

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Vol. 4. Issue.4., 2017 (Oct-Dec)

ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2628(Print):2349-9451(online)

SOCIETY AS A FACTOR OF PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IN "TESS"

GH MOHD MALIK

Research Scholar, School of Studies In Languages, Jiwaji University Gwalior
E mail:ishfaq9612@gmail.com



GH MOHD MALIK

ABSTRACT

Man is supposed to follow the track to be provided to him by his fate. Some people are very lucky as they get a soft and delicious track throughout life. As a result their personality develops in a good way. They are very confident and courageous people. On the other hand some people move on a thorny track throughout their life. Where they face harsh and cruel conditioned at every step of life. As a result their personality also develops accordingly. Such people are very shy and less confident. As 'Tess' also faced hard conditions and suffered by one way or other during her whole life, these factors directly affected her personality.

Key words: effect of social factors like sorrow, pain, success, poverty etc on one's life

In 1891 Thomas Hardy published *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and shocked Victorian readers with the novel's sexual themes and pessimistic outlook. Felice Charmond of *The Woodlanders* is a relatively minor character who is condemned by society yet pitied by Hardy, but *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* turns this character type into a major female heroine. While Victorians would have considered Tess immoral and whorish, Hardy paints her as a pure and innocent victim of selfish men and snobbish society. Throughout the novel, Tess never loses the reader's pathos or admiration, and her lawful execution reaches tragic proportions.

Tess is endowed with noble and upright characteristics which make it nearly impossible for readers to dislike her. She possesses a strong feminine beauty that attracts the notice of many. Robert B. Heilman even claims, "Hardy goes out of his way to establish the beauty and womanliness of Tess". Early in the novel, Hardy describes her beauty mixed with innocence: "Phases of her childhood lurked in her aspect still. As she walked along to-day, for all her bouncing handsome womanliness, you could sometimes see her twelfth year in her cheeks, or her ninth sparkle from her eyes; and even her fifth would flit over the curves of her mouth now and then". She frequently attracts the notice of passers-by who "would wonder if they would ever see her again", demonstrating her unique beauty and allure. This positive introduction to the novel's heroine immediately shifts attention and admiration to the leading woman.

Hardy also endears Tess to his readers by giving her admirable personality traits. Her first words in the novel are in defense of her drunken father, who has decided to ride home in a carriage to flaunt his newfound heritage. She tells her fellow classmates, "Look here; I won't walk another inch with you, if you say any jokes about him!". Resolute and loyal, she refuses to allow others to criticize her family or her name. Tess again earns approval as she demonstrates her love for her siblings, showing her "deputy-maternal attitude" in caring for the six younger children. After the family horse is accidentally killed and Tess goes to claim kin with the neighboring d'Urbervilles family, she is uncomfortable at Alecd'Urberville's advances and does not want to return to accept the offered position. As her family is pressuring her to agree, she meekly replies, "It is for you

to decide. I killed the old horse, and I suppose I ought to do something to get ye a new one". This acceptance of guilt, submission to her family's wishes, and resolution to their decision illustrates her respectable personality.

After Tess is abandoned by Angel, she again feels the burden of her family responsibility and worries about how to best meet their needs. Angel has given Tess fifty pounds to support her during their separation, and she dutifully gives her family half as "a slight return for the trouble and humiliation she had brought upon them in years past". Later, when Angel again sends her thirty pounds, she sends twenty to her family to pay for a new roof, leaving her with little to survive on and eventually requiring her to work for wages. This caring attitude for her family extends further when Alec approaches her with an offer of help. If she will come and live with him as his mistress, he will financially support her siblings and her recently widowed mother. Although she is repulsed by Alec's advances, she eventually succumbs to his wishes and leaves with him. Janis P. Stout believes the novel "excuses her second sexual fall, her deliberate selling of herself to Alec, and provides the ultimate demonstration of Tess's courage and generosity, hence the injustice of merely labeling her a fallen woman". Even as her life is nearing its end, Tess still demonstrates her love for her family. She urges her returned husband, "Angel, if anything happens to me, will you watch over 'Liza-Lu for my sake? . . . She is so good and simple and pure. O, Angel—I wish you would marry her if you lose me, as you will do shortly. O, if you would!". Her devotion and complete disregard for self in respect to her family reinforces her likable and honorable character.

Tess continues to display a selfless attitude in other areas of her life as well. When her baby Sorrow is about to die, she cries out, "O merciful God, have pity; have pity upon my poor baby! . . . Heap as much anger as you want to upon me, and welcome; but pity the child!" Nobly, she is willing to experience the wrath of God in exchange for the child's life, revealing a deep love for the child and a pure selflessness. Later in the novel when Angel Clare admires Tess, she attempts to refocus his affection onto the other milkmaids in order To save Angel from falling in love with her, an impure and tainted woman. Trying to "obscure her own wretched charms," she points out their graces and abilities to Angel. Hardy reveals Tess's inner struggle to squelch her own desires and redirect Angel's: "Self-sacrificing as her mood might be Tess could not well go further and cry, 'Marry one of them, if you really do want a dairywoman and not a lady; and don't think of marrying me!'. When Tess awakes to find the bleeding and dying pheasants, she again displays her selfless attitude by lamenting that the birds have suffered more than she: "Poor darlings—to suppose myself the most miserable being on earth in the sight o' such misery as yours! . . . And not a twinge of bodily pain about me! I be not mangled, and I be not bleeding, and I have two hands to feed and clothe me". Although Tess has been used and abandoned by men, is completely poor, and must now work in a wretched business, she sees her pain as minimal when compared to the suffering of other creatures.

References

1. Hardy, Thomas. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. New York: Bantam, 1984.
2. Hardy, Thomas. *Jude the Obscure*. New York: Signet, 1961.
3. Hardy, Thomas. *The Woodlanders*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.
4. Beach, Joseph Warren. *The Technique of Thomas Hardy*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962.
5. Blunden, Edmund. *Thomas Hardy*. London: Macmillan, 1942.
6. Boumbela, P., *Thomas Hardy and Woman* (Brighton, 1982).
7. D'Exideuil, Pierre. *The Human Pair in the Work of Thomas Hardy: An Essay on the Sexual Problem as Treated in the Wessex Novels, Tales, and Poems*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat, 1970