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硕 士 学 位 论 文

Hardy's View on Nature:

An Ecocritical Reading of *Far from the Madding Crowd* and

The Return of the Native

哈代的自然观——《远离尘嚣》与《还乡》
的生态解读

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Synopsis

Thomas Hardy was a well-known writer in the Victorian period of England in the 19th century, and he was honored as the last greatest writer and poet of the Victorian period. Hardy was prolific and during the eighty-eight years of his life he published fourteen novels, four volumes of short stories, eight volumes of verse and an 'epic-drama', *The Dynasts*. The 14 "Wessex Novels", which he wrote between 1871 and 1895, represent Hardy's creative talents and artistic accomplishments and establish his unique position in Victorian fiction. Up till now, the writings of Hardy have already been interpreted from a wide variety of critical perspectives. Some researchers pay their attention to the thematic significance of Hardy's Wessex novels, some analyze the psychoanalytical treatment of the characters and indicate modernism of Hardy's works, and some examine feminism in his novels, while other critics have showed his ties to Darwinism. Yet this paper, in the exploration of Hardy's two Wessex novels--*Far from the Madding Crowd* and *The Return of the Native*, employs a new critical approach, eco-criticism, which is particularly appropriate to an examination of literature in the context of globally environmental predicament.

This thesis consists of five parts. The introduction comes first, which presents the critical situation of our earth and analyzes the cause and solution of ecological crisis with the aim to find out the ideological and cultural rootstock of ecological crisis. Only when people's environmental consciousness has been promoted can ecological crisis finally be solved. Chapter One introduces the appearance of ecological literature and ecological criticism by giving a survey of the new critical theory through its general definition, ideological origin, academic background, main tasks and its significance. Then this chapter focuses on the analysis of Hardy's literary creation and his ecological thoughts. Up till now many critics and scholars both at home and abroad have researched on his novels from different perspectives but very few have interpreted his novels from ecological perspective. In fact the Novels of "Character and

Environment” are endowed with deep ecological thought by Hardy. Then this chapter switches to Hardy’s life experiences, the origin of ecological thought and the influence of the Industrial Revolution on him, pointing out that Hardy is a writer with ecological consciousness. Chapter Two is devoted to an ecocritical interpretation of Hardy’s depiction of the natural environment in his two novels: *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *The Return of the Native*. The two works display Hardy’s deep-felt concern about the natural system. In *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Hardy offers the peaceful repose of an idyllic view of rustic England in poetic languages and excellent descriptive art. Here people live at a place called Weatherbury in Wessex area where people are embedded in the stable local ecosystem and depend on nature for harvest and happiness. In this novel, nature is always interwoven with people’s actions and the two form an organic whole. Only in the great nature can people enjoy peace and harmony. While Hardy offers realistic description of the pastoral setting in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, in *The Return of the Native*, his representation of the natural images--the heath, storm, all kinds of plants and animals, is tainted with symbolism. Hardy’s use of symbolism profoundly portrays the personalities and inner world of his characters, reflecting the author’s deep thinking of the relation between nature, life and society, namely, the natural world holds similarity to our human world and nature is a living existence of human equality. Chapter Three explores the relation between people and nature reflected in Hardy’s novels, which embodies Hardy’s notion of “nonanthropocentrism”. Nature is an organic part of the whole ecosystem in which man is not superior to nature but equal to it. Nature is not the slave to mankind, and mankind is not the center of the world. In the two novels, the fates of Hardy’s characters to a large extent are decided by their relation with nature--people who are alienated from nature receive punishment and those who are close to nature find their final happiness. In a word, people are closely related to nature and their life depend on nature, so human beings should respect nature and return to it. The conclusion comes last, which summarizes the ecological consciousness implied in Hardy’s works. Global ecological crisis is threatening us all the time, so it is greatly important for readers to

reanalyze Hardy's works through the perspective of ecocriticism in literary research and environmental protection. In the ecological civilization today, Hardy makes us believe that the existence of human beings and nature are interrelated and provides us with useful enlightenment on how to handle the relationship between human and nature. In this way, this paper attempts to use Hardy's works to arouse readers' ecological consciousness, which will contribute to the urgent environmental protection.

Key Words: Natural Ecological Crisis; Ecocriticism; Novels of "Characters and Environment"; Ecological Consciousness; Nonanthropocentrism

厦门大学博士论文摘要

摘 要

19世纪英国小说家托马斯·哈代是维多利亚时期一位著名的作家，曾被誉为这个时期最后一名最伟大的作家和诗人。哈代在其88年的生涯中，曾出版了14本小说，4本短篇小说集，8本散文集和“史诗”——《统治者三部曲》。哈代在1871年到1895年间创作的14部“威塞克斯小说”，代表了他的创作才能和艺术成就，并奠定了其在维多利亚小说史上的独特地位。时至今日，从多视角对其作品进行研究的思潮从未间断。有些研究者着重对其威塞克斯小说进行主题分析，有些着重探讨其小说的心理描写并指出哈代小说的现代主义倾向，而另外一些学者又从女性主义和达尔文主义等方面对其小说进行了研究。本篇论文则用新兴的生态文学批评理论对其两部代表作——《远离尘嚣》和《还乡》进行生态解读，揭示作品所蕴涵的生态意识，旨在全球生态环境日渐恶化的今天唤醒更多人的生态意识。

论文共分五部分。引言介绍了当前地球环境污染的严峻形势、原因及解决的途径，指出环境危机的思想文化根源。要解决环境危机，人们的生态意识非常重要。只有从思想文化的深层次解决生态问题，才可能从根本上消除生态危机。

第一章着重介绍生态文学批评理论和哈代的生态思想。本章首先从生态文学批评的定义、思想渊源、学术背景、主要任务和文学意义五个方面先是介绍了生态文学批评的内涵和外延，接着介绍了哈代的创作生涯，探讨了哈代的生态思想。迄今为止，不同的评论家对哈代小说进行了多角度的研究，但从生态批评角度的研究并不多。本章从哈代的生活经历入手，分析了工业革命对他的影响，指出他的“性格与环境”系列小说其实蕴涵着深刻的生态思想。

第二章运用生态批评理论分析哈代在其代表作品《远离尘嚣》和《还乡》中是如何表述自然的。本章剖析了哈代对自然生态系统的深切关注。在《远离尘嚣》中，哈代以诗意的语言和高超的写景艺术描述了当时英格兰农村的田园美景。在威塞克斯地区的威瑟伯里，大自然是乡民们物质和精神生活的源泉。人们离不开大自然这个稳定的生态系统。自然和人物的活动交织在一起，从而形成一个有机

的整体。只有在大自然的怀抱中，人们才能享受到平静和和谐。在《还乡》中，哈代运用象征主义手法对自然意像荒原、暴风雨、各种动植物等进行了描写。通过象征手法，人物的个性和内心世界得到了深刻的刻画，由此反映出作者对自然、人生和社会三者关系的深沉思考。换言之，作者意识到自然界和我们人类世界具有相似性，因而自然和人类是平等存在的。

第三章分析了哈代在《远离尘嚣》和《还乡》中探讨的人与自然的关系。人与自然的关系体现了“非人类中心说”。自然界是生态系统不可或缺的有机组成部分，它和人类的关系是平等的，没有优劣之分。自然并非人类的奴仆，而人类也非万物的中心。在《还乡》和《远离尘嚣》中，人物的命运很大程度上取决于和自然的亲疏关系，亲之者顺，疏之者亡。总之，人和自然的关系是紧密相连、不可分割的。人的生活离不开自然，人是自然这个大生态系统的一个部分。所以，人类必须崇尚自然，回归自然。

结论部分对哈代两部小说中所蕴含的生态意识做了总结。当今社会，人类时刻受到生态危机的威胁，因此，从生态角度分析哈代作品便显得更有意义。哈代作品中的生态意识对如何正确处理人和自然的关系提供了有益的启示。本篇论文旨在通过分析哈代作品中的生态思想唤起更多人的生态意识，从而对生态文学批评稍尽绵薄之力。

关键词：自然生态危机；生态批评；性格与环境小说；生态意识；非人类中心

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Introduction

Ours is a period when industries are advancing at the full speed all around the world. People's living standard has been improved dramatically, while the natural world is affected by developments such as ozone depletion, deforestations, species extinction and the greenhouse effect. Jonathan Bate, a well-known British ecocritic notes in his famous ecological works--*The Song of the Earth* that “from the late eighteenth century onwards, there was an increasing awareness of industry’s tendency to alter the quality of our surroundings, even to affect the air we breathe” (14). Then he gives us a detailed description of all kinds of natural crises:

Carbon dioxide produced by the burning of fossil fuels is trapping the heat of the sun, causing the planet to become warmer. Glaciers and permafrost are melting, sea levels rising, rainfall patterns changing, winds growing stronger. Meanwhile, the oceans are over fished, deserts are spreading, forest shrinking, fresh water becoming scarcer. The diversity of species upon the planet is diminishing. We live in a world of toxic waste, acid rain and endocrine disrupters--chemicals which interfere with the functioning of sex hormones, causing male fish and birds to change sex. The urban air carries a cocktail of pollutants: nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, benzene, carbon monoxide and more. In intensively farmed economics, the topsoil is so eroded that the growth of cereal crops is entirely dependent on artificial fertilizers. The feeding of dead poultry to living cattle has bequeathed us bovine spongiform encephalopathy (‘mad cow disease’), which causes the collapse of the central nervous system and is transmissible to humans.

(24)

It is no denying that “we live in a world of toxic waste, acid rain and endocrine disrupters” (24). Our earth’s supporting system is becoming more and more vulnerable; our planet is struggling against unprecedented assaults--from global warming, resource depletion and species extinction to pollution overload and toxic surplus which is

aggravated by population explosion, industrial growth, technological manipulation, and military proliferation heretofore unknown by the human community. Till now, industrial pollution on the world scale is still increasing which negatively affects our health. Facing the above serious environmental problems, Bate gives us a warning that “the state of nature is parlous” (24). Environmental crises are threatening human society, which has brought about human's concern about nature. Like Bate, We are bound to ask: “where did we begin to go wrong” (24)?

Yes, we must initiate a radical rethinking of the myth of progress and of humanity's role in the evolutionary process. Since most of these natural crises are side-effects of economic growth, it cannot be denied that material progress necessarily goes together with ecological deterioration. Our human community has to search for new and sustaining relationships to the earth amidst an environmental crisis when we develop our economy. However, an environmental crisis is not only the result of certain economic, political, and social factors but also a moral and spiritual crisis which will require broader philosophical and ethic understandings of ourselves as creatures of nature, embedded in life cycles and dependent on ecosystems. Ethics, thus, need to be reexamined in light of the current environmental crisis. This is because ethics help to shape our attitudes toward nature in both conscious and unconscious ways. As the historian Lynn White observed, “What people do about their ecology depends on what they think about themselves in relation to things around them. Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny” (qtd. in Mary and Grim). For White and many others an important component of the current environmental crisis is spiritual and ethical. This contains the thinking of mankind's self examination of the anthropocentric theory which is the cultural root of ecological crisis. However, the value of anthropocentrism has been formed step by step in the development of human history.

“According to existing western theoretical studies, the notion of nature was once driven out of both human minds and literary criticism” (Jing 8). As Christopher Manes concludes: “For half a millennium, ‘man’ has been the center of conversation in the

West, and this ‘fictional character’ has occluded the natural world, leaving it voiceless and subjectless” (qtd. in Glotfelty and Fromm 26). Before Renaissance, the Christian religion was the dominating ideology in Medieval Europe. During the Renaissance period, in fighting against medieval asceticism, humanism was upheld by writers, artists and philosophers represented by Shakespeare who greatly affirmed the value of man in their writings. “In them, reason and science are put into a very high place” (Hu Zongfeng 11). It “states that man is godly, that man is able to find truth, goodness and beauty, and that man is capable of controlling the present life. Briefly humanism puts man at the center of their beliefs and takes man to be the measure of every thing” (10). On one hand, humanism holds significance in fighting against the absolute control of man by God; on the other hand, the extreme advocating of humanism leads to anthropocentrism which regards human beings as the center of the world and superior to all other creatures and plants. Man can plunder and enslave nature in his own way as he pleases. For example, Francis Bacon proposed man should command nature; Rene Descartes suggested man should be the master and oppressor of nature, and Kant held the idea that man was the law maker of nature etc. Then it came to 1760s, along with the operating of the first spinning machine and steam engine in the world, mankind entered into the era of industrial civilization. In this era, the notion of anthropocentrism had been further developed in man’s mind. Nature had been explored, exploited and destroyed with unprecedented scale and speed just to satisfy mankind’s unlimited material desire. Afterwards, through two hundred years’ of struggling against heaven and earth, when mankind was immersed in his great achievements in conquering nature mercilessly and felt complacent, he also had to face the serious ecological crisis. Now all kinds of environmental problems like water pollution, deforestation, species distinction, global warming, floods, hurricanes, etc. mentioned above are presenting enormous threats to our earth’s life-support systems.

In short, anthropocentrism-tainted modernization provides us with happiness as well as disasters caused by environmental destruction. The Environmental deterioration is so great that we have to take positive measures. So how can we relieve

such problems as food shortages, deforestation, air pollution, and land degradation, and provide clean water, adequate energy supplies, and improve public health? In today's ecological civilization era, the solution to the problem of ecological crisis lies in implementing the strategy of sustainable development and keeping ecological balance. Now it's time for us to identify that current environment problems are largely of "our own making" or "a by-product of culture" (Glotfelty). To maintain ecological balance, it is urgent for modern man to reexamine where our cultural system goes stray concerning mankind's relationship with nature and further raise our ecological consciousness to which literature, as a kind of cultural media, can't shirk such responsibility. As it is known to all, literature is the reflection of people's daily lives. It is the product of our deep contemplation and understanding of our own existence. In other words, literature is a spiritual weapon that has the function of exerting great influence on man's ideology, affection and behavior. So, literary works should not stand isolated from the natural world, but should maintain a relationship with nature, and help people to understand and protect it. So, for mankind's future fate, literary scholars should try their best to promote people's consciousness of understanding the environmental crisis. As historian Donald Worster argues:

We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of 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. (27)

Donald Worster holds such a belief: Nowadays humankind has been severely punished owing to global crisis caused by ecological imbalance.

In regard to ecological system itself, ecological problems result from human's

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