

‘Brotherhood Bonded Close’: An Ecocritical Perspective on Select Novels by Thomas Hardy

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ABSTRACT: This paper seeks to explore ecocritical dimensions in select novels by Thomas Hardy, focusing on his deep engagement with the natural world and its intricate connections with human life. Thomas Hardy, a leading Victorian novelist in the late nineteenth-century, had a profound familiarity with nature due to his upbringing in rural Dorset, and this is vividly reflected in his novels. The study takes a look at six of Hardy’s most popular novels, and argues that nature in Hardy’s works is not merely a backdrop but an active force that shapes characters’ destinies, and mirrors their emotional and psychological states.

Through an ecocritical lens, the paper examines how Hardy’s novels challenge anthropocentrism by portraying the interconnectedness of humans and nature, highlighting how human culture both influences, and is influenced by, the physical world. It further analyses Hardy’s perspectives on the impact of technological advancements on the environment, particularly in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, where he critiques the potential for exploitation and environmental degradation, foreshadowing certain modern problems of the intrusion of technology. The paper concludes by noting Hardy’s advocacy for ‘loving-kindness’ towards nature, highlighting his belief in humanity’s responsibility to preserve the natural world for future generations.

KEYWORDS: *Thomas Hardy, ecocriticism, interconnectedness, nature, loving-kindness.*

INTRODUCTION

A foremost writer of nineteenth-century England, Thomas Hardy is remembered chiefly for his deeply tragic novels set amidst the lush natural world of Wessex, a fictional county based on his native Dorset, located in the southern part of England. Hardy was born in the village of Bockhampton in Dorset, and had spent his childhood and youth in the family cottage which was located at the edge of a heath. Hardy was a “nineteenth century countryman” (Millgate 32), travelling everywhere by foot, and becoming intimate with the minutest details of his native landscape. Millgate mentions how Hardy “possessed an extraordinary sensitivity to the sights, the smells, and especially the sounds of the countryside at every hour of the day or night” (Millgate 33). His life at Bockhampton was “still paced by the procession of the seasons, the succession of the generations, and the imperatives of the agricultural and the ecclesiastical calendars. Its markers were lambing time, haymaking, and harvest; the first cuckoo, the longest day, the last swallow; Easter, Whitsun, Christmas; births, marriages and deaths” (Millgate 39). His close relationship with nature and natural surroundings found its way organically into all of his novels: his nature descriptions are memorable, and the interaction of his primarily rural characters with their natural surroundings reflect those of their creator. In his work on Ecocritical Studies, S.R. Sanders states that “... in Hardy’s novels, this landscape is no mere scenery, no flimsy stage set, but rather the energizing medium from which human lives emerge and by which those lives are bounded and measured” (Sanders 183).

Ecocriticism, an “earth-centred approach to literary studies” (Glottfelty xviii), explores how literature engages with the natural

world. This term was first coined by William Rueckert in his 1978 essay, 'Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism', and it paved the way for an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature that allows for the examination of authors' works in the context of nature and environmental issues. Grounded in the ecological principle that everything is interconnected, ecocriticism aims to study the idea of an interconnected human ecology. Glotfelty, in her work, *The Ecocriticism Reader*, saw ecocriticism as examining the intricate connections between culture and the environment, highlighting how human culture both influences, and is influenced by, the physical world. Though Thomas Hardy was writing in the nineteenth century, and the ecocritical approach was formulated almost a hundred years later, his extensive use of nature and natural descriptions in his works has prompted critics to re-examine his works through the lens of ecocriticism. Isabelle Gadoin notes:

With its emphasis on the natural landscapes of Wessex, and its many warnings about the dangers of the incipient mechanisation of agricultural labour, Hardy's work indeed seems to qualify as a perfect example of a nature-conscious type of writing, denouncing the ravages of the Anthropocene long before the notion was even thought of' (Gadoin).

With due respect to the differences in the environment and circumstances of existence between our time and Hardy's time, Gadoin raises the critical question: "How green was Hardy?" (Gadoin).

Modern critics have used ecocritical perspectives to re-read the works of Thomas Hardy. Notably, Kim Taplin, in her collection *Tongues in Trees* (1989), was one of the first to discuss Hardy's ecological themes, where she analyses *The Woodlanders* alongside works such as *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Tess of the d'Urb-*

Urbervilles, and *Jude the Obscure*. Ronald Morrison has extensively examined *The Mayor of Casterbridge* from an ecocritical standpoint across his numerous publications (1998, 2007, 2012, 2013), and he has even examined Hardy as an ecocritic in his own right. Jonathan Bate in *The Song of the Earth* (2000), draws our attention to the inherent conflict between traditional ways of life and modern advancements in *The Woodlanders*, while Laurence Buell in his seminal work *The Future of Environmental Criticism* (2005) notes how Hardy’s Egdon Heath functions as a main “character” in the novel. Anna Burton (2021) uses an ecocritical lens to analyse the depiction of landscapes in *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* in her work *Trees in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (2021). Recent critics have also widened the scope of ecocritical analysis of the works of Hardy. Nathalie Bantz-Gaszczak, in her study of ‘The Art of Analogy in Hardy’s *The Woodlanders* and Other Novels: Hardy’s Eco-Writing’ (2022) explores the profound connection between characters and their natural surroundings. Catherine Lanone’s contribution, ‘Of Furtive Hedgehogs and Steam Machines’ (2022), uses the image of the vulnerable hedgehog, (from Hardy’s poem, ‘Afterwards’), to represent a wider ecosystem of small animals threatened by invasive machinery and human carelessness. Fiona Fleming extends ecofeminist readings of Hardy’s novels by applying the concept of ‘Ecosexuality’ in her essay, ‘Thomas Hardy and Ecosexuality’ (2022), inspired by Elizabeth Stephens and Annie Sprinkle’s ‘Ecosex Manifesto’. Fleming contends that Hardy moves beyond the Romantic notion of Earth as a maternal figure, instead depicting it as a lover.

The scope of these readings of Hardy’s work stems from the uniqueness of his position as a writer in the rapidly changing world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Born in 1840, when the rural landscape still relied on traditional agricul-

tural methods, customs and local rituals, Hardy died in 1928, at a time when the world was navigating two world wars, when aeroplanes and motor cars were running, and when rapid technological advancements were changing global perceptions. Hardy thus witnessed both the profound impact of nature on humanity and its culture, and conversely, the ways in which human culture could affect nature and traditional ways of life. This experience shaped his perspective in most of his major novels, especially those that he had categorised as ‘Novels of Character and Environment’.

In these novels, we notice how Hardy frames his characters with images of nature. In *The Woodlanders*, Giles Winterborne’s surname references ‘winter’, and hence, he is ‘Autumn’s very brother’ (*TW* 171), even as Grace (in her nervous despair) romanticises him alternately as a ‘fruit-god’ or a ‘wood-god’ (*TW* 230). The etymology of name ‘Venn’ (in its Germanic origins), refers to the topography of moors and marshes, and thus the itinerant Digory Venn’s name could be translated as ‘one who wanders in the marshes or moors’. One can hardly forget Gabriel Oak’s steady faithfulness to Bathsheba in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, much like the sturdy oak tree. In the same novel, Boldwood’s name suggests the steadiness of wood – but indicates the vulnerability of Boldwood through the idea of porosity inherently contained in wood. Michael Henchard, in his happier days as a journeyman, had dressed in “leggings yellow as marigolds, corduroys immaculate as new flax, and a neckerchief like a flower-garden” (*Mayor* 177). Among the women, Tess has a “mobile, peony mouth” (*Tess* 10), and she had “roses at her breasts; roses in her hat; roses and strawberries in her basket to the brim” (*Tess* 36). Eustacia’s hair descends on her forehead “like nightfall”, and her nerves are soothed when her hair is caught in the bristles of a native shrub of the heath (*Return* 63). Hardy tends to associate his female characters with pagan imagery, and the maypole dance, a traditional

rural celebration, perfectly illustrates this connection. This dance, involving a pole adorned with flowers and leaves, served as a gathering place for young rural lovers, thus deeply embedding nature within country life and culture. For instance, Tess and her companions are shown dancing around the maypole at the novel’s outset, while in *The Return of the Native*, the maypole symbolises a fresh start for Thomasin.

It is worth noting, however, that Nature descriptions transcend their function as mere setting, or as a means of enhancing the portrayal of characters. Nature, in Hardy’s vision, can act as a ‘character’ in the novel as noted by Laurence Buell: “In such rare cases as Thomas Hardy’s *The Return of the Native*, we were given to understand that a nonhuman entity like Egdon Heath might be a book’s main “character” or agential force” (Buell 3). *The Return of the Native* begins with a description of Egdon Heath, modelled on the heath beside Hardy’s native cottage at Bockhampton. It is the stage where the drama of the lives of the protagonists is played out, from their romances to their deaths. To Clym, Thomasin and Diggory, children of the heath, Egdon is simply their home and their familiar ground. To Eustacia and Wildeve, town-bred outsiders, Egdon is the opposite: it is hateful and malevolent, and Eustacia intuitively understands that Egdon will cause her destruction – sadly, she does meet her end at a weir close to Egdon. Familiarity and harmony with nature, insists Hardy, is imperative for a character to live in peace: “To dwell on a heath without studying its meanings”, he states, “was like wedding a foreigner without learning his tongue” (*Return* 66-67); just as Eustacia did not understand the heath, and “only caught its vapours” (*Return* 68). The same could be said of Fitzpiers, in *The Woodlanders*. Fitzpiers is characterised as an outsider, who looks on as a spectator to the lives and activities of Hintock, but can never belong there. His presence is attractively mysterious, though he leaves

a trail of emotional devastation when he leaves Hintock to live with Mrs. Charmond. Hardy places Wildeve, Eustacia and Fitzpiers as decidedly 'urban' in contrast to the natives of Egdon and Hintock. In fact, when Hardy started writing *The Woodlanders*, he initially called it *Fitzpiers in Hintock*, and "the discarded title points towards a civilized Fitzpiers, clearly the outsider, treading on foreign, exotic, folkloric territory, and could almost be glossed as a condescending "Mr Fitzpiers and the Wessex rustics"', notes Peggy Blin-Cordon in her essay, 'An Ecocritical Reading of Hardy's *The Woodlanders*: Supernature and EcoGothic' (Blin-Cordon). Hardy's thought seems to foreshadow the idea that "The condition of the modern man, with his mobility and his displaced knowledge, is never to be able to share this sense of belonging. He will always be an outsider; his return to nature will always be partial, touristic, and semi-detached" (Bate 554).

Just as the beauty and harmony of nature are intrinsic to rural life, so are the storms, terrible weather, harsh landscapes, and crises resulting from the unpredictability of the weather. Hardy also uses nature, landscape and the cyclical nature of the seasons to mirror and drive the emotional and physical struggles of the characters. To Tess, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, her natural surroundings at the Valley of the Froom provide freshness, respite, and the hope for a new life, after she leaves her home for the second time. Here, nature images build an atmosphere of hope: Tess leaves her home on a "thyme-scented, bird-hatching morning of May" (*Tess* 89). The Valley of the river Froom is a "verdant plain", and "the Froom waters were as clear as the pure River of Life shown to the Evangelist" (*Tess* 90-91). Tess heard "a pleasant voice in every breeze, and in every bird's note, there seemed to lurk a note of joy" (*Tess* 91). Yet, when Angel abandons her, and she is forced to find a new life for herself at Flintcomb Ash, not only does the landscape become inhospitable, the work that Tess must perform

to sustain herself becomes torturous. Catherine Lanone, in her essay, “Exploiting Body and Place in Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*”, notes a sense of gendered oppression that Tess faces in Flintcomb Ash:

As if digging swedes in the frozen earth were not harsh enough, the fields are full of stones... Oppression appears in different guises. The women are forced to work outside in all temperatures, and to live in unhealthy abodes. Snow blows into Tess’s bedroom, through chinks in the wall. Wrapped in shapeless pinafores, the girls suffer in the fields, and Hardy literalizes the cliché, to be chilled to the bone: the cold “[chills] their eyeballs” (*Tess* 284) and affects “the surface of the body less than its core”, “penetrating to their skeletons” (*Tess* 284).

Hardy also uses Nature images as an index to the emotional and psychological upheavals in the lives of characters. When Grace Melbury – freshly returned to Hintock after a sophisticated education in the city – confuses ‘bitter-sweets’ (a type of apple) with John-apples, Giles is left wondering whether Grace had forgotten his love for her as she had the apples of her native land (*TW* 35). Bathsheba watches the approaching storm with horror in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, and realises her husband’s indifference to the care of her farm and property. Gabriel’s timely intervention and efforts to save her corn ricks also elevates his importance in her life. As they stand together and watch the storm, it becomes a mirror of the storm within Bathsheba’s heart, confused between the love for her irresponsible husband and the dedication of Oak at a time of crisis – the man whose love she had once rejected. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, rain and storm act as a signifier of the impulsive Michael Henchard’s complete destruction: he gambles on the prediction of rain and buys up all the stock, only to encounter fair weather: and he is forced to sell all his stock at the lowest price, ensuring his complete financial

ruin, leading to his eventual tragedy in the novel. Loss is far deeper for the Yeobright family in *The Return of the Native*: in her final, desperate bid to escape her failed marriage and the heath, Eustacia leaves home and seeks the help of Wildeve to travel to Budmouth. On the night of her escape, the weather turns ominous and she realises, finally, that she cannot escape amidst the storm and rain: “Never was harmony more perfect than that between the chaos of her mind and the chaos of the world without” (*Return* 358). Eustacia finally dies in the weir, and Wildeve dies in his attempt to rescue her, a memorable episode in Hardy’s writing which highlights how nature’s power may influence the destinies of the men and women.

Nature, then, is not simply a blind spectator to man’s life in the course of Hardy’s novels. Hardy emphasises repeatedly how Man and Nature are closely bound together in a symbiotic and interactive relationship. Though not a Romantic himself, Hardy does endorse their vision, that Man and Nature are part of the same order, and share a deeply intuitive bond. This interconnect-edness of Man and Nature challenges the anthropocentric view that places man at the centre of the natural world: instead, it posits the idea that Man and Nature are parts of the same whole, and highlights the idea of oneness. Thus, if Nature is determining the lives and destinies of humans, it is inevitable that humans, in turn, will have an influence on the natural world through their actions. This theme is explored in some of Hardy’s novels, especially in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*.

The nuanced connection between environment and the characters’ destinies makes *The Mayor of Casterbridge* a rich subject for ecocritical analysis. Casterbridge is portrayed as a community deeply rooted in its agricultural surroundings, and dependent on the changes of the seasons, the fertility of the soil, and the consequent success or failure of harvests – which directly impact the

lives and destinies of the characters. A significant aspect explored in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is the introduction of technology and modern methods in contrast to traditional agrarian practices. Donald Farfrae brings in a new seed-sowing machine, and introduces scientific and professional methods in agriculture – which leads to the general benefit of the Casterbridge community. The contrasting characters of Henchard, with his impetuosity, and Farfrae, with his cool-headed reasoning and science, are reflected in their approaches to nature and natural occurrences. Henchard defies years of his knowledge of nature and chooses to trust an unreliable fortune-teller; while Farfrae uses reason, science and sound methods to harness nature, and his methods are in tune with the natural order. Too late, Henchard realises with some bitterness that “... you can never be sure of weather till ’tis past” (*Mayor* 147). The novel thus illustrates how human actions can both benefit from, and be disrupted by, the natural world. Henchard’s impulsiveness and flawed character inevitably led to outcomes that mirror the unpredictable and sometimes harsh nature of the environment.

An ecocritical analysis of *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* becomes imperative when we trace the journey of Tess from her state of innocence to a world of corruption; and this journey is metaphorically represented not only in terms of the landscape, but also in terms of human labour and machinery. While the dairy farm at Talbothays is depicted as an idyllic and fertile valley in southern England, with its appealing farm life, routines of milking, butter-making, and cheese production, Flintcomb-Ash – whose name evokes barrenness – is characterized by mud, rocks, hardship, and near-famine conditions. The villainous Alec D’Urberville reappears here, and resumes his pursuit of Tess. Even the farmer at Flintcomb-Ash, Groby, is shown to be unsympathetic and authoritarian, unlike the kind Dairyman Crick at Talbothays. An implicit

comparison is further made between Flintcomb-Ash and Talbothays in the way in which machines are depicted. Machinery plays a limited role in the novel, with horses and horse carts serving as the primary means of transportation. In fact, Tess's tragic journey in the novel is directly driven by an economic necessity arising from the death of the family horse. Modern machines appear only sparingly: the train transporting milk from Talbothays to London and the threshing machine at Flintcomb-Ash. For the most part, contemporary farming technology is not available in the agricultural practices in Wessex. Talbothays does employ some modern equipment, such as hand and horse-powered butter churns, but these are compatible with traditional agricultural practices and do not pose a menacing threat to the agricultural way of life already in place.

However, the threshing machine at Flintcomb-Ash is depicted as a demanding, almost monstrous entity requiring constant attention, as emphasised by descriptions such as "the red tyrant... which was to act as the *primum mobile* of this world", which kept up a "despotic demand" on the girls who were running it (*Tess* 284-285). This machine becomes an all-powerful presence that dictates the rhythm of work. Tess is worn out by the "ceaselessness of the work" (*Tess* 286), and she received no respite as she was the only woman who could feed the machine swiftly. Hardy deliberately uses these images to convey the monstrosity of a human-made object that was built to exploit a certain section of the human population (the workers), while it directly benefited the other (the farm owner). The imposing and uncontrollable nature of the steam-powered threshing machine stands in stark contrast to the more traditional and peaceful operations of the dairy at Talbothays. Hardy's vision of the new threshing machine foreshadows certain modern problems of the intrusion of technology: while machinery allows for more efficient cultivation and pro-

cessing of agricultural products, leading to greater productivity, it also carries the potential for the intensification of farming practices. This could potentially lead to soil depletion, changes in land use, and a less sustainable relationship with the environment in the long run. Catherine Lanone further notes that the images associated with “the red tyrant” align the machine with colonial and patriarchal exploitation. Her ecofeminist perspective on *Tess* notices how the engineer who deals with the machine is once again the urban outsider, who “was in the agricultural world, but not of it.” (*Tess* 283) – indicating the attitude of a coloniser not in interaction with the “natives” and the “aborigines” (*Tess* 283), but rather using them as a means to an end. She states:

It is clear that for Hardy, the machine is beginning to colonize the rural South. And in so doing, it also colonizes the woman’s body, creating a proto-ecofeminist association between the countryside and the female worker’s body. Just as the landscape must respond to new notions of productivity, all year long, work is part of sexual harassment. Farmer Groby selects Tess for such particularly harsh work because she has resisted him on the road to Flintcomb Ash; and it is no surprise that Alec should reappear and watch her as she toils on the threshing machine. The machine makes the patriarchal system worse, instead of making women’s work a little easier. (Lanone)

Thus, the ecocritical dimensions in these novels by Hardy assert that nature operates not merely as a setting but as a dynamic force deeply interwoven with human existence and fate. Employing an earth-centred lens, the ecocritical approach examines this intricate relationship between humanity and the environment, underscoring the interconnectedness of culture and nature, a connection richly evident in Hardy’s work despite predating the formal field. Having witnessed the transition from a traditional rural society to an era of rapid technological progress, Hardy’s

novels reflect the reciprocal relationship of nature and humanity. However, since Hardy was not satisfied in merely depicting an interconnected relationship between humanity and nature, he was also looking for ways in which man could take charge and work actively towards improving this interrelationship. A strong believer in meliorism, Hardy believed that humans were not only a part of Nature, but had potential within themselves to act as a guardian to nature. Blessed with higher powers of intellect and empathy, man, according to Hardy, had a responsibility to protect nature and preserve it in its best form so as to be able to pass it on, undamaged, to future generations. His philosophy with regard to the natural world was based on his concept of loving-kindness, as he states in his 'Apology' to *Late Lyrics and Earlier*:

[L]ooking down the future these few hold fast to the same: that whether the human and kindred animal races survive till the exhaustion or destruction of the globe, or whether these races perish and are succeeded by others before that conclusion comes, pain to all upon it, tongued or dumb, shall be kept down to a minimum by loving-kindness, operating through scientific knowledge, and actuated by the modicum of free will conjecturally possessed by organic life when the mighty necessitating forces – unconscious or other – that have “the balancings of the clouds,” happen to be in equilibrium, which may or may not be often (*Apology* 557-558).

The term 'loving-kindness', oft-repeated in his novels, is drawn from the Biblical idea: in the Book of Psalms, the Hebrew word 'chesed' is used to describe the love of God when it is expressed through acts of kindness, and 'chesed' was first translated into English as 'loving-kindness'¹ in the Coverdale Bible of 1535². Hardy, who knew the Bible intimately, appropriates the religious implication of the word and instead, gives it a secular significance in an age of receding religious belief. Thus, instead of

the loving-kindness of God, it is man’s actions based on the principle of loving-kindness that assume supremacy in Hardy’s view; for it is the only means by which man may secure his rightful place within the natural world which he had the power to protect.

As we read the works of Hardy, it becomes amply clear that this quality of loving-kindness is something that he valued highly. It is a quality that is found in almost all his characters, and especially in his tragic protagonists. What is remarkable, is that even in the most adverse of circumstances, the characters do not forgo their humaneness, and do not hesitate to be kind and generous to nature’s lesser fortunate creatures. When, for instance, Gabriel Oak realises that all his sheep had died in a tragic accident, “his first feeling now was one of pity for the untimely fate of these gentle ewes and their unborn lambs”, for Gabriel Oak “was an intensely humane man” (*FFMC* 44). Similarly, Jude experiences a “magic thread of fellow-feeling” with the rooks that he has been entrusted to scare away from Farmer Troutham’s field – and instead of chasing them away with a clacker, Jude allows them to feast on the rick of the past year’s produce of corn. When he is caught in the act, he is smacked soundly by the farmer: yet, he still does not fail to be kind to the earthworms lying in clumps on the ground, and steps carefully to avoid squashing them with his foot. The narrator comments:

[H]e was a boy who could not bear himself to hurt anything. He had never brought home a nest of young birds without lying awake in misery half the night after, and often reinstating them and the nest in their original place the next morning. He 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 grief to him in his infancy. (*Jude* 11)

Later we see him killing a rabbit to prevent its agonising

death after it is caught in a steel trap. Similarly, even though Tess is at her utmost wretchedness and feels that she is a victim of life's unfairness, she pauses her suffering to care for pheasants that had been shot down by a hunting expedition, but had not yet died. With an "impulse of a soul who could feel for kindred sufferers as much as for herself", Tess proceeds to break the necks of the pheasants with her own hands, so that they may be swiftly put out of their misery (*Tess* 244). Tess's profound connection to nature is evident in her deep empathy for suffering animals. She perceives their helplessness and physical pain as far exceeding her own struggles, and this strengthens her resolve to endure her difficult life. Acts of loving-kindness from characters are also directed towards individuals who are less fortunate. An instance of loving-kindness occurs when Michael Henchard, as Mayor of Casterbridge, acts kindly towards the mother of his employee Abel Whittle, despite often expressing anger at Abel himself. This loving-kindness is returned in kind by Abel Whittle, who becomes Henchard's only companion in his final days.

Thus, Hardy's extensive focus on Nature in his writings, often including a subtext of preservation, is evident. Moreover, he clearly champions the quality of loving-kindness in his characters, particularly when expressed through the nurture and care of the natural world. In his writings, the intimacy that is reflected with Nature is a reflection of his own intimacy with Nature. In his *Life*, an incident is narrated of Hardy using "large dead leaves, white chips left by the wood-cutters, or pieces of stone and slate" in those times that he "felt volumes", but found himself without access to paper (*Life* 96). The increasing mechanisation of our world and the relentless encroachment of human greed upon nature amplify the significance of Hardy's message today. In this age marked by a capitalistic exploitation of nature with utter disregard for preserving our planet, it is important to remember

that man and nature are bonded together inextricably, and just as Nature nurtures all life forms, it is also man’s duty to care for the natural world, and to preserve it for future generations. In the modern, potentially godless age, Hardy finds a solution in ‘A Plaint to Man’, and suggests how it is best to rely on an emotional bond of brotherhood with each other, and with the natural world: The fact of life with dependence placed On the human heart’s resource alone, In brotherhood bonded close and graced With loving-kindness fully blown, And visioned help unsought, unknown (*Poems* 326).

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Notes:

1. Psalm 36:10 first used the term loving-kindness:

O sprede forth thy louynge kyndnesse vnto them that knowe the, & thy rightuousnes vnto the that are true of hert

2. While the King James Bible popularized the single word "loving-kindness" its origin in English Bible translation lies earlier. The Coverdale Bible of 1535, a collaboration between Myles Coverdale and William Tyndale, introduced the phrase "loving kindness" seventy-five years before the King James Version. The King James Version's contribution was to combine Coverdale's two words into the single term now in use.