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CATASTROPHE IN LOVE IN THOMAS HARDY'S *THE WELL-BELOVED*

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Abstrak: Di artikel ini, peneliti menganalisa *Catastrophe in Love* dalam novel Thomas Hardy, *the Well-Beloved*. Peneliti menggunakan teori New Criticism. Peneliti menganalisa hubungan cinta tokoh utama dengan gadis-gadis dari tiga generasi sebuah keluarga, si ibu, si anak, dan si cucu. Akhirnya penulis menyimpulkan bahwa setelah berpacaran dengan gadis-gadis dari tiga generasi tersebut, si tokoh utama mengkhiri kisah cintanya dengan kesedihan, dengan kata lain kehancuran dalam cinta.

Kata Kunci: *catastrophe*

Abstrak: In this article, the researcher analyzes *Catastrophe in Love* in Thomas Hardy's *the Well Beloved*. The researcher then uses New Criticism theory. The researcher analyzes the main character's love affair with girls of three generations of a family, the mother, the daughter, and the granddaughter. At last, the researcher draws conclusion that the main character, after having his romance with the girls of the three generations, ends in sorrow, in other words he undergoes a catastrophe in love.

Key Words: *catastrophe*

INTRODUCTION

On reading literary works, we always come up with an idea that the heroes or the heroines end in happiness as those literary works mainly deal with the fight between the good and the bad which the good defeats the bad. It does not happen to Thomas Hardy's works. Most of the main characters or the protagonists in Thomas Hardy's works are the victims of the blind life force. The main characters mostly end in sorrow as the things that happen to his characters are sometimes brought about by element of unfortunate and malicious chance. "Man, in Hardy's books is the product of heredity and environment. He is the product as well as the victim of the blind life force that Hardy sees occasionally as malignant..... We see his people against the background of the native Wessex, suffering, struggling figures in conflict with forces too strong for them" (Bakker, 1975:77).

The aforesaid very distinctive feature of Thomas Hardy's characters who end sorrowfully attract the researcher to analyze. One of Thomas Hardy's novels that is analyzed in this article is *The Well-Beloved*. *The Well-Beloved* is telling about a character which is quite impressive to the researcher. He falls in love with girls of three generations of a family. Not being able to get married to the first girl, he keeps waiting for nearly twenty years, for the daughter of the girl. Not being able to get married to the daughter of his first beloved, he keeps waiting for another twenty years, for the granddaughter of the girl. Though he fails to get married to the girls, his struggle to get what he wants impresses the researcher. He was 'the wandering Jew of the love-world' (51) who eventually is regarded by the world as 'the selfish design of an elderly man on a maid' (147).

Therefore, the researcher here raises catastrophe in love as the topic of this

article. Catastrophe is then the ruins of the fortune of the hero (Little, 1966:85). Ruin here does not mean that the main character is physically destroyed but the complete failure of his effort in achieving his girls to die for.

THEORY

The researcher uses New Criticism to analyze the novel which concentrates on elements within works of literature without focusing on historical, social, and biographical influences (Robert Scholes, www.cla.purdue.edu/blackmon/critical.htm). While elements of a literary work, in this case, a prose, are plot, character, and setting (Little, 1966:82). Rather, the researcher uses plot as the analyzing element in Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved*. Further, plot consists of exposition, the introduction to the characters, their relationships with one another, the physical background in which they find themselves (Little, 1966:83), conflict (two opposing forces), which may be one of man against nature, man against man, in the mind of the chief character, man against himself (Little, 1966:83), suspense, the readers' growing concern about which force will win, and how (Little, 1966:84), climax, a turning point in the whole action of a plot. It is the point at which the fatal step is taken, the essential decision is made which results in the action concluding one way or the other (Little, 1966:84), and resolution, the rounding-off of the action, the conclusion, one way or the other, of the conflict (Little, 1966:85).

RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher uses impressionistic criticism method. William Hazlitt states that impressionistic criticism "you decide from feeling, and not from reason; that is, from the impression of a number of things on the mind...though you may not be able to analyze or account for it in the several particulars" (Abrams, 1993:40). It means that the researcher is allowed to criticize the literary work subjectively, using his own feeling, regardless the available theories.

RESEARCH FINDING

Analysis

Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved* consists of three parts, part one, a young man of twenty, part two, a young man of forty, and part three, a young man of sixty, each of which includes chapters, respectively. Accordingly, the researcher elaborates how the narrator depicts the main character, Jocelyn Pearson, to undergo such a failure in romance from the beginning to the end of the story. Unlike the story of love in the other novels, with the unity of elements of the plot from the beginning to the very end of the story, Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved* is quite otherwise. Each part seems to be a Jocelyn Pierston's new love story. Each part includes his failure of getting his beloved girl. Part one, the first girl, the researcher may say, Avice 1, the girl of his age, part two, Avice 2, the girl of twenty years younger than he, the daughter of Avice 1, part three, the girl of forty years younger than he, the daughter of Avice 2 as well as the granddaughter of Avice 1. As the researcher focuses only on Jocelyn Pearson's love, which dominates the story and when the researcher considers that each part includes the whole elements of the plot of the affair with Avice 1 in part one, with Avice 2 in part two, with Avice 3 in part three, the researcher, therefore, gathers each element of the plot in part one, two, and three under one analysis. Such uniqueness of plot is the only ground the researcher raises for analysis in this article.

Analysis

Catastrophe in Love in Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved*

As mentioned above that the researcher analyzes the novel from the plot, the researcher, therefore, elaborates the elements of plot one by one. For each element of the plot, the researcher divides into three parts; A Young Man of twenty, A Young Man of forty, and A Young Man of sixty. Since the analyzed problems are about love, the elaborated elements of the plot focus on Jocelyn Pierston's love affair, consequently.

Exposition

As it is said above that exposition is the introduction to the characters, their relationships with one another, the physical background in which they find themselves. The narrator elaborates it in different way as long as the beloved girls the main character, Jocelyn Pierston, confronts are in different situation.

A Young Man of twenty

The narrator opens the first chapter with the reunion of Jocelyn Pierston with his old fellow islander, Avice 1, after about five years of separation, which seems to the reader that they are lovers. They are. The future will tell us.

‘Why, ‘tis dear Jocel!’ she burst out joyfully. And running up to the young man she kissed him (8).

It strengthens the reader’s opinion that they are true lovers as Jocelyn kisses her in return.

.....there was some constraint in the manner in which he returned her kiss, and said ‘My pretty little Avice, how do you do after so long?’ (8).

The following Avice’s 1 sentence confirms that they do what lovers always do:

‘I—I didn’t think about how I was altered!’ said the conscience-stricken girl. I used to kiss him, and he used to kiss me before he went away (9).

A Young Man of Forty

The narrator opens the chapter with another romance of Jocelyn Pierston. In his age of forty, Jocelyn Pierston’s love feeling grows up anew with the daughter of Avice 1, Avice 2. He was made acquainted not deliberately with Avice2 when he takes a glimpse of her on his visit to Avice’s 1 grave. He pays a romantic attention to her.

He had no opportunity for a further study of her by distant observation, and hit upon a pretext for bringing her face to face with him (68).

Jocelyn Pierston feels that his first affection comes anew on seeing Avice 2. His Well-Beloved reappears in front of him.

However, the Well-Beloved was alive again; had been lost and was found. He was amazed at the change of front in himself. She had worn the guise of strange women; she had been a woman of every class, from the dignified daughter of some ecclesiastic or peer to a Nubian almeah (71).

A Young Man of Sixty

Likewise, the narrator opens the chapter with another romance of Jocelyn Pierston. In his very late age, he falls in love with the daughter of Avice 2, the granddaughter of Avice 1, Avice 3.

He now felt that his old trouble, his doom—his curse, indeed, he had sometimes called it—was come back again (114) ...that the three Avices were interpenetrated with her essence (115).

Jocelyn Pierston is quite a tough man. In his age of sixty, unmarried, he encourages himself to get close to the very young girl, years younger of his age, for affection.

I hope to make the acquaintance—of your daughter,’ he said in leaving, knowing that he might have added with predestinate truth, ‘of my new tenderly-beloved (115).

In his thought, the too young girl he confronts now is supposed to be his loving-heart who has existed since he was a young man of twenty. She only moves from place to place.

He was subject to gigantic fantasies still. In spite of himself, the sight of the new moon, as representing one who, by her so-called inconstancy, acted up to his own idea of a migratory Well-beloved.... (116).

Thus, a man who has been romantically involved with a girl but fails to get her feels the same way to the daughter of his lover, feels the same way to the granddaughter of his lover.

The three Avices, the second something like the first, the third a glorification of the first, at all events externally, were the outcome of the immemorial island customs of intermarriage and of prenuptial union, under which conditions the type of feature was almost uniform from parent to child through generations..... (118).

Conflict

A Young Man of Twenty

As it is said above that conflict is two opposing forces, which may be one of man against nature, man against man, in the mind of the chief character, man against himself. In the case of Jocelyn Pierston as the man character, man against man, in this case against his beloved girls.

Jocelyn Pierston confronts a difficulty in continuing a love affair with Avice 1, as her mother is not convinced of his being faithful in Avice 1. He is supposed to get romantically involved with many girls. He is a wealthy man, instead.

‘Well, it can’t be helped now. You must be careful in the future. He’s got lots of young women, I’ll warrant, and has few thoughts left for you. He’s what they call a sculptor, and he means to be a great genius in that line someday, they do say’ (9).

On her mother’s utterances, Avice 1 hesitates. She has been in love with him, too. She is quite upset of abandoning him. She is afraid he will remain indignant.

‘oh, what shall I do!’ she was saying bitterly. ‘So bold as it was—so shameless! How could I think of such a thing! He will never forgive me a forward hussy, and yet—and yet I quite forgot how much I had grown. But that he’ll ever believe!’ (9-10).

A Young Man of Forty

On meeting Avice 2, Jocelyn Pierston’s memory is brought back to the years when he had a romantic affair with the mother of Avice 2, Avice 1. Jocelyn Pierston is, in Avice’s 2 thought, to blame

because he was beating about the bush in the romantic involvement with her mother. He didn’t come to the point. He was round the corner (129), instead. Her mother felt quite upset for this.

Avice fell into thought, and continued, ‘Mother had a very sad life for some time when she was about as old as I. I should not like mine to be as hers. Her young man proved false to her because she wouldn’t agree to meet him one night, and it grieved mother almost all her life. I wouldn’t ha’ fretted about him, if I’d been she. She would never name his name, but I know he was a wicked, cruel man; and I hate to think of him’ (75).

Knowing that Jocelyn Pierston is waiting for her on her usual road by which she passes every day, she withdraws. She takes another road. Jocelyn Pierston misses her.

One evening, when she had left her cottage and tripped off in the direction of the under-hill townlet, he set out by the same route, resolved to await her return along the high roadway which stretched between that place and East Quarriers (77).

A Young Man of Sixty

Jocelyn Pierston’s affection towards Avice 3 is blooming. He is aware that he is years older than she. He is quite conscious that in the case of age, it is supposed to be unequal marriage. However, he has things to be proud of. He has a social standing in the island. He inherits much property from his father, through which, he promises a very happy life in the future even though he is dead. He proposes her for marriage.

‘It might have been as far as feelings were concerned..... Now, Avice, I’ll to the point at once. Virtually I have known your daughter any number of years. When I talk to her I can anticipate every turn of her thought, every sentiment, every act, so long did I

study those things in your mother and in you. Therefore I do not require to learn her; she was learnt by me in her previous existences. Now, don't be shocked: I am willing to marry her—I should be overjoyed to it, if there would be nothing preposterous about it or that would seem like a man making himself too much of a fool and so degrading her in consenting. I can make her comparatively rich, as you know, and I would indulge her every whim. There is the idea, bluntly put. It would set right something in my mind that has been wrong for forty years. After my death she would have plenty of freedom and plenty of means to enjoy it' (119).

Jocelyn Pierston feels that abandoning Avice 1 is a terrible thing he has ever done in his life. He feels the same terrible thing in dealing a love affair with Avice 3. He is afraid of being dumped by her.

'When I went away from the first Avice,' he continued with whimsical misery, 'I had a presentiment that I should ache for it some day. And I am aching—have ached ever since this jade of an ideal learnt the unconscionable trick of inhabiting one image only' (124).

Suspense

As mentioned above that suspense is the readers' growing concern about which force will win, and how.

A Young Man of Twenty

The feeling of Jocelyn Pierston's affection towards Avice 1 turns out to be a question. He regards her merely as a friend, just some girl, a girl who has no special place in his heart.

...his affection for her was rather that of a friend than of a lover, and he felt by no means sure that the migratory, elusive idealization he called his love, who, ever since his boyhood, had flitted from human shell to human shell an indefinite number of times, was going to take

up her abode in the body of Avice Caro (10).

However, Jocelyn Pierston encourages himself to advance a proposal of marriage to Avice 1 with a hesitating answer from her.

"Will you have me as your husband?"

'ah!—mother says I am only one of many!' (11).

A Young Man of Forty

The reader is curious of what happens next after Jocelyn beholds the Well-Beloved's involvement in a private confab with an army-dressed man. 'Then he decided that she had a soldier-lover' (81). Being aware that he has many things to make ends meet, that has a good reputation more than Avice 2 does, he ignores the romantic involvement between Avice 2 and the soldier. Therefore, he never gives up getting her. He plans to propose her for marriage the following day.

'I would—tomorrow. Why shouldn't I? What are fame and name and society to me—a descendant of wreckers and smugglers, like her. Besides, I know what she's made of, my boy, to her innermost fibre; I know the perfect and pure quarry she was dug from: and that gives a man confidence (82).

A Young Man of Sixty

Avice 2, the mother of Avice 3, seems to accept Jocelyn Pierston's proposal of marriage to her daughter on consideration that he is a man of good social standing, a man of property. In such an event, the reader's concern grows up whether or not Avice 3 agrees to marry him even though her mother has given her a consent recollecting that he has failed to marry the previous two Avices, Avice 1 and Avice 2.

She felt perfectly sure that it was the best thing she could do for her girl. Not a young woman on the island but was envying Avice at that moment; for Jocelyn was absurdly young for three score, a good-

looking man, one whose history was generally known here; as also were the exact figures of the fortune he had inherited from his father, and the social standing he could claim—a standing, however, which that fortune would not have been large enough to procure unassisted by his reputation in his art (138).

Climax

As mentioned above that climax is a turning point in the whole action of a plot. It is the point at which the fatal step is taken, the essential decision is made which results in the action concluding one way or the other.

A Young Man of Twenty

Avice's 1 hesitation in accepting Jocelyn's proposal of marriage becomes clear as she cancels her appointment to meet Jocelyn Pierston. She observes it through a letter.

My dearest—I shall be sorry if I grieve you at all in what I am going to say about our arrangement to meet tonight in the Sandsfoot ruin. But I have fancied that my seeing you again and again lately is inclining your father to insist, and you as his heir to feel, that we ought to carry out island custom in our courting—your people being such old inhabitants in unbroken line. Truth to say, mother supposes that your father, for natural reasons, may have hinted to you that we ought. Now, the thing is contrary to my feelings; it is nearly left off and I do not think it good, even where there is property, as in your case, to justify it, in a measure. I would rather trust in providence (17).

A Young Man of Forty

Jocelyn Pierston is stick to his commitment. Regardless of Avice's 2 love affair with the soldier, he encourages himself to propose her for marriage.

'My darling, sweet little Avice! I want to ask you something—surely you guess what? I want to know this: will you be married to me, and

live here with me always and ever? (97).

A Young Man of Sixty

Avice 3, who seems to follow her mother's wish to marry Jocelyn Pierston, out of the blue, makes up her mind to marry another person, her previous lover, the true one. It has been observed in a letter which is forwarded to her mother.

Tell Mr Pierston it was not premeditated, but the result of an accident. I am sincerely sorry to have treated him with what he will think unfairness, but though I did not love him I meant to obey you and marry him. But God sent this necessity of my having to give shelter to y Love, to prevent, I think, my doing what I am now convinced would have been wrong (142).

Resolution

As mentioned above resolution is the rounding-off of the action, the conclusion, one way or the other, of the conflict.

A Young Man of Twenty

The end of Jocelyn Pierston's love affair with Avice 1 seems to have a sorrowful ending. He learns a trustworthy intelligence that Avice 1 has got married to somebody else, her cousin.

There came a time when he learnt, through a trustworthy channel, two pieces of news affecting himself. One was the marriage of Avice Caro with her cousin.... (37).

A Young Man of Forty

The end of Jocelyn Pierston's love affair with Avice 2 seems to have a sorrowful ending. Avice 2 turns out to have got married to another man secretly.

I mean he courted me, and led me on to island custom, and then I went to chapel one morning and married him in secret (98).

A Young Man of Sixty

The end of Jocelyn Pierston's love affair with Avice 3 seems to have the most sorrowful ending since he no longer intends to get married to somebody from the beauty point of view. He gives it up. Rather, it is a

truly total catastrophe in love, in pursuing beautiful girl.

His life seemed no longer a professional man's experience, but a ghost story; and he would fain have vanished from his haunts on this critical afternoon, as the rest had done. He desired to sleep away his tendencies, to make something happen which would put an end to his bondage to beauty in the ideal (147).

CONCLUSION

We know from the above explanation that the narrator tells the story not like the story in common which has the unity of plot from the beginning to end in that in the case of Jocelyn Pierston's love affair, the narrator depicts him as undergoing three eras of love affair. Each of which has the elements of plot as well as contains the catastrophe of his affection. Likewise, the narrator tells the story quite uniquely. At the first era, namely, at the age of twenty, Jocelyn Pierston is romantically involved with Avice Caro, at the second era, namely, at the age of forty, he falls in love with the daughter of Avice Caro, and at the third era, namely, at the age of sixty, he falls in love with the granddaughter of Avice Caro. Again, all of his romance with the trio Avices end in sorrow, in other words he undergoes a catastrophe in love.

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