

**Tribhuvan University**

**Subordination of Woman in Thomas Hardy's *The Well Beloved***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts in English**

**By**

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**May, 2010**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Mukti Ram Gyawali has completed his thesis entitled "Subordination of Woman in Thomas Hardy's *The Well Beloved*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from November, 2009 to April, 2010 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, I present my gratitude to Professor Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, the former Head of the Central Department of English, for his scholarly guidance.

I am also indebted to all the professors and lectures of Central Department of English for their explicit or implicit coordination and cooperation through scholastic and visionary interpolation.

Moreover, I would like to extend my special thanks to my colleague Mr. Keshab Raj Gnawali for his creative insight with the help of which this research could be possible to get its final shape. I am also thankful to all the friends for their help during the course of this research.

Finally, I am very much grateful to my parents Mr. Keshab Raj Gyawali and Mrs. Bhagbati Gyawali, my brothers and sisters for their continuous inspiration and economic support without which this research would have never come to the final shape.

May 2010

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## **Abstract**

Thomas Hardy's novel *The Well Beloved* discloses the situation and position of women as subordinated 'other' in the patriarchal strata of Victorian ideology. Creating the protagonist Jocelyn Pierston as the male epitome of Victorian patriarchy, who in the name of 'ideality' and 'perfection' rotates from one woman to another guided by patriarchal 'desire'; Hardy, in this novel, presents the social reality of Victorian patriarchy where women are exploited, subjugated and subordinated locating them in the position of margin or the 'other.'

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## I. Introduction

Thomas Hardy's novel *The Well-Beloved* can well be understood as the embodiment of the realistic tenets in terms of the Victorian societal configuration in which the women were subjugated, exploited and subordinated under the construction of male dominated strata of the community. The way Hardy presents the male characters in his thoughtfully provocative novel. *The Well -Beloved*, who rarely see women as individuals and as the embodiment of elusive indefinable aspects which tends to be the crisis of identity of women in Victorian society. Hardy's male characters frequently separate the women they love from their physical reality and elevate them into something ideal to be aspired to. In its examination of Jocelyn Pierston's elusive quest for the physical embodiment of his feminine ideal, it casts a critical eye back over its own author's gallery of female icons and as such is a fitting conclusion to the career of a novelist for whom women were persistent source of inspiration and fantasy in both his life and his art. Placing such male characters of at the centre/heart of interpretation and discussion and the female characters at the nutrients to fulfill the thirst and hunger of male characters, Hardy, in *The Well Beloved* is depicting Victorian stereotypes of patriarchal, subjugation, suppression and exploitation which were prevalent in Victorian societal structure.

Patriarchal social structure undercuts the representation of woman as affirmative speculation and perceivers women as the embodiment of what man lacks which leads towards the subordination, subjugation, exploitation without giving the space of 'center' placing woman as 'the other'. In Hardy's *The Will Beloved*, presentation of the main character Jocelyn Pierston ,the sculptor, as the ideal of patriarchal strata who in his entire life, searches for the 'ideal' woman flitting from woman to woman, subordinates the position of woman in that for him, women are just

the means of consumption by which he tries to get the maximum satisfaction.

Dramatizing such stereotypical strata of the Victorian society, Hardy, in this novel, is sketching the realistic tenets of that period.

A distinguished novelist and poet, Thomas Hardy is one of the central figures in English literature. Initially an architect who had won prizes from the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architectural Association, he became disillusioned and sought another medium for expression. He started to write poems which idealized the rural life which remained unpublished. Afterwards, his first attempt in the form of novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* (1867) was also rejected from the publishers. His two novels *Desperate Remedies* (1871) and *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) were published anonymously.

His dazzling literary career started with the publication of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873). His major works are *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *The Woodlanders* (1887), *Wessex Tale* (1888) and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891).

Nearly, all of Hardy's important novels and stories are set in the agricultural areas or town of Dorset in southwest England near Dorchester, the region Hardy called "Wessex." This was the area in which he grew up in the mid 1800s. In Hardy's time, Dorset was still a rural and unsophisticated area inhabited by rustic and superstitious people.

Hardy may have felt strong links to the past but he was also a writer of his time. Like many Victorian writers, Hardy was troubled by a dwindling of his religious faith. He had carefully read the writings of Charles Darwin and other scientists and had lost some of his belief that a controlling force governed the universe. This loss of

faith is reflected in the bleakness of the landscape in Wessex and the harshness of the fate that folagues many of Hardy's major characters.

Hardy's novels also reflect the Victorian realism. They are filled with real people encountering their own weaknesses and trials. Yet for all their realism, there is also a certain sensational quality in Hardy's novels. Most of his books were serialized in magazines before being published as books. Magazine readers demanded a carefully developed plot and at least one major event, such as crime, murder, seduction, or desertion, in every episode. Hardy was sometimes annoyed by having to "overplot" his books, but he didn't really care that much in long sum. He felt that his novel writing was "mere Journeywork" and not art. He secured his true artistry for his poetry.

Hardy's novels are still popular today largely because of their qualities and themes they deserve harmonizing with modernity. It was these themes that caused much of Hardy's problems with his critics. His works are deeply psychological, filled with misguided love, and closely concerned with the thoughts and feelings of women. All of Hardy's major works deal with unhappy relationships and several with divorce. In his novels, *Tess of the D'Urberuilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, the main characters Tess and Jude are both seduced by the "wrong" mates. Because of her seduction, Tess becomes the victim of sexual double standards and is deserted by a husband whom we might label a "male chauvinist." Jude's ill-fated marriage fails and he contemplates suicide. In *The Return of the Nature*, the protagonist Eustacia Vye drowns or commits suicide as she attempts to rendezvous with her lover. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the principal character Michael Henchard deserts his family and can never quite escape the psychological guilt that plagues him throughout the rest of his life.

As the core nature of his novels suggests, his works reflect his pessimism and sense of tragedy in human life. He wrote forceful studies of life in which his characters are continually defeated in their struggle against physical and social environment, against their own impulses, and against the malevolent caprices of chance.

After all, in all the works Hardy published, he is concerned with not civilization, nor manners but the principle of life itself, invisibly realized in humanity as sex, seen visibly in the world as what we call nature. He is a fatalist, perhaps rather a determinist and he studies the workings of fate or law, in the chief vivifying and disturbing influence of life, women. His view of women is more French than English; it is subtle, a little cruel, not as tolerant as it seems, thoroughly a man's point of view. He sees all that is irresponsible for good and evil in a woman's characters, all that is untrusting shy in her brain and will, all that is alluring in her variability.

Thomas Hardy's last published novel *The Well-Beloved* (1897), is a focused dissection of one man's pursuit of individual fulfillment along two paths: love and art. The hero or the principal character, Jocelyn Pierston, is a sculptors in search of perfection in both body and soul. His life is an obsessive, involuntary chase for the permanent embodiment of the ideal feminine, the well-beloved. He has glimpses of her everywhere - on the streets, in drawing rooms, at railway stations. She has beckoned to him from boyhood, throughout adolescence and manhood, and well into maturity. *The Well-Beloved* seems entwined with his artistic imagination, but at the same time she lives apart from his ambitions as a sculptor: he does not seek a model for his Venus statues or a Pre-Raphadite stunner. Pierston wants something he can hardly identify; the well-beloved is simply a "phenomenon". There is such a mixture of hope and anguish in Pierston's persuit that his wishes almost seem outside of

consciousness or volition, and he often feels cursed by his desires. His life's story- and so, his life's pursuit finally centers upon three generations of women, youthful reincarnation of the original Avice Caro from his native Isle of Slingers, with whom he fell in love at the age of twenty. He loves the daughter of the first, Avice when he is forty, and the granddaughter when he is sixty, but time and life defeat him. Pierston never finds happiness with *The Well Beloved*. Relieved at the extinction of the Well-Beloved and other ideals, he gives up his London studies with its collection of statues, retires as an Academician, and takes up urban planning in the Isle of Slingers.

*The Well-Beloved*, all in all, is the pictorial manifestation of the Victorian ideals constructed under the social panorama of patriarchy. It is because of this patriarchal construction, the place and value of the female is displaced or marginalized as well as trivialized. Those are the men who seek for their own satisfaction placing themselves in the topmost stage of the society undermining the position of women in the society which builds up the poignant and pathetic condition of the females subordinating their identity and existence in the society which *The Well-Beloved* expresses best.

The novel entirely moves around the principal character Jocelyn Pierston and his forty year quest for the incarnation of the ideal woman. This flantom eludes him as it flits from woman to woman-most especially Avice Caro, his sweetest art at twenty, then Avice's daughter Anne Avice, who charms him when he is forty, and finally Avice the third, the granddaughter whom he courts at sixty. But none of these romances reach fruition, and he loses both his artistic abilities and drive and his interest in the old quest. Thus, this novel is the fictional representation of the male dominated sexist ideology of the Victorian society.

Though Hardy classed this work with his "Romances and Fantasies", it has signaled various issues which are serious as well. This novel tries to capture the Victorian ideology through the presentation of the male character cum sculptor Jocelyn Plerston who can be the good example of Victorian male oriented ideology. In such case, this novel's hilarious experimentation has pulled the critical responses in considerable length. Various critics and interpreters have analyzed this novel applying different theoretical modalities and perspectives.

Relating to the desire of the protagonist Jocelyn as the quest for the achievement of the completion, critic and scholar J. Hillis Miller says:

The goal of the desire is to find that something missing, to achieve completion, to fill the gap...The male (Jocelyn) wishes to complete himself or to make up for a lack by joining himself to a beloved of the opposite sex . . . Jocelyn's desire is contradictory because its fulfillment would be his death and so not the fulfillment of desire . . . Between the two desires, the desire to maintain his separateness and so keep a self which is no self and the desire to complete himself and so die as himself . . . (Fiction 167)

According to the interpretation, Hillis Miller sees contradictoriness in the desire of the protagonist Jocelyn regarding its fulfillment which ends in death. He has also argued that Pierston's revelation that the well-beloved is empty, a sign without a referent also reveals his own impotence. The source of his artistic creativity turns out not to be "a positive fecundating power" but an absence. He explicit that Pierston postpones the abandonment of his desire because it would mean his own death.

Addressing this novel from the domain of love and beauty and concluding with the remark that *The Well-Beloved* is love's descent, another critic and scholar Annette Federico further explains:

Both love and beauty in *The Well-Beloved* are imagined as a means to connection or unity with a non-representable source of perfection outside of the experiential world. One question Hardy determinedly confronts in this novel is the desirability of transcendence. In this regard: . . . Hardy was interested in philosophy and spiritual matters, but he was also a student of Darwinian Theory and biological determinism- *The Well-Beloved* displays his awareness of heredity, genealogy and geological time alongside Platonic striving. (289-90)

According to this interpretation, Hardy's determine confrontation in this novel is the desirability of transcendence. Furthermore, this novel shows the glimpses of Darwinian Theory of naturalism and biological determinism with the awareness of heredity, genealogy and geological time. It also, according to this critic, dramatizes ironically a modern intellectual and spiritual situation posing a question on the existence of non-metaphysical idea of transcendence.

In the domain of critical approaches to glance *The Well-Beloved* from the new dimension, another critic and scholar De Angelis Rose poses the issues of love, self-love and the other in this novel. Regarding faultless love as a vanishing ideal, and a landscape of marble, the metamorphic form of limestone which unveils the connection between the erotic and the creative aspects of desire, he further assesses:

In Hardy's novel, the perfected image Jocelyn Pierston creates of his love of and for Avice I shape his love for her daughter Avice-II and granddaughter Avice-III. His love for them is, in fact, wholly

dependent upon the vitalizing power of their remembered predecessor;  
and since, in a sense, the beloved is both present and absent . . .

Jocelyn's primary object of desire is one with whom he can never consummate his love. He is separated both by death and by the epistemological barriers of his idealizing imagination evident in his "chiseling" of his "Well-Beloved." (99)

In this interpretation, De Angelis Rose, sees the protagonist Jocelyn Pierston and his three lovers driven hither and thither in the ever- renewed dance of love forever in the throes of a desire that is beyond consummation. Thus, in the search for perfection i.e. the well-beloved, protagonist Jocelyn Pierston becomes unable to fill- up his desire and ultimately, he shifts his desire from the quest of ideal beloved to build an ideal town at the end.

In light of such critical responses mentioned above from the critic and scholars of various domains of interpretation who had tried to interpret *The Well-Beloved* accordingly, it is worthwhile to mention here that though the novel has been gazed from multiple perspectives, it is still virgin from the perspective of feminism. The Victorian social structure provided subordinate space for the females discarding them as being the part and parcel of the society and placing them as min and privileged position in the composition of the society which the researcher aims to explore with light to Thomas Hardy's novel *The Well-Beloved* in this research paper.

So for as the format of this research paper is concerned, the present research paper has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents the short introduction of the author along with the major thematic aspects of his major works, a brief critical synopsis of the novel *The Well-Beloved*, and critical reviews of this novel

and an introductory outline of the present research itself. This chapter introduces the study area of present research along with the subject matter of research.

The second chapter pays considerable attention onto the explanation of theoretical modality which is to be applied in the research paper. The theoretical modality which the researcher aims to apply is particularly the issues on feminism. since it often concerns onto social and political transformations that address a sense of human existence, which is devoid of sexual biasness incorporating gender equality and freedom in order to explore female role and space at political, cultural and social level of society. Displaying the atrocity, suppression, subjugation and subordination done from the male oriented patriarchal social structure, it seeks independent female identity in the male dominated society. Thus the key notions of the feminist scholars which are relevant according to the spirit of this research will be borrowed in this chapter which paves guideline in order to prove the hypothesis which the researcher has proposed.

Followed by the theoretical modality of the research, in third chapter, the researcher will analyze the text in considerable length from the proposed perspective. While doing so, the researcher will sort out and include some relevant extracts which provides the most striking points to certify the proposed hypothesis as the evidences that the way women are perceived by male characters in Hardy's novel *The Well-Beloved*, it expresses the subordinate position of women in male dominated Victorian society.

The fourth part of this research is the conclusion section of the entire study. On the basis of the textual analysis in chapter three, it will conclude the explanations and arguments put forward in the preceding chapters and show Hardy's presentation of the female characters as the embodiment of Victorian sexist ideology which

culminates the position of women into subordination, margin, exploitation and subjugation.

Still, the novel may have numerous issues to discuss and interpret. But, through this research, a dimension can be added to the field of interpretation of this text because this research aims to understand the novel as the sexist one placing the females into the position of margin "the other" and the embodiment of patriarchal norms and values constructed under Victorian social reality. Thus, this can be a different gaze to view this novel.

## **II. Feminism and the Question of Subordination: An Overview**

Feminism is a school of thought which tries to dismantle the patriarchal social norms and values constructed against the natural law of equality to liberate women. It is an awareness of women's oppression and exploitation in society at the place of work and within the family, and conscious action to change this situation. It is also an awareness of patriarchal control, exploitation and oppression at the material and ideological levels of women's labour, fertility and sexuality, in the family, at the place of work and in society in general, and conscious action by women and men to transform the present situation. It is a massive complaint against patriarchal stereotype. Feminism is, according to Kamala Bhasin and Nighat Said Khan, "a doctrine advocating social and political rights for women, equal to those of men. It is also the body of knowledge, thought and theory that feminist scholars |thinkers| writers have created to challenge patriarchal knowledge and ideology...Feminism is also a discursive process, a process of producing meaning, of subverting representation of gender and creating new representation of womanhood, of identity and the collective self (5). Thus feministic standpoint degenerates the patriarchal logos advocating for the equality, dignity and freedom patriarchy in case of females. It focuses on the physical, economic, political psychological and religious equality and opposes gender roles, stereotypes and discriminations against women based on the assumption that women are passive, weak and physically helpless.

The term "feminism" was first used by the French dramatist Alexander Dumas in 1872 in a pamphlet "L" to designate the emerging movement for women's rights. It gradually emerged to be a worldwide cultural movement to secure a complete equality of women with men in the enjoyment of all human rights-moral, social, religious, political, educational, legal, economic and many others. It studies the dominations of

women in many fields from different perspectives. Therefore, Rosemarie Tong states that feminism:

Is not one, but many, theories or perspectives and that each feminist, theory or perspective attempts to describe women's oppression, to explain its causes and consequences, and to describe strategies for women's liberation. The more skillful a feminist theory can combine description, explanation, and perspective the better that theory is. (1)

Feminism is not only a study of problems but also it seeks its solution and its impact as well. It is a theory based on reason. That's why some critics call it 'feminist science'.

Feminism is an expression of resentment at the unjust treatment imposed upon women. It voices the women's objection to be treated as a doormat or a piece of furniture meant for the convenience of men. Women refuse to be shifted under oppression and restriction and intend to rebel against the hostile environment in which they live. It is a struggle against the hardship and neglect, imposed upon women: "Patriarchy continually exerts forces that undermine women's self confidence and assertiveness, than points to the absence of these qualities as proof that woman are naturally, and therefore correctly, self-effacing and submissive" (Tyson 85).

Feminism struggles against this kind of false creation for the establishment of patriarchal regime. Thus, it is not against the males of society but against their monopoly and dictatorship. It raises question against the long standard dominant, phallogocentric ideologies, patriarchal, attitudes and male interpretation of literature, social science, economics, politics, religion etc.

Moreover, all feminist activities including feminist theory and literary criticism have its ultimate goal to change the world by promoting gender equality. Thus, all feminist activity can be seen as a form of activism. This activism campaigns

on issue such as reproductive right, domestic violence, maternity leave, equal pay, sexual harassment, discrimination and subordination along with sexual violence. The them explored in feminism include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification, subordination, subjugation and under erasure.

Feminism studies women as people who are either oppressed or suppressed or deprived of the freedom of personal expression. All writers who struggle against patriarchy in favor of womanhood are generally considered as feminists. In this relation feminism is also a political theory and practice to break the social bondage of patriarchy. Focusing on this aspect, Toril Moi states: "The word feminist or feminism are political levels indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement" (135).

All the same time, Toril Moi makes clear what feminist criticism is in her book *Feminist Literary Criticism* saying: "feminist criticism, then, is a specific kind of political discourse, critical and theoretical practice, committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism, not simply a concern for gender in literature" (204). She has focused on the nature of feminist criticism which concerns gender differences and likewise its development as theory and its application which are useful to learn social, institutional and personal power relations between the sexes.

The basis of feminist ideology is that rights, privileged states and obligations should not be determined by gender. Feminism, however, is a grass root movement which crosses the class and race boundaries. As culturally specific, it addresses the issues relevant to women of the corresponding society. It focuses on physical equality and opposes the gender roles stereotypes and discrimination against women based on the assumption that women are passive, weak and physically helpless. It rejects the idea that certain characteristics or interests are inherently masculine, which are

positive and superior and that certain characteristics or interests are inherently feminine, which are negative and inferior.

The institutional legacy of feminism as a movement initiated only after post war period in the decade of 1960s when the voices of minorities emerged as movements. In this period suppressed voices got chance to revolt. Earlier also feminists felt that females are in fact made inferior not by nature but by social mechanism. In ancient period women were taken as puppet to amuse males. They said that females lack certain qualities which males possess.

The feminist movement of literary criticism is concerned with the representation of women in literature and position of women in society. The primary aim of the movement is to free women from oppressive restraints especially the cultural restraint of society which fixes the women's identity within narrow boundaries. The main strain of feminist movement strongly refuses the cultural definition of women which attempts to fix women's identity within male dominated canon. Some feminists seek equal status as the male in society in every field. Women also should be given the position of human being equal to male. But there are some other feminists who take males as enemy of their rights, freedom etc. They want their own individual existence and identity not given by male members of society. Some feminists from English speaking countries try to reconstitute the ways of dealing with literature in order to do justice to female points of view, concerns and values. In this context, Lois Tyson states, "Feminist criticism examines the ways in which Literature and other cultural productions reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social and psychological oppression of women" (81).

Most of the feminists have argued that the mainstream thought is biased towards women and they call for change in the varieties of issues of society at social,

economic, political and cultural level. The mainstream thought makes women lack freedom. They have asserted that the patriarchal ideology excludes, marginalizes and trivializes the women and their potentialities. Feminist writing includes feminist voices against the subordination that prevents women from realizing their independent identity. Feminist writing tries to wipe out the ideological oppression of women by men. In this respect, M.H. Abrams states:

The various feminisms, (however) shared certain assumptions and concepts that underlie the diverse ways that individual critics explore the factor of sexual difference and privilege in the production, the form and content, the reception and the critical analysis and evaluation of works of literature. (89)

He thinks all kinds of feminism aim to explore female self in society and in literature as well. Feminist believe, "Western society is pervasively patriarchal" (89). Thus, for Abrams, despite the variances on the perception along with the various philosophical standpoints, feminisms, all in all, agree in the issue of subjugation, subordination, suppression and exploitation done from the patriarchal autonomy marginalizing the role of female as the other with triviality.

In exploring women's space and self, it is said that the origin of revolting voice against patriarchal ideology goes to 17<sup>th</sup> century female critics Mary Wollstonecraft.

As she asserts in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*:

There are many follies, in some degree, peculiar to women: Sins against reason of commission as well as omission: but all flowing from ignorance or prejudice, I shall only point out such as appear to be particularly injurious to their moral character and in animadverting on them. I wish especially to prove that the weakness of mind and body,

which men have endeavored, impelled by various motive to perpetuate, prevents their discharging the peculiar duty of their sex: for when weakness of body will not permit them to suckle their children, and weakness of mind makes them spoil their tempers is women in a natural state. (396)

Wollstonecraft appeals to understand the essence of the discrimination and to realize the potential abilities of women. She blames men as the most responsible factors for women's backwardness. She advocates the repressed condition of women because of the lack of sufficient training and neglecting tendency of the society in educational sectors. Women don't have less potentiality than men. She claims that women should be free to use their own abilities so as to receive as much as opportunities in politics and education as men have been doing.

We find critical blow upon patriarchal structure of the society in women voices raised by Virginia Woolf in her writing. Her *A Room of One's Own* points out women's rage against men which is an outcome of men's subordination and underestimation of women that brings misunderstanding between two sexes. She advocates, "she must shut herself up in-a room in the country to write and been torn a sunder by bitterness and scruples, though her husband was of the kindest and their married life perfection" (819). Woolf's writing assists that women don't have sufficient space to use their own independent competence, rather, women are captured by creating false notion that they are not capable of exploring something remarkable in the society. In *A Room of One's Own*, the "Room" refers freedom of women's identity which women lack. Women don't have a room to express their own feelings rather they are captured in the 'Concentration Camp'. Woolf advocates 'radical changes' that erase suppressed value of the society regarding women "shaped by men"

(817). She imagines the society which exists being of primary and secondary creatures.

For feminists, patriarchy is based primarily upon male violence and of women's sexuality which foregrounds the domestic violence and the sexual abuse of both women and children which is the cutting edge of the patriarchal oppression where many women face male power in its crudest and most aggressive form. In this regard, a prominent 20th century feminist critic Simon de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* says:

As a matter of fact, the privileged position of men comes from the integration of his biologically aggressive role with his social function as leader or matter; it is an account of this social function that the psychological differences take on all their significance. Because man is ruler in the world, he holds that the violence of his desires is a sign of his sovereignty; a man of great erotic capacity is said to be strong, potent- epithets that employ activity and transcendence. But, as warm and frigid, which is to say that she will never manifest other than passive qualities. (397)

Patriarchal society gives all power to the male and weaknesses to the female. In patriarchal social structure, men were taken as rational, active and superior beings whereas women were regarded as inferior, passive and kind. Such type of discrimination compelled women to accept sexual abuses and harassment as well as subordination as natural without objection.

A mark of otherness is one's inability to shape one's psychological, social and cultural identity for Beauvoir as she traces, "In sexuality and maternity women as subject can claim autonomy; but to be the 'true women' she must accept herself as the

other" (1000). Beauvoir accuses men for their belief that transcendence can only be attained by men. Men project women as an inherently demure creature and men as powerful and virile so that latter can achieve transcendence. There is ambivalence in man's nature toward women for at one hand he calls woman a Muse, Goddess or Beatrice and he associates her with demon, death and cruel stepmother beings by phallogocentric social structure. Beauvoir rejects the otherness of women and gives proper reason for equality. The othering mystifies women's qualities and pushes them into isolation. The myth is utilized by men for their own purposeful mission which is a means to look at women as being of luxury to be consumed. The myth is a mirage into which man makes his purposeful valuations. Finally, Beauvoir realizes the bondage obstructing a women's free path so it is difficult for them to accept their status as autonomous individuals and other womanly destiny. Yet, Beauvoir believes that when men realize the situation women will be a full human being, an independent human being.

Advocating women's own independent identity, women's movement has taken its impetus from other different movements raising voice of emancipation. Among those contributing movements civil right movement is main one. As Mary Poovey in *The Difference of Women's Studies: The Example of Literary Criticism* states:

The historical specificity matters because, just as the oppressions generated by the intersection of such determinants of difference vary according to the exact nature of mutual articulation, so too do the opportunities for resistance to those oppressions. Because the women's movement in the United States was able to borrow emancipatory rhetoric from the civil rights movement, women as a group were able

to initiate a new set of claims for "emancipation." (Feminism in the Academy, 151)

Women's movement taking inspiration from civil right movement got a remarkable stand point in attaining the 'emancipation' from all form of oppression done upon women by man's overlooking tendency towards women. Black feminists began to appear in the society questioning the revolt against male centered tendency and asserting women's independent identity as civil rights movement and liberation movement paved way to them to form as autonomous black movement of 1970s in United States. We can find many associations established at that time to ad something to women's movement.

Feminist writing covers a broader scope and embraces variety of aspects in relation of humanity. Despite the fact that its primary focus is on the issue of women, several dimensions have been shown ranging from liberal attitude and the demand equal rights for the sexes to the radical ones voicing out the extreme ideology that tends to theoretically turn the patriarchy up and down. Some thinkers have adopted liberal feminism and some radical one. While along side those other feminist thinkers have developed with their affiliation to certain theoretical backgrounds, they include political feminism, Marxist feminism, post structuralist feminism etc. Yet their aim too calls for women's own identity in society.

Radical feminism, established as a feminist theory and criticism, is an revolutionary stream in respect to women's issues which remains hostile to patriarchy. It posits specificity to womanhood rather than assimilating into the field of activity associated with men. The notion of sexual operation is intimately connected with a strong emphasis on the sisterhood of women. Chris Beasley, in this regard reports Johnson defining it as, "one of the basic tenets of radical feminism is that any women

has more in common with any other women regardless of class, race, age, ethnic groups, nationality than any woman has with any man" ( 54 ). It encourages some degree of separation from men because it recommends putting women first making them a primary concern.

Radical feminists, like Showalter, demand an expression of female sexuality in literature which will burst through the bonds of male logic with a poetic power that defines the tyranny of logocentric meaning. Beside sexual oppression, radical feminists often view other forms of power, for example, unequal power relations within capitalism as derive from patriarchy. They think that at list sexual is the primary oppression. Radical feminist writing aims to counter women's supposedly natural, biological, inferiority and subordination within patriarchal society by asserting their at least equal status in relation to man. After Showalter, this radical notion got nourished by her followers Kate Millet, Carolyn Helburn and Judith Fellerly.

Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* signifies a significant point in feminist writing on literature. The acting out of the roles in the unequal relation of domination and subordination is what Miller calls 'sexual politic.' The book displays the enforcement of power relations with sexual differences in relation to the power mechanism in society as M .H. Abrams traces in his book:

She analyzes the western social arrangement and institution as covert ways of manipulating power so as to establish and perpetuated the dominance of man and subordination of women. In her books she attacks the ale bias in Freud's psychoanalysis and also analyzes selected passage by D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Miller as reveling the ways in which the authors in their fictional fanaticizes,

aggrandize their aggressive phallic serves and degrade women as submissive sexual object. (90)

As these lines refers, Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* shows that it is men who enjoy power to constrain women .Since there is a fact that women have been excluded from the exercise of political power ,the feminist analysis of poetics, therefore is necessary. Millet opposed the gender discrimination and studied institutions in which women have been still underrepresented.

It is with the Millet's *Sexual Politics*, modern feminist writing began and in the earlier phase, the emphasis was often political in the sense that the writer were expressing anger of injustices and were engaged in raising women's political awareness of their oppression by man .They believe that politics has been dominated by masculinity to expresses their identity implicitly or explicitly. The writing asserts the need of avoiding gender discrimination and that of allowing women to take free breath as man do in the society.

Another call for radical changes in women identity comes from French Feminism with prominent figures like Julia Kristeva, Helen Cixius, and Irigary. It concerns feminine writing from the position of women and accept Lacan's account of language \ culture as a masculine order but do not accept his positive affirmation of masculine order as equivalent to civilization or society. The feminist thinkers like Julia Kristeva and Hallen Cixious question the assumption that feminity can only be seen from the point of view of phallic culture. They are radical in nature and make deconstructive reading of society from the prospective of Derridian philosophy of center and margin .In this regard Wilfred L Guerien in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* mention:

French feminist who follow Lacan, particularly Helen Cixious, purpose a utopian place, a primeval female space which is free of symbolic order sex roles. Otherness and the law of the father and in which the self is still linked with what Cixious calls the voice of the mother.

(204)

French feminism disrupts the unities of western discourse pointing to its silences. It is the deconstruction of male centered thinking and takes language as the medium of women's oppression. In her famous essay *The Langh of Medusa* Cixious calls for women to put their "bodies" into their writing. She says, "A women's body with its thousand and one thresholds of ordour . . . , Will make the old single grooved mother tongue never berate with more then one language" (Sheldon 151). This statement amplifies a call for independence and necessity of rejecting the male way of writing.

Another permanent French feminist philosopher, Julia Kristeva describes a mother centered realm of expression as the semiotic as oppressed to the symbolic law of the father. Lacanian critics want to theorize about women's relationship to language and signification. She opposed phallogentrism with images derive from women's corporal experiences. By questioning the overlooked femininity, she prefers to see women to have independent position in realizing necessity of the time.

Likewise, Marxist feminism, another permanent glance of feminism, embraces Marxism and aims to dissert capitalism for the establishment of equality between man and women queering the status-quo of patriarchal autonomy in terms of socio cultural tents which equates women as best structure putting man as superstructure in the hierarchy of society. Karl Mark points out that cosciousness is the product of being which is determined by the socio economic condition of the society. And Marxist feminist thinker fined unequal distribution of capital as the main factor of

undervaluation of women's position in the society. They interpret issues like sexual harassment of female workers at factories and offices, under payment of women, limited employment of women in high income generating position etc. And they define women's position in relation to the socio-political and economic realities. K.K. Ruthuen points out, in this regard that it is Marxism that correlates feminism for both concern a lot about the oppressed condition of women in society. He finds Marx and Engels' Projection of bourgeois and proletariat as equal with husbands and wives respectively. He further asserts "Marx and Engles opine that the first class operation coincides with that of female sex by male, thus legitimating the family equation of husband with the bourgeoisie and wives with the proletariat" (29).

Capitalist social system is main cause of women's operation in society and its way out is to dismantle this capitalist social system. Capitalism gives rise to economic equality, dependency, political confusion and ultimate unhealthy social relation between man and women which is the route causes of women's operation. Marxist feminism can be used to help us understand" How economic forces have been manipulated by patriarchal law and costumes to keep women economically, politically and socially oppressed as an "underclass" (Tyson 93). Thus, one of the primary tasks of Marxist feminism" is to create the kind of world in which women will experience themselves as whole persons, as integrated rather than fermented or splintered beings" (Tong 45). Gender inequality is production of Capitalism and determine by capitalist mode of production.

We live in a, as Philips says, "class society that is also structured by gender, which means that man and women experience class in different ways" (qtd. in Bryson 258). For Marxist feminist, gender operation is class operation and women's subordination is seen as a form of class operation. It believes that women's situation in

society cannot be understood in isolation from its socio economic context. As Marxists see the alienation of labor from work, self, human beings and nature, women are also alienated from sex, self, children and from whole surroundings. In capitalism, labor is related as a commodity which can be bought and sold. Capitalism intensifies alienation and generalizes it throughout all levels of society. The end of alienation requires communism. So, in the society the end of patriarchal domination requires communism. As the classless society emerges, the class discrimination and gender discrimination will be diminished. Then only in such society, women can get their proper place and equality.

Thus Marxist feminism places women as proletariats and man as bourgeois and has proposed to wage a war against capitalism which is the source of oppression of women in the society. It wants disruption of socio political and economic structure constructed under male ideology and aims to configure a new one which will institute equal opportunity to both sexes and economic hierarchy would be dismantled. Marxist feminists have attacked the prevailing capitalistic system of waste and have advocated a revolutionary approach in which the overthrow of capitalism is viewed as the necessary precondition in dismantling the male privilege.

After all, feminism as a broad movement embraces a revolutionary standpoint from which women can prove themselves independent human beings in the male dominated society. All of the feminist thinkers have a belief that patriarchy, being male created discourse and rule to define women, is always beneficial to man. And by realizing this male centered tendency of the society, feminists joined their hands, have begun to resist against male hegemonic limitations and have shown women's inherent potentialities not less powerful than that of man so that a woman lives as a true and independent human being in the society.

Despite the variances polarized under the different theoretical formulations under the rubric of feminism, the very common view in which much feminist thinkers ground themselves is that western civilization is pervasively patriarchal which is conducted in such a way as to subordinate women in familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic domains. Because of the imposition of conscious and unconscious presupposition about male supremacy, females are conditioned to derogate their own sex and to cooperate in their own subordination. It is widely held that while one's sex is determined by anatomy, the prevailing concepts of gender are largely cultural constructs that were generated by the pervasive patriarchal biases of civilization. By this cultural process, females came to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional. In this way, females were and are victimized and subordinated from the every aspect of social strata constructed under the patriarchal construction of society. All in all, along with the scholastic propositions mentioned above given by the scholars of feminism, the ultimate goal of feminist criticism is to increase the understanding of women's experience and promote the appreciation of women's value in the world. Feminist critics generally agree that their goals are to expose patriarchal premises and resulting prejudices, to promote discovery and revolution of literature by women, and to examine social, cultural and psychosexual context of literature and literary criticism. Feminist critics therefore study sexual, social, and political issues once thought to be "outside" the study of literature.

### **III. Women as the Subordinated “Other” in Thomas Hardy’s *The Well Beloved***

Thomas Hardy’s picaresque dramatization of the female characters under the patriarchal Victorian social structuration places Jocelyn Pierston, the Protagonist, at the center of patriarchy, representing the norms, values, and spirit of Victorian idealism and in the other front, his envisioning the females as merely the prerequisites in order to fulfill the male oriented ambitions and desires nurtures the consideration of women as the “other” – submission, surrogate, vulnerable, and marginalized object in *The Well Beloved*. As the title of the novel is a live example to suggest the positional notion of the females in Victorian strata, females in Victorian society were treated as object since men used to commodify them in order to mark their propositions. They had set for the ideal and apt “women” in order to deserve the traits shaped by patriarchal autonomy of Victorian society. In *The Well Beloved*, Hardy’s presentation of female characters cum the beloved ones of Jocelyn Pierston – Avice I, Avice II, Avice III and the women whom he marries at the last- provides the glimpses about the treatment of women as the embodiment of subjugation, subordination, exploitation and victimization that formulates the principle of patriarchal atrocity.

In a male- dominated society, being a man means not being like women. As a result the behavior considered appropriate to each gender becomes severely restricted and polarized. The primary identities of women are relational throughout life and girls from the gender identities of that define them as women easily, securely, and permanently. Since women do not experience gender itself as a problem, social stereotypical attempt to make it a problem for them cause confusion and anxiety. In *The Well Beloved*, Hardy’s Provocation of masculine demarcation provides the inspiration for “the migratory, elusive idealization (Pierston) called his love”

(10). Since the plot of *The Well Beloved* suggests to Hardy by the remark of the sculptor that he had often pursued through the physical gusture that, according to patriarchy, defines the beauty of female, the narrator of *The Well Beloved* describes Pierston's professional beauty-chases' in a similar way.

The study of beauty was his only joy for years onward. In the streets he would observe a face, of a fraction of a face, which seemed to express to a hair's breadth in mutable flesh what he was at that moment wishing to express in durable shape. He would dodge and follow the owner like a detective: in omnibus, in cab, in steamboat, through crowds, into shops, churches theatres, public houses and slums-mostly, when at close quarters, to be disappointed for his pains. (38)

Since the concept of beauty is related to femininity, Pierston's search for the ideal female that harmonizes with the patriarchal dogma of Victorian ideology materializes the existence and identity of women subordinating their position in that society. Beauty, unlike its charismatic standpoint, lies in the eyes of the males who make the perception through observation in Victorian patriarchal social construction. Here, in this excerpt, Pierston's chase for his ideal 'beauty' demarcates the centrality of phallogentrism where the 'beauty' – females are objectified and subordinated placing submissive standpoint with the undercurrents of hierarchical norms, values and policies.

In the first of the three relationships with the Avices occurring in each part of the novel, itself a triad, Pierston and Avice I occupy the respective positions of desiring subject and desired object. Avice I, like her successors, will not only command the competing desire of two rivals, external mediators, but she will also compete against Jocelyn's platonic feminine ideal, the internal mediator. Jocelyn

Pierston returns to his homeland after spending there years in London and other cities of the continent. He visits to the Caro residence, and there he encounters his childhood friend Avice-I, for whom notes the narratorial voice, “his affection ... was rather than of a friend than of a lover” (12 - 13). The Possibility that the feminine ideal constructed under patriarchal autonomy might “take up her abode in the body of Avice Caro” prompts Jocelyn into making a marriage proposal that would give him possession of his internalized artist/mediator’s incarnate beauty. As the narrator sketches the character of Avice Caro:

She was in truth, what is called a ‘nice’ girl; attractive, certainly, but above all things nice- one of the class with whom the risks of matrimony approximate most nearly to zero. Her intelligent eyes, her broad forehead, her thoughtful carriage, ensured one thing, that of all the girls he had known he had never met one with more charming and solid qualities than Avice Caro’s. (13)

It is such patriarchal structuration of the females that harmonizes with Victorian idealism shaped with undercurrents of phallocentrism .Unfortunately, the eventuality of a marriage between them leaves him full of misgiving and without the heightened sense of passion that had prompted the proposal. Marriage, moreover, disrupts the pattern of absence-desire- transformative projection, disillusionment and ensures profession of the beloved, which as a passive condition can bring only physical and spiritual death. Feelings more of “comradeship than love ” returns to Jocelyn after the marriage proposal, but jealousy intercedes on desire’s behalf when Jocelyn sees Avice-1<sup>st</sup> ,as the recital ,where he is one of the many men captivated by her “intelligent eyes”. The threatened mediation of other males briefly rekindles his own interest in Avice 1<sup>st</sup>, but soon this passion dissipates.

The marriage however, never takes place .Pierston leaves the island and Avice 1<sup>st</sup>, creating the void necessarily, albeit unintentionally, continues the dynamic of triangular desire. Jocelyn’s feminine ideal now takes flight; and since Jocelyn can not be faithful to an ephemeral creature, he finds himself incarnating the well-beloved in another woman –Marcia Bencomb. Jocelyn's encounter with Marcia emphasizes the chivalric notions that underscore his romanticism and disguised his essential narcissism. He enjoys coming to the aid of a women in distress and assuming the role of provider, one which was denied to him by his father who “had educated and maintained Jocelyn as an art student in the best schools” and from whom he accepted a “yearly allowance pending the famous days to come” (12). Further the narratorial voice states regarding the issue of Mrs. Becomb:

'My father ' she burst out suddenly, 'is always scolding me for my extravagance .And he has been doing it today more than ever .He said I go shopping in town to simply a diabolical extent , and exceed my allowance'(21).

Furthermore, her statement with Jocelyn Pierston that “I have left my father for ever!” (21) Nurtures the issue of her attempt to revolt against the patriarchal dogma of malecentrism shaped with the colors of Victorian societal structure. Moreover, Marcia’s vulnerability leaves him (Jocelyn Pierston) in total control. Jocelyn enjoys this control since his search for the feminine ideal often leaves him at the mercy of those women who embody it. Jocelyn’s attraction to Mercia, however, is also connected to a more general aspect of his patriarchal desire that thrives on the inaccessibility of the beloved to fill up with the patriarchal ideals of the phalocentric society.

As Jocelyn dwells upon the transmigration of the beloved, he is intrigued by Marcia's family background that places him in a "position to apply the son of the montagues to this daughter of the Capulets" (28). Jocelyn discovered that Marcia's father is one of his father's chief rivals in the stone merchant's business and had once tried taking the business from him. The rivalry between their respective fathers fuels the passion involved in desiring the "forbidden fruit" while intensifying his sense of frustration at not possessing her. A union between them will betray Jocelyn's filial duty to his late father. While the strained familial relations serve as natural barrier to possession, Jocelyn's Victorian sense of masculine duty draws them together, for he realizes the "disparate circumstances" in which the ran away Marcia finds herself and insists on marrying a young woman ever after Somers suggest that he should not. He tells his friend "[p]oor Marcia will be compromised. I'm afraid, if I don't" (40). Jocelyn's chauvanistic surprise at Marcia's "resolve" not to marry him aligns him with other patriarchal male characters in Hardy's novels.

The contrary impulses within Jocelyn's personality are evident in the migratory process of the beloved; Jocelyn's contemplation of Marcia leads him to think that the "well beloved was moving house-had gone over to the wearer of this attire" (31). In his search for the female ideal, Jocelyn disassembles the object of desire according to the norms of patriarchy, only to reassemble her when he sees fit, all he while imagining that he is discovering, not imposing, this perfection unknowingly, Jocelyn assumes the authority of fixing a female identity that corresponds to his conception of what she should be. Very often, the recollection of past beloveds initiates the dismemberment process, for Jocelyn does not focus on the particular woman but rather on her hair, her eyes, or some other body part. This fragmentation of the beloved both fetishizes and depersonalizes her. Such manish

perception of females foregrounds the objectification and commodification giving the status of subordination which is the status-quo of patriarchy. Jocelyn's depersonalization involves listing the beloved's various appearances in which he classifies and qualities each woman according to her physical attributes. This catalogue reinforces the conventional Victorian gender dichotomy between male intellect and female body:

She comes nine times in the course of two or three ensuing years. Four times she masqueraded as a brunette, twice as a pale haired creature, two or three times under completion neither light nor dark. Sometime she was tall ,fine girl, but more often ,I think she preferred to slip in the skin of a lithe airy being ,of no great stature (39)

Moreover, Jocelyn's repeated use of phrase "The Beloved was again embodied" (32) qualities the female as passive receptacle which provides subordinate and submissive stand point in Victorian patriarchal superiority, for she imbibes the males conception of the female ideal. This depersonalization process reflects the circumscription of the female with in the frame work of the body/object and suggests her metaphorical containment as women in a male oriented society. Ironically, at the same time the continued flight of the Beloved underscore the inefficacy of the female body as a means of containment. In Jocelyn behavior, Hardy paradoxically posits a natural order in which nothing ever changes, yet simultaneously insists upon a women's potential for enacting changes that never quite develop.

Looking for reflection of late -Victorian development in the status of women in Hardy's work, Merryn Williams writes that they "found no echo in his fiction" where women always "remain victims " (59) while the female characters in Hardy's Novel do fall victim, literally or figuratively, to the laws of nature and the more of

19<sup>th</sup> century society, Hardy does “echo” the advancements in the status of women indirectly in *The Well Beloved*. Jocelyn's attempted use of the female body as a means of containment and his repeated failures threaten social stability that is based upon the women's status as instrument of male's desire. Perhaps, in posing the contradiction Hardy reflects the confusion of changing sexual templates at the end of the century.

*The Well Beloved* takes the idea of men's idealization of women, and their desire to reproduce them as objects of the masculine imagination, and concentrates it into a tightly organized, almost schematic fictional discourse on the gender implication of the relationship between artists and muse. All of Hardy's appropriatory male characters are implicated in this probing analysis of masculine artistic temperament for, as Jocelyn Pierston's painter friend Alfred Somers reassures him: “you are like other men only rather worse” (31). In this examination of Jocelyn Pierston's elusive quest for the physical embodiment of his feminine ideal, it cast a critical eye back over its own author's gallery of female icons and such is a fitting conclusion to the career of novelist for whom women were a persistent source of fantasy in both his life and his art.

Thomas Hardy's speculation of Jocelyn Pierston as a man in retreat from the ‘new’ and all its manifestations in the bourgeois urban society of London epitomizes the Victorian nobility colored with the supremacy of patriarchy. His birth place, the Isle of Slingers, is deeply pasteurized where Pierston chooses to represent his unattainable ideal in the form of female body, but though his ‘Aphrodites’ ‘Astartes’ ‘Freyjas’ ‘Junos’ ‘Lilliths’ ‘Minervas’ and ‘Psyches’ are popular with the general public, they fell to ‘come alive’ for their creator. In short, my assertion of the point here is that with the glorification of femininity along with the attributes of goddesses

idiosyncratic patriarchy intense to exploit, subjugate and sub-ordinate the females that germinates the status quo of males centered dogma.

Pierston's artistic frustrations are a metaphor for the frustration in his erotic life. Just as he seeks to shape his aesthetic ideal in stone .So he turns to an indigenous artisan family- the Caros- to provide him with an embodiment of his "well beloved" that migratory , elusive idealization he called his Love , who ,ever since his boyhood, had fitted from human shell to human shell an indefinite number of times(10).

However Avice Caro, is at first, as much a disappointment to him as his statues because Pierston's awareness of her sexuality arrests him at the level of the physical and prevents him from achieving a 'true' consummation with the spiritual beauty that she represents. Avice becomes 'the earthly realization of his formless desire' only after death has rendered her physically inaccessible. The impossibility of consummating this desire, signified by his fantasy of her body lead out 'under the young pale moon', ensures its constancy and leads him back to his native Isle to commune with the timeless essence of his dead fiancée. His retreat to the Platonic 'Real' necessitates the rejection of the material 'reality,' of the sexually experienced Miss Pine Avon who had briefly succeeded Marcia Bencomb, as a transient manifestation of the 'well beloved'. He claims that in his infatuation for Avice "flesh was absent altogether; it was loved rarefied and refined to its highest attar" (57). By comparison with the spiritualized dead women, the living one grows proportionately fleshier. "She seemed to grow material a superficies of flash and bone merely, a person of line and surfaces; she was a language in living cipher- no more" (55).

Pierston attempts to embody Avice' spirit in her daughter Ann. He imprisons her in his gaze- spying oh her through her cottage window- and even succeeded in remaining her Avice against her will. He justifies his obsession with this young

washer women by concluding that which the Caro family might not provide him with an exact manifestation of his well Beloved- that ‘individual nature which would exactly, ideally supplement his imperfect one and round with it the perfect whole’ they possessed the ‘materials for her making.’ ‘It was as if the Caros had found the clay but not the potter’ (76). The name ‘Caro’ is significant the fact that it is one of only half a dozen surnames on the Island makes it generic. At the same time, it suggests the contradictory nature of this particular aesthetic conception of the feminine. Caro is Latin for flesh and also suggest the Latin ‘Carus’- dear or Beloved and ‘Caritas’ with its specifically spiritual connotation.

In various relationships that are formed Jocelyn’s search for Beloved, each new Beloved most compete against either his disembodied famine ideal or the original Avice for whom he bears a necrophilic love. More important, Jocelyn’s chief mediator is his own artistic self, the artist who shapes and possesses the feminine ideal in cold marble. Jocelyn’s art work becomes the medium through which he displays the privileged part the internalized mediator plays in his life: “Jocelyn throws into plastic creation that ever- bubbling spring of emotion which . . . , will surge upwards and ruin all but the greatest man. It is probably owing to this . . . that he was successful in his art” (50). Later, the narrator notes, “He had lately been trying his artiest hand again on the Deas’s from in every conceivable phase and mood. He had become a one –part man –a presenter of her only” (63). Since both the feminine ideal that Jocelyn creates for women to simultaneously emulates and complete against and his artistic self are products of his own imaginative faculties, those can be speculated as the epitome of the Victorian status quo color with the dominance of patriarchy where even in the supplement of ideal women i.e. art. Jocelyn, Pireston, seeks the feminine perfection that is desired under the undercurrents of patriarchal ideology. As

such, Jocelyn and his mediator i.e. the art will never come into any physical conflict with each other since they are the by product of patriarchy; and therefore, there is never any open rivalry established between the two. Rather, Jocelyn's, the lover labours in frustration against the success of the artist-mediator within him without ever comprehending the nature of this psychic competition. Jocelyn's "ephemeral fancies"(55) do pose a clearly established problem for the beloved /object. The beloved must compete first with the ideal whose perfection she can never rival ,and second, with the dead predecessor she can not hope to eclipse while alive, therefore fostering the continuity of the desire which thrives on the impossibility of possession or erotic resolution.

The problems Jocelyn's beloved female faced are typified in his relationship with Miss Mrs. Pine-Avon, a woman that encounters twenty years after his failed relationship with Avicel and Marcia. He meets her at the home of Lady Channelcliffe, where, as the narrator notes, he "was suddenly seized with the presentiment .Its gist was that he might be going to reencounter the Well Beloved" (56).

Mrs. Pine –Avon must compete, first with Jocelyn's feminine ideal which, as he informs his host, he "can not describe . . . not even her complexion or dress" and later, with the crystallized image of the dead Avicel I (57). Mrs. Pine-Avon's dilemma is even more complicated, however, for she must create an identity for herself that suits Jocelyn's purposes by sublimating her own desires and guessing at his .If a unified self depends on there being no discrepancy between image and self image, then Jocelyn's ideal undermines Mrs-Pine –Avon's sense of self, for she must reflect an image that privileges someone else's desires and places her in a position of subordination. Mrs. Pine-Avon must submit to Jocelyn's authoritative determination

of who and what she is; She must allow his agency to determine hers. In succumbing to his influence, she encourages Jocelyn's preoccupation with narcissistic self-gratification at the expense of the beloved's human needs.

Since patriarchal construction considers beloved as goddess, mother, mistress, sister, mirroring counterpart, all in one, the lover's wraith in a changed sex-idealization of women –it is evident in the person of Avice II in *The Well Beloved*. She is “in the pursuit of impossible ideal”, as a surprised Jocelyn observes, “Just as he had been himself doing for the last twenty years.” Avice II describes the process as such:

I get tired of my lovers as soon as I get to know them well. What I see in one young man for a while soon leaves him and goes into another yonder, and I follow, and what I admire fades out of him and springs up somewhere else, and so I follow on, and never fix to one. (103)

Despite the nobility of Victorianism particularly in terms of ruling patriarchy, Avice II's revolt for freedom profligates a sense of generating consciousness of women about their location in the society. As in the given excerpt where Avice II locates her freedom in order to choose her lover, feminine attempt to understand their self has been implanted to which the patriarchal response is not good. For example when Jocelyn says to Avice II, “Where have you been?” he said, with almost angered concerned on his face. ‘You ought not to have been absent more ten minutes’ (127) .Here, the sense of fanatical patriarchy is prevalent since under the assumption of created rules from the patriarchal subjugatory patriarchy, Pierston attempts to subordinate Avice II. He further asserts:

‘Oh, Avice, Avice, you must not go out like this! Don’t you know that I am responsible for your safety? I am your –well, guardian, in fact,

and am bound by law and morals, and I don't know what all, to deliver you upto your native island without a scratch or blemish. And yet you indulge in such a midnight vagary as this! (127)

This practice of patriarchy deserves in the name of law and morality to place female characters within the limitations of general principles encapsulated with the ideological signation. With such moral principles which are only for the sake of males in the society, patriarchal social practice delimits the standard of women placing them in the marginal and subordinated position equating them with the "other"

The narcissistic tendencies that determine Jocelyn's object choice also influence Avice II's and their kinship in seeking lovers they can not possess establishes them as mirror images of one another. Avice II's self- sufficiency and inaccessibility stem, in part, from her loving herself more than any other, and this merely intensified Joicelyn's desire for her. Avice II becomes "the essence and epitome of all that is desirable in this existence" (108), especially after Joicelyn realizes that he has a rival for her affections, a man younger than he who can do more than just intellectualize his emotions. Jocelyn comes to this realization when he sees "the mouth of some hulking fellow . . . , upon hers, which he himself hardly ventured to look at" (109). Joicelyn 's desire for possession increases with the object /beloved's inaccessibility, and Avice-2<sup>nd</sup>'s own desire for the young man follows the same course. She becomes the female counter image of Jocelyn .Assuming the position of "subject," he seeks a young man to embody her masculine ideal, and she tries to gain possession of the young man who has intensified her passion in the same way she has intensified Jocelyan's-by eluding possession. Jocelyn emerges from this relationship 'with a feeling of impotence' that often ensues when the subject fails to gain possession of the desired object. Here, in this point, Avice II's attempt to make a free

'choice' regarding the masculine ideal gives the sense that despite the orthodox strata of Victorian patriarchy, a kind of consciousness regarding the position of women in society had been generated. In other words, through the depiction of the character Avicé II who searches for the young man who befits herself, Hardy, in this novel, attempts to raise the voice against Victorian societal autocracy, exploitation, subjugation, subordination, and trivialization done from the malpractice of patriarchy to females.

Despite the pervasive feeling of impotence, Jocelyn Pierston goes on to dream the ideal relationship so that he undergoes repeatedly searching for the ideal beloved woman including the last because Jocelyn, according to the Victorian patriarchy, is the outcome of the ideal society about the male. He finally marries Marcia Bencomb but tells her "I have no love to give . . . . But such friendship as I am capable of is yours till the end" (204). This admission denotes his physical and emotional failure as a lover, but it does not suggest an absence of erotic desire within his love, merely the failure to act upon it- "It was not the flesh; he had never knelt low to that. Not a woman in the world had been wrecked by him, though he had been impassioned by so many" (191). Jocelyn never acts upon the desire he feels; and while he provides shelter for both Marcia and Avicé II at his London home, instead of assuming the position of lover, he becomes the father-figure, strong and competent, displacing the image of his own father in his mind, freeing himself from the domination of a parental figure, and establishing a kind of incest barrier to erotic contact. A fear of submission stemming from Jocelyn's financial dependence on his father may have affected his attitude toward women and prompted the parental, and therefore platonic, behavior toward them. In becoming the father-figure, Joicelyn frees himself momentarily, from the feelings of inadequacy that plague him, but, more significantly, the parent-child

relationship that Jocelyn initiates becomes just another feature in the object –choice and suppression of the erotic component in his relationships. However, I consider this situation just as the experimentation of Jocelyn Pireston towards the females. His parental attitudes towards the female characters again places the strata of women within the undercurrents of patriarchy idealized by the Victorian social reality where females were subordinated and subjugated in this or that way.

The desire that conditions Jocelyn's objective choice throughout the novel becomes even more prominent when he returns to Avice II and her daughter Avice III, "A curious closeness between them had been produced in his imagination by the discovery that she was passing her life within the house of his own childhood. Her similar surname . . ., added to the identity of domicile" (144). The shared Pireston surname and home renews the various connections with and interests in the beloved as goddess, mother, wife, and sister. The scenario creates a situation that would restore him to a time of pre-Oedipal rivalries when he enjoyed a conflict-free environment with his own mother and re-establishes the lost harmony with the mother that leads to a never ending search for satisfaction. In such search for satisfaction which is equated with completion, Pireston goes on to select among the females that harmonizes with his prerequisites or premises for his 'ideal' that places females as being the object of co-modification. In this regard, *The Well Beloved* is paralyzed signation to portray the condition of women in the texture of Victorian nobility.

During the conversation with Avice II, Jocelyn informs her about his passion which originated in an ideal and exists in her as the memory of Avice I; and in the very next movement, the appearance of Avice III, who seemingly crystallizes as he gives an artist's description of her, displaces her as the possible beloved—"Warm friendship, indeed, he felt for her (Avice III); but whatever that might have done

towards the insaturation of a former dream was now hopelessly barred by the rivalry of the thing itself in the guise of the lineal successor” (147). If Jocelyn seeks in the beloved what he desires in himself, then Avice III comes closest, sharing his surname, his home and his room, and becoming, through Avice II's own sculpturing of her persona, the essence of Pierston's desired feminine ideal—“she was somewhat like her mother, whom he had loved in the flesh, but she had the soul of her grandmother, whom he had loved in the spirit” (170). As the narratorial voice observes, “His wraith in a changed sex had suddenly looked over the horizon at him” (150). In marrying Avice III, Jocelyn would achieve both of his infantile love objects in two women—Avice III represents the feminine image of his perfected self, and Avice II, formerly a narcissistic self-reflection, becomes the beloved mother figure. Indeed, he refers to Avice II as “our mother” when asking Avice III about her health (175).

Faced with the threat of disillusionment as he realizes the discrepancy in their ages, Jocelyn transforms Avice III and their relationship into a fairy-tale romance—Cinderella revisited, lost shoe, Fairy Godmother, and all, where he can play Prince Charming and Fairy Godmother, exchanging the latter role with Avice II, and “make her comparatively rich . . . , and . . . , indulge her every whim” (154). Even with such mystical idealization, sense of patriarchy prevails in that it is patriarchy which equates females with Goddess and angel and at the same time, with whores. In this mystical realm, Avice II, once called an “elf” and a “witch” by Jocelyn (148), performs her magic and transforms her daughter into the women of Jocelyn's dreams. Jocelyn for his part, plays the role of patriarchal hero by freeing Avice III's foot from a rock as the evening tide roars to shore. In the realm of fantasy, Jocelyn can transcend the effects of time that has aged him, something that he tries to do in the real world by keeping

Avice III from seeing him in full light-“Pierston ,who fancied he had won the younger Avice’s interest, at least, by the part he had played upon the rocks the week before, had a dread of encountering her in full light” (156). The fanciful transformation intensifies her desirability even as it creates the possibility of unrequited love that will prompt Jocelyn to become more involved in every aspect of Avice III, s life and, in so doing, reveal to him, the inevitability of his failure. “Upon the whole,” the narratorial voice notes, “he was not without abodement that it would be folly to press an” (160). Jocelyn, however, is a slave to his passion and masochistic in his pursuit of the beloved.

Jocelyn Pireston’s masochistic with regard to his quest for the idealized beloved is nothing but construction of ideological strata of Victorian patriarchy. Since piratical ideology undercuts the positional notion of the females in the societal as well as personal strata with sublimated status, Jocelyn forgets himself and just searches for the feminine ideal with in the limitations of ‘truth’ created by the patriarchal autonomy. While Avice II's deathbed request that Avice III and Jocelyn marry leads him to envision success, the very same forces that make him passion’s slave determine his failure. Such desire’s of Avice II is characterized by the submissive mentality of the females in that society. Avice III's “visibly pale” face and “scared look” upon seeing Jocelyn in daylight heighten his sense of inadequacy and forced him into revealing himself (166). Here, we can find a kind refusal of patriarchy though in gestures by Avice III. He hopes, however, that the revelation will validate the self he consciously recognizes when she accepts him for the person he thinks he is. While his perception of the situation is “more lucid”, Jocelyn is “blind” to the consequences of his actions which will simultaneously undermines his chances for marriage and created the void necessary for the continuous pursuit of the beloved.

Avicé III's response ironically comments on his own conception of the beloved that has characterized his pursuit –“I thought” she says, “that what you looked you were” (168). This is, in my opinion, a significant slap against the dominance of patriarchy colored with the cult of subordination.

Jocelyn finds himself setting up house with Avicé III but acting once again more like a doting father “indulging her every whim” than an amorous lover (172). Avicé III underscores her own perfection of him as parent, and “stand-in” Fairy Godmother, when she says, “Mother being an invalid, you are in her place” (177). Ironically, her statement emasculates him. Perhaps, she recognizes in him the female form that he has been seeking in life but has failed to recognize in himself. By promoting the union between her daughter and Jocelyn, Avicé II reinforces nineteenth century discourse that figures marriage in terms of financial stability and class mobility and defines the female as dependent upon the male. Avicé III, however, does not see marriage as a merger, having internalized the emerging middle class values regarding love and marriage. Moreover, education had allowed her some measure of economic freedom and has served as the impetus for self realization, choosing self - fulfillment over filial duty .She signals a feminine unwillingness to self -sacrificial offering which patriarchy does not consider in affirmative way.

Avicé III's behavior betrays the existence of a would-be lover and intensifies Jocelyn’s jealous desire for possession –“[H]e resolved to make the most of having her under his influence” (173). In his haste for the lost harmony with the past, Jocelyn sets an earlier date for the marriage; but Avicé III upholds the primacy of her own desires. On the eve of the marriage, she goes to meet Henri Leverre and becomes his wife, leaving Jocelyn in the same predicament in which he had left her grandmother Avicé I forty years before and bringing him full circle in the cycle of desire- “Don’t

blame her,” Pierston says, "She didn't make the circumstances . . . It was how I served her grandmother" (185). This ultimate self realization of Jocelyn Pierston provides the sense of awareness of patriarchy about its own frailty to envision women as subordinated commodified “other” in the society who don't have any passion, emotion sentiment and overall ,the freedom of rationality and “choice.” Further, Avice III's own choice of her life partner objecting the dogmatic standpoint of Victorian ideological signation of patriarchy challenges its autonomy.

Avice III's elopement extinguishes the cycle of Jocelyn's desire and leaves him desiring only oblivion-“He desired to sleep away his tendencies” (191); and while an old apparition that may rekindle the passion of desire reappears in the form of Marcia Bencomb, he insists on having “lived a day too long”. In his despair, Jocelyn continues playing the only role in which he has been successful- the father- figure- by providing Avice III with a dowry and making her, as he says, “a good match” for Henri (195). Jocelyn's emotional trauma transforms itself into a physical one that leaves him wavering between life and death; and when he revives, Jocelyn finds him in a “mental equilibrium and physical calm” that characterizes the absence of desire, for desire demands the possibility of passionate activity (197).

In light of such textual speculations it is worthwhile to mention that Thomas Hardy's novel *The Well Beloved* provides the realistic tenets in order to understand the Victorian social reality. In which females are treated as submissive, subjugated and subordinated because of the practice of patriarchy. Since in Victorian period, the condition of women was not good because at that time women were not considered to be in the position of human beings so that they were placed in the margin of social structure. This novel is such picturioration of exploitation, eroticism, subordination, subjugation as well as marginalization to females from patriarchal social standard and

on the other front, it provides the glimpses of optimism depicting the female characters (some) as conscious about their situation who within that social constraints search for the autonomous “choice”, marked with individuality challenging the autonomy of patriarchy.

Above all, Hardy's *The Well Beloved* depicts women as the subordinated “other” under patriarchy, there is no value judgment regarding the issues of women. Women are considered to be merely “object” of male desire which males intend to fulfill as Jocelyn Pierston does in the novel. Despite its least affirmation regarding the position and provisional egalitarianism of the females, the novel dominantly speculates the Victorian social reality particularly marked with the undercurrents of fanatical patriarchal ideology which places males at the supreme position whereas females are placed in the margin as the “other”. Thus, this novel is the epitome of feminine subordination from the spirit of patriarchy in terms of sex and sexuality.

## Chapter IV

### Conclusion

Thomas Hardy's novel, *The Well Beloved* profligates the situation of women in Victorian patriarchal society where females are exploited, subordinated and undermined. Hardy's presentation of male character Jocelyn Pierston as the epitome of patriarchal subjugative practice of Victorian society proliferates the issue of subversion of females as he goes on to search for the perfect beloved throughout his life. Being the role model of Victorian society in terms of law, order and morality, Jocelyn Pierston follows them, in order to fill up his 'desire' for the ideal beloved. Since the concept of 'ideal' is also shaped with the undercurrents of patriarchy, there is no space for the freedom and autonomy of females in Victorian society which Hardy depicts in his novel *The Well Beloved*.

Patriarchy defines itself in relation to the supremacy of males in the society. In patriarchal practice, there is no need to speculate the status of males as ideal one. Because of such representation, patriarchy undercuts the egalitarian standpoint to view women in the society placing them as the subordinated 'object' or the 'other'. Such marginalization of women is inherent tenet of malpractice of patriarchy evident in *The Well Beloved* because it depicts the ego of masculinity in the name of 'desire' or 'imagination' of 'ideal' and 'perfection' searching for that domain in women.

*The Well Beloved* is a focused dissection of one man's pursuit of individual fulfillment colored with the norms, values and perceptions of patriarchy, along two paths: love and art. The protagonist Jocelyn Pierston, is a sculptor in search of perfection in both body and soul. His life is an obsessive, involuntary chase for the permanent embodiment of the ideal feminine, the well-beloved which obviously sets the submissive position of women in that patriarchal society. He has glimpses of her

everywhere- on the streets, in drawing rooms, at railway stations. She has beckoned to him from boyhood, throughout adolescence and young manhood, and well into maturity. *The Well Beloved* seems entwined with his artistic imagination, but at the same time she lives apart from his ambitions as a sculptor; he does not seek a model for his Venus statues. Pierston wants something he can hardly identify; the well – beloved is simply a “phenomenon.” There is such a mixture of hope and anguish in Pierston’s pursuit that his wishes almost seem outside of consciousness or volition, and he often feels cursed by his desires. His life’s pursuit finally centers upon three generations of women, youthful reincarnations of the original Avice Caro from his native Isle of Slingers, with whom he fell in love at the age of twenty. He loves the daughter of the first Avice when he is forty, and the granddaughter when he is sixty.

All in all, Jocelyn Pierston’s necrophilic desire and his swinging towards various women during his life along with the three generations of Avice Caros in the name of searching for perfection, ideality and aptness in would-be beloveds serves as the genesis of patriarchy it promulgates the subordinate and subjugative standard of women in the undercurrents of Victorian social reality. Depicting such societal scenario, Thomas Hardy in *The Well Beloved* discloses the male directed structuration where females are treated as the ‘object’ of male ego and desire being in the position of margin or the “other.”

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