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OBJECTIFICATION OF FEMALE ON THE BASIS OF HER GENDER IN
TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES BY THOMAS HARDY

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ABSTRACT

The present research attempts to study the broad societal construction of women, which assigns them prescribed images and roles and shapes them accordingly, through analyzing the Victorian novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. This novel by Thomas Hardy depicts the suffering of women in Victorian England, and the current qualitative study highlights the objectification of women from different aspects in the novel through textual analysis. The study applies the concept of objectification with feministic insight. The finding of the research concludes the sexual objectification of women on the basis of her gender and suggests that unless society and women themselves establish their existential rights as capable and autonomous human beings, they will not reach their full potential. It emphasizes how women's opposition to prevailing patriarchal notions gives them a new sense of self and opens up opportunities for them to defy social norms.

INTRODUCTION

The status of Victorian women was really in contrast to the national power and development of the United Kingdom¹. Women were kept deprived of their due

¹ Wikipedia

rights. Even under the rule of a female monarch, they had no right to vote, or to own property. Modern feminist manifesto was not yet in practice².

Thomas Hardy, who lived in such a situation, was greatly influenced by the trends of his time. Thomas Hardy treated women cruelly in his novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. In the *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the female character "Tess" is depicted by Hardy in the same way as a Victorian woman ought to be. Hardy is highly criticized by modern feminist critics. The way he treats women, Tess, in his novel, is the subject of criticism. He has sexually objectified Tess in his novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

While describing Tess, Hardy always mentions the physical beauty of Tess. The way he describes this beauty, referring to her peony mouth, lips and cheeks, shows that Hardy was greatly influenced by the Victorian man's mindset. For whom female were pieces of decoration.

By using "feminism" as a framework and Marta Nussbaum theory of objectification, the researchers have brought forth the sexual objectification of female in the novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

Description of the "Tess" character

In his novel *Tess of the D'Urberville*, Thomas Hardy narrates the story of the poor Tess as follows:

Innocent Tess was sent to D'Urberville's family by his ignorant parents when the poor family of Tess learned of the knight's lineage. The name of his ancestor D'Urberville. There, naive Tess Durbyfield was seduced by Alec D'Urberville and she bore a baby, Sorrow, who died soon.

Tess lived a melancholic life for some time, but later she recovered herself, and moved on. She left her home and went Talbothays dairy to work as a milkmaid. Here she met Angel Clare, the son of a wealthy person. They fell in love with each other. After some time they married, but their marriage was a failure. As Angel came to know about Tess' rape by Alec, he left her at Marlott, and went to Brazil.

Now once again, Tess stepped forward in more and more miseries. She worked harder and harder. Meanwhile, her father died. They were driven out of their home. Now they were in utter destitution. At this point Alec exploited her. He told Tess that she should not wait for Angel. Finally, he convinced her to forget Angel and to live with him. He will provide her family with everything. Despite Tess's attempts to avoid Alec, she was taken by him as his mistress.

Angel Clare returned home from Brazil, weak and sickly. He searched every place to find out Tess. Eventually he met her mother and learnt from her that Tess was in Sandbourne. He went after her. When finally Tess saw Angel at Sandbourne, she got extremely angry at Alec. Alec had deceived Tess, she

² Wikipedia

stabbed him to death. She fled with Angel to escape, but eventually she was captured by a party of men to be executed for her crime.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Following are the main objectives of the current study:

- ❖ To analyze how Thomas Hardy treats woman in his novel.
- ❖ To analyze how Thomas Hardy objectified female due to her gender in his novel Tess of D'Urbervilles.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions will be addressed in the current study:

Q1. How is women treated by Thomas Hardy in his novel Tess of D'Urbervilles?

Q2. In what ways Thomas Hardy objectified female on the basis of her gender in his novel Tess of D'Urbervilles?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The worth of women's chastity was a topic of general debate and it was demonstrated in Thomas Hardy's novel Tess of the D'Urberville. According to Clement Scott (1894), women were born angels and those indulged in sex were perverted. Boumelha (1982) states that possibly it was this frame of mind which led to the divergence of women into the chaste or the depraved, the virgin or the whore. Mathew Arnold (1869) observes that Christian principles would blame Tess as immoral and impure. There are grounds which suggest that Tess' tragedy is caused by her passivity and indecisiveness. They adhere to the Hellenic philosophy of perceiving things for what they truly are. However, the opposing school of thoughts, Hellenists calls Tess to be innocent. They are of the view that Tess' down fall is caused by her poverty and her exploitation (Arnold, 1869).

Tess passivity is further explained in her relationship with Angel Clare. She gives the entire control of her life to him, stating "you know best what my punishment should be" (Hardy, 272). There are chances where Tess could alter her life if acted more decisively.

The narrator alludes to her mistakes and implicitly calls Tess to be responsible for her ruination slightly. In view of Lovesy (2003), "Tess appears absent in the decision making process that map out her life". For example, when Tess is leaving her home to go to Trantridge in order to work at Alec's house, she gives full control of the situation to her mother. As Hardy writes "Tess is undecided, and that her seeming indecision was misgiving. Tess is aware of the impending tragedy but she passively passes by the situation".

Tess frequently fails to maintain her decision. For instance, due to her past she decided she will never marry, even not with Angel. But later on gets married to him. While living with Alec at Sand Bourne, Angel comes to take her back. She forcefully implores that he "keep away". Tess says to Clare, "never come anymore". Here the transformation of the structure of sentence from imperative

to less demanding utterance suggests that Tess does not really mean what she says. This falsity of Tess' words is confirmed by her behavior, as she stabs Alec and runs after Clare. It is undeniable that many of Tess failures to keep her resolutions come as a result of her hardships. Nevertheless, the repetitive indecisiveness and passivity of Tess accords to her catastrophe. (Lovesy, 2003)

However, Tess's failures contribute to her calamity but primarily she suffers as a consequence of mistreatment by male characters. As in the eyes of Boumelha (1982), through the overtly masculine nature of the narrative voice, for example, the narrator scrutinizes the crimson inside of Tess' mouth, which has the implication of entrance and hence penetration, Tess is frequently the target of the male gaze. This theme is reinforced as, Tess is fed berries by Alec of Hardy narrates, how she parted her lips and took it in. Here the sexual connotation is unquestionable. The feminist critics believe that Hardy himself is sexually objectifying female body. (Boumelha, 1982)

Mona Halambery (2010) describes Tess as a victim of her sex, oppressed by men and their society. According to Holemberge, the birds, rabbits, and hares along with Tess are victims of life. Tess is described in the phrases "beautiful feminine tissues, sensitive as gossamer and practically blank as snow" such phrases show her innocence. Hardy makes it clear that Tess is a victim of her sex because she trusts Alec. She comes with him and he takes the opportunity to seduce her. When Angel is looking at Tess while they are milking at dawn, Angel is expecting from her to conform to the image of a perfect woman. He compares her with Greek goddesses. It is impossible for Tess to be God like perfect while she is a human. (Holemberg, 2010)

Widowson (2010) states that Tess is a representative of the images imposed upon her by male's character in the novel, Alec and Angle Clare. The same views are expressed by Silverman (1984). His analysis of Tess character leads to the fact that Tess is a surface upon which a pattern is imposed (Widowson, 2010). Braddy (1999) comments on the debate about Tess as a fallen woman, and believes that Tess was considered to be impure bodily but she has achieved the highest ideals of spiritual purity. George (1974) has discussed the character at two levels: as a human being, and as tool in the narrative. Tess has lost her sense of identity. At Sandbourne, Angel realizes that Tess was unable to recognize herself (George, 1974).

Objectification

Seven characteristics that contribute to the concept of considering a person as an object have been outlined by Martha Nussbaum (1995) as;

1. Instrumentality; the treating of someone as a tool for the purposes of the objectifier;
2. Denial of autonomy; treating someone as if they lack autonomy and self-determination;
3. Inertness; treating someone as lacking agency and maybe even action;

4. Fungibility; treating someone as a substitute for other objects;
5. Violability; treating someone as lacking in boundary-integrity;
6. Ownership; treating someone as if he/she was something that could be purchased or sold by another;
7. Denial of subjectivity; Treating someone as something whose experiences and emotions (if any) need not be taken into account.
Rae Langton (2009, 228–229) made an addition of three more characteristics to Nussbaum's list. These are;
8. Reduction to body; the treatment of someone as identified with his/her body, or body parts;
9. Reduction to appearance; treating someone primarily in terms of how he/she looks, or how he/she appears to the senses;
10. Silencing; treating a person as if he/she is silent, lacking the capacity to speak.

MacKinnon (1987) introduces the idea that objectivity and objectification have essential relations. "The position of the 'knower' is the neutral posture, which I shall call objectivity—that is, the non-situated distant standpoint," writes MacKinnon. From a societal aspect, [this] is the male perspective. The relationship of objectification is the relationship between objectivity as the posture from which the world is known and the reality that is apprehended in this way. Objectivity is an epistemological attitude in which objectification is a social process and masculine supremacy is a political, social activity that is acted out. In other words, viewing the world objectively results in objectifying it (MacKinnon, 1987). Recent feminist research has turned its attention to her assertion. Rae Langton and Sally Haslanger have investigated the concept that objectification is frequently concealed and "masked" as objectivity, drawing on MacKinnon's work.

In the above cited works, Tess's character is analyzed from different angles such as to find out whether she is pure or not, does she contribute to her tragedy. The gap, the researchers have found out is to analyze Hardy's mistreatment of Tess, to study that Hardy sexually objectifies female in his novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and to ascertain Hardy's ways of sexually objectifying female.

METHODOLOGY

As the object of the study, *Tess of D'Urbervilles*, is a piece of fictional literature, therefore, the method chosen for the study was qualitative and the technique used for the analysis of the particular opted text for current research was done through intensive and close reading. Moreover, the present research was carried out employing Martha Nussbaum's (1995) Objectification theory with the help of close textual analysis and intensive reading of the text of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the analysis of the selected text of Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. As a framework, the researcher uses feminism from the perspective of objectification of women bodies. According to Mackinnon (1988), objectification is defined as seeing and/or treating a person, usually a woman, as an object. The selected text is analyzed through contextual analysis with the help of the model (Svensson, L., 2021). Contextual analysis is used to make inferences by analyzing the content of the selected text.

Objectification of Tess by her mother

“Tess mother asks her dressing up more the dandy and put your best side outward.” (p.57)

This is the first passage where Tess's sexual objectification is started by her mother. When Durby fields came to know about their knightly lineages, they wanted their daughter, Tess, to go Trantridge where the knightly family D'Urbervilles lives. Her mother asked her to dress up in the best possible ways to ensnare the rich man, Alec.

Tess was presented as an object that has to be sold in the marital market to achieve a high social position. If her parents were not ignorant and they had not exposed Tess to Alec's sexual encounter and Tess being an able girl, if her energy utilized somewhere else, would have possibly achieved something good. Here Tess' mother conforms to the 6th feature of Martha Nussbaum's (1995) Objectification theory, that is, the treatment of a person who can be bought or sold. She wanted Tess to be sold, as if she was a thing.

Objectification of Tess by Alec

When Tess came to Tantridge to meet Mrs. D'Urbervilles, and asked her for financial help, as their horse, their bread earner, had died. Instead of Mrs. D'Urbervilles, she met Alec D'Urbervilles. This was their first encounter when Alec uttered the following lines:

“Well, my Beauty, what can I do for you?” said he, coming forward. And perceiving that she stood quite confounded "Never mind me. I am Mr. d'Urberville. Have you come to see me or my mother?" (p.44, 45)

According to Nussbaum's (1995) theory of objectifying women, Tess is reduced to appearance by Alec. Alec without knowing much about her judged her how she appeared to his senses. Alec seems to be a lusty man for whom Tess was only a sexual object to be looked at. He was a man dominated by lust. To him female are for enjoyment only.

“When d'Urberville got back to the tent he sat down astride on a chair, reflecting, with a pleased gleam in his face. Then he broke into a loud laugh. Well, I'm damned! What a funny thing! Ha-ha-ha! And what a crumby girl!” (p.49)

Alec was fascinated by Tess's appearance. He took her to his garden and fed her strawberries and kept some in her basket. He also kept flowers in her bosom to attract her for sexual intimacy. Tess had left but D'Urbervilles was reflecting over her beautiful face. He laughed and proudly called Tess a funny thing. In the view of Nussbaum, instrumentability, that is, the treatment of a person as a tool for the objectifier purpose, is a way of objectifying female. Alec was treating Tess like an instrument to be used for satisfying his lust.

Alec came to take Tess to Trantridge, his house where she would work as a poultry girl. She would have to look after Mrs. D'Urbervilles' birds. On their way to Trantridge, Alec was teasing Tess. He was so much attracted by her good looks that he could not help kissing her again and again.

"Let me put one little kiss on those holmberry lips, Tess, or even on that warmed cheek, and I'll stop — on my honour, I will!"(p.64)

He called her lips holmberry, her cheeks warmed. He conforms to Nussbaum's 8th feature of objectifying a female. This is 'reduction to body'. Reduction to body means treating a person as identified with her body or body parts. Tess was treated as an object of sex. Alec had no regard for her other qualities like her intelligence and innocence but for him, she was nothing but her lips and her cheeks. His aim was to put a kiss on her lips and cheeks.

Tess had started working in D'Urbervilles house as a poultry girl. Her job was to take care of Mrs. D'Urbervilles' birds. Tess had to whistle to the birds to call them as directed by Mrs. D'Urbervilles. But she could not whistle. While Tess is practicing whistling, Alec was looking at her and he was enjoying the movement of her lips. He was observing the redness of her mouth. Thus, pleasing him with her looks to reduce her to appearance is a way of objectifying female according to Nussbaum.

"Upon my honour!" cried he, "there was never before such a beautiful thing in Nature or Art as you look, 'Cousin' Tess 'Cousin' had a faint ring of mockery. I have been watching you from over the wall — sitting like IM-patience on a monument, and pouting up that pretty red mouth to whistling shape, and whooping and whooping, and privately swearing, and never being able to produce a note. Why, you are quite cross because you can't do it."(p.72)

Alec was constantly chasing Tess. He was not leaving her anywhere. For him, she is Ishtar, the goddess of love, fertility and sexuality. He was following her like her shadow everywhere, whether she was whistling to the fowls or trying to catch them in D'Urbervilles bedroom.

It was Sunday night and Tess had gone to a fair. There she enjoyed very much and now she was returning to Trantridge. Alec was following her. Here Tess's fate was conspiring against her. She quarreled with Car, her fellow woman from the folk. Tess kept on going alone. There she encountered Alec, as he constantly chased her. Now he had the chance to take Tess to a lonely place to seduce her.

Alec is trying hard to get near to Tess. He is persistently gazing at her covetously. Alec can be compared with the serpent that tempted Eve and Tess can be compared with the Eve who was easily tempted because of her innocence. As serpent spring into Eve's consciousness so does Alec into Tess. "He took a few steps away from her, but, returning, said," By the bye, Tess, your father has a new cob today. Somebody gave it to him. Somebody? You! D'Urberville nodded. O how very good of you that is! she exclaimed with painful sense of the awkwardness of having to thank him just then. And the children have some toys. I didn't know-you ever sent them anything! She murmured, much moved. I almost wish you had not-yes, almost wish it! why, dear? It hampers me so. Tessy-don't you love me ever so little now?" (p.79)

As Tess belongs to a poor family, she could easily be exploited economically. Alec is doing the same, while he took Tess to the woods; he was alluring Tess by saying that he had sent her father a new horse and her siblings some toys. It shows that Alec is using his wealth to persuade her for sex. According to objectification theory of Nussbaum Tess was reduced to commodity that could be bought. Alec tried to buy her with his wealth. Alec appears to be a man of capitalist thoughts for whom wealth is everything. With his money, he thought he could achieve everything. Even he thought, he could buy her passions for his money.

"D'Urberville stooped; and heard a gentle regular breathing. He knelt and bent lower, till her breath warmed his face, and in a moment his cheek was in contact with hers. She was sleeping soundly, and upon her eyelashes there lingered tears." (p.90)

This is the rape scene of Tess. Alec took Tess to the woods. He deceived her that he had lost the path as it was night. He was going to search for route and she might wait for him on the dead leaves. When he returned, he found Tess sleeping soundly. He forcefully raped her. Here, according to the objectification theory, Tess is objectified. She is treated as something whose experiences and feelings need not to be considered. She is objectified according to the denial of subjectivity. Her prior permission either for sex was nothing for Alec. He did not pay any attention to it.

Alec appears to be a cunning and bestial man. He seduced the innocent Tess in an organized way. First, he flattered her with his words, then through his action of sending her father a horse and her siblings some toys and when he found her sleeping, he availed the chance and raped her.

"Poch! Well if you did not wish to come to Trantridge why did you come?" (p.97)

After her seduction by Alec, when she complained, Alec replied her very passively. Even he declared Tess responsible for all the things that happened between them; he was a man of no conscience. He raped her and satisfied his lust with her body and then casted her aside. He had no regard for what harm he did to poor Tess. Immanuel Kant's views on objectification can be exercised well to explain Tess' objectification. In his lecture on ethics, he claims that

sexual love turns one of the parties into an object of appetite, and that once that appetite is satisfied, the individual is put aside like a sucked-dry lemon. All reasons of moral interaction cease to operate once a person becomes an object of appetite for another, because as an object of appetite for another, a person becomes a thing that can be handled and exploited by anybody.

Tess was seduced by Alec and now she was leaving for Marlot. Alec was taking her by his horse. He, being a lusty beast, is still pursuing his desire to kiss her. She was mistreated as an object for sex. She was lowered to the status of a sexual object that was to be used by Alec.

Alec did not appear in the novel till the chapter 48. He came back as a convert. He had converted and he was a religious preacher. He saw Tess. The sight of Tess was a stimulus of lust for him. He left all his preaching and ran after Tess. He said to Tess that she had the means to invoke his sexual desire for her, those were her eyes and her mouth. He asked Tess to keep her hand on the holy cross to tempt him no more. He called Tess the temptress and witch of Babylon. Tess is objectified according to the belief that counter Reformation Catholic Church holds. They believe woman to be a sexual temptress that need to be shut off to avoid man spoiling at her hands. According to the aforementioned Manta's 4th feature of objectification theory, Tess is treated as fungible, the treatment of a person as interchangeable with other objects. She was seduced but when the seducer reappeared as a convert, she is replaced from "my beauty" to "you dear damned witch of Babylon."

Tess being woman was treated so unjustly that she was done wrong and then she was blamed for the wrong done to her. She was primarily the victim of her sex. She suffered because she was a woman; her female gender became her enemy. She suffered because of her gender. Alec being a seducer appeared as a convert and easily declared him innocent. If he did anything wrong, it was due to Tess' charms. Her glaring eyes and her mouth were the means to spoil him. That was why it was all Tess fault to astray him. He being her chaser and seducer is innocent. This was the mal treatment of Tess by Alec. He not only sexually objectifies Tess but also cruelly declared her a culprit. But keep one thing in mind! His voice grew louder as he was overcome by the memories of his sincerity in asking her and her subsequent ingratitude, and he walked across to her side and grabbed her by the shoulders, causing her to shiver under his grip. "Remember, my lady, that I was once your master! I'll be your boss once more. You are mine if you are the wife of any man."(p.423)

When Alec came back to Tess as a convert, he bitterly and forcefully told Tess that she is his lady of whosoever wife she maybe. He is her master and she is his property. Victorian woman was entirely subjugated by men. She had no right to marriage. She had to do what man wants her to do. Alec calls Tess his possession. He takes her as his property. He calls himself as her master. He is diseased, cruel and inhuman towards Tess in all aspects.

Tess is objected according to the 6th and 7th feature of Marta's theory of objectification. Tess was treated like a puppet in the hands of Alec. She is treated as something whose experiences and feelings need not to be considered.

She is treated just like an object that has no feelings and emotions. She is no right to rule her own life. She is to be obliged to men.

Objectification of Tess by the narrator

After Tess had given birth to sorrow, her illegitimate son, she worked in the fields. She sat down wearily doing her work. On her miserable situation, Hardy comments that she could invoke sympathy from the heart of an enemy because she had flower-like mouth and large tender eyes- having a blind of shades. Her glamour made her a perfect woman.

According to the objectification theory, Tess is reduced to appearance by Hardy. She is treated primarily in term of how she looks or how she appears to the senses. Hardy brings forth her dazzling face to sympathize with her, and not her inner beauty.

“He had been on the point of kissing that too tempting mouth, but he checked himself, for tender conscience`s sake.” (p, 193)

It is a remark of the narrator when Angel was observing Tess mouth and wants to kiss it but he could not do. Hardy is observing Tess as too tempting. Hardy narration reinforces Alec`s concept of calling Tess to be a temptress or witch of Babylon. Hardy too holds that idea that Tess being an elegant woman is spoiling men. Hardy`s narration also treats Tess as a victim of her sex.

Objectification of Tess through characterization

“I agree to the conditions, Angel; because you know best what my punishment ought to be; only-only-don`t make it more than I can bear!” (P, 323)

This line occurs when Tess told Angel about his rape by Alec. Angel was so upset that he left for Brazil and Tess was left in Marlott. Tess gave the entire control of her life to him. She told him that he knows best what her punishment should be. She seems absent in her decision making process. The characterization of Tess by Hardy highlights her objectification. She is portrayed as a passive character. According to seventh feature of objectification theory of Marta she is described as a person whose opinions do not need to be considered.

Female objectification by Angel`s father

“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. She riseth while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household. She girdeth her loins with strength and strengtheneth her arms. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellent them all.”(p.336)

This was a passage recited by Angel's father from Bible. This passage was about genders roles. It defined woman's role in the society. Here the expectations from a woman were being described. The patriarchal structure of the society is told where a woman is good and virtuous only when she is good in households. It shows that Victorian society woman is only an object to perform the defined roles. This passage also throws light on the corrupt religion of the 19th century England when, even Bible is promoting the objectification of woman. The same passage is repeated by Angel's mother to highlight the fact that for them the woman is only an object/ thing to play certain roles and to conform to the established standards. If she did so she was refined, otherwise not.

Tess objectification by men in general

Tess arrived in Chalk-Newton, and had breakfast at an inn, where several young guys complimented her beautiful looks in an annoying manner. Nevertheless, she felt hopeful, because was it not possible that her spouse may still say these things to her? At the time of this occurrence, she had no choice but to take care of herself and stay away from these casual lovers. As a result, Tess vowed not to take any more chances with her appearance. As soon as she left the hamlet, she went into a thicket and pulled one of the oldest field dresses out of her basket. She had never worn it before, not even at the dairy, ever since she had worked in the sand at Marlott. She also pulled a handkerchief from her pack and knotted it around her face under her bonnet, as if she had a toothache, covering her chin, part of her cheekbones, and temples. She then viciously cut her eyebrows off with her little scissors and a pocket looking-glass, and went on her uneven way, safe from aggressive adulation.

What a moment of a maid!" said the next man who met her to a companion. Tears came into her eyes for very pity of herself as she heard him. "But I don't care!" she said. "O no — I don't care! I'll always be ugly now, because Angel is not here, and I have nobody to take care of me. My husband that was is gone away, and never will love me anymore; but I love him just the same, and hate all other men, and like to make 'em think scornfully of me!"(p.356)

Tess had no one to protect her from the attacks of lusty men when Angel Clare left her alone. She was chased by men as she arrived at the Chalk Newton. To keep off the men attack, she wore the oldest field gowns, covers her face, and wiped her eyebrows. It showed that Victorian women were dependent on men to protect them. Tess's chasing by the men showed that her physical beauty was men's center of attraction. The root cause of negative body image is not that only certain women bodies are valued, it is that women's bodies are valued more than women.

CONCLUSION

This study explores how is women treated in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, a novel by Thomas Hardy by drawing inferences from the selected text. The novel which portrays the Victorian women depicts value of Victorian women as not more than mere an object. Victorian women were subjugated by men. They were kept deprived of their due rights; their right to vote, to own property, and

even to marry. Hardy treats Tess likewise. She is treated by Hardy like Victorian women. She is portrayed as a passive character. She is treated cruelly and is described as a sexual object in the hands of male. Hardy objectifies women in different ways. Tess is first objectified by her mother, then by Alec, and the narrator. Mrs. Durbeyfield wanted to ensnare the rich man, Alec. She believes that by marrying Alec Tess fortunes will change.

Furthermore, Tess is objectified by Alec. He flatters her with his sugar coated words. He tried all possible means to get near to her, finally seducing her. Later on, she falls in love with Angle Clare. They got married but he leaves Tess when comes to know about her rape. Alec again appears as a preacher but when he sees Tess, he forgets all his preaching's and conversion and peruses Tess to marry her. For this he tried all possible means and finally takes her as his mistress.

Above all Tess is objectified by the narrator. From omniscient point of view, we come to know that Tess is reduced to appearance. The narrator always talks about Tess physical beauty. He mentions her large eyes, her rosy cheeks, and her red mobile mouth. Hardy's narration shows that he also wants to kiss her. Women have mostly been exploited and subjugated by men from time immemorial. They are stereotyped by them in whatever way they want. As a result of such treatment, women are reduced to the level of non-living things; all their potential ceased to be utilized in proper ways. Such an attitude deprives them from becoming useful members of the society. If the society wants to progress, they should give women their due rights in all aspects, as men. The society norms, in this regard, needs to be challenged.

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