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COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

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Côte d'Ivoire

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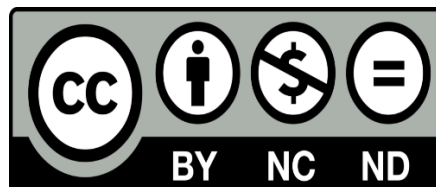
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EDITORIAL

Among the Senufos from the north of Côte d'Ivoire, the sacred grove is called "Sinzang". The first of these would date from the time of the patriarch and leader of Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). It is the tutelary space of the initiatory institute of the secret society: the Poro. These sacred forests exist in all the villages of the region and are highly protected and managed. The proof is that in their midst, adolescents perform the rite of passage leading them to the age of maturity. The "Sinzang" is also the centre of intergenerational knowledge transmission. Thus, the teaching of ancestral knowledge, ontology and cosmogony-contributing to the future spiritual, moral and social formation of the Senufo elite-is associated with this pantheon.

In line with this pedagogical and academic logic, the SINZANG Journal aims to promote African and Western humanities in Literature, Language, Communication and Education Sciences. To do this, it is part of a process of promoting the reflections and studies conducted by Teachers-Researchers and Researchers for the sustainable development of society.

As distinctive signs of "Sinzang", Jacqueline DELANGE, in *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifies among others the huts, earth cones and statues (masks). The visual identity of this magazine presents two masks, one symbolizing ancestral knowledge and the other Western science. The two facing the entrance of a sacred hut express the encounter of diverse knowledge put at the service of humanity. *In fine*, they export to other horizons, hence the idea of huts in perspective.

SINZANG is a pluridisciplinary and biannual peer-reviewed scientific journal. It is published in English and French but also accepts work written in German and Spanish. Moreover, depending on the requests made at the discretion of its review committee, it may issue special thematic publications and conference proceedings.

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ÉDITORIAL

Chez les Sénoufos du nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, le bosquet sacré est communément appelé « Sinzang ». Les premiers du genre dateraient de l'époque du patriarche et chef de Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). C'est l'espace tutélaire de l'institut initiatique de la société secrète : le Poro. Lieux fortement protégés et aménagés à l'envi, ces forêts sacrées existent dans tous les villages de la région. La preuve en est qu'en leur sein, les adolescents effectuent le rite de passage les amenant à l'âge de la maturité. Le « Sinzang » est aussi le haut lieu de la transmission de la connaissance intergénérationnelle. Ainsi, l'enseignement du savoir ancestral, de l'ontologie et la cosmogonie- contribuant à la formation spirituelle, morale et sociale de l'élite Sénoufo de demain-est associé à ce panthéon.

S'inscrivant dans cette logique pédagogique et académique, la Revue SINZANG ambitionne de faire la promotion des humanités tant africaine qu'occidentale dans le domaine de la Littérature, des Sciences du Langage, de la Communication et de l'Éducation. Pour ce faire, elle s'inscrit dans une démarche de vulgarisation des réflexions et des études menées par les Enseignants-Chercheurs et des Chercheurs pour le développement durable de la société.

Comme signes distinctifs du « Sinzang », Jacqueline DELANGE, dans *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifie entre autres les cases, les cônes en terre et les statues (masques). L'identité visuelle de cette revue présentant deux masques, l'un symbolisant le savoir ancestral et l'autre la science occidentale. Les deux se faisant face à l'entrée d'une case sacrée expriment la rencontre de connaissances diverses mis au service de l'humanité. In fine, elles s'exportent vers d'autres horizons ; d'où l'idée des cases en perspective.

SINZANG est une revue pluridisciplinaire à comité de lecture et scientifique. Elle est bilingue : éditée en anglais et en français. Mais elle accepte également les travaux écrits en allemand et en espagnol. C'est une revue semestrielle, tenant deux parutions l'an. Au demeurant, elle peut

procéder, selon les demandes ou les sollicitations formulées à l'appréciation de son comité de lecture, à des parutions spéciales thématiques et à la diffusion d'actes de colloque.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS
TABLE DES MATIERES

- 1. GASTRONOMIE, COMMUNICATION ET PRINCIPES DE MARQUAGE SYMBOLIQUE DANS LA PROMOTION DU TOURISME LOCAL IVOIRIEN**
..... Khan KOUAME (khankouame@gamil.com/
.....Sainghot SOUMAHORO (sainghotsoum777@gmail.com) (Côte d’Ivoire) _ P.1-24
- 2. EFFICACITÉ DU SPONSORING DES PARRAINEURS DE LA LIGUE DES CHAMPIONS UEFA 2025 EN TERMES D’ATTITUDE SUR LES POPULATIONS KORHOGOLAISES**
.....Katia OUATTARA (ouattarakatia@yahoo.com) (Côte d’Ivoire) _P.25-42
- 3. L’ORPAILLAGE ILLÉGAL, FACTEUR DE RISQUE SUR LA SANTÉ ET L’ENVIRONNEMENT NATUREL : CAS DE ZAGUINASSO EN CÔTE D’IVOIRE**
.....Doffou Brice Anicet YAVO (anicetyavo@upgc.ci) /
Francis Pacôme KOUAKOU (kouakoufp@yahoo.fr) (Côte d’Ivoire) _P.43-57
- 4. YA KOI DE CHARLES NOKAN : UNE DRAMATISATION DU TRAGIQUE**
.....Bangali DOUMBIA (bangalidoumbia.bd@gmail.com) (Côte d’Ivoire) _P.58-70
- 5. MODERNITY: A NECESSARY EVIL? A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF ISHMAEL BEAH’S *RADIANCE OF TOMORROW***
.....Kouakou Antony ANDE (andekouakou@yahoo.fr) (Côte d’Ivoire) _P.71-83
- 6. ORAL LEGACIES IN ANDRÉ BRINK’S *A CHAIN OF VOICES AND IMAGININGS OF SAND***
..Oumarou DIABAGATE (Oumaroudibagate75@gmail.com) (Côte d’Ivoire) _P.84-100
- 7. GENRE DES ENSEIGNANTS, TYPE D’ÉVALUATION ET PERFORMANCES SCOLAIRES DES ÉLÈVES DU SECONDAIRE**
.....Zakari MAHAMADOU (zakmohd4@yahoo.fr) (Niger) _P.101-116
- 8. STYLE IN SOME SELECTED POEMS BY ATUKWEI JOHN OKAI AND WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN**
.....Sansan SIB (sibsansan01@gmail.com) (Côte d’Ivoire) _P.117-136
- 9. LA PROBLÉMATIQUE DU DÉVELOPPEMENT D’UNE CONSCIENCE D’OPÉRATIONS MÉTALINGUISTIQUES DANS L’ENSEIGNEMENT DE LA GRAMMAIRE DES LANGUES ÉTRANGÈRES**
....Kouakou Yannick KONDRO (yannickkondro@yahoo.fr) (Côte d’Ivoire) _P.137-150
- 10. CHARACTERS AND DYSTOPIA IN THOMAS HARDY’S *THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE***
.....Julien Tanoé AFFI (affijulien@gmail.com) (Côte d’Ivoire) _P.151-161

11. CONTRIBUTION DE L'IRONIE AU STYLE DU ROMAN *LES SOLEILS DES INDÉPENDANCES* D'AHMADOU KOUROUMA

.....Abdoulaye SERE (lucasere2015@gmail.com) /
Tégawendé Donatien NANA (tegawendedonatienana@gmail.com) (Burkina Faso)
P_162-175

12. LESLIE SILKO MARMON'S CEREMONY: THE CARICATURE OF THE INDIANS' ALIENATION

.....Acho Patrice ADOUPO (adoupo_acho@yahoo.fr) (Côte d'Ivoire) _P.176-191

13. LECTURE INTERSECTIONNELLE DU FÉMINICIDE ET DES VIOLENCES ENVERS LES FEMMES DANS *SALVAGE THE BONES* ET *SING, UNBURIED, SING* DE JESMYN WARD

.....Selay Marius KOUASSI (lebonselay@yahoo.fr) (Côte d'Ivoire) _P.192-208

14. ANALYSE STYLOLINGUISTIQUE DE *BISTOURI DES LARMES* DE RAMONU SANUSI

Eiloghosa ENOGIOMWAN (Eiloghosa.enogiomwan@uniben.edu)
(Nigéria) _P.209-226

15. LE RYTHME NARRATIF DE LA SUBORDINATIVE RELATIVE DANS LES STRUCTURES PROVERBIALES

.....Kouadio Wilfried Cédric N'DRI (cedrickouadio@gmail.com)/
.....Mohamed CAMARA (mohcame@yahoo.fr) (Côte d'Ivoire) _P. 227-239

16. THE AMERICAN POLICE AS A TOOL OF WHITE SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION: A STUDY OF ANGIE THOMAS' *THE HATE U GIVE*

.....Ollo Désiré HIEN (hiendesire6@gmail.com) (Côte d'Ivoire) _P.240-250



CHARACTERS AND DYSTOPIA IN THOMAS HARDY'S *THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE*

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ABSTRACT

It is said that every society has its history. And every history has its literature. In other words, every society has its literature. So, in its intrinsic functioning, a literary work rallies to its author and its society. The Victorian period is one of the controversial with the appearing of the Industrial Revolution which has brought lots of changes in the world under the reign of the queen Victoria (1837-1901). Thomas Hardy is one of the greatest writers of that period whose life as writer has not been easy because of the Victorian society beliefs in a literature qualified as dystopian literature. His novel, *The Return of the Native* evokes provincial mores through the lives of characters subjected to implacable destiny. The objective is to show how the characters suffer from a strangeness to the world in one hand, and how they faced the greater risk of alienation by an uncontrollable force. To better understand our work, sociocriticism from Bernard Duchet and psychocriticism from Charles Mauron are used.

Key words: alienation, characters, dystopian literature, period

RÉSUMÉ

On dit que chaque société a son histoire. Et chaque histoire a sa littérature. En d'autres termes, chaque société a sa littérature. Ainsi, dans son fonctionnement intrinsèque, une œuvre littéraire se rallie à son auteur et à sa société. La période victorienne est l'une des plus controversées avec l'apparition de la révolution industrielle qui a apporté de nombreux changements dans le monde sous le règne de la reine Victoria (1837-1901). Thomas Hardy est l'un des plus grands écrivains de cette période, dont la vie d'écrivain n'a pas été facile en raison des croyances de la société victorienne en une littérature qualifiée de dystopique. Son roman, *The Return of the Native* évoque les mœurs provinciales à travers la vie de personnages soumis à un destin implacable. L'objectif est de montrer comment les personnages souffrent d'une étrangeté au monde d'une part, et comment ils sont confrontés au risque plus grand d'aliénation par une force incontrôlable. Pour mieux comprendre notre travail, la sociocritique de Bernard Duchet et la psychocritique de Charles Mauron sont utilisées.

Mots clés : aliénation, dystopie, littérature, personnages, période.

INTRODUCTION

The familiarity between the writing of the British writer Thomas Hardy and the Darwinian, and more broadly evolutionary vision of the universe has always been evident since the publication of the author's first novels in the second half of the nineteenth Century. In this Victorian period, the influence of science on literature was visible, as the industrial revolution gave it a prominent place. This influence was almost reciprocal, according to Gillian Beer, for while the Victorian novels of Hardy and George Eliot sometimes offered themselves as literary applications of Darwinism. Darwin's theories were themselves constituted as true narratives, and the evolution of species as the primary plot of the history of living things (Beer). The word dystopia helps distinguish fictive novels and, their use are ubiquitous in our present age of anxiety, anger, and upheaval. The *Handmaid's Tale*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, and *It Can't Happen Here* are to be considered as dystopian then Dystopias of the past no longer seem like relics of a depressing side genre; suddenly, they seem necessary. Meanwhile, new dystopian fictions have become one of the dominant and most lucrative literary forms for dealing with contemporary experience.

If novels today read like science-fiction, the speculative dystopias of the past now read like contemporary realism. In that way, what is dystopia? Is it the nightmare reverse of what Lyman Tower Sargent has called "social dreaming?" Or, is it an empowering experiment in thinking critically about our present in ways that will avert the dystopian disaster? And what makes it so appealing? Is it the thrill that comes with imagining something worse, because, as Kim Stanley Robinson puts it, "however bad our present moment is, it's nowhere near as bad as the ones these poor characters are suffering through?"

According to the Larousse dictionary, a dystopia is an imaginary society governed by a totalitarian power or a harmful ideology, as conceived by a given author. A dystopian work is one of fiction that depicts a disturbing society. And the societies described by dystopias function in such a way that the characters in these works of fiction cannot achieve happiness, or are confronted with other characters who cannot achieve joy and happiness. The emergency of the twentieth Century English language dystopian tradition defined by some writers such as Orwell, Aldous Huxley, and H. G.

Wells makes it easy to read through the lens of ideology, where main characters act as billboards for their authors' views.

The Return of the Native is a novel written by Thomas Hardy dealing with the alienation of on the main characters such as Diggory Venn, Eustacia, Clym Yeobright and Mrs. Yeobright in Wessex. In that novel one, the subject and the space in which he evolves are clearly intrinsically linked. The alienation of the former results as much from his character as from his environment and their interactions. The subject of this works « Characters and Dystopia in *The Return of the Native* by Thomas Hardy explores the permanent conflicts between the characters and their living environment which is against their own social and economic development. That fight derives from a husband and a wife; a mother-in-law and a daughter or son-in law; and so on. In order to better well understand our study, we are going to use sociocriticism from Claude Duchet and the psychocriticism from Charles Mauron. The two literary theories will make us discover the different attitudes of the protagonists in *The Return of the Native*.

According to Claude Duchet, Sociological criticism is literary criticism directed to understanding (or placing) literature in its larger social context; it codifies the literary strategies that are employed to represent social constructs through a sociological methodology. Sociological criticism analyzes both how the social functions in literature and how literature works in society.

According to Charles Mauron, “psychocriticism works on the text and on the words of texts” (Mauron, p 9), and the critic who uses this method must not stay far from the text: « Psychocriticism, for its part, does not lose sight of texts. He has promised to increase their intelligence, and will only succeed if his efforts are matched by those of other critical disciplines. » (Mauron, p25). For him « the psychocritic is not a therapist. He does not seek to cure. He makes neither diagnosis nor prognosis. Rather, he isolates the probable expressions of unconscious processes in the work, studies their forms and evolution, and endeavors to relate them to results acquired elsewhere p 25». In many works we can fit into several categories of dystopia because they contain several themes. And, one of the many sub-genres of dystopia in the late twentieth Century was the environmental dystopia. Some ecological catastrophes have been central to many works of the twentieth Century, but principally in its 4second half. Utopian harmony, purity and cleanliness have been replaced by pollution, smog,

stench and rats. In fact, "pollution became the first and foremost of the deadly ecological sins". So, in many novels of the British writers, such as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), *Ape and Essence* (1948) or *The Time Machine* (1895), the environment plays also an important role in the presentation of the story and the main themes. This unpleasant environment creates the feeling of discomfort felt by the main protagonists.

The first section of our analysis will show how the characters suffer from a strangeness to the world. They are excluded by two contradictory but complementary movements: rejection linked to changes in society, and ostracism due to conservatism. They are also condemned to wandering, uprooting and isolation in a world where social and family ties are disintegrating and communication is becoming problematic. Our second part will highlight the even greater risk of alienation that man runs by becoming a stranger to himself, by losing his identity as a subject.

1- CHARCATERS' ISOLATION

The Victorian period between 1880 and 1914 shows a rise in dystopian beliefs. This was due to reaction to a rapidly changing social, industrial and techno-scientific landscape. Dark visions spread visons of the future, with respect to social degeneracy and fear of technology. Having fear of the modernity, decline, new political thought, science and inventions, social studies of the poor, disease and insecurity fueled dystopian anxieties which invaded the news, arts, literature, philosophy and even fear of each other through eugenics and Social Darwinism. The visions of the future expressed themselves through social commentators writing dystopian novels and general reflections in newspapers. Social investigators' studies of city degeneration show the drawbacks of permitting the dark underworld a foothold in society. They serve as a graphic, dystopian warning that society is heading in the wrong direction. At the same time science and technology should have showed the path to a utopia filled with labour saving devices, transport and bright housing, yet fear of the 'new' stifled aspirations. Optimism turned to pessimism when the realization dawned that technology could destroy as well as improve life. Any utopian dreams were finally destroyed, with the advent of the First World War. Savagery, technological weapons and state conscripted soldiers showed the social commentators were correct in their dystopian visions.

In Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, the setting therefore plays an important role. Emotions and feelings do not only create the dystopian society, but the dystopian setting itself illustrates and complete the story of the protagonists and the work as a whole. Here, the characters were liked by fate caused by the Imminent Will. The earliest prototype in Hardy's fiction of alienated modern man is Clym Yeobright who comes back to Egdon Heath only to live in isolation unable to communicate with people whom he thought of as a cure for his alienation. Eustacia Vye, hating the setting has consistently been leading a life of alienation in Egdon Heath which leads to her suicide. In fact, Everyone in the play is influenced by Egdon. Eustacia hates him and calls him her hell, her cross, and he turns out to be her death. He makes Eustacia dark, selfish, rebellious and bitter. He makes her seem greedy for pleasure and prevents her from having any fun; something so rare on Egdon Heath. He is the very antithesis of her aspirations and desires, and she longs for the wider, more varied and cheerful life of a city, like Paris. She fights against Egdon Heath, but is ultimately crushed by it and meets her grave underwater in one of its pools.

1.1. Isolation and Misunderstanding

1.1.1. Clym Yeobright

Clym, after leading a “superficial” life in Paris, returns to Egdon Heath, believing he'll find redemption and peace in a return to his rural roots. However, he realizes that this return does not save him from his own malaise, and that he is even unable to communicate with the locals. Clym feels like a stranger in his own environment, despite his efforts to fit in. His attempts to become a schoolteacher are doomed to failure, and he is unable to find a place in the community. His return to Egdon Heath, instead of restoring him to himself, alienation and misunderstanding lead to a sense of self-detachment. Clym Yeobright loves Egdon Heath as much as Eustacia hates him. He is the “native” of the soil and the object appears very sympathetic to him. He's intellectual enough to appreciate its dark, mysterious beauty. He is knowledgeable and artistic enough to observe and appreciate its truth and beauty. The character conflict between Eustacia and Clym is best illustrated by their different attitudes towards Egdon Heath. When he goes blind, Egdon Heath provides him with a profession. He makes him a philosopher and a poet. Wildeve hates Egdon Heath because he's too dull. But otherwise, he doesn't care much about it. Hatred of the place is a point of affinity between Wildeve and Eustacia. However, Thomasin is

completely at home in Egdon Heath. She would be unhappy anywhere else. For her, it is an old and familiar place but she can't appreciate its beauty the way Clym can.

1.1.2. Eustacia Vye

Eustacia, a “romantic” character with dreams of a different life, cannot identify with the wild, rugged character of Egdon Heath. She feels like a prisoner here, and rebels against her surroundings. She is also at odds with Egdon Heath's rural society, which she perceives as restrictive and boring. Her desire to escape her situation and monotonous life leads to a feeling of loneliness and isolation, exacerbated by her difficult romantic relationships. Her suicide, the culmination of her alienation, is a manifestation of her loss of meaning and existential distress.

1.1.3. Egdon Heath

In *The Return of the Native*, Egdon Heath serves as a symbol of fate's unyielding power. The heath is described as timeless and indifferent, existing long before and long after human life (Hardy, *The Return of the Native* 13). It reflects the existential notion of a universe that is indifferent to human aspirations. It is more than a simple setting that destroys his enemies on his path. Egdon Heath's characters, though bound by tradition and destiny, are often characterized by a lack of deep connection and mutual understanding. Egdon Heath, with his rugged, savage character, represents a destabilizing force for the characters, who are often unable to adapt to his character.

2. RISK OF ALIENATION OF THE CHARACTERS

Hardy's fictions most often take issue with the 19th-century humano-liberal ideology, according to which society offers the individual the conditions for his liberation, provided he is willing to exploit his own intellectual and moral qualities. While Hardy doesn't completely reject certain aspects of this “philosophy”, he presents an entirely different vision of the world in which he lives. The society he depicts subjectifies man to inner and outer processes of alienation and reification, which combine and reinforce each other.

First and foremost, human beings are condemned to strangeness in their environment. On the one hand, they are victims of exclusion resulting from social and economic evolution and conservatism. The development of the industrial and capitalist system has led to the disappearance of many trades in the countryside, and its desertification. Society, so keen to encourage adaptability, was reluctant to see

individuals from lower classes invade places of power, and protected its prebends by erecting barriers that were difficult to cross, closing the doors of universities and restricting marriage within it. Moral and societal conventions also serve to maintain the status quo, and those who break them are ostracized or even eliminated.

While man is supposed to be able to put down roots in his environment, he lives in perpetual exile. Condemned to wandering in a shifting, fragmented world, he inhabits places that are foreign to him. Even when he doesn't move, places are transformed beyond recognition. And when he is fortunate enough to benefit from social promotion, the exile persists insofar as he no longer belongs to any milieu, neither to his milieu of origin, which no longer recognizes him, nor to his milieu of arrival, which never fully accepts him, as can be seen in Clym Yeobright and Grace Melbury, for example. Education thus becomes an ambivalent instrument, at once a source of liberation and alienation. Man should find in his fellow human beings the last bastion against his alienation. But all he encounters is isolation: village communities are gradually disappearing; families are in tatters; couples are tearing apart or turning into prisons. Hardy's inability to forge solid bonds with others translates into incommunicability. Like the hero at the start of *Jude the Obscure*, man comes to see himself denied by the landscape of his ancestors¹, no longer understanding the language of a world that has become absurd and sterile, a foreshadowing of Eloi's *Waste Land*.

This alienation takes on an even greater dimension by making man not only a stranger in the world, but a stranger to himself, by stripping him of his identity as a subject. For the novelist, more than fate or family destiny, spatio-temporal determinism reduces the human being to insignificance. The oppressive permanence of myths of eternal return is succeeded by historical finitude and irreversibility, as well as the play of coincidences - what the novelist calls "*life's little ironies*". As cosmic dust, man thought he had a privileged position in nature. But this is not the case.

True, there is a certain harmony between him and the natural environment, but it is fraught with ambivalence. For Hardy, unlike other authors, the scientific discovery of an organic link between man and nature does not necessarily lead to a positive unity, capable of counterbalancing the loss of religious values (Cosslett, p.66). In addition to insignificance, there is divine indifference and the absence of Providence. Hardy's

world is Darwinian, devoid of teleological finality and dominated by the law of randomness.

2-1- Individual Alienation

2.1.1. Clym Yeobright

After enjoying a successful life in Paris, Clym returns to Egdon Heath in the hope of rediscovering his identity and meaning in life. However, he finds himself even more isolated and dissatisfied, unable to communicate and connect with the locals. In *The Return of the Native*, the novelist Thomas Hardy emphasizes the irreversibility of the process. A true return to the native land is impossible, because education and life experience have transformed the person who left. Clym Yeobright's entire existence is marked by uprooting, and the first chapter of The Third Book offers a condensed account of his extranation. At the very beginning of his life, the harmony between Clym and his environment is perfect, to the point of making them inseparable: « Clym had been so interwoven with the heath in his boyhood that hardly anybody could look upon it without thinking of him. » (*RN*, 226). His diamond training exiled him spatially, taking him successively to Budmouth, London and Paris. Socially too, a gulf has opened up: «when I first got away from home I thought this place was not worth troubling about. » (*Ibid.* 228) But he feels like a stranger outside Egdon:

I found that I was trying to be like people who had hardly anything in common with myself. I was endeavoring to put off one sort of life for another sort of life, which was not better than the life I had known before. It was simply different.'(*Ibid.* 229)

This feeling of foreignness when he is far from home leads him to reconsider his origins and to undertake a return to his native land. He wants to return to his roots and serve his fellow citizens by teaching. But he doesn't really know the people of Egdon. His ideas and projects are of no interest to his former companions. The education he received condemns him to exile just as much as his travels and successive departures. By giving him a culture other than that of Egdon's inhabitants, it has made him a different man. Paradoxically, he becomes a stranger to his homeland, as do his ideas. A conversation between Sam, Humphrey and Commander Vye before his arrival shows the role played by education:

They say, too, that Clym Yeobright is become *a real perusing man*, with the *strangest notions* about things.

There, that's *because he went to school* early, such as the school was.'
'*Strange notions*, has he?' said the old man. 'Ah, there's too much of that sending
to school in these days! It really does harm.' (*Ibid.*, 162-163)

Beyond the humor behind the words of men closed to change, there is a reality. Clym, as a "perusing man", is unable to make a real return to his homeland, because he is trying to transform it according to the image he has kept of it and his new conceptions. Physically and emotionally, he still belongs to Egdon, but intellectually he no longer does ("strangest notions"). The paradox is total: the hero is uprooted in the very place of his roots.

2.1.2. Eustacia Vye

Eustacia is a woman in constant search of transcendence, a quest that leads her to dissatisfaction and isolation. She feels alienated from Egdon Heath and the simple life of the region, and finds herself unable to find meaning in her life, even in her love with Angel. She finds it difficult to find her way in the countryside, as her relationship with Egdon Heath is one of duality. She seeks to find her place in society and fulfill herself, but comes up against social constraints and opposition from those closest to her, leading to isolation and alienation.

2.1.3. Egdon Heath

The landscape of Egdon Heath, in *The Return of the Native*, with its wild, unpredictable nature, contributes to the characters' alienation. Clym and Eustacia feel small and insignificant in the face of nature's power, reinforcing their sense of isolation. The natural environment seems to exert an influence on the characters' decisions and destinies. Nature appears as a destructive element, testing their sense of identity and belonging. Overall, alienation is a common thread in *The Return of the Native*, highlighting the difficulties of finding one's identity and meaning in a world that often seems hostile and disconnected. Hardy's characters explore different facets of alienation, from the individual to the ecological and social.

This alienation is far more profound than Grace's, insofar as the young woman still understands those around her. We shall see that Clym's alienation is not only the fruit of his upbringing, but also the consequence of an exacerbated narcissism. This alienation sometimes results in real frustration. This feeling is linked to narcissism, but also to tangible socio-economic realities. It is dominant right from the start of *Jude the Obscure*. The hero compares his existence to that of the rooks he must hunt in

exchange for a modest fee: “[...] his heart grew sympathetic with the birds ‘thwarted desires’ (JO, 53). These thwarted desires emphasize another aspect of human foreignness. Jude, like Fitzpiers, Felice Charmond, Eustacia and many others, feels alienated in a world that sharpens his frustration. This frustration often stems from a “deficit of the real in relation to the unreal”. Human alienation can result first and foremost from the contrast between a sad, limited here and a more promising elsewhere. Jude feels all the more exiled in Marygreen than he dreams of a luminous world in Christminster.

In short, alienation in *The Return of the Native* reflects the characters' inability to find their place in the world, whether through their relationship with nature, society or themselves. The novel thus explores the consequences of loss of meaning and identity, and the feeling of being a stranger in one's own environment.

CONCLUSION

The illusion of representation, kept to a minimum in spite of everything, enhances the enjoyment resulting from a constant vacillation between verisimilitude and implausibility, sense and nonsense. It also enables cathartic identification. For Hardy, fiction is never pure reflexivity, locked into an art for art's sake that is alien to it, but remains open to social praxis. By presenting the other, the difference, in the text, the work leads the reader to question his or her aesthetic and ideological conceptions, and shows how aesthetic experience offers the possibility of « fighting against the risks of reification and alienation by ideology » (Jauss, p.295).

Thomas Hardy's work, like all great works of art, remains resolutely disturbing because it is polyphonic and therefore open, unfinished, unstable and unclassifiable. Understandably, it has greatly annoyed critics who have excluded it from the great literary tradition or vainly tried to imprison it in rigid molds. No matter how hard we try to define it, to fit it into a framework, it shatters them like so many shackles. The “meaning” of the work of art derives more from its divisions and ambivalences than from its unity¹¹. Like *Tess*, the “novels of character and environment” demand respect for their individuality, the plurality of their meanings, the arbitrariness of their signs. Their freedom comes at the price of their unsurpassable discordance, of the acceptance of their fundamental alienation.

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