

CONCLUSION

In reading Hardy's novels the reader always regards him as a pessimist. Hardy shows us that a novelist should not only explain, but also interpret, life. In his gloomy philosophy he feels that much of life is suffering and he thinks also that for many people there is no hope for happiness at all.

Thus things around. No answer I. ...
 Meanwhile the winds, and rains,
 And Earth's old glooms and pains
 Are still the same, and Life and Death are neighbours nigh.¹¹³

In all his works Hardy expresses the concept of fate. It is fate that determines the course of human life. Hardy notices also that so many people in this world fail to get what they most desire from life. People with high ideals concerning work, education and love, sometimes struggle in vain to achieve those ideals. It often seems to him that human beings are like puppets controlled by forces beyond their control. This external power is something eternal. That is why he feels that the persons who rebel against this are punished and those who yield are finally rewarded.

Hardy is deeply concerned with all kinds of suffering. He regards love and marriage as the chief causes of sorrow, for though they can bring ecstasy they also bring misery to man. Therefore he feels that a serious novelist should discuss the whole question of love including marriage between

men and women from every point of view. Hardy also mentions that most suffering comes from the conflict between reason and emotion. Emotion leads men to act in ways which are contrary to those dictated by their intellect. Jude's involvement with Arabella illustrates this most clearly. It is his youthful emotion that ruins him. When he first knows Arabella he tries hard not to let her influence him and tries to concentrate his mind on Greek and Latin, but he fails. We see how his head is struggling against his heart to win the victory. The head is defeated. He becomes involved with her and tragedy follows. The same thing happens in his relationship with Sue. Jude, being a married man, tries to control his passion and behave in the proper way. But again he gives way to his strong emotions. This same struggle can also be seen in Sue. After her marriage to Phillotson her reason tells her to stick to her husband, but her heart rebels and like Jude's, it prevails. We see another example in Clym Yeobright who is torn between the dictates of his reason and his emotions during his married life. He feels that it is his duty to improve his native district but his passionate love for Eustacia is one of the causes of his failure to carry out his idealistic plan. And it is also his intellect that destroys the happiness in their marriage.

Hardy's style is, in general, realistic. But sometimes he spoils this realistic effect by using too many

coincidences in his plot. However, improbability of incident does not matter much if the main characters are completely alive. His descriptions of nature are very accurate and very beautiful. Usually, however, they are rather mournful because it is apparent that man appears very small and helpless when pitted against nature.

Being an architect and a poet, he always constructs the novel well. His plots are well put together: the emotion increases as the story unfolds. But I think, his plots are less important than the psychology of his leading characters. His exciting incidents are sometimes a little overdone. An example can be seen in Jude when Father Time, the strange boy, kills his two half-brothers and himself. By this, Hardy wants to indicate to us what effect an unsympathetic society can have on an individual and how a man can do harm to others. Another exciting incident that can be seen in Far from the Madding Crowd is the breaking open of Fanny's coffin by Bathsheba who is alone in her house at night. This shows how much suffering the poor woman has received through her youthful folly in marrying a bad man. Another similar example can be seen in the life of Henchard, the mayor of Casterbridge. We feel that the things happening to him, his rise to a position of wealth and prestige as the mayor and then his sudden quick loss of everything, are too much for a single man. Hardy uses these exciting incidents to show the uselessness of all human endeavour which is not

in accord with nature.

Most of Hardy's characters are Wessex country men. The chief ones are people who fail in love or in life or in both, sometimes through their own faults, sometimes owing to fate. Clym and Jude fail both in their intellectual dreams and in love. Elfride in A Pair of Blue Eyes fails in love with both men. Her death ends her suffering. Giles and Marty are the two souls whose love is unrequited. All Hardy's characters are exceedingly well drawn. His main characters are built up by the psychological method while his minor characters are usually portrayed more or less from outside. We do not know for sure what is in their minds. The emotions and feelings of his chief characters are realistically and sympathetically described. Sometimes his characters are beautiful in their desire to do what is good and noble. Sometimes they are hateful in their cruelty and selfishness to each other. But all of them are pitiful because of the smallness of their achievement. Hardy shows a great compassion for his characters. He sympathizes deeply with all human beings, not only with the wise but also with the foolish. In fact, he exhibits a deep sympathy for all creatures even animals.

Consequently, if we study his work carefully we can see that Hardy is not completely pessimistic because he believes that in the distant future people might be able to control their emotions which are the chief cause of suffering

and might lead a happy satisfactory life. His reasons for dealing so much with the problem of marriage and divorce are probably two: first an unhappy marriage is one of the chief causes of human misery; and second he thinks that this particular kind of suffering can, in a sensible society, be avoided. He believes that some improvement in the laws and in the customs of society could immediately remove some of our suffering. In Jude, he points out clearly that the tragedy of Jude and Sue is caused partly by the very cruel treatment which they receive from society because they are living together but have had no marriage ceremony. Hardy's point is that so-called good people are more sinful than so-called bad people because the sin of cruelty is so much worse than any other. Here we see Hardy's tender, generous and noble heart.

Hardy is also a man of keen sensibility. He is keenly aware of suffering as well as the joy of life. Lord David Cecil writes a good comment on this:

Hardy's pessimism did not spring from a low-spirited temperament. On the contrary, the same sensibility that made him so acutely susceptible to life's sorrows made him also exquisitely responsive to its joys.

"Sweet cyder is a great thing,"
 he sings in one of his lyrics,
 "A great thing to me,
 Spinning down to Weymouth town
 By Ridgway thirstily,
 And maid and mistress summoning
 Who tend the hostelry:
 O cyder is a great thing,
 A great thing to me!

The dance it is a great thing,
 A great thing to me,
 With candles lit and partners fit
 For night-long revelry;
 And going home when day-dawning
 Peeps pale upon the lea:
 O dancing is a great thing,
 A great thing to me!

Love is, yea, a great thing,
 A great thing to me,
 When, having drawn across the lawn
 In darkness silently,
 A figure flits like one a-wing
 Out from the nearest tree:
 O love is, yes, a great thing,
 A great thing to me!

Will these be always great things,
 Great things to me? ...
 Let it befall that One will call,
 'Soul, I have need of thee':
 What then? Joy-jaunts, impassioned flings,
 Love, and its ecstasy,
 Will always have been great things,
 Great things to me!" 114

Despite his tenderness and kindness, Hardy was much attacked by the critics of his time. His first novels are not so bitter as his later ones. Tess and Jude produced a storm of narrow-minded criticism, both in England and America. At first he did not pay much attention to this because he thought that his intention was honest and good. Later he was accused of immorality and he was so disgusted by such misunderstanding of his high intention that he decided never to write another novel. Although he lived for about thirty years after that, he never did write another novel except one called The Well-Beloved which is unlike any of its predecessors. He returned to poetry, his first

and last love, to which he remained faithful until he died. However, it seems to me that his fame rests more on his position as a novelist than as a poet. At least so far as Thai students are concerned his novels are better known and more highly-appreciated than his poetry.

FOOTNOTES



- 1 Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy (London: Macmillan Co., 1933), I, 193.
- 2 Ibid., p. 75.
- 3 Ibid., p. 83.
- 4 Ibid., p. 235.
- 5 Stablez J. Kunitz (ed.), British Authors of the Nineteenth Century (New York: The H.W. Wilson Co., 1955), pp. 275-78.
- 6 Lord David Cecil, Hardy the Novelist (London: Constable Co., 1950), p. 27.
- 7 Florence Emily Hardy, I, 230.
- 8 Ibid., II, 41.
- 9 Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (London: Macmillan Co., 1957), p. 354.
- 10 Cecil, pp. 63 - 64.
- 11 Florence Emily Hardy, I, 63.
- 12 Cecil, p. 24.

- 13 Thomas Hardy, Two on a Tower (London: Macmillan Co., 1912), pp. 31 - 32.
- 14 Ibid., p. 33.
- 15 Ibid., pp. 33 - 35.
- 16 Thomas Hardy, The Mayor of Casterbridge (London: Macmillan Co., 1958), p. 218.
- 17 Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles (London: Macmillan Co., 1950), pp. 34 - 35.
- 18 Ibid., p. 117.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid., p. 161.
- 21 Ibid., p. 252.
- 22 Ibid., p. 441.
- 23 Cecil., p. 30.
- 24 Florence Emily Hardy, II, 23 - 24.
- 25 Ibid., p. 5.
- 26 Sir Charles Petrie, The Victorians (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1960), p. 200.

27

In fact, for the sake of his plot, Hardy here distorts the marriage laws, since Angel could have obtained an annulment.

28

Florence Emily Hardy, I, 289.

29

Hardy, Jude..., pp. 232 - 33.

30

Thomas Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1961), p. 282.

31

Florence Emily Hardy, II, 40.

32

Hardy, Jude..., p. 218.

33

Ibid., p. 232.

34

Ibid., p. 268.

35

Ibid., p. 347.

36

Hardy, Far from..., p. 39.

37

Hardy, The Mayor..., p. 357.

38

Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native (New York: The New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 1959), p. 156.

39

Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders (London: Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 460.

- 40 Hardy, Tess..., p. 295.
- 41 Ibid., p. 512.
- 42 See Theme of fate, pp. 6 - 9.
- 43 Florence Emily Hardy, I, 157.
- 44 Ibid., II, 16.
- 45 Hardy, The Mayor..., p. 70.
- 46 Hardy, The Return..., p. 44.
- 47 Hardy, Tess..., p. 185.
- 48 Hardy, The Return..., pp. 72 - 73.
- 49 Hardy, Far from..., p. 156.
- 50 Lascelles Abercrombie, Thomas Hardy (London: Martin Secker LTD., 1935), pp. 29 - 66.
- 51 Hardy, Far from..., p. 22.
- 52 Ibid., p. 138.
- 53 Ibid., p. 142.
- 54 Ibid., pp. 176 - 77.
- 55 Ibid., p. 252.
- 56 Hardy, The Mayor..., pp. 80 - 81.

- 57
Ibid., pp. 291 - 92.
- 58
Hardy, Tess..., pp. 120 - 21.
- 59
Ibid., p. 135.
- 60
Ibid., p. 167.
- 61
Abercrombie, p. 120.
- 62
Hardy, The Return..., pp. 289 - 90.
- 63
Abercrombie, p. 55.
- 64
Ibid.
- 65
Thomas Hardy, The Trumpet-Major (London: Macmillan Co., 1912), pp. 189 - 90.
- 66
Hardy, Two on a Tower, pp. 151 - 52.
- 67
Cecil, pp. 65 - 66.
- 68
Virginia Woolf, "The Novels Of Thomas Hardy,"
Victorian Literature, ed. Austin Wright (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 173.
- 69
Abercrombie, pp. 19 - 20.
- 70
Virginia Woolf, p. 175.
- 71
Ibid.

- 72 Hardy, Far from..., pp. 236 - 37.
- 73 Hardy, The Return..., pp. 12 - 14.
- 74 Hardy, Two on a Tower, pp. 68 - 69.
- 75 Hardy, The Woodlanders, pp. 76 - 78.
- 76 Hardy, Tess..., p. 128.
- 77 Ibid., p. 303.
- 78 Hardy, Far from..., pp. 18 - 20.
- 79 Ibid., p. 226.
- 80 Hardy, The Return..., pp. 12 - 13.
- 81 Ibid., pp. 59 - 60.
- 82 Hardy, Tess..., pp. 139 - 43.
- 83 Ibid., p. 360.
- 84 Ibid., p. 159.
- 85 Ibid., p. 160.
- 86 Ibid., pp. 169 - 71.
- 87 Hardy, Far from..., pp. 130 - 31.
- 88 Hardy, The woodlanders, p. 260.

- 89 Hardy, Far from..., p. 180
- 90 Hardy, The Woodlanders, p. 226.
- 91 Ibid., pp. 320 - 21.
- 92 Hardy, The Return..., p. 142.
- 93 Ibid., p. 190.
- 94 Hardy, The Mayor..., p. 143.
- 95 Ibid., p. 356.
- 96 Ibid., p. 358.
- 97 Ibid., p. 374.
- 98 Ibid., p. 381.
- 99 Ibid., p. 377.
- 100 Ibid., p. 182.
- 101 Ibid., p. 378.
- 102 Hardy, Tess..., pp. 295 - 96.
- 103 Ibid., p. 299.
- 104 Ibid., p. 213.
- 105 Hardy, Far from..., p. 179.

106

Ibid., p. 276.

107

Hardy, The Return..., p. 100.

108

Ibid., p. 178.

109

Hardy, Tess..., p. 136.

110

Hardy, Jude..., p. 239.

111

Ibid., p. 296.

112

Ibid., p. 241.

113

Hardy, Wessex and Past & Present Poems (London: Macmillan Co., 1924), p. 179.

114

Cecil, pp. 104 - 105.

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