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**Agnosticism & Existentialism in Thomas Hardy's
Poems: The impercipient (1898) & God's Funeral
(1910)**

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Dedication

This Modest Work is dedicated to many dears and beloved people.

First of all, I would like to dedicate this work to my father, the person that I wish so badly to be alive so that he can see me graduating. Next Many thanks and warm feelings also go to everyone in my family, particularly my mother, who provided me with love and encouragement from the first day of my education.

At last, I would like also to dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, I wish that she recovers soon and always be in a good health. Without forgetting my friends.

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General Introduction

One of the poets, who has been mostly observed in the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, is Thomas Hardy who tends to portray and treat different subjects within his poetry. This research is mainly concerned with the issue of Agnosticism and Existentialism and how the two concepts are clearly seen in the poetry of Hardy, especially the two poems that will be analyzed as case studies (the Impercipient 1898, God's funeral 1910). The impercipient poem shows Thomas Hardy's lack of faith highlighting with that on the great impact of the revolutionary theory of Darwin (the Origin of Species 1859), which helped a lot in shaking the religious beliefs of Hardy as a person. However, God's funeral demonstrates the absence of the religious part in Hardy's view point with a further existential vision according to what is surrounds.

This investigation is certainly; highly important in understanding Hardy's religious views presented through his poems. The study aims to reveal the issue of agnosticism and existentialism in the different eras; furthermore, it shows the existence of Agnosticism in Hardy's poem (the Impercipient 1898) after analyzing it, plus, demonstrating the visible concept of Existentialism through the analysis of God's funeral poem. The objective is to look for more clarifications for the two poems and produce a valuable work in order to encourage further students, plus, showing to what extent are Agnosticism and Existentialism used and presented in Hardy's poetry so that to express the first as no more than a creed and the second as a philosophy that emphasizes the meaningless of life.

The dissertation is divided into three chapters, the first chapter will provide a philosophical explanation of the two terms 'Agnosticism' and 'Existentialism' with both

origins and background, in addition to exploring these main concepts as the dominant ones of the different periods. The second Chapter will have a literary review about Thomas Hardy and his most prominent poem, plus mentioning the impact of Darwin's theory on him as a poet. The *Imprecipient* (1898) is considered as significant poem that tackled the case of Agnosticism where Hardy exposes the absence of his religion. At last, chapter three explores the use of Existentialism term in Thomas Hardy's poem *God's funeral* (1910). The research ends up with the general conclusion that will sum up all the ideas analyzed in the three chapters into one brief result for the whole study.

Introduction

The existence of God is disputed concerning a certain belief and whether God really exists or not. According to many believers, the human presence in the universe has been related to a supernatural source or power. The word agnosticism came to be a visible to the Victorian era which was considered as a period of anxiety, and conflicts of thoughts and ideologies.

During the Victorian reign that knew radical changes in almost all the fields from the human relations to knowing more about science, people's way of thinking took another dimension particularly in the religious one, This transformational circumstances in society led people to start questioning the existence of God, the certain truth in this latter is neither denied nor an affirmed by the theory of Agnosticism, what paved the way for skeptical views to be present in the late nineteenth century.

This chapter will be about the history of Agnosticism and Existentialism, the philosophical views of Agnosticism with particular attention to Thomas Henry Huxley as the first person who brought this term, in addition that it will discuss the impact of Darwin's theory *the Origin of Species (1859)* on his works. Furthermore, the second part will shed the lights on the themes of existentialism with the major existentialists in the twentieth century.

I-1 A Philosophical Overview

The word Agnosticism is rooted from the ancient Greek civilization “Agnostous” a term that mainly means without knowledge or something unknown, the doctrine of any kind of reality as it really appeared cannot be known or certainly reached. Moreover the responsible for coining this word is the English naturalist; biologist Thomas Henry Huxley in the late of 1860s, he came to this term in a meeting of metaphysical society, despite the fact that he had only two years of formal studying in early near London. The word itself was considered as a turning point that depicted a strong argument in the public debate of Huxley with the defenders of the Anglican institutions, the existence of the scientific Agnosticism was measured as an explosion in order to show the distinction between Theism and Atheism, and to insist for the relationship between the religious belief and the science evidence.

Huxley came to originate the term Agnosticism as follows:

“When I reached intellectual maturity and began to ask myself whether I was an atheist, a theist, a pantheist, a materialist, an idealist, a Christian, or a freethinker, I found that the more I learned and reflected the less sure I was of the answer, until at last I came to the conclusion that I had no part with any of these denominations except the last. Most of these good people ... were quite sure that they had attained a certain ‘gnosis’ -and had, more or less successfully, solved the problem of existence; while I was quite sure that I had not, and had a pretty strong conviction that the problem was insoluble... Most of my colleagues in the Metaphysical Society were --sits of one sort or another. So I took thought and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of agnostic. It came into my head a suggestively antithetic to the ‘gnostic’ of church history, who professed to know so much about

the very things of which I was ignorant; and I took the earliest opportunity of parading it at our Society. To my great satisfaction, the term was accepted". (17)

Agnosticism came as a proposal when Huxley gave in the quotation the origins of the word agnosticism and that was just an idea in his head after questioning god. He wanted to reveal his doubts about God and that He could not find himself presenting any one of the mentioned terms first, then it was derived from gnosis of the church history, that's what made him conclude the uncertainty about the existence of God.

According to Thomas Henry Huxley, Agnosticism was no more than a method which strongly depends on strong visual arranged applications of single principles, this latter is of a great antiquity that links the origins of its existence. His saying that confirms this idea is:

The word "Agnosticism is not a creed but methods, the essence of which lies in the vigorous application of a single...positively the principle may be expressed as in matters pretend conclusions are certain that are not demonstrated or demonstrable."(77).

This saying explores Agnosticism as method; it demands a rational approach to all knowledge. The word 'Agnosticism,' however, has since become one of the most misapplied terms in metaphysics, having enjoyed a diversity of applications.

Huxley saw Agnosticism as it appeared that it did not set any religious beliefs but rather demands a balanced approach to all acquaintance, including that claimed of religion. The word 'Agnosticism,' however, has since become one of the most misapplied terms in metaphysics, having enjoyed a diversity of applications.

The Greek philosopher Protagoras (411-481bc) is considered one of the most talented and authentic philosophers that tackled the issue of Agnosticism, he is famous of the

following saying;” man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, of those that are not that they are not”. Protagoras way of thinking seemed to be very complicated, as a result that he explained the laws and morals are not more than binding steps in human society that help to establish both of them. According to Protagoras, it is impossible that religion has the certainty in its existence. His Agnosticism was clearly visible through his persuasion, deal is all the specific cases or issues from the human beings perspectives are too pleasant to rely on their certain existence. His Agnostic behavior was highly interpreted from his saying:

“In unable to reach knowledge about the gods, either that they exist, or do not exist, or of their essential nature. Among the many factors which present me from knowing are the obscurity of the subject and the shortness of human life”(22).

This saying explains that knowledge is unreachable case and if it will be reached, the credibility for the existence of God would be something uncertain and humans are not necessarily in need to know.

Through the doubts of Protagoras concerning the existence of God, He was very specific in linking between all what is surroundings to the limitation of the human life. As it is obvious that his ideas had a huge frustration the reason that paved the way for questioning God’s existence appeared.

I-1-1 Types of Agnosticism

Agnosticism mirrored a very complex, philosophical term to deal with. The concept itself was divided in various types the first, one called “the strong Agnosticism” or “the epistemological Agnosticism” which means the evidence of either existence or nonexistence of God is unknown. The second one is titled “the weak Agnosticism” or “the empirical Agnosticism” which focuses on the presence or the no presence of God that is currently

unknowable, the person who has a soft Agnosticism is searching for evidence to proof his view and whenever the evidence are available his Agnosticism became complete.

The third type “The Agnostic Theism” which is a conception that is highly related to religious Agnosticism, despite the fact that these people do not claim to know of the existence of God, they still believe in such presence of only one God.

The fourth type is “the Agnostic Atheism” which is the contradictory of “The Agnostic Theism” that whether God exist or not people are denying believing in such existence. Therefor they simply do not believe in God being. The fifth type is “Pragmatic Agnosticism” which is the view that there is no proof of either the existence or non-existence of God or Gods, there is no evidence to support this concept.

The sixth type is “Apathetic Agnosticism” the image of this concept describes that there is no proof of God being or not. However, since any God or Gods that may exist to appear unconcerned for the universe or the well fare of its inhabitants, the question is largely academic to a certain extent.

Lastly “Ignosticism” this concept has a coherent definition of God that must be put forward before the question of the existence or the non-existence of God can be meaningfully discussed, if the chosen definition is not coherent, the Ignostic holds the non-cognitivist view that the presence of God is meaningless or empirically untestable.

I-1-2 Thomas .H. Huxley as a Proponent for Darwin's Theory

Thomas Henry Huxley the famous naturalist, brought the code of Agnosticism from the Darwin's theory *the Origin of Species* (1859), the book explores the notion of the origin of human being, the evolutionary perception of natural selection as no more than procedure in which organisms change as a result of modifications in inheritable physical or behavioral signs. This difference permits an organism to a better adaption so that the environment can help to survive. This progress was one of the best essential theories in the history of science hold by concrete evidence from variety to disciplines. Furthermore, Huxley was called "the Darwin Bulldog" he had a great weariless support on this evolutionary theory of his friend Charles Darwin, which gave him the opportunity to create his own important scientific contributions as well as that he had a special touch on the improvement in both science and education, in spite the fact that he had two years of formal schooling. It was understandable that T.H Huxley had a divergence with his faith in addition that he applied it in his book *the collected Essays* (1894).

Darwin could easily establish the influence of the development of the evolution. Many scholars saw the influence of such involvement in literature in several chapters that are devoted to the respective themes of god, origins of human by naturalizing so carefully human's backgrounds. The theory of Darwin stated clearly that the survival is only for the fittest and strongest and he undermined the stability of meaning that had been provided and given by Christianity in all these realms of thoughts.

I-1-3 Existentialism

I-1-3-1 The philosophy of Existentialism

Existentialism is considered as a philosophical approach that totally rejects the concept that universe has the ability to offer any proof in which humanity should live in a certain way. The good example to support this idea is found in Jean Paul Sartre's in his saying "Existence precedes essence». The philosopher Sartre in the saying is emphasizing on the idea that the presence of human in the universe forgoes the quintessence.

Existentialism is one of the most debatable terms in the century; it insisted on the individual being, freedom and choice. It focused on the question of the human existence, in addition to the feeling that there is no purpose or explanation at the substance of presence. Existentialists hold that if there is no god or any other superior force, the only way to register this nonentity is by embracing existence.

Existentialists believe that individuals are completely free and have to take the total control for their personal responsibilities in life.

I-1-3-2 Overview about the Most Significant Existentialists

Jean Paul Sartre (1905-1980): he is considered as being the unique, and the most important element of French existentialism. He was born in June 21, 1905 in Paris, France. Paul was raised by middle class in protestant family. The decision of being a writer was taken in his early years in addition; he concentrated to expose the hypocrisy of the suitable life offered to him by his parents and grandparents. Sartre studied philosophy, particularly phenomenology, which is a concern in itself with the fact that life can be experienced but not really known or reached. In his thirties, he wrote both philosophy and fiction with equivalent honesty, leading in 1938 for the autobiographical novel "Nausea" that helped to define the

difficult location for people in the modern world, His career was established. According to himself he was one of the century's most significant philosophers with 1943 publications of being and nothingness in which he tackled the human situation as the absurd position of existing but at the same time being aware of non-existence. Many years later, Sartre remained in the international spotlight as a philosopher, writer and political activist. 1964 were the age of glory as a result that he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, but he didn't accept it he believed that he should not take such gift for such normal establishment.

Simone De Beauvoir (1908-1986)

Beauvoir was born in Paris on January 9th; 1908, she lived there almost all her life. She was educated at the Sorbonne where she met the love of her life Jean Paul Sartre in 1929. After a period; they started an intellectual and personal relationship that lasted for almost fifty years. Beauvoir was well known of her book *The Second Sex* 1949, a two volume inspection of the roles of woman throughout history. She was a creative writer of fiction. Her novels had a specific perception (works based on her own life with a functionalized versions of the lively intellectual scene in Paris in the 40th and 50th they concluded that the novel she came to stay 1949, based on the romantic struggles between her and Sartre, and the young scholar who lived with them. Beauvoir wrote many plays and philosophical texts she suffered from pneumonia which directly caused her death in April 14, 1986, marking with that the end of first generation of existentialists.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

Kierkegaard was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, on May 05, 1813. His father rose from poverty to amass a substantial wealth, retiring early to dedicate his time to the Christian philosophy. He went to the University of Copenhagen in order to study theology in the age of twenty two. His life has totally changed when comprehended that his father's Christianity was damaged: the old man had once cursed God and had years earlier impregnated a servant. This

revelation directly drove Kierkegaard from religious studies to a life of hedonistic excess. Another significant event in his twenty seven when he became engaged to a wonderful woman but unfortunately the engagement was off. The woman moved on in her life and married, but Kierkegaard did not leave her through his writings.

Kierkegaard's works are a combination of fiction, philosophy, letters, journals or aphorisms. He rejected formal philosophical systems of knowledge, preserving that no one or no system could ever offer a complete understanding of the world. His starting work was either/or was an assemblage of short unrelated sketches aimed at convincing readers that life is a series of choices. In spite the fact that the philosophy of Kierkegaard was passionately Christian nature, he has a strong opposition to control belief.

Albert Camus (1913-1960)

Albert Camus is one of the most prominent figures in the existentialist drive that appeared in Paris. In the years before and during the Second World War, despite the fact that he himself refused to accept the label existentialist. Camus was born in November 7th, 1913 in Mondovi, Algeria a colony of France situated in northern Africa, Shortly after France entered the world war I. Camus's father was drafted into the army who never returned. Albert Camus and his brother were raised by his mother and grandmother in a terrible poverty. In 1936, he had not the ability to work as a teacher as a result that he had tuberculosis. Camus became affiliated with a leftist theater group and wrote for a newspaper and moved to Paris just before the start of Second World War. In 1942, he published one of the most essential influential novels, the stranger, which is about a man who acting out of complex circumstances kills a man whom he does not know, the situation explored the protagonist's disconnected, and questioning attitude about his own behavior captured the basic mood of existentialism and drove Camus an international success. When Famous was his partner, Camus detached himself from the existentialist movement in Paris, rejecting their Marxist political stance in service of political action free of any party. Camus's reputation seriously suffered as a result

that he was an opponent painted him as a populist who was afraid of offending the bourgeoisie because his main interest was to selling books. A period after, Camus won the Nobel prize for literature. He died in tragic accident car on january04, 1960.

I-I-4 the themes of existentialism

Twentieth century depicted the age of great social changes and ideological contradictions. Existentialism was the central feature in shaping the era which was considered as being the period of anxiety and pressure. The themes of existentialism deferred from one to another as a result to the various use.

I-I-4-1Freedom

The principle that the word existentialism was derived from is that the human discipline is based on nothing except free, choice. It directly contradicts any principle that try to find elements to control behavior, for instance, as economic, psychological or social systems which exist in order to explain what people do. Writers of this era do sometimes know such comprehensive views of the world, while they do not accept them for being an accepted reasons and explanations for discipline. Sartre the philosopher was a great lifelong supporter of the Marxist theory of class struggle, in addition to what he did not accept in Marx's theory is that particular disciplines are necessary for particular classes. On the other hand, he presented the causes why members of one class might behave similarly as a choice made by people who were unaware of their freedom to choose. This sense of freedom in existential works sometimes made the protagonists committing actions that are not accepted and considered to be evil, as if there is no universal system of justice that will bring punishment down on their heads.

I-I-4-2Alienation

Many intellectuals throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries considered this term to be of the conditions of civilized humans. The concept alienation represents the idea of not belonging and gives the feeling of isolation. Since the start of the industrial age, social philosophers, like Karl Marx who have shown how people are so alienated from the miserable work that they do, related with a connection disconnected by the economic and industrial system.

Alienation was shown by psychologists as a gap between the conscious and the unconscious aspects of self. Plus, theologians have also shown humanity as becoming increasingly alienated from what is called reality as the importance of god diminished.

Existentialism can be seen as a direct response to the social phenomenon of alienation.as the feeling grew of being left out in society, so did the existentialist's philosophy that it is natural to be separated from society as a result that having the concept of belonging to society is just an illusion.it is no clear coincidence that one of the most good examples are in the novel of albert Camus(the stranger),it was totally about the French existentialist movement as the title implies, the protagonist of this novel, is obviously outside the social order, Alienated from all even the closest people to him.

I-I-4-3Atheism

The deep meaning of the word existentialism in itself seems to support the abandonment of any belief in god as a result that the concept of god rejects the idea of personal responsibility that is at the center of philosophy.Jean-Paul Sartre,as one of the most significant existentialist and writer in the modern period who was totally an atheist with his wife Simon de Beauvoir with friend albert Camus. People in their works can clearly be seen as non-believers by trying to determine the proper behavior in the absence of some supreme power. While on the other hand, there is a subdivision of the existential writers that link the religious

feelings with existentialism, Kierkegaard who solved the question of the way how to reconcile a faith in god with responsibility of one's own actions in his philosophical works like fear and trembling. According to him, it was no contradiction between freedom and god in fact. The basis of religious belief was the ability to choose freely to believe. The atheist work was made by Martin Buber, whose in 1923 his philosophical I and thou brought together Jewish and Christian, the humanist beliefs. This book uses individual relationships, such as the ones one procedure with other humans (thou) in order to explain the human relationship to god.

I-4-4 Guilt and Innocence

This one is the most central concerns of the existential belief, in the absence of divine biological rules; people have to take responsibility of all their own actions. The price of freedom with no rules from god or any psychological traumas to excuse what one does, in this case the responsibility falls on the individual. The good illustration is available in Hemingway's characters because they took charge of their activities; he intends to present his protagonists who believe in fate without forgetting Sartre's play (Dirty Hands) that was presented in a very good way in which the protagonist accept guilt for murdering an opponent during wartime. The belief and the feeling of goodness are directly come from the absolute freedom.

I-I-4-5 Identity and Self

Existentialism like any other philosophical movements is not widely different; it is in need to explain the human conditions and identity. It might be defined in additional methods in relation to something for instance when psychologists find the backgrounds of the term in past involvements or in the effects of chemical balances in the brain. In existentialism, however there is no point of reference for human identity, a person's identity doesn't exist in anything except that person's actions. Because of the French existentialism that totally traversed over all the United States in the early 1950s, when the civil rights movement was just starting to

give a voice and identity to black Americans, this latter who had been treated in society in accordance with the color of their skin were to the existential perception that person creates his or her own identity the good example of this is found in Ralph Ellison's novel that explored this existential theme as they applied the race issue 1952 novel (The Invisible Man). The novel is about the black's conflicts for self. Identity is against society.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter provides us with a whole image about the history of Agnosticism with its origins, and the major figures who tackled this latter; T.H Huxley and Charles Darwin who were the influential persons to lead people starting to question the human race , in addition to clarify the concept of Agnosticism and explaining some views.

Agnosticism is widely known as a lack of knowledge, what paved the way for skeptical views to appear, Thomas Henry Huxley as the first person who brought the term was mainly influenced by the Darwinian Theory which supported agnosticism perspective.

Existentialism is a philosophy of life which has devoted a large part to the study of life's meaning. The meaningless of life, according to many existentialists, is difficult to grasp. In asking about its meaning, life can be explained by its essence, purpose and authenticity. The two terms represent different ways of beliefs with shedding the light on their various viewpoints through time.

Introduction

Thomas Hardy is considered as one of the most literary giants of both nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hardy's works tackled very important themes in different concepts from novels to poetry.

Thomas Hardy's poetry depicted the lack of the religious aspects within his agnostic views, he created a significant and pointed religious poems. As an Agnostic poet and great supporter for the Darwinian Theory "*the Origin of Species (1859)*", he presented new ideas with non-answered questions about the existence of God, his Christianity was not tight, the reason why his skeptical views about God started to emerge and revealed through his poetry.

The Imprecipient (1898) is measured one of Hardy's significant poems which pointed the issue of Agnosticism. Within this poem Hardy totally unmask his religious beliefs, and confirms his doubts in the existence of God. Therefor this chapter is mainly concerned to shed the lights on the lack of faith.

II-Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy was born in the 2, June 1840 in Dorset village. His early education was received from the local national school in lower Bournemouth which was run by national society in order to encourage the education of the poor in the established church. His great love and passion for reading, and having the literary sense were incredibly taken from his mother Gemina, the reason that helped him for being formed of romantic readings and tragic stories. It is undeniable that despite the fact that Hardy had the chance to attend the school he preferred solitude and reading books.

After years, he succeeded to work as an architect in London when he was twenty two years old; he stayed there five years but eventually pulled back to Dorset, as a result that he could not find his pleasure in the urban environment or the prejudice of classes that he felt at that time.

Hardy was an English novelist and poet; his works were mainly influenced by the environmental happenings. He was a great fan for the naturalist movement; he could explore the scientific and cultural life of London. Furthermore due to the effectiveness of Charles Dickens public lectures and the theory of Darwin "*the Origin of Species*", Hardy started taking into consideration his traditional Christian upbringing and decided to abandon his youth plan of ordination into the Anglican Church to become quickly distracted with the institutional Christianity.

During his literary career, the poet urged that for the moral progress of humanity which is set at the core of his poetry. He states the introduction in his 1909 "Time's Laughingstocks" and other verse of his collection of poetry;

“Will, I hope take the reader forward even if not far, rather than backward”

(Complete poems 190)

In this line Thomas Hardy intends to make his readers live every word in his works and try to take benefits from it, he wants them to feel and understand every single word in his works and go with it further with appreciation.

Also in Hardy’s “Apology” that preface his 1922 collection of late lyrics and earlier he says:

“What is today.....alleged to be pessimism is in truth, only.....questioning in the exploration of reality, and is the first step toward the soul’s betterment and the body’s also.” (Complete poems 557)

Hardy in the saying wants to clarify his pessimism to be no more than skeptical views in order to reach reality and knowledge, his important comprehensions for progress is supposed to be so difficult to deal with, he insisted on impressions recorded in poetry.

Hardy’s preface to poems of the past and present were extraordinary:

“I will probably be found, therefore, to possess little cohesion or through or harmony of coloring. I do not greatly regret this. Unadjusted impression have their value, and the road to a true philosophy of life seems to lie in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomena as they are forced upon us by chance and change”
(Complete poems 84.5)

In this saying Hardy's way of thinking is very complicated the reason that his thoughts and beliefs are lacking faith. He asserts the ridiculousness of the universe; chance and change are meant to be the significant concepts to force man in the universe.

II-2 Hardy's Agnosticism

Hardy's Agnostic famous saying:

"I have been looking for God for 50 years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him. As an external personality of course the only true meaning the word." (p.5)

The saying demonstrates Hardy as a frustrated person who is tired for searching the existence of God. He seemed to be doubtful as a result that after all this period; he confirms that if God really exists, he will certainly know as a result that nothing shows the reality that god's existence is possible that's why his skepticism is on the top.

Through the progresses of the century, Hardy's Christianity was totally shaken because of his great attachment for learning the scientific method and theories. On the other hand the agnosticism of his views made him question the aim and the meaning of the human presence in universe, for the sake of this he continued searching to find out the reality of whether there is a Godlike being or creator.

Hardy gave his total approval for scientific researches and theories such as "*the Origin of Species*" which strongly was the responsible reason for weakening his faith and encouraging his skeptical views and spiritual doubts to emerge. Thomas Hardy always kept the idea that if there is really God, so he must taking into charge of all the happenings in the universe from struggles and misery...to everything.

Agnosticism is the dominant theme in most of Hardy's works from novels to poetry, his fulfillment and regret which he has switched away from what he sees as the most

quintessential thing in life. Hardy's poetry has a special attitude of deep sorrow. His writing's style is rough and conservative forward. The poet was far from the romantic concept; because he explores the fatalist position against the cruel dark setting of his environment. He wrote many poems that were presented in a very sardonic weeping image portraying the bleakness of the human conditions within the Victorian society.

II-2-1 Hardy and the Darwinism

Thomas Hardy greatly depicted the Agnostic fan; he went with the uncertainty of the existence of God. Hardy completely rejected the religious aspects in his daily life thanks to Charles Darwin theory "*the Origin of Species*" which was considered as a turning point in the history of human presence. The Christian creed in the conservative Victorian beliefs is concentrated on particular essentials; the defenses of Hardy's on these essentials defined pessimism that help to know more about Hardy's own philosophy.

The Darwinian Theory was an explosion in science which totally changed the history of the origin of the humankind; it appeared in the nineteenth century, when Darwin claimed that human origins were rooted from apes. This theory had strongly affected Hardy's Christian beliefs.

Charles Darwin was a good companion to Hardy; he played a significant role to serve the deterioration of Hardy's faith. Time after hardy absolutely abandoned his pious belief in God, and started his investigation so as to find some answers for his questions in other researches.

II-2-2 Hope in Thomas Hardy's poetry

In spite of the fact that many critics have discussed the nature of hope for the improvement of humanity of Hardy, a very few participants gave the attention to the positive impact of Christ in structuring the new vision of hardy. However the important of the latter

use of theological language of his lifetime curiosity in the Christian Church remains a main matter within all most critical discussions. Concerning Hardy's hope the critics in general cases came out that he eventually found religious thought and tradition insufficient in certain extent.

Christian themes and pictures do not purely serve as examples of insufficiency that have to be ignored in the past so as to move forward for good future; they do sometimes provide a means of portraying for the reader what human amelioration looks like and the way how it can be extended.

The case of Christ as Hardy represented in his poetry, is in the same sense, the narration of Christian could be modified alongside to other text that are well known as essential to Hardy's increase of the philosophy of humanity in which he finds hope as a redemption for human, that is mainly characterized in Hardy's poetry by ethical progress which leads to spirit of universal skepticism, in addition to his Agnostic understanding about the existence of God. The Christ for Hardy plays a significant role as a poetic and more expressive symbol of human virtue and asking for the better change.

II-3 Analysis of *the Impercipient*

The Impercipient (1898) represents one of Hardy's extraordinary Agnostic poems, where he had an internal monologue; he speaks to himself and questions the existence of God. He finds a huge difficulty in accepting god and that his intelligence forbids him to see the truth. He shows that he lacks faith or in another word Hardy's as human being is looking for answers to his skeptical questions about God.

The poem reveals the Agnostic side of hardy in which he clearly sees the need of percipience to understand his position in society. The title *the impercipientis* interesting, it depicts the reality and stability of religion which are familiar to all people, and that cannot be seen for the poet. The hidden meaning after choosing the title is satirical; as result of using

such name which is suitable as spiritual metaphor for the non-believer (Thomas Hardy) of the existence of God.

Hardy had serious issues with religion and God; which strongly appeared in this poem, his inner religious beliefs are obvious for the readers; the poem showed the contradiction of Hardy about being a prayer at the Church, while at the same time has no real faith in God.

THAT from this bright believing band
An outcast I should be,
That faiths by which my comrades stand
Seem fantasies to me,
And mirage-mists their Shining Land,
Is a drear destiny.

The first stanza, Hardy seems to speak to a certain people who really believe in God. He mentioned that faith is a good friend to have; he is jealous of such people as a result that he saw the effect of the strong belief on them. However Hardy seemed to reject their religious visions and their principles thinking that his own beliefs are the chosen one and theirs is no more than imaginary faith.

Why thus my soul should be consigned
To infelicity,
Why always I must feel as blind
To sights my brethren see,
Why joys they've found I cannot find,
Abides a mystery.

In the second stanza the poet is directly questioning God and regretting for the reasons that kept him in tragic situation; his skepticism concerning the existence of God made him feel miserable and unhappy. By the contrary of the others who found happiness and joy in

life, Hardy seems to be so far from their feelings, to the point that his happiness is a kind of mystery, the poet is trying to settle his lack of belief while trying to find something that give him the same connection.

Since heart of mine knows not that ease
Which they know; since it be
That He who breathes All's Well to these
Breathes no All's Well to me,
My lack might move their sympathies
And Christian charity!

The third stanza reveals the difficulty of reaching the truth, Hardy says that it is not that easy to reach knowledge, plus his lack of faith is clearly visible (My lack might move their sympathies And Christian charity), this lines has a deep meaning which depict the internal feelings of Hardy, he thought that he deserves Christians petty, as a result that it is not his fault that couldn't find religion like the others.

I am like a gazer who should mark
An inland company
Standing upfingered, with, "Hark! hark!
The glorious distant sea!"
And feel, "Alas, 'tis but yon dark
And wind-swept pine to me!"

The fourth stanza shows that Hardy is too far from the Christian people, and that goes back to his Agnosticism. The poet is referring to several questions which were like an obstacle for him to find a clear answer for his raised questions in order to reach knowledge and reality.

Yet I would bear my shortcomings

Withmeettranquillity,

But for the charge that blessed things

I'd liefer have unbelieve.

The fifth stanza represents Hardy's acceptance of his destiny and reality. He gave up from his tragic life, as well as doubted the presence of the human life in the universe, so Hardy agreed to be considered as non-believer because he is sick of having such life which is plenty of problems and conflicts.

O, doth a bird deprived of wings

Go earth-bound wilfully! . . .

Enough. As yet disquiet clings

About us. Rest shall we.

The sixth stanza exposes Hardy's sorrow; he took the bird with no wings as a symbol for life without meaning and religion, he refers to himself and the Agnostic people who shared the same views about doubting the existence of God that they need perception and faith.

According to the critic John Sutherland, *the Impercipient* is the strongest emotional poem. Sutherland said that Hardy loved country churches, He loved and preferred being alone outside the church plus he favored the old English hymnal. The critic here wants to say that the poem is an expressive one and that goes to Hardy's nature, besides mentioning that he loved staying in the church all the time for the sake of reading the old English.

II-3-1 the Quest for spiritual Comfort

The struggle between reason and emotion in Hardy's search for faith was a kind of governing power behind the skill of Hardy in the religious terms. It is evident that the universal impact of these doctrines that formed the views of Hardy and outlined the desperation and

grief that considered his works. His aim in poetry is to explore reality, he insisted that his art expresses impressions not convictions and therefore cannot be understood as a personal report or belief.

Hardy's works mirror the doubts of agnosticism that consequently resulted from his readings, he establishes the absence of comfort in Christianity, and however he is clearly unable to dismiss the bible's doctrine or to discover his religion as a convenient one for the modern context. Hardy presents god in a state of defending himself and denies the responsibility of earth's suffering.

The spiritual dilemma of Thomas Hardy considered a critical one, as a result he cannot directly reject the existence of god, and that because god is always apparent in nature, while also cannot accept the Christian creed. Hardy tried to create an agreement between his own strong views as a realist, as well as his views of religion. He searched for the meaning in his life. Hardy wanted so badly to have answers for his questions whether god exists or not that's all the case, his curiosity made him so demanding for answers.

III-3-2the Darwinian elements in the imperipient

Thomas Hardy's poem portrays the person that expresses the suffering at being totally excluded from society of those people who have a strong faith in god. The poem joined the doubts about the Christian faith, on the other hand this doubts are registered with a manner of remorse. Hardy's belief in the church's creeds had been gradually undermined by his innate skepticism promoted by the great influence for the scientific environment of that time. In most cases this latter is represented not only by the magnificent progress in science and technology but also the influential writings of notable figures such as Charles Darwin.

Thomas Hardy was mainly influenced by the Darwinian Theory "*the Origin of Species*", his views have entirely changed after inquiry that the origin of human being are originated from animals "natural selections», he started questioning his Christianity deeply, indeed he

claims that there is no such thing called god and human are just creatures as any other creatures in nature.

Hardy's poetry raises a series of questions about the nature of god. He seeks to have a strong convincing argument which proves the existence of god. The acquaintance of hardy with Darwin influenced his vision of life that's why hardy incorporated the theory of evolution. The imperipient for instance, is a poem talks about the exclusion the person from community and try to know the origins of human presence.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter provides us with a whole image about the famous poet Thomas Hardy, highlighting with that on his Agnostic beliefs in addition to the impact of the Darwinian Theory that made Hardy's internal questions appeared about the existence of God in his poetry, moreover, a review about his major poem; *the Imperipient* (1898) that is analyzed to show his visible Agnosticism. Hardy as well-knowing poet presented his works in a very unique way, which paved the way for the critics to shed the light on his own poetry and drive them to develop their scope of study on his own works.

III- Chapter three: Hardy's Existentialism & *God Funeral*

Introduction

Existentialism was the basic, new phenomenon which shaped the twentieth century. Thomas Hardy experienced this period, and was given the opportunity to express himself in poetry rather than prose. The term portrays the meaningless of life as a new concept at that time, in order to give a certain view about the misery and chaos situations.

Britain knew total different circumstances, the twentieth era is considered as the hardest one ever in the history of almost all the world. Poetry lost its meaning to depict what surrounds; the poets started losing hope in having the good sense in life. Hardy succeeded to represent this new term for what it contains of deep, philosophical meaning.

Absurdity of life was widely spread; alienation was the dominant subject that characterized this period. Hardy's *God Funeral* was the most suitable poem to depict his existentialism with an additional particular relation to his skeptical views and the meaningless of life.

III-1 Hardy's Existentialism

Hardy noticed the human being from the existential, if not existentialist point of view. The linking component in Hardy's existential standpoint was his anxiety and conflict with human existence in metaphysical standings. For both Hardy and existentialists, people are both born into the world by accident without any point or any meaning. Hardy's pessimistic ideas in his major poems showed existentialism.

Most of Hardy's poems function as divisions about frustration of human objectives. His existentialist views are expressed in every word in his poetry. Hardy's existential poems

conveyed his own personal freedom. The meaninglessness of his life drove him to see his life so depressed and sad, plus it led him seeing God as a cruel supernatural force that has no mercy on the weak creatures.

In poetry, Hardy intended to give his ideas which stood in a very strong conflict to the accepted values of the Victorian conservative era. Almost all the evident themes in existentialist literature are present in Hardy's works, due to the chaos and struggles in the environmental surroundings obliged him to tackle.

According to Hardy as a person, the search for the meaning of life was like the search for self, its final result is his self-awareness. Hardy believes that personal choice exists in self-awareness; this means the more humans are conscious about their actions the more they are free. As man becomes unobstructed and permitted, the deeper he becomes more aware of limits which are forced on him by the external world. These bounds result from contending and conflicting aims of different features of the world.

Hardy expressed his existentialist visualizations and ideas in a letter to Edward Wright, later reprinted in his autobiography, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy* (1892-1928):

The will of a man is [...] neither wholly free nor wholly unfree. When swayed by the Universal Will (which he mostly must be as a subservient part of it), he is not individually free; but whenever it happens that all the rest of the Great Will is in equilibrium the minute portion called one person's will is free, just as a performer's fingers are free to go on playing the pianoforte of themselves when he talks or thinks of something else and the head does not rule them. (p.125)

This latter saying explores Hardy's belief that despite the fact that human beings exist as insignificant tiny fragments in a vast, indifferent universe, they can occasionally achieve

personal freedom. However insignificant such freedom might be in the context of the entire universe, it has great significance for the individual.

III-2 Analysis God Funeral

Thomas Hardy's poem "God's Funeral," took two years from the poet to be finished from 1908 to 1910, the poem is about attending a funeral; in which Hardy imagined himself this time appearing in the funeral of God. He considered him dead since man lives in chaotic situations all the times. Hardy seemed to blame god for all the depressions and struggles which are forced on people to live .the surface meaning of the poem suggests hardy's emotional side of devoutness in spite the fact that he used andemonstrative kindness and extensivesorrow words, in addition to biblical resonances. Hiscertainties for the stones of his intellectual skepticism about the dogmatic belief in god, according to what the scholar and critic Rimmer proposed that hardy depicted the funeral-goers in the poem.

The analysis of poem

I saw a slowly-stepping train --
Lined on the brows, scoop-eyed and bent and hoar --
Following in files across a twilit plain
A strange and mystic form the foremost bore.

The first stanza describes hardy's pessimism and loneliness in his starting saying that he saw. "A slowly-stepping train lined the brows". Hardy sees life as place of melancholy and sadness. He intends to show the unhappiness for having such life which has no meaning.

And by contagious throbs of thought
Or latent knowledge that within me lay
And had already stirred me, I was wrought
To consciousness of sorrow even as they.

The second stanza represents Hardy's way of thinking that is imprisoned with a sad thoughts and the lack of knowledge of life which complains him all the time giving the feelings of misery.

The fore-borne shape, to my blurred eyes,
At first seemed man-like, and anon to change
To an amorphous cloud of marvellous size,
At times endowed with wings of glorious range.

The third stanza, Thomas Hardy confirms that nothing stayed the same forever; everything changes by time and eventually loses its glory. Hardy claimed that he cannot see a clear image rather than shadows; it was like a mystery for him.

And this phantasmal variousness
Ever possessed it as they drew along:
Yet throughout all it symbolized none the less
Potency vast and loving-kindness strong.

In the stanza number four, the poet describes the differences of human kind, through time including with that their feelings and emotion that transformed. He insisted that the responsible one for these bad and miserable situations God.

Almost before I knew I bent
Towards the moving columns without a word;
They, growing in bulk and numbers as they went,
Struck out sick thoughts that could be overheard: --

The fifth stanza, Hardy is observing people with their different treatment for each other and how sadness is over their minds and faces; it is clearly obvious that they are alienated from the happenings plus their

'O man-projected Figure, of late
Imaged as we, thy knell who shall survive?
Whence came it we were tempted to create
One whom we can no longer keep alive?

The sixth stanza, Hardy is telling the state of people in the funeral of God, the fear of death is clearly seen on them. He is regretting about the meaninglessness of life and that nothing deserves to live for.

'Framing him jealous, fierce, at first,
We gave him justice as the ages rolled,
Will to bless those by circumstance accurst,
And longsuffering, and mercies manifold.

In the seventh stanza, Hardy says that God is eventually going to die like any human in the creation, Plus justice will dominate on the universe in which God would be mortal like creatures.

'And, tricked by our own early dream
And need of solace, we grew self-deceived,
Our making soon our maker did we deem,
And what we had imagined we believed,

In the stanza number eight, Hardy ridicules the human faith in God and how they could believe in an unseen powerful force which has no mercy on them. He mentioned that people and him were deceived and tricked for the dream of comfort, it was no more than imagination of belief.

'Till, in Time's stayless stealthy swing,
Uncompromising rude reality

Mangled the Monarch of our fashioning,

Who quavered, sank; and now has ceased to be.

The ninth stanza reveals that the reality of the passed time is uncompromised. The way in which it is impossible to prove God's existence in the universe as a strong power, all these were given in order to see the trembled image of ruler (God) who is dead like any human.

'So, toward our myth's oblivion,

Darkling, and languid-lipped, we creep and grope

Sadlier than those who wept in Babylon,

Whose Zion was a still abiding hope.

In the stanza number ten, Hardy stated his unconsciousness with the non-believers and that will bring just unhappiness to them. He clearly regrets sadly about his pessimism in the better life.

'How sweet it was in years forlorn

To start the wheels of day with trustful prayer,

To lie down liegely at the eventide

And feel a blest assurance he was there!

The next stanza Hardy is feeling sorry for the time in the past days when he was a good Christian at the church and has a good tight relationship with God; he used ironical words to express his visions about the existence of God and to show his neglecting religious side.

'And who or what shall fill his place?

Whither will wanderers turn distracted eyes

For some fixed star to stimulate their pace

Towards the goal of their enterprise?'...

In the coming stanza Hardy blows out his lack of religious part and his beliefs which have a great questions that cannot be answered. The poet is asking about whom or what can fill the empty hole in his thoughts.

Some in the background then I saw,
Sweet women, youths, men, all incredulous,
Who chimed as one: 'This is figure is of straw,
This requiem mockery! Still he lives to us!'

The stanza has a deep meaning where Hardy remembered the happy past and good moments which are not existed any more. Hardy speaks sorrowfully about this life and that the disbelieving people who stricken the question is still raised.

I could not prop their faith: and yet
Many I had known: with all I sympathized;
And though struck speechless, I did not forget
That what was mourned for, I, too, once had prized.

The following stanza, Hardy shows his disapproval of being a Christian, loyal believer and states the impossibility of having a certain faith doctrine, in spite of being one of them once in the past.

Still, how to bear such loss I deemed
The insistent question for each animate mind,
And gazing, to my growing sight there seemed
A pale yet positive gleam low down behind,

The subsequent stanza, the poet states that he totally lost and abandoned his faith about the existence of God; the reasons for the emergence of his skeptical views are the lack and insufficiency of the answers. Hardy was not convinced if God really exists.

Whereof, to lift the general night,
A certain few who stood aloof had said,
'See you upon the horizon that small light --
Swelling somewhat?' Each mourner shook his head

In this stanza Hardy shows the difficulty in finding happiness and joy in his life, he gave the example of the strong believer that can easily see the sky line of his faith by contrary to the other one who find obstacles in having a good being.

And they composed a crowd of whom
Some were right good, and many nigh the best....
Thus dazed and puzzled 'twixt the gleam and gloom
Mechanically I followed with the rest.

The poet seemed to reveal the brighten future for people who have a strong faith, by contrary to him his doubts about God prohibit him from sharing with them the same belief.

III-3 the existentialist part in god's funeral

Thomas Hardy through this poem reveals the meaningless of life to a profound certain extent in which absurdity was the dominant theme to shape the living period. Hardy was totally against the philosophy of Fredric Nietzsche but it is undeniable that he shared some comparable thoughts with him as an existentialist philosopher in some of his poetry (the scholar and critic Williamson(403) For example saw this in Hardy's poem "God's Funeral" (1910) which was obviously referred and taken from Nietzsche's famous expression, 'God is dead'. According to Hardy's way of thinking, the existence of man who is alone in the universe is neither malevolent nor benevolent but simply emotionless to him. The presence of man lost its value from the existential perspective as a result that meaningless will be the dominant aspect.

Hardy accepted to adopt the attack of Nietzsche on the religious hypocrisy in the Victorian conventional era, however Hardy rejected one of Nietzsche's key perceptions which presents the will to power that was the significant driving force in the human beings. The difference between Hardy and Nietzsche lay in his understanding of concern for all the suffering people and the other creatures. According to Williamson who said that Hardy the compassion of human was the only option from lifeless or harmful natural forces.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter affords us with a general view about Thomas Hardy as an Existentialist poet. Thanks to Soren Kierkegaard and Simon de Beauvoir, Jean Paul Sartre, Nietzsche, the philosophers who brought the term of Existentialism in order to depict life as it was lived in the twentieth century. In addition to the analysis of *the God's Funeral* (1910) as an illustration to support and aim to give a whole image about the absurdity of life at that time. It is obvious that the period witnessed a chaotic struggle and wars. For the modern period, people saw the truth as an imagined far concept to reveal to the extent of the philosophical and scientific ideas that rocked the world of the Victorian society which was terrifying.

General Conclusion

Nineteenth and twentieth centuries knew radical changes in almost all the fields, particularly the religious one. Both periods mirrored the absence of the religious aspects that paved the way for new ways of thinking due to a certain circumstances. The atmosphere of agnosticism and existentialism in its different forms are the dominant aspects in the majority of all writers of prose and poetry, Thomas Hardy as one of them, his works have directly been rooted from the influence of Darwin's theory; the origin of species, the latter is considered as the invention of the century where Charles Darwin saw the origins of the humans from animals thanks to the suitable adaptation for the environment that helped to survive.

Agnosticism as doctrine came to be visible for the sake of questioning god's existence. Hardy supported Darwin's way of thinking as a result that he shared similar non-answered questions about whether god exists or not. In the Impercipient poem, Hardy totally abandoned his Christian religion and come to be an agnostic person. The poem contained hardy's focus on tackling he issue of Agnosticism where he completely unmasked his religious beliefs and gave the green lights for doubts and skeptical views about the existence of god in the universe to be present in his poetry.

The Environmental happenings paved the way for existentialism to be seen in the twentieth century because of the miserable, chaotic surroundings. Thomas Hardy saw himself presenting this term that life is meaningless since there is no god or any other power, and if there is really god so he must take the whole responsibility for all this terrible and unaccepted situations.

Existentialism was clearly present in god's funeral, Hardy released himself from all the boundaries of life in addition to this, and the poem is absolutely about adopting a new concept in which the poet imagined himself attending the funeral of god.

Hardy's poem depicted that neither god presence nor absence considered the same case for him since all the time, people live in depression. The poet is insisting on blaming god for the happenings. According to Hardy the existence of the human being in the universe is neither benign nor malign that's why the concept in itself lost its credibility and was directly seen the existential part. Both poems portrayed the loss of faith and the rise of doubting god's existence in the deep of hardy's character, as a distracted person who could not find any rest or happiness in adopting any religion.

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Appendix A

The Impercipient (1898)

THAT from this bright believing band
An outcast I should be,
That faiths by which my comrades stand
Seem fantasies to me,
And mirage-mists their Shining Land, 5
Is a drear destiny.
Why thus my soul should be consigned
To infelicity,
Why always I must feel as blind
To sights my brethren see, 10
Why joys they've found I cannot find,
Abides a mystery.
Since heart of mine knows not that ease
Which they know; since it be
That He who breathes All's Well to these 15
Breathes no All's Well to me,
My lack might move their sympathies
And Christian charity!
I am like a gazer who should mark
An inland company 20
Standing upfingered, with, "Hark! hark!
The glorious distant sea!"
And feel, "Alas, 'tis but yon dark
And wind-swept pine to me!"
Yet I would bear my shortcomings 25
With meet tranquillity,
But for the charge that blessed things
I'd liefer have unbe.
O, doth a bird deprived of wings
Go earth-bound wilfully! 30
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Enough. As yet disquiet clings
About us. Rest shall we.

APPENDIX B

God's Funeral (1910)

I saw a slowly-stepping train --
Lined on the brows, scoop-eyed and bent and hoar --
Following in files across a twilit plain
A strange and mystic form the foremost bore.

II

And by contagious throbs of thought
Or latent knowledge that within me lay
And had already stirred me, I was wrought
To consciousness of sorrow even as they.

III

The fore-borne shape, to my blurred eyes,
At first seemed man-like, and anon to change
To an amorphous cloud of marvelous size,
At times endowed with wings of glorious range.

IV

And this phantasmal variousness
Ever possessed it as they drew along:
Yet throughout all it symbolized none the less
Potency vast and loving-kindness strong.

V

Almost before I knew I bent
Towards the moving columns without a word;
They, growing in bulk and numbers as they went,
Struck out sick thoughts that could be overheard: --

VI

'O man-projected Figure, of late
Imaged as we, thy knell who shall survive?
Whence came it we were tempted to create
One whom we can no longer keep alive?

VII

'Framing him jealous, fierce, at first,
We gave him justice as the ages rolled,
Will to bless those by circumstance accurst,
And longsuffering, and mercies manifold.

VIII

'And, tricked by our own early dream
And need of solace, we grew self-deceived,

Our making soon our maker did we deem,
And what we had imagined we believed,

IX

'Till, in Time's stay less stealthy swing,
Uncompromising rude reality
Mangled the Monarch of our fashioning,
Who quavered, sank; and now has ceased to be.

X

'So, toward our myth's oblivion,
Darkling, and languid-lipped, we creep and grope
Sadlier than those who wept in Babylon,
Whose Zion was a still abiding hope.

XI

'How sweet it was in years farhied
To start the wheels of day with trustful prayer,
To lie down liegely at the eventide
And feel a blest assurance he was there!

XII

'And who or what shall fill his place?
Whither will wanderers turn distracted eyes
for some fixed star to stimulate their pace
towards the goal of their enterprise?'...

XIII

Some in the background then I saw,
Sweet women, youths, men, all incredulous,
Who chimed as one: 'This is figure is of straw,
This requiem mockery! Still he lives to us!'

XIV

I could not prop their faith: and yet
Many I had known: with all I sympathized;
And though struck speechless, I did not forget
That what was mourned for, I, too, once had prized.

XV

Still, how to bear such loss I deemed
The insistent question for each animate mind,
And gazing, to my growing sight there seemed
A pale yet positive gleam low down behind,

XVI

Whereof, to lift the general night,
A certain few who stood aloof had said,
'See you upon the horizon that small light --
Swelling somewhat?' Each mourner shook his head.

XVII

and they composed a crowd of whom

some were right good, and many nigh the best....
Thus dazed and puzzled 'twixt the gleam and gloom
mechanically I followed with the rest.

Thomas Hardy