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Tess: A Pure Woman in Postmodern Perspective in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

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Abstract

The concept of a "pure woman" is a social construct created by dominant narratives. In Tess's case, the idea of purity is imposed on her by external forces, such as societal norms or oppressive power structures. Hardy rejects this social construction of purity created by dominant narratives. Hardy loses faith in Victorian purity and social norms. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* represents the morality of the time. Hardy considers the so-called purity and morality as the cause roots of sufferings which he terms as social evils. Hardy's impression about purity and morality seems to be permanent worries of mankind. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* can be read as a story of these worries. Hardy employs more than one approach to decipher the meaning of Victorian purity. Hardy portrays Tess as a pure woman who rejects socially constructed values in order to attack Victorian purity. Tess is more postmodern than Victorian in the sense that she opposes Victorian purity and virginity as meta-narratives. Tess believes what she believes to be right or wrong, rejecting Victorian society and social norms. Postmodern theory is applied to the text, the proposed study is qualitative. The novel is the primary source of data collection. Secondary data sources include books and journal articles. Research technique is interpretive content analysis. This research is inductive.

Key Words: postmodern purity, postmodern morality, postmodernism

Introduction

In postmodern perspective, purity is often seen as a complex and contested concept. Postmodernism questions traditional notions of purity as an absolute and universal ideal. Instead, it highlights the subjectivity and relativity of ideas, challenging the existence of pure and essential truth. Postmodern thinkers argue that purity is socially constructed and influenced by cultural, historical, and individual factors. They emphasize the fluidity and multiplicity of identities, rejecting fixed categories and clear boundaries between concepts like pure and impure. In this context, purity is a product of power dynamics, where dominant groups define and impose their version of purity upon others. Postmodernism encourages a critical examination of these power structures and encourages embracing diversity and hybridity rather than striving for a singular notion of purity. In a postmodern perspective, the character of Tess, from Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, is seen as a representation of a pure woman. Postmodernism is characterized by scepticism towards grand narratives and a focus on fragmented identities and multiple perspectives. Tess's portrayal in the novel embodies these characteristics, highlighting the challenges and contradictions faced by women in a patriarchal society. In Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the character of Tess represents a complex portrayal of a woman within a postmodern context. Postmodernism challenges traditional notions of identity, truth, and morality, and Tess's character embodies many of these postmodern themes. Viewing *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* through a postmodern lens offers insights into Tess as a character and her portrayal as a "pure woman." Postmodernism challenges traditional narratives and examines power dynamics, gender roles, and social constructs. In the case of Tess, her depiction as a pure woman is deconstructed and critiqued in a postmodern context. Postmodernism often explores fragmented identities, and Tess's character can be seen as a reflection of this. She grapples with societal expectations, experiences internal conflicts, and faces challenges to maintain a consistent sense of the self. The novel portrays Tess as a victim of patriarchal power structures, where men exert control over her life. From this perspective, her purity may be seen as a social construct, imposed upon her by a male-dominated society that expects women to conform to certain ideals. Postmodernism rejects the notion of absolute truth and questions established moral frameworks. Tess's actions and decisions, though controversial, can be viewed as a result of her circumstances and the ambiguity of morality in a complex world.

The postmodern perspective considers the cultural context in which Tess exists. It critiques the views of Victorian society on morality, sexuality, and gender roles, which greatly influence the outcomes of Tess's life. Tess's character embodies various postmodern themes, such as the deconstruction of social constructs, the struggle against societal expectations, and the

ambiguity of truth and identity. Her experiences, decisions, and interactions with other characters reflect the complexities and contradictions of being a woman in a patriarchal society. Postmodernism often emphasizes subjectivity and the idea that there is no single, fixed truth. Tess's character illustrates this aspect, as she is depicted differently by various characters in the novel, each interpreting her in their own way. Viewing Tess as a pure woman through a postmodern lens involves questioning conventional interpretations and recognizing the multifaceted nature of her character, as well as acknowledging the societal complexities that shape her experiences. In a postmodern perspective, Tess, the protagonist of Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, is seen as a symbol of the complexities and contradictions of human existence. Postmodernism often challenges traditional narratives and emphasizes the fragmentation of ethics, purity, truth, meaning, and identity. Tess's character embodies various postmodern themes, such as the instability of language and the idea that there is no single, fixed interpretation of her actions or motivations. Her experiences with societal norms and expectations, particularly regarding sexuality, are analysed through a postmodern lens, questioning the constructed notions of morality and gender roles. Tess's story draws upon Victorian literary conventions while challenging and subverting them. Her tragic fate reflects the uncertainty and randomness of life, which is a common motif in postmodern narratives. Tess as a pure woman in a postmodern perspective involves deconstructing the traditional notions of purity and exploring the multi-layered, ambiguous nature of her character and the societal forces that shape her identity and experiences.

This article intends to analyse purity of the main character in the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in the postmodern views of Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Richard Rorty.

Literature Review

Bukhari, Asgher & Parveen (2021) investigate the general social construction of women, which prescribes images and roles for them and shapes them appropriately, through analysing the Victorian novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* depicts the predicament of women in Victorian England. The female figure is nothing more than the kaleidoscopic visions created by others after a comprehensive analysis of the female protagonist who is exploited by the social prescription of her identity. The study uses a feminist perspective to apply the idea of social construction. It 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 emphasises 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. Along with other factors, the Victorian society of the nineteenth century was notable for its two most delicate issues: the issue of the deplorable conditions of the working-class women and the shifting conceptions of social classes in Victorian England. On a societal level, Victorian civilization was a patriarchal culture where men held power in political and social institutions and created laws that governed the lives of women and children. In such a situation, women were forced to take on whatever role, status, or position men designated them. In a culture where men predominated, absolute reliance and submission resulted in multiple standards of morality. The female body was shaped by culture into many roles and ideals. Tess battles on many different levels for her identity and survival while dealing with this societal prescription. She tries to change Victorian image of woman.

Shaheen, & Karim(2021) explain that interpersonal relativity, socio-cultural conventions, and inherent innate things are all factors that affect human existence. Interpersonal relativity in discourse refers to the idea that the meaning and interpretation of language, particularly in conversation, can vary depending on the interpersonal relationships and social context between the individuals involved. It suggests that how we understand and respond to language is influenced by factors such as our familiarity with the speaker, our shared cultural and social norms, and the power dynamics at play in the conversation. In essence, interpersonal relativity recognizes that the same words or phrases can have different connotations or implications in different social or relational contexts. It highlights the importance of considering not just the literal meaning of words but also the subtle cues, tone, and social dynamics that shape communication in human interactions. Human personality continues to have a contentious connection with these factors that influence how people fare in this uncaring natural and human universe. Psychosexual desires refer to the complex and individualized sexual attractions, fantasies, and interests that people experience. These desires can encompass a wide range of experiences and preferences, and they are influenced by various psychological, cultural, and biological factors. It is important to remember that psychosexual desires are a natural and diverse aspect of human sexuality, and they can vary greatly from person to person. A cycloramic depiction of numerous tensions stemming from psychosexual desires and cultural norms is observed in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. These conflicts hint to the psychological agony that Hardy's fictitious characters experience as a result of a system collapse. Hardy exposes the psychic ambivalence in portrayal of sexuality as a social taboo and the intellectual idealisation of fundamental human feelings. Psychic ambivalence refers to conflicting feelings or thoughts within a person's mind, often related to a particular situation, decision, or emotion. It is a concept frequently discussed in psychology and can manifest as a person experiencing mixed emotions or uncertainty about his or her feelings or actions. Psychologically, the conflicts between a person's sex and ego are a manifestation of their instinctive struggle. In light of Sigmund Freud's theories on sexuality, the vicissitudes of the ego, and sexual drives, this research examines how these problems are depicted. This research highlights how tensions between ego instincts and sexuality claims provoke psychedelic ambiguity and imagine fatal failure. Psychedelic experiences often involve a sense of ambiguity, where perceptions, thoughts, and emotions become fluid and interconnected, leading to a heightened state of uncertainty and open-ended interpretation.

Peng (2021) investigates that freedom appears to be a mere fantasy for Tess in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, which is generally viewed as a reflection of Thomas Hardy's deterministic view of the universe. Determinism is the philosophical idea that every event, including human actions, is determined by preceding causes or natural laws. In other words, it suggests that the current state of the universe, along with the laws of nature, uniquely determines all future events. This concept raises questions about free will and the extent to which individuals have control over their actions and choices. Hardy seems to be influenced by the idea that human lives are shaped by external forces, such as social class and environment, rather than solely by individual choices.

In his novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy portrays characters who struggle against fate and circumstances, often meeting tragic ends despite their efforts. His writing suggests a belief in the power of destiny and the limitations of human agency in the face of larger forces.

Tess is free in light of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophical ideas on freedom. Tess, conscious of her position in life, strives against the natural flow of things through constant choices. Jean-Paul Sartre believes in the concept of radical freedom. He argues that humans are fundamentally free to make choices and shape their lives, but this freedom also comes with responsibility. Sartre's philosophy emphasises that individuals must create their own meaning and values in an otherwise indifferent and absurd world. He states, "Existence precedes essence," suggesting that we exist first, and then we define ourselves through our choices and actions. This research uses Sartre's pertinent theory to attempt to provide an adequate account of Tess's freedom, which is manifested in consciousness of nothingness, alienation, dread, free choice, and death.

Shyam (2020) investigates that the novel *Tess of d'Urbervilles* chronicles the life of Tess, a young woman who battles against Victorian societal mores. Everything is right for a very long time. However, her father eventually learns about their d'Urberville ancestors from someone. It inspires her parents to have lofty aspirations. She is forced to work at a wealthy woman's chicken farm in order to satisfy her parents' wishes. She is a victim of patriarchal thinking there; Alec d'Urbervilles, the rich lady's son, abuses her physically and sexually and thus results in her becoming pregnant. She has no courage to face her family, but she is powerless to change anything because no one pays attention to her. She eventually gives birth to a child, but the baby passes away. To combat hunger and the financial difficulties, she once more works as a dairy maid at the Talbothay farm. She meets Angel Clare, a clergyman's son, in this farm. They fall in love, but her past and misunderstandings hamper their future together. Angel abandons her because it is socially acceptable to do so. Her life once more becomes miserable and painful. She runs across Alec once again while looking for work. Alec uses this occasion to harass Tess. She is forced to submit to Alec because of her poverty and inescapable circumstance. She finally kills Alec in order to free herself from all of these societal expectations and wins back Angel. She is detained and given the death penalty. Tess and her subsequent struggle against patriarchy and social norms are portrayed to construct a picture of Victorian women.

Zawil (2018) investigates that Tess is the focus of various speculation networks in the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and is influenced by misleading information from three sources. The first source of information that causes change is when Parson Tringham tells her father, John Durbeyfield of their supposed d'Urbervilles ancestors. The second source of information is speculation, according to which people judge Tess without clear proof. The last cause of harm is the rumours after Tess's collapse that cannot be forgotten by either she or anyone who witnesses it. All the information spread in the novel, the rumours and the reinterpretation of her scandal after her pregnancy, are a means of influence. The people who possess some kind of knowledge about Tess, real or speculated, influence her in one way or the other when they choose to speak about it, making it a kind of power over her fate in the text. The same information that several people hear can lead to different reactions, and so it is not the knowledge itself that is harmful, but rather how a person sees that knowledge that leads to the consequences that drive a narrative forward. Depending on the context, the same rumour can lead to serious actions. Tess allows the society around her and the power to control her life by allowing gossip to influence her decisions, and by rationalizing harmful social options that hinder her own growth. Despite the utter rejection of Tess's character by society, the reader is conscious that her "soul" is not tainted by evil, and that her acts are the product of the circumstances through which she is pushed by rumours and gossip.

Litwin (2016) observes that Hardy seems to believe that technology causes a spiritual decay within British culture of the nineteenth century. Not only the women are paid less for the same job than their male peers but they are also often sexually assaulted. Hardy blames technology and capitalism for the elite being more self-alienated. Because of technological advancements in agriculture, wealthy Londoners have lost all connections with Nature and therefore no longer have a simple understanding of where their food originates and how it is made which can cement the farmers and the city men in the belief to be interdependent, hence creating a human bond within them. Londoners drink milk but do not see a cow. Like Alec physically rapes Tess, Hardy claims that capitalist development and industrialisation ravages rural England's economy and ruins its people's lives. Alec represents Capitalism and Industrialisation. It is Alec who ruins Tess's life. The loss of the house of the Durbeyfield family is described as part of this broader social turmoil affecting rural craftsmen and farm labourers. When Tess's father dies, the agreement of rent expires. So they are not permitted to live on. We can say that the status of the Durbeyfield as members of the autonomous rural artisan community decides their fate against their home. Some of Hardy's criticisms of the social order and cultural ideals of Victorian England are somewhat close to those of Karl Marx. Hardy like Marx sees the execution of Capitalism inside agriculture leading to destruction. Concepts from Hardy and Marx are not only common but also similar in vocabulary. This devastation is portrayed in fictional form by Hardy's Tess. The wish that Hardy has is similar to Karl Marx to establish a classless society.

The above discussed literature review on Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* shows a gap in its interpretation and the proposed study fills this gap. It is analysed that why Hardy calls Tess pure in postmodern perspective. Postmodernism better explains the subtitle of the novel "The Pure Woman". The fact is that Tess has lost her virginity but Hardy calls her "pure". Postmodernism supports the idea that there is no universal truth to interpret the past and rejects that certain truth is not logical.

Research Methodology/ Theoretical Framework

This research is qualitative which concentrates on answering the questions of "why" and "how". It is an attempt to study Victorian morality, chastity and purity in postmodern perspective. Qualitative research believes that all knowledge is fundamentally relative and thus it gives prominence to the subjective element in all knowledge and research and stresses the quality of holistic coherence and distrusts the generalizability of knowledge (Nunan, 1998). The primary source for data

collection is the text of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* that is thoroughly analysed for the elements of postmodernism. The secondary sources are relevant books, research papers, and articles by different scholars in journals that are used in this study.

The researcher has adopted the inductive approach that is closely linked to qualitative research. It is basically a data-driven approach that begins with no preconceptions and where the cultural and intellectual biases of the researcher are not allowed to affect the process of collecting and interpreting the data but it has the capacity to generate new hypotheses for further research (Shohamy, 1989, p. 30).

This research intends to explore and critically analyse the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* from the postmodernist perspectives of Jean Francois Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault and Richard Rorty.

Findings

In the novel, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy used postmodern notions to change the established concepts. All of these Victorian social conventions were rejected by postmodernism. Chastity and purity did not revolve around physical purity. It suggested inner purity. The novel was an uprising against the so-called traditional morality. Hardy's claim to be a pure woman in the subtitle of the novel drew attention to the moral and societal issues the story explored. Even after having an unintentional affair with Alec, Tess was a pure woman. Thomas Hardy described her as a pure woman. Some individuals evaluated her according to their Victorian morals. They asserted that she could not be referred to as a pure woman as she lost physical purity. Hardy, however, believed that there was nothing like purity from a postmodern perspective. A universal idea that was acceptable was purity. It was developed by Victorian society that exclusively applied to women and not to men. Tess only lost outward purity when she gave into Alec. The custodians of morality should not ascribe a specific or all-encompassing interpretation. Purity, according to Hardy, was something that was undamaged and unspoilt. Hardy disagreed with the prevailing wisdom of Victorian society, particularly in regard to chastity.

Postmodern purity, in a postmodern perspective, was a concept that challenged the traditional notions of purity and authenticity. In postmodernism, there was a rejection of absolute truth and grand narratives, leading to a deconstruction and questioning of established norms and values, including those related to purity. In Victorian views, purity was often associated with ideas of perfection, essential truth, and clear boundaries. For example, in religious or moral contexts, purity was linked to adhering to a specific set of rules or doctrines without deviation. However, postmodernism criticized such fixed concepts and instead emphasized a more fragmented, fluid, and pluralistic understanding of reality. Postmodern purity involved embracing the impure, the hybrid, and the heterogeneous. It acknowledged the intermingling of different cultural, social, and philosophical influences, and it did not seek to purify or isolate them from one another. Instead, postmodern purity accepted the complexity and diversity of human experiences and celebrated the multiplicity of perspectives. Postmodern purity critiqued the idea of an absolute and unchanging self. It questioned the notion that individuals possess an essential and authentic identity, suggesting that identity was constructed through social, cultural, and historical influences. This fluid view of identity allowed for a more inclusive understanding of human beings and their diverse experiences. Postmodern purity challenged the idea of fixed, absolute purity, and instead embraced the impure, hybrid, and diverse nature of human experiences, identities, and cultural expressions. It reflected the postmodern rejection of grand narratives and a preference to fragmented and pluralistic perspectives.

In a postmodern perspective, Tess, the protagonist of Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, has been viewed as a complex character embodying various themes and ideas. Postmodernism questioned traditional norms and challenged fixed meanings, making Tess a suitable subject for analysis. In this context, Tess was seen as a representation of the complexities and contradictions of human nature, challenging the notion of a pure and idealized woman. Postmodernism emphasized the fragmented and subjective nature of reality, and Tess's experiences, struggles, and decisions reflected this uncertainty and ambiguity. Her status as a victim of social injustice and the oppressive patriarchal society aligned with postmodern critiques of power structures and the blurred boundaries between victim and oppressor. Tess's experiences were interpreted as a critique of the Victorian moral values, revealing the arbitrariness of societal judgments on purity and virtue. Tess's character challenged traditional notions of purity and innocence, highlighting the arbitrary nature of such categorizations.

Discussion

Lyotard (1979) suggests that there is no single moral framework that can encompass the complexity of contemporary society. Lyotard emphasizes the existence of multiple, fragmented narratives and highlights the need for ethical pluralism. Lyotard (1979) explores the fragmentation and incredulity toward metanarratives in the postmodern era. While not directly focusing on sexuality, Lyotard's critique of grand narratives and the rejection of universal truth and totalizing frameworks can be applied to understand how postmodernism challenges traditional notions of sexuality as a stable and universally valid concept. Postmodernism challenges the grand narratives or metanarratives that have traditionally shaped religious beliefs and practices (Lyotard, 1984). He suggests that in the postmodern era, multiple language games and local narratives coexist, undermining the authority of any single religious metanarrative. Postmodern era is characterized by the absence of grand narratives or metanarratives. Traditional religious narratives, such as the belief in a universal truth or an overarching purpose, no longer hold sway in the fragmented and diverse postmodern world. In essence, postmodern culture is mass culture, and all doctrines are rejected. Tess rejects Christian baptism that only the Parson can baptise her child. She has her own subjective approach to baptism as the Parson denies to baptise her child because she is not pure. Tess's child is yet to be baptized. She comes downstairs and begs if the Parson may be summoned. Her father's feeling of his family's antique nobility is high, and his sensitivity to the smudge that Tess has left on that nobility is palpable. Tess's father declares that no one is allowed to enter his house. Tess is the one who baptises her son "Sorrow, I baptize thee in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Hardy, 2008, p. 111). Lyotard accepts multiple micro-narratives, each with its own validity within specific social contexts. Tess does not wait for the Parson and baptises her child. It is a rejection of Christian way of baptising her child. She

considers herself and her child pure. It is only Victorian Christianity which constructs the concept of purity. She rejects this concept of purity.

Derrida is associated with deconstruction, a philosophical approach that seeks to uncover the inherent contradictions and hierarchies within texts and concepts. Derrida deconstructs the notion of "purity" arguing that it is an unstable and contested concept. Identity and purity are constructed through language and social structures, unveiling the hidden power dynamics that shape existence. Derrida presents his philosophy of deconstruction, which challenges binary oppositions and hierarchical structures. The very notion of purity is deconstructed, questioning the binary opposites of "pure" and "impure." The concept of purity is a social construct, highlighting the inherent contradictions and instability of such notions. This view, which seeks to challenge the modern viewpoint, is called reconstructive postmodernism. In order to show what synthesises it, it deconstructs the concepts and values of modernism and reveals that such modernist concepts that "equality" and "freedom" are not inherent to humanity or true to human nature but are principles or philosophical constructions. Tess rejects the concept of purity. She challenges Victorian concept of purity as old-fashioned for modern times. Tess admits, "All is vanity. She repeated the words mechanically, till she reflected that this was a most inadequate thought for modern days"(Hardy,2008,p.325). Derrida emphasizes the ambiguity and multiplicity of meaning. Tess's character is shaped by language, challenging any fixed notions of purity associated with her. Derrida's deconstruction is a method that aims to uncover hidden assumptions and contradictions in texts.

The concept of a "pure woman" in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* has binary oppositions, such as purity versus impurity. This concept of "pure woman" questions the stability of these binary opposites, highlighting how they are constructed through language and cultural values. Angel believes in binary opposites. He considers pure woman acceptable and impure unacceptable. Tess is a pure woman but Angel considers her as impure because he knows about her past. Angel has the same past but he is pure. Hardy criticizes this double standard of purity and tells that Tess "was a girl whose secret he had guessed, but who had not yet guessed his; an honest girl who loved him"(Hardy, p.314). The notion of a pure woman is inherently unstable and open to multiple interpretations. Postmodern philosophy often emphasizes the inherent ambiguity and uncertainty of language and meaning. Tess's experiences and interactions are filled with ambiguity, as she navigates complex moral dilemmas and conflicting social expectations. Her choices and actions often lack clear-cut resolutions, reflecting the postmodern notion that absolute truth and fixed moral frameworks are elusive. Tess's story illustrates the complexity and uncertainty of human existence, highlighting the postmodern theme of indeterminacy. Postmodern thinkers engage in the deconstruction of meta-narratives that claim to provide universal explanations of human experiences. Tess can be seen as a critique of the traditional Victorian narrative, which idealizes the concept of a "pure woman." The novel challenges the prevailing moral norms and exposes the contradictions and injustices within the Victorian society. Tess's story serves as a deconstruction of the dominant narratives surrounding femininity and purity, highlighting their oppressive nature. Postmodern philosophers often engage in deconstructing traditional narratives and binary oppositions.

Derrida(1967) emphasizes the deconstruction of binary oppositions in religious discourse. He critiques the hierarchical distinctions. Derrida deconstructs fixed meanings and challenges religious certainties. Religious concepts, such as good/evil or pure/impure, are constructed through language and are not fixed or absolute. Derrida's deconstructive methodology invites a re-evaluation of religious binaries, encouraging a more nuanced understanding of religious beliefs and practices. The idea of *différance*, which challenges the fixed meanings and binary oppositions is present in religious discourse (Derrida, 1978). Derrida argues that postmodernism encourages openness to multiple interpretations and the recognition of the inherent instability of religious language. Postmodernism questions Christianity as a sole source of truth. Hardy criticizes Victorian Christianity which emphasises upon the purity of women. Tess does not consider herself as a Christian and requests Alec to leave her in the name of his Christianity "O, will you go away – for the sake of me and my husband- go, in the name of your Christianity"(Hardy,2008, p.372). Tess tries to free herself from the control of men to find individuality. But her seducer, Alec, is not condemned or disciplined by the social opinion of her time. Instead, Tess, as a social stranger and religious criminal, is disdained and pursued everywhere she goes. Instead of being criticized and disciplined by religious consensus, Alec, the true sinner, is later converted to be a preacher. Hardy attacks Christianity here. Alec uses religion to deceive Tess because in Victorian society people had a firm belief in religion and priest. But postmodernism rejects this belief. So unjust is the social law that by classifying her as a fallen woman, it does not chastise or denounce the wrong- doer, but only robs Tess of her honour. However, the ruin of Tess by Angel is more unmatched than that of Alec.

Baudrillard is known for his theories of hyperreality and simulation. The concept of purity can be connected with the concepts of hyperreality and simulation. Purity is hyperreal, a representation that blurs the boundaries between reality and simulation. Purity is seen as a constructed illusion, a product of social codes and conventions. Purity is a simulation, a facade that covers the complex realities of power and desire. Baudrillard(1988) views that the copy looks more authentic than the original. The notion of a "pure" woman is an illusion created through media and social expectations, detached from any authentic reality. Baudrillard explores the hyperreal and the simulation of reality in contemporary society. The idea of a "pure woman" is a simulation, an idealized image constructed by social and cultural forces. Tess is a character who challenges the concept of purity which is hyperreal. Victorian purity looks more real than the original. Tess does not intend to have sexual account with Alec. She is raped by Alec. This rape is hyperreal which looks more authentic than the original. Therefore, she considers herself pure and tells Angel "it is not in me. O, it is not in me, and I am not that deceitful woman you think me"(Hardy,2008,p.272). Baudrillard is interested in the simulacra and hyperreality, focusing on how symbols and signs dominate contemporary society. The concept of a "pure woman" has become a hyperreal simulation detached from any genuine meaning. The representations of purity in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* are divorced from actual lived experiences and have become mere illusions perpetuated by media and social constructs. Purity operates as a mechanism of control and normalization, aiming to regulate women's bodies and behaviour. Tess struggles within this power structure, emphasizing how her pursuit of purity is tied to societal expectations and surveillance.

The idea of a pure woman is a constructed fantasy created by society, media, and symbolic systems. Purity is not a genuine essence but a simulacrum that conceals the complexities and contradictions of real-life experiences. When Angel tells Tess that he loves another woman in her shape after revealing her past, Tess seems to realise his words of "guilty" and "innocent" which are Simulacra. These words are copies of the original. Tess is true to say that Angel "looked upon her as a species of imposter; a guilty woman in the guise of an innocent one" (Hardy, 2008, p.269). Angel considers Tess as an innocent woman in the guise of a guilty woman. But Tess believes in an unconventional concept of purity. Hardy depicts Tess as a pure woman by adding a subtitle to make it clear that she rejects the Victorian concept of purity. In Tess's story, her purity and innocence are seen as symbols that have been commoditised and manipulated by society. Baudrillard argues that in postmodern society, meaning and reality become fragmented and detached from their original referents. Tess's identity as a "pure woman" becomes a simulacrum, a hyperreal representation divorced from any authentic essence. Tess's character highlights the fragmentation and instability of identity in a postmodern context. Throughout the novel, she experiences a series of transformations and changes that disrupt her sense of self. She transitions from an innocent country girl to a fallen woman, and her identity is further complicated by her relationships with two men and her social status. This fragmentation of identity challenges the traditional notion of a unified and stable self, emphasizing the fluid and multiple nature of identity in a postmodern world. In general, postmodernists reject any universal truth and values that place on life a constant meaning or sense.

Tess does not want her marital status to be associated with a ring. It is also a postmodern idea that social identity is really not an identity at all. Identity is an internal concept. It is simple to go with a group, but it is difficult to fly alone. When Tess's friend asks her about her wedding ring, she replies "I wear it round my neck on a ribbon. I don't wish people to think who I am by marriage, or that I am married at all; it would be so awkward while I lead my personal life" (Hardy, 2008, p.331). Tess rejects Victorian notion of purity that only a pure woman can marry. A pure woman can also live a single life. The dichotomy between fact and fiction, words and objects, signifier and signified, subject and object, is dissolved by postmodernists. From a postmodern lens, Tess's character can also be viewed as a resistance against these oppressive structures. She embodies agency and resilience, navigating a world that seeks to define and limit her. Her struggles and choices challenge the notion of a fixed, essentialized femininity and instead highlight the complexities and contradictions inherent in women's lives. Postmodern ethics emphasizes the importance of considering the specific context and circumstances when making ethical judgments. It rejects the idea of applying universal moral principles to all situations and argues for a more situational and contextual approach. The focus is on understanding the unique factors and complexities of each ethical dilemma and making decisions based on the specific context. Baudrillard (1994) argues that in contemporary society, including the realm of sexuality, images and simulations have become more significant than actual experiences. Baudrillard suggests that sexuality has been commoditised and reduced to a series of representations and simulations, detached from genuine human desire. Baudrillard (1981) observes that contemporary culture is characterized by the proliferation of images and signs that often mask or distort reality. Regarding sexuality, it can be inferred that it has become a commodity, a signifier detached from its original referent, leading to a hyperreal simulation of desire and pleasure.

Baudrillard (1988) argues that postmodern society experiences a shift from the real to the hyperreal, where simulations and symbols replace authentic religious experiences. He contends that the saturation of media and consumer culture results in a loss of faith in traditional religious institutions. Alec becomes a preacher only to show that he has become a true Christian. He becomes a copy of a true Christian. His conversion to a preacher is hyperreal. He has still his bad intention to have sexual relationship with Tess. Tess is sure that he has sexual desire to exploit her when he tells her, "I should not look too often on you. It might be dangerous" (Hardy, 2008, p.363). Baudrillard examines the concept of simulation and hyperreality, arguing that postmodern society has moved beyond real experiences and has created a world of signs and symbols that simulate reality. Baudrillard (1994) suggests that this hyperreality has affected religious practices, rendering them as mere simulations or empty rituals.

Foucault (1978) focuses on power, knowledge, and the ways in which social institutions control and regulate individuals. Purity is a social construct imposed by patriarchal norms and institutions. Purity is policed, disciplined, and eventually shattered, exposing the mechanisms of power that shape and limit life. Foucault focuses on power dynamics, discipline, and the construction of identities. Purity is analysed in terms of the power relations that shape identity and the societal norms that govern what it means to be a "pure" woman. Notions of purity are enforced through disciplinary mechanisms, such as social institutions and power structures. Foucault explains that how power shapes societal norms. Tess's actions, desires, and sexuality are regulated and controlled, emphasizing the mechanisms of power that operate upon her. The oppressive discourses and institutions serve to exert power over women and reinforce patriarchal systems. Postmodern philosophers emphasize the role of power and discourse in shaping individual experiences. Tess finds herself constrained by oppressive power structures such as patriarchy and social class. Her actions and decisions are heavily influenced by societal norms and expectations. Postmodern thinkers argue that these power dynamics construct and define gender roles, confining women to prescribed roles and limiting their agency. Tess's struggles with societal expectations and her rebellion against the restrictive norms exemplify the postmodern critique of power and discourse. When Tess is encouraged by Angel's past story of his sexual relationship with a female, Tess tells Angel that she has the same story and "it cannot be more serious, certainly" (Hardy, 2008, p.265). Tess considers her sexual relationship with Alec as less serious. It is the society which constructs social norms. Society has power dynamics to construct the concept of purity for women. Discourses and institutions impose power on women to ensure that they must be pure.

Postmodern ethics also questions the notion of moral progress or moral superiority. Rather than seeking to establish a hierarchy of ethical values, postmodernists focus on understanding and respecting different moral perspectives. They highlight the importance of context, power dynamics, and subjective experiences in shaping ethical judgments. Postmodern ethics also profoundly influences the narrative of contemporary literature. Important area in the exploration of postmodernism has been the writing of the Victorian period. All concepts of morality that stress universal purity are dismissed by postmodern ethics.

Tess is pure and noble in Angel Clare's eyes, despite her shady history. Tess is pitted against Victorian norms in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Hardy does it in defiance of Victorian social conventions. His perspective on Tess is that these rules are created by society and Tess is not obliged to obey. Angel Clare is supposed to follow Victorian social ethics to reject Tess as his wife who is not pure in Victorian society. It is Victorian ethics which constructs the concept of purity. Angel himself is sure that Tess "is pure and virtuous goes without question? Pure and virtuous, of course, she is" (Hardy, 2008, p.308). Postmodern ethics often focus on valuing and respecting difference, diversity, and otherness. Postmodernists emphasize the ethical significance of marginalized voices, identities, and perspectives, challenging dominant power structures and promoting inclusivity. Foucault (1976) emphasizes the relationship between language, discourse, and power in shaping ethical frameworks. Foucault examines how power structures operate through discursive practices and shape ethical norms. Foucault analyses dominant discourses and oppressive power relations. Victorian ethics constructs the concept of purity and imposes it on women. Victorian society exercises power through Victorian ethics to have a social control on women. Victorian ethics gives free hand to men to prove that they are more powerful than women.

Postmodern theorists challenge essentialist notions of sexuality and argue for a more fluid and fragmented understanding of sexual identities and practices. They critique fixed categories such as heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual and instead emphasize the plurality and complexity of sexual experiences (Butler, 1990). Postmodern perspectives on sexuality often intersect with other social categories such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity. These theorists recognize that sexuality is influenced by and intersects with multiple systems of power, creating unique experiences for individuals based on their social locations (Hooks, 2004). Foucault argues that sexuality is not a fixed or natural essence but a historically contingent and socially constructed concept. Victorian society emphasized that extramarital sexuality was forbidden for women only. Those women who were involved in it were not pure and they were called the fallen women. Victorian Christianity was the main source to influence those social norms. The fallen woman had plagued the Victorians endlessly. The effects of sexual experience beyond wedlock have culminated in ruin in an era obsessed with the idealization of female virginity. Angel Clare tells Tess that he plans to marry soon and that as a farmer, he will need a lady who is well-versed in farm management. He proposes to Tess. Tess responds that she cannot be his wife. All she wants is to love him. His father is a clergyman, and his mother will not accept a female who is not pure like Tess herself. It is Christianity which constructs the concept of purity for the whole family. Church is an institution which controls women by emphasising that they must be pure. Therefore, Tess is reluctant to accept Angel's proposal and responds Angel, "Your father is a parson, and your mother wouldn't like you to marry such as me. She will want you to marry a lady" (Hardy, 2008, p.201).

The concept of the angel in the home was promoted by Victorian culture, its art overflows with depictions of a sexually provocative woman. The fallen woman was deeply isolated from fully independent figure of the prostitute in discussing her blamelessness, although at times the lines between a fallen woman and a prostitute appeared to overlap. The image of a sexually impure woman was nullified. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is based on the motif of a fallen woman. The novel illustrates the biases of Victorian culture through this motif. When it was first published, the ability of Hardy to question contemporary views of sexual morality and marriage made many of his novels questionable. There were a number of different versions of the draft of his novel, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The editors who dismissed the novel on the grounds that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and the characters were too sexy. In their minds, sexiness made it unethical. Later in 1891, Hardy was given the opportunity to publish *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in a modified version of the book type, where, despite her rape, he obviously inserted the subtitle "*A Pure Woman*" to defend the heroine's innocence.

Foucault (1977) explores the power embedded within religious institutions. He examines how discourses of power operate within religious frameworks and highlights the production of truth claims and subjectivities in relation to religious practices (Foucault, 1977). Religion operates as a form of control and knowledge production, perpetuating hierarchical structures and systems of oppression. Foucault's analysis encourages a critical examination of religious power structures and calls for the deconstruction of dominant religious discourses. Postmodernism seeks to challenge and subvert these power structures by exposing their hidden mechanisms. Hardy rejects the notion in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* that the exposed wisdom of Christianity is the best source of morality and ethics. In order to fool Tess, Alec becomes a convert. Tess expresses her disbelief in such things. Alec becomes a religious figure to have control over her because religion is a good source to control people. Power operates through his practice of becoming a preacher. Tess tells Angel that he has ruined her life, "and then it is a fine thing, when you have had enough of that, to think of securing your pleasure in heaven by becoming converted! Out upon such- I don't believe in you - I hate it!" (Hardy, 2008, p.362). Tess seems to believe that purity is constructed by Victorian Christianity to exercise control over women. After the death of Tess's child, she is reduced to appealing for her child's redemption, approaching the Parson in a futile effort to obtain a proper Christian burial for her child, and seeks clarification that Sorrow (Tess's child) will not be doomed to an everlasting abode in hell. But the vicar does not give her this affirmation. From a twentieth century scenario, Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* uncovers values deeply rooted in the Victorian era. It seems Hardy's postmodern parody to mock and criticize Christianity. Hardy uses Victorian social elements in his novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and creates new ideas out of these elements. Hardy presents these elements in postmodern perspective.

Rorty is a pragmatist philosopher who highlights the contingent nature of truth and knowledge. Purity seems to be contingent social construct that holds different meanings within different cultural contexts. Purity is constructed and contested within the broader social context. Rorty's philosophy centres on pragmatism and anti-foundationalism. Tess is an individual who actively constructs her own identity, engaging with multiple narratives and discourses. The concept of a "pure" woman is rejected and instead focus on the practical consequences and social usefulness of embracing various aspects of identity is encouraged. Rorty focuses on language and its role in shaping our understanding of reality. Tess's character is based on rejection of conventions, morality, purity and chastity. She believes that Victorian social conventions are of no use in her practical life. No social law can help her to better her life. She is pure because she breaks Victorian law which is meaningless. She is against any law and she believes, "no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly" (Hardy, 2008, p.101).

Rorty(1989) points out that our concepts and categories are not fixed, but rather products of social and cultural practices. Sexual identities and orientations are not biologically determined or objectively grounded but are constructed through language and social interactions. Tess is rejected by Angel as his wife. Angel believes that his wife should be virgin. But Tess is not pure as she had sexual relationship with Alec. Tess forgives Angel for his sexual relationship with a girl but Angel does not forgive her. Tess has postmodern approach toward sexuality but Angel believes in Victorian concept of sexuality and informs Tess, "I do forgive you, but forgiveness is not all"(Hardy,2008, p.272). Postmodern approach to sexuality challenges traditional notions of fixed sexual categories and essentialist understandings of human nature. It rejects the idea of universal or essential sexual identity and instead emphasizes the diversity and fluidity of sexual experiences and expressions. In Rorty's view, the goal is not to discover some ultimate truth about sexuality but rather to engage in ongoing conversations and narratives that shape our understanding of it. He advocates for a pragmatic approach that focuses on achieving social solidarity and promoting tolerance and acceptance of diverse sexual experiences and orientations.

Rorty(1989) explains that postmodernism rejects the notion of an objective, transcendent truth that religion often claims to possess. He views religious claims as contingent and subjective, resulting from specific historical and cultural contexts rather than representing universal truth. Universal, moral and spiritual ideals are denied by postmodernism and the relativity of all principles in all fields is accepted. No particular value choice, therefore, exists. Morality and education are not basic subjects and cannot have objective standards. There is not one value or origin of values in the universe, there are countless values and multiple value sources. The human being is free to embrace ideals that he thinks will best present his "social self" and his equal community. Tess criticises Parson's behaviour who represents church. The Parson refuses to baptise and give Christian burial to her dead child. Tess's request is rejected by the Parson as her child is illegitimate. He does not listen to her. She advises, "Don't for God's sake speak as saint to sinners, but as you yourself to me myself"(Hardy,2008,p.114). Tess rejects Parson as the custodian of religious values and believes that there are multiple values. She considers herself pure and not a sinner. Rorty suggests that this relativistic stance of postmodernism challenges the traditional role of religion in providing ultimate meaning and truth. Rorty is critical of the traditional metaphysical and epistemological frameworks that religions often rely on. He examines that religious beliefs and practices should be understood in a pragmatic way, emphasizing their social and practical consequences rather than their metaphysical truth or correspondence to an external reality. Rorty sees religious beliefs as expressions of personal and cultural values, serving to create and sustain communities and provide individuals with a sense of meaning and purpose.

Purity, according to Hardy, is a natural quality opposed to artificial, and it is neither coined by society nor defined by it. Tess is considered "pure" by Hardy because she is a human who acts with pure motives in all of her deeds. She is attempting to live up to her society's aspirations and gender ideals. The disaster unfolds as society works feverishly to sabotage her ability. In 1891, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Faithfully Presented Pure Woman* was published. A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented reveals the desire of Hardy to regard Tess as a pure woman who is innocent. The reality did not stay well with the public. Tess suffers and, in the end, she dies, but she is repeatedly viewed as a clear example of an ideal woman in the novel. Tess decides to leave Angel Clare after realizing that their marriage is predicated on purity and virginity. Tess believes in inner purity. She does not make up her mind to do the wrong thing. She cannot live with someone who just believes in purity. Therefore, she suggests "We ought to part, and we may as well get it past and done"(Hardy, 2008,p.287). The character of Tess can also be studied in the light of Jungian personality development.

Conclusion

Purity, according to Hardy, is a natural quality opposed to artificial, and it is neither coined by society nor defined by it. Tess was considered "pure" by Hardy because she was a human who acted with pure motives in all of her deeds. She was attempting to live up to her society's aspirations and gender ideals. The disaster unfolded as society worked feverishly to sabotage her ability. In 1891, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles: A Faithfully Presented Pure Woman* was published. A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented revealed the desire of Hardy to regard Tess as a pure woman who was innocent. The reality did not stay well with the public. Tess suffered and, in the end, she died, but she was repeatedly viewed as a clear example of an ideal woman in the novel. Her punishment could be said to be the death of her new born baby, but Tess was eager to start a new life after her baby's death. No one attempted to deter her, and Tess herself was the only one who thought of her as a sinner. The community or the people around her did not really punish her, but much of her punishment came from herself. The kind attitude of Hardy towards Tess reflected his disapproval of Victorian social norms. Tess internalised these norms because she lived in Victorian society. He tried to examine the double standards among the individuals present. Tess's tale started with a pure woman, and she was portrayed as such even after her downfall. Hardy treated her not as a criminal, but as a victim. He challenged people to question certain double standards and the culture in which a man like Angel Clare was not permitted to apologise for her sins by posing Tess as a pure, almost perfect woman.

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