Chapter 2

THE AUTHOR:
THOMAS HARDY

Literary works of an author Thomas Hardy, are considered for this study.

2.1 PERSONAL

Thomas Hardy was an English novelist and poet. He was born in Dorsetshire in England on 2\textsuperscript{nd} June 1840.

His family was one of the branches of Dorset Hardys. His father was a master mason and building contractor.

2.2 EDUCATION

Thomas Hardy started his education in 1848 from Julia Martin’s School in Bockhampton. During his school days he learnt playing violin in 1849. From 1853 he started studying Latin and French. He also started reading widely.

Hardy was apprenticed to a local architect John Hicks, who was architect of Dorchester.
He started studying Greek dramatists, after he met Horace Moule.

2.3 LITERARY CAREER

Thomas Hardy started literary writing, that is essays, poetry, verse in 1859, but he was compelled to stick to architecture.

In 1862 he went to London to work with Sir Arthur Blomfield. Working with him in London, he explored the cultural life of London by attending exhibitions, plays, operas and by visiting museums.

In March 1865 his first literary article, a short story was published in Chamber’s Journal. For next two to three years he wrote good deal of verse and poetry which idealized rural life. But his writings were not appreciated by the readers.

Thomas Hardy’s career as writer spanned over fifty years which has been divided into three periods. The first as Novelist, second as Poet and third as Lyrical Poet.

2.4 HIS NOVELS

Thomas Hardy’s novel, which was published anonymously in 1871 was “Desperate Remedies”. This novel described many of the fundamental characteristics of his emerging style.

The next novel entitled “Under The Greenwood Tree” was published in 1872. This novel was a rural painting of a Dutch school in which Hardy found himself. Critics complimented the story, but this story was not accepted by readers. This novel incorporated material from his unpublished novel, “The Poor
Man and The Lady”.

Consecutively in the third year, a novel “A Pair Of Blue Eyes” was published. It was tragedy and irony together. At this juncture his career of architecture was relinquished and he started writing full time.

His first book that brought him fame and name was “Far From The Madding Crowd” published in 1874. This novel appeared anonymously in a Cornhill’s Magazine and was attributed by many people to Eliot. This novel is a story of the emptiness of the pastoral world and the potentially tragic results of sexual attraction.

In September 1874, Thomas Hardy married Emma and he set his house in London.

Next novel of Thomas Hardy was under the title “The Hand Of Ethelberta” published in 1876. The novel which brought him success and fame was “The Return Of The Native”. It is said to be the most sombre and picturesque novel. This novel was published in 1878.

“The Trumpet Major” was published in 1880.

The next novel entitled “A Laodicean” was published in 1881, when he was bed-ridden.

“Two On A Tower” was published in 1882.

In 1886 Hardy’s next novel “The Mayor Of Casterbridge” was published. It was a turning point of Hardy’s career. The novel represented his belief that “Character Is Fate”. This novel is filled with overt Biblical references that form the base of this tragic and agonistic novel.

The “Wonderlands” was published in 1887.

His first collection of short stories “Wassex Tales” was pub-

Meanwhile in 1891 “Tess Of The D’Urbervillies” was published, which was a story of poor village girl. Originally it was named as “Too Late Beloved!” The novel received mixed criticisms, many of them regarding morality of the story.

In 1895, the novel “Jude The Obscure” was published. This was his most thoughtful book. It aroused even more debate than “Tess Of The D’Urbervillies”. It was a story which dramatized the conflict between carnal and spiritual life.

In 1897 “The Well Beloved” was published after extensive revisions. It was a reprint of a story originally published in the “Illustrated London News” in 1892.

The last two novels were filled with issues of sex and death, the two topics which were taboos at that time.

“Jude The Obscure” created highest debate. A bishop burnt the book, critics abused him as degenerate and called the work disgusting. The criticism and ruthless treatment Thomas Hardy received after writing this novel was so much that he decided not to write henceforth. Accordingly his career as novelist came to an end & he did not write for another thirtytwo years, till his death.

2.5 THOMAS HARDY’S POEMS

In 1878 with the first volume of poems “Wasssex Poems” he started his career as a poet.

“Poems Of The Past And Present” was published in 1902.
The period as poet consisted of the great poem,

*The Dynasts* — Part one — Published in 1904
*The Dynasts* — Part two — Published in 1906
& *The Dynasts* — Part three — Published in 1908

The period of Thomas Hardy as a Lyrical Poet, begins with “Times Laughing Stocks” in 1909 wholly devoted to lyrical poetry.

It is not so often that an artist’s life can be divided so definitely into separate stages, each stage characterized by the use of different form. This tripartite division is perhaps the most remarkable feature of Hardy’s career as a whole.

### 2.6 AWARDS

Thomas Hardy’s essay titled “Coloured Brick And Terra-Cotta Architecture” received an award of Royal Institute of British Architects in 1863.

In 1863 he won the prize of Architectural Association for Design.

In 1910 Thomas Hardy received “Order Of Merit” and “Freedom Of Dorchester” awards.

Also in 1912 he received the “Gold Medal” of Royal Society of Literature.

### 2.7 THOMAS HARDY’S VIEWS

Hardy wrote over fifty works in his life including novels, poems, short stories, plays and autobiography.

His childless marriage to Emma Gifford lasted until her
death, but grew problematic in their old age. Shortly after
Emma’s death he married Florence Dugdale, a family friend.
She helped him to write autobiography.

Hardy died on January 11, 1928.

During 87 years of Hardy’s life he published 14 novels, 4
volumes of short stories & 8 volumes of Poetry.

It is said that the tragedies, Hardy faced in his life, are the
reasons for his novels to contain theme of love and have a gloomy
and pessimistic tone.

Out of the fourteen novels, he wrote, not all were well-
received. He challenged many of the sexual and religious con-
ventions of the Victorian age. All his work is concerned with one
thing under two aspects, non-civilization and non-mannerism.
He studied the workings of fate through inexorable moods or
humours.

Hardy’s view of women is more French than English. It is
subtle, a little cruel, not as tolerant as it seems. It is thoroughly
a Man’s point of view.

He sees all that is irresponsible for good & evil in a woman’s
character, all that is untrustworthy in her brain and will, all
that is alluring in her variability. He is her apologist but always
with a reserve of private judgement. No one has created more
attractive women of a certain class, women whom man would
have been more likely to love or to regret loving.

In his earlier books he has been somewhat careful for the
reputation of his heroines. Gradually he allowed them more
liberty with a frank treatment of instinct and its consequences.
2.8 THOMAS HARDY’S POSITION

In spite of all these, the position Thomas Hardy occupied in English literature has been unique. His death seemed to snap the last link connecting the famous nineteenth century literateur.

2.9 NOVELS CONSIDERED

Hardy started his career as novelist with his first published novel, “Desperate Remedies” in 1871 and ended with “Judge The Obscure” 1895. This time period is approximately of twenty four years.

This study is an objective study of the writing style of Thomas Hardy and relative change in his style. Hence the three novels

Desperate Remedies — 1871
Two On A Tower — 1882
Tess of D’ubervilles — 1991

have been selected for the study.

The three novels chosen for study are published approximately with equal time gap.

A table of all his novels and corresponding year of publishing is presented on the next page
2.10 THOMAS HARDY’S LITERARY CAREER AT A GLANCE

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<th>Title</th>
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