Two "Victorian" Women in *Jude the Obscure*

—— A Reconsideration of Arabella and Sue ——

Akemi NAGAMORI

Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies,
Kyoto University, Kyoto 606–8501 Japan

Summary *Jude the Obscure* (1895), the final novel by Thomas Hardy, was labeled as a "sensational" work and severely criticized. It is generally believed that such criticism was what caused him to give up writing novels. The story has two important female characters, the protagonist's cousin and de facto wife, Sue Bridehead, and his legal wife, Arabella Donn. As the author wrote to his friend, "the book is all contrasts—or was meant to be in its original conception" (Hardy, *Life* 281), the two women also contrast with each other. Many studies say that Arabella is the embodiment of the "flesh," and Sue is that of the "spirit." However, as most of these studies on *Jude* have mainly examined the character of Sue Bridehead, they have overlooked that of Arabella. By reconsidering Arabella as well as Sue, this paper argues that they do not represent "flesh" and "spirit," but the attitudes and actions of both women reflect the values of the feminist movement of that era, and conventional ideas at the same time.

Introduction

Jude the Obscure (1895), the final novel by Hardy, was labeled as a "sensational" work and severely criticized. It is generally believed that such criticism was what caused him to give up writing novels. The story has two important female characters, the protagonist's cousin and de facto wife, Sue Bridehead, and his legal wife, Arabella Donn. As the author wrote to his friend, "the book is all contrasts—or was meant to be in its original conception" (Hardy, *Life* 281), the two women also contrast with each other. He states in the preface that one of his purposes for writing *Jude* was "to tell, without a mincing of words, of a deadly war waged between flesh and spirit" ("Preface to the First Edition" 5).[1] As Patricia Ingham demonstrates, many studies say that Arabella is the embodiment of the "flesh," and Sue is that of the "spirit."[2] Langland examines Hardy's perspective as a masculine narrator in "A Perspective of One's Own" (12–13) and explores Sue's characterization and the text's obsession with "becoming a man" (32). Wittenberg argues that Hardy's perspective is voyeuristic (155, 159). However, as most of these studies on *Jude* have mainly examined the character of Sue Bridehead, they have overlooked that of Arabella.

This paper argues that the attitudes and actions of both women reflect the values of the feminist movement of that era, and conventional ideas at the same time. It also argues that Sue is not a New Woman, typical or imperfect, but a woman with ambivalence bound both by the Victorian moral code and what was considered to be a progressive way of thinking in that era. However, she bridges the gap between Victorian women and women of the next period. She is, as the author states, "a type of woman which has always had an attraction" for Hardy (Hardy, *Life* 281). Her self-sacrificial "conversion" at the end of the novel results from her experiences as a married

woman. Furthermore, Arabella is not just the embodiment of the "flesh" but is an embodiment of the feminist claim for women's rights. Part 1 of this paper will discuss Sue Bridehead as an conventional woman. Next, Part 2 will analyze Arabella as another conventional woman. Finally, Part 3 examines the two ways of living for the women struggling through the Victorian period.

1. Sue Bridehead, a Conventional Woman

Whether Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure* has been regarded as both the embodiment of a New Woman or an imperfect New Woman, she finally changes her mind, discloses her own ambivalence, and punishes herself for having been a fallen woman. However, Sue should not be categorized as such. While women in the Victorian era had to take care of their husbands and children and devote themselves to household chores—behavior which was considered virtuous during the era—those who were called New Women defied this notion. Jane Elledge Miller contends that a New Woman was "independent, outspoken, and creative" (14), and "antithetical to the Victorian stereotypes of the proper lady and the angel in the house" (14). In addition to that, a New Woman was "from a middle-class background," well read, and derived "her feminist principles from Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill" (14). It is true that Sue in *Jude* has some New-Women-like characteristics, which is demonstrated by her hatred of the restrictions of the Victorian matrimonial system, and her living independently by working in Miss Fontover's ecclesiastical shop and teaching in Phillotson's school. In addition, as Showalter points out (40), Sue's "sensitiveness" (*Jude* 37) and "nervousness" (*Jude* 224) also connote her New-Womanness, characteristics that were usually associated with women in the Victorian period. Hardy portrays Sue as if she was a New Woman, but in fact, there is a gap between her characteristics and those of New Women.

It is tempting to think that the character of Sue was created to reflect a "New Woman." However, Jude's observation, when he finally has a chance to look at her in the shop where she works, grasps her female sexuality : Jude has wanted to see her for a long time, and finally they meet. He cannot encounter her in Christminster at first, which makes him peep at her in the shop where she works (72). Her figure makes him more fascinated.

> 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. (73)

He also observes her "nervous" mien : "There was nothing statuesque in her ; all was nervous motion. She was mobile, living, yet a painter might not have called her handsome or beautiful" (73). In another scene, he sees her again in Christminster ". . . the pretty, liquid-eyed, light-footed young woman Sue Bridehead" (76), and hears that her "voice, though positive and silvery, had been tremulous" (82). These descriptions portray Sue's extraordinary delicateness.

One of her distinctive characteristics is her "sensitiveness" or "nervousness." When Sue was young, as Jude's aunt remembers, she was "[a] pert little thing, that's what she was too often, with her tight-strained nerves" (90). She went on to state that "now she's older she's of a thoughtful, quivering, tender nature, and as sensitive as. . ." (90). Sue had been sensitive since she was a child. Her appearance in her adulthood conveys her "sensitiveness" and "nervousness" ; for example, the narrative from Jude's viewpoint states "the rays fell on the nervous little face and vivacious dark eyes and hair of Sue, on the earnest features of her cousin" (83), or "her sensitiveness on some points was such that it might have been misread as vanity" (84). The apparent male narrator of *Jude* has an affinity with the male protagonist, Jude. In addition, he takes a lower tone in the description of Sue's hidden sexuality.

> She wore a murrey-coloured gown with a little lace collar. It was made quite plain, and hung about her slight figure with clinging gracefulness. Her hair, which formerly she had worn according to the custom of the day, was now twisted up tightly, and she had altogether the air of a woman clipped and pruned by severe discipline, an under-brightness shining through from the depths which that discipline had not yet been able to reach. (106)

"Nerve," "sensitive," and "quiver" are the narrator's favorite words in his description of Sue.

A number of studies of *Jude* point out Sue Bridehead's New-Women-like characteristics. The typical quality of New Women in the 1890s being "sensitiveness" or "nervousness" (Cunningham 45–79), Brady suggests that what Sue does and says represents the actions and speech of a New Woman (Brady 95). Jacobus, in "Sue the Obscure," argues that Sue represents a conflict with society and convention on multiple levels—religion, sexuality, and personal freedom. Jacobus, furthermore, argues her resemblance to a New Woman in the 1890s (304–28). A German reviewer wrote to Hardy about Sue's characteristics from an anti-feminist perspective. Hardy in fact has in his mind an image of a woman from the first feminist movement. In response to the criticism, Hardy noted in his summary the critic's idea in the Postscript of *Jude* in April 1912 :

> Sue Bridehead, the heroine, was the first delineation in fiction of the woman who was coming into notice in her thousands every year—the woman of the feminist movement—the slight, pale 'bachelor' girl—the intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing, mainly cities as yet ; who does not recognize the necessity for most of her sex to follow marriage as a profession, and boast themselves as superior people because they are licensed to be loved on the premises. (7–8)

By partly using the German reviewer's notion, Hardy admits the influence of the feminist movement in the nineteenth century on Sue's characterization, but he cynically analyzes Sue Bridehead's nature. Then he follows the author's own words : "The regret of this critic was that the portrait of the newcomer had been left to be drawn by a man, and was not done by one of her own sex, who would never have allowed her to break down at the end" (8). That quotation additionally implies the German reviewer's opinion that Sue should be depicted not by a male author, but by a female one. Although it is uncertain how Hardy took the criticism, it explains not only his understanding of the ideology of how females should be in his age, but also his pride in having accomplished, male author as he was, the depiction of a new type of woman.

However, there is difficulty in accepting that Sue Bridehead is such a New Woman, even though she is "a newcomer." Gittings contends that Sue is not a New Woman of the 1890s, but one of the 1860s (93–95). Cunningham also states that "Hardy seems to be building her up into a model of the New Womanhood in her theory, and on the other, he shows her as, in his terms, an entirely typical feminine woman in her practice" (114). Her comment is appropriate, and states that the characteristics that Sue reflects are quite different from those of typical New Women. The description of Sue as a shop assistant suggests her ambivalence ; she works in a shop selling ecclesiastical goods and ornaments in Christminster despite her skepticism concerning Christianity. The shop owner, Miss Fontover, scolds her for hiding the figures of Venus and Apollo in her room ; thus Sue decides to leave her job. She is then given a job by Phillotson, thanks to Jude's help, and becomes an assistant teacher at the elementary school. Her career is constructed by her relationship with the old man. It suggests that she knows what a woman must do to survive in the Victorian period. In this respect, in spite of being independent like a New Woman, Sue can be considered a Victorian woman.

The cohabitation with Jude without being married, however, contrasts Sue with old-fashioned Victorian women. After "Little Father Time" comes to live with

Sue and Jude, she wants to be a good mother and walks to sell Christminster cake with "little Jude." Her lifestyle as both Jude's wife and the children's mother is distinguished from that of what she used to be. She no longer tries to pursue independence. In fact, she fills the role of Jude's wife and that of mother in the house. Moreover, in Part Six, Jude and Sue cannot find another lodging in which they can reside with their two children and Little Father Time, because of society's disapproval of their controversial decision to live together and have children without matrimony (263). The social order of the time makes it difficult for the family to live in peace. Now that Sue is the mother of two children and Little Father Time, she is forced to work to take care of them. Their illegitimate marriage apparently lessens Sue's independence. In this point, she plays a role of an ideal mother as Victorian women were expected to do. Rather, she is like an "angel" —ironically, an "angel in the house."

Sue improves her career through her marriage to Phillotson, but the marriage fails. Before marrying Phillotson, Sue thinks of marriage as a simple contract (166–67), and then she learns of a woman's legal obligations of emotional and physical love to her husband. She feels aversion to having sexual intercourse with her husband, Phillotson, so she jumps from a window to escape to Jude when her husband mistakenly enters "her room" at midnight. As Showalter indicates, New Women and nineteenth-century feminists were often portrayed as not having sexual impulses or feelings (46). However, Olive Shreiner debunked this myth of the non-sexual, nineteenth-century woman in her controversial writing. Thus, Sue's behavior is not representative of a New Woman's sexuality, which was derided for being "frigid" and "passionless" ; rather, it conveys her fear of her own femininity (167).

However, Sue's sexual drive shows her attitude as a Victorian traditional woman. The author notes that her weak sexual instinct is not unique to her, but common to a certain type of woman of that age :

> . . . there is nothing perverted or depraved in Sue's nature. The abnormalism consists in disproportion, not in inversion, her sexual instinct being healthy as far as it goes, but unusually weak and fastidious. Her sensibilities remain painfully alert notwithstanding, as they do in nature with such women. (Hardy, *Life* 280)

Despite her "healthy" "sexual instinct," the force of Arabella's attractiveness inspires Sue to have a sexual relationship with Jude for the first time (206–07). After Sue and Jude begin to live together, they have three children between themselves. This indicates that she comes to realize the importance of having a sexual relationship with her male companion and to recover from her traumatic experiences in her marriage to Phillotson. In contrast, New Women could not or did not marry men and obey them, so Sue is in direct opposition to such women ; rather, she turns to a life as a Victorian woman.

She originally has weak sexual desire, and is reluctant to engage in sexual relationships with men. However, she lives a full life with Jude. She is intimate with Jude after his divorce to Arabella, and in the description of Sue and Jude's life together, there never is an implication that she resents sexual relationship with him. In contrast, Phillotson makes Sue sexually horrified and mentally troubled.

> I like Mr. Phillotson as a friend, I don't like him—it is a torture to me to—live with him as a husband! —There, now I have let it out—I couldn't help it, although I have been—pretending I am happy. (169)

Her feelings toward Jude and Phillotson are quite different, but she finally chooses to return to Phillotson without refusing sexual intercourse with him. Rather, she forces herself to be receptive to her husband. Her feminine attitude on sexual relationships with men seems ambiguous, but, actually, she does not want to give herself to Philotson's embrace because of her lack of sexual love for him. Therefore, Sue's final decision to return to him attests to the cruelty of her future situation. Furthermore, it also proves the change in her own stance on her own sexuality toward the dominant

one in the male-oriented Victorian society.

Unfortunately, she loses her children because of Little Father Time's murder and suicide. Then, she makes up her mind to live in a way that oppresses her more than ever ; that is, she returns to her first husband, Phillotson. After her children's death, she speaks about the changing of her heart as if it was a kind of discipline :

> 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! (288)

She is almost insane to "purify" herself. Her life with Phillotson, her official husband, is filled with sadness and pain. She expresses her feelings to Jude by saying, "He is a kind husband to me—And I—I've wrestled and struggled, and fasted, and prayed. I have nearly brought my body into complete subjection" (308). Owing to her "purification," his acceptance of her, despite his nature, changes the marriage into a typical life under the framework of the Victorian patriarchy, in which women should obey their husbands. Tragedy also falls on Phillotson, not just on Jude and Sue.

Sue advocates "free love" and a "free love union," which means that matrimony should not rest on the approval of such authorities as the government and church. Caird, a novelist and feminist in the late nineteenth century, insists on "free love" in her essay "The Morality of Marriage" in 1897.

> In a marriage true to the modern spirit, which has scarcely yet begun to breathe upon this institution, husband and wife regard one another as absolutely free beings ; they no more think of demanding subordination on one side or the other than a couple of friends who had elected to live together would mutually demand it. That, after all, is the true test. In love there ought to be *at least* as much respect for individuality and freedom as in friendship. (641-42)

Caird points out that a wife's "subordination" to a husband should not be required in their matrimony. Sue's opinions on love and marriage are modeled on "free love," which Caird espouses. In this way, Sue's ideas are representative of feminism in the late nineteenth century ; however, her ideal "free love" will not come true.

Sue Bridehead has been regarded as a New Woman, perfect or imperfect, for a long time. It is difficult, however, to fit her character into the mold of a New Woman. The author describes a way of life in which a woman in the Victorian age learns through experience to be an "angel in the house" in a realistic way. When Jude talks to Arabella about Sue's remarriage to Phillotson, he says "She's a fool!—And she's an angel, too, poor dear!" (294). The author depicts Sue as a female character struggling to demonstate a progressive way of life, but is obliged to adapt herself to the "ideal" female figure in the Victorian patriarchal society.

In the Victorian era, women behaved themselves by taking care of their husbands and children and managing the household affairs. In contrast, New Women did not marry and chose to live independently. Although Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure* has been regarded as the embodiment of a New Woman or an imperfect New Woman, she is not a New Woman but rather a bridge between a conventional Victorian woman and a New Woman—"a type of woman which has always had an attraction for me [Hardy] but the difficulty of drawing the type has kept me from attempting it till now" (Hardy, *Life* 281). The author thus portrays Sue as a woman of her own, somewhere between the extremes of the nineteenth-century feminist and Victorian housewife.

2. Arabella Donn, a Conventional Woman

The character of Arabella is presented in strong contrast with that of Sue. Arabella tends to be regarded as a sensuous female character that captivates men, but the author portrays Arabella as another kind of traditional woman along with Sue from the male point

of view. Arabella adapts herself to the requirements of the male-dominated society of her age. She represents female sexuality as well as the demands on women of that age and demonstrates the pragmatism of living an "honorable" life.

Arabella's female sexuality is emphasized from the beginning of the story. She is the daughter of a pig breeder. While she and her two friends are working near a stream, she throws pig genitals at Jude and then challenges him to bring them back to her. This is the first encounter of the two characters. The male narrator tells of her sexually attractive appearance :

> She whom he 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 ; . . . . (33-34)
>
> 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)

Because Arabella is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen in his life, he thoroughly gazes at her figure (35). As the exchange of the pig's genitals shows, Arabella is meant to represent female sexuality from a man's perspective ; thus, the narrator again emphasizes Jude's sexual awakening, and foreshadows that they will be connected in physical terms soon. It is clear that she has the power to attract Jude.

Diligent but ignorant of the world, Jude studies hard to enter a college in Christminster. Arabella is the first woman in his life who he feels sexually attracted to. When *Jude* was published, the novelist Margaret Oliphant severely criticized Hardy's novel in an article titled "The Anti-Marriage League," together with her other attack on Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (1895). Oliphant acrimoniously criticized Arabella for her animal-like quality :

> He [Jude] is virtuous by temperament, meaning no evil ; bent upon doing more than well, and elevating himself to the level which appears to him the highest in life. But he falls into the hands of a woman so completely animal that it is at once too little and too much to call her vicious. She [Arabella] is a human pig, like the beast whom in a horrible scene she and her husband kill, quite without shame or consciousness of any occasion for shame, yet not even carried away by her senses or any overpowering impulse for their gratification, so much worse than the sow, that it is entirely on a calculation of profit that she puts forth her revolting spell. (382)

For Oliphant, Arabella is an animal-like representation of female sexuality. Her comments like "completely animal" and "human pig," connote her strong disapproval of Arabella. As Fukuoka states, there is a tendency in the narrative of *Jude* to depict Arabella's appearance and behavior in a manner that emphasizes such qualities (103). Hardy represented her as such, but at the same time her intellect―a life skill in the Victorian matrimonial convention and system―is also conveyed. Arabella's life skills and strength to go on living demonstrated her practicality―her own "pragmatism."

Arabella is not only physically attractive but she also understands that getting an "honorable" man would lead to happiness. When she and her friends chat about Jude, these friends give her the following advice :

> "Nothing venture nothing have! Besides, you make sure that he's honourable before you begin. You'd be safe enough with yours. I wish I had the chance! Lots of girls do it ; or do you think they'd get married at all?"
>
> Arabella pursued her way in silent thought. "I'll try it!" she whispered ; but not to them. (43)

Based on their advice, she decides to try to get Jude to

marry her. In addition, she asks the itinerant physician Vilbert for advice. Although the relationship between Arabella and the doctor at this stage is not clear, she unburdens herself on him, and he lectures her on how to convince Jude to marry her (48).[3] His advice works, and she manages to obtain Jude's consent to marriage by falsely announcing her pregnancy. The episode implies how shrewd Arabella is in profiting from the worldly knowledge of Vilbert.

Through their marriage, Jude comes to recognize that Arabella is not what he wanted a wife to be. Furthermore, Jude is disappointed when he realizes that her hair and dimple, which convey her sexual attractiveness, are artificial. Her experience as a barmaid at a certain inn also makes him abhor her. It is true that Arabella made an effort to appear more attractive, but this does not necessarily mean that she was telling a lie. However, the husband is shocked to find out what his wife really is, and this leads to the end of their marriage. Besides, the pig-killing is the decisive factor in the end of their marriage (Part 1, Chapter 10). After the pig-slaughter, while Arabella is melting down the pig's fat, the quarrel begins between the two.

> "I won't have them books here in the way!" she cried petulantly ; and seizing them one by one she began throwing them upon the floor.
>
> "Leave my books alone!" he said. "You might have thrown them aside if you had liked, but as to soiling them like that, it is disgusting!" In the operation of making lard Arabella's hands had become smeared with the hot grease, and her fingers consequently left very perceptible imprints on the book-covers. She continued deliberately to toss the books severally upon the floor, till Jude, incensed beyond bearing, caught her by the arms to make her leave off. (57)

The pig's grease on Arabella's fingers is symbolic of her low social status, and her throwing his books upon the floor signifies her denial of his aspirations. The gap in their intelligence makes their living together difficult. Despite her low level of education, as she is the daughter of a rural pig breeder, her speech is less accented than that of her friends. Arabella hides her accent even during quarrels with Jude. Moreover, she somehow manages to speak without a rural accent on purpose to make Jude angry. In another scene, when Arabella writes to Jude to ask him to raise Little Father Time, the text of her letter does not appear like that of a rural maid's (216–17). Her lower educational level makes a stark contrast to that of Jude, which her life skill cleverly hides.

Arabella seems dependent on several male characters, such as Jude, Vilbert, Mr. Cartlett, and others, but she is really taking advantage of them through her sexuality. Her independence, which is represented by her life skills, is demonstrated through her job as a pig breeder soon after she leaves Jude. Jude, in contrast, remains unemployed in Christminster. Therefore, this "pragmatism" of Arabella makes it difficult to treat her simply as an embodiment of the "flesh" : Arabella is not just an embodiment of female sexuality, but a robust realist with the necessary life skills to survive any condition.

Arabella's pragmatism is delineated in her pig-killing as well as her seduction of her husband-to-be. In the abovementioned pig-slaughtering scene, which leads to the quarrel, Jude cannot do it, but Arabella proves her skills in pig-killing. Jude the idealist says, "It is a hateful business!" (54). Arabella retorts "Pigs must be killed" (54). She also says, "What's God got to do with such a messy job as a pig-killing, I should like to know!. . . Poor folks must live" (55). Arabella recognized what was needed to live and thus was able to slaughter the pig. Her practicality is conveyed through the above words.

Arabella, with her "animal-like" qualities, acts based on practical ideas, and her words indicate the knowledge she has gained through worldly experience. For example, she gives Sue advice on marriage laws :[4] "Life with a man is more businesslike after it, and money matters work better" (213), ". . . you [Sue] can get the law to protect you" (213), or ". . . for there's never any knowing what a man med do"

(213). In another scene, Arabella notices Jude and Sue in the Great Wessex Agricultural Show, and refers to their hidden relationship : "O no—I fancy they are not married, or they wouldn't be so much to one another as that. . . . I wonder!" (231). Her husband Mr. Cartlett, in contrast, shows his lack of observation : "I don't see as how there's anything remarkable in their behavior. I should never have noticed their being in love, if you hadn't said so" (231). Arabella retorts, "You never see anything" (231). She guesses the truth that Jude and Sue have not married yet, which the two try to disguise. It is Arabella that understands and accurately observes the world and human nature.

Her practicality is also presented at the last moment of Jude, where he is going to die but she dates Vilbert, who is now her lover. As her words at the end of Chapter 10 of Part 6—"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" (319) —show her pragmatism, she is again looking for someone who can love and support her through matrimony.

Although Arabella is delineated as a female character full of sexual attractiveness that can lure men to her, the author presents Arabella as another kind of conventional woman than Sue. Arabella knows what she must do and does it in order to live an "honorable" life. Her pragmatism forms a great contrast not only to Jude and Sue's idealism, but also to Sue's poor understanding of practical social conditions. The author skillfully mixes her obvious sexuality with her hidden practicality.

3. Sue and Arabella, Two Victorian Women

Hardy elaborately contrasts the characters of Arabella and Sue under the Victorian institution of marriage. Each of them plays one of two types of Victorian women. At the end of the novel, Sue lives as a conventional housewife with a conventional husband Phillotson, while Arabella looks for a new "honorable" husband in order to survive in the Victorian period in her own way. The male author prepares two different exits for the female characters : one who cannot come up with any new idea of her own and is going to adapt herself to the traditional way of life in a male-oriented society, and the other who makes the best of the matrimonial system.

Sue understands the social situation for women in the Victorian period, in which marriage was thought to be their best option. However, the collapse of Sue's marriage results from her ignorance of the facts of life, male and female sexuality, and the consequences of a second marriage. At their aunt's funeral, she tells Jude of her aversion to her husband Phillotson after their remarriage.

> 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! . . . I wish he would beat me, or be faithless to me, or do some open thing that I could talk about as a justification for feeling as I do! But he does nothing, except that he has grown a little cold since he has found out how I feel. (169)

Her confession reveals not so much Sue's lack of passion for and fear of her husband Phillotson as her abhorrence of him. In other words, she challenges the premise that she or any other woman must obey their husband's sexual desire "whenever he wishes" regardless of her own preference, as Caird illuminates. The sexual relationship between Sue and Phillotson creates a rift in their household. Despite her knowledge of the matrimonial system, she cannot accept the situation.

Sue's reference to beating and being unfaithful illuminates the double standard in the Victorian moral code. Under the British marriage system in the nineteenth century, when a wife wanted to get a divorce, not only adultery but also abuse or cohabitational refusal on the part of the husband had to be proved. Since Phillotson as her husband was not guilty of any of these actions, Sue cannot legally file for divorce.[5] The author protests with Sue against the

matrimonial system which is quite disadvantageous for the women in the era.

Sue understands what marriage brings to women. Marriage was one means of livelihood for women in the nineteenth century, just as it still is in the twenty-first century. Sue knows what the tradition and custom of marriage meant for women, but in the same scene, she confides her confusion with the old man as a husband and her regret for the marriage.

> If I were unhappy it would be my fault, my wickedness; not that I should have a right to dislike him! He is considerate to me in everything; and he is very interesting, from the amount of general knowledge he has acquired by reading that comes in his way. . . . (168–69)

The couple have no difficulties, except for their sexual relationship. As her past comradeship with the Christminster student shows, she tends to be interested in men who are knowledgeable. Her husband, generous and full of bookish knowledge, is a good partner to her as a friend, but she cannot accept his advances due to her sexual aversion to him.

That is why their marriage fails, and Sue starts to cohabit with her cousin Jude so that she can escape both the first oppressing marriage and the former official husband. In her connection with Jude, she tells him in advance of her fear of sexual relationships.

> My [Sue's] liking for you [Jude] is not as some women's perhaps. But it is a delight in being with you, of a supremely delicate kind, and I don't want to go further and risk it by—an attempt to intensify it! I quite realized that, as woman with man, it was a risk to come. But, as me with you, I resolved to trust you to set my wishes above your gratification. Don't discuss it further, dear Jude! (192)

A "risk to come" surely means sexual intercourse between man and woman. Similarly, she emphasizes the "risk" and her feminine "timidity."

> Put it down to my timidity, . . . to a woman's natural timidity when the crisis comes. . . . But don't press me and criticize me, Jude! Assume that I haven't the courage of my opinions. I know I am a poor miserable creature. My nature is not so passionate as yours! (191)

A woman, she says, has "a natural timidity" of "a risk," being afraid of "the crisis." She in fact switches her problem to that of women in general. The "sensitive" heroine hesitates to be sexually intimate with a man and stresses her lack of passion.

However, the reunion between Jude and his former wife Arabella triggers a new development in the relationship between Sue and Jude; Sue, for the first time, sleeps with Jude, and after some years she becomes a mother of three children. In the 1880s, contraceptive methods were not widely spread (Berkman 28). Sue has abundant academic and religious knowledge, while as Jude's de facto wife—who does not know how to use birth control nor practice it—lacks the life skills needed to live as an independent woman as she originally hoped to be. As in the case of Sue, inaccessible contraceptive methods caused lower class women to have many children, resulting in their worsening poverty. Such women had no chance to work, so that they not only economically depended on their husbands, but were also obliged to remain subordinate in the social hierarchy. They had no other choice than to become wives and mothers. After Arabella's advent, Sue's life is the very picture of ordinary women under the Victorian matrimonial system.

Sue's attempt to escape from her oppressive sexual relationship with her husband is thought to be based on that of liberal feminists, who insisted on gender equality regardless of social circumstances. In "The Morality of Marriage," Caird illuminates women's rights in the home:

> Then we must remember that licentiousness is—in general—the preying of one sex upon the other; women, respectable and outcast alike, are dependent on men for their bread and butter. They have no voice in determining the relations will bear to them. (644)

Such feminists in the late nineteenth century insisted

on marriage without physically and mentally oppressing women, and urged husbands to change their behavior toward their wives. This attitude implied that they accepted the current marriage system and their roles as wives and mothers, but that they wanted to make changes within this institution.

Arabella, a pragmatist, gives Sue advice on securing an "honorable" life in her own way. While the first feminists introduced their reformative ideas, there were women taking advantage of the marriage system, as Arabella suggests that Sue do. Arabella, describing her remarried life in Australia after her separation from Jude, teaches Sue the truth that women must live within the system.

> 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. (213)

Once a woman marries legally, the institution and the law protect her, Arabella says. Her understandings and the worldly techniques tend to be overlooked, because the critics pay more attention to her physical attractiveness, and animal-like qualities. However, Arabella demonstrates her practicality based on her legal knowledge; then, she utilizes the marriage system and law advocated by the world for her own benefit.

Considering the intensity of Arabella's sex appeal, it may appear strange of her to have only one child—Little Father Time, the boy who she claims was begot between Jude and herself. She makes love with Jude soon after she decides to marry him. However, her pregnancy, which she uses to trick him into marriage, is a false one. Arabella's "false" conception suggests that she understands how to avoid the risk that Sue fears, and how to provoke male sexual desire at the same time. Before contraceptive methods become generally widespread in the 1880s, there were fewer children in the households of clergymen and doctors (Branca 130-38). Her intimacy with the physician Vilbert appears to provide her with ways of preventing pregnancy. Arabella's marriage to Mr. Cartlett also indicates her tactics, because as a result, she succeeds in avoiding conception and incidental poverty. Arabella gives birth only to Little Father Time, and to no other child. This suggests that Arabella has acquired "female" life skills under the Victorian matrimonial system as she can control her pregnancies, unlike Sue.

Moreover, Arabella takes advantage of Jude's authority guaranteed by the laws of that era. She forces Little Father Time on Jude, who has parental authority over the boy, because husbands had the right of proprietorship of women and things attendant on them in the Victorian period (Brown 70-77). It is ironic that Arabella, not the intellectual Sue, understands the custom of the marriage system better, and meets the demands of the times.

Hardy prepares the tragic end of *Jude the Obscure* for the two female characters: Arabella legally married and Sue cohabiting with Jude. The former demonstrates and utilizes Victorian convention and typical social ideas for her own benefit, while the latter resists them and seeks her own love and life. The story ends with Arabella's survival and Sue's mental death by her remarriage to Phillotson. Sue becomes a conventional housewife with a conventional husband in a patriarchal system. In contrast to Sue's final status, Arabella looks again for a new "honorable" husband who will be her protector under the Victorian system. She concludes the story with her own ironic and triumphant words: "She's [Sue's] never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's as he is now!" (324). At this stage, Arabella has become the narrator in order to convey the fate of Sue. Hardy gives the two female characters two separate conclusions: one woman suppresses herself in the Victorian institution of marriage, and the other utilizes marriage

for her own benefit, each of which represents a way Victorian women could act toward the matrimonial system.

Conclusion

Thomas Hardy, a male author, sketches two different types of female characters—Sue Bridehead and Arabella Donn—in his last novel, *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Closely considering Sue's characteristics shows the difficulty of placing her within the mold of a New Woman. Although it is certain that Hardy understood this and intended for her to seem like such a woman, Sue is not presented as a New Woman, or even an imperfect one; rather, she is woman who attempts to resist the institution of marriage but in the end conforms to it. Besides, she is for Hardy "a type of woman which has always had an attraction," an incarnation of a woman in the late nineteenth century who bridges the gap between a traditional Victorian woman and a woman of the next period.

The story ends with Arabella's ironic but half triumphant words: "She's [Sue's] never found peace since she left his [Jude's] arms, and never will again till she's as he is now!" (324). Arabella has long been focused on for her female sexuality, while her pragmatism has been overlooked. However, the significance of the ending of the novel should be taken into consideration, and not just for its tragedy. Arabella is not just an embodiment of "flesh," or "animal passion," but a woman who takes advantage of the institution of marriage at a time when it was not meant to serve the interests of women. Sue, on the other hand, is broken by it. Illuminating the Victorian double standard and cruel customs, the end of the story indicates that even the new type of woman that Hardy intended to depict cannot live through the period. Therefore, ironically though, it is obvious that the male author admits that feminine toughness to live up to her pragmatism, as demonstrated by Arabella, is necessary in order to survive in the male-chauvinistic social framework. In this way, Hardy succeeds in his efforts to contrast the characters of Sue and Arabella in *Jude the Obscure*, although they were indeed colored by his own flawed perceptions of women.

Notes

1) Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, edited by Norman Page (Norton, 1978), p. 5. Subsequent references to this edition appear parenthetically in the text.
2) Ingham refers to the preface and writes "*the contrast of 'flesh and spirit' represented* by Arabella and Sue, appealing to the two sides of Jude's nature" (Ingham xii).
3) As for the itinerant physician Vilbert, Itoda Ikuko refers to his sexual image, focusing on a folk medicine that he sells.
4) Arabella's advice refers to The Marriage Act of 1870, 1882, and 1893 and The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 (Brown 70-77).
5) In contrast, when a husband wanted a divorce, it was only necessary to prove that the crime of adultery had been committed by his wife. It was not until 1923 that women were equal to men in terms of their right to file for divorce (Brown 70-77).

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『日陰者ジュード』における **2** 人の「ヴィクトリア朝的」女たち
—— アラベラとスーの再考 ——

永　盛　明　美

京都大学大学院　人間・環境学研究科　共生文明学専攻
〒606-8501　京都市左京区吉田二本松町

要旨　トマス・ハーディの最後の長編小説『日陰者ジュード』（1895）は，「センセーショナルな」作品というレッテルを貼られ，激しい非難を受けた．そうした非難によって，ハーディが小説家人生に終止符を打つことになったのだと一般的には信じられている．この物語には，二人の重要な女性キャラクターである，主人公ジュードの従妹であり事実上の妻であるスー・ブライドヘッドと，彼の法律上の妻アラベラ・ドンが登場する．「本書は，全てがコントラストをなしている，或いは，元来の着想においてはそうであるよう意図されたものである」（Hardy, *Life* 281）と筆者自身が友人へ書き送っているように，二人の女性キャラクターもまた「コントラスト」をなす存在であるが，多くの研究において，アラベラは「肉（flesh）」の具現化された姿であり，スーは「霊（spirit）」のそれであると指摘されてきた．しかしながら，こうした『ジュード』に関する研究のほとんどが主としてスーについて検討しているために，アラベラについては看過されているということは否定できない．それゆえ本稿は，スーとともにアラベラを捉えなおすことで，彼女たちが，単なる「肉」と「霊」の象徴ではなく，当時のフェミニズム・ムーヴメントと慣習的な考えとを反映した「コントラスト」をなす存在であることを論じるものである．