

Tess of D'ubervellies: Societal and Parental Role in the Subjugation of Womanhood

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Abstract:

This article examines and explores Thomas Hardy's portrayal of women in his novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. It gives a brief overview of the era in which Hardy was writing, focusing on the psycho-sexual complexities of the late Victorian era and their impact on women's characterization. The paper also examines Hardy's attitudes toward women and how these attitudes influenced his portrayal of female characters. The picture of vigorous Womanhood and victim forces beyond control is portrayed in *Tess*, the heroine. The novel depicts a very realistic picture of the fears, cognitive processes, and sufferings of a lady whose life is subjugated. Women are portrayed as sensuous and weak. Hardy depicts women who are influenced by their surroundings and hereditary factors. Due to their humanity, suffering is unavoidable, and guilt is compassion.

Keywords: Subjugation, Victimization, Women, Attitudes, Hardy, Tess, Compassion, Hereditary factors, Womanhood

Hardy has come to be universally recognized as the greatest novelist of the Victorian era. Indeed, he is one of the greatest novelists in the whole range of English literature. Some critics have even called him the Shakespeare of the English novel. Thomas Hardy was born on June 2nd 1840 and died on Jan 11th, 1928. Thomas Hardy was the creator of the philosophical novel. Man's predicament in the universe is the theme of Thomas Hardy's Novels. Hardy is the father of a unique form of tragedy. He has given the English novel a new depth, richness and significance.

Thomas Hardy's *Tess of D'ubervellies* is the best novel of its sort. The novel is full of examples from actual life. It reflects the events and way of life in modern civilization. It integrates readers from the past and present into the plot and makes them an integral part of the novel's content. The woman and her struggles in life are the main focus of the novel. The main character in the novel is Tess. Nine-year-old Tess was born into a low-income household. Tess's innocence is punished without her fault because of her beauty, her family's poverty, her ignorance of society's darker aspects, her lack of unemployment, her irresponsible parents, and her drunken father. She ends herself on the scaffold, accepting her fate due to all these things.

Tess persevered through numerous challenges for which she was not the cause or accountable. She is in her adolescent years, and her body parts are changing and drawing attention from everyone, but notably from men. Despite being gorgeous, she is not shielded. There are similarities between Tess and contemporary women. No matter how long ago the unfortunate events and catastrophes occurred, any lady of her Age can experience them, especially if her parents are careless and ignore them.

Thomas Hardy focuses on the attitudes that males have toward women. In this novel, Thomas Hardy de-

picts women as a daughter, wife, mother, victim of injustice, and murderers with such excellent justification. The novelist has made many of these kinds of connections clear, such as how hunger and desires are bonded together, how poverty affects people's mental faculties, and the icy line that separates Age and innocence. The novel portrays a very realistic picture of the fears, cognitive processes, and sufferings of a lady whose life is shattered.

A person's physical, mental, and spiritual well-being are all impacted by poverty. A man's level of thinking is reduced to a lower stage by poverty. The problem worsens if the caste system is combined with poverty.

In the novel's first scene, Tess's father, John Durbey Field, is introduced to us. He is an alcoholic, lazy person and does not care about his wife and kids. He detests the nature of hard labour. One day, a history student named Parson Tringham addressed him as 'sir'; Tess's father was shocked by this stranger's call. People who behave recklessly and are inebriated, like him, will not be respected by society. Therefore, he was surprised when someone addressed him as 'sir'. He muses on this for a long while. Tess's father, unable to contain his curiosity, asks Parson Tringham to explain why he is addressed as 'Sir'. Parson Tringham said that, as a history student, he learned about the excellence of his family heritage and a great name. After hearing this, Tess's father lost himself in his dreams. He starts to have a conceited mindset. He has genuinely begun to live in a fantasy world. By using John Durbeyfield's portrait, Thomas Hardy parodies Victorian society in this way.

People from high castes will feel proud of it regardless of their level of poverty, even if they don't work. We see people in and around us who are proud of their excellent family name, parents or grandparents' decent reputation, their position in society, or their prior accomplishments. The researcher got the impression from Hardey that those who are unable to plan for the future rather than living in the past fantasies and memories are ruining their families and identities.

Hardy attacks on English Victorian society started with an entitlement complex based on a weak name that prioritized historical names and the decline of the powerful in contemporary society.

After learning about his illustrious past, John assumes he comes from a wealthy and noble family. Though he was mentally released from poverty, his actual state of poverty was not altered. After telling his wife Jonah about his history, John heads to the Rolliver's Inn to celebrate and feels happy about his past. Later on, Jonah visits Rolliver's Inn in an attempt to retrieve her husband; however, upon arriving, she sits down with him and starts to celebrate.

Tess's brother Abraham tells her that his parents want to take her to the wealthy Mrs. Durbervelly to try her luck, but Tess refuses. Their horse, Prince, the main source of income, passes away. She feels discomfort about it. Guilt-ridden, she held herself responsible for Prince's passing. To make up for the loss and provide for her family financially, she concludes that working for Mrs. Dubervelli is preferable. She had no idea that her decision would throw her into a whirlwind. People in poverty are the same even in modern civilization. They are unable to make appropriate decisions at the appropriate moment.

Impoverished individuals have very little cognitive development. Individuals with few resources are more likely to make poor choices and decisions. The degree of poverty influences the choices they make. Instead of concentrating on how to avoid poverty, those in it search for ways to get away from it. Based on their level of poverty, they make decisions.

During the May Day Dance in the spring, many young ladies dance together while wearing white gowns. Thomas Hardy used springtime as a metaphor for life, as just as leaves fall and then grow again, so too can women with clean hearts and minds seek to start over. The impoverished females wait for the afflu-

nt men, expecting that by marrying them, they will be able to leave behind their life of poverty.

Hardy portrays the psyche of young people living in poverty. The ambitions and dreams of the aged young are clearly illustrated. Many girls in today's culture have parents who hope that if their daughter is attractive or beautiful, she will get married into a wealthy family. The researcher believes Tess's poor parents are hoping for Tess to have this kind of good fortune in her life.

In the novel, Tess serves as a source of income to support her family. She is shocked to see the outside world, with its lovely buildings and peaceful surroundings, when she first visits Mrs. Dubervellis' house to raise chickens. She then realizes that this is the environment she now lives in. She is unable to recognize the threat in that place which seems to be beautiful.

She knocks on Mrs. Dubervellis's door. The door is opened by a tall, good-looking, dark-haired 23-year-old with a thick moustache. Alec opens the door for Tess and allows her in after reading Mrs Dubervelli's note. He converses with her, evaluating her social understanding and maturity. He also recognizes her wants and feelings, the harsh circumstances of her upbringing, innocence, and poverty. As they stroll through the garden together, Alec gives Tess a basket of flowers and strawberries. He also stuffs her tummy with food while seductively watching her emotions and reactions on her face. Alec gives her a seductive glance. Without a doubt, owners like Alec are everywhere in every community. The researcher believes that employers such as Alec serve as a prime illustration of how, even in the modern era, exploiting the needs of the females who come to work for them, both physically and psychologically.

Girls inherently love gifts. Like how they enjoy taking walks and dining outside, Alec took advantage of Tess by feeding her well to make an impression on her. He intended to take her for a stroll in the garden in an attempt to woo her. Even in today's world, men seduce women on motorcycles and offer them small presents to entice them. The girls are unaware they are stepping into a world unfettered by men, much like dragons.

These girls' little happiness is being manipulated by men into a chance for them to experience great bliss. The girls come out and labor to feed their families or assist their parents financially, but the people in positions of power above them harass them with derogatory remarks, leftovers, and words that have two meanings, all of which are demonic in nature. However, researcher has also seen girls who, like Tess, smile while bearing their pain in their hearts. People lacking in humanitarian ideals, such as Alec, are opportunists who disregard family values as they are unaware of the significance of women's struggles.

Alec visits Tess at home in order to pick her up for work. When Jonah sees Alec's diamond ring, she assumes he is extremely wealthy and wishes her daughter to marry him. This is the natural tendency of women. She believes it would be wonderful if Alec and her daughter had a relationship. Jonah hopes to escape poverty this way, but her enthusiasm and hope cloud her judgment and prevent her from making the correct decisions. Jonah dresses her daughter differently, making her appear more attractive by clothing her in a short outfit. Despite her distaste for the outfit, Tess follows her mother's instructions. Jonah disregards her moral obligations to her daughter. Jonah can exemplify a few careless, impoverished mothers. Similarly, in the Novel "Beloved ", Beloved's mother, Sethe, goes so far as to kill her daughter. One could read about a woman in "Tess of the D'ubervelli" who uses her daughter's beauty as bait to escape poverty. In contrast, a mother in the Novel "Beloved" written by Toni Morrison, believes it would be best to kill her daughter in order to free herself from a life of labor and enslavement. Mothers are a child's first teachers in the world. Youngsters might draw inspiration from their mother's

words, actions, and presence. Girls grow up with their mothers nearer to them. Mothers are viewed as protective shields by girls. They enjoy consulting her for advice. Mothers are trusted by all people on this earth. Being a mother is an extremely responsible role. In Tess's situation, this is what transpired: the mother becomes the one who sells the daughter when she is unable to raise her children appropriately.

A mother ought to advise every adolescent girl, in particular, to safeguard and keep her body hidden; Jonah is exact opposite to this. Women are respected by society when they dress nicely and maintain physical discipline. It is obscene that men would try to take advantage of an exposed lady and prefer a well-dressed woman as a wife.

Usually, parents won't let their children go out with strangers. Girls are not permitted to go out late at night. Every parent considers security while sending their daughter out to school, college, work, or marriage.

The chastity of unmarried children is seen as the honour of the parents, whereas the chastity of married daughters is regarded as the honour of in-laws. Generally, a woman's chastity is regarded as a sign of her family's honour or a requirement for family honour.

A woman's solo association with a male results in a slew of adverse outcomes. Families in the past and now do not accept the introduction of a single man and woman. This does not make society happy. In many circumstances, men and women spend too much time alone, which causes their thoughts to become uncontrollable, their sense of language to deteriorate, and their physical desire to develop. The author portrays Jonah as Tess's mother in this instance, who initially refuses to send Tess with Alec. She eventually convinces herself to go out with Alec after accepting the reality that he will eventually marry her daughter. This illustrates the mother's ignorance and incapacity. Jonah uses her daughter to meet financial demands.

In this novel, Alec's-Tess's journey begins with physical lust and ends with emotional torment. Despite her dislike of going on a trip with Alec, Tess consents to go as her mother tells her. Alec drives too fast, and she is afraid when she gets close to a slope. The writer depicts the nature of males in this passage; women are generally drawn to men's physical strength and are submissive to the expert job done by men's physical strength. In today's society, men display their heroism in various ways, such as riding their bikes faster, performing stunts with their bikes, and so on, to attract women. The same thing Alec was doing here. Tess was too young to keep up with Alec's cart's speed. Tess doesn't intend to attract Alec or allow her to be attracted by Alec. She continued to travel with Alec solely for financial gain. As a result, this journey was joyful for one, while for the other, it was frightening. Tess holds Alec's hand in fear of his driving speed, but Alec advises Tess to hold his waist for which she disagrees, this allusion demonstrates Alec's obsession and longing for her. Tess finds Alec's proposal rude and uncomfortable. But in unavoidable circumstances, she sits holding Alec's waist.

Poor Tess appears to be in a helpless state of mind and is unable to stop Alec's speed. Tess asks Alec to go slower as he drives faster. Alec asks Tess if he is allowed to kiss her and then promises to go slowly. Here, the author refers to males like Alec, who take advantage of women's helplessness to create opportunities for themselves. No known people are nearby, and the location is known in a helpless scenario. In an unpleasant position, Tess accepts his proposal, which makes her uneasy. She wipes her cheek with the kerchief instantly, disgusted. This demonstrates her unease and rage. Alec once more accelerates the cart. Tess asks him to drive slowly. Tess refused to accept Alec's request to kiss her again and refrained from wiping with a handkerchief. Because her hat flies off, she stops the cart. She declines

to get into the cart again and continues to walk for five or six miles. Alec accuses Tess of disrespecting them by calling her various names and using filthy language in order to get inside the cart. Her weakness and poverty may be reasons for Alec to physically humiliate her by using filthy language.

In the novel "*A Street Car Named Desire*", Stanley is a man of animal nature. He tortures his wife Stella when she is pregnant; he drags her out into the street and beats her. Although he hurls her physically, she does not want to leave him because of her poverty. Stella tells Blanche that she cannot live and nurse her child. The poverty of women makes them submissive. Poverty makes the word worthless. Poverty undermines self-confidence levels. Poverty causes women like Tess and Stella to crumble under tyrannical authorities. Stella, who knows that even her sister Blanche has been treated unfairly by her husband, is left as a helpless wife who cannot resist her husband because of her poverty; it is not an exaggeration to say that poverty makes a woman so weak that he cannot resist injustice and thus the poverty destroys the life of Tess.

Eventually, Tess is seduced by Alec and becomes a mother to a child. Gradually, Angel marries Tess and leaves her because of her past life. Angel puts thirty pounds of money in the bank so that Tess does not get into financial trouble. When Tess's parents asked for twenty pounds to get rid of their financial problems, Tess gave her parents twenty pounds out of the thirty pounds given to her by her husband. Tess loses her life before marriage in order to shield her parents from their financial difficulties; after marriage, she uses the money she received as compensation from her husband to end her parents' financial difficulties. The author makes it evident that Tess's life was utilized to escape financial difficulties because of the poverty in Jonah's family. Poverty plays a role in people's lives. Poverty impairs people's thinking patterns and decisions. Human values are eroded by poverty. In this novel, Hardy eloquently depicts the struggles of a poor girl's life; many females in today's society still deal with similar issues. People have always taken advantage of the lives of helpless, innocent women in society. Tess's story serves as a wake-up call for every woman.

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