PASTORAL' as a poetic genre owes its origin to man's eternal quest for the last paradise as found in benevolent Nature. They were invented by the 'Alexandrian' or Greek bucolic poets of the third century B.C. like Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus. The spirit and quintessence of the pastoral thrive in an idyllic, tranquil, rural world into which a poet is mesmerized by a nostalgic tour of the past. An Arcadia full of simplicity, innocence, music, dance, laurels, and lilies flit past the poet's vision vying with the turbulent and trouble-torn present day realities. Passing centuries and changing cultures left the Pastoral unruffled in spirit and essence. The same idealistic simplicity which held Virgil and Theocritus in thrall inspired Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, Robert Greene, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Donne, John Milton, Alexander Pope, William Cowper, John Keats, Mathew Arnold, Thomas Hardy, Robert Frost and finally the modern W.B. Yeats. They tend towards a simplicity which is at once instinctive as it is universal. Pastoral, in a broader sense, is a view of life, an ethos or an informing principle.
The pastoral is invoked whenever an ideal or innocent world is sensed to be lost. It makes an interesting interaction between the harsh present day reality and an idealistic past perfection. W.W. Greg has described the basic condition of Pastoral as,

"What does appear to be a constant element in the Pastoral as known to literature is the recognition of a contrast, implicit or expressed, between pastoral life and some more complex type of civilization". 1

As Kermode puts it, pastoral poetry never arises in a time when there are children as there are now, who have seen a cow. Pastoral is a retrospective glance over the primitive from a sophisticated point of view. The past is sanctified in its exalted recollection of an Arcadian Vision. The Pastoral has been from the outset an urban interpretation of rural matters. The originator of Pastorals, Theocritus recollects from the perspective of the elegant court life of Alexandria, his Sicilian boyhood days spent in simple peasant ways.

With the Romantic and Victorian era leading to the Modern Pastorals regained a new significance as an antidote to the ills of a mechanised industrial society.
Industrial man is soon looking away from his technological wasteland into a peaceful rustic world. The contrast between the life in town and quiet country-side became a salient feature of pastorals. The rustics of the pastoral world lead a simple life whose rural ways and manners were "the unluxuriant product of a life". In the modern times pastoral has moved out of its old haunts in the Arcadian pastures. The countryside landscape and the diurnal rigorous routine of the rustics form the core of modern pastorals. Overwhelmed by the growth of technology, pastorals tend to go back to the prelapsarian time before the Industrial Revolution. The pastorals move from complexity to simplicity in both time and place. The soft primitivism of Arcadia is exchanged for a didactic primitive world. Nature in the countryside is perceived as morally generous, luxuriant and innocent, as Alexander Fraser Tytler forcefully says,

To a just taste, and unadulterated feelings, the Natural beauties of the country, the simple manners, rustic occupations, and rural enjoyments of its inhabitants, brought into view by the medium of a well-contrived dramatic fable, must afford a much higher degree of pleasure, than any chimerical fiction, in which Arcadian nymphs and swains hold intercourse with Pan and his attendant fauns and satyrs. 2
Hard work became an essential element in Romantic and Victorian versions of the pastoral. Wordsworth found harmony with nature which made the arduous tasks congenial and pleasant. The dictum that 'the herdsman lives by understanding the landscapes and living in harmony with them' is stressed by Wordsworth. The rustics such as Michael ("Michael") and the leech-gatherer ("Resolution and Independence") remain one with nature despite their hard labours.

Going back to the countryside is the essence of Victorian times and the pastorals at the turn of the twentieth century. The countryside became a sacred place of retreat in which one was refreshed after the ills of the city. The technological processes and mechanisation had intruded into the peaceful countryside also. Thus the pastorals are essentially a nostalgic going back to pre-industrial days. Some poets were fascinated by the old world splendour of shepherds and shepherdesses, while others found in the 'honest labours' of the rural world a haven of peace. The Pastoral vision comes throbbingly alive where there are frontiers checking the modernisation of the rural world. A longing for
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simplicity is thus universal and is an intrinsic part of the Pastoral.

All pastoral are a search for the original splendour of nature described in Genesis. But the ways of perceiving the splendour vary greatly and in the variety lies the fertility of the poet's imagination. The attraction of the pastoral increases with the turmoil of the surroundings. The flexibility of the pastoral in adapting itself to the tides of change has helped it to survive the test of time.

Degeneration of the splendour perceived earlier in nature, a retreat into an imaginary Arcadia, nostalgia, pastoral drama, lament and elegy are common features of the pastoral convention. In their different version, they reveal the effect of time and place. A study of rural England and New England during the transitional years is essential for understanding the pastoral lore of Hardy and Frost.

Hardy's actual rural Dorset is essentially a land of struggle, where changes occurred in urban trends. Railways, the penny-posts, mowing and reaping machines, union work-houses and lucifer matches had invaded the
serene hamlet, displacing old values. These new inventions placed life on a faster rhythm. But in the process, age old traditions were swept away. There were two major economic depressions following harvest failures. The farmers lost heavily.

Hardy shows mechanised agriculture at work and the resultant ravages following it. The reaping machine with its red arms in the shape of Maltese Cross, gradually reduces the corn. Hardy probably symbolised the human plight in the sad fate of humble creatures like rabbits, hares, snakes, rat and mice which were exposed, huddled and finally massacred. Man is equally helpless in the hands of mechanically operating passionless machines. In Tess of the D'Urbervilles he describes a machine as "dark, sooty, grimy and motionless." The machine and the engine man had nothing in common with the surroundings. "He was in the agricultural world, but not of it. He served fire and smoke these denizens of the fields served vegetation, weather, frost and sun." 4

All the old world practices like the shearing supper, the long smock-frocks and harvest homes have disappeared. The stationery cottagers who had carried
on the local traditions and humours were supplanted.
The migratory labourers could not continue the established
traditions and hence there was a break in the continuity
in local history, legend, folk-lore and social
conventions. The age long attachment to the soil and
home was rudely slighted.

The machines have become predominant driving human
labour to abject soulless work which mangled the body
and depressed the spirit. The social and economic
conditions were on the decline. Mass agricultural exodus
has left deserted farm houses. Mechanization of farm
work have brought in its wake misery of impermanence,
depopulation, unemployment, starvation and exploitation
of labour. Hardy like George Crabbe and John Clare
realises the sad facts of the transformation of the
villages.

Green pastures and verdant valleys have turned
into heathland and moor on which unrelieved dreariness
settled. Hardy finds an unattended heathland moor
evoking sad sensations.
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Sight shunned to entertain
The black lead land of featureless contour,
Was like a tract in pain.

("A Meeting With Despair" ll 2-3, PR, pp. 57 - 8).

The literal facts of Frost's world of decaying New England stretch over second growth timber a bleak rural world of abandoned 'black cottages', ruined farms ("Directive" PR, pp. 377 - 79) and overgrown neglected paths. The mounting tide of migration has left a few neglected, sparsely populated islands of farm lands. Some of his poignant lyrics depict the desolation and decay of the ravaged homes. 'An emptiness flayed to the very stones;/I found no people that dared show themselves'. ("The Census-Taker", PR, pp. 174-76).

Scenes of devastation, ruin and neglect were common. Village culture in New England like it was in Hardy's Dorest, was 'burnt, dissolved and broken off'.

There is a house that is no more a house
Upon a farm that is no more a farm
And in a town that is no more a town.

("Directive" ll 6-8, PR, pp. 377-79).
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Even natural forces are not spared by the ravages of urbanization. A pre-historic immortal force like the brook is smothered and driven underground. Evocatively the city stifles the citizens. The brook is thrown 'Deep in a sewer dungeon under stone/ In fetid darkness still to live and run' ("A Brook In the City" PRF, p. 231).

Frost's personal experience in the textile mills left a nightmare image of the machines. He views the mechanical devices as a menace, as objects, inducing fear and dread of accidents. The locomotive ("The Egg and Machine" PRF, pp. 269 - 70), the buzz saw ("Out, Out-") PRF, pp. 136 - 37) even the stones of the primitive grind mill ("The Grindstone", PRF, p. 188) become personifications of an evil force ever ready to conquer men. In "Out-Out-" a rattling and snarling buzz saw severs the 'tender hand of a young boy' and ultimately claims his life. The mechanical shaft's noise means 'life' when 'it's not our death' ("The Shy-Seeker", PRF, pp. 92 - 101) Frost is not restrained in his resentment of the machines. The speaker in "The Egg and the Machine" is outspoken,
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His hate had roused an engine up the road.
He wished when he had had the track alone
He had attacked it with a club or stone

("The Egg and the Machine" 11 4-6, PEP, pp.269-70).

Frost's youth and old age are blended with the rural locals of Vermont and New Hampshire. It is a rural world in decay. The rustics have lost all that was dear to them. There is no promise of better days to come. They are a forsaken and forlorn lot exhibiting strange mental aberrations. Silas in "The Death of A Hired Man" (PEP, pp. 34 - 40) fails to be a regular at Warren's farm. A hapless woman patiently awaits her tenure at the lunatic asylum. 'I s'pose I've got to go the road I'm goings/Other folks hare to and why shouldn't I?'

("A Servant to Servants" PEP, pp. 62 - 68). An over wrought wife refuses to co-operate with her husband in overcoming their common sorrow. ("Home Burial" PEP, pp.51-55). The sweeping transformation from the rural to an urban way of life distrubs the peaceful countryside and leaves the rustics bewildered.

The rapid changes kindled a nostalgia for a vanished way of life. In contrast to a disorganized
and disoriented present, a peaceful past is recollected, 
the poets retreat into a rural world, edenic in innocence 
and idyllic in its simplicity. The universal impulse to 
escape into the pastoral is sought by the weary poets as 
a means of escape or a temporary retreat to take stock of 
things, to recover. But it is a short sojourn, a temporary 
stay or rather a prelude to return.

O happy men! that have the grace... 
This bliss, this heav'n this paradise to see, 
and continues significantly; 
This is the place wherein you may assuage 
Your sorrows past, here is that joy and bliss 
That flourished in the antique golden age. 5

In the development of the Pastoral the connotation 
of an Arcadian retreat changed in the latter eighteenth 
century. The movement shifted from the local and 
realistic to the universal and symbolic, from shepherd 
kings to Georgic Idylls. The Georgic retreats were 
progressive and bourgeois. Husbandry and agricultural 
labour took the place of an easy restful life of a wandering 
shpherd and his flock.

From the days of Spenser and Shakespeare, through 
the ages of Milton and Wordsworth, to the modern, poets 
have found nature pure and uncorrupted in the rural world.
They are inspired by the splendour of the rustic world steeped in peaceful occupations of farming and agriculture. Man is seen as a simple husbandman, virtuous and content. Herrick portrays such a rural idyll.

Come sons of Summer, by whose toil,  
We are the lords of Wine and Oils,  
By whose tough labours, and rough hands,  
We rip up first, then reap our lands.

The romantic continued to admire the ways of the rustic folk, but they went beyond the domestic landscape of villages and fields to the wild grandeur of mountain and cataracts. Isaak Walton was mesmerised by rural England. His *Compleat Angler* finds in the rustic scenes a joy and an object worthy of contemplation. The earth gives up her bounty to the eager rustic. And the poet in his contemplation is in an exultant mood,

As I thus sat these and other sights  
had so fully possessed my soul with Content, and that I thought, as the poet has happily expressed it;  
I was for that time lifted above earth;  
And possessed joys not promised in my birth.

Thomas Hardy came from a humble home in upper Bockhampton in Dorset. His early associations were with field and flock. Hardy believed in the Wordsworthian
dictum that in rustic life 'the essential passions of the heart find a better soil', and are 'less under restraint than in urban society'. Though it was the age of transition, Hardy's early years were spent in a quiet corner. Dorset of his childhood by a singular fortune escaped the standardization of the industrial age and the resultant debasement of human sensibility. The rural England of mid-nineteenth century had changed very little.

Hardy grew up in close contact with the Dorset peasant folk with their rich country lore, their ballads and their penchant for local legends. His attachment to the rustic culture has a sole exception in John Clare. Hardy's knowledge of Dorset was without any illusion of the sentimentalization of a town-bred observer. Hardy writes with the ease of one who himself is an integral part of the rural world. As a true rural chronicler he projects nature in its varied moods of humour, pathos and defiance. Hardy's Dorset is different from the modern scientific world. It has the lasting charm of an ancient culture. Each object has an intimacy, every custom a tradition and the changing seasons a familiarity. Hardy brings alive the lore of the reddleman. He is familiar with every rustic occupation like cider-making,
sheep-dipping, reaping, furze-cutting or tree-barking.

Rural occupations are faithfully described. The peasant moves with the seasonal rhythm, his occupations varying with regularity. A frail farmer bravely tills 'the earth against gripping gusts' ("The Farm-Woman's Winter" CPH, pp. 214-15). The rigours of winter do not stop the farmer.

They load the leafless hedge hard by.
And the blades of last year's grass,
While the fallen ploughland turned up high.

("At Middle-Field Gate in February 11 6-8, CPH, p.480)

Frost brings fresh breath from the green country, a wholesome New England country with its 'rose-pogonias', and morgan colts. His own boyhood experiences stress an instinctual dislike for the urban experience. Frost has always associated best poetry with the rural scene, 'Poetry is more often of the country than of city. Poetry is very, very rural rustic'. His poems serve as a vivifying rarer breath of country air to the city-oppressed. Rural tranquillity brings a momentary salvation, to the stricken city-dweller, lost in the noisy bustle and confusion of factories. His
'Blue berries', 'Cow in apple time', 'The ax-helve', 'Tufts of flowers', 'Birches', 'West-running brooks', and 'Owen Birds' are the stable solid stations against the fast, moving currents of the scientific modern era. Frost's rural scenes, with all their realistic delicacy and liveliness of portrayal are not mere imitations of life. Like most of his characters Silas, the hired man, the farmer of "Star-Splitter", (PRF. pp. 176 - 79), and the wood-cutter of "Two Tramps In Mud Time" (PRF, pp. 275 - 77) Frost is imbued with rural occupation. To use his own phrase he 'mingled reckless talk of heavenly stars with hugger-mugger farming' ("Star-Splitter", PRF, pp. 176 - 79).

He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading.

("The Death of the Hired Man" 11 89 - 92, PRF, pp.34-40).

Frost is proud of his ability to handle a scythe skilfully. From Whittier to Emerson, there has been a fascination for work done with hands. Physical labour is linked to mental enlightenment. An intimate communion exists between the earth representing nature and the peasant, a spokesman for humanity. In a predominantly
rural world, the agrarian way of life seems permanent. Like Walt Whitman Frost is "Wersed in country things". He knows that "the fact is the sweetest dream that labor knows" ("Mowing" PPF, p. 17) He could chop firewood with vigour and ease.

Good blocks it was I split,
As large around as the chopping block;
And every piece I squarely hit
Fell splinterless as a cloven rock.

("Two Tramps In Mud Time" 11 9-12, PPF. pp.275-77)

The dictum that the ploughman lives by conflict with nature is true of the Georgian idylls of Frost and Hardy. Farm work is arduous and causes suffering ("At Middle-Field Gate in February" CPH, p. 480) The farmers wield their scythes, under the scorching sun with scarce shade." ("Mowing" PPF, p. 17) Group ritualism is common in Hardy's poem, as illustrated in the Harvest supper in "Harvest Supper" (CPH, p.777-78) and junketings and may pole in "The Bride-Night Fire" (CPH, p. 71) Communal farming is most common in Hardy's rural Wessex. As against this is Frost's stress on individual capacity and the tiller's relation to his own land. "Mending Wall" emphasises the need to have a
barrier separating the neighbours (PRF, p. 33) The speaker in "Two Tramps in Mud Time" (PRF, p. 275) is reluctant to let another share his occupation.

Hardy’s rustic labourers are a faded lot, frail and gaunt following the seasonal rhythm as a hopeless inevitability of continual work. ("The Farm-Woman’s Winter" CPH, p. 214) Frost on the other hand combines work, with pleasure 'then most I loved my task' He knows 'the work is play for mortal stakes' ("Two Tramps" PRF, p. 277). He finds aesthetic and transcendent moments in his confrontation with nature. He says in "Two Tramps In Mud Time"

My object in living is to unite
My avocation and my vocation
As my two eyes make one in sight.

("Two Tramps In Mud Time" ll 66 - 68, PRF, pp. 275-77)

Frost idealizes the rural labourer. Rejecting the conventional pastoral, he adapts Silas the hired man ("The Death of the Hired Man" PRF, pp. 34-40) a mower ("Mowing" PRF, p. 17) or a lumberjack ("Two Tramps In Mud Time" PRF, pp. 275-77), men doing physical labour. He prefers a tough life, renouncing the life of leisure. His rustic characters are not always engaged in creative work. The speaker in "Two Tramps" cuts the woods which is an
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anticreative occupation. In "Mowing" and "The Tuft of Flowers" (PF, p. 22) mowing the grass resists nature in the form of grass.

While celebrating the rustic world's merits, Hardy and Frost strive to bring a distant vision nearer. They set to work from the particular and reach the universal. They select particular locales in order to give authentic projection to their Arcadian retreats. In the background of Wessex and New England their pastoral move from the particular to the general from the local and time-bound to air universal and timeless dimension.

In a bid to immortalize the past, Thomas Hardy has evolved a definite setting in his works. This setting is a combination of half real and half dreamy locations. To this unique setting Hardy gave the name, 'Wessex' appearing for the first time in *Far From the Madding Crowd*. GREENHILL was the Nizni Novgorod of south Wessex. The idea of an ideal country which is
as yet unsullied by the ravages of mechanization and urbanization appeared in a series of poems and novels entitled, *The Wessex Poems* and *the Wessex Novels.* Hardy revived the ancient name of Wessex to describe the South-Western region of England, which provided the backdrop to the play of human passions he described. To lend unity to the scene he required a terrestrial definition. In his general preface to the Wessex Edition Hardy says,

'At the dates represented in the various narrations things were like that in Wessex: the inhabitants lived in certain ways, engaged in certain occupations, kept alive certain customs, just as they were shown doing in these pages.'

Hardy has tried to preserve a fairly true record of vanishing life in chronicling 'country customs and vocations, obsolete and obsolescent.' Hardy presents his conception of the interplay of nature and man through the play of life in a tract of the countryside. His protagonists are strong-natured countrymen, disciplined by the necessities of agricultural life. He admires the deftness and dexterity displayed in rural occupations. Hardy's Wessex is not merely a geographical location, it consists of people and their encounter with nature. Before the modern currents changed the rural way of life
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It had a lasting quality. Passing years did not change the customs or character of the rural community in his portrayal of Wessex. The scene spoke of permanence. The ploughman methodically tilled the land. There was a regularity without stalesness, its consistancy was the essence of reliability. In general, the rhythms of village life was steady and quiet.

I know a domicile of brown and green,
Where for a hundred summers there have been
Just such enactments, just such daybreaks seen.

("A Bird-Scene at a Rural Dwelling" ll 12-14, CPH, p. 701).

Hardy's Dorset of the pre-industrialised era had a rich folklore. The farmers held a harvest feast during which young 'maids danced their best with the Scotch-Greys in the barn', 'the red shapes; enlivening 'the brown barn' ('The Harvest Supper' CPH, pp. 777-78). The bygone culture of 'junketings, may-poles and flings' comes throbbingly alive in "The Bride-Night Fire" (CPH, pp. 71-4).

Hardy's regionalism is different from Arnold Bennett's provincialism or William Barnes's localism. As Prof. Samuel-Hynes has observed of the two men (Hardy and William Barnes)
Barnes was a provincial, Hardy was not, where Barnes exploited the "unique qualities" of Dorest life, Hardy sought to draw upon it for universally valid symbols. 10

"Literature begins with geography" and "the land is always in my bones." Robert Frost once told R.L. Cook, 11 Frost finds his poetic inspiration in the rural settings of Vermont and New England. He merged with the mountain forests, and brooks of New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts. His early life was spent in New England on the Derry farm. Those years turned out to be crucial in Frost's intellectual, spiritual and artistic development. The conditions celebrated in his pastoral Arcadia are those of a world not yet dominated by urban culture. A pleasant intimacy exudes from his snow scenes, country roads, and farm houses. When his North of Boston was published, they were befittingly compared to Idylls of Theocritus. Ezra Pound aptly termed them as 'modern Georgies'. 12

"Poetry is more often of the country than of the city" opined Frost. "Poetry is very, very rural—rustic. It stands as a resource, as a recourse." 13

Frost chose an isolated farmland of New England. It was a country of small hilly farms profuse with deep
dark woods, lilac and syringa bushes. In his
bucolics the leisurely rhythm of country life before
mechanisation is lyrically brought out. Farmland chores
are described with a homely cheerfulness. The life
recorded is simple and dictated by nature. The poem
"Strong Are Saying Nothing" (PRF, pp. 299-300) figures
the implicit faith present in the farmer's spring planting
and his unruffled faith in the seasonal activity, the
white blossom of plum awaits the bees, "though there's
more than a doubt if the weather is not too cold".

His New England predecessors were Sarah Orne Jewett,
Mary Wilkins and Alice Brown. While Hardy remained a mere
chronicler of village culture, Robert Frost took an
active part in farming. In his association with the soil,
there is a personal intimacy and intuition. The
quintessence of rural New England pulsates in his verses.
His portrayal is exact and lively. A rare vigour and
vitality characterize them. Earth is the main source of
Frost's poetic inspiration. Frost bestows an authenticity
to his bucolic delineations. "Let none assume to till
the land but farmers/ I only speak to you as one of them"
("Build Soil" PRF, pp. 316 - 25).
It was no dream of the gift of idle hours,
Or easy gold at the hand of fay or elf:
Anything more than the truth would have
seemed too weak.

("Mowing" 11 7-9, PRP, p. 17)

Frost takes just pride in a simple honest life.
He does not fancy easy gold ("Mowing", PRP, p. 17) A grind_stone is not mere quaint piece of decoration, it is symbolic of a labourer's sweat and groan. ("The Grind_stone", PRP, p. 188). Frost is surrounded by 'Blueberries as big as the end of your thumb,/ Real sky blue, and heavy, and ready to drum' and 'red apples', 'ten thousand fruit to touch, cherish in hand lift down'. ("After Apple-Picking" PRP, pp. 68-69).

In each one of his accounts there is the aroma of the region. Generally New Englanders have a flair for work. Even when old, infirm and feeble the old men in "An Old Man's Winter Night", (PRP, p. 106) and Silas carry out their chosen vocations. A determination verging on defiance distinguishes such heroism. Like Hardy, Frost is genuine in his accounts of the rural world. The jumbled hills, lichenated granite and little cold excitable streams are real. The main features of
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Frost's Georgic idyll are labour, work and human endeavour. The silvery birches ("Birches", PRF, p. 121), 'red tufts of flowers' ("A Tuft of Flower" PRF, pp. 22-23) and the neatly cut and stacked wood-pile ("Wood-Pile", The PRF, pp. 101-2) are actual occurrences.

Hardy's Wessex, on the otherhand is a dreamland, a fancy realm of perfection and harmony. His lyrics are full of fertile pictures of lush green fields, golden brown corn ricks, fluffy sheep, verdant valleys, merry village fairs and joyful harvest feasts, fairy-land scenes of joyous merriment.

Elsewhere the mead is possessed of the neats, That range not greatly above The rich rank thicket which brushes their teats,

("Growth In May" 11, CPH, p. 626)

The southern sea-bordered shire of Dorset, (scene of Hardy's idyll) is not a typical country of one soil; Nostalgic recollections helped Hardy weave a picture of the rural world of nineteenth century southwestern England. From the post-industrial world point, it is a picture of a by-gone world. Hardy himself was surprised to find the press and public willingly accept his fancy realm. His Georgic poems and novels
reconstruct the nineteenth century south-western England. The picture emerging out is mainly a nostalgic creation. The realities remain blurred and obscure. An analysis of the milieu leaves a picture of his Wessex more of a fictional world than one of an authentic historically documented area. 16

Frost does not portray a mythical world. Thus the tension which exists in the relationship of Dorset as it existed in the half-real, half-fancy 'Wessex' of Hardy is totally absent in Frost. His Vermont and New Hampshire are real locations. Frost does not shy away from verities. His North of Boston is a true picture of a post-industrial New England. It is an authentic delineation of a village ravaged by the mass agricultural exodus and the consequent scenes of deserted farms and bleak homes. The rustic characters of Hardy exude a myth of a bygone warmth and cozy comfort. The stark bare features of a modern village have impelled him to seek solace in the recollection of a golden past. Hardy is lost in the dream of a bygone world.

Childlike, I danced in a dream;
Blessings emblazoned that day;
Everything glowed with a gleam;
Yet we were looking away!

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The soothing rural world is an antidote to the evil effects of an over-crowded city life. There is a tranquillity in the salubrious air. The poets have chosen rural worlds to express heroic rectitude, a traditional rural capacity, a tremendous power to endure and surmount the obstacles which nature projects in their way. Among the simpler and purer elemental form they are durable too. The rustic folks passion is ingrained in the soil; Hardy and Frost have followed Wordsworth's dictum of 'choosing incidents and situations from common life'.

They chose particular regions to reach universal experiences. The locations provided authenticity. Even when the poems start with an identifiable spot in space, the image evoked is universal. Frost himself analyses his stand, "Because I wrote my novels in New Hampshire/ Is no proof that I aimed them at New Hampshire." ("New Hampshire" ll 246-7, "Poems pp.159-72). Dorset and New England are symbols for the whole world of human experience. Their rural realms represent nature as a microcosm. New England and Dorset to Frost and Hardy respectively are as Concord to Thoreau, Yoknapatawpha to Faulkner and Shropshire to Houseman. This is in sharp contrast with old pastorals which were not associated with any particular place.
The fact is the sweetest dream that labour knows.

("Moving" PRP, p. 17). An equation of fact and dream springs from the basic pastoral premises of identifying aesthetic dream and the activities of the Arcadian landscape. Hardy returns to an older, almost Virgilian world of shepherd and shepherdess. Frost apparently discards the animation and pretended correspondences between shepherd and nature in the old pastoral convention. But occasionally glimpses of conventional scenes are not uncommon.

From the surfeit of a harrowing experience in the cities, Hardy was "Heart-halt, spirit-lame, and city-opprest" ("In a Wood" CP, pp. 64-65). The Georgic retreat also became a sad experience, when machines invaded the peaceful countryside. The changes were a part of the long and painful agricultural revolution. As an expression of agricultural discontent, Hardy seeks the conventional pastoral world of shepherds.
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Who observed more strict, customs than the seasons' difference bade,
Who lived with running brooks for books in Nature's wildwood garden,
And called idleness their trade...

("The Two Basilinds" ll 17-20, CPH, pp. 199-201).

The unmistakable aroma of the lush green meadows, bylanes, flowing rivers and sunlit pastures and peacefully grazing cattle, establishes the potential value of a pastoral mode of life. The life is simple and leisurely. Shepherds and shepherdesses are engaged in the pastoral occupations of tending the cattle amidst profusion of thistles, fleshy catkins and fern sprouts. The season spoken of is of the gentle breezy month of May. Every meadow is green and every twig is astir with sap, and throbbing with life. As Hardy says in his pastoral novel, Far From the Madding Crowd, "God was palpably present in the country and the devil had gone with the world to the town."

They shear their sheep on a warm day in a barn and enjoy a shearing-supper after the day's labour. The bees come swarming and the bee-hiving operations start,

Suddenly there intunes a hum:
This side, that side, it seems to come.
From the purple in myriads rise the bees
With consternation and their rapt employ...

("The Sheep-Boy" ll 6-9, CPH, pp. 789-90).
Dairy-maids flock down to milk the cows coming from meads on a midsummer afternoon. The meadow is of a rich lush green hue. Amid the luxurious atmosphere of pasture and the tinkling of milk-pails, lilting melodies are heard when the maids and milkman sing to entice the cows. The shepherd is, the king of his flock and in his realm peace and contentment reign.

The flowery river-ooze
Upheaves and falls; the milk purrs in the pail;
Few pilgrims but would choose
The peace of such a life in such a vale.

("The Milkmaid" ll 5-8, CPH, p. 157.)

The rivers run criss-cross in the valleys, speckled with grass and multi-coloured floral profusion. Amid the oozing luxury and warm ferments of the valley at a season when the rush of juices could almost be heard below, it is impossible even for a dumb calf to indulge in despair. Thus he muses contemplatively,

And in some fair stream, taking sips,
May stand through summer noons,
With water dribbling from my lips
And rising halfway to my hips,
And babbling pleasant tunes.

("The Calf" ll 16-20, CPH, p. 945).
Hardy's pastoral are full of scenes of heightened passion, lyrical feeling and celebration of vernal love, peculiar to the pastoral world. The seasonal rites involve handsome shepherds and merry milkmaids. Human love follows the seasonal and diurnal rhythms. The milkmaids and shepherds are unbound and free, following the seasonal dictates. Young ecstatic love blossoms, quietly rich, with sedate activities. The external conditions influence the emotional impulses. Natural surroundings minister to their joyousness, simple facts, yet sufficient to increase their buoyancy.

How it shone

When we went from Flint comb - Ash
To start at dairy work once more
In the laughing meads, with cows three-score,
And pails, and songs, and love too rash;

("We Field-Woman" 11 13-17, CPH, 881).

The affairs are infinitudes of crystallized moments in the love lives of dairymaids and evocatively the love lives of whole man-kind. These vignettes are more than intuitive flashes of momentary celebration. Every single object viewed from the lover's propensity is enchanting. The surrounding vernal profusion enhances loves' youthful passion,
Past the hills that peep
Where the lease is smiling,
On and on beguiling
Crisply-cropping sheep;
Under boughs of brushwood
Linking tree and tree
In a shade of lush-wood,
There caressed we!

("Episodia" ll 1-8, CPH, p. 565).

In his adaptation of the pastoral convention, Hardy excels in the elegiac genre. The convention has been found especially appropriate to Hardy's expressions of grief over the passing of an old agricultural order, and the dying spirit of nature. While mourning the death of his wife he observes the classic mode of lament. The poems written during the period following the death of his wife Emma Lavinia Hardy (1912-15) entitled Veteris Vestigia flammae, are mainly elegies. There is no attempt on the part of the poet to build up heroic proportions; the main theme of loss generates pathos rather than pity and fear. Nature as manifested in these poems is shown to be calm, temperate, subdued
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with a twilight tinge of melancholy. They reflect a mute, quiet, meditative mood, deliberately restrained and dignified.

The pastoral elegy, as a genre is based on the myth and cult of Adonis, connected with vegetation and its seasonal variation. The ceremonies are discarded. But the rhythm of the seasons, changes in the vegetation and the mode of life of the people are constantly stressed. The poem "During Wind and Rain", begins with autumn season, "How the sick leaves reel down in throngs!" The following stanza is about spring, suggested in the spring clearing operations,

Making the pathways neat
And the garden gay;
And they build a shady seat....

("During Wind and Rain" 11 10-12, CPH, pp. 495-6). The chief characters of the poem, 'man and maidens' sit 'under the summer tree,/ With a glimpse of the bay'. Winter comes and with it the end comes rapidly. A high new house is acquired, and 'clocks and carpets and chairs/ On the lawn all day'. But death steals the 'brightest things that are theirs', "Down their carved names the rain-drop ploughs". (Ibid 11 28). The seasonal rhythm is concerned with the ideas of death and resurrection, and it helps Hardy to project the traditional view of nature as cyclical, harmonious and
life-giving. Hardy does not emphasize the renewal theme of a typical elegy. The scientific theories, formulated during the turn of the century displaced conventional beliefs. His elegies are in an oblique way, express his regrets at the passing of a certain kind of rural society and way of life. Hardy feels, and expresses the pathos of this process.

No more planting by Molly and me
Where the beds used to be
Of sweet-william; no training the clambering rose
By the framework of fir
Now bowering the pathway, whereon it swings gaily
And blows
As if calling commendation from her.

("Molly Gone" ll 7-12, CPH, pp. 497-8).

Another characteristic feature of a pastoral elegy is an extravagant expression of grief. Pastoral laments have a melancholic tone. Hardy's grief at the unexpected death of his wife overwhelms him and thoroughly shatters him. 'I seem but a dead man held on end/ To sink down soon ....'. ("The Going" CPH, pp.338-39).

Hardy's knowledge of classical form of pastoral elegy is shown in the poem "The Death-Day Recalled". In the opening of Moschus's "Lament for Bion", the poet invokes nature in the form of springs, groves and flowers
to participate in the mourning. In Hardy's adaptation of this mode, the poet's dismay at nature's failure to demonstrate its grief at the death of one 'who in her flower, loved the places, 'and often pined for their lonely faces', when she was confined in towns.

BHEHY did not quiver,
Juliet grew not gray.
Thin Valeancy's river
Held its wonted way.
Bos seemed not to utter
Dimnest note of dirge,

("The "Death-Day Recalled" ll 1-6, CPH, p. 350).

Hardy repeatedly asks the various landmarks, the reason for their muteness. The poet's reproaches are indicative of the inevitable change of view displacing faith in the ancient order of nature. Nature, as understood by a scientifically conditioned poet at the turn of the century is not interested in the death of one of her creation. It is Hardy's reluctant acceptance of the new evolutionary account of the biological world and nature. He cannot see nature warmly responding to human loss. Milton's view of sentimental nature as seen in his mourning of Edward King, is not shared by Hardy. Hardy is cut off from the mythical nature poetry of earlier centuries, and seeks a delicate balance between traditionalism
and modern scientific percepts. The pastoral tradition is here deployed in Hardy's poignant portrayal of nature's callousness, his inability to share the smug faith of his predecessors. Nature, "unheeding" and "listless", as shown here is to become a familiar sentiment of the modern perception, a hopeless reductive view. Hardian elegies act as a final synthesis of the transitional turmoil and the rejection of the romantic concept.

In the pastoral convention of the bucolic poets, the grief after working itself out, is mellowed and modulated into a mellow reconciliation. Hope arises out of one's conviction of the promise of renewed life in nature. The mourners express their faith through rituals. The religious and ritual undertones of the classical pastoral elegy appear in the poem "The Suppliant". A weary traveller comes from afar to place a wreath at the grave of his wife.

.... he fares
Along the wintry way,
From day-dawn until eve repairs
Towards her mound to pray.

("The Suppliant" ll 70-72, CPH, pp. 177-79)
Ceremonies are an integral part of the pastoral convention. They are connected with the legend of Adonis' resurrection. The cult of Adonis consists of extravagant acts of mourning, and elaborate rituals expressing hope of his rebirth. Spring and early summer flower-plants such as primroses, snow-drops and ivy are planted over the mound. They are symbolic of the renewal of life. A moving account of this practice appears in "Rain on a Grave."\(^{20}\)

Soon will be growing
Green blade from her mound,
And daisies be showing
Like stars on the ground,
Till she form part of them —
Ay— the sweet heart of them.

("Rain on a Grave" ll 28-33, CPH, pp. 341-42).

Hardy's elegies reflect his general unhappy mood, and his disappointment with nature's indifference. His poetic expressions reveal his thorough knowledge of the Greek Pastoral art. As a realist of the scientific era, he has to accept the evolutionary view of nature as inevitable. His attachment to a bygone culture and his acceptance of the scientific view do not stand in contrast. They are delicately balanced. The classical
pastoral elegy developed from rituals celebrating and promoting the seasonal renewal of Nature's fertility. But later on, the genre was utilised to express personal grief or the fallen state of the church (cf. Milton's "Lycidas", Shelley's "Adonais"). The end of life is mourned in Hardy's elegies.

The truth of New England pastoralism lies in its severity, not in a benignity that only masks and foreshadows the suffering and the inevitable death.

- Robert Frost

In Frost's version of the pastoral, it is a mode of viewing common experience through the medium of the rural world. Hence, there are only a few instances of the ancient pastoral world.

Typical pastoral world motifs like the shepherd, shepherdess, wandering flock, floral profusion, singing and dancing, the flowery wreath and pan with his oaten pipes are present. But in order to revitalise the art the traditional material is given a realistic start, by blending with it, details of Frost's countryside. Into the pastoral framework he has woven an intricate pattern of New England farm life. Changing the views of nature has necessitated a combination of
conventional pastoral imagery and a wealth of allusions to local customs and scenery.

The poem "The Pasture" is a typical pastoral idyll. The farm chores like, raking the leaves, cleaning the water and tending the calf are light and pleasurable labours. The picture of the delicate world of a pastoral spring liking of a little tottering calf by its mother establishes the simplicity of reality, and innocence of a prelapsarian world in a pre-industrial period. The poet invites his reader to enter the pastoral Arcadia.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young
It totters when she licks it with her tongue
I shan't be gone long - You come too

("The Pasture" ll 5-8, PRF, p. 1)

The poet's withdrawal into the pasture land in search of wandering cattle has a pastoral connotation. In the poem "The Runaway", a frightened Morgan Colt wanders in the mountain pasture. The shepherd is mildly rebuked for letting such a tender creature to roam unattended on a snowy evening.

"Whoever it is that leaves him out so late,
When other creatures have gone to stall and bin,
Ought to be told to come and take him in."

("The Runaway" ll 19 - 21, PRF, p. 223)
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His pastoral is a rich, fertile land nourished by brooks and mountain springs. An unlimited abundance marks his blueberry pastures. "Blueberries as big as the end of your thumb/ Real sky-blue, and heavy, and ready to drum." ("Blueberries", PRP, pp. 59-62).

"A scent of ripeness" pervades the unharvested pastures. ("Unharvested" PRP, pp. 304-5). The beauty and abundance of the scene is concerned with the organic whole of a purposeful beauty and fertility.

In the peaceful pastoral world, human love is shown in a tender moment of understanding. In "The Death of the Hired Man",

"........ She put out her hand
Among the harplike morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard some tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night.

("The Death of the Hired Man" ll 106-110, PRP, 54-40).

While Hardy portrays impulsive love of dairy-maids and shepherds in the vernal season. Frost projects the enduring conjugal love. In Hardy the surroundings full of spring flowers and song, inspired unrestrained love. In Frost, love seems to be based more on human understanding than on the external surroundings.
Although, Frost adapts other pastoral modes, it is in his Eclogues that he excels. These appear as monologues and dialogue verse poems on pastoral themes like "Build Soil" - ("A Political Pastoral", PRP. 316-25) and in "From Plane to Plane". (PRP 404-8). Frost chooses an untainted rustic life of simplicity for his pastoral perspective. Frost's choice of the local dialect suggests Wordsworthian influence. There is an infusion of New England dialect. The colloquial term merges with the rustic character and surroundings. It is a language of repeated experience and pure feelings.

As in the earlier pastoral mould, Frost's eclogue "Build Soil" begins with a talk about sheep. 'All woods and pasture only fit for sheep/ But sheep is what I'm going into next.' After this pastoral invocation, a raillery between the two shepherds follows. In the eclogue "From Plane to Plane", two friends indulge in mock-fight over the virtues of their respective professions.

"Your trouble is not sticking to the subject," Pike said with temper, And Dick, longed to say "Your trouble is bucolic lack of logic", But all he did say was, "What is the subject"?

("From Plane to Plane" ll 7-10, PRP. pp. 404-408).
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The generally playful banter of eclogue changes into a sententious tone in "Build Soil". In this poem, Frost voices his ideas. This is a new device of the ancient pastoral eclogue. There is only democratic socialism, Monarchic socialism, oligarchic ("Build Soil", p. 316 - 25).

The different genres of pastoral are deployed, but the spirit, quintessence, perspective and vision of pastoral arise from a common disenchantment with the tides of changes. The earlier pastoral made use of the separation of life in the town and in the country as a basic motive. The transitional years, have brought changes in the countryside and made it appear as more of an extension of the town, rather than an exclusive world by itself. The industrial and technological processes have been extended to mechanize farm work. Reaping machines, threshers, steam-plough mechanised flails and other mechanical devices displaced manual labour. The agricultural labour is brutalised and impoverished. A vivid description man's abject misery at the hands of machines is given in Stephen Duck's The Thresher's Labour:

No Fountains murmur here, no Lambskin's play,  
No Linnets warble, and no Fields look gay;  
'Tis all a gloomy, melancholy Scene,  
Fit only to provoke the Muse's Spleen,  
When sooty place we thresh, you scarce know  
Our native colour, as from work we go: 22
A distrust of such a mechanised life provided a motive for pastoral in Hardy and Frost. The poets are keenly aware of an opposition in values between the urbanised farm lands and the pre-industrial rural pastures. Nature is viewed as hostile in the machine dominated farm lands. They seek an Arcadian tranquillity in the sequestered unruffled condition of the agricultural labourer and the rustic atmosphere of the pre-industrial era. The rural occupations are seen as creative. Man in such a world is in constant communion with nature. Every farmland chore is expressive of an encounter between man and nature. In such context, the difference between georgic and the pastoral dissolve. Seen as a contrast to a changed circumstances, what would ordinarily be a georgic activity, becomes infused with pastoral spirit. The peasant is characterised by simple virtues of the pastoral shepherd. Their georgic projections are pastoral in perspective and sentiments. Secluded, pure and simple, Hardy's Wessex and Frost's New England emphasise the theme of rural retreat for a clarification out of chaos.

The pastoral version of Hardy and Frost is a synthesis of their attitudes towards the evils of mechanisation and their nostalgic affinity to their rural
world. They have adopted pastoral view to express their views of nature. The pastoral in Hardy is a perspective seen through his nostalgic recollection. 'Ah! dairy where I lived so long;''Tess's Lament', CPH, pp.175-77). But in Frost it is a vision, as it comes in the form of an invitation. ("The Pasture" FRP, p.1). The vision is born out of differences from the common view of reality, the unity of the scene, and aesthetic experience. The picture of an ordered world where the significance of things is simple and apparent, manifested in the symbols of the Spring, calf and cow. By its coherence, unity and evocation, rises above the level of experience into a vision, inspiring hope and faith.

One of the outstanding feature of their pastoral lore is their recurrent attempt to make sense of man's relationship to nature. It is as impossible in Hardy as it is in Frost to conceive of Nature without man. Man is at the same time not a solitary animal of a featureless landscape. The two entities, human and natural, are inextricably linked.
NOTES

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3. William Merryn also points out two factors responsible for the change. "During Eighteen Forties two things happened which were profoundly to alter life in Dorset. One was the extension of railway to Dorchester, the other was the abolition of the Corn Laws". William Merryn, A Preface to Hardy (London: Longman, 1976), p. 54.


15. 'Since then the appellation which I had thought to reserve to the horizons and landscapes of a partly real, partly dream country, has become more and more popular as a practical provincial definition, and the dream country has by degrees, solidified into a utilitarian region.' Hardy, General Preface to Works, reprinted in Far From the Madding Crowd (London: Macmillan 1978), p. 444.

16. Cf. As Margaret Drabble observes, '(Hardy's Wessex) however valuable a picture of nineteenth century south-western England, it provides, is essentially perhaps paradoxically - a fictional creation, a dream-world in which fact and fancy are inseparably intertwined as the twisting patterns in a piece of marble.' Ed. Margaret Drabble, The Genius of T. Hardy (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), p. 112.

18. Cf. Northrop Frye commenting on Milton's "Lycidas" says, "The Pastoral elegy seems to have some relation to the ritual of the Adonis lament, and the dead poet Bion, in Moschus' poem, is celebrated with the same kind of imagery as Bion himself uses in his lament for Adonis."


19. Come weep with me ye Dorian glades and springs,
Ye Dorian rivers, weep for Bion dead.
Ye groves, and all ye be green and flowering things
In funeral clusters be your sweetness shed.


20. Cf. In Far From the Madding Crowd, a pastoral novel, this ceremony is elaborately described,

There were bundles of snow-drop, hyacinth and crocus, bulbs, violets, and double daisies, which were to bloom in early spring, and carnations, pinks, picrotes, lilies of the valley, forget-me-not, summer farewell, meadow saffron and others, for the later seasons of the year.


A precedent reference is seen in Shakespeare's Cymbeline.

With fairest flowers, whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidelia,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave. Thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The asure's hare-bell, like thy veins:

(Act IV, Sc. ii)


23. Harold B. Toliver has observed in a very sensitive commentary of the poem "The Tuft of Flowers",

'Georgic is transformed by pastoral perspectives and pastoral is made "honest" by the farmer's commitment to the world of labour and "truth".