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Thomas Hardy's Women: An Examination of the Tragic Heroine

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by
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Introduction

Thomas Hardy composed realistic novels in which he explores both the pastoral and urban settings during the age of modernity in nineteenth-century England. Through the exploration of these settings Hardy portrays the effect that they have on his female protagonists. Hardy begins to investigate the psyche of the female protagonists as they interact with the male protagonists and the nature that encompasses the novel. Each female character begins the novel with a unique personality that undergoes different trials and it is how the woman reacts in these given situations that eventually determines her fate. There are four particular Hardy novels that embody this concept of the female protagonist: *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Each of these novels contains a female protagonist that faces situations that alter her character. Bathsheba Everdene, Eustacia Vye, Tess Durbeyfield, and Sue Bridehead are the four female protagonists that will be examined in this project.

As a writer, Thomas Hardy fashions settings in which nature constantly conflicts with modernity and society, creating a visual and realistic world for the characters: "a world shaped by an imaginative seeing into nature, human and pastoral, but a world bound no less by hard material fact, life as it is lived" (Morgan ix). The realism that is present within the novels

revolves around society and the social differences that appear for the characters from time to time. The four female protagonists are therefore placed within the confines of society and continuously attempt to find an identity in order to accommodate their conventional mores to social rules and institutions. All four of the women encounter social differences amongst themselves and other characters in the novel. Therefore, their consciousness develops through the perception of others and themselves. In Penny Boumelha's critical essay on Hardy she states "There is, throughout Hardy's fiction, a radical split in women's consciousness between self-perception and perception by others; it is this latter which gives birth to self-consciousness and to that concern with the judgment of others which is common to the female characters" (Boumelha, 35), demonstrating her belief that it is the perception of those around the female protagonist and her awareness of them that molds her self-consciousness. The female protagonist's consciousness of society allows her to constantly attempt to redefine herself in order to either be included in or apart from it. John Bayley addresses this concept as well stating

> [Hardy's] characters divide into those who are aware…of the conditions which life seems to demand of them, and of the kind of rewards it offer; and of those who 'love it desperately', however little they may be aware of the fact, and who are for that reason outside—more or less—the kind of consciousness which Hardy disposed of… (Bayley 87)

Bayley is addressing the fact that a Hardy character is to some extent conscious of the society that surrounds them, which creates a division of those who reap society's benefits and those who are completely outside of society. For example, I perceive that certain characters use society to their advantage, such as Bathsheba, in order to gain something out of it. There are also characters, such as Eustacia, who are infatuated with one concept of society and because of this

cannot penetrate successfully into the society that they are living in. Furthering my and Bayley's argument about the character's awareness of society, there is also a sense of denial and defiance of the society that each of the women are placed in. For Bathsheba it begins as a denial of the role a woman is supposed to play within a farming community; Eustacia denies the community of Egdon Heath to the extent of becoming a recluse; Tess is defiant of what people say about her having a baby out of wedlock; Sue attempts to avoid and reassess institutions that society has created.

As mentioned earlier, the settings that Hardy composes in are extremely crucial in shaping the female protagonist's character and identity. The women influence the place as well, for example John Bayley states "The natural, unconscious Hardy seems to know that place has the only stability, and that human beings are briefly real only when the intentness of the author focuses them as part of it…We become conscious of place through the presence of the character, who is not just a convince for Hardy's ambulant awareness of things" (Bayley 94), demonstrating the interdependence that place and character have amongst one another. The interdependence that the four women have with place molds some of their identity: "These female characters merge together their identity and that of the objects around them" (Boumelha, 35), which transforms the perspective other characters and society may have of them. Nature is one of the places that one can perceive this Hardy phenomenon in. The four novels delve into worlds that are heavily influenced by nature. The meaning and influence of nature changes throughout the three novels, but nevertheless it significantly affects and impacts Bathsheba, Eustacia, Tess, and Sue.

The nature composed in *Far From the Madding Crowd* is of the pastoral and astrological construction, devoid of industrial modernity. Bathsheba encounters animals and weather that

contain metaphors and paradoxes in relation to her life. The critic Rosemarie Morgan illustrates that Bathsheba's meeting with Farmer Oak and Boldwood occur in agricultural settings while her encounters with Sergeant Troy take place in "meadows, woods, and fields, as a mirror to Bathsheba's sexual temperament, [which] have precisely that fresh, open-air quality that Hardy sees in her own nature" (Morgan 34). In contrast, Eustacia is placed within a nature that becomes a character in *The Return of the Native*. Moments in the novel display Egdon Heath with seemingly human-like qualities through the way the narrator describes the landscape. It holds a certain power over Eustacia that is a determining factor in her eventual demise. The nature in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is relentlessly linked to Tess in ways that cannot be overcome and is something Tess eventually has to accept. This nature is the purest and most raw form out of the four novels, indicating a progression in how Hardy's conception of nature began to evolve. Hardy began with a purely pastoral nature that eventually evolved into the raw form of nature, which he directly connected to the female protagonist. Sue is not directly influenced by the nature found in the other three novels, although Jude is, she is touched by it in a more metaphorical manner through the character of Arabella and the bird imagery occasionally used to describe her character. Arabella stands for the carnal and raw aspect of nature that Sue has never experienced due to the urban life she has lived.

Within these four novels Hardy presents instability from his narrative perspective when discussing the female protagonists. Hardy carefully creates and molds each of these female protagonists through the lens of his narrator. The narrator's voice in each of the four novels is different and yet is also similar to some extent. In *Far From the Madding Crowd* the narrator seems confused about Bathsheba's character while describing her at certain points in the novel. The narrator is unable to place her within a fixed point because of her unique interactions with

other characters and the actions she performs when in private. This may lead the reader to confusion about her character, for example Henry James states "we cannot say that we either understand or like [Bathsheba]," (Lerner 1968, 33) and although James makes a warranted observation, it is not Bathsheba's character that the reader is confused by but rather the narrator's depiction of her because when Bathsheba speaks one can arguably place her in a specific fixed point. The narrator in *The Return of the Native* associates Eustacia with the night, placing her as a supernatural creature and sometimes displaying a certain disdain towards her because of her inability to penetrate the society of Egdon Heath. The most unique of Hardy's narrators appears in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* because of the infatuation that seemingly develops from the narrator towards Tess. Penny Boumelha observes

> all the passionate commitment to exhibiting Tess as the subject of her own experience evokes an unusually overt maleness in the narrative voice. The narrator's erotic fantasies of penetration and engulfment enact a pursuit, violation, and persecution of Tess in parallel with those she suffers at the hands of her two lovers. Time and again the narrator seeks to enter Tess, (Boumelha 120)

further indicating the narrator's attachment to Tess. The infatuation developed by the narrator leads "him" to portray Tess in a highly sexualized light even while she remains, according to the novel's subtitle, a pure woman. Boumelha goes further to say "she is not merely spoken by the narrator, but also spoken *for*. To realize Tess as consciousness, with all that that entails of representation and display, inevitably renders her all the more object of gaze and of knowledge for reader and narrator" (Boumelha 120), which is true throughout the beginning of the novel, but Tess ultimately breaks free of this trope by the end. The narrator of *Jude the Obscure* keeps Sue at a distance in such a way that the narrator is simply observing Sue as Jude is. Throughout

the beginning of the novel the narrator only portrays Sue through Jude's eyes and therefore this creates a similar effect that Bathsheba's narrator displays, the reader is unsure of Sue and is surprised when the narrator eventually does relate certain personality traits that do not coincide with the image of her that has been established.

Throughout the years that Hardy was writing and after, there has been much criticism devoted to the role of gender in his work. A good summary as to why can be found in Patricia Ingham's essay on Hardy, "Hardy was one of those prepared to accept a different construction of femininity which would rewrite both the ideal woman and her reinforcing opposite, the fallen woman as well as the New Woman" (Ingham, 140). Although this project is focusing on four female characters in Hardy's work, it is not an examination of gender in the four novels. Rather, I plan on exploring the progression of Hardy's portrayal of the tragic heroine and whether or not they are fully realized by the end of novel. The definition of a fully realized tragic heroine for this project is a woman, placed apart from other women in society, that reaches a moment of clarity (tragic awareness) and consciousness about the situation she has been dealt. She attempts to correct her past and gain freedom from the social restraints that have been placed on her, instead of simply surrendering. Through the woman's will power to attempt to correct the wrongs placed on her and reconcile her past, the heroine meets her demise (hence the tragic aspect) and accepts the outcome. The four novels trace Hardy's progression of the conception of the tragic heroine; beginning with the more comedic Bathsheba Everdene and ending with the tragic break down of Sue Bridehead. I chose to focus on the female protagonist rather than the male protagonist because it is in the female characters that Hardy portrays the struggle of a person's will most clearly.

The four female protagonists each develop and transform from the character they begin as in their respected novels. For three of these woman the change they undergo is not one of growth but rather decline. Bathsheba, Eustacia, and Sue each begin as strong-willed and independent women, often unafraid to speak their own mind, and yet by the end of their respected novels each of these characters experience a weakening in her character. They each surrender themselves to both the pressures of society and in ways to the men in their life. This makes them less realized tragic characters because they simply release their lives to the mistakes they make and the situations they are placed in. Although Bathsheba reaches a more realized emotional state by the end of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, she lacks a completely realized consciousness. These three protagonists set their fates in motion through actions carried out by themselves: Bathsheba sends the Valentine to Farmer Boldwood, Eustacia denies Mrs. Yeobright entrance into her home, and Sue marries Phillotson, which all instigate the eventual outcome in the woman's life. Tess is the only character to overcome society to the degree that she reaches a moment of clarity before her death and she is able to be freely release to her fate. Tess goes through four transformations that allow her to transcend her problems and attempt to correct her life outside of the lens of society. Unlike the other women's hand in their fate, Tess does not play much of a role in her fate. She is instead affected by the male characters and the universe's unraveling of her destiny. As John Bayley states in his "An Essay on Hardy," "Tess is the most striking embodiment in literature of the woman realized both as object and as consciousness, to herself and to others," demonstrating the woman she is by the end of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. This project will explore the four female protagonists in relationship to the concept that Tess is the most fully realized tragic heroine out of Hardy's women.

CHAPTER 1

Far From the Madding Crowd (1874): Two Transformations Towards an Emotionally Developed Protagonist

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In *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Thomas Hardy presents a rustic and pastoral world that is almost completely devoid of modernity, focusing instead on the natural world. The natural world presented is separate from the later novels because the land and the people are untouched by urbanization and the movement towards an industrial future. The female protagonist that shapes the novel is Bathsheba Everdene, a confident and attractive woman who has a completely different outcome from the subsequent three Hardy women. The narrator identifies Bathsheba's qualities that separate her from other women and is unable to actually place Bathsheba in a specific category. The narrator places her in between two established points containing both male and female qualities. Bathsheba's fate does not end in either an actual death or a metaphorical death like the other female protagonists, but rather a marriage and prospect for a happier life. However, Bathsheba slowly descends from an independent, self-reliant, and often vain, character to a lesser woman than she had previously been. Bathsheba becomes a woman who conforms to what society expects of her, such as marriage and the dependence on a male figure to run the business. Although Bathsheba does not lose her sanity like Eustacia and Sue,

she also does not reach the evolved mindset and tragic awareness of Tess. Bathsheba simply forgoes her previous independent lifestyle upon meeting Sergeant Troy and once he dies she realizes that she can never return to her self-reliant lifestyle again. Yet, as Bathsheba releases her independent personality she eventually reaches a level of awareness about her emotional state that allows her clarity in perceiving her life. Bathsheba is similar to Tess in that she undergoes two significant transformations to reach a moment of clarity in her life, yet she is not a tragic heroine since the novel ends happily.

Bathsheba begins the novel as an emotionally underdeveloped girl seeking forms of attention. The first introduction to Bathsheba that the reader receives is through the gaze of the male protagonist Gabriel Oak, a local farmer and shepherd in the village. A young woman drives through in a wagon and happens upon a package that contains a small mirror "in which she proceeded to survey herself attentively. She parted her lips and smiled" (5). Both Gabriel and the reader have to question why the woman is performing this action, the narrator then states:

> [W]hether the smile began as a factitious one, to test her capacity in that art,—nobody knows; it ended certainly in a real smile…. There was no necessity whatever for her looking in the glass…. She simply observed herself as a fair product of Nature in the feminine kind, her thoughts seeming to glide into far-off though likely dramas in which men would play a part—vistas of probable triumphs—the smiles being of a phase suggesting that hearts were imagined as lost and won. Still, this was an odd conjecture, and the whole series of actions was idly put forth as to make it rash to assert that intention had nay part in them at all. (6)

The passage demonstrates that even the narrator is unsure of the woman's smiling, wondering whether it began as a real smile or a false one, but knowing it ends as a true one. She becomes aware of her own self before anything else and seems to realize what she is doing, hence the reason she blushes. There is no purpose in looking in the mirror except to gaze at her own reflection, which is likened to an offspring of Nature, linking Bathsheba to the natural world that surrounds her. The narrator suggests that perhaps the woman is daydreaming about fantasies in which men defend her honor, but the narrator then backtracks this statement in the last sentence implying that one cannot assume this is what the woman is daydreaming about. The fact that the narrator is unsure of the woman's actions suggests that this character is both complex and slightly mysterious, also demonstrating the narrator's inability to place Bathsheba within an established point. The narrator, like the reader, does not yet know enough about the newly arrived woman to pass judgments on her. However, one can come to the immediate conclusion that this woman is vain, which is what Gabriel suggests to a man once the woman leaves. She is looking at simply herself in the mirror, which indicates an act of self-admiration, whether or not she may be conscious of it.

The next two scenes in which Bathsheba appears in she is riding a horse adorn with a man's saddle. The man's saddle is the backbone to Bathsheba's qualities that separate her from other women. The first time she is on the horse with a man's saddle she is with her aunt and it is unclear whether she rides it sidesaddle or the right way. Yet, both the aunt and the narrator take note that her saddle is not a woman's. The second time Bathsheba passes by on the horse she performs several different movements that shed more insight on her character. As Gabriel watches her, the first interesting action that the woman does is "looked around for a moment, as if to assure herself that all humanity was out of view, then dexterously dropped backwards flat

upon the pony's back, her head over its tail, her feet against its shoulders, and her eyes to the sky. The rapidity of her glide into this position was that of a kingfisher—its noiselessness that of a hawk" (14). The woman is aware that what she is doing would be frowned upon if someone were to see her; hence her checking that no one is around. Her actions in this moment point to a free woman unafraid of natural elements, such as the horse. This indicates that when Bathsheba feels like doing something and the moment is right, she will carry out what she plans to do. She does the movement quickly indicating that this is not the first time she has attempted it and is seemingly a comfortable position for her to take, even though it is not ladylike in the eyes of society. The next movement she makes demonstrates more of her character:

> The performer seemed quite at home anywhere between a horse's head and its tail, and the necessity for this abnormal attitude having ceased with the passage of the plantation, she began to adopt another, even more obviously convenient than the first. She had no side-saddle, and it was very apparent that a firm seat upon the smooth leather beneath her was attainable sideways. Springing to her accustomed perpendicular like a bowed sapling, and satisfying herself that nobody was in sight, she seated herself in the manner demanded by the saddle, though hardly expected of the woman, and trotted off. (14)

The woman is unafraid of sitting like a man atop a horse, although she is still conscious that what she is doing would be frowned upon by society. She rides the saddle as it should be ridden and not as how society would expect her to ride a horse. The word 'performer' used to describe Bathsheba in this moment depicts a woman who is able to play the part and has a connation of the dramatic in it, a quality that strongly exists within Bathsheba as the novel progresses. There is also a strong alliteration of the "s" sound that cannot be overlooked in the passage. It suggests

a laziness surrounding the woman's movements placing emphasis on how at ease Bathsheba is in this moment. The narrator's analogy between the woman and the sapling is reminiscent of a scene in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in which Tess is compared to the same object in nature. Here, the sapling is bowed, suggesting an imbalance and imperfection in Bathsheba's character in comparison to Tess, whose own sapling analogy was not bowed over, but rather growing straight and strong.

As Gabriel watches Bathsheba carry out her chores, the narrator highlights that although the woman acts in a less charming way than Gabriel thought she might act, she still maintains her beauty and allure within Gabriel. When Bathsheba notices Gabriel watching her, the narrator illustrates the reaction of the two characters,

> That the girl's thoughts hovered about her face and form as soon as she caught Oak's eyes conning the same page was natural, and almost certain. The self-consciousness shown would have been vanity if a little more pronounced, dignity if a little less…she brushed hers with her hand, as if Gabriel had been irritating its pink surface by actual touch, and the free air of her previous movements was reduced at the same time to a chastened phase of itself. Yet it was the man who blushed, the maid not at all. (15)

Upon perceiving Gabriel observing her, Bathsheba instantly assumes that he is assessing her features, just as she had been doing earlier with the mirror. The narrator states that Bathsheba's awareness of this does not imply either vanity or dignity because she portrays just enough self-consciousness of the situation. This is another instance in which the narrator is unsure where to place Bathsheba, is she being vain or is she displaying dignity; the narrator cannot pinpoint her mindset. Bathsheba's awareness of Gabriel's gaze changes her previous fast paced and carefree

movement to a more humbled and subdued one, displaying her consciousness of how Gabriel may be viewing her. The last sentence of the passage demonstrates that a man's gaze does not embarrass Bathsheba, but rather it is Gabriel who is taken aback by her realization of him, indicating a gender role reversal. This illustrates Bathsheba's unintentional disregard for men and their feelings that is portrayed throughout the novel.

When Gabriel has a conversation with Bathsheba in his hut, she refuses to give her name to him, indicating both a flirtatious quality and certain power emanating from her. The power she holds is her ability to withhold her name, even though a man is asking for it, something that other women would have readily given away. After Gabriel says something to Bathsheba the narrator states, "she observed in a tone which showed her to be that novelty among women—one who finished a thought before beginning the sentence which was to convey it" (18), separating her from other women due to her ability and willingness to process thoughts before speaking. The narrator clearly believes this is an important quality in Bathsheba and something that defines her from the other female characters in the novel.

Bathsheba overcomes Gabriel's thoughts to the degree that he wants to marry her soon after their meeting. Bathsheba runs after Gabriel to correct her aunt's statement that she is taken by another man and when Gabriel directly asks her if she has any men in her life, she replies "'What I meant to tell you was only this…that nobody has got me yet as a sweetheart, instead of my having a dozen as my aunt said; I hate to be thought men's property in that way, though possibly I shall be had some day'" (24). This statement demonstrates that Bathsheba's seemingly strong-willed and independent consciousness is aware that she will most likely marry at some point in her life. She is conscious that marriage is inevitable later in her life and she enjoys the idea of marriage to some extent, "'I have tried hard all the time I've been thinking; for

a marriage would be very nice in one sense. People would talk about me, and think I had won my battle, and I should feel triumphant, and all that. But a husband…'" (25). Bathsheba is once again focusing on herself, viewing marriage as a vehicle to gain attention from society and appear triumphant in life. Yet, the concept of actually having a husband after the wedding does not appeal to her and makes her question marriage, which is apparent in the ellipsis at the end of the sentence. Therefore, marriage only appeals to her because of the attention she would receive from society, demonstrating Bathsheba's vain aspect of her personality.

Although Bathsheba acknowledges her eventual marriage, throughout the conversation she repeatedly denies Gabriel's hand in marriage, illustrating both her flirtation of the possibility and her want to keep Gabriel around even though she does not love him. For example Bathsheba mentions her eventual marriage a second time, "'Well, what I mean is that I shouldn't mind being a bride at a wedding, if I could be one without having a husband. But since a woman can't show off in that way by herself, I shan't marry—at least yet'" (25), suggesting again that the concept of being the center of attention would be enjoyable. Bathsheba says she will not marry; yet the last three words imply the possibility is not completely ruled out of her mind, although for Gabriel it is. Bathsheba denies Gabriel consistently and tells him towards the end of their conversation "'I want somebody to tame me; I am too independent; and you would never be able to, I know'" (26). This contradicts Bathsheba's slight aversion to marriage as well as her independence. To want to tame one's independence implies that they are not fully self-sufficient and are in want of help or companionship to some degree. In Bathsheba's mind, her eventual husband, not Gabriel, will be able to rein in her freedom; something subsequent Hardy women do not look for, demonstrating the evolution of Hardy's tragic heroine. Bathsheba is also

expecting the attention of other men in her future due to the confidence her looks and she wants to be fought over.

When Bathsheba moves to a new town the villagers, quenching her need for attention, observe her intently. The reason for the attention given to Bathsheba by the villagers reveals an attribute of her character that refers back to the man's saddle and illustrates her authority. Bathsheba decides to be the master of her own farm, taking on the role a man would normally carry out. While speaking to her workmen Bathsheba states "'Now mind, you have a mistress instead of a master I don't yet know my powers or my talents in farming; but I shall do my best, and if you serve me well, so shall I serve you. Don't any unfair ones among you (if there are any such, but I hope not) suppose that because I'm a woman I don't understand the difference between bad goings-on and good'" (65), illustrating that Bathsheba is in charge of these men and confident the farm will be a success. Bathsheba lets her workmen know that although she is a woman, unsure of her farming abilities, she is conscious of the proceedings and business that make up the working of a farm. The presentation of Bathsheba as mistress of a farm once again separates her from the more conventional side she portrays while with Sergeant Troy. The authority she has gained through both the attention and her property marks a transformation in her character. She has begun to evolve from the vain girl she was into a more independent figure.

In one of Bathsheba's first interactions in the village as head of her own farm, the narrator focuses on the obvious difference between herself and the other farmers at market-day. The narrator states "Among these heavy yeomen a feminine figure glided, the single one of her sex that the room contained" (71), identifying Bathsheba as the only woman at the market place. Her confidence begins to waver upon the realization that she is the only woman in the room, but

is soon regained upon remembering how she wants to be perceived by these male farmers, "But if she was to be the practical woman she had intended to show herself, business must be carried on, introductions or none, and she ultimately acquired confidence enough to speak and reply boldly to men merely known to her by hear say" (71). Bathsheba overcomes both her lesser sex and knowledge of farming in order to speak with the men present in a professional manner, whether or not they know who she is. However, her gender is still apparent amongst all the men, especially to the narrator,

> Something in the exact arch of her upper unbroken row of teeth, and in the keenly pointed corners of her red mouth when, with parted lips, she somewhat defiantly turned up her face to argue a point with a tall man, suggested that there was potentiality enough in that lithe slip of humanity for alarming exploits of sex, and daring enough to carry them out. But her eyes had a softness—invariably a softness—which, had they not been dark, would have seemed mistiness; as they were, it lowered an expression that might have been piercing to simple clearness. (71)

The narrator suggests a capability for Bathsheba to overcome her gender and be equal with the men she is discussing business with. By focusing on Bathsheba's mouth during this moment of heated discussion, the narrator places Bathsheba in a sexual light, even though she is attempting to be defiant and confident amongst the men around her. She will not fully be able to do so because of her dark eyes containing a softness in them that detracts from her defiant attitude in the argument with the other male farmer. Her eyes suggest more femininity than if they were able to achieve a clearer gaze as she argues with those of the opposite sex. The men that are present with Bathsheba do not seem to sense the potentiality of being their equal that the narrator

is portraying. They view her with respect, but not as a threat to the farming community and themselves. Therefore, the narrator's viewpoint is unique and reveals Bathsheba in a light that the other characters never view her as. Similar to the narrator in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, this narrator seems to admire Bathsheba in a way that places her on a pedestal and attributes certain traits to her that may not even be present.

Although Bathsheba is conscious of certain things that other women are not, in regard to people's emotions and feelings she still remains completely unaware and insensitive. Bathsheba states to her housemaid, Liddy that "'we know very well women scarcely ever jilt men; 'tis the men who jilt us. I expect it is simply his nature to be so reserved'" (73), demonstrating Bathsheba's inability to realize that she jilts Gabriel when he proposes to her. She seemingly disregards this fact and focuses on the concept that this is usually the man's job. It is as if she is unaware that she is capable of doing this to a man while in the presence of another woman. She further illustrates this insensitivity and unawareness of people's emotional states through writing the humorous, yet detrimental valentine to Farmer Boldwood, stamping the letter with a "MARRY ME." After she sends the valentine to Boldwood the narrator reveals: "So very idle and unreflecting was this deed done. Of love as a spectacle Bathsheba had a fair knowledge; but love subjectively she knew nothing" (77), demonstrating Bathsheba's lack of knowledge about the emotional state of love.

Bathsheba's thoughtless valentine pushes Boldwood, a man who had never been interested in a woman before, to fall deeply in love with her. When first observing her, Boldwood is unable to determine Bathsheba's attractiveness, but from the moment he is told she is handsome, Boldwood is unable to control his feelings for her. Bathsheba's reaction to this is interesting,

> It troubled her much to see what a great flame a little wildfire was likely to kindle. Bathsheba was no schemer for marriage, nor was she deliberately a trifler with the affections of men, and a censor's experience on seeing an actual flirt after observing her would have been a feeling of surprise that Bathsheba could be so different from such a one, and yet so like what a flirt is supposed to be….She resolved never again, by look or by sign, to interrupt the steady flow of this man's life. But a resolution to avoid an evil is seldom framed till the evil is so far advanced as to make avoidance impossible. (96-97)

Bathsheba is surprised by Boldwood's immediate response to the valentine, unable to comprehend the consequences of her actions. The use of fire imagery to describe the chain reaction of emotions that the valentine causes demonstrates Bathsheba's unease of the situation. The narrator highlights that Bathsheba did not send the valentine in order to gain Boldwood's affection or seek him as her husband, doing it simply out of foolishness. If someone were to place Bathsheba, a woman who is supposedly so different from others, against a flirtatious woman the narrator states one would not be able to find much of a difference. Bathsheba then vows to never lead a man on again and play with their emotions, indicating her consciousness of her part in the situation. Bathsheba was the one to instigate Boldwood's attraction to her and she seemingly regrets what she has done. However, the narrator hints that it is too late for Bathsheba to change her ways and the damage will remain as it is. This leads one to wonder why Bathsheba craves the attention from men and then denies them, which is something the narrator focuses on later, "There are occasions when girls like Bathsheba will put up with a great deal of unconventional behaviour. When they want to be praised, which is often; when they want to be mastered, which is sometimes; and when they want no nonsense, which is seldom" (130). The

quote suggests that Bathsheba wanted this reaction from Boldwood, as well as Gabriel's earlier intentions. It illustrates that above everything else, Bathsheba wants to be praised and will do what she can to gain it. It is also reminiscent of the statement made earlier that Bathsheba ultimately wants to be fought over by men. Therefore, she reins these men in, denies them, and then still keeps them around.

Bathsheba's expression after denying Boldwood points to the concept of the male attention as a game: "She allowed a very small smile to creep for the first time over her serious face in saying this, and the white row of upper teeth, and keenly cut lips already noticed, suggested an idea of heartlessness, which was immediately contradicted by the pleasant eyes" (100). The small smile that Bathsheba accidentally lets slip through sheds light on her lack of attempt to change her flirtatious ways. She enjoys the attention Boldwood is bestowing on her and is glad she was able to ensnare another man to turn down. Yet, her eyes, which are her downfall when attempting to portray equality amongst men as seen in the market scene, keep her heartlessness at bay in the moment.

Bathsheba ponders the offer of marriage Boldwood proposes and is able to recognize that "[The offer] was one which many women of her own station in the neighbourhood, and not a few of higher rank, would have been wild to accept and proud to publish. In every point of view, ranging from politic to passionate, it was desirable that she, a lonely girl, should marry, and marry this earnest, well-to-do, and respected man." (101). Even though she is aware that the offer is one that many woman would be happy to have, Bathsheba does not want him as a husband and this fact is enough reason for her to deny him, indicating that Bathsheba ultimately wants to marry a man for love. The narrator states

> It appears that ordinary men take wives because possession is not possible without marriage, and that ordinary women accept husbands because marriage is not possible without possession; with totally differing aims the method is the same on both sides. But the understood incentive on the woman's part was wanting here. Besides, Bathsheba's position as absolute mistress of a farm and house was a novel one, and the novelty had not yet begun to wear off.... Beyond the mentioned reasons with which she combated her objections, she had a strong feeling that, having been the one who began the game, she ought in honesty to accept the consequences. Still the reluctance remained. (102)

The narrator demonstrates that the want and need to possess are what drive men and women to marriage. Bathsheba does not need the satisfaction of possession because of her position as head of a farm. Having the authority over the farm gives Bathsheba the pride and self-worth a woman may receive in marriage. Once again she feels regret for sending the valentine and sparking these feelings in the first place. However, she is not regretful to the point of repentance in the form of marriage to Boldwood. The use of the word "ordinary" illustrates that Bathsheba does not fall into this category and the narrator is placing her separate from society.

Tess, Eustacia, and Sue's beauty are described at some points as ethereal, but Bathsheba's beauty is compared to a demonic spirit, "Her eyes were at their darkest and brightest now. Bathsheba's beauty belonging rather to the demonian than to the angelic school, she never looked so well as when she was angry—and particularly when the effect was heightened by a rather dashing velvet dress, carefully put on before a glass" (107). In comparison to the other ethereal Hardy women, Bathsheba's beauty described in this moment is the complete opposite. She is demonic in her appearance rather than angelic and the narrator states that she looks most

beautiful when she is angry. This is reminiscent of the evil that the narrator suggests she cannot undo from herself and paints a darker light on Bathsheba, similar to the smile she reveals after denying Boldwood.

Once Sergeant Troy enters Bathsheba's life her character begins to shift from the independent and uniquely different woman to a more subdued character, marking the first significant transformation that she undergoes. Sergeant Troy captivates Bathsheba in a similar way that she affects Farmer Boldwood, creating a role reversal. He awakens her dormant emotions and sexual state, which opens her up to dependence, jealousy, and love. The reader can begin to see the change in Bathsheba though subtleties that the narrator reveals, such as "For a defiant girl, was a faltering way; though, for a timid girl, it would have seemed a brave way to endure" (141), in responding to Sergeant Troy. Although the way she responds would have seemed brave for a timid girl, Bathsheba's defiant personality is seen wavering in this moment and is seemingly out of place with her personality.

Sergeant Troy demonstrates his dominance over Bathsheba both during and after he exhibits his sword skills to her. It is in this moment that Bathsheba is subordinate to a man for the first time in the novel and unaware of the situation she is placed in. Sergeant Troy tricks her into believing that the demonstration of his sword skills is safe and towards the end of his show he points the sword at her chest in order to slay a caterpillar. This is a highly sexualized action that Troy enacts and Bathsheba is not in control of her own movement in the moment, unable to reverse the role of dominance. She is physically unable to move for fear of being hurt and Troy has placed himself in the dominant role, similar to rape. Troy then kisses Bathsheba in a moment of passion reminiscent to Alec d'Urbervilles' kiss of mastery on Tess, but Troy's kiss takes Bathsheba's breath away. After the kiss the narrator brings the reader's attention to the

affect it has on Bathsheba's character, "We now see the element of folly distinctly mingling with the many varying particulars which made up the character of Bathsheba Everdene…. Bathsheba, though she had too much understanding to be entirely governed by her womanliness, had too much womanliness to use her understanding to the best advantage" (147). Here the narrator illustrates Bathsheba's shift in character from independent to subordinate. Bathsheba previously did not know love and now it flows through her being. Her thoughtfulness that was celebrated by the narrator earlier has been overcome by her womanliness after the kiss. Although her understanding triumphs over her womanliness, in this moment and hereafter her understanding is replaced by her womanliness. The narrator continues to focus on the loss of her independence and reveal the difference between Bathsheba and a woman of weaker caliber,

> Bathsheba loved Troy in the way that only self-reliant women love when they abandon their self-reliance. When a strong woman recklessly throws away her strength she is worse than a weak woman who has never had any strength to throw away. One source of her inadequacy is the novelty of the occasion. She has never had practice in making the best of such a condition. Weakness is doubly weak by being new. (147-48)

Bathsheba's self-reliance is now her downfall in the face of love because she once knew strength and now that she has thrown it away Bathsheba is weakened. Her newness to the vulnerability of weakness is heightened do to her awareness of what independence once felt like. Her development in love throws Bathsheba off guard as well, never having felt this way about a man before. The new found feelings of love that Bathsheba is dealing with lead her to state "'Loving is misery for women always. I shall never forgive God for making me a woman, and dearly am I beginning to pay for the honour of owning a pretty face'" (155). The love that Bathsheba has

begun to feel is perceived as a curse for women in her eyes. This leads her to blame God for making her a woman in the first place and blessing her with beauty. The last sentence is interesting because it reveals that even though Bathsheba is cursing her womanhood she is still maintaining her vanity. Although Bathsheba regrets having been born a woman and prone to love in a harsher way than man, she is still able to praise her sex.

Bathsheba's newly attained womanhood begins to seep into other parts of her life and does not solely remain in the hands of Sergeant Troy. As she is talking to Farmer Boldwood, a man Bathsheba has always maintained strong stance with, the narrator states "Bathsheba, in spite of her mettle, began to feel unmistakable signs that she was inherently the weaker vessel. She strove miserably against this femininity which would insist upon supplying unbidden emotions in stronger and stronger current" (160). Throughout her conversations with Boldwood, Bathsheba usually portrays superiority towards him. Now that she has transformed into a more subdued character, her awareness of her femininity is heightened and she becomes the weaker person in the argument. Bathsheba attempts to smother the femininity that is making her the weaker of the pair, but her emotional state hinders her from suppressing it. Bathsheba's emotional state leads her to tears after this conversation, "With almost a morbid dread of being thought a gushing girl, this guideless woman too well concealed from the world under a manner of carelessness the warm depth of her strong emotions. But now there was no reserve" (167). This is a moment of vulnerability for Bathsheba that she does not want anyone else to witness. Bathsheba's emotions overcome her and she is unable to keep them at bay like she has in the past.

After marrying Sergeant Troy, any thought of Bathsheba maintaining her position as head of her farm is put to rest when he does not listen to her or Gabriel's warnings about a storm approaching and instead gives all the workmen alcohol. Bathsheba's power has been stripped

away from her and she appears almost as a completely different character. When Gabriel asks her why she married Sergeant Troy in the first place, she states "'between jealousy and distraction, I married him!'" (200), demonstrating regret in having accepted his proposal. One has to wonder why it is Sergeant Troy that transforms Bathsheba into a vulnerable and submissive woman. He is the antagonist of Gabriel and has an unpleasant disposition the moment he is introduced. Sergeant Troy takes advantage of Bathsheba in ways that neither Gabriel nor Farmer Boldwood would ever attempt. Therefore, one can reach the conclusion that his forcefulness and disrespectful nature is what draws Bathsheba towards him. As mentioned earlier, Bathsheba believes she wants a man that can tame her and subconsciously she views Sergeant Troy as the man to do it. Unfortunately it is not until the two are married that Bathsheba finds out Sergeant Troy's past with her ex-housemaid Fanny and truly realizes his treachery.

Upon finding a lock of hair that Troy has been keeping with him, Bathsheba has a fit of jealousy. Troy's response to her pathetic outburst is "'Why, Bathsheba, you have lost all the pluck and sauciness you formerly had, and upon my life if I had known what a chicken-hearted creature you were under all your boldness, I'd never have—I know what'" (205), illustrating that Bathsheba is no longer able to argue with a confident attitude. A lock of another woman's hair weakens Bathsheba to a state that is feminine and would be unattractive to the woman whom the reader began the novel with. When Bathsheba finds out that Fanny is dead and Troy realizes his mistake in marrying Bathsheba instead of Fanny, Bathsheba falls further into a depressed state. This demonstrates the reliance she has begun to form on Troy and it sickens her to believe that he could love anyone but herself. Once Troy leaves Bathsheba, she begins to cry again, attempting to once again suppress her newly acquired emotional state. The reader then receives

Bathsheba's thoughts about her transformation into this less confident and more reliant woman through the narrator,

> She was conquered; but she would never own it as long as she lived. Her pride was indeed brought low by despairing discoveries of her spoliation by marriage with a less pure nature than her own. She chafed to and fro in rebelliousness, like a caged leopard….Until she had met Troy, Bathsheba has been proud of her position as a woman; it had been glory to her to know that her lips had been touched by no other man's on earth—that her waist had never been encircled by a lover's arm. She hated herself now. In those earlier days she had always nourished a secret contempt for girls who were the slaves of the first good-looking young fellow who should choose to salute them. She had never taken kindly to the idea of marriage in the abstract as did the majority of women she saw about her. In the turmoil of her anxiety for her lover she had agreed to marry him; but the perception that had accompanied her happiest hours on this account was rather that of self-sacrifice than of promotion and honour. (217)

Bathsheba recognizes several important instances and feelings that have shaped the character that she is now. She first recognizes that Troy has conquered her, subduing both her self-reliance and independence. This has led her to relax in her life and begin to rely on Troy to the extent that she has let her guard down. The fact that Troy loves another woman and has left her leaves Bathsheba in a state of anger and confusion. She realizes that his nature is less pure then she thought it was before marriage and this wounds her pride. Bathsheba admits to hating herself for letting a man gain control of her life when she had previously been proud no one had been able to claim her as his own because of her ability to deny. She has now been tarnished by another

man and regrets her action in marrying Troy. Bathsheba also regrets having acted like the girls she looks down upon. Although she was able to deny both Gabriel and Boldwood, she marries Troy out of desperation and a need to claim him in the way that girls do with "the first good-looking guy" that interacts with them. Bathsheba views her marriage as one of self-sacrifice on her part, implying that she sacrificed her independence to maintain her lover.

Bathsheba's next transformation occurs when she allows Fanny's coffin to be brought into her home while the grave is being prepared. The entire chain of events that revolve around the coffin demonstrate Bathsheba's displacement and jealousy towards Fanny, while indicating an out-of-body experience she has. As Bathsheba strolls about town, she walks "Like a homeless wanderer she lingered by the bank…She must tread her giddy distracting measure to its last note, as she had begun it. With a swollen heart she went again up the lane, and entered her own door" (233), illustrating the role that Fanny has taken in Bathsheba's life. Fanny has metaphorically become mistress of Bathsheba's house, placing Bathsheba as a stranger and foreigner within her own home. It is as if she becomes homeless in this moment, unsure of how to proceed with her husband's dead lover lying in her home. Once Bathsheba returns to her home, she grapples with the concept of Fanny's death and past history with Troy. As she is "standing beside the uncovered coffin of the girl whose conjectured end had so entirely engrossed her, and saying to herself in a husky voice as she gazed within—'It was best to know the worst, and I know it now!'" (234), Bathsheba reveals that it was good for her to know the history between Fanny and Troy in order to uncover Troy's true character. Yet, not too soon after this scene, Bathsheba begins speaking to Fanny in a venomous manner, 'O, I hate her, yet I don't mean that I hate her, for it is grievous and wicked; and yet I hate her a little! Yes, my flesh insists upon hating her, whether my spirit is willing or no!...If she had only lived, I could have

been angry and cruel toward her with some justification; but to be vindictive towards a poor dead woman recoils upon myself O God, have mercy! I am miserable at all this!' (235). Bathsheba wants to hate the woman who has taken her husband's heart, but she feels cruel for hating someone who can never defend themselves. Therefore, Bathsheba wishes Fanny were alive so she could justify her reaction to the history Fanny shared with Troy. Since Fanny is dead, Bathsheba cannot actually blame her for how she is feeling and this creates confusion as to where her anger can be directed. Upon realizing this, Bathsheba takes a step back from herself and assessing her state of mind:

> Bathsheba became at this moment so terrified at her own state of mind that she looked around for some sort of refuge from herself….resolved to kneel, and, if possible, pray. Gabriel had prayed; so would she. [….] She knelt beside the coffin, covered her face with her hands, and for a time the room was silent as a tomb. Whether from a purely mechanical, or from any other cause, when Bathsheba arose it was with a quieted spirit, and a regret for the antagonistic instincts which had seized upon her just before. (235)

Bathsheba becomes frightened by her thought process in the moment and feels the need to do something with herself in order to escape it. She remembers a time when Gabriel knelt and prayed, so she attempts the same act by the coffin. This transfers Bathsheba to a state of calmness and changes her attitude into a less frantic one. Whether or not she was actually praying, Bathsheba's meditative state allows her to release the negative thoughts she was holding against Fanny. This is the first time Bathsheba has displayed a religious disposition and demonstrates the confused state of mind she finds herself in. She cannot direct her anger at a dead girl nor can she at her husband, therefore she turns to God in an attempt to right her mind.

This state leads Bathsheba to place flowers around Fanny's body and in this moment "She forgot time, life, where she was, what she was doing…. Bathsheba, pallid as a corpse on end, gazed back at him in the same wild way" (235). She becomes transfixed in her actions and transcends time through a meditative mindset, similar to the moment in which Tess can transcend her reality. Therefore, when she perceives Troy watching her, it is as if Bathsheba has joined Fanny in death due to her unawareness of his presence.

The feeling of peace with Fanny does not last too long and Bathsheba regains her jealousy upon seeing Troy, as he is about to kiss Fanny's lips:

> 'Don't—don't kiss them… *You will, Frank, kiss me too!*' …. There was something so abnormal and startling in the childlike pain and simplicity of this appeal from a woman of Bathsheba's caliber and independence…. It was such an unexpected revelation of all women being alike at heart, even those so different in their accessories as Fanny and this one beside him, that Troy could hardly seem to believe her to be his proud wife Bathsheba. Fanny's own spirit seemed to be animating her frame…. All the feeling she had been betrayed into showing she drew back to herself again by a strenuous effort of self-command. (237)

Bathsheba cannot bear to see her husband kiss another woman's lips and in a moment of desperation demands Troy to kiss her own lips. The narrator reflects that this moment of desperation is similar to a child's pain: Bathsheba has changed so completely from her former independent self that to see her acting in this way is depressing and immature. The narrator is shocked by her reaction and seems disappointed that Bathsheba has lost her sense of independence in this moment. Troy and the narrator come to the realization that all women are the same internally no matter what they appear to be like from their exterior and the way they

hold themselves in society. Fanny and Bathsheba become one in the moment and the two are indistinguishable from one another. Bathsheba has released all her emotions at once, something she has never done fully before. Therefore, she attempts to reign them back in, but both the reader and Troy have already seen that she has lost control. This leads Troy to state that Bathsheba tempted him through Satan to leave Fanny.

After Fanny is buried, Troy officially leaves Bathsheba and she now has to deal with the loss of her attachment to him. Bathsheba has lost all the independence and self-reliance she emanated at the beginning of the novel. Therefore, Bathsheba becomes stagnant in a way falling in between a death and rebirth transformation. She begins to reflect on her life and transformation,

> She belonged to him: the certainties of that position were so well defined, and the reasonable probabilities of its issue so bounded, that she could not speculate on contingencies. Taking no further interest in herself as a splendid woman, she acquired the indifferent feelings of an outsider in contemplating her probable fate as a singular wretch; for Bathsheba herself and her future in colours that no reality could exceed for darkness. Her original pride of youth had sickened, and with it had declined all her anxieties about coming years, since anxiety recognizes a better and a worse alternative, and Bathsheba had made up her mind that alternatives on any noteworthy scale had ceased for her. (256)

Bathsheba notes her feeling of still belonging to Troy even though he is no longer present. She feels both relief and surprise at his absence. She no longer contains the vanity and pride that was so predominately part of her constitution and instead focuses on her eventual fate as a poor, lonely soul. There is a sense of acceptance in this moment: Bathsheba has accepted her new self

and future, no longer worrying about expectations or alternatives in her life. When she finds out that Troy has drowned, she is the only one who believes he is still alive, demonstrating her concept that there is no alternative for her future: she will remain Troy's and therefore he cannot be dead. This dismal outlook on life places Bathsheba in a subordinated state of being and is in stark contrast to her previous outlook on life.

It is only when Troy is shot by Boldwood in front of Bathsheba that she comes to terms with a different outcome. She does not return to her old independent self, but is able to accept that she is free from Troy, indicating her second major transformation. While Bathsheba is listening to a children's choir sing, she regrets everything that she has learnt in life,

> She would have given anything in the world to be, as those children were, unconcerned at the meaning of their words, because too innocent to feel the necessity for any such expression. All the impassioned scenes of her brief experience seemed to revive with added emotion at that moment, and those scenes which had been without emotion during enactment had emotion then. Yet grief came to her rather as a luxury than as the scourge of former times. (308)

Bathsheba's acceptance of herself has allowed her to release her emotions on her own terms. She envies the children that are unaware of the power and meaning their words hold due to their innocence. All her emotions from her past experience cumulate into this one moment of expression for Bathsheba. She is able to recognize her emotional state for the first time and carefully dissects her life to feel what she was unable to acknowledge before. The grief she feels is not punishment but rather relief that she is finally able to give in to her tears and not be concerned with the weakening of her prideful nature.

Bathsheba realizes her loss of independence has been placed in Gabriel. Therefore, when he decides to leave her, Bathsheba asks him to remain and be her husband. The novel has come full circle and Bathsheba is completely dependent on the first man she turned down. However, Bathsheba still maintains some semblance of power since she is the one to ask Gabriel to stay and he complies. Although the novel ends on a happy note, a parenthetical statement suggests Bathsheba is still unhappy by her change: "Then Oak laughed, and Bathsheba smiled (for she never laughed readily now), and their friends turned to go" (318). She is unable to laugh readily, something she was constantly able to and unafraid to do in the beginning of the novel. This suggests that although Bathsheba has grown emotionally, she still weeps for the independence that was once part of her.

Bathsheba slowly fades into a less independent character from the vain and proud woman she begins the novel as. However, the two transformations she undergoes provide her with an emotional state that she was lacking throughout the beginning of the novel. She is able to grieve and realize her mistakes. This is something that Eustacia and Sue are never able to obtain and one can argue that this is why Bathsheba does not reach a physical or mental demise. Through her newly attainted emotional being Bathsheba is able to realize her dependence on Gabriel. Since her pride has vanished she is able to ask Gabriel to stay with her, something she would not have been able to do previously. Therefore, although Bathsheba does not reach Tess's level of understanding and success as a tragic heroine, she is able to recognize her mistakes and correct them to some extent, something neither Eustacia nor Sue do to their satisfaction.

CHAPTER 2

The Return of the Native (1878): Denial, Development and Demise

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In *The Return of the Native* Thomas Hardy presents a rural heath that becomes one of the determining forces behind the characters' fates. Egdon Heath transforms into a living entity that begins to signify light or darkness throughout the novel for individual characters. This natural universe plays a significant role in determining the fate of the female protagonist, Eustacia Vye, due to the unique connection the two share. Eustacia is a strong-willed beauty at the beginning of the novel and a destitute wandering woman by the end. When placed against Tess Durbeyfield, Eustacia falls short and can be perceived as a flawed tragic heroine in comparison. The flaw in Eustacia's character stems from her inability to overcome both the social pressures of Egdon Heath and her own weaknesses. While Tess maintains a steady progression away from society and transforms into a tragic heroine willingly able to accept her fate, Eustacia's character slowly dissolves from the stubbornness and pride of her personality to passivity in accepting her fate. Eustacia is tragically flawed because she is unable to maintain her grasp on reality and her identity in the face of broken possibilities.

Similarly to Bathsheba, Eustacia undergoes a series of stages that appear to lead her towards a path of tragic awareness, yet she never fully reaches it. Eustacia begins with a strong connection to Egdon Heath and the night. When Clym Yeobright returns to the heath, Eustacia

moves towards the daylight in which her dreams of moving to Paris are eventually shattered. Eustacia then enters a moment of stagnancy unable to decide between Clym and Wildeve; in this moment she is no longer connected to anything physical, such as Egdon Heath. The moment of tragic conflict that has the strongest effect on Eustacia is when she denies Mrs. Yeobright entrance into her home, which can be considered Eustacia's significant moment of development. From this transformation Eustacia gains tragic insight but it is too late for her to fully process her development and attempt to correct the wrongs she has implemented.

In the beginning of the novel Eustacia is indistinguishable from Egdon Heath to a newcomer and to the reader, as the narrator first introduces Eustacia without identifying her. These two factors indicate Eustacia's unique attachment as well as her confinement to Egdon Heath. The reader receives the description of what a resting man, Diggory Venn, is observing on a summit of Egdon Heath:

> he became aware that its summit, hitherto the highest object in the whole prospect round, was surmounted by something higher. It rose from the semiglobular mound like a spike from a helmet. The first instinct…might have been to suppose it the person of one of the Celts who built the barrow, so far had all of modern date withdrawn from the scene. It seemed a sort of last man among them, musing for a moment before dropping into eternal night with the rest of his race….There the form stood, motionless as the hill beneath…Above the figure was nothing that could be mapped elsewhere than on a celestial globe. (17)

The figure standing motionless on this landscape is higher than everything in the surrounding area, indicating the figure's superiority to the other elements. The form is perceived to be the highest point on the "celestial globe" pointing to the notion that nothing is higher than Egdon

Heath and this figure, indicating a divine or priestly figure. The figure is compared to a spike on a helmet implying that it is a form of dangerous protection to the summit. Both the reader and the resting man are unaware that this figure is a woman, and the narrator's description leads the reader to believe that the figure may be a man. The reader, then, first meets Eustacia as a mannish figure placed as the highest point of Egdon Heath and appears as a strong and independent character able to triumph over the heath. Yet Eustacia also completes the heath, which negates this and suggests an inability to triumph over it since she is one with it. The figure is so far integrated with the heath that it makes up some of the heath's beauty "Such a perfect, delicate, and necessary finish did the figure give to the dark pile of hills that it seemed to be the only obvious justification of their outline. Without it, there was the dome without the lantern; with it the architectural demands of the mass were satisfied" (17). The figure does not just add to the beauty of the Egdon Heath but completes it. The use of the adjective "delicate" is the first indication that this person may be female and not the male character the reader was led to believe.

The figure does not move and the narrator suggests, "The form was so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure that to see it move would have impressed the mind as a strange phenomenon. Immobility being the chief characteristic of that whole which the person formed portion of, the discontinuance of immobility in any quarter suggested confusion" (17). Although it has been established that this figure jutting out from the summit is a person capable of movement beyond the object that it is standing on, the narrator is stating that if the person were to move it would look abnormal and create confusion for those observing the summit. This suggests that the person has become a part of the landscape to the degree that they are unable to move without disturbing the harmony of it. Therefore, the figure can never truly be

one with the heath because of the human capacity of movement beyond that of the natural elements surrounding it. Since the figure does remain motionless for the majority of this scene, it appears to be determined and unwavering in its purpose for standing there. Eustacia is clearly patiently waiting for something at the top of the heath. When the figure does eventually move from the summit the narrator allows the reader to know that this figure is a woman by the way she moves: "the movement had been sufficient to show more clearly the characteristics of the figure: it was a woman's" (17). The fact that the reader learns more about Eustacia through her movements is in contrast to the motionless figure that was introduced in the beginning, illustrating that Eustacia is part of humanity instead of a fixed element of Egdon Heath. Her connection to Egdon Heath is made clear with this first glimpse of the female protagonist in which the narrator unavoidably links Eustacia to the natural element.

When Eustacia returns to the top of the summit the narrator offers a darker description of the elements surrounding her, beginning to display Eustacia's feelings towards Egdon Heath,

> a closely wrapped female figure approached the barrow from that quarter of the heath in which the little fire lay….She ascended to her old position at the top, where the red coals of the perishing fire greeted her like living eyes in the corpse of day. There she stood still around her stretching the vast night atmosphere, whose incomplete darkness in comparison with the total darkness of the heath below it might have represented a venial beside a mortal sin. (54)

Continuing to leave us in doubt regarding the identity of this woman, the narrator projects the theme of night and darkness that permeates the novel. The light that is emitting from the dying fire creates an incomplete darkness where Eustacia is standing and is reminiscent of the day, which seems empty compared to the night. Below, where the dying light does not touch, is

complete darkness. When set against each other, the incomplete and complete darkness, the narrator perceives a comparison between amongst the two shades of darkness as venial and mortal sin. Venial sin is forgiving while mortal sin is unforgiving, implying that although the lit area seems uninviting in the description it might be less sinful than the night. Yet Eustacia is constantly attracted to the night rather than the day, signifying her reliance on darkness. This is perhaps one way in which Egdon Heath maintains a hold on Eustacia, by keeping her in the mortal darkness in which the most important aspects of her destiny unfold.

It is through Eustacia's movements that the reader receives a slight description of her as Diggory Venn moves closer towards her. The narrator states:

> That she was tall and straight in build, that she was lady-like in her movements, was all that could be learnt of her just now, her form being wrapped in a shawl folded in the old cornerwise fashion, and her head in a large kerchief, a protection not superfluous at this hour and place….Her reason for standing so dead still as the pivot of this circle of heath-country was just as obscure. Her extraordinary fixity, her conspicuous loneliness, her heedlessness of night, betokened among other things an utter absence of fear. (54)

This is the closest the reader and the reddleman have gotten to Eustacia, yet the narrator still teases us with what she actually looks like. The narrator has magnified the scene from earlier allowing a clear outline of the figure once perceived as part of the summit. The narrator once again mentions Eustacia's motionless stance and points out a corresponding fearlessness in her character. The fearlessness is an important aspect to Eustacia's character as will be seen throughout this chapter. For now, one should observe the difference between Eustacia's fearlessness and Tess'. As one can see here, Eustacia begins with a fearless attitude that seems

unable of ever faltering, while Tess develops fearlessness gradually by the end of her respective novel.

The narrator demonstrates the power that Egdon Heath holds through describing the wind as Eustacia stands motionless once again,

> The wind, indeed, seemed made for the scene, as the scene seemed made for the hour. Part of its tone was quite special; what was heard there could be heard nowhere else….In it lay what may be called the linguistic peculiarity of the heath; and being audible nowhere on earth off a heath, it afforded a shadow of reason for the woman's tenseness, which continued as unbroken as ever. (55)

This passage makes the scene completely unique because the wind seems composed for the moment simply to illustrate the power of the heath. The wind is the only sound that can be heard on the heath and creates a symphony of different tones. The description of the numerous sounds that this wind makes on Egdon Heath demonstrates both its beauty and its power. The wind is the only thing that the narrator is able to focus on in this moment, wanting to show the sheer force of the wind throughout the heath. It is described as the language of Egdon Heath, imbuing the heath with human characteristics. The wind also explains why Eustacia remains in a tense and stationary position, demonstrating the physical power it holds over her. After this description Eustacia relays her first vocal noise to the reader and it parallels with the wind: she utters "a lengthened sighing" (56). The sigh is compatible with the wind that is blowing around her and suggests a deeper connection between Eustacia and Egdon Heath. It is almost as if the two become one through the similar sounds they are making.

Another aspect of Eustacia's character is seen through the eyes of the local people of Egdon Heath. They do not observe her as part of the beauty of Egdon Heath, but rather as a

witch that interrupts the harmony of the heath. One local man states "'the lonesome dark eyed creature up there, that some say is a witch—ever I should call a fine young woman such a name—is always up to some odd conceit or other; and so perhaps 'tis she'" (52), illustrating that since Eustacia removes herself from the locale she is seen as eccentric, which in the eyes of these people implies an enchantress. This is also due to Eustacia's beauty, which becomes a problem for people such as Susan Nunsuch. Susan's son, Charley, develops a childhood crush on Eustacia and then falls ill. Susan is under the impression that Eustacia is a witch and has put a spell on her son, eventually deciding to make a voodoo doll to condemn Eustacia. From this viewpoint Eustacia becomes something evil that has been placed on the heath to harm those living around her; she is separated from the heath in the eyes of society.

Eustacia's detachment from the local community of Egdon Heath demonstrates both her independence and her desire to return to an urban setting. Her reclusiveness and confidence stem from her close-mindedness about the working class and need to escape Egdon Heath. Eustacia feels like she does not belong in Egdon Heath's community of farmers because of her social position when she was living in the city. She feels out of place and yearns to return to the leisure of the middle class in a more productive city environment. On the heath Eustacia finds herself too proud to associate with the people around her, perhaps believing she would be lowering her social status if she were to form relations with the community. We are told that "She hated the change; she felt like one banished; but here she was forced to abide" (68), not only does Eustacia feel removed from her natural environment, but she also feels as if she has been banished to Egdon Heath and is being forced to remain within its confines. Therefore, this creates resentment in Eustacia towards the heath and its community. The narrator also provides a depiction of what is being processed in Eustacia's head while thinking about her life and Egdon

Heath,

> Thus it happened that in Eustacia's brain were juxtaposed the strangest assortment of ideas, from old time and from new. There was no middle-distance in her perspective…Every bizarre effect that could result from the random intertwining of watering-place glitter with the grand solemnity of a heath, were to be found in her. Seeing nothing of human life now, she imagined all the more of what she had seen. (68)

Eustacia is clearly struggling between her conceptions of the life she was once living and her current one. She is unable to combine the two and live happily on Egdon Heath because of the memories of a more interesting lifestyle. Eustacia's distancing from the local community is having a negative affect on her person because it makes her long even more for the urban life she was living before moving to the heath. The absence of people in her life conjures feelings of loneliness and boredom for Eustacia. Therefore, Eustacia is homesick for her previous life and seems unable to be happy on the solemn heath.

Chapter Seven of the first book is entitled "Queen of the Night" and provides an in-depth description of Eustacia. From this simple title the reader is able to perceive two things about Eustacia: she is portrayed as an ethereal being of high power and as seen earlier, most comfortable in the night. The first sentence of the chapter is "Eustacia Vye was the raw material of a divinity" (67), highlighting the concept that she is an exception in humanity, which places her back onto the summit and raises Eustacia above all those around her. The narrator focuses closely on her eyes and mouth, two forms of communication that distinguish Eustacia from other people. Her "Pagan eyes" and mouth indicate that Eustacia is not only a divine beauty but also seductively human as well. The description of her mouth clearly demonstrates this notion, "The

mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. Some might have added, less to kiss than to curl" (66). The narrator views her lips less as a tool for communication than as a form of seduction, while those around her identify them as a form of her pretentiousness.

Although Eustacia seems unable to have any weaknesses because of her ethereal and independent being, the narrator mentions a force that hinders her: Egdon Heath. The beginning of the chapter illustrated the connection Eustacia has with Egdon Heath and now the reader can perceive the sheer power it has over Eustacia. The narrator states

> But celestial imperiousness, love, wrath, and fervour, had proved to be somewhat thrown away on netherward Egdon. Her power was limited, and the consciousness of this limitation had biased her development. Egdon was her Hades, and since coming there she had imbibed much of what was dark in its tone, though inwardly and eternally unreconciled thereto. Her appearance accorded well with this smouldering rebelliousness, and the shady splendour of her beauty was the real surface of the sad and stifled warmth within her. (67)

Eustacia is placed within limitations while on Egdon Heath, demonstrating the heath's power over her. She is fully aware of the power that the heath holds and this hinders her development as a human being, believing that there is nothing for her to do about it. Egdon Heath is compared directly with Hades and Eustacia searches for the negative aspects that make it hell for her. The concept of Egdon Heath becoming Eustacia's own hell on earth refers back to her title as "Queen of the Night" and illustrates that perhaps this is one of the reasons Eustacia prefers the night rather than the day while living on the heath. At night she feels more in control of her own power because she cannot see the physical heath and therefore puts its power out of her mind.

During the day the light provides Eustacia with a sense of awareness of her surroundings and a reminder of her present living situation.

Eustacia's greatest desire is "to be loved to madness…love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days" (69). This is an important point to review while discussing Eustacia. Although she is a recluse by choice on Egdon Heath, she wants to be loved by someone intensely yet she also wants this love in order to escape the loneliness she feels. Therefore, Eustacia is looking for love as an escape from herself and feels the desire to be loved for something to have in her life. This breaks her away from the ethereal qualities she holds and portrays the human desires she contains. Through her want of love Eustacia is demonstrating her need for companionship, which detracts from her independent quality.

As mentioned earlier, Eustacia distances herself from the local community of Egdon Heath to the extent that she barely associates with them. Eustacia's reclusiveness backfires when Clym Yeobright returns to Egdon Heath because she finds herself unable to meet him due to her lack of relationships in the community: "She was a stranger to all such local gatherings, and had always held them as scarcely appertaining to her sphere" (122). This reiterates Eustacia's feelings of keeping herself distant from the people of Egdon Heath because she considers them below her, but now that someone has entered the heath that appears to be on Eustacia's social hierarchy she cannot meet him. Eustacia views Clym as a means of escape from Egdon Heath and return to a city with wealth, yet her pride keeps her from visiting the Yeobrights' house to meet him. He begins to invade her mind before she has met him: "what an opportunity would have been afforded her of seeing the man whose influence was penetrating her like summer sun. To increase that influence was coveted excitement; to cast it off might be to regain serenity; to

leave it as it stood was tantalizing" (122). Eustacia understands that Clym Yeobright is an educated man that has experienced the world outside of Egdon Heath and therefore she believes that he could be the one to save her from it. The narrator illustrates the conflict that Eustacia is going through as she contemplates meeting Clym, highlighting the fact that she is aware of the possibility of letting him go and gaining peace of mind. Yet, Eustacia is overcome by the excitement of meeting Clym to the extent that she is willing to change her identity simply to see him. This suggests that her current identity is malleable and able to change at her will when she perceives an opportunity in her favor.

Eustacia changes her identity by dressing up as a man and becoming a mummer to perform for the Yeobrights and the village. Dressing as a man is reminiscent of the beginning of the novel when Eustacia is standing on the top of the summit and the reader is unsure whether the figure is a man or a woman. Her gender change reflects her confidence in what she is doing and her determination to meet Clym. She is willing to take on a different role in order to meet the man that has been influencing her mind, displaying a strong character unafraid of being judged by those around her. After Eustacia decides to enact as a mummer, the narrator states "Eustacia felt more and more interest in life. Here was something to do: here was some one to see, and a charmingly adventurous way to see him. 'Ah,' she said to herself. 'Want of an object to live for—that's all is the matter with me!'" (124). Not only is Eustacia excited that she will be observing Clym for the first time, but that she has something to do with herself. This reflects the idleness that Eustacia faces since she does not have to work on the heath and is no longer in the fast paced life of the city. Unlike Thomasin who always has something to do, Eustacia is faced with boredom and this mummers role will give her an escape from her daily routine as well as the possibility of becoming someone else. She is also able to interact with the villagers without

them knowing that she is a part of them, maintaining the pride she holds against them.

Therefore, when Eustacia first observes Clym she is disguised as a young man. Eustacia is fully aware that she is female and he is male, while Clym is left unaware that a woman is observing him as he watches the mummers. This sets up an interesting dynamic as Eustacia watches Clym from the stage. She is able to freely and confidently observe Clym without being judged by those around her, while he is unable to do the same. The reader joins the narrator in Eustacia's mind as her thoughts of Clym are related while she lies "dead" on the stage. There is a fleeting thought of Wildeve as she ponders Clym, "She had come out to see a man who might possibly have the power to deliver her soul from a most deadly oppression. What was Wildeve? Interesting, but inadequate. Perhaps she would see a sufficient hero to-night" (128). Eustacia sees herself facing a life-threatening oppression and searches for the person to save her from it. Unfortunately, once Clym arrives Wildeve becomes insufficient to fulfill this position. Eustacia is placing Wildeve below her now that an educated man has arrived, showing her desperation to escape the heath. Eustacia believes that an educated man would want to go back to an urban setting and not remain in the wilderness. As she eventually observes Clym, Eustacia comes to a conclusion about her feelings towards him: "She had undoubtedly begun to love him. She loved him partly because she had from the first instinctively determined to love him, chiefly because she was in desperate need of loving somebody" (139). Eustacia has begun to love the man she believes will save her from Egdon Heath and the oppression she is facing. She is determined to love him because she views him as her equal and savior, yet the narrator points out that she also needs to love someone. The desperate need to love someone points to vulnerability in Eustacia that has not been shown before. Although Eustacia appears to be confident in herself and simply looking for someone to take her away from Egdon Heath, she also needs a companion in her life

especially because of her self-inflicted isolation. This vulnerability illustrates that Eustacia is not above humanity as she appears to be in the beginning of the novel.

The relationship that Eustacia and Clym begin to form after they meet is an interesting one. The title of the book in which their relationship forms is "Fascination," which accurately describes Clym's feelings towards Eustacia. Clym views Eustacia as the natural goddess of the heath and is drawn towards her through her beauty. The word fascination also implies a sense of no longer remaining in reality because of a complete overcoming of one's senses. A couple of days after having met, the couple reaches a point in their relationship where words become inadequate vehicles for communication: "They remained long without a single utterance, for no language could reach the level of their condition: words were as the rusty implements of a bygone barbarous epoch, and only to be occasionally tolerated" (192), Eustacia and Clym have passed the need for language in their relationship, seeming instead to connect on a level that is more metaphysical than physical. This is reminiscent of Eustacia's first communication through sighs at the beginning of the novel. Once the couple begins spending more time together and eventually marrying, the narrator observes that "They were like those double stars which revolve round and round each other, and from a distance appear to be one. The absolute solitude in which they lived intensified their reciprocal thoughts" (233). Eustacia and Clym have become one and are able to continue the solitary life Eustacia made for herself on the heath. They remain apart from the community, allowing their senses of one another to grow.

Although Eustacia and Clym have a moment of happiness together this soon fades upon Eustacia coming to the realization that Clym is not going to save her from Egdon Heath. She begins to perceive Clym's faults after coming to this realization; shattering her image of him as her savior. One of the main flaws she perceives is "that he did not care much about social

failure; and the proud fair woman bowed her head and wept in sick despair at thought of the blasting effect upon her own life of that mood and condition in him" (245). The use of the adjective "bitterly" clearly marks the disdain Eustacia is developing towards Clym. Although she does not socialize on the heath, Clym's social failure goes beyond her standards of class and society. By beginning to perceive Clym's flaws, Eustacia is betraying herself to the reader. The reader is able to perceive that since Eustacia is now aware that Clym will not be taking her to Paris, she is beginning to grow less affectionate towards him. This is reminiscent of a thought Eustacia has slightly earlier in the novel: "What a strange sort of love, to be entirely free from that quality of selfishness which is frequently the chief constituent of the passion, and sometimes its only one" (148). Eustacia is baffled by the concept of love devoid of any selfishness in it, which indicates that the love she holds for Clym is a selfish love. Her passion for Clym stems from the belief that he will whisk her away from Egdon Heath to an urban setting where they can live the life she wants. Therefore when this becomes a false hope, Eustacia begins to fall away from Clym and gravitate back towards Wildeve, demonstrating that her love is not only selfish but also superficial. This defining moment of realization is the beginning of a change in Eustacia in which the reader begins to perceive her vulnerable side.

After realizing that Clym will not be the savior Eustacia was hoping to find, the reader can begin to see Egdon Heath's influence on her all the more. Eustacia becomes "of late almost apathetic…. 'But I'll shake it off. Yes, I will shake it off. No one shall know my suffering. I'll be bitterly merry, and ironically gay, and I'll laugh in derision" (248-249), illustrating that she is still determined in her mindset. In order to shake off this "bitter" feeling, Eustacia joins a dance with villagers of the heath for the first time. Ironically it is here that Eustacia forgets her troubles and is able to release herself to both the dance and Wildeve. This is an interesting moment

because Eustacia has been carefully distancing herself from these people and keeping a solitary life both without and with Clym, yet this is where she receives a short wave of happiness once again. It is through forgetting about her troubles as well as her tyrannical self and releasing herself to the heath that Eustacia gains clarity and happiness once again; illustrating that if Eustacia were to surrender herself to the connection she has with the heath (as Tess eventually achieves with nature) she would be happier.

Eustacia is reunited with Wildeve during this dance, losing a sense of time with him. The dance brings the two together again and when Eustacia is talking to Wildeve slightly later in the novel she states "'I married [Clym] because I love him. But I won't say that I didn't love him partly because I thought I saw promise of that life in him'" (273). Eustacia is determined to believe that she did marry Clym on the grounds of love, but finally admits that there were other underlying reasons motivating her.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the significant moment of development for Eustacia occurs when she denies Mrs. Yeobright access into her and Clym's household. Right before Mrs. Yeobright knocks on the cottage door to make amends with Eustacia, Wildeve arrives. He tells Eustacia that he is still in love with her, has come into some money, and wants the two of them to leave the heath together. The news rattles Eustacia since she originally denied this man because he was part of the working class of the heath and would never be able to take her away from it; he was seemingly too ordinary for Eustacia. Thus, we see Eustacia wavering between lovers based on whether or not they can give her what she wants. When Mrs. Yeobright knocks on the door Eustacia believes that her knocking will eventually awaken Clym and states "'Yes—he is awake he will go to the door…I have a bad name with her, and you must not be seen. Thus I am obliged to act by stealth not because I have done ill, but because others are

pleased to say so'" (275). Eustacia clearly does not want to associate with Mrs. Yeobright and therefore does not check to see if Clym is fully awake. She is aware that by associating with Wildeve she is doing something wrong and blames it on those around her. There also seems to be a hint of awareness that by not answering the door herself, Eustacia is denying Mrs. Yeobright entrance into her home. The reader can perceive this once Eustacia realizes that Clym did not answer the door and the narrator states "Thought, misgiving, regret, fear, resolution ran their swift course of expression in Eustacia's dark eyes. She was face to face with a monstrous difficulty; and she resolved to get free of it by postponement" (280). Eustacia's ocular expressions convey her awareness of her actions in not opening the door for Mrs. Yeobright and what the consequences may occur because of it. She regrets her action and fears the result of what she has done; yet she realizes that she can put it off for a while, keeping Clym in the dark and warding off any retribution.

Unfortunately the postponement does not last very long due to Mrs. Yeobright's death, the final factor in Eustacia's breakdown. When Mrs. Yeobright dies Eustacia takes on the full responsibility of the woman's death by stating "'I am to blame for this. There is evil in store for me'" (293). Eustacia is owning up to the consequences of her actions, something she previously was not able to do. She is developing a sense of responsibility and realizing what she wants in life. However, this is as far as Eustacia's character will progress in her evolution as a tragic character. From this moment on she loses the characteristics that she had from the beginning of the novel and the newly achieved sense of responsibility. The fifth book of the novel changes tone as Eustacia slowly begins to lose herself to the heath.

In the Fifth Book, "The Discovery," Eustacia's former pride and confidence dissolve, and she becomes a tragically flawed character, no longer caring about her life or attempting to correct

the mistakes she made. Both her exterior and interior undergo a drastic change after Mrs. Yeobright's death. As Wildeve leaves the cottage one day he discerns Eustacia as a "pale tragical face" (303) from the window. Eustacia's face has never been portrayed as pale or tragic, indicating the change in her appearance perceived from those around her. She is no longer perceived as a strong and independent beauty that people believed to be a witch.

After Eustacia confesses to Clym her part in Mrs. Yeobright's death and they discuss the matter, the narrator states: "She assented in silence, and lifted her chin. For once at least in her life she was totally oblivious of the charm of her attitude. But he was not, and he turned his eyes aside, that he might not be tempted to softness" (319). This is the first time that Eustacia is unaware of the power her charm holds, which implies that she was consciously aware of it throughout the previous scenes of the novel and used it for her advantage. Although she still holds some sort of power over Clym, who is also very aware of her charm, her unawareness of it in this moment indicates the increasing fragility of her sense of self.

Eustacia begins to have suicidal thoughts after telling Clym the truth about not allowing Mrs. Yeobright in. These thoughts depict Eustacia giving up on life and not wanting to try to mend her mounting problems. As Eustacia begins contemplating ending her life, the narrator shows a different perspective of her changed person from another character:

> Charley has always regarded Eustacia as Eustacia had regarded Clym when she first beheld him—as a romantic and sweet vision, scarcely incarnate…he had hardly deemed her a woman, wingless and earthly, subject to household conditions and domestic jars. The inner details of her life he had only conjectured. She had been a lovely wonder, predestined to an orbit in which the whole of his own was but a point, and this sight of her leaning like a helpless

> despairing creature against a wild wet bank filled him with amazed horror. (320-21)

Charley is the son of Susan Nunsuch, the woman who strongly dislikes Eustacia throughout the novel because of her belief that Eustacia is a witch. Charley is a young, innocent boy who is providing the reader with a clear and uninhibited depiction of Eustacia. His perception of her is similar to the description provided by the narrator earlier in the text: he views her less as a human woman than an ethereal being that has been gracing the earth with her presence. He views her as a female trapped by the duties of womanhood and unable to truly be herself. Charley envisions her as the center of the world with everything, including himself, revolving around her. Upon seeing her in the condition she has fallen into after Mrs. Yeobright's death he becomes confused, which leads to feelings of amazement. The woman who was an ethereal divinity to this young boy has become a helpless "creature" unable to support herself because of her despair. Charley's perspective of Eustacia provides the reader with an understanding of how far she has fallen by this point in the novel. The innocent boy is shocked by the once proud woman's current appearance, indicting a significant change wrought in Eustacia by her slow descent. In response to displaying suicidal thoughts to Charley Eustacia states, "'What makes death painful except the thought of others' grief?—and that is absent in my case, for not a sigh would follow me!'" (324). Eustacia is beginning to take other people's opinions into consideration, thinking more deeply about whether or not those around her actually care about her disposition. Worrying about what others think about her character is something Eustacia did not bother with in the beginning, previously having focused specifically on her self and not bothering with much else.

Taking into consideration other people's opinions about her personality and having

suicidal thoughts are not the only out-of-character qualities that Eustacia demonstrates. For example, Eustacia takes a step back from herself and contemplates her state of mind: "But her state was so hopeless that she could play with it. To have lost is less disturbing than to wonder if we may possibly have won; and Eustacia could now, like other people at such a stage, taking a standing-point outside herself, observe herself as a disinterested spectator, and think what a sport for Heaven this woman Eustacia was" (327). In this moment Eustacia is viewing the possible actions she could have taken to prevent what is becoming of her; the narrator comments that it is more painful to think about how one could have succeeded and corrected one's mistakes than to just accept one's losses. Eustacia mourns for the cruel fate that she is dealt and blames the heavens for placing her in this situation. She also cries for the first time in the novel: "This outbreak of weeping took Eustacia herself so much by surprise that she could not leave off, and she turned aside from him in some shame" (328). Crying is a sign of weakness and is something Eustacia never had to deal with previously. She is literally surprised by her crying and is clearly shamed by it as well, indicating once again the control she no longer contains over herself.

When Eustacia decides to leave the heath, or rather attempts to leave, she connects with Egdon Heath in a way she was unable to do earlier. The connection occurs at night beside the fire, a place Eustacia has always felt most comfortable:

> She had used to think of the heath alone as an uncongenial spot to be in; she felt it now of the whole world…. As Eustacia crossed the fire-beams she appeared for an instant as distinct as a figure in a phantasmagoria—a creature of light surrounded by an area of darkness: the moment passed, and she was absorbed in night again. (237)

Eustacia has felt Egdon Heath a confining and unpleasant place to be in throughout the novel, yet

in this moment she views the heath as the most singular place in the world. Egdon Heath has become her world and she has finally accepted the inevitable. The "Queen of the Night" is engulfed in light for a moment, illuminating her figure to appear as a dream-like apparition to those who may observe her. Everything bad that happens to Eustacia occurs during the daylight: denying Mrs. Yeobright entrance, telling Clym about her involvement with his mother's death, and thinking about ending her life. Most of the time she enjoys outside is during the night and she seems most comfortable during the night as well. Yet, within the last moments of her life, Eustacia is literally lit up from a fire and is the only light around. The light consumes her as if it is erasing her identity and displaying her as a sacrifice to the heath.

Although Eustacia has this realization that the heath is the only place in the world, she still feels held captive by it and is not able to truly accept her having to remain there forever. However, the acceptance of Egdon Heath as her captor is significant because it brings her down even further mentally and physically:

> Never was harmony more perfect than that between the chaos of her mind and the chaos of the world without…. now that she thoroughly realized the conditions she sighed bitterly, and ceased to stand erect, gradually crouching down under the umbrella as if she were drawn into the barrow by a hand from beneath. Could it be that she was to remain captive still?...'O the cruelty of putting me into this imperfect, ill-concieved world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control! O how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all! (340-341)

The awareness of Egdon Heath's power over her has left Eustacia in a heap upon the ground.

The erect figure once standing on top of the summit, unable to be moved even by the powerful Egdon Heath wind, is no more. Eustacia is confused by her fate and does not understand what she could have done wrong in her life to deserve this outcome. Unlike Tess, Eustacia is never fully aware that the outcome is completely her fault; instead Eustacia simply blames it on the act of a higher power's vengeance. She reverts back to the first sound she makes, a sigh. This time the sigh is infused with the bitterness Eustacia feels towards her situation. Her loss of control is chipping away at her self and she believes there is nothing left for her to do. After this moment the heath becomes a demonic place for Eustacia with the rain feeling like the sting of scorpions and "malice in every bough and bush" (349). The darkness is no longer Eustacia's safe haven and she has slowly begun to lose her mind.

The next time the reader encounters Eustacia she is dead. There is an ambiguity in her death: did she throw herself into the river or did the mystical powers of Susan Nunsuch's voodoo doll work or perhaps the heath had something triumphed over her? One can only assume which hypothesis is correct since the reader is not present at the time of Eustacia's death. The character that had begun as an ethereal being is now

> eclipsed all her living phases. Pallor did not include all the quality of her complexion, which seemed more than whiteness; it was almost light. The expression of her finely carved mouth was pleasant, as if a sense of dignity had just compelled her to leave off speaking. Eternal rigidity had seized upon it in a momentary transition between fervour and resignation. Her black hair was looser now than either of them had ever seen it before, and surrounded her brow like a forest. The stateliness of look which had been almost too marked for a dweller in a country domicile had at last found an artistically happy background. (361)

Egdon Heath essentially takes Eustacia's soul away, leaving behind the body of a stately being. Eustacia seems to have made her peace through her death with the heath due to the dignity and resignation etched in her features. However, even after death Eustacia looks like an outsider of Egdon Heath. Her stateliness separates her from the rest of the people in the village and allows those viewing her to imagine that she had a happy life.

Since Eustacia has been removed from the plot, one would think that the novel is over, yet Hardy chooses to continue with an afterward which does not seem as successful due to Eustacia's absence. The Afterward focuses on an empty and desolate Clym as well as the romance between Thomasin and Diggory Venn. Eustacia's influence on Clym can be seen even after her death, as he becomes a wandering soul due to her lack of presence on earth. Eustacia's eventual loss of self-control and fear of Egdon Heath leads to her demise. Unlike Tess, she does not attempt to resolve her situation in order to live her life with the man she loves. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Eustacia never truly loves Clym or Wildeve, but simply loves herself. Eustacia is so wrapped up in her own mind that she is unaware of her ability to rectify the wrongs that she commits.

CHAPTER 3

Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891): Four Transformations Towards Becoming a Tragic Heroine

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In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Thomas Hardy creates a deterministic universe in which there is no perceived god. The utilization of this specific type of world allows Hardy to create a character that attempts to break free of a strictly social identity and society's rule in order to strive for control of both the past and the future. In Tess's mind society places a heavy burden on her actions, hindering or provoking her to carry out things she would not do otherwise. Therefore, the female protagonist undergoes several transformations both internally and externally as the novel progresses. There are four transformations that Tess experiences, each occurring after a literal or metaphorical death. Although Hardy divides the novel into seven titled phases, the division of four specific transformations demonstrates the uniqueness of Tess's character. Each of the transformations eventually advances Tess's mind and interiority to the degree that she is able to find an identity and assert herself definitively before her ultimate demise. However, one aspect of Tess remains constant as her transformations progress: her sexuality. Tess's power over men remains an unyielding force that cannot be overcome.

Time and nature also play integral parts in Tess's character and cannot be overlooked while discussing her four transformations. As the transformations occur, Tess's relationship to time remains ambiguous and her connection to nature remains a constant that continuously seeps into her life. At moments in the text time becomes something indefinable to both the reader and Tess, accelerating or decelerating as Tess retains a state of contemplation that creates an out-of-body experience for her. While nature is consistently linked to Tess in an unearthly way, indicating her inability to detach herself from it. The definition of time in this context is a malleable and indefinite progress of Tess's existence. Nature can be defined as the rudimentary elements that make up the world Hardy has created and it is completely separate from society. Although some critics may argue that Tess is a passive character who is controlled by some unyielding fate, the transformations shed a different light on Tess as a character. The transformations highlight Tess's ability to adapt when she encounters a form of death, a process that ultimately allows her to break free of society's hold on her, which none of the other Hardy women being discussed are able to achieve.

The first instance in which the narrator introduces Tess, the reader encounters a character composed of innocence and beauty,

> She was a fine and handsome girl—not handsomer than some others, possibly—but her mobile peony mouth and larger innocent eyes added eloquence to colour and shape. She wore a red ribbon in her hair, and was the only one of the white company who could boast of such a pronounced adornment. (20)

Tess is introduced not as the most beautiful woman amongst her kind, but as a woman who contains her own unique features that make her more enticing to those around her. Tess's eyes and mouth are the focus of her unique beauty; both add an expressiveness to her features that

cannot be ignored, illustrating a sensuality that permeates Tess. The second sentence in this quote sets up Tess as a part of the purity that these women contain, which is reflected in the use of the word "white." Tess's purity is an important aspect of her both before and after her first transformation, it is also the subtitle of the novel: "A Pure Woman." However, even though she is a part of these pure women, she is the only woman that has a red ribbon in her hair. Here, the red symbolizes something different about Tess in comparison to the other women present in the scene and Hardy foreshadows the metaphorical death that will lead Tess to experience her first transformation in the novel. The narrator expands and further enlarges upon Tess's appearance and exterior within this first encounter of her character:

> Phases of her childhood lurked in her aspect still. As she walked along to-day, for all her bouncing handsome womanliness, you could sometimes see her twelfth year in her cheeks, or her ninth sparkle from her eyes; and even her fifth would flit over the curves of her mouth now and then…to almost everybody she was a fine and picturesque country girl, and no more. (21)

Although Tess is identified as a woman, she still contains a youthfulness that has yet to pass from her features. The youthfulness is subtle and can be seen only on certain occasions, yet the narrator reiterates Tess's innocence in this depiction. To every one that is acquainted with Tess, she is seen as nothing more than a country girl, implying that no one has perceived her in a sexual or intimate light thus far. Portraying Tess with this womanly appearance, yet still containing aspects of her youthfulness, illustrates a distinctive quality she possesses at this moment in the novel. She has unknowingly been able to maintain a certain youthfulness about herself; through this youthful quality her innocence and purity become two defining aspects of Tess's personality before her first transformation. Tess's innocence and purity encompass her

and this is what attracts the narrator, reader, and men to her. This places the narrator in a unique position becoming both the storyteller and admirer of Tess.

When Angel Clare looks back on the dance as he is leaving town he perceives, "This white shape stood apart by the hedge alone. From her position he knew it to be the pretty maiden with whom he had not danced…she was so modest, so expressive, she had looked so soft in her thick white gown that he felt he had acted stupidly" (24). This perception of Tess, from the eyes of another character in the novel, begins with her simple white form, illustrating Angel's awareness of the purity she embodies in this moment and draws him to her. She is separated by what surrounds her and is a lone figure on the horizon, pinpointing both the reader's attention and Clare's on Tess. It is through her "position," presumably the way she is standing, that Clare identifies her as the woman he had not danced with. Her modesty and expressiveness draw Clare to her and cause him to recognize the consequences in not asking her to dance. This is important to take note of because it demonstrates that Tess's innocence and purity are compatible with an external sexuality that draws Clare to her before she undergoes her first transformation. Tess appeals to the opposite sex through her exterior features, as seen here and when she meets Alec d'Urberville later in the novel.

However, within these descriptions the reader does not yet receive any knowledge of Tess's interiority and mindset; only her external features are revealed, illustrating something about either Tess's mental state or the narrator. Hardy is attempting to show that Tess's interiority is not ready to be shown to the reader or is not yet fully developed. The narrator's view is also being established in this moment. The narrator is focusing on Tess and revealing only her outward appearance to the reader, demonstrating that the narrator is also enamored with Tess's exterior. This refers back to Penny Boumelha's critique addressed in the introduction: the

narrator is infatuated with Tess and therefore adapts a distinct male voice. The narrator clearly finds Tess's features pleasant and therefore neglects to delve into her inner psyche.

The reader first receives some sense of Tess's subjectivity before her first transformation when she is associated with a distortion in time. This moment occurs while Tess is driving her horse

> The mute procession past her shoulders of tress and hedges became attached to fantastic scenes outside reality, and the occasional heave of the wind became the sigh of some immense sad soul, conterminous with the universe in space, and with history in time…everything grew more and more extravagant, and she no longer knew how time passed. (41)

The word "mute" takes away the sound in this moment, focusing the reader's attention on Tess and her relation to the universe. Tess is taken out of reality as she knows it thus far and is transferred to a plane in which she is unaware of time. The wind is personified and becomes part of the "fantastic scene" encompassing Tess, reflecting Tess's own transcendental state. The wind becomes the sigh of "some immense sad soul," indicating this is the world's sad soul that sighs through the wind, mirroring Tess's own sadness about the possibility of leaving her family. Tess's relationship to nature and the universe link her to this depiction of sadness, showing that Tess is not living a life of happiness at the present moment. This is a moment in which Tess's emotional state is transferred to and reflected in the world around her through the symbolization of the wind and the regression of time, although she is unaware of the connection.

I

Tess's first transformation in the novel occurs after Alec d'Urberville has taken advantage of Tess's body in a sexual manner. He rapes her in the forest while she is essentially

unaware of his presence, illuminating that Tess's relationship with nature is not always a protective one. The fact that Tess is raped in the forest during the night highlights that nature's role in her life will not always be represented in a positive light. Although this scene is never explicitly portrayed to the reader, it becomes an implied action that can only have a devastating outcome for Tess after it has been fulfilled. When the reader first encounters Tess after the rape, there is a significant change in her character, her perspective on life, and the world presented around her

> on reaching the edge of the escarpment [she] gazed over the familiar green world beyond, now half-veiled in mist. It was always beautiful from here, it was terribly beautiful to Tess to-day, for since her eyes last fell upon it she had learnt that the serpent hisses where the sweet birds sing, and her views of life had been totally changed for her by the lesson. Verily another girl than the simple one she had been at home was she who, bowed by thought, stood still here, and turned to look behind her. She could not bear to look forward into the Vale. (102)

Tess is returning to the familiarity of her childhood home, which is slightly obscured in vision due to the surrounding mist. Although the mist veils half of what she perceives, Tess knows that the area is beautiful and yet on observing it after she has gone through her first transformation it is now "terribly" beautiful. The use of this particular adverb demonstrates something different in Tess's perspective of her past world, which is revealed to the reader in the second part of the same sentence. From her experience with Alec, Tess has begun to view the world in a different light. She is aware that although the world holds beauty there is another side to that beauty, something evil such as the serpent and the birds in the example given by the narrator. Although there maybe be birds singing in the trees, Tess is now aware that there is also the serpent

slithering on the ground beneath the birds. Her relationship with nature has developed into a complexity that encompasses the darker aspects of life. The quote states explicitly that this is not the same Tess that had left; this is a new woman with a different perspective on life. She is no longer able to observe her hometown's beauty without an awareness that there is a darker aspect always lurking beneath the surface. This also reflects Tess's own being at the moment: her beauty remains on the exterior, but her interior is no longer the untainted purity and innocence it was at the beginning of the novel. The use of the word "forward" implies two things in this moment: literally, that Tess is no longer able to observe the Vale due to her darkened vision; figuratively that she cannot look forward into the future. Her life has been altered drastically, even more so once it is revealed in the novel that she is pregnant. Nature clearly begins to reflect Tess's being and emotional state after the first transformation, "Sad October and her sadder self seemed the only two existences haunting that lane" (105), linking her directly to nature. Tess and the season are the only two things existing in this moment, emphasizing that nature will always be a part of Tess's life. The use of the word "seemed" illustrates that either Tess or the narrator is the one linking together Tess and nature, demonstrating her unconscious connection with nature.

Tess's new perspective on life propels her to contemplate her role in society, or rather her existence in the world, after her transformation has occurred. On walking back from the fields one night, the narrative reverts to free indirect discourse as Tess ponders her situation and meaning in life: "A wet day was the expression of irremediable grief at her weakness in the mind of some vague ethical being whom she could not class definitely as the God of her childhood, and could not comprehend as any other" (114). Tess's thoughts as she walks through the woods show a depth and complexity that were absent before the transformation. Tess's emotional state

is linked to the weather and she cannot determine if this is due to the God that partook in her childhood or some other ethical being that may exist in the world. Yet, Tess is unaware of any other ethical being except for the one that she was taught about in her childhood, indicating her lack of knowledge in certain areas of thought or perhaps her loss of faith. Tess's thoughts progress further as she continues her walk back home through the woods

> [T]his encompassment of her own characterization, based on shreds of conviction, peopled by phantoms and voices antipathetic to her, was a sorry and mistaken creation of Tess's fantasy—a cloud of moral hobgoblins by which she was terrified without reason. It was that they were out of harmony with the actual world, not she. Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren…she looked upon herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence. But all the while she was making a distinction where there was no difference. Feeling herself in antagonism she was quite in accord. She had been made to breakan accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly. (114)

This moment in Tess's mindset exemplifies her evolving connection to nature and what she truly feels about herself after the transformation. The beginning of the quote states that Tess is being controlled by not just her interiority and motives, but by the aversive voices in her head, which can be identified as the morality she is expected to follow in life due to the social construct ingrained in her. Tess is unreasonably afraid of this moral conscience that is encompassing her mind, declaring that it had to be her moral status that was not able to remain in reality. Tess places this moral status outside of reality and if her morality is essentially created by society then Tess is essentially placing society out of reality and herself within it. In this moment Tess is

identifying herself with "the actual world" in an attempt to identify herself. As she walks by the sleeping animals, she associates them with the "haunt" of innocence and herself as the "figure" of guilt. She believes herself to be intruding on the innocence she believes may be lurking in nature still and is no longer able to identify herself within innocence's confines. Tess is unable to associate herself with the innocence that she embodied in the beginning of the novel embracing instead a self-proclaimed identity of guilt, even though she was in fact Alec's victim.

However, the narrator suggests that this perception is false, that there is in fact little difference between Tess and the animals. Tess is unable to perceive that the animals she deems her "haunts of innocence" contain the darkness that all aspects of life hold. She is unable to see past their exterior and into the carnal nature that all animals possess, including humans. Although Tess has broken the social law of abstaining from sexual intercourse before wedlock, she has not broken any law pertaining to nature since it is humanity's carnal and natural instinct to have intercourse in order for survival. This illustrates that Alec is in fact in tune with his natural instincts and does not fear the consequences society may place on him, which sets up the dichotomy between the carnal Alec and the pious Angel. The reader can perceive that Tess believes herself to be at odds with nature as well as society, although the reader and narrator are both aware that she is in fact metaphysically linked to nature as depicted earlier and that this should allow her to release herself from society's rules and norms.

After Tess gives birth the narrator emphasizes her inability to identify herself without drawing significant connections between herself and society, emphasizing what had been touched on previously. Conceiving of "nature" and "society" in ways that the narrator points out to be completely false

> …the thought of the world's concern at her situation—was founded on an illusion. She was not an existence, an experience, a passion, a structure of sensations, to anybody but herself. To all humankind besides Tess was only a passing thought…Most of the misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations. (121)

Here, Tess is concerned with the world's opinion of her having a baby out of wedlock. The narrator states that although Tess believes society has a watchful eye on her, ultimately she is the concern of no one but herself. Unfortunately Tess is not yet able to perceive this in her identity, she is still very aware of what she believes society thinks of her, and the laws society place on her. Her actions are partially controlled and driven by her belief that the people around her are her judging her every move. This is why when Tess walks onto the field she moves with dignity and looks at people calmly while holding her baby, "some spirit had induced her to dress herself up neatly as she had formerly done, and come out into the fields…she had borne herself with dignity, and had looked people calmly in the face at times, even when holding the baby in her arms" (121). Tess wants to demonstrate to society that although she now carries the burden of an unwanted child out of wedlock, she can still be a part of society in a respectable manner. Therefore, society becomes a driving force of Tess's interiority. Although Tess develops further insight into nature and perhaps into her own identity after this first transformation, she is not able to break free of what she perceives to be society's hold on her or establish her own role in the world.

II

Tess's second transformation occurs after her baby's death and the completion of her short grieving process:

> Almost at a leap Tess thus changed from simple girl to complex woman. Symbols of reflectiveness passed into her face, and a note of tragedy at times into her voice. Her eyes grew larger and more eloquent. She became what would have been called a fine creature; her aspect was fair and arresting; her soul that of a woman whom the turbulent experiences of the last year or two had quite failed to demoralize. But for the world's opinion those experiences would have been simply a liberal education. (130)

To begin with, Tess is no longer considered a girl, but rather a woman after this transformation has taken place. She is seen as a complex woman, due to the expressions that are now etched onto her face and travel through her voice. Tess becomes more beautiful than before, a woman to be considered by others who encounter her. Not only is her appearance more womanly, but her soul has grown as well. The narrator separates his opinion from the world's opinion, once again highlighting his attachment to Tess. The use of the words "passed" and "at times" implies that both the reflectiveness and tragedy are only fleeting on Tess's face. Despite her emotional suffering she has yet to lose hope in searching for happiness and a purpose in her life. The narrator states through free indirect discourse, "She would be the dairymaid Tess, and nothing more" (131), illustrating that, for now, Tess is going to associate herself with the professionalism of a dairymaid and leave all other distractions behind. She is attempting to disassociate herself from the nature she is unconsciously linked to and the opposite sex she draws in unconsciously as well. Throughout the novel Tess is unaware of the hold she has on men and her strong connection to nature. Tess believes it is possible that, through work, she will be able to achieve this disassociation. The fact that this is stated through free indirect discourse demonstrates Tess's growing knowledge apart from the narrator's conception of her. Tess's thoughts are

displayed to the reader without heavy input from the narrator who is still present, illustrating Tess's own interiority as the transformations progress.

Following her second transformation that occurs due to her baby's death, Tess is more aware of time pertaining to her past, present, and future, "She philosophically noted dates as they came past in the revolution of the year, the disastrous night of her undoing at Trantridge with its dark background of The Chase; also the dates of the baby's birth and death; also her own birthday, and every other day individualized by incidents in which she had taken some share" (130). Tess marks dates in which something important has happened to her, which are mainly her interactions with death. This illustrates that Tess is aware of the darkness that invades her life and that it should be something for her to take note of for future reference. Tess "philosophically" keeps track of these dates, which suggests she wants to gain insight or knowledge about these specific date as patterns of ritual commemoration. This focus on death in her life and a need to gather intelligence leads Tess to contemplate her own demise

> She suddenly thought one afternoon…that there was yet another date, of greater importance to her than those; that of her own death…a day which lay sly and unseen among all the other days of the year, giving no sign or sound when she annually passed over it; but not the less surely there…of that day, doomed to be her terminus in time through all the ages, she did not know the place in month, week, season, or year. (130)

Tess seems afraid that she is unable to know when her death will take place, unable to physically mark it on her calendar. Her fear indicates that Tess is aware that she will and wants to have a future, but she's unsure for how long that may last. The date of her death rises in her mind as the most important date to mark down in her life, yet she is unable to take note of it because it is an

unseen and unknowable event marked in the future. Her death becomes something that is hiding from her grasp and is incapable of revealing itself to her. The realization of her eventual death indicates that Tess is developing a sense of tragic awareness.

As Tess makes her way to the Talbothays' dairy farm she contemplates the fact that it is not too far from the d'Ubervilles' estates "All the while she wondered if any strange good thing might come of her being in her ancestral land; and some spirit within her rose automatically as the sap in the twigs. It was unexpected youth, surging up anew after its temporary check, and bringing with it hope, and the invincible instinct towards self-delight" (132). Although the previous statement suggests that Tess is attempting to disassociate herself from her unconscious link to nature, this quote illustrates that she is permanently not able to do so. Tess is connecting herself to the earth in which her ancestors once resided. The connection she feels with this ancestral land evokes something within her, which the narrator describes in a simile connecting Tess to a twig. Her spirit flows up and out of her like the sap that flows out of a twig when broken. The spirit is identified as youth, something that fell out of Tess's grasp after her first transformation. From her newly awakened youth, Tess believes she can once again find happiness within her life and hopefulness for the future. Tess realizes within this transformation that she can maintain the possibility of being happy in her life.

When Tess arrives at the Talbothays' dairy farm, she remains in the same state she was in after her second transformation: a complex woman, still unable to maintain her own grasp on her interiority, with a surge of new youth radiating within her and a purpose to live her life:

> The irresistible, universal, automatic tendency to find sweet pleasure somewhere, which pervades all life, from the meanest to the highest, had at length mastered Tess. Being even now only a young woman of twenty, one who mentally and

> sentimentally had not finished growing, it was impossible that any event should have left upon her an impression that was not in time capable of transmutation. (138)

Although Tess has undergone difficulties and become more complex in her features, her mind is still not developed to the point that she is able to tangibly control it and be able to define her identity. She still has to mature within her interior, even though her outward appearance has changed and developed more fully. All the death-related events that have touched her life thus far could be changed and transformed into something better according to the narrator, hence there is space for Tess to undergo another transformation and continue to advance her interiority. Due to Tess's second transformation, she is not crippled by the events that might have changed another individual's life for the worse. Instead, Tess moves forward in time and her life, in hope of more pleasure and happiness existing in the world for her even after the horrific events she has faced thus far.

Tess's connection to nature and time mature as well, as her second transformation deepens and progresses. As she is walking through an uncultivated garden, Tess is described as moving "stealthily as a cat through this profusion of growth" (160), placing her directly into the moment as if she were an animal accustomed to walking through the garden; it is as if she is being stripped of her humanity. The fact that the garden is uncultivated powerfully suggests that she is interacting with nature itself and not a consciously constructed nature, connecting her firmly to the raw nature surrounding her. As Tess walks through the garden, certain elements of nature physically create contact with her, "gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, cracking snails that were underfoot, staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-slime, and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights which, though snow-white on the apple-tree trunks, made madder

stains on her skin; thus she drew quite near to Clare, still unobserved of him" (160). The elements of nature listed here are mainly secretions from both animals and plants, not being particularly pleasant, emphasizing the point made after her first transformation: other aspects of nature unknown to her previously have begun to seep into Tess's consciousness. The elements listed above suggest a sensuality pertaining to Tess she's the one rubbing nature on her "naked arms" and the stains visually stand out on her skin, identifying her in this metaphorical sexual act. Tess is physically covering herself with the pure elements around her, which are comprised of elements that are secreted. By rubbing the secretion into her skin Tess while Clare is watching her, Tess is unknowingly creating an erotic scene. After Tess's second transformation, nature makes a physical connection to her, something that had not been accomplished previously. Within this same moment time reveals itself as well "There was no distinction between the near and the far, and an auditor felt close to everything within the horizon. The soundlessness impressed her as a positive entity rather than as the mere negation of noise…Tess was conscious of neither time nor space." (161). Once again, within this moment sound is removed and the world becomes void of noise. This allows time to alter for Tess, as well as her perceptions to both diminish and heighten. She is unable to distinguish distance, but remains close to all the objects surrounding her. Tess is unaware of time and space once again as she is walking through the garden, but in this instance she is very aware of the harp's sound that is reverberating through her. Tess has become part of Clare in this moment, demonstrating that within her second transformation Tess is beginning to unconsciously desire a person of the opposite sex.

During this particular transformation Tess experiences an abundance of happiness, "Tess had never in her recent life been so happy as she was now, possibly never would be so happy

again. She was, for one thing physically and mentally suited among these new surroundings" (169), demonstrating that her happiness is something that she has never had the opportunity to feel and revel in before. Tess is once again compared to a tree in this moment of happiness: "The sapling which had rooted down to a poisonous stratum on the spot of its sowing had been transplanted to a deeper soil" (169). Instead of being compared simply to a twig, Tess has become a sapling that has been removed from the harmful soil she had begun her growth within. The "poisonous stratum" that the sapling has rooted onto can be a metaphor for her time with Alec, while the deeper soil becomes Clare. Tess has managed to transfer herself from Alec's abuse to Angel's love, demonstrating her growth after the second transformation. Tess is opening herself up to the happiness that she has been able to find through Clare and perhaps look forward to a future, something she could not contemplate earlier.

Approaching the precipice of the third transformation Tess comes to a realization through of her love for Clare. Once again she is not acting completely on her own will, but rather on behalf of Clare's feelings towards knowing her past. She decides to reveal to him the darker aspects of her past, a decision that she grapples with throughout their relationship. Even though it is stated that "She dismissed the past—trod upon it and put it out, as one treads on a coal that is smouldering and dangerous" (247), Tess feels the pressure of her past hindering her relationship with Clare and comes to the conclusion that she has to tell him in order to reach the full potential of happiness she can have with him. She is aware that her past may alter the way Clare perceives her and comes to the conclusion that she should be the one to reveal her past instead of someone else. Upon telling Clare about her past, he provokes her third transformation by stating, "'You were one person; now you are another…the woman I have been loving is not you…' He looked upon her as a species of imposter, a guilty woman in the guise of an innocent one" (290-91).

Clare is confusing Tess's own concept of her self and identity through stating that she is not the woman he fell in love with. Rather, she has been an imposter to her true identity, something that Tess cannot seem to comprehend and that jars her sense of being "the horrible sense of his view of her so deadened her that she staggered" (291). Tess detaches herself from her past after the second transformation and is therefore confused about why telling Clare about the past would make him change his mind about her. After this argument occurs, Tess removes herself to her bedroom where "the lonely Tess forgot existence, surrounded by the aromatic stillness of the chamber that had once, possibly, been the bride-chamber of her own ancestry" (297). In this moment Tess does not contain a substantial existence that she can connect herself to and identify with; she is simply connected to her ancestry and this is the only thing she is able to latch onto. The mention of the past to Clare and his reaction to it has made Tess more aware of her entire past life and has expanded to include her ancestral past as well due to the chamber she is residing in. This moment is also a reflection of Tess's curious relationship to time. The room is still and silent, lulling Tess into a state of unawareness about her self, yet maintaining a connection to her ancestry. The connection made to her ancestry is reminiscent of a time that has long passed, but remains in the span of this current time due to Tess's link with her heritage in this moment. Tess's connection to her ancestry stems from inhabiting the room of her forefathers and Tess draws it forward to merge with the present time. Since her existence has been forgotten the past and the present are able to combine in her mind. Tess's own past, especially the rape, begins to encompass her and becomes on of the defining features with her upcoming third transformation. The past becomes something Tess tries to rid herself of but is just as connected to as she is to nature.

III

The pivotal moment before Tess's third transformation occurs when Clare is sleepwalking, repeatedly shouting out, "My wife—dead, dead!" (311-12), eventually placing Tess in a coffin, foreshadowing her eventual demise. This moment also signifies the second metaphorical death (the first having been the rape); Clare has demolished Tess's identity after finding out about her past, and this translates to placing her in the coffin. Clare no longer perceives Tess as the woman whom he fell in love with, but rather someone he no longer knows, which essentially makes her dead to him. Although this third transformation may seem to push Tess backwards in her progress towards forming an identity apart from society, it actually allows her to contemplate her existence without an attachment to the past in her mind, "…disconnecting herself by littles from her eventful past at every step, obliterating her identity, giving no thought to accidents or contingencies which might make a quick discovery of her whereabouts by others of importance to her own happiness, if not to theirs" (347), suggesting a progression. Tess is slowly attempting to remove herself from her past and ridding herself of an identity that associates her self with the past. Everything that Clare has said to Tess is processed and this is the solution she comes to, although it is a seemingly impossible task to fulfill.

Within the third transformation, Tess's connection to nature becomes even more pronounced than before. In the first transformation she is connected visually to nature, in the second transformation nature physically clings to her body, and in the third transformation Tess physically interacts with nature's process concerning life on her own terms. The transition occurs when Tess encounters the pheasants strewn about the field, "writhing in agony, except the fortunate ones whose tortures had ended during the night by the inability of nature to bare more" (350). In Tess's mind nature ended the lives of some of the birds because it could not "bare

more" of the suffering. Therefore, Tess believes herself linked with nature while looking at the pheasants because she is also unable endure their pain, "With the impulse of a soul who could feel for kindred sufferers as much as for herself, Tess's first thought was to put the still living birds out of their torture, and to this end with her own hands she broke the necks of as many as she could find, leaving them to lie where she had found them" (350). To begin with, Tess is immediately associated with the birds as part of a similar suffering, implying that she is physically suffering inside on the same level as these dying birds. Her immediate thought is to kill each of the birds that nature had overlooked the night before to allow the birds an escape from their suffering. Through the action of killing each of the dying birds with her own two hands, Tess has physically taken over nature's role and attempts to do more than it has been able to do for the birds. She places them back where she finds them, creating the illusion that the birds died because of nature's release and not by a human's own hands. This also implies that since Tess is linked to the birds the only way to relieve her own suffering is through death. After she has killed the birds "she was ashamed of herself for her gloom of the night, based on nothing more tangible than a sense of condemnation under an arbitrary law of society which had no foundation in Nature" (351), indicating that Tess has learned something through this experience. She finally sees that her suffering has been the result of society's expectations, which Tess had been unable to internalize previously. Tess's physical interaction with nature seems to open her eyes to the role nature and suffering plays both in her life and the world around her. Through the act of killing the birds Tess is beginning to realize that Nature is not a separate entity such as God or society and that she is a part of this Nature.

Tess's interaction with nature while killing the suffering birds provokes her to assess her identity to some extent. One way that she does interact with her identity within this

transformation is through shaving her eyebrows off, "she mercilessly nipped her eyebrows off. Thus Tess walks on; a figure which is part of the landscape; a fieldwoman pure and simple" (353). This action transforms Tess into an individual that is less human than those around her. Eyebrows are a unique feature of the human body that allow human beings an individualized form of expression. Therefore, Tess has removed a form of her physical identity from her body that identifies her expressional state and detracts from her beauty. From this Tess becomes no more than a simple figure on the landscape, "virtually non-existent" (370). Yet the narrator states, "Inside this exterior, over which the eye might have roved as over a thing scarcely percipient, almost inorganic, there was the record of a pulsing life which had learnt too well, for its years, of the dust and ashes of things, of the cruelty of lust and the fragility of love" (353). Although Tess's outward appearance seems to have lost an identity and appear almost inhuman, her interior is alive and knowledgeable of the humanity and life that surrounds her. Although Tess is attempting to rid herself of her past, it has already influenced and penetrated her to a degree that cannot be ignored.

The dead pheasants are not Tess's only interaction and connection with birds in nature. There is an unearthly scene in which Tess observes arctic birds flying in the sky,

> [they] began to arrive silently…gaunt spectral creatures with tragically eyes—eyes which had witnessed scenes of cataclysmal horror inaccessible polar regions of magnitude such as no human being had ever conceived…These nameless birds came near to Tess and Marian, but of all they had seen which humanity would never see, they brought no account. (362)

The birds are completely quiet, creating a noiseless space as Tess observes them. They are defined as otherworldly creatures without names known to the human tongue that have witnessed

presumably terrible things that humanity has never and will never lay eyes on. These birds seem to almost make contact with Tess and yet they do not, perhaps implying that she will not be able to understand what they have witnessed. One has to wonder why these birds cross paths with Tess during this transformation. A symbolization the arctic birds may stand for is an organic form of nature that Tess is not connected to. The arctic birds have never been seen by humanity and the area of the world they come from is the true natural form of the world, untouched by humans. Although Tess is linked to the nature that surrounds her, these birds represent a part of nature that hinges on indifference and atrocity; the immanent will of Nature. Tess is not fully aware of the significance these birds hold, but the fact that she is observing them suggests that she is beginning to perceive the tragic nature of existence.

It is through her attempt to rid herself of the past that Tess is able to come to an epiphany about herself which is revealed in a letter to Clare, "I am the same woman, Clare, as you fell in love with; yes, the very same!—not the one you disliked but never saw. What was the past to me as soon as I met you? It was a dead thing altogether. I became another woman, filled full of new life from you. How could I be the early one?...I am sick as heart, not only for the old times, but for the present" (421). In this moment, Tess is asserting herself to Clare, she is confident in the woman she became with him and still is now. She is not looking into the future, but simply at the present her mind remains focused as she asserts that the past no longer affects her present self. However, she is unable to see how the past has shaped who she is now and therefore, she still remains attached to it. Although the past maintains a hold on shaping who Tess is, the past does not define her. From her past experiences, Tess continues to progress her interiority, but they do not determine her ultimate happiness.

There is a moment in which Tess is connected to nature while she is not present in the scene. While Clare is walking to see Tess for the first time after his return home, we see him "driving up the hill...which, three or four months earlier in the year, Tess has descended with such hopes and ascended with such shattered purposes…The pale and blasted nettle-stems of the preceding year even now lingered nakedly in the banks, young green nettles of the present spring growing from their roots" (465). The first part of this quote indicates an interesting correlation most people ascend with hopes and descend when they are not realized, yet Tess has done the reverse in this instance. One could interpret this in correlation to Tess's transformations: she began with hopes of a future but was denied this after her first transformation—the rape—yet this opened up a contemplation for different purposes for her life although these shatter upon each transformation, they rebuild in the next. The nature metaphor implies that there is room for new growth upon the old and dying. This can be linked directly to Tess, illustrating that Clare now believes there is still hope for their love and that there is some youthfulness remaining in Tess.

IV

Although the reader does not receive a direct account of what Tess is thinking before killing Alec, she states later to Clare, "I have done it—I don't know how…Still, I owed it to you, and to myself' (481). This is Tess's fourth and final transformation, Tess has reached a point in her mind in which she knows what she wants and is willing to do anything for it, including consciously breaking the social and natural prohibitions she could not break free of earlier. She wants is to be with Clare and attempts to attain the happiness discussed earlier. In order to do this, Tess has to destroy her past blight that Clare looks down upon, which is Alec. The act of

killing Alec represents Tess's attempt to correct her past for Clare and herself, asserting her freedom from conventional morality.

She has become an assertive woman, one that is able to simply say "I am ready" (495) to the men who take her to her death and tell Clare "This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have has enough" (495), demonstrating she is no longer disillusioned. It is within this fourth transformation that Tess reaches a stage of innocence that she had lost since the beginning of the novel "wrapped in profound slumber, Tess's lips being parted like a half-opened flower near [Clare's] cheek. The caretaker was so struck with their innocent appearance" (489). Similar to the beginning of the novel, there is a focus on Tess's lips in the scene, comparing them to a flower. From there the reader is taken into the eyes of the caretaker and is made to see the innocence that has returned to Tess. Through being reunited with Clare after literally killing the darkness from her past and released herself from society's hold, Tess has become whole and transcended to a state of innocence once again.

Thomas Hardy divides *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* into seven titled phases; the fact that Hardy titles the sections phases and not parts or books indicates a fluid progression towards a particular objection, in this case the end result of Tess's four transformations. The final and seventh phase is entitled "Fulfillment" illustrating that Tess has reached some sort of actualization or completion in her life. Tess is able to fulfill the completion of her fourth transformation by disposing herself from society and regaining what she had lost, Clare, there is nothing left for her now. Tess's death is reminiscent of the suffering pheasants that she broke the necks of, implying that Tess is also freeing herself from her own suffering. Each transformation brings Tess closer to freedom from society and the suffering that has been placed on her, while her connection to both her past, the past of her ancestry, her present, and the natural world each

strengthens. Tess's response to her death and her ability to break free of society are what separate her from Hardy's other female characters. She is able to steadily overcome the challenges presented to her in ways that her counterparts are not able to achieve in their respected novels, becoming the only fully realized tragic heroine.

CHAPTER 4

Jude the Obscure (1895): An Attempt to Demolish the Institution of Marriage

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In *Jude the Obscure* Thomas Hardy presents a world and society that is slowly being transformed by the uprising of modernity. Modernity creeps into the lives of each of the characters just as the natural world and traditions appear to mold the lives of Bathsheba, Eustacia, and Tess. The institution of marriage and its effect on people, especially women, is highlighted in this novel by the female protagonist. The female protagonist in *Jude the Obscure*, Sue Bridehead, is presented as an intelligent and opinionated woman who is unafraid to speak her mind when given the opportunity. She remains consistent in her character throughout the novel until marriage seeps into her life for the first time and she is placed as the antithesis of Arabella, Jude's first wife. After Sue faces her first marriage, the narrator slowly begins to reveal the flaws Sue's character has. However, Sue returns to her previous character once the marriage is dissolved, although she is weaker in character with the reader's knowledge of several of her flaws and she begins to feel the pressure of society against her. This leads Sue to begin to reveal her thoughts on marriage. Once the character Father Time is introduced to the plot and modernity is thrust into Sue's life even further, her character undergoes a drastic regression or

rather degeneration from her former character. She reverts from her former self, falling into the rules society and the institution of marriage has placed on her.

The first time the reader and Jude are introduced to Sue Bridehead is while she is not actually present in the scene. Before Sue is physically introduced into the text, Jude begins looking through his aunt's drawer and observes a

> photograph of a pretty girlish face in a broad hat with radiating folds under the brim like the rays of a halo. He had asked who she was. His grand-aunt had gruffly replied that she was his cousin Sue Bridehead, of the inimical branch of the family; and on further questioning the old woman had replied that the girl lived in Christminster, though she did not know where, or what she was doing….His aunt would not give him the photograph. But it haunted him; and ultimately formed a quickening ingredient in his latent intent of following his friend the schoolmaster thither. (72)

The introduction of Sue provided here reveals several aspects of her character to the reader. Although the photograph is not described in detail, one can assume that Sue contains beauty and a unique attractiveness in her features that cannot be overlooked due to the fact that her photograph haunts Jude. The word "haunt" implies obsession and Jude is drawn to her simply from looking at her picture, illustrating that Sue has unwillingly already ensnared Jude. This is reminiscent of Tess's unique beauty that draws in both Alec and Clare. Sue also lives in Christminster, a place that has become Jude's mecca, which pushes his determination to make it there even further and demonstrates a certain power that Sue already holds over him. It is significant that Sue is introduced to both the reader and Jude through a photograph. The photograph introduces the concept of modernity, which becomes an important theme throughout

the novel in relation to all the characters, especially Sue. The photograph also allows Jude to place his own perception of this woman's character before meeting her and he is able to set her up as an ideal woman without knowing her actual character. This skewed perception allows for a distortion in reality of Sue's character because when the narrator does eventually introduce Sue, the reader sees her as Jude has been imagining this woman. Therefore, her actual personality is intensified and much stronger than the woman that had been envisioned.

However, when Sue is introduced from afar her character remains an ideal one for the time being. Jude is overcome by this woman's beauty to the point that he is unable to speak to and interact with her. Therefore, the narrator remains at a distance from Sue only relating Jude's feelings towards her, "The consciousness of her living presence stimulated him. But she remained more or less an ideal character, about whose form he began to weave curious and fantastic day-dreams" (83). Although Jude has physically seen Sue, his shyness has kept him at this distance in which he can fantasize about her without truly knowing her and mold her into the woman he wants her to be. Therefore, the reader still remains in the dark about Sue's true character, even when descriptions of Sue are related it is provided through Jude's observations. For example when the narrator reveals Sue's features in more depth: "She looked right into his face with liquid, untranslatable eyes, that combined, or seemed to him to combine, keenness with tenderness, and mystery with both, their expression, as well as that of her lips, taking its life from some words just spoken to a companion, and being carried on into his face quite unconsciously" (83), although this is a closer description of Sue it is still heavily clouded by Jude's opinion of her. The narrator specifically states that it is only Jude who believes her eyes are filled with tenderness and mystery. This implies that Jude's perception is still clouded by his own perception of Sue, believing that she a woman of kindheartedness.

When the narrator does finally focus on Sue without Jude's influence on her personality, the reader observes only Sue, while Jude is removed from the scene. This is the first time in the novel in which Jude is not present and the narrator focuses solely on another character, revealing the importance of the moment. In the scene Sue happens upon a vendor selling "images," which turn out to be statues of Greek gods and goddesses. Due to the perception that Jude has placed on Sue, one would assume that Sue is a woman of Christian religion and would not stop by this vendor. Yet, Sue not only lingers at the vendor but also buys two of the statues: purchasing the goddess Venus, who is associated with love, and the god Apollo, who is the symbol for light and truth. Buying these statues presents a woman who is not rooted in Christianity and is willing to experience new worldly concepts. It also demonstrates that she is knowledgeable and somewhat unafraid of what society may think of her. Although she buys these statues she does keep them hidden from the landlady, aware that she can get into trouble for having them in her possession. Sue seems to be in want of her own private rebellion and this is something only the narrator and the reader are aware of.

When Jude eventually meets Sue he is surprised at the woman she actually is in comparison to the Sue in his mind. Sue is completely different from the fantasy Jude creates in his head, the narrator states "Jude was surprised to find what a revelation of woman his cousin was to him. She was so vibrant that everything she did seemed to have its source in feeling. An exciting thought would make her walk ahead so fast that he could hardly keep up with her; and her sensitiveness on some points was such that it might have been misread as vanity" (96), illustrating several things about Sue's character. The first aspect of her character presented here reveals that Sue expresses herself in a very vibrant way that leads one to assume she has a wealth of feelings attached to everything that she does, this is in contrast to Jude who portrays his

feelings in a subtle manner. Sue also values her own opinions and ideas to the point that she reveals a weakness if someone attempts to argue against her, unable to hide her vulnerability. The narrator states that this aspect of Sue might be considered vanity to some people, thinking so highly of her own opinions, yet not to Jude.

Throughout the novel Sue has unique opinions on what gender means to her, which are extremely important to understanding the character of Sue. These views separate her from the previous Hardy women and present the reader with a new generation of female character. The first time Sue's views on gender are hinted at is when Jude's aunt is relating Sue's childhood to him, "'She was not exactly a tomboy, you know; but she could do things that only boys do as a rule'" (105). As a child Sue was able to surpass gender roles and do activities that young girls normally would not or could not do in the eyes of society. The aunt makes a point of saying that she was not a tomboy, indicating that Sue still retained some semblance of her female qualities while overstepping the gender boundaries. When Sue escapes from her boarding school and goes to see Jude several important events happen that project more of Sue's unique views on gender portrayed directly from her. The first instance that points to gender is when Sue changes out of her wet clothes and puts on Jude's clothes. When the landlady comes up she mistakes Sue for a young man, completely changing Sue's gender from female to male. This confusion of identity is reminiscent of Eustacia dressing as a mummer in *The Return of the Native*, but is heightened and differentiated by what Sue says to Jude while dressed in man's clothes. Sue states

> 'You called me a creature of civilization, or something, didn't you?....It was very odd you should have done that…it is provokingly wrong. I am sort of a negation of it…. My life has been entirely shaped by what people call a peculiarity in me.

> I have no fear of men, as such, nor of their books. I have mixed with them…almost as one of their own sex. I mean I have not felt about them as most women are taught to feel—to be on guard against attacks of their virtue; for no average man—no man short of sensual savage—will molest a woman by day or night.' (141)

Although Jude has spent some time with Sue, he still does not perceive her as she actually is nor does the reader and this statement comes as a surprise. Sue views herself as a contradiction of civilization and not a part of it, which implies that Sue is against what civilization stands for and the limitations it places on her as a woman. Sue does not want to be considered a person living in society, but rather a person living outside of it. She continues to say that she has a peculiarity in her personality, indicating that this is one of the reasons she considers herself a negation of what society stands for. The main trait that separates her from society's ideals is Sue's ability to equate herself with men. Sue is unafraid of both their physical attributions and their knowledge; she is able to read the same books as men and talk to men on an equal level. She removes herself from other women's teachings on the savagery of men and focuses on her intellectual equality with them instead. Sue is able to disregard gender to the degree that she feels comfortable and equal amongst those of the opposite sex, even though society suggests it is impossible. Sue goes so far as to give an example of her intermingling with men closely, simply for the intellectual companionship they have to offer,

> 'We used to go about together…like two men almost…He wanted me to be his mistress, in fact, but I wasn't in love with him—and on my saying I should go away if he didn't agree to my plan, he did so…. People say I must be cold-natured,—sexless—on account of it. But I won't have it! Some of the most

> passionately erotic poets have been the most self-contained in their daily lives.' (142-143)

Sue almost considers herself a man while walking in the presence of her previous male friend. She seems to want a companion who is able to think at her intellectual level and is therefore drawn to men. Her beauty allows her to be close with a man, until that man believes he is in love with her. Sue denies this man's love on the grounds that she does not love him, which prompts the question of whether or not Sue can actually love. She answers this question in the second half of the quote, mentioning what society thinks of her. She believes that the life she is currently living is not as sexless and passionless as society may assume. Sue considers herself self-contained in her passions and able to love just simply choosing not to. However, the reader can perceive after Sue has married Phillotson that perhaps she is unable and scared to indulge in erotic passions due to the fact she is terrified to consummate the marriage. On some level, Sue seems to be telling Jude about her male acquaintance both to warn him and to make him jealous. She is showing him that she has interacted with males in her past and has not been afraid to deny them when they express their love, something Jude should realize and take from the story.

It is significant to look at Jude's realization that his views on gender differ significantly from Sue's because it demonstrates her opinions and mindset in more depth. As Sue is talking Jude believes "she seemed to get further and further away from him with her strange ways and curious unconsciousness of gender" (143), illustrating both his confusion of the woman that has consumed his life and the realization that Sue is different from the woman he thought she might be. Sue's opinions are highlighted here as being different from other women Jude may have encountered in his life and illustrates her advanced views on the role a woman plays in society. After thinking about what Sue has said, the narrator states

> If [Jude] could only get over the sense of her sex, as she seemed to be able to do so easily of his, what a comrade she would make; for their difference of opinion on conjectured subjects only drew them closer together on matters of daily human experiences. She was nearer to him than any other woman he had ever met, and he could scarcely believe that time, creed, or absence, would ever divide him from her. (147)

Jude is unable to overcome the concept of gender like Sue has been able to do in the past and is able to do currently. Although he recognizes they would be great companions due to their differing views and togetherness on human experiences, Jude is still extremely aware of Sue's womanliness and cannot remove himself from his feelings for her. Sue's uniqueness and beauty are what seem to draw Jude towards her. Jude realizes that Sue will always hold power over him and he will never be able to simply be her friend, which is exactly what Sue was attempting to warn Jude about.

In this case Sue is aware that she is drawing Jude in and is unafraid of the consequences in doing so, already having warned him about her ability to deny men. Although she is dismissive and rude at times while with Jude in person, she is able to keep him around through the forgiveness notes she sends him. Every time after the two characters meet there is usually a note sent to Jude from Sue apologizing for the negative and disrespected way she acted while they were together. There are about five of these notes that Sue writes to Jude begging for his forgiveness. These note indicate that although Sue presents a strong-willed and nonchalant attitude while expressing opinionated ideas that she is unafraid to speak aloud, she does not want to scare away Jude completely. The notes allow her to act however she likes in person to Jude while keeping him in love with her. In fact, Jude says to Sue "'That you are not so nice in your

real presence as you are in your letters'" (158), illustrating that to some extent Jude is consciously aware of what Sue is doing to him. The forgiveness notes begin to point out flaws in Sue's character. This entire situation opens Sue's character to reveal that she is vulnerable inside and in want of companionship; otherwise she would not attempt to apologize to Jude for her curtness and simply let him drift away. Sue's vulnerability begins to show through her exterior, after Jude has said this and their conversation has ended the narrator relates "Her being able to talk learnedly showed that she was mistress of herself again; and before they parted she had almost regained her vivacious glance, her reciprocity of tone, her gay manner, and her second-thought attitude of critical largeness towards other of her age and sex" (161). The narrator is demonstrating that Sue has been affected by what Jude has said and it is through her speech that she slowly begins to regain control of herself. The word "almost" suggests that the affect of Jude's speech has jarred her more than she would have liked. The narrator carefully lists all of Sue's exterior qualities that she begins to regain control of after Jude addresses her forgiveness notes. It shows the specific aspects that Sue contains such as her particular glance and manner, including her thoughts on gender. These are all aspects that Sue consistently attempts to keep in check throughout the novel that the reader may not always see, but here the narrator suggests that the awareness of these qualities are always present in Sue's mind.

One flaw that the narrator slowly begins to reveal and is more apparent after Sue dissolves her marriage with Phillotson is that she portrays a childish nature at times. For example the narrator directly says that in some matters Sue is a child, "Though so sophisticated in many things she was such a child in others" (233). Her childish nature is heightened when Arabella, Jude's ex-wife, comes back into his life. Sue begins to throw tantrums that negate the character presented when she was first introduced. She becomes so overcome by Arabella's

presence that she agrees to marry Jude, something she has refused to do since coming to Jude after divorcing Phillotson. This indicates a degeneration in Sue's character that is becoming apparent in the novel and is heightened with the introduction of Father Time, Jude and Arabella's son slightly later in the novel.

Sue's childish nature demonstrates a spoiled side of her character as well, illustrating another flaw in her character. She wants a specific kind of relationship with Jude and is unwilling to submit to his own wants. Her refusal to marry Jude also presents vulnerability in Sue's character: she is terrified of once again being ensnared in marriage in which she feels trapped and stripped of her freedom. After leaving Phillotson to live with Jude, one of the first things Sue relays to him is

> 'But I think I would much rather go on living as lovers, as we are living now, and only meeting by day. It is so much sweeter—for the woman at least, and when she is sure of the man. And henceforward we needn't be so particular as we have been about appearance….Should be two dissatisfied ones linked together, which would be twice as bad as before.' (249)

Sue explicitly tells Jude that she would rather live as lovers than rooted in marriage. Disregarding what society may think of this living condition, Sue would rather live unmarried with Jude than risk another marriage. She concludes that they would be happier if they were not bound together through the institution of marriage. Sue sincerely believes that the two of them would be even more dissatisfied than their previous marriages because both of them are coming from failed marriages. Sue continues along this vein to say

> 'Apart from ourselves, and our unhappy peculiarities, it is foreign to a man's nature to go on loving a person when he is told that he must and shall be that

> person's lover. There would be a much likelier chance of his doing it if he were told not to love. If the marriage ceremony consisted in an oath and signed contract between the parties to cease loving from that day forward, in consideration of personal possession being given, and to avoid each other's society as much as possible in public, there would be more loving couples than there are now.' (249)

Sue's speech demonstrates her feelings towards the institution of marriage and how it ruins the love between a couple. Sue believes that the flaw in marrying another person is that one is told to sign a contract to love the other person and that makes them rebel against one another. Sue suggests that if a couple about to get married were instead signing a contract that bound them to cease loving one another and not act like they were in fact married, the couple would not be unhappy. If the married couple were bound to act like lovers, Sue believes there would be greater success in the marriage. Having an open disdain against marriage reflects back on Sue being a woman placed on the outskirts of society because she is not searching for a marriage but rather avoiding one. Sue also mentions to Jude that "'What tortures me so much is the necessity of being responsive to this man whenever he wishes, good as he is morally!—the dreadful contract to feel in a particular way in a matter whose essence is its voluntariness!'" (204), demonstrating her frustration in her marriage with Phillotson. Sue does not comprehend why she has to do something she does not want to do in a particular moment, which reflects back onto her spoiled tendency. She does not want to be controlled by a man and is confused as to why she has to listen to Phillotson simply because the two are wedded. Sue proceeds to generalize about her sex stating "'Fewer women like marriage than you suppose, only they enter into it for the dignity it is assumed to confer, and the social advantages it gains them sometimes—a dignity and an advantage that I am quite willing to do without'" (250), demonstrating that she is separate from

other women when faced with the concept of marriage. Sue does not feel as if she needs to advance socially or gain dignity through marriage, believing she does not need these qualities in her life through marriage and rather contains them in her own right. She assumes that this is why many women actually end up marrying and that it seemingly has not much to do with love the two may share for one another.

Sue's conceptions of the flaws within the institution of marriage are in fact demonstrated slightly earlier than this discussion with Jude. It is in a previous conversation with Jude that Sue discusses her decision to marry Phillotson, identifies why she did it, and what she learned from it,

> 'before I married [Phillotson] I had never thought out fully what marriage meant, even though I knew. It was idiotic of me—there is no excuse. I was old enough, and I thought I was very experienced. So I rushed on…with all the cock-sureness of the fool that I was!…I am certain one ought to be allowed to undo what one has done so ignorantly. I daresay it happens to lots of women; only they submit, and I kick…When people of a later age look back upon the barbarous customs and superstitions of the times that we have the unhappiness to live in, what will they say!' (206)

Sue admits to having no idea what marriage consisted of before marrying for the first time, although she thought she had some idea. She hints to the concept of divorce, the ability of being able to end a marriage if one party believes they have made a mistake in agreeing to it and were unaware of the consequences. Sue suggests that she is not the first woman to experience this feeling but other women just live with it whereas she is prepared to fight for her happiness, indicating once again her distinction from other women. She calls the law-binding act of

marriage a savage custom that is in need of change with this age of modernity that the world is facing, Sue seems to believe that society's institutions should be part of the change towards modernity. There is a sense of entrapment for Sue in marriage that she wants to overcome by releasing herself from the marriage with Phillotson. She suggests to Jude while she is still married to Phillotson that "'[w]hy can't we agree to free each other'" (214), displaying the want for freedom that was mentioned earlier. The freedom Sue is referring to seems to be her want to establish intellectual friendships with males that do not lead to any passions or declarations of love from them, an asexual companionship. Therefore by dissolving the marriage she has with Phillotson, Sue would be able to create this ideal freedom with Jude once again. She implies that he would also gain freedom through ending his marriage with Arabella, indicating both Sue's projection of her own mindset onto Jude and her want to have him to herself.

Sue feels the need to further justify her marrying Phillotson with Jude besides her previous reasoning of not knowing what marriage entailed. Sue wants to portray that she had a say in the marriage to some extent and does not want to appear weak in simply having married Phillotson to end a scandal,

> 'But I haven't the courage of my views, as I said before. I didn't marry him altogether because of the scandal. But sometimes a woman's *love of being loved* gets the better of her conscience, and though she is agonized at the thought of treating a man cruelly, she encourages him to love her while she doesn't love him at all. Then, when she sees him suffering, her remorse sets in, and she does what she can to repair the wrong.' (233)

Sue states that she did not simply marry Phillotson because of the scandal surrounding her but because she lost faith in her own beliefs. She believes that the power of being loved by someone

else overcame her and dissolved her views on marriage for the moment, pushing Phillotson to love her further although she did not truly love him. Sue applies this phenomenon to all women, weakening her sex as well as her own beliefs in the eyes of both Jude and the reader. Sue mentions an awareness of perceiving the man suffering as she leads him on, yet there is no mention of this from the narrator. Therefore, one can assume that it is Sue's own suffering that makes her remorseful of the situation, displaying her spoiled quality clearly.

Sue is referred to a bird both literally and metaphorically at several points in the novel, each instance demonstrating her feelings of being caged in and kept from her freedom. The first time the narrator references her with bird imagery is while she is still married to and living with Phillotson, she "made a little nest for herself in the very cramped quarters the closet afforded" (212). The word "nest" conjures images of a bird creating a home for itself, something Sue has not been able to do in Phillotson's house as of yet. She would rather sleep in a closet than lie down next to her husband in his room. This illustrates Sue's fear of intimacy that was eluded to earlier: she is unable to physically be with Phillotson even though she says she loves him. Therefore, Sue creates her own space to sleep in separate from Phillotson, attempting to free herself from the marriage. The second reference occurs when Sue has finally agreed to marry Jude, Sue is in fact the one that makes the reference stating "Times had decidedly changed. 'The little bird is caught at last!' she said, a sadness showing in her smile" (258). Sue is directly implying that Jude is stripping her of a freedom she can only maintain separate from marriage. She immediately views Jude as a captor imprisoning her body, mind, and soul. The final comparison between Sue and bird imagery is metaphorically achieved. When Sue and Jude find themselves in a difficult and tight financial situation they have to sell most of their possessions, including pigeons that Sue keeps as pets. After they have been sold to a butcher the narrator

describes this scene: "An emotion at sight of them, assisted by the growing dusk of evening, caused her to act on impulse, and first looking around her quickly, she pulled out the peg which fastened down the cover, and went on. The cover lifted from within, and the pigeons flew away with a clatter" (296). Sue releases the birds from their imprisonment and from their fate, something she wishes she could do for herself. The act of releasing the pigeons symbolizes Sue's own want to escape her own fate, since the bird's fate is death one can assume that Sue believes her marriage and life are a slow death of her soul and intellect. She wants to free herself from the confines that society's rule have placed on her, especially within the institution of marriage.

As mentioned earlier, Sue appears to be the opposite of everything that Arabella's character is. When Arabella is first described the narrator states "She was a complete and substantial an animal—no more, no less" (33), introducing a woman who is viewed for her voluptuous exterior rather than her mind. Since the word "animal" is used in the description one can assume that Arabella is meant to evoke the carnal passions within Jude and not portray anything further than that. In contrast to this carnal woman is Sue who, as has been demonstrated earlier, indulges in her intellect rather than any erotic passions. Sue is unable to give into any carnal desires, believing that expanding her mind and maintaining male friendships is preferable. Therefore, Sue is everything that Arabella is not and creates a dichotomy between these two characters. As eluded to earlier, the reason Sue eventually marries Jude is in spite of Arabella's return. There is a revealing scene in which the reader can observe Sue doing something that she has never shown any inclination of doing before Arabella's presence,

> Arabella lay facing the windows, and did not at once turn her head: and Sue was wicked enough despite her penitence, to wish for a moment that Jude could

> behold her forerunner now, with the daylight full upon her. She may have seemed handsome enough in profile under lamps, but a frowziness was apparent this morning; and the sight of her own fresh charms in the looking-glass made Sue's manner bright, till she reflected what a meanly sexual emotion this was in her, and hated herself for it. (258)

Sue is observing Arabella while she is in an element of vulnerability and simplicity. She has the ability to look at Arabella in her natural form as she is sleeping and truly see who she is. Sue notes that Arabella is not as pretty as she seems in unnatural light and wishes that Jude would be able to see her now in the natural light of the morning. Then Sue observes her own reflection in a mirror and for the first time in the novel, she indulges in her own beauty. Sue is proud of her looks in this moment of comparison between the two characters. However, she realizes that what she is doing is evoking sexual emotions within her self, something that goes against her character and beliefs completely. Sue slowly becomes aware of this fact and chastises herself for this indulgence. Sue forgets herself in this moment while she's near Arabella, who is unconsciously bringing out the carnal nature in Sue.

Although Arabella displaces Sue in her mindset against marrying Jude, the two still do not wed. However, once Father Time enters into the lives of Jude and Sue, it appears Sue can no longer ward off the impending nuptials between her and Jude. However, Sue has not begun to completely break down from her original character and is able to use her wiles once more to convince Jude that marriage would be pointless,

> 'But having been awakened to [marriage's] awful solemnity as we have, or at least as I have, by experience, and to my own too squeamish feelings perhaps sometimes, it really does seem immoral in me to go and undertake the same thing

> again with open eyes…We are a weak, tremulous pair, Jude, and what others may feel confident in I feel doubts of—my being proof against the sordid conditions of a business contract again!' (275)

Sue uses the pronoun "we" twice within the quote to project onto Jude her own feelings about a marriage between the two of them, she corrects herself the first time and then does not the second time. It is Sue's subtle way of suggesting and manipulating Jude to feel the same way she does about marriage. She suggests that their previous experiences in marriage have opened their eyes to the harsh realities that the institution of marriage holds. Sue believes that the two of them are too weak to stand up against the demands that the bond of marriage would place on them. This is one of the last moments of defiance that Sue has in favor of her own opinions and beliefs.

Sue begins to reveal that how society perceives her character affects her more than one would believe. As she is having a conversation with Jude, Sue states "'I can't *bear* that they, and everybody, should think people wicked because they may have chosen to live their own way! It is really these opinions that make the best intentioned people reckless, and actually become immoral!'" (292), demonstrating the infiltration into Sue's conscious of the public's opinion of her chosen lifestyle. Sue believes that society should not judge the way she has chosen to live with Jude and the fact that she is being judged makes society the immoral collective and not herself. There is one moment in which the couple attempt to quell the gossip that their neighbors have been circulating by leaving town to get married "but the mistake as it was called of their going away so secretly to do business, kept up much of the mystery of their lives…A living mystery was not much less interesting than a dead scandal" (287). Although Sue is fighting for

her choice of lifestyle, she is revealing to the reader a sense of vulnerability and weakness to what is being said about her that was not portrayed earlier in the text.

Before Father Time commits the horrendous act of murdering his siblings and himself due to the overwhelming age of modernity, Sue depicts a further weakening in her character. After perceiving Phillotson while walking around town Sue describes what she felt upon seeing him to Jude, "'But I am weak. Although I know it is all right with our plans, I felt a curious dread of him—an awe, or terror, of conventions I don't believe in. It comes over me at times like a sort of creeping paralysis, and makes me so sad!'" (319). The quote further illustrates Sue's eventual surrender to society and its institutions. Sue admits to Jude that she feels herself growing weaker in her character, believing that it is because of her ensuing weakness that she feels a sense of dread upon seeing Phillotson in the street. Whether it is the guilt of having led Phillotson on or dissolving the marriage they had, Sue is beginning to believe in the bond that the institution of marriage places on two individuals.

Father Time is portrayed as a character overcome by the modernity that is infiltrating society. He is a child that is aware of the trials and tribulations found in adulthood that characters such as Jude and Sue are yet aware of. However, Sue places herself in the role of a mother to Father Time and believes she is the one to provoke Father Time's decision to kill himself and his siblings. Father Time questions if it is because of the children in Sue's life that they cannot find lodgings at a financially unstable moment in their lives. Sue answers in the affirmative and then proceeds to truthfully tell Father Time that there is another child about to enter their lives. This information overwhelms Father Time and he blames Sue for bringing another child into the world, stating that she had "'done o' purpose'" (323). Sue regrets having been truthful to Father Time about the new baby and views the information as the tipping point

for Father Time. The fact that Sue relays this information to Father Time highlights her childlike persona. She told Father Time about the other baby in a moment of frustration and unawareness that she is talking to an upset child, Sue did not think about the outcome this information may have on Father Time.

After all her children have died, the reader finds the truth in a statement made earlier by Jude, "'Sue, sometimes, when I am vexed with you, I think you are incapable of real love'" (231). Sue's reaction to the death of her children illustrate that she is capable of real love, something that completely reverts her from the previous character she had been. After their death she continuously states "'O, O my babies! They had done no harm! Why should they have been taken away, and not I!'" (326), displaying repentance and guilt on Sue's conscious. She clearly loved her children and is not able to understand why they have been taken away from he. Therefore, she believes that it is because of something wrong she did in her life that she is now being punished for. Sue comes to the epiphany that it is both her and Jude's lifestyle that was at fault,

> 'We went about loving each other too much—indulging in ourselves to utter selfishness with each other! We said—do you remember?—that we would make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature's intention, Nature's law and *raison d'etre* that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us—instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart. What dreadful things I said! And now Fate has given us this stab in the back for being such fools as to take Nature at her word!' (328)

Sue strongly believes that Jude and herself were too selfish in their relationship and should have been more aware of how they were perceived by those around them, namely society. She blames

herself for following the rules of Nature instead of society's rules; finally giving in to the institutions and civilization she has been so against throughout the novel. Sue is repenting for the lifestyle she adamantly wanted with Jude and views fate as punishing her for it. It is interesting that Sue uses the term "nature" as the guidelines she had been following throughout the novel because she never directly refers to it in her conversations with Jude. Nature also becomes a proper noun in this moment, emphasizing the role as a form of an institution it is enacting for Sue.

After the death of her children Sue is a completely transformed character. The narrator shows the reader how drastically Sue has changed after the death of her children from the character she once was,

> Sue and himself had mentally travelled in opposite directions since the tragedy: events which had enlarged his own views of life, laws, customs, and dogmas, had not operated in the same manner on Sue's. She was no longer the same as in the independent days, when her intellect played like lambent lightning over conventions and formalities which he at that time respected, though he did not now. (333)

The narrator compares the effect of the tragedy on both Sue and Jude. Jude grows in the way he is viewing life and society, while Sue backtracks in her views and becomes a different woman. The woman she is becoming does not use her intelligence to her advantage in life anymore and because of this Jude is beginning to loose respect for her. Sue is becoming everything she was against and is unable to live with herself without her children. This demonstrates that her love for them exceeded beyond what the narrator portrayed when they were still living.

Sue begins to not only reflect society but also Christianity, believing her children died as

punishment for her way of living. Instead of being associated with bird imagery she is now represented alongside Christian imagery, identifying her repentance. Jude finds out that she goes to church every evening, finding her laying "prostrate on the paving" (338) beneath the church's cross. This is not the same Sue who was able to purchase Pagan idols on the street or live unmarried with a man. In fact the last time Sue sees Jude "she knelt down again, and stopped her ears with her hands till all possible sound of him had passed away" (378), which signifies a religious connotation. Sue kneels down and clasps her hand to her ears, an almost prayer-like action, as if she is praying to purge herself of Jude entirely.

Sue becomes convinced that the marriage she had with Phillotson is still in effect because of the lawful marriage bond and that this is one of the main reasons that her children were taken away from her. She states " 'My children—are dead—and it is right that they should be! I am glad—almost. They were sin-begotten. They were sacrificed to teach me how to live!—their death was the first stage of my purification. That's why they have not died in vain!'" (352), relaying to Jude that what they had together was not real because society did not recognize it. Sue's children were taken away from her in order to open her eyes to the life she was sinfully leading; they died for a reason in Sue's clouded mind. Therefore, in order to heed the message of her children's death Sue reclaims her marriage with Phillotson.

Although Sue's fate does not end in demise like Tess and Eustacia, she reaches a metaphorical death by the end of the novel. Sue is unable to maintain her mindset after her children's death and society's pressures overcome her. Unlike Tess who is able to discard society and attempt to correct her problems in life, Sue surrenders herself to everything that she stood against in the start of the novel: both the institutions of marriage and Christian religion triumph over Sue. Sue becomes a displaced character and is unable to correct the wrongs that

have been placed on her. She surrenders herself to the institution of marriage, releasing all her own opinions and becoming a passive character unable to be united with Jude. Out of the four female protagonists, Sue Bridehead is the most advanced in her understanding of the role her gender plays in society and the need for change as modernity rises. Her character shows the evolution of Hardy's female protagonist. However, Sue never reaches a moment of tragic awareness to overcome her past and falls short in comparison to Tess.

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