

Social Realism In Thomas Hardy's Selected Novels

Dr. Prashant J. Mandre

Teaching Assistant

Karnataka Arts College & P. G. Centre, Dharwad - 580001

Abstract:

The novel's realism developed in Britain in the 19th century as a result of rising literacy and cultural awareness. Realist writing in the 17th and 18th century was limited to a small number of authors, such as Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding. Abrams noted in his book "*A Glossary of Literary Terms* (1899)" that a number of nineteenth-century novelists, such as George Eliot, William Dean, and de Balzac, adopted realism. Realists perceive things as they actually are, as opposed to romanticism, which sees life as it appears to be. Realisticism tackles human existence and experience, whereas romanticism focuses on feelings and ideas. The goal of realist writing is to establish a connection between the writer and the reader, and a skillful use of reality is all that is required. Novelists with a creative bent are those who can distinguish between literary realism and reality, and who also have superior writing techniques.

The novel's realism can be evaluated based on how it continues to impact the readers. Williams (1958) introduced a novel concept in realism during the 20th century, contending those novels written in the 17th and 18th centuries, like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688), adopted traditional techniques when applying realism, relying on sparse observations and limited records. As a result, the realistic flavor of these books fades quickly. Additionally, he says that novels created in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have been treasured and preserved. This study examines how much Hardy's "*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (2005)" adheres to Williams' (1961) *idea of New Realism*.

Keywords: *Realism, Society, Thomas Hardy, Williams, Social Problems and discrimination*

INTRODUCTION:

Thomas Hardy is a talented artist with several accomplishments. Hardy was up in a small town in southwest England, and his works are often inextricably linked to this place. Hardy's books are vibrant and contain a lot of regional flavor. Hardy's tragic books depict the anti-social trend, alienation, and worry about human fate. His writings have always been regarded by the world as being full of life and world philosophy. His writings feature elements of modernism, and he has long been considered a realist. Only a handful of individuals have, nevertheless, thoroughly examined the unique Existentialism-inspired reflection in his books. In his writings, Hardy has addressed a wide range of issues, including religion, ethics, life, society, love, and marriage. According to Hardy, social evil cannot be eradicated, human conditions are becoming worse, and pessimism and worldliness are progressively taking over as the universal human condition. Hardy believes that Christian

civilization is the source of tragedy and the end of all beautiful things, and he attacks outdated religious concepts that don't deserve happiness but instead fail to persuade readers of this in several of his works. In order to get readers thinking about the terrible fate of the hero and to make them realize that cannibalism and decaying religions and ethics are incompatible with human nature, Hardy writes sad conflicts and endings.

The social novel and the personal novel are the two types of realism. Both the societal and the personal novels ought to be factual, with the personal one requiring in-depth study. Stated differently, the social novel addresses a specific society or community. It centers on a specific setting and a well-defined lifestyle. However, the personal formula novel draws from firsthand knowledge. It is concerned with the individual terrain, much like the regional novels of Thomas Hardy. The author uses Wessex's unique scenery as a metaphor for the region's overall way of life. We seek a focus that recognizes each person as unique and absolute, as well as the way of life in general. Although Williams (1958) acknowledges that the term "realism" is ancient and has had many different interpretations since the middle of the 19th century, the term's current use has been highly dubious. Williams believes that the definition of realism has expanded to encompass additional dimensions and implicit meanings in order to portray modern life and society. Williams discusses the contemporary novel and attempts to create his own unique brand of reality. He believes that the writer of the modern novel tackles contemporary problems that affect the person as well as his community, showing the extent to which the two components interact. This new interpretation of realism demonstrates a total rejection of the term's conventional technical definition to demonstrate the application of realism in the realist fiction. Certain Russian terminology, such as Narodnost and Tipchimoto, are used by Williams (1958). Narodnost refers to spiritual expression, whereas Tipchimoto denotes the portrayal of ordinary people in ordinary circumstances. Additionally, he suggests the evolution of the attitudes using the names Ideanot and Partisonst. Realistically speaking, realism is something dynamic and all-encompassing. It has multiple points of view about life. Conversely, life is depicted from several angles, the realistic novel "went out with the hansom cab," based on nineteenth-century preconceptions about the west. "In response to such assertions, Williams's notes that a greater proportion of contemporary novels than those produced since the eighteenth century are filled with realistic themes found in everyday life. In addition, the realistic novel gives way to the psychological novel. Although it stands for a different form of reality, the influence of the outdated word "realism" is still present. To deal with the new world, modern novels employ sophisticated methods and strategies, which is why they have changed. Techniques that can help the writer more easily connect with the characters' emotions so that they can be vividly and precisely portrayed and observed. The realistic novel set in the 19th century lacks the element of showing characters' offensive sides, which is necessary for a social fiction to accurately describe real life. According to the study, the primary goal of most artists is to be original and beloved by their audience. The ability of an author to introduce fresh ideas into his literary works is what defines creativity. If fresh writing techniques aren't used, there could be danger that endangers the novel's future. Before taking any action, authors must offer an appropriate depiction of modern life in order to update their writing techniques appropriately. The majority of readers in the younger

generation are not very interested in reading the classic realistic novels because some novelists continue to follow in the footsteps of their forebears.

Thomas Hardy thinks that circumstances, fate, and chance manipulate man like a puppet. Additionally, he demonstrates how enjoyment is only a sporadic part of the whole drama of suffering. Why God allows suffering for humans. It is believed that the Government of God is the Ultimate Government, or perhaps the Ultimate Power. All things should be considered by the All-Powerful One. This Supreme Government ought to combat evil forces rather than commit terrible crimes that cause misery. Thomas Hardy, who did not believe in God, presented his beliefs about love, life, destiny, the world, and man and suffering in a blindingly scientific and logical manner.

According to Thomas Hardy, an occult force compels humanity to make mistakes and then accept misery. Thomas Hardy is a great literary innovator and the heir apparent to British critical realism. On the one hand, he carried on the rich legacy of British critical realism while also highlighting the negative aspects of the Victorian era. However, he also introduced British modernism and critically examined the modernist predicament of individuals living in a contemporary capitalist society where moral principles have vanished. Hardy is among the writers who write in the period between modernism and Victorianism. The books of Hardy differ from those of Dickens, his forerunner, and Lawrence, his successor. He so builds a bridge that connects the two. Hardy had mistrust for contemporary society.

"Hardy demonstrates in his books of the Modern Era how modernism has severely damaged contemporary civilization. His books are very colored and flavorful in the modernist literary tradition. The tragic novels of Hardy have a contemporary literary flavor. The major themes of his tragic novels are the anti-social tendency, alienation, and concern about human destiny that permeate contemporary literature across all genres. His writings provide new life to the Modern Age in English literature while inheriting and advancing the typical traits of the Victorian age. As a result, everyone can learn about and comprehend his ideas and philosophy of life, love, the universe, etc. According to George Stade, "the modernist writers' most universal trait was an antagonistic or alienated relationship to their own cultures." The inverse relationship between the depicted chaos and the projected aesthetic order was the most prevalent element in all of their works.

Hardy lived at a crucial moment in British history when the country moved from a feudal to a modern society, one that was shaped by traditional culture and exposed to the rapidly advancing industrial civilization. He witnessed the period in which Britain was progressively moving into a capitalist industrial society. Thus, his works paint a realistic image of the breakdown of the English countryside during this time. It also illustrates the manner by which the antiquated traditions of the patriarchal clan system are being destroyed. People eventually grow apathetic and alienated as a result of all of this, and they experience an unparalleled sense of loneliness. Freedom, fraternity, and democracy have all been destroyed as a result of the two world wars.

By designing protagonists who are somewhat based on him, Hardy also addresses class concerns in his books. These characters believe that the world they were born into does not allow for the full development and use of their talents. These individuals follow their abilities in a society that is socially superior to their own because they are driven by a strong sense of aspiration and self-discovery. Particular examples of these types of characters are found in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*' Stephen Smith, *The Woodlanders*' Clym Yeobright, *Jude the Obscure*'s Jude, and Grace Melbury's *The Woodlanders*. Through these kinds of scenarios, Hardy's novels illustrate the perversity and brutality of class distinction, as well as the impossibility and futility of fully severing oneself from one's roots in an effort to climb the social class hierarchy. In actuality, Tess and her family's mistreatment says volumes about widespread societal discrimination and noncooperation towards all common men who belong to the lower and middle class social strata. It also talks volumes about the injustice done to the lady in particular.

A number of classic female roles against the backdrop of Wessex can be found in Hardy's works: *Jude the Obscure*'s Sue, Bathsheba in *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Eustacia in *Return to the Native*, Tess in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and Lucetta in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* are just a few examples. Although they each have very distinct personalities, they are all connected by the fact that these women always struggle to fit in with their surroundings, live in substandard housing, and make unsuccessful attempts to leave their current circumstances. These characters highlight the pitiful social, political, and economic circumstances that today's middle class faces. As a result, they are universal rather than unique. Because of their pessimism and unconventionality, the earlier works of this extremely sensitive author received a rather apathetic reception from British intelligentsia. These criticisms and queries were directed towards the representation of women and premarital sex. They were regarded as morbid psychology at the time. Because of their candid portrayal of sex, several of his writings drew even harsher criticism from the Victorian audience and were frequently called obscene. They received harsh criticism for what appeared to be an attack on the institution of marriage by putting up ideas like encetolepsy. Thomas Hardy's novels are undoubtedly a serious critique of the social restrictions that hampered 19th-century people's ability to enjoy their lives. Known as a Victorian Realist, Hardy has studied the social norms that underpin the Victorian status quo, arguing that these regulations impede everyone's life and eventually result in misery. By telling a tale of love that transcends class lines in two on a Tower, Hardy aims to challenge these norms and establish a narrative against the backdrop of social structure. We are compelled to think of doing away with the rules established for love. These customs are upheld by nineteenth-century society, and conformity is guaranteed by social pressure. However, over time, some people came to recognize the novelist's excellent abilities. The artist's goal was understood in terms of mysticism's deeper psychology.

To sum up, maybe the best approach to recognize Thomas Hardy's contribution to the entire intellectual community would be to see him not just as a prolific novelist and poet, but also as a brilliant propagandist and a voice against social injustice.

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