

Women and nature: An ecofeminist analysis of Kamala Markandaya and Thomas Hardy's selected texts

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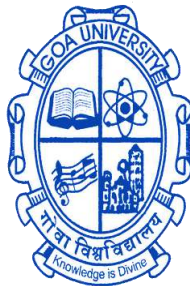
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I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, “**Women and Nature: An Ecofeminist Analysis Of Kamala Markandaya and Thomas Hardy’s Selected Texts**” is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the English Discipline at the Shenoi Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University under the Supervision of Ms. Runa Menezes and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will be not be responsible for the correctness of observations given in the dissertation.

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COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

This is to Certify that the dissertation report "**Women and nature: An ecofeminist analysis of Kamala Markandaya and Thomas Hardy's selected texts**" is a bonafide work carried out by Ms. P Shanugra Sunil Kumar under my supervision in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Masters of Arts in the Discipline of English at the Shenoi Goembab School of Languages and Literature, Goa University.



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Abstract

Ecofeminism sheds light on the interconnection between women and nature. Ecofeminist critics throw light on the objectification and patriarchal domination of women. Kamala Markandaya is noted for her understanding of nature and sensitive portrayal of women. She is also well acquainted with the East-West dynamics, thereby focusing on colonial and postcolonial issues. Thomas Hardy, on the other hand, is a notable writer of 19th century England, and his novels majorly highlight the societal expectations, taboo topics, subjugation of women and nature. This research focuses on Kamala Markandaya's *The Coffer Dams* and Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, analyzed through an ecofeminist framework. A comparative approach to the texts will be incorporated, mainly to bring out ecofeminist insights and an in depth understanding on how culture too plays a significant role in Markandaya and Hardy's works. The methodology involves a qualitative analysis through a close textual reading of the selected texts.

Keywords: Nature, Women, Culture, Ecofeminism, Post-colonial, Industrialization.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Overview of the theory 'ecofeminism'

Ecofeminism, which emerged in the late 20th century, is a branch of feminism that explores the interconnected relationship between women and nature. The term 'Ecofeminism' was first coined by the French author Françoise d'Eaubonne and aimed to highlight awareness on women-nature issues and commitment towards the environment. The writings of d'Eaubonne's also bring forward the major threat to women and nature that is the male system, their power to dominate both women and environment by simply planting "the seed in the earth as in women" (qtd. In Gates, 8), this was emphasized by the author. This philosophy also looks at how a patriarchal society treats both women and nature. Ecofeminism, like feminism, uses the idea of equality and strongly advocates respect for women and sensitivity towards the natural world. By promoting a better worldview wherein all life is valuable, ecofeminist theory aims to show humanity's dependence on nature and women.

According to Karen Warren, to understand and have a broad perspective in this discourse, ecofeminists can base itself on fundamental arguments that point to what is the relationship between the oppression of women and the domination over nature. For a better understanding Warren proposes to look from "historical, symbolic, theoretical, experiential connections" (Warren, *The Power and Promise of Ecological Ecofeminism*, 1). In *A Glossary of Literary Terms* ecofeminism is described as the study of specifically feminine ideas on the environment in the neglected nature writings penned down by female authors, as well as the analysis of the role

attributed to women in fantasies of the natural environment by male authors. (Abrams, Geoffrey, 100)

The self-worth of women and the environment are valued by Ecofeminists. They want to change the status of women and advance equality between genders. Therefore they believe that masculine community is controlling nature and women, patriarchy being the key issue. (Kukade, 5825) Western thinkers have explored ecofeminism as a framework but their general perspective was Euro-centric, mostly focused on the view and issues of European women. Nonetheless, several researchers and scholars in India put forward the experiences of Indian Women, and offered their own unique view on ecofeminism. For instance the women led environmental movements are mostly focused by ecofeminist such as 1998, Appiko movement was held in Karnataka and nextly in the year 1973 Chipko movement which were led by a group of women in the district of Gahrwal in India. In both cases the women prevented the cutting of trees by embracing them.

Prominent environmental feminist Bina Agarwal is grounded in real world situations and believes that the system of production, reproduction, and distribution of goods among women is shaped by class and gender divisions. She also notes that on one hand women in India, particularly those living in impoverished rural homes, suffer gender-specific consequences as a result of environmental degradation. Therefore she states, “In the patriarchal thoughts, women are identified as being closer to nature and men as being closer to culture. Nature is seen as inferior to culture; hence women are seen are inferior to men.” (Ecofeminism in India, 2023)

The objective of ecofeminist analysis is to show how social conventions unjustly dominate women and the natural world by examining the consequences of gender divisions. To foster value and respect for the living environment and women, the theorists believed that

feminism and Ecocriticism could be integrated. Consideration was also given to the long-standing historical tradition of linking women and nature to characteristics such as chaotic and irrational, which also need a male dominance according to patriarchal society. Male on the other hand is supposed to control the usage and evolution of nature and women because they believed that they were logical and orderly. (Nirmal, 137)

Similar to how people approach nature from an anthropocentric perspective, ecofeminism is a story about women's experiences in a largely exploitative and patriarchal society. It's an understanding that recognizes the close connection between the exploitation of the natural world and the way that the western man treats women and indigenous civilization. Hierarchical dualisms are the outcome of the patriarchal conceptual framework, which prioritizes characteristics tied to masculinity over those linked to feminine. This dominant logic and value-based hierarchical thinking both serve to justify women's simultaneous power over the natural world. Since any harm done to nature eventually affects human lives, particularly women's lives, it is vital that we acknowledge and respect the interdependence of all life forms. (Singh, 21)

Deeply rooted in the ideology, which is domination of women and nature by patriarchal society. To get over this, one must advocate equal rights, nonviolence, and nonhierarchical structures of governance to create new social forms that are to rethink the underlying patriarchal values and structural relations of their own culture. In order to respect nature and all living forms, ecofeminists contend that it is also necessary to recognize the interconnectedness of all life processes. Instead of attempting to dominate nature, humans should learn to coexist with it and strive to go beyond the hierarchical relationships. (Rao, 126) Thereby in a the publication, "Ecofeminism at the Crossroads in India: A Review", Rao notes that human should seek to

transcend power structure by quitting being dominant towards nature and have a bond with ecology to thereby coexist in the similar world they live in.

Further this research aims to analyze the novels *Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented* by Thomas Hardy and *The Coffer Dams* by Kamala Markandaya, through the lens of Ecofeminist theory.

Description of the authors

Thomas Hardy, an English poet and novelist who wrote in the latter half of the 19th century, was among the first male authors to highlight the harsh circumstances women faced, through his novels. Rather than stereotyping women, he tried to show the societal expectations placed on women in the Victorian era. He also delved into the natural world, describing nature in a detailed and sensitive manner. He was raised in Dorset and at the age of sixteen, he stated working as an apprentice to a local architect because his family couldn't afford to take him to university. After moving to London in 1862 for employment, he started his own education. He took evening studies at King's and engaged himself in capital's intellectual atmosphere during the time. Due to ill health, he had to return home in 1867, where he worked as an architect and completed his early novels.

Kamala Markandaya, a British-Indian novelist and journalist, wrote during the latter half of the 20th century. She attended the University of Madras to study history, and was born in Mysore. For a long time Markandaya worked as journalist and had few short stories published between 1940 and 1947. After her marriage to English journalist Bertrand Taylor, she moved to England in 1948 and settled there. She often shows parallels between the subjugation of women by traditional society and the exploitation of nature through the depiction of the tribal lifestyle and rule of western culture. Markandaya was one of the first Indian novelists to write about

interracial relationships, immigration and the struggles faced by the urban middle class and rural peasants. Her ability to clearly depict the struggles of the society that was changing was what made her a strong writer.

As both Markandaya and Hardy focus on themes such as nature, inequality, class difference and industrialization, an in-depth study of both the novels from an ecofeminist lens will provide valuable insights.

The study will offer a critical lens for analyzing the issues of environment and portrayal of women. The various issues like gender inequality, societal domination on women and ecology, and the degradation of nature can be covered with the help of the selected novels. Hardy's work helps to delve into the treatment of women and nature in his texts as he believed that women must be given opportunity to develop and flourish. Similarly, Markandaya focuses on the relationship between Indian and western cultures and their effect on women and nature. A study of Indian and Western influences on women and nature in Kamala Markandaya's novel and the nature-women conflict in Hardy's work will further provide a deeper understanding for Ecofeminists analysis. "Post-independence Indian English fiction retains the momentum the novel had gained during the Gandhian age...A notable development is the emergence of an entire school of women novelists among whom the leading figures are Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai." (Padmakarrao, qtd in. 2) Thereby as Padmakarrao mentions, Kamala Markandaya is noted to keep the cultural understanding of the East West conflict in post-colonial era.

1.2. Scope and limitations of the research

With the selected novels: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy and *The Coffer Dams* by Kamala Markandaya, the paper will be analyzed from an ecofeminist perspective. A thematic analysis with the look at narrative techniques will help to examine through diverse cultures and various perspectives presented in the selected text. The major focus will be the main and central characters in both the texts to get a better understanding of the issues highlighted by the authors.

The study will be restricted to the theory of Ecofeminism which focuses on the idea of understanding the interconnected relationship between women and nature, also acknowledging humanity's dependence on nature, on how every life has to be valued and cherished. As ecofeminism is an emerging theory the contemporary perspective such as Queer Ecofeminism may not be included in the analysis of the selected texts. Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was written in 1891 during the Victorian era in England and Markandaya's *The Coffer Dams* was published in 1969, so this study will be restricted to each of these texts only within their own social context and milieu. This study highlights the major characters namely Tess, Alec, Angel from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and Helen, Clinton, and Mackendrick in *The Coffer Dams* with some minor character to effectively apply the theory and understand the themes and techniques.

1.3. Research problem/question

- Do the selected texts reflect ecofeminism and reveal significant insights on women and nature?
- Is there a difference in Indian and Western outlook on women and nature in the selected texts?

1.4. Relevance and necessity of the proposed research

- Necessity in the field of languages and literature

As society faces environmental issues and concerns of social justice, ecofeminism presents a framework for understanding and addressing these issues as well as the role and value of women in society. The novel *The Coffin Dams* shows the east-west conflict that affects the ecology. Whereas the novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* portrays male dominance and challenges which were faced by the female character. The study of both the novels become prominent for understanding cultural differences and the challenges faced by both women and nature. Through the study of both the novels from the lens of Ecofeminism, we can understand the challenges faced in the time period it was written in, and understand its relevance today.

- Relevance to the society

The study will explore issues faced by women and nature through the theory of Ecofeminism; various challenges faced by women and environment can be addressed with the help of the selected novels. This study can be helpful to understand the problems in society and to promote gender equality and sense of responsibility and empathy for nature.

1.5. Aims and objectives

- Looking at the selected novels through the lens of Ecofeminism
- Undertaking a comparative study of the selected novels by Hardy and Markandaya
- Role of culture in the women-nature conflict

1.6. Literature review

Many perspectives have been proposed to define ecofeminism which brings the humans focus on how the theory is defined, like that of Karen J. Warren who critiques domination shown at different spheres and states “nonhuman nature and naturism are feminist issues.” (Warren, Ecofeminism 4) On the other hand Diamond and Orenstein lays emphasis on women and nature stating that “Each path has a different background and history...their common concern is to prevent the destruction of nature.” (qtd. In Datar, 8) looking at this issues in a broader sense through Kamala Markandaya who is said to write novels, “chiefly concerned with human relationship and woman’s predicament.” (qtd In Kumar, ‘Feminism in the novel’, 10) and Thomas Hardys’ as noted by Irving Howe “liked women” and “could not imagine a universe without an active, even an intruding feminine principle.”(qtd. In, Patan, 359) Thereby, an analysis of novels will further enhance and bring new perspectives from the authors’ lens.

Barbara T. Gates in her journal publication *A Root of Ecofeminism: Ecoféminisme* shares ideas of Françoise d’Eaubonne, who points that:-

Today the two most immediate threats to survival are overpopulation and destruction of our resources; fewer recognize the complete responsibility of the male System...their ability to plant the seed in the earth as in women, and their participation in the act of reproduction (qtd. In Gates 8).

Gates also points out the male dominated societies which were considered the highest and significant, historically, compared to women who were given status of minority. She says “Women must act to save themselves and earth simultaneously.” (Gates 7-16)

Susan Buckingham in her research study “Ecofeminism in the 21st Century” indicated that eco-feminist argument which was based on the idea that because these social and economic

structures caused large-scale environmental damage, women, in a sense, share this experience and are therefore better positioned to speak up for nature. (Buckingham 3-12)

In the research paper “New Directions for Ecofeminism: Toward a More Feminist Ecocriticism” Greta Gaard suggests that it is reasonable to assume that in the context of Post-colonization Ecocriticism, which is inextricably linked to ecological and social justice, the activists in these areas would view each other as allies, as ecofeminism stands in opposition to all forms of hierarchical and patriarchal structures, while environmental justice stands in opposition to the continued exploitation of nature and the marginalization of humans. (Gaard, 6-11)

In a Journal article, “Changing Dimensions of Ecofeminist Jurisprudence: East and West” Nirmala focuses on some ecofeminist ideas posed by ecofeminist such as Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies, where Shiva focuses on how, “the violence to nature, which seems intrinsic to the dominant developmental model, is also associated with the violence to women who depend on nature for their sustenance and also of their families and societies.” (qtd. In Nirmala, 153) Thereby showing how often women in East culture are more attached towards natural environment, this is also due to the societal and family pressures. Here a new perspective apart from the historical western idea can be noted.

Karen. J Warren in her publication “Ecofeminism: Women Nature Culture” notes that “Ecofeminists especially have helped us begin to see the gendered character of how people in the West, especially men, have been split off from nature.” (Warren, 186) Warren here notes how we have been able to recognize the gendered nature of the division and how man in particular has split from nature. Also identifying women and natural world as “other” is a fundamental aspect of our contemporary work environment. Often compared to men, women are paid less despite the equal amount of work conducted in any field.

Sudhir K. Arora, in his research paper *Kamala Markandaya in the Postcolonial Space* published in a book “Indian Women’s Writings in English” by T.Sai Chandra Mouli and Jaydeep Sarangi, explores Markandaya’s works and notes how strongly she portrays her female protagonist against the male counterparts. Through the east-west encounter from postcolonial lens, Markandaya delve into different angles such as political, cultural, artistic, and technological. She never failed to voice her feeling about the colonial era, as Arora mentions “she entered the post-colonial space to explore the unexplored” (Arora, 161-170)

Arun Kumar Biswas in his research study “Negotiating between the human and the nonhuman: representation of environmental issues and concerns in Kamala Markandaya’s *Nectar in a Sieve*” mentions Kamala Markandaya’s deep interest in the natural world and her concerns on current environmental crisis. Her upbringing in a rural South Indian environment and her family and cultural background has shaped her view on the environment. She is deeply connected to the natural world which is reflected in many of her works like *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), *The Coffer Dams* (1969), and *Pleasure City* (1982). (Kumar, 5-11)

Geeta Rani in her thesis “Kamala Markandaya: A Fresh Evaluation of her Genius as a Novelist” notes that Markandaya’s main focus is on women who are enslaved by their husbands and used as a source of sexual pleasure and unpaid domestic staff to carry out domestic tasks without ever raising a voice against the long term drama of their subjugation.

Anita Sandlin in her thesis, “Fear and Fascination: A Study of Thomas Hardy and the New Women” notes Hardy’s view on women and nature, wherein Hardy argues that women are similar to nature, nurturing, often unpredictable and sometimes destructive. Hardy therefore believes that women must be given the opportunity to develop and flourish in a supportive environment free from prejudice and social judgment. Sandlin then states that although Hardy

was not in the vanguard of women's movement and did not support suffrage as Mill did, he was a part of the debate through his new women heroines. (Sandlin, 21-28)

Similarly, journal publication by Childers speaks about Hardy's portrayal of women characters. Mary Childers in "Thomas Hardy, The Man who "Liked" Women" notes that the concept of "inconstancy" is central to Hardy's depiction of women, as it can be interpreted to refer to both their infidelity and their impulsive behavior. She also suggests that Hardy in his writings was able to distinguish himself from women, as a result, he became more self-assured, by taking on masculine roles that he would otherwise have held in low regard. (Childers, 332-334)

The insights gained from the literature review have given a better understanding of gender, ecology and the socio-economic issues faced by both women and nature. An area that needs more attention here is a closer analysis of how culture and tradition influences the relationships between women and nature. Particularly, an East-West study will also help to enhance the research on Markandaya and Hardy's work.

1.7. Formulation of hypothesis

The selected works, perceived from an ecofeminist framework offer significant insights about nature and women with a cultural understanding of the social milieu in which they were written.

1.8. Methodology

The research methodology used will be qualitative analysis and the dissertation will undertake close textual analysis of the selected novels: *The Coffer Dams* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented*. An in depth study of the novels with the application of theory of Ecofeminism will help to primarily focus on contextual analysis, dealing with culture, nature and women. The research will be conducted using the theoretical framework

of ecofeminism and will attempt to delve into the background of the author through secondary research about these two texts.

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. The first chapter includes a survey of literature, including the information of authors and theories, and sections on scope, importance and hypothesis with aims and objectives are discussed in this chapter. Chapter two titled “An Ecofeminist Analysis of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles: A Woman Faithfully Presented*” introduces the novel by Thomas Hardy and look into the thematic analysis with theories. Chapter three named “An Ecofeminist Analysis of *The Coffer Dams*” consist of Themes, settings, techniques and analysis.

Chapter four “Comparative study of the selected texts by Kamala Markandaya and Thomas Hardy” focuses on the both the novel though Ecofeminist lens and how the culture plays an important role in both the text with the time milieu of selected texts. Final Chapter is “Conclusion” which gives an overview of the discussion and summing up by showing the results that were found with the questions that was answered through an in-depth study.

1.9. Chapterization

Chapter 1- Introduction

1.1 Overview of the theory ‘Ecofeminism’ and description of authors

1.2 Scope and limitations

1.3 Research problems and questions

1.4 Relevance and necessity

1.5 Aims and Objectives

1.6 Literature Review

1.7 Formulation of Hypothesis

1.8 Methodology

1.9 Chapterization

Chapter 2- Ecofeminist analysis of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented*

2.1 Overview of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*

2.2 Title Significance

2.3 Historical Background: Victorian Features

2.4 Theme and Technique

2.5 Tracing the women and nature conflict

Chapter 3- Ecofeminist analysis of *The Coffers Dams*3.1 Brief Summary of *The Coffer Dams*

3.2 Title Significance

3.3 Historical Background: Colonial and Post-Colonial Space

3.4 Themes and Technique

3.5 Tyranny of Nature and Women

Chapter 4- Comparative study of the selected novels by Kamala Markandaya and Thomas Hardy

4.1 Comparative Literature

4.2 Power Dynamics

4.3 Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Views

4.4 East-West: Divide and Rule through Modern Idea of Industrialization

4.5 Encompassing Cultural implication in the East and West

Chapter 5- Conclusion**Works Cited**

Chapter two

An ecofeminist analysis of *Tess of the d'Urberville: a pure woman faithfully presented*

2.1 Overview of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

Thomas Hardy's novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was first released in three volumes as a book. In the same year it was published in bowdlerized form (July–December 1891). The book was initially subtitled as *A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented* as Hardy believed the story's heroine was an innocent person unfortunately she was mistreated by the strict Victorian moral codes. (Birdi, 2024)

The story revolves around Tess who is a 16-year-old rural girl, Tess who resides in the southwest English community of Marlott. The story opens with the financially struggling Durbeyfield family finding out that their lineage goes back to an illustrious family background of 'd'Urbervilles' and the naive father is joyous and proud of being a descendant. The family traditionally used to transport beehives for their daily income. In the novel Tess is bounded by people who are strong enough to force her into situation very easily. At the very beginning a tragic incident occurs, where a "pointed shaft of the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince..." (Hardy, 41-42) and the poor horse dies. Thereby Tess is wished to turn towards Alec as per her mothers' desire. Tess refuses at first but thinking about the horse that died she instantly gave up. Alec on the other hand is from an aristocratic family, having power within to suppress anyone; he uses his power to dominate Tess. Eventually in the novel Tess is seduced by Alec as a result she carries a child named Sorrow, who passes away in infancy. The dominance is seen throughout Tess' life as she is succumbed to the events by her family and thereby adding to

it comes Alec d'Urbervilles. Her life just keeps on getting controlled by and she doesn't even blame anyone but herself.

Later she travels to Talbothays to work as a dairymaid in a wealthy farming community. In the farm she finds Angel Clare, a son of a pastor, who was exploring the dairy business for his interests. Ultimately they fall in love and marry, but the unfortunately their happiness was short lived. Tess had never spoken to Angel about her previous life which troubled her very much. Angel here emotionally forces her to marry him and desperately wants her to be his wife. Here his emotional domination is showcased by Angel, who even though seems innocent, does have a lot of control over Tess. After marriage Tess reveals to her husband about her past and despite Angel too having a previous affair, couldn't accept Tess being with someone losing her innocence. His notion of Tess's virgin innocence was completely broken thereby he demands to separate and lead their ways differently. He moves to Brazil and Tess too returns home, travelling continually as field work.

At Flintcomb-Ash farm Tess is overworked and rushed by the person in charge, meanwhile her feeling of abandonment by Angel nearly distracts her. At this moment Alec d'Urbervilles returns, having apparently transformed into a dedicated missionary. His new character however is not strong enough to hide his darker side when he come across Tess and is instantly desperate to pursue her under his control. In the coming events, Alec convinces her that Angel is not planning to return, at this point Tess is aware of her inability to resist Alec's wealth and the conveniences her family can afford. After falling in the trap Tess discovers Angel who came back but too late and learns about the letters which did not reach Angel. In the final part of the novel, Tess kills Alec in an outburst of sadness and misery. Tess and Angel take routes through the countryside. For a brief period, they are blissfully reunited and spend a week in an

empty house. Police finally arrest her and execute, leaving Angel and Tess's sister Liza Lu to live together as her final wish.

2.2 Title significance

Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented is the title of Thomas Hardy's Wessex novel. Hardy in the novel explored the mens' double standard, and the theme of Pure and innocent women seen by Victorian era. Even through the title we can see authors' description of Tess, who in spite of being considered unethical by Victorian society, was viewed as Pure and faithful by the author. Thereby, Hardy challenges the Victorian era's discriminatory practices towards women and men. The change in the view of the author on women's representation can be viewed.

At the same time, the critics have also pointed Hardys' use of word 'Pure' in the subtitle which could suggest his views that purity stays in one's soul and mind rather than physical purity viewed by traditional society. As Meadowsong suggest in his research paper that "In addition to adding the much-disputed sub-title ("A Pure Woman") to the novel, Hardy steadily revised the work in order to emphasize Tess's innocence." (Meadowsong, 299) Also by the detail and emphasis on Tess, author continuously tries to show her innocence and bringing out the tragedy plus revealing the incident to make reader more sympathize with Tess.

It does seem that Tess in the novel is not given a single identity of her own, which itself is depicted through the title, where Tess is belonging to the d'Urbervilles rather than Durbyfield. The author itself fails to give her an identity and at the end to after all the harsh circumstance she went through in the hands of Alec, the tile remains *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. She is also

considered 'pure' in the subtitle and throughout the novel, which also in a way seems contradictory to the Victorian society's thoughts.

Some critics have also questioned Hardy's own self confusion about his view on characters. As Asquith mentions in his review, "Hardy felt strongly enough about his heroine's purity to allude to it in his full title, but in so doing he highlights his own doubts concerning responses to his fictional creation." (Asquith, 2004) His doubts can also be seen through the novel where Angel leaves Tess just because she had a previous relation and found that she isn't a pure, virgin woman he expected her to be. Here the authors' confusion can also be noted as he turns the whole event in Tess life further as a tragedy and perhaps indicate that this is the state of a woman who isn't pure anymore.

The title can be interpreted in different versions, as some of it being, Hardy's being sympathetic of the situation of women during Victorian period, or perhaps a mockery of women who failed to adhere to the society and ends up being the victim under societal rules.

2.3 Historical background: Victorian features

The nineteenth century Victorian period in British history refers to the years approximately between 1820 and 1914, which roughly reflects the reign of Queen Victoria (1837–1901). The era was marked by various events and changes like an increase in the number of people who can vote, growing state and economy, Britain's position as the world's most powerful empire, advancement in science, new religious perspectives, and a shift from an ordinary to a modern and complicated way of life. This can also be seen in the novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, a son of a religious man Angel decides to start a modern way of life rather than living within a confined role like his father. Angel's view shift to the modern and complicated way of living by going to Brazil and looking for a good job. Thereby Victorian culture was

structured in a hierarchical manner. The primary dividing lines in Victorian times were class and gender, although race, religion, location, and occupation all played significant roles in defining identity and status. (Steinbach, 2019)

The "doctrine of separate spheres" served as the foundation for Victorian ideology on gender. It was said that men and women were created for various purposes so hence they were made different. In this ideology women were considered physically weak, whereas men were powerful. Sex was viewed as important to men, and reproduction was essential to women. Here women were considered reliant on someone for their daily needs, and men were self-sufficient. Females belonged in the private realm whereas males belonged in the public one. Women were also expected to manage homes and raise families, while men were meant to engage in paid labor and politics. Additionally, it was believed that women were inherently more ethical and devout than men, who were said to be preoccupied with sexual urges while women were apparently free from such worries. Although the majority of working-class families were unable to adhere to this theory of distinct spheres due to their inability to make ends meet with the given money by single male worker of the house, the idea therefore had an impact on all social classes. (Steinbach, 2019) Tess similarly was a girl who had to make the ends meet by doing multiple jobs. She wasn't provided enough money by her father, who was proud enough to do any work as he became aware of his newly found noble power. To look after her whole family, she had to sacrifice her life by earning as much as she can.

The written work of the Victorian era, which spans the whole nineteenth century, is frequently considered to be the pinnacle of English literature. Before the novel, poetry gained its popularity as it was widely accepted. The middle class could express themselves by writing about their life in literature, thanks to the advancement of technology. It brought literature closer

to the problems that actual people experienced in their daily lives. Thus, realistic fiction started to appear in the Victorian novels. Classes had a significant impact on Britain's social structure following the industrial revolution. The lower classes in England, who were eventually referred to as the "working class," perished from physical labor with little chance of acquiring property, while the higher classes prospered as a result of industrialization. Following this significant revolution-caused shift, new social classes including the middle and working classes emerged. Although there has always been a divide in English society amongst the wealthy and the underprivileged, it is now even more evident. It is possible to categorize the classes in England during the nineteenth century as follows: aristocracy of noble birth, upper and lower middle classes, and working class. Therefore novelists in 19th-century England reflected the socioeconomic structure of their day. (Aslan, 2-4)

The book's interpretation on how society judges a woman after she was raped and assaulted was looked upon deeply in the era. Thereby readers of Victorian age surely were judgmental on the modern interpretation and the character development of Tess.

2.4 Themes and technique

Settings: Wessex setup

In order to comprehend Hardy's writings, nature is a crucial component of the setting. To visualize and experience the setting of the novel, one can benefit from the portrayal of landscape. A setting also often helps to enhance the plot and themes in the novel.

"A fertile and sheltered tract of country in which the fields are never brown and the springs never dry" (Hardy, 18) is the outset that Thomas Hardy focuses more precisely. The major setting of the novel includes Marlott, Sandbourne, Flintcomb-Ash, Talbothays and "Stonehenge, which made its way into British culture, through artists like JMW Turner and

novelists like Thomas Hardy, as a symbol of England's violent pagan heritage.” (Olegnowicz, 2021) thereby plays a crucial part as they shed light on Tess, the protagonist. Tess and the environment she lives in have parallels in the novel which also makes it possible for the reader to comprehend Tess's feelings and emotions at that particular moment.

One of the notable English novelists of the Victorian era, Thomas Hardy, set all of his major works in the Southwest and South of England. He gave the region the name "Wessex" in honor of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy that ruled this region in antiquity before the Norman Conquest. Despite the fact that the locations in his stories are real, he frequently gave them made-up names. For instance, Hardy refers to his native Dorchester which is the setting of the novel *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The author referred to Wessex as "a merely realistic dream country" in the preface of his work of fiction *Far From the Madding Crowd*, published in 1895 (Purwarno, 143-144). Hardy's frequently idealized affection for the Wessex landscape which is counterbalanced by the novel's cruelly realistic portrayal of societal injustice.

There are moments when Hardy's depiction of Marlott's landscape is poetic. Blackmoor Valley and Marlott itself capture the essence of the country's natural beauty and cultural ambience. It also depicts a moment when there is a May Day dance where the society is in a tranquil state, this also builds tension for the upcoming events, the peaceful and tranquil state is similar to Tess and her family's life.

As her baby dies of illness Tess's shift to Talbothays which enables her to shift towards a new beginning in life. Firstly, Tess moves from the small town of Marlott to begin working at Talbothays, a farm that produces dairy products. She takes refuge of the "placid valley" which is the Talbothays to put her infant and Alec out of her mind. The "happy green tract of land" of

Talbothays serves as a metaphor for Tess's own surroundings. Crops were planted, nurtured, and harvested on the farm and like the vegetables and plants; Tess also was raised on the farm.

Similar to Talbothays, Tess's feelings and emotions were reflected in Flintcomb-Ash. In contrast with Talbothays, Tess's experience at Flintcomb-Ash, a "barren" area, was terrible and unsettling. The dairy farm had "stubborn soil," "there were few trees," and the surroundings were "dry and cold." (Hardy, 317) The farmland on the Flintcomb-Ash farm was "desolate drab," "uncared for," and a "starve acre place," (Hardy, 320) which is a complete opposite farm to Talbothays, that can be seen as positively vibrant with fullness of agricultural area. (Katongole) The trip Tess took to The Slopes hinted at the pain she would soon experience. When Tess leaves, she feels uneasy and reluctant. She is not at all enjoying the trip. The phrase "looks can be deceiving" appropriately describes the d'Urberville mansion at Trantridge. Despite the mansion's beauty, there is deceit and cunning truth beneath. (Katongole)

After rejecting Tess, Angel travels to Brazil in an attempt to make wealth, which represents his romanticized view of the world. Brazil is an exotic, ideal place; for Angel to start his farming business, however, as soon as he arrives, he is sick and feeble and all of his farming attempts fail. Angel's time in Brazil is a metaphor for his romanticized and idealized connection with Tess, which is ultimately dashed by his own ideal imagination (of Tess being a pure woman of nature).

Angel's arrival from Brazil is documented at Sandbourne, an elegant seafront resort where Tess is said to live a luxury lifestyle and wear fancy clothing. This scene gives the sense of Tess being in suitable surroundings and now in a financially secure living with Alec. Only in the later events the tragedy occurs, where the setting turns to the "capital of Wessex, Wintoncester," (Hardy, 444) where Tess was sentenced to death.

Hardy synchronizes the emotional state of the main protagonist in the novel with his depiction of the surrounding countryside. An intricate depiction of the environment, which reflects Tess's spirits, experiences and predicament, reveals a distinctive side. Tess's continual cycle between pleasure and pain is reflected in the surroundings. The location reflects her exquisite feeling and the great sorrow she endures.

- **Narrative technique: connecting woman and nature**

Narrators have freedom to present the story from all points of view and provide a thorough grasp of the ongoing events in the novel. The third person omniscient narrative technique is more uncommon, particularly in later years, yet it works well in older works which provide real-life situations. As George states in the thesis, "The role of the narrative is not limited to literature, but teaching the ecofeminist techniques of thinking critically about narrative mediation, especially as it applies to women and the environment, can help us to apply the same critical perspective outside of literature." (George, 51) Thereby narratives techniques not only give a basic background and explanation but also make reader think critically outside the novel explore the reality.

The narrative technique usually helps the reader to build a deeper meaning by visualizing the imagery portrayed by the author of any texts. Thomas Hardy uses the narration usually to make reader empathize with the characters and become more immersed in the story. Thereby he employs variety of narrative approach in his book *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. In his tragic novel, third person omniscient narration can be noticed, that is through letter writings, allusions, and narration between character journey, poetry, songs, and an in-depth description of the settings. Hardy uses all these approaches to emphasize his point by letting the reader form their own opinions on the incidents in novel. God, nature, Tess's unsatisfactory lovers, and her careless

parents are all represented by the narrator and the audience's interest at the same time, evoking a continuity and fullness of comprehension that is both deeply "human and divinely comprehensive." (Lowe, 58)

The reader gets to comprehend the characters way of life better because of the majority of songs that are straightforward and heavily accented, reflecting the cultural and social environment of the time. For instance, there is a rhyme in novel explaining Mr Crick which goes as, "Dairyman Dick All the week: - On Sundays Mister Richard Crick." (Hardy, 127) Next incident is when, Tess is reminded of her mother's ballad, when she tried her wedding dress which goes by like, "That never would become that wife/ That had once done amiss." (Hardy, 236) This song invokes a deeper thought in Tess's mind, and reader now experiences her inner turmoil that she is going through is becoming worse. As a result she confesses her relationship with Alec in the past and removes the guilt that plagued her mind.

While letting the reader form their own perspective, Hardy is able to step away from Tess's fate. All the events would be of difference if it was influenced by Tess's perspective and experiences if she were to describe them. David Lodge had spoken about Tess's narration in his essay of the protagonist Tess in *The Language of Fiction* that Hardy would "Constantly shift perspectives" and there comes "confusion in handling of point of view" in this manner the viewer is not able to identify "the consciousness of a character or narrator." (qtd. in Herbert, 78) Thereby sometimes the narration does become a bit confusing for reader to comprehend in the novel *Tess of the D'Urberville*.

The third-person, omniscient narrator who approaches the story from between the individuals' psychologies as a detached voice is present throughout the novel. The subversion that occurs in the narration overrides the environmental factors and feminine complacency that

are prominently emphasized throughout the text. The book goes on to discuss how oppressive it is to be a subject, whose gender prevents them from escaping its confines. It seems obvious now that Tess must stay up to date with Time's contemporary modifications in addition to the stages Hardy places her in.

As a safe haven outside of the main story, the narrator of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* fetishizes Tess. He meticulously focuses on Tess's features and physical appearance, pointing out "her bouncing handsome womanliness," (Hardy, 23) "her mobile peony mouth," (Hardy, 21) and "her flexuous and finely-drawn figure." (Hardy, 107) However, he puts himself into the story so frequently that he may end up appearing as a character after all. The novel's reading is greatly impacted by the narrator's evident scopophilia. (Gordeladze, 2022)

Major themes in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

"The often rich and varied underlying idea of the action is the *theme*." (Guerin, 13) According to Oxford Dictionary, a theme is "the subject or main idea in a talk, piece of writing or work of art." (Oxford Dictionary) So here the novel's repeating idea or underlying subject of an argument can be noted as a theme.

- **Nature and its influence of Tess' fate**

Hardy frequently uses farm ladies and rural English communities to symbolize nature. A common motif in many books, particularly in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, is nature. On the other hand, Hardy expertly conveys Tess's feelings through nature. He uses relatable and easily observed natural visuals to support those feelings. In order to further illustrate Tess's emotions of joy and grief, he also depicts many elements of the natural world, such as the weather, the terrain, and animals.

The protagonist *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is subject to a number of powers, including those of nature, fate, and men; also her subordination to such power results in the theme of her victimization. The natural world in the novel reflects the situation or circumstances. For instance, consider Tess's trip from Marlott to Trantridge; here Marlott, Emminster, and Trantridge are all small towns. These small towns involve her early innocence to an upcoming harsh reality dictated by social norms. Thereby Hardy's use of rural agricultural features of England can be immensely seen in his novels. There is something incredibly lovely and natural about the way he describes the village of Marlott. There is a certain amount of simplicity in the laborers' jobs and fields in Marlott. In the novel to establish Tess Durbeyfield's connection to the farming community, Hardy begins his depiction of the protagonist with a similar simplicity. "Tess Durbeyfield at this time of her life was a mere vessel of emotion, untinctured by experience. The dialect was on her tongue to some extent..." (Hardy, 22) According to Zou, the book *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* provides us with two views on nature: one is subjective which is primarily character-driven, illustrating the connection between human consciousness and the natural world; the other is "objective" which is primarily narrated by the narrator or occasionally "sober protagonists", revealing humanity's true place in the natural world.(Zou,24)

Another main thing related to nature was the horses which were considered a key component of British industry throughout the Victorian era as it was necessary for farming and transportation. Work horses were made to work harder than they could and frequently suffered from the tiredness and discomfort of such a demanding existence. In Victorian society, horses were more of a vehicle than a living being. Such harsh treatment was undergone by the poor animal that had no other choice than to listen to their owner. In the beginning of the chapter itself the horse dies as a sharp "pointed shaft of the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince

like sword...” (Hardy, 41-42) At one point Prince, the horse was even thought of selling to “knacker and tanner who would give only a few shillings for the body...” (Hardy, 43) Tanner would usually make use of the poor animals’ skin and make some commodity for future use of human.

Another instance of cruelty shown towards nature appears in the latter half of the novel when Tess found some injured bird on the ground who were hunted by men. This harsh circumstance in nature is portrayed in the novel, which also mirrors the society at the time it was written. Hardy is thereby fascinated by the bond between women and natural world. Women in the novel are more tune with the terrain than males are; they can blend into the surroundings and unite with it in a manner that men are unable to. It is clear from his work that Hardy appreciates the ability to maintain a connection with women and nature.

The four seasons that change in the book aligns with Tess’s life. Hardy doesn’t hold back when describing Tess’s extraordinary affinity for the natural world because she is a daughter of it. Tess’s joy and sorrow are purposefully incorporated into several seasons by Hardy. Tess’ enigmatic relationship with nature is amply illustrated throughout the book through a thorough depiction of the several seasons. The cyclical nature of seasons held great significance for Tess’ destiny. Autumn was only beginning of miserable life and followed by winter, which makes it worse. Spring brings vigor and vitality to her life and summer becomes a turning point. The novel started in the spring season, and Tess’s appearance is unparalleled in the first spring. She stood out from a group of young girls with her unadorned natural beauty. Her first experience with Angel gave her lovely fantasies of love and fantastic optimism for the future life. For her everything was new and exciting. Following the death of her first child, Tess experienced a second spring. The arrival of spring gave her more strength and energy.

Everything changed during the first summer after family lost Prince their horse. Due to the family's financial difficulties, Tess was forced to assert her kinship. Tess's and family's future remained unclear. Tess finds herself drawn to Angel during the second summer, but she is unable to embrace Angel's genuine love and is forced to back off in the face of Angel's desire. The summer offered Tess more doubt and uncertainty than certainty. She was unable to embrace the exciting future during that time.

Tess never saw the autumn as a time for harvest; instead it simply brought her grief and resentment. After being lured and raped by Alec in the first autumn, Tess's life seemed to be downswing. The story of Autumn's degradation and eventual sudden loss of herself makes for a very depressing read. She no longer qualified as a maiden and her seemingly promising future came to an unexpected stop. Her sole option is to isolate herself within the home and rarely venture outside in search of solace and inner serenity. Winter was the hardest season for Tess; during the first winter Tess lost her small baby, Sorrow. She spent the entire winter by herself. Tess endured an even more difficult second winter after her real love, Angel left her. She went to field on the farm and endured the most wretched winter there, crushed hearted and forced to provide for her family on her own. Tess believed that winter meant death and doom, which is why all her misfortunes occurred during this harsh season. In conclusion, Tess's destiny in the book is intimately connected to changes of the four seasons because she is daughter of the nature. (liu, 117-120)

- **Women dominated by men: a patriarchal society**

A recurring issue in the story is the way men can subjugate women just by using their masculinity as a primary source of power. At times, when Alec admits how awful he is for luring Tess for his very own fleeting pleasure, this command is given with deliberate intent by the guy, who is fully aware of his abuse. She would often remember the carefree days at Marlott but Alec would ignore her emotions and occasionally try to use her helplessness by forcing a kiss. As a result, she would sit "like a puppet, replying to his remarks in monosyllables." (Hardy, 94) Here Tess is compared to a puppet who can only listen to Alec blankly as he is in control.

The most significant incident that changes Tess's life in the book is Alec's abuse, which is unquestionably the most severe case of male dominance over a female. Even Tess's mother does not hold Alec partially responsible for the rape when Tess informs her regarding Alec taking advantage of her. Rather, she informs Tess that, "You ought to have been more careful if you didn't mean to get him to make you his wife." (Hardy, 100) Even though Alec appeared to have a more significant part in the offense that was done, Tess is deemed more responsible for her conduct than Alec.

Another incident of male authority is when Tess's father John Durbeyfield, too proud of his nobility, refuses to help Tess when her son, Sorrow, was ill with high fever. As the child was on deathbed, Tess wanted to baptize her child and give him a name. John on the other hand was too ashamed by his daughters act that he orders "No parson should come inside his door...he locked the door and put the key in his pocket." (Hardy, 112) This also shows how even her father never supported Tess even though she was ready to sacrifice her whole life for her family.

Tess lives in a patriarchal Victorian England, which puts her at a disadvantage due to her gender. The storyteller portrays Tess's persistence in spite of mistreatment and tragedy. Following the

demise of the child, Sorrow born as a result of Alec's rape, Tess departs from her home and work for Talbothays Dairy. Such horrific events demonstrate how during the Victorian period women were forced to accept their fate and move on.

Angel is a symbol for the emotional dominance that men hold over women. One instance is when Tess's companion Retty “tried to drown herself.”(Hardy, 253) after Tess’s wedding and Marian was found drunk and was “brought home, thinking she was dead...” (Hardy, 253) even though Marian isn't known to have ever drunk alcohol. This occurs after Angel confesses that he favors Tess over other women. Even though Retty and Marian are aware that Angel will never wed any of them, the girls' love for him or rather, their affection for the idea of him drives both to such extremes when he marries Tess. Retty and Marian's responses highlight the sensitive nature of women. Often Angel emotionally dominates Tess and force her mentally in to marrying him. He achieves his end goal as he believes that Tess is “a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature...” (Hardy, 142) from this statement the reader becomes aware that he just wanted Tess for her purity and innocence which he believes makes her more beautiful.

With Tess murdering Alec, the cycle of male dominance is ultimately broken, marking the very first instance in the book where a woman actively challenges a man. Naturally, when the huge crowd of male policemen arrests Tess at Stonehenge, this conduct simply serves to further repression of women by men. However, for a brief instant, Tess's action appears courageous when the conventional norm of subservient women bowing to dominating men is broken. Thereby we remember how Gaard notes “we cannot end the exploitation of nature without ending human op-pression, and vice versa” (Gaard, 19). Also how Gates convey the message that “Women must act to save themselves and earth simultaneously.” (Gates 7-16)

The women at the time were also chosen as field labour as they were easily hired as explained in the novel “Female field-labour was seldom offered now, and its cheapness made it profitable for tasks which women could perform as readily as men.” (Hardy, 321) By this description the situation of the period can be seen, on how women were often paid less than they deserved. Even though they worked similar to the men, they were subjected to discrimination. Also in the Victorian times, unlike the western world, a baby born before the women are tied in a marriage was seen as sinful and society would blame her stating as an impure woman. Here the shame she goes through is because of societal ideology and gendered preference on who is pure and impure. It is the women in such case tend to succumb in the lock of societal pressure. Thereby, Hardy closely looks at the female lead, portraying her sorrow and tumultuous relationship with men as well as her tragedies.

- **Modernity and myth of catching up through development**

“The term modernism is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms, concepts, and styles of literature and the other arts in the early decades of the twentieth century, but especially after World War I (1914–18).”(Abrams, 226) The authors attempted to produce constantly new creative forms and techniques, to expose previously disregarded and often forbidden subject matter by breaking accepted norms and rules not just in art but also in societal conversation.

The story is set during the period when traditional farming communities gave way to modern industrial society. The rural areas are perceived as a relatively peaceful setting, where the customs and beliefs of the prehistoric Pagan culture have largely persisted. The distinction between the rich men of higher society who reflect modern humanity's control of nature and the rural ladies who represent nature and its powers is echoed in the dichotomy across rural and

urban locations. The author portrays the loss of innocence as the primary cause of the moral shallowness of the current population through detachment from the ancient, natural way of life.

The farming equipment, which is shown as terrifying monsters that invade the tranquil soil of from Valley, emphasizes the significance of it once again. Naturally, compared to the women they harm, Alec D'Urberville and Angel are portrayed to be ruthless and bitter, despite their wealth, education, and eloquence. A modern carriage even kills Prince the horse, yet another effect of modern way of living and its effects. Since the residents of the community are too spoiled to consume raw milk without becoming ill, the milkmaids are forced to add water to their milk so the villager don't become ill, here the people have been so used to the artificial way of living that now the natural way makes them sick. Particularly to men who have mostly lost their relationship to the patterns of nature due to urbanization and industrialization, Tess's harmony with the environment makes her a desirable figure. The book has a nostalgic, sorrowful feel to it; those who deviate from nature's course are shown as meeting their demise. There's a sense of longing for a romanticized past and a certain innocence that disappeared with the advent of the modern day.

- **Religious conflict**

G. Galloway notes that “Religion is man’s faith in a power beyond himself whereby he seeks to satisfy emotional needs and gain stability in life and which he expresses in act worship and service.”(qtd. In Medda, 78). According to the definition provided here, both power and the creator are unseen, also religion becomes a force that connects individuals to the god so that all our desires are fulfilled. Hardy surely carries over Arnold's view of paganism as an individual's achievement. Additionally, he embraces Arnold's transhistorical theory and for Hardy and Arnold, paganism is essentially a way of looking at life. (Panter, 2014)

Thomas Hardy battled with his personal religious convictions, and this conflict is evident in his writing. He remained loyal to his family's Christianity as well, even if he admired the pagan past. In general, he believed in a divine force that dictated fate. Similar to his life, Hardy introduces his characters, especially those in his latter works, with a constant need to find a moral purpose and principles in universe which might replace the outdated traditions that no longer hold sense. In the novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, arriving at Talbothays Dairy, Angel Clare suffers from "the ache of modernism," or what David DeLaura has called "the distress and rootlessness of those whose intellectual honesty forces them to live without a sense of Providence," having rejected the "untenable redemptive theolatriy" of his parents' faith. At Talbothays, Angel appears to discover a fulfilling substitute for Christianity in the pagan way of life. (Bonica, 849-850)

Hardy saw the need to look for purpose and fateful patterns in the world. He also understood the unease and suffering uneasiness felt by "advanced" people who were unable to find the same significance in conventional orthodox society. However, Hardy demonstrates that Angel's idea as a form of neopaganism that is inaccurate and untested and proves to be harmful. Tess becomes a symbol of a way of life and a set of ideals when Angel enshrines her in his pagan belief as "a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature" (Hardy, 142). In the end, Angel also plays a significant part in Tess's demise. (Bonica, 851)

2.5 Tracing the women and nature conflicts

Thomas Hardy illustrates instances of patriarchy in connection to the natural world. Alec d'Urbervilles highlights the patriarchal inclination in the novel when he tells Tess, who was married to Angel at the time, that "whatever your dear husband believed you accept, and whatever he rejected you reject, without the least inquiry or reasoning on your own part." (Hardy, 361) Here the patriarchal dominance over Tess is highlighted where she is said to be only belonging to her husband whom she has to adhere blindly irrespective of how she has been treated.

Hardy also believes that only a male pronoun can accurately characterize the weather, which is misty and where the sun becomes a greater significance. "The sun on the account of the mist, had a curious sentient, personal look, demanding the masculine pronoun for its adequate expression..." (Hardy, 105) This also suggests that, as compared to a male pronoun, a female pronoun is too insignificant or not enough to define a worthy sun. Thereby also giving more significance to the male character and indicating the strong authority of their presence.

"Patriarchal conceptual frameworks which justify the domination of women also justify the domination of nonhuman nature by conceiving women and nature in terms which feminize nature, naturalize women, and position both women and nature as inferior to male-gender..." (Warren, *Feminism and Ecology*, 45) Warren notes that the patriarchal dominance often controls women thereby keeping women and nature in their control. Patriarchal conceptual frameworks which support the dominance of women also support the dominance over nonhuman nature. Here Warren's idea is portrayed to define the main protagonist Tess who is often looked down upon by the male society; even the narrator at some point justifies male authority and domination with the help of nature.

With the point of interconnected affection between women and nature, here Vandana Shiva suggests that “At, one level nature is symbolized as the embodiment of the feminine principle, and at another, she is nurtured by the feminine to produce life and provide sustenance.” (Shiva, 37) In this framework, women are connected with the natural world their whole life, and writers of textual narratives explore the theme of women and nature which can be pointed through our protagonist Tess. In the novel there is an incident where Durbeyfield’s horse, Prince died as “the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince like a Sword...falling with a hiss into the road” (Hardy, 41-42) Here the tragedy of horse is symbolized with the upcoming events in Tess’s life. The next perspective that is critiqued by the ecofeminist is the male centered view on exploiting resources for their own benefit as stated by Datar, “Industrial society rejects the gatherer(part of the community of beings) and the agriculturist (a steward of nature) view of man. It emphatically asserts that man is separate from nature and has every right to exploit natural resources for their own well-being.” (Datar, 97) In the novel Angel was looked down upon when he wanted to work in agricultural field. On the other hand there were men were exploiting nature for their own benefit, for instance in the novel some men had killed innocent birds and left it on the ground to die a painful death. As noted by the narrator, “they made it their purpose to destroy life- in this case harmless feathered creatures, brought into being by artificial means...at once so unmannerly and so unchivalrous towards their weaker fellows in Nature’s teeming family.” (Hardy, 315)

- **Conclusion**

An ecofeminist analysis of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* highlights Hardy's concern on the separation of rural and urban areas, the unfair society during 19th century and the evident destruction result of the one sided patriarchal laws. There is no doubt that humanity's overuse or exploitation of nature affects everyone.

Chapter three

An ecofeminist analysis of *The Coffey Dams*

3.1 Overview of the novel

“IT WAS A MAN’S TOWN. THE CONTRACTORS HAD BUILT IT, WITHIN HAILING distance of the work site, for single men and men who were virtually single by reason of being more than a day’s walk away from their women and villages.” (Markandaya, 1)

The Coffey Dams, written in 1969, presents an Indian and British collaboration to closely construct a dam across a raging river in Malnad. The “man’s town” (Markandaya, 1) is largely portrayed in the novel as being overly dominated by male figure, so women and nature are treated as inferior to man. The plot centers around a crew of British engineers led by Howard Clinton and his associate Mackendrick building a dam in the tribal region of the South Indian highlands during the Post-colonial era. The male western engineers are portrayed as the proponents of modernization, and the impoverished tribal male population is used as laborers and they go with it because they have no other option. Through the course of time writer portrays the female protagonist’s distaste for industrialized developmental initiatives that were supported by men and thrived at the expense of the natural world. In regards to materialist gain and earnings this man-made dam is seen to be more valuable than natural resources. Therefore, building the dam is a very ambitious project for British engineers and the Indian government.

What is a coffer dams?

According to Merriam Webster, Cofferdam is “a watertight enclosure from which water is pumped to expose the bottom of a body of water and permit construction.” So basically cofferdam is a little enclosure that is constructed either upstream or downstream of an area of water to construct a dam. Pumping out water is made easy for the construction workers and engineers who work by the cofferdam. Consequently, concrete work on the dam wall becomes simpler. Prefabricated steel structures are typically used to build cofferdams, and they may be readily disassembled shortly after the civil work is completed. (Khanna, 2019)

3.2 Title significance

The Cofferdams by Kamala Markandaya novel set in 1960 South Indian region have a lot to talk about East-West encounter in the post-colonial era. The title of the novel is The Cofferdams, which is a very suitable name for the novel as the plot revolves around building of Cofferdam in India. Usually a cofferdam is built in a water body to drain water and make an enclosed area for further construction such as constructing bridge, repairing dams etc. Such structures are built within the water bodies. This structure requires a lot of equipment and commodity to be transported when required. Some of the components needed for the constructions are cross braces, wooden planking that is wales, sheet piles soon.

In the novel the title signifies the ongoing project on Dams which is talked throughout the novel. The construction has become a highlight in life of both Indian and British members. The title would signify modernity as tribal are new to the whole structure and often fail to understand how the dam works. This advent of industrialization has brought new construction the village which comprise of building of bungalow, paving a way by making accessible roads, building

canteens etc. One leads to another, like that one new formation in the novel is leading to development at many stages. Here the title plays an important role as the beginning of a huge development is happening because of the raising of coffer dams.

3.3 Historical background: colonial and post-colonial space

The novel is set in the Post-colonial period as it is mentioned in the text that “the heavy lion seals of the Government of India” (Markandaya, 4) was used to sign the contract and the seal of Government was introduced in the year 1950 on Republic day. This was also the time when India was free from any domination and power previously enforced by the Britishers. In the novel author really question the idea of freedom that people got after independence and whether India was really independent with their thoughts and ideas. The era in Post-Colonial in India is reflected in the year 1947-1980. At this time India show a significant shift from being regionally distributed power to major role in world economy following the establishment of a new government. Even though the novel was set in Post-colonial India, it also shows the Colonial discrimination which dominated the native people in the village.

During the period of Colonialism, when the colonizer arrived in India, the Indian society drastically changed. Britishers had the intention of making huge profits. This involved purchasing raw materials from low cost and selling completed goods for higher price. The British therefore expected Indians to be learned and contemporary enough to consume their products. Also “India became heavily dependent on British engineers, receiving little encouragement to develop its own resources of talent until the last of the raj.” (Buchanan, 523) Here the West society was receiving a major investment to develop their nation. Another point that is highlighted by Aditya Mukherjee is that there’s “a completely different explanation for the development in the twentieth century, particularly between World War I and 1947, Instead of

decolonialization, what this period witnessed was not only the continuation of colonial exploitation but its blatant intensification in many respects at great cost of the Indian economy and its people.” (Mukherjee, 19) Thereby British control had become worse in time which became negative on Indian politics, economics and social spheres, eventually leading to anti-British activities across India. After fighting against the exploitative rulers, they were finally given Independence on 15th August 1947.

Postcolonial writers mostly would focus on the drawbacks and effect of colonial period. Mukherjee further notes that colonial situation have increased commercialization, there is a rapid growth in transportation and major development was happening during colonial period and continued in the postcolonial times. (Mukherjee, 8) Thereby colonial setting and rapid growth have resulted in the capitalist development. A major example can be noted in Markandaya’s *The Coffer Dams*, which shows the post-colonial setup through Clinton who “imported a Ferrari 500, cutting through the forbidding mass of import restrictions like a ruthless laser until the gleaming machine stood...” (Markandaya, 7) Thereby Markandaya brings light to the effect of West in India through a post-colonial setup.

3.4 Themes and technique

- **Setting**

The place where construction is undergoing is in the highlands of South region in Maidan and Malnad which is in the state of Karnataka. Malnad and Maidan are two division of Karnataka Plateau; Maidan is an area with small hills with plain region, whereas Malnad consist of hilly areas around. “...people of the Maidan and the Malnad, the plains and hill-country people, who had watched with awe the precipitate birth of a town in the jungle.” (Markandaya, 2) Here in novel the place is described to be at growth with the arrival of contractors. Clinton

stayed in a Bungalow with the woodland setting, which was previously built by an Indian contractor named Subramaniam. Mackendrick on the other hand preferred to live across the river with his other staffs in peace.

Comparison to luxury of New Delhi where Clinton had lived, in an air-conditioned room, but the current village where he lived was nothing alike. Here he was welcomed with “insects circled like satellites around the petromax lamps.” People were loud and described by Clinton as “inexperienced men.”(Markandaya, 13) The tribal people were close to the river, jungle, birds and animal, thereby people here coexisted with the natural environment.

As the plot moves forward, the tribals in the novel witness a rapid growth of their village with Dam, newly formed bungalow, Canteens, Machinery etc. The natural setting is being dominated by the people as they try to control the river flow, cut down the trees and attack the animals for their pleasure. The sudden change in the environment is described by old man, the head of the village, who exclaims, “Tin cans and cardboard boots, and scented pigs’ grease to plaster on their hair...they are short of food too...jungle is full of games if they relied on that...they will learn what is real and mourn what is lost.” (Markandaya, 72) Here the gradual growth and the sadness of the older generation can be witnessed through old man’s thoughts who is often skeptical of the new foundation built by the western engineers. Thereby by the end the setting of the novel shifts to growth towards modern society through the planning of West engineers, who is building the dam.

- **Narrative technique: an Indian-British perspective**

Markandaya used omniscient narration in *The Coffer Dams* to help the reader understand the text and provide a fresh perspective; this method allows readers to comprehend the story from different viewpoints. In this type of narration usually the person is fully aware of their inner thoughts, any distinct motives or feeling of the character, which is described in novel with their viewpoint. Markandaya uses such narration to build curiosity among the reader on the upcoming turmoil in the novel. As third person narration is commonly used in Omniscient perspectives, that nouns like “they”, “she”, “he” and sometimes the first person narrative “I” is used.

The novel begins with an anonymous narrator who explains the village, talks about Clinton who is new to this village in South India. Through Clinton's description, we are thoroughly introduced to his ideas and how much he hated war just because it destroyed the buildings and structure built by men. Often through such narration the inner turmoil of the character is revealed as we see in the novel when Helen becomes close to the Indian villagers, she also learn about their problem and is also helpless as described by the narrator as, “She could not, however, speak of it either to her husband, or to Mackendrick, or even to Bashiam, recognizing there was nothing to be done.” (Markandaya, 151) The self-awareness and helplessness can be witnessed through this narration on Helen's situation.

The narrator switches between different characters' perspectives, thoughts and feelings to develop each one since it would be unfair to withhold information about their mental states and sentiments from the characters. In addition to Clinton, the narrator also delves into the minds of Helen, Mackendrick, Bashiam and Millie Rawlings. Kamala Markandaya employed a third person narrative which is very effective in this case, as opinions of the fictional characters are

highlighted. Also by this we see how Clinton's details and personality is provided more by Mackendrick, who is a close friend, often there for him in his difficult times. Narrative play a very prominent role to highlight the characters inner thoughts and feeling here. As though different ideas of the people in the novel various perspective can be noted. Thus, Markandaya employed the narrative which offers each character equal nuance and significance. This is particularly significant when a writer employs a story with too many characters because it is the most effective narrative approach to employ.

Themes

- **Western influence of modernization urbanization and development as uprooting**

“A popular term for the changes brought about in the non-western country by construct, direct or indirect, with a Western country is *modernization*.” (Srinivas, 50)

“Modernization, in sociology, is the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society.” (Kumar, 2016) Westernization here brings Modernization which transforms the small rural areas into a more industrialized one. Srinivas in his work *Social change in modern India* noted that western ideas can change mindset of Indians in believing that western culture is the superior one. He explained it better with the example of how Indians used to sit on the floor and eat food but nowadays they prefer chair and table to sit on. Similar change in the society can be noted in Kamala Markandaya's *The Coffer Dams*, where the Indians got influenced by the Britishers to build their own canteen by looking at the canteen built by British contractors in India. Even there was a small scene in the novel where Gopal was about to greet officers by shaking hands which is the more western way of greeting but they in return folded their hands for a Namaste, which is a common gesture used by Indians to greet anyone.

In the *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi states “our ancestors dissuaded us from luxuries and pleasures. We have managed with the same kind of plough as existed thousands of year ago. We have retained the same kind of cottages that we had in former times and our indigenous education remains the same as before.” (qtd. in Kolge , 59) He therefore feels that industrialization and advent to modernity will only make humans crave for more material goods. Similarly in the novel we witness how the older generation were more towards nature and despised the idea of development, whereas the younger generation like Bashiam was more into building of dam and growth which is shows how he is slowing getting away from the natural environment.

The coffer dams highlights how life of people residing in rural setup is affected by the advent of industrialization and modern changes. It also depicts the daily and simple lifestyle of rural people in natural setting. The tribes are forced to relocate upriver at the beginning of the story to ensure that Clinton and his group can build their settlement and live a luxurious life while they build the dam. Clinton and his team now have full authority over the locals, village and the environment. Clinton is the British head engineer who appreciates man-made constructions and believes in the physical strength of equipment. His main goal is to complete the dam on time. The indigenous inhabitants of India, have continued to live according to their traditions regardless of who was in authority—the Mughals, the British, maharajahs, or Indians.

The forest provided food for many in the past. Of course, dangers from modernization and westernization as well as invasions on their territory present challenges to them. Many common Indians know very little about the tribal, as they are not part of the mainstream Hindu and Muslim societies in India. The novel aptly illustrates the notion that industrialization, which in turn causes environmental degradation, is a direct result of man’s hegemonic mindset of using

nature and its resources for his own economic gain. This dam is regarded as much better in terms of worldly advantages and earnings than natural assets. Therefore, the building of such a dam is an ambitious undertaking involving both the Indian government and British engineers.

By illustrating the struggle between the powers of nature, represented by raging river in the South Indian village, in contrast to the modern development, Markandaya presents a fresh perspective in the novel. Therefore 'river' represents tradition and primitiveness and 'dam' represents advancement and modernity. As a result, the story raises some important concerns affecting tribal people. New values are emerging with the construction of the dam, including commercialism, a culture of luxury and convenience, alienation and other elements of industrialization are highlighted through the novel.

- **Nature as (colonized) Other**

“At night when machines and men were silent one heard the river. Like a heartbeat: insistent, increasing, soft when you took no notice, loud when you listened.”(Markandaya, 26)

Nature is depicted as soft, peaceful, but on the contrary it's also seen as destructive and dangerous. In the novel when Bashiam, native worker, gets up feeling pleased and calm listening to the constant rhythm of moving river. On contrary a British worker move to cite and “irritably wished the river would stop.” (Markandaya, 26) The two different scenes here portray the mindset of an Indian and British worker who thinks opposite of nature. Bashiam grew up with the nature, he was always surrounded by this pleasant environment because of which he sometimes viewed nature in a positive light, whereas the British worker have lived in an industrialized and much developed country with much luxury. It therefore becomes hard for the foreign labour to adapt to the Indian natural environment which fails to provide the richness of modern world he previously lived in. Bashiam did think of river as a disaster because when

season changed and it was monsoon, the river will be overflowed which ruin the native peoples hut. Such uncomfortable situation made them think perhaps the dam is for the betterment of the tribal community. This is also the reason why the old man who the head of tribal community say “that this river is a demon.” (Markandaya, 158)

In the novel, Krishnan, an Indian labourer, voices his concern about the issues building of dam and claims that it requires more adjustments. The Indian monsoon is erratic and because the British neglected to consider the northeast monsoon, it might seriously affect the surrounding areas. Thus, Krishnan, the leader of the Indian workers advised about that the cyclones, solar flares and persistent labour issues to be taken into account. Clinton being stubborn defended Krishnan views with past statistics and collective figures that he had held tight as a proof to continue his project. Further he did not even look into the issues very seriously thereby completely neglecting Krishnan’s words. Here we witness the dominance that Clinton carries with him to bring down the Indian workers at each and every point of time.

The tribal community in the novel has been very close to nature and will make use of everything present in the environment. The bits and pieces of pottery that Helen finds in her backyard is one of the natural elements. The pots are usually made of clay which we get from the earth. Very often the people who live there in the southern region make use of clay pots to cook food. It is way too healthy and sometimes when you store water, it remains cold and fresh. There’s also Plantain leaves used for wrapping food items which Britishers learned from the locals around. Natives have learned how to effectively make use of nature and live in harmony with the natural environment. This is the traditional way of living which is healthy, but with the arrival of Britishers more or less things have taken a turn. For example, the Westerners have started canteen, shops, building roads etc. Which only leads to unhealthy way of living. The head

of the tribesman thereby states “they rubbish they buy from the camp shop? Tin cans and cardboard boots, and scented pigs’ grease to plaster on their hair...they are short of food too...the jungle is full of game, if they relied on that and not on money which comes and goes...” (Markandaya, 72) The thoughts of old man becomes very relevant in the novel and society today, which relies more on the technology and money, but are blind to see the nature which provides everything we need.

- Key problems in natural surroundings

Firstly deforestation, which is majorly witnessed in the novel, as the modern technology mercilessly chops the trees and thereby makes the living birds homeless. The major issue of deforestation is highlighted by Markandaya in *The Coffer Dams*. Clearing of the jungle for Western civilization is also a central thing focused in case of destruction. Another subject to notice is Urbanization, which is a rapid grown is happening in the rural area under British engineers. Through the upcoming development in the text, village of Malnad region experience a gradual change in their area. Even though people are getting employed and development is occurring in the region, the natural environment is transformed becoming more urbanized. Nextly the noise pollution is majorly focused in the novel that effect the environment and the people living in the area. The building of Coffer dam needs lot of blasting in the area, so dynamite is exported to clear the area. So they used, “twenty explosions, close on twenty-five tons of dynamite splitting open the valley in symmetrical calculated pattern.” (Markandaya, 50) The modern machinery also creates a lot of destruction to create a way for modern development. With this not only the nature goes through noise pollution but also the soil is removed and the rocks are destroyed.

- **Social conditioning of women in East and West with societal influence**

Despite the small number of female character in the book, Markandaya attempted to capture diverse perspectives and dispositions in the female characters. Starting with Helen, who is an extroverted and gregarious individual, prefers to pursue her own interests rather than succumb to external pressures. She feels really at peace because of her attachment to the locals and the natural surroundings. On the other hand, Millie organizes numerous get-together parties to bring her people back together. Living in nature annoyed her, and the bugs just made matters worse. Thereupon Millie completely detested living in nature. The tribeswomen on the other hand worked in the field with men, looked after their children, did household chores “in the sun, pounding grain or kneading dough.” (Markandaya, 71) They multitasked and were always ready to help their family in bad times. The difference between the women in novel is also because of the social condition they lived in.

Even though Helen came from a well to do establishment, she wouldn't look down upon the tribal. Millie on the other hand would clearly show her hatred towards the native Indians and make bad remarks. Tribeswomen on the other hand were always ready to welcome the new community and will be hospitable with them. In the latter part of the chapter when two British workers died, the tribeswomen came to the funereal wherein the narrator describes the scene as “tribeswomen, the hereditary undertaker, cautiously offering her services in case she was not good enough for the sahibs and they had fallen on her withered neck in gratitude.” (Markandaya, 123) In during the funeral they were only worried to not upset the “sahib” whom they respected and would not even dare to offend.

Helen who belong the western community have gone against her own people and their western ideology to help the tribal with the growing issue of destruction and degradation that the

people were facing. She loves nature and the people connected to the environment. Her frequent visit to the settlement made her native dialect better which further added to her advantage. Helen often explored the jungle and village, even though no one would accompany her. Very soon she came in contact with dogs, hens, birds around and also met children playing around. She also found women who were “almost as naked as the children.” (Markandaya, 38) Something that she would never witness in her country, she found here that amused her. Helen was more close to the environment like the people who lived here and felt more connected to the tribal than the Englishwomen who likes to party and stay at home like Millie. This is also the reason why he is treated with much respect than the other “Memsahib.” Helen often feels melancholy for the natives who have to leave their original homeland, so that the British labourer and technicians could have cozy bungalows on the native land for themselves.

Markandaya portrays her female characters as conventional women with all their defining characteristics and innate abilities, yet they quietly deal with life’s challenges on a daily basis. She understands that women face unspoken obstacles in their lives.

- **East-West encounter**

A significant topic that draws attention in Kamala Markandaya’s work is the contact between East and West. She has attempted to show the East in stark contrast to or at odds with the West. Her main focus seems to be exploring the variables that clash with different racial and cultural backgrounds when presenting the issues. The perspective tends to be British more than Indian, as *The Coffer Dams* are quite a lot of time about West. It is maybe hard to guess if this change in emphasis is related to the alleged change in her nationality. However, Markandaya’s racial awareness and instincts are unquestionably Indian, and her artistic vision is unaltered. *The Coffer Dams* illustrate the West’s superiority in science and technology. Middle-aged British

engineer Clinton is a partner in an English dam building company with global implications. In his home country, people view him as a wealthy and property obsessed individual and revere him as a successful guy. However, Clinton sees himself solely as a builder, a guy whose position is higher than the local Indian engineers which is emphasized in the narrative in the novel that says “Bashiam understood...there was a place for him and another for Clinton, and that his position was not only far below in the power scale, but that the towering and voracious terms of modern commitment diminished him to significance.” (Markandaya, 19)

The Coffer Dams depicts an East-West interaction that occurs both on a technological and human level. When it comes to technology, the struggle is between the strength of nature, which is embodied by the raging South Indian River where the dam is being constructed and the torrential downpours that attempt to impede the construction process. The poor hill tribesmen who work as common laborers and the haughty British officers led by Clinton are at odds on a human level. Markandaya conveys her belief in the equality of all humans through Helen. In fact, the author raises the point that Europeans are hostile towards the East.

A more shocking instance of Clinton’s cruelty is revealed as the dam is being built. Two British officers, Bailey and Wilkins, died in the first disaster, necessitating a suspension of operations so that they could be buried honorably. Forty-two impoverished tribesmen plunge into the river in the subsequent incident. A boulder jam has rendered two dead bodies untraceable. Clinton determines that everyone should get to work as the bodies may be integrated into the structure, he doesn’t consider it such a big issue to let the body stay there and rot. Clinton’s action highlights the disparities in Western perspectives on human principles.

Due to the inherent differences in their perspectives of one another, Kamala Markandaya believes that the east and west are unable to coexist. In the book, Helen holds her own Western

community accountable for this, stating, “Our world The one in which I live. Things are battered down in it. Under concrete and mortar, all sorts of things. The land. Our instincts. The people who work in our factories, they’ve forgotten what fresh air is...but we are Christians you know, an arrogant people, so we deprive them of their rights.”(Markandaya, 144)

Along with Clinton and his lively, considerably younger wife Helen, is opposite to her husband. She searches for some solace in the tribal community as he focuses on the difficult tasks. It is a pity that Clinton is constructing the dam for the tribe whose members are too little and too primitive to matter for Clinton. He sees them all as similar being with little to think about. This portrays Clinton and his spouse as having very different outlooks on life. They stand for two extremes: Clinton unable to communicate with the locals, while the latter have nearly fully integrated into their society. Clinton becomes agitated and overburdened by Helen’s obsession with the tribals which adds to his already mental load. So, Helen here is meant to symbolize the West’s quest for understanding the East, while Bashiam, with his fixation on technology and machines and his disconnection from his traditional roots, is meant to symbolize the plight of India’s contemporary young generation. The complex depiction of India’s rural life and the tribal society not only enhance the plot’s setting but also heighten the theme’s relevance.

The sense of realism and sincerity that the book exudes allows the author to use her enormous talent to depict the contradiction from a perspective point of view. When Clinton is disturbed by the issues of the dead bodies of two Indian laborers who were murdered in an accident, that racial conflict takes on a tragic meaning. Clinton mercilessly chooses to save time by choosing to include the bodies-which are submerged beneath a boulder in the flooding river-into the dam’s construction rather than remove them. But the Indian laborers demand that the bodies be brought back. They threaten to attack, with Krishnan as their leader. They cite an

earlier incident in which the bodies of two British laborers were found in a similar manner in a river, prompting a two-day work stoppage to allow the deceased to be buried in a respectable Christian ceremony. Krishnan informs Rawlings and the other English engineers that it should be “a simple matter of equality that same done to us as to you.” (Markandaya, 182) and draws their attention to the disparity in treatment. The episode demonstrates the novelist’s impeccable comprehension of the racial relationship and skillfully makes the point. She has the ability to express this in original ways.

Homi K. Bhabha brings a post-colonial viewpoint to modern critical theory in a much radical manner. He goes into great detail about the act of effectively displaying two copies of the white man’s visage. He attempts to elucidate the roles that mimicry and ambivalence play in colonial discourse in his portrayal of writing of culture. It has come to characterize the contradictory relationship that exists between the colonizers and the colonized when conversation about colonialism is fostered. By absorbing the invaders’ cultural practices, presumptions, institutions and values, the colonized people were forced to mimic them. Therefore, he claims, imitation finds a gap in the assurance of colonial supremacy and an ambiguity in its control over the behaviors of the colonized. This mimic nature can be thoroughly noted in the novel, when the younger generation tries to practice the Western culture and become more civilized.

3.5 Tyranny of nature and women

Kamala Markandaya's depiction of feminine sensibility, the intimate connection women have with nature and the ways in which she highlights these relationships is seen in the novel. She also critiques the harmful practices of rewarding extraordinary use of contemporary technology and employing machinery to build dams instead of traditional, experience based knowledge and human aid. Women are shown to be true environmentalists because of Kamala Markandaya's portrayal of their qualities and relationships to the natural world, which brings the women in close. When it comes to loving, respecting and defending the natural world, Helen is the true embodiment. One of the book's primary character is Helen who loves being among the tribe, animals, birds and forest. She adores the tribal way of life, as well the wildlife, forest and rural cultures. Her deep and loving outrage at the bungalows of English officers of the construction company being replaced with the huts of the impoverished locals is evident.

According to Vandana Shiva, the primary reason for shift of the in Indian society's worldview about nature is colonization, which marginalizes both the natural world and the residents in for economic development. It is said that colonialization undervalued environmental approaches where native used to admire and protect it. Therein Shiva rightly highlights the theoretical differences between Indian and Western perspective on environment and natural surroundings, where the Western idea views nature as a resource to be exploited and used as an asset. (Shiva, *Staying Alive*, 39) Therefore the male centric authority tames the nature and shows their domination and control over human and nature.

As Vandana Shiva states, "During the four decades from 1947 to the end of 1980s when 'development' was the major target of the nation state, the 'motherland' metaphor disappeared from the discourse of nation building." (Mies and Shiva, 108) Similarly when government set out

the rule to build dam in Malnad, people forgot their own land and river, in order to get into development stage and better lifestyle.

The new generation of Indians was so thrilled by the idea of development that they forgot their own homeland. This shows how much the western male dominated society can influence the people. In another statement Vandana Shiva elaborates the development stage by saying that “The marginalization of women and the destruction of biodiversity go hand in hand. Loss of diversity is the price paid in the patriarchal model of progress which pushes inexorably towards monocultures, uniformity and homogeneity.”(Mies and Shiva, 164) Slowly the native culture is declining as the new generation is more attracted towards the western idea of progress and development. The people fail to recognize the importance of nature until it's too late. That's the reason often women take a stand to protect the nature and help the underprivileged people. Even then in the novel when Helen takes a stand for the native, she is often criticized and controlled by the male authority. She is also a victim of domination and patriarchal mindset that revolves in her own roots.

Conclusion

Thereby in the novel Markandaya highlights the events that led to destruction of nature and subjugation of women through East-West encounter. The novel also shows the cultural clash that occurs throughout, because of which often one culture is viewed as superior to the other. Here even though the Indians were seen respecting the western culture, the Britishers on the other hand would often scorn. Markandaya did not completely make the Western society look evil as she brought in Helen who wholeheartedly supported the tribals. Here the ecofeminist analysis too plays a major role, as Helen is seen as a woman taking a stand for nature and humans.

Chapter four

Comparative study of the selected novels by Kamala Markandaya and Thomas Hardy

4.1 Comparative literature

The phrase “Comparative Literature” implies to any form of literature that are compared and contrasted with one another. It examines a connection between multiple recognized and notable literary texts. While doing a comparative study it’s important to analyse text, look into themes, techniques, forms, any sort of movements reflected and the trend. To find the absolute facts, comparative study should be conducted with open-minded and diverse ideas, without prejudice towards any one particular text. Similarity and differences can be researched and applied to such type of comparison study. The main objective of this type of study is to conduct a study to uncover the truth with serious and sincere approach. As comparative study is comparing and contrasting broader sources, so the approach in a way broadens the scope and perspective on a various issues. Bijay Kumar Das gives his idea about comparative study by stating that, “The simple way to define comparative literature is to say that it is a comparison between the two literatures... analysis the similarities and dissimilarities and parallels between two literatures. It further studies themes, modes, conventions and use of folk tales, myths in two different literatures or even more.” (qtd. In WordPress.com)

The history of comparative literature has proved its inherent substance and form, which promotes the analysis of literature across cultures and disciplines. Here the premise that “how” rather than “what” is important in literary analysis, teachings and matter of literature. So essentially the approach towards the selected text will be critical in nature, as to study the culture and literature while doing a comparative study. (de Zepetnek ,14-15)

4.2 Power dynamics

Power dynamics pertains to the extent of power and authority that an individual or group of individuals can exert over another individual or group. Power comes in many forms, and it can affect interpersonal and systemic interactions as well as other kinds of connections. It is not always harmful to have power dynamic but on the other hand, tyranny and subjugation may ensue if the party possessing an excess of power misuses it. Power dynamics are required in some circumstances. Government officials ought to have some authority over the people who live in a community. In actuality, power dynamics can often be exploited, with disastrous effects for the group that is under that influence. (Lassen, 2022)

- Male dominance through characters of selected texts

“Man’s dominance emerges out of the verity that he is the only literary creature on the globe. He is capable of using diverse natural resources for accomplishment of his economic and political goals, and social desires.” (Kumari, 2150)

Tess of the D’Urbervilles is regarded a remarkable tragedy which depicts the injustice of social law and male supremacy over women through the character Tess, who was oppressed by societal norms which is put on by the society. Tess’s sins are viewed as terrible and unforgivable by traditional society of 19th century England. Hardy argues that Tess is harmed by Social laws, discrimination and mainly the men’s restrictive views on gender, marriage and chastity. The first hand male dominance faced by Tess is from her father and Alec d’Urberville. In the novel her father refuses to help her in her difficult times when she needed to have a proper Christian burial of her baby ‘Sorrow’, even refused to send her out or call priest for her thereby “locked the door and put the key in his pocket.” (Hardy, 112) Alec on the other hand would try to very often take advantage of her by forcefully kissing her, but in the beginning of the novel itself he had

succeeded to assault her and impregnate her, then leaving her alone. From this incident she ended up having a baby. Here the domination and the need to satisfy one's own need can be noted. Alec and John is true embodiment of the male dominance that Tess went through throughout the novel.

Another character in the novel which showed the control was Angel. Here Angel was emotionally controlling Tess in many ways. Even when Tess refused to marry him, he mentally forced her and made her agree to adhere to him. So here the physical and emotional dominance over women can be noted in Hardy's text. As Miller proposes in her theory that, "As soon as [a woman] can believe she is using herself with someone else and for someone else, her own self moves into action and seems satisfying and worthwhile." (qtd. In Young, 8) Tess focuses her full attention towards her family and husband to satisfy their need as she feels that her value comes from her relationship with other rather than herself. She therefore often work hard to be an ideal daughter, "pure" bride to her husband Angel, and also at some point a loving mother to her child. She gives more value to the relationship that was bound to her and finds her own self to be worthless without helping and caring for them.

On the other hand *The Coffey Dams*, Kamala Markandaya focuses more on the connected domination towards nature and women simultaneously; major focus towards the environmental issues where the South Indian natives reside is portrayed by the author. The protagonist Helen is depicted here as a very strong women with her own thoughts and ideas to help people and nature. The male authority in the novel is Clinton who has a superiority complex, wherein he shows the ego that he can achieve anything on his own and often times hide his feeling of inferiority to cope with the truth he hides. He tries to often question Helen when she helps the community she adores, and also makes the community suffer for he believes they are low class people.

As Kumari mentioned in her article “Agri-Environmentalism and Technology: A Study of Kamala Markandaya’s *The Coffer Dams*,” male authority is capable of using the natural goods for their own benefit, similarly Clinton is capable of destroying the natural environment so that he can achieve his goals. There is also a scene in the novel where Clinton is frustrated by Helens support to Indians; he ended up brutally raping her for he had completely removed his aggression on her. The control he wants to assert on his wife and make her submit under his custody is seen in the novel. This also reflects the men’s desire to make things work for his own good and control everyone through violence.

Helen and Tess are thereby a true embodiment of the suppression faced by male authority, which often control and take away their voice to show dominance. Even though Tess often tries to fight back like Helen, she end up feeling guilty, this leads to her downfall under societal pressures. Eventually Tess leaves the place and blames herself for her fate. The suppression that both undergo is largely because of men but the action was taken mostly by Helen rather than Tess, who had to adhere to the societal norm during her time. Both Helen and Tess are physically, verbally and mentally dominated and suppressed by the men. Helen stayed strong throughout and believed in her individual thoughts. On the other hand Tess succumbed in the hands of the men and authority lead men. Helen chose to fight, stand for injustice and go in the right path. Wherein Tess accepted whatever she was going through, but did show some strong will to kill Alec and spend little time left with Angel. Similarly Tess and Helen had been raped in the novel by the men who want to assert their power on her and make them be under their lead. This shows how even in different time period or different countries men are often dominant in nature and feel the need to show their power.

- Treatment of nature (Animals, Birds, and Trees)

Hardy and Markandaya described nature and the treatment definitely in their own unique style. They had their own image and ideas about the natural surroundings and the problems the environment faced during the time period.

In Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, he mostly uses nature as a symbol. For instance, when their family horse Prince dies, it was seen as Tess fate for the upcoming events in her life. Also when Tess found that all the birds had been injured in some way by hunters when she came upon them in the tangle of trees, where she had taken a nap, here the birds serve as a metaphor for Tess, who likewise will die a painful, innocent death. Like the birds, Tess suffers and ultimately perishes. Nature is also shown as the reflection of Tess's emotions in novel. When their dear horse is lifeless the nature is in distress and seem to show pity towards the natural being, which is described as, "The atmosphere turned pale, the birds shook themselves in the hedges, arose, and twittered; the lane showed all its white features, and Tess showed hers, still winters." (Hardy, 42) In the novel author did highlight the issue faced by animals and birds, where a Horse were made to do labour without a break even if they looked tired and pale; birds on the other hand were victim under the hands of vicious hunters, who kill birds for fun. Thereby *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* shows the interconnection between women and nature with equal violence they face.

In *The Coffer Dams*, Kamala Markandaya highlights nature and women separately and in a way author have given an individual value to both by describing the environment issue and the women's subjugation. Even though their problems are interconnected in some or the other way, the issues here are focused more deeply and can be studied individually. In the beginning of the novel the cutting of trees are described, where it is used for the luxury of men. "Cutting through

the forbidding mass of import restrictions like a ruthless laser until the gleaming machine stood on the quay at Madras Harbour, waiting for Mackendrick to finish building his road.” (Markandaya, 7) Here the trees are either cut for the making a road for a Ferrari to drive smoothly, making a lavish bungalow so the men have a good life to live in middle of the forest.

Next, the poor birds were often led to harsh circumstances under human existence. In the novel the author narrates “The mynahs were very popular with the British; the men bought them and put them in cages near their bunks and lovingly taught them to swear in English. The bulbuls went to them too, for their sweet voices, they sang their sweetest just before caging killed them.” (Markandaya, 82) A very troublesome description of how these birds succumbed to death can be seen in the novel. This is also the harsh reality that Markandaya tried to portray in her text. Another instance of an animal being killed for the luxury of men is when Bailey who is among the British engineer, kills a deer so that he can use the skin for his bedside rug. As narrated in the novel as, “Bailey had shot one, though they were a protected species; he was very proud of the spotted skin, which he used as a bedside rug.” (Markandaya, 101) So here in the novel Markandaya shows the subjugation majorly faced by nature in hands of men. The helpless creatures are made to do things that often harm them leading to their death. As a Philosopher Peter Singer quotes, “All the arguments to prove man’s superiority cannot shatter this hard fact: in suffering the animals are our equals.” (Animal Rights a History Peter Singer) Animals do feel the pain just like human. We should not subject them to suffering as they do share the same capacity of human to feel both joy and grief.

Both the novel tends to show the sufferings faced by natural beings. In *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* the Birds and animal subjugation is described in a way to also show aftermath of

Tess's life. But in *The Coffer Dams* the suffering is individually described and critiqued upon by the female protagonist all the time.

- Individual decision and thoughts

Helen in the novel make her individual thoughts alive, as she believes individuals are more significant than ideologies placed by the society. She was intimately close to Bashiam in the novel but she distances herself from him following his injuries, which works well for both of them. Helen is often seen as a helping hand for the locals in the village. She would often go out in the jungle which is seen as a mystery by Westerns'. She is the one always making decisions for the Indian villagers who are helpless. Helen even thinks about the natural environment, which she deeply values and wants to care for. By developing a figure such as Helen, Markandaya has done a fantastic job of demonstrating why it is important to have an individual mindset and thoughts. She is also the reason that East-West encounter haven't reached a climax, to where more destruction would have occurred.

Tess on the other hand comes under family and societal pressure which left her bound to the norms. In contrast to this there were times when she made her own decision and tried to live her life accordingly. For instance when Alec left her alone impregnating her, rather than crying over it and giving up, she decided to raise the child and work at the same time. She often refused to live a life that someone would pity on, but rather went to work in field, was financially independent and earned for her herself and her family. So from the beginning she never gave up, rather she chose to live a life with hard work and much respect.

- Women and nature interconnected or separate?

Hardy in his select text gives more significance to men at one point by even comparing to a worthy son by giving a strong authority and dominance that they can assert in a life of women and nature. His narration with the help of nature quite often shows the control that a patriarchal society holds. For instance there is a scene when Alec forcefully kisses her and it was described as, “his lips touching cheeks that were damp and smoothly chill as the skin of the mushroom in the fields around.” (Hardy, 96) Even in such a sad scene where she was forced upon, the narrator never failed to describe her skin to a ‘mushroom in fields’, helpless and soft, which perhaps what he tries to define her as. Prince is another case of destruction in hand of men, where his death too is symbolized to future of Tess. Thereby Hardy more often puts women and nature life in an interconnected manner, to show the subjugation both the living being goes through.

Markandaya on the other hand have shown the women, nature experience in a traditional and modern setup. Here the main character Helen is more often like an activist who points out the sudden destruction that is effecting the environment. She definitely loves to live around birds, animals, and the tribal community in India. Even though she herself is a westerner she can clearly understand the adverse situation her own community is putting on the East. She is also the victim of patriarchy, where she have to often be under her husband’s order, which also she more often rejects. In the novel the destruction of nature is also portrayed in many ways, through cutting of trees, killing of birds for luxury, construction of bunglaw and many more industrial setup end up harming the natural environment. As Chayya Datar pointed in her publication, “Despite women’s participation in movements, their demands are not always articulated separately. Women’s responses are not studied in a sensitive manner and their ideas are often ignored and excluded.” (Datar, 30) Similarly Helens’ demands were not looked upon

and were often excluded for the male authority is the one to rule and make decision. As rightly said in *The Coffer Dams* “Men were the only killers. Of themselves too, sometimes following through a wish for death without knowing it themselves.” (Markandaya, 121) Thereby Helen here is the one who voice the issue on such destruction and try to bring an end to it.

So both Hardy and Markandaya had a different style on voicing the issues on women and nature. They did show the problems through character and the natural surroundings but it does feel that Hardy was more to symbolizing and interconnecting the issue but Markandaya on the other hand showed the problem through individual beings and the emotion that Helen felt through such subjugation.

4.3 Nineteenth and twentieth century views

- Victorian and postcolonial thoughts

A detailed examination of fiction’s narration exposes an alarming connection between Hardy’s third-person, free spiritual dialogue and the upper class, white, masculine voice of western science, whose viewpoint becomes godly. In fact, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* is set against the backdrop of the rural English wilderness, that prior to the twentieth century, was populated primarily by farming community and women were wanted by men to be their wife for farm work as a spouse and worker. The development of machinery for agriculture and the widespread misogyny that pervaded Victorian society’s rural areas are paralleled in Hardy’s story in a convincing manner. Also the new perspective can be noted in the novel where Angel wants to pursue a much more modern farming setup in Brazil, but his father is a preacher who has some traditional view in life. In the novel a clear shift from ordinary to a much more modern and complicated way of life can be noted.

Several Indian authors have looked into the topic of East-West power dynamics under colonialism. Kamala Markandaya examines the theme from a postcolonial viewpoint, focusing on the East-West encounter during the contemporary times, which is characterized by materialism, the rise of industrialization and technical growth. Whereas, in the twentieth century India was undergoing modern growth with the civilizing community, which can be clearly seen through Markandaya's text. As expressed in the novel, the tribal here gets a job under West engineers, who clearly show some dissatisfaction towards them but definitely control their lives to satisfy the need.

The fast growing nation can be seen in 19th century England through *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and the white man's burden with the growing industrial setup can be noted in *The Coffer Dams*.

- Hardy and Markandaya's views on ecology and women

Hardy often depicts her character Tess in the light of natural characteristics, by often comparing or symbolizing her to the nature. The value of natural environment and patriarchal rule can be seen in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. He often shows the destruction caused by class and society, who is more into mechanizing the nation. Markandaya on the other hand separates nature and women by not connecting them but showing their problems as interconnected. Although she gave voice to Helen but somehow failed to bring out the life and issues faced by Indian women in the novel *The Coffer Dams*. Often times they are just mentioned doing their work or participating in death ceremony to mourn. Even then Markandaya was brilliant in portraying the actual problems in the state through a Western protagonist. Helen thereby is seen to represent the Indian community by helping them, at the same time looking at the natural destructions and raising voice against such violence against nature.

4.4 East-West: divide and rule through modern idea of industrialization

- Development in East and West

In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the machinery and invention can be noted as described by the narrator as a reaping machine, there is a scene in novel where with the help of such modern development, it takes no time to finish the work, which is said as, “the arms of the mechanical reaper revolving slowly, till it passed down the hill quite out of sight. In a minute it came up on the other side of the field at the same equable pace...” (Hardy, 106) This machines do have a side effect as it can harm the animals and some small creatures living in the fields, which can also be seen in the novel when, “Rabbits, hares, snakes, rats, mice, retreated inwards as into a fastness, unaware of the ephemeral nature of their refuge...they were huddled together...till the last few yards of upright wheat fell also under the teeth of the unerring reaper, and they were every one put to death by the sticks and stones of the harvesters.” (Hardy, 106) Therefore, even when the modern machinery was helpful for the workers and the farmers, it did have a negative impact on the animals that lived in the soil.

As Vandana Shiva mentions in her publication *Ecofeminism*, “Dams, mines, energy plants, military bases- these are the temples of the new religion called ‘development’...” (Mies and Shiva, 98) There is a lot of development that happens in Kamala Markandaya’s novel *The Coffer Dams*. The construction of Dam is the major part of the novel. In the village in south India where the tribe live surrounded by nature is suddenly disrupted by the engineers who arrived for the construction work. As rightly said in *The Coffer Dams* “Men were the only killers. Of themselves too, sometimes following through a wish for death without knowing it themselves.” (Markandaya, 121) The advent of modern machinery is majorly found in the south Indian Village surroundings which makes the job more efficient and less time consuming. This

development do provide job for the individual but at the same time cause a lot of issue in natural surroundings. This development is often disrupting the nature and humanity as the sound of the modern equipment is too loud for the people to bear, in such case they have to quietly be in favor of the West.

Therefore both the novel shows the positive and negative effects of the new technological advancement brought in by the West society in both East and West Society. The positive impact being, time efficiency that the equipment brings making it easy for the labourer to work with. On the other hand the negative effect is the disruption due to loud sound and the effect of this modern equipment on nature and people.

4.5 Encompassing cultural implication in the East and West

- What is Culture?

As Hofstedy defines, “[Culture] is the collective programming if the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.” (qtd. In Spencer Oatey, 2) Another explanation is given by Matsumoto, “...the set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next.” (qtd. in Spencer Oatey, 2) Here the culture is viewed as behaviors that unite or divide a group of people according to differences in a set of thoughts, beliefs and so on. Thereby *The Coffey Dams* and *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* will be studied through the following definitions on culture, to find the connectedness and differences in both the texts.

- Social class and structure in selected texts

“Social class is a social construction, a way of grouping people within a broader culture, much as with ethnicity and caste, in a way that differs from society to society.” (Henry, 51)

In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the family tree of Durbeyfield was discovered, which highlights the impact of social status in Victorian culture. One morning when the aristocratic heritage was introduced to them they were on cloud nine. Although their situation doesn't change even after learning they are belonging to d'Urbervilles, still John Durbeyfield, when learned about his legacy is instantly happy to leave the low status and poverty driven life. Before acquiring anything, he is in his fantasy where he grows from a poor to wealthy family

The social class differences are also seen during the may-day dance, where the young girls usually want to escape their way of living by getting in contact with a rich aristocratic man. All the girls thereby thrive to be selected by this handsome and men of high class to climb the social ladder. Similarly, in the novel Tess' parents try to think of a better life by making their daughter get connected to her supposed cousin Alec d'Urbervilles, as he belongs to high social status. In this game of social class often the high class people achieve success as we witness in the novel how Tess, often is succumbed to problems and end up in bad situation. Alec on the other hand, who had luxurious life and previously assaulted Tess, is at the end living a better life, being a preacher.

Money and fame is something that matter more in the Victorian context other than that is the social class. This is because, in the novel Alecs' father, "Old Mr. Simon Stoke had made his fortune as a honest merchant in North...he felt the necessity of recommencing with a name that would not too readily identify him with smart tradesman...he considered that d'Urberville looked and sounded as well as any of them: and d'Urberville accordingly was annexed to his own name for himself and his heirs eternally." (Hardy, 48-49) By this narration the reader is aware that Alecs' father has brought his family name to make his identity of a high class. Thereby, becoming Stroke-d'Urbervilles, the one who spent money to get a family name.

At Talbothays, the life was different for Tess as she did not experience a class difference. The narrator often introduces reader to the happy and healthy living of Tess in the farm without any social restrictions. Even the landscape and environment at this point added to the merry living of the people at the time. The simple rural lifestyle without any control of external forces made life easier for Tess. At the same Talbothays farm, Angel is introduced as the one who left his high class living and traditional life to work as a farmer. His brother belongs to an intellectual group, which make him feel that he doesn't really fit with them. His idea and thoughts on religion is also different, where his family seems very snobbish and emotionally connected with the ideology they were grown in, whereas Angel is withdrawn from them not able to feel or understand his own family. When he arrives at the new farm, the narrator states, "A prig would have said that he had lost culture and a brute that he had become coarse." (Hardy, 183) So he loses the interest in his own family culture and tries to stay aloof from his own house.

The Coffin Dams, shows two different culture in form of Clinton and Bashiam as one being conqueror and another conquered. They additionally possess a common perspective in which they see any change in the natural world as an opportunity to triumph, racing against the clock and turning a blind eye to setback. Helen on the other hand is emotionally driven with strong human value; therefore she finds it difficult to comprehend Clintons' focus on the dams' construction. She deeply values the tribals and feels the agony they cause due to the modern advent.

The head of the tribe is used as a person to suggest alternative solutions to the occurring problems in the village. Even while dying the old man said not to worry as nobody will be harmed, "when the ridges rise clear." (Markandaya, 234) here the hopes that the head gives plays an important part as later the ridges were clear and the problem were solved. The culture and

beliefs is seen in the end of the novel on how much knowledge the old man holds as he have as he have lived in this village his whole life. Thereby narrated as, “At earth and sky, and hills which had been his familiar from birth and over the long reaches of his life to these last moments of its running out, and would have conveyed a seeping knowledge.” (Markandaya, 233-234)

Helen in the novel flees the burden of marital responsibilities. Her love for adventure and travel drives her. Helens’ departure from the British quarter represents a revolt against Western ways of thinking and doing according to their ideas. She becomes aware of the vastness of ongoing tribal tradition as her perception broadens. As she mentions in the novel, “The land, Our instincts. The people who work in our factories, they’ve forgotten what fresh air is like. Our animals-we could learn from them, but we’re Christians you know, an arrogant people, we deprive them of their rights. (Markandaya, 144) In this sentence, Helen describes her own people who feel their culture is a superior one and would suppress people based on their religion too.

A major cultural clash and tension among people can be seen when deaths occurred due to the dam construction. When Bailey and Wilkins died, Westerns demanded a “decent Christian burial.” (Markandaya, 117) They were provided a proper burial, with tribeswoman too participating in the ceremony, “cautiously offering her services.” (Markandaya, 123) Here East-West connected with each other in the miseries caused in the village. Later in the text the context change when the West refused to help the East when their people died due to the accident building the dam. Around “forty human beings, less two who marinaded in the river, at the upstream of the dam.” (Markandaya, 168) died due to an error that occurred, which was not seen as a big problem by the British engineers. The arrogance is viewed by the reader when Clinton says, “There is no need, to shift the boulder. It rests on the dam, and can be moulded in...their bodies can be incorporated Into the structure.” (Markandaya, 172) As it was said in the novel,

“Hindus cared about as a soul” (Markandaya, 180) So without a proper burial of the body the soul will wander around and won’t get peace. Thereby the locals decided that, “No work, until the bodies of our dead are returned to us. So that the rites may be correctly performed, and their souls depart in peace.” (Markandaya, 182) Krishnan who is the head of Indian workers decided on the plan to rescue the bodies from the river and make things right among his people. Thereby, In light of social issues and technical advancement, Markandaya illustrates the clash of cultures among the East and West.

Hardy therefore presents the cultural difference in form of class difference among the western community, where the family name had a higher preference, but at the same time he shows how money can buy anything and in the novel family name was paid for to earn a social status. In contrast to Markandayas text, the novel here is depicting the harsh reality of two different cultures through East-West conflicts. Even though among the East society itself the culture is divided between Hindus and tribal communities, but when a problem occurs they stay together. West society on the other hand is showed in a negative plus a positive side, where Clinon is being a rebel in controlling the East and Helen fighting against her own community for the Indians.

Both the novel portrays the cultural differences that create a lot of issues among the East and West. The culture can divide people plus it can unite one community to protect the surroundings.

- Indian and Western cultures

In the 19th century milieu, novel *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, the western values and traditional setup can be studied in various ways. Hardy draws on Tess's varied experiences working in various agricultural positions to discuss how he believes capitalism and industrialization are majorly destroying rural way of life and the whole setup. The kind of farm life that is sadly disappearing is embodied by Talbothays Dairy. Their employer treats the maid equally with the males. The Cricks host their workers and even eat with them together, also equally sharing home with the workers. Alongside the dairy workers Mr. Crick frequently milks the cows. The traditional social setup can be seen here, where there is no discrimination among the class system. The workers are treated equally and given much respect in this small setup in rural place.

In contrast to Talbothays, Flincomb-Ash is more brutal and demonstrates how England has changed from its age old structure to a more modern setup. The advancement can be seen through machinery used at this farm which is described as, "the red tyrant that the women had come to serve a timber-framed construction, with straps and wheels appertaining- the threshing-machine which, whilst it was going, kept up a despotic demand upon the endurance of their muscles and nerves." (Hardy, 365) The transformation from traditional farm to a more modern field can be noted here, where the advent of industrialization and import of machinery to make things easier for human can be seen.

The Traditional and modern conflict with the emphasis on racial and cultural differences is focused in *The coffer Dams*. The new system is embodied by English technocrats such as Clinton, Rawlings, Mackendrick. Traditional culture is represented by Tribal people, who work as laborers in India under the Westerner. They are thereby under constant control and domination

which forces them to work hard with less pay. The tranquil village life is disrupted when British technocrats and engineers design plan to construct the dams. So Modernity here is depicted by the 'dam', while tradition is represented by community nested in the cozy embrace of nature. Here the end of traditional pattern of living is heralded by the demise of the old man in tribal community. Thereby making way for the development of industry, science and technology.

Bashiam is a symbol of the next generation of tribal men who embrace the modern progress. The tribesmen are here described by Helen as being easygoing, accommodating, subservient, gentle and accepting. As Bashiam is talented with mechanics so he joins the English engineers and thereby becomes a bridge between the modernity and tradition as well as stuck in refined and primitive setup. Markandaya here highlights the arrogance with which the so-called modern and civilized people treat the defenseless, indigenous people of the community. In this setting of novel both East and West ideas are highlighted, which was in the 20th century time period. As Maria Mies notes, "there are abundant studies which show the direct connection between the violence and brutality of the European colonizers against tribal people worldwide...The white colonizers were convinced that tribal people were creatures in lower evolutionary state than themselves and that the universal law of history demanded their surrender to 'progress'." (Mies and Shiva, 147-148) Similar situation can be witnessed in the novel when the tribals plus Indians are called and usually made fun of by calling them as 'inexperienced men', 'savages', 'highly vocal', 'Beggars' etc. Here the novel notes the cultural value in traditional India and the transformation of this traditional India by Western advent.

In *The Coffer Dams* the major focus is on the discrimination that the West clearly brings out when speaking of Tribals. In the East, traditionally the orthodox mindset and atmosphere is described. Eventually with the arrival of West, Modernity is being cast upon people. The main

target is the younger generation who wants to live a better and lavish lifestyle, forgetting what they left behind them. The culture here plays an important role as it helped Indian and Britishers to know their culture and unite with each other. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* the major focus is on the transformation which the West brings upon with industrial revolution. The common element seen in both the novel is the rapid growth of Modernity that is brought by the westerners to make their life better. Even the sudden change in the age of industrialization can be equally noted in both the novel. The situation of tribal, women and nature in *The Coffin Dams* and nature, women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* can also be compared in a way that they both were the victim of Westernization. Both Helen and Tess have different lifestyle but they both succumb under this patriarchal rule that lead to more disasters.

- Interest in farming

Another topic of interest in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *The Coffin Dams* is farming which plays a central role in both texts.

Starting with *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, where Tess is often seen in dairy farm, fields working among other women. Men and women work together at Dairy, and also that is how Tess is introduced to Angel. At Talbothays it is fun and happy place for the workers as for now heavy and new machinery weren't introduced yet, everyone cared for each other and would engage in small talks. Flintcomb-Ash on the other hand was the coldest and roughest part of Tess's life as she went through a lot of hard labour. It was winters when she arrived there and even the trees were covered in frost. Tess' life and condition is often mirrored with the weather she experienced at Flintcomb-Ash. Farming experience was different at each farmhouse which Tess entered in, thereby making her strong.

In *The Coffer Dams*, the women who is majorly portrayed is Helen, Millie who are British origin and tribes women aren't named but were described as completely opposite to westerns'. Helen was close to tribal so she would often indulge in small talks and constant visit to villages. On the other hand Millie loves to conduct parties in order to unite Westerns' in South Indian region. Here the difference is that Helen believes in unity and treats everyone as humans. Mille on the other hand majorly discriminated most of the Indians to show her superiority. The tribal women in the novel is seen as, "women almost as naked as the children who stared at her in vivid surprise, slaking their curiosity without a vestige of embarrassment until from somewhere a well-submerged sense of hospitality surfaced..." (Markandaya, 38) The village tribal women therefore are described by narrator as half naked in view of Westners' eyes, at the same time very hospitable in nature. Helen also noticed that, "Men and women were at work, sated herself with watching, and most of all she marveled that such full and rounded-out living could go on." (Markandaya, 39) By this the reader becomes aware on how most of the time the women and men work together to grow crops in fields and make a living out of it.

In both the novel we witness how in a rural area men and women work together without any hesitation of gender and discrimination towards each other; rather they work hard to make a living for their family together. It is the cultural differences and the domination of new technology that bring changes in the small towns. The difference that is noted is the that Tess' journey have been described more deeply, on how she experienced challenges in different farms, whereas the Tribal women is shown as working in the same village and not much detail is being provided.

- Ending of both the texts- tragedy; happy, open-ending

In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, author showed the harsh circumstances in the novel and ended up it in a tragedy. Tess, who has developed throughout the novel, is strongly portrayed at the end as someone who is taking a stand for her own self. Tess in the text kill Alec d'Urbervilles in rage because he had always been cruel towards her, the point when she got extremely enraged was when he lied about Angel and made her believe that he had left her forever. The scene after Alecs' murder was described as, "The wound was small, but the point of the blade had touched the heart of the victim, who lay on his back, pale, fixed, dead, as if he had scarcely moved after the infliction of the blow." (Hardy, 429) The extreme murder is the result of her built in anger that left her wandering her whole life. As a result she takes action and readily accepts her fate. With the final note "I am ready" Tess is taken in custody and hanged to death. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* therefore questioned the double standards, discriminations on men and women at the time. It also addresses several taboo topics in the process, such as sexual assault, unplanned pregnancy, motherhood, incest, etc.

The Coffer Dams is often viewed as happy ending but it seems more like an open ending where a lot of things can happen even after the scene is all cleared and everyone is happy with the usual phase that is somewhat come to an end. The construction is the major topic of discussion throughout the text. Only at the end all the obstruction was cleared making a way to modify the dam in future and create various other project on the south Indian regions. The novel therefore ends on a note that the path for construction is cleared as the nature is calmed and the water level have come down. The event somewhat shows Markandayas' thought on criticizing the modern advent but at the same time making a move from traditional way of thinking to a more modernized view wherein things can go as planned and not end up as a disaster.

Chapter five

Conclusion

This dissertation has looked into the novels of Kamala Markandaya and Thomas Hardy, reviewing them through the theory of ecofeminism. The ecofeminist reading has unraveled the connection between women and the environment that has lasted across cultures, languages and history. In-depth discussion of this relation across centuries is covered in the chapters through study texts, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *The Coffer Dams*. Around the world, women are fighting to overcome the cultural and economic barriers that have kept them insubordinate to men. Numerous fundamental presumptions of a patriarchal framework have been reviewed by ecofeminists. These assumptions include the encouragement of destructive alteration of nature, hierarchical thinking, and control over women.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles largely highlights female subjugation and disappearance of rural culture due to the advancement in industrialization and Urbanization. A deeper understanding of psychological and societal struggles, especially faced by women was highlighted through Hardy's novel. The characters in the *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* cannot help but defy the excessively restrictive social standards of their time, that is, the nineteenth century Victorian society. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* critiques the society and portrays the immense beauty of the natural world and its worth. He shows how women fight against the patriarchal system and the destructive forces of male domination.

The Coffer Dams by Kamala Markandaya highlights the parallels between nature and women in number of areas. She suggests that treating everyone equally, taking care of others and looking at nature with much respect and love is central to women. Helen is portrayed as a symbol

of a woman who is seen having these qualities of caring for everyone regardless of caste, class, cultural differences. She is often mistreated by her spouse and attempts are made to control under the patriarchal influences, but nevertheless she overcomes certain difficulties by choosing her own path and looking out for people in need.

Another key finding lies in the social milieu the novel was written in, that is the Post-Colonial and Victorian period, which plays a major role as it displays the circumstances and conditions of those times, when society ignored certain issues and accepted their fate. As the Nineteenth century England and Twentieth century Indian society had undergone a period of growth in technology and industrialization, thereby the countries had shared experience due to the advent of modernization. For instance, in both the novel, initially the village was described as peaceful and happy, but by the end, there were construction and machinery introduced. This had an effect on the rural farmers, tribal who depended on agriculture and nature. Tess and Helen, on the other hand also becomes the victim of Western society as the men played a dominating role in their life.

A comparative study was conducted of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *The Coffin Dams*. In the novels, Tess and Helen, both are subject to a lot obstacles mostly because of the society they lived in were overly controlling. Even though their problems are contrasting, yet they are commonly faced with the patriarchal domination. As both belong to the era of development and modern technological growth, it seems to affect them in some or the other ways. Tess is more into rural farming and the machinery make her feel uneasy. The change in the environment is another leading factor in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Helen on the other hand is looking through the problems of rural villages and understands the root cause. She figures out the root cause and

directly fights for justice. Tess and Helen therefore raise their voices in many ways but they are made to obey under the societal norm.

Cultural understanding in Hardy and Markandaya's text is another major aim of the study which highlights the women-nature issue. Culture plays an important role in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as Tess battles two cultural issues, focusing on the social hierarchy and the notion of society that believes that women should be pure. *The Coffer Dams* too shows the cultural clashes that occur in the novel's setting. As Helen had to fight against her own cultural notions and help the rural villagers of India. The differences in Helen and Clinton's perspectives on animals, birds, insects, tribal community and the culture of rural town which loves the natural environment and spiritual setup emphasized through narration. Ecofeminist also aim to highlight this male supremacy and the incorrect views men hold of women and the natural world.

A deeper understanding of the ways in which culture and tradition impact women's relationship with environment is another area that requires further research in the context of East-West study. Markandaya and Hardy's contribution thereby improved the research by depicting the tradition and culture of the time period it was written, thereby also putting forward author's views on the various issues during 19th and 20th centuries. Through the research significant results were found that indicated the cultural notions, the destructive force on natural setup, subordination of women and thoughts regarding the modern advancement.

A further deep study on the numerous other works of Hardy and Markandaya can provide different views and bring out the ongoing issues in the society. Hardy's novel can be researched more from a religious point of view in a very detailed study to highlight the cultural conflicts. Markandaya's various other novels can be delved into more research to show the Indian women and their hardships in the society.

Therefore, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *The Coffer Dams* reflect ecofeminist views and reveal significant insights on women and nature through the characters such as Helen, Tess, Clinton, Alec. The Indian and Western outlook on women and nature can also be noted through various examples in the selected texts, which Markandaya and Hardy portray by showing and defying the societal norms. Culture therefore becomes one of the key reasons for domination over women and nature.

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