

“The Private Little Sun”: The Symbolism of the Sun in Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*

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Abstract

Tess of the d’Urbervilles is written by Thomas Hardy, first published serially in 1891. The subtitle of this novel is called *A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented* as Hardy believes the heroine is a virtuous victim of a rigid Victorian moral code. In this novel, Hardy engages the imagery of sun with the action and the theme by different artistic skills. As a novelist with keen insight, Hardy sees natural surroundings among the important formative influences of a person’s life, especially for Tess. Hardy makes frequent use of this instinctive response to climate and geography. The novel is structured so that events take place in seasons which are artistically appropriate. At the most beautiful, productive season of the year, Nature appears to be striving for perfection: everything tends towards wholeness. Yet in the bleak and cold seasons one must go through all the difficulties and disillusionment. The symbol of the sun and the alternation of the seasons give this novel its everlasting complexity and tension.

Keywords: Tess of the D’Urbervilles, symbolism, sun, nature, Thomas Hardy

1. Introduction

In Chapter 2, while depicting the cheerful May-Day walking, Hardy argues that Tess, the heroine of the novel, holds “a private little sun” (Hardy, 20). Her “remote and distant hope” is to help her family to extricate from plight and to marry a man like Angel Clare. Willingly or unwillingly, Tess leaves home with hope, but returns home with disillusionment. This pattern repeats till the death of Tess. The imaginary of the sun plays a crucial role in this novel. The rise and set of the sun, as the alternation of day and night, with the change of season and the change of natural surroundings, are deeply involved with the development of the plot, which suggests Hardy’s view of human life. The cyclical pattern in a way resembles the mediaeval Wheel of Fortune, on which ambitious men never cease from rising and falling. Hardy engages the imagery of sun with the action and the theme by different artistic skills.

Early Hardy establishes the symbol of the sun. In July 1888, Hardy wrote in his notebook:

Thought of the determination to enjoy. We see it in all nature, from the leaf on the tree to the titled lady at the ball... [Hardy’s ellipses] It is achieved, of a sort, under superhuman difficulties. Like pent-up water it will find a chink of possibility somewhere. Even the most oppressed of men and animals find it, so that out of a thousand there is hardly one who has not a sun of some sort for his soul. (Florence Hardy, 213)

He believes that every human being has a sun for his soul against all odds. In the 17th century poet Thomas Browne’s work *Urn Burial*, Browne holds that in every human’s body there is an invisible sun which keeps human being alive. Hardy’s view is analogous to Browne’s.

2. From Hope to Despair

At the beginning of this novel, Tess’s blighted world shows little promise of the fulfillment of her hope and dream. When Tess first meets with Angel, her hope to dance with him is dashed by an “eclipsing girl” (Hardy, 23). It is not until “the rays of the sun” has absorbed Angel’s retreating figure on the hill that she shakes off her temporary sadness and answers her would-be partner (Hardy, 25). As the declining sun absorbs Angel in Tess’s gaze and establishes him as the object of her hope, the private little sun of Tess’s soul generates the romantic, bright but elusive dream.

When Tess returns home from the May-Day dance, “the yellow melancholy” of the one-candled spectacle of the interior house, which is in stark contrast with the warmth and gaiety of the field, strikes upon Tess’s senses with

“an unspeakable dreariness” (Hardy, 26). This kind of monotony and muddle are made bearable for her parents by the illicit trip to Rollivers where troubles and realities take on themselves a metaphysical impalpability and no longer stand as pressing concretions which chafes body and soul. In contrast to her parents, Tess possesses innocence which is burdened with the responsibility of careless neglect, almost replacing them as head of the family. Tess is born into a world which thrives on illusions: the Durbeyfield family live on romantic visions of a return to their former glory. And while criticizing their castles in the air, and their dreams of her marriage to the young squire, Tess inherits the same weakness. She is also prone to melodramatic view of herself which increases her sense of guilt. Her family encourage this, by regarding her as their potential savior. Everything is against her living as herself, for herself. Aware of the contrast between the outside and the interior, there comes to her “a chill self-reproach” and “a dreadful sting of remorse” (Hardy, 26).

Later that night, she has no choice but to take over the duties of supporting her family since her parents pin their hopes on her. When her father cannot sober up to take the hives to the market, Tess offers to go, lighting a lantern, with her little brother Abraham. This lantern, without doubt, is no substantial light. With it, they make “an artificial morning” for “the real morning being far from come” (Hardy, 36). Abraham is sensitive enough to natural surroundings, as he begins to talk of “the strange shapes assumed by the various dark objects against the sky” (Hardy, 36) and observe the stars “whose cold pulses were beating amid the black hollows above, in serene dissociation from these two wisps of human life” (Hardy, 36). Then Tess falls deeply into reverie in which “the mesh of events in her own life” is examined, with the natural surroundings simultaneously close to a metaphysical perception (Hardy, 38).

Hardy attributes human emotions to the passing trees, hedges and the wind which organically transcend time and space, as Hugman points out that in this atmosphere we are given “a glimpse not only of the correspondence between man and Nature, but also between man, Nature and the universe” (Hardy, 45).

But the lamp, artificial light as it is, goes out and in the darkness the shaft of the mail-cart pierces Prince. Faced with the sudden calamity, Tess stands helplessly and waits for help in despair. The natural surroundings also change:

The atmosphere turned pale, the birds shook themselves in the hedges, arose, and twittered: the lane showed all its white features, and Tess showed hers, still whiter. The huge pool of blood in front of her was already assuming the iridescence of coagulation; and when the sun rose a hundred prismatic hues were reflected it.

The silence of the night is broken and with the refraction of the sunlight, the scene assumes a kind of bizarre beauty. The prismatic hues contrast strikingly with the single white of Tess’s face. Tess arrives at home in the evening while Prince still lies in the lane, “with his hoofs in the air and his shoes shining, in the setting sunlight he retraced the eight or nine miles to Marlott” (Hardy, 38).

The death of Prince, which is a significant turning point in Tess’s life, makes it even more difficult for Tess’s family. Hopes are fading that Tess relies on her own efforts to improve her family’s situation. After her day-dreaming precipitates Prince’s disastrous death, Tess sees herself as a murderess. This is not simply an ominous foreboding, but typical of the melodrama which is to characterize the relationship between Tess and Alec. With the extinguishment of the artificial light and the rise of the sun, Tess is obliged to try her fortune by seeking help from the rich relative. A pattern can be observed in this episode—a movement from light to darkness, from hope to despair, each followed by a new dawn which reveals the cruel reality in the blighted world. The pattern is repeated in the description of Tess’s being seduced by Alec after the fair held at Chaseborough.

3. Alec’s Seduction of Tess

The very environment in which Tess meets Alec is alien and artificial, for everything looks like money— “like the last coin issued from the Mint” (Hardy, 44). The newness of the red-brick building, the fancy farm, and even the falsity of the name d’Urberville, suggest the illusory and unstable nature of Alec’s world. However, the surrounding landscape of The Chase is quite antique. The new and the old coexist in the organic system of Wessex. With Hardy’s use of pagan references like “Druidical mistletoe”, heliolatry and Stonehenge, a much larger view of history is introduced. This gives a timelessness to the experiences of the novel which are seen as part of an ancient and continuing series (Hardy, 44).

Tess immediately falls under the spell of Alec’s charm, obeying “like one in a dream”, as if drugged by the “blue narcotic haze”. In the spectrum of Tess’s young life, Alec is “the blood-red ray” which will bring her the “tragic mischief” (Hardy, 47). The metaphor of sun is repeatedly employed to indicate Tess’s forthcoming tragedy. Her unconsciousness, her natural dreamy passivity and her ignorance of life and man combine to make her seduction

almost inevitable. When Tess returns home from Trantridge, she complains to her mother about her lack of family help and proper education.

Tess encounters Alec in June for the first time, however, after several months in September, she is seduced by Alec where darkness and silence rules everywhere around. Hardy sets the time when Tess leaves for Chaseborough after a day's toil: it is a fine September night just before sunset, "when yellow lights struggle with blue shades in hair-like lines" (Hardy, 70-71). Through this low-lit mistiness Tess encounters the private little jig in another artificially illuminated interior where from the open door there floated into the obscurity a mist of yellow radiance. Despite being fond of dancing, Tess excludes herself.

Hardy delineates the dance with exquisiteness. In the state of drunkenness, the ecstasy and the dreams begins in which the boundary between emotion and matter is blurred, the cottagers and surrounding nature "forming an organism of which all the parts harmoniously and joyously interpenetrated each other" (Hardy, 74). They become an integral part of Nature. After the dance, on their way home, each drunken cottager fancies that there is a halo in the moonlight about the shadow of his or her own head. And on Alec's horseback, Tess leaves Chaseborough towards the upcoming inevitable fate which one cottager describes as "out of the frying-pan into the fire" (Hardy, 77).

In Chapter 10 "The seduction or rape", the passage of time is sensed through Hardy's accurate description of the changes of light. When the horse ambles along for a considerable distance, they are enveloped by "a faint luminous fog" (Hardy, 78). Whether from absent-mindedness or from sleepiness, Tess doesn't perceive that they have arrived at the wood of The Chase. As Alec sets out to find the way, the pale light lessens with the setting of the moon, and then Tess becomes invisible as she falls into reverie, which is different from Angel's disappearing in the rays of the sun. When Alec turns back, the moon has quite gone down. The Chase is wrapped in thick darkness, although morning is not far off.

Tess and the surrounding nature forms an organism which Tess looks like a sleeping beautiful white hart at the mercy of the hunter. Alex touches Tess's cheeks which are damp and smoothy chill "as the skin of the mushrooms in the fields around" (Hardy, 90). In the darkness before the dawn, in the land of the oldest wood in England, Tess suffers from the fatalistic tragedy and then an immeasurable social chasm is to divide her personality from that previous self of hers.

Tess leaves Trantridge on a Sunday morning in late October, not long past daybreak, when the yellow luminosity upon the horizon lights the ridge. Gazing over the familiar green Blakemore Vale which is half veiled in mist, Tess senses a sort of terrible beauty, for circumstances have changed and she has learnt that "the serpent hisses where the sweet birds sing, and her views of life had been totally changed for her by the lesson" (Hardy, 87). When she parts from Alec, the sun doesn't offer any sympathy, of which the rays are without any warmth, "ungenial and peering" (Hardy, 90). There is only the sad October and her sadder self.

4. The Birth of Tess's Baby

Tess returns to her family in despair, the despondency of the next morning's dawn reminds her of the rough and hopeless future. In the Bible, there writes: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to his place where he arose" (Ecclesiastes 1:4-7). The sunrise brings with it the consequences of an earlier day's deeds. Night's darkness ends but morning's light discloses harsh reality. In fear of the neighbor's whispers and judging, Tess retreats from public life. The only exercise she takes is walking in the woods after dark. She knows how to seize the moment of evening when "the light and the darkness are so evenly balanced that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralize each other, leaving absolute mental liberty" (Hardy, 97). Hardy is skilled in depicting the blurring boundaries between two different states. Unconsciously, the drunken cottagers seem to be in a dreamland of the emotion. Immersed in the balance of light and darkness, Tess consciously acquires freedom and transcendence which become a respite from worldly affliction. Alone in the woods, Tess integrates herself with Nature and she even experiences an epiphany. Human beings are frequently shown to be integral parts of the natural scene. This is particularly so of women, whom Hardy sees as close to Nature in their gentle passivity. Nature enables woman to give birth child and nurture new life as the land is the mother of humans and animals. Thus, woman can assimilate herself with the field while man cannot.

A much less philosophical view sees farm-people as a race apart. The urban observer sees them as a mere phenomenon— "Hodge"—without variety or individuality. Their activities tend to reinforce this idea: for example, the garlic hunt:

Differing one from another in natures and moods so greatly as they did, they yet formed, bending, a curiously

uniform row—automatic, noiseless; and an alien observer passing down the neighboring lane might well have been excused for massing them as “Hodge”. As they crept along, stooping low to discern the plant, a soft yellow gleam was reflected from the buttercups into their shaded faces, giving them an elfish moon-lit aspect, though the sun was pouring upon their backs in all the strength of noon. (Hardy, 135)

Time goes on. When Tess and her baby appears in Chapter 14, it is a hazy sunrise in August of the next year. At the very beginning, Hardy employs three paragraphs to depict the sun. Dense vapours permeate the night before. The hazy sunrise takes on a different aspect, as Hardy writes:

The sun, on account of the mist, had a curious, sentient, personal look, demanding the masculine pronoun for its adequate expression. His present aspect, coupled with the lack of all human forms in the scene, explained the old-time heliolatries in a moment. One could feel that a saner religion had never prevailed under the sky. The luminary was a golden-haired, beaming, mild-eyed, godlike creature, gazing down in the vigour and intentness of youth upon an earth that was brimming with interest for him.

At this moment, the mild and godlike sun gives off warmth, love and vitality. Tess gives birth to a baby and for the first time during many months Tess makes a resolution to work in the fields as an independent woman. Thus, the dense nocturnal vapours symbolizes Tess’s past—the rape at that misty night. As the vapours are attacked by “the warm beams”, the sun is a symbol of hope which guides Tess to forget about her gloomy past. However, just in the afternoon, Tess’s baby gets a sudden illness and then dies. Her hope is dashed again.

As Tess has a private little sun for her soul to bask in, Hardy employs pathetic fallacy to attribute human emotion or responses to the natural sun according to different circumstances. When Tess goes back home in despair, the sun is ungenial and indifferent. When the anguish is relieved and the new life is born, the sun is genial and affectionate. Pathetic fallacy is a phrase coined by John Ruskin in *Modern Painters* (1856) to denote an enduring practice in Western literature: the tendency of poets and painters to imbue the natural world with human feeling. For Ruskin, it becomes an important criterion of artistic excellence. The fallacy, due to “an excited state of feelings, making us, for the time, more or less irrational,” creates “a falseness in all our impressions of external things” (Greene, 1009). The Victorian poet Tennyson is well schooled in the scientific issues of his day, and his descriptions of natural objects are often clinically precise. After 1842, his verse reveals a markedly less frequent usage of pathetic fallacy, and *In Memoriam* offers a striking revision of the device by evoking its essential effect without indulging its excesses (“Calm is the morn without a sound. / Calm as to suit a calmer grief” [11.1-2]) (Tennyson, qtd. in Greene, 1009).

Tess of the D’Urbervilles is written during the Second Industrial Revolution. Advancements in manufacturing and production technology enables the widespread adoption of machines and the railroad networks. In the novel, Hardy takes a natural view to depict the “invasion” of the machine. The sound of the reaping-machine is like “the love-making of the grasshopper” (Hardy, 100). As the corn is reduced gradually, the natural surroundings change.

Hardy’s usage of the pathetic fallacy ironically emphasizes the loss of communion between the individual and the natural world, as the Stoke family’s disguise and the thatched cottage of fowls which is once an old garden. In tis implied envy of an older world where such communion once existed, it resurrects the pastoral nostalgia. Hardy’s description of the different places in the novel is very impressionistic. The atmosphere of the vale Blackmoor is tranquil and languorous.

After her son Sorrow’s death, Tess remains in her father’s house during the winter months where she philosophically notes dates in the revolution of the year. Looking in the glass at her fairness, the date of her own death suddenly occurs to her. Almost at a leap Tess changes from a simple girl to a complex woman. Tess becomes fairer but her soul is not demoralized. Hardy firmly defends Tess’s virtue; he believes that Tess’s past experience would have been simply a liberal education but for the world’s opinion. However, Tess is not devastated by her past misfortunes for she feels “the pulse of hopeful life still warm within her” (Hardy, 112). As an integral part of Nature, she still holds the recuperative power which pervades organic nature. She is a child of Nature. We see her growth to womanhood, her luxuriance of aspect and fullness of growth not as isolated facts, but as part of the brimfulness of Nature itself.

A year later, a particularly fine spring comes round and “the stir of germination” moves Tess as it moves the wild animals and makes her passionate to go. One day in early May, Tess leaves home for the second time and sets out to work at Talbothays dairy with renewed hope and “the invincible instinct towards self-delight” (Hardy, 113). Coincidentally, Talbothays stands not remotely from some of Tess’s forefathers’ estates. Though she has never before visited the country, she feels akin to the landscape where her ancestors lie entombed. Later in Chapter 52, Tess and her family visited the tomb of her ancestors when Tess’s when they are expelled from

Blakemoore and become homeless. That night the cold sunlight of the early spring peers invidiously upon their furniture.

Giambattista Vico believes that all nations have three human customs in common: religion, marriage and burial. According to him, humanity has its origin in *humare*, that is, “to bury” (Vico, 168). Earth is the mother of gods and giants. Vico points out that the most noble houses of Europe and almost all its reigning families take their names from the lands over which they rule. By burial human and land are closely connected. Thus, a sense of nobility is generated. All the while Tess wonders if any strange good thing might come of her being in her ancestral land, however, her efforts to free herself from the disastrous bygone and her marriage with Angel fail. Finally, in Stonehenge which is built by the original ancestors, Tess sacrifices her life to the fulfillment of her hope.

5. Love and Death

In spite of her sorrows of the past, the days at Talbothays are broadly sunny for Tess. With the recuperative power her hopes are reborn as she walks toward the Vale of Little Dairies, the place of Tess’s roman with Angel Clare, the sun of her life. The Vale of Little Dairies is intrinsically different from Blackmoor Vale. Angel Clare is a young man inexperienced in human matters. He is full of notions and general principles. Early association with country solitudes has bred in him an “aversion to modern townlife” (Hardy, 132). During his stay at Talbothays he learns much. He discovers the delights of the simple life and sees something new in life and humanity. He makes close acquaintance with phenomena which he has before known but darkly— “the seasons in their moods, morning and evening, night and noon, winds in their different tempers, trees, waters and mists, shades and silences, and the voices of inanimate things” (Hardy, 134). Angel’s stay at Talbothays, his relationship with Tess, his journey to Brazil and his final reconciliation and fulfillment are seen to be his true education. It is these experiences which make him a true man.

However, to Tess, Angel is all that goodness could be, as Hardy writes that her affection for him “was now the breath and light of Tess’s being” (Hardy, 213). Tess’s love for Angel and his love for her are expressed again and again in imageries associated with the sun. However, Angel doesn’t fulfil Tess’s hope of marriage. She again suffers disillusionment, as the description of the central forces at odds: “the inherent will to enjoy, and the circumstantial will against enjoyment” (Hardy, 305). The interaction of the two forces gives the novel its complexity and tension.

The fullness of summer in the Valley of Little Dairies is a substantial reality; it has a completeness which makes it imaginatively eternal. In reality of course, it passes, and inevitably turns to autumn and winter. Hardy points out that even the apparent solid continuity of the seasons is made up of numerous frail and short-lived elements. They meet continually in that strange and solemn interval— “the twilight of the morning; in the violet or pink dawn” (Hardy, 145). The mixed, singular and luminous gloom in which they walk along, often makes Angel think of “the Resurrection-hour”, and Angel regards Tess as Eve and Demeter.

The span of Tess’s pregnancy and the little baby’s birth is euphemistically omitted but every month of the summer which Tess and Angel falls in love is delineated in detail. In Chapter 24, Angel declares his love for Tess, Hardy describes the season at the very beginning:

Amid the oozing fatness and warm ferments of the Var Vale, at a season when the rush of juices could almost be heard below the hiss of fertilization, it was impossible that the most fanciful love should not grow passionate. The ready bosoms existing there were impregnated by their surroundings. (Hardy, 164)

The occasion of the proposal is sun-filled. Angel embraces Tess, “the sun slanting in by the window upon his back” and Tess, having been lying down in her clothes, is warm “as a sunned cat” (Hardy, 187). The ardour of Angel’s affection is so palpable that Tess seems to flinch under it like “a plant in too burning a sun” (Hardy, 188). Besides this scene, their work and their rambles are given frequent emphasis through references to the sun.

There is hardly a touch of earth in her love for Clare. Time goes on and then the autumn is coming. In October Tess accepts Angel’s proposal. Angel’s love sheds an almost physical light on her life. In Chapter 31 Hardy writes that Tess’s affection for him is now the breath and light of Tess’s being. A spiritual forgetfulness coexisted with an intellectual remembrance. She walks “in brightness”, but she knows that “in the background those shapes of darkness” are always spread (Hardy, 213).

It is in the month of May that Tess and Angel first meets and then meets again at Talbothays. At home Tess contemplates time philosophically— “her undoing at Trantridge with its dark background of The Chase”, “the dates of the baby’s birth and death” and even her own birthday and death (Hardy, 111). At Talbothays she wants to stop time, wishing that it would always be summer and autumn. At Bramshurst Court, she wishes to escape

time's movement. But the reality is that time cannot be stopped and all that is sweet and delightful has its finish. In *"Tess of the D'Urbervilles: Repetition as Immanent Design"*, J. Hillis Miller points out that the sun in this novel symbolizes not only "the fecundating male source, a principle of life, but also a dangerous energy able to pierce and destroy" (Miller, 122). The sun will always rise and fall as usual whatever changes take place. At last Tess sacrifices her life to the sun.

The wedding of Tess and Angel is in the winter. The scene of Tess's two confessions is illuminated by the light from the fireplace and by the candles on the table, which contrasts with the sunny outdoor pastoral scene. The rays of the sun are cold and the two lovers, after each confesses his wrongdoing, become "but the ashes of their former fires" (Hardy, 253). The seasonal settings are carefully chosen. They reflect a perception which any urban reader may understand—that sunlight is beautiful and conducive to happiness and harmony, and that bleak winter winds and dark skies suggest misery and discomfort.

In complete contrast to the luxuriance of Talbothays is the bleakness of Flintcomb-Ash, the high, calcareous land where Tess passes her grim winter in Angel's absence. Here, climate and human harshness combine to afflict the body to the utmost: but physical discomfort is a mere shadow of the mental anguish Tess suffers, although there are times when even her robust body nears the end of its endurance. The comparative insignificance to her of severe bodily discomfort reinforces our understanding of her mental suffering.

In Chapter 57, on their way of fleeing, Tess could not help turning her head every now and then to look at Angel. She still regards Angel as her god, the god of sun, as Hardy writes:

To her he was, as of old, all that was perfection, personally and mentally. He was still her Antinous, her Apollo even; his sickly face was beautiful as the morning to her affectionate regard on this day on less than when she first beheld him. (Hardy, 408)

At that moment, Tess believes that Angel is the man who loves her purely and who believes in her as pure.

When they arrive at Stonehenge, Tess feels the warmth and comfort of the stone owing to the basking of the sun. Since one of her mother's people is a shepherd hereabout and she is deemed to be a heathen by Angel in the past, Tess feels at home at Stonehenge. The place Tess is lying may be near the Sun-Stone for in the north-east sky, Angel can "see between the pillars a level streak of light" (Hardy, 417). At that time, it may be in June, around the summer solstice, for at summer solstice an observer standing within the stone circle, looking north-east through the entrance, would see the Sun rise in the approximate direction of the heel stone, and the sun has often been photographed over it. Tess asks Angel whether the heathens sacrifice to God at Stonehenge, Angel denies and answers: "I believe to the sun. That lofty stone set away by itself is in the direction of the sun, which will presently rise behind it" (Hardy, 417). Here Angel's answer echoes the aforementioned "the old-time heliolatries".

Tess wakes just before dawn, when "the light was strong, and a ray shone upon her unconscious form, peering under her eyelids and waking her" (Hardy, 418). She leaves with contentment and happiness. She is ready to sacrifice her life for her "remote and distant hope"—to maintain an independent and decent life, to gain pure love and happy marriage. Tess is put to death on a bright and warm July morning. It is in summer that Tess wants to stop time and freeze the picture which she and Angel are deep in love. In the last chapter, when Angel and Liza-Lu walks to watch Tess's execution, their gait is with grief which "the sun's rays smiled on pitilessly" (Hardy, 419). The sun is not the previous "beaming, mild-eyed, godlike" one, the rays of which are without sympathy and love. Here Hardy employs pathetic fallacy to criticize the cruel and merciless environment and to show his sympathy to Tess.

6. Conclusion

The time scale within the novel is between four and five years. We are intensely aware of the passage of the time through the indication of the month or season in which the new events are to take place, "not so much of specific months or periods but the progress of time and the continuous rhythms of change" (Hugman, 7). Hardy is a novelist with keen insight. He sees natural surroundings among the important formative influences of a person's life, especially for Tess. Hardy makes frequent use of this instinctive response to climate and geography. The novel is structured so that events take place in seasons which are artistically appropriate. At the most beautiful, productive season of the year, Nature appears to be striving for perfection: everything tends towards wholeness. Yet in the bleak and cold seasons one must go through all the difficulties and disillusionment. The symbol of the sun and the alternation of the seasons give this novel its everlasting complexity and tension.

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