

CHAPTER-I

Introduction

Notes on Thomas Hardy and His Novel

Thomas Hardy was born at Higher Bockhampt, Dorset, on June 2, 1840, where his father worked as a mason and builder. From his father he gained an appreciation of music, and from his mother an appetite for learning and the delights of the countryside about his rural home. Hardy's mother, whose tastes included Latin poems and French comedy, provided for his education. "As a child, Hardy and his family would sit around a fire in the evening and listen to his mother's stories about the old days, and Hardy stored those up in his memory forever" (Cecil 49). Hardy was frail as a child, and did not start at the village school until he was eight years old. Hardy was educated at a local school. When Hardy was sixteen, he became a student of John Hives, a Dorchester architect and Church restorer. At this time he visited art galleries, attended evening classes in French at King's college, enjoyed Shakespeare and opera, and read works of Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and John Stuart Mills. He won prizes from the Royal Institute of British Architects and architectural Association.

In 1857, Hardy began to write verses and essays, but, advised by his friends, did not to give up parentage profession, architecture. He passed some years sketching and observing many old Dorset Churches. Then he became an assistant to Arthur Blumfield in London, in 1867, and worked hard at his profession. In 1867 Hardy left London for the family in Dorset. His first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, finished in 1886, failed to find a publisher and Hardy destroyed the manuscript. He was encouraged to try it again by mentors and friends, and also by Emma Lavinia Gifford.

Encouraged by Emma Lavinia Gifford, he started to consider literature as his "true vocation".

Hardy published *Desperate Remedies* in 1871 and *Greenwood Tree* in 1872 anonymously. In 1873, he published *A Pair of Blue Eyes* under his own name. The story draws on Hardy's courtship of Emma Gifford, whom he married in 1874. His next novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* was his first important work. Hardy in *Far from the Madding Crowd* first introduced Wessex. The novel was successful enough for Hardy to give up architecture work and pursue a literary career. His *The Hand of Ethelbert* appeared in 1876. But, it couldn't level of *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

Hardy moved from London to Yeovil and then to Sturminster Newton, where he wrote *The Return of the Native* (1878). In 1885 he returned to Dorchester, moving into Max Gate - a house that Hardy had designed himself. There Hardy wrote *The Mayor of Caster Bridge* (1886), and *The Woodlanders* (1887). *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) attracted criticism for its sympathetic portrayal of an immoral woman and was initially refused publication. "Its subtitle, a pure woman / Faithfully Narrated, was intended to raise the eyebrows of the Victorian middle-class" (Aggress37). *Jude the Obscure*, published in 1895, aroused the hostility of conventional readers by its frank handling of sex and apparent attack on the institution of marriage. "Hardy's marriage had also suffered from the public outrage - on both sides of the Atlantic abused the authors as degenerate and called the work itself disgusting" (Cecil 49). Disgusted with the public reception of two of his great works, Hardy gave up writing novels altogether.

At the age of 22 Hardy moved to London and started to write poems, which idealized the rural life. He was an assistant in the architecture firm of Arthur Blomfield. He visited art galleries, attended evening class in King's College,

enjoyed Shakespeare and opera, and read works of Charles Spencer, and John Stuart Mill whose positivism influenced him deeply. In 1908, Hardy published his first volume of poetry, *Wessex Poems*, a collection of poems written over 30 years. "Hardy claimed poetry was not as well received by his contemporaries as his novel had been, but critical response to Hardy's poetry has warmed considerably in recent years, in part because of the influence of Philip Larkin". However, critically his poetry is still not considered as his prose.

Hardy's poems deal with themes of disappointment in love and life, and mankind's long struggle against indifference to human suffering. Some, like "The Darkling Thrush" and "An August Midnight" are thought of as poems about writing poetry. Hardy's gigantic panorama of Napoleonic Wars, *The Dynasts*, composed between 1903 and 1908, was mostly in blank verse. "Hardy, in fact, was the ideal poet of a generation. He was the most passionate and the most learned of them all. He had the luck, singular in poets. Of being able to achieve a competence other than by poetry and then devote the ending years of his beloved verses" (Cecil 52).

After the death of his wife, Hardy was racked with sorrow and guilt as he hadn't tried harder to understand her, and he wrote a collection of poems, *Vetris Vestigiae Flammae* in memory of her and their life. All was not glooming, in 1914 Hardy remarried, to Florence Dugdale, his secretary since 1914, nearly 40 years his junior. From 1920-1927 he worked on his autobiography which, when it was published, under was Florence's name. During the remainder of his life, he devoted himself to poetry, of which wrote several collections. Hardy became the president of Hardy Society of Authors. Hardy's last books published in his lifetime are *Human Shows, Far Phantasies, Song and Trifles* (1925). *Winter Words* on various moods and meters appeared posthumously in 1928.

It was Hardy, like George Moore, who helped to break the constraints against which novelist had fretted in their critical discussion of what to do on the novel. He had extended the treatment of women's physicality by developing a sub erotic register on some of early novels. Hardy created extravagance range of observation regarding the experienced and predicament of the time. "Hardy stared 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 of social change" (Cecil 52). As a realist, Hardy felt art should describe and comment upon actual situation such as the heavy lot of the rural laborers and the bleak lives of oppressed women. "Hardy's personal life was overshadowed by behavior of his wife. She prided herself being niece of an arch deacon rather than her novelist husband. Though he never commented on his conjugal but shadows of unhappiness can be seen in some of his novels" (Ghent 83).

Moreover, Hardy's personalities in the novels are deliberated subject to his inexorable plots and those plots of cosmic irony. Because of these results, his characters are remarkable. "Tess, Bathsheba, Eustacia, Jude, Sue play the pivotal role in Hardy's fictional works and their predominant present makes them central and major texts in themselves" (Ghent 83). His career as writer spanned over fifty years. His works reflect his stoical pessimism and sense of tragedy in human life. The center of his novels is rather desolate and history - freighted countryside around Dorchester.

Hardy's novels take place in the partly - real, partly - dreamed" country of Wessex. The landscape was modeled on the real countries of Berkshire, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset and Wiltshire, with fictional places based on real locations. Hardy's novels are village tragedies, composed to the drama of broken love and wrong girls, the feuds and the hangings that filled his early memories (Cecil 53).

Hardy's novels are all others in describing love, which is conceived as blind, irritable storm. Hardy excels all other in describing love." He wishes us feel the actually heat and colour of blame, to reproduce its impact on hearts" (Ghent 83). For Hardy, love is women's whole existence. He stressed their frailty, their sweetness, their submissiveness, their coquetry as well as their caprice. He treats women with sympathy, the suffering of Tess, Elferied, Marty and Bathsheba are touched with peculiar pathos.

There is always something of the folk song about Hardy's plots. Even *Tess of the d' Urberville*, which is considered so modern and advanced in its time, has a story, which reveals itself as a regular folk - tale tragedy. The novel, like the other major works by Thomas Hardy, although technically a nineteenth century work, anticipates the twentieth century in regard to nature and treatment of its subject matter. Furthermore, Hardy bravely challenged many of sexual and religious convention of the Victorian age.

Hardy began to write *Tess of the d' Urevilles* in 1889 and it was originally serialized in the Graphic after being rejected by several other periodicals from July to December in 1891. It was the twelfth novel published by Thomas Hardy. It was finally published as a novel in December of 1891. The novel questions society's sexual mores by compassionately portraying a heroin who is seduced by the son of her employer and who thus not considered pure and chaste women by the rest of society.

Tess of the d' Urbervilles came into conflict with Victorian morality. It explored the dark side of his family connection Berkshire. Considered a radical writer during the later Victorian years, Hardy received negative criticism for *Tess of the*

d'Urbervilles. He strongly defended Tess, a controversial character for the Victorian, and he felt particularly sensitive to the negative criticism about her and novel.

Hardy added the subtitle 'A Pure Women' at the last moment. It created problems for many critics. The subtitle snubbed many readers on moral ground, for whom Tess is a "ruined" immoral woman. Hardy's public and critics were especially in his depicting the seduction of a village girl. *Tess of the d' Urbervilles* raised a lot of eyebrows because it questioned Victorian morals, but this didn't affect book sales. Upon its publication, *Tess of the d' Urbervilles* encountered brutally hostile reviews; although it is now considered a major work of fiction, the poor reception of *Tess of the d' Urbervilles* precipitated Thomas Hardy's transition from writing fiction to poetry" (Ghent 84). Nevertheless, the novel was commercially successful and assured Hardy's financial security.

Tess of the d' Urbervilles deals with several significant contemporary subject for Hardy, including the struggles against the religious belief that occurred during Hardy's lifetime. The Oxford Movement, a spiritual movement involving extremely devout thinking and actions, largely influenced Hardy. His family members were primarily orthodox Christians and he also considered entering the clergy, as did many of his relatives. Yet he eventually abandoned his devout faith in God based on the scientific advances of his contemporaries, including most prominently Darwin's on the *Origin of Species*. Hardy's own religious experiences can thus be seen in the character of Angel Clare. Angel Clare resists the conservative religious beliefs of his parents to take a secular view of philosophy. Like Angel Clare, Thomas Hardy found himself torn between different social with which he could not fully align himself. *Tess of the d' Urebevilles* reflects that divide.

The novel also reflects Hardy's preoccupation with class that continues through his novels. Hardy had connections to both the working and the upper class, but felt that he belonged to neither. This is reflected in the pessimism contained in Tess of the d'Urbervilles toward the chances for Tess to ascend in society and Angel's precarious position as neither a member of the upper class nor a working person equivalent to his fellow milkier at Talbothays. (Ghent 85)

Purity, both sexual and moral, is an important concept in the novel. The word is used throughout the narrative with reference to Tess, and the subtitle of the book deems her as a pure woman. When applied to women in Victorian England, the concept of purity had specific reference to sexual chastity. By this definition Tess loses her right to be called "Pure". The word is nevertheless still applied to her because she is no more than an innocent victim.

When Hardy wrote the novel he knew that the characterization of asexually fallen women as "pure" would shock some readers, and indeed it did, but he thought it was important to show that loss of virginity does not necessarily corrupt a woman's heart and mind.

Over a hundred years after the publishing of this novel, readers have enjoyed, learned, and been intrigued because of a radical writer who fought against the social pressure to conform to the moral standards through his character—a poor, oppressed woman named Tess Durbeyfield. (Cecil53)

Hardy considers Tess "pure" because, despite her bodily state, that is her loss of virginity, she is morally pure, uncorrupted by her hard life.

CHAPTER-II

On Victorian Morality

The term morality is defined as the standard or principle of good behaviors. It is a concept, which refers to the social system of morals. It is a societal phenomenon and since human beings create societies, it is a concept created by human beings. It is clear that morality is relative to our environment and does not apply to all personas at all times. The concept of morality can only be subjective instead of objective, universal or absolute. It does not apply to individual human beings when they are alone. A shipwrecked survivor on an island need not concern himself with morality because it does not apply to him in isolation. This illustration emphasizes the fact that morality is applicable to an individual only when he interacts with other people. Despite the fact that morality is relative phenomenon, human societies have established codes of conduct, codes of morality to regulate society.

The concept of morality is different in different society. A specific act may be moral, value and lawful in one culture, while the identical act may be punishable by death in another culture. Human beings devise moral judgments, such as good and evil, right and wrong, with the object of furthering law and order in society. All societies impose moral standards on its members.

The Victorian society was fully influenced by religion. The Victorian system of morality was relied on the existence of gods or godlike beings:

Through the medium of religion they had paralyzed the mind of the people, just as morality had enslaved the spirit. In other words, religion and morality was a much better whip to keep people in submission, than even the club and the gun. It is Morality, which condemned

woman to the position of a celibate. Morality was merciless in its attitude to a woman. Once she dared to be herself, to be true to her nature, to life, there is no return: the woman is thrust out from the pale and protection of society. (Dylan 20)

The society imposed moral standards on its members based on religion. So, the concept of morality in Victorian society is different than the concept of modern society. The Victorian age, named after Queen Victoria who ruled British Empire for sixty-three years was marked by deeply conservative morality, a morality which covered every facet of society from dress to sexual mores. "When one thinks of Victorian society, images of strict etiquette, virtuous mannerisms, and perhaps an aura of prudishness probably come to mind"(Agress 34). The Victorian sexual mores was highly repressive and an individual's sexuality was a focus of public attention.

During the Victorian period, the value of social ethic was strong and the society would play a vital role in the private affairs of people. The society was dominated by belief that an individual's sex and sexuality form the most basic core of his/her identity, and social standing. Sexuality was a taboo subject matter and responsible for the moral decline of society rather than an interest in achieving personal gratification and satisfaction. "An era controlled by evangelical ideals in which talk of sex and sexuality was seen as taboo"(Morgan 11). For the Victorians, physical body and sex was intrinsically undesirable and unclean. The society adopted strong moral norms in sexual behavior, and consider actions outside of the boundaries set by those norms to be immoral or wrong. "There seemed to be an anti-sensual mentality which regarded sexual restraint as favorable and moral" (Morgan 11).

The Victorian society expected women to marry and manage a home, thus preventing them from exploring or expanding on their own interests, talents, and

desires. As society assigned women to the home, it also effectively prevented women from gaining the knowledge that secured men's control. A woman's chief duty was to sacrifice herself to physical and emotional needs of her husband. She was supposed to know the things necessary to bring up their children and to keep house.

The society distinguished between sexual relationships that are practiced for biological reproduction and physical gratifications. Sex was allowed only in formal marital status and in fertile age but could not be practiced solely for physical pleasure.

The Victorian period was an undeniably modest society in terms of manners, speech, gestures, and appearances. The society had a very stringent sexual code including a widespread and principled belief that there should be discipline and unobtrusiveness in all sexual activity.

(Morgan 12)

Mothering a son was quite different than mothering a daughter. "It was a top priority to teach a daughter how- to conform to society's definition of femininity" (Ghent 87).

The Victorian girls were taught that they should get married and have children.

Daughters were taught at a young age that they should learn to become a good wife and mother. They were born, brought up and educated to become wives and nothing else.

The Victorian society was in the grip of patriarchy. Men were the makers, interpreters, and enforcers of social rules. The characteristics a gentleman possessed were competitiveness, rationality, aggressiveness, independence, and toughness, ambition, social responsibility, will power, self-reliance, and direct action, rather than a slow process of thought. Masculinity was equated with power and authority. Various notions of superiority, dominance, and freedoms defined it. Quite contrary, femininity

as equated with submission, compliance, inferiority and passivity, nurturance, intuitive morality, domesticity, and delicacy. So, men assigned the roles, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and needs of women.

The Victorians adopted conservative tradition that stated women were intellectually inferior. There was one set of behaviours, codes and rules for men and a different set for women. The Victorian women were not allowed to enjoy sexual satisfaction freely and were often considered to be responsible for the moral decline of society if they did. "The Victorian society was patriarchal and the sexual ethics were often hypocritical because the women were held much more accountable for their sexual behaviors than the men" (Morgan 19). Husbands were seen as the superior beings in the house and women were responsible for domestic duties. They were responsible for housework like shopping, cooking, and sewing. They were compelled to dedicate to home and family. They were submissive in each and every field. "Men never supposed to be submissive. They were to be movers, and doers--the actors in life. Women were to be passive bystanders, submitting to fate, to duty, to God, and to men" (Ellis 54).

The Victorians were worried that women would cease to fulfill their traditional roles if they received education. "It was even thought that a woman risked brain fever or sterility if she became educated "(Dickerson 49). They thought that learning would physically deform women, make their brains develop large while weakening their wombs, destroy their figure and complexion. They even thought that co-education would sexually stimulate the male students; in return, distracting them from their studies. Moreover, the Victorian women were thought to be too feeble minded and weak to handle the troubles of political involvement.

From the age they were small, women were expected to be perfect dolls. They

had to remain bluntly. They had to remain under their father's or husband's control. "The empire of women is the empire of softness, her commands are caresses, her menaces are tears" (Ellis 56). They were believed to be lower class citizens, not worthy of voting or owning property. It was not only men who believed that they should not hold a lower position but even women believed that they should not hold the power to influence politics or even make decisions about their own property. For at least this reason, Victorians seem to have thought quite a lot about sex, creating theories and rules and reasons that were often very incongruent with regard to the way sex began to be understood in times following. In such a patriarchal society as was nineteenth-century England, female sexuality became most scrutinized, and often many mistaken beliefs were formed. Victorian England being a highly religious society, a great deal of scrutiny was placed upon women who were unchaste before and outside of marriage.

However, marriage was the ultimate goal of every young Victorian woman, they had no choices in their life. Young ladies, though advised on the importance of catching a man, were warned not to be too liberal in display of their charms. Marriage was seen as a life-long working partnership, not an experiment. It was a sacred bond, a holy mutual commitment, in which women served often as matriarchs. They were not equal partners in marriage. They grew up with the aspirations that they would grow up to marry with perfect men and they would be everything they ever dreamed about. But once married women would feel disappointed that they did not have this perfect relationship and delve into becoming the ideal mother and wife. "The public avocation of violence was ironic since men and women were supposed to be one after marriage. The reference means that those women lost their autonomy, identity, and independence"(Hasan 43). They had no longer works in the care of others; instead, all

their time and efforts were spent on her husband, which was the middle-class role of the angel in the house. Meekness and modesty were considered beautiful Virtues.

Similarly, divorce in the Victorian period was almost forbidden for women. Basically women had no grounds for divorce. "It was alright to become separated from husband but divorce was out of the question "(Hasan 46). Society would play a big role in divorce too. A woman was expected to live separated from her husband for the rest of her life and not married. "The Victorian patriarchal society put women into the category of idiots"(Dickerson 49). She was not allowed to keep her children or retain any of her property. She was allowed to keep things such as her makeup and clothing and nothing more. Divorce for her meant a life of solitude. She was not allowed to sue for alimony or any of the property they had acquired together. With no skills due to being uneducated she often had to find a job anywhere she could just to make ends meet.

Encouraging the belief that women were no more than property of their husbands, the Victorian society permitted even physical abuse of women. It was typical for women to be beaten with fists, kicked, savaged by bulldogs, or thrown into burning fires by male abusers. Physical abuse was seen as one way in which superiors corrected their subordinates. Women were considered to be "delivered to them as their thing, to be used at their pleasure" (Brownmiller 39). Thus the Victorian patriarchal society lumped women into the same category of minors.

Nineteenth century laws also led to a woman's oppression in regard to her husband. Most states enforced a common law, which stated a husband had the legal right to control his wife and all her possessions. The contemporary laws were more open in presenting women as subjected to male supremacy." For the Victorians, as God through marriage had made men and women "one body," the society through law

had made husband and wife "one person"(Hasan 46). In the process of marriage, women had to submit all components of their body and mind. In accordance with Victorian sentiment and family division of labor, contemporary law was also based on the privileges given to the male. Therefore, the contemporary law also helped the patriarchal society to establish male supremacy. The contemporary law reinforced the view of males as free, irresponsible, and autonomous, and of women as dependent and responsible for the essential work of rearing children and maintaining the private sphere of the home. That is why the Victorian women almost never sought 'self-fulfillment' at the expense of the family. Instead, they saw any husband-success as a kind of personal success.

Women were expected to uphold the values of stability and morality by making the home a special place, a refuge from the world where her husband could escape from the highly competitive, unstable, immoral world of business and industry. "It was widely expected that in order to succeed in the work, men had to adopt certain values and behaviors such as materialism, aggression, vulgarity, hardness, rationality. But men also needed to develop another side to their nature, a human side, an anticompetitive side. The home was the place where they could do this"(Dylan 20). It was where they could express their personal feelings and thoughts. The home was no longer a unit valued for its function in the community, but rather a place where a male can enjoy and rule. The women were expected to organize parties and dinners to bring prestige to their husbands, also making it possible for them to meet new people and establish economically important relationships. At the same time they must make sure they devote enough time to their children and towards improving their own abilities and cultural knowledge. A woman in Victorian times was also obliged to take care of her parents in case of illness, even if this stretched over months and years and often

implied a great sacrifice of self-interest on her side. "Another duty was that of being the "sick-nurse" who takes care of ill family members. This requires a good temper, compassion for suffering and sympathy with sufferers, neat-handedness, quiet manners, love of order and cleanliness; all qualities a woman worthy of the name should possess in the 19th century"(Dylan 20).

In this way, the religion and the contemporary law enforcement reinforced viciousness against women by encouraging the belief that they were inferior to men. The Victorians felt that women had to remain in the realm of the private sphere because of their function in nature as child bearers and providers of care. Women have historically been viewed as second-class citizens-at least since the Victorian era. Therefore, it was understood that seeking their own independence should not be their goal. They were taught to believe independence was only for the unfortunate women, and that they should be dependent on a man. "Woman is so formed as to be dependent on man. The woman who is considered the most fortunate in life has never been independent, having been transferred from parental care and authority to that of a husband" (Dylan 20).

The double standard allowed male sexual freedom but women were judged and punished severely when they do not conform to society's expectations. The society proclaimed that women were the guardians of morality. They were raised to superhuman stature and denied the quality of being what they were, the very quality of being human beings. Actually, the view of women was exalted because they were compared to goddess. So they could not have chances to enjoy a status equal to men. They were measured as sacred object, which should not be used for such pleasurable thing as sex. Their bodies were seen as pure and clean until they have sexual experience. "The first wish of the ideal woman, whether she is loved or neglected

should be to be herself respectable and this notion of respectability included an attitude towards sexuality that was chaste and free of passion"(Morgan 22).

Sexual attitudes and practices were much more stigmatizing for the woman than the men. Without sexual purity, a woman was no woman, but rather a lower form of being, a fallen woman, unworthy of the love. Indeed, a woman's role was to help men to overcome their essentially immoral natures. Any sexual desires experienced by women were considered to be in contradiction with the social virtue. They were not permitted to freely engage themselves in sexual acts unless it was with the specific purpose of procreation. Sex outside of procreation was discouraged and disallowed. If a woman did not wish to have child, sexual pleasure was also to be excluded from her experience. Chastity was an idealized value for a woman. It was largely believed that women should have no sexual desire. Moreover, they were thought to be rather asexual creatures, and the sexual act was simply an act through which they might produce children. Thus, the Victorian sexual prudery and denial combined to produce a portrayal of women as childbearing machines:

The view of women as exalted, superior, almost divine, beings acquired the name of 'woman-worship'. Indeed, some began to speak of a 'Goddess' rather than the traditional God. Nevertheless, most Victorians adopted the conservative tradition that stated that women were morally and intellectually inferior. (Laura 34)

Thus, they were either raised over like a goddess or thrust down like a childbearing-machine.

A woman's worth before marriage desires and needs that do not affect women is the basis for the double standard. Her purity rested in her virginity, and once

married she was expected to only engage in conjugal acts when her husband desired. "During the Victorian era, marriage was a mans world" (Kynch 26). It was considered acceptable fbr a man to have sex with a prostitute. Women could not have sex with other men without being considered immoral but men did not have this restriction. In fact it was often considered natural that a man might need the body of another woman. Because women had no rights, this behavior could not be punished. Women simply had to accept this behavior since obedience was all that was required of them. The ideal woman was "suited to the private sphere of the home and the family, possessing gentleness, kindness, and active sympathy" (Agress 36). Both pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relationships of a woman were perceived to be gravely immoral and shameful.

CHAPTER–III

Tess as a naive woman

Tess Durbev field, the heroine of the novel, is certainly a victim of morality in the Victorian society. She is a dutiful and an obedient daughter of rural working class family. Her appearance, behaviors and acts reveal her innocence:

Phases of her childhood lurked in her aspect still. As she walked along today, for all her bouncing handsome womanliness, you could sometimes see her twelfth in her cheeks, or her ninth year sparkling from her eyes; and even her fifth would flit over the curves of her mouth now and then. (11)

During the Victorian era, girls were often married because their parents would search for wealthy men who could advance their social status. Marriage of daughters was a means to secure business deals, increase wealth or raise social status. The Victorians girls had no control over their education and were taught domestic duties only. They should know the domestic chores like sewing, cooking and cleaning. As a result of lack of education girls were expected to marry in order to find someone to support them economically since they did not have the knowledge to do any jobs. This led them towards the social and financial pressures that resulted in them getting married according to their parents' choice. They had to marry with men that their parents chose for financial and social reasons.

Tess's parents, aware of her beauty, viewed her as an opportunity to gain wealth. They urged their daughter to venture from the home to seek financial assistance from the D'Urbervilles in nearby Trantridge. They chose wealthy Alec d'Urbervilles for her daughter. Tess's mother dresses her for Alec assuring her that her

pretty face and figure will do more for her than her extinct d'Urbervilles title. She nearly sets up Tess to be seduced but Tess even cannot realize the purposes for which she was sent to Trantridge Cross.

Tess's white dress symbolizes innocence and Hardy suggests that her purity comes from her lack of experience as he describes her as a girl untouched by experience. Tess' mother never educates her about some of the essential facts of life and Tess cannot know what most men are like. In addition, Tess' selfish mother wants her to marry Alec and never thinks about the best interests of Tess. When Tess returns without marrying Alec, her mother is upset with her, believing that she has missed a key opportunity to marry a rich man. Thus, Tess is a victim of her parents' aspirations to ascend social scale.

Sexuality in the nineteenth century was not only unspoken but literally unspeakable. Women were discouraged from questioning the sexual acts because of the general moral of revulsion. There was strong condemnation of explicit treatment of sex in conversation. "Most of the condemnation of sex was simply an excessive need to protect oneself from what was considered shameful and worshipping the code of chastity" (Dylan 19). Total ignorance of sexual matters and abundant benevolence were the idealized characteristics of the Victorian women. Tess is a girl who does not get any knowledge about sexual matters. Being unaware of her sexuality, Tess goes to claim kinship with wealthy Alec d'Urbervilles and seek a portion of her fortune. "It was luxuriance of aspect, a fullness of growth, which made her appear more of a woman than she really is"(34). As a result of her upbringing she receives from her parents and the society she cannot perceive the danger of meeting Alec.

Tess's innocence is also revealed in her passive resistance to Alec. When she thinks Alec is making physical advances, she just gives him a little push, which

almost knocks him off the horse. Whenever she participates in Alec's desire, her participation is lifeless. When he kisses her she flushes with shame and wipes the spot on her cheek that has been touched by his lips with her handkerchief. We can clearly understand her mechanical response to Alec's activities. "She had not considered what she had been doing: whether he was man or woman, stick or stone, in her involuntary hold on him. Recovering her reserve she sat without replying, and thus they reached the summit of another declivity" (45).

Thus, Tess is an innocent girl betrayed by a wicked seducer. She is very inexperienced in the ways of the world, particularly relating to men, as a result of the upbringing she receives from her parents.

The Victorian society expected girls to marry and manage a home, thus preventing them from exploring or expanding on their own interests, talents, and desires. As society assigned girls only domestic affairs, it also effectively prevented them from gaining the knowledge that secured men's control. Due to the fact that a girl's chief duty was to sacrifice herself to the needs of her family, they were supposed to know the things necessary to bring up their children and to keep house.

The Victorians thought it unnecessary for girls to attend school. It was even said that studying was against their biological nature and could make them ill. "The fear that a better education would not only make women neglect the home but would also make them strong-minded and domineering, or even worse, make them proud and desirous of becoming masters of their homes prevailed during the nineteenth century" (Blake 29).

Due to this fear, Victorian girls received an education geared towards submission and motherhood rather than intellectual fulfillment and general

knowledge. They were to stay more or less an ornament of society and be subordinate to their husbands. Due to the fact, Tess had hoped to become a schoolteacher but she could not go to school. "She had hoped to be a teacher at the school, but the fates seemed to decide otherwise" (16). Tess could not have education and her childhood experiences could not help her to prepare herself to function within the patriarchal framework of the society. And, consequently, she never learnt the value of conforming to the expectations of others. Tess neither could realize nor taught, at a young age, that innocence to social convention carries with it the certainty of merciless judgment and swift punishment.

Tess is the most responsible member of her family. As the eldest child of the family, she is keenly conscious of her duties. Her sense of duty to her father and mother is as deep as her devotion to her brothers and sisters. "Tess has the strong sense of responsibility which the children of alcoholics often develop, she has, like some of them, developed an excessive sense of responsibility" (Lothe 17).

Tess's sense of responsibility can be seen in her trivial behaviors too. When she returns from the dance and finds her mother washing clothes she feels "a chill self reproach that she had not returned sooner, to help her mother in these domesticities, instead of indulging herself out-of-doors" (14). She also feels guilty about the grass stains on the white dress her mother washed and ironed. She leaves the dance early because she is worried about her father's behavior. Her anxiety about the father and her feeling of guilt toward her mother are both aspects of her compulsive feeling of responsibility for her family. Having irresponsible parents, Tess assumes responsibility and worries about her younger siblings:

All these young souls were passengers in the Durbey field ship-entirely dependent on the judgment of the two Durbey field adults for their

pleasures, their necessities, their health, even their existence. If the head of the Durbey field households chose to sail into difficulty, disaster, starvation, disease, degradation, death, thither were these half-dozen little captivates under hatches compelled to sail with them. (18)

Tess feels constantly solicitous about the welfare of her brothers and sisters. Tess's parents force her to take in responsibilities beyond her years. She falls asleep as she is taking a load of bees to the market and accidentally kills the horse. This is not Tess' fault. It wasn't her responsibility to take the bees to the market. It was the responsibility of her drunken father. If anyone is to blame for being irresponsible, it is Tess' parents. Tess is always doing work her parents should be doing because her parents are too lazy and Tess feels responsible for supporting the family. Their inability to provide security drives her to be the victim of Alec. She does not receive the parental care which would give her a feeling of security and the freedom to grow in accordance with her nature.

Tess must from an early age assume responsibility for the care of the younger children and for the welfare of the family as a whole. She is always ready to give them financial help with the last penny she has got. She even goes to d'Urbervilles mansion to reform her ruined family again. When Tess seems reluctant, the children wail "Tess won't go-o-o and be made a la-a-dy of!" (24). Later too when she is working at different places, she does not become oblivious of the needs of her parents.

Tess is compelled to be a parent not only of the children but of her mother and father as well. Her parents are drunkards and she has to control them. They, both go off drinking together and it is Tess who must fetch them. "They went home together, Tess holding one arm of her father, and Mrs Durbey field the other"(22). From the beginning of the novel to the end, she has an overwhelming feeling that the family's

fortunes are in her hands, that it is she who must be their providence.

It is clear that Tess needs, wishes, feelings, and aspirations must be sacrificed to the common good of her family. Joy, spontaneity, self-actualization are out of the question. As a Victorian girl, she makes sacrifices easily "The fact that she makes this sacrifice so readily and that it is dwelt upon so little indicates the feebleness of Tess's wishes for herself and the strength of her self-effacing tendencies"(Beal 57). Thus, She is a self sacrificing young woman who is devoted to her poor family. Her compulsion to sacrifice herself for the family is central cause of her tragedy.

In attempting to establish Tess's purity or innocence, Hardy employs ethical norms. Tess is pure because she never meant to do wrong since she lives in an ironical world in which events rarely turn out as she intend them to. She is not to be responsible for the negative consequences of her actions. Her decisions have always been made with good and pure intentions but have resulted in damaging consequences. The distinction between Tess's act and intention makes her pure. "Her soul remains unstrained regardless of what happens to her body"(Moraan 20).

If we accept the argument that people should be judged by their intentions rather than by their by their acts, we find that Tess intended the opposite of what she did. Tess is pure because her intentions are pure. Her self-sacrificing attitude toward her family is the cause that she cannot preserve her virginity, her purity. It is clear that her sin, premarital relationship with Alec, is not her deliberate act. She is an innocent victim, not an immoral woman.

Thus, Hardy opposes the traditional view equating virtue and purity with virginity. Hardy's argument seems to be that we cannot judge an act's (goodness or badness by its conformity or lack of conformity to the ethical standards of society for

society's conventions and laws are merely arbitrary, man made. Thus, Hardy criticizes the attitude of purity of the Victorian society. He makes us feel antipathetic toward the Victorian conventions just as successfully as he makes us feel sympathetic toward a Victorian girl, Tess.

Tess's Relation with Alec D'Urbervilles

Alec D'Urbervilles is the cause of Tess's social disgrace. He is an arrogant, proud and manipulative man. He is a luster who becomes obsessed with mastering her. He is confident that Tess would surrender to his wishes without any response from Tess. "If you are any man's wife you are mine"(37).

Alec's first words to Tess, "Well, my Beauty, what can I do for you?"(34). It indicates that his first impression of Tess is only one of sexual magnetism. Alec pushes strawberries into her mouth and presses roses into her bosom. The strawberries and roses are indications of Alec's lust and sexual desire for Tess as he preys upon her purity and innocence. Dazzled by Tess's beauty, he persuades her for sexual reasons and uses his financial standing as a means of tempting her into giving herself to him. It is clear that Tess never wants to tempt Alec but slowly and gradually she falls victim to Alec's influences.

Tess is purchased by Alec like a slave and manipulated by his presents to her poor family. Alec takes advantages of her feelings for her family and dominates her because of his money and strong personality. His economic help to her family produce on her a feeling of gratitude towards him which he does not fail to use for his nefarious purpose. "Tess weeps because she knows that Alec's kindness to her family is part of his pursuit of her, that her submissions is the price of his bounty, and that she cannot. for her family's sake, turn him away"(Kynch 23).

Alec's treatment toward Tess shows that he wants only her body and is indifferent to her soul. Although Tess understands that she is an erotic object existing solely for his enjoyment, she is incapable to resist him actively. Driven by his senses, Alec rapes her. "He knelt and bent lower, till her breath warmed his face, and in a moment his cheek was in contact with her. She was sleeping soundly, and upon her cheeks there lingered tears" (64). At this time, Hardy gives reference to Shakespeare's "The Rape of Lucerne" where the serpent hisses a sweet bird's song suggesting that Alec is equivalent to Satan.

Alec is successful to make Tess act as he wishes. He assumes a cultural right to possess Tess's body time and again without her consent. Even after his religious conversion, he calls her a temptress and a witch, forgetting that it was he who raped her. His voice sank, and a hot archness shot from his own black eyes. "You temptress, Tess, you dear damned witch of Babylon-I could not resist you as soon as I met you again!" (3 17). Moreover, he blames Tess for her own troubles asking her never to tempt again. Forgetting that it is he who seduced Tess, he even blames her mother who did not warn Tess that man can seduce. Rather than accepting the blame for his weakness of morals, he blames Tess who is naive and meek. He rapes her, but unlike Tess, he is free from guilt. "Alec represents a Victorian aristocratic, a rake, an explicator, a sadist a sexual hunter and a Victorian Satan who causes Tess's execution and his own death"(Kaja 58).

The Victorian double standard to the sexual practices of men and women victimized Tess for having premarital sex but not Alec. Tess stands as the symbol of endurance as she suffers the pain of the social moral crime for which she is not at all responsible. It is the unfair class system that allowed a man to impregnate and abandon a girl. It is society that has encouraged the view of women as objects and

inculcates in them the belief that they are themselves to blame for whatever misfortune befalls them.

Though the child is the result of rape, Tess is made to carry out the heavy odds from the society. Being raped and bearing an illegitimate child she leaves the conventional code of female behavior and is punished by society. The pain and sorrow experienced by her is not shared by her society. She gives birth to her baby without any social support. Church refused to baptize the babe of a spouseless mother. When the baby dies Tess buried it in the shabby corner of the churchyard where all unbaptized infants and notorious drunkards, suicides were buried:

It symbolizes innocence in a sense since this baby was innocent having done nothing wrong, but it was punished by society for coming from such an evil act. Having been raped, Tess was also innocent of the crime, but she was still punished and pushed aside by society. This baby symbolized Tess's bad circumstances which were out of Tess's control.

(Kaja 58)

Because of her rape, Tess is continually bombarded by rejections and humiliations from the society. Impregnated by Alec, Tess becomes the subject of daily gossip in the community. The women of the society even forget that she is a part of same society and that they may suffer the similar case. Desperate to avoid the painful truth, Tess puts on much distance with society. She can no more tolerate the social torment and leaves her father's house. In an attempt to start her life in a new way, Tess decides to move away from the seclusion of Marlott to Talbothays where no one will know of her past. Thus, the social injustice brings undeserved suffering, to Tess. Her momentary submission to Alec brings her a far greater suffering.

Alec's sexual indiscretion is practically overlooked because in Victorian society, sex was thought to be enjoyable for men, but not for women. Women were expected to show voluntary restraint from the act of sex and shrink from the pleasures of passion. Therefore, it seemed more natural for Alec to rape Tess but very unnatural for Tess to become a mother of an illegitimate child "Alec holds this ideological sword over Tess's head throughout the entire novel"(Mary 24). With the burdens of her illegitimate child. Tess has to suffer physically, emotionally and socially.

CHAPTER-IV

Tess as a Victim of the Victorian Morality

Tess's relation with Angel Clare

Although Tess's premarital relationship with Alec is the cause for her social degradation, the cause of her destruction is Angel Clare's concept of morality. Angel appears a highly responsible, intellectual and unorthodox at the beginning which everyone near him appreciates. He is a man with unconventional moral and religious views who does not believe in church.

In contrast to the narrow religious beliefs of his father, Angel is open to other modern moral systems and it is this difference of opinion that leads Angel not to attain college and enter the church. Angel is a rebellious striving toward a personal vision of goodness. He is a secularist who yearns to work for the honor and glory of human beings rather than the honor and the glory of god. Finding the society as a thing, to be improved, he fervently believes in the nobility of man. He is a modern man who wants to reject the values handed to him, and sets off in search of his own.

Tess is tremendously influenced by his unconventional behavior. She is deeply impressed by his personality, thoughts, and behaviors. Tess learns that Angel is a gentleman-born. His father is the Reverent Mr. Clare at Emminster. But when what Angel really is gets disclosed, he comes to be even more priggish than Alec. "Within the remote depths of his constitution, so gentle and affectionate as lie was in general, there lay hidden a hard logical deposit, like a vein of metal in a soft loam, which turned the edge of everything that attempted to traverse it. It had blocked the acceptance of the church" (308).

Victorian society held a double standard for men and women. Although a man

was expected to control his sexual desires the best he could, the man was allowed some latitude. Although he was expected to remain faithful to his wife, if he occasionally visited a prostitute to relieve himself of evils his wife was expected to overlook this behavior. On their wedding night, Angel freely reveals his secret to Tess that he has had a brief relationship with a woman in London. He tells of the time of his life when he plunged into eight and forty hours' dissipation with a stranger. Clare confesses, "Happily I woke almost immediately to a sense of my folly, I would have no more to stay to her, and I came home. I have never repeated the offence. But I felt I should like to treat you with perfect frankness and honor, and I would not do so without telling this. Do you forgive me?" (286).

At this time when Angel Clare unfolds the reality of his experience, he seems to be extremely sure that Tess would forgive him. It seems he wants to appear to be honest and sincere before Tess so much so that she might begin to love even his follies just because he had made a confession. Finding the experience of Angel like her, Tess determines not to keep her secret hidden any longer. She, too, hopes respect from beloved husband. But what she achieves by doing so is the exact opposite of her expectation. Tess chooses the harder, stony path and does not compromise by hiding truth only in order to be socially accepted and materially secure. But when she discloses her past which is no more different than Angels. he cannot forgive her. Tess's begging for forgiveness is responded very cruelly. "Forgive me as you are forgiven! I forgive you Angel. "You-yes you do.' But you do not forgive me?' Tess, forgiveness does not apply to the case! You were one person, now you are another. My God-how can forgiveness meet such grotesque- prestidigitation as that" (200).

Tess tries to respond him with honest, and integrity. She wants to build the happiness of her matrimony on honor, sincerity and a pure conscience so that her

beloved husband would be able to respect her. She determines not to keep her past hidden but Angel's reaction to her confession is astonishment for her. The contrast between Angel's thoughts and actions makes him hypocrite. His hypocrisy or dual character creates a moral crisis in Tess's life. Tess bestows the gift of forgiveness on him but he swiftly changes from a loving beloved to a husband who criticizes and rejects his wife. "Hardy has thoroughly prepared the reader, if not the heroine, for Angel's vicious reaction to Tess's confession on their wedding night. As soon as he learns she was badgered into a short affair when she was sixteen, farm workers turn into the scum, not the salt, of the earth" (Mary 24). Angel is a snob who thinks himself a moral man but rejects Tess considering immoral for the similar act. Consequently, Tess becomes a victim of his snobbery.

Angel is concerned with Tess's virginity rather than her innocence. For him, her purity lies in her virginity not in her innocence. The horrible sense of his view of Tess deadens her spirit and she staggers being unable to hold her. She struggles to clarify her position. "What have I done- what have I done! I have not told of anything that interferes with or belies my love for you. You don't think I planned it, do you? It is in your own mind that you are angry at, Angel Clare, it is not in me. It is not in me, and I am not that deceitful woman you think of me"(296).

Her pleading for mercy and all her endeavors to clarify her real position go in vain. A stone could melt but not Angel. Angel's idea of purity is conventional and narrow; he equates it with physical virginity. Angel seems intellectually liberated as he does not subscribe to the religious beliefs of his father and brothers and refuses to become a minister. In reality, his underlying emotions and basic principles remain conventional, perhaps as conventional as theirs"(Boumelha 27).

Finding Tess beautiful and pure, Angel treats her gently. He respects her feelings and interest. "When Angel almost kisses her too tempting mouth, he apologizes, Forgive me, Tess dear, he whispered. I ought to have asked. I did not know what I was doing. I did not know what I was doing. I do not mean it as a liberty. I am devoted to you, Tessy, dearest, in all sincerity! (153). The intellectual and a free thinking Angel proves to no more than a slave to the Victorian customs and conventionality. After her confession, Tess looks so true but Angel urges her to lie, to tell him her confession is not true.

'Tess ! Say it is not true! No. it is not true!' 'It is true.'

'Every word?' 'Every word'

He looked at her imploringly, as if he would willingly have taken a lie from her lips, knowing it to be one, and have made of it, by some sort of sophistry, a valid denial. (236)

Angel is wrong as he asserts that Tess is not the same woman when he learns of her past. He cannot love her because of her experience of sex. He is able to see only her body not her genuineness. Hardy comments on Angel's judgement of Tess's purity." No prophet had told him. and he was not prophet enough to tell himself, that essentially this young wife of his was as deserving of the praise of King Lemuel as any other woman endowed with the same dislike of evil. her moral value having to be reckoned not by achievement but by tendency" (230).

When Tess reveals the fact that she is really a d'Urbervilles instead of a Durbeyfield, Angel is delighted about Tess's family lineage. Angel replies, "You are not what in common parlance is called a lady, for you are a cottager's daughter, as I am proud to say. But you are a lady, nevertheless-in feeling and nature" (179). But

after knowing Tess's past, he is disappointed in his vision of the same status. He blames her for the family background which he previously thought would make her acceptable to be respectable in middle class society. "He is self-contradictory because his rejection of society's values is superficial; at a deeper level, he still believes in society's moral laws and social code"(Milberg 72). Basically, if Angle did not have the conventional concept of morality he could ignore her past and accept her.

Angel demonstrates that he is the product of a culture which allows a man sexual freedom but not a woman. When Tess responds with deep hurt and confusion over this turnaround, Angel tells her, "Don't Tess, don't argue. Different societies, different manners. You almost make me say you are an unapprehending peasant-woman, who has never been initiated into the proportions of social things. You don't know what you say" (248). And then, in the Victorian behavior Angel can't fight, he tells Tess, "I thought-any man would have thought-that by giving up all ambition to win a wife with social standing, with fortune, with knowledge of the world, I should secure rustic innocence as surely as I should secure pink cheeks " (254). There is no doubt that a double standard of morality was in force for the Victorians.

Women were expected to remain chaste until marriage and faithful thereafter. With men it was quite different. As owner of his wife, a man could do as he pleased with and to his spouse because she lacked the power to control her own actions. Angel demonstrates that he is the product of a culture which allows a man sexual freedom but not a woman. Because of the double standard of morality, Angel cannot forgive Tess when she tells him about the rape and the baby. Thus, Angel has turned into another one of Tess's victimizers.

Being influenced by the Victorian concept morality, Angel idealizes her as a fresh and virginal daughter of nature. To Angel, she is a goddess, a symbol of

perfection rather than a person with faults and foibles. The 'Angel of the House' theory was strong. It was women's duty to preserve the moral idealism. Tess suffers because she is unable to preserve the moral idealism. "Women had to be seen more pure, almost more like angels than normal humans, an ethereal vision whose purity is to be worshipped" (Ellis 15). Angel idealizes the Tess in the same way and it is his idealization of Tess which blocks him to accept her.

Victorian society's view of woman as only worth something if she were pure and goddess-like results in Angel idealizing Tess instead of seeing her as a normal human being. For him, she is a spiritualized version of her sex, worthy of being, compared to Artemis and Demeter. Learning the truth of Tess's violation breaks his ideal mould she is supposed to fit, and results in his leaving her and blaming her for their broken marriage. Despite holding more liberal opinions than his father and brothers, Angel Clare is nevertheless equally dogmatic and obstinate. "He has a deeply theoretical mindset; it is his conventionality that causes him to reject Tess when he learns information about her past that contradicts his view of her" (Mary 35). He is aware of what the Victorian society deems pure, and this keeps him from accepting Tess for who she really is.

Tess is trapped once again - although on this occasion she is bound to Angel by ideological fetters. Tess is transformed in Angel's sight - a visionary essence of woman - a whole sex condensed into one typical form. Tess's material, physical relationship with Alec has been replaced by a spiritual, idealized one with Angel. She has now become a by his imaginative and ethereal reasoning. (229)

The Victorian women were thought to be the property of their husbands. To uphold the honor of women, husbands felt a need to protect their wives from others. For the

Victorians, a woman's morality was based on her physical purity and her physical purity was her virginity.

The Victorians believed that the loss of virginity necessarily corrupt women's heart and mind. Women had to remain faithful to the marriage vows. "The Victorians were always dismayed when women did not remain faithful, and they made very distinct assumptions about men and women, the most important one, perhaps, having to do with sexuality"(Ghent 86). When Angel found that his wife is not virgin he is humiliated. Tess's lost virginity compelled him to feel socially degraded and morally disgraced. His conventional mindedness incited him to desert her. "Tess's confession destroys Angel's idea of Tess as a virginal, pure, simple child of the soil; as a result, he cannot see, let alone appreciate, the vital, loving Tess before him" (Mary 36).

Tess is compelled to sink in a great sense of guilt because of Angel's concept of morality. Angel's rejection breaks Tess spiritually and emotionally. The physical wound on her created by Alec begins to ripen when Angel declares her as an impure girl. His departure to Brazil leaves her almost as a widow. "Angel's physical rejection of Tess has subjected her to the cruelty of love, she is broken both spiritually and emotionally"(Kaja73). Similarly, Angel desertion of her leads her towards a long period of hard physical labor and ceaseless mental agony.

Another example of the sexual double standard that existed during Victorian times was the fact that a wife could not divorce her husband for being adulterer, whereas a man could divorce his wife and leave her penniless solely for her infidelities:

Husbands were expected to use discretion with their extramarital affairs, and although Victorian society did not exactly approve of men

having adulterous relationships, these relationships were also not condemned as long as they were dealt with in a discreet and non-public manner. It was often thought that being married and keeping a mistress was far more preferable and likely to be accepted in society, than remaining single and engaging in casual intercourse. (Hasan 43)

Divorce in the Victorian period was a matter of disgrace, embarrassments or a social scandal. Angel does not divorce Tess to avoid social disgrace. When Tess tells him that he can divorce her he replies that she cannot understand the social rules. As a Victorian male, Angel regards Tess as an inferior creature suffering from a lack of intellectual faculties and an unreasonable being. He believes that Tess has to be subdued and guided.

'By divorcing me.'

'Good heavens - how can you be so simple! How can I divorce you?'

'Can't you - now I have told you? I thought my confession would give you grounds for that.'

'Tess- You are too, too childish -unformed-crude, I suppose! You don't know what you are. you don't understand the law-You don't understand!' (199)

Thus, Angel's moral thought generated by society victimizes Tess. It is the Victorian concept of morality that unfairly keeps Angel from accepting Tess as his wife, despite his own besmirched sexual history.

However Angel attempted to transgress the conventional ideas, he cannot leave them back. As a result of upbringing in the same society, he is no more different than Alec. Trapped between his conventional mentality and inner self, he destroys

Tess's life. If he had been able to rid himself from the distorted notions of purity which he had been brought up with, there would have been no sufferings. He Judged her by social scale rather than by her virtuousness, compulsion and intention. Angel restrains his love for Tess instead of opening himself to his true inner feelings for her. Thinking and clinging to social values separates him from Tess. His journey to Brazil is just an escape from his inner self which makes him weak rather than strong physically as well as mentally. "O, it is not Angel-not my son-the Angel who went away! She cried in all the irony of sorrow, as she turned herself aside. His father, too, was shocked to see him "(323). Later, he wonders why he judged her by her actions rather than by her intention or will.

Angle, with growing perplexity, joined emigrants to Brazil. His lone hard journey made him to appreciate Tess's worth as he began to discredit the appraisal of Victorians values. Having realized the inadequacy of holding dogmatically to his principles, Angel abandoned them. But personal change came too late to save his wife's life as she becomes Alec's mistress. Tess can not be blamed for going back to Alec. It is the logical decision to make because she, basically, has no choice and has not heard from Angel for a very long time. When Tess kills Alec, it obviously is not by accident. Tess seems like the only person to blame for the murder because she is the one who stabs Alec. It is true that some blame should be placed on Tess for the murder, but this was not completely her fault. She is not a cold-blooded killer. She has lived a miserable life full of sorrow and tragedy. When she learns that Alec is not her cousin and that he was wrong for making Tess believe that Angel would never come, she takes out all her anger and frustration in an impulsive crime of passion. Tess is wrong for doing this, but she does not deserve to be hanged. In conclusion, Tess Durbeyfield is indeed a pure woman who is no more than a victim of patriarchal

society. "Angel Clare represents a dualist, a Victorian Puritan, a virgin seeker and a deceptive hero, who suffers Tess mentally"(Kaja 59).

Although Tess had no hope of love and marriage after her rape but Angel brought a ray of hope in her life Middle class parents didn't want their- children marrying socially beneath them, but Angel proposes to Tess anyway, against his family's wishes. Tess even realizes the situation and tells Angel. "Your father is a parson, and your mother wouldn't like you to marry such as me. She will want you to marry a lady" (187). She loved him and hoped for a happy married life but Angel's conception of morality failed to provide her love and dignity:

She is being victimised because of her naivety, and that Hardy tries to make us take her side. When Alec rapes her, this is her first experience of' being a victim, this happened because she did not know how to refuse Alec's advances, and did nothing to fight back. This comes back to haunt her during her relationship with Angel Clare, when she tells him what happened. He thought that she was pure and virginal, this is the second case of her being victimised. (Kala 60)

Rejected and hurt by Angel, Tess developed passivity as a strategy for survival. She accepted the view which Angel and the society have of her. Her feelings of impurity became more profound due to the reinforcement by Angel. Unloved and deserted, she succumbed passively to Alec's trap again. She never tried to fight back against him. Her conventional mentality compelled her to remain passive and tolerate anything that her family and society force open her. Emotionally bereft and financially impoverished, Tess is trapped like a bird in a clap-net. Nevertheless economic poverty, innocent behaviors and lack of education causes her trouble; Angel's conventionality is responsible for her suffering and tragedy.

Tess as a Self Victim

Tess forgives Angel for having an affair with another woman but she is unable to forgive herself. Being influenced by the moral convention of Victorian society, she never dares to think herself a pure woman." When she is raped by Alec, depression begins to shake her faith"(Beal 62). It brings a sense of guilt as well as question of morality for her. She starts to think herself an impure woman. She loses her self respect along with her virginity. "Tess is destroyed by her ravaging self-destructive sense of guilt and life denial attitude" (Beal 56).

During the Victorian era, a girl could have social status until she is virgin. "Once led astray, she was the fallen woman, and nothing could reconcile that till she died"(Morgan 20). As a woman of the Victorian society, Tess takes the rape and pregnancy as a crucial concern and as an unforgivable sin. She is so much steeped with the contemporary values that her pre-marital sexual experiences appears utterly sinful to her. Later, when Angel expresses his love for her she hesitates to reveal her past. She is ashamed because she thinks herself an impure woman. When Angel Clare unfolds the reality of his sexual experience he seems to be extremely sure of that Tess would forgive him but Tess is always scared of the consequence of her confession. She herself does not have any hope of forgiveness from Angel. Angel seems very unconcerned about his pre - marital relationship which is his deliberate act but Tess is unable to leave her past experience back. "Tess's past has already begun to weave the fatalistic web that will trap her like a fly and from which the ravenous spider of chaotic doom will draw all of her life's animation out "(Hasan 42). Tess thinks Angel is an intellectual man but she is unable to realize his hypocrisy because she herself is victim of the same concept. She never judges her husband's actions rather follow him idealistically. Tess's acceptance of Angel's judgment makes her to think her an

immoral woman. Tess never acts as an experienced bold or emancipated woman but rather works as a weak and dependent woman. She depends on her mother, Alec and Angel because her thoughts and actions are influenced by the Victorian concept of an ideal woman.

Due to Tess's internalized concept of morality, she condemns herself and wishes to die. Instead of ignoring her bitter experience, she clings to it. Her mind is tormented by 'a crowd of moral hobgoblins' (120). Plagued by her past experience of being raped, she makes her present miserable. Her misery certainly has been generated by her conventional mentality:

Tess is angry with Alec and angry with her mother; but she is most angry, of course, with herself. She "detests," "loathes," and "hates" herself for her weakness. She has these feelings. We are told, because she does not love Alec; and the fact that she was ready to sell herself undoubtedly contributes to her self-contempt. But the chief reason for her self-loathing is "moral hobgoblins" of religion and convention.

(Beal 57)

Tess's experience of being raped changed her from an innocent girl to a guilt-ridden woman. Her feelings are based upon the message the society sends to her. This message has seeped into her mind. Her physical purity is not based on her physical features, but rather on her belief and conviction that the society imposed upon her. Tess imagines her guilt to be a natural consequence of her actions, not only in the eyes of the community but also in the eyes of nature. While walking in the hills she experiences self-ravaging sense of shame. "She looks upon herself as a figure of guilt intruding into the haunts of innocence. But all the while she is making a distinction where there is no difference. She has been made to break an accepted social law, but

no law known to the environment in which she fancies herself I such an anomaly" (121). Having experienced humiliation at the hand of Alec, Tess lives a life of distress. Her feelings ultimately lead her toward self-loathing and self degradation.

The Victorian society told that Tess is impure and she, without doubt, believed her society. She has been so depreciated by herself that she is reduced to accept herself as an embodiment of impurity. Having brought up in the Victorian society, her thoughts, feelings, and beliefs are deeply influenced by the contemporary values. Although most of her misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, not by her innate sensations. The sense of regret felt after the events leads her eventually to gallows after enduring a number of hardships and sufferings:

Her upbringing has made her view that experience not only against social morality but also against God. And this moral encompassment of her own characterization, based on shreds of convention, peopled by phantoms and voices antipathetic to her, was a sorry and mistaken creation of Tess's fancy—a cloud of moral hobgoblins by which she was terrified without reason. (132)

Nevertheless, Tess knows that she was innocent girl when Alec raped her. 'Angel! - Angel! I was a child - a child when it happened! I knew nothing of men.'(140). But her narrow sense of chastity and conventional mentality caused her to become a deserted wife.

Tess even hesitates to utter Mrs Clare as she reels. "I have no moral right to do so" (146). She knows that her relationship with Alec is not her intentional act but she considers herself an unchaste woman unsuitable for Angel who is pure and moral. She never doubts on Angel's purity whose past is like her. "Tess is certainly a victim and

her lack of understanding over such matters only increases the guilt that already embodies her"(Laura 31). Similarly, she vows not to attract any male and even cuts off her eyebrows to make her ugly after her rape. "Hardy explains that, with her little scissors by the aid of a pocket looking-glass, she mercilessly snipped her eyebrows off: and thus insure against aggressive admiration she went on her uneven way" (272).

Tess feels guilty about her relation with Alec "How wickedly mad I was!"(98). Tess's behavior and thought reflect her guilt. She thinks that Angel is pure and she should not make him impure marrying him. Overwhelmed with the sense of shame, she wants to give up her chance to marry Angel because she thinks that other girls deserve him more for they are virgin and pure. "I will never stand in your way, or in the way of either of you!' She declared to Retty that in the bedroom (her tears running down). 'I can't help this dear! I don't think marrying is in his mind at all, but if he were ever to ask me I should refuse him, as I should refuse any man" (128).

Furthermore, Tess continuously tries to deny Angel although she loves him because she feels that he deserves someone as pure as he thinks Tess is. 'Don't ask me. I told you why-partly. I am not good enough - not worthy enough.' (153). However she finds impossible to give Angel up, but she believes that it is the right thing to do. She feels that it would be fair to Angel. 'Mr. Clare- I cannot be your wife-I cannot be!"(136). Thus, Tess is a woman of the Victorian society who can not overcome sexual limits of her time and culture. "Tess is presented as a suffered pilgrim, a spouseless mother, as a Miltonic Eve, as a heavenly bride, as a half broken stalked lily and a wounded creature nearest to death who is victimized by the Victorian morality"(Lothe 18).

Because of her unfortunate experience with Alec. Tess overestimates Angel's moral integrity and his personal superiority to herself. "She sees him not as a man but

as intelligence" (Boumelha 26). Despite her sufferings as an abandoned wife, Tess continues to repress her resentment and to glorify her husband:

The meaning of her life still lies in being possessed by Angel and in participating, thereby, in his glory. If Angel would come to her she would be 'well content' to 'die in his arms' if only he had forgiven her. If he cannot forgive her and allow her to live with him as his wife, she will be content, ay, glad, to live with him as his servant so that she could be near him, and get glimpses of him, and think of him as hers.

(323)

After the marriage. Angel insists that they separate but she does not deny. She goes along with everything he says although it is killing her to be pushed away. She sacrifices her feelings to make it easy for him because of her sense of guilt. "She had set herself to fall by her guilt" (Kaja 52). It is Tess who suggests that she can return to her parents' home. Angel did not think of this possibility but when Angel asks if she is sure. Tess does not express her own feelings but gives the reply she thinks he wants "Quite sure"(246). Guilt-ridden, Tess submits to his anger and, except for a few arguments, takes no action to win him back. Tess passively submits to her husband because she thinks her husband is better than herself. "I have no wish opposed to yours"(200).

Although Angel acts immorally, as he engages in an adulterous relationship, he is not condemned for these actions by Tess. Angel is godlike for her. She remains completely submissive to her husband as he carries her across the river and to the cemetery. Because of her guilt and her conventional mentality she even remains open to the possibility that he may murder her or cause their mutual death. Tess therefore is a wife who can leave her life in the hand of husband. She never tries to revolt against her husband.

Moreover, in Tess's desperate letter to Angel we can distinctly see that Tess looks for slavery, and not married life on an equal basis of mutual understanding because of her defeated mind. She, in fact, humbles her in a great deal out of guilt. As she writes, "I would be content, ay, glad, to live with you as your servant, if I may not as your wife; so that I could only be near you, and get glimpses of you and think of you as mine"(318). So, Tess never really dares to stand up and fight against Angel's views of her as a fallen woman not worthy to share his life any longer. Her guilt establishes her as a subordinated woman with patient endurance and passive suffering. She completely surrenders to the male code of marriage by subordinating her individual opinion and innate free will to Angel. During the Victorian era, popular notions regarding the role of the woman in society concentrated on the submissive wife whose whole existence revolved around loving, honoring, obeying and amusing her husband. The woman's intellect was for arrangement and order in house but not for her personal development. Tess Ba Victorian wife who loves, honors, obeys and believes her husband. But her faith is shattered by, her god, Angel:

'I thought, Angel, that you loved me - me, my very self! If it is I you do love, how can it be that you look and speak so? It frightens me! Having begun to love you. I love you forever - in all changes. in all disgraces, because you are yourself. I ask no more. Then how can you, my loving me? 'I repeat the woman I have been loving is not you'. (271)

Despite her will to further her education, she is denied the opportunity to develop her talents and fulfill her aspirations. "The opportunities available to the Victorian women only allows one conclusion: the fulfillment of their defined role as angel of the house"(Brownmiller 34). Thus, while offering a false sense of power, the expectations of society and the limited education allowed to women limited the possibility for them to explore their talents.

The society expected the Victorian women to contribute daily and hourly to the comfort of their husband. Being influenced by the notion, Tess presents herself as a passive woman who does not resist her husband even when he tries to kill her. She never really dares to stand up and fight against Angel's sudden reactionary views of her as a fallen woman not worthy to share his life any longer. "The Victorian societal ideologies pushed her to strive for perfection, to become the 'Pure Ideal'. From the beginning Tess has demonstrated her submissive nature to Angel through predictable Victorian methods including blushing, demurring, not looking, and not speaking" (Ghent 86). So, Tess submits herself to the Victorian ideal of a wife and sacrifice herself for Angel's needs.

Desperate to be possessed by Angel, Tess follows him blindly. She wants to make herself his, to call Angel her lord, her own, and then to die for him. She wants to die with Angel loving her and thinking well of her. Thus, when she is apprehended at Stonehenge, she is at peace: "It is as it should be Angel. I am almost glad-yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for % on to despise me "(274).

Victorian society held a double standard for men and women. Although a man was expected to control his sexual desires the best he could, the man was allowed some latitude. Although he was expected to remain faithful to his wife, but if he occasionally visited a prostitute to relieve himself of evils, his wife was expected to overlook this behavior. During the Victorian period, it was hard for a woman to admit that she was not pure." The Victorian ethic made fidelity the supreme virtue and sexual irregularity the blackest of sins" (Dylan 22). The phenomenon of Victorian prudery accompanied this concept of purity. With the strong societal enforcement of these beliefs, many Victorian women lived with great shame, guilt, and fear of

damnation. Passion was deviant, and thoughts of sexuality would cause insanity. Tess became the victim of the same notion.

Tess is raped, exploited and cursed by Alec. Similarly, detested and deserted by Angel. She remains no more than garbage for Alec's lust and Angel's hypocrisy. No doubt, the Victorian society is responsible for the victimization of Tess but, ironically, Tess is also responsible for her destruction. She continually suffers from guilt and finds fault for herself. The effect of her loss of virginity on her is profound. She is a fragile and delicate girl who is compelled to associate her lost virginity with moral impurity. Having been abandoned as an immoral woman, Tess could not have opportunity to develop her self-esteem. The devastating power of guilt caused Tess to destruct in her quest for love, self worth and identity. If she could have mobilized her powerful innate drive for self worth and create both energy and focus to find the solution to her problem, she could have faced the situation boldly.

Tess simply accepts circumstances as they are. Moreover, she blames herself for all the misery she has to suffer. She even blames herself for Alec's treachery and wishes that she had not been born. Tess is too hard on herself; her self-hate is excessive. The loss of her self-respect and of her honored position in the family and the community plunges Tess into despair. Instead of being the family's savior, she is its shame. Tess wishes for death, obscurity, and obliteration.

Tess essentially sacrificed her life to be with Angel when he finally came back for her. She knew that if she killed Alec, she would be executed, but she did it anyway so that she could be with Angel with nothing between them. She gave up her life for love of Angel but he is so much imposed with the social values that his love for Tess leads her to execution. She could not reject the notion that her purity is her virginity. Her crime is only the way to escape the world where she cannot be accepted as a moral woman.

Tess's feelings of self hatred compels her to strive for better life, she allows her bitter experience to become her reality that envelops her feelings of societal inadequacy. Utterly destroying any possibility of making a happy married life, she lapses into guilt, as she could not have ground for self-confidence or foundation of self-esteem. If Angel accepted her she would gain a sense of self-confidence and pride. Unable to acquire the social standard of morality she directs her hatred towards herself.

Self-confidence arises out of efforts but because of the images of the convention instilled in her mind, the personal power of Tess remained passive and the outcome is guilt. She continually suffers from the guilt and cannot have ability to live with self respect. Unable to attack Angel's actions and avoid her sense of guilt. Tess Murders Alec. She kills Alec after being deserted by Angel not after her rape. Immediately after her rape, she tries her best to collect her internal strength to avoid her bitter experience of being raped. She leaves even her home and venture out for an independent life. As a bold woman, she rejects Alec's marriage proposal. But Angel's rejection makes her weak and she returns to Alec's trap again. Angel's rejection leads her towards the crime rather than Alec's physical exploitation. Thus. Angel's conventionality is responsible for her suffering than Alec's crime.

CHAPTER-V

Conclusion

I lard,, presents two Victorian men. Alec d'Urbervilles and Angel Clare. and they victimize Tess. They hurt her and cause her ruin. Alec plays with her flesh and Angel plays with her mind. "Alec kisses her: he does so as an expression of lust. Angle did so as an expression of love"(Lothe 14). Even though they seem very dissimilar. in many ways they share commonalities: "The swarthy, swashbuckling, brutish, nouveau-riche phony aristocrat and the delicate, rebellious, skeptical, even squeamish dissenting minister's son turned radical farmer are two halves of Victorian culture that dooms Tess" (Laura 30). They cannot appreciate her beauty; they cannot even see the richness of life that she embodies.

Angel and Alec are almost alike in their acceptance of the totality of the patriarchal idea that women are at fault for whatever happens to them. They even believe that they are entitled to control Tess. tier actions and feelings.

Angel and Alec appear as figures of Victorian society hovering around Tess, but misunderstanding her, unworthy of her. unable to match her natural strength and spontaneity. Both are statements about the principal character types of the Victorian middle class- the cruel bourgeois and the disinherited intellectual: both are without roots, both show a split between thought and feeling. both lack an adequate image of selfhood. (Laura 30)

In the Victorian era. women were supposed to respond passively to the actions and decisions of men. "Woman has a head almost too small for intellect. but just big enough for love" (Brownmiller 49). In a society where men controlled `government,

business, law, and other significant social endeavors, wives were required to work for their husbands' social well-being. As society expected women to remain as domestic objects, both men and women labored to prevent women from rebelling against their role. Labeling women who tried to move beyond their sphere as immoral, society turned away from those who challenged the conventional order of society. "Hardy called Tess a pure woman and justified her actions, and Victorian critics didn't go along with this. A contemporary critic states that "he [Hardy] startled readers by insisting on Tess's innocence, both of sexual complicity and of murder" (Barret 25).

The Victorian women were supposed to be pure of heart, mind, and, of course, body. The society appointed women as the models of purity "In *The Cult of True Womanhood*, historian Barbara Welter lists the four essential traits for the ideal Victorian woman including piety, passivity, submissiveness, and domesticity" (Lothe 14). So, they faced the problematic task of fulfilling a role that prevented them from fulfilling their own needs and desires.

Tess's sacrificing nature fulfills the Victorian ideals of passivity, domesticity and submissiveness but she completely fails to fulfill the model of Victorian pure woman as she becomes the victim of Alec. After leaving Trantridge Cross pregnant and unmarried, Tess is treated by the society as an immoral woman but Hardy continues to present her as a model of morality. He presents her as both pious and pure she, however, violates the Victorian ideal of woman with her lost virginity. The Victorian concept of morality is so dogmatic that an individual's concept of morality was out of question. Hardy confronts the social concept of morality. "Individuals sometimes feel that making an appropriate lifestyle choice invokes a true morality, and that accepted codes of conduct within their chosen community are fundamentally moral, even when such code] deviate from more general social principles" (Beal 56).

The society emphasized the norms of morality rather than the happiness of an innocent girl. Her feelings, choices and decisions are shattered by the social concept of morality. The double standards of sexual morality and the domination of male values leave Tess nowhere to stand. Hardy was well aware of the double standards of morality that the Victorian era placed on the sexes. Hardy confronts society's perception of the ideal woman. He criticizes the hypocritical social taboos of the society and shows the world how unjust are Victorian double standards. "The Victorian double standard include the willingness to be judgmental of other people, to claim understanding for a man and not for a woman, and to have different expectations for each"(Blake 23).

Tess is dutiful and loving to her parents, but she also acknowledges their faults, and holds herself largely responsible for the family's well-being. She believes in her right to control her own body, and resists the usurpation of this right to the best of her ability. Finally, she attempts to choose her husband wisely, in the hope that a freely given, mutual exchange of love will enhance the purity of both the wedded-lovers and their society. But Victorian societal ideologies pushed Tess to strive for perfection, to become a pure ideal. The novel suggests that this ideal is unnatural. Focusing on the perfect purity of the ideal blinds people to the particular purity of the individual. Human nature is imperfect, and will always seem inferior and unsatisfactory in comparison with the ideal. The individual woman like Tess earns her title by remaining true to herself, cherishing her own humanity and the humanity of others.

Unless the individual is privileged over the ideal, a woman's worth will continue to depend on circumstances beyond her control, rather than her own behavior. As a result, many a worthy Pure Woman will be

wasted (like Tess) instead of going on in partnership with a worthy man to possibly change the condition of the world for the better.(Milber 78)

Through the novel. Hardy questions the validity or integrity of society's expectations for women. Hardy portrays Tess as having morals and convictions which the Victorian society did not think a woman who is raped possessed or deserted. "Indeed, Tess provides a standard of what is right and essential for human beings to demand from life. Tess is finally one of the great images of human possibility, conceived in the chaste, and chastening, spirit of the New Testament"(Milberg 78).

Hardy challenges the unspoken rules of- the double standard of sexuality, which Victorian society implemented in an effort to maintain womans inferiority. "Hardy challenges Victorian ideals scorning sexuality by creating Tess in opposition to the belief that a sexy woman, is intellectually vapid or morally loose, or as many Victorians believed, diseased in body and mind" (Lothe 20). Hardy has tried to expose through his novel that society did not allow women the same freedom allowed men, and in fact, judged the women more harshly for mistakes. or for violations done to them.

Hardy is aggressive toward social forces which limit the individual. He arraigns God, he attacks widely held conventions and beliefs. he bewails the vulnerability and helplessness of man. He is sympathetic towards women who were expected to marry and manage a home, thus preventing them from exploring or expanding on their own interests. talents. and desires. (Buck '2)

Less is a passive and a striking vehicle for attacking her society's morality. She never really fights for her love and is essentially marked by. "Patience, that blending of moral courage with physical timidity" (Lothe 18). She is unable to completely fulfill the expectations associated with the Victorian ideal due to her innocence, responsibilities and circumstances.

Addressing the submission and self-renunciation involved in true womanhood, Hardy questions the validity or integrity of the social expectations for women. The novel effectively demonstrates the moral wrong attributed to women who fail to accept or fulfill the Victorian concept of moral woman either due to her innocence or her circumstances. The entire texture of the novel is framed in such a way that one is made to regard Tess as a moral despite her virginal disintegration. This is explicitly a challenge to the Victorian moral values. Hardy gave the Victorian public, Tess, "a pure woman" whose only taint was how her situation was viewed by a society that held women to higher standards than they did men"(Beat 59).

As Tess proceeds to grow throughout the novel, Hardy raises important questions such as the objectification of women and the valorization of their sexual control. He forwards a question that why men such as Alec d'Urbervilles are excused for not being able to control their inherent sexual desires and women like Tess are punished without any fault. It is Tess who becomes the victim of the Victorian concept of morality not Alec who rapes her. It is Tess who is judged, not the violator of her body and the destroyer of her life." Through the Use of Victorian social taboos, the bleak picture of a poor social and economic background, and two Victorian men, Hardy has enabled readers of many different societies and eras to feel a compassion for this girl and to learn something about history" (Boumelha 17).

Thus, *Tess of the Durbervilles* functions as Hardy's greatest challenge to Victorian mores, and Tess comes forth as the symbol of its injustice. For she is the woman whose life experience reveals the hypocrisy and narrowness of the social values. "Hard" gave the Victorian public 'a pure woman' whose only taint was how her situation was viewed by a society that held women to higher standards than they did men" (Beal 62). Hardy also shows that how the Victorian concept of the morality wears down the minds of innocent girls.

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