



**Unraveling the Psyche: A Psychoanalytic Examination of Thomas Hardy's  
'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'**

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**Abstract**

Thomas Hardy, an English poet, novelist, and Victorian realist. He wrote many works. His last novels 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' and 'Jude the Obscure' is his finest work. This works challenges of hardships of working class, feminism, Marxism, psychoanalytic. He got popularity from this novel.

This article discovers the impact of psychoanalytic in the novel of 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' by Thomas Hardy. The impacts of psychoanalytic showing culture, society, politics and social situation. The exploration of the novel is subconscious desires, repressed memories and psychological conflicts of the characters. It would be discover how Hardy's portrayal of Tess's experiences, particularly her relationship with Alec D'Urbervilles and Angles Clare, can be analyzed through a psychoanalytic lens to uncover the deeper meaning and psychological insight.

The abstract touches the theme of repression, trauma, power dynamics, and the influence of societal expectations on individual psychology. The aim of this article is to discover the psychoanalytic theme through the characters. In other words it would be say that the characters are generally passes through the impact of psychoanalytic.



**Key Words:** Unraveling, Psyche, Psychoanalytic, Repression, Id, Ego, Superego, Trauma and Repetition, Gender roles and Identity

**Unraveling:** The term indicates explore something in deeply with the intention of understanding complexities or reveal the hidden aspects. It suggests delving into the meaning of psychological depth present in Thomas Hardy's novel, 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' through a psychoanalytic aspect.

**Psyche:** It refers to the human mind, soul, spirit regards as thought, feeling and behaviour. The word "Psyche" refers to the psychological aspects of the characters and themes explore in the novel from a psychoanalytic lens.

**Psychoanalytic:** The term refers to psychological theory. The method developed by Sigmund Freud explores the unconscious mind, early childhood experiences and role of internal conflicts in shaping of personality and behaviour. In literary term the psychoanalytic method involves interpreting characters, themes, narratives through the aspects of Freudian psychology exploring subconscious motives, desire, and conflict.

**Repression:** It analyzes how characters suppress or deny their desires. For instance Tess experiences various traumas repressed memories throughout the novel, such as her rape by Alec and the subsequent social judgment faces by her.

**Id, Ego, Superego:** It identifying the psychological elements with the actions and decisions of the characters. These 3 components are given by Sigmund Freud.

**Trauma and Repetition:** It explores past trauma influence character's present action and relationship. Characters faces situation again and again in life of them. The experiences of Tess could be examined through the psychoanalytic theory, particularly in the term of trauma, repetition and their effects on Tess's psyche.

**Gender Roles and Identity:** It examines societal roles and expectations influences characters sense of self and behaviour.



These key words are provides a framework for delving into the deeper layer of the psyche of the characters and understanding the underlying themes of the novel.

## Introduction

Thomas Hardy born in Higher Bockchampton, Dorset, in England. He died in 11 January, 1928 in Dorset. His works are related to Wessex. He wrote many works. Some of his notable works include 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles', 'Far From the Madding Crowd', 'The Mayor of the Casterbridge', 'Jude the Obscure, and 'The Return of the Native'. He is considered one of the greatest novelists of the Victorian era.

Psychoanalytic theory is given by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). This theory explain human behaviour. He divided the structure of human mind or psyche into two categories:

### 1> 3 Layers

1. Conscious (Upper)
2. Subconscious (Middle)
3. Unconscious (Bottom)

### 2> 3 Components

1. Id
2. Ego
3. Superego

There are elements in the novel that could be analyzes through a psychoanalytic lens.

She practiced ballads privately at odd moments, especially "The break o'the day":

"Arise, arise, arise!

And pick your love as a posy,

All o'the sweetest flowers

That in the garden grow.



The turtle doves and small birds

In every bough a-building,

So early in the May-time

At the break o' the day!" (Tess of the D'Urbervilles, Chapter 49)

These lines by Tess melted the heart of even stone. These simple words of a song express the painful mockery of the aching heart of the singer. It shows the impact of psyche.

### **Tess Subconscious Desires and Conflicts:**

"A strong woman who recklessly through away her strength. She is worse than a weak women who has never had any strength to throw away."

The action and decisions of Tess throughout the novel could be analyzed in terms of subconscious desires, conflicts and motivations. Her relationship with Alec D'Urbervilles, for example, could be seen as a manifestation of her subconscious desires conflict with social moral values and expectations.

### **Symbolism and the Unconscious:**

"It an offense come out of the truth, better is it that the offense come than that the truth be concealed."

Thomas Hardy also explore the term of symbolism in his writing, which can be interpreted as representations of the unconscious mind. For instance, The role of Tess's life be analyzed in terms of symbolism and its impacts shows in the mind of Tess.

### **Tess Confrontation with Alec:**

The dialogues between Tess and Alec express power of struggling, manipulation and sexual tension. This reflect Freudian concept of repression, and the struggle for control.



## **Tess Confession to Angel:**

“Here we suffer grief and pain,

Here we meet to part again,

In Heaven we part no more” (ch.51)

When Tess told about her past to Angel, the dialogues between them reveals her inner turmoil, guilt, and fear of rejection. Angel’s reaction marked by the reflection of his internal conflicts and social conditioning regarding purity and morality.

## **Tess Dialogues with her Parents:**

“When Tess is driven by family poverty to claim kinship with wealthy D’Urbervilles and seek a portion of their family fortune, meeting her cousin Alec proves to be her downfall. A very different man, Angel Clare seems to offer her love and salvation but Tess chooses whether to reveal her past or remain silent in the hope of a peaceful future.”

Tess is always suppressed by society also by her parents. She always sacrifices herself for her family. Even after that her family blames her and always points out her in every situation. The dialogue between Tess and her parents highlights the difference of generation, social pressure, and family dynamics. Her desires exemplify Freudian theme of the Id, Ego and Superego.

## **Angel letter to Tess:**

The letters of Angel to Tess after during those days of their separation reveals the struggle to reconcile his love for her with social norms. These letters explore the inner conflict of Angel.

## **Tess Dreams and Imaginary Conversations:**

“My life looks as if it had been wasted for want of chances! When I see what you know, what you have read and seen and thought, I feel what a nothing I am!”



The dream and imaginary conversations with deceased characters such as her child, symbolize her subconscious desires, fears and trauma. These dialogues are windows of Tess psyche, explore the theme of guilt, and existence.

By these conclusion readers can discover the psychological complexities, motivations, internal struggle of the characters, enrich their understanding of Thomas Hardy's masterpiece.

### **Conclusion:**

The main aim of this research is to identify the psychoanalytic effects in various terms in the novel of Thomas Hardy 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'. Readers find the psychoanalytic impact in various aspects of social and cultural way through the characters of this novel. Characters are felt inner psychological impact and their inner condition express in this novel. All characters face psychoanalytical situation through the condition which they faces in their life.



Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal

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Indexed in: Crossref, ROAD & Google Scholar

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