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Hope Versus Despair in  
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# **Beyond Sorrow: Love and Death Conflict: Hope Versus Despair in Thomas Hardy's Poetry**

**Asst. Instr. Adnan Taher Rahma**

**General Directorate of Baghdad  
Education**

## Abstract

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) Thomas Hardy is considered by literary historians to be the most important late Victorian / early Edwardian poet. He has been misunderstood as a poet of unalleviated pessimism without any hope for manhood or any maintenance or happiness for human or soul. Wherever he turns, the critics say, he sees a bleak view, the shadow of disappointment or death, monotony complete isolation, and lack of love and charity. This dreary outlook could be, to some extent, appropriate to the works of Hardy, the novelist, yet a close study of his poetry shows the fact that Hardy's notions are, no doubt, unique. It is in the way that this study brings out Hardy's reliability, sympathy and poetic belief to the front.

Hardy's love for human sorrow and his dream of life make him in the actual sense a serious intellectual. Hardy cannot be called a "complete pessimist" or a "weakling radical". It is the feeling of grief and depressed which one notices in some of his works which is removed by his intense remark of accurate thing in nature which is equivalent to celebration. This paper will tackle the idea of love and death in some of Hardy's poems like: '*The Darkling Thrush*', '*Her Late Husband*', '*Heredity*', '*His Immortality*', '*August Midnight*', '*The History of an Hour*', '*After a Journey*', and etc.

**Keywords:** C.P.: The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy, Eros: The God of love, Thanatos: The God of Death, Symbols of love: Tryphena and Emma.

In his '*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*', Sigmund Freud said:

In the theory of psychoanalysis, we have no hesitation in assuming that the course takes by mental events in automatically regulated by the pleasure principle. We believe, that is to say, that the course of events is invariably set in motion by unpleasurable tension that it takes a direction such that its final outcome coincides with a lowering of that tension ... that is with an avoidance of unpleasure or of production of pleasure.

(1969, 275)

In this association, Edmund Blunden states: "To speak of him as a pessimist writer would be misleading because it is inadequate. He does not preach pessimism, for he has the saving grace of having no ism to support or to exemplify". Whereas an unknown reviewer rightly concludes in the *Athenaeum*:

Perhaps after all, it is foolish to call any man a pessimist who takes the trouble to express his pessimism in works of art. If one were a pessimist, one would hardly think it worthwhile to write books while there is literature, there is hope. To write is itself an act of faith.

(An unsigned reviewer, the *Athenaeum* rpt. In '*Thomas Hardy's Poems*', (ed.) by Gibson and Johanson, p.81).

In his short poem '*August Midnight*', Hardy shows admiration to the meekest creatures which the poet regards as more well-informed than human being since they know the secret of the universe than human beings do. Hence, to call Hardy a purely negative will be unjust. He has many poems of affirmation which love or Eros, the life's instinct is celebrated as a victorious against death or Thanatos instinct. These poems counter the claims of pessimism and establish stability between hope and misery. In his poem '*The darkling Thrush*', the reader can differentiate between love and death. In the first part, the description is of a winter landscape, as the speaker contemplates the scene. The bleak desolates evening. As the day-



light grows, with spreading frost, the human beings go home, seeking shelter beside the fire place. Images of the domination of death and its overthrow of love are indicated in the following images of despair and death:

The land's sharp features seemed to be  
The Century's corpse out leant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy  
The wind his death-lament  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit on the earth  
Seemed fervorless as I.

(The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy (1930; rpt. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd 1970), ppt. 490-1. All subsequent quotations from Hardy's Poems will come from this edition and will be abbreviated as C.P, p. 255).

Yet, Eros does not surrender. It continues fight against death, which is represented by the melodious song of weak and featherless bird. This song is a source of great joy and gladness which substitutes the mood of gloom and frustration of the first part of the poem:

At once a voice arouse among the bleak  
twigs overhead in a full-hearted  
evensong of joy unlimited; an aged  
trush, frail, gaunt and small, in blast be  
ruffled plume, had chosen thus to fling  
his soul upon the growing gloom.  
(C.P, p.255)

One can even distinguish a sense of affirmation in his dullest poems dealing with death and decline. This does not mean that a perfect balance has been achieved. Though the pendulum always swings towards sorrow and gloom, at least tension is lowered and some kind of relief is accomplished. It is supposed that love alone is the power that can triumph over the time, and can turn an instant into eternity. Man's hope to overcome that dread of death-the morality showing life transiency, his longing for immortality and his desire to arrest the flow of time can be understood by love. Keats in his 'Ode on Grecian Urn' presents art as the medium which,

by arresting the flow of time, immortalizes the fleeting moment of delight of lovers. Keats states:

Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
Thought winning near the goal-yet, do not  
grieve; she cannot fade, thought thou has  
not thy bliss, forever wilt thou love, and  
she fair!

(Ode on Grecian Urn/ Lines 17-20)

Love, thus, becomes the most dominant feature in poetry, for a poet, like Hardy, extremely aware of the world "where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eye" endeavors to perpetuate it-directs his art to render into words the beauty that cannot disappear, to celebrate love that is not time's fool. In his '*The Tragic Sense of Life*', Kiguel de Unamuno perceives:

The vanity of the passing world and love  
are the two fundamental and heart-  
penetrating notes of true poetry. And they  
are two notes of which neither can be  
sounded without causing the other to  
vibrate. The feeling of the vanity of the  
passing world kindles love in us, the only  
thing that fills life again and eternalizes it.  
(p.70).

In the same work, Unamuno, nominates love as the only way man has to preserve himself saying: "in love and by love we seek to perpetuate ourselves". (ibid, p. 133).

In Hardy's poetry, also, three notable aspects appear, his obsession with the theme of death, his wish to arrest the flow of time, by either standing outside it, or by believing that all things have always existed and will continue to exist-that nothing actually deceases, and his treatment of love as reminiscence reliving a past moment in the present and so striving to eternalize it. As the three themes are interwoven in Hardy's poetry, it would be suitable to be the central theme of the present study through the remaining two themes.

To remind man of the transiency of life, the eternal flux in the world, Death, is always knocking at the door. He himself perhaps recognized how Thanatos and love or Eros instinct claimed his persistent interest. "I see

there are more poems on love and marriage than on death which I am told I am always bringing in".

(Collins *talks with Thomas Hardy*, p.20).

Closely connected with the problem of Death is man's concern for immortality. This is apparent in Hardy's poems in which he links the theme of death with imagery suggestive either of love or transformation – the conversion of the matter into something, but not its entire fading. How the act of burial things the lover to the proximity of the beloved is shown in Hardy's poem '*Her Late Husband*', he declares:

O strange interment! Civilized lands  
Afford few typesthereoef;  
Here is a man who takes his rest  
Beside his very Love,  
Beside the one who was his wife  
In our sight up above!

(C.P, p.152)

The transience of beauty and the memories of love are intermingled with death in a single stanza:

Bubbling and bright some-eyed  
But now – O never again:  
She chose her bearers before she died  
From her fancy men.

(C.P. p, 590)

How death has eventually transformed the little girl Fanny Hurd into little flowers of daisy is the theme of the poem "*Voices from Things Growing in a Churchyard*". Here again the transience of life gets emphasis and the idea of flux, death, immortality and beauty are intertwined:

A little girl here sepulchered  
Once I flit-fluttered like a bird  
Above the grass, as now I wave  
In daisy shapes above my grave

(C.P, p.590)

Another way to overcome the terror of decease is to be convinced that a man continues in the form of his descendent. Thus, the individuals may come and go, but they are perpetuated in their children. As Freud



proposed the chief task of Love (Eros), the nature of life, is to preserve the species "these germ cells, therefore, work against the death of the living substance and succeed in winning for it what we can only regard as potential immortality" (Freud, p.312). In his poem "*Heredity*" Hardy emphasizes the immortality of the family-face that despises 'the human span of durance'. It is "the perpetual thing in man that heeds no call to die":

I am the family face;  
Flesh perishes, I live on,  
Projecting trait and trace  
Through time to times anon

(C.P, p.407)

Furthermore, in the poem "*The Immortality*" the poet describes how he found the better part of a deceased individual 'shining within each faithful heart of those bereft'. As time passed on, he could still perceive the soul continuing its course, in the life of the season, though now bereft of its previous intelligence looking for that very person in the later generation. He found out that in their hearts he had decreased into "a thin/ and spectral mankind". And finally, he is reduced to "feeble speck" in the very heart of the writer himself:

Lastly I ask – now old and child-  
If ought of him remain un-perished still;  
And find in me alone, feeble spark,  
Dying amid the dark

(C.P, p.131)

For a living person one of the ways to arrest the flux of time is by grasping the moment, and by living it so intensely as to make it eternal. Hardy in "*Under High Stony Hill*", "*The History of An Hour*" and "*On the Departure Platform*" captures what Browning called 'the moment one and infinite' and James Joyce turned as Epiphany or the Roman philosophy carpe-diem which the cavalier poets believe in. This means pluck a day like a flower or seek delight now and here which symbolizes a point of hope and assertion in Hardy's poetry, in the first poem, the moment of laughing. "Beneath the moon light blink", the parting kiss of the beloved in "*On the Departure Platform*" is so intensely felt that it has become timeless. It is presented in "*The History of An Hour*" as recognizable:

Yes, 't was too satiate with soul, too  
 ethereal;  
 June-morning scents of a rose-bush in  
 flower  
 Cast in a clap-net of hempen material;  
 So catch that hour!

Reminiscence of the people departed can be called pseudo-immortality – living in the memories of persons. These remembrances are progressively declining out as Time works relentlessly and eventually disappearing in the dark of Lethe. How death may impart a sort of immortality by arresting the variability of Time finds most emotional expression in the poem *Friends Beyond*. Instead of dealing with ideas, Hardy here limits the situation – giving to the departed individuality. They are able to show that, when alive, they had parallel impulses and practices as these existing today have. An abstract notion is here envisioned by Hardy in a clearly comprehended situation. To the living, these persons William Dewy, Farmer Ludlow, Tanter Reuben, The Sruire and Lady Susan are just dead and buried in Mel-stock churchyard. Yet, to Hardy, they still survive, for in the dead of the night, they gossip to him in the muted, measured note of a ripple under archway, or alone cave's still side. They tell Hardy that their failures in life have been turned by death into triumph. The cares and worries of life are now not theirs. They are no more the victims of the moods of nature. They tell Hardy:

We've no wish to hear the tidings, how the  
 people's fortunes shift;  
 What your daily doings are;  
 Who are wedded, born, divided if your  
 lives beat slow or swift

(C.P, p.53)

By meeting death, they have overcome the fear of death. It is as if Death has, by fixing them at one point. By rising them above the eternal flux of things, imparted to them the capacity to stand outside Time and Change. They have thus a right to feel triumphant:

We have triumphed: this achievement  
 turns the bane outside, un-successes to  
 success,



Fear of death has even bygone us: Death  
gave all that we possess.

(C.P, p.53)

Thus, if death in life indicates morality, life in death can be a substitute of immortality. Yet, the solace belongs to those who are in the kingdom of death. To the living, the process of becoming is unavoidable. They experience at every moment the effects of change – of everlasting flux – on themselves, on nature, their deeds and on the earth itself. Hardy, in his autobiography, gives outlet to his keen sensibility to this saying:

"It is a-going – i.e., the becoming – of the  
world that produces its sadness. If the  
world stood still at a felicitous moment,  
there would be no sadness in it.

(*Childhood among the Ferns*, C.P., p.825)

To the same idea Hardy gives expression in a poem saying: "Why should I have to grow to man's estate. And this afar noised World perambulates?" (ibid)

To Hardy, 'Time is toothless', time is a mock of being length transcends/ Time ancient regal claims. In another poem, so time, he challenges time – You are not enough/ But a thought/ lost, lost is always close to us:

All the loved-lost thns are being  
continuous,  
In a dateless dure abiding, over the present  
striding with placid permanence  
That knows not transience: Firm in the  
Vast, First, Last: After, yet close to us.

(C.P, p.719)

Love as the basic nature of manhood, is universal; to love intensely would mean living forcefully. On the temporal and spatial planes, the lovers may have to suffer the pains of departure; they may be haunted by the fright of losing what is dearest to them. Though, there is a plane where the loved-one is never lost. Hardy's poems disturbed with losing love also embody the theme of becoming old and losing bodily charms. They, hence, represent man's losing fight against Time and Morality. The poems like 'She to Him', 'Amabel', 'Former Beauties' and 'The Revisitation' are dealing

with losing – love, vanishing beauty and transience of life. All these themes portray man's failure to arrest the flux – his inability to turn the moment into eternity. '*She to Him*' shows how 'that sportsman time but rears his brood to kill':

When you shall seem in the toils of time  
My lauded beauties carried off from me,  
My eyes no longer stars as in their prime,  
My name forgot of Maiden fair and free.

(C.P, p.11)

The gradual passing of the strength of love finds express in another poem:

Perhaps, long hence, when I have passed away,  
Some other's feature, accent, thought like mine.  
Will carry you back to what I used to say,  
And bring some memory of your love's decline.

(C.P, p.12)

In '*Amabel*', Hardy laments how Time, the cruel oppressor deprived her of all her claims:

I marked her ruined hues,  
Her custom-strained views,  
And asked "Can there indwell  
My amabel?"

(C.P, p.6)

How time, the delicate thief, takes away the physical charms of the loved-ones, forms the theme of '*Past Beauties*'.

These market-dames, mid-aged, with lips  
thin drawn, and tissues sere,  
Are they ones we loved in year's a gone,  
And courted here?

(C.P, p.223)

In '*The Revisitation*', the lover meeting the beloved after twenty years discovering:

That which Time's transforming chisel  
Had been tooling night and day for twenty  
years,  
And tooled too well

In its rendering of crease where curve was,  
Where was, raven, grizzle – pits  
Where peonies once did dwell  
(C.P, p.180)

Certain actions in Hardy's life played a vital part in shaping his conduct of love. With his first-love resulting in disappointment and his beloved, Tryphena, becoming his lost-award, Hardy learnt as what disagreeable change time brings about. He has to learn the same again with deeper and greater sadness when his sweetheart, Emma, became his wife. Leaving separately the first two years of this unfitted marriage, the remaining period was that of vengeance on man. In his age of seventy-three, Hardy went to St. Juliet in Mach 1913, to retrace his steps into the past, to renew the time, for loyalty to the past was the characteristic of his mind. For him "it was the only way now possible to assuage the sense of guilt, of past neglect, real or imagined. His suffering broke through the self-protective shell of reserve built up during the years of estrangement ...". (The later years of Thomas Hardy 1922-28, collected by Florence Emily Hardy, p.210)

The memory of the experience of young love was, to Hardy, a method to get away from the present. It also indicated some regression of childhood, operating from the depths of the unconscious, conditioning the poet's replies and making him return to Hardy's Treatment of Love the past. Hardy refers to his ability of keeping a feeling unexpressed for years; and then giving outlet to it. He states that: "I have a faculty for burying an emotion in my heart or brain for forty years and 'exhuming' it at the end of that time as fresh as when interred."

(ibid, p.212).

Hardy's use of words such as 'Burying', 'interred' and 'exhuming' indicates connotation with the dead. It also points out his inability to respond to the warm, throbbing, passionate bodily-love of the beloved, when she is actually there. Instead, he loves to evoke shades from the past. It was only after Emma died that Hardy could serve his outpourings on her love and attractiveness when she was young. (ibid, p.215). Hardy's love poems exemplify his anxiety with the past, his tendency to store in



reminiscence the actions of the past days, to re-form them. His fancy and the detachment of the experiences in time and space, toss over them a colouring of imagination, and presents them and moment of the past being lived in the present. (216)

A large number of Hardy's poems have love as its theme. His love-poems can be collected under two groups: poems written in his youth, during Hardy's staying in London, and the poems of his matured years. These poems published as 'Memories of Vision' and the poems of 1912-13. Hardy expresses his love for Emma through the period of their courtship, an old love which now conserved in memory. Although many women came in Hardy's life, yet, Emma and Tryphena are the two who exercised highest effect on his passionate life. His remorse for Emma was because of the fact that he identified that he could offer to her nothing better, for she remained to him just the shadow of his first-love.

Indeed, the researcher finds an inkling of Hardy's quest for the ideal woman from an entry in his journal dated 1865. Hardy notes that though women, in general, have almost identical expressive and intellectual attributes, there is something mysterious which raises her far above the rest:

April 1865. There is not that regular gradation among women- kind that there is among men. You may meet 999 exactly alike, and then the thousandth – not a little better, but far above them. Practically, then, it is unusable for a man to seek thousandth to make his. (G.W. Sherman, p.257).

Another note revealing his sense of loneliness written as follows:

June 2, 1865. My twenty-fifth birthday is not very cheerful. Feel as if I had lived a long time and done very little. Walked about by moonlight in the evening, wondered, what woman- I should be thinking about in five years' time

(The early years of Thomas Hardy, p.52)

The desire to attain the ideal woman is reflected as an attempt tied to end in uselessness. This sense of frustration and failure on marks Hardy's over-all view of love. He admits that love acts as the motivating force of life. In '*Lines to a movement in Mozart's Flat Symphony*' he explains how 'love lures life on'. In the company of the beloved, love leads one to such freshness, equality, freeness and fullness. The moment of intense love, as the lover steals a kiss from the beloved, symbolize a unique combination of rashness, rareness, maturity and fruitfulness. Over these sensitive involvements, Hardy shows how love enhances the expressive life of man.

Hardy is influenced by the Romantic poets, so there is a resemblance between his view of love and the Romantic poets. Shelley regards the 'sustaining love' as "the light whose smile kindles to Universe." To Hardy, the image of the beloved is always associated with some enlightening object – staff, moon etc. In '*As I set out for Lyonesse*', he clarifies his first visit to his darling Emma, this lights up his loneliness: "And star-light lit my lonesomeness/ when I set out for Lyonesse/ a hundred miles away. (C.P, p.293). The memory of Hardy's beloved, Tryphena, is again appealed in images allusive of light, he depicts her saying:

Gulls glint out like silver flecks  
And light blinks up far away ...  
The all-pervading clouds exclude  
The one quick, timorous, transient star;  
I cry: there reigns the star for me (C.P, p.464-65).

In his poem "*He Wonders about Himself*", Hardy feels himself that his sorrow in love was caused by Immanent Will, and wonders that he could do little to frustrate the Will's design:

Part in mine of the general will  
Cannot my share in the sum of sources  
Bend a digit the poise of forces  
And a fair desire fulfill? (C.P, p.480).

Hardy regards Tryphena as a divine star saying that: "Shall I be watching the stars of heaven thanking one of them looks like thee?" (ibid, p.479). Their love relationship is ended in exasperation. Hardy feels that the light of his love is shine and is about to be extinguished. Such doubts find a proof in '*A Wet August*' and '*At Waking*'. In the later poem, he explains how, as 'dawn began to creep' amid cold clouds drifting dead-white a 'corpse

outlaid'. He beheld the vision of Tryphena, but the light was almost on the point of extinction. She is described by the poet when he said:

O vision appalling  
When the one believed in-thing  
Is seen falling, falling  
With all to which hope can cling. (C.P, p.209).

In '*A Wet August*', Hardy recalls that August-day "full-rayed fine", he has spent with his beloved, and associates it with a fine day in the present: "By the then golden chances in things/ were wrought more bright than brightest skies to-day". (C.P, p.547). Hardy also feels that the light of his previous love has now stopped to brighten his life. This is shown in his poem 'The End of the Episode' when he said "The love-light shines the last time/ between you, Dear and me. (ibid, p.211). These moments of unreliability and doubt are short lived. The poet eventually understands that the light of love has not faded out, and it still continues to shine with its old gleam. This is clear in his poem 'In the seventies' when he states: "In the seventies I was bearing my breast/ penned-tight/ certain starry-thoughts that threw a magic light". (ibid, p.430).

In his poem '*Memory and I*', Hardy characterizes his search for memory of his previous love. This love is a basis of light "O Memory, where is now my love/ that rayed me as a God above? (ibid, p.171). In poem '*Thoughts of Phena*' Hardy looks to give up all limits of his former love. The news of the death of his beloved maybe moved him to direct his emotions more passionately. In the same poem, he admits that "she was my lost-prize" and that he has no moment or keep-sake of her:

Not a line of her writing  
Not a thread of her hair' as a reminder of the  
days  
When her dreams were up-brimming with  
light  
And with laughter he eyes. (ibid, p.55)

The poem '*The Place on the Map*' represents an essential event of Hardy's love-life in which his beloved, Tryphena, breaks to Hardy the news that presently she is going to be the mother of his child. He is filled of grief and melancholy. Although both of them are emotionally and physically married, severe ethical codes of the society do not recognize it. What would have been a source of delight to them hence becomes the source of worry. '*At Rush Pond*', represents



the reflection of the moon on the surface of the pool that reminds Hardy of the image of Tryphena in water. He saw this reflection when she left him forever. To Hardy, The reflection of the moon in water is gloomy, such as Tryphena's memory to him. She exists to his memory like the moon in the poem. This reflection is not as the straight source of light, but a likeness of the source of light. The grief that circles the reflection of the moon expresses of the shadow of unhappiness that encompasses the memory of Tryphena. This change is explained by the fact that Hardy began to court Emma.

In fact, the love relationship between Hardy and Emma depends on the memory of the former beloved. He wins her in marriage, but marital bliss was not to be theirs. This childless couple lives a life of mutual misunderstanding for about thirty years. It results in Hardy's worry and Emma's compulsion. The death of Emma leaves Hardy to view in retrospect their days of courtship. After Emma was no more, Hardy also haunted with a sense of guilt and sorrow at not having treated her well. This nostalgic reminiscence of the past mixed with overtones of grief and sadness found expression in the poems of 1912-13. As his pilgrimage of penance, Hardy actually started a journey to St. Juliot, the scene of his and Emma's love. The experiences of thrilling were recreated by Hardy, trying to present a moment of the past as if it were eternalized. Hardy's love-poems addressed to Emma are the sparks of an old fire.

Hardy does not depend only on his own remembrance for re-forming the moments of the past. He has the wish to divulge in his poetry what the early months meant to them both – and not to him alone. Hardy pictured them both as seen them felt and experienced by him and Emma, too. A contrast of some entries in Emma's memories is very clear when she describes her meeting with Hardy in '*The Recollections*'

At that very moment the front door-bell rang  
and he was ushered in. I had to receive him  
alone and felt a curious uneasy  
embarrassment at receiving anyone,  
especially so necessary a person as an  
architect. I was immediately arrested by his  
familiar appearance, as if I had seen him in a  
dream.

(Recollection of Emma, p.33).

Hardy gives a poetic expression to the same in his '*A Man was drawing near to me*', saying:

There was a rumble at the door  
A draught disturbed the drapery

And but a minute passed before  
With gaze that bore my destiny  
The man revealed himself to me.

(C.P, p.549).

Hardy narrates the events from Emma's standpoint as she felt and practiced the state. The ringing of the call-bell in '*A Rumble at the Door*' which is cited by Emma becomes the man revealing himself to her in this poem. Another entry in Emma's *Recollections* explains her journey with Hardy to Bocastle Harbour, and also narrating how they passed the same stream:

We sketched and talked of books. Often we  
walked down the beautiful valley to Bocastle  
harbour where we had to jump over stones  
and climb over a low wall by rough steeps ...  
we once lost a tiny picnic tumbler, and there  
it is to this day no doubt between two small  
boulders.

(C.P, p.316-17)

In his poem '*After a Journey*', Hardy feels that he is still being drawn to the sights connected with his flattering to Emma by her "voiceless ghost":

You are leading me on to the stops we knew  
when we haunted here together the waterfalls  
above which the mist-bow shone at the then  
fair hour in the then fair weather.

(C.P, p.328)

In his poem '*The Hunter*', Hardy makes Emma's unreasonable form admit that she still follows him like his own shadow. She is still like his invisible companion in all his sufferings and delights:

If he but sigh since my loss befall him  
straight to his aside I go. Tell him a beautiful  
one is doing all that love can do.

(C.P, p.325)

Hardy shows how unacquainted vision raises up before his mind's eye vision of Emma. This is shown in his poem '*Places*':

Nobody calls to mind that here upon Boterel  
Hill, where the Waggoner's skid, with cheeks  
whose airy flush outbid. Fresh fruit in bloom,  
and free of fear she cantered down ...

(C.P, p.332)

Hardy more yearns for and loves his young wife, Emma, as he first knew her. This is reflected in his poem '*The Phantom Horsewoman*', who emerges 'warm, real and keen'. Emma also like Hardy admits how she is not limited to a specific place. She is 'everywhere/ in his brain-day, night/ as if on the air/ it were drawn rose-bright':

Time touches her not, but she still rides gaily  
in his rapt thought on that shagged and bushy  
Atlantic spot. And as when first-eyed draws  
rein and sings to the swing of the tide.

(C.P, p.333)

Hardy reconstructs the magic of his first meeting with Emma. He re-wears the magic of the past even if it seems only a dream. He also recalls how when everything had seemed fair in the beginning. Hardy's poem '*Near Lanivet*', explicit a clear premonition of Emma's lapsing into a morose bitterness. The figure of an executed woman depicts Emma in her depression. Her white-clothed form is seen in the faint evening light as of a woman crucified. He clarifies that saying:

I, lightly: 'There is nothing in it. For you,  
anyhow! –"O I know there is not, said she ..."  
Yet I wonder if no one is bodily crucified  
now, In spirit one may be". (C.P, p.410)

The feelings explained in poetry often bears the suggestions of the crucible in which they were cast. Certain characteristics of Hardy's treatment of love deserve analysis and scrutiny. The change shaped by time, the constant flux operating in the visible universe remains his constant obsession. Time works on human emotions and sentiments, and gradually takes away their intensity. One of the poet's concerns is how to capture this flux and how to reserve for the future the moment which is being intensely lived. However, memory comes to the saving of man. By storing in memory the experience of the moment intensely lived, man can turn the moment, as if it were, into eternity. The majority of the subjects of Hardy's love poems are the moments of the past, stored up in reminiscence and recollected with a vividness that imparts to them the strength of the current moment. Hardy practices this experience out of his own love – life. It is either of his first love relationship with Tryphena or his courtship with Emma.

Anyone, as a reader, may miss the expression of that physical warmth and sensuality in Hardy's love poems which love between the sexes involves. The throbbing desires and the longing of the flesh aroused by the physical attendance of the beloved have no place in Hardy's love poetry. Despite the fact that his love



poems be mostly contemplates on his love for the real two women who actually came in his life, Emma and Tryphena, yet they appear in his poetry as they had been preserved in his memory as symbols of love than as living beings. To Hardy, Tryphena is more enduring in his poems than the real Tryphena, and Emma remains just a shade of the former love. Hardy, even in these autobiographical love-poems, seems to be in love with the word love itself, which is an abstract idea than with the beloved. Although these women have been treated more as abstraction than as living beings in Hardy's love-poems, yet he does not succeed in totally divesting them of their actuality. In Hardy's poems, there are traces of his ambivalent attitude to the object of his love. He loves Tryphena, and he cannot overcome the feeling of dislike to her for her having yielded to the advances of his friend, Moule. He is devoted to Emma's love of the courting-days. Thus, after gaining her as his wife, the feelings of love gave way to those of misunderstanding and indifference. The matrimonial sadness after Emma's death resulting brought about in Hardy the feelings of repentance and guilt, and also of being unfair to one loved deeply once. Hardy's poems written after her death are remembrance of the happy days of their courtship blended with feelings of remorse and repentance.

Hardy looked yearningly to his happy days with Emma and poured out his love for her in poems written after her death. Though, for about thirty years he had been indifferent to her at the best, proves his inability to get love from and bestow it upon the loved one, when she would be physically present. The awareness of his deep-seated deficiency also resulted in Hardy's feelings of guilt and remorse. His acute consciousness of having been unfair to Emma is reflected in that intense grief and self-pity which characterizes some of his poems.

A distinguished feature in Hardy's treatment of love is that he replies to his love as an object of his own feelings, and as a subject having an independent existence of her own. Like Eustacia, the heroine of *The Return of the Native*, Hardy is more in love with the love that is distant and remote. In Hardy's poem, 'At Tea', there is a young wife looking at her husband and the lady-guest with eyes clearly reflecting "her sense that she fills an envied place", that she dominates the love of her husband. The husband steals a yearning glance at the face of the lady-guest and she sits smiling betraying no feeling by her voice or looks:

And the happy housewife does not know  
That the woman beside her was first his  
choice  
Till the fates ordained it could not be so.

(C.P, p.391)

The idea of wedded-love shows itself to be a myth is the theme of 'The Dame of Atheihall'. The eloping wife returns to her departure. His wife's going away made it easy to marry the girl he loves:

Another love, another choice, her going is  
good. Our conditions mend; in a change of  
mates we shall both rejoice; I honed that it  
thus might end.

(C.P, p.142)

The marriage may be a social and a legal bond, but it does not bind together two hearts is realized by the husband in 'The Burgers' as he lies in ambush to kill the eloping wife. As at midnight, the wife appears with her lover, and sees the husband with lifted sword. 'She flings her fainting form on her lover to shield him'. The husband realizes that:

I may house  
And I may husband her, yet what am I;  
But licenced tyrant to this bonded pair.

(C.P, p. 21)

The husband hands her over her gold ornaments, jewelry and robes, and bides them both adieu. When his friend asks him whether he had been able to strike the deadly blow, he replies:

I have struck well. They fly but  
Carry wounds that none can cicatrices  
Nor mortal? Said he, lingering-worse, said I

(C.P, p. 22)

The concepts of Love (Eros) and Death (Thanatos) are presented in a pity relationship in which there ought to have existed strong affections in which revenge would have been more suitable. The spouse displays how there has not been lost love between the lovers, the husband and the wife. Two hearts in which the sources of love are required, the physical nearness becomes practically painful. They yearn for physical separation. But the ironies of life do not offer this relief to them. In Hardy's 'Curate's Kindness', the person allows a new competitor to be with his wife. He also thinks that he contributed to their happiness by alerting the rule of keeping the husband and the wife separately. However, Hardy experiences suffering at the loss of the beloved that is not private love. The intensity with which it is felt, the objectivity with which a once-deeply-felt sense of loss conveyed by the poet, makes it an expression of the sorrow of all those who love and who lose. In addition to that, Hardy weaves his

views on love with his vision of life in such a way as to make the former a complicated component of the later. The personal experience of losing his first beloved, Tryphena, is expressed with the intensity of a personal loss. Yet, it is woven in the pattern of Hardy's view of life as a chance operating to ruin man's happiness.

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