

LIFE AND BIOAGRPHY OF THOMAS HARDY

M. ASHA

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Hosur Institute of Technology and Science, Tamil Nadu, India.

ABSTRACT

The topic has taken up for the study of the life and biography of Thomas Hardy and which made him to analyze the emerging self-conscious women.

KEYWORDS: Feminism, Self-Conscious, Women

INTRODUCTION

It deals with the life and biographical sketch of Thomas Hardy. It gives an introductory note on feminism, interpreting the thematic concerns.

It is really ironic to note that it was the male British writer who were experimented in exposing the patriarchal prejudice of our culture, following him feminist critics have subjected the novels of the old writers, where the heroines suffer the pressure of patriarchy. As a weaker sex of the class how their psychological prospect is portrayed in the social is clear scrutinized by the writer. Though the writer belong to the Patriarchal Society portrays the emergences of women. To study in detail is the aim of this topic.

Life of Thomas Hardy

Hardy was born on June 2, in 1840 to Thomas and Jemima Hardy at Higher Bockhampton, Dorset. His father was a mason master and builder. Hardy gained an appreciation of music from his father and from his mother, an appetite for learning the delights of the countryside about his rural home. In 1848, at the age of eight though he was delicate Hardy entered his first school at the Stinsford Parish, where he learned Mathematics and Geography. Hardy's mother was always concerned for him and had high ambitious educational plans and supplemented his readings.

Schoolings

Hardy was drawn the conformist school, and in 1850, his mother enrolled him at a school in Dorchester. At the age of 16, Hardy helped his father with the architectural drawings for the restoration of Woodsford Castle. The owner James Hicks an architect was impressed by the young Hardy's work, and took him as an apprentice. Later he moved to London to work with prominent architect Arthur Bloomfield, where he began his writing. Number of publishers rejected his poems, so he was vexed.

Life in London

Hardy enjoyed his life in London, though health was poor, and he returned to Dorset to work for Mr. Hicks. In 1870, Hardy was sent to plan a church restoration at St. Juliet in Cornwall as an architect. A critic Paul Turner reflects: "But perhaps his interest was not purely professional" (Peter Widdowson. Nineteenth Century Literature.54.1 June 1999, P.69.)

To talk about the personal life he was engaged to Lois Deacon's cousin Tryphena Sparks and wrote many poems on her. Their love affair bore with an illegitimate son. Tryphena was a student at Stockwell Training College, Clampham, in 1869-71. Hardy was twenty-seven years old when their relationship was said to have begun, when Tryphena was just sixteen. The wonder was that no mention of this romantic period in his life was made in the two parts of "The life of Thomas Hardy" which were published in one volume in 1962, the year of Miss Deacon's booklet. Later in the book under the review, "Providence and Mr. Hardy", written in collaboration with Mr. Terry Coleman. The tragic course of their affair was to be traced not only in plot aspects of the novels, but in several of the most powerful and appealing poems of Hardy.

Marriage Life

Hardy was obsessed by social status from his youth of *Origins Species*. Hardy met Emma Lavinia Gifford during his engagement to Tryphena. There was an misunderstanding between Hardy and Tryphena, which led to the break to their affairs. Hardy's mother Jemima strongly urged her children not to marry, but to live together as a sort of mutual defence of the society against the world. Jemima's behavior in time also helped her Hardy's first marriage with Emma Lavinia Gifford on September 17, in 1874. But, Millgate's careful shifting of evidence shows the uneven relationship between Emma and her husband's family. As a result family totally collapsed.

A critic Robert Gittings say that Thomas Hardy was frequently concealed with pains, facts, starting from Emma Gifford, the middle class girl whom Hardy sought to marry, and later from the public at large through the official biography. 'Jude the Obscure', and its publication in 1895, despised Emma was assisting him with details for the novel, the image of the sour woman who wanted such novel to be suppressed. Emma burnt his manuscripts, was "entirely false, even it smallest details".

The section of Seymour-Smith's book had offended Hardy on Florance Dugdale, who became the second wife of Hardy in 1914, 15 months after the Emma's death on November 27 in 1912 and was buried in Stinsford Churchyard. Hard remarried Florence Dugdale at the age of 74 and Florence was 35. Seymour-Smith hates her because she spread the "myth" of Hardy's miserable first marriage, and he spares no effort to blame her.

Finally, in 1914, Florence had asked for a settlement on their marriage. Hardy was very likely the richest author in England, but Hardy was a peasant about money in the same way that he had never outgrown his adolescent emotions. When Florence needed minor surgery and a stay in a nursing home. Hardy paid money and feels "no trouble had been too much for him to protect her health". In 1917, Hardy began a Literary imposture which succeeded beyond his expectations.

Hardy wrote his biography by hand. Florence typed the copy, the original manuscript, and all the notes, and diaries and letters upon which it was based were destroyed. Florence managed to produce the first volume of the alleged life, taking time to remove nearly every complimentary reference to Emma, who had become more dear to the old man after her death.

Hardy's next volume would made cross hope his friend was not quite as unhappy as his poetry. But he probably was" (Peter Widdowson. *Nineteenth Century Literature* 54.1, June 1999, P.206). Mr. Horace Moule was an older, better educated bachelor with literary connections, who helped young Hardy to launch his career in psychological and intellectual growth.

Michael Millgate also brings the shadow of Hardy's possible relationship with another Dorset girl, Cassie Pole.

Hardy's relationships with both of his wives are presented sensitively and with a reluctance to make facile judgements on their complex matters. Most of the biographers have assumed that, when Hardy came up to London as a young man, he had the appearance and manners of a countryman, but he was shy and indifferent in that strange urban world. Hardy makes him an attractive youth, though there was no evidence to support other view of Hardy's social behavior at that time. Within a decade, when Hardy had began to establish himself as a writer, he moved easily into London society. In London he met writers and editors, joined clubs, denied with the rich, and lived a successful Man of Letters.

Late Seventies

In Hardy's late seventies, he wrote his own "authorized" version, leaving the work to be completed and published by his wife on her own accord. The two posthumous volumes, "The Early Life of Thomas Hardy", and "The Later Years of Thomas Hardy", were not much the story of a life as the history of a career. Drawing on notebooks, diaries and letters, Hardy compiled a public record: the books, the social occasions, the travels and the honors, with here and there a literary or philosophical reflection that are taken from old notes. It was a record of remarkable literary and social success. Many titles, so many invitations, but no private life to speak off. In his self protective reticence, Hardy had refined himself out of his own story: a reflection in "Jude the Obscure".

Two things to be said about Hardy was: about sexuality that Hardy was a proper Victorian in personal sexual matters, however frank he wisd to be on fiction was opposite on connection with his own life. Once Hardy reported to Edmund Bluden his friend that he was still capable of "full sexual inter course" at the age of 84. Great strength of Millgate's work was that Hardy earned the reader's confidence on his ability to distinguish between false coin and true, a confidence that no biographers of Hardy have managed to sustain. Millgate's vast knowledge of the minutest detail of Hardy's life, culled from his years of work on the letters, makes him the ideal for this new available material.

Mid Victorian Dorset

Hardy's own experience and his work, close relationship between a useful biography of him has inevitably to be a literary biography. Hardy's biography was one of the great merits of Millgate's book that in pursuing the man who never loses sight of the works. Michael Millgate likes Hardy, because, Hardy was a man who notices the minor detail and, unlike the many biographers, knows what to do with that, we now have life that makes of Hardy the man and the writer as a single person. Rumour was not exactly increased, Hardy's like abilities, but that was his way of paying back the world for hurting him. Hardy always felt an outcast, and estrangement was vital to his creativity. Hardy sympathized with women because he saw women as social victims. In Hardy's life there were no crimes, scandals, and dark betrayals. Michael Gittings called Hardy's secretiveness abnormally hard.

Governorship

Hardy accepts governorship of the Dorchester Grammar School and presidency of the society of authors on 1909. In 1910, Hardy was presented with the Order of Merit.

Hardy's Death

Hardy died at the age of 87, on January 10, in 1928. Hardy's heart was buried on Stinsford Churchyard, while his heart remained rest on Poet's Corner, on Westminster Abbey.

Hardy's Works

In the 1860's Hardy had written a substantial amount of unpublished verse, but during the next twenty years almost all his creative effort went on to novels and stories. Hardy's first novel *The Poor Man and The Lady*, was written in 1867, but the book was rejected by many publishers and Hardy destroyed the manuscript. The following year Hardy published, *Desperate Remedies* (1871), to universal disinterest, was a work of sensation and crime.

Most of Hardy's fictional works, *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), showed the real places around Dorset on the lot, including the village of Higher Bockhampton. For the first time the novel *Under the Greenwood Tree*, brought Hardy a popular acclaim. Followed by that success Hardy wrote a serialized novel, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873). Hardy's first book that gained notice was *Far From The Madding Crowd* (1874). After the success of the novel Hardy was convinced to yearn his living as an author. Hardy first used Wessex on 'Far From The Madding Crowd'.

Hardy set his fiction on Western England, which he called by its old Saxon name called Wessex. The admirable qualities of *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876), this novel spoke about a single country, which is nearly equivalent of Dorset. *The Return of the Native* (1878), was an imaginative return, passionately and deeply felt, to the country just outside the backdoor of Hardy's birth place. In his next novel, *The Trumpet – Major* (1880), Hardy turned to the more distant past, to the Napoleonic wars that had fascinated him from an early age. *A Laodicean* (1881) and *Two on a Tower* (1882), are nominally set on Wessex, his novels moved away to the society and culture of Wessex.

The Three Strangers (1883), the story takes place on and about a vividly imagined, isolated cottage during one stormy night and morning. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), Hardy made a considerable imaginative step on his understanding of Wessex, his return to his life on Dorchester. Casterbridge was the capital of districts, on which Hardy had set most of his fiction. For the first time we see Hardy acting as a local historian for the more accurate information of his readers.

The Woodlanders (1887), one of his best works of nature. In 1888, Hardy collected together most of the short stories he had published on magazines during the last ten years, and called the collection *Wessex Tales*. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), came on conflict with Victorian morality. It explored the dark side of his family connection in Berkshire.

Jude the Obscure (1896), caused Hardy on the midst of a storm of controversy. *Jude the Obscure* publication caused a rift between Thomas Hardy and Emma, who were afraid that the readers would regret that as describing their own marriage. The publicity did not harm the book sales. *The Well-Beloved* was a love story published in 1897.

CONCLUSIONS

Hardy was a religious man. Not a conventional Christian, certainly, but a frequent church goer, who loved the language and the music of the church. The social mobility, the economic uncertainty, the threat of poverty, the breaking up of stable rural life, were all realities and Hardy's novels were on that sense valuable historical documents.

REFERENCES

1. Childress, Marry 1981: Thomas Hardy, *The Man Who Liked women*, CRITICISM, Vol-XXIII: No.4, P.317-334.
2. Gittings, Robert: *Young Thomas Hardy 1975 and The Older Hardy 1978*. *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Vol-31.1,

June 1976.

3. Millgate, Michael 1984: Thomas Hardy: A Biography, *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Vol-37.4, March 1983, Pg. 335-36, No.28, P. 602.
4. Seymour-Smith, Martin 1994: Hardy, *Sunday Times Book Review*. January 30, 1994. Terry Coleman and Lois
5. Deacon 1966: Providence and Mr. Hardy *Times Literary Supplement*, June 23, 1966.
6. Turner, Paul 1998: The Life of Thomas Hardy: A Critical Biography. *Nineteenth Century Literature*, Vol-54.1, June 1999, Pg.69.

