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SOME ASPECTS OF HARDY'S VOLUNTARY PHILOSOPHY

1. THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOPENHAUER'S PHILOSOPHY ON HARDY

Schopenhauer's influence on Hardy is beyond any doubt. Schopenhauer's main work *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* appeared as early as 1819, and its English translation *The World as Will and Idea* in 1883--1886, just when Hardy published *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. We do not know whether Hardy knew the concepts of the German philosopher directly or via other philosophers like Nietzsche, Hartmann, Haeckel whom he mentions together with Schopenhauer in his review of Maeterlinck's *Apology for Nature*¹. He mentions Schopenhauer's name also in his novels² but the most striking evidence of Schopenhauer's influence remains the parallelism of their philosophical concepts.

2. THE WILL

The first book of *The World as Will and Idea* begins with Kant. The world is my representation, says Schopenhauer. It is only comprehensible with the aid of the constructs of man's intellect: space, time and causality. But these constructs show the world only as appearance (phenomenon), as a multiplicity of things next to and following one another – not as the

¹ F. E. Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840–1928*, The Macmillan Press, London 1975, p. 14–315.

² T. Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, [in:] *The Thomas Hardy Omnibus*, The Macmillan Press, London 1978, p. 954. Hereafter all references to this edition will be in the text.

thing in itself (noumenon), which Kant considered to be unknowable. The second book advances to a consideration of the essences of the concepts presented. Of all the things in the world, only one is presented to a person in two ways, viz., the person himself: he knows himself externally as body, as appearance and, internally, directly as part of the primary essence of all things, as will – in the general sense that Schopenhauer gave to the concept. The will is the thing in itself, it is unitary, unfathomable, unchangeable, beyond space and time, without causes and purposes. In the world of appearances it is reflected in an ascending series of realizations. From the blind impulses in the forces of inorganic nature, through organic nature (plants and animals), to the rationally guided actions of men, an enormous chain of restless desires, agitations, and drives stretch forth – a continual struggle of the higher form against the lower, an eternally aimless and insatiable striving, inseparably united with misery and misfortune. At the end, however, stands death, the great reproof that the will-to-live receives, posing the question to each single person: Have you had enough?³

Hardy's idea of Will parallels Schopenhauer's concept. It is "a vague thrusting or urging internal force in no predetermined direction"⁴, "an indifferent and unconscious force at the back of things «that neither good nor evil knows»"⁵, in its secondary sense "an effort exercised in a reflex or unconscious manner"⁶. Hardy uses the term "Will" for want of a better definition, finding such categories as "Impulse" or "Power" inadequate to express his idea. In a letter to his friend Edward Clodd he says: «Power» would not do, as power can be suspended or withheld, and the forces of Nature cannot"⁷. And writing to Edward Wright he criticizes the term "Impulse". "The word you suggest – Impulse – seems to imply a driving power behind it; also a spasmodic movement unlike that of, say, the tendency of an ape to become a man and other such processes"⁸.

What Hardy emphasizes in the concept of Will is its blind character, indifference to morality and the lack of consciousness. Especially this last feature seems to him deplorable because it cannot be reconciled with the feelings of a sensitive and thinking humanity: "If Law itself had consciousness how the aspect of its creatures would terrify it, fill it with remorse"⁹. It is the conclusion Hardy arrives at "after infinite trying to reconcile a scientific view of life with the emotional and spiritual, so that they may

³ *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

⁴ F. E. Hardy, *op. cit.*, p. 334.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 337.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

not be interdestructive"¹⁰. Another conclusion is even more radical: "The emotions have no place in a world of defect and it is a cruel injustice that they should have developed in it"¹¹. This and similar perceptions lead him further on to the formulation of evolutionary meliorism, a polemical argument with Schopenhauer's doctrine. Hardy's meliorism consists in the fact of the Will gradually growing into self-consciousness and "fashioning things fair". Answering E. Wright's inquiries concerning *The Dynasts* he writes: "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 world (i.e. so much of the world as has become conscious) is likely to take place in the mass; and there being no Will outside the mass – that is the Universe – the whole Will becomes conscious thereby; and ultimately, it is to be hoped, sympathetic"¹².

The concept of evolutionary meliorism, however, is only a theoretical idea, a vague thought of Hardy's memorandum, which does not have exemplification in his novels.

3. FREE WILL VERSUS NECESSITY

In Schopenhauer's system of thought, absolute freedom is an attribute of will as noumenon. The objectification of Will is the last act of free Will, its leap from the kingdom of freedom into the world of necessity. Henceforth closed in a certain object, determined by its aspirations, drives and ambitions, it lives in a confined world of objects which limit not only gratification of its desires, but also their manifestation, the very shape these desires assume. Man, being only a part of empirical world, is limited to the same extent as other objects by the constituting principles of this world, causality and necessity. Each of his acts is the result of both motives, supplied by the surrounding world and the external, as well as the character with which he is born and which he cannot change. Thus, not only the results of man's actions are determined but also his intentions, the former by causal relations of the world, the latter by the dependence of human desires on innate character. Then where is the room for freedom?

Schopenhauer answers this question referring to Kant and his concepts of empirical and intelligible character. Empirical character, like man in

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 335.

general, as the object of experience is only a phenomenon inextricably bound with the forms of all phenomena (or appearances) – time, space and causality, and subject to their laws. It is man's intelligible character i.e. his will as a thing in itself which is provided with absolute freedom and independence of the law of causality. However this transcendental freedom is not manifested in real life, we can reach it only in the act of abstraction when we forget the phenomenon and its forms trying to grasp mentally the essence of man and being. Thus freedom should not be looked for in a single action of man (*operari*) but in his essence and being (*existentia* and *essentia*). The principle: *libero arbitrio indifferentiae* (absolute freedom of action) should be substituted with: *operari sequitur esse* (action results from being). Shifting freedom from the sphere of action into the sphere of being expands the scope of responsibility. This responsibility only apparently and directly refers to the action, actually concerning the character. "Character is Fate" because it pervades every human act and because we cannot change it.

Kant's and Schopenhauer's reasoning saves freedom only as a concept. Absolute freedom does not pertain to the empirical world. Man is the more free, the deeper is his awareness of limitations imposed by the external world. These limitations result from contradictory aspirations of different objects of the world. In order to coexist with other objects of the world, one must conquer his ambitions and subdue appetites of his will. Freedom thus consists in self-restriction.

Hardy settles the question of will versus necessity in a similar way. The explanation he gives is the following:

The will of a man is [...] neither wholly free or wholly unfree. When swayed by the Universal Will (which he mostly must be as a subservient part of it) he is not individually free; but whenever it happens that all the rest of the Great Will is in equilibrium the minute portion called one person's will is free, just as a performer's fingers are free to go on playing the pianoforte of themselves when he talks or thinks of something else and the head does not rule them¹³.

Schopenhauer's and Hardy's solution are similarly compromising. Hardy thinks that man is free if his individual will does not grow into conflict with the will of others. The equilibrium of which he writes must result from limitation of individual contradictory aspirations. As in Kant's system of thought, absolute freedom in Hardy's universe may be conceived only as an idea, a transcendental fact; in empirical world freedom consists in self-limitation.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

4. THE ETHICS OF SYMPATHY

Schopenhauer's ethics of sympathy points to the negation of will as a possible liberation for man. It summons man to a will-less way of viewing things. A genuine liberation results from breaking through the bonds of individuality imposed by the ego. Whoever feels acts of compassion, of selflessness, of human kindness, and the suffering of other beings as his own is on the way of abnegation of the will to live, achieved by the saints of all peoples and times through ascetism.

Hardy's understanding of sympathy is strikingly similar:

Altruism, or The Golden Rule, or Whatever "Love Your Neighbour as Yourself" may be called, will ultimately be brought about I think by the pain we see in others reacting on ourselves, as if we and they were a part of one body. Mankind, in fact, may be and possibly will be viewed as members of one corporeal frame¹⁴.

5. THE WILL AS NOUMENON

Hardy's concept of Will is a category similar to that of Schopenhauer. The attribute "Immanent" indicates that the Will is not separate and inconsistent with the world, but homogeneous with it. Using the term "Immanent Will", Hardy stresses the fact that the Will objectified is the only manifestation of the Will understood as an abstract or noumenon i.e. devoid of existence which can be experienced by man empirically. Hillis Miller in his demonstrative explanation oversimplifies the mechanism of Immanent Will but perhaps thus brings it closer to popular understanding:

Both halves of the term "Immanent Will" are important. The supreme power is immanent rather than transcendent. It does not come from outside the world, but is a force within nature, part of its substance. It is a version of the inherent energy of the physical world as seen by nineteenth-century science: an unconscious power working by regular laws of matter in motion. Though what happens is ordained by no divine law-giver, the state of the universe at any one moment leads inevitably to its state at the next moment. Existence is made up of an enormous number of simultaneous energies, each doing its bit to make the whole mechanism move. If a man had enough knowledge he could predict exactly what will be the state of the universe ten years from now or ten thousand. All things have been fated from all time¹⁵.

The Will permeates all the objects of the world without exception, realizing their individual aspirations and specific tendencies. It inheres in nature and in man. The melody of the heath in *The Return of the Native*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

¹⁵ H. Miller, *Distance and Desire*, London 1970, p. 14.

reflects its presence. "The wind moves" an infinite number of the mummied heath-bells and makes them emit a sound. However, it seems "it was a single person of something else speaking through each at once"¹⁶.

A man, especially during moments of affliction, is aware of the Will's presence. Then he comprehends it as something separate and external from himself, as an omnipotent force that he burdens with responsibility for his failures and thus relieves himself from the pangs of conscience. He gives it different names: "Immanent Will", "colossal Prince of the World"¹⁷, "Heaven"¹⁸, "sinister intelligence"¹⁹, "the Great Power who moves the world"²⁰, "the President of the Immortals"²¹, "The First Cause"²², "a ruling Power"²³.

The names point out that the Will has not the character of Providence directing human lot. On the contrary when individual aims of the characters are confronted with the lack of supra-individual, general direction, the Will acquires the features of the malicious God killing men for his sport. Although Hardy does not conceive such a God, he stresses the negative aspects of the world perceived as the Will.

In *The Return of the Native* Eustacia Vye tries to excuse herself for refusing to open the door to Mrs. Yeobright, shifting the responsibility to something above her:

Yet, instead of blaming herself for the issue she laid the fault upon the shoulders of some indistinct, colossal Prince of the World, who had framed her situation and ruled her lot²⁴.

By the end of the novel, lost in despair and seeing no way out of the situation, she accuses cruel Heaven of destroying her life:

'How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me! [...] I do not deserve my lot', she cried in a frenzy of bitter revolt. 'O, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control! O, how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all!'²⁵

¹⁶ T. Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, Pan Books, London 1978, p. 60-61. All further page references are from this edition.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

¹⁹ T. Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Pan Books, London 1978, p. 126. All further page references in the text are from this edition.

²⁰ T. Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles...*, p. 1063.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1116.

²² T. Hardy, *The Return of the Native...*, p. 375 and *id.*, *Jude the Obscure*, Macmillan, London 1978, p. 363. All further page references in the text are from this edition.

²³ T. Hardy, *Jude the Obscure...*, p. 150.

²⁴ T. Hardy, *The Return of the Native...*, p. 294.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

Another instance of this feeling is Henchard's behaviour at the pivotal moments of his life, when he learns that Susan is not his daughter and later when he loses everything in corn transactions:

Henchard, like all his kind, was superstitious, and he could not help thinking that the concatenation of events this evening had produced was the scheme of some sinister intelligence bent on punishing him. Yet they had developed naturally²⁶.

The movements of his mind seemed to tend to the thought that some power was working against him.

'I wonder', he asked himself with eerie misgiving; 'I wonder if it can be that somebody has been roasting a waxen image of me, or stirring an unholy brew to confound me! I don't believe in such power; and yet – what if they should ha' been doing it!'²⁷

In *Jude the Obscure* both Sue and Jude refer to the power above them, comprehending it as hostile or friendly depending on the vicissitudes of their lives. At Melchester Jude has no reason to understand the forces as unfriendly.

He took it as a good omen that numerous blocks of stone were lying about, which signified that the Cathedral was undergoing restoration or repair to a considerable extent. It seemed to him, full of the superstition of his beliefs, that this was an exercise of forethought on the part of a ruling Power, that he might find plenty to do in the art he practised while waiting for a call to higher labours²⁸.

Sue's fear of the impact of heredity prompts her to understand the power as hostile. "[...] It makes me feel as if a tragic doom owerhung our family, as it did the house of Atreus"²⁹.

The examples quoted above show how explicitly negative are the features with which the Will is endowed by Hardy's characters at the moments of despair. Their judgement is not disinterested or fair. Involved in the concrete life situation and seeing no solution to its complications, committed to their goals and desires, the protagonists judge subjectively, emotionally and irrationally. The force controlling the world acquires the features of doom and fatality as in classic tragedy. Only occasionally is the development of events understood as natural. From among the characters mentioned so far only Henchard, the Shakespearian tragic hero, can bring himself to view events in this way. His reflections on "the sinister intelligence" responsible for what happens are followed by the thought that the events had developed naturally. More objective judgement, unfluenced by personal feelings and opinions, characterizes especially those of Hardy's protagonists who are made to resign, withdraw from life and assume the position of observers

²⁶ T. Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge...*, p. 126.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

²⁸ T. Hardy, *Jude the Obscure...*, p. 150.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

("watchers from the distance" to use Hillis Miller's terminology). It is also the attitude of objective, omniscient narrator pondering over their fate.

The Will in the latter wording is characterized most of all by its indifference to human life. This feature is revealed in the sarcastic statement of Tess who has reconciled herself to her misfortunes. In the question addressed to Alec she asks:

'How can I pray for you [...] when I am forbidden to believe that the great Power who moves the world would alter his plans on my account?'³⁰

To the similar effect are aimed the last words of the narrator in this novel, commenting on the response of Tess's "relatives" to her lot:

'Justice' was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess. And the d'Urberville knights and dames slept on in their tombs unknowing [...]³¹.

Indifference and the lack of consciousness of the Will are stressed in the narrator's comment on Tess's seduction:

But, might some say, where was Tess's guardian angel? Where was the providence of her simple faith? Perhaps, like that other god of whom the ironical Tishbite spoke, he was talking, or he was pursuing, or he was in a journey, or he was sleeping and not to be awaked³².

The fact that the Will is not tantamount to ethical order and harmony, to the moral principle, is made conspicuous in Clym's observation:

He did sometimes think he had been ill-used by fortune, so far as to say that to be born is a palpable dilemma, and that instead of man aiming to advance in life with glory they should calculate how to retreat out of it without shame. But that he and his had been sarcastically and pitilessly handled is having such irons thrust into their souls he did not maintain long [...]. Human beings, in their generous endeavour to construct a hypothesis that shall not degrade a First Cause, have always hesitated to conceive a dominant power of lower moral quality than their own; and, even while they sit down and weep by the waters of Babylon, invent excuses for the oppression which prompts their tears³³.

All the qualities of the Will mentioned above together with the description of its working are also implicit in the narrative passage in *Jude the Obscure*. The autor makes a distinction between Sue's representation of the world and the forces controlling it at the moment of happiness and tragedy which follows the death of her children. The image of the somnambulist in its

³⁰ T. Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles...*, p. 1063.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 1116.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 898.

³³ T. Hardy, *The Return of the Native...*, p. 376.

complex meaning shows the unconsciousness of the Will as well as its automatic character, its lack of reflectiveness, irrationality and passivity:

They would sit silent, more bodeful of the direct antagonism of things than of their insensate and stolid obstructiveness. Vain and quaint imaginings had haunted Sue in the days when her intellect scintillated like a star, that the world resembled a stanza or melody composed in a dream; it was wonderfully excellent to the half-aroused intelligence, but hopelessly absurd at the full waking; that the First Cause worked automatically like a somnambulist, and not reflectively like a sage; that at the framing of the terrestrial conditions there seemed never to have been contemplated such a development of emotional perceptiveness among the creatures subject to those conditions as that reached by thinking and educated humanity. But affliction makes opposing forces loom anthropomorphous, and those ideas were now exchanged for a sense of Jude and herself fleeing from a persecutor.

'We must conform!' she said mournfully. 'All the ancient wrath of the Power above us has been vented upon us, his poor creatures, and we must submit. There is no choice. We must. It is no use fighting against God!'³⁴

To sum up let us enumerate the features of Immanent Will having taken into account and corrected the distortions of evaluation caused by the commitment of Hardy's protagonists:

- 1) unconscious – the images of the sleeping god and somnambulist;
- 2) indifferent to human lot – neither hostile nor friendly;
- 3) lacking moral qualities that people used to ascribe to it;
- 4) working mechanically and automatically like a somnambulist;
- 5) not reflective like a sage, unthinking, unreasoning, irrational.

6. THE WILL OBJECTIFIED; THE NATURE OF EMPIRICAL WORLD

The Will as noumenon is inaccessible to human cognition; what man experiences in the course of his life is the Will objectified, i.e. the Will incarnated in the objects of the world. In the empirical world of Hardy, as in that of Schopenhauer, the Will is internally at variance, destined for perpetual affirmation by imposing its drives and aspirations on everything which stands in its way. The desires and tendencies of individual objects and men are thus at cross purposes, irreconcilable and clashing with each other. Since an individual constitutes part of the Will as a cosmic force, he faces only one choice, either to work his will on other people or objects or to submit to somebody else's will. Hardy's concept approaches here Darwin's doctrine of "the survival of the fittest". According to it the life of every man seems to be an incessant struggle for survival and the world appears as a great battlefield where everybody fights against everybody else.

³⁴ T. Hardy, *Jude the Obscure...*, p. 362 (emphasis mine).

The mastery of one form of Will over another, the supremacy of one man over another, are contradictory with the laws of ethics and logic, they violate human sense of justice and harmony. However they remain a fact. All the analysed novels show the evidence of it. The examples of inappropriate unions in which one of the partners, usually less noble and admirable if not wicked, dominates and appropriates another, more virtuous and worthy, are the marriages of Jude and Arabella, Sue and Phillotson, Tess and Angel, and especially tragic in its consequences the liaison between Tess and Alec d'Urberville. One of the partners usually gets hold over another in a dishonest way, by means of a lie (Arabella) or concealment of the truth (Phillotson) or by force (Alec d'Urberville), and wilfully or involuntarily uses to destroy another. In *Jude the Obscure* the domination of Arabella over Jude diverts him from his purposes:

Arabella soon reasserted her sway in his soul. He walked as if he felt himself to be another man from the Jude of yesterday. What were his books to him? what were his intentions, hitherto adhered to so strictly, as to not wasting a single minute of time day by day? 'Wasting!' It depended on your point of view to define that: he was just living for the first time: not wasting life. It was better to love a woman than to be a graduate, or a parson, ay, or a pope!³⁵

The narrator's bitter reflection over Tess's seduction stresses the discrepancy of the two orders: ideal and moral versus empirical:

Why it was that upon this beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow as yet, there should have been traced such a coarse pattern as it was doomed to receive; why so often the coarse appropriates the finer thus, the wrong man the woman, the wrong woman the man, many thousands years of analytical philosophy have failed to explain to our sense of order. One may, indeed, admit the possibility of retribution lurking in the present catastrophe³⁶.

The Will in its numerous forms of objectification is as unconscious as the Will in cosmic sense. In human behaviour it is manifested as an impulse, unconscious drive, mechanical in its nature. Once involved in its activity man keeps to his course because once set in motion he cannot stop. It is the force of inertia that pushes him forward. He cannot but continue in the same direction unless he is acted upon by a stronger will. When Angel Clare resolves to desert Tess, he perseveres in his intention by force of impetus. Only a stronger person could discourage him from his plans:

That evening he was within a feather-weight's turn of abandoning his road to the nearest station, and driving across that elevated dorsal line of South Wessex which divided him from his Tess's home. It was neither a contempt for her nature, nor the probable state of her heart, which deterred him.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

³⁶ T. Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles...*, p. 898.

No, it was a sense that, despite her love, as corroborated by Izz's admission, the facts had not changed. If he was right at first, he was right now. And the momentum of the course on which he had embarked tended to keep him going in it, unless diverted by a stronger, more sustained force than had played upon him this afternoon³⁷.

Similarly Henchard once involved in hazardous transactions cannot help risking his fortune because "the momentum of his character (knows) no patience"³⁸.

The internal discourt of the Will makes the phenomenal world, when watched from certain spatial and emotional distance, appear as chaos, the confusion of antagonistic aspirations, muddled up desires, tangled and intersecting paths, fights, encounters, and duels. It is seen in this way by Mrs Yeobright who closely approaches an insight into the essence of the world, though she does not reach complete understanding of it:

What was the great world to Mrs Yeobright? A multitude whose tendencies could be perceived, though not its essences. Communities were seen by her as from a distance; she saw them as we see the throngs which cover the canvases of Sallaert, Van Alsloot, and others of that school - vast masses of beings, jostling, zigzagging, and processioning in definite directions, but whose features are indistinguishable by the very comprehensiveness of the view³⁹.

The same world seems to be more sinister and menacing from the point of view of the man involved in a concrete situation, committed. Such ideas as fight, the battlefield, fighting parties, and combatants are suggested more openly. The narrator of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in the scene following the wife-selling episode contrasts "the wilfull hostilities of mankind "with" the peacefulness of inferior nature"⁴⁰. In a while he reverses the situation and makes the peaceful and innocent nature the most cruel assailant.

In *Jude the Obscure* the main character cannot understand the disparity between the interests of people and of other creatures:

Events did not rhyme quite as he had thought. Nature's logic was too horrid for him to care for. That mercy towards one set of creatures was cruelty towards another sickened his sense of harmony. As you got older, and felt yourself to be at centre of your time, and not at a point in its circumference, as you had felt when you were little, you were seized with a sort of shuddering, he perceived. All around you there seemed to be something glaring, garish, rattling, and the noises and glares hit upon the little cell called your life, and shook it, and warped it⁴¹.

Accidentalism is one of the aspects of the contradiction between ideal (noumenal) world which is inaccessible to man and the phenomenal world

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1031.

³⁸ T. Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge...*, p. 187.

³⁹ T. Hardy, *The Return of the Native...*, p. 191.

⁴⁰ T. Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge...*, p. 16.

⁴¹ T. Hardy, *Jude the Obscure...*, p. 37-38.

which is part of his everyday experience. It is high time Hardy ceased to be criticized for "the excessive reliance upon coincidence in the management of his narratives". We must begin to appraise him in terms of his intention. His aim is to show that "accident" is the concept which contradicts and denies the harmony arbitrarily applied to the world by man in his generous aspiration at order and unfailing principles. Accident is unjustified only from the point of view of a man. It is incredible because it does not fulfil human expectations and wishes concerning the nature of the world.

Dorothy Van Ghent in her essay *On Tess of the d'Urbervilles* enumerates several instances of accidents and coincidences. It is accident that Clare does not meet Tess at the May-walking, when she was "pure" and when he might have begun to court her; coincidence that the mail cart rams Tess's wagon and kills Prince; coincidence that Tess and Clare meet at Talbothays, after her "trouble" rather than before; accident that the letter slips under the rug; coincidence that Clare's parents are not at home when she comes to the vicarage; and so on.

According to the critic only superficially does it seem that this type of event, the accidental and the coincidental, is the least credible of fictional devices, particularly when there is an accumulation of them. She finds certain justification for it in the fact that "«life is like that» – chance, mishap, accident, events that affect our lives while they remain far beyond our control, are a very large part of experience"⁴². Besides, in the accidentalism of Hardy's universe she recognizes "the profound truth of the darkness in which life is cast"⁴³. She also stresses the fact that the really great crises are psychologically motivated (Alec's seduction of Tess, Clare's rejection of her and the murder).

However inspiring and comprehensive is Dorothy Van Ghent's criticism of Hardy's accidentalism, it must be noted that she defends him rather in terms of aesthetic integrity (which she finds in the identification of the principle of the world in *Tess* with earth and nature) than in terms of his philosophic vision. The passage from *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* commenting on the significance of meeting between Tess and Alec presents Hardy's philosophical argument on accidentalism understood as the lack of ontological order:

Thus the thing began. Had she perceived this meeting's import she might have asked why she was doomed to be seen and coveted that day by the wrong man, and not by some other man, the right and desired one in all respects – as nearly as humanity can supply the right and desired; yet to him who amongst her acquaintance might have approximated to this kind, she was but a transient impression half-forgotten.

⁴² D. Van Ghent, *On Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, [in:] *Hardy: A Collection of Critical Views*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall 1963, p. 80.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

In all ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving. Nature does not often say 'See!' to her poor creature at a time when seeing can lead to happy doing; or reply 'Here' to a body's cry of 'Where?' till the hide-and-seek has become an irksome, outworn game. We may wonder whether at the acme and summit of the human progress these anachronisms will be corrected by a finer intuition, a closer interaction of the social machinery than that which now jolts us round and along; but such completeness is not to be prophesied, or even conceived as possible. Enough that in the present case, as in millions, it was not the two halves of a perfect whole that confronted each other at the perfect moment; a missing counterpart wandered independently about the earth waiting in crass obtuseness till the late time came. Out of which maladroit delay sprang anxieties, disappointments, shocks, catastrophes, and passing-strange destinies⁴⁴.

Hardy's accidentalism is not an imperfect and artificial artistic device but the reflection and imitation of the incoherence of the world. His literary universe is, like Schopenhauer's, final, necessary, and causal. Necessity is understood here not as a cause-and-effect chain of events but also as a single event. The abuse of accident by Hardy is not in fact "the abuse" since it remains in line with his philosophical concept and with the dramatic integrity of his novels. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is not exceptional in this respect. Other novels, particularly *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Jude the Obscure*, give many examples of similarly strong causation and justification of accident, very often psychological. Accident becomes there a fact of inner, psychic reality concerning the character and motives of behaviour of the protagonists. Every fact or occurrence is important since once it is done it cannot be undone, retracted or withheld. It necessarily involves a whole sequence of consequences and determines what happens in future. Very often the result of one wrong move decides of the ruin of the character's whole life, however virtuous and wise would be his actions afterwards. A firmity woman appears when she is least expected by Henchard, at the turning point of his career, when he seems to have redeemed his past guilt. She brings about his destruction. Lucetta's letters betray her former affair with Henchard and indirectly cause her death. Jude's son, the product of his ill-matched marriage with Arabella, destroys his and Sue's life.

The principles of the empirical world – causality, necessity, and finality – do not admit exceptions. As a result it appears as given once for all, determined at every moment of its existence, and the characters' lives as repetitions of formerly designed pattern. Determinism is illustrated with two frequent metaphors present in all Hardy's novels – the image of the theatre, stage or arena of life and the image of wandering.

The former of the two stresses the fact that human experience is not genuine and important since it duplicates the fate of the thousands, and that man is dependent and incapacitated being only an actor acting the

⁴⁴ T. Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles...*, p. 875-876.

part which has already been written. The latter – the image of wandering, with spatialized concept of time implicit in it, assumes that the character in his pilgrimage of life proceeds from one actualized experience towards another. As Hillis Miller rightly observes the character's course preexists its actualization and the stations of his life are already there before he reaches them.

7. PARADOXICAL FREEDOM, FREEDOM WITHOUT CHOICE

The lack of freedom in the empirical world is the consequence of determinism. The principle of free will is valid neither in Schopenhauer's nor in Hardy's world. Freedom does not pertain to the sphere of activity. Every human deed is determined by the relations of cause-and-effect on the one hand and by motives, man's innate character, with which he is born, on the other.

Those of Hardy's characters who are not aware of the essence of the world behave as if they had absolute freedom. In this way they disobey and violate the order of the world thus incurring its wrath and bringing down its punishment on themselves. The tragedy of Henchard, Lucetta and Wildeva consists in the lack of understanding of the nature of reality, in a vain attempt to evade its laws.

Those protagonists who reflect over the nature of the world are able to see their place in it and perceive the limitation of the possibility to act. Eustacia, Clym, Mrs Yeobright, Elizabeth-Jene, Farfare and also, by the end of their lives, Sue and Jude belong to this group. The loss of "the godlike conceit that we may do what we will", "the consciousness of limitation", "the attempt to make limited opportunities endurable" characterize their attitude to life. They clearly realize the fact that freedom is not conceivable in an individual's life. Especially two passages stress inaccessibility, remoteness and impossibility of freedom; they are Clym's reflection about the moon and the metaphor of heron in *The Return of the Native*:

More than ever he longed to be in some world where personal ambition was not the only recognized form of progress – such, perhaps, as might have been the case at some time or other in the silvery globe then shining upon him. His eyes travelled over the length and breadth of that distant country – over the Bay of Rainbows, the sombre Sea of Crises, the Ocean of Storms, the Lake of Dreams, and the vast walled Plains, and the wondrous Ring Mountains – till he almost felt himself to be voyaging bodily through its wild scenes, standing on its hollow hills, traversing its deserts, descending its vales and old sea-bottoms, and mounting to the edges of its craters⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ T. Hardy, *The Return of the Native...*, p. 196–197.

The heron is seen through the eyes of Mrs Yeobright, one of the most reflective of Hardy's protagonists:

While she looked a heron arose in that side of the sky and flew on with his face towards the sun. He had come dripping wet from some pool in the valleys, and as he flew the edges and linings of his wings, his thighs, and his breast were so caught by the bright sunbeams that he appeared as if formed of burnished silver. Up in the zenith where he was seemed a free and happy place, away from all contact with the earthly ball to which she was pinioned; and she wished that she could arise uncrushed from its surface and fly as he flew then⁴⁶.

The images have two things in common. The first similarity consists in shifting the sphere of realisation of freedom into the regions distant from the earth. Clym imagines that freedom is possible in the moon, Mrs Yeobright places it far away in the ether, somewhere near the sun. The place does not matter. It might well have been Ultima Thule, mentioned by Hardy on some other occasion in *The Return of the Native*. What is important is its remoteness from the earth, the fact that it belongs to the uttermost part of the universe, beyond human reach. Mrs Yeobright, pinioned to the earth, will never ascend so high. Clym can wander about boundless areas of lunar landscape only in his imagination. The spatial distance points to the essential inaccessibility of freedom, the impossibility of achieving it. An additional factor contributing to the general idea that freedom is unreachable is Mrs Yeobright's imprisonment and incapacitation suggested by the word "pinion". It implies that she cannot move because her arms are bound. Since the same word as a noun means "bird's wing" or "flight-feather of a bird" and the expression "to cut off a pinion" figuratively means "to hamper flight", the word further suggests that Mrs Yeobright's wings are clipped, her activities and aspirations are checked by the limitation of her possibilities. She is discouraged from what she is ambitious to do and her aspiration at flight in the air thwarted. The idea of the thwarted flight is also implicit in the last sentence of the passage. The words: "she wished she could arise uncrushed from its surface" allude to Icarus' flight in its double meaning. They refer to the eternal human dream to rise high over mediocrity, to develop one's capacities to the utmost but also point to the dangers involved in the undertaking, especially when one makes too much of his abilities. His audacity and impudence may offend the gods and bring about his destruction.

Another similarity between the two images concerns the association of the two objects, the moon and the bird, with light, radiance and lustre. Silver globe glimmering in the sky and the wet heron bathed in sunlight, reflecting the rays of the sun, are surrounded with haloes of glory and

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 286.

splendour. The heron is so bright that it bedazzles Mrs Yeobright with radiance and she has to shade her eyes with her hand. The quality of brightness associated with the images brings to the mind such idiomatic comparisons as: bright as silver, bright as day, bright as noonday. It must be noted that both objects are silver (silvery globe, heron formed of burnished silver) and the heron is watched by Mrs Yeobright at noon, when the sun reaches the zenith. The brightness further implies the gem-like quality of both objects, the fact that they are perfect, matchless and faultless. They both seem to acquire the features of precious, high-priced jewels.

The radiance and preciousness additionally contribute to the effect of the inaccessibility of freedom. The heron and the moon are not seen by the observers in their concreteness but already as symbols. Thus freedom is the act of abstraction or imagination rather than the object of possible human experience.

Freedom is the act of conscious reflection. It is the consciousness of one's limitations, knowledge of inaccessibility of freedom in the empirical world. Here Hardy's idea comes very close to Schopenhauer's concept and to that of Malebranche for whom "la liberté est un mystère". It is paradoxical freedom. Schopenhauer's idea of intelligible character does not save freedom in itself. It only makes it possible to speak about freedom as the consciousness of being what one really is. At the same time such a concept, not giving up determinism, enlarges the sphere of human responsibility. Although what man does depends on external circumstances, beyond his control, he is judged as if his deeds were acts of free will and depended entirely on himself. Kant's concept of intelligible character parallels the idea of Novalis in Hardy's novels. It is expressed in the famous quotation: "Character is Fate".

But most probably luck had little to do with it. Character is fate, said Novalis, and Farfrae's character was just the reverse of Henchard's, who might not inaptly be described as Faust has been described – as a vehement gloomy being who had quitted the ways of vulgar men without light to guide him on a better way⁴⁷.

The severity and intransigence of man's evaluation implied by the thought "Character is Fate" are incomparable with his actual possibilities. The judgement passed on man is out of all proportion to his deeds. A slave, an incapacitated person is treated as if he were the master of his fate. This fact has far-reaching ethical consequences (condemnation of activity among others).

The reflection over liberty and nature of the world heaps other problems in front of Hardy's characters. The questions they ask themselves concern the possibility of action in the determined world. Eustacia having lost the

⁴⁷ T. Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge...*, p. 115.

god-like conceit that we may do what we will, wonders whether to acquire or not "a homely zest for doing what we can". Jude meditates which way of life he should choose, whether "to follow uncritically the track a man finds himself in without considering his aptness for it" or "to consider what his aptness or bent may be and re-shape his course accordingly". Clym chooses between two ways of life: "that zest for existence which was so intense in early civilization" and "a view of life as a thing to be put up with".

All these questions reflect the same dilemma: whether to submit to one's lot or to rebel in high Promethean fashion against it, whether to assume active attitude to life, though unrealistic rather than a passive one, whether to drift on the wave of fate letting it choose life's direction or to try to shape his life in spite of the obstacles.

The practical consideration of these problems in terms of the possibility of their realization makes them obvious and apparent. In Hardy's world there is no doubt as to the correctness of choice. In every case only one part of the alternative is true. It will be corroborated by the lives of all the characters mentioned above. The fact they ask such questions will only increase their sense of tragedy but the choice of unrealizable way of life, the refusal to compromise, to do what they consider below their moral standards, will enlarge their human dignity.

Let us consider two outlooks, Eustacia's attitude to marriage and Jude's to life in general:

Eustacia had got beyond the vision of some marriage of inexpressible glory; yet, though her emotions were in full vigour, she cared for no meaner union. Thus we see her in a strange state of isolation. To have lost the godlike conceit that we may do what we will, and not to have acquired a homely zest for doing what we can, shows a grandeur of temper which cannot be objected to in the abstract, for it denotes a mind that, though disappointed, forswears compromise. But if congenial to philosophy, it is to be dangerous to the commonwealth. In a world where doing means marrying, and the commonwealth is one of hearts and hands, the same peril attends the condition. And so we see our Eustacia – for at times she was not altogether unlovable – arriving at that stage of enlightenment which feels that nothing is worth while; and filling up the spare hours of her existence by idealising Wildeva for want of a better object⁴⁸.

Jude demonstrates a similarly uncompromising way of life. Odds and ends of life never satisfy him. He judges his life by the end of it when the practical consequences of adopting such unflinching and consistent principles have become evident. His evaluation is the evaluation *ex post* when nothing can be changed. Admittedly he is a loser. However, had he been given a choice once again, he would have chosen the same attitude.

It is a difficult question, my friends, for any young man – that question I had to grapple with, which thousands are weighing at the present moment in these uprising times

⁴⁸ T. Hardy, *The Return of the Native...*, p. 77.

– whether to follow uncritically the track he finds himself in, without considering, his aptness for it, or to consider what his aptness or bent may be, and re-shape his course accordingly. I tried to do the latter, and I failed. But I don't admit that my failure proved my view to be a wrong one, or that my success would have made it a right one; though that's how we appraise such attempts nowadays – I mean not by their essential soundness, but by their accidental outcomes. If I had ended by becoming like one of these gentlemen in red and black that we saw dropping in here by now, everybody would have said: 'See how wise that man was, to follow the bend of his nature!' But having ended no better than I began they say: 'see what a fool that fellow was in following a freak of his fancy!'

However it was my poverty and not my will that consented to be beaten. It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one; and impulses – affections – vices perhaps they should be called – were too strong not to hamper a man without advantages; who should be as cold-blooded as a fish and as selfish as a pig to have a really good chance of being one of his country's worthies. You may ridicule me – I am quite willing that you should – I am a fit subject, no doubt. But I think if you knew what I have gone through these last few years you would rather pity me. And if they knew – he nodded towards the college at which the Dons were severally arriving – it is just possible they would do the same⁴⁹.

Hardy's other characters draw different conclusions from the fact that liberty is lacking in the empirical world. Consequently they choose a different mode of life, less noble perhaps but also less dangerous, providing them with a sense of security.

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NIEKTÓRE ASPEKTY WOLUNTARYSTYCZNEJ FILOZOFII HARDY'EGO

Przedmiotem artykułu jest zastosowanie niektórych filozoficznych koncepcji Schopenhauera w tragicznych powieściach Hardy'ego. (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *The Return of the Native*). Ze względu na ograniczoną objętość pracy porównanie to przeprowadzono w kilku jedynie aspektach.

„Wola jako noumenon” dotyczy natury absolutu. Hardy nadaje Woli takie cechy, jak: brak świadomości, obojętność wobec moralności, mechaniczny charakter, brak ukierunkowania w działaniu. Koncepcja „ewolucyjnego melioryzmu” – argument w polemice Hardy'ego z Schopenhauerem – jest jedynie teoretyczna i nie znajduje egzemplifikacji w powieściach.

„Wola uprzedmiotowiona” omawia naturę świata empirycznego, wskazując na jego wewnętrzne skłócenie. Wola wcielona w poszczególne przedmioty i realizująca ich jednostkowe dążenia skazana jest na wieczną afirmację poprzez narzucenie swego kształtu wszystkiemu, co

⁴⁹ T. Hardy, *Jude the Obscure...*, p. 345.

staje na jej drodze. Aspiracje poszczególnych jednostek i przedmiotów nie dają się pogodzić. W rezultacie uprzedmiotowienia Woli świat jawi się jako wielkie pole bitwy, gdzie wszyscy walczą ze wszystkimi. Ilustracją skłócenia Woli w powieściach Hardy'ego są nieudane związki małżeńskie i akcydentalizm. Akcydentalizm Hardy'ego, tak często krytykowany, stanowi filozoficzną refleksję autora nad niekoherencją świata.

„Wolność paradoksalna, czyli wolność bez wyboru” dotyczy idei wolności. Zarówno u Schopenhauera, jak i u Hardy'ego wolność jest pojęciem intelligibilnym, należy do sfery noumenalnej, w świecie empirycznym się nie przejawia.

Związana z ideą wolności kantowska koncepcja charakteru intelligibilnego powiększa zakres odpowiedzialności. Choć to, co robi człowiek zależy od zewnętrznych okoliczności, nad którymi nie ma władzy, jest osądzany tak, jakby jego czyny były aktami wolnej woli i zależały od niego samego. Odpowiednikiem koncepcji Kanta w powieściach Hardy'ego jest idea Novalisa wyrażona w słynnym *Character is Fate* („Charakter człowieka jest jego losem”).

Refleksja nad naturą świata i wolnością stawia przed bohaterami Hardy'ego szereg problemów, m. in. pytanie o możliwość działania w zdeterminowanym świecie. Dylemat, który muszą rozwiązać – czy poddać się losowi, czy w prometejski sposób buntować się przeciw niemu, czy przyjąć aktywną czy bierną postawę wobec życia – w swym aspekcie praktycznym jest oczywisty. Różny sposób jego rozwiązania, przyjęty przez bohaterów dzieli ich na tragicznych i wyalienowanych.