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A LINGUISTIC CRITIQUE ON NATURALISM IN THOMAS HARDY'S NOVEL 'THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE'

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ABSTRACT

This research linguistically explores the naturalistic elements in Thomas Hardy's book "The Mayor of Casterbridge" i.e., Immanent will, fate, the Law of Nature, and Naturalism as a whole are the main naturalist tenets that are considered. This research investigates how various forces, such as immanent will, fate, and natural laws, interact to determine and frame a person's actions and life. This study looks into the impact of coincidence and chance in our lives. A man is not solely accountable for his actions which lead to his miserable destiny, and it is also explored that free will is not entirely free. According to this research work, nature significantly impacts how our lives are affected. Regardless of our decisions and desires, our lives are directed and governed by an absolute force known as Immanent Will. According to the research, because natural law controls every aspect of human life, all people are subject to it.

Keywords: Mayor of Casterbridge; Lives; Fate; Naturalism; Linguistic critique.

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hardy's novel The Mayor of Casterbridge was first published in serial form (in the magazine The Graphic) in 1886 and then as a book the following year. A representation of Dorchester in the nineteenth century can be found in the made-up city of Casterbridge. The story follows the rise and decline of Michael Henchard, who, after leaving his wife and daughter behind, starts nothing, gains regard & prosperity, and therefore is reunited with his family only to end up losing it all due to his own folly, his desire for vengeance, and a string of unfortunate events.

Personas in The Mayor of Casterbridge

The main character of the book is Michael Henchard. The plot begins with his decision to sell his child and wife to the sailor. He wakes up the next morning and spends the following eighteen years becoming successful after failing to locate them. He ultimately succeeded in the post of the Mayor of Casterbridge.

Michael Henchard's wife is Susan Henchard. During a fit of intoxication, Susan's husband sells her and her child to a sailor. After the sailor passes away, Susan goes back to look for Henchard.

The sailor who buys Susan Henchard & her daughter is named Richard Newson. When Susan discovers she is still wed to her first husband, despite the purchase, he fakes his death out of sympathy.

Susan Henchard and Richard Newson are the parents of Elizabeth-Jane Newson. Until her mother's letter on her deathbed reveals her father is Newson, she believes she is Michael Henchard's child.

Traveler Donald Farfrae arrives in town and proposes workable solutions to a problem with Henchard's wheat. He takes over as Henchard's manager and establishes himself as a well-liked and astute businessman.

Henchard and Lucetta Templeman fall in love after he is unable to locate Susan & their daughter. He wishes he could marry her but is unable to. Lucetta is despised by the locals because they believe her connections with Henchard to be inappropriate. She creates love letters for Henchard, which are later made public to the entire community.

Joshua Jopp was previously passed over for Henchard's managerial position, but when Farfrae and Henchard argue, Jopp is given the position. He gets to read Lucetta's letters to the villagers.

Operational Terms

Naturalism

A significant literary movement that began in the second half of the 19th century is known as "naturalism" (1880-1920). Naturalism holds that humans are influenced by both their genetics and their environments, applying the scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to the study of beings. This ideology frequently portrays man as being at odds with nature, society, or even himself. It was heavily influenced by Darwinism.

Fatalism

The idea that fate or destiny is a vast, impersonal, primordial force that has existed since the beginning of time, is unaffected by human choice, and is more potent than any god that man has imagined or created is known as the fatalist theory.

Determinism

It acknowledges that the laws of cause and effect are in force, that the human will is not free, and that despite their best efforts, humans are powerless to change their fate. It also acknowledges that man's efforts to oppose the will of things have no chance of success.

Linguistic critique

Linguistic critique refers to the linguistic analysis (Gul et al., 2022) of the text in order to know the worth of linguistic forms and content. The study in hand applies linguistic analysis to unfold the naturalistic elements in the novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge* by Thomas Hardy. This linguistic analysis technique is crucial in identifying the naturalist elements, agreements and disagreements strategies, and gender representation used in the text (Ishtiaq et al., 2021; Ishtiaq et al., 2022).

Aim of the Research

The study's goals are as follows:

1. To examine the naturalist elements in "*The Mayor of Casterbridge*" as a novel.
2. To determine Hardy's naturalistic philosophy by analyzing the book using key naturalistic elements.
3. To unfold the impacts of naturalism in the novel by using the technique of linguistic analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A lot of research work exists in this novel. The "pain of modernity" at this time in history replaced long-held beliefs in politics, social order, science, and religion. Many people found that the new concepts did not satisfy their emotional needs. He read Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* as a young man and a few churchmen's writings endorsing radical theological ideas, which influenced his views on religion later in

life. It was impossible for an all-knowing, all-powerful god to account for evil's universal presence and circumstances' consistent tendency to favor happiness (Dachie, 1969).

When Hardy wrote his works in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, "naturalism" in literature was in vogue. According to Donna Campbell, naturalism is a literary movement whose proponents use scientific methods and ideas to accurately depict reality. The plots in Naturalism portray the characters' decline as an inevitable result of their downfall, which is frequently depicted by lower-class characters in urban settings or a broad view of one aspect of contemporary society. In Naturalism, the characters act out of emotion rather than reason and exhibit little insight into their behavior. Characters in naturalism tend to act out of emotion rather than reason and show little understanding of what they are doing. George Becker has characterized naturalism as "materialistic determinism and dismal mate fatalism" (Furst & Skrine, 2017).

One is reminded of how frequently Hardy uses chance and circumstance to shape his plot when thinking about his works. Thomas Hardy's writings must be understood in the context of his fatalistic outlook on life because Hardy vacillates between determinism and fatalism, two central ideas in naturalism. Suppose you subscribe to fatalism, the idea that everything happens for a reason. In that case, you are likely to believe in fate as a vast, omnipotent force that spans all of time and is more potent than any deity you've ever imagined. Determinism, to put it another way, is the idea that despite our best efforts, we have no control over our destinies and that human will is not free. Hardy sees life as a never-ending battle against the outside forces that keep him from having fun. The event plays a crucial role in determining whether Hardy's characters are happy or sad. His works creatively manifest fate by chance and coincidence, nature, time, women, and convention. Only the Immanent Will, not fate, manifests itself in each of them (Hardy, 1990).

RESEARCH DESIGN

For this research study, the researcher used a qualitative approach. We decided on a qualitative research design for literature because there are many subjective elements to consider. A qualitative research design aims to identify the causes and mechanisms of the phenomenon. The qualitative method is frequently viewed as being more subjective than objective. Interviews, textual analysis, and observations are all examples of qualitative methods. It enables the researcher thoroughly examine novel concepts and experiences.

Data Collection

The researcher obtained the data from two different sources. It includes:

The main source

The novel's text, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, serves as the main source for data collection. The researcher gathered words, phrases, sentences, events, dialogues, character actions, and narration related to the study's questions and objectives by thoroughly reading the novel.

Supplementary source

The information from the novel's related sources serves as the secondary data source. Books, journals, magazines, research papers, and other written works were used as secondary sources of information.

Data Collection Procedure

The techniques used to obtain the data from the sources include;

1. Careful reading (Close Reading) of the book.
2. Underlining key passages from both primary and secondary sources.
3. Sorting the data into various categories in accordance with the situation.

4. Making judgments.

The technique of the Data Analysis

The researcher used a descriptive qualitative analysis of the content to analyze and describe the data gathered from the novel. By closely examining various facets of the characters and their actions in the novel, the researcher carefully examined the novel's naturalistic elements. The researcher examined all the notable passages from the book that would indicate naturalism in work. The descriptive analysis of the novel served as the starting point for the analysis, which concluded with a naturalistic analysis of the literary work.

DATA ANALYSIS

Text analysis is a research process and methodology that involves gathering, collecting, and examining qualitative data to understand it. People make sense of life and life experience through literary analysis. Text analysis provides a detailed interpretation, description, and understanding. We can decipher a text's literal meaning, subtext, symbolism, and other values. The textual analysis creates structured data from free text. In this chapter, the researcher analyses important research objectives, quotations, dialogues, and sayings from the novel's text, along with personal interpretation and comments from other critics, to reach a genuine and unbiased conclusion to the study.

Naturalism began in the late 19th century in literature, film, theatre, and art. Naturalistic writers wrote stories based on the idea that the environment determines human character. It's deterministic, detached, and objective. This movement occurred after Charles Darwin's 1865-1900 theory of Evolution, which states that social conditions, heredity, and nature shape human characters.

Thomas Hardy lived during the naturalist literary movement, and he admired Darwin and Emile Zola as true representatives of human sorrow. Hardy wrote a story that portrays the dejected and gloomy aspects of human life, where we are mere puppets in the hands of Immanent will. Thomas Hardy's "The Mayor of Casterbridge" depicts blind fate. Hardy's blind and merciless fate brought misery, pain, and sorrow to Henchard. According to Thomas Hardy, fate is always overthrown by coincidences and unforeseeable events. Michael Henchard fights fate in isolation.

Hardy states that,

"since the issues of the individual life are the great part determined by what the living creature is or has to start with, in virtue to its heredity relation to parent and ancestors---- attaches to Environment in the widest sense, food, climate--- in the widest sense but all these potent influences act upon on organism whose fundamental nature is determined, though not rigidly fixed, by its heredity that is, we repeat, by its genetics relation to its forebears" (Milligate, 2004).

Hardy was a naturalist who believed that individual life is determined by parents and ancestors. Michael Henchard, a pauper, enters Weydon-Prior. His appearance and description in the novel suggest he's poor. Fed up with poverty, he comes to town to find a better job. Naturalism drives his life from the start, as he is born poor and penniless. All his worries are because he's poor; if he were rich, things would be different. The action scene was the result of his drinking liquor, which made him out of his mind, but was liquor really what made him auction off his wife? This is the main question about the naturalistic element. Going insane was the result of freely drinking liquor, but selling his wife for five guineas was fate because he was penniless and unable to support his family. He sold his wife and daughter so he could find a job with one head to support. His poverty led him to sell his wife and daughter. Had he been rich, he wouldn't have sold his family, but social and hereditary factors determined his life course, which devastated Henchard, Susan, and Elizabeth Jane.

A Pakistani research paper titled "Exploring Elements of Naturalism in Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge*" confirms that Henchard's auction of his wife and daughter was a direct result of his ill fate, which was predetermined by an Imminent will. The authors of this research believe that the Fairfield, where horses and sheep were kept for sale, was not meant to sell and buy humans and that the chief of Fairfield refused to sell the animals to early visitors. Poor hay trusser Henchard sold his wife because of fate and society. The reason is that he was drunk and thrown by natural law into worse conditions, as he says: "For my part, I don't see why men who have wives and don't want them shouldn't get rid of 'em as these gypsy fellows do their old horses, said the men in the tent, why shouldn't they put 'em up for auction to men who need such articles?" I'd sell mine if anyone wanted her! (9, Ch. 1)

According to natural law, Henchard's nature made him view his marriage as a blunder and burden. He had no love or pity for his wife and daughter, so he opposes nature's laws and suffers greatly. Fate was punishing him for his negative actions.

Susan was meek, humble, and simple. Susan's husband's bitter, harsh, and insensitive behaviour is explored in the novel. Hardy:

"She knows I'm crazy when I do that," he exclaimed. Why did she drag me into this disgrace? 'She wasn't gay if I was,' he yelled. Susan's so stupid. "Weakness has hurt me more than rage!" (17).

Consider Susan's simplicity when analysing this text. She was so grounded that she didn't argue with Henchard at the auction, instead accepting her meekness and welcoming his rash decision. Henchard couldn't control his harsh and repulsive mind. He couldn't control his bad temper and made rash, careless, impulsive decisions, as in the auction. Susan, a humble, simple, and meek woman, fell victim to her husband's bad temper and went with Newson, a stranger. Henchard's temper and Susan's meekness are both inherited. Their nature influences their lives. Susan's humility led to misery with Newson. Had she overcome her husband's mistake and refused to go with Newson after the auction? She could have made Henchard understand their situation, but her simplicity and humility led to disaster. Overdrinking was a chance; Susan's meekness and Henchard's rashness were hereditary. Heredity clearly influences our characters, lives, and actions.

Knezevic (2011) says that an inherited constitution determines character.

"Race is everything," says Disraeli.

According to both statements, inheritance and heredity drive Henchard and Susan's lives. Henchard said their personalities and social conditions caused his biggest mistake.

"I was a hay trusser when I got married at age 18. Would you marry me?"

Poverty drives our fortunes. In poverty, people are helpless and make mistakes. Henchard can't be solely blamed for his circumstances, and mankind's willful hostility is evident.

Henchard came to town looking for work. Since he was a victim of poverty, he drank more and more liquor to forget his pathetic situation and get relief from his harsh life, from which he wanted an escape. This liquor poisoned Henchard, unbalancing his senses. Because of his poverty, he was socially downtrodden and obsessed with money. Poor man sold his family for five guineas because he was so drunk from drinking. Had he been wealthy, he wouldn't have stayed in a furmity where animals were bought and sold, but his ancestral failure led to poverty, which led to misfortunes. Henchard can't control his nature, as most people can't. Social conditions can transfer natural behaviour genetically. Henchard's rashness and impulsiveness influenced his decision, as did his environment. Henchard says;

"I lost my wife.... She was carrying our only child while I was working. We visited a country fair booth. I drank then" (Milligate, 2004).

Susan and Elizabeth-Jane were taken from Henchard at Furmity Station by nature's cruelty. Henchard searched for his family but was unsuccessful. He had a useless struggle against his determined fate. The fate that deprived him of his family could also help him find them when he searched for them, but nature was not on his side, and he suffered greatly in the future.

"Hardy embodies fate in various forms" (Mullik, 1957). It's sometimes natural. Henchard will find his family when they are not in need, not when he needs them. Henchard couldn't find his wife and daughter.

Later, when Henchard becomes mayor and is happy with Lucetta, Susan and Elizabeth Jane return and change everything for him. His decline continues, and he must choose between Lucetta and Susan. Poor, cruel fate rules our lives. According to Emile Zola, external and internal determinism define all human phenomena. Henchard was helpless against fate's strangest oppressions: not finding his family when he needed them and finding them when he didn't. Society, family, and environment shape people (Furst & Skrine, 2017).

Susan was a meek, humble woman who tried to live a healthy life with her husband Henchard, but fate was cruel to her despite her simplicity, humility, and weakness. The natural law was supposed to acknowledge her efforts and hard work for making her house a home, but she was sold to a sailor named Newson. Nature ignores Susan's annoying auction bargain. She's having problems. She was virtuous. She tried to stop the heinous auction, but was doomed by the Immanent Will.

The novel's plot takes a major turn when Susan and Elizabeth Jane reappear in Henchard's life. Henchard was meeting Farfrae at a hotel to talk about business. Susan and her daughter arrive at the same hotel as Farfrae. Susan sees Henchard as a successful person and decides to meet him. She sends him a note through Elizabeth to start over. This incident shows that it was nature, the Immanent Will, and coincidence that Susan and Elizabeth reappeared in Henchard's life when he was in love with Lucetta and planning to marry her. Hardy believes natural forces oppose Henchard's happiness and bring him from Mayor to begging. Susan and Elizabeth return to Casterbridge after that.

"No wife, I say, until today. She'd returned. What's to be done today?"

Henchard fell for Lucetta Templeman when she nursed him in New Jersey. Love is natural. Henchard's attraction to Lucetta is a natural human instinct and innate trait. Nature made him love her, he says.

"When I fell, this young woman at the boarding house where I was staying nursed me. Why? I wasn't worth it. Being in the same house and feeling her warmth, we became intimate."

He was sick and Lucetta cared for him at the boarding house by chance. So his first meeting with Lucetta was a divine coincidence. Lucetta saved him from dying. Before Susan's return to Casterbridge, all this happened. He cherished Lucetta. Their love grew and they had a sexual relationship. Henchard and Lucetta hid their love due to social pressures. He left Lucetta to avoid embarrassment. This is how social conditions control and affect human lives; he left Lucetta out of fear of social embarrassment because having sexual relations was against society's norms. In such situations, naturalism limits human lives. Nature brought Susan back into his life when he couldn't imagine it, and social norms made him leave Lucetta. In doing better, he made more mistakes and was left ruined with nothing.

The weather demolished Henchard's success and happiness. Henchard brought a lot of wheat to outdo Farfrae, but nature favoured him. Bad weather wasted much of Henchard's product. Henchard's plans for a public holiday party went awry, and his hopes turned to depression. Henchard's party had no shade or cover, but Farfrae had made one. In bad weather, everyone left Henchard's party and joined Farfrae's. Henchard did everything he could to entertain the people and ruin Farfrae's party, but nature had other

plans. Weather devastated Henchard and made Farfrae a town influencer. This is how naturalistic forces favour or oppose humans, leaving us helpless.

"The weather changed, and the tin-like sunlight became topaz".

Henchard believed in traditional weather forecasting methods. He used old weather prophecies. His prophecy failed, and he lost much. Due to bad weather, he had to sell his grain and wheat at a loss. Here, nature cruelly betrays Henchard. Farfrae was equipped with modern technology, however. He used modern techniques and technology for better weather forecasting. He benefited from making timely decisions. Henchard's impulsive, immature decisions are punished by nature.

Fate plays another trick on Henchard with Newson's reappearance. Elizabeth was his only lifeline, so he lied to her. By lying to Elizabeth Jane, he betrayed himself and was ostracised and hated. Newson returns and ends Henchard's misery. Newson knows everything, so Henchard's life is cut short. It's a natural law that brings back the dead like Newson, affecting human lives. Henchard decides his own punishment because he was predestined to face heinous consequences. Determinism is fundamental to human life. Henchard made some decisions that led one to believe he was the master of his own fate, but the final scenes prove he was a puppet of fate and master of nothing. Michael Henchard's will.s

"That Elizabeth Jane Farfrae be not told of my death, or made to grieve on account of me.

'& that I be not bury'd in consecrated ground.

'& that no sexton be asked to toll the bell.

'& that nobody is wished to see my dead body.

'& that no mourners walk behind me at my funeral.

'& that no flours be planted on my grave.

'& that no man remember me.

'& to this I put my name.

"Michael Henchard."

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion is presented in accordance with the information that was examined. This work discusses the pertinent information and ideas that have been discovered in accordance with the problem statement, primarily taking the research objectives and questions into account. The outcome of this research paper was presented before the detailed data were presented. However, the researcher has provided a succinct summary of the entire study here for convenience and a clearer understanding of the goal.

In light of the novel, a critical discussion was held regarding how heredity and social environment affect how long humans live. The analysis has made it clear that humans are influenced by their environment and social surroundings in addition to their inherited traits. Humans don't have the concept of free will because every action they take is ultimately predetermined by an Immanent Will. Chance and coincidence are ruthless natural forces that have both positive and negative effects on people's lives. A man's inheritance, which is given to him by his parents, and environment matter a lot in his life through a series of events, leading him to a destructive fate, it is further observed in the study. People's actions are not always responsible for shaping their destinies, but rather a man's inheritance, which is transferred to him by his parents.

In his book "The Mayor of Casterbridge," pessimist Thomas Hardy mixed the themes of pathos, pity, predeterminism, pessimism, and naturalism. Naturalistic determinism can be seen in Henchard's ill-fated

and unwelcomed marriage, the furmity tent setting where the heinous auction took place, the unanticipated love affairs, death, sex, and a persistent life of poverty.

"All life is suffering. Suffering is the universal law and its better not to have been born at all" Thomas Hardy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher humbly advises and suggests that anyone interested in studying Thomas Hardy's works of literature work on his philosophy and major themes in "The Mayor of Casterbridge" from various facets of life and literature. They can develop pessimism in this book. In this novel, further study on the role of characters and Shakespeare's maxim "Character is destiny" is possible. From a feminist perspective, sexism and genderism can also be viewed as research studies in this book.

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