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Literary Trends and Ecological Vision: Focus on Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*

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Abstract

This work investigates the role literary trends play in Thomas Hardy's representation of man's relationship with nature in The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891) and Jude the Obscure (1895). In order to examine the impact of literary trends on Hardy's ecological vision, it is hypothesized that the literary conventions the author was exposed to constituted the springboard for his depiction of man's links with the environment in the selected texts. This is because such movements informed the issues and style of Hardy's environmental narrative. Ecocriticism and Influence constituted the theoretical framework on which this study was anchored to reveal that Classicism, Romanticism and Victorianism shaped not just the content but also the style of Hardy's environmental discourse in The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. Therefore, authors' backgrounds are significant in their environmental perspectives and should be taken into account during ecocritical debates and analyses; as the literary conventions Hardy was exposed to informed the content and form of his ecological narrative.

Keywords: Environment, Fiction, Ecocriticism, Thomas Hardy, Degradation, Protection

Introduction

In the global ecosystem, man and nature are intertwined and mutually dependent. This view is shared by Taylor when he opines that "The central message of modern ecology is that the ecology of the earth is immensely complex and integrated" (581). Therefore, any malfunction or failure of the ecosystem is a prediction of man's doom alongside other living things. Morton captures this as he opines: "The sky is falling, the globe is warming, the ozone hole persists; people are dying of radiation poisoning and other toxic

agents; species are being wiped out, thousands per year; the coral reefs have nearly all gone" (10). Stretching this point further, Tosic declares that "[...] man feels *vitally* threatened in the ecologically degraded world. Overexploitation 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)." (44).

Consequently, a lot of effort is being put in place to create a good environment around which all other things prosper and such endeavours should continue. Tomic corroborates this as he submits that “The end of the twentieth century showed clearly that *everyone* had to do something to help the Earth survive. [...] The reflection of that difficult struggle in the area of culture and spirit speaks for the urgency of action or the urgent need to do something in this respect”(44). Literature can be useful in this endeavor as Danlami and Amougou indicate that “Literature can play a great role in environmental protection, albeit through the sensitization of readers”(24). In line with this assertion, Glotfelty and Fromm quote environmental historian Donald Woster as stating:

We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather how our ethical systems function. Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as precisely as possible, but even more, it requires understanding those ethical systems and using that understanding to reform them. Historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists and philosophers, cannot do the reforming, of course, but they can help with the understanding. (xxi)

Therefore, literature can be usefully examined as having great bearing on man and his practical relation to the natural world in which he lives. The aim of this work is to identify the representation of the man’s relationship with the environment in Thomas Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* with focus on the significance of literary trends. In order to interrogate the role of literary movements in Hardy’s ecological vision, this paper anchors on the hypothesis that such movements contribute the content and style of Hardy representation of the link between human beings and nature in the selected texts.

In order to examine the ecological views of Thomas Hardy in line with literary epochs, Ecocriticism and the Influence approach were used. Regarding Ecocriticism, Payne and Babera state: “Ecocriticism, also known as literary ecology or environmental literary studies, is a field of criticism that emerged in the late twentieth century as a slightly delayed response in the humanities to the global emergence of the environmental movement in the 1960s and 1970s” (205). As indicated here by Payne and Babera, Ecocriticism investigates the relationship between literature and the ecology. They further submit that “Together with environmental philosophy and environmental history, and to some extent studies of place, space, and landscape, it forms the core of what in the early twenty-first century is an emerging cross-disciplinary field of environmental humanities” (205). Ecocriticism is associated with the Influence approach since the influence of literary movements and the texts and/or that animated them on Hardy’s ecological perspective is the focus of the work. This is in conjunction with Roland-François’ declaration that “[...] any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (1). This research is aimed at examining the impact of the literary movements that Hardy was exposed to on his views of man’s relationship with nature; and so leans itself to Ecocriticism as described by Payne and Babera above.

The fact that literary trends have effects on writer’s ecological dynamics is pointed out by Levin as he states: “[...] while environmental systems and environmental stress remain central to the work of ecocritics, there is a growing sense that these can

only be addressed effectively if they are understood in relation to the larger social and socio-discursive concerns that have become so central to literary studies [...]” (172). In this dimension, the influence of literary movements on Hardy’s vision of man and nature will be examined in this work that is made up of three analytical parts which include “Classical Ideas”, “Romantic Affinities” and “Victorian Leanings”.

Classical Ideas

This section examines the manner in which Classical ideas shaped the ecological perspectives of Thomas Hardy. Hardy was very much interested in classical works and did study them enormously and they had great bearings on him. Fleming says: “Hardy’s wide reading of classical and religious texts, combined with his experience as an architect, for which he won a literary prize, is patently clear in the many allusions and eclectic references to Greek and Roman cultural images, as well as in the architectural features throughout the fourteen novels” (7). Hardy Florence on her part indicates that Hardy read “[...] several books of the *Aeneid*, some Horace and Ovid, etc; and in fact grew so familiar with his authors that in his walks to and from the town he often caught himself soliloquizing in Latin on his projects. He also took up Greek, which he had not learnt at school, getting on with some books of the *Iliad*.” (28). A good number of these classical authors and texts Hardy is said to have read and familiarized himself with dwell quite much on man’s (un)friendly relationship with nature; and impacted his ecocritical views. In line with this, Hollander quotes Harold Bloom who says poetic influence; “[...] always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main traditions of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism” (1). Hardy reads and interprets the classics before reshaping the environmental inspiration he gets from them to suit his spatiotemporal ecological context; and this lends his works to ecocritical readings as corroborated by Buell, Heise, and Thornber who describe Ecocriticism as “attaching special importance to issues of environmental (in) justice, to collective rather than individual experience as a primary historical force and concern in works of imagination” (433). Ovid hints on this when he mentions the worth of untouched nature both for man and other natural elements as he says: “The earth itself, without compulsion, untouched by the hoe, unfurrowed by the share, produced all things spontaneously, and men were content with foods that grew without cultivation” (31-32). Homer’s *The Odyssey* even gives this unspoilt nature a supernatural dimension in showing its worth as he says “The sun rose on the flawless brimming sea into a sky all brazen-all one brightening for gods immortal and for mortal men on plowlands kind with grain” (Maynar Mact *et al* 238). Classical authors and texts like these which dwell so much on the man-nature dynamics and whom Hardy studied had a role to play in his view of man and nature. One of the instances where the impacts of classical ecological perspectives are seen in Hardy’s works is with regards to Henchard’s will. When Henchard loses his business, mayoral position, Lucetta’s love and Elizabeth Jane’s attention to his bitter rival Donald Farfrae, Henchard decides to leave Casterbridge for good and seeing death very close to himself, writes his will. As brought out in Hardy, Henchard’s will runs thus:

MICHAEL HENCHARD’S WILL

“That Elizabeth-Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on account of me.

"& that I be not bury'd in consecrated ground.
 "& that no sexton be asked to toll the bell.
 "& that nobody is wished to see my dead body.
 "& that no murners walk behind me at my funeral.
 "& that no flours be planted on my grave,
 "& that no man remember me.
 "To this I put my name.
 "MICHAEL HENCHARD" (325)

This will reveals a lot about man's relationship with nature that can be traced back to the classics; specifically the fact that the dead body of a man considered evil, corrupt or immoral should not be buried inside the earth so that the innocent earth should not be desecrated. Henchard considers himself worthless and says he should not be buried in the good earth or mourned by anyone. This probably was influenced by the situation of Oedipus in Sophocle's *Oedipus the King* where King Oedipus is found guilty of patricide and incest with his mother to the extent of fathering children with her. When he dies, the gods judge his corpse too impure to enter the earth and did not have a right to a funeral. Talking about the father, Oedipus's situation, Antigone says: "He's to be left unwept, unburied, a lovely treasure for birds that scan the field and feast to their heart's content" (Maynar Mact *et al* 633); simply re-echoing the verdict of the gods as transmitted by Creon who announces: "No, he must be left unburied, his corpse carrion for the birds and dogs to tear, an obscenity for the citizens to behold". (Maynar Mact *et al* 637). Viewing the similitude between the events in the two texts and considering Hardy's interest in and reading of the classics, one can deduce that Henchard's desire not to be buried in the pure earth and not to be mourned is a parody of Oedipus's fate in Sophocle's *Oedipus the King*.

Another dimension where Hardy's ecological ideas can be traced back to the classics is in his treatment of horses. Horses constitute a key natural element in classical discourse serving a wide variety of purposes like serving the soldiers in fight and transporting people from one place to another. An example of a case in which a horse is used in war and in transporting people, soldiers inclusive, from one place to another is seen where Homer says a soldier stabbed by Idomeneus falls, "[...] as when an oak goes down or a white poplar or like a towering pine tree which in the mountain the carpenters have hewn down with their whetted axes to make a ship timber. So he lay there felled in front of his horses and chariot, roaring, and clawed with his hands at the bloody dust" (281). In the same dimension, inn the very last line of Book XXIV which is the last Book of Homer's *The Odyssey*, Chorus, in relation to Hektor's burial, says "Such was their burial of Hektor, breaker of horses" (Maynar Mact *et al* 496). Hardy equally treats horses with a lot of emphases when it comes to their roles in man's life especially with regards to transportation. These horses that are bought and sold especially in fairs like what Henchard and family see in Weydon Priors where Hardy says: "The trusser and his family proceeded on their way, and soon entered the Fair-field, which showed standing-places and pens where many hundreds of horses and sheep had been exhibited and sold in the forenoon, but were now in great part taken away" (Hardy *Jude* 4), are used mostly to transport people and goods from one place to another and as plough pullers in farms. Using the epistolary technique, the narrator raises the use of horses in transportation in Lucetta's letter to Henchard. In it, she says she is on her way to Bristol where she will meet her only family member who is rich and and might give her financial

assistance. She adds "I shall return through Casterbridge and Budmouth, where I shall take the packet-boat. Can you meet me with the letters and other trifles? I shall be in the coach which changes horses at the Antelope Hotel at half-past five Wednesday evening [...]" (Hardy *Jude* 114). When she finally comes and is telling Henchard about her enormous furniture she says "It took a waggon and four horses to get it here" (Hardy *Jude* 172). The role of the horse in transporting people and goods here as is the case in the classics is quite clear. We equally see horses playing this role when Farfrae is passing with his luggage beside Lucetta's house. The narrator says "A yellow flood of reflected sunlight filled the room for a few instants. It was produced by the passing of a load of newly trussed hay from the country, in a waggon marked with Farfrae's name. Beside it rode Farfrae himself on horseback" (Hardy *Jude* 173).

Furthermore, the man-nature view in Hardy that seems to have been informed by classical authors and texts is the link between man as a shepherd and sheep. In *Oedipus the King*, in a bid to solve the mystery over his identity and the murder of his father, Oedipus says "I am waiting for the shepherd. He is crucial" (Maynar Mact *et al* 613) and when the shepherd arrives, Oedipus asks him if he is a shepherd and his answer is "Herding the flocks, the better part of my life" (Maynar Mact *et al* 620). This is just one instance out of many in classical texts wherein the shepherd, a human whose job is to take care of sheep, is given this much centrality and importance as he alone can unravel the mystery of Oedipus's identity and consequently his father's death. Hardy equally accords this magnitude of attention and focus on a shepherd during the Casterbridge Fair when the narrator says "Among the rest, at the corner of the pavement, stood an old shepherd, who attracted the eyes of Lucetta and Farfrae by his stillness"(Hardy *Jude* 157). These shepherds ply their trade in pastoral areas and Hardy makes reference to one of those with specific reference to ancient Greece which is the origin of some of the classical works. Clare observes Tess's dejection one day when he passively talks to her about pastoral life in ancient Greece. The narrator adds that Tess is working on natural items when she is told that as "She was gathering the buds called "lords and ladies" from the bank while he spoke" (Hardy *Tess* 161). The reference to shepherds and ancient Greece amidst these ecological lines can attest to the fact that the ecological views of Hardy in this dimension are informed by Greek classical works. This, not only in the context of Hardy himself widely reading classical works as seen above but also in the fact that Jude who is a mason and admirer of the classics like Hardy himself attests to having read them a great deal. Jude says "I have read two books of the Iliad, [...] I have also done some Hesiod, a little scrap of Thucydides, and a lot of the Greek Testament" (Hardy *The Mayor* 26). He adds that as soon as he is settled he will read even more as he declares "Meanwhile I will read, as soon as I am settled in Christminster, the books I have not been able to get hold of here: Livy, Tacitus, Herodotus, Æschylus, Sophocles, Aristophanes--[...]-Euripides, Plato, Aristotle, Lucretius, Epictetus, Seneca, Antoninus" (Hardy *The Mayor* 27).

She (Elizabeth Jane) began the study of Latin, incited by the Roman characteristics of the town she lived in. "If I am not well-informed it shall be by no fault of my own," (Hardy *Jude* 129) she would say to herself through the tears that would occasionally glide down her peachy cheeks when she was fairly baffled by the portentous obscurity of many of these educational works.

Another aspect in which the classics seem to have influenced Hardy man-nature views is in terms of the respect of the order dictated by the classic idea of the chain of being. As Pritchard states:

“[...] the Great Chain of Being was believed to take the form of a succession descending from God, through angels, humanity and animals. To emphasise the separation of the animal world from the supernal, in the Middle Ages the Christian symbol of the antichrist was the beast, the devil was regularly portrayed as a hybrid of man and animal, and evil spirits and demons were depicted as taking animal form.” (166)

This order is presented in Hardy's texts with anyone trying to value animals as they do humans is considered to be in disharmony with the order of things. But this is a rule, Tess, in her endeavour to care for plants and animal, chooses to ignore. The narrator says:

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. (Hardy *Tess* 108)

Her thoughts about man and nature on the background on the chain of being go in line with those of Ayinuola who says: “The widespread assumptions and beliefs that the human species has a right to use, and even exploit nature because of its place in either a divinely sanctioned or ‘natural’ hierarchy is damaging the natural environment” (39). This goes against the views of Ovid in *Metamorphoses* who thinks that there was no sun, moon and stable seas and “Although the elements of land and air and sea were there, the earth had no firmness, the water no fluidity, there was no brightness in the sky. Nothing had any lasting shape, but everything got in the way of everything else; for, within that one body, cold warred with hot, moist with dry, soft with hard and light with heavy” (29). This state of disorder, according to Ovid, was stabilized only by god who is in the upmost rung of the chain of being as he says: “The strife was finally resolved by a god, a natural force of a higher kind, who separated the earth from heaven, and the waters from the earth, and set the clear air from the cloudy atmosphere. When he had freed these elements, sorting them out from the heap where they had lain, indistinguishable from one another, he bound them fast, each in its separate place, forming a harmonious union”(29).

As seen above, therefore, the great connection between Hardy and the classics both in his life and texts, and the ecological dimensions most of the classics take, can lead one to understand that the similitudes Hardy's ecological views have with those outlined in some of the classics indicate that such classics had bearings in his visions of man and nature.

Romantic Affinities

Here, the impact of Romanticism on the ecological ideas of Thomas Hardy will be examined. Hardy's Romantic perceptions are not like those of William Wordsworth who out rightly praises nature totally and at times presents nature as god. Hardy paints a

picture of nature at his time revealing not just the positive parts of nature but by hinting to the potential dangers nature faces as a result of man's activities. In line with this, Ibrahim states that “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 [...]” (114). 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. On his part, Fleming posits that “[...] Hardy's view was neither Wordsworthian nor pastoral, but rather a grim recognition that brutal realities were omnipresent, replacing former idyllic pictures of nature” (256-257). While sharing Fleming's opinion that Hardy's Romantic visions are different from Wordsworth's and that Hardy affirms that disastrous realities of man's impacts on nature were on the rise, I disagree with him on the issue that Hardy was neither pastoral nor idyllic. Though not as exclusively as Wordsworth, Hardy does present the idyllic and pastoral faces of nature in his works. When Michael Henchard, Susan and Elizabeth Jane are walking towards Casterbridge, the narrator paints an idyllic image of the surrounding and referring to noise or sound he says:

For a long time, there was none, beyond the voice of a weak bird singing a trite old evening song that might doubtless have been heard on the hill at the same hour, and with the self-same trills, quavers, and breves, at any sunset of that season for centuries untold. But as they approached the village sundry distant shouts and rattles reached their ears from some elevated spot in that direction, as yet screened from view by foliage. (Hardy *Jude* 3)

The tranquility and untroubled nature of this rural landscape gives it an obvious idyllic dimension. The pastoral underpinning of Hardy's novels is brought out when the Henchard family are all in Casterbridge. There, Elizabeth-Jane opens the hinged casement one morning and the moist air brings in the feel of imminent autumn almost as clearly as if is in the remotest hamlet. The narrator says “Casterbridge was the complement of the rural life around, not its urban opposite. Bees and butterflies in the cornfields [...] flew straight down High Street without any apparent consciousness that they were traversing strange latitudes. And in autumn airy spheres of thistledown floated into the same street, lodged upon the shop fronts, blew into drains, and innumerable tawny and yellow leaves skimmed along the pavement [...]” (Hardy *Jude* 54).

These instances indicate that though to a limited degree as compared to other Romantic writers like Wordsworth, Hardy did paint an idyllic and pastoral image of his natural environment. However, it is in Hardy's presentation of the ills on nature of man's switch from manual labour to machines that Hardy differs with Wordsworth. Hardy's Romantic vision of nature which is not totally idyllic but presents the ill effects of industrialization thereby differing from Wordsworth is probably because, as Fleming says: “It was in the years between Wordsworth and Hardy that farm mechanisation and agricultural expansionism increased greatly, threatening old traditional ways and values, bringing about huge changes in both humanity and nature” (245). It could be argued that the Romantic writers who came during or after the industrialization, Hardy inclusive, had a slightly different view of Romantic environments since they talked about the ills of industrialization; unlike those who wrote before it. Ayinuola shares this view as he says: “The natural environment has progressively been endangered by the activities of man over the past decades.

Attention was first drawn to this by the romantic poets who were alarmed by the obvious danger posed to nature by the dynamics of the Industrial Revolution” (10). Hutchings adds that: “But it was during the Romantic era, which witnessed a sharp rise in urban populations and an increasingly industrialized economy, that environmental problems became much more severe and noticeable, taking on a new sense of urgency” (175). These ecological concerns that need to be handled urgently are seen in *Tess* where a reaping machine is introduced. This machine that has two huge arms of painted wood that rise from the margin of yellow cornfield hard by Marlott. They formed part of the revolving Maltese cross of the reaping-machine which has been brought to the field on the previous evening to be ready for harvesting this day. The dangers of such machines to nature are painted in the fire image that make up their colour; knowing the effect of fire on natural elements. As the machine starts harvesting, the narrator says: “Presently there arose from within a ticking like the love-making of the grasshopper. The machine had begun, and a moving concatenation of three horses and the aforesaid long rickety machine was visible over the gate, a driver sitting upon one of the hauling horses, and an attendant on the seat of the implement” (Hardy *Tess* 110). The ill effects of such machines on nature are not just limited to the pulling horses as they are made to suffer even more but the picture is bigger as Hessayou says the following in relation to the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution:

Seventeenth-century intramural parishes tended to be dirty, smelly, and noisy, those in the less fashionable east end of the metropolis subject to the polluting stench carried across the City by the prevailing westerly wind. Smoke from burned sea coal (a very soft, sulphurous, low-grade coal) had been an intermittent health hazard since the late thirteenth century. A cheaper urban alternative to firewood and charcoal, near universal domestic and industrial use of sea coal was identified by the statistician John Graunt (1620–74) as contributing to London’s high mortality rate. (11-12)

In addition, although Hardy in his Romantic leanings does not see nature as god as explained above, he nonetheless presents instances where natural elements have divine power Pritchard says: “The Romantics explored the dynamic between humanity and nature, trying to discern God in nature, or nature “as the fingerprint of God’s creation” (157). An instance where Hardy sees natural elements as having divine powers so that man can even swear by them is seen when Henchard consults the weather forecaster ahead of the exhibitions he and his bitter rival, Farfrae, are to hold publicly in order to maximize his chances of triumphing. After telling Henchard that five farmers have already consulted him about the same issue from different corners of England, the weather forecaster says “By the sun, moon, and stars, by the clouds, the winds, the trees, and grass, the candle-flame and swallows, the smell of the herbs; likewise by the cats’ eyes, the ravens, the leeches, the spiders, and the dungmixin, the last fortnight in August will be--rain and tempest” (Hardy *Jude* 182). Here, it is very obvious that natural elements are given godly qualities and are being sworn to. In the same light, on the morning Tess has to travel to the d’Ubervilles, she gets up before dawn when the dark grove is still very quiet except “[...] for one prophetic bird” (Hardy *Tess* 56) that sings alone as if it is the only one that knows the time while the rest of the birds and other creatures are very silent. In this case, the lone singing bird is given the close-to-divine supernatural powers of prophecy. Such

supernatural powers, this time of spiritual dimension, are equally given the stars as Tess tells Clare that in order to make his soul go outside of his body when he is alive, what to do “[...] is to lie on the grass at night and look straight up at some big bright star; and, by fixing your mind upon it, you will soon find that you are hundreds and hundreds o’ miles away from your body, which you don’t seem to want at all” (Hardy *Tess* 154-155).

It can therefore be seen that Hardy was influenced in his views of nature by Romantic leanings. Though he is not an all-out exclusive worshipper of nature as his idyllic and pastoral insinuations are far lesser than those of other Romantic writers like Wordsworth, Hardy presents degrees to which natural elements are given godly qualities and also dwells on the impacts of industrialization on the natural environment.

Victorian Leanings

In this section, the impact of the Victorian era elements on the environmental views of Thomas Hardy will be investigated. It was during the Victorian period that the Industrial Revolution took place in England as says Alexander: “Under Victoria, a Britain transformed by the Industrial Revolution became the world’s leading imperial power and its most interesting country” (248). This replacement of manual work with machines had a huge impact on the environment. These shifting dynamics of the man-nature connection was reflected in the literary works of many writers who lived within the Victorian era including Thomas Hardy. The introduction of machines is seen in several instances in Hardy’s texts and reflects the cultural reality of England during Hardy’s days that was based on the exploitation of nature for human benefits. In his lifetime, Hardy witnessed the transformation of the agricultural landscape through the Industrial Revolution that “[...] took place from 1760 to some time between 1820 and 1840” (Tripathi 75). He specifies that “During this period, western societies underwent great changes as new forms of manufacturing began to take over traditional economic activities. This shifted economic production from homes and small shops to the creation of many large factories. This transition included the adoption of machines, new chemical manufacturing and iron production processes.” (75). It is worth noting that Hardy was born and lived around this period (1840 to 1928) according to Stringer (281)) and his life between the rural areas of Dorset and Dorchester and the urbanized London permitted him to observe the transformation of the English agricultural landscape through Industrial Revolution. There was, for example, the invention of the new-fashioned agricultural implement referred to as the horse-drill and was till now unknown in the rural parts of the country where the venerable seed-lip is still used for sowing as in the old days of the Heptarchy. The sensation its appearance creates is likened to that of a flying machine at Charing Cross. The curiosity is high as “The farmers crowded round it, women drew near it, children crept under and into it. The machine was painted in bright hues of green, yellow, and red, and it resembled as a whole a compound of hornet, grasshopper, and shrimp, magnified enormously. Or it might have been likened to an upright musical instrument with the front gone. That was how it struck Lucetta. “Why, it is a sort of agricultural piano,” she said” (Hardy *Jude* 162).

Some of those trying to get a glimpse of the new machine are Elizabeth Jane and Lucetta who examine it curiously; painstakingly observing the many rows of trumpet-shaped tubes one within the other, the little scoops which “[...] tossed the seed into the upper ends of the tubes that conducted it to the ground [...]” (Hardy *Jude*

164) till Donald Farfrae comes forth and explains to them that "It will revolutionize sowing heereabout! No more sowers flinging their seed about broadcast, so that some falls by the wayside and some among thorns, and all that. Each grain will go straight to its intended place, and nowhere else whatever" (Hardy *Jude* 165)! The replacement of handwork with machines, though making work rapid and effective as Farfrae explains, leaves many nostalgic about their old methods of cultivation. This is reflected through Elizabeth Jane who exclaims "Then the romance of the sower is gone for good," (Hardy *Jude* 165) and even uses Biblical allusion to that point out the connection between man and nature in farming as she quotes the preacher who said "'He that observeth the wind shall not sow,' (Hardy *Jude* 165). The excitement over the advent of machines is so high that the King of England has to displace himself to inaugurate one of the machines as it is said that "A Royal Personage was about to pass through the borough on his course further west, to inaugurate an immense engineering work out that way" (Hardy *Jude* 255). And the population of Casterbridge comes out to "[...] to express its sense of the great services he had rendered to agricultural science and economics, by his zealous promotion of designs for placing the art of farming on a more scientific footing" (Hardy *Jude* 255). When it is reminded that "Royalty had not been seen in Casterbridge since the days of the third King George [...]" (Hardy *Jude* 255), the worth the English people attach to those machines becomes more glaring. This presentation of the shifting agricultural dynamics from manual to machine production was surely influenced by Hardy himself witnessing the same transformation in his life. To indicate his skepticism over the advent of machines on nature, Hardy contrasts the urban industrialized areas to the rural areas that have not witnessed industrialization; praising the latter at the expense of the former from the ecological perspective. The narrator says: "Thus Casterbridge was in most respects but the pole, focus, or nerve-knot of the surrounding country life; differing from the many manufacturing towns which are as foreign bodies set down, like boulders on a plain, in a green world with which they have nothing in common. Casterbridge lived by agriculture at one remove further from the fountainhead than the adjoining villages--no more" (Hardy *Jude* 58).

By presenting the rural areas as environmentally friendly as symbolized by their "green" nature and the industrialized cities as their contrast, Hardy points to the adverse effects the advent of industries had on the environment which is in line with Roy's statement that "The factories seem ugly in the midst of the green nature. They belch out black smoke day and night that pollutes not only the air but also landscape of the entire area" (97). This also corroborates the fact that in Victorian England, the industrialized cities had several environmental problems and that was not the case with the rural unindustrialized areas. Hessayou says:

The major cause of concern was London. Seventeenth-century intramural parishes tended to be dirty, smelly, and noisy, those in the less fashionable east end of the metropolis subject to the polluting stench carried across the City by the prevailing westerly wind. Smoke from burned sea coal (a very soft, sulphurous, low-grade coal) had been an intermittent health hazard since the late thirteenth century. A cheaper urban alternative to firewood and charcoal, near universal domestic and industrial use of sea coal was identified by the statistician John Graunt (1620–74) as contributing to London's high mortality rate. (11-12)

He further indicates that water was another major sanitary problem as it "[...] was regularly dumped into the River Thames, and access to fresh water for drinking, cooking, washing, and industry was a sporadic source of tension"(12). From another angle, the fact that most of the machines mentioned by Hardy have to do with farming and the corn cultivation precisely adds more strength to the view that Hardy was influenced by occurrences he witnessed during the Victorian England in his ecological perspectives. In the Victorian era, corn was so vital that the state had to put in place the "Corn Law" to protect it and ensure its smooth production. In this connection, Adams says "Meanwhile, the so-called "Corn Laws," instituted following the Napoleonic Wars to protect agricultural interests, increased the pinch of hunger by subsidizing the price of grain at artificially high levels, thus creating a division of class interests that became a flash point of early Victorian politics" (3). In addition to the horse-drill mentioned above that prepares the ground for the planting of corn, there was the flour mill. Referring to Clare, the narrator says:

Next, he wished to see a little of the working of a flour-mill, having an idea that he might combine the use of one with corn-growing. The proprietor of a large old water-mill at Wellbridge--once the mill of an Abbey--had offered him the inspection of his time-honoured mode of procedure, and a hand in the operations for a few days, whenever he should choose to come. Clare paid a visit to the place, some few miles distant, one day at this time, to inquire particulars, and returned to Talbothays in the evening. (Hardy *Tess* 261)

The flour-mill still rotates around corn since it is supposed to transform corn from cereal to corn flour. When an emergency meeting is held in Casterbridge around mayor Henchard to discuss the factors that lead to the bad quality of bread, corn alongside wheat are at the centre. To the inquisitive Donald Farfrae, Buzzford says: "Oh, 'tis the corn-factor--he's the man that our millers and bakers all deal wi', and he has sold 'em growed wheat, which they didn't know was growed, so they SAY, till the dough ran all over the ovens like quicksilver; so that the loaves be as flat as toads, and like suet pudden inside" (Hardy *Jude* 49). All these machines have a direct impact on the conditions of the animals. This is because the machines that are to be moved around as they do their work are only moved by horses; thereby adding to their suffering. An example of the use of horses to put machines into effectiveness is seen where "Presently there arose from within a ticking like the love-making of the grasshopper. The machine had begun, and a moving concatenation of three horses and the aforesaid long rickety machine was visible over the gate, a driver sitting upon one of the hauling horses, and an attendant on the seat of the implement" (Hardy *Tess* 110).

The Victorian realities, therefore, had a great impact on Hardy's vision of the relationship between man and nature; the most influential item in this perspective being the Industrial Revolution. As Hardy lived during the Victorian era and witnessed the environmental changes that occurred in England as a result of machines working in the fields and performing other tasks that were initially performed by man manually, he presents this reality in his texts highlighting the ill effects of the Industrial Revolution on both plants, animals and the atmosphere in such a way that the bearings of the Victorian ideas in his visions can be easily deciphered.

Conclusion

The various literary trends that Thomas Hardy was exposed to during his lifetime and writing career have a bearing not just on his ecological vision but also on the manner in which he presents it. Thus, Classicism, Romanticism and Victorianism have all impacted Hardy's representation of the relationship between man and nature in his novels *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* as they inform the environmental issues he projects in these novels as well as the manner in which he does so. The author has therefore drawn inspiration from his literary background in order to paint an image of the man-nature relationship as one that needs to be ameliorated upon. From this perspective, knowledge of an author's background will be a great asset in investigating his or her ecological discourse.

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