

TESS' FATEFUL LIFE IN THOMAS HARDY'S *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES*

Sufi Ikrima

UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya,

sufi_ikrima@yahoo.com, tobiashanan@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article aims to explore the work of fate in the sense of natural law and its manifestation in leading the life of the heroine in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. The theoretical framework is the concept of fate and Sartre's Existentialism by applying the concept of free will and personal responsibility. The analysis focuses on any natural events that happen in Tess' life, which eventually become such fate agents in determining Tess' life. The finding says that no matter how fateful her life is, Tess exhibits how much she stands on her own by revealing her own free will and her personal responsibility regarding her reaction towards the fateful events she undergoes.

Keywords : fate; law of nature; existentialism; free will; personal responsibility

Man needs to struggle to make up his life. The struggle requires a man to work hard. He should do every task and take every chance in order to have a proper life. The result of the struggle may appear predictable and expectable, but it may also come in the opposite. One cannot guarantee that when he has done everything in proper, he will get an equal result with what he did. Sometimes one may find that however perfect his doing is, he still cannot reach what he wants. There seems to be another force outside him that hinders his aim into reality and causes his failure, even worse, his death.

Such outside power is usually called Fate. Fate comes into man's life to determine what kind of life he should have, regardless any effort he does to change it. Fate becomes, in many cases, the real champion over a man's life.

Some men, however, may not let Fate rule their life easily. They need to fight against it, whether being the winner or the loser. They stand up every time Fate fails them, though in the end, it is Fate which often beats them unequivocally. But the point is that they have tried to make such bargain for their Fate.

The above background is the basic reason that makes the writer eagerly takes Fate as the major topic in this literary research. Since, following Wellek and Warren (219), literature must stand in recognizable relation to life, though it may be presented not as a whole but a specific sort of it. Therefore, a knowledge independent from literature is needed to know the relation that a specific work may have towards life.

Furthermore, in selecting a novel to be the subject, Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) is chosen with Tess Durbeyfield as the protagonist. The writer exercises one of Hardy's works due to the fact that, according to Force (7), Hardy is a writer that has a fatalistic outlook on life. Therefore, his work must have been expressing the same idea, and so is with *Tess*. (For the next, *Tess* written in italic is used as a short form of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, while Tess written in normal font is used to represent the protagonist, i.e. Tess Durbeyfield.) Meanwhile, Tess is selected to be the protagonist because she appears as the only character in the story whose life is mostly ruled by Fate. She is also the one who exhibits some attitudes to fight against her Fate.

Starting from this point, the writer is interested in discussing the life of Tess Durbeyfield in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in the way Fate determines her life and her attitudes towards her Fate. The writer intends to present the fateful incidents and events in Tess' life, which lead her to her death. This study also explores Tess' attitudes towards her Fate.

Fate: the Concept and the Work

Fate, often, be the only answer people can find when they undergo something without any current reason. Kendal (1), implying the same idea, states that "the idea of Fate as a power in the world came from the attempt to find a cause for events which appeared to follow no definite law and to be the result of mere chance." Those events, though mostly appear by chance, may have a significant role in determining the Fate of someone's life.

Fate 'gets along' with human being in an unavoidable way. No one can escape from it. When someone feels that he finds a way to avoid it, Fate unexpectedly appears at the end of the way, waiting for that man in its other mode. Anaeus Seneca writes some verses in which there are two lines explain on Fate's work: / *The fates do lead the man that follows willing; / But the man that is unwilling, him they drag.* (in Augustine 213)

The above lines tell clearly on how Fate spreads its wings over man's life. Its effect is absolute. There is no need to make any bargain. The choice is only to follow Fate and let it determine whatever life a man has to live. Man may try to run from it, but Fate will find him and often

give the worse result in his life. Warfield (2) writes an illustration that has the same agreement with Seneca's lines:

Man is himself a part of the great world - force, carried along in its all – embracing sweep, like the water – beetle in a torrent. He may struggle, or he may let himself go; but the result is the same, except that in the latter case, he embraces his doom, and so is at peace.

In the sense of the law of nature, Fate appears very much impersonal. Butler (7) regards the law of nature, or the Immanent Will as Hardy calls it, as the energy that sustains the universe and which is involved in all events. The law of nature exists in natural world as well as the society, as Butler previously asserts:

But the law of nature does not stop short at the boundaries of something called the “natural world”: it runs for man and the society as much as for ants and anthills, so the conflict between the two dispensations lies as much within man as between him and hostile external forces (Butler 6).

However, the law of nature often appears as a cruel power affecting human's life. It comes as a power which is quite ignorant to man's will but to force man following its will. Butler (7) explains how the Immanent Will becomes unaware of human's aspirations. The Will may coincide with what man proposes but often the Will disposes that man should take different thing from he wants. Lindley (59) also states that nature may be the important rule in one's life, but it has lack regards on the happenings in his life and therefore generates the so-called cruel Nature's Law. The indifferent of the law of nature is also admitted by Nishitani (52) who writes:

But the laws of the natural world that rule over life and matter alike, that govern life as well as death, are in the themselves indifferent to questions of our life and death, of the fortune and misfortune that comes our way, of the good and evil we do. Nature greets with indifference distinctions like these which belong to the concerns of man as distant and unfeeling, at times even as coldhearted and cruel.

There are two points that can be drawn from above statement. First, that the law of nature may appear as Fate in man's life and second it may not care about man who lives in its rule. The law of nature governs man's life and determines which road a man should take. But, the law of nature never questions whether man is content or suffering by taking that road. How far man's life is determined by the law of nature is stated clearly by Butler (9) that “... we are as we are because of a long and many-stranded web of cause and effect constantly wrought by the Immanent Will.”

Fate, however, may appear in other modes while working over man's life. Force (8-9) explains briefly about Fate that appears in many faces; chance and coincidence, time, woman, also convention and law. All those faces are the masks for the Immanent Will which appears as man's Fate.

Chance and coincidence, in the name of Fate, encounters man's life as the determining events and affects it very much. Perrine (49-50) states that chance cannot be barred from life. And when chance is compounded, that would be coincidence. Further, Perrine explains clearly about chance and coincidence in the following sentences:

CHANCE is the occurrence of an event that has no apparent cause in antecedent events or in predisposition of character. In an automobile accident in which a drunk, coming home from party, crashed into a sober driver from behind, we can say that the accident was a chance event in the life of the sober driver but it was a logical consequence in the life of the drunk. COINCIDENCE is the chance concurrence of two events that have a peculiar correspondence. If the two drivers involved in the accident had been brothers and were coming from different places, it would be coincidence (50).

The role of chance is quite significant in governing the universe. Adelman (5) writes: "...blind chance seemed to govern a universe in which minute accidental variations in the species accounted for the evolution of human being". Chance and coincidence contribute the work of Fate in determining man's life and the way he should live it.

Time. Fate may sometimes hide its face behind time. "Time," writes Force, "is a great series of moments. The joys of life are transitory and the moments of joy may be turned to bitterness by time" (9). Time, under the name of Fate, has its authority to lead man into his fixed life. Time conditions man's life as it goes. And though it already passed away, the trace is still affecting much. Lindley (57-8) argues that whatever happens in the present is as the result of the past. One cannot escape from it since present life is conditioned by the past and that past and present times are interwoven within the life of the individual. Time goes on and brings man into his determined place.

Woman. Woman can be the agent for her own destiny as well as man's. Woman, states Force (9), carries out Fate's works, yet Fate often play game with her. Millgate (296) states that woman often pays her Fate by finding herself bereft or betrayed by some such tricks of Fate.

Convention and law. In *Tess*, convention and law appear as Fate's most ironic manifestation. Both are created by man, explains Force (9), but can work as the agent of Fate as effectively as the other aspect of Fate. Man

devises convention and law to make his life easier to handle. But convention and law can hamper the way man wants to make up his life. Both things are able to make man cannot reach what he intends by the limitations both convention and law have. However, the difference with any other aspects is that man can fight both back by changing the hampering convention or law.

Based on the review of Fate, the analysis on Tess' fateful life is held under the concepts of Fate as the law of nature and of the manifestations of Fate. The concept of Fate as the law of nature refers to some natural events and incidents which govern the life of Tess'. This concept is presented by Lance St. John Butler (1990) and is sustained by Keiji Nishitani (1982) and David Lindley (1980). Moreover, the concept of manifestations of fate is derived from Lorraine M. Force (1966) and is supported by Laurence Perrine (1974), Gary Adelman (1992), David Lindley (1980) and Michael Millgate (1982). This concept is to define the fateful events and incidents in Tess' life which lead her to her fatal life.

The Attitudes towards Fate: Sartre's Existentialism

"we are all free, therefore we must choose"

(Sartre in Stumpf 484)

Freedom, explains Titus, expresses one's authentic self and involves "...facing choices, making decision, and accepting responsibility for them" (294). Freedom, thus, is a summons to action. Freedom, for Sartre, means that man has to choose and make himself whatever he becomes (in Roberts 209-10). Man has to choose, adds Titus (302-3), "...the condition underwhich he is to live ... and, therefore, he is responsible for his life and decisions."

Roberts (210-11) explains that even though choice establishes the value man gives to things and the opinion he has of himself, choice can make man's mode of living and his world view arbitrary and precarious. They are arbitrary because their 'rightness' cannot be demonstrated by showing how they conform to norms, structures or authorities beyond man's freedom. While they are precarious because only freedom can prevent man from turning, at any moment, in directions which undercut everything he has believed and accomplished.

Furthermore, Roberts (212-3) also asserts that man's freedom may be engulfed by nature, anonymous meanings or the freedom of other person. Since when the other sees man as an object, part of the meaning of his life is taken out radically. It means that when man is seen as a coward or a waiter, he is apprehended on terms of meanings which he cannot choose or accept. Such alien knowledge of man – the characteristics the other gives him – may appear so heartless and prejudiced and inevitably intrudes into

his consciousness. Man, thus, can neither being an object nor can he accept the fact that this is what the other sees. By the fact, he may react with rage, resentment or pride.

Sartre does not deny that "...man is 'made' as a thing in the world by heredity, childhood experiences, habits, family, class, nation or culture". These factors may constitute man's situation but cannot make him identical with his situation (in Roberts 211). Titus (303) adds that man's situation may seem meaningless, absurd, and tragic, but he can still live by integrity, nobility and valor.

As a matter of fact, no matter man is hedged about by nature, society, the others and death, he must take sole responsibility for whatever meaning life may have. And since man's choosing requires him to decide not only the meaning of his life but also the meaning of human's life, he also has to take upon himself the burden of all mankind. Man is responsible not only for himself but also for all men, and this fact is what may arise anxiety and anguish in man's life (Roberts 213; Stumpf 483).

Sartre states that man's responsibility is the consequences of his freedom (in Titus 303). It means that if man is what he makes of himself, he has no one to blame for what he is except himself. Man cannot blame either a god or a supreme intelligent (Stumpf 483; Titus 302).

Man's responsibility also prevails in his past and present events. Roberts (211) states that a man's responsibility for his past occurs in two senses. First, that his projecting made the past what it was at the time and second, that he can choose what meaning the past shall have in relation to his project now. Therefore, using Stumpf words: "...if man expresses his genuine humanity in all his behavior, he will never deceive himself, and honestly will that become not his ideal but rather his very being" (485).

The review to depict Tess' attitudes towards the fateful events and incidents in her life is conformed to Sartre's Existentialism on man's freedom and personal responsibility. The concepts on man's freedom account for Tess' decisions relating to the fateful incidents or events in her life. Meanwhile, the concepts on responsibility explain Tess' attitudes towards any events as the consequences for her decisions. These concepts are derived from David E. Roberts (1957); Harold H. Titus (1959) and Samuel Enoch Stumpf's (1975) views on Sartre's Existentialism.

METHODS

This study is a library research and uses descriptive qualitative method. The method is used because it suits the study that consists of the description of the fateful events and the attitudes toward fate in the analysis instead of numeric data. Furthermore, the analysis applies the

content approach to describe the Tess' fateful life also Tess' attitudes towards Fate based on Sartre's concepts on Existentialism.

Relating to the theories exercised for the analysis, the writer works out the data in two distinct stages. The first stage is the inductive technique and it is used when the writer conducted general reading towards the novel to decide whatever theories used in this study. Moreover, the second stage is the deductive technique which is exercised to conduct the analysis, together with the theories, based on the statement of the problems.

Briefly stated, the steps that precede the analysis are: (1) conducting general reading to the novel; (2) selecting and classifying the related references; (3) making such close reading towards the novel to reveal the intended data based on the theories reviewed; (4) recording the data from the novel and the references based research topic; and (5) conducting the analysis.

Meanwhile, the analysis itself is gradually conducted as follow: (1) Analyzing the fateful events and incidents during the seven phases in protagonist's four year life including chance and coincidence, time, woman, convention and law as Fate's other names; (2) analyzing which involves the protagonist's freedom and personal responsibility as the attitudes towards Fate based on Sartre's concepts on Existentialism; and (3) concluding the analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis on Tess' fateful life involves the description of natural events and incidents that work as Fate agents in her life. Those events, in turn, govern what kind of life she might have. The writer employs the words 'incident' and 'event' in the sense that 'incident' refers to the happening that is actually not very important, and is accidental and unintended, but has become very much fateful for Tess. Meanwhile, the word 'event' refers to the important happening and of course fateful for Tess within which Tess has her role towards it.

Fate as the Law of Nature

When her father fails to bring the beehives to the market, Tess finds nothing to do but to take over his duty. Thus, accompanied by her little brother, Abraham, Tess rides the wagon when the time is just two o'clock in the morning. It is indeed too early for both to go out and labour. Soon, they unconsciously fall asleep. Consequently, their drowsiness leads the horse to the wrong side and a mail cart suddenly crashes it to death (ch. 4: 31-5).

Drowsiness is quite natural, especially at the hour when every living creature is supposed to be at rest. But in Tess' case, such natural moment is more likely a fateful thing for life. And the consequence is inevitable.

Prince, the horse, is killed and since it is the only means for the family to earn living, Tess can only agree to go to Trantridge where another fateful event waits for her.

In chapter 4 page 34, the omniscient narrator explains that “Tess was not skillful in the management of a horse ...” and therefore she needs to keep awake. But Nature is ignorant to the fact. It only evolves under its own law that two o’clock in the morning is a usual time to go resting and not to go working, especially for Tess who never undergoes such trip.

Moreover, Nature is also unaware about the Durbeyfields’ needs towards the horse and lets the death come to it. Supposed that the accident ought to happen, it is very helpful if the horse is only a little injured. But it seems like Nature plays a game with Tess’ life by using the death.

It is also such drowsiness that contributes to the scene of Tess’ seduction later on. This time is intensified by Tess’ weariness. Taking Alec’s offer to give her a ride home, Tess is so much tired and sleepy that she does not realize that Alec takes her to pass by a wood instead of taking the Trantridge track. How much Tess’ weariness overcomes her is explained as follows:

“She was inexpressibly weary. She had risen at five o’clock every morning of that week, had been on foot the whole of each day, and on this evening had in addition walked the three miles to Chaseborough, waited three hours for her neighbours without eating and drinking, ... she had then walked a mile of the way home, and had undergone the excitement of the quarrel, till, ... it was now nearly one o’clock [in the morning]” (ch. 11: 86).

Therefore, when Alec leaves her to find the way back to Trantridge, Tess can no longer be awake. Tess falls asleep when Alec unexpectedly seduces her. And the consequence it precipitates is even worse than the former case; she has a child, therefore, she has to take the alienation of her society and the departure of her husband (ch. 13: 107; ch. 37: 323).

Beside drowsiness, Death is also considered a natural moment in man’s life, but not for Tess. Just like in Prince’s case, death once more comes as Fate’s agent in Tess’ life. Taking the news that her mother “*is took very bad, and ... dying*” while her father “*is not very well neither*”, Tess breaks her agreement to work at Flintcomb-Ash until the Old Lady-Day and returns home (ch. 49: 438-9). Old Lady-Day takes place on April the sixth. It is the day when “*...agricultural world was in a fever of mobility; agreements for outdoor service are to be now carried out; and the laborers are removing to the new farms*” (ch. 49: 438; ch. 51: 449). However, a few days later, the condition is changed. Her mother “*is a good deal better, but ... [her] father is death*”. Death, again, plays game by taking the ‘wrong’ one, as affirmed by the narrator: “*... the Durbeyfield*

couple had changed place; the dying one was out of danger, and the indisposed one was dead" (ch. 50: 447).

Actually, it is quite reasonable that Tess' father is the one who dies. He is dead for a heart attack and long before, the doctor has reminded that he can pass away anytime (ch. 50: 447; ch. 3: 21-2). But the 'mistake' of the death lies in the fact that Jack Durbeyfield's life is the last for the duration of his house's lease. And when he dies, the family consequently should leave it (ch. 51: 452). If only it was Joan – Tess' mother – who dies, though it distresses the family, at least they could still have shelter and should not be driven away from their homeland.

In this matter, there lies the indifference of Nature. It has no regard to the difficulty of Tess' family due to the death of her father. Death comes to the father instead of giving him a chance to live any longer and causes the family loses their shelter. Nature only follows its law. For a man with a heart condition likes Jack's, death often comes in sudden. Nature's indifference is also admitted by the following comment:

"In the ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things the call seldom produces the comer, the man to love rarely coincides with the hour for loving. Nature does not often say 'See!' to her poor creature at a time when seeing can lead to happy doing; or reply 'Here' to a body's cry of 'where?' till hide-and-seek has become an irksome, outworn game" (ch. 3: 48-9).

Such comment approves what Butler says that the Will [the Immanent Will] often disposes what man proposes that man should take different thing he wants (7).

Furthermore, the law of nature may appear in many modes which are mere passing moments for other people. But for Tess, those moments become other Fate's agents to govern which way Tess must go. The following are the descriptions of modes into which Fate manifests itself.

(1) **Chance and Coincidence:** How far *chance* plays a game with Tess begins just when she thinks that she can overthrow her past trouble by marrying Angel. But on Christmas' Eve, a week before the wedding day, when the couple spends the day with shopping at town, they encounter a Trantridge man whom recognizes her past affair (ch. 33: 265). It is quite strange about the encounter, since Trantridge is some miles away from the town. But *chance* makes it possible for Tess. Consequently, "*the ghost of the past*" reaches her again and encourages herself to make confession to Angel.

Realizing that she cannot "*declare the past to him [Angel] by word or mouth*", Tess writes her confession "*on the four pages of a note sheet*". She puts it into an envelope and slips the letter under Angel's door.

Unfortunately, *chance* rules her life in a way she could never expect. The letter is slipped beneath the carpet and Angel never realizes its existence (ch. 33: 266: 9). Thus, Tess has no choice but to tell him directly.

Another work of *chance* in governing Tess' life is the overheard conversation of Angel's brothers. Having not heard about her husband after their estrangement a year ago, Tess resolves to go to Emminster to ask her parents-in-law about Angel. But on her way to the residence, Tess is overtaken by Angel's brothers and overhears their conversation about "*his ill-considered marriage*" (ch. 44: 381-2). Tess should have not let the conversation affect her and follow through on her plan, but she does the opposite. She turns back and starts walking her way home where, again, by chance she reencounters her seducer.

In addition to *chance*, *coincidence* also plays a part in Tess' life. Being now cast away in "*a starve-acre area*" of Flintcomb-Ash Farm, Tess surprisingly recognizes that her employer is the Trantridge man who was beaten by Angel on his words about her past affair (ch. 33) and who passed her by in a lane heads for the farm and scared her by his words (ch. 41: 352). Thus, Farmer Groby, the man's name, seems to find enough reason to keep nagging at her due to her lack of skill (ch. 43: 371-2; ch. 46: 406). The fact intensifies Tess' difficulty as a deserted wife.

Nature's plan of letting Tess reencounter Alec by *chance* is not without reason. The reencounter is the beginning of another fateful path that ends in Tess' conversion to Alec. Tess, at first, thinks that the conversion is the end of all, but she is wrong. Nature still keeps its biggest plan for her; that is to lead her to the gallows.

Actually, when talking about how *chance* works out Tess' life, it is the learning of d'Urberville's lineage – together with the shiftlessness of Tess' parents – that start everything. The Durbeyfields make use of the news to gain advantage: to make Tess the "trump card" to claim kin with Mrs. Stoke d'Urberville and to win "some noble gentleman" to marry her (ch. 4: 28-9). If the news never came to her family, her parents would never have such project. And if her parents were not too shiftless, they might have not sent her to Trantridge to "sell the title". The description above proves two important points; first, that *chance* and *coincidence* may appear as Fate's manifestation, and second, that *chance* and *coincidence* indeed govern Tess' life.

(2) **Time**: Time also plays its part in contributing the nature's plan on Tess' life. One of the examples is the time when Tess fails to see Mrs. d'Urberville and meets her son, Alec, instead. The narrator's comment explains that it is *time* that determines which man Tess should engage with:

... Had she perceived this meeting's import she might have asked why she was doomed to be seen and coveted that day by the wrong man, and not by some other man, the right and desired one in all respect [Angel Clare] (ch. 5: 48).

Tess' lament on her relationship with Angel also expresses how *time* becomes so cruel in playing with her life:

"Why didn't you stay and love me when I – was sixteen; living with my little sisters and brothers, and you danced on the green? O, why didn't you, why didn't you!" she said, impetuously clasped her hands" (ch. 31: 250).

Those two expressions imply that *time* has set her fateful life by playing a game of 'the wrong man at the right time and the right man at the wrong time'. Tess meets Alec – "whose reputation as a reckless gallant and heart-breaker was beginning to spread beyond the immediate boundaries of Trantridge (ch. 13: 105) – just when she is too innocent to understand his evil intention towards her. And she meets Angel – who sees her as "pure, and lovely, and of good report" (ch. 31: 250) – when Tess is no longer a simple girl.

Moreover, it is also *time* that prevents Tess to confess when it is still possible to do so. Tess realizes that her letter is unread on the day of her wedding. *Time* delays Tess' plan until her wedding night when Angel also makes his confession (ch. 34: 284-7). But, unexpectedly, Tess' confession results in Angel's departure.

Time, once again, prevents Tess' happiness with the return of Angel, which is too late. Angel comes back to her when Alec has already "won her back to him". How much *time* hurts her is shown in her speaking:

'Tess! [Angel] said huskily, 'can you forgive me for going away? Can't you – come to me? How do you get to be - like this?'

'It is too late,' said [Tess], her voice sounding hard through the room, her eyes shining unnaturally.

.....

'I waited and waited for you,' she went on, her tones suddenly resuming their old fluty pathos. 'But you did not come! And I wrote to you. And you did not come! [Alec] kept on saying you would never come any more, and that I was foolish woman ... (ch. 54: 484).

Angel's return does hurt Tess and she becomes more upset by the fact that Alec has lied to her. Thus, impulsively, she stabs Alec with a knife and soon becomes a fugitive.

However, *time* not only precipitates Tess' misery, but also provides, though does not last quite long, a moment of happiness for her. When the

love of Angel comes, Tess lives “in spiritual altitudes ... approaching ecstasy” and she seems “to be wearing a crown” (ch. 31: 246). She wishes “that it would always be summer and autumn” with Angel “courting” her (ch. 32: 258). Henceforth, the analysis on *time* as Fate’s other agent exemplifies that *time* can also play its part in determining Tess’ life.

(3) **Woman:** Force states that *woman* can carry out Fate’s work for herself or for others (9). And Tess also becomes Fate’s agent for herself and her family. When she leaves Alec after their short affair, her mother bursts with anger and says: “why didn’t ye think of doing some good for your family instead o’ thinking only of yourself” (ch. 12: 103). By leaving Alec, Tess has set her own path to be “a spouseless mother” and put an end to Alec’s providence for her family. Thus, the family loses the benefactor for their financial needs.

Meanwhile, after making her confession to Angel, Tess says that Angel may leave her. By her words Tess has decided her own path to be a deserted wife. And when Angel really leaves her, her preference of not letting anyone know about their estrangement requires her to face hard days in her wandering (chs. 36-8).

Even more, the murder that Tess commits becomes another example of *woman* working as Fate’s agent. Tess kills Alec and therefore hinders herself to live happily with Angel (ch. 56: 489). Angel has already forgiven her and asked her to rejoin him. But Tess breaks the opportunity by killing Alec. Thus, she can only live with her husband for a few days before attending her gallows (chs. 57-9). This fact proves Force’s statement that woman can play as Fate’s agent and determine her life as well as the other agents do.

(4) **Convention and Law:** actually, it is the work of social convention that works as a turn of the screw in Tess’ misery. According to Kathy Newkirk, “in Victorian times, woman who has children out of wedlock were among the most outcast members of the society” (4). And so is with Tess. Shame with Tess’ illegitimate baby, her father forbids anybody to come into the house and baptize the dying infant. When the baby finally passes away, the Vicar refuses to give a Christian burial and excuses, “... I would willingly do so if only we two were concerned. But I must not – for certain reasons” (ch. 14: 117; 122).

Furthermore, what makes Angel leave Tess is also due to such convention. He had ever seen her as a “virginal daughter of nature”, that was “pure” and of “good report.” (ch. 18: 155; ch. 31: 250). But now he tells her: “Don’t, Tess: don’t argue. Different societies different manners. You almost make me say you are an unapprehending peasant woman, who has never been initiated into the proportions of social things” (ch. 33: 297). Tess thinks that Angel will understand her position but he is “yet the

slave to custom and conventionality” and ill judges her by leaving her in regard that she is very much impure.

The work of convention does not stop at that point. It also ruins the opportunity Tess may have in looking for a proper life. When the Durbeyfield should be driven away by the death of the father, the villagers refuse to receive them as weekly tenants just because they see her as not a “proper woman”. They say that the family “should have to go soon” (ch. 51: 452-3). Convention makes Tess unable to live happily as Angel’s wife and should also leave her homeland.

Meanwhile, *law* can also contribute to Tess’ life by its own game. Tess suggests Angel to divorce her by making the seduction as the excuse, but Angel’s response implies that law makes divorce almost impossible to do “... How can I divorce you?...You don’t understand the law...” (ch. 36: 305). Thus, when Angel leaves Tess, the most suffering thing Tess bears is the fact that she is a deserted wife. If only the *law* became more friendly by letting Angel divorce her, Tess’ suffering would not be as that much.

When Tess kills Alec, she indeed ruins the opportunity to rejoin Angel. But supposed that she was only sentenced for life instead of the gallows, Tess would still have such opportunity. Yet, *law* decides the opposite and disregards the fact that the one Tess kills was her seducer. Law has condemned Tess to death and therefore thrown away every possibility to rejoin Angel. Thus, the analysis proves that Fate may manifest into social convention and law then govern the life of Tess.

Of course, Tess’ tragedy is also result of the imposition of conventional values on her by other people. She is considered as improper though it is not fully her fault. This is just like what she thinks “whatever her sins, they were not sins of intention, but of inadvertence, and why should she has been punished so persistently?” (ch. 51: 455). Tess questions the injustice she accepts. Yet, that is how the convention works. It never questions whether Tess sins by intention or not. It sees her just the same; that she is improper due to what happened to her. This is how the convention becomes indifferent.

However, if only Tess has not acknowledged the values, her suffering would not have been so intense. But later, Tess is able to accept the indifference and remain indifferent. Therefore, Tess does not make any attempt to escape after killing Alec. She ignores the law that condemns her to death because such law also never cares about how much Alec has tortured her.

Fairly to say, it is quite possible to suggest that Tess is actually fated to be with Alec. No matter how hard she tries to throw him away from her life, the path she takes always leads her back to him. Even when she has already married to Angel, circumstances still bring her back to Alec.

But Tess never loves Alec, “I don’t quite like Mr. d’Urberville...” (ch. 6: 54) and never wants to be fated to him. Hence, the murder that Tess conducts may also be regarded as her effort to bargain her Fate. The murder indeed liberates her from Alec but it also ruins the reconciliation between her and Angel and leads her to the death sentence. However, the best for all is that Fate “has ended [its] sport with Tess” (ch. 59: 508). And just like Seneca’s lines, Fate drags Tess since she is unwilling to follow. Supposed that she just lives with Alec after the seduction, at least she would never undergo such hard life at Flintcomb-Ash Farm and would never be a deserted wife, though the murder is still possible to happen. Yet, different with what Warfield has illustrated, Tess precisely struggles and makes such bargain to embrace her doom at peace.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis on Tess’ fateful life is that the law of nature can be the Fate that determines Tess’ life. And in its work, Fate may appear in many modes and can rule Tess’ life in every way. Thus, based on the review of Fate as the law of nature and its manifestations, the analysis proves that Tess’ life is very much determined by fateful incidents and events happen to her.

Tess’ Attitudes towards Fate

Tess exhibits many attitudes towards the Fate that rules her life. At one time Tess laments the fateful things that take place around her, but at another time she faces those things with dignity. The analysis on Tess’ attitudes, thus, aims to portray how Tess reacts against her Fate on the basis of Sartre’s Existentialism, especially on man’s freedom and personal responsibility. This analysis is also sustained by the character’s analysis of Tess. Meanwhile, the review that provides for this analysis is derived from the views of Robert (1957), Titus (1959), and Stumpf’s (1975).

Several weeks after the seduction, Tess leaves Trantridge without any intention to marry Alec. Alec can make her family well provided if only she asks him. But her pride prevents her to do so. In fact, beyond everything, it is her freedom that is put at risk. Alec is generous towards her family. He gives her father “a new cob” and the children “some new toys”, but the gifts are just to hamper her step (ch. 11: 88-9). Alec’s generosity is only his trick to hold on to her. And Tess realizes the fact. That is why she refuses to take anything from him: “I have said I will not take anything more from you, and I will not – I cannot! I should be your creature to go on doing that, and I won’t!” (ch. 12: 98).

The seduction indeed puts Tess on the horns of a dilemma. It offers her two difficult choices; to live with Alec and make her family well provided but she becomes his “creature”; or to leave him and set herself free but her family loses their only benefactor. And Tess makes her decision come to a less difficult choice, i.e. the latter. Such decision comes

by the reasons that there is still another way to provide for her family by working at “the fields or the dairies” and that decision enables her to get rid of being Alec’s “creature”; by being everything he wants her to be.

Tess’ life is about her struggle against Fate, and so is with the decisions she makes. When she leaves Alec, Tess tries to bargain what life Fate has already determined for her. Tess makes such decision as if she says to her Fate: “let me get free from him, and I will pay whatever price for it”. She does so when she kills Alec (ch. 56). Even when Tess decides to tell Angel the truth, what comes in her mind is that Angel will forgive her so he can throw her past away. She puts her marriage at risk by the hope that she will be forgiven, then, all the memories of Alec will be left behind forever. But Fate fails her, yet Tess still has to pay the price.

Moreover, the choices that Tess makes reveal who she really is. Her unwillingness to take any help from anybody due to their “favour or pity” towards her shows how much independent Tess is (ch. 44: 376). She prefers to work rather than to let Alec pay “at the uttermost farthing” and provide for all her needs (ch. 98). Furthermore, it is better to endure the harsh life at Flintcomb-Ash than to claim to Angel’s parents for her difficulty.

Tess sees herself as an independent person and in consonance with her pride she creates a distinct quality, as Alec tells her “*one* would think you were a princess from your manner...” (ch. 12: 98). Tess comes from a peasant society and grows in such culture but she exhibits a quality that differs from it. This approves what Roberts has cited from Sartre’s view that ‘man cannot be identical with what he is grown up’.

Through the choices Tess makes one can see how she regards her society. Her decision to be “a spouseless mother” and appear in village’s field “suckling her child” at lunch hour reflect her effort to protest the alienation the society gives her related to her being unmarried after the seduction (ch. 14: 115; 112). She struggles against the narrow-mindedness of her surroundings that fails to understand that she never intends to do such sins. Even later, Tess regards her society as being unjust for punishing her insistently of the inadvertent sins (ch. 51: 455).

Tess’ protest also goes to some Christian rites when she realizes that her child is dying (ch. 14: 119; 122). Tess baptizes her baby by herself “SORROW I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost”. Tess conducts such baptism because of her father’s refusal to let the parson come into the house to baptize the baby (ch. 14: 117). And when the baby finally dies, Tess tells the Vicar “don’t for God’s sake speak as saint to sinner, but as you yourself to me myself...” to give the baby a Christian burial.

To some extent, Tess’ actions or words show her objection towards the social law or even the Christianity as if she suggests that such law

should be brought up to date. Her suggestion for Angel to divorce her implies that “if a marriage makes either the husband or wife unhappy, then the marriage should go” (Williams 83). And Angel’s response “... How can I divorce you? ... You don’t understand the law...” also implies how Tess sees such law; that it is possible to alter the law when it only suffers those who follow. And those doings make Tess appear ‘arbitrary’ in the eyes of others.

Thus, Tess creates her own value from the decisions she makes; that she is born differently from those at her time and that she is born at the wrong time. Yet, her surroundings fail to understand Tess. After the seduction, Alec regards her as a common woman he is used to engage with. Therefore he disposes her and thinks that it is quite enough just to make her well – provided for her material needs (ch. 12: 98-9). Meanwhile, Angel, before the confession, idealizes her as “the most honest, spotless creature that ever lived” (ch. 28: 227). But, after the confession, he sees Tess as “an unapprehending peasant woman who had never been initiated into the proportions of social things” (ch. 35: 297). Such judgments affect her much. She cannot accept the way she is regarded and reacts with both her pride and anger. Tess can easily leave Alec and let Angel leave her. But she also shows her anger when she realizes that Angel is as unjust as her society and that they have punished her beyond her forbearance (ch. 51: 455).

Tess is quite independent; and her independence requires her to take the ‘sole responsibility’ for whatever happens due to her decisions. When she decides not to marry Alec after the seduction, Tess is ready for the consequence, i.e. the delivery of their baby. Therefore, Tess is able to introduce it courageously to the villagers at field (ch. 14: 113). When she tells Angel that he may leave her for her confession, Tess bears the estrangement by keeping the fact from her parents as well as his (ch. 36: 313; ch. 38: 330; ch. 44). And when the police arrest her for the murder she has done, Tess shows no resistance and says, “Have they come to me? ... It is as it should be” (ch. 58: 505). Tess has acknowledged her freedom and she is also ready for the consequence.

Moreover, Tess’ responsibility also runs for the others: her family, her baby, and Angel. For her parents, Tess is responsible to provide for their needs. Tess cannot stand the impoverished condition due to her parents’ shiftlessness. That is why she agrees to work at Trantridge after the death of Prince that becomes the “bread-winner” along its life (ch. 6: 54). Even, it is this sense of responsibility that forces her to let Alec win her back after the death of her father, since it is Alec who is very generous to her family. Unfortunately, such responsibility is the one that contributes to her flaws: in the former case, the seduction; and the latter, the murder.

Tess is also responsible for the existence of her baby. Tess realizes that she has sinned but not her baby. The baby is only the consequence of her past undoing and it should not pay for it. Therefore, regardless the society, even her father's refusal towards its existence, Tess still expresses her responsibility by baptizing her baby by her own hands when the baby is dying; and giving it a quite proper burial by making "a little cross of two laths and a piece of string, and having bound it with flowers [then sticking] it up at the head of the grave [of her baby] (ch. 14: 119-22).

In fact, the most haunting problem for Tess is her past experience. And it is the main ground where Tess' responsibility for Angel lies on. When Angel's love comes to her, Angel's idealization on her only makes her think that she is deceiving him. Hence, in conflict with her own feeling for him, Tess points out the virtues of other girls when Angel draws near to her; tells him that they are better than her and "perhaps would make a properer wife" than her (ch. 22: 179; ch. 23: 185; ch. 29: 235). Tess does this effort due to the past burden she bears. Yet, Tess cannot deny her love for Angel and finally agrees to marry him.

Tess' agreement makes her past burden even more difficult to bear, instead of preventing her mind from it. And when her written confession fails her, her responsibility of not wanting to deceive Angel encourages her to confess by her own mouth (ch. 34: 387). Such responsibility, however, charges her to undergo hard days at Flintcomb-Ash Farm. Such action corresponds to Roberts' view on 'responsibility for the past' and in this case, Tess expresses in the way of choosing what meaning her past affair should have in her present life. Tess does not regard it as a mere passing trouble just like her mother has suggested. Thus, it keeps haunting Tess in every way she tries to have a new life.

Moreover, what Tess thinks, implies two important points: that pastime often requires man's responsibility; and that such responsibility may raise anxiety in his life:

We [Tess and Angel] shall go away, a very long distance hundreds of miles from these parts, and such as this [the encounter with the Trantridge man whom recognizes her past affair] can never happen again, and no ghost of the past reach there (ch. 33: 266).

Tess' decision to marry Angel cannot free herself from her past undoing. It even requires her to confess. And the word 'ghost' implies that her past keeps following her in every way she tries to escape. As long as Tess has not made her confession yet, it will haunt her and make her anxious all the time. This fact also approves Lindley's statement that the past and the present are 'interwoven' in man's life.

Above all, however, Tess is responsible for her Fate. She admits that her life is ruled by Fate, "My life looks like as if it had been wasted for the

want of chances!” (ch. 19: 161). But, instead of following her Fate willingly, Tess prefers to fight against it and to do some actions “My soul chooseth strangling and death rather than my life. I loathe it; I would not live always” (ch. 19: 160). Regardless that the result might be the same, Tess still bargains the price Fate charges her. Such matter implies Tess ‘genuine humanity’ that among the inevitability of Fate’s work in her life, Tess still has a will to enjoy and to have a better living. And this is the reason for her struggle. But when finally Fate leads her to the murder, Tess takes it without any attempt to escape from the death sentence and says “What must come will come” (ch. 58: 498).

The analysis on Tess’ attitudes towards Fate explains that to some extent, Tess exhibits some attitudes that suit Sartre’s Existentialism. She faces choices due to the fateful events happen to her, makes her own decisions and takes the responsibility for them. Through those attitudes, Tess campaigns that no matter what Fate tells her, she can still fight against it.

CONCLUSION

The analysis on Tess’ fateful life identifies the law of nature that can be the Fate to rule someone’s life. Tess’ life is determined by the natural happenings that appear as Fate’s agents for her. Those natural happenings are represented by the drowsiness that causes Prince’s death and Tess’ seduction; and by the death of Tess’ father. In working out Tess’ Fate, nature manifests itself into many modes: chance and coincidence – represented by the incident with a Trantridge man, the unread letter, the overheard conversation, the learning of d’Urberville’s lineage and the shiftlessness of Tess’ parents; time – prevents Tess from the right man and delays Tess’ confession until the wedding night; woman – i.e. Tess herself, carries out Fate’s work by leaving Alec, letting Angel leave her and killing Alec; convention and law – single woman with a baby is regarded as the society’s outcast, the impossibility of divorce and the death sentence. All those modes, together with other natural moments, determine the life Tess should have: to be involved in an affair with the unwanted man that ends with the seduction; to be deserted by the most wanted husband due to the seduction; and to be condemned to death for killing the seducer. And Tess’ death is the end of her struggle against Fate also the end of Fate’s game with Tess’ life.

The attitudes Tess exhibits towards Fate’s work in her life proves that though the end might be determined, man should make his own life by fighting against the unwanted Fate. Tess shows many attitudes and among them are attitudes that suit Sartre’s concepts of Existentialism. Towards every fateful event happening in her life, Tess faces it with dignity by

making her own decision: leaving Alec after the seduction and killing him. Tess expresses her freedom by choosing to act in contrast with Fate's will. By her freedom, Tess is able to exhibit her own meaning by protesting against convention and the people that hinder her will: by appearing in the village's field with her baby, baptizing and giving her baby a Christian burial by herself, and asking Angel to divorce her. Towards the consequence of her decisions, Tess shows her responsibility for herself as well as for others: keeps the estrangement by herself, makes confession to Angel, refuses to escape after killing Alec and takes her death in peace. And by those actions, Tess exhibits her genuine humanity: that she is the one who refuses to follow her Fate without doing any actions. It is such humanity that distinguishes Tess from other people in her time.

REFERENCES

- Adelman, G. (1992). *Jude the Obscure: A Paradise of Despair*. New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Augustine, St. (1986). *The City of God*. Trans. Marcus Dods. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc.
- Butler, L. St. J. (1990). *Thomas Hardy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Force, L.M. (1966). *Notes on Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Nebraska: Cliff's Notes, Inc.
- Hardy, T. (1994). *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. London: Penguin Books.
- Kettle, A. (1972). *An Introduction to the English Novel. Volume II: Henry James to the Present Day*. 2 Vols. London: Hutchinson University Library.
- Lindley, D. (1980). *York Notes on Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. London: Longman York Press.
- Millgate, M. (1982). *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*. Oxford University Press.
- Nishitani, K. (1982). *Religion and Nothingness*. Trans. Jan Van Bragt. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Perrine, L. (199). *Literature: Structure, Sound and Sense*. 2nd Ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
- Roberts, D.E. (1957). *Existentialism and Religion Belief*. Ed. Roger Hazelton. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stumpf, S.E. (1975). *Socrates to Sartre: A History of Philosophy*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Titus, H.H. (1959). *Living Issues in Philosophy: An Introductory Textbook*. 3rd ed. New York: American Book Company.

Wellek, R. and A. Warren. (1942). *Theory of Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Internet Sources:

Kendal, J. (2003). *Fate* [Online, accessed on October 23, 2015]. URL: <http://www.Newadvent.org/cathen/05793a.htm>