

Exploring Tess's Inner World from Her Tragic Life

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Abstract. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, a representative work of Hardy's, is one of "series of Wessex", which expresses sublimity and decency of classical beauty. It describes the tragedy of a country girl. She possesses the qualities of beauty, purity, kindness, diligence and tolerance. She pursues freedom based on self-esteem instead of satisfying vanity by marrying a rich man. She is so pure that she uses her behaviors to protest against the times by her actions. Her tragedy is caused by society. At the same time, Alec and Angel stand for two kinds of social forces putting Tess into abyss. They straightly create the tragedy toward Tess. All of those descriptions reveal that capitalist systems and laws mistreat women in the Victorian period. From the aspect of analyzing context, gradual establishment of Tess's image and her life experiences are formed under such historical background.

The novel was written in the nineteenth century of the Victorian period. At that time, industrial civilization conflicted with traditional life style. Capitalistic culture struck with moral conception, legal system and religious belief. Tess, as a woman who comes from a poor family, not only suffers insults but also curbed by traditional thinking. The law is imperfect and it serves for the people from the upper class. People still keeps conservative attitude toward marriage. They disdain unchaste women. It's disloyal to their husband for dissolute behavior. Meanwhile, developments bring about new thoughts. New environment and lifestyle make female have independent consciousness. They are no longer subordinate to their husband. The wake of female consciousness makes them pursue their happiness regardless of secular vision. They follow their inward ideas. Tess experiences from an ignorant girl to a women who knows the essence of happiness. Her short but shining life suffers joys and sorrows of life and then gains regeneration. Her whole life also reflects a thorough understanding of life and marriage for ordinary women in nineteenth century. By analyzing Tess' attitudes toward happiness, we can learn a whole society, historical background and political system in nineteenth century. The understanding of happiness is her sublimation in spirit. At the same time, we know the development of whole society[11].

Introduction

Introduction of Hardy and the Writing Background.

Every era has its own storytellers. In the later of nineteenth century, an English novelist and poet Thomas Hardy was born in a downfallen lord family. During his youth age, he was engaged in many kinds of works which has deeply affected his writing career. And he showed great passions and gifts in writing poets and novels, even though he became well-educated through self-study.

Hardy lived in the period when the capitalism began to prevail from cities to villages. In England at that time, people lived in a distressful life. Due to his life experience, and Hardy's art thinking was great influenced by the cruel reality, thus he expressed his sympathy toward those people' tragic life who lived in dark society by critical realism.

Hardy wrote poetry primarily. His first collection even wasn't published until 1898. What brought him fame was his novel Far From the Madding Crowed (1874), The Mayor of Caster bridge (1886), Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891) and Jude the Obscure (1895). His writing style has changed a lot from presenting the color of the bucolic and pastoral mood to use the sharp words to show the social tragedy. Especially his representative work Tess of the D'Urbervilles shows a lots far-reaching and profound social problem form many aspects. Unfortunately, though the novel is breathtaking, it has many criticisms. In this period, his another work Jude the Obscure was published in 1895. In the

book, he revealed hypocrisy of religion and darkness of unreasonably capitalist system like marriage, education and labor relationship. He also expressed those oppressed ordinaries' aspirations by modern society. The last two novels brought about controversy even hostility. So he had to return to write poetry.

Hardy's each work is well designed. All the plots are connected with one another closely. Every part, like human's body, can't be parted and they all do their functions to make themselves more attractive. All the phrase and dialogue, scene and action, incident and encounter are deliberately arranged which fit in with his subject. That can be well reflected in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

The novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is depicted the underclass who suffered from the hypocrisy of the Victorian morality and system which mastered their marriage, sexual behavior and position of society, especially to women. Hardy not only described the pressure that came from the industrial revolution toward rural and agriculture villages, but also brought Greek tragedy into his novel. At the same time, those doctrines in Bible constrain people who lived in underclass both physical and psychological, thus the whole novel was the description of historic features.

There is a famous quote from Hardy: It is difficult for a woman to define her feelings in a language which is chiefly made by men to express their ideas. That means, from ancient to the nineteenth century, women's social status were lower than men. Few people could change the law. However, with the development of civilization and prosperity of industrial social, women gradually realized to strive for more equal right by themselves, thus avoiding many tragedies.

Introduction of the Story of Tess.

Tess D'Urbeyfield is a very beautiful country girl. She possesses many good qualities like purity, goodness, tenacity and braveness. Though she has so many attractive qualities, she has to do work for a noble family-the d'Urbervilles-who has the same surname with Tess's family. Unfortunately, the son of the host is keen on Tess's beauty. He uses all kinds of means to take liberties with Tess and finally seduces her. After that, Tess is pregnant and returns back her own home. She gives birth to a baby. Due to her so-called "guilt", she is despised by everyone in village including her parents. Under tremendous stress and the death of baby, Tess leaves hometown for a dairy farm. At there, she meets a priest's son, Angel Clare, and falls in love with him, thus they plan to get married. At the wedding night, Tess confesses her past to Angel. But Angel can't forgive Tess's past. Therefore, Tess returns home, and Angel goes for Brazil alone. Suffering from lots of insults, Tess languishes for the sight of Angel but only to be told by Alec that he will never come back. Impoverished life forces Tess to be a mistress. After a while, however, Angel wants to live with Tess. Having seen the deep lover come back, Tess is full of hatred and regret, thus she kills Alec by herself with a knife. Then Tess goes back with Angel. In their escape, Tess is arrested by policemen and is condemned to death. Angel receives Tess's request that he marries her sister Liza Lu. So they finally live together and the beautiful girl Tess ends up her whole life.

In the novel of *D'Urbervilles*, Hardy thinks Tess is the symbol of beauty and love. She possesses all outstanding merits just as people in Wessel but only to a tragedy in her society. Through this novel, Hardy reveals the hypocrisy of morality in the nineteenth century, which especially restrict female to pursue their own happiness. Anyhow, the work is absolutely a splendid work of his[6].

Three Factors of Influencing Tess' Life

Industrial factors.

In the late of the nineteenth century, feudal society begins to disintegrate. Capitalist industrial civilization rapidly immersed in the rural areas. Hardy's hometown has been greatly influenced by such impact. The patriarchal society collapsed. Thousands of peasant farmers sink into predicament with unemployment and poverty. Facing with the consequence caused by industrial civilization, as a humanitarian, Hardy's internal spirit suffers great shock[3]. He hates that industry which has destroyed primal harmonious life. Based upon the social context, Hardy presents a panorama of the impact toward rural areas in the novel. By depicting Tess's family as an epitome of peasant, he intensively reveals the miserable life of the peasant. Tess' tragedy is caused by the society.

Tess comes from a poor farmers' family though she is clever beautiful and hardworking. However, under such conditions that capitalism invades rural areas and change social custom. As a person from the lower classes, Tess has no right to pursue her ideal life. There is no doubt that she would be bullied and oppressed by bourgeois. At the very start, Tess lived in a harmonious society. She received six years' education. So she wants to become a teacher simply. But with the horse-only economic source-died, Tess has to find relatives to lease the burden of her family. So she goes to look for help from a rich man who is an upstart with much property. It is one who acts without moral restraint. He is the typical people in industrial civilization which transform both physical and psychological. After the death of Tess' son, she leaves home again for Talbothays Dairy to be a milkmaid. The owner Mr. Crick is a warm-hearted dairyman. The farm is exactly capitalistically epitome. The owner hires employees to work for the business by providing several wages for them. Via squeezing labors' surplus value, bourgeois obtain maximal benefit. When Angel separates with Tess, on her way to home, she chooses to work in Flintcomb-Ash farm in another town for making a living. The owner Robbie is a vengeful person. He treats Tess harshly for revenging her. Before Tess came here, she came cross Robbie. He is a rude and impolite man, so he laughed at Tess. His behaviors annoyed Tess so that Tess scolded him. Therefore, Robbie, a cruel bourgeois, takes this opportunity to bully Tess. It's vain to fight against a bourgeois like him. Tess has seen this, so she is obedient to work hard no matter how heavy the farm work is. She just wants to make a living by herself instead of mendicancy. As a woman, by herself, she prefers to live hard rather than rely on others.

Female Subjectivity.

The female subjectivity means that women live equally with man and are no longer subordinates or slaves of men[5]. They can achieve the worth of individual through their own efforts as men. During the Victorian period, England witness great expansion of culture, trade and industry. At that time, men treated women as a weak and obedient creature, and female must submit to male who is her husband or father. All of those make ideology experienced a little change. Though with the development of laws, women' status didn't elevate in many aspect, which can be showed on Tess. During Tess' whole life, she always tries to pursue a perfect life when she plays a role of daughter, mother, wife and mistress. The female subjectivity has deeply influence her attitude toward life. Firstly, as a daughter in sixteen years old, she should live in a carefree life. However, poverty forces her to undertake burden of whole family. At the same time, she shows great self-esteem. Her mother asks her to find relatives, she refuses at beginning. Subject consciousness makes her reject to rely on others. She is clearly aware of that the untruthful man won't bring any changes to their life[4]. Regarding as life, Tess maintains a sober-mind, unlike her mother and other women. At this time, she knows few about the definition of Happiness

Having seduced by Alec, unlike other women who must be married the man who hurt them. Subject consciousness make Tess leaves Alec instead of becoming his wife. Women shouldn't be a subordinate of men. She thinks that lose of virginity shouldn't restrict women to pursue their happiness. When her mother, a conventional and utilitarian woman, blames Tess for not trying to make Alec marry her, she said that I don't wan to marry such man. She knows that having sex life without love violate affections and dignity. How utilitarian she is! In Tess' heart, money and comfortable life doesn't mean a happy life. What she wants is a full love that based on trust, cherish and equality[12].

So when she stays in Talbothays Dairy. She falls in love with Angel who is a perfect man. He possesses all virtues that Tess appreciates. Tess feels very delighted and enjoys the life. She thinks their love beyond everything, and their love is a perfect union. However, the ideal love is broke by the truth of losing virginity. She begs for Angel's pardon after know Angel has an ignominious past: since I forgive you, and you should excuse me equally. As long as we love each other, we are equal in our innermost soul. Tess seeks for her own happiness bravely.

Morality.

During the Victorian Age, capitalist society including economy, system and culture has improved a lot. So it was the time that conflict comes between human wills and the morality. In most cases,

morality was used for maintaining people's power and defending the benefits of the rich people, especially the capitalist class.

In the nineteenth century, people tend to utilitarianism. So in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, utilitarianism is deeply influence main characters. It has deeply rooted in the British society in the nineteenth century, thus it has affected Tess' life, and it makes her have a clear cognize of happiness.

Tess's mother, a country woman without any knowledge, as a typical laboring woman in Victorian age, she herself does everlasting housework. She can do nothing but to look after the families. But she knows how to make a living for her daughter. As her daughter Tess inherits her good-looking, she expects Tess to be rich enough someday to prevent the poor family from getting into worse poverty by taking full advantages of her beauty. In order to achieve her aim, she advises Tess to use her sexual shape to attract wealthy men[9]. Therefore, when she knows that Alec possesses much property, she makes efforts to persuade Tess to marry him, even though her daughter has seduced by Alec. What she cares is Alec's status and wealth regardless of her daughter's happiness. After Tess married Angel who comes from rich family, Tess' parents care little about their marriage and ignore her sufferings. They just ask for money from Tess. So on their mind, wealth is everything.

The same situation is unanimous in Angel's mother. Angel has a wealthy and respectable family. His mother wants him to marry a pure, grandeur, well educated lady. The workwoman in milk house all want to marry Angel for his handsome and wisdom. So in that circumstance, morality limits women to choose their own life. Under great pressures of morality society, they have to give up their own ambition and swim with the tide. Tess has no choice but follow her mother's advice to find relatives. That causes the beginning of tragedy of Tess.

Analysis of Three Stages of Tess' Experiences

The Rising sun (The time before meeting Angel).

Tess of D'Urbervilles is an attractive novel for many women can see their hope for a better life from Tess. At very beginning, Tess is a pure girl. Her bright red lips had set her apart from the other girls. She likes a beautiful flower. Everything is perfect. She should have lived a carefree life just like any other country girl. However, fate plays a joke on her.

As we all know that Tess was born in a poor family, so she knows a little about the world and the people of the society. But she cares about her families very much. When Tess turned home, her heart suffered great pain. One hand, it is her self-accusation that makes she very sad, she thinks that her bitter experience brings much humiliation to her family, in a period of time, she afraid of seeing the people in her village. She did not want to hear something which other people whispered about her. So she often took exercise after dark, only at this moment, she could feel free and has no fear of the shadows. So we can draw the conclusion that most of her sufferings come from the old conventions or corrupt customs and prejudice in the society rather than her inner-mind. She was greatly influenced by the social conventions, but those corrupt customs is unfair. Due to the Alec's bad behavior, Tess has suffered great pain. In the same case, Alec had not get any punishments, just like before he lived a free and happy life. And he bears no blames from the public. It is unfair to Tess. However, in Tess's minds, it is a natural thing, because she was born with this kind of fate, so she has to accept it and there is no way or reason to change it[9]. People all believe the predestination, no matter what happened to their life, it is destiny and they should obey it. As for Alec, Tess could not have escaped the temptation, although she always resisted it. When she was pregnant, she takes the responsibility to raise the child alone. She kept silently what she has encountered. She accepted and endured the injustice of her life.

On a sunlight day, women dance to celebrate Cerialia (a festival in honor of Roman goodness Ceres). The girls are energetic, active and passionate. Tess is one of them just like a rising sun. Her life is beginning to start. The red hair band makes her distinguished from other girls. She is also pride of what she dresses. She is like a rose in bud. Her face is full of warmth and enthusiasm without any sophisticated features. Unlike old women whose faces are carved with experiences, Tess

is chaste. Everyone would be attracted by such a cheesy country girl among them. Just then, Hardy arranges Tess to meet with male lead-Angel. It's a pity that Angel dances with girls hurriedly before he has time to talk with Tess. For Tess, it is a good signal. Because her life would turn another stage. With the death of horse, Tess has to work in Alec's farm to support family. She transfers her role in her life from a girl who lives freely to an adult who should take responsibilities for her family. She has grown up with consciousness of mature. As a people live in lower classes, though poor, Tess never want to utilize her beauty to seek for a comfortable life. However, when all comes to all, she is so young that she knew little about evil from world. Alec feed Tess with strawberries which imply sexual desires. In addition, she lacks the ability to protect herself. So in an autumnal night, Alec takes advantage of Tess when she is helpless and seduced her. A vivid flower fell off[7].

The Blooming Flower (Fall in Love with Angel).

Having seduced by Alec, Tess realized that she doesn't love him, nor be a wife of Alec. Her self-esteem won't allow her to stay here. So Tess leaves here for her hometown. She doesn't want to be manipulated by him like a plaything. Female should be self-help instead of being an obedient and subordinate appendage. She is pregnant after return to home. Her mother is woman who has little education background, old morals and norm of conduct were deep-rooted in her mind. So she blames her for not marrying Alec. Only that can their family get rid of poverty. It is impossible for Tess to marry Alec who a prurient and lustful man. Whoever has a little subject consciousness won't marry him. That's the biggest difference between Tess and other women. Rumors are flying in their village. Many traditional women look down upon Tess, which makes her keep away from crowd and concern her own inner world. Loss of virginity doesn't means unchaste or immodest. Her soul is integrated. After some time, her son died so that she becomes a silent woman. She turns to be an intricate woman with deep thought. Next month of May, she chooses to leave Malott. Everything could be "recovery" as people forgive it. Spring comes again and Tess comes to Talbothays Dairy. She encounters Angel. They fall in love with each other. Tess thinks her soul has been rescued. Their love is calm but fervid. It's a perfection of union. Tess enjoys the time. She becomes a beautiful woman again. She likes a wizen flower that gets fertilizer and comes back to life again. Put aside all that has happened and try to start again.

The Perished Flower (Tess Fight Against Morality).

Tess is an honest girl who faces straightly to her inner heart. Based on trust, Tess tells her past to Angel. He, a hypocritical man, deserts Tess for his feudal thoughts deeply root in his mind, though he is regarded as an open-minded and creative youth. He was poisoned by feudal ideas. Compared with Tess who forgives his sultry past, he lacks responsibilities in his life. What he cares about is body not her pure spirit. For Tess, Angel rekindles the hope of love. Suddenly, he turns around and blank off the intention by himself. All Angel has done nearly destroyed Tess and her belief. But Tess knows that only be alive, can she proves her genuine love to Angel. Thought she wants to suicide herself to help Angel get away from the dilemma, she uses her rebelling spirit and independent personality to maintain dignity and equal personality. After she leaves Angel, Tess works in farms to support her family by working heavy works. During this time, Angel shows no interest in her. Tess has difficult in life. So she cares less about self-esteem and asks help for Angel's parents. However, she fails. At the same time, she comes across Alec again. Tess waits for Angel's return whole-heartedly. Alec always infests her. When Tess' families are in the dilemma, Alec stirs up trouble to serve his ends. Tess asks for help by writing letters to Angel but doesn't receive his reply. Moreover, Alec deceives Tess that Angel will never come back. Tess has no choice but to become his mistress. She knows that her surrender is just seeks for a better life not means that she really love Alec. Maybe Tess will live in such life throughout her life. Fate plays a joke on her. In the autumn, Angel comes back unexpectedly and looks for Tess after enduring hardship in Brazil. What makes him disappointed is Tess has became a mistress of Alec. Tess is both surprised and ashamed. She didn't think that Angel will come back. She hates Alec to the utmost degree, and she clearly knows that she loves Angel. In order to live with Angel, she has to kill Alec who is the source of pain. Only if she kills Alec, they can enjoy the transient happiness. In the winter, they escape away from the city where Alec lived. During those days, Tess feels matchless happy. It is a blessing for her to live with

Angel as a woman and a wife. She is so pleased that she goes easy with policemen. She knows that in her whole life, she enjoy those days she wants. There is no pity in the life. And she is full of hopes. Finally, she uses behaviors to boldly pursue her love. In the winter, the colorful flower died with a ghost of a smile on the world.

Conclusion

Tess is a pure, innocent, brave, considerate and beautiful girl. She is a girl of the poor peasant family. She decides to depend on her own hands to chase individual happiness. However, her fate is not controlled by herself but the society. The social regulations and conventional morals, old conceptions and unfair laws control the people's mind and behaviors. Tess is the victim of the society. The society brings many changes to her life and forces her to change a lot. In order to support her family's living, Tess does what her parents wish her to do, although she is unwilling to do it. From then on, her tragic life began. In her whole life, she meets two men, one is Alec D'Urbervilles, and the other one is Angle Clare. Alec has given a bad start to Tess's life, because he makes her lose her virginity. In the society, people attaché great importance to one woman's chastity, just like Tess who is abandoned by her husband, because of she had told Angle Clare about her past after their marriage[8]. She becomes the slave of love. Tess contributes and sacrifices a lot to the love and her family. She has taken many responsibilities which in fact is not her obligations. As a result, she murders Alec under indignation and the passion of yearning for true love. Her tragedy is caused not only by her personal characters but also by the social elements. It is the influence of the capitalism that destroys her life. She is lived in a society where people are controlled and overwhelmed by capitalist law and conventions, and this makes Tess, an innocent girl, inevitably lead a tragic life, and finally turn out to be the sacrifice of the society[13].

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