

Capire la crisi del romanzo vittoriano imparando da due romanzieri-poeti: George Meredith e Thomas Hardy

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Abstract

*Understanding the Late-Victorian Crisis through Two Novelists-Poets:
George Meredith and Thomas Hardy*

This contribution investigates the forms of Victorian poetry through the analysis of selected poems by George Meredith and Thomas Hardy. Biographies tell us about a long friendship between the two, and a particular episode in which, after a visit by Hardy to Box Hill, Meredith confided that he had been "afflicted by [Hardy's] twilight view of life", whereas Hardy was asked if he had been "saddened by [Meredith's] optimism". The episode highlights a substantial difference in temperament and aesthetics. However, Meredith and Hardy share more than initially appears: both attribute a central role to poetry as a literary genre as well as the same treatment of nature in poetry. "If Galileo had said in verse that the world moved, the Inquisition might have left him alone", writes Hardy, suggesting that only the polysemic and plural nature of poetry can bridge the gap between word and reality, between the means of communication and the representation of history; only the imaginative strength and the modeling tension of the poetic instrument are able to offer a socially acceptable vision of the external world and its changes. In discussing the two poets' representations of nature and environment in poetry, a multilevel analysis of their poetic texts is offered as a method of hermeneutical disambiguation to be implemented in the theory and practice of English literature.

Keywords: Meredith; Hardy; nature; Darwinism; environment.