

# Human-Nature Relationship in Hardy's *The Woodlanders*

Hari Krishna Lamichhane, PhD  
Scholar (English), Tribhuvan University  
hklamichhane@gmail.com

## Abstract

*This article examines human-nature relationship in Thomas Hardy's novel The Woodlanders. It examines how Hardy shows environment's role in nourishing human beings and giving them knowledge. This article, in particular, studies the situations of the characters Grace Melbury, Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond. In the novel, Hardy dramatizes how place determines the 'making' and 'unmaking' of an individual especially through the character of Grace Melbury. The novel deals with the problematic aspects of being uprooted from the place. The characters with the rootedness to place have the easier survival, fixed geographical and cultural identity and the other who have not rootedness with the geographical location neither get fixed social/cultural identity nor assimilate with the place properly. Lack of assimilation with the place makes the characters suffer. In this sense, the novel has highly emphasized the sense of place in it.*

**Keywords:** human-nature relationship, rootedness, location, dislocation, Wessex, ecocriticism

## Introduction

This article examines how Thomas Hardy's novel *The Woodlanders* dramatizes how place determines the 'making' and 'unmaking' of an *individual* especially through the character of Grace Melbury. Hardy in the novel raises the issues of location\ dislocation, in place\ out of place as well as the rootedness and up-rootedness. The novel deals with the problematic aspects of being uprooted from the place. In that sense, the novel has highly emphasized the sense of place in it. Hardy in *The Woodlanders* shows that place sense makes the total meaning of an individual. He tactfully gives the message that one needs to assimilate to the place (environment) where s/he goes to live. If one does not have rootedness to the location, it is ultimately disastrous as in Grace Melbury, Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond's fate in the novel.

Hardy presents the eco-society of Wessex where things are in ecological order, and people born and bred there have close acquaintance with fir plants, apple trees, lonely roads, streets and houses. They have memories, habits and instruction learnt from the co-existence with the place. They have close affinity with every object animate or

inanimate. But the pristine environment is disrupted by some few outsiders who cannot develop association with Little Hintock because they are from built environment and do not practice in the process of integration to the place. So, all they become the victim of dislocation.

Hardy in the *The Woodlanders* shows the effects of cruel indifference to the old-fangled system of his days through the character Grace Melbury. She belongs to the both worlds, the rural and the urban. As she comes back to her home town Little Hintock, after being educated beyond her station; she feels alienated from her childhood place and childhood friend, Giles Winterborne. She feels everything strange. She distances herself from the locale where she has come to live. Unlike other natives in the woodland, she cannot develop closer affinity to her own birth-place. She is such a native who breaks the connection with the place where she is living and cannot return. Hardy in the novel posits that the physical ties between people and place should not be broken. If it is broken, something wrong goes there. So is the case of Grace Melbury and other characters. Hardy has presented Grace Melbury as a character who is physically and psychologically detached from the place, because she has “modern nerves in primitive blood” (xi) which becomes disastrous to her.

Having shaped with new implanted imagination, for Grace Melbury, the matter of rusticity becomes the matter of curiosity; she cannot find pleasure in wilderness from where she was sprung to the built environment. It is her up-rootedness to the place where she is, “she cannot separate the genuine and artificial in her personality” (xii). As a result, she chooses metropolitan Fitzpiers as her husband, a man of fancy rather than the man of heart and leaves her intended, the rural Giles. Her inability to choose the right one is due to her unchanged imagination that she developed in town, but now she is in her native land. Finally, her alternative choice proves wrong. This shows her dislocated condition. So, she is doomed to live unhappy life.

Cultivation is so advanced in her mind, thus she cannot show any attachment to the archaic legal system. She has duality; she loves and does not love it. And so is the case for Giles too. When her unfaithful husband, Fitzpiers runs to continent with Mrs. Charmond, a rich land lady of the woodland, she promises that she dreamed transform into problems. Through suffering she comes to know the pure love of Giles' Winterborne, and hopes to unite with him. When Giles dies for the sake of her reputation, Grace returns to her husband. Thus Grace is torn in between Giles and Fitzpiers as she is already torn between places. Hardy in *The Woodlanders* problematizes the problems of up-rootedness to the place. For this reasons, Hardy juxtaposes urbanity and rustic setting in his novels where movements of characters take place and that cannot fit to the place.

Keeping all these issues related with the pastoral setting and the characters' impracticality to adjust with the rural environment, this research work attempts to analyze the text through the perspective of ecocriticism with regard to the human condition and place. Almost all of Hardy's writings deal with the similar tussle between man and the place where s/he is connected. Hardy's novels are set in Wessex, South West of England with the ultimate theme of human being and their position in nature.

Hardy's considered view of the world emerges instead from image, symbol, and the often symbolic or metaphoric narrative structures of the novels. About Hardy's novel and poetry with regard to his natural philosophy William R. Siebenschuh argues:

It pervades the fiction and poetry, because in them it is more than simply issues or subjects that drive Hardy's imagination, it is also what he once termed an "idiosyncratic mode of regard," a way of looking at the world with the quality and characteristics of intuitive and imaginative insight, rather than a considered or abstract philosophy. (773)

Hardy's novels are regarded as the proper philosophical task of the tussle between pastoral and urban as well as man and nature conflict. As critics have pointed out for some time, Hardy's most instinctive mode as a writer is figurative, not analytic; his most habitual method is symbolism.

Another feature of Hardy's novel is regarded as the use of symbol. The symbolic dimension of Hardy's fiction was not what attracted his earliest readers and reviewers, who responded to the books most often in mimetic, formal, and moral terms. But since at least Marcel Proust's time, critics have become increasingly aware of the importance of the many recurring patterns, symbols, and images in the fiction and poetry as R. Siebenschuh argues, "Hardy's use of place as setting or historical context or to reveal characters, than with his use of symbolic details or imaginary involving people's relationship to places to explore and explain what he perceived to be the psychologically 'dislocated' condition of modern man and woman" (775).

Similarly John Holloway says, "Our response to the detail [in Hardy's fiction] . . . must be colored by our enduring sense of what is mediated all in all" (247). The urge to discover 'what is mediated all in all' has resulted in a succession of stylistic and phenomenological studies of the fiction in the past several decades each with a differing idea about which are the most important patterns. The critics' object in most cases is, as J. Hillis Miller puts it, "to identify those underlying structures which persist through all the variations in Hardy's work and make it a whole" (x).

Wessex is the proper place for Hardy to play with the interaction between his characters and places. Places had been dominating thematic aspect in 19<sup>th</sup> century English fiction. In this connection, Miller mentions, "The concrete details of physical places and communities also began to serve the Victorian novelists' growing sense of the complex relations between individuals and history" (X). In the nineteenth-century novel, the physical world was much more fully realized than in earlier narrative-factory and slum as often as village and heath-because there was less interest in timeless moral or ethical drama alone.

Each of these ideas under the general rubric of the concept of place is relevant to Hardy to one degree or another. None is exactly my subject here. My concern is more with Hardy's use of place as setting or historical context, or to reveal character, than with his use of symbolic details and imagery involving people's relationships to places to explore and explain what he perceived to be the psychologically 'dislocated' condition of modern men and women.

The 'location' and 'dislocation' of the people in the place used by Hardy is somehow relevant with the nature consciousness of Hardy. Hardy's writings are observed and analyzed with naturalist way of writing. B. P. Birch claims, "In contrast, the later novels are characterized by movement of persons and events across districts and landscapes on a much grander scale" (352).

Hardy's symbolic use of the concept of 'in place' and 'out of place' or 'location' and 'dislocation' as a broader and more pervasive language which he uses to dramatize the state of emptiness and sense of exclusion and non-belonging that he writes about ceaselessly and that is one of his favorite ways of characterizing. 'In place' and 'out of place' are analyzed through the perspective of ecocriticism since the character's existence and location or dislocation is marked due to their relationship with the environment. Characters those in harmony with nature as well as those who are not are two bipolar distinctions that Hardy creates in his novels. Categorizing characters on the basis of opposites like continuity with nature vs. people on a false track-the private dreamers inevitably oversimplifies. His consciousness of the role of nature and human attachment with it could be studied under the ecocriticism, mainly with regard to the man's position within his place. About the nature and Hardy's writings, B. P. Birch claims:

One immediate distinction that can be drawn between the earlier and the later novels is that the early ones appear to be more 'fixed' within natural regions, or indeed within small districts in those regions, whereas major characters in the later stories are allowed to roam from one broad landscape or natural region to another as each part of the story is unfolded. (351)

B. P. Birch observes Hardy's writings with regard their place settings as well people's relationship with the place. The similar concept of place within the literature could be analyzed under the ecocriticism with regard to the place and man's relationship with it. The concept of place has always been of central interest to literature-environment studies. Part of the reason for this is interdisciplinary to redress the historic neglect of setting relative to plot, character, image, and symbol in literary works. Ecocriticism's attention to place reflects its recognition of the relation between human life/history and physical environments to which works of imagination bear witness, hence the claim by one of ecocriticism's earliest spokespersons that its distinctive addition to the commonly studied triad of race, class, and gender was place as a critical category. Hardy's *The Woodlander* asserts the similar relationship or interconnectedness between people and the place.

Ecocriticism is a school of literary criticism that critiques man's relationship with physical environment in literature. As the primary focus is on, "The Place of Place" in Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders* this research work applies ecocriticism as main theoretical base. For the analysis of the rootedness and up-rootedness of characters caused by the effect of place, this research work will be based on physical environment and its connectedness with individuals.

Ecocritics value purity in ecosystems and places over the moments of hybridization and border crossing. The relationship between local and global frameworks had also been envisioned quite differently. Ecocritics usually projected harmonious, widening circles of concern and involvement from the local to the global and sometimes the cosmic, whereas postcolonial scholars tended to stress tensions and disruptions between local and global frameworks of experience. Exploring such conflicts and convergences between the study of ecological relationship of human existence, ecological degradation produced a more fluid perspective on the sense of the local as one, but not the only possible gateway to environmental awareness and ethics. The similar ecological awareness is evoked by the author like Thomas Hardy through their texts with the contact and conflict of man and environment.

The reciprocal relationship between people and place in Hardy's *The Woodlanders* demands the ecological theories related with the place and man's position within it. About the relationship between Lawrence Buell writes in *Environmental Imagination*. According to Lawrence, with the environmental crisis comes a crisis of the imagination, a need to find new ways to understand nature and humanity's relation to it. In this connection he mentions, ". . .the sense of the individual is inseparable from tribe and bonded to place in a relationship in which nature is not 'other' but part of continuum with the human" (19). This research aims to observe *The Woodlander* with similar ethics of study connecting man's position in environment.

Man's location or dislocation with the place of his surroundings is major issues of this research since it aims to trace the human's position in his place or nature or environment. About the man's knowledge, existence as well as his adjustment connected with his locality. In this connection, John A. Hannigan in *Environmental Sociology: A Social Constructionist Perspective* mentions John Berryman's view, "The ordinary knowledge is accumulated within local grassroots networks by breathing air, drinking water, tilling soil, harvesting forest produce and fishing rivers, lakes and oceans" (43). Berryman regards his view that the practical knowledge comes through the assimilation of natural environment. In *The Woodlanders*, Winterborne has the similar assimilation with nature who is brought up in the vicinity of Little Hintock. Similarly, Grace Melbury and Dr. Fitzipiers can be integrated with the place. These characters cannot even develop the ordinary knowledge about the place and they are not interested to be rooted to the bucolic origin.

### **Human-Nature Relationship in *The Woodlanders***

The nature and its effects on the people who live in the particular place shape the individual in *The Woodlanders* with regard to their psychological, cultural and economic factors. Place as a maker makes and unmakes the individuals in terms of their co-partition with nature which determines the identity and existence of individuals. The association of human beings with their environment not only sets the psychological, cultural and economic aspects of human beings but also predicts their facts in term of their assimilation and disassociation with surrounding environment. In this light, this research using eco-critical insights analyzes how place determines the total meaning of an individual including psychology, culture and economy.

Hardy wants to see a true marriage between man, place and nature by presenting disloyal marriage between man and place in his novel *The Woodlanders*. He knowingly designates a character, Grace Melbury, in *The Woodlanders* to focalize the consequences of detachment with the place. Hardy specifically is interested in the exploration of psychic growth of an individual in association and in disassociation with place. Thus, in his novel, there is the movement of characters from one place to another. This research also aims at finding the impression of place on man with the help of psychological frame.

In *The Woodlanders*, Grace Melbury does not have her own mother and is raised by her surrogate mother. Another element to predict her psychological development is that she is sent way from her own birthplace to a school when she was child. From this point, there is the development of psychological distance of birth place for Melbury. She is sent to urbanized locale. Mother is nature; nature is mother. Grace has disconnection with mother as well as with her birth place. When there is separation of a child from mother, then the "self", "I" begins to develop, "As an infant grows and learns to distinguish between self and nonself, a part of total perceptual field is gradually delineated as the

“me”, “I” or “self”. As this self-structure develops, it becomes the integrating core of the personality – the reference point around which the individual experience and coping patterns are organized" (86). This passage from *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life* by Coleman, Butcher and Carson clearly describes about the formation and functioning of the “self”. The learning of a child during their growth makes total perceptual field of their own. The shaping of personality mainly depends on how they perceive, think, feel and interact with their surroundings. In this sense, association with the place is also one of the determinants of psychological development. Keeping this separation of child’s self from his/her mother and his/her psychological development into the consideration, Grace Melbury’s psychological development too could be understood with regard to her separation with her mother and place.

The place where we live has sensational effect on us. We interact with each of the components of the place – biotic and abiotic. It is through daily interaction, “me” perceives as “I” in association with the place. In case of Grace Melbury, her modeling of ‘self’ develops according to the place which is advanced and urban unlike her birth place little Hintock. Tony Hiss while talking about place and human self says, “The places where we spend our time affect the people we are and can become” (11). How Grace would be like in the future is connected with her bringing up in the place which clearly marks psychologically detached status of Melbury with her birth place. It leads her towards disassociation to her own place.

Grace Melbury’s ‘self’, ‘I’ is determined according to the “dual accountability” (9) as mentioned by Linda Hutcheon with regard to the inbetweenness of people’s ‘self’ shaped by two different places. Grace Melbury’s ‘self is neither shaped by little Hintock nor by metropolis. Her dual identity as urban or rural girl is the major concern of Hardy to indicate the dual development of ‘self’ which clearly dislocates her from little Hintock and metropolis. These lines from the novel clarify her dual identity or the lack of fixed belongingness to geographical location:

It would have been difficult to describe Grace Melbury with precision, either than or at any time. Nay, from the highest point of view, to precisely describes a human being, the focus of universe, how impossible! But apart from transcendentalism, there never probably lived a person who was in herself more completely a *reduction ad absurdum* of attempts to appraise a woman, even externally, by items of face and figure. (33)

There is the difference between ‘face’ and ‘figure’ of Grace Melbury which clearly presupposes her dual identity. At the same time she belongs to Hintock as well as she does not belong to it because her birth place is Hintock but she could not assume this

place as her own physically and psychologically. Her 'self' is not associated with her own birth place little Hintock.

'Self' or 'I' define things and things define 'me' because I am always in association with things. Thus, subjectivity is associated with the landscape in one way or another. 'Subjectivity' or 'self' is shaped according to one's locality or the surroundings where the individual is associated. The internality of an individual is shaped and sized by the externality of the things that are in the place. Grace Melbury has not the fixed or single locality to build her 'self' that keeps her in in-between position which does not let form her concrete 'identity,' 'self' and 'subjectivity.'

About the in-between position of 'identity' and 'formation of self,' Lawrence Buell takes the reference from Lopez's Two Landscape Theory. He mentions, "The contours of human subjectivity as he sees it, are modeled by the configuration of the landscape with which a person has been deeply associated" (94). Buell taking the reference of Lopez's ideas crystallizes the role of landscape for the shaping up of the subjectivity of an individual. The geographical setting plays the role of catalyst in definition of "self", identity and perception of an individual.

Grace Melbury was born in little Hintock, a rural place with full of wilderness. As she had just started to interact with her surrounding, she was sent to the urbanized place. As a result her development of 'self' formed somewhere outside little Hintock. Place differs from place in terms of its envioning details. Place/nature nurtures an individual according to its envioning details. The way of nurturing is important because it forecasts what would be individual.

Now, Grace Melbury has turned into young adolescence, learned and cultured, "glorified and refined" (32). She has advanced mind and make-up because of her learning in a place. While describing Grace Melbury, Hardy mentions, "It was true; cultivation had so far in the soil of Miss Melbury's mind" (37). How does she look like today? How does she think today? How does she response to the things around her today? All these are the matters of nurturing and place impression. Place psychology is very crucial for the physical and mental growth of an individual. In this lime light, Grace Melbury's physical and mental growth is shaped by the 'self' of urbanity not by the 'self' of rusticity.

She was okay when she was in town. Perhaps, she felt anxieties in the beginning days. But with the continuity with the place, she slowly felt comfortable herself. She grew up in town, her modeling of 'self' grew in accordance with the place. She has association with the place where she has been when she is in town. The problems begin when she gets back to her own native land, little Hintock because she cannot associate her 'self' with nature's 'self'.



Her arrival to her origin is a curse for her. She cannot integrate to the place, little Hintock, though it is her own primitive land. She has "modern nerves with primitive feelings"(246). Thus she is an outlandish person. Because of the previous impression of the place, she finds little Hintock village strange, aloof and cool. Hardy to show her psychological detachment with the place writes, "Why are you looking at John-apple trees! You know better-sweets. You used to well enough?" 'I am afraid I have forgotten, and it is getting to dark to distinguish'. Winterborne did not continue. It seemed as if the knowledge and interests which had formerly moved Grace's mind had quiet died away" (36). Hardy clearly clarifies her psychological detachment with the place. On the way coming back her home she can't distinguish apple trees. She does not have any memory of these trees. It has been long time and she has forgotten all things. It means Grace Melbury does not have psychological attachment with the place and for her, where she is coming to live, is a dark world. It shows that she does not have rootedness to the place though she was born there. She was bred in built environment. She is not adaptive to the place. It is the effect of her stable 'self' that she has developed somewhere; not in little Hintock.

It is compulsory to assimilate with the place where one goes to live and nature compels to do so because place affects us in many unforeseen ways. Grace Melbury, in the novel *The Woodlanders*, in the beginning days of her arrival feels strange to her surrounding and even she finds her own home so strange. But slowly she tries to acquaint her with the place. She wants to integrate though she has problem in living there. For her attempt of reconciliation to the place, Hardy posits, "Tis the strangeness after her genteel life that makes her feel uncomfortable at first. Why, when I saw Hintock the first time I thought I never could like it but things gradually get familiar and stone floors seem not so very cold and hard, the hooting of owls not so very dreadful, and loneliness not so very lonely after a while" (68). Here, Hardy shows Grace Melbury's attempt to connect herself to the place. She tries to adjust to the place though she feels uncomfortable at the beginning. The entire novel goes through the tension that she is able to be associated with the place or not.

Grace Melbury wants to integrate herself to the place, but her stable 'self' that she has developed somewhere does not let her to reconcile to the place which she herself does not know. In fact, she is maladaptive because of the mixed – impression of the place. She belongs to two – where which causes the split personality in her. Sometimes she finds herself in association and sometimes finds herself in disassociation with the place. She loves and does not love the place. She does the same even in the love affair. She loves and does not love her true childhood friend, Hintock's son, Giles Winterbrone. It is 'critical time in Grace's emotional life (217).

She hangs herself in dualism of 'yes' and 'No' condition. Finally, she deserts Giles Winterbrone, though he is, for her, nearest, dearest and loveliest. Why did so do so? A question arises. She has bifurcated personality. She is in Hintock, but her 'self' belongs to another place. There is not unity between her 'self' and 'nonself'. Grace Melbury does not have psychological association with place which results in her the dualism of

belonging. Thus, she is out of the place within the place. This causes her split personality. Her disassociation and unhappiness shows that she has neurotic paradox. She finds her everyday situation threatening. She, for the immediate relief from the situation perceived as threatening, chooses Mr. Fitzpiers, a cultivated man of advanced ideas and practices. Who has the same place psychology as Grace Melbury does have. They both do not have rootedness to the place, little Hintock. Thus, psychological rootedness to the place matters most which Hardy wants to establish in the novel, *The Woodlanders*.

For Grace Melbury, her childhood friend and intended, Giles Winterbrone is no-one, but a metropolitan Dr. Fitzpiers, for her, in her own. Similarly, she assumes her 'mother-land' as 'other-land.' This clearly shows the tragic destruction of her 'self.' This contributes to the schizophrenia in her. Thus, placelessness causes schizophrenic nature in an individual through which Grace Melbury suffers in little Hintock. Her restless psychological behavior is reflected after her marriages with Dr. Fitzpiers as Hardy writes, "Her eyes filled with tears of bewildered, alarmed emotion . . . Grace was almost without a friend in the world outside her father's house; her life with Fitzpiers had brought no society, had sometimes, indeed, brought her deeper solitude than any sad ever known before. Hence it was a treat to find herself again the object of thoughtful care" (234). When she gets married to Dr. Fitzpiers, she cannot truly love him. Mr. Fitzpiers too, has split personality resulted by the detachment with the place, little Hintock. Hardy writes regarding the dwelling of him, "chemical experiments, anatomical projects and metaphysical conceptions had found a new home the Little Hintock" (43).

Mr. Fitzpiers develops illicit relationship with Mrs. Charmond after getting married to Grace. Mr. Fitzpiers does the same as he has divided place psychology. He too, is from built environment, has lived in desolate Hintock, but does not have association with it. According to his nurturing, he does what he finds best. First, he gets married to Grace Melbury, and then flees with another woman, Miss Charmond. But Grace Melbury finds it uneasy because she is caught in between two places – rural and urban.

Through each and every angle Grace Melbury seems in dual position. As she does not have clear association with place where she does stand, she suffers a lot in between of places as well as her former lover and new husband. She lives in a condition of neither married nor single. "I do not mind at all what comes to me, Grace continued; 'whose wife I am or whose I am not! I'd love Giles: I cannot help that: and I have gone further with him than I should have done if I had known exactly how things were. But I do not reproach'" (243). Hardy illustrates her anomalous position. Her puzzled condition with situation results to the environmental crisis. It is through long suffering she comes to realize the love offered by Giles. To suggest her helplessness, Hardy further says "I was obliged to come to you, because I have no other help here" (249). Hardy at this point suggests that

duality appears because of the mixed impression of place. Grace wants to reintegrate herself to the place or primitivity. That is why she wants to go back to Giles Winterbrone but she has her husband. It means she has residual effect of psychic attachment with the place is now, effecting her. At last, with the war in the heart 'to go' or 'not to go', she goes to Giles but it becomes late.

When Grace Melbury approaches to Giles Winterbrone, Winterbrone dies because of disease. It is her ill fate. As they have just started to reunite, he dies. And Grace Melbury receives the great shock. As Giles Winterbrone is the symbol of nature, Winterbrone cannot reunite with him. In this lime light, Grace Melbury's failure to unite with Giles Winterbrone is her failure to integrate with place or nature. The place of place plays deterministic role to change the fortune of an individual. At this point, Hardy indirectly hints that psychological attachment is compulsory to live in a place. Otherwise, it leads a person to the state of neurosis. Hardy, in the novel, *The Woodlanders*, presents Grace Melbury as a glorified and refined girl at the beginning but as schizophrenic at the end of the novel because of her disintegration with place where she is born.

The death of Giles Winterbrone is a great shock for Grace. She cannot hold herself. She cries, weeps at the death of Giles Winterbrone. A wife of someone weeps and cries so hysterically for the demise of another one in pain of not getting married to him. Will there be another tragedy like this? Grace Mellbury is in "indefinably depressed" (138), "she is almost hysterical" (246). Grace Melbury is really hysteric, neurotic and schizophrenic. She does not belong to anyone; neither of Dr. Fitzipers nor of Giles Winterbrone, so is the case in terms of her place attachment. She is neither rural nor urban. Though Grace Melbury has dishonest living in a place, cannot die. She chooses Dr. Fitzipers. She has vexed, puzzled and perplexed condition caused by the impression of place. Thus, honest living means to go in continuity with nature. "In truth . . . Thoreau was never 'really believed banished from the world', nor did 'he seek or profess banishment'. He earned 'an honest living by gardening and land-surveying'. Furthermore, 'his home life – always the best test – was thoroughly affectionate and faithful" (354). Buell in his *The Environmental Imagination*, while talking about the place sentiment, pin points that true attachment with the place is honest living. It never causes banishment and dislocatedness. In case of Grace Melbury, she has dishonesty in living. She finds her home not best and test. She never gardens and surveys the land with interest and pleasure and she is not faithful to the place.

Her false living and disloyalty to the place causes deep anxieties in her. Thus, disintegration to the place is the ground reason for the out-break of maladaptive behaviors, Hardy wants to reveal in his novel *The Woodlanders* through the character, Grace Melbury,

how she is psychologically dislocated in her birth place due to her growth in different locality of urban setting that does not let her live peaceful life in rural homeland. Thomas Hardy through the character Grace Melbury represents the idea that how the individual goes through the psychological dislocation within a place while s/he cannot assimilate with the geographical location.

## Conclusion

This research work has explored the role of the place or environment for the making and unmaking the meaning of an individual in Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders*. For this purpose, it has dealt with the issues like role of the place in the development of self, overall cultural upbringing of humanity as well economic factors of individual which are directly shaped according to the geographical location of the characters in the novel. Through the analysis of the making and unmaking of the major character Grace Melbury who is shaped according to dual accountability of sense of places, the urban and rural, this research has revealed the interrelationship of environment and human beings.

Hardy's *The Woodlanders* mainly concentrates on the people and place relationship. The characters with the rootedness to place have the easier survival, fixed geographical and cultural identity and the other who have not rootedness with the geographical location neither get fixed social/cultural identity nor assimilate with the place properly. Lack of assimilation with the place makes the characters suffer. For example Grace Melbury throughout her life in her native village Little Hintock, a rural village goes through suffering because she has grown up in urban locality. On the other hand, Giles, her childhood friends easily assimilates with the place because throughout his life he is in there and he has a well understanding of the place. In this sense, the adjustment and detachment of human being with their geographical location is the major factor which leads the novel ahead.

The tussles between human and nature is not limited within the suffering of an individual rather the environmental factors or the locatedness of the place even affects the human relationship. The love story between Grace and Gilles is an example of the role of places to shape human relationship. As Grace comes to live in Little Hintock from urban locality, she cannot go in continuity with the place. Living in the place Little Hintock, she develops the dualism of 'two places psychology.' It is the reason why she loves and does not love Giles as she does the same to both places- Little Hintock and City. The different psychic development of two lovers caused by two different places results the tragic separation between Grace and Giles. Thus, this research has revealed that it is the role of the places not of the mere human beings to shape the individual in *The Woodlanders*.

The place and its effects on the people who live in the particular place shape the individual in *The Woodlanders*. Place as a maker makes and unmakes the individuals in terms of their co-partition with nature. The association of human beings with their environment not only sets the psychological, cultural and economic aspects of human beings but also predicts. In this light, this research using ecocritical insights, has analyzed how place determines the total meaning of an individual.

### Works Cited

- Birch, B. P. "Wessex, Hardy and the Nature Novelists Author(s)." *Transactions of the Buell, Lawrence. The Environmental Imagination*. Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Institute of British Geographers, New Series*. 6. 3. (1981). 348- 358.
- Coleman, James C, James N. Butcher and Robert C. Carson. *Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life*. Scott, Foresman and Company, 1980.
- Hannigan, John A. *Environmental Sociology: A Social Constructionist Perspective*. Routledge, 1995.
- Hardy, Thomas. *The Woodlanders*. Harper Collins, 1905.
- Hiss, Tony. *The Experience of the Place*. Knopf, 1990.
- Holloway, John. *The Victorian Sage: Studies in Argument*. Archon Books, 1962.
- Hutcheon, Linda. "Metafictional Implications for Novelistic Reference." *On Referring in Literature*. Indiana University Press, 1987. 7- 9.
- Miller, J. Hillis. *Topographies*. Stanford UP, 1995.
- Siebenschuh, William R. "Hardy and the Imagery of Place Author(s)." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 39. 4. (Autumn, 1999). 773- 789.