrought by rapt asthetic rote,
Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,
And not their consequence.

(DI. Fore Scene, 1)

The Spirit of the Pities objects to the Spirit of the Years and, as every intelligent man of modern world, asks:

Still thus? Still thus?
Ever unconscious!
An automatic sense
Unweeting why and whence?

Be, then, the inevitable, as of old,
Although that so it be we dare not hold!

(DI. Fore Scene, 1)

It seems that the question of the character of the Immanent Will is at the same time the question of the character of God. The Spirit Ironic rates the Will and gods as equal:

... if all the Spectacle be true,
Or an illusion of the gods (the Will, To wit) some
hocus-pocus to fulfil?

(DI. After Scene, 524)

In a note, dated April 1899, Hardy claimed that the identity of both concepts is exactly the same: "... the conception of a First Cause, which the theist calls 'God', and the conception of the same that the so-styled atheist calls 'no-God', are nowadays almost exactly identical ..."¹ God is the motivation and continuation of the course of Nature as expressed by the Spirit of the Years (DI. Fore Scene, 6). There is a correspondence between Hardy's God and Aristotle's view of the Devine²; thus, as an epic-drama, *The Dynasts* contains references to ancient gods: to Sophocles (DI. v. iv, 99) and Aeschylus (DIII. After Scene, 524). Napoleon, as a hero, does not take his own decisions, but he only performs what the Immanent Will has intended him to do. Thus, Napoleon is similar to the hero in ancient drama and myths. In Ancient drama, the hero is always overcome by a supernatural power beyond his control which, in turn, gains victory. Similar to the ancient hero also, Napoleon does not act by course of his own will because he is in the hands of the General Will. But according to the Spirit of the Pities, Napoleon represents those aspects of mankind which do not deserve mercy and compassion. Hardy neither gives Napoleon courageous personality, nor connects him with patriotism: Napoleon immediately vanishes when the battle is lost, both at Leipzig (DIII. iii. v) and at Waterloo (DIII. vii. viii). Moreover, men like Nelson, Pitt, Moore, the Sergeant, Wellington, and others devote themselves to the nation, ready to lay down their lives for honour and duty. They justify the optimistic note of the Pities at the end of the epic-drama (DIII. iii, After Scene, 525); their humanity have an optimistic prospect. The existence of good mankind, brave and honest men, who deserve mercy, supports the belief of the Spirit of the Pities:

... But others find
Poesy ever lurk where pit-pats poor mankind!

(DII. iii. i, 210)

In contrast to those characters who serve as an argument that good men exist, Napoleon's character, if hero he is, is a hypocrite man. Napoleon has free choice, but it does not mean it is easy for him to decide. Choice is partly free and partly conditioned. "Every man", says Harold Morrell, "is limited, sometimes burdened, by heredity and environment." The man, he continues, "who insists he is such-and-such by nature and can act in no way, he deceives himself and acts with bad faith. He must not blame ...the 'Will'."³ Hardy does not say that man is a puppet, but he criticizes his choice to be a puppet; the doctrine in which Hardy's tragedy lies. After the massacre at Moscow, Napoleon exclaims to Maria Louisa, who

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has been questioning him on the loss of the army, that they have been conquered by God's sky rather than Russia, and

I meant the enterprise and not its stuff. . . .
I had no wish to fight, nor Alexander,
But Genius who out shapes my destinies
Did all the rest!

(DIII. i. ii, 363)

Through the structure of feelings, Hardy believes, understanding is awakened. Nature is an organic unity of which human life and society are a complete whole. The principle of determinism implies a rational law which contradicts Hardy's doctrine that "non rationality seems, as far as one can perceive, to be the principle of the Universe."⁴ Hardy feels that the "scheme of Things is, indeed, incomprehensive"⁵; thus, he objects to the reviewers who treats his works of art as if they were a scientific system of philosophy, although he repeatedly states in prefaces and elsewhere that his views are "seemings, provisional impressions only", and they are "used for artistic purposes because they represent approximately the impressions of the age, and are plausible, till somebody produces better theories of the universe."⁶ Far from holding a fatalistic belief in a deterministic universe in which human strive counts for nothing, Hardy has faith in the human capacity for choice, in the exertion of individual will, and that individuals who fail to assert their humanity, as in the case of Napoleon and what the Spirit of the Pities asserts, are blamable. In spite of the working of the Immanent Will in *The Dynasts*, there is human self-assertion as epitomized, for example, in Wellington's strategy against Napoleon. Hardy's characters are not predetermined, but have potential. The characters effect circumstances when it acts to realize this potential; thus, a pattern of cause and effect arises. Man is not made completely powerless by heredity and environment, but only limited and not wholly determined by forces beyond his control, as Hardy noted: "Life is what we make it as whist is what we make it; but not as Chess is what we make it; which ranks higher as a purely intellectual game than either whist or life."⁷ Thus, both fate and man are contributory parts and tragedy does not arise from the tenet that man is a puppet for the Will, or even, conscious man is forced to be the puppet of a blind Will, but it arises from human weaknesses, as exemplified in the character of Napoleon, and success depends on the exercise of human will. In fact, the real war is between man and forces beyond man. Forces deal with man's cards, but it is the responsibility of man to play the cards; thus, failure results from bad playing and intellectual errors. In this case, man's failure or success depends on the mutual workings of fate and free-will.

Hardy specified his view in December 1914, saying: "...some freedom ... would ... be operative as such whenever the remaining great mass of will in the universe should happen to be in equilibrium."⁸ The gods are merciless in ancient drama. It seems that the Spirit of the Years introduces the ancient dichotomy of Will–God, which is similar to Aristotle's God. It says: "I am but an accessory of its works" (DI. i. ii, 15). On the other hand, the young Spirit of the Pities opposes the Spirit of the Years which advocates the Inadvertent Mind and emphasizes the notion that men gain cognition with flux and reflux of time. It sees the Will as growing into self-consciousness, then growing into graciousness. With the growth of

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consciousness, Hardy sees some practical ground for his "evolutionary meliorism", which he emphasizes in his personal writings. The question of consciousness may be summed up in the following words:

In *The Dynasts* we have been shown with great poetic justice a full perspective of life as seen through the various elements of human personality, but reason, itself has fully faced reality and not ended on a note of scepticism, despair, or fatalism, but on an attempt to face the problem of unconsciousness; which runs through all existence.⁹

The Spirit of the Pitiees believes in the opportunity for consciousness and for an individual human will as a parcel in the total Will. However, the Spirit of the Years insists on its idea that the Will labours as one unit. Thus, it does not believe in the divisibility of the Will. It introduces the anatomy of the Immanent Will as an organism with the "... Prime Volitions – fibrils, vains, / Will-tissues, nerves, and pulses of the Cause", labouring through the "Earth's compositure", through all and indivisible, where human figures move like puppet-watchers whose strings are pulled by the Prime Mover and cognition of this "Prime Mover of the gear" is impossible (*DI. Fore Scene, 6-7*).

The function of the Spirit of the Years is only to register and watch (*DI. Fore Scene, 2*). The Spirit of the Years shows how the old laws operated phases of men's dynastic lines repeatedly by analogy. It considers the Will as passive to men who are prone to suffering. However, it claims that it does not care for the result. The Spirit of the Years says:

Already change
Hath played strange pranks since first I brooded here.
But old Laws operate yet, and phase and phase
Of men's dynastic and imperial moils
Shape on accustomed lines. Though, as for me,
I care not how they shape, or what they be.
(*DI. Fore Scene, 3*)

It seems that there is a connection between the spirit of the Years, telling the human story itself, the principle of consciousness, and the vast Unconscious, or the Prime Cause. John H. Astington argues that the Spirit of the Years, similar to the Will, is "aloof, cold, fatalistic, inhuman" and it "reveals the 'workings of the Will', albeit that the events are predetermined, so that the two forces exist in a very close relationship."¹⁰ Amiya Chakravarty insists that:

The Spirit of the Years is the rational principle, objectively recording facts as they happen and placing them in time sequence with the facts that have happened before. It has no business to draw conclusions or to forecast events. It can only note changes in the historical process as they become known.¹¹

The younger Spirit of the Pitiees calls at the elder Spirit of the Years for at least a little mercy on mankind (*DI. Fore Scene, 4*). It states that if everything works according to the

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opinion of the Spirit of the Years, it will be a terrestrial tragedy. Supporting this opinion, it uses "men of deep art in life-development" (DI. Fore Scene, 3), loving the truth, the excellent. After the disappearance of the anatomy of the Immanent Will, the Recording Angel, in an aerial music, sums the historical events so that the spectacles can converse on the earth tragedy. There is "far-off Consequence" of the Prime Cause, on which the spectacles may but muse without learning, appears itself during historical happenings which, in turn, may be used to answer the philosophical enquiries:

We'll close up Time, as a bird its van,
We'll traverse Space, as Spirits can,
Link pulses severed by leagues and years,
Bring cradles into touch with biers;
So that the far-off Consequence appears
Prompt at the heel of foregone Cause.—

The PRIME, that willed ere wareness was,
Whose Brain perchance is Space, whose Thought its laws,
Which we as threads and streams discern,
We may but muse on, never learn.

DI. Fore Scene, 7) (

Finally, the Phantoms traverse time and space and enter Europe during the Napoleonic Wars.

Hardy says in *The Dynasts*, that the doctrines of his Spirits "are but tentative, and are advanced with little eye to a systematized philosophy warranted to lift 'the burthen of the mystery' of this unintelligible world." He hoped for them and their speeches a "dramatic plausibility" sufficient for obtaining, what Coleridge calls "that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith."¹² He designes his Spirits, he says, as replacements, for "Divine personages from ... antique Mythology as ready-made sources or channels of Causation," or for "the celestial machinery of, say, *Paradise Lost*, ... *Iliad* or *Eddas*."¹³ Such contrivance, Hardy thinks, is a "divergence from classical and other dramatic precedent which ruled the ancient voicings of ancient themes"¹⁴ and perhaps acceptable to the twentieth century. Hardy's divergence forces a fundamental change of form from models like Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, Goethe's *Faust*, and the *Persae and Oresteia of Aeschylus*, which have both characteristics of epic and drama. He looks forward to be a modern epic-dramatist.

Hardy's "Phantasmal intelligences" in *The Dynasts* represent abstractions, true realities of life. Donald Baker, who suggests man's stoic acceptance of his destiny, connecting Hardy with the past, admits that references to "abstractions," "Spirits," and "spectral figures," with the implication that they are to be seen as larger than life, even in fact "supra-naturalistic", foreshadow the formal and technical proposals for a new kind of theatre in the works of Daniel Craig and Antonin Artaud, two British theatre's most famous actors. Both Craig and Artaud maintained a form of theatre as a diversion from the conventional theatres, which are still present in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The aim was to present "authentically motivated characters and naturalistically constructed scenes".¹⁵ Hardy appears to reject such convention thirty years before Craig published in 1911 his proposals for a "supra-naturalistic" theatre. In the epic-drama the Immanent Will is visualized, where "the

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faces of every row, square, group, and column of men, French and English, wear the expression of that of people in a dream" (DIII.vii. vii, 505). In his theses, *The Theme of Time in the Poetry of Thomas Hardy*, John H. Astington argues that Time is a dream; the external reality has been reversed by looking through it to something deeper.¹⁶ This scene corresponds to Plato's philosophical Cave myth.

On the other hand, the Phantoms are personified in the epic-drama and introduced according to their age hierarchy. The younger Spirit of the Pities called as Spirit of Compassion (DI. i. ii, 15), the eldest Spirit of the Years addressed by others Sire (DI. i. ii, 15), (DI. i. vi, 36), Father Years (DI. i. vi, 34), Eldest-born of the Unconscious Cause (DI. ii. ii, 42), Old Years (DIII. vi. iii, 467), the Shade of Earth called as dear Dame (DIII. i. v, 345), the Spirit Ironic, admonished by the Spirit of the Pities, and the lowest status, the Spirit Sinister and the Spirit of Rumour that result from their utterances in prose. The Spirit of the Years refers to the hierarchy of the Phantoms when it addresses the young Spirit of Rumour, saying:

The younger here of our ethereal band
And hierarchy of Intelligences,

(D 1.1.III, p. 26)

The Phantoms sometimes speak to people in disguise: "The four phantoms enter the Gallery of the House in the disguise of the ordinary strangers" (DI. i. iii, 17). In the disguise of a young foreigner, the Spirit of Rumour appreciates the English nature in a dialogue with a woman in front of the Tuileries. This discrepancy in the Phantoms is clear from Hardy's double labelling: the Phantoms and Spirits. It seems that the inconsistency concerning the personification of the Spirits—Phantoms may be adequate to Hardy's denial for personifying God. Hardy himself in the "Preface" to *The Dynasts* emphasizes that the doctrines of the Spirits do not represent systematized philosophy, as the Spirits are hoped to have enough dramatic and theological plausibility.¹⁷

Although the Phantoms in *The Dynasts* have their origin in ancient literature, they represent Hardy's method of myth-making. On June 16, 1875, he wrote in his notebook: "Reading the Life of Goethe. Schlegel says that 'the deepest want and deficiency of all modern art lies in the fact that the artists have no mythology.'"¹⁸ Evelyn Hardy adds the following comments:

This is an interesting note: Hardy's mind was mythopoeic, as well as analytic, and though he continually strove to impose the dictates of reason, his interest in the occult, in the unconscious, and in myth and legend, continued to obtrude, almost to his astonishment.¹⁹

For Orel, the senior Spirit (the Spirit of the Years) promotes Stoic philosophical doctrine.²⁰ The first part of Hardy's thought, as expressed by the Spirit of the Years, is that

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everything is ruled by an absolute logical necessity. The same idea is expressed by Bailey, saying: The Spirit of The Years functions as an objective spectator who seems to "represent the stoic and scientific part of Hardy's thought".²¹ This is opposed by the young Spirit of the Pities, representing Humanity of the Tertiary Age²² (*DI*. i. vi, 37), which has faith in a future progress. The Spirit of the Pities is supported by the Spirit Ironic, another young Phantom, which ironically comments on human behaviour, but these comments imply some interest in human destiny too. It speaks two words only in the "Fore Scene", but they are pregnant of ironic meaning; when the Spirit of the Pities says: "Let this terrestrial tragedy_", the Spirit Ironic replies: "Nay, comedy—" (*DI*. Fore Scene, 4). The Spirit Ironic seems to be unsatisfied with the inconsistencies that it observes: it laughs at human predicaments. In fact, the Spirit Ironic seems to combine the visions of Hardy: the vision of the Spirit of the Pities and to add something of its own by way of comment; It sees the comedy in tragedy, the reality behind appearance. The irony produced by the Spirit Ironic has the effect of reducing man's mistakes to his proper scale. It finds humour in the fraternity of enemy soldiers during a battle lull; thus, irony, as the Spirit Ironic points out, resulting from man's ignorance of the future, enjoying his humour at the expense of human self-interest.

The Spirit Sinister admires war and supports Napoleon (*DI*. ii. v, 54). The Spirit Sinister seems to stand for malice. It "is sketchily blocked in", says Orel, and "seems to stand for a kind of malice and love of evil for its own sake. He approves of the most blackguardly of Napoleon's actions, and admires war for its bloody brutality."²³ Hardy does not give it a big role; the number of its speeches is limited. The Shade of the Earth does not averse, just the "... ineffectual Shade ... a thrall / To It ..." (*DI*. Fore Scene, 3), it growls as war is devastating the Earth. The Spirit of Rumour personifies rumour, Spirit-Messengers and Recording Angels record the news. Hardy believes that the governing Force would attain consciousness and that man's lot would be improved thereby. Such belief is expressed through the character of the Spirit of the Pities. Hardy, John Firth believes, "does not identify himself with the Spirit Ironic in its scepticism or with the Spirit Sinister in its sardonicism; he identifies himself throughout the drama with the Spirit of the Pities."²⁴

The epic-drama closes with the Chorus, uttering the hope that the Will will become conscious and sympathetic. The Spirits form a Chorus, which knows more than people and may evaluate the meaning of human actions. This differentiates Hardy's chorus from the Greek Choruses. In the following words Hardy answers those who criticize his use of celestial machinery to illustrate his philosophy:

What the reviewers really assert is, not 'This is an untrue and Inartistic view of life, ' but 'This is not the view of life that people who thrive on conventions and permit to be painted'. If, instead of the machinery I adopted, I had constructed a theory of a world directed by fairies, nobody would have objected, and the critics would probably have said 'What a charming fancy of Mr. Hardy's!' But having chosen a scheme which may or may not be a valid one, but is presumably much nearer reality than the fancy of a world ordered by fairies would be, they straightway lift their brows.²⁵

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Hardy's intention is to find a balance between logic and emotionalism. In his diary he writes: "Rationalists err as far in one direction as Revelationists or Mystics in the other".²⁶ Long before Hardy began writing *The Dynasts*, the idea of presenting a co-ordinated spectacle of life in which reason and emotion would be shown in action and interaction was being formulated in his mind, and this is to be found in *The Dynasts*. In May 9, 1981, Hardy writes in his diary that he is always "trying to reconcile a scientific view of life with the emotional and spiritual."²⁷ He tries to unite the idea of evolution in Nature with the existence of human feelings, and human life. According to Florence Hardy, he makes this response to Joseph McCabe's proposal to include him in a Biographical Dictionary of Modern Rationalists, in this way:

He says he thinks he is rather an irrationalist rather than a rationalist, on account of his inconsistencies. He has, in fact, declared as much in prefaces to some of his poems, where he explains his views as being mere impressions that frequently change. Moreover, he thinks he could show that no man is a rationalist, and human actions are not ruled by reason at all in last resort.²⁸

Hardy emphasizes many times that the philosophy he undertakes is his own rather than an echo of others. Hardy, in a note dated June 2, 1907, states:

That the Unconscious Will of the Universe is growing aware of Itself I believe I may claim as my own idea solely— at which I arrived by reflecting that what has already taken place in a fraction of the whole (i.e. so much of the world as has become conscious) is likely to take place in the mass..., and "I believe... that the Prime Cause, this Will, has never before been called "It" in any poetical literature, English or Foreign."²⁹

Despite the fact that his poetic design is original, Hardy's view of the unconscious, as Florence Hardy admits, approximates to the Jewish philosopher, Spinoza³⁰ (1634-77). Recently, Spinoza has been celebrated as a champion of individual freedom. Spinoza's "intellectual love of God" is much "the same intimate union of thought and feeling."³¹ The first part of Spinoza's thought is that what governs the universe is not Purpose but Necessity. The other hypothesis of Spinoza's philosophical view is that human cognizance is a part of God's cognizance, through which God's self-cognizance is realized. Hardy's hope in the growing self-consciousness of the Immanent Will as expressed by the Spirit of the Pities approximates to Spinoza's thought. Spinoza is known as "the noblest and most lovable of the great philosophers. Intellectually, some others have surpassed him, but ethically he is supreme."³² For Spinoza, "He who clearly and distinctly understands himself and his emotions, loves God, and so much the more as he more understands himself and his emotions."³³ This proposition introduces the "intellectual love of God," in which wisdom is contained. The intellectual love of God is a union of thought and emotion. Spinoza does not, like the Stoics, object to all emotions; he supports those who appear to be active in the power of outside forces. The belief that everything as part of God is love of God. When all objects refer to God, the idea of God will fully occupy the mind. This seems the same belief of Hardy

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who exemplified it in the interpretations of the Spirit of the Pitiees. Spinoza's "intellectual love of God" is much the same intimate union of thought and feeling. "Every one", says Bertrand Russell, "who has done any kind of creative work has experienced...the state of mind in which, after long labour, truth, or beauty, appears, or seems to appear, in a sudden glory—it may be only about some small matter, or it may be about the universe." Russell also thinks that "most of the best creative work, in art, in science, in literature, and in philosophy, has been the result of such a moment."³⁴ The experience, at the moment, is very convincing and there is utter certainty; Hence, experience is necessary to any good creative work. Thus, *The Dynasts* is the result of Hardy's experiences throughout his life, in which he considered the idea of Unconscious Will becoming conscious with flux time as original.

The primary conflict developing in the epic-drama is between the concept of incognizance of true reality of the Mover introduced by the Spirit of the Years and the belief of the Spirit of the Pitiees in growing self-consciousness of the General or Immanent Will. In fact, these inconsistencies, in the philosophical framework of Hardy's *The Dynasts*, stem from the imaginative nature of the epic-drama. Throughout the epic-drama, the Spirit of the Pitiees tries to give an answer to the question: what is man like? The nature of the characters in the drama supports its belief in the existence of honest men. Moreover, the Chorus of the Pitiees speaks for Hardy and expresses his deistic attitude.

Hardy, in *The Dynasts*, stresses the importance of Pain for getting gain as The Spirit of the Pitiees says:

...For the large potencies
Instilled into his idiosyncrasy—
To throne fair Liberty in Privilege' room—
Are taking taint, and sink to common plots
For his own gain.

(DI. Fore Scene, 3)

Hardy stresses that not until pain is felt to all upon the globe, hope spread, and that pain, "tongued or dumb," is "kept down to a minimum by loving-kindness [the Spirit of the Pitiees]".³⁵

Hardy's intention, to find a balance between rationalism and emotionalism, is very impressive in his writings. However, emotions, for Hardy, have charming and imposing strong effect on his mind. The Spirit of the Years (spirit of reason) says to the Spirit of the Pitiees (spirit of compassion): "You almost charm my long philosophy / Out of my strong-built thought" (DI. After Scene, 524). However, the Spirit sympathetic (the Spirit of the pitiees) is recognized as the youngest and the latest development in Hardy's doctrine. Hardy seems to be pleased by an Australian admirer who wrote to him:

My thanks for your tremendous new statement in *The Dynasts* of the world-old problem of Freewill versus Necessity. You have carried me on to the mountain with Jesus of Nazareth and viewing with Him the great conflict below, one

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chooses with Him to side with the spirit of the Pitiees, in the belief that they will ultimately triumph.... The spirit of the Pitiees is indeed young in comparison with the Years, and so we must be patient... Your conception of the Immanent Will-irresponsible, blind, but possibility growing into self-consciousness, was of great significance to me, from my knowledge of Dr. Bucke's theory of the Cosmic Consciousness.³⁶

Hardy is brought up as a traditional Christian and his wish to believe in an omnipotent God has been continued, even when his intellect forced an urgent disbelief. In 1890, he wrote in his notebook: "I have been looking for God 50 years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him."³⁷ Such note, says Demond Bawkin, reinforces the desire to affirm the existence of God. This idea affects the plots of his novels: "in some corner of his heart Hardy seems to desire to see his protagonists damned. It is almost as if damnation were the one certain proof of God's existence."³⁸

After witnessing the historical events of the Napoleonic Wars, the Spirit of the Years in "After Scene" tries to prove the passivity of the Will:

Yet seems this vast and singular confection
Wherein our scenery glints of scantest size,
Inutile all—so far as reasonings tell.

(DIII. After Scene, 522)

The Spirit of the Years accepts the Will as the Prime Mover of human deeds, in its consequence, deprives people of their responsibility. Napoleon's individual will seems just the representation of the Immanent Will: as soon as he finishes his role, Napoleon will disappear from the World scene. The history of the Napoleonic Wars and Napoleon's historical role in it are the evidence of determination. But the solution of the philosophical question of the Will is found in the words of the Spirit of the Pitiees, which believes in a good God who seems to be identical with the Will and to whom a request resembling a prayer is sent. The Spirit of the Pitiees believes that the growing of self-consciousness of the Will is the essential factor for the possible change of human behaviour throughout history. It represents an idealistic compassion, as the Choruses sing:

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

(D After Scene, p. 525)

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The Choruses inexplicitly argue for some possibility of human will. The Spirit of the Pities believes in the Will with mercy far from the inert Will proposed by the Spirit of the Years. This Will is hymned by the Semichoruses of the Pities:

Yea, Great and Good, Thee, Thee we hail,

.....
Though times be when the mortal moan
Seems unascending to Thy throne,
Though seers do not as yet explain
Why suffering sobs to Thee in vain;
We hold that Thy unscanted scope
Affords a food for final Hope,
That mild-eyed Prescience ponders nigh
Life's loom, to lull it by-and-by.

.....
Exultant adoration give
The Alone, through Whom all living live,
The Alone, in Whom all dying die,
Whose means the End shall justify! Amen.

(D After Scene, p. 522-3)

It is obvious that this hymn resembles a religious prayer.

Men are continually tested by forces of good and evil. When a dynastic struggle begins, man's conditions may turn to the worst and popular passions turn to hero-worship. The Chorus of the Pities says:

The soul of a nation distrest
Is aflame,
And heaving with eager unrest
In its aim
To assert its old prowess, and stouten its chronicled fame!
(DII. i. iii, 156)

Thus, "man is subject not only to the General Will but to the weaknesses (defects and taints) of character, says Pinion."³⁹ It is in this sense that man fatal destiny, which is expressed by the Spirit of Rumour, saying: "character indeed be fate" (DII. vi. vi, 310). In time of crisis leaders may be shaken in the web, which connects all the apparently separate shapes including even Wellington in its tissue with the rest, and showing him, like them, as acting while discovering his intention to act."⁴⁰ The Spirit of Rumour notices:

The crisis shapes and nears
For Willington as for his counter-chief.
(DIII. vii. Vii, 504)

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The Pities continues:

The hour is shaken him, unshakeable
As he may seem!
(DIII. vii. Vii, 505)

The Dynasts is an epic-drama of war as Hardy sings in the title page: "And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong, / And trumpets blown for war". The theme of war is well-developed throughout *The Dynasts*. Fifty-one out of a hundred and thirty-one scenes are devoted to conducting this theme, including the battles at Trafalgar, Ulm, Austerlitz, Jena, in the Peninsula (Vimiero, Coruna, Talavera, Albuera, Salamanca, Vitoria, Nivelles), at Wagram, Borodino, the Beresina River, Leipzig, and Ligny, Quatre-Bras, and Waterloo. Hardy provides these scenes with real historical figures of commanders and officers. However, the names of common soldiers are mentioned rarely and generally, only in footnotes. The facts concerning the amount of arms, number of soldiers, times, descriptions of uniforms, positions of headquarters, and names of ships are also presented. This epic-drama contains many contemporary songs, for example, when the British columns march from Brussels, they sing the *Brighton Camp or the Girl I've left behind me* (DIII. vi. iv, 468).

In spite of the Spirit Sinister's argument that "War makes rattling good history; but Peace is poor reading" is not intelligent, it seems partly truthful. Wars have been the theme and background of countless epic and dramatic works, and the subject of countless historical books. Men have always fought wars and seem to be enthralled by them. War may be, and indeed, as illustrated by Spirit Sinister and exemplified in men's finding delight in it, is good history, but this good history is also pitiful. Hardy stresses the senselessness and illogicality of war where common people of different nationalities kill each other, although they personally have no reason for mutual hostility. The Spirit of the Pities renders it impressively in the battle at Talavera:

What I see but thirsty, throbbing bands
From these inimic hosts defiling down
In homely need towards the little stream
That parts their enmities, and drinking there!
They get to grasping hands across the rill,
Sealing their sameness as earth's sojourners. –
What more could plead the wryness of the times
Than such unstudied piteous pantomines!
(DII. iv. v, 245)

Pity is undeniable and explicit in *The Dynasts*, which tells pitiful stories. It is impossible not to pity the suffering and pain of the deserters. For example, in the scene of the retreat of the English army near Astorga in Spain, where they are dead drunk and nearly naked, one of them is embracing a dead woman, and a voice comes from the still retreating army, saying: "It is the worst case of brutality and plunder that we have had in this wretched time!" (DII. iii. I,

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208). There is pity in the lengthy death of the unknown soldiers, showing how meaningless and senseless the rhetoric of war is.

There are English officers who, like Willington, risk their life to fulfill their duties. In the scene when the English army retreats near Astorga in Spain, the Sergeant, while exhausted and cold and tries to hide his pain from racking cough, encourages his soldiers to proceed and fight against the French forces (DII. iii. i). Sir Arthur Wellesley who becomes Lord Wellington, like Nelson, dedicates his duties to the nation rather than to his own life. He feels as obliged to his duty to his nation as his soldiers. Wellington keeps his head up even in the situation of big losses, when he is in danger of losing his life in the battle at Waterloo, he says:

. . . to hold out unto the last,
As long as one man stands on one lame leg
With one ball in his pouch! – then end as I.
(DIII. vii. vii, 507)

He also explains what shame may result from losing the war:

And though the day seems wearing doubtfully,
Beaten we must not be! What would they say
Of us at home, if so?

(DIII. vii. vii, 508)

Patriotism in Europe is characterized and intensified in the period of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Hardy expressed his opinion of patriotism in his diary on September 8, 1886: "...certain things may ... be good ... e. g. patriotism ..." ⁴¹ He also wrote in an undated note: "Patriotism...if in sympathy" with some contries, a virtue." ⁴² Orel points out, Hardy's emphasis on England as Napoleon's obsession which mobilizes the English to prevent the Emperor from achieving the complete triumph unifies the confusion of historical events. ⁴³ The patriotism of other nations, e.g. of Russia, protecting their homeland is not much elaborated in the epic-drama. Napoleon himself bitterly admits his failure to humiliate the pride of the English, their ability to save their own country:

Saving always England's –
. . .she
Whose tough, enisled, self-centred, kindless craft
. . . made herself the means of mangling me!
(DIII. vii. ix, 520)

Pinion asserts that Hardy's intention is not only to present "... England with conscious patriotic pride", thus, his subject is not only "the heroic part played by a nation; it was rather the international suffering of humanity caused by few." ⁴⁴

In "Part One", Villeneuve's refusal to risk rotten ships and men, a refusal which is the result of the ordain of conscience (DI. ii. ii, 42); Fox's refusal to accept Grevilliere's offer to

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assassinate Napoleon places state honor before false political advancement (*DI. i. iii, 34*); Sir John Moore's refusal to take the place of the wounded Colonel Wynch in a wagon clarifies the notion that self-interest is inferior to altruism. Moreover, General Mack's decision not to disperse the army before the battle at Ulm, and Napoleon's proclamation about the expected invasion of the English shore after the battle at Trafalgar; and, most supremely, Nelson's lament for the death of the French sniper who has shot him put common humaneness before personal revenge:

'Twas not worth while! - He was, no doubt, a man
Who in simplicity and sheer good faith
Strove but to serve his country. Rest be to him!
And may his wife, his friends, his little ones,
If such he had, be tided through their loss,
And soothed amid the sorrow brought by me.
(*DI. v. iv, 95*)

The capacity for self-sacrifice in the characters of *The Dynasts* shares a rigorous concept of duty to something other than the self. The comments of dying Nelson, Villeneuve, Pitt, and Moore emphasize the notion that duty is superior to self-interest. Nelson, for example, both as a historical figure as well as the character in *The Dynasts*, is fearless and simple-minded, passionately loyal to his King. He was a worthy antagonist of Napoleon. Hardy with the view of his imaginative work chooses only Nelson's features which represent the contrast to Napoleon's longing for his own power, his own dynastic line, his own profit, as well as his cowardice. Actually, good men, such a Nelson, serve as foils for the French Emperor.

These examples expose free will, debated by the explanatory and interpretive remarks of the Phantoms, as well as, the progression of the historical events. In "Part Two", on the surface, there seems inconsistency between Napoleon's denial to take the blame for his failure, proclaiming that he is ruled by fate, and continuous belief in his possession of his own great power. The decision-making of Josephine and Maria Louisa, who accept what seems to be necessary and unavoidable, does not mean that Hardy was not aware of his interest in history and his tendency to present the historical events in detail, but for revealing other important themes, such as the theme of the relation between men and women. Josephine complains about her relationship with Napoleon who intrigued with Madame Walewska:

...The independent spouse
At that time was myself; but afterwards
I grew to be the captive, he the free.
Always 'tis so: the man wins finally!
(*DIII. iv. vii, 423*)

Josephine reacts very emotionally, though she acts out of love for Napoleon (*DII. v. ii*). Although Napoleon limits her good will and ignores her feelings when he proposes to Maria Louisa, she feels love and dedication for him and feels like going with him to Elba as she admits when she is dying:

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 shown
Between him and the woman of his choice
For whom he sacrificed me.

(DIII. iv. vii, 422)

Thus, her attitude does not change even after Napoleon loses his power. The Spanish Queen Maria Luisa is primarily worried about the safety of General Godoy, the husband of Princess Theresa of Bourbon, who she loves. Princess Theresa of Bourbon, although she knows that Godoy has love affairs with other women, she tries her best to save him from the advancing Napoleon's army, and the folk who are angry with him because of his failure to defend the country (DII. ii. ii). During the Conference of the Allies in Vienna, the ministers and sovereigns move to talk apart leaving the ladies, even the Grand Duchesses and Empress acting aloof (DIII. v. ii). Woman's having no legal identity as distinct from man is a dominant theme of Hardy's other works and well-illustrated in *The Dynasts* as he was continually affected by women's suffering. Women, in *The Dynasts*, are partly idealized, though their free will is limited. The Austrian Archduchess Maria, in her dressing the uniform before the battle at Wagram, wishes Napoleon to die. In fact, patriotism caused her to join the army and fight for her country. But because man is limited by heredity and environment, she hopelessly accepts the marriage to Napoleon as her duty, her decision and choice is limited by her father's denial of her emotional objections (DII. v. iii). Similar to the French Empress Marie Louise, her loyalty is exemplified when she sacrifices herself for her husband and children. Before the occupation of Paris by the allies, after the battle at Leipzig (DIII. iv. iii, 404), and after Napoleon's flight from Elba, like Napoleon, she puts the blame on fate:

...Methinks that I was born
Under an evil-coloured star, whose ray
Darts death at joys! ...

(DIII. v. ii, 433)

Napoleon is the main protagonist of *The Dynasts* who seems to be the aggressively, highly forward-moving character of the events in Europe in the years 1805-1815. As an epic drama, *The Dynasts* follows the rise and fall of Napoleon's dynastic effort. The antagonism of his character, as the Spirit of the Pities emphasizes during the Coronation ceremony, lies in the fact that he is brought to power by the French Revolution, which is based on anti-dynastic principles as if it was a free choice (DI. i. vi, 33). Napoleon himself admits his only purpose "To make good showance to posterity / Was to implant my line upon the throne" and he brought everything to it (DIII. vii. ix, 520). Such qualities are also present in Emperor Francis and Emperor Alexander. Although Emperor Francis proclaims love and respect for his daughter's decision about Napoleon's proposal to marry her when he says: "affection is my duty, heart my guide" (DII. v. iii, 269), he, then, asks his Prime Minister to convince her by referring to her duty and obligations to the nation. The Emperor is emotionally loyal. He laments, shedding tears, the pain of his brave soldiery at Austerlitz (DI. vi. v, 121), but like

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Napoleon says: "Each for himself, his family, his hiers; / For the wan weltering nations who concerns, who cares?" (DII. i. vii, 125) After the Prussian army being defeated and while Napoleon and Alexander are planning for "cutting up" the world, Alexander shows sympathy with the Prussian Queen Louisa, for whom he asks Napoleon for kindness and mercy (DII. i. vii, viii). Giving his fortification to Napoleon, Alexander hesitantly gives approval to Napoleon's proposal for marrying his sister. Finally he stops feeling sympathy with both the Prussian Queen (DII. i. viii) and his sister (DII. v. vii) for the sake of more superior thing; his dynastic plans. Alexander and Francis are characterized by the sentiment of tenderness. In fact, their family is inferior to their dynasty.

"Part Third" is seen as more integrated than "Part Second". Marshal Ney's disobedience to Napoleon's direction to occupy Quatre-Bras as announced by the Spirit of Roumor: "Therewith the foe's accessions harras Ney, / Racked that no needful d'Erlon darks the way!" (DIII. vi. ii, 476) and Grouchy's divisions' disability to return in time because "A note from Bulow to Lord Wellington, / Announcing that a Prusian corps is close (DIII. vii. ii, 490) participate in the fall of Napoleon. Moreover, on the basis of the procession of Napoleon's tests and his effort to exercise his own will, however poorly, Hardy shows that Napoleon lost the game because of his weaknesses, and this led to the fall of his dynasty. The result of this game culminates in Napoleon's finally acknowledgment that he passively obeys the Will. Wellington, on the other hand, remains firm in his attitude to duty. He venerates the lives of his soldiers. He does not risk their lives for nothing, as exemplified in the battle of Waterloo when he orders his men, who form square columns of the infantry, to hide behind the hill as long as possible and fire to drive back the cavalry (DIII. vii. Iv, 496-8). Grieved at losing General Picton, he mentions the latter's firm, resolute, and courageous action, and says: "...But never a man / More stout in fight, more stoical in blame!" (DIII. vii. iv, 493) Because of his deliberate plans and judgments (DIII. vi. v) and, unlike Napoleon, his advocacy for his soldiers in adverse situations (DIII. vii. viii), Wellington succeeds in limiting Napoleon's aggressive actions. Unlike Napoleon, who has little emotion and depending on reason, Wellington represents a man who has a balance between emotion and reason. Wellington stays composed and calm and does not fall into a rage or apathy as Napoleon did. Hardy tries to reconcile the two sides of his work by thinking of an alliance between religion and complete rationality by means of the interfusing effect of poetry. Hardy's infinite effort is to reconcile a scientific view of life with the emotional and spiritual, so that they may not be interdestructive. Wellington's self-controlled positive emotivity can be compared to Nelson whose emotion, though does not matter great, is superior to his reason, as exemplified in his passionate relationship to women. When Duke Bruswick swears to revenge his father, he recommends:

Take cheerful views of the affair in hand,
And fall to 't with sang froid!

(DIII. vi. ii, 459)

Hardy composes an epic-drama based on the Napoleonic Wars to explore his ever interesting doctrine, namely "non-rationality". *The Dynasts* is an extremely remarkable and powerful piece of work, full of ideality, and compact with imagination. It is a great, modern

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epic-drama of the intelligence—a vision of the world imbued with amazing significance, and amazing originality of conception. It is a monument of true poetic feeling and deep study of human nature.

Notes

¹Florence Emily Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892-1928* (London: Macmillan, 1930), 83.

²David Adams Leeming, *The Oxford Companion to World Mythology* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2009), 313.

³Roy Morrell, *Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965), 141.

⁴Hardy, 90.

⁵Ibid., 218.

⁶Ibid., 175.

⁷Ibid., 96.

⁸Cited in Katerina Koutkova, "*The Thomas Hardy's Verse Drama: The Dynasts.*" Master's thesis. University of Pardubice, 2011. [http://www.google.iq/#hl=ar&rlz=1C2AVSH_arIQ498&q=The+Thomas Hardy%C2%B4s+Verse+Drama...](http://www.google.iq/#hl=ar&rlz=1C2AVSH_arIQ498&q=The+Thomas+Hardy%C2%B4s+Verse+Drama...) (accessed: 2/1/2013),16.

⁹Amiya chakravarty, *The Dynasts and the Post-War Age in Poetry: A Study in Modern Ideas* (Oxford: University Press, 1938), 74.

¹⁰John H. Astington, "*The Theme of Time in the Poetry of Thomas Hardy,*" (master's thesis, McMaster University, 1967), in Open Dissertations and Theses, <http://digitalcommons.mcmaster.ca/opendissertations/4852> (accessed: April 1, 2012), 17.

¹¹chakravarty, 27.

¹²Thomas Hardy, *The Dynasts: an Epic-drama of the War with Napoleon* (London : Macmillan, 1919), viii.

¹³Ibid., viii-ix.

¹⁴Ibid., viii.

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¹⁵Donald Baker , "Thomas Hardy: Prophet of Total Theatre," *Comparative Drama* 7, no. 2 (Summer, 1973), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41152607> (accessed: 22/3/2012),14.

¹⁶Astington, 21-26.

¹⁷Hardy, *The dynasts*, viii.

¹⁸Evelyn Hardy, ed. *Thomas Hardy's Notebooks* (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), 51.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 51.

²⁰Harold Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Epic-Drama: A Study of The Dynasts* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1963), 70.

²¹J. O. Baily, *Thomas Hardy and the Cosmic Mind: A New Reading of The Dynasts* (Chapel Hill: university of North Carolina Press, 1956), 52.

²²The Tertiary period begins with the catastrophe that killed off the dinosaurs , about 65 million years ago, and it lasts down to 1.8 million years ago. With nearly all of the dinosaurs gone, there was plenty of room on Earth for the mammals to have lots of babies, and soon there were all different kinds of mammals all over the Earth. Here, the Spirit of the Pities has faith in the progress of humanity over time.

²³Orel, 71.

²⁴John Joseph Firth, "Thomas Hardy: Victorian and Modern Ironist" (PhD <http://hdl.handle.net/10393/21390> dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1960), (accessed: 12/3/2012), 75.

²⁵Hardy, *Later years*, 104.

²⁶Hardy, *Later Years*, 121.

²⁷Florence Emily Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928), 192.

²⁸Hardy, *Later Years*, 210.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 125.

³⁰*Ibid.*,128.

³¹Bertrand Russell, *The History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Stratford press, 1945), 123.

³²Ibid., 569.

³³Ibid., 576.

³⁴Ibid., 123.

³⁵Cited in F. B. Pinion, *A Hardy Companion: A guide to the works of Thomas Hardy and their background* (1968; repr., London: Macmillan, 1984), 104.

³⁶Hardy, *Later Years*, 127-128.

³⁷Hardy, *Early Life* 293.

³⁸Desmond Bawkins, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1950), 74.

³⁹Pinion, 105.

⁴⁰Ibid., 106.

⁴¹Hardy, *Later Years*, 54.

⁴² Cited in Koutkova, 16.

⁴³Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Epic-Drama* 56-57.

⁴⁴Pinion, 114.

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الاهمية الفلسفية في قصيدة توماس هاردي (السلالات)

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الخلاصة

تكمن ايجابية توماس هاردي بصورة رئيسية في مواضيع اللاعقلانية والتي تبدو له على انها مبدا الكون. لايعني هاردي باللاعقلانية على انها تفاهة بل كونها المبدأ الكائن في مفترق العقلانية مع نقيضتها. يستكشف هذا البحث مفهوم هاردي للاعقلانية في السلالات و هي مسرحية ملحمية على الحروب النابليونية، وهي اروع أعماله. على الرغم من ان هاردي اعتبر فكرة الادراك المتطور لارادة بانها جديده الا انها تقترب من المفهوم الفلسفي لسبينوزا. يستغل هاردي الفلسفة الافلاطونية لاسهاب مذهبه الفلسفي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المسرحية الملحمية، الارادة المطلقة، الوعي، اشباح تجريدية، الامل، الالم، امكانية الاختيار.