

Thomas hardys life story and his primary works english literature essay

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ABSTRACT

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) was an English poet and novelist, famous for his depictions of the imaginary country " Wessex". Hardy's works reflected his stoical pessimism and sense of tragedy in human life. Tess of the D'Urbervilles is one of the best and most popular works by Thomas Hardy. The heroin, Tess, is regarded as Hardy's most successful female image. The novel depicts the misfortune of an impoverished peasant girl Tess who resists her unjust fate, suffers setbacks again and again, till to be destroyed. This thesis focuses on a study of the background of Hardy's literary perspective and how his fatalism consciousness comes into being as well as the embodiment of fatalism in this novel. From the paper, readers get a better comprehension of Thomas Hardy and his fatalism awareness. Moreover, we'll know what leads to Tess's tragedy and sympathize with the heroin. Fatalism is the main thread. This thesis is composed of 5 chapters. Chapter One is an introduction, covering the literature review and organization of the thesis. Chapter Two presents the author and the novel, mainly dealing with Thomas Hardy's literary perspective and how his fatalism awareness comes into being. Chapter Three analyzes the factors that lead to Tess's tragedy. Chapter Four makes a detailed study of the function and the concrete embodiment of fatalism in the novel. Chapter Five

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Chapter One Introduction

1. 1 Rationale

Thomas Hardy is one of the most distinguished poet and novelist in English literature. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) which is generally regarded as Hardy's finest novel came into conflict with Victorian morality is a brilliant tale of seduction—love—betrayal and murder. The heroine, Tess, is industrious, kind, loyal and pure. However, such a beautiful female suffered constant anguish and tribulations. She tried to struggle against the unjust fate, but she failed. Hardy's works reflected historical pessimism and sense of tragedy in human life. He focused on supernatural power and fatalism. Therefore, many foreign and domestic experts pay a lot of attention on analyzing it. In this thesis, the author means to make a profound study of Thomas Hardy's literary perspective, especially his fatalism awareness, and how to reflect fatalism in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Through analyzing fatalism in the novel, readers get a deeper interpretation of Thomas Hardy and his fatalism awareness. Moreover, we'll know what leads to Tess's sorrowful ending and

sympathize with the heroin. The paper endeavors to provide a better comprehension of Hardy's literary creation for readers.

1. 2 Literature review

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) – English poet and novelist, is famous for his depictions of the imaginary country " Wessex". He was a member of the Naturalist Movement. The bulk of his work, set mainly in the semi-fictional land of Wessex, delineates characters struggling against their passions and circumstances. Hardy helped forge a link between the 19th and 20th century literary traditions – Hardy's works reflected historical pessimism and sense of tragedy in human life. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) which is generally regarded as Hardy's finest novel came into conflict with Victorian morality – It is a brilliant tale of seduction – love – betrayal and murder – Hardy's novels offered a uniquely English style, language, set of characters, and most importantly, his center on supernatural power and fatalism. Many foreign and domestic experts pay a lot of attention on analyzing it. The research of Hardy in China covers three stages: 1. Translation. In 1934, Lu Tianshi first translated Hardy's novel " Tess of the D'Urbervilles" which marked the emergence of the earliest translations of the novels written by Thomas Hardy. 2. Comments. This phase centers on the main characters of the work related to the meaning and theme. 3. New development. Since the 20th century, a new period of development had appeared. With multiple translations, foreign scholars' researches also began to publish in Chinese. The study transferred from the shallow think to intensive evaluation. With the publication *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in 1891, Thomas Hardy had become

popular with Chinese readers. In the novel, Tess's life is full of tribulations, eventually leading death. In the first decade of the 21st century, relevant papers on Tess have increased rapidly. Some scholars maintain that Tess' tragedy was not accidental, as the Tragedy of Tess, written by Shi Xuehua. The article says that under social injustice, she inevitably became a sacrifice of that society. Many foreign specialists focus on the study of the novel. In 1894, Lionel . P. John issued the " Thomas Hardy's Art" as the first to study Hardy's collection. Blake Brooke (a scholar of Hardy's philosophy thought) pointed out that" Inner will is the core of Hardy thought". Virginia Woolf once said," Hardy has strong ideological force, a profound poetic and humane concern, especially to women". D. H. Lawrence (1885~1930) spoke highly of Hardy. He wrote that " Thomas Hardy's feeling, his intuition, his mastery of beauty.....is very great and deep" in his book Study of Thomas Hardy. In John Alcorn's work, he explained his opinion about Tess in details. The root of Tess's tragedy can be concluded as her unfaithfulness in a transitional social period. Tess of the D'Urbervilles is regarded as the summit of Hardy' realism novel in a transitional period. " Hardy wants to emphasize his oppositional view against the specific social situation; meanwhile the theme lies in the criticism of social conditions under the control of capitalism" (John Alcorn, 1979). According to Professor Webster, Tess of the D'Urbervilles is a contribution to Hardy's war against man's inhumanity, Arnold Kettle takes a different point of view. For him, the subject of the novel is not the tragedy of a " pure women", but rather the destruction of the English peasantry. A number of scholars make significant contributions to the research of the novel---. Liu Yafei (2004) analyzes Tess's fate in the tragedy; Shi Xiaohong

(2010) interprets Thomas Hardy's fatalism and tragic sense in his novels; Bing Xuan (2007) studies Tess's miserable destiny and Hardy's fatalism awareness. Of course, others have different opinions about the novel. In brief, Tess is doomed to be a victim in such a poor family and a conventional society. Therefore, this paper aims at giving an insight into Hardy's literary perspective in Tess of the D'Urbervilles so that we'll have a better appreciation of this great work..

1. 3 Organization of the thesis

This thesis is composed of 5 chapters. Chapter One is an introduction, covering the rationale, literature review and organization of the thesis. Chapter Two presents the author and the novel, mainly dealing with Thomas Hardy's literary perspective and how his fatalism awareness comes into being. Chapter Three analyzes the factors that lead to Tess's tragedy. Chapter Four is the main part of the thesis. It makes a detailed study of the function and the concrete embodiment of fatalism in the novel. Chapter Five is a conclusion, reflecting the thesis author's opinion on fatalism in the novel and the illumination it brings to readers.

Chapter Two: Presentation of the Author and the Novel

2. 1 Thomas Hardy's Life Story and His Primary Works

Hardy (1840-1928), an English poet and novelist, is a writer across two centuries. His early and middle creation was novel-based, which inherited and carried forward the Victorian literary tradition. In his old age, Hardy's excellent poetry pioneered the British 20th century literature. On June 2nd 1840, Hardy was born in a small village in the southwest England, next to

the Dorset Wilderness. Therefore, the natural environment here became the main background of Thomas Hardy's future works. His parents attached importance to education on Hardy and sent him to London University in 1862. He majored in language there. Then he began his literary creation. Hardy published nearly 20 novels in his whole life, the most famous of which were *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, *The Return of the Native*, and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Moreover, he produced 8 poems, including 918 episodes. In addition, there were many short stories using "Wessex Tales" as their general name, as well as the epic drama *The Kings*. His best local-colored works are his later ones, which are known as "novels of character and environment", are the most representative of him as both a naturalistic and a critical realist writer. Hardy's two novels, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) are his last long fiction works. The last novels challenged the sensibilities of Victorian readers with situations that ruffled many a Victorian feather: immoral sex, murder, illegitimate children, and the unmarried living together. Heated debate and criticism over these two books helped Hardy decide that he would rather write poetry. In fact, so stung was he by the criticism of his works that Hardy did not write another novel.

2. 2 Thomas Hardy's Literary Perspective and His Fatalism Awareness

Most of Hardy's novels are set in Wessex, the fictional primitive and cruel rural region which is really the home place he both loves and hates. They are known for the vivid description of the vicissitudes of people who live in an agricultural setting, menaced by the forces of invading capitalism. Hardy's

works are also noted for the realistic presentation of life and social criticism. They are full of bitter exposure and sharp criticism of the corrupted, unjust, hypocritical Victorian social system, the cruel exploitation of capitalism, the utilitarian commercialism, and the irrational, inhuman social conventions and morals which killed human wills and desires and destroyed people's natural emotions and relationships. As a man intellectually advanced and emotionally traditional, Hardy cherished the beauty, simplicity, and honesty of the rural life, but was aware of the savagery, narrowness and backwardness of the life. He claimed that literature should manifest the truth and reality. New discoveries and modern philosophies of the time opened his eye to the stark reality and brought about in him a new understanding of the objectivity, inevitability and cruelty of the natural laws of "survival of the fittest". Hardy's view of the world was rather dark and gloomy. He believed in the inevitability of the conflict between the inner, subjective human nature and the outer, objective, wild nature or social environment, and the inevitable tragedy of human life. Hardy believed in the existence of some mysterious, supernatural power which was very powerful, half-blind, impulsive, and uncaring to the individuals, and determined their fate however hard they tried to change or escape it. In Hardy's eyes, the man's fate is predeterminedly tragic, driven by a combined force of "nature", both inside and outside. In his works, man is shown inevitably bound by his own inherent nature and hereditary traits which prompt him to go and search for some specific happiness or success and set him in conflict with the environment. The outside nature—the nature environment of Nature herself—is shown as some mysterious supernatural force, very powerful but

half-blind, impulsive and uncaring to the individual's will, hope, passion or suffering. Man proves impotent before fate. However, he tries, and he seldom escapes his ordained destiny. The pessimistic view of life predominates most of Hardy's works.

2. 3 Hardy's Fatalism Coming into Existence

Most of Hardy's novels are covered by pessimistic fatalism. For him, the human race has always been controlled by the supernatural force which represses his strength. The pre-determined fate attributes to human failure or tragedy. In Hardy's works, the fate is keen on hoaxing the humble people, brings them a series of inappropriate action and results in an unfortunate coincidence. People tirelessly struggle against fate, but the result is always fruitless. Sufferings and death are unpredictable, bravery of human beings is the ability to endure the spiritual loneliness, setbacks, poverty, and continue to hold on. This is the most fundamental part of Hardy's philosophy and also the core of fatalism. Two factors contribute to Hardy's fatalism awareness.

2. 3. 1 Social Background

Hardy lived most of his life in the Victorian age (1837—1901). At this time, drastic changes took place in various areas. It was also the most prosperous era in British history. During this period, the British Industrial Revolution reached its peak, agriculture achieved mechanization and the UK was moving towards the machine age. However, social problems were also very serious. Contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was becoming increasingly fierce. Since 1970s, the United Kingdom moved from the liberal capitalism into monopoly capitalism. But economic prosperity did

not give ordinary working people happiness. The industrialization fell into the self-made economic depression in 1980s. On the other hand, although people in the bottom of society lived deplorably, the whole community was still progressing. He couldn't figure out the phenomenon. In ideology, Hardy could not accept the most-favored Victorian beliefs, such as belief in God. The development of science opened the horizon of humankind. In addition, Darwin's theory of evolution made people doubt the existence of God. On the one hand, Hardy witnessed the rapid development of industry. On the other hand, he also discerned the tragedy of the underclass. Confronted with these contradictions, Hardy utilized fatalism to explain these issues. In the 19th and 20th centuries, many important ideas appeared, including the "Origin of Species", Schopenhauer's pessimism philosophy, Nietzsche's transhumanism, Einstein's theory of relativity, and so on. Among them, Darwin's theory of evolution and Schopenhauer's pessimism philosophy occupied a dominant position in Hardy's world outlook, thus determined the entire theme of his creation. The theory of evolution, a major scientific discovery and a new theory of philosophy in the late half of the 19th century, left profound influence on European science, arts and literature. Its essence is natural selection and survival of the fittest. Hardy's "Character and Environment" novels were affected by this idea, therefore he explored this idea in his works. His novels faithfully redisplayed the conflict between man and environment, most of which ended in tragedy. He attributed this outcome to the character weakness. However, Hardy also realized that blindly shifting the blame on the people, especially those of good nature with minor flaws, was not fair. So, in the end, the blame on people's tragedy went

to fatalism consciousness. In terms of ideology, he accepted Schopenhauer's pessimistic voluntarism. Tess's tragic fate demonstrated human's inability in front of the community and history. The face of history is powerless. The unknown fate took control of people's life.

2. 3. 2 Personal Experience

Hardy lived almost all his life in the Dorset countryside. In his childhood, the Dorset countryside was very different from the rest of the UK. It had its own cultural traditions, even its own language. Hardy deeply fell in love with the nature and ordinary life of the country. However, the invasion of industrial capitalism to the countryside destroyed the original agricultural economy, ruined poor farmers as well as traditional patriarchal system. In this campaign, Hardy lost the beautiful land and pastoral life, feeling deeply sentimental. This is the cornerstone of his pessimism. In the struggle between the dispossessed farmers and rich landowners, Hardy witnessed that countless farmers were mercilessly exploited. What made him regret was that he and his parents belonged to the peasantry on the edge of destruction. From the subconsciousness, Hardy resented the unfair disruption which the industrialization brought to the rural areas. However, as a novelist in the capitalist society, he did not recognize the advantages of democracy and revolution. He became increasingly frustrated and eventually turned to pessimistic fatalism. Education left a great influence on the thought of Hardy. The juvenile Hardy was educated at home, therefore he believed the existence of supernatural forces learning from his grandmother and mother. Hardy showed a strong interest in literature when he studied at school. He

read a lot of Greek and Shakespeare's tragedies. At the same time, Schopenhauer's pessimism philosophy and Darwin's theory of natural selection also affected Hardy. Due to the particular age where Hardy lived, the conflict between tradition and innovation took place in him. The contradictory attitudes run through his entire creative process. In his view, the subjective and the objective, freedom and necessity, the ideal and the reality are always in conflict. Frequently, people are in a state of helplessness in their own behavior choices. Hardy criticizes the existing system, and thinks that the tragedy of the characters and the social life is inevitable. He believes in tragic fate. People are constantly teased by the indifferent reality. No matter how hard they struggle against the fate, they end up in failure.

2. 4 Introduction of the Novel

It came into conflict with Victorian morality. It explored the dark side of his family connections in Berkshire. In the story the poor villager girl Tess Durbeyfield is seduced and raped by the wealthy Alec d'Urbervilles. Then, she became pregnant but the child died in infancy. After that Tess left her home and found work as a dairymaid on a farm in another village and fell in love with Angel Clare, a clergyman's son. They married but when Tess told Angel about her past, he hypocritically deserted her. Tess became Alec's mistress. Angel returned from Brazil, repenting his harshness, but found her living with Alec. Tess killed Alec in desperation, she was arrested and hanged.

Chapter 3 Causes for Tess's Tragic Fate

Social revolution is the root of Tess's tragedy. The social tragedy originates from the conflict between human and social environment. The social reasons for Tess's tragedy mainly manifest the impact of social changes, the penetration of feudal concept, the mock of secular moral prejudice, the hypocrisy of capitalism, and the religious persecution. The novel set in the late half of the 19th century, when capitalism had already invaded the remote rural areas of England. What's more, crisis and depression began to appear. Tess is brought up in an impoverished family. Her destiny is in close connection with and influenced by the social environment. Tess's tragic fate has its conspicuous social nature□She is the victim of social oppression, which stems from the capitalist morality and religion as well as from the capitalist exploiters. Customary morality and religious ethics of Victorian Era consist of the most important element that determines Tess's inevitable tragedy. Tess is also a victim of the capitalist laws. Whoever does not observe the capitalist law and attempts to challenge it, he or she will be expelled and rejected by the society. Personality determines on one's fate, which is the consequentialness of Tess's tragedy. In Hardy's time, woman is defined by her adherence to submission and resistance to sexuality.

Whereas in Hardy's novels, he redefines the role of women, centering on sexuality. By emphasizing the physical aspect of femininity in his unorthodox representation of the sexual female, Hardy threatens the Victorian model of women. Tess, defined by sexuality, is characterized as a " lush bit of nature, a sexual being". In contrary to this sexuality, Tess possesses certain inherent qualities, such as pride and independence, passivity and submissiveness.

Passivity and submissiveness are the inner reasons that result in her downfall. Alec is rich, handsome and sensual outside; but he is a fraud and villain inside. He seems to be another element of disastrous circumstances of the novel, Angel is a man governed by his intellect, and he has his feelings split from the intellect. His love towards Tess is stunted by his prejudice (derived from the moral standards of the Victorian era). He does not allow himself to recognize the love he still feels for Tess because principles and standards are stronger in his mind than love. The fatalism awareness has laid the tone of the tragedy. The accidents, coincidences and omens run throughout *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, or summarized as the fatalism. In this novel, Hardy employs a number of coincidence and accidents to make Tess's tragedy unavoidable. By doing so, Hardy drops a hint that human destiny is determined by a kind of circumstantial force similar yet superior to any god created by man and that human beings will have no control over his own destiny. Omens and signs are also used to add to Hardy's fatalism outlook on life. Hardy's fatalism is also embodied in the form of nature, nature of the world and nature of the people. From Hardy's perspective, nature is the primary factor in life. Hardy's novels present wildness both in nature and in human nature which is set against the norms and order of society.

Chapter 4 Fatalism in Tess of the D'Urbervilles

4. 1 Definition and Function of Fatalism

Fatalism refers to the belief or theory that human actions and events are controlled by and result from causes that determine them. According to Karl Marx, a man's economic environment determines his actions and life;

according to Darwin, it is the scientific laws governing evolution; according to Freud, it is the human unconsciousness; and according to some religious it is the will of a god or gods. For Cliff, fatalism is a view of life which says that all action is controlled by the nature of things or by fate which is a great, impersonal, primitive force existing through all eternity, absolutely independent of human wills and superior to any god created by man. In Hardy's opinion, fatalism is the fate of people caused by the necessary elements which are predictable but inevitable and can not be changed. The fatalists hold that the earthy things have already been doomed before one's birth, and the tragedy of people are arranged by the will of God. No matter how hard people resist, they can't escape from the fate of tragedy. It is God or some supernatural forces that dominate everything. In Hardy's novel, whenever Tess is close to happiness, accidental misfortune befalls her. The fact that Hardy lived in an age of transition adds to his natural disposition toward a melancholy view of life. In his works, Hardy gives a biting exposure and criticism of the greed, hypocrisy and sordidness of the bourgeoisie. But as a result of his class limitation, he fails to find a solution to the social problems of his time. Consequently, he turns to fatalism in explaining his heroine's tragedy in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. At the same time, Hardy takes advantage of fatalism to criticize the social morality, religion and capitalist laws in the Victorian time.

4. 2 The Concrete Embodiment of Fatalism in the Novel

In many of Hardy's novels, we can find the author's fatalistic outlook on life. The case is especially true in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. According to him:

Tess's tragic life is inevitable: the society, the customary morality, the religious ethics, capitalist law and weakness in characters' personality all lead to Tess's tragedy. Her tragedy is doomed from the start. Hardy notices the society's frightfulness and life's misery, but unfortunately, he can neither analyze the root of the tragedy on the basis of social system, nor change the reality and life. In this novel, fatalism is shown in the family origin, in distinct characters, in accidents and coincidences, and in given objects, which decides Tess's fate at some critical moments.

4. 2. 1 Fatalism in Tess's Family Origin

The heroine, Tess, is intelligent and extremely charming. She receives a certain amount of education. On the contrary, elegant nature does not bring her happiness, in fact, she has a tragic unfortunate life. She was born in an impoverished and penniless home with 7 siblings. This indicates the beginning of her miserable fate. As the eldest daughter, Tess is asked to drive trucks and send farm produce in the place of her drunken father. Unfortunately, God makes fun of Tess. Her truck collides with a postal vehicle, which kills the only source of livelihood for her family, the old horse. From the surface, the death of horse appears to be a coincidence, but it implies an inevitable result, that is, Tess has to do the things she does not want to do, and it is this thing that eventually leads to the tragedy of her life. It also reflects that Hardy can not create a promising future to the underclass people. The description of the heroine in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is a typical example of the farmers' bankruptcy. The fate of Tess is on behalf of the fate of the peasantry class of rural areas in southern England. The archeology

discovery about the D'Urbervilles which the priest has found proves that Tess's family has an ancient natural basis from the historical perspective. The historical inevitability results in Tess's destruction.

4. 2. 2 Fatalism of Different Characters

Tess is an extraordinarily beautiful country girl. She is not only beautiful in appearance, but also noble at heart. In a world populated by morally fragmented individuals, Tess is the only morally sound person. We should remember that Tess is not totally a country girl; she is the descendant of the once noble family of D'Urbervilles. Just as she herself claims " I am only a peasant by position, not by nature!"(Tess 2006: 302). It is her striking beauty and nobleness in disposition that appeal to both Alec and Angel strongly. But it is, paradoxically, this very spiritual nobility that makes her vulnerable to men like Alec and Angel who do not and can not commit themselves to another person as she does. She is the only major character who is not completely and disastrously bound up with one's own ego. In addition, she is the only one who cares for others, who can enter into complete and satisfying relationships with others. She is also the only one who does not exploit and use people. But ironically, in this unprincipled world, it is always the kindest and noblest persons who are prone to be hurt and used by the other unkind people and are doomed to suffer misfortunes repeatedly. So virtues may sometimes turn into disadvantages for some characters. As to Tess's personality, it constitutes the contradictory qualities of being proud and independent in spirit and a passivity and submissiveness towards other people and her fate. These qualities contribute greatly to her tragedy. Tess's

pride and independence is shown again and again throughout the novel: in her determination to leave Alec, in her unwillingness to tell her parents the truth about her marriage and to ask help from Angel's parents. It is this pride that prevents her from trying to win Angel back. Her qualities of pride and independence also prevent her from getting any help from the others and she has to live and suffer on her own. After Alec takes advantage of her innocence and physical exhaustion to seduce her, she becomes his mistress for a short time. Hardy gives no explanation as to why she should agree to stay after seduction. This may be illustrated with her passivity and submissiveness. Angel and Alec are the two major male characters in the novel and they are also the two men who influence Tess deeply and finally destroy her. They seem quite the opposite in appearance and characteristics. Angel is described as well-educated, reserved, subtle, sad, whereas Alec is described to be a dandy and a lady—killer. Angel's love is completely spiritual and ethereal, while Alec's has an animal nature. But as a matter of fact, there are basic similarities between them. Both of them inhabit a moral and spiritual vacuum. They can understand their moral limitations best by comparing them with Tess, who is a whole, healthy person. In Tess, head and heart work together. In both them, one aspect of their personalities has become overgrown and dominant, and therefore they are distorted beings. With Alec, it is sexual energy that has gone unchecked, without any corresponding development of emotions to provide channels for it, Angel, on the other hand, is governed by his intellect. He is more complex than Alec. Angel's problem is that he has split his feelings from his intellect, and that his mind mistrusts his emotions. Because his emotions have

developed, he can experience real, deep feeling, as in his love for Tess. Nevertheless, because of this separation between his mind and mad heart, he can make the cruelest decision to leave her; his emotions do not take part in the decision-making process. He is capable of performing the most heartless actions, in other words, he is only acting rationally. In this regard, he is much crueler than Alec who is frankly sensual and does not pretend to any great emotional depth and fineness. To some extent, Angel does much greater damage to Tess than Alec. For Angel, whether Tess is innocent or not, she should be punished by fate for what she has committed. Tess's mother, Joan, specially reveres the fortune-telling book. She has a strange fetish worship and fear. As a result, she has never put it in the house all night, after each use, she would put it back in the right place. Each of Tess's family members speaks to her using a fatalistic tone "This is our fate". The young girls working together with Tess grow up in distant rural areas, they also firmly believe fatalism.

4. 2. 3 Fatalism in Some Accidental Events

In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy employs many coincidence and accidents to make Tess's tragedy unavoidable. By doing so, Hardy implies that human destiny is determined by a kind of circumstantial force similar yet superior to any god created by man and that human beings will have no control over his own destiny. First of all, Tess was born into a poor family with shiftless parents instead of a wealthy one or a striving one with capable, diligent and thrifty parents. This is the unlucky arrangement of the fate. Since the world is a blighted one, people who live in it are doomed to be

unhappy. Secondly, at the very beginning of the story, Tess's father—John Durbeyfield, happens to know from a local parson that he is the last descendent of the d'Urbervilles, an ancient noble family with a long and distinguished history. John drinks too much after he learns of the exciting news. Therefore, Tess has to drive the wagon instead of her drunken father. Unfortunately, a mail coach crashed into their unlighted wagon, and their horse was killed. The loss of the horse means that they lose their means of survival. Had it not been for the news about their ancestry, Jack would not have got drunk that night and they wouldn't have lost their horse. Thirdly, when Tess takes care of the fowls in Mrs. d'Urbervilles house, she goes to Chaseborough every Saturday night. One night, her fellows drink too much, and one of the village girls gets into an argument with Tess on the way home. She wants to fight with Tess. In order to get out of the awkward situation, Tess is taken advantage of by Alec who rides by. He offers her a ride and she accepts, which will never happen in other circumstances. It also occurs that Tess is extremely weary that night. Then, in the primeval woods, in the dense fog and complete darkness, Tess is seduced by Alec. She loses her chastity and her life changes henceforward. Fourthly, when Tess has recovered from her misfortune and is prepared for a new life in Talbothays Dairy, she unexpectedly meets Angel and falls in love with him. In the evening they get married, Tess tells Angel that she was once seduced. After hearing the terrible news, Angel breaks down and declares that he will not forgive her. In the following days, both of them are in depression and anguish. Eventually, Angel abandons Tess. Finally, Tess's father died. Since her father is a life-holder, his death ends automatically their possession of

the land. Tess's family is homeless. Her mother is weak and shiftless. Tess has to take the responsibility of supporting her little brothers and sisters. Under the economic oppression and social injustice, and without any information from her husband, Tess is forced to go back to Alec who can economically help her family to survive. Angel returns from Brazil. But it is too late to prevent the tragedy from happening. A series of accidental events keep Tess from pursuing happiness. It seems that God subjects Tess to his every irony on impulse by playing tricks on Tess and destroys Tess in the end.

4. 2. 4 Fatalism in Some Objects

Hardy makes full use of red objects to symbolize the color of fate. Red in the traditional Western culture and Chinese culture vary greatly, representing the blood, violence and crime. As one of the imagery of the Bible, red in the traditional sense represents lust, doom and danger. In the beginning of the story, Tess pays a visit to Mrs. d'Urbervilles with a much wider red ribbon than usual. The house of the d'Urbervilles is constructed in red bricks. Alec takes Tess to his family's strawberry fields and feeds her red strawberries. When the horse was killed by a postal vehicle, the blood poured out of the wound. Spots of blood appear from time to time, are the suggestion of Tess's tragic fate. After Tess killed Alec, Mrs. Blue noticed a little red like a red heart on the rectangular white ceiling. At this moment, red indicates violence and crime. Therefore, the red imagery has been closely connected with the tragic fate of Tess throughout the story. In Talbothays Dairy, on the first day of Tess's coming, these dairy-workers find that the cows let down less milk

than usual and they believe this is because there is a new hand. When the butter does not come in the chum, they believe that somebody in the dairy might be in love. They have their beliefs and explanations for every common incident. On Tess's wedding day, the cocks' crows in the afternoon are regarded as bad omens. And almost everybody feels that something terrible is going to take place. Each object or sign has its significance in the plot of the story. It is either a forecast of what will happen on the heroine or an indication of misfortune. The Wessex people have a deep belief in superstition and fate. Hence, some symbolic things and signs are employed to present their belief. Since there is a kind of mysterious power hidden in nature that has men's destiny in control, Tess has to accept what will happen to her. Whatever she does the final result is doomed.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

A good literary work is a mirror of the society; it is bound to expose the social disadvantages and social conflicts. On behalf of Hardy's highest achievement of realistic novels, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* reflects the contradictions and confusion of ordinary people in the 19th-century British society, revealing an impact which the so-called "advanced" capitalist economy gave to the patriarchal system in rural areas. People in these regions lived a miserable life. Hardy showed deep sympathy for the laboring people. Hardy knew that the intrusion of capitalism could not be stopped, so his "Character and Environment" novels showed intense pessimism, and assailed the darksome society. The tragedy of the protagonist in Hardy's works was not the individual fate of characters generated by chance. Its

tragic consciousness fully reflected the prevalence of social plight. In the history of Western literature, Hardy's tragic novels fused and developed such a living philosophy—a person must be suffering with dignity in order to find the chances of survival, square up to tribulation, then demonstrating the theme of fortitude, courage and wisdom. This novel is a fierce attack on the hypocritical morality of the bourgeois society, the capitalist invasion into the country and destruction of the English peasantry towards the end of the century. Tess, as a pure woman brought up with the traditional idea of womanly virtues, is abused and destroyed by both Alec and Angel, agents of the destructive force of the society. And the misery, the poverty and the heartfelt pain she suffers and her final tragedy give rise to a most bitter cry of protest and denunciation of the society. As Hardy say at the end of the story, " Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals had ended his sport with Tess." To fully understand the novel, one has take into consideration both its critical realist and naturalistic significance. The theme of the " fallen woman" has been previously established in literature; however Hardy develops this theme further through Tess. Hardy focuses on the " fallen woman" in several of his works, but Tess remains the most elaborately depicted of these figures, Tess is a woman who suffers from her fall, but still finds the strength to rise above her situation. Far from being a passive victim, Tess embodies a fierce impulse to self determination against daunting, and ultimately insurmountable odds□Hardy develops a character whose inner strength allows her to conquer the established definition of the fallen woman. Hardy is a genius of the Victorian era!