

LOVE AND DEATH IN THOMAS HARDY'S POEM AFTER A JOURNEY

By
A A Gde Dipta Mahaputra
Jurusan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas Sastra Universitas Udayana

Abstrak

Setelah meninggalnya Emma, istri Thomas Hardy, ia mulai menulis banyak puisi yang bertemakan cinta untuk mengenang almarhumah istrinya. Dalam syair-syair yang bertemakan cinta tersebut, Hardy banyak menyatakan kepedihannya yang mendalam di mana kehidupannya menjadi sunyi dan hampa setelah ditinggal istrinya pergi untuk selama-lamanya.

*Dalam studi ini, karya penyair Inggris Thomas Hardy yang berjudul *After a Journey* dipilih untuk dianalisis dan penulisan studi ini menggunakan sumber data primer dari syair tersebut di atas dan menggunakan teori sastra yang ditulis oleh Knickerbocker, K.L. 1963. *Interpreting Literature*, dan buku *Theory of Literature* yang ditulis oleh Rene Welek and Austin Waren (1962).*

Hasil dari penulisan ini menyatakan bahwa adanya hubungan yang erat antara kehidupan si penulis dengan karyanya. Dengan kematian istri Hardy yang mendadak, keadaan ini menimbulkan banyak ide-ide tentang cinta bagi Hardy, di mana menurutnya cinta bisa mengakibatkan kebahagiaan atau sebaliknya membuat seorang patah hati dan cinta juga bisa merupakan suatu pengalaman yang tidak bisa dilupakan.

*Dalam studi ini ditemukan bahwa puisi Thomas Hardy *After a Journey* memiliki elemen-elemen dasar yang dipengaruhi oleh pengalaman hidupnya, agamanya dan cintanya.*

Kata kunci: cinta, kehidupan, kematian,

1. Background of Study

Literature refers something creative, imaginative, and expressive of which the material is language. It is created based on human consciousness and imagination which is translated by the artist into a concrete form. One of the important aspects of literature is its relationship with human life because it expresses and shares human life as well as human experiences

Poets work with words, while artists work with a variety of media including paint, ink, paper, canvas, clay, and metal. But both poets and artists

offer pictures that reflect their responses to images, experiences, people, places, emotions that observed, remembered, or imagined (Stamford, 2006 : 1235)

Knickerbocker and Reninger (1955: 309) state that as the first step in understanding a poem, it is very helpful to make a paraphrase of its plain sense. The meaning of each part of the poem helps determine the meaning of the whole poem, and in turn the whole poem helps determine the meaning of each part. According to Wellek and Warren in their book, *Theory of Literature* (1955: 309), the meaning of poem is seldom stated directly, but is carried or revealed by the element and structure of the work that is usually in the form of figurative.

In this study, a poem entitled *After a Journey* by a popular English poet Thomas Hardy was analysed. The poem tells about love and death. Both love and death are mystery in human life. Hardy creates this poem in connection with his wife who is dead. A deeper understanding about *After a Journey* is analysed by studying Hardy's autobiography.

2. Problem of the Study

Through the problems to be discussed; they are formulated as follows,

1. What message does Hardy want to convey to the readers in *After a Journey*?
2. How does the life experience of Hardy help understand the poem?

3. Aims of the Study

This study has three aims; they are the general, specific, and academic aims.

The general aim of this writing is to apply theories related to Hardy's poem *After a Journey* and the specific aim is to find out what message the poet wants to deliver to the readers.

The last is an academic aim that is to apply the theory of literature learned in the English Department and write a scientific article to contribute to this department. Besides, this writing can be used as reference for the student who likes to write about literature.

4. Research Method

There are three points in this section: data source, method and technique of collecting data, and method and technique of analysing data.

4.1. Data Source

The data of this study were taken from Tomas Hardy's poem entitled *After a Journey*. The primary data analysed in this writing were taken from Thomas Hardy's poem entitled *After a Journey* cited in (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/sep/23/poetry.thomashardy>) and the Hardy's biography was taken from Wikipedia, the free Encyclopaedia, a website addressed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Hardy.

4.2. Method and Technique of Collecting Data

The data is the object of the study. The method applied in this study was library research because this method is reliable and relevant to the process of collecting the data. The important one is to get some books in the library and some articles on internet as data sources and references in order to find out more data related to the topic of study.

4.3 Method and Technique of Analysing Data

The data were analysed in accordance with *Theory of Literature* by Warren and Wellek. 1962 and *Interpreting Literature* by Knickerbocker, K.L. 1963. And one more theory to support this study is Smith's theory in his book of theory *Inside Poetry*. 1985.

5. Analysis

Thomas Hardy's poem *After a Journey*, has the message of the agony of the love that he indeed to deliver. By knowing his background or through reading his biography, better understanding about the poem. Can be obtained the

biography of Thomas Hardy helps a lot in trying to understand the meaning of the poem. He has something in common, that is he has created a very touching poem dedicated to his lovely wife, Emma. Hardy combines his imagination with the reality of his life to create this poem.

Hardy expresses his shock over Emma's death. This is shown through his choice of diction, as he addresses her directly as if she were still alive, suggesting that he is in a state of denial over her untimely passing. He argues with Emma as if she were with him, accusing her of abandoning him on purpose in order to escape their failing marriage and his neglect. He gets angry at her for never telling him that she was ill, or that she would die, never to say good bye.

It is marked that the beginning of the poem is dedicated to Hardy's or the narrator's lover. Hardy uses voice and setting to captivate the ultimate theme of the struggle through loneliness, and the memory of a "a voiceless ghost," that leaves him longing for his lost object of affection (I come to interview a Voiceless ghost – Line 1). The title of the poem describes the nostalgia experienced after happy love affair and the pain that follows after his lover has gone, it is happiness which haunts him in his misery as he cannot find a purpose to move on in his journey through life.

Hardy explains the pain he feels and the control of his wife is still over him, even in her death, as she haunts him. He still feels that she is with him, taunting him and even revealing herself to him. This shows that though their relationship has failed, he is still tied to her and perhaps resents her even more for that.

No evidence exists to suggest that the woman or his wife in question returns or acknowledges the affections of the narrator. Frequently mentioning ghosts and haunting, Hardy may imply that she has passed away, but as the narrator, Hardy also describes himself as a "thin ghost" (And not the thin ghost that I now frailly follow! - Line 23).

Because Hardy also describes himself in ghost-terms, he may simply imply that a part of him has died, and if she is no longer a part of his life, he may look to her as being that specific part of him that no longer exists. After receiving

no feedback from the woman, Hardy, as the narrator cannot move on without her, so he looks to scenes in nature and decides that he “knows what she is doing: she is leading him on” (Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see, - Line 25).

The setting takes place where the lovers once corresponded, and the narrator returns to this place where he can strongly visualize the past. Because the narrator cannot physically obtain his object of affection, he returns “to the spots they knew when they haunted together” (To the spots we knew when we haunted here together, - Line 18). He describes “unseen waters”, ejaculations that awe” him, so the awe-inspiring images that he describes must come from his imagination because they are “unseen” (And the unseen waters' soliloquies awe me. - Line 4). Although the setting takes place where the narrator physically exists within the present, he primarily focuses on pictured hopeful scenes with his lover from the past and only looks to the present as a reminder or “ghost.” The current scenery “seems to call out to him from forty years ago” (That it seems to call out to me from forty years ago, - Line 22) and he almost expects to see her “facing round him everywhere” (Facing round about me everywhere, - Line 6)

The narrator sees the past as being a very happy place of love filled with images of waterfalls, spring, joy, and flowers. As the poem comes to a close, he finally acknowledges the present only to describe the night. The day coming to an end accentuates the natural order of beginnings and endings, but he looks to the stars wishes to return at a later date. He concludes the poem by stating that he is “just the same as when,” so the narrator does not acknowledge the natural order of change and beginnings and endings (I am just the same as when - Line 31).

To study more deeply, the poem actually reflects the life of Thomas Hardy. It has the relation between Hardy’s life and his poem *After a Journey*. Thomas Hardy writes this poem two years after Emma Hardy died. In his biography, it is said that the shock of her death stirred Hardy greatly and made him write a lot of poetry, one of them was *After a Journey*. If *After a Journey* is compared with his marriage, it can be seen that he described his marriage with Emma as a journey.

From the day they were born until they get old and then die is a journey in life. When people get married, they start a new journey with the one he or she loves. Death is one kind of journey too. It is a journey to another place, but not in this world anymore. The difference is just that now they are not traveling together anymore.

In this poem, the poet felt that way. Now that she left him, he felt that their journey was ended there. Although dying is like traveling to another place, by the death of Emma, their journey seemed to come to an end.

6. Conclusion

Hardy's poem expresses his separation to his wife brings sadness to him, because his feeling of loneliness. Hardy's poem has the meaning of the agony of love that is rather tragic. *After a Journey* has the message of the agony of the love that the poet indeed to deliver.

By knowing the author's background or through reading his biography, the readers can get better understanding about the poem. The biography of Thomas Hardy helps a lot in trying to get the meaning of the poem. He has created very touching poem dedicated to their lovely wife. He combines his imagination with the reality of his life to create this poem.

Finally, it shows that Love means having strong feeling for someone and love can create a feeling of caring more for someone else, which may result happiness or sorrow.

7. Bibliography

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