

### POINTS TO REMEMBER IN ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES-13

1) Swinburne was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature every year from 1903 to 1907 and again in 1909. He is considered a poet of the **Decadent school**.

2) A few of **Swinburne's** works of criticism include:

a) A Study of Victor Hugo (1886)

b) A Study of Ben Jonson (1889)

c) A Study of Shakespeare (1880)

d) The Age of Shakespeare (1908)

3) The subtitle of Thomas Hardy's novel '**Under the Greenwood Tree**' is '**A Rural Painting of the Dutch School**' - a novel by the English writer Thomas Hardy published anonymously in 1872. ([PAPER2, Q22, 2004](#))

4) '**Under the Greenwood Tree**' was Hardy's second published novel and the first of his series of Wessex novels. The novel has been recognized by critics to be the precursor of Hardy's later tragic works. It set the scene for Wessex that the author revisits time and again. Based on the semi-fictional medieval Anglo-Saxon Kingdom, it eventually came to include counties in Southwest and South Central England.

5) The setting of the novel is Mellstock village. **Dick Dewey** fancies the schoolmistress, Fancy Day. With her beauty, she gained another suitor in the vicar, Mr Maybold. After struggling with conflicted feelings for her suitors, Fancy and Dick get married at the end of the novel.

6) Hardy began work on what would become the first of his Wessex novels, **Under the Greenwood Tree** in 1871. The background of the novel is based on the conflict between his grandfather's 'string choirs' of viols and voices in Stinsford Church and a new vicar who was determined to replace the choir with an up-to-date organ.

7) Forty years after this incident, **Hardy** recalls saying, " The Mellstock Quire and its old-established west-gallery musicians.... is intended to be a fairly true picture....."

8) The book was originally titled, "**The Mellstock Quire**", but during the summer of 1871, Hardy added significant additional material, which reduced the focus on the vexation of the choir and instead focused on the love story between Dick and Fancy.

9) With the addition of the material, the novel underwent a significant change in the structure. With the new structure came the new title '**Under the Greenwood Tree**', taken from a song in

Shakespeare's **As You Like It** (Act 2, Scene 5), and a subtitle, **A Rural Painting of the Dutch School**.

10) **Thomas Hardy** (1840- 1928) was an English novelist and poet. A Victorian realist in the tradition of George Eliot, he was influenced by Romanticism in both his novels and poetry. He wrote poetry throughout his life and regarded himself as a poet. However, his first collection did not appear until 1898.

11) It is often thought that realism is the particular tendency of **Victorian fiction**, and it is significant that its earliest uses of the word realism refer to the faithful representation of the real world in art and literature. The novelist of the period who most uses this word is George Eliot.

12) Like George Eliot, Hardy was highly critical of Victorian society. The declining status of rural life has been a major concern. Early on, he gained fame as the author of novels like **Far From the Madding Crowd** (1874), **The Mayor of Casterbridge** (1886), **Tess of the d' Urbervilles** (1891), and **Jude the Obscure** (1895).

13) Hardy's first novel, **The Poor Man and the Lady**, written in 1867, failed to find a publisher. He then had it reviewed by his friend and mentor, George Meredith, the Victorian poet and novelist. He advised him against publishing it because it was too controversial and not worth risking his publishing career in the future.

14) After abandoning his first novel, Hardy wrote two new ones hoping to have some commercial appeal- **Desperate Remedies**(1871) and **Under the Greenwood Tree** (1872). Both of these works were published anonymously. While working on his latter novel, he met his wife, Emma Gifford.

15) In 1873 **A Pair of Blue Eyes**, a novel drawing on Hardy's courtship with Emma, was published under his own name. A plot device popularized by Dickens, the term ' cliffhanger' is considered to have originated with the serialized version of this novel published in the Tinsley magazine between Sept 1872 to July 1873.

16) **Desperate Remedies** (1871), **Far From the Madding Crowd** (1874) and **Two on a Tower** ( 1882) reflect the success of the sensation fiction in the 1860s.

17) In **Far From the Madding Crowd**, Hardy first introduced the idea of calling the west of England Wessex. Wessex had been the name of the early Saxon kingdom. This work was successful enough to make Hardy give up on architecture and pursue writing as a career.

18) He wrote *The Return of the Native* (1878) when he moved to Yeovil from London. In 1880, he published his only historical novel, **The Trumpet Major**. In 1882, he wrote a romance **Two on a Tower**, a romance set in the world of astronomy.

19) Upon his last move in 1885 to Max Gate, he wrote the **Mayor of Casterbridge** (1886), **The Woodlanders** (1887) and **Tess of the d' Urbervilles** (1891), the last of which carried a

sympathetic portrayal of the fallen woman. Its subtitle *A Pure Woman: Faithfully Presented* was intended to raise eyebrows of the Victorian middle class.

20) **Jude the Obscure**, published in 1895 was met even more negatively for its treatment of sex, marriage and religion. It was an attack on the institution of marriage. It is also said that the Bishop of Wakefield burnt the copy. It is argued that the negative treatment he received from Tess and Jude made him give up on novel writing.

21) Despite this Hardy had become a celebrity by the 1900s. Another novel '**The Well-Beloved: A Sketch of a Temperament**, first serialised in 1892, was published in 1897.

22) **Philip Larkin** saw 'unhappiness' as central to Hardy's work. Being a realist, Hardy examined the social constraints on the lives of those living in Victorian England. He criticised the orthodox beliefs relating to marriage, education and religion. It is these limiting factors that cause unhappiness, eventually leading to suffering. In ***Two on a Tower***, Hardy takes a stand against these predetermined rules of society by creating a love story that crosses the boundaries of class.

23) Another important theme is the overwhelming presence of fate. The characters often find themselves at crossroads. Had such an incident not occurred, the story would have taken a different course. A junction in the novel is symbolic of an alternative that the character could have chosen for himself or herself if they had not chosen otherwise.

24) An example of chance playing a major role can be seen in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. "Had Bathsheba not sent the valentine, had Fanny not missed her wedding, for example, the story would have taken entirely a different path."

25) D.H Lawrence's *Study of Thomas Hardy*(1936) indicates the importance of Hardy for him. Hardy's treatment of character and Lawrence's own philosophy helped significantly in the development of *The Rainbow*(1915) and *Women in Love*(1920).