

**University of Sudan for Science and Technology**  
**College of Postgraduate Studies**

**Ecological Features and Nature Symbolism  
In Three of Thomas Hardy's Novels**

السمات البيئية ورمزية الطبيعة في ثلاث من روايات توماس هاردي

**A Thesis Submitted for PhD Degree in English Literature**

**By El-Tag El-Nour Abdel Mahmoud Ibrahim**

**Supervised by Professor Yousif Omer Babiker**

# Dedication

**To My Family**

## Table of Contents

Dedication .....	I
Table of Contents.....	II
Acknowledgement.....	IV
Abstract.....	V
Abstract (Arabic version).....	VI
<b>CHAPTER ONE :</b> .....	1
Introduction.....	1
1.1. The Movement of Ecocriticism.....	4
1.2. Significance of the Study.....	6
1.3. Objectives of the Study.....	9
1.4. Research Method.....	10
<b>CHAPTER TWO.....</b>	11
Theoretical Background and Literature Review.....	11
2.1. Nature and Literary Symbolism .....	32
2.2. Ecocriticism Compared to Conventional Critical Schools.....	37
2.3. Evolution of Ecocriticism .....	46
2.4. Hardy's Writing Style.....	53

<b>CHAPTER THREE:</b>	59
Under the Greenwood Tree	59
3.1. Synopsis of the novel	59
3.2 Analysis	61
3.3. Nature Symbolism in the Novel	89
<b>CHAPTER FOUR :</b>	96
The Woodlanders	96
4.1. Synopsis of the Novel	96
4.2. Ecocritical Analysis	98
4.3. Nature Symbolism in the Novel	144
<b>CHAPTER FIVE :</b>	154
Tess of the D'Urbervilles	154
5.1. Synopsis of the Novel	154
5.2 Analysis	158
5.3 Man and Machine versus Nature	165
5.4 Tress as Eve or a pagan Goddess	172
5.5 Dignity and sexuality	182
5.6Sense of place	195
5.7 Nature symbolism in the Novel	202
<b>CHAPTER SIX.....</b>	211
Summary, Suggestion and Conclusion	211
5.5. Bibliography	218

## Acknowledgements

Thanks are particularly due to **Professor Yousif Omer Babiker** for his supervision of this research , and for his advice and valuable observations.

I am indebted to my friend Othman M. Al-Hassan for his help with the word-processing.

## Abstract

This research is an attempt to study the ecological features and nature symbolism in three of Thomas Hardy's most accomplished novels: *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*; which are called by literary critics *Novels of Characters and Environment*.

The study investigates the issue of environmentalism viewed by the conventional critical literary schools compared to the new vision formed by the school of Ecocriticism as a modern critical approach . It Studies Hardy's major themes in the novels mentioned above, with especial emphasis on the causes and effects that derive modern lifestyle to fail to find possible solutions for the current environmental crises.

The importance of this study emerges from the fact that setting of global laws to restrict the continuous violation of environment are proved to be of very limited effect; as it has been said that “Laws are made to be broken”. Fortunately, literature can provide the world with new perspectives, which may rekindle our deeper feelings about the powerful bonds we have with the natural world. Ecocriticism, as a new literary school, takes the initiative to clarify the interconnected relationships between nature and culture ; making new cultural bonds between man and environment.

The Analytical – Comparative Critical Method has been applied in this research. The recommendations of the study that it stresses the fact that preservation of our planet cannot simply be enhanced through international conferences and setting of global laws. Rather, that can be achieved through love of nature. Nature writings, including fiction, can well tolerate the responsibility of solving current world environmental problems. Ecocriticism in this regard, proposes that people should feel and act, not as members or partners in a particular country, but as members of the planet. Such a notion should inspire humanity to work together to put an end to the shame of environment degradation.

## مستخلص البحث

هذا البحث هو محاولة لدراسة السمات الايكولوجية ( الإحيائية ) واستخدام الإشارات الرمزية للطبيعة في أهم ثلاث روايات للكاتب الروائي توماس هاردي وهي حسب تسلسل تاريخ إصدارها

تحت الشجرة الخضراء , مستوطنو الغابات , تيس من عائلة ديربرفيل

و هي تعرف في أوساط النقد الأدبي بـ " روايات الأشخاص و البيئة".

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة النقد البيئي و النظر إليه من واقع رؤية المدارس النقدية التقليدية في مقارنة و مقارنة لرؤية حديثة من منظور مدرسة النقد البيئي. الدراسة تحقق في أهداف و مرامي الكاتب الروائي توماس هاردي مع التأكيد علي المسببات التي ساقط العالم بنمط عيشه المعاصر إلى فشله في أن يجد حولا مناسبة لأزماته البيئية الراهنة.

أهمية هذه الدراسة تنبع من واقع أن إيجاد حل للآزمة العالمية للبيئة عن طريق وضع القوانين و البروتوكولات الدولية قد اثبت عدم جدواه , و لم يحقق سوى نتائج ضئيلة جدا, و كما يقال " لم توضع القوانين إلا لكي تنتهك ". ولكن , و لحسن الطالع , يمكن للأدب أن يقوم بما عجز عنه القانون,ذلك بما يستطيع أن يحرك به المشاعر الإنسانية نحو الرابط الأزلي بين الإنسان و الطبيعة.

أن مدرسة النقد البيئي , كمدرسة أدبية نقدية حديثة , لتأخذ بزمام المبادرة كي تلقي الضوء و من ثم توضح العلاقة المتداخلة بين جدلية الإنسان و الطبيعة و الثقافة فيما يتعلق بموضوع البيئة.

انتهج الباحث طريقة المنهج التحليلي المقارن , و قد خرجت الدراسة بمجموعة من التوصيات , أهمها أن الحفاظ على هذا الكوكب من جهة اختصاصه بقضايا البيئة لا يتحقق فقط بواسطة سن القوانين الدولية , و إنما يتحقق بحب الإنسان للطبيعة و احترامه لها.

أن كتابات الطبيعة , بما في ذلك الرواية, بمقدورها إن تقوم بهذا الدور المهم في حل مشاكل البيئة الراهنة. فالأدب البيئي , في هذا الإطار , منوط به حض الإنسان ليس فقط في إحساسه و عمله للحفاظ على البيئة بمفهوم الجهوية القطرية , بقدر ما هو مطلوب منه أن يتصرف بمسؤولية كفرد أصيل ضمن سكان هذا الكوكب. ولا شك أن مثل هذا المفهوم من شأنه أن يلهم البشرية بما يقودها للعمل معا لوضع حد لانتهاك البيئة وعدم تقديرها.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

The study of literature in relation to the field of ecocritics is deeply rooted in the history of literature. It dates back to the Pre-Victorian era but eco-criticism as an academic discipline began in earnest in 1990s. However, many relevant competences believe that this new area of study essentially refers to the early 1970s. Scholars and concerned critics are still engaged in defining the fundamental subject of this literary critical approach. Sheryll Glotfelty one of the pioneers in the field, defines ‘eco-criticism’ by saying : “ The study of the relationship between literature and physical environment”. On the other hand, Laurence Buell hold that; this study must be conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis.

Apart from the different views and contradicting visions of many scholars and critics the study of literature through the scope of ecological perspective seems to be the keen understanding and profound knowledge of nature as reflected in human literary works. It concerns the philosophical explanation for the new – old notion of “The unity of the Universe”, a notion which has been reflected in different literary forms including poetry fiction and drama.



In this study the inter-relationships of nature and culture will be underlined to expound the over-argued paradoxes of human knowledge in terms of the intellectual and philosophical inter-relationships that are related to ecological sciences, politics literature and humanities in general, all of which are associated with the field of ecocriticism.

The term 'eco-criticism' is believed to have been innovated by William Rueckert in 1978 in his essay '*Literature and Ecology*' in the American magazine *Nature* (1978 issue No 256). The essay basically focused on the study of nature writings, and reading literature with a special concern about 'green' issues.

By the 1990s, ecocriticism had emerged as a recognizable discipline within literary studies in the American universities. The classical schools of criticism, such as the Victorian realists became more concerned about the importance of tackling serious issues, such the wave of industrialization which changed the natural landscapes, and caused huge devastation of ecological life. Writers poets and natural historians began to write about the 'damage' which was striking the land and the wildlife in general. One of the key figures, and an important pioneer in the field of ecocritics, is Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) whose book *Walden*, also known as *The Life*

*in the Wood* was published in 1854. This book is believed to have paved the way for the critical school of Naturalism.

Indeed, the emergence of this school in the field of literary criticism was attributed to the writings of Thoreau and others, including naturalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose nonfiction book "*Nature*" (published in 1836) is reckoned as a landmark in American nonfiction writings. Emerson's *Nature* is viewed by many critics as the first written principles of the philosophy of 'Transcendentalism', which is concerned with the mystical unity of nature as a part of the whole unity of the universe.

Emerson called for the 'enjoyment' of the 'holy' relationship between man and environment. However, some scholars and critics hold that much of the focus of ecocriticism has been centered upon the American 'white men' in an attempt to underline some special factors that are related to race and gender and led to revolutionizing the new trend of concern about nature preservation.

The issue of ecology in relation to culture before the emergence of this school, had become a common issue in literature, especially in terms of its new concept of human creativity through a romantic perspective. It viewed naturalism and realism as two inter-penetrated critical approaches.

This may reveal the nature of the domain of ecocriticism as it seems to bring together the two extremes of realism and romanticism.

### **1.1. The Movement of Ecocriticism:**

The overlap between man and nature has been noticed in ancient human inscriptions and drawings as in ancient China ancient Egypt or the ancient civilization of Bables. Since that early period of time man has been glorifying and even worshipping different aspects of natural features. The ‘mysterious’ nature has attracted man throughout history, and the link between them continues to environ and govern the mystic relationship thereon.

This trend may explain the lively work of the contemporary environmental movements all over the world. Organizations, like *Nature our Mother Nature’s Friends* or *Eco-friends*.. etc. believe that ecological influence upon humanity is instinctive rather than socially organized activities. Our love and respect for nature is believed according to many scientists, to have a special relationship with our instincts of survival. We love nature because we love to survive. We regret to see a dead wild animal, or to witness the cutting down of a beautiful green tree or even to see someone who savagely damages flowers or delicate plantations. Thus, nature

has continued to formulate the most important source of inspiration in terms of human works of art.

Nineteenth century American naturalists and explorers are often credited by ecocritics as having initiated the idea of nature conservation. These writers (naturalists and explorers) were different from the literary authors because their work mainly focuses on the scientific descriptions of environmental phenomena. Nonetheless, many of their writings are imbued with a poetic spirit, that makes their ideas accessible to the ordinary reader. The views of John Burroughs, and John Muir found expressions in their collection of essays '*Wake..Robin*' and '*Birds and Poets*' in 1877. They strikingly mingle between scientific description and talented literary sense. Muir who was originally Scottish, finally turned to become an active defender of environment in the United States of America .

The literary movement of ecocritics could also be traced in Britain in the late nineteenth century, when the romantic poets strongly reacted against the eighteenth century emphasis on what they called 'reason'. They sought new ways of expressing their thoughts and feelings. William Wordsworth for instance, is considered even in modern times, the spokesman of the romantic movement. In many of his poems and lyrics, he celebrated the beauty and mystery of romance.

Modern critics particularly those who are associated with the school of ecocriticism, view Wordsworth as the 'godfather' of the eternal physical and spiritual reflection, which is often over-disputed; when it comes to view the relationship between humans and nature from an exclusively sophist perspective.

In the same respect, important figures can be mentioned including Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats Lord Byron Percy Shelley, through T. S. Eliot, whose masterpiece, *The Waste Land*, stands a landmark which can be viewed as a bio-diverse source, as well as a transcendental literary work.

Recent studies have viewed *The Waste Land* from an ecocritical point of view. Indeed, it has been associated with the field of ecocritics, and some critics consider it as the border area between romanticism and realism.

## **1.2. Significance of the Study:**

In response to the question of what ecocriticism is or should be, ecocritics have come to agree that this approach is meant to tackle issues and enquiries that relate to the analysis and promotion of works of art which raise moral questions about human interactions with nature. It, therefore, constitutes what they term "an economic school of thought" as it engages audiences into debating issues of resource allocation for which there are no

technical solution. Recently , ecocriticism has been included in the syllabuses of a number of English literature in many educational institutes e.g University of Nevada, USA , some Japanese Universities and other concerned colleges worldwide.

Sometimes the two terms ecology and environment, are confusing. However, recent studies tend to consider ecology as the study of the relationship of plants and animals to their physical and biological environment which includes light and heat or solar radiation, moisture. The biological environment includes organisms of the same kind as well as other plants and animals.

The notion of exploiting the existence of nature in literary works to many critics has enhanced much of the environmental concern of today, despite the fact that sometimes there was no deliberate intention to raise the awareness of the environmental crises of today. Ecocriticism in this sense, can bring closer a number of sciences, such as literature, arts, anthropology, geography and other academic disciplines to serve its final purpose; that is love of nature and preservation of environment. More important is the fact that ecocriticism can also bridge the gap between romanticism and transcendentalism on the one hand and realism on the other. Hence the use of different literary trends for the benefit of new environmental vision.

The three novels that have been selected for analysis from an ecocritical are commonly known as Thomas Hardy's Character and Environment novels. They are *Under the Greenwood Tree* *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

The study is based on the inter-twined concepts of this modern approach of ecocriticism with a special reference to the romantic interest in nature which has significantly contributed to revolutionizing the new world concepts of nature preservation.

As an ecological novelist, Hardy employed his views about nature to protest against the capitalist machinery. His love and respect to nature evolved into a kind of global interest that has been crystallized into profound knowledge and awareness of the importance of the preservation of the ecological system. Hardy's contribution to raise global awareness of the environmental crisis is believed of great importance than the official legislations which are intended to save nature.

Hardy, is indeed, considered as the representative of the "*sense of place*" in his novels. He is always inclined to glorify the spiritual relationship between man and plants and animals in a sense of literary treatment. His celebration of nature, as will be explained in the forthcoming chapters, is the icon that labels his fiction. Every mention of plant insect bird or

animal is in fact a special key or a symbolic indication to the eternal link between man and nature. His intention is to make people realize this link and adore this link. It is believed that official treatment of environment problems through the issuance of special laws is ineffective, or has little effect on the public.

Further, the study attempts to draw attention to the use of the ecological language and terms in order to reveal the writer's linguistic choices. The selected novels are of significance, for the author has to create "the place", which the critics refer to as Wessex, rather than to envision the setting' of the novel. Hardy is inclined to make use of almost unnoticeable details in his narrative, by involving natural species in the plot in a simple mix between human wants and the external factors. Hardy's most effective technique, in this regard is to make use of the richness of the ecological life. So the mention of sparrows, moose, owls, colours and movement of twigs, the sound of the wind and the continuous mention of *The still nature* and other ecological features are viewed by the critics as factors that have special significance and symbolic gestures.



### **1.3.Objectives of the Study:**

This study is expected to contribute to arouse the official and popular awareness of the issues of the environmental problems, as it links between human creativity and environment preservation through a mutual understanding of the continent's environmental problems.

### **1.4.Research Method :**

Critical – Comparative Analysis Method will be applied in this research. Through which a number of critical views and comparative studies will be introduced to underline the role of ecocriticism in terms of forming new global stances for the benefit of humanity.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Knowledge in origin has been considered an indivisible whole. All sciences including the study of environment ecology, geophysics arts history philosophy are closely associated within a broad framework which is called ‘omniscience’. The term of ‘omniscience’ has been expounded by scientists and philosopher since the early ages of the European Enlightenment. Therefore, it is only appropriate to talk about the inter-penetrating and the interwoven relationships and their complicated links.

In ancient times and pre-historic eras, through the dominating period of the Divine Books; the Old Testament the Bible and the Holy Quraan, the fact that all kinds of knowledge are unarguably of a divine origin has always been emphasized, in accordance with the theory of ‘*The Divine source*’. So, it can be said that the branches which are now referred to as ‘fields of study’ are likened to small brooks, which all flow in the huge ‘sea of knowledge’ and thus come to the same end and start a fresh from that very end.

Literary criticism in its classic or modern form has existed for long time. In the fourth century BC Aristotle wrote the *Poetics* which was a description of literary forms with many specific criticism of contemporary

works of arts. The *Poetics* signaled and led to the evolution of the concepts of ‘mimesis’ and ‘catharsis’ which are still used in literary criticism. One important feature of Aristotle’s *Poetics* is its concentration on the natural elements from which the idea of "ecocritics" originated. Around the same period of time Bharata Muni an ancient Indian writer and poet, included literary criticism in his book *Natya Shastra* which is a study on the ancient Indian and Sanskrit literature in which society and nature are placed under focus.

Late classic and medieval criticism often focused on religious texts as opposed to secular texts. Literary criticism including the old - new form of ecocriticism, has been employed in other forms of medieval Arabic literature and Arabic poetry since the beginning of the ninth century. It is to be found in al-Jahiz's *Kitabul al-Haywan*, in which diverse ecological features are employed.

Through the different stages the idea of *knowledge* had been conceived of as a collective whole and has occupied the thought of countless scholars from the far East civilization up to the era of colonialism.

Diane Ackerman (2001 ; 73) naturalist essayist and poet points out that Egyptologists discovered that the subject of *love of nature* was preserved in written poetry as early as around 1300 B.C. and that though that poetry was

written more than three thousand years ago it shared similar interests and themes ; human passions love of nature concerns and religious beliefs. There was always room for ‘ *the green* ’ in its eternal association with human life.

During the Victorian era ( 1837 - 1901) through the colonial times there was general trend and inclination to glorify nature. At the same time the emergence of naturalism was coupled by a revival of romanticism.

In the modern time ecocritics has been officially recognized as an academic field of study after the publication of two works at the end of the twentieth century; *The Ecocriticism Reader*, (edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm), and *The Environmental Imagination* (by Lawrence Buell). at the end of the twentieth century. The two have been reckoned as reference works in the field. In the United States of America the field of ecocriticism gained more importance after the emergence of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment ( ASLE).

It is only appropriate then to clarify the meaning of the word '*ecology*' and distinguish it from '*environment*'. '*Ecology*' is "the scientific study of the pattern of relations of plants animals and people to each other and to their surroundings". On the other hand, '*environment*' is defined as " the

physical and social conditions in which people live or the natural conditions such as air water and land in which people animals and plants live."

However as the two words deal with broad aspects many other definitions are worthy to be given . Recent studies describe the term Ecology as the study of the relationship of plants and animals to their physical and biological environment. The physical environment includes light and heat or solar radiation, moisture, wind, oxygen, carbon dioxide, nutrients in soil, water, and atmosphere. The biological environment includes organisms of the same kind as well as other plants and animals.

Environmental Studies on the other hand, is defined as ' the systematic studies of human interaction with their environment'. It is a broad field of study that includes the natural environment, built environments, social environments, organizational environments, and the sets of relationships between them. Hence, environmental studies is distinct from ecology and environmental science.

Nonetheless, the above given definitions provide a generalized idea. Ecology is a scientific study of various living organisms, their distributions and their relationships with environment . Environmentalism, on the other hand, is more of a social movement that is concerned with the impact of human activities on environment and the steps to be taken to

improve its quality. The relationships are amazingly inter-related; naturalists historians poets novelists and others are similarly concerned with environmental issues. While environmentalists struggle by the help of law and by pressure groups to maintain cleaner and better environment for humans novelist and poets fight in their own way to make the inhabitants of the world *love* their mother *the earth*.

In England ecocritic scholars and literary critics have a great deal of cumulative references in literary genres particularly in poetry. William Cowper in "To the Mouse", one of his earliest poems, says:

“ I’m sorry for Man’s dominion  
Has broken nature’s holy union  
And justified that ill opinion  
Which makes thee startle  
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion  
And fellow mortal”

That love –link of nature expressed by the romanticists, among whom William Cowper stands out as a recognizable figure, has been viewed as one of the common features shared by romanticists and naturalists, despite the apparent over –argued points of view relating to romanticism as opposed to naturalism.

Historically, ecocriticism has deep roots in literature in so far as its relationship with the philosophy and the origin of the notion of the 'unity of the universe' as concerned. This unity is the core of all other different issues that are related to the issues of ecocritics. Many writers, including philosophers, poets and novelists as well as Aristotle and other Greek philosophers, had expounded the idea of the 'unity of the universe. Even some Muslim sufis and philosophers came to adopt the same idea, including *Ibn Arabi* (1165 - 1240).

Ibn Arabi's view in this regard is astonishingly close to Ralph Waldo Emerson's reflection about the universe . Consider this quote from Emerson which is almost similar in meanings to Ibn Arabi's :

"Standing on the bare ground,  
My head bath by the blither air and uplifted into infinite space,  
All mean egotism vanishes,  
I become a transparent eyeball,  
I am nothing I see all,  
The currents of the universal Being circulate through me,  
I am part of parcel of God".

Emerson expressed his idea that humans could perceive everything and feel oneness in mediation by viewing nature. Since that time up to the

present, the trend of glorifying nature in literature and reflecting the philosophical views, or religious beliefs has remained very common. This is closely related to the original idea of the '*unity of the universe*'. In the same context many novelists poets and literary critics have implicitly shown deep interest in nature as a source of inspiration and energetic literary revelation particularly the late romantics.

It is important here to point out that the idea of '*the unity of the universe*' has been closely related to the religious thinking of many philosophers of Christianity and Islam, as exemplified, for instance, by *Ibn Arabi* and *William Blake* whose thoughts were mainly derived from their speculative religious views.

Some classic critics attempted to link the idea of the '*unity of the universe*' and the romantic movement to prove the vagueness and uncertainty of the movement. This classic movement was somewhat over-argued; and the movement of romanticism continued to be representative of the spiritual aspect of ecocriticism. Here are some examples by different writers and poets who celebrate and glorify the relationship between man and the surrounding environment.

In *The Fly*, by *William Blake* (ibid), thus addresses a fly :

Little fly



Thy summes play  
My thoughtless hand  
Has brushed away  
Am not I  
A fly like thee?  
Or art not thou  
A man like me?  
For I dance and drink and sing  
Till some blind hand shall brush my wing...  
Then Am I a happy fly?  
If I live or die.

Another example is Yeats' poem, *The Second Coming*; in which he says:

Turning and turning in the widening gyre  
The falcon cannot bear the falconer;  
Things fall apart ; the centre cannot hold  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

Yeats here refers to what he calls 'anarchy' of the world, as things become almost confused and chaotic. This 'anarchism' according to Yeats, is the result of man's violation of the system of nature.

Later in the twentieth century the revival of the ecocriticism as an important field of study as well as a political interest has been associated with the devastation and the huge damage that was caused by man in order to change the forests and wildlife into cultivated lands. This led to the emergence of the idea of 'revaluation of nature' that opens broader doors to the theme of *politics* in English literature which in turn, led to the emergence of the groups of *Friends of Nature* the *Greens* *Eco-Friends* ...etc .

In America, a number of writers came up with new ideas about the important role of environment in literary genres, particularly in poetry and novel. Nevertheless, non-fiction writings have played an important role in enhancing local and global awareness of preserving ecological life and revaluating environment. Henry David Thoreau stands out as a pioneer in this respect. He stressed the importance of rainforests and wildlife for the general balance of humanity. He published his famous book *Walden* in 1854, which he later, retitled *Life in the Wood*. Thoreau is believed to have set the principles of what is called today *Ecocritics*. In addition, he wrote about forty essays in which he expounded his new social and economical concepts of nature and environment. Due to the literary touch of these essays, they had greatly influenced the public opinion and government policies.

The considerable attention and recognition which Emily Dickenson's poetry received from the public in the second half of the twentieth century is mainly attributed to her special use of symbolism and her personification of the natural elements to reflect the spiritual bond between man and environment. In her poem '*Love*' Part Three, thus she writes :

“ Have you got a brook in your little heart,  
Where bashful flowers flow,  
And blushing birds go down to drink  
And shadows tremble so?”

She continues to underline the eternal bond between man and the little brook to reflect her natural involvement:

“And nobody, knows so still in flowers  
That any brook is there,  
And yet your little drought of life  
Is daily drunken there”.

Many critics in fact have associated Emily Dickenson's poetry with sufi philosophy. The relationship between suphi philosophers and the theme of the 'unity of the universe' which is a fundamental issue in this study, for it is closely related to ecocriticism, and gigantic writers like Fitzgerald and

Ernest Hemingway have been classified by the ecocritics as *naturalist-realist* writers.

Hemingway's masterpiece for instance, *The Old Man and the Sea* is viewed by many critics as a Christian allegory that exemplifies the theme of 'the unity of the universe' in terms of Santiago's relation with the sea.

Serious ecocritical studies are inclined to view the important contributions of Kenneth Burke to the area. Robert Wess ( 2004 : 19) is among those who have studied Burke's views about ecocriticism. He introduced four modes of what he calls *Burkean* ecocriticism. First, *Ecological Holism*, a special term that Burke uses to refer to the great respect and the wise practices of man in dealing with environment. Second, *Technological De-Terminism*; another special Burkean term which refers to 'determinism'. ( Burke made a linguistic twist to play on the word 'determinism' by dividing it into two parts *de-* and *terminism*, a word which Burke used for the first time in his *Prologue in Heaven*. Third, *Rueckert's Ecocriticism* which mainly focuses on the prefix '*Eco*' in contrast to '*Enviro*' to emphasize that humans are in the centre surrounded by other living things. Fourth, *Ecological Realism*, which Burke explains in his essay *A Mediation on Man Nature and Words* as he stresses the need to serve the planet by finding realistic ways of expressions and creative

linguistic choices (that can make use of metaphors and other figures of speech in literary works) to teach people how to protect their planet from a potential tragic end. More detailed explanation of Kenneth Burke's views on ecocriticism shall be presented in the forthcoming chapter.

More recently, in an article that extends ecocriticism with a special link to a number of Shakespearean studies Estok (2001; 220), an eminent scholar in the field argues that "ecocriticism is more than simply the study of nature or natural things in literature. Rather, it is any theory that is committed to effecting change by analyzing the function, whether thematic, artistic, social, historical, theoretical or otherwise, of the natural environment, or aspects of it, represented in documents (literary or other) that contribute to material practices in material words".

He continues to state that the "functional approach of the cultural ecology particularly the branch of ecocriticism, which analyzes the analogies between ecosystem and imaginative texts, posits that such texts potentially have an ecological regenerative and revitalizing function in the cultural system." Along the same line a considerable number of critics and concerned authorities have underlined the fact that though the idea of ecocritics is not an entirely new way of thinking, ecocriticism is undoubtedly a new school of criticism.

Nevertheless, it has to be stressed that the real start of nature writings cannot be specifically determined in this part of the study. Any attempts to probe the roots of the historical background of ecocritics and ecocriticism may have to consider different human experiences since the dawn of history. However, many concerned critics of this approach try their best to determine the origination of this notion and its effectiveness as a literary idea before evolving as an important literary critical movement. Many important literary titles have been under focus for the purpose of review and revaluation among them are Shakespeare's works. In the same context, more studies have followed with more focus on ecocriticism including writings about natural history, travel and adventure and other relevant literary genres.

But it has to be pointed out that much of the focus has been on the role of physical setting values consistent with ecological wisdom metaphors and symbolism that positively influences the way that we treat our environment. In addition, more themes have been introduced including race gender and class.

Many novelists are now being viewed through the scope of ecocriticism including William Faulkner Ernest Hemingway and Gabriel Garcia Marques, for instance are now being studied from an ecological point of

view. Contemporary critics in general and eco-critics in particular seem to find a new spirit in this new approach; they are exerting great efforts in an attempt to reevaluate the traditional way of tackling the issue of environmental crises. Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, according to many modern critics, are outstanding examples that represent the writer's 'sense of place'. The representation of the paramount theme of 'the unity of the universe' in ecocriticism in *The Old Man and the Sea* for example, cannot be missed even by ordinary readers.

One important organization which has adopted the idea of the 'holy link' between literature and environment is the *Association of the Study of Literature and Environment* (ASLE) in the United States of America, which contributed much to the field of ecocritics at its two levels; the natural exploration in relation to awareness of the environmental problems and the important role that literature can play.

One critical approach which has indirectly been associated with ecocriticism, is the Marxist critical school. It is a critical approach, that has been known for decades for its clear stance in terms of social views and class struggle. The common interest that links between ecocriticism and Marxism is the economic structure which in turn, leads to certain Marxist

political views that are opposed to capitalism. Many nature friends explorers and even natural historians attribute most of nature's damage to capitalism, believing that capitalism as an economic and social trend, has laid the foundation for the concept of financial interests only, regardless of the balance of nature. This has led to the destruction of vast areas of rainfall forests for the sake of international company's agricultural activities. This trend according to Marxist views, has negatively contributed to the extinction of a number of ecological species.

Moreover Marxist criticism, which has always been interested in realism is inclined towards class struggle, which represents the main part of Marxist thoughts. In addition, there is always the theme of 'politics' as a common interest to ecocritics and Marxism. Many of those concerned believe that economic policies adopted by Western countries are only interested in profits without paying any attention to terrible violations of nature that have directly led to today's catastrophic environmental crises.

The school of ecoricism as far as literary themes are concerned, can be linked historically to a number of what is termed as ' Commonwealth Literature'. The term denotes the large volume of literary works that are produced in the Commonwealth countries, and deal with the theme of



violation and damage of local environment for the purpose of establishing huge industrial projects in Britain's previous colonies.

Despite its importance Commonwealth literature has received little attention by the Western literary movements. However a number of African and Asian novelists seem to have common interest in these themes by adopting new concepts during and after the colonial era. South African novelists Alan Paton and Doris Lessing the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe and the Trinidadian novelist V.S. Naipual can be mentioned as examples. In their works, they are inclined to create characters who are caught between sets of values, and are unable to resolve the difficulties that confront them. What is relevant to the issue of ecocriticism is the use of 'symbolism' by such writers in their narratives and the exploitation of natural elements for the purposes of representation and personification of the current situations in their countries. In other words, they make use of ecological features in an attempt to reveal the clashes between traditional values and the new ideas as in *Things Fall Apart* and *The Lion and the Jewel* by the Nigerian writers Achebe and Sonika.

However it is to be borne in mind that the revival of the revaluation of nature in its relationship to the field of ecocritics and the ecocriticism movement is mainly concerned with the idea of 'eco-consciousness' instead

of 'ego-consciousness' as has been pointed out to by Joseph Meeker (1990; 52) in his book *The Comedy of Survival ; Studies in Literary Ecology*, whose themes and issues are entirely based on the critical concept of '*sense of place*'.

Generally, the critics' attempt is geared towards a new understanding of the concept of '*place*' in the study of literature in general, and fiction in particular. The notion of reconsidering 'non-human' things is back and alive. These things have their own special abilities to communicate with humans. This has become a popular theme in many in twentieth century literature particularly in the novels of Faulkner Hemingway Garcia Marquez and others who had adopted the idea within the broad framework of '*nature revaluation*' in relation to the concept of '*sense of place*' in literature.

Thomas Hardy the subject of this study, is considered one of the most important figures in terms of nature exploitation in his writings. His fictional works have been viewed by modernist critics, who emphasized the idea of nature glorification as expressed by Hardy in these works. Hardy's works which are divided into three types, will be discussed and analyzed in the forthcoming chapters with special reference to the first type ; *Novels of characters and environment* whose main focus is on

the inter- relationship between literature and environment.

In the early 1970s critics became more interested in about the novels of Hardy and the studies on him moved to structuralism and post-structuralism thinking, including Marxism and Feminism approaches. Considering his philosophy as a novelist, it can easily be noticed that Hardy is inclined to exploit nature and make use of it a significant expressive tool in his narratives.

Before the revolution of literary criticism, Hardy did not receive much of the attention and recognition that he deserved, for he was viewed from a traditional critical point of view. However, when critical schools had crystallized different critical stances Hardy became the focus of study by a number of reputable academic critics.

It is generally agreed that it is more important for literary critics to study Hardy's fiction through the perspective of 'nature' with its striking presence in the setting of the author's novels. Hence it is only appropriate to underline the strong '*sense of place*' and see how it is reflected in them. This can best be done through the eco-critical approach. By analyzing the three selected novels the high technique and smart employment of nature's diverse elements can be highlighted.

Awareness of the problematic relationship between arts particularly fiction, and environment has been an issue of discussion by many natural explorers and essay writers in recent times. But the conception of the issue by novelists and poets will definitely be of a considerable difference because of the profound and philosophical attitudes that are associated with poetry and novel and the strong impact they have on the readers because of their close link to human creativity . However, nature has continued to be a major characteristic in terms of the theme of '*sense of place*' and the use of symbolism as a fictional technique with the emergence of modernism .

The movement of eco-criticism reached a climax when the study of 'ecocritics' was recognized and became an academic discipline in the American universities in the second half of the twentieth century. Before that the world was witnessing the beginnings of world crises in the field of environmental preservation. Consequently, strict laws were issued to 'keep our planet clean by governments and non-government organizations. Nonetheless, the response remains to be poor and sometimes indifferent due to contradictions between law and their enforcement.

Critics therefore became aware that they had to take the initiative by focusing on a number of issues, including the study of ecocritics, and

endeavour to surge the concerned organizations to stand against the apparent destruction of natural features. On the other hand, ecocriticism began to raise new themes and concerns; its interests extended to include more new issues such as 'regionalism' and 'feminism', which began to receive more attention by ecocritics.

To trace back the unconscious origins of the idea of glorifying nature in literary works, one has to point out that much of the criticism in Victorian and pre-Victorian eras including fiction, was of a traditional streak. The study of Thomas Hardy as novelist, with respect to the modern issues of today's complications, will inevitably have to employ eco-critical criterion and place much of the focus on discussing and analyzing Hardy's morality of fiction, the quality of his poetry the style and the narrative techniques he used and so on. With its really new features and important aspects especially with reference to literature and its important role in modern life crises, ecocriticism will most aptly provide an effective tool for our present study.

In one of the most influential essays of the ecocritical movement *Revaluing Nature Towards an Ecological Criticism*, (Glen 1990 ; 6) quotes from Meeker's ( ibid) *Studies in Literary Ecology* that "human beings are the earth's only literary creatures, and if the creation of literature is an important characteristic of human species it should be examined carefully

and honestly to discover its influence upon human behaviour and the natural environment to determine what role it plays in the welfare and survival of human kind”.

Hardy, one of the earliest writers who showed interest in nature underlined the significance of the concept of '*sense of place*' in his fiction. He set society's standards in his depictions of characters in association to cleanness of nature which implies the purity of rural areas and rural characters.

The notion of exploiting the existence of nature in literary works, to many critics has elevated much of the environmental concern of today, despite the fact that there was no deliberate intention to raise people's awareness of the importance of ecology in Hardy's time.

Hardy's representation of the country in fact is touched with nostalgia for land that was disappearing. He conceived of the countryside as the visible link between the past and the present, embodying the holy humanitarian heritage that allows for steady growth and the preservation of the inexplicable wisdom of those who live close to the soil. What Hardy implicitly includes in his narratives is his emphasis on the idea that the only way for the country to be preserved is through its inheritance, i.e. people who love and understand the rhythms of nature.

Close consideration of Hardy's fictional works will lead us to realize his deep love of natural beauty and how he views it in a different romantic way particularly the English countryside where he lived. However, Hardy's depiction and presentation of that beauty is astonishingly realistic yet the elements of the scenery are laden with symbolic meanings that enhances the message he intends to convey in each of his three novels. Hardy's fictional career in fact reflects changing views and sceneries swinging between untouched rural England and what follows later; that is what came to be termed 'agricultural revolution' which Hardy E. M. Forester D. H. Lawrence and others considered a devastating violation of the ecological system.

### **2.1.Nature and literary Symbolism:**

Writers in general and poets and novelists in particular, use literary devices to add layers of meanings to their writings. One way of employing this writing technique is through the means of symbolism. The symbols that writers use are usually well known in literature or culture. Understanding the symbol being used, can help enhance its connection to the story or to the poem, and this, in turn, leads to profounder appreciation and better understanding. In this modern time of ours and with the huge diversity of media there are different ways that can help understand symbolism; for

instance consider how movies, television, and music videos use symbols of sound and light effects to immediately make us think of, or associate with other things.

In Western culture most of the symbolic concepts have been derived from religious traditions or Greek background. According to one academic language institute ( [www.studyzone.org](http://www.studyzone.org)) the following are the most commonly used symbols in English literature.

First colours : writers use colours to symbolize different meanings in their literary works in many ways. Sometimes colours can be used to describe clothing of characters or in the setting of the story. Colours, are mainly used to provide better description of the characters or the situations.

Here are some colours and their symbolic denotation in the Western culture:

White for the good purity innocence; black for evil; red for love or courage; blue for beauty and loyalty; purple for royalty

Gold for wealth and power; green for hope growth and new life.

Sometimes natural phenomena are used as symbols for time of life and other different things. For instance, here are the denotation of natural elements and other different things :



Dawn for liberty and new era; night for death; sunrise for new beginning; sunset for the end; fall for middle age; spring for youth and new life; summer for young age; winter for old age .

There are also elements' including creatures (like animals and birds) and objects, each has its own symbolic denotation. Let us get back to reference to Hardy's fictional work. It can be observed that he is inclined to associate his characters with nature and rural environment. He is instinctively attracted by the natural elements and rural life. Hardy has made use of huge Western heritage relating to literary symbolism either related to nature or to other resources, which has mainly been derived from the Bible the old Testament and Greek mythology.

Dorothy Eagle( 1970 ; 558) describes the term 'symbolism' in her important book the Concise Dictionary of English Literature as " a movement in French poetry which began about 1880 when the poems of Mallarme and Verlaine were becoming known and reached its highest about 1890". Symbolism in this sense, aimed at evoking feelings rather than describing events . Thus its main purpose is associated with impressions intuitions and sensations.

‘Nature’ which is mainly linked with symbolism, is termed in Greek as *physis* and in Latin it is *natura* . At first it was referred to as the nature of

*something*, as in Lucretius the dramatic monologue by Lord Tennyson titled *On the Nature of Things*. But it came to stand alone, perhaps by means of phrases such as 'the nature of everything', to mean the universe or the natural world.

Ovid the ancient Roman poet, ( 43 B.C -18 A.D) mentioned “nature” as featureless before the creation (*Met*; 1.6).

According to late ancient sources, The Orphics a Greek mystic religious group praised *Physis* as the mother of all, all-wise, all-ruling, and immortal; hence the term *Mother Nature*, appeared for the first time, but the personification was not sustained for long. The more ancient myths about Gaia ( *the earth*) must also have contributed to encourage this kind of personification. A good example is Homer's ' *Hymn to the Mother of All*' whose two fascinating opening lines are :

"I shall sing of well-founded Earth, mother of all,  
Eldest of all, who nourishes all things living on land."

It is to be observed that both Greek and Latin words for “nature” and “earth” (Greek *gaia*, *ge*, Latin *tellus*, *terra*) are feminine. Later, it was referred to as Mother Nature as in Lucretius' ( *ibid* ) *alma Venus*.

Thus .the word 'nature' is used in ancient Roman and Greek poetry to mean the word 'earth'.

Nature as an allegorical figure was also mentioned in Bernard Sylvestris and Alanus de Insulis; the latter's '*Complaint of Nature*' influenced *The Romance of the Rose*, where Nature is personified as the '*Mistress of Venus*'.

In Commonwealth literature symbolism has basically been associated with abstract concepts such as revolution, liberty and martyrdom. The colonial period was passionately influenced by the revolutionary movements and the dominating propensities that expressed aspiration for liberty. As well, Post-colonialism was overwhelmingly coloured by literary symbolism in association with the idea of liberation from the European colonizers. Much of the focus was on terms such as : dawn to represent freedom sun rise to represent revolution darkness to represent colonization and so on. Examples of Commonwealth political literature and its symbolic features are to be found in short translations to show how African and Latin writers for instance were inclined to symbolism in their writings particularly poetry, to avoid persecution and ' legal' liability. One memorable example of this is a poem by *Abul Qasim al-Shabbi* (1909 - 1934) the reputed Tunisian poet in which he says :

" If ever people are willing to freely live,  
Then, definitely fate shall reply,

And dark shall definitely, vanish,

And shackles shall break ."

It is obvious that the poet uses *dark* and *shackles* as symbols of the colonial authorities.

Another example can be found in the writings of *Gabriel Garcia Marquez* ( 1928 - 2014), the well-known Colombian novelist, whose use of symbolism is stunning, as far as political literature is concerned. In several of his literary works such as *Faded Leaves* *Hundred Years of Isolation* *Kidnapping* and *Big Mum's Funeral* he has made much use of symbolism. Garcia, in fact is more inclined to use political and religious allegories.

Nonetheless, nature remains to be one of the richest resources of inspiration for writers in the different literary genres, with an obvious bent on symbolism.

Recently some literary critics, have become interested in ecocritics and have endeavoured to simplify some of the common symbolic elements.

For example symbolism about animals plants insects and other natural features .

## **2.2.Ecocriticism Compared to Conventional Critical Schools:**

Literary criticism is usually defined as the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of a literary work. Accordingly, a critical position may start with

the reader's response to produce primary impressionistic point of view. In traditional thinking and interpretation of the term 'criticism' involves spotting the general themes of the work tracing how the work is developed, then presenting and tackling its issues.

In the twentieth century new critical schools emerged with new criteria in literary criticism; that is setting special principles which later became known as "the critical theory", in the light of which a particular literary work is evaluated in terms of form and content. Recently different schools have developed innovative ways to approach literary texts from different perspectives.

In this part of the study, it will be attempted to explain some of the traditional terms trends and general perspectives which represent the main characteristics of the traditional critical schools, then the most important features that characterize the school of ecocriticism will be underlined.

In regard of the three major literary genres ; poetry novel and drama a number of critical terms will always be present to refer to broader aspects or distinctive qualities of different genres of literature.

Likewise, significant concepts related to conventional literary criticism including for instance terms like style form content allegory metaphor irony

structure ..etc. will be explained. These concepts are in fact the main tools for literary critics in considering and evaluating in any literary work.

Each era in the history of English literature has been characterized by its distinctive features which are the result of certain influential historical and cultural factors. Medieval literature, for instance, is of an allegorical nature, and the underlying meaning is always religious. In his book *Literary Terms and Criticism* ( 1987 ; 129) John Peck justifies this by saying " ..this is because the allegorical way of thinking is one in which the everyday world is seen as an imperfect reflection of the divine world" . It is worth noting that the last great religious allegories *Faerie Queene* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, were written by Spenser, the Medieval poet.

Nineteenth century literature witnessed the greatest wave of romantic poetry which was pioneered by Coleridge Wordsworth and Keats. Critics refer to this period as the era of passionate literary works ; it was the era of fancy and imagination. The idea of imagination here refers to the notion ' finding order in the disorder of experience. This is indicative of the fact that the romantic writers are inclined to seek their source of order in the mind with the imagination serving to create order and unity in experience. Nonetheless, tension is frequently notable between the ideal order and the failure of imagination to cope with the disorder of life.

It is generally noticed that in traditional criticism critics assume that the correct meaning of a text is what the author is after despite the fact that later on a kind of critical thinking came to be developed to view with great consideration the extent to which the reader can possibly create the meaning of a text and also the inadequacy of all interpretations.

However, some critics argue that the meaning of a literary work can be sought and revealed throughout the reading of the text and that the author's intention is irrelevant in criticism.

As for language and style traditional criticism places considerable emphasis on language and the way in which it is used, to reflect the role and significance of concepts; such as allusion (a reference within a text to another literary works ) or ambiguity (using some words which often have different meanings) or archetype ( a model for different copies to be used). In his book *How to Study English Literature*, Martin Coyle ( 1947 ;138) says about language and style in a literary text: " A much more productive and precise way of talking about the language is to concentrate on style this involves describing how a particular piece of writing functions, and discusses what words are used and why How do we set about discussing a style what could be said about language ? The answer is simple and straightforward : the style of a text is always appropriate to the subject".

All these critical terms and writing techniques including others are fundamental keys to understanding any type of literary genres. In addition knowledge of the aforesaid literary terms and techniques are also a criterion which is widely agreed upon by the scholars of traditional criticism. Concentration on literary modes and critical vocabulary aims at highlighting some of the important and basic literary terms and techniques so that they can be compared to modern ways of literary analysis in terms of modernism particularly ecocriticism, which is the topic of this research.

It is important here to recall the above mentioned definition of literary criticism . According to John Peck ( ibid) " literary criticism is usually regarded as the analysis interpretation and evaluation of literary works". Applying critical theory therefore produces an impressionistic kind of criticism which involves writing about one's own feelings. Academic criticism however, is more analytic than reflecting impression. Commenting on the subject matter and the writing style is necessary, in addition to special consideration of particular experiences and events compared to universal human experiences.

In this part of the study, the focus will be on the most important features of the traditional criticism, including the modern approaches which mainly stress the significance of getting close to the literary text. Recent critical



schools have drawn attention to the fact that all readers of a literary work bring preconceptions to the text itself. These preconceptions in fact reflect the dominant values and beliefs of the modern society. John Peck (1947;139) thinks that "this has led to the developments of quite a lot of criticism in which the angle of perception is consciously altered, and one of the strongest development of this kind is the growth of "feminist criticism". Feminist criticism is a way of seeing a literary text differently from the male perspective that has always been dominant in the society. However it is viewed by many critics as only to be concerned with demonstrating that literature is sexist in the portrayal of women or with showing how texts reveal the injustice of a male society in which women are regarded as inferior.

British 20th century criticism has to a far extent, been influenced by F. R . Leavis who pioneered the school of Practical Criticism, in which the literary work is discussed with the aid of any supporting evidence about when and where a particular work is written and who wrote it. Partially, the attention of Leavis' approach and his conventional critical stances have been combined to regard and particularly appreciate the text as being an aesthetic construction with a concrete sense of its value and importance. Many critics follow this approach except American new critics whose criticism is

characterized by their very close discussion of the literary text and their exhaustive examination of the words in each individual page. Leavis' critical approach is sometimes called the Pluralist School, because it seems to look at the literary text with an open mind and without any commitment to any ideological position.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Marxist criticism emerged, and effectively influenced a great deal of British and French critics. It is marked by its clear stance on the themes and the general trends of the literary text. A Marxist critic is very clear about the specific beliefs that are of interest. To him, the text has to be read in the light of an 'all-informing' philosophy. Accordingly, a literary work has to be seen in relation to Marxist view of history. Hence, the idea of class struggle is a central point, and the connection between literature and the economic structure of the society in which it was written is always made evident. It follows that a committed Marxist critic usually puts the bourgeois struggle for instance as the most generating source of the story events. In the same context, it can be noticed that Marxist critics are mainly interested in the realistic novel. George Lukacs one of the most famous Marxist critics, basically concentrates in his critical works on presenting full picture of the structure of the society.

However, Marxist criticism in various ways, ties up with Feminist criticism. Both schools are interested in the social and political questions that literature raises. They are considered to be radical approaches in terms of changing the way in which a society conducts itself, unlike structuralists and post-structuralist critics who are more concerned with the language of literary texts. In addition, Marxist and Feminists critics usually focus on the content of a literary work.

Edmund Husserl (1859 -1938) was the pioneer of the Phenomenological school of criticism. He was a German philosopher and mathematician who came to be recognized as the founder of the philosophical school of phenomenology in the twentieth century. He broke with the positivist orientation of the science and philosophy of his day, and wrote elaborated critiques of historicism and psychologism in logic.

Phenomenology is clearly a form of romantic criticism which attempts to bring out the unique personality behind the literary work. This school stresses things that are elusive and hidden in the mind of the writer.

In the first decade of the twentieth century Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure ( 1857 – 1913) introduced a new approach to language, and later he developed a special way to tackle literary works through the structure of the language. He was interested in the theoretical system that shapes all

languages rules and principles that enable a particular language to exist and function. Thus Structuralism emerged as a new approach that elaborates complex theories about language and applied them to literature as well.

However most of today's critics think that structuralism and post-Structuralism theories do not belong to the traditional literary schools of criticism. To them, the difference between the two schools and the other traditional approaches is in the idea of 'coherence'. In other words, traditional critics accept the view that a text offers a 'coherent response' to life and that the critic can make coherent sense of this response. On the other hand Structuralists and Post-structuralists contend that 'experience' is confusing and that the 'text' cannot make 'coherent sense' of life. This fact has been pointed out by Martin Coyle (1947; 140,141): "...to many critics this appears as a negative approach but there must be some reasons that why the last quarter of the twentieth century criticism has started to produce such puzzling criticism".

Indeed, Literary criticism has gone beyond all limits. This will be explained in the forthcoming part of this study, which will also bring out the characteristics of Ecocriticism as the most modern of literary critical schools.

### 2.3. Evolution of Ecocriticism:

Unlike the traditional literary critical schools Ecocriticism investigates things such as the underlying ecological values, the precise meaning of the word "nature", and whether the examination of "place" should be a distinctive category, as with the case with class, gender or race. Ecocritics the broader concept of ecocriticism, examines human perception of wilderness, and how it has changed throughout history and whether or not current environmental issues are accurately represented or even mentioned in popular culture and modern literature. Other disciplines, such as history, philosophy, ethics, and psychology, are also considered by ecocritics as they may possibly contribute to ecocriticism.

According to many critics, William Rueckert ( ibid ) may be considered the first person to use the term "ecocriticism". In 1978, he published an essay titled *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*. His intention was to focus on “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature.” *The Ecocritism Reader*, (1980; 107) . In this essay Rueckert has almost set the general principles of this school.

Ecologically minded individuals and many thinkers have published progressive works of eco-theory and criticism since the first emergence of

environmentalism in the late 1960s. However, because there was no organized body that might care about the study of the ecological or environmental aspect of literature. Accordingly, the above mentioned works, along with others, remained scattered and came to be categorized different subject headings; pastoralism, human ecology, regionalism, American Studies... etc.

British Marxist critic Raymond Williams ( 1973; 96), for example, wrote a critical study of what he called "pastoral literature" titled *The Country and the City*. Hurbert Zapf (200; 39) comments on this study by saying:" spawned two decades of leftist suspicion of the ideological evasions of the genre and its habit of making the work of rural labour disappear".

Another early ecocritical text is by Joseph Meeker ( ibid ) in his book titled *The Comedy of Survival* in which he proposes a kind of argument by stressing the fact that : " environmental crisis is caused primarily by a cultural tradition in the West because of separation of culture from nature, and elevation of the former to moral predominance". He adds that " Such anthropocentrism is identified in the tragic conception of a hero whose moral struggles are more important than mere biological survival".

Meeker's adoption of an eco-philosophical position, with its apparent scientific sanction as a measure of literary value, tends to prevail over Williams's ideological and historical critique of the shifts in the literary genre's representation of nature.

As Glotfelty (ibid) comments in *The Ecocriticism Reader* "One indication of the disunity of the early efforts is that these critics rarely cited one another's work; they didn't know that it existed... each was a single voice howling in the wilderness." Unlike feminist and Marxist criticism, ecocriticism failed to be crystallized into a coherent movement before the 1970s. Indeed it has started to prevail in the United States by the beginning of early 1990s.

Since the 1980s, some concerned writers and scholars have begun to work collectively to establish ecocriticism as a literary genre, primarily through the work of the Western Literature Association (WLA) in which the revaluation of nature writing as a non-fictional literary genre could function. In 1990, at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), Glotfelty (ibid) became the first person to hold an academic position as a Professor of Literature and the Environment. Since then, (UNR) is considered the intellectual home of ecocriticism, even though, the Association for the

Study of Literature and Environment ( ASLE) was formed into an organization with thousands of members in the United States alone. From the late 1990s, new branches of ASLE and affiliated organizations were started in the UK, Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand (ASLEC-ANZ), India (OSLE-India}, Taiwan, Canada and Europe.

Simon Estok ( 2001; 220) states in his book, *A Report on Ecocriticism* that " ecocriticism has distinguished itself, firstly by the ethical stand it takes, its commitment to the natural world as an important thing rather than simply as an object of thematic study, and, secondly, by its commitment to making connections with different kinds of sciences".

More recently, in an article that extends ecocriticism to Shakespearean studies. In his book ' Shakespeare and Ecocriticism' Estok (2005; 1617)) argues that ecocriticism is more than "simply the study of 'Nature' or natural things in literature; rather, it is any theory that is committed to effecting change by analyzing the function—thematic, artistic, social, historical, deological, theoretical, or otherwise—of the natural environment, or aspects of it, represented in documents (literary or other) that contribute to material practices in material worlds". This obviously indicates the functional approach of the cultural ecology branch of ecocriticism, which analyzes the



analogies between ecosystems and imaginative texts and posits that such texts potentially have an ecological regenerative, revitalizing function in the cultural system .

Nevertheless Michael P. Cohen ( 2004 ; 36) has observed in his book *Environmental History* that “ if you want to be an ecocritic, be prepared to explain what you do and be criticized, if not satirized.” Certainly, Cohen adds his voice to such critique, noting the problems that ecocriticism faces. All ecocritics share an environmentalist motivation of some sort, but the first thing they are concerned about is to make the inhabitants of the earth love nature to protect the environment and the ecological system .

In her book *The Truth of Ecology* Dana Phillips ( 2003; 105) has criticized the 'literary quality' and scientific accuracy of nature writing . Similarly, there has been a call by many critics to recognize the concept of what was termed the 'environmental justice' movement in redefining ecocritical discourse .

In response to the question of what ecocriticism is or should be, Camilo Gomides ( 200; 23 ) in an essay titled " *Putting a new Definition for Ecocriticism* seems to have contributed to the creation of a new definition which is both broad and discriminating. He states it is "The field of enquiry

that analyzes and promotes works of art which raise moral questions about human interactions with nature, while also motivating audiences to live within a limit that will be binding over generations". He further tests it for a film called *Maladaptation* about Amazonian deforestation.

Implementing the Gomides definition above Joseph Henry Vogel (2008 ; 105,119) points out that ecocriticism constitutes an "economic school of thought" as it engages audiences to debate issues of resource allocation that have no technical solution.

Furthermore, the issue of ecocriticism has developed to generate new critical concepts in terms of literary writing. Ecofeminism, for example, is a modern literary critical school which is basically associated with the movement of ecocritics. Similarly, the ecofeminist approach is a social and political movement that focuses on the oppression of women and nature as they are considered closely interrelated. The term is often referred to by Francoise D'Eaubonne. In his book *feminism ou le mort* (in French) D'Eaubonne (1974; 112) used the new term then it became very common on many occasions throughout dialogues among feminists and environmental thinkers and activists, who recognized the conceptual

and material connections between the oppression of women and the mistreatment of the natural world.

After its emergence, ecofeminist philosophers of the 1990s branched out to explore the interconnections of a number of issues including sexism, supremacy of culture over nature, racism and social inequalities. Currently, ecofeminism is not only concerned with the dominations of gender and nature, but also race and class.

The importance of eco-feminism, as an outcome of the ecocriticism approach, increases as it shows how environmental policies affect our everyday lives. Ecofeminists think that women, children, the working class and coloured people are the most powerless populations, and their rights should be protected. To go further with this notion, relevant researches have shockingly shown that women are the ones who are first affected by ecological degradation and nature devaluation. As environmental awareness is crucial, political, economic, and social changes are needed to help this awareness.

In the forthcoming chapters, Hardy's most important novels will be analyzed from an ecocritical point of view. It is believed that this new critical approach is the appropriate one to better reveal Hardy's environmental thoughts. This will definitely help clarify the spiritual ties

between the author and nature in terms of writing inspirations and the way Hardy translates his intimacy to nature into a creative writing style. For it is believed that he overwhelmingly exploits elements of nature to create staggering impressive scenes, which enable him to tactfully link natural elements with symbolic concepts to produce deeper reflections.

#### **2.4.Hardy's writing style:**

Thomas Hardy ( 1840–1928) an English novelist and poet, was born near Dorchester. He is considered one of the great English writers of the 19th century. He was the son of a stonemason. Like his father, he loved music, and like his mother, he devoted himself to literature.

Hardy could not afford to pursue a scholarly career as he wished and was apprenticed to a man called John Hicks, a local church architect. Nonetheless he continued to study the Greek and Latin classics. From 1862 to 1867 he served as assistant to Arthur Blomfield, a London architect; but due to health problems he had to return to Dorset, where he worked for Hicks until 1874.

To many of his critics, Hardy's writing style was influenced by his own way of upbringing and nurture . There are in fact two main important factors which have determined his attitude in general and his writings in particular ; music and painting. Throughout his life Hardy was greatly influenced by his

family's music heritage love of painting. This not only steered his writing style but his themes and issues too.

Hardy spent his childhood among family and friends who were gifted narrators and musicians and whose shared memories and folklore songs formed a rich oral tradition. Clair Seymour (1994; 2) in her introduction to *Under the Greenwood Tree* observed that " In this novel, Hardy recreates a number of collective cultural memories, celebrating the world which was nearest to him ". Nevertheless Hardy's portrayal of place and characters is always an intriguing mixture of the real and the imagined. His personal experiences and genuine sympathy for his characters and their milieu give his descriptions a kind of vividness and authority. Seymour (ibid) further remarks that " The rural figures in *Under the Greenwood Tree* may have seemed quaint and picturesque to Hardy's newly-cultivated London eye, yet he succeeded in individualizing and humanizing his characters by employing a Chaucerian humour" . His language effectively reflects the beliefs and lifestyle of the people of the countryside.

However, his writing style is viewed by many critics to be of more tragic streak than of comic touch. His portrayal of human relationships, including love is of tragic nature as it reflects the social conflicts and restrictions of his day. Hence, most of his works are, in fact reflections of

his social pessimism and his personal sense of the inevitable tragedy of human life.

Hardy was influenced by some of the writers who preceded him or by those who were around him. He was part of a movement that encompassed many great novelists such as George Eliot Charles Dickens and others. His style is fairly typical of his time. Both the descriptive language and the formal structure demonstrate the influence of traditional landscape painting on his writing techniques. He is more concerned with modes of perception, visual and intellectual literal and moral. To many contemporary critics his themes were controversial particularly when were adopted by a group of feminist critics.

Hardy's love of nature is extremely provincial and local, he was born and bred in that tract of South England which he called 'Wessex', and spiritually embraced it with the glow of a lover. He was permeated with its sights and sounds and odour and substances, this instinctive inclination to nature has notably orientated his novels within the compass of both his themes and writing style. He tactfully employs nature and natural features as symbolic elements in his narratives.

In another aspect, his adoration of nature is more comprehensive and thorough than that of any of the romantics. He loves and enjoys the conventional beauty of nature, the beauty of moonlit glades, hills and dales, the arrival of spring when thousands of flowers bloom, and birds sing sweet melodies, the murmuring of rivers, and the beauty of the sunset and the day dawn. All these seem to fire his soul, move him to ecstasy and inspire him to create poetic descriptions.

Interestingly, Hardy not only loves the scenes and sights of *nature* but he also loves those who live in *her* midst. His characters for instance, are all drawn from among those who live and work in the lap of nature. His best characters are field workers. He portrays them with great enthusiasm. Hardy seems to have a kind of emotional relationship with those who work on fields, or involved in agricultural jobs. He calls them “natural men”. Also, he loves the lower creatures of nature and the humble relationships of men in nature’s teeming family. He is undoubtedly one of the greatest animal lovers in English Literature. At every step in his fictional works, he displays a close familiarity with their ways and habits.

Despite the fact that Hardy is classified as a realist he was undoubtedly influenced by the romantic and neo-romantic movements in terms of writing style and adoration of nature and animal world. Hardy's writing style is

almost a mere reflection of his realistic – romantic interrelated notion of style innovation.

In many of his nature writings he seems to be influenced by Lord Byron (1788 -1824) and his reflections about nature. In many situations, Hardy brings to the reader's memory Byron's nature reflections. In his poem *Suckling* in which he thus writes :

But words are things, and a small drop of ink  
Falling like dew, upon a thought produces  
That which makes thousands,  
Perhaps millions, Think.

Hardy is totally indulged in a kind of naturalist style of writing. Sometimes he is inclined to add some rustic characters in his novels to play the role of chorus in a musical work. Most of his novels are full of scenes of coincident events.

Also is inclined to comment on his characters, and disclose their intentions by using the technique of foreshadowing to sustain his readers' interest.

Before the three selected novels are eco-critically analyzed, a short synopsis for each novel will be given. Simultaneously, we shall review other



conventional and modern literary critical schools to compare old critical views with modern ones.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Under The Greenwood Tree

### 3.1.Synopsis of the novel:

*Under the Greenwood Tree, or The Mellstock Quire* is a novel which was inspired by Shakespeare's masterpiece '*As You Like It*'. It was first published in 1872, and it was Hardy's second published novel and the last to be printed without his name. This novel is considered the first of his great series of the "Wessex novels". While Hardy originally thought of simply calling it *The Mellstock Quire*, finally he settled on a title borrowed from a song in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (Act II, Scene V).

The song goes like this :

"Under the greenwood tree

Who loves to lie with me,

And turn his merry no

Unto the sweet bird's throat

Come hither, come hither, come hither:

Here shall he see

No enemy but winter and rough weather."

The plot is based on the activities of a group of church\_musicians, the Mellstock parish choir, one of whom Dick Dewy becomes romantically entangled with a comely new school\_mistress, Fancy Day. The novel opens with the fiddlers and singers of the choir—including Dick, his father Reuben Dewy, and grandfather William Dewy, while making the rounds in Mellstock village on Christmas Eve. When the little band plays at the schoolhouse, young Dick falls for Fancy at first sight. Dick, smitten, seeks to insinuate himself into her life and affections, but Fancy's beauty has gained her other suitors, including a rich farmer and the new vicar at the parish church.

The vicar, Mr. Maybold, informs the choir that he intends to tell Fancy, an accomplished organ player, to replace their traditional musical accompaniment to Sunday services. The tranter and the rest of the band visit the vicar's home to negotiate, but reluctantly he gives way to the more modern organ. Meanwhile, Dick seems to win Fancy's heart, and she discovers an effective stratagem to overcome her father's objection to the potential marriage. After the two are engaged secretly, however, vicar Maybold impetuously asks Fancy to marry him and lead a life of relative affluence; racked by guilt and temptation, she accepts. The next day,

however, at a chance meeting with the as-yet-unaware Dick, Maybold withdraws his proposal; and Fancy, simultaneously, has withdrawn her acceptance.

The novel comes to an end with a humorous portrait of Reuben, William, Mr. Day, and the rest of the Mellstock rustics as they celebrate the couple's wedding day. The mood is joyful, but at the end of the final chapter, the reader is reminded that Fancy has married with "a secret she would never tell" (her final flirtation and brief engagement to the vicar). Though *Under the Greenwood Tree* is often seen as Hardy's gentlest and most pastoral novel, this final touch introduces a faint note of melancholy to the conclusion.

### **3.2. Analysis:**

It may be appropriate at this point to move on to a comparative ecocritical reading and analysis of Hardy by focusing on pure nature as it has been represented in his works from fiction to social implications. Generally, what can be obviously noticed is the author's cinematic depiction of the country moving from different natural features and employing plantations birds and insects to create fictional world of its own. *Place* is usually mentioned to create a kind of special relationship between the reader and the imaginative setting of the narrative. In this respect, Hardy

seems to succeed in engraving the minute details of his description of nature in the minds of his readers. It is to be noticed that in most of his novels, particularly those of *Characters and Environment*, the technique of employing hills, dales, heaths and rivers is always there. They seem to be the corner stone and the main touch of beauty and charm in these works. Hardy is intimately familiar with his beloved Wessex which he renders with great and fidelity.

In Hardy's love of 'Nature' there is nothing mystic or transcendental as in that of Wordsworth's. Though he habitually personifies nature-objects, Hardy has never expressed belief in nature as having a separate life or soul of its own. He loves nature for her beauty, and not for any mystic qualities that *she* might possess. He does not worship *her* as a kind and benevolent goddess, watching benignly over those whose souls are in harmony with her own soul. In this age of global environmental crisis, the recent years have witnessed the rise of "ecocriticism" as a new literary approach whose main focus is on the relationship between literature and the physical environment. The main objective of this approach and its fundamental aim is to raise people's awareness of the situation of the earth and how our behavior affects it, an issue that Hardy tackled earlier than most of his fellow writers.

While nature, landscape and the whole physical environment had formerly been considered only as a by-products of the literary text.

The ecocritical approach tries to dissect the environment into its natural parts, with the intention of expanding the notion of the world to its ecological biosphere and therefore, looking at the environment as a literary category. As raised by Glotfelty (ibid) in one of her lectures: "In addition to race, class, and gender, should place become a new critical category?". Indeed, it will be attempted in this research to answer this question with special focus on Hardy's selected novels.

In the UK, for instance this approach, whenever it has been applied to literature, is often traced back to canonical writings, especially those by well-known British nature writers like Hardy, and it is usually geared to answer questions such as : "How is nature represented in the novel?" and "What role does the physical setting play?"

In our ecocritical approach to *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the sub-approaches, deep ecology, ecofeminism and urban ecocriticism will be included noting that the latter two are subjected to social ecology in general. Furthermore, some of the difficulties the approach has confronted so far, especially the dispute over the nature/culture issues will be outlined, and the general distinctions between Romantic and Victorian ecology

writings will be focused on. Analysis of *Under the greenwood Tree* will be carried out from an ecocritical perspective, and then, to bring the writer's use of language into focus, special tools will be used including ecocritical devices like anthropomorphism, ecofeminism contour descriptions, animal and insect species, in addition to the use of senses and shifts of narrative positions, which the author has employed to highlight the characters' interaction with the environment .

It is also important here to delve into the rural England, from the novel's point of view, and look for meaning to life on the entire earth, and to stress the importance of the relation between Wessex and Dorset, as actual places on earth, and their implications to the reader. As well, the reading of the novel's setting as an actual map that is outlined by the characters' movement, and linking the literary approach with geographical mapping will be brought out.

More importantly, it will be attempted to detail the socio-ecological and historical implications of texts written in the Victorian period being read in the 21st century, and explain+ how and why does Hardy has that distinctive ecological look at his native environment in certain ways during his time and what the present-day reader can deduct from his descriptions and its ramifications. Special attention will be paid to how ecocritics look at

different ways of landscape and nature representation in the novels. Characters' relationships to their native environment through ecofeminist approach will also be described.

At the very beginning of the novel, the author provides us with the following statement : " To dwellers in the wood almost every species of trees has its voice as well as its feature" ( *Under the Greenwood Tree* p 3). The impression the reader may have that the role of nature is going to be of dominant and great significance in the novel. Hardy's emphasis on *voice* and *feature* is meant to underline the vitality of trees and stress the unique relationship between humans and other natural elements, as represented by trees. The author expresses his belief that a 'fir-tree' actually '*sobs*' and '*moans*' as it rocks ! The act of 'rocking' moving by the breeze, is normal but *sobbing* and *moaning* are sounds relating to animals and humans. Hardy's intention is to stress the fact that the people living in the countryside are almost in physical and spiritual union with their environment. So, many of the humans, animals and plants are thought to understand each other.

According to Hardy trees can be affected by the circle of seasons. But they remain distinct and each tree stands out as proud special and unique .



They do not surrender even to the tough cold waves of winter. "A tree does not destroy its individuality". (*Under the Greenwood Tree*, p3).

In his introduction of the novel characters the author describes them in a way similar to a painter who seems to be much more interested in invisible details. Hardy introduces Michael Mail by saying, " He carries a fiddle under his arm and he walked as if engaged with something connected with the surface of the road" ( *Under the Greenwood Tree* ; 4).

Likewise, about Robert Penny he writes " .. he has two faint moons of light gleamed from the precincts of his eyes..". The singers are depicted as one group of different ages to stress the idea that the villagers their local environment and their culture are all one unit. " All advanced between the varying hedges and the trees dotting them here and there kicking their toes occasionally among the crumbled leaves" ( *Under the Greenwood Tree* ;5) . The author here gives the reader a detailed description of the scene with a kind of full sense of place that moves the reader to a world which Hardy has envisioned, and the reader may well be part of it. Mentioning the same places in almost all of his novels made the critics call them the *Novels of Characters and Environment*. This underlines Hardy's instinctive response to the rural world in general and to rural England in particular. His main focus is in the natural world and the relationship between community and

its environmental conditions, and the harmony that can be found between humans and nature to stress the extent to which a particular community is governed by its local circumstances.

In Hardy's novel one can easily recognize the most exiting aspects of English nature, integrated complexity of cultural political economic and emotional life. The author seems to raise some spiritual and cultural issues through what can be termed the "ecosystem of the place". In *Beyond Nature Writing* Richard Kerridge (1984 ;126) comments on the setting and characters of

*Under the Greenwood Tree* by saying : " He ( Hardy ) writes of nature as seen, variously by the agricultural labour the urban visitor, the romantic poet lover naturalist and other viewers".

In this novel, as in his other novels, Hardy's natural world does not appear as wildness to be reached or explored only by crossing difficult threshold or surmount hardships. Rather, it is a world which is inseparable from the inhabitants who share the place and the same environmental conditions. Consider for example, Hardy's depiction of the musicians and singers marching towards the church and crossing unpaved ways while describing the land contours and the natural features as a part of the scene, or the event linking the

individuals of the singing group almost to the natural elements or when he underlines the similarities that are derived from the locality of the very place and he perceives of the villagers' lifestyle as a divine right. Hardy actually creates one unit out of the rural lifestyle to stand against the newly-imposed wave of the industrialized agriculture of his time. Thus, the idea of anthropomorphism is further emphasized. This may well explain why his witnesses of drastic and critical moments are usually birds animals or small creatures primeval yews and oaks, gentle roosting birds hopping rabbits and hares they are helpless creatures who are present at a moment to simply witness changes of the protagonist's future life. This can be noted in different situations and scenes including the moving scene of Tess being raped in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, as will be explained in the following chapters.

About intimacy to the geographic area in which Hardy creates his setting, Simon Gutrell (1999; 21 ) thus writes: "The interconnection of the novel and the place is the central element in viewing Wessex' society". He continues to say : "The novel has allowed Hardy to say some of the things about class and gendre relationships based on the conditions of a particular place."

However Hardy frequently emphasizes the theme of "the ability to survive" in the rural areas and he further links the existence of the country people with the existence of the land, embracing its ecological diversity. His characters' knowledge of the nature of the 'place' determines their ability to adapt and survive in a changing world guided by the industrial revolution which Hardy considers a great jeopardy to the virginity of Rural England.

Hardy uses slightly disguised or ancient place names throughout his thirteen Wessex novels and forty seven short stories to create his '*partly real, partly dream country*' of Wessex. Though he labels Dorset as 'South Wessex' on the early tourist map which he helped annotate, his own identifications

here show that his home county was the very heart of Wessex.

However at the time of writing *Under the Greenwood Tree* it seems that Hardy had not fully formulated the geography of the fictional Wessex which was to be the location of his later novels. This explains why Hardy has regularized the strategy of his novel settings with slight changes in some places and villages in his later novels. In *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the author alters existing names of some places and inserts new ones in the text in order to conform with the subsequent novels. For instance Budmouth has

been changed to Weymouth Casterbridge to Dorchester Chalk Newton to Maiden Newton Mellstock to Stinford then, Lower Bockhampton.

This made some critics use the term "Hardy's Wessex" which is frequently discussed under the rubric of 'place,' to refer to the phenomenon of literary regionalism. Hardy is usually described as a writer who uses historical and accurate detail to preserve images of an obviously disappearing world. William Cobbett's *Rural Rides*, George Eliot's *Scenes from Clerical Life*, and *Under the Greenwood Tree*, are frequently cited as examples of this enormously popular genre.

Beyond these more common senses of the term 'sense of place' in novel writing, John Alcorn gives the concept of place a post-Darwinian twist. In an essay in one of his literary essay collection *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence*, Alcorn coins the term "naturism" to describe a school of writers who use 'place' in a particular way that involves both landscape and setting. As for the idea of "The naturist world" Alcorn assumes that the world of nature is "a world of physical organism, where biology replaces theology as the source of both psychic health and moral authority.

Naturism is, of course associated with Darwinism which sees man as part of an animal continuum; where the writer reasserts the importance of instinct as a key to human happiness. As he also tends to be suspicious of

the life of the mind Alcorn adds " as a novelist, he is likely to prefer a loose plot structure, built around an elaborately described landscape". This seems to be applicable to Hardy's concept of 'place' in his novel setting, for he looks at community and environment as a whole. This 'whole' includes plants animals and humans. To him plants, animals birds insects ... etc, determine the nature of human life.

Hardy must have been deeply interested in the philosophical concept known as ' *The Great Chain of Being* ' this concept is closely connected to the ancient concept of "*The Unity of the Universe*". However both terms were later used by the naturalists and adopted by the eco-feminists and other ecocritics believing that they are not only related to the principles of place and natural cycles but they can also be extended to the principles of language and culture, e.g. the use of human resources ( head foot cap ...etc) to refer to the names of specific land forms. This notion of course, relates to the socio-ecological relationship between humans and environment.

Hardy's portraits like his landscapes, are always an intriguing mixture of the real and the imagined, whether in this novel or in his other novels including *The Woodlanders* and *Tess*. For instance, the Dewy's cottage is likened to Hardy's family home in Higher Bokhamptons.

However, the rural figures in *Under the Greenwood Tree* seem to be quaint and picturesque to Hardy's newly- cultivated London eye. He is successful in individualizing and humanizing his characters in Chaucerian humour.

In her Introduction to the novel, Claire Seymour( 2004 ; 20) writes, " While he ( Hardy) noted the improvements that had affected rural lives, he felt deeply the losses which had accompanied change particularly in terms of sensibility of outlook observing that increasing mobility was resulting in a less intimate relationship with the land". In consequence, the country people with their customs and activities, are no more considered. Michael Mail talks about the village's cultural activities. He says, "People don't care much about us now. I have been thinking we must be the last left in the country of the old string players" . *Under the Greenwood Tree* (p ;17).

In the part of the novel titled *Going the Rounds* Hardy starts to use implicit symbolic pictures to add more spiritual and transcendental dimensions to his narrative. And in the Christmas song performed by the village band, Hardy, for instance, derives his inspiration from the Bible :

" Remember Adam's fall  
O thou man,  
Remember Adam's fall  
From the Heaven "

But here "Adam's fall" is symbolic of the drastic change that has struck the nature of the land and to the changed reality of rural life in England. It was seriously threatened by industrialization and urban lifestyle which indicates the author's reference to the first man-made fault.

Symbolism in a typical Hardy story basically depends on nature and natural phenomena. He employs a great number of natural elements in his symbolism. This also reflects the author's tremendous knowledge of the religious and cultural background which is the main source of symbolism in Western culture, as will be explained later in this chapter.

*Under the Greenwood Tree* is of four parts. Each part is named after one of the four seasons of the year. Each season has special significance in the development of the story.

Michael Feber ( 1999; p182) in his book *Literary Symbols*, thus explains the use of seasons in English literature: "Seasons are selected from the years' slow rounding" where many indications are given, and many of the meanings of the trees and flowers, beasts and birds are found in literary works depending on seasonal comings and goings . The seasons themselves have long been applied metaphorically to human lives and natural phenomenon. Interestingly Hardy frequently links between nature music and human activities in general. His sense of the internal harmony of the three



elements is particularly to be found in the countryside. Hardy's inclination to depict this can easily be noticed. Consider for instance, how Fancy is described, "Her dark eyes are arched by brows of so keen slender, and soft curve, that they resembled nothing so much as two slurs in music" *Under (the Greenwood Tree ;33)*. He continues to say, "Amid the rest of the dancing ladies like a flower among vegetables ". The reader the critic, or music expert will notice the unique linking between human physique plant and music (which is abstract in nature) Mixing the three elements seems to effectively respond to our sense of beauty. Consider how the scene of the dance is pictured "His arm holding her waist more firmly, and his elbow getting further and further behind her back and most blissful swinging to place shoulder to shoulder her breath curling his neck like a summer zephyr". The author's reference is made to the pure rural distinction of group dancing, and the atmosphere of intimacy in the rural life.

Hardy's fondness of resembling humans to plants and flowers is endless. He resembles Fancy Day's sudden appearance out of the school's door to a blooming young flower " ...the door opened and the three quarters of a blooming young schoolmistress revealed before him!".( *Under the Greenwood Tree ; 43)* .

Hardy seems to be always committed to his rural descriptions and his absolute environmental richness of imaginative picturing of the rural society. He revels minute details of the social structure of Melstock by employing a wide range of ecological elements and a great number of huge diversity. This is done in association of plants and birds in order to provide vivid pictures out of different simple situations.

With the advance of narration, Hardy gathers a number of sub-plots into one unit to prepare for events prelude, and to foreshadow further developments in the story. His writing technique apparently depends on coincidence, which is mingled with other side – events related to the surrounding environment. This technique helps the reader view a particular scene in the context of a universal perspective. Here the ecological life seems to play an important role, for the whole narrative is associated with simple incidents happening in the same place and at the same time while a particular character is involved in a particular situation. In addition, the author employs his good and apt cultural knowledge to develop short conversations that help enrich the dramatic value of the messages he intends to convey. Most of his character portrayal is derived from the Western culture and its relation to music and painting. This tendency may well explain Hardy's proclivity to nature as the main source of his writing

creativity. Music painting and nature are the three fundamental elements in perceptible and abstract creation. For instance, consider his portrayal of Mr. Penny the show maker, " Mr. Penny being invariably seen working inside like a framed portray of a shoemaker by some modern Moroni, he sat facing the road with a boot in his hand" ( *Under the Greenwood Tree* ; 48).

Hardy's integrated view about the rural community is always present when he depicts his fictional images. He likens the advance of the parish towards the vicarage to " a flock of sheep descending down the hill..". The picture here is shown within the general context of the scene, neither satire nor inferior view is intended by the author.

Animals together with the other living beings are an inseparable part of the components of the scene. In his description of Dick's journey to Melstock to fetch Fancy's household, Hardy emphasizes the role and ' the company' of Smart the mare; "Along with Smart watching the damp slope of the hill sides as they streamed in the warmth of the sun which at this unsettled season shown on the grass with the freshness of an occasional inspector rather than an accustomed proprietor" ( *Under the Greenwood Tree* ; 64). Even the phrase " streamed in the warmth of the sun.." appears to be amazing if we imagine the movement of Dick the mare and the warm rays of the sun embracing the horseman's body while descending the hill

side. This is also stressed when they drive home. Hardy comments: "Dick and Smart have just emerged from the street ..". Firstly Smart takes the lead then Hardy further points out their co-existence to emphasize Dick – Smart tie and their mutual role. When he comes to describe the room in Fancy's parents' house he reveals a great deal of unconscious eco – diverse background. The most striking point about the room is that it reflects upon the intimacy between objects as exemplified and introduced by Noah whose ark boarded by pairs of creatures of every sort.

Nature imagery in a Hardy's narrative leads the reader to the significance of the eternal link between humans and the environment. The importance of nature in someone's life is determined by his awareness of the great role in our social life. In Hardy's world of fiction nature is a social category, and though we are accustomed to separate nature and human perception into two realms, they are in fact indivisible. The author usually mixes between nature as powerful force and beautiful spirit at the same time. Humans naturally belong to nature not to the urban and artificial world. When Mr. Geoffrey talks about Fancy He describes the delicate young lady as " A young woman's face will turn the north wind." ( *Under the Greenwood Tree* p; 69). Hardy likens human nature to *mother nature* which can sometimes become gentle and devastating at the same time.

Some critics view Hardy as being sometimes closer to the Marxist school of criticism, for he focuses on a particular kind of social community by analyzing social relations from an economic point of view. It can be noticed that in many of Hardy's novels socio-economic conflicts are present. He pictures simple folks having their own dreams that rarely come true due to class conflict and the clash between urbanization and frugal rural life.

On the other hand, some critics view Hardy's literary works from a feminist perspective. Many feminists, in fact, have linked most of his heroines with nature and *naturism* on the one hand and with degradation of environment on the other. This concept was originally derived from the ancient social concept of "Hierarchy of Value". In an attempt to explain this concept, Britany Bach (2011 ; [envirolit.website](http://envirolit.website)) says that " In the Western culture, women are valued as less than men, and nature is inferior to culture. Most times humans perceive themselves to have no connection with nature; this lack of connection causes humans to abuse the environment". She arranges *Hierarchy of Value* in terms of primacy and importance in a specific order; god, man, woman, children, animals, nature.

This "Hierarchy of Value" demonstrates both sexism and speciesism. It suggests that woman and nature are inferior to man. In consequence, ecofeminist philosophers of the 1990s set out to explore the interconnections

between sexism, the supremacy of culture over nature, racism and social inequalities. Ecofeminism is not only concerned with the dominations of genre and nature, but also race and class.

As for his special concern about animals particularly when he talks about Smart (the horse) in association to Dick's rural activities, Hardy seems to be influenced by a number of civil societies that emerged early in the nineteenth century in England such as *Animals' Friend Society* and the *Council of Justice to Animals*. He is obviously inclined to employ his literary work to support such active societies at his time. This is clearly indicated in the long and realistic pig-killing scene in *Jude the Obscure* and the scene of *Tess* hiding away in a forest to avoid being raped. Added to that the scene of the dying victims by a shooting party in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

In a letter to a friend, Hardy says of his literary works in this regard: "What are my books ? But one plea against man's inhumanity to man, to woman, and to the lower animals".

This attitude towards animals and the "lower animals", as he calls them may well explain Hardy's special concern whenever he makes mention of Smart the horse Elizabeth's little birds the butterflies the bees in Mr. Day's farm .

He seems to positively employ these 'lower creatures' in his writings to emphasize his commitment to the moral responsibility he shares with a number of writers after the emergence of animal protection societies.

In addition to his shown concern about animals Hardy uses his great knowledge of the very small details of ecological life. He is able to take the reader to the very scene of event through his extraordinary depictions of every single item; small plant or small insect. Sometimes he employs human senses or nature's colours to add to the vividness of his scene. Consider his description of Fancy Day and Suzan Dewy when they are out in the farms, " It was a morning of the latter summer time, a morning of lingering dews, when the grass is never dry in the shade. Fuchias and dahlias were laden with small drops of water, changing the colour of their sparkle at every movement of the air " He goes on to say "the threads of garden spiders appeared thick and polished, ... and dozens of long – legged crane flies whizzed off the grass at every step the passer took". (*Under the Greenwood Tree*; 91).

Consider how the bio-diverse scene is depicted in such a way as to stimulate a completely integrated picture of the place, Through the description of Fancy and Suzan while enjoying their walk. It is so powerful

that it takes the reader to the actual '*place*' and makes him with conscious of it and full acquainted with the details of the dramatic situation. It may right be observed that many eco-critics rely on the idea of the "*sense of place*" to bring the reader as close as possible to the text, regardless of the writer's political or social stances. Hence, the critics' indication to focus and study the relationship of the author with the 'place' as one of the most important factors in examining the final message of the narrative.

It is to be noticed that most of Dick and Fancy meetings are out in the natural world among the flowers wild plants in the lap of the greenery. Deliberately Hardy intends to create fascinating natural atmosphere, and to liken beautiful Fancy to *nature*. His female characters are frequently likened to nature in terms of beauty, fertility and moody changes. The author here is rather painting than portraying a romantic scene, " Her heart quickened adding to and withdrawing from her cheeks varying tones of red to match varying each thought. Dick looked expectantly at the ripe tint of her delicate mouth ". ( *Under the Greenwood Tree* ; 89) . The phrase '*to match*' is actually employed by Hardy to create special harmony between Fancy and the 'place' where nature is covering that part of the world ; hence Fancy seems to be a part of the very scene. The same can be said about Dick when he goes nutting he is portrayed as a twig, or a part of the bushes or may be



camouflaged amongst the massive colours created by nature in the little wood. " ...he entered a hazel copse by a hole like a rabbit burrow in the plunged vanished among the bushes and in a short time there was no sign of his existence". ( *Under the Greenwood Tree* ; 104). However if he is invisible by man now, Venus takes care of him she develops new plans to reunite him with Fancy again. The mention of *Venus* is once more a reference to the theme of '*The Unity of the Universe*'. As it gives, nature can also hinder. Dick became a part of the hazel copse and Fancy is not able to see him until one of the nature's powers interferes ; *Venus*." Thus, Venus has planned different arrangements".(*Under the Greenwood Tree* ; 104)

However, as a realist, Hardy believes that art should describe and comment upon actual situations, such as the heavy lot of the rural labourers and the bleak lives of oppressed women. Despite the fact that he is a nature-lover, Hardy still has other themes to convey. Though the Victorian public reader tolerated his depiction of the problems of modernity, it was less receptive to his religious scepticism and criticism of some of the social questions were raised at his time, such as divorce laws and child abuse. His critics are especially offended by his frankness about relationships between the sexes, particularly in his depicting of the seduction of village girls, and

more disagreeably in *Tess* and the sexual entrapment and child murders in *Jude*.

Hardy usually deals with delicate matters and when the contemporary reader, for example, encounters with the prostitutes of Casterbridge's Mixen and without recognizing the social circumstance of the time, the reader would probably be confused. An obvious example is that when the reader is led to conclude from the 'Chase' scene in *Tess* that the rape has taken place.

Generally, in Hardy's novels the development of female characters varies from one character to another far more than the variation between his male characters. Fancy Day and Tess, for example, are in parallel to Dick and Alec. The temperamental capriciousness of characters such as Fancy Day, Eustacia Vye, and Bathsheba Everdene arises from an immediate and instinctive obedience to emotional impulse without sufficient corrective control of reason. Hardy's women rarely engage in such intellectual occupations as thinking about the future.

Of all of Hardy's women, it is surely Tess who seems to deserve respect for her strength of character and struggle to be treated as an

individual human being. Fancy Day also breaks the chain of education to marry the tranter's son. As W. R. Herman( 1981; 16) says in his book *Explicator* : " Tess rejects both the past and the future that threaten to engulf her in favour of the eternal now" . Hardy's attitude towards women is complex because of his own experiences. Certainly the later stages of his own marriage to Emma Lavinia Gifford must have contributed much to his somewhat equivocal attitude. Furthermore Hardy is inclined to praise female endurance, strength, passion, and sensitivity; and at the same time, depict women as meek, vain, plotting creatures of mercurial moods. In his own experience, and as a young man, Hardy was easily infatuated, and easily wounded by rejection which caused him many complexes.

Nevertheless, he depicts his bright and beautiful heroines through his portrayal of real-life figures, such as the school-mistress Tryphena Sparks; the blush of her cheeks, the arch of her eyebrows,her likeness to particular birds or flowers. Even today's female readers are inclined to accept the realism of Hardy's female protagonists. To him, woman represents the beauty and fertility of nature. Despite his implication that woman is the weaker sex, he still believes that "No woman can begrudge flattery."

Hardy also believes that the country people's specially admirable for their ability to predict future happenings and keen observation of the surrounding environment. When Fancy is caught in the rain she is met by Mrs. Endorfield who is described as an "exceedingly and exceptionally sharp woman in the use of her eyes and ears". ( *Under the Greenwood Tree*; 114).

This seems to make sense; in view of the fact that people in the countryside had to rely on their senses in most of their daily activities because there were no helping devices like those which were available in urban areas.

Hardy also emphasizes that environment controls rural community way of living and the natural phenomenon of the successive movement of seasons is only a kind of exchanging 'natural governors'. Ecocritical studies prove it true that it is humans who benefit from obeying nature's law. It follows that global environmental crises are due to humans violation of nature's system; including ecosystem and bio-system. Hence the problem and crises are caused by man himself.

Examining Hardy's works from a naturalistic perspective will show that there are two kinds of tensions that characterize his narratives. Together, they can lead to better interpretation of experience and aesthetic enjoyment in praxis. In other words, it can be said that the two tensions constitute the theme and form of the naturalistic novel. The first is that between the subject matter of the naturalistic novel and the concept of man that emerges from this subject matter. It is to be noted that Hardy populates his novel primarily from the lower middle class or the rural society. His fictional world is that of the commonplace and the non-heroic in which life would seem to be chiefly the dull round of daily existence. But Hardy discovers in this world of commonplaces those qualities of man which are usually associated with the heroic or adventurous character, such as acts of violence and passion which involve sexual adventure or bodily strength that culminate in desperate moments and violent death, as is obviously depicted in *Tess*.

A naturalistic novel is, in fact, an extension of realism only in the sense that both modes often deal with the local and contemporary. The naturalist, however, is believed to discover in this material the extraordinary and excessive in human nature.

The second tension involves the theme of the naturalistic novel itself. It often describes story characters as though they are conditioned and

controlled by environment, heredity, instinct, or chance. But also it suggests a compensating humanistic value in the characters or in their fates, which affirms the significance of the individual and his life, as led to realize, for example, the importance of personal value in the character of Marty in *The Woodlanders*.

Dick in *Under the Greenwood Tree* for instance is handsome but very simple and of low class as well; whereas Fancy Day is introduced as a charming lady and educated school mistress. Yet, each character has evolved in an opposite direction; breaking class restriction where finally they meet fall in love with other, and get married. Hardy attribute this emotional approach to the concept of '*place*'. It is actually '*place*' that brings them together. Indeed, place is a part of their environment; environment is ruled by nature; and nature is the *mother of all* that reveals the qualities and hidden treasures of living and nonliving things.

The final scene of the novel (the gathering of the villagers under the tree) almost reflects the message that Hardy tries to convey. The tree under which the wedding celebration takes place is a huge old tree. Hardy chooses a tree to emphasize the importance of the other living things the plant it is also of special value and of symbolic significance.

The Naturalists are inclined to confirm that *Plant* is the first living thing on the earth, so Hardy's reference to the ancient tree to huddle a wedding party is actually back-to- nature invitation to return to the lap of nature to love it to respect it and finally to confess and ask forgiveness for humans' injustice to environment.

Thus, Hardy describes the tree " ... an ancient tree, horizontally of enormous extent ...many hundreds of birds had been born amid the boughs of this single tree tribes of rabbits and hares had bibbed at its barks from year to year quaint tufts of fungi had sprung from the cavities of its forks and countless families of moles and earthworms had crept out of its roots young chicken their mothers..." ( *Under the greenwood Tree* ;142 ).

The title of the novel *Under the Greenwood Tree* has been borrowed from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, as has been mentioned earlier. However, Hardy's tree is likened to any family tree but in a broader sense. It alludes to the human race in general and the differences between humans in terms of origin class or colour are of no importance. This is the message about Dick's marriage that can be inferred from Fancy Day who belongs to a different social class.

*Under the Greenwood Tree* is considered to be Hardy's most bright confident and optimistic novel. Claire Seymour ( ibid ), in her introduction to the novel, confirms that: "The delightful portrayal of a picturesque rural society tinged with gentle humour and quiet irony has established Hardy as writer".

However, the novel is not only a charming rural idyll for it also has inter-related themes and plots. The double-plot in which the love story of Dick and Fancy is interwoven within the tragedy of the history of Mellstock Quire hints at the poignant disappearance of a long-lived and highly valued traditional way of life.

### **3.3.Nature Symbolism in the Novel**

Symbolism originally refers to a literary poetry movement that emerged in France about 1880. In the *Dictionary of English Literature* Dorothy Eagle (1970 ; 558 ) states that, "Symbolism is a French poetry movement which appeared when the poems of Mallarme and Verlaine were becoming known and reached its highest about 1890".

However symbolism in the Western culture is believed to have been derived from three main sources; the Western folklore heritage the Old



Testament and the Bible. As a literary device symbolism is indirectly aimed at emphasizing particular concepts and themes, and it evokes rather than describes. It is basically concerned with impression intuition and sensation. The concept of symbolism in modern literature and art has extended to reach broader horizons including the use of symbol to represent physical things and abstract ideas.

Hardy as novelist and poet appeared at the time of the emergence of symbolism as a new literary device in poetry and fiction. Therefore, his literary works must have been influenced by the newly - born literary movement. His use of symbolism is to a great extent closely linked to nature and its elements. His eco-system is astonishingly reflected in his literary works to reveal his deep knowledge of plants insects birds animals and other different types of lower living things.

It may be observed that the title of the novel; *Under the Greenwood Tree*, is suggestive of the implication of the tree and the reference to the '*Tree of Creation*' and, to the idea of the *Unity of the Universe*.

Close reading of the story will take us through different events and situations, and demonstrate how the author employs natural elements

animals or plants, to symbolize other physical things or to foreshadow future events.

As has been pointed out Hardy seems to divide his novel into four parts to coincide with winter spring summer and autumn, the year's four seasons. Each part comprises a number of chapters. Symbolism of seasons in general, as Michel Feber's ( 1999; 183) states: " is selected from the years' slow rounding of the four seasons to represent the circle of life " . Many of the meanings of the trees and flowers, beasts and birds for instance found in this novel depend on their comings and goings at specific seasons of the year. Indeed, seasons of the year have long been applied metaphorically to human lives, as can be observed in this conventional passage from *The Seasons* by James Thomson (1923; 265):

“See here thy pictur’d Life;

pass some few years. Thy flowering Spring,

Thy Summer’s arden strength.

Thy sober Autumn passing into age,

And pale .Winter comes at last,

And shuts the Scene''.

Hardy employs the four seasons in his novel symbolically. He starts with winter to symbolize the end of the traditional rural lifestyle signaling the beginning of a new era, that of Dick and Fancy which will come with spring. Summer and autumn are symbolic of plant's bearing of fruit, they imply reproduction and events.

Earlier in the novel, the author's tells us about the emergence of the moon, when the country music band march towards the church before midnight. Hardy refers to the moon as *feminine*, "The moon in her third quarter has risen since the snowstorm" (*Under the Greenwood Tree*;16). In Latin and Greek culture the moon is symbolic of virginity and chastity. Symbolism here is of two folds; Hardy's intention is to imply Fancy's chastity and purity as Dick's joins the band with the sole intention of meeting her. On the other hand, the mention of the 'snowstorm' implies and foreshadows troubles that may obstruct Dick's endeavours to win Fancy's heart.

The moon is also associated with the church, and it is believed that it is a representation of the moon in Christian culture, as Michael Feber (ibid; 130) has observed : "The church has been represented by the moon shining benignly with the reflected light of Christ the sun and the date of Easter is

set as the first Sunday after the first full moon after the vernal equinox". Feber adds "In Christian iconography, the Virgin Mary is sometimes shown with the moon under her feet".

Hardy's symbolism is sometimes very difficult to notice despite his obvious inclination to use it as a writing technique. Many critics attribute this to his special concern about the country people's lifestyle which in a way may be associated with good and bad omen particularly at the author's time. Hardy's mention of the 'canary in the cage' ( *Under the Greenwood treep*. 72) in the scene of furniture removal can be interpreted as a negative sign of the couple's lack of self-will. For Dick though a popular figure, is to some extent under the pressure of class discrimination. Fancy, on the other hand, is also under the pressure of the vicar's temptation and is not free to make the right choice with regard to love and wealth.

In the " *Confession* " scene, Hardy mentions a number of ecological features, including " ...threads of spiders (that) appeared thick and polished". Feber (1999 ;198) assumes that: "Most of the spider's literary appearances have to do with spinning and weaving. The Greek tale of the girl Arachne (Greek for the word *spider* ) and her weaving contest with Athena is memorably told by Ovid (*Met.* 6-1;145). The word '*spider*,' from Old English *spithra* is from the same root as ' spin ' ; the German word for

‘spider’ is *Spine* ". In this sense Hardy employs his symbolic narrative to underline the fragile nature of Dick – Fancy relationship at that stage. On the other hand the author foreshadows the intrigues taught by Mrs Endorfield to Fancy to gain Dick's love after learning about his relationship with a beautiful girl whom she meets at the 'gypsy party'.

The scene in which Hardy gathers multi-ecological features, thus described: " when the landscape appeared embarrassed with the sudden weight and brilliancy of leaves when the nightjar comes ..., when the apple trees have bloomed and the orchard-grass become spotted with fallen petals when the faces of the delicate flowers are darkened by the honey- bees ...when the cuckoos blackbirds and the sparrows become noisy and persisting intimates ..." ( *Under the Greenwood Tree* ;133). This is an optimistic portrayal hence, the symbolic implication of the streak of delight signals prelude to the couple's reunion and marriage.

The scene in which Fancy is caught in the rain is symbolic, for in English literature it can imply and be interpreted in different ways. Rain as suffering, or sign of bad luck, rain as a fertilizing agent ...etc. It often stands as a synecdoche for all types of bad weather, symbolizing life's unhappy moments. As is commonly said "we save for a rainy day". So, rain may

imply that Fancy will experience a bad time with Dick and that happy time will come again and replace suffering.

To confirm this idea, Hardy concludes the story by the singing of a nightingale and when Fancy hears a loud musical voice, she says delightedly " Oh it's the nightingale " . (*Under the Greenwood Tree* ;146) .

The nightingale in the English literary heritage has been reckoned as the most spectacular bird in English literature. It has been numerously mentioned in thousands of poems from Homer to the twentieth century. Even in ancient times it acquired an almost formulaic meaning as the bird of spring and mourning. Later on, it came to imply and be associated with love. Feber ( 1999; 200 ) states that, "Homer linked the bird with love and spring in the *Odyssey* and it is *Venus* the goddess of spring who makes the bird sing a song of love " .

The same tradition is to be found in Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowls*, where the nightingale is defined as the bird "That clepeth (calls) forth the grene leves newe " ( 1985 ; 351).

Hardy brings the story to an end with the scene of the couple honeymooning in the lap of the beautiful nature. The two lovers symbolize eternal youth of rural England.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## The Woodlanders

### 4.1. Synopsis of the novel:

The story takes place in a small woodland village called Little Hintock. It is the story of an honest woodsman, Giles Winterborne, and his attempt to marry his childhood sweetheart, Grace Melbury. The timber merchant George Melbury spares no expense in educating Grace, his only daughter. He sends away from home for study, and he is eagerly awaiting her return. Giles Winterborne, a traveling farmer and apple grower, also looks forward to Grace's homecoming. Mr. Melbury who happened to wrong Giles's father many years before, intends to make amends, and he promises Giles that he will Grace to him.

When Grace returns, it is obvious that she is much too cultured and refined for the ways of a simple farmer. However, Grace knows that her father has promised her to Giles, and she means to go through with it even though she shrinks a little from his plainness. Despite the fact that Giles is an honorable man, and Mr. Malbury likes him, but he finds it difficult to bear seeing his daughter throw herself away by marrying a commonplace farmer.

Giles is aware that he is not worthy of Grace, but he cannot dare to withdraw, nor can the father and the daughter. Through a series unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances, Giles loses the houses that ensured his livelihood. His loss settles the matter. Although Mr. Melbury can easily support them both, it is unthinkable that such a lady as Grace should be tied to a man without a steady income. However, when her father tells her that she must forget Giles, Grace finds herself for the first time thinking of her would-be husband with real affection.

The local doctor, Edred Fitzpiers, is the descendant of a formerly reputable family and in his own right a brilliant and charming man. The first time that he beholds Grace, Edred is enchanted with her beauty. He thinks she must be the lady of the Manor, Mrs. Charmond. Soon the two young people meet, and Edred asks Grace's father for her hand. Mr. Melbury gladly gives his permission, for Edgar is far above Grace in concert. Despite his sorrow for disappointing Giles and failing to keep his pledge, Mr. Melbury encourages Grace to accept Edred. For the sake of being obedient to her beloved father Grace accepts Edred in spite of her growing of Giles.

When the young couple return from a long honeymoon, they settle in a newly decorated wing of her father's house. Edred resumes his practice, but



his clients are becoming few in number and he decides to accept a practice in the neighbouring town. Just before leaving, Mrs. Felice appears. She is known as a disreputable woman. She happens to have an accident and Edred is called to see her; and the two involve in a love affair. When it is known to Melbury he tries

to secure a divorce for his daughter and marry her to Giles.

Later, Fitzpiers quarrels with Mrs. Charmond and he returns to Little Hintock to try to reconcile with his wife. She flees the house and turns to help Giles who is still suffering from a serious disease. He nobly allows her to spend the night at his hut because of the stormy weather. Giles dies and Grace goes back to Fitzpiers, the repentant unworthy husband.

No one mourns Giles except a courageous peasant girl named Marty South, who all along has been the overlooked but perfect mate who has always loved him.

#### **4.2 Analysis:**

In this novel Hardy starts his narrative technique by giving a realistic survey and at the same time an envisioned accessibility to a wide stretch of a land including Little Hintock, the neighbourhood of High – Stoy Bobb-down Hill Bullbarow Hambledon and the slopes of Shaston Windy Green

and Stour Head. These places and landscapes are actually imagined places, but Hardy has marked them with a kind of concrete familiarity so that they might be numbered among the scenic celebrities of the English shires since they have been created by the author early at the end of the eighteenth century. Hardy also applies the technique of observing people and things.

'Identity' and 'place' are two important elements in this narrative and one of the most effective strategies that Hardy employs is the feminist and ecological power of vision that enriches the strategy of 'observing' things. Or as has been observed by some eco-critics *The Woodlander* is a novel of 'observing characters'.

The idea here is based on the ability 'to observe without being observed'. It is the power over the object of one's observation by using some aspects of spectatorship theory to demonstrate the complexity of the power of observing both things and people. In some cases the viewing relationship is gendered and voyeuristic where the man is the viewer and the woman is the object of his viewing pleasure without her being aware of it. This notion is strongly supported by the feminist and eco-feminist critics.

Hardy in fact employs this technique in most of his novels which are referred to as "Novels of Characters and Environment". In addition the author swings between Darwinism and romanticism in his personal views

about the rural areas of England, particularly those in Wessex and Dorsetshire the setting of his fictional world.

Many critics have recognized Hardy's elegy for the life in the country, including Dale Kramer (1975; 105) who argues that Hardy "was at odds with the way of life he saw developing around him. ... The world of rural Dorset, which he loved, was eroding". Kramer continues to argue that "disillusionment raised in Hardy a discontent with what seemed to be the causes for the unsatisfactory conditions of existence and the imbalance between what ought to have been and what were the possibilities of achieving happiness" . Glenn Irvin (ibid) describes Hardy's longing for the past as overwhelmingly to be apparent in *The Woodlanders*. He argues that " ... in this novel, Hardy presents the new order as malignant and depraved, and that even with its limitations and inflexibility, the old order is preferable to the new, but impossible, of course, to preserve".

However the general impression that dominates the reader of *The Woodlanders* is the gloom and decay which began to hit the natural world even before Hardy's day. This is mirrored in the lives of the characters of the novel. The overwhelming feeling of pain and decay results from Hardy's insistence on the notion of the Darwinian struggle for survival within the woods, which is highlighted through numerous references in the novel. At

times, this sombre view gives way to a real celebration of the beauties in nature, particularly in the progression of the seasons and their influence on the productivity of the natural world. But this joy is not to last as we see for instance Grace's discovery of her love for Giles will not come to fruition. Hence the Darwinian view of nature, that demonstrates animal plant and humans and the eternal struggle for survival remains dominant.

It is generally believed that Hardy's depiction of nature is most powerful, and romantic in *The Woodlanders*. This is made obvious by establishing a close relationship between the novel's characters and the natural world. Many examples of the unity between character and landscape can be cited particularly when a character's feelings are imitated by nature or vice versa as can be inferred from Marty's comment on Mr. Percomb " ...You look unnatural away from your wigs as a canary in a thorn hedge..."(*The Woodlanders* ; 11). Or when the author tries to create an interaction between the inner glare and the outer dark in the lonely world of Marty " A lingering wind brought to her ear the creaking sound of two overcrowded branches in the neighbouring wood which were rubbing each other into wounds and other vocalized sorrows of the trees together with the screech of owls and the fluttering tumble wood pigeon ill-balanced on its roosting bough". ( *The Woodlanders* ; 15).

Considering Hardy's natural world in this novel, the notion of Darwinism versus Romanticism is always present; which fact indicates that the idea of survival in nature can be paralleled by the glorification for nature's beauty fertility and productivity.

The story opens with a rambler any rambler who is supposed to tour that place, whose role – as we come to know- is carried out by a stranger. What is important, is to notice that the man does not belong to the land that the author describes as being covered by the apple orchards. The man is walking along a narrow coach road. Hardy uses the techniques of picturing the scene as a cameraman, covering as far as what stretches before his sight. The rambler is supposed to give a complete picture of the woodlands to the reader as he views the scene throughout the eyes of a curious new visitor.

Hardy here is inclined to emphasize the idea of 'environmental unity' between man the land and natural world. This is to be noticed at the very start of the narrative. Mr. Percomb is thus described: " It could be seen by a glance at his rather finical style of dress that he did not belong to the country proper ". Or, as portrayed as a part of the scene in the writer's description of a winter's morning "There was now a distinct manifestation of morning in

the air and presently the bleared white visage of a sunless winter day emerged like a dead-born child". (*The Woodlanders* ; 1, 21)

Notably Hardy creates a kind of parallels in his character- making to highlight the contrast between urban and rural cultures. In *Hardy's Woodlanders : Inwardness and Memory* Goerge Fayen (1961 ; 88 ) says : " Though as usual in Wessex novels there is a studied opposition of rural values and urban types, the difference in Hardy's *Woodlanders* recapitulation lies in his handling of his contrasts. That is between the outsiders Dr. Edred Fitzpiers and Mrs. Felice Charmond, and the natives Giles Winterborne and Marty South".

Through an ecocritical perspective it will be possible to go beyond the mode of literary criticism that reads setting only as a metaphor. Indeed it will also be possible to view a novel's plot and theme differently. This is particularly true of setting which will be viewed as physical spaces that shape cultural outputs.

There is an ongoing dialectical relationship between identity and place, for the narrative voice allows certain subjectivities to be constructed and changed as the story events unfold. In *Environment and Planning* James Tyner ( 2005 261) expresses his belief that landscape functions as a medium through which subjectivity can be constituted. He states, "It is a matter of

who we are, through a concern of where we are " . Tyner ( ibid ) here connects the construction of identity with a territorial reference point. This is particularly relevant in the case of belonging to a certain group as in the rural community that Hardy depicts in his novels of Characters and Environment .

Unlike romantic writers Hardy does attempt to recreate a romantic atmosphere in his late novels. His attitude is "to look back in anger" to remind us of the traditional way of living that helps preserve precious things around us. In them he predicts human greed of today which is almost spoiling everything.

In *The Woodlanders* the author reveals a lot his soul seems to be mixed up with the soil and the plant . He is now less interested in re-creating romantic beauty in the landscape than in searching for the "intention" within nature. In his introduction to his book *Romanticism in Hardy's Woodlanders* Holly Davids (1997; 4) observes that, "The concept of *intention*, which Hardy is most explicit about in the famous *Unfulfilled Intention* passage in ( *The Woodlanders* ;48), incorporates a Romantic and a Darwinian meaning".

As has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, the word intention (in the above context ) suggests the Darwinian impulse for change and progression,

and implies the romantic sense of the word and the hidden meaning at the heart of nature.

The idea of the '*unfulfilled intentions*' can be applied to a number of characters in the novel; the case of Melbury's broken promise for Giles to marry Grace Fitzpier's troubled relationships with Grace the tragic end of Marty's love for Giles and Mrs. Charmond's failed love affairs.

Though it may be said that Hardy is no longer attempting a re-creation of a romantic landscape in this novel, his intention still lies within the romantic tradition. He seems to seek a kind of presence within the landscape, as opposed to merely trying to describe nature itself. It has been argued by a number of critics particularly eco-critics, that Hardy's depiction of nature in *The Woodlanders* relies upon discovering this "*intention*," either romantic or Darwinian, within nature. Obviously, Hardy keeps a balanced distance between Romanticism and Darwinism when he tackles the issue of nature as an inspiring element in his fiction.

It is to be noted that the writer has special interest in the theme of exposing the tension between traditional and modern attitudes towards life or what F.B. Pinion labels "The antithesis between nature and civilization". So, in most of his 'Novels of Characters and Environment' and in *The Woodlanders* in particular Hardy continues to concern himself with this



theme, dramatizing it as he has done in his early novels. This is obviously reflected in the situation of Grace Melbury, the young woman, who has to decide on an appropriate marriage partner. She has to choose between Giles Winterborne, a woodsman who speaks in "the tongue of the trees and fruits and flowers" as described by the author, and Dr. Edred Fitzpiers, one of the last surviving members of a classic old English family, who dabbles in science and philosophy. Grace's situation represents the conflict between modernism and the traditional lifestyle in the English rural regions. Interestingly and for some pessimistic reason, Hardy makes Fitzpiers 'the stranger' win over Giles 'the good – hearted' as shall be explained in the forthcoming analysis.

In the same context Michael Miligate (1971 ; 251) comments by saying : "In *The Woodlanders*, we have the reverse: traditional Giles weakens and dies, and civilized Fitzpiers carries off the questionable prize. While the ascendancy of the modern, less worthy man in the later novel is generally attributed to Hardy's darkening vision of the human condition, it is more particularly tied in with the author's sense of the disintegration of the rural world and his changed perception of nature and the natural world".

Hardy is inclined to stress the tension and conflict between the life of conventional reality that Mr. Melbury leads and that of his daughter's

modern lifestyle which he admires. Mr. Melbury says to Giles, who is supposed to fetch Grace home "You see Giles coming from a fashionable school she might feel shocked at the homeliness of home; and it's these little things that catch a dainty woman's eye if they are neglected." Then he adds " we live here alone don't notice how the whitey – brown creeps out of the earth over us but she, fresh from a city, she notices everything" (*The Woodlanders* ; 30).

Personification and representation of natural elements is one of Hardy's significant themes that have already been pointed out in the previous analysis of *Under the Greenwood Tree*. Yet the author expressively and repeatedly stresses the same notion in *The Woodlanders* with an innovated vision. Here Hardy makes much of the focus on Grace . He describes her in such a typical Thomasian manner " It could have been difficult to describe Grace with precision either then or at any time ....it may be said that she was sometimes beautiful at other times not beautiful according to the state of her health and spirit" ( *The Woodlanders* ; 35). On one occasion, she is "a weak queen bee" ; on another, she is a "turtledove". She is also likened to a wildflower which, having been transplanted from the woodland to the greenhouse, has now come back to the place of its origin. The author's attempt is to centralize the idea of the rabid change of the rural community

in the character of Grace. On the other hand, Hardy seems to take Grace as a symbol for nature in terms of the state of changeability.

Hardy's career as a novelist is overwhelmingly geared towards creating images from the natural world ; either through the personification of natural elements in order to draw the reader's attention to nature as an inspiring source, or reminding his readers of the worst in our world ; by devaluation of nature and seeing only the destructive side of the eco- system. To serve his purpose Hardy has employed a special type of diction to emphasize the idea of physical and spiritual pain in human life. He depicts 'the oak trees brandish their arms' they ' smite' and ' disfigure' their neighbours . They are even capable of torturing each other. In his book *Thomas Hardy* Irvine Howe ( 1968; 112) comments on the idea of likening human beings' behavior to plants and insects . He says : "the writer goes further to portray the plant's 'slow torture' of young branches to hint at man's mistreatment to his brother in humanity. He resembles this to the lowest order of creatures"

He further observes that " One special value of Hardy to the approach of ecocriticism lies in the connection between geography and culture. He does separate place and characters that he locates in an enclosed ecological cycle that is constantly moving, evolving and is under the threat of being interfered, which affects the fate of the protagonists" . This is obvious in the

case of Grace. As a country girl, she is greatly influenced by the new culture that she acquires in town. Thus, she becomes spiritually divided between Fitzpiers who represents city life and Giles who represents rural life.

As has been pointed out, Hardy is viewed by many critics as a naturalist. So he is not far from the common themes that realist – naturalists share. A number of minor themes have been identified by literary critics; including survival, determinism and violence of nature. Firstly, the theme of '*brute*' within each individual, composed of strong and often warring emotions: passions, such as lust, greed, or the desire for dominance or pleasure; and the fight for survival in an amoral, indifferent universe. The conflict in naturalistic novels is often 'man against nature' or 'man against himself' as characters struggle to retain a 'veneer of civilization' despite external pressures that threaten to release the '*brute*' within.

Secondly, *nature* as an indifferent force acting on the lives of human beings. The romantic vision of Wordsworth that 'nature never did betray the heart that loved her' here becomes the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual. Nature in the wind (and that in Hardy's vision) does not seem cruel nor is it beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But *she* is indifferent, 'flatly indifferent' as he himself describes it.

Thirdly, the forces of heredity and environment as they affect and afflict individual lives.

Fourthly an indifferent, deterministic universe. Naturalistic texts often describe the futile attempts of human beings to exercise free will, often ironically presented, in a universe that reveals free will as an illusion.

However one can link Hardy's common themes such as the theme of 'fate and chance' or 'individual's confrontation' with cruelty of life as demonstrated in the characters of Marty South and Giles in *The Woodlanders*, or Tess who is continuously challenged by a series of misadventures, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

One remarkable themes in *The Woodlanders* is that of 'alienation' as was pointed out by Ahmed Abu Zeid's ( 1987; 2) in his study *The Themes of Alienation in the Major novels of Hardy*. He observed that: " ... in *The Woodlanders*, not only does wild nature fail to be a regenerative and productive force, but also human nature fails to be communicative and assuring" . He further adds, " The people of Little Hintock fail to communicate with each other ". They lack the harmony of a simple rural community, and this might be understood as a pessimistic foreshadow of the beginning of the rural society's disappearance in England.

The relationship between Marty and Giles for instance is an 'obstructed relationship' ; Giles dies a sacrificial death, and Marty ends as a wreck in a rare scene hardly credible in a newly emerging world. Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond, on the other hand, are isolated in the sterile enclosure of their own fantasies. Grace, anticipating Tess is torn in a conflict between two worlds, neither of which can happily accommodate her.

In the above mentioned passage of *'The Unfulfilled Intention'*, Hardy seems to stress the same notion of his pessimism " The leaf was deformed the curve was crippled the taper was interrupted ; the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling ". (*The Woodlanders* ; 48) . Abu Zeid ( ibid; 3) emphasizes the idea of pessimism and alienation as a major theme in the novel. He believes that "The novel foreshadows the modern themes of failure, frustration, futility, disharmony, isolation, rootlessness, and absurdity as inescapable conditions of life" .

However, The central theme of a typical Hardy novel is usually interwoven of different minor themes. Apart from the eternal cycle of Hardy's basic concern with the relationship between man and nature there are, on the other hand other inter-related issues that Hardy employs to keep the harmony and balance between fiction and reality. He frequently creates minor plots about simple and ordinary people who are usually involved in

the narrative to serve complementary roles that are necessary to revitalize the final picture of the scene.

As one of the few novelists who are specially interested in the relationship between human beings and non-living objects or plant and animals Hardy is seen by many modern critics as a real eco-novelist and eco-poet. For a number of contemporary critical studies which make much of the focus on the area of ecocritics have proved that Hardy has deliberately applied this technique in his literary career to draw the world's attention to environmental deterioration which is basically man-made. And that other beings are subject to extinction. But he almost does this in an implicit manner. He creates his rural communities then he links all other threads that can lead to the importance of the central issue ; man and the ecological system.

Amazingly his predictions and hints have all come true as the world in the present time severely suffers from uncontrollable environmental crises. Hardy's narrating talent has made of the current state a piece of fiction, while at the same time endeavoring to control the idea of rural life and its central insight. Hardy's attempt is to probe the unifying generalization about life, whether stated or implied in his narrative.

One of the minor themes that Hardy underlines is that of the impossibility of finding personal fulfillment in conventional marriage. He argues the dialectic relationship between love and marriage as can be seen in the case of Grace and Giles, on the one hand and Grace and Fitzpiers on the other. Hardy stresses how the society the rural society in particular over-evaluates marriage at the price of love .

Hardy is inclined to visualize a dramatic picture that links between man and nature to highlight an implicit struggle between culture and nature. His intention is to invoke this binary polarization in order to problematize how man and other living things should exchange roles in harmony to protect their mutually inhabited planet.

In his book *The Natural Contract* Michael Serres (1995 ; 7) points out that most of the nature writings focus on the contemporary environmental predicament and try to bring a sense of urgency to the questions that are related to the issue of environment . Serres ( ibid ) tries to interpret all kinds of 'the struggle' that can be inferred from a number of nature writers; including Hardy who employs visual metaphor to describe the struggle between nature and culture. This notion is quite notable in the scene of Grace's visit to Hintock House while Giles is watching her . Here is how Hardy reveals Giles' thoughts about Grace : " He questioned if her father's



ambition which purchases for her the means of intellectual light and culture far beyond those of any other natives of the village would not operate to the flight of her future interests above and away from the local life which was once to her the movement of the world".

( *The Woodlanders*;57 ).

The significance of Hardy's study from an ecological perspective is that his views towards nature are not completely romantic in the classic way of viewing nature as has been explained earlier. He investigates the inter-relationships that involve man nature and culture . So the traditional romantic inspiring nature is not everything in a typical Hardy novel.

Luc Ferry ( *ibid* ) comments in the same context in his book *The New Ecological Order*: " The affiliation between Romanticism and ecology nonetheless remains problematic. On the one hand, Romantic nature philosophy has been linked with oppressive and totalitarian political dispositions. On the other hand, Romanticism has been reduced to a simplistic nostalgia for a lost unity with nature, or worse, as a rhapsodic celebration of beautiful scenery". This well explains the idea aforesaid about the paradox of Romanticism and Darwinism. It is also interesting to see how Hardy shows the helplessness and inertness of the landscape by describing the violent struggle endured by plants in the woodland area and

animals in the Malbury homestead. Hardy in fact reflects the unpleasantness in nature which in a way comes closer to the idea of Darwinism.

Nevertheless Hardy presents Darwinian and Romantic elements of his own vision simultaneously. Here is how he describes the scene of Malbury and Grace driving away from the wood : " Their wheels silently crushed the delicate patterned – mosses, hyacinths primroses lord-and-ladies, and other strange and common plants ". ( *The Woodlanders* ;125 ).

However Hardy's inclination towards the glorification of nature is quite dominant over his Darwinian tendency. His description of the change from Summer to Autumn for instance reflects his deep romantic love of nature. In his introduction to *Hardy's Romanticism in The Woodlanders* Holly Davis ([www.otago.ac.nz](http://www.otago.ac.nz)) contends that : " With the change in the seasons, from Summer to Autumn, comes Hardy's most Romantic description of the glory of nature. Melbury's excursion to Highstoy Hill lends him a Keatsian view of the cider district showing". Hardy keeps on picturing the Malbury tour : "The miles of apple trees in bloom. All was now deep green" (*The Woodlanders* ; 126) Davis continues to say " at the beginning of the cider season Hardy unsparingly describes the orchards of Little Hintock: "...beyond the yard were to be seen gardens and orchards now bossed, nay encrusted, with scarlet and gold fruit, stretching to infinite distance under a

luminous lavender mist". (*The Woodlanders* ; 127). The scene is obviously mystic and romantic but with a gloomy streak.

Interestingly Hardy does not create a generalized depiction for the English rural areas only but he reflects the reality of Hintock village in a particular point of time despite the fact that the same life has been run in the same way for hundreds of years. The significance of this is that the author chooses a drastic period of time in which a great change is about to take place. This well explains in fact Hardy's interest in observing and recording almost every single kind of animal or plant. He reminds us of a number of insects and plants that he believes we might not see in the urban life to come.

Modern readers will encounter with a kind of wildlife that is unrecognized to most of them. In this setting of trees and axes, flowers and cider presses, foxes and man-traps, different kinds of birds and insects Hardy attempts to record lots of natural features as well as to create a sense of familiarity between readers and nature. He actually stresses the unity of the woodlanders and the surrounding place unless new comers intervene or new ideas are imported to the small distinctive community of the Hintock village. However life stream runs well, and human passion is as true and practical as nature itself.

In an attempt to reveal the lifestyle of Hintock the author just observes the economic and social equations in the society without analysis. Yet he hints and sometimes foreshadows the potential consequences. Unlike the romantic novelists of his time Hardy implicitly considers external factors in humans relationships such as social status wealth and education as the dominating factors that determine the nature of relationships between the major characters in the novel ; Mr. Melbury Giles Winterborne Marty South Grace Fitzpiers Mrs. Charmond and other minor characters.

Hardy seems to believe in the relationship between humans and the land. He pictures Giles and Marty South as pure and unspoiled ; both are his ideals in terms of their sticking to the land. In the scene of planting trees he pictures Giles and Marty in great harmony with the land that they compete against each other to enhance the process of planting as agro-experts. The author passionately talks about Giles's career: "Winterborne's fingers were endowed with a gentle conjuror's touch in spreading the roots of each little tree under which the delicate fibres all laid themselves out in their proper direction for growth " . Marty South wholly belongs to the land her femininity is likened to the fertile land. She is rich, with love and passion. She talks about the small trees in such a passionate manner : " It seems to

me as if they sigh because they are very sorry to begin life in earnest just as we be ".

The writer sees Marty through the eyes of Giles; she has got a terrible cold but still " She was a heroic girl ...she would not complain while he was disposed to continue work. " ( *The Woodlanders* ; 59 ).

Ironically Marty who devotes herself to the land remains sad and alienated whereas Giles who represents loyalty and self-purity, dies in a tragic scene. Hardy seems to portray the two of them as the symbols of traditional rural life in the face of modernity.

Close reading of Hardy's characterization, shows that Giles and Marty may be placed together while Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond will make a good pair. Grace Milbury is fit to stand in the middle. Thus, it will be possible to establish a kind of dialectical relationship between modernization and the conventional rural system. Accordingly, an implicit kind of antagonist polarization between the two extremes ( rural life and modernization) is established by the writer. This is demonstrated by Fitzpiers' closeness to Felice Charmond and Grace's spiritual relation to Giles. Hardy's attempt is to create a kind of familiarity with what the eco-critics call the ' *sense of place*', which is viewed by Buell ( *ibid* ) as a negative factor. In his book *The Environmental Imagination* Buell

(ibid;118) argues that one of the key functions of environmental writing is to deploy tropes of displacement and disorientation that force us to attend to the home place in a new way: He believes in the view of "Seeing things new, seeing new things", and in extending the notion of *community* to join the broader notion of "the ecological community" he dreams of. These are some of the ways in which environmental writing can re-perceive the familiar for the purpose of deepening the idea of "the sense of place" . In a way, this may be interpreted to mean that *The Woodlanders* is only a bit of nostalgia. Ian Gregor ( 1974 ; 142) in his critical study *The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction*, assumes that : " *The Woodlanders* is based on recollection remembrance of things in the past a concern to render a consciousness increasingly susceptible to the tension of the present ".

Hardy as suggested by a number of eco-critics is close to the Eco-feminist themes and issues. The Eco-feminists' assumption is based on the fact that Eco-feminism is important because it shows how environmental policies influence our everyday lives. Women, children, the working class individuals, poor people and coloured people are the most powerless populations who usually fall as victims due to environment violations and their rights to health should be protected.

To further this notion, Eco-feminists have shown so far that women are the ones who are first affected by ecological degradation and climate changes. This is due to environment damage resulting from humans conflicts and capitalist economical theories of world vast production. Environmental awareness and ecology reconsideration is a must. So new policies should be adopted by civil press groups worldwide as political, economic, and social changes are badly needed to help bring about this awareness.

As Hardy centralizes the theme of 'man – nature' relationship he implicitly sympathizes with the local men and women in the novel to express his love of the soil. Throughout the stages of the narrative, we meet with minor characters whose roles are of great importance to bridge the gaps between great events in the story. It is to be noted that most of these characters are employed to reflect the reality of the local community in minute detail. Timothy Tang John Upjohn, Mrs. Melbury and Suke for instance are used by the writer to clarify the other side of rural community. From a Marxist point of view the existence of such characters is the true mirror of how the writer views the final scene of rural England. Marxist critics have shown great interest in Hardy's works particularly *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* as both novels tackle the question of the historical change and individuals' lifestyle in Europe under capitalist economical conditions.

The natural world in which Giles Winterborne finds himself is radically different for example, from that of *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *The Return of the Native*. One may catch the occasional glimpse of Hintock as "a wondrous world of sap and leaves" but the more prevalent images of the place imply "the microcosm" of a world in which the struggle for existence is the chief condition of existence.

Descriptions of the suffering and torment that natural objects inflict on one another and of the infertility of gardens seem to dominate the novel. This kind of imagery attract a number of Marxist critics to probe the dialectic relationship between man and the historical conflict in terms of social and economical relations as has been observed earlier.

However, Hardy's strongest spokesman who conveys the writer's special concern about the 'place' is Giles. "Giles who was the colour of his environment" as he sometimes is totally unified with nature and even though he is not seen amongst the orchards. But he is also portrayed on different occasions to represent loyalty for the 'place'. When the writer sees Giles through Grace's eyes, nature is personified and associated with him in a romantic manner. "He looked and smelt like Autumn's very brother, his face being sun-burnt to wheat – colour his eyes blue as corn – flowers his sleeves and leggings are dyed with fruit stains his hands clammy with the



sweets juice of apples his hat sprinkled with pips and everywhere about him that atmosphere of cider which at its first return each season has such an indescribable fascination for those who have been born and bred among the orchard " . ( *The Woodlanders* ;143).

One important aspect of Hardy's novels commonly known as ' Novels of Characters and Environment' is his detailed and almost specialized knowledge of a vast number of different kinds of plant species insects and animals and their different kinds and categories. Despite the fact that he was born in a small hamlet in the parish of Stinsford to the east of Dorchester in Dorset, his amazing knowledge of the ecological system is that of an expert, knowledge that he employs in his world of fiction. Hardy's keen powers of observation and word painting make him a notable landscape-painter. "If word-pictures could be hung on walls", says H.C. Duffin (2003;159) in his book *Thomas Hardy The Study of Wessex Novels* "Hardy's nature pieces would fill up an entire gallery." He continues to say "Hardy's nature descriptions are fresh and accurate. They are not bookish, but based on first- hand observation of the facts and phenomena of nature. He observes everything, nothing escapes his eye, but he selects only those details as are likely to serve his purpose". Thus in his nature descriptions, Hardy combines imagination with realism, fact with fiction. By careful selection and ordering

of material he heightens the significant aspects of a scene and renders it with greater effectiveness. His methods of landscape painting are like those of a director of a modern movie. First, he presents the broad outlines of a scene, and then moves the camera forward to convey the details of the landscape. This combination of "the methods of Wordsworth and Crabbe" as Duffin (ibid ) puts it, is best seen in the description of the valley of the Great Dairies in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and in the scene of the barber before he arrives at Marty's house in *The Woodlanders*. In the scene of the dairies for instance first the reader is given a colourful background of sun-set, then the place and finally the details. We are told that the air was clear, ethereal and bracing, and that the waters of the river were clear and rapid. As Tess approaches nearer, we are even shown the large-veined udders of the cows that 'hung ponderous as the sand-bags, the teats sticking out like the legs of a gipsy's crock; and, as each animal lingered for its turn to arrive, the milk fell in drops to the ground.' The detailing is also notable in the scene of the stranger's arrival at Little Hintock. A similar method has been employed in painting the Vale of Blackmoor and so on.

In certain respects Thomas Hardy has an advantage over the painter, who paints with the brush. A painter of landscapes can paint only what he sees, while Hardy can astonishingly convey what he hears too. Thus he even

describes the sound of the juice running in the vein of plants and the stir of germination in all nature, with the coming of spring. The varied, whispering sound made by heath bells and heard by the author or by one of his narrators is a good example of Hardy's powers of hearing sounds of nature, and of rendering them into words. Further, Hardy shows and reveals different things in motion which a painter of landscapes with the brush can hardly do. Nothing is static in Hardy's landscapes. He shows things growing, moving and becoming different from what they are. This helps the reader notice the change in the moods of his characters.

Indeed Hardy's landscapes are always subjected to human moods and situations. So the landscape in *The Woodlanders* and in the other novels changes according to the psychological situation and fate of the hero or the heroine. However silent nature and the state of soundless is not ignored by the writer. He creates in his fictional world scenes that reflect absolute silence and quietness which help represent other situations that parallel the stormy sounds of nature.

This technique can be observed in the scene of portraying Grace early in the morning on the day of Fitzpier's visit. " ...not a sound came from any of the outhouses as yet. The tree –trunks the road the outbuildings the garden every object, wore the aspect of mesmeric passivity which the quietude of

daybreak lends to such scenes . Helpless immobility seemed to be combined with intense consciousness" (*The Woodlanders*;150). Through this powerful description Hardy sensitively links between his characters' mood and the surrounding scenes of the non-living things. The same seems to be true of the characters of Dick in *Under The Greenwood Tree* Grace and Giles in *The Woodlanders* and Tess in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. The latter gives an ideal example for the above idea.

It can rightly be said that Hardy stands out as one of the best writers in terms of providing truthful and life-like descriptions of the night in relation to the characters and their environment. Night scenes are pictured in a magical and fascinating manner. Even the sky and the stars are brought in to add to the realism and splendour of the scene.

Hardy seems to feel the colours of nature during the night ; hence his ability to convey this atmosphere to the reader. In these scenes which are romantically depicted, Hardy prefers to borrow from *Aella* by the 'Marvellous Boy', Thomas Chatterton ( 1752 – 1770) to provide the needed fascinating picture of the countryside evening

" When the fair apples red evening sky,

Do bend the tree unto the fruitful ground

When juicy pears and berries of black dye

Do dance in air, and calls the eyes around"

Interestingly, Hardy is at his best when he describes the scenes of desolation; dark or moon-lit nights or weather at its worst as is obviously seen in *Tess of D'Urbervilles* and *The Woodlanders* in particular. However it is of worth to note that Hardy employs some of his characters to convey his implicit rejection of the outsiders who spoil the lifestyle of the people of the country by their greed and selfishness. To him these outsiders have no spirit of the 'place' and they lack the true feeling of belonging to the soil. Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond are good examples that show the outsiders' self-interest their lack of harmony with the rural community whose values they are likely to spoil and overlook Fitzpiers who observes, "There is a very good society in the country I suppose for those who have the privilege of entering it ". But he himself cannot enter that society as he considers himself amongst the educated and refined. This well explains that he is not able to approach any one of the woodlanders but only Grace who is portrayed as swinging between urban and rural life. However, Mrs. Charmond is bold enough to express her arrogance and hatred of the reality of the local people. Thus, she talks about Little Hintock: "...The misery of remote country life is that your neighbours have no toleration for difference

of opinion and habit". (*The Woodlanders* ;172 ). Some critics believe that her attitude and her suspicious relationship with Fitzpiers give the impression that she looks down upon Grace ( the peasant girl ) whom she considers a mismatch for the educated doctor.

One of the significant features that characterize Hardy's fiction, is the tendency to create and develops distinctive regional mythology. His profound knowledge of the Greek and the Roman cultural and religious heritage has helped him convey his message as a writer.

Throughout the novel abounds with numerous quotations from the Old Testament the Greek Tragedy or the accumulative heritage of the Anglo-Saxon poetry and French and German thinkers. On several occasions Hardy makes his characters refer to classical or religious sayings. Despite the fact that this is a Victorian tradition in poetry and novel writing it is believed that Hardy has made use of it to show his technique of characterization. Through this technique Dorset, the local parish has come to attain global reputation. Hardy, in fact, is a fan of glorifying '*the locality*' in order to reach universal horizons.

There is general consensus by the late twentieth century critics that Hardy's fiction can best be viewed through the inter-relationship between culture and ecology, believing that human activities have their influence on

the biosphere and the earth itself. One such critic who has expounded this idea is Julian Steward (1902 – 1972) who is considered the father of the modern cultural ecology.

Cultural Ecology as a theory focuses on how cultural beliefs and practices help human populations adapt to their environments and live within the means of their ecosystem. Hence its relation to social organizations and other humanitarian institutions.

Cultural Ecology tends to interpret cultural practices in terms of their long-term role in helping humans preserve their environment out of self-motivation.

Hardy's early mature perspective in this regard is believed to have enabled him to understand and tackle the questions of environment power and wealth distribution, together with the threat to the global ecological life. This can be described in a new approach that stands mid – away between romanticism and Darwinism.

In his book *The Theory of Cultural Ecology* Julian Steward (ibid; 109) states that " Cultural Ecology has steadily made an effort to combine both the ideas and the approaches of the natural and social sciences. In this way, cultural ecology seeks to explain the social sciences by the means of the

natural sciences. It uses the environmental pressures as explanations for cultural change. It therefore recognizes the ways in which different societies adapt differently not as a result of intelligence, but as a result of their climate " . Therefore when Hardy depicts how Giles (or Marty) for instance is talented or highly skilled in carrying out an activity related to their local reality he actually stresses the recognition of how a person is adapted to a particular environment. In the same context Hardy pictures Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond as clumsy, not in harmony with the local society. They are like a parasite plant in a well-cultivated field. He hints at this idea when he makes Grace discover her true love for Giles, not because he is more intellectual and handsome but because he shares her the same culture. The writer emphasizes this idea when he reflects Grace's inner feelings towards Giles " She has made a discovery .. she had looked into her heart and found that her early interest in Giles Winterborne had become revitalized into growth by widening perceptions of what was great and little in life. His homeliness no longer offended her acquired taste his comparative of what so-called culture did not now jar on her intellect. His country dress even pleased her eye his exterior roughness fascinated her " ( *The Woodlanders* ;198).



Recent studies have revealed another relationship between culture and nature; it is believed that "culture imposes on nature and nature imposes on culture" . From this notion emerged the idea of *Environmental Determinism*, in opposition to that of *Environmental Possibilism*. Environmental possibilism which was basically introduced by Professor Roy Rapaport (1926 – 1997), became closely associated with the field of ecocriticism. In his book *The New Ecology*, professor Rapaport has explained the idea of *Environmental Possibilism* suggesting that a particular group or community responds to their environment in a number of ways that are exhibited by others.

Nevertheless, considering Hardy's fiction, with its dense description of nature and the detailed particulars of the rural community it can be said that it tackles other important aspects of social and economical life in addition to its main objectives. There is a clear indication that the emotional waverings of the various characters between possible patterns is meant to mediate the questions of class, money, education and wider affiliation. The dense web of shifting personal relationships is matched by the equally potent and complex socio-economic relationships within which they take place; relations of landlord and tenant employer and employee workmates or business arrivals. In her introduction to *The Woodlanders*, Penny Boumelha observes that

"The emotional and the economic intertwine in an unpredictable and disconcerting ways ".

In common with much of Hardy's fiction *The Woodlanders* does not narrate a progress towards a single definitive choice. In terms of plotting Hardy uses a kind of technique which some critics call 'double choice' suggesting the presence of a circle of events. For instance throughout the narrative course of events, it is obvious that the right partner is met then lost and finally met . It seems that the author likens social events to the natural cycle of seasons. In his book *The Way of the World* Franco Moretti ( 1987 ; 288-9) comments on the idea of the ' double choice' in a Hardy typical story by saying : " choices are made until the rightness of the original choice is confirmed " . This might be seen in the inter-relations that determine the fate of each of the main characters : Grace Giles Fitzpiers Marty South and Mr. Charmond. It also clearly explains the former idea of the novel's relationships that run in circles.

Penny Boumelha (ibid) observes that " the novel declines to reward neither its characters nor its readers with the rightness of relationship restored is closely connected with its focus on and representation of, sexuality". She continues to add "*The Woodlanders* is more of an ensemble

piece it takes its structure and centre from the interaction and shifting relations of community within its relatively isolated and bounded woodland location. The continuum of the wood and the village the trees and the human inhabitants is quite overt ".

In a striking way, Hardy wonderfully employs two of the human senses; observing and hearing to create the required effects for his scenes. Part of the significance of the novel is its permanent focus on the group rather than the individuals. The author uses his characters to interpret the presence or actions of one another. So here the sense of hearing or observing plays an important role to convey the most complete and touching impression to the reader. For instance, Marty South is introduced, for the first time as seen through a lighted window, and made more and more under the focus as Percomb approaches her house. Melbury Felice and Fitzpiers are depicted in the same way. In the small community of Hintock as in any rural community it seems there is always someone looking on or listening in. Thus, the flow of the novel's events is constantly caught in a web of observation or hearing. Hardy presents a true picture of the rural society which, he believes reflects the human inhabitants of the isolated areas to depend on their senses and instincts.

For a long time, the critics of Hardy's fiction have been preoccupied with the issue of "fate", and the "sense" that forms his characters. Hardy's characters are shaped into puppets of some malign inhuman power. Peter Widowson (1989 ;154) notes in his book *Hardy in History* : "...It is not always the same as the apparent fatedness of the action in *The Woodlanders*.

The description of Felice for instance as 'a divinity' who shaped the end of the villagers or Fitzpiers as 'a remorseless Jehovah' suggests an ironic distance from notions of supernatural determinism ". Accordingly when Hardy talks about Marty's chances in life he actually talks about 'destiny' and only by chance that she has been forced to practise that physically exhausting kind of work and later to sacrifice her beautiful hair for little money. Hardy tells us that neither Grace nor Felice is better than Marty in any kind of talent or in physical beauty. He thinks that nothing in Marty's body or abilities has predestined her for manual labour. 'Destiny' here could be replaced by '*chance*'.

Hardy is fond of using the technique of making symmetry and opposition as a writing style as has been observed earlier. As a novel of community, *The Woodlanders* is equally resonant and well - narrated as through the creation of a number of similarities in terms of environmental

presentation and community lifestyle. It provides the suitable graphic form to the abstraction in the flow of the events to heighten the general atmosphere of the story. It is obvious that the writer's intention is not to offer authoritative and narrative interpretation or comment or judgment to guide the reader. However a number of issues have been implied and thus the reader of today would probably interpret Hardy's themes and issues in the most proper way in the light of the new literary critical schools.

One important feature that distinguishes Hardy's novels of 'Environment and Characters' is that they obviously share 'sympathy with women'. This notion has been viewed and analyzed by critics particularly eco-feminists, to focus on the idea of the disputed relationship between woman and nature, on the one hand and the Victorian general attitude of life on the other. Hardy is thought to believe in nature not only as an inspiring resource but also to emphasize his call for preserving the natural world.

Women in a typical Hardy's narrative is entirely associated with nature. His sympathy with his heroines is to echo his sympathy with the land and the lower creatures. Thus, his views of Modernism suggest complete intellectual divorce from nature. Hardy further questions the general trend of modernization in his day and whether it suits human life in the light of devaluation of nature. He represents woman to stand for nature in order to

emphasize the interconnectedness of nature and self, though they essentially represent one entity and cannot be appreciated separately. As has been noted earlier in the first chapter of this study, the Western culture in general has been associated with the femininity of nature as a symbol of fertility. This brings to minds '*gaia*', the mother nature in Greek mythology.

Since ancient times, nature has been portrayed as feminine and women are often thought of as closer to nature than men. Women's physiological connection with birth and child attendance have partly led to this close association with nature. The menstrual cycle, which is linked to lunar cycles, is another example of closeness to nature's rhythms and natural cycles.

Contemporary studies which are concerned with "green culture", including eco-critics frequently recommends that researchers and critics should create a kind of global approaching to the issue of ecology. The united States along with some European and Asian countries have already established research centers and specialized academic and cultural institutions to bring people closer to nature. Eco-feminists as has been noted earlier have taken the lead to employ nature in literary and art criticism. Hence their attempts to familiarize ordinary people with the culture of

respecting natural world, and the symbolic employment of green nature's positive aspects such as renewal, fertility and rebirth.

Hardy is seen by a number of critics in the like manner, by linking his female protagonists with nature. In the scene of Grace and Felice meeting in the dark when they both miss their ways home, Hardy likens Grace to nature in sympathy, gentility and warmth on the one hand and sudden gust of rage and roughness on the other. " They clasped each other closely, Mrs. Charmond's fur consoled Grace's cold face ...while the funereal tree rocked and chanted dirges unceasingly...Grace started roughly away from the shelter of the furs and sprang to her feet". ( *The Woodlanders*; 218, 219 ) . Thus, Grace's natural reaction to Mrs. Charmond is revealed : "Grace was naturally kind but she could not help using a small dagger now" ( *The Woodlanders* ; 220).

Despite the fact that this study is largely based on the eco-critical approach, traditional criticism remains to be of worth. For it is more suited to drawing comparisons and contrast between conventional and modern views.

It is generally agreed that most of the critical movements that are related to eco-criticism, eco-feminism naturalism or Marxism share inter-related relationships with the school of *realism*. They have all evolved the work of global events and the drastic changes that resulted thereof. Thus

eco-criticism has emerged as a reaction to environmental and ecological degradation. Naturalism has emerged from realism feminism and eco-feminism have been associated with eco-criticism and so on.

F.B. Pinion (ibid) is one of the critics who considerably contributed to the scholarly study of Hardy's fiction. His writings can be viewed as important to understanding Hardy's character making technique. In his book *A Hardy Companion* (1982;145) he states that " ...Although the frequent iteration of sensational event, surprise, dramatic suspense, irony of circumstance, and reversal of fortune strain the probability of his novels, as he was well aware, Hardy took comfort in the realization that probability of character is far more important than probability of incident." This accords with Hardy's last definition of tragedy: "The best tragedy is the highest tragedy, in short, is that of the worthy encompassed by the inevitable".

Ted R. Spivey, in his *Tragic Hero* (1954;191) argues against Ernest Baker's contention that Hardy's heroes are never quite tragic in the Aristotelian sense because they suffer not from a clearly-defined *hamartia* (an undermining flaw or fatal error in judgment) but from 'paralysis of the will.' He contends that Hardy "was a writer of tragedies, a tragic poet, if you will, who did his work in prose". Rather than in the traditional tragic medium, verse drama, in his great novels : *The*



*Woodlanders The Return of the Native, Jude the Obscure, Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* Hardy sees man beaten down by forces within and without himself and seeks to record man's eternal struggle with fate. This is also what the Greeks and Shakespeare do. Conceding that Hardy's heroes lack the universality, the rich intellects and imaginations of Shakespeare's heroes". Nevertheless we see in *Tess* and *Jude* "souls capable of great feeling, souls capable of exultation" and "nobility of passion". He concludes that tragedy for Hardy is the defeat of the romantic hero's desire to reach a higher spiritual state. The drives of Hardy's characters to achieve states of love and ecstasy are powerful enough to make his chief characters among the most passionate in English literature.

Hardy's tragic heroes and heroines cry out defiantly against their fate, but accept their doom with an insight into and out of awareness of the forces of evil which have affected their downfall. By the very strength of their passion, Hardy's protagonists command our sympathies, and we experience a feeling that someone of great worth has been lost when we see them destroyed. Spivey ( ibid; 193 ) adds, : "Despite the fact that we do not view them on the stage, Hardy's heroes and heroines are specifically tragic in the Aristotelian sense because they elicit from the reader the requisite and somewhat contradictory responses of pity and fear ".

If we view Hardy's characters in the above extracts from Spivey's critical perspective, and compare that to an eco-critical view, it can be said that the focus of eco-criticism will be on themes and issues related to the protagonist's relationship to the 'place' his / or her representation as a harmonious natural element. Or, the theme of alienation and conflict between modernization and rural lifestyle, interwoven with the character's symbolic status in terms of association to the natural world, like plants animals and low creatures.

However, as a realist, Hardy feels that art should describe and comment upon actual situations, such as the heavy lot of the rural labourers and the bleak lives of oppressed women. Though the Victorian reading public might tolerate Hardy's depiction of the problems of modernity, it was less receptive to his religious scepticism and criticism of many social relationships, including marriage and divorce as can be observed in *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. It is noted by both conventional and modern critics that Hardy is unique in connecting his character's general mood and the general trend of the society, together with every-day events to nature, particularly in his novels of 'Character and Environment. So most of his characters' activities or emotions are linked to the natural conditions of the very place in which the event happens. Here is one of Hardy's scenes in

which he depicts Melbury's searching for Fitzpiers: (Melbury is very upset because of his dear Grace's troubles with Fitzpiers) " He stood still listening and looking around the breeze was oozing through the network of boughs as through a strainer the trunks and larger branches stood against the light of the sky in the forms of sentinels gigantic candelabra pikes halberds lances and whatever else the fancy chose to make them Giving up the search Melbury came back to the horses and walked slowly homeward leading one in each other". (*The Woodlanders*; 230). It is to be observed that the writer has skillfully employed a number of natural elements to provide an integrated picture of Melbury's psychological situation.

Hardy, as a realist – naturalist, portrays a type of characters who are frequently - but not invariably - viewed as ill-educated or lower-class characters, whose lives are governed by the forces of heredity, instinct, and passion. Their attempts at exercising free will, or choice are hamstrung by forces beyond their control. This is made obvious by Hardy in the scenes of Mr. South's tragic death as he associates being alive with the existence of the tree at his window. Or Marty who lives in poverty despite her talents, or Giles who devotes himself to the values of a rural community.

Indeed, Giles is considered the ideal character that Hardy has ever created to balance the rhythm of the narrative and keep the resonance of the events in harmony. Giles' life and death are like a short epic, but they are likened to an impressive song for the virgin land that Hardy keeps dreaming of throughout his writing career as a novelist. Giles has been created by the author in glorification of the soil of Little Hintock that represents the whole country, the rural England. Hence the depiction of Giles with great and touching sympathy.

In one of the final scenes when Giles becomes seriously ill, and decides not tell Grace about his illness, the author portrays him in such a way as to uncover sensitive nature and pure soul that no woman would worthy of his love. He is an inseparable part of nature. " He seemed to be accustomed to the noises of woodpeckers squirrels and such small creatures he took no notice of her tiny signal ; she knocked again, ... he came and opened the door placing his arms in hers while surprise joyalarm, sadness chased through him by turn"( *The Woodlanders*; 270).

Hardy ends his narrative with a wonderful scene that conveys a number of messages. After Giles' death both Marty and Grace regularly keep a promise to visit Giles' grave every week. But finally Graces breaks her

promise. She reunites with Fitzpiers who is partially responsible for Giles' tragic death, which is symbolic of the end of rural England.

However, Hardy seems to give in to the new lifestyle of modernization and industrialization. He signals his surrender by hinting that rural life and urban life are two extremes in terms of social values and ethics. That is why, despite her apparent loyalty to Giles, Grace chooses to go with Fitzpiers which fact suggests that Giles is in her heart but Fitzpiers is in her mind. This is one evidence that shows the influence of urbanization which Grace has experienced during her college study in the town. And this is perhaps why she turns pragmatic.

Contrarily, Marty South remains loyal to Giles even after his death. She considers Grace's withdrawal from the scene as an unforgivable betrayal. "Now my own, own love she whispered ; you are mine and only mine for she has forgot thee at last although for her you died....but ever I forget your name let me forget my home and heaven ..no no my love I never can forget thee for you were a good man and did good things". (*The Woodlanders*; 331).

One important observation to make about Hardy's novel is that in addition to his varied writing techniques he has employed a considerable

number of religious and philosophical statements on different occasions. Indeed, *The Woodlanders* is stuffed with such references it is actually a text of dense and complex self –consciousness . Literary allusions and generic reminiscences abound with a variety of effects. Hardy has managed to make use of the blend of functions in *The Woodlanders*. Profound references from the Bible are made, in addition to Greek mythology Sophocles and Shakespeare Keatsian Atumns and Homeric episodes down to Shelley and Wordsworth.

However the general sense by which a reader can closely view *The Woodlanders* is that the novel is presented as an elegy in view of its highly poetic quality. William Buckler is one of those writers who were aware of the poetics of *The Woodlanders*, Which fact made him draw the attention of the novel's readers to its "organic, verifiable, critical" nature .

The poetic quality of Hardy's language and vision, not to mention the novel's organic building, have added to the appeal of the novel. Its symmetry, and Hardy's impressionistic view of characters have given more weight to the argument for elegy.

As Hardy approached the end of his novel-writing career and prepared himself for a life of poetry, it was only sensible for him to think in

increasingly poetic terms. Accordingly, he seems to have relied more on the tone and the mood to make his story-telling techniques more effective. The move towards elegy was perhaps initiated by Hardy's increasing disability, in the face of a Darwinian and highly industrialized world, to recapture his early Romantic views of nature.

It was demonstrated earlier how Hardy felt the pain of industrialization. Actually, he was so disturbed by industrialization, that he expressed his refusal of the new trend of lifestyle by his active contributions to a number of societies that emerged.

As an artist Hardy refused to compromise his poetic vision, and insisted upon revealing what he called the '*Heart and Inner Meaning*' of whatever he was describing. The notion of "heart and inner meaning" is to become even more intensely elegiac in his final tragic novels, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

#### **4.3.Nature Symbolism in the Novel**

Throughout the novel, Hardy appears to be inclined to emphasize a number of nature symbolism. As has been mentioned earlier, symbolism as a writing technique in English literature was mainly derived from three sources ; the Greek mythology the Old Testament and the Bible and the

Western folklore. Notably Hardy's symbolic writing technique can be distinguished from the Victorian fashion in that Hardy has made use of a huge number of natural elements which are not quite well-known to most of the Victorian readers.

It seems that Hardy's nature symbolism was in response to his continuous awareness of nature and its movement. He believed that humans and other living things are of physical and spiritual natural symmetry, an idea which was adopted by the movement of Transcendentalism which emphasizes the idea of man relating himself with nature. The Transcendentalists believe that God expresses himself through nature and if human beings relate themselves to nature; actually they are relating themselves to God. This view eventually led to emphasizing the concept of the '*unity of the universe*' which has been mentioned earlier.

Hardy also employs symbolism to enhance his narration technique and enrich his literary works and makes them colourful. Such techniques is believed to add profounder dimensions to the literary work and give it deeper meaning.

Hardy's symbols in this novel are of different forms, including figure of speech. However the author sometimes uses metaphors that are laden with



symbolism. For example, comparing two things that are not similar then showing what they have in common.

Early in the narrative, Hardy introduces Marty South a feminine labourer who falls a victim to the social system. But the appearance of the professional barber (Percomb) is actually a prelude to the girl's hair sacrifice which she bitterly accepts after a long bargaining. (*The Woodlanders* ; 11,12,13,14). This scene is viewed by many critics as a "spiritual rape" of the girl which foreshadows the girl's loss of her companion woodlander ;Giles Winterborne. As Dale Kramar (ibid) puts it " The sexual symbolism is evident too, in the language of violation with which Marty's self-mutilation is first recounted : the sacrifice of her hair is described as a rape that leaves her deflowered".

Other symbolic features in the novel are the *trees*. Hardy lists sets of a great variety of plants with special reference to apple trees. An apple tree in Christian heritage symbolizes the underlying story of Eden and the story of the Fall. Other pastoral elements have been employed among others including the seasonal cycles.

The incident of Mr. South's death presents us with a very strange case. Dr. Fitzpiers says " This is an extraordinary case " . Marty South explains

that " The shape of the tree seems to haunt him ( Mr. South) like an evil spirit he says it is exactly his age ".(*The Woodlanders* ;93). And when the tree is cut down Mr. South dies in the same evening.

This incident is symbolical in two ways; first, the cutting down of the tree is foreshadowing the man-made devastation of rural areas. Second, the controversial death of Mr. South is symbolic of the sudden collapse of humanity by damaging the symbol of family life the tree which represents ecological life.

A close look at the characters of Giles and Fitzpiers for instance would lead us to realize that both of the characters are created by Hardy to represent two extremely different types of personalities. Giles' kindly common sense and Fitzpiers' scientific rationalism are combined by the author to underline John South's obsession but their logical approach ( if the tree is no longer there it cannot kill him) in fact leads directly to his death and to all that follows.

In his introduction to *The Woodlanders*, Dale Kramar (2005;2) observes that "The novel's recurrent imagery of bodily fragmentation ( referring to : Marty's hair Melbury's back Grammar Oliver's head John South's brain the limbs and lungs and the old amputation of the woodland trees". He continues

to add, " at the same time these devices give ironically literal expression to the novel's under-mining of the idea of self-possession and it stresses the unavoidable violence of interaction in the struggle for survival".

Hardy's use of nature and natural phenomenonae to symbolize or foreshadow his story events is sometimes beyond anyone's expectation. In the scene that shows Fitzpiers' early admiration of Grace, Hardy, for instance employs the changeable climate of ' half snowy and half rainy' weather and what he calls ' the changeful tricks' of nature together with ' the strange mistakes that some of the trees made in budding before their month ' to foreshadow the troubles that will stand on Fitzpier's way before and after his marriage to Grace. Hardy's comments that ".. these were features of a world not familiar to Fitzpiers" (*The Woodlanders*;113.Stressing the fact that Fitzpiers is a strange body in this land if not he is in the wrong place.

In the same context when he says " trees...glued up by frozen thawing " Dale Kramar continues to comment on the phrase that Hardy "suggests natural as well as human propagation is attended by mischance and frustration". The following lines are quoted by Hardy from Keats :

" In drear nighted December,

Too happy, happy tree,  
Thy branches never remember  
Their green felicity  
The north cannot undo the  
With a sleety whistle through them,  
Nor frozen thawing glue them"

Hardy in fact is playing upon Keats' contrast of an appropriate seasonal event in nature and humanity's sexual unhappiness unlimited by season.

Hardy's profound knowledge of the Greek and Latin cultural heritage has enabled him to make use of numerous references in order to enrich his narrative. In the scene of Fitzpiers chasing the country girl Suke Damson in the annual country play dance season, Hardy creates a kind of symbolism that can be noticed by very few critics. He says " In the moonlight Suke looked very beautiful ....while they remained silent on the hay, the coarse whirr of the eternal hawk burst sarcastically from the top of a tree". ( *The Woodlanders* ;135).

In the traditional hierarchy of birds in Western culture the hawk, falcon, and kindred predators rank just below the eagle. And the typical prey of the hawk is the dove. Hardy symbolizes the hawk for Fitzpiers and the dove for

Suke .Thus he implicitly hints that Fitzpiers might have raped Suke. It is Hardy's fashion to let his readers know things by themselves, as implied in the famous rape scene of Tess.

Hardy's symbolism is rather complicated and deeply inter-related with nature's mystic atmosphere. Sometimes, he employs natural physical objects as has been noticed, by using different types of plants twigs and leaves of the trees to portray a particular joyful or gloomy scenes. He also employs the sounds of nature including birds wind and rain.

It may be appropriate at this juncture, to look at Hardy through an ecological scope . At the very outset it would be realized that this world of fiction appear to be haunted by nature in every single detail. Like many of his novels of "Character and Environment" Hardy's central axis of his story plots rotates round the relationship between nature and human emotion. Take Giles Winterborne for example. As the plot is centralized around this character he dies at the end of the story and it is obvious that his death is symbolic to the title. Dale Kramar ( 1985;23) comments that " It is a lost mythology as well as the rape of the woods by ruthless predators from the modern world". Even the trees in the book can be seen as silent mourners for Giles' loss.

In his book *Hardy's Woodlanders* Ralph Stewart (1990 ; 48 ) states that " One of the most important episodes in Thomas Hardy's *Woodlanders* is John South's rather early and unexpected death" .Unlike other critics, he further explains the symbolic message about the incident and says that " John South is afraid of a giant tree next to his house Fitzpiers the outsider cuts the tree down in the middle of the night as a good deed towards South when South wakes up the next day sees the tree is gone he dies from shock ". This can be understood in the same context of Hardy's symbolism in relation to his pessimistic outlook and his fears about the future of rural life. The episode clearly refers to the destructive effect of the incomers from the 'modern world ' upon the traditional world of *The Woodlanders*.

In fact, Hardy is incomparable when he mingles human emotion with the natural details to portray a particular situation or feeling. He addresses the human ego with deep emotion and makes the reader listen to his characters through touching and vivid pictures. Thus, his symbolism follows the same trend of touching and effectiveness. He portrays Grace's physical beauty but also he uncovers her inner thoughts about life and marriage, and both the idea and the feeling are derived from the surrounding natural elements. " The earth is this year had been prodigally bountiful and now was the supreme moment of her bounty ....and she wondered if there was one

world in the universe where the fruit had no worm, and marriage had no sorrow" (*The Woodlanders* ;184). Hardy's metaphor about marriage in the above lines is absolutely unique when he compares two entirely different things ( fruit and marriage) and (a worm ) compared to the problems that eats out a foundation or a core of a material.

As has been stated earlier, Hardy's portrayal of Giles is always of special significance. For most of the symbolism related to Giles is centered around the relationship between him and the natural world. Hardy chooses a variety of narrative techniques, he employs figures of speech and meditative metaphors to describe the character of Giles. The depiction of the scene that immediately follows Giles' death is worthy enough to be speculative, and is definitely retrievable by the reader, for it has been pictured with brimful emotion and true feelings: "The whole wood seemed to be house of death pervaded by loss to its uttermost length and breadth. Winterborne was gone and the copses seemed to show the want of him those young trees so many of which he had planted, and of which he had spoken so truly when he said that he should fall before they fell, were at that very moment sending out their roots in the direction that he had given them with his hand".(*The Woodlanders*; 293). If Giles' glorious death is compared to that of Mrs. Charmond's who is finally shot by a desperate lover in Germany it will be

realized how deliberately Hardy has presented the two characters at the end of the story. The symbolism lies in implying that the outsiders ( as represented by Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond ) are of serious hazard to the rural community; they are self-destructive as well.

Hardy ends the novel with two controversial scenes. The first is that of Grace and Fitzpiers walking in the wild Fitzpiers tries his best to convince Grace to go with him and to forget the past. The author symbolizes the presence of the moon to stress Grace's purity. On the other hand there appear the clouds, which is symbolic of the forthcoming troubles which the couple are going to face.

One other scene is more touching and extremely emotional. It is that in which Marty South expresses her love for Giles after his death while standing at his grave. Hardy emphasizes the value of the concept of the loftier quality of abstract humanism and that of eternal non-physical love, though each of them seems to belong to a different world.



# CHAPTER FIVE

## Tess Of The D'Urbervilles

### 5.1. Synopsis of the Novel :

The novel is set in impoverished rural Wessex during the Long Depression period. Tess is the eldest child of John and Joan Durbeyfield, uneducated rural peasants. However, John is given the impression by Parson Tringham that he may have noble blood, since "Durbeyfield" is formed from "D'Urbervilles", the surname of a noble Norman family, now extinct. The news immediately goes to John's head. Shortly after that Tess participates in the village May Dance, where she first meets Angel Clare.

The day after, Tess' father gets too drunk to drive to market that night, so she undertakes the journey herself. However, she falls asleep at the reins, and the family's only horse encounters a speeding wagon and is fatally wounded. The blood spreads over her white dress, a symbol of forthcoming events. Tess feels so guilty over the horse's death that she agrees, against her better judgment, to visit Mrs. D'Urbervilles, a wealthy widow who lives in the nearby town of Trantridge.

Tess does not succeed in meeting Mrs. D'Urbervilles, but chances to meet her libertine son, Alec, who takes a fancy to Tess and secures her a position as poultry keeper on the estate. Tess dislikes Alec, but endures his persistent unwanted attention to earn money to replace her family's horse. One night, walking home from town with some other Trantridge villagers, Tess inadvertently antagonises Car Darch, Alec's most recently discarded favourite, and finds herself in physical danger. When Alec rides up and offers to rescue her from the situation, she accepts. Instead of taking her home, he rides through the fog until they reach an ancient grove called "The Chase", where he informs her that he is lost and leaves on foot to get his bearings. Tess stays behind and falls asleep on a coat he lent her. Alec returns and rapes her.

Tess goes home to her father's cottage, where she keeps almost entirely to her room. The following summer, she gives birth to a sickly boy who lives only a few weeks. On his last night alive, Tess baptizes him herself, after her father locks the doors to keep the parson away. The child is given the name 'Sorrow'. Tess buries Sorrow in unconsecrated ground, makes a homemade cross, and lays flowers on his grave in an empty marmalade box.

Two years after the Trantridge debacle, Tess, finds a job outside the village, where her past is not known. She works for Mr. and Mrs. Crickat as a milkmaid at Talbothays Dairy. There, she befriends three of her fellow milkmaids, Izz Retty, and Marian, and there she meets Angel Clare again, now an apprentice farmer who has come to Talbothays to learn dairy management, and the two fall in love.

Angel returns to Talbothays Dairy and asks Tess to marry him. This puts Tess in a painful dilemma as Angel thinks her a virgin, and she shrinks from confessing her past.

As the marriage approaches, Tess grows increasingly troubled. She writes to her mother for advice; and she is told by her to keep silent about her past.

The wedding takes place at Talbothays Dairy and goes smoothly. Tess and Angel spend their wedding night at an old D'Urbervilles family mansion. When he confesses that he once had a brief affair with an older woman in London, Tess is moved to tell Angel about Alec, thinking he will understand and forgive her. Angel is appalled by the revelation, and makes it clear that Tess is reduced in his eyes.

Tess returns home for a time but, finding this unbearable, decides to join Marian at a starve-acre farm called Flintcomb-Ash. Looking for assistance, Tess attempts to visit Angel's family at the parsonage in Emminster. As she nears her destination, she encounters Angel's older brothers. They do not recognize her, but she overhears them discussing Angel's unwise marriage, and dares not approach them. On the way, she meets Alec D'Urbervilles, who has been converted to Methodism under the Reverend James Clare's influence. A few days later, Alec comes to Flintcomb-Ash to ask Tess to marry him. In the meantime, Angel has been very ill in Brazil and, his farming venture having failed, heads home to England. On the way, he confides his troubles to a stranger, who tells him that he was wrong to leave his wife. Angel begins to repent his unfair treatment of Tess.

Upon his return to his family home, Angel has two letters waiting for him: Tess's angry note and a few cryptic lines from "two well-wishers" ; Izz and Marian, warning him to protect his wife from "an enemy in the shape of a friend". He sets out to find Tess and eventually locates Joan, her mother; she tells him that Tess has gone to live in Sandbourne, a fashionable seaside resort. There, he finds Tess living in an expensive boarding house under the name "Mrs. D'Urbervilles." He tenderly asks her forgiveness, but Tess, in

anguish, tells him he has come too late; thinking he would never return, she yielded at last to Alec D'Urberville's persuasion and has become his mistress. She gently asks Angel to leave and never come back. The same day Alec is found stabbed to death in his bed. Tess joins Angels and they start an unknown journey. They continue walking and, in the middle of the night, stumble upon Stonehenge, where Tess lies down to rest on an ancient altar. Before she falls asleep, she asks Angel to look after her younger sister, Liza-Lu, saying that she hopes Angel will marry her after she is dead. At dawn, Angel sees that they are surrounded by police. Tess taken to prison, is found guilty and executed. Angel and Liza-Lu then join hands and go on their way.

## **5.2 Analysis:**

The opening chapter introduces several major themes; including the effect of the past on the present, the narrative technique of coincidence or chance. Degradation of the poor, integration into the folk or community, the richness of wildlife and the fertility of nature.

When Tess and her father are introduced it can easily be observed that both characters are psychologically entangled with the past. The revelation by Parson Tringham of his illustrious family tree to Durbeyfield, is a reinforcement of the supposed glorious past of the family. The immediate

effect of this meaningless information about the past is Durbeyfield's foolish behavior; he is taken by his own self importance and then becomes a drunkard. Strangely the long-term consequences of Tringham's chance revelation continue to the end of the novel and the impact that the revelation of her ancestry which affects her future, is discovered later on.

The first time Tess is introduced in the narrative is when she is participating in a Cerealia, a local tradition which is basically a festival for Ceres the Roman goddess of the generative power of nature. The author chooses the fertile and sheltered Vale of Blackmore as a perfect setting for the event, and the home of Tess. It is to be noted that Hardy frequently links Tess with nature and fertility as is revealed in the inter-related events of the story. It is generally agreed that the author's intention in this novel is to allow 'the voice of woman' to be heard.

In her introduction to the novel Penny Boumelha (*Tess* ; 14) remarks that, "This kind of fiction is the obvious medium through which the author is to astonish or to improve the world". She adds, " In this way, the voice of woman has really been heard in literature". Earlier before this in his book *The British Barbarian*, Grant Allen (1895; 94) had praised the novel considering it Hardy's masterpiece. He underlined its literary and social value by saying : " *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is a work of which every young

girl and married woman in England ought to be given a copy". Boumelha (ibid) is of the opinion that the complexity of Tess's class position, the poverty of her family, the ease with which they are forced into ruin and homelessness by episodes of misfortune and Tess's vulnerability to exploitation by landowners and increasing mechanization of agriculture. All of this point out to her status as a member of the rural proletariat of the nineteenth century.

As a realist novelist, Hardy stressed the idea of the 'damage of the rural community' in many of his novels. In *Tess*, the same theme is emphasized, though interwoven with the complicated social attitude of the time. Tess is frequently portrayed as a girl who is dehumanized by the threshing merciless machine. The structure of the novel is based on scenes that drift Tess from one place to another. However all the places that are used as the scenes of the story events almost share similar setting that include farms, wild nature green hills, and so on. At these same places Tess and her co-workers her lovers and her employers are frequently to be met.

The author's inclination to link Tess with nature makes him create passionate intensity of the narrative mode. This has led recent feminist critics to view the novel through a scope of a controversial point of view: that there is something reminiscent of sexual pursuit and possession in the

very intensity of the gaze something which turns the ostensibly non-gendered narrative voice towards overtly desirous maleness.

Eco-critics consider Hardy's Tess the heroine of the novel, as the closest of all his heroines to nature. Tess's actions and reactions can be attributed to instinct. From this perspective, the association of woman with nature as Penny Boumelha (ibid; 15) points out " serves to reduce a woman's individuality and identity whereas men working in the fields remain distinct women in the same situation are part and parcel of nature ".

However Hardy is thought to be ironical commentator on nature's role in guiding humans. This has been observed by Boumelha, who says, " Nature as he believes does not often say "See!" to her poor creature at a time when seeing could lead to happy doing; or reply "Here!" to some creature's cry of "Where?" till the hide-and-seek has become an irksome, outworn game". This notion is plainly reflected throughout the novel.

Hardy inaugurates his narrative by giving a vivid description of the place at which the story events begin. As usual, he stresses the significance of ' *the place*' Vale of Blackmore, which is thus introduced by the narrator: "The fertile and sheltered tract of country in which the fields are never brown and the spring never dry...arable lands are few and limited without



slight exceptions the prospect is a broad rich mass of grass and trees mantling minor hills and dales". ( *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 18).

It is of worth to note that Hardy depicts both Valley of Blackmore the village, and Tess in detailed narrative to reflect the unity between Tess and the place where she lives. His portrayal of the women villagers including Tess is amazing in terms of observing and registering every small detail. Here is how Tess is described " Tess at this time of her life was a mere vessel of emotion, untinctured by experience. The dialect was on her tongue to some extent despite the village school; the characteristic intonation of that dialect for this district, being the voicing approximately rendered by the syllable UR...you could sometimes see her twelfth year in her cheeks or her ninth sparking from her eyes and even her fifth would flit over the curves of her mouth now and then" (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ;21). The description of The Valley of Blackmore and Tess have been portrayed as inseparable part of that place. Obviously, Hardy's inclination to create his heroine as an embodiment of nature, in terms of beauty, purity variability and irritability.

One important point that Penny Boumelha has made is that the novel does not set out the meaning for Tess herself as the heroine of the story. Rather it attempts to show the extent to which people in various ways hold her and interpret her ways of behaviour. It is contended by Boumelha that

what is fundamental to what Tess and her story mean for the those round her, and the close association others are inclined to make between her and nature. Accordingly, Tess's actions and reactions can be generally attributed to instinct.

In the narrative Hardy explicitly presents binary oppositions, giving a moral dimension to the idea 'nature is good artificial is bad'. This concept therefore has been expressed in different ways through the novel. This is noticeable right from the start, when Tess is introduced by the author. She is described for instance to be a mix of a simple village girl and schoolgirl in her dialect. She is portrayed in such a way as to represent the contrary oppositions of Alec and Angel Clare. Alec sees in Tess 'her exceptional physical nature' whereas Angel Clare is enchanted by her abstract qualities her personality and her purity. He beholds her as the visible personification of absolute perfection, and calls her *Artemis* (the goddess of hunt) or *Demeter* (the goddess of chastity). This might well explain his strong reaction when he learns that she is not virgin; he rejects her.

Hardy's agricultural setting of the story suggests the cycles of the seasons and fertility to be paralleled in a symbolic manner. The loss of a woman's virginity seems to symbolize "death as irreversible consequence" as critic Boumelha calls it. However, it can be said that the theme of sex in

the novel is a reflection of nature for further representation of the natural production and reproduction processes.

In his book titled *How to Study a Novel* John Peck ( 1995; 157) observed that " The novel is so emphatic in its sympathy for Tess that critics have always been alert to its tremendous power and emotional force . Beyond this critics have also written with great insight about how the novel sets the order of society against another kind of order, the order of nature". This observation may well explains the concept of the binary oppositions. Peck's view is based on the idea that society is dominated by male thought, which imposes rigid rules, hence Tess is considered to be outside this order, and in view of her instinctive, rather than intellectual behavior, she is regarded to be in harmony with Nature.

Hardy succeeds in giving the novel both power and beauty. However the beauty he has given is a tragic one. For Tess is portrayed with great delicacy as nature's physical and spiritual icon. She is linked with the natural movement of time. This has been underlined by Peck (ibid; 158) when he comments: "We see Tess for instance at dawn or twilight where she is the border between the day-light world of reason and the intangible elusive world of night".

Nevertheless conventional critics attribute the author's sympathy with Tess to his critical attitude to the social order that punishes a *young woman* and creates in her a deep sense of guilt. Actually, the one to be held responsible for the wrong doing is '*the man*' who has deceived and exploited her.

Ecocritics are inclined to view *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* from a different angle. Therefore it is only appropriate to focus on the novel from an ecocritical perspective in an attempt to give new vision to the task of the literary critical schools. Hardy's physical description of Tess, for example, can be seen as sets of natural shapes and natural lines such as the contours of the countryside against the architectural regularity of towns . This vision uncovers the writer's pessimism about the loss and damage of nature and rural life.

### **5.3. Man and Machine Versus Nature:**

However, the analysis will partially focus on other critical schools; such as the Marxist approach which is of particular relevance to the works of Hardy. Arnold Kettle and Douglas Brown, for instance, have adopted a Marxist approach to Hardy's novels in general, and to *Tess of the D'urbervilles* in particular. They view the text from a political perspective, and, hence they are inclined to put extra liberal humanist emphasis on Tess

and her destiny. They try to look for new ways to probe the relationships between the issues of language politics and gender in literary works. With reference to this point, Peck (ibid; 160) remarks, "Critical approaches might provide you with some pointers about the ways in which criticism of today whether the focus be on Hardy or any other novelist, can engage with the questions of politics of the critic and the politics of the critic".

However apart from his common issues and themes Hardy seems to stress the issue of the conflict between the 'conventional' and the 'modern'. He tends to distance himself from the conventional values particularly those of the Victorian age and society. He remains committed to the speculative view of warning implicitly of the catastrophe of destroying both the society and the rural life, as he frequently hints at the urban society and mass agricultural projects which take the form of farmlands, while in actuality they are new greedy colonies which lack both the characteristic of the town and the country. Hardy seems to believe that this new kind of mechanized agricultural sprawl has a negative impact both on man and nature, as it deprives each extreme of its unique features.

Hardy is mostly concerned about the relationship between man and machine which has nothing to do with the land. What is interesting is the very unusual manner in which Hardy describes the men in charge of

machine used in agricultural works. He tends to consider the 'machine men' as aliens, they do not belong to the land they are almost inhuman characters in the rural atmosphere. Thus, Hardy psychologically prepares his readers to speculate about Tess's traditional upbringing and contrast it to the idea of '*man and machine*'. This is carefully portrayed by him when Tess joins Merion and Izz in Flintcomb-Ash. "As Tess grew older and began to see how matters stood a Malthusian (the writer refers to Malthus Theory) towards her mother for thoughtlessly giving her so many little sisters and brothers ...as soon as she left school, she used to lend a hand at haymaking or harvesting on neighbouring farms, or by preference at milking or butter-making processes". (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 43).

In this novel Hardy tends to stress the positive or the wholesome effect that nature may have on those farmers and workers who till the land and remain attached to it, as demonstrated by the farm labourers at Trantridge. Though they are a rougher, harder drinking group than the folk at Marlott and the workers at Talbothays Dairy, they still retain their relation with nature.

This has been pointed out by Dale Kramer ( *ibid*; 17) : "At the dance scene, for instance their harmony with nature allows them to be swept up by natural sexual force. They become 'a sort of vegeto-human pollen' part of the

generative movement that sweeps through nature and connects all life, plants and animals, human and non-human alike". He continues to say : "...uninhibited by false social laws, they are carried along by the sexual urge; they repeatedly change partners until they are suitably matched". In the same regard, folks are probably contrasted with Marion, Izz, and Retty, who are fully aware of the social differences that separate them from Angel.

Hardy in this novel develops the idea of representing nature by one of his characters to a broader aspect. He implicitly compares laws of nature to those of the society. Traditionally, this is no easy task to frankly discuss in view of the traditions of his day. The idea that he tries to express is that the raping of Tess is a natural practice within the laws of nature. Attention is solely drawn to the result, and to the society's reaction and the heavy burden that Tess has to endure throughout her short life. The immediate result of her sexual experience is the "immeasurable social chasm" which has resulted in the separation of *Tess the Maiden* from *Tess the Maiden No More*. The society and Tess's acceptance of its judgment is what matters most; she is viewed as an immoral woman. According to the law of nature, she has done nothing wrong. For as she wanders along in the deepening twilight, she can only be regarded as an integral part of nature. Her seeming guilt is breaking the society's conventions and religion's prohibitions. Hardy's comment is:

"It was they that were out of harmony with the actual world, not she. Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of guilt intruding into the haunts of innocence. But all the while, she was making a distinction where there was no difference. Feeling herself in antagonism, she was quite in accord. She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly". (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 97).

A number of modern critics have paid attention to this notion that Hardy seems to propound; including Dorothy Van Ghent holds a similar view, without making preference for either Angel or Alec who have contributed to the destruction of Tess. To her, both Angel and Alec can be viewed as metaphors of extremes of human behavior.

Van Ghent has made further inquiries about the contradiction between the law of nature and social-religious laws that are operated in the novel. She wonders whether this has contributed to Tess's misfortunes. Does the phrase "*laws are made to be broken*" suggest that Tess was raped, or does it only mean the natural act of sex was a transgression in society, and that by doing something natural Tess 'had been made to break' a social law.



As for Hardy's themes and the issues he raised in his novels it can be observed that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is rich in its involvement with several inter-related themes and issues. Like most of Hardy's other novels, rural life and the ache of modernism is a prominent issue in the story. The hardships and drudgery of rustic lifestyle are fully explored through the travel and work experiences of Tess. Religious orthodoxy and social values are also questioned in the novel.

Fate versus freedom of action is another important issue in the novel. While the main storyline may sound fatalistic, Hardy does not miss the opportunity to point out that the darkest of tragedies could be prevented by human action and sincere consideration.

With regard to the rural lifestyle it can be observed that Hardy equally focuses on the detail of humans' everyday life and he seizes the opportunity to give the names of a considerable number of plantations birds and insects, with the intention of underlining the importance of the rural life as opposed to the frantic wave of agricultural mechanization.

Obviously the author is inclined to resent the sight of machines in the fields. He prefers to see humans carrying out the operations of planting cleaning and harvesting the crops. He believes that man of this geographic area is a part and parcel of the outdoor nature and the outsiders with their

machines, are odds as they break the eternal harmony of the environment. Consider Hardy's portrayal of the place where Tess and her peers work : "The narrow lane of stubble encompassing the field grew wider, ...rabbits hares rats mice retreated inwards as into a fastness unaware of the ephemeral nature of their refuge, and of the doom that awaited them later in the day, when their covert shrinking to a more and more narrowness, they were huddled together friends and foes" (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 100).

Hardy sympathizes with the low creatures; he laments the expected miserable reality after machine violation to the virgin nature. He depicts Tess in an extremely romantic manner when she is totally absorbed in her harvest duty: "gathering the corn with both hands against her knee and pushing her left gloved hand under the bundle to meet the right on the other side holding the corn in an embrace like that of a lover" ( *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 101).

Here is one of the most wonderful descriptions by the writer in his portrayal of natural human beauty as embodied by Tess: " Tess as she sat there ( sitting during the work interval) with her flower-like mouth and large tender eyes neither black nor blue nor grey nor violet rather all these shades together and a hundred others !!" ( *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 103). Interestingly, the above description of Tess is given immediately after she

returns from long hours of tiring work to suckle her newly-born child. This suggests that Tess's beauty is absolutely perfect, and never affected by grief or fatigue. Hardy highly adores his heroine; she is portrayed as a woman who is a representation of Wessex Eve, in harmony with the natural world.

However, Marxist critic Raymond Williams (ibid;213 ) in his book *The Country and the City* questions the identification of Tess with a peasantry destroyed by industrialism. He stresses the fact that: " Tess is not a peasant, she is a school educated member of the rural working class; she suffers a tragedy through being thwarted, in her aspirations to rise and her desire for a good life which includes love and sex, not by industrialism but by the landed bourgeoisie (Alec), and liberal idealist (Angel), and again, by Christian moralism in her family's village".

#### **5.4. Tess as Eve or a Pagan Goddess:**

With regard to the religious theme, it can be observed that Tess has been viewed from numerous pagan and neo-Biblical backgrounds and references. For instance variously she is depicted as an Earth goddess or a sacrificial victim. Early in the novel, she participates in a festival for Ceres, the goddess of the harvest, and when she performs a baptism for her child Sorrow she chooses a passage from Genesis, the book of creation, in

preference to the traditional New Testament verses. In the end, when Tess and Angel come to Stonehenge, which is commonly believed in Hardy's time to be a pagan temple, she willingly lies down on an altar; implying the fulfillment of her destiny as a human sacrifice.

A considerable number of conventional and modern critics including eco-critics, have viewed the religious themes in different ways. However, generally, Hardy's Tess is seen throughout a religious eye and much of the religious criticism is associated with the Christian concepts of the general trend of forest pushes dark plants and animals which have special significance in the English literature. Let us consider some of the critical views which are mostly of religious significance that view Tess as Eve. Throughout the novel, Tess is directly compared to an incarnation of Eve. Like Eve, she is an innocent, lovely creature who is led into temptation; directly or indirectly. Tess, at the urging of her parents, seeks to claim the privileges of her lineage by appealing to the D'Urbervilles, thus she exchanges her innocence for the hope of earthly wealth and receives carnal knowledge and the shame that accompanies it.

Alec D'Urbervilles, Tess's seducer, fills the role of the tempting serpent. He pursues her and finally rapes her; here he is likened to the

devil who insists on the wrong doing to his victim. Angel Clare, the man she loves, serves as a person of values and good manner. He is likened to an Israelite pious man who dedicates his whole life to doing the good, but commits a fatal mistake and finally goes to Hell. Though Clare is not totally privy to Tess's ruinous choices and misfortunes, and though he attempts to cast blame fully on Tess, he is complicit in sexual sin by deserting her.

Tess is also viewed by critics as a pagan goddess; captivated by her youthful beauty and regal bearing, Angel Clare underlines this link between Tess and earthy pagan goddesses by referring to her as '*Artemis*' and, thinks of her as “a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature”.

Consider 'The Chase' which is a forest where Tess is raped by Alec D'Urberville. It can be as a representation of the Garden of Eden, in which Tess is pursued and devoured by evil. She is then literally expelled from the Edenic purity of her maidenhood and forced to wander in shame for the rest of her short life. This is also likened, by some critics, to the story of the '*Great Wander*' of the Sons of Israel in Sinai and Palestine.

Angel as his name implies, is presented in the novel as a would-be source of protection and deliverance for Tess. He is portrayed as an object of

girlish idolatry for Tess and her fellow milkmaids. As a man, he is representative of a more educated, privileged class. He has the power to be a savior for Tess. Actually, he does rescue Tess, but hypocritically abandons her. His inconstancy emphasizes Hardy's criticism of the religious sect of the society. Their walk together amongst the bushes, is thus depicted by Hardy: "The mixed singular, luminous gloom in which they walked along together to the spot where the cows lay, often made him think of the Resurrection Hour. He little thought that the Magdalen might be at his side"(Tess of the D'Urbervilles; 145). Hardy's reference to the name 'Magdlen' is meant to imply the social attitude towards Tess as a former sinner.

Brazil also is seen as a 'Return to Eden' after Angel Clare learns of Tess' past her rape and illegitimate son his vision of Tess as a pristine maiden is destroyed and he escapes to Brazil in the hope of immersing himself in the agricultural work and pure virgin nature; presumably, he wishes to recover his happiness there. Brazil is the embodiment of the Garden of Eden for Clare. Nevertheless, his return is a failure; for it is marked by disease and misfortune, and has to return to England in defeat.

Regarding the religious theme, the Christian theme of redemption is present in the scene where Tess is lying down on a stone and being caught for her execution, she becomes a human sacrifice who must die for her sins and those of the men around her.

In his book *Fiction and Repetition* J. Hillis Miller (1986 ; 119) thus comments on the social values fate and freedom:

"The sexual double - standard to which Tess falls victim; despite being, in Hardy's view, a truly good woman, she is despised by society after losing her virginity before marriage. Hardy plays the role of Tess's only true friend and advocate, pointedly titling the book "a pure woman faithfully presented" and prefacing it with Shakespeare's words from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*: "Poor wounded name! My bosom as a bed shall lodge thee". However, although Hardy clearly means to criticize the Victorian notions of female purity, the double - standard verdict also makes the heroine's tragedy possible, and thus serves as a mechanism of Tess's broader fate.

Hardy frequently hints that Tess must suffer either to atone for the misdeeds of her ancestors, or to provide temporary amusement for the gods, or because she possesses some small but lethal character flaw inherited from the ancient clan. It can be understood that an uncontrollable mess has been

brought to the countryside community with modernism. Tess can be seen as a personification of nature ( lovely, fecund, and exploitable ), while animal imagery throughout the novel strengthens the inter-related fictional events.

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* has also been viewed from a feminist and eco-feminist perspectives, by means of textual interpretation of the novel, for the purpose of arguing that there is affinity and harmony between women and nature and stressing the incompatible contradiction between them and men. Hence the belief that women and nature are the victims of capitalistic industrialization and expansive male intrusion. This critical point of view suggests that the tragedy of Tess is not only confined to her; rather it the tragedy of all women and nature.

In a research titled *Thomas Hardy as an Eco-feminist Author*, Christine Brandi (2010 ; 6) states " In this novel Hardy addresses the social status of women via his ground-breaking characterization of strong women engaged in an indirect conflict presence. The difficulties that women experience in their endeavors to overcome patriarchal oppression actually creates much of conflict action that drives the plot of Hardy's tragic novels". This suggests that within the patriarchal society's stratification of humans, discriminatory practices go far beyond simply valuing males more highly



than females. For similar intolerance is shown towards those from non-dominant racial religious or socioeconomic background.

Tess's hardships and suffering make her deeply speculative about life. Angel Clare could probe her thoughts and views about the past and the future which mutually play conspiratorial roles to spoil Tess's presence. He is astonished by the peasant girl's philosophy about life. Tess goes further to stress the fact that she does not want to learn more than she has already learnt. "I shouldn't mind why ?..Why the sun do shine on the just and the unjust alike ? ... Because that is what books will tell me" (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 142). Her words are a reference to the Biblical verse in which Jesus addresses God and says "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendth rain on the just and on the unjust " (Matt:5:45). Tess wonders why the evil is not punished on earth for wickedness. Wicked deeds in Hardy's point of view are harmful to humans animals plant and other low creatures. He openly expresses this idea in his talk to the Royal Society for Wildlife Conservation early in the beginning of the twentieth century.

Hardy employs a number of writing techniques to develop and crystallize the themes of the story. He imposes a number of motifs in this genre, with special reference to birds. His creation of recurring structures

contrasting and other literary devices have helped him develop the text's major themes, as it has been mentioned earlier.

There are many motifs in this novel, but birds are of special significance, as can be expected of those who follow and apply the ecocritical approach. Birds in a typical Thomas Hardy's story are usually employed in different literary roles.

In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* birds are used as recurring images throughout the novel, evoking or contradicting their traditional spiritual association with a higher realm of transcendence. The Christian dove of peace and the Romantic songbirds of Keats and Shelley are believed to symbolize sublime heights. This suggests that birds will have positive meaning in this novel. Tess occasionally hears birdcalls on her frequent hikes across the countryside. Their free expressiveness stands in stark contrast to Tess's silent and constrained existence as a wronged and disgraced girl.

When Tess goes to work for Mrs. D'Urbervilles, she is surprised to find that the old woman's pet finches are frequently released to fly free throughout the room. These birds with their movement imply hope and liberation. Yet there is a kind of ironic paradox that can be interpreted from this movement for it gives doubtful impression whether these images of

hope and freedom are illusory in view of Tess ' case. Symbolically, D'Urbervilles' birds leave little white spots on the upholstery, which presumably some servant, perhaps Tess herself, will have to clean. Some eco-critics are inclined to take this as suggesting that freedom for one creature entails hardship for another, as is the case with Alec's free enjoyment of Tess's body that causes a lifetime of suffering for her.

In the scene when Tess encounters the pheasants maimed by hunters and lying in agony, birds no longer seem to be free, rather they re oppressed and submissive. For pheasants are no romantic songbirds hovering far above the earth, they are actual victims of earthly violence. They are doomed to suffer down below and never fly again. That is in fact one of Hardy's repeated messages in most of his narratives that have become to be known as *The Novels of Character and Environment*.

Nevertheless, Tess is undoubtedly Hardy's icon amongst all of his heroines. Her place among other literary works is absolutely unique. Those involved in studying this novels are likely to be encountered by open possibilities and wide horizons of new thoughts and modern visions of criticism. Hardy's physical and spiritual linking of Tess to nature can cause confusion as most of the story events themes motifs and symbolism are associated with her. Thus modern criticism is challenged by the huge

diversity of related issues, all skillfully interwoven to merge all the events of the story and render a coherent whole totally directed to glorify the natural world.

Hardy depicts Tess as the gift of heavens that no one ever can deny. But she is besieged by complications which cause her to suffer and lose her pure nature. Those who attempt to win her heart are doomed to suffer too. The spiritual damage that caused by Alec upon her is like a wild animal's damage to a tender flower; it is irretrievable.

In an essay titled *New Eye on Nature: The Real Constant Is Eternal Turmoil*, (Science Times, July 31) Alice Tufel writes : "However, ecologists seem to reject the idea of 'Natural Equilibrium' and they suggest instead nature is in "a continuing state of disturbance and fluctuation" . She further adds " But more than a hundred years ago, Hardy was saying essentially the same thing in his novels and poems. In his fictional world, nature again and again proves itself unpredictable, chaotic and random - unguided by any sort of world order and controlled instead by what Hardy called the 'Immanent Will,' which has no consciousness, no conscience and no grand plan".

Like today's ecologists, Hardy said that external events, often the most trivial, could throw a life off course or alter a person's fate forever. Actually

Hardy was a keen observer who recorded life as a "series of seemings," only occasionally interrupted by moments of stability, rather than as one absolute, unchanging picture.

Close consideration of Hardy's fiction will show the persistence of the same rotating idea ; man is eternally linked to nature. This is either openly or implicitly expressed by Hardy with the inclination of stressing his strong belief that human beings are blindly driven to an known destiny due to human greed. This kind of simplicity together with the natural trend of living are the ideal way to save humanity from the new self-destructive lifestyle in England. He was concerned about human relationships and how they should be developed smoothly, as is to be found in nature.

Hardy at first depicts Tess and Angel's love affair as ideal because it develops like a 'growing plant' and thus it grows like a natural thing. Nevertheless, their sensitive and fine nature prevent physical contact between them except on a few occasions.

### **5.5. Dignity and Sexuality:**

One of the minor themes that Hardy tackles in this novel is the issue of 'dignity and sexuality' as a social concept which was not open for common discussion in the author's day. However Hardy touches this issue

shyly with a tender association with what happens in nature. He creates further dimensions in terms of pursuance of female by the male, to imply likeness between man and nature. The writer seems to relate human dignity to brutal sexuality not as an absolute concept, but rather symbolically. Alec can be seen symbolic to brutality and Tess nobility. Thus, Angel can be viewed as standing in between. When he finds out that Tess is not virgin he rejects her despite his passionate love for her. Tess's virginity is associated with 'dignity' according to his queer conception of 'purity'. On the other hand, Alec conceives of Tess as a mere prey and his self-satisfying 'dignity' urges him to think of her as a female who can satisfy his sexual desire and not a wife.

Hardy's focus on the innate sexuality within Tess Durbeyfield is framed in such a way as to imply that her sexuality is so forceful that Tess can do little to control like an animal in her season. This remains to be the center of her life's maladies. For she has remained the focus of sexual attention for primarily manipulative or self-serving reasons. This is highlighted by her parents' attempts to use her looks in order to gain her a gentleman husband. Hence her abuse by Alec D'Urbervilles as a mere object to satisfy his lust. Again by rejecting her, Angel Clare himself frames Tess in terms of her sexuality. Her attempts to make herself sexually less attractive represents a

measure of self-defense. The act of mutilating herself is meant to ward off the attention of those who are inclined paid to focus on her physical beauty. Consider Alec's flirting when he meets her at the Poultry House: "There was never before such a beautiful thing in nature ...putting that pretty red mouth to whistling shape", and compare it to the way Angel beholds her : " She is the visionary essence of woman a whole sex condensed into one typical form ". Angel looks at her figure with lustful eye : " The brim-fullness of her nature breathed from her. It was a moment when a woman's soul is more incarnate than at any other time when the most spiritual beauty bespeaks itself flesh and sex takes the outside place in the presentation" ( *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*; 146 187).

On the other hand, Angel's love for Tess, pure and gentle as it seems, proves to be a kind of an unhealthy domination. Angel substitutes an idealized picture of Tess's country purity for the real-life woman that he continually refuses to get to know. When he calls Tess names like ' Daughter of Nature' and 'Artemis,' he seems to overlook her true self in favour of a mental image that he has long entertained. Thus, her identity and experiences are totally suppressed . This pattern of male domination is finally reversed by Tess's murder of Alec, to mark the first time counter attack by a female against the domination of a male.

It can be said that both men, Alec and Angel, wish to possess Tess; each in his own way and the damage done to her features is in two different ways. However, it is undoubtedly clear that Tess is destined to experience hardships and ill fate right from the beginning of the story.

With reference to minor themes in the novel Hardy seems also to stress the "Theme of Alienation" as can be observed in the former novel; *The Woodlanders*.

It is believed that modern Europe and its old spirit have influenced the Victorian writers. Thus, the difficulty of reconciling historical and spiritual perspectives has formed major or minor themes for Hardy and the late Victorian novelists.

In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, for instance Tess the major character in the story, after her childhood experiences at Marlott and later at Trantridge, soon discovers how oppressive the society is, particularly when she is rejected by Angel, whom she sincerely loves. On the other hand, Angel suffers from self-division; the conflict between received attitudes and advanced ideas causes him to be an embodiment of an alienated man who is hardly able to reconcile the values of two different worlds. On many occasions Tess is seen sitting alone; talking to herself and recalling her past as one of the



conspirators against her present and future. She tries her best to learn from her past but she is doomed to her tragic end.

Hardy's writing technique in this novel is based on three elements. First, the mention of plants; heath, bushes and flowers. Second: the mention of animals and insects. Third, linking of the story events with the sequences of darkness and daylight. As in his previous two novels, Hardy employs the three above mentioned elements to emphasize in turn, the three ecological literary and the symbolic dimensions.

Hardy's continuous mention of plants has special significance. The detailed description of species is coated with many the messages that he intends to convey throughout the novel. Foremost, is that of his love for rural England and his call for the protection of remaining rural lands that were not annexed to the vast mechanized agricultural areas. The detailed mention of plant species also reveals Hardy's good knowledge of the world of plants. The mention of animals and other lower creatures by the author is an inseparable part of the Hardy's glorification of nature as a whole. Through it, Hardy intends to emphasize the important role of these creatures in the preservation of the environment.

Hardy's continuous association of the two contrasting elements of darkness and daylight has some relation with his naturalistic writing

technique. Hence, the critics view of him as a naturalist novelist. Naturalism is used to refer to a literary movement that seeks to depict life as accurately as possible, without being indulged in emotion, idealism, or literary convention. As a post-Darwinism approach, it asserts that human beings exist entirely in the order of nature. In his book *Glossary of Literary Terms*, M. H. Abraham (1984 ; 175) points out, "Naturalistic writers try to present their subjects with scientific objectivity. They often choose characters based on strong animal drives who are usually 'victims both of glandular secretions within and of sociological pressures without'. He continues to add "The end of the naturalistic novel is usually unpleasant or unhappy, perhaps even tragic, though not in the cathartic sense Aristotle, Sophocles, or Elizabethan writers would have understood by the term tragedy".

Naturalists in this sense, tend to emphasize the smallness of humanity in the universe. They are inclined to remind readers of the immensity, power, and cruelty of the natural world, which does not care whether humanity lives or dies.

When Hardy set his story plots of what he calls Novels of Characters and Environment he had in mind it seems, the naturalists' literary views of today. These views are mainly based on the conviction that human beings do not have souls or any mode of participating in a religious or spiritual world

beyond the biological realm of nature, and that any such attempts to engage in a religious or spiritual world are acts of self-delusion and wish-fulfillment. Humanity is thus a higher order of animals whose characters and behaviours are entirely determined by two kinds of factors, either hereditary or environmental.

As for the literary dimension associated with the mention of animals and plants in a typical Hardy story, the author seems to employ a special diction. Some traditional critics believe that the use of special word patterns related to scientific field; like plants and animal world is a kind of violating the literary language which labels the characteristics of both literary genres poetry and prose. To the ecocritics a set of language patterns depicting the natural world help reinforce the sense of realism in the narrative.

Hardy's use of a special 'nature diction' is unique . He creates a special world for the depiction of the surrounding world, that helps create a sense of fascination and mysticism. His employment of the natural elements to take part in the scene determines his character's emotional status. Usually, Nature in Hardy's fiction is either sympathetic or of a great wrath according to the character's inner feeling. In their drive to the town Tess and Angel Clare are engaged in a conversation about their future relationship. Hardy employs the natural elements to create a well-interrelated scene with nature as an

example for the above notion : " So they drove on through the gloom, forming one bundle inside the sail-cloth, the horse going as he would, and the rain driving against them. She had consented. She might as well have agreed at first. The appetite for joy which pervades all creation, that tremendous force which sways humanity to its purpose, as the tide sways the helpless weed was not to be controlled by vague lucubrations over the social rubric" ( *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 208).

From the above description of the surrounding environment it can be observed that the emotional status of the couple is of intimate warmth, nonetheless, it is a bit moderate. In another scene, which is more impressive because of the couple's joy as they talk openly about their love to each other it is to be noticed that Hardy uses nature as a part of the scene:

" They were never out of the sound of some purling weir whose buzz accompanied their own murmuring while beams of the sun formed a pollen of radiance over the landscape. They saw tiny blue fogs in the shadows of tree and hedges...the shadows of Clare and Tess would stretch a quarter a mile ahead like two long fingers pointing afar to the green". But when the situation is different and everything in the couple's life turns to sadness and tears, Hardy comes up with a different picture of nature's sympathy to cope with the gloomy scene when he describes Angel's feeling after he fears that

he has lost Tess because of her confession : " He reclined in his coach in the sitting - room and extinguished the light. The night came in and took up its place there unconcerned and indifferent ; the night which had already swallowed up his happiness and was now digesting it listlessly and was ready to swallow up the happiness of a thousand other people with as little disturbance or change of mien " (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 255).

As for the symbolic dimension, Hardy's use of symbolism appears to be amazingly genuine and touching. He employs physical and abstract elements to personify or probe the depth of human nature in a grandeur manner. Nature's symbolism, together with the variable linguistic choices that Hardy adopts in this novel will be explained and discussed in the forthcoming part of this chapter.

Hardy's fondness of creating comparisons parallels and making contrasts is well known to the traditional and modern critics. In this novel, he artistically makes use of the techniques of implicit comparisons between characters. He further employs this technique in order to emphasize the themes and issues that he is raising. *Tess*, for instance is filled with these side-by-side comparisons.

In his study of the novel, Peter J. Casagrande (2001, [www.thomashardy.studies](http://www.thomashardy.studies)), coins the word "beaugly" which is a combination of the words "beautiful" and "ugly" to argue that the novel is

chock-full of comparisons such as poor/rich, good/evil, Angel/brothers; Tess/her siblings; high class/low class, and past/present, and so on. Even the title of Casagrande's study, "*Unorthodox Beauty*," suggests a beauty that does not conform to the standards by which other novels before or since *Tess* have been judged. Hardy is keen to point out the rationale for his philosophy when he states : "The business of the poet and novelist is to show the sorrow underlying the grandest things, and the grandeur underlying the sorriest things."

Hardy does not express a downright rejection of the traditional social system of England at his time, which was based on "town / village" community. Rather, he rejects the concept of exploitation, as exemplified by those who come from the town to horribly abuse the simple country men and women. A good example is Mr. Groby who keeps his workers, including Tess Merion and Izz working almost all day long. The idea of presenting the concept of "the poor" versus "the rich" as an implicit theme should not escape modern readers. Alec's seemingly endless wealth, for instance, contrasts the Durbeyfield's abject poverty. Peter Casagrande (ibid; internet website) has this to say: "Hardy uses this juxtaposition to demonstrate the difference between the "haves" and the "have nots."

However, even Hardy himself observed that in the distant past, just as Alec and his kind take advantage of Tess and her kind, the ancient d'Urbervilles had their way with the poor of their time", he continued to say: "Doubtless some of Tess d'Urbervilles mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time". But Hardy does not forgive the sins of the past or present, he believes that to visit the sins of the fathers upon the children may be a morality good enough for divinities. For it is scorned by average human nature; and it therefore does not mend the matter.

While not forgiving Alec for his misdeeds, Hardy does make some attempt to understand Alec's actions as a part of his class. As well, he tries to comprehend good and evil. The poor down in Marlott have adapted a fatalistic attitude best represented by the saying, "It was to be that Tess is inclined to question the contrast between the forces that have dealt her a less than fair hand. She says: "I shouldn't mind learning why the sun do shine on the just and unjust alike"( *Tess*; 85). Her query is one that has perplexed men since the dawn of time: why is there good and evil in the world?

Hardy seems to be interested in invoking the ancient Greek views on good and evil, as is mentioned in the Torah and the Old Testament and The

New Testament of the Bible. As well, Milton's ponders over this idea in *Paradise Lost* in an attempt to understand what motivates men to perpetrate either good or bad.

Another contrast is to be found in the families themselves; the Durbeyfields and the Clares. The former, even though impoverished, have a closeness that binds them. Tess' weakness is her siblings and their well being. In fact, Alec makes use of this weakness to tempt her, in a manner similar to that of Satan's temptation in the Bible and in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Hardy describes Tess' siblings as "six helpless creatures, who had never been asked if they wished for life on any terms, much less if they wished for it on such hard conditions as were involved in being of the shiftless house of Durbeyfield." (*Tess*, ;43).

Angel and his brothers, on the other hand, do not share the closeness of Tess' siblings. The brothers would find it difficult to aid each other, let alone others who might be in dire circumstances. Hardy comments on this point by saying : "they (the needy) were to be tolerated rather than reckoned with and respected."

The author is also inclined to contrast the lifestyle of the farms where Tess works; e.g. Talbot hays and Flint comb-Ash; Talbot hays region and



its green valleys and abundant life: "The river itself, which nourished the grass and cows of these renowned dairies, flowed not like the streams in Black moor . . . The From waters were clear as the pure River of Life shown to the Evangelist" (*Tess* ; 119). Flint comb-Ash, on the other hand, looks: "sublime in its dreariness." Marian, Tess' friend from Talbot hays, calls the farm a "starve-acre place". It is not like the lush dairy at Talbot hays.

Hardy also draws a contrast between the men who run the two farms. Flint comb is run by farmer Groby, a mean-spirited man who demands that his workers work even harder, while Mr. Crick from Talbot hays uses his sense of humour, honesty and self-confidence to motivate his workers.

These contrasts indeed serve to reveal the nature of the people, the places and situations that Tess encounters. They also help the writer make close observations of the people and their interaction with each other.

Back to the idea of "*The sense of place*" which is the fundamental basis of the ecocritical school. It appears that *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* does not share the same features that characterize Hardy's other Novels of Character and Environment. The character of Tess has been created to in such a way as to be capable of undertaking the task of touring the different places that are stored in Hardy's imaginative geographical region of '

Wessex'. Through her tours the reader is introduced to different places, and each place has its own special atmosphere that seems to influence Tess. Hardy's intention is to imply that she no longer belongs to any particular 'place'. Due to many social and environmental factors she has become uprooted. Hence, she has lost compass and never can get home.

### **5.6. Sense of Place:**

The word "place" has come to mean a variety of things to the modern critics of fiction in general and to the ecocritics in particular. At the simplest level, it usually refers to a writer's artistic use of a highly particularized physical environment, geographical region, or human community. 'Place' in this sense has had many uses. One is, of course, the increased symbolic role played by the "setting" since the gothic era.

The *sense of place* as detailed in different places in Hardy's fiction is of special importance, for it provides a realistic, countrified backdrop against which the characters lead their lives, struggling with untoward circumstances. Hardy's study and accurate portrayal of nineteenth century rural society in Dorset and the surrounds of 'Wessex' of his novels seem to have helped him provide and presents a microcosm of human life through which he has managed to comment on the universal

condition of human existence. However, in a typical Hardy story the natural world is often described in great detail, and is made more significant than a mere setting against which the narrative unfolds. Hardy establishes a reciprocal relationship between environment and character; as it has been mentioned above this helps to create a kind of interaction which serves to demonstrate the changing position of humans in the post-Darwinian Victorian period. The narrative voice is meant to depict the natural world in the same way the appearance of different individuals are described, and vice versa. This technique removes the sense of authority from human hands, and helps place humans within the natural world, rather than ruling above it. As has been observed by Richard Altick (1991 ; 339) in his book *The Presence of the Present* : "A Sense of Place", refers to the physical objects that filled and defined places, also it provided Victorian novelists with a rich new language for revealing aspects of character and registering subtle and not-so-subtle social, class, and moral distinctions". Beyond these more common senses of the term, John Alcorn ( ibid; 112) gives the concept of place a post-Darwinian twist.

In *The Nature Novel from Hardy to Lawrence*, Alcorn coins the term "naturism" to describe a school of writers who use the concept of ' place ' in

a special manner that involves both landscape and setting. "The naturalist world," as Alcorn emphasizes, "is a world of physical organism, where biology replaces theology as the source of both psychic health and moral authority."

In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy's classification clearly demonstrates the importance he frequently attaches to the interaction between human life and the geographic surroundings, and the generating power of environment that determines the lives of the characters who inhabit it.

Finally the novel's inter-weaving, together with its literary and mythological allusion, and its development in terms of social complication or in the general context of man's relationship with the surrounding environment is a unique mix in which Hardy employs a number of techniques metaphors and symbolism. Hence his ability to encapsulate the whole sense of the meaning and lesson of the story of both Tess Durbeyfield and Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

The main character, Tess Durbeyfield is symbolic of purity and simplicity. The second, who develops into Tess of the D'Urbervilles, is symbolized for nature spoiled and destroyed by modern life's complications.

In this novel Hardy expresses pessimism, and his worries about the future of rural England. Penny Boumelha ( ibid;16 ) points out that Hardy " stresses the fact that Tess's individual story is precisely not the unique destiny of the exceptional but rather the potential fate of any member of her sex and class in a society so determined that what is written on the body can never be erased".

By employing his narrative skill to the utmost, Hardy had managed to demonstrate his great awareness of time and history in order to underline the significance of the human subject. His emphasis on environment shows to some extent, the influence of the Darwinian theory on him. The role of fate and circumstance is of special importance in the plot of each of his stories. This echoes and underlines the evolutionary ideas, the effect of place upon chance, extinction, and survival.

Hardy's intention is to stress the important issues that are related to the welfare of the human race and the need for a life of piece. Nature and literary regionalism are obviously Hardy' favourite issues. Hence his dedication of all his time and efforts to the call for defending rural England and its wildlife. He remained absolutely loyal for his beliefs

even in his retirement, he continued to emphasize the same themes and issues.

Hardy is inclined to identify and stress the important correlation between humans and their environment, and highlight the significance of the interaction between them. He claims, "...an object or mark raised or made by man on a scene is worth ten times any such formed by unconscious Nature. Hence clouds, mists, and mountains are unimportant beside the wear on a threshold, or the print of a hand".

Hardy has demonstrated his awareness of time and history, while at the same time, underlining the significance of the human subject. John Alcom (ibid;113) goes further when he points out that "Hardy uses the metonymy of corporeal fragments - the print of a hand - to represent the importance of human existence in transforming landscapes, and it is by this transformation that its meaning is imparted to nature".

Interestingly, the final scene of the novel does not even show Tess; it is like the rape scene, in which Hardy pulls back and describes the surrounding scene, but does not give the reader any details of what is going on with Tess herself. What happens can only be inferred from Hardy's ambiguous, elliptical language, and other signs at the end of the novel.

In the final scene, Liza-Lu and Angel wait outside of a prison Hardy does not come right out and call it a prison. He only describes the structure of the building as "a large red-brick building with rows of short barred windows bespeaking captivity". Angel and Tess's sister do not witness the execution; and neither do the readers. They wait and watch the building until a black flag is raised on a pole outside the prison tower, at which point the narrator pulls back, and says: "Justice was done". The sentence : "Justice was done," can be interpreted to mean that "justice has been served ", ` rather than done. Tess has been executed for murder, and the black flag at the prison indicates that an execution has just taken place. Hardy puts "justice" in quotation marks because, of course, neither he nor the reader believes that Tess's fate to be "just" in any real sense.

To soothe the gloomy atmosphere of the ending, as can be observed, the author tries to create a kind of relief by imposing Angel's potential remarriage to Liza-Lu. It is to be recalled that before her arrest at Stonehenge, Tess asks Angel to marry her younger sister (Liza –Lu) after she dies. She seems to know that she is going to be arrested and executed, and appears to be comforted by the thought that Angel might marry Liza-Lu after she is gone. However, this proposal seems to be shocking ; Liza-Lu has never been a major character in the novel, and thus Tess's last wish is an

incident that is invented by the writer in keeping with the traditional story happy ending. It may also be understood that Liza-Lu is a natural extension of Tess. This idea well explains Tess's inner thoughts before being arrested, particularly in view of Tess's reasons for proposing her sister to Angel; she says, "Liza-Lu has all the best of me without the bad of me" (Tess ; 416).

In the same context the narrator describes 'Liza-Lu as "a spiritualized image of Tess, slighter than she, but with the same beautiful eyes". Therefore, Liza-Lu can be seen to represent a purer and more spiritual form of Tess; perhaps, she is supposed to suggest what Tess could have been, if she had never met Alec. If that is the case, then the potential marriage of Angel and 'Liza-Lu would be at least partial atonement for the tragic way that Angel and Tess are driven apart by Tess's past.

However, this does not mean that the novel actually ends in an optimistic mode. Tess is executed, and Hardy seems to suggest that her suffering is due to a man-made mistake which fact implies the potential destruction of what is pure and beautiful.



### 5.7. Nature Symbolism in the Novel:

Symbolism in general, is the practice or art of using an object or a word to represent an abstract idea. An action, a person, a place, or an object can all have symbolic meanings. However in Hardy's Novels of Character and Environment he usually suggests a certain mood or emotion. He actually concentrates on the natural features ; including natural phenomena plants animals and insects which are employed to symbolize or hint at a particular event, instead of saying it blatantly.

Tess the heroine of the novel, is also viewed by many critics as one of the most symbolic character in all Thomas Hardy's fictional works. In his writings, he is often inclined to illustrate and symbolize the theme of "Ache of Modernism". This is the most dominant theme in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, which, as has been noted by one critic : "The novel portrays in a symbolic way, the energy of traditional ways and the strength of the forces that are destroying them". Hardy also describes modern farm machinery with infernal imagery. At the dairy, he notes that the milk sent to the city must be watered down because the townspeople cannot stomach whole milk as they 'do not go with nature'.

Nature in the novel is personified in a woman called Tess. Angel's middle-class fastidiousness makes him reject Tess, a woman whom Hardy often portrays as a sort of Wessex Eve, in harmony with the natural world. If anyone abuses her he actually abuses the common sense of nature! When he parts from her and goes to Brazil, the handsome young man becomes so ill that he is reduced to a "mere yellow skeleton". All these instances are typically interpreted as indications of the negative consequences of man's separation from nature, both in the creation of destructive machinery and in the inability to rejoice in pure nature.

However, Marxist critic Raymond Williams (1985 ; 201) in *The English Novel From Dickens to Lawrence* questions the identification of Tess with a peasantry destroyed by industrialism. He points out that "Tess is not a peasant, she is a school- educated member of the rural working class: she suffers a tragedy through being thwarted, in her aspirations to rise and her desire for a good life (which includes love and sex), not by Industrialism but by the landed bourgeoisie (Alec), liberal idealism (Angel) and Christian Moralism in her family's village".

Symbolism of nature as personified in Tess may help explain the character of Tess as a true embodiment of nature in the broad sense. She is lovely,

fecund, and exploitable. Animal imagery throughout the novel strengthens this association. There are many examples of this relationship; Tess's misfortunes for instance, begin when she falls asleep while driving Prince (the horse) to market, thus causing the horse's death; at Trantridge, she becomes a poultry-keeper; she and Angel fall in love amid cows in the fertile Frome valley; and on the road to Flintcombe-Ashe, she kills some wounded pheasants to end their suffering.

Throughout the story Tess emerges as a character not only because of her symbolic representation but because Hardy's feeling for her is strong and touching, perhaps stronger than for any of his other invented characters.

However Hardy's main landscape symbolism in this novel lies in the contrasts of the two valleys of Blackmore Vale, and the Valley of the Frome and the plateau in-between where Flintcombe-Ash is situated. The two often contrasted to bring out their meanings in Tess's life, as they become symbolic of her "inner landscapes", the lush fertility of the Frome valley echoing the growth of Tess and Angel's passion, just as the arid landscape of Flintcombe that mirrors the disappointment of her hopes.

Right at the beginning of the novel, Hardy employs the region's geographic features to describe the nature of the contours of the land, which

enhances the cinematic portrayal of the whole area and underlines Tess's social and cultural background and her relationship to the geographical area in which she lives.

It is important to observe that landscape is not only a descriptive background in Hardy's work; it is a living and dynamic force that reflects the characters' inner motivations and helps determine their actions and responses. Hardy is frequently inclined to create both actual and symbolic landscapes by using different sets of symbols for each novel but almost with unified themes.

The novel opens by introducing Parson Tringham who meets by chance John Durbeyfields Tess's father. Tringham gives Mr. Durbeyfields a bit of information that proves the latter to be a descendant of a noble Norman family. Now Jack the haggler, who suddenly becomes 'Sir' John, totally depends on the history of his ancestors, the knights of the Lord of Estremavilla in Normandy. This can be interpreted symbolically to mean that 'Sir John' and his family, including Tess are only to live the glory of their past. But Their present and future are likely to be gloomy when it is learnt that the noble family members are extinct. So the conspiracy of the past over the present is quite obvious.

It is in the scene of May Dance ( *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, pp.23, 24) when Angel meets Tess for the first time, and realizes that it is rather too late to ask her for a dance. Tess feels slighted, a fact that foreshadows Angel's misunderstanding and the injustice he does to her after they are married. When Tess' father gets too drunk to drive to the market that night, Tess undertakes the journey herself. However, she falls asleep at the reins, and the family's only horse encounters a speeding wagon and is fatally wounded. The blood which splashed over her white dress is also a symbol of the unavoidable forthcoming unhappy events.

The first part of the novel ' *The Maiden* ' also witnesses the meeting of Tess and Alec at his mother's house. Alec's material gifts to Tess is interpreted by many critics as symbolic of physical seduction. Tess herself like Blackmore cottagers, is superstitious, for she believes in bad omens. While carrying the rose home: "A thorn of the rose remaining in her breast accidentally pricked her chin...she was steeped fancies and pre-figurative superstitions she thought this an ill-omen " ( *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 50).

In the scene of Tess's rape the writer employs the 'darkness' of that night to act as a conspirator, in Tess's tragedy. He says : "Darkness and silence ruled everywhere around" . The name of the valley ( The Chase) is also

symbolic; it suggests Tess is going to be chased and raped. The narrator wonders : Where is Tess's guardian angel? Hardy is doubtful about divinity and the angels. However, in the story there is Angel Clare, who severely destroys " the sensitive gossamer and the pure blank as snow" physically as well as spiritually.

Hardy's most powerful reference to Tess as a symbol of nature, is to be found in the raping scene, and how she is held in disdain by the local community. Tess may be regarded a victim of the society or her rape may be attributed to the natural eco-system where the 'weak' is not saved and is crushed by the strong. Alec, the strong, raped Tess, the weak, and though the society knows this fact, Tess is still viewed as a 'sinner'.

Unlike his other novels Hardy is more intensive and more inclined to symbolize natural features in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* than in his other novels. He is more passionate and transparent in his attitude towards Tess. There is closer association between him and nature in relation to Tess's psychological situation. Throughout her tours between Blackmore, Talbot hays and Flint comb-Ash Tess is portrayed in different moods through reference to nature. Three examples can be cited to show how the writer links between his heroine's psychological situation and the surrounding

environment. First, in the scene of Tess's early arrival at Talbot hays Dairy Hardy portrays Tess in a better mood here is how he describes the place : " The season developed and matured. Another year's installment of flowers leaves nightingales, thrushes finches and such ephemerals creatures took up their positions when these were nothing more than germs and inorganic particles. Rays from the sunrise drew forth the buds and stretched them into long stalks..." (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 144). Second, Tess is shown with a broken heart when Angel destroys her spirits when he openly rejects her after her confession : " He reclined in his couch in the sitting-room and extinguished the light. The night came in and took up its place there unconcerned and indifferent; the night which has already swallowed up his happiness and now digesting it listlessly; and was ready to swallow up the happiness of a thousand other people with as little disturbance or change of mien" ( *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*; 255). The third example is when Tess arrives at Flintcomb-Ash ( which stretches between the valley of her birth and the valley of her love) she is spiritually shattered. Here is how the author depicts the place in Tess's eyes: " Here the air was dry and cold, and the long-cart roads were blown white and dusty within a few hours after rain. There were few trees, or none, those would have grown in the hedges being

mercilessly plashed down with the quickset by the tenant –farmers, the natural enemies of trees, bushes and brake " *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* ; 300).

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is also richly woven with religious symbols and descriptions which are drawn from both Christianity and Pagan religion. Though religious imagery of the character of Tess is illuminated. She is differently portrayed as a modern-day Eve, partly earth goddess and partly a sacrificial lamb . Her villainous and flawed paramours drive her to a tragedy wrought by man's sins and uninterrupted by higher powers. In an essay published in her website, Augusta Conlon states that : "As Tess falls victim to the sordid injustices of human society, Hardy makes clear the impotence of religion of any form to save her. Tess is rebuffed by the stern, legalistic religion embodied in churches and in Angel Clare's father. She is victimized by Alec D'Urbervilles when he is sinner, and again wronged by him when he is born-again as an Evangelical Christian". Augusta continues to say that :Throughout the novel, Tess is directly compared to an incarnation of Eve. And like Eve, she is an innocent, lovely creature who is tempted, perhaps indirectly, and ruined. Tess, at the urging of her parents, seeks to claim the privileges of her lineage by appealing to the D'Urbervilles. She exchanges her innocence for the hope of earthly wealth and receives carnal knowledge and the shame that accompanies it.



Another symbol is Brazil, Angel's destination after his tragic separation from Tess. Many critics have viewed Brazil in the novel as a 'Return to Eden'. After Angel learns of Tess' past her rape and illegitimate son his vision of Tess as a pristine maiden is destroyed and he escapes to Brazil in the hopes of immersing himself in the agricultural work. He is passionate about recovering his happiness. Brazil is symbolic of Garden of Eden. But also, his return to Eden is a failure, and is marked by illness and misfortune. He has to return to England in defeat. This also reflects man's eternal ordeal on the earth.

# CHAPTER SIX

## Summary, Suggestions and Conclusion

It was only in the 1990s that eco-criticism emerged as a separate discipline, though the relationship between man and his physical environment had always been interesting to literary critics. Interest, at the basic scientific level and in the metaphorical form in literature can be explained as thus; man always exists *within* some natural environment, or according to Buell (ibid), "There cannot be *is* without *where*". It is generally believed that the last decade of the twentieth century was the time during which people became aware of the global problem of the survival of the Earth which humanity would face in the twenty first century.

Having discussed and analyzed Hardy's selected novels of Character and Environment (*Under the Greenwood Tree*, *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*), it can safely be concluded that these novels share similar themes and issues. The eco-critical approach has been used with due reference to other conventional approaches.

The term *Ecocriticism* is a contemporary neologism; *Ecology*, is concerned with the relationships between living organisms in their natural environment as well as their relationships with that environment, the term is linked to *criticism*, hence the emergence of *Ecocriticism* as a critical literary approach.

Eco-criticism is concerned with the relationships between literature and environment or how man's relationships with his natural environment are reflected in literature. Studies in this field can certainly be described as interdisciplinary studies in view of their unusual combination of natural sciences and a humanistic disciplines. The domain of eco-criticism is a broad one, since it is not confined to one literary genre. The most prominent figures in contemporary ecocriticism are: Lawrence Buel, Cheryll Glotfelty, Simon C. Estok, Harold Fromm, William Howarth, William Rueckert, Suellen Campbell, Michael P. Branch and Glen A. Love.

In her book: *Eco-criticism – Interdisciplinary Study of Literature and Environment* Jelica Tosic (2012, internet website) states that "The first explanation is concerned with man's essential quest for personal identity, or with his need and failure to find his roots. That is the reason why he is a life-long wanderer, on the one hand, and why he is always identified with the familiar physical and cultural environment, on the other". This statement underlines the fact that man feels vitally threatened in the ecologically degraded world. Excessive exploitation of natural resources and man's disregard of the air, water and soil that sustain him have given rise to the question of the survival of both man and the planet (Earth). The end of the

twentieth century witnessed the urgent call on every one to do his part to help the Earth survive.

Ecocriticism, in this respect is a means by which humanists guard the world in which they live. This global problem and the call for solving it have been reflected in the field of culture and literature.

Despite the fact that Thomas Hardy belongs to the Victorian literary era, his themes and issues are absolutely different from those of his contemporary writers. He shows special interest in nature. His name has become associated with some literary terms such as '*sense of place*' '*unity of the universe*' '*mother earth*' '*inspiring nature*' and so on.

Hardy is believed to have revolutionized *nature* by resorting to it as a source of symbolism and inspiration. He is reckoned to have gone beyond the limits of a particular event in his narratives. His description of landscapes, for instance, is intended to make contrasts which helps him draw the reader's attention to the damage caused by the machine to the wildlife during his time.

Hardy has come up with valuable philosophical views about nature and its importance in our lives. These views go far beyond the factual level of ecology as a science to a deeper level of self-awareness and "Earth wisdom".

It is worth stating that his philosophy highly concerns both the living and non-living world. He seems to have viewed that world with new vision. Hence, Hardy is believed to have broadened the narrow limits within which the assumptions and values of his views have later been considered. He paved the way for a number of contemporary literary terms that came to be adopted by critics of Modernism Movement, including the concepts of "*Deep Ecology*" "*Environmental Literature*", "*Eco-system*" "*Eco-feminism*" and even *Naturalism*. He lays more emphasis on the role of the individual who is required to behave as a *citizen of the world* to take responsibility for the survival of the earth.

It is quite right to say that Hardy's philosophy involves all aspects of human life and thought. Hence, the inspirational quality of his approach and his effective views. Hardy, in fact views nature as a divine gift for not only does it enhance the fulfillment of humans' needs, but it also determines human existence.

He includes and symbolizes natural features in his works, especially his novels of Characters and Environment, to stress the need for unity of man and all creatures and the environment around.

The approach to Hardy's novels from an ecocritical perspective, is most suitable, for it greatly helps reflect the above mentioned values, and

complies with the recommended principles. Hardy gives expression to his deep adoration of the world of nature, and his wish to the unification of everything in the world and the desire to promote man's physical environment.

Lawrence Buell came up with the coined phrase '*Environmental Imagination*' to imply that the physical environment shapes imagination and need to be preserved. On his part, Hardy has called attention to the serious deterioration of the physical environment, and stressed the fact that a lot of plant and animal species have been eradicated and a great number of other species have been added to the list of endangered species. Although he is ready to accept the idea of extinction as a natural process, he continues to stresses the fact that it is alarmingly accelerated because of man's greedy activities.

In Hardy's novels time moves rhythmically, in seasons and ages rather than mechanically. This is meant to reread the natural phenomena, that in turn, govern human tendencies and demands. Man, as implied by Hardy, is driven by an immediate and instinctive obedience to his emotional impulse, without sufficient corrective control of reason.

In his introduction to the critical study of *The Novels of Thomas Hardy* Phillip V. Allingham ( Victorian Internet website, 2011) states:

"Complementing his minor roles as folklorist and anthropologist, Hardy was very much the social critic. In his fiction, not only natural forces (such as the adverse weather that assists in ruining Michael Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* ) but also human society seems bent on crushing the sensitive and imaginative individual. Society inflicts its gratuitous suffering through exercising outworn conventions and superficial values, as well as through the new age's emphasis on efficiency". This attitude implies that Hardy, as a realist, is inclined to believe that art should describe and comment on actual situations, such as the heavy lot of the rural labourers and the bleak lives of the oppressed women. He makes touching links between 'woman' and 'nature' as can be found in his masterpiece *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

It is appropriate to end this conclusion with Carl J Webber's Editorial Epilogue, titled *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress* ( 1935;13), in which he notes the most significant characteristics of Hardy's fiction which are evident in most of his novels particularly those of Characters and Environment. First, Webber emphasizes that Hardy's world of fiction has its own stage which is chiefly set in rural Wessex, somewhere in the southwest of England. Second, It is topographically specific, to a degree that is unparalleled in English literature. Third, It mainly deals with Dorset farmers, and shows sympathetic insight into the life of this class. Fourth, it does not

avoid an impression of artificiality whenever "polite society" is involved. Fifth, the dialogue is often unreal, and there is occasional stiffness of language, with involved sentences, awkward inversions, split infinitives, with special use of tremendous names of plant birds and insects. Sixth, nature interests him for her own sake, and captures his literary diction, and his treatment of her is often poetic. Seventh, there are many literary allusions and quotations, and references to painters, musicians, and architects in imitation of most of his contemporary writers.

Hardy's symbolism is unique in its personification of natural elements and associating them with human behavior. With great talent, he employs literary symbolism through the use of green nature's positive aspects such as renewal, fertility and rebirth, as well as the counterbalancing wild, destructive, uncontrollable aspects of nature. Close reading shows how Hardy's work of fiction uses nature as a basis for understanding human nature, suggesting that man is already in *Nature*, and *Nature* is forever in him.



## Bibliography

Abraham, M. H. *Glossary of Literary Terms* Oxford University press, 1984.

Abu Zaid, Ahmed *Themes of Alienation in the Major Novels of Hardy*, PhD thesis University of Glasgow 1987

Ackerman, Dione, *On Extended Wings*, Random House publications, NY, USA 1985.

Alcon John *The nature novel from Hardy to Laurence*, Colombia University Press 1977.

Altik Richard *The presence of the Present* Ohio State University press, Ohio USA, 1991.

Barry, Peter. "Ecocriticism". *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2009.

Bharta Muni, Nataya Shastra, Sanjeet Natak Academy Press, 1975.

Brandi Christine *Thomas Hardy As an Eco-Feminist Author*, Cambridge University Press 2010.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge, MA and London, England, Harvard University Press, 1995.

- Buell, Lawrence *Critical Inquiry* The Belknap Press of HarvardUSA, 1998.
- Buell, Lawrence. *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, USA 2001.
- Cassagrande Peter *Unity in Hardy's Novel*, Regent Press of Kansas USA 1982.
- Cohen, Michael P. *Ecocriticism Under Critique, Environmental History* 2004.
- Coupe, Lawrence, *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Cranston, CA. & Robert Zeller, "The Littoral Zone: Australian Contexts and their Writers". New York: Rodopi, 2007.
- Duffin H.C *The Study of Wessex Novels*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2003.
- Eagle Dorthy *Dictionary of English Literature* Oxford University Press UK 1970.
- Emerson Ralf Waldo, *Nature* Boston Publishing House, USA, 2006.
- Estok, Simon C. (2001). "A Report Card on Ecocriticism." *AUMLA* 1996.
- Estok, Simon C. "Shakespeare and Ecocriticism: An Analysis of 'Home' and 'Power' in King Lear." 2005.

- Fayen, George *Hardy's Woodlanders, Inwardness and Memory*, Cambridge University press UK 1961.
- Feber Michael *Literary Symbolism* Cambridge Univ. Press, Edinburgh Building Cambridge UK, 1999.
- Ferry, Luc. *The New Ecological Order*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Garrard, Greg, *Ecocriticism*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Glotfelty, Cheryll and Harold Fromm *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens and London: University of Georgia, 1996.
- Gomides, Camilo. 'Putting a New Definition of Ecocriticism to the Test: The Case of *The Burning Season*, a film' 2006.
- Gregor. Ian, *The Forms of Hardy's Major Fiction*, University of California Press, CA, USA 1974.
- Guttrel Simon *Wessex* Oxford University Press UK 1999.
- Hardy, Thomas *Under the Greenwood Tree* :Wordsworth Edition Ltd. 8B East St., Ware Hertfordshire 2004
- The Woodlanders*, Oxford Univ. Press, NY, Dale Kramer, 1995.
- Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Oxford Univ. Press, NY, 1983.
- The Mayor of Casterbridge*,
- The Return of the Native* Barends and Noble, R.G. Cox NY USA 1970.

*Far from the Madding Crowd*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1985.

*Jude the Obscure*, AMS Press NYUSA 1984.

Heise, Ursula K. "Greening English: Recent Introductions to Ecocriticism."

*Contemporary Literature* 2006.

Herman W.R. Explicator Randal Publications NY, USA, 2000.

Ibn Arabi, Muhyiddeen, *History of Philosophy*,

H. Hoffding, LondonUK, 1956.

*Indian Journal of Eco-criticism* New Delhi Issue No. 96.

Jahizh al *Kitab al-Haywan*, New Encycolopedia of Islam, Rowan  
&Littlefield Publishers, 2008.

Kroeber, Karl. *Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the  
Biology of Mind*. New York: Columbia UP, 1994.

Maretti, Franco, *The Way of the World* Est. Verso press, 2000.

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal  
in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.

McKusick, James C. *Green Writing: Romanticism and Ecology*. New York:  
St. Martin's, 2000.

Meeker, Joseph W. "The Comedy of Survival": Studies in  
Literary Ecology." New York: Scribner's, 1972.

- Miller J. Hillis *Fiction and Repetition* Harvard University Press 1986.
- Moore, Bryan L. *Ecology and Literature: Ecocentric Personification from Antiquity to the Twenty-first Century*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
- Nicolson, Marjorie Hope. *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959.
- Phillips, Dana. *The Truth of Ecology: Nature, Culture, and Literature in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Pinion F. B. A *Hardy Companion*, Palgrave Macmillan4Cinon St. LondonUK, 1982.
- Rapaport, Roy, *The New Ecology* Yale University Press USA, 1984.
- Rueckert, William. *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*. *Iowa Review*, 1978.
- Rojas Pérez, Walter. *La ecocrítica hoy*. San José, Costa Rica: Aire Moderno, 2004.
- Selvamony, Nirmal, Nirmaldasan & Rayson K. Alex. *Essays in Ecocriticism*. Delhi: Sarup and Sons and OSLE-India, 2008.
- Serness Michael *The Natural Contract* University of Michigan Press, USA 1995.

Slovic, Scott. *Seeking Awareness in American Nature Writing: Henry Thoreau, Annie Dillard, Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry, Barry Lopez.*

Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah Press, 1992.

Spivey Ted . R *Thomas Hardy's Tragic Hero* 1954

Thoreau H. D *Walden* Ticknor and Fields Publishers, Massachusetts, USA  
1854.

Vogel, Joseph Henry. *Ecocriticism as an Economic School of Thought:*  
Woody Allen's NY USA, 1999.

Webber Carl *An Indiscretion in the life of an Heiress* 1935

Widowson, Peter Hardy in History

Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City.* Chatto and Windus  
Publications London UK, 1973.

Zapf, Hubert *Literary Ecology and the Ethics of Texts, New Literary History,* NY, USA, 2008.