



Analyzing Exertion of Hardy's Tragic Effect in Tess

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Abstract

This paper begins with a brief introduction to Hardy's whole life and his works, especially this novel Tess and points out the tragic effect's importance and Hardy's tragic idea. Linked to this tragic effect, this paper analyzes the nice application in Tess. At last, we can understand more the fame of tragic effect and how it applies in Hardy's works.

Keywords: Tragic effect, Victorian times, Fatalism critique, Morality, Destiny

1. Introduction

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was one of the greatest critical realistic writers. His works deeply displays countries' changes in social economy, politics, morality, custom and painful destiny of unemployed farmers. Under the invasion of Capitalism from 1870's to 1890's, Hardy creates a great number of works in his life. His several long pieces of fictions make him be famous in the history Of English literature. Owing to exploring commonly the problems of human existence, his works form a series of "character and environment fictions", which represents the highest achievement of author' novel creation, tortuously expresses human crisis in spirit and belief in the latter period of Victorian Times. When he goes on realistic description and social critique, his tragic recognition to human existence environment and future is endowed these fictions melancholy and grieved central theme so that these fictions have strong tragic effect. Tess is Hardy's latter work and is comparatively mature in artistic and creative techniques. It describes the devils of Capitalism and embodied his ideas and literature achievements. The novel is set in the background of the invasion of Capitalism and the great bankruptcy of village economy and poor farmers' lives. These results undoubtedly are exposal and flogging to evils of Capitalism.

2. Speciality in Hardy's tragic effect of his works

2.1 Background of bringing tragic effect

The Victorian Times was well known for the optimism of stiff ethnics. Such a social atmosphere would surely have some impact on him. As a matter of Fact, the critical tragic effect Hardy possessed coordinated with what was rife then. The only difference was that Hardy was a novelist who regarded critical tragic effect as the starting point to understand life and write novels, while critical tragic effect was only an empty talk to those aristocrats. In Tess, nearly all the ferocious social evils he criticized concern traditional value ideas, such as religious doctrine, legal article, education of liberalism, marriage ethnics and so on. The outlook of critical tragic effect in his works shows his anti-society inclination---seeking natural beauty of life and substantiation of free emotional life. The theme stands together with the realistic one and forms the two pillars of the work.

2.2 Its difference between traditional tragic effect and other effects

Traditional tragic idea naturally has a certain influence on formation of Hardy's tragic idea. But traditional tragedy emphasizes the conflict between people and destiny, Hardy's tragic idea is different from this, he emphasizes the conflict between people and society. So, his works are social tragedies with more criticism. In 1885, Hardy wrote: "tragedy, simply speaking, tragedy expresses a state of thing in personal life, its instinctive ability and desire finally inevitably cause painful result." Why it is inevitable is "the ideal life that humans want to live doesn't suit to their present simply realistic life." Linked to Hardy's works, it is difficult to see what he talks here is the core of his tragic idea. He thinks tragedy is not simple conflict between people and environment, but human instinct and progressive tendency (the certain conflict between hero's seeking to humanitarianism and free, nice life) and hostile, evil social reality. This necessity is not the reflection of God's consciousness, fatalism but the deep reflection of essence and rule in social life. As Hardy himself says "Comedy is tragedy, if we can observe if profoundly enough." so what Hardy emphasizes on "certainty" brings deep historical truth and stimulating historical depth to his tragic works.

2.3 Far-reaching social influences

Tess's tragedy is not an occasional tragedy in personal life, but a deep social tragedy that is excellent people's common tragedy among common laborers in Capitalistic society. Here, it is so happy that we see the fighting and progressive spirit of laborers change their own social positions and old world. Hardy also thinks the nice nature of human beings disappears on Capitalistic classes, but only exists on common laborers, especially people who live in remote villages which are away from Capitalistic civilization, they meanwhile have "instinctive sense of justice and faith of fairness," only their hope and seeking can represent the common requirements of human development and progress. Here, though Hardy's conclusion is non-historical, abstract, super-class, but saying the times Hardy is in, it is so right that he sees humanitarianism does not suit anti-humanitarianism, they can shake the optimism of Capitalism. So it is very natural that Hardy's tragic novels arouse the strong shaking and fear of ruling classes in Capitalism. Here, we have to admire valuable honesty and bravery as a Capitalistic humanitarianistic author.

3. Tragic expressions in Tess

3.1 The whole structure of tragic effect

Critical tragedy has, in its turn, tended to align itself with these three modes in emphasis on one or the other: on the analysis of archetypes, on characterization and dramatic probability, or on the novelist's social vision. Partisanship, one notes, has not been unknown. Let us try some other formulations of the nature of tragedy, particularly as they might apply to Tess of the D'Urbervilles. Hardy's own definition seems worth consideration—"the WORTHY encompassed by the INEVITABLE." Too brief though this is, it is not difficult to see how this might be applied to both Greek and Elizabethan tragedy. To expand somewhat, from other ideas Hardy often expressed and sometimes implied by his practice, the worthy are those of high moral stature. "The inevitable is the nature of the universal," according to Marcus Aurelius' phrase that Hardy quotes frequently with approval. Until about 1895, he did develop his conception of the Immanent Will that is unconscious but may become conscious through its infection by the consciousness of good men, nor did he give it definitive expression until THE DYNASTS in the early years of our century. Until he was forty-five, Hardy believed that the Inevitable was a combination of natural law as Darwin formulated it, the occurrence of coincidence or not, and the inevitable presence of flaws in man's character, Tess's sexuality—that was controlled except when she was tired. Though these elements were never fitted together with absolute cohesion in any of the novels (particularly since Hardy inconsistently added to these the belief that man, conditioned by nature and in turn conditioning society, could alter society towards the better), and though Hardy never regarded himself as a systematic philosopher and was always somewhat the agnostic who framed "weak phantasies" out of the finally incomprehensible nature of reality, they form an adequate basis for tragedy if one does not assume with Mr. Paterson that tragedy must "justify the ways of God to man."

3.2 Description of mood

Tess is sometimes sentimental and I doubt that Henry James would have ended with "the president of the immortals had finished his sport with Tess," an interpolation which, like many others Hardy made, is an aesthetic flaw. (Yet somehow, since it was written into the novel and all of us have sometimes felt just as unreasonably bitter, I like even this with the unobjective part of me.) Father Time travesties the bitter view Hardy often felt and spoils (for a while) the tragic vision the novel as a whole expresses (as little Nells spoil Dickens' novels, a pile-up of sensational incidents the work of Wilkie Collins, and sentimental moralizing a lot of Thackeray's good fiction). The aesthetic manner of this novel admirably enabled Hardy to express his intellectual conception of life, from its outer show of events to the most primal discord of its nature, and even to the necessary tragic resolution of the discord. But it withheld him from adding to his formation of life and the gloss of his own opinion of the tragedy. "That tragedy is not an accidental accompaniment of life, but essential to its nature, this manner of art can be brought, without any violence, to assert, but it is very difficult for it to assert either that the tragedy is a fine, heartening business or, on the contrary, pitiable and unjust. So a change of aesthetic habit becomes necessary, and Tess is written in a form which the artist's conscience easily allows to control an emotional as well as an intellectual judgment of life. Instead of being constructed round a progressive harmony of several individual themes, the form of these two novels [termed "epic" as a convenient label] develop a single theme, the life-history of one person, and send this uninterruptedly forward. This is obviously the case in Tess." (HILLIS MILLER, 1970)

3.3 Admiration of Hardy to Tess

Tess is Hardy's heroine, this novel, indeed, strikingly similar as regards Hardy's conception of the characters and themes in general and the female protagonists in particular. Like Eustacia, Tess is firmly linked to a pre-Christian world. Not only does Angel Clare imagine her "a frush and virginal faughter of nature" but he also puts Tess in a again environment by calling her "Artemis, Bemeter and other fanciful names" and by discussing with her "pastoral life in Ancient Greece" and at the end of the novel Tess identifies the setting of the final scene, stonehenge, as "The heathen temple". Then, as she realizes how appropriate the place is for the staging of the closing scene of the drama, she tells ANGEL "you used

to say at Talbothays that I was a heathen. So now I am at home". Hardy's sympathy for Tess has not been seriously questioned and it seems reasonable to assume that Eustacia is an early version of the child of nature image that was to be her emotions she simply listens to the same voice of nature.

3.4 Reflecting woman's charming of Tess

Tess is a concentrating study of a woman who battles to be recognized as a person in her own right, but who never gets the chance to realize her womanhood. Considered inferior as a woman and as a peasant, her self-esteem is constantly eroded by a society which brands her as socially, economically, and morally unacceptable. The hunting predatory men like Alec and others, the scorn of the morally-righteous like Angel, the victim of family loyalty, it is no wonder that toward the end she looks like a woman out of whose body all the blood has run. The black flag which goes up on the prison roof as signal that her execution for murder over becomes a symbol of a blighted life. The most poignant thing about Tess, though, is not her death but her loneliness in life. The special loneliness which comes from inside is not being known by others. The novel is a high point of maturity in Hardy's fiction. He deals with poverty and the woman, the double standard of morality, the role of passivity forced upon women, and how woman's chances for happiness are eventually blighted. "To examine Tess in any detail is to be made more than usually aware of two things – the varying levels of imaginative intensity which it contains, and the way in which these levels disappear to leave the reader with a dominant impression of unity. There is the art of the ballad writer, the beautiful village maid, seduced in the green wood, who rallies to find her true lover, only to be rejected by him when he discovers her act and brought to a tragic end. There is the art of the writer who feels that such a world is dying in the shadows of the new industrial the writer who reflects philosophically on these things." (IANGREGOR, 1962) Nevertheless, the total impression that Tess leaves on the reader is undeniably one of unity and we must start by asking how that is done, before going on to isolate the various elements that make it up. The first thing to be noted is the extraordinary vividness and imaginative density with which Tess herself is presented. Tess is continually before the reader as a living presence. She is the heart of the novel, giving it all the life it has, and that life remains a personal Life, it does not transform itself into symbolic terms so that she becomes the agricultural community in its moment of ruin. If an enlargement of the Character takes place, it is to increase the force of the character, not to point out its significance. Tess felt akin to the landscape – this is Hardy's way of providing a dramatic notation for material which, in another novelist, would have been handled psychologically. At every stage of the tale interior states are visualized in terms of landscape. Then when consider Alec D'urberville, we move into a world different from this one, but the shift still lies completely within Hardy's power of dramatic presentment. It has been frequently urged against Alec that he is simply a stock-in-grade figure from Victorian melodrama. He is certainly a stock figure, but only because he belongs to a stock world, he is the eternal tempter. He describes himself to Tess as "the other old one who can tempt you in the disguise of an inferior animal". To a large degree, he is simply the anonymous villain of the ballad, here Hardy is establishing an historical perspective. The rural ballad world now comes to be seen more specifically as an agricultural community beginning to disintegrate under the threats of industrialism. Is Tess a moral woman? The beauty and ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses, its true history lay not among things done, but things willed. This is a forceful passage, making the point succinctly and without rhetorical flourish. Hardy is here feeling his way toward a criticism of behavior as an adequate moral register—not things done, but things willed. In James this criticism is vastly extended and subtilized, and the way is prepared for the characteristic twentieth-century novel, which takes as axiomatic the moral supremacy of things willed. The citadel defended by the Victorian novelist was innocent, the citadel defended by the modern novelist has shifted to integrity and here we are more naturally at home in the psychological world of motive and intention. Abstractly Hardy could see the shifting strategy, but in practice, He occupied the old position. The last analysis what does come through is the force of Hardy's sub-title a pure woman seen and presented within a social framework. Hardy may talk of things willed but here everything is externally done, the gauntlet is visibly thrown. The individual physically confronts her antagonist. But the way is beginning to be clear for things willed to find their imaginative expression in art, for the contest between corruption and innocence to take place not in a field, but within the human heart itself. For this we have to leave Hardy and enter the world of Henry James. Tess is almost the only novel of Hardy's in which a single character is great enough to transcend too-crushing mechanisms of plot. Tess has for its sub-title a Pure Woman. Why this laboured attempt on Hardy's part to establish Tess as an emblem of chastity before the book begins? Obviously it is, I think that because the dice is loaded before the book begins, and that Hardy that he has loaded it himself. Tess was victimized both ways, by Hardy on the one side and by Victorian England on the other. With Tess the cry is not this pity she is a whore! But he knows that whatever he might think, Victorians that very purity was the secret of the trouble. A wanton labeled wanton, but not a wanton labeled pure.

4. Conclusion

Critical tragic effect of Hardy during his novel-writing days was directed more toward his pessimism than toward the sexuality of his themes. Perhaps Hardy's readers would have more readily accepted Tess's happiness (after sufficient penance) than the cruel death that she must suffer. D.H. Lawrence, frequent critical tragic effects of Hardy are that as counters to mid-Victorian optimism, he would not allow anyone who could feel deeply or think broadly to be happy.

Hardy had been strongly influenced by Darwin's work during his maturing years prior to his first published novel in 1871. The battle between man and nature, manifest in the mysterious and even malevolent power that determines the process of natural selection, becomes translated into a cosmic pessimism in which man is countered at every turn by antagonistic forces. Because man can never be sure of himself, Hardy was clearly reacting to Victorian sentimentality, although he did not evade it on several occasions when he was sure his audience desired tears. He did recognize, though, that to approximate such tragedy he would have to manipulate many things artificially in order to make his philosophy work out consistently. Hardy was generally isolated from the beliefs of a dominant part of his audience. Therefore, we sense the strain, the need to impose consistency even at the expense of art. He still says the business of the poet and novelist is to show the sorriest underlying the grandest things, and the grandeur underlying the sorriest things. Most of Hardy's novels have markedly unhappy endings. This is a significant characteristic of their forms. He is the first major English author to write a number of novels that end unhappily, although the conclusions of his best novels can only be called tragic. He does not simply negate happiness, he insists on sorrow. His achievement, in terms of form, is to have combined the tragedy and the novel. Hardy is a writer of great subtlety. He makes full use of the force of reserve, and the emphasis of understatement, but he can be obvious, heavy-handed and unrelenting as well. He seems sometimes to resemble the man with the tinpot of red paint in *Tess* who paints biblical texts in fiery letters around the countryside, but he, observations, as when he describes how the strangers drinking outside Rolliver's inn "threw the dregs on the dusty ground to the pattern of Polynesia", or tying Eustacia's bonnet strings after their quarrel. He uses the most delicate touch and the hammer blow. His harshness and his ruthlessness can be obscure for us the fact that these qualities exist together. Hardy needs the tragic because of the overwhelming power of his feelings. It may be said that the novel as he found it was too slack and diffuse for his purposes. Tragedy may be considered the most rigorous of narrative form, the novel is perhaps the most commodious. Hardy's combination of the two enables him to express sorrow as no other English novelists can. His work is remarkable for the varieties and nuances of sadness. Among English writers, perhaps only Shakespeare surpasses him in this capacity. Hardy worked consciously and deliberately as an artist in the tradition of the greatest European art. His idea of tragedy represents a combination of Greek, Shakespearean and Biblical tragedy.

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