

*Cristina Chifane\**

## ***THE SYMBOLISM OF NATURE IN THOMAS HARDY'S WESSEX TALES AND NOVELS***

**Keywords:** *cycles of nature; symbols; myths; self-discovery; self-denial; regeneration; dissolution.*

**Abstract:** *Analysing the lives of the protagonists in Thomas Hardy's Wessex Tales and Novels, this paper aims at answering the following questions: Is their destiny shaped by a certain determinism lying in the environment? Do their decisions and feelings influence the natural surroundings by means of outward projection?*

*If a mythical and archetypal reading will favour the assumption that the characters' reactions depend upon the cycles of nature, a psychoanalytical interpretation will focus upon the assumption that natural descriptions are in fact nothing but a representation of the characters' inner self.*

*Although apparently in contradiction, the two approaches reveal different facets of the same truth: in Hardy's tales and novels, nature is not just a mere decorative location; it is profoundly and uniquely bound to the characters' lives and destinies, sometimes becoming a character in the story.*

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\* "Constantin Brâncoveanu" University of Brăila, Romania