



T.C.
EGE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Social Sciences

**The Role of Dualities, Narrative and
Language in Thomas Hardy's Fictional
Representation of Woman**

Master's Thesis

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Department of English Language and Literature

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ETİK KURALLARA UYGUNLUK BEYANI

Ege Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Mdrlğne sunduğm “The Role of Dualities, Narrative and Language in Thomas Hardy’s Fictional Representation of Woman” adlı yksek lisans/doktora tezinin tarafımdan bilimsel, ahlak ve normlara uygun bir řekilde hazırlandıėını, tezimde yararlandıėım kaynakları bibliyografyada ve dipnotlarda gsterdiėimi onurumla doėrularım.

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ÖNSÖZ

Öncelikle şunu belirtmeliyim ki, lisans eğitimimde İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı'nı seçmek benim için en önemli kararlardan biriydi. Hacettepe Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünden 2016 yılında mezun olup lisans eğitimim sonrası ara vermiş olsam da bu alana ilgimi ve merakımı hiç yitirmedim ve her zaman derslerde bana öğretilen bilgilerin üzerine koymak istedim. Bunun sebebi okunacak kitapların, yapılacak araştırmaların hiç bitmemesi ve aslında edebi analizin çok eğlenceli olabilmesidir.

Bu alana karşı beslediğim merak, Ege Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Yüksek Lisans Programı'na girmemle güçlenip büyüdü. Koşarak gittiğim derslerin ardından sınıf arkadaşlarımla boş zamanlarımızda dersler üzerine konuşmak, farklı fikirler paylaşmak arka planda beni en çok geliştiren şeylerden biri oldu. Tez konularımızı belirlerken Thomas Hardy romanlarından bazıları üzerine bir çalışma yapmam gerektiğini hissediyordum ancak bu düşüncem, Virginia Woolf'un Hardy'nin romanları hakkında yazdığı "The Novels of Thomas Hardy" makalesini keşfedip okumam ile bir yolculuğa dönüştü. Daha sonra yapısalcılık yaklaşımının kurucusu Ferdinand de Saussure'ün çalışmalarını inceledikçe dilin insan deneyimlerini tanımlayan bir biçim olduğu ve bu biçimin edebi eserlerde sayısız çeşitlilikte kullanıldığı fikri üzerine romanlarda kullanılan dilin arka planına ulaşmanın mümkün olup olmadığı sorusu ortaya çıktı. Thomas Hardy'nin birçok romanı olması ve romanlarında potansiyel olarak bulunan yazınsal desene ulaşmanın karakterlerini nasıl yarattığını anlamama yardımcı olabileceğini düşünerek okumalar yapmaya başladım. Bu esnada, *Under the Greenwood Tree* romanı, yazarın başarıya ulaştığı ilk romanı ve romantik olay örgüsü içeren en erken kitaplarından biri olmasıyla tez çalışmama dahil ettim. *Far From the Madding Crowd* romanını da *Under the Greenwood Tree*'nin basımından iki yıl sonra yayımlanmış ve büyük başarıya ulaşmış olması, benzer şekilde romantik olay örgüsü içermesi sebebiyle çalışmama ekledim.

Saussure'ün dilin bir yapı olması ile ilgili öne sürdüğü teorisini Hardy'nin romanlarını biçimsel olarak oluşturan karakterler, anlatı ve olay örgüsü üzerine koyarak okumak, Virginia Woolf'un makalesinde üzerine durduğu fikirlerle örtüşüyordu. Benzer

şekilde Claude Levi-Strauss'un ikilikler üzerine yaptığı çalışmalarını incelemek, Hardy'nin romanlarında da bu ikiliğin nasıl şekillendiği ve olay örgüsünde neye hizmet ettiği üzerine yoğunlaşmamı sağladı. Yapısalcılık yaklaşımını kullanarak Hardy'nin iki farklı romanında baskın olarak bulunan yazınsal desenini incelemek, yazarın kadın ve erkek karakterlere karşı olan farklı tutumunu ve olay örgüsündeki anlatımının başlangıçta modern olarak tanımladığı kadınları kurgusunun ilerleyişinde toplumsal normlara kısıtlanmış şekilde tasvir edildiklerini gösteriyordu. Aynı şekilde iki romanda da üç farklı erkek karakter arasından olay örgüsünde anlatıcının düşünceleriyle örtüşen kahramanların kadın karakterle evlenmesiyle sonuçlanması, geleneksel ve toplumsal kuralların baskınlığını ortaya çıkarıyordu. İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı'nın vazgeçilmez yazarlarından biri olarak eserleri okunan Thomas Hardy'nin romanlarını biçimsel anlatısını inceleyerek okumak, kadın ve erkek karakterlerin hala özgürleştirilemediği ve özgürleşmekten çok uzak olduğu bir dünyada ilk adımın çizilen sınırların farkına varmak olduğunu bana kazandırdı.

Tez çalışmamın sonucunda Thomas Hardy'nin iki romanı üzerine yaptığım incelemede bazı sorulara cevap bulsam da aslında aynı yazarın başka eserlerindeki veya diğer yazarların eserlerindeki yazınsal desenlerini keşfetmenin geleceğe bırakılan edebi mirasın niteliği ve sınırlarını tespit etmenin, bu sınırların bilincinde akademik çalışmaların geliştirilmesi açısından büyük öneme sahip olabileceği kanısındayım. Bu yolculukta karşılaştığım ve içimdeki merakın hep alevlenerek büyümesini sağlayan bütün hocalarıma teşekkürü bir borç bilirim.

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ÖZET

Bu tez, Thomas Hardy'nin yazınsal biçimine ve bu biçimin özellikle kadın karakterlerinin oluşumunda nasıl bir etkisi olduğuna odaklanarak, *Far from the Madding Crowd* ve *Under the Greenwood Tree* isimli iki ayrı aşk romanının yapısal unsurlarının kapsamlı bir analizini amaçlamaktadır. İnceleme yöntemi kapsamında yapısalcı bir çerçeve sınırları içerisinde Ferdinand De Saussure ve Claude Levi-Strauss'un teorik görüşlerinden faydalanılacaktır. Bu bağlamda, Hardy'nin romanlarında kullandığı olay örgüsü, karakter temsili ve ikilikler gibi yapısal unsurların anlatının amacına yönelik kullanımı incelenecektir. İngiliz Edebiyatı'nın en itibarlı yazarlarından biri olan Thomas Hardy, birçok edebi esere imza atmış ve romanları günümüzde de hâlâ pek çok okuyucuya ulaşmaktadır. 19. yüzyılın sonu ile 20. yüzyılın başı arasında bir geçiş figürü olan Hardy'nin edebiyatının, Viktorya döneminin bazı ideallerini modern döneme taşıdığı gözlemlenebilir. Modern dönemin kadınlar için ekonomik bağımsızlık, bireysellik ve sosyal yaşam açısından çok şey değiştirdiğine inanılmasının kaçınılmaz bir sonucu olarak, Hardy'nin anlatı yapısının neden olduğu geleneksel kısıtlamaların Yeni Kadın idealleriyle nasıl örtüştüğü veya onlara nasıl meydan okuduğu konusunun irdelenmesi gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle, Hardy'nin romanlarındaki anlam ve karakter inşasını yapısalcı bir yaklaşımla incelemek, yeni kadın algısına geçmişten miras kalan özellikleri ortaya çıkaracaktır. Hardy'nin eserlerindeki kadın kahramanların oluşumunda tercih ettiği biçimlerin sonuçlarının araştırılması, anlatısının toplumsal rolü ve varlığını açısından kadın kavramı üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koyacaktır. Sonuç olarak, bu tezin amacı Hardy'nin yapısal anlatısının kadın karakterleri üzerindeki geleneksel kısıtlamaları şekillendirdiğini araştırmak ve aynı zamanda, Hardy'nin edebi mirasının, geçiş dönemine özgü doğasının önemiyle paralel olarak yeni kadın ideallerine bıraktığı sınırlamaları betimlemektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın, Thomas Hardy, İkilikler, Yapısalcılık, Modern

ABSTRACT

This thesis engages in a comprehensive examination of the structural elements in two of Thomas Hardy's romance novels *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *Under the Greenwood Tree*. It primarily focuses on the analysis of Hardy's structural narrative and its determining role in terms of forming his woman characters. To analyse the novels, the theoretical perspectives of Ferdinand De Saussure and Claude Levi-Strauss will be utilized in connection with a structuralist framework. In this regard, deliberate utilization of structural constituents in Hardy's novels will be examined by the agency of plot, characterization and dualities. Being one of the most influential writers of English Literature, Thomas Hardy has produced many literary works, and his novels still reach many readers today. Considering he is a transitional figure between the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, Hardy's novels can be observed as carrying some of the ideals of the Victorian era over the modern literary period. Because modernity is believed to have changed a lot for women in terms of economic independence, individuality, social life, it is conclusively necessary to grasp how traditional constraints inflicted by Hardy's narrative structures resonate with or challenge the ideals of the New Woman. Hence, using structuralism to explore Hardy's construction of meaning and characters in his novels will unveil the inherent characteristics of new woman. Exploration of the implications made by Hardy's structural choices regarding the social role and presence of female protagonists will depict the impact of his narrative on the concept of woman. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to explore how Hardy's structural narrative shapes the traditional restrictions on his female characters. It also aims to depict the inherited limitations of new woman ideals while pointing to the importance of transitional nature of Hardy's literary legacy.

Keywords: Woman, Thomas Hardy, Dualities, Structuralism, Modern

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ABBREVIATIONS

1. *Under The Greenwood Tree* : *UGT*
2. *Far From the Madding Crowd* : *FFMC*



INTRODUCTION

In the literary world of the late 19th century England, Thomas Hardy emerged as a valued author whose works dealt with the complexities of human relationships, societal norms and the coming of modernity. As a writer, he has been placed on a high pillar around the world for his successful contributions to English literature. As Virginia Woolf later put it: “because of the dignity with which his gift was used, it was impossible not to honour him as an artist and to feel respect and affection for the man”.¹ He left numerous poems and novels for those who are passionate about English literature. Since the number of his works is vast, there is still a necessity to explore and study more of his legacy.

Thomas Hardy’s works, especially his novels have similar themes. It might be possible that he developed some plots and characters over the long years of his authorship and practiced upon similar plots and characters as he evolved into a successful writer. George Harvey explains the earliest incident which might have affected Hardy’s fiction as follows:

His father had occasional work from the Kingston Maurward estate, and a strong emotional attachment developed between Julia Augusta Martin, the wife of its owner, who was childless, and young Hardy. This relationship afforded a glimpse of a sphere of elegance that provided the class theme for his first attempt at fiction, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, and it became a subject to which he returned obsessively.²

What Harvey remarks about Hardy’s novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* is that Hardy produced many different works whose theme and plot were found complementary to the characteristics of the aforesaid novel. Stephanie Hingston Kauffmann has also made a related observation about Hardy’s novels as:

All fourteen of Hardy’s novels center on the relations between the sexes, and their plots, which constitute fourteen variations of what I have called Hardy’s fundamental “romantic plot,” turn upon the happy or unhappy outcomes of such

¹ Woolf, “The Novels of Thomas Hardy.” p. 172.

² Harvey, *The Complete Critical Guide to Thomas Hardy*. p.7.

relations. Educational aspiration, social injustice, despair over life in a world which ignores or frustrates personal fulfillment: crucial and recurrent as these themes are, it is nevertheless the romantic and sexual relations between the characters which illustrate them and bring them into focus.³

As it is made clear by these remarks, Hardy's novels also have common literary characteristics. Exploration of the common motifs that highlight Hardy's novels can help enlighten both the critics and the readers of Hardy. For this purpose, the analysis of this thesis focuses on his novel *Far From the Madding Crowd (FFMC)* and *Under the Greenwood Tree (UGT)*. *FFMC* stands as a great example of Hardy's vivid portrayal of rural life in Victorian England while also illustrating a fiction of rich characters and social dynamics. Though portraying a smaller world than *FFMC*, *UGT* similarly depicts the life of people in a rural community and their dependency on old traditions and beliefs. Apart from these common themes, Kauffmann's observation is also found prevailing in these novels. Therefore, it is possible to ascertain a deeper structural framework that skillfully shapes the representation of characters' identities and the plot progression beneath the surface of pastoral background within these narratives.

The element that preserves Hardy's prose can be defined by its belonging to a transitory time; Hardy witnessed the ending of Victorian period which had its effects on his works. Virginia Woolf described Hardy as: "... a lover of old ways and plain countrymen yet doomed to see the flesh and faith of his forefathers turn to thin and spectral transparencies before his eyes".⁴ Woolf's analysis of Hardy's internal world can also be observed to persist in his works by means of his rural characters, and his plots consisting of fateful incidents which represented the coming of modernity.

As Virginia Woolf claims that Hardy was among the writers who were unconscious⁴, she explains the unforeseen force that drove Hardy's characters and plots and concludes as such:

The novels therefore are full of inequalities; they are lumpish and dull and inexpressive; but they are never arid; there is always about them a little blur of unconsciousness, that halo of freshness and margin of the unexpressed which

³ Kauffmann, "Relations Between The Sexes In Thomas Hardy's Novels: Structural Patterns Of Characterization And Plotting." p. 32.

⁴ Woolf, p. 174.

often produce the most profound sense of satisfaction. It is as if Hardy himself were not quite aware of what he did, as if his consciousness held more than he could produce, and he left it for his readers to make out his full meaning and to supplement it from their own experience.⁴

Woolf's analysis points out that there were prevailing factors that caused Hardy to create such characters and plots. Seeing that Woolf's claim alludes to the factor which makes Hardy an unconscious writer, it is the aim of this thesis to explore the underlying meaning that Hardy conveyed through his novels *FFMC* and *UGT*. Therefore, this thesis attempts to unravel the intricate web of structural constraints that control the portrayal of women in Hardy's novels by drawing upon the theoretical frameworks of structuralism, particularly Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of signification and Claude Levi-Strauss's theory of binary oppositions.

Considering the emergence of modernism in English Literature, it is possible to say that it flourished through a need for change in literary world. Robert McParland explains the birth of modernism as follows: "The path toward modernism was forged in the late Nineteenth Century. Symbolism, impressionism, naturalism coalesced as novelists sought new narrative form. In the new century, emphasis shifted to interiority, to how experience registers in consciousness".⁵ Therefore, it can be argued that Thomas Hardy produced his works at the same time as modernism emerged. Analysing Hardy's novels through the lens of the connection between the characteristics of his novels and the emergence of modernism can direct literary critics to discover how Hardy might have affected or been affected by modernism. McParland also notes: "Story and narrative may shape our understandings of the past of a culture. Books, periodicals, and electronic media transmit this story. Through stories adapted across time the power of myth is engaged; stories can mobilize people. ... The past, then, is actively reconstructed in memory"⁶, which means that Hardy's novels can be regarded as a part of cultural memory. Regarding the cause-and-effect relationship of the past and the future, it can be argued that Hardy's novels might be analysed to demonstrate their influence on the cultural memory. Similarly, the aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how

⁵ McParland, "Modern Consciousness and Cultural Memory." p. 19.

⁶ McParland, p. 7.

Hardy's narratives function as vehicles for the containment and regulation of the modern woman image by examining the ways in which language, characterization, and dualities converge to construct meaning.

As Hardy's novels will be analysed through the principals of structuralism, the notion of binary oppositions will be utilized wherein characters, themes and motifs are juxtaposed in pairs of mutually indivisible categories. Through this lens, this thesis explores how Hardy's heroines are situated within a dichotomous framework that constrains their agency, autonomy, and individuality. Moreover, Saussure's concept of signification will be employed to investigate the characterization and narrative signifiers that encode and reinforce traditional gender norms and hierarchies within the text.

At the heart of this thesis' examination lies the assertion that Hardy's novels are structured to tame and domesticate their heroines, relegating women to subordinate roles as wives and repressing their aspirations for autonomy and self-determination. By illuminating the structural constraints that delineate the representation of women in *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far From the Madding Crowd*, this thesis will shed light on the legated ideals of traditional women images ingrained within these seemingly pastoral narratives.

Through a detailed examination of structural elements such as characterization, narrative progression, and dualities, the aim of this thesis is to unveil the hidden mechanisms through which Hardy's novels participate in the construction and perpetuation of restricted women identities. Ultimately, this thesis ventures to offer new insights into the intersection of traditional woman image and modern woman image, while challenging conventional interpretations of Hardy's works as mere reflections of rural life in Victorian England.

CHAPTER 1

THE FORMED TRAIL OF THOUGHT: STRUCTURALISM

In this chapter of the thesis, general background and the theoretical development of structuralism will be explained in detail. For there are many aspects of the theory dependent on each other, the explanation will follow how structuralist terms came into use and how they expanded in time. Structuralism is an intellectual theory that influences and gets influenced by different areas of social sciences. Therefore, the impact of certain figures whose works do not necessarily provide specific information about literary criticism will be discussed as well. As an example, Claude Levi-Strauss, being an anthropologist, has discussed and contributed to structuralism. Hence, his name will be included in the exploration of the structuralism theory. After every subsection, a brief information of how the explained ideas and terms will be used in relation to the analysis of Thomas Hardy's novels will be given.

1.1 Structuralism as a New Objective Method of Literary Analysis in 20th Century

Literary structuralism has been brought up in the 20th century when a great number of different approaches and inventions to both language and literary criticism were propounded. Structuralism can simply be defined as an intellectual approach to anything that needs to be understood within the organizational and interconnected world of concepts. It holds that everything that humans perceive consists of interdependent fragments, patterns and models. The models of opposition such as day and night, light and dark, birth and death, summer and winter can be given as examples for these organizational concepts that represent structure. Structuralist theory supports the idea that everything can be analysed and understood through the complementary components existing in the structural system. For the literary criticism of a novel, some of these components can be characterization, plot and narrative. Since its emergence in mid-20th century, this approach has been adopted and used in many different areas of social sciences such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, literary criticism, and architecture. The approach has flourished with Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, and his methodology has paved a new path to analyse narratives. About Saussure's

contribution to linguistics and how it affected the study of language, Malbon states the following: “Before Saussure, traditional linguistics focused on diachronic analysis, the study of changes in language over time. Saussure’s insistence on the priority of synchronic analysis, the investigation of the structure of language, revolutionized linguistics”.⁷ As Saussure’s methodology helped the structuralist intellectual idea develop, his ideas about how language is an organized phenomenon make the foundation for structuralism.

In terms of literary criticism, structuralism is a theoretical framework and a means to analyse any literary text to understand the structures that shape and create the meaning in the text and its components such as the plot, characterization, setting, genre, theme, style and other literary devices. Plot, which is a highly distinct structural element in novels, is one of the many aspects to analyse a work through structuralism as it generally follows a pattern and presents certain forms that help create the meaning for the reader. As an example, traditional triangular plot structure can be given. Triangular plot structure means that the story starts with the introduction of the characters, and conflicts arise until the climax is achieved. After the climax, the story follows a falling action and ends with a resolution. Also, the resolution is sometimes determined by the genre of the specific text, especially in traditionally written works. Depending on the genre of tragedy or comedy, a plot can end with death or marriage. Since the resolution is crucial for the general meaning of the text, literary devices forming the novel are shaped around the plot to achieve the resolution. In addition, characterization is also affected by the resolution which means the characters are created through forming. In natural development of plot, a writer creates his characters and relationships, which means that the meaning in a novel is something created through forms. This idea was particularly new in 20th century because it offered a fundamentally different perspective to literary criticism and since then, it’s been used especially in English literature studies to better understand how the form functions and how it shapes meaning in literary texts.⁸ In the introduction of his book *History of Structuralism*, François Dosse explains

⁷ Malbon, Elizabeth Struthers. “Structuralism, Hermeneutics, and Contextual Meaning.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 51, no. 2 (1983): 207–30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1463635>. p. 208.

⁸ Bozkurt, Bülent R., ed. *Literary Terms: A Companion to the Study of Literature*. Hacettepe University, 1959. p. 83-85.

that the arrival of such a theory created a sensation through Western schools and among scholars:

Structuralism was contestatory and corresponded to a particular moment in Western history. It expressed a certain degree of self-hatred, of the rejection of traditional Western culture, and of a desire for modernism in search of new models. Antique values were no longer glorified; structuralism demonstrated an extreme sensitivity to everything that had been repressed in Western history.⁹

As it is stated in Dosse's words, structuralism provided a brand-new lens through which traditional Western literature could be analysed. Until 20th century, literary critics have used and applied many different methods to read and analyse works all of which were subjective and susceptible to counter arguments. With the emergence of structuralism however, the evaluation of human speech was thought to be eligible for being objective and scientific as the modern world required. The idea of every society and human behaviour mostly following a certain pattern and being structural was epochal because it meant that the previous methods of criticism were obsolete. Therefore, certain philosophers and scholars have put more on Saussure's methodology and provided the needed explanations and methods to achieve a structural approach. With the adaptation of their ideas on linguistics and semiology, it was possible for literary critics to analyse literary texts in terms of the techniques that structuralism offered.

In literary texts, the literary critic finds the underlying structure of the text's components such as plot, genre, characterization, setting, symbols and other literary devices. For structuralism, these literary components depend on each other as they exist in relation to one another to create the ideas in the text for the readers to understand. Narrative is the tool for the artist to convey their message and ideas to any reader. Using structural criticism, one can trace the path to author's core ideas, enabling a deeper understanding of the narrative. This approach allows the critic to explore the underlying structure withing the plot. To be able to understand how finding the structure helps analyse the text, the foundation of structuralism and its development as a literary theory are explained next.

⁹ Dosse, François. "Preface." In *History of Structuralism: The Rising Sign, 1945-1966*. U of Minnesota Press, 1997. p. xx.

1.2 The Foundation of the Method: Ferdinand de Saussure's Semiology

Swiss linguist and philosopher Ferdinand de Saussure is acknowledged to be structuralism's founding father and unfortunately, he failed to complete his book project which would have included detailed insight of his methods and theoretical findings regarding semiology. After his death, some of his students managed to piece together the collections of his notes and his work on semiology was published as *Course in General Linguistics* in 1916.¹⁰ This book contains the most fundamental points of Saussure's research on language and many structuralist scholars have used it as the base for their works.

To understand Saussure's perspective of language, it should be considered that he also had done research on the history of linguistic studies, and he summarized them to better point out the insufficiency of previous studies and the incomprehensible vastness of linguistics. To understand the structuralist view, Saussure's explanation of small parts in language should be the pivotal point of departure. To mention some from *Course in General Linguistics*, Saussure elaborates on the key concepts of structuralist approach such as sign, signifier and signified. Simply, signifier is the term he gives for the word and sound form of a concept and signified is the concept which exists in the intellectual mind of the speaker of that language. Together, signifier and signified creates the sign which enables transfer of the concepts between different parties.¹¹ The separation of the sound/image form of a word and the space it occupies in collective intellectual mind allows the structuralist scholar to see that words are essentially message carriers, and they transport concepts among societies, time periods and individuals. The message in words can consist of or be the result of some conceptual patterns and it is not free from other elements of language. Based on Saussure's analysis of words containing signifier and signified, it is apparent that every word and language which have existed for some time have traces of different aspects of the society it was used by. Sean Homer points this out stating: "... individual speaking subjects remain unconscious of the system itself. Saussure's most original contribution

¹⁰ De Saussure, Ferdinand. "Introduction: Saussure and His Contexts." In *Course in General Linguistics*. Columbia UP, New York, 2011, p.xxi.

¹¹ De Saussure, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Columbia UP, New York, 2011, p.67.

to the study of language, then, was the conception of language as a total system – a system that governs what people can say, while they themselves remain unconscious of its rules”.¹² The key revelation here is the impossibility of inventing a whole new language which would not have any reflections of the existing languages or grammatical rules. This impossibility lies in the fact that every sound and word we create would somewhat be inclined to an existing signifier. Saussure explains this as such:

The signifier ... is fixed, not free, with respect to the linguistic community that uses it. The masses have no voice in the matter, and the signifier chosen by language could be replaced by no other. ... No individual, even if he willed it, could modify in any way at all the choice that has been made; and what is more, the community itself cannot control so much as a single word; it is bound to the existing language.¹³

The intricate relationship between the signifier and its usage shows that language doesn't occur freely from concepts and ideas. When it comes to the relationship between the signifier and the signified, Homer summarizes Saussure's explanation stating: “The relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary and is determined by social convention”.¹⁴ This arbitrariness is a specific feature of every language, and it microcosmically shows how communication occurs starting with a very small part of the language, a sign, to continuously create new words and sentences whose meaning is determined by the distinction among different signs. In other words, what most English speakers understand from the sound/image of the word ‘tree’ is determined by every other word which is ‘not tree’. Homer remarks: “According to Saussure, meaning does not reside in individual signs but in the relationship between signs in the language system itself. Language creates a differential system whereby any given sign acquires its meaning by virtue of its difference from other signs”.¹⁴ As it is clear, words in a sentence cannot be replaced by other signs because their role is determined by the language users and any sign is not free from what concept it conveys on the collective mind. Because language is used and created through a group of

¹² Homer, Sean. “Saussure (1857–1913) And The Linguistic Sign.” *Jacques Lacan*. Routledge, 2005, p.37.

¹³ De Saussure, p.71.

¹⁴ Homer, p.38.

meaningful signs every day, it can be taken to mean that it is a system of collective signs which together convey certain insights and experiences of individuals and societies.

In his studies, Saussure demarcates every aspect of language analysis thoroughly, which proves the ampleness of aspects to consider for language study, and his evaluation provides scholars with multifaceted layers to practice on for the analysis of language structure.¹⁵ Because of the interdependence between society and language, it is possible to say that language shapes and gets shaped by many aspects of humankind while the existence of a system for the organization of humankind and language remains the same. About the system that predominates the existing languages and its rules, Saussure makes the distinction between the idea of language as a signifying system, *la langue*, and the human language, *la langage*. Marking this difference, he claims that the idea of language has a system and the languages we speak daily are the products of the system in that whole.¹⁶ According to this idea, languages are susceptible to the influence of societies and time. Therefore, every language exists as previously signified when it is being used by people. However, *la langue*, which represents the system of languages, is not affected by societies or time but has all the rules and mechanics of languages in it. Simply put, Saussure means that the languages we use to communicate are the manifestations of the idea of the ever-existing language structure (*la langue*). As John K. Sheriff elaborates on Saussure's terms explaining semiology, he clarifies that the practice of language goes through the rules and borders of the language and is produced as speech which is named as *la parole*. Continuing, Sheriff sums up Saussure's idea thusly: the languages act as institutions and has certain set of rules; when the language is spoken, its structure is assimilated to be expressed through words.¹⁷ This means that languages may reflect the ideological thoughts of a certain society and its structure is influenced continuously by the input of constant use. While Sheriff quotes Terence Hawkes to explain the terms better, he describes how Saussure's analogy of chess resembles the relationship between *la langue* and *la parole*:

¹⁵ De Saussure, Ferdinand. "A Glance at the History of Linguistics." *Course in General Linguistics*. Columbia UP, New York, 2011, p.1-5.

¹⁶ De Saussure, Ferdinand. "The Object of Linguistics." *Course in General Linguistics*. Columbia UP, New York, 2011, p.9.

¹⁷ Sheriff, John K. "Beginning with Saussure: The Sentence-Text Analogy." *The Fate of Meaning*. Princeton University Press eBooks, 1989, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400859979>. p.6.

The rules of chess can be said to exist above and beyond each individual game, but they only ever acquire concrete form in the relationships that develop between the pieces in individual games. So with language. The nature of *the langue* lies beyond and determines the nature of each manifestation of parole, yet it has no concrete existence of its own, except in the piecemeal manifestations that speech affords.¹⁸

Therefore, it can be said that every speech and narrative find their form through some structural patterns and their structural analysis may provide insights to the society in which they are being used. What is important here is comprehending the dominance of linguistics structure over human experiences. Saussure's findings point to the unseen or overseen aspects of language. These unseen or overseen aspects of language is summarized by Homer below:

Language precedes consciousness; as speaking subjects we are born into language.

Language does not reflect reality but rather one produces one's experience within the constraints of the given language system and that language system, to some extent, conditions the nature of one's experience.

Language is not an absolute and fixed system within which a singular meaning can be located, but it is rather a set of differential relations.¹⁹

Accordingly, it can be argued that Saussure's model for the language made it possible for the linguists and scholars to intensify their attention to the fragmented pieces of a certain text to comprehend and find out the meaning in a more thorough way. Since the tools of a literary text can be analysed to contribute to the meaning, their function and form can point to the overall structure of a text. This means that the literary tools go along with the determined plot while both shape and affect each other. For example, characterization of a novel can be analysed to consist of certain signs which shape the descriptions and actions of characters. Also, the narrative has preceptive signs which influence the overall shape of the plot. While the characters and the narrative are affected by a process of signification, their roles in the plot can be found to have certain

¹⁸ Sheriff, p.6.

¹⁹ Homer, p.40.

narrator guidance or structuring to achieve the desired resolution for the text. In conclusion, the elements of a text can be analysed structurally to identify the contributors to the overall meaning of a text.

Using this perspective into critical analysis of Thomas Hardy's novels, the starting point is the signification of characters and narrative in his chosen novels. Because the signifiers determine the progression of the narrative. When Homer's saying "we are born into language"¹⁹ is adopted to literature, it can be said that Hardy's novels are born into the signs he chose to narrate his fiction. Also, as his characters are born into this system, their actions can be found to have the traces of a pre-determined signification process which help continue the structural system. This structure then, shapes and frames characters' experiences around the plot. In other words, characters make choices around the restrictions that are made by the structure of Hardy's narrative. Hence in this thesis, Hardy's novels will be analysed by means of Saussure's findings to explore how the characters' experiences are influenced by the constraints of the descriptions, the narrative structure, and Hardy's characterization.

1.3 Claude Levi-Strauss and His Idea of Binary Oppositions as The Poles of Narrative

The study of structural linguistics is based on the overall dominating language system as it is discussed in the previous section which explained the foundational theory of semiology of Ferdinand de Saussure. With respect to this, it can be claimed that words in a linguistic system play a role in creating the signification for the unconscious collective mind of society. The signification in the collective mind occurs as words are used in relation to one another. For instance, the word breeze used along with such words as serenity, peacefulness will invite connotations of a relaxed state of mind, maybe a summer holiday. Similarly, using the word gloomy to describe a rainy day will attract other connotations such as cold, lack of light and therefore create a murky state of mind. Relating the words to each other provides significant insight for linguistics as every signification occurs through a web of connotations. Now, a complementary way of this structural mode of expression will be explained.

As mentioned before, structuralism has affected many areas of social sciences in 20th century and Claude Levi-Strauss was another name whose works contributed to structuralism as well. He was a French anthropologist, and his book *Structural Anthropology* had a profound and lasting impact on the fields of anthropology, sociology, cultural studies as well as linguistics. As an anthropologist, Strauss overviewed the development history of ethnology, ethnography, history, anthropology and elaborated on the problems in each field, concluding that the methods of research in every one of these fields had been insufficient to some extent.²⁰ He stated the issues with the study approaches in these specific fields and how the methodology and theories used in each fail to be complementary regarding different aspects of social sciences. Upon the conclusion that the different branches of social sciences are interrelated and how approaches could be adapted to one another, he made use of Saussure's approach to language, and he adapted a structural approach to anthropology.²¹ His starting point in his theoretical pathway includes linguistics, an area which Strauss believed to be studied on more comprehensively than the other areas of social sciences:

Linguistics occupies a special place among the social sciences, to whose ranks it unquestionably belongs. It is not merely a social science like the others, but, rather, the one in which by far the greatest progress has been made. It is probably the only one which can truly claim to be a science and which has achieved both the formulation of an empirical method and an understanding of the nature of the data submitted to its analysis.²²

As it can be inferred from his words, the way linguistic studies helped other areas of social sciences has also benefited linguistics to progress. In his studies, as Strauss analyses the dynamics of social organizations of different groups, he demonstrates how language and society affected each other and how the organization in both shaped the other. Because the connection between language and culture is so closely tied, it may be challenging to show objectively how each one would have been constructed or practiced in life without the effect of the other one. He chose a comparative method to understand

²⁰ Levi-Strauss, Claude. "Introduction: History and Anthropology." *Structural Anthropology*. Hachette UK, 2008. p.1-20.

²¹ Levi-Strauss, p.20.

²² Levi-Strauss, p.31.

the dynamics among different groups of people as well as different species; he analysed that the line demarcating nature from culture has a lot to do with how societies changed and lived together for so many years.²³ For a group to be differentiated as having culture, he suggests the rules that are obeyed by the members of that group are distinctive to speak of the presence of culture.²⁴ Because when people want to live together, therefore forming the phenomenon called society, they need the rules around how they are allowed to have relationship with each other. This type of organization is explained in “Language and Kinship” by Levi-Strauss, and he combines the theory of culture with language, explaining how culture shapes linguistic signs so as to make rules:

Traffic regulations have also arbitrarily assigned differential semantic values to the red and green traffic signals. The opposite choice could have been made. And yet, if it had, the emotional and symbolic overtones of red and green would not simply be reversed thereby. In the current system, red evokes danger, violence, and blood, whereas green is associated with hope, serenity, and the placid unfolding of a natural process such as that of vegetation. But what would happen if red were to stand for “go” and green for “stop”? Red would no doubt be perceived as an expression of human warmth and communication and green as an icy and venomous symbol. ... The choice of the sign may be arbitrary, but it retains an inherent value ²⁵

As it can be understood from this example, language, society, and culture are all intertwined as language provides a certain functionality to the latter organizations. Thinking of the colour red in Saussurean terms, it is a signifier whose form and meaning are initially arbitrary. But as Strauss shows in above-example, due to cultural norms, it's place in traffic rules has shaped it to have the meaning of these other relational words: stop, danger, violence, and blood. These attributions to the colour red in relation to traffic rules have been chosen for the purpose of functionality yet it has been practiced by societies for some time, therefore making it impossible to be replaced by any other

²³ Levi-Strauss, p.35.

²⁴ Levi-Strauss, p.60.

²⁵ Levi-Strauss, p.94.

signifier. In short, Strauss' example shows that most of the signs used among societies have already been assigned roles and they are therefore bound by the meaning given to them since culture is a historically developing phenomenon. This clearly shows that signs are nearly impossible to be reconstructed as their function continues to be practiced by societies every day.

Another aspect that Strauss mentions about this interconnectedness is the role of consciousness and unconsciousness. Because one may think of language as being changeable because the evolution of it depends on the people who use it for communication. The problem with this idea is that language cannot be analysed without being conscious of its underlying structures. As the general use of language hugely depends on the number of people using it and the timespan that it's being used in, objective study of language doesn't help change its infrastructure; but it does help scholars analyse culture. Strauss also mentions this:

Language is a social phenomenon; and ... much of linguistic behavior lies on the level of unconscious thought. When we speak, we are not conscious of the syntactic and morphological laws of our language. Moreover, we are not ordinarily conscious of the phonemes that we employ to convey different meanings; and we are rarely, if ever, conscious of the phonological oppositions which reduce each phoneme to a bundle of distinctive features. This absence of consciousness, moreover, still holds when we do become aware of the grammar or the phonemics of our language. For, while this awareness is the privilege of the scholar, language, as a matter of fact, lives and develops only as a collective construct; and even the scholar's linguistic knowledge always remains dissociated from his experience as a speaking agent, for his mode of speech is not affected by his ability to interpret his language on a higher level. ...²⁶

Concluding from Strauss' words, the attribution of signs to certain signifiers happen on the unconscious collective level and the ability of scholars to analyse language doesn't help to change the unconscious decision. As he says language is a social phenomenon, the power over it lies highly on society rather than individuals. This observation points out that unconscious has dominance over language. The number of scholars who may be

²⁶ Levi-Strauss, p.56-57.

aware of the power of linguistic structures would constitute a smaller part of the population compared to the number of people who use language functionally, unconsciously without realizing the importance of linguistic structure. Therefore, the unconscious use of language has the greater input into language and signs. To give an example, it can be said that having a well-paying job doesn't necessarily show a person's success because the dynamics of the employment, education, individual skill sets might differ on a vast scale. However, if a certain society believes in the idea that a person's salary shows his/her success rate, this belief holds more power over the construction of language. The words related to success might possibly revolve around the amount of money a person earns in such a linguistic system. Therefore, structural linguist's method will provide the analysis of the language on society's level. Applying the same idea to literature, analysing the text and its structure will make it possible to find out what certain narratives and symbols mean on the collective mind of societies.

In 'Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology' chapter of *Structural Anthropology*, Strauss analyses the forming of family and the rules to maintain the structure of family in a society.²⁷ In terms of the connection between anthropological structures and linguistic structure, it is important to note that both language and society occur as a consequence of combining rules. To analyse the smallest part of society, it becomes inevitable to understand the structure of a family. As Wiseman explains Strauss' structural analysis of family, he claims:

For a man, prohibited from marrying his own close relatives, to have a wife, he must release his sisters and daughters to others, in order that those others may give him their women. This imperative gives birth to kinship as a field of social relations regulated by a law of exchange which, in some societies, materialises in positive marriage rules ... But even where this does not apply, and the choice of a spouse is not regulated by any such injunctions, the incest prohibition remains, as the minimum form of a rule of exchange and reciprocity that makes possible kinship and society – and culture itself.²⁸

²⁷ Levi-Strauss, p.34.

²⁸ Wiseman, Boris. *The Cambridge Companion to Lévi-Strauss*. Cambridge UP, 2009. p.81.

This explanation shows that culture and society come into existence by centring around the rules that set boundaries around relationships. Basically, if the structural development of a society gives more independence to a male's choices by providing him the freedom of choice for a suitable wife other than his own family, this privilege reflects in their language. As it is also mentioned in the above-quotation, submitting to the rules of female-exchange among different families would allow the agreement to the consequence that a male would not intervene in the pursuit of females in his family by males from other families. This agreement makes the essential forming rules of a culture, and it also says a lot about the position of women. In such a society, the females become the objects to the rules about creating a family. By these rules, the members of society acknowledge that the female would be picked by a male member of a different family. This structure doesn't allow the opposite direction of course. The rule does not start with the restriction of a mother marrying with his son; rather, the agreement starts with the choice of male. In this equation, the male becomes the primary member of a society, and it may explain their predetermined role in management of their communities. Whereas the female become the secondary member of societies as they are agreed to be involved with the male member of other families. In parallel with this observation, it is possible to say that the language created in such a society represents their rules. Accordingly, the attributions given to a male would be primary while the attributions for the female would be secondary. Strauss' analysis of kinship and structural linguistics coincide with each other by the rules governing both. With respect to this, Strauss analyses how people position members in a family, creating a web of connections in relation to one another. These connections make the basis for the foregrounding rules among the member of this group. He explains how the term father is constructed in society:

... In our own kinship system, for instance, the term father has positive connotations with respect to sex, relative age, and generation; ... Thus, for each system, one might ask what relationships are expressed and, for each term of the system, what connotation - positive or negative - it carries regarding each of the following relationships: generation, collaterally, sex, relative age, affinity, etc. It is at this "micro-sociological" level that one might hope to discover the most

general structural laws, just as the linguist discovers his at the infra-phonemic level or the physicist at the infra-molecular or atomic level.²⁹

Deriving from this argument, it can be claimed that the general social structure of a society can be discovered at the micro level. When this idea is adapted to language, the elements of a text's structure can be discovered on the micro-components of the speech which are the words. The words in a linguistic system may consist of the structural elements of the society and their analysis can point to the construction of linguistic signs. As his example also shows, any given sign exists along with its other components. The meaning each sign conveys is a combination of the signifier, the signified and other signs it was used amongst. Thus, finding the primary and secondary signs in a text would make it possible to see what attributions are given to different genders. Each sign has positive or negative connotations in their linguistic practice of a society. The decision of any positivity or negativity that any sign might carry is determined among the members of society. Therefore, it can be said that the words and sentences carry the elements of a deeper meaning when they are analysed in terms of structural linguistics.

With the help of Strauss's anthropological analysis, there is more to the method of structural analysis of language. As he compares different groups of people and the relationship of the members in every community, he realizes that the treatment of family or community members occur on a dualistic base. He explains: "In patrilineal societies, where the father and the father's descent group represent traditional authority, the maternal uncle is considered a 'male mother.' He is generally treated in the same fashion, and sometimes even called by the same name, as the mother. In matrilineal societies, the opposite occurs".³⁰ This analysis of gender-based treatment in societies shows that the structure of a family affects other members of society as well. Therefore, the dualistic nature of a family creates a structure that relies on dual roles and representatives. Considering that family is a small structure, it also implies the way how Strauss approaches to the analysis of culture. The genders of mother and father shape the family, and a similar opposition is found between nature and culture. As Philippe

²⁹ Levi-Strauss, p.35.

³⁰ Levi-Strauss, p.41.

Descola states: “he [Levi-Strauss] has used it [the contrastive opposition between nature and culture] in such a variety of contexts and for so many purposes, that for many it has come to embody one of the main characteristics of his way of thinking”.³¹ In Strauss’s works, the exploration of duality plays a significant role because he believes that binary oppositions enable societies to build their cultural structure around. This dualism can also be observed in his analysis of family; the structural rules rely on the difference of genders of family members. A female’s position in family is decided much by her role to the primary member of the family, the father. This duality influences society, language, and even narrative. Descola explains this stating:

In the structural analyses of myths, the properties, substances and entities that he isolates in the narrative chain are incorporated to contrastive matrixes which are often organised according to the very axis of the nature/culture opposition; as if, playing on the antithesis between the raw and the cooked, honey and tobacco, dirt and adornment, the bush fires and the cooking fire, ... pairs of opposites such as full and empty, supple and rigid, high and low, right and left, life and death, hot and cold, container and contained, offer everywhere an adequate physical framework for organising symbolic systems.³²

Hence, it can be argued that the dominance of the dualities over any structural phenomenon is accessible. Whether it be the gender roles, building relationships, societal values, it is possible to analyse a structure over two oppositional conceptions. In family structures, father figure is accepted as the primary gender figure, so he has more freedom of choice about how to build his family. When the structure of society is examined, it is possible to see that the combination of male and female genders is accepted as a norm because their oppositional positions allow them to contribute in their lineage to value the same type of relationship. When the values of a society are analysed, it can be observed that the structure is built on dualities; good and evil, rich and poor, high and low. When they are read as representatives of social structure, novels can be analysed to embody a structure of dualities. Hence, the meaning of a text can be examined to be affected by these dualities.

³¹ Descola, Philippe. “The two natures of Lévi-Strauss.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Lévi-Strauss*, edited by Boris Wiseman, 103–17. Cambridge University Press, 2009. p. 103.

³² Descola, p.109.

Considering how the relationships are built as communities give certain roles to members depending on their matrilineal or patrilineal place, it is possible to say that the words being used to refer to certain family members also carry the conceptual undertones. When the analysis of signs along with their connotations and the contrastive duality of structural elements are combined, it can be suggested that the oppositions create a pattern of dual connotations that construct the meaning of signs. To use this approach on any literary text, the following step for a scholar is to zoom out of the fragmented parts of speech and focusing on how meaning is played out on the bigger frame. As it is discussed before, every word is arbitrary on its own until they are thought in relation to other relational terms. For the meaning to exist, there must be some correlation among the words that are discussed because only when there is a structural relationship among words then they are able to convey a message. As suggested here, Strauss's method provides structural linguistics another aspect which explains how society treats and receives the meaning in language. Strauss's emphasis on the linguistic behaviour relying on the unconscious thought²⁶ shows that linguistic structure doesn't depend on the scholars; it is not possible to change the rules of language by becoming aware of them because the construction of structure happens on the unconscious level. This means that while the meaning is constructed through structural web of connections, the unconscious thought²⁶ plays an important role in terms of dualities of structure. The binary structure depends not on the linguistic scholars but on the unconscious that dominates society. Society then, fragments the pieces to create two oppositional dominating binaries through which all meaning is constructed. Wendy Doniger explains this interpretation of Strauss in "Theoretical and Actual Approaches to Myth" as follows:

Myth, ... is a form of language, and language itself predisposes us to attempt to understand ourselves and our world by superimposing dialectics or dichotomies upon data that may not be binary at all. And underneath language lies the binary nature of the brain itself, which cooks the raw material of human experience on dualistic griddles. Right and left, good and evil, life and death – these are inevitable dichotomies produced by the brain that has two lobes and controls two eyes, two hands. We are split creatures literally by nature, and we process

experience like a simple digital machine. Our common sense is binary; the simplest and most efficient way to process experience seems to be by dividing it in half, and then to divide the halves in half, reformulating every question so that there are only two possible answers to it – yes or no.³³

What is offered by these sentences is that meaning holds place in human consciousness mostly in two binary concepts. Even though the societal binary conceptions are claimed to be falsified, communities experience and perceive everything on a binary system. This is the way of society's perception to categorize the meaning in either of the two concepts. Therefore, it can be stated that constructing oppositions play a non-negligible role in the process of meaning-making in language. Based on this result, it can be asserted that finding and analysing the binaries that dominate the construction of the meaning in any text is crucial to find the presumptive implications in it. Realizing the oppositional dynamics in language can show how certain important elements that construct social values are built and decided through the writer and what the structure of their work suggests. Strauss explains the effect of binary oppositions as follows:

... to understand the avunculate (kinship relations) we must treat it as one relationship within a system, while the system itself must be considered as a whole in order to grasp its structure. This structure rests upon four terms (brother, sister, father, and son), which are linked by two pairs of correlative oppositions in such a way that in each of the two generations there is always a positive relationship and a negative one. Now, what is the nature of this structure, and what is its function? The answer is as follows: This structure is the most elementary form of kinship that can exist.³⁴

In Strauss's example, the structural analysis of the words that refer to the family members consist of the following binaries: brother and sister, father and mother, son and daughter. Therefore, binary oppositions consist of a web of signs that create the meaning. Applying the idea of binary oppositions to the structural analysis of a text can demonstrate the positive and negative meaning behind signs. Then, the exploration of

³³ Doniger, Wendy. "Claude Lévi-Strauss's theoretical and actual approaches to myth." In *The Cambridge Companion to Lévi-Strauss*, edited by Boris Wiseman, 196–218. Cambridge University Press, 2009. p. 197.

³⁴ Lévi-Strauss, p.46.

binary oppositions in a text can also determine their effect on the unconscious thought. To give an example, the contrastive opposition of man and woman in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* can be mentioned. Because the contribution of man/woman opposition happens on the unconscious level in terms of its effects on society, it is impossible to reverse its implications for the language of people who watched or read *Hamlet*. In the play, the narrator is the son, Hamlet whose voice governs the perspective and the narrative of the plot. Through Hamlet's narration, the world of his royal family is depicted in a male's lens, and it can be suggested that everything the audience perceive relies on the male perspective. As Hamlet mentions his mother's presence and her betrayal of her husband, the female gender is drawn in colours of her position in the family and her immoral attitude following her husband's death. Because the narrator is chosen to be Hamlet, it is impossible to hear her mother as the subject of her story. This builds the contrastive oppositions between male and female. Through the play, Shakespeare contributes the connotations of loyal, morally adept, honourable attributions to the male while the connotations for the female would be immoral, disloyal and inapt mother. Therefore, it is possible to claim that *Hamlet* has contributed to the concept of mother negatively while adding positive connotations for the male representatives of society.

Accordingly, the exploration of binary oppositions and their implications in Hardy's novels will expose the features of his structural narrative. In the subsequent chapters of this thesis, Hardy's use of binaries will be studied to explore the creation of meaning and implications made through the narrative.

1.4 Unveiling Patterns: Some Examples of Structural Analysis in Literary Criticism

In this subsection, the integration of the theoretical background with some practical examples is given to illuminate the application of structural approach on different literary works. Hence, this subsection aims to provide some brief examples and bridge the gap between theoretical exposition and the forthcoming analysis of the selected texts.

The components that play role in a literary text can be analysed to show the influence of structuralism and underpinning these influences can help analyse the unconscious meaning in a text. As languages can be examined to include a structural pattern in accordance with the studies of Saussure and Levi-Strauss, a literary work may also have some characteristics that stem from the structural patterns of a language. The patterns playing a role in language can affect the literature that is produced in that language. Understanding that there has always been some structure governing how the society and its language is shaped and organized help see the frame in which such patterns are allowed to exist. When literature is put in the same frame, it becomes clearer that such structures may have played a directive role in terms of affecting the unconscious thought.

The structural analysis of a literary work can be the object of questions in many different aspects. Since a literary work consists of different components, the focus of structural analysis can be far-reaching. But it is undeniable that a literary work is mostly remembered by its author. On some occasions, it may be a sympathetic feeling or the fame of the author that determine the popularity of a work. Regardless of the accommodating details, it can be claimed that critical analysis of a work is inseparable from its author. Supporting this idea, Susan K. Harris explains that the literary work and the author exist along with each other.³⁵ While providing a structural analysis of three short stories, she explores the connection of the work and the author:

I am treating these texts as products of particular “authors,” by which I mean a subjective consciousness that, though originating a given work, is itself a product of its culture’s multifarious present. Equally important here, an “author” is also a product of his or her culture’s interpretations of the past - its readings, and methods for reading, prior texts. If each author’s productions are also returns, rewritings, of prior texts, then what interests me here are the ways authors first repeat and/or alter inherited concepts, and, second, fill in gaps in prior texts and ramify their implications.³⁵

³⁵ Harris, Susan K. “Vicious Binaries: Gender and Authorial Paranoia in Dreiser’s ‘Second Choice,’ Howells’ ‘Editha,’ and Hemingway’s ‘the Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber.’” *College Literature*, vol. 20, no. 2, Jan. 1993. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25112031.

In this case, the writers are found to be impacted by the unconscious thought and therefore produce works which would represent the mechanism of the world they live in. Hence, the literary work can be thought to have cultural implications. This explains the dominating power of the unconscious because as people use and shape language, they shape the literature as well. The characteristics of a society may result in the representation of those characteristics in the literature produced by the same society.

In this article, Harris remarks that the three short stories analysed in the article resemble neither thematically nor historically. But it is also stated that these different short stories are constructed in such a way to represent marginalized female characters who are also the victim of the binary structure of the short story they exist in.³⁶ As it is previously discussed along with Claude Levi-Strauss's studies in this thesis, the structural components of a language may be permeated on the unconscious thought in binary form as well. This results in the formation of the binary oppositions that shape the meaning of the work. The characters, relationships, descriptions are all drawn in a way that would fit in either of the two opposite sides. In Harris' analysis, the opposites of the short stories are female and male. She states:

If we examine these characters' behaviors as responses to their marginalization, we confront the stories' implicit oppositions, and are led to examine the stories in light of their common binary infrastructure. Suddenly the authors of the stories appear in a new light: first, as inheritors of a discursive practice mandating gendered opposition; second, as creative subjects disturbed by their own bad faith as authorities in regard to their female protagonists; and finally, as gendered subjects grown fearful that the hapless female objects they have created will retaliate against them.³⁶

What is suggested here is that the structure of the short stories is readable on different layers, but the foundation is constructed through the gender opposites. Levi-Strauss' idea of binaries and its effect on the imagination of any writer is observable if any structural reading of a text proves to have binary opposites. This shapes the imagination as well; therefore, the cause-and-effect analysis of language and literature resembles to a vicious cycle. The binary mechanism of the society results in its effect on both the

³⁶ Harris, p. 70-71.

linguistic structure and the authors who produce in that language. The literary work they produce carrying the inherited binary structure results in the replication of the same binary structure. Therefore, if the binary oppositions are to be found as one of the governing factors of a society, it is possible to say that the literary works of the same society will inevitably be shaped by those oppositions. Because Harris' analysis of the three short stories finds the binary oppositions to be male and female, it should be noted that one pole serves in the thriving of a party while the opposite pole causes the other party to deteriorate. Because one pole must be positive while the other is negative, the female cannot be associated with any positive attributions when the positive pole represents the male. Moreover, the construction allocates the equally negative aspect of the male to the female. In other words, in a system of binary oppositions, a male is powerful while a female is weak, a male is logical while the female is incoherent, a male is esteemed while the female is disparaged. On a binary system, one part cannot remain neutral; the poles attract and allocate every conceptual positive and negative. In the short story analysis, Harris finds the same happening to characters of the stories; she states "these three stories express a culturally encouraged disposition dialectically to link activity with maleness and passivity with femaleness, thus collapsing four potential categories (active or passive males, active or passive females) into two, and to value these particular combinations over any other possibilities".³⁶ Therefore, the binary thought absorbs any potential new values and prevents a third pole or a neutral ground from existing. This means that the authors are also bound by the dominating power of existing two poles, the unconscious doesn't allow them to create a text free from the binary thought.

Another example of the structural analysis of literature is Tzvetan Todorov's analysis of four different stories of *Decameron*.³⁷ In this analysis, Todorov focused on the structural analysis of the plot as he found the plot structure of the different stories in *Decameron*, stating:

It is easy to recognize that these four plots (and there are many others like them in the *Decameron*) have something in common. ... Analysis of this narrative

³⁷ Todorov, Tzvetan, and Arnold Weinstein. "Structural Analysis of Narrative." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 3, no. 1, Jan. 1969, p. 70. JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1345003>.

clause leads us to discover the existence of two entities which correspond to the “parts of speech.” a) The agents, designated here by X and Y, correspond to proper nouns. They serve as subject or object of the clause; moreover, they permit identification of their reference without its being described.³⁸

In this analysis, Todorov analyses the plot of the stories focusing on the agents as he calls X and Y of the stories. He finds that the plot can be narrowed down to a clause which includes the subject, X, and the object, Y, of the stories. Because a subject carries the active role in a sentence while the object is the passive one, it can be concluded that the structure of the plot is under the effect of the X, the subject. When the subject and object are found in the plot structure, the constructing agents of the narrative can be examined accordingly. From this point on, the plot can be analysed according to what the subject and object serve in the plot. While this analysis provides a simplified understanding of a plot, it also shows how the voice of the narrative is determined by the subject. Combined with the examination of the binary oppositions, the narrative can be discovered to have a biased perspective. For example, Todorov discovers the presence of binary oppositions in *Decameron* as he states: “With Boccaccio, the two equilibriums symbolize (for the most part) culture and nature, the social and the individual; the story usually consists in illustrating the superiority of the second term over the first”.³⁹ Therefore, if the X and Y of the narrative are also the constituents of the binary opposition in the text, it is possible to say that the structure of the text is very restrictive for both agents. Even though Todorov only focuses on the literary text rather than the argument of the text, his examination proves the presence of binary structure in a narrative. This means that structural analysis can illuminate the function of the binary oppositions in a text’s meaning. While Todorov’s analysis purely focus on the structure, it also shows that the formation of the binary oppositions occurs naturally in language.

Considering the examples of structural analysis, it is possible to say that by analysing the structures in a text, a critic can unearth the questionable aspects of a literary work. Because the plot can be discovered to have a biased perspective, the structure can be found to depict merely two ends of a pendulum swing. The neutral

³⁸ Todorov and Weinstein, p.73-74.

³⁹ Todorov and Weinstein, p.76.

pendulum bobs remain unwritten and undiscovered by the choice of the author. Todorov explains this problem in his article as: "... plot is a notion that critics undervalue and, hence, often disregard. The ordinary reader, however, reads a book above all as the narration of a plot; but this naïve reader is uninterested in theoretical problems".³⁸ As it can be understood from this statement, the naïve reader would read and accept the presented plot as it is. This would result in the reader's participation of the unconscious thought which was mentioned before. The plot can contribute to the binary mechanism of thought for the reader who will unconsciously contribute to the shaping of the language accordingly. The readers can perceive the meaning of a text without realising its binary structure. Therefore, they can participate in the unconscious thought of a binary structure and create meanings of their own. The writer, who is a part of this linguistic structure can contribute to the existing binaries by means of producing literary works which inherit the same frames as well. For example, a writer can have a consistent binary structure in each of his/her works. If these works are discovered to deal with the theme of good and bad, it means the binary opposition of the unconscious thought is present in an author's works. Discovering this problem in Thomas Hardy's novels is a part of the aim of this thesis.

Despite the restricting characteristic of a constructed literary work, a change in the unconscious thought is possible if the faulty parts are enlightened first. As Harris concludes her article, she states: "Informed resistance will at once enrich our readings of the past and clarify our struggles to interpret past culture in terms of present needs. It may also serve as a point of origin for new returns, different revisions of prior texts that will evolve into new paradigms for gender relationships".⁴⁰ Considering this conclusion, the analysis of literature in terms of structuralism can enlighten the unwritten blind spots by pointing out the repeating structure. These blind spots in literature can serve as an informing agent and may establish a ground for future literary works by pointing out the problematic aspects of past and/or existing literature. Hence, by analysing Thomas Hardy's novels in terms of structuralism, the aim is to point out the fallacy of the constructed woman image in his romance novels. When Thomas Hardy's literary career was coming to an end, the characteristics of literature of early twentieth century was

⁴⁰ Harris, p.79-80.

also changing due to the changes around the world. Morag Shiach states this change about the modern literature and writers in these words: “There was certainly an intense consciousness among these writers of a need to be modern, in literary style as well as in life, and a developed perception that the modern world was, in important ways, unlike what had come before”.⁴¹ Therefore, because modernity was in need of a space free from the past culture, the contributing literature should be held accountable for whether it improved the status of woman as a concept or it remained passive in terms of freeing the idea of woman for the emergence of modernity.

1.5 19th Century Influences on the Structural Fabric of Hardy’s Novels

Before delving deeper into the analysis of Thomas Hardy’s novels, this part of the study discusses the circumstance of his works briefly to understand the organization of his novels. Because Hardy’s life covers a large period of 19th century and the early 20th century, it’s important to note that his works were under the influence of this time period. Geoffrey Harvey states this long lifespan of Hardy saying: “His long life, beginning when Victoria was still a young queen and ending a decade after the First World War, saw many revolutionary social and intellectual changes that are refracted in complex ways in his writing”.⁴² Hardy saw the rule of Queen Victoria for the most part of his life and witnessed the First World War as well. Without a doubt, this historical importance of his lifetime has changed both his life and his literary career:

He is read not only by hundreds of thousands of school and university students but by people who buy paperbacks for pleasure reading. His novels and stories are dramatised on radio and television, and made into movies. Again like Dickens, he is a classic who has not ceased to be popular. He has not been subject to swings of fad popularity and thus has been neither suddenly overexposed nor suddenly eclipsed. For casual readers of Hardy, the nature of his reputation and the fact that people write about his works are not factors in

⁴¹ Shiach, Morag. “The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel.” *Cambridge University Press eBooks*, 2007, doi.org/10.1017/ccol052185444x. p.2.

⁴² Harvey, Geoffrey. *The Complete Critical Guide to Thomas Hardy*. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2003. p.1.

their choosing his works to read. They read, are affected deeply by Hardy's art-or not; and go on to read another Hardy work, or not, as inclination leads.⁴³

Considering Kramer's remarks, the literature produced by Hardy can be proven to have importance still today. As he also mentions the radio and TV adaptations of Hardy's works, it is undeniably important to see that Hardy has produced a great number of literary work and still reaches so many people to this day. As newer and diverse perspectives of literary theory have changed a lot for both the readers and the writers, it is a topic of focus to analyse Hardy's literature as still appealing to broad audiences. Also, the subject focus of his literature has been found to reflect Hardy's life as Harvey expresses: "Much of Hardy's life, as he observed, is present in his novels, poems and short stories, and the complex strands of relationship between his life and his writings. These encompass, uniquely, his adoption of the topography of Dorset, where he was born and grew up, for his fictional county of Wessex, and his exploration of its society and history".⁴⁴ This can be shown as a reason why his literature was very successful. As Hardy's novels represented a lot of aspects of his life, it can be said that the realistic nature of his novels has contributed a lot to the credibility and the fame of his novels. Since he included the detailed and natural descriptions of Dorset in his novels as the fictional Wessex, the realistic and vivid reflection of a world has brought a lot of attention to his novels.

Apart from being very influential, what Hardy wrote is also of great importance in terms of his audience. As Harvey puts it: "Another important context is the literary market place in which his work was published, especially since the majority of his novels and some of his short stories first appeared as serials in the popular magazines of the day".⁴⁴ Considering that it was a source of income for Hardy as well as many other writers of the period, the composition of the novels in chapters of a few pages plays an important role in the way how these novels were perceived. To analyse the novels and their subject matters as thoroughly as possible, it must be noted that Hardy's novels did not meet with the readers in the form of a book. Rather, chapters are published every

⁴³ Kramer, Dale. "Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy." *Palgrave Macmillan UK eBooks*, 1979, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-03780-3>. p.3.

⁴⁴ Harvey, Geoffrey. *The Complete Critical Guide to Thomas Hardy*. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2003. p.5.

week on popular magazines. This also means that, there was the power of reception of the novels over the author and the plot. Since the analysis method of this thesis focuses on form, it is important to understand that different factors might have influenced Hardy's literature. To give an example, it can be said that Hardy could have chosen to include or eliminate the parts which were favoured or disapproved in his novels. Understanding this cause-and-effect relationship of the author and the reader is vital in that structuralism also takes the unconscious thought into consideration for the analysis of the texts. As it is discussed in the previous subsection of this thesis, linguistic practice occurs on the unconscious level of the thought which then has a power to affect the shaping of the languages. Regarding the influence of the marketplace on fragmented chapters of Hardy's novels at that time, it can be said that Hardy shaped his novels in accordance with the needs and favours of readers. Regarding the influence of Hardy's readers, Harvey mentions the fate of Hardy's unpublished novel *The Poor Man and the Young Lady*:

The reader at Chapman & Hall, the novelist George Meredith, recommended that Hardy should tone down the satire, or write a fresh novel with a more developed plot. Eventually Tinsley Brothers offered to publish it, but their request that Hardy should guarantee the project against financial loss was felt to be excessive, and so it lapsed and the work was never published, though Hardy drew on scenes from it for subsequent novels, *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, with some echoes also occurring in *Desperate Remedies*.⁴⁵

It should also be noted that Hardy's unpublished novel *The Poor Man and the Young Lady* has also shaped many of his later novels. The conflict that arises from social class differences between man and woman can be observed to have shaped the title of his novel as well. Considering the occurrence of the same conflict in his following novels, it can be argued that Hardy made use of class conflict in many of his novels. The idea that Hardy's life circumstance has affected his works is supported by Harvey as follows: "Social class was an extremely significant influence on Hardy. In the Victorian period, gradations of social class were rigid, and to Hardy it mattered intensely that his family

⁴⁵ Harvey, p. 17.

was a degree above its neighbours in the social scale”.⁴⁶ Therefore, Hardy’s idea of a family can be also observed to affect the influential elements in his literary works.

Some feminist critics of Hardy combines the class conflict with gender roles in their analyses to show that class and gender issues were very dominant in Hardy’s plots. Harvey explains one of the works that aims to examine these issues as follows:

In a more recent essay on Hardy, Penny Boumelha (1999) explores the relative importance of class and gender differences in three pastoral novels, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *The Woodlanders*. In each of these novels, after an interruption to the courtship pattern, the heroine confirms the rightness of her original choice. Fancy Day returns to Dick Dewy after an interlude of harmless flirtation, Bathsheba Everdene accepts all three suitors, though only Gabriel Oak remains at the end, ... Gender and class are linked in these novels, argues Boumelha, because the social position and economic standing of the heroine’s husband determines her social destiny.⁴⁷

It can be argued that the class conflicts of characters played a significant role in Hardy’s novels. His depiction of heroes and heroines may be found to carry implications of elements which construct their identity in a certain way. Combining this with the fact that much of Hardy’s life is present in his novels⁴⁴, it can be concluded that the unconscious desire was prominent in his novel on different layers such as social class, gender roles and marriage.

Studying Hardy’s novels creates the question of why social class and gender roles create conflicts and shape the course of plots in the novel. This question is present in almost all of Hardy’s works and many other writers produced on the same topic during that period. Regarding reason for this conflict, Harvey comments on the topic saying:

Education is a significant preoccupation in Hardy’s fiction. School teaching is seen as the focus of idealism, and for women a route to independence, but Hardy also examines how increased social mobility may blight individual lives by

⁴⁶ Harvey, p. 7.

⁴⁷ Harvey, p. 186-187.

educating people out of their class, and how on the other hand exclusion from education may result in tragically wasted lives.⁴⁸

Because of the social structure changing as a result of rapid scientific improvements in 19th century, it can be seen that Hardy's period witnessed a polarization in the structure of the society. Due to the improvements of Industrial Revolution, gender roles changed a lot as mentioned by Rubye Du Terroil:

In the first half of the century, women's work, for the most part, was inside the home; but around the 1850s she began working outside the home, and the number thus finding gainful employment increased as the century advanced. Women worked as laundresses, they were bath-house operators, mid-wives, nurses, governesses.⁴⁹

The change of roles for women can be considered as one of the most crucial factors that affected the structure of social class. It also means that the unconscious thought began to include ideas regarding the change of women's work because they hadn't been included in different aspects of life until 19th century. It can be seen that this change has affected Hardy's novels as well since the heroines in *UGT* and *FFMC* both belong to different social classes than their male suitors. The differences brought by social mobility meant differences in the family structure as well. Since women started to have access to education more, it was followed by an increasing number of issues such as marriage, financial independence and so forth. Gale Cunningham explains:

Highly qualified women were emerging as a result of concessions wrung from the educational establishment and suitable work and social status had to be found for them: the Girton Girl and the Lady Doctor became recognised sub-groups of the New Woman species, and the financial independence and personal fulfilment gained through work began to seem attractive alternatives to marriage.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Harvey, Geoffrey. *The Complete Critical Guide to Thomas Hardy*. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2003. p.9.

⁴⁹ Du Terroil, B. A., Rubye. "The Role of Women in the 19th Century." www.uiw.edu/sanantonio, August 1949. Accessed March 21, 2024.

⁵⁰ Cunningham, Gail. *The New Woman and the Victorian Novel*. 1978, ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA06969784. p.2.

What Cunningham mentions as personal fulfilment was also present in Hardy's novels. In *UGT*, Fancy Day is the representative of what Gale Cunningham refers to as 'new woman' since she is known by her profession as schoolmistress. Also, Bathsheba Everdene, the heroine of *FFMC*, is a farm owner, who is faced with many challenges due to her demanding position in society. Therefore, Hardy's novels can be found to have been affected by the changes in society. Analysis can be found to show that main characters of his novels suffer from this change in meaning of a lifestyle. As his novels are explored in depth to see how Hardy's plot processes the social structure of his time in his characters, it will become clearer to understand the connection between Hardy's novels and the gender roles in society.

CHAPTER 2

EXPLORING THE STRUCTURE OF HARDY'S FICTION: SIGNIFIERS AND DUALITIES IN *UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE*

2.1 Introduction to *Under the Greenwood Tree* Structural Analysis: Overview and Methodological Approach

When Hardy began writing novels, one of his first novels was not favoured by many critics under the name of *Desperate Remedies*⁵¹ because of being too sensational and sexually charged. Taking the criticism into consideration, he later published *Under the Greenwood Tree* whose plot discovers the romantic entanglement of Fancy Day, Dick Dewy, Farmer Shiner and Mr. Maybold.⁵² The novel was first published in two volumes in the summer of 1872⁵³ and can be considered as Hardy's earliest successful novel.

The novel *UGT* is set in a small town, Mellstock in Hardy's fictional Wessex which includes the development of a love story between Dick Dewy and Fancy Day, as well as the changing of old traditions in the rural community symbolised by the introduction of new musical instruments into the church choir. The new vicar, Mr. Maybold represents the forthcoming changes of modernity and he also serves as a rival to Dick in terms of Fancy's affection and potential marriage. Mr. Maybold introduces the church organ as a new instrument which is played by Fancy in the choir. Another male suitor for Fancy is Mr. Shiner who is a farmer and the churchwarden. Among the male suitors of Fancy, Dick appears less suitable because his father is a tranter. However, Dick is chosen as the hero of the novel who represents the honest man, out of which the conflicts between old and new, man and woman are to be explored. Therefore, the novels deal with the themes of social class, gender roles and the old versus new. Despite Fancy's unorthodox characteristics, she gets married to Dick in the end.

⁵¹ Hardy, Thomas. *Desperate Remedies*. Oxford University Press eBooks, 2009. <https://doi.org/10.1093/owc/9780199554829.001.0001>.

⁵² Harvey, Geoffrey. *The Complete Critical Guide to Thomas Hardy*. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2003. p.19.

⁵³ Hardy, Thomas. *Under the Greenwood Tree: A Rural Painting of the Dutch School*. 1873. p.7.

The structural analysis of *UGT* firstly includes the exploration of signifiers in the novel and the examination of their function in the unconscious thought. The exploration of signifiers will be divided into two different subsection which will focus on signifiers of characterization and signifiers of narrative separately. After, the binary oppositions will be explored based on the signifiers of the text. These parts will depict the specific choices made by the author to create the meaning of the novel. The signifiers that are found to shape the meaning are shown in **bold** words in the analysis.

2.2.1 Signifiers of Characterization and The Construction of Meaning in *Under the Greenwood Tree*

For the analysis of the novel, the opening pages serve as an enriching tapestry of linguistic and narrative signifiers that lay the background for the characterization of key individuals within the rural landscape of Mellstock. Employing Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralist framework, this analysis aims to explore the intricate web of signifiers and signifieds, uncovering the layers of meaning embedded in the text. Through a close examination of signifiers, it will be possible to discern the nuances of the hero and the heroine, their social status, and relationships with the community. The aim of this subsection is to illuminate the ways in which language constructs and delineates the world of Hardy's rural landscape by applying Saussure's linguistic principles.

As the plot unfolds, the narrator introduces the hero, Dick Dewy, whose identity is not merely shaped by action or dialogue, but also by the linguistic symbols that surround him. The first paragraph describes the nature and man consecutively, resulting in the juxtaposition of male and nature: "To dwellers in a wood almost every species of tree has its **voice** as well as its feature. At the passing of the breeze the firtrees **sob** and **moan** no less distinctly than they rock; ...".⁵⁴ Exemplifying Hardy's success in his power to describe nature so powerfully, the nature is depicted to accompany the male character forming the web of connection between man and nature. Apart from the vivid description, the personification of the nature must be noted as well, because these signifiers show how Hardy uses pathetic fallacy at the beginning of his novel to

⁵⁴ Hardy, *UGT*. p.9.

combine the hero with his surroundings. It can be argued that the narrator strengthens the relationship between hero and the physical setting of the rural town, resulting in the hero representing the natural state of his community. Right after this description, he introduces the hero:

On a cold and starry Christmas-eve within living memory **a man** was passing up a lane towards Mellstock Cross in the darkness of plantation that whispered thus distinctively to **his intelligence**. All the **evidences of his nature** were those afforded by the spirit of **his footsteps**, which succeeded each other lightly and quickly, and by the **liveliness of his voice** as **he sang** in a rural cadence ...⁵⁴

As it is presented in these quotations, the narrator's opening description belongs to a rural place which uses nature to depict a value untouched by the changes of the time. After this description of nature, the reader is greeted with the main character of the novel in words which do not oppose but align with the descriptions of nature. The signifiers clearly show that man is a signifier integrated with nature in Hardy's novel. For the characterization of the main character of his novel, Hardy chooses to embody Dick Dewy and nature in unity. Stephen J. Spector also analyses how important a role the combination of man and nature plays: "The reciprocal definition of human and tree in these first two paragraphs, a mixing of the natural and the human, is a species of chiasmus, a rhetorical figure whose vast potential for character creation is marked from the beginning of the novel".⁵⁵ Following the description of the hero, Hardy doesn't use a distinct characterization for other male characters; they appear having similar characteristics but slight differences in their physical description. The reader is introduced with the other male members of the novel in the following paragraph:

The first was a bowed and bent man, who carried a fiddle under his arm, and **walked** as if engaged in studying some subject connected with the surface of the road. ... **The next** was Mr. Robert Penny, boot- and shoemaker; ... **The third** was Elias Spinks, who **walked** perpendicularly and dramatically. **The fourth** outline was Joseph Bowman's who had now no distinctive appearance beyond

⁵⁵ Spector, Stephen J. "Flight of Fancy: Characterization in Hardy's Under the Greenwood Tree." *ELH* 55, no. 2 (1988): 469–85. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2873213>. p.472.

that of a human being. ... Finally came a weak lath-like form, **trotting** and **stumbling** along ...⁵⁶

For the method of characterization here, it can be said that Hardy uses numbers and slight differences in order to create the members of the church choir which constitute the community for the male protagonist Dick Dewy. The slight differences among the male characters is significant in creating the concept of familiarity which also shapes the unity of the male members in the novel. The first man, who is the male protagonist, is described along with the nature while the members of his community are described in the same manner. Spector lucently comments on this saying:

The five characters share three attributes in these paragraphs. The most obvious is denomination, but the most developed is movement or “gait” (a term borrowed from nature because proper to horses), which gradually blends with shape: Spinks’s perpendicularity, for example, defines both his mode of walking and his body’s shape. Number is the third shared attribute, appearing as “first,” “next,” “third,” “fourth,” and “finally.” Here number (or enumeration) functions modestly as a marker of minimal difference, but later number becomes a figure of considerable comic power in connection with Fancy's choice of suitors.⁵⁷

As it can be also understood from Spector’s analysis, the narrator uses numbers to introduce the characters. Their differences narrated in numbers functions to depict the strong connection among community members in Mellstock to the reader. As male characters, they are mostly defined by the quality of their actions. Hardy chooses to give different characteristics to different figures which helps him demarcate the male protagonist only, other characters’ not having any outstanding features proves that they only add in number. However, the number and features of characters stand for a more important thing when generalized. Using Saussure’s analysis of meaning making, it can be said that Hardy creates a sequence of signifiers -nature, trees, man, community, familiarity, action- to establish the meaning for his male characters. Harold Toliver also makes the same remark considering the correlation created between man and nature stating: “The first section (winter) is devoted to describing the nature of the old

⁵⁶ Hardy, *UGT*. p.11.

⁵⁷ Spector, p.474-475.

communal life and its underlying flaws, beginning with an account of the harmony between man and nature”.⁵⁸ By juxtaposing the signifiers along with the earliest parts of the plot, Hardy settles down the natural way of human existence for the reader. His characters signify that humankind is primarily male, deeply connected to nature and part of a familiar community. The lifestyle he creates using this signification process is later conflicted by the arrival of the female protagonist, which would constitute the plot for his novel.

As for the introduction of the female protagonist, Fancy Day, the plot doesn’t provide immediate introduction unlike the male characters. In the novel, Fancy exists in the dialogues of other characters until Chapter V⁵⁹. For the first two chapters of the novel, the only woman character introduced is Dick’s mother, through her role as a mother to the male protagonist: “This apartment contained Mrs. Dewy the tranter’s wife, and the four remaining children ...”.⁶⁰ After Mrs. Dewy is introduced, she is placed along her household duties which implies that the primary function of a female character is to tend to her duties as a wife and a mother: “Mrs. Dewy sat in a brown settle by the side of the glowing wood fire ... to reassure herself that they were not being broiled instead of smoked ... ‘Come in, come in, and draw up to the fire; never mind your shoes,’ said Mrs. Dewy, seeing that all except Dick had paused to wipe them upon the door-mat”.⁶¹ This order of character introduction also tells a great deal about Hardy’s women characters. It can be concluded that the most convenient setting a woman character can exist into a world of male characters is through family relationship for Hardy.

After the characters and the setting of Mellstock are explored in the plot by familiarising the reader with the traditional scene of the novel, Fancy is introduced thorough her physical attributes.⁶⁹ This order of familiarizing characters can also be thought as a signifier for the genders. First, the male is familiarized. After the male, the members of his surroundings are presented even though they have roles of lesser

⁵⁸ Toliver, Harold E. “The Dance Under the Greenwood Tree: Hardy’s Bucolics.” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 17, no. 1 (1962): 57–68. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2932817>. p.64.

⁵⁹ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 9-33.

⁶⁰ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 14.

⁶¹ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 15.

importance for the plot. The female protagonist is introduced after the harmony of the male and his world is established. It can be argued here that the narrator uses the individual female as the subordinate sex by placing Fancy after the establishment of a stable environment. Moreover, while the male characters are introduced, they are generally present and in a conversation with the members of community. It is different for the female protagonist. Before the narrator includes Fancy into the plot physically and verbally, other characters talk about her and this is how she becomes a character in the novel: “The new **schoolmistress’s!**” “Ay, no less, Miss Fancy Day; as **neat a little figure of fun** as ever I see, and just **husband-high.**”⁶² Through this mention of her, Fancy is introduced into the plot along with her age and physical attributions foreshadowing her romantic entanglements. Adding the tone of surprise to the information of her social role makes it clear that Fancy represents the change of gender roles in the rural town of Mellstock. Correspondingly, the other signifiers through which she is mentioned are of her physical appearance such as her being neat and a little figure of fun. Through these, the presence of the woman character is recognized by not of her presence or dialogue, but by her physical appearance. Thus, the adjective ‘husband-high,’ which denotes a woman of marriageable age, is included to the signifiers which create Fancy’s role for the plot before she even appears in the novel. Apart from her existence through dialogues among other characters, the narrator introduces her through his own description as follows:

There, between the cider-mug and the candle, stood this interesting receptacle of the **little unknown’s foot**; and a very **pretty boot** it was. A character, in fact – the **flexible** bend at the instep, the **rounded localities** of the **small nestling toes**, scratches from careless scampers now forgotten – all, as repeated in the tell-tale leather, evidencing a nature and a bias. **Dick** surveyed it with a **delicate feeling** that he **had no right** to do so without having first asked **the owner of the foot’s permission.**⁶³

This detailed depiction of Fancy’s boots carries so many messages for the plot. First, the state of the boots is explained by the adjectives shown in bold words which will later be

⁶² Hardy, *UGT*. p. 23.

⁶³ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 24.

used to describe Fancy's physical state in the novel. The picture of the romanticization of a female's boots and how they awaken "delicate feeling" for Dick is interrupted by social rules since the narrator emphasizes that Dick feels he has no right surveying her boots considering "the absence of the owner of the foot's permission". Hence, Hardy creates the conflict of romance for the male protagonist; because he belongs to the order of the community, he should ask for the permission of a woman to have such feelings first. This conflict is the first example of Hardy's socially restricted narrative. Despite the common negativity attributed to a restriction, Hardy uses it to portray a righteous hero who respects the rules of society in a very innocent and romantic way. Considering the role of the boots for Fancy, it can be mentioned that she still exists imaginarily through the words of others to the extent of her association with her boots. Spector analyses the importance of this for characterization of the novel as follows:

Fancy enters the novel not in person but as the main topic of a dispute among the harmonious Mellstock choir touched off by her boot ... Her initial appearance seems another instance of the text's character-reading lesson: she is first seen as a boot, which leads to the expectation that she will become knowable via her boot's evidence of her "gait" or "footsteps." Yet the reading of Fancy's boot, which involves metonymy (boot/outer stands for character/inner) and synecdoche (boot/part stands for whole), proceeds anything but smoothly. ... It is hard not to read Fancy's boot and the love it inspires in Dick Dewy as a variation of the narrative of Cinderella's glass slipper and Prince Charming, which can be read as an allegory of the figure of love.⁶⁴

As it can be concluded by this perspective, the introduction of the female protagonist is specifically structured by Hardy to frame her existence into the borders of a love relationship.

Through her boots, she first becomes a symbol of a petite, feminine figure and it also signifies how she was perceived by the community of Mellstock. When the narrator introduced Dick Dewy and other male characters of his community, he included all their specific ways of walking. By including the figure of boots and their state to the description of Fancy, the narrator makes sure that the characters in the novel will

⁶⁴ Spector, p. 479-480.

acknowledge her existence only through their social structure. This contributes to conjure up another conflict for the plot as Fancy will become the unfamiliar, threatening character for the church choir.

Even though the plot has moved a considerable amount by the time Fancy is described through her foot, the narrator still stalls her character entrance as characters go on talking about her during her absence. These conversations held in the absence of the female protagonist play an important role in terms of signification of the new woman figure. Because she doesn't belong to the community, she is not given a chance by the author to enter the plot through dialogue; rather, her figure and belongings (her boots) replaces her individual existence. Apart from her belongings, she is depicted through conversations held among other characters. These conversations clearly show to what extent a modern woman will be accepted in their society. After Dick sees her boots, he has a chance to talk about her with another male while still not having talked to her in person properly: "“What about **her face?**” said young Dewy. ‘Well, as to that,’ Mr. Spinks replied, ‘’tis a face you **can hardly gainsay. A very good pink face,** as far as that do go. ...’”⁶⁵ Looking at this conversation, Hardy adds more signifiers to the characterization of Fancy which only stand for her physical attributions and gender. For the development of the plot, the juxtaposition of Fancy Day with descriptions such as a non-rejectable pink face along with her being little and having small boots that has flexible bends, which arouse delicate and forbidden feelings for the male protagonist draw a very sexualized picture for her. Spector says: “What Spinks’s reply grudgingly confesses is the fascination an almost anonymous face holds, especially in this highly sexualized context in which an all-male choir contemplating a female receptacle begins to fantasize about an erotic ‘pink face.’”⁶⁶, which confirms that the image of modern woman is still of a woman whose sexuality can be naturalized among the male community disregarding of her character and individuality.

When the Christmas morning arrives, Fancy stops being a figure for Dick as he sees her in the church for the first time. Still, she is seen through her movements, without conversing with anybody. Her appearance as a full person for everybody

⁶⁵ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 26.

⁶⁶ Spector, p. 484.

coincides with the loud singing of girls that day. All the members of Mellstock community are in the church and the choir starts to sing for Christmas. At this moment, the narrator foreshadows the disruption⁶⁷ that will be brought by Fancy later by the choir girls' loud voice during the singing:

Now this had never happened before **within the memory of man**. The **girls**, like the rest of the congregation, **had always been humble and respectful followers** of the gallery; **singing at sixes and sevens** if without gallery leaders; **never interfering** with the ordinances of these practised artists – having no will, union, power, or proclivity **except it was given them** from the established **choir enthroned above them**. ... **'Brazen-faced hussies!** Said Bowman. **'True; why, they were every note as loud as we, fiddles and all, if not louder!'**⁶⁸

Through this incident, Hardy establishes the unquestionable patriarchal order which had been the structure of the community until that day. Comparing the performance of girls on that day to the history is referred to as "within the memory of man".⁶⁸ As it can be concluded, the history is remembered and told through the memories of man and the loud singing of girls is noticed as if an improbable event made probable. For the history reference, Hardy uses the words humble and respectful, not-interfering followers, and implies the girls have always been substitutes that were given roles by the order above them. This means the current situation of the girls are the opposite of humble and respectful, because they sang as loud as men. Bowman's words are carefully picked to represent the feelings of the community as "brazen-faced hussies", which directly affect the status of females in society. Bowman's words signify the loud-speaking girls as shameless females who have no virtue. Considering that Fancy is the new schoolmistress, and she has the influence over the girls of the choir, the narrator creates a conflict between the community and Fancy. The new modern touch of Fancy is found threatening as it disarranges the traditions of the church choir, and through the words of men of the community, modern female is granted with a bad reputation.

When the time finally comes for the interaction of the novel's hero and heroine, Hardy provides an elaborate physical description for both the hero and the readers.

⁶⁷ See footnote 94.

⁶⁸ Hardy, *UGT*, p.46.

Despite using characteristic features as a differentiating tool for the male characters, the specific choice of a stereotypical and shallow presentation of the heroine sets the tone for women figure:

But the **comely, slender, prettily-dressed prize** Fancy Day fell to Dick's lot, ... We gain a **good view** of our heroine as she advances to her place in the ladies' line. She belonged to the **taller division of middle height**. **Flexibility** was her first characteristic, by which she appeared to enjoy the most easeful rest when she was in **gliding motion**. Her **dark eyes** arched by **brows of so keen, slender, and soft a curve**, that they resembled nothing so much as two slurs in music—showed primarily a **bright sparkle** each. This was softened by a frequent thoughtfulness, ... with a certain **coquettishness**; which in its turn was never so decided as to banish honesty.⁶⁹

When the signifiers are considered, it is clear to see that signification for a heroine is largely achieved by femininity of the character's body. The signifiers can be found to embody the exact picture of a woman who is accepted as beautiful among society. While this picture is drawn for Fancy, it is not possible to say the narrator approaches the same to Dick or any other male characters. The narrator mentions male's physical qualities from a more neutral space, only to specify how a character is as the plot progresses. This difference in the characterization of a hero and a heroine is based simply on their biological difference. Moreover, the narrator adds extra signifiers to the depiction of his heroine, by using words such as "thoughtfulness" and "coquettishness". It is also important to note that these words are not used to complement any character interaction or a dialogue; it can be seen that they represent the narrator's comments of a woman. In the plot, there is no necessity for Fancy's thoughtfulness to show any kind of coquettishness, but the use of these signifiers plays a role in strengthening the narrator's ideologic commentaries which causes the plot to focus less on her individual personality. In contrast with fewness of the heroine's personality signifiers, the narrator increases her desirability as an object of feminine beauty with the help of physically descriptive signifiers. The heroine's face and clothes are spared to be elaborated on even more:

⁶⁹ Hardy, *UGT*, p. 53.

Her **lips** imitated her brows in their **clearly-cut outline** and **softness** of bend; and her **nose** was **well shaped** - which is saying a great deal, when it is remembered that there are a hundred pretty mouths and eyes for one pretty nose. Add to this, **plentiful knots of dark-brown hair**, a **gauzy dress of white**, with **blue facings**; and the slightest idea may be gained of the young maiden who showed, **amidst the rest** of the dancing-ladies, **like a flower among vegetables**.

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When the rest of Fancy's description is analyzed, her features are created in a manner which can provide an almost fantasy woman who is impossible to be real. The narrator's remark on her distinguishingly well-shaped nose shows that she is compared with other women who lack a well-shaped nose. Therefore, it can be argued that Fancy's beauty is rare among women, which heightens her feminine beauty while the narrator's characterization of the heroine still lacks individualistic descriptions. After her facial attributions which are presented as almost impossible to exist together, her hair and even the hairstyle is described along with what she wears. At this point, Hardy blends Fancy's facial beauty with her white dress so well that she becomes one with her beauty and dress, which adds to her feminine desirability. Furthermore, she is compared to the rest of the dancing-ladies and concluded to be a "flower"⁶⁹ while others are like "vegetables"⁶⁹. It means that as a heroine, Fancy's characterization is made remarkable through not her character but her beauty. It can be argued that she is an example of feminine objectification. She can be observed to be beautiful enough to attract other characters' attention but her characteristics without her gender are left out. Through this comparison and other details depicted in Hardy's narrative, Fancy's uniquely objectified beauty relegates all other women to the realm of mundane existence in humanity's eyes. Looking at this fact, it is inevitable to say that Hardy's heroine is explored through her attributions of gender which neglects any aspects of her individual modernity.

2.2.2 Signifiers of Narrative and The Construction of Meaning in *Under the Greenwood Tree*

Apart from characterization, the plot of *UGT* is also an element which can be analyzed in terms of structuralism and can be found to have strong implications for

characters' actions. Since the characterization is found to be shaped by certain signifiers which causes a segregation of gender and class, the plot can also be analysed to reflect the effect of signifiers. An examination of the signifiers that shape characters' actions in the novel will show the frame of meaning in the text better.

As it is discussed in the previous chapter, the hero and the heroine of the novel are given the chance to meet properly very late in the plot. After Dick has gained a significant insight about Fancy Day through conversations made about her arrival and beauty, he is observed to locate the object of his desire during Christmas. As everybody dance in celebration, Dick is given a challenging conflict which foreshadows the progression of plot. He sees Fancy is courted by other males as well and feels very inclined to her:

Again and again did **Dick share his Love's hand with another man**, and wheel round; then, more delightfully, promenade in a circle with **her all to himself**, his arm **holding her waist** more **firmly** each time, and **his elbow getting further** and further **behind her back**, till the distance reached was rather noticeable; and, most **blissful**, swinging to places shoulder to shoulder, **her breath curling round his neck** like a summer zephyr that had strayed from its proper date. ...

Fancy was now held so closely that Dick and she were practically **one person**.

The room became to Dick like a picture in a **dream**; ...⁷⁰

In this paragraph which describes Dick's passionate dance with Fancy, Hardy draws a vivid picture of the two characters being close. Because his novel explores the love story of Dick and Fancy, it is unavoidable to see the hero and heroine together. However, their love relationship is based solely on physical appearances rather than on deeper personal connections. Thus, Dick's interest in Fancy remains superficial and forms independently of her characteristic features. Even though the characters are very close to each other, and the novel has progressed a great deal, Hardy still didn't include Fancy in any elaborative conversation which can refer to her personality. In this paragraph as well, she plays a role as a feminine magnet who attracts all the bachelor males to herself during a social gathering. It can be argued that the narrator is aiming to bring forth the love story and as a result, neglects character development. When the

⁷⁰ Hardy, *UGT*, p. 58-59.

narrator's approach to the depiction of hero and the heroine is considered, it can be said that Hardy's love story includes elaborate depictions of male individuality while it focuses on feminine physicality for the heroine: "He also, from time to time, sipped **sweet sly glances at her** profile; noticing the set of her head, **the curve of her throat**, and other **artistic properties** of the lively goddess ...".⁷¹ As Fancy's beauty is established to be the object of pursuit for the young males, Hardy creates another conflict with her different social standing for Dick. Because she is educated, she is set to belong to the upper parts of the social ladder and in turn, Dick's desire to have her is too much to disregard even in a disadvantageous position such as his:

"What a **difference!**" thought the young man-hoary cynic *pro tem*. "What a miserable deceiving difference between the manners of a **maid's life at dancing times** and at others! Look at this lovely Fancy! Through the whole past evening **touchable, squeezeable even kissable!** For whole half-hours I **held her so close to me** that not a sheet of paper could have been shipped between us; and I could feel **her heart** only just outside **my own**, her life beating on so close to mine, that I was aware of every breath in it. A flit is made upstairs **a hat and a cloak** put on— and **I no more dare to touch** her than" – Thought failed him, and he returned to **realities**.⁷²

With these lines for the hero, Hardy makes sure that the desire to have Fancy summits and then the "realities" of her belonging to a different social class is set. What is notable here is that Dick behaves as if he would have easily had Fancy if she was from a family like his. The way the narrator builds the conflict is also prejudiced; the narration disregards Fancy's own judgement to choose a male because she is beautiful and reachable in terms of social values. The narrator provides only the hero's perspective of desiring Fancy; however, the heroine's internal thoughts are chosen to be hidden in the plot. This means that the hero's perspective preconditions the plot, the reader is given partial insight in terms of depicting the hero's and the heroine's thoughts. Therefore, it can be argued that the narrator's sided approach to characters divert the perspective of readers. When the reader is exploring the plot, it can be observed that s/he has more

⁷¹ Hardy, *UGT*, p. 61.

⁷² Hardy, *UGT*, p.64.

insight to the hero. This orientation of character perceptivity can be argued to affect the plot; as an example, Dick's pursuit of a marriage is rewarded at the end. While Dick is given chances to construct a personality, Fancy exists by the help of her beauty, and she can object to Dick only through her social class. This structure is also noted by Glenn Irvin in these words:

Hardy constructs the plot around love intrigue with its characteristic misunderstandings, surprises, emotional extremes, and emphasis on youth and milieu. Distinctions of social position, education, and wealth plague the young lovers and motivate the plot. Dick Dewy and Fancy Day provide ample humour through their bungling antics and uncertainties, and the background characters contribute to the festivities that mark the progress of the story.⁷³

As it can be observed by these remarks, Hardy puts the hero and heroine in the structure of a love entanglement in which the female's choices are directly limited to the expectations of society. It is possible to say that Dick's character depiction is in alignment with other people, he doesn't encounter any criticism or rejection from people around him. However, the narrator's attitude towards Fancy is different. Her aspirations are never mentioned except when she engages in flirtatious talks with male characters. This also suggests that her character is only surrounded by voices which belong to the society and dictate her to continue the existing social order. A male's approach to her is only in terms of her beauty as an object, her characteristics are almost never mentioned during these conversations. This unfolds during a private talk of Fancy and Dick later in the plot as:

"Because **how much you are to me depends upon how much I am to you,**" said she in low tones.

"Everything," said Dick, **putting his hand towards hers,** and casting emphatic eyes upon the **upper curve of her cheek.**

⁷³ Irvin, Glenn. "Hardy's Comic Archetype: 'Under The Greenwood Tree.'" *The Thomas Hardy Journal* 6, no. 3 (1990): 54–58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45274017>. p.54.

“Now, Richard Dewy, **no touching me!** I didn’t say in what way your thinking of me affected the question - perhaps inversely, don’t you see? No touching, sir! Look; goodness me, don’t, Dick!”⁷⁴

As it is clear from this conversation, Fancy decides she will behave towards men in the same manner they show interest in her. This shows that a woman’s worth is decided by her physical signifiers rather than her signifiers of character. She exists as a desirable feminine object and this existence is supported in the plot by the signifiers of male characters. In the quotation above, Dick’s physical advancements towards Fancy can be given as an example. The narrator continues to develop Fancy’s character as it is reflected in conversation. Fancy also realizes her worth through bachelor’s advancements towards her. Her behaviour aligns with her social role as a “husband-high”⁶² woman. Moreover, during these flirtatious conversations between Fancy and Dick, the mention of social class difference is neglected not to prevent the desirable fantasy built by male perspective. In other words, the conversations between Dick and Fancy don’t include implications of any class difference, they include strong descriptions of Dick’s desire towards Fancy. This way, the narrator establishes the desirable fantasy of the heroine. When Dick continues to make physical advances towards her, a scene is created in which the driving desire of the male is rewarded while the female’s requests are ignored. As the narrator constructs the plot, it is undeniable that he favors the male’s pursuit of physical love and neglects the female character development.

The plot also discovers different characters’ interest in Fancy. Firstly, Mr. Shiner, a farmer and a churchwarden, approaches Fancy during the Christmas party, which causes a competition between him and Dick.⁷⁵ Later in the plot, Mr. Maybold (the vicar) is seen to decide that the organ should be played by Fancy, which causes a disruption among choir members as it meant a change of church music.⁷⁶ Considering their positions as a farmer and a vicar, it can be seen that the narrator uses other male characters to create a conflict between them and the hero, Dick. As the social class conflict and different bachelors’ interests in Fancy increase, the narrator explores

⁷⁴ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 73.

⁷⁵ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 52-53.

⁷⁶ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 88-89.

Fancy's materialistic attributes which imply Dick's insufficiency to be fit for Fancy. This conclusion is drawn from a conversation between Fancy and Dick when she expresses her disapproval of Dick's clothes. When she sees Dick wearing an old waistcoat, for example, she paints a materialistic picture of herself in these words: "'You won't wear that old waistcoat, will you, Dick?'"⁷⁷ In this part of the plot where Dick and Fancy talk about how they look and what they should wear when Dick meets her family, Fancy's talk connotes vanity. As the conversation goes on between the couple, Dick questions her effort to look beautiful because they are engaged and Fancy explains in these words: "I shouldn't like a stranger to see me dressed badly, even though I'm in love. 'Tis **our nature**, I suppose."⁷⁸ With these impressions, the narrator describes a woman who is very keen on fashion. The narrator also concludes this characteristic to belong to all women by Fancy's words of "our nature".⁷⁸ As this reflects another limitation on women's part, the reason Fancy is portrayed as such a woman is practical. Because Hardy draws the powerful desire between the couple to be the reason for bringing them together earlier in the plot, he makes sure Fancy is a character who values vanity because it is the only way she can pick Dick among other male characters. As a result of the inevitable physical passion between Dick and Fancy, Hardy aims to balance the conflict created by difference in their social classes. Fancy's characterization is specifically designed for her to choose Dick among all her suitors. Irvin analyses this situation as follows:

With all the emphasis on Dick and Fancy's social polarity, Hardy must assure the reader that a desirable match is being made, and he does so in the most traditional manner. First he established a strong physical attraction. Maybold offers Fancy education, refinement and culture. Shiner offers wealth and social position. But Dick is handsome. ... Fancy's dominant characteristic is her vanity, and because of her concern for appearances, it is only natural that she is attracted to the handsome Dick, despite her protests about his dull waistcoats and sometimes unfashionable dress. ... Since Fancy is the new, educated, talented,

⁷⁷ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 145.

⁷⁸ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 146.

clever woman who disrupts the parish, Hardy is careful to indicate that in marrying Dick she will not disturb the old order unacceptably.⁷⁹

In other words, Fancy's characterization allows the narrator to make his love story possible. While achieving the unlikely love story to be likely, he compromises an in-depth characterization for Fancy, which results in a very physically beautiful yet characteristically shallow portrayal of his heroine.

Later in the plot, it can be observed that Fancy's future has been determined by her family. The organization of her family house is shown to be ready for her marriage and it is discovered by Dick. When Dick visits her house, Hardy's depiction shows that his female character's destiny is envisaged by her family:

The arrangement spoke for itself: nobody who knew the tone of the household could look at the goods without being aware that **the second set** was a **provision for Fancy**, when **she should marry** and **have a house of her own**. The most noticeable instance was a pair of green-faced eight-day clocks, ... These chief specimens of the **marriage provision** were supported on the right by **a couple of kitchen dressers**, each fitted complete with their cups, dishes, and plates, in their turn followed by **two dumb-waiters, two family Bibles, two warming-pans, and two intermixed sets of chairs**.⁸⁰

In view of this, Fancy's presence in the text shifts from being a feminine object to a social-role-to-be as the plot unfolds. Because she is introduced to the plot as a young woman, the plot progresses in a directive way which concludes the expectations for her to be a wife. Similar to this, the surfacing of Fancy's family and their expectations of Fancy uncover the parts where Fancy's future life is settled but are left out from the narration. The fact that Fancy's parents' have bought two sets of the same furniture because one set of it would be used in Fancy's married life foreshadows her future. It is observable that Fancy's parents are getting ready for Fancy's marriage which might have affected her personality. Considering the effect of her surroundings, it can be said that the second set of furniture is a signifier of her future marriage, which dictates her choices in a specific way. The male characters approach her with intentions to marry her

⁷⁹ IRVIN, p. 55-56

⁸⁰ Hardy, *UGT*, p. 101.

and her family obviously raised her with similar ideals. This also draws the picture of roles given to a wife because the description of Fancy's marriage provision mostly consists of kitchenware. The signifiers of kitchenware represent not only a wife's signification but also Fancy's future is bound by these signifiers. Even though a part of the conflict for the plot raises from her being educated, she is still considered in the framework of traditional roles for wives in terms of her future. The imagination of her future traditional role also suggests a pre-decided set of signifiers for the future of a single woman.

When Hardy's power over the narration is analysed, the way his narration signifies the hero, and the heroine differently should be examined to understand the narrator's effect on the plot. For a thorough analysis of the plot, the omnipotent view of writer must also be evaluated. When the narrative is observed, Hardy uses omniscient narrator when the plot is engaged with the thoughts and experiences of the main character, Dick. Meanwhile, he uses a limited third person point of view to narrate Fancy and what she does. The narrator never provides enough insight about Fancy for the reader to disclose her true intentions or character. The narrator's tendency to elaborate on the hero omnisciently can be perceived as the narrator has associated himself with the hero. Considering the details surrounding Dick, it is worth noting that his depiction is very clear in terms of both character and intention. Rosemary Jann observes this saying: "He sympathized with the resentments of the lower classes yet was also invested in positioning them as different from those who, like himself, were constructed as implicitly meriting their higher level of social distinction by virtue of their internalization of middle-class standards of decorum and behavior".⁸¹ Concluding from this observation, the function of different suitors for Fancy is revealed as they only represent anti-hero models. By engaging in an in-depth characterization with Dick Dewy, Hardy also represents his social place and has the chance to practice how a virtuous personality may distinguish his character (or himself) from other members of society. In the novel, his association with Dick is observable in these words:

⁸¹ Jann, Rosemary. "Hardy's Rustics and the Construction of Class." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28, no. 2 (2000): 411–25. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25058527>. p.411.

For several minutes Dick drove along homeward, with the inner eye of reflection so anxiously set on his passages at arms with Fancy, that the road and scenery were as a thin mist over the real pictures of his mind. Was she a coquette? The balance between the evidence that she did love him and that she did not was so nicely struck, that his opinion had no stability. She had let him put his hand upon hers; she had allowed her gaze to drop plumb into the depths of his - his into hers three or four times; her manner had been very free with regard to the basin and towel; she had appeared vexed at the mention of Shiner. On the other hand, she had driven him about the house like a quiet dog or cat, said Shiner cared for her, and seemed anxious that Mr. Maybold should do the same.⁸²

The realistic expression of Dick's feelings here overpowers any other character insights in the novel. Hardy doesn't provide any emotional or thoughtful information regarding Fancy, Shiner or Mr. Maybold. Fancy's encounters with other suitors are briefly mentioned in the plot and are generally used to enrich the conflict of the plot by causing problems between Fancy and Dick. The main character's confusion about his love life can be regarded as heartfelt. How Fancy gives Dick mixed signals is efficiently described and even commented on. The question "Was she a coquette?" is not a simple question that is roused on Dick's mind. At this point, the question whether Fancy was a coquette or not becomes a question in readers' mind as well. This question acts as a divertive signifier as it provides a definition for Fancy's indescribable actions in question form. Therefore, intentional use of point of view helps Hardy build a strong, realistic perspective for the reader as well. Combined with other signifiers in the text, Hardy creates an image for Fancy which has a pattern of probative undesirable characteristics for a partner. Considering his power upon his narrative as a writer and his inclined favoritism for his hero, imposing all the distrustful signifiers to the heroine proves Hardy's prejudiced perception for women.

When the conflict between different suitors is aroused in the plot, the picture drawn for Dick and Fancy are very different. The narrative discredits Fancy indirectly to depict her manipulative approach to a challenging situation. For example, Fancy's father finds Mr. Shiner as a suitable husband for Fancy and intends to marry his

⁸² Hardy, p. 116.

daughter to him but the couple reacts to the tragedy in different ways. While Dick responds to this news saying: “I must start off and see your father at once!”⁸³, which suggests his strong willpower to fight for Fancy and his honest personality, Fancy’s answer is rather confusing for both Dick and the reader:

I think we had better see him together. Not tell him what you come for, or anything of the kind, until he likes you, and so **win his brain through his heart**, which is always the way to **manage people**. I mean in this way: I am going home on Saturday week to help them in the honey-taking. You might come there to me, have something to eat or drink, and let him guess what your coming signifies, without saying it in so many words.⁸⁴

This answer plays a confusing role in both Dick and Fancy’s relationship and in Fancy’s characterization as an inexplicable character. As it was analyzed before, Dick’s position is well-supported by in-depth character insights by Hardy. During this conversation as well, Dick’s straightforwardness is favourable because he signifies a man of his word. For Fancy, however, the same clarity cannot be found. As a result of lack of enough character insight, Fancy’s response to a relationship crisis may forward her true intentions in two different ways. It may be interpreted that she is a female good at manipulating people because she suggests indirect ways to influence her father’s opinion. In this case, everything she said in words or any of her actions become questionable. Until now, she might have spoken or acted in ways which would manipulate people into liking her and therefore her true intentions with all these men are impossible to figure out. On the other hand, her suggestion might stand for things she hides from Dick. Her answer may also stand for her lack of desire to get married with Dick instantaneously. In this case, it can be concluded that she wants to see and evaluate what her options are among different men. This means that she is an opportunist. As Mark Rollins also observes saying:

Fancy makes for profitable reading because she is such a difficult character to read. Hardy uses several distinct narrative techniques to render her so. Rather than serve as a reliable witness, he questions the correspondence between

⁸³ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 144.

⁸⁴ Hardy, *UGT*. p.144-145

perception and knowledge through the characters' and narrators' attempt to understand Fancy's character. He also employs punning wordplay, narrational uncertainty, narrational reticence, and ambiguous allusion to enable readers to work things out for themselves when considering Fancy's nature, moral worth, and suitability as a marriage partner for Dick.⁸⁵

Rollins' analysis explains the function of Fancy's questionable character clearly. The meaning in Fancy's words is so carefully chosen to suggest different paths for her intentions that her actions mostly signify a flaky personality. Concluding narrative analysis of the novel, it is clear to see that the main conflict of the novel is designed to be Fancy through her unattainable female inner-world and her being of a different gender group than Hardy himself. Hardy's choice of positively connotated signification for his male characters' actions reveals that Fancy is signified through all questionable and negative actions because she is a female character who is hard to win. It shows that the heroine's actions are restricted to the narrator's signifiers of her femininity.

2.2.3 Dualities and Their Function in *Under the Greenwood Tree*

Structural analysis of a text doesn't only regard the meaning construction through signifiers, the dualities also play a big role in setting the structure for a literary work. As it was previously explained in 1.4 subsection of this thesis, dualities may change role as binary oppositions which changes the structural stand of a text completely. If the oppositions are found to be organized and specific in a way which help build a big part of a plot, it becomes an important focus to analyse how they function in terms of changing and shaping the meaning in a text. Regarding the signifiers of characterization and narrative in Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the exploration of dualities in the text may be found to amplify the meaning construction in different ways.

UGT has been found to be very strategically organized in terms of characterization and the same aspect can be analysed to find the narrator's binary thinking mechanism. First and foremost, the oppositions of traditional and modern are

⁸⁵ Rollins, Mark. "The Profitable Reading Of Fancy: Indeterminacy In 'Under The Greenwood Tree.'" *The Hardy Review* 15, no. 2 (2013): 26–35. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45301555>, p. 28-29.

constructed in the novel by the help of characterization of Dick and Fancy, and symbols of the organ⁷⁶ as a new instrument for the choir. As it was mentioned earlier in the plot, a character belonging to the traditional community of Hardy's rural says: "'Times have changed from the times they used to be,' said Mail, ... 'People don't care much about us now! I've been thinking we must be almost the last left in the county of the old string players? Barrel-organs, and the things next door to 'em that you blow wi' your foot, have come in terribly of late years.'"⁸⁶ This declaration of resentment symbolizes the core conflict of the plot regarding the old and new. Times are changing, but this change is represented in oppositional ways by Hardy. The way he constructed his novel suggests that the change cannot result in any improving way because his narration romanticizes the old structure. Starting with the change of musical instruments, he explores this change in characters and plot. The most significant opposition he makes use of is of Dick and Fancy. As Irvin simplifies it in these words: "The central problem of the novel is to bring together Dick, who is identified with the traditional society represented by the choir, and Fancy, who aligns with modernism represented by Parson Maybold and Farmer Shiner."⁸⁷, it is clear to see that the novel explores the unbalance between the traditional society and modernism through the love relationship of Dick and Fancy. However, the unbalance between traditional society and modernism is expressed in oppositional ways, which suggest the two are the opposites of each other. Considering the change experienced by scientific improvements and industrial revolution, it is undeniable that the social structure would get affected in different ways. Then again, Hardy's representation of the social change can be found in favour of tradition. The fact that the narrator characterizes Dick to represent his own ideals is a demonstrative example of Hardy's perspective of tradition. The plot is structured to be in favour of the Mellstock community because he makes use of signifying the community as a whole living in complete harmony and having no negative outcomes due to the lack of any adaptation. Regarding the traditional community, the characters are represented as bound by the societal structure of old-world order and living completely happy with their lives. When the conflict between Dick and Parson Maybold

⁸⁶ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 29.

⁸⁷ Irvin, p.54.

and Farmer Shiner is explored, it can be stated that Dick has always maintained a trustworthy and capable stance despite his social class. Hardy doesn't include the similar character insight for Maybold or Shiner because they represent the characters of modernity along with Fancy. Dick is depicted living with his family and having a role for both his family and community while Maybold and Shiner are depicted as individuals, separate from their family and society. Therefore, the structure of the characters and plot stand in complete opposition. Spector argues in these words:

The creation of character by generating controlled systems of difference and rhetorical figures like personification, synecdoche, chiasmus, and prosopopoeia works well until Fancy Day makes her entrance, disrupting the tradition-bound male world of the Mellstock choir. It is tempting to interpret this disruption thematically, as a binary opposition manifesting itself along class, sex, and educational lines.⁸⁸

Demonstrated in his words, it can be said that the balance of rural lifestyle is disrupted by Fancy. Until Fancy is introduced, all the female characters exist along with their gender roles as mothers, sisters, or wives. For example, Hardy explains Dick's family in these lines: "This apartment contained Mrs. Dewy the tranter's wife, and the four remaining children, Susan, Jim, Bessy, and Charley, graduating uniformly though at wide stages from the age of sixteen to that of four years ...".⁸⁹ Thus, Fancy's introduction as a disruption to both the community, family, and Dick shows that she is the only female to appear individualistic. Constructing this unbalance, Hardy makes use of not only ideals of modernity but also Fancy's gender. As a result of her introduction to the plot as "husband-high", her gender is exploited in terms of the traditional understanding of gender roles. Subsequently, her physical depictions suggest the fantasized image of a woman cancelling out her intellectual representation of modernism:

She was wrapped in a white robe of some kind, whilst down her shoulders fell a twining profusion of marvellously rich hair, in a wild disorder which proclaimed it to be only during the invisible hours of the night that such a condition was

⁸⁸ Spector, p. 478.

⁸⁹ Hardy, *UGT*, p.14.

discoverable. Her bright eyes were looking into the grey world outside with an uncertain expression, oscillating between courage and shyness, which, as she recognized the semi-circular group of dark forms gathered before her, transformed itself into pleasant resolution.⁹⁰

While Hardy doesn't spare such long phrases to elaborate on any other character, the evidence here suggests that Fancy exists in this community only as a fantasized image. Her perceived image as a beautiful woman who is about to get married to a young man is a standard value in traditional terms. The prejudiced ideas of Hardy's traditional characters also support this: "the form of that young female vision we zeed [saw] just now, and this young tenor-voiced parson, my belief is she'll wind en round her finger, and twist the pore young feller about like the figure of 8 – that she will so, my sonnies."⁹¹ The character of a woman depicted in these lines belong to the old belief system of Dick's community and yet the plot is suggestive of these old ideas. These factors contribute to the restricted exploration of Fancy as a modern woman. Apart from the community's set ideas and values for her, Fancy is not given any circumstance to stand for modernism without the intrusion of traditional society. The outcome of this restriction is the opposition between traditional society and modernism.

Hardy uses other elements as well to create the opposition between Fancy and the society apart from Fancy's inclusion to the plot regarding her maiden femininity. When Fancy's role is considered, for example, she is specifically chosen to be involved in the choir and play the newly introduced organ under the orders of Mr. Maybold, the vicar who is also another suitor of Fancy. For the plot, Mr. Maybold belongs to the group of people who bring new ideals to the community, and he becomes a rival for Dick for the competition of becoming Fancy's husband. As Dick's competition with Mr. Shiner conflicts and resolves in the plot, the vicar's inclusion into the group of men who want Fancy is foreshadowed by Fancy's complex character. Despite their separate representation of character, Hardy's narrative induces both Mr. Shiner and Mr. Maybold to be victimized against a feminine figure. This is openly observable during the following conversation between Dick and Fancy:

⁹⁰ Hardy, *UGT*, p. 34.

⁹¹ Hardy, *UGT*, p. 40.

"I fear for that dress," he said, as they wiped their hands together.

"What?" said Miss Day, looking into the box at the dress alluded to. "O, I know what you mean-that the vicar will never let me wear muslin?"

"Yes."

"Well, I know it is condemned by all orders in the church as flaunting, and unfit for common wear for girls who've their living to get; but we'll see."

"In the interest of the church, I hope you don't speak seriously."

"Yes, I do; but we'll see." There was a comely determination on her lip, very pleasant to a beholder who was neither bishop, priest, nor deacon. "I think I can manage any vicar's views about me if he's under forty."⁹²

During this dialogue, Dick is depicted as a member of society who respects and cares about traditions. As opposed to this, Fancy's answers can be interpreted as deranging and chaotic as Dick's response to her also suggests. Despite Mr. Maybold's role as the representative of the new order for the community, the juxtaposition of church rules and Mr. Maybold as the choir-master integrates them during this conversation as opposed to Fancy. Dick's stance is in favour of the church and Fancy's resilience to church rules bring Dick and Mr. Maybold in a male-union against the dominant feminine who claim to be able to get anything she wants from men 'under forty'. Fancy's words carry some sense of pretentiousness in her ability to obtain anything she wishes. However, the source of this self-faith is alluded to her feminine power. Regarding the vicar's age, Fancy feels challenging and victorious, which means she claims power over young men resulting from her fantasy-world beauty. As it is demonstrated in this dialogue, Hardy's narrative accumulates the old and new opposition to stand as patriarchy against feminine ideals using Fancy's external signification regardless of her modernist role. As the narrative unfolds, the final binaries in the novel become the male, Dick, representing the order of the community and the modern female, Fancy, representing the chaotic threat. Regarding the construction of Fancy as the social opposite Spector states that:

Fancy disrupts the text, and specifically problematizes its carefully regulated character generating system, because she seems to be a figure, not of some concept, but of the slippery playfulness of the figure. In the novel's musical

⁹² Hardy, *UGT*, p. 113.

metaphors, she is a figure standing out from the ground provided by the Mellstock choir, or a solo harmonium player, whose single-voiced organ takes the place of the multi-voiced choir. As an individual in a society where identity seems derived from group membership, she is, as the wise choristers say, impossible to “onriddle” (118), always a slightly aberrant character who escapes classification.⁹³

In this respect, Hardy’s narrative can be found to exploit gender stereotypes to recreate the balance in traditional society. When the narrative is analysed over the plot, it is found to elaborate on male characterization while Fancy’s characterization remains superficial. This superficiality can be interpreted as stemming from the traditional idea of woman who had no chance to represent herself and is only represented through male gaze. Fancy’s signification as the new world order or modernity is negated through her disorderly characterization as a threat to the plot. Therefore, it can be argued that Hardy’s narration allures the reader to the female stereotypic image of a beautiful woman and adds a threatening characterization to her without providing the equal character complication to her as Dick. Along with Dick, the reader can be found to expect either the revelation of Fancy’s unreliable nature or the cancellation of her threatening modernist attributes. As the plot later reveals, the latter happens. As a result of the need to reorganize the unbalance caused by Fancy, Hardy makes uses of attraction between the main characters. Similarly, Irvin points out Hardy’s reconstruction of the balance stating:

With all the emphasis on Dick and Fancy's social polarity, Hardy must assure the reader that a desirable match is being made, and he does so in the most traditional manner. First he established a strong physical attraction. Maybold offers Fancy education, refinement and culture. Shiner offers wealth and social position. But Dick is handsome. ... Fancy’s dominant characteristic is her vanity, and because of her concern for appearances, it is only natural that she is attracted to the handsome Dick ... Since Fancy is the new, educated, talented,

⁹³ Spector, p.478-479.

clever woman who disrupts the parish, Hardy is careful to indicate that in marrying Dick she will not disturb the old order unacceptably.⁹⁴

As explained by Irvin, superficial characterization of Fancy later recompenses Hardy's purpose to rebalance the traditional society. Even though her initial introduction to the plot symbolizes the coming of a change with modernity, Fancy's female attributions focus on her womanhood rather than her individuality. As Fancy is not given any room for character development as well, she remains as the ultimate opposite of male community. Despite the modern signification of male characters such as Mr. Shiner and Mr. Maybold, it is eventually discovered that Hardy has signified them in the male society the whole time. Using modernist male characters to divert Fancy's attention and cause conflicts for the plot progress helps Hardy maintain the unresolved issue in the novel. In the end, Hardy's final oppositions for the novel stand as the male who signifies the traditional society and the modern female who signifies feminine threat due to her modern character.

Towards the end of the novel, Hardy uses Fancy's previously discussed ambiguous morality to create the highest tension. As Dick and Fancy's marriage day comes closer, Mr. Maybold who proposes to Fancy explaining his feelings towards her in detail.⁹⁵ After answering as "Yes, I will,"⁹⁶ Hardy mystifies Fancy's true intentions and sense of morality in a dexterous way. Following this crisis of the plot, the narration explains her words which are suggestive of bad character:

He advanced quickly, and put his arm out to embrace her. She drew back hastily. "No no, not now!" she said in an agitated whisper. "There are things; - but the temptation is, O, too strong, and I can't resist it; I can't tell you now, but I must tell you! Don't, please, don't come near me now! I want to think, I can scarcely get myself used to the idea of what I have promised yet." The next minute she turned to a desk, buried her face in her hands, and burst into a hysterical fit of weeping.⁹⁶

Fancy's illogical agreement to get married to two different men at the same time is left for the reader to be commented on. Except for her actions, the narrator doesn't give any

⁹⁴ IRVIN, p. 54.

⁹⁵ Hardy, *UGT*, p. 186-187.

⁹⁶ Hardy, *UGT*, p. 188.

insight about her motives, but he includes suggestive clues for the reader to judge her character as they wish. For example, prior to Mr. Maybold's proposal, Fancy welcomes Dick from the window and Hardy narrates Fancy's thoughts after Dick leaves as: "During the retreat she said to herself, almost involuntarily, and still conscious of that morning's triumph – 'I like Dick, and I love him; but how plain and sorry a man looks in the rain, with no umbrella, and wet through!'"⁹⁷ Following this observation, Mr. Maybold comes to propose to her with "an umbrella". This sequence of events suggest that Fancy gets confused because of Dick's poor state when he visited her. The confusion resulting from her fondness of vanity is so amplified as to cause a change of heart for Fancy. At this point, she is no longer an undeciphered character, she merely stands for her dishonourable feminine values.

After the crisis of Fancy's agreement to marry him, Mr. Maybold writes her a letter which functions as a demonstrative example of men's innate goodness:

"Why didn't you tell me – why didn't you? Did you suppose I knew? No. Had I known, my conduct in coming to you as I did would have been reprehensible. But I don't chide you! Perhaps no blame attaches to you – I can't tell. Fancy, though my opinion of you is assailed and disturbed in a way which cannot be expressed, I love you still, and my word to you holds good yet. But will you, in justice to an honest man who relies upon your word to him, consider whether, under the circumstances, you can honourably forsake him?"⁹⁸

This depiction of character for Mr. Maybold contrasts Fancy's bad character. Hardy's character construction can be found to be in favour of men as shown by Mr. Maybold. Dick is depicted as the honourable, trustworthy community member and other male members' actions align with Dick's character depiction as well. This parallel characterization allows Hardy to create a sense of unity which belongs to male gender. In opposition, Fancy's actions demonstrate a character who might be considered as worthy of condemnation. In addition, her actions are narrated as flaws resulting from her feminine nature. Fancy's response to Mr. Maybold supports this idea:

⁹⁷ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 185.

⁹⁸ Hardy, *UGT*. p. 192-193.

“DEAR MR. MAYBOLD, ... It is my nature – perhaps all women’s – to love refinement of mind and manners; but even more than this, to be ever fascinated with the idea of surroundings more elegant and pleasing than those which have been customary. And you praised me, and praise is life to me. It was alone my sensations at these things which prompted my reply. Ambition and vanity they would be called; perhaps they are so. After this explanation I hope you will generously allow me to withdraw the answer I too hastily gave. ...”⁹⁹

With these words, it is apparent that Fancy’s characterization is accusable of her vanity and ambition which she attributes to all other women. By concluding the crisis with Fancy’s acceptance of lack of morality, Hardy makes sure that the opposite entity for men is women with everything they have, even their characterization. Fancy’s declaration of her accusable behaviour caused by her gender determines the final image of women for readers. As the plot unresolves, Fancy gets married to Dick without him knowing about what happens between Fancy and Mr. Maybold. The narration of the wedding is not in a celebrating tone but rather in a criticising manner and Rollins illustrates it as follows:

The most difficult aspect of Fancy's character to determine is her moral goodness. The narrator increases the difficulty by omitting to provide an unqualified estimate of her moral worth. Instead, he offers an uncertain evaluation of her character on her wedding day. The narrator describes her as being “too refined and beautiful for a tranter’s wife, but perhaps not too good” (V, i). The qualifying “perhaps” encourages readers to make their own evaluations of Fancy's goodness. The fact that Hardy revised the novel’s manuscript to add this qualification to the original passage suggests a deliberate choice to leave this determination to his readers.¹⁰⁰

As Rollins points out Hardy’s role in influencing the readers’ perspective, the narrative’s power over the plot is highly suggestive of the female gender’s demonstration of negativity. Regarding the overall structure of the plot, it can be found out that Dick is spared deeper analysis for character while Fancy is not. Also, the

⁹⁹ Hardy, *UGT*, p. 194.

¹⁰⁰ Rollins, p. 29-30.

progress of the plot has many different elements which leads to the male/female binary. Even though the conflicts seem to be caused by the opposition between traditional lifestyle and modernity, this opposition is dissolved by the chaos caused by Fancy's mysterious character. Fancy's attributions are introduced as the features of modern female figure, but they were discovered to be chaotic and were implied to be the result of modernism. Her character's helplessness towards the end of the plot is not discussed in detail, but it is intended to be critiqued by the reader. Also, the plot's conclusion in Dick and Fancy's marriage despite all questions suggest that disruptive female modernism is being taken under control by males who control traditional community and therefore ensures the stability in society:

Although Fancy makes the right choice in the end and stands by her first love (although only after the vicar does the gentlemanly thing and allows her to recant her second engagement), her moral failings are clearly intended to even the social balance between her and Dick, as the narrator indicates in describing her as 'too refined and beautiful for a tranter's wife, but perhaps not too good'.¹⁰¹

Jann's conclusion also demonstrates that the unbalanced tone of the plot is resolved by the couple's marriage. Hardy makes sure that the initial construction of the characters includes the opposition of his time, the traditional and the modern, but he later masterfully attributes these concepts to the genders. By discovering the rural life of Mellstock, he depicts a society which is alive and real, and is expected to face chaos brought by modernity. The new ideas are challenged along the plot, and the conflict of tradition / modernity is resolved through Dick's traditional marriage to Fancy. The conflict between Dick and Mr. Shiner, and Mr. Maybold are also resolved which shows his dominant role as the hero. Even though Dick's signifiers of characterization seemed to lack the high position of Mr. Shiner and Mr. Maybold, his virtuous characterization helped him settle down with a modern female. As for Fancy, the narrative suggests that she managed to get married despite she had flaws which are unforgivable. Her flaws are associated with her gender, and the narrator emphasizes the conflicts caused by

¹⁰¹ Jann, p. 417.

women's nature. As Fancy "thought of a secret she would never tell"¹⁰², her character judgement is suggestive to the detriment of her, and other women like her. Her keeping the events about Mr. Maybold in the dark predicts that they will not end happily ever after. As the plot progression connected the female and the modernity in a negative way, Hardy's fiction is also reminiscent of misdeeds if women are ever allowed to have modern values.

The analysis of signifiers which affect the characterization along with plot reveals that Hardy's novel *UGT* explores a traditional hero who clashes with the modern heroine. Though the main conflict seems to be caused by their social class, it is discovered that the narrator mostly focuses on gender differences. Therefore, the main duality becomes the male and female as opposites of each other, and the narrator generalizes female characters through the heroine's inexplicable nature negatively. The heroine's defect by accepting another man's proposal while being engaged to the hero⁹⁹ implies the immoral nature of women. In addition to this, the implications of the heroine's eventual marriage throughout the novel also shows that Fancy represents the modern female figure who is bound to marry. In conclusion, Hardy's novel *UGT* explores the modern female's traditionalization by means of a traditional marriage while it also connotes the terms woman and modernity negatively.

¹⁰² Hardy, *UGT*. p. 215.

CHAPTER 3

EXPLORING THE STRUCTURE OF HARDY'S FICTION: SIGNIFIERS AND DUALITIES IN *FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD*

3.1 Introduction to *Far From the Madding Crowd* Structural Analysis: Overview and Methodological Approach

Despite Hardy's humble successes with his previous novels, it was *Far From the Madding Crowd*¹⁰³ (to be abbreviated as *FFMC* after this point) which brought him the greatest fame. Published in 1874, *FFMC* deals with the struggles of an honest man, Gabriel Oak, who falls in love with Bathsheba Everdene. Subsequently, the novel explores the class conflict between Gabriel Oak and Bathsheba Everdene. Harvey claims that the reason for the success of this novel was mainly because Hardy was well informed about the setting, which helped him create realistic settings and characters for the novel. The town in the novel, Weatherbury was based on Puddletown in England, and Hardy lived there for some time.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, *FFMC* can be thought as one of the most important novels of Thomas Hardy.

The novel *FFMC* opens with Bathsheba's introduction from the point of Gabriel Oak's view. He falls in love with her and proposes to her; but Bathsheba refuses him. Though initially a girl without a fortune, Bathsheba inherits a big farm after her uncle's death and becomes a young farm owner. Bathsheba's social rise coincides with Gabriel's fall as he loses all his sheep after an unfortunate event. This leads him to work for Bathsheba's farm. As a powerful female figure, Bathsheba gets acquainted with her neighbour, Mr. Boldwood who also proposes to her and gets rejected. Bathsheba's independent character is later challenged by the young Sergeant Troy with whom she gets married secretly. After their marriage, Bathsheba learns about Troy's previous relationship with Fanny Robin who dies while giving birth to Troy's stillborn child. Upon the bad news, Troy leaves Bathsheba and is later thought to have drowned. However, he reappears later at a party which was held by Mr. Boldwood to propose to

¹⁰³ Hardy, Thomas. *Far From the Madding Crowd*. 1st ed., İstanbul, Turkey, Karbon Kitaplar, 2019.

¹⁰⁴ Harvey, p. 22.

Bathsheba. After Mr. Boldwood loses his temper over Troy's sight and shoots him dead, Bathsheba becomes widowed and retreats to her farm. At the end of the novel, Gabriel and Bathsheba get married as Gabriel has become a prosperous bailiff and been by Bathsheba's side through the worst times.¹⁰³

The analysis of the novel *FFMC* will firstly determine the signifiers of Gabriel Oak and Bathsheba Everdene as the hero and the heroine of the plot. Because the signifiers of Mr. Boldwood and Sergeant Troy play an antagonistic role to Gabriel, they will also be utilized to better show the narrator's gender-based signification. The signifiers will be shown in **bold** in quotations taken from the novel and their analysis will reveal the influence of the narrator's gender-based signification in overall structure of the novel. After the signifiers of characterization are examined, the signifiers of narrative affecting the meaning of the novel will be analysed under a different subsection. Based on the findings of the analysis of signifiers, the binary oppositions will be examined. These analyses will aim to show the effect of specific signifiers on the character signification which helps the narrator to form the dualities of the plot. It will be demonstrated that Hardy's novel uses gender-based signification to construct the dualities and lead the plot to grant the hero the marriage he wants at the beginning.

3.2.1 Signifiers of Characterization and The Construction of Meaning in *Far From the Madding Crowd*

Similar to *Under the Greenwood Tree*, *FFMC*'s opening chapters serve as a veritable tableau of linguistic signifiers that lay the groundwork for the narrator's characters. The analysis of characterization signifiers will unfold the identities and the relationships of the novel's central figures. Through an examination of the narrative's description of the characters' speech patterns, actions and interactions, the complex web of signifiers that shape the meaning of the novel will be discovered. By revealing the layers of language and narrative in the introductory chapters, this subsection aims to find the underlying mechanisms through which Hardy constructs his characters.

The first chapter of the novel is crucial in that it settles the hero and the heroine, Gabriel Oak and Bathsheba Everdene along with foreshadowing their characterization. As the title of the first chapter, "Description of Farmar Oak – An Incident"^{Hata! Yer işareti}

tanımlanması. demonstrates, the point of view initially belongs to Oak, which changes later as the narrator provides omniscient details of the plot. Oak's characterization lasts for three whole pages, the description focusing on his character and intellectual aspects as the following lines show:

His Christian name was Gabriel, and on working days he was a **young man of sound judgment, easy motions, proper dress, and general good character**. ... In his face one might notice that many of the hues and curves of **youth** had tarried on to **manhood**: there even remained in his remoter crannies some relics of **the boy**. His **height and breadth** would have been sufficient to make his **presence imposing**, had they been exhibited with due consideration. But there is a way **some men** have, rural and urban alike, for which the **mind is more responsible than flesh and sinew**: it is a way of curtailing their dimensions by their manner of showing them.¹⁰⁵

The presentation of Gabriel Oak in these words establishes what to expect of him in the following chapters. He is a farmer, but the Hardy's characterization takes Gabriel beyond and allows a deeper depiction to highlight his intellectual personality. As evident in this characterization, Gabriel's personality is not like those who choose to exhibit their height and breadth imposed, which draws a picture of a humble and handsome man. It should also be mentioned here that, regarding Gabriel's facial qualities, he is described in terms of his age as both belonging to the group of adults and carrying boyish features. This depiction can be regarded as genderless. The narrator's description of Gabriel is voiced through a neutral tone, he doesn't include any positive or negative judgement regarding his male protagonist. The analysis of the heroine's characterization will show that Gabriel's characterization is opposed to the heroine's characterization which depicts the narrator's gender-based signification in the following paragraphs.

After the judgement of Gabriel's character is determined through these words, Hardy adds a last descriptive sentence for his protagonist from which he will draw the plot: "he was twenty-eight, and a bachelor".¹⁰⁵ This sentence puts the stress on Gabriel's availability as a husband. Now that Gabriel's signifiers are fixed and his place on a

¹⁰⁵ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.13.

social scale is revealed, the narrator returns to Gabriel's environment with a description of the rural setting along with the presentation of the heroine. As the narrator centres the plot to be explored around Gabriel by thrusting other details out, Gabriel spots the waggon which carries his future love, Bathsheba Everdene. Regarding her characterization, Hardy's narrative and portrayal are of great significance to analyse the beginning of the novel:

The waggon was laden with **household goods** and window plants, and on the apex of the whole sat a **woman, young and attractive**. ... The handsome girl waited for some time idly in her place, ... Then **she looked attentively** downwards. It was **not at the bird, nor at the cat**, it was at an oblong package tied in paper, and lying between them. She turned her head to learn if the waggoner were coming. He was not yet in sight; and her eyes crept back to the package, her thoughts seeming to run upon what was inside it. At length she drew the article into her lap, and untied the paper covering; **a small swing looking-glass** was disclosed, in which she proceeded to **survey herself attentively**. She **parted her lips and smiled**.¹⁰⁶

It is to be noted that these words include a picture of the female protagonist, and she is described along with the household goods her waggon carries with her. This juxtaposition of female gender and house items can be regarded as signifiers for a stereotypical female. While the narrator explains the object of her attention, he makes it clear that she is not interested in her surroundings but in the mirror that will help her see herself. As Gabriel watches around, the woman watches her own beauty secretly and feels content. Thus, the woman is introduced into the plot not through her name but through her age, feminine beauty and self-indulgence. The following paragraph strengthens the image drawn before, including both Hardy's and his virtuous male protagonist's impressions regarding the female:

... the sun lighted up to a **scarlet glow** the crimson jacket she wore, and painted a **soft lustre** upon her **bright face and dark hair**. The myrtles, geraniums, and cactuses packed around her were fresh and green, ... girl with a peculiar **vernal charm**. What possessed her to **indulge in such a performance** in the sight of

¹⁰⁶ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.14-15.

the sparrows, blackbirds, and **unperceived farmer** who were alone its spectators, — whether the smile began as a factitious one, to test her capacity in that art,— **nobody knows**; it ended certainly in a real smile. She **blushed at herself**, and seeing **her reflection blush, blushed the more**.¹⁰⁷

The image created for the woman firstly focuses on her facial features and her charming nature. After these impressions, the narrator's questioning her act of self-indulgence forms the future relationship between Gabriel and Bathsheba. She neglects the farmer and the reason to why she acts so is a mystery to anybody. Still, she is charming as she is capable of blushing at her beauty. The colour combination of her jacket as crimson and her blushing face vividly creates a high contrast with her complexion and hair, which will override her personality in the plot. The narrator's physical descriptions of the female character are so powerfully illustrated that Gabriel's "sound judgement"¹⁰⁵ is tested through her surreal charm. Ian Osby analyses Bathsheba's description as follows:

... it radiates uncertainty and ambivalence. Although he observes Bathsheba's actions with minute intimacy, he does not know what their motive is or how to respond to them. ... Its detail and texture are obviously meant to render her immediately appealing, to endow her with abundant and vital life. ... The spectacle is charged with erotic overtones, but they are delicately conveyed - as such effects usually are in Hardy's fiction. A strong element of voyeurism is already implicit in the very situation. ... Eroticism is more explicit in the colour of Bathsheba's jacket, in her ambiguous smile that may begin in calculation certainly ends in spontaneity, and, most delicately and tellingly of all, in her blush.¹⁰⁸

As Osby's analysis demonstrates, the initial presentation of Bathsheba includes the naturalization of her erotic feminine beauty through the signifiers that Hardy's narration governs. Compared to Gabriel's character description, Bathsheba's stance is firstly through her gender and how appealing her existence is to male characters. This distinct choice of characterization suggests Hardy's tendentious approach to his characters. As Barbara A. Schapiro analyses:

¹⁰⁷ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 15.

¹⁰⁸ Ousby, Ian. "Love-Hate Relations: Bathsheba, Hardy and the Men in 'Far from the Madding Crowd.'" *The Cambridge Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1981): 24–39. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42966352>. p. 25.

“Nobody knows” if Bathsheba’s smiling at her reflection is vain and artificial - a testing of “her capacity in that art” of feminine wiles -or an innocent pleasure in her own natural beauty (which her artless blushing at her own image suggests). The narrator allows for both possibilities, just as Bathsheba’s character throughout the novel sustains the tension of contradictory qualities: she is both manipulative and ingenuous, tough and vulnerable.¹⁰⁹

The narrator prefers to limit his omniscient perspective when Bathsheba appears. While he gives specific description of her looks, he expresses the ambiguity of her mind. He blurs the reasons for Bathsheba’s looking at herself in the glass to create interest in her character while also suggesting possible reasons for it. The reasons for Bathsheba’s actions suggested at this early stage of the novel are persisting in the plot later. Thus, the narrator’s commentary forms the future actions of his heroine. After the introduction of both characters, the narrator provides a more detailed commentary on Bathsheba’s ambiguous presence to fix the shape of a female protagonist whose individuality is to be filled out in later parts of the plot:

The picture was a delicate one. **Woman’s prescriptive infirmity** had stalked into the sunlight, which had clothed it in the freshness of an originality. ... She simply **observed herself** as a **fair product of Nature** in the **feminine kind**, her thoughts seeming to glide into far-off though **likely dramas** in which **men would play a part – vistas of probable triumphs** – the smiles being of a phase suggesting that **hearts** were imagined as **lost and won**.¹⁰⁷

The narrator refers to Bathsheba as “Woman” suggesting that he generalizes the character with the rest of the women. Considering Gabriel’s individuality, it can be argued that Hardy’s narration doesn’t present equal observations for male and female protagonists. Moreover, mentioning female’s “prescriptive infirmity” proves his perception of women as faulty beings. The word “kind” refers to his comparison of women as being distinct from humans. The word “product” combines the image of a woman with an object, she is the outcome of an action. While Gabriel stands in rural England as a natural male, Bathsheba is depicted as the source of Gabriel’s objectifying

¹⁰⁹ Schapiro, Barbara A. “Psychoanalysis and Romantic Idealization: The Dialectics of Love in Hardy’s ‘Far from the Madding Crowd.’” *American Imago* 59, no. 1 (2002): 3–26. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26304739>. p. 13.

a kind. Juxtaposing her previously mentioned charming nature with her imaginary thoughts, the narrator ascribes Bathsheba's complex actions to a feminine desire to conquer men's hearts in fictional dramas. Since Bathsheba doesn't talk during her gaze at the mirror, the narrator's commentary on her action implies that a woman's appreciation of her beauty may only be the reason of conquering men's hearts. It can be argued that the narrator's reasoning of Bathsheba's actions prejudices the woman's actions because the objective reason of her actions is never disclosed. As a result, Bathsheba is now determined to be faulty, man-hunter and dreamy without any action and conversation on her part. As Bathsheba's waggon is unable to pass the gate without paying the fee, Gabriel decides to help her by paying twopence to the gatekeeper.¹¹⁰ Gabriel's help goes unnoticed by Bathsheba, proving Hardy's previous narration rightful. Likewise, Gabriel's response to the gatekeeper mentioning Bathsheba's beauty resolves that "she has her faults"¹¹¹ and this fault is uttered in this word: "**Vanity**".¹¹¹ The conclusion of the first chapter includes powerful signification for Gabriel and Bathsheba. It can be observed that the hero is described in detail to show his virtuous character while the heroine is described through the gaze of the hero. Hardy's presentation of his two main characters in such distinct way due to the gender difference hints the deliberate signification of characters to develop the plot. Therefore, the first chapter foreshadows Bathsheba's future actions caused by her vanity. Comparing her depiction to Gabriel's, it can be argued that the conflict between Bathsheba and Gabriel is determined to be the result of Bathsheba's vanity.

After the first chapter concludes Gabriel's good character, the narration explores the nature of Gabriel's life and his daily routine along with some information about his past, which informs his social status to have changed lately from a bailiff to a farmer. So far, the structure of the novel follows the initial characterizations of the main characters in which a conflict is to be discovered later between male and female. The following chapters narrate more of Gabriel's espial of Bathsheba while she rides a horse:

There appeared in view an **auburn pony with a girl** on its back, ... She was the **young woman** of the night before. ... The girl, who wore no riding-habit,

¹¹⁰ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 16.

¹¹¹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.17.

looked around for a moment, as if to assure herself that **all humanity was out of view**, then dexterously dropped backwards **flat upon the pony's back**, her **head over its tail**, **her feet against its shoulders**, and **her eyes to the sky**. ... She came, the pail in one hand, hanging against **her knee**. The **left arm** was extended as a balance, enough of it being **shown bare** to make Oak **wish** that the event had happened in the summer, when **the whole would have been revealed**.¹¹²

Hardy's narration in the above quotation doesn't carry any undertones of Gabriel's previous prejudice of Bathsheba. Moreover, Bathsheba is introduced as if a completely different female as the transition from the signifiers of "girl with a pony" to "young woman" suggests. Similar to his attitude towards Fancy in *UGT*, the narrator gives vivid physical descriptions of his female character before revealing any communication of her with Gabriel. The specific choice of the word "pony" along with a girl rather than "horse" leads to the narrative of objectified feminine beauty. As the girl rides the pony, the narrator specifically indicates the act is private, that she doesn't act this way among others. Regarding Gabriel's access to this secrecy, the scene functions as a fantasy of the male through Bathsheba's connection with a pony which even exposes some bare parts of her body. The narrative exemplifies that female character's signification is formed through words that serve to masculine desires.

When the hero and the heroine have a conversation for the first time, Bathsheba's speech is preceded by both Gabriel's effect on her character and the narrator's commentary on women:

That the girl's thoughts hovered about **her face and form** as soon as she caught **Oak's eyes** conning the same page was natural, and almost certain. The **self-consciousness** shown would have been **vanity** if a little more pronounced, **dignity** if a little less. **Rays of male vision** seem to have a **tickling effect** upon **virgin faces in rural districts**; she **brushed hers** with her hand, as if Gabriel had been irritating its **pink surface** by **actual touch**, and the free air of her

¹¹² Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 27-28.

previous movements was reduced at the same time to a chastened phase of itself.

Yet it was the man who blushed, the maid not at all.¹¹³

Despite many detailed descriptions of her, Bathsheba's appearance is tinted in this paragraph by Gabriel's gaze. Moreover, the narrator adds stereotypical insights about women to reason Bathsheba's actions. The narration suggests that the male gaze results in the self-consciousness of a woman which can represent either vanity or dignity. It implies that a woman has dignity if she remains unaffected by the male gaze, or she has vanity if her self-consciousness is heightened. Therefore, it can be argued that a woman cannot neglect the male gaze in Hardy's fictitious world. This conclusion limits the reasoning of her self-conscious act; it would have simply implied her awareness of surroundings if the narration hadn't reasoned her actions by vanity or dignity. Moreover, the stereotypical observation of the narrator by "Rays of male vision seem to have a tickling effect upon virgin faces in rural districts"¹¹³ suggests that male is affective in causing a change on women which robs the women of their neutrality met by a male eye. The commentary goes on fantasizing Gabriel's imaginary touch on her face by which Hardy has the chance to signify her face as "pink". As the narrator has used strong colours to describe a desirable feminine beauty previously¹⁰⁷, it can be argued that the narrator contributes to the vivid description of the heroine's physical beauty by using colour adjectives. Adding pink to the colour palette of Bathsheba's depiction, the narrator's choice of signifiers for the heroine can be observed to serve the desirability of feminine beauty.

In examining the initial character signifiers in *FFMC*, it becomes evident that the narrator employs a gender-based signification to depict the hero and the heroine before they interact with each other. Through a close analysis of the narrator's method of characterization, it is apparent that the heroine is portrayed as a desirable feminine object, her identity shaped primarily by her physical attributes. In contrast, the hero is endowed with a depth of characterization which presents him as a fully realized individual with complexity. This asymmetrical portrayal, wherein the heroine's identity is reduced to superficial signifiers while the hero is afforded a more nuanced description, emphasizes the underlying gender dynamics at play within the narrative.

¹¹³ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 29-30.

The narrator's directive role in constructing the heroine as an object of desire serves to reinforce traditional gender norms. As the analysis passes on to the narrative signifiers of the novel, it can be observed that the evaluation of these initial character signifiers uncovers the complexities of gender representation in Hardy's novel.

3.2.2 Signifiers of Narrative and Their Function in *Far From the Madding Crowd*

In this subsection, the focus of structural analysis shifts from the static signifiers of characterization to the dynamic elements of narrative progression. The aim of this subsection is to unravel the intricate web of narrative signifiers that construct the plot and its implications for the heroine. The previous examination of character signifiers enlightened the gendered constructions of identity, and similarly, this subsection will dissect the evolving narrative landscape and its implications on the modern female.

After Gabriel and Bathsheba's first conversation regarding Gabriel's confession of his espial and his giving Bathsheba's hat back to her, Hardy uses suspense to bring the two characters together again. Bathsheba finds Gabriel unconscious in his hut, but it is narrated through Gabriel's point of view. The limitation of perspective regarding the events in the plot helps the narrator sustain the ambivalence around Bathsheba. As Gabriel gains consciousness, the situation is described in a manner which does not suggest any indications of sickness on his regard: "The **young girl with the pleasant lips and white teeth** was beside him. More than this – **astonishingly more** – his head was upon **her lap, his face and neck** were disagreeably **wet, her fingers** were **unbuttoning his collar**."¹¹⁴ It can be argued that these observations indicate Gabriel's clear judgement of Bathsheba's face despite his unwellness. The narration of events shows signs of the narrator's previous commentaries which are accompanied to Bathsheba's vivid physical descriptions.¹¹⁵ The depiction can be found to have implications of intimacy. Despite his unhealthy state, Gabriel is very precise in acknowledging Bathsheba's attractive features and their physical closeness. After this description, the narrator reveals that Gabriel was about to suffocate to death before Bathsheba found him. However, the narrative of the events unfolds Gabriel's physical

¹¹⁴ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 33.

¹¹⁵ For the narrator's previous commentaries of similar manner, see footnotes 117 and 122.

ill-state later while Bathsheba's physical closeness to Gabriel is narrated before. Therefore, the sequence of narration is constructed to serve the male fantasy of intimacy again. After Gabriel's imaginary union with Bathsheba is described, the reality is revealed in the form of Bathsheba's saving Gabriel's life. After this event, Hardy makes sure the suspense is not totally resolved as Bathsheba prefers not to share her name with Gabriel. Their conversation and the chapter end as follows: "'Now find out my name,' she said, **teasingly**; and withdrew."¹¹⁶ Since their intimacy creates an irrevocable desire for Gabriel, Bathsheba's last words draw him to her more, the tease is supposed to be resolved in the following chapters. Additionally, the next chapter opens with a generalized commentary about male-female relationships and Gabriel's state:

The **only superiority in women** that is tolerable to the **rival sex** is, as a rule, that of the **unconscious** kind; but a superiority which **recognizes itself** may sometimes please by suggesting **possibilities of capture** to the **subordinated man**.

This **well-favoured** and **comely girl** soon made **appreciable inroads** upon the **emotional constitution** of young Farmer Oak.¹¹⁷

The narrator's declaration of women's conditional superiority foreshadows future tensions of the plot caused by Bathsheba's inheriting her uncle's farm and Gabriel's losing his farm. It also predefines the nature of Bathsheba's relationship with other men, as the narrator suggests that any display of a woman's superiority is meant to be captured by a subordinate man. This means that Bathsheba's awareness around her superiority can only cause a man to desire her and eventually capture her; she can never be superior independently. It is also equally important that the plot uncovers Gabriel's love for Bathsheba which will maintain the conflict throughout the plot. Since the hero of the novel is Gabriel Oak, his love for Bathsheba is the essence of the progression of the plot. By creating a heroine who is superior to Gabriel and is wanted by different men, the narrator establishes the instability between the heroine and other characters. This instability will be resolved by the hero later in the novel. This imbalance is the quest for the hero to overcome and to rebuild the balance of Hardy's fictional society.

¹¹⁶ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 36.

¹¹⁷ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 37.

Therefore, it can be said that Bathsheba's inheritance is a symbol for the instability of Hardy's fictional society which will be resolved by the hero. This way, the narrator predetermines Bathsheba's fate by positioning her as the young owner of the farm in the novel.

Before Bathsheba inherits her uncle's farm, Gabriel's love for Bathsheba is announced by his marriage proposal. However, he talks about it first with Bathsheba's aunt who claims that she has many men wanting to marry her. "That's **unfortunate**, ... I'm only an **every-day sort of man**, ... Well, there's no use in my waiting, for that was all I came about..."¹¹⁸ Gabriel concludes. Since Bathsheba's aunt's claim doesn't reflect the reality on Bathsheba's regard, the narrator strengthens the instability between the hero and the heroine by encountering Gabriel with the heroine's aunt. While Gabriel leaves without conversing with Bathsheba, Bathsheba's running after him riddles the narration, implying undiscoverable intentions of Bathsheba:

Farmer Oak – I - ... she said panting **like a robin**, her **face red and moist** from her exertions, **like a peony petal** before the sun dries off the dew. "I didn't know you had come to ask to have me, or I should have come in from the garden instantly. I **ran after you to say - that my aunt made a mistake in sending you away from courting me** - ... - It was quite a mistake-aunt's telling you I had a young man already," Bathsheba went on. "I haven't a sweetheart at all - and **I never had one**, and I thought that, as **times go with women**, it was such a **pity to send you away** thinking that I had several."¹¹⁹

While the meaning behind Bathsheba's words is blurred, her face having desirous features are fixed; the narration still implies a desirable image separate from her actions. Her sentences make her sound as if she wants Gabriel, but she is talking around the circles. Since the implication of her words encourage him, Gabriel proposes to her again. But she rejects him saying:

"Why, Farmer Oak, ... I never said I was going to marry you. ... **What I meant** to tell you was only this," she said **eagerly**, and yet **half conscious** of the **absurdity of the position she had made for herself** - "that **nobody has got me**

¹¹⁸ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 41.

¹¹⁹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 41-42.

yet as a sweetheart, instead of my having a dozen, as my aunt said; I **hate** to be thought men's property in that way, **though possibly I shall be had** some day. Why, if I'd wanted you I **shouldn't have run after you** like this; twould have been the forwardest thing! But there was **no harm in hurrying to correct** a piece of false news that had been told you."¹²⁰

This rather stretched out explanation contributes to the tension built between two characters while also painting an absurd personality for Bathsheba. The narrator also intensifies her illogicality stating she is not even fully conscious, only 'half-conscious' about what she means. Her words regarding 'to be had' by men justifies the narrator's perspective of women being a kind; she hates to be thought so even though she will be had eventually. Her reasoning for running after him only to correct false news about her doesn't sound persuasive compared to her effort to do so. By surrounding Bathsheba's explanations with such riddled words along with his narrator's comments, Hardy characterizes the heroine with an inexplicable personality. Comparing Hardy's narration regarding Gabriel's actions and Bathsheba's, it can be observed that Gabriel's thoughts and actions align as opposed to Bathsheba's. Her thoughts are depicted undiscoverable and absurd, and her actions imply different things than what she says. This difference in signification can be observed to affect the heroine negatively. Katharine Rogers contributes to this conclusion explaining as:

... Hardy saw rationality as a quality opposed to feminine nature. ... When women do manage to behave with reason and magnanimity, Hardy explicitly states that they do so in spite of their womanhood. ... We find no such glib generalizations about men in Hardy's novels, and little use of the label 'manliness.' When it does appear, however, its connotations are invariably positive, and indicate the highest and most complete virtue.¹²¹

As Rogers's explanation clearly points out, Hardy's male characters are hardly generalized while his female characters are mostly compared to other women. As a result of this comparison, he deduces all women to be irrational. This generalization is amplified with complex statements of female characters during their speeches in the

¹²⁰ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 43.

¹²¹ Rogers, Katharine. "Women In Thomas Hardy." *The Centennial Review* 19, no. 4 (1975): 249–58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23738074>. p. 257.

plot. In this way, the female's signification through absurdity shape and incline their forthcoming actions as open to query.

Shortly after Bathsheba becomes the farmer of her uncle's estate upon his death, she discusses her intentions to send a valentine to one of her boy workers named Teddy Coggan with her maid Liddy, and the two together come to the decision of sending it to the bachelor farmer Mr. Boldwood as a joke. While the reason behind this change of heart is evaded by Liddy's irrelevant offer to send it to Mr. Boldwood, the narrator implies that Bathsheba is becoming a heartless woman after her recent change of status. Since the narrator doesn't provide any logical reason for sending the valentine, her baseless action supports her character's absurdity she demonstrates with Gabriel. To make her character more ambiguous and build the conflict between Gabriel and Mr. Boldwood, Bathsheba chooses a seal in words 'Marry Me'. The narrator concludes this action: "So very **idly** and **unreflectingly** was this deed done. Of love as a spectacle Bathsheba had a fair knowledge; but of love subjectively **she knew nothing**".¹²² This commentary is justified by Boldwood's obsessive love for Bathsheba later and she is unable to return a comprehensible answer to Boldwood as she was with Gabriel:

"Mr. Boldwood, it is painful to have to say I am surprised, so that I **don't know** how to answer you with **propriety and respect** - but am **only just able to speak** out my **feeling** - I mean **my meaning**; that I am afraid I can't marry you, much as I respect you. You are **too dignified for me** to suit you, sir. ... **I-I didn't - I know** I ought never to have dreamt of sending that valentine - **forgive me**, sir - it was a **wanton** thing which no woman with **any self-respect** should have done. ... I have not fallen in love with you, Mr. Boldwood - certainly I must say that." She allowed a very **small smile to creep** for the first time over her serious face in saying this, and the **white row of upper teeth**, and **keenly-cut lips** already noticed, **suggested an idea of heartlessness**, which was immediately **contradicted** by the **pleasant eyes**.¹²³

The confessional sentences uttered by Bathsheba in response to Boldwood are made even more inapprehensible than her reaction to Gabriel's proposal. She confesses that

¹²² Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 125.

¹²³ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 160-161.

she can't respond in a proper and respectable manner, but she can only reason her feelings. The suggestion of an illogical and susceptible woman image is hidden behind her words. Concluding her irrationality, she claims Boldwood is 'too dignified' which aligns with the narrator's previous examination of her dignity¹¹³. She also stutters which can be a sign for her doubtful personality and it contributes to her character's ambivalence. Asking for forgiveness, she accepts moral superiority of Boldwood in return to her nonsense action concluding what she did was 'wanton'. Eventually, Boldwood's persistence and the description of the smile on her face as suggestive of 'heartlessness' signify her physical presence to be taken more seriously than her irrational words. Combined with her refusal of Gabriel, the narrator manages to establish an unreliable yet attractive heroine who defied both a virtuous man as Gabriel, and a rich, respectable man as Mr. Boldwood. The vanity Gabriel attributes to her at the beginning is ornamented through these events in the plot. At this point, Bathsheba's signification is designed to rely on her physical attributions, male characters' fantasies and her irrational actions towards men. Despite her new demanding position as a farm owner and her young age, she is signified not through her skills of ambitious practices but through her femininity and unsound speech.

Following Bathsheba's rise as a farm owner and the decline of Gabriel's social status, the plot evolves to demonstrate more of Bathsheba's flaws. Contrasting Bathsheba's disinterest in any men she meets, she falls in love with Sergeant Troy. As he signifies the antagonist for Gabriel, the narrator makes sure Sergeant Troy's characterization opposes to Gabriel's. After Bathsheba and Sergeant Troy's disorderly encounter at night¹²⁴, Bathsheba makes inquiries regarding Sergeant Troy and Liddy enlightens Bathsheba as follows:

"Oh! Miss - I blush to name it - a **gay man**! But I know him to be very **quick** and **trim**, who might have made his thousands, like a **squire**. Such a **clever young dandy** as he is! He's a **doctor's son** by name, which is a **great deal**; and he's an **earl's son** by nature! ... And, he was **brought up so well**, and sent to **Casterbridge Grammar School** for years and years. Learnt **all languages** while he was there; ... However, he **wasted his gifted** lot, and listed a **soldier**;

¹²⁴ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 200.

but even then he **rose to be** a sergeant without trying at all. Ah! such a blessing it is to **be high-born; nobility of blood** will shine out even in the ranks and files. ... ”¹²⁵

This paragraph exemplifies that Liddy is specifically placed as Bathsheba's confidant among characters despite her social position as a simple maid. Liddy's manner of describing Sergeant Troy is unlike any rest of her speech; she gives a depiction of Sergeant Troy in a way to influence Bathsheba's opinion of him. Hence, Bathsheba's judgement of Sergeant Troy is shaped around the signifiers Liddy uses to describe him, which results in Bathsheba's falling in love. As Bathsheba rejects everybody until this point, Sergeant Troy's noble lineage combined with his inclusion in education and mastering culture (implied by his language skills) formulate enough amount of curiosity in Bathsheba to see Troy as the ideal man. The narrator makes sure Troy's description doesn't show any virtuousness but only relies on his social aspects. However, Gabriel's initial description provided details of his virtuous character at the beginning of the novel.¹⁰⁵ This difference of perspective between characters of Gabriel and Sergeant Troy proves that the narrator had chosen Gabriel to have the opposite of Sergeant Troy's characteristics deliberately. As the plot later discloses Troy to be an unreliable man through Gabriel's perspective, the narrator holds back Troy's negative aspects when he meets with Bathsheba initially. Hardy intends to prove Gabriel's superiority over Sergeant Troy by deliberately changing the point of view from the narrator to Gabriel to relay negative insights about Troy. Rather than providing details of Troy's character after Bathsheba meets him, the narrator includes commentary upon Bathsheba's astonishment regarding Troy:

After all, **how could** a **cheerful wearer of skirts** be permanently **offended** with the **man**? There are occasions when **girls like Bathsheba** will **put up with** a great deal of **unconventional behaviour**. When **they want to be praised**, which is **often**, when **they want to be mastered**, which is **sometimes**; and when **they want no nonsense**, which is **seldom**. Just now the first feeling was in the ascendant with Bathsheba, with a dash of the second. Moreover, **by chance or**

¹²⁵ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 204-205.

by devilry, the ministrant was antecedently made interesting by being a handsome stranger who had evidently seen better days.”¹²⁶

In this paragraph, the narrative is explanatory of Bathsheba's interest while there is no such explanation but blurred reasoning for her disinterest in Gabriel or Boldwood. The narrator's method of explanation for Bathsheba's interest involves gender generalization¹²¹ as it is made use of previously by using different signifiers. The narrator refers to women here as “cheerful wearer of skirts” which reduces the image of women to only the bottom half of their body with the ornament of skirt. This description shows a change of the body part that the narration focuses. Previously, the focus remained on overall beauty of women and their face¹¹⁹; but in above-paragraph, the focus implies a degradation of the woman image since the character's future choice of husband (Bathsheba's marrying to Troy) should be frowned upon. Additionally, the commentary gives reasons for this type of women to like ‘unconventional behaviour’ by men. It implies Bathsheba will ‘be had’ by praises, and by being mastered. Sergeant Troy is full of praises for Bathsheba which renders her speechless. Gabriel's social position is not enough for Bathsheba to consider a husband, Boldwood's position is the same with her because he is a farmer. However, Sergeant Troy is educated, of noble lineage and in military profession, all of which summarizes what Bathsheba doesn't have. The commentary concludes that Bathsheba, being the type of girl described, is interested in Troy for these reasons. Moreover, the narrator adds another reason for Bathsheba to be interested in Troy by pointing out her acknowledgement of Troy as ‘handsome stranger’, which results in forming of a love conflict. It can be argued that the sequence of events shapes a considerable extent in the plot. When Bathsheba meets Gabriel, the narration precedes her thoughts or actions. When she meets Sergeant Troy, the narration constructs their encounter ‘by chance or by devilry’. In addition, Gabriel's description relies highly on the narrator while Troy's depiction is revealed through Bathsheba's maid, Liddy. The commentary given after Troy's depiction generalizes female gender in a negatively tinged way to rationalize Bathsheba's future actions. Through Sergeant Troy's characterization, Hardy premeditates Bathsheba's fall and Gabriel's rise.

¹²⁶ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 205.

After Bathsheba and Troy meet, the narrator constructs Troy in such an unlovable way that their marriage hints Bathsheba's fallacy: "He was moderately truthful towards men, but to women lied like a Cretan - a system of ethics above all others calculated to win popularity at the first flush of admission into lively society; and the possibility of the favour gained being transitory had reference only to the future".¹²⁷ As G. I. Lewis summarizes: "He seems to 'act in his own particular way', but he uses Fanny Robin to 'satisfy' his 'appetites'. In addition, Troy is deceptive, speaking the truth to men, but lying 'like a Cretan' to women. Moreover, he can 'speak of love and think of dinner', his attitude towards women being to treat them unfairly"¹²⁸, Troy's previous descriptions through omniscient narrator are painted to appear antagonistic to Gabriel. Therefore, only by making Bathsheba full of faults can the narrator succeed in bringing them together. Foreshadowing Bathsheba's future fall, the narrator informs of her fallacy after her encounter with Troy. Following a few events that bring the two together, Bathsheba is described as in love with Troy; however, the narration can be discovered to discourage Bathsheba and other women to fall in love with such a man as Troy:

Bathsheba **loved Troy** in the way that **only self-reliant women** love when they **abandon their self-reliance**. When a **strong woman recklessly throws away** her **strength** she is **worse than a weak woman** who has never had any strength to throw away. One source of **her inadequacy** is the **novelty of the occasion**. She has **never had practice** in making the best of such a condition. **Weakness is doubly weak** by being new.¹²⁹

It can be shown that this explanation holds more than the narrator's disapproving criticism of Bathsheba's love in a detailed analysis. By providing insights of Troy's dishonourable character, the narrator criticizes Bathsheba's love consequently. However, the first sentence structure in above-paragraph is suggestive of blaming Bathsheba's womanhood. She is generalized into the group of women who throw away their self-reliance to love a man like Troy. Implying that reliant women are already

¹²⁷ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.207.

¹²⁸ Lewis, G.I. "Thomas Hardy: Hostile To 'Individualists'?" *The Hardy Society Journal* 4, no. 2 (2008): 49–52. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45274631>. p. 51.

¹²⁹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.232.

weak and have no difficulty in loving men, the narrator explains Bathsheba's love for unlovable Troy through her loss of self-control. By doing so, he manages to rob Bathsheba of her initial independency which makes her 'doubly weak' in the face of following events of the plot. Her weakness is shown as a culmination of two aspects, firstly her having no experience in love, secondly her being a self-reliant woman and having no other choice than loving the antagonist. As a result, the plot unfolds Gabriel's warning of Bathsheba about Troy as such: "His being higher in learning and birth than the ruck o' soldiers is anything but a proof of his worth. It show's **his course** to be **down'ard**"¹³⁰. Following Gabriel's warnings, the plot ensures Bathsheba's fall by disclosing that she already got married to Sergeant Troy secretly.¹³¹ Their marriage becomes known by everybody after Sergeant Troy moved into Bathsheba's farm and the following events defame Bathsheba as foreshadowed previously by both the narrator and Gabriel.

Gabriel's previous warnings are gratified by Troy's derelict acts after Bathsheba and Troy's marriage. A few months-in Bathsheba and Sergeant Troy's out-of-sight marriage, the narration fulfils Gabriel's overshadowed superiority in his farming skills with the implication of Troy's unfitness in the same regard. In Chapter XXXVI, "Wealth in Jeopardy – The Revel"¹³², Gabriel stands out to be the hero of the farm by sensing the rain is about to come and wants to warn Troy while Troy enjoys his harvest dance with everybody in the farm: "'Will you tell him, then,' said Gabriel, 'that I only stepped ath'art to say that a **heavy rain** is sure to **fall soon**, and that **something should be done** to protect the ricks?' 'Mr. Troy says it will not rain,' returned the messenger, 'and he **cannot** stop to **talk** to you about **such fidgets**.'" ¹³³ As if to prove Gabriel's previous revelation about Troy's "downward course"¹³⁰, the heavy storm and rain synchronize, and Troy's self-righteousness collides with Gabriel's advanced farming skills. He calculates how much worth of wheat and barley would be lost during the storm with a conclusion of his immediate interference:

¹³⁰ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 236.

¹³¹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 288.

¹³² Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 295.

¹³³ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 297.

Seven hundred and fifty pounds in the divinest form that money can wear - that of necessary food for man and beast: **should the risk be run** of deteriorating this bulk of corn to less than half its value, **because of the instability of a woman?** “**Never, if I can prevent it!**” said Gabriel. Such was the argument that Oak set outwardly before him. **But man**, even to himself, is a **palimpsest**, having an **ostensible writing**, and another beneath the lines. It is possible that there was this **golden legend** under the utilitarian one: “I will help to **my last effort the woman I have loved** so dearly.”¹³⁴

A mindful analysis of this paragraph proves that it contains both Gabriel’s surface-thoughts and the narrator’s omniscient insight. Both are crucial in understanding its function in the plot. Firstly, Gabriel’s question regarding the risk to be caused by ‘the instability of a woman’ is pivotal. Despite Gabriel’s initial attempt to warn Sergeant Troy and Troy’s dismissal of him, Gabriel blames Bathsheba’s ‘instability’. Combining with the previous analysis regarding Bathsheba’s irrationality¹²³, she is blamed by the male protagonist because she is a woman, and she makes instable choices regarding her husband due to her womanhood. Additionally, the narrator specifically reads between the lines of Gabriel’s thoughts to conclude his heroic love. Generalizing this act to man, Gabriel is glorified in his act of showing his maximum effort for his love. His love overflows in heroic aspect so that his love comes of his manhood. Because Gabriel’s thoughts imply harsh criticism regarding Bathsheba’s choices, the narrator intrudes to highlight Gabriel’s “golden legend”¹³⁴ character. Gabriel’s love is underwritten not to be caused by Bathsheba’s womanhood, but by heroic and virtuous nature of manhood. Gabriel’s glorification will later be utilized to save Bathsheba from completely perishing from her fallacies.²⁰⁵

After Gabriel’s insights about the storm come true and his unnoticed worth is emphasized by the narrator once more, the narrative brings Bathsheba and Gabriel together during the storm night. Although Gabriel initially blamed Bathsheba for being instable and marrying an unskillful man as Sergeant Troy as explained in previous paragraph, he finds Bathsheba trying to do something to save the harvest, which negates Gabriel’s previous thoughts. However, the narration doesn’t praise Bathsheba as it does

¹³⁴ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 300-301.

Gabriel's heroic love: "In the open ground before him, as he looked over the ridge of the rick, was a dark and apparently female form. Could it be that of the **only venturesome woman** in the parish - Bathsheba? The form moved on a step: then he could see no more."¹³⁵ In these sentences, Bathsheba's brave action is ignored by the narrator; the commentary is not as elaborate as it is about Gabriel's heroic love. The appearance of Bathsheba at night during storm is functional as to bring Gabriel and Bathsheba together and their encounter results in Bathsheba's gratitude towards him. When Gabriel's calculations are juxtaposed with his meeting with Bathsheba, she appears guilty of choosing an unsuitable husband. However, when she is alone, she still retains her initially independent character. The narration's conclusion of Bathsheba to be 'the only venturesome woman' signifies what she lost by marrying the antagonist. Since she acted on her own without her husband's interference at night, she is almost rewarded to witness Gabriel, a man she formerly rejected, saving her farm. It is also observable in the novel's chapter conclusion below:

"Thank you for **your devotion**, a thousand times, Gabriel! Goodnight - I know you are **doing your very best for me**." She diminished in the gloom, and vanished, and he heard the latch of the gate fall as she passed through. He worked in a reverie now, musing upon her story, and upon the **contradictoriness** of that **feminine heart** which had **caused her** to **speak more warmly** to him tonight **than** she ever had done whilst **unmarried** and **free to speak as warmly** as she chose.¹³⁶

Upon Bathsheba's recognition of Gabriel's worth, Bathsheba's contradictory character is given as the only explanation for her warmth towards Gabriel. The comparison of her married attitude to her unmarried attitude correlates with her womanhood by pointing out her 'feminine heart'. Hence, the narrator remarks the ambivalent attitudes of womanhood through Bathsheba's conversation with Gabriel. It also implies a secret love potential on Bathsheba's part for Gabriel because she is made regretful by her choice of husband. This degradation of Bathsheba's free will is observed by Rosemary Morgan below:

¹³⁵ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.306.

¹³⁶ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 312.

... Oak's sex, youth (or inexperience) and, no doubt, physical good looks, are nowhere brought to bear upon capability. Ironically, despite the disadvantages of being female, young and beautiful, Bathsheba's success as a single-woman-farmer is undone only when she takes on a male partner; that is, she marries. One way or the other her fortunes are jeopardised."¹³⁷

What Morgan clarifies is that Oak's inexperience regarding love is never brought up to be an issue while Bathsheba's choice of Troy makes her "doubly weak"¹²⁹ by being also inexperienced and most of her contradiction are reasoned by her womanhood. Moreover, her downfall starts as she gets married with Troy in secret and the storm night is only the beginning of troubles she is to face because of her marriage. The events following the storm affirms the occurrent troubles; Bathsheba is discovered to be talking to Troy about how he loses money on horse-racing: "'And you mean, Frank,' said Bathsheba, **sadly** her voice was **painfully lowered** from the **fulness and vivacity** of the **previous summer** 'that you have lost more than a hundred pounds in a month by this dreadful horse-racing? O, Frank, it is cruel; it is foolish of you to take away my money so. ...'".¹³⁸ The narration carries symbols of her fall by referring to her voice and its contrast to how full and vivid it was the previous summer. This conversation plays a role as a confrontation rather than simply depicting the scene of their marriage; because Troy's response to Bathsheba foretells the coming of Fanny Robin to disturb their marriage: "Why, Bathsheba, **you have lost** all the **pluck and sauciness you formerly had**, and upon my life if I had known what a **chicken-hearted creature** you were **under all your boldness, I'd never have** - I know what."¹³⁹ Troy's disapproval of Bathsheba's lost courage and 'sauciness' is conveyed as legitimate criticism despite Troy's being the cause of Bathsheba's change. The narration doesn't include as much commentary on Troy's negative aspects because it was done before Bathsheba married him by means of both narrator and Gabriel. All the reminders regarding Troy are rendered to both the reader and Bathsheba before they got married. Therefore, after the marriage, the negative aspects no longer belong to Troy, they have become Bathsheba's.

¹³⁷ Morgan, Rosemarie. "Subverting Orthodoxy: Far From the Madding Crowd." *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, 2006, pp. 21-40. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203193365>. p. 30-31.

¹³⁸ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.319.

¹³⁹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.320.

Troy's confession of his regret to have married Bathsheba is followed by Fanny's inclusion in the plot. She appears first as a passenger on the road asking for help from them¹⁴⁰, and then she appears as Troy's secret possession of a lock of her blonde hair¹⁴¹. After Bathsheba's fight with Troy regarding their repentance to be married, Bathsheba learns about Fanny's death without knowing that the hair Troy kept belonged to her. The unfolding of events leaves no opportunity for Bathsheba to succeed; everything in her life falls apart. Fatality brought up by her choice of husband is sequenced in the events of the storm, the horse-racing, Troy's regret, Fanny's appearance and her death respectively. Not in any of these events is Bathsheba given an independent voice or a supportive commentary; neither the narration is neutral. Rather, she is left alone to face the consequences of her choice.

The news of Fanny's death and Bathsheba's realization of her husband's affair with her follow the plot next. Until her coffin appears, Fanny is never mentioned to be bearing a child even when Bathsheba and Troy come across her on the road¹³⁹, but Gabriel's dignity is emphasized through his "last attempt to save Bathsheba from ... immediate anguish, [as] he looked again ... at the chalk writing upon the coffin-lid. The scrawl was this simple one, 'Fanny Robin and child.' Gabriel took his handkerchief and carefully rubbed out the two latter words, leaving visible the inscription 'Fanny Robin' only".¹⁴² Hence, it is revealed that Fanny died while giving birth to Troy's stillborn child and Gabriel had attempted to erase the evidence of Troy's infidelity and lessen Bathsheba's pain. At the same time, the narrative unfolds Bathsheba's concerned inquiries regarding Fanny which would result in Bathsheba's realization of Troy and Fanny's relationship. As she becomes suspicious of Fanny being Troy's old lover, she wants to see if Fanny had the same colour of hair that Troy had kept all this time. Her worries are finalized with her praise for Gabriel:

She suddenly felt a longing desire to speak to **some one stronger** than herself, and so **get strength** to **sustain her** surmised position with **dignity** and her **lurking doubts** with **stoicism**. Where could she find **such a friend**? nowhere in

¹⁴⁰ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.321.

¹⁴¹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.333.

¹⁴² Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 356.

the house. She was by far **the coolest of the women** under her roof. **Patience and suspension of judgement** for a few hours were what **she wanted to learn**, and **there was nobody** to teach her. Might she but **go to Gabriel Oak!** - but that could not be. What **a way** Oak had, she thought, **of enduring things**.¹⁴³

The narration is open to question by juxtaposing Gabriel's attempt to cover Troy's impregnation and making Bathsheba have doubts regarding Fanny. It can be argued that Gabriel's attempt is deliberately narrated to show his sincerity and dignity towards Bathsheba and not to lessen her suffering. Because Bathsheba has suspicions of Troy herself and eventually learns about Fanny's baby by seeing the inside of Fanny's coffin¹⁴⁴, Gabriel's deed cannot function properly as he intended. Additionally, Bathsheba's loneliness in her suspicion makes her long for Gabriel's counselling in above-paragraph. The narration of her thoughts follows a path starting her acknowledgement as someone weak, needing a stronger company to support her and ending in her acknowledging Gabriel's 'way of enduring things'. While the narration doesn't provide Bathsheba any guidance previously during her troubles with Troy, she needs Gabriel's comforting teaching in Troy's absence because she needs 'patience and suspension of judgement'. Even though the plot is centred around Bathsheba's failed marriage with Troy and Fanny's tragedy in this chapter, Gabriel's involvement in the process signifies Bathsheba's incompleteness and achievement of Gabriel's reclaiming his protagonist role.

For Gabriel to become Bathsheba's husband, the narration follows a pattern of character deletion. As Fanny's death and Troy's impregnation of her is uncovered¹⁴⁴, the deletion of character involves both Bathsheba and Troy. Initially, the conflict that kept Gabriel and Bathsheba was the difference of their social class and Bathsheba's independence. After her marital status changes, the conflict is doubled by a rival for Gabriel even though the narrator never characterized Sergeant Troy truly as a rival to Gabriel. Still, Troy's character development serves to his deletion eventually. Adjustment regarding Bathsheba's fall has started with her secret marriage with Troy, and it is to change completely after her annihilation by Troy. The narrator resolves the

¹⁴³ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 360.

¹⁴⁴ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 363.

romance conflict of the plot after Fanny's death. As it can be analysed by Troy's kisses of dead Fanny and their stillborn child¹⁴⁵, Bathsheba witnesses a big loss by the unfolding events:

Bathsheba sprang **towards him**. All the **strong feelings** which had been **scattered** over **her existence** since she knew what feeling was, **seemed gathered together** into **one pulsation** now. The **revulsion** from her indignant mood a little earlier ... was **violent** and **entire**. All that **was forgotten** in the **simple and still strong attachment of wife to husband**. She had **sighed for her self-completeness then**, and **now** she **cried** aloud **against the severance of the union she had deplored**. She flung her arms round Troy's neck, **exclaiming wildly from the deepest deep of her heart** – "Don't-don't kiss them! O, Frank, **I can't bear it—I can't! I love you better** than she did: **kiss me** too, Frank - kiss me! You will, Frank, kiss me too!"¹⁴⁵

Upon Troy's appearance and his display of affection over a dead female and child, Bathsheba almost becomes a painting which is being robbed of its colour, a wife whose love is not enough for her husband and a female whose womanhood is not enough to bear her husband's child. The narrator specifically mentions her existence becoming whole at the sight of her husband. Her anger regarding Troy's depraved past vanishes as a response to her attachment to him as a wife. Troy's connection to Fanny clearly signifies the ideal bond between a wife and a husband to make it obvious that it is what Bathsheba lacks. However, her existence is dependent on this bond even though their marriage has never been mentioned having any importance previously. Craving the marital bond after the display of husband's misled affection is unlike any of Bathsheba's characteristics. Nevertheless, it is necessary for character deletion. It can be argued that Bathsheba's exclaiming her love for Troy is constructed to be shattered by Troy's disownment as follows:

"This woman is more to me, dead as she is, than ever you were, or are, or can be. If Satan had not tempted me with that face of yours, and those cursed coquetries, I should have married her. ..." He turned **to Fanny** then. "But never mind, darling," he said; **"in the sight of Heaven you are my very, very wife!"**

¹⁴⁵ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.366-367

... “If she’s-that, - **what - am I?**” she [Bathsheba] added, as a **continuation of the same cry**, and **sobbing pitifully** ... “You are **nothing to me-nothing**,” said Troy, heartlessly. “A ceremony before a priest **doesn’t make a marriage. I am not morally yours.**” A **vehement impulse to flee** from him, to **run from this place, hide, and escape** his words **at any price, not stopping short of death itself, mastered Bathsheba** now.¹⁴⁶

The narration in this paragraph erases Bathsheba’s status as a wife through Troy’s words to the point where she can never achieve to be a wife ever. Her physical attributions and her actions perceived as ‘coqueties’ are diverted to Satan and she is deemed invalid as a wife. Although Troy is revealed to be unfaithful as a husband, it is Bathsheba who is framed with sorrow and grief due to Troy’s rejection of her. Moreover, Fanny’s dead child carries the implication that Bathsheba is rejected because of her lack of fertility. As a result of the culmination of her lacking, Bathsheba is driven to run, hide and escape. Through Troy’s actions and words, the narration deletes Bathsheba’s wifhood along with her characteristics. The narration of the events signifies the deletion of Bathsheba’s marital role and her downfall. This deletion is also represented in the next chapter by these lines: “‘Oh, Liddy!’ she said, or **attempted to say**; but the words had only been framed by her lips; there came no sound. **She had lost her voice** by exposure to the clogged atmosphere all these hours of night.”¹⁴⁷ Considering Bathsheba’s character development throughout the novel, it can be argued that her loss of voice signifies the end of her independence as a female since she can no longer stand up for herself. This signification can be regarded as the annihilation of her distinct characteristics.

Since Troy’s disownment of his marriage occurs privately between him and Bathsheba, the plot construes the events for the marriage to end in the eyes of society as well. After their final meeting in front of dead Fanny and her child, Troy leaves Bathsheba and is believed to have drown in the sea as the evidence of his clothes suggest¹⁴⁸. However, he is not dead, his disappearance solely serves Mr. Boldwood an opportunity to approach Bathsheba again. Meantime, Bathsheba starts living on her own

¹⁴⁶ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 367-368.

¹⁴⁷ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 372.

¹⁴⁸ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 398.

both as a widow and a wife who can't give up hope on her husband's life.¹⁴⁹ Simultaneously, Gabriel's social status begins to change and he advances his social status during Troy's absence. As Gabriel starts working for Boldwood too, the narrator depicts his newfound prospering life as follows:

It was eventually **known** that **Gabriel**, though **paid a fixed wage** by Bathsheba ..., had made an engagement with Boldwood by which Oak was to **receive a share** of the receipts a small share certainly, yet it was **money of a higher quality** than mere wages, and **capable of expansion** in a way that wages were not. Some were beginning to consider **Oak a "near" man**, for though **his condition** had thus far **improved**, he **lived in no better style than before**¹⁵⁰

Gabriel's upward move in the social ladder happens after Troy disappears, which implies that he is being prepared for his husband role at the end of the novel. However, Gabriel doesn't appear as the sole suitor of the widow. Boldwood becomes once more prominent to marry Bathsheba. Since Gabriel and Boldwood can't exist in the plot to have Bathsheba, Boldwood's inclusion to the plot contributes the events Troy's undoubted death¹⁵¹. The narrator uses the method of character deletion to eliminate Boldwood and the marital bond between Bathsheba and Troy definitely. As Boldwood arranges a party to propose to Bathsheba, Troy appears there as well, causing Boldwood to feel grave infuriation towards him. Boldwood shoots Troy in front of public, hence, he and Troy exit the plot leaving Bathsheba a true widow.¹⁵² Considering the beginning of the novel, Gabriel's protagonist role is reconstructed through these events of the plot. Linda Shires comments upon the topic as follows:

One can argue, in fact, that for Oak to regain power and re-establish his "proper" gender role, the masculinities of Troy and Boldwood must do each other in. Oak can become empowered only through his relation to them (his difference from them) and theirs to each other. He does not become empowered merely by

¹⁴⁹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p.393-435.

¹⁵⁰ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 404.

¹⁵¹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 461.

¹⁵² Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 448-461.

sexual opposition through his relation to Bathsheba or merely by comparability to other men who traffic in women, but also by difference from other men.¹⁵³

Shires' analysis overlays Gabriel's existence throughout the novel. After Bathsheba's rejection of Gabriel's proposal, the conflict dividing them is caused by their social status firstly. Boldwood and Troy are never characterized to overshadow Gabriel's character, though their rivalry constituted further conflicts of the plot. Until Troy's death, Gabriel remained a background character who appears to help Bathsheba in hard times. His characteristics and manners are constructed to differ from Boldwood and Troy, which contributed to the progression of the plot by his performance as Bathsheba's male confidante. Her independent choices come undone to clear the path for Gabriel. Similarly, Boldwood negates both Gabriel's antagonist Troy and himself by killing Troy. While the plot concludes the end of Bathsheba and Troy's relationship, it is also important to note that Bathsheba now exists as a protagonist whose most distinct characteristics are vapoured into the events caused by her marriage. The pattern of protagonist's rightful marriage is sustained throughout the plot by Hardy. Also, Shires comments on the narration's marriage conclusion as follows:

While *Far from the Madding Crowd* propels its story forward through postponement (organizing a field of commutable and plural meanings through misunderstandings, chance connections, and so forth, which all delay closure), it also structures events paradigmatically to reach that point of closure where all story movement ceases: Gabriel and Bathsheba finally marry.¹⁵⁴

Shires' analysis clearly demonstrates that the conflicting elements of the plot suspend the main characters' union and they contribute to the relationship of Bathsheba and Gabriel. However, it can be argued that the resolution of the conflicts doesn't treat Gabriel and Bathsheba in the same way. While Bathsheba's life shatters to mere fragments, Gabriel remains unaffected, and his social status gets better and better. Similarly, Rosemary Jann claims that the plot is structured to progress Gabriel's social status as follows:

¹⁵³ Shires, Linda M. "Narrative, Gender, and Power in 'Far from the Madding Crowd.'" *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 24, no. 2 (1991): 162–77. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1345561>. p. 166.

¹⁵⁴ Shires. p. 165.

Gabriel Oak is the protagonist in flux here, and as the novel opens, he has moved from being first shepherd, then bailiff, to becoming “farmer Oak” with the purchase on credit of his own flock of sheep. Their loss demotes him to shepherd again, although his own skills and Boldwood’s favor have already made him a tenant farmer before his marriage to the genteel Bathsheba assures his social fate at the novel’s end. The appropriateness of his eventual restoration to a higher class is prepared for by his alignment with implicitly genteel standards of sensibility, a sensibility thrown into greater relief by the contrasting behavior of his rustic fellows.¹⁵⁵

The connection between Jann and Shires’ analysis demonstrates that Hardy’s narration structures Gabriel’s difference from other male characters as the prominent element of the novel. The narration is interwoven with events to depict Gabriel’s distinguished character and he is succeeded to be the husband who owns a farm at the end. The signification of Gabriel’s character is constructed through complex progression of the plot. Meanwhile, Bathsheba’s character undergoes a self-sacrificing alteration. Bathsheba’s change is manifest in these lines: “None of the old colour had as yet come to her cheek, and its absolute **paleness** was heightened by the **jet black** of her gown, till it appeared preternatural.”¹⁵⁶ The opposition of pale and jet black signifies both Bathsheba’s loss of colour and her loss of distinct characteristics. It can be argued that Bathsheba’s initial character definition is constructed to change from independent to dependent. Her presence was initially described through the pink of her cheek and the crimson of her jacket. Eventually, her physical description signifies shades of black and white. Therefore, it can be argued that Hardy constructs a female character lessened to her marital role to pave the way for the succession of his male protagonist. Throughout the novel, Bathsheba can be seen to discover the catastrophes of her choices while acknowledging Gabriel’s superiority in terms of intellectual thought. Her irrationality is given much emphasis to establish a ground for the narrative events leading Gabriel’s succession to make a good husband. Rogers concludes:

¹⁵⁵ Jann, p.419.

¹⁵⁶ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 473.

In short, these novels show the tenacity of sexist assumptions even in so humane and enlightened a man as Hardy. Rejecting the sexual mores of his patriarchal society, preferring unconventional women to the passive Victorian ideal, consciously sympathizing with women, Hardy still could not quite see them as human beings like himself. His primary sympathy remains focused on the sensitive rational man. Only men among Hardy's characters can rise to an altruism that extends beyond their family; only men can combine stability and moral soundness with the ability to think. To be rational - which means, to be fully human - a woman must rise above her sex, and in this she does not often succeed.¹⁵⁷

What Rogers observes about Hardy's novels is applicable to Bathsheba and Gabriel. Even though Bathsheba appears as a distinct female character, she cannot maintain her independency and vivacity in a plot surrounded by male suitors. In the meantime, Gabriel thrives as the protagonist of the novel despite the unfortunate events he experiences. Gabriel appears as the rational human while Bathsheba still suffers from irrationality due to her womanhood.

Analysing Hardy's narrative progression throughout the novel, it can be argued that the plot serves mainly to the rise of Gabriel as the rightful man. Bathsheba's role as the female protagonist is constructed through events that signify her incompleteness due to her womanhood. Her failed secret marriage causes her to lose her independent character and her initial colourful characteristics eventually diminishes to fit into a marriage that is approved by society. Gabriel remains as the pertinent protagonist of the novel who climbs the social ladder by marrying a strong female figure who proved her dependency on him. In conclusion, the signification of Bathsheba and Gabriel carries implications of womanhood's lack of rationality and capability which are achieved through marriage to a rational man.

3.2.3 Dualities and Their Function in *Far from the Madding Crowd*

The exploration of dualities in *FFMC* is crucial to illustrate that how dual elements intricately construct and enrich the overall narrative significance, which

¹⁵⁷ Rogers. p. 257-258.

contributes to the analysis of meaning structure. The narrative style practiced by Thomas Hardy has its specificities that shape dualities very intricately.

The undertone of *FFMC* can be analysed hidden in its exposition which influences the plot and character significance throughout the novel. The first chapter is structured to consist of the main characters, the foreshadows of conflicts, and the dualities. J. H. Miller's analysis of Hardy's approach as an observer to the plot is explained by his sentences: "His [Hardy's] self-awareness and that of his characters are always inextricably involved in their awareness of the world. Their minds are turned habitually outward."¹⁵⁸ This Hardyan quality is very dominant in the first chapter of *FFMC*. Gabriel Oak, watching Bathsheba Everdene's wagon entering his rural community's land¹⁵⁹, symbolizes the mind turned outward by the protagonist. The dominance attributed to this outward gaze is the determinant of the dualities for Hardy. As Oak watches, Hardy watches through the eyes of his fictional male character. The object of the gazer, Bathsheba becomes the opposite of this duality immediately because of Gabriel's gaze. She is narrated through the protagonist's gaze which precludes her objective inclusion into the plot. This means that Bathsheba is included in the plot through Gabriel's subjective gaze; it affects her depiction greatly since a mere encounter would have saved her from Gabriel's view of her as an outsider. By examining the duality of the observer and the observed, the novel will be analysed to uncover the meaning structure of *FFMC* and its influence on the heroine.

The narrator uses the following sentence at the beginning of the second paragraph: "His Christian name was Gabriel, and on working days he was a young man of sound judgement, easy motions, proper dress, and general good character."¹⁶⁰, which shapes the protagonist figure regardless of any circumstances of plot progression. Gabriel is constructed through the words of narrator without his interference in any events of the plot. The narration goes on building Gabriel by giving information about his family and his routines of the day which is generalized to all men:

¹⁵⁸ Miller, J. Hillis. "The Refusal of Involvement." Kindle. In *Distance and Desire*, 1–29. The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970. p. 1.

¹⁵⁹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 13.

¹⁶⁰ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 11.

But there is a way some men have, rural and urban alike, for which the mind is more responsible than flesh and sinew: it is a way of curtailing their dimensions by their manner of showing them. And from a quiet modesty that would have become a vestal, which seemed continually to impress upon him that he had no great claim on the world's room, Oak walked unassumingly and with a faintly perceptible bend, yet distinct from a bowing of the shoulders.¹⁵⁹

As illustrated in above-paragraph, the depiction of Gabriel Oak is formed positively which associates his identity with the intellectual mind and his characteristics are being emphasized more than his physical figure. The generalization of Gabriel's dominant intellect and noteworthy, modest character shows that Gabriel is the representative of the instinctive goodness in men. He stands for the men who are inherently like him. The narrator prioritises Gabriel's characteristics by introducing him in such positive connotations very early in the novel. Therefore, it can be argued that Gabriel's characteristics become the standard, the plot explores his rivals such as Mr. Boldwood¹⁶¹ and Sergeant Troy¹⁶² to be different from him. Hence, his characteristics overrun his antagonistic rivals in the plot. Based on the description of him, it is possible to state that Gabriel constitutes the positive face of the novel's duality. In the plot, Gabriel's lifestyle and character is challenged to prove his role as a protagonist through encounters with other characters and conflicts that constitute the negative face of the duality. In the first chapter, one of these encounters is when Bathsheba is introduced as "a woman, young and attractive".¹⁶³ The difference between Gabriel and Bathsheba initially relies on her womanhood, her age and her beauty. Also, she is the gazed object while Gabriel is the gazer. Through this action of espial, Bathsheba is shaped through the narrator's perception of the scene. Harvey makes a crucial remark on Bathsheba's introduction as follows:

Initially, she is presented from the point of view of Gabriel Oak, who is observing her as she sits on a waggon, narcissistically regarding her own extraordinary beauty in a small looking glass, conjecturally dreaming of triumphs over men. She uses her sexuality as a form of defense and control.

¹⁶¹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 97.

¹⁶² Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 200.

¹⁶³ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 13-14.

Hardy describes her as a woman whose independence of men is necessary to her sense of identity, and who regards marriage as literally a degrading sacrifice of self.¹⁶⁴

Considering Hardy's characterization of the female protagonist, it can be observed in Harvey's analysis that Gabriel's individual existence is shadowed and intrigued by Bathsheba's introduction. Her description of a narcissist woman prejudices the possible future encounters of Bathsheba and Gabriel. While the narrator's omniscient viewpoint is found to connote Gabriel's character positively, Bathsheba's unconscious act of self-love opposes Gabriel's positive naturality. Concentrating the exposition of the novel on these two characters, it can be argued that Hardy constructs the initial duality over Gabriel and the woman. The positive attributions of Gabriel collide with the woman's description as faulty because of her vanity.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, the first established duality of the novel is between the representative of all men, Gabriel, and representative of vanity, the woman.

It is exemplified throughout the novel that the woman is an ornament for Gabriel's vision as well as his imagination, which suggests a kind of passive subduing. In the second chapter, Gabriel watches through the roof of a shed he just discovered to find Bathsheba's image entertaining his imagination as can be seen below:

Oak, ... became more curious to observe her features, but this prospect being denied him by the hooding effect of the cloak, and by his aerial position, he felt himself drawing upon his fancy for their details. In making even horizontal and clear inspections we colour and mould according to the wants within us whatever our eyes bring in. Had Gabriel been able from the first to get a distinct view of her countenance, his estimate of it as very handsome or slightly so would have been as his soul required a divinity at the moment or was ready supplied with one. Having for some time known the want of a satisfactory form to fill an increasing void within him, his position moreover affording the widest scope for his fancy, he painted her a beauty.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Harvey, p. 62.

¹⁶⁵ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 17.

¹⁶⁶ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 26.

In this paragraph, the godlike ability Gabriel uses to observe his surroundings is mentioned along with his discovery of his restricted vision of a human. Here, Gabriel imagines the parts of the woman he observes as he fancies. His imagination is rewarded to reveal that he was observing Bathsheba, which constitutes a desire to fulfil for the protagonist. Suddenly, Gabriel becomes a character who is drawn after the object of his desire as Bathsheba's characteristics are still unknown to him. The implication of his desire compounds enough interest in Gabriel to wilfully go after the woman who represents vanity for him. By this role, he is painted as a prominent figure whose attempts to acquire the woman is justified. His character is given the unearthly right to follow the object that is so distinct from him. The tension brought up by his desire is amplified when Bathsheba is discovered on horseback by Gabriel, allowing his curiosity to build up more: "... she seemed to imply that the desirability of her existence could not be questioned; and this rather saucy assumption failed in being offensive because a beholder felt it to be, upon the whole, true."¹⁶⁷ The narrator's choice of word as 'offensive' upon acknowledging her desirability can be regarded as Gabriel's first need to address. Gabriel's acknowledgement of the desire to obtain Bathsheba is justified through the narrator's commentaries. The initial picture of Gabriel was perfectly whole, suggesting he was complete in every way, both manly and characteristically. His inquisition of the woman figure causes him to have strong emotions towards her, which he would normally find offensive. However, the truth in her desirability defies his completeness; her existence intrudes his by exposing a desirable woman figure. The desire can be argued to cause a recognition of a need for Gabriel, which constitutes his duality. Once whole, his identity becomes fragmented to imply the need to acquire a woman which fixates Gabriel's manhood and the woman at opposite ends of the duality: the male and the female.

Bathsheba's characteristics highly rely on her physical descriptions by Gabriel initially and her womanly appearance is entangled with Gabriel's gaze. Arriving in a wagon, she is a stranger who is to be acquainted. Her acquaintance doesn't happen on her own account, as mentioned in the novel: "For as without law, there is no sin, without eyes there is no indecorum; and she appeared to feel that Gabriel's espial had made her

¹⁶⁷ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 29.

an indecorous woman without her own connivance”.¹⁶⁸ The narration here shows that Bathsheba’s character is firstly brought to life by Gabriel’s eyes. Without his espial, she doesn’t appear present in the text. Therefore, it can be argued that Gabriel’s gaze makes Bathsheba’s existence possible. Her character is completely reliant on Gabriel’s observation; hence, she is a figure in Gabriel’s literary existence. When Bathsheba saves Gabriel from suffocating in his hut, their conversation reveals a deeper meaning of the narrative as follows:

“It was not exactly the fault of the hut,” she observed in a tone which showed her to be that novelty among women – one who finished a thought before beginning the sentence which was to convey it. “You should, I think, have considered, and not have been so foolish as to leave the slides closed.” ... He wished she knew his impressions; but he would as soon have thought of carrying an odour in a net as of attempting to convey the intangibilities of his feeling in the coarse meshes of language. So he remained silent.¹⁶⁹

In this scene, as Bathsheba turns into an independent character by speaking differently than other women and by criticising Gabriel’s ‘foolish’ action out loud. Her distinctiveness is compared to an incapturable scent for Gabriel, his inability to capture what she caused him to feel in words makes him recognize Bathsheba as a separate individual. Previously, Bathsheba existed as a figure belonging to the group of other women which created the duality for Gabriel. However, her speech and selfless act to save Gabriel proves that her characteristics may be different to him. Therefore, he proceeds to propose marriage to which Bathsheba replies: “I want somebody to tame me; I am too independent; and you would never be able to, I know”.¹⁷⁰ Bathsheba’s declaration of independence overbalances Gabriel’s presence in the text because his desire to obtain her is deemed unreachable. The conflict arising from Bathsheba’s rejection causes both ends of the duality to share equal power. Even though Gabriel dominated both his surroundings and the woman, she manages to disengage herself from his narrative and becomes his counterbalance. Her rejection carries elements of

¹⁶⁸ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 32.

¹⁶⁹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 33-34.

¹⁷⁰ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 46.

Hardy's modern woman as her actions and presence appear unpredictable, which also foreshadows her future farm-ownership.

The following events cause the power to shift more dramatically, leaving Gabriel a poor shepherd¹⁷¹ and Bathsheba a farmer due to her uncle's death¹⁷². Bathsheba's unpredictable character is extended beyond Gabriel's narrative now after she becomes a farm-owner:

"A woman-farmer?"

"Ay, 'a b'lieve, and a rich one too!" said a bystander. "Lately 'a come here from a distance. Took on her uncle's farm, who died suddenly. Used to measure his money in half-pint cups. They say now that she've business in every bank in Casterbridge, and thinks no more of playing pitch-and-toss sovereign than you and I do pitch-halfpenny – not a bit in the world, shepherd."¹⁷²

Gabriel's search for a job as a shepherd coincides with Bathsheba's accession despite her young-age and gender, and it develops the conflict of social class between man and woman in the plot. Gabriel's previous encounter with Bathsheba is now overshadowed by her social status which causes a polarity between the two. Because of Bathsheba's social rise and Gabriel's downfall, their previous conversation about getting married becomes obsolete. The narrator points out their societal distance saying: "Oak walked on to the village, still astonished at the reencounter with Bathsheba, glad of his nearness to her, and perplexed at the rapidity with which the unpracticed girl of Norcombe had developed into the supervising and cool woman here. But some women only require an emergency to make them fit for one."¹⁷³ The narrator's generalized commentary about women implies Bathsheba's unfit character for her social rising. It is made clear by the narrator that women like Bathsheba may experience a quick social rise after an emergency. After Bathsheba's inheritance, Gabriel's initial dominance is replaced with Bathsheba's role as a rich employer and this imbalance constructs the main conflict of the novel. The power shift between Gabriel and Bathsheba creates a deadlock for Gabriel; his characteristic superiority becomes overshadowed by societal conflicts.

¹⁷¹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 52.

¹⁷² Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 65.

¹⁷³ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 67.

However, it can be argued that Hardy creates this imbalance between his male and female protagonists only to unbind it by causing Bathsheba to experience a set of unfortunate incidents. This pattern of unbinding is explained by Harvey below:

The even-tenored life of the rural community is disturbed by the arrival of a woman farmer in Bathsheba, who has inherited her uncle's farm, and who is placed in a traditionally masculine role. This is challenged by the dramatic appearance of Frank Troy, a figure from the world of ballad; a dashing sergeant of cavalry, of good family and education, who is also a mercurial, sexually predatory scapegrace. ... His rootless modernity is also a disruptive element in Weatherbury. He has no feeling of responsibility to the farming community. Stupefied by drink after the harvest supper, he is oblivious to the vulnerability of the ricks to the coming storm. He also lacks the countryman's sense of continuity and time (symbolically he offers his watch to Bathsheba), and has no feeling either for the rhythms of nature. One of Troy's functions in the narrative is to upset the ordered pattern of rural life.¹⁷⁴

Bathsheba's marriage with Sergeant Troy is crucial to explore her character development, because it appears wrong in the eyes of society. After Bathsheba becomes a farmer, the plot concludes her choices to imply her 'unpracticed' nature as mentioned in the narrative before.¹⁷³ Upon the arrival of Sergeant Troy, who is described as an untrustworthy man, Bathsheba's power over both her life and her farm starts to decrease. As described in the plot, Troy "was moderately truthful towards men, but to women lied like a Cretan ..."¹⁷⁵. His symbolic character is conveyed in the novel omnisciently, which implicitly questions Bathsheba's love towards him. Additionally, Bathsheba's interest in Troy is justified through her womanhood which lacks an 'understanding' as follows:

Bathsheba, though she had too much understanding to be entirely governed by her womanliness, had too much womanliness to use her understanding to the best advantage. Perhaps in no minor point does woman astonish her helpmate more than in the strange power she possesses of believing cajoleries that she

¹⁷⁴ Harvey, p. 61-62.

¹⁷⁵ Hardy, *FFMC*, p. 207.

knows to be false-except, indeed, in that of being utterly sceptical on strictures that she knows to be true.¹⁷⁶

By these sentences, the narrator proposes that Bathsheba's powerful characteristics are clouded by her womanhood. Her 'understanding' and 'womanliness' placed on opposite ends, proves undeniably that her womanhood is held responsible for her questionable behaviour. Not only the narrator criticises Bathsheba for her fault in being governed by her womanhood, but Bathsheba's acceptance of Troy is also questioned by Gabriel: "I wish you had never met that young Sergeant Troy, miss"¹⁷⁷. The fact that Gabriel works for Bathsheba and disapproves of her choices clearly hints her clouded rationality, and it foreshadows the catastrophes Troy brings. Since the beginning of the novel, Gabriel is presented as the honourable, hardworking man who lost his fortune. His supervision for Bathsheba is symbolic in foreshadowing that bad fortune will follow her. Gabriel's rational dominance can be seen in this paragraph:

You know, mistress, that I love you, and shall love you always. I only mention this to bring to your mind that at any rate I would wish to do you no harm: beyond that I put it aside. I have lost in the race for money and good things, and I am not such a fool as to pretend to 'ee now I am poor, and you have got altogether above me. But Bathsheba, dear mistress, this I beg you to consider - that, both to keep yourself well honoured among the workfolk, and in common generosity to an honourable man who loves you as well as I, you should be more discreet in your bearing towards this soldier.¹⁷⁸

His words addressing Bathsheba suggest that Gabriel is aware of his unfortunate fate, and he accepts Bathsheba's social superiority over him. However, his warning regarding Troy narrated in a pressing tone; he also implies that Bathsheba is not superior to him regarding relationships. He also reminds Bathsheba of 'the workfolk' implying that she has responsibilities towards the community. For Bathsheba to maintain her 'honour' in society, she is advised to stay away from Troy. The conflict that is constructed between Bathsheba and her love for the antagonist Sergeant Troy is narrated through Gabriel's

¹⁷⁶ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 232.

¹⁷⁷ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 236.

¹⁷⁸ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 238.

warnings and the omniscient narrator. Their insights are parallel to suggest that Bathsheba's life is about to go wrong once she chooses Sergeant Troy. In the face of Gabriel's intrusion, Bathsheba's independency prevailed in these words: "... You shall go, sir – your lecturing I will not hear! I am mistress here".¹⁷⁹ Moreover, Bathsheba's acceptance of loving Troy also hints that she isn't rational as narrated in these words:

"He is not bad at all... My poor life and heart, how weak I am!" she moaned, in a relaxed, desultory way, heedless of Liddy's presence. "Oh, how I wish I had never seen him! Loving is misery for women always. I shall never forgive God for making me a woman, and dearly am I beginning to pay for the honour of owning a pretty face."¹⁸⁰

By making Bathsheba's previously uncontrollable individuality become weak in relation to a disliked man, Hardy creates a dilemma for Bathsheba. Her once established status is challenged in relation to her love for Troy. When Gabriel's pursuit of her love is taken into consideration, Bathsheba's love is conditioned to be fruitful in case she prefers a socially accepted man as a husband. However, her love for Sergeant Troy is criticised negatively among society, which results in a crisis. Harvey analysed Bathsheba's character development as follows:

An intelligent, capable woman, she almost ruins her life by her sexual responses to the men who pursue her. She seems to fear the moral power bestowed on Oak by virtue of his critical observation of her; ... but she feels sinful in the sexual abandon of her surrender to Troy. Yet in this relationship she succumbs to her fundamental desire to have her independent spirit tamed in a way that she knows Oak could never do.¹⁸¹

As Harvey clarifies masterfully, Bathsheba appeared as someone too individualistic when she first met Gabriel and it caused a conflict between them. It can be argued that their status change increased the tension of this conflict, and their individualistic difference started to rely on their societal differences as well. When their courses of life are analysed, it can be claimed that Gabriel is to maintain an honest life working for Bathsheba while she explores the concept of desire inexpertly. The narrative imposes

¹⁷⁹ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 239.

¹⁸⁰ Hardy, *FFMC*. p. 244-245.

¹⁸¹ Harvey, p. 62.

Bathsheba's faulty decision-making mechanism upon her womanhood, and her faults become multiplied by her secret marriage with Troy. The omniscient narrator explores Bathsheba's secret escape to meet Troy in these words elaborately: "By this arrangement she could trot Dainty gently all the day, reach Liddy at Yalbury in the evening, and come home to Weatherbury with her whenever they chose so nobody would know she had been to Bath at all. Such was Bathsheba's scheme."¹⁸² The implication of a secrecy on Bathsheba's plans invites more criticism because her arrival at Bath results in Bathsheba and Troy's marriage. Their marriage is symbolic to be deceitful since it happens secretly and without the approval of society. While the narrator stops narrating what Bathsheba and Sergeant Troy might be doing in Bath, the plot explores incidents around Bathsheba's farm and characters rely on gossips about where Bathsheba might be and what she might be doing at that time.¹⁸³ After Bathsheba returns with Sergeant Troy, her marriage with Troy is disclosed when Mr. Boldwood tries to confront Troy and he reveals their marriage papers.¹⁸⁴ A few weeks after Troy becomes a member of the community, certain incidents arise that demonstrate the disharmony caused by Troy's irresponsibility. After one of these incidents, which is caused by his lack of consideration regarding the farm during a horrible storm one night,¹⁸⁵ Bathsheba explains her secret marriage to Gabriel without owing any reason to do so as follows:

"Well, I was alone in a strange city, and the horse was lame. And at last I didn't know what to do. I saw, when it was too late, that scandal might seize hold of me for meeting him alone in that way. But I was coming away, when he suddenly said he had that day seen a woman more beautiful than I, and that his constancy could not be counted on unless I at once became his... And I was grieved and troubled" She cleared her voice, and waited a moment, as if to gather breath. "And then, between jealousy and distraction, I married him!" she whispered with desperate impetuosity.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 266.

¹⁸³ Hardy, "In the Sun – A Harbinger" in *FFMC*. p. 267-276.

¹⁸⁴ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 288.

¹⁸⁵ Hardy, "Wealth in Jeopardy – The Revel" in *FFMC*. p. 295-304.

¹⁸⁶ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 311.

Bathsheba's confession of jealousy can be argued to be parallel with her depiction; persistent about her individuality, she makes decisions impurely. Her individuality combined with Troy's disharmonic life can be regarded as a symbol for the arrival of the modern times in the novel. Supporting this idea, Troy is narrated in such words as follows: "...Sergeant Troy, who, having bought his discharge with Bathsheba's money, was gradually transforming himself into a farmer of a spirited and very modern school."¹⁸⁷, which suggests a common attribution for both him and his wife. Bathsheba has been very individualistic in her decisions and Sergeant Troy demonstrates a modern life; hence, these two individuals can be considered as symbols of the coming of modernity. However, the incidents causing from Troy's disharmonic attributions keep on creating obstacles for Bathsheba. The desire previously having caused Bathsheba to marry Troy is no longer mentioned in the narrative after their marriage. Rather, their individual peculiarities are collided to display Troy's unfit character as a farmer. The duality caused by Bathsheba's character and her desire towards Troy resulting in their union as husband-and-wife changes form after the marriage. First, Troy is depicted as an unskillful farm owner as opposed to Gabriel who is intuitively good at farming. The farm recovers from the storm thanks to Gabriel. His preparedness in the face of a disaster is opposed to Troy's precarious drinking¹⁸⁸ at the night of the storm. As exemplified in these sentences: "To be just, the men were not greatly to blame for this painful and demoralizing termination to the evening's entertainment. Sergeant Troy had so strenuously insisted ... that drinking should be the bond of their union ..."¹⁸⁹, the narrator creates an opposition between Troy and Gabriel. This opposition is amplified with Troy's old-lover, Fanny's reappearance¹⁹⁰. While the narrative omnisciently follows Gabriel's thoughts and his loyalty to Bathsheba is proven on many occasions, Troy's past life haunts Bathsheba after she discovers Troy had a lover before her¹⁹¹. Upon the news of Troy's ties to another woman, she responds:

¹⁸⁷ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 318.

¹⁸⁸ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 298.

¹⁸⁹ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 302.

¹⁹⁰ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 320.

¹⁹¹ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 333.

Tell me the truth, Frank. I am not a fool, you know, although I am a woman, and have my woman's moments. Come! treat me fairly, ... I don't want much; bare justice- that's all! Ah! once I felt I could be content with nothing less than the highest homage from the husband I should choose. Now, anything short of cruelty will content me. Yes! the independent and spirited Bathsheba is come to this!¹⁹²

The fact that she associates foolishness with womanhood connotes the omniscient narrator since previous commentaries include such generalizations. Also, Bathsheba can be observed to distinguish herself from her womanhood in this speech. However, the acknowledgement of emotional vulnerability in relation to Troy at the end implies remorse about her choice of husband. Her emotional elevation can be found to show implications of Gabriel's rightfulness. It can be argued that the narrative is interplaying dualities of different characters and social changes. Gabriel's measureless love and commitment is opposed to Troy's deceitful nature and immoral character while Bathsheba's independent nature is opposed to her vulnerability after marriage. The narration even focuses on her lost maidenhood stating: "Until she had met Troy, Bathsheba had been proud of her position as a woman; it had been a glory to her to know that her lips had been touched by no man's on earth - that her waist had never been encircled by a lover's arm. She hated herself now."¹⁹³ Bathsheba's self-admiration in the first chapter which narrates her looking at a mirror opposes the narration of her hateful self-consciousness after Troy. Therefore, the change brought by her poor choices are compared to her single life in order to reflect Bathsheba's current desperation of losing what she previously had.

By bringing Fanny's unfortunate fate to the surface right after Bathsheba's remorse of marrying Troy, Hardy creates another duality between the two female characters, Bathsheba and Fanny. Discovering that Fanny died giving birth to Troy's stillborn child¹⁹⁴, she is devastated by her fate and the two appear alone in the scenes of

¹⁹² Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 336.

¹⁹³ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 337.

¹⁹⁴ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 363.

Bathsheba's becoming aware of her inadequacy compared to Fanny. The narrator states her mental state as follows:

Bathsheba indulged in contemplations of escape from her position by immediate death, which, thought she, though it was an inconvenient and awful way, had limits to its inconvenience and awfulness that could not be overpassed; whilst the shames of life were measureless. Yet even this scheme of extinction by death was but tamely copying her rival's method without the reasons which had glorified it in her rival's case.¹⁹⁵

The fact that she desires death after learning what her husband did ironically coincides with Fanny's current situation. Choosing Troy as a husband makes her desire death; yet her rival in loving Troy (Fanny) has already achieved that desire. Hardy's choice of the word 'rival' to describe the relationship between Bathsheba and Fanny illustrates that wifedom is a competitive field, which depicts Bathsheba as an almost heartless wife. The narrator suggests that dying on the face of love and birth is 'glorified', a state Bathsheba can never reach. Despite their shared-gender, Fanny and Bathsheba are depicted as opposites since Bathsheba is not a mother and her husband rejects her partnership in marriage. Thus, it can be argued that Hardy's narrative adumbratively fixates motherhood with wifedom, rendering Bathsheba's insufficiency in motherhood. Although both Fanny and Bathsheba are the victims of Troy, the narrator excludes any commentaries that suggests it. Even though Bathsheba claims: "this woman is your victim; and I not less than she"¹⁹⁶, Troy's answer suppresses her claim:

"Ah! don't taunt me, madam. This woman is more to me, dead as she is, than ever you were, or are, or can be. If Satan had not tempted me with that face of yours, and those cursed coquetries, I should have married her. I never had another thought till you came in my way. Would to God that I had; but it is all too late!" He turned to Fanny then. "But never mind, darling," he said; "in the sight of Heaven you are my very, very wife!"¹⁹⁶

Troy's answer includes many connotations regarding both Bathsheba and him. Even though Bathsheba was warned by Gabriel not to marry Troy before, Troy's reaction

¹⁹⁵ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 363-364.

¹⁹⁶ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 367.

accuses Bathsheba of seducing him. He blames her beauty and coquetry, which is associated with Satan, and declares his repentance in marrying Bathsheba instead of Fanny. While addressing Fanny's corpse with such love, he is depicted almost redeemable. Peter J. Casagrande explains the duality in Hardy's perspective towards man and woman in these words:

Troy is portrayed as one capable of better things but pushed into error by the circumstances of his birth, his military profession, and even by the susceptibility of women to his charm. Bathsheba, in contrast, is portrayed as one who errs because innately flawed. There can be little doubt of Hardy's view in *Far from the Madding Crowd* that women are by nature infirm.¹⁹⁷

Explained in this paragraph, Hardy's fiction explores Bathsheba's faulty nature by her marriage with Troy. Severely criticized by the protagonist, Troy's character is excused by his irresistible charm, and his commitment to Fanny is suggestive of the possibility of a positive change in his character. By creating a virtuous and voiceless rival for Bathsheba in Fanny's dead motherhood, Hardy makes sure Bathsheba's independency is altered by her faulty marriage completely.

Gabriel's centrality is evoked even in the most troublesome times for Bathsheba as Hardy directs the novel towards the conclusion of Gabriel and Bathsheba's marriage. After his heroic act to save the farm from the storm, he appears in Bathsheba's thoughts despite irrelatively:

Bathsheba became at this moment so terrified at her own state of mind that she looked around for some sort of refuge from herself. The vision of Oak kneeling down that night recurred to her, and with the imitative instinct which animates women she seized upon the idea, resolved to kneel, and, if possible, pray. Gabriel had prayed; so would she.¹⁹⁸

Being narrated after Bathsheba's observation of Fanny's dead body and her child, this commentary proves Bathsheba's gravitation towards Gabriel as a result of his superior character. The correlation shown between Bathsheba's insufficiency to endure hardships

¹⁹⁷ Casagrande. "A New View of Bathsheba Everdene." E-book. In *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*, edited by Dale Kramer, 50–73. Springer, 1979. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-03780-3>. p. 55.

¹⁹⁸ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 364.

and Gabriel's capability to overcome hardships is structured to oppose each other. Since Gabriel's superiority is stated early in the novel, it is maintained through different events in the plot. Casagrande analyses Gabriel's superiority stating:

... the dominance of Oak in a novel centrally concerned with Bathsheba's career - may be seen as emanating from Hardy's view of her as one infirm in nature. Oak's prominence is best seen, I think, as a function of Bathsheba's imperfection. Oak's ability to observe the defects of non-human nature (the loss of his flock, the fire, the storm, the bloated sheep) and to contrive amendment fits him to observe, minister to, and finally to marry the faulty Bathsheba. The novel thus associates the imperfect nature of its heroine with defective non-human nature and offers in Oak an example of how to cope with the unregenerateness of things.¹⁹⁹

Casagrande's remarks show that the incidents follow a pattern to bring Bathsheba and Gabriel together. Since Bathsheba's social change as a farmer intervened the romantic relationship between the two, her career is hung by a thread occasionally to lead up to Gabriel's rise. Following Troy's abandonment of Bathsheba, she is described as a mournful woman who becomes indifferent towards her farm which parallels with Gabriel's achievements in her negligence: "... we now see Oak mounted on a strong cob, and daily trotting the length breadth of about two thousand acres in a cheerful spirit of surveillance, as if the crops all belonged to him - the actual mistress of the one-half ... sitting in ... gloomy and sad seclusion."²⁰⁰ Meanwhile, Bathsheba's social appearance causes other people to excommunicate her figuratively, estranging her from life completely as someone at Boldwood's party says: "'What a fool she must have been ever to have had anything to do with the man! She is so self-willed and independent too, that one is more minded to say it serves her right than pity her'".²⁰¹ When compared, the status of Gabriel and of Bathsheba appear antipodal; the thriving of Gabriel through an honest earning clash with the humiliation of a woman who is faulty because of her keen independence.

¹⁹⁹ Casagrande. p. 51-52.

²⁰⁰ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 403.

²⁰¹ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 448.

Bathsheba's demanding role as a farmer is overshadowed by Gabriel's ways, as her choice of husband brings miseries for both herself and her farm. Considering her career as a farmer, it can be argued that Hardy created a modern woman in Bathsheba by her social role and independent characteristic. However, her unfit status to rule her farm as needed creates an opportunity to bring Gabriel forth while the plot gets close to the end. Katharine Rogers analyses Bathsheba's ill-conditioned status after Troy's disappearance in these words: "She resolved to manage her farm herself, and Hardy admired her resolution; but he made clear that she was not capable of living up to this masculine role. The farm would soon have failed if Gabriel had not generously taken on the responsibilities of a bailiff".²⁰² Gabriel's appropriateness as a farmer is juxtaposed with Bathsheba's incapability so that their marriage would be suitable. Considering the incidents that leads to Bathsheba's decline, it can be stated that Hardy shapes Gabriel's characteristics and Bathsheba's opposingly. His depiction of Bathsheba includes humiliation from society. Because her faulty nature is impossible to match with Gabriel's virtuous character, the plot includes Boldwood's killing of Troy. Upon the tragic events, Bathsheba carries her husband's body back to her house and doesn't "let her dear husband's corpse bide neglected for folks to stare at for all the crownors in England".²⁰³ Previously associated by Satan because of her beauty and coquetry¹⁷³, Bathsheba undergoes a process to purify her faulty character to become suitable for Gabriel. Her husband's death plays a significant role in procuring her purification. The narration of Troy's body inspection and the comments from the characters present at scene offer the following in Bathsheba's defense:

"The body has been undressed and properly laid out in grave clothes. Gracious Heaven - this mere girl! She must have the nerve of a stoic!"

"The heart of a wife merely," floated in a whisper about the ears of the three, and turning they saw Bathsheba in the midst of them. Then, as if at that instant to prove that her fortitude had been more of will than of spontaneity, she silently sank down between them and was a shapeless heap of drapery on the floor. The

²⁰² Rogers. p. 255.

²⁰³ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 465.

simple consciousness that superhuman strain was no longer required had at once put a period to her power to continue it.²⁰⁴

Bathsheba's 'stoic' nature following her husband's death and her 'superhuman strain' are critically placed to depict her character transformation. Before her marriage to Troy, she was signified through negative connotations and generalizations regarding her gender. However, her marriage aligns the incidents that lead to her enduring character. This change is narrated to be observable in her dependency on Gabriel as well:

"And what shall I do without you? Oh, Gabriel, I don't think you ought to go away. You've been with me so long - through bright times and dark times - such old friends that as we are - that it seems unkind almost. I had fancied that if you leased the other farm as master, you might still give a helping look across at mine. And now going away!"²⁰⁵

After Bathsheba's character alteration to fit Gabriel's, they are brought together to get married. It can be claimed that Bathsheba's initial declaration of being too independent is modified towards the end to make her accept Gabriel's superiority. Bathsheba's attempt to stop Gabriel from leaving her completely by saying: "It was very cruel of you, considering I was the first sweetheart you ever had, and you were the first I ever had";²⁰⁶ shows that she emotionally demands Gabriel to love her back and signifies a domestication on her part. As the hero and the heroine reach a settlement to get married, their marriage eventuation shows a tamed and dependent woman character in Bathsheba. Casagrande analyses their union as follows:

With Oak's re-entry into Bathsheba's life, reserve and funereal sadness give way before a pleasing bit of male fantasy, the taming of a shrew, when Oak's announced intention to emigrate moves Bathsheba to pursuit of him. However, Hardy does not allow the playfulness in this to conceal the fact that Bathsheba's new manner, characterised by humility and even mildness, cloaks the old instinct to charm and possess a man.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 466.

²⁰⁵ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 477.

²⁰⁶ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 482.

²⁰⁷ Casagrande. p. 68.

Analysed in above-paragraph, it can be argued that Hardy created a set of dualities to match his rightful protagonist with the object of his desire at the end. By creating an independent female character, he both appealed to modernity and created a duality between the heroine and the male protagonist. The female's modern attributions play a significant role in her marriage to the antagonist. By Bathsheba's secret marriage, Hardy negates the ostensible superiority of Bathsheba's unapologetic character. Juxtaposing Bathsheba's womanhood with Fanny's, Hardy constructs the dependent female who willingly marries Gabriel at the end. Even though they deliberately plan "the most private, secret, plainest wedding that it is possible to have",²⁰⁸ their marriage is approved by society: "However, we couldn't think of letting the day pass without a note of admiration of some sort. ... Here's long life and happiness to neighbour Oak and his comely bride!".²⁰⁹ Since Gabriel's eligibility to have a marriage is equated with Bathsheba's repentance of her faulty past, the two can form an alliance in the eyes of people. Still, Bathsheba's rise in the eyes of society comes to fruition at the expense of her becoming tame: "Then Oak laughed, and Bathsheba smiled (for she never laughed readily now), and their friends turned to go".²¹⁰ Therefore, it can be argued that Hardy transformed Bathsheba according to the needs of both Gabriel and society. Through a plot of constructed dualities, Hardy made sure that the independency of the heroine would eventually signify the acceptance of dependant female.

²⁰⁸ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 484.

²⁰⁹ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 489.

²¹⁰ Hardy. *FFMC*. p. 490.

CONCLUSION

In the examination of character signifiers and narrative signifiers in Thomas Hardy's novels *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far From the Madding Crowd* through Ferdinand De Saussure's idea of signification, it has been found that Hardy's choice of signifiers shape and influence the meaning of his novels and the plot's conclusion. By analysing the character descriptions in both novels, it is found that Hardy tends to explore more of his heroes' inner worlds while the elaborations of his heroines rely mostly on their womanhood and physical attributions. The exploration of the narrative signifiers also concluded that Hardy's characters can move only to the extent that their descriptions and circumstances allow. It means that they are limited in their actions by their descriptions and circumstances. It is also found that the narrator's role is immense in foreshadowing a conflict before it arises. With the narrators' intrusion on the plot progress by structuring the circumstances of the characters, both novels evolve in particular ways which map out the route of characters' decisions, and both novels' outcomes serve in traditionalization of modern women characters through marriage. In general, both novels' endings depict the hero's rise to a higher social class.

The roles of Hardy's heroines are representations of a contradictory nature; both Fancy and Bathsheba are modern female characters in that they don't fit in the traditional descriptions of womanhood. They don't exist merely through their role in a family; opposingly, their inclusion into the plot begins with their extraordinary roles in a community. Fancy appears as a schoolmistress and Bathsheba as a farm owner, both of which represent women's financial independence without the accompanist male. However, their young age and beauty are always prominent as attributions addressed by both the narrator and other characters in the novel. Their social roles are mostly overshadowed by their interactions with male characters. These interactions demonstrate that womanhood is an attribution that causes irrational behaviour in women, and it plays a vital role in plot progression as the narrator constructs the plot on conflicts arising from irrational behaviour. The analysis of their characteristic signification demonstrates that both Fancy and Bathsheba are constructed through similar signifiers, and both are met with similar consequences in the plot. The fixation

on women characters' irrationality shows that Hardy constructed them through a similar approach and literary style. Albert J. Guerard highlights the common traits in Hardy's characters as follows: "All novelists tend to borrow from their earlier works, though as a rule unconsciously. Hardy's tendency to do this was particularly strong. One could almost say, given the degree to which women dominate his stories, that nearly every novel had its source in some trait, perhaps unemphasized or undeveloped, of the preceding novel's heroine".²¹¹ Exemplified in Guerard's sentences, Hardy's heroines Fancy and Bathsheba have inherited most of their attributions from an unconscious, generalized womanhood, which has been revealed through signifiers as explained.

When compared, these two novels also explore different portrayals of their heroines through their plot progressions and conclusions. In *UGT*, the conclusion is open-ended, the narrator leaves the readers to ponder the moral implications of Fancy Day's secret approval of Mr. Maybold's proposal, hidden from her husband, Dick. This ambiguity invites readers to reflect on Fancy's values and the results of her undisclosed emotions. Conversely, *FFMC* offers a more complex resolution by transforming Bathsheba Everdene's character from a vivid, independent woman to a pale, subdued widow. The novel illustrates the profound impact of Bathsheba's ill-fated marriage choice with Sergeant Troy, depicting her subsequent suffering as a form of punishment. Ultimately, Bathsheba's journey culminates in an approved marriage with Gabriel Oak, suggesting a return to societal norms and acceptance. Through these different conclusions, it is explored that Hardy's novels have illustrated different dimensions of his heroine's experiences through the moral and societal expectations placed upon women.

Hardy's heroes, as well as his heroines, inherited some attributions which are signified through elaborated descriptions of the narrator. As distinct from heroines, Hardy's way of characterization for his heroes relies on initially narrated depictions of a virtuous character which are relayed to the reader at the beginning of the novels. The fact that heroes exist through their definite signifiers as fixed at the exposition of the plot proves that Hardy's novels are mediums of a reward system for his morally

²¹¹ Guérard, Albert Joseph. "The Women of the Novels." in *Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Prentice Hall, 1963. p. 65.

superior heroes. Both heroes are extraordinarily trustworthy, honourable and virtuous which are challenged by other male characters as rivals in courting young, beautiful women. Despite the challenges caused by their rivals, the heroes are found resistant to the hardships of their circumstances. The intrusion of the narrators is found to be contributor to both heroes in justifying their courses of action. Eventually, both heroes are rewarded in sustaining their morality by marrying with the women who are the objects of their desire throughout the novel.

When their social roles are juxtaposed, it is found that Hardy's novels dealt with the romantic entanglement between a woman of superior social class and a man of inferior role. Since both novels end in marriage of the woman and the man, the imbalance of their social class is negated through the faulty actions of the heroines and the righteousness of the heroes. Stephanie Hingston Kauffmann has also asserted the dormant pattern of Hardy's novels as follows:

Foremost is the "poor man and the lady" pattern, in which a male of inferior social class desires a romantic and sexual relationship with a woman of superior position, the intelligent and emotional "heroine," who displays an incongruous mixture of vitality and masochism and fascinates a variety of men, leading her to evaluate the available males in each novel.²¹²

Through analysing the dualities present in both novels, this thesis has also found that Kauffmann's claims are pertinent in both *UGT* and *FFMC*. The use of dualities in both novels play a significant role in character and narrative signifiers. Even though both novels seem to explore the romantic relationship between a superior woman and an inferior man, it is apparent that the characters' social class is symbolic in creating conflicts between them, the plots progress dependently on the duality between man and woman. Since the opposition between two genders are substantial in creating the conflicts, it is concluded that both novels rely on dualities to achieve the desired result that is marriage.

The dormant pattern that is considered to govern Hardy's novels is crucial to notice the role of authorship in affecting the reader. The need to analyse what Hardy

²¹² Kauffmann, "Relations Between The Sexes In Thomas Hardy's Novels: Structural Patterns Of Characterization And Plotting." p. V.

aimed to achieve in narrating his characters in such peculiarity can be found in “Profitable Reading of Fiction” by Hardy’s own words as follows:

If we speak of deriving good from a story, we usually mean something more than the gain of pleasure during the hours of its perusal. Nevertheless, to get pleasure out of a book is a beneficial and profitable thing, if the pleasure be of a kind which, while doing no moral injury, affords relaxation and relief when the mind is overstrained or sick of itself. The prime remedy in such cases is change of scene, by which, change of the material scene is not necessarily implied. ... the reader be not too critical. In other words, his author should be swallowed whole, like any other alterative pill. He should be believed in slavishly, implicitly. However profusely he may pour out his coincidences, his marvellous juxtapositions, his catastrophes, his conversions of bad people into good people at a stroke, and vice versa, let him never be doubted for a moment.²¹³

Therefore, Hardy’s view of fiction suggests that reading is an activity of pleasure and the writer’s artistic contribution to the narrative of a story shouldn’t be the target of questioning by any reader. This suggestion contributes to the continuation of his peculiar signification for males and females; it assures that males are signified through their inner world and the females through their beauty. In the perception of their dual existence, man and woman are forever restricted to their oppositional natures and the discovery of their individuality is stained through their gender.

Hardy’s novels contribute to the endurance of dual thinking and traditionalized gender restrictions. Based on the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Levi-Strauss, it is proved that his novels pursue the structure of traditional gender roles and interactions. Through this structure, his heroines are restricted by the signifiers around them, not allowing their modern roles flourish along with their individuality. Virginia Woolf also emphasises Hardy’s narrative quality as follows:

In every book three or four figures predominate, and stand up like lightning conductors to attract the force of the elements. Oak and Troy and Bathsheba; ... They live as individuals and they differ as individuals; but they also live as types

²¹³ Hardy, Thomas. “The Profitable Reading of Fiction.” E-book. In *Thomas Hardy’s Personal Writings: Prefaces, Literary Opinions, Reminiscences*, edited by H. Orel, 110–25. Springer, 2016. p. 110-111.

and have a likeness as types. ... However lovable and charming Bathsheba may be, still she is weak; ... This is a fundamental part of Hardy's vision; the staple of many of his books. The woman is the weaker and the fleshier, and she clings to the stronger and obscures his vision. ... His characters, both men and women, were creatures to him of an infinite attraction. For the women he shows a more tender solicitude than for the men, and in them, perhaps, he takes a keener interest.²¹⁴

In parallel with this analysis by Woolf, this study investigates the different ways in which Hardy's characters and plots evolve and it has been discovered that Hardy's characters appear as individualistic but act as types. In addition, his female characters never get disintegrated from their inherited gender prejudices. In both novels analysed, it is explored that the heroines are eventually drawn to settle down with a male no matter how different their aspirations are. Kramer's following statement emphasizes the similarity of plot conclusion in each novel by remarking how the heroines are traditionalized through marrying the heroes:

Among the major novels, *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), with their 'happy' endings, can be seen as attempts to show, in the comic mode, the possibility of amendment and regeneration. Fancy Day, the whimsical heroine of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, does return to her native place, and does marry her rustic lover under a greenwood tree, though the situation at the end of the novel is not without its grim irony. *Far from the Madding Crowd*, it might seem, is an attempt to show something similar - the growth of Bathsheba from impulsive folly to good sense and marriage to Gabriel Oak.²¹⁵

Since both novels' character development impose a major change on heroines, it is notable that the heroes remain as heroes from the earliest to the last of the chapters. Despite their initial signification of modern characteristics, the heroines are externally construed to become tamed and domesticated by having socially accepted marriages. With these conclusions, this research has utilized structural criticism to draw awareness

²¹⁴ Woolf, p. 176.

²¹⁵ Kramer, p. 54.

around the structural influences of literary texts and demonstrate that the authorship might be found very efficient in creating or sustaining certain patterns and restrictions. In relation to the novels analysed, it is pointed out that Hardy's female characters are shaped and restricted around certain narrative choices of authorship.



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