



THOMAS HARDY AND VYANKATESH MADGULKAR – A SHORT COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Comparative literature studies have become a respectable academic discipline today. It can be seen that comparisons have now extended over distant parts of the world. Now, Comparative literary studies provide motivation for inter-literature analyses and it functions as framework for critical observations, like - literary themes, types, movements, influences etc. It is possible to pursue comparative literary study between literary products of distant cultures. Comparative literature discusses theoretical framework method or theme by paying attention to similar frameworks in a range of languages and cultures. It is an interdisciplinary field. Its practitioners study literature across national borders, time periods, long waxes, and genres and across boundaries between literature and other arts, across disciplines. In broader sense, comparative literature is the study of 'literatures without borders.' This research paper , by using a comparative study method , aims at to find out similarities and differences between two regional novelists - Thomas Hardy, a famous English regional novelist and the other, Vyankatesh Madgulkar, a famous Maharashtrian regional novelist. Both of them have written novels and presented ineffable beauty and charm of selected regions. This paper is divided into three parts- first part is related with Thomas hardy ,the second with Madgulkar and the last part draws certain conclusions by comparative methods.

Keywords: - Comparative literature, regional literature ,biography of writer, comparison, contrast, pain, portrayal of human life, destiny , genre.

INTRODUCTION

“Comparative Literature is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country.”- Henry Remak.

I



From its beginning in the 19th century comparative literature has been closely associated with emergence of different national cultures. Comparative literature studies have become a respectable academic discipline today. It can be seen that comparisons have now extended over distant parts of the world. Now, Comparative literary studies provide motivation for inter-literature analyses and it functions as framework for critical observations, like - literary themes, types, movements, influences etc. It is possible to pursue comparative literary study between literary products of distant cultures. It brings together for a detailed examination typologically similar themes, periods, geographical locations etc. The use of interdisciplinary techniques has given a new dimension to comparative literary study. Comparative literature sets aside national prejudices and provincialism but, it doesn't ignore independent existence and vitality of different national literary traditions. Many theorists and scholars have defined comparative literature as general literature. It is an auxiliary discipline of literary history with fragmented subject matter and having no method of its own. By doing comparative study, literary scholar not only compares but reproduces, analyzes interprets, evokes, evaluates and generalizes etc. It studies all literatures from international perspectives.

Comparative literature discusses theoretical framework method or theme by paying attention to similar frameworks in a range of languages and cultures. It is an interdisciplinary field. Its practitioners study literature across national borders, time periods, long wages, and genres and across boundaries between literature and other arts, across disciplines. In broader sense, comparative literature is the study of 'literatures without borders.' Comparative literary studies can provide motivation for inter-literature analyses, also, such studies function as frameworks for critical observations like-literary themes, genres, tendencies, movements, theories etc. Comparative literature is a continuous process of intellectual adjustment. Matthew Arnold used the coinage 'Comparative Literature' first in 1848. It was used in the field of sociology in the 19th century. Then, in France, in second and third decade of the 19th century, it entered the literary circle and by the end of 19th century, comparative theory established in Europe. In the course of time, it spread all over the world. It shows that comparative literature was not used as a tool of literary studies up to the 20th century. Comparative literature contains theories like – influence, reader response, translations, adaptations, character presentations, themes, period studies, concept studies etc.

This research paper , by using a comparative study method , aims at to find out similarities and differences between two regional novelists - Thomas Hardy, a famous English regional novelist and the other, Vyankatesh Madgulkar, a famous Maharashtrian regional novelist. Both of them have written novels and presented ineffable beauty and charm of selected regions. Thomas Hardy's presentation of 'Wessex' and Vyankatesh Madgulkar's presentation of 'Maandesh' attracts reader's attention. Thomas Hardy's 'Wessex' contains- Berkshire, Wittshire, Hampshire, Somersetshire, Dorsetshire and Devon – 6 counties, whereas, Vyankatesh Madgulkar's 'Maandesh' contains- Atpadi, Jat, Kawathemahankal, Mangalwedha, Maan and Sangola - 6 main Talukas in South-West Maharashtra. This paper is



divided into three parts- first part is related with Thomas Hardy, the second with Madgulkar and the last part drew certain conclusions by comparative methods.

II

Thomas Hardy is one of the greatest Victorian writers who was born at Upper Bockhampton, in Dorset, on second June 1840. His father was a master mason. He owed much to his parents- love of music, love of reading and their rural background. He attended school in Dorchester. He left school in 1856 and was articled to the architect John Hicks in Dorchester. Here he began to teach himself Greek, with encouragement from the dialect poet and philologist William Barnes, who had a house next door to Hicks' office. At the same time, he met and was befriended by Horace Moule, the son of the Vicar of Fordington in Dorchester, who had been educated at Cambridge, and who now helped him with his studies, and encouraged him to write poetry. Public executions were still carried out in Dorchester, and he witnessed there the hanging of a woman, an event which haunted him for the rest of his life, and which he reenacted in his novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* forty years later.

In 1868, he started writing stories. He returned to Dorchester in ill health, and began work once again for Hicks. He switched to writing novels, but his first work, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, was rejected by various publishers. In 1871, he wrote first novel 'Desperate Remedies'. His novel *Desperate Remedies* was published anonymously by William Tinsley in 1871, in three volumes. It was favourably reviewed in both 'Athenaeum' and 'The Morning Post'. His other novels followed, and in 1874, he married Emma Gifford and had his first real commercial success with *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Two years they wandered about Europe and England and in 1878, returned to London. The Hardys moved often, living at various times in London, Swanage, Yeovil, Sturminster Newton, Tooting, Wimbourne Minster, Dorchester and finally, in 1886, Max Gate, a house near Dorchester designed by Hardy himself and built by his brother, which remained his home until his death. He continued to write novels. Between 1878 to 1912, he wrote nine more novels, three volumes of short stories and published three collections of poems. In 1887, he made a tour of Italy, visiting the graves of Shelley and Keats. Conflicts with his editors in 1889 forced him to make changes to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which was not published until 1891, when it was well received but also heavily criticised. In 1895, when he published *Jude the Obscure*, the level of criticism was so severe that it contributed to his decision to stop writing novels altogether. The book also brought into the open a serious rift in his marriage, as Emma Hardy considered it to be an attack on the sanctity of marriage.

He turned to poetry once again, and his first collection, *Wessex Poems and Other Verses*, was published in 1898 'Poems of the Past and the Present' followed in 1901, *The Dynasts*, a three volume epic poem, in 1904, 1906 and 1908, and *Time's Laughingstocks and Other Verses* in 1909. In 1910, he was awarded the Order of Merit, having previously refused a knighthood, and he received the freedom of the borough of Dorchester. Emma Hardy died in 1912 and in



1914, he married Florence Dugdale, who had been his secretary since 1912 and was just 34 years old. First World War disturbed his peace of mind. He worked for the wounded soldiers. Between 1878 to 1912, he wrote nine more novels, three volumes of short stories and published three collections of poems. He published further volumes of poetry, including *Satires of Circumstance* (1914), *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses* (1917), *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922), *Human Shows, Far Phantasies, Songs and Trifles* (1925), and *Winter Words, in Various Moods and Metres* (1928). He died on eleventh January in 1928 at the age of 88. His heart was removed and buried in Emma Hardy's grave in Stinsford Churchyard. His body was cremated and the ashes buried in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey. In his life he suffered a lot, from his early childhood to the end. So, perhaps he has presented role of fate in man's life through his novels. Along with fine description of Wessex, he touched the concept of Man and Destiny through his novels and very sensibly depicted it.

In his novel "Far from the Madding Crowd" (1874) he presents story of love of three men for the same Woman. Bathsheba is poor, orphan beautiful girl who got estate of her uncle, farm and property. She is independent minded, self-willed and self confident. Gabriel Oak, a farmer expresses his sincere love to Bathsheba, but is rejected and he lost two hundred sheep so, he became a wage-earner and then manager of her business. Though his love was rejected, he continued his love with loyalty. While in *The Return of the Native*. (1878) Thomas Hardy expresses a fatalistic view of life in his tragic novel. He depicts human actions as subject to the control of an impersonal force destiny or fate. Chance and coincidence drives the life and man has no right to change its way. The character in Hardy's novel does not have control over their lives. Hardy believes that characters are governed by fate.

While his *Mayor of the Casterbridge* (1886) shows that man can be master of his fate in limited sense but at the end destiny overpowers man. Michael Henchard, a hay trusser, drunk in a fair and sold his wife and child for five guineas to Newson, a sailor. He soon realized his mistake and vows not to touch drink for next twenty years. Due to his courage and determination, he became Mayor of Casterbridge (Dorchester). After 18 years, his wife returned to him. But in Thomas Hardy's 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles', Tess is presented as a young girl who becomes a fallen woman at the end. She is the victim of her destiny and also she makes wrong decisions. Her destiny takes her to the way due to which she suffers a lot. She makes her own fate and so she becomes a fallen woman in the society. Through the conflict between fate and destiny, Hardy wants to reveal the inevitable misery of the human beings. It can be said that unification between fate and destiny affected Tess' life.

The glimpses of both Victorian and modern society can be seen in "Jude the Obscure" (1895). This novel exposes Hardy's best balanced philosophy. Through female figures e.g. Bathsheba, Hardy presented conflict between the desire for marriage and that for individuality and independence. In this novel fate reveals its working mainly through



Fathertime. Birth of such an abnormal, morbid child shows working of supernatural power inimical to human happiness. Here, destiny works to end the very human desire to live. Hardy believed in hostile destiny. To him, destiny keeps man away from their expected or desired happiness. This hostility of destiny can be seen in the form of unforeseen happenings i.e. in the form of chances, accidents and coincidences.

III

Vyankatesh Madgulkar is the greatest Indian writer writing in English who was born on sixth July, 1927 in Madgule, a small village with a population of over a thousand, in Atpadi taluka, Sangli district, part of 'Maandesh'. His family includes five brothers, two sisters and parents. Poverty was the main difficulty. Due to residence in drought affected region, he couldn't continue his studies. But, he picked up father's narrative technique and mother's art of painting, these two qualities, and further he developed them. He did his schooling at Madgul, Kundal, Atpadi, Vibhutwadi, and Kinhai... etc. He studied up to metric, but, he was a good reader of Marathi and English literature. His grandfather and earlier generations lived off the land, but his father took job in the govt. of Aundh, a princely estate, which ruled over the region 'Maandesh'. The job took him to various villages and small towns of Maandesh. In this way Vyankatesh Madgulkar got to see, observe and experience life in many parts of Maandesh. He freely mixed with children of other castes and communities and learnt various 'arts'—how to climb trees, how to identify birds, how to trap fish, how to hunt.etc. Further all this is presented through his novels. He studied at Madgule and Atpadi. But, he was average student. Teacher told him, he had no future. So, perhaps in teenage, he left home and joined freedom struggle. He took active part in 1942 Quit India Movement. For two years, he was considered criminal by British Govt.

He developed enormous love for reading. He read John Steinbeck, George Orwell and the Irish writer Liam O' Flaherty, and several other Western writers by using a dictionary. He went to Kolhapur to be a painter but, at the age of nineteen, he became a short story writer. Also, he worked as a journalist. In 1946, he published his first short story. Then, through different periodicals he wrote and published many short stories. In 1949 he published story collection 'Maandeshi Manse' and it popularized him as a known rural short story writer in marathi. Realistic presentation of Maandesh has done through his memorable, rural character sketches. All strata of society are the integral elements of rural social society. Their beliefs, traditions, manners, superstitions are presented with social emotive, cultural and economic issues of the time.

In 1950, he went to Mumbai. In 1955, he took up a job in All India Radio and worked upto 1985 on different posts. All this time, he continued his writing and developed his own art of writing. He was chiefly known for his unsentimental depiction of rural life in a part of southern Maharashtra called 'Maandesh' in the 15 to 20 years before and after Independence. Presentation of Maandesh with most details was his main aim. He was affectionately called as



Tatya, (grand old man) by all. On 28th August, 2001, he died due to illness, when he was 74 years old.

Vyankatesh Madgulkar is the hidden gem in Marathi literature. Madgulkar's all writing is an artistic revelation of an artist's self and emotions. He tried to explore secrets of nature. These landscapes and sights present his revelation of man and destiny done with concentration. It made him to be aloof from all bias and literary arguments. His writing revealed the idea that original writer selects and uses particular words in particular places. He fought like a tough man. He learned all this from the society in Maandesh. Hovering drought, difficulties made Maandeshi man as a creature struggling, hard working and facing blows of destiny bravely.

Along with short stories, he handled novel writing. In 1954, his *Bangarwadi* was published and it became the milestone in Marathi literature. In modern novel what is importance of regional aspect, it is shown by this novel. Local language, drought, social life of people living in *Bangarwadi* made this novel very popular. His other novels 'Vavtal' (The winds of fire), and 'Kowale Diwas' are autobiographical novels. In his 'Pudhacha Paul' he transformed one of his short stories in a novel. Keen, critical picture of monkey groups is presented through *Sattantar*. Side by side he wrote some plays and translated some works. Also, his great novels are translated in to other foreign languages. It shows scope of his writing. Along with short stories and novels, V. Madgulkar also, wrote screenplays and several folk plays. He translated wild life books, from English to Marathi. He wrote essays on his numerous travels, nature-observations and interesting people he had read about. He wrote over 200 stories and 8 novels.

His *Bangarwadi* received many rewards. Life in *Bangarwadi* is related to specific region – land season...etc. Human grief, shepherds plight, their adjustments, endurance is presented. Villagers of *Bangarwadi* are sometimes happy, sometimes sad; they collapse, rise and begin to work again. All characters are depicted with utmost details. All villagers are simple but their griefs made reader uneasy. At the end, due to drought, everyone leaves the village and *Bangarwadi* becomes a barren land. But, it is clear that again, in next rainy season they will come back and they will start again new life. To endure blows of destiny has become integral part of their life. Displacement has become an integral part of their life. His skill of word painting can be seen through this novel. By using specific words, he sketched live characters. Madgulkar is skilled in moulding language for his own purpose. When we think of *Bangarwadi* geographical considerations are important- scanty rain, scarcity of water, few crops, and barren fertilized land...etc. So, farming has never become main business here. Sheep keeping is the main business. Displacement is common. It has become routine of the villagers. To depict drought affected Maandesh is the main objective of Madgulkar here. Land turned barren in summer, dried grass, dusty, rough road – this description of *Bangarwadi* creates pathos. It presents Maandesh's barren nature. Life of *Bangarwadi* bears stamp of all this. Destiny (Pachavi in Maandesh) work's in the forms of drought and poverty. Villagers



face blows of destiny. Through this novel, Madgulkar has succeeded in creating separate existence of Maandesh. Changing season changes Maandeshi life.

His 'Vavtal' is translated in English as 'The winds of fire' It has been translated in Russian language also. Shankar, a young Brahmin boy narrates the story. Detailed description of destroyed, burnt villages after Gandhi's death is presented. Disbelief, cruelty, suspicion, thoughtlessness is criticized. Problems created due to communal parity and fearful uneasiness is expressed through it. His affinity and aloofness of Maandesh is presented. About this novel, he says that he didn't wish to write novel on Indian communalism or politics. Only he wanted to present sensibility of a small village boy what he saw, observed and experienced after Gandhi's death. His mother though belonged to great family, mixed with other people, never considered class contrast. From this, Madgulkar presents that in many villages, language, profession of farming, dress codes of most people were same. After Gandhi's death such mixed people and their houses were looted and set on fire. They became unsafe. Yesterday's neighbors, friends became enemies. So, most of them left villages and went to live in cities. This uneasiness and inner working of the mind gave birth to this novel 'Vavtal'.

His 'Kowale Diwas' presents graph of happenings in the life of a criminal boy who after crime declared as absconding. He wished to live carefree life but, some events in his life made it uncertain. He experienced this uncertainty in his life. His life becomes directionless and at last it reaches to maturity. Madgulkar made it very interesting with his skills. He thinks that events that had taken place in teen age and different experiences are assets of human life. Destiny makes man to change his way of life. This idea is presented. It makes the reader to think of one's self.

His novel 'Pudhach Paul' describes a story of straight forward Krishna. Village routine, Patil's duty, tragic situation in the village, people's exploitation, their endurance, different nature of people, Krishna's journey to Mumbai, disturbance in family, at last, Krishna's realization of all ideas and he started living new life- It was his Pudhach Paul (Next step.). It clearly presents tragic pathos of Maandeshi rural life. But Madgulkar's 'Sattantar' is worth mentionable and different novel. There is no hero, villain, heroines, narration but, it criticizes and keenly describes struggle between two monkey groups every group's region is fixed in the forest, intrusions, relations between males, relations between animals, hunting of monkeys by wild animals, try of defence, leadership of group and struggle of males in monkey groups to win favor of the females – all this is described very effectively through this novel. Sattantar means change in rule, change in leadership. One's defeat and other's victory is Sattantar Through this Madgulkar has shown that it has been going on in human beings. Madgulkar reveals human psychology and existential tendency through this novel.

IV

Whereas Thomas Hardy is a famous English regional novelist of Victorian era, Vyankatesh Madgulkar is a famous Maharashtrian regional novelist in modern age. Both of them have written novels and presented ineffable beauty and charm of selected regions. Thomas Hardy's presentation of 'Wessex' and Vyankatesh Madgulkar's presentation of 'Maandesh' attracts reader's attention. Thomas Hardy's 'Wessex' contains- Berkshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, Somersetshire, Dorsetshire and Devon – 6 counties, whereas, Vyankatesh Madgulkar's 'Maandesh' contains- Atpadi, Jat, Kawathemahankal, Mangalwedha, Maan and Sangola - 6 main Talukas in South-West Maharashtra. Both these writers presented common people with different professions, dress codes, languages, customs, manners, morals and social habits from Wessex and Maandesh respectively. From the above discussion certain conclusions may be drawn.

1. Both Thomas Hardy and Vyankatesh Madgulkar - are the writers Regional literature.
2. Both of them, by presenting particular regions tried to reveal concept of Man and Destiny through their novels. Destiny makes man to face many difficulties and to adopt new way of life. Sometimes, lust overcomes intellect. They presented wildness in man and his cultural ideas.
3. Both presented problems generated due to illiteracy, superstitions, vagaries of nature etc. displacement, unsettlement due to frequent migration is common. Fate, directly, or indirectly plays crucial a role in shaping the lives of people of the Wessex and the Maandesh. It is also common.
4. Thomas Hardy and Vyankatesh Madgulkar presented a typical socio-cultural aspect of the Wessex and the Maandesh respectively through – geography, landscapes, ways of living life, professions, customs, habits, languages, codes of conduct, agricultural pursuits etc.
5. Both were impressed by tragic pathos of humanity caught in between its craving for happiness and the harsh limitations of material and social facts. It gave rise to revelation of concept of Man and Destiny.
6. Through their novels, they presented that Fate by employing a human instrument brings about tragedy. Hardy's novels present an important stage in the growth and development of regional English fiction. In the same way, Vyankatesh Madgulkar's novels are milestones of Marathi regional fiction.
7. Both depicted plight of characters set against agricultural society threatened by the forces of the change.

8. Both confined to the relatively small setting of the regions- the Wessex and the Maandesh respectively. By depicting these small regions, they described their countries and characters.
9. Both presented how destiny makes man to face many difficulties and to adopt new way of life: through wildness in man and his cultural ideas, sometimes lust overcomes sense of intellect.

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