

Treatment of the Women Characters in the Early Novels of Thomas Hardy

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Abstract

Hardy was Victorian, by education, by enveloping circumstances; he was the inheritor like any other man of genius of his time, of the characteristic attitude towards life and art which the age had developed. But at the same time, though his novels belong to the nineteenth Century. Victorian they represent Hardy's revolt against the convention and philosophy of that time, "The Victorian age, more than all previous ages, perhaps even more than the one in which we live, was essentially an age of democracy, especially in England. Individuals composing the bulk of the society – the poor middle class and labours and farmers – both men and women asserted their rights recognized. The effect of the political ideas of the French Revolution and influence of the prose and poetry of Scott and Wordsworth in the previous generation life related forces in the literary world which in Victorian age bore stupendous results not only in the shape of a change outlook on life, but in the shape of democratic social legislation, pledged to recognized men as men.

Key Words : Hardy, labours and farmers, middle class, stupendous, pledged

Introduction:

Hardy's pessimistic view of life, his attitude towards natural as a malign force in league with the dark and sinister destiny which pursues women to his ultimate tragedy his treatment of accidents as invariably sprouting up to determine the trend at ironic circumstances, his sense of humour in realism, his realistic handling of local colour all these are clear symptoms of a new spirit that was a joyous death knell to the seemliness and superficial optimism of the Victorian age. But Hardy is not, therefore, to be classed with the modern novelists. His resemblance to them ceases with the characteristic view of life. In technique and literary tradition, in social and political legislations, pledged to recognize man as men style and presentation he is a Victorian all the same. The brutal nakedness and staggering realism of D.H. Lawrence, the sensational

exploitation of the subconscious by James Joyce of Ulysses fame, the shapelessly discontinuous snap-shots of Virginia Woolf eliminating of action in novels by Dorothy Richardson – all these new experimentations are as they are from the rest of the Victorians.

The five great novels of Thomas Hardy's Tess of the d'Unbervelles, The Return of the Native, Far From the Madding Crowd, Jude the Obscure, and The Mayor of Casterbridge – are full of pain and necessary of life.

Hardy has generally shown in his important characters same "weakness, disability, inherited instinct or perhaps same error in the assertion of their strength which inevitably becomes the chance for the power of the world finally to assert itself against them. This is more pathetic, because more natural, than any tragic interference from the outside; but Hardy

always knows how to mitigate it by an exquisite tenderness, a justice of mercy towards his own creations. It is especially noticeable in the case of his women. They are on the whole disturbing and even sinister agents in the stories, but no one could think of blaming them for that, it is as a personalities chiefly by virtue of male affection for them, as most writers who have believed in the sinister efficiency of woman have tried to make out which male desire crystallizers in the form of imagined perfection, to become in the end distracted by finding there is nothing in the reality of womanhood answering to the ideal. Hardy's woman exists entirely in their own right."

Objectives of the present work:

The present paper is an attempt

1. To find out the treatment of women characters of Thomas Hardy novels.
2. To find out the relation between treatment of women characteristic in the human society.

Methodology of the present work:

The present research paper is descriptive in nature in the treatment of the women characters in the early novels of Thomas Hardy.

Main Description and Analysis of Women Characters in of his Early Novels:

This is a great work of subjectivity, a masterpiece of its kind, but of a very special kind. No other writer emotional power or so intuitive a vision. Considered, however, from another point of view, we prefer 'The Return of the Native', perhaps, is more complete as an expression of the peculiar qualities of Hardy's genius, but The Return of the Native as more complete as a representation of life"

Hardy's art which gives him superiority over other English realists is the Supreme Consistency of his characterization. His women react to life in the only way they can given always their environment and their heredity – Hardy's does not shrink from trailing their tragedies if consistency demands it. Nothing but tragedy can rightly follow such characters as Eustacia Vye, Bathsheba, Lucetta, Elizabeth Jane, Sue, Arabella Tess Susan, and Hardy has no palliative for above characters. Nor is anything but tragedy consistent with the circumstances which battle and finally overcome Tess Durbeyfield. The greatest of sincerity and consistency in characterization is simply a sense of the inevitability of it all when the book is laid aside, and it is but fair to say that our greatest novelists rarely have failed the test. Hardy never fails it. Not only is he unhampered by the "happy ending" theory which dominates to many novelists even of the rank of Dickens, but the chain of his incidents goes relentlessly onward from the very beginning even when, as is so apparent in The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Jude the Obscure, it is binding the victim with no hope of escape. Moreover, Hardy does not allow any difference to convention to eliminate from his pages scene dealing with any phase of human passion if he thinks that scene necessary to the consistency of his characterization. If an Arabella Dan is to be depicted, then the motivating impulse of her life and nature must be depicted also.

Hardy's women are not by any means all alike, they do possess qualities common to their sex and which he thought necessary to men's nature. Among these is

an evil, but when operating in union, brings man untold Woe. "Mere vessel of emotions: he calls Tess, and the epithet might applied to many of his Tesses. Logic plays little part in their actions. At heart they are animals, whose chief charm is physical beauty, used to entice man. Hardy actually speak of many of them as animals, Eustacia, for example, is a "crying animal". Picotre, an "unreasoning animal", and Arabella is a "female animal" of an unimportant heroine he says "That he had been able to seduce another women in two days was his crowning though unrecognized fascination for her as the for her as the she-animal". This is unbridled passion is usually accompanied by instability of temperament. Women are fickle by nature and change their minds without provocation. They respond quickly to impulses and act thereupon without the correction of reason.

Eustacia, Lucetta, Ethelbarta, Bathsheba, Vivietta, Felie, Elfride, and some of the noble dames how and miracle is the contrast between these and Anne, Faith, Grace, Elizabeth Jane, Thomasin, Charlotte, Marty South, upon the one side, all shades and light of passion, petulance, perversity, on the other reticence, patience, restraint. The violent or ambitions natures are more opulent and impulsive in their demeanors mood follows mood, they are always in a state of revolution against themselves, the quiet or constant natures

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are more refined and proud in their bearing, they suffer, but in silence and with strength.

Many of the characteristic formal concerns of the no modernist novel first forward expression in the works of novelist who reached maturity in 1980's. The use of multiple and highly subjective narrators at tempts to transcribe the "stream of consciousness", the non-linear representation of time, poetic prose, self-consciousness about the form of the novel, and reliance on myth, private symbolism, literary allusion arose from the reaction against realism and naturalism during the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Most specially treatment of the women characters are involve with the post structuralize and post modern deconstruction of western society and the interrogations of the constructs and master narratives that inform or create various social attitudes and perceptions of gender. Hardy's novels is the focus on the politics of sex and the cultural and social norms and values that played an important part in the view of women and gender discrimination in Victorian society. There is little doubt that Victorian society has a very narrow view of the potential and individuality of woman.

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