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**Ecocritical
perspective on
Waverley and
*Tess of the
D'Urbervilles***

Literary ecotourism in Scott
and Hardy: an analysis of
Edward Waverley and Angel
Clare, inveterate tourists

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There is “something of the big-game hunter in these tourists, boasting of their encounters with savage landscapes, ‘capturing’ wild scenes, and ‘fixing’ them as pictorial trophies in order to sell them or hang them up in frames on their drawing-room walls”.

(Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain 1760-1800*)

“Che cos’è questa valle per una famiglia che venga dal mare, che non sappia niente della luna e dei falò? Bisogna averci fatto le ossa, averla nelle ossa come il vino e la polenta, allora la conosci senza bisogno di parlarne ... Il fatto è che Cinto – come me da ragazzo – queste cose non le sapeva, e nessuno nel paese le sapeva, se non forse qualcuno che se n’era andato”.

(Cesare Pavese, *La Luna e i Falò*)



Figure 1. *Doctor Syntax Sketching on Lake* by Thomas Rowlandson, in *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque, A Poem* by William Combe (1812)

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❖ Introduction

With regard to human relationship with the environment, twenty-first-century westerners have the general inclination to idealize landscapes' appearance by focusing exclusively on the aesthetical character of the environment, by means of the numerous 'cultural filters' it is imbued with, instead of trying to deepen their understanding of it and achieve a more complex awareness of it. They are inclined to have a romantic vision with regard to what is natural and wild, what has not been created by humans and yet bewilders them. Although many people still live in rural contexts and have a close relationship with the environment which surrounds them, the great majority of westerners are city-dwellers who tend to have a rather different attitude with regards to the environment and are hardly ever aware of the relevance of establishing a proper and healthy connection with the ecosystem. When town-dwellers go on a trip in the countryside or in the mountains, they usually tend to look for picturesque environments where they may take a break from the city, places where their inclination to pursue the myth of happiness and freedom is inspired and where they consequently tend to idealize wilderness and remoteness, features that certainly contrast with their habitual urban life. Imbued as they are in their anthropocentric vision of the world, they apparently find it hard to fully understand what having a sustainable relationship with the environment actually means and keep on behaving superficially focusing on the aesthetical beauty of the landscape. Yet, it is not about finding the perfect spot to photograph. The real challenge is not managing to get nice pictures of natural beauty amongst which we would choose the best one and post it on our profile in whichever social network, together with an effective caption. The actual dilemma is actually finding an efficient way to establish a sensible relationship with our ecosystem in which we may manage to behave as inhabitants rather than superficial tourists. Nowadays it seems to be more relevant for us to prove we visited a specific place instead of truly experiencing it and in order to do that we take tons of pictures, apply some filters on them and share it with our 'followers'. We thus try to ameliorate the landscape we photographed according to our expectations and ideas of perfection as we usually tend to project on the outer world what we are willing and hoping to find. It is not important to actually visit a given location, but to exhibit a perfect picture of it since aesthetical perfection is

for us a source of happiness. This tendency of idealizing what we see – especially the countryside and the mountains, landscapes we westerners have been progressively leaving on the background, places we recognize to be part of our lives almost exclusively during the weekends, when an outward journey with our families and friends is a good alternative to the events of the town, a natural context that embodies our idea of happiness and freedom exactly because it is not part of our routine – makes us feel satisfied, yet, once we awaken from this romantic dream and we realize our expectations are not fulfilled, we are forced to go back to an environment we are accustomed to, where we feel at ease and where our expectations are always met. However, it would be better for us to recognize that, evidently, our relationship with the environment is not appropriate and that we should attempt to improve it as we play an active part in the ecosystem in which we live.

In the following pages, I will examine two literary characters that I have interpreted as early examples of naïve tourists who, merely focused on their own expectations, end up idealizing the environment they visit. Although they appeared more than two centuries ago, these two characters seem to be very similar to us twenty-first-century westerners, as human tendency to idealize natural landscapes, especially the countryside and mountainous areas, is still present.

This thesis aims at analysing how Walter Scott and Thomas Hardy deal with what we have learned to call ‘ecotourism’ in the literary genre in which they have a pivotal role, namely the novel. These authors succeed in depicting the prime examples of modern men, problematizing the peculiar relationship they establish with the environment, perceived as a special repository of wealth and idealization made for humans who, despite wandering and wondering among the beauties of nature, eventually fail to develop a proper attitude in a natural context. In particular, in this study I will examine two novels, *Waverley*, by Sir Walter Scott (1814) and *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy (1891). With regard to Scott’s work, the object of my study will be the protagonist of the novel, young Edward Waverley, whereas in Hardy’s novel, I will focus on Angel Clare, Tess’s beloved. Both these characters behave as tourists throughout the plot of the novels as they long for losing themselves in natural environments to escape the habitual

circumstances in which they live. Waverley is a young officer who, imbued with the idyllic atmosphere of a feudal Scotland, neglects his commitment and responsibilities in the Hanoverian army for the sake of his romantic nature, while Clare refuses to follow in his father's steps and rather than becoming a parson decides to pursue a career in agriculture wandering from farm to farm through Wessex (Hardy's fictional world located in Southern England) and reaching Brazil afterwards. Both Edward and Angel are two observers; as a matter of fact, they are two outsiders who, fascinated by rural and pristine landscapes, observe local people busy with their lives and do their best to imitate them. Their tourist-like attitude, which turns out to be a particularly relevant feature throughout the narration of the books, is extremely engaging and highly affects the readers' sensibility. Indeed, almost inadvertently, readers may either condemn such characters – even laughing at poor Waverley – thus criticising two inappropriate tourists of a kind, or identify with them, hence experiencing the same feelings of romantic bewilderment. Waverley and Clare idealize the natural world and its inhabitants; nevertheless, they will never fit in a world which is so different from the one they come from and which they obstinately idealize. For this reason, when reading these novels in an ecocritical perspective, it is necessary to consider the opposition – which will slowly modify into a continuum – country-city with which our culture has always struggled and recognize that a tourism based on an excessive idealization of the environment, despite being a cure for our intoxicated and stressed lives, may lead to irreparable harm – as it occurs in the plots of the two novels. The disproportionate idealization Edward and Angel insist on will lead not only to a fiasco, which might be termed “tourist's failure” but also to other irremediable consequences they do not even realize to have triggered (Kerridge 2001, p. 132). These novels, if analysed from an ecocritical perspective, contain a classical theme, namely, the relationship between humans and land, culture and nature, city and country. Nineteenth-century writers are committed to exploring the manifold relations between nature, individuals and society; in particular, Scott and Hardy deal with the question of modern Western man's alienation. From these novels, we can actually infer the warning not to behave as Edward and Angel who, blinded by their ideals and beliefs about the environment they visit, are not able to

achieve a factual connection with those particular landscapes, Edward with the secluded Scotland of 1745 and Angel with the rural Southern England of the 1890s. These characters are alienated men who refuse to obey their families and consequently fail to meet their expectations. The two young men do not accept to behave according to the social constraints of their time, hence they find refuge in the beauty of nature, which “offers [them] a promise of freedom, peace and belonging” (Bate 2000, p. 122). Edward deserts the Hanoverian army his father managed to assign him and without thinking of the consequences of his actions, resolves to become a Highlander. Angel refuses to become a clergyman as his brothers did; instead, he opts for a career as agriculturist and finally chooses to go to Brazil where he can apply his innovative agricultural methods. Both Edward and Angel are actually able to disobey and neglect their responsibilities thanks to their wealthy families, ready to support and provide them with the money necessary to satisfy their requests, exactly as tourists do. These young fellows, like tourists, can stay in a different environment only for a limited time. Their plans are destined to fail since they do not belong to the places they visit; they can admire them just as tourists would do, but will never achieve a more complex understanding of them. In his novels, Hardy describes “the irreconcilable clash between the forces of tradition and of innovation”, a gap that, nevertheless, is slowly disappearing as traditions are increasingly making way for modernity, thus representing a transformation that, even if with difficulty, has to be accepted (Bate 2000, p. 14). Scott, on his part, urges us to recover old traditions which otherwise would get lost over the years, indeed, in the postscript of his novel, he confesses his “purpose of preserving some idea of the ancient manners of which [he has] witnessed the almost extinction” (*Waverley*, p. 376). The concept of ‘memory’ is essential for Hardy as well since he believes that “to belong in a place means to know its history”; therefore, memories are fundamental in the building of one’s identity (Bate 2000, p. 18). However, “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” (ibid). Edward Waverley and Angel Clare are precisely modern individuals. The only way in which they may collect some

memories is in a tourist-like behaviour of remembering interesting stories, events and traditions, or simply capturing a picturesque view, as in the “large and spirited painting, representing Fergus Mac-Ivor and Waverley in their Highland dress, the scene a wild, rocky, and mountainous pass, down which the clan was descending in the background” (*Waverley*, p. 373). Hardy “recognizes that once we have left our native home and been educated into gentility, we can never return, save in the brief moment of blind passion, to the world of latent early instinct” (Bate 2000, p. 19). In this regard, Hardy harks back to Friedrich Schiller’s belief that, in the past, people did not think about their relationship with the environment, as they were part of nature, “but the moderns have fallen into self-consciousness. That we have feelings about nature demonstrates that we are separated from it” (Schiller, 1985, cited in Bate, 2000, p. 73). This is the consequence of progress. Waverley and Clare, even if the former is the representative of the first half of the century and the latter is set in the last decade of 1800s (as *Waverley* was published 77 years before *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*), are here depicted as the products of nineteenth-century progress. Indeed, they are affected by the urban environment in which they live, a context characterized by new discoveries and implements, where the cultural influence of the time (implications of the Romantic Age) together with their natural disposition and education lead them to romanticize nature, considering it as a place where people may live in a happy state far away from the faults of civilization and the social restraints of the time.

Not only are the above-mentioned characters the prototypes of modern *men*, characterized by a tourist-like attitude, but the structure of both these works suggests that the novels construct their implied readers as tourists. If we pay attention to the language of the texts, we realize that the omniscient narrator behaves as a tourist guide who accompanies and conducts us to the places where the plots are set. Therefore, we readers have the feeling of dealing with a guidebook, meaning that we become, in a way, tourists who travel through Scotland and Wessex; naturally, we do not actually experience what Waverley and Clare have to undergo, since we are external to the story and, as the narrator does, we observe the events from a certain distance, allowing ourselves to condemn or identify with the young men. The accurate descriptions provided by Scott and

Hardy confer a tourist's perspective on the readers who are taken by the hand and led through the countryside as the story develops. The narrator is our local guide which informs us of the perils of the place and shows us the ways in which the characters inevitably get caught in a trap. We know we would make the same mistakes if we were in their shoes, but we are actually safe in our comfortable living-rooms or at our desks, where we tend to criticise poor Edward and naïve Angel rather than feeling sympathy for two inexperienced tourists we so much resemble to. We should therefore keep in mind that notwithstanding our sharp criticism, Waverley's and Clare's attitude truly reflects our relationship with the natural world, emphasizing the existing gap between man and environment.

In his enlightening book, Jonathan Bate suggests that literature may reconcile us to nature. In his vision, the writer has the capacity to “restore us to the earth which is our home” and thus bring culture and nature together again – as he asserts in the preface of *The Song of the Earth*. The question then arises: could this actually be possible? Will we ever be able to get back to nature, or will we remain mere callow tourists along the lines of Edward Waverley and Angel Clare? In a way, Scott and Hardy seem to act as eco-tourist guides who attempt to restore us readers to the environment we tend to be alienated from, warning us to behave sensibly towards the landscapes we see. From an ecocritical perspective, these two novels invite us to establish a deep and healthy relationship with the environment, not merely based on aesthetical and romantic principles but on the actual awareness of the place we find ourselves in, where we better give up any idealization and rather opt for real and sensible experiences.

❖ Chapter one

Historical context: nature, landscape, tourism

1.1 Nature versus man: a historical paradox

With his famous *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men*, published in France in 1755, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) has influenced Western man's thinking about nature and the relationship between humans and the environment. According to him, it is the physical strength among the species to determine natural inequality; however, humans live in societies ordered "according to other kinds of law, which sustain a political inequality whereby it is not the strong who rule over the weak but the rich who rule over the poor" (Rousseau, 1994, cited in Bate, 2000, pp. 30-31). That is why, in order for us to understand "the origin of the law of political inequality, we need to imagine a 'state of nature' in which the law is absent" (ibid., p. 31). Rousseau asserts that certainly this condition no longer exists, maybe it never really did and in all probability, it will never occur in the future. However, we need to understand it if we are willing to evaluate the situation we are experiencing in a proper way. In this 'state of nature', we are supposed to be 'in touch with our instincts', to be part of nature, therefore, to be free. This state of original freedom is threatened by several social restrictions, necessary to be part of a community where people have to live under the laws imposed by the institutions. As observed by Jean Starobinski, Rousseau opposes society, as it is contrary to nature. "Society and nature remain, rather, in permanent conflict, and it is this conflict that gives rise to all man's ills and vices ... He accuses civilization, which is characterized by its negativity with respect to nature" (Starobinski, 1988, cited in Bate, 2000, p. 31). As Bate goes on "society is the negation of nature. The work of the thinker is to negate the negation, to accuse civilization, which is characterized by its negativity with respect to nature" (ibid., p. 32). Consequently, as Rousseau (1991, cited in Bate, 2000, p. 32) argues in his *Emile or on Education* (1762), "forced to combat nature or the social institutions, one must choose between making a man or making a citizen, for one cannot make both at the same time". Yet, we humans are made of both nature and culture; "we are both a part and apart from nature" as our existence mutually depends on the ecosystem we happened to evolve in, and the society we live in, which is a creation of man and is deeply opposed to the 'state of nature' advocated

by Rousseau (Bate 2000, p. 33). This paradox, “the evolution of a conception of the human as apart from nature was itself a mechanism in our species’ struggle for survival”, a phenomenon influenced by a specific geographical area and a particular historical period (ibid., p. 34). Over the centuries we continued to evolve our ability to adapt in any environmental conditions, achieving huge scientific and technological advances which clearly distinguish our species from all the others. As Bate correctly points out, having grouped ourselves under the category of ‘human’, almost accidentally all of the other natural species have been classified as ‘nature’, as the Other. In this way, we have created a concept of ‘human’ that completely moves away from the very thing which originated us, our ecosystem. The very problem is that “once nature is the Other, man can advance with scant regard for it”, brutally exploiting it (ibid., p. 35).

Another interesting concept which Bate emphasizes is that for many years we were used to talking about ‘man and nature’, not of ‘human and nature’, automatically gendering this human figure as masculine. In addition to that, the man everyone seemed to implicitly think of was white and European, a civilized sort of man, certainly not as an American native or an Australian aboriginal. This is precisely the reason why the Western man has always claimed to embody and represent civilization: with his sophisticated manners and intellect, he was the typical representative of the conventional etiquette, perfectly embodying the product of society, as opposed to all which was uncivilized, as the natives, who were considered part of nature. Edward Waverley and Angel Clare are two Englishmen, provided with a certain level of education, belonging to wealthy families, accustomed to a comfortable life and completely unfamiliar with the implications of a life surrounded by nature: they represent the modern civilized westerner.

1.2 Nature: a collective idealization of a green and past-related image

When we think of ‘environment’ we traditionally visualize green hills, enchanting mountains, wildflower meadows, amazing waterfalls, crystal clear brooks and lakes. These associations we automatically make originally arose during the Enlightenment as they developed in the enlightened minds of the intellectuals of the time who would eventually spread their ideas all over Europe by means of their works.

In particular, Rousseau had in mind a specific kind of environment when, in the second half of the eighteenth century, he published his works. Evidently, his writings, among many others, influenced the imagination of the time, idealizing certain natural characteristics that the Swiss celebrates as representatives of the perfect place to be at in order to recover our original ‘state of nature’. Rousseau took inspiration from Switzerland, his native country, that he will always consider a safe haven to take refuge in from the corruption of society. Only there can he experience moments of truly solitary happiness, on the shores of mountainous lakes, surrounded by beautiful heights, and, more importantly, away from social dilemmas. In his view, man is happy in that particular place precisely because he himself was happy there. Indeed, Rousseau’s concept of childhood is strictly linked to the idea of the ‘bon sauvage’ who, living in strictly connection with nature and avoiding civilization, is a gentle, merciful, sociable and autonomous being. Man, needs to go back to that primitive world, where he will finally escape alienation and the inner disorientation he is affected by, dreadful consequences of the opulent society he lives in. The philosopher advocates that not only the individual but the entire society must go back to the so-called ‘state of nature’. In this perspective, Rousseau anticipates the ecological problem we are facing today and reflects the attitude of many ecologists who are calling for a change.

Rousseau’s idea of a ‘state of nature’ is thus closely related to his concept of happy and natural childhood, as it is claimed in his *Emile*. And this is due to his own experience, to the happy memories he has of his early years in Switzerland, an association we usually tend to make almost automatically, as Williams properly

reminds us. In the desperate realization of the galloping environmental change that affects the rural scenery, we are induced to attempt the recovery of that very landscape we used to be surrounded in during our childhood.

In his masterpiece, *The Country and the City*, Raymond Williams, when commenting John Clare's poem, points out that

a way of seeing has been connected with a lost phase of living, and the association of happiness with childhood has been developed into a whole convention, in which not only innocence and security but peace and plenty have been imprinted, indelibly, first on a particular landscape, and then, in a powerful extension, on a particular period of the rural past, which is now connected with a lost identity, lost relations and lost certainties, in the memory of what is called, against a present consciousness, Nature. (Williams 1973, p. 201)

The idealization of the past has always influenced our mentality. Woody Allen punctuates this concept in *Midnight in Paris* (2011), where the protagonist, a twenty-first-century novelist who dreams of living in the Paris of the 1920s, once catapulted in that period, realizes that in the age he depicted as 'golden' people's desire was to go back to even earlier times. This clearly confirms the idea that is at the core of the movie, and that is asserted by Paul, another character of the film, namely that

nostalgia is denial, denial of the painful present...the name for this denial is golden age thinking, the erroneous notion that a different time period is better than the one one's living in. It's a flaw in the romantic imagination of those people who find it difficult to cope with the present. (Whipp, 2012)

This exactly reflects the position of Williams, who defines it as 'a problem of perspective'. In the writers' imagination of every historical period, there exists a perfect time in the past where we humans were happy and in harmony with the

rural world, “an unlocalized Old England” as he defines it, an epoch and a place that exists in our particular idea of golden age, of pastoral dream. In every epoch, man feels the “persistent desire to get away from what is seen as the world” and seeks refuge in a distant and remote land he visualizes as perfect (Williams 1973, p. 34). This ‘escalator’, as Williams defines it, could actually move backwards without pause, until we reach Eden, the flawless garden where we used to live in harmony and from which God banished us. Very often, the happy past described by the authors is located in their childhoods where a sense of nostalgia is “universal and persistent”; however, it is always necessary to consider that different values are brought into question at different times, as the historical perspective the writer lives in is a key factor we always need to be aware of (ibid., p. 16).

Angel Clare celebrates a past that is gone as well. Considering Christianity an oppressive cage, he harks back to the ancient values of paganism celebrated by Matthew Arnold, taking inspiration from the Greek ideals that unfortunately faded under the influence of the Christian principles. Once at Talbothays, Angel realizes how modern religions as the Evangelical creed, of which his father is a proud representative, attempt to constrain the real ‘pulse of existence’; supporting Arnold’s philosophy and influenced by the natural environment he decides to experience, young Clare is deeply convinced that man has to live through his senses. Certain of his beliefs, Angel says to his father “that it might have resulted far better for mankind if Greece had been the source of the religion of modern civilization, and not Palestine” (*Tess*, p. 158). Yet, Clare does not embody a natural being as he seems to profess. For he really represents a spiritual being constantly dominated by the theoretical side of human existence. A theoretical side that is essentially puritan and that will lead him to leave Tess and degenerate into the conventional prejudices and negative gospels of life. He idealizes Tess to such an extent – by automatically associating her to the ancient traditions of a pristine world – that he is not able to accept her for what she actually is, a simple country girl who, as humans usually try to do, did her best according to the circumstances. On his part, in his postscript Walter Scott admits his intention of “preserving some idea of the ancient manners of which [he has] witnessed the almost total extinction” (*Waverley*, p. 376). The past events Scott presents are filtered through

Waverley's point of view, a youth characterized by a romantic attitude that looks nostalgically at "old Scottish faith, hospitality, worth, and honour" (ibid). Like Angel Clare, Waverley celebrates a past that is gone and will never come back. Although Waverley has actually had the chance of experiencing it, Angel does not have this opportunity, as the reality he decides to experience is already under the influence of modernity. By experiencing the peculiar reality of old Scotland, Waverley understands that such a world is destined to disappear as it is too different from his contemporary era and the inevitable developments human society is undergoing cannot but move past those ancient traditions. With a heavy heart, Scott's hero accepts the fact that past is gone: after experiencing an incredible adventure in an ancient world whose values are gradually dissolving, Edward grows up and resolves to move forwards, realizing that "the romance of his life [is] ended, and that its real history [has] now commenced" (*Waverley*, p. 312). Clare experiences a quite similar process of disenchantment. At the beginning he does not accept the fact that past is gone. He celebrates Greek paganism and is convinced that taking refuge at Talbothays and idealizing Tess can actually allow him to go back to the condition of freedom and happiness ancient Greece has always symbolized. However, he will soon understand that it is impossible to get rid of the historical changes which took place in between ancient Greece and the era he lives in, especially Christian influence, which has particularly affected his own education and which will eventually impact on his insensitive judgment of Tess, based on the preconceptions instilled by his family, beliefs characteristic of the society of the period the novel is set in.

1.3 Landscape and the English Enlightenment

During the Enlightenment, the concept of nature acquired a crucial role as it was believed to associate the human to the divine, the mortal to the eternal. As a result, the concept according to which God created the earth primarily for humans, and humans had then the right to use it became even more emphasized. Indeed,

Christian theology affirmed that all had been divinely adapted for mankind, because humans alone had immortal souls and so could be saved. Genesis had granted man ‘dominion over the fish and the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth’.
(Porter 2000, p. 298)

However, despite this deep faith in human power over the world, it is important to consider that the enlightened generation, “had inherited a profound environmental crisis which it zealously combatted” as in the first half of the seventeenth century “the climate was deteriorating, the soil growing exhausted and pestilences multiplying” (ibid., p. 300). Certainly, this is proof of how climate issues have always affected human existence through the centuries. Almost two hundred years after, the Romantic poet John Keats (1958, cited in Bate, 2000, p. 104) was a witness of unfavourable climatic conditions as well, and as a result, he was an advocate of “the bond between self and environment”. Keats was deeply convinced that in order to survive, our species needed both human bonds – living in society – and good weather – especially due to the fact that he suffered of consumption and consequently had an existence that was dramatically destined to the influence of the weather – in particular in those years, which were characterized by a poor air quality.

Despite the burdensome climatic crisis of 1630, the theological eco-pessimism of the seventeenth century was challenged by the enlightened thinking. After the Glorious Revolution (1688-89), values of freedom, order, prosperity and progress provided people with a new vision of the world that was now balanced

and justly ruled under the English parliamentary monarchy, a form of government that finally allowed mankind to be happy. The subsequent improvement of the weather led to the conviction of a “globe that was self-sustaining and self-repairing ... so as to form an enduring habitat, perfect for man” (Hutton, 1795, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 302). So, the view of a world seen as ruined and sick turned into “a pleasing prospect of a wise and lasting provision for the economy of nature” (Jones, 1985, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 302). As Porter goes on, “the Earth was not in crisis; it operated by a self-adjusting system governed by universal laws and made for man”. God was the benevolent architect of the natural order at the service of man.

The idea of ‘improvement’ highly influenced the mentality of the time, since, by actively working on the environment, man could actually turn wasteland into wealth. Furthermore, according to the Protestant theology, the cultivation of nature promised spiritual reward. Consequently, nature was praised by eighteenth-century poets whose hymns celebrated the enlightened and harmonious order of the natural world which surrounded them.

Moreover, due to the explorations European voyagers had been engaged in, English Enlightenment was deeply influenced by widening horizons and artists and thinkers began to represent “man as a citizen of the whole world” (Porter, 1980, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 297). The universe was now conceptualised as something real, tangible. As asserted by Carlyle (1829, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 297), “men have lost their belief in the Invisible, and believe and hope and work only in the Visible ... Only the material, the immediate practical, not the divine and spiritual, is important to us”.

As a consequence, human relation to the environment was seen as cooperative: mankind by means of work and innovations positively affected nature by adorning it “with beautiful Cities and Castles, with pleasant Villages and Country-Houses ... and whatever else differenceth a civil and well-cultivated Region from a barren and desolate Wilderness”, as asserted by John Ray (1691, cited in Porter, 2000, pp. 305-306), a botanist and Anglican clergyman of the time.

Always according to Ray’s vision, this is what God would tell his creatures:

I have placed thee in a spacious and well-furnished World, I have provided thee with Materials whereon to exercise and employ thy Art and Strength ... I have distinguished the Earth into Hills and Valleys, and Plains, and Meadows, and Woods; all these Parts, capable of Culture and Improvement by thy Industry, I have committed to thee for thy assistance in thy labors of Plowing, and Carrying, and Drawing, and Travel, the laborious Ox, the patient Ass, and the strong and serviceable Horse ... (ibid., p. 305).

This passage clearly demonstrates the anthropocentric vision that the Enlightenment instilled in the English eighteenth-century citizens. Everything was believed to be exclusively created for mankind, the exploitation of the land was thought to be encouraged and animals were of course supposed to be created to serve humans.

In this perspective, the farm can thus be seen as the epitome of the relations between human beings and nature. In the opinion of Matthew Hale (1677, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 306), “God was the great freeholder, the world his estate and man his tenant”. For this reason, humans (specifically male human beings) in order to “preserve the face of the earth in beauty, usefulness and fruitfulness” were “invested with power, authority, right, dominion, trust and care, to correct and abridge the excesses and cruelties of the fiercer animals” (ibid). Therefore, nature could work if only dominated, it needed to be ruled by the principles of good husbandry and man was, obviously, the steward who, not only had power over the land, but also was able to improve it. And those citizens, enlightened by such a spirit of enhancement and progress, resolved to accomplish this task both in the field of the capitalist farming – whose agricultural progressive betterment was publicised by a new type of instructional literature – and in the domain of landscape gardening.

In this period agriculture (and nature in general) was especially associated with science. Indeed, through both the promotion of the chemical study of the soil aimed at enhancing farming, and the observation of alternative methods of foreign husbandry numerous changes and innovations were introduced. This new

‘scientific agriculture’ transformed the relationship between man and nature. As wrote James Hutton, “man becomes ‘like a God on earth... orders the system of this world, and commands this species of animal to live, and that to die’” (Jones, 1985, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 308). As a result, during these years, several volumes and periodicals on the new farming techniques and agricultural improvements were published.

However, as Williams points out, this particular tendency to consider nature scientifically is to be found in another branch of the literature of the time, something detached from the mere observation of working agriculture, as, for instance, in Gilbert White’s *Journal*. What was new in White (1720-1793), an English naturalist, ecologist and ornithologist, was “a single and dedicated observation, as if the only relationships of country living were to its physical facts. It [was] a new kind of record, not only of the facts, but of a way of looking at the facts: a way of looking that [would] come to be called scientific” (Williams 1973, p. 169). White, “in the close and detailed precision of his notes and observations” scrutinised natural order, “a physical world of creatures and conditions”, as he was interested in nature for its own sake, separated from human influence (ibid., p. 170).

The turning point in the agricultural business occurred with “the shift from ‘moral economy’ to ‘political economy’, from partial usufruct to complete private ownership” thus “end[ing] the waste of Nature and ensur[ing] the gain of all” (Porter 2000, p. 309). Enclosure and enlightened agriculture became a model of “proper environmental superintendence, wedding profit to paternalism, yet also incorporating cherished values” that encouraged poets to avail themselves of the traditional pastoral myths, which considered nature a “spontaneous bucolic bounty” (ibid., p. 310). Adam Smith’s view of land as “the greatest, the most important, and the most durable part of the wealth of every extensive country” and the Protestant interpretation of labour as an activity that “consecrated private gain into a public and ecological good” contributed to the advent of a real worship of nature, which was now considered “the root of all value” (Smith, 1976, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 310).

The association of the environment with the image of the farm promoted “policies for the responsible management of natural resources for private profit and long-term public benefit”, consequently “the mastering of the wild was a source of pride” and became a dominant theme (Porter 2000, p. 311).

As a result, since wilderness was thought to be made controlled, pleasing and, above all, profitable, English gardens underwent some changes as well.

Influenced by the Renaissance style, which was characterized by order and classical ideals, gardens had been until then meticulously organised, as they had to reflect human presence, in opposition to the natural and untamed wilderness, where nothing was methodically ordered. However, as during the Enlightenment nature began to be enclosed and ‘regularised into a farm’, this vision obviously changed. “With Nature tamed, wildness itself could at least become aesthetically prized” and “the English garden was refashioned to follow Nature” (ibid., p. 312). Consequently,

a generation of gardeners fostered a new arcadian escapism by turning the great house into an island lapped by a sea of parkland, whose austere simplicity – mere turf, tree clumps and sheets of water – could pass for Nature, thanks to the art that concealed art”.

(ibid)

This alteration in the general taste of the time originated great changes in the aesthetics of the environment and landscaping. The ennoblement of mountains was one of those changes. Mountainous landscapes arose great admiration as they “could be validated through the eye of art, and perceived more as paintings than as mere natural objects” (Porter 2000, p. 314). In the 1780s the ‘picturesque creed’ was theorised by William Gilpin, according to whom “the test of a scene lay in how well it actualized the qualities making a fine painting” (Andrews, 1989, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 314). In the late eighteenth century, natural elements such as “craggs, precipices and torrents, windswept ridges, unploughed uplands ... became the very acme of taste, precisely because they had not been ruled and refined by the human hand” (Burke, 1757, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 314). Certainly, this new

taste that would later affect the romantic thinking and that still determines our collective imagination, had been influenced by Edmund Burke's famous work published in 1757, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*.

This progressive alteration of view led to the development of a 'natural supernaturalism', "the neo-pagan and Romantic notion that Nature is sacred and 'measureless to man'" (Porter 2000, p. 314). The 'cult of sublime' which originated from a mutation in the landscape preference of the time became very popular especially due to the "Romantic conviction ... that industry wrecked the environment, both physically and aesthetically" (Bermingham, 1986, cited in Porter, 2000, p. 316). From that moment on, the sublime scenery was considered the safe haven against the progressive deterioration caused by the industrial society. As a matter of fact, "what had long been championed as agricultural improvement actually spelt environmental degradation and aesthetic impoverishment" (Porter 2000, p. 317). Unfortunately, this impoverishment did not just involve landscape aesthetical beauty, it affected rural labourers' conditions as well, which worsened even more.

Enlightened culture created environments of the senses and the soil that fantasized the harmony of human production and natural sustainability. At the heart of enlightened attitudes towards Nature, however, lay a nest of paradoxes. Enlightened man, especially in his Picturesque embodiment, wanted to discover Nature unspoilt by man; and yet, when he found it, he could not resist the impulse, if only in the imagination to 'improve' it, aesthetically or agriculturally. By the close of the eighteenth century, utilitarian Nature – Nature improved – was becoming problematized and Romanticism was making it transcendental, holy and subjective. Under Romanticism, Nature became the new religion. (Porter 2000, p. 319)

1.4 Romantic legacy: association between mood and environment

The Romantic Age is characterized by a new practice, the attribution of human feelings and moods to natural views. This tendency to describe landscapes through one's inner feelings, that is a kind of personification which occurs in poetic descriptions, will be later defined 'pathetic fallacy', a term coined by the British cultural critic John Ruskin (1819-1900). 'Pathetic fallacy' refers to the assignation of human emotions and conducts to natural elements and things. Ruskin criticizes the exaggerated sentimentality that dominated late-eighteenth-century poetry. According to him, poetry had to be extirpated of the 'emotional falseness' it was characterized of, since the poet's perceptions unjustly affected the landscapes which simply deserved to be described for what they were. The typical romantic description is a melancholic landscape which reflects the poet's pensive mood. The poem mirrors the poet's interior life so that everything which is described seems to emanate the spirit of the writer. As Bate argues, "this kind of self-conscious identification between mood and environment is not characteristic of older representations of melancholy. Ruskin showed that the pathetic fallacy is distinctly a mark of the modern – we would say the Romantic – artist" (Bate 2000, p. 124).

The philosophy of Romanticism appeared as a reaction against the Enlightenment, opposing its values, which were based on an extreme rationality and had only led to violence and terror, despite its promise of happiness and improvement. As a consequence, throughout Europe, artists, writers and musicians rejected the enlightened values, turning to emotion and imagination. Accordingly, nature, with its astonishing beauty and power – which at the time was far more wild and respected than today – was selected as the main theme. Pristine nature was the perfect scene where individuals were able to exalt their emotions, which were usually heightened or rather violent. Through nature man could disclose his inner feelings, his deeper distress and seek refuge in boundless and pristine landscapes where he could experience the bewilderment provoked by the sublime.

The painting that is considered the quintessential romantic image is *The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (c. 1818) by Caspar David Friedrich.

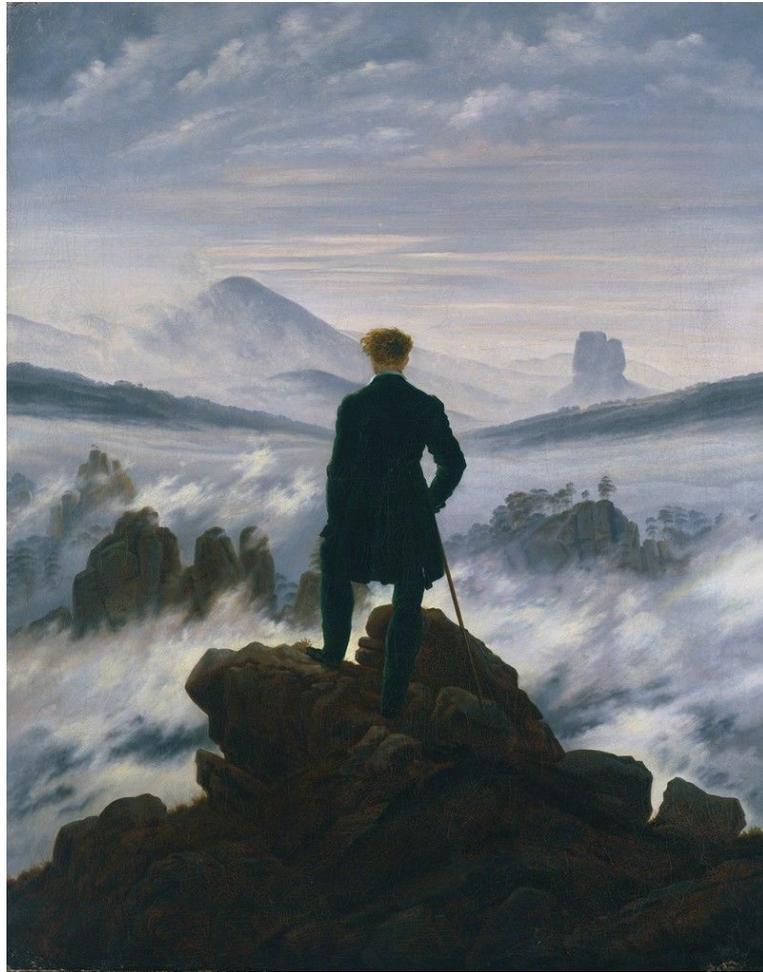


Figure 2. *The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (c. 1818), by Caspar David Friedrich

This well-known painting depicts a man overlooking a foggy landscape while standing on a rock; a gentleman who was certainly meant to reproduce the Romantic wanderer lost in the sublime, but which actually represents the attitude of the insatiable modern man towards the world. Standing in a raised position, looking down at that scenario as a god would probably do above the world he created, he clearly symbolizes human power over nature. In this sense, Friedrich's work not only depicts the sublime, the Romantic man, the tension provoked by natural awesomeness, but it also produces an evident depiction of the Anthropocene man whose influence over nature is overwhelming. Romantics aimed at representing nature's power, nature's influence over man, nature's

spiritual refuge against the corruption of modern civilization. Yet, nineteenth-century-artists were the product of the former era during which the aesthetic of Enlightenment spread its principles all over Europe.

Consequently, although Romanticism is usually presented as a cultural movement which is totally opposed to Enlightenment as it tends to emphasize the feelings of the artists (especially pessimism and disillusion concerning the historical and political situation of Europe after the French Revolution), nineteenth century was still influenced by the Age of Reason. Indeed, an attitude of faith in progress with regards to the several scientific and technological discoveries, and an increasing optimism towards humankind who guided by reason was believed to conquer the world was still present in the Romantic Age. This is what emerges from this painting; not a quivering, threatened, unfamiliar, melancholic poet, but a steady, confident, bold gentleman. Here the sublime does not intimidate man: he stands in a position of dominance over the entire nature, even the more sublime and terrifying.

The Wanderer above the Sea of Fog may be then considered as a temerarious tourist in the very moment of recognition of natural beauty, when totally convinced of his own power over it, he still ignores what actually lays behind such charm – a life which is rather different from the one described in books, a nature which does not really reflect the perfect beauty celebrated by art. In this perspective, Scott's first description of Edward in the Highlands seems to resemble Friedrich's wanderer, as he embodies a bold and determined squire, pleasing inspired by the evocative nocturnal landscape, in a posture of contemplation:

the moon, which now began to rise, shewed obscurely the expanse of water which spread before them, and the shapeless and indistinct forms of mountains, with which it seemed to be surrounded. The cool, and yet mild air of the summer night, refreshed Waverley after his rapid and toilsome walk; and the perfume which it wafted from the birch trees, bathed in the evening dew, was exquisitely fragrant.

He had now time to give himself up to the full romance of his situation. (*Waverley*, p. 86)

Nevertheless, our hero will soon change attitude by acknowledging his own limits as his desperate attempts to act like a Highlander turn out to be useless. *Waverley*'s futile efforts have a comic effect on the readers who end up deriding him; however, Scott's writing ability succeeds in creating a strong bond between Edward and the public. The readers tend to identify with him as he embodies their romantic reveries; indeed, *Waverley* is a typical early-nineteenth-century adolescent who needs to find his place in the world. He is a tourist willing to explore, he has faith in his own beliefs, but he has not dealt with the innumerable dangers nature has in store for him yet.

It is incredible how now as then, two centuries after Friedrich painted such a masterpiece, the observer can still feel the same emotions the painting used to awaken at the time. While looking at those summits poking out the fog, exactly as the wanderer, we take pleasure in admiring such natural beauty because our attitude towards aesthetic attractiveness is still there: we are fascinated by landscapes and we tend to idealize them. However, several twenty-first-century-digital hikers would not be happy with the mere contemplation of it. If modern superficial tourists had the chance to stand in such a position, overlooking those peaks, they would probably take a ton of pictures and selfies, posting them online. Today there is the tendency to shorten the real moment of contemplation of the environment by losing time looking at our phones' screens, choosing the best filter, adjusting the light and striking a pose, instead of enjoying the moment in the place we are visiting. Exactly as *Waverley* – who embodies the enervated romantic youth – and precisely as the picturesque tourists – busy in examining landscapes compulsively looking for the embodiment of their idea of 'picturesque' – we are looking for our idea of natural beauty, we are always inclined to modify what we actually see, we are not satisfied with the reality which surrounds us, it does not seem to be ever good enough, so that we constantly seek to ameliorate it, to live it up to our expectations. Will we ever cease craving for perfection? Will we keep

being disappointed superficial tourists as Edward and Angel or will we ever be able to get a deeper understanding of nature?

1.5 Can natural beauty be unmediated?

Natural beauty has usually been influenced and labelled by mental associations we humans have produced over the centuries. Culture affects nature, celebrating specific natural features while condemning others. And it is all because of previous opinions, crystallised ideas and preconceived judgments deriving from years of unstoppable passing on.

During the Romantic age, the fundamental feature of a poem was the turmoil of feelings conveyed through the description of nature, so that the readers could identify themselves with those passions, without regard to the exact geographical identification of that place, even though they frequently made explicit the name of the location which inspired their poems. The readers could actually project themselves into any real landscape which owned the characteristics depicted by the poem. This means that they could mentally connect every poem to a particular landscape they were familiar with, or rather, their taste was accustomed to as poems were mentally connected to places they saw on illustrated books, or through “a visualization of a piece of fictive text. Yet to speak of that same illustration as working within the tradition of the painterly sublime is to relate it not to nature, but to a previous work of art” (Bate 2000, p. 125). As a matter of fact, “artists try to tell you something about the world, about life – they hold up a mirror to nature – but they can only do so via a repertoire of techniques and conventions that are inherited from previous art” (ibid., p. 126). This is certainly true for “the case of representations of a return to the wild” as “the intrusion of artistic tradition is necessary to both the compositional process and the affective response, but it contaminates the purity of the relationship with nature itself” (ibid). This means that artistic representations of a figure in a landscape are inevitably mediated. Therefore, the question which arises is: can a figure stand in a natural landscape, relating to it, in an unmediated way? Well, apparently, the very moment nature reveals itself to us humans, it will always be mediated by our previous knowledge, our preconceived ideas, our language. Waverley and Clare judge the environment they see by means of their ‘cultural filters’ as well, filters which are the product of their epoch and country of origin: nineteenth-century England. Indeed, the

environment we are presented by Scott and Hardy is mediated through the ‘cultural filters’ owned by the characters – who are representatives of the particular time in which the authors lived. Therefore, since every time we observe nature we apply our specific ‘cultural filters’ to make our judgments, our vision will always be subjective and influenced by the particular language and medium we employ when doing it. Nature will be inevitably mediated by our ways of framing it in a work of art, a photograph, a description, a poem, a song, or an engaging guidebook.

The challenge is try to get to a mature awareness of the environment which, despite being mediated by our ‘cultural filters’, deserves to be understood in its complexities. We should attempt to go beyond the mere application of our preconceived ideas on the landscape we look at and actually understand the intricacies which hide underneath its outward appearance.



Figure 3. *Flatford Mill from a Lock on the Stour* (ca. 1811) by John Constable

1.6 Picturesque: from taste to tourism

With regard to guidebooks, it is precisely in the late eighteenth century that they grew popular in Great Britain. In 1778 Thomas West, a Jesuit priest, antiquary and author, published the first guidebook to the lakes, entitled *A Guide to the Lakes*. It referred to the Lake District, a mountainous region located in North West England, within the county of Cumbria, which borders Scotland to the north. The publication of this book is especially crucial as it enabled the origin of the modern tourism industry. West was one of the first authors to emphasize the notion of ‘picturesque environment’ through his descriptions of the beautiful views that visitors could admire in the wild and savage north. His delineation of the scenery and wilderness of Northern England, characterized by a typical romantic vision, was very influential at a time when grand tours were so much popular among the upper classes. West drew the attention of a wide public since he claimed that the Lakes’ scenery was very similar to the one that could be enjoyed in the continent, comparing it to the Alps or the Apennines landscape. It was the beginning of real tourism in the Lake District, a place which from that moment on would become the quintessential British tourist destination and years later a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as it is considered one of the finest areas to epitomize England’s natural beauty, where artists, writers and musicians have been inspired for centuries. The “journey back to nature” as Bate defines it, “has its origins here. The early tourists went armed with guidebook, sketchpad, Claude glass and sometimes camera obscura” (Bate 2000, p. 127). They needed to immortalise natural beauty as we ordinarily do today. They used to sketch, paint or photograph what they considered a particularly fine view.

Malcolm Andrews (1989, cited in Bate, 2000, p.127) in his book on the origins of picturesque tourism, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain 1760-1800*, explains that “there is a peculiar circularity in the tourist’s experience. He values the kind of scenery which has been aesthetically validated in paintings, postcards and advertisements; he appraises it with the word ‘picturesque’; and then he takes a photograph of it to confirm its pictorial value”. If we think about it, through this process humans cannot but turn the places they

visit into commodities, thus tempting, directly or indirectly, other people to act likewise, encouraging them to get to the same places and capture their charm. In this way, those very places are destined to lose their naturalness, becoming affected by the influence of mass humanity. Now, if in the past this vicious cycle was mainly fostered by writers and painters, today, we are all to blame for it as, due to our immoderate use of social networks, we are all responsible for such a worsening mechanism.

We will take as an example a very recent incident that happened last summer in a mountainous area nearby Cortina D'Ampezzo, a place considered one of the Venetian marvels characterized by the Dolomites that in 2009 were declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As reported in the *Corriere della Sera*, notwithstanding the visible bans translated in four languages, tourists pay no attention to the rules as they totally disregard interdictions treating a glacial lake as if it were their holiday-home swimming pool. Their impoliteness is absolutely unacceptable and cannot but lead to the degradation of such an environmental heritage. The reporter laments the fact that in one single day four thousand tourists visited Sorapiss Lake – one of the most beautiful natural lakes of our region, located 1900 meters above sea level, famous especially for its turquoise water – leaving rubbish everywhere. In addition to that, a 26-year-old tourist swam in the lake and took some selfies completely ignoring the ‘no bathing’ signs. Such a crowd of tourists in a mountainous area is due to an exaggerated advertising of the place which, quite obviously, has been promoted by simple trippers, inveterate excursionists that habitually post – for instance on Instagram – their captivating pictures and inadvertently produce a rather dangerous “public of potential fellow-pilgrims” (Bate 2000, p. 127).

Following Thomas West's example, William Wordsworth himself, by publishing his *Guide to the Lakes*, his best-selling publication, “did more than anyone to popularise his native Lakeland landscapes, and in so doing bring in the trainloads of day trippers whom he then said would destroy the place” (ibid., p. 128). Wordsworth was then not only a critic, but also an exponent and economic beneficiary of the picturesque philosophy. Unfortunately, although the intentions of these writers were morally admirable as they were uniquely willing to praise the

natural beauty of their native land, which of course had to be a source of pride, the consequences they induced were rather disastrous.

One of the prerequisites for the picturesque was “a little pleasing peasant poverty”, as “beggars or ... colourful gypsies” were “the human equivalent of run-down buildings”, perfect representatives of that particular state of decay that picturesque scenes had to convey (Bate 2000, p. 128). However, this specific trend of the time led to excessive convictions that produced rather comic behaviours among artists. Accordingly, the comic effect produced by these artists throughout their assiduous search for the perfect picturesque spot was object of scorn for many writers. Bate provides us with an effective example by citing a scene of *Headlong Hall* (1816), a comic novel by Thomas Love Peacock, where

a pleasant walk by the lake in the landscaped grounds of the hall is rudely interrupted by a tremendous explosion: Squire Headlong’s ruined tower being insufficiently tumbledown for a refined taste, he has taken it upon himself to speed the process of decay with the assistance of some well-laid gunpowder. (ibid)

According to Sir Uvedale Price, author of *An Essay on the Picturesque* (1794), the element that had to be considered responsible for the distinction between the ‘classically beautiful’ and the ‘romantically picturesque’ was the influence of time. Now, time had to be regarded not only as the passing of the years, but also as the effect of the weather. Therefore, time, through the altering effect that weather has on things, “transforms what was once a human imposition into a part of the landscape itself” (Bate 2000, p. 129). Price thus emphasized the “manifestation of nature’s wonderful powers of regeneration, [the] organic life’s capacity to infiltrate the most seemingly desolate places”, a concept that still characterizes the collective image of romantic landscape, which is typically epitomized by some ancient wrecked buildings covered in ivy located in a remote and uninhabited area (ibid).

The term ‘picturesque’ was first introduced in 1768 by the Reverend William Gilpin (1781, cited in Ross, 1987, p. 271), in his treatise entitled *An Essay*

on *Prints*, where he defined it as “a term expressive of that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture”. As Ross points out, this concept figured not only in discussions on English gardening, but had a much broader influence in the cultural life of eighteenth century. Christopher Hussey (1927, cited in Ross, 1987, p. 271), an English pioneer in the history of taste, considered the picturesque an aesthetic discovery and believed that in the picturesque era “the relation of all the arts to one another, through the pictorial appreciation of nature, was so close that poetry, painting, gardening, architecture, and the art of travel may be said to have been fused into the single ‘art of landscape’”. As the art historian David Watkin (1982, cited in Ross, 1987, p. 271) observes, “between 1730 and 1830, English poets, painters, travellers, gardeners, architects, connoisseurs, and dilettanti were united in their emphasis on the primacy of pictorial values. The Picturesque became the universal mode of vision ...”.

However, due to their obsession with the rules of taste, “a movement that began with a desire to return to the simplicity of natural forms had become trapped by its own prescriptive jargon (Bate 2000, p. 130). The admiration of sceneries became a mere matter of terminology for, as Jane Austen (1933, cited in Bate, 2000, p. 130) comments through the character of Marianne in her *Sense and Sensibility*, “every body pretends to feel and tries to describe with the taste and elegance of him who first defined what picturesque beauty was”. This means that Gilpin’s jargon had become the norm in the 1790s when Austen was working on her novel, since, in those years, when the cult for the picturesque was at its height, his descriptions of scenery provided the only applicable qualities for a landscape to deserve the attention of the observer and be considered truly picturesque.

A rather interesting consideration deserves here to be illustrated, namely, the fact that this idea of picturesque mainly focused on the aesthetical appearance that nature evoked in the eye of the beholder, totally disregarding the soil productivity of the area. This is a vision that clearly breaks off from the Enlightened view of nature, which was especially characterized by the utility of the land. The picturesque fashion, on the contrary, tended to promote a different idea of ‘fine country’, a luxury that was affordable only to the wealthy and healthy, people who, distant from the practical use of the land spent their time simply

admiring the scenery, as tourists would do. Despite the philosophical attitude that characterized this new conception of natural beauty, which focused on the celebration of a primitive and uncorrupted landscape, it is essential to remark the particular way in which these apparently innocuous and eco-friendly tourists related to the environment. As a matter of fact, at the basis of picturesque tourism laid a conservation movement, engaged in the protection of places of natural beauty which “did not base their arguments on a theory of nature’s rights. Rather they argued from human needs” (Bate 2000, p. 132). Actually, the experience of the natural world was, and still is, a form of recreation for us humans as it is necessary for us to escape urban modernity, which very often renders us stressed and alienated. In this perspective, the attitude of the admirers of the picturesque towards nature can be considered rather utilitarian as they were de facto “using it as a source of nourishment for the spirit, just as the man who enclose[d] land [did] so in order to increase its yield of nourishment for the body” (ibid).

This taste for travel to remote and beautiful areas – as the English Lakes and the Scottish mountains – precisely originated at the end of the eighteenth century due to the influence of Gilpin and his fellow authors, so that

by the end of the nineteenth century, the number of people with the leisure and income to indulge that taste had increased to such an extent that tourism itself began to change those places, with the result that organizations such as the National Trust were formed for the purpose of protecting the most celebrated picturesque spots. (Bate 2000, p. 132)

Furthermore, as Bate brilliantly points out, the encounter with nature is not only a form of recreation for the alienated man, but also a true ‘act of re-creation’ of nature on the part of an artist. Indeed, a landscape is none other than a portion of land specifically arranged by the observer aimed at representing a given scenery that is believed to be pleasing. Precisely, the term ‘landscape’ originally denoted an artistic genre, a pictorial representation of the countryside, therefore, a ‘picturesque landscape’ is a section of land that resembles a painting. The

picturesque scene is usually viewed from a raised station where the observer stands overlooking the view with the classic attitude of Enlightenment mastery. Thus, picturesque landscapes reproduce the point of view of the human observer, not the land itself, it is not at all natural, but rather artificial. Picturesque reversed the normal situation in which art should imitate nature, proposing instead that nature should imitate art; “in valuing art above nature whilst pretending to value nature above art, the picturesque took to an extreme a tendency of Enlightenment thought which has had catastrophic ecological consequences” (Bate 2000, p. 136).

According to Gilpin, the most picturesque spots were “product[s] of human history, not geological time”, especially ruined abbeys (Bate 2000, p. 142). From this point of view, industrialisation was a product of human history as well. For this reason, picturesque tourists, besides natural beauty, used to admire the new industrial sites, which were unquestionably considered ‘picturesque’, for they had an impressive impact on them just as much as natural phenomena and ancient ruins. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that sublime could be evoked by both industrial and natural elements, as they were equally responsible of bewilderment and charm. It was true that industry and urbanisation were considered fundamental for civilization and that their aesthetic magnetism was a source of sublime sensations, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century the general opinion that industry had to be confined to the city became the new Romantic creed, in order to protect the environment.



Figure 4. *Tintern Abbey: The Crossing and Chancel, Looking towards the East Window* (1794) by William Turner

1.7 The persistent pursuit of the picturesque and its satire

The Claude Glass is the object that best epitomizes the attitude of picturesque tourists. This original device was used to reproduce the scene in the style of Claude Lorraine's art, which focused on landscape painting. Nature was reflected through the glass, which was obviously named after the French painter, and the landscape mirrored by it was framed and modified in its natural tints. The Claude Glass was intended to help artists reproduce landscapes and as Gilpin himself advocated its use, this device became very popular at the time. Logically, the landscapes represented by Gilpin were characterized by the tints and the oval shapes provided by the glass, influencing the general taste of the upper classes. Following Gilpin's steps, tourists and artists, determined to spot a stretch of picturesque land, used to stand on a promontory, turn their back on the view and take out their Claude Glass.



Figure 5. A ruined abbey, from William Gilpin's Wye Tour. Aquatint from *Observations on the River Wye* (1782)

The guidebook published by William Gilpin in 1782, *Observations on the River Wye*, intensely increased the popularity of the Wye Tour by illustrating its sceneries as if mirrored by a Claude Glass. This is a typical example of picturesque

excursion along the river Wye, which for much of its length forms part of the border between England and Wales and which certainly represents one of the most scenic landscapes in Britain. This tour aimed at contemplating the natural beauty of the Wye Valley which, according to Gilpin, represented the quintessential picturesque features. At the time, tourists used to travel by pleasure boat where they could admire the landscape and capture the view by writing or drawing. However, the simplest way to explore natural places were on foot, as William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy did in 1798. Inspired by this tour, the poet wrote his famous poem entitled “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour, July 13, 1798”.

The common destinations of picturesque tourists were Scotland, North and South Wales, the Wye Valley and the famous Lake District, in northwest England. Searching for the perfect picturesque scenery in line with Gilpin’s idea, often by means of the Claude Glass, they quickly sketched or painted the view that most attracted them. The attitude of these inveterate tourists would later be satirised by caricaturists in the early years of the nineteenth century, even though picturesque tourism remained a popular fashion until the 1830s.

A famous example of picturesque satire is the comic poem written by William Combe and illustrated by Thomas Rowlandson, *The Tour of Dr Syntax in Search of the Picturesque* (1812), which would be later followed by *The Second Tour of Dr Syntax in Search of Consolation* (1820) and *The Third Tour of Dr Syntax in Search of a Wife* (1821). Combe and Rowlandson successfully lampooned the typical picturesque tourist – in particular Gilpin’s expeditions to picturesque Britain – effectively criticising the mania of the time, when looking for the ideal landscape led to the celebration of a framed and purely aesthetic nature, totally disregarding the possible dangers one may incur in while concentrating on the mere “act of representation, in supposing that there is nothing outside the frame of the Claude Glass” (Bate 2000, p. 133).

Even though the picturesque tourist, as Dr Syntax, declares to be in search of nature, he is in fact seeking specific artworks that may be reflected into the landscape, “his ideal would therefore be to find a text inscribed upon the land: a ruin which picks out the letters P I C” (ibid). In order to do that, the tourist does

not really look at the real world that surrounds him, but rather keeps reading his guidebook, the real source of picturesque, where the correct aesthetic features a spot must present are listed and masterfully exemplified. So, as the picturesque tourist is not looking where he is going, he will probably get lost.



Figure 6. *Doctor Syntax loses his way* by Thomas Rowlandson in *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque, A Poem* by William Combe (1812)

The way in which Dr Syntax “feels free to alter what he actually sees in order to make it conform to picturesque principles” is extremely comic as “to anyone who actually inhabits the country, the whole procedure will seem very bizarre” (Bate 2000, p. 134). Both *Doctor Syntax drawing after nature* (picture below) and *Doctor Syntax sketching on the Lake* (on the first page) anticipate James Baker Pyne’s device of turning the gaze of the natives back on the tourist, where “instead of the tourist regarding the native labourer as part of the picturesque scene, the local is looking at the trainload visitors, regarding them as anthropological curiosities” (Bate 2000, 127-128).

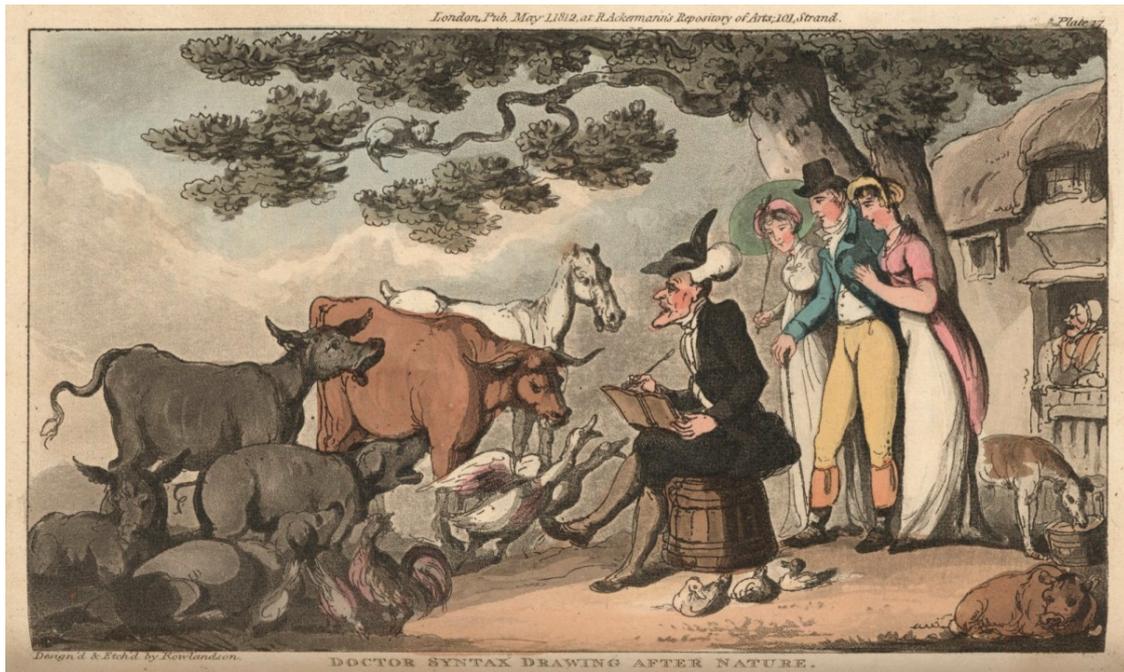


Figure 7. *Doctor Syntax drawing after nature* by Thomas Rowlandson in *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque, A Poem* by William Combe (1812)

As remarked above, focused on finding the perfect picturesque beauty, tourists may fall into unexpected dangers, a typical trait of untrained travellers who, excessively confident of their abilities and perpetually lost in their thoughts, end up underestimating the country.

In the plates below, Dr Syntax, his eyes on the precious guidebook he constantly refers to while meditating on the romance of the situation and trying to identify the picturesque, tumbles into the water and is pursued by a bull. Here Rowlandson succeeded in criticizing and emphasizing how picturesque tourists, focused on the artistic aspect of the landscape and dreamily immersed in their fancy, did not realize that they were actually dealing with the real world, a realm that was not merely made of refined words and pictures, but a world where it was especially necessary to be pragmatic.



Figure 8. *Doctor Syntax tumbling into the water* by Thomas Rowlandson in *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque, A Poem* by William Combe (1812)



Figure 9. *Doctor Syntax pursued by a bull* by Thomas Rowlandson in *The Tour of Doctor Syntax in Search of the Picturesque, A Poem* by William Combe (1812)

1.8 The natural context of Edward Waverley and Angel Clare

I will now illustrate the features of the natural context in which the two characters that are the object of this study move and behave as tourists, clarifying the peculiar differences which characterize the environments that they regard as ‘nature’.

Edward Waverley moves from a modern England to a pristine Scotland. He crosses two borders, the one which divides England from Scotland – which by 1745 have already been unified under the name of Great Britain – and the inner Scottish border between the Lowlands and the Highlands. So, the change of place and the progressive approach towards a specific environment, which in the eyes of the protagonist is more natural, more authentic and romantic, develops through this long travel northward, as the nineteenth-century collective imagery locates the land of wilderness in the North of Great Britain, far away from industries, cities and modernism. The remote and untamed North well represents the romantic wild nature par excellence. Certainly, the historical period in which the story is set affects this particular vision of nature, as the older the times, the better the environment. Indeed, by associating the unspoilt nature to ancient times, Waverley supports a cliché that people, and especially writers, normally use when engaging this topic. Waverley, enchanted by that particular situation, ends up idealizing a world characterized by ancient manners based on the feudal order, a political system which completely opposes English justice. Indeed, the feudal system that still rules Scotland is far from embodying a perfect past, rather, it imposes severe laws and poor conditions on the subjects who live under their lord’s will. As illustrated in the novel, the chiefs have power of decision on the whole community they head up where people are expected to obey and support their rulers in any situation, as any opinion or disapproval from their part is denied. Therefore, the so much idealized ancient honour and traditions we readers are introduced to actually conceal a very harsh and inflexible system in which only the powerful have the right to decide and are really respected. Edward, embodying the character of a tourist and a romantic youth, eventually idealizes the values that he, being wealthy, belonging to a well-known family and having good connections, is allowed to

benefit; were he a poor and unremarkable youth, he would probably experience anything but a romantic adventure.

Geographically, there is a progressive steepness of the ground as Waverley moves northwards: the environment he refers to is typically hilly in the Lowlands and mountainous in the Highlands. In Scott's novel, therefore, readers are not introduced to the typical life of the farmers set in the English countryside, affected by capitalism and industrialisation and which writers as Hardy oppose to the modern cities. Rather, Scott depicts a feudal economy based on poor farming, breeding and hunting. In the context of feudal Scotland, the Enlightened trend of the compulsive exploitation of the land has not arrived yet. In those years, untamed nature still exceeds human influence on the environment, since the effects that the peasants have on those places appear as completely acceptable and harmless. Waverley is fascinated by such a landscape because it is very different from the one he is accustomed to, but above all, because it represents the setting of the romances he reads. He is enthralled by those places especially because of the past they represent. In that remote region, he is willing to find the exact romantic imagined sceneries he keeps taking refuge in, exactly as the picturesque tourists aim at getting to perfect views predefined by art. The particular evocativeness of the Lowlands, and even more of the Highlands, is due to their wildness and boundlessness, their wonderful and unrestrained openness: only green pastures, steep slopes, clear waters and local genuine vegetation. In the Scotland of 1745 that Waverley celebrates, people coexist with the environment in a harmonious way. Certainly, this is Edward's romantic vision. As a matter of fact, the human tendency to dominate over nature has always existed, being an attitude typical of our species. Our highly developed body and mind allow us to do things that the other animals simply cannot do and the evolution we underwent made us capable of damaging the ecosystem that originated us. Having achieved such a degree of power and control over the whole world, and acknowledging the serious consequences our behaviour has on the ecosystem, we desperately refer to previous ages where we were supposed to live in the total respect of the environment, not realizing this is just a myth we have been telling continuously and that will endure through the generations. It is a way of judging a world that we

do not like and that originated by human activity, an activity we do not accept and we hope will, sooner or later, cease to derange the ecosystem. Certainly, at the time in which the *Waverley novels* are set, peasants exploit the environment as mankind has always done, only they do it in their own way, with the tools they have available in that specific historical period, hunting, farming, breeding and cutting trees. It is the perspective of the observer to consider it a ‘more natural’ relationship with the environment but human intention to dominate has always been present. As explained by Williams, it is just a matter of perspective and a myth created by our unsatisfied lives and burdened consciences., an idyllic dream we keep getting back to, a habit instilled in our human essence that took hold through the centuries.

If *Waverley*’s idealized nature is a primitive Scotland with its green pristine landscapes, stupendous mountains and clear lakes, set in a pre-capitalist society – where feudalism is nevertheless slowly disappearing – Hardy, on his part, introduces the reader to a modern Wessex, where even the most remote country villages are affected by capitalism.

Wessex, the place chosen by Hardy for his fictional world, geographically corresponds to Southern England – specifically to the counties of Devon, Somerset, Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorchester, which are circled in orange on the map below – and is composed of six territories: North Wessex, Upper Wessex, Mid Wessex, Outer Wessex, Lower Wessex and South Wessex. The name of this area, in which Hardy’s characters move, derives from ancient Wessex, one of the regions established by the Anglo-Saxons, and which included the territories Hardy’s Wessex refers to. Wessex, together with other six kingdoms, East Anglia, Essex, Kent, Mercia, Northumbria and Sussex, formed the heptarchy that reigned in Britain from the 6th until the early 10th century, when they were finally united under the name of Kingdom of England. The story of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, is mainly set in the region of South Wessex (circled in purple on the map), where the green countryside seems to occasionally recall an English pagan past that has gone for too long a time.



Figure 10. This map geographically contextualises Wessex in the current regions of England

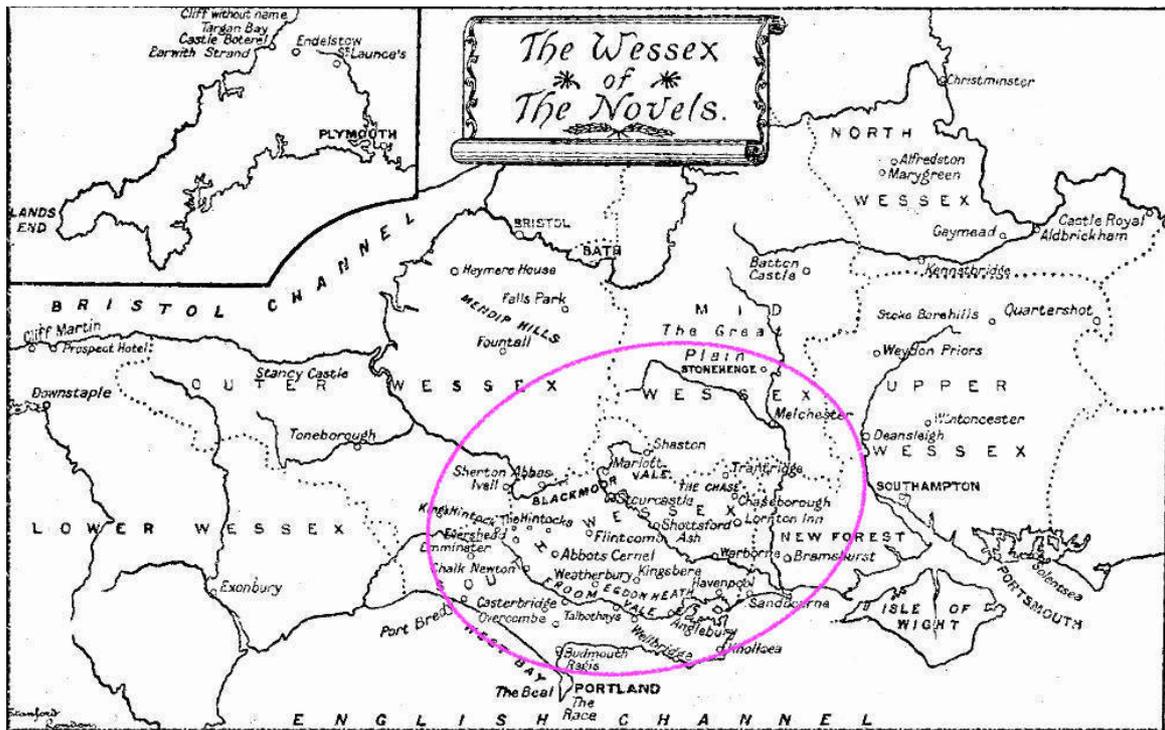


Figure 11. This map is from the Wessex Novels Edition. 1895-1896

This pagan revival is just a sweet and nostalgic dream Angel keeps hanging on to during his stay in the countryside. He celebrates English rurality with its revitalising calmness, romantically neglecting the fact that even the country, despite being far away from the city, had already been affected by modernity. The mid-nineteenth-century English countryside described by Hardy is not unrestrained and pristine as the Scotland of 1745, rather, it is characterized by enclosures, migrations from the country to the city, and “annual migrations from farm to farm” where “the Egypt of one family was the Land of Promise to the family who saw it from a distance, till by residence there it became in turn their Egypt also; and so they changed and changed” (*Tess*, pp. 351-352). Even though there still exist places as Talbothays, where people live in a marginal and unspoiled world which resists the modern methods of farming, peasants’ lives have become uncertain, increasingly depending on their landowner’s decisions. Moreover, their work is excessively quickened due to the introduction of new farming implements that set their labour pace, as it is the case at Flintcomb-Ash farm. Angel, despite being aware of the agricultural technological innovations that are spreading through the English countryside – techniques he himself is willing to explore and

employ – once at Talbothays he tends to neglect the impact that modernity, under the influence of industrialisation and capitalism, has on the rural world and ends up celebrating a secluded and bucolic place representative of an essentially biological agriculture. Talbothays represents an agricultural world which still harks back to the typical manners of the past, a world which, far from the cities, has not been affected by the new methods of the mid-nineteenth century capitalist England yet. The peasants Angel meets there, simple and spontaneous, are bearers of ancient pagan myths and traditions and represent a world characterized by archaic customs and superstitions – similar to the situation Waverley finds in Scotland – values that are nevertheless destined to disappear under the galloping influence of modernity. Hardy therefore depicts Talbothays as a world made of manual work, of abilities and knowledge that have been passed down over many generations where locals are seen as humans who are more true and less corrupted due to their attachment to values typical of a rural world which is almost gone. However, locations as Flintcomb-Ash are proof of the inevitable changes that are taking place more and more in the rural areas where new implements, as the unstoppable threshing-machine, render the worker's labour inhuman. The engineman, a “dark motionless being”

travelled with this engine from farm to farm, from country to country, for as yet the steam-threshing machine was itinerant in this part of Wessex. He spoke in a strange northern accent ... hardly perceiving the scenes around him, and caring for them not at all: holding only strictly necessary intercourse with the natives, as if some ancient doom compelled him to wander here against his will in the service of his Plutonic master. (*Tess*, p. 325)

This curious entity, despite being in the agricultural world of Flintcomb-Ash, is not part of it. As he comes from the north, probably from one of the industrial cities where modern implements are produced, he is a foreigner who, “in a sort of trance”, does nothing more than obey orders, showing no sympathy for the poor labourers, victims of the deleterious effects that such a machine has on their lives

(ibid). As a matter of fact, the new machine renders less human both the engineman and the workers of the farm: the nature of the environment and the nature of human beings, affected by modernity, are doomed to be oppressed. Angel, who comes from the city, quite disappointedly, does not find such modern agricultural methods at Talbothays, rather, he is introduced to a completely biological agriculture, based on manual work. In such a pure and rural place, he rediscovers the tranquillity of a life away from the social and modern constraints of the city. He tends thus to romanticize Talbothays environment in a tourist-like attitude of admiration for a pristine world where outsiders have the impression to be free from their daily preoccupations and duties. However, the happy bucolic world of Talbothays is destined to disappear, since new agricultural implements, as the threshing machine, will reach the remotest areas of the country as well.

Therefore, both Scott and Hardy represent rural places that, in different ways – despite Waverley's and Angel's celebration of an idyllic and harmonious universe created by their fervid imagination – are irreversibly about to be affected by modernisation. In the case of Scotland, the feudal order is slowly decaying under the influence of the emerging middle-class and is destined to make way for the parliamentary monarchy that is already present in England, while, in the case of Wessex, the pre-capitalist management of the land, with its biological agriculture, is subdued by the modern capitalist mechanised farming. Despite Waverley's and Angel's obstinacy to ignore this irreversible process of change, as they are completely lost in their romantically touristic adventure, the authors provide us with a truthful historical context where mankind, even though prising the environment, cannot resist from altering it.

The natural context of Waverley's adventure is well represented in the paintings below, the first depicting a typically picturesque landscape of the Lowlands and the second representing the sublime scenery of the wild and mountainous Highlands, places where human presence is not to be found:



Figure 12. *Lake and Hill Landscape* (1870s) by William Beattie Brown



Figure 13. *Coire-na-Faireamh, in Applecross Deer Forest, Ross-shire* (ca. 1883-184) by William Beattie Brown

On the other hand, the following painting represents a quite different landscape, the natural context of Southern England, where Angel Clare decides to study the

farming and breeding methods of the time and where human presence can distinctly be noticed in the landscape:



Figure 14. *Reapers, Noonday Rest* (1865) by John Linnell

These paintings are here proposed to further clarify the difference between the two types of environment described by Scott and Hardy so that a visual distinction may be even more effective for the readers to understand my point. Scott focuses on a nature which is wild, not yet modified by human activity, whereas Hardy describes a nature which has already been modified by the labour of English farmers and that has therefore already undergone a process of change. This difference is given by both the time lapse of the plots and the particular geographical place in which the stories are set. Certainly, *Waverley*, being published 77 years before *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and talking about events that happened one century before the ones presented by Hardy, presents a nature far less affected by modernity compared to Angel Clare's world. The century gap between the two stories, however, is not the sole reason for such a difference in the natural context that is described. The particular geographical area in which the events take place

influences the natural context as well since to each area corresponds a specific morphology of the land. Quite obviously, the mountainous and remote landscapes Waverley is charmed by are expected to be found mainly in the North of Britain, which is characterized by a merely mountainous morphology, while the 'Froom Vale', located in the 'Valley of the Great Dairies', suitable for Angel's apprenticeship in farming and breeding is surely to be located in the South of Britain. Accordingly, the two novels emphasize two diverse types of nature, in *Waverley* the narrator celebrates the untamed Northern territories of Britain, while in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* the nature that is praised is a gentle and subdued nature, where the real peril is not caused by wilderness but by man. The landscapes of Northern and Southern Britain certainly emphasizes a diverse geography and structure of the land, which, as a consequence, inevitably leads to a very different relation between human action and environment. Actually, it has to be acknowledged the fact that whatever the morphology of the environment, places are nevertheless destined to be exploited by humans. Talbothays represents a rural area characterized by a fertile soil thus subjected to be exploited by means of agricultural methods. However, should the environment be too harsh to be exploited agriculturally, it would be used anyway. As a matter of fact, mountainous regions, unsuitable for agriculture, are usually destined to be manipulated in touristic terms, very often becoming renowned tourist destinations, as in the case of Scotland.

Although very dissimilar, the natural contexts in which Edward and Angel take refuge are certainly to be considered 'nature' as in both cases the environment has a pivotal role and clearly affects human choices. Also, they completely differ from the more artificial places they are accustomed to, the controlled world of Waverley-Honour on the one hand, and the "hill-surrounded little town" of Emminster on the other (*Tess*, p. 156). Therefore, they are idealized exactly because they deeply contrast with the habitual environment the two young men are used to live in. However, they are idealized for another reason as well. Waverley and Clare idealize those places because they are the places where their idealized women belong to. Flora and Tess are presented as natural beings and are usually described as pagan and mythological creatures. The device of associating the

female characters to the natural environment is here employed in the romantic emphasis of two inexperienced youths that still pervaded with an adolescent naivety identify both nature and women as pure and divine, getting carried away with their excessive romantic attitude. However, while Flora is represented as pure, determined and almost intimidating throughout the entire novel, Tess is depicted as weak and raped. If Flora's dream of restoring the Stuart family is condemned to fail – as history runs its course and the feudal system is destined to collapse – Tess's naivety and spontaneity is inevitably led to be damaged due to human deplorable behaviour – her parents' ambition, Alec's animality and Angel's excessive morality. In the eyes of the two characters, that particular nature they experience is unaffected by external factors, in those places they feel free. Actually, the natural environment they visit is not totally free, for, although in different ways, it is exploited in both cases. In Scotland, the apparently unrestrained land is actually controlled by the feudal aristocracy of the Lowlands and the clans of the Highlands, according to their interests, whereas in Wessex, the seemingly tranquil and autonomous life of the farmers and breeders is truly determined by the decisions of the landowners.

Both Waverley and Clare behave as tourists in the natural context they celebrate. Edward does so embodying an aristocratic youth unable to take care of himself among the mountains and who consequently ends up identifying with a fake romantic hero, whereas Angel plays the part of a naive aspiring agriculturalist whose philosophical attitude has really nothing to do with the country life he resolves to pursue. These characters praise a nature that is merely aesthetic, flawless and ethereal. They tend to project their passions and expectations on the natural environment, that is why, the perfect nature – and perfect woman – they talk about only exists within their minds. Human mind, shaped by art – paintings and texts – automatically projects specific expectations predetermined by the artistic influence it is imbued with on the outer world thus interpreting in its own way the events and places it happens to run into. However, this picturesque attitude is destined to be temporary as the environment clearly reveals its defective and pragmatic character, emphasizing the specific abilities it requires in order for people to endure it.

❖ Chapter two

Waverley: Edward Waverley

2.1 Waverley: a romantic youth

Edward Waverley is a young English soldier of the Hanoverian army who is sent to Scotland at the beginning of his military career to join the quarters of the regiment of dragoons in which he has obtained a commission, where he will be later involved in the 1745 Jacobite rebellion. From the first chapters of the novel we are informed of his remarkable power of imagination and love for literature, two elements that deeply affect his character. His education, “of a nature somewhat desultory” (*Waverley*, p. 12), which is the real cause of his romantic attitude towards life, leads him to prefer spending his time lost in his own imagination instead of living his real life: “as living in this ideal world became daily more delectable to our hero, interruption was disagreeable, in proportion” (*ibid.*, p. 19). Edward’s fancies take place in the sombre library of Waverley-Honour, his uncle’s estate, or along the avenues through Waverley Chase, the domain which surrounds the Hall, whose environment is portrayed as “pristine and savage” (*ibid.*). His days are then characterized by a continuous and intense state of daydreaming; his romantic dreams originate from the romances he constantly reads – which describe medieval settings – and the tales of his family narrated by the tireless Mrs Rachel, his aunt – an old maid who lives with Sir Everard, her brother and Edward’s “affectionate old uncle to whose title and estate he [is] presumptive heir” (*Waverley*, p. 6).

That is why, once our hero gets to Scotland, which at the time is still characterized by feudalism, he expects to come across places which reflect precisely the settings of the adventurous tales and romances he is so much accustomed to. His expectations are so high that our young hero takes the idealization of the Highlands to the extreme, frequently refusing to accept the simple living conditions and rural habits of Scotland, therefore seeking refuge in his reveries. This is exactly the case in chapter XVI (volume I), where the narrator provides us with quite an ironic comment:

here he [Waverley] sate on the banks of an unknown lake, under the guidance of a wild native, whose language was unknown to him, on

a visit to the den of some renowned outlaw, a second Robin Hood perhaps, or Adam o' Gordon, and that at deep midnight, through scenes of difficulty and toil, separated from his attendant, left by his guide: – what a fund of circumstances for the exercise of a romantic imagination, and all enhanced by the solemn feeling of uncertainty at least, if not of danger! The only circumstance which assorted ill with the rest was the cause of his journey – the Baron's milk cows! this degrading incident he kept in the back-ground. (*Waverley*, p. 86)

Here, *Waverley* is finally admiring the 'land of romance' he so much longed for, yet the atmosphere is about to be spoilt by the remembrance of the real motivation of his journey up to the Highlands. The very reason Edward is asked to accompany Evan Dhu Maccombich, the loyal servant and foster-brother of Fergus Mac-Ivor – the charming chieftain of Glennaquoich – is anything but romantic. The preceding night a party of robbers from the neighbouring Highlands drove off the milk cows of the Baron. This happened because the Baron refused to pay *black-mail* to Fergus Mac-Ivor – who used to guarantee a protection over his cattle – thinking “it unworthy of his rank and birth to pay it any longer” (*Waverley*, p. 75). The two gentlemen had quarrelled at a county meeting, where the young man “wanted to take precedence of all the Lowland gentlemen then present” an attitude which the Baron could not suffer (*ibid.*, p. 78). The old gentleman could not believe his eyes when he found out that his steward, “Baillie Macwheeble, who manages such things his own way, had contrived to keep this *black-mail* a secret from him, and passed it in his account for cess-money” (*ibid.*). Certainly, the Baron and the young Mac-Ivor “would have fought; but Fergus Mac-Ivor said, very gallantly, he would never raise his hand against a grey head that was so much respected” (*ibid.*). From that very day the disagreement between the two has not yet been resolved. However, the very same day of the sad discovery, Evan Dhu visits the Baron, offering Fergus's apologies to the gentleman in the hope that their former friendship may be re-established. The Baron, having accepted Mac-Ivor's apologies, agrees on a pacification between the parties and Evan Dhu, accordingly,

“declare[s] his intention to set off immediately in pursuit of the cattle” (*Waverley*, p. 82).

The highlander’s appearance, a stout mountaineer wearing the national costume, fully armed and equipped, with an air of dignity and audacity in his gaze, strikes Edward, awakening his curiosity. Here Waverley’s tour begins, following the experienced Evan Dhu, the local guide who will lead him through the wilderness of the Highlands “whose dusky barrier of mountains had already excited his wish to penetrate beyond them” (*ibid.*, p. 81). The highlander, flattered with the foreigner’s curiosity about the customs and landscapes of his own place,

without much ceremony ... invited Edward to accompany him on a short walk of ten or fifteen miles into the mountains, and see the place where the cattle were conveyed to; adding, ‘If it be as I suppose, you never saw such a place in your life, nor ever will, unless you go with me or the like of me.’ (*Waverley*, pp. 82-83)

Edward behaves as a ‘picturesque tourist’ who does not really accept nature for what it is, as “what he is actually looking for are beauties pre-determined by art” (Bate 2000, p. 133). He is essentially searching for chivalric adventures set in medieval and sublime landscapes which can satisfy his insatiable imagination. However, he will soon realize that those romantic dreams can only exist through the pages of a book or in one’s fancy. Reality is quite another story.

A significant example of Waverley’s disappointment is his meeting with Donald Bean Lean, the cows’ robber, who is presented as

totally different in appearance and manner from what his imagination had anticipated. The profession which he followed – the wilderness in which he dwelt – the wild warrior forms that surrounded him, were all calculated to inspire terror. From such accompaniments, Waverley prepared himself to meet a stern, gigantic, ferocious figure, such as Salvator would have chosen to be the central object of a group of banditti.

Donald Bean Lean was the very reverse of all these. He was thin in person and low in stature, with light sandy-coloured hair and small pale features, from which he derived his agnomen of *Bean*, or white; and although his form was light, well proportioned, and active, he appeared, on the whole, rather a diminutive and insignificant figure. (*Waverley*, p. 88)

As this passage clearly demonstrates, Scott's young hero is never really satisfied. His imagination, shaped by picturesque art – in this case the scenes painted by Salvator Rosa – and unattainable expectations, is always to be disappointed. His tourist-like attitude is the real obstacle for him to accept the naked truth reality is made of, as not even that “land of military and romantic adventures” truly fulfils his expectations (*Waverley*, p. 79).

Waverley's dissatisfaction is the actual prove of his unquestioned estrangement from that place, which is leagues apart the fairyland he built in his mind.

Waverley is considered as both a historical novel – the first of this genre to have appeared – set sixty years before the publication of the book and describing the 1745 Jacobite rebellion that took place in Scotland, and a bildungsroman, as it narrates Edward's personal growth from youth to adulthood. When this novel was published, it had a huge success since the readers could easily identify with young Waverley and get interested in his adventures. This tale of ancient manners arose readers' curiosity precisely because it presented a historical event that occurred in the past, yet an event that was still well remembered and whose romantic atmosphere pleased the public of the early nineteenth century when Romanticism with its celebration of pristine nature and sublime landscapes held a prominent role in the European literary and artistic scenario.

2.2. Geography of uneven development

What made the incredible adventure of Waverley possible was a peculiar phenomenon, known as ‘geography of uneven development’. Indeed, as Waverley moves away from England towards Scotland, and from the Lowlands towards the Highlands, a substantial change takes place: from a significantly developed England, he gradually proceeds towards a more archaic Scotland, where people still live according to the old traditions of their ancestors and are especially attached to “the principles of loyalty which they received from their fathers, and of old Scottish faith, hospitality, worth, and honour”, something that seems to have already disappeared among the modern English society in 1745 (*Waverley*, p. 376). As Scott reminds us in his postscript, Scotland was affected by modernization much later than England, indeed “there is no European nation which, within the course of half a century, or little more, has undergone so complete a change as this kingdom of Scotland” (*ibid.*, p. 375). For this reason, at the time of the story, Waverley when moving through Scotland, travels through time as well. The expression ‘geography of uneven development’ thus refers to the fact that not only the European nations – and of course the countries of the world – presents different levels of development, but also that the regions of the same nation and the villages and towns located in the same region are characterized by deep differences in terms of modernisation. The basic lesson that emerges from Franco Moretti’s *Atlas of European Novel: 1800-1900* is that “every space has its story, but not everything can happen everywhere” (Geoffrey Winthrop-Young 1999, p. 21). That is why during the first half of the nineteenth century only Scotland can be the perfect setting for such a romantic adventure characterized by archaic principles and ancient traditions, where our hero gets lost in a pristine natural beauty he has until then only dreamed of. Waverley is therefore the expedient Scott makes use of in order to introduce the reader to the inevitable clash between England and Scotland, as explained by Enrica Villari (1996, pp. 481-482), who asserts that “the traveller moves not only through space but also through time, and his point of view associates the present of the centre with the past of the fringes [...] from the centre of England towards the Scottish Highlands” (my translation).



Figure 15. *Scene in the Lake District* (ca. 1850) by George Frederick Buchanan

2.3 Jacobites vs. Hanoverians

Villari (1996, p. 482) points out that the novel, set in eighteenth-century Scotland during the Jacobite insurrections following the Acts of Union (1706, 1707), which proclaimed the unification of Scotland and England under the name of Great Britain, describes not only the presence of the ‘geography of uneven development’, but also the conflict between old Scotland, loyal to the House of Stuart, and the modern Hanoverian England. The political disputes caused by the coronation of the Dutch William of Orange led to sentiments of hostility, especially between England and Scotland and Scott’s novel concentrates upon this political conflict, which is present in Waverley’s family, in the events narrated throughout the plot and, of course, in Edward’s mind. As the narrator clarifies in the first lines of the second chapter (volume I),

A difference in political opinions had early separated the baronet from his younger brother, Richard Waverley, the father of our hero. Sir Everard had inherited from his sires the whole train of tory or high-church predilections and prejudices, which had distinguished the house of Waverley since the great civil war. Richard, on the contrary, who was ten years younger, beheld himself born to the fortune of a second brother, and anticipated neither dignity nor entertainment in sustaining the character of Will Wimble. (*Waverley*, p. 6)

This means that Waverley’s family has always been conservative and faithful to the Stuarts, as all its members participated to the first Jacobite rising of 1715 when James Francis Edward Stuart, known as the ‘old pretender’ attempted to gain the throne of Britain. Young Edward is well aware of that, as “his aunt Mrs Rachel narrate[s] the sufferings and fortitude of Lady Alice Waverley during the great civil war” whose devotion to the House of Stuart led her to “purchase the safety of her prince with the life of her darling child” (*Waverley*, p. 18).

However, Waverley's father, being the youngest of the family, grew up with a different political opinion, influenced by the new sovereign, William III; therefore, our young hero is expected to behave according to his father's inclination.

Although Waverley is appointed captain of a regiment of dragoons belonging to the Hanoverian army, he is not interested in politics. He does not have a clear idea of who he is willing to fight for, as he keeps wavering – as his family name suggests – throughout the entire novel until when he makes his final choice of being a Hanoverian. Actually, it has to be said, Edward really does not want to fight. He just desires to live a quiet life surrounded by his precious books, away from battles and bloodsheds.

When Edward arrives in the Lowlands, he meets his uncle's ancient friend and correspondent, the Baron of Bradwardine, an old pedantic gentleman faithful to the Stuarts who, "after his demelée with the law of high treason in 1715, ... ha[s] lived in retirement, conversing almost entirely with those of his own principles in the vicinage" (*Waverley*, pp. 45-46). Although the Baron, observing Edward's cockade, admits he "could have wished the colour different" – meaning that he would have preferred Waverley to be a Jacobite – he accepts it, confessing to be old and recognizing that times have changed; having said that, he promptly invites the young fellow to have dinner with him and his other guests (*ibid*, p. 47). After dinner, "the baron announce[s] the health of the king, politely leaving to the consciences of his guests to drink to the sovereign *de facto* or *de jure*, as their politics inclined" (*Waverley*, p. 49). Notwithstanding the Baron's tolerant and hospitable manners towards Waverley, one of his guests, the young Laird of Balmawhapple, highly despising the supporters of King George II, insults Edward by calling him 'rat of Hanover'. Such a disrespectful behaviour affects the Baron's temper who starts a fight against the young Laird, who is accidentally knocked down by Edward – that comically "stumble[s] in the act of lifting a joint-stool" – which fortunately is soon turned off by Luckie Macleary, one among the Baron's faithful servants (*Waverley*, p. 55).

Later on, the political opposition becomes even more decisive as we are introduced to the character of Fergus Mac-Ivor and his clan. His father, "engaged heart and hand in the insurrection of 1715, and was forced to fly to France, after

the attempt of that year in favour of the Stuarts had proved unsuccessful” (*Waverley*, p. 101). Fergus is therefore committed to the Jacobite cause and is willing to fight in order for Charles Edward Stuart, the ‘young pretender’, to finally reacquire his legitimate crown.

These are the particular circumstances in which Waverley finds himself when reaching Scotland. Being hesitant about the king to support and completely uninterested in political issues, when reaching ‘the land of romance’, he is so bewitched by the romantic atmosphere and by such examples of boldness and dedication in a world where people are deeply attached to ancient values that, for a while, he changes his mind and engages in the Jacobite cause. Waverley’s attempt to be a Jacobite Highlander is absolutely comic as he acts like a clumsy and often absent-minded tourist, totally unaware of the dangers he may run into. Several times he is rescued by his loyal friends and very often he underestimates the perils they must face in order to keep him safe.



Figure 16. Waverley with the Baron of Bradwardine and his daughter Rose

2.4 Beautiful, sublime or picturesque?

Another important distinction to be made as regards the landscapes Waverley has the chance to observe, is the gradual shifting from ‘picturesque’ to ‘sublime’. Indeed, as Waverley moves towards the Highlands, the landscape consistently becomes wilder and more intimidating. From a typically picturesque scenery in the Lowlands, after crossing the border, Edward comes upon quite an altered view, as when he reaches the Highlands the landscape awakens extraordinary feelings that belong to the principles of sublime and that he has never experienced until then. When engaging this theme, it is important to remember that although these three terms have been often considered equivalent,

the experience of the picturesque is different from the experience of the beautiful and sublime. While, as Burke argued, the experience of beauty produces a state of contemplation, repose, and relaxation, and the experience of the sublime produces a state of awe, writers on the picturesque commonly claimed that it produces a state of ‘interest’, ‘surprise’, ‘curiosity’, or ‘play’, which, they thought, is a source of pleasure. Picturesque scenes lead the mind to make associations and connections. The observer is stimulated rather than calmed or overwhelmed. (Paden 2013, p. 18)

Therefore, there is a progressive escalation in the feelings awakened in the beholder as he proceeds from a relaxing beautiful, through an engaging picturesque, until reaching an overwhelming sublime. These different effects landscape has on the observer, in this case on Waverley, are due to the gradual distancing from human presence towards isolated and unadulterated nature, again, it is an effect of the geography of uneven development.

In chapter VIII (volume I), Waverley enters the village of Tully-Veolan, where “near the bottom of this stupendous barrier, but still in the Lowland country, dwelt Cosmo Comyne Bradwardine of Bradwardine” (*Waverley*, p. 35). This ‘stupendous barrier’, which the readers will find in the map below – Highland

boundary – marks the border between the Lowlands and the Highlands. The adjective ‘stupendous’ functions as a warning for the reader since it informs us that Edward is approaching the Highlands, the land of sublime, a region characterized by beautiful landscapes that both threaten and stupefies the observers, leaving them amazed.

However, before reaching the Highlands, Waverley stays in the Lowlands, precisely in the hamlet of Tully-Veolan – a secluded world ruled by the feudal authority of the Baron – where the landscape is not sublime yet, but typically picturesque. As he proceeds along the streets of the village he observes how

the houses seemed miserable, especially to an eye accustomed to the smiling neatness of English cottages. They stood, without any respect for regularity, on each side of a straggling kind of unpaved street, where children, almost in a primitive state of nakedness, lay sprawling, as if to be crushed by the hoofs of the first passing horse.

(Waverley, p. 35)

The almost ‘primitive state of nakedness’ of the children and the ‘sun-burnt loiterers’ he describes in the sentence right after emphasize the wildness of Scotland and, exactly as Waverley, we readers have the feeling of being catapulted into an exotic realm, where the Celtic heritage is still present and pervades the entire environment we are introduced to.

In the next paragraph, the narrator provides us with a description that well represents a picturesque view:

Three or four village girls, returning from the well or brook with pitchers and pails upon their heads, formed more pleasing objects, and with their thin short-gowns and single petticoats, bare arms, legs, and feet, uncovered heads and braided hair, somewhat resembled Italian forms of landscape. Nor could a lover of the picturesque have challenged either the elegance of their costume, or the symmetry of their shape, although, to say the truth, a mere

Englishman, in search of the comfortable, a word peculiar to his native tongue, might have wished the clothes less scanty, the feet and legs somewhat protected from the weather, the head and complexion shrouded from the sun, or perhaps might even have thought the whole person and dress considerably improved by a plentiful application of spring water, with a *quantum sufficit* of soap. (*Waverley*, p. 36)

This report is so accurate that we can actually compare it to a picturesque painting by Salvator Rosa, who at the time was a well-known artist among cultivated people. Certainly, the ironic commentary of the narrator does not go unnoticed and it emphasizes the difference in the habits of the Scots and the English, due to both the geography of uneven development and the disparity of social class existing between the villagers and Waverley, well remarked by the narrator as he goes on describing the peasants.

They stood and gazed at the handsome young officer and his attendant, but without any of those quick motions and eager looks that indicate the earnestness with which those who live in monotonous ease at home look out for amusement abroad. Yet the physiognomy of the people, when more closely examined, was far from exhibiting the indifference of stupidity; their features were rough, but remarkably intelligent, grave, but the very reverse of stupid ... It seemed, upon the whole, as if poverty, and indolence, its too frequent companion, were combining to depress the natural genius and acquired information of a hardy, intelligent, and reflecting peasantry. (*Waverley*, p. 37)

In this passage, the locals do not look at the foreigners as if they were ‘anthropological curiosities’ – as Rowlandson depicted in his plates – but rather behave indifferently. However, their appearance indicates a clever mind, an acuteness that is unfortunately affected by poverty and indolence as, due to their

poor social conditions, the natives cannot actually benefit from their natural intelligence. It is the particular context they were born and still live in that negatively influence their existence. This clearly demonstrates the consequences of uneven development. Although Lowlanders live in close contact with nature, a state which is continually prised by the outsiders, the effect that such a living has on locals is quite undesirable. Nature oppresses natives' 'natural genius', and this indicates that the myth of the happy and primitive savage is not really truthful. It seems that they are quite used to such visits, to be object of foreigners' diversion and be included in their coveted picturesque views. The reader is inclined to believe that this is a rather habitual practice and, as a result, locals are not surprised, they are just passive, they resign themselves to be observed by tourists. They are probably depressed by acknowledging the fact that they are and will always be peasants, thus regretting their social status and the backwardness of their village. This particular detail in locals' behaviour is due to Scott's familiarity with the theme of picturesque tours, which characterized the period he lived in. Indeed, it is important to keep in mind that Scott began his novel in 1805, sixty years after the events of the story, when picturesque tourism was highly in fashion in Britain; for this reason, some details belonging to his own age are reflected in his book even if set in the past. Certainly, this attitude of passive acceptance on the part of native people is an actual theme, for after centuries of tourism industry, several territories which in the past were considered exotic and pristine are now common tourist destinations where locals have become used to foreigners' visits and probably feel as Tully-Veolan's dwellers, experiencing the same social distance. It seems to exist a mutual feeling of envy where man always desires what he does not own: tourists envy natives for the place they live in and the, apparently, quiet and free life they have there, while natives envy tourists for the social status, wealth and educational level they usually have.

In chapter XXII (volume I), Waverley explores the Highlands guided by Flora, Fergus's charming sister, and is overwhelmed by a typically sublime landscape:

it was up the course of this last stream that Waverley, like a knight of romance, was conducted by the fair Highland damsel, his silent guide. A small path, which had been rendered easy in many places for Flora's accommodation, led him through scenery of a very different description from that which he had just quitted. Around the castle, all was cold, bare, and desolate, yet tame even in desolation; but this narrow glen, at so short a distance, seemed to open into the land of romance. The rocks assumed a thousand peculiar and varied forms. In one place, a crag of huge size presented its gigantic bulk, as if to forbid the passenger's farther progress; and it was not until he approached its very base, that Waverley discerned the sudden and acute turn by which the pathway wheeled its course around this formidable obstacle. In another spot, the projecting rocks from the opposite sides of the chasm had approached so near to each other, that two pine-trees laid across, and covered with turf, formed a rustic bridge at the height of at least one hundred and fifty feet. It had no ledges, and was barely three feet in breadth. (*Waverley*, p. 116)

Here the narrator brilliantly describes the charming yet perilous Highlands. It is interesting to observe that even in such a desolate place, man succeeded in rendering it tame and easy to walk, but only nearby the human settlements. At a short distance from the castle, the real 'land of romance' appears, in all its splendour and perils, a nature that has not been altered by human presence and activity. As the narrator continues the description of such a romantic scene,

advancing a few yards, and passing under the bridge which he had viewed with so much terror, the path ascended rapidly from the edge of the brook, and the glen widened into a sylvan amphitheatre, waving with birch, young oaks, and hazels, with here and there a scattered yew-tree. The rocks now receded, but still shewed their grey and shaggy crests rising among the copse-wood. Still higher,

rose eminences and peaks, some bare, some clothed with wood, some round and purple with heath, and others splintered into rocks and crags. At a short turning, the path, which had for some furlongs lost sight of the brook, suddenly placed Waverley in front of a romantic water-fall. It was not so remarkable either for great height or quantity of water, as for the beautiful accompaniments which made the spot interesting. After a broken cataract of about twenty feet, the stream was received in a large natural basin, filled to the brim with water, which, where the bubbles of the fall subsided, was so exquisitely clear, that, although it was of great depth, the eye could discern each pebble at the bottom. Eddying round this reservoir, the brook found its way as if over a broken part of the ledge, and formed a second fall, which seemed to seek the very abyss; then wheeling out beneath, from among the smooth dark rocks, which it had polished for ages, it wandered murmuring down the glen, forming the stream up which Waverley had just ascended. The borders of this romantic reservoir corresponded in beauty; but it was beauty of a stern and commanding cast, as if in the act of expanding into grandeur. Mossy banks of turf were broken and interrupted by huge fragments of rock, and decorated with trees and shrubs, some of which had been planted under the direction of Flora, but so cautiously, that they added to the grace, without diminishing the romantic wilderness of the scene. (*Waverley*, p. 117)

In this passage, the narrator continues his accurate description of the sublime landscape of Scotland, where Waverley gets lost in the beauty of what he sees. Here, nature is the real protagonist, a nature which is wild and beautiful. However, not even in front of such a natural perfection people are able to desist from modifying the environment, as Flora ordered the plantation of additional trees and shrubs. Nevertheless, Flora's intervention is considered by the narrator, and Waverley as well, extremely appropriate as, through her directions, she managed to add even more grace to the scene, without weakening its 'romantic wilderness'.

This may be interpreted as both the effect of Waverley's infatuation for Flora, and the awareness that, if good intentioned and respectful, human intervention on natural order may actually be beneficial.

Having examined these fragments of text, a distinctive trait between picturesque and sublime landscapes is the presence of human beings or of human activity. In the first case, the landscape usually presents a small group of people, surrounded by a natural environment which may also include livestock and other clues of human settlement, such as small cottages or barns. On the other hand, sublime landscapes mostly represent pristine and untouched nature where humans are excluded and the real and only protagonist is the natural scenery. Consequently, whereas the picturesque is something pleasing to see, enjoyable, interesting and stimulating, because still influenced by human presence, the sublime is astonishing but highly intimidating, as the observer cannot distinguish any human influence in it. The spectator who contemplates a landscape that is sublime is completely overwhelmed by it: before natural beauty and power, humans feel helpless and all they can do is surrender to such a view.

2.5 Beautiful and Sublime, Rose and Flora

This section will deal with another interesting feature of Scott's novel, the implicit influence that a place has on its dwellers and that inevitably emerges through the attitudes they are characterized by as the story develops. The author's ability to transpose the environmental characteristics of the places he sets the story in to the characters who belong to them is certainly remarkable. In particular, the characters that will be analysed here are Flora Mac-Ivor and Rose Bradwardine, the two women that are objects of Waverley's interest throughout the novel. As Waverley proceeds northwards from the Lowlands towards the Highlands, he experiences the progressive change in the landscape, from a picturesque to a sublime scene, that is reflected in the passage from Rose, a young 'amiable' woman, to Flora, who embodies the 'Celtic Muse' par excellence.

The narrator introduces the character of Rose Bradwardine describing her as

a very pretty girl of the Scotch cast of beauty, that is, with a profusion of hair of pale gold, and a skin like the snow of her own mountains in whiteness. Yet she had not a pallid or pensive cast of countenance; her features, as well as her temper, had a lively expression; her complexion, though not florid, was so pure as to seem transparent, and the slightest cause sent her whole blood at once to her face and neck. Her form, though under the common size, was remarkably elegant, and her motions light, easy, and unembarrassed. (*Waverley*, p. 45)

This delicate creature certainly represents a perfect example of features typical of what may be defined 'beautiful', as "the sweetness of her voice, and the simple beauty of her music" always convey a pleasing sense of calm and relaxation. Rose does not embody the picturesque of the natural Lowlands, as she lives within the ancient walls of a beautiful Scottish mansion, in her apartments, studying French, Italian, Music, "submit[ting] with complacency, and even pleasure, to the course of reading prescribed by her father", characterized by "all the simplicity and

curiosity of a recluse” (ibid., pp. 70-72). Therefore, she represents the serene and peaceful beautiful, a pleasing presence to contemplate in a calm and relaxing way. Undoubtedly, the ‘delicacy of feeling’ characterizing this seventeen-years-old lady is remarkable and enjoyable; however, to Waverley’s eyes, she appears as rather passive and easily susceptible. Indeed, every time Rose happens to be in Waverley’s company, she keeps hanging off his words, “listen[ing] with eagerness to his remarks upon literature, and shew[ing] great justness of taste in her answers” (*Waverley*, p. 70). She is truly willing to learn from him, compliantly looking at him as one would do with his master. She is so much young and inexperienced and so much in love with him that she always approves his comments, never daring to judge him, as any infatuated young lady would do. Rose embodies a kind of beauty that is domesticated and controlled. She would do anything for Waverley, but the young protagonist, too focused on his romantic dreams, does not perceive the complete devotion and love Rose feels for him.

On the contrary, he is enthralled by the enchanting Flora, the sister of the brave and loyal chieftain Fergus Mac-Ivor, as “she [is] precisely the character to fascinate a youth of romantic imagination. Her manners, her language, her talents for poetry and music, [give] additional and varied influence to her eminent personal charms” (*Waverley*, p. 128). During his stay at Glenaquoich, Waverley is completely bewitched by Flora’s “antique and regular correctness of profile”, “dark eyes”, “clearness of complexion”, “utmost feminine delicacy”, and “elegant manners” and accomplishments which she could acquire due to the particular attention that Chevalier de St George and his princess had towards her and her brother after their parents died (ibid., p. 111). Unfortunately, Flora, true representative of the sublime and unattainable woman, will never get interested in Waverley as her extreme devotion to the Jacobean cause is her only purpose in life.

She believed it the duty of her brother, of his clan, of every man in Britain, at whatever personal hazard, to contribute to that restoration which the partizans of the Chevalier St George had not ceased to hope for. For this she was prepared to do all, to suffer all, to sacrifice

all. But her loyalty, as it exceeded her brother's in fanaticism, excelled it also in purity... In Flora's bosom, on the contrary, the zeal of loyalty burned pure and unmixed with any selfish feeling".
(ibid)

Waverley's idealization of such an enchantress, which mirrors his idealization for the Highlands, highly affects his "indolence and indecision of mind", leading to serious consequences, as his being accused of high treason by the Government, his complete disregard for the fate of his own troop, and "the infinite distress, and even danger, which [his] present conduct has occasioned to [his] nearest relatives" (*Waverley*, pp. 242; 260). Waverley's realization of the fact that his infatuation for Flora is completely unrequited, as she is truly convinced that she could "never regard [him] otherwise than as a valued friend" is another disappointment the young hero has to deal with (ibid., 148). Flora discourages Waverley from such a "hazardous experiment" as she could never love him as "he ought to be loved" since "every keener sensation of [her] mind is bent exclusively towards an event", the Jacobean cause (*Waverley*, p. 150). Flora is truly convinced that the perfect woman for Waverley is her friend Rose whose temperament and interests are certainly more appropriate to him.

Flora embodies the narrator's point of view as she sincerely illustrates her thoughts to Rose:

... high and perilous enterprize is not Waverley's forte. He would never have been his celebrated ancestor Sir Nigel, but only Sir Nigel's eulogist and poet. I will tell you where he will be at home, my dear, and in his place, – in the quiet circle of domestic happiness, lettered indolence, and elegant enjoyments of Waverley-Honour. And he will refit the old library in the most exquisite Gothic taste, and garnish its shelves with the rarest and most valuable volumes; – and he will draw plans and landscapes, and write verses, and rear temples, and dig grottoes; – and he will stand in a clear summer night in the colonnade before the hall, and gaze on the deer as the

stray in the moonlight, or lie shadowed by the boughs of the huge old fantastic oaks; – and he will repeat verses to his beautiful wife, who shall hang upon his arm; - and he will be a happy man.
(*Waverley*, p. 276)

Waverley's future wife described by Flora will eventually be Rose, that in chapter XXIII (volume III) finally marries her beloved. So, initially Waverley heads towards the sublime as inveterate tourists would do, only listening to his feelings, deeply influenced by the romantic longing for an unforgettable adventure in the wilderness of an unexplored Scotland, completely neglecting the consequences of such a hasty choice. However, after a while, in a tourist-like attitude, after experiencing the sublime, the remote perfection of nature, and in this case the ecstasy that a lady as Flora could only awaken, he decides to go back to his normal life, retiring to a place he actually fits in and opting for a woman whose disposition better combines with his own. He therefore abandons a wilderness that does not belong to him and retires to a place that is appropriate to his romantic and quiet attitude, with Rose, a loyal and beautiful wife, a woman who is certainly more manageable compared to Flora.



Figure 18. Flora Mac-Ivor and her harp in *Waverley* (1814)



Figure 19. *Waverley* and Rose Bradwardine at their Studies (1871)

2.6 Waverley: an improbable highlander

All the efforts Waverley makes at resembling a highlander are useless and produce comical situations where his behaviour is depicted as inappropriate and amusing at the same time. He is continually rescued by the mountaineers he meets in the Highlands whose attitude is extremely reverential and supporting towards the young squire, whichever circumstances he finds himself in: this is proof of their disinterested loyalty, hospitality, worth and honour – characteristics which Scott celebrates in his postscript.

A very comical episode is the one described in the first chapter of the second volume, where Fergus invites Waverley to ‘the solemn hunting’. The natural strength of the deer and the fierceness of both animals and hunters is successfully described by the narrator, who emphasizes the wilderness of the scene, underlining the opposition humankind versus nature. It is as if we could actually see and perceive the deer’s fightback in their desperate attempt to survive.

Their [the deer’s] number was very great, and, from a desperate stand which they made, with the tallest of the red-deer stags arranged in front, in a sort of battle array, gazing on the group which barred their passage down the glen, the more experienced sportsmen began to augur danger. The work of destruction, however, now commenced on all sides. Dogs and hunters were at work, and muskets and fusees resounded from every quarter. The deer, driven to desperation, made at length a fearful charge right upon the spot where the more distinguished sportsmen had taken their stand.

(*Waverley*, p. 129)

However, this serious situation rapidly acquires a humorous tone as Waverley does not understand the peril they are about to fall into – as he does not even know the language of the people whose uniform he is proudly exhibiting and whose homeland he celebrates as the land of romance – and is promptly saved by Fergus:

the word was given in Gaelic to fling themselves upon their faces; but Waverley, upon whose English ears the signal was lost, had almost fallen a sacrifice to his ignorance of the ancient language in which it was communicated. Fergus, observing his danger, sprang up and pulled him with violence to the ground just as the whole herd broke down upon them. The tide being absolutely irresistible, and wounds from a stag's horn highly dangerous, the activity of the Chieftain may be considered, on this occasion, as having saved his guest's life. He detained him with a firm grasp until the whole herd of deer had fairly run over them. Waverley then attempted to rise, but found that he had suffered several severe contusions, and upon a further examination discovered that he had sprained his ankle violently. (*Waverley*, pp. 129-130)

Scott's ability of quickly dropping his solemn tone by turning it into a comic scene is definitely remarkable as it is especially due to this writing device, which the author effectively employs, that readers' enthusiasm and interest is kept alive throughout the reading of the novel. Scott's public tends to identify with the young protagonist and his flaws:

by making his young protagonist appear comically out of place in the stag-hunt scene because – like a tourist and an enthusiast of local colour – he pretends he is what he doesn't seriously mean to be, Scott gives us a glimpse of what he early understood might be lurking under the beautiful surface of all young heroes' ideal romancing in our age of prose: the modern hell of the inauthentic experience. (Villari 2000, p. 111)

As the narrator tells us, during the stag-hunting Waverley is injured and the same happens in the thirteenth chapter of the second book where he “fell with, and indeed under his horse, and sustained some severe contusions” (*Waverley*, p. 196). Edward's delicate constitution, which emerges especially in situations where a

particular physical resistance is required, leads the reader to identify him as a character that is completely unfitting for that particular place and lifestyle, a protagonist who is always out of place, who himself does not meet the expected standards of a romance-like world that, very often, he does not consider fully adequate. Each time Waverley is rescued by some Highlanders, brave mountaineers who carry him with them and who, above all, care for his safety, even risking their own life. These benevolent and tireless rescuers seem to embody the mountain rescue service that constantly guarantees paid professionals or volunteer professionals ready to get engaged in perilous activities of search and rescue in mountainous environments. The specific techniques they use together with their local knowledge of the place they work in allow them to be the real heroes of wild areas, especially when saving unexperienced tourists who, totally unaware of the dangers and traps they may fall into, believe that hiking in the mountains is the same as taking a stroll in a park.

While reading Scott's novel, readers are aware of the fact that Waverley, lost in his romantic dream, does not really understand that without the support of these brave and big-hearted mountaineers, he would not have survived.

Of his tour in the Highlands will remain a painting depicting him with his friend Fergus, wearing their tartan, surrounded by a wild and mountainous scene, beside which hung the arms he carried during his incredible adventure and that he was never really able to use. According to the painting, both Waverley and Fergus are represented as heroes. However, that particular picture neglects the real story. Art mediates nature, mediates reality and shows only what the painter wants to convey. The spectator, when looking at the painting could never realize how the events actually developed, how Waverley was anything but a hero. He would probably admire both Fergus and Edward unaware of the tourist attitude Waverley had all the time. Waverley, on his part, will probably nostalgically think of those special days, as a tourist would do when swiping the thousands of pictures taken during an unforgettable trip.

❖ **Chapter three**

Tess of the D'Urbervilles: Angel Clare

3.1 Angel, agriculturalist-to-be: vocation or frustrated rebellion?

Thomas Hardy describes the character of Angel Clare as rather contradictory from the very beginning of the novel. In the second chapter of the first volume, the young man appears at Marlott's Withsun celebrations – a remnant of pagan May rites associated to the May-time custom of choosing a bride – where, unlike his brothers, he resolves to dance. He selects “almost the first [girl] that [comes] to hand”, soon reproaching such a hastened choice (*Tess*, p. 17). He realizes only afterwards that he should have waited to notice Tess, dance with her and ask her name as he is really struck by her expressive look. Aware of losing the chance to get to know that beautiful girl, after a while, he nevertheless decides to leave and join his brothers “dismiss[ing] the subject from his mind” (*ibid.*, p. 18). Here, it is already clear the conflicting attitude of this character who is willing to get acquainted with Tess, yet he desists from doing it. As Waverley, he is hesitant, since, as asserted by the narrator, when looking at him one immediately understands what kind of person he is, someone “that [has] hardly as yet found the entrance to his professional groove. That he [is] a desultory tentative student of something” (*Tess*, p. 16).

In such a “fertile and sheltered tract of the country”, where

the village of Marlott [lies] amid the north-eastern undulation of the beautiful vale of Blakemore ... an engirdled and secluded region, for the most part untrodden as yet by tourist or landscape painter, though within a four hours' journey from London,

Angel looks at Tess as looking at a picturesque painting (*Tess*, p. 12). As a tourist, he admires that “fine and picturesque country girl” but does not dare to actually investigate what is behind her appearance: once his artistic taste is satisfied he leaves (*ibid.*, p. 16).

In chapter XVII, we are told about Angel's aspirations, as the narrator informs us that the young Clare is a parson's son that “is learning milking, and that plays the harp ... too much taken up wi' his own thoughts to notice girls” (*Tess*, p. 113). We

immediately realize that despite his desire to learn “farming in all its branches”, his personality is anything but inclined to do it.

Exactly as Waverley, Clare is not a muscular and sturdy youth, the typical features of a country man, but rather a spiritual being, characterized by

an appreciative voice, a long regard of fixed, abstracted eyes, and a mobility of mouth somewhat too small and delicately lined for a man’s, though with an unexpectedly firm close of the lower lip now and then; enough to do away with any suggestion of indecision. Nevertheless, something nebulous, preoccupied, vague, in his bearing and regard, marked him as one who probably had no very definite aim or concern about his material future. (*Tess*, p. 113)

So, not only is he similar to Waverley in his physical aspect, but also in his wavering and romantic character. Neglecting her father’s expectations, he is resolved “to acquire a practical skill in the various processes of farming, with a view either to the Colonies, or the tenure of a home-made farm, as circumstances might decide” (*ibid.*, p. 114). As this passage demonstrates, Angel does not even take a position to decide the place in which he will implement his agricultural methods, leaving to the circumstances the power of decision for his own future. Not only does he disappoint his parents due to his refusal to become a clergyman, but also because of his marriage with Tess, for “a dairywoman was the last daughter-in-law they could have expected” (*Tess*, p. 210).

Angel’s inner opposition is continually proved as we learn about his uncertainties with regard to his creed. He declares to “love the Church as one loves a parent” but “he cannot honestly be ordained her minister ... while she refuses to liberate her mind from an untenable redemptive theolatri” (*ibid.*, p. 115). He rejects the doctrine according to which Christ died on the cross to redeem mankind, yet he keeps judging the world by means of an excessive criticism resulting by the Evangelical school whose principles imbued his education. As Edward, Angel is deeply influenced by his particular upbringing and, as a consequence, ends up acting inappropriately in a context which is not his own, just pretending to be

someone he is not, mainly because he himself does not have a clear and constant opinion and is therefore easy to condition. He celebrates Greek paganism but his prejudices lead him to be beset by doubts and fears and his conduct will cause suffering to his parents, but above all to poor Tess.

He prefers to pursue “the honour and glory of man” rather than that of God; refusing to follow his brothers’ and father’s steps, aspiring to be someone different, imbued with the spirit of a new generation (*Tess*, p. 116). Between Angel, the youngest of the brothers that Mr Clare had by his second marriage, and his father “there seem[s] to be almost a missing generation”, and as a consequence, they seem to live in two different worlds (*ibid.*, p. 114). Angel, whose thought does not coincide with the vicar’s, is an alienated man that is motivated to go against the grain. Characterized by a particular “aversion to modern town life”, the young Clare, “having an acquaintance who [is] starting on a thriving life as a Colonial farmer”, ends up to pursue a career in agriculture, completely different from the one his family is built on, a profession which, according to his expectations, will provide him with an economical independence together with an intellectual liberty (*Tess*, pp. 116-117). However, as the narrator tells us, his principles are philosophical and moral, he is devoted to abstract ideas at the expense of all that is material. As

he spent years and years in desultory studies, undertakings, and meditations; he began to evince considerable indifference to social forms and observances. The material distinctions of rank and wealth he increasingly despised. Even the ‘good family’ (to use a favourite phrase of a late local worthy) had no aroma for him unless there were good new resolutions in its representatives. (*ibid.*, p. 116)

Isolated in his utopian world made of studies and meditations, Angel loses interest in the practical side of life, becoming “more spiritual than animal” (*Tess*, p. 192).

His agricultural dream, therefore, seems to be a kind of frustrated rebellion against a world which does not satisfies his expectations rather than a real vocation. He believes this to be the right solution which both meets his requirements of

making a living and being intellectually free, and which can be easily achieved, by means of his acquaintance's support and "a careful apprenticeship" (*Tess*, p. 117). However, he does not consider that, despite his enthusiasm and resolution to change, agriculture is not as easy as it is described in books, since it is a rather pragmatic profession, quite the opposite of the theoretical discourses he is so much accustomed to. Although "he [is] one who might do anything if he tri[es]", Angel will soon understand that despite his dedication to farming, he will never become somebody he is not (*ibid.*, p. 114). Even though he is learning the job at Mr Crick's dairy, he will never be an agriculturalist as his vocation is inclined towards anything but practical work. Tess as well "seem[s] to regard Angel Clare as an intelligence rather than as a man" due to "the distance between her own modest mental standpoint and the unmeasurable, Andean altitude of his" (*Tess*, p. 125).

3.2 Angel's idealization of Talbothays and Tess

Angel has a romantic vision of both the green valley of Talbothays and Tess, the woman he falls in love with. This peculiar relationship between nature and woman, as in the case of Scott's novel, implies that the environment and the female figure mutually influence each other as the romantic vision of a youth in love tends to idealize both the object of his love and the background it moves in. The young woman is romantically depicted as an integral part of the English countryside; she is picturesque as the landscape she moves in. Angel sees her as a goddess leading a harmonious and "pastoral life in ancient Greece" (*Tess*, p. 125). This divine association originates from the peculiar effect which the midsummer downs light has on the country girl. It is that special light that actually converts her into a goddess who "seem[s] to have a sort of phosphorescence upon [her face]" (*ibid.*, p. 130). In reality, Angel's face presents the same ethereal effect to Tess's eyes, due to that particular gleam of that time of the day. That peculiar atmosphere affects Angel's perception, as "the mixed, singular, luminous gloom in which they [walk] along together to the spot where the cows [lie], often [makes] him think of the Resurrection hour"; indeed, at dawn, Tess "[is] no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman" (*ibid.*). In such a romantic landscape, Angel calls her with the names of ancient Greek goddesses, Artemis, the goddess of chastity, and Demeter, the goddess of fruitfulness because these are the images his imagination instinctively reflects upon her. However, Tess is far from being chaste and fruitful, as she was raped by Alec and later gave birth to a baby who soon after died. In that particular situation, while Angel keeps staring at her, Tess seems to have "minute diamonds of moisture from the mist" upon her eyelashes "and drops upon her hair, like seed pearls", but as the sun rises she gradually loses "her strange and ethereal beauty ... and she [is] again the dazzlingly fair dairymaid only" (*Tess*, p. 131). The romantic haze of "these non-human hours" surrounds the young girl and arises a sense of sublime in Angel's perception, deeply affected by "the summer fog ... and the meadows [that lie] like a white sea, out of which the scattered trees [rise] like dangerous rocks" (*ibid.*). Meeting "daily in that strange and solemn interval, the twilight of the morning, in the violet or pink dawn", Tess becomes for Angel

“a rosy warming apparition” acquiring a certain “persistence in his consciousness”, however, he “allow[s] his mind to be occupied with her, deeming his preoccupation to be no more than a philosopher’s regard of an exceedingly novel, fresh, and interesting specimen of womankind” (*Tess*, p. 129). In that “spectral, half-compounded, aqueous light which pervade[s] the open mead, impress[ing] them with a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve”, they live their romantic dream, lost in the magic of the natural background of Talbothays (ibid., p. 130). Again, natural landscape affects human perception of reality and makes Angel idealize Tess.

It is due to that particular place that Tess, the simple country girl, becomes a Greek goddess, the protagonist of Angel’s dreams. Clare’s attitude is getting increasingly imbued with that specific environment as he is actually sojourning there. He can never really pause from Talbothays’ life, he is therefore easily led to judge people and situations on the basis of the romantic disposition he is daily practicing and strengthening. His natural disposition, clearly romantic and meditative, is here brought at its highest and the young man cannot but let himself be dragged along by the dreamy situation he finds into. Indeed, at Talbothays he is not detached and in a hurry as the first time he glimpsed Tess at Marlott’s festival. In that situation, he saw her for what she actually was, a nice country girl, somebody he could easily dismiss from his mind. However, now, the influence that both the environment and the fascination of infatuation have on Angel, completely alter the world he sees and cannot let the young man judge objectively and sensibly. Angel’s romantic love for Tess, so “disinterested, chivalrous, protective” is, as his ideas, abstract and spiritual because mainly based on feelings (*Tess*, p. 192). To Tess’s eyes, Angel is “all that goodness could be” knowing “all that a guide, philosopher, and friend should know” (ibid). Tess, exactly as Angel, is completely infatuated, charmed by such a “perfection of masculine beauty, his soul the soul of a saint, his intellect that of a seer” (ibid).

Despite Angel’s restrained attitude towards bodily love, in Talbothays his animal instincts awaken:

resolutions, reticences, prudences, fears, fell back like a defeated battalion. He jumped up from his seat, and, leaving his pail to be kicked over if the milcher had such a mind, went quickly towards the desire of his eyes, and, kneeling down beside her, clasped her in his arms. (*Tess*, p. 151)

The following picture depicts this scene: Angel and Tess are in the meadow, milking the cows, when Angel loses control and goes towards the girl.

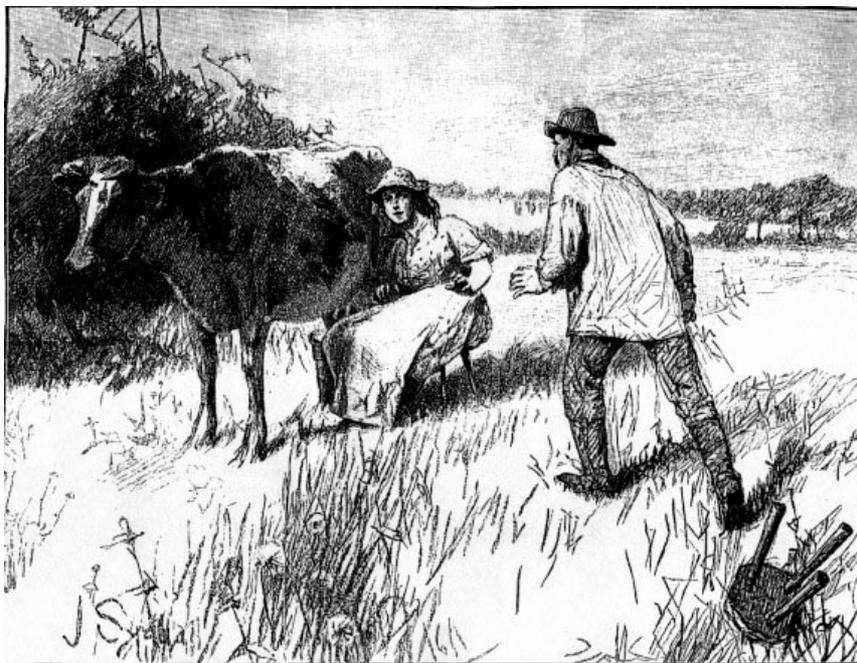


Figure 20. "*He jumped up from his seat ... and went quickly towards the desire of his eyes*" by Joseph Syddall

How very lovable her face was to him. Yet there was nothing ethereal about it; all was real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation. And it was in her mouth that this culminated ... He had never before seen a woman's lips and teeth which forced upon his mind with such persistent iteration the old Elizabethan smile of roses filled with snow. (*Tess*, p. 151)

The idealization of Tess has undergone a deep change; Angel does not imagine her in a merely spiritual way, but physically as well. In this sense, Hardy's novel presents a romantic love that is different from the one we find in Scott's work. Waverley's infatuation for Flora is purely platonic, he never alludes to the girl as Clare does with Tess. Edward is primarily charmed by Flora's elegance and manners. Of course, he is infatuated with her because of her beauty as well, but never comments on her physical aspect as explicitly as Angel does. This may be caused by the different cultural codes the novels refer to, since Scott's hero tries to embody (and comically displays) chivalric manners, completely fitting the plot of a historical novel, while Hardy's character seems to be willing to embrace changes and consequently move away from traditions. However, both Angel and Edward stay on the surface of things, they do not go beyond the girls' appearance, they only need to admire beauty in order to be satisfied and live happily and distractively in a constant state of daydreaming. Angel is pleased to see Tess's beauty, to him it is enough to venerate the artistic and esthetical character of her nature; he does not seem to be interested in understanding Tess's inner trouble as, to him, it is enough to focus on his own desires and expectations without actually verifying whether his beliefs are valid or not. For this reason, when he finds out the truth about her life, he cannot accept it since it is something that differs too much from what he imagined, it does not fulfil his idea of perfection and unveils quite another story, a real one. The real moment Clare wakes up from his romantic dream he comprehends that the woman who seemed until that moment the most perfect creature on earth is not flawless. The same process of disenchantment happens with regard to the environment: Clare believes Talbothays to be perfect due to his obstinate idealization of such a different location compared to the one he is accustomed to, a fantasy he will soon dismiss from his mind once he will see it for what it actually is: a setting he does not really belong to. The tourist idolization for a particular place can thus be compared to the infatuation for somebody when one is in love. In both cases, a romantic attitude leads the beholder to overestimate the object of their admiration and, despite the pleasing feeling this dreamy situation conveys, sooner or later it will come to an end and reveal the truth.

3.3 Angel's idle dream

Although disappointing parson Clare's expectations, Angel confesses to his father his resolution to become an agriculturalist and manages to get him to support his idea. Indeed,

as he [Mr Clare] had not been put to the expense of sending Angel up to Cambridge, he had felt it his duty to set by a sum of money every year towards the purchase or lease of land for him some day, that he might not feel himself unduly slighted. (*Tess*, p. 162)

Mr Clare agrees on Angel's plan, certain that "as far as worldly wealth goes ... [he] will no doubt stand far superior to [his] brothers in a few years" (*ibid.*). At the same time, Angel manages to convince his parents of his decision of marrying Tess telling them that, considering his professional aspiration, she would make a good farmer's wife, a woman

able to milk cows, churn good butter, make immense cheeses; [somebody who] know[s] how to sit hens and turkeys and rear chickens, to direct a field of labourers in an emergency, and estimate the value of sheep and calves. (*Tess*, pp. 162-163)

Not only does Tess know how to perform all the farming duties, but also possesses other remarkable qualities, being "a regular church-goer of simple faith; honest-hearted, receptive, intelligent, graceful to a degree, virtuous as a vestal, and, in personal appearance, exceptionally beautiful" (*Tess*, p. 163). Therefore, certain to proceed in the farming business with Tess at his side, the ambitious young man plans to attain a "position as a farmer on an extensive scale – either in England or in the Colonies", even though he will soon change his mind (*ibid.*, p. 162).

Talbothays experience deeply affects Angel's attitude as during his stay at Mr Crick's farm, he actually undergoes a deep change that leads him to integrate in that particular environment. Lodging in a huge attic above the dairy-house, "at

first he lived up above entirely, reading a good deal, and strumming upon an old harp ... but he soon preferred to read human nature by taking his meals downstairs”, getting to know the occupants of the farm and taking “a real delight in their companionship” as “the conventional farm-folk of his imagination – personified by the pitiable dummy known as Hodge – were obliterated after a few days’ residence” being “disintegrated into a number of varied fellow-creatures” (*Tess*, pp. 117-118). Just arrived at Mr Crick’s farm, to Angel’s eyes,

the ideas, the modes, the surroundings, appeared retrogressive and unmeaning. But with living on there, day after day, the acute sojourner became conscious of a new aspect in the spectacle. Without any objective change whatever, variety had taken the place of monotonousness. (*ibid.*, p. 118)

So, a place where at the beginning Angel seemed to be a complete foreigner, gradually becomes interesting to his eyes and succeeds in releasing him from the gloomy attitude he had when he arrived from Emminster. Indeed, the young man, during the months spent at Talbothays,

became wonderfully free from the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races with the decline of belief in a beneficent Power. For the first time of late years he could read as his musings inclined him, without any eye to cramming for a profession, since the few farming handbooks which he deemed it desirable to master occupied him but little time. (*Tess*, p. 118)

At Mr Crick’s farm, he finds a world that still relates to ancient traditions, where farming and breeding proceed by means of completely biological methods, something he is not used to anymore. At Talbothays the cows are milked

as they [present] themselves, without fancy or choice. But certain cows will show a fondness for a particular pair of hands, sometimes

carrying this predilection as far as to refuse to stand at all except to their favourite, the pail of a stranger being unceremoniously kicked over. (*Tess*, p. 121)

Interestingly, despite being quite numerous – one hundred-and-five – at Talbothays farm each cow has its own name – Dumpling, Fancy, Lofty, Mist, Old Pretty, Young Pretty, Tidy, and Loud – thus being clearly discernible by the people of the dairy. Clearly, in this particular place, workers have to give in to the animals’ will, as cows are not mere milk producers to be exploited with no regard to their needs, but rather fundamental creatures to be respected and looked after.

Another curious episode that well depicts the organic world of Mr Crick’s farm is told in chapter XXII where the farmer receives a letter from a customer complaining that “the butter had a twang” (*Tess*, p. 139). The dairyman lets everybody who is at hand taste the butter in order for them to help him understand the origin of such a taste. He finally solves the enigma, the butter tastes of garlic, thus declaring: “we must overhaul that mead ... this mustn’t continny!” (ibid).

Obeying Mr Crick’s orders,

all having armed themselves with old pointed knives they went out together. As the inimical plant could only be present in very microscopic dimensions to have escaped ordinary observation, to find it seemed rather a hopeless attempt in the stretch of rich grass before them. However, they formed themselves into line, all assisting, owing to the importance of the search ... (*Tess*, p. 139)

Thanks to Mr Crick’s labourers’ careful work, “with eyes fixed upon the ground ... not a single inch of the pasture but would have fallen under the eye of some one of them” (ibid). “Not more than half a dozen shoots of garlic being discoverable in the whole field” yet result to be responsible of the seasoning “of the whole dairy’s produce for the day” (ibid). This is the typical image of a cohesive community that works together and manages to find solutions without unreasonably damaging the environment. Angel “who communistically stuck to

his rule of taking part with the rest in everything, glanced up now and then” as a volunteer though, thus not really engaging in the enterprise but rather behaving as a tourist (*Tess*, p. 140). He cannot endure such an effort and exclaims: “upon my soul and body, this here stooping do fairly make my back open and shut!” and worried about Tess’s conditions invites her to take a break and “leave the rest to finish it” (*ibid.*). Here it is clear that Angel considers such a situation an adventure rather than an actual work, lost in his loving daydream about the picturesque Tess.

Although Clare gets to appreciate the naturalness of the countryside characterized by curious traditional methods that are applied at Talbothays and in the neighbouring farms and mills, representatives of a rural world imbued with a particularly relaxing and serene atmosphere that he considers as highly valuable in order to live happily and free, he cannot actually find the new techniques he is willing to study. Therefore, despite his enthusiasm for living in such a peaceful place, each time he resolves to investigate some new agricultural activities, his expectations are inevitably disappointed. For instance, wishing to “see a little of the working of a flour-mill, having an idea that he might combine the use of one with corn-growing” he is determined to visit “a large old water-mill at Wellbridge – once the mill of an Abbey” the proprietor having “offered him the inspection of his time-honoured mode of procedure” (*Tess*, p. 204). However, the techniques “of bolting and the old-fashioned machinery” he finds there, which apparently have been in use for centuries, do not seem to really “enlighten him greatly on modern improved methods” (*ibid.*, p. 240). He is looking for something new and innovative, something he knows because he has the possibility to access manuals where the new agricultural techniques are explained and, of course, because of his modern vision given by the city-lifestyle he grew up in, a vision which emphasizes the importance of innovations rather than the significance of traditions.

Although clearly diverging “from the Angel Clare of former times”, as he does actually manage to “behave like a farmer” after spending some time at Talbothays, his philosophical mind-set is preserved, deeply affected by the education he had and the family values he was raised with (*Tess*, p. 158). Indeed, he is convinced that “farming, of course, means roughing it externally; but high thinking may go with plain living, nevertheless” (*ibid.*, p. 160). Therefore, Angel

can only modify his external aspect as his spirit will never really coincide with the rurality of the countryside. The aspiring agriculturalist will always differ from the other dairymen; certainly, he may learn to dress and behave like them, but will never feel and think as they do, exactly as Waverley, despite wearing a tartan, will never be a highlander. Although Angel seems to be committed to become part of that new world and aspires at being a successful farmer, he himself is aware of the evident distance that there is between his inner nature and the rural work. This is something everyone is aware of, especially Tess, who reflects upon this issue;

it was true that he was at present out of his class. But she knew that was only because ... he was studying what he wanted to know. He did not milk cows because he was obliged to milk cows, but because he was learning how to be a rich and prosperous dairyman, landowner, agriculturalist, and breeder of cattle ... At times, nevertheless, it did seem unaccountable to her that a decidedly bookish, musical, thinking young man should have chosen deliberately to be a farmer, and not a clergyman, like his father and brothers. (*Tess*, p. 125)

Angel is at Talbothays only to observe, he looks at the rural world like a tourist would do. In the future, he may be involved into the working of the land, but not directly as a labourer, rather at a distance, as an owner. Land working does not fit such a pure young town-dweller, “how could this admirable and poetic man ever descended into the valley of Humiliation”? (*Tess*, p. 124). Angel will always be considered an outsider, “a gentleman’s son who’s going to be a great landowner and farmer abroad!” (*ibid.*, p. 137). Tess and the other peasants envy Angel’s social position, while young Clare, on his part, envies the naturalness of country people, that, to his eyes, are happy and free. But it is clear to everybody that Angel will never really be an agriculturalist since, as the protagonist of *La Luna e i Falò* says, “you’ve got to have it in your bones, you’ve got to be born with that” – my translation – (Pavese 2005, p. 54).

Angel is completely different from Tess. He needs to leave his habitual environment in order to learn the secrets of rural work as this is something he is not familiar with, something he did not acquire by his family, something he is actually willing to explore though. Tess, on the contrary,

as soon as she left school, [lent] a hand at haymaking or harvesting on neighbouring farms; or, by preference, at milking or butter-making processes, which she had learnt when her father had owned cows; and being deft-fingered it was a kind of work in which she excelled. (*Tess*, p. 37)

This demonstrates the profound difference between Angel's and Tess's disposition towards the rural world. Unlike Angel, Tess has grown up in that particular environment, she is part of it, she is a practical person and knows what it actually means hard working. As a consequence, Angel is attracted by her due to her intrinsic closeness to nature. Indeed, as he is interested in improving his knowledge of that specific field, he looks at her as if she were an agricultural guide to learn from, and he is fascinated by her particular ability at the farm. Moreover, he is completely deceived by her picturesque beauty which makes him romanticize and idealize the environment he is surrounded by. So, Angel ends up associating Tess to the natural environment he wants to investigate, getting even more convinced about the career he resolved to pursue. Unfortunately, this conviction will be totally misleading, affected by what George Eliot defines as the "dear deceit of beauty". The beauty of both Tess and the natural environment hides a truth which is hard to accept, consequently leading to Angel's failure, as husband and farmer.

Angel observes the workers and reflects. He thinks about how to improve rural activities: he is not part of that particular world because he is not able to fully understand the deep attachment workers have to traditional methods as he does not belong to that place. His commitment is based on a scientific vision of the land, something that has to be exploited by means of the modern techniques that are emerging at the time and does not care about the ancient traditions of the rural world. For this reason, as it has been already stated in the previous chapters, Angel

is a very controversial character as he both tends to idealize nature seeing it as a typical romantic environment, and at the same time, seems to consider it as worthy if only exploitable. His personal interests, once the idyllic environmental vision affected by his infatuation for Tess evaporates, are clearly stated: he is intentioned to be a successful agriculturalist and his main focus is on exploring the “advantages of the Empire of Brazil” where “land was offered ... on exceptionally advantageous terms” (*Tess*, p. 260). As “Brazil somewhat attracted him as a new idea, Tess could eventually join him there” (*ibid*). This clearly epitomizes Angel’s quivering and egoistic nature. He does not hesitate to leave Tess and reach the new world pursuing a dream that will lead to a fiasco. Influenced by his thirst for liberty and wealth “the emigrating agriculturalist” departs for Brazil, his Land of Promise (*ibid*). Angel reaches the New World, sure to succeed in his “proposed experiment with that country’s soil, notwithstanding the discouraging reports of some farm-labourers who had emigrated thither and returned home within the twelve months” (*Tess*, p. 266). However, his experience turns out to be disastrous, as he is “drenched with thunderstorms and persecuted by other hardships” exactly as the several English farmers and farm-labourers who emigrated there to have success in the Brazilian fields (*ibid.*, p. 275). Returning to Emminster ill and unsuccessful, Angel sees his agricultural adventure fail as Brazilian land does not have the same characteristics of the English soil. The innovative methods he applies, together with the precious notions he acquired during his apprenticeship, do not suit Brazilian soil since they seem to exclusively fit Wessex’s typical environment. This means that agricultural techniques are localized as they suit specific regions and cannot be applied in a territory characterized by a completely different morphology and climate. However, English farmers reached that far country with

the baseless assumption that those frames which, ploughing and sowing on English uplands, had resisted all the weathers to whose moods they had been born, could resist equally well all the weathers by which they were surprised on Brazilian plains. (*Tess*, p. 275)

Natural conditions heavily affect human behaviour leading agriculturalists to adopt their methods to the specific environment they have to deal with. And of course, this is really not something one can learn on books, as experience only will teach it. Angel is convinced to be prepared, he believes to know all the necessary notions in order for him to start an agricultural business. He is certain that by means of his books and all the time he spent at observing the work at the farms and mills he visited, he will become a successful agriculturalist. Yet, being a naïve and intellectual young man, he neglects a rather relevant issue: in agriculture, what really matters is practice, manual work, and experience. No matter how new your techniques are, you will never get anything from the land if you do not know that place. In order to master a place, you ought to know it, and you do not do it by reading or studying a book, you do it by working the soil. Certainly, you need to observe it, but above all, you need to act upon it. Angel is not and will never be an agriculturalist because it is a profession that deviates too much from his personality. Exactly as during the garlic chase, Angel will always leave the others finish the work, very likely, he will soon lose interest in the rural world as it is something very practical which completely diverges from his intellectual disposition. This is just a temporal allure that will certainly fade away as he understands his total incompetence and unfamiliarity with the rural world. In addition to that, although he can learn to act and dress like a farmer, he will never have a strong constitution that will actually allow him to do such a hard manual work. For this reason, he can be seen as a tourist that unaware of the actual implications of staying in the specific natural environment of the English (and Brazilian) countryside, inevitably ends up going back home, to his parents' house, where he can recover and be himself again. Angel's plan turns out to be an idle dream that will never get him to achieve the actual success he resolved to have.



Figure 21. *“Is she of a family such as you would care to marry into – a lady in short? Asked his startled mother ...”* by E. Borough Johnson

3.4 Nature: utilitarian or philosophical?

Angel, who first resolved to investigate the countryside in order to exploit the land, ends up idealizing it. This is the same attitude picturesque tourists would have while admiring the landscapes during their explorative tours, where humanity stands before the observer “in the pensive sweetness of Italian art” (*Tess*, p. 259). In that remote world, he can actually appreciate an atmosphere and some values that seem to have disappeared in Emminster. In this way, he identifies with a tourist that, curious to investigate an environment he is not accustomed to, surrenders to the interest he feels for such a change of location where he can leave his anxieties behind. Such an interest for this particular countryside location, together with his infatuation for the beautiful Tess, makes Talbothays the quintessential harmonious and free-thought environment, a place which Angel, in a way, tends to romanticize exactly as picturesque tourists would do. Therefore, the young aspiring agriculturalist, deeply influenced by his ethereal and philosophical nature, once at Talbothays, fascinated by the natural appeal of both the country and his beloved dairymaid, is persuaded to consider nature not just as land intended for a productive agriculture but as a romantic and picturesque landscape to admire and enjoy. Consequently, there is a change, from a merely material vision of nature towards a spiritual perception of the environment, an intrinsic natural value human psyche can benefit from. Angel is able to perceive this particular state of mind also due to his essentially spiritual disposition, in this sense, to such an individual the picturesque vision of nature is more easily achieved. In addition to that, Angel possesses a social and economic situation that allows him to neglect a vision which is strictly utilitarian of the countryside, in favour of a romantic vision his spirit benefits from. This clearly reminds of the typical romantic attitude flourished to oppose the scientific and positivist approach prioritised by the Enlightenment. However, Angel will soon neglect this romantic picture as his ambition leads him to pursue his dream at any cost, embracing his resolution to become an agriculturalist and leaving poor Tess in a dreadful state.

In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the natural environment described by the narrator creates in the character of Angel Clare, as well as in the readers, two

different perspectives. On the one hand, there is the merely realistic vision of the countryside intended for the exploitation of the land – the farm, the labourers' work, the animals, the modern implements that inevitably affect the rural world - while on the other hand, there is a kind of idealization of the countryside opposed to the city, where all the positive aspects of living immersed in the pastures in a sort of secluded fairyland distant from any type of anxiety modernity gave rise to seem to be emphasized, something the visitor's spirit can benefit from. Angel, who emphasizes the Brazilian rural world considering it as a land to be materially exploited, will have to deal with a troublesome situation in that "strange land": a hard work far from being productive and "a severe illness from which he had suffered shortly after his arrival [and which] had never wholly left him" (*Tess*, p. 339). Even though he is about to "relinquish his hope of farming here [in Brazil]" he decides to keep "this change of view a secret from his parents" (*ibid*). However, he will soon be forced to return to his homeland, recognizing his failure that "might be called a tourist failure", both in his agricultural plans and with regard to Tess (Kerridge 2001, p. 132). Indeed, as Kerridge (2001, pp. 132-133) goes on, Angel

will chance upon Tess and become her middle-class lover, embodying (and eroticizing) the readerly fantasy of rescuing Tess. In this role he will fail her catastrophically ... Drawn to her because of a cultural fantasy he projects onto her, he recoils when she reveals her difference from that fantasy.

Therefore, Angel experiences a real fiasco both philosophically – idealizing Tess and the rural world of Talbothays – and on the merely utilitarian side of his agricultural plan as he realizes the impracticability of the farming career he envisaged in Brazil. Angel is disappointed by his own expectations: as a tourist, he thinks to know what he will actually have to face because of his fascination for the appearance of things. However, the very moment he realizes what really hides below the surface, he recognizes the huge distance between appearance and substance, between fantasies and reality.

Indeed, Angel embodies the modern man characterized by both a philosophical perception of nature and a utilitarian vision of the environment. However, with regard to the utilitarian attitude towards the environment, Angel and several twenty-first-century individuals seem to be characterised by a double utilitarian perception of the natural world, the one deriving from the physical exploitation of the land and the one developing from their conviction of achieving serenity if surrounded by a rural landscape. In particular, in Angel's case, there is a kind of circularity where from an initial perception of the environment as something to be materially used, a romantic vision of nature gradually evolves until this very idealistic conception of the place eventually turns into another utilitarian evaluation which does not refer to a strictly material use of nature, but to the fact that people tend to take advantage of the environment exclusively for their well-being. This is the same situation many westerners still experience today, in particular, it is the typical attitude unwary tourists have towards the environment. Based on the philosophy of seeking happiness and freedom, they unconsciously exploit nature for their own personal purpose, idealizing it – thus overestimating what they see – and underestimating the perils they may fall into and the several difficulties people have to deal with when living in close relationship with the environment. However, they are usually not able to (and especially not interested in) understanding these issues. When they finally seem to become aware of the actual implications of living in the countryside, it is usually late as, probably, they have already undergone a so-called 'tourist failure'. Therefore, we can say that when considering careless tourists' behaviour, philosophy engenders utilitarianism since the need to pursue happiness and freedom, getting away from the pressures of everyday life, eventually turns into some occasional escapes to the countryside where they end up exploiting nature for their own sake. So, even though unwary tourists do not exploit the environment by working the land, they do it in any case by visiting rural locations and behaving as they usually do, remaining on the surface of what they see without deepening their understanding of the environment they choose to escape to, as Angel does in Talbothays.

3.5 Wessex map and landscapes: tourist-readers explore Hardy's fictional world

In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy meticulously specifies the geography of Wessex. A clear map depicting all the locations cited in the novel is presented to the reader – *the Wessex of the Novels* (1895-1896) is reported in the section “The natural context of Edward Waverley and Angel Clare”, on page 47 of this dissertation. Hardy seems to employ a style resembling the one which is normally used by the authors of guidebooks in order to attract readers and get them to be willing to explore Wessex. Even though Hardy gets the readers to travel in a world which is fictional (where each location is given an invented name), by means of clear descriptions he is actually able to provide the public with a perfect image of Southern England, specifically, describing four of the six main geographical areas of the county of Dorset, “the heavy clayland of the Vale of Blackmoor, the rich heathland valleys of the Frome, the forbidding chalk upland of Flintcomb-Ash and the fringes of the great barren heathland” (*Tess*, Appendix II, p. 468).

Throughout the pages, the warm voice of the narrator introduces the readers to an environment that, according to each place, is extremely changeable and, at times, describes the landscape by means of artistic references. The reader's journey through Hardy's realm of fiction in this novel begins at Marlott, a village “of the beautiful Vale of Blakemore or Blackmoor ... for the most part untrodden as yet by tourist or landscape painter” (*Tess*, p. 12). Here the reference to the seclusion of the place which renders it still unexplored by tourists and painters, emphasizes its naturalness and truthfulness, therefore attracting and intriguing the readers of the novel even more, introducing them to the subsequent geographical description of this delightful valley surrounded by hills “in which the fields are never brown and the springs never dry” (*ibid*). The narrator continues to emphasize the particularity of the Vale of Blackmoor as “the traveller from the coast, who, after plodding northward for a score of miles over calcareous downs and corn-lands, suddenly reaches ... surprised and delighted ... a country differing absolutely from that which he has passed through” (*ibid*). This is the same reaction readers would

have should they decide to visit the region overlooking it from the hills which encircles it, where they would admire the small fields with their pale green grass and dark green hedgerows, a landscape characterized by a dreamy atmosphere “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” (*Tess*, p. 12). This is a typical scenery which landscape painters would certainly be pleased to picture, an environment where “arable lands are few and limited” and “with but slight exceptions the prospect is a broad rich mass of grass and trees, mantling minor hills and dales within the major” (ibid). However, despite the apparent naturalness of the place, the narrator artfully provides us with some specific clues meaning that human agency has not spared this part of the country. Right after the description of the valley the narrator informs the reader about the old name of the place, “the Forest of White Hart, from a curious legend of King Henry III.’s reign, in which the killing by a certain Thomas de la Lynd of a beautiful white hart which the king had run down and spared, was made the occasion of a heavy fine” (*Tess*, pp. 12-13). This legend seems to remind the readers of the archetypal case of disrespect for the rules, the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. Here, as in the episode of the Bible, humans cannot restrain themselves from dominating nature and as a consequence are punished: having killed such a pure animal, the king decided to tax the land. This digression, showing as human tendency to impose on nature – and derange it – has had heavy consequences through the centuries, seems to implicitly anticipate the novel’s subliminal message, in other words, the fact that mankind has been modifying the environment according to laws that are not natural, but rather have derived from civilization. The narrator invites people to accept reality as times have changed and the presence of modernity in rural England, although invisible in some areas, is nevertheless affecting the countryside. As a matter of fact, the country is becoming increasingly industrialised and quite paradoxically, human innovations are endangering the conditions of their species and environment. In this perspective, despite the negative effects caused by civilization, which have to be acknowledged and accepted, it is precisely on the environment that humans should focus – not in a

passive and nostalgic way but assuming an optimistic, active and respectful attitude – in order to safeguard both nature and themselves.

The reader is then led to Trantridge, where Tess is sent in the attempt to ‘claim kin’ because of her parents’ aristocratic aspirations, and where the poor girl is raped by Alec of the D’Urbervilles, whose father usurped the noble family name she inherited. Tess’s tragedy precisely occurs in the Chase, a district right “outside the immediate boundaries of the estate”,

a truly venerable tract of forest land, one of the few remaining woodlands in England of undoubted primeval date, wherein Druidical mistletoe was still found on aged oaks, and where enormous yew-trees, not planted by the hand of man, grew as they had grown when they were pollarded for bows. (*Tess*, p. 38)

Certainly, the episode of Tess’s rape has been localised in such a sylvan and archaic forest in order to symbolize the tragic exploitation of the land on the part of us humans, ruthless beings, incapable to respect the pureness of the environment we live in. Moreover, earlier in the story, Tess is seduced by Alec in the fruit-garden, a place where plants are cultivated in an artificial way, thus epitomising human control over nature. Poor Tess has been ruined as well as the environment and in this sense, she identifies with nature itself.

After going back home, delivering her baby and tragically burring him, the girl decides to get away from Marlott and reaches “the valley of the Great Dairies, the valley in which milk and butter grew to rankness, and were produced more profusely, if less delicately, than at her home – the verdant plain so well watered by the river Var or Froom” (*Tess*, p. 102). Here, Tess, and the reader with her, rests and admires the landscape,

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. The green lea was speckled as thickly with them as a canvas by Van Asloot or Sallaert with burghers. The ripe hue of the red and

dun kine absorbed the evening sunlight, which the white-coated animals returned to the eye in rays almost dazzling, even at the distant elevation on which she stood. (ibid., pp. 102-103)

Here Hardy refers to Denis Van Asloot and Antoon Sallaert, two minor Flemish genre painters in the manner of Pieter Bruegel, the famous painter of Dutch and Flemish Renaissance art, known for his landscapes and peasant scenes. This particular reference to landscape painting that anticipates what will later evolve in the trend of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century picturesque art, symbolizes the particular relevance that Hardy gives to landscapes.

Before such a pleasing view, where “the new air was clear, bracing, ethereal ... [and] the Var waters were clear as the pure River of Life shown to the Evangelist, rapid as the shadow of a cloud, with pebbly shallows that prattled to the sky all day long”, Tess feels better and seems to let go all her anxieties; “either the change in the quality of the air from heavy to light, or the sense of being amid new scenes where there were no invidious eyes upon her, sent up her spirits wonderfully” (*Tess*, p. 103). Despite the delightful atmosphere of stillness where nature appears to dominate the scene, the invisible presence of modernity has affected that valley as well, where “the enclosures numbered fifty acres instead of ten, the farmsteads were more extended, [and] the groups of cattle formed tribes” (ibid., p. 102).

The reader is then conducted to Flintcomb-Ash Farm and is introduced to a “starve-acre place” where Tess has to deal with a desolate wintery environment and the dampness of a cold rainy weather (*Tess*, p. 284). The girl works in a swede-field where the land, “of chalk formation” is “composed of myriads of loose white flints” an infertile and depressing place which makes her sadly regret “green, sunny, romantic Talbothays” (ibid., pp. 285-286). Certainly, this is an environment that completely differs from the ones Tess previously experienced. Here,

the whole field was in colour a desolate drab; it was a complexion without features, as if a face, from chin to brow, should be only an expanse of skin. The sky wore, in another colour, the same likeness; a white vacuity of countenance with the lineaments gone. So these

two upper and nether visages confronted each other all day long, the white face looking down on the brown face, and the brown face looking up at the white face, without anything standing between them but the two girls crawling over the surface of the former like flies. (*Tess*, p. 285)

At this point, the reader finds a landscape that is the undisputed protagonist of the scene. Tess and Marian are here completely oppressed by the hostility of such an environment since the narrator depicts them as two small flies. In this section, Hardy completely overturns the habitual descriptions readers are accustomed to. Instead of focusing on people and consequently considering the landscape as a background, he now decides to concentrate on the nature which surrounds mankind, neglecting human presence and humiliating the two girls, seeing them as tiny, almost invisible beings. In this passage, the sky and the land are transformed into faces gazing at each other; as a result, the environment is humanised while people are dehumanised. Hardy is here giving his public a clear message, environment is not a mere backdrop people act in, on the contrary, it needs to be considered an actual character of the story, an entity worthy to be described and respected.

In the last part of the book, at Alec's insistence Tess decides to follow him to the pleasure city of Sandbourne, "a fashionable watering-place", "a glittering novelty" which sprung up from "that tawny piece of antiquity" of the "eastern tract of the enormous Egdon Waste" (*Tess*, p. 375). This exotic location with "its piers, its groves of pines, its promenades, and its covered gardens" rises up near one of the oldest sites of England as "within the space of a mile from its outskirts every irregularity of the soil was prehistoric, every channel an undisturbed British trackway; not a sod having being turned from there since the days of the Caesars" (*ibid.*, pp. 375-376). Here, the narrator emphasizes the fact that despite the modern appearance of such a location, a nature that is still untouched and original actually survived. In that new "Mediterranean lounging-place on the English Channel ... the sea was near at hand, but not intrusive; it murmured, and ... the pines murmured in precisely the same tones" (*Tess*, p. 376). So, although human impact

seems to have pushed the sea to the background of the scene, natural presence can still be perceived, even if through a soft murmur.

After Alec's murder, Tess and Angel flee from Sandbourne, hidden in the Mediterranean vegetation of that "half-woodland, half-moorland part of the country" (*Tess*, pp. 386-387). After passing through the New Forest, they reach the Great Plain ending up in front of Stonehenge, "a forest of monoliths grouped upon the grassy expanse of the plain", a "heathen temple", symbol of the past, of traditions that are gone, and more importantly, symbol of human relationship with nature (*ibid.*, p. 393). The lovers' escape ends here, where Tess is finally imprisoned for Alec's killing: the law of man finally prevails and nature can do nothing but observe, exactly as the readers. As well as the novel's readers, Angel is a reckless tourist that can only stare at the scene as he is not able to actually intervene. That primitive place, despite his admiration for paganism, is not Angel's natural environment, therefore, the young man can do nothing but leave Tess to her tragic destiny.

The tourist-readers are led throughout a very diversified Wessex, where landscapes assume a pivotal role in the development of the plot. The diverse agricultural techniques that are described in each area emphasize the specificity of the natural background, which is deeply changeable. Together with Tess, the reader moves from fertile regions to very harsh fields and ends up to a pristine land representing ancient times and paganism. In this sense, there is a circularity where the protagonist, originating from the natural world of Marlott, is led to explore places far less primitive where the impact of modernity is undeniable and is finally directed to Stonehenge, the emblem of ancient paganism dating back to times when nature was not primarily tamed but worshipped.

However, it is interesting to remark how the locations described by the narrator, despite being highly affected by progress, still seem to preserve some territories where the environment is unspoiled. Those places which have undergone important changes due to the effect of modernity present, even if in their outskirts, a natural environment that is the actual protagonist of the scene, where people are led to recognize its undisputed dominance over human life.

Although modernity affected Marlott's inhabitants with the alcohol consumption at Rolliver's inn, "the single alehouse at this end of the long and broken village" and with the use of agricultural implements as the reaping-machine, its picturesque landscape, with its delightful hill and woods and its ancient traditions, still dominates the scene and is considered an appealing country place that tourists and artists would certainly visit (*Tess*, p. 25). At the same time, despite Chaseborough's shallowness and grossness, "a decayed market-town two or three miles distant" from Trantridge where, on Saturday nights, a crew of men and women usually find refuge in the "dyspeptic effects of the curious compounds sold to them as beer by the monopolizers of the once independent inns", "the primeval yews and oaks of the Chase" silently rise and form one of the oldest woods of Britain (*ibid.*, pp. 63-64-73). Likewise, in spite of the evident use of modern implements at Flintcomb-Ash Farm, the turnip-slicing machine and the threshing-machine, the environment is the protagonist of the scene and with its rigidity oppresses people. Similarly, the fashionable location of Sandbourne, even though it is a place that has been recently built and that clearly represents the impact of modernity on the natural environment, is not far from a location that has been unaltered for centuries. Therefore, landscapes have a central role in this novel precisely because Hardy is convinced that mankind needs to restart from the environment in order for us to have a better future, thus opposing to a morality originated from civilization, which very often does not reflect the reality of things, as with regard to Tess, who is condemned for Alec's murder when, abandoned to her fate, she was previously deceived and consequently raped.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles is certainly a novel that emphasizes the presence of modernity in the English countryside underlining how people change according to the environment they are surrounded by: the harsher the land, the harsher the character of its inhabitants. And the more a place is affected by modernity, the unhappier are its dwellers. As explained by the narrator, in the quasi-romantic world of Talbothays, where people live following the natural pace of a biological agriculture, despite the toughness of the manual work they have to carry out, everybody seem to be serene and any possible situation – as the garlic chase – is absolutely bearable for labourers. At Flint-Comb Ash, on the contrary, there is a

completely different scenario as the presence of urban modernity is more dramatic: workers, being subjected to the new implements imported from the city, are ruthlessly exploited and consequently lead a very unhappy life. However, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the environment is not just as a place which is exploited and modified by man, but rather an active entity which has the power to affect humans' existence, an environment from which people can and must restart for a better future.

By means of the accurate map provided by the author, readers are always aware of the actual movements the characters undergo throughout the story. They are able to localise them in the map and see what distance they can cover during their journeys. In this way, the public can visually locate the diverse environments of Wessex and have an idea of the morphology of the area. Moreover, being provided with such a clearly defined geography, the public has the feeling to be dealing with a real story as Hardy takes inspiration from actual places he visited in Britain. The author believes his readers to be real tourists, an observing public that, nevertheless, has a certain impact on the narrative.

Hardy demands that readers should take seriously the way their presence is implied by the narrative. They should acknowledge that a visitor is not a ghostly, free-moving figure who watches and leaves no imprint but a bodily presence engaged in an act of consumption that will have material consequences. Tourists are not external to the economy or ecosystem they visit; they are part of it, engaged in an activity likely to transform it. (Kerridge 2001, pp. 129-130)

Therefore, as real tourists affect the environment they visit, readers influence the narrative they read. Indeed, the characters of the story are “the product of an environment, a field of meaning in which both readers and characters move” (ibid). In this sense, the ‘environment’ is given by both the narrative, so by the narrator’s and the characters’ internal point of view, and the readers’ external opinion. As Kerridge (2001, p. 132) goes on, it is interesting to remark that it is precisely the ‘social chasm’ between the community of villagers depicted in the novel and the

community of readers that emphasizes the tourist attitude of the reading public towards the narrative. The middle-class readers, while reading Hardy's story, seem to take a picturesque tour throughout Wessex, and by means of their townie manners they probably end up judging the landscapes and situations they encounter in a typical tourist way. For this reason, they need to be aware of the actual power of their judgment, they should remember that they have a pivotal role in the story as well, and that they really ought to be cautious when criticizing the characters depicted by the narrator, minding of the particular circumstances under which they act and sometimes trying to put themselves in their shoes. In this sense, readers may identify with the character of Angel Clare. As a matter of fact, Clare embodies the reader since he is accustomed to read and, behaving as a tourist, he keeps judging what he sees on the basis of his preconceived ideas deriving from his social status and education.

It is interesting to note the reverse effect which is suggested in a particular episode of the novel, where, among the lines, the villagers' point of view towards the city dwellers emerges. Tess is aware of being part of a picturesque rural world which townies do not and will never really know. The tourists from the city can surely go on a trip to the countryside and enjoy the pastures and woods which characterize the environment, but they will never fully understand what lies behind a rural place. One morning while Tess and Angel are delivering some milk to a train directed to London, the girl reveals her thoughts to her lover:

‘Londoners will drink it at their breakfast to-morrow, won't they?’
She asked. ‘Strange people that we have never seen... Noble men and noble women, ambassadors and centurions, ladies and tradeswomen, and babies who have never seen a cow ... Who don't know anything of us, and where it comes from; or think how we two drove miles across the moor to-night in the rain that it might reach ‘em in time?’ (*Tess*, p. 187)

The readers of the novel represent the city dwellers Tess is imagining, so the protagonist of the story is interested in the life of Hardy's public, experiencing a

kind of “pleasure at the glimpse of the profusion of interconnected life” which there actually exists between rural and urban world (Kerridge 2001, p. 131). In this way, Tess appears as a real human being, not just a fictional character of an invented story, and, as a result, readers may empathize with her as tourists would do during an excursion. However, they would look at her simply as part of a picturesque world, that, even if real, is too far away from their reality. Angel, on his part, does not really consider Tess’s argument as he himself is a tourist who, subjected to the romanticism and picturesqueness of the situation he is living, does not comprehend that he actually belongs to the same category of townies that will never truly belong to rurality.

3.6 Wessex and the 'spirit of place'

As asserted by John Alcorn (1977, p. 9), it is remarkable the way in which Hardy's landscapes have influenced English fiction, "not only in terms of the new importance of landscape description, but more significantly in terms of the new manner in which landscape enters the art of story-telling" as in Hardy's novels "landscape comes alive". With Hardy, landscape becomes an actual character of the story, not a mere background to set the plot in, as he "seeks the enduring monumental shape which lies beneath the distortions and limited perspectives of human vision" (ibid). Therefore, Hardy invites his public to investigate the environment going beyond the typical point of view we usually tend to employ, inviting us to think about our relationship with it and the way in which the civilized societies we live in influence our perception of nature.

By means of a vision which is "often Olympian and panoramic; he sees landscape from above, as one looks at a map" and, in the same way, he sometimes "seems to be looking at his characters through a telescope", thus maintaining the point of view of an omniscient narrator, or rather, of a tourist guide who provides excursionists with a broad overview of the environment they are surrounded by (Alcorn 1977, p. 9). "This sense of the spatial distance of the narrator from the action is essential to the pathos" of his novels as in the ending of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* that provides us with "a quality of universality which is projected by means of a sense of visual distance" (ibid). Moreover, this particular distance the narrator employs seems to homogenize the individuals that move in the space described, whether villagers, outsiders or animals, seeing them all as part of the same landscape. In the same way, landscape acquires a pivotal role as it encloses all the other characters of the scene, and thus becomes the real protagonist of the novel, the one that, either admired, idealized, or exploited, endures the passing of the time, any weather condition it is subjected to and, ultimately, human influence. Therefore, Hardy "in a world grown vastly more complex and unmanageable, a world where 'things fall apart'" has "the temerity to try to put things together again" representing a world where landscape dominates (Alcorn 1977, p. 9). In this situation, Angel Clare is a tourist who, as the readers, explores the landscape

he is introduced to. We have seen that his attempt at taming landscape is useless as if he is actually willing to establish a stable relationship with the natural environment he cannot either think of taming it or idealizing it, he just needs to pay attention to it, listen to the voices of nature and to the spirit of the place, thus respecting it and acknowledging that it is the landscape to be the real protagonist of the scene. We do not know whether Angel truly learnt the lesson and that after Tess's death he is actually able to change his attitude towards the environment. However, this is what Hardy wished for in the late nineteenth century, when, aware of the changes modernity was advancing, he foresaw the possibility of living in a better world only if restarting from the environment.

As Alcorn (1977, p. 16) accurately points out in the first chapter of his book,

the pastoral genre, ancient and modern, has always concealed beneath its placid surface highly charged comments on political and social issues. Hardy's use of pastoral settings and themes expresses his sense of the opposition between man in nature and man in society. Increasingly Hardy tended to see an opposition between the spontaneity of nature and the legal rigidities of social institutions and conventions.

As we have seen, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the character that embodies this 'opposition between man in nature and man in society' is precisely Angel Clare. Imbued with social conventions that over-developed his spiritual side, he constantly restrains his animal part. Although Talbothays naturalness awakens his instincts and makes him feel free and happy, he is however continuously influenced by his education and the moral conventions inculcated by his family. As a matter of fact, "Hardy's dominant use of 'spirit of place' in his last novels is closely connected with his increasing bitter criticism of institutional morality" as "it is this man of high principle, incorruptible virtue, and strong intelligence, who provides the self-righteous turn of the screw that crushes Tess" (Alcorn 1977, p. 20). Therefore, despite the pastoral and romantic atmosphere of green and

flourishing Talbothays, this aspect of harsh critique towards modern civilization is nevertheless present in Hardy's novel.

As Alcorn (1977, pp. 18-19) goes on, Hardy's characters "are continually moving across the landscape". Their struggle, as Lawrence (1936, cited in Alcorn, 1977, p. 19) writes in his "Study", is "about becoming complete, or about the failure to become complete". Angel moves from Emminster visiting several farms before getting to Talbothays, he then expatriates and reaches Brazil, and eventually goes back to England. In this perspective, the young Clare embodies the modern man who decides to travel in order to become complete, when in fact, he is seeking to escape from a situation he does not like, an ecclesiastic career. He will eventually fail to become complete, at least the way he himself prefigured to become complete, as his expectations are deceived and he is not able to become a successful agriculturalist in the New World.

As Alcorn (1977, p. 25) goes on in the second chapter of his book,

Hardy's landscape is a place of refuge, an escape from the pressures and prohibitions of modern civilization. His heroes and heroines tend to merge with the landscape and become one with natural creation. Power of place delivers them – however momentarily – from the terrors of purpose and choice.

So, in this case, both Edward Waverley and Angel Clare – even though he is not the hero of Hardy's novel – escape from the pressures of their everyday situation, the first taking refuge in the pristine landscape of Scotland and the second immersing himself in the rural landscape of Wessex. Both the characters retire to a quiet bucolic place in order not to choose – Waverley does not know whether to be a Hanoverian or a Jacobite, Clare does not know whether to begin his agricultural activity in England or abroad; moreover, both of them are not fully convinced about the professions they are pursuing, Waverley does not really feel a soldier and Clare seems to be an agriculturalist only outwardly. Yet, in a way, the environment itself will choose for them as it will force them to give up their hesitation and choose to leave, Waverley will leave the Highlands and Clare will

leave Brazil. Hardy “believes that modern civilization has underestimated the environmental forces which work upon man ... Freedom is within nature; it is a fulfilment of instinct itself; its goal is the maturing of man’s natural potentialities” (Alcorn 1977, p. 25). Therefore, humans should abandon a too strictly moral and religious view of human freedom – as the traditional Christian one – and rather ground their life on the circumstances of their own lives, namely, on the actual environment they live in. Clare is the product of modernity and does not accept to surrender to his instinct since he keeps judging by means of Christian morality. He should instead live according to the ‘spirit of place’ as it is from nature that the world may revive.

In order to achieve this, as suggested by Hardy, “a radical reorganization of society” is necessary, a society that “will allow for a greater tolerance for the natural variety of human instinct and behaviour ... Hardy’s better world will emerge from the spontaneity of living things themselves: above all from the physical foundation of man, which is the foundation and guide to Hardy’s spirituality” (ibid, p. 23). However, as Alcorn continues, “Hardy is not merely echoing the thoughts of Rousseau” as “his plea is not for a primitive state of nature, but for the redress of an imbalance between the individual and society” (ibid). So, there is “a new relationship in Hardy’s novels between landscape and character” which symbolizes the modern man’s struggle “to understand the mystery of nature which holds a firm hope for a better life” (ibid). Therefore, the “spirit of place” emphasized in Hardy’s novels rises from this “sense of oneness between man and his physical environment”, where a place “symbolises the hope of building a society more responsive to human nature, a society that in time will emerge, not through abstract dogma, but from ‘things themselves’ – from the body of the earth and the creatures which live and grow upon it” (Alcorn 1977, pp. 23-24).

❖ Chapter four

Waverley and Clare: superficial tourists

4.1 The natural world: a form of pleasure

We are certainly interested in what is artificial and realized by our highly developed faculties as we are pleased with our capacity of creating beautiful objects which meet our standards of perfection; nevertheless, the natural world, where human influence seems to be absent, and very often seems to be intentionally kept out of the way (at least apparently), is considered a form of pleasure which seems to outdo man-made things.

As Kerridge (2001, p. 134) points out, in Hardy's novels there are two forms of pleasure in the natural world which corresponds to two different types of human attitude, on the one hand there are the so-called "unalienated lovers" and, on the other, there are the "alienated lovers" of nature. The unalienated lovers of nature are usually embodied by natives, individuals that are "deeply embedded in a stable ecosystem", whereas the alienated lovers of nature are habitually represented by romantic individuals, tourists, newcomers, and readers as well (ibid). So, the former type of individuals actually inhabits the natural world, while the latter can do nothing but gaze at such a particular environment.

As Kerridge (2001, p. 134) goes on, "the conventional assumption is that the transition from preindustrial to industrial society abolishes the first and engenders the second". Indeed, as in the case of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, we see a world made of traditions and archaic values which, although secluded, is slowly making way for modernity, and, as we have seen, "many of Hardy's characters are enmeshed in the technological and social changes that produce this transition" (ibid). Hardy's novels "are appreciative of both ways of loving nature and intent on exploring the relationship between them", since the narrator of the novel which is here considered provides the readers with both the observer and the inhabitant of the natural world: Angel represents the typical alienated romantic tourist, newcomer and reader, whereas Tess is the archetype of the unalienated native which actually inhabits the rural world. These two categories of nature lovers are presented in Scott's novel as well, where Waverley belongs to the alienated kind and Evan Dhu Maccombich is surely part of the unalienated natives of the Highlands.

However, there exist a certain difference between Scott's and Hardy's way of depicting the relationship between alienated tourists and unalienated natives. The significant distance between the characters of Waverley and Evan Dhu is never to be reduced. Certainly, Waverley learns some notions of what living into the mountains actually means by his loyal guide, but Evan Dhu does not get to know more about alienated tourists of the sort. He is aware of the fact that Edward is fascinated by the landscape of the Highlands and he offers to guide him throughout the mountainous environment which otherwise would be inaccessible to an outsider as Waverley, yet, the Highlander does not really get to know Edward's feelings or thoughts, especially because he is not at all interested in doing that. Evan Dhu merely keeps living his normal existence while fulfilling his duty of watching after the English tourist he is responsible of. Although Waverley explores the Highlands guided by Evan Dhu and the squire's knowledge about Scotland is undoubtedly enlarged, these individuals seems to be floating into separated bubbles which belong to two unconnected worlds that will never meet. In Scott's world, the possibility of intertwine alienated and unalienated nature lovers is not foreseen. Waverley is lampooned in the same way picturesque tourists would be: he is a passive hero; to him the natural world is nothing more than a form of pleasure and he is led to idealize it because of the preconceived forms of art his education provided him with, it is precisely his literary background that implicitly encourages him to visit the Highlands. The Highlanders, on their part, are not interested in knowing more about Waverley's world due to their hostility towards the illegitimate Hanoverian party which is ruling England. These political discrepancies divide Scottish and English dwellers and they will finally lead Waverley to abandon his romantic dream.

With regard to Hardy's novel, circumstances are rather different. Despite the deep differences existing between the rural and the urban world, these two universes are increasingly to be intertwined as rurality and modernity are slowly creating a new type of continuum in the nineteenth-century. Of course, there is a mistrust on the part of villagers towards the new implements that are increasingly being employed in the countryside, however, this change is something they have to accept as this alteration is the product of the particular historical context they are living in.

Relationships between these two different worlds, between the archaic country and the modern city are inevitable and they will never go back to the way it was in earlier times, as modernity cannot be put aside. In this perspective, Hardy introduces his public to a world that is not clearly divided between country and city, but rather an environment in which rural places and civilized influence are to coexist and cooperate. People have to accept this and begin to recognize the actual importance environment has on human life. Hardy thus anticipates the environmentalists' hope: the realization "of sustainable forms of development that will not estrange communities from their natural environments" (Kerridge 2001, p. 134). Environmentalists, indeed, "seek to build alliances between tourist and native, hoping for an eventual society in which everyone will move between these positions" (ibid).

As it has emerged from the novels here investigated, "the alienated observer tends to see unreflective happiness in the lives of the unalienated" (Kerridge 2001, p. 134). And still today we tend to think that people who live in the countryside are spontaneously happy compared to city dwellers. This common expectation is grounded on the basis of the general opinion that nature makes people be serene; as a result, country people do not need to meditate upon their state of happiness as they seem to be naturally happy. Obviously, this is the townies' fantasy, a vision that is valid as long as the environment is fertile, pleasing and the weather conditions good. Certainly, this romantic belief is rather distant from the actual reality that country people have usually to deal with.

Life in the city is chaotic and artificial, whereas the natural rhythm of the countryside is slow and relaxing; precisely for this reason, people experience a pleasing sense of peace, happiness and freedom in the country. On account of this, since we westerners need to repossess our natural rhythm, re-establishing a deep and healthy relationship with the environment which surrounds us, we are usually likely to think that such a change is possible only if away from the city. Yet we tend to do it by idealizing the countryside, visualizing it as a pastoral heaven ready to welcome us, merely considering the pleasing aspect of green pastures and mysterious woods, when instead, it would be necessary to learn to live with both the pros and cons of nature, both under favourable and unfavourable conditions.

Careless tourists do not know how to do this as, accustomed to an artificial existence aimed at indulging all their whims, they cannot envisage a world in which they are not the protagonists and where their expectations are not met, what is more, they lack specific notions which only the natives of that place can own, notions made of knowledge and traditions that have been passed down through the generations and that focus on the specific environment they live in.

If Scott succeeds in emphasizing the importance of traditions and ancient values, together with celebrating Scottish pristine environment where modern innovations have not affected the landscape yet, it is with Hardy's work that landscape becomes the real protagonist of the novel and the purpose the author envisages attaining is the swift from a mere celebration of ancient past – with its traditions and values – and natural beauty towards an invitation to accept the landscape in which the characters live and act, a landscape that is affected by modernity; hence Hardy invites us to accept change, even in its negative side, as it is inevitable and we cannot refuse it. Therefore, setting his plot in a pastoral landscape as Scott did in *Waverley*, Hardy is able to convey a new message to his public, namely that humans not only need to accept the deep changes which are affecting the environment and people existence, but also that it is time for people to get over the opposition country-city which has been present for centuries and rather begin to live in a rural-urban continuum where society is composed of individuals that are able to live in a respectful and harmonious way in whatever environment they happen to be surrounded by. Humans ought to respect the landscape without idealizing it, but simply accepting it for what it is; we cannot think of merely taking the best from it, on the contrary, we need to accept it even in the most negative situations when we must recognize our limited control over it. We should try to achieve a deeper understanding of nature and avoid imitating the behaviour of the two characters that this dissertation aimed at analysing. Waverley and Clare embody two modern westerners, temerarious tourists who are willing to take advantage of the pleasing aspect of nature while neglecting its more challenging and problematic side. They do not accept changes; they rather avoid them as they escape modernity and take refuge in particular environments they are not accustomed to. They idealize the landscape in the same way picturesque

tourists would do and retire when circumstances turn out to differ from their expectations. Therefore, they neither accept the civilized environment they come from nor the new location they escape to. From alienated city dwellers, they turn into alienated tourists. It is precisely this sense of estrangement with regard to the environment in which people live that has to be avoided: humans should aim at feeling actual part of the landscape they inhabit, they must not escape their reality but accept it, thus living in a rural-urban continuum.

4.2 Waverley and Clare: from the geography of uneven development to the urban-rural continuum

As pointed out by Dymitrow and Stenseke (2016) in their essay ‘Rural-Urban Blurring and the Subjectivity’, particularly in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, the idea of the ‘urban-rural continuum’ began to evolve. This concept developed from the attempts to comprehend the social changes resulting from the interconnection among the influence of urbanisation, industrialisation and capitalism. The straightforward opposition between urban and rural landscape that until then had been a key figure of human thought and consequently characterized people’s imagination no longer existed. Such a rural-urban dichotomy became now extremely blurry; that neat distinction the world used to be grounded on was not possible any more. The colossal impact that capitalism, industrialisation and, in particular, urbanisation had on the world produced huge consequences on the environment. Certainly, this influence varied across space thus inscribing diverse sorts of continuum. Precisely for this reason differentially urbanised places appeared, where it was not the opposition between rural and urban the feature to be spotted, but rather the merging of traits which belonged to both city and country in a new continuum which is at the base of our contemporary society.

In this context, it may be logical to notice a remarkable development in the way in which Scott and Hardy illustrate the relationship between man and environment in their novels, where the former depicts a tourist that travels not only through space but also through time thanks to the phenomenon known as ‘geography of uneven development’, whereas the latter introduces one of the first literary representatives of the rural-urban continuum, a situation reflecting the way in which we still live today. From an ecocritical perspective there is a deep change in the presentation of the characters described by the two authors. Edward is perceived to be an outsider that decides to undertake his adventure on the Highlands due to the seclusion of that area from the modern world as he is willing to experience the sublime landscapes and situations narrated in the romances he is accustomed to read, thus pretending to be a hero of those chivalric manners that

do not exist anymore in the modern England in which he habitually lives. Angel, on the other hand, has followed his agricultural ambition because of the particular condition of closeness between the country and the city that is developing in those years. For this reason, Angel Clare embodies the modern man that is halfway the rural and the urban world, he symbolizes the changes which began to take place in the nineteenth century in an urban-rural continuum where no clear boundaries actually exist between those two worlds that used to be distinctly divided.

However, since defining the world according to binary conceptions is an attitude which human beings have historically developed, perhaps we ought to accept the “culturally induced permanence of the rural dichotomy” which will always be part of our imagining (Dymitrow & Stenseke, 2016). It is sensational, to say the least, the way in which our ancestors have been able to condition our concept of the world throughout history by manipulating the images of rural and urban landscapes. From that moment on, we have begun judging the world on the basis of the space we happened to occupy. We have built our identities depending on the environment that surrounded us, since “our identities are constituted in both time and place, are always shaped by memory and environment” (Bate 2000, p. 109). Accordingly, “collective understandings of landscape and nature-culture relations” developed, especially “at regional or sub-regional scales” which led to the construction of regional identities (Walsh, 2020).

Obviously, “the concept of landscape imaginaries incorporates elements of both temporality and spatiality”, indeed, the way in which socio-natural changes are perceived by the community and the specific place in which they occur are certainly relevant (ibid). For this reason, at the time of *Waverley*'s and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*' publication, people tended to produce landscape imaginaries influenced by the Romantic legacy of solitary poets who were willing to retire from the irremediable corruption of society towards landscapes where liberty and love could still be attainable. The same holds for Edward Waverley who is sure that once in the Highlands his romantic dream will come true: he will find liberty and love; he will be a hero and he will finally find the cure for his boring existence. This is also true of Clare's intentions as he thought that pursuing a career in agriculture would allow him to have an economic independence without

sacrificing his 'intellectual liberty'. Living away from the city renders Angel a better person, "a student of kine" ('kine' meaning 'cattle') who is actually able to extirpate the commonplace prejudices regarding the countryside which proliferated in the city and to appreciate the natural phenomena that characterize the environment, biological events he forgot about when living in Emminster. This "early association with country solitudes had bred in him an unconquerable, and almost unreasonable, aversion to modern town life", the same feeling Romantic poets experienced when surrounded in the natural landscapes (*Tess*, p. 116). Indeed, the more the individuals distance themselves from the city, the more they recover the harmonious relationship with nature they seem to have irredeemably lost, thus becoming disinclined to live in an urban setting. However, this is just a temporary illusion which is destined to dissolve, a mere deception due to the fascination of natural beauty. By focusing no more than on the landscape attractiveness, the unwary visitors do not pay attention to what living in such circumstances actually means. They fix their gaze only on the pleasing surface, on what is celebrated by poets and artists. Yet, when they finally awake and realize how many difficulties locals have to face de facto in similar conditions, they simply quit and go back to their former lives. Generally, they do not overtly admit they failed, they simply find a plausible excuse and abandon the place that until then they considered idyllic and flawless, as it is the case of the characters of Edward Waverley and Angel Clare.

Although both these characters are affected by an excessive idealization of the environment which they are willing to explore and both of them are finally disappointed, they result to have a different relationship with the natural landscapes they resolve to visit as Angel presents a deeper awareness of his intentions with regard to the English countryside compared to Edward's attitude towards the pastoral Scotland in which he wavers. Scott presents Waverley's trip to the Highlands as an adventure that is not planned by the young squire and that will probably end up at a certain point, as he is aware of the insurmountable distance that there actually exists between his hero and those natives, he rather emphasizes this gap by lampooning Edward, thus rendering him evidently unsuitable in the Scottish Highlands. Hardy, on the other hand, introduces his

public to a young man that, although embodying an outsider – as it is Waverley’s case in Scott’s novel – is actually willing to become an agriculturalist, since this is his real intention. Young Clare wants to do something new and he is convinced of pursuing a career in agriculture before reaching the idyllic Talbothays; moreover, this idea originated not from a romantic dream, but from real circumstances, from the modern way of considering the countryside a profit motive, not a mere bucolic landscape to take refuge in. Angel’s vision of the countryside reflects a more modern mind-set according to which urbanity and rurality are linked together, where the country and the city are finally intertwined thus establishing a continuum which is still present today. Yet, despite living in this rural-urban continuum, very often, similarly to Angel Clare, we westerners still behave as superficial tourists who tend to focus only on their plans thus underestimating the influence that the environment actually has on our life; as a result, even if our intentions are clear and we are convinced of what we will do, we must remember that we have always to deal with the environment in which we are willing to act as it is the environment itself to have the last word.

❖ **Conclusion**

This dissertation aimed at analysing Edward Waverley and Angel Clare from an ecocritical perspective, delineating the development that occurred in the tourist-behaviour of the characters presented by Scott and Hardy. Both Waverley and Clare believe in a specific idea of natural environment which turns out to be disappointed, because induced by preconceived artistic and literary notions. Edward and Angel embody the romantic attitude according to which it is more important to stick to one's own fantasies and intrinsically modify reality than actually recognize it for what it is. They are victims of an exaggerated idealization who suddenly wake up and realize their ideas were mere dreams that cannot exist in the real world; in this sense, they turn out to be two disenchanting Romantics whose plans evidently fail. Waverley and Clare, once immersed one in the Scottish mountains and the other in the English countryside, cannot resist from idealizing the landscape they see. They are convinced they will find exactly what they supposed to, but their expectations are destined to be disappointed. They are influenced by their education and their natural disposition to such an extent that they end up behaving as two naïve and unwary youths who exclusively focus on the surface of things, until the moment in which they get to realize that reality is rather different from the prospects they imagined.

Even though both Edward and Angel tend to behave as picturesque tourists, there is a progress in their tourist way of moving and readers can perceive that there actually is a kind of evolution between these two characters. In Scott's novel, we understand that his comic way of criticizing and presenting Waverley to his public aims at underlining his complete unfitness in such an environment, and the message we finally get is the sad realization of the fact that ancient values and traditions have gone forever; as a result, we feel a sense of nostalgia towards a world that is inevitably disappearing. Scott aims at showing how those primitive places characterized by respect and heroism were surely better than the modern world he is living in and that, unfortunately, his generation is slowly forgetting about such values, becoming more and more disrespectful and egoistic, increasingly focusing on individual interests – we are told that, once in Scotland, Waverley exclusively thinks about his own interests deserting his loyal troops and ignoring the consequences his behaviour will have on his own relatives; his father

as well becomes a Hanoverian in order to get a position in the English parliament, neglecting the customary devotion towards the House of Stuart his family has always been committed to – and progressively estranging from natural environments such as the Scottish Lowlands and Highlands. Certainly, in *Waverley* we find a clear separation between Jacobean Scotland, which is considered to be pristine, authentic and, representative of the ancient values that people are inevitably dropping – both for its remote and mountainous nature and Edward's idealization of it – and Hanoverian England, which, on the contrary, symbolizes the burden of modernity.

With regard to Hardy's work, we have a narrator that does not bitterly regret the past as Scott does, but that is rather engaged in the future, where the aim is to present his real contemporary world to the readers, a context in which past is gone and changes cannot be ignored. The only way to deal with this situation is to accept modernity and to look forward what will be next. Angel is presented as a modern individual who is trying to build his future in a rural-urban continuum. As a matter of fact, his aspiration to become a landowner epitomizes this connection between the country and the city, as the landlord exploits the countryside in order to fulfil his personal interests deriving from the society that developed in the nineteenth-century urban world; he is therefore interested in methods that are modern, based on new implements and techniques, where biological agriculture is perceived as a picturesque custom to admire with a tourist attitude, a practice deriving from an ancient world that is destined to disappear. As a matter of fact, in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* we find an environment where the boundaries between the country and the city are blurred as rural and urban features tend to blend and where people as Angel seem to be made of a combination of contrasting elements, deriving from the desire to establish a connection with the countryside and the inevitable awareness of being part of the city. However, the moral side is likely to dominate over the more natural part of human beings, thus rendering their relationship with the environment complicated and deeply affected by an inclination to idealize and control what instead cannot be really tamed.

Even though in different ways, in both cases we are presented with a 'tourist's failure' where the characters, due to their exaggerated idealization towards what

they see, modify the perception of the reality they happen to find themselves in, and as a consequence, do not attain the purpose they envisaged.

Both Scott and Hardy use an omniscient narrator in their novels, whose perspective presents the landscapes and the situations in which the characters move in the style of a guide-book. These authors introduce the readers to certain circumstances in which many inexperienced tourists may run into. Quite surely, we readers would have behaved as them in those particular situations, making the same mistakes; for this reason, we can actually identify with the characters of *Waverley* and *Clare*. Accordingly, the reading public may identify with a group of unprepared tourists who, without the attentive care of the narrator-guide, would have probably experienced the same tourist's failure of Angel and Edward, two outsiders who, even though presenting obvious dissimilarities, will eventually share the same inclination to idealize an environment they are unaccustomed to, thus playing the role of picturesque visitors who, blinded by their own idealization, are led to lose track of real life. Yet, it is exactly the power of idealization to strengthen Edward's and Angel's idle convictions and enthusiasm, for without such an excessive celebration of the environment they visit, they would probably realize the unattainableness of their ideas and admit their limits in advance, thus avoiding such a tourist's failure.

Therefore, we readers are introduced to Scotland and Southern England and are led to travel through those landscapes as if we were real tourists; however, we can benefit from the secure guide of our narrators, somebody the two characters that have been here studied cannot count on, who introduce us not to a mere superficial and picturesque tourism as the one embraced by Edward and Angel they warn us against, but rather to an early form of ecotourism, subliminally inviting us to behave reasonably, appreciate natural environment as it is, develop an environmental awareness, respect local cultures and traditions, and opt for biocentrism rather than anthropocentrism. Like *Dr Syntax*, Edward and Angel focus on a mental guidebook, consisting of their artistic and literary knowledge, by means of which they idealize reality. As a result, Scott and Hardy implicitly invite us readers to not follow their example, refusing the typical attitude of picturesque tourists and embracing an eco-tourist approach. So, through the

reading of these novels, the public learns a great lesson: never idealize and underestimate contexts you are not accustomed to, but above all, never undervalue nature.

The issues presented in these novels are still valid today since, now as then, many among us are apt to idealize the hilly and mountainous environment, fascinated by picturesque and sublime landscapes, places in which we tend to relax and temporarily forget about our problems. The idealization makes people move towards those locations but leads them to realize that reality, very often, simply does not meet their expectations. As a result, neither in the city nor away from it they are ever to be at ease and still now, as in the nineteenth century, several individuals attempt to establish a proper connection with the landscape which surrounds them, seeking for the right balance between their need to be in the countryside or in the mountains and the necessity to be part of society, a theme that literature still continues to debate.

This thesis aimed at focusing on two characters reflecting the modern endurance of a superficial tourist-like attitude on the part of a few too many individuals that still tend to behave like them nowadays. However, tourism has undergone important changes through the centuries. Indeed, this early type of tourist-guide novels depicting nineteenth-century unwary travellers is very different from the contemporary tourist narratives illustrating equipped ecotourists of the twenty-first century. In this sense, it is important to consider how real and literary tourism has evolved through the centuries and the way in which ecotourism has been increasingly encouraged, in literature as well, in the perspective of a more biocentric vision of the environment.

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Illustrations:

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