

Research Paper Titled: Tess; Transformation from A Milkmaid to a Murderer

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Abstract

Tess of the D'Urbervilles is an emotional phenomenal literary art master piece of Thomas Hardy, an English writer of significant pragmatism. The present research paper studies Tess of the d'Urbervilles through the current contemporary women with special focus on Indian woman, their social background and the old traditional prejudiced mentality of people. The paper discusses the grounds of Tess's catastrophic destiny which is swayed by the main character Alec D'Urbervilles and his deceitful moral conduct, unjust law, and hopelessness of capitalism. Through the journey of Tess we witness a miserable life at close quarters and due to this We are able to develop clear empathy and understanding of a female psyche it is not a surprise that none of the reader ever felt that Tess is a culprit in any sense though she was a murderer .I have established permanent bonds of resemblances with the pleasures and pains of Tess after completing this paper and the credit goes to the impeccable art of storytelling of reverend literary artist Mr. Thomas Hardy Sir.

KEYWORDS: phenomenal, literary, pragmatism, contemporary, catastrophic, destiny, capitalism, culprit, resemblance.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles, by Thomas Hardy was published 1891. It was subtitled A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented as Hardy felt that its heroine Tess was a virtuous victim of a rigid Victorian moral system. This immortal Hardy's masterwork departed from predictable Victorian fiction in its focus on the rural lower class and in its open handling of sexuality and religion. The poet and novelist Thomas Hardy is widely accepted as the most famous painter of visual novels, associated with the inescapability of human destiny. His works are aligned with a rural background drawn as an dirge for diminishing country ways, but which also provides much expected humorous reinforcement.

Thomas Hardy was born in Higher Bockhampton, Dorset - and the fictitious Wessex where he lay down most of his novels is clearly instigated by south-west England.

The poet and novelist Thomas Hardy is perhaps most famous for his powerfully visual novels, concerned with the inexorability of human destiny. His works unfold against a rural background drawn as an elegy for vanishing country ways, but which also provides much-needed comic relief.

The novel under research Tess of D'Urbervilles is also blessed with the beautiful and nostalgic landscapes and scenic beauty of Wessex the much-loved milieu of Mr Hardy.

Sometimes the impact of this locale is felt with so much magnitude that it emerges as a character itself. The protagonist of this perpetual timeless novel is as lovely as her name is. I request you to please welcome Tess D'Urbervilles on board. Tess hold my hand and led my path of research into her life by gently guiding me in her tear filled lonely world we came so much close to each other in our resemblances of female psyche that I am not been able to get out of the influence of her company though my research paper is over. In a way i am in her hangover and perhaps don't want to get over it. Through her I am able to understand her two lovers Alec and Angel who too, like me got addict to her external charm, hypnotic beauty and irresistible internal enchantment.

Tess was a chaste, pious, beautiful and diligent pastoral girl who craved for the true compassion of life, but was always ditched by fate and evil. Tess has a dual personality and who doesn't have? You and me we all have many dimensions of our personality. Tess has the guts to stand firm against the established ethics and the bogus religion practices; At the same time she was chained to the conventional principles of her Christian values which paves way for her tragic fate .Her tragedy lies in the fact that although she understood that she was the victim of violence she also believed that she was blameworthy. This self hatred leads to her torture and disapproval. When her family's horse died due to overwork she felt so guilty and strong sense of responsibility led her to kneel down and accept her parents wish to go and claim a kinship with the rich D'Urbervilles family. Tess knew that Alec was unworthy for her, but knowingly she accepted his help. Out of sympathy and responsibility for her family and for the living, she agreed to live with Alec. When she felt herself pitiful of love for Angel Claire she asked Claire to marry her sister as a wife. She constantly struggled and then compromised Her feelings were complex. This personality was expressed in the relationship between her and Angel. Lovers should be equal on the platform of rights; however, Tess always demeans herself and elevated Claire. Her miserable past didn't get Claire's acceptance .I felt strong urge to slap Tess when despite Claire's abandoning her on no fault of hers she didn't make the least objection. A string of passionate letters which carried lovelorn filled momentum which could even melt heart of the stone but failed to impress stubborn and biased Claire's heart. Tess lost her dignity and forgot herself for her devotion and surrender for Angel Claire. It is this kind of sightless and disproportionate love that made Tess lose the right to endeavor for happiness. On the contrary it worsened the misfortune of Tess. At first, the lack of self realization was revealed in Tess's thoughts towards love. For the first time she saw Angel, she was fascinated by his understanding and handsome appearance. She always drifted between Claire and Alec. Same conflict of personality is found in each one of us if I talk about females all women want their lover to be fusion of Angel and Alec .We want our lovers to be cunning and crafty ,wealthy and powerful ,henpecked and compliment giver like Alec and same time we want decent and dutiful, morally character and dignified lover too. She loved Claire but out of unawareness, she was molested by Alec. She often care about other people's needs, but neglected her own necessities. She had to sacrifice herself for her family. She didn't have her own independence which brought her into the void of suffering, and finally led to the tragedy of her life. Sometimes I am compelled to think that our Tess was overly careless and overly innocent to unnoticed Alec's intentions and Angel's intentions which made her a soft and easy target for them.

Indeed she had deep inferiority complex and simple mind Tess was beautiful but self-obsessed, she was docile and timid. Her inferiority embellished her pain. When she wanted to tell Angel her sinful past, her feeling was so uncertain. She had dilemma she wanted to release her pent up emotions she thought that this was her own fault. She was afraid that Angel will not forgive her and will reject her. So she was determined to tell the truth. However, Angel abandoned her. She often made a conclusion from the traditional ethnicity and disturbed her normal psychological condition. Sometimes, she opposed traditional moral, at the same time, she would become its protector. This sense of self-discipline had its deep past basis, and it was the materialization of the whole society. Therefore, Tess's ending was doomed to be tragic. This is the reflection of purity for Hardy. Although she began to comprehend the objectives of Alec's plot, she was too inexperienced. "I have forgiven you for the same!" That is to say, it is her unmanipulative mind that cause her to death.

No one could have predicted the unexpected painful fate for the "fine and handsome" daughter of a poor country peddler, with palpably little more than her overflowing emotions and her "large innocent eyes" to make a distinction her from the other girls in her native village of Marlott, Tess Durbeyfield must have looked ahead to be happy, if monotonous, life. In its place, her father's poverty and her family's vain desire to exploit a recently discovered inherited link to nobility cause Tess to fall under the disparaging manipulation of Alec D'Urberville, an unprincipled scoundrel who steals her virtuousness and impregnates her. With slow, painful effort, Tess strives to recover her reputation and self-respect, and she resolves never again to surrender to passion. Then, into her life walks the captivating Angel Clare, the free-thinking but stalwartly virtuous son of an Anglican vicar. Despite her efforts to leash in her intense nature and fabulous vigor Tess falls worshipfully in love with the young man, and he with her. Yet a menacing impediment emerges. Angel stops to return her affections once she reveals the disgrace of her sexual past.

In typical tragedy, the leading actor is damaged from within by a tragic blemish in his or her character. Tess has a tragic failing as well as is she better implicit as a sufferer of external circumstances. Alec wrongs Tess through his lack of morality. Alec tries to seduce her. He finds her too proud and modest to fall into his nooses, and so he tricks her into accepting a ride from him back to the family house at night, and cuts through the woods. After getting lost intentionally Alec leaves Tess to fall asleep under a tree while he tries to find the path. He comes back, and, finding her asleep, takes advantage of their isolation to rape her. While it may be persuasive to think of Alec as an "evil" character and Angel as a "wise" one, both experience an inner struggle between saintly spotlessness and passionate desire—a struggle that neither man wages successfully. Moreover, it is Alec the rogue—not Angel the moralist—who is there for Tess when she is in need and who supports her family in a time of emergency Tess mothering a child out of wedlock would probably be far less of a scandal than it was in Wessex in 1891 intensified her grief and pain.

Tess is entangled in a triangle with two men now I can't call it a love triangle it is not indeed because one of the man in this triangle is a villain the evil one the harasser the pain inflector in Tess 's life he is Alec D'Urbervilles. He has one-sided love for her.

Another man Angel Clare is the hero the savior the good one whom Tess loves to the verge of worshipping him. Tess tormented Alec, the supernatural powers of fate, chance, coincidences, nature, and superstitions. Alec and his lust is the primary reason of her wrathful suffering other elements which augment these sufferings are poverty, drunken parents and large number of siblings.

Tess I feel is the sweetest temptress and has first of all seduced our unarmed writer Mr Hardy seemed to be smitten by her youthfulness and fuller attractive body. He leaves no chance to admire her in throughout the novel. Her beauty became her curse. As she was exceptional beauty she suffered a lot.

Her mother Mrs. Joan D'Urbervilles milked her beauty in hope of getting in return providence for her family and forced Tess to be the representative of the Durbeyfields at the d'Urbervilles mansion .When she reached there to claim her kinship with the rich d'Urbervilles family she coincidentally met Alec who was swept away by her charming enchanting beauty and her unfortunate time began. He began her harassment and molestation and initiated by demanding kisses and her surrender.

The first ill omen that Tess felt was the indication of the misfortunate life that was soon be unfolding for her,

'then she fell to reflecting again and in looking downwards a thorn of the rose remaining in her breast accidentally pricked her chin. Like all the cottagers in the Blackmoor Vale, Tess was stepped in fancies and prefigurative superstitions; she thought this an ill omen –the first she had noticed that day.'

Alec was in love with her from the first sight but she never fell in love with him till her last breath .Alec experimented all the known ways to woo her but failed. Her innocence fused with the blossoming youthfulness turn him on every time he set his eyes upon her. I guess Alec left no chance to admit his love for her and she always refused.

The turning point in Tess's already sad, poverty stricken and struggling life came when Alec outraged her modesty while she was in deep slumber. She paid all her life in terms of pain, regret ,remorse and sufferings for her innocent trust on a predatory and womanizer like Alec. A girl was casted in a woman prematurely after this heinous act.

'But, might some say, where was Tess's guarding angels? where was the providence of her simple faith? perhaps like that other god of whom the ironical Tishbite spoke, he was talking or he was pursuing or he was in a journey, or he was sleeping and not too be awakemed'

The episode where Tess discloses about this misshapen to her mother turns into tears even the most strong stone hearted person.

'O mother my mother! cried the agonized girl, turning passionately upon her parent as if her poor heart would break. How could I be expected to know? I was a child when I left this home 4 months ago. Why didn't you tell me that there is a danger in men-folk? Why didn't you warn me?'

The fate plays a game on her by doubling her trouble when she discovered her pregnancy. I wonder how tough it would have been for Tess to deal with the rumours and mockery of people outside of her kinsfolk and questions and doubts of her own family. Tess went under the detesting trial all alone. That rapist Alec never turned up in this most painful phase of her life. I admire Tess sense of her duties towards her parents and siblings

Being the eldest child she always assisted in sharing the financial burden of her large poor family that is why she worked so hard in the field during her difficult months of pregnancy and lactating period. She rested only for breast feeding her infant whom she ill cared and I guess abhorred too. She is not able to understand her maternal responsibilities towards the baby as she herself was too young and above all that baby was the outcome of rape. This baby girl's anguish of not being able to baptize her baby shatters us deep inside. We readers feel same helplessness as it was felt by our dear Tess.

I admire her brave heart her sense of responsibilities and the devotion towards her parents and younger siblings which make me love and respect her more.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles more truthfully seen as a remonstrance against unjust moral and social doctrine, a tribute that such constitution will always exist in any given society thus this novel and Tess is relevant to our contemporary society as well. I lost my heart completely to Tess in the end of the novel where she near the end of her life, suggests that Angel should marry her sister, 'Liza-Lu. I am still wondering was this her sacrifice or her compensation towards Angel, but my mind argues that Tess committed no sin out of her will. Rape was forced so was her tragic past. My heart accept this fact with a lump in my throat that Liza-Lu replaces her just physically but by no means spiritually the most deserving finest character milk maid Tess.

Tess short lived reunion with Angel after murdering her tormenter is most heart raching for me. This is the brief period where she gets her long awaited companionship of her husband for whom she has longed so much as desert longs for rain They remain at a deserted mansion before continuing northward to find a boat out of England. They rest at Stonehenge; there Tess, who realizes that she will inevitably be captured, asks Angel to marry her sister, Liza-Lu, after she is gone. As Tess sleeps a party of men surrounds Angel and Tess to capture her and arrest her for Alec's murder. Tess is executed for her crime, while Angel does her will and in all probability marries Liza-Lu. I am moved to tears reading her untimely forced death. Everything in life she received I guess forcefully. Her going to make an appeal to a nearby wealthy family who bear the ancestral name d'Urbervilles was completely against her wish it was forced upon her by her poor parents in hope of getting financial support for their needy large family.

She got first experience of love in form of rape by Alec d'Urberville which was totally against her wish during her sleep. She was really above an average woman to accept that illegitimate infant born out of rape and love her deeply but that child named sorrow was snatched forcefully from her arms by the cruel hands of nature. Tess is more worried about the baby's soul than anything else, so she buries it in the churchyard on the sly. We are shattered by her faith in Christian morality that she baptizes the child herself. Growing needs of her family forced her to work in dairy farm beyond her strength. Later when Angel proposed her and was waiting for her reply it was like thrusting upon her his will

as she took so many days to reply she battled in her dilemma of past sexual harassment and present innocent proposal. I guess Angel too forced her to change her mind and fall in love with him.

Later when after knowing the truth the virtues Angel got defeated under his false ego and ran away abandoning her she was forced to work and suffer like hell. How much she craved for him can never be measured if you can count the tears I am sure Tess darling must have shed infinite tears for Angel and the pity is, at her no fault.

When circumstances of her life when her father passed away and mother was ill she forced her self back in the arms of her rapist and found one fine day Angel at her door step.

Her true love and frustration forced her to murder Alec no one could believe a naïve timid docile girl who never knew even to talk in loud volume who could never strike an insect even could kill a man but impulse and regret force her to do so. She was hanged till death forcefully. She has not yet lived fully but was doomed to die with so many unfulfilled wishes and dreams.

According to me Tess of the d'Urbervilles deals with several significant contemporary subjects for our society as well including the struggles of religious conviction that occurred during Hardy's lifetime. Hardy's own religious experiences can thus be seen in the character of Angel Clare, who defies the conformist dutiful philosophy of his parents to take a more devout and worldly view of values Any youth of today can be related with him.

The novel also reflects Hardy's obsession with social class that continues through his novels. Hardy shows the conflict and disagreements between the working and the upper class, This is reflected in the gloom contained in Tess of the d'Urbervilles toward the chances for Tess to mount in society and Angel's uncertain position as neither a member of the upper class nor a working person correspondent to his fellow men at Talbothays. Same is rampant in our resent society the gap the social differences in status and classes in always there. Again, like Angel Clare, today's youth found himself torn between different social spheres with which he could not fully align himself. Tess of the d'Urbervilles reflects that divide.

To sum up, it is Tess's compromise, unawareness, inadequacy, Alec's immorality Angel's duplicity, her parents' arrogance the social principle and deceitful laws that causes Tess's catastrophe. Tess was a fine and very charming girl, but she was flaccid submissive. She was devoid of revolting fortitude. All these attribute doom her miserable fate. So Tess's tragedy is not fortuitous

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