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Thomas Hardy's Siren

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Thomas Hardy's Siren

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Chapter One	1
Introduction	1
Sirens: The Basics	2
Beasts	6
Chapter Two	17
Arabella: A Feminist?	17
Song	21
Truth	25
Chapter Three	30
Drowning	30
Conclusion	39
References	41
Bibliography	45

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ABSTRACT

The Sirens episode in *The Odyssey* is comparably short, but it is one of the most memorable scenes in the epic. Sirens are trying to stop the male narrative, the male quest of Odysseus with their own female “narrative power” (Doherty 82). They are the quintessential marginalized, calling for a voice, a presence, an audience in the text of patriarchy. The knowledge they promise, though, comes with the price of death. They are covertly sexual in Classical antiquity, but since the rise of Christianity, a new Siren emerged from the depths of the sea; instead of the sexually ambiguous embodiment of knowledge, she became fleshy, bestial, and lustful (Lao 113). In his *Jude the Obscure*, Thomas Hardy creates a Victorian Siren in the form of Arabella Donn, who personifies all of the misogynistic qualities of womanhood. She is deceptive, bestial, lecherous, and aligned with death and destruction. Intentionally or not, however, Hardy's Arabella is also paradoxically a bearer of truth and wisdom. This thesis will further textual study of *Jude the Obscure* and provide a new reading of Arabella Donn.

Chapter One

Introduction

Thomas Hardy's last novel is memorable: animals scream in their death throes, a child kills himself and his siblings because they "are too many" (325), and marriage is not the romantic institution of the past. *Jude the Obscure* questions belief systems, tests comfort zones, and condemns the most fundamental institutions, namely education, marriage, and religion. For instance the university system caters to upper-middle class students and denies working-class men, like Jude; women have few roles to choose from in that society, although women's rights were gaining ground; and Christianity seems impractical and out of place in the rising modern world. Writing towards the end of the Victorian era, Hardy critiques the stringent moral, social, and legal codes, which were unraveling.

One of the Victorians' most heinous offenses was their blatant misogyny. Misogyny manifests itself through an array of cultural expressions, from science and medicine, to religious doctrine, literature, art, and history, which includes classical mythology. Within each of these infected channels of ideology, women were proven to be unequal to men. Depictions of women often focused on their lesser status, from their inferior brains, childlike nature, and abnormal sexual drives (Kestner 31). Both Sue Bridehead and Arabella Donn comment on

society's harmful types of women and the need for gender progress. Sue becomes victim to the inequities of her gender by the end of the novel, but Arabella becomes, on the surface, a victimizer by conforming to the treacherous woman archetype.

Although the text is rich in Biblical allusions, including Jesus Christ, Samson and Delilah, Job, and Mary, Hardy also uses a plethora of pagan figures from the Greco-Roman period. The metaphors for Jude oscillate between Odysseus and Apollo, Sue becomes an ironic Venus, and Arabella becomes the classical monster, the Siren. Symbolically, the Siren connotes several types of women in the Victorian period. She could be a fallen woman, or more specifically, a venereal disease carrying prostitute. She might be a barmaid, she sometimes embodied the addictive qualities of opium (Kestner 9), or she might be just a common, predatory woman. In *Jude the Obscure*, Thomas Hardy creates a Victorian Siren in the form of Arabella Donn, who personifies all of the negative qualities of womanhood. She is deceptive, bestial, lecherous, and aligned with death and destruction. Intentionally or not, however, Hardy's Arabella is also paradoxically a bearer of truth and wisdom. By ignoring the narrator's obvious dislike for Arabella, the audience can uncover the harmful results of misogyny.

Sirens: The Basics

The Sirens episode in *The Odyssey*, which Homer wrote in approximately 800 B.C., is relatively short and comes at the end of Odysseus's stay with Circe.

Before Odysseus leaves her island, Circe warns him of the Sirens' deathly power:

Listen with care/to this now, and a god will arm your mind./ Square in your ship's path are Seirenes, crying/ beauty to bewitch men coasting by;/ woe to the innocent who hears that sound!/ He will not see his lady nor his children/ in joy, crowding about him, home from sea;/ the Seirenes will sing his mind away/ on their sweet meadow lolling./ There are bones/ of dead men rotting in a pile beside them/ and flayed skins shrivel around the spot. (XII 46-56)

By binding himself to his ship's mast, Odysseus can listen to the Sirens without falling prey to their song. They sing a song of promises, of knowledge, of time, past and present:

This way, oh turn your bows,

Akhaia's glory,

As all the world allows—

Moor and be merry

Sweet coupled airs we sing.

No lonely seafarer

Holds clear of entering

Our green mirror.

Pleased by each purling note

Like honey twining
From her throat and my throat,
Who lies a-pining?

Sea rovers here take joy
Voyaging onward,
As from our song of Troy
Greybeard and rower-boy
Goeth more learned.

All feats on that great field
In the long warfare,
Dark days the bright gods willed,
Wounds you bore there,

Argos' old soldiery
On Troy beach teeming,
Charmed out of time we see.
No life on earth can be
Hid from our dreaming.

(XII 220-245)

For such a (relatively) short episode in the epic, the Sirens have overshadowed most of the characters in the text and have become icons even in contemporary

times. Since Homer's *Odyssey*, Sirens have taken many, "often contradictory," forms throughout Western art, literature, and religion (De Rachewiltz 2). From asexual harbingers of death, to compassionate mourners, or ravenous sexual monsters, the Sirens are a site of contradiction and paradox (Lao 17). In the Victorian era, Hardy's well-developed character Arabella constitutes the quintessential Siren.

From her first scene in *Jude the Obscure* and throughout the rest of the novel, Hardy posits clues to Arabella's Siren identification. In the beginning of the action, Jude is pursuing his quest, studying at Christminster, when a group of girls interrupt his reverie:

On the other side of the hedge was a *stream*, whence, as he now for the first time realized, had come the slight sounds of voices and laughter that had *mingled with his dreams*. He mounted the bank and looked over the fence. On the further side of the stream stood a small homestead, having a garden and pig-sties attached; in front of it, beside the brook, *three young women* were kneeling, with buckets and platters beside them containing *heaps of pigs' chitterlings*, which they were washing in the running water. One or two pairs of eyes *slyly* glanced up, and *perceiving that his attention had at last been attracted*, and that he was watching them, they braced themselves for inspection by putting their mouths demurely into shape and recommencing their rinsing operations with assiduity. (33 emphasis mine)

Note the similarities between this scene from *Jude the Obscure* and Circe's description of the Sirens in *The Odyssey*. Arabella and the two other girls form the classical three, like the Graces, the Parcae or Moirai (the Fates), the Furies, the Harpies, and of course, the Sirens (Andriano 109). Hardy sets the girls in a brook, amongst the butchered pig innards which resemble the Sirens' rotting men. The girls are aware of Jude's presence and feign a deceptively pastoral pose, even amidst the smell of the sties. The Sirens, likewise, are very tempting throughout their song and what they promise, but their location reeks of death.

Odysseus escapes the Sirens not through self-control but physical restraint; if Circe had not warned him, he and his crew would have ended their journey on the Sirens' rocks (Billingham 32). Like Odysseus, Jude cannot resist the Sirens, but he has no mast to tie himself to; this scene initiates his tragic downfall, which Hardy catalogs throughout the rest of the novel. Jude is similar to Odysseus in another respect: he is on a quest. As in several of his works, Hardy creates a lower-class character in the form of Jude, who struggles to ascend the social ladder in *Jude the Obscure*.

Beasts

Something Homer neglects to do in his epic is to characterize the physical features of these deadly beings, the Sirens. Meri Lao writes that describing the Sirens "would have been superfluous because everyone [in Homer's society] knew then what later was forgotten: the Sirens were bird-women" (1). Siegfried Walter de Rachewiltz contests this opinion in his dissertation and states that Homer uses the Sirens because they were unrecognizable by the ancient Greek

citizen. Because the Sirens were minor, indistinguishable characters within his discourse, Homer was able to “turn them into . . . suggestive and ambivalent presences, endowed with the power of vagueness” (de Rachewiltz 3). Neither stance can be proven as fact, but Lao is correct on one point: from the earliest representations, “the Sirens were bird-women” who were “buxom, winged, and sometimes bearded [;] they almost always had the talons of birds of prey, less frequently lions’ paws, and on very rare occasions lower bodies in the form of an egg” (1).

Even though mermaids, or fish-women, replaced the Sirens in modern discourse, Victorians were aware of their feathered past through several prominent representations. For example, John William Waterhouse’s *Ulysses and the Sirens* (1891) and Gustav Adolf Mossa’s *The Sated Siren* (1905) characterize the physical features of the classical Siren, whose top-half is woman and whose bottom-half is bird (Lao 22). The most paradigmatic representation, however, resides on display in the British Museum; this piece, the fifth century B.C. Attic stamnos, links Victorian Sirens to their classical past (Lao 9).

Appropriately enough, Hardy does not neglect describing Arabella as bird and egg-like from Jude’s first meeting with her:

She whom [Jude] addressed was a fine dark-eyed girl, not exactly handsome, but capable of passing as such at a little distance, despite some *coarseness of skin and fibre*. She had a round and prominent bosom, full lips, perfect teeth, and the rich complexion of a *Cochin hen’s*

egg. She was a complete and substantial *female animal* - no more, no less. (33 emphasis mine)

Later, Arabella uses her bird-like qualities to seduce Jude. She keeps an egg in her bosom which initiates their consummation and her disputed pregnancy:

`I am part egg-shell. . .

`What is it?' said her lover.

`An egg - a cochin's egg. I am hatching a very rare sort. I carry it about everywhere with me, and it will get hatched in less than three weeks.' (50)

Although Victorians were aware of the Siren's monstrous past, most representations of Sirens in that period have regular women waiting on rocks or swimming through waves; a woman's obvious bestial degeneration did not need to be represented with "half-bestial creatures" as men often were (as Centaurs, Fauns, etc.). Since reading (and viewing) audiences assumed a woman's bestial nature, many authors (and artists) created womanly Sirens, like Arabella, who do not literally have wings or a fish-tail. Operating within the misogynistic discourse of the Victorian period, Hardy introduces a common societal theme in portraying Arabella, who embodies the "lower," physical part of nature.

While men normally represented the spiritual or intellectual in Victorian discourse, women signified nature and the flesh, which supposedly made them more bestial and simple. Charles Darwin accepts the "notion of the natural inferiority of woman" in his work *The Descent of Man*, and he also suggests that *Homo sapiens* could devolve (Dijkstra 211). Since Victorians assumed the natural superiority of upper-class white English men over women and other

racess, the evidence of devolution or degeneration was to be found in these “others” (Dijkstra 212). During the period, painters produced many works that aligned sexualized women with animals, and they often relied on classical or Biblical motifs, including the powerful images of Leda, Europa, Eve, Lillith, Medusa, Cleopatra, the Sirens, and other “monstrous” women.

Representing the quintessential other, monsters embody society’s anxieties, “moral lesson[s],” and “warning[s]” for their individual transgression, intentional or not, against the established ideology (Buchbinder 2-3). An ideology operates in the interest of a dominant group’s beliefs, values, and practices; art, literature, legends, and political and religious structures are means of perpetuating traditional hegemony (Buchbinder 4). Myths “are the stories people tell,” and they “teach important things or are an essential part of a people’s religions, or of their pasts” (Wilk 3-4). Ideology gives people an identity, and that ideology is always trying to suppress rebellion and marginalized ideologies (Wilk 5-6). Jack Holland defines misogyny as patriarchy’s ideology, which “explain[s] the domination of men over women” (8).

Allegorically, *The Odyssey* represents “the emergence of a patriarchal order and the accompanying need to put the threatening power of female sexuality under control” according to Adorno and Horkheimer’s Marxist *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Wellmer 6). Patriarchy as a masculine construct projects its fears onto female sexuality, which takes on a “life-threatening, anti-civilizing power” (Wellmer 8). Victorian society scapegoated women for several reasons. The Victorians experienced a surge of rapid change in all facets of their life, the

like never previously seen, but this change made them anxious about social development, especially in the era of Darwin and the rise of science. Theories of “social development” violently split between masculine “evolution” and feminine “degeneration” (Dijkstra 211). Victorians considered themselves as part of an Empire in classical terms, and they glanced back at their forerunners, including the Persian, Greek, Roman, and Egyptian Empires, which were built upon masculine ideals, but each one of which fell because of a deformed “effeminacy” (Proudhon qtd. in Dijkstra 211). Logically, they decided that when women have power, society turns powerless.

Other parts of humanity also split into more extreme binaries, including types of women. Kelly Hurley summarizes the dichotomies Victorian women had to choose from: “Victorian representations of women tend to polar extremes: women are saintly or demonic, spiritual or bodily, asexual or ravenously sexed, guardians of domestic happiness or unnatural monsters” (121). Although covertly sexual in Greek times, the Sirens transformed into overtly sexual beings with the rise of Christianity in the Western world (O’Shea Meddour 473). A Siren’s sexuality and gender become the most monstrous aspect of her *self* within Christian discourse (de Rachewiltz 81). The spiritual, androgynous qualities of the Sirens passed onto the Christian angels, and the Sirens changed into “the agents of perdition through sex” (Lao 58). A Siren no longer relied solely on her voice or music to lure men at this point in representations, but she began using her wiles and beauty to destroy men and civilization.

Although women embody the “brutish” side of nature, Hardy does not hesitate from aligning Jude with these “coarser” parts of life as well. The only person who transcends her body is Sue, and to her Jude admits his “animal passion” and “grosser nature” (250). Once again rooting his story in Greco-Roman mythology, Hardy makes a comparison between Jude and another important figure, Apollo. Like most gods and goddesses, Apollo’s place within the Olympian structure has conflicting, paradoxical meanings. He is at once the sun god and a god of music, but he also represents the combination of poetry and primitivism (although the primitive side to his character is small) (Hamilton 31). Hardy’s pagan or mythological allusions throughout the novel include Sue’s statues of Venus and Apollo. Sue ironically represents Venus, who, as one of the main Olympian goddesses, is the only sexualized one. The others, including Athena and Diana, are virginal and sexless. Jude represents the Apollonian figure, and as such, he suffers with the conflict between the love of learning and the urgent surges of lust that Arabella awakens.

Jude feels close to animals, especially those that are suffering throughout the novel. When he is a little boy at Marygreen, he communes with the birds in Farmer Troutham’s fields. He grows tired of scaring the tenacious birds away from the crop and allows them to feast on Troutham’s corn. Troutham sees this indiscretion and Jude loses his job. The practical side of life does not inform Jude’s sentimental nature. Arabella later remarks to Sue: “Never such a tender fool as Jude is if a woman seems in trouble, and coaxes him a bit! Just as he used to be about birds and things” (259). Women, like the birds, keep Jude from

reaching his full potential, mostly because Jude acts too often on lust and weakness; a relationship with a woman in this society meant taking care of that woman because she would have no other means of living.

The Sirens are not the only bird or bird-like women in the canon of mythology: the Harpies, Eurynome, Nemesis, and Eos all possess the characteristics of birds (Lao 2). One figure who is inextricably linked to the Sirens, through narrative and animalistic qualities, is Circe. Like the Sirens, Circe is another female figure who must be resisted by Odysseus because she has the means to permanently interrupt the masculine narrative (Doherty, "Sirens" 81). Her animal nature consists of two parts: the bird and the pig.

Circe's name in Greek stems from *kirkos*, which means hawk, and as a bird woman she shares many Siren characteristics. When Odysseus's men approach her island, they are entranced by her "enchanted song," (de Rachewiltz 9) which lures sailors through seduction and promises of comfort (de Rachewiltz 11). In *The Odyssey*, Homer parallels Circe and the Sirens as female deceivers, although they are women whom Odysseus can enjoy. Hermes warns Odysseus of Circe's tricks but tells him how he can take pleasure in Circe's bed; likewise, Circe in turn informs Odysseus of the Sirens' tricks but gives him the means to experience pleasure in their song (de Rachewiltz 12).

Circe's tale is a cautionary one: sexual depravity and becoming prey to a deceptive woman will lead to a man's degradation and degeneration (Dijkstra 321). Several scholars, including Dijkstra (283-84) and Kestner (12), consider Arabella to be a Victorian Circe, but this interpretation is rooted in the union of

Circe and the Sirens. Throughout Western discourse, Circe's blatant sexuality fused with the Sirens, who were originally more androgynous than later Christian representations. In Arthur Hacker's 1893 painting "Circe," he captures this fusion between the mythical beings; in the painting, Circe sits amongst men who are transforming into pigs, but under her lie petals and flowers, which as Dijkstra notes, give the impression of "a strange sort of livid, fleshy debris," just like the remains of men who perish on the Sirens' meadow (321).

In *The Odyssey*, Odysseus's men drink Circe's potion and are transformed into pigs. Throughout Western knowledge, pigs act as a variety of symbols, from gluttony and lust to fertility and pregnancy (Shlain 110). Whatever their meaning, pigs, with their flesh-like skin, represent the human condition (James 45). Again, Arabella's first scene in the brook takes on a new meaning when the relationship between Jude and the human-like pigs is analyzed.

Arabella's seduction of Jude parallels their interactions with pigs in the novel. She throws a pig penis at Jude to get his attention, and instead of repelling him, his sexuality awakens and he becomes attracted to Arabella. As Hardy tells Edmund Gosse in a letter, he wanted:

. . . to show the contrast between the ideal life a man wished to lead, & the squalid life he was fated to lead. The throwing of the pizzle, at the supreme moment of his young dream, is to sharply initiate this contrast.

(Harding 88)

While Jude is dreaming of a life beyond the common, he is slapped into reality by a pig penis which represents the working class. Laboring men use pig penises to

clean their boots (Harding 93), and the penis is also in the shape of a working tool, a corkscrew.

The base characteristics of the pigs become an essential part of their courtship. Arabella's first, unsuccessful attempt at sexually seducing Jude is presented after the scene where one of her pigs escapes. Her false pregnancy is precipitated by her other false pregnancy, the hatching of the egg: "She put her hand into her bosom and drew out the egg, which was wrapped in wool, outside it being a piece of *pig's bladder*, in case of accidents" (50). (Notice how the cochin can only hatch with the combination of the feminine egg and the masculine pig's bladder.) Their marriage ends after the butchery scene; Jude feels a connection to the pig, and Arabella treats it with apathy:

[Jude] went downstairs, lit the fire under the copper, and began feeding it with bean-stalks, all the time without a candle, the blaze flinging a cheerful shine into the room; though for him the sense of cheerfulness was lessened by thoughts on the reason of that blaze--to heat water to scald the bristles from the body of an animal that as yet lived, and whose voice could be continually heard from a corner of the garden. (57) ...

`Upon my soul I would sooner have gone without the pig than have had this to do!' said Jude. `A creature I have fed with my own hands.' (58) ...

The white snow, stained with the blood of his fellow-mortal, wore an illogical look to him as a lover of justice, not to say a Christian; but he could not see how the matter was to be mended. (60)

Hardy makes Arabella seem like the villain in this scene, but she is acting through practicality and the knowledge that “[p]oor folks must live” (59). Besides that, as Doheny notes, “Jude is content to have bacon, chops, and roast on his table, [but] he is not so easy about taking the action necessary to get it there, and he panics” (65).

Although Jude upholds them as noble beings, pigs represent the brutish lower-class. Jennie Kitteringham notes that “many of those in other social classes ... held [pig-killing] to epitomize the degradation and low character of those within the labouring classes” (qtd. in James 44). For Jude to butcher the pig instead of waiting for the pig-killer or allowing Arabella, the person with experience, to do it, he has once again confirmed his place within the social hierarchy, but he has also reinforced Arabella’s lower place. She offers to slaughter the pig but, “‘Of course you shan’t do it,’ said Jude. ‘I’ll do it, since it must be done.’” (58). He wants her to be useless, to be below him.

Like birds, pigs also have ties to their ignoble sisters, women. Hardy presents Arabella as bestial in connection with pigs, appropriately enough since in Greek and Latin slang, pigs represent the prostitute or a “derogatory term for female anatomy” (Harding 100). Arabella is a “female animal,” bird-like, pig-like, and lower-class; Dijkstra describes her as “the degenerative principle of woman graphically at work” (283). She offends Sue’s asexual sensibilities, and Sue describes her as “low-passioned” (254) and “too low, too coarse for [Jude] to talk to long” (256). Hardy creates a binary division between Sue’s asexuality and Arabella’s lush corporality. Arabella’s physicality is what separates her from the

classical Sirens, although she is birdy, and is what connects her with Christian Sirens.

As a sexual being and a monster, Arabella is “less womanly,” by Victorian standards, because sensuality automatically excludes maternity, which defined women (Andriano 112). Arabella’s sexual fervor also characterizes feminists and other wild women, and nineteenth-century artists and authors dealt with their feelings of “fear, horror, hope, and revulsion” for these women by creating classical characters, including “the nymphs, Sirens, and maenads” in their works (Dijkstra 250). In these representations, *The Odyssey* became “merely a convenient literary framework for a scene otherwise expressive of very modern cultural concerns” (Dijkstra 264). Being a Siren (or a Circe) means embodying the anxiety and fear that patriarchy has for women. Many critics, including Mary Jacobus, Michael Thorpe, and Jil Larson, uphold Sue Bridehead as the New Woman or feminist prototype in *Jude the Obscure*, but in their character analyses, they often overlook or reduce Arabella.

Chapter Two

Arabella: A Feminist?

Relationships define the characters in *Jude the Obscure*, but Hardy's creation is not a light-hearted affair like earlier novels of the period; in fact, marriage is no longer the main goal but an ethical act that deserves scrutiny (Larson 159). Kate Millet notes in her *Sexual Politics* that the novel "is on very solid ground when attacking the class system, but when it turns to the sexual revolution, Hardy himself is troubled and confused" (134). Hardy, however, presents the backlash of class systems and gender politics. The character Arabella illustrates the monster that society makes out of women.

According to Ruth Robbins, Arabella goes after hapless Jude in a reversal of expected gender roles. Throughout history, women are not usually the seducers of men because they are the ones who would suffer the consequences of exposure, namely a ruined reputation and a chance of pregnancy (Robbins 98). In the late nineteenth-century, however, it was more socially acceptable for women to be "flirts," which provided them with a sense of agency within a relationship. As a flirt, Arabella attempts to control her destiny and makes choices when others, primarily her father, would ordinarily be making them for her. Flirting is also a way to test boundaries as well as a way to "experiment and learn" (Larson 161). Pregnancy no longer carries the stigma for the flirt but transforms it into a goal which women use as a tool of power.

Like Jude, Arabella is also on a quest throughout the novel. Arabella's goal, however, is marriage and security, and she is aware that marriage is an exchange of power and property in that society (Tropp 151). How else was a woman to live? As she tells Sue:

Life with a man is more *businesslike* after it, and *money matters work better*. And then, you see, if you have rows, and he turns you out of doors, you can get the *law to protect you*, which you *can't* otherwise, unless he half-runs you through with a knife, or cracks your noddle with a poker. And if he *bolts away from you*--I say it friendly, as woman to woman, for *there's never any knowing what a man med do*--you'll have the sticks o' furniture, and won't be looked *upon as a thief*. (259 emphasis mine)

In the 1870s, new marriage legislation gave women more power, starting with the Married Woman's Property Act. Unfortunately, poor women from Arabella's class still suffered within their marriages in this time period. Wives who were abused by their husbands did "not report their husbands to the police because they were financially dependent on them and could not survive without their income if they were sent to prison" (Holland 195).

Jude is turned off by the seriousness of his initial relationship with Arabella; to him, "[c]ourting in such a business-like aspect as it evidently wore to [Arabella's father] was the last thing he was thinking of" (39). This society makes Sirens, who "trap" men out of survival motives into business-like relationships. The other two Sirens, Arabella's friends Sarah and Anny, seem quite familiar with entrapment: "'Caught un, my dear?' laconically asked the girl called Anny" (36).

An often disputed point in the novel is whether Arabella truly believes she is pregnant or not. During her courtship with Jude, Arabella is not as sophisticated as Anny and Sarah when it comes to “country matters.” They give Arabella advice on how to catch Jude, who is more apt to fall prey to the trap since he is not a “sojer,” “sailor, or commercial gent from the towns, or any of them that be slippery with poor women!” (45). Jude is innocent and “[a] countryman that’s honourable and serious-minded” (45); basically he is a perfect candidate for seduction. Arabella is hesitant to try to become pregnant before marriage, as that could ruin all her future prospects, but as her friends advise, “[I]ots of girls do it; or do you think they’d get married at all?” (45).

Being single means instability, which Arabella fears. Later in the novel, Arabella is single, briefly, and she voices her anxiety to Jude:

I am lonely, destitute, and houseless--that's what I am! Father has turned me out of doors after borrowing every penny I'd got, to put it into his business, and then accusing me of laziness when I was only waiting for a situation. I am at the mercy of the world! If you can't take me and help me, Jude, I must go to the workhouse, or to something worse. Only just now two undergraduates winked at me as I came along. 'Tis hard for a woman to keep virtuous where there's so many young men! (359)

Her father wants little to do with Arabella, although he helps her catch Jude again: he exclaims, "I'll do anything to get thee off my hands" (362).

Arabella fancies Jude from the first, but no scholars discuss why Arabella likes him. She is sexually attracted to him, as she says:

I've got him to care for me: yes! But I want him to more than care for me; I want him to have me—to marry me! I must have him. I can't do without him. He's the sort of man I long for. I shall go mad if I can't give myself to him altogether! I felt I should when I first saw him! (44)

Most of the village considers him a joke for his bookish ways and desire for upward mobility. On one hand, Arabella might like him for this precise reason; by marrying him, she might be lifted up and out of her situation and into a more middle-class, urban domestic life. Since Arabella is a burgeoning Siren in comparison to her friends Anny and Sarah, Jude might also be just an easy target for her budding ambitions.

Jude does not seem to mind Arabella's flirtation, even though she is so beneath him in his estimation. She is not his inferior, nor Sue's, in any way, however; she is practical, hardworking, strong, and pragmatic in face of Jude and Sue's unrealistic sentimentality. What Jude calls his sentimentality or higher feelings is in actuality a form of laziness (when he gets tired of scaring the birds away, he lets them eat) or hypocritical squeamishness i.e. uselessness (for instance, the pig-killing). Arabella is an answer to sentimentality according to Mary Wollstonecraft's standards:

I wish to persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that the soft phrases, susceptibility of heart, delicacy of sentiment, and refinement of taste, are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are

only the objects of pity and that kind of love, which has been termed its sister, will soon become objects of contempt. (317)

Although Arabella does not have book learning like Jude and Sue, she has her own wisdom, which Jude does not accept.

Song

Like Sue Bridehead and Jude Fawley, Arabella Donn's name has a deeper meaning. To take "Arabella," one must recognize that this particular name is relatively exotic for a rural pig breeder's daughter. Her foil, Sue, is rightly given a common name, and even her friend is called Anny.

Etymologically, "Arabella" breaks down into two parts: "Ara" and "bella." While "bella" refers to beauty, "ara" is remarkably close to "aria," something Hardy was probably aware of in the creation of his characters. Arabella's name, then, resembles "beautiful song or melody," something the Sirens employ to lure sailors to their deaths.

In mythology, the only song to overpower the Sirens' comes from Orpheus, who is a mortal son of a Muse. A passenger on Jason's ship, the *Argo*, Orpheus used his music to energize and delight the sailors. When the *Argo* approached the Sirens' island, Orpheus played a song that overpowered their voices and saved the sailors.

Hardy employs an Orpheus figure in *Jude the Obscure* in the form of Christminster, which overpowers even Jude's lust for Arabella and his love for Sue; Christminster, like Orpheus, represents patriarchal ideology and the rigid class system within. According to the *Orphic Argonautica*, a masculine "ode to

events of violence, danger, war, and destruction” overpowers the Sirens’ song (Lao 43), and Plato notes that Orpheus “despised the feminine” (Lao 44).

Orpheus’s function on the *Argo* is to make the lower-class men row the boat; he is not there to teach them or provide sheer delight. The joy of his music hides the real reason he is onboard: to increase productivity amongst the laborers.

Jude gets entranced, like the *Argo* rowers, by Christminster when he is a little boy who dreams of the idealized scholarly life:

Suddenly there came along this wind something towards him; a message from the place—from some soul residing there, it seemed. Surely it was the sound of bells, the voice of the city; faint and musical, calling to him, ‘We are happy here.’ (17)

Young Jude wants to join this happy community, and he asks Vilbert, the only person he knows who studied in Christminster, for his old grammars. Vilbert is only interested in selling his medical products, and Jude learns “[t]here was to be no intellectual light from this source” (23). Like the Argonauts, Vilbert concerns himself more with material gains (money, like the golden fleece) than truth or beauty. Unfortunately for Jude, he does not realize the reality of this situation nor the fact that it will repeat itself throughout his life.

Apollo and Orpheus are inextricably linked within mythology. Apollo, the god of music and the sun (light), creates Orpheus and endows him with these characteristics. Like Apollo, Jude creates the spectacle of Christminster in his idealistic, youthful fantasies and endows the city with noble distinctiveness. Christminster appeals to the working man (Jude is not the only one), someone

who sees the city of light as unattainable. Young Jude converses with another laborer in Marygreen about Christminster, and the man seems struck by the impressive goings on of the city:

'Oh, they never look at anything that folks like we can understand,' the carter continued . . . 'On'y foreign tongues used in the days of the Tower of Babel, when no two families spoke alike. They read that sort of thing as fast as a night-hawk will whirl. 'Tis all learning there - nothing but learning, except religion. And that's learning too, for I never could understand it. Yes, 'tis a serious- minded place You know, I suppose, that they raise pa'sons there like radishes in a bed? And though it do take--how many years, Bob?--five years to turn a lirruring hobble-de-hoy chap into a solemn preaching man with no corrupt passions, they'll do it, if it can be done.' . . . (18-19)

Of course, the man has never actually been inside Christminster, but this fact does not stop young Jude from romanticizing the learned city even more. To him, the place represents "a city of light," the site where "the tree of knowledge grows," a "place that teachers of men spring from and go to," a "castle" of "scholarship and religion," and a place that "would just suit [him]" (20).

Although the introduction of Arabella and her Siren song briefly derails his quest to study in Christminster, he decides to give her up after several months of dallying: "I am going away,' he said to her. 'I think I ought to go. I think it will be better both for you and for me. I wish some things had never begun! I was much to blame, I know. But it is never too late to mend.'" Christminster's pull

overpowers Arabella's feminine spell. Of course, at this point, Arabella tells him she is pregnant, and he stays. He says, wisely:

'Of course I never dreamt six months ago, or even three, of marrying. It is a complete smashing up of my plans--I mean my plans before I knew you, my dear. But what are they, after all! *Dreams about books, and degrees, and impossible fellowships, and all that.* Certainly we'll marry: we must!'

Throughout the novel, Jude's hopes rest within the gates of Christminster; Sue and Arabella later discuss his obsession, and as Sue comments:

'Of course Christminster is a sort of fixed vision with [Jude], which I suppose he'll never be cured of believing in. He still thinks it a great centre of high and fearless thought, instead of what it is, a nest of commonplace schoolmasters whose characteristic is timid obsequiousness to tradition.'

(301)

She asks him a few pages later: "Why should you care so much for Christminster? . . . Christminster cares nothing for you, poor dear!" (308).

Jude has already "glimpse[d] the correct relationship between man and the universe," or his place in the class system at this point, as Mark Asquith notes, and Jude realizes Christminster is not a learned Utopia (57). Jude's obsession does not stop, however:

'Well, I do, I can't help it. I love the place--although I know how it hates all men like me--the so-called self-taught,--how it scorns our laboured acquisitions, when it should be the first to respect them; how it sneers at our false quantities and mispronunciations, when it should say, I see you

want help, my poor friend! ... Nevertheless, it is the centre of the universe to me, because of my early dream: and nothing can alter it. Perhaps it will soon wake up, and be generous. I pray so! ... I should like to go back to live there--perhaps to die there! In two or three weeks I might, I think. It will then be June, and I should like to be there by a particular day." (308)

Christminster teaches Jude one main lesson, that appearances are deceiving, but Jude's idealistic hope, his "dreaming, striving, disappointment[,] and perplexed contemplation . . . marks his decline" (Asquith 58). The class system uses deception in perpetuating itself; Jude thinks that hard work and persistence will allow him to become learned, but Christminster does not operate like that. Hardy critiques Christminster and society through Jude's dialogue: "I perceive there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas: what it is can only be discovered by men or women with greater insight than mine--if, indeed, they ever discover it--at least in our time" (317).

Truth

Hardy offers two forms of (indirect) wisdom in this novel which both happen to be at odds in Jude's life. The first is a masculine form from Christminster, and the second is Arabella's more subversive feminine wisdom. Just as Arabella's first name has a symbolic meaning, her last name, Donn, aligns her with the Dons of Christminster. Hardy positions Arabella and the Dons as foils in one of the early courting scenes:

[Jude] talked the commonest local twaddle to Arabella with greater zest than he would have felt in discussing all the philosophies with all the Dons

in the recently adored University . . . and Jude, the incipient scholar, prospective D.D., Professor, Bishop, or what not, felt himself honoured and glorified by the condescension of this handsome country wench in agreeing to take a walk with him in her Sunday frock and ribbons. (40)

Within this parallelism, Christminster represents (patriarchal) culture, and Arabella embodies the natural world.

Although Arabella (inadvertently?) deceives Jude with her false dimples, hair, and background, she does not lie to him in their marriage, as she tells him in her letter. Actually, if Jude would listen to her instead of projecting his desires onto her person, he would hear practical truth and wisdom in her words.

According to Salecl, the Sirens provide “knowledge which the listeners do not want to know anything about” (3). From Arabella, Jude could learn that he is as far away from Christminster as Arabella (and for that matter, Sue) are from men’s institutions and spaces.

The narrator and many readers marginalize and denigrate Arabella in *Jude the Obscure* just as they create monsters out of the Sirens in *The Odyssey*. As Lillian Eileen Doherty mentions in her article, “female figures constitute a series of threats or false goals for the male hero,” and the threats include “Kalypso and [Circe]” as well as the Sirens (“Sirens” 81). The Sirens’ monstrosity and ability to cause danger lies in their ability to interrupt the *male* narrative while “appeal[ing] to no authority but their own knowledge” (“Sirens” 85). In this way, the Sirens represent the oral tradition (as singers) while Orpheus, who

overpowers the Sirens, represents the written word (Orpheus is credited with creating the alphabet), which is steeped in patriarchy (Lao 46).

Throughout history, Sirens never lured or deceived women; they interacted solely with sailors, who were always men ("Sirens" 84). By stalling the narrative and preventing the sailors from going home, the Sirens destroy the domestic sphere, or as Renata Salecl phrases it, they present a danger "to family life" and "social order" (2). In Arabella's hotel room, her allure has no effect on Sue, who "was wicked enough despite her penitence, to wish for a moment that Jude could behold her forerunner now, with the daylight full upon her . . . a frowsiness was apparent this morning" (258). The Sirens, like Arabella, do threaten women, albeit indirectly. Jude uses Arabella's promise of sex to pressure Sue into a sexual relationship. Sue does not want to live as husband and wife in any way; she prefers the celibate, platonic lifestyle with Jude.

Instead of roosting on nests, which normally represent birth and fertility, the Sirens roost on decay; birth and death are intertwined, for the Sirens exist outside of time. Arabella may not be immortal, but she creates a sort of timelessness by giving birth to Father Time, who was "Age masquerading as Juvenility, and doing it so badly that his real self showed through crevices" (266). Time means nothing to the Sirens; everything is an eternal cycle of birth and death. Father Time embodies this vision, like other children of the new generation who "seem to see all of [life's] terrors before they are old enough to have staying power to resist them" (326).

Hardy once again emphasizes Arabella's unwomanly state with the introduction of Father Time. She has no maternal cravings or ambitions when it comes to childrearing and feels little sadness when he tragically commits suicide. The sailors who hear the Sirens' song also perish in a grotesque manner, according to Homer. The rotting carcasses of sailors lie underneath the Sirens while they await their next victims. Perhaps the putrid deaths relate to the Sirens' song and feminine theme; decay and rot are part of death, although that aspect is not something that would usually comprise a male epic narrative of war. In epics, deaths are glorious and noble, and they occur during masculine pursuits. The alternative comes from the Sirens; death and decay are tied into the circle of life, to the eternal feminine, to nature. Arabella is aware of the balance of nature; to her, sentiment does not enter the farmyard, where butchery and death mean life. At the end of the novel, Jude's impending death gives her a moment of pause, but she already has her eye on Vilbert as her next beau because marriage means her life, her survival.

When the Sirens sing and lure men to their meadow, do they allow the men to know before they die? In Homer's work, the Sirens promise Odysseus truth, the price being, of course, death. This intersection of truth and knowing parallels Plato's allegory of the cave. Once a man has stepped out of the cave, he cannot return back to the false world of shadows (Lao 43). Similarly, once a man hears the song of the Sirens and experiences enlightenment, he must die. Odysseus knows that the Sirens will kill him, but he cannot help but want to go to them; he is attracted to the love of knowing.

Hardy, not Jude, recognizes Arabella's power of promise, of truth, in this novel, which is why he gives her the last word: "[Sue] may swear that on her knees to the holy cross upon her necklace till she's hoarse, but it won't be true!" said Arabella. 'She's never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's as he is now!'" (397). Although Jude could learn from Arabella, as well as Sue, about harmful gender practices, he has a hard time empathizing with a woman's plight in that society. Jude criticizes gender roles as such:

. . . it is no worse for the woman than for the man. That's what some women fail to see, and instead of protesting against the conditions they protest against the man, the other victim; just as a woman in a crowd will abuse the man who crushes against her, when he is only the helpless transmitter of the pressure put upon him. (277)

It actually is worse for the woman than for the man; Jude's livelihood depends on himself, not another man. Unlike Sue, he is not constantly pregnant. Unlike Arabella, he is not a burden to his father. Jude recognizes the class system's problems, but he does not realize how difficult it is to be a woman, even though Sue and Arabella's lives illustrate that lesson.

Chapter Three

Drowning

Sirens are constantly changing and are “ready to embrace the newest semblances” over time (Lao 83). Lao hypothesizes that the evolution of the Siren bird to the Siren fish was due to a mistranslation. As Lao notes, “[w]ing and fin, in Greek, are both designated by the same word, *pterughion*; in Latin, only a vowel separates *pennis* and *pinnis*” (82). In addition to being fishy, Sirens also became lustier and more bodily with the rise of Christianity. They started singing less but started carrying accessories, including musical instruments, mirrors, and combs (Lao 108). Their bodies, not their music, lured sailors to their deaths.

Arabella deceptively uses her body, her only commodity, to lure Jude, who has never felt lust before. She begins her seduction at their first meeting after she emerges from amongst the water and Jude remains:

They talked a little more and a little more, as they stood regarding each other and leaning against the hand-rail of the bridge. *The unvoiced call of woman to man, which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella's personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention - almost against his will, and in a way new to his experience.* It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that till this moment Jude had never looked at a woman to consider her as such, but had vaguely regarded the sex as beings outside his life and purposes. *He gazed from her eyes to her mouth, thence to her bosom, and to her full*

round naked arms, wet, mottled with the chill of the water, and firm as marble. (35 emphasis mine)

Suddenly, Jude's plans of scholarly endeavors fade away as he becomes entranced by his Siren: "The intentions as to reading, working, and learning, which he had so precisely formulated only a few minutes earlier, were suffering a curious collapse into a corner, he knew not how" (36). Jude contemplates whether or not he should stand her up, but his better judgment is clouded by her Siren song, i.e. lust:

In short, as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him - something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto. This seemed to care little for his reason and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions, and moved him along, as a violent schoolmaster a schoolboy he has seized by the collar, in a direction which tended towards the embrace of a woman for whom he had no respect, and whose life had nothing in common with his own except locality. (38-9 emphasis mine)

Jude has the ability to make choices, but his weakness will not allow him to forego Arabella, though he blames her for his attraction. Throughout their courtship, Arabella uses her body to entice Jude in several ways. When they first meet, she uses her gift of artificial dimple making:

As the girl drew nearer ..., she gave without Jude perceiving it, an adroit little suck to the interior of each of her cheeks in succession, by which curious and original manoeuvre she brought as by magic upon its smooth

and rotund surface a perfect dimple, which she was able to retain there as long as she continued to smile. This production of dimples at will was a not unknown operation, which many attempted, but only a few succeeded in accomplishing. (34)

After they are married, Jude believes he has been tricked:

A little chill overspread him at her first unrobing. A long tail of hair, which Arabella wore twisted up in an enormous knob at the back of her head, was deliberately unfastened, stroked out, and hung upon the *looking-glass* which he had bought her. (53 emphasis mine)

Jude has married, as Elisabeth G. Gitter states, one of the “most heavy-handed of mermaids” (941) who uses her luxurious, displayed hair as a “sexual invitation” to men throughout her life (938).

The above scene places Arabella near a mirror, and Hardy places her near that object throughout the novel. Jude watches her in a mirror in the pub. There is a mirror in her hotel room when Sue comes to visit her. She curls her hair and practices dimple-making in the mirror in the scene before his death. Hardy also places her near natural mirrors, water, throughout. Like a more contemporary Siren or mermaid, Arabella comes accessorized. Theoretically, the mirror reflects her person, with her desires and feminine self, and “to prevent loss of self[,] she had to reassure herself continually of her existence by looking in that . . . mirror” (Dijkstra 132). Without a mirror or with a broken mirror, a woman does not have a place to produce her self identity, which makes her insane (Dijkstra 133-34). Without a mirror, she will only be able to reflect the

male and his desires (Dijkstra 133). Jude reflects his desires onto Arabella, but she maintains her self reflection throughout the novel. Sue, on the other hand, has no mirror, and her identity oscillates between unsuccessfully trying to develop itself independently of society or reflecting Jude's desires.

At first, Jude reflects the desire that Arabella is a pastoral innocent, which she certainly is not, and Jude's mistake, which was "born of his innocence," leads him to believe his marriage is "an entrapment born of Arabella's cunning" (73). If anyone is deceiving Jude, it is Jude alone. For instance, in the scene in the pub with the Samson and Delilah picture, Arabella refuses to drink the beer because she tastes a defect. Jude does not ask her how she knows this, but patronizingly remarks: "How much you know!" (41). Like Jude, Homer makes Odysseus traverse dangerous landscapes amongst dangerous women, but Odysseus always had a choice to take another route, another path. Odysseus is simply unable to deny himself pleasure, even unto death.

The providers of pleasure, the Sirens, lure sailors to their deaths; their pleasurable song includes promises of knowledge and truth, not just sex, but the men die when their ships crash on the rocks and they drown. Jude is in a process of drowning throughout the novel. At first, out of marriage troubles and misery, he literally attempts to drown himself:

In the dusk of that evening Jude walked away from his old aunt's as if to go home. But as soon as he reached the open down he struck out upon it till he came to a large round pond. The frost continued, though it was not particularly sharp, and the larger stars overhead came out slow and

flickering. Jude put one foot on the edge of the ice, and then the other: it cracked under his weight; but this did not deter him. He ploughed his way inward to the centre, the ice making sharp noises as he went. When just about the middle he looked around him and gave a jump. The cracking repeated itself; but he did not go down. He jumped again, but the cracking had ceased. Jude went back to the edge, and stepped upon the ground. It was curious, he thought. What was he reserved for? He supposed he was not a sufficiently dignified person for suicide. Peaceful death abhorred him as a subject, and would not take him. (65)

Metaphoric drowning seems to suit him better, as he joins the ranks of his fellow working-class men:

What could he do of a lower kind than self-extermination; what was there less noble, more in keeping with his present degraded position? He could get drunk. Of course that was it; he had forgotten. Drinking was the regular, stereotyped resource of the despairing worthless. He began to see now why some men boozed at inns. He struck down the hill northwards and came to an obscure public-house. . . . He called for liquor and drank briskly for an hour or more. (65)

Alcohol is one way to drown oneself, and historically, barmaids were the Sirens who led men to their ruin through this type of drink. The rise of the barmaid was due to the expanding commercialization of the service industries (Bailey 151). In the 1890s, Parliament developed several bills to “outlaw barmaids” (Mullin 479). Female abolitionists saw the barmaid as a “decoy for the sale of drink” (Mullin

480), but many reformers believed barmaids were victims to “moral casualty, fatally vulnerable to drink, seduction and worse” (Bailey 167).

James Joyce’s eleventh chapter in *Ulysses* centers on barmaid Sirens who lure men, and Katherine Mullin compares these barmaids to an earlier representation, Arabella. According to Mullin, Sirens were “ubiquitous figures in the realist fiction of the 1890s” (480). She quotes W.H. Wilkins’s “A plea for the barmaid,” which was published in 1896. He comments on the barmaid type: “She is a ‘decoy’, a Siren, a Lorelei who lures strong men into the whirlpool of alcohol . . . they have seen through her false fringe, her fictitious complexion, her arts and her wiles and her stereotyped smiles” (Qtd. in Mullin 475). Arabella confesses to Jude that she was a barmaid; in fact, that profession gave her the tools (false hair, false dimples) to attract him:

‘I used to draw the drink at a public-house there—just for a little time; that was all. Some people put me up to getting [the false hair], and I bought it just for a fancy. The more you have the better in Aldbrickham, which is a finer town than all your Christminsters. Every lady of position wears false hair—the barber's assistant told me so.’ (53)

The barmaid was plopped down in the middle of consumer products, and her attentions became another commodity that pubs offered (Bailey 154). Many types of barmaids flourished, one type being the “daughter of the working class” who would “spend her career in working-class pubs and might keep employment into her late thirties” (Bailey 163).

Jude thought with a feeling of sickness that though [the false hair trend] might be true to some extent, for all that he knew, many unsophisticated girls would and did go to towns and remain there for years without losing their simplicity of life and embellishments. *Others, alas, had an instinct towards artificiality in their very blood, and became adepts in counterfeiting at the first glimpse of it.* However, perhaps there was no great sin in a woman adding to her hair, and he resolved to think no more of it. (53 emphasis mine)

Jude echoes the sentiments of the parliamentary bills and the Joint Committee on the Employment of Barmaids, who were proponents of temperance and social reform. Their 1905 report states:

Barmaids are the Sirens who lead young men to drink. Of that there can be no doubt, and the question is whether the purveyors of alcohol should be allowed to use up such a mass of maidenhood as is annually sacrificed to the trade, merely for the sake of giving additional attractiveness to the drink they sell. (Qtd. in Mullins 475)

Arabella has once again deceived Jude, intentionally or not; he thought she was an unsophisticated “figure of pastoral innocence” (Asquith 59). The realization that Jude is trapped in such a marriage leads him to destroy himself throughout the rest of the novel. Like a victim of the Sirens, he is in a process of drowning throughout his life. Drowning himself with liquor does not kill Jude, but exposing himself to the rain in order to see Sue one last time weakens him unto his death.

Water has a dualistic function; it gives life through nourishment, but it also takes destructive forms, from floods to the site of shipwrecks and drowning (Lao 20). Water, with its dualistic function, has ties to the feminine as well. A mother's womb, which contains amniotic fluid, the essence of life, symbolizes birth and comfort, but with birth comes death. A woman continues the cycle of life with each birth, and she becomes the site of "ambivalence": she embodies decay and death, but she is also the source of bodily pleasure (Tong 143). Jude wants to return to the feminine through death, one that will quietly put him at peace, womblike. He quotes Job's lamentation on his deathbed:

Let the day perish wherein I was born . . .

Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly? . . . For now should I have lain still and been quiet.

I should have slept: then had I been at rest! (392)

He is alone when he dies because Arabella has taken up with Vilbert.

After rejecting the feminine for so long, for not empathizing with a woman's plight (be it Arabella's or Sue's), Jude has been rejected by the feminine and is left with the masculine Christminster. Jude's rejection of Arabella is comparable to the Argo sailors' rejections of the Sirens. When Orpheus's music overpowers the song of the Sirens, the bird women commit suicide by drowning (Lao 9). Although Arabella does not literally commit suicide, Christminster overpowers her in the form of Vilbert, a former disciple of Christminster. Noticing Jude's impending demise, Arabella soberly makes a decision about Vilbert: "Well! Weak women must provide for a *rainy day* . . . it's

well to keep chances open. And I can't pick and choose now as I could when I was younger. And one must take the old if one can't get the young" (390 emphasis mine). She seduces Vilbert, who seduces as he is seduced, appropriately enough, at the river's edge. At first, he touches her "ribs," a Judeo-Christian gesture that asserts his masculine superiority over her (394). Then he covertly puts his arm around her waist, and "[a]n arch expression overspread Arabella's face at the feel of the arm, but she kept her eyes on the river . . ." (395). She finds him slightly repugnant, but her survival depends upon another husband, once again. This scene connects back to the beginning of Jude and Arabella's relationship. Christminster almost lures him away from Arabella, that is, until she tells him she is pregnant.

At the end of Jude's life, the Orphic Christminster provides him no solace or comfort. The music of Christminster surrounds his deathbed, and no one can hear his suffering for he is utterly alone. Jude wants to drown, to reach a peaceful end, but he ironically dies thirsty:

As soon as [Jude] could speak he murmured, his eyes still closed: 'A little water, please.'

Nothing but the deserted room received his appeal, and he coughed to exhaustion again---saying still more feebly: 'Water--some water--Sue--Arabella!'

The room remained still as before. Presently he gasped again: 'Throat--water--Sue--darling--drop of water--please--oh please!'

No water came, and the organ notes, faint as a bee's hum, rolled in as before. (392)

Orpheus's function is to prevent the sailors from drowning with the Sirens. Orphic knowledge, however, is not satisfying or based in the systems of life (like the Sirens') but in greed and contention. Jude's death is empty, but he realizes that Christminster has deceived and ensnared him his whole life, and he begins to realize his folly: "*There [the womb] the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.... The small and the great are [in the womb]; and the servant is free from his master*" (392-93).

Conclusion

Jude's death signals the end of the novel, but Arabella and Sue live on. Sue represents a type of New Woman to Hardy's audience, a link in the chain of women's rights, but Arabella is of a different sort. She has lust, ambition, and common sense; the narrator's disparaging view of Arabella stems from the fact that she is, even more so than Sue, a danger to institutions. Since Hardy vilifies a society's institutions, a reader can infer that the gender, as well as the class, system is under scrutiny.

Arabella has many predecessors in the canon of literature and ideas, from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* to Anthony Trollope's *Madeline Neroni*, not to mention the Biblical and classical allusions, from Cleopatra, Pandora, Eve, Lillith, Medusa, the Harpies, Scylla, Calypso, Circe, and the Sirens. Hardy specifically aligns Arabella with the Sirens and their paradoxical characteristics. Like the

Sirens, Arabella can be the harbinger of death or the vessel of enlightenment, the monster or the muse.

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