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The Ecological Thought of Thomas Hardy:

A Comparative Study of his Selected Novels and their Movie Adaptations

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ABSTRACT

'The Ecological Thought of Thomas Hardy: A Comparative Study of his Selected Novels and their Movie Adaptations' is an inter-textual analysis of Hardy's novels and their movie adaptations from an ecocritical perspective. My study explores the ways in which verbal and audio-visual narratives engage with human and non-human relationships, and thus offer alternative perceptions of nature in a historical era marked by an escalating ecological crisis and environmental anxiety. I examine the possibility of human and non-human co-existence as well as various modes of human and non-human entanglement and connection: labour-related, material, acoustic, semiotic, corporeal, as well as emotive.

This study is interdisciplinary in nature, drawing on an eclectic mix of theories, mainly ecocriticism, eco-cinema and adaptation studies. The conceptual framework developed here identifies convergent and divergent ecocritical strands of thought between the novels and their movie adaptations. My project recognizes the complexity of both the verbal and the audio-visual narratives, illuminating complex eco-centric and occasionally anthropocentric visions across the fiction as well as the movies. While highlighting similarities and dissimilarities between novels and their movie adaptations, my project recognizes the originality and autonomy of movie adaptations as well as the artistic creativity of their respective directors.

Hence, my research contributes and expands ecocritical studies of Hardy's narrative prose fiction as well as the existing scholarship on adaptations of his works. By analyzing adaptations in ecocritical terms, my project extends debates about eco-cinema, seeking the possibility to push beyond a study of environmental documentaries and wildlife films. With this aim in my mind, I hope to encourage a better, more nuanced engagement with the natural and the non-human in the related field of the film industry, especially representations of the natural world in adaptations.

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that this project is the fruit of my own investigation and references as well as acknowledgements are made wherever necessary.

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Introduction

The Anthropocene has recently emerged as a central concept in the field of environmental humanities. It refers to the geological epoch in which humanity's involvement with nature is marked by unprecedented forms of mastery and exploitation, the causal factors of the environmental dilemma. The concept also documents a notable tendency within critical scholarship to reappraise and reconfigure literary representations of nature (Solnick 2017: 20). This critical turn came first to be known as ecocriticism, William Rueckert's coinage in 'Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecology' (1979), where he pointed out his initiative to 'develop an ecological poetics by applying ecological concepts to the reading, teaching, and writing about literature' (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: 107). Ecocriticism, as Glotfelty expounds, 'takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature' (1996: xix). Responding to the alarming scales of the anthropogenic environmental crisis, especially during the post-Cold War era when existential threats came to the forefront, ecocritical thought bifurcated around the 1960s and crystallized around the 1990s with an objective to debate the possible ways in which literature might contribute to a wider understanding of the ecosphere and call attention to the escalating rupture between culture and nature. While it was initially confined to the analysis of textual narratives, nowadays the field is expanding its reach to the domain of visual media, with critics' efforts having heralded the nascent branch of eco-cinema. A notion first coined by F. Scott MacDonald, eco-cinema is 'the project of 'provid[ing] new kinds of film experience that demonstrate an alternative to conventional media-spectatorship and help to nurture a more environmentally progressive mindset' (Rust, Monani and Cubitt 2013: 20). The core of eco-cinema is to advance the diverse socio-political voices aspiring to rekindle human-nature connectedness; utilize audio-visual narratives as a means to provoke reflections on human and non-human relationships, and thus stimulate environmentally mindful behaviour.

Ecocritical examination of human and non-human representation in audio-visual and textual narratives is the central concern of this project. At the core of my thesis is a comparative study of Thomas Hardy's selected novels and their movie

adaptations, with an aim to explore convergent and divergent conceptions of human and non-human interconnectivity. The objective here is to provide a deeper ecocritical engagement with Hardy through an intertextual analysis of his novels and adaptations. This methodology helps to illuminate more profound ecocritical readings of Hardy's prose fiction and contribute insights into the writer's existing ecocritical scholarship. Furthermore, the study foregrounds a novel approach to adaptations on Hardy's work, discussing their ecocritical potential. My central claim here is that while Hardy's texts are recognized as proto-environmental, so this also shapes the way in which adaptations of his novels engage with the human and the non-human encounter.

My study places prominence on Hardy's 'Novels of Character and the Environment' which, as the configuration indicates, epitomizes Hardy's multifaceted engagement with the natural world, and his rigorous attention to diverse natural forms like plants, animals, matter, but also landscape and different notions of place, biosphere and the environment. The multifarious focus of these novels, while bringing breadth and depth to my analysis, also serves the objectives of my study which aims at a fresh, radical and inclusive ecocritical assessment of Hardy's writing. Amongst others, I focus on *The Woodlanders* (1887), *UGT* (1872), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), *FFMC* (1874) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). While many of these novels have been adapted to cinema / TV on multiple occasions, I prefer to limit myself to six adaptations in order to lend depth to my analysis while equally affording extensive coverage of directors' specific choices of cinematographic styles as well as thematic concerns. This is essential because my study investigates the ways in which audio-visual, verbal and textual narrative techniques inform readers' and viewers' understanding of the environment. Hence, I consider Phil Agland's *The Woodlanders* (1997), Nicholas Laughland's *UGT* (2005), Roman Polanski's and Ian Sharp's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1979/1998), Christopher Renton's *FFMC* (1996) and Michael Winterbottom's *Jude* (1996). These specific adaptations, introduced between the 1980s and 2000, in a time where 'cinematic Hardy' came to prominence, serve my objectives as they are broadly faithful to the historical period in which the novels are set, which increases the intertextual dialogue between the texts.

My research examines both cinematic as well as television adaptations. This might seem problematic, and even controversial, especially when we consider the existing differentiations between the two styles of production. Indeed, there is a

tendency in the British context to sideline films produced for television, considering them technically inferior to cinema. As Hannah Andrews explains in the context of British cinema:

> The relationship between film and television seems to be part of the intellectual unconscious of much recent writing on British cinema. For example, Justine Ashby and Andrew Higson's introduction to their edited collection *British Cinema Past and Present* contains no reference to television's involvement in the British film industry at all, despite citing several films with which television institutions were involved. Similarly, in the three editions of *The British Cinema Book* there is no single article dedicated to the relationship, even in the section titled 'contemporary British cinema'. Studies of British cinema appear not to want to talk much about television (2014: 8).

The differentiation between film and TV, as Philip Hodgetts suggests, is based on the quality of camera moves: while films are distinguished by 'elaborate,' 'motion,' and 'dynamic' camera moves, TV is characterized by 'static camera setups' (2014: para 4). Hodgetts explains that this difference in quality is related to the factor of time as well as money: film directors tend to invest much time in writing the scripts, having more shoot days, and further editing the work, and this is usually costly (2014: para. 4). Another difference between TV and film has to do with medium specificity: while films use a widescreen ratio, television films that are produced before the 2000s are commonly shot with a 4:3 screen ratio, which are usually have a degree of video flatness (Simons 2016 : 42).

My research considers TV and film adaptations as equal productions. The arguments which support my position are many-fold. Basically, static camera moves and widescreen ratio, though relatively important to reinforce certain thematic trajectories, hardly collide with the aims of my research. The rational for this is that ecocritical standpoints can be expressed in myriad ways: through the use of soundtrack, the use of close-ups, the particular duration of shots, and, more importantly, through the positioning of characters and landscape either on the forefront/ background position, or/ and in the center/ margin of the cinematic stage and the camera's frame. Furthermore, I posit that these minor medium specificities do not diminish the eco-cinematic value of the productions under study, especially when the content shows clear attention to human-non-human interaction. Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the distinction between cinema and TV is becoming untenable

especially in a digitally developed world where tele-visual productions can be easily edited through the use of NLE (Hodgetts 2014: para.3). In addition, with the production of high-definition cameras, the distinction between cinematic and television films is gradually fading, especially as film makers tend to 'render their productions with the similar visual quality as cinematic films' (Simons 2016: 42). As Andrews explains '[i]t is undeniable that the relationship between film and television in Britain has developed into a powerful symbiosis over the past three decades' (2014: 181). As far as Hardy's adaptations are concerned, the film productions are broadcasted on TV as well as online resources and are even available in the form of DVD, becoming accessible to a large audience worldwide.

There seems to be a set of constraints to read the selected adaptations through the lens of eco-cinema. But I am confident that my study paves the way for a reconsideration of the ecological potential of fictional audio-visual narratives. One might consider these adaptations as part of British heritage cinema and thus serve a purely commercial purpose, aiming at audience appeal and monetary gain.[1] By contrast, I argue that the label British heritage cinema is hardly an impediment here, for this particular genre actually promotes landscape as a key ingredient of the British identity, which makes these adaptations eminently suitable for an ecocritical analysis. As Andrew Higson underscores, 'the luxurious country-house settings,' and 'the picturesque rolling green landscapes of southern England […] are among the more frequently noted attractions' of British heritage cinema (2003: 1). In addition, the directors, with the exception of Phil Agland, are renowned for feature films rather than natural documentaries, and thus have never been acclaimed for environmental activism. Here I argue that my study refutes the intentional approach and, instead, engages with the actual artifacts by assessing their content as well as their stylistic features. This, however, might invite another question not less thought-provoking than the first. Audio-visual narratives, especially the fictional, given temporal constraints, are believed to prioritize plot dynamics and the dramatic action over the setting, which

[1]Andrew Higson suggests that 'the heritage film label is […] a critical invention of recent years, emerging in a particular cultural context to serve a specific purpose' (2003: 11). The word 'heritage' can refer to the historical films which portray 'actual figures from history, in their historical context' (ibid: 12). It might also stand for films 'that present fictional characters in historical settings;' these are also widely known with the notion of costume drama (ibid).

makes them 'more anthropocentric' in comparison to novels.[2] I insist that this statement is hyperbolic, especially if we look at the way in which the works under study integrate nature into the fabric of the narrative, relying heavily on zooming strategies, long takes and wide angles of the natural scenery, time-lapse and soundtrack, all of which have recently been recognized as the defining features of eco-cinematic works. Arguably, a prime reason why landscape has a prominent presence in these adaptations is that, given Hardy's pro-cinematic and visual style – which I will discuss extensively across my analysis [3] – descriptive passages of landscape can be easily rendered to a visual medium while relying on long takes as a cinematic equivalent, and also 'appropriating' similar painterly and cinematic techniques.[4] Hence, if nature has a vital and pervasive presence in the novels, so it is in the movies. Additionally, if the novels pertain to an ecological reading, this also translates to the movies.

However, it is important to stress that it is not my intention to magnify the pro-environmental potential of these adaptations and locate them on the same ground or category with wild life documentaries which focus exclusively on nature. By contrast, I am aware that the texts, while not straightforwardly environmental, deploy natural imagery in often complex ways which generate multifaceted readings. Hence, my analysis offers a nuanced argument, accounting for the artistic, symbolic functions as well as the ecological underpinnings of the movie's nature imagery. Here I advocate the ideas of Adrian Ivakhiv who discusses the semiotic and metaphoric dimensions of audio visual narratives as well as the 'open-endedness' of visual images: 'once an image or sound is there in the film, its range of potential meanings opens up to the

[2] This is especially the case of classical cinema whose 'golden rule' is: 'everything must be subordinated to the narrative. In principle, each element of the film ought to be integrated into the narrative process. This is true for setting (including exteriors) which situates the actions and events by the film' (Lefebvre 2006: 28).

[3] David Lodge considers Hardy as an outstanding 'cinematic novelist' (1974: 246). Similarly, Roger Webster believes that Hardy's fiction 'lends itself to or translates into a cinematic medium' (1993: 148).

[4] See David Lodge, 'Thomas Hardy and Cinematographic Form', in *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 7 (1974), pp. 246-54; Joan Grundy, *Hardy and the Sister Arts* (London: Macmillan, 1979); Terry Wright, *Thomas Hardy on Screen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 8-19; Roger Webster, 'From Painting to Cinema: Visual Elements in Hardy's Fiction', in *Thomas Hardy on Screen*, pp. 20-36.

interpretive inventiveness of its viewers' (2013: 201). Ivakhiv draws attention to the inestimable proliferation of significations arising from visual narratives. Likewise, my argument is that nature images, especially when allocated to a visual medium, are often suggestive and, thus insinuate multilayered meanings, and inspire a wide range of readings.

The selected adaptations, released in a time of intense socio-political anxiety because of degrading environmental conditions, could be argued to mirror the ecological and social concerns in Hardy's novels. A glance at the period's news headlines and a survey of the academic scholarship produced during this especially ecologically sensitive epoch reveals that the issues of pollution, resource depletion, natural catastrophes, extinction, biodiversity loss, erosion, radioactivity, pesticides, water acidity, and climate change have become a source of 'Solastalgia' all around the globe.[5] While these movies were not produced with an intention to champion the goals of environmental movements, their directors, as my chapters will illustrate shortly, actually respond to the cultural attitudinal changes of their respective societies, and thus their adaptations retain aspects specific to their context of creation. This is the case of *The Woodlanders*, for instance, where the director introduces a logging machine that was originally not mentioned in the novel. Similarly, the adaptations of *Tess* capitalize on the presence of the reaping machine and in framing the shots, the complex structure of the machine, its pollutant smoke and disturbing noise are explicitly foregrounded, inviting reflection on the contemporary growing issues of air and sonic pollution. Here I do not mean that Hardy excludes agricultural machinery from his fiction, but, as Gerd Bayer and John Parham have recently argued, unlike in the movies, the machine 'does not dominate any of the novel's scenes, but is instead found in the background' (qtd in Heinzl 2011: 104). What I am harkening at here is that these adaptations are indirectly shaped by the twenty-first century context of technological development and ecological predicament. Therefore, it could be argued that the directors', likewise the audience's, encounter with Hardy's landscapes, according to Rhian Williams, 'is coloured by our contemporary experience of them as threatened' (2011: 55).

[5] Solastalgia is a term coined by Glenn Albrecht to refer to a worldwide feeling of distress and anxiety caused by the escalating issue environmental degradation (2005: 41).

The movies' context of environmental urgency, although far more distressing than the novels', was part of nineteenth century social anxiety, especially with the epoch's emerging threats of industrialization, agricultural capitalism, mass clearances and enclosures. It is undeniably true that the Industrial Revolution introduced the necessities of a luxurious and exuberant life to the especially wealthy classes of the metropolitan cities. Paradoxically, however, it also disrupted the society's overall structure in both urban and rural areas and created a social disparity between the rich and the poor. In his novel, *The Woodlanders* (1887) for instance, Hardy chronicles the disintegration of the rural community and enacts a sneering critique against the injustices of the class system which entraps Giles Winterborne and Marty South and bring about their eventual demise. Further, Hardy's writing came at a specific age when technological progress started to pose real threats to the rural landscape and the rural economy of Wessex countries. This eventually came to exert tremendous impact on the writer's perception of the natural world and his delineation of human and non-human interaction more specifically. Simply put, in the long history of nineteenth century industrialization wrought the degradation of the natural world, an issue which continued to inform Hardy's literary practice. For instance, Hardy's *Tess* (1891) marks the incursion of the reaping machine into the agrarian landscape, which, although it facilitated agricultural work, produced a capitalist mode of labour which enslaved rural dwellers to long hours of arduous work, but also compromised the biodiversity of Wessex, threatening the existence of diverse species of fauna and flora (1978:137). As Jonathan Bate expounds, 'Hardy died in 1928 with a knowledge of the automobile, the airplane, the gramophone record, and the radio', (1999: 542) and I am inclined to add that he lived to witness the threshing machine proliferating into the region of Dorset and irrevocably altering its landscape. Thus, an admirer of nature, scenic beauty and a staunch advocator of rural stability, Hardy found in literature a cogent means to devise stories of rural deprivation, disintegration and loss of stability as well as peace, all of which was an inevitable outcome of nineteenth century social upheavals.[6]

Nineteenth century Britain was also characterized by unprecedented advancement in the manufacturing economy which produced a consumerist mindset towards nature. Hardy brings these capitalist tendencies to focus in *The Woodlanders*

[6] This can be clearly deduced from Hardy's novels which, according to Richard Kerridge, 'are appreciative' of two different modes of pleasure in the natural world: aesthetic contemplation and a dwelling approach' (2001: 134).

which, accentuating characters' complex relationship to the Hintock woodlands, captures the environmental havoc wrought in their farming activities. The trees in the novel are diseased, which can be attributed to the excessive barking work practiced by the natives. Indeed, scientific research has recently confirmed that barking can be detrimental to trees' health, for 'without bark the tree cannot transport sugar from its leaves to its roots. As the roots starve, they shut down their pumping mechanisms, and because water no longer flows through the trunk up to the crown, the whole tree dries out' (Wohlleben 2016: 18). Overloaded with symbolic underpinnings, the antagonistic relationship of John South to the elm tree proves that the natives' association with nature is not always friendly. Similarly, John Melbury's overtly utilitarian approach to the forest as well as the inhabitants' cruel hunting practices encapsulates a pessimistic viewpoint that, for Hardy, it is high time to reconsider our relation with the environment. Hence, through his narratives, Hardy documents the exploitative attitude inherent in nineteenth-century industrialization which, as John Parham claims and Hardy's narratives illustrate, produced 'a colonial attitude towards the environment: a ruthless exploitation of natural resources and the arbitrary transformation of the environment' (2002: 153).

1) A Green Perspective on Adaptations of Hardy's Novels

A central axis of Hardy's novels, especially the case of 'Novels of Characters and the Environment', is a profound interest in the natural, whether it is a setting, a landscape, a forest ecosystem or even animals and plants. Hardy's fascination with nature is often expressed in various ways, frequently identifying vivid descriptions of the geographical, topographical, and ecological features of Wessex, sometimes capturing moments of human and non-human interaction in a shared environment and, on many occasions, deploying natural imagery for multi-layered symbolic purposes.[7] The centrality of nature in Hardy's novels is acknowledged by many critics across generations. Amongst his contemporaries, Horace Moule praised *UGT* as having a

[7] It is worth mentioning here that 'Wessex' is the name of an Anglo Saxon kingdom, which Hardy uses to lightly fictionalise the specific geography of Dorset (Hardy [1895]1902 : 27).

'genuine air of the country breathing throughout it' (1987: 45). Similarly, when *Desperate Remedies* was first published was 'praised for its rural scenes' (Kerridge 2001: 127). Amongst Hardy's contemporary critics, H.C. Duffin believes that 'Hardy's nature pieces would fill up an entire gallery', and his 'nature descriptions are fresh and accurate […] based on first- hand observation of the facts and phenomena of nature' (2003: 159). Indeed, across his fictional writing, while commemorating stories of human individuals, Hardy also pulls nature from the margin of the narrative and often reveals how the physical world shapes characters' destinies. For this reason, Hardy's novels, as Ralph Pite proposes, 'join character and environment together, making the two appear equivalent to one another' (2002: 01).

Unsurprisingly, a survey of Hardy's critical scholarship demonstrates that his fiction is acclaimed for its carefully detailed depictions of nature. A long line of critics, dating back to the writer's time and persisting through the 1990s until the present day, have sought to understand Hardy's vision of nature in the light of conventional modes of representation like pastoral art, romanticism, naturalism, and regionalism.[8] Hardy's nuanced and complex use of nature imagery resulted in often irreconcilable and contentious views on what critical tenets his fiction best reflects. The inauguration of ecocriticism in the 1990s as a distinct critical field of enquiry shaped scholars' take on Hardy's fiction, and thus researchers began to examine the different ways in which it celebrates ecology. The first to read Hardy's fiction from an ecocritical perspective was Jonathan Bate. Situating the writer's project within what he termed a 'romantic ecology', Bate advances the view that Hardy's writing 'represents nostalgia for a simple, honest, rustic way of life among hedgerows, haystacks, and sturdy English oak trees' (1999: 542). Another pioneering essay on Hardy's ecological thought is Richard Kerridge's 'Ecological Hardy' (2001). Unlike Lawrence Buell who finds Hardy 'problematical as an eco-centric writer' (qtd in Kerridge 2001: 141), Kerridge believes that the writer is 'an obvious candidate for the ecocritical canon' (2001: 126). While Buell postulates that Hardy's fiction 'is about people in place, not about place itself' (qtd in Kerridge 2001: 141), Kerridge purports that 'the special value of Hardy to ecocritics is precisely in the way he does not separate place and person' (141). For Kerridge,

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[8] This array of critics includes, among many others, Joseph Warren Beach (1922), Michal Squire (1970), Stephen Regan (2009), Wentworth Knickerbocker (1928), Hazel Williams (1965), Michal Benazon (1975), Raymond Williams (1973), Ralph Pite (2002), and others.

> Hardy is concerned with the multiplicity of uses- material, cultural, and emotional- that human beings have for the natural environment. He writes of nature as seen, variously, by the agricultural labourer, urban visitor, Romantic poet, lover, naturalist, young countryside dweller longing for city glamour, ambitious entrepreneur, prosperous or struggling farmer, and many others (2001: 126).

According to Kerridge, in Hardy's fictional realm, wide-ranged relationships with nature produce diverse ways of engagement with the physical world: 'the unalienated lover of nature inhabits; the alienated lover of nature gazes' (2001:134). While the first category represents the natives; the second includes 'a Romantic, a tourist, a newcomer, and a reader' (2001:134).

An extensive analysis of Hardy's ecological thought has recently been undertaken by Susanne Heinzl and El-Tag El-Nour Abdel Mahmoud Ibrahim in their respective doctoral theses (2011/2016). Heinzl adopts an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Hardy's novels, relying mainly on deep and social ecology along with the sub-branches of urban ecology and ecofeminism. She extends Kerridge's reading and scrutinizes the ways in which Hardy's linguistic specificity as well as stylistic methods, like symbolism, shifting narrative positions, the personification of nature, and the de-personification of characters, inform Hardy's ecological enquiries. Part of Heinzl's concern is to foreground the writer's celebration of Wessex – the fictional substitute for Dorset – and his depiction of its landscape, topographical and geographical features as a means to raise people's ecological awareness of locality. Drawing on a similar approach, Ibrahim acknowledges the distinction which Hardy attaches to the physical setting and highlights the bearings of setting on the construction of identity and its impact on characters' lives. He also appraises, among other aspects, the writer's vivid engagement with the biotic community, his delineation of characters' knowledge and familiarity with the environment, and portrayal of reciprocal relationships between characters and the physical setting. Part of this study is to also scrutinize the symbolic intensity of Hardy's narratives and, more precisely, how the writer deploys natural imagery of 'animals or plants, to symbolize other physical things or to foreshadow future events' (2016: 91).

Hardy's novels are often acclaimed for the centrality of the setting along with the characters and plot dynamics. For instance, Harold Williams appreciates the closeness between Hardy's rustic folks and their environment: 'in Mr. Hardy's novels

it is difficult to dissociate the people from their environment' (1914: 125). This salient feature of Hardy's fiction made it even more appealing to ecocritics who, influenced by first wave ecocriticism, call for a searching engagement with the natural environment as a 'category' on its own.[9] In his essay, Joseph Carroll briefly comments on how the lives of Hardy's characters are often shaped by the physical setting: 'characters in his novels take on the coloring of the country they inhabit, blending insensibly into the landscape they traverse' (2004: 98). Similarly, Atef Mohamed Abdallah and Mohamed Saeed A. Ali underscore that setting in Hardy's novels does not serve a mere decorative purpose, but rather functions as a force which 'interacts with its inhabitants and shapes their lives' (2015: 16). Studies of this kind often scrutinize Hardy's fiction with an objective to highlight ecological notions of harmony and symbiosis. For instance, Himan Heidari claims that *FFMC* champions a return to an idyllic life in the countryside where people develop intimate relationships with the natural world. In his view, Gabriel Oak 'creates such a harmonious relationship with animals and his environment, therefore, he is a part of nature' (2016: 66). Likewise, Saman Ali Mohammad discusses the writer's technique of anthropomorphism and its utility to reinforce man-nature connectedness; highlights moments of characters' intimacy with the environment and elaborates on how the natural settings wields impact on characters' decisions, fortunes and prospects. He suggests that 'Mrs. Yeobright, Clym Yeobright's mother 'becomes another victim of environment and dies because she is exhausted by the heat on the way back to her house and is bitten by an adder' (2018: 174).

Recent studies have considered specific aspects regarding Hardy's depiction of the natural setting, focusing on his express engagement with individual natural forms like trees and animals. Exploring arboreal realism in *UGT*, Elizabeth Caroline Miller argues that Hardy's narrative offers a perspective beyond the human and his sustained attention to trees promotes alternative views of the world, inducing readers to approach the human and the non-human from a non-hierarchal perspective (2016: 698). In the same category, William Cohen investigates the influence of the Victorian tactile imagination on Hardy's worldview and glosses that 'one way of reading the

[9] For instance, Michael Bennett glosses that 'If eco-criticism has taught us anything, it has taught us to view "settings" not just as metaphors but as physical spaces that inform, shape, and are shaped by cultural productions' (2001:197).

novel is to regard trees as people and the people as trees' (2014: 60). With such conceptualization, Cohen does not acknowledge a simple anthropomorphization of trees, but unearths Hardy's vision of a shared material substance and bodily features between trees and human beings (2014: 07). Considering the intersection between ecocriticism and animal studies, Anna Feurstein explores the concept of democracy in relation to the non-human world and believes that Hardy's engagement with animals 'challenges assumptions of human superiority' and often reflects on 'the possibilities and limits of an inclusive democratic representation extending beyond the human' (2018: 01). Here my aim is not to wholeheartedly refute the findings of these studies, but to offer a more nuanced and complex ecocritical reading of Hardy's prose fiction, drawing insights from the more advanced second and third wave ecocriticism.[10]

Across this thesis, while attempting to complicate and nuance existing scholarship on Hardy and ecocriticism, I also discuss the possibility to extend the writer's ecocritical thought to adaptations on his novels. At the heart of this study is an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of Hardy's early critics, by exploring the possibilities of radical ecocritical as well as eco-cinematic Hardy. For instance, while assessing Hardy's work in the light of nascent ecocritical venues, my study calls attention to the writer's construction of material agency, elucidates the eco-ambiguity of his rural characters, and foregrounds how the writer's supposed anthropomorphism uncovers scientific 'truths' and prompts us to understand culture through nature. My study also places emphasis on Hardy's landscape, and how a depiction of its mutating physiological features, acoustic co-ordinates, and semiotic qualities outlines various modes of engagement with the natural world. Furthermore, I turn attention to an often neglected aspect of Hardy's ecological thought, stressing the ecological potential of the way he engages with the anthropomorphic world. Inspired by the work of ecocritics like Joseph Carroll, Kurt Fosso and Seth T. Reno, this project explores the intersection between evolutionary biology, neural sciences and ecocriticism and how

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[10] In the context of this thesis, second wave ecocriticism refers to the ideas of scholars like Joseph Caroll who aim to break down the human and non-human boundary, borrowing insights from the related field of biology and evolutionary theory. Third wave ecocriticism includes the sub-branches of ' "eco-cosmopolitanism", "rooted cosmopolitanism", "the global soul", and "translocality" […] post-national and post-ethnic visions of the human experience of the environment […] the new wave of "material" ecofeminism […]eco-masculinism, and green queer theory […] and the concept of "animality" ' (Solvic 2010 : 7). In this project, I am specifically concerned with the ideas of material ecocriticism, ecofeminism and the notion of animality.

Hardy's narratives sometimes align with the scientific findings of these related disciplines. With this aim at the forefront, I prefer to study Hardy's novels in the light of their adaptations, for, indeed, an intertextual examination of the texts, while helping to foreground the eco-potential of the adaptations, further serves to consolidate the ecological complexity as well as richness of Hardy's writing.

The inception of adaptation studies around the 1950s has drawn remarkable attention to adaptations based on Hardy's fiction. A critical scrutiny of the existing scholarship reveals that, while examining aspects of textual 'fidelity' and 'faithfulness', academic interests largely revolve around a discussion of aspects like generic and stylistic differences between the textual and the visual narratives, concerns like Darwinism, class struggle and gender relations.[11] Another cluster of commentators address Hardy's visual style, investigating the ways in which his painterly and cinematic techniques mark his avant-gardism in cinematic studies. For instance, David Lodge considers Hardy among the first novelists to set up the foundation of cinema. He underscores that the writer is among nineteenth-century novelists who first 'anticipated film' (1981: 95). Lodge explains that Hardy's descriptive style is loaded with visual images, which makes it highly relevant to cinema adaptation: 'Hardy uses verbal description as a film director uses the lens of his camera – to select, highlight, distort and enhance, creating a visualized world that is both recognizably "real" and yet more vivid, intense, and dramatically charged' (1981: 97). Similarly, J.B. Bullen claims that: 'Hardy's highly developed visual sense would seem to make his material eminently suitable for the cinema' (2016: 51). I agree with these critics, and across this study further suggest that Hardy's visual strategies and cinematic prose have anticipated the eco-potential of the adaptations under study. For example, aiming to scrupulously mirror Hardy's delineation of nature, directors like Phil Agland, Ian Sharp and others skillfully encapsulate and

[11] See Richard Nemesvari, 'Romancing the Text: Genre, indeterminacy, and Televising *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*', in *Thomas Hardy on Screen*, ed. T. R. Wright (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 397- 402; Gladys V. Veidemanis' s 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles: What the Film Left Out', in *The English Journal* (1988)77.7: 53-57; Peter Widdowson, *On Thomas Hardy, Late Essays and Earlier* (Macmillan, 1993); Richard Jermy Strong, *Six English Novels Adapted for Cinema* (1999); Raphaëlle Costa de Beauregard's 'Darwin, Polanski and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles:* facts and metaphors', in *Miranda. Multidisciplinary Peer-reviewed Journal on the English-speaking World* (2010)1:1-10.

integrate the natural landscape into the fabric of their narratives initially relying on the writer's visual apparatus.

It is the adaptations' construction of landscape as well as nineteenth century countryside life which have long interested Hardy's scholars. A long critical tradition has unproblematically construed these adaptations as idyllic constructions of the rural. For instance, critical scholarship on *Tess* has often reproached Polanski for blurring the grim life of nineteenth century rural society in favor of promoting an idealized vision of the countryside. Part of this idealization is seen in the cinematography of lush landscape. Edmund Wilson proclaims that 'The Durbeyfield family's poverty, and the village's poverty, is obscured in *Tess* by the magnificent photography and landscapes' (1936:176). Likewise, Roger Webster believes that '*FFMC*, whose title clearly treats the concept of pastoral ironically, is re-pastoralised in the film version' (1993: 150). In another essay, Webster makes a passing comment on the adaptations' pastoral features and posits that Schlesinger's *FFMC*, Sharp's and Polanski's *Tess* 'tend more towards the picturesque and the production of stereotypical images with a "Hardyesque" feel to them. These film versions generally present a safe, familiar version of Hardy's fiction accentuating the pastoral or striving for an authenticity which is validated by sense of the painterly' (2005 : 21). A similar argument was advanced by Paul Niemeyer who believes that 'the cultural identity' of Hardy's *FFMC*,

> as a simple pastoral—or just as escapist lit— remains largely intact; and this identity was not challenged by John Schlesinger's 1967 film; in fact, it was codified. […] Schlesinger winds up creating both a safe, contained version of Hardy as pastoralist, and a familiar picture of Hardy's world as a place where nature blesses those who live according to its dictates (2003 : 75-76).

Similarly, David Wiegand finds David Blair's direction in *Tess* 'competent', yet, in contrast to the novel, 'the impoverished Durbeyfields and other villagers look a bit too well scrubbed and freshly laundered and that Wessex itself is a bit too pretty' (2009: para 10). Robert Hanks also criticizes the movie's overt idealization of pastoral life claiming that the director 'can't afford to remind the viewer too explicitly just how grubby and laborious life was in the days before indoor hot running water, automatic washing machines and biological powder' (2008 : para 1). This view that film directors appropriate Hardy's painterly techniques to promote a conventional

perception of Hardy as an escapist and nostalgic writer is recently questioned by Nicol Cloarec who believes that Schlesinger actually preserves Hardy's 'ambiguous' style which oscillates between 'realist and self-conscious mode of presentation, as well between the viewer's involvement and distancing affects' (2012:73). She adds that the director produces a movie which can be 'said to be "faithful" to Hardy's novel, achieving similar ambivalent effects and taking into account its artifice as well as 'the sheep and the dogs" that Henry James so admired' (2012:84).

My project recalibrates the complexity of these adaptations and reconfigures the previous interpretive approaches which unproblematically insist on their proclivity towards idealization of rural life. Unlike these critics, I believe that an intrinsic feature of these adaptations is a vacillation between realistic and pastoral modes of perception which, in the words of David Nicholls, 'capture the beauty' of nature 'without forgetting that this is a brutal, unforgiving landscape' (2010: para 4). Hence, I argue that the movies' manipulation of pastoral credentials is riddled with irony and complexity. In addition, while many critics hold a skeptical view towards the pastoral, claiming that it engages more with characters rather than the actual environment, I will illustrate through the scrutiny of the movies that the pastoral actually takes us in entirely different trajectories. Indeed, the corpus under study actually challenges conventional representations of the countryside as a lush Arcadian resort where escapists look forward to repose. Instead, the movies grapple with the diverse issues of deforestation, the encroachment of the machine into the agrarian landscape, and the excessive agricultural use of the land. Hence, my analysis of these texts, while eco-theoretically informed, attempts a nuanced engagement with the pastoral, accounting for the diversity of its forms and the multiplicity of its versions, namely anti-pastoral and post-pastoral.

Indeed, pastoral has come to be known as a 'contested term' (Loughery 1984: 08) which refers to different variations of meaning. Terry Gifford defines pastoral as 'a historical form with a long tradition which began in poetry, developed into drama and more recently could be recognized in novels' (1999:01). It refers to 'any literature that describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban' (1999: 02). Gifford distinguishes between the 'celebratory', 'escapist' and 'nostalgic' stance of the simplistic form of pastoral and the 'corrective' stance of the anti-pastoral: 'the pastoral can be a mode of political critique of present society, or it can be a dramatic form of unsolved dialogue about tensions in that society; or it can be a retreat from politics

into an apparently aesthetic landscape that is devoid of conflict and tension' (1999:10). Gifford has also coined the notion of post-pastoral to describe the ecocritically engaged type of writing which focuses more on nature rather than human's action against a natural setting. According to Gifford, post-pastoral poetry 'avoids the traps both of idealization of the pastoral and of the simple corrective of the anti-pastoral' (2002: 78).

Similarly, the sublime discourse has recently been criticized by ecocritics like Timothy Morton – and many others – who believe that an aesthetic approach to nature re-inscribes the scenic and unscenic binary and mystifies the horrifying magnitude of the ecological emergency (2010: 5). The 'tourist gaze' perspective, as Greg Garrard prefers to call it, is also believed to contribute to the objectification and commodification of nature and, ultimately, alienate human beings from the natural realm. As Jhan Hochman argues, a

> Film renders viewers separate and superior to film-nature even as it brings them into proximity. Nature becomes, then prop(erty) and commodity not unconnected to the idea and practice of world nature as prop for film and property for the larger culture (qtd. in Ingram 2000: 32).

Unlike Morton and Hochman, I take the more moderate view of critics like Scott MacDonald, Martin Lefebvre and Christopher Hitt who complicate the sublime discourse and foreground its ecocritical potential. In addition, while I do not deny that movies like *Tess* and *The Woodlanders* mark occasional moments where landscape is rendered from an aesthetic vantage point, I also insist that these moments simultaneously incorporate images of aesthetically less-privileged landscapes and tend to overtly highlight a dwelling perspective, aspects which further epitomize the intricacy of these narratives.

At the level of methodology, I interrogate the often dual stance of critics, who, while often assessing the movies in terms of 'fidelity' and 'faithfulness', tend to subordinate them to textual narratives, diminish their artistic merit, deny them novelty and originality, and reduce them to mere forms of 'replication' and 'imitation'.[12]

[12] See James Harold (2018), Nicol Cloarec (2012), Richard Jeremy Strong (1999), Webester Rogers (1993), Gladys V. Veidemanis (1988).

Hence, at the heart of this project is a comparative study between Hardy's selected novels and their adaptations highlighting instances of divergence and convergence. This methodological approach, I believe, reclaims the value of the adaptations, whereas the 'fidelity' paradigm obscurs their intellectual rigour as well as the quintessential efforts of the directors who undeniably aspire to achieve artistic distinction. In the words of Thomas Leitch, 'the most obvious limitation of this approach [the dualistic approach] to adaptation studies is that in an age of explosive new media, it excludes adaptations in virtually all media from consideration' (2012: 90).

The history of cinema and film adaptation, when compared to literature, is relatively recent. Given this ontological precedence, literature and adaptation have often been approached from a hierarchal perspective, with novels being praised for 'originality' whereas adaptations dismissed as 'copies':

> Dualistic, bimedial account of adaptation has been extraordinarily powerful and persistent for several reasons. It offers both conceptual simplicity – the cinematic and televisual texts it considers as adaptations are counterpoised to their literary originals – and disciplinary neatness (Leitch 2004: 90).

The existing bias towards novels dictated that scholars need to study adaptations against the backdrop of 'fidelity' to examine the extent to which they are faithful to the 'original source'. Recently, however, this approach has been challenged by critics such as Mireia Aragay who believes that the 'fidelity' principle is irrelevant: 'the literary source need no longer be conceived as a work/original holding within itself a timeless essence which the adaptation/copy must faithfully reproduce, but as a text to be endlessly (re)read and appropriated in different contexts' (2005: 22). I agree with Aragay that the fidelity criticism is no longer pertinent, yet I insist that adaptations should be studied in the light of their novels, not because the latter is inferior, but because of the 'inter-textual dialogue' between novels and adaptations.[13] Hence, in my analysis, I adopt a much more poised approach, by examining similarities and differences and explaining their motives whether related to formal and medial differences, contextual, cultural, and temporal factors, or these have to do with directors' interpretations, or aspirations to express certain choices and preferences.

[13] I borrowed this phrase from Linda Hutcheon's theory that adaptation is a form of 'inter-textuality' (2013: 21).

Thus, informing my analysis is a theory of adaptation developed by Linda Hutcheon. Turning down the concepts of 'fidelity', 'faithfulness' and 'closeness', Hutcheon redefines the underlying critical standards of adaptation theory and forges new critical touchstones which recognize the value of an adapted work as a 'creative' and 'autonomous' aesthetic object. Hutcheon stresses that an adaptation is by no means a 'reproduction' or a 'replication' of other works, but a creative interpretive process which manifests originality as well as novelty. Hutcheon defines adaptation as a kind of intertextuality where ideas or stories intermingle together creating a mosaic-like aesthetic object. She uses the word 'palimpsest' to emphasize the dialogical relationship that links an adaptation to already existing works.

In her theory, Hutcheon recognizes the aesthetic value of both a written text and its adaptation without overlooking the specificities underlining their mode of representation. The critic expounds that a film and novel afford two different modes of representation (showing/telling) which require distinct modes of engagement (watching/reading), all of which serve to construct and transmit meaning in a quite different manner. While textual narratives address imagination through the telling mode, films rely on the showing mode and, therefore, appeal to us through 'aural as well as visual' dynamics (2013: 23). In narrative literature, the telling mode 'stimulates' as well as 'controls' our imagination through the text's selected language and, with the move to the showing mode, we experience a 'direct perception' of the 'performance mode' which, in addition to dialogue, visual, gestural and aural elements contribute significantly in the construction of meaning (2013: 23). Differences in the mode of engagement and representation do not mean that 'one mode is inherently good at doing one thing and not another; but each has at its disposal different means of expression—media and genres—and so can aim at and achieve certain things better than others' (2013: 24). In the context of this study, I argue that the two different modes not only contribute to the ways meaning plays out throughout the medium, but also the way spectators understand and critically engage with an audio-visual narrative.

Another factor which feeds into our critical perception of a novel and its movie adaptation, as Hutcheon's theory reveals, is the process of adaptation itself. As a process, an adaptation means undertaking one of two different options: either 'contraction' or 'subtraction'; meaning 'cutting or expansion' (2013: 19). As H. Porter Abbott discloses, adaptation is 'a surgical art'; 'adaptations, especially from long

novels, mean that the adapter's job is one of subtraction or contraction' (qtd in. Hutcheon 2013: 19). On the other hand: 'short story adaptations have had to expand their source material considerably'; hence, 'contraction' and 'subtraction' make of adaptation a 'palimpsestuous' work which foreshadows an/multiple already existing work/works (Hutcheon 2013: 6). In the case of Hardy's novels, we are mainly concerned with contraction and, in order to mould the writer's dense novels, the directors need to compress much of the novels' narrative details. Consequently, the elision of certain material, scenes or even speeches which, however insignificant they might look, play a crucial role in the interpretative process and may alter our understanding of the novel and its movie adaptation.

According to Hutcheon, formal differences are by no means the sole factor shaping the fabric of novels and their adaptations, and thus contributing to their different interpretations. A novel and its movie adaptation, though sharing similar storyline, events, characters, setting and themes, are produced into a particular socio-economic and spatio-temporal context which moulds their content. Therefore, the invocation of this given context is essential. Hutcheon further argues that an adaptation is shaped by the personal motives of its director who aims to either re-'affirm', 'question' or 'subvert' the core messages of the original text (2013: 94). Across my thesis, I argue that Hardy's *Jude* must be read in the light of the nineteenth century Victorian socio-cultural system as it was a response to the period's scientific and philosophical discourse which constructed Hardy's perception of the universe and his understanding of humans' place within its scheme. In addition, the novel was directed to nineteenth century readers, who were familiar with the Victorian notions of masculinity, femininity and codes of bourgeois decorum, different factors which inclined the author to daringly challenge the ideals of humanism which back then privileged reason over emotions and mind over body. This dichotomy, however, was fading in the contextual production of the movie, a reason why Winterbottom elides a number of scenes hinting at the culture/ nature dualism in Hardy's novel. For example, he elides the scene where Jude punishes himself for giving in to sensuality, an act which conflicts with the ecclesiastical work he inclines to pursue. I think this is essential for Winterbottom to trigger viewers' identification with Jude.

2) Theoretical Framework:

This project falls within the purview of ecocriticism and the flourishing sub-field of eco-cinema. In its broad sense, eco-cinema is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry comprising a wide spectrum of disciplines, including cinema and film studies, ecocriticism, and the science of ecology. For MacDonald, eco-cinema signifies the 'retraining of perception' (2004: 109). The objective of eco-cinema scholars is to scrutinize the ways in which visual media promote ecocritical values which have the potential to direct viewers' attention to natural phenomena. These critics seek to extrapolate the different ways in which media can stimulate environmental consciousness, inducing audiences to rethink their relation to the natural surroundings, and ultimately help to mitigate anthropocentric mindsets. Eco-cinema scholars, like F. Scott MacDonald, David Ingram, Paula Willoquet-Maricondi, Jennifer Ladino, Adrian Ivakhiv and others, believe that visual media can instill these values through different techniques including zooming, soundtrack, and time lapse. Other techniques include the strategic use of camera to shed light on the non-human world, the repetition of shots and the length of their duration. According to MacDonald, certain camera shots, long takes more specifically, have the potential to change the viewer's perception of nature and divert anthropocentric views 'of landscape and place as ephemeral and comparatively insignificant' (Rust, Monani and Cubitt 2013: 21).

While drawing predominantly from eco-cinema studies, I also undertake an interdisciplinary approach to ecocriticism. This is essential to unearth the complex and multifaceted eco-potential of Hardy's fiction given the writer's varied interests in natural forms, matter, the arboreal, animals, landscape, environment, and humans. Hence, my project is informed by an eclectic mix of ecocritical approaches which address different forms of human and non-human interaction, connection and interdependence. The project engages with theories of the arboreal developed by critics like Robert Pogue Harrison and Kim Taplin; theories of landscape as put forth by the anthropologist Tim Ingold and ecocritics like Christopher Hitt, Terry Gifford and Jane Bennett; theories of soundscape and biosemiotics as developed by Murray Shafer, Bernie Krause, and Timo Maran. Lastly, I borrow critical insights from the premises of Joseph Carroll, Kurt Fosso and Seth T. Reno who bring to prominence the

intersection between evolutionary biology, neural science and ecocriticism. My close readings also reflect upon the scientific and cultural material introduced during the time production of the selected narratives. For instance, I propose that Hardy's perception of a dynamic landscape is informed by his readings of geology and his depiction of animality is shaped by the theories of Charles Darwin. In relation to the films, I contend that eco-cinematic instances in Agland's *The Woodlanders* could be attributed to the director's aspiration towards environmental activism through the means of visual media.

Implementing this theoretical paradigm, my project also aims to better conceptualize the textual and audio-visual narratives in a way which attends to medium specificity. This eventually helps to point out convergences as well as divergences between novels and their adaptations without mystifying the ecocritical potential of either medium. For instance, in the first chapter I explore Karen Thornber's concept of eco-ambiguity, which, I believe, challenges the existing scholarship on Hardy and ecocriticism.[14] While critics like Richard Kerridge argue that Hardy celebrates characters' harmonious relationship with the natural world, I contend that his narrative reveals the ambiguity inherent in characters' actions and the contradictions characterizing their association with the natural world. This concept, while enabling us to reflect on characters' struggle to meet basic survival needs and maintain sustainable ecological relations, also signals the intricacy of the environmental dilemma as well. Hence, I argue that Hardy's narratives do not necessarily promote alternative human and non-human relations, but indicate the difficulty to maintain ecological relations while pursuing agricultural ventures and coping with technological progress. Similarly, my choice of the theories of landscape in chapter three attends to the subtle differences between the ecological visions arising from the movies and the novels.

[14] Eco-ambiguity refers to the 'complex, contradictory interactions between people and environments with a significant human presence' (Thornber 2012: 1)

3) Thesis Outline

To implement my research paradigm, I have devised an outline consisting of five chapters which explore three main thematic categories: the first part is dedicated to the representation of the biomorphic world;[15] the second deals with the geomorphic space;[16] and the third considers the representation of anthropomorphic subjects; that is to say, human beings. This structure enables me to undertake an inclusive and a holistic ecocritical approach which helps to evade generalizations that might lead to, inadvertently, abstracting certain natural elements – for instance, material agency which marks a vital contribution to this study. Hence, while this specific structure brings thematic diversity to my study, it also enables me to examine how the narratives engage with different aspects of the natural, be it insects, animals, plants, humans, material substance, acoustic or semiotic co-ordinates. This endows my study with more focus and enables me to bestow equal attention on the visual and the textual narratives alike. I am aware that these diverse thematic concerns might reflect a hint of naïve perfectionism, or inevitable shallowness in the analysis given the confines of space. To avoid this, I narrowed down my focus to specific thematic concerns. Lastly, although the chapters have been grouped thematically, they inform each other and serve the thesis' overarching argument which explores various modes of human connection to and engagement with the natural world. In the first two chapters, I highlight an interactive mode of being between the human and the non-human where awareness of mutual dependencies and interrelatedness inspires a sense of biodiversity, central to co-existence. In the following chapters, I proceed to highlight deeper modes of enmeshment: sensory, labourious and material engagement with landscape; semiotic and acoustic entanglements; and finally corporeal and emotive connections to the physical world.

Chapter 1 and 2 deal with the representation of the biomorphic world, looking at the portrayal of animals and plants in Hardy's *The Woodlanders* (1887) and *UGT* (1872) and their respective adaptations by Phill Agland (1997) and Nicholas Laughland (2005). Looking at the representation of the arboreal, the two chapters seek

[15] This refers to biome species including insects, animals and plants.

[16] 'The territorial ontology that underlies the world of any film' (Ivakhiv 2013:70).

to understand how certain narrative / tele-visual techniques and ways of being in the world inform the narratives' depiction of biodiversity. The first chapter investigates the theme of biodiversity in the specific context of forest representation; for this reason, I deem it necessary to analyze the ways in which nineteenth century and twentieth century industrial contexts shape the way the narratives deploy forest imagery to depict a world that is pre-dominantly defined with escalating disjunction between the human and the non-human. The opening section of the first chapter sheds light into the different ways in which reductions, elisions, but also additions shape the movie's representation of the forest. I argue that, while whittling away the symbolic overtones of Hardy's characters, the movie still adopts the novel's pastoral structure, yet not to promote but to rather question the pastoral ideal and uncover the contradictions inherent in pastoral life. While capitalizing on the encroachment of technology to the forest order, the movie pushes further beyond the novel's counter-pastoral credentials, foregrounding the discrepancy between the pastoral and reality in time where fast-paced technology continues to exacerbate the schism between humans and nature. Having thus fleshed out the forest's symbolic function, the second section provides a textured and detailed engagement with the forest's biomorphic world. I posit that Hardy's representation of forests and woods promotes the importance of what we would now call biodiversity, an aspect articulated through the naming of species, depiction of the interdependencies and interconnections between biome species as well as between biomes and the forest's ecosystem. The aim here is to complicate Hardy's ecological vision: I argue that the narrative does not always celebrate human and non-human symbiotic integration, but rather reveals complex relationships mediated with both harmony and disharmony. The movie, while illuminating occasional moments of human and non-human interaction where both subjects mutually share the cinematic stage in a state of partnership, still strips animals of agency.

The second chapter builds on the previous chapter and continues to scrutinize moments of human and non-human interaction while discussing the representation of the arboreal in *UGT* (1872/ 2005). I argue that the movie appropriates Hardy's painterly techniques and develops a sustained sense of time-lapse. I contend that this skillful use of time-lapse is ecologically significant for it heightens a sense of transience and temporality as an ecological reality informing human and non-human

existence, and thus challenges human hubris and crosses the divide between the human and the non-human. Despite occasional convergences, however, the movie renounces the novel's rich folklore, more specifically Hardy's pantheistic sympathies which further endorse the writer's non-dualist perception of the human and the non-human. My aim here is to push beyond the existing scholarship on Hardy's pantheistic tendencies, positing that the writer's depiction of plants' liveliness actually resonates with scientific findings recently established in the related field of botany. The second section engages more deeply with striking differences between the movie and the novel. While discussing the social functions of trees, I illustrate that the novel deploys the specific Greenwood tree to draw a link between culture and nature, and highlights how trees are often perceived as markers of place, interconnection, and togetherness, whereas the movie uses this particular tree to draw rigid boundaries between society, nature, and wilderness. With its brief glance at the intersection between the arboreal and the perception of place, this section functions as an inroad to the subsequent two chapters which investigate notions of place, environment and landscape the most significantly.

Hence, the third and fourth chapters look at the representation of the geomorphic world, accounting for the physical features of landscape, its acoustic co-ordinates as well as its semiotic qualities. The third chapter draws similarities and differences between Hardy's *Tess* (1891), and its cinematic adaptation by Roman Polanski (1979) and the TV adaptation by Ian Sharp (1998). Here I exceptionally undertake an analysis of two different adaptations to better illustrate how stylistic choices and directors' preferences feed into striking differences between a novel and its adaptation. In the opening section I highlight the ways in which medium differences, such as contrasting modes of presentation (showing vs. telling) and different modes of engagement (reading vs. watching), dovetail into Hardy's and Sharp's simultaneously convergent and divergent visions of landscape. I suggest that while both narratives highlight a laborious engagement with the world, the novel goes deeper to construct material agency as a driving force behind a constantly changing, mobile and dynamic landscape. I posit that Sharp's narrative heightens a sensory engagement with landscape, capitalizing on the aesthetic features of the world, and invoking the trope of the sublime. The second section further explores Hardy's and Polanski's similar and dissimilar ecological visions. I argue that the dissimilarity is

related to medium specificity, but to the director's preferences as well. This section deals with the often mis-construed notion of pathetic fallacy and symbolic intensity usually informing Hardy's and Polanski's depiction of landscape. I suggest that Hardy revises the pathetic fallacy technique and deploys it in a way that consolidates a material enmeshment with the world where tactile, sensory and sonic engagements with the surrounding environment wields impact on characters' psychic realities.[17] This ultimately foregrounds a non-anthropocentric understanding of material agency and challenges a symbolic perception of landscape as a container for characters' feelings and emotions. I also indicate that, both Polanski's and Hardy's text deploys symbolism in such a way which articulates human and non-human continuities. In precise terms, both narratives inspire a post-pastoral world view which Terry Gifford believes to 'achieve[s] a vision of an integrated natural world that includes the human' (1999: 148).

The fourth chapter is entitled 'Acoustic Entanglement and Biosemiotics in Hardy's *FFMC* (1874) and its adaptation by Christopher Renton (1996)'. By the concept of entanglement, I refer to the human and non-human condition of enmeshment, resonance and inter-connectivity. Entanglement also pertains to a sense of confusion informing the often complicated human and non-human relationship and their positions in the universe. As the *Online OED* defines the term, entanglement is 'a means of entangling; that by which a person or thing is entangled; an embarrassment, a snare; a circumstance that complicates or confuses a matter' (2016). With the concept of biosemiotics, I refer to the communicative and semiotic competency of the physical world, where acoustic, visual, and tactile clues contribute to a better engagement with the environment and interaction with the natural world (Hoffmeyer 2008: 4). Discussing the tonal features of both narratives, I explore the narratives' depiction of place as inherently distinct, yet simultaneously connected to a wider national sphere. Key to my argument here is to draw attention to how active listening uncovers a world full of resonances and resemblances, which reconcile human and non-human relationship. I argue that the novel's depiction of the acoustic is even more

[17] First coined by John Ruskin, 'pathetic fallacy' refers to 'the attribution of human emotion or responses to animals or inanimate things, esp, in art and literature' (*OED*).

evocative and much nuanced, constructing the physical world as inherently communicative.

The last chapter is devoted to the representation of the anthropomorphic world in Hardy's *Jude* (1895) and its adaptation by Michael Winterbottom (1996). I further discuss two rival modes of connection to the physical world: corporeal and emotive. The aim here is to go beyond the practice of listening and active de-codification of natural signs, to stress an inward and internal mode of connection that is corporeal and emotive. Hence, I stress human and non-human shared physiology of instinctual feelings and emotions, including sensual impulses, sympathetic and empathetic motifs. In the first section, while highlighting Hardy's reading of Charles Darwin, I lay out the various ways in which evolutionary theory intersects with the modern-day ecological thought. I argue that the agency of instinct defines Hardy's ecological thought, an aspect which the film magnifies through the strategic use of voyeurism. In the second section I argue that the texts serve the ecological thought through their innovative construction of an emotive connection underlying the human and the non-human encounter. I will show that, while the adaptation preserves key scenes which foreground humans' tendency to sympathize and empathize with human and non-human subjects, it refutes Hardy's critical stand against the culture and nature dichotomy which permeates the Victorian worldview and thus the novel.[18] Indeed, while scathingly criticizing the Victorian bourgeois culture, its religious construction of morality as well as its patriarchal attitudes, Hardy documents the discrepancy between culture and nature highlighting how instinctual feelings are often in conflict with different conceptions of morality, a factor which represses characters and bring their eventual downfall. In contrast, Winterbottom, corresponding to a contemporary society whose rules are relatively flexible and its atmosphere is pre-dominantly secular, renounces Hardy's critical stance and draws a relatively harmonious integration between culture and nature. I argue that Winterbottom's worldview is especially expressed through addition and elision of certain scenes.

[18] I used the word 'nature' here to refer to the biological make-up of human beings, stressing a physiology of sexual urges and instinctual feelings as an essential condition situating humans in the natural sphere. With the word culture, I refer to the man-made laws and belief systems which construct an overall cultural paradigm and which might or not aspire to denaturalize humans.

Finally, I propose that Hardy's novels and their respective adaptations inspire divergent and occasionally compatible ecocritical readings, an argument which deflects the commonly held conceptions which underrate adaptations in favour of textual narratives. The chapters illustrate a cluster of factors which mark the distinction as well as the originality of adaptations in relation to their novels: the nature of the medium (visual vs. textual), differing modes of engagement (watching vs. reading), contrasting societal and cultural contextual realities, and the conflicting preferences and visions of the writer and those of the directors. These factors, especially the contrasting modes of engagement, dovetail into the way in which the human-nature encounter is portrayed across the narratives, with the movies being ecologically complex, often shifting between anthropocentric as well as eco-centric positions, whereas the novels' rich texture is open to much more nuanced and even radical ecocritical readings. Finally, with their incompatible eco-orientations, the textual and audio-visual narratives still complement each other and offer inherently multifarious alternative modes of engagement with the natural world.

The Representation of Woods in *The Woodlanders* (1887-1997): Sharing the Natural World with the More-than-Human

Introduction

This chapter highlights human-forest relationships as portrayed in Hardy's *The Woodlanders* (1887) and its movie adaptation by Phil Agland (1997). The first section argues that the movie and the novel can be brought into clear dialogue with recent ecocritical theory, thereby deploying the rural setting, a forest-environed setting more precisely, as a means to reassess sentimental and escapist tendencies synonymous with conventional pastoral.[19] While both narratives document the dispossession of the lower class rural society and envision the pastoral as tracked through the sense of hopelessness and failure of romantic love, the movie further documents the encroachment of the machine, tracing the transformation of the imaginative 'Arcadia' in a contemporary socio-economic context largely mediated by technology and industrialization.[20] The second section seeks to engage with the texts' representation of the biomorphic community of the Hintock woods, looking at how these integrate insects, animals and plants into the narrative. I suggest that Hardy's preoccupation with the forest is significant not for its aesthetic, archetypal or symbolic nuances, but because of its biodiversity, being a shared territory between the human and the non-human all of which are entangled in a network of inter-related dependencies.[21] I posit

[19] Conventional or sentimental pastoral is first coined by Leo Marx to refer to a type of pastoral writing that is characterized with 'yearning for a simple, more harmonious style of life, an existence "closer to nature," ' without accounting for the realities of hard work, social progress and the complexity of human-nature relationship (Marx 1964: 06). A conventional pastoral narrative is likely to celebrate 'a man in almost perfect repose, idly brooding upon the minutiae of nature, and now and then permitting his imagination a brief flight' (1964: 13).

[20] Arcadia is first coined by Virgil in his *Eclogues*; it is 'an alpine region that is cut off on all sides by other high mountains. It was the perfect location for a poetic paradise, a literary construct of past a Golden Age in which to retreat by linguistic idealization' (Gifford 1999: 20).

[21] Here, I adhere to the definition advanced by the 1992 UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) that 'biological diversity' means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between

that while Agland is an explicitly environmental activist, his movie is riddled with ambivalences: while cuing subtle eco-significant readings in some scenes, it still dwells more on chronicling a diminishing rural mode of life and the failure of romantic love between Grace and Giles.

My analysis is guided by the theoretical formulations of Leo Marx and Robert Pogue Harrison as developed in *The Machine in the Garden* (1964) and in *Forests: The Shadow of Civilization* (1992). Marx's distinction between 'sentimental' and 'complex' pastoral reveals the intersection between the pastoral discourse and ecocriticism and helps to complicate conventional readings of the texts under scrutiny and consolidate a new ecocritical assessment.[22] While Harrison's text is known for its symbolic, archetypal, political and historical treatment of forests, I deploy it for my own ecocritical purpose. For instance, while Harrison traces the cultural formations informing the perception of forests in western history, I extrapolate the ways in which this thought paradigm shapes human and non-human relationships and, ultimately, how the texts' incorporation of similar ideas help to bridge existing rift between humans and nature. A central idea in Harrison's book, which I believe brings forth the eco-potential of Hardy's narrative, is the definition of the forest as a '*sanctuary* for wildlife' (1992: 72). This definition, while turning our attention to the wealth of habitat in forests' ecosystems, not only resonates with the laws of ecology, but enables me to consolidate the proto-environmental import of Hardy's novel which celebrates the Hintock woodlands as prosperous biomes.

Implementing Harrison's concept, I foreground Hardy's strategic technique of naming individual species, the way he skillfully weaves these into his fictional fabric, and the text's depiction of underlying complex inter/intra- species interdependencies, especially in relation to the wood's ecosystem. More precisely, I scrutinize characters' relation to the Hintock woodlands, discerning their role for the long-term regeneration of its ecosystem. I posit that Hardy's construction of rustic characters falls within the

species and of ecosystems' (qtd. in Burch-Brown, Joanna, and Archer 2017: para7). In this study, while using the word biodiversity to refer to the heterogeneity and variety of living organisms and the complex relationships connecting these organisms together, I only relate it to the specific ecosystem of woods and forests.

[22] Complex pastoral is the antithesis of sentimental pastoral which uncovers 'the radical change in the character of society and the sharp swing between two states of feeling, between an Arcadian vision and an anxious awareness of reality' (Marx 1964: 30). The reality of social and mechanical progress is often key to a complex representation of rural life.

purview of Karan Thornber's 'eco-ambiguity'. With the notion of eco-ambiguity, Thornber refers to the 'complex, contradictory interactions between people and environments with a significant human presence' (2012: 01). Hence, eco-ambiguity:

> manifests in multiple, intertwined ways, including ambivalent attitudes toward nature; confusion about the actual condition of the nonhuman, often a consequence of ambiguous information; contradictory human behaviors toward ecosystems; and discrepancies among attitudes, conditions, and behaviors that lead to actively downplaying and acquiescing to nonhuman degradation, as well as to inadvertently harming the very environments one is attempting to protect (2012: 06).

As I will demonstrate shortly, Hardy's rustic characters fit nicely with this definition; for instance, while Giles Winterborne exhibits a considerable level of intimacy and familiarity with the environment, he still participates in deforestation and relies heavily on the forest's resources for various utilitarian purposes. Here, eco-ambiguity, while helpful to conceptualize the inconsistent and contradictory human-forest relationships manifested in Hardy's narrative and accentuate the complexity of his characters, serves to question existing scholarship which deems Hardy's characters as 'ecosystem people' who maintain symbiotic relationships with the environment (Kerridge 2000: 270).

In my approach to the movie, I explore the politics of visual representation, scrutinizing aspects of cinematography and how different methods of framing shots and positioning characters in the cinematic stage serve to marginalize or foreground the presence of non-human animals. In addition to other eco-cinematic critics, I draw on the theoretical premises of Paula Willoquet-Maricondi who ponders how visual media can articulate non-human subjectivity. Central to Willoquet-Maricondi's argument is that an ecocritical perspective on a 'film allows for a different story to emerge, a new way of re-envisioning our relationship with the natural world', and enables us to 'approach what Emerson called an ''occult relation between man and vegetable'', one in which humans and nature are both subjects and participants in a relationship, "a harmony'' of both' (2010: 171). According to Willoquet-Maricondi, then, with strategic use of cinematography, films can play a vital role in promoting an eco-cinematic experience which envisions non-human animals as subjects and active agents. Indeed, as I will illustrate, while certain cinematic modes help to pull the non-

human characters away from a peripheral position and recast their subordinate role, also work to heighten viewers' perception of human and non-human as equally worthy of attention.

The theoretical guidance of Jennifer Ladino is pertinent here. Like Willoquet-Maricondi, Ladino discusses the possible ways in which non-humans can occupy a subject rather than an object position within a tele-visual representation, constructing them as partners and companions co-existing interdependently with human beings in a shared physical space. Among other strategies, Ladino acknowledges the significant vocal presence of the non-human animals in the *mise-en-scene* and the importance of constructing the cinematic space as equally shared by human and non-human beings. Ladino illustrates that the use of a natural soundtrack serves to foreground the animal voice and disconcert humans' possession of language. Ladino also expounds how specific ways of framing shots help to present humans and non-humans as dominant actors across a visual representation. She believes that cinema is 'a connective medium bringing together and mediating between inherently communicative human and nonhuman worlds,' (2013: 50) and 'is uniquely suited to destabilize both human and animal categories by bringing the "here" and the "there" together, visually as well as narratively and even […] experientially' (2013: 144). While Ladino's argument is made concerning environmental documentaries, I implement it in my study of a feature movie. I believe that the techniques she describes can be equally deployed in fictional as well as explicitly factual environmental narratives.

1) A Late 20th Century versus 19th Century Imagination of Arcadia: The Incursion of the Machine in Agland's *The Woodlanders*

An award-winning director of documentaries *Fragile Earth* (1982-93), *Baka: A Cry from the Rainforest* (2012) and *China: Beyond the Clouds* (2016), Agland is well known for his pro-environmental concerns which define the bulk of his films. A milestone experience in his professional career, *Baka: People of the Rainforest* (1989) offered Agland an opportunity to explore the tribes of the Cameroon rainforest where indigenous people, living beyond the encroachment of governmental laws, were

intertwined with the natural surroundings establishing intimate and sustainable relationships with the forest. This experience came to shape Agland's construction of the rainforest as a pastoral abode where people are connected to the land through daily work as well as different leisure pursuits in the forest. The documentary also capitalizes on images of rural harmony and tranquility and features idyllic pictures of children singing in a professed sense of mirth and rapture. Twenty five years after the release of this film, however, Baka has altered drastically after the exigencies of modern life were expanding beyond the borders of cities to reach the territories of the rainforest, a factor which has taken a heavy toll on Baka's people and their relationship to the natural world (Hughes 2012: para.2). After the government ordered that the forest become a nature reserve, the Baka people were banned from the land and prohibited from working in the forest, especially from hunting which was the source of their livelihood (ibid). As a result of this rural transformation, Agland released *Baka; A Cry from the Rainforest* (2012), a documentary film which mourns the loss of the Arcadian-like milieu of the Baka tribes and chronicles the monumental change incurred both on surrounding landscape and its inhabitants right after the capitalist encroachments.

In one of his interviews, Agland acknowledges the indirect way in which the Baka experience inspired his decision to make a feature film that is based on nineteenth century rural life:

> I spent two years living with the Pygmy community in central Africa to make *Baka* and the way in which the Pygmies embrace their environment is similar to the way the woodland people did in rural England a century ago. The Victorian woodlanders were a very poor, close-knit group which worked and fed off the land. Against this back-drop Hardy deals with human emotions. All my films are concerned with people and the way they interact with each other and their surroundings, and the Hardy novel deals with love, the family, trust and the environment (*Entertainment Industrial Magazine 1998* : pg. a34).

Hence, Agland's decision to adapt *The Woodlanders* to cinema stems from his belief in a latent closeness between Baka's people and Hardy's characters, especially in the ways they relate to the natural world in a sustainable, yet for me paradoxical, manner. Thus, while decades seem to separate Hardy's characters from the indigenous people of Baka, for Agland, their unadulterated relationships to the natural environment is a

shared legacy. Ironically, however, Agland's endeavor to foreground this human intimacy with nature in his movie is actually undermined with a realistic outlook which accounts for the disconcerting actualities of hard work, class struggle, social instability, and, more importantly, technological and urban intrusion. Indeed, the director accentuates the disintegration of rural community and the incursion of the machine into the agrarian landscape, which mark the movie's tendency to debunk the pastoral myth and revise the pastoral ideal. Given this tension informing the movie, I argue that it might be parsed as a counter discourse which reflects on 'how the pastoral ideal [could be]incorporated in a powerful metaphor of contradiction – a way of ordering meaning and value that clarifies' (Marx 1964: 4) our modern-day context of an increasingly urbanized and exponentially industrialized society. The tension surfacing in Agland's pastoral, while having similar echoes in the novel, is magnified through the incorporation of a logging machine which, I believe, Agland deploys as a token gesturing to the 20th century context of massive manufacturing production.

a- The Hintock Woodland: A Rural Setting more than a Decorative Stage:

To begin with, both the novel and the movie follow a seemingly pastoral structure, evoking a vision of the rural setting as an enclave existing beyond the city borders. In the movie, features of a rural setting are established right in the opening scenes where the viewer encounters a male figure, whose cautious steps betray a sense of unfamiliarity with the lush locality. This figure, we come to realize later, is barber Percomb coming from London on a business pursuit to purchase the hair of Marty South, one of the country's lower-class denizens, in order to sell to the wealthy lady Felice Charmond. According to the narrator, the barber's attire, overtly lavish and extravagant, and his unfamiliarity with the environment set him apart from the country proper and define his estrangement from the woodland:

> It could be seen by a glance at his rather finical style of dress that he did not belong to the country proper; and from his air, after a while, that though there might be a somber beauty in the scenery, music in the breeze, and a wan procession of coaching ghosts in the sentiment of this old turnpike-road, he was mainly puzzled about the way (1996:42).

At stake in this formulation is a pastoral mode that celebrates belonging rather than longing, connection to the land rather than aesthetic yearning, which are lacking in the barber's character. Similarly, in the movie, with his intimidated and cautious steps, the barber demonstrates that he neither has knowledge of the geography nor appreciation towards the surrounding environment, thereby consolidating his disconnection from the rural order. In both texts, the barber retains a symbolic function and might be considered a proxy for both the reader and the viewer, being a character from beyond the woods led into this initial strangeness.

Despite a shared mutual concern with rusticity, the way the movie engages with the geographical and topographical realities of the Hintocks differs greatly from that vision evoked in the novel. Indeed, Hardy's countryside is populated, with the wood a small feature in the landscape, while Agland's pastoral vision is of a depopulated landscape where the wood seems to retain a greater aesthetic and symbolic significance in the opening scene. At the outset of the novel, when the barber is introduced into Little Hintock, he encounters 'half a dozen dwellings' (1996: 9). On the map which Hardy attaches to his novel, it can be seen that the wood is surrounded by a number of towns and villages; the countryside is densely populated whereas the forest is very small (Louw 2007: 100). In the movie, however, as displayed in the early scenes, the woodland is surrounded by a pastoral landscape of sweeping vistas and farmlands where we hardly discern any buildings or cottages. A very few habitations which seem to be scattered here and there are only revealed later on when the barber ventures into the forest, and this gives us the impression that the Hintocks are largely depopulated. Here I argue that the boundless farmlands which encompass the forest signal to twentieth century context of massive capitalist and mechanical agriculture. As for the exclusion of human dwelling from this landscape, I believe is thought-provoking: while it might be construed as a romantic impulse to celebrate pristine nature, I contend that it is a revisionist stance on the director's part, where the twentieth century context of escalating urbanization indirectly filters into the movie. Hence, at stake here is our sense of the twentieth century common experience of massive exodus to the city when interconnections between human social life and that of the forest had been rapidly diminishing.

That the movie is shaped by twentieth century context of escalating urbanization is not a mere impression evoked in the establishing scene only, but a

vision resurfacing all the way through the cinematic experience. The director elides Hardy's communal approach to the forest, focusing more on the solitary experiences of certain individuals such as Dr Fitzpiers, a rural descendent from Oakbury Fitzpiers, who 'returns to nature', only to become 'a tourist-observer' of the Hintock woodlands and its inhabitants (Moore 1990: 141). It is also the birthplace of Grace Melbury who returns from the city after a long absence of a decade or more. Exposed to urban culture in the early phases of her teenage life, Grace 'once possessed a woodlander's sensibility', now becomes 'a refined appreciator of culture' (Moore 1990: 151). While these anti-pastoral tropes of alienation and disconnection are present in the novel, the narrator provides a contrasting complex context to that of the movie, displaying the ways in which the woodlanders' life experiences are intricately interwoven with the forest's space. Hence Hardy's denizens frequently interact with the wood through daily activities, idle walks and seasonal agricultural work. For instance, while conducting their work in the forest, Hintock dwellers find an occasion for community gathering and an opportunity to rejoice in recollections of the past and the ancient stories they experienced in the forest. The barking work, for instance, offers a leisurely experience, where Mr Melbury and other rural farmers indulge in telling 'ancient timber-stories' (1996:136). With such instances which mark characters' feelings of strong connection and association, the novel illustrates moments of forest culture which serve to mitigate the dual perceptionof forest-civilization. However, unlike the movie which evokes anti-pastoral experiences of rural desertion and depopulation, the novel constructs a vision of a less threatened and less deserted pastoral where rural dwellers still reciprocate a continuously intimate relationship with the woodlands. This relationship, however, as I will illustrate in the second section, is riddled with ironies and ambivalences, an aspect which complicates the novel's initial pastoral impulse.

Both texts transcend the traditional perception of forests as a sylvan world designed for idleness and a decorative 'theatre for human events' (Buell 1995: 154). Instead they foreground the experience of 'self as continuous with place' (ibid). While living on the edges of the woodlands, the woodlanders' 'identity', as Pat Louw observes, 'is closely formed by the forest, which gives them a sense of belonging' (2007: 101). While Louw's observation applies to the novel, it also resonates with the movie, which, in the opening scenes, articulates a sense of rural identity inherently constructed in relation to forests. In her return from town to Little Hintock, Grace

experiences a sense of displacement, dislocation and rootlessness, where she seems to lose connection with Hintock mores and the woodlands. Passing by the forest, Giles draws her attention to the apple trees, yet Grace only perceives them in terms of their physicality: she cannot distinguish between 'the bitter-sweets and John-apples' (00: 06: 35). In another scene, Grace laments the fact that she has become a stranger to the very trees she once loved and cherished (01:01:00). In contradistinction, given his daily interaction with the woods, Giles is still familiar with the different types of the apple trees, which invites meditation on the intersection between identity and place. In effect, the wooded landscape here is a 'central material and symbolic object onto which the emotions and identity[ies]' of Giles are attached (Ritter and Dauksta 2011:160). In the words of Harrison, the trees are 'the living tissue of time', and 'indispensable parochial monuments, landmarks, milestones and other points of reference by which each person can take his or her own bearings in time and place' (Ritter and Dauksta 2011:139). This is ecologically significant as it allows for the setting to emerge as a category on its own rather than a backdrop for the dramatic action. It resonates with the idea of Michael Bennett that settings are 'physical spaces that inform, shape, and are shaped by cultural productions' (2001:197).

While both texts invite reflection on the complex ways in which social identity is inextricably bound up with the spatial world surrounding the characters, the novel displays a deeper engagement, drawing attention to a material component of selfhood. For instance, Giles is coextensive with nature; the wood's basic materiality is infused in him:

> His sleeves and leggings dyed with fruit stains, his hands clammy with the sweet juice of apples, his hat sprinkled with pips, and everywhere about him that atmosphere of cider which at its first return each season has such an indescribable fascination for those who have been and bred among the orchards (1996: 204).

Here the narrative construes rural identity as a materially embodied reflex, a scent and sensation reflected from Giles. Furthermore, the text breaks the human/ nature boundary, constructing Giles' identity in terms of natural material substance. In the words of Grace, Giles incarnates 'Nature unadorned', whereas her husband is 'the veneer of artificiality' (ibid). Rural denizens like Giles and Marty, often in contact

with the forest, exhibit a profound 'level of intelligent intercourse with Nature' (Hardy 1996: 326) which marks their familiarity with the wood:

> The casual glimpses which the ordinary population bestowed upon the wondrous world of sap and leaves called the Hintock woods had been with these two, Giles and Marty, a clear gaze. They had been possessed of its finer mysteries as of commonplace knowledge; had been able to read its hieroglyphs as ordinary writing; to them the sights and sounds of night, winter, storm, amid those dense boughs, which had to Grace a touch of uncanny, and even of the supernatural, were simple occurrences whose origin, continuance, and laws they foreknew. They had planted together, and together they had felled, together they had, with the run of the years, mentally collected those remoter signs and symbols which seen in few were runic obscurity, but all together made an alphabet. From the light lashing of the twigs upon their faces when brushing through them in the dark either could in like manner name its sort afar off. They knew by a glance at a trunk if its heart were sound, or tainted with incipient decay, and by the state of its upper twigs the stratum that had been reached by its roots. The artifices of the seasons were seen by them from the conjuror's own point of view, and not from that of the spectator (326-327).

This passage pinpoints the different ways in which the visual, tactile and acoustic engagement with the forest's landscape has a visceral effect on Giles and Marty, filtering into their sense of rural identity. In fact, their ears are attuned to the sounds of birds, winds and the hissing of tree leaves, their sight is ever entangled with the forest landscape, thus reading its intricate structures as alphabets, and the fabric of their bodies corresponds well to the caresses of the tree boughs and enables symbiotic interaction. It seems that long familiarity with the woodland as well as its visceral impact contributes not just to Giles' and Marty's formation of 'place perception' (Ritter and Duaska 2011: 164), but to their sense of rural identity as well. Hence, Giles' and Marty's experience of the forest unveils a deeper level of material enmeshment, which substantiates J. Grange's argument that 'trees in forest landscapes often present themselves as dominant in our field of vision' for 'our eyes are so fixed that the space in front of us dominates our consciousness' (qtd. in Ritter and Duaksta 2011 : 162). Despite her estrangement from the Hintock mores, the forest's materiality has a visceral, emotional and psychological impact on Grace, temporarily reviving her lost sense of connection and rootedness. The wood's acoustic performance works on Grace's senses and brings back into her consciousness the faded recollections of the past: 'the crash of a felled tree in the depths of the nearest wood recalled the past at the

moment, and all the homely faithfulness of Winterbourne' (1996: 336). Here I think what the novel evokes is much more than a romantic nostalgic yearning, but a sense of forest's materiality as an active agent. Eventually, however, Grace is much more infatuated by urban glamour: she decides to cling to its rarefied culture and compromise her rustic identity.

b- Entrapped Bucolic Love: The Discrepancy between Pastoral Fantasy and Bleak Reality:

Both texts align with pastoral design, chronicling a 'bucolic romance' unfolding in a woodland setting, yet both of them inspire a counter-pastoral vision that bucolic love is far from being ideal. While resurrecting the romance between Giles and Fitzpiers, the movie exclusively capitalizes on the couple's experience of the wood and invests in a number of scenes which feature their courtship in its precincts (00:38:00/00:32:00/ 00:39:00). Grace's meeting with Fitzpiers happens accidentally in the nearby wood during the Black Spell ritual. This meeting, albeit not their first, is a landmark in their lives as it marks a mutual initiation to the instinctual desire which would later on urge them into matrimony. Hence, the wood is the birthplace of Grace's unselfish romantic love and Fitzpiers' sexual desire. The forest is thus a haven for communion with one's nature and a place where to come to terms with 'the impersonal nature of desire' (Harisson 1992: 91). Paradoxically, however, this romantic relationship, as the later scenes evidence, is far from ideal: its stability is continuously threatened by domestic disharmony as there is a jarring cultural and social gap between the partners. Perceiving himself to belong to a 'higher' social class, Fitzpiers rejects any association with the rural folk, an aspect which upsets Grace and causes ongoing fracture in the relationship. Fitzpiers' infatuation with Grace eventually fades away when he encounters Mrs. Charmond with whom he indulges in a romantic affair which would eventually destroy the marriage. Thus, the movie adheres to counter-pastoral view that bucolic love is neither enduring nor ideal.

Hardy's revision of conventional bucolic romance takes on a far more radical outlook, juxtaposing the faithful, unconditional and uncompromising love of Giles and Marty, that of constantly wavering and indecisive Grace with the obsessive and self-interested affection of Tim Tang and of Suke Damson, and the erotic as well as raw

sexual desire of Fitzpiers. Marty's love of Giles is unrequited, yet is genuine, unvarnished and faithful. On Giles' grave, she swears: 'if ever I forget your name let me forget home and heaven' (1996: 364). Similarly, Giles' passion for Grace, despite her decision to effortlessly let go of their romantic past, is as genuine and as unadulterated as Marty's. Grace, however, influenced by the rarified culture of the city and endeavoring to accommodate parental satisfaction, she chooses Fitzpiers over Winterborne and his 'homely faithfulness' (1996: 336). Unlike Marty who vows to remain eternally faithful to Giles after his death, Grace reconciles with her adulterous husband, returns to city life, to become ultimately alienated from Hintock. Suke is no less artificial than Grace: infatuated by the urban glamour of Fitzpiers, she intentionally seduces him into kissing her; in return, the latter profitably succumbs to the seduction. While officially engaged to Tim Tang, Suke still yearns to flirt with Fitzpiers, which embitters Tim and enrages him into setting a mantrap in the forest to kill Fitzpiers. Worse than Suke, Fitzpiers embodies, according to Kevin Z. Moore, the 'unprincipled rhetoric of desire' (1990:139), in which 'desire is neither sympathetic nor lasting, but variable and momentary' (1990: 145). Implementing this logic in social interactions, he flirts with Suke while married to Grace, and thereafter cheats on her again with Mrs. Charmond. What is being emphasized here is to revise the conventional tropes associated with bucolic love, such as fidelity, chastity and innocence. Instead, Hardy highlights the ways in which romantic love is entrapped by internal greed as well social bias.

Often suspense is a key ingredient in visual narratives and, in order to magnify it, Agland seems to simplify the movie's representation of the love story, eliding deeper symbolic significances of characters. This is probably the reason why Agland enacts a fair amount of surgery work at the level of the plot as well as dialogue. For instance, Marty's affection for Giles is whittled away, so is Tang's relationship with Suke. Furthermore, he constructs a more sympathetic portrayal of Fitzpiers, blurring his flirtation with Suke. For instance, he elides the scene where the latter seduces Fitzpiers into kissing her. Where he implies a late evening encounter between Fitzpiers and Suke, there is no evidence that the two indulge in a romantic relationship. Furthermore, whittling away Fitzpiers' comments on the temporality of desire as well as his intention to marry Grace for social benefits, the director suggests that the fracture in the couple's relationship comes down to domestic disharmony not because

of Fitzpiers' narcissistic desire and sexual infatuations. Hence, Agland tempers down the novel's stance on raw sexual desire, the antithesis of bucolic love, which makes him less radical than Hardy. The director's editing work here indicates a desire towards material success that can only be earned when the audience's appeal is guaranteed. This is probably why the director decides that the love story should be less gloomy and more enthralling.

Fitzpiers' and Suke's treachery of Grace and Tim takes place in the woodland, which might imply that Hardy replicates the culturally deeply-rooted perceptions of forests as spaces of errancy and corruption, where one can easily succumb to unrestrained sexuality. Despite moral obligations which bind Suke and Fitzpiers to Tim and Grace, both of them violate the morality of bourgeois respectability to satisfy their own whims, flirting with each other. Paradoxically, however, Grace's ultimate sojourn to a one-chimney hut in the forest, rebelling against the social laws which still enchain her to her adulterous husband, mitigates the very duality which the early scenes set out. Resenting the tyrannical social directives which deprive her of divorce, Grace flees her home to find refuge at Giles' hut in the woodland. The days she spends in the wood do not mark any attempt, especially on the side of Giles, to indulge in a romantic or sensual act despite strong feelings of love and attachment. Giles' self-restraint and discipline indicates that the issue is not with the forest as a locus of sensuality and unrestrained sexuality, but rather lies in what people wish to make of the forest space. The inability of Grace to secure a divorce from her husband, despite his sexual infidelity, affirms that corruption actually inhabits the legal system rather than the forest's remote recesses. Hence, the woodland here is presented as participating in Grace's rebellion against the social law which obliges her to succumb obediently to her husband. The woodland, we are told, is the safest place for her to escape the eyes of the rural community and the eyes of her unreliable spouse: 'you had better stay where you are for the present, if you wish not to be caught,' Giles says to Grace (1996: 302). Thus, the novel erases barriers between culture and nature, promoting intimacy and participatory relationships with the natural world.

Tim's bloodthirsty revenge in the wood might be argued to contribute to human-nature separation, implying that the woodland is altered to be unsafe, fearful and perilous. So does the invocation of the mysterious character of the gypsy during the Black Spell ritual, a scene which the director excludes from the movie. The gypsy

seems to wander in the woodland not for leisurely purposes, but to seek revenge on Mrs. Charmond: 'he suspected that this man, who seemed so distressed and melancholy, might be that lover and persistent wooer of Mrs. Charmond whom he had heard so frequently spoken of, and whom it was said she had treated cavalierly' (1996: 152). The presence of a gypsy with murderous intentions in the forest might contribute to its 'Othering', by presenting it as a refuge to bandits and criminals. This might also replicate a perception of the woods as places of anarchy and disorder (Harrison 1992: 61). The murder of Mrs. Charmond, however, takes place in the city not in the woodland, and the presence of the gypsy in the Hintocks is a mere coincidence. In this sense, the novel doesn't evoke repulsion from the wood, but rather engages complex characters whose personalities reflect both vicious and virtuous qualities. Evil here is dislocated from the woodland space and located in the characters themselves; to use the words of Northrop Frye: 'the savagery that once traditionally belonged to the forests now lurks in the hearts of men – civic men. The dangers lie within; not without' (1995: 212). That is to say, the forests have no bearings on notions of evil or good; it is characters' actions which might be vicious or virtuous.

Returning to the convergences between the narratives, I argue that both texts debunk the pastoral myth of rural stability and harmony to uncover a sharp discrepancy between fantasy and reality. This is explicitly expressed through the character of Grace who hardly reconciles her old experience of the forest to the present reality. Returning back to nature, Grace's interaction with the Hintock woodlands is based solely on the leisure opportunities they offer to her, although she is inwardly attached to it through the memories of the past. Grace's vision of the woodland is ostensibly clouded with a sense of longing and nostalgia and her experience of it is haunted by childhood reminiscences:

> At the moment of their advance they looked back, and discerned the figure of Miss Melbury who, alone of all observers, stood in the full face of the moonlight, deeply engrossed in the proceedings. By contrast with her life of late years they made her feel as if she had receded a couple of centuries in the world's history (1996: 145).

In the forest Grace recalls 'the homely faithfulness of Winterbourne (1996: 336). This romantic impulse is eloquently demonstrated early in the movie through the scene where she breaks up with Giles. In the forest Grace's dull face seems to convey

longing as well as attachment to this particular spot which was once a nest for her romance with Giles (00:28:00). For the lovers, the forest's trees were once (and are still) epitomes of togetherness: on one of the trees is carved the first letters of their names, and the way in which the letters seem to be indelibly forged into the tree's trunk signals a strong desire to commemorate their love eternally (00:28:32). The lovers' tendency to rely on the tree as a means to enshrine their attachment is a palpable romantic trope which evidences intimacy with nature and encapsulates a sense of reverence towards trees and recognition of their primordial existence. Where the forest's majestic trees are steadfast, enduring and unbending, the two lovers aspire to similar everlasting love. With this symbolism at the forefront, the movie gestures towards childhood innocence and the purity of Arcadian love, yet this pastoral connection to nature is forgone with Grace's exposure to urban life.

Hence, both narratives exploit the experience of nostalgia and longing to foreground the tension between pastoral yearning and felt experiences, where Grace ultimately rejects her romantic past, to cling, instead, to conceptions of civilized culture. An idyllic past is replaced by various feelings of economic insecurity which entraps Giles and stymies his romantic aspirations. While looking at the forest through the veil of nostalgia, Grace's actions are socially mediated and culturally constructed: while still captivated by her past love, she submits willingly to the orders of her father who aims at elevating his social position. Thus, she gives up on Giles and yields easily to the influence of the socially superior Fitzpiers. Where Grace finds in the forest a haven for leisurely walks, she still finds it quite difficult for her to inhabit it. Hence, she becomes a 'tourist of fashion' (Moore 1990: 153) in her own country, and instead of seeking reconnection with rustic life, she seeks solace and thus accompanies Charmond for 'the possibilities of a refined and cultivated inner life, of subtle psychological intercourse' (163). In effect, the movie accentuates Grace's ambivalence: her tendency to consider the forest solely for its leisurely pleasure is conveyed in a scene where she overtly expresses professed jealousy of Mrs. Charmond who roams the world exploring the cities of Italy and Switzerland (00:28: 13). While Grace is ostensibly connected to her rural surroundings by the means of daily walks, she inwardly rejects the pastoral mode of life as it impedes her material aspirations. In this sense, the texts indicate the discrepancy between the pastoral ideal: to live in a rural district is to also suffer the different meanings of deprivation and confinement. It

is this very reason which had motivated Melburry to send Grace to the city to acquire a refined education which would secure her a respectable social position. In fact, Grace would have never dreamed of such a privilege, if she spent her childhood in little Hintock. Therefore, for Grace, childhood innocence is a transitory and brittle phase which introduces her and Giles into adult life when the experiences of heartache and disillusionment are inevitable. Similarly, her connection to the natural world becomes a mere past experience which whirls away when she decides to cling to a more 'sophisticated' urban culture.

This sense of rootlessness and disconnection assumes an especially melancholic mood in the movie, where the strategic use of bleak-toned music as well as pathetic fallacy culminates in elegiac feelings of mourning and lamentation. In the separation scene, the intensity of loss is projected into the forest's landscape in intimation that the natural world reciprocates the wretchedness of Giles and the unhappiness of Grace. The lovers' fading love becoming a ragged memory takes on the form of yellowish tree leaves. The leaves, scattered here and there and blown up by the wind, echo the hopelessness and dispiritedness of the lovers, being trapped by class dynamics and thus deprived of each other. The scene takes place at the ingress of autumn which signals transience and change, which, unfortunately, is unfavourable to the romance between Grace and Giles. Through the visualization of this scene, the movie seems to replicate conventional pastoral appreciations where nature is believed to be a benevolent power responding to people's emotional experiences. Thus, nature seems to lament the turmoil of the lovers and console their melancholy, which is quite paradoxical. However, the imagery here is much more complex and nuanced than it seems and, I believe, it invokes a post-pastoral vision. Here the life-span of romantic love is seen in terms of the cyclic rhythms of nature: the decaying romance (as symbolized in the yellowish leaves) is portrayed as part of a decaying landscape. Hence, the underlying significance of this imagery is to assert a post-pastoral view of a landscape inherently shaped by decadence and a romantic bucolic love threatened by dissolution. Thus, the movie draws parallels between the human and the non-human, alerting readers into seeing human experience of love as ephemeral as a leave.

While paring away the scenes where the novel charts characters' participatory relationships with the wood, the movie undoes complexity and succinctly demarcates rigid lines between Grace – the tourist gazer – and the real inhabitants of the forest

who suffer daily ordeals and hardships. The watching mode serves a drastic role in magnifying the novel's counter-pastoral impulse, especially when it captures the miserable realities surrounding the lives of the rural inhabitants. Across the movie, the viewer is inclined to identify with the impoverished Marty, whose spars making proves that 'woodland labours are neither kindly nor joyous' (Moore 1990: 146). The same feeling can be experienced towards Giles who appears utterly alienated and miserably dispirited after losing his home to Mrs. Charmond, the owner of the Hintock woods. Indeed, close-ups of Giles' dull face become a powerful vehicle transmitting the very meanings of sadness, dispossession, disappointment and futility: we see him planting trees, yet his face and mechanical movements barely convey enjoyment and his attitude hardly resembles that of an immersed, passionate or hopeful figure. When he first welcomes Grace to her father's home, an enforced sense of intimidation underlies his tone while trying to vainly remind her of childhood dreams, old reminiscences of the past and apparently forsaken love promises. Ultimately, both in the novel and the movie, the ruin of Giles' romance with Grace incarnates a rupture in the rural social relations, an aspect which underscores the division of the rural social system into the upper and the lower classes, with an irreconcilably jarring gap in between.

c- The Encroachment of Technology into Hintock Woodlands: The Transformation of Arcadia:

The movie's ultimate transformation of traditional sentimental pastoral is consolidated through the director's decision to incorporate a logging machine into the heart of what otherwise be called an Arcadian world. The machine does not appear frequently in the timescale of the movie, yet, whenever introduced onto the stage, the time duration is expanded to extremely long shots of two minutes, one minute and a half, or so. Introduced in the opening scenes, the machine's noise and its smoke contrast sharply with the serenity and the tranquility of the natural surroundings (00: 04: 50/ 00: 05: 10). With the machine's noise in the foreground, the movie questions a possibility for immersion, repose and peacefulness in the forest. The cinematic stage is even more expressive of the transformations which the machine produces upon the natural world: with the view of timber piles scattered here and there, the forest ceases to be a natural enclave or a haven for relaxation; it is rather transformed into a manufacturing

resource. Hence, it can be assumed that the machine fashions a metaphor of rapacious capitalism, with all its different meanings of wanton exploitation and destruction.

Unlike in the movie, Hardy doesn't refer to a sophisticated logging machine anywhere in his text. The barking as well as felling work, we are told, are conducted through traditional means relying on a ripping-tool and axes: 'what he had heard was the tear of the ripping-tool as it ploughed its way along the sticky parting between the trunk and the rind' (1996: 134). In another reference, the narrator observes: 'when the oak stood naked-legged, and as if ashamed; till the axe-man came and cut a ring round it' (1bid). On the other hand, the way Agland foregrounds the logging machine in the forefront of the frame contradicts sharply Hardy's representation of machinery in other novels like *Tess*. As discussed by critics like Gerd Bayer and John Parham, 'Hardy does not leave out machinery and modern technology in the books, but it does not dominate any of the novel's scenes, but is instead found in the background' (Heinzl 2011: 104). Thus, it could be argued that 'the dominance of the reaping machine [sic] in the movie scene would therefore suggest a bigger influence of machinery on men than portrayed in the book, showing that the lives of the woodlanders have already been disrupted and that they are already closer to "modern" society than Hardy wants us to believe' (ibid). I agree with Heinzl and add that the way Agland stages the machine gestures towards the hierarchal division of the rural society in relation to the labour market as well. While in the novel the barking and felling work is occasionally envisioned as a relatively communal experience, the movie prompts us to see it as part of a purely capitalist structure. Indeed, in the movie, while the workers of lower position are shown to be enslaved to the machine till late hours of the day, John Melbury seems to assume a commanding position and staying at distance monitoring the laborers' work. The implication here is that Agland sees capitalism to be deeply entrenched in the fabric of rural Hintock, thus shaking its social structure and disrupting social harmony.

2) The Representation of the Hintock Woodland as an Ecosystem of Biodiversity

R.P. Harrison defines forests as 'prodigious ecosystems: environments where various species establish their "niche" and exist in complex, integrated relationships to one another, each contributing its share to the network and each, in turn, depending on the delicate coherence of the network as a whole' (1992: 199). Indeed, a forest has a valuable significance as an ecosphere where diverse species are interconnected and interrelated through an interchange of nurturing relationships. Given the intricate dependencies connecting the various organisms living in such an ecosystem, forests are analogous to 'the earth as a single, complex integrated ecosystem' (Harrison 1992: 199). Harrison believes that a recognition of forests as 'complex integrated ecosystem[s]' is essential to becoming more considerate of their value. Indeed, these are vivid incarnations of the multiple forms of entanglements which bond the human to the non-human and enlace the local to the global: 'what is true for a particular forest's ecosystem is true for the totality of the biosphere. Humanity begins to appear in a new light: as a species caught in the delicate and diverse web of a forest-like planetary environment' (1992:199).

In fact, Hardy's representation of woods shares clear resonances with Harrison's definition. His depiction of the Hintock woodlands complies with the laws of ecology initially because Hardy is preoccupied with the wealth of species inhabiting its precinct and his text offers opportunities for ecocritics to recover significant understanding of inter/intra-species enmeshment in the world as understood by Hardy. Hence, at the core of the novel is a resistance to the conventional symbolic use of forest lore to focus instead on animal habitat and a non-human community practice. In succinct phrasing, Hardy's writing is valuable to ecocritics because it celebrates forests as prosperous and lively biomes. In its turn, the movie marks occasional moments which consolidate a perception of non-human animals as companion subjects, and this inspires a sense of co-existence crucially significant to maintain biodiversity. This, however, is not to say that the movie is explicitly eco-centric, for, indeed, non-human subjects sometimes seem to lack real agency across the narrative. In effect, being heavily redacted to form a script whose duration must meet the

demands of a filmic medium and capitalizing on the romantic attachment between Giles and Grace, the movie oft elides the novel's rich texture on non-human practice in the world.

a- The Novel's Perspective on Biodiversity: Integrating the Biotic Community into the Narrative Fabric

Hardy's *The Woodlanders* resists an anthropocentric perception of forests and woods as a neutral setting whose only significance is to support the dramatic action and equally challenges abstract engagement with the natural world as a broader category. It, instead, highlights the fecundity, abundance and diversity of the wood's ecology. The novel's ecological method of identifying wildlife by specific species and genus names works well to draw attention to the wealth of organisms and species inhabiting the Hintock woodland. Indeed, across the narrative, organisms are identified by their individual species: tree, plant and animal species are not referred to as broad categories, but acquire particular names. When the Hintock inhabitants celebrate the Black Spell ritual in the neighboring woodland, the narrator digresses from the plot to capture the forest's wealth of animals: 'two or three hares and rabbits bounded down the glade from the same direction' (146). In chapter III, the narrator calls attention to Marty's intimacy with the environment: her familiarity with the bird species inhabiting the wood is intriguing: 'a lingering wind brought to her ear [...] other vocalized sorrows of the trees, together with the screech of owls, and the fluttering tumble of some awkward wood-pigeon ill-balanced on its roosting-boughs' (16). With frequent experience of work in the woodland, Giles becomes familiar with its creatures: 'he seemed to be accustomed to the noises of woodpeckers, squirrels, and such small creatures' (296). In addition, the narrative identifies the variety of plants and trees thriving in the wood: the tree species vary from fir, oaks, hollies, ashes, hazels, orchards, elms, birches and apple trees; the plant and flower species include strawberries, raspberries, brambles, parsley, snowdrops, primroses, and other vernal flowers. In chapter VII, while Grace and her father have a stroll in the nearby woodland, they spot myriads of trees and plants: 'in some of these dells they passed by holly berries in full red growing beside oak and hazel whose leaves were as yet not far removed from green, and brambles whose verdure was rich and deep as in the month of August' (52). The narrative attends to a variety of tiny biotic elements which

usually grow in shady places like tree branches and trunks; these elements vary from small insects as well as creepers. Whilst in Giles' hut inside the deepest recesses of the wood, Grace could see,

> Trees in jackets of lichen, and stockings of moss. At their roots were stemless yellow fungi like lemons and apricots, and tall fungi with more stem than stool.[…]Further on were other tufts of moss in islands divided by the shed leaves – variety upon variety, dark green and pale green; moss like little fir-trees, like plush, like malachite stars; like nothing on earth except moss (307).

On another woodland walk, Grace comes across an archaic building whose ruins became a natural habitat for vegetative life: 'the ashlar of the walls, where not overgrown with ivy and other creepers, was coated with lichen of every shade, intensifying its luxuriance with its nearness to the ground till, below the plinth, it merged in moss' (58). The naming of organisms in these different textual references evidences Hardy's familiarity with the Dorset locale and validates the closeness of Wessex' denizens (Marty and Giles) to the natural world. More importantly, however, it signifies that the writer appreciates the Hintock wood as an ecologically prosperous biome. The moral here is to reinforce a sense of biosphere diversity: while inspiring a sense of value and reverence towards the biotic community, naming species, according to Robert Hass, makes the natural world worthy of attention especially as 'there's a tremendous tendency, especially in our hurried-up society, to abstract, not to see' (qtd in Shillinger 1995: para 29). Indeed, biotic elements, regardless how tiny or futile they might look, retain an intrinsic value and ecologically delicate functions of paramount importance to environmental balance. Recognizing these organisms for their intrinsic value 'models a new way of seeing' the world around us (ibid: par. 22) and has the potential to counter our tendency to 'not notice' it (ibid: para. 2-3).

In his essay, Kerridge argues that Hardy's fictive style integrates natural elements as part and parcel of the narrative fabric: 'the activity of small creatures and the immense distances spanned in planetary observation both represent departures from the normal concerns of character and plot. Yet such moments are parts of the very plots they seem to escape' (2000: 269). Indeed, at the surface level, *The Woodlanders* is preoccupied with the conventional themes of class, marriage, and love fulfillment, yet it is ecologically pertinent because of its sustained attention to the non-human habit in the world. Hence, while digressing from the main plot, the narrative

pushes beyond mere naming of individual species to incorporate the biotic community of the Hintock woods as part of the story's subplot. For instance, in chapter III, a description of characters' daily occupations is not less significant than the daily activities of the animal community: 'the woodlanders everywhere had already bestirred themselves, rising this month of the year at far less dreary time of absolute darkness' (1996: 23). The narrator refers to the 'owls that had been catching mice in the outhouses, rabbits that had been eating the winter-greens in the gardens, and stoats that had been sucking the blood of the rabbits' (1996: 24). While taking us into the woodland depths, the narrative familiarizes readers with the ways in which plant life unfolds in parallels with the unfolding life of humans. For example, Chapter XIX chronicles the obscure ways in which light and temperature contribute to the emergence of new installments of flowers:

> Spring weather came on rather suddenly, the unsealing of buds that had long been swollen accomplishing itself in the space of one warm night. The rush of sap in the veins of the trees could almost be heard. The flowers of late April took up a position unseen, and looked as if they had been blooming a long while, though there had been no trace of them the day before yesterday (1996: 133).

While this passage might be considered as a mere technical device introducing readers to the novel's subplot, I contend that it simultaneously celebrates non-human practice and thus draws visibility to the natural world. Moreover, the passage charts a scientifically accurate description of how flowers emerge in the natural habitat. These explanatory details divert readers' attentiveness from the narrative flow to ponder on plant life. Hence, I posit that while daily engagements of human characters seem to be a focal point in the narrative, animal and plant life is also endowed with a centrality of its own in the overall scale of the representation. Eventually, these instances which resurrect the presence of the non-human, which might be deemed to serve a mere artistic function, to ecocritics like Anna Feuerstein actually retains political underpinnings, inviting us to,

> Examine the possibilities and limits of an inclusive democratic representation extending beyond the human […] this more inclusive representation can also be taken seriously as literary representation, which views the novel as democratic, and considers it a fruitful space for imagining a multi-species political community (2018: 1- 2).

I agree with Feuerstein that imagining ‘a multi-species political community’ is at the core of Hardy’s fiction, and further suggest that the novel alerts us to the fact that such community can only flourish when the ideals of harmony and coexistence are not trespassed, for these are the preconditions for the prosperity of biodiversity. Indeed, across his the narrative, Hardy often brings the ‘non-human perspective[s]’ to the forefront (Kerridge 2000: 269), frequently referring to the animal kingdom as a neighbouring community to the Hintock inhabitants (1996: 301-307).

In *The Woodlanders*, the human is co-extensive to the non-human, especially in terms of mutual dependencies, but also reciprocated in nurturing relationships. In effect, the narrative documents intra-species entanglements by highlighting the productive functions of the Hintock woods and hinting at human’s ongoing responsibility in maintaining the forest’s ecosystem. For instance, the woodland is presented as a source of a living to the impoverished rural inhabitants who exploit its abundant resources such as fruit, timber, spars, and bark for different economic purposes. We encounter in the opening scene Marty ‘making spars’ in order to earn her living (1996: 10). In chapter XXVIII, the forest is envisioned as a land of plenty, abundance, and bounty, supporting the survival of the rural community:

> Surrounded by orchards lustrous with the reds of apple-crops, berries, and foliage, the whole intensified by the gliding of the declining sun. The earth this year had been prodigally bountiful, and now was the supreme moment of her bounty. In the poorest spots the hedge were bowed with haws and blackberries; acorns cracked underfoot, and the burst husks of chestnuts lay exposing their auburn contents as if arranged by anxious sellers in a fruit-market (202).

The woods are exploited by Mrs Charmond and John Melbury and are thus entangled with their social prospects, retaining a symbolic significance as markers of their social power and dominance. Owning the Hintock woods, Mrs Charmond is a commanding authority in the Hintocks. She gains her financial independence from the exploitation of the forest’s resources. She not only deprives Giles of his house by taking over its lease after the death of John South, but she daringly asks to purchase Marty’s chestnut locks to use for her own purposes. Similarly, a timber dealer, Melbury sells his trees for profit in order to climb the social ladder, but to also invest in his daughter’s

education. His work in timber sustains his social standing and redeem him from an impoverished past when he was constantly bullied for his lowly social position. Hence, the novel's treatment of the forest insinuate a post-pastoral view-point, celebrating human and no-human co-dependencies and envisaging landscape as an agentic force.

Further, the novel implies the post-pastoral trope of human responsibility towards the ecosystem. Indeed, while the woodland is vital for characters' basic needs, so is human presence to maintain the forest's diversity. As Tony Fincham explains, 'Hardy's Woodlands – stretching South and East from Melbury Osmund (the original Great Hintock) – would have mainly belonged to the Ilchester family of Melbury park (Great Hintock House)' (2008: 03). Despite this ownership system, however, the forests were nevertheless accessible to the public because many of them were leased to the common people (Morgan 2008:4). In effect, the woodlands were 'cultivated'; meaning, 'they were pastoral rather than wild, indigenous trees being intersected with apple orchards' (Louw 2007: 97). Hence, the woodlanders play a fundamental role in the forest's ongoing rejuvenation.This is precisely the case of Giles who plays a regenerative role in the woodland through his forestry work. In the words of Marjorie Garson, Giles 'is creatively involved with nature', having 'unique power to make trees grow', and 'a desire to help them achieve their own fullness of being' (2011: 20). The death of Giles is felt keenly as it entails a loss of an active regenerative force within the forest's ecosystem:

> The whole wood seemed to be a house of death, pervaded by loss to its uttermost length and breadth. Winterbourne was gone and the copse seemed to show the want of him; those young trees, so many of which he had planted, and of which he had spoken so truly when he said that he should fall before they fell, were at that very moment sending out their roots in the direction that he had given them with his subtle hand (1996: 302).

Here the narrative recasts the cultural antidote that pristine nature is able to maintain its own balance and equilibrium. Instead, the narrative envisions an 'interventionist' approach where people's activities are crucial for the prosperity and the regeneration of the woodland's ecosystem.[23] Thus, the narrative bridges the gap between culture

[23] See David Ingram, *Green Screen, Environmentalism and Hollywood Cinema* (University of Exeter Press, 2000): pp.19.

and nature, by highlighting a corporeal as well as ethical engagement with a biosphere, which situates human beings in the natural word.

Hardy's rural characters, however, are not always of the type which Ray Dasman describes in *Wildlife Biology* (1946) as 'ecosystem people' who maintain 'sustainable relation to the local ecosystem', as Richard Kerridge claims (2000: 270). In fact, the rural inhabitants enact harmful practices which have the potential to endanger the forest and jeopardize the wildlife which unfolds within its ecosystem. For instance, chapter XII discloses the cruelty of hunters towards the forest's biotic community: 'they were intending to re-enter the copse when a panting fox emerged with a dragging brush, trotted past them tamely as a domestic cat, and disappeared amid some dead fern' (85). Hunting here evidences the eco-ambivalence of the rural inhabitants who compromise sustainable relationships with the wood to pursue different economic as well as leisurely activities. The characters' eco-ambivalence is ultimately demonstrated in chapter XIX where the narrator describes the barking work, a seasonal agricultural activity which transforms not only the appearance of trees, but the overall pattern of the natural landscape. In effect, with barking, peeled trees become naked and the entire face of the Hintock wood changes: the 'oak stood naked-legged', (1996:134) and 'the woodland seemed to change from an open filigree to an opaque body of infinitely larger shape and importance' (1996:142). This change becomes obvious when we juxtapose it with the western part of the Blackmore Vale: in comparison to the wood's 'opaque body', the southern part of the vale is characterized with 'orchards', which 'were a blaze of pink bloom' and 'some of the richly flowered trees' (1996:138). Emphasizing these changing aesthetic qualities, the novel calls attention to landscape dynamicity and challenges the ideal of aesthetic endurance. Significantly, however, the barking work brings into sharp focus the ways in which the woodlanders' excessive instrumental view of the forest might bring about its eventual destruction. Indeed, across the novel, trees are diseased 'wrinkled like an old crone's face, and antlered with dead branches that rose above the foliage of their summits' (1996: 195); half-dead oak trees are 'hollow, and disfigured with white tumours, its roots spreading out like claws grasping the ground' (209); and 'slimy streams of fresh moisture, exuding from decayed holes caused by old amputations, ran down the bark' (195). In another reference, the narrator reveals that the trees' leaves are 'deformed' and their curves 'crippled' (1996: 53). In fact, an oak tree can be

hollow and not look aesthetically pleasing, which might be considered as part of Hardy's endeavor to depict a real woodland and its biological processes rather than an idyllic one. Indeed, trees are living beings which contract illnesses and this further explains why the trees are hollow. Thus, this might be read as a post-pastoral perspective which considers landscape in terms of inevitable processes of birth and death. Simultaneously, however, that the trees are half-decayed and leaves are 'crippled' evokes a reconsideration of the barking work largely practiced by Hintock farmers. Indeed, research has proven that 'without bark the tree cannot transport sugar from its leaves to its roots. As the roots starve, they shutdown their pumping mechanisms, and because water no longer flows through the trunk up to the crown, the whole tree dries out' (Wohlleben 2016: 18). This explains the narrator's bleak tone and skeptical attitude towards the traditional practice of barking.

An antithesis to Giles' intimacy and communion with trees is John South whose fixation on the elm tree corroborates the eco-ambivalence of Hardy's rustic characters. Introduced as a supernatural figure which indirectly brings about the death of John South, the tree transcends a literal meaning to retain a symbolic resonance. John South's relationship to this tree often inspired post-romantic interpretations: Kevin Z. Moore believes that it fashions a metaphor of a yeoman's connection to trees. Moore argues that South's attitude towards the tree mirrors a romantic attachment to nature, yet 'what had been a healthy attachment to the tree in Wordsworth's emblem becomes a neurotic dependency in Hardy's reworking of it, one which does no body no good' (1990: 109). Unlike Moore, I posit that South's relationship to the tree incarnates escalating disconnection from nature and gestures towards an obsessive and unhealthy utilitarian approach to nature. Indeed, a textual reference like the following works against feelings of attachment and connection,

> As the tree waved South waved his head, making it his fugleman with object obedience. "Ah- when it was quite a small tree," he said, "and I was a little boy, I thought one day of chopping it off with my hook to make a clothes-line-prop with. But I put off doing it, and then I again thought that I would; but I forgot it, and didn't, and at last it got too big; and now 'tis my enemy, and will be the death of me. Little did I think, when I let that sapling stay, that a minute would come when it would torment me, and dash me into my grave (1996: 92).

Illustrated by Mr. South's frequent endeavors to chop down the tree are different meanings of human conquest – exploiting the natural world in rapacious and irrational measures. As the word 'my enemy' implies, South's hallucinations uncover an internalized antagonistic attitude to the tree which ultimately bifurcates to a neurotic and psychological malady at his deathbed, triggering his fear that the tree's decay might bring about his death. Here, it seems that South does not appreciate the tree on its own terms, but perceives it in terms of egotistical fancies, seeing in its survival the prospects of a long life as well as immortality. This stance, as Naomi Klein cogently explains, supports 'a nonreciprocal, dominance-based relationship with the Earth, one purely of taking' (2015: 169). It is worth noting here that South's hostility towards the tree is based on a superstitious belief that 'there exists between him and every member of class an intimate and altogether special relationship' (Radford 2003:146); consequently, its decay will bring about his death. Evident here is an archaic form of superstitious and fallacious anthropological lore which, while still surviving in the precincts of Wessex countries, dictate a rift between the human and the non-human. This anthropological lore, as I will explain Chapter 2, is complex and leans towards nuanced ecological interpretations.

b- The Movie's Approach to Biodiversity: Sharing the Cinematic Stage with Non-human Subjects

Agland has openly expressed his aspirations towards environmental activism and believed that visual media can play a decisive role in reconnecting humans to nature. In one of his interviews, he explains that he aims for an effective and serious engagement with the environmental dilemma to combat the escalating issue of deforestation. His movie named *Korup* (1982), which envisages plant and animal life in the jungles of Cameroon, can be considered as part of his environmental activism. Commenting on this film, Agland declared:

> I travelled for about two or three years in the tropics just to get to know other cultures, became very concerned in tropical deforestation and wanted to do something about it. In a very naïve way I chose Cameroon and I just bought a camera – I felt that the essential prerequisite of doing something like that was publicity (Jasper 1998: para. 8).

To further assert his ecological inclinations, Agland stated that the film was not aimed at material profit or professional success, but to raise awareness about the importance of parks: 'I made the film not because I wanted to be a film-maker, but because I wanted to make a park' (Jasper 1998: para. 8).

To extend Agland's environmental sensibilities to *The Woodlanders*, however, and say that the adaptation is overtly eco-cinematic is to exaggerate its eco-cinematic potential. As highlighted in the first section, the movie's explicit concern is to document a pastoral life fading away and taking with it any slight hope for social and economic stability. Hence, the movie contemplates the transformation of the rural society and the subsequent disjunction in the relationship between humans and nature, a critical issue inherently rooted in the expansion of modern modes of life as well as capitalist dynamics. It is the romance trope however which stands out for viewers as the cornerstone of the movie's thematic fabric, chronicling the tragic end of Giles' and Grace's love story. [24] This is reinforced through the movie's advertisement which foregrounds the image of Giles and Grace together intimately embracing each other, in a gesture towards the romantic relationship which unites them. To capitalize on these two themes is to remain truer to Hardy's novel, but to also garner the audience' appeal, ensure professional success and financial gain, for 'cultural value', as Simon Murray explains 'is not innate in any work, but is socially constructed, perpetuated, or challenged' (2012: 125), and audience's appeal is 'a prerequisite for any large-scale adaptation project' (2012: 127). The centrality of the love story in the movie shapes its ambivalent construction of the non-human community, especially its representation of fauna and flora. In fact, the director illuminates certain scenes which foreground the non-human voice as well as presence, and gesture towards the necessity of co-existing with nature. However, these scenes are not free from anthropocentric tendencies, often inclining to strip the non-human of real agency.

To begin with, the director's decision to shoot the movie in the heart of The New Forest is a strategic choice to consolidate ecocritical credentials. Nowadays, The New Forest is recognized as a vital site for wildlife locally as well as globally. The forest harbors an exceptional variety of plants including moss, beetles and lichen flora;

[24] Romance here refers to the romantic attachment of love and affection between Grace and Giles.

a wide range of tree species like oaks, beeches, birches, yews and many other species which provide as the natural home of different kinds of birds. In addition, the forest is a testimony to humankind's active role in maintaining the well-being of the ecosphere, having constantly been managed according to the modern-day ideas of ecology. In effect, the New Forest has long excited the interest of political leaders who set the better management of its natural wealth as a priority of their agendas. In 1079 when the New Forest was designated as a royal forest by William I (The Crown Lands Management Plan 2008- Summary': 5). To preserve its production of timber, two different Acts of Increase and Preservation of Timber were issued in 1689 and 1808 to include the forest as an enclosed area (ibid). Between 1971 and 2000 – with the recognition of the biosphere diversity of the New Forest – sustainable management and conservation of its natural and cultural heritage became a priority of the Forestry Commission (ibid). By 2005, the forest was designated as a National Park and became a Special Area of Conservation (ibid). As this historical record demonstrates, the New Forest remains a proof that pristine nature and wilderness are only mythical constructions advanced through cultural and literary imagination, and humans' continual management of the natural world is a more enduring truth. More importantly, the survey clearly illustrates that human agency is vital for the ecosystem's equilibrium and regeneration.

This context of modern management of forests filters into the movie which, similar to the novel, celebrates Giles' sustainable forestry work. Indeed, the director foregrounds a couple of scenes where Giles practices various techniques involved in the process of forestry rejuvenation including tree planting, transplanting, but also pruning, an indispensable seasonal practice absolutely necessary to grow healthier and long-aging trees (00:15:00/01:09:00/ 01: 13:00). What the movie effectively illustrates, however, is characters' utilitarian tendencies through the heedless felling of trees. As noted earlier, the incorporation of the logging machine evidences that deforestation in our industrially-driven society is far more serious than in Hardy's era. Despite this critical stance on deforestation, however, the movie does not imply that the forest's ecosystem is threatened by human agency and is, therefore, in the process of decaying. By contrast, wide angles of the forest's landscape, recurring across the movie in multiple occasions, display that the forest is in a healthy condition, looking densely wooded and prosperous (00: 53: 00/ 00:57:00). This eventually contrasts

sharply with the novel's pessimistic outlook that human's eco-ambivalent practices are potentially threatening to the ecosystem.

It is not easy to find a cinematic equivalence for the novel's ecological technique of naming diverse biome species. However, with more than half of the movie's events taking place outdoors, the director manages well to exploit the cinematic stage in a way which captures the biological diversity of the New Forest. With shifting scales, the movie features various cuts of majestic hills and sweeping vistas as well as medium close-ups of grass, creepers, flowers, and, occasionally, insects. For example, the movie frequently features sequences focusing on Graces' walk in the forest and wide angles as well as medium/extreme close-ups are purposefully used to capture flowers from different angles as well as scales (00:32:00/ 00:39:00/ 01:08:00). The flower species vary from one sequence to another according to seasonal variations, and, more importantly, the color of Grace's gowns mirror the colour of the flowers, implying that Grace aligns with the mutable seasons and is in tune with them. Ecologically charged, the scene where Grace confronts Suke in the forest, the camera pans through an installment of flowers, different from those introduced in the earlier scenes, and an extreme close-up is used to capture a spider (00:56:00). In a similar scene, an extreme close up features a bee sucking pollen. The scene then cuts to a wide angle capturing blossoming apple trees; and an effective use of soundtrack is used to foreground the noise of the bee, the hissing of the trees as well as a chorus of multiple bird species (01:13:00). With characters' confrontations taking place in the deep recesses of the forest, the movie affords a glance at the multiple tree species flourishing in the forest and the creepers thriving in their trunks as well as boughs (00:06:00/ 00:13: 00). The scene where John Melbury confronts Fitzpiers, rebuking him for cheating on Grace with Mrs. Charmond, constructs a vision of the forest as ecologically rich: a great variety of trees surround the characters, and when Fitzpiers falls down from the back of his horse, a thick soundtrack of multiple bird species dominates the scene, implying that the forest is their natural habitat (01:06:00/ 01:07:00). With sequences like these, the movie evokes a 'comprehensive perspective, one capable of grasping the place and role of elements and beings both large and small' (Hjort 2016:118). These scenes, however, are debatable. Indeed, while biotic elements seem to be part and parcel of the movie's shifting narrative scales and orientations, it is the human presence that is foregrounded the most indomitably.

A wild-life documentary filmmaker, Agland, while working on a film of the flora and fauna of Korup entitled *Korup: An African Rainforest* (1982), compiled a list of bird species which he encountered during his fieldwork in KNP (Rodewald, Dejalfve and A. Green 1994: 05). Similar painstaking work is involved in *The Woodlanders*, where the use of natural soundtrack consolidates a significant ecological stance. In the opening scene, as barber Percomb first sets foot in the forest, a variety of birds' sounds seem to call viewers' attention. Among these we can distinguish the sound of an owl, a blackbird, sparrows, chicken youngsters and a variety of other bird species. The vocal presence of the birds is not limited to this scene, but occurs repeatedly across the movie. For instance, coming back from Giles' party, the rural folk are singing, while the sound of a blackbird intermingles with the human voice (00: 20:00). In another scene, where Giles and Grace are conversing in the forest, a dense soundtrack of birds is introduced, thereby inducing contemplation on the diverse bird species inhabiting the woodland (00:29:00/ 00:58:00). The movie marks ecologically evocative scenes where the human vocal presence is minimized, whereas the intense soundtrack of multiple bird species dominates the cinematic space (00:56:00/ 01:00:00/ 01:06:00). Here the ecological edge of the natural soundtrack lies in its capacity to embody the vocal presence of the biotic community within the cinematic space, cuing viewers to be more attentive to the non-human communicative voice. To use Ladino's words, because the birds have significant presence, the movie 'challenges us not just to endure the sounds that nonhuman animals make but to learn to listen to, even appreciate them, as another kind of language' (2013: 141).This is not to say that the birds have a language that is similarly complex to that of human beings. What I mean, however, is that the movie celebrates the biomorphic sound as a distinct communicative system of semantic significances within the specific context of a birds' community, which thus challenges human hubris and prompts humility.

The movie includes a number of scenes where humans and non-humans are represented as equal subjects mutually sharing the cinematic space. At the outset of the movie, when silence prevails, a bird's sound is used to break this silence. This sound, however, is only heard the very moment when the barber ventures into the wood. The semantic significance of this abrupt sound is to highlight the bird's awareness of the barber's presence, as if being an alarm call to this stranger. In a response to the sound, the barber lifts his head up and looks around to figure out the

location of the bird, yet in vain. Here, the bird is constructed as a subject possessing the power of viewing, whereas the barber is the object of the bird's seeing gaze. Donna Haraway writes, 'vision is *always* a question of the power to see—and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices' (1988:192). In the light of Haraway's argument, it could be said that the bird's act of surveillance earns him a powerful position over the barber.

While further exploring the wood, the barber comes across a herd of pigs, which, at the awareness of the barber's approaching steps, quicken their steps, freeing the path to move in the opposite direction (00:02:00). There is a palpable ambiguity in this particular scene. On the one hand, the pigs do not seem to exchange eye contact with the barber, yet there is reciprocity of perception in their part as well as the barber. Thus, the barber holds back watching for a moment, and the pigs, in return, quicken their steps and divert their movements. Because the two different species are careful not to stumble through each other's path, it might be said that they are constructed as equal subjects exhibiting relatively equal perceptual qualities. Furthermore, with the barber's propensity not to disturb the pigs, respectfully allowing them to pass by peacefully, the director frames a human/non-human encounter which 'articulat[es] a norm for the viewer, a way of interacting with the natural environment […] that goes to the very heart of […] ecological filmmaking' (Hjort 2016: 120). However, it is worth noting here that the barber is on a mission to buy Marty's chestnut locks, which is the very antithesis of his initial ecological stance, and this makes us question his intention when he stops for the pigs whether, he respects them for real, or he is only intimidated by their presence. Coming to the close of the scene, however, the viewer observes an implicit tendency to privilege the presence of the barber over the pigs'. Where the barber takes the left position in the edge of the frame, the pigs are relegated to the extreme right-hand position; and when the barber further advances in his way to Marty's home, the pigs are pushed forth to the margin and disappear from the stage (00:02:40). Such a position, argues Elizabeth Henry, 'suggest[s] that the subject is on his/her way out of the frame, and out of the situation. It is an unstable position, announcing movement and pending disappearance' (2010: 173). Indeed, eventually the presence of the barber pushes the pigs away from the frame, which allows him to maintain a more powerful and dominant mastery position. Here, while Agland makes concessions to present the pigs as major participants in the cinematography, the film is

still basically a human story and about human relationships, and thus the animals seem to lack a real agency in the overall scale of representation.

The director envisages the forest space as a dwelling place for the humans and the non-humans alike. This is conveyed in the establishing scene where the director introduces the audience into small lodges and huts, thus suggesting that a number of the Hintock denizens actually live inside the forest. It could be argued here that the movie hints at human's belongingness to nature, having their proper dwelling in nature. A relatively domesticated milieu, the forest becomes a space for human and non-human encounter. In a latter scene, Mr. Melbury is shown to have a walk in the forest with Fitzpiers while discussing homely concerns and a herd of pigs are scattered around grazing in peace (00:31:26). In this scene, the movie blurs the dualistic view of species' identities, and inspires an ethical view of animals as companion species to humans, co-inhabiting the world in harmony and symbiosis. Hence, the movie, to use the words of Ladino, 'resists a speciesist perspective. The human and nonhuman animals draw our attention equally: we are involved in each scene through the perspectives of both'; this, in turn, 'subverts species hierarchies and reminds us of our companion species status' (2013: 141). While highlighting this moment of human intervention and intrusion into the Hintock woodland, the narrative again destabilizes the boundaries between the social and the natural and advocates a sense of interspecies communication. This crossing over the animal community makes of the woodland space a 'place of encounter, a contact zone', which, as Ivakhieve claims and as the narrative demonstrates, is 'charged with meaning, affect, and possibility' (Ivakhieve 2013: 245). This ultimately hints at the imperatives of co-existence, especially as the pigs seem to graze freely without being maltreated. This scene is not free from anthropocentric overtones however: while the forest is portrayed as a 'place of encounter', the humans seem to be distant from the non-human, for there is no active interaction and association between the two communities (ibid). Another issue here has to do with the politics of representation, the specific use of the mise-en-scene the most notably. While the camera privileges Melbury and Fitzpiers and endows them with a mastery position by occupying the forefront of the frame, the pigs only take up a marginal background position. This risks presenting the pigs as mere decorative objects in the scene.

Conclusion

The representation of forests in *The Woodlanders* (1887/1997) aligns, I suggest, with the core tenets of counter-pastoral (and sometimes post-pastoral) writing. Despite occasional overlaps between the movie and the novel, Agland is sometimes far more radical than Hardy. First, by incorporating the logging machine, the director responds to a modern society driven by industry and technology and implies that humans' relationship to forests and woods is more economically-driven than Hardy would incline us to believe. Second, Agland highlights an individualistic approach, capitalizing on the male and female protagonists' experience of the forest, whereas Hardy envisages a communal approach which serves to reconfigure culturally-entrenched notions of a forest/civilization dichotomy. Eliding the novel's communal approach, the movie implicitly evokes meditation on the increasing phenomenon of urbanization in the late twentieth century where social connection to forests is largely mediated by capitalist as well as leisure pursuits. Both texts recalibrate anthropocentric understandings of the natural setting as a symbolic background, and foreground the effect of the forest's materiality on humans' sense of identity and illustrate the ways in which literature becomes a prism to express a sense of identity that is inherently and indissolubly entangled with the forest lore. While the movie alerts viewers to the existing linkage between the forest experience and the construction of identity, the novel goes beyond to draw a sense of continuity between place and characters at deeper levels of material enmeshment. Despite these human and non-human reciprocal relationships however, Hardy's are complex characters whose activities, despite occasions of harmony, damage the physical world. A central argument in this chapter has to do with the representation of the biomorphic world which I will elaborate on more extensively in the next chapter. I argued that Hardy's novel resonates with the laws of ecology, mainly for celebrating the Hintock wood as a site of biodiversity. The movie, edited to suit the distinctive grammar and syntax of film, occasionally promotes a sense of co-existence between the human and the non-human, yet still cues subtle anthropocentric attitudes inherently determined by the fictional nature of the filmic narrative as well as its commercial purposes. In what

follows, I scrutinize the representation of the biomorphic world in *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872 / 2005), further exploring different means of promoting biodiversity and human and non-human co-existence.

Arboreal Imagery in *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872 /2005): Insights into the Culture/ Nature Continuum

Introduction

In 1912, when he reissued *UGT*, Thomas Hardy elected to include this work in his 'novels of character and environment'. This particular categorization, as Elizabeth Carolyne Miller explains, has double significance: while it emphasizes a realistic mode of representation where characterization takes precedence over plot mechanics, it also indicates the narrative's meditation on ecological issues: 'the "and" in Hardy's formulation "novels of character and environment" ', argues Miller 'is also crucial in that it suggests his novel's dialectical approach to human characters, the environment in which they live, and the complex, reciprocal relationship between them' (2016: 698). Hardy's conspicuous interest in the human and non-human connectedness was noted by contemporary critics like Hourace Moule who described the novel as 'filled with touches showing the close sympathy with which the writer has watched the life, not only of his fellow-men in the country hamlets, but of woods and fields and all the outward forms of nature' (1987 : 43). Moule added that the novel was characterised by 'the genuine air of the country breathing throughout it' (1987: 45). I agree with Miller and Moule that Hardy's fiction reveals inextricably interwoven relationships between characters and their rural environment. Moreover, the narrative is especially pertinent for ecocritical analysis pricisely because it demonstrates interconnectivity between animals, plant life and the rural culture. Otherwise put, I posit that the narrative transcends an abstracted form of depicting the rural environment, to draw more specific and rigorous attention to the interplay between flora – a basic constituent of the environment – and the rural culture.

Hence, the chapter explicates the arboreal imagery of Hardy's novel and its ecocritical imperatives. While complicating the arguments of the aforementioned critics, especially Miller's, I extend my ecocritical reading to the novel's movie adaptation by Nicholas Laughland (2005), with an aim to draw out notable similarities

and differences. More precisely, this chapter centers attention on the texts' depiction of trees in terms of their biotic/ physiological realities, their ecological, practical as well as social functions, and discusses their potential to mitigate the backgrounding of plants. The first section highlights similarities between the novel and the movie, investigating the ecocritical potential of the texts' strategic use of time-lapse as a means to foreground transience and temporality, existential conditions equally shared by the human and the non-human.[25] I further argue that Hardy's narrative dismantles the human and non-human boundary, especially through the writer's keen anthropological interest in pagan lore, superstition and folk-customs. To be more precise, here I explore the writer's invocation of anthropological concepts like 'animism', 'pantheism' and 'vegetable spirit' as cogent means to illustrate human-tree relatedness. Then, I turn attention to the texts' meditation on the tree-society's connectedness in the texts' specific context of rural Wessex. I contend that, while the novel's depiction of trees contributes to a better understanding of culture-nature connectivity, the movie is more ambivalent, occasionally deploying arboreal imagery to demarcate boundaries between the social and the natural.

This chapter, while pondering the core issue of biodiversity discussed earlier in Chapter One, addresses alternative notions about the human and non-human encounter, and weighs how artistic works can be a means to mitigate purely instrumental and reductionist attitudes towards plant life. While trees are the focal point of this chapter, however, I do not diminish the ecological import of insects, animals and human species, which I incorporate in Chapters One and Five. It is worth noting here that Hardy's abiding interest in the arboreal has been a subject of investigation to many scholars, especially ecocritics. For instance, arboreal fascination and human/ non-human relatedness in Hardy's narrative prose fiction are explored by both William A. Cohen and Elizabeth Caroline Miller in their respective articles (2014/2016). My study, in addition to its focus on the movie adaptation, goes deeper to gauge how Hardy infuses folklore as a means to break down hierarchal conceptions, but, more significantly, investigates how the writer's subtle use of 'animism' resonates

[25] According to Timothy Morton time-lapse is an effective means which serves to draw an image of a dynamic world. The use of time-lapse involves a succinct description of the gradual changes which animate the life of organisms. It introduces us to the complexities of this change within a short period of time. Morton argues that 'a time-lapse film of a flower growing and dying shows not only its fragility and unique beauty but also its linkage with everything else (2010: 45)'.

with scientific realities recently established in the field of botany. In my analysis, I draw from theories of the arboreal put forth by Kim Taplin (1998), Mathew Hall (2011), but also deploy some material from the scientific research of Petter Wohlleben (2016). In addition, I draw on the eco-theoretical insights advanced by Timothy Morton and Adrian Ivakiev whose insights, I believe, contribute significantly to my project and help me to better explain the eco-potential of Laughland' s visual and cinematic stylistic choices.

1) Depicting Trees' Physiological and Biotic Realities: Repairing the Bridge between the Human and Non-Human

a- Time-lapse Photography: Transience and Temporality

Hardy's writing style is distinguished by its painterly techniques which mark the longstanding impact of Dutch painting on Victorian literary discourse (Yeazell 2008: XVI).Years before the advent of photographic sciences, Hardy found in painterly techniques an effective means to underpin the realistic overtones of his fictional imagination (ibid). As Yeazell observes, 'only when the photographic reproduction of the visible world began to take the place once occupied by the faithful mimesis of the painters did the idiom of the "Dutch painting" gradually disappear from nineteenth-century rhetoric about novel' (ibid).This, however, never means that painterly techniques have entirely dissolved from the realm of fictional writing, a reality evidenced in Hardy's novel's subtitle 'A Rural Painting of the Dutch School (1872)' (ibid).This turn towards the painterly was acknowledged by Hardy's contemporary reviewers. In his essay, Horace Moule reads *UGT* as 'the best prose Idyll' in which, 'deserting the more conventional, and far less agreeable, field of imaginative creation which he worked in his earlier book, called *Desperate Remedies*, the author has produced a series of rural pictures full of life and genuine coloring' (1872: 43). In a similar vein, Virginia Woolf praises the novel for its mode of representation and effective manipulation of painterly techniques, which, according to Woolf, mark Hardy as an outstanding 'English Landscape painter' (1928: 83). What seems to be more appealing to Woolf is the writer's distinct portrayal of rural life, mainly its 'pictures […] of cottage gardens and old peasant women, who linger to collect and preserve from oblivion the old fashioned ways' (ibid). Hardy's marriage of the visual

painterly and the written narrative, as J.B. Bullen purports, stems from his life-long interest in visual arts (2009: 212). Hardy not only implemented visual techniques in his narration, but numerous scenes in his novels draw on sketches he already painted as he was himself a talented draughtsman and painter (ibid). For instance,

> An accomplished study of the Old Manor House, Kingston Maurward, painted in 1859, provided him with an image that he transformed into Knapwater House in *Desperate Remedies,* and his drawings of the streets and cottages of Bockhampton and Stinsford found literary expression in the architectural details of Mellstock in *Under the Greenwood Tree* (ibid).

According to Bullen, Hardy was also a frequent visitor of art exhibitions, a passion which stamped in his mind images which he would later deploy in his writing (2009: 214).

In *UGT*, painterly techniques, skillfully deployed by Hardy, help to consolidate a view of a dynamic world guided by cyclical rhythms. Relying heavily on the use of images, colours, shades and foregrounding moments of blackness and light, the novel constructs a portrait-like image of the vegetative life as well as natural scenery in an ongoing process of transformation. More specifically, the novel draws attention to the ways in which temporal rhythms correlate with the ongoing alterations of the general outlook of trees: depending on the changing seasons, these trees are sometimes barren and bare, and on some occasions fully covered with foliage, flowers and fruit. For instance, in the novel's opening, which coincides with winter, the narrator draws attention to 'the silver and black-stemmed birches', 'the pale grey boughs of beech', and 'the dark-creviced elm' which appear like 'flat outlines upon the sky' (1994: 6). When the season develops into summer time, the narrative description highlights the view of 'fuchsias and dahlias […] changing the colour of their sparkle at every moment of the air; and elsewhere hanging on twigs like small silver fruit' (1994: 142). Again, the trees assume a radically different outlook in autumn where the 'flocks of green and yellowish leaves' fall to the ground covering the surface of the land (1994: 172). Captured in the form of sequential visual images, individual portraits of the trees' gradually changing appearance become relational and inseparably connected, thus projecting in the reader's mind a form of time-lapse photography. Where the description is structured in a form of images, the narrative style becomes closer to the moving-images media and equally serves to awaken readers to 'understand and

visualize' the concept of 'time, duration, becoming and change' (Ivakiev 2013: 360). At the surface level only, the time-lapse technique used in here seems to conform to seasonal tropes and a clichéd sense of passing seasons as being permanent, stable and inexorable, which is peculiarly problematic especially in the current context of climate change, global warming and extreme weather events. At a deeper level, however, the time-lapse of the trees sprouting and ultimately shedding their foliage offers a visual experience of the world's mutagenic conditions and, ultimately, serves to draw an image of a dynamic environment.

While it might be considered mere stylistic extravagance or artistic embellishment, Hardy's painterly technique in *UGT* actually anticipated its cinematic adaptation. Indeed, similar to the novel, the watching of its movie leaves viewers with a strong sense of time-lapse which evokes a perception of an ever-changing world that is in an ongoing process of becoming. Indeed, the viewer is drawn to a beech tree which develops in a number of different scenes, with each scene capturing a specific cyclic development in the tree's lifespan. The tree is introduced in a very long scene at the onset of the movie, where close-ups and the camera's mobile movements are adroitly deployed to highlight the tree's physiological reality in the bitter weather of winter, especially bringing into focus the barren status of its twigs (00: 01:00). The tree appears for the second time through a comparatively long *temps mort* of 21 seconds, consisting of different shots and having variant significations (00:29: 40). The early shot is a zooming technique which captures the early phases of the tree foliage; the later shot is a wide angle which emphasizes the enormous size of the tree. Unlike in the very early scene, the tree assumes its green colour, signaling that spring is approaching. The tree is introduced for the third time through a *temps mort* of 30 seconds: while the close-ups draw attention to the tree's all greenish foliage, the zooming technique distinguishes individual leaves still in their early stages of sprouting (00: 22: 00). The camera simultaneously captures the green grass and the blossoming flowers which lay on the ground beneath the tree's canopy (00: 37:05). The greenery of the grass, the blue sky, the sound of the birds which comes on repeatedly, and the couple of chickens and their youngsters – introduced in an immediately consecutive scene – signal the forthcoming of spring when natural landscape undergoes a regenerative process, thus taking on a new outlook. The tree comes on again in the very last scene where its autumnal reddish, yellowish and

brownish leaves are scattered on the ground here and there. With this emphasis on the tree, the movie, within the time duration of an hour and a half, conveys a succinct vision of how seasonal rhythms take place, an aspect established through the strategic use of time-lapse originally inspired from the novel. This strategic use of time-lapse, as Morton explains, reveals the 'fragility and unique beauty' of the trees, prompting us to see them 'less a solid single lasting thing' (2010: 45).

Adrian Ivakhiev expounds that visual images are inherently evocative and simultaneously characterized by a plurality of meaning:

> Once an image or sound is there in the film, its range of potential meanings opens up to the interpretive inventiveness of its viewers, and to the degree that origin, in the firstness of the images and sounds taken from the profilmic world, and at the point of reception, which it ricochets from one viewing and interpretive context to another (2013: 201).

As expressed here, visual images yield multifaceted significations: when a single image evokes multilayered resonances, the relational process linking a particular image to a whole cluster of images further constructs myriad evocations. Implementing this logic, I argue that the movie's use of a natural setting resists one single interpretation and thus its function is by no means symbolic or decorative. For instance, the texts' depiction of seasonal variations, which might be deemed a conventional way of structuring plot according to pastoral preference of rhythmic resonance, actually shapes one's understanding of 'ecological wholeness'.[26] Indeed, the narratives recognize the role of time in the unfolding of biotic life; more specifically, the entangled relationships between the world's regenerative processes and the temporal rhythms of the four seasons. Hence, while time might be conceived to have a neutral and a separate existence from the biotic community, the texts alert us that it is actually interwoven into the fabric of all life forms and implicated in their organic processes of growth and decay. In nature, as Morton succinctly puts it, 'everything is connected to everything' (2010: 38). The time factor, the guiding force behind the inherently dynamic and perpetually changing material world, as Ivakhiv avers, changes 'in motion': 'everything is in motion between one state of matter-

[26] By ecological wholeness, I refer to what Jonathon Bate terms 'the interconnectedness of all things'; more precisely, the intricate and complex ways in which the factor of time, weather and species interact in a network of reciprocal relations (2000: 28).

energy and another' (2013: 305). Thus, the use of time-lapse photography here is significant, for it aids us to grasp an intuitive perception of time as effective, and of the physical world not as static, but in an ongoing mutagenic process. As Morton remarks, 'like seasons, things seem static because we don't notice them changing, and when they do change, there is a rough predictability to the way they do so' (2010: 44).

While time is a guiding force behind the transitory stages of life forms, weather is another variable which contributes to this transience. As Jonathan Bate puts it, 'ecosystems evolve in time through the operation of weather'; weather 'is a prime means of linking spatiality and temporality' (1999: 109). While the effect of time and weather are not immediately apparent to an observant mind, the complex ways in which they operate to ultimately condition the transitory stages of organisms can only be observed in terms of the episodic changes which animate the facets of the natural landscape. In the movie, it is in vegetative life, more particularly in trees, that the great toll of time and weather can be easily discerned, especially with the changing seasons of the year. With its auditory devices, the movie contributes to an ecological understanding of the ways in which the life of organisms is attuned to meteorological conditions. For instance, soundtracks of swarming bees and tweeting birds, only introduced during the spring weather, alert viewers to how temporal and cyclic rhythms are interwoven into animals' lives and day-to-day movements (00: 39: 00). The movie prompts us to draw similar connections through the particular use of trees as well; for instance, zooming and the extreme close-ups of the sunshine penetrating an unfolding leaf serves to draw an intimate connection between weather and the seasonal emergence of vegetative life (00: 37: 05). What is portrayed here, I argue, correlates with the ecological thought of Taplin who notes, 'trees mark the passing of time. Most obviously this is so in their seasonal variations'; 'trees also remind us of mortality and the passage of time by outlasting us' (1989: 67). With their changing appearance – from bare twigs and branches in winter, to fully covered in the greenery of foliage in spring and summer, which later on take a pale and brownish colour in autumn – trees are prime 'representatives of organic life' (1989: 80). I would also suggest that these are prime embodiments of transience and temporality.

The movie's audiovisual apparatus, provoking thought on the enmeshment underlying the world, might be construed as a cinematic equivalent to Hardy's symbolic resources which hardwire into the novel's plot the oft-neglected voice of

biotic forms. Indeed, similar instances of environmental entanglement can be found in the third chapter. Enjoying a walk in a garden, Fancy is attracted to 'the threads of garden-spiders' and 'dozens of long-legged crane-flies whizzed off the grass at every step the passer took' (1994: 142). In another scene, Fancy ponders 'a yellow butterfly and a red-and-black butterfly that were flitting along in company' (1994:144). In his reading of this scene, El-Tag El-Nour Abdel Mahmoud Ibrahim proposes that the novel's reference to the biotic life falls within the logic of a symbolic ordering of meaning. He suggests that the specific description of the spider hints at 'the fragility' of the couple's relationship, whereas elements like 'flowers' and 'honey-bees' signal towards their reunion through the bond of marriage (2016: 94). Unlike Ibrahim, I contend that the scene should not be confined to one single interpretation, for, indeed, it retains multilayered meanings, one of which contributes to our grasp of the ecological laws underlying nature. Here, the butterflies, the spiders and the flies, while entirely absent in the novel's early chapters which chronicle the winter season, are portrayed to be in a lively and active state in summer. The novel implies that what plays into the emergence of these insects is the mild temperature of summer and autumn: 'in crossing the glades, masses of hot dry air that had been formed on the hills during the day greeted his cheeks' (1994: 160). The emergence of these insects in this particular season and the allusion to a change in temperature degree provokes reflection on the dynamic relationship between organic procreative processes, changing seasons and thus fluctuations in environmental conditions which enable mating processes. Hence biotic elements, skillfully integrated into the narrative, reach beyond the figurative to gesture towards human and non-human kinship of sharing similar mating and procreative processes which guarantees human and non-human survival.

Furthermore, investigating ecological features in Hardy's novels, Ibrahim construes Hardy's engagement with seasonality as part and parcel of the novel's symbolic orientation. He argues that the four seasons are deployed in the novel to mirror the exigencies of nineteenth century modernity and its enduring destructive impact on the fabric of the rural society. He explains that winter is specifically used to 'symbolize the end of the traditional rural lifestyle signaling the beginning of a new era, that of Dick and Fancy which will come with spring' (2016: 92). It might be true that the novel's depiction of seasons, and thus the movie's, is indivisible from their

representations of characters' lives and their socio-economic context, but this depiction cannot be interpreted as solely limited to a symbolic construction of meaning. Instead, I argue that the texts' portrayal of seasonal rhythms gestures towards an ecological reality, being employed to display humans' connectivity to the larger ecosystem, especially through the means of cyclic agricultural work. This is implied in both texts through a meditation on the specific agricultural processes of nutting, honey-making and harvesting which come along according to seasonal variations. What is being emphasized here is humankind's attunement to the environment, especially through cyclical agricultural labour.

Despite a number of unmistakable parallels between the two texts, the director still enacts a great deal of surgery work at the level of plot structure. For instance, while foregrounding the romantic relationship between Dick and Fancy, the director tends to complicate their love story. While in the novel, the reader has no doubt that Fancy and Dick are meant to be together, the movie creates a possibility that Fancy will be wed to Shiner, heightening therefore a sense of suspense right from the beginning. Thus, while Shiner is just a minor character in the novel, he assumes the role of a major character in the movie, being presented as an obstacle to the lovers' union. Despite these changes, however, the movie still adopts the novel's pastoral structure, where the major events of the story develop and progress according to seasonal rhythms. The plot chronicles the development of the romance between Dick and Fancy from a random chance encounter to a tantalizing bucolic courtship successfully crowned with matrimony, and the major events in this love relationship unfold in tandem with seasonal variations. Significantly, every phase of the couple's relationship is introduced through an introduction of a tree's cyclic development, imparting a sense of ecological enmeshment that trees are somehow chroniclers of human's lives. However, this correlation between the trees and characters' lives might be considered a mere structural device facilitating a shift in narrative scales and orientations. Instead, I argue that this is ecologically significant as it harkens at shared existential and ontological conditions between the humans and the non-humans, in terms of birth, growth change and death. This ongoing condition of transience and change is shared between the human and the non-human and, therefore, situate humans within the natural realm and bring the two realms into a similar footing. A tree, as Taplin puts it, 'is a thing subject to the same laws of nature as ourselves: it is

an energetic being, liable to an approaching death; its age is written on every spray; and, because we see it is susceptible of life and annihilation' (1998: 72).

The movie portrays two different trees: an oak – whose significances I will cover in the next section – and a beech tree. Beech trees are usually of comparatively tremendous size and have thick foliage, which makes them perfect nesting places for myriads of bird species and a protective shelter to insects as well as creepers. Hence, the beech tree stands out for the complex ways in which organisms are inseparably connected in an interwoven web of meaning. The tree, to borrow Ingold's idea, embodies the life-cycle of its own and that of the different insects, birds, animals and specimen of fauna and flora whose history of unfolding is intimately bound up with the tree's cyclic growth (Ingold 1996: 168). This biotic reality is implied in the movie through the use of soundtrack in specific scenes which feature sounds of innumerable bird species emanating from the tree's boughs (01:45: 00/ 00:29:49/ 00:37:05). In fact, through the choice of this particular tree, the movie consolidates the novel's construction of trees as the embodiment of an entangled bank and a miniature ecosystem which sustains the lives of other fauna and flora. When depicting the Greenwood tree, the narrator observes,

> Many hundreds of birds had been born amidst the boughs of this single tree; tribes of rabbits and hares had nibbled at its bark from year to year; quaint tufts of fungi had sprung from the activities of its forks; and countless families of moles and earthworms had crept about its roots. Beneath and beyond its shade spread a carefully-tended grass-plot, its purpose being to supply a healthy exercise-ground for young chickens and pheasants: the hens, their mothers, being enclosed in coops placed upon the same green flooring (1994: 216).

The tree here is celebrated for its ecological functions. Because of its great age, the tree is ecologically of vital significance because of its utility in sustaining the lives of myriad of environmental organisms, not in a transitory stage, but rather in a long scale. On the ground, beneath the tree shade, grows the grass which would probably flourish only in partial shade. Beneath the tree is also a favourable atmosphere for chickens and pheasants. The shade operates as a shelter from scorching weather, an essential variable to the prosperity of their health. While the novel hints at the ways in which the tree is interwoven with the health of the chickens, it implicitly gestures towards a broader significance. Indeed, the tree's function here transcends a literal meaning to

attain a symbolic level of reference. It might be said to stand out for a collective of trees which cooperate as the world's vital respiratory system. A plantation of trees absorbs huge quantities of carbon dioxide, and from them emanates healthy and refreshing air. Thus, Hardy's and Laughland's trees can be viewed more as mini-ecosystems than individuated tree species. More importantly, Laughland's strategic visualization of the beech tree serves as a case where a visual image reproduces a descriptive passage in a succinct manner that is inherently sensitive to textual fidelity.

b- Pantheism and Ecological Realism in Hardy's Novel: Further Insights into Human and Non-Human Kinship

Hardy's narrative prose fiction is ostensibly pertinent for cinematic adaptations given its visual appeal; however, it is simultaneously characterized by rigorous attention to tiny details about life forms. This is, for instance, often the case with the description of trees and plants where the narrator not only meditates on the very elemental parts of their ontology and their biotic realities, but, as I will illustrate shortly, often portrays them from an anthropomorphic standpoint. This characteristic of Hardy's fiction makes it necessary for critics to dwell, not only on aspects of characterization and plot dynamics, but on what seems like artistic extravagance. In the words of William A. Cohen, appreciating the diverse artistic qualities of Hardy's prose fiction 'means approaching this book with a different set of priorities than with much other fiction: to read, that is, not for plot or character, but by dwelling on [...] the " boring part": the description of trees and other natural forms' (2014: 06). Cohen's argument is especially relevant here where the movie adaptation misses out the significance of a few descriptive scenes, or one would frankly say, is sometimes unable to find a visual equivalent for the novel's complex metaphoric apparatus. This is especially the case when the writer's specific choice of diction gestures towards scientific realities about life forms and also when he appeals to a pantheistic form of expression. Hence, in its depiction of trees, the novel goes beyond temporality and transience to explore diverse aspects of human and non-human kinship, to which the movie pays little attention.

Influenced by the writings of James George Frazer, especially as M. Zeilter points out, '*The Golden Bough*, which Hardy discussed with Edward Clodd in 1890

and began reading in 1891', the writer took great pains to bring to his literary realm the anthropological lore of Dorset (Zeilter: 72). Hardy's keen interest in folklore had been 'rekindled […]by his meeting and subsequent friendship with Edward Clodd, soon-to-be president of the British Folk-Lore Society,' who shared his interest in anthropology (Zeilter: 73). Henceforth, both corresponded 'on matters of folklore, anthropology, comparative religion, and ethics' (ibid). Years before this, however, in May 1877, Hardy declared his interest in Dorset's folklore heritage, noting that he perceives natural objects from a pantheistic perspective and that he 'sometimes looks upon all things in inanimate Nature as pensive mutes' (Hardy 1989: 117). Twenty years later, he admitted that 'in spite of [himself he]cannot help noticing countenances and tempers in objects of scenery' (ibid). Be it a mere childhood fancy or a genuine belief, Hardy's speculations on the sentiency of natural objects remains a defining feature of his fictional practice, often depicting trees and plants as having human qualities and in possession of agency as well as volition. In *The Woodlanders*, for instance, the elm tree brings about the ultimate death of John South, and consequently changes the course of Giles' life, who loses the legitimacy to renew the lease of his home after South's death. Here, what seems to be a mere tree is invested with uncanny and occult energy.

Plant consubstantiality in Hardy's novels garnered the attention of readers as well as critics, especially anthropologists who associate the writer's world view with prevalent forms of folk customs and superstitious beliefs surviving in the rural cultural heritage of Wessex. Discussing the use of arboreal elements in the Maypole Dance, which is thought to be a pagan ritual in origin, Charlotte Bonica believes that Hardy advocates a pagan way of life as an 'innate and inescapable human need to make sense of the universe in humanly understandable terms' (1982: 894). In a similar study, Andrew Radford reads South's fixation on the elm tree in *The Woodlanders* as an instance of 'tree-worship [that] stubbornly persists in remote rural settlements' (2003:145). Moreover, Jacqueline Dillion interprets Hardy's fascination with rural folklore as an attempt 'to clarify that specific folk customs and beliefs were based on organic local tradition' (2016: 14). Dillion contends that 'what seem like the relics of a nebulous folk past' often reappear in the present in Hardy's works, as they did in the social life of Dorset from which he drew inspiration (2016:15). In contrast to these critics, my objective here is not to investigate the epistemological or the philosophical

resonances of Dorset's folklorist heritage, but to rather analyze the way it actively shapes the human and the non-human encounter in the specific context of Hardy's rural society. I posit that alignment with folk culture consolidates the writer's ecological thought: while reflecting on entwined human-plant relatedness, his narrative also anticipated scientific facts recently established in the related field of botany.

Recently, Mathew Hall has underscored that faunal and floral species should be treated as other-than-human persons, and must be considered from a care-based perspective as well as a normative standing. Hall critiques Western philosophical and religious discourses, and explicates how these have long contributed to the separation of the human from the natural order, justifying humankind's dominance over and exploitation of the natural world. Hall believes that, with its recognition of sentiency, kinship and elements of personhood in natural objects, the anthropological heritage of the indigenous people of North America, New Zealand and Australia provides an alternative viewpoint to the Western cultural paradigm and serves the ecological project which seeks to bridge the schism between the human and the non-human. Hall clarifies that what he means by pagan lore is not a belief in the sacredness or worship of natural forms, but rather refers to certain customs and folklore which foster the values of respect and reverence towards natural forms, and eventually nurture care-based relationships. Hall especially celebrates the animist beliefs of indigenous people and believes that these provide a proper model for an adequate human-plant relation. Hall stresses that 'liberating plants from exclusion, recognizing them as sentient beings, and moving toward engagement with them would constitute true nonviolent action toward the plant kingdom. Achieving this would allow plants to be recipients of solicitude, loving kindness, and compassion' (2011: 93). Hall acknowledges trees' necessity for human survival, while emphatically denouncing a purely utilitarian approach as well:

> It must be remembered that not all harm to individuals is ecologically harmful. The bear that eats bilberries may kill some of the individual plants, but at the same time, it spreads the seeds. Consumption can lead to (re)production. However, overconsumption is symptomatic of human plant relationships that revolve around instrumentalism (2011: 65).

Hence, at the heart of Hall's theory is advocacy of a more balanced approach to nature: while not denying the practical functions of trees, he critiques a purely instrumental economic mindset and denounces the wanton felling and massive overconsumption of trees which continues to wreak havoc on the natural world. According to Hall, 'purely instrumental relationships are one of the major drivers of ecologically destructive behaviour. Our wholly instrumental relationships with plant life are inappropriate because they are a very significant contributor to the current anthropogenic environmental predicament' (2011: 158-159).

'A research scientist at the Centre for Middle Eastern Plants at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh', Hall further provides scientific evidence for plant sentiency (LeVasseur 2014:123). His research into modern botany and plant science reveals that 'plants and humans share a basic ontological reality as perceptive, aware, autonomous, self-governed, and intelligent beings' (2011: 12–13). Here Hall is by no means anthropomorphically ascribing human characteristics of intelligence and awareness to natural forms, but he refers to a pattern of semiotic and semantic interaction between plants and their respective environment: 'like other living beings, plants actively live and seek to flourish. They are self-organized and self-created as a result of interactions with their environment' (ibid). Hall argues that plants do not grow mechanically, but rather possess a degree of sensation and volition. This is demonstrated through trees' daily activities 'to grow actively towards sources of water and gravity,' their ability to 'directly perceive light,' to use it to 'direct movement' and to 'sense the proximity of neighbouring individuals' (2011: 139-143). Hall further speculates on plants' communicative capacity arguing that there exists a system of 'plant-plant interactions of their own, capable of self-recognition, and existing in a "rhizosphere" of communicative, symbiotic relations' (2011: 125). Hall's speculations on plant's communicative capacity have recently been established as a scientific reality, where research revealed that trees actually communicate 'by means of olfactory, visual, and electrical signals' (Wohlleben 2016: 12). Given these scientific discoveries, Hall stresses that denigrating plants because of inferiority and passivity is not only untenable, but is ecologically inaccurate as well.

In his fictive writing, Hardy deploys a certain folklore that could be explained in the light of Halls' premises. On several occasions, Hardy identifies the floral world as other-than-human beings and draws attention to an existing ontological likeness

between the human and the non-human, emphasizing shared bodily features. For instance, in *The Woodlanders*, trees are said to have 'arms', 'skirted trunks' and 'spreading roots whose mossed rinds made them like hands wearing green gloves' (1996: 53-59). *UGT* displays a similar tendency to reveal human and non-human kinship:

> The last day of the story is dated just subsequent to that point in the development of the seasons when country people go to bed among nearly naked trees, are lulled to sleep by a fall of rain, and awake next morning among green ones; when the landscape appears embarrassed with the sudden weight and brilliance of its leaves; when the night-jar comes and strikes up for the summer his tune of one note; when the apple-trees have bloomed, and the roads and orchard-grass become spotted with fallen petals (1994: 201).

Metaphorically used, the word 'naked' heightens a sense of kinship between the tree and human ontology, where the tree's trunk and its barren branches are similar to the human body when stripped of clothes. The writer deepens the analogy, by attributing facial expressions and perceptual abilities to the surrounding landscape which, probably because of the leaves' autumnal color, becomes reddish and, therefore, seems to be embarrassed of the tree's nakedness. It is worth mentioning that this depiction reveals a degree of ambivalence; on the one hand, the association between the tree's trunk and the human body retains a sense of 'ecological realism', by 'strengthening our sense of the tree as a bodily creature like ourselves' (Taplin 1998: 178). Hence, the nakedness of the tree's body emphasizes a 'common experience within difference rather than a cozy and unthinking anthropomorphism that puts dogs in dinner jackets, and makes everything in nature "just like us" ' (ibid: 179). This sense of 'ecological realism', however, hardly applies to the depiction of the landscape in terms of human feelings of shyness and embarrassment, aspects which have a clear association with the literary technique of anthropomorphism which attributes human qualities to the non-human. In this particular example, this anthropomorphic description is highly problematic, if not sentimental: while it has the potential 'to break down the distinction between human and animal being' (Bate 2000:178); it still provides a human-centered perspective on the natural world, a factor which risks to 'establish humanity as the barometer for normative values and affirms the centrality of human life' (Bruckner 2010:188).

Elsewhere in his writing, Hardy evokes aspects of folklore which recognize sentient qualities in floral species. In his poem 'Throwing a Tree', Hardy expresses his resentment at chopping down a tree, which he unequivocally condemns and thus considers a crime. Hardy denounces the axe-men's sense of inhumanity, by calling them 'executioners'. Brutally cut down, the tree seems to Hardy to 'shiver' and 'quiver': the saw then begins, till the top of the giant shivers/ the shivers are seen to grow greater with each cut than before:/ they edge out the saw, tug the rope, but the tree only quivers' (09-11). In *Jude the Obscure*, little Jude 'could scarcely bear to see trees cut down or lopped, from a fancy that it hurt them; and late pruning, when the sap was up and the tree bled profusely, had been a positive given to him in his infancy' (1978: 55). Similarly, in *UGT*, when describing the trees in the stormy weather of autumn, the narrator observes the way they 'writhe like miserable men as the air wound its way swiftly among them' (1994: 172), as if the trees are actually capable of feeling cold and pain. In effect, Hardy's fiction is shaped by nineteenth century environmental concerns when the issue of heedless exploitation of forests' resources was coming to the forefront. As ecocritic Kim Taplin explains, in Hardy's era, 'modern machinery [...] can clear a great many trees' (1998:17). This massive clearance of forests certainly explains the writer's choice to adopt a particular folklore which heightens a normative approach to trees, thus recognizing in floral species the capacity to feel. Hence, pervasive animism and arboreal imagery becomes a cogent means for Hardy to 'make[s] us compare and consider and think why we value trees' (1998: 17).

While it might be viewed as a bold statement against tree felling, however, Hardy's depiction of trees' sentiency in the previous references takes on a rigorous tone which denies any practical use of trees. The writer's stance is inherently radical and realistically farfetched. More practically, it doesn't serve the ecological ethic, for the ecological thought is actually about the possibility to maintain balanced human and non-human relationships. Indeed, while mitigating a mere utilitarian approach towards trees is required, it is impossible to completely denounce any practical use of trees and deny their necessity for human survival. As Hall eloquently states:

> Recognition of plants as *other-than-human persons*—a powerful way of incorporating plants within social and moral relationships of care and nurturing. Yet, [...] , *persons* are not exempt from use, a fact which has important consequences. With plants as persons, there can be no

> "substantial outclass of living beings that are morally excluded in order to locate any viable form of eating which allows an ethical basis for human survival." Uncomfortable or not, there is no dualistic separation of personhood and us (2011: 161).

I concur with Hall, for at the core of the ecological thought is overcoming overconsumption attitudes of instrumental mindsets which not only jeopardize plant life, but the biosphere as a whole. However, it is important to stress that it is impossible to completely avoid a social use of trees. Eventually, it is worth reiterating that what does harm to the natural world is not a moderate use of timber for basic commercial needs, but the unreasonable wanton felling of trees.

While there is a residue of folkloric relics in Hardy's writing, this often requires special attention as it resonates with intriguing scientific truth recently established in the related field of botany and plant science. For instance, in the *Woodlanders* Hardy's cogent use of animism endorses a perception of plants as species with intelligent behaviour as well as perceptual traits, rather than passive elements growing in a random or a mechanical way:

> In the hollow shades of the roof could be seen dangling etiolated arms of ivy which had crept through the joints of the tiles and were groping in vain for some support, their leaves being dwarfed and sickly for want of sunlight; others were pushing in with such a force at the eaves as to lift from their supports the shelves were fixed there (1996: 26).

There is an intricate correlation between the ivy's want of sunlight and the way in which it relentlessly strives to access it. Furthermore, the use of words like 'groping' and 'pushing it with such a force' actually gestures to the ivy's quest to survive. With such linguistic usage, the narrative constructs a vision of plants in possession of sensation, perception, volition as well as agency. This actually aligns with the findings of contemporary research that 'the growth response of plants to light was a *behavioral response*, not simply mechanical movement' (Hall 2011: 138). Another scientific reality is expressed in the following textual reference which assumes a metaphoric resonance:

> Low-hanging boughs went up and down; high and erect boughs went to and fro; the blasts being so irregular, and divided into so many cross-currents,

> that neighboring branches of the same tree swept the skies in independent motions, crossed each other, or became entangled. Across the open spaces flew flocks of green and yellowish leaves which, after travelling a long distance from their parent trees, reached the ground and lay there with their under-sided upward (1994: 172).

What is ecologically accurate in this passage is the use of the words 'parent' and 'neighboring'. This suggests an existing sense of community and a parental role of nurturing amongst trees. Botanical research confirms that this description stretches beyond the metaphoric as trees do maintain a supportive relationship, where individual trees supply each other with nutrients. As Peter Wohlleben has recently reported, beeches, for instance, 'are capable of friendship and go so far as to feed each other' (2016: 15); these also tend to 'synchronize their performance so that they are all equally successful' to grow and survive (ibid). As the quotation illustrates, Wohlleben refers to an underlying reciprocal relationship between trees inherently based on nurture, which might be construed in terms of human friendship and family. Hardy's rigorous depiction of trees often highlights the very tiny organisms thriving in their trunks as well as roots, fungi for instance. In *UGT*, the narrator is not only fascinated by the tree as a single living being, but reflects on the small organisms like fungi which usually form an integral part of the tree ontology: 'quaint tufts of fungi had sprung from the activities of its forks' (1994: 216). In *The Woodlanders*, the fungi are likened to lungs: 'on older trees still than these huge lobes of fungi grew like lungs' (1996: 53). In fact, the use of 'lungs' here is scientifically accurate. Indeed recent studies evidence that fungus communities, usually thriving in trees' trunks as well as underground, play a vital role in various organic processes like photosynthesis. This research reveals that 'trees of different species exchange huge amounts of carbon via an internet of fungi—a "wood-wide web" that secretly connects their roots' (Yong 2016: para.2). Hence, latent in the novels' pantheistic impulse is a scientifically established truth about trees' ontological realities.

While instilling a perception of trees as human-related species, the narrative prompts us to reflect on their place vis-à-vis the moral order. In effect, shining through the novel are man-tree encounters which position trees as 'fellow creatures'.[27] In his essay, Stephen J. Sector draws attention to the ways in which Hardy's narrative

[27] Kim Taplin's concept (1998: 69)

delineates trees by emphasizing their particular features and sounds, and thus distinguishing their individuality. Through this specification and individuation, explains Sector, the trees are 'distinguished by their respective sounds and movements: the fir sobs, moans and rocks; the holly whistles and battles; the ash hisses and quivers, and finally the beech rustles' (1988: 471). Sector posits that while the narrative endows the trees with human attributes; it alternatively describes human characters in terms of arboreal imagery. For instance, when Dick is introduced into the scene where trees are 'whispering', he is equally individuated and distinguished by his voice and light, quick movements which marks his presence along with the trees (1988: 472). Sector argues that this 'reciprocal definition of human and tree is a species of chiasmus, a rhetorical figure' which enables the process of character creation across Hardy's novel' (1988: 472). To portray trees as capable of 'sobbing' and 'moaning' is to certainly indulge in sentimental anthropomorphism, which is ecologically problematic. Relevant to my argument here, however, is the stylistic feature of individuating trees with their specific sounds – 'whistling', 'hissing' and 'rustling'. While individuating trees with their distinctive attributes helps in the process of 'character creation', I would also argue that it effectively shapes readers' sense of trees as fellow-creatures having overtly distinct yet interrelated qualities. This recognition of human and non-human kinship is a strong incentive to co-exist peacefully and lovingly with trees, perceiving these as autonomous species. This invitation towards co-existence is implied in the end of the novel: heading to the parish church, the wedding procession makes its way under trees, creating a celebratory moment where trees are main participants: 'now through a hazel copse, matted with primroses and wild hyacinths; now under broad beeches in bright young leaves they threaded their way into the high road over Yalbury Hill' (1994: 213-214). Walking under trees in unmistakable humility, the rural denizens convey a message that plants should be incorporated 'within social and moral relationships of care and nurture' (Hall 2011: 161).

2) A Perspective on the Social Significance of Trees: Trees as a means to demarcate and cross boundaries

a- The Multi-functions of Hardy's Arboreal Imagery: Crossing Social and Spatial Division

When trees are specifically celebrated in a society's given cultural heritage, then this must imply and communicate a stronger and deeper form of human and non-human connection that resists negotiation. Indeed, Harrison argues that trees are associated with belongingness, thus defining one's place in a given region or territory. He suggests that, in ancient times, the early inhabitants of forests used trees to establish their dwelling boundaries:

> The giants in their respective clearings claim dominion over the land by demonstration: we are sons of this earth, we are born from oaks. Which earth? Which oaks? They point: this earth here, where the wooden grave-posts mark the presence of our ancestors in the ground. These posts are the oaks from which we are born. We belong to this place, for our tree has been planted here. These oaks, or these graveposts, have sprung up under the auspicious of god. The family tree supplants the oak tree and thereby grounds the universal institutions of humanity: religion, matrimony, and burial of the dead (1992: 7).

Wessex's nineteenth century community, as Hardy's narrative demonstrates, entertained a similar perception of trees as markers of one's place in a particular physiological space as well as belongingness. For this reason, there is an undeniable resonance between the writer's representation of trees and Harrison's argument.

In *The Woodlanders*, for instance, the narrator envisages trees as an integral part of characters' dwelling: 'half a dozen dwellings were passed without results. The next, stood opposite a tall tree' (1996: 09). Similarly, in *UGT*, trees reverberate with social significance, defining territories as well as frontiers, and identifying social boundaries. Hence, we encounter Dick Dewey walking across a lane of trees which, according to the narrator, stand out as a borderline between the Lower and the Upper parishes of Mellstock:

> A man was passing up a lane towards Mellstock Cross in the darkness of a plantation that whispered thus distinctively to his intelligence. […] the lonely lane he was following connected one of the hamlets of Mellstock parish with Upper Mellstock and Lewgate […] within the woody pass, at a

> level anything lower than the horizon, all was dark as the grave. […] After passing the plantation and reaching Mellstock Cross the white surface of the lane revealed itself between the dark hedgerows like a ribbon jagged at the edge […] they all advanced between the varying hedges and the trees dotting them here and there […] soon appeared glimmering indications of the new cottages forming the small hamlet of Upper Mellstock for which they were bound (1994: 5-6-9).

Here the trees enclose estates and encompass hamlets in the form of edges and hedgerows; they also maintain boundaries and mark the edge of communities and their social properties. Thus, where a tree seems to be a mere neutral natural component, it actually shapes one's feeling of social belonging, attachment and connectedness.

In Hardy's novel, as much as trees define one's belongingness vis-à-vis a geographical territory, they actually shape the distinctive features of such a territory especially in terms of ecological idiosyncrasies. In fact, the narrative prompts us to perceive trees in terms of vital ecological connectedness, thus provoking reflection on how these define the biological reality of a given region. The text alludes to the ecological functions of tree hedges, and how these play out into the ecological conditions of Mellstock, shaping its weather patterns: 'The copse-wood forming the sides of the bower interlaced its branches so densely, even at this season of the year, that the draught from the north-east flew along the channel with scarcely an interruption from lateral breezes' (1994: 6). Here the hedge plays the role of a protective shelter to Mellstock, especially from wind, but it seems that the draught asserts its pervasive power more than the trees could withstand. This vision of trees as protective shelters complies with the core tenets of ecological thought and resonates with the ideas of John Stewart Collis who, in *The Triumph of the Tree* (1950), points out the active role of trees in maintaining ecosystem balance. For Collis, trees are significant as they 'hold up the mountains. They cushion the rain-storm. They discipline the rivers. They control the floods. They maintain the springs. They break the winds' (1950: 141-149). Similarly, for Hardy, trees and tree hedges are significant for their social as well as ecological functions: they play out into the demarcation of cultural as well as physical boundaries, defining social groups as well as geographical territories and their ecological conditions.

That the novel is entitled *Under the Greenwood Tree* could never be taken as an arbitrary choice, but rather consolidates an impulse that today we would call ecocritical. In fact, the tree which appears in the title witnesses Dick and Fancy's marriage, which implies strong bounding between Hintock dwellers and their surrounding natural landscape. As the wedding party illustrates, the narrative espouses what Harrison calls 'a marriage of history and nature, where history does not mean the grand events of the past but rather the human appropriation of the earth as a place of dwelling' (1992: 208). By a similar logic, while organizing the wedding party beneath the tree, the place is domesticated and rendered as an extension to the social sphere. Consequently, because of the social appropriation of this place, 'the land gathers the endless extension of space and bounds it within the intimacy of *place*' (Harrison 1992: 209). This image of an interwoven relation between history and nature is metaphorically expressed through the weed-covered and the tree-encircled home of the Dewy family:

> It was a long low cottage with a hipped roof of thatch, having dormer windows breaking up into the ridge and another at each end. The window-shutters were not yet closed, and the fire- and candle-light within radiated forth upon the thick bushes of bow and laurestinus growing in clumps outside, and upon the bare boughs of several codlin-trees hanging about in various distorted shapes, the result of early training as espaliers combined with careless climbing into their boughs in later years. The walls of the dwelling were for the most part covered from the door-way a feature which was worn and scratched by much passing in and out, giving it by day the appearance of an old keyhole (1994: 10).

This passage articulates the condition of entanglement as an essential attribute of dwelling: where the cottage is covered up with 'the thick bushes of bow and laurestinus growing in clumps', the narrative establishes links between the human and the non-human. Hence, the novel incarnates the ability of literature to signal the state of dwelling in the natural world. While espousing a dwelling perspective through clearing a place amidst trees, the novel does not work against the ecological ethic, for, as Taplin argues, 'awe and empathy are not incompatible with using trees, or with clearing modest spaces among them to accommodate ourselves' (1998: 15). Nevertheless, there is a danger in considering trees solely as raw material.

Interwoven into the novel is the theme of love and boundary crossing, especially in relation to class affiliation. With the figure of the tree, the novel enacts a scathing criticism of social hypocrisy and class prejudice which seem to hinder Dick's and Fancy's path towards happiness. Where the tree witnesses the union of Fancy and Dick under the holy bond of matrimony, it actually brings together all the dwellers of the village in a merry moment regardless of age difference, gender, but more importantly, regardless of social and cultural backgrounds. Fancy and Dick, despite the disparity between the two classes they belong to, manage to surmount encumbrances of different sorts and are eventually united with the bond of marriage. The message which emerges here is that natural feelings of attachment and affection transcend boundaries and hierarchies set up by social and cultural formations. Hence, the tree here seems to retain a double-fold metaphoric reference: while stressing that the bond of love and passion are far stronger than the prejudices of the class system, it also asserts bare equality and brotherhood as basic principles that unite members of a given society. Meaning, human beings can only co-exist together in harmony when they abide by the natural law of equity and equality. To quote E. E. A. M. Ibrahim, the tree 'alludes to the human race in general and the differences between humans in terms of origin class or color are of no importance. This is the message about Dick's marriage that can be inferred from Fancy Day who belongs to a different social class' (2016: 88). Eventually, with the image of the dwellers under the tree, the novel calls attention to the ways in which floral species are bound up with the life of rural denizens. Hence, the tree, marking a spiritual bond and a landmark social event, stands for community togetherness and functions as an object of emotional connectedness. Cultural memory – the memory of the marriage celebration – is inseparably linked with the survival of this tree, a factor which fosters ongoing feeling of attachment necessary for its protection. While standing as a witness to the hallmark events of the characters' lives, the tree 'binds past, present and future in a single place' (Ingold 1993: 168).

When 'the Greenwood Tree' is the 'spiritual heart of the narrative' (Taplin 1989: 140), the narrator only discloses modest descriptive details about it, the enormity of its size as well as shortness of its height (1994: 216), which hardly enable us to identify its species. Nevertheless, where the tree species is not identified, it becomes even more intriguing, thus consolidating the multifaceted ecocritical imperatives of the

novel. Hardy's is a 'Greenwood Tree'; as such, it is significant for being a member of a tree community; that is to say, the Hintock wood. In other words, abstraction here is pivotal to accentuate the intrinsic value of not one specific individual tree species only, but that of a collective of trees thriving in the wood's ecosystem. Hence, where the novel celebrates a 'Greenwood Tree', it actually implies a moral necessity to celebrate, preserve and conserve all tree-kinds regardless of a cultural significance which might prioritize a particular tree species over another. One could also argue that that the tree has a synecdoche-point of reference, standing for the natural world as a whole. Therefore, where one can perceive it as a particular place, a specific environment, one can also identify it as the physical world which hardwires both place and environment to its fabric. Furthermore, while this individual tree is inseparably linked with people's experience of joy and comfort, the novel induces us to live in proxy and intimacy with the natural world. Indeed, as Kim Taplin expounds, intimacy with trees encourages closeness with the natural world: 'On a walk in sun or rain we can still experience how shade and shelter were constantly added to the trees' other practical gifts to us we lived closer to the earth (1998: 15).

Elizabeth Carolyne Miller believes that the 'Greenwood Tree' fashions a metaphor of human and non-human co-existence. The parish dwellers, explains Miller, on their way to the church are 'dwarfted by-' '_"dark perpendicular firs" that hang above "like the shafted columns of a cathedral" ' (2016: 697). The smallness of the parish dwellers amidst the height of the trees, argues Miller, is part of the novel's ecological overtones which dethrone human supremacy and asserts their inclusion in the wider ecosystem. Miller writes, 'the trees of *Under the Greenwood Tree* hang above the human character, diminishing their stature and positioning them within a broader framework of ecological representation. To be "under" the tree is not so much to be subordinate to the tree as to coexist inescapably in the same medium as the tree' (2016: 698). I agree with Miller and argue that this positioning of humans and non-humans as equal forces is the hallmark of the novel's ecological vision: where it challenges human hubris, it also refutes anthropocentric claims for mastery and superiority. I also posit that, while bringing the human and the non-human into an equal position, the narrative instills a tree with value by implanting a sense of reverence and respect towards the floral world.

Miller construes the Greenwood Tree's symbolism in relation to the writer's active engagement with the local and the bio-region, and thus proposes that Hardy's tree is a symbolic reference to nineteenth century prevailing feeling of rural rootlessness (2016: 696). Miller explains that this is expressed in the writer's essay 'The Dorsetshire Laborer', originally published in *Longman's Magazine* in 1883. Through this essay, Hardy expressed his sympathy towards nineteenth century rural dwellers who used to lead a precarious life after agricultural mechanism caused irreparable disruption in their community. Hardy writes 'a result of this increasing nomadic habit of the laborer is, naturally, a less intimate and kindly relation with the land he tills than existed before enlightenment enabled him to rise above the condition of a serf who lived and died on a particular plot, like a tree' (qtd in 2016: 696). Due to the encroachment of machinery into the rural sphere and the proliferation of agricultural capitalism, the locals 'have lost touch with their environment' (ibid). Miller comments on Hardy's essay that the

> New rootlessness is clearly double-edged, as the reference to serfdom suggests, but what is lost, in Hardy's estimation, is closeness with the land […] words such as "intimate" and "touch" suggest communion by way of physical proximity, a material connection such as that between the root system of a tree and the land it cleaves to (2016: 696).

Miller argues that in *UGT*, that Hardy deploys the tree to refer to the very sense of rootlessness which nineteenth-century rural communities experienced: she explains that 'while the tree, along with the wedding celebrated beneath it, would appear to signify continuity and rootedness, the end of the novel suggests instead that the newlywed couple will be one of the last to enact the village's old nuptial traditions' (2016: 697).

I agree with Miller that the novel fosters a counter-pastoral vision that Dorset's rural stability is being continuously lost to a modern world of increasing industrialization. However, unlike Miller, who believes that Hardy deploys the figure of the tree to exclusively voice his engagement with locality, I argue that through the specific use of trees is mediated the novel's perception of 'place' as ecologically connected to a wider national sphere. To start with, the novel's construction of place as porous, open and permeable is implied through its implicit reference to the enclosures. More precisely, it is marked in the tendency of the rural dwellers to

relocate to the city. In chapter three, the narrator observes: ‘there was lower Mellstock, the main village; half a mile from this were the church and vicarage, and a few other houses, the spot being rather lonely, though in past centuries it had been the most thickly-populated’ (1994:27). In addition, the narrator alludes to the proliferation of a network of trade routes into the region of Dorchester, the physical setting of the novel. As the narrative illustrates, these routes play a major role in connecting the Mellstock parish with the metropolitan city of London: ‘the wood was intersected by the highway of Casterbridge to London at a place not far from the house, and some trees had of late years been felled between its windows and the ascent of Yalbury Hill, to give the solitary cottager a glimpse of the passer-by’ (1994: 104). Hence, as a consequence of nineteenth-century socio-economic transformations, Dorset could also afford greater mobility as well as connection to a wider national sphere, thus becoming less isolated.

In effect, the novel’s reference to the highway connecting the Yalbury wood to London through the Casterbridge highway gestures towards late-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century advancements in infrastructure systems. As Ralph Pite observes, turnpike roads were introduced to Dorchester as around the 1750s; more precisely, ‘the road from Salisbury to Dorchester was turnpike in 1756 and from Dorchester to Weymouth in 1761’ (2002: 38). Certainly, with the development of this network of trade roads, the geography of Dorchester became more accessible as the network of roads contributed to a less remote and isolated region. More significantly, such developments helped to dissolve the boundaries between the local and the national; as Pite observes:

> The different lines of communication in Hardy's novels - turnpikes, by-ways, railways, Roman roads - are used to show not only the various layers of history or the encroachment of modernity. They show, too, that there are simultaneously different, competing ways in which (using Doreen Massey's terms) the global is in the local and vice versa (2002: 38).

I concur with Pite and argue that with its reference to trade roots, the novel enables new modes of ecological relation to emerge in which the local is enlaced with the national in an intersection of economic exchanges. In quite different terms, the novel marks its turn from the bioregional concern to focus on a wider national scale by foregrounding the social and economic bonds between Wessex countries and London.

These economic bonds are illustrated in the work of Geoffrey Day as a timber-steward. As Kerridge has argued, Hardy's writing depicts 'landscape as ecological process: landscape, that is, as constituted by ecological relations reaching across the world in complex networks' (2010: 66). Again here, it seems that Hardy conceives trees in terms of practical value, pointing at the way they contribute to the national economy. However, it is worth noting that there is palpable inconsistency in Hardy's stand on tree felling here: while he strongly denounced it previously, now he eschews any comments on the abundance of timber work in the surroundings of Hintock; therefore, we see him neither condemn nor celebrate it.

b- Wooded Places as Resorts of Wilderness: Ambivalent Laughland

Similar to the novel, the movie is released in a specific context of environmental crisis defined by growing scales in faunal as well as floral extinction. Research has revealed that, in the last decades, trees have been gradually diminishing from the surface of the Earth because of increasing urbanization and industrialization:

> During the last three centuries, twelve million km^2 of forests and woodlands have been cleared; five million km^2 of grasslands have been lost; while cropland areas have grown by twelve million km^2. While the extent of temperate forest vegetation shows signs of recovery, tropical forest destruction proceeds at 130,000 km^2 per year. This assault on plant habitats now directly threatens between 20 to 30 percent of plant species and up to 40 percent of all species with extinction (Hall 2011: 159).

Amidst escalating environmental devastation, spring diverse feelings of mourning and anxiety amongst not only environmental activists, but indigenous communities worldwide. This affective response to ecological emergency is nowadays referred to by the name of '*Solastalgia*', an experience of 'people who strongly empathies with the idea that the earth is their home and that witnessing events destroying endemic place identity (cultural and biological diversity) at any place on earth are personally distressing to them' (Albrecht 2005: 46). This common experience of environmental havoc and its subsequent feeling of '*Solastalgia*' explicate the arboreal imagery prevailing in Laughland's movie. While Laughland is not an overtly eco-film director,

his movie cues considerable ecological stances especially through the representation of Hardy's 'Greenwood Tree' which reoccurs in the overall scale of the narrative in approximately seven scenes or more. By representing the tree as a prominent rhetorical figure, the movie actually reasserts the novel's fascination with the 'Greenwood Tree' in particular, and trees more broadly. Hence, I suggest this frequent reference to the tree cannot go unnoticed but is rather worth sustained attention.

In a striking contrast to the novel which introduces the Greenwood Tree once only in the concluding chapter, the movie opens up the dramatic action with the very figure of the tree. Indeed, the movie unfolds with a long 'establishing shot' of a minute and a half which introduces the viewer to an enormous tree dominating the cinematic space.[28] With such emphasis on the tree, a 'semiotic link' is created to refer to the movie's rural setting. Given the director's acknowledgment of the writer's name in the very introductory scene, a further implication is made that the movie hinges on a representation of a particular rural setting which existed in the remote past rather than in the present. It is Wessex, Hardy's fictional 'district once included in [an] extinct kingdom' (Hardy [1895]1902: 27). Hence, although the movie is shot in Jersey and Hertfordshire, the director's painstaking effort to remain faithful to the historical setting of the novel keep 'reassuring disconcerted viewers that it is, in spite of the evidence of their eyes, Wessex they are seeing' (Gatrell 2005: 38). As Gatrell explains, Laughland manages to do so through the reproduction of traditional music and dance, rural manual work, but, more importantly, through the application of the real names of the places referred to by Hardy in his narratives (ibid).

While the tree has an unmistakable association with the geomorphic world portrayed in the movie, it simultaneously consolidates multilayered meanings. Indeed,

[28]According to Ivakhiev an 'establishing shot' introduces the viewer into the physical setting of the story and may also evocatively reflect a film's thematic orientation: it 'anchors what is to come, revealing the context and background against which the narrative events will unfold and typically establishing some set of relations between key characters and geographic or historical setting' (2013: 85). An establishing shot, Ivakhiev observes, tends to feature 'landmarks identifiable' with the specific place which the narrative is aiming to present; for instance, an opening shot might start with the image of the Eiffel Tower which stands for Paris (2013: 85). In this sense, an establishing shot 'creates an objectscape,' which 'provides the setting for the subjectscape, since the two are co-emergent' (2013: 85).

while the tree can be seen in its ‘givenness’ [29] – where the tree simply means an ordinary tree – it also ‘retains a semiotic openness’ [30] whereby it stands for a wide range of semantic constructions that stretch beyond plot dynamics. Trees are famed as symbols of ‘life and fertility’. Hence, their predominant presence in the movie might be said to function as a symbolic reference to the romantic love affair between Dick and Fancy. It validates its naturalness despite class prejudice and, simultaneously, consolidates the continuity between the human and the non-human. Trees are also reverenced for their religious symbolism, often judged as a spiritual link between human beings and a supreme divine power. [31] In the movie’s context, trees held cultural significance as well, comprising an indispensable presence in the cultural ritual. The scene where a group of children revolve around a tree brings to the fore how trees have often played a key role in the English festive rituals; this is the case of the popular Maypole Dance, which survived in nineteenth Dorset (00:35:00).The movie deploys a beech tree which, in addition to its ecological functions, is especially significant to the movie’s ‘Englishness’ because of its religious and mythological associations. The original name of the tree is ‘Fagus’ which ‘may have been an ancient Celtic tree god’ (Ginsburg 2017: p 3), the reason why it is a holy tree in the English cultural imagination. Beeches usually populate English woods acquiring, therefore, the symbolic name of the ‘Queen Mother of the Woods’ (Ginsburg 2017: 4). The movie features an oak tree as well, which evokes the tangled history of the floral world and the English expression of national identity. In fact, where the beech is a queen tree in the English popular imagination, thus a symbol of femininity, the oak is a king, the symbol of masculinity. That the director deploys an oak tree cannot be coincidental but taps into different notions of nationhood and identity, for the British, like the German and the American, identify the oak as a national tree and a national symbol, given its longevity, endurance and steadfastness (Ritter and Dauksta 2012: 252). For instance, John Evelyn, in *a Discourse of Forest-Trees (1664),* associates oaks with ‘pride and glory’. Given their longevity, oaks might be associated with ancestry and

[29] Adrian Ivakiev, *Ecologies of the Moving Images: Cinema, Affect, Nature* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press) p. 95.

[30] Ibid

[31] See Dainis Daukesta, ‘From Post to Pillar – The Development and Persistence of an Arboreal Metaphor’, in *New Perspectives on People and Forests*, ed. by Dainis Daukesta and Eva Ritter (Springer Science+Business Media, 2011), pp. 99-119.

family continuity; they 'may become powerful presences which articulate practices and memories of home' (Ritter and Dauksta 2016: 160). Furthermore, oak-trees have eminent historical value in the English imagination, having been once a refuge to King Charles II when he fled from Roundheads after the battle at Worcester, finding amidst oak branches and twigs a protective shelter (Stamper 2002: 19). In the context of the movie, trees retain a similar symbolic reference providing protection and concealment for Grace and Dick in their escape from the prying eyes of society to celebrate their feelings of love and affection in the forest under the trees' canopy (01:04:00). Hence, the tree lends itself to boundless associations, especially in terms of its entangled history with myths of English national identity. By the virtue of repetitive shots, the tree images, 'insinuate themselves into our consciousness, resonating on multiple levels that are irreducible to a single interpretation' (Ivakiev 1013: 17). Through these different 'semiotic links' crystallize wide-ranging ecological interpretations resisting any form of confinement.

This particular tree which dominates the cinematic space actually corresponds to Hardy's description of the 'Woodland Tree' beneath whose shade is organized the wedding party of Fancy and Dick. In effect, the way the director portrays the tree serves as a case where a movie can effectively and faithfully translate a textual descriptive passage into visual images. The tree is introduced in the establishing scene through a relatively long shot of fifty seconds. It is captured through different scales and angles, with every single camera angle translating particular aspects of Hardy's descriptive details. For instance, the very early seconds of this shot is a wide angle which draws attention to the remarkable size of the tree and its wide horizontal extension, similar qualities highlighted in Hardy's narrative: we are told that the tree is 'horizontally of enormous extent' (1994: 216). The camera then takes an upward mobile position to capture the bare boughs of the tree, as if accentuating the tree's barrenness in this time of the year, which coincides with winter. Where this shot allows a glimpse at the tree's structure in this particular season, it also reminds us of some tiny details characterizing Hardy's tree: while the tree is horizontally of massive size, its length is relatively short. Then, in a swift movement, the camera comes down to highlight in extreme close-ups the tree's trunk. The solidity and magnificent size of this trunk – with its dense and entangled branches – draw viewer's attention to the tree's old-agedness, which corresponds to Hardy's descriptive details that the

‘Greenwood Tree’ has actually a primordial existence in the landscape (1994: 216). Thus, we can argue that through this opening shot the movie, like the novel, harkens at trees’ ontological antecedence and hints at the longevity of trees’ lifespan, which challenge human hubris and claims for supremacy. Indeed, steadfast and robust, trees are markers of a history for a span of time which sometimes transcends generations, whereas humans’ lifespan is fragile and short-lived. An oak, for instance, ‘represents an earlier indigenous population against which human beings have carried on a long, and in many parts of the world a now rapidly accelerating, campaign’ (Taplin 1998: 13). Therefore, with such skillful handling of the cinematic apparatus, meaning repetitive shots, the use of close-ups, zooming techniques and wide angles, the movie converges with the novel’s delineation of the tree’s physiological features and consolidates multifarious ecocritical imperatives.

In contradistinction to the novel, however, the tree frequently appears as a single primal phenomenon in the cinematic space, standing on its own and suggesting to viewers its significant presence throughout the visual performance. Hence, the tree seems to occupy a place beyond human reach and far away from human habitation, for indeed, with the course of events, human subjects never seem to be in proximity or interaction with the tree. While the tree is deposed from the surroundings of human dwelling, a semantic sign is constructed that wilderness is the place to which it belongs. This insistence on detaching the tree from human dwelling marks a tendency to demarcate boundaries between human living space and the natural world, a dual construction of culture versus nature which overtly collides with the novel’s perspective on humankind’s binding relationship with the material world, human’s inhabitation of the landscape more specifically.

There is undeniable inconsistency across the movie, however, where the director’s tendency to draw boundaries between culture and nature becomes loose. Ironically, the movie features two different scenes where trees are portrayed to play a participatory role in different social events; for instance, the party organized by Mr. Shiner takes place under the canopy of trees (00:35:00 / 1:04:000 / 01:09:00). Nevertheless, unlike Hardy’s woodland tree which unites the rural society under its shade regardless of class, gender and age, trees in this specific scene are deployed to demarcate rigid lines between the rural upper and lower societies. We see the wealthy society of Shiner celebrate in the backyard of his luxurious house, whereas the

commoners, including the Dewy family, celebrate on their own under the trees' canopy outside Shiner's house. Hence, trees here reinforce social division, rather than unification; they imply class fractures, rather than connections.

Laughland's inconsistency persists all across the narrative. In contrast to the novel, the movie is informed by a pastoral impulse where a forest setting is constructed as a site of communion and hospitality. Notably, the movie composes the wooded setting as a sanctuary to the loving couple who, despite their reciprocal feelings of affection, their efforts towards blissful marriage are encumbered by the dynamics of social class. Dick Dewy – despite being honest-hearted and well – mannered; and in spite of his magnanimity, faithfulness and dedication to his work – is deemed an inappropriate life partner to Fancy. He is looked upon with disfavour by Fancy's father because of his lower social class. On her part, Fancy, while being confused, reluctant and often submissive to her father who objects to her relationship with Dick, only rebels against his authority when she gets a chance to flirt with Dick in a nearby forest. Hence, the movie heightens a sense of Shakespearean Arboreal: while in the forest, hidden from the reproaching eyes of society, Fancy enjoys a 'prelapsarian state of innocence' (Taplin 1998: 53), willingly yields to her passion, and thus confessing her love to Dick (01: 04: 00). Welcoming to their courtship, the forest is a haven for Fancy and Dick to celebrate their emotional connectedness, escape stifling social pressure and liberate themselves from the claws of patriarchy, factors which stand out as stumbling blocks in their way to happiness. Hence, under the forest's canopy Grace and Dick are 'offered air, space, privacy, a sense of primal and limitless possibility, a chance for a man untrammeled by society to claim his birthright of happiness' (Taplin 1998:133).This is further envisioned in a later scene – invented by the director – where Fancy is shown to wade into a lake and throws herself into Dick's arms despite her father's objections to her association with the latter. Here Fancy becomes resolute and daring, further attempting courtship with Dick (01:16:00 - 01:18: 00). In this juncture, the movie constructs wilderness as a pastoral abode which embraces the lovers' romance. This pastoral imagery, however, is clouded with ambivalence. In an additional scene included by the director, Geoffrey Day (Fancy's father) is entrapped in a forest nearly losing his life, which replicates a perception of wilderness as perilous to human beings, and thus further contributes to human-nature separation (00: 52: 00).

Finally, while Hardy deploys tree imagery to reinforce his preoccupation with rural disintegration and rootlessness, Laughland advocates a return to the rural mode of being. Indeed, the director blurs the diverse issues of enclosures, rapid urbanization, and social incoherence, which in the novel seem to cause the gradual demise of nineteenth century rural community. By contrast, the movie inspires a relatively romanticized and idealized view of rusticity, cherishing a hope in pastoral restoration. This is underlined by the festive mode which dominates the movie, especially the lavish party organized by Mr. Shiner. This party, while only alluded to in the novel, is a pivotal dramatic event in the movie that is exploited both as a plot device as well as a pastoral trope. On the one hand, it marks a climatic dramatic event where the potency and the genuineness of romantic love between Dick and Fancy are tested by parental interference as well as material prospects. Thus, the party is an opportunity for Dick to ignite Fancy's jealousy and rekindle her affection for him when she is actually confused about whether to remain faithful to him or marry Shiner, thus, appeasing her father. The party simultaneously evokes pastoral intimations, implying that rural life is that of festivity, idleness, repose and joy. In addition, in a scene invented by the director, Fancy turns down the affluence and social prospects of Maybold, happily embracing the rural lifestyle of Mellstock, thus announcing a return to her rural roots (01:30:00). Eventually, Fancy actually joins the community of rural workers labouring on the land and she openly asks Dick to marry her, a scene which overtly contradicts the ambivalent counter-pastoral resolution of the novel, which implies that rural stability is not likely to last long in little Hintock. Indeed, Dick and Fancy are probably 'the last to enact the village's old nuptial traditions' (Miller 2016: 697).

Conclusion

The ways in which trees are portrayed in the movie illustrates a complex case where a film director strives to achieve textual fidelity, yet simultaneously desires to impose personal preferences. The movie foreshadows the novel's construction of trees as epitomes of transience and temporality, yet renounces Hardy's rich anthropological lore which reinforces human and non-human relatedness. In addition, the director loses sight of the ways in which Hardy's greenwood tree is interwoven with the social

life of rural inhabitants and portrays it as a representative figure of wilderness instead. Hence, the novel deploys the tree in such a way which reinforces a perception of nature as an extension of the social sphere, whereas the movie demarcates boundaries between human dwelling and wilderness, inspiring, therefore, a sense of environmental nostalgia. This, in turn, signals a tendency on the part of Laughland to romanticize an imaginary past of Arcadian lore, which stands in a sharp opposition with the contemporary society where the material world is being continuously threatened by techno-industrial advancements of different sorts. Unlike the novel, in the movie the tree is deposed from a human dwelling place, and the wedding celebration, instead of taking place beneath the tree, is held in Dick's home-yard. I will explore further convergences and divergences in Hardy's novels in the next chapter where this brief reference to the notion of dwelling is elaborated extensively. Hence, the core theme of the next two chapters is the representation of the geomorphic world, looking at how textual and visual narratives engage with the physical features of the terrain as well as its acoustic co-ordinates.

The Representation of Landscape in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891/1979/1998): Ecological Sublime, Material Ecology, and Post-Pastoral Intimations

Introduction

Whereas literary engagement with natural forms like fauna and flora is at the core of the previous two chapters, the representation of the geomorphic world provides a central concern in this and the subsequent chapter. Discussing visual and verbal depictions of landscape, I explore various forms of entanglement: sensory, laborious, material, acoustic and semiotic. I move beyond a discussion of ecological relations of co-existence, symbiosis and harmony addressed earlier in Chapters One and Two, to chart deeper forms of human and non-human connection and entanglement. In what follows I show that Hardy, while evincing scrupulous attention towards the biomorphic world, espousing a form of writing that accounts for the vitality of floral and faunal forms, the geomorphic world remains even more fundamental across his narratives. This is especially evidenced through his renewed attention to various notions of place, environment, and landscape. These notions, while usually deployed interchangeably to refer to nature in general, actually hold subtle differences that need careful scrutiny and nuanced definition. Landscape, as Tim Ingold observes, is 'a contoured and textured surface replete with diverse objects - living and non-living, natural and artificial' (Ingold 1993: 154). Landscape is 'experienced as a journey made, a bodily movement from one place to the other, and the gradually changing vistas along the route' (ibid). Qualitatively measured by those who observe it, landscape holds a 'form, in just the same way that the concept of the body emphasizes the form rather than the function of a living creature' (Ingold 1993: 156). Landscape is neither a symbolic structure nor 'a product of human cognition, "an achievement of the mature mind" ' (Ibid), but a physical form, a dynamic process that evolves with the unfolding life of the human and the non-human. Humans are connected to the landscape through the parameters of dwelling: 'as the familiar domain of our dwelling, it is with us, not against us', 'and through living in it, the landscape becomes a part of

us, just as we are a part of it' (Ingold 1993: 154). While we think of landscape in terms of form, we perceive the environment in terms of function. It is often understood as a set of reciprocal relationships between organisms and the physical world:

> To think of environment [...] is to regard it primarily in terms of function, of what it affords to creatures - whether human or non-human - with certain capabilities and projects of action. Reciprocally, to regard these creatures as organisms is to view them in terms of their principles of dynamic functioning, that is as organized systems (Pittendrigh qtd in Ingold1993 : 156).

The term environment relates to different categories, a physical environment consisting of 'light and heat or solar radiation, moisture, wind, oxygen, carbon dioxide, nutrients in soil, water, and atmosphere'; and a biological environment which includes 'organisms of the same kind as well as other plants and animals' (Ibrahim 2016: 14). Place is different from both landscape and environment in a sense that it refers to a 'delimited block of earth's surface', often retaining a 'symbolic meaning' (Ingold 1993: 155). A place is defined by activities of the people inhabiting it, and, therefore, 'owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there – to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambience' (Ingold 1993: 155-156).

While occasionally referring to notions of place and environment, the core focus of this chapter is an analysis of representations of natural landscape in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and its adaptations by Roman Polanski (1979) and Ian Sharp (1998). I posit that, despite occasional overlaps and affinities, the novel's construction of landscape contrasts sharply with that of the visual narratives. Whereas the novel celebrates a participatory ecology and foregrounds how historical as well as material forces constantly metamorphose the physiological features of landscape, Sharp's adaptation is torn between realistic and pastoral modes, vacillating between notions of dwelling, rural harmony and the romantic aesthetic of the beautiful and sublime.[32] Furthermore, I show that there are striking differences between the selected adaptations themselves: while Sharp's adaptation capitalizes on an aesthetic

[32] It is an 'aesthetic category associated with ideas of awe, intensity ruggedness, terror, and vastness emphasizing Man's relative insignificance in the face of Nature, arousing emotions, and stimulating the imagination. It was therefore distinct from the Beautiful and the Picturesque, and was of profound importance in relation to an appreciation of the grandeur and violence of natural phenomena' (Oxford Reference 2011).

appreciation of landscape, Polanski's lends more to a post-pastoral reading, where the natural setting evokes continuities between the human and the non-human. While the movies' depiction of landscape is often marginalized – considered as a mere symbolic backdrop – I provide a revisionist ecocritical assessment.[33] Ultimately, in my re-reading of Hardy's narrative, I go beyond the pitfalls of early critics who often construed the writer's novels from the perspective of first wave ecocriticism and, instead, suggest that his writing can be better appreciated by implementing the recent developments in ecocritical theory, namely material ecocriticism.[34]Notably, unlike the previous and subsequent chapters, this chapter weighs two different adaptations to better illustrate how directorial preferences in terms of both content and cinematographic style eventually shape an adaptation's originality.

Informing my chapter are the theoretical premises of Tim Ingold and Jane Bennett. While Ingold is an anthropologist rather than an ecocritic, his ideas resonate powerfully with the claims of environmental historians and scientific ecologists who emphasize human participation and integration in the physical world.[35] Relevant to my study is Ingold's concept of 'taskscape' which accentuates how human and non-human activities often intermingle and conglomerate together co-producing an ever dynamic and constantly mutating landscape. Ingold illustrates this intersection between the human and the non-human as follows: 'the rhythms of human activities resonate not only with those of other living things but also with a whole host of other rhythmic phenomena – the cycles of day and night and of the seasons, the winds, the tides, and so on' (1993:162). By recalibrating the agential role of these natural elements, Ingold disrupts anthropocentric attitudes that consider non-living organisms as inherently inert and passive, an argument defended by material ecocritics like Jane Bennett. Bennett believes that 'anything whatsoever, whether it be more perfect or less perfect' is inherently beaming and 'vibrant' with life, has some kind of agentic power

[33] See introduction (p. 14-15).

[34] This array of critics includes Jonathan Bate (1999), Malika Tripathi (2016), Himan Heidri (2017) and other critics who read Hardy's novels from the lens of romantic ecology.

[35] For instance, Ingold's argument complies with the ideas of scientific journalist Stephen Budiansky, who purports that 'Man's long history as an agent of change in nature's own perverse tendency toward disorder and complexity pose a complication that simple policies built upon the idea of nature's innate balance cannot even begin to cope with' (qtd in Ingram 2000: 19).

and, 'will always be able to persist in existing with that some force whereby it begins to exist, so that in this respect all things are equal' (2011: 2). Bennett does not attribute any conscious or intentional quality to matter but highlights an interactive relationship between bodies which generate series of effects and interactions. In the context of this study, I consider the role of a-biotic forces in shaping and re-shaping a landscape's outward qualities and illustrate how this eventually challenges anthropocentric understanding of agency.

In addition, I refine the theoretical formulations of Christopher Hitt and Terry Gifford. More precisely, I evoke Hitt's concept of 'ecological sublime' which, I believe, enables me to better articulate the ecological dimensions of the narratives under scrutiny and especially helps to re-conceptualize the movies through an eco-cinematic lens. Whereas the notion of the sublime, popularized by eighteenth-century romantic philosophers, is often dismissed by recent critics as a cultural construct which re-inscribes human estrangement from nature, Hitt, not only complicates and interrogates the sublime discourse, but also explicates its pertinence to an ecologically oriented criticism.[36] Hitt's central thesis is that sublime appreciation of nature 'offers a unique opportunity for the realization of a new, more responsible perspective on our relationship with the natural environment' as it induces us to appreciate nature's autonomy, its 'holy otherness', and fosters feelings of awe and humility towards nature (1999: 605).[37] Relevant to my study is Gifford's concept of the post-pastoral as well, which marks a 'shift from the anthropocentric position of the pastoral' to a more 'eco-centric view' of nature (1999: 152). Gifford discusses six post-pastoral qualities: (1) a perception of nature as a humbling and awe-inspiring force, (2) a recognition of 'a creative-destructive universe equally in balance in a continuous momentum of birth and death, death and rebirth, growth and decay, ecstasy and dissolution' (153), (3) a tendency to show 'that our inner human nature can be understood in relation to

[36] A long line of critics who critique the sublime for a wide range of reasons, amongst many others William Cronon believes that the sublime 'depends on and re-inscribes the notion of nature's otherness, of the separation between the human and nonhuman realms' (qtd in Hitt 1999: 603).

[37] This concept is coined by Rudolf Otto to refer to the individuality and autonomy of nature (qtd in Hitt 1999: 613). Hitt believes that the concept is ecologically pertinent as it entails feelings of 'wonder,' 'awe,' 'mystery,' 'chaos,' 'astonishment,' (1999: 613), and provides an alternative to the Kantian sublime which mandates human's estrangement from nature on the grounds of humans' possession of *logos*.

external nature' (156), (4) a non-dualist perception of nature and culture (163), (5) a desire to build responsible ecological relationships (165), and ultimately (6) an 'ecofeminist['s] realization that the exploitation of the planet is of the same mindset as the exploitation of women' (165). My analysis reveals that there are undeniable affinities between Gifford's formulations and the way in which the primary texts envisage nature as well as the human and non-human interplay. It is worth noting, however, that it is not my intention to discuss the total six post-pastoral features given the confines of space. My main focus is especially laid on the ways in which the works under study portray landscape in a way that suggests affinities between the exploitation of nature and the oppression of lower class women, and in a fashion that breaks the barriers between the internal and the external.

1) The Natural Landscape of Hardy and Sharp: Material versus Romantic Ecology

Influenced by the nineteenth century impressionist turn in visual arts, especially the paintings of Turner as well as Renaissance painters like Crivelli and Bellini, Hardy, in his depiction of landscape in *Tess*, adopts a visual style characterized by the use of striking colours and images.[38] Across the narrative, Hardy's visual dynamics are utilized to accentuate the aesthetic dimensions of landscape, as seen from characters external to the country proper, like the case of the amateur antiquarian narrator. In his first encounter with Blackmore Vale, the latter is drawn to the landscape's aesthetic aura and apparent order. The antiquarian perceives the vale as a 'secluded region', which, despite nineteenth century innovations in transportation technologies, was still not familiar to 'tourist[s] or landscape-painter[s]'(1978: 48). The antiquarian perceives the vale as an Arcadian sanctuary sequestered outside history and beyond the reach of mechanical contrivances: this 'sheltered tract of country' is endowed with fertile soil, ever-green fields and sweeping hills which, when coming to the view of a foreign beholder, formulate an 'expended map' different from any other country which he

[38] Hardy's visual mode of representation reflects the 19th century impressionist turn in visual arts, which at that epoch extended its reach to influence the domain of literary writing (Webster 2005: 20). Hardy also admitted that his art aims 'to intensify the expression of things, as is done by Crivelli, Bellini, &c. So that the heart and inner meaning is made vividly visible' (qtd in Wilson 2009 : 212).

might have passed by (1978: 48). While appreciating the prosperity as well as the fecundity of this agricultural landscape, the narrator equally stresses its aesthetic attributes:

> The fields are mere paddocks, so reduced that from this height their hedgerows appear a network of dark green threads overspreading the paler green of the grass. The atmosphere beneath is languorous, and is so tinged with azure that what artists call the middle distance partakes also of that hue, while the horizon beyond is of the deepest ultramarine. Arable lands are few and limited; with but slight exceptions the prospect is a broad rich mass of grass and trees, mantling minor hills and dales within the major (1978: 49).

Here, the description of the valley hinges on the principles of conventional pastoral, accentuating various scales of harmony, the orderly and the beautiful, all of which are perceptible in the ways in which the fields, the surrounding dales and hills stretch over the surface of the land in a decorative pattern. The position of the antiquarian is that of an external observer, glancing from afar at the 'green fields', the 'hedgerows' which formulate 'threads over spreading the paler green of the grass' (1978: 49). Envisaged in terms of painterly measurements, the far-off horizon, with its 'azure' colour and 'deepest ultramarine', conveys a sense of sublime which brings the landscape's energy into prominence. Hence, evident in this meticulous description is Hardy's impressionistic techniques which accentuate the tourist gaze and aesthetic aspirations of his middle-class amateur antiquarian.

Hardy's visual apparatus affords a smooth transition into cinema, and enables Sharp to easily craft and reproduce the narrator's aesthetic vision of landscape. In the establishing scene (00:00:00 / 00:07:00), the director introduces the viewer to a relatively wooded hill which, while contrasting sharply with the domesticated Blackmore Vale of Hardy, still conveys an image of a pastoral enclave, encircled by sweeping agricultural landscapes, arable lands and fractions of wilderness. It is the hill's sublime and aesthetic dimensions on which the director capitalizes the most. Making good use of a wide angle, the director portrays John D'Urbeyfield as the main actor in the cinematography, yet he captures the greenery around in a way that asserts the landscape's dominant presence. While surrounded by extremely tall trees everywhere, John D'Urbeyfield is brought to a secondary position, being dwarfed amidst the trees with his height hardly reaching half that of the trunk. When he comes

across the antiquarian, the latter is presented in the very margin of the frame's left-side, whereas a marvelous tree seems to occupy a considerable space in the right-side of the frame. With such framing, the movie marks an instance of the sublime: where the trees are magnificent and awe-inspiring, the characters underneath appear humble and small. While this instance of sublime affect might be said to reinforce a binary opposition of the non-human as distinctly superior to the human, I argue that it consolidates a perception of nature as awe-inspiring and autonomous, which, according to William Cronon, can be an 'indispensable corrective to human arrogance' (1996 : 87).

This initial instant of aesthetic appreciation and conventional imagination of pastoral order figures out heavily across the movie. For instance, the May-Day dance scene is envisaged in a way that brings the rural community of Marlott to a momentary communion with and immersion in the natural world. Accordingly, the movie marks a relatively idyllic construction of nature where the countryside community celebrates and reposes in serenity (00:01:45- 00:08:00). The scene conveys a sense of harmony and symbiosis, especially evoked through an effective use of natural soundtrack: the intermittent chorus of the birds, the flow of the water, the barking of dogs and the bleating of the sheep convey conventional pastoral tropes of serenity and festivity. This natural soundtrack intermingles with the music of the country folk, thus imparting a sense of connectedness and delightful pleasure in nature, typical of tropes of bucolic life. While capturing the festive rituals, the director draws on close-ups which capture the merry faces of the country girls, which consolidates a pastoral impulse that joy and mirth are inherently rooted in association with nature. With human and non-human characters scattered in the canvases of nature, the movie constructs what MacDonald defines as a 'visual/auditory training in appreciating the experience of an immersion within natural processes' (2013: 18), that is initially accentuated through the strategic use of a long take of two minutes or so. This construction of idyllic bucolic life, however, as I will illustrate shortly, is marked by ambivalence and complexity: it is actually unsettling, transitory and ephemeral.

While this shift to visual media corresponds to the antiquarian's vision of Marlott as a pastoral retreat or resort, the director actually renounces the narrative's historical material which, while revealing the mobile and mutant conditions of Blackmore Vale, complicates aesthetic and pastoral evocations of landscape. While

the antiquarian's reflections gesture towards an Arcadian lure of a natural landscape immune to technological encroachment, a cursory reading discloses that Hardy is actually preoccupied with dynamicity, looking at fluctuations in the movements of landscape. The narrative oscillates between the present and past tense, reminding readers that the Blackmore Vale is continually shaped and reshaped by historical forces. We are alerted to the fact that the vale was originally a densely wooded forest known as the forest of White Hart. At the present time, when 'the forests have departed' (1978 : 49), there are still 'remains of its early conditions to be found in the old oak copses and irregular belts of timber that yet survive upon its slopes, and the hollow-trunked trees that shade so many of its pastures' (1978: 49). Certainly, the narrative alludes to nineteenth century enclosure laws which paved the way to agrarian capitalism, necessitating the clearance of myriad forests and small fields to afford more extended pastures and farms. Thus, the forests 'have departed', an obvious indicator that a massive diminution of trees has taken place, and refers to the 'old oak copses' and the 'irregular belts of timber', a clear illustration of the ways in which the enclosures shaped the physiological features of this tract of the country. The narrative also acknowledges the presence of 'hollow- trunked trees', implying that the departure of the forests is related not only to nineteenth century enclosures, but to the natural regenerative processes of growth and decay. With its new constituents; i.e., the hills, the dales, the pastures, the hedgerows and the fields, the form of Blackmore Vale differs greatly from what it was in the remote past. These topographical features seem to be emerging gradually through different historical periods. In a reference to the workings of time as well as the ways in which historical forces and social activities are indelibly interwoven into the fabric of the landscape, the novel accentuates that 'in the valley, the world seems to be constructed upon a smaller and more delicate scale'(1978: 49). Hence, at the core of the narrative is a refutation of Arcadian stability, asserting that aesthetic endurance is a brittle and short-lived fictional fantasy, which aligns with the eco-centric stance of the post-pastoral.

In addition, the narrative attends to subtle occasions where characters' daily movements become landmark traces across the landscape. This, according to an ecocritical perspective, might be said to signal humans' embeddedness in the natural world. Hardy describes Tess's journey across the Blackmore landscape where the physical contact of her feet with the soil enables her to realize that she is in the

surroundings of Marlott, the place of her birth as well as upbringing: 'She [Tess]paced a soil so contrasting with that above it that the difference was perceptible to the tread and to the smell. It was the heavy clay land of Blackmore Vale' (1978: 427). Here, Tess's familiarity with the landscape through the means of 'tread and smell' resonates with what Ingold terms as 'muscular consciousness' (1993: 1667). In his analysis of *The Harvesters* (1565), a painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Ingold explains that the paths and tracks which resurface in the land are the result of people's movements through their daily journeys in the landscape. In these tracks, proclaims Ingold, is 'sedimented the activity of an entire community, over many generations' (1993: 167). When these movements are incorporated and 'imprinted' on the terrain, they are simultaneously 'embodied, on the side of the people, in their muscular consciousness' (1993: 167). Similarly, Tess's movements on the land seem to leave traces in the surface of the landscape, a factor which contributes to the emergence of the path, but these movements are simultaneously incorporated into her 'bodily experience' – enabling her familiarity with the locality. Hence, the narrative unsettles the mind/matter binary and emphasizes Tess's connectedness to the natural world through the means of 'muscular consciousness' that is initially enabled through daily contact with the tangible terrain.

The movie features a number of occasions where the director seems to work hand in hand with Hardy's narrator and meticulously mirrors the novel's depiction of landscape. For instance, the visualization of the Vale of Great Dairies marks a tendency to foreground the agency of the natural landscape, introducing it in a long take of a minute and half, and thus liberating it from narrative dominance and pulling it from a peripheral to a central position. Building on the narrative's cinematic prose, which highlights an aerial position toward landscape, the viewer encounters Tess climbing a relatively steep and high hill (00:57:00). Two techniques are used to foreground the sublime qualities of the natural world here: the particular framing of the shot as well as the heavy use of painterly techniques. The director positions Tess at the very bottom of the shot occupying a quarter of the image only, whereas the sun and the horizon are distinguished with three quarters of the image's surface. With such framing, the sun, in its magnificence, captivates viewers' attention as a dominant force in the scene. The sun's sublime beauty is further reinforced through the accentuation of its bright color and illuminating radiance which, contrasting with the drab grey

dress of Tess, draws attention to the sun itself as the most conspicuous component of the scene and subdues other elements, including Tess. Similar to the novel, in the second half of the shot, the camera takes a mobile upward aerial position to capture the vastness and the grandiosity of the natural vistas. We are presented with a montage of pastoral images: fertile meadows, pastures and farmlands; a close-up of a watercourse with water gushing as if penetrating the camera; and a herd of cows which, while in the forefront position of the camera, subdue the presence of their shepherd, Angel Clare. This cinematic moment marks a convergence between the textual and the visual medium, where the movie seems to correspond to the novel's descriptive repertoire: 'the farmsteads were more extended, the groups of cattle formed tribes hereabout; there only families. These myriads of cows stretching under her eyes from the far east to the far west outnumbered any she had ever seen at one glance before' (1978: 156). The way the farms extend from 'the far east to the far west' has a sublime connotation where the landscape is seen in terms of its magnificence and scale, and so does the word 'outnumbered' which implies a Kantian sublime value of plentitude and abundance. Similarly, the movie, through the use of a wide angle, it capitalizes on the lush and boundless expanses of the landscape. These images of majestic landscape can be argued to generate a state of humility before nature, which Kant terms 'sublime temper of the mind' and Hitt considers as 'the cornerstone of the environmental ethic' (1999: 607).

The representation of the Vale of Great Dairies marks a tendency by the director as well as the narrator to foreground sublime values of vastness and infiniteness, but to also highlight characters' economic and social bonds with the land. Interestingly, both in the novel as well as the movie, the prosperity of this pastoral 'pilgrimage' is conveyed through the image of cows scattered around the riverbank. To emphasize this prosperity even further across the movie, close-ups are used in the immediately consecutive scene which introduces us to the farmers milking the cows: the camera is aimed closely at the plentiful produce as well as to the farmers' hands while engaged in work (00:59:43).This cinematic moment is open to multiple readings: one might argue that the narrative stands out as a pastoral construction of landscape of plenty; i.e., a landscape that is ever generous and fecund, and this is ecologically paradoxical as the fecundity of nature is neither permanent nor guaranteed. Here, instead, I propose that, with the pastoral impulse foregrounded, the

movie implicitly enjoins us to contemplate humans' dependence on the natural world for basic survival needs, which gestures at the integration between social economy and the natural environment. Thus, we come to realize that the movie, like the novel, constructs a complex vision of landscape: while encouraging us to see the sublime in the natural world, it does not necessarily adhere to the notion of wilderness as a space outside history and civilization, and a place apart from human society. While presenting nature as a landscape to admire, the narratives are still alert to the ways in which labour connects people to the land and rejects the idea that nature is devoid of human endeavour.

It is worth mentioning, however, that, like in the depiction of the Blackmore Vale, a shift to the visual mode marks a compression of crucial narrative details, which blurs the multi-faceted dimensions of Hardy's perception of landscape. Indeed, the narrative goes beyond highlighting a laborious engagement with the land, to attend to the transformative effects inherent in daily activities as well as cyclic agricultural work. The narrator depicts farmers as an active force working on the surface of the landscape: 'Men were at work here and there – for it was the season for "taking up" the meadows, or digging the little waterways clear or the winter irrigation, and mending their banks where trodden-down by the cows' (1978: 258). Evident here is a dwelling perspective towards landscape, where the narrator describes a stewardship relationship between the rural community and the land, a relationship inherently based on nurture, watchfulness and care. This care-based relationship, however, as I will illustrate shortly, is vexed and uneasy. In another textual reference, a further implication is made that the farming activities have long contributed to the different metamorphoses which this landscape has undergone: 'thus they all worked on, encompassed by the vast flat mead which extended to either slope of the valley – a level landscape compounded of old landscapes long forgotten, and, no doubt, differing in character greatly from the landscape that they composed now' (1978:163). Here, the narrative espouses what Greg Garrard terms 'a mode of practical existence as an immediate reality' (2004: 108); that is to say, a landscape inhabited by and dwelt on rather than seen from the lens of aesthetic pleasure. For Hardy, as Jonathan Bate explains, 'there is no division between human intercourse and local environment', for his 'countryside is inhabited rather than viewed aesthetically' (1999: 554). While I agree with Bate, I also stress that Hardy's view of landscape goes beyond mere

celebration of human and land partnership to reveal how human activities are hardwired into the fabric of the landscape, an aspect which shapes and reshapes its physiological features.

In his essay (1999), Bate reads Hardy's landscape through the lens of romantic ecology. Bate contends that, in *The Woodlanders,* Hardy documents an endangered rural mode of co-existence with the natural world in a time of escalating social change. He expounds that the novel documents a symbiotic relationship between rural characters and their surrounding environment; for him, this is the case of Marty South and Giles Winterborne. He also illustrates how Grace, introduced to urban life in early phases of her childhood, loses connection with the environment. Bate looks at Hardy from a nostalgic viewpoint. He states,

> Our instinct about Hardy is this: he values a world for him vanishing, for us long vanished in which people live in rhythm with nature. Presumably we value such a world because we are not entirely happy with our own modernity, with speed, with noise. We sense that there is something wrong about our comfortable insulation against the rhythms of the seasons, something alienating about the perpetual mediation of nature through the instruments of culture, whether radio and canned food, which Hardy lived to see, or television and genetically-modified crops, which he would have had grave difficulty in imagining (1999: 542).

Here Bate considers the reader's response to the text, believing that an encounter with Hardy's fictional localities might spur a better engagement with the environment. Hence, for Bate, Hardy's Wessex 'may serve as an analogy for the human capacity […]to live, that is to say, with thoughtfulness and with care for the earth' (1999: 558-559). As the words 'thoughtfulness' and 'care' clearly indicate, Bate is hopeful that Giles' 'nurturing' relationship to the land might cue ecological attitudes, hinting at the necessity of being sensitive to nature and accountable to the environment.

I concur with Bate that Hardy's depiction of rural ecology serves as an ecological reminder on how modernity continues to alienate us from the natural world. However, to suggest that Hardy's narrative celebrates people living in harmony with nature is to lose sight of the nineteenth century economic realities which have had a destructive impact on not only rural community and rural landscape, but the very essence of the relationships people held with the natural world. In effect, to understand

nineteenth century Wessex ecology, one must not exclude it from the long history of enclosure laws and agricultural capitalism which fostered various meanings of loss, dispossession and destitution amongst rural dwellers. A victim of this system, Tess leads a precarious life, pursuing work opportunities at all costs, even when work means grim conditions as well as vulnerability. Despite her young age, she wakes up early in the morning and travels a long distance from Marlott to Casterbridge in order to sell her father's beehives in return for few shillings. Tess's family ultimately experiences humiliation as well as destitution, losing the lease of their house after her father's death. Furthermore, Hardy chronicles a historical epoch where relationships to the land, based on a system of ownership, were mediated from a purely capitalist and utilitarian perspective, and a 'nurturing relationship' was often decided on economic grounds of how much produce the land might yield and how much wealth it might help to accumulate. As the narrator illustrates, there were three types of villages in Wessex, 'the village cared for by its lord, the village cared for by itself, and the village uncared for either by itself or by its lord' (1999: 360). Here, the novel draws attention not only to the dispossession of rural dwellers, but to the arbitrariness of landownership and how it shaped the land's ultimate conditions, becoming cultivated or entirely abandoned on economic grounds. Hence the novel captures and assesses a lost unity with nature, where the organic milieu is seen as 'a raw material for production' and 'approached in terms of its use-value' (Bate 1991: 57).

Furthermore, Hardy's characters are not the type of Wordsworth's independent workers who were always in 'harmony with nature', and; therefore, developed a sort of 'partnership' with the land where care and responsibility was the foundation of economic sufficiency and symbiotic relationships.[39] Hardy's characters, for example Tess and Marian, 'represent the spirit of [un]alienated labor' (Bate 1991: 22), compelled to toil in grim conditions to earn a living. Indeed, Hardy discloses the deadening monotony and ugliness of agricultural labour as well as the harshness of rural ecology, and how Tess, to survive, must suffer physical exhaustion as well as mental turmoil. Hence, the narrative traces the debilitating impact of agricultural work, by highlighting long hours of mechanical labour which subjugate Tess to the mercy of landowners: 'dinner-time came, and the whirling ceased; whereupon Tess left her post, her knees trembling so wretchedly with the shaking of the machine that

[39] See Bate's *Romantic Ecology* (1991: 22).

she could scarcely walk' (407). This is not to say that Hardy exhibits nostalgia for a rosy past, lamenting the loss of an 'organic society' and the dissolution of an idyllic rural life, which, as Raymond Williams suggests in *The Country and the City* (1973), has no existence beyond literary artifacts. Further, this does not mean that Hardy is 'hostile to mobility', for, indeed, to read him so 'is to misrepresent him brutally' (Kerridge 2001: 138). In effect, at the core of Hardy's writing is to show 'the possibility of a nature writing not always in search of stability, not simply hostile to change and incursion' (ibid). Indeed, acknowledging 19th century developments in agricultural equipment, the writer stresses that working the land is neither pleasant nor without difficulties. The exhausting work assigned to the aged horse Prince, while evidencing that the rural community is not always in harmony with the natural world, also proves that life before mechanical agriculture was neither rosy nor easy. Hence, what is revealed here is that working the land is not without ecological violence, either on part of the human lot, or on the side of the natural world. Probably one of the novel's most eloquent moments which illustrate this reality is found in chapter XIV, where the reaping machine threatens the lives of many animals:

> Rabbits, hares, snakes, rats, mice, retreated inwards as into a fastness, unaware of the ephemeral nature of their refuge, and of the doom that awaited them later in the day when, their covert shrinking to a more and more horrible narrowness, they were huddled together, friends and foes, till the last few yards of upright wheat fell also under the teeth of the unerring reaper, and they were everyone put to death by the sticks and stones of the harvesters (137).

This extract complicates principles of romantic ecology and the ideals of harmony, symbiosis, and 'unity with nature'. Hence, while uncovering the ways in which historical forces condition the dynamicity of the landscape, the narrative accentuates the latent violence in human agency and its potential to threaten and endanger the lives of both humans and the non-humans. Accordingly, it could be argued that Hardy's approach to dwelling is much more nuanced than one might ever think.

Sharp's vision of the human and non-human interplay contrasts sharply with Hardy's. Eliding scenes which validate the complexity of Hardy's characters – the hunting scene for example and the narrative's commentary on characters' ambivalent attitudes towards the land – the director capitalizes on scenes which celebrate people

in harmony with nature. This can be discerned in Tess's delightful response to a singing bird when returning from the Maypole dance (00:08:48), her conversation on stars and her knowledge of their various mythical associations (00:13:43- 00:14:10), and eventually her embitterment at the death of the horse Prince (00:15:00- 00:17:00). Travelling to Casterbridge in the dead of night, Tess's horse collides with a speeding mail cart, falls down in the street and is eventually shot dead by the mail cart owner, all of which happens in an abrupt moment of absent-mindedness when Tess is taken into a reverie. Overcome by a strong sense of guilt and remorse for the loss of the horse, Tess blames herself for the horse's death (00:15:20). Tess's attitude here, while evidencing friendly ecological relationships, also encapsulates an implicit ecological statement that animals should be considered from a normative perspective. At the surface only, the movie seems to mimic the novel's major events, however, the way the director frames the scenes contrast sharply with Hardy's narrative. For instance, accentuating the inescapability of ecological violence, as mentioned earlier, Hardy stresses that Prince is forced to work despite its age and obvious physical frailty. This might be taken to mean that the writer throws blame on the D'Urbeyfield family for mistreating the horse and indirectly causing his death. Hence, it could be argued that the novel refutes the ideal of 'nurturing relationships' espoused by Bate. In the movie, however, the horse doesn't seem to suffer any health conditions, which exonerates the D'Urbeyfields from advertently exploiting the animal. Thus, one could say that the movie complies with the tenets of romantic ecology, portraying care and nurture as foundational to the rural community, which is originally complicated in the novel.

However, the movie equally portrays a realistic vision of rural work and, thus, consolidates the novel's perspective on ecological harshness and human-nature disintegration. While renouncing the touristic, picturesque gaze of the early scenes, the director advocates Hardy's holistic approach which engages with the harsh reality of rural work. After her separation from Angel, Tess is introduced into a more unsettling ecology where she experiences the bitterness of agricultural work. By the virtue of her labour, Tess, in the words of the narrator, becomes 'a figure in the landscape' and 'a woman of the fields' (02:03:00). While the phrase 'a woman of the fields' might imply sustainable ecological relations, where Tess is connected to nature through laborious engagement, the watching mode reveals that this connection is far from harmonious. Vividly portraying Tess's alienating toil on the Flintcomb-Ash farm, the director,

relying primarily on extremely long shots of three minutes or more, invites reflection on the repulsiveness of agricultural work. Equally important, the use of extreme close-ups to capture Tess's hopeless face, the bitterness in her eyes, her mud-covered hands, as well as ragged clothes evidences that the rural experience is that of alienation, continuous struggle and deprivation (02:14:00).

Both the novel and the movie document the encroachment of machinery into the rural landscape in a time of increasing technological innovation. Nevertheless, where Hardy's reaping machine takes a background position, Sharp brings the machine to the forefront, portraying it from the perspective of technological sublime. Foregrounding the gigantic size of the machine in the mise-en-scene, the director relies on a wide angle which, instead of capturing the entire machine at once, closely reflects parts of its complex structure, thus drawing attention to its magnificent wheels, massive engine and body (02:15:00- 02:18:00). The machine doesn't seem to evoke positive connotations at all: it enslaves the rural laborers from dusk till dawn; and with its thick smoke as well as deranging noise, it silences the natural sounds around and undoes any possibility of pastoral repose. Hence, the director complicates of the pastoral ideal, envisaging a landscape mediated through technology and, simultaneously, uncovering the disconcerting actualities of rural life and agricultural toil. Sharp's realistic depiction as well as decision to magnify technological presence across the landscape is understandable especially if we account for the movie's temporal context where society is mechanically and industrially driven. Indeed, Sharp here gestures towards the twentieth century context of large-scale agrarian capitalism and technological developments.

Returning to my initial claim – regarding Hardy's depiction of a mobile and constantly changing landscape – I argue that the novel moves beyond work experiences to expose how geological matter contributes to the mutability of landscape, an aspect which the movie obscures. Hardy, as Patricia Ingham notes, was an avid reader of geological research which came to shape his perception of the natural world. The writer obtained a copy of the sixth edition of Gideon Mantell's *The Wonders of Geology* (1848) in 1858 from his friend Horace Moule, a text whose vivid descriptions of the stratified past may have contributed to Henry Knight's geological visions in Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (qtd in Buckland 2008: 6). Mantell's text identifies the Earth's layered geological history and conceives of the natural world as inherently

transformative, mobile and dynamic. At the end of this volume, Mantell details the particular geological history of the 'Sussex coast' and foregrounds Briton's transformation from 'the country of the Iguanodon', to a fishing village, and finally into 'a beautiful city […] with its palace, its temples, and its thousand edifices, and its streets teeming with a busy population in the highest state of civilization' (qtd in Buckland 2008: 11). Hardy was also aware of Darwin's *The Formation of Vegetable Mould* (1881) which presents 'a graphic demonstration of how the modest but relentless activities of some of the humblest of creatures, given enough time, could determine not only the arability of the land but also the reformation of the entire face of the landscapes' (qtd in Padian 2010: 221). Hardy's knowledge of geology and evolutionary theory explains the scientific content of *Tess* which asserts the fluidity and vitality of geological matter and its continual role in shaping the topographical features of the land.

Indeed, filtering into Hardy's depiction of landscape, especially *Tess*, are ideas of a similar kind to those advanced by Mantell and Darwin. Through sustained engagement with the concept of 'deep time', a belief that life on Earth began in an extremely distant time that is inherently immemorial, Hardy envisages landscape as a continuous process unfolding across different geological epochs. This shows in the fowl farm which Tess is assigned to take care of when working for Alec's mother. The narrator expounds that the place has undergone a series of transformations: 'the community of fowls […] made its head in an old thatched cottage standing in an enclosure that had once been a garden, but was now a trampled and sanded square' (1978 : 99). This passage acknowledges human 'partness' with landscape, highlighting social agency as an active force behind the dynamicity of landscape. The narrator acknowledges the various social activities and material uses which brought the site to its present state. More significantly, however, the narrative covertly implies that matter is active and in a constant state of flux: social work here didn't change the topography of the place only, but the nature of its soil, effecting its arability and rendering it eventually unsuitable for agricultural use. Ecologically relevant here is the reference to geological time as well: on this particular cottage, time seems to be experienced in different scales that are simultaneously instant and distant: the time when it was a farm, then a garden, and a square thereafter. The novel here allows a glance at the brevity of human existence in relation to the vast histories of geological time. While challenging ingrained anthropocentric understandings of time, the

narrative implicitly invites us to reflect on the world's ontological precedence, which resonates with the principles of ecology. As Kate Rigby observes, 'the diverse physical realities of air, water, fire, rock, plants, animals, soils, weather, ecosystems, solar systems etcetera, to which I refer when I speak of "the natural world" or "earth", nonetheless precede and exceed whatever words might say about them' (2014: 126). Thus, the narrative serves as a catalyst against a belief in human supremacy over the physical world.

Further, Hardy espouses a type of writing which engages with the very basic material component of landscape. For instance, the delineation of the Flintcomb-Ash farm accounts for the topographical features of the land as well as the ways in which these features are inherently predetermined by geological matter. The narrative describes the farm as a desert-like place whose agricultural produce is limited to crops like turnips and corn:

> They [Tess and Marian] walked on together, and soon reached the farmhouse, which was almost sublime in its dreariness. There was not a tree within sight; there was not, at this season, a green pasture – nothing but fallow and turnips everywhere; in large fields divided by hedges plashed to unrelieved levels (1978:358).

In a latter textual reference, the narrator draws a connection between the landscape's 'desolate' features and the quality of the soil: in Flintcomb-Ash, the soil is a kind of 'stony lanchets or lynchets- the outcrop of siliceous veins in the chalk formation; composed of myriads of loose white flints in bulbous, cusped and phallic shapes' (1978: 360). In contrast to the dreary desert-like landscape of the Flintcomb-Ash farm, the Blackmore Vale is characterized by its fecundity and 'ever-green' pastures (1978: 48). The narrative explains that what shapes the 'enclosed character' of the Blackmore Vale is the nature of its soil and the quality of its weather which determine the type of the habitat which grows in the nearby surroundings. The narrator stresses that the nature of the soil in the Blackmore Vale is the main factor which still preserves some aspects of its old topographical features: 'It was the heavy clay land of Blackmore Vale [...] Having once been forest, at this shadowy time it seemed to assert something of its old character' (1978:427). Ecologically significant here is not only the foregrounding of the landscape's basic material substance, but also what Bennett

terms 'material vibrancy'; that is, matter in an ongoing active and lively state. Hence, for Hardy, the soil is neither inert nor passive, but casts agency on the landscape and, thereby shapes its topographical features.

The novel engages with fluvial processes, revealing how hydrological matter continuously transforms the physiology of the landscape. The narrator identifies the mobile nature of the river Froom; how its shape has been changing all the way through: the river which looks now 'exhausted, aged, and attenuated, lay serpentining along through the midst of its former spoils' (1978: 159), was initially 'as wide as the whole valley' (1978: 159). It is such descriptive details which unveil Hardy's complex vision of Wessex landscape. While the river Froom seems to retain a pastoral connotation, hinting at the plentitude and fecundity of the land, its agedness, however, yields a counter point of view. Hence, the narrative alerts us that landscape stability is doomed to be temporary and short-lived. However, it is not only the stability of landscape and its aesthetic endurance that is ephemeral; it is the very prosperity, the fecundity of nature and, more importantly, its generosity which is neither guaranteed nor permanent. The text targets and subverts the life-long notion of the 'generous mother nature' which, according to Morton, implies different meanings of exploiting and appropriating the natural world (2010: 07).

In addition to this post-pastoral impulse, the narrative portrays matter in continual states of interaction and transformation. It stresses how the river Froom, with its constant movements, flashes sand and gravels – full of organic matter – into the adjacent farms: 'the shovelfuls of loam, black as jet, brought there by the river when it was as wide as the whole valley, were an essence, of soils, pounded champaigns of the past, steeped, refined, and subtilized to extraordinary richness, out of which came all the fertility of the mead, and the cattle grazing there' (1978: 258). This passage can be read in the light of what Bennett calls 'material assemblage'. On the one hand, the narrative recognizes the different particles of soil as inherently 'vibrant' and active elements which beam with life and endow the meadow with 'extraordinary richness'. In Bennett's terms, the particles are individual 'actants' and 'effective bodies' which unify and coalesce together, creating an 'assemblage' or a 'confederate' of agency; that is to say, the loam itself which actually sustains the fertility of the soil. On the other hand, this fertilizer – meaning the loam – formulates another confederate of agency along with the waters of the river Froom which

‘nourish[es] the grass and cows’ of the Vale of the Great Dairies (1978: 157). The narrator underscores that ‘the river had stolen from the higher tracts and brought in particles to the vale all this horizontal land’ (1978: 157). By implication, it is the collision between the river and these particles which contributes to the prosperity of the Vale of Great Dairies. While the narrative personifies the river, giving it human attributes – the ability to steal – it prompts us to question anthropocentric understandings of agency and eloquently articulates the river as an agentic power. In addition, with its meditation on the material component of landscape, the novel invites us to consider nature beyond pastoral and romantic considerations of the beautiful and the sublime. It highlights instead a vital materialist approach which comprehends nature in terms of basic material substance.

The movie, while having the capacity to shift back and forth between past and present occurrences, still smothers the novel’s geological discourse, which would arguably not only distract the audience from the plot, but would also work against the director’s temporal preferences. As my thesis introduction posits, textual and visual narratives trigger two contrasting modes of engagement, an aspect which determines what goes into an adapted text and what might be otherwise excluded. As Hutcheon explains, while the novel’s telling mode targets readers’ ‘imagination’, the watching mode addresses viewers’ ‘perception’. Additionally, in textual narratives imagination is often ‘controlled by the selected, directing words of the text and liberated – that is, unconstrained by the limits of the visual or aural’; by contrast, when watching a movie, ‘we are caught in an unrelenting, forward driving story’ (2013: 24). Hence, ‘a *shown* dramatization cannot approximate the complicated verbal play of *told* poetry or the interlinking of description, narration, and explanation that is so easy for prose narrative to accomplish’ (2013: 24). The implication of these media differences is that Sharp cannot go back and forth to explain how geology and agricultural work has changed landscape’s topographical features. This would not only disorient viewers, but affects the movie’s temporal dimension, posing a possibility to run beyond time limits. Adaptation, as H. Porter Abbott explains, is a ‘surgical art’: in order to mould a long narrative into (for example) a ninety minute visual performance, much of editorial trimming and surgical work is needed to reduce the movie into the basic elements of the plot (2002: 108). Having said this, however, I do not mean that a visual medium is inherently anthropocentric, a sweeping statement which I

complicated through the analysis of instances of soundtrack, long takes and wide angles which, across Sharp's adaptation, endow the natural landscape with agency of its own. While this trimming work does not lead to the marginalization of landscape, however, it obscures Hardy's multifaceted and complex vision of landscape and its mobile nature.

Finally, with its focus on elements of the sublime, the movie misses out the cultural rigour of Hardy's landscape. As Allison A. Kroll explains, Hardy's Wessex is 'an experiment in the institution of heritage' that has a significant role in 'conserving personal, cultural, and national histories' (2009: 335). Indeed, Hardy alerts readers to the ways in which Wessex landscapes are steeped in history and are vibrant with culture, being reservoirs of mythic and superstitious relics as well as canvases populated with ruins of ancient castles, tombs and effigies of the people who once inhabited the place. For Hardy, Wessex landscape 'is of a historic, no less than of topographical interest' (49). For instance, hills in Marlott are significant for they are historical monuments and living memories rather than being mere geo-physical places divorced of cultural associations. Set up against the duration of human experiences, the hills nearby Blackmore Vale represent a gateway through history and speak to the multiple generations which inhabited the place centuries ago. Despite the departure of these ancestors, their remains are still carved and incorporated into the fabric of the landscape:

> Departed hills and slopes - now cut up into little paddocks - and the green foundations that showed where the D'Urbervilles mansion once stood; also an outlying stretch of Egdon Heath that had always belonged to the estate. Hard by, the aisle of the church called the d'Urbervilles Aisle looked on imperturbably (1978:447).

The ways in which the d'Urbervilles' remains seem to be indelibly bound up with the landscape highlights the family's link to the land and their domestication of the terrain in the process of dwelling. Now that the d'Urbervilles family members are dissolved into a mere organic matter, landscape continues to stand out 'as an enduring record of – and testimony –' to their lives (Ingold 1993: 152). Hence, 'archeologically', as Saman Ali Mohammed has recently argued, Hardy 'creates a union between the ancient and modern world' (2017: 172).

The movie actually makes an oblique allusion to how the d'Urbervilles, at some point in the past, maintained inseparable links with the lands nearby Marlott. In his accidental encounter with the antiquarian, Jack D'Urbeyfield inquires about the location of the family's mansions, pastures and estates, and the antiquarian underscores that these exist nowhere in England anymore (00:00:00/ 00:01:15). It seems that the d'Urbervilles' social and economic connection with land only extends to the past; at the present time, however, this bond has become a mere historical record told by antiquarians, especially as the family was doomed to extinction. Missing here is Hardy's visual depiction which vividly incarnates how the d'Urbervilles' castles, tombs and effigies still show up in the surface of the land and thus are indelibly inculcated into the canvasses of the landscape. Hence, landscape in the movie ceases to be a historical façade which speaks to cultural connectedness, a connectedness that initially springs from the life-long process of dwelling. To borrow the words of Saman Ali Mohammed, the movie fails to visually portray how Hardy's delineated places are 'historical landmarks' which 'preserve man's history of contact with land' and internalize 'man's previous historical interactions with his environment' (2017:172). Simply put, the d'Urbervilles' ties with the land are only recounted by antiquarians rather than by the tangible terrain of the landscape itself.

The movie elides natural/ cultural connectedness especially in relation to the forest of the White Hare. According to the narrator, the forest was originally a royal hunt reserve in the distant past and notorious as a place for witchcraft. In the temporal scale of the novel the forest, gradually transformed into fields, pastures and relatively wooded hills, has become a cultural repertoire and a nest where various relics of myth as well as folklore persist for generations to come. Indeed, the forest seems to contribute to the rich cultural heritage of Marlott: while 'the forests have departed, but some old customs of their shades remain. Many, however, linger only in a metamorphosed or disguised form. The May-Day dance, for instance, was to be discerned on the afternoon under notice' (49). Hence, the forest of the White Hare illustrates what Greg Garrard, in his definition of dwelling, calls the 'landscape of memory, ancestry and death, of ritual, life and work' (2004: 108). Simply put, Hardy's landscapes are thus vibrant sites for ecological, cultural and historical interaction. By contrast, the movie fails to foreground how the historical and cultural significances of the May-Day as well as the long history of the forest are inseparably connected. In

other words, the movie blurs how the May-Day ritual acquires particular significance in the context of a diverse ritual and mythical heritage long associated with the forest.

In contradistinction to the novel, the movie celebrates the forest landscapes of Marlott for their sublime imperatives only. Framed in an extremely long shot of two minutes or so, the forest where Alec seduces Tess – originally referred to as a chase in the novel – invites attention to the humbling power of wilderness. The forest's interiority inspires awe as well as fear in Alec and Tess who suddenly confront its overwhelming darkness after having lost their path in the dead of the night. We discern a sense of terror in Tess's voice wondering where she is and sense ostensible humility in Alec's reply that they are in one of the oldest forests in England. The forest marks its presence visually as well as acoustically in a specific way which underpins sublime values. While Alec's and Tess's faint voices are almost submerged in the densely wooded forest, the wind seems to jostle and jolt the tree branches, producing a peculiar whistle and hissing which creates apprehension and unease on the viewer's part. The view of Alec and Tess while in the deepest recesses of the forest is worth attention as it clearly hinges on different elements of the sublime as well. Two hollowed tree trunks – one sturdy and immobile and another fallen and almost leaning into the ground – are shot from below. Massive in size, these trunks dominate the cinematic space and take up about a quarter of its surface. While at the center of the shot, Tess and Alec are surrounded by the tall and horizontally enormous trees from the right and left side and encompassed from the top by the forest's thick leafy canopy. Thus, despite their centrality in the frame, Alec and Tess are brought to a secondary position and their presence is subdued by the dominant presence of the landscape which fills up the screen. Such moment of sublime wilderness, while it might be said to contribute to 'Othering' nature as dangerous and 'underwrites humans' separateness from […] the natural world' (Hitt 1999: 606), I posit that 'otherness' here doesn't necessarily inspire anti-ecological sentiments and doesn't necessarily hardwire a hierarchal division of subject and object. By contrast, it draws attention to the necessity of accepting nature 'in its full individuality, as a unique and astonishing event' (Hitt 1999: 613).

2) Re-reading the Symbolic Landscape of Hardy and Polanski: Material Agency and Post-pastoral Intimations

In Hardy's fiction then, landscape is inextricably woven into the fabric of the narrative. In the words of William Cohen, landscape 'functions as a character' in Hardy's fiction (2006: 446). While liberated from narrative dominance, landscape is often afforded agency and autonomy. It is also typical of Hardy to foreground the presence of landscape through the use of a highly visual painterly and cinematic prose which ultimately anticipated the adaptation of Sharp who, in return, relies heavily on long takes, wide angles, and occasional temp-morts to integrate the natural landscape into his narrative and equally pull it out from the margin. Hardy, however, also engages with the natural world from a seemingly aesthetic standpoint, especially drawing on symbolism and the age-old technique of pathetic fallacy.[40] As I will illustrate shortly, there is an undeniable intertextual dialogue between Hardy's text and that of Polanski as well, where the director appropriates the novel's stylistic devices for his cinematic use, especially symbolism which he exploits to the fullest. In relation to both Hardy and Polanski, a long tradition of critical analysis explains how pathetic fallacy and symbolism serve to sustain the aesthetic value of the writer's and the director's respective narratives and enrich their thematic textures.[41] In contrast to these critics, I argue that symbolic constructions as well as personifications, having imminent presence in both narratives, are complex and by no means anthropocentric. Otherwise put, I posit that while anthropomorphic instances might be construed as a symbolic use of landscape as a descriptor of characters' emotions and a vehicle to express particular thematic trajectories, they are actually heightened with a sense of complexity and are, therefore, open to multiple readings, many of which operate to subvert anthropocentric legacies. Indeed, both texts deploy biomorphic and

[40] John Ruskin is the first to coin the notion of 'pathetic fallacy' in *Modern Painters,* to refer to the romantic poetic tendency to attribute human traits and qualities to the natural and the non-human.

[41] See, for instance, Satoshi Nishimura, 'Thomas Hardy and the Language of the Inanimate', in *Studies in English Literature, 1500 – 1900,* 43. 4 (p. 897); and Arthur Rankin, 'Painterly Moments in Roman Polanski's *Tess*', in *Senses of Cinema* (2008), 46.

geomorphic actors as a means to highlight the ways in which human beings are inherently integrated into the natural world. This ultimately makes for the texts' post-pastoral leanings, which, to use the words of Terry Gifford, aims to 'achieve a vision of an integrated natural world that includes the human' (1999: 148). Here I further argue that the novel, through subtle use of such stylistic devices, reveals a material enmeshment with the world where tactile, sensory and sonic engagements with the surrounding environment shapes characters' lives and physiological realities.

a- Ecofeminist Intimations

A salient feature of post-pastoral literature, as Gifford postulates, is a tendency to draw parallels between the destruction of nature and the oppression of working-class women. Gifford locates destructive attitudes towards nature in the androcentric attitudes which privilege men over women, but also discriminate against different social groups: 'the exploitation of the planet is of the same mindset as the exploitation of women and minorities' (1999: 165). Ecofeminism, crystallized into a sub-branch of ecocriticism around the 1980s (1999:166), has become an umbrella term for diverse bifurcating thought paradigms. In my study, I prefer to narrow down my scope and adopt Gifford's definition, but also that of Greta Gaard which show striking convergences. In effect, both critics believe that the environmental crisis is rooted in patriarchy more generally and its discrimination against a whole variety of categories:

> Ecofeminism's basic premise is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities and species, is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature. Ecofeminism calls for the end to all oppressions, arguing that no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature (Gaard 1993: 1).

Hence, ecofeminists believe that, to find a way out of the escalating environmental dilemma, collaboration is crucial to mobilize against the myriad injustices inflicted upon different social groups, specifically working-class women. Hardy's and Polanski's *Tess* can be construed as works which support an ecofeminist reading, yet, while the novel's ecofeminist impulse is self-evident, the movie, driven by suspense and the dictates of a love-plot, enacts considerable editorial work at the level of

dialogue and, therefore, remains ambivalent. Amongst the various female characters whose plights the texts document, Tess's oppression by an unjust patriarchal society, her rape experience, unfruitful marriage, and final sorrowful death stand out to ecofeminists as compelling evidence of how the victimization of women is inextricably intertwined with the exploitation of natural resources. In both texts, symbolism as well as the pathetic fallacy work effectively to validate ecofeminist overtones.

Entrapped by unjust patriarchal and social laws, Tess sustains agonizing pain and detrimental losses across different stages of her life. First raped by Alec, then scorned by self-appointed custodians of bourgeois 'respectability' for giving birth to a child out of wedlock, to later lead a precarious life shifting from one field-working job to another, Tess's story reflects the full extent of patriarchal oppression. Notably, however, the injustices which encumber Tess's path towards happiness and stability do not seem to be solely confined to members of a similar sexual affiliation and social class only, but further extend to nature. For instance, the cruelty Tess receives at the hands of her middle-class 'betters' is of the same kind to that inflicted upon pheasants, being frail preys of callous hunters:

> Under the trees several pheasants lay about, their rich plumage dabbled with blood; some were dead, some feebly twitching a wing, some staring up 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 (352).

Similarly, Polanski prompts us to see Tess's suffering as similar to that of a deer pursued by hunters (01:52:00). Both in the novel as well as the movie, Tess is susceptible because of her 'supposedly' female 'secondary' position in a male-dominated society, and so are the deer and the birds: vulnerable victims to the hunters who reduce nature to mere instrumental purposes. On the other hand, while Tess is perceived as a sexual object by both Alec and Angel – at least in the novel – the birds and the deer are similarly viewed in terms of instrumentalism and pleasure, to demonstrate humankind's dominance and superiority over nature. Since Tess is portrayed as sharing a similar fate with the deer and birds, and reciprocates a sense of harmony with these creatures, a symbolic association is constructed to suggest that

Tess is part of the natural order which is continuously objectified because of unjust cultural fallacies:

> Poor darlings—to suppose myself the most miserable being on earth in the sight o' such misery as yours!" she exclaimed, her tears running down as she killed the birds tenderly.[…] she was ashamed of herself for her gloom of the night, based on nothing more tangible than a sense of condemnation under an arbitrary law of society which had no foundation in Nature (353).

What this reveals is a critique of a cultural thought paradigm, unveiling the paradoxes as well as the injustices underlying human-made laws, and denouncing cruelty both towards women as well as animals, which is in line with ecofeminist theory. For Hardy, law, inherently 'arbitrary' and antithetical to 'nature', neither accommodates the rights of working-class women, nor the rights of animals.

Where nature imagery figures out heavily in both texts, it constructs a strong association between the subjugation of lower class women and the exploitation of nature. Additionally, both texts construct a metaphoric association between Tess and organic nature, and between Alec and the so-called civilized culture. In both texts, after welcoming Tess to his house, Alec introduces her to the British queen strawberries and further picks up roses for her, adorning her dress as well as her hat. In the novel, the reader is alerted that Alec uses nature for basic instrumental purposes to gain Tess' attention, and in a very similar way, he only desires association with Tess for temporary pleasure. Indeed, the novel unfolds an ecofeminist statement that Alec, while perceiving flowers as a means of decoration, equally considers Tess as a sexual object. In an evocative scene which endorses this reading, we are told that a thorn from Alec's flower pricks Tess's chin (1999: 84), an indication that Alec has malign intentions and that his seductive strategy is eventually damaging to Tess. In effect, the narrator discloses Alec's scornful comments regarding Tess: 'then he broke into a loud laugh. 'Well, I'm damned! What a funny thing! Ha-ha-ha! And what a crumby girl!' (1999: 83). Where the movie removes this subtle detail, it inclines us to believe that Alec is infatuated by Tess's beauty, treating her kindly and offering flowers as a means to gain her approbation, although his intention— as we come to realize later on— is temporary pleasure. Here, although the flowers are equally used for a utilitarian purpose, the intention is not harmful: gaining Tess's heart through the means of nature. Hence, what the novel presents as clear seduction which results in

further objectification, the movie deploys as a romance pastoral trope, and only uncovers Alec's ill-intentions at the end.

Across the novel, the plight of lower-class women can be understood in the light of wide-ranged injustices inflicted upon non-human species. The way the narrator constructs the strawberry scene can be read as a strong ecofeminist statement. While munching the strawberry, Alec's eyes are intimately directed to Tess, in an endeavor to voyeuristically scrutinize her body:

> D'Urberville began gathering specimens of the fruit for her, handling them back to her as he stooped: and presently selecting a specially fine product of the 'British Queen' variety he stood up and held it by the stem to her mouth.
> 'No, no!' she said quickly, putting her fingers between his hand and her lips. 'I would rather take it in my own hand.'
> 'Nonsense!' he insisted; and in a slight distress she parted her lips and took it in. They had spent some time wandering desultorily thus, Tess eating in a half-pleased, half-reluctant state whatever d'Urberville offered her (81).

With her feelings of unease and annoyance at Alec's invasive scrutiny, Tess actually turns down the latter's dominating gaze and his tendency to reduce her to an object of voyeuristic pleasure. The novel continues to expose Alec's crude treatment of Tess in the ensuing scene, disclosing his intention to exploit her in a coldhearted way, forcing her to kiss him. Simultaneously, the novel prompts us to see the interrelatedness between Alec's objectification of Tess and his abusive treatment of his horse:

> 'If any living man can manage this horse I can: - I won't say any living man can do it - but if such has the power, I am he.'
> 'Why do you have such a horse?'
> […] it was my fate, I suppose. Tib has killed one chap; and just after I bought her she nearly killed me and then, take my word for it, I nearly killed her (95).

Across the narrative, while in full commend of his horse, Alec directs it according to his inclinations, and the horse rushes off and slows down according to the latter's orders. Hence, the novel prompts us to see Alec's brutality towards his horse as of a piece with his exploitation of Tess.

There is a strong sense of ambivalence surrounding the way the director frames this scene. In contrast to the novel, the ways in which Alec approaches Tess closely scrutinizing her face and her lips while munching the strawberry speaks to

ecofeminists as a clear objectification of Tess's body where the director uses the scene as a pretext 'allowing [Alec] to gaze at [Tess] fully' (de Beauregard 2010:4). Misleading as it is, the scene is framed in a way which further ignites suspense, suggesting reciprocity of attraction on the part of both Tess and Alec, which, in fact, is not the case. Indeed, Tess hardly seems to be displeased with Alec's close scrutiny. Reading this scene in the light of Tess's eventual confession that Alec has actually taken advantage of her pushes the viewer to mistrust Tess, discrediting her authenticity and honesty (01:39:00- 01:41:00). Hence, while promoting suspense, the director inspires a reading that is inherently antithetical to the ecofeminist cause, consequently, tacitly endorsing male dominance and consolidating female subservience. The ensuing scene where Alec is keen to obtain a kiss from Tess is equally misleading and controversial. In fact, the showing mode blurs the lines between what might be considered as a frank mistreatment or a reckless adolescent-like form of courtship, especially if we consider the previous and the later scenes where Alec is being kind to Tess. Thus the novel's ecofeminist underpinning is unaddressed.

Ambivalent ecofeminist instances figure out persistently across the movie. In an additional scene which clearly diverges from and contradicts the novel's original plot, the movie introduces a brief montage of Alec and Tess together, suggesting that the couple is involved in a relatively long-term romantic relationship. The scene features a comparatively idyllic landscape: while Alec and Tess are fashionably attired, enjoying a boat cruise together, followed by a pair of courting swans. These courting swans might be read as symbolic objects deployed by Polanski to incline viewers into understanding the sexual encounter in terms of external nature. Hence, the swans are introduced as natural actors to validate and consolidate the presumably romantic relationship between Alec and Tess. The use of the white and pinkish colour in this scene – the colour of the swans, Alec's costume and the colour of Tess's dress is quite telling, symbolizing innocence and fertility. Hence, it could be argued that the swans are used to locate the couple's sexual intercourse within the scope of nature, hinting at humans and non-humans' shared instinctual mode of being. To put it differently, the movie positions Alec and Tess within the natural scheme, for they formulate a continuum with the natural world in terms of their sexual instinct. This association is even suggested by Polanski's statement that Tess did not 'break Victorian moral codes, but she responded to natural law, to nature, her nature' (Kennedy 1979: para 57).

While instinctual desires mark a biological connection between the human and the non-human, the way Polanski envisages it actually runs counter to ecofeminist thought. Polanski seeks to normalize a sexual encounter that was initially forced upon Tess whose young age as well as inexperience, as the novel accentuates, makes her vulnerable and, therefore, not responsible for her actions: 'it was a luxuriance of aspect, a fullness of growth, which made her appear more of a woman than she really was' (82). In fact, an ecofeminist analysis of the scene would see a clear case of Alec's predatory behaviour. Richard Jeremy Strong considers this scene as part of Polanski's strategy to exonerate Alec from forcefully compelling Tess into the sexual intercourse which has previously taken place in the chase. For Strong, the scene also suggests that Tess should not be judged for the sexual intercourse even if it falls outside wedlock. Hence, Tess 'can be allowed a sexual mistake, be allowed to enjoy sex without love, and still be "pure" the object of our sympathy' (1999: 218). While I agree with Strong that Polanski exonerates Alec from the responsibility of raping Tess, I contend that the director legitimizes Alec's sexual subjugation of Tess, which is ethically disconcerting.

Unlike Polanski, Hardy shows strong sympathy with Tess and presents the sexual encounter with Alec as a despicable and outrageous rape incident. In fact, Hardy does not indulge in a direct description of the rape itself, yet he clearly condemns Alec as a rapist. Hardy stresses that the latter perceives Tess as a temporary sexual object and takes advantage of her, exactly the way Tess's ancestors did with females of a lower social class: 'doubtless some of Tess d'Urberville' s mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time' (49). Experiencing pregnancy out of wedlock, Tess is socially excluded, and burdened with feelings of shame: 'walking among the sleeping birds in the hedge, watching the skipping rabbits on the moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence' (103). In this passage, Tess, while oppressed with guilt, is convinced of being culpable, yet Hardy, in the subsequent textual reference, stresses that her opinion of herself is erroneous. While she is inclined to exclude herself from the natural order, believing that she infringed social and natural law, Hardy insists that what she is brought up to believe as a 'social law', is inherently unjust and oppressive, and has no foundation in nature: 'She had been

made to break an accepted social law, but no law know to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly' (103). With such a statement, the narrative aligns with the ecofeminist thought which questions social hypocrisy which condemns Tess and exonerates Alec, who is a victimizer in the first place.

b- Material Agency

Hence, the texts' manipulation of symbolism as well as pathetic fallacy is much more nuanced and complex than it seems to be. Certainly, one could not deny numerous instances when Hardy and Polanski envisage landscape as a canvas which mirrors characters' emotional as well as mental status, and a descriptor correlating with the fluctuations in their fortunes. For example, in the novel, the barren landscape of Flintcomb-Ash farm underscores Tess's forlorn conditions of loneliness and distress when mercilessly forsaken by Alec, and the tough nature of its environment correlates with the cruel treatment she receives from society: 'here the air was dry and cold, and the long cat-roads were blown white and dusty within a few hours after rain' (365). Similarly, in the movie, crossing the Flintcomb-Ash farm after her separation from her husband, Tess is encompassed by impenetrable fog and daunting loneliness. An abrupt sound of a lonely blackbird is introduced to correlate with her deserted state, as if ostensibly commiserating with her (01:50:00). Both the darkness and the invisibility created by the fog underscore Tess' mental torpor and bespeak of a sympathetic response on the part of nature, as if responding to the protagonist's dismay and emotional agony. One is inclined to argue that the disorderly nature seems to stand for the social prejudice which brings about Tess's calamity. All of these examples illustrate an anthropomorphic perception of nature that is inherently sentimental and reductionist.

Along with these examples, however, pathetic fallacy throughout *Tess* sometimes helps to dissolve boundaries between nature and culture, the internal and the external, the human and the non-human. For instance, the texts' meditation on the different experiences of love and hope, suffering and despair is conceived through the means of personification and symbolism that eventually consolidate the continuum between the external natural world and humans' inner nature. In a scene created by Polanski, Alec, right after his separation from Tess, has a solitary stroll in the forest

(01:48:30). Hitherto breaking up with Tess, Alec is hardly the same cheerful person who, during the courtship days, was animated by enthusiasm, alacrity and zest for life. A close-up of his countenance betrays weariness, dismay, but also highlights fading brightness and a lack of vivacity. The movie's manipulation of pathetic fallacy in this specific reference prompts us to perceive the change in Alec's existential conditions in terms of the surrounding landscape: the pale countenance which Alec assumes is hardly different from the forest's yellowish and brownish canopy which was once all green, and his present state of mind is barely dissimilar to the fluctuating weather which changes from bright summer to a grey winter. Both in the novel and the movie, the bright warm weather which marks the beginning of the couple's romance and witnesses Tess's joy, the sweet May days of Blackmore Vale, the 'ethereal' weather of the Vale of Great Dairies and its fecund farms are barely the same bleak and cold but also 'starve-acre' landscapes of Flintcomb-Ash which witnesses the lovers' separation and Tess's ultimate dismay and disappointment in life (01:54:20/ 01:50:30). Here the texts' depiction of landscape is vexed and nuanced: while natural vistas function as descriptors of characters' emotional reality, these simultaneously establish analogies between humans and non-humans in terms of transient existential conditions. Otherwise put, structured according to natural rhythms, the plot enables us to draw parallels between the fleeting seasons of the year, the fluctuation in characters' feelings and opportunities, and the transience in their attitudes and psychic realities. Thus, the texts validate that human and non-human life is similarly caught up in inevitable change, constantly experiencing cycles of decay and rebirth, transition and transience.

In effect, a close scrutiny of its symbolic apparatus discloses that the novel does not stop at the level of merely tracing the correlation between humans and non-humans. It actually reveals matter in a state of animation, illustrating the visceral, physiological, and psychological impact of elements like scent, breeze and air. For instance, in her first encounter with the lush landscape of the Vale of Great Dairies, Tess seems to conceive of a 'pleasant voice in every breeze, and in every bird's note to lurk a joy' (157). In another reference, the narrator proclaims that at the sight of the placid pastoral scenery of this particular Vale, Tess's 'spirits, and her thankfulness, and her hopes, rose higher' (157). A traditional reading of these excerpts would see a clear case of pathetic fallacy where Tess's happiness is attributed to the birds around

as well the breeze. By contrast, I argue that the narrative pushes beyond symbolism to reveal humans' material enmeshment in the world, and evokes a sense of 'material vibrancy' where the basic tangible components of landscape act upon human's body and generate a series of effects. Indeed, the narrative makes for a scientific and psychological reality, gesturing at how air and scent intermingle with and shape Tess's psyche. The narrator explains that the place 'lack[s] the intensely blue atmosphere of the rival vale, and its heavy soils and scents; the new air was clear, bracing, ethereal' (125), which certainly revives Tess's spirits. Indeed, the novel resurrects the agency of the place's material substance: the 'change in the quality of the air from heavy to light' and 'the sense of being amid new scenes', and how all of this 'sent her spirits wonderfully' (157). The narrative equally illustrates how the change in Tess's state of mind further affects her beauty: 'her more perfect beauty accorded with her less elevated mood; her more intense mood with her less perfect beauty. It was her best face physically that was now set against the south wind' (157). This does not project Tess's feelings into to the surrounding landscape, but constructs the air and the scent as 'agents with the power to manufacture sensations of themselves in others' (Arsic 2017:126). This not only helps to counteract distinctions between subject and object, but to also disrupt the ontological dualism of lively subjects and inert objects.

Indeed, Hardy's use of personification allows us to reckon the manner in which human existence is constantly enmeshed in a web of reciprocal relationships with the surrounding material world. This is the case when Marian proclaims that the weather doesn't 'hurt [Tess's] beauty at all – in fact, it rather does it good' (363). Hardy's pointed choice of diction here – his use of hurt – is a clear case of personification which transcends instrumental anthropomorphism. Indeed, the narrator here accentuates how weather acts upon Tess's physiology, thereby highlighting material vibrancy, which heightens a perception of the human body as porous and interactive. In effect, across the novel, matter is active and lively, continuously shaping the psychic reality of characters. For instance, the narrative acknowledges the ways in which light enhances Tess's performance in the farming work: 'something in the place [...] the fantastic mysteries of light and shade, made others as well as Tess enjoy being there' (430). Here personification is significant as it articulates light's agency, emphasizing its bearings upon the workers' performance. This description could be

explained with Bennett's statement that 'nonhuman materialities have power, a power that the "bourgeois I," with its pretensions to autonomy, denies' (2010: 16).

It is worth noting here that the novel's gesture towards matter's vibrancy is not limited to Hardy's published fiction, but extends to his private notes as well. Writing *FFMC* (1874), Hardy reflects on how nature contributes meaningfully to the production of his fiction: 'sometimes indoors, sometimes out', Hardy, 'would occasionally find himself without a scrap of paper at the very moment that he felt volumes. In such circumstances he would use large dead leaves, white chips left by the woodcutters, or pieces of stone or slate that come to hand' (Millgate 1985: 9). At the surface level only, Hardy acknowledges how culture and nature intermingle together, especially when he documents his literary reflection on the 'dead leaves' and 'white chips'. At the deeper level, however, he implicitly conveys that his very literary artifact is the product of nature because he is initially inspired to a write in a moment of encounter with the natural landscape. What is emphasized here is the ways in which material agency and human creative impulses are entangled. In the words of Angelique Richardson, Hardy 'turns to nature to produce culture, bringing the two into fertile reciprocity' (2009: 54). Hardy offers similar insights in *The Woodlanders* through the character of Mrs. Charmond who whenever is 'at different places in the South of Europe [...] feel[s] a crowd of ideas and fancies thronging upon [her] continually' (1996: 61).

In the previous examples, the way matter intermingles with human's creative faculties shows clear resonances with Bennett's idea that cultural discourse is shaped by an assemblage of material 'actants', one of which is the environment,

> The sentences of this book also emerged from the confederate agency of many striving macro- and micro actants: from "my" memories, intentions, contentions, intestinal bacteria, eyeglasses, and blood sugar, as well as from the plastic computer keyboard, the bird song from the open window, or the air or particulates in the room, to name only a few of the participants. What is at work here on the page is an animal-vegetable-mineral-sensory cluster with a particular degree and duration of power (2010: 23).

Hence, Hardy's narrative shows reciprocity with Bennett's argument that human beings and the non-human phenomena merge together in a non-dualist basis. Material ecocritics like Bennett view the world as an arena co-inhabited by different forces with

interchangeable effects. These forces are both natural and social, having distinctive ‘agency’ which materialize both in discourse and real life. A pioneering figure in the field of material ecocriticism, Susan Hekman contends that ‘the social is not separated from the natural [...] but rather they continually interpenetrate each other. Bodies, texts, machines, human and nonhuman entities continually interact in complex relationships’ (2010: 14–15). Similarly, Hardy’s narrative affirms the agency of matter and its active interplay with social forces.

Hence, it becomes evident that, in Hardy’s fictional realm matter pulsates with life and is often enmeshed with human existence, which destabilizes a dualistic ontology conceiving of matter as inert and passive. However, the narrative also acknowledges the harshness and unpleasantness of ecological reciprocity. Through *Tess* (the novel), the harshness of interwoven existence can be seen in the fever which weakens Angel’s body while in Brazil, and which causes the death of so many other fellow British farmers when exposed to a different weather. The narrative makes an explicit statement that ‘the scorching weather’ of Brazil has an adverse impact on Angel’s degraded health conditions. This effect is also highlighted in *The Woodlanders* in relation to John Melbury who suffers ‘stiffness about the arm, hip, and knee joint’ (1996: 32). This illness, as the narrative indicates, is ‘the net product of the diverse sprains and over–exertions that had been required of him in handling trees and timber when a young man’ (32). As for the cramps which affect his left shoulder, these ‘had come of carrying a pollard, unassisted, from Tutcombe Bottom home; that in one leg was caused by the crash of an elm against it when they were felling; that in the other was from lifting a bole’ (32). The sickness has developed through time leading to severe complications: ‘Now in his declining years the store had been unfolded in the form of rheumatisms, pricks, and spasms, in every one of which Melbury recognized some act which, had its consequences been contemporaneously made known, he would wisely have abstained from repeating’ (32). This degradation in Angel’s and Mellbury’s health conditions validate the ecocritic’s statement that ‘we are vital materiality and we are surrounded by it, though we do not always see it that way’ (Bennett 2010: 14). Furthermore, this highlights the negative impact of matter, which challenges the ideal of symbiotic relationships ‘confronting the fact that all beings are related to each other negatively and differentially, in an open system without center or edge,’ and validating that ‘the mesh is also made of negative

difference, which means it does not contain positive, really existing (independent, solid) things' (Morton 2011: 39). That is to say, ecological relations might be characterized with harmony, as well as violence and negative impact.

In his essay, Simon Gatrell deplores the inability of movie adaptations, for instance Polanski's *Tess*, to elucidate the ways in which Hardy's characters are intimately connected to the natural landscape (2005: 40). Gatrell proclaims that directors fail to find a cinematic apparatus that can function as a visual equivalence to Hardy's metaphoric language which heightens reciprocity between characters and the environment. While I agree with some aspects of Gatrell's argument, that, for instance Polanski's adaptation fails to render Tess's connectedness to the Vale of Great Dairies and obscures how the materiality of Flintcomb-Ash acts upon her body as well as psyche, I posit that his statement supports a reductive binary perception of visual media as expressively limited in comparison to textual narratives, which is not always the case. For instance, the failure to reflect Tess's relationship with the environment in the specific example of the Vale of Great Dairies is not because the visual apparatus is limited in its ability to evoke ecological connectedness and material enmeshment, but pertains to the director's choice to elide this scene because of temporal considerations or authorial preferences. To support this argument, I refer to Sharp's and Blair's adaptations whose use of close-ups works effectively to render Tess's reciprocity with ecology.

Indeed, Sharp's and Blair's visual representation of the Vale of Great Dairies revolves around the concept of connectedness that is at the heart of ecocriticism. The representations feature Tess at the summit of a green hill and the camera is closely aimed at her face. Tess' encounter with the large expanses of the greenery around her seems to bring about a sense of happiness that animates her face (00:57:35). The ways in which Tess journeys through the landscape with discernible liveliness in her movements and cheerfulness animating her face is relatable to the natural scenery around her. In other words, Tess' elevated mood marks reciprocity between her and the materiality of the natural world, the serenity of the environment and the tantalizing beauty of the landscape. This ultimately corresponds to the novel's statement that when encountering new scenery, Tess's 'spirits, and her thankfulness, and her hopes, rose higher' (1978:157). Like the novel, while highlighting the harmonious integration between Tess and the world around her, the cinematic performance symbolically

endorses an ecological viewpoint that the human mind is part and parcel of nature. By highlighting the psychological impact which nature exerts on Tess, the narrative, through the strategic use of close-ups, prompts us to recognize the relatedness between mind and matter; meaning, Tess's consciousness and the natural world around her. Hence, similar to the novel, the movie adaptations resist a dual construction of the material world as inherently passive, inert and non-lively. While transcending such dual constructions, the material world is envisaged as having an 'animating spirit'. In this sense, to quote Bate, both the literary and the visual narratives 'refuse[s] to carve the world into object and subject; the same force animates both consciousness ('the mind of man') and 'all things' (1999: 147). In other words, both narratives prompt us to consider human perception and consciousness as inseparably linked to the natural milieu.

Having thus complicated Gatrell's argument, it is worth reiterating that visual narratives can be as expressive as textual narratives, and this is the case of Blair's and Sharp's adaptations which hint at ecological enmeshment through the strategic use of close-ups. However, it is worth acknowledging that movies and novels are not without differences of their own, which recalibrate the distinctiveness and complexity of each medium. For instance, unlike Hardy, it is not convenient for Polanski to incorporate a scientific and material discourse in a visual performance which, as I mentioned earlier, is not only confined to time, but also shaped by a motivation to gain audience immersion in dramatic action and plot. While the narrator can guide the reader's imagination through textual details, the director cannot afford distracting the audience by incorporating extra material which might obfuscate viewers' attention. Having said this, however, I do not mean to posit that visual narratives are purely anthropocentric, prioritizing the dramatic action over setting or landscape. Indeed this is a dangerous fallacy which I dismantled through my analysis of close-ups and long takes of landscape in Sharp's adaptation and a sweeping generalization which I challenged when highlighting the ecological underpinnings of Polanski's symbolic landscape. What I mean, however, is that adapting a plot into a visual medium requires straightforwardness and certain textual details, while secondary to the plot dynamics, only distract the viewer's attention and are, therefore, unfavourable for the director.

Conclusion

The movies and the novel, despite occasional overlaps, lend themselves to different interpretations. While the novel can be best appreciated from the perspective of material ecology, Sharp's adaptation hinges on the principles of the beautiful, the sublime and aspects of harmony and symbiosis, defining features of romantic ecology. Similar to the novel, the movie occasionally accounts for human experiences of the natural world through work and communion and invites us to appreciate the integrity and autonomy of nature without forgetting the subtle ways in which the rural community is connected to Wessex terrain and weather. The novel illustrates what Ingold terms as 'the taskscape made visible' (1993: 167), meaning how daily activities and agricultural work shape and re-shape the physiological and topographical features of landscape. It is also attentive to the ongoing activities of the presumably inactive, passive, and inert matter which include the arability of the soil, the constant movements of rivers and the continuously fluctuating weather patterns. This ultimately resonates with the principles of material ecocriticism that the environment is shaped by material forces 'which visibly or imperceptibly, merge with the life of our bodies and places' (Iovino and Oppermann 2014: 3). To borrow the words of Neal Alexander and David Cooper, Hardy's novel 'remind[s] us that places do not simply exist but are made or remade by forces and processes that are at once historical, social and cultural,' to which I would add material and ecological (2013: 5). Hardy's novel and Polanski's movie exhibit both convergences and divergences as well: while both texts deploy symbolism and personification in a post-pastoral fashion that supports ecofeminist readings and highlights continuities between the human and the non-human, the novel's manipulation of pathetic fallacy further helps to construct matter as active and effective. With their contrasting perspectives on landscape, these narratives highlight alternative modes of connection to and engagement with the tangible terrain: sensory, corporeal and material. In the subsequent chapter, I explore two rival modes of engagement: acoustic and semiotic.

Acoustic Entanglements and Biosemiotics in *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874/1998)

Introduction

While often drawn to the material specificity of place, envisioning landscape as constantly interactive, lively and dynamic, Hardy also exhibits heightened interest in the tonal navigations of space. The writer, as I will demonstrate through my analysis of *FFMC* (1874), is acutely sensitive to the visual as well as the auditory dimensions of place, bringing vision and sound into an intricate interplay, and, ultimately, fostering a better engagement with and appreciation of the natural world on the part of readers (David 2010: 136). This keen fascination with the acoustic coordinates, translating easily into a visual medium through the use of natural soundtrack, is a notable feature of Christopher Renton's adaptation (1998). Where attention to acoustic refrains is salient across the two forms, I contend that it evokes a sense of place as environmentally particular, distinct and homogeneous, yet simultaneously porous, permeable and ecologically connected to a wider national sphere. I also analyze the ways in which the novel and the movie help negotiate a hierarchal perception of the human and the non-human, assessing the ways in which tonal navigations of landscape are deployed as a means to 'uncover a whole world of resonances and resemblances – sounds and sights that echo and bounce far more than would be possible were the universe to have a hierarchical structure' (Bennett 2010: 99).

In this chapter, I posit that across their respective works, Hardy and Renton manifest an eco-poetic practice which attends to the active resonances of non-human sounds discussed in Jonathan Bate's *The Song of the Earth* (2000). For Bate, eco-poetry – which stands for '*poiesis* (Greek "making") of the *oikos* (Greek "home" or "dwelling-place") –,

> could be that poiesis in the sense of verse-making is language's most direct path of return to the *oikos,* the place of dwelling because metre itself – a quiet and persistent music, a recurring cycle, a heartbeat – is an answer to nature's own rhythms, an echoing of the song of the earth itself (2000: 75).

In his book, Bate argues that sensorial engagement with place is a key feature of ecopoetics and believes that 'harmonious dwelling with the earth is a matter of *staying put* and *listening in*' (2000: italics in original 29). In this chapter, I underscore that an acoustic reading opens up a new perspective to better appreciate the ecological potential of Renton's movie by drawing attention to its often-overlooked natural soundtrack. It is also my aim to bring new insight into Hardy's ecological thought through the medium of the acoustic, a predominant feature of the writers' literary practice which has often been subject to misinterpretation. This is especially significant given that Hardy's preoccupation with acoustic coordinates seems to be tantamount to his depiction of geographical scales and visual aesthetic dimensions.

In my analysis I contest the readings of the few critics, such us David James, who have dealt with the acoustic navigations of Hardy's novels. James' focus is mainly laid on the reader-writer relationship, highlighting the ways in which the acoustic is used in Hardy's novels as a way to intensify readers' cognitive and sensory engagement with the writer's narratives and their imagined natural landscapes. James argues that the soundscape in Hardy's novels is used instrumentally as a narrative device to elicit readers' enjoyment of the text. For him, Hardy's description of the soundscape has an aesthetic dimension, used in a way that is 'intentionally ornamental, even hyperbolic; and they appeal today to an analysis of not only texture, distance, and scale, but also resonance, ambience, and their consequences for unpacking the language of his fiction' (2010: 131). In contrast to James, I posit that Hardy's interest in the auditory specificities of place is far too valuable to be reduced to a mere narrative device which enhances the aesthetic appreciation of the writer's narrative prose fiction. I argue that soundscape in Hardy's fiction can be read as a means to raise ecological awareness by capturing a sense of place and reflecting the plurality of voices and polyphonies which animate the natural world.

In addition, I complicate and refine the ideas of Michal Irwin who explores the latent aesthetic as well as philosophical nuances in Hardy's manipulation of sound and noise. Irwin posits that in Hardy's writing, soundscape 'contributes substantially to the vividness of the narrative, and enhances the authority of the narrator' (2000: 42). More importantly, however, for Irwin 'the noises in Hardy's novels are plainly included less for the sake of descriptive density than for thematic reasons', to 'contribute to a

sustained meditation about man's place in the scheme of things' and imply 'a fundamental similarity' between the human and the non-human' (2000: 46). Across this chapter, while taking further the ideas of Irwin, I offer a more nuanced analysis, by reading the writer's manipulation of sound from the perspective of ecocriticism as well as biosemiotics. In addition, I explore the possibility of eco-cinematic Hardy, drawing similarities and differences between the writer's depiction of auditory spaces and the director's manipulation of soundtrack across his adaptation of *FFMC*.

1) Soundscape and Multi-scalar Dimensions of Place: Enlacing the Local to the National

In his writing, Hardy espouses a bioregional form of writing which celebrates Wessex, a region based on the native countryside of Dorset and named after an ancient Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the south of Great Britain ([1895]1902: 27). Hardy's devotion to Wessex has particularly captivated public attention with the result that many people started to envisage an actual Wessex existing somewhere in the territories of England ([1895]1902 : 392-93). This is especially because of the writer's celebration of Dorset's regional natural vernacular and folklore as well as vivid description of its nineteenth-century socio-economic contexts (Rogers 2001: 228-229). Aware of public speculations regarding an actual existing Wessex, Hardy, in his preface to *FFMC* (1895), urged his readers to 'refuse steadfastly to believe that there are any inhabitants of a Victorian Wessex outside the pages of [his novels]and the companion volumes in which they were first discovered' ([1895]1902 : 27). Where Wessex is a moniker only, it is the actual landscape of Dorset which had riveted the writer's literary imagination. This also ignited his poetic vocation, inspiring his legacy of total fourteen novels and 954 poems, the majority of which were nature poems.

While devotedly celebrating the scenic beauty of Dorset's landscapes, Hardy has a peculiar habit of often oscillating between its tonal as well as visual scales. The writer's fascination with the acoustic flourishes of rural Dorset came to influence Renton's adaptation of *FFM C*. Indeed, Hardy's depiction of acoustic resonances is deployed skillfully by the director to give viewers the impression that it is rural Dorset

that they are seeing. Similar to the novel, mixed voices of the human and the non-human dominate the cinematic space, creating an ostensibly idyllic rural retreat. Like Hardy, the director foregrounds the mooing of cows, the bleating of sheep, the cacophonies of bells on the sheep necks, and the barking of the dogs which intermingle with human voices in an undeniable harmony. As key ingredients in this acoustic assemblage, each of these sounds evoke the tropes of the shepherd's life as well as the poetry of Theocritus and Virgil, which reoccur throughout Hardy's novels. Across the novel as well as movie, birds' tweets, gushing water of rivers and streams illustrate the ecological diversity of Dorset and incarnate the supposedly 'relaxed rhythms' and 'tranquility' of conventional country life. The natural soundscape is sometimes blended with the melodious tunes of Oak's flute, a distinct pastoral archetype of festivity, joy and idleness. A pervasive presence of church bells dominates the novel as well as the cinematic stage and summons a Christian pastoral which readers and viewers can experience as continuous with their own religious soundscape. Ecologically pertinent here is the mix of acoustic resonances which establishes ecological links and interconnections between the human and the non-human, and accentuates a shared history, space and community between both realms.

Acoustic co-ordinates across the novel seem to reinforce a pastoral construction of place as a secluded enclave. However, the encroachment of technological noise makes this pastoral imagery unsettling and unstable. Indeed, across the novel, acoustic refrains are penetrated by the sounds of modern machinery; the sound of clocks and watches for instance. Across the novel, clicks of clocks bring about disharmony and break rural tranquility, especially at night-time: 'a manor-house clock from the far depths of shadow truck the hour, one, in a small, attenuated tone. After midnight the voice of a clock seems to lose in breadth as much as in length, and to diminish its sonorousness to a thin falsetto' (1987: 322). Indeed, across the narrative the clock is portrayed as a distracting force: its obfuscating noise is displeasing, undermining pastoral serenity and transmogrifying the organic natural soundscape: 'the rattle of the quarter, its fussy retreat, were almost painfully abrupt, and caused many of the congregation to start palpably' (1978: 164- 165). In another textual reference, the narrator discloses: 'an indescribable succession of dull blows, perplexing in their regularity, sent their sound with difficulty through the fluffy atmosphere. It was a neighboring clock striking ten' (1978:135). In fact, the clock here

holds a metonymic presence, standing for the proliferation of techno-industrial noise to nineteenth century rural landscape when the whistles of trains, the noise of threshing machines, along with hourly ticks of clockworks announced a new phase of capitalist development in the English countryside.

In *FFMC*, as Nicole Cloarec observes, 'clocks and watches are mainly associated with the intrusion of modernity and its capitalist quantitative logic' (2012: 80). Introduced around the 1850s as part of the transforming impact of the Industrial Revolution, clockworks marked a transition from an organic model to a mechanical perception of time and witnessed a movement from cyclic agriculture into a synchronized capitalist mode of work and leisure.[42] Indeed, in chapter XVI, the clock imparts a negative connotation, being a harbinger of mischief and anticipating the imminent tragedy which befalls Fanny Robbin when she is eventually forsaken by Frank in the very church which was supposed to unite them through the bond of matrimony:

> There was a creaking of machinery behind, and some of the young ones turned their heads. From the interior face of the west wall of the tower projected a little canopy with a quarter-jack and small bell beneath it, the automaton being driven by the same clock machinery that struck the large bell in the tower. Between the tower and the church was a close screen, the door of which was kept shut during services, hiding this grotesque clockwork from sight. At present, however, the door was open, and the egress of the jack, the blows on the bell, and the mannikin's retreat into the nook again, were visible to many, and audible throughout the church [...] The silence grew to be a noticeable thing as the minutes went on, and not a soul moved (1978: 164-165).

Here Hardy seems to conceive of Frank as well as the clock-work from a similar logic of destructive urban intrusion. The character of Frank brings the corruption of the city right to the rural community, giving up on Fanny on their wedding-day to eventually marry Bathsheba. Frank marries the latter not out of genuine love, but out of greed, aiming at the social prospects the marriage would confer on him and, thus deceiving and causing heartache to both Bathsheba and Fanny. By making the clock a witness to the disappointment of Fanny, Hardy equates the destructive behaviour of Frank with

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[42] According to Kirstin Oslen, '18th century Britain was almost lackadaisical about time. Each parish church set its clock to local time, often by means of a sundial. When it was noon in London, for instance, it was about 12:11 in Bristol and 12: 04 in Reading' (1999: 111).

the disastrous ramifications of 'the capitalist quantitative logic' to which the clock-works stand for (Cloarec 2012: 80). Indeed, the clock-work becomes a witness to the hardships which Fanny survives in the work-house, measuring her long hours of toil and hard work. Hence, social transformation in *FFMC* brings dismay to the rural community of Wessex as well as ongoing threat to its ecology.

Arguably, the proliferation of technology into rural Wessex implies greater connectivity and dependency between the rural and the urban, making for a network of economic interchanges between to the two realms. So do the clocks' regular clicks: their noise is connective medium which enlaces the local to the national,

> The air was so empty of other sounds that the whirr of the clock-work immediately before the stroke was distinct, and so was the click of the same at their close. The notes flew forth with the usual blind obtuseness of inanimate things – flapping and rebounding among walls, undulating against the scattered clouds, spreading through their interstices into unexplored miles of space (265).

'Unexplored miles of space' suggests that the sonorous presence of the clocks' noise reaches beyond the locality of Wessex. Hence, soundscape here challenges a perception of rural Wessex as socially immune to change and resist a construction of the rural as ecologically secluded and intact, thus allowing for porous and permeable dynamics to emerge. As Richard Kerridge contends, 'Hardy's narrative forms bring interdependency to the fore,' and I conclude that this connectedness is both economic as well as acoustic (2010:130).

Conversely, the movie's manipulation of acoustic landscape unfolds a pastoral imagination of rural tranquility and serenity. The movie starts with a relatively long montage of a minute and half which features images of wilderness as well as brief shots of lavish natural landscape (00:06:00 / 00:10:00). Indicative of rural placidity here is the intermittent tweets of birds as well as the gurgling sound of a stream which dominates the cinematic space and breaks down silence. The background music here, however, is neither joyous, nor as immersive as the soundscape, imparting a melancholic feeling of loss as well as nostalgic yearning and longing. This sets up the viewers' feelings that what they are seeing is actually a mere lost form of intact ecology, thus inspiring sentimental environmental nostalgia. The movie takes readers

to the heart of wilderness and creates a sense of place that invites contemplation on the purity of acoustic landscapes in a time where the noise of machinery and technological contrivance was less invasive. The very early encounters between Bathsheba and Oak take place in wild nature, where meadows, hills and majestic mountains are landmark topographical features of the surrounding landscape (00:11:00/ 00:14:00). In these scenes, the audience's attention is drawn more to the pervasive presence of soundscape than to the conversation between Oak and Bathsheba. Indeed, the bubbling stream, the bleating of sheep, the mooing of cows and the hissing of the wind are brought to the foreground, making anthropogenic sound less significant. Similarly, in the sheep dipping scene, the continuous splash of water, the bleating of the sheep, the sweet chirruping of birds and the chatter of the rural denizens is indicative of rural harmony and symbiosis (01:04: 00/ 01:05:00). The director here excludes technological noise, mutes down the clocks' noise which preoccupies Hardy's imaginative landscape and creates a relatively intact ecology where ambient sound is all pervasive. The director briefly introduces the threshing machine in the later scenes, yet, unlike Hardy, he doesn't portray it as a distractive force that shatters down rural repose. Indeed, the machine's noise seems to intermingle harmoniously with the clatter of farmers without compromising rural peace and serenity. It might be argued here that the director perceives agricultural machinery as part of the natural landscape, thus reconciling the threshing machine to the pastoral. To use Leo Marx's words the machine here 'instead of causing disharmony, […] is a unifying device' (1964: 221).

Problematic as it is, the movie's pastoral tincture of idyllic serenity is ecologically paradoxical. On the one hand, one might argue that the movie complies with objectives of ecological thought, especially when we locate it in the modern-day context of car culture, hyper industrialization and mechanization. The movie, while distancing itself from the celebration of machinery as well urbanization, provides an alternative narrative that captures a sense of place as a central theme. This is especially encouraged through a few scenes which privilege the non-human sound over the human voices; in scenes like these, the viewer is encouraged to perceive natural sounds as 'worthy of attention'. In the early scenes, for instance, (00:04:16 / 00:05:16) the hissing of the wind, the sounds of the cows and the sheep are brought to primacy, dominating the scene for one minute without any intrusion of human voices. In scenes like these, the viewer is drawn to the balanced participation of the human and no-

human sounds, a balance continuously swung by sonic noise in crowded metropolitan localities. Therefore, acoustic landscape here provides 'a 'counterenvironment,' which in the words of David Ingram, has the potential to 'defamiliarize our habitual, mainly visual ways of perceiving the world' (2006: 134). This 'counterenvironment,' however, I believe, is not without ambiguities. In effect, while it might spur viewers into environmental action, it might equally make us passive by the use of the soothing pastoral tropes, inducing us to accept that the film is set historically in a more ecologically rich time already passed away. Hence what might foster an effective engagement with the environmental crisis, might only impart nostalgic yearning.

Despite this silencing of technological sound, however, the movie complicates the initial sentimental tropes of everlasting placidity, emphasizing the abrupt transience in natural rhythms from idyllic pleasure to fearful sublime. Indeed, the soothing tweets of birds, the melodic gurgling of rivers, the immersive power of breeze caressing the grass are often silenced by abrupt blowing of winds, crashing of thunder as well as the violent gushing of seas' currents and waves. Across the movie, the agency of wind is set up right in the early scenes (00:04: 26/ 00:11:00/ 00:14:00). Where the wind dominates the cinematic stage for five minutes, it becomes indicative of the destructive forces of nature, thus undermining order, and inspiring awe and humility. The director's choice of background music here is indicative of fearful sublime as well, thus consolidating a shift 'from the anthropocentric position of the pastoral to the eco-centric view of post-pastoral' (Gifford 1999: 152). The wind coincides with the fateful fall of Oak's sheep from the magnificent hill, which causes their tragic death as well as the demise of Oak, experiencing degradation in his social status and becoming an impoverished shepherded when he was initially a well-off farmer. Here the violent blowing of the wind, the extreme close-up of the majestic hill and the skillful choice of foreboding music lean towards a post-pastoral reading that co-existence with nature is not always as harmonious as one might think. Soundscape as well as background music here suggest that rural life is shaped by a continuous feeling of precariousness, uncertainty as well as vulnerability, and association with nature is caught up in a web of gain and loss, pleasure and fear. In the latter scenes, the wind becomes more violent and powerful: it submerges anthropogenic sound, silences everything else outdoors, and restricts the movements of rural denizens, forcing them to stay inside their houses. The dreadful power of nature here becomes the humbling force which challenges human hubris and induces reverence as well as respect towards

the non-human. Similarly, oceanic sound – introduced in the latter scene to delude the audience into thinking that Troy is drowned (02:41:00) hints at the frightful agency of nature as well as its destructiveness. Here the gushing sound of the tides going forth and back become suggestive of post-pastoral senses of instability, vulnerability and precariousness. The possibility that Troy might be drowned in this ocean marks the movie's as well as the novel's post-pastoral overtone that association with nature can be fateful and sorrowful. Hence, latent here is a post-pastoral 'recognition of a creative-destructive universe equally in balance and in a continuous momentum of birth and death, death and rebirth, growth and decay, ecstasy and dissolution' (1999:135).

Similar to the novel, the director's attentiveness to soundscape constructs an ecological vision of place continually shaped by historical forces – of both social and economic origins – and that the bioregion is inherently enlaced to a greater national space. Similar to the novel, the movie's early scenes mark the urban intrusion of soldiers into the rural region of Casterbridge. The clattering hooves of the horses intermingle with the heterogeneous sounds of the rural folks and the bleating of their sheep (00:02:00). According to Shafer, 'one of the most influential keynotes of the early urban soundscape must have been the clatter of horses' hooves, everywhere evident over cobblestone streets, and different from the hollow tramp of hooves on the open ground' (1994: 62). In the movie, horses function both in rural as well as urban landscapes as both Frank and Bathsheba ride horses. However, introduced in a form of a troop, the thick and sharp sound of horses' tread on stoned roads might be said to mark urban intrusion into the rural milieu. In the latter scenes (02:05:00 / 02:35:00), the sharp sound of horses' hooves becomes ecologically significant because it echoes the materiality of the turnpike roads, which became popular in the countryside proper over the nineteenth-century as well as in the movie's industrial context of production. In fact, the proliferation of turnpike roads signals the far-reaching impact of the Industrial Revolution, especially in connecting the countryside to the city. While fostering greater interconnectivity between the urban and rural landscapes, it simultaneously contributed to dissolving environmental and social specificities between the two ecologies. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, these roads not only connect Casterbridge to other cities in a series of commercial and economic exchanges, but also enable the better mobility of people. Hence, the movie's (as well

as the novel's) sensitivity to soundscape gestures towards ecological and economic interdependencies between the local and the national.

Finally, it is interesting to note that Hardy's scrupulous acoustic attention sometimes relate beyond pastoral and counter-pastoral modes of creating meaning to draw an ecological experience of place as geographically and environmentally distinct. In *TRN* (1878), for instance, the narrator describes Eustacia's active engagement with the surrounding soundscape experiencing the specificity of the heath's keynotes:

> It might reasonably have been supposed that she was listening to the wind, which rose somewhat as the night advanced, and laid hold of the attention. The wind, indeed, seemed made for the scene, as the scene seemed made for the hour. Part of its tone was quite special; what was heard there could be heard nowhere else (1974: 81).

In his analysis of this scene, David James acknowledges the vivacity of Hardy's description and appreciates how the aural and visual flourishes enable readers to 'fully appreciate the heathland's pictorial and aural specificity – matching the concentration with which we visually read this terrain with a keenness for things "heard" re-sounding off its "hard" and "husky" vegetation' (2010: 145). I agree with James and further suggest that the passage transcends an aesthetic imperative to consolidate an ecological reality recently established in the field of acoustic ecology; that is: the sound of acoustic assemblages differ from a place to another, a factor which distinguishes a particular geographical location as specific, distinct and homogeneous. In effect, Hardy's accentuation that 'what was heard there could be heard nowhere else' substantiates Shaffer's claim that interactive acoustic keynotes of a particular geographical territory determine its own specificity. Shafer indicates that 'every natural soundscape has its own unique tones and often these are so original as to constitute soundmarks' (1994: 26). Shafer indicates that his acoustic experience of rain in New-Zealand differs from any other experience in any part of the world. In effect, it could be argued that Shaffer's experience is similar to that of Hardy, whose experience spanned the rustic hinterland and the metropolitan centre. Indeed, the writer experienced what it feels to be physically immersed and acoustically attuned to the landscapes of Dorset – the country where he spent his teenage days – and recognized how such experience is nothing the same as in the noisy urban suburbs of London – the city where he advanced his literary career. This oscillating experience of

urban and rural landscapes has arguably shaped his argument here that the tonal features of Egdon heath 'could be heard nowhere else' (1974:81).

Similarly, in *FFMC*, Hardy crafts an eco-poetic practice that responds to the multi-scalar dynamics of place, especially its acoustic resonances. Across the narrative, tonal and acoustic navigations enable readers to experience the geographies of Wessex as acoustically particular and versatile. The narrative celebrates the acoustic agency of Norcombe Hill, stressing the acoustic distinctiveness of its 'half-wooded' and 'half-naked' sites as well as the horizon in between,

> Between this half-wooded half naked hill, and the vague still horizon that its summit indistinctly commanded, was a mysterious sheet of fathomless shade – the sounds from which suggested that what concealed bore some reduced resemblance features here. The thin grasses coating the hill, were touched by the wind in breezes of differing powers, and almost of differing natures – one rubbing the blades heavily, another raking them piercingly, another brushing them like a soft broom (58).

Evident here is an alternative mode of literary practice which offers 'not a description of dwelling with the earth, not a disengaged thinking about it, but an experiencing of it' (Bate 2000: 42). The narrator, consistently attuned to the poly-phonic sounds of nature, conveys a vivid acoustic experience of the hill, by resurrecting the multifarious layers and pitches of its geomorphic sound when the wind caresses the grass. When the geo-phonic sound of the wind interacts with the grass, it produces an acoustic resonance different to 'the grumbling' experienced in the half-wooded sphere of the hill:

> The hill was covered on its northern side by an ancient and decaying plantation of beeches, whose upper verge formed a line over the crest, fringing its arched curve against the sky, like a name. To-night these trees sheltered the southern slope from the keenest blast, which smote the wood and floundered through it with a sound as of grumbling, or gushed over its crowning boughs in a weakened moan (75).

In addition, the narrator ruminates on the serenity of the hill's half-naked sites at night-time: 'it was a featureless convexity of chalk and soil – an ordinary specimen of those smoothly outlined protuberances of the globe which may remain undisturbed on some great day of confusion, when far grander heights and dizzy granite precipices topple down' (58). With such poetic dexterity and persistent practice of active

listening, the narrator guides readers through various acoustic scales which not only enhance readers' sensory experience of Wessex geographies, but alert us to its multifarious and heterogeneous acoustic ecologies. What is being emphasized here is the sense of a place's keynotes marking its acoustic distinctiveness and specificity. With this poetic sensitivity, the narrative complies with the findings of Krauss that vegetative habitat and geographical features shape a place's acoustic individuality (2012: 29).

2) The Acoustic Origins of Human Music and Songs

Acoustic landscape is, then, significant in creating a sense of place across literary artifacts, which would heighten readers/ viewers ecological sensibility. In fact, it is even more vital because it marks continuities between culture and nature. For some bio-acousticians, acoustic navigations actually stand for the evolutionary roots of music and human songs. A pioneer in the sub-discipline of soundscape ecology, Shafer underscores that music and singing originated from human mimicry of natural sounds, birds' vocalization mainly:

> The language and song of the birds has been a subject of much study, though still today it is highly debatable whether the birds "sing" or "converse" in the customary sense of those terms. Nevertheless, no sound in nature has attached itself so affectionately to the human imagination as bird vocalizations. In tests in many countries we have asked listeners to identify the most pleasant sounds of their environment; bird-song appears repeatedly at or near the top of the list. And the history of effective bird imitations in music extends from Clement Janequin (d. *c.*1560) to Olivier Messiaen (b. 1908) (1994: 29).

Shafer indicates that while surrounding natural sound ignites humans' creative imagination, its complexity resists any efforts towards authentic mimicry. Thus, it is through music that humans endeavor to reproduce an imagined model of an ideal soundscape:

> In onomatopoeic vocabulary, man unites himself with the soundscape about him, echoing back its elements. The impression is taken in; the expression is thrown back in return. But the soundscape is far too complex for human speech to duplicate, and so it is in music alone that man finds

> that true harmony of the inner and outer world. It will be in music too that he will create his most perfect models of the ideal soundscape of the imagination (1994: 30-31).

That music has its roots in natural soundscape is further endorsed by the bio-acoustician Bernie Krauss. Krauss posits that where acoustic communication amongst organisms is a vital means in mating as well as reproduction processes and is initially a rudimentary survival mechanism to secure food and protect territories (2013: 97), it also marks organisms' aesthetic competency. He believes that all organisms 'sing melodies that merged into parts of a much larger choir' (68) and illustrates that 'ants "sing" by stridulating – rubbing their legs across their abdomens' (58). He claims that specific bio-phonic assemblages and acoustically defined territories are characterized with rhythmic patterns and structures similar to those found in musical productions:

> Combined biological sounds in many habitats do not happen arbitrarily: each resident species acquire its own preferred sonic bandwidth – to blend or contrast – much in the way that violins, woodwinds, trumpets, and percussion instruments stake out acoustic territory in an orchestral arrangement (97).

Similar to Shafer, Krauss contends that the natural world is musically expressive and human-made music is inherently entangled with and actively shaped by surrounding natural soundscapes. Through his research on the musical culture of Central Australia, he concludes that the music of some tribes 'bore a strong relationship to the sounds around them' (68). This type of music, while endeavoring to reflect the fluctuating conditions of the environment, its 'tempo increased and the feeling was much more energetic. Whether the music was instrumental or vocal, or accompanying a dance, it drew deep inspiration from the signals emanating from the woods' (68).

An ecocritical examination of *FFMC* displays undeniable congruence with the ideas advanced by Shafer and Krauss. Both in the novel as well as in the movie, the tonal features of landscape can be construed within an aesthetic as well as ecological framework. On the one hand, the narratives' use of soundscape operates as a tool to bridge the gap between the cultural and the natural, hinting at the crossover and evoking organic continuities between melodious natural sounds, man-made music as well as human songs. On the other hand, however, the movie sometimes leans towards anthropocentric appreciations, especially in specific scenes where the natural

soundscape is deployed as an instrumental device to drive the plot forward within a sense of suspense. In these specific cases, the natural soundscape is often relegated to the background and is used merely as a symbolic leitmotif. This does not mean that Hardy's deployment of soundscape is less nuanced and ecologically less paradoxical, especially in few instances where the writer's linguistic peculiarity evokes sentimental anthropomorphism as well as pastoral yearning.

To begin with, the organic continuity between natural sounds and music has been a central concern for Hardy whose continued fascination with the soundscape of the Stonehenge allows him to reckon on the evolutionary roots of music. Hardy is renowned for his interest in the acoustic, but more precisely his keen interest in the latent resemblances between instrumentally produced musical notes and the melodious tunes emanating from rhythmic natural sounds. He is best known for his interest in the acoustic features of Stonehenge which he continually refers to on different occasions across his works. Living in Dorset, Hardy visited the place in 1897 and later on in 1899 (Millgate 1984: 400-1). In *Tess*, Hardy ponders the interaction between wind vibration and Stonehenge, and how this interaction produces resonances and echoes similar to musical notes:

> All around was open loneliness and black solitude, over which a stiff breeze blew […].'What monstrous place is this?' said Angel. 'It hums,' said she. 'Harken!'. He listened. The wind, playing upon the edifice, produced a booming tune, like the note of some gigantic one-stringed harp. No other sound came from it […] At an indefinite height overhead something made the black sky blacker, which had the semblance of a vast architrave uniting the pillars horizontally. They entered carefully beneath and between; the surfaces echoed their soft rustle; but they seemed to be still out of doors […]. 'What can it be? […] A very Temple of the Winds' […] 'It seems as though there were no folk in the world but we two' […] they […] listened a long time to the wind among the pillars […] Presently the wind died out, and the quivering little pools in the cup-like hollows of the stones lay still (1985:483- 484).

Hardy describes the manner in which the site hums and produces a 'booming tune' when the wind blows violently, a sound which he likens to a 'one stringed harp'. This is an Aeolian harp consisting of 'a wooden box with metal strings, which is placed so that the wind blows on the strings and produces varying pitches. It is known that such instruments were made in ancient Greece, and they also became popular household

items in the romantic era' (Till 2009: para.5). In an interview with Hardy, reported in the *Daily Chronicle* on August 24th 1899, we are told that he 'made special visits to Stonehenge to get his lights for the chapter' (Orel 1966: 196) and that he 'lives within a bicycle ride of it' (Ibid). Commenting on his delineation of Stonehenge, he observed that 'if a gale of wind is blowing the strange musical hum emitted by Stonehenge can never be forgotten' (Ibid: 200).

Hardy's fascination with ecological sounds and nonhuman 'voices' remain evident across his novels, especially *TRN* (1878). The narrative creates moments of eerie silence to foreground the acoustic presence of Egdon Heath,

> Gusts in innumerable series followed each other from the north-west, and when each one of them raced past the sound of its progress resolved into three. Treble, tenor, and bass notes were to be found therein. The general ricochet of the whole over pits and prominences had the gravest pitch of the chime. Next there could be heard the baritone buzz of a holly tree. Below these in force, above them in pitch, a dwindled voice strove hard at a husky tune, which was the peculiar local sound alluded to. Thinner and less immediately traceable than the other two, it was far more impressive than either. In it lay what may be called the linguistic peculiarity of the heath; and being audible nowhere on earth off a heath, it afforded a shadow of reason for the woman's tenseness, which continued as unbroken as ever (1974: 81).

While documenting geographical specificity here, the passage illustrates organic tonal continuities between the human and the non-human. First, what can be retrieved from this passage is an implicit articulation of the heath's subjectivity, by highlighting its vital presence and foregrounding its active and dynamic resonances as an acoustic assemblage. Notably, the narrator resurrects the diverse natural sounds involved in this vitality, individuating the distinct sounds of the acoustic assemblage, thus inviting readers to relish and appreciate a single individual sound as an essential sonic component. Accordingly, the gust manifests distinct layers of vocal resonances, and the holly tree is marked with a different and distinct sound of its own. Ecologically significant on the depiction is the narrator's refined sense of attunement and attentiveness to the non-human voice, envisaging pattern, structure and aesthetic resonances in the acoustic assemblage. Indeed, where the narrative pinpoints different layers of sound pitches – the treble tenor and bass notes of the gusts along with the husky tune of the holly – and stresses the rhythmic texture uniting the sounds together, it enjoins readers to recognize a latent harmony in the soundscape assemblage akin to

the kind found in music. Furthermore, ecologically more significant here is the reference to the aesthetic tincture, the agential force and cognitive as well as sensual impact of the acoustic assemblage: it is not only 'impressive', but also 'afforded a shadow of reason for the woman's tenseness' (1974: 81). The contained rhythm, harmony and effect here enjoin readers to envision and appreciate soundscape as a symphony, an orchestra, if not a musical concert. This can be explained in terms of Krauss' argument that 'every place, with its vast populations of plants and animals, becomes a concert hall, and everywhere a unique orchestra performs an unmatched symphony, with each species' sound fitting into a specific part of the score'; which might be conceptualized as 'a highly evolved, naturally wrought masterpiece' (10). Similarly, in the previous excerpt from *TRN*, the harmonious amalgamation and infusion between the heterogeneous sounds of the heath's acoustic texture is aesthetically structured and experienced by Eustacia as akin to a musical note.

While this narrative instant of acoustic musicality is ecologically suggestive, it is equally tinged with ambiguity. The ecological edge here lies with the narrator's delicate acoustic ear, or in other terms, his acute attention to the aural dimensions of the heath which induces the ethical practice of active listening necessary for environmental sensibility. This ecological practice is especially significant in a modern-day society where the tonal rhythms of nature are continuously endangered by the invasive and omnipresent noise of techno-industrial machinery. So, the narrator's refined aural senses encourage immersion in and connection to the natural world in a critical era where noise pollution ignites the anxiety of various communities across the world. In the words of David James, Hardy's narrative is important because of its 'developing strategies for alerting his readers to the way rural settings highlight connections between our emotional and cognitive responses to spatial sounds' (2010: 132). The flipside here, however, is that the narrator's experience is inherently elegiac to the reader who is exposed to a continually threatened environment, whereas the novel's context is ecologically far more intact. This creates a possibility that the reader might experience a yearning for a more agrarian lifestyle in a bucolic sense, accepting that connection to it is irreparably lost. Another issue here is related to the writer's para-linguistic apparatus. In the previous quotation, while the use of 'linguistic peculiarity' evokes ecological resemblances and draws a connection between the human and the non-human voices/noises, it still opts for the medium of anthropomorphism which perceives the natural world from a human perspective and

subsequently blurs the distinction between the human and the non-human. Indeed, while the natural world retains a communicative capacity, the natural sound is still distinguished from the syntactically complex system of the human language.

Intersection between culture and nature is overtly expressed in *FFMC* where engagement with the acoustic landscape brings awareness of the natural roots of liturgical music. The narrator observes that 'the instinctive act of human kind was to stand and listen, and learn how the trees on the right and the trees on the left wailed or chaunted to each other in the regular antiphonies of a cathedral choir, lowering it to the tenderest sob; and how the hurrying gust then plunged into the south, to be heard no more' (58). Through the use of words like 'wail' and 'sob', the narrator seems to conceive the natural world from an anthropomorphic standpoint by ascribing human attributes to natural objects, reinforcing, therefore, a sentimentalized perception of nature. However, what is ecologically striking here are the ways in which the passage articulates the musicality of the trees' rustle as the wind blows through their twigs, hinting at the cross-over between music and soundscape. While drawing an analogy between the musicality of the soundscape and that of a 'cathedral choir', the narrative challenges the hierarchal perception of human and non-human relationships, constructing the capacity to produce sweet melodies as an inherently natural act rather than a creative feature which falls exclusively within the proper domain of humans. Simply put, by the means of a metaphor, the narrative forms acoustic links between soundscape and liturgical music, incorporating the latter in the wider scheme of nature: the term 'chaunted' actually reinforces a perception of soundscape as a verbal melody. Hence, while imparting an aura of Christian pastoral, the soundscape is in fact continuous with liturgical music. Evident here is the transmutation of culture in nature.

In a subsequent passage, the narrative further reconciles human and non-human relationship by introducing the melodies of Oak's flute, whose powerful presence seem to be tantamount to that of the acoustic refrains highlighted in the previous quotation. The narrator reveals that,

> Suddenly an unexpected series of sounds began to be heard in this place up against the sky. They had a clearness which was to be found nowhere in nature. They were the notes of farmer Oak's flute. The tune was not floating unhindered into the open air: it seemed muffled in some way and was altogether too curtailed in power to spread high or wide (1978: 58).

This scene in which the melodies of the flute intermingle with the acoustic resonances of the hill elaborates a sense of harmony and symbiosis which crosses the division between culture and nature. Furthermore, through the confluence of the natural sounds and the flute notes, the narrative forms acoustic links between the human and non-human, thus illustrating the ways in which human beings are entangled in a world full of similar movements, animations and resonances. To use the words of Michal Irwin,

> The noises in Hardy's novels, like the visual descriptions, are there to remind us that human beings are surrounded by contingent phenomena, overwhelming in scale and diversity, which are sometimes an influence on us, sometimes a distraction, always a source of information and analogy […] It affirms that we live in a world of endless, restless movement' (2000: 68).

Indeed, symbols of 'contingent phenomena' are expressed through the relational musicality animating the previous scene, where the vocal and the aural features of the landscape intermingle with the tones emanating from Oak's flute in a rhythmic pattern that suggests organic continuity.

While this scene is key to an ecological evaluation of the novel, the director works it out it in a way that only obscures the continuity between the melody emanating from Oak's flute and the acoustic coordinates of the surrounding landscape. While the movie recognizes the flute as a key pastoral archetype, it introduces its sound in a moment when the only audible voice in the cinematic stage is a faint barking of a dog coming afar whereas the animating sounds of trees, birds and breeze is blurred. This way, it misses out the resonances between the cultural and the natural, previously highlighted in the novel (00:09: 00). Hence, trimming work here obscures organic continuities gestured at in the novel.

This does not mean that the audio-visual is inherently less expressive than the textual. Indeed, where the novel relies on metaphoric devices to draw links between the human and the non-human, the movie's sonic apparatus prompts viewers to experience ecological continuities as an 'immediate physical reality' (Carroll 2001: 93). For instance, the onset of the movie constructs an eco-cinematic moment, where the incorporation of an amalgamation of music, a song and a natural soundtrack creates a sense of harmony and symbiosis (00:02: 22). In this scene Bathsheba enjoys a moment of pastoral idleness in a wood nearby her house, enjoying a horse ride.

Relishing a momentary communion with nature in an instant of complete tranquility, Bathsheba is intimately connected to the natural surroundings. This connectedness is endorsed through a sustainable use of a medium close-up capturing the professed joy animating Bathsheba's countenance while in a solitary sojourn to wilderness. While at ease, Bathsheba sings a sweet melody which intermingles with the pleasant tweeting vocalization of a (solo) blackbird coming afar, a vocalization of a nearby flock of birds, bubbling of a nearby stream as well as background music. This combination actually creates a harmonious acoustic assemblage involving the natural and the cultural. When Bathsheba stops singing, the melodious vocalization of the birds is paralleled with the sweet background music accompanying the scene. This mixture of songs, natural soundtrack and music draws the natural and the cultural into a de-hierarchized position and invokes contemplation on the intersection between music, human creative songs and the natural soundscape.

Both in the novel and the movie, festive moments are portrayed in such a way which repositions the centrality of human beings. For instance, the sheep fair retains a symbolic significance as a pastoral trope of rural festivity and communion, but also endorses ecological notions of acoustic entanglement and continuity. Both in the novel and the movie, the fair offers an opportunity to present human sound as a component of a relational and resonant environment. Hence, bleating and panting of sheep, as well as the barking of dog; the chatter of the elderly as well as children; the exuberant songs of the performers and the vibrant sound of their swords; the tunes of violins and trumpets as well as the notes of drums mark a pleasant symphonic presence and an ecstatic acoustic assemblage. Where both humans and non-humans are major participants in the event, the texts break the barriers which segregate the cultural from the natural. In the words of Bennett such positioning prompts us to gauge how through 'sound, through the various refrains we invent, repeat, and catch from nonhumans, we receive news of the [...] energies to which we humans are always in close, molecular proximity' (2001: 168). Indeed, the non-human sound here is part and parcel of the felicitous atmosphere created by the performers, the violins and trumpets. Thus, the scene incarnates the capacity of art to recognize and appreciate the aesthetic expressiveness of both culture and nature, bringing both realms to reciprocity.

In parallel with these ecocentric instants, however, one cannot overlook certain scenes where the soundscape across the movie retains aesthetic underpinnings that are

inherently instrumental. Across the movie, wind is resurrected as a distinct acoustic phenomenon, yet deployed as an instrumental device to signal the fluctuating circumstances of characters' lives and the abrupt arbitrary changes which befall them. Introduced prior to the murder of Sergeant Troy by Boldwood, the howling wind becomes evocative and its whistles are foreboding, triggering an uneasy sense of impending tragedy. This note of unease is implied earlier in the confrontation scene, where Boldwood censures Frank for forsaking Fanny and mistreating her. The scene is preceded by a sudden call of a cock which might be conceptualized as a harbinger of change. When the conversation between Boldwood and Troy intensifies into a fierce argument, a frightening sound of an animal comes from afar to hint at further mischief. The background music becomes more anticipating when Boldwood loses his temper at Troy, promising to revenge on Frank for having mistreated both Fanny and Bathsheba. Later on, the screaming of horses, seemingly annoyed and disturbed, generates a cynical feeling that the tragedy is taking place soon (02:51:55). The wind only subsides in the end when Boldwoold is ultimately imprisoned for killing Frank and Bathsheba is married to Oak at the movie's tragicomic resolution.

3) A World of Similar Ecological Resonances:

In *Silent Spring* (1962), the book which heralded the environmental movements of the 1960s and which continues to shape recent ecological thought, Rachel Carson proclaimed that the decaying 'voices of spring in countless towns in America' was an indicator of an environmental crisis (1991: 22-21). Carson's book has left ecocritics grappling with a key question: how to make the voice of nature effectively heard through the prism of literature particularly and cultural artefacts more broadly. Addressing a similar issue, Christopher Manes observes that 'Nature is silent in our culture (and literature societies in generally [sic]) in the sense that the status of being a speaking subject is jealously guarded as an exclusively human prerogative' (1996: I5). Manes contemplates how the 'voice' of nature has often been muted in the paradigms of western literature, an issue dictated by the anthropocentric attitudes which consider language as an exclusively human property. Instead, Manes believes that, in addition to the speaking Homo Sapiens, there are other speakers like 'birds,' 'the wind,' 'earthworms,' 'wolves,' and 'waterfalls' whose 'intents' are usually not counted for

(Ibid). Manes stresses that the priority of ecologically-oriented literature is to reflect this plurality of voices animating the natural world. Manes' concern for non-human voice is central to the ecological aspirations of Jonathan Bate as well:

> It is we who have the power to determine whether the earth will sing or be silent? As earth's own poetry, symbolized for Keats in the grasshopper and the cricket, is drowned ever deeper – not merely by bulldozers in the forest, but more insidiously by the ubiquitous susurrus of cyberspace – so there will be an ever greater need to retain a place in culture, in the work of human imagining, for the song that names the earth (2000: 282).

Here Bate acknowledges the role of literature in promoting better ecological relationships initially through meditation on the acoustic agency of the natural world, an aspect which could save the earth from silence when techno-industrial noise is growing exponentially. Similarly, Kate Rigby believes that, instead of celebrating humankind's linguistic mastery, poetic writing could 'draw us forth into the polyphonic song of our nonhuman earth others' (2004: 434). What risks muting the sound of nature in literary products is the anthropocentricity of writing. Since it is an inherently anthropocentric practice which 'cannot avoid the human "I" at its centre' (Lovelock 2003: 769), there is a possibility that human linguistic agency takes a centrality whereas the voice of nature is relegated to a peripheral position. Nevertheless, literature can also draw attention to the acoustic presence of nature and has the potential to 'strive to represent relationships with the environment, to be scrupulous in its observance of the condition of enmeshment in the world' (Lovelock 2003: 770). Indeed, attentiveness to the polyphonic sounds of nature serves as a cogent means to reconcile human and non-human relationships and contribute to a better understanding of the nonhuman phenomena as meaningful, expressive and, therefore, intrinsically valuable.

In *FFMC,* Hardy espouses a form of writing which aligns with the philosophical insights advocated by Manes, Bate and Lovelock. Across the novel the depiction of landscape's acoustic features hints at the integration of human beings in the natural world; reinforces a sense of equal value being shared between the human and the non-human; and, more significantly, provokes meditation upon nonhuman communicative competency. In chapter XLIV, the narrator introduces the scream of a

boy along with a series of birds' vocalizations in a way that provokes readers to think of human language as one type amongst a wide spectrum of communicative styles belonging to different non-human species: while Bathsheba is outdoors,

> She became conscious of some interesting proceedings which were going on in the trees above her head and around. A coarse-throated chatter was the first sound. It was a sparrow just waking. Next: 'Chee-weeze-weeze-weeze!' from another retreat. It was a finch. Third: 'Tink-tink-tink-tink-a-chink! From the hedge. It was a robin. 'Chuck-chuck-chuck!' overheard. A squirrel.Then, from the road, 'With my ra-ta-ta, and my rum-tum-tum!'. It was a ploughboy. Presently he came opposite, and she believed from his voice that he was one of the boys on her own farm (1978: 362).

Ecologically pertinent here is the narrator's identification and naming of the distinct sound of each single creature, evidencing a level of familiarity with the environment, but also reflecting a distinct sense of respect towards these creatures whose sound is worthy of readers' attention. The way the narrator situates the voice of the boy along with the sounds of the non-human creatures is even more intriguing, implying that these sounds actually formulate a continuum. In this sense, the boy's sound is part of, rather than apart from, the natural soundscape. Hence, the boy's utterances represent one component of a resonant environment.

Similarly, with the move to the movie we observe that the lively mixture of human and non-human sounds invokes a sense of a shared territory and shared history.[43] Across the movie, the bio-phonies of human and nonhuman beings intermingle intricately in a way which resists division between the human and the non-human community, between the indoor and the outdoor, signaling reciprocal attentiveness between the two realms. For instance, in one scene (00:10:36 / 00: 11: 00) the sounds of the cows and the sheep invade the indoors of the characters to

[43] By the word territory, I refer not only to the spatial demarcations of a place, but to what Deleuze and Guattari define as a network of behaviors and expressions produced by living organisms. Here, a behavior or an expression is a 'refrain', a kind of movement that demonstrate unknown connections and potentialities (1987: 312). Deleuze and Guattari are not precisely concerned with a theory of ecology, yet their emphasis on the interplay between the human and the non-human in a specific ecosystem aligns with the theories of eco-criticism which draw interest to human and non-human interaction. As Bernd Herzogenrath points out, 'Thinking the environment with a Deleuze/ Guattarian ecology/ machinics is [...] basically a call to think complexity, and to complex thinking, a way to think the environment as a negotiation of dynamic arrangements of human *and* nonhuman stressors, *both* of which are informed and "intelligent" ' (2009: 4–5).

intermingle with the conversation between Oak and Bathsheba's aunt. The sheep attending a later scene (01:04:00 – 01:06:00), for instance, articulate the ecological ethic of living in harmony, closeness and symbiosis with the natural world. The natural soundtrack, ecologically pertinent here, includes ongoing chorus and whistles of three or more different bird species, bleating of sheep, hissing of the breeze and flow of water – introduced at the end of the scene – all of which are foregrounded in a similar way to the ongoing conversation between Bathsheba and Oak. Here, by drawing equal attention to the human and the non-human sounds, the movie, like the novel, revisits anthropocentric attitudes which consider the natural world as 'unworthy of attention'. Through the visual cinematography of this particular scene, while attending to the sheep, Bathsheba and Oak are sitting on their knees and thus are reduced to the sheep's similar height. In another shot, the camera takes an aerial position which again dwarfs Bathsheba and Oak to locate them in the sheep farm, as if having similar height to the sheep, which relegates the two characters to a similar position to that of the sheep (01:24:00).

Reciprocal relationships of listening and being listened to recur over and over again across the narratives; accordingly, the reader's and viewer's attention is continuously drawn to the acoustic performances of the human and the non-human. Indeed, the novel marks specific moments where the human and the non-human reciprocate a sense of acoustic attentiveness. This is the case of the owl, hinted at in chapter V, which seems to respond to the presence of a lonely soul in a nearby forest: 'as he was coming along in the middle of the night, much afeared, and not able to find his way out of the trees, 'a cried out, "Man-a-lost! Man-a-lost!" An owl in tree happened to be crying "Whoo-whoo-whoo!' (1978: 107-108). Reciprocally, human characters also exhibit a heightened sense of attunement to the non-human sound; this is especially the case of Oak. The narrative suggests: 'He heard what seemed to be the flitting of a dead leaf upon the breeze, and looked' (1978: 69). The narrative delineates Oak's movement across the landscape when his senses are suddenly captivated by the chorus of birds:

> Little birds in the hedges were rustling their fathers and tucking themselves in comfortably for the night, retaining their places if Oak kept moving, but flying away if he stopped to look at them. He passed by Yalbury Wood

> where the game birds were rising to the roosts, and heard the crack-voiced cock-pheasants' 'cu-uck', and the wheezy whistles of the hen (1978: 91).

The use of the acoustic in this specific excerpt retains a twofold ecological significance. On the one hand, it draws attention to Oak's sensorial engagement with the natural world around him: Oak is in a state of attentive reciprocity; he is a relational being entangled in the landscape rather than a distant observer. There is also a sense of palpable ambivalence in this scene, however. Where the bird is constructed as a perceptive subject, its apprehension of Oak uncovers existing division in human and nonhuman relationships, and thus the novel implies that the safety of the biotic community is jeopardized by human intrusion.

Similarly, reciprocal acoustic attention across the movie challenges human's linguistic superiority and prompts awareness of the semantic significance of non-human sound. The early scenes across the movie mark a disastrous accident where Bathsheba's barn is set on fire (00:23:00). The peasants' calls while asking for aid to extinguish the fire, their continuous yelling and shouting seem to be responded to by intermittent calls of a blackbird. I think what is communicated here is a sense of acoustic responsiveness between the human and the non-human, which breaks the barriers between culture and nature. Ecologically more suggestive than this is Oak's dreadful experience in his hut when he is nearly suffocated to death. In this scene, Oak leaves the fire unattended when he is asleep and the accumulation of smoke inside the hut nearly costs him his life. Oak's dog plays a key role in this fateful event, barking in agitation, as if calling out for immediate help in order to rescue Oak. The dog's agitating barking here to rescue Oak from inescapable death demonstrates that language is more than a combination of letters, but it can also be non-human sound, barking for example (00:09:00). Here it seems that Bathsheba recognizes a latent message in the dog's agitating barking as well as its semantic expressiveness. Accordingly, she responds to the dog's calls and rushes off to the hut and rescues Oak from inevitable death. With these scenes at the forefront, the theme of listening becomes a shared thread between the novel and the movie.

Both the novel as well as the movie draws delicate connections between the human and the non-human world through scrupulous attention to their footprints. The narrator refers to the tramps of horses: 'the tramp of the horse was apparent,

approaching the front of the building. The paces slackened, turned in the wicket, and, what was most unusual, came up the mossy path close to the door. The door was tapped with the end of a crop or stick' (1978: 123). In another textual reference, the narrator makes reference to foot-steps of human characters: 'footsteps were heard in the passage, combining in their character the qualities both the weight and measure, rather at the expense of velocity […] he then stamped with each foot severely, and on looking down his boots were perceived to be clogged with snow' (1978:131). By drawing attention to the footprints of the horse and the human character alike, the narrative crosses the division and reconciles estrangement between the human and the nonhuman. Latent here is a state of attentive reciprocity, where the narrator's focus shifts from observing two entangled realms, human and non-human.

The movie inspires a similar reading, drawing continuities between human and non-human panting. A landmark post-pastoral turning point in the movie's (as well as the novel's) plot dynamics is when Bathsheba's sheep fall prey to some kind of a fatal disease which, without Oak's skillful treatment, would kill the entire flock and thus bring about Bathsheba's ruin (01:16:40/ 01:18:00/01:18:57/01:21:49). This incident complicates the pastoral overtones of both the novel and the movie, suggesting that nature is also mediated through the inescapable encounter of death. It also illustrates that vulnerability as well as social instability are inevitable threatening case-scenarios which continuously haunt a farmer's life, making it less ideal as one might think. In this scene, the viewer's attention is drawn to the panting of the sheep while they struggle to breathe, thus eliciting viewers' identification as well as emotive engagement with the non-human. In a latter scene, roles are shifted and now it is Fanny Robin who pants and sniffs so heavily, while toiling in the work-house (01:22:00/ 01:22:30). Acoustic flourishes here suggest a latent entanglement between the human and the non-human, situating Fanny and the sheep in equal footing.

Along with these eco-cinematic moments, however, there are a few other instants when anthropogenic sound is brought to the forefront, whereas the natural soundtrack is reduced to the background. In the sheep dipping scene (00:01:07), for instance, the chatter of the characters seems to intermingle harmoniously with the sound of the water, the bleating of the sheep and the whistle of the birds. However, no sooner does the conversation between the characters start, the sound of the non-human beings recede to the background allowing primacy for anthropogenic acoustic

presence. The intensity of the sound lessens gradually, becomes faint to be eventually almost obliterated from the background when Mr. Boldwood strikes up a conversation with Bathsheba. This illustrates that non-human acoustic presence sometimes retains a marginal position across the movie: while it is part and parcel of an agrarian setting, it still lacks a dramatic significance that is as central as that of the human characters. That human voice is prioritized over that of the non-human is understandable given that the director is dealing with a feature, rather than a documentary film and his aim is to primarily foreground human action.

4) Coming into Terms with the Semantic Qualities of the Natural World

An acoustic reading of *FFMC* reveals that natural soundscape is semantically evocative and constitutes a part of nature's semiotic competency. By 'semiotic competency' I mean that the biotic world is inherently communicative and signifying through the means of tactile, visual, sensory, olfactory and, most importantly, through acoustic clues (Hoffmeyer 2008: 04). The idea that the physical world retains a semiotic agency is explored by Timo Maran and Jesper Hoffmeyer, pioneers of the nascent field of biosemiotics. This sub-branch of ecocriticism challenges the assumption that human beings are the sole communicative species and posits that biotic forms interact with, monitor and understand their environment through a system of signs (Hoffmeyer 2008: 04). Accordingly, the physical world is a semiotic object and non-human creatures are as perceptive as human beings, albeit with a slight difference in quantity and degree. As Hoffmeyer observes, '[a]ccording to the biosemiotic perspective, living nature is understood as essentially driven by, or actually consisting of, semiosis, that is to say, processes of sign relations and their signification—or function—in the biological processes of life' (2008: 04). A biosemiotic consideration of the natural world is ecologically relevant as it challenges the anthropocentric mode of communication and helps to recognize meaning in the natural world by accounting for complex semiotic channels. Semiosis, as Jonathan Beever articulates,

> Is a morally relevant and natural property of all living things thereby offering us an ecological, as opposed to merely environmental, ethic. A consequence of this semiotic theory is that living things are accorded inherent moral value based on their natural relational properties — their ability to signify. This consequence establishes a hierarchy of inherent moral value based on the scope of signification: the larger the Umwelten, the greater the value (2012: 182).

As this passage indicates, conceiving meaning in the natural world is a rudimentary step to establish better ecological relationships where awareness of nature's semantic qualities brings about attentiveness to its intrinsic value, which helps to step beyond purely utilitarian tendencies. Along similar lines, I argue that Hardy's *FFMC* is ecologically significant mainly because it constructs meaning and signification as a property of both humans and non-humans. In its part, the movie continues to engage viewer's senses through the means of acoustic presence which, I believe, challenges human understanding and know-ability of the natural world. This in turn, complicates the movie's pastoral leanings and further consolidates its post-pastoral undertones.

In chapter XLIII of *Tess*, the narrator delineates a sudden change in the temperature and an abrupt accumulation of moisture which Tess and her friend perceive as signals of upcoming snow,

> Then one day a peculiar quality invaded the air of this open country. There came moisture which was not of rain, and a cold which was not of frost. It chilled the eyeballs of the twain, made their brows ache, *penetrated to their skeletons*, affecting the surface of the body less than its core. They knew that it meant snow, and in the night the snow came (1985: 364).

Interestingly, the snow has already been predicted by a flock of birds which, in reaction to the sudden fluctuation in environmental conditions, are forced to shift their habitat from the North polar region: 'the snow had followed the birds from the polar basin as a white pillar of a cloud, and individual flakes could not be seen. The blast smelt of the icebergs, arctic seas, whales, and white bears, carrying the snow so that it licked the land but did not deepen on it' (1978: 364). According to Marian 'the cunning northern birds knew' that the snow was approaching (1978: 365). Such depiction situates the girls as well as the birds as semiotic subjects with a distinct capacity to monitor and respond to their respective environments and interact with it meaningfully through the means of tactile clues. What is depicted here is in line with

Maran's thesis that 'organisms are bound together through perception, recognition, communication and action and they act in these relations as subjects, interpreting each-other's perceivable appearances in a species-specific manner while also including their individual ontogenetic experience' (2014: 212). Similarly, in the novel, the girls as well as the birds manifest semiotic understanding of their respective environments and respond to its communicative signals in a way that ensures survival.

FFMC inspires an ecological interpretation hardly dissimilar to the type previously discerned in *Tess*. Across the novel, Gabriel Oak, attuned to the elemental rhythms of his locale, also grasps a folklore heritage which enables him to interact with nature and meaningfully decipher its signs. He is able to 'to ascertain the time of night from the altitudes of the stars' (1978: 60):

> The Dog-star and Aldebaran, pointing to the restless Pleiades, were half-way up the Southern sky, and between them hung Orion, which gorgeous constellation never burnt more vividly than now, as it soared forth above the rim of the landscape. Castor and Pollux with their quiet shine were almost on the meridian: the barren and gloomy Square of Pegasus was creeping round to the north-west; far away through the plantation Vega sparkled like a lamp suspended amid the leafless trees, and Cassiopeia's chair stood daintily poised on the uppermost boughs. 'One o'clock,' said Gabriel (1986: 61).

Here Oak associates with nature through a kind of native or folk culture knowledge which operates in a coherent way in Hardy's fictional world. He is reading Hardy's version of a semiotic world in which specific star positions are indicative of time. Oak's 'ability to read the signs, his intuitions are an instance of the transmission of knowledge' in a relatively pastoral context threatened by the encroachment of technology (Lanone 2019: 07). In the words of Ihde, Oak symbolizes a dying out pastoral mode of existence:

> Once one has left the Garden the past ways of gaining knowledge are more often lost or forgotten. Very few of us 'know' what any peasant would have known about planting times or take seriously in the same way the passage of the seasons. Our praxes have irreversibly changed (1990: 63).

However, as Lanone proclaims, there is a much more modern ecological strand of thought in Oak's behaviour, than a conventional pastoral practice. In effect, while prioritizing a communal and organic way of determining time through cyclic rhythms

over a mechanically synchronized form of time, Oak is 'laying stress on a natural temporality that ought to be preserved,' which is not nostalgic, but ecological (2019: 07).

Oak is also sensitive to the movement of animals like toads, garden-slugs and spiders, all of which he perceives as 'Nature's […] way of hinting to him that he was to prepare for foul weather' (1978: 300). A skillful field worker, Oak is aware that migratory movements of the animals signal an upcoming storm at the end of August when the weather is still 'dry and sultry' (1978: 297). Arguably, the storm was instinctively anticipated by the sheep beforehand: they 'had now a terror of something greater than their terror of man. But this was not the most noteworthy feature: they were all grouped in such a way that their tails, without a single exception, were towards that half of the horizon from which the storm threatened' (1978: 301). There is something of a biosemiotic ethic here, where Oak's association with nature as well as animals' movements across the landscape could be seen as a reaction to environmental semiotic clues:

> A heated breeze from the south slowly fanned the summits of lofty objects and in the sky dashes of buoyant cloud were sailing in a course at right angles to that of the breeze below. The moon, as seen through these films, had a lurid metallic look. The fields were sallow with the impure light (1978: 296).

Informing Hardy's description of ecological relations here is his familiarity with some type of archaic folkloric beliefs that survived in Dorset. Interestingly, however, this form of folkloric thought has recently been tested as an ecological reality. In effect, science has evidenced that weather conditions play a drastic role in animal's movements across landscape:

> Environmental cues such as temperature, moisture level, elevation changes, wind speed and direction, scent, and auditory and magnetic fields are often overlooked in experiments attempting to determine the effect of landscape structure on movement ability (Stevens et al., 2006a, b). For example, animals frequently use wind to orient toward a favored habitat (Knowlton and Graham 2010: 1347).

Hence, it could be argued that Hardy's fiction accords with contemporary ecological findings. He unknowingly constructs the natural world as a structured system of signs open to de-codification and a complex network of communication between organisms and their environment. In this light, the sudden change in the temperature degree, the alteration in the moon's light radiation and the hot breeze can be read as tactile, visual and acoustic clues for the frog, the spider, the sheep as well as Oak. The creatures' responses to these different signs hint at a species-specific biological aptitude to associate with the physical world through the means of neural, tactile, sensory and auditory channels. In chapter XXXVI, the narrator observes,

> Every voice in nature was unanimous in bespeaking change. But two distinct translations attached to these dumb expressions. Apparently there was to be a thunder-storm, and afterwards a cold continuous rain. The creeping things seemed to know all about the later rain, but little of the interpolated thunder-storm; whilst the sheep knew all about the thunder-storm and nothing of the later rain (1978: 301).

That Oak as well as 'the creeping things' 'knew' about the upcoming weather change, despite a degree of anthropomorphism, prompts readers to renegotiate the formations which confers on humans a superior position in the cosmic scheme.

What follows is that the novel's worldview aligns with the biosemiotic thought that the physical world retains a complex biotic/organic system of signification no less important than the oral mode of human communication. The narrative indicates that, communication

> Is a process between a signaler and a receiver in which information in the form of structured energy transients between the two sides. The description substantiates the assumption that communication represents a semiotic strategy used by a sender to contact a receiver (Farina 2014 : 64).

This prompts a reflection upon a human/nonhuman shared biological make-up and neural activities which enable a similar experience of biological de-codification of the natural world: both the humans and nonhumans rely on cognitive and perceptual tools to monitor their respective environments. I am also inclined to stress that the behaviour of Oak, while illustrating the ways in which the human and the nonhuman are bound up in a complex system of communication, illustrates a bioregional ethic

and a pastoral mode of being where rural denizens, especially peasants, are intimately familiar with their environment and its rhythms.

Both in the novel as well as the movie the storm is deployed as a landmark narrative device driving the plot forward. When it occurs, it causes heavy rains which nearly ruin Bathsheba's harvest. Hence, the storm marks the climax of the plot, introducing Bathsheba into a dramatic moment when her socio-economic status is dreadfully threatened. Because of the storm, Bathsheba is initiated into a state of self-recognition, confronting self-drowning remorse for having always been unfair and ungrateful towards Oak despite his undeniable magnanimity. However, unlike in the novel, the movie's storm comes all of a sudden without any warnings, a factor which obscures the previously highlighted biosemiotic connections. With the storm suddenly blowing and the thunder abruptly crashing, the movie – as well as the novel – constructs a post-pastoral perception of nature as awe-inspiring and humbling. In effect, the wind is a reminder that nature is not only unknowable, unpredictable and uncontrollable, but might also be violent and destructive. Soundscape here disrupts idyllic pleasure by the means of fearful sublime, thus inducing a shift from the 'from the anthropocentric position of the pastoral to the eco-centric view of post-pastoral' (Gifford 1999: 152).The storm's raging power is emphasized in the cinematic space through the acoustic performance of the wind whose violent whistle dominates the scene for a considerable period of time. This cinematic instant retains an ecocritical standpoint: where the shriek of the wind intensifies only to silence down any anthropocentric voice, the movie overtly resurrects the acoustic agency of nature, repositioning the centrality of the human subjects. Similarly, in the scene which portrays Oak's and Bathsheba's relentless efforts to shelter the agricultural produce from rain, the whistle of the wind takes a foregrounded position whereas the faint voices of Bathsheba and Oak are reduced to the background. Thus, the movie hints at the frailty and hopelessness of humans amidst natural calamity, fostering a post-pastoral attitude that nature is in continual flux.

Bee-keeping, a key pastoral trope in both the novel as well as the movie, is portrayed in a way which consolidates a non-human mode of communication that is inherently based on a semiotic interplay. At the surface only, bee hiving can be seen as part and parcel of a pastoral construction of rusticity where other seasonal activities like harvesting, sheep-dipping and sheep-shearing constitute a defining feature of rural

culture. On the other hand, the bee-hiving work embodies the ecological ethic of reciprocity and interdependency: the colony of honeybees is specifically managed by Bathsheba to be more successful; in return, the latter benefits from the bees, especially in terms of their produce (honey). Both in the movie as well as in the novel the thick noise and busy activity of the bees draw striking attention to the non-human phenomena as active agents in a world shared between the human and the non-human. Indeed, the bees can be considered as a mark of collective liveliness, especially in the movie where their acoustic performance seems to have a pervasive presence. Introduced for more than two minutes, their intense noise marks significant presence and sets out their acoustic agency along with that of the human language, the conversation between Bathsheba and Troy. When the conversation between Troy and Bathsheba and the continuous buzzing of the bees come to the forefront, a semantic construction emerges to reconcile human and non-human linguistic agency. However, one cannot overlook the ecological limits of this particular scene: coming to the end, attention is drawn more to the conversation between Bathsheba and Troy; consequently, the bees' acoustic performance is relegated to the margin and eventually submerged into silence. While this might be considered as an anthropocentric gesture on the part of the director, it is however inescapable, for, given the fictional nature of the narrative, it is the dramatic action which takes primacy.

In the novel, the metaphoric use of language prompts readers to account for the acoustic presence of the bees, but also enjoins us to ruminate on an existing complex mode of semiotic interaction in a bee colony. The narrative glosses that the bees were not only

> late this year, but unruly. Sometimes throughout a whole season all the swarms would alight on the lowest attainable bough – such as part of a currant-bush or espalier apple-tree; next year they would, with just the same unanimity, make straight to the upper most member of some tall, gaunt custard or quarrenden, and there defy all invaders who did not come armed with ladders and staves to take them (1978: 233).

Here, the bees are akin to human beings in terms of their ability to communicate to each other in their own proper mode of communication, arguably relying on acoustic performances as well as bodily movements. Indeed, the bees' 'unanimity' to collectively swarm on a particular location indicates that they are arguably behaving in

a way that shows biosemiotic understanding. Further, the emphasis on an existing 'unanimity' between the bees is ecologically striking: it suggests the efficiency as well as the complexity of the bees' mode of communication. The bees' specific choice of habitat, presumably guided by survival needs for food as well as safety, indicates that the bees are in a semiotic interaction with their own environment, monitoring the extent it guarantees their survival needs, mainly nourishment as well as security. Despite its ecological imperatives, however, the passage still raises a degree of ambiguity. While the emphasis on the bees' 'unruly' nature might endorse a perception of insects as uncanny creatures which display intelligent behaviour, deploying the term in its customary sense might be taken to mean that bees are capable of intentionality. This entails that the narrator perceives the non-human from a purely anthropocentric perspective, whose ecological pertinence I persistently questioned in the previous chapters. Furthermore, the use of the words 'invaders' and 'arms,' while implying that human intervention into the biotic community is undesirable and might have destructive consequences, further demarcates boundaries between human and non-human territory advancing the schism between the two realms. Indeed, the narrative seems to reconfigure human presence as a source of ecological destruction, inferring that the ecosystem can only remain intact through the exclusion of humans, which is highly problematic.

Conclusion

Non-human language is a decisive and pervasive subject in ecocritical debates, especially in the sub-branch of acoustic ecology which aims to dismantle deep-rooted 'Cartesian thinking' and 'Kantian idealism' which regard language an exclusively human endowment. Through a sustained incorporation of non-human biophonies as well as spatial geophonies, the artistic works under scrutiny awaken us to the lively and sonorous voices animating the physical world. The ecological imperatives of this acoustic attentiveness are twofold: while it advances narratives of place as ecologically distinct and particular, it further serves to recast the human and non-human / cultural-natural dichotomies, projecting a relational world full of similar resonances, sounds and echoes. By invoking the tangled history of music, singing and natural soundtrack, both modes of narrative serve as reminders that the world is full of

'sentient beings and complex-minded systems' (Dunn 1997: 5), which are ever-interactive. More significantly, the novel's depiction of acoustic landscape is ecologically relevant as it pinpoints the semiotic and semantic competency of the biotic community, thus evincing its intrinsic value. Interestingly, the movie's acoustic coordinates serve to disrupt idyllic pleasure and inspire a sense of fearful sublime, thus bringing the movie into dialogue with the post-pastoral mode of imagining nature. With this glance at acoustic navigations and the significance of active listening, I close this part of my thesis and move to a discussion of the representation of the anthropomorphic world, where I scrutinize a different type of engagement with the world: corporeal and emotive.

The Creaturely Self: Animal Instinct, Emotive Connection and Moral Sentiments in *Jude the Obscure* (1895/1996)

Introduction

While the previous chapter discusses human inclusion in the natural world by the means of acoustic and semantic entanglements, this chapter argues that humans are connected to the natural world from within, meaning through an 'internal animal self' and a corporeal physiology which induces shared feelings of sympathy and empathy.[44] Analyzing *Jude the Obscure* (1895), I posit that Hardy's fiction challenges human sovereignty and the ideology of mastery, by affirming humankind's continuity with the natural world through emphasis on human participation in embodiment and emotionality. I contend that, while resituating humans in the natural realm, the narrative also stresses the importance of responsibility and recognition as a means to maintain more balanced ecological relationships. Moreover, the chapter investigates the ways in which Hardy's perception of embodiment and emotionality shifts and translates to the movie adaptation by Michal Winterbottom (1996). My analysis draws attention to the ways in which the cultural context as well as the director's artistic preferences and choices play into the movie's construction of the underlying relationship between animal instinct and cultural formations. The chapter is divided into two sections: the first highlights the ways in which both the movie and the novel contest human exceptionalism by foregrounding the agency of instinct and sexual drives, biological and creaturely aspects which validate human inclusion in the ecosystem. The second section sheds light on the narratives' portrayal of emotive connection, acknowledging the ways in which altruistic feelings of sympathy and empathy awaken a moral sense of responsibility and thus induce a sense of co-existence.

[44] See Kurt Fosso, 'Of Asses and Men', in *Love of Nature. Wordsworth and the Green Romantics: Affect and Ecology in the Nineteenth Century,* ed. by Reno Seth T. (University of New Hampshire Press, 2016): pp. 78-107.

Jude the Obscure (1895) is strikingly coloured with the epoch's emerging Darwinian thought, which prompted a number of Hardy's critics to label him as a Darwinist. Indeed, among the numerous interpretations associated with *Jude*, the novel's obvious Darwinian credentials have long been a subject of recurrent debates. Critical discourse pertaining to Darwinian influence on the construction of *Jude* often dwell on the theme of determinism and believe that Hardy is primarily concerned with the discrepancy between organic animal instinct and the rigidity of the Victorian cultural system, an aspect which, from their point of view, often heralds the downfall of his characters.[45] In the light of these interpretations, critics incline to believe that Hardy laments the fact that instincts are in tension with cultural behaviour. Further, these critics often address the pessimistic outlook defining the tragic framework of the novel and argue that Hardy lost faith in a benevolent nature and, therefore, charts a view of an indifferent, hostile and malignant universe. For these critics, the writer's gritty pessimism is indissolubly connected to his belief in determinism. [46]

Recently, however, the examination of Darwinian influence on Hardy has shifted attention to the writer's rigorous engagement with altruistic feelings. Unlike previously, commentators tend to rethink Hardy's engagement with animal instinct interpreting it in a much more positive light. For instance, Caroline Stumper studies *Jude*'s construction of biological morality and its ethical imperatives. The objective of Stumper's is to reinvent Hardy's optimism and thus debunk critics' speculations on the writer's bleak view of the universe: for her, the sympathetic qualities of Hardy's protagonists offer a 'corrective to familiar assumptions about Hardy's pessimism' (2011: 666). Building on Stumper's argument, Owen Roberts-Day conducts an extensive analysis of the different ways in which Darwin's philosophical insights came to shape Hardy's understanding of morality. Key to Roberts-Day's argument is

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[45] See for example Roy Huss, 'Social Change and Moral Decay in the Novels of Thomas Hardy', in *The Dalhousie Review* (1967); Christopher Baker P. 'The "Grand Delusion" of Jude Fawley', in *Colby Quarterly* 10.7 (1974): (p.6); Roger Robinson, 'Hardy and Darwin', in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background* (1980), pp. 128-50.

[46] See for example Richard Carpenter, *Thomas Hardy* (New York, 1964), p.5; Roy Morrell, *Thomas Hardy: The Will and the Way* (Kuala Lampur, 1965), p IX; Albert Pettigrew Elliot, *Fatalism in the Works of Thomas Hardy* (New York , 1935), p. 15; Irwine Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (London, 1968): pp. 23.

his assertion that Hardy introduces highly sympathetic protagonists into a hostile society which quashes their prospects. This tragic end, argues Roberts-Day, serves to instill a moral imperative in readers' minds (2013: 3). In *Thomas Hardy and Animals* (2017), Anna West takes a post-humanist approach to Hardy's fiction, one of which is *Jude*. She appraises the ways in which Hardy's depiction of altruistic feelings in animals serves 'to reconfigure the notion of human-animal boundary' (7).

In this chapter, I attempt a new reading of Hardy's evocation of animal instincts in human subjects, situating the writer's worldview within the nexus of ecocriticism. I suggest that the agency of instinct highlights Hardy's ecological viewpoint because instinct intimates a connection between the human and the non-human being in the world. Along these lines, I argue that *Jude* can be ecologically appreciated as a narrative which bluntly critiques human and non-human discontinuity through the vantage point of the 'creaturely'. Furthermore, I extend my ecocritical reading of the novel to Winterbottom's adaptation. I conduct an intertextual analysis of the movie and the novel, investigating the director's and the writer's positions on animal instinct.

Informing my chapter is a second-wave ecocritical approach.[47] This branch of ecocriticism seeks to destabilize the dual perception of humans and non-humans, which has long nurtured a separation between nature and culture. Second wave ecocriticism includes the ideas of commentators like Reno Seth, Val Plumwood, Joseph Carroll, and Kurt Fosso who aim to disrupt Aristotelian and Cartesian thinking which have long provided the philosophical guidelines which define the human as inherently estranged from the natural sphere. While deeply entrenched in the Western thought paradigm, Aristotelian and Cartesian philosophies cherished a belief in humans' unique possession of reason and logic and celebrated their presumed limited participation in emotionality and embodiment, creaturely rudiments that are usually associated with the non-human (Plumwood 2003: 2). In response to these ideas, second wave ecocritics aim to resituate human beings in the natural order by resurrecting their creaturely makeup, mainly their embodiment and earthly-grounded existence. Hence, they often deploy Darwin's ideas of evolutionary theory and borrow insights from the developing field of evolutionary biology as well as neural sciences to

[47] See p.18

back-up their theoretical claims. For instance, Carroll adopts the belief that human beings formulate a continuum with vegetative life initially because they are subject to evolutionary processes and contends that human nature can only be viewed within the scope of evolutionary theory. He proclaims that 'Darwinian evolutionary theory has established itself as the matrix for all the life sciences. This theory situates people firmly within the natural, biological order and evolutionary principles are now extending themselves rapidly into the human sphere' (2004:15). Thus, central to second wave ecocritics like Carroll is to highlight the different traits shared by humans and non-humans, mainly, reproductive processes, mating strategies, but also emotionality as well altruistic behaviours.

In his reading of Darwinian theorization of human behaviour, Carroll adopts the view that human beings represent a 'late and special instance of mammalian evolution' (2004: 153). He adds that, while natural selection has helped human beings to develop 'peculiar cognitive, linguistic' capacities, it has 'done nothing to liberate them from the elemental constraints of all animal life – the necessity of nourishment, of water and air, a certain range of temperature, of protection from physical harm, and of successful reproduction' (153). By contrast, the adaptive process of human beings has 'proceeded within biological conditions that are larger, broader, deeper, and older than any specifically human characteristics' (153). Amongst many other biological conditions, Carroll explains that 'human sexuality – the specificity of male and female identity and the oft-conflicted interdependence of men and women – flow directly from these biological realities' (153). Human sexual drives, argues Carroll, can only be considered as 'innate motivational characteristics' of human beings (154). In the scope of this study, while I agree with Carroll that sexuality is an indispensable biological trait which locates humans within the biotic sphere of animal and vegetative life, I emphasize that we should not lose sight of recognition, conscience and self-awareness, aspects which estrange humans from animal life. I argue that these aspects which might mistakenly be taken to demarcate boundaries between humans and non-humans, and which might be used to justify human supremacy, actually necessitate human's responsibility in the world to maintain an ethical imperative towards creatures, including both humans and non-humans. As Terry Gifford purported: 'it is our consciousness which gives us our conscience, our ability to take responsibility for our behaviour towards the other species of the plain and towards the plain itself'

(Gifford 1999: 163). I concur with Gifford: being human is to be guided by innate biological imperatives, but to also abide by a moral-ethical framework.

1) Creaturely Poetics: Sexuality, Emotionality and Physical Vulnerability

Jude (1895) is profoundly shaped by nineteenth century scientific innovations and philosophical speculations which sought to answer fundamental questions regarding the origins of humans. Thirty-seven years before the publication of this novel, Charles Darwin (1809-1882) launched his theory of evolution which triggered diverse controversies during his lifetime as well as decades after his death. This theory, which shocked many of his contemporaries, has had an enduring impact on different fields of science such as biology, psychology, economy, ecology and the recently developed field of ecocriticism. Before the inception of Darwin's theory, people had had a firm belief in the theological explanation that the universe is the creation of a divine power and that God created Man in His image, endowed him with reason which distinguishes him from other creatures and establishes him at the highest position of the hierarchy of being (Strong 1946: 446-447). Darwin challenged these biblical views, claiming that all living organisms, including humans, plants and animals, have gradually evolved and mutated through time to reach their actual physical shape. According to Darwin, adaptation to environmental conditions is the main factor behind these perpetual mutations, for without these, species cannot ensure their survival. Darwin explained that these changes are necessary and arbitrary; that is, the constant variations in the mechanisms and functions of an organism are biologically determined and punctuated by the very means of 'Natural Selection' (Bradshaw 2003: 11- 14).

Nowadays, one of the notable ways in which evolutionary theory is appreciated is in terms of the insights it offers to the burgeoning field of ecocriticism. One of its main contributions to the existing ecocritical scholarship is its foundational intervention which tests and dismantles the hierarchal view of the universe and the dualist thinking that informs the Judeo-Christian tradition, Greek, Roman, and Enlightenment philosophies. While these cultural philosophies distinguish humans as uniquely separate from other species, Darwin, as Roy. C Strong puts it, 'swept away at

one blow Man's unique position in the scheme of things. He now took his place alongside the animals, his spark of divinity extinguished' (1996: 446). Indeed, the theory of evolution proclaimed that all species are interrelated, and Man is only one variety among so many other species which live in mutual interdependence. As a way of emphasis, in the conclusion of *The Origin of Species*, Darwin uses the phrase 'entangled bank' to expresses his belief in an existing kinship between the human and the non-human animals (1859: 459). Thus, the evolutionary theory destabilized the western anthropocentric paradigm to promulgate a holistic vision of the universe where entangled species exist interdependently.

Hardy was immensely engaged with nineteenth century scientific discourse. He was particularly entranced by the innovative scientific findings of Darwin. In his autobiographical work, he notes that he was 'among the earliest acclaimers of *The Origin of Species*' (1958: 158), a book whose philosophy contributed to the construction of his characters, plots, themes and shaped his perception of the universe. One of Darwin's many legacies which especially caught Hardy's attention was his holistic view of the universe which prompted the writer to believe that 'all organic creatures are of one family' (Millgate 1985: 373). In a letter to the Humanitarian League, Hardy asserts his belief that human beings are by no means superior to the non-human: 'while man was deemed to be a creation apart from all other creations, a secondary or tertiary morality was considered good enough towards the "inferior" races; but no person who reasons nowadays can escape the trying conclusion that this is not maintainable' (Millgate 1985: 377). Indeed, Darwin's philosophy came to confirm Hardy's inner belief in a brotherhood and 'bare equality' between the human and the non-human (Evers 2005: n.p), a belief which he actively advocates in his literary practice.

Set against the backcloth of Darwinism, *Jude* reflects on the human and non-human continuity, prompting readers to ponder the ways in which biological needs connect us rather than exclude us from the natural world. The novel confronts the creaturely reality of human beings, resurrecting, for instance, Arabella's unrestrained sexuality:

> She whom he addressed was a fine dark-eyed girl, not exactly handsome, but capable of passing as such at a little distance, despite some coarseness of skin and fiber. She had a round and prominent bosom, full lips, perfect

> teeth, and the rich complexion of a Cochin hen's egg. She was a complete and substantial female animal – no more, no less; and Jude was almost certain that to her was attributable the enterprise of attracting his attention from dreams of the humane letters to what was simmering in the minds around him (1988: 81).

The narrator's likening of Arabella to a 'complete and substantial female animal' here is neither demeaning nor derogatory, but demonstrates a Darwinian strand of thought which brings the human and the non-human into similar ground. Further, the narrative's overtly sensual and voyeuristic description of Arabella stresses that her earthliness brings her closer to nature. As Strong explains, Arabella's

> Large breasts suggest her abundant sexuality and the novel charts the expansion of her bosom with age in tandem with the lengthening of the distance at which she can pass as handsome; in the later stages of the novel Arabella appears increasingly 'frowsy' under bright light and in the morning. Her affinity with farmyard animals – and coarse unrestrained sexuality – is introduced through her very first act of throwing the penis at Jude, and the reference to a hen's egg anticipates the egg she keeps in her cleavage - a measure which excites Jude's interest and precipitates his first sexual encounter (1999: 239).

Further, the narrator chronicles the obscure ways in which Jude succumbs obediently and meekly to the biological forces operating within his body, thus drawing him closer to Arabella. In his first encounter with the latter, Jude, despite his scholarly aspirations, finds himself guided more by instinctual feelings rather than intellectual deliberation. The narrative observes,

> She saw that he had singled her out from the three, as a woman singled out in such cases, for no reasoned purpose of further acquaintance, but in commonplace obedience to conjunctive orders from headquarters, unconsciously received by unfortunate men when the last intention of their lives is to be occupied with the feminine (82).

This passage substantiates the scientific claim that human beings are biologically driven animals. This sexual impulse, as the narrative goes on to emphasize, is beyond the control of Jude. In other words, Jude's rational faculties are temporally overpowered by his desires, which challenges humankind's perceived uniqueness.

Indeed, the novel prompts readers to conceive of animal instinct as a driving force that numbs deliberate reasoning and, therefore, confuses human's consciousness. In his first sexual encounter with Arabella, Jude seems to lose control over his action as the agency of biological forces becomes far more indomitable:

> The unvoiced call of a woman to man, which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella's personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention - almost against his will, and in a way new to his experience. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that till this moment Jude had never looked at a woman to consider her as such, but had vaguely regarded the sex as being outside his life and purposes. He gazed from her eyes to her mouth, then to her bosom, and to her round naked arms, wet, mottled with the chill of the water, and firm as marble [...] what a nice-looking girl you are! He murmured, though the words had not been necessary to express his sense of her magnetism […]. Jude felt himself drifting strangely, but could not help it (1988: 83).

The emphasis that Jude's sexual yearning for Arabella contradicts sharply with his personal intentions and that his behaviour runs counter to his will serve to underscore that animal instinct might undermine rational deliberation and triumphs over the agency of reason. So does the meticulous focus on the uncontrollable 'magnetism' between the lovers and the ways in which Jude 'drifts strangely' towards Arabella. Hardy's sensually charged language, his voyeuristic focus on Arabella's 'mouth', her 'bosom' and her 'round naked arms' underscores the intensity of Jude's gravitation and attractions towards Arabella, perceiving in her an erotic spectacle.

Nevertheless, when the narrative suggests that human beings are sometimes controlled by biological needs, it also stresses that we are guided by a sense of moral agency. After their sexual encounter, Jude is morally convinced to marry Arabella in order to save her the judgments of society: 'yet, such being the custom of the rural districts among honorable young men who had drifted so far into intimacy with a woman as he unfortunately had done, he was ready to abide by what he had said, and take the consequences' (102). While this passage clearly acknowledges Jude's moral responsibility, the novel's tonality hinges at a sense of lamentation and regret that Arabella is not the type of women for Jude. Indeed, for Hardy, the tricky manners of Arabella and her dishonesty make her 'not worth a great deal as a specimen of womankind' (102). Here Hardy seems to pity Jude's sexual awakening not because animal instinct is inherently destructive, but because it might drive us to act against

our convictions and interests. This is exactly the case of Jude who forsakes his intellectual dreams to marry someone like Arabella, who, as the narrator expounds, is dishonest and thus undeserving of Jude.

In its turn, Winterbottom's adaptation marks a tendency to mimic and consolidate the writer's view on sexuality, portraying it as a biological trait which locates humans in the natural world. One of the strategic techniques deployed by the director to mirror the novel's rumination on human animalistic drives is a voyeuristic depiction of characters, mainly conducted through the means of extreme close-ups. For instance, the way Winterbottom portrays the first encounter between Arabella and Jude reflects a painstaking effort to faithfully communicate the novel's meditation on human and non-human kinship. The director makes a strategic use of close-ups to draw attention to 'the round and prominent bosom' of Arabella (81), a bodily attraction which formulates an erotic spectacle to Jude. Following similar seductive strategies highlighted in the novel, Arabella is shown to lick a hen's egg which she keeps in her cleavage and places close to her bosom. When Jude expresses bewilderment at Arabella's awkward behaviour, she responds that 'it is in a woman's nature to give life to things' (100). Both in the movie and in the novel, the egg carries a symbolic meaning which draws analogies between human and non-human procreative processes, mating strategies and sexual desires. This analogy is extended in the cinematography characterizing the scene, through the pigs which seem to share the cinematic space with Arabella and Jude while indulged in sexual intercourse.[48] In this scene, the noise of Arabella and Jude during sex seems to intermingle with the noise of the pigs, thus constructing a metaphoric glimpse of human biological history. 'The sheer animality of the scene', Robert Schweik proclaims, and 'the erotic noises of Jude and Arabella mixing with those of the pigs – underscores the raw animal power of the sexual drives both respond to' (2005: 188). Indeed, I concur with Schweik's argument: latent in this scene is a complex analogy between human and non-human mating strategies, a biological procreative urge which ensures the survival of both species. In this sense, the human and non-human are portrayed as akin to each other, having shared biological and existential conditions.

[48] It is worth noting here that the sexual intercourse takes place near the pig pen and not upstairs in Arabella's house as the original source denotes.

In *Creaturely Poetics* (2010), Anat Pick acknowledges the significance of films to readdress anthropocentric attitudes. She proclaims that the cinematic apparatus is eminently suitable to articulate the creaturely aspects of human subjects. In her comment on realist cinema, Pick describes '*cinema as a zoo*: cinema as a zoomorphic stage that transforms all living beings – including humans – into creatures' (106). In effect, Pick's observation applies to Winterbottom's adaptation whose metaphoric use of the cinematographic space hints at the ways in which human sexuality is rooted in evolutionary biological needs. In a scene invented by the director, Arabella is shown to climb a tree, dangle her body from its branches and eventually dismount it (22:10: 50). With remarkable resilience and dexterity, Arabella's light body movements bring to fore the claims of Darwin which emphasize human's evolutionary beginnings and their entangled history with monkeys and apes. This scene can also be read in relation to the ways in which the imperatives of instinct tend to govern the actions of human beings: seductive as they are, Arabella's instinctive acts are intended to ensnare and inflame Jude's passions. One could argue that Arabella's performance enables the creaturely poetics of the movie as it illuminates clear behavioral resemblances between human and non-human creatures.

The narratives' portrayal of Arabella's seductive ruse, especially the novel's, dissolves rigid boundaries between intellect and emotion. One might argue that in the character of Arabella is incarnated a combination of the rational and the instinctual. Indeed, while accentuating Arabella's sexual drives, both narratives stress that she is voluntarily involved in inflaming Jude's desires. In her first encounter with Jude, we are told that she 'brightened with little glow of triumph' (83). This validates the nuance latent in Hardy's vision: while the instinctual magnetism between Jude and Arabella plays largely into their sexual encounter, this is equally prompted and stimulated by seductive acts deliberately enacted in part of Arabella. This is equally implied in the movie especially through the scene where Arabella first approaches Jude throwing a pig's heart at him in an endeavor to catch his attention (00:08:14). In the novel as well as the movie, Arabella frequently attempts to fake a dimple to equally seduce Jude: 'by this time she had managed to get back one dimple by turning her face aside for a moment and repeating the odd little sucking operation before mentioned, Jude being still unconscious of more than a general impression of her appearance' (83). The novel chronicles Arabella's relentless attempts to gain Jude's attention: 'she kept her two lips resentfully together, and Jude followed her like a pet

lamb till she slackened her pace and walked beside him. Talking calmly on indifferent subjects, and always checking him if he tried to take her hand or clasp her waist' (98). Here, while emphasizing Arabella's 'abundant sexuality', and simultaneously acknowledging her adherence to rational deliberation, both texts construct a complex and paradoxical vision of human subjectivity, where mind and body are set up in a de-hierarchized position. On the one hand, the narratives alert us that mind and body can co-exist congruently and subserviently. Unlike Jude who drifts towards Arabella against his intention, the latter is instinctually attracted to Jude; she resolves to gain his attention, and thus appeals to rational deliberation which eventually brings her closer to him. In that sense, through Arabella's character, the novel and the movie suggest that we lead an existence that is both instinctual and rational, which underscores that animal instinct exist alongside self-awareness and that the mind and heart are not always in conflict. On the other hand, where Jude meekly submits to Arabella's sexual initiatives, the texts ambivalently privilege reason over instinct, suggesting that succumbing to instinct might be destructive.

The narratives situate base animal instinct within the realm of domestic territory. Thus, it is neither external to human and social life, nor is it exclusive to the non-human. This is especially enabled in the novel through the writer's strategic use of the subjective point of view which unveils Jude's internal psychic reality as well as sexual fantasies. Indeed, surfacing the novel's multiple thematic trajectories is Jude's agonizing experience of loneliness. As harsh as it is, loneliness enforces Jude to endure inescapable inner conflicts as well as emotional turmoil while relentlessly struggling to adapt to city isolation and striving to come to terms with his animalistic drives. Before his initial encounter with Sue, Jude seems to already indulge in a sensuous imagination of her, an aspect which might risk presenting him as morbidly lustful. When he first moves to Christminister, Jude finds himself locked away in an empty room; his solitude brings to his imaginative faculties a sensuous reflection on Sue: 'Jude, a ridiculously affectionate fellow, promised nothing, put the photograph on the mantelpiece, kissed it – he did not know why – and left more at home. She seemed to look down and preside over his tea. It was cheering – the one thing uniting him to the emotions of the living city' (133).With such reflection on Jude's domestic life, the novel draws attention to the ways in which our domestic behaviour connects us to the

natural world. Here we grasp the biological reality that animalistic drives are inherently part of domestic and social routines.

The movie pushes even further, violating Jude's privacy and continuously intruding upon his intimate life in the very corners of his bedroom. A director of films such as *The Claim* (2000), *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997), *24-Hour Party People* (2002) and *In this World* (2002) which have triggered controversies because of daring sexual acts, Michael Winterbottom is known for his 'frankness' about sex (McGlamey 2007: 396). His bold representation of sexual relationships is extended to his adaptation of *Jude*. The second sexual intercourse between Arabella and Jude (00:15:30/ 00: 16: 30), which takes place right after their marriage, while subtly implied by Hardy, is foregrounded by Winterbottom to illustrate the ways in which naked desire governs our intimate domestic relationships. The director further allows Arabella to have sexual intercourse with Jude when she is legally still tied to her husband in Australia (00: 59: 00/ 01:00:00). This scene suggests that sexuality can be a form of physical vulnerability that overrides rational faculties. While emotionally devastated as Sue rejects him, Jude feels hopeless and frail in front of his desires. This is, however, problematic as it clearly emanates not from romantic attachment or a genuine sense of affection, but rather from a temporary arousal of a sexual urge. Where Jude is inculpable for the sexual encounter as he is under the effect of alcohol, and therefore emotionally vulnerable, he is ethically held responsible for his action. The audience is even inclined to discredit Arabella's ethical value system, questioning how she succumbs to her momentary sexual drives when she is not really in love with Jude and legally tied to another man: her spouse in Australia.

Across the novel, irony seems to be a cogent means for Hardy to refute the ideals of humanism. This is especially deployed to sometimes resurrect the power of instinct over cerebral agency in order to confront the hierarchal perception of natural sexual impulses and cultural intellectual pursuit. This is reflected in the way Jude's sensuality plays into the suspension of his intellectual dreams and a diversion from his career aspirations to become a bishop: when 'Arabella reasserted her way in his soul,' Jude 'walked as if he felt himself to be another man from the Jude of yesterday. What were his books to him? What were his intentions, hitherto adhered to so strictly, as not wasting a single minute of time day by day?' (92). Hence, reason, as the narrative well demonstrates, is not the only source of agency and is not the only dictator of humans' actions and behaviour. It is rather passions and emotions which sometimes preside

over human's crucial decisions and choices. Hence, through the means of irony, the novel asserts the primacy of animal passion and animal instinct in human life and their ongoing intertwining effects in life decisions, thus mocking the humanist celebration of reason. By making Jude renounce his education, the narrative endorses the very dichotomy it aims to deflect: Jude seems to be entrapped by two antithetical forces which seem to be out of tune. Consequently, Jude is confronted with a very difficult decision to make: either adhere to emotionality and, therefore, fulfill his sexual drives and give up on his intellectual dreams, or subscribe to reason at the expense of his emotionality and animality. With this schism between reason and emotion, the narrative's ecocritical underpinnings become rather ambiguous and problematic.

This is not the case with the movie. Indeed, while toning down the radical transformation in Jude's character, the director inclines us to believe that Jude, by marrying Arabella, is acting out of passion as well as intellect. In fact, Winterbottom's Jude is not as passionate about books as Hardy portrays him, and he does not seem to suddenly give up on his intellectual aspirations as the novel accentuates. Thus, Winterbottom, while undoing the ambivalence characterizing Jude, subdues the novel's use of irony and renounces the writer's initial intent to challenge the ideals of humanism, thus eliding the culture/ nature binary.

Indeed, while both narratives inspire an ecological view which positions humans within the natural processes of 'the vegetable and animal kingdom' (Reno 2016: 36), the tone is different. In effect, Winterbottom portrays animal instincts in humans in a positively and optimistically romantic mode, thus envisaging a congruent relationship between culture and nature. By contrast, Hardy's awareness of the discrepancy between the two forces – especially as perceived by the Victorian bourgeois society – shapes the haunting sense of pessimism that dominates the novel.[49] One of the factors which drive the novel's sense of gritty pessimism is a depiction of an existing tension between the spiritual and the organic. The novel highlights the experience of Jude who grapples with his sexual desires when it seems to mismatch with the religious mode of being he is expected to pursue. Indeed, with his aspirations towards a career of an ecclesiastical nature and his work in a solemn

[49] In the specific context of this chapter, 'culture' refers to the customs of the nineteenth century rural district as well as the church conventions which provided as the source of authority and the standard of morally accepted behaviour; by the word 'nature', I refer to the human biological make-up, its instinctive and organic feelings.

place like a church, Jude's 'earthly passions' are deemed to be 'unauthorized' (146). Paradoxically, Jude's experience of ungoverned sexual drives runs counter to the expectations of the religious establishment: he feels much more drawn to Sue the moment he is supposed to compromise his bodily drives, completely relinquishing to the spiritual. He is trapped into blaming himself for thinking of Sue instead of having a religious experience of worship, admiration and contemplation:

> What a wicked worthless fellow he had been to give vent as he had done to an animal passion for a woman, and allow it to lead to such disastrous consequences; then to think of putting an end to himself; then to go recklessly and get drunk. The great waves of pedal music tumbled round the choir, and, nursed on the supernatural as he had been, it is not wonderful that he could hardly believe that the psalm was not specifically set by some regardful Providence for this moment of his first entry into the solemn building (139).

As illustrated in this passage, Jude strives in vain to reconcile the spiritual and the organic; he is, therefore, torn apart between the religious authority which holds him back from Sue and the animalistic drives which drift him to her. Ironically, however, Jude is continuously 'thinking more of [Sue] instead of thinking less of her, and experiencing a fearful bliss in doing what was erratic, informal, and unexpected' (146), as if his organic feelings are stubborn and relentlessly powerful. Thus, the novel's use of irony, while disconcertingly re-inscribing a binary opposition between culture and nature, serves to defy the dogmatic religious moral credentials which conceive sexual love in more rigid and regulated terms. Across the narrative, this irony takes on a defiant tone, blatantly elevating the organic over the spiritual: 'to be sure she was almost an ideality to him still. Perhaps to know her would be to cure himself of this unexpected and unauthorized passion. A voice whispered that, though he desired to know her, he did not desire to be cured' (146). Accordingly, the writer unites Jude and Sue through a relationship which meets the disapproval of society, yet this relationship is doomed to fail when social pressure becomes powerful.

At the core of the novel is a critique of the dogmatic religious beliefs which persistently aim to denaturalize humans. In the words of Bajaj Sheetal, Hardy 'is opposed to the suppression of the natural in man' (2016: 61). Hence, the novel draws a sympathetic vision of Jude becoming a frail victim of religious dictations because of his embrace of emotionality and animality. When forsaken by the object of his

affection – Sue – Jude is profoundly distressed and submissively resorts to the religious method of mortifying the flesh and nourishing the mind and spirit with prayers to strip himself of his 'earthly passions', but all in vain. As a means to flee his sorrows, Jude is haunted by the idea of,

> Mortifying by every possible means his wish to see her, nearly starving himself in attempts to extinguish by fasting his passionate tendency to love her. He read sermons on discipline; and hunted up passages in Church history that treated of the Ascetics of the second century (250).

Paradoxically, Jude's endeavours to punish himself physically culminate in inescapable failure; thereafter, he comes to reconcile reason with his creaturely self and ultimately embrace his earthily embedded being. He is profoundly convinced that 'the human was more powerful in him than the divine', the narrative asserts (267). In fact, Hardy charts a scientific explanation for the animal instinct which overrides Jude's mental faculties. Indeed, the writer envisages sexuality as something which perfects human existence and contributes to a much more balanced and holistic life. For instance, Chapter IV stresses that human survival depends on nourishment as well as sexual fulfillment:

> Those three enormous reasons why he must not attempt intimate acquaintance with Sue Bridehead now that his interest in her had shown itself to be unmistakably of a sexual kind, loomed as stubbornly as ever. But it was also obvious that man could not live by work alone; that the particular man Jude, at any rate, wanted something to love (145).

As illustrated here, Hardy is in support of Jude, revealing that the fault is not in his animal passions, but in the dogmatic and rigid religious conventions which aspire towards an ethereal and disembodied mode of being. Further, Hardy seems to question social control, denouncing the means by which people's behaviour is policed and regulated.

Conversely, the movie romanticizes the love relationship between Jude and Sue in a way which blurs the boundaries between culture and nature. While it stresses the difficulty of love fulfillment and attainment, the movie does not directly attribute the source of this difficulty to an ongoing conflict between social/ religious forces and biological desires. For instance, at the early stages of Jude's attraction to Sue, the

movie does not betray any sense of irony which would disseminate an uncomfortable feeling that Jude's desires might cause him any particular sorrow or agony. By contrast, the movie portrays the relationship accentuating positive romantic imagery, and it emphasizes its developmental stages more elaborately. In one of the scenes which are added by the director, Sue joins Jude and his fellow workers in a gathering (00:25:05); enjoys drinking wine and smokes a cigarette while tantalizingly watched by Jude (00: 22: 17). In other additional scenes, right after Sue's break-up with Phillotson, Jude and Sue spends pleasurable time together while enjoying a beach scene (01: 15:00) and a bicycle ride outdoors (01: 17:00), without hinting that the relationship is actually reproached by society. The only scene which slightly hints at social constraints is when Sue is ousted from school as she was frequently seen with Jude and Phillotson. At this stage at least, the director seems to imply that Sue is not judged for her relationship with Jude, but for dating both men simultaneously.

Similar to the novel, the movie continues to stress the creaturely heritage of humans by drawing attention to the ways in which thwarted animal desire has a drastic negative impact on Jude's well-being. Significantly, however, unlike in the novel, Jude does not retreat back to religion seeking solace and consolation and does not follow a religious method of fasting and praying to lessen his heartache and purify his body and soul from his 'earthly passion'. By contrast, Jude seems to wretchedly give in to alcohol as a means to cast away the shadow of Sue from his mind. As a way to escape his invincible grief, Jude further indulges in sexual intercourse with Arabella in an extra scene, created by the director. While tuning down the novel's religious imagery, the movie renounces Hardy's critical stand against religious orthodoxy and cultural hegemony which aim to tame the natural and animalistic in human beings. What is being emphasized here is a twentieth century perception of animal instinct, where religion and conventions have no bearings over people's romantic aspirations and human relationships. Thus, defining the movie is a much moderate ecological view point that the natural in the human is a trait to celebrate rather than eradicate.

The decision to whittle away Jude's embrace of religious practices to purify his body from what Christminister ecclesiasts perceive as 'earthly passions' can be explained in the light of the director's preferences as well as the movie's contextual background. Primarily, the movie does not strictly chart a view of Jude as particularly religious. The director elides all the scenes which bring about Jude's aspiration to

follow a career of an ecclesiastical nature and limits his goal to secure an education degree from Christminister. Thus, it might seem awkward, self-contradicting, and unbelievable to the audience to be introduced to a sudden change in Jude's religious beliefs. Another reason might be related to the timescale where these two artifacts are produced: Hardy's novel is about nineteenth century religious dogmatism and social rigidity where sexual drives were perceived in a decidedly conservative way. The movie, however, was produced in the 1990s where people have a more open view of human sexuality. In short, while the novel responds to a society where morality and religion are much indissolubly entwined, the movie is made in a more secular age where Jude's self-punishments would alienate an audience's sympathies for him. At this juncture, what contributes to the movie's description of a congruent culture/ nature relationship is the socio-economic context which directly filters into its thematic structure. As R. Jeremy Strong has pointed out in his analysis of the film and novel, 'Winterbottom has acknowledged that to repeat Hardy's arguments exactly as he argued them a century ago would be largely redundant' (1999: 225).

To sum up, through its rumination on human sexuality, Hardy's novel constructs an ecological reality which transcends human/ non-human dichotomy and affirms human's inclusion in the material world. Hardy's characters, however, epitomize the complexity of human vulnerability where reason is sometimes overridden by the workings of sexual drives. This vulnerability, according to Anat Pick, makes human beings akin to animals: 'being humans is grappling with what is inhuman in us' (2010: 12). In its turn, the movie extends the novel's ecological thought through the medium of the creaturely, capitalizing on certain scenes which bluntly resurrect the non-human in the human subjects. Thus, the representations enjoin us to rethink our stance from human narcissistic claims which celebrate human's hyper-separation from nature and which have long pre-conditioned instrumental views of the non-human. The analysis showcases that both narratives help to dismantle the dual perception of culture and nature, albeit in different ways: while Winterbottom opts for the mode of romance to depict a culture that is inherently in a continuum with nature, Hardy adopts irony as a means to challenge the humanist discourse on human's intellectual superiority. While locating human beings in the natural sphere, Hardy hints at the role of consciousness and recognition, human endowments which dictate our responsibility in the universe. In the following section, we will see that the narratives further emphasize human responsibility through

rigorous engagement with what Kurt Fosso terms a corporeal basis of moral goodness.[50] In what follows, I posit that *Jude* overtly articulates that animalistic drives exist along with what Adam Smith calls 'moral sentiments' of sympathy, empathy and kindness, sentiments which enable an emotive connection with nature.

2) Emotive Connection, Moral Sentiments and Corporeal Morality

In its essence *Jude* confronts the galling realities of suffering, pain and physical vulnerability. Both in the novel as well as the movie pain is at once emotional, physiological and intellectual. Both narratives ruminate on the physical and mental repercussions resulting from repressing biological urges and coping with the disappointment of unrequited affection. When Jude realizes that Sue does not reciprocate his feelings of love, he is thrown into the creaturely realm of physical suffering as well as mental agony:

> His passion for Sue troubled his soul; yet his lawful abandonment to the society of Arabella for twelve hours seemed instinctively a worse thing – even though she had not told him of her Sydney husband till afterwards. He had, he verily believed, overcome all tendencies to fly to liquor –which, indeed, he had never done from taste, but merely as an escape from intolerable misery of mind. Yet he perceived with despondency that, taken all around, the utmost he could hope for was that in a life of constant internal warfare between flesh and spirit the former might not always be victorious (251).

The description of Jude's agonizing pain here reveals the interconnectedness between the emotional, physiological, and the intellect. Thus, the narrative challenges Cartesian hierarchies by emphasizing the connectedness between heart, body, mind, and soul. The ways in which the narrative foregrounds this intersection shows strong resonance with the theoretical explanations of love as it is explained in the related field of neural sciences. According to Reno, Erasmus Darwin, a pioneer in the field of neural sciences, purported that emotions are both 'material, and neural processes'; meaning, while emotions are produced in a form of 'muscular motions', the 'brain processes

[50] By moral goodness here, I refer to the universal humane feelings of compassion, mercy, and kindness.

these emotions to produce ideas'; these ideas, in return, determine the psychological state of the individual, whether joy or sadness (2016: 33). In a similar way, Jude's emotional state is accurately described in a highly scientific and ecological fashion, which, in the words of Reno, 'reveals that biology, cognition, and emotions are much more interconnected and interdependent' (2016: 30).

Furthermore, both narratives resurrect physical pain as part and parcel of human life. The scene in the film where Sue gives birth to her first child, originally not highlighted in the novel, is unmistakably disconcerting because of its daring vulgarity as well as its contained share of horror which contradicts with laws of decorum. This, however, is crucial for our understanding of the movie's overall construction of creatureliness. Indeed, at stake here is to ascribe special meaning to Sue's body becoming. In fact, in this very scene, visual images become more signifying of the physical pain Sue experiences than the discursive language can ever denote. In both narratives, pain connects the heart, body and mind, but also unites the human and the non-human. Indeed, the narratives alert us to the fact that the physiological pain experienced by both Sue and Jude actually extends to the non-human realm, thus situating human beings in the natural order. In a separate scene, highlighted by both Hardy and Winterbottom, Jude overhears the groaning of a trapped rabbit. Jude actually responds to the rabbit's pain, and, in order to put an end to its suffering, he decides to kill it (01:05:50). With such attentiveness to how pain unites the life of creatures, the narratives enjoin us to question human supremacy and uniqueness. As Pick has recently argued, 'reflecting on human life from the "creaturely prism" destabilizes human assumed privileged position in the universe and emphasizes involvement in the biotic world: reading through a creaturely prism consigns culture to contexts beyond an anthropocentric perspective' (2011: 05).

For Hardy, individuals suffer because internal natural forces are incongruous with external cultural formations. Indeed, the novel addresses the frailty and the controversies inherent in the Victorian social, legal and religious system, especially the conventional bourgeois understanding of marriage, divorce and morality. Tempted to marry Phillotson out of the transitory appeal to his attention, Sue ultimately realizes that she is 'unfitted by temperament and instinct to fulfill the conditions of the matrimonial relation' (281). Further, emotionally attached to Jude, Sue is unable to reciprocate Phillotson's feelings of love and, therefore, unwilling to indulge in any

sexual intercourse with her husband. This gradually creates a rupture in the couple's relationship, precipitating their eventual separation. Sue believes that to suffer is because 'the universe' and 'things in general […] are so horrid and cruel', enforcing her to succumb to her husband's desires in the name of marriage (283). Sue actually questions the relevance of 'laws and ordinance', when 'they make [people] miserable when [they] know [they] are committing no sin'; she confesses to Phillotson: 'I do like you! But I didn't reflect that it would be so much more than that […] for a man and woman to live on intimate terms when one feels as I do is adultery, in any circumstances, however legal' (287). Here it seems that Hardy is skeptical of the cultural construction of morality which throws blame on Sue for her authenticity and her resistance to sexually yield to her husband when she actually is not in love with him. Here the Victorian law, considering the sanctity of marriage and prioritizing the family institution over the fulfillment of individual happiness, would blame Sue for not committing to Phillotson and not submitting to his will, although she has no feelings of a sexual affection towards him. Conversely, Hardy rather places value on the individual, supporting Sue's aspiration to liberate herself from Phillotson at the expense of the marriage contract. While social law considers marriage from a religiously idyllic perspective, Hardy looks at it from a scientific and humanist viewpoint. For Hardy, marriage should not be reduced to a binding contract which necessitates partners to behave in a socially acceptable manner, but rather sees it as an institution where two mature individuals are comfortable with each other and thus complement and satisfy each other physically as well as emotionally.

While wholeheartedly rejecting the 1890s culture and its perception of religious morality, Hardy places faith in altruistic feelings of sympathy and empathy as a means towards moral goodness and ethical awakening. Indeed, *Jude* can be read as an ecocritical statement which revaluates the source of moral goodness and partly re-situates it deep in the flesh and in the physiology of feelings and emotions. When the relationship between Sue and Phillotson becomes shakier, Sue pleads with him to liberate her and thus split up amiably and amicably. Divorce, highly objectionable from the perspective of the 1980s society, will distort Phillotson's reputation and brings him to a shameful and disgraceful social position. Despite the misfortunes awaiting him, however, he agrees to leave her:

> I shall let her go; with him certainly, if she wishes. I know I may be wrong – I know I can't logically, religiously, defend my concession to such a wish of hers; or harmonize it with the doctrines I was brought up in. Only I know one thing: something within me tells me I am doing wrong in refusing her. I, like other me, profess to hold that if a husband gets a so-called preposterous request from his wife, the only course […]. I simply am going to act by instinct, and let her principles take care of themselves (294).

Hence, what motivates Phillotson to liberate Sue from the undesirable marital contract is not a religious sense of responsibility, or a commitment to the cultural law, but an internal sense of empathy that binds humans and non-humans. Phillotson' s decision to leave Sue comes from his capacity to feel her pathetic situation and respond to her 'pleading': 'have you ever stood before a woman whom you know to be intrinsically a good woman, while she has pleaded for release – been the man she has knelt to and implored indulgence of' (294). What follows from here is that Phillotson's moral sensibility is related to his 'inner capacity to be affected emotionally, here by the audible as well as visible sufferings of another being' (Fosso 2016 : 81). In this sense, Phillotson's empathetic reaction charts an ecological possibility to mutually and symbiotically share the world through a reciprocation of feelings, pains and sufferings. Phillotson's words recalibrate the claim of neural scientists and, thus, ecocritics who believe that human beings are emotively connected to each other through a shared physiology of 'sinews' and 'sensory organs' which induce a sense of sympathy and empathy (Fosso 2016: 92). According to Fosso, sympathy 'suggests a shared external and internal network of nerves, sinews, and organs – and along with them, of the other as (in) oneself. A "spirit" not only of "animation" but also of animality and sentience' (2016: 92). Hence, the narrative articulates the importance of feelings to stir one's conscience; these feelings which bind individuals together demonstrate that capacity to behave ethically is partly grounded in the body.

Echoing throughout *Jude* are the philosophical claims advanced by positivist thinkers like Mill and Comte, both of whom influenced Hardy's thought a great deal. In *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830-1842), which Hardy read in the English translation (1875), Comte put forth his views on morality and history.[51] Comte's central idea is that 'the innate altruistic "social instincts", like the egoistic "personal

[51] T.R. Wright, 'Positivism: Comte and Mill,' in *Thomas Hardy in Context*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Cambridge University Press: 2013), pp. 296-306.

instincts", can be strengthened by exercise and weakened by disuse, forming a supposedly scientific basis for a belief in moral progress' (Wright 2013: 297). Mill, in *System of Logic* (1843), adheres to a similar view like Comte believing that human's attitudes and conducts are morally subjected to change through the development of altruistic habits. In *Utilitarianism* (1863), Mill reiterates similar ideas to Comte emphasizing that 'nobler feeling' can be further developed by exercise and 'giving to the service of humanity, even without the belief in Providence, both the psychological power and the social efficacy of a religion' (qtd in Wright 2013: 300*).* In *Liberty* (1859), a book which heavily influenced Hardy, Mill speculates on the ability of individuals to restrain their natural selfish tendencies for the sake of moral development while he adopts a skeptical view from the ability of religious and political laws to instill morality in humans (ibid).

While Mill's and Comte's philosophical claims on natural morality induced Hardy to recalibrate the value of altruistic feelings as a source goodness as well as moral realization, it had simultaneously shaken his belief in the capacity of religion to revive feelings of connection and sympathy between people, which are, for the writer, a requisite for moral identification. This is demonstrated through the character of Gallingham who zealously subscribes to the conventional cultural understanding of morality and adheres to the rigid doctrine of society. Outraged at Philloston's decision to part with Sue, Gallingham believes that Sue 'ought to be smacked, and brought to her senses!' (294). Evident in Galingham's attitude is the frailty and hypocrisy of Victorian bourgeois morality. For Hardy, this cultural understanding of morality is biased: instead of securing the rights of all social groups regardless of gender and race, it actually perpetuates androcentric values ascribing to women an angelic status that requires them to be constantly demure, obedient and submissive to male domination. Hardy denounces Gallingham's attitude because, unfair as it is, it only brings misery and constant heartache to Sue. For Hardy, should the moral code initially necessitate an equal respectful and merciful treatment of people, then Gallingham's reaction certainly contradicts the core tenets of morality. The failure of culture to instill goodness and morality in individuals is also epitomized through the character of the clerk whose material aspirations motivate him to leave the church choir and join the wine trade, which would boost his material prospects. Despite his religious background, the clerk, in addition to his 'greedy' mundane aspirations, looks down on Jude because of his inferior social background: 'they talked a little longer, but

constrainedly, for when the musician found that Jude was a poor man his manner changed from what it had been while Jude's appearance and address deceived him as to his position and pursuits' (254). Here, the clerk, while having been immersed in religious teachings for a lifetime, fails to associate with Jude in a morally acceptable manner.

The movie, due to some alterations at the level of dialogue and because of streamlining certain crucial scenes, blurs the novel's critical stand on cultural morality. For instance, Winterbottom's dramatization of the relationship between Sue and Phillotson marks a number of compressions, especially at the level of the story structure as well as the framing of characters' dialogue and conversations. The separation between Phillotson and Sue is primarily implied to the audience when Sue, shortly after her marriage, comes to realize that she is still attracted to Jude. Despite her confused emotional state, however, she inclines to stay with Phillotson while avoiding any contact with Jude. The deterioration of the marital relationship starts in tandem when Jude comes to visit Sue in Ashton, the working place of Sue. In his visit, Jude is further invited by Phillotson for dinner. After this dinner the viewer is introduced into a whispered conversation which hints at a fight between Sue and her husband. While Phillotson's rising voice makes his words hardly perceptible, the viewer can clearly hear Sue resentfully asking him to leave her. After that, Phillotson seems to leave Sue's room in an ostensibly resentful state, whereas Sue is all alone in her room sobbing bitterly. The day after, Phillotson summons Jude to his desk and informs him that Sue is willing to leave him and he does not object to that.

The way the movie reframes the couple's breakup blurs the novel's ecological strand of thought in two different ways. On the one hand, one cannot clearly decide what motivates Phillotson to separate from Sue and voluntarily agrees to her living with Jude: is it his instinctual sense of moral goodness, as the novel would like us to believe? Or, is it his sense of dignity or self-esteem which cannot allow him to go on in a relationship where he constantly feels undesirable?; Second, in order to eschew any direct critique of the religious establishment and the legal system, the previously described scene – the scene which tells the story of the couple's separation – marks an elision of Sue's statements which clearly enact a scathing criticism of these external forces which compel her to stay with her husband. The criticism is further eschewed when Gallingham, the incarnation of the societal voice in the novel, is excised from

the scene. The elision of these details not only blurs the novel's rumination on the corporeal basis of moral goodness, but also the novel's critical stand from the cultural institutions which stand as a reference to what is morality acceptable or not.

The movie largely eschews the novel's satirical view of Victorian bourgeois morality and the way it ultimately damages human requirements embodied in natural feelings of compassion, sympathy and empathy. Hence, Sue does not return back to her spouse and, despite her separation from Jude, there is still a spark of hope that she might be eventually reunited with him. In the novel, however, Phillotson, right after his separation, faces the crude judgments of his society: he loses his job and experiences a great deal of rejection and derision from his acquaintances. Indeed, Phillotson has 'hopelessly ruined[his] prospects', he 'see[s] only dire poverty ahead from [his] feet to grave; for [he] can be accepted as a teacher no more' (317). Ironically, in order to reclaim his dignity and gain people's respect, Phillotson has to renew his relationship with Sue, thus silencing his instinctual sense of moral goodness. On her side, after undergoing similar rejection and losing her children to death, a predicament which brings her to a state of disbelief and intellectual torpor, Sue decides to act against her instinct and eventually reunites with her spouse. Jude, with his separation from Sue, is brought to a hopeless state and degrading health conditions. Through this bleak ending emerges the novel's overt satirical view of cultural morality: where the novel documents the character's desire to depart from the inadequacies of social law, it simultaneously shows that such departure is eventually their source of demise. By the juxtaposition of the characters' instinctual sense of morality and the rigidity of social laws, the novel registers a discrepancy between culture and nature. Following on the footsteps of Mill and Comte, Hardy exposes the way social law is damaging to humans' altruistic feelings of sympathy and empathy. By contrast, the movie's ambivalent ending inspires a hope that moral goodness might eventually triumph over all hurdles.

The narratives' depiction of altruistic feelings in humans is especially relevant in the modern-day context of ecological thought, especially with the pressing question of animals' rights and the burgeoning aspirations to build sustainable human and non-human relationships. In effect, both the novel as well as the movie recognizes a corporeal link between the human and the non-human that often culminates in emotive stirring of consciousness, conscience, and moral awakening. This is especially

demonstrated through the utterly shocking pig-killing scene which the novel portrays in a full-length chapter and the movie highlights as an intense dramatic moment. Probably one of the novel's most salient proto-ecological statements is the way the narrator repeatedly refers to the pig as a 'fellow mortal', a statement which signals to an existing kinship and companionship between the human and the non-human (112). The word 'mortal' here is ecologically pertinent as it hints at human's creatureliness, stressing shared vulnerability and mortality between the human and the non-human. The novel details a vivid description of the pig woefully relinquishing to death: 'the dying animal's cry assumed its third and final tone, the shriek of agony; his glazing eyes riveting themselves on Arabella with the eloquently keen reproach of a creature recognizing at last the treachery of those who had seemed his only friends' (110). Similarly, the movie accentuates the animal's changing note from 'rage,' to a 'cry of despair: long-drawn slow and hopeless' (109).With its share of horror, this scene triggered the outrage of many, amongst them those critics who considered it 'horrible'(Cox 1970: 258) and 'nauseating' (Lerner and Holmstrom 1968: 113). Nevertheless, for Hardy the scene was destined to 'serve a humane end in showing people the cruelty that goes on unheeded under the barbarous *régime* we call civilization' (Purdy 1980: 94). In the context of this study, I argue that the scene is significant for its ecocritical implications: I posit that the shrieks of the pig are meant to awaken human's cognitive faculties, create a visceral impact and generate an affective identification with the hopeless creature, thus signaling to an underlying emotive connection binding the human and the non-human. Indeed, while making the scene emotionally charged and dramatically intense, the pig's shrieks are meant to awaken human conscience and stir moral goodness. In the words of Fosso, the imagination of the pig's shrieks and groans is a pathway to recognize its 'right and fitness to live' (2016: 80). In the fictional realm of the novel, the pig's cries stir the emotions of the 'tender-hearted' Jude who, inwardly affected, strongly denounces the criminal act: 'Upon my soul I would sooner have gone without the pig than have had this to do!' (109). Similarly, in the movie, while appalled by the pig's agonizing shrieks, Jude is disgusted by Arabella's aptitude to coldly skin of the animal and refuses to participate in such a sordid act. It could be argued that Jude's reaction substantiates the view that humans' physiology of feelings connects us to the natural, urging us to be more merciful and compassionate.

Hardy, as Millgate argues, was 'a passionate proponent of such causes as slaughterhouse reform and an active supporter of animal welfare organizations and movements for the abolition of fox-hunting, stag-hunting, hare-coursing, and other field sports' (1990: 170). He had constantly expressed his empathy towards animals and outrage from the widespread abuses which he noticed in his society. He particularly expressed intense aversion from hunting and shooting animals, a practice which according to Millgate, became 'a mass slaughter' in the Victorian society, and Hardy considered cruel and tyrannical (2004: 218). Hardy's sympathy towards the non-human fellow creatures is a humane value which he had cherished throughout his lifetime. His biography reveals that he was passionately attracted to depicting animals around him; he was always indignant and inwardly hurt whenever his father mistreated the family's livestock (Evers 2005: NP). As a young child, Hardy would crawl like a sheep in order to experience how it feels to be a sheep (Evers 2005: NP) and as a mature adult, he would create a cemetery for his pets at Max Gate (Millgate 2004: 240). In a letter to Florence Henniker (31 Oct 1920), he expressed the following view: '[w]hat silly people we are to get so attached to pets whose natural lives, as we well know, must in every reasonable probability finish before our own!' (Millgate 1990: 349). Indeed, pets were of much worth to Hardy, which explains his renewed sympathy with animals throughout *Jude*.

Hardy's defense for animals' rights extends to the movie as well. In the opening scene of the movie little Jude comes across a crude wooden gibbet with dead birds hanging from it. The ominous scene of the hanged birds, heart-wrenching to Jude, seems to kindle his sympathy: he stops his clacker and proceeds to cast bits of bread at other birds feeding in the field. Unfortunately, Jude's sympathetic attitude makes him vulnerable to the scolding of Farmer Trouthams who punishes him, shouting at him angrily and even beating him. Through this scene, argues Robert Shweick, the movie epitomizes 'the grimness of a world in which sympathy and tenderness may be harshly rewarded' (2005:185). I would also add that the scene embodies the ways in which our earthliness and physiology provide as a means to feel other creatures, a factor which further induces an ethical association and harmonious co-existence with the world. Expressed differently, this scene articulates the way humans are bodily connected 'to the natural world by way of sensory "impulse" of corporeal feeling' (Fosso 2016: 95). In effect, evident in Jude's reaction to the birds is his capacity to imagine their physical sufferings, which, as Fosso explains,

involuntarily induces sympathy and empathy. Lastly, I suggest that the decision to rely on an image of hanging birds in this scene marks an effective use of cinematography, for, indeed, such spectacle of horror not only heightens Jude's emotive engagement with the world and ultimately elicits his sympathetic behavior, but further helps to awaken viewers to human cruelty towards fellow species and to emotively stir their moral identification with the non-human.

The novel's dramatization of this scene is one in which detailed and elaborate narrative description yields multi-faceted ecocritical interpretations. Where in the movie Jude's sympathetic behaviour is one in which human individuals corporeally respond to the pain of other fellow creatures, in the novel the reaction similarly springs from an emotive connection binding Jude to the natural world, but also originates from a shared vulnerable existence. In the novel, while frightening away the birds from the field, Jude does not come across hanged birds like in the movie, but he naturally 'grew sympathetic with the birds' thwarted desires,' primarily because 'they seemed, like himself, to be living in a world which did not want them' (54). Here, the narrator denounces the social injustices which little Jude is subjected to, mainly the ruthless treatment and the wanton abuses he frequently receives from his aunt. In one of the textual references which the movie elides, we are told that Jude's aunt crudely desires his death, and that 'it would have been a blessing if God Almighty had taken [Jude], with [his] mother and father, poor useless boy' (51). Hence, Jude's experience of similar mistreatment is the ground on which his humane sentiments and moral goodness emerge towards the birds. While weaving together the abuse of Jude and the plight of the birds, the novel constructs an ecological vision on how vulnerability brings the human and the non-human into similar footing. It also signals how the exploitation of the natural world is inherently rooted in the very social prejudices due to which the rights of certain human minorities are constantly violated. Meaning, the predicament of the birds is inextricably intertwined with the wider scale of vulnerable people, the children among so many other social groups.

Furthermore, Jude's sympathy towards the birds emanates from a firm belief that animals are fit to live on the basis of equality. Indeed, through Jude's empathetic reaction, Hardy seems to voice his political statements, urging towards an equally ethical treatment of humans and non-humans. Indeed, incarnated in the character of

Jude are Hardy's aspirations to consider animals as fellow creatures. Thus, for Jude, the birds, while naturally fit to live, are friends deserving of mercy and compassion:

> They stayed and ate, inky spots on the nut-brown soil, and Jude enjoyed their appetite. A magic thread of fellow-feeling united his own life with theirs. Puny and sorry as those lives were, they much resembled his own [...] his clacker he had by this time thrown away from him, as being a mean and sordid instrument, offensive both to the birds and to himself as their friend (53).

The novel's political message is expressed in a decidedly critical stand and emphatic outlook, addressing the contradictions within the social and religious establishment. Ahead of his time, Hardy is in search of an alternative perception of moral goodness, a type which guarantees a normative approach towards animals, but also ensures individuals' happiness, and sanctions against cruelty and pain in all its forms. Hardy believes that Victorian bourgeois morality is untenable because it fails to guarantee human happiness. From his point of view, cruelty is initially embodied in the fabric of such a moral code as well as social law. When Jude is rebuked by his employer for feeding the birds, Hardy stands up for the little child and denounces the religious establishment and the legal institution which normally functions as the blueprint of morality, yet, ironically, fails to stop human and non-human suffering. He says: 'the clacks of the field [...] echoing from the brand-new church tower just behind the mist, towards the building of which structure the farmer had largely subscribed, to testify his love for God and man' (55). In another textual reference, the narrator glosses that Jude, despite his young age, is aware 'of the flaw in the terrestrial scheme, by which what was good for God's birds was bad for God's gardener' (55). Thus, the novel articulates Hardy's aspiration towards reformation and the betterment of human and non-human rights.

Three strategic techniques are deployed in the movie to convey the novel's proto- eco-political statement against animal cruelty: extreme close-ups, bleak-toned music and the use of black and white colours. When introducing the gibbet where the birds are hung, the director relies heavily on extreme close-ups. The closely framed shots of the birds feature repetitively, which serves to disconcert viewers' conscience and signals that they are ethically involved in the scene. Similarly, the use of melancholic music expresses the unfortunate reality of a world governed by injustice,

and the strategic use of the white and black equally reflects resentment at human' cruelty against the non-human animals. What the movie misses out, however, is the novel's blatant mockery of the Victorian bourgeois cultural paradigm regarding moral goodness and human rights. When the novel's commentary can be easily reproduced in the form of a voice over, it is nevertheless whittled away, an aspect which makes for its neutral stand from the cultural paradigm broadly and cultural morality in particular. Hence, the movie constructs a general statement which denounces cruelty against non-human creatures, but it does not necessarily hint at flaws in the Victorian cultural system.

Thus, the novel and movie, through their respective engagement with emotive connection, variously serve to heighten a sense of ecological connectedness that is inherently grounded in emotions. Such emphasis on organic and instinctual feelings of sympathy and empathy troubles the superiority of the mind over body and reason over emotions. It also bridges the gap between the human and the non-human, dissolves boundaries between the cultural and the natural, and contributes to a better ecological understanding of human beings as earthly embodied creatures. Ultimately, the rootedness of moral goodness in these organic feelings serves to collapse the dual perception of humans and non-humans since the 'animal other' is deeply infused into the human flesh. As ecocritics have recently argued, 'inner moral sense becomes a (desired) active force and product of the other as oneself, a feeling of our 'animalness, our embodiedness in the world' (Fosso 2016: 93).

Further, the narratives' rumination on emotive connection aligns what Val Plumwood terms Ecological Animalism; that is to say, a philosophy that 'supports and celebrates animals and encourages a dialogical ethics of sharing and negotiation or partnership between humans and animals, while undertaking a re-evaluation of human identity that affirms inclusion in animal and ecological spheres' (2003: 2). With Ecological Animalism, Plumwood challenges the Western hierarchy which excludes humans from the ecological sphere and sets them apart from the realm of animals. She also revisits the perception of animals by considering them human fellows and partners deserving of ethical consideration. In Plumwood's words, Ecological Animalism overcomes hierarchal thinking by 'resituating humans in ecological terms at the same time as it situates non-humans in ethical and cultural terms' (2). At the core of this theory is the intention to challenge and disrupt the ideology of mastery and

domination which stands as the prime reason behind the objectification of the natural world and the exploitation of animals. Ecological Animalism, as illustrated throughout *Jude*, challenges human supremacy, undoes the subordination of animals and promotes their welfare, by 'oppos[ing] reductive and disrespectful conceptions and treatments of animals' (2).

Conclusion

To sum up, permeating *Jude* (1895- 1996) is a nascent ecological strand of thought which recognizes that animalistic drives, while having indomitable power to override individuals' rational faculties, exist along with what Adam Smith calls 'moral sentiments' of sympathy and empathy. These sentiments, as recent eco-philosophers have argued, enable an emotive and a corporeal connection with the world, which brings the human and the non-human into a network of relationships. We have also seen that, unlike the movie, the novel accentuates that Victorian bourgeois morality, aiming to tame and regulate the natural in humans, perpetuates ongoing suffering. Searching for an alternative perception of morality that accommodates the natural in the human, Hardy stresses that moral goodness – the foundation of symbiosis and co-existence – is partially infused in the body, taking the form of sympathetic and empathetic responses. While the movie constructs a similar understanding of corporeal connection, it eschews any direct criticism of cultural – especially religious – morality. Different factors seem to dovetail into this stand. At the level of the narrative structure, Winterbottom whittles away a number of scenes, curtails many incidents and blurs the voice of so many characters which Hardy strategically employs to convey his worldview on morality. I considered for example the ways in which the movie does not bring about the rejection which Phillotson receives from society right after his break-up with Sue. As already mentioned, the movie also pares away all the characters which, for Hardy, embody the Victorian bourgeois perception of morality; these include Phillotson's friend, and the clerk.

CONCLUSION

In *The Cinematic Footprint: Lights, Camera, Natural Resources*, Nadia Bozak acknowledges the role of audio visual narratives in promoting alternative visions of ecological crisis:

> Cinema can be seen as an ecological practice. Models and precedents exist, not only within the history of cinema but also in some of its current (perhaps less privileged) applications, as well as in other modes of expression such as painting, photography, philosophy, literature, and, indeed, in the very act of seeing. Reevaluating these modes and moments in the history, theory, and practice of peripheral cinemas demonstrates how cinema and the image have always been environmentally determined (and determining) and also how film, like life, can be more proactively or intentionally ecological (2012: 08).

Indeed, for Bozak the film industry provides an effective means of change which draws attention to the anthropogenic environmental emergency. Bozak's argument illuminates the central focus and objective of this project which aims to broaden the horizon of eco-cinema, construing fictional audio-visual narratives through the lens of ecocriticism.

This study is an intertextual analysis of selected Wessex novels and their movie adaptations. My objective has been to examine the ways in which audiovisual, verbal and textual narrative strategies inform our grasp of the human and non-human encounter. The preceding five chapters explore distinctive facets of ecocritical thought in relation to Hardy's novels, but also to recalibrate the ecocritical potential of movie adaptations that have widely been proclaimed to promote a 'safe' version of pastoral Hardy (Webster 2005: 21).[52] The study envisaged the necessity to foreground the nuances in the adaptations, pushing beyond previous readings which associate these works with nostalgic forms of pastoral yearning and imagination. My study also affirms how Hardy's fiction is widely acknowledged for its cinematic and visual dynamics. This attribute of his prose, I contend, facilitates a transition and effective translation of the writer's perception of the natural world into the adaptations.

My study addresses a gap in the existing critical scholarship on Hardy's novels, both in relation to adaptation studies as well as ecocriticism. It also enriches

[52] See introduction, p.19.

the burgeoning field of eco-cinema by promoting a new dimension that considers the ecocritical potential of audio-visual texts that are originally based on novels. I propose that, in order for eco-cinema studies to flourish, it needs to push beyond a study of wild life documentaries and assess the possibilities of eco-cinematic fictional audio-visual narratives. It should be noted that across my research, I adopted a cluster of theoretical concepts often deployed in analyzing wild life documentaries rather than fictional narratives. This envisages the need in critical studies as well as the film industry to look deeper at a range of stylistic techniques a movie might deploy to engage with nature in a way that would inspire ecologically sustainable mindsets.

While this project has canvassed Hardy's novels and their adaptations, it has necessarily restricted its analysis to five novels and six adaptations which express overt fascination with the human and non-human encounter. A rationale for selecting these novels was based on their multifarious focus on various aspects of the natural; be it fauna or flora, place, environment or a landscape, tonal coordinates or material substance, and finally human and non-human subjects. The focus on Hardy is due to his sustained scrutiny of rural landscapes at a time of increasing mechanical agriculture, his depiction of country life at a crucial point of change, his conspicuous interest in the human and non-human encounter and his abiding concern with the animal question. With such orientations, I believe that Hardy is amongst the writers whose literary practice has sought to repair the bridge between culture and nature, as now recognized in ecocritical studies. In the words of Susane Heinzl, Hardy 'contributed to the environment actively by making it on the one hand the centre of the content of his novels and on the other hand actively adding to it by using literary devices that show the importance of the environment' (2016: 107). Indeed, as the previous chapters have demonstrated, Hardy's narrative techniques, while ostensibly anthropocentric, actually serve to consolidate ecocritical imperatives. For instance, we have seen how Hardy's use of anthropomorphism takes us in completely different trajectories, validating the human and non-human continuum, articulating material agency, but also gesturing towards scientific realities recently established in the field of botany.

Arguably, the adaptations under scrutiny are not always in line with the parameters of eco-cinema scholarship, especially as they revolve mainly around human drama. However, with their post-, anti- and counter-pastoral credentials and

their relatively eco-cinematic strategies – wide angles and long takes of landscape, sustainable use of zooms, soundscape and time-lapse – , the adaptations stand as a vivid testimony for the complexity of fictional audio visual narratives. This enterprise does not present an exhaustive study of adaptations of Hardy's novels, however. My goal was to focus specifically on certain directors' preferences, both in terms of stylistic apparatus as well as content. This explains the limited number of adaptations undertaken for study. I prioritized adaptations produced between 1979 and 2005, a specific historical era when cinematic Hardy started to come to prominence especially with the rise of the mainstream genre of 'costume drama' whose pioneers sought to popularize and promote 'classic' novels through stirring visual adaptations. Furthermore, these adaptations share one thread in common; that is a common sense of intertextual dialogue with the novels which I deem to be a fundamental requirement for a project which foregrounds tonal similarities and differences, convergences and divergences.

My study has offered an eclectic mix of ecocritical approaches, namely arboreal/wooded ecology, romantic and material ecocriticism, pastoral (with its diverse fractions of post-pastoral, and anti-pastoral), acoustic ecology, bio-semiotics, but also borrowing insights from evolutionary biology as well as neural sciences which inform recent strands of thought in ecocritical theory. This mingling, which contributes to a better understanding of radical ecocritical Hardy, speaks to the multifarious focus of his novels which engage with myriad facets of the natural and forms of the human and non-human encounter. The study is distinct in terms of its methodological approach, looking at novels and their adaptations as inherently innovative and autonomous, yet inter-textually dependent works which exhibit both similarities and dissimilarities. Hence, while adaptations of Hardy have often been examined in terms of their so-called 'faithfulness' and 'fidelity', this project highlights hitherto overlooked convergences and divergences. At a thematic level, while adaptations of Hardy have long garnered the attention of many critics, their ecocritical potential was largely undervalued. The only attempt to consider the eco-potential of the adaptations was first initiated in 2016 by Susane Heinzl who undertook an ecocritical analysis of Agland's *The Woodlanders*. Yet the interest, as the literature review displays, has faded away and eco-cinematic Hardy has gone relatively unnoticed.

Looking at the representation of the biomorphic world in the specific context of arboreal and forestry imagination, the first two chapters explored the possibilities to maintain biodiversity while sharing the world with the non-human others on the basis of harmony and co-existence. My analysis revealed that Agland's and Laughland's adaptations inspire similar interpretations to the original novels; nevertheless, these are still different aesthetic experiences which exhibit originality as well as novelty. For instance, where both Hardy's and Agland's texts lean towards a counter-pastoral representation of forests, Agland tends to be far more radical than Hardy. Representing a post-agrarian vision of country manners and mores, what engages Agland is not a discrepancy between 'pastoral' and 'reality', or the failure of love and rural instability and disillusionment only. He is far more concerned with the encroachment of machinery into the rural sphere along with an increasing tendency to migrate to large cities. Hardy was equally concerned with the degradation of the rural economy, yet his communal approach to forests imparts the impression that the countryside of the final decades of the nineteenth century was far more stable than Agland would incline us to believe. Both Hardy's and Agland's works are ecologically relevant because the forest is portrayed as a marker of social identity: where Agland portrays characters' immersion in and connectedness to the forest landscape, the novel engages more profoundly with the material component of identity, exploring how matter enacts a visceral impact on rural subjectivities. It is the novel's rigorous engagement with the forest's wealth of habitat that makes Hardy even more useful for an ecocritical discussion. He depicts the forest not in a form of abstraction, nor as a decorative symbolic stage, but as a thriving biome. Hardy identifies genome species by name as a way to consolidate their value. He also draws attention to the forest as a booming biotic community. He weaves elements of fauna and flora into his narrative, distracting readers' attention from the dramatic action to occasionally contemplate complex biotic realities. Hardy's narrative fiction is also well suited to debate about biodiversity because he underlines the human and non-human interconnection in the specific context of forest representation, tracing human and non-human co-dependencies but also contemplating characters' eco-ambivalent practices. Agland, while having real ecocritical aspirations, offers a complex adaptation. On the one hand, his strategic use of soundtrack and cinematography can be said to mirror Hardy's identification of fauna and flora; on the other hand, although occasionally portraying animals as part of the cinematography, he strips them of real agency, not

presenting them as active players on the stage. Operating from a twenty-first century context of massive industrialization, Agland asserts the ambivalence of Hardy's characters, thus displaying a sincere concern with deforestation. Nevertheless, the analysis revealed that the director sometimes leans towards an aesthetic appreciation of landscape, which ultimately blurs Hardy's concern for a vulnerable forest ecology.

The second chapter explored the theme of biodiversity more extensively, while looking at the representation of the arboreal in Laughland's and Hardy's *UGWT*. We have seen how Hardy's innovative visual techniques anticipated Laughland's adaptation which, similar to Hardy's narrative, draws attention to tree physiology, engaging with different notions of transience, temporality and ecological connectedness. I suggested that Hardy's painterly techniques, marking the nineteenth century intersection between literature and visual arts, can be read in terms of time-lapse photography, effectively employed by writer as well as director to depict seasonal variations. Nevertheless, it is not always easy for the director to find a cinematic equivalent for Hardy's highly metaphoric language, especially his anthropomorphism. Given my aim to explore the intricacies of ecological thought in Hardy's fiction, my analysis revisited the writer's anthropomorphic legacy, and argued that his specific use of anthropological notions such as animism and pantheism reaches beyond anthropocentric values to consolidate ecological and scientific realities recently established in the field of botany. Indeed, I revealed that Hardy's nuanced depiction of plants serves to affirm their volition, sensation, agency and dynamicity, yet sometimes this proves sentimental, envisaging the non-human from the perspective of the human. I have also argued that Hardy celebrates trees for their social significance, constructing these as objects of cultural as well as spiritual connectedness, marks of belonging and rootedness. More importantly, however, Hardy deploys arboreal imagery to signal a human appropriation of the landscape. By contrast, Laughland, while recognizing the cultural connotations of trees, evoking the tangled history between the floral and ideologies of Englishness and nationhood, still entertains ambivalent ecological perspectives. Indeed, while deposing trees from human dwelling, thus demarcating boundaries between wilderness and working community, he advocates a return to an archaic rural mode of being where humans are often in contact with nature.

Looking at audiovisual and textual representations of the geomorphic world, the second part of my thesis addressed the role of medium specificity, modes of engagement, but also director's preferences in shaping ecological imperatives. Discussing landscape representation in Hardy's and Sharp's *Tess*, the project explored the multi-faceted ecocritical Hardy whose text celebrates a sensory and laborious engagement with landscape, yet simultaneously highlights material agency. I suggested that Hardy's narrative challenges anthropocentric construction of matter, calling attention to the effective abilities of soil, weather, and water. Indeed, across Hardy's narrative, matter not only pulsates with life and is thus dynamic and effective, but casts agency on the physical world, contributing to metamorphoses in the surface of the landscape. The novelist's painterly as well as cinematic prose, appropriated by Sharp and reproduced in the form of long takes, facilitated the director's work to liberate landscape from narrative dominance, moving it from the margin to the center of representation. However, where Hardy's material discourse is pertinent for a textual representation, it is not relevant for Sharp to hardwire into the visual narrative. This limitation, I attributed to temporal constraints and the director's consideration of audience's expectations and partialities. Indeed, Hardy, addressing the reader's imagination, has the capacity to digress from plot dynamics to supply us with vivid historical and material details on how landscape is continuously shaped and reshaped by human as well as a-biotic forces. By contrast, the movie captures the novel's laborious and sensorial engagement with landscape, yet elides Hardy's historical and material discourse. This ultimately obscures the novel's construction of landscape as a process and blurs its meditation on material agency. Anthropomorphism, earlier discussed in Chapter Two, resurfaces again in this chapter where I recalibrate the innovation latent in Hardy's use of pathetic fallacy. I argued that Hardy's and Polanski's use of this old-aged technique is not inherently anthropocentric, but entails an entirely different and innovative interpretation which can be termed ecocritical. Leaning towards a post-pastoral depiction of landscape, the director's and writer's use of symbolism and pathetic fallacy sets the human and the non-human in a de-hierarchized set of relationships, blurring rigid distinctions between the human and the non-human. Undertaking an ecofeminist reading of the novel and the movie, I proposed that both Hardy and Polanski deploy the natural as a means to foreground the intersection between the exploitation of under-class women and natural resources. Nevertheless, where the novel strongly aligns with the ecofeminist voice, denouncing

the objectification of Tess by Alec, Polanski's romanticization of the rape encounter ultimately reveals undeniable ambivalences animating his work.

Dwelling on the representation of the geomorphic world, Chapter Four addressed two rival modes of engagement with nature; acoustic and semiotic. Attempting a new reading of Hardy's and Renton's acoustic landscapes, the chapter suggested that auditory navigations in *FFMC* serve to frame a sensorial experience of landscape and advance alternative narratives of place as inherently porous, permeable and interlinked to a wider national space. Both narratives incarnate the capacity of art to connect us to the world, alerting us to discern and experience the holism underlying the biotic community. The chapter claimed that Hardy's acoustic landscape aid in repairing the disjunction between the human and the non-human. While validating the non-human's linguistic agency, uncovering the evolutional roots of music, it also points to the communicative and semantic properties of the natural world.

Inspired by the findings of evolutionary biology and neurological science which came to inform the ecocritical thought of scholars such as Val Plumwood, Joseph Carroll, Kurt Fosso and Seth T. Reno, the last chapter set out to challenge human supremacy through the means of creaturely poetics. I explored alternative modes of connection; corporeal and emotive, by highlighting human and non-human continuities in terms of animal instinct as well as a physiology of feelings and emotions. Reading Winterbottom's *Jude* in the light of Hardy's novel, I posited that both narratives celebrate the creaturely facets and the animal within the human, envisaging the power of sexual desires to override deliberate reasoning. These narratives foreground an emotive connection with the world, emphasizing the role of sympathy and empathy in enriching human and non-human interactions, and thus gesturing towards human responsibility and ethical involvement in the wider world. Relying on a number of elisions, however, the director renounces Hardy's critical stand against the Victorian bourgeois culture which, from Hardy's perspective, operated to widen the rift between culture and nature while aiming to denaturalize the human.

So, the cinematic and visual qualities of Hardy's narrative prove helpful for directors to reflect and translate his marked fascination with landscape and the human and non-human encounter. However, my analysis revealed that the textual and audio-

visual narratives are not always compatible and often exhibit striking dissimilarities. These contrasting perspectives are due to multiple factors related to specificities in the mode of representation and contrasting modes of engagement. Sometimes the divergences are determined by societal and cultural factors, given the jarring gap between the narratives' contexts of production. Significantly, however, differences in perspectives pertain to personal editorial preferences. Indeed, while the directors tend to maintain a more-or-less similar plot, characterization, setting and dramatization, they still incorporate and sometimes elide specific details and scenes in a way that would consolidate their personal visions and validate the originality of their respective works.

It is worth noting that Hardy has often ignited the interest of many film directors, with the result that his novels are adapted to cinema more often than other nineteenth century writers. For instance, there are more than nine adaptations of *Tess*, and each adaptation is inherently distinct in terms of setting, temporal context, stylistic choices, and even dramatization. This explains the need for further work on the eco-cinematic Hardy, weighing the implications of these differences on the way scholars perceive their artistic distinction as well as ecocritical potential. It would be rewarding to investigate the latent nuances in these wide ranging adaptations, and how this would help to unearth a multi-faceted eco-cinematic Hardy. This would eventually serve to promote a much less biased handling of adapted works, destabilizing reductionist assumptions which dismiss adaptations as essentially inferior to literature and inherently lacking originality.

Another crucial research question prompted by this research is to consider how adaptations of Hardy's novels encourage readers as well as viewers to position him as a georgic, documenting various types of strenuous agricultural work. Indeed, while a majority of scholars Hardy's fiction challenges, embraces or complicates pastoral tropes, only a few commentators address the georgic resonances of his artistic vision. Hardy is usually sensitive to the rigours of agrarian toil, confronting the daily challenges of farming, furze-cutting, rearing sheep or tree-cutting. Hence, it would be interesting to reappraise the adaptations with georgic tropes in mind, examining how cultural production sheds light on Hardy's attitude towards rustic labour in an age of social ferment and capitalist accumulation.

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