

## A “Pure” Woman in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*

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### Introduction

*Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, which appeared as serial publication in *Graphic* in 1889, was first published in a book form in November 1891. The book publication obliged the author Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) to modify and eliminate some episodes in it—for example, scenes where Alec takes Tess to The Chase, and where she gives birth to a baby, whom she names Sorrow, and who dies soon.

*Tess* has been variously criticized since just after its publication. An article in an issue of *The Pall Mall Gazette* published soon after the publication of *Tess*, said that “Mr. Hardy’s art is now an old story; and it is enough to say here that he has never exercised it more powerfully—never, certainly, more tragically—than in this most moving presentment of a ‘pure woman’” (*The Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31, 1891). In 1892, January 23, “The only fault in Mr. Hardy’s style is an excess of pedantic phraseology in various parts of the book,” said *The Spectator*, referring to *Tess*’s scientific mood (*The Spectator*, January 23, 1892). More recently, *Tess* has also been related to Darwinism, and feminist criticism. Auerbach in *Woman and the Demon* indicated that Tess was the heroine who was called “a fallen woman” but overcame her fate. Silverman added, in 1984, a new viewpoint of the violence by the text—the narrator’s fetishizing but sadistic responses to Tess, thereby to provide the ground work for the contemporary studies of *Tess*. In 1993, Bronfen, comparing Tess with Hardy’s other fatal heroines, explored the way the heroine was betrayed and died, and in the same year in *The Sense of Sex* Margaret R. Higonnet, dealing with discourses in the text between female and male, indicated that “Hardy exposes the perpetual displacement of women as figure” (28). Lyn Pykett took up Hardy’s last three novels, *Tess*, *Jude*, and *The Well-Beloved*, and said “Hardy’s narrative gaze must, it seems, either look at or away from the female body.” The idea was supported by Brady in “Textual Hysteria.”

By means of realistically depicting *Tess*, Hardy creates the character of Tess who has two

sides—a Victorian conventional woman and a “pure” woman. The story results in his limitation of realistically writing the female character through Hardy’s masculine point of view. This paper will deal with the limitation of the male author’s characterization of Tess, and in so doing explore beyond the dichotomies of pure/fallen woman in the Victorian period. In this paper, firstly, her attitudes as a Victorian woman and her “purity” will be considered. Secondly, then comes consideration of the author’s and the male characters Angel’s and Alec’s spiritualization of Tess as a “pure woman,” which shifts Hardy’s writing “the truth” to testifying to the heroine’s “purity.” The masculine author’s limitation of depicting the feminine character Tess will be proved by comparing Tess with the other female characters, above all her younger sister Liza-Lu. In Preface of his last novel *Jude the Obscure* (1895)<sup>1)</sup>, Hardy says that he tries to describe the heroine with “flesh and spirit”, but in Tess the male writer focuses on the heroine’s “spirit”: the heroine perishes due to the male author’s “fulfilment” of her spiritualization as a “pure woman.”

### 1. Tess, a Victorian woman

One side of Tess is the object of male dominance, typical of the Victorian period, the respectably conventional and conservative age. At the age of *Tess*, even in late Victorian period, a woman should be mentally and physically obedient to men, called an “angel in the house.” Otherwise she was a “fallen angel.” Tess’s attitudes as a Victorian woman are represented in her objectification by her legitimate husband Angel, and her physical husband Alec d’Urberville.

Angel Clare, the heroine’s husband in the latter half of the novel, comes from a line of priests, and he shares with all of his family members evangelical doctrines and conservative, “respectable” moral sense common among the Victorians. He works as a peasant at Mr. Crick’s farm to be an agriculturist. At first Angel wanted to flee from his family tree and live freely with modern idea unlike a priest’s son, and he seemingly gets rid of such doctrines and moral sense. However, regardless of his conscience and reason, he actually has the same thought as his family do: the conservative morality common among the middle class in the Victorian period.

The Victorian moral sense at the heart of his family including Angel is condensed into the words of his mother when Angel tells his mother about his future bride: “And that she is pure and virtuous goes without question?”<sup>2)</sup> his mother emphasizes, and Angel answers, “Pure and virtuous, of course, she is” (206). Being “Pure and virtuous” as his mother says means that a woman is a virgin, which suggests Angel’s mother’s strict morality. In the following scene, she again emphatically makes sure of Tess’s virginity:

...And living in such seclusion she naturally had scarce ever seen any young man from the world without till she saw you. (206)

He then says "Scarcely," but his mother furthermore asks him, "You were her first love?" (206). Angel's mother who persistently worries about purity and virtue—virginity—of a wife of her son's represents Victorian conventional morality, and the idea lies deep in the minds of the Clares.

Mr. Clare, Angel's father, thinks in the same way as his mother's. When Angel and his father talk about an ideal bride of him, Mr. Clare advises him to marry "a pure and saintly woman you [Angel] will not find one more to your true advantage, and certainly not more to your mother's mind and my own, than your friend Mercy" (128). As she is a daughter of Mr. Clare's earnest-minded friend Dr. Chant, both his father and mother recommend her to get married to. Mr. Clare's judgment of Mercy indicates how important it is that Angel's bride is morally and physically a virgin. In the same scene, Angel answers his father, sharing his parent's moral sense:

Mercy is good and devout, I know. But, father, don't you think that a young woman equally pure and virtuous as Miss Chant, but one who, in place of that lady's ecclesiastical accomplishments, understands the duties of farm life as well as a farmer himself, would suit me infinitely better? (128)

He wants to introduce Tess to them, but at the same time the scene suggests that Angel unconsciously compares her with Mercy at the moral level of purity. Purity by his definition also means physically innocent.

Angel shares with his mother the moral sense which people in the middle class had commonly, and this ruins the marriage between him and Tess as soon as they get married. After the marriage registration he impatiently confesses to Tess that he has once indulged in dissipation with a stranger in London for 48 hours. Then Tess also reveals that she has once had sexual relationship with Alec, the rape by him, believing his forgiveness to her. However, he does not accept the fact; "...the woman I have been loving is not you," but "Another woman in your shape" (179). After that, the narrator says, "Nothing so pure, so sweet, so virginal as Tess had seemed possible all the long while that he [Angel] had adored her, up to an hour ago" (184). It suggests to be "pure" in the Priest's son's words is to be a maiden or virgin. The narrator admits that Angel's thoughts are predominated by the mentality of his family:

With all his attempted independence of judgment this advanced and well-meaning young man, a sample product of the last five-and-twenty years, was yet the slave to

custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings. (208)

Although he is born in a priest family, he takes a skeptical view and wants to live out of the doctrine as an agriculturist living in nature. In spite of his idealism, "custom and conventionality" deep-rooted in his mind prevents him from accepting Tess just the way she is. He says he has "been loving" Tess, but he has never loved her as she is.

Later in the story Angel emigrates to Brazil to learn agriculture and builds his company. However, he finds himself swindled, suffers from a disease, and has his company and fellows killed in a bad and strange environment. When Angel exhaustedly comes back to Tess after she again becomes Alec's mistress, Tess still adores him. In the scene, the word "pure" is used in Victorian's moral sense:

He was still her Antinous, her Apollo even; his sickly face was beautiful as the morning to her affectionate regard on this day no less than when she first beheld him; for was it not the face of the one man on earth who had loved her purely, and who had believed in her as pure? (305)

Although his doctrine unconscious but deeply rooted in his mind makes him to refuse Tess before he goes to Brazil, he realizes and regrets his immature understanding of her shown on the night when the couple makes confession to each other. When Angel crosses the border to Brazil, he also crosses the border of his moral sense.

Female "purity" cannot be dealt with without her sexuality, and in the text, female sexuality is produced by male observation objectifying the female character. Tess is always "seen" by men including the narrator and the author, which conveys her female sexuality—her objectification by the masculine observations represents her sexuality. She in turn tries to escape their sight and disguise her uncontrollable sexual charm; for example, reaching Chalk-Newton she wears her oldest field-gown, ties a handkerchief around her face under her bonnet, and snips her eyebrows off. In the same scene, although especially Angel has already regarded her no longer to be "pure" from her confession, the narrator moreover observes Tess, saying: "Tess walks on; a figure which is part of the landscape; a fieldwoman pure and simple, in winter guise" (220).

The masculine narrator tries to manifest her "purity" from the narrator's own point of view, instead of Angel's. He sees her noble spirit in the name of "purity," though it should be used to mean to be physically innocent by Angel. Here is an implication that not only Angel but also the narrator expects her to be a maiden in the name of "purity," as the narrator reports her state after the wedding night. In their confessions of sexual matter in their past, the narrator takes her to be

"absolutely pure" (186), and he also sees in her that "Nature, in her fantastic trickery, had set such a seal of maidenhood upon Tess's countenance that he [Angel] gazed at her with a stupefied air" (186). Tess's "purity," presented by her objectification from the masculine observation, is related to her femininity.

In Tess's dying wish, she asks Angel to marry her younger sister Liza-Lu, saying "She [Liza-Lu] 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!" (311). Liza-Lu, who realizes Tess's wish at last, is just a substitute for her, because "simple and pure" Liza-Lu indicates that she is not only violated but also has Tess's simple-heartedness. The author leads the story to the end by getting rid of Tess's then "stained" body by the seduction.

Eyes of men convey her sexuality, which is not active but passive one. In Chapter 6, where the narrator gazes at her with beautiful flowers, her unconscious sexuality is conveyed through the narrator's eyes:

Then she became aware of the spectacle she presented to their surprised vision: roses at her breasts; roses in her hat; roses and strawberries in her basket to the brim. She blushed, and said confusedly that the flowers had been given to her. When the passengers were not looking she stealthily removed the more prominent blooms from her hat and placed them in the basket, where she covered them with her handkerchief. Then she fell to reflecting again, and in looking downwards a thorn of the rose remaining in her breast accidentally pricked her chin. (31)

The roses, which Alec has given her, symbolize her femininity, to enhance her sexual attractiveness. The male narrator describes her figure with flowers as if relishing the sight of her, whose shape is taken as her female sexuality. She has her chin pricked with "a throne of the rose" when her unconscious and passive femininity is presented, not hidden by herself. By inserting the scene the author Hardy predicts that her sexuality will cause her to suffer. Throughout the narrative the masculine narrator, throughout the narrative he carefully and erotically looks at her shape, and describes her "passive" sexuality through the masculine eyes.

Alec also gazes sexually at Tess when they meet first, the incident which reveals her sexuality; "She had an attribute which amounted to a disadvantage just now; and it was this that caused Alec d'Urberville's eyes to rivet themselves upon her" (30). He is charmed each time he sees her figure. Becoming a "convert" in Phase the Sixth, he is once more "observing her from some point or other" (262), and then he remembers their de facto marriage and makes up his mind, to be officially married to her, though unable to achieve it in the end. In terms of the

masculine gaze urging Tess's female sexuality, Alec is similar to the narrator of *Tess*.

Another man who also sees Tess is Angel Clare. His eyes make her a sacred and typical woman. Seeing her for the first time in Mr. Crick's farm, he feels her femininity:

She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman—a whole sex condensed into one typical form. He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names half teasingly, which she did not like because she did not understand them. (103)

It is natural for him to compare her beauty to Demeter's because he worships the nature till he denies Christian creed and devotes himself to his ideal agricultural life. Artemis is the goddess of hunt, wild animals, wilderness, and virginity. The woman, whom he thinks sacred like "Artemis" or "Demeter," must be mentally "pure and virtuous" and at the same time physically virgin. At the wedding night he at first discloses his experience in London:

I [Angel] admired spotlessness, even though I could lay no claim to it, and hated impurity, as I hope I do now. Whatever one may think of plenary inspiration, one must heartily subscribe to these words of Paul: 'Be thou an example— in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. (176)

He shames himself to have committed a "sin," praising Tess's "purity." It is understandable that he should think of a "sin" linked to a flesh as being immoral and stained. For that reason, once he knows that she is a flesh-and-blood woman and in fact not a virgin, he cannot forgive nor accept her.

Angel's strict morality deriving from his unconscious religion at the bottom of his mind as well as his inherent praiseful attitude towards nature leads him to spiritualize Tess as Artemis and Demeter. Although he has made sexual relationships with another woman and has knowledge of female sex, he cannot treat the London woman and his ideal Tess on an equal plane.

Tess's contrast with Victorian conventional women can be considered in terms of a double moral standard, which the people of the Victorian era took much account of. Premarital sexual intercourse tended to be given tacit tolerance for men, while that of women was never admitted in England at the age of *Tess*. Angel's moral sense comes from such typical Victorian mentality according to which he will not accept her sexual experience, as he says to her "forgiveness does not apply to the case" (179). Notwithstanding the antipathy against women's sexual intercourse as exemplified by her mother Joan's advice that Tess should not reveal the violation by Alec and her

life after that event, Tess confesses to Angel the incident at The Chase. That suggests her deviation from a traditional Victorian woman.

She tries to maintain their marriage, while Angel is disappointed at her past. After the confessions Tess tells Angel "...I shan't do anything, unless you order me to..." (180). This total submission of herself comes not only from her sense of guilt but also from her confidence as a housewife. It represents her thought and attitude that if necessary she can act like a housewife whom Angel idealizes. Angel asks her "And if I do order you to do anything?" (180). And then she answers,

I will obey you, like your wretched slave, even if it is to lie down and die. (180)

She can not be said as a conventional woman, for her awareness is condensed into the line: her words represent not only her love and faith for Angel, but also her awareness of the situation concerning females, in her eyes, that of a "wretched slave" in the marriage. Her attitude towards marriage system and life differs from other contemporary women.

On the other hand, her financial problem makes her give herself to Alec, in the position in which she is taken for his wife without registration, called "Mrs. Durberville." Her father's death turns her family adrift, so that she, in spite of her repeated refusal of his proposal, begs financial support in turn for her sexuality. The contract of their common-law marriage implies that her human right is not assured and she has to offer herself for Alec every time he wants whether she loves him or not. Tess's interpretation of marriage, where there should be love between a man and a woman, is different from the Victorian idea with which women married men to be an angel in the house. This oppressive life with Alec soon ends with her mortal stab at him: thus she abandons the life of a conventional woman in those days: as a result, she liberates herself from Alec's, male's, domination.

That liberation by herself, however, does not come from her conscious self, for she says to Angel after the murder, "I have done it—I don't know how" (303). Her first life as a lover of Alec is caused by the violation in The Chase, and secondly she has to be his lover because of her financial problem, regardless of her will. Concerning her murder, Tess does not commit the crime of her own free will. Instead, something unknown and ill-omened drives her to kill Alec. There is no intention, independence or autonomy in Tess.

Tess's "purity" is defined not in the flesh but in the spirit by the narrator/author. However, the masculine characters' and author's observation intrudes her uncontrollable femininity on the "pure" spirit. In that point, the female character is to be an object for the men. At the same time, though she seems to make her own decision, in fact she is only forced into this or that conduct,

just like a typical Victorian woman. Tess's peripety murder of Alec is less of her own choice than as a result of her lack of autonomy.

## 2. Tess, a spiritual (ized) woman

Neither the narrator nor Angel criticizes her murder of Alec. Although she is no more a virgin than being guilty, those men draw close to her. In this time, masculine point of view does not allow the female character Tess to treat herself like a flesh-and-blood woman. As a result of that, the author fails to describe realistically the heroine.

The narrator vindicates Tess, treating the murder case as one by the woman done to the man full of lust. Her mentality is shown in terms of Christianity and the Bible, or, it can be expressed, in other words, as "divinity" or "dignity." Tess is true to Angel's love till her last moment, and the narrator expresses her pure love to Angel, comparing it to the attitude shown in the Bible:

Clare knew that she loved him—every curve of her form showed that—but he did not know at that time the full depth of her devotion, its single-mindedness, its meekness; what long-suffering it guaranteed, what honesty, what endurance, what good faith. (167)

The scene conveys that Angel sees her physical charm, represented in "every curve of her form," without understanding her spirit and mind. On the other hand, as to her adoration for Angel, her love is also described by the same implication.

The firmness of her devotion to him was indeed almost pitiful: quick-tempered as she naturally was, nothing that he could say made her unseemly; she sought not her own; was not provoked; thought no evil of his treatment of her. (189)

This description is obviously quoted from Corinthians 1:

4 Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,  
5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;  
6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;  
7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (1

Cor. 13. 4-7)

Corinthians is one of the Pauline Epistles, written for the followers about the importance of charity. Tess's love is likened to charity, or love in Corinthians 13, because of which the author leaves his writing of Tess to the phrases of Corinthians.

Chapter 14, where Tess baptizes her child, conveys implication of what the author calls external "purity"; Hardy was obliged to omit the episode when *Tess* was issued in a serial form, but later he resumed it in the first edition. At the beginning of its serialization, the readers in the Victorian period would not have been able to allow the heroine to bear an illegitimate child and administer baptism to that baby. In the scene in Chapter 14, where Tess baptizes and names her baby Sorrow at the very moment of its death, it is the eyes of the narrator that spiritualize Tess:

Her figure looked singularly tall and imposing as she stood in her long white nightgown, a thick cable of twisted dark hair hanging straight down her back to her waist. The kindly dimness of the weak candle abstracted from her form and features the little blemishes which sunlight might have revealed—the stubble scratches upon her wrists, and the weariness of her eyes—her high enthusiasm having a transfiguring effect upon the face which had been her undoing, showing it as a thing of immaculate beauty, with a touch of dignity which was almost regal. (74)

And in the following description, to the eyes of her younger brothers and sisters, she looks as if she were divine and dignified, a goddess or Christ:

She [Tess] did not look like Sissy to them [her brothers and sisters] now, but as a being large, towering, and awful—a divine personage with whom they had nothing in common. (75)

In spite of her sexual violation by Alec, becoming his mistress, and giving birth to her baby, her figure has more than human beauty.

Her divinity, which the author calls "purity", is emphasized in later pages. When Tess lies on an altar of the prehistoric structure of Stonehenge, "Soon the light was strong, and a ray shone upon her unconscious form, peering under her eyelids and waking her" (312). In the heathen temple, Tess is now sacrificed by the author. She leaves her will to Angel soon after talking of sacrifice in the heathen religion. Not God but the sun they used to offer up. Angel and Tess's younger sister Liza-Lu pray for Tess in the last part named "Fulfillment," where the flag tells the

two the execution of Tess for her murder of Alec:

The two speechless gazers bent themselves down to the earth, as if in prayer, and remained thus a long time, absolutely motionless: the flag continued to wave silently. As soon as they had strength, they arose, joined hands again, and went on.  
(314)

Here, Tess's execution reminds the readers of the Christ's Passion. Angel and Liza-Lu pray for Tess's salvation, and the narrator implies correspondence of the situation with the Christ's Passion.

In an interview, the author asks the reader to "see by her violent death poor Tess makes some reparation for her sins, and so justice is satisfied." Yet he goes on, "I consider that she was to all intents and purposes a pure woman till her last fall" (388). Thus, the author regards Tess not as a femme fatal but as a "pure" woman in terms of her "purity." In his writing *Tess*, the author is always aware of Tess's "purity," as the subtitle of the story "A Pure Woman" tells. It is clarified that not only Angel but also the author spiritualizes the heroine. Because of his masculine point of view, Tess spiritualized by the author suggests that he himself overlooks her side of a flesh-and-blood woman: in this point, he fails to describe a woman realistically in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

### **3. Tess, a "Pure" Woman**

Tess's mother and younger sister Liza-Lu of the Durbeyfields make a contrast with Tess. Her mother is not educated, having typical and traditional view, especially of marriage. On the contrary, Tess partly understands her mother's idea, but often disagrees with her. Tess asks Angel to marry Liza-Lu after her death, whose wish is to be together with Angel by a clamp of Liza-Lu. It also indicates both her conventional idea of men educating women in patriarchy. Tess seems a woman germinating a "New Woman,"<sup>3)</sup> but her characteristics have been those of Victorian women's till the end. Hardy fails to achieve his writing realistically, as a result of that, in the name of "Fulfilment," Tess must sacrifice her life in order to fulfill her "purity."

The Durbeyfield family, with its three women—Tess, her mother Joan and her sister Liza-Lu—, is poor but large. These three women of the family represent three different types of women. The mother Joan suffers from poverty but, because of her incapability and ignorance, she does not do anything to better such financial condition nor correct her husband John, a drunkard who is poorly paid. She forgets how lazy her husband is and relies on Tess.

As Tess grew older, and began to see how matters stood, she felt quite a Malthusian towards her mother for thoughtlessly giving her so many little sisters and brothers, when it was such a trouble to nurse and provide for them. Her mother's intelligence was that of a happy child: Joan Durbeyfield was simply an additional one, and that not the eldest... (25-26)

Joan actually does not take care of Tess's brothers and sisters, and Tess takes the place of her mother. Joan does not have strength nor wisdom for living, so she is incapable of accomplishing the role of the mother of the large family; still, it is this mother that persuades Tess to go to the Durbervilles, get some job or get married to the son of the Durbervilles. The mother has a typical and traditional view of the poor in the Victorian period. What Tess thinks is often different from what the mother does, and rather she sometimes feels pity for her own mother.

Tess has a younger sister Liza-Lu. While Tess is absent, Liza-Lu seems to support the family. She is a "half girl, half woman—a spiritualized image of Tess" (313). Tess's dying wish to Angel shows the characteristics of Liza-Lu:

Liza-Lu is so gentle and sweet, and she is growing so beautiful. O, I could share you with her willingly when we are spirits! If you would train her and teach her, Angel, and bring her up for your own self! ... She had all the best of me without the bad of me; and if she were to become yours it would almost seem as if death had not divided us... (311)

The author intends Tess to play a role of a woman deviating but growing out of the oppressive social structure for women, in contrast with the other female character, Liza-Lu. It is clear that "the bad" means succumbing to the violation by Alec, being his mistress and giving a birth to an illegitimate child—that is, her way of life as an fallen woman in the Victorian era. Her words, which tell Angel to educate Liza-Lu to be an ideal woman for him, can mean that Angel as a husband should subject her sister under the system of patriarchy. Here is a hint that Tess values a spiritualized and virginal woman—an ideal female in the Victorian age called an angel in the house—rather than a woman who is such an unconventional woman as Tess herself. Her wish to accompany Angel with Liza-Lu as a clamp between him and Tess is equal to her giving up herself soiled with "the bad." In this time, at last, not only the narrator and Angel but also Tess herself gets rid of her body, "flesh."

There remains a problem in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. As Howe indicates, "Hardy presents her neither from the outside nor the inside exclusively, neither through event nor analysis alone"

(421), Hardy describes Tess's passive/dependent/objectified sexuality, while her active/independent/autonomous one is not written in it; for example, she stays with Angel at a manor-house on her escape after her murder (Chapter 58). It is implied that they have sexual relations, but Tess does not seem to harbour any dilemma or confusion about such relationship with Angel. It is on the course of their romantic escape journey that Tess and Angel become truly man and wife. This "Fulfilment," as the title of Phase the Seventh says, lacks reality despite Hardy's realistic writing style. There is no description of Tess's determination of sexual relationships between her and Angel in that scene.

Hardy in dealing with sexual relationships in *Tess* is never free from his own gendered mentality. As for Angel he abhors and refuses her after her confession because he has regarded her as Artemis or Demeter. This suggests his agony when he has to face her sexuality, especially the fact that she is no longer a virgin. Angel's emotional turmoil is expressed on the basis of that of Hardy as in the scene of his confession to Tess. Here is male emotional turmoil from a male point of view. On the other hand, there is no mention of Tess's confused feelings towards sexual relationship. It is possible that the author implies that the violation by Alec makes deep scar on her heart and that she can be cautious of relationships (especially sexual relationships) with men and escapes the eyes of men to avoid being involved in seduction. Her emotional turmoil about sexual relationship is not described throughout the story, however. She at first adores Angel as a god-like existence, not as a male:

She loved him so passionately, and he was so godlike in her eyes; and being, though untrained, instinctively refined, her nature cried for his tutelary guidance. (142)

In another scene, that of their escape journey, Tess takes Angel, though exhausted and weakened, as "Antinous" and "Apollo" (304). Angel's image idealized and spiritualized by Tess is maintained in her adoration. In spite of her violation by Alec in *The Chase*, the death of her baby Sorrow, and her life as Alec's mistress, the author does not imply that Tess is confused by idealized Angel when they have sexual relationships. That is, Tess's confusion is not portrayed through a filter of the masculine author.

Concerning *Tess* as a New Woman fiction, Cunningham says that "Tess is not a New Woman, but the novel which is built around her embodies essential features of the New Woman fiction which followed it" (103). It would be too much to say that Tess is a "New Woman," for she does not have knowledge and wisdom of social circumstances and does not make use of them, and essentially, her activeness and strength of will are not suggested in the text. For example, in her murder of Alec, there is no description of how she kills him at that time. Instead of that, she says

to Angel, "I have done it—I don't know how" (303). She is toyed with by fate, and passively accepts the consequences. Hardy's Tess remains a traditional female character till the end of the story, which the author weaves with a "New Woman" fiction.

The author leads the heroine to give up her "flesh" by her will, and in the end of the story, he takes Tess's life, in the name of "Fulfilment." Tess perishes by the execution in order to accomplish her "purity" constructed from masculine spiritualization by the author.

Comparison of Tess and the other female characters suggests her mother's typical idea of marriage in the Victorian period, and Liza-Lu's marriage taken over from Tess's Victorian mentality. Tess's wish to be together with Angel by a clamp of Liza-Lu indicates her mind common in patriarchy. Hardy creates Tess a Victorian conventional female character, lurking in the germinating "New Woman." Tess Durbeyfield, whose life the author deprives in the name of "Fulfilment" of her "purity," accepts her fate, to leave undefiled Liza-Lu with a role of an ideal woman in the Victorian patriarchy.

### Conclusion

The male author creates one female character named Tess in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The female protagonist's tragedy is caused by Angel's Victorian conservative moral sense of the middle class and Alec's sexual violation which leads to physical and financial domination. Masculine observation embodies her "purity" and then objectifies Tess. As a result, her unconscious and uncontrollable sexuality emerges. However, in contrast, such masculine observation spiritualizes her mentality—the male observers toy with the heroine in the text, so her autonomy is deprived her of. The author tries to emphasize the "purity" of the heroine, and in consequence he fails to describe her as a flesh-and-blood female and ends with her execution. The heroine has seemingly both "flesh and spirit"; yet, Hardy brings to a close the tragic story by focusing on her spiritual (ized) side. Tess, whom Hardy cannot depict realistically from the masculine point of view, perishes so as to "Fulfil" her "purity."

### Notes

- 1) Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. Norman Page (New York: Norton, 1978). In "Preface to the First Edition," Hardy proclaims his purpose in this novel:

For a novel addressed by a man to men and women of full age; which attempts to deal unaffectedly with the fret and fever, derision and disaster, that may press in the wake of the strongest passion known to humanity; to tell, without a mincing of words, of a deadly war waged between flesh and spirit; and to point the tragedy of unfulfilled aims, I am not aware that there is anything in the handling to which exception can be taken. (5)

- 2) Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, ed. Scott Elledge (New York: Norton, 1991), p. 206. Subsequent references to this edition appear parenthetically in the text.
- 3) In the nineteenth century, especially in the late Victorian era, there appeared women mainly in London who were quite different from the ones before. Conventional women at that time were called "angels in the house," while the different women were variously called "up-to-date women," "women of loose morals," "emancipated women," for they insisted on the right to vote, and equal opportunity in education and employment. The genre of novels featuring such women was named "New Woman novel," to which a number of writers resorted, and that with commercial success. The emergence of New Women is against the backdrop of "odd women phenomenon" in the middle of the Victorian age. Industrial Revolution divided British people into men working outside and women watching over the family as housewives. Such a housewife had to offer her husband a refuge named a home or family, and played a role of a good wife and mother—as an angel in the house. (Brown 70-77)

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