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**Man and Two Women : A Study of the Females
Characters in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure***

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Dedication

To our families , we say “Allah bless you”

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Abstract

This paper consists of two chapters: Chapter one deals with Thomas Hardy's life and works , brief overview about the novel *Jude the Obscure*, the chapter also discusses similarity between Thomas Hardy's life and Jude's character .

Chapter two examines Jude's state between the two females; Jude and Sue relationship in one hand then and with Arabella on the other hand .

Finally, a conclusion is given to sum up the findings of this paper.

Chapter One

1.1 Thomas Hardy's Life and Works

Thomas Hardy was born on 2nd June 1840 in Upper Bockhampton .He was son of builder ‘who worked in an architect’s office and for some time he was an architect .His mother Jemima was well-read, educating Thomas until he went at age 8 to his first school at Bockhampton, where he learned Latin. Because of lacking the money for a university education, Hardy’s formal education ended at the age of 16,when he became apprenticed to James Hicks, a local architect, in Dorchester . He moved to London in 1862, where he recorded as a student at King’s College London and won prizes from the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architectural Association. ¹

He never felt at home in London due to deeply conscious of class divisions and his social inferiority, but became interested in the social-reform works of John Stuart Mill and Auguste Comte. Five years later, concerned about his health, he returned to Dorset, settling at Weymouth, and dedicated himself to writing. Since 1867 he turned to the literature. He wrote about native Dorset and he depicted plain scenes from life of peasants, rural girls and handicraftsmen. Very often he idealizes life in the country and he puts into contrast with metropolitan rush. ²

Thomas Hardy shows inhumanity and pitiless principle of capitalistic system. He was a representative of realism and naturalism. In 1870, while on an architectural mission to restore the parish church of St Juliot in Cornwall, Hardy met and fell in love with Emma Lavinia Gifford, whom he married in 1874. Then the Hardys moved from London to Yeovil, and then to Sturminster Newton, where

he wrote *The Return of the Native* (1878), one of his better but still underrated novels. In 1885, they moved for the last time, to Max Gate, a house outside Dorchester designed by Hardy and built by his brother.³

His greatest masterpiece *Jude the Obscure* (1895) met with strong negative response from the Victorian public because of its controversial treatment of sex, religion and marriage. In 1898 Hardy published his first volume of poetry, *Wessex Poems*, a collection of poems written over the previous 30 years, and in the 20th century Hardy published only poetry.⁴

He wrote in a great variety of poetic forms including lyrics, ballads, satire, dramatic monologues, and dialogue, as well as a three-volume epic closet drama *The Dynasts* (1904–1908), and though in some ways a very traditional poet, because he was influenced by folk songs and ballads, he was never ordinary with invented stanza forms and meters, making use of “rough-hewn rhythms and colloquial diction.” Hardy wrote a number of significant war poems that relate to both the Boer Wars and World War I, often using the viewpoint of ordinary soldiers and their colloquial speech. His work had a profound influence on other war poets such as Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon.⁵

Hardy and wife Emma had become estranged in the 1890s, interested by her view that *Jude the Obscure*’s harshness about marriage was autobiographical, but Emma’s death in 1912 had a traumatic effect on him. After her death, Hardy made a trip to Cornwall to revisit places linked with their courtship. His *Poems* (1912–13). Many of Hardy’s poems deal with themes of disappointment in love and life, the best of them with carefully controlled elegiac feeling and often eloquent irony.⁶

A number of notable English composers, including Benjamin Britten, have set Hardy poems to music. In 1914 Hardy married his secretary Florence Emily Dugdale, who was 39 years his junior, though still remaining preoccupied with his first wife's death. In 1910 he was awarded the Order of Merit and was also for the first time nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature; he was nominated for the prize again in 1921.⁷

Hardy became ill with pleurisy in December 1927 and died at Max Gate just after 9 pm on 11 January 1928, having dictated his final poem to his wife on his deathbed. His funeral was on 16 January at Westminster Abbey and, over the objections of his family, eventually interred in the Abbey's famous Poets' Corner. A compromise was reached whereby his heart was buried at Stinsford with Emma.⁸

In both his fiction and his poetry Hardy frequently conceives of, and writes about, supernatural forces including some fascination with ghosts and spirits, particularly those that control the universe through intuition or fancy rather than any firm will. The irony and struggles of life, together with his curious mind, led Hardy to question the traditional Christian view of God. Even so, he retained a strong emotional attachment to the Christian liturgy and church rituals, particularly as manifested in rural communities that had been such a formative influence in his early years, and Biblical references can be found woven throughout many of Hardy's novels.⁹

Hardy himself denied that he was a pessimist, calling himself a "meliorist," i. e., one who believes that the world may be better by human effort. But there is little sign of "meliorism" in either his most important novels or his lyric poetry

(meliorism is an idea in metaphysical thinking holding that progress is a real concept leading to an improvement of the world. It holds that humans can, through their interference with processes that would otherwise be natural, produce an outcome which is an improvement over the aforementioned natural one).¹⁰

Still, his best poems go beyond a mood of perverse or disastrous circumstance to present with quiet elegiac gravity some aspect of human sorrow or loss or frustration or regret, always projected through a particular, fully realized situation. Hardy's fiction was admired by many 20th-century writers, including D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and Somerset Maugham.¹¹

Moreover, although Hardy's poems were initially not as well received as his novels had been, he is now recognized as one of the greatest 20th-century poets, and his verse has had a profound influence on later writers, including Robert Frost, W. H. Auden, Dylan Thomas, and most notably Philip Larkin.¹²

In Larkin's edition of the *Oxford Thomas Hardy Book of Twentieth Century English Verse* (1973) he included 27 poems by Hardy and far fewer by such icons as T. S. Eliot and W. B. Yeats. Moreover, in the area of popular culture, Hardy has been a significant influence on Nigel Blackwell, frontman of the post-punk British rock band Half Man Half Biscuit, who has often incorporated phrases by or about Hardy into his song lyrics.¹³

The novels of Thomas Hardy's late period are generally regarded as enriched with great pessimism. The basis of it rests in Hardy's dealing with inexplicably strong and inhuman forces which make the characters' lives unbearable. Although Hardy offers glimpses of happy circumstances, the fates of

his characters are sealed before they actually attempt to defend themselves.¹⁴

1.2 Plot Overview of *Jude the Obscure*

Jude the Obscure, the last completed novel by Thomas Hardy, began as a magazine serial in December 1894 and was first published in book form in 1895. The novel tells the story of Jude Fawley, who lives in a village in southern England, who yearns to be a scholar at "Christminster", a city modelled on Oxford. As a youth, Jude teaches himself Classical Greek and Latin in his spare time, while working first in his great-aunt's bakery, with the hope of entering university.¹⁵

Before he can try to do this the naïve Jude is seduced by Arabella Donn, a rather coarse and superficial local girl who traps him into marriage by pretending to be pregnant. The marriage is a failure, and they separate by mutual agreement, and Arabella later emigrates to Australia, where she enters into a bigamous marriage. By this time, Jude has abandoned his classical studies.¹⁶

After Arabella leaves him, Jude moves to Christminster and supports himself as a mason while studying alone, hoping to be able to enter the university later. There, he meets and falls in love with his free-spirited cousin, Sue Bridehead. But, shortly after this, Jude introduces Sue to his former schoolteacher, Mr. Phillotson, whom she eventually marries. However, she soon regrets this, because in addition to being in love with Jude, she is physically disgusted by her husband, and, apparently, by sex in general. Sue soon leaves Phillotson for Jude. Because of the scandal, Phillotson has to give up his career as a schoolmaster.¹⁷

Sue and Jude spend some time living together without any sexual relationship. This is because of Sue's dislike both of sex and the institution of marriage. Soon after, Arabella reappears and this complicates matters. But Arabella and Jude divorce and she legally marries her bigamous husband, and Sue also is divorced. However, following this, Arabella reveals that she had a child of Jude's, eight months after they separated, and subsequently sends this child to his father. He is named Jude and nicknamed "Little Father Time" because of his intense seriousness and moroseness .¹⁸

Jude eventually convinces Sue to sleep with him and, over the years, they have two children together and expect the third. But Jude and Sue are socially ostracised for living together unmarried, especially after the children are born. Jude's employers dismiss him because of the illicit relationship, and the family is forced into a nomadic lifestyle, moving from town to town across Wessex seeking employment and housing before eventually returning to Christminster . Their socially troubled boy, "Little Father Time", comes to believe that he and his half-siblings are the source of the family's woes. The morning after their arrival in Christminster, he murders Sue's two children and dies by suicide by hanging .¹⁹

He leaves behind a note that simply reads, "Done because we are too menny." Shortly thereafter, Sue has a miscarriage. Beside herself with grief and blaming herself for "Little Father Time's actions, Sue turns to the church that she has rebelled against and comes to believe that the children's deaths were divine retribution for her relationship with Jude .²⁰

Although horrified at the thought of resuming her marriage with Phillotson, she becomes convinced that, for religious reasons, she should never have left him. Arabella discovers Sue's feelings and informs Phillotson, who soon proposes they remarry. This results in Sue leaving Jude once again for Phillotson. Jude is devastated and remarries Arabella after she plies him with alcohol to once again trick him into marriage.²¹

After one final, desperate visit to Sue in freezing weather, Jude becomes seriously ill and dies within the year. It is revealed that Sue has grown "staid and worn" with Phillotson. Arabella fails to mourn Jude's passing, instead setting the stage to ensnare her next suitor. The events of *Jude the Obscure* occur over a 19-year period, but no dates are specifically given in the novel. Aged 11 at the beginning of the novel, by the time of his death Jude seems much older than his thirty years for he has experienced so much disappointment and grief in his total life experience. It would seem that his burdens exceeded his sheer ability to survive, much less to triumph.²²

1.3 Similarity Between of Thomas Hardy's Life and *Jude the Obscure*

An aspect of Hardy's childhood which is of more importance in *Jude the Obscure* than in all of his other novels is that of religion. Hardy had abandoned Christianity while in London, but returned to his faith later on. Though *Jude the*

Obscure portrays a world in which God appears to be absent, the characters are constantly reacting to religious teaching.²³

Important themes common to many of the novels include questioning the institution of marriage, the interaction between man and nature, class conflict, and the role of women in nineteenth century society. In addition to Wessex, he assigned fictional names to other real locations. Thus Marygreen is Fawley, Christminster is Oxford, etc.²⁴

This simultaneously lends a realism to the work, while giving Hardy license to shape his fictional world. One strong similarity between the real and fictional world, however, is the tension between London and the countryside. On the one hand, modern influences were sought after by the country people and on the other, they were resented and seen as threatening. Hardy frequently writes in dialect, showing the different speech patterns of various classes. Though he was essentially of a middle-class background, he treats his working class characters sympathetically.²⁵

Hardy's attitude toward his characters, particularly his female characters, is extraordinarily complex. His most famous female characters include Sue Bridehead of *Jude the Obscure*, Bathsheba Everdene of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and Tess from *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. They portray great strength, but are also prone to great weakness. Of these, Sue Bridehead is probably the most complex. *Jude the Obscure* was written while Hardy's first wife, Emma, was still alive. It is not difficult to see a dissatisfaction with marriage evident in the novel, which presumably reflects his marital problems. Sue Bridehead can be seen as a sort of romantic fantasy, someone Hardy wished he had married. The fact that the

relationship between Sue and Jude fails reflects not just Hardy's pessimism, but his unwillingness to make an adulterous relationship successful. No actual adultery on his part was ever proved.²⁶

Certainly, there are other parallels between Hardy's own life and the portrayal of Jude, though it was far from autobiographical. Hardy himself was apprenticed to an architect, Jude a stone mason who does church reconstruction, like Hardy's father. Hardy studied Greek on his own, as Jude does. Finally, at age twenty-six, Hardy was in love with his cousin, Tryphena Sparks who, at sixteen was studying to become a teacher. It is difficult not to believe that this was the source for the character of Sue Bridehead, although she is also said to be based on Florence Henniker. It is clear that Hardy preferred to write about the world of his childhood and adolescence rather than the more sophisticated world in which he moved as an adult. In none of his novels, and particularly not in *Jude*, was the Wessex countryside overly sentimentalized. Though he saw its beauty, he also saw its dark side.²⁷

Notes

¹ Katerina Chaloupkova , *Women and their relationships in novels of Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence*. Bachelor Thesis in Faculty of Humanities. 2009,12.

² Ibid.

³ Chris Snodgrass, *Hardy Introduction*. New York: Blackwell Publishers ,2015,2.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid,3.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Khatereh Tanoori, *Men and 'Presence': Constructions of Masculinity in Selected Novels of Thomas Hardy*. School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics Newcastle University ,2012,6.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid,8.

¹¹ Jeremy Axelrod, *Thomas Hardy* .New York: Penguin,1997,31.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Diplomova prace, *The Question of Predestination of the Female Characters in Thomas Hardy's Novels and its Reflection in Television and Film Adaptations*. International Journal of Educational Planning and Administration. Volume 1, Number 1 .2016,2.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Patricia Ingham, Introduction. *Jude the Obscure*. Thomas Hardy. Ed. Ingham. New York: Oxford, 1985, Xi.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid,xii.

¹⁸ Henry Charles Duffin, *Thomas Hardy: A Study of the Wessex Novels, the Poems, and The Dynasts*. Manchester: Manchester University Press1967, 53.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid,55.

²¹ Ramon Saldivar, *Jude the Obscure: Redaing and the Spirit of the Law*. New

York: Chelsea House Publishers,1987. 191.

²² Ibid.

²³ A. J. Guerard " *Introduction.*" *Hardy. Ed. A. J. Guerard* .New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.,1963),1.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Drabble, M .*The Oxford Companion to English Literature* ‘Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 151.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid,154.

Chapter Two :Jude Between The Two Females

The novel explores several social problems in Victorian England, especially those relating to the institutions of marriage, the Church, and education. These themes are developed in particular through Hardy's use of contrast. For example, at the beginning of their relationship, Jude's Christian faith contrasts with Sue's religious scepticism, a contrast which is heightened even further by their later role-reversal. Although the central characters represent both perspectives, the novel as a whole is firmly critical of Christianity and social institutions in general .¹

By tracking Jude's trajectory throughout the novel, the reader is enlightened to Hardy's bleak, anachronistic view on the then-current state of organized religion. Jude, from his origins in Marygreen, always found religion to be the end game of an otherwise troublesome and uninteresting life. But, as seen through his systematic exclusion from the educational organization of Christminster, Jude's dream of entering the church would prove to be unattainable, leaving him to pursue other, less fulfilling interests .²

A similar track can be seen in Hardy's treatment of the traditional institution of marriage. From the original pairing of Arabella and Jude to their eventual reunion, Hardy depicts marriage as a crushing force which, although a social necessity, finds little home other than to propel the character's downward spiral into unhappiness. Organized religion, as Hardy argues, is a system which actively complicates and obstructs the ambitions of our protagonists .³

If one were to step back from these tangible institutions, the more encompassing themes of faith and doubt play an equally important role in the novel; both of these, in fact, are similar in that they are catalysts for action.

Whenever a character proclaims faith in something, that something is pursued. Similarly, when a character doubts something, that is pursued. In the book, doubt can be viewed as a transfer of faith; whenever a character is doubting, they are simply deciding to put their faith in something else.⁴

Because the book has no universal standard of morality or value system, there is no black and white. Whatever the character believes in is what they pursue, whether or not it conflicts with the beliefs of another character. As an exemplification of this idea, one can turn to Sue's final decision to leave Jude. In the final part of the novel, because of a change in her beliefs, Sue discovers that she is committed only to Mr. Phillotson. Because she puts faith in something else, in this case religion (and therefore marriage), she takes action in a completely different direction than before.⁵

2.1 Jude and Sue Relationship

Jude Fawley, the protagonist of Hardy's novel, links the two female characters. Although they are so unlike, he has a relationship to both of them because he yearns for a merge of rationality and feeling. His cousin Susanna Florence Mary Bridehead (Sue) symbolizes rationality. She supports his dream to study at the University of Christminster, in the town they meet for the first time. Both enjoy sharing the interest of reading books. Talking about literature and education makes Sue a part of Jude's wished life in Christminster.⁶

Perhaps the most interesting character in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* is Sue. Throughout the novel, she is described as everything from boyish and sexless, all the way to Voltairean and just simply unconventional. Some claim she

had read prolifically many writers noted for their frankness and/or indecency. Upon a surface reading, one can't help but wonder about the sexual identity and desires of Sue.⁷

Sue's choices leave Phillotson penniless and broken, and yet he has no regrets about his relationship with her. He says:

I don't go unless I am turned out. And for this reason; that by resigning I acknowledge that I have acted wrongly by her; when I am more and more convinced every day that in the sight of Heaven and by all natural, straightforward humanity, I have acted rightly .⁸

Her intelligence and freethinking has great influence on Jude, so that she becomes an ideal woman in his eyes. The more they spend time together and come closer, they begin to feel more than a friendship or a cousinship. Jude falls in love with Sue. He desires her as a lover, though they do not marry, because of the belief that the marriages in the Fawley family have a tragic end. Moreover, Sue is in need of a partner who is a good friend and not a lover.⁹

Her rationality prevails her emotions because she fears to lose her self-restraint, so she blocks her longing for a relationship which oversteps the boundaries of a friendship. After recognizing that the close friendship with her cousin results in rumours, she chooses to marry another man, Richard Phillotson. Besides protecting her reputation, he would give her the friendship she is longing for. Working together at a school, they spend much time together.¹⁰

In his company Sue can continue her education, feels accepted and encouraged to actualize her ideals:

Half an hour later they all lay in their cubicles, their tender feminine faces upturned to the flaring gas-jets which at intervals stretched down the long dormitories, every face bearing the legend 'The Weaker' upon it, as the penalty of the sex wherein they were moulded, which by no possible exertion of their willing hearts and abilities could be made stronger while the inexorable laws of nature remain what they are (*Jude the Obscure*,35).

Nevertheless, she does not find her happiness on Phillotson's side. She misses Jude and the emotions she refused in his presence. She asks Jude not to give her up, while she has wanted him to forget her before. The reason for her contradictory behaviour is her hopeless waver between her mind and her heart. She cannot find a balance which satisfies her requirements. First, she believes that a marriage with Phillotson would be reasonable but she misses Jude and the desire which she refused. As Sue is honest to her husband, he shows her understanding. Even more, he thinks that Jude and Sue "seem to be one person split in two". Therefore, Phillotson allows his wife to go back to Jude .¹¹

Sue and Jude begin to live together and except for sexuality, they are like husband and wife. Sue asks for Jude's patience and he shows respect although he wants to love her in every way . At this point, Jude is confronted with the separation of his needs. Sue's intellect enriches him, she is everything to him but obviously the lack of sexual intimacy causes an imperfection of their relationship.

Jude sees no other choice than satisfying his craving with Arabella. Actually, he does not want to betray Sue but Arabella is his legal wife and he has the right to be together with her .¹²

Jude and Sue, over the course of the novel, are both destroyed by the church and its impact on how society views the couple. Despite their true love for each other (Jude and Sue display the most honest and respectable love of any pair in the entire novel - and they truly do care for their children, despite what happens to them), they are utterly destroyed. Their dreams are crushed, their marriages and lives end unhappily .¹³

2.2 Jude and Arabella Relationship

Arabella is a piece of work. She is so selfish, thoughtless, and manipulative that it's hard to take her seriously as a character in some ways she's like a cartoon villain or something. Like, if this were a romantic comedy, she'd be Rachael McAdams from Mean Girls. Of course, this isn't a romantic comedy (again, it doesn't get much less funny than Jude the Obscure), so Arabella's behavior gets a lot worse than backstabbing and prom antics.¹⁴

Arabella tricks Jude into marrying her twice. In fact, it is almost impossible at times to know when if ever Arabella is telling the truth. After all, this is a woman who fakes the dimples on her cheeks:

As the girl drew nearer to it, she gave, without Jude perceiving it, an adroit little suck to the interior of each of her cheeks in

succession, by which [...] she brought as by magic upon its smooth rotund surface a perfect dimple. (*Jude the Obscure* ,27).

In the end, Arabella plays an enormous role in Jude's and Sue's downfall. She cares nothing about the consequences of her actions, and she cares about no one other than herself. As Jude lies dying, Arabella is already hitting on another man to take his place, and when she finds Jude dead she just leaves him there so she can go to a boat race.¹⁵

Jude's fate says something about Hardy's opinion of knight-like honor in today's world: it'll get you into trouble.

Yet such being the custom of the rural districts among honourable young men who had drifted so far into intimacy with a woman [...] he was ready to abide by what he had said and take the consequences. (*Jude the Obscure* ,54)

From their first meeting on, Jude has a soft spot for Arabella:

[He] was almost certain that to her was attributable the enterprise of attracting his attention from dreams of the humaner letters to what was simmering in the minds around him (*Jude the Obscure*,68).

Comparing to his relationship with Sue, Arabella is just a woman fulfilling her husband's desires. They have no other similarities or bondings holding them together. Both, Jude and Arabella, realize this, but unfortunately at a different point of time. In the widest sense of the word, their first meeting at Marygreen is an attack on Jude.¹⁶

Arabella throws a piece of flesh at him. Besides, she attacks him with her magnetism and Jude cannot defend himself.

The unvoiced call of woman to man, which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella's personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention almost against his will, and in a way new to his experience (*Jude the Obscure*, 75).

While Jude behaves shy, she is fearless and even after a short time she tells her friends she wants to marry him. Jude thinks that they are not made for each other and regrets that the relationship has even started. Whereas he dreams of books and degrees, she does not have any interest in education. There is only one thing that carries on their relationship, which is sex. Arabella is aware of that and she uses it. She is resolved to marry him and tells him that she is pregnant.¹⁷

Again, she does not leave him any other choice than doing what she wants. When it comes out that this was a lie, she vindicates herself by saying that she is a woman. Instead of blaming herself or apologizing, she wants Jude to accept her mistakes which she ascribes to her nature: "Woman fancy wrong things sometimes"⁸. She utilizes her power, her strong personality, her determination, her intelligence and her sex to oppress Jude. But what is the purpose of this marriage?

A man and a woman living two different lives, try to get along with each other. Jude thinks his wife is cruel and despicable because she kills pigs. Arabella throws her husband's books on the floor because she does not want to have them in her way.¹⁸

The couple does not have interest or respect for each other. Jude is afraid of that before they marry but he wants to bear the responsibility of becoming a father. After hearing that the pregnancy was a lie, he is not consistent enough to leave her. However, she acts more selfish when she understands her fault. So she just leaves him with a final letter and goes to Australia. There she lives with her parents who later take care of her son. Jude does not know about his child before Arabella needs someone to look after him. After eight years neither her parents, nor herself can afford raising up a child and Arabella needs Jude's help. She gives her son away to Sue and Jude. This is an example of Arabella's life attitude. She makes her own decisions without being worried about the consequences, about other people's opinions or about regretting her actions in the end. She just tries to live every day to its fullest.¹⁹

Arabella tricks Jude into marrying her twice. In fact, it is almost impossible at times to know when if ever Arabella is telling the truth. After all, this is a woman who fakes the dimples on her cheeks:

As the girl drew nearer to it, she gave, without Jude perceiving it, an adroit little suck to the interior of each of her cheeks in succession, by which [...] she brought as by magic upon its smooth rotund surface a perfect dimple.

(Jude the Obscure, 71).

Arabella, for all her negative traits and bad decisions, simply wants to have a life. Over the course of the book, Arabella does some pretty horrible things - she fakes a pregnancy to force Jude into marriage (although she protests that she actually thought she was pregnant, and it could be that she indeed had a miscarriage), she gives up her child to Jude, and she tricks Jude into remarrying her when he's drunk. At the end, she lets Jude die alone.²⁰

At their first meeting, he is granted a moment of illumination as to Arabella's character, when she throws the pig's pizzle:

It had been no vestal who chose that missile for opening her attack on him. He saw this with his intellectual eye, just for a short fleeting while, as by the light of a falling lamp one might momentarily see an inscription on a wall before being enshrouded in darkness. And then this passing discriminative power was withdrawn. (*Jude the Obscure*, 39)

For all these things, it could be assumed that Arabella is the villain of *Jude the Obscure*, but that's not really the case. If anything, the villain is actually society and the Christian church. The church ends all of the happiness in the lives of Sue, Jude, Sue's first husband, their children, and even Arabella. If anything, the characters spend their entire lives trying to find happiness despite a church that wants to blame them for that happiness.²¹

Arabella, of all the characters, stands as the least effected by this. She happily enters into a marriage with Jude, after having premarital sex and when she

(as she claims) was pregnant. She happily marries another man, despite still being married to Jude. She happily gives up her child for Jude to raise instead. And she has no regrets about tricking Jude into marrying her again. Her happiness comes from life - not from society or the church .²²

Notes

¹ Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent*. London: Macmillan, 1999,21.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid,23.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Michael E. Hassett, "Compromised Romanticism in *Jude the Obscure*." *Nineteenth Century Fiction* 25 (1970-71): 432.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983,p.18. All further qoutations are taken from this text.

⁹ Robert Heilman, *Reasons Against Emotion: The Significance of Sue*. Toronto: Bantam, 1969. 504

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Sarah Grand, *The New Woman as an Imperialist Feminist*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.2005,164 ‘

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Irving Howe, *Literary Modernism in Jude the Obscure*. Toronto: Bantam, 1969. 512-511.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Sarah Grand, *The New Woman as an Imperialist Feminist*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.2005,8 ‘

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid,11.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Shanta Dutta, *Ambivalence in Hardy: A Study of his Attitude to Women*. New York: Palgrave, 2000,97.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Rosalind Miles. *The Women of Wessex: The Novels of Thomas Hardy*. Smith. London: Vision Press, 1979,26.

Conclusion

Known for his depictions of nature and women of all social classes in the

Victorian era, Thomas Hardy remains one of the most influential writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Though in some ways an advocate for women's free will, Hardy believed that sex represents a fate that social reform and individual assertion can only partly counteract. In his novels of struggle and heartache, Hardy wrote of women's strength, intelligence, and capability all qualities he demonstrated as essential to female nature; and as an essentialist, he often aligned women's innate qualities with nature.

In Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* Jude is ripped between the pure sexuality of Arabella and the pure intellect of Sue. Jude is sexually more comfortable with Arabella so, in this sense, she is Jude's true partner. Arabella represents the classical entrapment by sex: the entrapment of an innocent sensual man by a hard, needy, shackling woman Arabella with stop at nothing to get Jude. Sue is a complicated mesh of sexual aversion and the power of female intellect .Sue thinks and that is her mystery. Sue has radical ideas, especially for a woman, and it is commonplace for her to question society and it's problems. Sue, to Jude's dismay, also dismisses much of religion

Jude is emotionally torn between the two main women in the novel, Sue and Arabella, because each woman can only partially satisfy his urges. The stark difference in emotion, conversation, and sexual appetite make Sue and Arabella polar opposites in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. Sue and Arabella, in Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, are like a Pre-Raphaelite painting of Sacred and Profane Love. There they stand assuming the absent man, the abashed, overwhelmed Jude. Sue is thin, pretty, with a light, abstracted, questioning gaze; Arabella is round, sly-eyed, sleepy, with the dreaming torpor of a destitute girl pondering an exchange of sexual coin. It is scarcely worth noting that they are different, almost opposites.

The sources of feeling could not be more reflective than they are in Sue, or more immediate and formless than they are in Arabella. Experience, with them, is not merely the sum of events gone through; it is the response of their differing consciousness to love, want, greed, or renunciation.

Jude is ripped between the pure sexuality of Arabella and the pure intellect of Sue. Sue and Jude are unconventional, rebellious and critical of the social order. Just as Hardy chose to invite the reader to regard Jude and Sue as living in sin or at any rate unworthily when they are with their legal spouses, but pursuing an ideal when they are living together without the benefit of a marriage ceremony.

Although Sue and Arabella are very different from each other, their relationships with Jude share some overlapping qualities. Both women arguably use Jude to get something that they want for Arabella, it's respectability and financial stability, and for Sue, it is the sense of power and security that come from being in love. In both relationships, Jude is so overwhelmed by physical attraction that he makes decisions he otherwise might not make. Jude notes that both women become obstacles to his religious and career ambitions.

Jude is not a strong person. Except for Sue, Jude turns away from his goals when barriers spring up. He has no follow through. When he does follow through on his pursuit of Sue, he comes across as a man who's read too much advice from pick up artists. He won't take Sue's no for an answer. He sulks and broods and needs women to nurse him because he can't (or won't) take care of himself.

In the novel, Sue and Arabella are connected as women with Jude Fawcley. But he does not initiate or control. Instead, he is identified by them and his

situation is dominated by what they offer or withhold. In youth he comes under the sexual domination of Arabella, a surrender rather flimsy that immediately becomes a trap very steely. With Sue, a miserable life is redeemed by the joys of enlightenment and by the special importance that is given to a love or an attachment by one who cares to think about it in a deep way.

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