

CHAPTER ONE

Hardy and His Portrayal of Female Characters

1.1 Hardy's Life and Works

Thomas Hardy, a Victorian novelist and poet, was born in Higher Bockhampton, Stinsford, Dorset, on 2 June 1840, as the first child of Thomas and Jemima Hardy. His father was a master-mason and a violinist. His mother enjoyed reading and relating all the folk songs and legend of the region. Hardy spent his childhood with his parents pleasantly. He owed much to his parents and their rural background, inheriting from his father a love for music, from his mother a love for reading, and from both, strength of personality. Between his parents, Hardy gained all the interests that would later appear in his novels and his own life, his love for architecture and music his interest in the lifestyle of the country and his passion for literature.

In 1848, Hardy entered the newly opened Stinsford National School, and then to Dorchester British school. In 1856, he was made a disciple to John Hicks, an ecclesiastical architect in Dorchester. He continued his own reading, encouraged by the Dorset poet William Barnes. Hardy was also encouraged by Horace Moule, the brilliant son of a vicar, to whose friendship, he owed much intellectual excitements. He continued to live at home and, in the life of the small rural community, he found refreshment and strength.

At the age of seventeen, Hardy began to write verse and essays. As advised by his friend Moule, he decided not to give up architecture. In 1862, Hardy went to London to look for a work. There, he was employed as an assistant to Arthur Bloomfield. Although, uncertain whether literature or architecture should be his life's work worked hard at his profession.

In March 1865, his first prose work 'How I Built myself a House' was published in *Chambers' Journal*. Feeling lonely and depressed, he became ill, and in 1867 he returned to Dorset, working again for John Hicks and at Weymouth for the architect Crickmay, who took over business after Hick's death. During 1867/68, he wrote a satiric story titled *The Poor Man and the Lady*. It was read by George Meredith, a major writer of the period who asked Hardy not to publish it and suggested to give up satire and write well-plotted novels. The manuscript was rewritten but never published. According to Meredith's advice, Hardy wrote a novel in 1870 which was published in 1871 under the title *Desperate Remedies*, which was only a modest success. In 1872, his next novel *Under the Greenwood Tree* and in 1873, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* were published.

Hardy married Emma Lavinia Gifford in 1874. His first great successful novel *Far From the Madding Crowd* was published in the same year. At first, their marriage was happy but later, it deteriorated. Emma became the victim of delusions. She openly prided herself more upon being an arch-deacon's niece than upon being married to Hardy. She considered herself socially superior to her husband. Her public behavior towards Hardy became insulting. She even tried to stop the publication of *Jude the Obscure*, which she thought to be immoral. Hardy did not repent on his marriage and did not try to get rid of his wife, but the scars can be seen in his works. In 1896, Hardy announced that he would not write another novel as long as he lived. He kept his words. In 1910, he was awarded the Order of Merit and honorary doctorates were awarded by the universities.

Mrs. Emma Hardy died unexpectedly in 1912. Hardy was with her at the time of her death. Emma never regained consciousness after a quarrel which had occurred earlier by an unlucky chance. The feeling of remorse and grief led Hardy to write

some of the best love poems, recapturing the moods of joy and desire which he and his wife had experienced in their first years of marriage. Two years after Emma's death, Hardy married a charming and sympathetic woman, named Florence Dugdale. Although she was much younger than Hardy, their domestic life became peaceful and orderly.

Hardy's principal works are as follows:

A. Novels

<i>Desperate Remedies</i>	1871
<i>Under the Greenwood Tree</i>	1872
<i>A Pair of Blue Eyes</i>	1873
<i>Far From the Madding Crowd</i>	1874
<i>The Hand of Ethelberta</i>	1876
<i>The Return of the Native</i>	1878
<i>The Trumpet Major</i>	1880
<i>A Laodicean</i>	1881
<i>Two on a Tower</i>	1882
<i>The Mayor of Casterbridge</i>	1886
<i>The Woodlanders</i>	1887
<i>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</i>	1891
<i>The well –Beloved</i>	1892
<i>Jude the Obscure</i>	1895

B. Volumes of Short Stories

<i>Wessex Tales</i>	1888
<i>A Group of Noble Dames</i>	1891
<i>Life's Little Ironies</i>	1894

A Changed Man 1913

C. Poetry

Wessex Poems 1898

Poem of the Past and Present 1901

Satires of Circumstance 1914

Moments of Vision 1917

Far Phantasies Songs and Trifles 1925

D. Epic Drama

The Dynasts (3 volumes) 1904-1908

The First World War spoiled Hardy's newly found tranquility. His visit to the German and the English wounded soldiers, lying a few hundred yards apart in two Dorchester hospitals, affected him deeply. Alert and courteous, he was interested in everything around him. He became himself a beloved part of the Wessex he had delineated. Hardy died on 11th January, 1928. His dead body was buried in Westminster Abbey, but in consideration of his deep affection for his native Wessex and the peculiar inspiration it gave him, his heart, in a separate casket, was buried in his parish churchyard. His death was felt as a great loss and he was mourned as the last of the great Victorians.

1.2 Hardy as a Novelist

The first major step of Hardy, as a novelist, was the establishment of the region, which he called "Wessex". Nearly all of his novels are set in the agricultural areas or towns of Dorset near Dorchester, the region, Hardy called Wessex. Therefore, he is called a great regional novelist. Wessex was the area in which he grew up in the mid 1800s. He got ample opportunities round his native village. His country world was his education. The scenes and sights of nature which he observed early in the life

were never forgotten. It is this limited region, which forms the scenic background to each of his "Wessex novels". The same physical features - hills and dales, rivers, pastures and meadows, woodlands and heaths appear and reappear in his all works. This imparts to his works a kind of scenic continuity and a touch of realism. Every event in his novel takes place within this locality. The description of Mellstock village in *Under the Greenwood Tree* is so realistic that many have taken it to be an exact reproduction of the Dorset countryside. Similarly, the description of Casterbridge is an exact reproduction of the town Dorset. The dreary and desolate atmosphere of Flintcomb - Ash farm in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is exactly the same as that of real place.

Thomas Hardy knew every details of the life and custom of Wessex rustics: the farmers, the woodcutters, the trussers, the cider makers, the shepherd, the cobblers, the dairy persons etc. Tess Durbeyfield is a dairymaid in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Michael Henchard is a hay trusser in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Reuban is a local tranter in *Under the Greenwood Tree*. His characters are deliberately subjected to his inexorable plots and those plots to cosmic irony. The result is that the characters thus created become interesting and remarkable. Therefore, Hardy is often portrayed as the novelist of memorable characters. Tess, Bathsheba, Eustacia, Sue and Jude are a few to mention here. These characters play the central role in Hardy's fictional works and their predominant presence makes them central and major text in themselves. His rustic characters are among his artistic success. They reflect the spirit of the place, they are soaked in tradition of primitive class, rooted in soil. They are as eternal as woods, fields and heaths. Another notable feature of Hardy's characters is that all his tragic heroes or heroines are taken from the common people. Before Hardy, there was the practice of Aristotle's theory that the

tragic hero must be a man of high rank. Most of the writers used to follow this theory.

But Hardy's tragic heroes or heroines are common people : Tess a milk-maid, daughter of a haggler; Jude Fawley, stonemason, sometimes baker's assistant; Gabriel Oak, shepherd; Sue Bridehead, school teacher; Michael Henchard, hay - trusser etc.

Hardy is the creator of fate in his novels. His characters suffer from it. W.D. Howells

Writes:

I do not know how instinctively or how voluntarily he [Hardy] has appeared to own inherent superstition of fate; which used to be a religion; but I am sure that in the world where his hapless people have their being, there is not only no providence, but there is fate alone; and the environment is such that character itself cannot avail against it.

(Kirk and Kirk, 152)

Furthermore, Howells says, "He [Hardy] is the sport of fate but he is never otherwise than sublime; he suffers more for others than for himself" (Kirk and Kirk, 152).

Every writer is a product of an age in which he is born and bred, in which he works and creates. He can not escape from the influences of his environment, social, cultural, political and intellectual movements. Readers can not understand his works without understanding the times in which he lived and wrote. This is more so in the case of novel which reflect the time spirit to a much greater extent than the other at forms. It depicts the social condition and the various problems that are of the great interest to the people composing that society. The age in which Hardy lived was in a state of great turmoil. It was the period of advance in many areas like science, industry, education, religion, art etc. The problems created by these advances occupied deep thought in the mind of Victorian writers. In poetry, in the serious essay and particularly in the novel, the Victorians excelled. There was a fusion in each and

every aspect of Victorian English society. There was the class between the old and new ideas. It was a disturbing age for a sensitive mind. The transformation of English society into novelty was intolerable for the conventional people. It was an age of transformation. David Cecil explains the situation of transition:

Eighteenth century rationalism had united with the new romantic spirit of rebellion against convention to shake the fundamental basis of belief, religious, social, political which the people of the old England had nauseatingly accented. Since the beginning of the century leaders of thought were more often than not unorthodox . . . the middle of the century it was further disturbed by the higher criticism of the Bible and Darwinian theory of evolution .(21)

The evolutionary theories of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871) and Herbert Spencer's *Man Versus the State* (1884) completely revolutionized the contemporary views about man and society. Faith in the biblical view of creation was shaken, and was replaced by the Darwinian theory of evolution - struggle for existence and survival of the fittest. Then the new social and political currents fostered by great thinkers also contributed largely towards this mighty change of thought .Hardy, as a native, could not remain aloof from these influences. His keen and sensitive mind grasped the different problems of his contemporary society which are vividly drawn in his novels. In course of writing more than a dozen novels, Hardy created tremendous range of observations regarding the experience and the predicament of the time. Malcolm Bradbury mentions, "Hardy started off in a familiar world of culture, nature and British history and turned it into drama, metaphor and crisis, making his Wessex not only a large regional landscape but a primal scene, a place of nature and culture, of eternity and social change"(35).

Hardy has pictured all the turbulences of Victorian impact in his novels. He presents unsophisticated simple society which has been destroyed by the impact of rapid progress of industrialization and modernization. The domination of modern industrialization over unsophisticated society causes a clash and the result becomes invariably tragic for the simple rural life in his novels. Talking about Hardy and his countryside, David Cecil mentions:

As a country man, he [Hardy] belonged to the world that was passing. That rural England, which was hallowed for him by every tie of childish sentiment, was becoming to crumble before his eyes. Everyday he noticed that old habits were discontinued; that stories and songs were being forgotten; that families established for years in a place were leaving it. (22)

Hardy dedicated himself and his work to study the old province of Wessex. The heart of Hardy's Wessex is the country of Dorsetshire. It was here that he was born, bred up and settled in life. It was here that he produced the best of his works. He had acquired knowledge of this region. He was permeated with its scents and substances, with its scenes and sights. He has described the physical features of his Wessex with great accuracy and realism. He has immortalized the land of Wessex, which is living, breathing reality in his novels. Edmund Gosse mentions:

In choosing North Wessex as the scene of a novel, Hardy willfully deprives himself of a great element of his strength where there are no prehistoric monuments, no ancient buildings and immemorial woodlands In Berkshire the change which is coming over England so rapidly, the resignation of the old dreamy elements of beauty has proceeded further than anywhere else - in Wessex. Pastoral loveliness

is to be discovered only here and there, while in Dorsetshire it still remains the master element. All this combines to lessen the physical charm of *Jude the Obscure* to those who then turn from it in memory to *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *The Return of the Native*. (Cox, 264)

Regarding his themes, Hardy selected tragic themes for his novels. His novels are questioning about life. He constantly attacks accepted beliefs. Along with beauty, Hardy was more impressed from tragic pathos of humanity. Hardy presents unhappy moods of his characters in his novels. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is a powerful tragedy based on the fate of a poor peasant girl. *Under the Greenwood Tree* depicts the problematic, tragic, decayed picture of rural society. *Far From the Madding Crowd* is a somber book which invites serious reflection. *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *The Woodlanders* are the example of tragic novels. Similarly, *Jude the Obscure* is another powerful tragic novel. Although his novel present somber and gloom mood of life and the world we live in, it is not his intention to show the pessimistic view of life. He simply unfolds the reality which embraces pleasure and pain, failure and success, progress and hindress. He presents his impression of life in a detached and objective manner. M.H. Abrams in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* vol.5 writes, "Hardy himself denied that he was a pessimist calling himself "meliorist", i.e. one who believes that the world may be made better by human effort. But there is little sign of "meliorism" in his most important novels or his lyric poetry" (1739).

The use of local dialect, in which Hardy was well versed, and through which all his characters express themselves, gives his work a touch of realism. Not only this, he also knew the Wessex rustics suggested more through his movement than through

his words. His eyes did not leave to portray dancing, singing and drinking as their favorite recreation. Whenever they have leisure time, they assemble and pass their time in dancing, singing, drinking and in idle gossips. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Tess takes part in May – Day dance named "club- walking". In *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the villagers assemble at William Dewy to celebrate merry Christmas and indulge in drinking. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the rustics gather at the 'Three Mariners', drink and comment on the events of the day. Eustacia dances with Wildieve in *The Return of the Native*. Hardy's power of description is much admirable. His description of the scenes and sights, characters and their traits are so vivid that readers feel that they have visited those places and met those characters in reality. In this context, John Peck writes, "The first point is that to a very great extent, Hardy is a visual novelist. He paints the scenes and we as readers are asked to interpret what we see" (41).

Hardy has attempted to preserve a fairly true record of the vanishing life of the Wessex setting in his novels because when he wrote the series of Wessex novels, the Wessex life in England was in the process of great change. For him, Wessex has become the book of history which his discerning sight reads as other men read the newspaper. He has raised the Wessex novels into higher level. Wessex scenes and sights are made a part of universal nature as a whole. Wessex heaths and woodlands have an epic grandeur and his principal characters have the greatness of epic heroes and heroines.

Hardy has never been an over rapid producer except for a short period early in his life. His first novel *Desperate Remedies* anonymously appeared in 1871. It created no great excitement in the novel reading world. A year later, still anonymously appeared *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872). *A Pair of Blues Eyes* (1873) was the

first novel in which author put his name. It attracted many reader's attention. It convinced the professional tasters of fiction that a new and capable teller of Wessex stories has arisen in the galaxy of English fiction in late Victorian age. However, his first great successful novel was *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) which established him as one of the great novelists of the Victorian age.

Hardy's novels are still popular today because of his qualities. He has great and individual style. He has the rare power of saying exactly what he wants to say in clear, strong and charming language. His narrative is straightforward. He does not disregard chronology or logical sequence of events. His form is conventional, but as far as his matter is concerned, he is entirely a modern. He has wonderful power of describing and interpreting inanimate nature. His all characters are human beings with common weakness and virtue. These qualities made Hardy to occupy an important place in the history of English novel. Joseph Warren Beach writes:

Hardy's greatness lies, more than anything else, in the association of events with setting in which they occur. There has never been a novelist so sensitive to impression of sight and hearing, one who renders them with so much precision and at the same time with such regard for the total aesthetic effect of the scene or object rendered its harmonious relation to the emotions involved. The appeal is three fold : to our sense of reality; to our sense of beauty; and to our sympathetic emotions; and such a combination, so rare if not in fiction, is what gives Hardy his superiority over many novelists with greater endowments in other directions .(141)

For the greatness of Hardy as a great novelist, Edmund Blunden in his book *Thomas Hardy* writes, “It is chance to remind the public that Thomas Hardy is now the one living figure of fulfilled genius in English literature” (140).

1.3 Hardy’s Portrayal of Female Characters

Thomas Hardy’s “Wessex novels” portray different types of female characters. His female characters stand out clear and distinct from one another. He shows a great power of differentiation in portraying them. Indeed, it would not be wrong to call Hardy a specialist in portraying women characters. In the female personality, we can find Hardy’s understanding of human nature. About Hardy’s female characters, Louis Cazamian comments:

The women of Hardy are closer to the instinctive stage, more elementary, as it were, in good or evil; he has wanted to make them either the tools of life force or the victims, easily overcome, of a cruel fate rendered heavier by the sensibility of their hearts. (1248)

This present section of the research deals with five major female characters taken from his masterpieces: *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *Far From the Madding crowd*, *Jude the Obscure* and *The Return of the Native*.

Among Hardy’s female characters, Tess Durbeyfield claims the foremost attention, not only by the reason of popularity, but more especially in that she is distinguished by the label of “a pure woman”. She is strictly moral in her ideas and her conduct. Her thoughts, her desires, her behaviour are unimpeachable from the moral point of view. Moreover, her sense of disgrace and her remorse are infinite. Her conscience is sensitive. In short, morally and mentally she is stainless; even during the later period of her dissipation with Alec, her mind is drugged and dead with weariness, pain and despair, and is therefore guiltless. Irving Howe highlights the

character of Tess by mentioning, “Tess remains a figure of harmony – between herself and her role, between nature and culture. A victim of civilization . . . Tess is one of the greatest triumphs of civilization: a natural girl” (103).

Apart from her extraordinary beauty, grace and vitality, she has mental qualities of a rare and delightful kind. She is sensitive, impressionable, poetic and heroic. Her long endurance of her suffering makes her sublime. She shows perfect nobility and generosity of sentiment, both in her attitude towards her simple rivals at the Flintcomb-Ash farm and in her splendid faith in Angel Clare. Tess remains most lovable of Hardy’s heroines. But Michael Millgate, a biographer and critic of Hardy mentions, “Hardy is entirely ambiguous in handling Tess’s ultimate responsibility for her most decisive acts – the sexual surrender to Alec, the failure to confess to Angel, the second surrender to Alec and the murder because he nowhere suggests that Tess is right to do these things” (280).

Elizabeth- Jane is another female character of great interest. She is the daughter of sailor Richard Newson and Susan Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. She is the embodiment of a proper young woman. She does not at once catch the eye of the readers but a longer acquaintance with her reveals her fascination. Elizabeth – Jane becomes a more interesting and more fully realized character as the story progresses. As the only person in the novel who grows and changes, she works very hard at educating herself academically and socially. She is always trying to improve herself. At the beginning she may seem to be a prig or a small town girl, but she grows into a gentle, kind- hearted woman. She never becomes cynical. She can even forgive Henchard for his lies to her. She is also the only character who seems to express warm feelings, even love towards others. She touches all the other main characters in the novel. First as a child, then friend and later, wife. Her personality

develops, first under suffering and later with her marriage to Donald Farfrae. Her only lapse from virtue is her unkind dismissal of the hopefully returning Michael Henchard.

The character of Bathsheba Everdene in *Far From The Madding Crowd* turns on her marriage with Sergeant Troy. Bathsheba is a sane, strong, successful woman. But she is at once attracted, and without much difficulty wooed and won by Troy whom anybody would know to be a scoundrel merely by seeing him. Troy's behaviour at his very first meeting with Bathsheba is offensive but, as it proceeds from an admiration of her beauty and charm, she condones it. Furthermore, she yields to the ultimate folly of jealousy. She confesses to Gabriel Oak that she had married Troy because he had told her that he had met a woman more beautiful than she. Yet, Bathsheba is fine character. We can easily imagine that, having been through her experience of pain and suffering, she develops into a mature woman fit to be the worthy mate of Gabriel Oak. Hardy feels so enthusiastic about her that he compares her brain with Elizabeth and spirit with Mary Stuart. *New Quarterly Magazine*, October 1879 mentions:

Bathsheba Everdene is an unlike Elfride Swancourt a rustic version of what is essentially the same woman allows her to be. She has the same restless vanity, the same disposition to yield to tyranny and underrate devotion ; at moments, the same tenderness; but nature and education have made her more hardy in mind as well as body, and she has a desire for independence which renders her lapses into subjection piquant and often pathetic. (qtd. in Cox, 65/66)

Another great female creation of Hardy is Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*. The most distinctive and interesting element in this woman's nature is a certain

sexlessness which shows itself in a desire for marriage without physical sex- union. Jude calls her a bodiless creature, with very little animal passion in her, to which she rejects. She is a self – centered woman wanting more than she is willing to give. She is intelligent but her knowledge seems fashionable and her use of knowledge is shallow. She is outspoken but afraid of her emotions and desires. She may be regarded as an intellectual woman, as distinguished from non –intellectual types like Tess. Anyway, Sue is sensitive, often perverse; she is alive with emotions and acts on lightning impulses. Louis Cazamian writes, ". . . the character of Sue a deeply studied and prophetic portrait of a girl in whom the conflict between brain and instinct is endowed with the unstable charm of complexity" (1251).

Eustacia Vye in *The Return of the Native* is another major female character created by Hardy. The contrast between Eustacia and Sue is that Hardy had sought to portray two extremes of female nature – the first, in whom spirit governs leaving flesh to play a subsidiary part; the second, whose flesh dominates her soul and who experiences intense passions. Eustacia is of the second type. A rich sensuousness is her dominant characteristic which makes her conspicuous among Hardy's women. Her sensuous nature is incapable of thought. Every act of hers is the instant product of impetuous desire. She has no guide except emotion and animal desire.

In this way, Hardy presents his female characters having different traits and characteristics. At the same time, it would not be fair to Hardy to say that he has only heroines and no heroes or that his women put the men in the shade. His Wessex novels present a critical investigation of male and female characters from the points of view of interest, significance, morality etc. He tries to present almost balance picture between males and females though there is a slight dipping of the scale towards the side of female characters. Hardy's estimate of woman is high, but it is conditioned

and qualified by his keen observation of the realities of life. He makes female characters beautiful, interesting, fascinating and gives them great parts to play. But he can not help it if fate treats them cruelly.

CHAPTER TWO

Survey of Feminist Movement

2.1 Introduction

Feminist movement, often called feminism, is a theoretical discourse that attempts to describe, explain and analyze the condition of women's lives from past to the present. It advocates for women's rights based on the belief of equality of sexes. Feminism seeks equal rights for women giving them equal status with men and freedom to decide their own careers and life patterns. All women writers who struggle against patriarchy in favour of womanhood are generally called feminists. Kolmar and Bartkowski write:

Feminist theories examine and try to explain the causes and conditions in which men are more powerful and men's production, ideas and activities are seen as having greater value and higher status than women's. For many feminist theorists this comes to mean examining and explaining all structures of domination, whether based on gender, race, class, age, sexuality, nation or some other differences. (I)

Feminist movement, no doubt, is the result of male domination over female. Though there is no difference between two sexes in the process of their biological creation and birth, men have always taken themselves superior to women and treated them as weak and ineffectual beings from the beginning of the human civilization. While on defining feminism Raman Selden shows the poor status of woman by writing, "In pre-medallion days, the men regarded their sperm as the active seeds which give form to the awaiting ovum which lacks identity till it receives the male impression" (134).

Traditionally, women were subordinated to men since the origin of human beings. Bible also defines that the creation of Eve was out of Adam's rib ! When Adam knew that God created Eve out of his rib, he said:

This is now bone of my bones,
and flesh of my flesh,
She shall be called 'woman'
For she was taken out of man.

The Bible (Genesis 3:14)

Because of such notion, women are segregated from their birth to death. Regarding this, Aristotle said, "The female is a female by the virtue of certain lack of qualities and we should regard the female nature as afflicted with a natural defectiveness" (qtd. in Schnier 8).

In the ancient Greek law, women were not treated equally as men. They had secondary role in religion and government. They had no control over family, children and private property. Everything used to belong to their husbands. Their duty was to serve family and children remaining under the society's laws. Women were under the severe constraints of law and watched. Their lives remained as perpetual minor under the control of guardians. The existence of slaves and women was same. In this context, Aristotle says, "Inferiority of slaves and women was innate. It could not be cured" (qtd. in Doren 44).

During the Middle Ages (1350-1500), Christian ideology dominated. Everything was defined by the Christian ideology including culture, religion and tradition. But it contributed no little to the oppression of women. Marriage was held to be an institution demanding mutual fidelity that expected women's subordination which was described in Old and New Testament by St. Paul. According to him, "For

the husband is the head of wife, even as Christ is the head of the church

Therefore as the church is the subject unto Christ, so let the wife to be their own husband in everything” (qtd in Wayne 58).

In the Renaissance time, all ancient arts, cultures, traditions and laws were revived with the classical thoughts of Christianity which played dominant role to guide women. Churches, Bible and Holy scriptures were important to judge women’s position in the society and family. The demand for morality and chastity constrained women and narrowed their existence. Men were directly related to God. To follow the Christian virtues of chastity, humility, piety and patience under suffering were necessary virtues of women. Regarding women’s oppression, feminist Beverly Jones says:

We identify the agent of our oppression as men. Male supremacy is the oldest, most basic form of domination. All other forms of exploitation and oppression (racism, capitalism, imperialism) are extension of male supremacy; men dominate women, a few men dominate rest. All power structures throughout the history have been male- dominated and male oriented. Men have controlled all political, economic and cultural institutions backed up this power to keep women in an inferior position. All men receive economic, sexual and psychological benefit from the male supremacy. All men are oppressors and have oppressed women. (qtd. in Schnier 128).

Women had no legal status as men in Renaissance time. The code denied women’s access to masculine position, depriving them from all civil capacities, kept them, while unmarried under the guardianship of father, who sent into the convent if she

failed to marry. If she married, she and her property would be completely under the authority of her husband. Depicting women's social position, Helen Wilcox writes:

Women severely constrained in social and legal position. In law, women had no status what so ever but only daughter, wives of widows or men; according to the church, they were to be silent and listen to the advice of husbands or pastors; in religious and cultural patterns of thought, they were daughter of Eve with a continuing proneness to temptation and disproportionate burden of guilty .(4)

In the same way, women had same predicament in the eighteenth century as in earlier era. They lacked professional position in the society. They were treated as servants in home and outside. The young girls got only sketchy education under strict supervision with motives of civilizing value. Education they received was likely to be a carefully restricted version of curriculum. In the profession, peasant women took considerable part in the labor firm and burden of maternity added them to fatigue. They were married off or sent to convent without consultation. The rising middle class imposed strict morality upon wives. But women of the world led extremely like licentious lives and upper middle class was contaminated by such example. But the legal position of women crucially affected depending on whether she was single or married. According to Vivine Jones, “. . . a married woman had no separate legal identity, her existence was figuratively ‘covered’ subsumed into that of her husband” (92). They had no private property and control over family. In public law, there was no place for them except on throne. Thus they sat neither in the council nor in the House of Commons or House of Lords. Neither did they serve on vote nor juries.

Women remained confined in the Victorian society also. They tried to escape from the network of patriarchal hegemony. Since early eighteenth century, they were

still entrapped inside it. The era was marked by the male- chauvinism and female consciousness. However women's freedom, individuality and rights all were under the grip of male's power. Victorian period dominated with male either on politics or social. Though, the queen Victoria throned, had no any decision making power. Prince Albert was more active than the queen in cases of decision making. She was proud with her husband thinking he was the kindest, best man of the world. Not only the queen, but also Victorian women were just the best nurses, mothers, wives and daughters.

Through the centuries patriarchy has determined and shaped almost entirely the nature and quality of our society, its values and norms, the place and image of women within it and the relation between the sexes in which men are valued above women. In Sheila Ruth's words, men are always overpowered with the sense of "I am a man, she is woman. I am strong, she is weak. I am tough, she is tender. I am self – sufficient, she is needful" (54). Women for centuries were considered weak. So they could not come to the ranks of men and at the same time they could not occupy equal status in society. This notion that women are physically weak by nature was universally accepted in patriarchal society and it had become a means of controlling women in every sphere: social, political and even literary. Focusing this aspect Selden writes:

Women have been made inferior and oppression has been compounded by men's belief that women are inferior by nature. However, the abstract notion of equality receives lip service but demands for real equality will usually be resisted. (135)

In patriarchal society, from the primitive age, women are regarded as non-entity and their opinions and expressions, however important and rational, were

ignored. They were rarely asked for their views and opinions concerning their experiences. If women expressed their views on any social or other aspects, they were ridiculed or looked down with contempt by men and they were always considered different from men. So is the case in most societies because they are pitied by men who have always doubted women's intelligence and capability. Women are made economically and biologically inert as they are interpreted and controlled by male dominated institution and culture that limit them as housewives. A woman to be recognized in association with men's appellation, is the most deplorable person. In our society, according to Beauvoir, "She is sex-absolute sex no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to men, not she with reference to her" (qtd. in Sydnie 138).

Varieties of hypothesis regarding women were formed and the origins and causes of women's subordination right from the beginning of civilization were never definitely explained. Women were expected to serve men physically, taking care of their homes, property, clothing, childrens; economically doing countless jobs in which women were paid less or not paid at all; sexually as wives, mistresses or prostitutes. Since woman did all the household works, which men did not wish to do, men were free to spend their time on socially valued activities for which they received all kinds of material and psychological rewards. In this way, men always tried to put women under their control. It was said that male was always superior to female. Though women occupied the half of the world, they were not equally treated as men.

In this way, women, for centuries lived miserable lives. But this miserable condition did not remain the same because women became conscious of their secondary situation and began to question it. They become quite aware of the fact that they were made weaker, dependent and powerless by men. They were paid less

attention in comparison to male. They did not get the opportunity to go to school and were not given systematic training. They were forced to occupy a secondary place in the society. They felt that they have failed to occupy the place of dignity with free and independent existence. They became aware of the fact that their intellectual and professional qualities were imprisoned within the four walls of their house. Realizing the miserable condition of women, Mary Wollstonecraft first raised her voice in support of women's emancipation as well as women's education. She was the first feminist writer to raise voice in favour of women and with her publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) feminism gained momentum. Through this work, she challenged the idea that women exist only to please men and proposed that women should receive the same opportunities as men in education, work and politics. She wrote:

My own sex, I hope will excuse me, if I treat them like rational creatures, instead of flattering their fascinating graces, and viewing them as if they were in a state of perpetual childhood, unable to stand alone. I earnestly wish . . . to persuade women to endeavor to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of testes are almost synonymous epithets of weakness (qtd. in Sydie 143)

A Vindication of the Rights of Woman became one of the greatest works of feminism which argued that the educational system of that time deliberately trained women to be frivolous and incapable. Wollstonecraft argued that an educational system that allowed girls the same advantage as boys would result in women who would be not only exceptional wives and mothers but also capable workers in many professions.

Moreover, industrial revolution brought great upheaval in England and laid great impact on women's lives. By the time of industrial revolution, a wave of self awareness among women emerged. They began to claim political freedom, the right to work as well as the right to equality and freedom. Women now acquired a sense of sin: a sin of hearing the injustice of men. And there emerged a number of women writers such as Jane Austen, George Eliot and Bronte sisters who were pioneers of the Victorian age. We can find some aspects of feminism in their writings. Though during the Victorian period, feminism was not introduced as it developed today, there we can see some aspect of feminism in the writings of Austen, Eliot and Bronte sisters. They contributed a lot to protest against the condition and status of women in their contemporary society. The awareness of women's need for equality with men crystallized in the movement to obtain women suffrage rather than in any fundamental or far – reaching reevaluation of women's social status, roles and their place in the economy. Education brought awareness among women. As a result, more able women came to the forefront. The wave of awareness among women enabled them to start working for the freedom of women.

In the later nineteenth century, a few women began to work in the professions, and women as a whole achieved the right to vote in the first half of the twentieth century, but still there were distinct limits on women's participation in the workplace, as well as a set of prevailing notions that tended to confine women to their traditional roles as wives, mothers and homemakers. Meanwhile, the economic conditions underlying women's inferior or dependent status were changing as women had fewer children and as household appliances freed them from many of the labor- intensive chores formerly associated with housekeeping. The growth of the service sector in the western world's economics in the decades following The Second World War also

helped to create new types of jobs that could be done as well by women as men. All these factors made growing numbers of women aware that society's traditional notions of them had failed to change as rapidly as women's actual living conditions had.

In the twentieth century, feminists like Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Elaine Showalter, Toril Moi, Kate Millet, etc played great roles to develop feminist issues. An important precursor of modern feminism, Virginia Woolf's role in the modern context is a significant one. Her *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and other important essays and fictions on women authors and on cultural, economic and educational disabilities raised woman's awareness against what she called the 'patriarchal' society that have hindered or prevented women from realizing their productive and creative possibilities. In her book *A Room of One's Own*, she has explored the situation of women writers. Her central argument is that women do not have money and a room of her own, that is they do not have separate space for writing. She clearly depicts the condition of women and claims for social reform. She writes:

Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercising for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and

embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn and laugh at them . . .
 . (75/76)

A milestone in the rise of modern feminism was Simone de Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex* (1949) which became a world wide best-seller and raised feminist consciousness by appealing to the idea that liberation for women was liberation for men too. M. H. Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* writes:

A much more radical critical mode was launched in France by Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), a wide – ranging critique of the cultural identification of women as merely the negative object, or “other,” to man as the dominating “Subject” who is assumed to represent humanity in general; the book also dealt with “ the great collective myths” of women in the works of many male writers.(88)

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir has established the fundamental issues of modern feminism by arguing that man defines the human not women. She argues that the word ‘woman’ is socially constructed. She writes:

One is not born rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fact determine the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature , intermediate between male and eunuch , which is described as feminine. (281)

Women’s existence is in dilemma today, on the one hand, they want to reclaim equal social status and they are compelled to accept ‘otherness’ and ‘objectness’ on the other. Their independent successes are in contradiction with their femininity. Assimilating these facts, Beauvoir proclaims:

'Woman is lost. . . . The women of today are not women at all' In sexuality and maternity women as subject can claim autonomy

.The men of today show certain duplicity of attitude which is painfully lacerating to women; they are willing on the whole to accept women as fellow beings, an equal; but they still require her to remain the inessentialWith man there is no break between public and private life . . . whereas women's independent successes are in contradiction with her femininity since the 'true' woman is required to make herself object, to be the other .(276)

Women's rediscovery of writing becomes the focal point in Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977). She says that like male writer, female has a tradition of their own. She examines British women novelists since the Bronte sisters from the point of view of women's experiences. She presents the view that there is a profound difference between women's writing and men's and a whole tradition has been neglected by male critics. But she puts forward her argument by saying, "The lost continent of the female tradition has arisen like Atlantis from the sea of English literature" (qtd. in Sheldon 138). Showalter divides this tradition into three phases: (a) The "feminine phase" (1840-80): In this phase writers like Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot imitated and internalized the dominant male aesthetic standards. They wrote in male pseudonyms because there was no place for female in the literary tradition. (b) The "feminist phase" (1880-1920): Writers in this phase protested against male canon and values. Elizabeth Robins and Olive Schreier were influential writers of this period. (c) The "female phase" (1920- onwards): This phase developed the idea of female writing and female experience. It is the phase of self – discovery. Rebecca West, Dorothy

Richardson and Katherine Mansfield were the most important early female novelists in this phase.

Regarding women's security, Kathy Mac fee and Myrna Wood in *The Vintage Book of Feminism* write:

We must demand the rights of woman to protect themselves. Because . . . the violence created by the brutalization of many man in our society is often directed at women and because not all women are willing to able or to sell themselves for the protection of male, women have a right to self – protection. (146)

Kate Millet emphasizes that women should be given power to develop their personalities, economic status and literary career. She says, "The essence of politics is power" (qtd. in Jefferson and Robey 205). She claims that patriarchy is the main cause of women's suppression and it makes them inferior. She writes, "Patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male. Power is exerted directly or indirectly in civil and domestic life to constrain women" (qtd. in Jefferson and Robey 205)

Different feminists define feminist issues and women status in different ways. It is relevant to present some of the views. Kolmar and Bartkowski write:

The basic issue that has concerned feminist theory is, depending on the terms one prefers, women's inequality, subordination, or domination by men. At the root of these is the issue of gender asymmetry- the designation of women and things associated with women as different, inferior to, of lesser value than men and things associated with men. (I)

According to David Lodge, "Feminism, at its deepest level resists the challenges the law of father"(425). The new Columbia Encyclopedia defines feminism as,"

Movement for the political, social and educational equality of women with men..."(934). Similarly, Toril Moi says, "The words 'feminist' or 'feminism' are political levels indicating support for the aims of new women's movement which emerged in the late 1960s"(qtd. in Jefferson and Robey 204).

Through this study we come to conclusion that women have been marginalized in legal, social, political and professional areas since the ancient time to present era. According to Helen Cixous, "Female body and sexuality have been negated and repressed by the centuries of male power" (qtd. in Howthorne 117). Realizing the poor condition of women feminists presented their views on the liberation of women from the patriarchal society. Feminists' aim is to eliminate the oppression and discrimination on the basis of sex.

2.2 Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary critics try to explain how power imbalances due to gender in a given culture are reflected in or challenged by literary texts. In defining feminist criticism, Toril Moi writes, "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). Though feminist criticism come out in its full shape only after 1960, behind it lies two century's struggle for women's rights. This struggle was marked by such books as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, J.S. Mill's *The Subjection of Women* and Margeret Fuller's *Women in the Nineteenth Century*.

Different feminist critics' view on women are different , but the aim of each critic is to awake women and support them by attacking men on the belief that literary critical theories propounded by men focus only on men, without giving any space for the women. The feminist theories, such as , Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*

(1929), Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1944), Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1969), Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) etc have heralded a new era in women's literature raising their voice for women.

After 1960s feminist literary criticism is closely interrelated with the movement called political feminism which denotes social, economic and cultural freedom and equality between males and females. So, feminist literary criticism indicates a revolt against patriarchy. Therefore, feminism always indicates the attempt against the male order or the patriarchy. For this reason, male can be feminists and even female writers may not be feminists. Nevertheless, a woman naturally tend to be feminist because she, being herself a woman, knows more about women's inner problems than men. In this context, Toril Moi says, "Men can be feminists but they can not be women, just as whites can be anti- racist but not black" (qtd. in Jefferson and Robey 208). Analyzing the participation and commitment of female writes of the 1960s, De Hart says:

The feminist revolution of the 1960s . . . was begun largely by educated, middle class women whose diverse experiences had sharpened their sensibility to the fundamental inequality between the sexes, . . . stepped in a commitment to equality and the techniques of protest. (349)

Feminist critics examine the experiences of women from all races, classes and cultures. Despite their diversity, feminist critics generally agree that their goals are to expose patriarchal premises and resulting prejudices, to promote discovery and reevaluation of literature by women and to examine social, cultural and psycho sexual contexts of literature and literary criticism. Feminist critics therefore study sexual, social and political issues once thought to be outside the study of literature.

Gynocriticism is a radical made in twentieth century feminism. One of the influential gynocritics who coined the term 'Gynocriticism' is Elaine Showalter. She, in her monumental work *A Literature of Their Own* (1977), presented the issues of gynocriticism. Gynocritics avoid the inevitability of male modes and theories and seek a female model. According to Showalter, gynocritics construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature. They develop new models based on the study of female experience. Gynocriticism states that women are different in terms of nature, race, culture etc so they can not universally studied. Gynocriticism emphasizes a specific feminists reading of women's texts. The aim of gynocritics is to read the literature written by women and to show what characterizes the literature of women as women. Moreover, they try to establish their own tradition of literary writing and criticism by excluding males so that the female issues such as household, pregnancy , abortion, delivery, female-female relation etc can be raised in higher level.

CHAPTER THREE

Presentation of Textual Analysis

3.1 Reason's for Tess's Tragedy

The female protagonist of the novel, Tess Durbeyfield undergoes different suffering and at last, her story ends in tragedy. Different critics have different points of views regarding her tragedy. F.B. Pinion mentions that Tess has “hereditary weakness”. Her “concern for other” is what Pinion regards the main cause of her tragedy (77). Irving Howe holds that Tess like Christian in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is a pilgrim, but unlike christian “her pilgrimage has no goal” which is the main cause of her tragedy (qtd. in Millgate 78). Jeanette King thinks that Tess meets tragic consequences as she accepts false images others have of her. She mentions:

. . . Tess accepts the false image others have of her, she is extremely vulnerable to the dream and illusions with which she is tested along the ‘long and stormy highway’ of her journey. Her pilgrimage in search of a better future leads her only to the awareness that her future is inseparable from the past she is trying to escape. (112)

Another critic Dorothy Van Ghent admits that three crisis take place in course of her life – Alec’s seduction of her, Clare’s rejection of her and Alec’s murder through her. All these tests of her are, according to Ghent psychologically motivated. Ghent talks also of the inconsistency in the character of Tess and that inconsistency is the consequence of the “dilemma of moral consciousness”. She mentions:

. . . the dilemma of Tess is the dilemma of moral consciousness in its intractable earthly mixture schematically simplified, the signifying form of the Tess universe is the tragic heroism and tragic effectuality

of such consciousness in an antagonistic earth where events shape themselves by moral design. (40)

As this research is done from feminist point of view, its main focus will be to explore how male characters are responsible to bring tragedy in Tess Durbeyfield's life dealing also with major chances and coincidents, which like other novels of Hardy, play a vital role to bring disaster in our heroine Tess's life. Two male characters are chiefly responsible to bring tragedy in Tess's life. The villainy of Alec d'Urberville and the tyranny of male – chauvinism chiefly embodied in Angel Clare are main reasons to bring tragedy in Tess's life. Similarly, unfriendly chances and co incidents also play a vital role to bring tragedy in Tess's life.

3.1.1 Alec d'Urberville's Responsibility

Alec d'Urberville's villainy is one of the main reasons responsible for Tess's tragic end. Alec occupies a foremost position among the villains created by Thomas Hardy because he is responsible, to a large extent, for bringing the tragedy of the best loved heroine of Hardy's novels. Alec is a sensualist with a shallow mind and without much conscience. He shows himself to be skillful in the art of seducing young girls. His most unfortunate victim becomes an innocent and inexperienced peasant girl Tess.

We meet Alec d'Urberville for the first time in the novel when Tess goes to meet Alec's mother, Mrs. D'Urberville at the request of her mother Joan Durbeyfield. Regarding Alec's physical appearance Hardy writes:

He had an almost swarthy complexion, with full lips, badly moulded, though red and smooth, above which was a well- groomed black moustache with curled points, though his age could not be more than three-or four- and – twenty. Despite the touches of barbarism in his

contours there was a singular force in the gentleman's face, and in his bold rolling eye. (43)

When Alec receives Tess in his house called The Slopes, he at once becomes interested in her seeing her fully- grown body and beautiful face. He conducts Tess about lawns, flower-beds, conservatories, and fruit garden giving strawberries to eat and gives her flowers to put in her bosom and on her hat. He also assures Tess that his mother will do some help to her family which is in difficult economic condition after the accidental death of their horse Prince which was helping to run their haggling business.

From his strange behavior towards Tess, we come to know that Alec is casting an evil eye upon the innocent young girl. Hardy writes:

He watched her pretty and unconscious munching through the skeins of smoke that pervaded the tent, and Tess Durbeyfield did not divine, as she innocently looked down at the roses in her bosom, that there behind the blue narcotic haze was potentially the "tragic mischief" of her drama – one who stood fair to be the blood- red ray in the spectrum of her young life. She had an attribute which amounted to a disadvantage just now; and it was this that caused Alec d'Urberville's eyes to rivet themselves upon her. (45)

Hardy regrets the fact that Tess has met the wrong man expressing the comment, "Had she perceived this meeting's import she might have asked why she was doomed to be seen and coveted that day by the wrong man, and not by some other man, the right and desired one in all respects-. . . (45/46). Hardy goes on to say, " In the ill-judged execution of the well- judge plan of things the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving"(46).

Alec's real intention towards Tess becomes clear when he drives his carriage in a fast speed in order to frighten her and force her to accept his kisses while bringing Tess towards his home as an employee in his mother's poultry. When Tess requested him to slow down the carriage, Alec said "Let me put one little kiss on those holmberry lips, Tess; or even on that warmed cheek, and I'll stop –on my honour, I will"(57). When Alec managed to kiss against her will, tears came into Tess's eyes and, overcome by a feeling of shame, she wiped with her handkerchief the spot on her cheek that had been touched by his lips. At this, Alec became angry and demanded another kiss which Tess had to submit. Alec continues to pay attention to her in the course of her duties. He keeps intruding her at all odd hours. His real villainy comes out when, taking advantage of the circumstances and the situations as it has developed and as managed by him, seduces innocent girl Tess. Seduction becomes the crucial incident to ruin Tess's life. At the time of seduction, Tess was physically exhausted and mentally weary because of her quarrel with her companions. She was half a slept and hardly understands what Alec was trying to do. Hardy asks why events had been allowed to take such a course: "But might some says, where was Tess's guardian angel? Where was the Providence of her simple faith?" (77). Referring to Alec's action in robbing Tess's chastity, Hardy writes:

Why it was that upon this beautiful feminine tissue, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow as yet, there should have been traced such a coarse pattern as it was doomed to receive; why so often the coarse appropriate the finer thus, the wrong man the woman, the wrong woman the man, many thousand years of analytical philosophy have failed to explain to our sense of order. (77)

Moreover, Hardy comments:

As Tess's own people down in those retreats are never tired of saying among each other in their fatalistic way:" It was to be . "There lay the pity of it . An immeasurable social chasm was to divide our heroine's personality thereafter from that previous self of hers who stepped from her mother's door to try her fortune at Trantridge poultry- farm. (77)

Alec regards his seduction of Tess merely as one of his amorous adventures and did not think much about its consequences. Tess told him that she was going home and would not come back. Alec asked her to get into carriage and Tess obeyed. Hardy writes,"She listlessly placed her basket and bundle within the dog- cart, and stepped up; and they sat side by side. She had no fear of him now; and in the cause of her confidence her sorrow lay" (82). On the way in course of their conversation Tess said," . . . My eyes were dazed by you for a little and that was all" (83). She further said, "I didn't understand your meaning till it was too late"(83). To this Alec said, "That's what every woman says"(83). Tess felt enraged by this insult and said, "How can you dare to use such words? My God, I could knock you out of the gig! Did it never strike your mind that what every woman says some women may feel?" (83).

From Alec's words we come to know that Alec is completely unaware of the fact that Tess has suffered an irreparable loss from him. From this incident we begin to feel a deep hatred towards him. He belongs to the group of those philanderers whose main purpose in life is to gratify their sensual desires without thinking the sad consequences that their victims may have to suffer. The two girl nick- named as the Queen of Spades and the Queen of Diamonds are among those girls who have served as instruments of pleasure for the philanderers like Alec d'Urberville. At the time of their separation what Alec says to Tess is:

I suppose I am a bad fellow- a damn bad fellow. I was born bad, and I have lived bad, and I shall die bad, in all probability. But, upon my lost soul, I won't be bad towards you again, Tess. And if certain circumstances should arise- you understand – in which you are in the least need, the least difficulty, send me one line, and you shall have by return whatever you require. (83)

While staying at home after the seduction, Tess felt terribly depressed. To seek consolation, she went to church one Sunday morning. But there people whispered something negative about Tess. In Hardy's words:

The people who had turned their heads turned them again as the service proceeded; and at last observing her they whispered to each other. She knew that their whispers were about, grew sick at heart, and felt that she could come to church no more. (90)

Alec's seduction of Tess results in her being an unmarried mother. Tess's giving birth to a small girl in the course of her work in the field is really pitiable. Because of the poor health, her baby seemed to be dying. Tess thought that if the baby died before being baptized, there will be no salvation for it. Therefore, Tess, unable to find a clergyman, herself performed the baptism ceremony by saying, "SORROW, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (99). But the child passed away. Referring to the baby's death, Hardy deepens our sympathy by the following comment:

So passed away Sorrow the Undesired- that intrusive creature, that bastard gift of shameless Nature who respects not the social law; a waif to whom eternal Time had been a matter of days merely; who knew not that such things as years and centuries ever were; to whom the cottage

interior was the universe, the week's weather climate, new – born
 babyhood human existence, and the instinct to suck human knowledge.
 (100)

Tess, then, faced the problem of a Christian burial for her child . She went to the local vicar and requested him to give her child a Christian burial. But the vicar refused to do so because the child was not properly baptized by a priest .Finding no alternative , Tess had to bury her child in that shabby corner of the churchyard where all unbaptized infants , notorious drunkards , suicides and others of the conjecturally damned are laid . In this way, Tess lived a sorrowful life whereas, one of the main villains, who caused Tess's tragedy, Alec lived so called 'converted' life of a preacher.

After her child's death, Tess starts a fresh life working out a dairy called Talbothays. There, her love and marriage with Angel Clare ends in tragedy. Leaving Tess alone, Angel leaves for Brazil. Tess once again becomes jobless and her family faces financial difficulties. In search for a job, Tess arrives at Flintcomb- Ash and starts a job of farm labour. There she coincidentally sees Alec d'Urberville. He was preaching a sermon in an earnest voice. Alec's such transformation amazes us as much as it amazes Tess. When Alec could get away from his audience, he came towards Tess and told her that he had been converted from his wicked life to a religious and spiritual life by a priest called Mr. Clare (Angel's father). Tess doubted that such a sudden transformation could last long. She scolded him by saying:

I can't believe in such sudden things. I feel indignant with you for talking to me like this, when you know – when you know what harm you've done me! You and those like you , take your fill of pleasure on earth by making the life of such as me bitter and black with sorrow; and then it is a fine thing, when you have had enough of that , to think

of securing your pleasure in heaven by becoming converted. Out of such- I don't believe in you – I hate it. (300)

Tess told him that she had learnt things in her troubles; and when he asked what troubles she had been through, she told him of the first one, the only one related to him. Before leaving Tess, Alec did a strange thing. He made her swear that she would never tempt him by her charms or ways. It was an unnecessary proceeding because such a thing was far from Tess thoughts, but she swore. This incident clearly shows us that Alec's lust is not dead.

One day Alec appeared at the place of her work and said that he wanted to talk to her. He blamed himself for the misfortunes which Tess had suffered and the hard labour to which she was now subjected for a livelihood. Alec said, "Yours was the very worst case I ever was concerned in. I had no idea of what had resulted till you told me. Scamp that I was, to foul that innocent life. The whole blame was mine; . . ." (306). Alec told that he wanted to make amends for his misconduct towards her. He said, "However, what I want to ask you is will you put it in my power to make the only amends I can make for the trick I played you- that is, will you be my wife, and go with me?" (306). But Tess rejected his offer saying that she felt no affection for him at all and she was married to another man. Alec said that he had made his proposal only for her sake and for her good. He then told her that, on meeting her, all his old passions for her had returned to him. He said:

Tess – don't look at me so – I can not stand your looks! There never were such eyes, scerely, before Christianity or since! . . . There – I wont lose my head ; I dare not . I own that the sight of you has waked up my love for you, which I believed was extinguished with all such

feelings. But I thought that our marriage might be a sanctification for us both. (308)

In this way, Alec's transformation proves to be a superficial and temporary affair. His newly acquired religious faith begins to crumble and his old desire for Tess revives in all its intensity. Hardy comments on Alec's short lived conversion by saying, "Reason had nothing to do with his whimsical conversion, which was perhaps the mere freak of a careless man in search of a new sensation, and temporarily impressed by his mother's death" (313/314).

Alec then time and again started pestering helpless Tess. We feel sorry for her defenselessness against that rogue. Alec told Tess that he wanted to help her because he could not see her toiling like that. He said that his carriage was waiting and she had only to go with him. She was the cause of his having given up his work as a preacher, and he would now like to take her away from that mule whom she called her husband. Tess was so enraged by these words of Alec that she flung her leather glove directly in his face. Alec's reply to this was, "Remember, my lady, I was your master once; I will be your master again. If you are any man's wife you are mine!"(321). Alec inwardly resolves to possess Tess because he still considers her as a pure woman. He says, "Now I shall leave you; and shall come again for your answer during the afternoon. You don't know me yet. But I know you" (321).As promised, Alec came to her and offered to give every possible help to her parents, her brothers and sisters. But Tess replied that she would take nothing from him. Worried by Alec's meeting one after another, Tess wrote a letter to her husband Angel entreating him to come back to her before anything terrible happened. She wrote:

I must cry to you in my trouble – I have no one else. I am so exposed to temptation, Angel! I fear to say who it is, and I do not like to write

about it all. But I cling to you in a way you cannot think. Can you not come to me now, at once, before anything terrible happens? O I know you can not, because you are so far away. I think must die if you do not come soon, or tell me to come to you. (325)

At the same time, Tess received sad news about her family. Her parents were seriously ill. So, to take care of parents, she returned home. After seeing her parents condition, Tess had no intention of going back to Flintcomb – Ash. So, she started working in the garden and the small field close to her house. One day, Tess was surprised to see Alec, disguised as a working- man, close to her in the field. He told her that he had been thinking about her brothers and sisters and wanted to do something for them. But Tess did not respond to his advances. The same day, Tess's father died. The death was a great loss in more ways than one. It meant that the family has to leave the cottage which they had been occupying under a lease, Tess's father being the last tenant to have held the cottage under a lease. After Tess's family became homeless, Alec offered to accommodate the family in his house at Trantridge. But Tess declined the offer and said that they had taken rooms at Kingsbere. But, unfortunately, the rooms which they had booked had been given away to somebody else because their letter informing the owner that they would occupy the accommodation soon had reached him late. Finding no alterative Tess had to pile her family belongings to the church – yard. Alec again met Tess and told her that she had only to give him a command and that he would obey her. But Tess told him to go away. To this Alec said, "Mind this; you'll be civil yet!" (351). Meanwhile, finding no communication from Angel and under the difficulty of her family needs, Tess accepts to live with Alec as his mistress.

But unexpectedly, Angels returns and reaches to Tess. The meeting between them is very touching. When Tess says it is too late, Angel pleads, "I did not think rightly of you- I did not see you as you were. I have learnt to since, dearest Tessy mine! "(365). But Tess says," Too late, too late! Don't come close to me, Angel! No – you must not. Keep away!"(365). Tess further said," But you did not come. And I wrote to you; and you did not come. He [Alec] kept on saying you would never come any more, and that I was a foolish woman. He was very kind to me, and to my mother, and to all of us after father's death. He- "(365).

Angel's visit had greatly disturbed Tess. Her dear husband had come to her after all. Tess says to Angel, "I hate him [Alec] because he told me a lie- that you would not come again, and you have come!"(366). Finding Angel back and remembering Alec's cruelty upon her, Tess seems in the mood of revenge. In a kind of soliloquy, Tess says:

. And then my dear husband came home to me and I did not know it and you[Alec] had used your cruel persuasion upon me. . . . you did not stop using it- no-you did not stop! My little sisters and brother, and my mother's needs . . . they were the things you moved me by and you said my husband would never come back – never; and you taunted me, and said what a simpleton I was to except him And at last I believed you and gave way ! And then he came back! Now he is gone, gone! A second time, and I have lost him now for ever and he will not love me the littlest bit ever any more – only hate me . . . O yes , I have lost him now – again because of – you! (368)

She further said, "O you have torn my life all in pieces made me be what I prayed you in pity not to make me be again ! . . . My own true husband will never never- O God – I can't bear this! I can not!"(368).

In anger, Tess stabbed Alec and went running to meet Angel. She told Angel that she had killed Alec. She said, "I feared . . . that I might do it some day for the trap he set for me in my simple youth, and his wrong to you through me. He has come between us and ruined us, and now he can never do it any more"(372). Angel and Tess both escaped from the place but within a week, Tess was taken into police custody and hanged in charge of Alec's murder. Hardy's comment on Tess's execution is memorable. He writes, "Justice" was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Aeschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess"(384).

In this way, Alec plays very important role to bring tragedy in Tess's life. Tess kills Alec willingly and knowingly. Alec has been instrumental in bringing Tess's destruction. His actions have caused her untold suffering and have completely wrecked her happiness. Twice in life he plays a crucial role, and on both occasions brings disaster for her – first by seducing her, and later convincing her that her husband would not come back and in this way luring her to stay with him as his mistress. As readers, we love it when a bad guy like Alec dies but looking it realistically: what did it gave her? Death. Not a happy end to the feminist movement in the novel.

3.1.2 Angel Clare's Responsibility

Angel Clare, a representative of male – chauvinism, is another reason responsible for bringing tragedy in Tess's life. He is a man of double standard. He has different standard of judgment for males and females which causes tragedy in Tess's life.

We get a momentary glimpse of Angel Clare early in the story when he happens to pass through the village of Marlott and catches Tess's attention and arouses her interest. When we meet him next, he is working as dairyman Richard Crick's pupil and learning dairy- work to qualify himself for his agricultural projects. Coincidentally, Tess starts the job of a dairy maid in the same dairy, after her child's death, where Angel is working. Tess was surprised to see there the man who had joined in the club- dance at her village, the passing stranger who had danced with some girls but not with her. After observing Tess at the dairy, Angel said to himself, "What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is" (124). Angel found something familiar in Tess. Angel concluded that he had seen her before, but where, he could not remember.

In the course of their work, Angel and Tess were acquainted with each other. The acquaintance between them has developed into an intimate friendship. Both of them felt attracted to each other. Angel was more attracted towards Tess. Hardy writes:

It was then, as has been said, that she impressed him most deeply. She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman – a whole sex condensed into one typical form. He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names, half teasingly- which she did not like because she did not understand them.

"Call me Tess," she would say askance; and he did. (134/135)

One night, when in bed, Tess overheard the conversation of her three room – mates and learnt that all the three milk –maids name Retty, Marian and Izz were deeply in love with Angel. All the three admitted their secret passion to one another, but at the same time, they agreed that he could not marry any of them, not even Tess

because he was a gentleman's son and would marry a woman of his own social status. But Tess, at the same, time recalled Angel having told Mrs. Crick that he would most probably marry not a fine lady but a farm woman to help him in the business of farming which he had chosen as his career.

Three months after their meeting, Angel declared his love to Tess. He told her that he loved her dearly and truly. At that time, Angel was completely under the spell of Tess's beauty. Hardy describes the charm of Tess's beauty by writing:

To a Young man with the least fire in him that little upward lift in the middle of her red top lip was distracting, infatuating, maddening. He had never before seen a woman's lips and teeth which forced upon his mind, with such persistent iteration, the old Elizabethan simile of roses fill with snow. (152)

Now, Angel was completely in love with Tess. He said, "I am devoted to you, Tessy , dearest, in all sincerity!"(153). Angel went his home and consulted about his marriage plans with his parents. They reply him that they would not object. But Tess refused Angel's proposal of marriage saying that she could not become his wife. She had not thought of getting married.

After a few days, Angel repeated his proposal of marriage to Tess. He said:

I wish to ask you something, of a very practical nature, which I have been thinking of ever since that day last week in the meads. I shall soon want to marry, and, being a farmer, you see I shall require for my wife a woman who knows all about the management of farms. Will you be that woman Tessy? (173)

But she again refused his proposal of marriage saying that it was only for his good that she was not willing to marry him. But inwardly, Tess was experiencing a fearful

conflict. She wanted Angel as ardently as he wanted her, but her conscience stood in the way. She had come to Talbothays with the resolve not to get married, and now she did not want to take a step which might afterwards cause bitter regret to her husband for his blindness in marrying her.

One Month later, once again, Angel proposed her. This time, Tess fixes a certain date for her final reply, and even goes to the extent of saying that she would tell him all her experiences and everything about herself. Though Tess inwardly resolves to say "yes" to Angel's proposal, she says "no" on that fixed day. However, Angel did not give up his effort to convince Tess. After a fortnight, Angel asked her why, having already given him her heart, she was refusing him her hand. Tess said that she wanted to tell him the story of her life. Angel said that he was not interested in any biographical details about her. Tess, however, told him that she was not a Durbeyfield but d'Urberville, a descendant of an old and noble family. Angel told that he did not love her less after knowing her noble ancestry. Actually, Tess had wanted to tell him about her seduction by Alec d'Urberville, but at the last moment, she failed to disclose her sad past. Then, Tess agreed to marry Angel under his pressure. Hardy makes the following comment on her agreeing to marry Angel:

She had consented. She might as well have agreed at first. The "appetite for joy", which pervades all creation; that tremendous force which sways humanity to its purpose, as the tide sways the helpless weed, was not to be controlled by vague lucubrations over the social rubric. (191)

Then, Tess wrote an urgent letter to her mother informing the latest development. In reply, her mother urged her strongly not to speak a single word to her would-be husband about her past misfortune. Angel asked Tess to fix the day of

their marriage. He said that he had to finalize his plans for starting his farm and he would like to get married before he got involved in the numerous details of his business. Here, Tess's love for Angel is strongly emphasized. Hardy writes:

To her sublime trustfulness he was all that goodness could be knew all that a guide, philosopher, and friend should know. She thought every line in the contour of his person the perfection of masculine beauty; his soul the soul of a saint; his intellect that of a seer. (193)

Her failure to have told her sad past to Angel prevented Tess from fixing the wedding day. At last, New Year's Eve was fixed as the date. But feeling guilty and having no courage to tell Angel about her past, Tess wrote down the history of the past three or four years of her life and putting the sheets into an envelop addressing Angel Clare, she slipped the envelop under the door of Angel's room. Next morning, Angel met her and behaved as normal. Perplexed by Angel's continuing normal attitude towards her, Tess doubted whether he had received her letter or not. Tess, then, quickly went to Angel's room when he was not there. Bending on the door, she perceived the white margin of the envelop under the carpet. Obviously, when she had thrust the envelop beneath the door, it had slipped under the carpet and had never caught Angel's notice. With a sinking heart, she withdrew the letter. There it was sealed just as she had thrust it. But Tess felt that she could not let him read it now because the house was in full bustle of preparation. The whole tragedy of Tess centers round this incident.

After their marriage, Angel said that he had a confession to make. He told her of that time in his life when, "tossed about doubts and difficulties in London, like a cork on the waves, he plunged into eight and forty hours' dissipation with a stranger" (221). He asked Tess's forgiveness and she readily forgave him. It was now her turn. In a faltering voice, she told the story of her life and her misadventure with Alec

d'Urberville and its results. Tess said that he should forgive her just as she had forgiven him for his lapse. But the whole attitude of Angel now changed. He said, "O Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case. You were one person: now you are another. My God – how can forgiveness meet such a grotesque- prestidigitation as that!" (226). Angel went to say, "I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you" (226). When Tess asked who she was then, his reply was: "Another woman in your shape" (226).

From his these types of speeches, we clearly know that Angel is a man of double standard. He has one standard of moral conduct for men and another for women. When Tess promises, "I will obey you, like your wretched slave, even if it is to lie down and die." Angel scornfully says "You are very good. But it strikes me that there is a want of harmony between your present mood of self- sacrifice and your past mood of self- preservation" (227). Angel admits that she was "more sinned against than sinning" and he is prepared even to forgive her but cannot accept her as his wife. When Tess cites other cases similar to her own, Angel says, "Different societies different manners. You almost make me say you are an unapprehending peasant woman, who have never been initiated into the proportions of social things" (229). He goes on to say that he had thought her "a new- sprung child of nature" but he finds her to be "the belated seedling of an effete aristocracy!" (229/230).

In this way, Tess's confession entirely changes Angel's attitude towards her. Obviously, he believes in a double standard, one for himself and the other for Tess. The effect of Tess's confession on him is profound. He can not reconcile himself to the revelation.

Angel spent a couple of days with Tess in the house only for form's sake, to avoid public disgrace which would have resulted from their immediate separation.

Tess no longer expected forgiveness from Angel. Angel told her that he might live with her in case her seducer had not been alive. But later, separation was decided. Though, Angel is undoubtedly guilty of crime of deserting Tess on the grounds which have no validity, there can be no question on the depth of his love for her. The sleep-walking scene clearly shows the deep roots of his love. As he carries Tess in his arms and walks towards the churchyard, he mumbles the words, "My poor poor Tess, my dearest darling Tess! So sweet, so good, so true!"(242). Next, he feels a genuine grief in leaving her and at the time of parting says, " There is no anger between us, though there is that which I can not endure at present. I will try to bring myself to endure it " (247).

While separating, Tess goes in a carriage, Angel watches it. Hardy writes:

The fly moved creepingly up a hill, and Clare watched it go, with an unpremeditated hope that Tess would look out of the windows for one moment. But she never thought of doing, would not have ventured to do , lying in a half- dead faint inside . Thus he beheld her recede, and in the anguish of his heart quoted a line from a poet, with peculiar emendations of his own: -

God's *not* in his heaven: all's *wrong* with the world !

when Tess had passed over the crest of the hill he turned to go his own way, and hardly knew that he loved her still. (248)

In this way, they separated. Tess returned back to her parents whereas Angel left for Brazil. But, his experiences in Brazil had been sad. The severe illness from which he had suffered shortly after his arrival, had never wholly left him. So, he had almost decided to give up his hope of farming in that country.

During the period of his stay in Brazil, Angel had mentally aged a dozen years. He had been wrestling with himself on the subject of morality, and he had come to the conclusion that the moral ideas needed to be revised. The beauty or ugliness of a character, he now thought, lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses. The true history of a mind lay not among things done, but among things willed. Accordingly, his view of Tess's character also underwent a great change. He felt that his state of mind started to accept Tess as his wife. This view was reinforced by the opinion of another Englishman to whom Angel had narrated his story. Thus, from being Tess's critic, he now became her advocate. But, on the other hand, Tess wrote Angel about her meeting with Alec and recent development. But finding no communication from Angel, Tess was much depressed. Angel's cruelty made her think that he was not her true husband. When Angel returned from Brazil and came in contact to Tess, it was too late. Now, Tess had accepted to live with Alec as his mistress. When Tess said it is too late, Angel pleaded, "I did not think rightly of you – I did not see as you were" (365).

Finding her dear husband Angel back to her, Tess can not forgive Alec for having deceived her for the second time. She kills Alec and runs away with Angel. But their reunion could not last long. Within a week, they are captured policeman and Tess is hanged in charge of Alec's murder.

Therefore, Angel's responsibility for bringing tragedy in Tess's life is very great. He remains unmoved by Tess's reasoning, by her appeals and entreaties, by her total submissiveness. When he forsakes Tess, she is doomed to a life of want and misery. Existence becomes a burden for her. She waits and waits, hoping that the basic nobility of Angel's nature would bring him back to her. She tries to meet Angel's parents but fails. She writes pathetic letters to Angel but gets no reply. The chapters

in which Tess's life after Angel's desertion of her is described, are intensely moving. Then comes her forced surrender to Alec, and her tragedy is complete. Angel returns, but it is now too late. Although several reasons and many circumstances combine to bring the tragedy in Tess's life, the dominant and determining cause is the flaw in Angel's character, his conventional moral outlook which prevented his acceptance of Tess as his wife after learning about her past life.

3.1.3 The Vital Role of Chance and Coincidence

Chance and coincidence play vital role in all novels of Thomas Hardy. In the work of no other novelist do chance or accident and coincidence exercise such a conspicuous influence on the course of events. Chance and coincidence operate as the deciding factors in Hardy's novels. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* also, chance and coincidence play vital role to bring tragedy in Tess's life.

Early in the story, Prince, the horse of the Durbeyfield family is killed in an accident. Tess's father being in no condition to undertake an important journey, Tess offers to take his place. As she is driving the wagon carrying a load of beehives to be delivered in a distant market, the mail van coming from the opposite side collides against Tess's wagon, and Prince dies. This accident has a profound influence on the life of Tess. The family business having become suddenly disorganized by the death of the horse, it becomes necessary for Tess to contact the d'Urbervilles for help, and the meeting between her and Alec which follows leads to consequences which are disastrous. Alec's seduction of Tess is a direct, though not immediate, result of the death of Prince. A sheer accident is responsible for the seduction which eventually proves the undoing of her marriage with Angel Clare.

Another mis- chance that deeply affects the life of Tess is her written confession, pushed by her under Angel's door, going under the carpet and not

reaching Angel at all . Being an honest girl, Tess tries her best to tell Angel about her past life , but all her efforts to do so prove futile . Finally , Tess writes down an account of her experience with Alec in order to inform Angel of the secret of her life . If Angel had received this letter before their marriage, he would either forgiven her or refused to marry her. In either case , the tragedy of Tess would have been averted . Angel, knowing Tess's past after their marriage, adopts a stiffer and rigid attitude that causes tragedy in Tess's life.

Another mis- chance that brings disaster in Tess's life is her unexpected meeting with Alec. Tess coincidentally meets Alec preaching a sermon while returning from her abortive visit to Emminster. The meeting awakens Alec's lust again. He renounces his missionary's role and pursues Tess. If this chance had not occurred, all would have been well with Tess. Angel was coming to claim her and she would have been reunited with him happily. But a chance meeting with Alec destroys her life.

Another coincident occurs after Tess's meeting with Alec . Tess's mother falls seriously ill and her father becomes unwell too. As a chance , her father dies and mother recovers. The death of her father means their being homeless because her father was the last tenant to have the cottage under a lease. The house- owner at Kingsbere by another mis- chance, hands over the possession of his house to another tenant, after having promised it to Tess's mother. This misfortune is an ideal opportunity for Alec to put further pressure upon Tess. Thus, a number of chance happenings seem to conspire against any possibility of Tess's achieving happiness in life. Her surrender to Alec, which completes her ruin, thus comes as a result of coincidences.

3.2 Tess's Own Responsibility

Tess's story ends in tragedy. But question arises: how much she herself is responsible for her own tragic end? This section of the research tries to answer this question.

The entire tragedy of Tess has one parent cause, all other causes being only contributory . One single event ruins Tess and her chances of happiness in life, and that is Alec's seduction of her. Hardy regarded Tess as " a pure woman" and he does it rightly. It is clear from events preceding the seduction that Tess in no way encourages Alec in his amorous advances. From the beginning, she shows a natural modesty and a chaste independence of mind and body. She is distressed when Alec feeds her strawberries. She wipes off the kiss Alec gives her on her second journey to " The slopes". She strong- mindedly decides to walk few miles rather than sit next to him on the carriage. The concessions she does make seem to be innocent and inevitable but they are preludes to disaster. Alec is able to cultivate a familiarity with her by his playful dialogue and jestly calling her cousin whenever they are alone. Owing to her dependence on Alec's mother and his mother's dependence on him because of that lady's blindness , Tess becomes more pliable under Alec's hands than mere companionship would have made her.

It is agreed that Alec's seduction of Tess was more or less a rape, Tess's passivity being chiefly due to utter physical exhaustion , her sleepy state and her ignorance of what Alec was trying to do . She says , ". . . My eyes were dazed by you for a little, and that was all"(83). She further says, " I didn't understand your meaning till it was too late" (83). And we have no reasons to disbelieve Tess's words.

When Tess returned to her home , after the seduction , the whole family was surprised by her unexpected arrival. Her mother asked her if she had come to be married or for a holiday. Tess told her mother what had happened. When her mother

said, "You ought to have been more careful , if you didn't mean to get him to make you his wife !" Tess replied," Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men folk? Why didn't you warn me?"(87).

In this way, Hardy nowhere gives us any indication that Tess was prone to the temptation of the flesh, and it is made clear that she had at no time felt drawn towards Alec. Her worst fault is her ripe, voluptuous figure which arouses Alec's lust.

Later in the novel, she falls in love with Angel Clare while working at Talbothays dairy. Angel proposes to marry Tess. But, Tess refuses to marry him due to her sense of guilt. The misfortune of her experience with Alec stands in the way of her saying 'yes' even though she desires nothing better than this opportunity to marry a man with whom she is genuinely in love. We can appreciate Tess's reason for her refusal. Being a sincere girl, she does not want to deceive Angel. Tess says to herself, "I can't bear to let anybody have him but me! Yet it is a wrong to him, and may kill him when he knows ! O my heart – O,O,O ! " (179/180).

Feeling great conflict within her mind, Tess writes an urgent letter to her mother for her advice. Her mother in her letter urged her strongly not to speak a single word to her would be husband about her past misfortune. Obviously, her mother did not see life as Tess saw it. We see the contrast between Tess and her mother. Tess's past misfortune is, to her mother, only a passing accident while for Tess, it has a deep and far- reaching significance, and she finds it impossible to set it aside. Tess's failure to have told her sad history to Angel prevented Tess from fixing the wedding day. Tess wrote another letter to her mother, seeking her advice once again and telling her why it was necessary that she should tell true facts to her lover. A post- marriage explanation might not be received by man like Angel light – heartedly. But this letter brought no reply from Mrs. Durbeyfield.

Under Angel's pressure, Tess was compelled to fix the wedding day. The thirty – first of December, New Year's Eve, was fixed as the date. Now, Tess deeply feeling guilty wrote down the history of her past life and putting the sheet into an envelop, slipped it under the door of Angel's room. But, Angel failed to discover the letter. When Tess confessed her past life after their marriage, Angel's whole attitude forwards her changed. This incident played one of the major roles to bring tragedy in Tess's life.

Towards the last phase of the story, Tess once again surrenders to Alec. This time she surrenders under her family needs. Her father dies, and the family becomes homeless. No reply comes from Angel. Under the pressure of family needs, Angel's determined pursuit of her and Angel's indifference, Tess surrenders to Alec and becomes his mistress. But finding Angel back and remembering Alec's cruelty upon her, Tess kills Alec willingly and knowingly which results in her hanging.

In this way, Tess's own responsibility for her tragedy is very limited. In the beginning, she gives no encouragement to Alec's advances. But unfortunately she is seduced. Later, she fails to confess her past misfortunes to Angel. Tess's entire physical suffering and mental agony after her marriage with Angel are the result of her failure to have confessed her past to him in time. Angel clearly says, "O Tess- if you had only told me sooner I would have forgiven you!"(261). The tragedy thus lies upon Tess's failure in this respect. The failure is not willful. Every time she tried to tell her history to Angel, something happen to hinder her. She never wanted to hide her past from Angel; in fact her hesitation to agree to Angel's proposal of marriage was due to her sense of guilt. She did not wish to marry him without revealing the fact. Towards the end of the novel, Tess kills Alec . We don't feel sorry when a bad guy like Alec dies. Our sympathy goes to Tess. But this incident finishes Tess's life.

At last, what we can say that Tess herself is very little responsible to bring tragedy in her life. We can find Tess's weakness in two incidents – first, failing to tell her past life to Angel in right time. Second, her murder of Alec in anger which gave her nothing but death.

3.3 Role of Tess's Sex Towards her Tragic End

From the beginning of human civilization, sex became a vital tool for domination, oppression and segregation to the females. Tess, being a Victorian woman, could not escape from the social boundaries that contemporary male-chauvinistic society imposed upon females like her.

We should remember Tess one of the few lucky girls who unlike other Victorian girls, got chance to go to school. Hardy writes, ". . . her daughter [Tess], who had passed the sixth standard in the National school under a London – trained mistress, spoke two language; the dialect at home, more or less; ordinary English abroad and to persons of quality" (26).

Tess's sex play an important role to bring tragedy in her life in the sense that Alec takes advantage of her being a female and seduces her. If she had not been a female, there would be no seduction at all. And if there was no seduction, there will be no tragedy. Commenting on the seduction Hardy writes:

As Tess's own people down in those retreat are never tired of saying among each other in their fatalistic way: "It was to be" There lay the pity of it. An immeasurable social chasm was to divide our heroine's personality thereafter from that previous self of hers who stepped from her mother's door to try her fortune at Tantridge poultry-farm.(77)

After the seduction, Tess becomes pregnant. During her pregnancy. Tess, to seek solace, goes to visit a church. But, at the church, people commented negatively about her . Hardy writes:

The people who had turned their heads turned them again as the service preceded; and at last observing her [Tess] they whispered to each other. She knew what their whispers were about , grew sick at heart, and felt that she could come to church no more.(90)

In this way, people cast negative comment about Tess because she was a female. But Hardy nowhere suggests us that Alec suffered the same fate as Tess. Being a dominating male, Alec escaped easily from the social boundaries. Tess lived a sorrowful life being hated by the people whereas; equally responsible Alec lived the life of a preacher. Tess herself has to take care of the child to whom she gives birth. Hardy nowhere suggests is that the society spoke a single word against Alec. Tess bears another blow of being a female after her marriage with Angel. Angel confesses a moral lapse on his part and asks for Tess's forgiveness who quickly forgives him . But he refuses to forgive Tess after knowing about her past misfortune with Alec. Angel's arguments clearly show that he is the man of double standards. He has one standard for judging males and another for females. Tess is not forgiven because she is a female. Though Angel thinks himself a liberal but he is in reality , and without knowing it ,a slave to social convention.

Society's cruelty upon Tess, a female, can be seen in Tess's hanging also. Tess kills Alec because he destroys her life first, by seducing her and secondly, by forcing her to be his mistress. When she kills Alec, she is hanged because she is a female but the maltreatment of Tess by Alec is never questioned because he is a male living in

male- dominated society. In this way , Tess's sex plays an important, though not crucial , role to bring tragedy in her life.

CHAPTER FOUR

Conclusion

Both males and females are equally important to form a society. In the absence of one, society can not be complete. In other words, males and females are two wheels of a chariot. Just like a chariot can not move in the absence of any one of the wheels, society can not be complete in the absence of any one of two sexes. But this universally accepted fact was reflected from the existence of society.

Though, there is no difference between male and female in the process of their biological creation and birth, males have always taken themselves superior to females. There is no convincing reason to believe that females are inferior or ineffectual human beings and males are always superior and civilized human beings. Varieties of hypothesis regarding females were formed in order to dominate female and the causes of women's subordination right from the beginning of civilization were never explained. In fact, women's condition is very pitiable right from the beginning of the civilization. They were neglected mentally, economically and physically by society as inferior beings. Their involvement outside the home was not allowed. "Anatomy is destiny" this concept was strong. The anti – feminists wanted to keep women where they always had been because they suspected women and neglected them as mediocre who were fit only for motherhood. It is against this suppression that women rebelled. Their own condition excited them to love themselves. So, feminists brought feminism as politics for the upliftment of women. They began to love their own sex, ignored the past rigid ways of spending their lives and came out openly to do something for society.

Thomas Hardy was the novelist of the late Victorian period. Victorian period dominated with male in all spheres of human life. Queen Victorian was ruling at that

time. But she had no decision making power. Prince Albert was exercising all the power related to throne and decision making. Hardy, as a realistic observer of the society he was living in, could not remain untouched by such social condition. His novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* presets women's condition in male-dominated society. The female protagonist of the novel, Tess Durbeyfield is a representative female character of Victorian peasant society. She suffers much in her life and at last, her story ends in tragedy because of male domination. The representative males of Victorian society Angel Clare and Alec d'Urberville are main villains to cause tragedy in Tess's life.

Two major forces of male- chauvinistic society are responsible for Tess's disaster. Alec d'Urberville is the symbol of ruling class. He takes women as merely a "thing" to enjoy. He seduces Tess by taking advantage of her helplessness and doesn't pay attention towards the consequences that Tess has to bear. Similarly, Angel Clare is a representative of rigid morality. He personifies social convention even though he pretends not to believe in it. He judges her unhappy experience by the conventional morality and finds her guilty . A man of double standards, he maintains a rigid stand on the point and refuses to accept Tess as his wife . Tess, here, becomes a Victim of the conventional social attitude . In this way , male – dominated or what we call " patriarchal" society is responsible to bring tragedy in our heroine Tess Durbeyfield's life.

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