

How does Hardy present the character of Tess in the first three chapters

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Tess is presented as a member of a poor agricultural family. Despite her modest background, Tess is portrayed as anything but 'simple'. Instead, Hardy presents her as a young, hugely diverse woman through a series of paradoxical contradictions. The tragic trajectory of the novel is evident from the introduction of Tess as a victim of her social circumstances and gender. Hardy portrays Tess's character as pure and innocent but also on the verge of womanhood. Through the use of colour imagery, Hardy presents Tess's darker persona, 'red ribbon'.

The connotations of the colour red suggest, love and lust, portraying Tess as a voluptuous character. The author also uses colour imagery again that express a contrasting side to Tess. 'white company'. The connotations of the colour white represent, innocence and purity, painting Tess as a young girl. Furthermore, Hardy's chapter title, 'The maiden' reinforces Hardy's message of Tess being young and pure. Hardy does this to illustrate to the reader the diversities of Tess's character and to highlight the underlying notion that Tess is vulnerable.

This also reinforces the mixture of elements to her character and may foreshadow her future vulnerability when she encounters men. Thomas Hardy also alleges Tess's character, primarily innocence, through the description of the landscape. The symbolism used, highlights Tess's innocent state and purity, 'secluded region'. This is symbolic of Tess's vulnerability and innocence and also to suggest that Tess is on her own. The euphemism 'untrodden' suggests Tess's purity and virginity. Hardy gives the impression

that Tess is a vulnerable character, he does this to foreshadow coming events.

It is Tess's vulnerability that puts her in unfortunate circumstances later in the novel. Hardy portrays Tess as a victim on all fronts. She is exposed as a young girl who is growing up quickly, almost too quickly and is having to deal with her situations. We see Tess as a victim of her own social status through her father insolence, 'waving his hands above his head and singing'. Hardy trying to portray Tess's father as immature to foreshadow Tess being the only responsible person who willing to look after her father. This suggests that Tess is a victim of her fathers inappropriate behavior.

Women from Tess's background and social status fell under constant victimization. As though they were worth very little to society. The position of women during the Victorian period was very low. From this we feel a sense of pathos towards Tess and understand the general attitudes people had on women during the Victorian era. Hardy conveys Tess as being , contrastingly, desirable to men, ' she had looked so soft'. The past tense suggest that she no longer looks ' so soft' and that Tess is grown up and open to male encounters. Hardy builds a sensual image of Tess portraying her as far more desirable to men, ' pouted-up deep red mouth'.

The author uses colour imagery to build a licentious picture of Tess. However Hardy exposes a contrast, ' yet still growing into a definitive shape'. Hardy exhibits Tess's youth and the notion that Tess is still growing and hasn't developed quite yet. This contrast is used to reiterate Hardys' underlying notion that Tess is vulnerable; and that she is in susceptible throughout the

novel. Hardy evokes Tess's character as being strong and proud. She sticks up for her embarrassing father. 'I won't walk another inch with ye, if you say any jokes'.

This illustrates how Tess has to make excuses for her father. Tess evokes a sense of loyalty to her father. However, underneath the proud bravado Tess is very disconcerted and downtrodden, from her physical description, 'colour upon her cheeks spread over her face'. This highlights how Tess is somewhat embarrassed but doesn't want to show it. From this we see initially Tess as being empowered but then later unfolds as Tess being embarrassed. Hardy does this to convey the different elements within Tess; and to highlight her composure when in a difficult situation.

Hardy portrays Tess's maturity, he does this to once again build a contrast in Tess's character. 'recovered her equanimity'. This illustrates that Tess has remained stable and calm and has not over-reacted. But also contrasts with Hardy presenting Tess as a 'mere vessel of emotion'. This alleges her youth and foreshadows the notion that Tess is not as strong as she is made out to be. Hardy presents Tess's character through the narrative voice. Hardy does this to foreshadow the unfortunate future for Tess.

To conclude, Hardy presents the character of Tess through the vivid physical description, this ultimately enforces her vulnerability. Hardy uses authorial intentions and creates a sense of pathos to the reader. This instantly makes us feel sorry for Tess as she is a victim of gender and inequality. Hardy presents Tess in such a way to challenge Victorian views as at this time they were looked at as sinners. Overall Hardy presents Tess as the subtitle

intended,' the women faithfully presented'. Hardy did this to challenge the Victorian attitudes to women and to raise awareness through the character of Tess.