



University of Tikrit
College of Education for Women
English Department

Subject

Thomas Hardy *The Man He Killed*

Fourth Stage

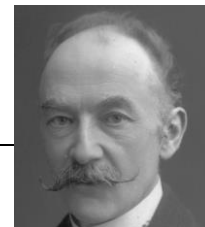
Prepared by

Assistant Professor

Ahmad Khalid Hassoon

Email

ahmadartstr@tu.edu.iq



Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

The Characteristics of Thomas Hardy's poetry

Thomas Hardy was born in Dorset, England, in 1840. He is a novelist, poet, and short story writer. He belongs to the Literary movement named Naturalism. He began his writing career as a novelist but he won his fame as an English poet. *The characteristics of his poetry are :*

- 1- Hardy is a local or regional literary writer because , in his writing, he always talks about his region , native homeland Wessex, Dorset, in the south of England, where he grows up.
- 2- He was a pessimistic and melancholic poet which his poems reflect the tragic point of view of life. Therefore he didn't find any relief in life and because of this his writings end in tragedy and suffering.
- 3- He is interested in the rural life , peasants ,woods, countryside, and natural environment. He finds out that life of the countryside is better than the urban life. Therefore, in his poems, he attacks those who leave their villages to go and live in the city.
- 4- He mostly writes tragedies in which he pays attention to the unities of time, place, and action. Therefore, fate and chance are very important elements in portraying the characters and lead to their suffering. He gradually developed that disillusioned and tragic view of life which reflect the cruelties of city life, disappointment in love, and man's struggle hopelessly with life.
- 5- The romantic , Victorian ,and supernatural elements have a great influence upon Hardy's poetry.
- 6- Hardy formed a highly technical original style, combining rhythms and colloquial diction with an extraordinary variety of meters, delightful music, and stanza forms.

An August Midnight(1901) by Thomas Hardy 1840 –1928

A shaded lamp and a waving blind,
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor:
On this scene enter—winged, horned, and spined—
A longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore;
While 'mid my page there idly stands
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands...

Thus meet we five, in this still place,
At this point of time, at this point in space.

—My guests besmear my new-penned line,
Or bang at the lamp and fall supine.
"God's humblest, they!" I muse. Yet why?
They know Earth-secrets that know not I.

Thomas Hardy (1840 – 1928)

Hardy was an English poet. His works are considered part of Victorian Realism and greatly influenced by Romanticism. He was critical of Victorian society, especially on the declining status of rural Britain.

'An August Midnight' (1901)

The poem shows the relationship established between men and nature to reflect Hardy's interest in 'natural history'. The poem describes the meeting of a man with five insects. However, the man and the insects are described as equals, generating empathy with these small creatures. (winged, horned, and spined - A longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore; a sleepy fly)

(Structure and Poetic Form)

'An August Midnight' has two stanzas with six lines each:

The poem presents two dissimilar **rhyme schemes**:

the **first stanza** has an ABABC rhyme scheme and **the second stanza** has an AABBCC rhyme scheme. Something similar occurs within the stanzas with the meter. For example, the first line of the first stanza has iambic pentameter, whereas the second line has anapaests. With this mixture of rhyme and meter, Hardy creates a particular and interesting rhythm that consists of alteration rather than stability. This sporadic rhythm can be read as the movement of insects.

Prepared by Assistant Professor Ahmad Khalid Hassoon College of Education for Women

Thomas Hardy's style in "An August Midnight"

In "An August Midnight", Hardy's style combines these elements to create a sense of enchantment, contemplation, and a deep connection with the natural world, which is characteristic of his overall poetic style.

Imagery

In "An August Midnight," Hardy uses vivid and descriptive imagery to create a sensory experience for the reader, describing the moonlit garden and the natural elements in detail (the moonlight, the fragrance of flowers, and the glowing tree).

Metaphor and Symbolism

The poem uses metaphors and symbolism to convey deeper meanings and abstract concepts. For example, the moonlight is described as a "glow-worm lamp," and the tree's glow is a "star-shaped portal for the moon." These metaphors add depth and figurative meaning to the descriptions.

Ambiguity and Wonder

Hardy often incorporates ambiguity and wonder to allow readers to engage with the text and to convey a sense of awe and reverence for the beauty and mystery of the natural world. In this poem, the ambiguity surrounding the nature of the glow and the presence in the garden encourages contemplation.

Nature and Mysticism

Nature is a recurring theme in Hardy's work, and "An August Midnight" explores the mystical and mysterious aspects of nature, suggesting a deeper, hidden world that exists alongside the visible one.

Prepared by Assistant Professor Ahmad Khalid Hassoon College of Education for Women

The Man He Killed BY THOMAS HARDY

"Had he and I but met
 By some old ancient inn,
We should have sat us down to wet
 Right many a nipperkin!

 "But ranged as infantry,
 And staring face to face,
I shot at him as he at me,
 And killed him in his place.

 "I shot him dead because —
 Because he was my foe,
Just so: my foe of course he was;
 That's clear enough; although

 "He thought he'd 'list, perhaps,
 Off-hand like — just as I —
Was out of work — had sold his traps —
 No other reason why.

 "Yes; quaint and curious war is!
 You shoot a fellow down
You'd treat if met where any bar is,
 Or help to half-a-crown."

The Man He Killed

- * The poem is written in the first person (stand view-point of one of the soldiers).
- * The poem focuses on the senselessness and futility of war where a man has killed another - quite simply for they were fighting on opposite sides in a war. The poet ironically criticizes his tragic and dark outlook on life during the circumstances of war.

The Man He Killed

First Stanza The poem shows us how futile war is. The speaker says that if they had met in an inn they would of shared many drinks. But since they met at war and shot each other ending killing the other man. (If met in other circumstances, they will enjoy drinking several nipper = drinks)

Second Stanza They met as infantry (food soldiers) on opposing sides in a battle. The two men stared face to face (strange looking). The friends will shot at each other, therefore, one has to die. The speaker supposedly shots at his friend and kills him at once meanwhile the other person (foe) wants to kill him.

Third Stanza The speaker then tried to find a reason to justify the killing but fails to find one. That reflects the struggling to find a reason for killing the man. The repetition of the word ' because' reflects the man's hesitation (not convincing) . Eventually, he concludes that he did that because it was his foe or enemy. He is still consciously that this reason in not good enough and does not excuse him for what he did.

Fourth Stanza Once again the poet comments on the word of "war" is attractive and curious one to describe the friends' meeting in a bar or help each other by lending money .