Nature in*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*: A Revelation of Hardy's Literary and Scientific Choices

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Abstract: The painstakingly wonderful description of nature in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* undoubtedly points to Hardy's cultivated capacity of observation and his instinctive ability not to miss details while contemplating natural scenes. Yet, Hardy's talent manifests itself in his innovative reworking of natural elements in multiple figures of speech such as similes, metaphors and imageries which testifies to a romantic perception of reality. However, far from being benevolent and charitable, the landscape participates in the universal conspiracy that chains Man to a godless and cruel world where daily struggles and the law of "the survival of the fittest" based on heredity and chance are the guiding principles of existence. Man is leveled to other species in such struggles and in a Darwinist fashion; Hardy never misses the opportunity to draw parallels and affinities between Man and his fellow species the animals. Deploying nature as such, Hardy gives clues to his readers that place him in the Romantic Realist tradition literally speaking while aligning him with the theory of evolution on a scientific level. His choices are nonetheless detrimental to humanity.

Key words: nature, romanticism, figures of speech, Darwinism, determinism.

Introduction (literature review, purpose)

This article comes to fill in the gaps in the existing literature analyzing the deployment of nature in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and the impacts of Darwinism on its composition. In fact, works about Hardy's use of nature as a background or a rural setting to his novel abound, yet do not look at the functionality of the landscape. Amalgamating both his literary and scientific convictions, sceneries affirm that literature and science reflect and complement each other and are not as popularly known at odds. In a similar vein, realism is often considered as a reaction against romanticism; however, my article shows that Hardy manages to blend these traditionally opposed literary movements quite aptly. Last but not least, works dealing with Hardy's deterministic views in life are not uncommon but rarely do they discuss the dangers of such determinism on humanity.

Methods:

My approach is mainly descriptive dealing with Hardy's exploitation of nature in different ways based on books, online articles and personal critical analysis.

Discussion:

First of all, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, nature is invested into different figures of speech lending a poetic style into the novel's texture. Besides, between the romanticism of his poetic style and the realism of the novel, Hardy sets out a Victorian romantic realist project. Finally, his evolutionary perspective built around notions like heredity, chance, and common ancestors between men and animals works out its way into a dangerously deterministic view of life.

Summary of the novel:

Before examining the functionality of nature in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, a brief account of the story seems necessary. *Tess* is Hardy's twelfth and penultimate novel written in 1891. "Hardy was once asked, 'Which of your novels is your favourite?' He thought for a moment and replied, simply, 'Tess'" (Johnson 1977, 142). The fact that this novel is his favorite implies that the literary and scientific choices incorporated mirror what Hardy truly believes in and thus one can draw general conclusions about the writer. The story starts by the poor Jack Durbeyfieldgaining knowledge about his aristocratic lineage and consequently developing hopes of richness. MrsDurbeyfield knows about a rich D'Urbervilles in some parts of the country and sends her beautiful daughter Tess to claim kinship. Driven by a sense of guilt because she caused the death of the family's horse, their only source of income, Tess sets out to her journey. Unfortunately, the two families are not relatives as the rich family faked the name for the sake of reputation. But Alec, the only son of the family, hides the reality from Tess and manages to seduce, rape and impregnate her. This disastrous event shatters all hopes of happiness for the heroine Tess. After experiencing a brief happiness and a romantic relationship with Angel, she is abandoned by the latter the night of her marriage upon her confession of the incident. Gloom and misery ensue. Later on, Alec takes advantage again of Tess. Unable to bear the pain and the humiliation especially when Angel forgives her, Tess murders Alec and is finally executed for her crime.

1-APoetic Style through Natural Elements:

Hardy began his writing career as a poet, but the public unacknowledgementof the merit of his verse coupled with his need for money compelled him to turn tofiction. However, "he was often

known to make disparaging remarks about the mechanical trade of novel writing"(Johnson 1977, 295). While a novelist, Hardy does not succumb to the novel's commercial obligations nor does he lose his fondness of poetry and spontaneously preserves poetic diction in his prose. His poetic diction is most often linked to nature. By nature, Hardy means more than a collection of inanimate natural objects or a mute background to events. Rather, it is considered an active contributor to the life of the individual. It sometimes works as a concrete representation to feelings, sometimes as omens and forerunners of events.

One first poetic aspect that weaves the fictional texture in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*is symbolism. Indeed, words in this text bear both the denotative and connotative aspects. Connotations, while often universal, are sometimes specific to the work in hand and need to be analyzed in close relation to the thick web of symbolic references that matches the heroine's different stages in life. A striking instance is when Tess thinks about Angel's suggestion of marriage. Torn between joy and dejection, vacillating between acceptance and refusal and unable to decide whether she should tell him about her sexual affair with Alec or keep it secret, she "remain[s] among willows"(Hardy 2000,156). In fact,

> The willow tree has a long history of symbolism rooted in spirituality and cultural traditions. There are references to the willow tree in Celtic and Christian tradition, among others. One of the most valuable traits of the willow tree is its flexibility. The willow tree is one of the few trees that is capable of bending in outrageous poses without snapping. This can be a powerful metaphor for those of us seeking recovery or a spiritual path. The message of the willow tree is to adjust with life, rather than fighting it, surrendering to the process. The willow reminds us to let go and to surrender completely to our innermost selves and to gain a deeper understanding of our subconscious. Another powerful symbolic meaning of the willow tree is its adaptability, the willow tree's ability to not only survive, but also thrive in some of the most challenging conditions. We can also look at how the willow tree encourages the expression of deep emotions, including grief and sadness through tears and teaching us the value and consequences of love and loss. One of the greatest symbolic meanings of the willow tree is that even through great loss we have the ability to grow and there is potential for something new ("Symbolism of the Willow Tree", 2016)

Accordingly, the willow tree is highly significant for Tess. Undergoing severe misery and psychological disturbance after being raped by Alec, Angel's proposal offers promises of happiness and recovery. Pondering upon the matter, Hardy places his heroine under a willow tree following the historical significance of the symbol. Yet, Hardy reworks the natural elements into a design which belongs to tradition as well as to his own convictions. He believes that nature is anything but benevolent. The possibility of recovery, survival and adaptability remains unrealized as it is revealed later on in the course of actions. Angel could not accept Tess's affair although he was once an adulterer himself; and the happiness-to-be turns into further despondency and agony. The willow tree far from being a solution and a locus of "potential for something new" is an illusionary respite and an inevitable reoccurrence of the old cruelty of fate.

On the same day of the willow scene and as the night advances the moon arises in the sky but Tess "went in, and upstairs without alight" (Hardy 2000, 156). Historically the moon is a symbol of chastity; and the fact that Tess does not stay to enjoy it and prefers going back home without light reminds the reader that Tess is "[maiden] no more"(Hardy 2000,66).

The moon isalsoconsidered a luminary, but she produces no light of her own accord. She is reliant upon the sun'slight to reflect (mirror) her image to our earthly eyes. This method of

projecting light makes the moon a symbol of subtlety. Clarity, reflection, and indirect deduction are gained by *passive means*. Where the sun will boldly bear down its blaze upon a given philosophical subject – the moon softly enfolds our attention - illumining our psyche in a gossamer glow that is more open to esoteric impressions ("Moon Meanings and Moon Symbolism").

In the above mentioned symbolic sense, the image of the moon has much to do with Tess's precarious situation and her passivity in receiving events such as her violation. She is not the determinant of her fate. Nothing happens as she likes. Her destiny is always traced by others. Alec writes her story as an adulteress and the Victorian ethics carried out by Angel dash all hopes of happiness. Her flee from the light becomes thus an attempt at escaping the passivity that stamps all the phases in her life; yet, she remains again and again trapped by the gender, social, and ethical nets of the time.

Another significant symbol is the mistletoe. Mistletoeis of extreme importance to pagan cultures, for it is a sacred plant to the Druids that "revered the plant's powers as an aphrodisiac, believing the berries to contain the sperm of the gods" ("Mistletoe in Mythology"). Hardy makes good use of this symbol when Angel revisits the Wellbridge Farm house after the collapse of his marriage and finds that the leaves and the berries of the mistletoe he placed over the marriage-bed are "brown and wrinkled" (Hardy 2000,234). Another impressive example occurs when Tess is molested anew by Alec - her former lover - after her husband's deserting of her.Alec compares her to a calf:"you are as weak as a bled calf, you know you are" (Hardy 2000,294). Ln most religionsa calf is a sacrificial animal; therefore, associating Tess with this animal foreshadows her second submission to Alec's seduction. Her victimization is mapped through images of blood, animals, and sacrifice.

As such, symbolism is not the mere substitution of one object for another but the use of concrete imagery to express abstract ideas and emotions. StéphaneMallarmé defines symbolism as the art of "evoking an object little by little so as to reveal a mood or conversely, the art of choosing an object and extracting from it "unétatd'âme" and he adds that this could be achieved only "par uneserie de déchiffrements" that is "by a series of decipherings"(qtd. in Chadwick 1985, 1).Indeed the reader should labor to extract a mood for deciphering one meaningmeans the meticulous examination and the attentive trailing of several symbolic images in different instances.

One of the richest associations that compels deciphering is linking Tess to the red color in various occasions. In fact, Tony Tanner agrees that "[w]atching Tess's life we begin to see that her destiny is nothing more or less than the colorred" (1968, 192)[1]. The color red being the color of blood "dogs her, disturbs her, destroys her. She is full of it, she spills it, she loses it," (1968, 192) Tannercontinues. Her mouth is "a mobile peony mouth" (Hardy 2000, 10). Peony is a plant with large showy red flowers; thus, Tess's mouth represents an enticement to the male gaze. When she goes to Trantridge for the first time, Alec forces roses and red-strawberries on her. While Alec carries her on his horse for the second time to Trantridge to working the poultry farm, he whips his horse, significantly a mare, inexorably intosubmission.When Alec offers transport to Tess after her Saturday late enjoyment of the fair and the market in Chase borough, he guides her into the deep forest where primeval yews, which are shrubs with stiff straight leaves and poisonous red fruits, fill the place and a thick fog wraps the Chase. All these symbolic signs incrementally bring about the deflowering of Tess. In his novel, Hardy is able to match every natural detail with an appropriate physical, social, and mental correspondence. Conveying such abstract ideas that illuminate the text through familiar natural objects such as strawberries,

peony and, yews testifies to Hardy's literary dexterity and his familiarity with the rural environment. Indeed, Coombes affirms in his book *Literature and Criticism*that

In a good writer's hands, the image, fresh and vivid, is at its fullest used to intensify, to clarify, toenrich; a successful image helps to make us feel the writer's grasp of the object orsituation he is dealing with, gives his grasp of it with precision, vividness, force, economy; and to make such an impact on us, its content, the stuff of which it is made, can't be unduly fantastic and remote from our experience, but must be such that it can be immediately felt by us as belonging in one way or another to the fabric of our own lives (1953, 43-4).

Symbolism via natural elements is but one device used by Hardy to convey ideas and images which are beyond the reach of literal expression. Hardy resorts consistently to figures of speech not to ornament his language but to stimulate intellectual and sensory responses. His incessant deployment of nature unveils itself in similes as well. He intersperses a protean range of wonderful and innovative similes in his text. The sound of the reaping-machine in Marlott is; for example,"like the love making of the grasshopper" (Hardy 2000,77).The resemblance is the annoying and unprepossessing nature of both sounds. While one may be more familiar with the noise a reaping-machine produces than that of the love making of the grasshopper, the simile intends to divulge Hardy's personal repulsion of the insectile intrusion of machines into the human world. Machines are for him unwelcome insects that mar the peaceful rural existence. Tess and Marian work hard in the stubborn soil of Flint-combAsh and "crawl over the surface [of the land] like flies"(Hardy 2000, 250). Here the insects translate that the two girls are so diminished in value and state of mind. They are lost financially and especially psychologically; hence, their fly-like situation. The life of Tess "shall fall as a leaf and be shed as the rain" (Hardy 2000, 203) when Angel rejects her because of her sexual affair withAlec.

Metaphors are of equal significance to Hardy in his texture of figurative language. When Tess and Angel are under some fir trees after Tess's murdering of Alec, the boughs are moaning, showing dejection for Tess's future hanging. Here nature is cruel in prefiguring Tess's death and functions as an omen. Hardy infuses some extended metaphors too. One outstanding metaphoris the following: "On the grey moisture of the grass were marks where the cows had lain through the night - dark-green islands of dry herbage the sizeof their carcasses, in the general sea of dew. From each island proceeded a serpentine trail, by which the cow had rambled away to feed after getting up"(Hardy2000,116).It is interesting to note that in the above mentioned metaphor, nature is used to depict nature. The whole image is amazing and springs from Hardy's profound knowledge of the rural life with its precise details. The overwhelming dew in the morning makes the field look like a sea in its openness and vagueness; and the scattered places in the field where cows spent the night are of a darker color so that they are distinguished from the white mass wrapping the space just like islands which are prominent in the blue sea. The trail left after the departure of the cows for food forms continuity to the island-like spot. Neither evoking a human mood nor prefiguring an event, has this metaphor served to add a fresh perception to a familiar rural scene. In this sense, Hardy's style is akin to the Russian formalism's technique of defamiliarization or Ezra Pound's "make it new". In his defamiliarizing of the familiar, the writer suggests that perception is more important than reality and here again Hardy looks much more like a romantic poet rather than a realistic novelist.

Sometimes similes and metaphors mingle together and contribute to the same image. Hardy depicts Tess in the twilight:"Minute diamonds of moisture from the mist hung too, upon Tess's eyelashes and drops upon her like seed pearls" (Hardy 2000, 116). In his insistence on the

ethereal beauty of Tess at that time of the day, Hardy makes of his heroine a figure of light with the brilliance of diamonds and pearls. The image intensifies Angel's belief that Tess is different in nature and essence from other women taking her to be the embodiment of the physical and spiritual purity. The very choice of the twilight time reveals Hardy's conviction that a woman's purity is a construct conjured up by the personal as well as social convictions of the time. While Angel's world shatters upon knowing that Tess is virgin no more reducing the female purity to such a narrow Victorian ideal, Hardy insists in his subtitle to the Novel that Tess of the d'Urbervilles is *A Pure Woman*. Terms like "moisture" and "mist" are used to highlight the nebulosity of the idea of purity in the Victorian times. Hardy points to the change of perception from the twilight to other periods of the day which parallels the ephemeral nature of social conventions.

Personification is less frequent. Hardy is more interested in linking people to the surrounding natural environment than in linking nature to people. One example is the description of the dry ugly soil of Flint-comb Ash. "The whole field was in color a desolate drab. It was a complexion without features as if a face from chin to brow should be only an expanse of skin" (Hardy 2000, 250). It is as if the land had a complexion, a face which ought to have features but its featurelessness makes it plain, ugly, and ominous.

Visual imageries are, on the other hand, frequent involving light, darkness, beauty and color among other things. Norman Page asserts that "[i]f Dickens' greatest natural gift [is] his ear ... Hardy's [is] surely his eyes and his keen response to the visible world" (1986, 66). When Tess and Angel met in the early morning, "the spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light... pervaded the open mead, impressed them with a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve" (Hardy 2000, 115). Images of light are created by naming them (light), by describing the type of light which is to be perceived of a specific source (spectral, aqueous) as well as detailing their effects (impression of isolation and paradise).

Auditory imageries are also present but less recurrent. Here is one example: "[Silence] was broken by the strumming of strings ... those notes ...wandered in the still air with a stark quality like that of nudity ... Tess listened like a fascinated bird ... Tess was conscious of neither time nor space"(Hardy 2000,108). Again, images of sound are produced by naming them (strummingof strings), describing the emanating type of sound (stark quality like that of nudity) along with their effects such as fascination and the loss of consciousness.

Both imageries are taken from "The Rally" phase where the poetic style and the recurrence to nature become more intense than in any other part of the novel. The phase exposes the growing love relationship of Tess and Angel which recallsmindingromances and the romantics. I insist on the distinction between romance as a genre which applies in multiple ways to Hardy's novel but remains beyond the scope of this paper and the romantic tradition with its emphasis on nature as the key concern of this work.

2-Thomas Hardy's Romantic Realism:

Before comparing Hardy's literary practice to romanticism, a brief overview of the latter seems necessary. A reaction against the excessive belief on rationality and reason, romanticism emphasizes emotions and imagination. "The Romantic period of history, lasting from the late-18th to mid-19th century", Martha Mendenhallsummarizes, "affected the perceptions of Europeans and Americans in the areas of music, literature, art and philosophy. Romantic ideas emphasized a strong perception of self, reliance upon one's imaginative faculties and the investment of Nature with symbolic and quasi-religious significance. The Romantic movement

also opposed the Industrial Revolution's mechanistic influence on society" ("The Defining Ideas of Romanticism"). In this respect, Hardy's investment of nature through the above discussed imageries and figures of speech, his distaste of the mechanical invasions epitomized in the reaping machine and the emphasis on the particular experience of the individual as opposed to the neo-classical concern with universal types align him with the romantic tradition.

However, his romanticism incorporates some changes of structure and emphasis from the traditional guidelines of the movement. Such departures are; of course, direct or indirect responses to his times. Thomas Hardy, who was born in 1840 and died in 1928, lived all the Victorian era that spanned from 1837 to 1901. The Victorian era that marked the reign of Queen Victoria in Great Britain witnessed major social and economic upheavals due to the emergence of industrialization. "As manufacturing and industrialization skyrocketed," Jackie Ngo explains, "the chasm between the rich and the poor widened. Social turbulence was feverish, prompting writers and thinkers to speak out against the injustices in the world. As the economy abandoned agriculture for industry, rural farmers were forced to move to the city in search of factory work, straining the urban infrastructure"("Literary Elements of Victorian Literature"). Therefore, the English society experienced periods of transition from rural to urban, from conservative to liberal and even because of the emergence of new scientific theories such as Darwin's theory of evolution from Christianity to apostasy.

These transitory instances were, of course, reflected in the literary practice of the time which underwent a transition itself. Josh Rahnwrites:

> In the early years of the Victorian Period, poetry was still the most visible of literary forms. Like everything else, poetry and poetics underwent an evolution during the nineteenth century. Both the purpose of poetry and its basic style and tone changed drastically during the Victorian Period. In the first half of the nineteenth century, poetry was still mired in the escapist, abstractimagery and themes of the earlier generation. While essayists and novelists were confronting social issues head-on, poets for their part remained ambivalent at best. This self-induced coma gradually lifted, and by mid-century most poets had moved away from the abstractions and metaphysical tropes of the Romantics and fashioned a more down-to-earth, realistic kind of verse... At some point in the Victorian era, the novel replaced the poem as the most fashionable vehicle for the transmission of literature ("Victorian Literature" 2011).

The changing landscape of the English society in the Victorian age accelerates the rise of the novel as an appropriate genre to reflect upon the new social, economic, and political structures then at work. Attention to details, reports of life-like experiences and the investigation of the psychological interiors of the characters become the main traits of the novel and of the realistic novel in particular.

Hardy takes great pain in describing the rural community in the Victorian era with all its specificities and activities in his *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*; yet, his realistic depiction of circumstances is tethered to a romantic poetic style. His novel embodies the transition from romanticism to realism quite aptly. The course of events is actually concomitant with nature. The different psychological states of Tess are mirrored in the surrounding scenery or originate from it. Jackie Ngo attributes such a practice to the Victorian writers. He says,"Victorian authors bolstered the power of personal experience and emotion by altering the pre-existing concept of word-painting from a mere description of scenery to a dramatic narration of landscape". Apart from the instances detailed in the first part of the article, Hardy traces the heroine's trajectory in life through the seasons. On the May-Day dance which is a spring festivity and "a gay survival

from Old-Style days, when cheerfulness and May time were synonyms" and when girls were "all dressed in white gowns" (Hardy 2000, 8); and Tess "was a fine and handsome girl– not handsomer than some others, possibly– but her mobile peony mouth and large innocent eyes added eloquence to colourand shape. She wore a red ribbon in her hair, and was the only one of the white company who could boast of such a pronounced adornment" (Hardy 2000, 9), Tess is still a happy maiden. As autumn advances, Tess becomes "[m]aiden no more" (Hardy 2000, 66) as the subtitle of chapter twelve informs the readers. Her rape incident takes place in October. Further misery ensues as Tess's child Sorrow dies significantly in winter. As the season turns into "a particularly fine spring" (Hardy 2000, 88), Tessenters a healing process and gets a job as a milkmaid in Talbothays dairy away from home. "Her hopes mingled with the sunshine" (Hardy 2000, 91) and as such it seems not surprising that she meets Angel Clare her beloved for the first time in a summer evening in June in the dairy. Being the season of romance, the love relationship between Tess and Angel grows as the "season devolp[s] and mature[s]" (Hardy 2000, 113). Unfortunately, their wedding which promises happiness and recovery for Tess takes place in winter. It ends on the first day when Tess confesses her past to her partner. Intermittently, Tess experiences ups and downs that parallel the conventional coding of the seasons. Finally, the story closes with the heroine's execution in a July morning after experiencing a brief romantic relationship with Angel. The romance of the summer betrays Tess as it betrays the reader at the end of the novel with a tragic resolution.

It is here where Hardy departs from the romantics' exploitation of nature. For the latters, recurrence to nature is a retreat from the evils of industry. Nature serves as the favorite living milieu, a beautiful background to be depicted in their literature as well as a source of tranquility and inspiration. Returning to nature, which is pure and innocent, is an opportunity for renewal and regeneration. Nature is benevolent and sympathetic to humans. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, nature as has been discussed in this paper proves indifferent, cruel and, destructive to Tess's life. Hardy believes that nature is cyclic and though it passes by spring, summer and autumn, it inevitably ends up in winter when everything dries up and dies. For Hardy, the universe is godless. Based on that principle, he develops pessimistic and deterministic views of life leading to his concept of "immanent will" which is at odds with Wordsworth's "active principle" that is a belief in the healing power of nature.

Hardy reports the specificities of rural communities in the Victorian era and narrates his heroine's life story so precisely but in no way could he betray his sensitivity to the natural world. Through nature, Hardy does not evade reality but gives the reader a closer understanding, a better vision, and a familiar experience of it. Nature is deployed in a way that makes the real look more real by concretizing the most abstract of concepts. Realism for Hardy is by no means a reaction against romanticism. Rather, it is continuity to it. Hardy looks at the real through the natural lenses that do not embellish reality but highlight its truth, cruelty, and ugliness. The real life is embodied in the natural process which resolves itself fatalistically in a tragic way. In fact, Hardy narrates the landscape to use Jackie Ngo's image. Hence, it seems legitimate to refer to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* as a romantic realist work of art.

3-Hardy and Darwin's Theory of Evolution:

The contributing causes to Hardy's apostasy after his dream of becoming a Christian minister are hard to pin down with definitive evidence; yet, the revolutionary academic movements occurring in the nineteenth-century, which is the century of science, undoubtedly impressed him and brought about his abandonment of orthodox Christianity. One of the main revolutionary works

was Darwin's theory of evolution which is based onnatural selection. Darwin's book *The Origin of Species*, in which his theory is detailed, was published in 1859 which means when Hardy was nineteen years old."George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, who had a particular interest in science, were close readers of Darwin's works," affirms DrAndrzej Diniejko in his article "Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution and the Intellectual Ferment of the Mid- and Late Victorian Periods". Darwin lays the core of his theory in the introduction to his book:

I can entertain no doubt, after the most deliberate study and dispassionate judgment of which Iam capable, that the view which most naturalists entertain, and which I formerly entertained –namely that each species has been independently created - is erroneous. I am fully convinced that species are not immutable but that those belonging to what are called the same genera are linear descendents of some other and generally extinct species, in the same manneras the acknowledged varieties of any species are the descendents of that species. Furthermore, I am convinced that Natural Selection has been the main but not the exclusive means of modification(qtd. in Dewberry 1992,1-2).

Such a continuity Darwin detects from one species to another undermines all teleological explanations of human existence andshakes a long-held religious assumption of the divine creation of the world and the centrality of the human in the universe.

Darwin, who observed a continuing struggle for existence in the natural world, showed that the determining factors of life are chance and necessity in the "survival of the fittest." Darwin's theory of evolution thereby undermined the value of traditional religion and morality, which had been accepted for centuries as the guiding principle of mankind, because it implied that man was no more than a "talking monkey", and no God was necessary to create him. It revolutionized man's conception of himself. Darwin thus started a new anthropocentrism thatdeprived man of his unique position in the world. In the light of Darwin's theory, man appears left alone in the universe without any divine power which should — or could — protect him. When Darwin's followers realized that man is no more or no less than a "naked ape", they concluded that such close similarities between man and the rest of the animal world destroyedany purpose of human existence other than that which all animals have. Darwin's theory claimed that since the individual is merely a servant to his species, the overall purpose of existence is the necessity of reproduction. Sexuality therefore becomes the most important motivation for human behavior (Diniejko 2010).

Besides claiming that the ancestors of human beings were a kind of ape, the theory of evolution through natural selection stresses heredity, chance, and the ability to adapt to the environment which entails the degeneration of the weaker species and the survival of the fittest.

Influenced by Darwin's theory of evolution, Hardy has no difficulty seeing men and animals as related species. Indeed, the law of evolution states that all organic creatures are of one family. F.B Pinion explains Hardy's belief that "the web of being includes all living things. For human progress the centre of Altruism should be shifted from humanity to the whole conscious world collectively" (1991, 182). Indeed, the theory of evolution eradicates the centrism of the human who must accordingly reevaluate and rethink his position in the universe.

For this reason, Hardy introduces the sufferings of animals as one of his main topics in several of his novels. He is equally sensitive to the sufferings of both men and animals. George Levine views that "Hardy's extraordinary sensitivity to the variety, abundance, beauty and pain of even the most minute natural phenomena makes him the first great poet of Darwinism" ("Darwin and the Evolution of Fiction" 1986).On her way to Flint-comb Ash, Tess encounters the man who

was rude to her by saying she was not a girl and was knocked down by Angel. She runs away from him and hides in a plantation of trees. Her sleep is interrupted by strange noises of palpitation and flutter. In the morning, she discovers "[u]nder the trees several pheasants lay[ing] about, their rich plumage dabbled with blood; some were dead, some feebly twitching a wing, some staring up at the sky, some pulsating quickly, some contorted, some stretched out- all of them writhing in agony, except the fortunate ones whose tortures had ended during the night by the inability of nature to bear more"(Hardy 2000, 244). Hardy's depiction of the birds in this meticulous way reveals that he is deeply touched by their agony. He goes further in his sympathy to condemn the participants in the hunting party which caused the pheasants to be wounded and killed as"at once so unmannerly and so unchivalrous towards their weaker fellows in Nature's teeming family"(Hardy 2000, 244).Through this image, Hardy discloses his belief that men and animals are relatives and draws a parallel between Man's cruelty to Man and Man's cruelty to animals so that as James Gibson puts it in his *Tess of the d'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy*, we become "aware of a universal pattern of suffering" (1986, 37).Hardy's language is unmistakably Darwinian. In fact, the notion of the "weaker fellows" brings to mind the notion of the most disadvantaged species that perish because of their weaknesses for the benefit of the fittest. The identification of Tess's situation with that of the birds is patent in alluding toher as "a hunted soul" (Hardy 2000,243). Both men and animals are hunted creatures in a world of struggle and tragedy.

Hardy's interest in animals is once again divulged in his empathy to the rabbits, hares, snakes and mice in Marlott wheat fields, that are to be "huddled together ... under the teeth of the unerring reaper" (Hardy 2000,77).A striking common denominator between Hardy's main characters of his *novels of character and environment* is that most of them are sensitive to animals and their torture. Indeed, Tess "with the impulse of a soul who could feel for kindred sufferers as much as for herself" (Hardy 2000, 244) puts the birds out of torture by breaking their necks. The vocabulary item "kindred" refers to common characteristics shared by Tess and the birds and gives the description a Darwinian stamp. Her intuitive sympathy to birds is expressed in her remark to Angel after murdering Alec that "the sight of a bird in a cage used often to make me cry" (Hardy 2000,343). In Hardy's last novel, *Jude the Obscure*, Jude who is the main character is equally sympathetic and sensitive to birds. When he is supposed to guardTroutham's farm from birds, he addresses them: "Poor little dears! You shall have some dinner- you shall. There is enough for us all. Farmer Troutham can afford to let you have some. Eat, then, my little birdies, and make a good meal!"(Hardy 1994,11).

Hardy finds no real distinction between people and birds when he comments upon the roar and artificial life of London: "The people in this tragedy laugh, sing, smoke, toss off wines, etc, make love to girls in drawing rooms and areas, and yet are playing their parts in the tragedy just the same. Some wear jewels and feathers, some wear rags. All are caged birds; the only difference lies in the size of the cage. This too is part of the tragedy" (qtd. in Pinion 1991, 162).Tess's early tragedy of being violated has taught her that "the serpent hisses where the sweet birds sing" (Hardy 2000, 66). When she rallies and sets off for Talbothays, her zest for life is heard in "every bird's note" (Hardy 2000, 91) as if the birds were able to understand Tess's happiness. At Talbothays, when she is reminded of the past, a solitary cracked reed-sparrow greets her from the bushes by the river in a sad machine-made tone. The birds associated with Tess indicate mainly an intense suffering. Their agony is the result of the cruelty and indifference of both Man and nature and emphasizes a harshness which is universal and of which Tess is a victim. Tess, who "could never hurt a fly or a worm" (Hardy 2000, 343) and whom "the sight of a bird in a cage

used often to make [her] cry" (Hardy 2000, 343), is caught in "her days of immaturity like a bird in a spring" (Hardy 2000, 172). Later, she is drawn to Angel "like a fascinated bird" (Hardy 2000, 108); and eventually she is caught in Alec's traps of seduction "like a bird in a clap-net" (Hardy 2000, 255).

The relationship between men and animals is also brought outin the many comparisons of Tess to animals other than birds. After Tess's recovery from her past painful memories, namely, her deflowering in Trantridge and the death of her child Sorrow, "a particularly fine spring came round, and the stir of germination was almost audible in the buds; it moved her, as it moved the wild animals and made her passionate to go"(Hardy2000, 88). In Talbothays' garden, when she listens to Angel's notes, she follows the sound and goes "stealthily as a cat through this profusion of growth"(Hardy 2000, 108) to reach Angel's place. When Angel comes back from Emminesterto Talbothays, he hugs Tess tightly and feels her "warm as a sunned cat" (Hardy 2000, 149).

Early in the novel, Hardy highlights the degeneration of the d'Urbervilles' lineage. On his way to Marlott, Tess's father John Durbeyfield, who is a haggler, is addressed by a man as "Sir". The following conversation takes place:

"Now, sir, begging your pardon; we met last market-day on this road about this time, and I zaid 'Good-night,' and you made reply 'Good-night, Sir John', as now." "I did," said the parson."And once before that–near a month ago." "I may have." "Then what might your meaning be in calling me 'Sir John' these different times, when I be plain Jack Durbeyfield the haggler?"The parson rode a step or two nearer. "…Don't you really know, Durbeyfield, that you are the lineal representative of the ancient and knightly family of the d'Urbervilles, who derive their descent from Sir Pagan d'Urberville, that renowned knight who came from Normandy with William the Conqueror, as appears by Battle Abbey Roll?"

...

"... where do we d'Urbervilles live?" "You don't live anywhere. You are extinct– as a county family."

...

"And where be our family mansions and estates?" "You haven't any." "Oh? No lands neither?" "None; though you once had 'em in abundance,... " (Hardy 2000, 3-5).

A Darwinian register is easily tracked throughout the dialogue with words like "lineal", "descent from" and "extinct". Naturally a Darwinian logic is elucidated as the d'Urbervilles were of the strongest species with "abundance" of "mansions", "estates" and "lands" thus able to survive as knights. The nowadays absence of these characteristics that underwent mutations into poverty and misery means that the Durbeyfields are on their way of "extinction" to leave room to the more advantaged species. Hardy in more than one occasion reminds "how are the mighty fallen" (Hardy 2000, 5).As for Darwin such falls and changes are slow and gradual, it is not till the end of the story that Tess passes away although her father died earlier in the novel. From the very beginning, Tess as well as her father seems predestined. The father, while his ancestors were extinct, cannot come to terms with reality and fancies himself Sir John and calls a boy to serve him only to give him"a shilling, one of the chronically few that he possessed" (Hardy 2000, 7). His vain vanity coupled with his excessive alcoholism qualify him as an inferior member of a species that must disappear. He is unable to adapt to his present environment.

Tess as well gets her share of troubles mapped mainly by chance and heredity. The news her father knows by chance about their noble blood line prove disastrous to her life. Driven by the guilt of killing the family's horse which is their only source of income, Tess accepts her mother's

suggestion to go and claim kinship from a certain d'Urbervilles who is, unfortunately, fraudulent. Because of her good looks she inherited from her mother, Alec d'Urbervilles is seduced and rapes her. The collapse of her marriage from Angel Clare is caused by her inability to adapt to the Victorian morals that demand chastity from women. Her mother advises her to keep the incident of the rape secret but being too "pure" and innocent, she could not cheat on Angel. Cheating with its usually negative connotations could be in this case a strategy of adaptation to achieve happiness. The bad timing of Angel's forgiveness corresponds to her renewal of the adulterous relation with Alec; itself caused by further misfortunes in the family. Tess's killing of Alec is not abandoned all together from Angel's thoughts nor is it completely surprising for him. "There momentarily flashed through his mind that the family tradition of the coach and murder might have arisen because the d'Urbervilles had been known to do these things" (Hardy 2000, 338). Heredity, chance, poverty, and the inability to take the right decisions at the right time pave the way to the tragic resolution of the novel that is the execution of Tess.

Liza-Lu Tess's youngest sister, on the opposite side, "is so gentle and sweet, and she is growing so beautiful. O I could share you with her willingly when we are spirits! If you would train her and teach her, Angel, and bring her up for your own self! . . . She has all the best of me without the bad of me," (Hardy 2000, 346)Tess affirms towards the end of the novel. Younger than Tess, equally beautiful, chaste in a Victorian sense, uneducated as a woman then must be, ready for the male's inscription of the teachings and trainings he chooses for her, Liza-Lu is the perfect Victorian woman. Thus, she belongs to the fittest and manages to survive only because of her submission to the moralities and codes of her age. Angel, a male in the Victorian society, belonging to the middle class is also able to survive; although like Tess, he was adulterous once. In this sense, the idea of the survival of the fittest seems extremely dangerous as it confuses right and wrong. It lacks all moral sense. It also foregrounds gender inequality. The concept of the "fittest" itself is limited by social boundaries that do change from one time to another and from one place to another. Hardy's attitude towards the natural laws is problematic and even ambivalent. While he ends his novel by the death of the heroine as unable to fit in, he insists in his title that Tess is "a pure woman".

Whether pure or impure, one's life is foreordained. Hardy believes that Man is at the mercy of the laws of nature, unable to alter them and is thus stripped of his free will. If he shows any revolutionary acts like Tess's murdering of Alec, nature takes control of the situation again and avenges itself. J. Hillis Miller recapitulates:

> In Hardy's world there is no supernatural hierarchy of ideals or commandments, nor is there any law inherent in the physical world which says it is right to do one thing, wrong to do another, or which establishes any relative worth among things or people. Events happen as they do happen. They have neither value in themselves nor value in relation to any end beyond them. Worse yet, suffering is certain for man. In place of God there is the Immanent Will, and this unthinking force is sure to inflict pain on a man until he is lucky enough to die (1970, 13).

Such a deterministic view is detrimental to humanity as in a predestined world, Man tends to resign from all good behavior, charity and moral sense. If one's fate will inevitably move in a fixed beforehand traced trajectory, all efforts seem futile and useless. Jeff Laird defines determinism as "the belief that everything we say, do, or think is just a function of physics and chemistry" and accordingly compares man to a robot. He goes on to explain the consequences of determinism in a carried out study as follows:

The studies examined how exposure to deterministic thinking affects a person's behavior.

Participants were assessed for moral reasoning before and after being inundated with pro-determinism ideas, asopposed to those who were not so indoctrinated. Not surprisingly, as people were more exposed to deterministic thinking, they became more likely to justify things like cheating and less likely toparticipate in charity. Likewise, when peppered with deterministic propaganda, participants were significantly more likely to do things they knew full well that others didn't like: a reduction in altruism. They also recorded slower reaction times and a greater tendency to choose passivity over action ("The Consequences of Determinism" 2014).

Disastrous as they are, determinism and theories of evolution must not be promoted. The reader must not easily accept such narratives. Instead, he must develop critical thinking to evaluate whatever material presented to him/her so that he/she does not become the victim of certain ideological constructions.

Conclusion:

In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, there is an exhaustive manipulation of the natural material. By looking at the rural landscape and the natural elements as a rich repertoire of symbols, Hardy affirms that nature is more than an emblem of beauty. It is a source of inspiration and imagination. Thus, it shapes his writing style. Whether Hardy is writing poetry or prose, the reader thinks himself at the presence of a romantic poetic piece. Nature is also an active force in the human life; although, in most cases it foreshadows negative possibilities. It acts ominously upon human existence and directs fatally its course of events. This deterministic view, that details the cruel specificities of daily life, categorizes Hardy as a realist. Besides, nature with its fauna and flora is also an extension of humanity, a belief he supports after reading Darwin's theory of evolution. Hence, Hardy could easily draw continuous parallels between people and animals. Approaching nature as such reveals Hardy's literary affiliations of Romantic Realism as well as his scientific orientations such as that of Darwinism. His convictions, however, must be treated with caution as they are fraught with perils in that they cripple human agency and strip human life from all moral sense and meaningful purposes.

End notes:

Note 1: Tony Tanner's article "Colour and Movement in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*" is written in 1968. It is included in Dale Kramer's *Hardy Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Look at the list of references below.

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