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A Pure Woman, Archetypally Presented:
Towards a Jungian Criticism of Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

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A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Fall 2008

Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

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Abstract

Tess Durbeyfield is one of the most memorable characters in English literature. She is at once a working-class woman and a mythic figure. Abused by her superior and caught between classes, she represents the individual struggling for identity.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles appeals universally to the nature of the woman in literature. Her status as the natural or archetypal woman is clear throughout the novel. Hardy created Tess who cannot be defined by just one categorization. Tess certainly fulfills the limited idea of the fallen woman. However, Hardy is appealing beyond this narrow view of humanity to the more ancient and lasting vision of the archetypal woman. This particular telling of a timeless, archetypal story brings to light ideas that were relevant in the ancient world, in Hardy's era, and in contemporary literature.

A Pure Woman, Archetypally Presented:

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Virginia Woolf describes Hardy as belonging to that group of “unconscious writers...like Dickens and Scott, [who] seem suddenly and without their own consent to be lifted up and swept onwards. The wave sinks and they cannot say what has happened or why” (401). This unconscious genius is what has given the modern reader one of Hardy's greatest works: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. It has been evaluated in many ways since its publication in 1891, but if Woolf was correct, a Jungian criticism of this text is a most appropriate way to mine the depths of Hardy's unconscious. The novel's symbolism, harkening back to a primeval paganism, has long been recognized by scholars. However, even those who do not have a familiar knowledge of the traditions of the ancient British isles have been touched by the “moments of vision” found in the pages of *Tess* (Woolf 401). An analysis of the symbolic structures used to describe the character of Tess can provide a unique look into the collective unconscious portrayed in the novel and the archetypes which have resonated with so many readers in the hundred-plus years since Hardy penned this text.

Archetypal criticism is a theory which has struggled to gain acceptance in the world of literary criticism, but it should not be quickly thrust aside. It has some specific advantages to offer the critic reading works like Hardy's *Tess* which echo mythic structures. As Daniel Russell Brown says in his essay, “A Look at Archetypal Criticism,” the fundamental understanding behind this form of criticism is that “there are some motifs in literature that satisfy readers and listeners in quite dissimilar societies....It is the task of archetypal criticism to excavate these mental symbols, idols and temples in

literature to see if important aspects have been overlooked” (465). Metaphysically speaking, it is not possible to prove the existence of a collective unconscious, but “not every reality can always be recorded on a machine. That does not mean that collective images do not exist” (466). Jung’s development of such a theory could be considered a response to the “ache of modernism” that Hardy feels so deeply (Hardy 124). A set of universal, shared images in the cognitive depository of human minds is one way to believe in something bigger than oneself even without the assurance of a divine being (467). Without the historical security of a Christian worldview, this became a need for the moderns. As Brown says, Jung realized that people “need to experience the non-rational” (467). Rahv makes a similar point: “In our time the movement of history has been so rapid that the mind longs for nothing so much as something permanent to steady it” (qtd. in Brown 468). Joseph Campbell points out that archetypes and mythologies can “carry the human spirit forward...” (qtd. in Brown 468). Thus although *Tess* is a tragic tale, Ian Gregor calls it “an elegy so intensely imagined that it brings with it its own vitality, amounting almost to exuberance” (24). Symbolic elements of the novel echo stories of the past and provide a lift for the spirit by virtue of their permanence and importance to the unconscious mind.

Richard Chase defends the use of a psychological theory to analyze literature. He says, “As the psychoanalyst learns about the working of the normal mind from the study of neurosis, so the literary critic learns about the literary imagination from the study of myths...” (qtd. in Brown 469). Myth is the response of the human mind to many of life’s questions, and it is one way to counteract a feeling of being lost in rapidly-changing world. Hardy’s angry confusion about how to make sense of a world without God results

in a retreat to the philosophies of early paganism and their natural and enduring structures, making this type of critique appropriate. The retelling of stories that touch deeply the human soul and connect with readers across time and cultural boundaries, whether in the form of the ballad, a novel, or some other form, is central to the archetypal thesis.

In his landmark work, *An Introduction to the English Novel*, Arnold Kettle makes the claim that the central idea in Hardy's *Tess* is "that in the course of the nineteenth century the disintegration of the peasantry—a process which had its roots deep in the past—had reached its final and tragic stage" (49). While this may be the most important idea for Kettle as *Tess* stands in the lineage of the English Novel, it does not encapsulate the heart of Hardy's tale. When, on Hardy's original title page, the reader finds: "...Poor wounded name! My bosom as a bed / shall lodge thee," is Hardy using Shakespeare's quotation as an expression of pathos for the "disintegration of the peasantry"? (1). Indeed not; his lament is for the woman Tess. The archetypal woman stands at the center of Hardy's achievement. The tragedy of the English peasants may be Kettle's main concern, but it is only a peripheral issue for Thomas Hardy. Ideas of purity, womanhood, and rebirth permeate the novel. Ian Gregor says, "That voice, so compassionate in its tone, is continually seeking to relate and enlarge the narrative we glimpse through it, the outlines of a primal narrative—that of *Paradise Lost*" (22). An understanding of *Tess* primarily as a lament for the dying of Hardy's peasantry is a superficial and insufficient reading of the text, one that misses the core principles of the work. An archetypal critique, on the other hand, is able to bring out those themes and symbols that are central to Hardy's compassionate telling of the story of *Tess*.

Thus while Archetypal criticism is not always the most fruitful critical technique, but it can shed light on works such as Hardy's *Tess* which incorporate massive mythological elements. It is an appropriate critical method for analyzing his subject but also coincides with the way many critics have described Hardy's creative process. Wright echoes the thoughts of Virginia Woolf when he says Hardy writes "indirectly rather than openly about subconscious drives only beginning to be recognized" (129). Archetypal criticism is unique in employing a semi-formalistic close reading strategy while, as Wilber S. Scott remarks, remaining "concerned humanistically with more than the intrinsic value of aesthetic satisfaction...historical in its investigation of a cultural or social past, but nonhistorical in its demonstration of literature's timeless value, independent of particular periods" (qtd. in Brown 472). There is much to be gleaned from *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* using this approach because of the nature of Hardy's novel and his process. The character of Tess, along with her historical and physical settings in the novel are important subjects for archetypal critique.

Intertextuality is an important component of archetypal criticism. The critic needs to draw comparisons between the primary text and other texts written in diverse settings, historically and geographically. *Tess* contains motifs which relate closely with narratives such as *Paradise Lost* which have Biblical themes, and synthesis of archetypal sources can provide a fuller comprehension of the novel. Ultimately Bonaparte compares the conclusion of the novel with Milton's image in *Paradise Lost* of Adam and Eve leaving the garden hand and hand (432). She believes that his imagery is meant to undermine the Biblical narrative. Still, the nature of archetypes continues to make this a valuable study as Hardy develops the archetype further and takes it in a new direction. The Jungian

conclusion about such similarities is, once again, an original image of the Edenic garden, the death-rebirth cycle, and the feminine principle in the collective unconscious that are repeated throughout history in rituals, stories, and literature like Hardy's *Tess*. An archetypal reading of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* renders Tess' illicit sexual encounter as a violation of insignificant societal mores but not natural law, justifying Hardy's ultimate portrayal of Tess as a pure woman.

To be properly understood, Hardy's tale must be accessed not simply as the personal journey of a young English girl in the 1800s but as the story of the timeless female figure which has haunted literature for centuries. One of the central problems of this text—Tess' purity—is answered differently depending on the critical process chosen. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Tess Durbeyfield is a representation of the archetypal woman in the Jungian collective unconscious. In the May celebration scene the reader realizes the first of Hardy's insinuations that Tess is the archetypal woman—later he will almost explicitly state this as fact. Shirley A. Stave says, "In [Tess], myth and history fuse. We are presented, on the one hand, with a goddess figure of immense stature. She exists in time while she remains timeless...." (191). In the Maytime dance Hardy attempts to make Tess ageless when he remarks that, "Phases of her childhood lurked in her aspect still" (Hardy 15). *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* says the archetypal woman is "associated with the life principle, birth, warmth, nourishment, protection, fertility, growth, abundance (for example, Demeter, Ceres)" (152). Tess' connection with the idea of the fertility goddess is an important one, underscored by specific details the May dance scene. As the beloved of Angel Clare, she stands for a type of a Greek goddess; her story has been compared to that of Persephone and other

goddesses (Bonaparte 415). As the archetypal woman she is tied to the concept of fertility and stands for all women.

Hardy's many references to Tess' natural paganism establish her as the archetypal woman incarnate in a "simple" country maiden. An important moment in which Hardy refers to Tess' paganism is when Angel enters just as she is waking from an afternoon nap. Hardy's narrator demurs, "It was a moment when a woman's soul is more incarnate than at any other time; when the most spiritual beauty bespeaks itself flesh...she regarded him as Eve at her second waking might have regarded Adam" (Hardy 169-170). Hardy, though a fierce agnostic, continually alludes to Biblical stories. Part of the reason Tess' paganism can become confusing is that Tess has both pagan and Christian origins, and Hardy is often attempting to "paganize" elements of Christianity that are associated with Tess. Eve is one example of this—Hardy wants to align the reader's image of Eve with the pantheon of Greek and Roman goddesses because he believes that the pagan goddess existed before Christianity. He wants to prove that Christianity commandeered the pagan goddess and Christianized her, resulting in Eve. He is attempting to restore Eve to her rightful place as an expression of the archetypal pagan goddess. Thus Tess' association with Tess is not merely Biblical—the implications go beyond the Biblical narrative to Hardy's vision of Eve as a Christian expression of his larger, pagan understanding of the archetypal woman.

Hardy also uses Alec to classify Tess as having archetypal qualities which transcend the historical reign of Christianity. He says, "I cannot stand your looks! There never were such eyes, surely, before Christianity or since!" (Hardy 317). This can be read as a double commentary on Tess' physical eyes which are the most significant in Alec's

life before his conversion and after, but also on the timelessness of Tess as a pagan (pre-Christian) goddess who maintains her regnant power, even after Victorian Christianity has become the societal norm.

Angel's perception of Tess may be spiritualized and idealized, but because Hardy allows other characters to draw the same conclusions, the reader is led to believe that there is some truth in Angel's comparisons of Tess to Greek and Roman goddesses. This underscores Tess as the archetypal woman. Angel compares Tess to the religious figures of Greek and Roman paganism because it is this society that he venerates. He tells his father that it might have been better if the prevailing belief system had come from these societies rather than the Middle East (Hardy 158). Angel's expression of Tess as an archetype comes in the form of the goddesses Artemis and Demeter because those mythic figures are, based on his study and beliefs, the most readily available.

A powerful image of Tess as a pagan goddess occurs when her baby is dying and she is concerned for his soul. While Hardy does not believe her fear is founded in reality, he still portrays her as a woman who commands the power to defy orthodoxy even while seeking to uphold it. The action stems from her innate feeling of what might be termed a "female priesthood," a feeling that has its roots in the power of the pagan matriarchs from whom Tess is spiritually descended.

Another instance of Hardy attempting to show Tess as ultimately pagan, even though she expresses her paganism through flawed Christian means is her song as she enters the Valley of the Dairies. As Tess looks upon the valley wherein Talbothays dairy lies, she sings a litany from the *Book of Common Prayer* in praise of the day and the beauty of the landscape (Hardy 104). This is at once a communication of one of Hardy's

fundamental beliefs and an example of the idea of Tess as “actualized poetry” as Angel later describes her to his father: Tess “*lives* what paper-poets only write” (164). After Tess is finished singing, the narrator says:

And probably the half-unconscious rhapsody was a Fetishistic utterance in a Monotheistic falsetto; women whose chief companions are forms and forces of outdoor Nature retain in their souls far more of the Pagan fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systematized religion taught their race at a later date. (Hardy 104)

Per Hardy’s usual presentation of what he considers important truths, Tess often does something significant which she does not quite understand, while Hardy fills the reader in by couching it in more philosophic terms. Hardy’s narrations often present an idea in two ways—in the native Wessex phrases on the lips of Tess and “a more accurate expression, by words in *logy* and *ism*, of sensations which men and women have vaguely grasped for centuries” (124). Here both Tess and the narrator affirm that Christianity has arisen from a truth much more earthy and primal, and that Christianity has a hold on culture because it tames that natural paganism while still expressing some of the feeling contained in the older creed. Tess is a pagan woman who has been given the weak vessel of Victorian Christianity to express her paganism, and Hardy seeks to rectify that throughout the novel. One important way he does this is by drawing on points in Britain’s history when paganism was more prominent, such as during Roman rule or the religious leadership of the Celtic Druids.

Hardy underscores Tess as the archetypal woman by providing her with archetypal settings that are often available to him because of the remnants of Roman or Druidic influence in

the history of England. One example is the Maytime dance which establishes Tess as part of the fertility ritual that has been celebrated in many cultures, including various regions of the British Isles. As Tom Nash has pointed out, it is a rite whose meaning is no longer understood by the cottagers who celebrate it, but was once a fertility ritual (40). Tess here is established as the sacrifice which was sometimes made by those in ancient times celebrating this Druidic holiday (41). In particular, the red ribbon in her hair, contrasting with the white gowns the girls and women are wearing, marks her as the chosen sacrifice which will bring about the symbolic fertile growing season. Nash says that the novel's folkloric symbols are united by one motif: "the welcoming of the fructifying spirit of vegetation" (41). Irving Howe remarks, "...[Hardy] could not imagine a universe without an active, even an intruding, feminine principle" (406). As the sacrificial, feminine fertility principle, Tess experiences the death-rebirth cycle shrouded in these symbolic and age-old aspects of paganism.

Support for the universality of an image or motif often comes not only from literature, but from cultural practices as well. Frazer's *Golden Bough* provides archetypal significance for elements of *Tess* from this perspective. In *The Golden Bough*, Frazer notes the type of celebration Hardy also describes. Frazer's work attempts to catalog different practices, rituals, and stories across cultures, creating a record of the bank of important unconscious ideas in the human experience. Frazer documents celebrations where people "masquerade for the time being as spirits of vegetation. Such magical dramas have played a great part in...Europe, and based as they are on a very crude conception of natural law, it is clear that they must have been handed down from a remote antiquity" (161). This is also Hardy's conception of the ceremony. It is important that Frazer mentions natural law, because Hardy believes that natural law is behind this old ritual. He realizes that the people of Wessex still celebrate a ritual for the spirit of

vegetation which they do not understand, but he believes it has its root in the reality of natural law, and Hardy believes that natural law is the only thing that is certainly true.

Frazer attempts to give the meaning behind the fertility ritual for those readers who, like the natives of Wessex in Hardy's tale, do not understand the original purpose. Frazer asks, "What is the object of slaying the spirit of vegetation at any time and above all in spring, when his services are most wanted?" The answer to this could equally apply to Hardy's Tess as representative of this spirit:

The divine life, incarnate in a material and mortal body, is liable to be tainted and corrupted by the weakness of the frail medium in which it is for a time enshrined; and if it is to be saved from the increasing enfeeblement which it must necessarily share with its human incarnation...it must be detached from him before, or at least as soon as, he exhibits signs of decay, in order to be transferred to a vigorous successor. (349)

It seems apparent that Hardy, intentionally or unintentionally, has used this archetypal celebration and rewritten it as Tess' life. Tess is the pure woman enshrined in the "frail medium" and eventually has to be sacrificed so that the feminine spirit can be passed on to the fresh young 'Liza-Lu. The Jungian, of course, recognizes the celebration of fertility as a representation of some archetype larger than itself, and Frazer reinforces this by including fertility rituals from other nations (the examples from the British Isles are closest to Tess' story, but there are similarities in each of the rituals). Hardy has taken the worn-out fertility ritual and incarnated its purpose in the woman Tess. Thus Tess' story is not simply an echo of an ancient pagan ritual, but ultimately an archetype in the

collective unconscious of humanity which has been expressed in different ways throughout the ages. Tess' death as the divinity, according to Frazer, would be "...merely a necessary step to h[er] revival or resurrection in a better form" (349). Tess must be sacrificed so that she can be resurrected as a more perfect representation of the archetype. In this case, Tess' spirit is reborn in 'Liza-Lu, who has not been involved in a sexual relationship and who will remain pure as a result of Angel's guidance.

It is important to understand both the spring fertility and the fall harvest rituals, because Tess' story involves both. She is, as Campbell says, the life of all that lives but also the death of all that dies, and it is important not to neglect this part of her story (114). Frazer ties Demeter, to whom Hardy also compares Tess in the novel, to what he calls the "Corn-Mother" and explains the celebration of the Corn-Mother, which takes place in autumn, in many different societies. In Scotland and Wales, for example, the ritual bears comparison with Tess' final hours: "...if cut before Hallowmas...the last corn cut at harvest is known...as the Maiden," bringing to mind, of course, the title of the first book of *Tess* (467). In Berwickshire the harvest ritual is called "cutting the Queen," (472). This parallels the way Tess is described as "regnant" and with other adjectives of royalty throughout the novel. Her royal status is particularly clear the scene with the Queen of Diamonds and the Queen of Hearts right before she is taken into the forest by Alec: she speaks "majestically" and insults her companions (Hardy 67). As Stave says, "Hardy emphasizes her mythic (ie., nonhistorical, nonhuman) nature by endowing Tess with qualities that culture, particularly Victorian culture, claimed were alien to a woman's nature. One such quality is her queenly pride..." (191). Tess is proud and the reader grasps that she is the true queen, rather than either of the other women in that scene

(Hardy 65). At the end of the novel, Tess is perhaps a type of harvest, a representation of Demeter who cannot long survive in Hardy's harsh, modern world. Her characterization as a sacrifice is based on the historical setting of British fertility rites, but other settings point to her status as the archetypal woman as well.

The archetypal elements of Tess' historical stage are likewise an important part of establishing her as the archetypal woman. The key historical element for Tess is her d'Urberville heritage. Tess' stage is a world much bigger than herself—she is often described as a kind of pawn of fate. Tess' struggle is overarchingly seen as the last efforts of a dynasty which has deteriorated so far that it can now be reborn. The narrator says, "...her family was so unusually old as almost to have gone round the circle and become a new one" (Hardy 128). It seems that Hardy brings about the rebirth of the family through Tess' story. In the meantime, the Durbyfields are struggling to live on the land their ancestors once owned and ruled. This historical setting for Tess, the dying heritage of d'Urbervilles, provides an archetypal background because it promotes the archetypal death-rebirth cycle that is so important in the novel. It also asserts that aristocratic blood cannot keep a family wealthy, and does not even have the power to birth it anew. Instead, the d'Urberville line is reborn because of Tess' common mother with which Tess' powerful pagan qualities are united. The archetypal is more important than the artificial aristocracy that has been created in England—natural law prevails against Victorian social structures here, as in so many other aspects of Hardy's novel.

Several physical settings for Tess of the d'Urbervilles point to Tess as the archetypal woman because they provide archetypal surroundings. Blackmoor Vale, Talbothays, and the forest which is the setting of Tess' sexual encounter with Alec all

have commonalities reinforce Tess as the archetypal woman with other Edenic settings found in literature, including the Bible and *Paradise Lost*. At the beginning of the novel, the physical setting is Blackmoor Vale, “a world of folk magic and superstition. In setting and atmosphere the work is totally naturalistic. The green vale of Blackmoor, fertile, small, enclosed by hills, lying under a blue haze—the vale of birth, the cradle of innocence...” (Ola 194). Hardy describes Tess’ birthplace as an idyllic paradigm of the perfect country village. This gives her story a mythic quality. Even though Hardy is painting her from his knowledge of the residents of such a vale in his experience, it is archetypal in the sense that it bears similarities with Eden or other perfect garden settings throughout literature. It has often been noted that Tess’ ruin is set among “the primaeval yews and oaks of the Chase,” one of the oldest forests in England (Hardy 73). This is an important setting for the fall of the archetypal “first woman” Tess.

Tess’ journey to Talbothays is an interesting combination of the Edenic and the fallen. The valley is described as “clear, bracing [and] ethereal” (Hardy 103). Tess herself is described in a way that unites the physical and the spiritual. The narrator says, “When she was pink she was feeling less than when pale; her more perfect beauty accorded with her less elevated mood; her more perfect mood with her less perfect beauty” (103). Her “more perfect beauty” is a description of Tess as the ideal woman. This portion of the novel is so appropriately called “The Rally.” The woman has fallen in the Victorian sense but she is entering Eden in the archetypal landscape of the story. Irving Howe calls her “a girl who is at once a simple milkmaid and an archetype of feminine strength” (407). Tess is clearly both country girl and goddess in Hardy’s tale.

It is at Talbothays as well that Angel speaks explicitly speak to Tess’ true archetypal status. When he is first getting to know her, he says to himself, “What a genuine daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!” (Hardy 120). As Wright says, “In moving to Talbothays, then, as well

as in falling in love there, Tess is seen to be in tune with natural forces deeper than conventional social morality” (135). Once again it is Hardy’s two visions of Tess united. As Elliot B. Gose, Jr. says, “Victorian England was characterized not only by conflicts but by attempts at synthesis...” (423). Here Hardy makes his own attempt at synthesis in this section of the book with Tess as the naturally pure, socially fallen, woman, entering the valley of dairies.

The passage that most clearly establishes Tess as the archetypal woman brings the recognition that she is also fallen. Hardy’s narrator refers to Angel and Tess as “the first persons up at all the world...impressed...with a feeling of isolation, as if they were Adam and Eve” (Hardy 130). Adam and Eve, the first people on earth, were also the first to fall in a moral sense (Genesis 3). Their story takes place in the Garden of Eden and Adam and Eve, the fall, and the garden have all become prominent images in the body of archetypal criticism. Tess incorporates all three of the major archetypes associated with the Biblical account of the Garden of Eden. She represents the woman Eve who is deceived by the serpent and falls, bringing sin into the world. However, Eve has come to represent the beauty and significance of the first woman even while being the one responsible for moral decay. Hardy’s decision to compare Angel and Tess to Adam and Eve is an important one in the archetypal scheme of things.

Tess is perceived by Angel as having “an almost regnant power” since “hardly any woman so well endowed in person as she was likely to be walking in the open air within the boundaries of his horizon” (130). It is important to note that Tess has received her “endowment” from her common mother, not from her aristocratic d’Urberville heritage. Hardy assures the reader that high birth does not equal goddess-like qualities. Still, Hardy provides an important archetypal setting for this moment—a midsummer

dawn. In this scene, Tess is, to Angel, Artemis and Demeter, but she is also, according to Hardy's narrator, the Magdalen (130). The Magdalen is the archetypal fallen woman, and Hardy's narrator does not distinguish between the goddess and the fallen woman in Tess at this point. She is both "the milkmaid" and at times, "a visionary essence of woman—a whole sex condensed into one typical form" (130). It would be difficult to define an archetypal woman more plainly Hardy does in this scene.

At the end of the novel, Hardy once again uses setting to emphasize Tess as the archetypal woman. Tess' capture at Stonehenge unites her with the mystical paganism purportedly celebrated at this location. Here, the perception of the location as archetypal by Hardy and others is much more important than whether or not Stonehenge actually was used as a site of sacrifice. Here Tess is the pure sacrifice who dies for all the women who have been misused and wrongly accused of sin. Tess has laid herself down on the altar of Stonehenge, where Angel tells her they used to sacrifice to the sun (394). It is the eternal feminine that is emphasized at Stonehenge especially regarding the characteristics she inherited from her mother. She is significantly back in the land where one of her mother's "people" once lived. It is not at Kingsbere where Tess finds peace, but Stonehenge.

Evelyn Hardy provides one of the most passionate statements of Tess as a goddess of nature being sacrificed on the altar to society at such a significant location:

In choosing Stonehenge as the setting for her last hours with Angel, Hardy stressed the sacrificial elements involved, but he looked upon Tess as having been destroyed by 'the letter of the law that killeth.' When Hardy is moved by his creation Tess assumes divine proportions; she is enlarged symbolically until she towers above us like one of the great Byzantine Saints or Empresses. (Hardy *Critical Biography* 232)

As Evelyn Hardy says, Tess “towers above us” at many points throughout the narrative such as during the baptism of her baby and here at the conclusion of her story, which takes place at Stonehenge. They are the ancient, mysterious stones which were probably the site of sacrifice (Hardy 394). This makes it an extraordinarily appropriate location for the demise of Hardy’s protagonist of mythic proportions. Through Angel, Hardy provides information about what Stonehenge signifies to the reader. The time of year is also significant. Robert Graves says, “The circle was so sited that at dawn of the summer solstice the sun rose exactly at the end of the avenue in dead line with the altar and the Heel stone...” just as it did on the morning Tess was taken to her death (290). Angel says, “That lofty stone set away by itself is in the direction of the sun, which will presently rise behind it” (Hardy 394). Tess is, of course, lying upon the altar. It is also significant that Tess is not taken until she is awakened by the sunrise (396). She is not a sinner to be taken out in the night; she is a pure woman constricted and finally overpowered by her society, arrested by compassionate enforcers of societal law in the full light of the morning sun. However, the fact that she is allowed to sleep until she wakes naturally is one more testament to her regnant power. She is not taken until she makes the statement: “I am ready” (396). The police represent modernism and society’s law, which is not rooted in natural law and ultimately flawed in judging Tess as it does. Tess and the sun stand for natural law which can be squelched for a time but never truly overpowered by Victorian society. Hardy says that Angel prefers “sermons in stones to sermons in churches,” (183). It is not certain whether Angel understands this sermon, but with an archetypal reading of the text, the reader may grasp the sermon found here at Stonehenge.

As a new type of fallen woman, Hardy uses Tess to undermine several elements of the powerful Victorian belief system and reinforce his pagan worldview. One way he does this is by using Tess' historical aristocratic background to upbraid the Victorian notion of class importance. She is called "the exhausted seedling of an effete aristocracy" (Hardy 232). However, her father's nearly-dead aristocratic background has very little power over the course of her fate. It is at Stonehenge that Tess' dominant pagan heritage is strengthened and associated with her mother: "One of my mother's people was a shepherd hereabouts, now I think of it. And you used to say at Talbothays that I was a heathen. So now I am at home" (393). As Stave says, "...Hardy aligns Paganism with matriarchy by emphasizing Tess' bond with Joan..." (196). As Hardy pointed out in the beginning of the novel, "...the personal charms which Tess could boast of were in main part her mother's gift, and there for unknighly, unhistorical" (20). However, while Tess' beauty may not be from her d'Urberville ancestors, her beauty comes from the maternal side which is connected to the ancient paganism of the British Isles. Tess' true heritage is not that of old families associated with her father or Alec. Her mother's beauty is what encourages Alec to take advantage of her in the first place, and her mother's common heritage is what moves the cogs of the narrative. Hardy is upbraiding the notion of class importance by showing that Tess' aristocratic heritage has far less effect on her life than her mother's common heritage. Aristocracy cannot save Tess or anyone else. It is instead her status as the archetypal woman that ultimately allows her to become the sacrifice that will save other women by breaking the domination of the unfair sexual standard.

Hardy also uses Tess to portray Christianity as an insufficient religious system and social foundation. On this point, Hardy's narrator describes Angel as having been

“surprised back into his early teachings” (265). Angel was strong enough to counter the teachings of the church in many areas of life, but here he did not realize that “this young wife of his was as deserving of the praise of King Lemuel as any other woman endowed with the same dislike of evil, her moral virtue having to be reckoned not by achievement but by tendency” (265). Angel had been moved to a certain point of cognitive dissent against Victorian social mores, but in this case, was unable to see Tess the way Hardy saw her—as a pure woman.

It is fascinating how Hardy frequently uses Biblical analogies to make “pagan” arguments. In Ian Gregor’s essay, “Contrary Imaginings: Thomas Hardy & Religion,” Hardy is referred to as “churchy” (19). It is not correct to suggest that Hardy and his character Angel share the same philosophy, but they do have commonalities. It was Hardy’s intention to be ordained until he was twenty-five, when he, like Angel, drew back from Christianity (19). Both Angel and Hardy think in terms of Biblical events and symbols. They both reject Christ as God and probably reject God altogether, but Hardy cannot get away from continually referring to the Bible to make his points. He uses the Bible, however in two senses. He uses it to disprove what he considers constrictingly narrow Victorian beliefs (embodied in Angel’s father, the Calvinist minister). He also uses it to create a basis for an archetypal view of the world of which the Bible is one manifestation. Howe says, “Tess is finally one of the great images of human possibility, conceived in the chaste, and chastening, spirit of the New Testament” (Howe 409). It is in the spirit of the New Testament that Hardy knows so well but it is a variation on a familiar theme—Tess is no Christian. She is a pagan goddess who simply has much in

common with Biblical and literary figures because she, like those women, represents the eternal feminine.

On the same topic, Lovesey finds it significant that Angel's rejection of the Church's doctrine is centered around Article Four of the Thirty-Nine Articles, which deals with the bodily resurrection of Christ (317). Angel tells his father he cannot affirm it. However, his theology is still problematic because of his inability to accept Tess as a pure woman after she confesses the nature of her relationship with Alec.

Angel idealizes Tess, and the reconstruction of her virginity replaces the resurrection in his religion of unbelief. This demythologizing transmogrification resolves Angel's anxieties about Christian doctrine in material terms. The symbolic reconstruction of Tess's virginity, figured in the recuperative allegory of Tess's mouth and in the person of her sister Liza-Lu, within the context of references to the rebuilding of the temple, allows Angel to retain his deified, homogenized view of women and to accept the benevolence of a natural order without God. (Lovesey 320)

Hardy also uses Tess to subvert the Victorian social system by arguing for the preeminence of natural law. He cites different examples of people who have been caught between Christianity or society and natural law and just how harmful Victorian Christianity can be. Tess and her friends are described as being caught between the forces of Nature and the forces of society. The narrator says, "They writhed feverishly under the oppressiveness of an emotion thrust on them by cruel Nature's law—an emotion which they had neither expected nor desired" (Hardy 147). Wright calls this "...a paragraph which virtually summarizes the novel, encapsulating Tess' tragic and passionate struggle

to reconcile the demands of nature and civilization” (Wright 129). The shame which Tess experiences is not a part of her natural environment. Her reflections after the birth of her child are filled with guilt, but once again the narrator shares with the reader what he considers the truth—“It was they that were out of harmony with the actual world, not she....She had been made to break a necessary social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly” (Hardy 85-86). Here Hardy definitely asserts that the actual world *is* the natural world. According to Parker, “One of the strongest images which Hardy develops within *Tess* is the divergence of social and natural law in discussions of sexuality....The value of societal law is suspect, since it exists apart from the reality of the natural world” (275). This is what makes it possible for Tess to be a pure woman in spite of fornication and murder. Her inclination never strays from natural law, even while it breaks the social or religious laws Hardy is continually trying to discredit.

Hardy’s narrator uses Tess to overturn Victorian social mores in a non-sexual setting as well. After the scene in which Tess mercy-kills the pheasants, Hardy’s narrator makes the strong statement: “[Tess] was ashamed of herself for her gloom of the night, based on nothing more tangible than a sense of condemnation under an arbitrary law of society which had no foundation in Nature” (Hardy 279). Hardy time and again affirms the supremacy of natural law and his inclination that social law should be in accordance with it. This is meant to be a support for Hardy’s thesis that Tess is a pure woman. The reader empathizes with Tess’ killing of the pheasants. They are going to die anyway; why should the death be drawn-out and painful? The narrator even seems to assert that if fate were kind, it would allow Tess to die as well. At the entrance to the tomb of her

ancestors, Tess asks, “Why am I on the wrong side of this door?” (364). She, like the pheasants, has been wounded by the wealthy hunter (Alec) who leaves her wounded to come back later (279). Tess is hung by the neck just like she killed the birds by mercifully wringing their necks to spare them the pain of a death caused by the desires of the masculine and the pleasure of mankind.

The scene with the pheasants also prefigures her murder of Alec. It seems that Hardy acquits Tess of this crime not based on natural law so much as on what a modern attorney might call “reason of insanity.” *Tess* does indeed have an increasingly disoriented narrative as the story moves toward its conclusion. Stave argues that this degeneration makes sense mythically as well: “Only after she enters into a love relationship with Angel Clare, mythically her opposite, her enemy, and her destroyer, does she lose the sense of who and what she is” (199). Without this sense, she is moving towards destruction as a woman and the rebirth of the goddess spirit in a new body.

As the archetypal woman, Tess is in the unique position to be able to fulfill another important archetype—the archetype of redeeming sacrifice for humankind. Tess, because she ultimately represents every woman and the eternal feminine, replaces Jesus Christ of the Scriptures with her death and rebirth. In the novel, Tess is reborn as ‘Liza-Lu and breaking the power the gender-determined standard of sexuality. The resurrection also represents the triumph of natural law. In her preparations for death she gives life to her younger sister when she ordains her union with Angel as her successor (Hardy 394). Here she is returning to her role as the life-giving spirit of the fertility ritual. Oliver Lovesey clearly states: “Representing the rebuilt tabernacle of Angel's religion of unbelief, Liza-Lu displaces the Christian resurrection for Angel in favor of a material resurrection centered on a reconstructed Tess” (319). This new

expression of the enduring rebirth archetype replaces the long-standing image of Christ's resurrection in Hardy's mind. Tess represents a return to what Hardy sees as the truer religious sentiment of goddess incarnate. Stave says, "In this novel, [Hardy] most clearly treats the worship of the nature as a religion in its own right....The same religion he affirms is Paganism and Tess functions as its deity, its goddess" (193). Hardy would not deny that Christianity is an expression of the archetype, but it is not the ultimate expression and certainly not the most powerful one for Hardy. The rebirth of Tess cements her in her role as archetypal woman who has the power to overcome the rules of Victorian society that are not based on natural law.

Hardy uses Angel as a flawed alter-ego who understands Tess as goddess but ultimately cannot reconcile this view of her with his knowledge of her fallenness. The tragedy of Angel's response at finding out about Tess' relationship with Alec is based on his inability to accept Tess the way Hardy does—as a pure woman. As Howe so succinctly says: "[Tess] falls. She violates the standards and conventions of her day. And yet, in her incomparable vibrancy and lovingness, she comes to represent a spiritualized transcendence of chastity. She dies three times, to live again....Tess reaches purity of spirit even as she fails to satisfy the standards of the world" (Howe 408). All of Angel's eloquent mythological allusions were only acceptable because Angel still assumed Tess stood within the confines of Victorian mores. His words turn cold at her admission of her past: "I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you" (Hardy 229). His mythological image of her was a romantic, rather than a realistic, one.

Hardy makes it clear that his true opinions do not lie with Angel's. Angel has so mythologized Tess that when he finds out her history, he feels as though the Tess he loved is dead. In a sleepwalking scene, he says, "My wife—dead, dead!" (Hardy 247).

Hardy's narrator chastises him, saying, "With all his attempted independence of judgment this advanced man was yet the slave to custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings" (Hardy 265). Angel fails to create the synthesis that Hardy so passionately presents. Hardy is no traditionalist, but he incorporates principles of the traditional woman and makes a bold statement about what it really means to be pure.

According to Hardy, the critics judge incorrectly when they judge Tess by her final acts. Instead, they "drag in, as a vital point, the acts of a woman in her last days of desperation, when all her doings lie outside her normal character" (qtd. in Parker 274). After it is too late, Angel asks "himself why had he not judged Tess constructively rather than biographically, by the will rather than by the deed?" (Hardy 370). To agree with Hardy's subtitle, the reader must also judge Tess by the will rather than by the deed. Only then can she stand as the extraordinary fusion of socially fallen but archetypally pure woman.

Hardy is attacking the Victorian gender-determined double standard, but more importantly, from an archetypal perspective, he is obscuring the distinction between the archetypal feminine and the fallen woman. Irving Howe claims that "Tess is one of the greatest examples we have in English literature of how a writer can take hold of cultural stereotype and, through the sheer intensity of his affection, pare and purify it into something that is morally ennobling" (408). Hardy takes Tess beyond the Victorian stereotype—she is a pagan and her association with nature underscores this blended status which has puzzled so many, like Buckley, who writes, "What was different and sometimes disturbing about Tess was the idealization of the wronged heroine, an

emphasis on her essential “purity” – despite adultery and violent murder—made more insistent with each change from the earliest manuscripts to the serial version and on to successive editions” (Buckley 3). Hardy’s narrator is convinced of Tess’ purity—he seems to establish Tess as a goddess of mythology even though Angel later repents of these comparisons, adding to Tess’ sorrow.

Hardy, as his quotation asserts on the title page, has good reason to wish to “lodge Tess in his bosom,” for her story continues to get darker and more tragic as it nears its close, but it is incorrect to say there is no hope in Hardy’s conclusion. It is true that Tess is denied the satisfaction of an afterlife meeting by Angel (395). The great irony is that Hardy describes Angel as being like God, Hardy’s silent god who does not or cannot answer for suffering: “Like a greater than himself, to the critical question at the critical time he did not answer” (395). Hardy’s anger at God or fate for dealing with Tess as it does is apparent, but his focus is not only on this. As Gregor has so aptly written, Hardy’s phrase about Aeschylean justice has been over-quoted and quoted out of context (20). He argues that the paragraph must be read as a whole to reach Hardy’s entire conclusion for the tale: “Hardy, true to practice, makes his conclusion multiple in emphasis (20). Hardy’s indictment of fate is not as dark as some would like to make it. He includes a look at history (the d’Urberville knights) and the future—Angel and ‘Liza-Lu (21). Gregor says, “...it is the four sentences taken together which constitute a human truth, by catching in varying lights our condition...” (21). Tess dies as the archetypal woman to save other women from the sexual double standard of Victorian society. Hardy’s conclusion means hope for the world as Tess’ spirit is reborn in the life of her sister.

Reading *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* archetypally allows the reader to see Tess’ encounter with Alec as a breach of social law but not natural law, which ultimately justifies “pure” as an appropriate adjective for Tess. The double play between the

Victorian vision of the fallen woman and the classical vision of the victorious goddess creates a compelling drama for the modern reader of this book. Evelyn Hardy sounds a bit Jungian when she asserts that Hardy was not “fully aware of the significance of his symbolism, of that which he had rightly apprehended with his intuition” (234). An archetypal look at Tess brings the reader a realization that Tess is a woman caught between her natural paganism and the beliefs of Victorian society. Hardy has an eternal faith in Tess’ purity, and even though his convictions on some other points seem unsure, he paints a fascinating portrait of one Victorian woman which incorporates so many enduring images of the collective unconscious and echoes books like the Bible and *Paradise Lost*. As Virginia Woolf says, “It is as if Hardy himself were not quite aware of what he did, as if his consciousness held more than he could produce, and he left it for his readers to make out his full meaning” (qtd. in Evelyn Hardy 232). Using archetypal criticism, the reader can draw closer to understanding the full meaning in Hardy’s remarkable novel, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*.

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