

# Tess of the d'urbervilles by thomas hardy: describing unrealistic ideal love

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## **Examine the View Hardy Presents Angel Clare's Love for Tess as Idealistic Rather Than Realistic in this Extract**

Arguably, Hardy presents Angel Clare's love for Tess as an unrealistic, ideal love rather than a realistic love through his use of description to describe Tess. Hardy uses the word "phosphorescence" which gives the implication that she has an unnatural glow in his eyes which could suggest that he sees her in an unnatural and almost perfect way as glow has connotations of fantasy and idealised perfection as though he sees Tess as angelic and untouchable. Hardy's overdramatic and unrealistic description of Tess links also to the successful use of pathetic fallacy as Hardy describes the 'open mead' as having a 'spectral, aqueous light' which connotes to the idea of bright colour and happiness and the word 'aqueous' connotes to the idea that the light is an unnatural colour and adds to the mythical and fantasy feel of the extract.

Hardy uses hyperbolic and romantic imagery to overdramatise and create an idealistic view of Angel Clare's love for Tess. Hardy describes the 'dawn' as 'violet and pink' which are warm colours connoting to the idea of his love for her warms him and warms his heart and that he feels comforted and warm when he is around her. An interpretation of the use of the word 'dawn' could also suggest a sense of a new beginning and that his love is starting to grow and develop into something perfect and unrealistic. Another interpretation could be that the 'dawn' implies sunrise and that she lights his way and is his source of brightness giving a sense of idealised love as it suggests she is almost too perfect in his eyes to be considered as realistic.

Hardy uses biblical references in the extract which could suggest a strong sense of admiration and true love towards Tess as many people viewed love and religion as being very closely linked. Hardy refers to "Adam and Eve" which could suggest that he sees their love as connoting to a pre-lapsarian innocence and love which would relate to the idea of their love being idealistic rather than realistic. Another link to Gods or biblical references is when Hardy refers to "Artemis" and "Demeter" which are Greek Gods therefore connoting to the idea of mythology and fantasy and that she is untouchable and cannot be tainted which is an idealised view of how Angel Clare may see her. Hardy also references the "Resurrection hour" and "Magdalen" which connotes to the idea of miracles and some critics could say that miracles are unrealistic and an idealised fantasy that people choose to believe in.

Another example of how Hardy creates a sense of idealised love is that Tess says to Angel Clare "call me Tess" which could be an implication that his love is too dramatic and too perfect and that it scares her because the hyperbolic God-like names and the mythological, idealised love he feels towards her makes her feel scared and uncomfortable. Another interpretation is that she may be worried that she would not live up to his high expectations that he has of her and so she tries to bring him back down to reality.

While many critics could say that Hardy presents an idealised love for Tess, some could say that he sees her in a realistic way because Hardy writes from Angel Clare's perspective and describes "fair women" do not work hard and

that Tess is “close at hand” and does not “rest”. The word “fair” connotes to the idea of the traditional perfect woman and most literature uses the word “fair” to describe a woman who is pure and perfect; however, Tess is not addressed in this way and so could suggest that his view is not that of an idealised love but of a realistic and respectful love for her.

In conclusion, Hardy successfully creates a sense of idealised love for Tess through his dramatic and hyperbolic feelings of attraction and potential admiration towards her.