

Dominance of the Natural: A Comparative Reading of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Sadeq Chubak's *Puppetry*

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Abstract

The present article seeks to read Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Sadeq Chubak's *Puppetry* (*Kheymeh-Shab-Bazi* in Persian) in order to demonstrate their similar treatment of both 'the natural' and the fate of human beings when positioned in contrast with the natural. Hardy and Chubak, despite belonging to distinctive contexts, were both under the influence of the premises of Naturalism. The present paper aims to explore these two works of fiction in order to compare the way both authors employed the Naturalist literary trend in their style of writing, characterization, and perspective. Both authors employed an objective viewpoint, pretty similar to how scientists approach their object of study; they kept their distance from their narrations, with no particular effort to interfere in or to comment on the occurrences of such narrations. This research focuses on how, through utilizing Naturalistic principles, they endeavored to expose the quivering position of human beings when exposed to the powerful impacts of the natural. The study focuses on their similar approaches towards apparently dissimilar issues which, despite the considerable discrepancy concerning the socio-cultural contexts of their works, lurked below the surface of the fiction they produced.

Key words: Naturalism, Determinism, The Social, The Natural, Persian Fiction.

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1. Introduction

Literary Naturalism was directly influenced by Darwinism which was a highly controversial branch of scientific approach. Darwin presented his unpredictably innovative theory in the mid-nineteenth century according to which the whole sculpture the man had constructed of humanity, with all its centrality and strength, was shattered. In *Origin of Species* (1859), he refused the theory of creation represented by the Church and presented his notion of the disapproval of Immutability of the species by which he expresses his belief in the survival of the fittest. Originally influenced by the scientific developments of the nineteenth century (in particular, Darwinism), Naturalism put the majority of its emphasis upon the vital role of nature and, hence, unpredictably decentralized man from the world – a gesture which was, above all, a conspicuous contradiction to the Enlightenment. Consequently, Naturalist writers attempted to obliterate this sort of despair, which was the direct result of their unwelcome devastating theory, through a considerable emphasis on their characters and their most private thoughts, emotions, and relationships.

Naturalists, strongly influenced by the scientific movement, took refuge in literature in order to relieve themselves through an expression of all their cynicism and to depict the unstable position of human beings in the universe. Literary Naturalism first appeared in English and French fiction towards the end of the nineteenth century. It became a dominant school in the American fiction of the early twentieth century, and, almost half a century later, was manifested in the literature of the Middle East including Persian fiction. Naturalist authors are profoundly involved in the unavoidable power of the natural; they are obsessed with the sense of solitude as well as that of isolation. Naturalist authors are the creators of a number of character-driven narratives; they walk back into nature on their own or through their characters.

The present paper explores Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and three short stories from Chubak's *Kheymeh-Shab-Bazi (Puppetry)*, including *Mardi-dar-Ghafas (A Man in the Cage)*, *Pirahan-e-Zereshki (A Dark Maroon Dress)*, and *Golhay-e-Gooshti (Flowers of the Flesh)*. Probing into the authors' techniques of storytelling, the present article seeks to investigate their interconnections, to distinguish the overlaps they might have, and to demonstrate how Naturalism impacted as well as connected both authors' assumptions and perceptions of human issues. On the basis of the Naturalistic point of view, this paper aims to exhibit the analogies which, despite all the distinctions and differences between the authors, find their way to the different layers of their works.

2. Review of Literature

The majority of scholarship on Thomas Hardy points to the disillusioned view of life and cynicism. Solomon Olaniyan, for instance, through his investigation of *Jude the Obscure* on the basis of the trope of disillusionment, contends that “through Hardy’s explicit portrayal of life in Victorian society, Hardy condemns human institutions which endlessly perpetuate people in suffering, castration of hopes and limit them socio-politically” (54). Pursuing the motif of disillusionment among the characters in *Jude the Obscure* and founding his argument on the fact that “Hardy has fictionalized the struggle of the common man in the face of helplessness” (54), Olaniyan then depicts the whole sense of hopelessness, disintegration, and alienation with which Hardy’s characters are all plagued.

Gursharan Kaur tried to discover every nuance of Naturalism in Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure* through an observation of the elements in the setting of the story, the social milieu, heredity, psychological inclinations of the characters as well as determinism and fate. He finally concludes that this novel can be regarded as a tragic one in which heredity and fate have an inevitable influence on the characters’ lives. Another example of a similar research has been conducted by QI Jun-jie, who has focused on heredity, Darwinism, and atavism in Hardy’s novels. Examining *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, she observes the elements of “Darwinian discourses as well as issues of heredity and degradation” (830). Her emphasis is mostly on Hardy’s fusion of his contemporary scientific discourses with his literary imagination, “as well as in using scientific issues to mediate between authorial intention and critical expectation” (830). What QI Jun-jie clearly highlights then is “Hardy’s pessimistic outlook towards the relationship between man’s free will and determinism” (838).

Similarly, Stefani F. Anic delves into some selected works of Hardy, including both novels and poetry, so as to highlight the impacts of Darwinism on his style. At the beginning of her survey, she examines the influence of Darwin’s theory on the Victorian era and, then, through a close investigation of some of Hardy’s most eminent novels, with a primary focus on *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, she endeavors to depict the evolutionary theme of this fiction. Impressed by the chaotic world of Darwin, “while trying to reconcile a scientific view of life with the emotional and the spiritual” (34), she contends that “Hardy’s narratives capture human suffering and the resulting apathy” (34). In the end, she argues that “although Hardy depicts the Darwinian struggle for existence in his fiction, his pessimism is undeniably overshadowed by his altruism” (41). The presence of this furtive optimism, in spite of the simultaneous presence of

some noticeable cynicism, is going to be analyzed in the present article as well, though with a more distinctive purpose.

Although Darwinian discourse and Naturalistic elements appear to be the invariable concerns of the critics regarding Hardy's works, it should not be ignored that there are some scholars who, unlike the previously mentioned ones, prefer to accost this author from other perspectives. For instance, Nath endeavors to depict Hardy as a regional novelist, contending that he "popularized the landscape by beautifully depicting the nature and environment of the particular land and people therein, specifically highlighting the conflict between man and nature" (159). His most prominent emphasis is on the elements of regionalism in Hardy's texts, "including characters, dialectics, customs, history and topography of a particular region" (159), to illustrate him as a regional novelist. However, the major purpose of the present study is to represent the role of nature as a sign of tranquility rather than a geographical structure.

Similarly, Ali Mohammed investigates Hardy's selected works, namely one of his poems, "The Darkling Thrush," and one of his novels, *The Return of the Nature*, in order to explore the role of nature in his works and to depict "how someone like Hardy portrayed his nature consciousness through a mere portrayal of any harmony or disharmony of man with his environment" (167). He attempts to highlight Hardy's insistence on the conscious or unconscious impacts of the setting and the surrounding world on human life. He also maintains that nature is Hardy's major character in these selected works, particularly, in the Victorian era when technological advancements and materialistic aspects of life were highly valued.

Another author addressed in this study is Sadeq Chubak, the first Iranian author whose works were considered to be Naturalistic in accordance with the elements he borrowed from this movement. However, there have always been arguments and disagreements among Iranian scholars and critics over considering Chubak as a Naturalist writer. Sepanloo, for instance, contends that while the movement belongs to the Western world, some aspects of his work can be vaguely associated with Naturalism:

Chubak is not the pursuer of Naturalism as it is typical of the Western literature, since his works do not include the notions of heredity and the genetic influence on one's destiny, both of which are among the crucial elements of Naturalism. However, his focus on the nastiness and reflection of violence with no further explanation seems to be close to Naturalism.¹ (105)

1. The Persian quotations in this article are all translated by the authors.

Bashiri and Keshani, delineating the philosophical and literary aspects of Naturalism, seek to indicate the similarities and differences between Naturalism and Realism and contend that Chubak should be viewed both as a Naturalist and a Realist novelist. Whereas they do not intend to deny the realistic features in his stories, they prefer to observe their Naturalistic elements. Investigating two prominent works by Chubak, *Sang-e-Sabour* (Tower of Strength) and *Antari-ke-Lutiash-Morde-Bud* (An Ape whose Owner Had Died), Bashiri and Keshani argue that these works can be considered as both Naturalistic and non-Naturalistic. Founding their study on distinctive aspects, they conclude that Chubak can be regarded as a Realist-Naturalist, which means “he is an author who intends to represent an apparently Naturalistic world, because of his realistic purposes” (54). They also introduce him as an author who, in terms of both style and theme, is unique among his Iranian contemporaries.

Salamat and Ghomlaghi have delved into *Sang-e-Sabour* (Tower of Strength) and *Tangsir* (Tangsir) by Chubak in order to investigate their Naturalistic aspects. While distinguishing the boundary between Realism and Naturalism and examining the elements of both movements in Chubak's novels, they categorize him as a Naturalist author, “He can be regarded as a Naturalist for his depiction of the ugliness and the nastiness of the life as well as his vivid picture of the muddy mire of the world” (102). Therefore, through highlighting the Naturalistic features of these two novels, their research aims to present this writer as a Naturalist rather than a Realist.

Since there has been a consensus among the critics about the inevitable influence of Western authors on Chubak's style, analysis of his works on the basis of a comparative study has been prevalent among researchers. For instance, Fooladi and Golabian have conducted such a study on Chubak and Zola from the Naturalistic perspective. Regarding Chubak as a Naturalist writer, they present numerous significant features of Naturalism in his work, *Sang-e-Sabour* (*Tower of Strength*):

A universal suffering, a psychological view towards the events, careful attention to the details, determinism, the lechery of his characters, the greed for bloodshed, the sense of rage, sexual scenes, heredity, an experimental novel, manifestation of the social milieu, social oppression upon the children and also the women, anti-religious features of Naturalism, and the denial of the supernatural beliefs, the significance of education and culture for the masses, opposition to public beliefs, freedom of speech in writing and Realism. (1274)

Nabizadeh is another researcher who recognizes Chubak as a Naturalist and argues that his short story, *Mardi dar Ghafas (A Man in Chains)* is the best representative of Chubak's works to depict his use of Naturalistic elements as "determinism, despair, nihilism, vernacular language, immorality, irreligious beliefs, the significant role of animals and the inferior role of man" (55). She insists that Chubak is not simply a Naturalist, but that he occasionally goes beyond Naturalism through his innovations.

In a highly comprehensive critique, Baraheni delves into every single short story by Chubak and attempts to present a vivid depiction of this author's skills and styles. He also recognizes this author as cynical in his narration of life, "While reading some stories by Chubak, the reader might think whether life is as pugnacious, sordid and oppressive or whether it is the author who finds everything so violent and suffocating" (597). He seems so impressed by this author's tangible picture of animals that, while examining *Antari-ke-Lutiash-Morde-Bud (An Ape Whose Owner Had Died)*, he exclaims that "in modern Persian story, no animal has ever been observed from such a psychological lens. Neither have their instincts ever been analyzed as carefully as they are in this story" (623). Moreover, Baraheni, through a brief review of some influential short story writers such as Poe, Maupassant, Chekhov, and Tolstoy endeavors to present a depiction of Chubak's style and the impressions such western authors had left on him.

3. Theoretical Framework

Having eschewed Romanticism and deviated from Realism, Naturalism emerged in the late nineteenth century by embracing determinism, detachment, and scientific objectivism as well as founding its methods upon scientific notions, particularly Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection. As Olafson indicates, it is "a movement of thought that not only takes its name from 'nature' but assigns an unqualifiedly positive valence to the fact of our being part of nature" (4). Accordingly, the significance of nature, natural rules, and predetermined heredity laws were considerably highlighted in both literary and philosophical Naturalism.

The first version of Naturalism was so steeped with Darwinian discourse and evolutionary theories that its next versions in the following century still abounded with the elements of this theory. Deviation from the traditional mystical approach towards human beings and various aspects of life can probably be construed as one of the major aspects of being influenced by Darwinism, and thus Naturalists are no more interested in either metaphysical or supernatural concepts which were prevalent in the traditional philosophies. Olafson argues that "naturalism came to be

understood as a liberation from the dogmas of supernaturalism and the conservative social order..." (5). This detachment from mysticism and basing its major concerns upon scientific discoveries, specifically "the Grand Story of Bing Bang and evolutionary biology," as Moreland claims, causes Naturalists to depict "living organisms as property-things or ordered aggregates" (76). This new scientific viewpoint of the world resulted in a variety of implications about human beings, other living creatures, as well as the whole world.

Darwin's theory was radically and predictably implausible since it shattered all the presuppositions humans had of themselves as the centre of the universe. The theory of the survival of the fittest not only shifted the biological bases but also the social ones, resulting in a consequent cynicism according to which man was considered equal to other creatures and inferior before the power of nature. The full acceptance of such an appalling theory and admitting frankly to one's inferiority was not as simple as it looks for man, who had always dealt with idealism rather than realism. As Carroll claims, we, human beings, are inclined to make culture and civilizations, though we have been drowned in the supernatural phenomenon so much that we have tended to forget nature and the physical world around us:

Humans are very strange and unusual animals. Like other animals, they are driven by their passions, prompted by their instincts, goaded by their physical needs. Unlike other animals, though, they create imagined worlds and live in them [...] We have believed in some very strange things [...] Is it any wonder, then, that we should look to culture, the fabrications of our minds, and believe, in our simplicity, that culture contains nature? (273)

People of spirituality and supernaturalism might have become quite distraught since they had been dragged into the physical and real nature, which was heedless enough towards them and would be able to defeat them quite simply. On top of that, there was breaking news which looked like the last shot and could transform, all by itself, beliefs of the whole century: God is dead and man is all alone by herself or himself. As Carroll indicates, "God died a lingering death in the nineteenth century. The fundamentalists will tell us that reports of His death, like that of Mark Twain, have been greatly exaggerated. But really, there has been no exaggeration" (275). Emphatically, there has been no exaggeration since all new scientific theories and inventions were rational enough to wash away fully all those stories introduced in the theological books and studies.

Virginia Richter contends that "by destroying religion, Darwin unwittingly undermined the moral basis of civilization" (203). Humans thus

realized their shattering position in the universe and endeavoured to get rid of their bafflements towards a set of distinctive binaries like war or peace, satisfaction or reluctance, anarchy or civilization. Although, as Richter points to Arnold's claim, the result of the materialistic individualism, which was the inevitable consequence of the new theories, was anarchy. It was, in fact, to avoid this anarchy that man demanded culture and civilization to protect and transcend the individual. Richter, in her attempts to delineate Spengler's ideology, states that Spengler's concerns were of the history and what the history presented to the human culture. She demonstrates that Spengler believed in a historical pattern for each civilization on the basis of their past, "Spengler postulated that cultures — in a specific geographical sense: e.g. Arabic or Indian culture — were analogous to organisms and developed in invariable cycles of growth, blood and decay" (194). Through an investigation of these analogies and organisms, he came up with a pattern for the Western culture in the nineteenth century.

What literary Naturalists endeavoured to manifest was this decentralization of human beings, the inclination to the return to nature as well as its subsequent disillusionment, cynicism, and peace that one can find in one's re-joining nature, all of which compounded the bizarre era of undesirable scientific discoveries. Zola's famous phrase, "tranche de vie", meaning 'slice of life', was an explicit reference to the common biological experiments of those days. Consequently, the Naturalist author managed to illustrate a tragic episode in the life of the characters, who were doomed to be defeated by the natural.

4. Analysis

4.1 A Naturalist Reading of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

Thomas Hardy has long been recognized as an author who focuses on minorities and all kinds of discrimination they suffer from. *Tess of d'Urbervilles* is considered a prominent example of this particular attitude of the author. The story commences with Tess leaving her house and all the miseries she is confronted with. In the characterizations of the protagonist, Tess, and the antagonist, Alec D'Urbervilles, distinctive aspects of the Naturalistic view are observed. Tess is sketched as a sentimental, cynical, and gullible girl of a poor family who can be easily absorbed by the nature that surrounds her:

Tess Durbeyfield's route on this memorable morning lay amid the north-eastern undulations of the Vale in which she had been born, and in which her life had unfolded. The Vale of Blackmoor was to her the world, and its inhabitants the races thereof. [...] every contour of

the surrounding hills was as personal to her as that of her relatives' faces. (Hardy 42)

This is when Tess, being forced to abandon the village, recalls how she has spent all her childhood in intimate connection with the beautiful quieting nature. What she misses most is the tranquility she has always experienced in this region during the years—a strong feeling which is now making it intolerably difficult for her to leave. Looking around at the environment reminds her of all the deep peace and quiet that she has to quit because of marriage and fortune—things she has never been interested in. This lack of enthusiasm depicts a specific characteristic of Hardy's characters, which is a sense of isolation from society while being absorbed in nature. Tess, as a typical character of Hardy's novels, is recognized as a Naturalistic victim who, particularly when dismissed by the society, can easily discover the peace and tranquility which reigns in nature. Unlike many of her peers in the period, Tess is not keen on being effluent or looking attractive to so many gentlemen. As a result, she is known as a bizarre girl and is constantly being dismissed by the public. She looks for her lost tranquility in nature, realizing that she is all alone in this apparently enormous world.

Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence. But all the while she was making a distinction where there was no difference. Feeling herself in antagonism she was quite in accord. She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly. (97-98)

This quieting intimacy which Tess feels with every element of nature delineates her isolation and separation from the disturbing public. Being raped by a rich man and not being able to find a good husband make her a notorious person in the village. This is precisely what a Naturalistic author endeavors to manifest: the lack of a reciprocal understanding among people and the isolation of man despite living in the society which leads those like Tess to seek the perpetual tranquility in nature. She makes a permanent effort to escape from the society in which she is forced to break the laws and is, hence, reproached and sentenced to perpetual misery and melancholy. Therefore, nature is the one and only place which gives her innocence back to her with no pre-judgment. One can feel the intimacy between man and nature in many of his other characters as well. For instance, Mrs. D'Urbervilles, a wealthy fortunate woman who has Tess look after her birds, has a close friendship with animals as if they can feel

everything that she feels. This is, perhaps, why she pays a lot of attention to how Tess should take care of and be attentive towards them, too:

“Ah; you are the young woman come to look after my birds?” said Mrs. d’Urbervilles, recognizing a new footstep. “I hope you will be kind to them. My bailiff tells me you are quite the proper person. Well, where are they? Ah, this is Strut! But he is hardly so lively today, is he? He is alarmed at being handled by a stranger; I suppose. And Phena too— yes, they are a little frightened—aren’t you, dears? But they will soon get used to you. (65)

In this scene, Tess is supposed to touch every single bird and is then asked whether she can whistle or not because Mrs. d’Urbervilles loves to hear them whistling. This queer interest in pets and animals, which is common specifically among the characters of Naturalistic texts, can be due to the deep loneliness that she, irrespective of her social class, experiences. Characters of Naturalistic texts appear to be constantly escaping from the infuriating sense of being intruded and judged by others—an irritation which appears to escalate especially when the upper class is confronted with the lower class. For example, when the former is in power and the latter in a state of vulnerability. The more they attempt to keep in touch, the more they realize that there remains a huge gap between them.

The lack of mutual understanding results in lack of confidence and trust among men. It is this same lack which separates them from each other perpetually and leads to the isolation of the individuals and, consequently, to the fragmentation of the society as well as the disillusionment and depression of its members. This lack of confidence and trust is also both the reason for and the result of a lack of balance in the society where power and wealth are mostly predominant. Hardy’s sentimentally sensitive characters believe that their miseries have been predetermined and nothing would ever help them out, “she saw before her a long and stony highway which she had to tread, without aid, and with little sympathy. Her depression was then terrible, and she could have hidden herself in a tomb” (96). This short description of how Tess is feeling after her misfortune might suffice to show how lonely and desperate Naturalistic characters find themselves in the world.

The injustice which is inevitably prevalent all over the society, bestows a dramatic significance to the ancestors. This significance could be both the reason and the result of the belief in the idea of predestination. In addition to the sense of disappointment and embarrassment at its roots, this new claim has also laid the foundations for many new genetic improvements and the superstitious beliefs which have ever since affected humans’ attitudes towards themselves as well as the surrounding world. The

analogies among the descendants of the same family are not restricted only to appearance, “Yes, that’s the d’Urberville nose and chin—a little debased” (14), but also it is expanded to include the behavioral, the financial and, consequently, the social features of man, “Aye, there have been generations of Sir Johns among you, and if knighthood were hereditary like baronetcy – as it particularly was in old times, when men were knighted from father to son – you would be Sir John now” (14). The higher class one’s family and forefathers belong to, the higher social status one gains. That is why Tess’s family, unconscious of the fact that their family is extinct according to the rule of the survival of the fittest, makes endless efforts to gain their ancestors’ name and reputation back:

“... I mean, where do we d’Urbervilles live?”

“You don’t live anywhere. You are extinct—as a county family.”

... “And where be our family mansion and estates?”

“You haven’t any.” (15)

This conversation depicts clearly that although Tess’s father was informed of his dignified ancestors, it is known that his family had long lost its effluence and possessions. However, in the hope of gaining a high social status at some distant point, he still makes an attempt to get back his ancestral distinction. Despite the fact that this family has lost its previous dignity, they send their naïve daughter in a desperate search for their lost fortune only to realize that no matter how much one endeavors, everything seems to be predetermined by an unfair but certain rule.

The significance of the ancestors, the sense of injustice, the survival of the fittest which is ruling over the society, and the prevalent sense of disillusionment and pessimism all originate in the increasing power of nature which, above all, disparages and decentralizes the position of the man in the universe. This sense of humiliation is manifested thoroughly in the indifference of nature and portrayed fully in the several descriptions of that nature in the various chapters of the book, all of which means that what occurs to man is of the least significance to nature. The lack of attention on the part of nature to a creature who was once regarded as the center of the world cost her the loss of her high hopes as well as her deep certainty, faith, and confidence.

4.2 A Naturalistic Reading of Sadeq Chubak’s Short Stories

Naturalism was introduced to Iranian literary circles mostly through the works of Emil Zola and Guy de Maupassant in the early twentieth century. It was affected by the local culture and was even sometimes misperceived as sentimentalism. However, in spite of the presence of heated debates and contrary views, Chubak is widely acknowledged as a pioneer of

Naturalist movement in Persian literature. *Mardi-dar-Ghafas (A Man in the Chains)* is the story of a man who has imprisoned himself at home right after the death of his young wife. As it is clear from the title, he is a dejected man, living in deep distress away from other people. He, as a typical man in Naturalist movement, lives with and in his past and has neither optimism nor any enthusiasm for the future. The loss of his wife has caused him deep grief which is now dragging him into a gloomy dead-end:

When he looked at the clock, he forgot all about Golandam's photo. This clock has not been set for fourteen years. In all these years, the clock's hands have been standing still at four three—as if throughout these fourteen years, his life has been hindered. Fourteen years of his monotonously melancholic life stayed at four three. Time fixed at four three, which has been watching all his gloomy life, doesn't even intend to move at all. (Chubak 65)

This detailed description of the eerie life, or literally the gradual death of the protagonist, depicts how the author, in spite of being objective in his narration, is concerned with the irresistible sense of despondency dominant over the life of man. He pauses a lot in his blood-curdling sketch of the position of the man in the world so as to confirm how mournfully determined it is. Bitter-coated analogies are another feature of his narration which delineates the depth of dejection and distraught in one's life, "His life was led in such a gloomy way that trudging was like a continuous walk through an oozy swamp in which one is stuck and surrounded by alligators, frogs, and snakes" (73). What would cause one to think of life as disgusting and disturbing except for the sense of injustice, isolation, and vulnerability opposed to one's fate? When a Naturalist author observes how life and all the meaningful concepts man has struggled for are diminished and aborted through new materialistic concepts, she or he feels totally paralyzed, unable to find a convincing optimistic explanation for the mundane occurrences that surround him.

The characters in Chubak's works mostly face some tragic phenomena including death, the loss of family and friends, mortal diseases, and natural disasters. Chubak's character here is the last descendent of a mighty family whose members all died of cholera while he was in India. He has not touched his sister's unfinished rug; nor has he touched his younger sister's clothes. As we read in Chubak's work, "he was like the insane till he married Soudabeh. [...] Soudabeh's love could pacify him and make all those grieves fade away; but only within three months, she got Diphtheria and died, filled his heart with mourn" (73). All these griefs and losses caused this man to isolate himself to death, to get addicted to opium, to make an intimate friendship with a weasel, and to sit down with her

precisely as a human being, “He had only one thing to feel happy about and that was the weasel. Thinking about her pacified him. [...] having another creature in his room which was never about to reprimand or disturb him, made him relaxed” (60). Through these brief lines, Chubak, as usual, has succinctly clarified why Hasan Khan prefers a weasel to people. The irritating sense of being prejudged, reproached, or reprimanded has usually been a quite rational factor for one to stay away from the public, “Dear Lucy, are you a weasel or a man, ha? Better than man? Bravo! It’s better that you aren’t a man. If you were a man, I’d never let you in here...” (68). Facing all these fragmentations and segmentations in human society and admitting to her or his equal position with other creatures, a Naturalistic man makes an attempt to seek tranquility in nature and among the other creatures.

Hasan Khan makes such an intimate friendship with the weasel that it seems not to be an animal in his view anymore, but “an intelligent girl who was shaped as a weasel and became his mate” (76). This intimate friendship is the last ray of hope which Hassan Khan can pull in order to be able to carry on through this muddy path. He has concluded that man is feeble and full of defects and, thus, recognizes that he feels much closer to the dead, “Isn’t a malformed man closer to those who are dead rather than to those alive? I have passed half-way towards death and there has remained another half” (80). He does not call his life a real ‘life.’ Rather, he uses the phrase “half-way towards death” to describe it, which depicts how devastated he feels and how interested he is in getting rid of this whole misery. His weasel is the last valuable thing he possesses and when he sees that she intends to leave him because of copulation, he loses his last thread and has nothing to help him breathe, as though death was nothing but a pause to all these pre-determined sufferings.

Golhay-e-Gooshti (Flowers of Flesh) is another short story in which Chubak, as succinctly as usual, presents a dark depiction of a human relationship founded upon materialism. Morad owes a Jewish man some money and cannot pay it back. However, this only seems like an excuse for Chubak to delve into the very fragmentations that occurred among different levels of society. He portrays his protagonist as a very hateful person:

He used to enjoy his suffering as well as his happiness and considered them as inseparable from his life. He detested people, even a new-born baby. He was used to his solitude. He found himself alone even in the most crowded spots and didn’t care about people around, no matter who they were. Morad didn’t see and didn’t

intend to see. He had made something like an eggshell around him and carried on his life there. (Chubak 20)

This concise sketch of the protagonist indicates another Naturalistic character Chubak has managed to create: a man of loneliness, silence, and passivity who is in the same dead-end as the others. However, he is quite aware of his own terrifying situation, not as the people he himself manifests as “those who find their shelter in the communities and crowds, running away from the menace of death and loneliness” (24). Accordingly, not only does this awareness help him to get on well with his overwhelming sufferings, but also it makes it much more impossible for him to tolerate them. Moreover, his passivity and emotional numbness originate in this paralyzing cautiousness.

The world seems to be always in autumn, desperately chilly and bare of delightful colors. When the Jewish man whom Morad is in debt to, has an accident and dies, Morad does not even move. He stares at the scene of the accident and passes by indifferently. This scene, despite its apparent passivity, can be considered the climax of the story. Firstly, while the protagonist’s cynicism increases, he does not make any effort to hide it. Moreover, it uncovers how gloomy and desperate he finds the world to be and that, through this disappointing approach, he has become so inactive and inattentive that, having been noticeably separated from the people around him, he does not even care about them:

He changed his path and went through the crowds. He hit them and was hit by them. But he didn’t care at all. It was a kind of mental freedom that he had gained. He got lighter. He was alone as well. The people passing him by didn’t exist in his view. They existed for themselves; he existed for himself. Neither the sound of the cars nor that of the crowds affected him. He was all alone. (26)

Chubak endeavors to utilize as many vicious phrases and pictures as possible to delineate the nastiness lying beneath every detailed scene of the world in the view of a Naturalistic man. At the end of his short story, his character does not die as Hassan Khan did in the previous one. Instead, he enters a much more disgusting phase of life — a phase in which there awaits total putrefaction for him with no source of love or pleasant scent. The accident and the frightened faces of people look to brush away the last few signs of hope in him. Watching the vulnerability of a man of wealth before the law of nature might confirm for him that man is totally enslaved by nature and predestined to eternal suffering. That is why all the previously pleasant things like the scent of women, smell like the blood and putrefied flesh. The title of the story has been intelligently chosen in order to delineate the picture of the men who, in the protagonist’s pessimistic

eyes, are flowers made out of flesh: flowers (men) whose apparent beauty is nothing but pretense and lie. Besides, this analogy depicts how passionately Chubak attempts to delineate that people's feelings are dwindled to the extent they have become a mere living thing left with no sensation and longing, except for more power, fame, or money. Therefore, the infuriating world is only a place where men are just like terrifying wandering flesh flowers supposed to attack and eat at one another in order to survive.

5. Discussion: A Comparative Analysis

The nineteenth-century socio-cultural scene was mostly dominated by several prominent scientists who had inevitable impressions on all aspects of life. Having been targeted by various appalling scientific and religious theories, the Victorian subject was so bewildered that he/she could not help being mentally devastated. The devastation and fragmentation that human beings experienced in this era were predominantly associated with Darwin's and Spencer's theory of evolution. On the influences of these prominent figures on the Western culture (not only upon their contemporary period but also on the subsequent centuries), Carroll presents a transparent explanation:

Darwin's *Descent of Man* fed into a larger stream of "naturalistic" thinking in the philosophy and literature of his time [...] Darwin's vision was grounded in careful reasoning about scientific evidence [...] Over the period of a century and a half, these differences of intellectual quality have made a decisive difference in the magnitude and character of Darwin's influence. [...] In our thinking on man's place in nature, Darwin is closer to us now than he has ever been before. (271)

Accordingly, Darwin might be considered the most prominent figure, among the others, whose ideologies and theories are going to be investigated first and foremost. What was central to his theories, as Carroll also mentions, was the non-rhetorical aspects of them. Unlike the other thinkers of the day, Darwin's major concern was for biology and his theories were only gradually adopted to the other aspects of human life. These notions were also emphasized by the literary figures of the time and had a continuous impact on the authors and the elites of the following centuries. This apparently unfair struggle between the feeble and the powerful for survival founded a base of injustice on various levels of social relationships and turned into a major theme for the literary texts of the period out of which those of Thomas Hardy were of momentous significance.

The fictional works of the late nineteenth century were mostly replete with the themes of decay, disillusionment, pessimism, and isolation of man in a devastating civilization. Thomas Hardy has been well-reputed for his magnificent power of objective narration. The necessity of the use of a prescribed objective tone for a Naturalistic author is particularly one of the direct impacts of Darwinian scientific notions. It is also this same aspect of narration which can be spotted first and foremost in both their style of writing. They both make an endeavor not to disturb the floating wave of the narration with any commendations or intrusions. Acting just like a camera, a really idealistic one, they both precisely describe whatever they can see through their exact unforgiving lens in the minutest details.

Chubak was one of those literary figures belonging to the subsequent century who was still impressed by both Darwinism and Naturalism. Living in the decades of decay in Iran (the gloomy years of Great Wars and malnutrition and genocides which were the direct results of international and civil wars, disease and natural disasters), he could not possibly prevent the cynical glasses gifted to him by the world. As Baraheni contends, he is unforgivingly cruel in his depiction of his characters' lives and miseries. Chubak, Baraheni argues, "draws the melancholic picture of the loneliness of this disabled man who has relied on a dog in order to forget his solitude in such an objective and practical way that the reader can find herself or himself in the bitter realities of her or his own fate" (596). The nature philosophy which is mentioned in Baraheni's claim is the same as the lack of forgiveness in Chubak's narration. He does not censor himself and that is why his stories are steeped in frustrating pictures of both the physical and the sentimental aspects of human life abounding with injustice, violence, and mourning.

Having been impressed by their contemporary philosophical and scientific theories, both Hardy and Chubak were concerned with the theory of heredity and inheritance in order to adopt and discover its tangible impacts on social life. For instance, in *A Man in Chain*, Hasan Khan is the last survivor of a family all of whose members, as Chubak narrates, have died because of a disease. This important piece of information about Hasan Khan not only indicates the forcing power of the natural, but also manifests how this suffering is inherited by Hasan Khan himself: his wife dies of an illness, and he surrenders himself to the power of nature when his dog abandons him because of its natural instinct. On Hardy's attention towards heredity, Qi Jun-jie claims, "Instead of 'Tess D'Urberville', 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' points directly to the central issue of descent and ancestry. The novel begins with and develops around the

issue of lineage" (833). Therefore, even the title of his novel depicts the significance of this theory for Hardy.

They both consider the social distances between the higher class and the lower class of the society. Poverty and affluence seem to be distinguished as matters of inheritance as well as matters of fortune and misery. In their story, this issue looks exaggerated since the fortunate might experience falling from grace once, but the poor never appear to be given any opportunity to experience the opposite. The Jewish man who represents the rich in *Golhay-e-Gooshti (Flowers of Flesh)* dies of an accident or the rich man of D'Urbervilles is murdered by his cousin, both of which indicate the inevitability of death and the overwhelming power of nature. However, on the other side, Morad in *Golhay-e-Gooshti (Flowers of the Flesh)* and Tess in Hardy's novel are those who, having inherited misfortune and suffering, can never taste a tinge of happiness.

Chubak draws an ugly picture of the society: a space marked by violence, war, poverty, malnutrition, and illnesses providing people with a deep sense of frustration about which a caring author cannot be indifferent. He, cautiously, wanders in this society, surveys all the already forgotten corners, and attempts to portray them. He prefers to depict the life of those tormented by the paralyzing forces of both nature and the society. Making no effort to provide solutions, he, objectively, shoots the extreme close-ups of those people being squeezed to death by the overwhelmingly intolerable fate with which they have been forced to deal.

The same notion is repeated in Hardy's novels, particularly *Tess of d'Urbervilles*, which takes place in a specific region called Wessex. Hardy has been recognized as a rare intellectual restricting himself to one zone in whose description he is very precise. In fact, it seems as if these two writers' attention to the considerable significance of the regional impacts was undeniable since they both attempt to highlight these impressions upon the people, indicating how incredibly influential they can be. On top of that, their emphasis on this kind of impact has been examined several times. For instance, the rationale behind this choice can be perceived in Nath's words:

As a regional novelist, the greatest strength of Hardy is his presentation of people and their customs dwelling in the region he selected. These countryside [...] They people living in Wessex are soaked in tradition [...] One may in them find the man spiritual history of are as eternal as the wood and field and heaths. (161)

The choice of a particular region for narrative means a lot to Naturalistic authors since they cannot reject the regional impressions on,

whether physically, mentally, or behaviorally. This emphasis appears to have resulted from the significance of the survival of the fittest as well as the considerable importance of inheritance in a Naturalistic mindset. Humans, thought to be inevitably influenced by regional and familial features, should constantly endeavor to fit into the environment they live in to be able to survive; therefore, the influences that nature might have upon them can neither be rejected nor denied.

The lack of stability is prevalent in their stories in which the characters are surrounded by various frustrating situations that lead them to confusion and anxiety in their social interactions. Consequently, they do not seem to be unaware of this reciprocal connection. As a result, this instability can be the most comprehensive aspect of their narratives since it can refer to all other aspects in brief. All the appalling biological and philosophical theories of the time, the regionalism, the overwhelming power of nature, the unfair law of heredity, and the weakness of man against all of them have altogether shattered the previously stable position of man. Chubak demonstrates this sense in both his stories in the characters' connection with others.

6. Conclusion

The present article has tried to delve into Hardy and Chubak's narratives from a Naturalistic perspective so as to distinguish the probable similarities and differences between them. Through the investigation of the elites of the nineteenth century, this article attempted to examine the impressions of their theories upon both authors. Darwin's biological theories, Spencer and Spengler's sociological perspectives, and the socio-political occurrences of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries all made an inevitable impression upon the authors. Both Hardy and Chubak belonged to Naturalism and were highly impressed by Darwinian biology. The theory of heredity, regionalism, and the sense of instability and disillusionment were all the Naturalistic features shared by both. This study depicted how these two authors, through following the same movement, presented similar attitudes towards the world around them and how they both endeavored to manifest the sorrows and solitude of human beings. Human beings, according to both authors, are often overwhelmed by the natural and have to deal with their biological features and the social context they are positioned in. Therefore, a philosophical determinism is at work in both Hardy and Chubak's works. The characters in Chubak and Hardy's selected works are devastated by their destiny and, incapable of making even a slight change in their life, they seem to be doomed to suffer eternally. Both authors provide the readers of their works with a pessimistic worldview in

which the individual is most likely to be crushed by uncontrollable natural forces.

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سیطره امر طبیعی: خوانش مقایسه‌ای تس از خانواده دوربرویل توماس هاردی و خیمه شب بازی صادق چوبک

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چکیده

مقاله حاضر بر آن است که خوانشی تطبیقی از رمان تس از خانواده دوربرویل اثر توماس هاردی و مجموعه داستان خیمه شب بازی اثر صادق چوبک ارائه دهد و مواجهه هر دو اثر را با امر طبیعی و سرنوشت انسان‌ها در هنگام رویارویی با آن نشان دهد. هاردی و چوبک علی‌رغم بافتار متفاوت آثار خود، تحت تاثیر مبانی طبیعت‌گرایی بودند. طبیعت‌گرایی به مثابه جنبش ادبی بسیار تاثیرگذار، به طور مستقیم تحت تاثیر یافته‌های داروین بود که جهان علمی آن دوره را دستخوش تغییرات بنیادین کرده بود. مقاله حاضر تلاش می‌کند میزان و سطح به کارگیری اصول طبیعت‌گرایی را در هر دو اثر واکاوی نماید و سبک نوشتاری و شخصیت‌پردازی را در آنها مورد بررسی قرار دهد. بررسی پیش رو نشان می‌دهد هر دو نویسنده با استفاده از زاویه دید عینی نظیر روش دانشمندان حوزه‌های مربوط به زیست‌شناسی به کالبدشکافی موضوع تحت بررسی می‌پردازند. آنها همواره فاصله خود را با روایت حفظ می‌نمایند و هیچ‌گونه تلاشی جهت مداخله در وقایع بیرونی و رخدادها و یا احوال ذهنی شخصیت‌ها انجام نمی‌دهند. پژوهش حاضر به این مسئله می‌پردازد که این آثار، علی‌رغم تفاوت‌های آشکار بسترهای اجتماعی-فرهنگی، هر یک به شیوه خاص خود موقعیت‌شکننده انسان‌ها را در حین رویارویی با قدرت سهمگین امر طبیعی بازنمایی می‌کند.

واژگان کلیدی: طبیعت‌گرایی، جبرگرایی، امر اجتماعی، امر طبیعی، سرنوشت

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