TRANSFORMATION OF PERSPECTIVE, OF MAN AND THE UNIVERSE FROM ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON TO THOMAS HARDY

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TRANSFORMATION OF PERSPECTIVE OF MAN AND THE UNIVERSE FROM ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON TO THOMAS HARDY

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ABSTRACT

The conflict between religion and science started after the Renaissance in the west and continued through the age of Copernicus and Galileo to the 19th century. During this conflict, many people especially the scientists, tried to enlighten people's minds at the cost of paying high prices. Copernicus and Galileo were among those scientists who suffered a lot from this conflict and even were accused of being against the doctrines of the Christian Church.

The conflict between religion and science reached its climax during the Victorian Age, which was both called the age of scientific advancements and the age of religious controversies. Scientific findings, which conflicted with the teachings of the Bible caused a definite crisis of faith and the people of the age began questioning the meaning of life and the existence of God. Alfred, Lord Tennyson was one of these people who found himself in a profound doubt and came at the verge of loosing his former belief after reading Lyell's *Principles of Geology* and Chambers' *Vestiges of Creation*. Under the influence of scientific views of his time, Tennyson wrote his famous poem *In Memoriam A.H.H* which reflected all his doubts, conflicts and finally his consolation by reconciling science and faith.

In the following decades it was Thomas Hardy who continued Tennyson's uncertainties. Although he was a devoted Christian in the first part of his life, after the publication of *The Origin of Species* he started to loose his former religious values. Influenced by the ideas of Darwin and Huxley, he called himself a "harmless agnostic" and became more and more cynical about the existence of God.

As poets who were highly aware of the scientific advancements of their time, Tennyson and Hardy reflected these ideas through their poems.

ÖZ

Bilim ve din arasındaki çatışma, batıda Rönesanstan sonra başlamış, Kopernik ve Galile'nin çağlarında da devam ederek, 19. yüzyıla uzanmıştır. Bu uzlaşmazlık boyunca, pek çok insan özellikle bilim adamları ağır bedeller ödeme pahasına insanları aydınlatmaya çalışmışlardır. Kopernik ve Galile, bu çatışmada son derece mağdur olmuş, hatta kilisenin öğretilerine karşı gelmekle suçlanmış bilim adamları arasında yer almışlardır.

Bilim ve din arasındaki bu çatışma, hem bilimsel gelişmeler, hem de dini çekişmelerin yaşandığı çağ olarak adlandırılan Viktorya Dönemi'nde doruk noktasına ulaşmıştır.İncilin öğretileriyle çelişen bilimsel buluşlar,kesin bir inanç krizine yol açmış ve çağın insanları, bilimsel çalışmaların ışığı altında,hayatın anlamını ve Tanrı'nın varlığını sorgulamaya başlamışlardır.

Tennyson da kendini derin bir şüphenin içinde bulan ve Lyeel'in *Jeolojinin İlkeleri* ile Chambers'in *Yaradılışın İzleri* adlı kitaplarını okuduktan sonra inancını kaybetmenin eşiğine gelen insanlardan biridir. Bu bilimsel görüşlerin etkisi altında Tennyson, tüm şüphelerini, çelişkilerini, acılarını ve en sonunda bilim ve dini uzlaştırmasıyla duyduğu rahatlamayı yansıttığı ünlü şiiri In Memoriam A.H.H'ı yazmıştır.

Tennyson'ın şüphelerini, takip eden yıllarda Hardy sürdürmüştür. Hayatının ilk yarısında dindar bir Hristiyan olduğu halde, Darwin'in *Türlerin Kökeni* adlı kitabının basımının ardından Hardy dini değerlerini kaybetmeye başlamıştır. Darwin ve Huxley'in etkisiyle, kendisini zararsız bir agnostic olarak tanımlamış ve tanrının varlığı hakkında giderek daha şüpheci olmaya başlamıştır.

Çağlarındaki bilimsel gelişmelere son derece duyarlı olan Tennyson ve Hardy bu yeni fikirleri, şiirleri vasıtasıyla yansıtmışlardır.

To my daughter, Ezginur and son, Ata Türkoğlu...

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to examine the perspective of man and the universe from Alfred, Lord Tennyson to Thomas Hardy in the light of changing, scientific social and religious attitudes of their time.

The Victorian Period, which is called the age of transition, doubt and progress, witnessed many changes in social, economic and religious arenas. These social religious and economic changes as Bowyer pointed out, "cannot be dissociated from the Industrial Revolution which covers a period extending from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century" (16). Therefore the changes that took place in Victorian Age were outcomes of Industrial Revolution during which England changed to an industrialized and technologically developed society from an agricultural one. The age was described by Thomas Carlyle as "the Age of Machinery" (qtd.in Supple 49). In this age science in England, by means of technology and new inventions, presented Victorians the opportunity to reach the farthest overseas lands by producing steamboats. Steamships, railroads, new machines and techniques were all indications of the industrialized England.

Science did not only strengthen the economy of England and contributed to the daily life in England, but also shook the Christian beliefs by putting forward some views, claims and theories. The scientific developments, which shook the

faith of people in the traditional Christianity, were especially in the fields of geology and biology. First of all, it was extremely difficult for 19th century man to admit that the Earth was about five billion years old which was incompatible with their Biblical belief of Earth's being 6000 years old. While they were dealing with the new time scale of the Earth, 19th century people encountered one of the most serious controversies of the age. This controversy exploded in 1859 when Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* was published. With Darwin and his theory of evolution, the former beliefs of Victorian people in the benevolence of the Universe and its existence and maintenance for the benefit of human beings were badly shaken.

The Industrial Revolution, social and economic changes, new scientific developments and especially religious doubts strongly affected and changed the life of 19th century man and shook his stability. Therefore, some people rebelled against the development which were taking place and thus began to blame all the current issues of their time; the rise of science, class conflict, poverty, industrialization and the theory of evolution, which threatened their stability in the society. The Victorian man's response to developments and controversies of their time was emphasized by Chapman as follows:

> As a result of all these controversies, people developed a tremendous fear of change and criticized any idea or work that threatened their sense of stability (35).

It was inevitable for many Victorian writers, poets and intellectuals not to be greatly influenced by the social, intellectual, scientific and religious atmosphere of such changes. Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Thomas Hardy were

among these writers who were very much aware of the scientific and religious changes and intellectual trends of their times. The conflict between traditional ideas and the new ones, reason and faith and religion and science, which has lasted for centuries, can be easily observed in their poems.

The second chapter of this study deals with the origins of religion and science and presents a general summary of the conflict between them after the Renaissance in the West and presents how this conflict continues through the age of Copernicus and Galileo to the 19th century that is, the age of Tennyson, Darwin and Hardy in England.

The third chapter considers a number of changes, which England experienced during the 19th century, and especially focuses on the scientific developments that shook people's former beliefs and led them to a broad questioning about God, the Bible and the Universe.

The fourth chapter aims to show Tennyson's approach to new scientific developments in the light of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* and Chamber's *Vestiges of Creation* and his reflection of personal view point with examples through his famous poem; *In Memoriam A.H.H,* as regard to religious issues of his time.

The fifth chapter gives a brief summary of Thomas Hardy's religious biography which stretches out from belief to doubt under the influence of great scientist, Chares Darwin and some liberal thinkers of the time, Thomas Huxley and John Stuart Mill. The chapter also aims to display Hardy's ideas about the existence of God, the meaning of life and man's position in the earth through his several poems by emphasizing his dark and pessimistic outlook of life.

CHAPTER II

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Religion and science have been around for thousands of centuries. During the centuries from Copernicus to Darwin there has been an ongoing conflict between the two because the tendency for religion is to stick to its roots while science constantly changes and evolves. Therefore, the history of science has become the history of reason, which always tries to approach to man and the Universe in a rational way. During this constant and long-lasting struggle many scientists like Copernicus, Galileo and Darwin, were accused of being against the doctrines of Church and particularly Galileo was threatened with severe punishment. They suffered a lot and had to paid high prices to enlighten people's minds that were under the influence of Christian Church for hundreds of years.

If the history of religion and science is examined carefully, people will observe the fact that both religion and science have come from the same origin. In the prehistoric times, humans were exposed to a world filled with strange, unexplainable and very dangerous natural phenomena. People could not

understand the causes of earthquakes, volcanoes, storms, droughts and famine. These natural phenomena were terrifying experiences over which people had no control. The changing seasons, phase of the man and animal migrations were other astonishing events. The reasons of these events were beyond the ability of ancient men to understand, predict or explain. As a result, the causes of these natural events were attributed to supernatural forces. People created primitive religious rituals to please the Gods that were believed to control these natural phenomena. While religion was arising from the fear of natural dangers, terrified at the threat of these natural dangers, mankind began searching for the causes of these natural phenomena. This quest precipitated in an interest in the nature and people began seeking ways to deal with it. This is an important point because questioning the causes of natural phenomena and elaborating primitive religious rituals at the same time shows that the origin of religion and science is common. Religion was born from a desire to escape the danger and science was born from a desire to find the mystery and truth of nature. Therefore, the earliest forms of scientific research arose from religion. The people who looked for scientific knowledge in Egypt, Mesopotamia and other ancient cultures were from religious circles. These were the first people who took interest in studying nature and spent time to find solutions to the natural forces.

The observation of heavens was first carried on by priests. "They scanned the sky from watchtowers called Ziggurats which were built near the temples of great cities" (Armitage 18). The priests were interested in the movements of the moon and the planets. The priests did not observe the sky because of their curiosity or because of scientific interest. The only reason for their observation of

the sky is to foretell the future by taking notes of what was happening in the heavens because it was the duty of the priests to warn the king or citizens about their future. In the time of Babylonians, which goes back as early as 3000 BC, it was believed that the heavenly bodies had a great influence on the lives and the fortunes of every human being. There was a belief that a person's whole career depended on the positions of heavenly bodies in the sky. Babylonians' and Egyptians' curiosity of observing heavenly bodies, in fact, can be regarded as the first steps in the improvement of astronomy. "This belief that earthly events are fore told by signs in the heavens later developed into a kind of fortune telling called astrology" (Armitage 18).

The supernatural control of natural events was still an explanation in the time of the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations. These cultures developed a strong and well-organised system of beliefs. Their beliefs were centred on a large number of Gods. They believed that these Gods were responsible for controlling every aspect of the physical world. In ancient Greece for example, the god Poseidon was the guardian of the sea and controlled the events associated with the sea and oceans; and Athena, the goddess of the earth was responsible for the seasons' harvest.

Although natural phenomenon was believed to be under the control of Gods, Greek and Roman cultures, did not only deal with mythical characters and supernatural forces. During the time of these civilizations, "a seed of reason" also emerged (Brooke 58). Philosophers such as Aristotle and Euclid began to produce writings, which praised the virtues of experimental observation and reason in

explaining the cause of natural events. As a result, Greeks had an important place in the history of science. Armitage emphasizes their role in science as follows:

> The whole idea of a science of the stars and, indeed, all reasonable thought about life and the world practically started with them. It was the Greeks who first really tackled the astronomical problem, which Copernicus was later to take up a fresh and to carry great stride nearer its solution (20).

Since Greeks had no Bible or creed or a powerful priesthood to oppose, they managed to form at least partially rational approach to thinking processes with these new ideas. Nevertheless, these ideas that were very unusual for the time, never gained wide acceptance and then faded as the Roman Empire slowly decayed. As the centuries passed after the fall of Roman Empire, the initial means for understanding the forces of nature still continued to be mysteries for people of the time. During the Dark Ages, superstitions gave no way to reason and European people like ancient men, continued to believe that the reasons and causes of natural events were beyond their control and understanding. People developed ritualistic practices to satisfy supernatural forces and they even developed a complex belief in magic.

As western civilisation slowly moved from Dark Ages and into the Renaissance period, a growing number of scholars appeared. They questioned the established method of acquiring knowledge. With the rising number of scholars the conflict between science and religion, which has come from the common origin, started. Before these scholars, religion and science were regarded as one and the same in Western culture. Both science and religion appeared and

reinforced the same view of the world. Judith Walker Riggs summarizes this view as follows:

> The universe, a three-storied apartment house, with heaven on the top floor, full of gods and stars; earth in the middle, full of people and animals and plants; and the hell in the basement, full of terrible and scary things. God had nothing else to do but sit up there watching us. We were the centre of attention. We were his people (155).

The discoveries of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries completely overturned this worldview. With the new understandings that the sun is a fixed star around which the earth moves and earth is just one of many planets, "the three-storied apartment house" worldview collapsed. It is of course impossible for science and religion to dwell in the same place because science is more changeable than theology and deals with testable explanations of natural phenomena. It does not admit the supernatural forces. However, religion deals with the matters of faith and belief and it centres on supernatural beings. Therefore it is impossible for them to exist together as Draper states:

> Will modern civilization consent to abandon the career of advancement, which has given it so much power and happiness... Will it submit to the dictation of a power (religion)... which kept Europe in a stagnant condition for many centuries, ferociously suppressing by the stake and the sword every attempt at progress; a power that is founded in a cloud of mysteries; that sets itself above reason and common sense; that loudly proclaims the hatred it entertains against liberty of thought and freedom in civil institutions... Then it has in truth come to this, that Roman Christianity and Science are recognised by their respective adherents as being absolutely incompatible; they cannot exist together; one must yield to the other; mankind must make its choice-it cannot have both (qtd in Gould 118).

It was during the seventeenth century that mankind was forced to make a choice between science and religion, because, the conflict between religion and science has mainly arisen during scientific revolution. The relationship between them throughout history is described by Broke, as a marriage, which ended by divorce. Broke's observation on this point is as follows:

> The concept of separation of science from religion during the seventeenth century implies that during preceding centuries there had been a fusion. And it also implies that where there had once been marriage, there was now divorce... It is true that from the thirteenth to sixteenth century, the pursuit of natural knowledge was often subordinate to theological concerns... It is also true that, during the seventeenth century, the domains of science and theology were differentiated in a new and challenging ways... The great achievements of the seventeenth century seem to testify to a new independence of scientific inquiry (Brooke 53).

During these scientific inquiries, the validity of scientific knowledge was carefully controlled by the Catholic Church. In the other words, the correctness of scientific knowledge depended upon whether it fit within the teachings of the church or not. In those times, most people believed that the words in the Bible were the "words of God" (Rolston 76). Thus, any scientific observation which disagreed with the literal interpretation of the Bible caused confusion for these people who believed in God. This does not mean that individuals in this time period did not reject the doctrines of Church as a means of understanding the universe. Some people, especially the scientists struggled to reveal scientific truths about nature despite the heavy opposition of the Catholic Church. This caused many scientists of the seventeenth century to be accused of heresy and it also forced them to abandon their countries or give up their teachings. Giordano

Bruno, (1548-1600) Nicolaus Copernicus, (1473-1553) Galileo Galilei, (1564-1642) Charles Lyell, (1797-1875) Robert Chambers (1802-1871) and Charles Darwin (1809-1882) were among these scientists who changed the world with their courage and wonderful discoveries. These great scientists' contribution to the world history is summarized by the great philosopher Bertrand Russell as follows:

> Those to whom intellectual freedom is personally important may be a minority in the community, but among them are the men of most importance to the future. We have seen the importance of Copernicus, Galileo, and Darwin in the history of mankind, and it is not to be supposed that the future will produce no more such men. If they are prevented from their work and having their due effect, the human race will stagnate, and a new Dark Age will succeed, as the earlier Dark Age succeeded the brilliant period of antiquity. New truth is often uncomfortable, especially to the holders of power; nevertheless, amid the long record of cruelty and bigotry, it is the most important achievement of our intelligent but wayward species (252).

Copernicus was an early astronomer who challenged the widely held belief that the earth was at the centre of the solar system. This belief was put forward by Aristotle. Aristotle had placed the Earth at the centre of the universe, and the Catholic Church adopted this system. As a result, Christians submissively accepted that; since mankind, the highest creature of God, has been sent to the earth by God, the earth must be the centre. Copernicus came to quite a different conclusion after making many observations. His experimental observations led him to the conclusion that the Earth was only one of many planets that revolve around the sun. Therefore, the first pitched battle between theology and science was the astronomical dispute as to whether the earth or the sun was the centre of

the universe. Although Copernicus' observations were valid, his ideas were rejected by the intellectual community and by the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church, in fact, feared that the growth in scientific thinking would weaken its influence on people. Thus in order to maintain its authority, it took several drastic steps against the growth of scientific thinking and always denied the scientific truths. Under the coercion of the both Church and the Inquisition, Galileo was forced to sing the following statement of Inquisition in spite of his own scientific findings:

> Wednesday, February 14, 1616
> The proposition that the Sun is the centre of the world and does not move from its place is absurd and false philosophically and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to the Holy Scripture. The proposition that the Earth is not the centre of the world and immoveable but that it moves, and also with a diurnal motion, is equally absurd and false philosophically and theologically considered, at least erroneous in faith (qtd.in Santillana 129).

The only opposition Copernicus experienced in his lifetime was not only from the Catholic Church but also from Martin Luther who called the great scientist a "fool":

> ... new astrologer who wanted to prove that the Earth was moving and revolving rather than the heaven and the firmament, sun and moon... This fool wants to turn the whole area of astronomy upside down. But as the Holy Scripture testifies, Joshua ordered the sun to stand still, not the Earth (qtd.in Needham 444).

As a result, Copernicus' major work, *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies* was put on the Index of Forbidden Books in 1611 and not taken out until around

1835. The Index consisted of a list of books, which were considered as immoral, impious and dangerous by the Catholic Church. His work was presented as a hypothesis by the editor, as a work of imagination, in order to escape persecution. Copernicus was in many ways lucky. He died on the day that the first editions of his books were distributed, before he could be arrested. However, his first major supporter Giordino Bruno was not as lucky as Copernicus. Bruno was imprisoned by the Inquisition and later burned alive for heresy.

In spite of Catholic Church's drastic opposition, Galileo supported the Copernican theory, with his belief that everything in the solar system revolved around the sun, not the earth. The Church's reaction against Galileo's scientific discoveries is very well described through the words of an old cardinal in *The Life of Galileo by Berthold Brecht:*

> I hear that this Signor Galilei banishes mankind from the centre of the universe to somewhere at the edge. He is, therefore, plainly an enemy of the human race. And he should be treated as such. Man is the crown of creation; every child knows that, God's highest and most beloved creature. How could He place such a miracle, such a masterpiece, on a little remote and forever-wandering star? Would He have sent His Son to such a place? How can there be people so perverse as to believe in these slaves of their own mathematical tables? Which of God's creatures would submit to such a thing? ... I am at the centre, and the eye of the Creator rests on me and on me alone. Around me revolve, attached to eight crystalline spheres, the fixed stars and mighty sun, which was created to shed light upon my surroundings. And upon me too, in order that God may see me. And so, visibly irrefutably, everything depends on me, on Man, the masterpiece of God, centre of Creation (Brecht 65).

Since the idea that the earth moved around the sun was not in accord with biblical scripture, Galileo was opposed by the Inquisition and he was found guilty. He was

ordered to recant. Galileo, kneeling before the religious authorities, read the following statement prepared by the Inquisition in 1632:

> I, Galileo Galilei, teacher of mathematics and physics at the University of Florence, renounce what I have taught, that the sun is the centre of the universe and motionless. I, renounce abhor and curse, all my heart and with sincere faith, all these falsehoods and heresies, as well as every other falsehood and every other opinion which is contrary to the teachings of the Holy Church (Brecht 107).

Legend has it that Galileo whispered as he was getting up from his knees, "But still, it moves" (Gould 140). Whether true or not, history reveals that he did not have his heart and mind in his recantation because he knew he had been right. After his recantation, Galileo was arrested by the Inquisition then he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Galileo's books had already been in the Index of Forbidden Books in 1616. The Church did not want things to change. It never admitted a belief that could be interpreted as contradicting the Holy Bible.

"If Galileo's struggle with church was the First World War in the clash between the powers of religion and science" says Gould, "then Charles Darwin's theory of evolution is the Second World War" (140). Both Galileo and Darwin were opposing the doctrines of the Catholic Church, which dominated in people's minds for ages. While Galileo was discussing the planet earth's place in the solar system and claiming its revolving around the sun, Darwin was discussing man's place among the living creatures on the earth and supporting the idea of his splitting off from apes and chimpanzees just five million years ago. In other words, Galileo and Darwin were shaking all the former beliefs about man's being

the highest creature of the God who was believed to have created him from his own image.

According to the theory of evolution, the complex organisms we see today were all developed from simpler organisms, which lived millions of years ago. Evolution works by a process called "natural selection" (Blackmore 186). Every species has certain peculiarities and those peculiarities are passed on to the next generations. These traits help an organism to adapt to its environment. Those that do not help an organism are not passed on. Slowly, over thousand of years, new species arise; others become extinct. Mankind too fits into this whole system. That is to say, according to the theory of evolution, "human beings are relatively newcomers to the animal kingdom-splitting off from apes and chimpanzees just five million years ago" (Blackmore 186). But evolution stands in stark contrast to the story of creation that is told in Bible. According to the account in Genesis, "God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (5). In addition, the theory of evolution, describes a universe with an age of at least five billion years in contrast to the seven days of creation in Genesis.

Charles Darwin was not the first who mentioned the theory of evolution. Sir Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830) also claimed that the earth was in fact millions of years old and many species have already been extinct. But it was Charles Darwin who first described the theory of evolution on a scientific basis.

After Darwin had written his famous and at the time controversial book, *On The Origin of Species,* he was severely attacked by the theologians and the

church. The book basically stated that life evolves by a process of natural selection and this view conflicted with Church's view of special creation, placing humans along side the other animals.

That is to say, although the conflict between science and religion started hundreds of years ago, the controversy has reached its climax during the Victorian Period when all Biblical truths and old beliefs were being questioned under the light of great scientific advancements. John Moley supports the idea by saying the following while describing the Victorian Period: "It was an age of science, new knowledge, searching criticism, followed by multiplied doubt and shaken beliefs" (qtd.in Pollard 29).

The Age was characterised by rapid change and developments in nearly every sphere from medical advances, scientific and technological knowledge to changes in population growth and religious ideas. The writers of the period, who also suffered from uncertainties of their era, shared their doubts and questioning with their readers. Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Thomas Hardy were among these intellectuals who were very much aware of the contradictions of their age. Both took part in the questioning of old beliefs.

As will be discussed in the following chapters, both Tennyson and Hardy as the great poets of their ages reflected their ideas and thoughts through their poems regarding the changing social, economic and particularly the subject of their studies and religious attitudes of their times.

Tennyson, highly influenced by Lyell's *Principles of Geology* and Chamber's Vestiges *of Creation* revealed his new understanding of Nature, God and Universe through his famous poem *In Memoriam A.H.H* and Hardy whose

former beliefs were badly shaken by Darwin's *Origin of Species*, reflected his ideas about God and Universe rather in a more pessimistic mood than Tennyson's in his works. In their attempts to meet the challenge of the new ideas of their times, Tennyson and Hardy in a way had to cut across from traditional beliefs and may be regarded as pioneers of their times since they tried to find solutions of varied problems of their ages.

In the process of finding answers to universal questions of; if life has a meaning, if man is God's highest creature and if God really exists, the Romantic assertion of "I am!" turned out to be the great Victorian question of; " Who am I?" which "can easily be translated in to the simpler question; Am I?" (Timko 625). While the Victorian Man was trying to find an answer to the question of "Who am I?" he also had to deal with a lot of changes and developments which influenced the whole way of living of the age.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF PROGRESS, TRANSITION, AND DOUBT

The Victorian Age was one of the most important and active period in the history of England in terms of economic growth, and change in social, cultural, scientific and religious atmosphere. It was a period of conflict between traditional ideas and recent intellectual developments. Philosopher John Sterling summarizes the spirit of the age as follows:

> Our time is racked and torn, haunted by ghosts, and errant in search of lost realities, poor in genuine culture, incoherent among its own chief elements...half-sick, half dreaming, and whole confused (qtd.in Scott 29).

The above comment of John Sterling on Victorian Age may be a good phrasing which describes the spirit of the age and summarizes the Victorian Man's point of view about this problematic, controversial age which at the same time, led to economic developments. The Victorian Age marked a period of great transition in many aspects of human life. Although Victorian Age was an era of various social, economic, political and religious developments, as W.E Houghton pointed out,

"The two outstanding features of ... 'the age of transition' were the bourgeois industrial society and widespread doubt about the nature of man, society and the universe"(qtd.in Forsyth 214). The "bourgeois industrial society" was the outcome of Industrial Revolution that lasted from the late eighteenth century to the mid nineteenth century. Since Industrial Revolution gave way to many changes and improvements the society, the social and economic changes of Victorian Age cannot be dissociated from the Industrial Revolution. As a result of the outputs of the Industrial Revolution, Victorians started to move towards an industrial society and they moved from a rural civilization to an urban civilization. Manufacturing industry, development of new techniques, non- human power, railways, roads and steamship were the indications of the Industrialized Britain. It is clear that Industrial development led to an increase in the number of employers, traders, engineers and accountants. New occupational areas and economic changes revealed the need for skilled workers the condition of who was explained as follows by Herold Perkin:

> The workers who eat meat, vegetables, fruit and dairy produce, lived in the best and newest cottages and filled them furniture and knick-knacks, bought books and newspapers, supported mechanics' institutes and friendly societies, and paid the heavy subscriptions to the craft unions (qtd.in Supple 61).

However, development brought many problems with it. In spite of the rise of industrialization, only a certain class of people could take advantage of this new life. First of all, Industrialization caused the problem of mass population. The rise in the population resulted in unemployment, diseases, poor housing and

dreadful living conditions, which caused high rates of child mortality. The dreadful condition of the rising towns, which "had sprung up which looked more like barracks then centres of community life," was described by John Simon, London's first Medical Officer of Health, as follows:

> Courts and alleys with low, dark, filthy tenements, were hammed in an all sides by higher buildings, having no possibility of any current air, and (worst of all) sometimes, so constructed, back to back, as to forbid the advantage of double windows or back doors... It is no uncommon thing, in twelve feet square or less, to find three or four families staying together (perhaps with infectious disease among them), filling the same space night and day, men, women and children in the promiscuous intimacy of cattle... Whatever deep injury it inflicts on the community... whatever debasement or abolition of God's image in men's hearts is tokened by it...these matters belong not to my office. Only because of the physical suffering am I entitled to speak, only because pestilence is forever within the circle; only because Death so largely comforts these poor orphans of civilization (qtd.in Milliken 108).

Along with these dreadful conditions, there suddenly arose a set of other problems such as child labour and illiteracy, because of lack of education. As regards to all these conditions, Victorian people found themselves in difficulty of finding answers to the questions of; "Was the machine age a blessing or a curse?" and "Was the middle-class economic system making humanity happier or more wretched?" (Norton 1580). This pessimistic view began to change in the second half of the century when social conditions started to improve because some social institutions and foundations began working for the betterment of social life in England. These foundations believed in " the nation's responsibility towards all men, young persons and children" and they supported the idea that " the process of accumulating knowledge and freedom should be the heritage of every child"

(qtd.in Milliken 112). In 1832 the Victorians experienced Reform Bill, which gives the middle class the right to be properly represented in the parliament. Reform Bill, did not only lead to the loss of the political and economic power of aristocratic landowners, but shifted the power from landed aristocracy towards expanding middle class of businessman. As a result of social and political outcomes of the Industrial Revolution, Victorians started to move towards an industrial society, and as generally pointed out they moved from a rural civilization to an urban civilization.

With the increase of industrial production, by the improvement of old technical processes and invention of new ones, like manufacturing industry, steamship, roads, railways and locomotion, the whole life of eighteenth century man was transformed completely. However, it was the railroads, as Collins pointed out, which played the most important role in transition from past to the present state of society: "The industrial revolution had incrementally separated past from present, but nothing set the ages in relief against each other more unequivocally than the construction of the railway" (7). Thomas Arnold also elaborated the role of locomotion in the century by saying "feudality is gone forever" on seeing the first train pass through the Rugby's country side (qtd.in Forsyth 214). The new railways, as Arnold claims, were regarded as the recurrent symbols of people who felt themselves to be on the move towards the future. While Arnold was praising the contribution of railways to the society, Thackeray was blaming them for destroying the past that represents the old values and traditions:

> Your railroad starts the new era, and we of a certain age belong to the new time and old one. We elderly people have lived in that prae- railroad world, which has passed into limbo and vanished from under us. I tell you it was firm under our feet once, and not long ago. They have raised those railroad embankments up, and shut off the old world that was behind them. Climbing up that bank on which the irons are laid, and look to the other side, it is gone" (qtd.in Buckley 34).

The railroads got different responses from the man of the era. No matter what their responses towards the new invention were, the important point here is that; although all ages witnessed some change and progress, as Timko claims, " never before had man thought of their own time as an era of change from past to the future"(610). Because of great advancements in the fields of economy, industry and science, Victorian men felt that this was an era of transformation from the past to the future. The following statement proves how Victorian people were aware of the significance of their age and how they elaborated their place in this age by saying: "We are an era in human history, the farthest milestone on the long road of man's progress. We take our role very seriously" (qtd in Altick 74).

The Victorian people, who took their role very seriously, were also aware of the fact that science did not only participate in the progress of man and the economy of England and changed the daily life, but also put forward some views, claims, theories which shook their former beliefs. In the Victorian Age, people who had taken great steps to become a society of science and technology now had to investigate the validity of their religious beliefs. Hence, the age was begun with a confidence and optimism leading to economic boom, prosperity and progress, but then this optimistic view gave way to uncertainty and doubt about God, the Bible and the Universe. Arnold expresses his ideas about the age as follows:

> Never since the beginning of Time was there, that we hear or read of, so intensely self-conscious a society. Our whole relations to the universe and to our fellow- man have become an Inquiry, a Doubt. (qtd in Isaac 38)

Thus, the Victorian Period may be regarded as an age of transition between the religious stability of the 18th century and the contradictions, doubt and instability of the 19th century. The feeling that the age was one of the transition did not only come from the changes in society, but it also came from the changes in ideas. Science was producing new ideas in geology, astronomy and biology and this spread of scientific attitudes were affecting the religious faith of men. The unsettling of religious belief by new advances in science, especially the theory of evolution and the historical study of Bible drew many writers into considerations of problems of faith and truth. Works such as Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1830-33) and Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) induced man to see nature and God from a different perspective. The discoveries of the scientists placed man not only among the animals, but in the material world as well. Other sciences, too, seemed to diminish the significance of man. Astronomy, by discovering new and distant stars and galaxies, made man's world insignificant. The geologic and astronomic discoveries, introduced a new, non-spiritual belief. This was the period in which "epistemological" rather than "metaphysical" concerns began to predominate (Timko 610). That was a time when it was particularly urgent for man to learn more about himself and his world. When the philosopher John Stuart Mill tried to describe "The Spirit of Age" in 1831 he wrote:

> The first of the leading peculiarities of the present age is that it is an age of transition. Mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines and have not yet acquired new ones (qtd.in Scott 5).

By mentioning "old doctrines" and "new ones" Mill tries to claim that Victorian Age was not only an age of transition but also the age, which witnessed the conflict between the traditional doctrines and new ideas. With the losing of men's old institutions, all the characteristic values of Victorian Age elaborating Bible, God, Nature and Man began to fade away. Therefore, God and the Bible were likely to be dissolved before doubtful and panicked people's eyes. The figure of omnipotent God was not only disappearing but also was being replaced by a perception of a cold, mechanistic universe, which has no care for man's existence. Having lost the old beliefs and not acquiring the new ones led people to sadness, isolation and loneliness. A young English man summarizes the character of Victorian Age as follows:

> Our lot is cast in an evil time; we cannot accept the present, and we shall not live too see the future. It is an age of transition and doubt; in which the masses are carried hither and thither by chimeras, while to the few... is left nothing but sadness and isolation (qtd.in Scott 39).

The sadness and isolation of 18th century were most probably the outcomes of the loss of faith in traditional beliefs. The advancements in both biology and geology probably lead to that loss. They both examined how change, growth and transformation took place in the world, and showed that these things can be

explained in "naturalistic terms" (Gill 57). When seen through the eyes of reason, religion became " merely an outmoded superstition" (Isaac 38).

In order to overcome their doubt about God, Bible and the Universe, the writers who were deeply affected by the scientific advances of the century began questioning the meaning of life and the existence of God. Scientific discoveries, which seemed to refute certain religious beliefs, inspired many writers to cover the topics of faith and truth and God in their works and led them reflect the popular attitudes of the time in their poems. Alfred, Lord Tennyson was one of those writers who was concerned with the current issues of his time, particularly the crisis of faith that occupied the whole century.

CHAPTER IV

TENNYSON: CRISIS OF FAITH IN IN MEMORIAM A.H.H

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, whose mind and soul were filled with the problems of Victorian Age, reflected all the intellectual, moral and religious controversies of the age through his poems. Particularly in *In Memoriam A.H.H*, he questioned the existence of God, the meaning of life and the Universe by reflecting the concerns of individuals who lived in a universe redefined by scientific discoveries.

These scientific discoveries and new developments in science interested Tennyson beginning from his childhood. As a result of his intense reading about geology, biology and astronomy, he absorbed many ideas of different scientists and tried to embrace them, although they were completely incompatible with his religious beliefs. Tennyson's interest in science was described by Gliserman as follows:

> In the 1830's and 1840's Tennyson read some books by scientists and popularisers of science. In these books scientific information and theories were represented in ways intended to anticipate and

> affect how readers understood and experienced science, how they fit its meanings into their other beliefs about themselves and external world (278).

As a response to his interest and reading of scientific books, he assimilated some of this information, theories and new ideas and reflected his thoughts about these new studies in his works, especially *In Memoriam A.H.H*, which then comes to be the general summary of Victorian conflicts. It is a poem of contrasts and contradictions, a song of devotion and a desperate cry in the darkness of grief and doubt, a work of art deeply effected by the traditions of past, and at the same time a radical poem with its praising and acceptance of modern ideas. His best friend's loss led Tennyson to reflect all his emotions in *In Memoriam A.H.H.* The news of this devastating loss was conveyed to Tennyson in a letter from Arthur's uncle, Henry Hallam:

> At the desire of a most afflicted family, I write to you because they are unequal from the grief into which they have fallen to do it themselves. Your friend, sir, and my much-loved nephew, Arthur Hallam, is no more. It has pleased God to remove him from this...He died at Vienna, on his return from Buda...and his remains come by sea from Trieste...(qtd.in Wheeler 221).

Tennyson first met Hallam in 1828 when he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. There he was strongly influenced by a group named the Apostles, " a discussion group who discussed the changing religious and scientific modes of thinking within the university and in the country as a whole" (Gliserman 213). During a competition, Tennyson met Arthur Hallam who was then his best friend and influenced most of Tennyson's future life. To Tennyson, Hallam was "dear as the mother to the son" and "more than his brothers are to him" (Hill 19). So as a

response of his devastating loss, he started giving way to his feelings in isolated lyrics that make up *In Memoriam A.H.H.* In the poem, Tennyson tried to find an answer to his desperate questions of; Why Hallam was deprived of life such an early age? And why there was so much suffering in the world? He expresses his feelings in one of his letters by saying "an omnipotent Creator who could make such a painful world is to me sometimes as hard to believe in as blind matter behind everything"(qtd.in Grant 487). His mourning led him to the broader question of meaning of life in general and the significance of man in such a suffering world. Although his composition began as a kind of "self therapy for the trauma" of losing a close friend and great source of moral support, along the way, Tennyson voices his doubts about religious faith which emerged as a result of scientific advancements of the age (Turner 28). As a result of the sudden extinction of his friend and the first shock of his great grief, the life seemed to have lost all meaning for him. Finding himself in great difficulty in accepting Hallam's death, he began seeking an answer to his desperate questions of; "Was the world wholly without purpose and man an irresponsible toy for gigantic forces of nature? If so, what value could there be in life? What was left but curse God and die?" (Ross 125).

The tragic death of Hallam brought Tennyson close to despair, shook his belief and drove him to doubt whether the universe was in the hands of all powerful and omnipotent God or a cruel one who filled the world with grief and sorrow. Tennyson did not struggle only with the news of his best friend's death but also with the new advancements in astronomy, biology and geology, which shook all the beliefs of many people of the age about the God and the Universe.

As the years went on, Tennyson began to recover from the shock. While he was struggling with his personal grief and sorrow he tried to find relief in creative work and study and he prepared "a rigorous programme of study," which included history, chemistry, botany, electricity, animal history, physiology and theology (Meadows 112). By studying science and examining new discoveries, he aimed to increase his capacity to deal with the great philosophic and religious questions, which were gradually absorbing his thoughts. He almost devoted himself to scientific studies that he believed would help him to solve the mysteries of earth and the meaning of life. The following quotation summarizes Tennyson's rigorous programme:

> On Tuesday morning, he studied chemistry; Wednesday morning botany; Thursday morning, electricity; Friday morning, animal physiology; Saturday, mechanics. Tennyson's contempraries regarded his understanding of science as being especially influential in two branches of science- astronomy and geology-not listed in his timetable (Meadows 112).

As a result of his intense scientific reading, his mind started to deal with the endless battle between science and religion. His life was occupied with the characteristic conflicts of his century and he dealt with progress, development and evolution. From his boyhood, Tennyson breathed the atmosphere of scientific theories and discoveries; nevertheless, it was not easy for him to accept the triumph of science over religion and to witness the destruction of the all values of the past. However, he admits science's alluring effect and since science " reaches forth her arms," to world, he thinks, it is impossible that anyone would ignore its importance and beauty and reflects his feelings in *In Memoriam A.H.H* as follows:

Who loves not Knowledge? Who shall rail[1]
Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Who shall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail. (CXIV 1-4)

Tennyson professes a deep devotion to knowledge and looks forward to its wide extension. On the one hand, he can not ignore the "beauty" and the attraction of knowledge, on the other hand he demands that knowledge should "know her place" by saying;

Let her know her place,
She is the second, not the first. (CXIV 15-16)

At this point the fundamental conflict of the poem is revealed. This is the conflict between science and religion, which haunts the work from the beginning to the end. When his respect for science encounters his religious faith, Tennyson tries to find a solution for his conflict by claiming that the increasing power of knowledge can be reconciled with faith. Therefore the increasing threat posed to religion by science does not seem to worry Tennyson any more. Dreaming faith and reason hand in hand, Tennyson tries to regain his faith, which seemed to abandon him many times:

Let knowledge grow more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
Make one music as before. (CXIV 1-4)

[1] The poem considered and discussed in this chapter is from title edited by James Gibson.

In Tennyson's mind, reason and faith were not antagonistic to each other. He claims in this stanza that by reverencing each other, they lead man to relief just like in the old days. He uses the term "as before" to refer to the age of faith that characterized before the age of Galileo, when modern science had not created the gulf between intellectual knowledge and faith. The everlasting conflict between Tennyson's heart and mind and his debate with himself is clearly felt in almost every section of his famous work, *In Memoriam A.H.H,* which was welcomed by its readers because it tried to solve a problem that haunted the age. The problem was described by Turner as "the conflict between science and religion and the problem of doubt"(Turner 125). Such doubts made many people of that age call the Christian belief into question.

As a poet who was painfully aware of the developments of the time, Tennyson dealt not only with his religious doubt but also he tried to regain his faith that seemed to abandon him after the death of Hallam. In such a contradiction Tennyson called *In Memoriam A.H.H* "the way of soul"(qtd.in Ross 95). The unsolved conflict between the need to believe and the difficulty of believing became the theme, which Tennyson coped with all through his life. Tennyson describes the struggle of his soul in detail; sometimes he fell away from his faith, suffering from his friend's death, sometimes he embraced faith to cope with his great grief. The way that Tennyson pursued in this poem is uneven; it has ups and downs, twists and turns. Sometimes he finds emotional comfort and reaches emotional heights; then all of a sudden, he begins to suffer greatly in doubt and sinks to depths. As a result of these contradictions, Tennyson's mind

sways from one state to another and he tries to find consolation in God and wants to take shelter in His existence by an acute questioning:

> Strong Son of God, Immortal Love,
> Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
> By faith, and faith alone, embrace
> Believing where we cannot prove; (Prologue,1-4)

In Memoriam A.H.H starts with the lyric in which both faith and doubt are placed side by side. Although his faith in God and Christ "Strong Son of God" seems strong, Tennyson's "chronic doubt" begins creeping in even in this "most Christian" stanza (Butler 10). The opening stanza can be regarded as an expression of doubt and uncertainty.

The doubt in people's mind is increased by confusing them with the impressions of not seeing Christ's face, embracing him only by faith and not being able to "prove" his existence. Tennyson's contradictions started at the very beginning of *In Memoriam A.H.H.* On the one hand he expresses his doubts about God's existence, on the other hand he wants to believe that God will not leave them in dust by, saying:

> Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
> Thou maddest man, he knows not why,
> He thinks he was not made to die;
> And Thou hast made him: Thou art just. (Prologue,9-12)

In this stanza Tennyson wants to believe in the justice of God and immortality of man. As Pattison declares in the following quotation, Tenyson yearns desperately to believe that human beings are immortal:

> He addresses God by asking 'you wont leave us in this mess...will you?' He cannot tell why but he believes God should have made man in such a way that men should be immortal and to be able to find a consolation he again yearns God at the end of the stanza, 'we are immortal...aren't we?' He desperately seeks a confirmation in God's existence and human's immortality (109).

Tennyson's despair reflects the despair of every man who is conscious of the scientific developments of the age. He confirms the idea by saying "it is rather the cry of the whole human race than mine" (Pattison 109).

Meadows points out that, Tennyson's curiosity about science and new advances of the age started in his early ages:

> The problems of space and time, especially how to understand human life in the context of the distances and time-scale of the Universe concerned Tennyson from his boyhood (112).

In Tennyson's youth, the long-accepted figure of 6000 years for the age of the world was still widely quoted. This was the Biblical interpretation of World's Age. However in 1830 geologist Charles Lyell' work *Principles of Geology*- the first serious evolutionary treatise- was published. With the publication of *Principles of Geology*, all the ideas and beliefs of men in eighteen-thirties were shaken. In the *Principles of Geology*" Lyell demonstrated that the present state of the earth is the result of natural forces like wind and water erosion, water moving, rock faulting and sedimentation, which occurred over a long period of time. Lyell claims in his work:

> That none of the works of a mortal being can be eternal... And even when they have been included in rocky strata...they must

> nevertheless eventually perish, for every year some portion of the earth's crust is shattered by earthquakes or melted by volcanic fire, or ground to dust by the moving waters on the surface (qtd.in Ross 124).

The ideas of Lyell shook the faith of 18th century man by suggesting "the earth was in fact millions of years old, not a mere six thousand as was traditionally taught by the church" (Chapple 77). Lyell's ideas also conflicted with the doctrine of earth's being created in seven days by God:

> Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done (Genesis 2).

Therefore Lyell contradicted the doctrine of Christian Church by suggesting that the present state of earth is the result of a long, slow process of modification rather than a series of sudden change and divine events. The new time-scale comes out in *In Memoriam A.H.H* as:

> The rolls the deep where grew three,
> O earth, what changes hast thou seen
> There were the long street roars, hath been,
> The stillness of the central sea. (CXXIII 1-4)

Influenced by Lyell, Tennyson implies that the World was much older than it had been thought. The idea was not only to disprove the Genesis but also diminished the significance of man by claming that the "life-span" of a man was nothing when compared to the sudden expansion of earth's age from six thousand years to the millennia as geologists proved (Chapple 78).

With the destruction of Biblical interpretation of Earth's age, many people of the century turned their face to Nature, which was believed to be the perfect creation of God.

Tennyson was one of the most influential poets who used an abundance of nature imagery in his poems. In *In Memoriam A.H.H*, Tennyson treats many different aspects of nature. Hallam's death and his curiosity about the existence of God changed his ideas about Nature and God, so he examined nature from a different perspective. The basis of 18th century religious faith was the "natural religion" (Hough 224). This creed is found in Butler's Anology:

> If revelation is confusing and incomplete, so is nature; those who find that nature leads them to belief in God should logically find no difficulty in being led by revelation to a belief in the Christian God (qtd.in Hough 244).

Butler briefly summarises the 18th century men's perception of God and Nature. He assumes that it is nothing but only nature will lead men to God and through nature only can man understand the perfection of God. The relationship between God and Nature is examined in Paley's "Natural Theology" in a different perspective than Butler's:

> It is the familiar argument from design. If we found a watch lying on the ground it would be immediately evident to us that it must have had a maker and the more we studied workings the clearer this would become (qtd.in Hough 268).

It is with the Universe, claims Paley, the perfect and admirable constitution of the natural world and the excellent order of it lead men to the hypothesis of a benevolent and intelligent creator. It is understood from the ideas of Butler and Paley that Enlightenment Scientists perceived nature as " a window to the divine" and perfect reflection of God (Hass 675).

However, in the late 18th century, scientific thinking emphasized the importance of improvements in geology. In the light of geologic advancements and under the influence of Hallam's death, Tennyson never thought nature as "a window to the divine," on the contrary he blamed it being so cruel and "careless of the single life" and addressing nature, he makes the following comment:

> So careful of the type she seems,
> So careless of the single life. (LV 7-8)

Tennyson thinks that the profusion of nature is only an effort to keep the type in being and that nature is careless about the individual. While it appears careful to preserve various species, but in doing so, it gives scant regard for individual lives. Since nature has no attention for individual's life where then, wonders Tennyson, is the meaning and purpose of the individual who is claimed to be created by God " in his own image." and as the highest creature on the Earth, in the Bible:

> And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the flow of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that crept upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the of image God created he him; male and female created he them (Genesis 6).

While he was dealing with the problem of nature's being so indifferent for individual life, which was promised to be blessed by God, another fact emerged from Lyell's *Principles of Geology* that increased Tennyson's disappointment about nature which extends her cruelty not only to individual lives but also to many different species as well.

Charles Lyell in *Principles of Geology* suggested that the fossil record revealed the existence and destruction of innumerable species through out the history of earth. In the second volume of *Principles of Geology* Lyell claims that

> The continual physical changes which geology revealed pointed to the certain extinction of species after species throughout the earth's history, as they found themselves unable to cope with the new conditions they encountered (qtd.in Ross 121).

The changes which was found in the fossil "fauna and flora" were explained by the scientists of the age as "the destruction of one set of species and their replacement by another set" (Gliserman 285). Extinction of so many species "shook the beliefs in an omnipotent, all- powerful and all knowing God"(Chapple 136). Tennyson, whose studies, "tend to assume that he created his poetry out of the facts and theories of science directly," addresses fossil records by calling them "scarped cliff and quarried stone" (Gliserman 281) and expresses his thoughts about the indifference of nature as follows:

> So careful of the type? But no.
> From scarped cliff and quarried stone
> She cries, 'A thousand types are gone;
> I care for nothing, all shall go. (LVI 1-4)

Tennyson observes that not only is nature careless of individual lives, but even whole species have been squandered in the struggle for survival. Tennyson's expression of "scarped cliff and quarried stone" refers to fossils, which prove that thousand of types have disappeared and he wonders if man, the highest creature of God, will disappear in the same way. Although Tennyson wrote *In Memoriam A.H.H* two decades before the outbreak of the evolution controversy, which was caused by Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, "a thousand types are gone" expresses the idea of "survival of the fittest" (Williams 73).

Therefore, the nature, "the window to the divine," the perfect creation and reflection of God, was now perceived by many people to be hostile and indifferent to species which was supposed to be created by her (Hass 675). In other words, Tennyson replaced Romantic's healing nature with one " red in tooth and claw":

> Tho Nature, red in tooth and claw,
> With ravine, shriek'd against his creed...(LVI 15-169)

Tennyson claims that man is always at the mercy of the forces of nature to be "blown about the desert and dust." He sees every aspect of nature as cruel and describes nature as " red in tooth and claw"; so that nature which is "red in tooth and claw" shrieks against the creed of man as God's companion and greatest creation. He sees nature as a destructive force and expresses his wonder by asking " Are God and Nature then strife?" for nature does not care for the life of species and individuals. Therefore, the Romantic view of nature, "a window to divine" left its place to the new understanding of a cruel and indifferent Nature, which is "red in tooth and claw." This is an explicit rejection of Romantic view of Nature, "a window to divine." Tennyson's faith seems to be weakened by his doubts

concerning the carelessness and indifference of Nature. In such a desperate condition, Tennyson feels himself as a helpless child crying in the night:

> So runs my dream; but what am I?
> An infant crying in the night:
> An infant crying for the light:
> And with no language but a cry.(LV 20-24)

In the last three lines of the stanza, Tennyson pictures himself as a child who is battering against a dark and silent world for solace, company and clarity. The doubt about God and Christianity seems to reach its climax in this stanza. "In the final analysis" Tennyson declares that " all of his trust in an invisible God is not much more than a dream" (Ross 72). The cry of the child expresses a profound fear that God is not benevolent and that Christian consolation is no more than a child's fantasy.

With the change of "liberal religious opinion" and the new understanding of Nature, people turned their face to God's beloved creature; Man (Hough 1). Tennyson summarizes the "new scientific thinking" of the nineteenth century as; "It is hard to believe in God; but it is harder not to believe. I believe in God not from what I see in Nature, but from what I find in man" (qtd.in Forsth 213). Tennyson reflects this idea in *In Memoriam A.H.H* as:

> I found him not in world or sun
> Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye
> ...
> And like a man in wrath the heart
> I stood up and answer'd ' I have felt' (CXXIV 5-8)

This stanza is an explicit rejection of the " God from design" (Kozicki 674). Tennyson believes that all men should do is to turn to themselves for their solace. The general tenor of these lines is to show men that Nature cannot lead men to God. Tennyson points out that faith's only sure foundation is inner experience. Belief must be based on what men feel. Hallam Tennyson, Tennyson's son, later quotes his father as saying almost the same thing in 1892:

> Yet God is love, transcendent, all pervading! We do not get this faith from Nature or the world. If we look at Nature alone, full of perfection and imperfection, she tells us that God is disease, murder and rapine. We get this faith from ourselves, from what is highest with in us, which recognized that there is not one fruitless pang, just as there is not one lost good. (qtd.in Pinion 131).

Tennyson struggles to believe that "God was love indeed" and elaborates the belief that only the spiritual growth and love lead men to reach God (Pinion 131). By supporting the idea of an omnipotent, all pervading and all loving God's revealing "himself through the human attribute of love, the highest self-sacrificing love; in the freedom of human will and in the immortality of the soul," and forming the idea that God is reconciled with the mechanistic universe through "a divine plan of evolution," Tennyson seemed to regain and established his faith (Kozicki 676). Tennyson, through his spiritual growth, reaches the idea that the principle of reaching God and immortality was love. He thinks the divine love and God can only be reached through human love.

The love, affection and brotherhood that he felt for Hallam at this point seems to rescue Tennyson from his suffering, grief and doubt which surrounded him. Tennyson can be said to move from despair to happiness because he finally

discovers that his past, which is characterized by grief and disasters, doubt and uncertainty, should have "meaning after all" (Kozicki 677). He points out in the following stanza that even the tiniest creature on the earth has an aim and created by God for a purpose;

> That nothing walks with aimless feet;
> That not one life shall be destroy'd,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete.(LIV 5-9)

He wants to believe that Hallam's death should also have a meaning. His death may be the promise of a higher race which is about to come according to Tennyson who is the poet of "the larger hope" (Wheel 116). Tennyson wanted to believe that evolution might be God's divine plan for humanity. While establishing the idea, Tennyson seemed to be highly influenced by Robert Chambers who postulated in *Vestiges of Natural History of Creation (1844)* that "a superior race to come, of which outstanding individuals were to be considered heralds" (Ross 129). Chamber's work is professed as "the first attempt to connect the natural sciences into a history of creation"(Ross 129).

The idea of the coming of a superior race led Tennyson to a new understanding of the process; if man, he thinks, developed his present state from a lower form, then why that development has to be stopped? Tennyson's ideas about man's development find an echo years later in Darwin who claims in *Descent of Man* that " man has risen from lowly condition to the highest standard as yet attained by him in knowledge, morals, and religion" (qtd.in Timko 619). Tennyson claims in *In Memoriam A.H.H* that as the perfect creation of God, man

might evolve ever closer to God's image and divinity leaving behind the "satyr-shape" and ape visage of his ancestors. Extending evolutionary theory to God's divine plan, Tennyson hoped that man might transcend animality by encouraging his divine soul. He asserts that humanity must "Move upward, working out the beast, and let the ape and tiger die"(CXVIII 27-28). It was love, immortal love which Tennyson mentioned in Prologue separates man from animals. His assertion that the advance of the individual is dependent upon a higher race about to come is revealed in *In Memoriam A.H.H.* He claims man is to be:

> The herald of a higher race,
> And of himself in higher place.
> If so he type this work of time
> Within himself, from more to more.(CXVIII 14-17)

He yearns for the peace after dealing with too much conflict and expresses his hope of the coming of "thousand years of peace"(CVI 28) when the higher race is realized and all institutions have been reformed for the "common love of good" (CVI 24). Tennyson is comforted by the contemplation of the peaceful age to come by saying:

> And all is well, though faith and form
> Be sundered in the night of fear. (CXXVII 1-2)

In the Epilogue, the conflict of the age and the intellectual war of *In Memoriam A.H.H* conclude peacefully. The Epilogue of *In Memoriam A.H.H* is again indebted the *Vestiges of Creation.* Tennyson describes the wedding day of his sister in this section and claims that the child resulting from the union will be,"

a closer link betwixt us and the crowning race...No longer half-akin to brute" (Epilogue 127-128). By giving the news of " the crowning race," Tennyson repeats his belief for the coming of a higher race. Therefore, Tennyson's despair turns into hope at the end of the poem. The poem, through which the readers witnessed many conflicting emotions of Tennyson like grief, sorrow, doubt and conformation, could be best understood in the light of Tennyson's own statement about the subject matter of *In Memoriam A.H.H:*

> It must be remembered that this is a poem, not an actual biography. It is founded on our friendship, on the engagement of Arthur Hallam to my sister, on his sudden death at Vienna, just before the time fixed for their marriage, and on his burial at Clevedon Church. The poem concludes with the marriage of my youngest sister Cecilia. It was meant to be a kind of Divina Commedia, ending with happiness. ....The different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given, and my conviction that fear, doubts, and suffering will find answer and relief only through Faith in a God of Love. 'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of human race speaking thro'him (qtd.in Ross 100).

One of the most remarkable things about *In Memoriam A.H.H* was its popularity among the people of the age, especially among Tennyson's contemporaries. *In Memoriam A.H.H*'s popularity mostly comes from its dealing with the problems of existence, especially with the problems which are caused by the struggle between religion and science, "that the Victorians clasped it to their bosoms to supplement the consolation offered by the Bible" (Ross 101). Tennyson was called as a " modern poet" by Bradley who regards him as " one of the great poets whose attitude towards the sciences of nature was what a modern poet's attitude ought to be..."(qtd.in Ross 95). He is called "modern" because he

universalised his individual grief and tried to find an answer to his questions that occupied his mind during his lifetime. Tennyson' questions were not so different from the questions of people who have lived long after him. Through the poem, he has dealt with the universal questions of, if man has an immortal soul, if there is any meaning in life and if there is a God. He finally finds a consolation in the Epilogue by reconciling faith with knowledge. Since its publication, *In Memoriam A.H.H* has evoked varied responses from different readers. "What *'In Memoriam'* did for us, for me at least," wrote Henry Sidgwick, "was to impress on us the ineffacable and ineradicable conviction that humanity will not and cannot acquiesce in a godless world"(qtd. in Timko 619). After the death of his husband, Queen Victoria told Tennyson that, "Next to the Bible, *'In Memoriam A.H.H'* is my comfort"(qtd.in Ross 93). Along with it's comforting effect in religious matters, *In Memoriam A.H.H* guided many people of the time in their thinking about science. One of Tennyson's close friends remarked on his first reading of *In Memoriam A.H.H*:

> I was quite entirely ignorant and indifferent in those days about the poetry, and did not in the least know or guess who had written it, but, opening it haphazard at the Geologic Stanzas, was so impressed and riveted by them...that I could not put the book down until I had read all through from end to end. I was caught up and enthralled by its spirit, and my eyes seemed suddenly opened on a whole new world (qtd.in Meadows 111).

That is to say, Tennyson carried Wordsworth's prophecy of "poetry would eventually be able to absorb the results of science and carry them alive into the heart" (qtd. in Ross 25).

It would be Thomas Hardy in the next generation who took up the questioning, deepened by new scientific advancements, up where Tennyson left.

CHAPTER V

THOMAS HARDY, AND A PERSPECTIVE OF RELIGION

The works of writers usually reflect the values of the time when they are written, and Thomas Hardy's poems do the same. Just like Tennyson, Hardy could not ignore the scientific developments, social changes and changing values of his period and he carried on Tennyson's uncertainties about the meaning of life and the existence of God in a rather more pessimistic mood.

As a writer who lived in the age of transition, which was neither quite Victorian nor completely modern, Hardy observed great changes in social life and witnessed the destruction of many Victorian values and morality, which had been dominant since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Collins describes Hardy as " an illustrator of transition and opposing paradigms, as a figure at once entirely Victorian and consummately modern" (14). Therefore, his works combine the elements of both the Victorian and the modern period. Clarke's following comment on Hardy's state of mind which was shaped "on the shadow line between nineteenth and twentieth century" (Williams 1) shows how he found himself in the middle of contradictions caused by his religious upbringing and 19th century's scientific, intellectual thinking:

> Hardy's state of mind is one example of the conflict between the new scientific view of life that the nineteenth century produced and the whole attitude toward life, which had been traditional to Western Culture. Hardy is a partisan of the new view, but acutely conscious always, of the old view" (261).

Therefore, as Collins declares, "The collision of past and present is perhaps the major theme in Hardy's life and art"(9).

The most severe collision was taking place in religious arena in his time. The character of the age which Hardy lived in was described by one of his father's friend, R.S Smith as follows: "There never was a time in England in which there was more of religious controversary than at present" (qtd.in Pettit 138). Therefore Hardy's works, which mirrored his life, mostly reflect his contradictory attitudes toward the meaning of life and existence of God, in other words, toward the changing values of traditional past in the light of scientific advancements in which he had a great interest during his lifetime.

Thomas Hardy was born in the early years of Queen Victoria, in the countryside, the town Dorset, where most people could neither read nor write and when there were no railways and electricity. It was a very remote and old-fashioned region. When Hardy was growing up, Dorset was completely different from the rest of England because it had its own culture, tradition and its own language. However, things started to change when the railway reached Dorset. At that time, Hardy was seven years old but years later he blamed railways for killing the countryside's traditional ballads and says that "the orally transmitted ditties of centuries being slain at a stroke by the London comic songs that were introduced" (Williams 44). Therefore, he had witnessed the replacing and superseding the old

culture and traditions of his country by the new "pop culture which has no real roots there" (Williams 44). When he was eleven years old, Hardy witnessed the Great Exhibition, which was held in London in 1851. In his later years Hardy thinks that one of the most important events of his childhood was the Great Exhibition and observed during the exhibition how thousands of people who had never left their countryside or seen a train in their life, got on special "exhibition trains" and went to London to see "the wonders of modern science and industry" (Williams 46). Later on he expressed his feelings about the great exhibition as follows:

> For south Wessex, the year formed in many ways an extraordinary chronological frontier or transit-line, art which there occurred what one might call a precipice in Time. As in a geological 'fault' we had presented to us a sudden bringing of ancient and modern into absolute contact, such as probably in no other single year since the Conquest was ever witnessed in this part of the country (Williams 47).

Although Hardy, during his childhood, had a great interest in railways, industrialization and the new ideas, he did not write much about industrialization and life in big towns. Instead, he preferred writing about his countryside, about the differences between past and the present and about the Providence whose existence was being questioned in the atmosphere of the Victorian intellectual climate.

Like many Victorians who were fairly conscious of religious matters, Hardy was brought up in a strongly Christian home and held strong faith in Christianity at least in the first part of his life. He was the son of Orthodox parents and he regularly attended services in Stinsford Church with his family. As a child, who

was unconscious of religious conflicts of the age, Hardy absorbed the religious atmosphere of Dorset, and gradually acquired profound knowledge about God and the Bible. Hardy was so influenced by the doctrines of the Church and religious upbringing of his family that, when he was a child, "to be a parson had been his dream" says Williams and adds the following comment by considering Hardy's religious background:

> Stinsford church, where many of his ancestors were buried, was to him the most hallowed spot on earth. In this connection he said once-perhaps oftener_ that although invidious critics had cast slurs upon him as Nonconformist, Agnostic, Atheist, Infidel, Immoralist, Heretic, Pessimist, or something else equally opprobrious in their eyes, they had never thought of calling him what they might have called him much more plausibly_churchy; not in an intellectual sense, but in so far as instincts and emotions rule. As a child, to be a parson had been his dream; moreover, he had had several clerical relatives who held livings; while his grandfather, father, uncle, brother, wife, cousin, and two sisters had been musicians in various churches over a period covering altogether more than a hundred years (7).

Hardy's being a devoted Christian was confirmed by John Keble in his *The Christian Year,* (1861) as follows:

> Hardy was in the early 1860's, very regular in his attendance at services. Not only on Sunday's but also on important saint's days...Hardy's personal life indicate that towards the end of his six years at Hicks's Hardy was a committed and devout Christian, fully accepting the principles of Anglicanism and its High Church Practice, both emotionally and intellectually (qtd.in Jedrzejewski 10).

In addition to intense religious attitudes of his time and the influence of his family's being pious Christians, the Oxford Movement had also played an

important role in the reinforcement of Hardy's religious faith. This spiritual movement, involving devout thinking and actions started to spread to Dorset and become very influential in the country. The supporters of the movement reinforced the idea of a benevolent God who is close near to man and transcends the natural order of things. The aim of the movement was described by Collins in the following statement:

> The aim of the Oxford Movement, at least initially, was to resanctify the Church and re-establish it as infallible in its teaching of mystical dogma (30).

In 1862 Hardy "started alone for London, to pursue the art and science of architecture on more advanced lines" (Williams 9). This date was regarded as the turning point in Hardy's life. After he had come to London, he became more interested in the new ideas and views. Hardy's best friend, Harvey Moule , as a man of Cambridge, served as an educator for Hardy who had newly came to London and still been surrounded by the rural ideas of Dorset. Harvey Moule whom Hardy discussed the new ideas of the time, played an important role in the deterioration of Hardy's faith and changed his whole point of view by introducing " him to literary criticism and liberal theology" (Williams 8). In addition, Moule presented Hardy with *Essays and Rewiews,* which was regarded among one of the most controversial books of the time and which caused a profound deterioration on young Hardy's faith in Christianity. The book was written by some churchmen who " feel that Christianity would have to be brought up to date" (Williams 75).

When Hardy's religious deterioration combined with his weakened health, induced by London's "notoriously unsanitary" atmosphere, his dark mood, began

occupying many of his poems. In one of his earliest poems, "Dream of the City Shopman" Hardy expresses his frustration, which was caused by his weakening religious faith:

> O God that creatures framed to feel[2]
> A yearning nature's strong appeal
> Should writhe on this eternal wheel
> In rayless grime;
> And vainly note, with wan regret,
> Each star of early promise set;
> Till Death relieves, and they forget
> Their one life's time!

Therefore, when Hardy decided to go back to his hometown in the summer of 1867 for a rest because of his illness, he was completely a different man whose "early religious convictions weakened and died, he began to feel a passion for reforming the world" (Williams 10). Jedrzejewski points out the change in Hardy's viewpoint as follows:

> In any case, there is no doubt that the Hardy that returned to Dorset in 1867 was a man entirely different from the Hardy that had left it in 1862_ no longer a youth in search of truth and understanding of life and world, but a man of relatively clearly realised views, aware of complexities of modern thought and prepared to take, with regard to at least some of most important existential questions of the day, his own standpoint (45).

That is to say, there is no clear cut before and after traceable in Thomas Hardy's "religious biography" (Collins 7). There is not a definite data about a distinct turning point when Hardy became doubtful about Christianity. Terry Coleman describes the process of Hardy's journey from faith to doubt as follows:

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[2] The poems considered and discussed in this chapter are from title edited by Paul Turner.

> At the beginning of 1860 Hardy was probably still a Christian, and at the end of 1866 he certainly was not, and of the process by which this change came over such a mind we know nothing (qtd. in Drabble 47).

In fact, between those years, at his susceptive age, he observed the flood of positivistic and naturalistic thinking spreading to London. After his first reading of the *Essays and Reviews* and soon after *The Origin of Species,* Hardy's Orthodox faith completely broke down. Under the impact of these two works he started to explore natural science and philosophy.

The Origin of Species was an outcome of long work of Darwin who found during his researches in South America that certain animals showed slight but quite definite differences from the animals on the islands only few a miles away. This fact struck him so deeply that he suggested his new theory about the origins of life while he was trying to find answers for the following questions:

> Had they been created with these slight differences when God made the world, as was thought in the Book of Genesis?" or was it not more likely that all belonged to the same species, and had evolved their own differences to suit their special conditions of life?" (Williams 73).

Finally, Darwin found his striking answer to these questions and came to the following conclusion that

> Vast number of species had existed at one time, but several had died out; those which survived being the ones which were best adapted to their environment. This became known as the doctrine of the *survival of the fittest* (qtd in Williams 73).

Darwin applied his theory to human beings as well as the animals. He did not, as many people thought, claim that man was descended from the monkeys, but he thought, " men and monkeys were collateral descendants of one ancestor" (qtd.in Williams). This theory, shook Victorian Christianity to its roots, opened Hardy's eyes to Natural Selection which claims that nature cares as little for the race as it cares for the individual. It cares for nothing even the human value but only cares "the perpetuation of life, and in its very lack of aim and purpose reveals itself a meaningless process" (Roppen 289).

In many of his poems, like "A Plaint to Man," Hardy was continually wrestling with the new view of the world. In the poem, the God of Christianity is personified by Hardy and given the voice to adress mankind and the God resumes the theory of evolution:

> When you slowly emerged from the den of Time,
> And gained percipience as you grew,
> And fleshed you fair out of shapeless slime,
> Wherefore, O Man, did there come to you
> The unhappy need of creating me_
> A form like your own—for praying to?

In the poem, Hardy tries to claim that, while science is advancing at that speed, it is inevitable that the perception of God will soon become "too incongruent to survive the modern age" (Collins 25) and he points out that belief in God is dwindling day by day. His personified God in the poem confesses this fact as follows:

> And now that I dwindle day by day
> Beneath the deicide eyes of seers
> In a light that will not let me stay,
> ...
>
> And tomorrow the whole of me disappears,
> The truth should be told, and fact be faced
> That has best been faced in earlier years

At the end of the poem, God asserts that "the truth must be told" which "has been faced in earlier years." The truth implied here most probably refers to the "truths" which were revealed from the scientific advancements of the time and cause agony to many people who were supposed to face it in earlier years.

After Darwin's *The Origin of Species,* which was claimed to kill the Wordsworthian view of nature "the whole understanding of nature poetry has been changed" and Darwin's idea of survival of the fittest made Wordswordian nature poetry mode impossible after 1859 (Isaac 3). Langboum affirms this change in the following quotation.

> Hardy never went further in rendering nature's indifference than in the poems of the 1860's, which were written under the first impact of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (46).

In "Nature's Indifference," for example, Hardy claims that nature does not intend to evolve in upward direction. This was an explicit denial of one of Victorian's favourite belief of "Providence-a force which saw to it that everything in the world worked towards good" (Williams 80).

In "Neutral Tones," even beginning from the very first stanza, Hardy displays his indifferent view of the nature. The first stanza of the poem just like the title establishes the theme of neutrality:

We stood by a pond that winter day,
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
They had fallen from an ash, and were grey
...
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with greyish leaves.

In the poem, Hardy, by displaying a picture of a white- cursed sun and grey leaves, reacts against the romantic colourfulness of nature. Hardy's indifferent nature attitude was most probably an outcome of Darwin's influence, which caused a decline in the importance of Wordsworthian nature poetry.

It is clearly pointed out in the poem that, when compared with Wordsworth's understanding of nature "as the great beneficent source of worthwhile human feelings," Hardy's perception of nature, "as inadequate as a source of perception and beauty," was a meaningless and random one (Ward 88).

The inevitable conclusion of evolution theory carried Victorians to the painful idea that "if life evolved under its own laws, if it was not true that Adam and Eve and the animals had been created just as they were in the Garden of Eden, then there was no need for God" (Williams 73).

When the ideas of natural selection and evolution coupled with the idea that life is a meaningless and aimless process, like many people of the age, Hardy started to believe that God was either uncaring or irresponsible or simply did not exist. If there really was a God, he wonders, why there was so much horror in society and nature and why there was so much pain in the world. Hardy finds himself in difficulty in accepting such a suffering world, and expresses his feelings as the follows:

> What does often depress me is the sight of so much pain in the world, constant pain; and it did just as much when I was an orthodox Churchman as now; for no future happiness can remove from the past sufferings that have been endured (Jedrzejewski 47).

Despite his religious parents and their providing him with a strict Christian authority, Hardy was too much of a realist to accept the presence of a benevolent God, in the midst of all these pain and hardship in human life. Therefore, Hardy spent his life looking for a God who seemed to disappear in the light of scientific advancements of the time. As Blackmore affirmed " the deterioration in his belief made him search for the purpose and meaning of human existence"(195). Not being exactly sure about the existence of God and not combining his scientific principles to the ideas of religion, Hardy "became an agnostic" (Williams 73) and " went on being an agnostic all his life" (Williams 79). The term "agnostic" is described in the Chambers Encyclopedic English Dictionary as follows:

> A person who believes that one can know only about material things and so believes that nothing can be known about the existence of God (22).

The term "agnostic" was coined by the 19th century British scientist T.H Huxley who was one of the most rigorous supporters of Darwin and was called "Darwin's bulldog" by many critics. He believed that only material phenomena were objects of exact knowledge and maintained that human beings cannot know whether God exists or not, and described his term "agnostic" as the follows:

> Agnosticism is not properly described as a "negative" creed, nor indeed as a creed of any kind, except in so far as it expresses absolute faith in the validity of a principle, which is as much ethical as intellectual. This principle may be stated in various ways, but they all amount to this: that it is wrong for man to say that he is certain of the objective truth of any proposition unless he can produce evidence which logically justifies that certainty. This is what Agnosticism asserts; and in my opinion, it is all that is essential to Agnosticism. That which Agnostics deny and repudiate, as immoral, is the contrary doctrine, that there are propositions which man ought to believe, without logically satisfactory evidence, and that reprobation ought to attach to the profession of disbelief in such inadequately supported propositions (qtd. in Williams 73).

"Except as a young man, Hardy did not believe in a personal God" says Williams (66) and Hardy affirms William's claim by writing in his fiftieth birthday that the following: "I have been looking for a God for fifty years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him" (qtd. in Collins 15).

Although Hardy kept fame both as an author and a poet, he always preferred writing poetry where he could freely and effectively express his scientific views and agnostic ideas without any restrictions from "victorian censorship" about which he complained in his *essay Candour in English Fiction* and "spoke out on the difficulties of being an artist in his age" (qtd. in Orel 127). In the following quotation Hardy briefly summarizes his reasons of choosing verse instead of fiction:

> Perhaps I can express more fully in verse ideas and emotions which run-counter to the inert crystallized opinion – hard as a rock – which the vast body of man have vested interests in supporting. To cry out a passionate poem that ... the Supreme Mover ... the Prime Force ... must be either limited in power, unknowing, or cruel – which is obvious enough, has been for centuries – will cause them merely a shake of the head; but to put it in argumentative prose will make them sneer, or foam, and set all the literary contortionists jumping upon me, a harmless agnostic, as if I

> were a clamorous atheist, which in their crass illiteracy they seem to think is the same thing ... If Galileo had said in verse that that the world moved, the Inquisition might have let him alone (qtd. in Collins 5).

"Hap" is one of the best examples of Hardy's poems through which he presents the belief that no deity, even a malevolent one, rules the universe. In the poem, Hardy reflects God's mockery on man's misery, and claims that only random change is responsible for human's fate:

> If but some vengeful god would call me
> From up the sky, and laugh: "Thou suffering thing,
> Know that thy sorrow is my ecstasy,
> That thy love's loss is my hate's profiting!"
> ...
> -Crass Casualty obstructs the sun and rain,
> And dicing Time for gladness casts a moan...
> These purblind Doomsters had as readily strown
> Bliss about my pilgrimage as pain.

The first stanza starts with "if" which depicts the uncertainties of Hardy's faith in the existence of God. By calling God "vengeful," Hardy confirms the death of Victorian over powerful and omnipotent God and replaces him by a cruel one who calls man, once believed to be the highest creature of the earth, as a "suffering thing" and takes joy from his suffering.

Hardy also focuses on the randomness of life and claims that it was chance only, represented by the personifications "Crass Casualty," "dicing Time" and "purblind Doomster," dictates all the events. That is to say, Hardy pointed out the incompatibility of the ideas of an omnipotent God and the suffering of man.

"Subalterns" is another poem, which shows Nature's randomness and obedience of some forces to this indifferent God without questioning:

"Poor wanderer," said the leaden sky,
"I fain would lighten thee,
But there are laws in force on high
Which say it must not be."

Hardy's "Subalterns" deals with some natural effect's servitude to a higher power. It displays some natural being's- the sky, the North Wind, sickness, death- absolute obedience to a stronger force, which is implied to be God. These effects are personified by Hardy to express their submission to the cruel God, who filled the world with pain and suffering. In the poem not only the sickness, and The North Wind, but also the death submits to this higher force, by confessing that he is also a slave to the schedule: "But I, too, am a slave!" Just as "Hap," "Subalterns" also aims to demonstrate the indifference and randomness of the forces governing nature.

The "New Years Eve" is another poem in which Hardy deeply shocked the conventional Christians of his time by implying God's indifference towards man. The speaker asks God to explain why he forced human beings to suffer:

Yea, Sire; why shaped you us, "who in
This tabernacle groan"-
If ever a joy be found herein,
Such joy no man had wished to win
If he had never known!
Then he: My labours-logicless-
You may explain; not I:
Sense_sealed I have wrought, without a guess
That I evolved a Consciousness
To ask for reasons why.

However, God has no answer to his question. He is "sense-sealed" which means "he only cares about the processes of nature, not the spiritual struggles of human beings" (Williams 149). Hardy focuses on the idea of existence of a force, which is responsible for goings-on in the universe, but is not conscious about the individual's sufferings.

Although Hardy's faith in Christianity was badly shaken and his former traditional religious ideas were put into question under the influence of Darwin and Huxley, he was also greatly influenced by some other thinkers of the time as he confessed in 1924:

> I have no philosophy...merely what I often explained to be only a confused heap of impressions, like a bewildered child at conjuring show... My pages show harmony of view with Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Comte, Hume, Mill and the others (qtd.in Charles 137).

John Stuart Mill, whom Hardy regarded as "one of the profoundest thinkers of the last century," had a deep influence on Hardy's literary development (qtd.in Williams 82). Mill's father, James Mill, and Jeremy Bentham were responsible for working out the philosophy of Utilitarianism, which is based on the idea that "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong" and utilitarians believe that "human beings were motivated only by desires of obtaining pleasure and avoiding pain" (qtd.in Williams 82). Therefore it is natural that Mill was brought up according to his father's ideas. His essay *On Liberty* both focuses on the idea that "if people are forced to live in ways which they do not want then their whole personalities will become distorted" (qtd.in Williams 86). Hardy was strongly impressed by Mill's *On Liberty* about which he says: "... We students of the date knew almost by heart" (qtd.in Williams 82).

Like many Utilitarians, Mill thought "nothing was valuable if it was not useful and human happiness was more important than institutions" (qtd.in Williams 82-83).

Inspite of Hardy's doubts about the existence of God and the meaning of life, he always believed in the necessity of a religion and stressed the importance of religious rituals and worship for individual help and comfort. He reveals his thoughts about going to church and worship as follows:

> I believe in going to church. It is a moral drill, and people must have something. If there is no church in a country village, there is nothing. Religious worship for the average man and woman is a great help to decent living. There may be a certain amount in the service that is of little value, but beautiful liturgy and grand old hymns have proved a help to thousands (Jedrzejewski 53).

It is clear from the above quotation that Hardy believes that religion plays an important role in social and moral order of societies and should be regarded as a guardian for people's "common ethical and cultural heritage" (Jedrzejewski 53). Because of a lot of people's need to believe in something and for their spiritual comfort, religion was absolutely necessary and was considered as one of the most important fundamentals of the continuity and stability of social life.

However Hardy believes that Christianity was not an adequate religion any more to answer the necessities of man while science was improving to such extend and denying many doctrines of the Bible and suggested its replacement by a new religion by asking "...why does not Christianity throw the sponge and say I am beaten, and let another religion take its place?" (qtd. in Jedrzejewski 50).He

thought that a new religion should be developed according to the changing needs and requirements of people and he briefly suggested the following:

> All the Churches in Europe should frankly admit the utter failure of theology, and put their heads together to form a new religion, which should have at least some faint connection with morality (qtd in Jedrzejewski 53).

This quotation is an affirmation of Hardy's longing for a new religion, which could bring a profound and more efficient understanding of ethics. If his religious biography is considered, it would easily be observed that, from his "rather passive recognition" which was an outcome of his religious upbringing, Hardy moved to the acceptance of a "more active understanding" of the need of a new religion (Jedrzejewski 50).

Something of what Hardy thought of Christianity and his own attitude towards his lack of faith is indicated in his poem "The Impercipient." There is no doubt that Hardy was nostalgically trying to keep the church he loved. While he was attending a church service, as a member of congregation, he realizes that he is no more sharing the believers' feelings and he feels unhappy while the "bright believing band" around him was hearing the "promise of immortality that the Service offers," like the sound of " a glorious distant sea" to him it is no more than the wail of "yon dark // And wind-swept pine." Hardy reflects his experience through "Impercipient" and displays his own attitude towards Christian faith as follows:

> That with this bright believing band
> I have no claim to be,
> That faiths by which my comrades stand
> Seem fantasies to me,

And mirage-mists their Shining Land,
Is a strange destiny?
Why thus my soul should be consigned
To infelicity,
Why always I must feel as blind
To sighs my brethen see,
Why joys they have found I cannot find,
Abides a mystery.

The thought in this poem is quite straight-forward: Hardy, attending a cathedral service, considers his own lack of faith and confesses that he no longer shares the joys of other believers and no longer accepts Christianity as an adequate religion to provide spiritual comfort. Instead, Christian faith seems to him to be "fantasies" and he describes heaven as "mirage mists" and "strange destiny" which he cannot conceive.

In the second stanza Hardy blames God for consigning his soul to unhappiness and simply asks why his soul should be "consigned to infelicity." He further describes his insight as blindness and complains that he is unable to find the joys of religion found by believers and claims in the third stanza that his lack of faith should move Christians to pity him:

My lack might move their sympathies
And Christian charity!

In the fifth stanza Hardy, having lost his belief, resembles himself to a bird that has lost its wings:

O, doth a bird deprived of wings
Go earth-bound willingly!

That is to say, struggling in an era, when Christianity was the norm, Hardy spent most of his life looking for the existence of God and the purpose of life. As he

aged, his faith was gradually lost because of the new scientific view of life, which "had disturbed the former serenity and raised insistent questions of man's place in nature and his eternal destiny" (Wood 669).

In "He Never Expected Much," which he wrote on his eighty-six birthday, Hardy portrays the world as indifferent and insensitive towards the needs of human beings.

> Well, World, you have kept faith with me,
> Kept faith with me;
> ...
> Never, I own, expected I
> That life would all be fair.

The world answers this believing and stoic persona who seems to be defeated by the haphazardly run world, as follows:

> I do not promise overmuch.
> Child; overmuch.

In the poem, Hardy reflects his resignation that the world will not fulfill any expectations that man asks and he feels that whatever was controlling the world was a passive being whose force is inadequate to fulfil man's necessities. That is to say, at the age of eighty-six, Hardy was getting more and more cynical about the existence of God.

To conclude, Hardy thinks that the universe is controlled by an unknown power, which he calls "fate," "Immanent Will," "Crass Casualty" or "Pure Blind Doomster" (Cecil 114). Brooks summarizes Hardy's point of view of the situation of man as "a struggling extremely sensitive, insufficient individual in an

uncompromising insensitive and absurd universe" which offers only suffering and dying. (25)

Unlike Darwin, who claims that "his theory of evolution does certainly not make against Christianity" (qtd.in Hough 247) and unlike the other thinkers of the time "as Spencer, Stuart Mill, Wallace and even Huxley, Hardy was unable to reconcile the idea of a fortuitous natural process with a faith in purposive existence" says Roppen (290) and summarizes the outlook of these thinkers about reconciling faith with science and putting the man on a significant place in nature as follows:

> These men were as convinced as their eighteenth-century forbears that man had a significant place in Nature, at the top of the animal hierarchy, and pointing to higher forms of life_ at least in moral sense. The survival values which man retains from the struggle for life were to them real values, and history confirmed, on its evidence of cultural and moral progress, their optimistic hopes for the future (Roppen 290).

Thus, as Roppen affirmed "Hardy was the first great Victorian poet to break away from this optimism, and deny the eclectic assumptions on which it rested" (289). His inability to reconcile religious belief with modern scientific and historical knowledge was clearly indicated through his poems that reflected his developing agnostic standpoint. Being a poet whose "outlook of life and of the world is a dark one," induced by his shaping the themes of his poems around a cruel God, hostile nature and sufferings of man, Hardy was called "pessimist" by many Victorians (Bezel 1). However, he rejected the term "pessimist" and insisted that he was only "a harmless agnostic" or an "evolutionary meliorist", which "implies a hope that

as human intelligence and conscience developed, conditions in the world must improve" (Millgate 410).

Because of his ideas that the universe was ruled by "Chance" and that only be improved by human intelligence, not by the help of God, many Victorians accused Hardy of being "a malignant old gentlemen who enjoyed tormenting the human race" (Williams 81). However, his ideas conveyed thought his poems and personal statements, strongly influenced poets of twentieth century, Ezra Pound, Robert Graves and D.H Lawrence who "had identified themselves as beneficiaries of Thomas Hardy and his poetry" (Hynes 177). Thus, Hardy's ideas would wait for the next century to meet its best hearers.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused on the spiritual journey of certain poets, Tennyson and Hardy, from an absolute faith to a suffering doubt, from the 18th century to the 19th under the influence of changing social and religious attitudes in the light of developing science.

The second chapter of this study has concerned with the origins of religion and science and presents a brief summary of the conflict between them. The history of religion and science demonstrates that they both came from the same origins. Not be able to understand the causes of natural phenomena, earthquakes, volcanoes, storms and droughts, people of early periods of history attributed these events to supernatural forces, which, they called Gods. People, then, created primitive religious rituals to please these Gods whom were believed to control all these events and at the same time they began to question the causes of natural events. That is to say, religion was born from a desire to escape the danger and science was born from a desire to understand the mysteries of nature. As western civilizations moved from Dark Ages into the Renaissance period, the conflict between religion and science started. During the seventeenth century, people, under the influence of scientific advancements, were forced to make a choice

between the two. The scientists of the age struggled to reveal scientific truths about nature despite the heavy opposition of the Catholic Church.

Copernicus was one of these scientists whose experimental observations led him to claim that the earth was one of the several planets that revolve around the sun. Then Galileo continued Copernicus' studies and brought experimental evidence concerning the planet earth's place in the solar system.

Two centuries later, Darwin directed his observations and studies not on the place of earth in the solar system but to the origin and the place of living beings on planet earth. Contrary to the Biblical account of life on planet earth, Darwin developed the Theory of Evolution, which alone with other social and intellectual developments of the age brought the matter of creation and religion into question.

The third chapter of this study has discussed the Victorian Age, which made a deep impact on history as an arena of clash between religion and science and observed the climax of this conflict. The Victorian age has been presented in the chapter as economically a prosperous, varied and colourful, but at the same time as a problematic and controversial age. The age was varied and colourful because it witnessed many scientific and technological advancements and harboured various new beliefs and attitudes. It was also a problematic and controversial age because various conflicting ideas led Victorian people to a kind of spiritual struggle and they began questioning their former beliefs under the influence of new scientific advancements, which caused an absolute crisis of faith. Finally, it has been emphasized in the chapter that not only ordinary people but also the writers and thinkers of the age suffered from this spiritual uncertainty and fell into depths of a profound doubt and reflected their emotions through their works.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Thomas Hardy were two of these writers who reflected the popular perspectives of their time through their works and questioned the meaning of life and the existence of God through their poems.

The fourth chapter has aimed to show Tennyson's approach to new scientific developments and religious controversies of the age. As a person who was highly interested in science, Tennyson absorbed many ideas of scientists and tried to embrace them with his religious belief although they were completely incompatible with the doctrines of the church. When his interest in science combined with his great pain, induced by his close friend, Hallam's death, Tennyson found himself in a profound doubt about the existence of God and the meaning of life. He reflected all his feelings through his famous poem, *In Memoriam A.H.H* which he called " the way of soul." The chapter has also focused on *In Memoriam A.H.H,* which reflected Tennyson's conflicting mind; sometimes he fell away from his faith, sometimes he finds emotional comfort and reaches emotional heights, then suddenly he again suffers greatly in doubt and sinks to depths. While he was experiencing these ups and downs, Tennyson was highly influenced by the works of Lyell, who claimed that the earth was in fact millions years old and many species had already been extinct. Lyell's investigations made Tennyson replace Romantics' "healing nature" with a new understanding of nature, which is "red in tooth and claw." He was also influenced by Chambers, who made "the first attempt to connect the natural sciences into a history of creation" (Ross,129) and found consolation by extending evolutionary theory to God's divine plan. The chapter has come to the conclusion that how

Tennyson's despair turned in to hope and how he regained his spiritual comfort and peace by reconciling science and faith.

Chapter five has given a brief summary of Hardy's religious biography, which has stretched out from an absolute faith to a suffering doubt. The chapter has first focused on Dorset, the rural area, where Hardy was born and brought up in traditions and religious ideas of the time. At that time, young Hardy witnessed the reaching of railway to Dorset, the Great Exhibition and the Oxford Movement which played an important role in the reinforcement of Hardy's religious faith.

The chapter, then, has pointed out to the date 1862, which was a turning point in Hardy's life in terms of the encounter with new ideas and views of Darwin, Mill, and Huxley, by whom he was highly impressed. While Darwin was suggesting the Theory of Evolution, Huxley was introducing him with the term "agnostic" and causing a struggle in his mind about the existence of God. Mill, on the other hand,effected him deeply by suggesting the idea that the human happiness was more important than institutions.

The chapter at the same time has presented Hardy as being an agnostic, meliorist and pessimist writer and demonstrates how he had reflected these tendencies through his several poems. His inability to reconcile scientific views of the age with religious faith and his loss of belief in an omnipotent God has been the last concern of the chapter five.

The overall conclusion is that; although they came from the same origin, in the 16th century an ongoing conflict started between religion and science. With the new scientific evidence about the age of planet earth and extinct species, which conflicted with the doctrine of church the conflict aroused its climax in the

19th century and caused a definite crisis of faith. The two prominent poets of the age, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Thomas Hardy, have been the figures discussed in the fourth and fifth chapters of this thesis. The matter of science and religion was an acute crisis for these two poets who reflected their scientific views through their poems.

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