

Tess of the d'urbervilles, thomas hardy



**ASSIGN
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Swindells and Hardy wrote their novels over a century apart, yet they both discuss their concern regarding the restrictions of social convention on natural humanity. The societies of the times in which the authors wrote have many contrasts, but both found it necessary to write about the conflict between social and natural law. Hardy was protesting against the way his society was and urged the middle classes; who comprised his audience, to leave their iniquitous ways. Swindells, however, warns the modern society of the late twentieth century what the augmentation of the suppressive forms of social convention, upon natural humanity, would lead to.

Social convention is a restriction upon natural humanity. A good example of this is found in what the vicar in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* told Tess, when she asked the him to give Sorrow a Christian burial: ' Well - I would willingly do so if only we two were concerned. But I must not - for liturgical reasons. ' He could have done so if his decision was based on natural humanity, compassion for her individual circumstances.

However he felt could not do this - ' for liturgical reasons', as the book of common worship instructed: The Office ensuing [the service for the burial of the dead] is not to be used for any that die unbaptised. The formality of the Church's rules did not allow for the response to individual circumstances. The Church's convention is something that Hardy subtly disputes, but he is not undermining the religion, merely disagreeing with the restrictive practices. ' If only (they) two were concerned', his decision needed not to have been concerned with social convention.

However, if he had gone against the liturgy, the disapproval of society would have been great. This is the struggle between the laws of society and nature. Hardy's novel, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, is about a working class girl, of the nineteenth century, who is persistently rebuked by society's judgement, which results in multiple adversities she has to face. *Daz 4 Zoe* is a story of two teenagers who fall in love and fight against the restraints of the social convention they suffer. They are separated not just by social disapproval, but also by physical distance and security measures in place by the totalitarian, Dennison government.

The social contexts of the two novels have major impacts on the language used by the two authors. Hardy was writing for an educated middle class audience of the late nineteenth century. This audience was easily shocked, which forced Hardy to be subtle in descriptions of events, and meant he could not discuss in details the hardships suffered by Tess. Rather than using blunt language, he used figurative accounts and descriptions of the mood and the landscape rather than the actions themselves.

By way of doing this, Hardy almost personified 'Nature' in Tess. Read the answer on Her mood and experiences where respondent to her natural surroundings. When Tess was travelling to Talbothays, Hardy acknowledged the relationship between Tess and the environment: Tess had never before visited this part of the country, and yet she felt akin to the landscape. The environment around Talbothays is described with positive delineations and enthusiastic language, both in the physical landscape and the air around her: It was a typical summer evening in June, the atmosphere being in such delicate equilibrium.

.. eeds whose red an yellow and purple hues formed a polychrome as dazzling as that of cultivated flowers. In Talbothays, Tess ' had never in her recent life been so happy'. This is connected to the fresh and natural environment at the dairy farm.

If this is compared to Flintcomb-Ash, where Tess was suffering from poverty and emotional distress, the land is described as ' a desolate drab', and again the connection is clear between Tess's situation and the landscape. Hardy does this because he feels that a natural environment is the basis of all things right in the world. He felt at home in the natural environment in which he lived and his negativity with a place like Flintcomb-Ashe is his protest against industrialisation. Hardy personifies nature in Tess as a way of showing how society's rules and judgements suppress the nature of righteousness and how nature struggles against the harshness of convention, such as industrialisation.

Hardy uses irony at the very end of the novel as a final remark to show his frustration with social convention. He says " Justice' was done' which shows he does not consider the hanging of Tess to be morally just, but the judicial system demanded so. This is a memorable way to end the novel as the questionable use of ' justice' makes the reader think about whether it was justice or not. This is an effective technique forcing the reader to think back over the course of the book, considering whether Tess, representing natural humanity, was done justice. Swindells wrote Daz 4 Zoe intending it to be read by an audience who would identify with Zoe; a working/middle class teenager of today.

His language then differs greatly to Hardy's, as the social context is so different. Our society is not easily shocked: we have been desensitised. This meant that Swindells was able to use direct descriptions and graphic imagery rather than being forced to use figurative language. His efforts to write shocking occurrences is evident in Zoe's finding of the dead body in Rawhampton: They'd found a dead man and filled his nose, mouth and one ear with twigs and grass stems. This kind of scene is an extreme that Hardy would not have dared use, but is necessary to shock the audience Swindells aims his novel at. Swindells uses unsophisticated language, which is easily understood by a teenage reader.

He also wrote the novel in a diary style so that the appeal would be suitable. He aims his novel at teenagers, as it is the younger generations he wishes to warn about the dangers of the way society could become: young people will forge that future society. If he had written the novel for a middle class well-educated adult, then there would be little point in warning someone about something that they'd have no control over, as they would not be part of it. Tess was capable of speaking two languages; her dialect at home and Standard English outside of the home and 'to people of quality' were very different.

She was educated with the way she spoke which did make her incongruous with her surrounding peers as she had 'passed the Sixth Standard in the National School'. She was educated to understand her situation, but was not educated enough to emancipate herself. Tess's natural tongue was her own dialect, which Hardy uses, again, to show her natural basis. Zoe's language also shows two sides to her; her education in her correct English, but also

her relaxed informality in her colloquial language makes a suitable read for a similar reader.

Zoe's writing is such that a teenager would easily identify with it and would be in fitting with that of a teenage diary. Her language is a complete contrast with Daz's. This is to provide a visual contrast on the page between the young lovers. Daz's diary entries are full of phonetic language, for example 'stansrareeson' and 'grad you ashon', and neologisms, like 'doodies' meaning clothes, showing his lack of education in contrast with Zoe.

Daz's simplistic language and lack of education does allow for some of the most poignant phrases. A touching moment was when Daz saw Zoe as he came out of the tunnel and made a simple error with a well-known phrase: 'troof is stronger than friction, rite? The real phrase is 'truth is stronger than fiction' but ironically, Daz's error reveals a phrase very relevant to the novel. The novel is about their true love overcoming the problems of the two conflicting societies. His accidental phrase has a lot more meaning than he could have imagined.

The language of the subby world is of wide contrast with simple chippy language. The chippy language is made of up simple words like 'fan' meaning helicopter. Where as the subby language is made up of educated rhetoric, especially as far as the government's propaganda is concerned. An example of Dennison propaganda is: 'The Franchise (Income Qualification) Bill was introduced to correct an anomaly whereby those sections of the population which contributed least to society were able to exercise undue influence upon it through misuse of the vote. The Franchise Bill is a more

sophisticated and effective way of brainwashing 'subbies' because it is subtle and full of rhetoric.

This is yet another contrast to point out to the audience the stark differences between places like Rawhampton and Silverdale. Both Daz 4 Zoe and Tess of the d'Urbervilles focus on individuals at odds with their societies. Tess is outcast from conventional society and Daz and Zoe undermine the social rules around them. Both Tess and Zoe are females scrutinised for things out of their control.

In Tess's example, these are offences against her, and in Zoe's case, it is her love for Daz that she cannot control. Both Zoe and Tess are condemned under the law of society. Zoe, however, acts on her instincts and defies convention whereas Tess does not until, perhaps, she kills Alec. This is because feminism is a product of modern society, which Swindells, Zoe and the audience would have acknowledged. Throughout Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Hardy expresses his views of many matters. His dislike of industrialisation, his disagreement with the Church's structure and his ideas regarding the struggle between social and natural law are just some of those he had raised.

Swindells also raises many of his own views with in his novel. The palm tree story included at the beginning of the novel raises the issue as to whether our society would rather hear about pleasant news, about trees being saved, and care about superficial matters rather than face the much more negative concerns with old people dying and similar issues. The use of informal and colloquial language lures the audience into momentarily caring about the

palm trees. The story evokes guilt in the reader as they realise they are responsible for the glut of trivial information filling the media.

Swindells probably dislikes society's fascination with shallow information, which is why the palm tree story is such a contrast with the real issues being raised in the main novel. Although Hardy and Swindells wrote very different novels, their messages regarding the tension between natural and social law are very similar. They both feel that the rigidity of social convention is a restriction upon the necessary natural humanity. Hardy protested against the way that society had so many inflexible rules and judgements, which did not correspond with natural humanity over individual circumstances.

Swindells warns his audience of the deep segregation that can be caused if compassion and natural instincts are ignored and social convention is taken to an extreme level where individuals are no longer recognised and only two forms of people are classed; the valued, and the valueless. Both novels, however, intend to change the way the reader thinks and that social convention is tamed to allow natural humanity to operate within it. Neither states natural humanity is good and social convention is bad. They merely suggest that social convention has more power and overbearance on natural humanity. Both must be allowed to exist for a well developed, just society to occur.