CHAPTER V

WOODLANDERS & TESS

In his preface to The Woodlanders, Hardy hints towards the basic theme of the novel, i.e., the relationship between two groups based on marriage. The factors that affect the love relationship are economical, social and even educational. The author knows all these factors but is unable to give any solution to the readers. As a philosopher he does not think it as his duty to give his opinion where only individual experience can find out the way. Hardy quotes Gibbon-

“The duty of an historian does not call upon him to interpose his private judgment in this nice and important controversy.”

In the preface of the novel Hardy talks about the psychic and social problem-

“In the present novel, as in one or two others of the series which involve the question of matrimonial divergence, the immortal puzzle given the man and
woman, how to find a basis of their sexual relation, is left where it stood and it is tacitly by assumed for the purpose of the story that no doubt the depravity of the erotic heart who feels some second person to be better suited to his or her tastes than the one with whom he has contracted to live, enters the head of a reader or writer for as moment.”

The Woodlanders is a Sophoclean tragedy according to Thomas Hardy. The location of this novel is one of the places outside the gates of the world where usually may be found more meditation than action and more listlessness than meditation, where reasoning proceeds on narrow premises and results in inferences wildly imaginative, yet where from time to time drama of a grandeur and unity are enacted in the real, by virtue of concentrated passions and closely knit interdependence of the lives therein. Hardy makes such novels with the local characteristics of his scene, yet he always penetrates beneath them to those universal facts of human existence that make a web of social structure. The history is repeated in the life of individuals.
Father of Grace Mr. Malbury usurps the love of Giles’s father. He feels for a long time that he should repay Giles by marrying his daughter with him. Poor and uneducated Giles lives in dreams and his love is usurped by rich, educated and urban Dr. Fitzpiers. None is bothered about his character. Mr. Malbury creates the temptation in the heart of Grace for better and materialistic prospect as we have seen in the novel Under the Greenwood Tree but here influence of parents dominates and Giles is deserted. Hardy writes about this novel-

“On taking up The Woodlanders and reading it after many years, I think, I like it as a story best of all.”

One is tempted to agree with him when one comes across this neglected but tense and beautiful novel.

The little world of The Woodlanders is dominated by Dr. Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond who are rich and of cultivated upper class people. They are devoid of human feeling while usurping the right of poor rustics, for their personal whims and revenge motive they easily take away what they want from ordinary people like Giles and Marty South, Giles and Marty are not merely figures in
the landscape, they create the landscape. Both of them are products of selfless nature having the instinct of love but never conscious of that in midst of their unfortunate rural surroundings.

Winterborne is one of the simplest characters who like Clym Yeobright is in affinity with nature. Hardy presents his unselfish nature and love for Grace, the daughter of Mr. Malbury, the upper middle class wood merchant. In a very famous passage one studies the feelings of both of the while they plant the pine trees. They work together. Winterborne’s fingers are endowed with a gentle conjurer’s touch in spreading the roots of each little tree, resulting in a sort of cares under which the delicate fibers all lay themselves out in their proper direction for growth. The trees seem to be sighing when they are put upright and when they lie down, they don’t sigh at all. And she herself explains the reason of it that those plants sigh because they are very sorry to begin life in earnest as they are. Both of them have to work for their livelihood. Giles’s parents are dead and Marty has to work since her father is old and sick. They forget their natural love instincts in the pressure of hard life. She loves Giles but like many Shakespearean heroines
she never expresses her love to Giles who in spite of having such a faithful friend, seeks the love of Grace who no doubt fair and educated is nowhere near to Marty in virtue but this is the psychology of love that the people are not happy with what they have and haunt for another.

The rich persons like Mrs. Charmond are the factors that destroy the relationship and the property of the people. Most of the cottages and houses in the village are owned by her. She is sensual and always in the search of a man that can satisfy her fires. Often she goes abroad with new dress to look younger. When she observes the chestnut hair of Marty South, she decides to possess that heir and sends master barber Mr. Percomb to Marty. Marty earns three pence a day by making spargads, the chips with which fire is maintained. She makes these woodchips for Mulberry. Percomb shows her a sovereign - a golden sovereign to sell her hair to Mr. Charmond. She at first refuses clearly. He raises the cost up to two sovereign but in vein. She knows that her hair is the most beautiful part of her personality; Mr. Percomb comes to real threats and say-
“The lady, who wants it, wants it badly. And between you and me you’d better let her have it. It will be bad for you if you don’t.... You see Marty, as you are in the same parish and in one of these lady’s colleges and your father is ill and would not like to turn out and it would be well to oblige her.”

Marty knows this threat but she having a genuine feeling of love for Giles hopes to marry her. Hence the threat, at first falls flat upon her. But she also knows that Giles has inclination for Grace the daughter of Mr. Malbury. Grace’s father is very disturbed to think about his daughter’s relation with Giles. On one hand he feels the guilty conscience and he should get his daughter married with Giles in spite of his being poor. But on the other hand he thinks that he is wasting his daughter upon him. He has spent his money upon his daughter to make her sophisticated and certainly her standard is higher than that of Giles. Marty over hears that particular piece of conversation when Mr. Malbury talks about Grace’s marriage with Giles. Now Marty comes to reality and feels that money is also important for her. At once the value of two
gold sovereigns tempts her and she sells her hair to Mrs. Charmond. In fact the cottages of Giles and Marty’s father were on life lease of her father. On his death Giles and Marty will have to leave the cottages. She does not hear the next portion of Mr. Mulberry conversation with his wife. He does not find Giles suitable match for his daughter. No doubt there is mutual love between them but reality is not to be ignored.

“I know that well. There will be no lack of that with him. But since I have educated her so well, and so long and so far above level as the daughters hereabout, it is wasting her to give her to a man of no higher standing than he.”

George Eliot says,

“When land is gone and money is spent, then learning is most excellent”

In this novel too Hardy says that-

“Learning is better than houses and lands.”

But the story of the novel shows that all three go together. Giles in his self depreciatory sense of living on a much smaller
scale than the Mulbury do, puts his invitation of Christmas in mild form. Grace with her father comes before scheduled time. Giles being alone in the house lives in unsystematic ways and Grace is depressed to see it. Mr. Mulberry is doubtful about the future of Grace if she marries with Giles. The poor impression of Giles habitation changes the mind of Mr. Mulberry who in turn advises Grace to divert her inclination from Giles. Along with money, education also becomes leading factor in influencing the lives of people. The servant Mr. Creedle thinks that the party was a failure as it was not according to the level of Grace. He says,

"They should not have schooled her so monstrous high or else bachelor men should not give rendys, or if they do give them, only to their own race."

Grace after the party is coming to the point of resolution. She is lost in thoughts. Mrs. Charmond does not appoint her as her companion and Mr. Mulbury takes it as the result of her relation with Giles. He clearly advises Grace,
“Now, he went on emphatically, ‘tis Winterbourne’s affair has done this. O yes it is, so let me say one word. Promise that you will not meet him again without my knowledge.”

Like sergeant Troy, Dr. Fitzpiers is a philanderer. He is rich and educated. Mr. Malbury awakens the temptation in the heart of Grace who otherwise like Elfride, feels herself morally bound to Giles. But the materialistic temptation works and she deserts Giles. More over unfortunately, father of Marty dies and Giles loses, his only one possession, i.e. his cottage. Marty knows the result of it and ironically, she writes these lines on the wall of Giles house –

“O Giles, you have lost your dwelling place,
And therefore Giles you will lose your Grace.

Fitzpiers is rich and educated having no set of morals. He has relations with Grace, Mrs. Charmond and other girls of the village but all his vices are garbed under his education and richness. Giles knows it very well and submits himself to his fate. Creedle, his servant says to Giles –
“Ah, Master... you have lost a hundred load of timber well seasoned; you have lost five hundred pound in good money; you have lost the stone windered house that is big enough to hold a dozen families, you have lost a share of half a dozen good wagon and their horses all lost through your letting slip that was once you own.”

The house is gone, the property is gone and the educated beloved is gone. Unlike Gabriel Oak and Venn whom he resembles strongly in some ways, Giles can not find fulfillment in the world. Grace in the light of her husband forgets Giles who sacrifices himself for her sake. She goes to midland with her husband as readers can suppose that they will lead a happy life and poor Giles is remembered by poor Marty who is left alone to shed tears at the grave of Giles. At the end of the novel Hardy wants to show that the marital union or marriage does not make a difference for the people who give themselves to higher kind of mutual relationship. They are spiritually married. Even Grace realizes it and says to her
that Giles ought to have married her and nobody else in the world. Marty shakes her head.

“In all our outdoor days and years together, ma

“m” she replied, the one thing that he never spoke to me, was love, nor I to him”.  

She dedicates her life to him, rather merges her identity with his. She never thinks of second man in her dreams and life. Really for Grace we forget Marty. But she stands as grand and gloomy as the Oak tree giving shelter to the people. In fact the disciplined behaviour of Giles with Grace when he is dying outside in rain increases his greatness in the eyes of Marty as she is the only woman who knows this secret from the very beginning. Marty and Giles are natural born lovers who do not find fulfillment in material world. At the same time they never allow the feelings to go beyond their control. Rather their feeling for their lovers inspires them to love them without any selfish motive. In spite of being a girl of no attractive personality, she touches sublimity at all points and looks like a being who has rejected with indifference
the attribute of sex for the loftier quality of abstract humanism. She puts the fresh flowers on the grave of Giles and,

“Now, my own, own love, she whispered, ‘you are mine and only mine... whenever I get up I’ll think of ‘ee and whenever I lie down, I’ll think of ee’ again.... If ever I forget your name let me forget home and heaven! But no, no, my love I never can forget thee.”

The tale of Giles and Marty becomes much more realistic as they are unable to overcome all the material economical and social hurdles of this life. At the same time they do not show uncanny behaviour even their dreams don’t come true. But literature at a large scale is not the description of such people. Hardy loves such characters like Marty. Writes H.C. Duffin-

“She had opened the book and she closes it with those words of divinely simplicity, mysterious beauty. It is a great loss to like others that Hardy did not make her the subject of a full length study”

Sue somewhere comes closer to her but she is more a neurotic than a sublime one like her,
“In respect of the life that displays human nature, Hardy has deliberately and involuntarily confined his attention largely to a single situation, which may be described as faithlessness, or indecision, or divisibility in love... with the exception of The Mayor of Casterbridge all concerned to show us the strife of the soul under the stress of divided affections.”

Among the unpublished valuations of Tess, Henery Jams wrote to Stevenson that good little Thomas Hardy has scored a great success with Tess which chockfull of faults and falsity and yet has a singular beauty and charm. George Meredith in a letter to Frederick Greenwood called Hardy one of the few man whose works he could read and regretted the way in which the heroine was treated at last. Whatever faults were found in Hardy’s novel and in the subtitle, “A Pure woman”, the impression that it made was profound. Having decided that she must die he went purposely to Stonehenge to study the spot. It was a gloomy lowering day and the skies almost seemed to touch the pillars of great heathen temple. He thought that -
“But I still maintain that her innate purity remained intact to the very last though I frankly own that a certain inward purity left her on her last fall. I regarded her then as being in the hands of circumstances, not normally responsible, a mere corpse drifting with a current to her end.”

Consider Tess of the D’Urbervilles, the tragedy lies not in her desertion, her struggle for bread, her frightful death but in her ‘sin’, her bewilderment of soul at Clare’s behavior, the intensifying agony of her despair, culminating in the awful wrecking of her nature in the foul shadows of Durbervilles, renewed amours-

“To be crushed to death by lead or grief is nothing for a pure woman to be crushed in to impurity, there is soul’s tragedy that has no equal in horror”.

Beginning with a description of the secluded and languorous vale of Blackmoor, in which lies Marlott Tess’s home village, the chapter provides an introduction to Tess and attention is drawn to her freshness, her innocent eyes, the phases of child hood that yet
linger over the bouncing womanliness. Hardy’s view is clear that in the absence of education and meliorative environment heredity is every thing. Then comes Angel Clare, hiking through the village and pausing in the evening light to watch the dancing and the two stars crossed ones have their premonitory wistful sight of each other. The unavoidable reality comes with ugliness when Joan Durbyfield and her husband are found soaking in public house. Here of course is the first explanation of what is to come. Tess has grown up in the household, with its slipshod morality has been brought up by these slack twisted parents. She is pointedly said to take after her mother in physical build. She is pretty, ignorant and easily moved. The death of the family horse forces Tess to work at D’Urbervilles’. These D’Urbervilles are nothing but stokes who have brought up the old mansion and adopted the old name. Alec is twenty four, swarthy, willful lips and bold rolling eyes. Hardy speaks again of the particular attribute in Tess upon which the rolling eyes at once fall, a luxuriant aspect inherited from her mother. In one sentence it can be said that her physical build and
soft yielding nature is the cause of her tragedy. Both of these features she derived from heredity.

Tess’s mother puts in her mind the idea of marriage with D’Urberville, as a very likely possibility. And she is naturally not repelled by the idea. Her state of mind is marvelously shown. Tess looks after Mrs. D’Urbervilles fowls and Alec follows her about. During a comic squabble, Tess is rescued by Alec who carries her off on horse back in to woods. She is tired out, so he puts her down on the leaves wrapped in his great coat. She falls asleep and wakes to find herself, “maiden no more”. Excuses can be put in her defense. She is badly parented, badly brought up and had been told over and over again that Alec would marry her. She is little dazed by him and half believed he loved her. All this Hardy shows with great clearness shows it was inevitable that Tess should fall, in other words should undergo simple natural experience before she is married. Hardy goes to show the appalling misery and tragedy, this experience brought in to several lives. Hardy shows the helplessness of Tess in his hands and in the hands of
circumstances. Hardy puts forth his strong idea of agnosticism when Alec bends over her.

“He (Alec) knelt and bent lower, till her breath warmed his face.... She was sleeping soundly and upon hers eyelids there lingered tears.... But might some say where was Tess’s guardian angel? Where was the providence of her simple faith? Perhaps like the other gods of whom the ironical tishbite spoke, he was talking or he was pursuing or he was in a journey or he was asleep not to be awaked” 18

It is difficult for us with our Victorian bent of mind to accept Hardy’s defense for Tess. No doubt in modern times that could have been taken only as liberal education. But living in Victorian age Hardy tries to put modern psychological views that show him ahead of time. It was not the first time that he had tried to flout society’s sexual and marital conventions. But he never did so provocatively as when he nailed ‘A Pure woman’ to his mast head up to the last phrase of the novel. Like Oedipus Tess has committed a crime without her spiritual involvement but she will
have to pay for it. The society is much more important as one goes through the view of the social critic-

“However a combination of the two angles gives something like truth; what had happened to Tess was-as Tess well knew cause for endless sorrow, but there was no need for the sorrow to be crushing and endurable, had it not been for the false view taken of the matter by society”

The people try to find out the possibility of retribution lurking in the present catastrophe. They doubt whether some of Tess D’Urberville’s male ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt-the same measure towards the peasant girls of their time. Hardy refers to the theological idea that to visit-the sins of the father upon the children may satisfy the divinities but it is scorned by average human nature. The cruelty of the present offence is there and can not be mended. Some people may believe in the fatalistic approach but no one can deny the inference of event upon the future of Tess. Her mother says-
“I thought of I spoke of his fond feelings and what they might lead to, you would be hontish with him and lose your chance, she murmured, wiping her eyes with apron. “Well we must make the best of it, I supposes ‘Its nature, after all and what do please god’."  

In the second phase, squalor is put aside and beauty once again finds place in the life of Tess. She is indeed so swiftly, so miraculously, a greater Tess. She feels the vital truth that it is because there is no love between them and that whatever has happened is loathsome. Life is irrepressible and Tess makes a fresh start. Hope, youth and spirit rise again and give us the beautiful phase. Presently comes the discovery that she has come to the form where Angel Clare, is working as pupil. Hardy gives an adequate sketch of him-fixed abstracted eyes, sensitive and delicate but firm mouth. The hard logical deposit that runs through his mental condition is described later. He has been through precisely the same experience as that through which Tess has gone. In London he was carried off his head and nearly
entrapped by a woman much older than himself. In describing it to Tess he tells how he had into eight and forty hours' dissipation with a stranger. And Tess explains it is just the same. Unfortunately Clare never sees it and it seems that his logic goes in the wrong direction.

Clare's attention is soon drawn to Tess. He does not remember to have seen her as she does at once. From Clare and others, during this period readers get constant references, dramatically ironic to Tess virginity. She seems as a fresh and virginal daughter of nature to Angel Clare, when she works as a milkmaid at Talbothays dairy. It is highly probable that these words are full of meaning- of Hardy's view of Tess as still essentially and maiden and pure. Helped by a June evening, they draw near to each other. Each is attractively puzzled by other. Tess becomes very happy indeed for she has been transplanted from the scene of her grief. Life is strong within her and she is in the early stages of love when it is exciting but not disturbing. They meet continually and daily. The spectral half compounded light which pervades the open meadow impresses them with a feeling
of isolation as if they were Adam and Eve. Her face is lovable to him-

"Yet there was nothing ethereal about it; all was real vitality, real warmth, and real incarnation".  

These lines show the difference in the description of Sue and Tess. Sue is beautiful no doubt but her spirituality dominates over her physical charms. Whenever Hardy describes the beauty of Tess, the physical charm dominates over the reason of her counterparts, as it might have happened in the case with Alec. The physical sharpness she received from her mother. For Clare her beauty culminates into her mouth. The influence passes into Clare like an excitation, Resolutions prudence, fears fall back like defeated battalion. He when, jumps from his seat and clasps her in his arms, it is as the desire of his eyes. At another moment she is flushed from sleep, the brim fullness of her nature breaths from her.

Clare’s love intensifies but Tess refuses to agree to any sort of binding or engagement. Clare’s heart outruns his judgment in betraying his love for her but he does not try to take advantage of
her defenselessness. He is one of the most interesting heroes whom Hardy has so far attempted to draw. He seems like Clym who wishes to use his education for the honour and glory of man. He comes to live at Talbothays to study dairy work and farming. He takes a step downwards from his own class by doing this. He, like Clym finds that living close to nature makes him surprisingly cheerful. He stops thinking of the diary workers, as comic yokels and begins to like them and respect them as people. He indeed, takes a real delight in their companionship. The change in his attitude brought about by working in the diary for a while is respondent for his falling in love with Tess. The social situation becomes the stimulating factor otherwise he is from a clerical family.

At last Tess consents to be his for ever and ever. She tries five times to tell him of the obstacle and Hardy continually points over her shoulder of the waiting shadows. The omens thicken and quiet wedding takes place and still the omens continue. Her friend Retty attempts to kill herself and this turns the scale for Tess. She decides that she will tell Clare there and then. Had he not ever
before his marriage vows sworn that he would never hurt or neglect her?

The basic flow in Angel, is morbid idealism, idealism derived from certain human situations certain social attitudes prevalent in his time and class, which has gone and become negative. Like all Victorians he has one standard of moral conduct for man and another for woman. He tells Tess that he is a believer in good morals. He also confirms his own dissipation, with a woman at London. Having made his confession of this lapse, he breezily asks for Tess forgiveness which she promptly grants. On the other hand when Tess confesses, his reaction is one of the astonishment and shocks-

“\nIn the name of our love forgive me! She whispered with a dry mouth. ‘I have forgiven you for the same!.... But you don’t forgive me’?

“You were one person; now you are another... the woman I have been loving, is not you”.\textsuperscript{21}

As far as Tess is concerned she feels unconvinced. Even after her marriage she whispers to herself that Clare does not love her
real self but only her image. But Clare and his behaviour can not be justified. The arguments, with which he supports his decision of abandoning Tess after her confession, can not be considered sound. He continues repeating that she had been different person before disclosure and she is another. In what way different? He does not argue about it. He acts on principles and traditional psychology that no virtuous women should have sex experience before marriage, without including men into account. This two way tradition was merely based on the property which was vested in man. This convention by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries become so essential part of the general outlook that attempts was made to find in it a more permanent necessity based on the inherent difference between man and woman. Sir John Bigham the President of the Divorce court, during the Royal Commission on the Divorce Laws, 1912, writes-

"... he did not think the act of misconduct on the part of the man had anything like the same significance as such an act on the part of a women.... It was not inconsistent with his continued on the part of the
women was, in his opinion quite inconsistent with
continued love and esteem for the husband. Clare’s mental workings are not admirable. At different
times he objects that Tess is not pure and innocent and she is
another man's wife by nature and it would be bad for her children
if their mother were known to have been seduced before her
marriage. In fact Clare is thinking of his own discomfort not of that
of the children. Both he and Tess see at once, though neither
mentions it that the disability has a purely local force. The social
traditions come in between their union and Clare at this juncture
thinks more according to these reality factors and reality factors
dominate over his love for Tess. Other wise sleep walking scene
shows that some sort of love has got a hold on his heart and the
confession of Tess affects his psyche deeply. It seems real that
great thoughts come from heart.

The sleep walking scene is highly symbolical signifying
Clare’s state of mind. After one o’clock at night Tess hears the
sound of staircase and observes her husband coming toward her
with a curiously careful tread. Her joy vanishes when she
perceives his eyes fixed in an unnatural stare or vacancy and his lips murmuring; Dead! Dead! Dead! Tess observes that continued mental stress has wrought him in to this somnambulistic state. Murmuring the same words, he picks her up in his arms and rolls her in the sheet as in a shroud. Then lifting her as a corpse, he carries her across the room, whispering, ‘My poor Tess- my dearest darling Tess! So sweet, So good, So true!’ He imprints a kiss upon her lips-lips, scorned in the day time. He descends the staircase, passes out in the direction of the river and crosses the plank bridge. He comes to the abbey ground where an empty grave in which he carefully lays Tess. He kisses Tess second time and lays down on the ground alongside with deep sleep. She tries to awake him but in vain. Then she whispers in his ears with firmness; ‘let us walk on darling.’ To her relief he gets up even in deep sleep. Tess conducts him back to the house and induces him to lie down on sofa covering him up warmly. The scene shows split in the personality of Clare in to physical realities and spiritual impulses. He loves Tess but social factors do not allow him to maintain the marriage further.
Hardy is not concerned with the every day surface of things but with the deeper principles and forces that lie behind them. He does not require to talk about everyday life. If our eyes are always being directed to superficial details, they will not penetrate below them to perceive fundamental causes. He says, "My art is to intensify the impression of things, so that the heart and inner meaning is made vividly visible." For him the practical realities do not hold any significance. But he gives full scope for the expression of spiritual and the psychic experience. The scene may seem improbable but Hardy never cares for such things if he longs to give his readers, the deeper realities of human mind. He had masters before him like Shakespeare, Walter Scot and Romantic poets. Hardy is steered by what is momentous and picturesque in life, by its phases of heightened passion and spiritual illumination. In consequence he presents his themes in a higher emotional key than most novelists do and conceives it in more psychological term. David Cecil writes-
“For the best parallel, we must leave fiction and go back to drams to the Sleeps Walking scene in Macbeth or the echo scene in Duchess of Malfi.”

After the event, Tess goes home and her unphilosophic husband leaves England. Before departing he visits his father’s house. Choosing of King Samuel’s words in the phase of virtuous women as the reading for the evening is as natural as it is ironic. When Clare tells every detail to his mother, listening to his views she wishes if she could have seen her. Since she is pure and chaste she would have been refined enough for him. She asks whether she is a women whose history demands investigation. He replies that, she is spotless; He tells that lie. But Tess can not stay at home and wanders from place to place as some sort of wild animal. Hardy continues fighting against conventions. He points out that it is the thought of world’s concern at her situation that bows her head so profoundly. He further suggests that alone on a desert island she would not have been greatly wretched at what has happened to her. Hardy feels her sinless. Yet the coarse pattern has been traced on her fine substance. She herself under all these
aspects, must have felt did unquestionably feel the spiritual degradation

“Was once lost always lost really true of chastity? She would ask herself. She might prove it false if she could veil by gone's. The recuperative power which pervaded organic nature was surely not denied to maidenhood alone”.

Hardy tries to search the practical and social reason of Tess's suffering and he co-relates the topic with the existence of human society above animal groups. According to him some conventions represent endeavor to embody and fix a stage of men's progress upward from the animal and such is the one thing that has for its aim the confining of copulation to love. Of course, actual wording of the convention confines it to marriage, but this also means that another tradition assumes loosely and blindly with good intension that marriage and love are interchangeable terms. It is the basic spiritual principle that lies, behind the practical phrasing of the tradition that gives meaning to Tess's fall.
One has some slight difficulty in believing of Alec's transformation. He too, resounds Clare's idea that morally Tess belongs to him. Nobly enduring all suffering Tess has to go to the assistance of her parents and the misery of the eviction of the family stirs a bitter sense against the cruelty done by Angel. At the same time D’Urberville's help grows more urgent. He serves the practical need of her family. Tess accepts his offer with the idea that in a brute sense that man alone was her husband. It is a soul destroying weariness that bends Tess a little to acknowledge kindness in his offers of help.

She realizes that the feeling with Alec may go on and apprehending the danger she writes an infinite pitiful letter to Clare-

"I am exposed to temptation Angel. I fear to say who it is and I do not like to write about it all... can not you come to me, at once, before anything terrible happens? If you really cannot come to me, will you let me came to you? I am as I say worried, pressed to do, what I'll not do.... I am in terror as to what an accident
might lead to and I so defenseless on account of my first terror... but if I breakdown by falling in to some fearful share my last state will be worse than the first...

come to me and save me from what threatens me!”

Clare returns to England. He still hesitates as to where truth, decency and love should take him. By the time he has decided to seek Tess it is too late and he finds her as Alec's mistress. Then the action takes place quietly and Tess murders Alec, the person who had not only stained her body but soul as well. First time it seems that Clare accepts her with soul and body together saying that he loves her. Some novelists would have let them go. But Hardy believes in reality and a person can not escape the punishment of the crimes or sin committed by him or her. He gives a marvelous picture of coming of dawn on Stonehenge and the quiet arrest. Tess is hanged and the readers see Clare and Liza Lu-bent weeping and praying-creeping on hand in hand.

Tess of D'Urbervilles is beyond doubt the greatest of the Wessex novels. Tess herself is the most sublime figure in Hardy combining supreme beauty with nobility that elevates the whole
conception of human nature and yet she is not like Marty South flaw less! She has hammertia the fatal weakness necessary to give tragedy a rational if not a moral bias. Angel Clare is intellectual figure with all limitations. The way he puts his merciless arguments before Tess, he destroys Tess’s simple faith. He fails to help Tess at the crisis of her life because of which she falls in another snare, because of which she has to murder Alec to prove herself spotless. He actually delays more than a weak before setting out in search of Tess. Hardy suggests that with more animalism he might have been the nobler man. Actually he does not have warmth of soul. He can not easily be blamed for that as consciousness is very much a matter of early training. His views concerning a woman’s virtues are quite according to Victorian bent of mind. At the same time he is a real character. The matter of humanity is so complex that it is not easy to find all answers in the books. Hardy’s characters, in the usual way are very human. There are no grandisous. They are all flowed gems, no angels but of the earth, earthly and universal as well beyond the boundaries of culture and nations.
REFERENCES


2. Thomas Hardy, Woodlanders, i, ii.


4. The Woodlanders, 14.

5. Ibid, 20


7. The Woodlanders, 30.

8. Ibid, 78.


10. Ibid, 106.


14. H. C. Duffin, Thomas Hardy, (Delhi: Doaba; 1993), 233.
15. Ibid, 111, 12.


17. H. C. Duffin, 80.


19. Thomas Hardy, Tess, (Delhi: Rupa; 2000), 111.

20. Ibid, 182.


22. H. C. Duffin, 243, 44.


25. Tess, 129.