

Treatment of nature in tess



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Nature figures prominently in Hardy's novel, "Tess of the D'urbervilles".

In so far as the philosophy of the literature Hardy is concerned the role of Nature in "Tess" contributes to a great extent. Nature is closely related also to the social and cosmic visions of Hardy. All the major characters of Hardy are off-spring of Nature. They are rather composed of the elements. All of them live in close of the elements. All of them live in close kinship with nature.

This kinship prepares for Hardy the conception of the organic community. An organic community is one which has close kinship with nature and whose members are mutually inter-dependend. This conception of the organic community, where the role of Nature is immense, is important and closely associated with the social perspective of Hardy. At least twice, in the course of this novel, we come across organic communities. For the first time in Tess's own village Marlott where the inhabitants are closely connected with Nature and they form an organic community.

For the next time, we trace such a community in Talbothays Dairy. Nature has blessed the Dairy with its components in abundance. The inhabitants are in close contact with Nature and they lead a prosperous life. tess and angel for the very first time, come close to each other in this Dairy. This impulses of Nature are corresponding also to the instincts of the human body and the human mind.

It is in Talbothays Dairy that Tess and Angel, in close contact with Nature, engage themselves in "Pagan" pleasures. But this organic community which is nurtured by Nature cannot exist forever, it is at stake. The invasion of

industrialization, chiefly in the figure of newly invented machinery, is posing serious threats to it. Flintcomb Ash, where we again come across Tess, is a place where this invention of industrialization has established itself on a story ground. There, unlike Talbothays, the machine is in the ascendant and all the workers—who are merely human beings—are serving just as servants to the machine. The interaction between human figures are of little importance.

Nature is associated with the conception of the evil. The weather in Talbothays was a nice one and there was a lot of happiness, but in Flintcomb Ash, where there is no pleasure, the weather is rather a cold and misty one. In some places of “Tess of the Durbervilles” Nature contributes to the understanding of Hardy’s cosmic vision. It is significant that by the time Hardy is writing “Tess” he has rejected Christianity. Nature has substituted the Christian god. Nature is viewed by him as an all pervading Authority.

Both good and evil are manifest in Nature. The mysteries of our bodily instincts are closely related to the mysteries of Nature. It is in the Oldest Wood that Tess is “seduced” by Alec. She is “seduced” not raped.

Her body has a language of its own and it has found its resonance in the body of Alec and this happens in the lap of Nature. At some places Nature is viewed by Hardy as such an Authority whose agents are controlling everything. Abraham, Tess’s younger brother has gone out in the night to search for their parents, and his going out in the night is described in such terms, “And the night swallowed him up.” Night here is an agent of Nature. Tess is viewed by the author as of Nature.

” What Angel thinks about her is also significant. Angel thinks about Tess, “ what a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is.” This reveals something of the physical instincts of Angel. He has spent a part of his life in the city and now a “ daughter of Nature” is attracting him. The attracting qualities are her “ fresh and virginal” ones. This phrase, “ fresh and virginal” implies the animal and vegetative, that is, sexual impulses of the body of Angel.

This is a very significant event in the understanding of Hardy’s philosophy. Hardy has rejected Christianity, which is always vigilant on bodily demands of human beings and it always preaches to hate and ultimately suppress body. But that this Christian doctrine is absurd is proved through Angel’s behaviour. This young man, from a rigid Christian background, indirectly although, submits to his bodily passions.

And a “ daughter of nature” is something that contributes to clarifying this. Hardy’s undertaking to defend Tess as a pure woman by emphasizing her kinship with Nature perpetually draws him towards the Romantic view of Nature as a reservoir of benevolent impulses, a view which one side of his mind rejected as falsely sentimental. Many Victorian writers, struggling to reconcile the view of Nature inherited from the Romantics with the discoveries of Darwinian biology, exhibit the same conflict, but it is particularly noticeable in Hardy. A passage in chapter- XIII which seems especially revealing in this is that which describes Tess’s gloomy nocturnal rambling in the weeks following her seduction, where she is explicitly shown entertaining the pathetic fallacy, and her mistake explicitly pointed out by the author: “ A wet day was the expression of irremediable grief at

her weakness. But , the novel goes on , this encompassment of her own characterization, based on shreds of convention, peopled by phantoms and voices antipathetic to her, was a “ mistaken creation of Tess’s fancy— a cloud of moral hobgoblins by which she was terrified without reason.” Here we are meant to feel that Tess’s “ guilt” is a fabrication of social convention, sometimes unknown to the natural order which Tess distorts by projecting her own feelings into it. That Nature should present its most somber aspect to Tess when she is most desolate is, in a way, evidence of how deeply she is “ in accord” with Nature. Elsewhere in the novel it is true that when Nature is not presented to Tess’s consciousness, it is neither innocent nor guilty, but neutral: neither sympathetic nor hostile, but indifferent.