

THE DIALECTICS OF HUMAN DESTINY AND THE LAWS OF NATURE IN THE WORKS OF THOMAS HARDY AND XURSHID DUSTMUHAMMAD

Madina Boynazar qizi Qodirova

Teacher, Secondary School No. 31,
Karshi City, Uzbekistan

ORCID: 0009-0001-3771-6382

Annotation. This article examines the dialectical relationship between human destiny and the laws of nature in the prose of Thomas Hardy and Xurshid Dustmuhammad. The study proceeds from the premise that nature in both writers is not a passive landscape but an active artistic category that interacts with character, social environment, moral choice, chance and historical circumstance. The analysis shows that Hardy often presents nature as an autonomous temporal-spatial force whose cycles expose the fragility of human plans, while Dustmuhammad more frequently turns natural, vegetal and zoomorphic images into psychological and symbolic codes revealing moral pressure, social deformation and inner transformation. In both poetics, destiny emerges not as a simple predetermined scheme but as a dynamic field produced by the interaction of natural necessity, social constraint and personal agency. The article argues that the dialectics of human destiny and natural law is one of the key conceptual bridges linking the two writers despite differences in national tradition, historical context and narrative method.

Keywords: Thomas Hardy, Xurshid Dustmuhammad, human destiny, laws of nature, nature, society, determinism, free will, landscape, symbolism, comparative poetics, ecocriticism.

Introduction

Human destiny and the laws of nature have occupied a central place in literary thought because they bring together two fundamental questions: to what extent is a person free to determine his or her own life, and to what extent is human existence conditioned by forces that exceed individual intention? In fiction, this problem is rarely expressed in purely philosophical propositions. It is embodied through landscape, weather, season, bodily vulnerability, birth and death, social convention, accidental encounter and the spatial organization of the narrative world.

Thomas Hardy's fiction is especially productive for such an inquiry. His Wessex is simultaneously a concrete regional environment and a literary world in which agricultural cycles, roads, fields, heathlands, changing seasons and social institutions shape the possibilities available to characters. Hardy criticism has repeatedly emphasized the importance of environment, chance and determinative circumstance in his novels. Yet his protagonists cannot be reduced to passive victims: they interpret, resist and choose within the conditions imposed upon them. Studies of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* have accordingly discussed not only fatality but also the heroine's acts of consciousness and choice [1; 2].

Xurshid Dustmuhammad's prose develops a different but comparably complex relation among person, environment and fate. In works such as *Bozor*, *Jajman* and *Chayongul*, the external world is frequently transformed into a symbolic and psychological structure. The market, the village, flowers, animals and other concrete images become signs of moral pressure, instinct, desire, social disorder or inner transformation. Recent Uzbek scholarship has interpreted

Dustmuhammad's prose through symbolism, psychological analysis, chronotope and the relationship between nature and society [3; 4; 5].

The comparative value of Hardy and Dustmuhammad lies not in claiming direct influence or identical philosophical positions. Rather, it lies in identifying a shared artistic problem: both writers place human beings in environments that are materially real and symbolically charged, and both examine how destiny is produced through the interaction of outer law and inner response. The present article therefore investigates the dialectics of human destiny and natural law as a comparative poetic category.

The aim of the research is to determine how natural processes, social forces and individual agency interact in the works of the two writers; how landscape and natural imagery participate in the construction of destiny; and how national-cultural context modifies the artistic meaning of this relationship.

2. Theoretical Framework: Destiny, Natural Law and Literary Environment

The concept of destiny in literature should not be limited to supernatural fatalism. In realist and modern prose, fate may appear as the cumulative effect of heredity, environment, social hierarchy, economic dependence, gender convention, historical circumstance and unpredictable accident. Natural law, in turn, may refer both to physical necessity - seasonal change, biological vulnerability, mortality - and to the larger idea that human life is embedded within processes that cannot be fully controlled by consciousness.

An ecocritical approach helps clarify this relationship because it treats environment not as decorative background but as a participant in meaning production. Glotfelty and Fromm define ecocritical inquiry through the relationship between literature and the physical environment, while Garrard demonstrates how pastoral, wilderness, dwelling and other environmental categories become literary structures of value [6; 7]. In Hardy, this perspective reveals how rural spaces possess duration and force independent of the individual. In Dustmuhammad, it helps explain how natural images interact with social and psychological meanings rather than merely illustrating them.

The idea of dialectics is particularly useful because destiny in both writers is generated through contradiction: nature and civilization, instinct and norm, desire and duty, continuity and rupture, individual freedom and collective pressure. These oppositions are not static. One term changes the meaning of the other. A field can be both productive and exhausting; a flower can symbolize tenderness and vulnerability but also transformation under pressure; a market can be a place of economic exchange and simultaneously a metaphor for a moral order in which values are bought, sold and negotiated.

Hardy's fictional Wessex is one of the most developed examples of literary environment functioning as more than setting. Roads, valleys, heathlands, farms and weather systems have their own rhythms. Human beings enter these rhythms temporarily, while the land often appears older and more durable than individual biography. The Return of the Native makes this principle especially visible through Egdon Heath, whose temporal scale exceeds the lives of the characters. Ecocritical readings of the novel emphasize that the heath resists complete human appropriation and acts as a powerful environmental presence [8].

In Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the relation between destiny and natural law is more intimate because Tess's body, labor and emotional life are repeatedly placed in seasonal and agricultural contexts. The novel moves through rural spaces whose fertility and decline echo, but never mechanically duplicate, the heroine's experience. Nature can appear compassionate, indifferent

or cruel depending on the human situation through which it is perceived. The result is a complex poetics in which natural order cannot be reduced to moral justice.

This separation between natural process and social morality is fundamental. Human institutions judge, classify and punish according to historically specific conventions; nature does not necessarily confirm those judgments. Tess may be condemned by society while the natural world around her continues its seasonal rhythm. The contrast exposes the instability of social categories that claim universal validity. Hardy thereby creates a tension between natural necessity and socially manufactured fate.

Chance also functions as a mediator between natural law and personal destiny. Accidents, mistimed encounters, physical exhaustion and failures of communication repeatedly redirect the lives of Hardy's characters. Such events may appear random, but their consequences become tragic because they operate within restrictive social structures. Studies of Tess have therefore distinguished between the heroine's exposure to circumstance and her continuing capacity for choice [1; 2].

Hardy's poetics therefore represents natural law as neither benevolent providence nor simple enemy. It is an impersonal structure within which human beings construct meanings and make decisions. Tragedy often occurs when social conventions, personal desire and environmental necessity enter into destructive alignment.

Tess provides the clearest field for examining the dialectics of fate and nature because the heroine's destiny is shaped simultaneously by biological vulnerability, economic necessity, patriarchal power, class aspiration, chance and personal decision. Her life cannot be explained by one single cause. The novel's tragic logic emerges precisely from the accumulation of forces that are individually contingent but collectively overwhelming.

The rural environment is closely connected with labor. Tess's movement through farms and villages marks changes in social position and emotional possibility. The productive landscape is never merely idyllic: agricultural work can offer temporary harmony, but it can also expose the body to fatigue and exploitation. This double value is central to Hardy's realism. Nature sustains life and simultaneously reveals human dependence.

The novel also questions the assumption that social morality reflects natural law. Social codes concerning sexuality, purity, legitimacy and marriage are presented as human institutions, not self-evident laws of the universe. Their power is nevertheless real because they organize reputation, opportunity and punishment. Tess's destiny therefore develops in the gap between what society calls law and what the natural world itself confirms or ignores.

Recent scholarship has challenged readings of Tess as wholly passive by emphasizing her acts of refusal, choice and moral self-awareness [1]. This perspective is important for the present argument: dialectics requires both constraint and response. Tess cannot control all the conditions of her life, but she continuously interprets them and makes decisions. Her tragedy does not eliminate agency; it dramatizes the limits within which agency operates.

In Dustmuhammad's prose, nature often enters the narrative less as an autonomous physical system than as a symbolic language for psychological and social processes. This does not mean that the material world disappears. Rather, physical images - flowers, animals, weather, village space, bodily sensation - are intensified until they become signs through which inner conflict can be read. Madina Qodirova's recent comparative study similarly notes that natural imagery in Dustmuhammad frequently functions as a psychological and symbolic code [3].

Chayongul is particularly revealing. Scholarship on the work describes a transformation in which the symbolic opposition between "flower" and "scorpion" becomes associated with

goodness, injury, social pressure and moral deformation [4]. The important point for the present argument is that nature is not used as a neutral decorative vocabulary. The title itself fuses two natural images with opposite emotional associations, creating a symbolic structure for the character's fate.

In this narrative logic, destiny is shaped through the interaction between external social pressure and internal transformation. The natural symbol registers what has happened to the human being. The image of the flower suggests vulnerability, beauty and the possibility of harmony; the scorpion introduces defense, danger and pain. The movement between them can be interpreted as a dialectic in which social violence changes the meaning of natural imagery and, through it, the representation of personality.

Jajman offers another mode of symbolic naturalization. Studies of the story emphasize the grotesque and symbolic figure of Jajman as a representation of appetite, weakness and morally destructive impulses [5]. Here the human condition is interpreted through a creaturely or zoomorphic register. The natural and the social do not simply oppose each other; they become intertwined in an image that exposes the instinctive foundations of social behavior.

Bozor broadens this logic from individual psychology to social environment. The market is an economic space, but it also becomes a metaphorical model of transitional society. Characters move within a world where material exchange intersects with moral valuation. In such a context, destiny is not governed by landscape in Hardy's sense; rather, the social environment itself acquires an almost naturalized force, producing habits, pressures and temptations that appear difficult to escape [9].

Dustmuhammad's fiction therefore transforms the question of natural law into a question of symbolic and psychological necessity. Natural images show what social life does to the human subject. At the same time, their ambiguity prevents a simple moral scheme: the same image may contain tenderness and threat, life and destruction, attraction and fear.

Both Hardy and Dustmuhammad resist the idea that fate is purely metaphysical. Social environment mediates the effect of nature at every stage. In Hardy, class structure, gender norms, property relations and religious expectations determine how natural events are interpreted and what consequences follow from them. In Dustmuhammad, family pressure, communal judgment, market logic and moral decline transform the meaning of ordinary experience.

For Hardy, one of the central tragedies is the mismatch between living human complexity and rigid social categories. For Dustmuhammad, a comparable conflict appears when collective pressure distorts the person's inner equilibrium. The two writers therefore share a concern with environments that become morally coercive even when their mechanisms differ.

The contrast is also culturally significant. Hardy writes from late Victorian England, where rural modernization, class mobility and changing religious authority destabilize inherited forms of life. Dustmuhammad writes from the context of modern Uzbek society, where post-Soviet transition, changing social values and the tension between tradition and modernity shape literary consciousness. These contexts produce different symbolic vocabularies but similar questions about the fragility of the individual before larger systems.

The dialectics of destiny is most visible at the limits of life: birth and death. These events belong to biological necessity, yet literature reveals how societies surround them with unequal meanings. Hardy repeatedly places mortality against the continuity of landscape, creating a contrast between the finite human subject and an environment that persists. Such contrasts

deepen the tragic effect because nature's continuation can appear indifferent to individual suffering.

In Dustmuhammad, mortality is often mediated through symbolic intensification rather than panoramic landscape. Threat, injury, decay and transformation are condensed in images that bring social and psychological conflict close to the body. The natural image becomes a language of existential pressure.

In both cases, however, death does not simply prove the victory of fate. It retrospectively reorganizes the meaning of choices. A tragic ending can reveal the cost of earlier social judgments, failures of empathy or misread circumstances. Thus death becomes a point at which natural necessity and moral interpretation intersect.

Landscape in Hardy and symbol in Dustmuhammad perform comparable structural functions. They organize narrative expectation, externalize conflict and create continuity between individual scenes. Hardy's weather and seasonal change can prepare, interrupt or intensify action. Dustmuhammad's recurring symbols can concentrate a whole psychological or ethical conflict in a single image.

In both cases, however, environmental representation participates in characterization. A protagonist is not defined only by direct description. The way the character moves through a landscape, reacts to weather, perceives a natural image or responds to a social space reveals disposition and ethical orientation. This is why environment becomes inseparable from destiny: the world does not merely surround the character; it helps produce the character as a narrative being.

Analytical aspect	Thomas Hardy	Xurshid Dustmuhammad
Dominant environmental form	Landscape, season, rural space, weather	Symbolic natural image, village/social microspace, zoomorphic and vegetal codes
Nature and fate	Nature exposes limits of human control and the fragility of social plans	Natural imagery registers psychological transformation and social pressure
Social mediation	Victorian class, gender, property and religious conventions	Communal judgment, moral pressure, market logic, transitional social values
Character agency	Choice persists within restrictive circumstance	Moral and psychological response persists within symbolic/social pressure
Narrative effect	Expansive spatialization of tragedy	Concentrated symbolic intensification of conflict
National specificity	Wessex and late-Victorian rural modernization	Modern Uzbek society, tradition/modernity tension, post-Soviet transition
Philosophical result	Fate as interaction of contingency, natural necessity and social structure	Fate as interaction of social pressure, symbolic transformation and personal responsibility

Table 1. Comparative features of the dialectics of human destiny and natural law.

The table demonstrates that the two writers approach the same philosophical problem through different dominant artistic mechanisms. Hardy's environment is usually spatially extensive and

temporally deep; Dustmuhammad's environment is often symbolically condensed and psychologically immediate. Yet both strategies reveal the dependence of human destiny on relations that exceed individual intention.

The comparison also shows why the term "dialectics" is more accurate than "determinism." Determinism implies a one-directional cause, whereas the literary worlds of Hardy and Dustmuhammad are structured by reciprocal influence. Environment shapes perception, but perception also gives environment meaning; society limits choice, but individual response can expose the injustice or absurdity of social law.

The most important philosophical conclusion of the comparison concerns free will. Neither writer offers an uncomplicated doctrine of absolute freedom. Characters are born into specific bodies, families, classes, communities and historical moments. They cannot choose the basic conditions from which life begins. Yet literature becomes meaningful precisely because characters respond to those conditions.

In Hardy, the tension between circumstance and agency creates tragic irony. The reader can often see alternative possibilities, but social timing, misrecognition or material limitation prevents them from becoming real. The character's freedom is therefore situated rather than unlimited. This interpretation is consistent with scholarship that reads Tess as an active consciousness struggling within inevitability rather than as a purely passive victim [1].

In Dustmuhammad, freedom is frequently ethical and psychological. The crucial question is not whether the character can escape every external pressure but whether he or she can preserve moral integrity, self-knowledge or human responsiveness under that pressure. Symbolic transformations become measures of the struggle between inner value and external deformation.

Comparative literature requires attention to difference as well as similarity. Hardy's Wessex grows out of English regional history, agricultural change and Victorian debates concerning religion, class and sexuality. Dustmuhammad's symbolic prose emerges from Uzbek cultural experience, communal ethics, the transformations of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and the encounter between inherited values and changing social realities.

Nevertheless, the two poetics converge in a universal literary question: how can a person remain human within systems that are larger than the self? Nature is important because it relativizes social authority. Society may present its rules as absolute, but the larger processes of life, death, season, instinct and material necessity reveal the historical and constructed character of many human judgments.

This convergence explains why comparative analysis is productive. The writers do not need to share a direct literary genealogy to illuminate one another. Reading them together makes visible different artistic solutions to the same ontological problem.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the dialectics of human destiny and the laws of nature is a significant organizing principle in the works of Thomas Hardy and Xurshid Dustmuhammad. In Hardy's fiction, nature frequently appears as an autonomous spatial-temporal order whose cycles, accidents and material demands expose the vulnerability of human projects. In Dustmuhammad's prose, natural and creaturely images often become psychological and symbolic codes through which social pressure, moral deformation and inner transformation are represented.

In both writers, however, fate cannot be reduced to an externally fixed script. Destiny emerges from the interaction of natural necessity, social structure, chance and personal response. This

model explains why their protagonists remain ethically meaningful even when their freedom is restricted: they continue to interpret, resist, choose and bear consequences within circumstances they did not create.

The analysis also reveals a productive contrast between Hardy's expansive environmental poetics and Dustmuhammad's concentrated symbolic poetics. The former places the individual within a large landscape and long temporal rhythm; the latter often condenses social and existential conflict into a charged image, object or creature. These differences reflect national tradition and historical context while preserving a common philosophical concern.

Thus, the human-nature-society triad functions in both literary systems as a dynamic field of contradiction rather than a stable hierarchy. Nature can support and threaten; society can protect and oppress; the individual can be constrained and still responsible. The tragic or morally intense force of the narratives arises precisely from this unresolved dialectic.

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