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Symbolism in Thomas Hardy's The Return of the Native

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Abstract

Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928) was contemporary with the critical events of two centuries; the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. In this period modernism has been initiated, developed and reached its peak. Though Hardy is considered a modernist poet and writer related to his style, technique, kind of narration, and literary approach, he seems to be subtly anti-modernist in his sixth novel **The Return of The Native** due to his alignment with his characters who resemble symbolically anti-modernist point of view. Hardy's bias against modernism is obvious through his consciousness of the shortcomings of modernism which is described by his statement "the ache of modernism".

This novel is leaving a wide room for symbolic interpretation according to the writer's metaphorical language and his great intellectual background. His narration is crowded with symbols derived from the historical, mythological, and religious allusions. The most important symbols are: Egdon Heath, Rainbarrow, Bonfire, Wind and Storm, The moon, Eye sight, Gambling, and Paris. Hardy's characters tend to be symbolic rather than realistic especially for Clym Yeobright, Eustacia Vye, and Diggory Venn.

This paper reveals the major symbols of the novel and studies them due to the basic theme of modernism and the other themes as well.

The Return of the Native is a typical representative of Hardy's style "as critics have pointed out for sometime, Hardy's most instinctive mode as a writer is figurative, not analytic;

His most habitual method is symbolism, not argument."[(1)]

The poetic language enhances this symbolism in this novel by which the critics can derive much thoughts and attitudes related to the writer though the ambiguity of them constitutes a problematic issue.

I. The Heath

The setting of this novel is playing a great role by its effect on the characters themselves. The place is the heath which was very close to the writer's birthplace in Dorset.[(2)] The time is the second half of the nineteenth century during which the precursors of modernism have to be initiated. The first chapter of the novel describes this heath in a way which transforms it to a principal character and so identified as man-like figure:[(3)]

> It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature - neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly; neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony.
>
> (RN I: i, 33)

The characters can be divided according to their love or hatred toward the heath and their destinies are to be defined according to this relationship. Diggory Venn, Thomasin, and Clym are deeply rooted in the heath, so that they are contented with their life in this place. The latter's return from the city of modernism to live in his native place bears the symbolic meaning of the title of the novel. Eustacia Vye, Damon Wildeve, and Mrs. Yeobright are, on the contrary, characterized by their hatred to the heath. The latter's disapproval of her son's decision to stay as well as her feeling of supremacy towards the locals reflect her hostility to the heath.

The first chapter of the novel is dedicated to the description

of the heath because "the heath proves physically and psychologically important throughout the novel".[4]

Darkness is always accompanying the heath throughout the writer's description:

> The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening; it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread. (RN I: i, 31)

The frightful appearance of the heath enhances those characters' point of view towards it. The primitive nature of the heath seems to be at severe enmity to civilization and modernism:

> The untameable, Ishmaelitish thing that Egdon now was it always had been. Civilization was its enemy; and ever since the beginning of vegetation its soil had worn the same antique brown dress, the natural and invariable garment of the particular formation. In its venerable one coat lay a certain vein of satire on human vanity in clothes. A person on a heath in raiment of modern cut and colours has more or less an anomalous look. We seem to want the oldest and simplest human clothing where the clothing of the earth is so primitive. (RN I:i, 33)

The unchangeable features of the heath reinforce its ability to resist any attempt to change its nature:

> The sea changed, the fields changed, the rivers, the villages, and the people changed, yet Egdon remained. (RN I: i, 33)

The heath may be considered as a symbol of fate, in a sense it controls the destinies of its inhabitants[(5)] ; this tragic feature proves true at the end of the novel and it is foreshadowed in the first chapter:

> It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities. (RN I: i, 33)

The symbolic end of the first chapter refers to the beam of hope which may emerge from the gloomy nature of the heath by the reference to the white colour of the road:

> On the evening under consideration it would have been noticed that, though the gloom had increased sufficiently to confuse the minor features of the heath, the white surface of the road remained almost as clear as ever. (RN I:i, 34)

II. Bonfire and Rainbarrow:

Traditionally, bonfire is used for commemorations especially religious and pagan. The word (bonfire) seems to mean the beautiful or nice fire assuming the first stem of the word related to French. It suggests that the evil side of the function of fire is eliminated. The writer puts the bonfire-makers in a high radiant position in contrast with the darkness of the heath:

> It seemed as if the bonfire-makers were standing in some radiant upper story of the world, detached from and independent of the dark stretches below. (RN I:i, 40)

The imagery of light and darkness serves symbolically the theme of knowledge and ignorance throughout the novel especially in the first eight chapters. Fire serves to yield light and

warmth to the ignorant natives who are surrounding the bonfire with cheerful dancing. Eustacia and Wildeve are meeting by the bonfire as a contradictory image to the locals' meeting by the fire too, suggesting the knowledge-ignorance equation . Rainbarrow is the highest place in the heath, the centre of the locals' festivities, and the place of the lovers' meetings. Eustacia is the first person who emerges at its top when the novel starts. It reflects her consciousness of superiority over the heath and other characters.

By his poetic language, the writer depicts fire as " the instinctive and resistant act of man" with an allusion to the legend of (Prometheus) to denote the rebelliousness of some of his characters against nature embodied by the heath:

> Moreover to light a fire is the instinctive and resistant act of man when, at the winter ingress, the curfew is sounded throughout Nature. It indicates a spontaneous, Promethean rebelliousness against that fiat that this recurrent season shall bring foul times, cold darkness, misery and death. Black chaos comes, and the fettered gods of the earth say, Let there be light. (RN I:iii, 41)

The rebellious characters are Eustacia, Wildeve, and Clym though they are different in their directions. For Eustacia, the writer alludes to her rebelliousness in the chapter " Queen of Night " and describes it as " smouldering " to show her silent or suppressed rebelliousness:

> Her appearance accorded well with this smouldering rebelliousness, and the shady splendour of her beauty was the real surface of the sad and stifled warmth within her. A true Tartarean dignity sat upon her brow, and not factitiously or with marks of constraint, for it had grown in her with years. (RN I: vii, 82-83)

The allusion to (Tartarus) here to envisage Eustacia as an inhabitant of Tartarus[6]. The recurrent allusions to Tartarus, where the Titans were cast, identify the heath with hell at least for Eustacia as the opinion of F.B.Pinion who states that " the fires, for example, that light up the heath are emblematic of the Promethean rebelliousness of Eustacia against her fate; for her, Egdon Heath is Hades".[7] The writer uses " the decaying embers" standing for the decaying emotion between Eustacia and Wildeve which is in need to be stirred up. Eustacia blew up the red coal when she was waiting for wildeve. This movement symbolizes that Eustacia intends to raise up her emotion towards Wildeve. She is used to call him by bonfires as a sign of her blazing emotions. On the other side, the writer uses the same symbol (embers) directly to indicate that

> The revived embers of an old passion glowed clearly
> in Wildeve now. (RN I: vi, 80)

The writer maneuvers by these symbols (embers)and (fire) to keep pace with the fluctuated emotions between Eustacia and Wildeve like this answer by Eustacia to Wildeve when she denies her coming first to see him at the Rainbarrow:

> " O no", she said, intractably moving to the other side
> of the decayed fire. (RN I: vi, 80)

When this meeting is ended with indecision, and to indicate that their relationship still suspended, the writer uses the symbols of fire too:

> She scattered the half-burnt brands, went indoors immediately, and up to her bedroom without a light. Amid the rustles which denoted her to be undressing in the darkness other heavy breaths frequently came; and the same kind of shudder occasionally moved

> through her when, ten minutes later, she lay on her bed asleep. (RN I: vi, 81)

On the fifth of November, all the bonfires are slowly extinguished except that of Eustacia's home because its vegetation is different from the heath's. It means that the nature of this family is incompatible with the nature of the heath and its inhabitants. Also, it indicates that the disturbing emotions of Eustacia are still burning. The writer describes her soul to be " flame-like" to refer to her romantic nature and anxious character:

> Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression. (RN I: vi, 82)

Her flame –like soul leads her to rebelliousness in a strange direction against all the traditional thoughts, that she prefers war men to the wise, to take the side of the Philistines not that of the Jews, and to admire Pilate the tyrant who handed Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified according to Christianity:

> Her high gods were William the Conqueror, Strafford, and Napoleon Buonaparte, as they had appeared in the Lady's History used at the establishment in which she was educated. Had she been a mother she would have christened her boys such names as Saul or Sisera in preference to Jacob or David, neither of whom she admired. At school she had used to side with the Philistines in several battles, and had wondered if Pontius Pilate were as handsome as he was frank and fair. (RN I: vii, 85)

She is no longer a Promethean figure except her rebelliousness. There is no knowledge here to be stolen from gods. The fire here is a symbol for abstract love in which Eustacia believes as mentioned by the writer:

> And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover. (RN I: vii, 84)

Her rebelliousness is extended even against Wildeve because she is always conscious of her superiority:

> At moments her pride rebelled against her passion for him, and she even had longed to be free. (RN I: vii, 86)

But though she tends towards modernism, she really believes in its false version like her partner Wildeve:

> The person whom is victimized is most by fate is Eustacia Vye. She is the character who tries so hard to leave the tiresome Egdon Heath, but is never able too. She tries very hard to set herself up with the right guy who will help her leave the place which she despises the most. Eustacia craved the glamour and intensity of a fast life that is not found on Egdon Heath.(8)

The real Promethean figure is Clym who returns from the city of modernism to his native place with his project of knowledge as if he has stolen the fire of knowledge from the goddess of knowledge, Paris to give it to the inhabitants of the heath and he is punished by his tragic destiny.

The allusion to Diggory Venn as a reddleman who is likened by the " Mephistophlian visitants" in the novel, suggests the legend of Faust and his bond with the devil. The red colour of the reddleman

and the fiery cloak of Mephistopheles coincide with the flame-like soul of Eustacia. Also the red ribbon on the neck of Eustacia worn at the night of her elopement which is used by Susan Nonsuch to deter Eustacia's spell against her son as she believes, is associated with this idea. Many similarities connect Faust with Eustacia; witchcraft, romance, power, appearances, and adventure. She has the same tragic affinities of Faust who tends for power beyond the limitations of the human being and faces the tragic punishment for his illegitimate ambition.

III. Clym's Semi – Blindness:

In general, it refers to the intellectual blindness, but as related to the theme of modernism it may be interpreted in three ways:

A. The writer is with modernism if this blindness is interpreted as Clym returns from the city of modernism (Paris) to the (Heath) as a symbol of ignorance. Pinion interpreted "Clym's partial blindness" according to his "premature idealism which convinces him that he can bring light to a people still walking in darkness."(9)

B. The writer is against modernism if this blindness is interpreted as intellectual blindness. The characters are depicted in moulds which are suitable to the writer's predetermined attitude. It can be concluded that "any character who comes from the " civilization" of cities or who longs for it proves to be someone of little worth - think of Eustacia and Wildeve."(10) Clym here couldn't understand other characters and reality, and this misunderstanding is proceeding to comprise other characters as well:

> Clym's eventual near-blindness reflects a kind of deeper internal blindness that afflicts all the main characters in the novel: they do not recognize the truth about each other. Eustacia and Clym misunderstand each other's motives and true ambitions; Venn remains a mystery; Wildeve deceives Thomasin,

> Eustacia and Clym. The characters remain obscure for the reader, too.(11)

Also, it refers deeply that knowledge may be misleading, in a sense that our civilization, especially western, is proceeding in a wrong way. The writer's attitude towards this kind of modernism is registered through his character,Clym:

> Clym is the first of Hardy's idealists, the first of what have been called his ' prig heroes ', a man conscious all the time of what Hardy himself called ' the ache of modernism. ' In a sense, he represents Hardy's own values(12).

Hardy's philosophy of life is embodied in his character Clym who dislikes city life and describes it as "effeminate"(13):

> He conceives his great characters from the same height; in the case of Clym by making him a representative of what he considered modern man – and the man of future – in his most qualities; in the case of Eustacia by richly romantic view of her.(14)

The criterion of modernity is different for Hardy. He considers Clym, who returns from Paris to the heath and rejects city values as a modern man, on the contrary of the case of Eustacia who hates the heath and longs for living in Paris, and considers her "not his modern woman : she is woman as he most characteristically sees her."(15)

Clym's career as a furze-cutter, which is greatly attached to the land of the heath, and generally considered as uncivilized job especially for Eustacia, does not deter Hardy for his judgment.

Pinion relates Clym's abandonment of his career as a diamond merchant to biographical reasons. He states that " Clym's sacrifice of

a city career, and his mother's disappointment, owed something, no doubt, to Hardy's abandonment of architecture."(16)

The symbolic meaning of Clym's career as a diamond merchant is traditionally related to the use of diamond for ornamental aims. It suggests the life of "going with appearances" that Clym disgusts. The comparison between the suggested and practiced careers of Clym ; teacher, diamond merchant, and furze-cutter leads to conclude their symbolic meaning related to theme of modernism. Diamond trade is considered as a false demonstration of modernism; furze-cutting is deeply rooted to nature and the original or primitive world.; education according to the real and genuine trend of modernism is the futuristic hope. Clym is seeking for a sort of knowledge which "brings wisdom rather than affluence."(17) His transformation to an itinerant preacher at the end of the novel is crowning Hardy's moral concept of life:

> Thus, one view which has received a good deal of currency is that Venn is to be seen chiefly as a representative of a bygone era – a product of Hardy's nostalgia for an older, simpler, agrarian way of life that was being swept away by the advance of the industrial revolution.(18)

C. The third interpretation may be concluded as the reconciliation between the two previous contradicting points of view. It means that the writer is with certain kinds of knowledge that save the human being and he is against other kinds of knowledge which may destroy the human being and lead him to his tragic destiny.

IV. Death:

The death of Eustacia and Wildeve may be interpreted that the heath hates these two characters and it kills everyone who resembles an enemy:

> Death by drowning is an imaginatively appropriate end for Wildeve and Eustacia. It also suggests the hostile nature of the heath which revenges itself for the hatred shown it by these two. It seems that the characters cannot escape Egdon: you either come to terms with it or it destroys you[(19)].

Eustacia is so obsessed by the passage of time, she burrows

> her grandfather's telescope and her grandmother's hour-glass – the latter because of a peculiar pleasure she derived from watching a material representation of time's gradual glide away. (RN I: vii, 86)

She uses modern instruments within an ignorant background. The hour-glass is to show the significance of time for Eustacia who tends to live in a modern city but not for the heathfolk or other characters for whom time is frozen or regardless except Wildeve. She directs the telescope to him in a sign which suggests their mutual perspective and destiny.

Many allusions in the novel which identify Eustacia with goddess, queen, and witch. The chapter of 'Queen of Night ' is pregnant of these allusions chiefly directed to the idea of fate foreshadowing Eustacia's tragic end. The reference to the emblems of the three Fates " the distaff, the spindle, and the shears " indicates the influence of women on the fate of men:

> Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for a while, she had handled the distaff, the spindle, and the shears at her own free will, few in the world would have noticed the change of government. (RN I: vii, 81)

Also, the allusions to Sphinx, Heloise, and Cleopatra reflect the controlling power of fate against the will of the suggested characters of these allusions. The conflict between will and fate is the pivotal problem for Eustacia. The major difference between Eustacia and Thomasin is condensed by this statement in the text:

> To have lost the godlike conceit that we may do what we will, and not to have acquired a homely zest for doing what we can, shows a grandeur of temper which cannot be objected to in the abstract, for it denotes a mind that, though disappointed, forswears compromise. (RN I: vii, 85-86)

Eustacia with her " godlike conceit " wants to do what she wants, in contrast with Thomasin who wants to do what she can. Eustacia's tragedy emerges from the truth that she is not convinced by her lot as her partner in tragedy – Wildeve - is.

It can be concluded that " the more ambitious characters have exposed themselves too openly to fate."[(20)]

Walter Allen goes so far when he accuses Hardy that he " has aligned himself with the nature of things against his characters, that he is manipulating fate against them."[(21)]

The symbolic meaning of their death is the death of their direction or attitude. Their attitude is against the writer's idea of anti – modernism; really the false appearances of modernism which are embodied by the behaviours and ambitions of Eustacia and Wildeve.

Eustacia prophesized the death of Wildeve like the Witch of Endor who called up the figure of the dead Samuel to prophesy the death of the king Saul:

> I merely lit that fire because I was dull, and thought I would get a little excitement by calling you up and triumphing over you as the Witch of Endor called up

Samuel. I determined you should come; and you have
come! I have shown my power. (RN I: vii, 80)

She prophesized her death as well, when she referred to the heath:

Tis my cross, my shame and will be my death!
(RN I: ix, 97)

It is not a kind of coincidence that Diggory Venn saves the life of Clym but not the lives of Eustacia and Wildeve. Diggory Venn is much associated to Clym according to his attitude of life. Venn, Thomasin, and Clym are still living in accordance with heath life, in contrast with Eustacia, Wildeve, and Mrs. Yeobright who are not in reconciliation with heath life, so they are facing their tragic death.

By her part, Mrs. Yeobright contributes to the hatred of the heath, but her hatred is not announced publicly as for Eustacia and Wildeve. She endures life on the heath but she refuses this endurance to be suffered by her son. She dreams that Clym returns to the city of light, Paris. The heath symbolized by the adder takes revenge and kills her.

Mrs. Yeobright resembles one of those who tend for modernism and the heath resembles ignorance in this point of view, so that the struggle between them ends with the victory of the heath.

V. Moon:

"No moon, no man" is a superstitious saying of which the heathfolk believe. It symbolizes the relationship between the moon and man's birth to define his personality. The perfect man might be born when the moon was full. Christian Cantle, the inept and the first gambler in the gambling scene, who proves unfortunately winner at first, was born at moonless night. The last state of Clym as an "

itinerant preacher" suggests the similarity between Christian and Clym related to their state of mind. The scene of the eclipsed moon, in which Eustacia agrees to marry Clym,symbolizing the disapproval of fortune to this marriage. The failure of this marriage at last proves that this conclusion is correct for the differences of their characters. The writer's hints to Eustacia as a tragic heroine are related to the moon:

> Eustacia once more lifted her deep stormy eyes to the moonlight, and, sighing that tragic sigh of hers which was so much like a shudder, entered the shadow of the roof. (RN II: vi, 148)

When Eustacia points to the eclipsed moon referring to the slipping time, Clym concludes:

> 'you are too mournful'. (RN III: iv, 193)

The eclipsed moon may be interpreted that Eustacia "confides to her lover the deep (and perceptive) fear that their love will not last."[(22)] She is always afraid of the "unknown":

> No. Only I dread to think of anything beyond the present. What is, we know. We are together now, and it is unknown how long we shall be so; the unknown always fills my mind with terrible possibilities, even when I may reasonably expect it to be cheerful (RNIII:iv,193)

She expects a better job for Clym when she interprets the shining of the eclipsed moon on his face "as if it were cut out in gold":

> ....Clym, the eclipsed moonlight shines upon your face with a strange foreign colour, and shows its shape as if it were cut out in gold. That means that

> you should be doing better things than this." (RN III: iv, 193)

At the night of the elopement, the absence of the moon is a sign for the occurrence of the catastrophe:

> The moon and stars were closed up by cloud and rain to the degree of extinction. (RN V: vii, 320)

The writer uses the metaphor of the eclipsed moon to denote her tragic death; the eclipse of moon means the eclipse of Eustacia herself:

> They stood silently looking upon Eustacia, who, as she lay there still in death, eclipsed all her living phases. (RN V: ix, 339)

The rise of the moon at the very end of the novel denotes the celebration of the regained love between Thomasin and Diggory Venn:

> O no; it is not necessary, Mrs. Wildeve, thank you. The moon will rise in a few minutes. (RN VI: i, 349)

VI. Gambling

Gambling is much associated with chance, accident, coincidence, adventure, and fate. They are to "determine the outcome of human effort."[(23)] Most of the characters of the novel seem to be gamblers. The Writer presents " Wildeve taking rash steps almost frivolously, like someone gambling with life."[(24)] At first, he has gambled away " his chance of a career as an engineer and trying to make something of his life as a modest innkeeper with no prospect"[(25)] He gambles with his life with Thomasin and their daughter to escape the heath with Eustacia to live in the unknown place. The money he has inherited encourages him to do that as if he

is playing a real game of gambling. As Wildeve, Eustacia gambles with her lot of life in the heath with Clym to adventure with Wildeve to live in a modern city essentially found in her imagination.

Clym gambles with easy and comfortable life as a diamond merchant in Paris to endure cruel life in the heath and working as a furze-cutter. In reference to Oedipus in his tragedy, he lost his mother and wife but won wisdom from suffering.

The destinies of the characters are driven by the power of fate in an inevitable proceeding. One's destiny depends on " the fall of the dice, and the dice are loaded against him."(26)

In the scene of gambling, Wildeve proves loser as his role in life, while Diggory Venn, the winner, proves his succeeding role at the end of the novel. From the beginning, Venn gambles on Thomasin and gains her at the end. He is the only winner and seems to be the exception of the surrounding losses. Thomasin, wrongly gambles on Wildeve but gains the correct and suitable lot of her life, Diggory Venn.

VII. Wind, Storm, and Rain

In the first chapter of the novel, the writer describes Egdon Heath's relationship with the wind and storm:

> Then Egdon was aroused to reciprocity; for the storm
> was its lover, and the wind its friend. (RN I: i, 32)

At the end of the novel, the heath uses his lover- the storm,- and his friend -the wind- appropriately to strike his enemies,Eustacia and Wildeve. Its beat is done with the aid of the whirlpool in which the two tragic heroes are drowned.

The devilish tinge of the wind is portrayed clearly in the dancing scene of the locals around the bonfire:

> The chief noises were women's shrill cries, men's
> laughter, Susan's stays and pattens, Olly Dowden's

> "heu-heu-heu!" and the strumming of the wind upon the furze-bushes, which formed a kind of tune to the demoniac measure they trod. (RN I: iii, 52)

When Christian heard of Clym's coming home at Christmas, he told Mrs. Yeobright:

> "Mind you don't get lost. Egdon Heth is a bad place to get lost in, and the winds do huffle queerer tonight than ever I heard 'em afore. Them that know Egdon best have been pixy-led here at times." (RN I: iii, 54)

The queer wind is accompanied by the fairy mood haunted the heath. Clym's coming is the cause of the death of Eustacia and his mother due to Clym's interpretation:

> "She is the second woman I have killed this year. I was a great cause of my mother's death, and I am the chief cause of hers." (RN IV: ix, 340)

Clym is lost in the heath as the Shakespearean King Lear lost in the wilderness. The two heroes are mourned by the queer wind and heavy storm.

Whenever Eustacia is proceeding towards Rainbarrow, the wind is blowing in severe gusts. Pinion thinks that " even more artistic is the acoustic introduction to Eustacia, as her ' lengthened sighing ' merges with the sounds of the wind in the heath."[(27)] As the writer himself said:

> 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. (RN I: vi, 71)

The wind expresses Eustacia's emotional disturbances and her internal conflicts. When she was waiting for Wildeve at Rainbarrow:

> Her back was towards the wind, which blew from the northwest; but whether she had avoided that aspect because of the chilly gusts which played about her exceptional position, or because her interest lay in the southeast, did not at first appear. (RN I: vi, 70)

The role of the weather in the novel is directed in such a way that it and " the heath's seasonal changes accord with mood and situation in passages of poetic overtones, from the large scale to the small, from the most vividly colourful to the funereal."(28)

The parallelism between the setting and the inner feelings of the characters is designed in great harmony particularly for Eustacia that " such harmony of the outer scene with the thought and feelings of the beholder are paralleled in 'the chaos of the world without' and the chaos of Eustacia's mind when she stood for the last time on Rainbarrow."(29)

The last tragic scene at the end of the novel is the most powerful one in which this harmony is performed. When Eusstacia is still thinking of her elopement with Wildeve though it is to be acted during midnight:

> The scene without grew darker; mud-coloured clouds bellied downwards from the sky like vast hammocks slung across it, and with the increase of night a stormy wind arose; but as yet there was no rain. (RN V:vii,317)

The storm is at its beginning which reflects the beginning of the action because Eustacia's mind tends to the side of elopement. But the rain is still holding because Eustacia is still holding in the house. When her grandfather finds out that she has left and there is

no response for his question, the wind is digging at the corners of the house and the rain is initiated with few drops:

> But no response was made to this statement save an imaginary one from the wind, which seemed to gnaw at the corners of the house, and the stroke of a few drops of rain upon the window. (RN V: vii, 319)

The struggle is now started as soon as Eustacia leaves the door of the house and there is no chance for retreating:

> When she got into the outer air she found that it had begun to rain, and as she stood pausing at the door it increased, threatening to come on heavily. But having committed herself to this line of action there was no retreating for bad weather. Even the receipt of Clym's letter would not have stopped her now. The gloom of the night was funereal; all nature seemed clothed in crape. The spiky points of the fir trees behind the house rose into the sky like the turrets and pinnacles of an abbey. Nothing below the horizon was visible save a light which was still burning in the cottage of Susan Nunsuch. (RN V: vii, 320)

The cruel elements of nature are gathering to form the funereal scene; the rain was ' threatening to come on heavily ', ' the gloom of the night was funereal ', ' all nature seemed clothed in carpe ', even the light was still burning. The weather is rebellious against Eustacia as if it disagrees for her decision; meanwhile, she is rebellious against her lot of life:

> How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me!... I do not deserve my lot!" she cried in a frenzy of bitter revolt."O, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-

> conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control! O, how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all!" (RN V:vii,321)

On the other side, the wind is doing the same action at the corners of Clym's house symbolizing the evil will to undermine the bases of their mutual house:

> To Clym's regret it began to rain and blow hard as the evening advanced. The wind rasped and scraped at the corners of the house, and filliped the eavesdroppings like peas against the panes. (RN V: viii,324)

Also, the rain starts gradually to drop till it is falling heavily to awaken Clym and alarm him that the disaster is coming:

> His sleep, however, was not very sound, by reason of the expectancy he had given way to, and he was easily awakened by a knocking which began at the door about an hour after. Clym arose and looked out of the window. Rain was still falling heavily, the whole expanse of heath before him emitting a subdued hiss under the downpour. It was too dark to see anything at all. (RN V: viii, 324-325)

Darkness here is related to Clym's weak eyesight, as well as, the reference that is no hope or solution for the problem.

Implicitly, the writer identifies the heath with monster and the drops of the rain with scorpions:

> Yet in spite of all this Thomasin was not sorry that she had started. To her there were not, as to Eustacia, demons in the air, and malice in every bush and

> bough. The drops which lashed her face were not scorpions, but prosy rain; Egdon in the mass was no monster whatever, but impersonal open ground. (RN V:viii,329)

Actually, the malice nature of the rain and the monstrous structure of the heath are driven against Eustacia and wildeve, but not against Thomasin:

> Here Wildeve waited, slightly sheltered from the driving rain by a high bank that had been cast up at this place. (RN V: ix, 333)

Even Clym, when he and Wildeve were beside the weir and:

> a dull sound became audible above the storm and wind. Its origin was unmistakable--it was the fall of a body into the stream in the adjoining mead, apparently at a point near the weir. (RN V: ix, 333-334)

The wind did not treat him as an enemy and it "might not blow him off."

VIII. Conclusion:

In his novel **The Return of the Native**, Thomas Hardy symbolizes his characters even the setting especially the heath to carry the central theme of modernism. He seems to be objective when he displays his characters according to their attitudes towards the heath and the modern cities especially Paris. Eustacia, Wildeve, and Mrs. Yeobright hate the heath and love Paris, in contrast with Clym, Diggory Venn, and Thomasin who love the heath and prefer it as a suitable place to live in. But Hardy is sympathizing with the idealist character,Clym and considers him as his ideal. Hardy's love

to the countryside of Wessex and his longing for the rural rituals and festivies are embodied throughout the novel. The bonfire and Rainbarrow resemble the centre of these festivities and symbolize the Promethean fire which is strongly related to the rebelliousness of Eustacia and Wildeve. Also, it refers to the problematic issue of knowledge and modernism related to Clym, as a Promethean figure, and his scheme of education. Clym's semi-blindness symbolizes his misconception of the real world and the real identities of the characters around him. His suffering emerges from his consciousness of the wrong trend of modernism related to his experience in Paris and the disapproval of the heathfolk and some characters to his scheme in a way proves that " the rural world was not ripe for him" as the writer states himself.

The setting is well designed to symbolize the internal conflicts and feelings of his characters. Moon and gambling are mostly regarded to fate symbolism. The weather (wind, storm, and rain) accompanies the tragedy of the main characters and reflects their suffering. The rich symbolism in the novel promotes it technically to the most eminent literary works ever written.

Notes:

1. William R. Siebenschuh, "Hardy and the Imagery of Place" Journal Article Excerpt; Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900, Vol. 39, 1999, www.Questia.com.
2. F. B. Pinion, **A Hardy Companion** (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1968): 1.
3. Calvin S Brown et al, **The Reader's Companion to World Literature**. 2nd ed. (New York: The New American Library, Inc.):452.
4. http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/returnofnative/section10.rhtml
5. Rad Essays .Com, "Symbolism In Return Of The Native".htm

6. J.C.S. Temblett-Wood (introd.), **The Return of the Native** By Thomas Hardy (London: Macmillan), 1975, note no 83 by Derwent May : 370.
7. Pinion: 32.
8. Rad Essays .Com**,** op cit**.**
9. Pinion: 34.
10. Temblett-Wood : 11.
11. http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/returnofnative/section10.rhtml
12. Walter Allen, **The English Novel** (England: Penguin Books Ltd,1954): 247.
13. Ismail Salami, **Thirty Great Novels** (Tehran: Mehrandish Books, 1999): 424.
14. Allen: 248.
15. Ibid:247.
16. Pinion:31.
17. Allen:249.
18. John Hagan, "A Note on the Significance of Diggory Venn" Symbolism-Diggory Venn – Windows Picture and Fax Viewer.Com.
19. Temblet-Wood: 23.
20. Salami: 423.
21. Allen: 251.
22. Salami: 422
23. Brown: 232.
24. Salami: 423.
25. Temblet – Wood: 17.
26. Brown:232.
27. Pinion:33.
28. Ibid: 33.
29. Ibid: 33.

- The quoted texts of the novel are according to **The Return of the Native** By Thomas Hardy (London: Macmillan), 1975. The title of the novel is abbreviated as (RN).

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