



SOCIAL REALISM; ITS IMPACT ON ARTHUR MILLER AND T. P. KAILASAM.

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ABSTRACT

Realism as a literary technique and an art is used by so many writers and artists to present things in a realistic way. Realism is a word originated from English which means “factual”, “actual” or true. A way of seeing, accepting and dealing with situations as they really are without being influenced by your emotions or false hopes and a style in art or literature that shows thing and people as they are in real life. The question ‘what is realism?’ has been passing from one generation to another generation without finding proper solution. The concept has changed from time to time becoming complex. Some opine that the words ‘truth’ and ‘nature’ are similar. In this process of analyzing the life of a man, different types of ‘Realism’ come in to existence. Greek dramas are analysed with ‘cosmic realism’, which judges the man’s situation beyond the physical powers of the world.

INTRODUCTION

Social Realism” is the last stage of the kind. It propounds a consciously contradictory concept of the society. The realist ought to describe society as it is but he must also describe it as it should and will be. The writer must be faithful to reality. Social realism became an important art movement during the Great Depression in the United States in 1930’s. American social realism includes the works of such artists as Jacob Lawrence, Grand Wood, Walker Evens, and Arthur Miller among several others. The term dates on a broader scale to the realist movement in French art during the mid 1800’s. Social realism in the 20th century refers back to the works of French artist Gustavo, who used it in his paintings; however, the social realistic style fell out of fashion in 1960’s, but is still influential in thinking and the art of today.

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Arthur Miller richly expresses the themes of social realism in his plays. Arthur Miller in his plays reflects the effects of 1st World War and the Depression in the society. His well known plays *All My Sons*, *Death of a Sales Man*, *The Crucible* express rich social realistic aspects. Both modernist and realists attacked the moral dilemmas in the society.

The concept of Realism of the 19th century Europe was developed in Kannada after the 20th century. We can trace realism in many Kannada fictions. The famous Kannada critic G.S. Amur accepts it, but some critics deny the statement and declare that there is no realism in Kannada literature.

Thyagaraja Paramashiva Kailasam (T.P.Kailasam) is a well known Kannada writer of the 20th century. He is known as the first social dramatist in Kannada literature. Due to his studies and travels in the foreign lands, he is acquainted with different forms of dramas. As a result he starts one act dramas with modern style. T.P. Kailasam has written seventeen social dramas. All of them deal with the common man's every day life as the subjects. His style of writing is peculiar: some readers even may find difficult to read the titles of the plays, for example; *Thaalikattokkooline?* He uses Telugu, Tamil, Urdu with Kannada and English in his plays. It is known as "*Kanglish*" (Kannada and English). According to him he uses the real language of the common man, who uses it in his every day life. So his style of writing is realistic. There is an extreme pathos in some of his plays such as Narasu's death scene (Bhahishkaara). Kailasam makes people to think with his realistic themes as the aim of education is to form a good character but not to stuff the unnecessary things in the mind

Arthur miller and T.P. Kailasam, proved themselves as a great social realistic writers of America and Kannada literature of south India respectively.

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In this process of analyzing the life of a man, different types of 'Realism' come in to existence. Greek dramas are analysed with 'cosmic realism', which judges the man's situation beyond the physical powers of the world.

Psychological realism- believes the truth of the deep mind of a man.

Socialistic realism- analyses in sociological and Marxist point of view.



Magical realism- it does not believe in both physical and metaphysical.

Extreme realism- believes in general, good justice and humanity.

Moderate realism- believes all the goodness in one's mind.

Optimistic realism-denotes the brighter side of the life.

Pessimistic realism- posing only the darker side of the life.

There are many other kinds of realism,

Critical realism

Durational realism

Dynamic realism

External realism

Fantast realism

Formal realism

Ideal realism

Ironic realism

Plastic realism

Romantic realism

Satiric realism

Subjective realism

Visionary realism

Low realism

High realism

Drab realism

Low realism

High realism

Drab realism

Social realism.

Social Realism” is the last stage of the kind. It propounds a consciously contradictory concept of the society. The realist ought to describe society as it is but he must also describe it as it should and will be. The writer must be faithful to reality. The Russian writer L.I. Timofeyer calls it the fulfillment of all the art and literature. Social realism also known as “Socio Realism” is an artistic movement, expressed in the visual and other realist arts, depicts social and racial injustice, economic hardship through unvarnished pictures of life's struggles often depicting working class activities as heroic.

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realism in the 20th century refers back to the works of French artist Gustave, who used it in his paintings; however, the social realistic style fell out of fashion in 1960's, but is still influential in thinking and the art of today.

Many artists who subscribed to social realism were painters with socialist, political views. The movement therefore has some common qualities with the socialist realism used in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc. In certain contexts, socialist realism has been described as a specific branch of social realism.

Social realism is being used in the plays and cinemas. Italian neo-realism movement is known for film makers of social realism. Social realism was also adopted by Hindi films of the 1940's and 1950's. The U.S.A. was one of the last countries to adopt this form of style in cinema. In the field of drama also social realism plays an important role.

Arthur Miller richly expresses the themes of social realism in his plays. He follows Ibsen, Balzac and Zola. We can find various dramatists of the world who employed social realism in their works. Nowadays it is a powerful aspect, pervading all kinds of literary works.

The influence of realism on American literature is profound. After the First World War, American people and the authors among them were left disillusioned by the effects of the war on their society. America needed a literature that would explain what had happened and what was happening to their society. American writers turned to what is now known as modernism. The influence of 19th century realism and naturalism and the truthful representation of American life and people were evident in post World War I modernism. Realism and modernism not only depicted American society accurately and unbiasedly, but also tried to find the solutions brought upon by the suffering caused by the war.

The realistic movements of the late 19th century saw the authors accurately depicting life and its problems. Realists attempted to give comprehensive picture of modern life by presenting the entire picture. Instead of giving one sided view of life they attempted to show the different classes, manners, and stratification of life in America.

The realistic movement evolved as a result of many changes and transitions in American culture. In the late 1800's the United States experienced "swift growth and change" as a result of a changing economy, society and culture due to an influx in the number of immigrants into America. The naturalist movement slowly develops with the most of the ideals as the realists in its attempts to find life's truths. In contrast, Naturalists, extreme realists, see the corrupted side of life and how environment deprives individuals of



responsibility literary naturalism invites writers to examine human beings objectively, as a scientist studies nature.

The rapid changes in American society and America's relation with the rest of the world left America in disarray. After the First World War, American society was divided and left without definition. This demanded for a new age of literary expression to control and document the "isolationist fears", "corruption", and "disenchantment" caused by the war. Authors strived to explain to their generation the social and moral confusions. The World War broke down America's fundamental institutions. War diminished the individual identity and the society as a whole. The human personality was "dwarfed" as much by the dehumanizing magnitude of modern events. Writers such as Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald spearhead the modernistic renaissance by employing realistic and naturalistic techniques.

Arthur Miller in his plays reflects the effects of 1st World War and the Depression in the society. His well known plays *All My Sons*, *Death of a Sales Man*, *The Crucible* express rich social realistic aspects. Both modernist and realists attacked the moral dilemmas in the society. The only difference was that these dilemmas were different. While that realists attempt to give a comprehensive picture of modern life, modernists wish to express the whole experience of modern life. These authors of the realistic and modernistic period have the same goals. So naturally they write using the same ideas, methods, and principles. Realists focus on different literary aspects to detail how American culture is affected by these changes. They portray the different characters shaped by the society and try to convey the good and evil aspects of life. Thematically, both groups of authors convey the good and bad aspects of a changing American society. Both rally for change and both ask for the unification of society, but both still linger more on the presence of corruption in America. Both realists and modernists want to paint an unbiased, accurate picture of society by confronting the problems of the individual and of the society. Realists of late 19th century and modernists of 1920's write alike, but are divided on the basis that their respective societies are so different.

Miller accepts the social realism but at the same time he does not ignore the inner psyche of human mind. He accepts his involvements with the three stylistic modes prevalent in modern drama; the realistic, the expressionistic and the rhetorical. He accepts Ibsen's influence on him, the situation in his plays as in Ibsen's, is never stated but revealed in terms of hard actions. We may observe this in his, 'All m In Miller's plays each of his heroes gets involved in a struggle which results either from his acceptance or rejection of an image of himself. This image grows out of the values and the prejudices of the society he lives in. Joe Keller in *All My Sons* and Willy Loman in *Death of A Salesman* attach themselves to images which



their society has created and called good as they are consenting victims. But John Proctor in *The Crucible* rejects to accept the label that the society tries to force on him. His death at the end of the play is an affirmation of an individual. Proctor's decision to let himself be hanged rather than to confess grows out of Arthur Miller's involvement in the immediate political situation from which *The Crucible* is drawn. In the Mc Carthian era when many writers and performers have come forward to confess their political sins and also name their fellow-sinners. Miller has surprisingly chosen a hero who can say 'no' to such confession.

In *All My Sons*, Joe Keller is ambitious and betrays society. Miller draws up an indictment of the society also as he suggests that it is the pressure for a materialistic society that guides Keller in choosing an anti-social choice. Keller is afraid that he would lose respect if he would admit his guilt to the government that he has supplied faulty cylinders to air force. Keller's agony at being called a 'Murderer' by his neighbours clearly shows the inescapable relation between man and society. Subsidiary themes such as the problem of Chris's marrying Annie and contrasting concepts of Jim and his wife towards his pursuit of medical research are realistically portrayed in the play. They make us to remember the day to day family problems in the society. Joe Keller's confession of his crime sends a good message to the youth in the society. The main theme of *Death of A Salesman* is a conflict between the individual and the society, that is, between man's moral values and the social environment.

The Crucible presents the stresses and strains of a changing society, the play Arthur Miller tries to define the link between Salem, witch-hunt and modern 'McCarthyism' by postulating the 'political inspiration of the devil', so that the 'devil' in the force which opposes the generally accepted view of the good society. To capitalism, communism is the devil and the vice versa, complete with all his old attributes of secret corruption, sexual deviations and unholy fascination.

Arthur Miller's plots are compactly woven and carefully built. But they suffer from spontaneity as he labours hard and takes every care not to allow unnecessary details to creep in. He doesn't mind to sacrifice unity of action to maintain unities of time and place. For him ideas are more important than events and that is why his plots are dominated by ideas and mental states of characters rather than a good story. He avoids or postpones climaxes in his plays. Miller's narrative schemes of *All My Sons*, *Death of A Salesman* and *The Crucible* are alike in spite of his wide-ranging experiments with form. His schemes are based on Ibsen's exhibition of the inescapable causal movement from past action to present reaction. In each play the protagonists hide guilt and they generally have some sins or mistakes to confess.



The concept of social realism is borrowed into Kannada literature from the West. In the convention of small story writers in 1945 at Bangalore, T.N. Shree Kanthaiah discussed the meaning of the word realism as nearest to the truth.

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Kailasam has followed strongly and supported the realism in his dramas with zeal to bring the real social life on the stage. According to him, ‘drama is a mirror and it reflects the society’. He introduces the realism for the first time and awakens the realistic sense in the plays. He releases the Kannada theatre from the clutches of the tradition and establishes a new and realistic theatre. He follows Bertolt Brecht and G.B. Shaw in their historical perspectives. He too tries to analyze the everyday life and the changes in the society from the historical point of view.

T.P. Kailasam has written seventeen social dramas. All of them deal with the common man’s every day life as the subjects. His style of writing is peculiar: some readers even may find difficult to read the titles of the plays, for example; *Thaalikattokkooline?* He uses Telugu, Tamil, Urdu with Kannada and English in his plays. It is known as “*Kanglish*” (Kannada and English). According to him he uses the real language of the common man, who uses it in his every day life. So his style of writing is realistic.

He uses realistic characters in all his plays. He observes people keenly. All his characters are the middle class men and women of south Indian society. Widows Nagamma, Savithramma, Subbamma, Lawyers, Ahoblu, Ranganna, Narasimhaiah, mothers Lakshmiddevamma, Parvathamma, servants Bora, Jameldar, modern ladies Shivadas Iyer, miss Prabhamani, house wives- Saathu, Paathu, Venkamma, children Maadhu, Kittu,



Polikittu, Nagu, Raghu, Mudmani, and barber, vegetable vendor, prostitutes, writer Ramashastry are all types and represent every section of the society.

Kailasam's popularity lies in his humour. Brilliant conversation with pun and rhyming is the major feature of his plays. The dialogues make the audience laugh, for example, Kempe Gowda's stealing sarees, mad man's sending back from school. Some times we trace irony in humourous dialogues. All his plays are blended with rich social realistic qualities which reflect the 18th century south Indian life style.

There is an extreme pathos in some of his plays such as Narasu's death scene (Bhahishkaara). Kailasam makes people to think with his realistic themes as the aim of education is to form a good character but not to stuff the unnecessary things in the mind. As he says "There must be some understanding between the husband and wife to enjoy the happiest life". "Man's passion makes woman a prostitute". "Wise people are cheated by shrewd people" these are the realistic statements which make people think about the deep rooted false systems in the society.

The unique themes of his dramas and qualities of his characters, place Kailasam among the great writers of India. All his characters, themes, and techniques, are all realistic and they place him along with the great realistic writers of the world.

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