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Synopses

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SYNOPSIS

ONE ASPECT OF *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES*

— Three Tesses —

by Masago Akagi

Since T. Hardy died in 1928, we have had a great many criticisms and biographies of him; even in Japan hundreds of studies on Hardy have been published in succession. Most of these studies repeatedly lay stress on the Immanent Will as if it were the whole of Hardy or the key to Hardy's world. Such tendency, we are afraid, becomes so pronounced and so deep-seated that we cannot discuss Hardy without thinking over the Immanent Will.

In this thesis we intend to investigate Tess, the heroine of the story, from her inside, trying to forget the Immanent Will. We can divide the mental development of Tess into three phases: (1) ignorance (2) spiritual enlightenment (3) immortality.

Indeed Tess may be looked upon as a heroine of tragedy, but she can't be a frail passive, and unhappy woman, because she has a strength to overcome any hardship and to live long enough to attain a bliss with Angel Clare before she dies.

Such strength of Tess lies in her endless efforts to seek for happiness in life and in her unyielding perseverance with all sorts of distress. In other words, against any adversity she does not fail to find a way out and to convert her own unhappiness or disappointment into happiness or hope, and she always develops mentally with her deep distress. Through this martyrdom of Tess, Hardy shows us the superiority of the spiritual to the physical, and tells us the bliss of spiritual world at the last scene of the story.

The Stonehenge scene is described symbolically ; the scene in which Tess is lying on the Stone of Sacrifice has a religious meaning. The scene shows the author's sceptical attitude towards the present Christianity and his earnest longing for a new Christianity. Throughout this story Hardy is always concerned to reveal the corruption of the Church and the decline of Christianity.

DECADENCE—ISOLATION—LIMITATIONS OF MAN

Three Features of Robert Frost's Lyrics

by Tajiro Iwayama

Robert Frost has often been praised as a nature poet, but he is not a "mere nature poet." When he deals with nature in his poems, he never focuses his concern on such characteristics as beauty and mercy, or ugliness and cruelty. Nature, which has indeed these characteristics, is always juxtaposed with human beings, or vice versa. A serious study of Frost's lyrics will discover some features of the juxtaposition of nature and human beings.

The present article tries to discuss the three dominant features. The first feature is his interest in the persistence of life in the midst of decay. "For me the initial delight," says Frost in "The Figure A Poem Makes," "is in the surprise of remembering something I didn't know I knew." The "something" is sometimes a "wood-pile," sometimes "spring pools" filled with leaves, and sometimes "the gaps in a wall." They are all the things decayed or decaying, in which the poet sees a life of man or an eternal life. The second feature of the juxtaposition is the poet's sense of isolation as seen in "Ghost House," "A Pan With Us," or "Desert Places." There the poet finds a life force to enable him to stand his sense of isolation in nature. Although it is a life force, it is not reassuring, not matchless, but limited. As in "The Most of It," "On Going Unnoticed," "The Last Mowing," or "Directive," it leads us to a feeling that an individual man is, in Yvor Winters' terms, "small, lost, and unimportant in the midst of a vast and changeless universe." This is the third feature of Frost's lyrics.