

THOMAS HARDY NOVELS THE ROLE OF FATE AND CHANCE, COINCIDENCE AND TRAGEDY

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Abstract:

This study examines the theme of the role of fate and coincidence and tragedy in the works of Thomas Hardy, focusing on how these elements influence the lives of his characters and shape the narrative. Through a comprehensive analysis of secondary sources, the study aims to shed light on Hardy's portrayal of the fate and coincidence in his novels and poems, highlighting the philosophical and existential questions raised by these themes in his literary works. Thomas Hardy, one of the most renowned Victorian novelists and poets, is known for his profound exploration of human existence, particularly the role of fate and coincidence in shaping individual lives. Hardy's works often depict characters who struggle against seemingly insurmountable odds, only to be confronted by the harsh realities of fate and chance. Thomas Hardy's literary legacy is characterized by a profound examination of the human condition, with themes of fate and coincidence recurring throughout his works, these themes not only serve as narrative devices but also invite readers to contemplate the complexities of existence and the extent to which individuals are masters of their own destinies. This review paper seeks to explore the fate and coincidence in Hardy's writings, drawing from a wide array of secondary sources to analyse their significance and implications.

Keywords: Thomas Hardy, fate, coincidence, determinism, tragedy, narrative, characters.

Thomas Hardy as novelist, poet and social critic, Hardy was a man of enormous depth and character with a distinctive darkness about him. Hardy's life is now explored in an illuminating new documentary Thomas Hardy by Odyssey Television and premiering on Sky Arts on Tuesday 14th September 2021. Author of classics such as *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy's work reflects the human tragedy of his characters' lives as they struggle with their passions, fate, and their position in society, always with the utmost compassion and in vivid detail.

Hardy's modest upbringing made him aware of the hypocrisies of Victorian class society. As his popularity rose, he became increasingly conscious of a feeling of being between classes, of loving London Society but never feeling part of it. This, matched with his love for nature, meant he preferred to spend much of his time in the rolling landscapes of his Dorset home, the land he called Wessex. Hardy focused his novels on the social specificities and suffering of the people that lived there with brooding vision.

Thomas Hardy fate and exclusion tragedy explores Hardy's complicated relationship with women, both in his works and life. Hardy married his first wife Emma in 1874. He fell genuinely and profoundly in love with her, but this intense love was to last for just two years. Love and respect turned to hostility and bitterness in the last years of Emma's life. At the same time, Hardy fell in love with a young writer - 39 years his junior - Florence Dugdale. Following Emma's sudden and unexpected death, Hardy married Florence. His profound experience of and reaction to Emma's death affected him intensely. It produced a great explosion of what was to be his greatest poetic work. It also marked a pronounced shift in his character.

Hardy regretted the way he had treated his wife and as he remembered the intensity of his love for her.

Thomas Hardy fate and tragedy and co-incidence, delves into his incredible abilities as a writer, a critic of the oppressive forces of society and looks at Hardy's ability to eloquently chastise the values of the world he inhabited with an acute sense of compassion for human tragedy, as a man haunted by both rage and empathy. The programme also includes extracts from leading feature films based on Hardy novels, including Kate Winslet and Christopher Ecclestone in *Jude*, Eddie Redmayne and Gemma Arterton in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and Julie Christie in *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

In addition to fate, coincidence plays a significant role in Hardy's narratives, often serving as a catalyst for pivotal events. The chance encounter between characters or the fortuitous occurrence of circumstances frequently drives the plot forward, imbuing the narrative with a sense of unpredictability and irony. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, for instance, Michael Henchard's impulsive act of auctioning his wife in a fit of drunkenness sets off a chain of events that reverberate throughout the novel. This reliance on coincidence not only adds depth to Hardy's storytelling but also underscores the capriciousness of life it

Thomas Hardy, renowned for his novels and poetry that delve deep into the human experience, often grapples with the concept of fate. In Hardy's context, fate is depicted as a powerful force that shapes the lives of his characters, often leading them to tragic ends. This essay explores Hardy's portrayal of fate, examining how it influences character decisions and outcomes, and compares his treatment of fate with other literary works that explore similar

In Hardy's works, fate is not merely a predetermined outcome, but a complex interplay of chance, external circumstances, and individual choices. Fate is often depicted as an external force that controls the lives of his characters, pushing them towards a predetermined destiny. However, Hardy also suggests that individuals have some degree of agency, as they are able to make choices that can alter their fate, albeit within limits set by external forces.

One of the most striking examples of fate in Hardy's works is the character of Tess in "Tess of the d'Urbervilles." Despite Tess's efforts to escape her tragic fate, she is ultimately unable to overcome the forces working against her, leading to her untimely demise. Similarly, in "The Mayor of Casterbridge," the protagonist, Michael Henchard, is plagued by a series of unfortunate events that are seemingly beyond his control, ultimately leading to his downfall.

Hardy's treatment of fate is reminiscent of other literary works that explore similar themes. For example, in Shakespeare's "Macbeth," the titular character's tragic downfall is largely attributed to the workings of fate, as prophesied by the witches. Similarly, in Sophocles' "Oedipus Rex," the protagonist's attempts to avoid his fate only serve to fulfill it, highlighting the inevitability of fate.

Combining radical instincts, a hatred of hypocrisy, poetic brilliance and a deep sense of the tragic basis of life, Hardy had a quiet external appearance but internally was a man of seething, gloomy darkness. The author of a series of a brilliant novel, many of which have been made into successful feature films - *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *Jude the Obscure* - Hardy later in life became a great poet. Despite his respectable outward appearance, Hardy's life was more complex than it seemed. He married his first wife Emma Gifford in 1874 and became estranged from her for the last 20 years of their life together. They hardly spoke. Hardy was overcome with grief and sadness following the death of Emma. He had ignored her for half their married life. Hardy's uncomfortable secret was that for the last years of his wife's life he had been deeply in love with a young woman -his secretary. Quite simply and rather suddenly, Hardy's acts of mourning and regret released a greater poet within himself. The work he created made Hardy one of the greatest poets of the 20th century. At the heart of Hardy's writing is the intersection of fate and chance with human tragedy, set in a landscape that Hardy called Wessex -one that has haunted his readers ever since.

The background of the study which is the literature of contemporary writers was reviewed it is begin with of the significant research in gender and the role of gender in novels of the English literature. In directive to provide the historical context and describe the characteristic of the two literary movements in come fast in this study, the review talks the following features of literary and cultural history; modernism and the theatre of postmodernism and post modernism and the theatre. The structural functional theory is created on the concept that a certain society must discover away to prepare it-self to confirm existence that how women, and men best in their place in society is not organically determined by what the culture requires. Can be observed in novel the gender in this novel. The writer adult health as a native place for them and there are a lot of cultural elements that we can see in it according to the author it is a very good place according to the residence of this area this place is not good for them so in this way the structural functional theory can also be analysed by on the text of this novel. Social learning theory clarifies and how gender rules formed by the means of a developmental procedure orientation much similar behaviour is a central to social education theory is a concept of attainment of rewards for exhibiting the current correct gender role behaviour and the major emphasize is on the agents of strengthening as by Howard and Hollander. The next was gender schema theory which is unlike the other gender theories which have followed in the novel.

Hardy was well aware of economic, social and legal aspects which restricted women's lives.

One side was doomed face of women and second side was social restrictions on women aspirations, desires and self-satisfaction. The reason was that in the contemporary work of novelists' women were portrayed as evasive, passive and docile, these novelists hardly shown rebellion against men dominant role in society over women as well doomed face of women.

Hardy represents the social norms of Victorian period in which a women plead to be innocent not only physically but also mentally. That society also imposed some restrictions as well on female such as ignorance of sexual meters and silence on it. Further she had not any right to represent her desire and passion about sexuality and romance. At that time women had only one duty to give birth and brought up the children, Terms were used at that time "fallen women" and "deviant" for females having any sexual passion. She was not having any right or paying any part in political and economic power.

Hardy painted in the Return of the Native conflicts about marriage by showing intellectual, sexual and emotional conflicts, by emphasizing on sexual disorder and martial breakdown. Hardy's representation of the physical-nature of females is a part of showing domed face of female characters. To understand this the picture of women in contemporary literature is required. Hardy's novels considered opulent, complex and rich in characterization and themes so which could be evaluated in regard to the contemporary trends and standards of criticism as discussed, if this novel read with traditional methods with special focus on romantic and sexual themes will not get any material realities for female characters. But alternative way of reading will produce different results of these believes. Women suffering because of sexual misbehaviour meet with undeserved outcomes and punishments by Hardy's ambivalent shape of first cause as discussed by Nicholson.

Thomas Hardy, a masterful storyteller known for his intricate narratives, often employs coincidence as a narrative device in his works. This essay delves into the definition and significance of coincidence in Hardy's narratives, analyses key coincidences in selected works, and interprets how coincidence contributes to plot development, drawing upon examples from his novels *Coincidence*, in Hardy's narratives, refers to the occurrence of events or circumstances that seem unlikely or improbable but serve to drive the plot forward or to underscore thematic elements. Coincidences in Hardy's works often involve chance encounters between characters, unexpected twists of fate, or seemingly random occurrences that have profound consequences for the story. Significantly, these coincidences are not merely plot contrivances but are intricately woven into the fabric of Hardy's narratives, contributing to the

overall thematic richness and complexity of his works.

One of the most notable instances of coincidence in Hardy's novels is found in "Tess of the d'Urbervilles," where Tess encounters Alec d'Urberville, the man who will ultimately bring about her downfall, by chance. This encounter sets off a chain of events that dramatically alter Tess's life trajectory and leads to her tragic fate. Similarly, in "Far from the Madding Crowd," the chance meeting between Bathsheba Everdene and Gabriel Oak at the beginning of the novel sets the stage for their complex relationship and the intertwining of their fates.

In "The Mayor of Casterbridge," coincidence plays a pivotal role in the downfall of the protagonist, Michael Henchard. The accidental sale of his wife, Susan, and daughter, Elizabeth-Jane, early in the novel sets off a series of events that culminate in tragedy for Henchard, this coincidence not only drives the plot forward but also serves as a commentary on the unpredictability of life and the fragility of human relationships.

Coincidence in Hardy's narratives serves to highlight the role of fate and chance in shaping human lives. By incorporating coincidences into his stories, Hardy underscores the idea that individuals are often at the mercy of forces beyond their control. However, Hardy also suggests that these coincidences can be transformative, leading characters to new insights about themselves and their place in the world.

Furthermore, coincidence in Hardy's works serves to create a sense of interconnectedness among his characters and their lives. The chance encounters and events that occur throughout his narratives are not random but are part of a larger pattern that reflects the interconnectedness of all things. This interconnectedness reinforces Hardy's themes of fate, determinism, and the complexity of human relationships.

Thomas Hardy's use of coincidence in his narratives adds depth and complexity to his storytelling, underscoring the role of fate and chance in shaping human lives. Through his skillful incorporation of coincidences into his works, Hardy invites readers to contemplate the unpredictable nature of life and the ways in which seemingly random events can have profound consequences.

Thomas Hardy, a prominent figure in English literature, often delves into philosophical and existential themes in his works, particularly concerning the concepts of determinism and chance. This essay explores the philosophical themes related to determinism and chance in Hardy's works, examines the existential questions raised by his portrayal of fate and coincidence, and compares his treatment of these themes with other philosophical works that discuss similar ideas.

Hardy's works often reflect a deterministic worldview, suggesting that human lives are governed by forces beyond their control. Characters in his novels often find themselves trapped in a web of fate, unable to escape their predetermined destinies. For example, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Tess's tragic fate seems to be sealed from the moment she is born into a lower-class family with limited opportunities for advancement. Similarly, in *Jude the Obscure*, Jude's dreams of becoming a scholar are constantly thwarted by circumstances beyond his control, leading to his ultimate downfall.

At the same time, Hardy's works also acknowledge the role of chance in human life. Coincidences and random events often play a significant role in shaping the course of his characters' lives, highlighting the unpredictability of existence. This tension between determinism and chance underscores the complexity of human experience in Hardy's narratives.

Hardy's portrayal of fate and coincidence raises profound existential questions about the nature of human existence. His characters often grapple with the idea of free will versus determinism, questioning whether they have any control over their own lives or if they are merely pawns in a larger cosmic game. This existential angst is exemplified in the character of Michael Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, who wrestles with the idea that his actions are predetermined and that he is powerless to change his fate.

Conclusion:

Furthermore, Hardy's portrayal of fate and coincidence raises questions about the meaning and purpose of life. If human lives are governed by forces beyond their control, what is the point of striving for happiness or success. These questions reflect the existential dilemma faced by many of Hardy's characters and resonate with readers who grapple with similar issues in their own lives. From the above account, it's clear that fate plays a dominant part in the novels of Hardy. Quite often fate acts on the lives of characters in the form of chance. It is no use blaming Hardy for the excessive use of fate and chance in novels for by the very nature of his theme they are essential in this world. In the world of Hardy, the struggle is between man and destiny and the latter is more powerful than former. Moreover, destiny is an unknown force, we do not know how it acts. As a result of this it shows itself in the form of unexpected blows of chance. Thus, considering his philosophy of life, Hardy is justified in the use of fate and chance to such a great extent in his novels. This review paper has provided a glimpse into the multifaceted nature of fate and coincidence in Hardy's literary universe, drawing from a diverse array of secondary sources to illuminate their significance and implications. As we continue to grapple with life's uncertainties, Hardy's timeless meditations on the imperium of fate and coincidence serve as a poignant reminder of the fragility of human existence and the enduring power of storytelling to illuminate the depths of the human soul.

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