

**"SHE CAN WRITE BOLDLY":
AN EXAMINATION OF SELF, SCHOLAR, AND TEACHER
THROUGH A STUDY OF THOMAS HARDY'S HEROINES**

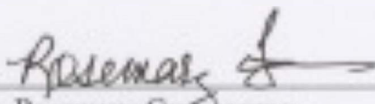
by

Catelin M. Turman

**A thesis submitted to the faculty of Radford University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English**

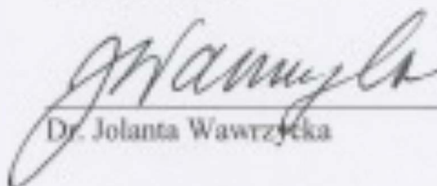
July 2017

© 2017, Catelin M. Turman



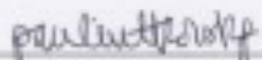
Dr. Rosemary Guglielmo
Thesis Advisor

Date 7/5/17



Dr. Jolanta Wawrzeka

Date 7/5/17



Dr. Paul Witkowski

Date 7/5/17

Abstract

In “‘She Can Write Boldly’: An Examination of Self, Scholar, and Teacher through a Study of Thomas Hardy’s Heroines,” Catelin Turman, M.A., explains how her personal and academic relationship with Thomas Hardy’s novels *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* and *Far From the Madding Crowd* has morphed as she has transitioned from a student of literature to a teacher of literature. Turman uses the criticism of Louis Althusser and Hélène Cixous to analyze the ideology of patriarchy within Hardy’s novels and to explore her transient relationship with her twenty-first century patriarchal society. She argues that Hardy’s heroines Tess Durbeyfield and Bathsheba Everdene resist and rebel against the tenets of patriarchy in their respective novels. Although Turman contends that Tess’s rebellion is ultimately a failure, she argues that Bathsheba’s rebellion is a success, because it results in Bathsheba’s renegotiation of the patriarchy: by the end of the novel, Bathsheba is able to live under the umbrella of patriarchy according to Virginia Woolf’s definition of androgyny. Ultimately, Turman uses the rebellions set forth by Hardy’s heroines, coupled with Cixous’s and Woolf’s criticism, to renegotiate her own relationship with the patriarchy and to argue that Hardy is a proto-feminist author ahead of his time. Looking forward to her future as a teacher of literature, Turman concludes her project by arguing that Norma Greco’s “lived experience” pedagogy is the most effective method for teaching Hardy’s novels in the classroom.

Catelin M. Turman, M.A.
Department of English, 2017
Radford University

Dedication

For Alex:

Thank you for always believing in me—and for helping me to believe in myself.

Acknowledgements

Dr. Rosemary Guruswamy, Dr. Jolanta Wawrzycka, Dr. Paul Witkowsky

Dr. Amanda Kellogg, Dr. Moira Baker

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Introduction: Self.....	vi
Chapter I: Scholar.....	1
Chapter II: Re-Reading <i>Tess of the D'Urbervilles</i>	11
Chapter III: Reading <i>Far From the Madding Crowd</i> through the Same Lens.....	24
Conclusion: Teacher.....	48
Works Cited.....	54

Introduction: Self

In “The Laugh of the Medusa,” French feminist critic Hélène Cixous urges women to write themselves into being through an almost stream-of-consciousness call to arms: “Woman must write her self,” Cixous argues, and she “must write about women and bring women to writing [...] as a woman, toward women” (875).¹ In answer to Cixous’s call to action, this study represents my struggle to write “as a woman, toward women” and about women (875). Specifically, I write “as a woman, toward women” about two of Thomas Hardy’s novels that have historically been used to teach women about women: *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* and *Far From the Madding Crowd* (875). These novels have had a specific impact on my own identity as a woman, a reader, and as a scholar. To begin this meta-reflexive study of my complex relationship with Hardy and with my own story, I must begin with Cixous.

Cixous argues that for all women, the act of writing is an act of re-claiming the female self—the female body—from the Western patriarchal culture that has usurped female autonomy, leaving women either as passive victims or active agents of the patriarchy. Cixous writes, “We’ve been turned away from our bodies, shamefully taught to ignore them, to strike them with that stupid sexual modesty” (885). Cixous challenges women to write fearlessly, unapologetically, and in their own language: “Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes, they must submerge, cut through, get beyond the ultimate reserve-discourse” (886). In the

¹ In “The Laugh of the Medusa,” Hélène Cixous provides readers with a definition of her particular use of the word “woman.” Cixous writes, “When I say ‘woman,’ I’m speaking of woman in her inevitable struggle against conventional man; [...] there is, at this time, no general woman, no one typical woman. What they have *in common* I will say” (Cixous 875-6). For Cixous, there is “no one typical woman” or a singular female experience (876). However, despite the “infinite richness of their individual constitutions,” Cixous acknowledges that all women do have a common experience within patriarchal cultures: all women “struggle against conventional man” (875-6). It is this particular woman—the woman who lives within the over-arching umbrella of patriarchy—that I have chosen to examine.

past, I have argued that patriarchy forces women to work *within* the dominant discourse, but Cixous argues that women can work *against* the patriarchy instead—that female writers can burst through the patriarchal-language of their forefathers and write in a language of their own: “[I]t is time for her to dislocate this ‘within,’ to explode it, turn it around, and seize it; to make it hers, containing it, taking it in her own mouth, biting that tongue with her very own teeth to invent for herself a language to get inside of” (887). With this project, and using the only language I have—a language created out of and embedded within patriarchy—I write as woman, for women, and about women who have been created by a male author, within a male language, and within systemic patriarchy. Specifically, I write as a woman about Hardy and two of his literary heroines: Tess Durbeyfield and Bathsheba Everdene.

I was first introduced to Hardy and *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* in my twelfth grade British literature class. Although my classroom experience with the novel was rather isolating—I was the only student in the class who actually finished the novel, and we only spent a week at the end of the spring semester discussing it in the classroom—my first reading of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* nevertheless had a significant impact on my identity as a woman and as a reader. At seventeen, I identified with Tess’s experiences with Alec D’Urberville: her rape and resulting fall from her society, her consequential feelings of shame, isolation, and impurity, and, ultimately, her feelings of rage and despair.²

² In her biography of Hardy entitled *Thomas Hardy*, Claire Tomalin writes that magazine publishers (the novel was originally published through serialization) objected to the “frankness” of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (Tomalin 228). Determined to get his work published, Hardy initially published *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* with a “mock marriage” instead of a rape scene, and Tess does not give birth to a child (228). By the time Hardy was ready to publish *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* in novel format, he had “restored the rest of the cuts for book publication” (229). Tomalin further notes that due to Hardy’s revisions and additions—which occurred through 1912—to the novel, “textual studies of Hardy” and “arguments about his intentions” have “kept scholars busy” (230). Tomalin thus asks her readers, “Did he withhold information about Tess’s rape [...] because he was not a realist but a modernist [...] To challenge the standard Victorian response to the fallen woman? Or to nudge the reader into seeing how relative all values and judgments are in such matters?” (230). Tomalin does not offer readers a definitive answer to any of these speculations; regardless, it is nevertheless clear that Tess’s rape continues to be a driving force in Hardy studies.

Although it has been eight years since I first read *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and my feelings of self-hatred and blind anger have since cooled, Hardy's novel has continued to permeate my scholarship and, to some extent, my identity. Journalist and author Rebecca Mead writes about this phenomenon of a book's ability to form a reader's identity. Although Mead specifically writes about her personal and lasting relationship with George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, her observations ring true for my continuing relationship with *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Mead writes, "Books gave us a way to shape ourselves—to form our thoughts and to signal to each other who we were and who we wanted to be. They were part of our self-fashioning, no less than our clothes" (Mead 6). Beginning at seventeen, and lasting through most of my years as an undergraduate student, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* "form[ed] [my] thoughts," "gave [me] a way to shape [myself]," and became a "part of [my] self-fashioning" (6).³ Throughout these few years, I identified—perhaps to a detriment—with Tess's status as a fallen woman; I felt that I had been robbed of my own innocence, that I was ruined, broken, and alone. It wasn't until several years had passed since my own fall that I was able to read *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* again from a new perspective on the novel and on myself. As a graduate student reading the novel, separated from my past by space and time, I found I no longer identified with Tess's status as fallen; indeed, I no longer viewed Tess as fallen—as broken—at all. Perhaps more significantly, I found that I no longer identified as a fallen woman.

But what had led to this drastic change? Obviously, Hardy's novel and characters were still the same as they had always been; and yet, I somehow read the novel and viewed Tess from an entirely different point of view. Mead comments on this ability for a novel to change as its reader changes, writing, "There are books that grow with the reader as the reader grows, like a

³ Interestingly, Rebecca Mead began her relationship with George Eliot's *Middlemarch* when she was seventeen, and this novel was also introduced to her by her English teacher at the time (Mead 1).

graft to a tree. This kind of book becomes part of our own experience, and part of our own endurance” (16). Since I no longer identified as fallen, I no longer identified Tess as fallen; instead, I discovered that we were both, in a sense, survivors of our falls. This time, my reading of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* led me to identify with a character of survival and empowerment rather than a character of ruin and hopelessness; I had become the tree and *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* had become my graft (16).

While my second reading of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* gave me a stronger female character with which to identify than my first reading of the novel, it was yet undeniable that Tess’s strength only takes her so far: the novel ends with her imprisonment and execution. She survives her fall and the events that follow, but only temporarily; ultimately, she is unable to survive her own narrative. I yet needed what Tess was unable to give me: a strong female character who *does* survive her narrative—who *does* survive her fall and continues to live, negotiate, and control her life within her culture. I had, of course, already been introduced to such female literary characters: Jane Austen had given me Emma Woodhouse, Charlotte Brontë had given me Jane Eyre, and Henry James had given me Isabel Archer. And yet, once again, it was Hardy’s Bathsheba Everdene from *Far From the Madding Crowd* that stayed with me; it was Bathsheba with whom I most strongly identified.

Unlike Tess, Bathsheba not only survives her fall and her narrative, but she also earns a happy ending: she renegotiates her life and role within the patriarchy, and she consequently marries a man who is her equal rather than her better as dictated by patriarchal norms. Bathsheba has thus replaced Tess for me; I have moved past my fallen-state where, like Tess, I had convinced myself that I was damaged and did not deserve happiness, and I have, like Bathsheba, let go of my fall and recognized that happiness, even within patriarchy, is possible.

While both characters are, in a sense, survivors of their falls and patriarchy, it is Bathsheba who trumps Tess—Bathsheba not only survives, but thrives.

But, the question remains, why do I need these characters in the first place? Why, like Mead to Eliot's *Middlemarch*, have I continuously been drawn to Hardy's heroines—why have I continuously examined my own life with Hardy's heroines as a framework? In his book *The Things that Matter*, professor Edward Mendelson comments on this tendency for a reader to examine his or her own life through the framework of a literary text. Mendelson writes,

Anyone, I think, who reads a novel for pleasure or instruction takes an interest both in the closed fictional world of that novel and in the ways the book provides models or examples of the kinds of life that a reader might or might not choose to live. Most novels of the past two centuries that are still worth reading were written to respond to both of these interests. They were not written to be read objectively or dispassionately, as if by some nonhuman intelligence, and they can be understood most fully if they are interpreted and understood from a personal point of view, not only from historical, thematic, or analytical perspectives. (Mendelson xii)

For years, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* had given me a “model” for how to live as a fallen woman in a patriarchal society (xii). During my graduate student years, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* morphed into a “model” for “the kind of life that a reader might [...] not choose to live”—that is, the novel became an example of a life I no longer wanted to live (xii). Even when my attitude towards Tess changed—when I viewed her as survivor rather than as fallen—the fact that she does not survive her narrative left me, once again, without a strong, female “model” for how to thrive *after* a fall (xii). However, *Far From the Madding Crowd* and Bathsheba filled this void for me. Bathsheba's fall and her resolution to *not* stay and identify as fallen gave me the

“model” I had been missing (xii). Indeed, Bathsheba gave me the courage to no longer identify as fallen—and, perhaps more importantly, she taught me how to renegotiate the patriarchy in order to not only be happy, but to acknowledge that I *deserved* to be happy. Hardy and his heroines thus gave me the medium to “tak[e] a passionate interest in [my] own past and future”—to renegotiate my own relationship with Hardy and with my own identity (xii). In the words of Mendelson, then, this project is “written for all readers, of any age, who,” like me, “are still deciding how to live their lives” underneath the umbrella of patriarchy, yes, but also happily, independently, and on their own terms (xiii).

Chapter I: Scholar

Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* was initially given to me by Mrs. Jane Hobeika, my high school British literature teacher. In my first and currently only experience with Hardy in the classroom, Mrs. Hobeika introduced herself to me and my fellow classmates by asking us to contemplate the meaning of the phrase, "Where you are going is partly determined by where you have been." In contrast to this philosophy, Hélène Cixous writes, "It is time to liberate the New Woman from the Old by coming to know her—by loving her for getting by, for getting beyond the Old without delay" (Cixous 878). While it is Cixous's "The Laugh of the Medusa" that has partially inspired my thesis, I starkly disagree with her statement that we must get "beyond the Old without delay" (878). I agree more with Mrs. Hobeika: it is only by knowing the Old (the past) that we can become the New Woman (the present), to begin to understand and sympathize with Her (878). Thus, by better understanding my past relationship with Tess, I can better understand my current relationship with Tess.

As I learned in Mrs. Hobeika's class, in the fifth edition of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy writes, "This novel [is] one wherein the great campaign of the heroine begins after an event in her experience which has usually been treated as fatal to her part of protagonist, or at least as the virtual ending of her enterprises and hopes" (Hardy 4).⁴ Tess's story does not *end* with rape; it *begins* with rape.⁵ Now, of course Tess could have been a compelling heroine of a novel without having ever been raped, but at seventeen, feeling isolated and voiceless, I was

⁴ In "The Apprehensive and Suppressed Soul of the Fallen Woman in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*," Noorbakhsh Hooti comments on this passage from Hardy's preface to the fifth edition of the novel. Hooti writes, "[Hardy's] authorial comments [...] leave no doubt that he is arguing in favor of the fallen woman. Hardy's argument is that though Tess is fallen, she should not be judged by her fall alone but by her own intentions, nature and the circumstances that compelled her to be in this position" (Hooti 631). Hooti's assertion that Hardy is "in favor of the fallen woman" implies that Hardy argues "in favor" of Tess rather than against Tess; it is not Tess's fault that she "falls," and her creator, according to Hooti's interpretation of Hardy's preface, does not blame or judge her for her fall (631). Indeed, Hooti interprets Hardy's preface as serving as a plea for his readers: do not judge Tess for her fall, but judge her as you would judge anyone: for her "own intentions, nature and [...] circumstances" (631).

⁵ Hardy does not actually use the word "rape" in his preface to the novel.

grateful to meet someone else—even in fiction—who had shared my experiences. Although ending in tragedy, Tess’s story nevertheless continues after she is assaulted by Alec D’Urberville in the darkness, in the forest.⁶ Because it wasn’t over for Tess, I knew it wasn’t over for me. It was possible for me to heal, and Tess’s story gave me the first step, the first motivation, to do so.

However, concerning my past relationship with Tess, I related to her when I was a senior in high school, not because my teacher spent a significant amount of time discussing Tess’s rape; quite the contrary: we spent a section of one forty-five minute class discussing this particular part of the novel.⁷ Instead, I fell in love with the novel and related to the character so strongly because my teacher gave me the text and the tools to read, think, and write critically on my own.

Since I was first introduced to Hardy in an English classroom through *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, I have consequently turned to other English teachers who likewise teach *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*. My research has been disheartening to say the least. In both the high school and the college classroom, teaching *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* has, generally speaking, failed. Rebecca Hayden, an advanced high school English teacher, writes anecdotally about her experiences teaching *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* in the advanced placement English classroom. Every year, she begins her unit on *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* by telling students, ““This is the book that turned me into an English teacher”” (Hayden 41). After her experiences teaching a group of students who almost unanimously despise the novel in general and the character of Tess in particular, in addition to being unable to emotionally separate from her students’ critical and

⁶ In “The Laugh of the Medusa,” Hélène Cixous writes, “Dark is dangerous. You can’t see anything in the dark, you’re afraid. Don’t move, you might fall. Most of all, don’t go into the forest” (Cixous 878). In *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, Tess experiences this “horror of the dark” when she is alone in the forest with Alec D’Urberville (878). Where “[d]arkness and silence ruled everywhere[.]” Tess falls asleep in the forest, and it is while she is sleeping that Alec rapes her: “He knelt, and bent lower, till her breath warmed his face, and in a moment his cheek was in contact with hers. [...] Doubtless some of Tess d’Urberville’s mailed ancestors rollicking home from a fray had dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time” (Hardy 82). For Tess, the “[d]ark [forest] is,” indeed, “dangerous,” and, because of Alec, she becomes a fallen woman here (Cixous 878).

⁷ Hardy does not actually use the word “rape” in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, either.

disparaging comments, Hayden is forced to question *why* she continues to teach *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* at all. Hayden asks, “[I] feel that favorite books are part of my soul, and the question arises, To what degree am I willing to bare that soul to hundreds of adolescents, who may be harboring their own quirks, prejudices, and lightning-quick dismissive judgments?” (42) Feeling “personally attacked” and “trampled to death” by her students’ passionate hatred for Tess’s character and for the novel, Hayden and her students nevertheless make it through the unit as they “always do” (42). The last day of the in-class discussion on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hayden shares an insight with her students: her students have, perhaps, been ““reading this book as if it were truth and not fiction”” (43). Again, almost unanimously, her students shared with her that they had forgotten to look at the novel as just that—a novel, a work of art, fiction.⁸ In spite of this realization, Hayden is left feeling discouraged, disillusioned, and questioning “whether it was worth bringing [her] private self into the classroom” (43). By the end of her article, Hayden remains inconclusive about her musings, but she ends her anecdote with a positive twist. During this same semester, a former student, now in college, visited her; this student dropped her pre-med major to major in English—all because of Hayden’s teaching of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*: ““You know, Ms. H., reading *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in your senior English class changed my life”” (44).

Like Hayden, Shanta Dutta, a teacher of undergraduate students in the United Kingdom and in India, has experienced difficulties teaching *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. When teaching the

⁸ While reading *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, I also fell into this trap of forgetting that Tess is a fictional character rather than a real, flesh and blood human. It is thus interesting that other readers have had this same experience with the novel in general and with Tess’s character in particular. In fact, in her biography of Hardy, Claire Tomalin notes that Hardy’s commentary on Tess’s character in his letters indicates that he viewed Tess as a real person (rather than as a literary character of his own creation) as well. Tomalin writes, “To another friend he wrote at the time of its [the novel’s] publication, ‘I am glad you like Tess—though I have not been able to put on paper all that she is, or was, to me.’ To a third he confessed that he had lost his heart to Tess as he wrote about her. [...] Whether formed from memory or dream, she was palpable to him” (Tomalin 225-6).

novel, Dutta, asserting that “there is no consensus among critics even to this day,” asks her students, “What happened to Tess on that fateful night in the Chase—was she raped or was she seduced?” (30).⁹ In spite of her students’ often judgmental answers, Dutta teaches her students to answer this question through a feminist lens; she debunks typical student responses that claim Tess must have had sex willingly because of her immense and lasting guilt. Dutta reminds her students that in patriarchal societies, survivors of rape and sexual assault are often conditioned to feel guilty, writing, “The victimized girl is made to feel responsible for her own violation, the suggestion being that either she was inappropriately dressed or something in her manner invited the outrage” (30). Based on her students’ reactions of blame towards Tess’s character, Dutta argues that students today are less able to comprehend or believe in Tess’s naiveté and innocence.¹⁰ Dutta argues that modern students are constantly exposed to sex through television, books, and media; this exposure, according to Dutta, makes it more difficult for today’s students to “make this leap of historical imagination and conceive of the genuine innocence of a school-dropout like Tess” (31). For Dutta, the consequence of this disconnect between the modern student and Tess’s nineteenth century world is that Tess is no longer as relatable of a character. Dutta writes, “[T]he basic premise [of the novel] is that we, as readers, have to believe in Tess’s innocence for her tragic end to move us to protest indignantly against the travesty of justice meted out to her” (31). Dutta’s teaching of the novel relies on her students empathizing with Tess, rather than blaming her, for her actions in the novel; this disconnect between the modern student and Tess makes reaching this goal a “real challenge for a teacher of *Tess*” (31).

⁹ In her article “Teaching *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* in Kolkata,” Shanta Dutta argues that Tess is raped and not seduced because of Hardy’s initial manuscript. According to Dutta, one of the earlier editions of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* includes a scene where “Alec gives Tess a spiked drink” (30). For Dutta, this scene clearly stipulates that Tess’s rape/seduction scene, at least initially, was “clearly [...] a premeditated rape” (30).

¹⁰ By “innocence,” Dutta is specifically referring to Tess’s “ignorance about the physical facts of life,” i.e., sex (30).

As with Hayden's difficulties in teaching *Tess*, I have to wonder: are Dutta's goals in teaching *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*—her goal of persuading her students to sympathize with Tess, to understand her naiveté and virtue, to feel angry when Tess is executed—are these the goals that teachers *should* expect students to meet? Since Dutta teaches freshman undergraduate English, shouldn't her goals instead be to teach her students to think critically, to become stronger writers and more critical readers, to be able to form, support, and express an opinion, and to be able to make a well-formed argument? I sympathize with both Dutta's and Hayden's frustrations as teachers in the classroom, but I have to wonder: are they using the novel to teach their ideologies—passions, beliefs, opinions—instead of teaching students how to form their *own* passions, beliefs, and opinions? I realize Dutta and Hayden have been teaching for several years between them, and I have only been teaching for two; however, I am forced to ask if they are experiencing problems teaching *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* not because of the novel itself, but rather because of *how* they are teaching the novel?

I contend that high school English teacher Norma Greco provides a solution to Hayden's and Dutta's teaching difficulties. Greco, who teaches high school senior girls, asks the question I have been mulling over for some time. Greco asks, "Why do we teach poems, plays, and novels when most of the world pushes them to the side as softly undisciplined, ineffectual in solving the actual conflicts of life, and superfluous to more tangible, profitable studies [...] that promise to improve the condition of our material lives?" (48). Essentially, Greco's question boils down to, what is the purpose of being an English teacher anymore? Fortunately for Greco's readers, she answers her own question. Greco writes, "In a time when the larger, utilitarian American culture and even literature PhDs wonder why it is that we teach literature at all, *students* have shown me

reasons that affirm my profession and my passion” (48; italics added). Greco thus answers her question in one word: students. It is because of the students that teaching literature still matters.

However, Greco argues in favor not just of continuing to teach literature, but in continuing to teach literature in a student-centered environment. Specifically, Greco contends that teaching literature as a lived experience is paramount. Quoting critic John Rouse, Greco defines this lived experience technique as ““experience that might renew one’s connections to others and the world”” (48). Through teaching literature as lived experience, Greco teaches her students to “know how to live in the world as moral beings who can think and feel complexly, respond to others with compassion, and act with courage and integrity in life’s tough times” (48). Additionally, through reading literature in the English classroom through this lived experience method, Greco’s students “come to recognize and value the power of literature to ask big questions and to move them to deeper understanding of themselves and others” (48). Literature, Greco argues, thus teaches students compassion and self-reflection in addition to helping them become more critical and engaged readers and writers (48).

Further in her article, Greco specifically discusses her methods for teaching *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* as a lived experience. Greco argues that *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* encourages students to focus on the questions of morality present in the text, in addition to the “situations in which actual freedom is denied by culturally ascribed roles and expectations, poverty, oppression, family responsibilities, and the actions of other people” that are present throughout the novel (49). Greco encourages her students to recognize that, like Tess, we experience all of these issues in our twenty-first century lives—making Tess and the novel all the more relevant and relatable to modern student-readers.

Greco includes practical teaching methods in her article that she has developed through her experiences in teaching *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and other works of literature as well. For instance, Greco has her students write final papers in addition to keeping reading journals, and her classroom environment is focused on student-discussion rather than on lecture. Greco's written and oral assignments teach her students to study and read literature for its "aesthetic power to inspire and unify complex thoughts and feelings" (51). Additionally, Greco argues that through the completion of these assignments, her students are "moved to meaningful reflection on important matters in their lives, including relationships with others in a world whose tenuous future is theirs" (51). For Greco, teaching literature as lived experience—as a medium for encouraging students to reflect on their lives and the lives of others—is *the* reason to continue teaching literature in the English classroom.

Through teaching literature as lived experience, Greco has undeniably experienced more success and less head(heart)aches over teaching *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* than Hayden and Dutta. Unlike Hayden and Dutta, Greco's teaching is centered on the student rather than on the teacher. Both Hayden and Dutta cite their struggles with teaching the novel: Hayden teaches the novel from a personal and opinioned perspective, and Dutta attempts to teach her personal ideology through the text; however, it is Greco's study that focuses solely on her students and *their* work, opinions, life experiences, and developing beliefs. Greco does not write about her goals in teaching certain aspects of the novel (Hayden, for instance, wants her students to fall in love with her favorite book), and, unlike Dutta, she does not include instances from the text where she desires students to feel a particular emotion or have a particular reaction about the plot or characters; instead, Greco focuses on her students and their developments and opinions, and she encourages her students to focus on these aspects of their lives as well. It sounds so simple,

but it is this distinction—the distinction between emphasizing the desires of the teacher in the classroom and emphasizing the development of the individual student—that makes Greco’s teaching of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* successful and rewarding and Dutta’s and Hayden’s teaching of the text much less so.

As a senior in high school, I connected with *Tess* so powerfully, because the foundation of Mrs. Hobeika’s class consisted of making such lived experience connections through her philosophy, “Where you are going is partly determined by where you have been.” Although Mrs. Hobeika asked her students to think and write about the phrase, “Where you are going is partly determined by where you have been” on the first day of class, she kept coming back to this phrase as we continued to read, write about, and discuss literature throughout the year. Coupled with reading journals, short papers, and final papers, each of Mrs. Hobeika’s units provided us with literal lived experiences: we went on pilgrimages to personally-significant places when we read Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*, and we wrote and printed a collection of our own tales; we had an Early Modern Period party in which we each contributed a recipe and baked an Elizabethan dish, and we wrote Shakespearean-inspired sonnets; we read the poetry of the Romantic poets aloud under the shade of maple trees; and we stood on top of our desks, marched in unison around the classroom, and formed our own version of the Dead Poets Society. With *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, we had fewer lived experiences as a class; it was the last novel we read together, and, lacking time, we only devoted a week to discussing and writing about it. However, I continued to read and annotate the novel after graduation. I took it with me on my senior beach trip, and—to a fault—I became as isolated as *Tess* through my lived experience of finishing the novel. While my girlfriends swam in the ocean and dove in the rock quarry, I sat on the beach by myself for hours in solitude, reading, thinking, and remembering. I then took

the novel with me to my dorm room at Hollins University that fall, and *Tess* sat on a rickety shelf above my bed, constantly reminding me of what I was: fallen. “Where you are going is partly determined by where you have been”: in this case, where I had arrived was directly determined by where I had been, by what had happened to me. In part, I chose to attend an all-women’s university, because I thought I would be safe there; surrounded by other women—rather than by men—I thought I would escape my fear, self-judgment, and isolation. In a sense, I thought I would escape the patriarchy. Of course, this decision to attend an all-women’s university was ultimately an overcorrection, and I quickly discovered that even in a matriarchal community, I could not escape the patriarchy; I could not escape the lived experiences of my past.

As a now twenty-five-year-old woman contemplating her future endeavors and goals as an English teacher, I realize I am no longer the seventeen-year-old girl sitting in Mrs. Hobeika’s twelfth grade English class or the depressed young woman alone in her dorm room at Hollins, quietly finding solace in *Tess*’s character; I no longer have to identify as a victim of the patriarchy, as a victim of rape, or as a fallen literary heroine. Just as I no longer see *Tess* as a victim, I no longer see myself as one, either. Like *Bathsheba*, I have acknowledged the patriarchy; I have resisted the patriarchy; and I have, finally, renegotiated the tenets of patriarchy that led to my lived experiences and that have haunted and controlled me for nearly a decade. Without the patriarchy hanging like a noose around my neck, I have become the New Woman—I have become Cixous’s *Medusa*: “You only have to look at the *Medusa* straight on to see her. And she’s not deadly. She’s beautiful and she’s laughing” (885).

Inspired by my past lived experiences with *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, in the following chapter, I explain my new reading of Hardy’s novel—a reading in which I argue that *Tess* is an active rebel against that patriarchy rather than a passive victim of the patriarchy. I assert that

while Tess does, indeed, resist the patriarchy up until her execution (an act that is, perhaps ironically, paramount to her rebellion), her resistance ultimately fails; she is unable to fully renegotiate the systemic patriarchy as a space for her to not only survive, but to thrive, and she thus does not survive her own narrative. In the third chapter, I contend that in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Bathsheba is able to do what Tess is unable to do: survive her fall, renegotiate her life beneath the umbrella of patriarchy, and outlive her narrative. Through Tess's and Bathsheba's resistances against the patriarchy (even though Tess's resistance fails), I ultimately argue that as a novelist, Hardy is a proto-feminist. In the end, it is because of my lived experience connection with Hardy's heroines—and, consequently, my better understanding of myself as a woman and as a scholar—that I conclude my project looking forward to my future as a scholar *and* as a teacher of Hardy's novels.

Chapter II: Re-Reading *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

In the attempts to leave my past lived experiences behind, my present begins with my re-acquaintance with Tess Durbeyfield. I re-read *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* the summer I turned twenty-four, nearly eight years after my own story began.¹¹ During this second reading, instead of finding the same heroine I clandestinely identified with at seventeen, I was introduced to a victim I only vaguely recognized: a victim of rape, a victim of poverty, a victim of manipulation and abuse; only a victim. I no longer saw myself as a victim—at least, I no longer saw myself as being *only* a victim. And yet, in spite of my realization that I no longer identified with Tess-as-victim, I was forced to acknowledge that my most influential literary heroine has always been, and still remains, Tess. I have tested the boundaries of propriety with Marianne Dashwood, I have wailed for Heathcliff during tumultuous thunderstorms with Catherine Earnshaw, I have engaged in witty-sparring matches with Elizabeth Bennet, and I have burned mansions to the ground with Bertha Rochester, but it is Tess Durbeyfield's story, for better or for worse, that has continued to permeate my identity.¹²

I began to give up hope that I would ever figure out why it was Tess (victim) who had relentlessly stayed with me rather than any of the other countless female figures (heroines) that had formed my literary and academic life; so, I began to focus on Hardy himself, on Hardy-as-author. It disturbed me that Hardy, a male, had created Tess's character and story at all. *Tess of*

¹¹ As with Tess, my story did not *end* with rape, but rather, it *began* with rape (see my discussion of Thomas Hardy's preface to the fifth edition of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* on pages 11-12).

¹² In "The Apprehensive and Suppressed Soul of the Fallen Woman in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*," Noorbakhsh Hooti argues that Hardy's literary heroines often "evoked comparison with those of Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and Jane Austen. His heroines spoke directly to women readers" (Hooti 630). Hooti cites Hardy's contemporary female readers as support for his argument, detailing how these women, after reading Hardy's novels, wrote letters to Hardy to confess their similar experiences to Hardy's heroines: "After the publication of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy received letters from women who had not dared to tell their husbands about their pre-marital experiences. A few begged to meet him privately to confide with him" (630). I am thus not by any means the first woman to identify with Hardy's female heroines more than, or at least differently from, the heroines written by prominent nineteenth century women writers.

the D'Urbervilles was published in novel format in 1891, decades after Hardy had already established himself as a prolific literary figure and British novelist.¹³ Indeed, according to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, the well-established literary archetype of the fallen woman that is prevalent in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* had already been established canonically by John Milton in "Paradise Lost" over two centuries prior to Hardy's writing but that had, of course, existed long before. Thus, at least on the surface, Hardy was not contributing anything new to the canon by perpetuating this literary archetype through *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

However, when read through the lens of Marxist theory, and specifically in terms of Louis Althusser's theoretical framework of "ideological interpellation," Hardy's artistic decisions are comprehended as evidence of his own interpellation into the systems of male-privilege that defined Victorian society and culture.¹⁴ Hardy was, after all, a man of his time: an economically privileged, white male who benefitted from Victorian systemic patriarchy; thus even as a man, Hardy lived under this inescapable ideology. Within Althusser's ideas of ideology (patriarchal ideology specifically here), the masculine is given privilege as Subject, or subjectivity, over the feminine, which is the subject, as in subjugated object. Althusser defines the "Subject" as something "distinguish[able]" from "ordinary subjects, with a small *s*" and as being "Unique," "Absolute," and as "God" (247). Using his example of organized religion as a tool for reinforcing privilege and systems of domination, Althusser writes, "[R]eligious ideology is indeed addressed to individuals, in order to 'transform them into subjects,' by interpellating

¹³ Hardy had already published *Far From the Madding Crowd*, his "first commercially successful novel," at this point in his literary career (Cook ix). Published in 1874, it was *Far From the Madding Crowd* that established Hardy's reputation as a prominent literary figure: "Some early reviewers [of *Far From the Madding Crowd*] compare the little-known author to George Eliot, generally considered England's greatest living novelist" (xi).

¹⁴ In "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," and quoting Karl Marx, Louis Althusser defines "ideology" as "the system of the ideas and representations which dominate the mind of a man or a social group" (239).

the individual [...] in order to make him a subject, free to obey or disobey the appeal, i.e. God's commandments" (247).

Applying Althusser's ideas to the concept of patriarchy as an ideology, patriarchy creates subjects with a lowercase "s" out of the individual man and woman according to a classification system privileging the father and the masculine and debasing the mother and the feminine. As subjects, man and woman have the freedom to either "obey" (comply with) or "disobey" (rebel against) the foundational tenet of patriarchal ideology—that woman and the feminine are subservient to man and the masculine in every way (247). However, since in this system patriarchy is in fact the Subject—and not a specific person—and man and woman are the subjects, then *both* men and women are interpellated—given an identity—by patriarchal ideology.

Hardy, as the subject man under the Subject patriarchy, is a product of this system; his work, unconsciously or otherwise, produces and works within the same system. It is only through a process of identity-revision that he might consequently work himself into a stance of resistance. Indeed, Hardy does attempt to resist his own interpellation through *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. On the one hand, Hardy undeniably perpetuates the literary archetype of the fallen woman through his very creation of Tess's character—that is, Tess's character and Hardy's novel add to the already established ideological texts concerning the fallen woman. On the other hand, even though Hardy writes about the fallen woman, he also challenges the more traditional treatment of the Victorian fallen woman—that she is irrevocably fallen from respectable society—through his writing.¹⁵ In "The Apprehensive and Suppressed Soul of the

¹⁵ In "A Collision of Vice and Virtue in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*: 'A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented or a Fallen Angel,'" Nafiseh Salman Saleh comments on the imperativeness of a woman's adherence to the construct of female-chastity in Victorian England. Saleh writes, "Women were defined [...] as the center of chastity. [...] [T]he women of the nineteenth century occupied a position of duality within the culture where they

Fallen Woman in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*," Noorbakhsh Hooti argues that by writing *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Hardy "treats the theme of the fallen woman by giving it a new dimension" (631). For Hooti, this "new dimension" of the fallen woman is evident through Hardy's decision to "challenge [...] the norms of the Victorian Age [and] to defend the rights of women" (631). Hooti notes that instead of following the norm of his Victorian society and blaming Tess for her fallen condition, Hardy places blame on specific members of Tess's society for failing to warn Tess about the potential dangers of being a woman (i.e., subservient, secondary) in a system that privileges men. Hooti argues that Hardy portrays Tess as a "victim" of her mother's "opportunism and folly" and as a "victim" to Alec's and Angel's "construct [of her] sexual identity" (631). Hooti thus implies that Hardy, rather than blaming Tess, blames the members of her society for her fall; for Hardy, it is not Tess's fault that she falls, but rather the fault of her society.

Yet, Althusser argues that an ideology is "eternal"; in patriarchal ideology, as long as there are the "subjects" of "man" and "woman," then there will likewise be the "Subject" of patriarchy (240).¹⁶ This relationship between the Subject and the subjects, then, is a co-dependent one.¹⁷ Hardy as subject depended upon the existence of the Subject of patriarchy in order to create *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. From this perspective, and under the Subject of patriarchy, the subject of man—Hardy—likewise becomes the Subject. Since the ideology of

were defined as either Madonna or Magdalene, pure or impure" ("A Collision" 89). Like Tess, Victorian women fell into one of two categories: not fallen or fallen, "pure or impure" (89).

¹⁶ Althusser defines "eternal" as being "omnipresent, trans-historical and therefore immutable in form throughout the extent of history" (240). This "eternal" quality of an ideology leads to Althusser's argument that "ideology in general has no history" (240). For Althusser, an ideology transcends history, because it functions in the "same form throughout" history (240). As long as there are the "subjects" of "man" and "woman," there will always be the ideology of patriarchy; the ideology's continuation depends not on the reoccurring presence of individual people, but on the reoccurring presence of the "subjects" of "man" and "woman."

¹⁷ Althusser again uses religion as an example of this co-dependency: "God needs them [men], the Subject needs the subjects, just as men need God, the subjects need the Subject" (248). Patriarchy (Subject) needs its subjects (man and woman) to survive, and the subjects, specifically the man subjects, need patriarchy (Subject) to continue to exert their dominance over the subject of woman.

patriarchy privileges the (white, straight) man, the man becomes the Subject for the woman as subject. Thus, the subject of woman is answerable to two Subjects: the larger ideology of patriarchy and the man (Subject) who enforces this ideology. This is a co-dependent relationship; without the ideology of patriarchy, there would be no subjects of man and woman; without the subject of woman, there would be no Subject of man.

In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar argue that “Paradise Lost,” likewise written within an ideology of patriarchy, informs the female reader of her “secondness, her otherness, and how that otherness leads inexorably to her demonic anger, her sin, her fall, and her exclusion from the male-dominated and thus male-privileged world” (191). However, unlike many of his modernist contemporaries, and in spite of writing within the patriarchy, Hardy does *not* follow the Miltonic formula for the fallen woman in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*. Certainly, Tess falls, but unlike other famous heroines such as Emma Bovary and Anna Karenina, the author does not condemn his creation for her fall. Indeed, the full title of Hardy’s work is *Tess of the D’Urbervilles: A Pure Woman*.¹⁸ Just as man and woman are faced with the options to “obey” or to “disobey” the tenets of patriarchy, the option of obedience or rebellion extends to

¹⁸ In a letter written by Hardy in 1892, Hardy comments on his decision to add a subtitle to the title of his novel, the full title being *Tess of the D’Urbervilles: A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented by Thomas Hardy*. Indeed, in his letter, Hardy writes that this “half the title of the story” consists of “the words without which the aim & purpose of the novel cannot be understood,” and that the “second title of the book” is “absolutely necessary to show its meaning” (Purdy and Millgate I: 253; I: 254). Hardy argues in favor of his decision to classify Tess as “a pure woman” in his subtitle, even though he is aware that his contemporary readers will most likely not agree with his judgment of Tess. Hardy writes in his letter, “Reading over the story after it was finished, the conviction was thrust upon me [...] that the heroine was essentially pure—purer than many a so-called unsullied virgin: therefore I called her so” (I: 267). Hardy, in spite of how his contemporary readers generally viewed Tess, deemed her as being a “pure” woman (267). Hardy defends this decision to identify Tess as “pure” in another letter written in 1892 (267). Hardy writes, “As to my choice of such a character after such a fall, it has been borne in upon my mind for many years that justice has never been done to such women in fiction. I do not know if the rule is general, but in this county the girls who have made the mistake of Tess almost invariably lead chaste lives thereafter, even under strong temptation” (I: 251). In his letter, Hardy argues for Tess’s purity out of an awareness of the past societal and fictional negative judgments inflicted on women in Tess’s situation. By arguing for Tess’s purity even after her fall from her patriarchal society’s good graces, Hardy is essentially arguing for the purity of all women in Tess’s situation; these women may “fall,” but, according to Hardy, they generally lead virtuous, “pure” lives afterwards (I: 267; I: 251).

the writer (Althusser 247). The author can consciously choose to use his/her written work as a means of following and thus perpetuating patriarchal stereotypes, or as a means of rebellion, though some would argue that the author can never fully escape the facts of his/her interpellation. On my first and even on my second reading of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, I argued that Hardy was unconsciously interpellated into the system of patriarchy by creating Tess and her fall—that Tess's experience of being raped and her consequential fall were nothing more than another addition to the Western ideology of fallen women. However, in rethinking Hardy's conscious attempts to reframe Tess's fall (she is "pure" rather than damaged), it has become clear the ways in which Hardy's tale of the fallen woman subverts the traditional outline for the fall of woman as studied by Gilbert and Gubar. Indeed, I would argue that Hardy does not obey the systemic patriarchy, but rather, with Tess, rebels against it.

Further, Hardy's creation of Tess's character raises awareness of the all too common reality of the fallen woman of nineteenth century England—a concept created and reinforced by societal expectations placed on women's purity. While on the surface Tess might appear to be nothing more than a victim of the ideology of patriarchy and the literary archetype of the fallen woman, she is instead a rebel *against* the patriarchy. Tess is raped, bears a child outside of the institution of marriage, becomes an abandoned wife, and is forced by poverty—which is itself caused by systemic patriarchy—to return to her rapist (Alec D'Urberville) for her and her impoverished family's survival. Considering Tess returns to Alec and eventually also returns to the husband who abandoned her after he blamed her for her rape, it would be all too easy to argue that Tess is nothing more than a victim of the patriarchy and that her story perpetuates the nineteenth century expectations of patriarchy; however, Tess rebels against her status of fallen and murders Alec prior to returning to her husband, and she only returns to her husband after he

apologizes for abandoning her and admits that he treated her poorly. Further, although Tess is ultimately executed for murdering Alec, her death is not for death's sake or for macabre effect; instead, I contend that it is an act of rebellion. She leaves her rapist and reunites with her husband, and they spend several days in blissful confinement and seclusion. Then she *lets* herself be captured; her execution is, in a sense, a deliberate escape from the institution that has plagued her entire life.

Previously, as an abandoned wife living in near poverty, and due to the fact that her family faces destitution after the death of her father, Tess is ultimately forced to return to Alec when he promises her and her family material and financial comfort if she will be his mistress: “Now; though I have been your enemy, I am your friend, even if you won't believe it. Come to this cottage of mine. We'll get up a regular colony of fowls, and your mother can attend to them excellently; and the children can go to school” (Hardy 375). Tess's society does not support her or other women in her fallen condition; unable to thrive on her own, Tess is forced to return to her rapist in order to survive.

However, even after she returns to Alec, Tess is still unable to survive in her society.¹⁹ When Angel finally returns to Tess to offer her his forgiveness, marital support, and physical presence, it is too late: “You didn't come back to me, and I was obliged to go back to him” (407). Tess tells Angel that Alec “kept on saying you would never come any more [...] He was very kind to me, and to mother, and to all of us after father's death. [...] He has won me back—

¹⁹ When Angel returns to Tess after she has already been living with Alec, Angel notices that “his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognize the body before him [her own body] as hers—allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will” (Hardy 401). By the time Angel returns to Tess, and by the time she is living with Alec, Tess no longer views her body as belonging to herself. Indeed, at this point in the novel, Tess has essentially been forced to give her body to Alec in exchange for her family's and for her own survival. Tess, then, does *not* own her body anymore. Further, beneath the umbrella of patriarchy where Tess is the subject (debased) and Alec is the Subject (privileged), Tess never truly owned her body in the first place; her body is, in a sense, owned and controlled by the Subject of patriarchy. Thus, at this point in the novel, even though Tess has yet to be officially arrested and executed, the patriarchy has already robbed her of her physical body, and she is little more than “a corpse upon the current” (401).

to him” (401). Tess sends Angel away from her lodgings with Alec, but the knowledge that Angel has finally forgiven her and is ready to act as her husband is too much for Tess to endure. After Angel’s departure, Tess finally, openly, and without reserve blames Alec and his relentless manipulation of her and forceful presence in her life as being the cause of her undoing:

[Y]ou had used your cruel persuasion upon me....you did not stop using it—no—you did not stop! My little sisters and brother, my mother’s needs....they were the things you moved me by....and you said my husband would never come back—never; [...] And at last I believed you and gave way! [...] O yes, I have lost him now—again because of—you! [...] O you have torn my life all in pieces....made me be what I prayed you in pity not to make me be again! (403)²⁰

While Tess is finally able to confront Alec—to rightfully place the blame for her desperate condition onto him—it does not change her situation; feeling responsible for the well-being of her family, Tess feels as if she cannot leave Alec, but she also feels as if she can no longer stay with him: “O God—I can’t bear this! I cannot!” (403). Overwhelmed by grief and desperation, and irrevocably trapped in her unfortunate circumstance, Tess’s only means of escape from Alec is to murder him.²¹ After finally reuniting with Angel after murdering Alec, Tess explains, “I have killed him! [...] I feared long ago [...] that I might do it some day for the

²⁰ Although Tess rebels against the patriarchal practice of self- and victim-blaming here by blaming Alec for her status as fallen, it should be noted that Tess is unable to initiate this piece of the rebellion until after Angel has returned and promised to be faithful to her again as her husband. Angel tells Tess, “I did not think rightly of you—I did not see you as you were [...] I have learnt to since, dearest [...] I am come on purpose for you—my mother and father will welcome you now” (Hardy 400). Until Tess has another option for her material well-being and survival besides living with Alec, she is unable to leave him; Angel finally gives her this required motivation to do so. Thus, although Tess rebels here, due to her patriarchal society, she is unable to do so without the promise of financial and material protection and security from another man. Tess’s rebellion, then, moves her from one male’s “protection” to another.

²¹ After Tess murders him, Alec’s dead body is described vividly by Hardy. Hardy writes, “The wound was small, but the point of the blade had touched the heart of the victim, who lay on his back, pale, fixed, dead, as if he had scarcely moved after the infliction of the blow” (405). It is interesting that Tess murders Alec by stabbing him with a knife, a phallic symbol; just as Alec causes Tess’s fall (the death of her purity), Tess causes Alec’s fall (the death of his body) through a form of phallic, bloody penetration. Further, by murdering Alec, Tess regains possession of her body from him; he no longer controls her and, now, it is Alec that is the “corpse upon the current” (401).

trap he set for me in my simple youth, and his wrong to you through me. He has come between us and ruined us, and now he can never do it anymore” (407). Tess is ultimately able to rid herself of Alec and reunite with her husband, but their reunion is short-lived. The novel ends with Tess being arrested and sentenced to death for murdering Alec: “A few minutes after the hour had struck something moved slowly up the staff, and extended itself upon the breeze. It was a black flag[,]” which signaled the completion of Tess’s execution (420).

While Tess’s story ends in death, her society provides her with two options while she is yet alive: conform to its patriarchal expectations and live, or rebel against these expectations and die. Throughout the novel, Tess is presented with opportunities to conform to her society’s expectations for her: her mother warned her not to tell Angel about her past with Alec; had Tess heeded her mother’s advice, she presumably would have survived her own narrative and lived a long and happy life with her husband; additionally, Tess arguably had the option to leave Alec and rejoin her husband without first committing murder. It is interesting, then, that Tess chooses rebellion over conformity. While conformity appears to be the logical and ultimately safer choice, it would not have led to a happy and peaceful life for Tess, because she could not escape the judgment of the patriarchy. Tess is advised to remain silent about her past with Alec by her mother, because it is traditionally expected for women in patriarchal societies to remain silent about men’s transgressions against them: “Many a woman [...] have had a Trouble in their time; and why should you Trumpet yours when others don’t Trumpet theirs? No girl would be such a fool” (210). In spite of her mother’s and her society’s expectations, Tess nevertheless chooses rebellion over conformity and tells Angel about her past “Trouble” with Alec for two reasons (210). First, Tess does not feel worthy of Angel’s love, because she, like her society, classifies herself as a fallen woman. She is compared to Mary Magdalene (“He [Angel] little thought that

the Magdalen might be at his side”) and she compares herself to Eve after Eve eats from the Tree of Knowledge and is classified as the first fallen woman (“[S]he regarded him [Angel] as Eve at her second waking might have regarded Adam”) (145; 187). Coupled with this feeling of unworthiness and self-blame, Tess confides her past to Angel because next to her self-deprecation, she regards Angel as a perfect being—indeed, she regards him as an almost God-like figure; she refers to him repeatedly as “so perfect a man” and as a “divine being” (211; 220). Tess thus confides in Angel because ““he was so good”” and she ““felt the wickedness of trying to blind him as to what had happened”” (275-6). Tess “could not [...] dared not—so sin—against him”” (276). Tess rebels against the patriarchy because to her, conformity—silence—is more damning than revealing her status as a fallen, unchaste woman. Tess would rather live with the consequences of honesty (rebellion) than silence (conformity).²²

Additionally, by murdering Alec and returning to Angel, Tess chooses rebellion over conformity. Obviously, committing murder does not conform to societal regulations. Tess’s reasoning for rebelling and deciding to murder Alec, therefore, is significant. Since Tess views Angel as a God-like figure, she views her murder of Alec as the ultimate sacrifice to Angel: ““Angel, will you forgive me my sin against you, now I have killed him?”” (407). It is not unusual for Tess to view Angel as her God. In a patriarchal society, her husband (or her father when she is unmarried) is expected to provide everything for her; his judgment is the only judgment that matters. For Tess, then, Angel is supposed to fulfill this role of benevolent protector and provider: ““[H]ere was this deserted wife of his [...] clinging to him without a suspicion that he would be anything to her but a protector. He saw that for him to be otherwise was not, in her mind, within the region of the possible”” (408). It is only after Tess murders Alec

²² Tess views Angel as “perfect” here because underneath the overarching umbrella of the Subject of patriarchy, Tess is unable to separate herself from her position as subject just as she is unable to separate Angel from his position as Subject; thus, Angel will always be the privileged Subject, and Tess will always be the debased subject.

and runs away with Angel that Angel finally fulfills this role as God, protector, and husband for Tess. He tells Tess, “I will not desert you; I will protect you by every means in my power, dearest love, whatever you may have done or not have done!” (408). Angel finally gives Tess what her society is unable to give her: benevolent protection, compassion, and support. Thus, while Tess ultimately chooses rebellion, her act of rebellion gives her everything conformity is unable to give her.

However, though Tess finds happiness and support through rebellion, Angel notes that her love for him “extinguished her moral sense altogether” (408). Her lack of “moral sense” in choosing rebellion through murder leads directly to Tess’s death (408). Through her rebellion, she breaks every patriarchal regulation expected of her—losing her chastity, giving birth to a child while unmarried, becoming Alec’s mistress, and finally committing murder—and her punishment is execution: “‘Justice’ was done [...] the flag continued to wave silently” (420). Tess is thus unable to survive in her patriarchal society: if she chooses conformity, she chooses a life of silence and unhappiness; if she chooses rebellion, she gets the life she wants, but it is not sustainable. The patriarchy, then, ultimately kills Tess.

Although Tess dies, her death nevertheless gives her agency as a character. Death is not something that just happens to Tess; by actively choosing rebellion, Tess actively chooses death. After having murdered Alec, and when they are hiding in the empty house, Tess tells Angel, “I do not wish to outlive your present feeling for me. I would rather not. I would rather be dead and buried when the time comes for you to despise me, so that it may never be known to me that you despised me” (413). Although Angel insists that he “cannot ever despise” Tess, she remains unconvinced (413). She insists that he will, like every other man, grow to “despise” her, and she plans to not be alive when this inevitable feeling occurs: “I also hope that. But

considering what my life has been I cannot see why any man should, sooner or later, be able to help despising me” (413). Tess thus plans her death even while she and Angel remain safe and hidden from the authorities who seek to arrest Tess for murder.

In a later conversation with Angel when the pair is on the run again, Tess further demonstrates that she is intentionally planning to be captured and executed. Tess chooses Stonehenge as a place to rest in the middle of the night, even though Angel informs her that this location is not safe because it is ““visible for miles by day”” (416). As she rests on a piece of Stonehenge as if ““lying on an altar,”” Tess beseeches Angel to marry her sister (416). Tess says, ““O Angel—I wish you would marry her, if you lose me, as you will do shortly”” (416). It is evident here that Tess understands if they do not continue to put distance between themselves and the crime scene, then she will undoubtedly be captured. In spite of this understanding, Tess continues to rest at Stonehenge and to speak of her now inevitable death and of her insistence that Angel marry her sister: ““She has all the best of me without the bad of me; and if she were to become yours it would almost seem as if death had not divided us”” (416). Tess falls asleep shortly after making this final wish, and when she wakes up, she is surrounded by arresting officers. Tess’s response to this realization that the police have finally caught up with her is one of acceptance and relief: ““It is as it should be!’ she murmured. ‘Angel—I am almost glad—yes, glad! This happiness could not have lasted—it was too much—I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me.’ She stood up, shook herself, and went forward, neither of the men having moved. ‘I am ready,’ she said quietly” (418). Tess’s final scene is thus one of action and agency. Tess is affirmatively “glad” that she has been caught; her wish that she will not live for Angel to “despise” her has been granted; and it is Tess, not the arresting officers, who makes the first move—that is, it is Tess who stands up and walks “forward” to the men who

remain stationary and passive (418). Tess does not survive her own novel, but she is nonetheless “ready” for death; she chooses death because, unlike life in a patriarchal society, Tess can die on her own terms—she can resist the patriarchy and die as an agent of resistance rather than live as an agent of patriarchal-perpetuation (418).

However, even though Tess leaves her narrative on her own terms and with active agency, she nevertheless dies; her rebellion against the patriarchy, then, ultimately fails. Tess’s acts of resistance, even her actions as drastic as choosing death, never allow her to fully escape from the systemic patriarchy. Every time Tess attempts to rebel against the patriarchy, she always ends up back with a man: she returns to her father’s house after Alec rapes her; she finds work under male bosses and landowners; she marries Angel and returns to Alec after Angel deserts her; she returns to Angel after murdering Alec; and, finally, although she chooses death, it is male police officers who capture and arrest her. Tess (as subject), even when she dies, is unable to escape the men (Subject) in her life. Since, as Althusser asserts, ideology is “eternal,” the ideology of patriarchy is “eternal”; as long as there are subjects (“man” and “woman”), the Subject of patriarchy will continue long after Tess’s death (Althusser 240).²³ Thus, Tess never had a chance to escape from this “eternal” ideology, through her death or otherwise; Tess can resist and rebel against the patriarchy only, but she can never truly escape from it (240). The patriarchy will eternally continue on—with or without Tess.

²³ Indeed, this “eternal” nature of the ideology of patriarchy is evident after Tess is arrested (Althusser 240). After Tess is captured, she is, in a sense, replaced for Angel by her sister Liza-Lu. Angel and Liza-Lu walk “hand in hand,” and Liza-Lu is described as being “a spiritualized image of Tess, slighter than she, but with the same beautiful eyes” (Hardy 419). Angel retains his status as the Subject “man” here, but Liza-Lu easily replaces Tess’s status as the subject “woman.” As Althusser notes, as long as there are subjects, the Subject will survive, and vice-versa (248). Thus, Tess’s survival is not required for the Subject of patriarchy to survive; she could live, or die, and the patriarchy would live on regardless.

Chapter III: Reading *Far From the Madding Crowd* through the Same Lens

In Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Bathsheba Everdene is able to accomplish what Tess Durbeyfield in Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is unable to do: she is able to rebel against the patriarchy *and* survive her narrative. Unlike with Tess, Hardy created a female character in Bathsheba who not only resists the patriarchy and lives, but who also renegotiates the tenets of patriarchy in order to live *happily*. Bathsheba's story does not end in her execution; rather, it ends with her successfully initiating a courtship with Gabriel Oak—a man who is, because of Bathsheba's renegotiation of the patriarchy, her equal and her partner. Bathsheba's rebellion against the patriarchy is thus triumphant; rather than attempting to escape from the patriarchy (which, as for Tess, would be impossible for Bathsheba due to the eternal nature of the ideology of patriarchy), Bathsheba chooses to live (rather than to die) within the system of patriarchy on her own, renegotiated terms.

Concerning *Far From the Madding Crowd*, which was ironically published nearly two decades prior to the publication of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, biographer Claire Tomalin writes, "Hardy intended it to be a contemporary story—with a heroine who challenges Victorian assumptions about young women" (Tomalin 126). For Tomalin, it is the character of Bathsheba in particular who "challenges Victorian assumptions" of womanhood and femininity (126). Tomalin argues that Bathsheba "is autonomous, active, prepared to choose her own men and possessed of a strong erotic will of her own, characteristics usually allocated to bad women in nineteenth-century fiction" (126). For Tomalin, Hardy reverses the tenets of patriarchy: he takes the "bad wom[a]n"—the fallen woman—and makes her the heroine of the "warmest and sunniest of his novels" (126). Hardy comments on this decision in a letter written in response to one of his female readers in November of 1874 (the same year in which the novel was published). In

his letter, Hardy writes, “I had an idea that Bathsheba, with all of her errors, was not devoid of honesty [...] I must add that no satire on the sex is intended in any case by the imperfections of my heroines” (Purdy and Millgate I: 33). Hardy chooses to create his heroines as imperfect, and thus as realistic; in spite of his heroines’ “imperfections,” Hardy nevertheless defends them rather than judges them: just as Tess is pure, Bathsheba is honest (33). Neither heroine is perfect, but they are yet beloved and defended by Hardy: “I myself, I must confess, have no great liking for the perfect woman [in] fiction” (33). Hardy’s “honest” creation of Bathsheba’s character—his decision to make her “real” rather than patriarchally “perfect”—thus challenges the tenets of patriarchy, specifically those of female passivity and the concept of women as property; no one, at least for the majority of the novel, owns Bathsheba but herself (33).

Through Bathsheba Everdene, Thomas Hardy writes as a proto-feminist: he creates a character who successfully challenges the conventions of patriarchy—and wins.²⁴ Like Tess, Bathsheba spends the entirety of *Far From the Madding Crowd* resisting the patriarchy. As Shazia Ghulam Mohammad and Abdus Salam Khalis note in “Archetypal Patterns in Thomas Hardy’s Depiction of Women,” “no other woman, in the Victorian culture, would behave in a way Bathsheba behaves. [...] Bathsheba is a woman of iron nerves [...] Only a woman of exceptional will power can do such challenging tasks which Bathsheba undertakes” (10). To support their argument that Bathsheba behaves singularly for a woman in Victorian England—that she resists the system of patriarchy—Mohammad and Khalis cite instances from the novel in which Bathsheba rejects the institution of marriage, “fight[s] her own battles,” behaves like her male counterparts while amongst them, rides horses across the countryside unaccompanied, and

²⁴ The term “proto-feminist,” as it specifically relates to Thomas Hardy’s *Far From the Madding Crowd*, was suggested to me by Dr. Jolanta Wawrzycka.

“is not given to blushes or shyness,” i.e., she does not perpetuate femininity (10).²⁵ Tomalin argument agrees with Mohammad’s and Khalis’s assessment of the strength of Bathsheba’s character. Tomalin writes that through Bathsheba’s character, Hardy offers “a picture of what he most admired in a woman: strength, high spirits, passion, and the power to recover from setbacks and mistakes” (127). However, in spite of her “iron nerves” and her “strength, high spirits, [and] passion,” Bathsheba’s acts of resistance against the systemic patriarchy fail her time and time again (Mohammad and Khalis 10; Tomalin 127). She does not, like Tess, resist the patriarchy by choosing death, but her acts of resistance nevertheless result in a death: the death of her independence. It is thus only when Bathsheba stops resisting the patriarchy and, instead, *renegotiates* the ideologies of patriarchy altogether that she is able to not only survive, but to *thrive* independently against the dominant discourse. Ultimately, Bathsheba trades resistance for renegotiation, and it is this choice that allows her to survive through the end of her novel—something that Tess is not able to do.

When Bathsheba’s and Gabriel’s relationship initially begins, it conforms to the expectations of patriarchy: Gabriel meets Bathsheba, and he proposes to her shortly thereafter. Gabriel determines that he will ““make [Bathsheba his] wife, or upon [his] soul [he] shall be good for nothing!”” (Hardy 34). Bathsheba, however, resists this patriarchal expectation of marriage; she insists that she will not marry Gabriel, because she does not love him. Additionally, Bathsheba declines Gabriel’s offer of marriage from a position of practicality. Bathsheba tells Gabriel, “[Y]ou are better off than I. I have hardly a penny in the world—I am staying with my aunt for my bare sustenance. I am better educated than you—and I don’t love you a bit” (40). In spite of Bathsheba’s practical arguments against their union, Gabriel

²⁵ In spite of Hardy’s decision to create a character that works against the ideology of patriarchy during the Victorian Era, *Far From the Madding Crowd* “met with a success which [...] exceeded [...] anticipation” (Purdy and Millgate I: 34).

continues to seek her acceptance to his proposal, declaring that he is “content to be liked” by Bathsheba if she is unable to marry him out of love (40). However, Bathsheba continues to resist the patriarchal expectation of marriage in her conversation with Gabriel; not only does she reject Gabriel’s proposal, but she rejects the institution of marriage altogether: “I *hate* to be thought men’s property in that way [...] I shouldn’t mind being a bride at a wedding, if I could be one without having a husband. [...] I shan’t marry” (38-39). Bathsheba, by rejecting the entire institution of marriage here, also rejects Gabriel as a potential future husband. Gabriel ends their conversation “firmly” by saying that he will ask Bathsheba to marry him “no more” (41).

After Bathsheba refuses both Gabriel’s marriage proposal and the institution of marriage altogether, she is fortunate enough to inherit her uncle’s farm. This inheritance and consequential ownership of land is another moment where Bathsheba resists the ideology of patriarchy; she refuses to hire a male bailiff, and, instead, she decides to run the farm herself: “Now, before I begin, men,’ said Bathsheba, ‘I have two matters to speak of. [...] I have formed a resolution to have no bailiff at all, but to manage everything with my own head and hands” (86). Bathsheba’s announcement to her farm-employees, the majority of whom are men, that she will be managing the farm alone and as a woman is greeted with “an audible breath of amazement” (86). Clearly, in this patriarchal society, Bathsheba’s male workers are not accustomed to working underneath the employment of a woman. Bathsheba is fully aware of the irregularity of her position, however, and she addresses it with authority from the beginning: “Now mind, you have a mistress instead of a master. [...] Don’t any unfair ones among you [...] suppose that because I’m a woman I don’t understand the difference between bad goings-on and good” (91). Bathsheba not only establishes her position as an authority figure here, but she likewise establishes her position as an authority figure who does, indeed, know something about

farming; she knows the difference “between bad goings-on and good” in terms of farming and in terms of the work of her farm employees. Further, Bathsheba establishes herself as an authority figure who will likewise be involved in the farming process alongside of her employees. Bathsheba informs them, “I shall be up before you are awake; I shall be afield before you are up; and I shall have breakfasted before you are afield. In short, I shall astonish you all” (92). Bathsheba is determined to not just be an authority figure, but to be an authority figure that nevertheless works alongside of her employees. In this conversation with her workers, Bathsheba breaks down gender and class divisions; she resists the patriarchy by being a female authority figure, and she resists class divisions by working in the fields alongside of her farmhands. It is important to note that Gabriel resists the patriarchy here as well. After Bathsheba rejects his marriage proposal, Gabriel, through an act of fate, becomes one of the male workers employed on Bathsheba’s farm. The gender roles are thus reversed here: Bathsheba has the control, the authority, in her relationship with Gabriel at this point in the novel.

However, the same cannot be said about Bathsheba’s relationship with Sergeant Frank Troy; it is Troy, and not Bathsheba, who has the agency in their relationship. Bathsheba first meets Troy when he is walking near her farm late one evening: “His sudden appearance was to darkness what the sound of a trumpet is to silence” (172). The pair runs into each other in the dark of night, and they become entangled together. It is Troy, and not Bathsheba, who assumes the active role in their first encounter: “I’ll unfasten you in one moment, miss,” (172). Bathsheba resists Troy’s active role throughout their initial encounter (“O no—I can do it, thank you,’ she hastily replied”), but her resistance to Troy—and to the patriarchal control that he represents—fails repeatedly (172). In spite of her attempts at resistance, Troy dominates this entire first meeting with Bathsheba: “He looked hard into her eyes when she raised them for a

moment; Bathsheba looked down again, for his gaze was too strong to be received point-blank with her own” (173). Troy controls Bathsheba with the “male gaze,” and she crumbles beneath his influence (837).²⁶ Further throughout this interaction, Troy silences Bathsheba repeatedly: “She closed her lips in a determined silence,” “Bathsheba really knew not what to say,” and “She made no reply” (Hardy 174-5). Even though Troy dominates his initial interaction with Bathsheba, Bathsheba initiates leaving the interaction: “[R]eaching a distance of twenty or thirty yards, [she] turned about, and ran indoors” (175). Unfortunately, Bathsheba feels as if she needs to run away from Troy, but she nevertheless initiates the leaving process, thus reclaiming a bit of control over the situation and her relationship with Troy.

However, Bathsheba’s agency in her relationship with Troy does not last.²⁷ Troy regains control over Bathsheba by metaphorically raping her.²⁸ Troy persuades Bathsheba to come, alone, and watch him perform his military sword routine in “the hollow amid the ferns” (194). The pair are, indeed, outside for Troy’s sword routine, but they are nevertheless in an enclosed and isolated space. As she lives in Victorian England, it is not socially acceptable for a woman to be alone with an unmarried man; as such, Bathsheba attempts to bring Liddy, her friend and

²⁶ In Laura Mulvey’s “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” Mulvey writes that the “male gaze” is able to “project[t] its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*” (Mulvey 837). Further, Mulvey argues that the “male gaze” divides the male from the female: the man is active (he does the looking) and the female is passive (she is the object of the “male gaze”) (837). In this scene between Troy and Bathsheba, even though the pair is tangled together in the dark, Troy enforces his “male gaze” onto Bathsheba’s figure (837). Troy thanks Bathsheba for “the sight of such a beautiful face,” he repeatedly calls her “Beauty,” he notices her “light fingers,” and he tells Bathsheba that he has “never seen a woman so beautiful” before (Hardy 173-4). Here, Troy does the looking (active), and Bathsheba’s body is the object of his “male gaze” (passive) (Mulvey 837).

²⁷ In contrast to my argument that Bathsheba loses her agency in her relationship with Troy, in “*Far From the Madding Crowd: Bathsheba’s Tale of Resistance to Appropriation*,” Shazia Ghulam Mohammad and Abdus Salam Khalis write that “Troy’s devious ways wins [Bathsheba] over” (442). Their argument that Troy “wins [Bathsheba] over” implies that Bathsheba does, in fact, have agency in her relationship with Troy; indeed, it implies that Bathsheba chooses to engage in a relationship with Troy (442).

²⁸ Just as Alec gains physical and ultimately financial control over Tess by raping her, so does Troy by metaphorically raping Bathsheba here (see discussion about Troy’s and Bathsheba’s resulting marriage, which begins on page 46).

her servant, along with her to the ferns. She notably asks for Troy's permission to bring a companion with her to the ferns: "I must bring Liddy too. Might I not?" (192). Predictably, Troy does not "see why [Bathsheba would] want to bring her," and consequently, Bathsheba, with "an unconscious look of assent," comes to the ferns and to Troy alone (192).

Bathsheba arrives at the designated meeting spot, and already the language for this scene is overtly sexual: "trembling and panting [...] her breath came and went quickly, her eyes shone with an infrequent light. Yet go she must" (194). The scene is set for a sexual encounter between Bathsheba and Troy, but the sexual nature of the scene transforms into a predatory nature when Troy unsheathes his sword for the military routine. Troy's sword "gleamed a sort of greeting, like a living thing" (195). It is evident that Troy's "living" sword that "greet" Bathsheba in the ferns is a phallic metaphor (194). When demonstrating and describing his "sword" routine for Bathsheba, Troy uses phallic words such as "thrust," "thrusting," and "points"; he uses the word "cut," which implies a violent and bloody opening; and he uses the word "pursuing," which obviously implies a chase of some sort (195). Bathsheba's response to this first segment of Troy's "sword" demonstration further gives this sexual scene a violent and predatory tone; she responds simply with, "How murderous and bloodthirsty!" (195).

Troy is not satisfied with this initial and brief demonstration of his "sword" play; indeed, he will not be satisfied until he demonstrates his "sword" play directly on Bathsheba. Troy begins the second part of his "sword" play by saying, "Now I'll be more interesting, and let you see some loose play—giving all the cuts and points [...] quicker than lightning, and as promiscuously—with just enough rule to regulate instinct and yet not to fetter it. You are my antagonist" (195). Again, Troy's language here is filled with images of sex and violence: "loose play," "points," "promiscuously," and the concept of "instinct" all reference either the act of sex

or the phallic sexual organ, and “cuts” and “antagonist” refer to images of violence (195). Within this linguistic-framework of sex and violence, the second half of Troy’s “sword” demonstration involves Troy waving his sword within “one hair’s breadth, or perhaps two” of Bathsheba’s body (195). Before beginning the second half of his routine, Troy “tests” Bathsheba to see if she will permit him to continue his routine: “Now just to learn whether you have pluck enough to let me do what I wish, I’ll give you a preliminary test” (196). It is significant that Troy does not ask Bathsheba’s permission to perform the second half of his routine here; instead, he “tests” her to see if she has enough “pluck” to “let” him do what he wants to her (196). Since Troy is going to “do what [he] wish[es]” with Bathsheba, then she is not, in fact, “let[ting]” him “do what [he] wish[es]”—he is going to do it regardless of whether or not she “lets” him do it (196). And thus within this context of sex, violence, and dominance, Troy begins his “sword” routine on Bathsheba: “[T]he next thing of which she was conscious was that the point and blade of the sword were darting with a gleam towards her left side, just above her hip; then of their reappearance on her right side, emerging as it were from between her ribs, having apparently passed through her body” (196). Troy’s “sword” appears to have “passed through [Bathsheba’s] body” here—an image of penetration (196). Although Troy insists that he has “not touched” Bathsheba, she nevertheless responds with an ““Oh!”” of shock and inquires of Troy, ““Whatever have you done!”” (196). Troy ignores Bathsheba’s fear (she has “cried out in affright, pressing her hand to her side”), and continues his “sword” play after promising that he ““will not only not hurt [her], but not once touch [her]”” as well (196).

It is in this third act of Troy’s “sword” play that he metaphorically rapes Bathsheba. Troy’s identity as a predator is most noticeable here in this scene: “[H]ad it been possible for the edge of the sword to leave in the air a permanent substance wherever it flew past, the space

let untouched would have been almost a mould of Bathsheba's figure [...] his eye nevertheless always keenly measuring her breadth and outline, and his lips tightly closed in sustained effort" (197). All the while Troy is actively thrusting his "sword" here in his "sustained effort," Bathsheba is complying with Troy's demand; she is standing passively "still as a statue" lest she be cut with his "sword" (196-7). Unfortunately for Bathsheba, and without her prior knowledge or permission, Troy nevertheless decides to "cut" Bathsheba with his "sword": "That outer loose lock of hair wants tidying," he said, before she had moved or spoken. 'Wait: I'll do it for you.' An arc of silver shone on her right side: the sword had descended. The lock dropped to the ground" (197). Troy forcefully, violently, without Bathsheba's consent, cuts off her hair—violates her body.²⁹ It is after this moment that Bathsheba is fully afraid of Troy, particularly as he attempts to cut off another lock of her hair. She says in response to his demand, "O, you have spoilt my hair! [...] No—no! I am afraid of you—indeed I am!" (197). However, Troy does not heed Bathsheba's "no" here, and he again thrusts his "sword" onto her personhood after demanding that she holds still while he performs: "I am only going to kill that caterpillar settling on you. Now: still!" (197). Troy uses his "sword" to remove a caterpillar from Bathsheba's dress, even though she explicitly argues against his touching her with his "sword" again. During this final performance of his "sword," Bathsheba is convinced that Troy kills her: "She saw the point glisten towards her bosom, and seemingly enter it. Bathsheba closed her eyes in the full persuasion that she was killed at last" (197). This second, and final, image of penetration and the phrase "killed at last" imply sex and orgasm—but it is not Bathsheba who orgasms; rather, it is

²⁹ Troy's violation of Bathsheba here is reminiscent of the Baron's violation of Belinda in Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock." Just as Troy slices off a lock of Bathsheba's hair with his sword without Bathsheba's consent, in "The Rape of the Lock," the Baron cuts off a lock of Belinda's hair with a pair of scissors without her consent: "The meeting Points the sacred Hair dissever / From the fair Head, for ever and for ever!" (Pope 53). Further, Belinda's reaction is similar to Bathsheba's reaction; like Bathsheba, Belinda cries out after her "rape": "And Screams of Horror rend th' affrighted Skies" (53).

Troy (197). It is only after this final act of penetration that Troy sheaths his “sword”: “Troy returned the weapon to the scabbard” (198).

Not only does Troy metaphorically rape Bathsheba by violently removing a lock of her hair, but he takes the lock of hair with him when he leaves Bathsheba among the ferns: “‘I must leave you now,’ said Troy softly. ‘And I’ll venture to take and keep this in remembrance of you’” (198).³⁰ Bathsheba’s stolen lock of hair here is, perhaps, metaphorical for her stolen virginity and, as it is nineteenth century England, her stolen virtue and innocence as well. It is thus because of Troy that Bathsheba, in spite of her efforts to resist him, becomes a fallen woman: “She felt powerless to withstand or deny him. He was altogether too much for her, and Bathsheba seemed as one who, facing a reviving wind, finds it blow so strongly that it stops the breath” (198). Troy takes advantage of Bathsheba’s powerlessness and breathlessness here; he kisses her shocked and seated body before leaving her in the ferns. His unwanted and unprecedented kiss leaves Bathsheba, if possible, weaker than she was before the kiss: “That minute’s interval had brought the blood beating into her face, set her stinging as if aflame to the very hollows of her feet [...] It had brought upon her a stroke resulting [...] in a liquid stream—here a stream of tears” (198-9). Bathsheba, like Tess when Alec rapes her, is left alone in the wilderness, weak and in tears. And, worse, she is left blaming herself for Troy’s violation: “She felt like one who has sinned a great sin” (199). Troy metaphorically rapes Bathsheba, and yet it is Bathsheba who perceives herself as fallen; it is Bathsheba who feels as if she has “sinned” (199).³¹

³⁰ In Pope’s “The Rape of the Lock,” the Baron, at least temporarily, keeps Belinda’s lock of hair as well: “Let Wreaths of Triumph now my Temples twine, / (The Victor cry’d) the glorious Prize is mine!” (54).

³¹ Claire Tomalin, quoting J. M. Barrie, notes, “‘Never until Troy was shown at work had we learned from fiction how such a being may mesmerize a bewitching and clever woman into his arms’” (Tomalin 131). Of course, I disagree with Barrie’s word choice of “mesmerize” here; Troy does not “mesmerize” Bathsheba—he manipulates her (131).

This is not the first time that Troy's sexual actions have resulted in a woman being fallen; like Bathsheba, Fanny Robin also becomes Troy's victim. Troy and Fanny have a sexual encounter. The reader does not know if this encounter was repetitive in nature or a one time experience, or even if the sex was consensual; regardless, sex prior to or outside of marriage in the nineteenth century would have classified the woman in the encounter as fallen. This sexual experience thus results in Fanny tracking down Troy at his barracks and asking him when they will be married: "It weighs me to the earth. It makes me say what ought to be said first by you [...] when shall we be married, Frank?" (96). Troy seemingly reluctantly agrees to marry Fanny, but the wedding never takes place. Due to a misunderstanding, he arrives at All Saints' Church to marry Fanny while at the same time, Fanny arrives at All Souls' Church to marry him. While waiting for Fanny to arrive, not yet aware of the misunderstanding, Troy experiences the embarrassment of the female members of the church watching him wait: "'Tis a wedding!' murmured some of the women, brightening. Let's wait!" (122). Troy waits for Fanny with the women watching him in the church, but she never shows. While he is waiting, Troy is humiliated by Fanny's absence: "I wonder where the woman is!' a voice whispered again. There began now that slight shifting of feet, that artificial coughing among several [...] at length there was a titter [...] titters and giggling became more frequent" (123). His pride wounded, his lips "compressed," Troy abandons his post at the church after standing in wait for an hour (123). Fanny finally arrives at the church when Troy is leaving, but it is too late: "The expression of her face, which had been one of intense anxiety, sank at the sight of his nearly to terror. [...] 'O Frank—I made a mistake!—I thought that church with the spire was All Saints' [...] I waited [...] and found then that I was in All Souls' [...] I thought it could be tomorrow as well'" (124). Troy, his pride wounded and his resolve to marry Fanny consequently diminished, decides not to

marry Fanny after all. Before leaving Fanny standing alone in the square, Troy tells her, ““You fool, for so fooling me! But say no more. [...] I don’t go through that experience again for some time, I warrant you!”” (124).

On the other hand, Bathsheba is able to do what Fanny Robin is unable to accomplish: she attempts to reject her status of a fallen woman by going after Troy and marrying him. Prior to their getting married, and after assaulting Bathsheba in the ferns, Troy leaves for Bath, and he “had also kissed her a second time” prior to his leaving (207). Troy’s second kiss with Bathsheba further establishes her position as passive and his as active in their relationship; Hardy writes that Troy “kissed her” rather than “they kissed” or even “she kissed him” (207). It is during Troy’s absence in Bath that Bathsheba, for the first time in the novel, discovers how weak she has become since the beginning of their acquaintance: ““My poor life and heart, how weak I am!” she moaned, [...] “O, 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 [...] What shall I come to! I suppose I shall get further and further into troubles”” (209-10). Determined to avoid getting “further and further into troubles,” Bathsheba resolves to follow Troy to Bath and break off contact with him once and for all (210). Bathsheba begins her journey to Bath alone and in the middle of the night (“It was most venturesome for a woman, at night, and alone”), and it is directly because of this decision that Bathsheba, rather than ending her relationship with Troy, ends up marrying him (228). Bathsheba later tells Gabriel about her decision to marry Troy: ““I was alone in a strange city, and the horse was lame. [...] 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”” (265).

However, Bathsheba does not only marry Troy out of a wish to avoid scandal for her decision to travel to see him alone or for her fallen-experience in the ferns; she marries Troy because he pressures her into the union. Bathsheba tells Gabriel the rest of the story: ““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”” (265). Bathsheba tells Gabriel that Troy would have abandoned her if she did not “at once bec[o]me his,” but it is unclear whether or not Troy’s insistence that Bathsheba “at once bec[o]mes his” refers to his desire to own her as a wife, to have sex with her and own her as a sex object, or both (265). Bathsheba, “grieved and troubled” and in a state “between jealousy and distraction,” thus agrees to marry Troy (265). Gabriel says nothing at the end of Bathsheba’s story, which leads to her hurriedly saying, ““He was not to blame, for it was perfectly true about—about his seeing somebody else”” (265). Again, rather than rightfully blaming Troy for his manipulation and mistreatment of her, Bathsheba here appears to blame herself; if it is not Troy’s fault “about his seeing somebody else,” then the conclusion, for Bathsheba, is that it is her fault (265).³² Regardless, Bathsheba succeeds where Fanny failed: she and Troy marry, and her status as a fallen woman is consequently mended: “[S]he had agreed to marry him; but the perception that had accompanied her happiest hours on this account was rather that of self-sacrifice than of promotion and honour” (286). Bathsheba commits an act of “self-sacrifice” in terms of her independence as an unmarried woman with an income, but she also commits an act of societal self-preservation by marrying Troy; she is, seemingly, no longer fallen through her marriage (286). Like Tess’s acts of resistance in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, Bathsheba’s act of resistance

³² Similarly to Bathsheba’s self-blame here, Tess blames herself for Angel Clare’s mistreatment of her after their marriage. After revealing her past with Alec to Angel, and after Angel refuses to forgive Tess, Tess calls herself “wicked,” and she claims that although she is Angel’s legal wife, she has “no right” to live with him (*Tess of the D’Urbervilles* 249).

here—her marriage to Troy to resist her status as fallen—ultimately fails. Bathsheba resists one patriarchal construct (that of the fallen woman) only to fall into the trap of another patriarchal construct: marriage. Thus, even through her acts of resistance, Bathsheba is unable to escape from her interpellation into the patriarchy.

However, when Bathsheba and Troy get married, the union robs Bathsheba of her former independence and forces her to succumb to patriarchal necessities. For example, in his new position as her husband, Troy now has access to all of Bathsheba's money—and he freely and repeatedly takes advantage of this access: “Frank, [...] 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. We shall have to leave the farm; that will be the end of it!” (272). Troy's gambling problem (with the money earned from Bathsheba's farm, no less) nearly ruins Bathsheba's livelihood. Further, Bathsheba's freedom of mobility is threatened by Troy's new position as her husband. Prior to their marriage, Bathsheba did not hesitate to travel alone; now, not only is Troy constantly by her side, but he dictates her every move. It is now Troy who drives and directs the carriage (“She was sitting listlessly in the second seat of the gig [...] he held the reins and whip”), and it is now Troy who determines where Bathsheba goes (“Walk the horse to the top [...] Do you hear? Clk—Poppet!”) (271; 273).

In spite of resisting her society's perception of her status as fallen through her marriage to Troy, and in addition to her consequential loss of independence, Bathsheba remains trapped within Troy's manipulation and control. When Bathsheba confronts Troy about his gambling addiction, he responds by threatening her: “Bathsheba, [...] don't go too far, or you may have cause to regret something” (283). After threatening her, Troy admits to Bathsheba that there has been a woman before her and that he thus regrets their marriage. Bathsheba responds to his

threats and to his admission of inconstancy with her own admission: ““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!”” (286). Bathsheba, with “mournful astonishment,” admits to Troy that she is “content” with any treatment that does not constitute abuse, no matter how closely it resembles abuse; “like a caged leopard,” Bathsheba is no longer “independent and spirited” (286). Within her marriage to Troy, although her society no longer perceives her as fallen, Bathsheba is not her own person; she has lost control over her own life: “She was conquered; but she would never own it as long as she lived” (286).

Bathsheba has been “conquered” into patriarchal submission by her relationship with Troy; it is this reality of being “conquered” coupled with internalized patriarchy that forces Bathsheba to still identify as Troy’s victim—as fallen: “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” (286). Bathsheba’s fall and her attempts at resisting her fall through marriage result in her loss of pride and happiness in her “position as a woman” and in her feelings of self-hatred (286). Bathsheba regrets her marriage, and she “bitterly remembers” her life before her introduction and marriage to Troy: “[S]he had never, by look, word, or sign, encouraged a man to approach her [...] she had felt herself sufficient to herself, and had in the independence of her girlish heart fancied there was a certain degradation in renouncing the simplicity of a maiden existence to become the humbler half of an indifferent matrimonial whole” (287). Bathsheba attempts to resist the patriarchal status of “fallen” by falling into another patriarchal expectation: matrimony. And, unfortunately for Bathsheba, not only does she marry, but she marries

someone who is cruel rather than “indifferent”; she has become the very “slave”—the woman who becomes a “slave [to] the first good-looking young fellow who should choose to salute [her]”—for which, prior to her fall and her marriage, she had held a “secret contempt” (286). Of course, it is not actually Bathsheba’s fault that she is now trapped in a loveless, abusive marriage—that she is legally dependent upon the man who caused her fall in the first place and who is now causing her financial ruin and emotional turmoil—but, due to her interpellation into patriarchal constructs, Bathsheba is no longer able to objectively see that it is not her fault. For Bathsheba, although her marriage to Troy outwardly mended her societal-perceived status as fallen, inwardly, she still identifies as fallen because she has lost her independence and sense of self-worth through her marriage; in a sense, she has lost everything that makes her Bathsheba: “Bathsheba had begun to know what suffering was. [...] ‘I can hardly say why I have taken so to crying lately; I never used to cry’” (288-304).

Consequently, Bathsheba has the unfortunate realization that although she resisted the social status of a fallen woman by marrying Troy, she is, in reality, no different from Fanny. Like Fanny and Troy’s relationship, Bathsheba’s relationship with Troy leaves Bathsheba in a fallen-state and kills everything that effectively makes Bathsheba the previously strong and independent woman that she was prior to meeting Troy: “Bathsheba was lonely and miserable now [...] her loneliness then was to that of the present time as the solitude of a mountain is to the solitude of a cave” (304-5). While Bathsheba’s sense of fallen-ness is solitary and internal, Fanny’s status as fallen is overwhelmingly solitary and *external*; Bathsheba suffers a death of her identity, independence, and happiness, but Fanny actually dies. Abandoned by Troy and pregnant with his child, Fanny is forced to survive in isolation and in poverty, conditions that result in bodily weakness and illness: “At length her onward walk dwindled to the merest totter,

and she opened a gate within which was a haystack. Underneath this she sat down and presently slept” (275). Fanny struggles to hold on to her life, but she is ultimately unable to survive her pregnant, impoverished, and abandoned condition; she and her child both die: “[Gabriel] looked again, as he had looked before, at the chalk writing upon the coffin-lid. The scrawl was this simple one, ‘*Fanny Robin and child*’” (303).

For Bathsheba, Fanny’s death becomes proof of Troy’s past inconstancy with Fanny—and it becomes analogous for her own experiences with Troy. Like Fanny, Bathsheba is abandoned here by Troy for the corpse of his past lover: “[B]ending over Fanny Robin, he gently kissed her, as one would kiss an infant asleep to avoid awakening it” (311). Bathsheba cries out and beseeches Troy not to kiss Fanny and to kiss her, his legal wife, instead, but he ignores her, insisting that he will kiss Fanny rather than Bathsheba. Troy further blames Bathsheba for their marriage, and he pledges his undying love to Fanny’s corpse:

“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! I deserve to live in torment for this!” He turned to Fanny then. “But never mind, darling,” he said; “in the sight of Heaven you are my very, very wife!” (312)

Not only does Troy pledge his love for the dead Fanny in the presence of his living wife here, but he also blames Bathsheba for their entire relationship. He assaults Bathsheba in the ferns, and yet accuses her of tempting him with her looks; he initiates their relationship, but he blames Bathsheba for being flirtatious; essentially, Troy accuses and blames Bathsheba for taking the active role in their relationship, even though she almost exclusively occupies the passive role

(312). Bathsheba, with “measureless despair and indignation,” responds to Troy’s accusations and commitment to Fanny with a question: ““If she’s—that,—what—am I?”” (313).

Presumably, Bathsheba is asking what her status with Troy is here now that he has declared that it is Fanny, and not Bathsheba, who is his true wife. Troy tells Bathsheba, ““You are nothing to me—nothing [...] A ceremony before a priest doesn’t make a marriage. I am not morally yours”” (313). Just as Troy abandons Fanny outside of the church, he abandons Bathsheba here as her husband.

Through her parallel experiences with Fanny—both women are manipulated by Troy, experience sexual encounters with Troy, become fallen women because of Troy, become abandoned by Troy, and both, in a sense, die from their relationships with Troy—Bathsheba consequently comes to the conclusion that, like Fanny, she has been Troy’s victim the entire time: ‘And that this woman is your victim; and I not less than she’” (312). Thus, Bathsheba realizes that neither resistance to nor conformity with the ideology of patriarchy—the ideology that creates the concept of the fallen woman—is effective in terms of surviving within the ideology. Indeed, although Bathsheba mends her societal status as a fallen woman by conforming to the patriarchal expectation of marriage, she, like Tess, nevertheless becomes an abandoned wife; Troy disappears after Fanny’s burial, and although he is presumed dead by drowning, possibly suicide, Bathsheba accurately believes otherwise: ““[H]e’s still alive. [...] [W]ouldn’t it have been different, shouldn’t I have heard more, or wouldn’t they have found him [...] [D]eath would have been different from how this is. I am perfectly convinced that he is still alive!”” (340). Like Bathsheba, Fanny is forced to conform to the patriarchal tradition of the fallen and abandoned woman, and it is only after her own death that her status as fallen is removed: “Suppose that Troy had followed Fanny into another world [...] ‘He was hers and she

was his; they should be gone together” (341). Thus, although resistance and conformity are not effective strategies for escaping the system of patriarchy, in this instance, death is; unlike Tess, Fanny escapes patriarchy—escapes the status and realities of a fallen woman—through her death.

However, through Bathsheba’s character, Hardy is not satisfied with death as a solution to the patriarchy: “Bathsheba indulged in contemplations of escape from her position by immediate death [...] Yet even this scheme of extinction by death was but tamely copying her rival’s [Fanny’s] method” (309). Instead of choosing to resist, to conform, or to die, Bathsheba chooses to renegotiate the tenets of patriarchy all together. Ironically, her relationship with Gabriel becomes symbolic of her renegotiation of the patriarchy. Unlike with Troy, Bathsheba has always had agency in her relationship with Gabriel, and this agency continues after Troy’s presumed death. It is Bathsheba, and not Gabriel, who initiates the romantic nature of their relationship this time: “She tapped nervously, and then thought it doubtful if it were right for a single woman to call upon a bachelor who lived alone” (406).³³ Bathsheba assumes the traditionally masculine role here by traveling to Gabriel’s house (active/masculine) and initiating conversation with Gabriel, who sits alone in the domestic sphere (passive/feminine). When Bathsheba enters Gabriel’s house, both she and Gabriel continue to perform the opposite gender roles: Gabriel as host and entertainer in the private domestic sphere and Bathsheba as active traveler from the outside public sphere. Bathsheba’s masculine invasion of Gabriel’s feminine domestic space causes the pair to become aware that they have, indeed, swapped gender roles:

³³ This scene is in stark contrast with Bathsheba’s decision to chase after Troy, also “a bachelor [...] alone,” prior to their marriage earlier in the novel (Hardy 406). Bathsheba goes after Troy in order to (from her perspective) right a wrong; here, with Gabriel, Bathsheba has done nothing wrong, and yet she worries that her actions will be perceived as socially unacceptable.

It was very odd to these two persons, who knew each other passing well, that the mere circumstance of their meeting in a new place and in a new way should make them so awkward and constrained. In the fields, or at her house, there had never been any embarrassment; but now that Oak had become the entertainer their lives seemed to be moved back again to the days when they were strangers. (407)

While Bathsheba's and Gabriel's "lives seemed to be moved back again to the days when they were strangers" due to their newly assumed gender roles, I contend that Hardy reverses this scene in Gabriel's house with the scene in Bathsheba's aunt's house where Gabriel first proposes marriage to Bathsheba (407). Just as Bathsheba and Gabriel now sit around his fire awkwardly, Gabriel and Bathsheba's aunt likewise sat around her fire awkwardly. Gabriel visits Bathsheba's aunt with the premise of bringing Bathsheba a lamb, but really his motive is to ask for Bathsheba's hand in marriage: "The lamb isn't really the business I came about, Mrs. Hurst. In short, I was going to ask her if she'd like to be married" (36). Gabriel, this time assuming the masculine role, invades the female-dominated domestic space of Bathsheba and her aunt with his proposal of marriage. Conforming to the patriarchy by asking Bathsheba to marry him in this way, Gabriel is rejected: "Well, there's no use in my waiting, for that was all I came about: so I'll take myself off home-along, Mrs. Hurst" (36).

However, when Gabriel and Bathsheba swap gender roles, they are able to unite romantically and as equal partners. Rather than perpetuate the patriarchy by Bathsheba waiting passively in the domestic sphere to be asked and Gabriel actively doing the asking by invading the domestic sphere, Bathsheba asks Gabriel in his domestic sphere. Concerned that he is not renewing his contract to work on her farm for the following year, Bathsheba asks Gabriel why he is leaving. Gabriel responds to her question by informing her he is leaving in order to squash the

rumors that have been spreading about them in the community. Gabriel tells Bathsheba the contents of the rumors—that he is biding his time until she will one day marry him: ““The top and tail o’ t is this—that I’m sniffing about here [...] with a thought of getting you some day”” (407). Bathsheba responds by commenting on the substance of the rumors, arguing that they are “absurd” (408). Gabriel agrees: ““Yes; of course, it is too absurd. I don’t desire any such thing; I should think that was plain enough by this time. Surely, surely you be the last person in the world I think of marrying. It is too absurd, as you say”” (408). Gabriel’s response that he no longer wants to marry Bathsheba, as he did in the beginning of the novel, upsets her, and she tearfully denies ever saying that she thought of their marrying as being “absurd” (408). Gabriel, surprised by Bathsheba’s sudden emotions and now flat denial of her having just said that their marrying would be “absurd,” denies his prior statement against their marrying as well: ““Bathsheba [...] if I only knew one thing—whether you would allow me to love you and win you, and marry you after all—if I only knew that!”” (408). Bathsheba, instead of assuming the feminine role by giving her answer (either a passive “yes” or “no”), actively rebukes Gabriel for not asking her to marry him: ““But you never will know,’ she murmured. [...] Because you never ask”” (408). Bathsheba’s assumption of the active role thus allows her and Gabriel to admit their feelings for one another, although Bathsheba comments on the impropriety of assuming the masculine role under the umbrella of Victorian patriarchy: ““Why, Gabriel, [...] it seems exactly as if I had come courting you—how dreadful!”” (409).

Hardy comments on Bathsheba’s and Gabriel’s equality and partnership, which I argue they are only able to have because of their willingness to reverse their gender roles. Hardy writes, “Theirs was that substantial affection which arises [...] when the two who are thrown together begin first by knowing the rougher sides of each other’s character, and not the best till

further on, the romance growing up in the interstices of a mass of hard prosaic reality” (409). For Hardy, Bathsheba and Gabriel work so beautifully and effectively together because they know each other’s “rougher sides,” but I argue that it is because, knowing how and when to reverse gender roles, Bathsheba and Gabriel form two parts of what Virginia Woolf would call “androgyny” (Hardy 409; Woolf 97). Woolf writes in favor of androgyny, arguing “that it is natural for the sexes to co-operate,” and this naturalness causes Woolf to question “whether there are two sexes in the mind corresponding to the two sexes in the body, and whether they also require to be united in order to get complete satisfaction and happiness” (96-7). In order for Bathsheba and Gabriel “to get complete satisfaction and happiness,” they do, indeed, unite as a unified and equal pair (97). They are able to unite in a true partnership, because they each have what Woolf, quoting Samuel Taylor Coleridge, calls the “androgynous mind” (97). Woolf writes,

[I]n each of us two powers preside, one male, one female; and in the man’s brain the man predominates over the woman, and in the woman’s brain, the woman predominates over the man. The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually co-operating. If one is a man, still the woman part of his brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her. (97)

By assuming the feminine role in the domestic sphere, Gabriel allows “the woman part of his brain” to take over; likewise, when Bathsheba assumes the masculine role by invading the domestic sphere, she allows the man part of her brain to assume control (97). As androgynous individuals, Bathsheba and Gabriel understand both the masculine and the feminine roles because they have both the masculine and feminine pieces inside each of them; as such, they do not perpetuate the patriarchally embedded hierarchy of masculine over feminine, because each

person assumes each role: “This good-fellowship—*camaraderie*—[...] is unfortunately seldom superadded to love between the sexes [...] Where, however, happy circumstances permits its development, the compounded feeling proves itself to be the only love which is strong as death” (Hardy 409). Bathsheba and Gabriel, as an androgynous pairing, thus work together to renegotiate rather than obey or resist the patriarchy; even though one is male and one is female, they are nevertheless equal partners. Because she accepts her androgyny, Bathsheba not only survives the patriarchy, but thrives in it by overtly renegotiating it—and, unlike Tess, she consequently gets a happy ending of life rather than a despairing ending of death: “[T]hese two sensible persons [...] arm-in-arm for the first time in their lives [...] Then Oak laughed, and Bathsheba smiled” (413-15).

Ultimately, through Tess’s rebellion against the patriarchy (even though it is a failed rebellion), and Bathsheba’s successful renegotiation of the patriarchy, Hardy demonstrates that he is, indeed, a proto-feminist novelist. Tess’s and Bathsheba’s rebellions prove that without constant resistance against the patriarchy—and, really, without complete renegotiation of the patriarchy—patriarchy is not an ideology that supports its female subjects; indeed, it is an ideology that perpetually forces women to be subservient subjects rather than dominant Subjects. In a letter written in 1893 (two years after the publication of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* and nineteen years after the publication of *Far From the Madding Crowd*), Hardy gives advice to his friend, Florence Henniker, on writing. Hardy writes, “If you mean to make the world listen to you, you must say now what they will all be thinking & saying five & twenty years hence: & if you do that you must offend your conventional friends” (Purdy and Millgate II: 33). Hardy did indeed “offend his conventional friends,” particularly by the contents of *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*; however, by creating such strong female characters as Tess and Bathsheba, and

by thus demonstrating that the ideology of patriarchy does not and cannot support women, Hardy “[said] [...] what [society would eventually] all be thinking & saying” as the nineteenth century transitioned into the twentieth—and, consequently, he established himself as a proto-feminist writer and as a man generally ahead of his time (33).³⁴

³⁴ Tomalin argues that in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and in Hardy's later novel, *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy “set out to shock and horrify people to force them to take notice of the things he found detestable in society. In *Tess* [and, as I contend, in *Far From the Madding Crowd* through Fanny Robin's character] it had been the double standard and the general view that a woman once ‘fallen’ could not redeem herself” (Tomalin 257). Although Tomalin does not use the phrase “proto-feminist” here, her argument that Hardy found the “double standard” placed on women in patriarchal societies “detestable” (rather than normal or acceptable) supports my argument that Hardy was, indeed, a proto-feminist writer (257).

Conclusion: Teacher

As a student reading (and re-reading) Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* through Norma Greco's practice of "lived experience," I learned how to renegotiate my former identity as "fallen" beneath the "eternal" umbrella of patriarchy (Greco 48; Althusser 240). As a scholar, I found a "model" for "the kin[d] of life that [I] [no longer chose] to live"—a life of a fallen identity—in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, and I found a "model" for "the kin[d] of life that [I] might [...] choose to live"—a life of androgyny—in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (Mendelson xii). Now, moving away from my past as student and as scholar, and looking ahead to my future as a teacher of literature, I have chosen to examine how I will teach Hardy's novels in the college classroom.

Inspired by Greco's successes with her lived experience pedagogy, and because of my own cathartic experiences as a student in Mrs. Hobeika's English class (which was comparable to Greco's lived experience teaching philosophy), I have decided that I, too, will deploy Greco's "lived experience" pedagogy into the literature classroom. In "I Think I'm Falling in Love with this Novel," Greco offers her readers specific methods for teaching *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* as a lived experience. Greco writes, "Hardy's novel engages students in moral reflection and questioning and [...] touches surprisingly on their postmodern lives" (49). As Greco notes, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is relatable to the twenty-first century student; as such, through class discussion and informal writings, Greco argues that *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* offers students a lens through which to examine their own lives—to read the novel as a lived experience. Greco writes,

When students are placed hypothetically in situations as morally ambiguous as Tess's, they examine dilemmas that are real and identifiable. They begin to recognize the limited

choices in life that many people face—situations in which actual freedom is denied by culturally ascribed roles and expectations, poverty, oppression, family responsibilities, and the actions of other people. [...] [S]tudents also begin to understand that decisions and actions may be clouded with such moral ambiguity that no choice is clearly better than another and that, at times, we are all caught in the trap of equally undesirable alternatives. (49)

The “morally ambiguous” “situation” that Greco specifically alludes to here is “Tess’s decision to help her family in the end and rejoin Alec” (49). Greco notes that during class discussion of Tess’s decision to return to Alec, students almost always initially chastise Tess for being “submissive and morally weak” (49). However, Greco asks her students if “they would make sacrifices to help their families,” just as Tess does when she returns to Alec, and “almost all agree that they would” (49). Greco thus uses this scene in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* as an access point for students to examine times in their life when they have had to in the past, or when they might have to in the future, make “morally ambiguous” choices (49). Greco prompts her students with discussion questions: “What kind of sacrifice is one willing to make? To what extent is one willing to sacrifice for others?” (49). Greco has her students debate, reflect, and informally and formally write about these discussion questions and others (49).

Furthermore, Greco’s technique of teaching *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* as a lived experience teaches her students to feel empathy for others—whether it is for Tess as a character or for real people in their own lives. Through their class discussions and writings, Greco encourages her students to think about the limitations Tess experiences as a nineteenth century, lower class woman (49). By examining the inherent obstacles that Tess has to overcome in her society (her class and her gender), and the obstacles that are forced upon her (her status as a

fallen woman and as an abandoned wife and her resulting poverty and desperation), Greco's students are better equipped to empathize with real people who experience such inherent and imposed obstacles. Greco notes that her students thus "realize that many people [like Tess] are not successful in life or even considered moral by cultural standards because of multiple prevailing factors. These factors often mitigate harsh judgments and elicit the need for compassion, charity, and even social change" (49). By reading *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* as a lived experience, Greco teaches her students this "need for compassion, charity, and [...] social change" (49).³⁵

Further, I contend that Greco's lived experience pedagogy as a method for teaching students empathy is imperative in terms of renegotiating the tenets of patriarchy—even though this renegotiation is not Greco's specific goal as a teacher. I have personally experienced the power of teaching empathy in the classroom through literature as a means of at least attempting to renegotiate the tenets of patriarchy. While teaching Alan Moore's graphic novel *Watchmen*, I had my students move their desks into a circle while we discussed the text. As in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, in *Watchmen* one of the female protagonists, Sally, is raped; like Tess, Sally briefly returns to her rapist. While we were discussing this section of the book in our literary circle, I had two of my male students make derogatory and blaming comments on Sally's clothing (she is portrayed as a 1940's "pin-up girl") that she is wearing in her rape scene; additionally, I had several students—male and female—blame Sally for returning to her rapist later in the novel. In attempts to build empathy and to raise awareness in my students, we

³⁵ I contend that reading and teaching *Far From the Madding Crowd* as "lived experience" would likewise teach students to feel empathy and that there is a "need for compassion, charity, and [...] social change" (Greco 49). Class discussions about Fanny Robin's experiences as a fallen, abandoned, and impoverished woman and Bathsheba's "morally ambiguous" decision to marry Troy after his mistreatment of her, for example, would certainly lend themselves as access points for students to examine such empathy-lacking and "morally ambiguous" situations in their own lives (49).

discussed Sally's situation, but we also discussed current college-aged rape statistics. I pointed out to them that, statistically speaking, there were at least four women in our classroom who had experienced sexual assault and at least two men who had likewise been assaulted. Essentially, we discussed everything that Sally experiences as a character in *Watchmen* within the framework of our own twenty-first century patriarchal society: the definition and prevalence of victim-blaming, sexual violence statistics, and the psychological impact sexual violence has on a person, including PTSD and lasting feelings of fear, guilt, and shame. Within this context, our class reading and discussion of *Watchmen* became a lived experience for me and for my students. By the end of that day's class discussion, my two male students who had initially made comments on Sally's outfit admitted that they had never given sexual assault much thought, and they had not thought about their comments as being callous. Further, my students no longer blamed Sally for returning to her rapist or for being raped in the first place; rather, the class empathized with her and with her situation. Just as Greco taught her students through their reading of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* that there is, indeed, a "need for compassion, charity, and [...] social change," my students learned through our reading of *Watchmen* that there is likewise this need—that we need to empathize with each other in general and with those who experience oppression in particular (49). It is thus only through this learned empathy that we can begin to examine and renegotiate the tenets of patriarchy, including the prevalence of sexual assault and victim blaming.

At the conclusion of each of her classes in which she deploys her lived experience pedagogy, Greco asks each of her students to "reflect on their growth as readers and writers during the course" (50). One of Greco's students notes that the lived experience class discussions "eased" her struggles with reading and writing about novels (50). In a reflection, this same student asserts that the lived experience classroom "has helped [her] to look inside [her]self

and to realize so much more about life and who [she is], both as a writer and as a person” (50). Another of Greco’s students “presents herself as a protagonist in her self-reflection in which she chronicles her literary journey as a journey of the self” (50). Yet another of Greco’s students observes that “entering into a text as a ‘human being’ has resulted in an exciting amalgamation of thought and feeling—and stronger writing” (50). As noted in her students’ reflections, Greco argues that teaching literature through lived experience leads to “more engaged and earnest readers and writers, who embrace both the value of fiction and the synthesizing strength of their writing” (51). This growth in students’ reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, in addition to a development of empathy for others and awareness of the self, makes Greco’s lived experience pedagogy ideal for teaching literature. Greco’s practical techniques of having her students keep reading journals, write final papers and informal class writings, and participate in class discussion meet the general expectations of an English class; but it is her specific emphasis on using literature as an access point for students to learn more about themselves and the world around them that has solidified my decision to use Greco’s pedagogical techniques in my future literature classroom.

Alongside of Greco’s lived experience pedagogy, I plan on incorporating the teaching methods described in William Deresiewicz’s *A Jane Austen Education* into my future literature classroom. Deresiewicz writes, “Literary study [...] was not about learning a secret language or mastering a bag of theoretical tricks. [...] It was about getting back in touch with the ways we used to read—the ways people read when they’re reading for fun—but also about intensifying them, making them more thoughtful and deeply informed” (Deresiewicz 99). As Deresiewicz learned during his time as a graduate student, the best method for “getting back in touch with the ways we used to read” was by reading—and writing—constantly (99). Deresiewicz does not

argue in favor of students exclusively writing seminar papers; rather, for Deresiewicz, students should write numerous one page papers on the novels they are reading: “Just [the student] and the book and [...] [a] fiendishly simple question” to guide students’ short papers (99). I agree with Deresiewicz’s argument that short papers should accompany longer seminar papers in the literary classroom. During my time as a master’s student, I learned the most about myself as a writer and as a reader (and retained the most information) when I took courses that required these short weekly papers that accompanied the reading. Deresiewicz further argues for students to trust their responses to the reading in these brief, recurrent papers, but to also examine these responses (99). Regarding this method of reading and responding regularly, Deresiewicz writes, “Feelings are also the primary way we know about novels—which, after all, are training grounds for responding to the world, imaginative sanctuaries in which to hone and test our ethical judgments and choices” (99). Here, Deresiewicz’s insistence that it is through feelings (in tandem with writing) that readers “know about novels” is reminiscent of Greco’s lived experience pedagogy. Like Greco, Deresiewicz asserts that novels are access points and act as a lens for readers to better understand the world around them (99). For both Greco and Deresiewicz, then, reading, writing about, and studying literature is not just about understanding a literary work; it is about understanding life and its intense experiences and feelings. For Deresiewicz, and indeed, for me as a scholar and as a teacher, it is this “curiosity, perplexity, exhilaration; the buzz in the brain, the tumult in the soul”—it is all of these things that students, scholars, and teachers have “to work with”; it is here “where [...] scholarship [and teaching] should start. With the love of reading” (99).

Works Cited

- Althusser, Louis. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses." *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. Translated by Ben Brewster, New Left Books, 1971, pp. 238-50.
- Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." Translated by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1976, pp. 875-93.
- Cook, Jonathan A. "Introduction." *Far From the Madding Crowd*, by Thomas Hardy, Barnes & Noble, 2005, pp. ix-xiii.
- Deresiewicz, William. *A Jane Austen Education: How Six Novels Taught Me about Love, Friendship, and the Things that Really Matter*. Penguin, 2011.
- Dutta, Shanta. "Teaching *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in Kolkata." *Victorian Review*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2012, pp. 29-33.
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Yale U. P., 2000.
- Greco, Norma. "I Think I'm Falling in Love with This Novel." *The English Journal*, vol. 95, no. 6, 2006, pp. 48-51.
- Hardy, Thomas. *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Barnes & Noble, 2005.
- . *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Oxford U.P., 2005.
- Hayden, Rebecca. "Teaching Works We Love: Hazards of the English Classroom." *The English Journal*, vol. 94, no. 4, 2005, pp. 41-44.
- Hooti, Noorbakhsh. "The Apprehensive and Suppressed Soul of the Fallen Woman in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*." *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, vol. 1, no. 6, 2011, pp. 630-4.
- Mead, Rebecca. *My Life in Middlemarch*. Broadway Books, 2014.

- Mendelson, Edward. *The Things that Matter: What Seven Classic Novels have to Say about the Stages of Life*. Anchor Books, 2007.
- Mohammad, Shazia Ghulam and Abdus Salam Khalis. "Archetypal Patterns in Thomas Hardy's Depiction of Women." *PUTAJ—Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2014, pp. 9-15.
- . "Far From the Madding Crowd: Bathsheba's Tale of Resistance to Appropriation." *The Dialogue*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2013, 440-6.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, edited by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, Oxford U.P., 1999, pp. 833-44.
- Pope, Alexander. *The Rape of the Lock*. Edited by Geoffrey Tillotson, Methuen, 1985.
- Purdy, Richard Little and Michael Millgate, editors. *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy: Volume One, 1840-1892*. Oxford U. P., 1978.
- . *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy: Volume Two, 1893-1901*. Oxford U. P., 1980.
- Saleh, Nafiseh Salman. "A Collision of Vice and Virtue in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*: 'A Pure Woman Faithfully Presented' or a Fallen Angel." *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2014, pp. 89-94.
- Tomalin, Claire. *Thomas Hardy*. Penguin, 2007.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. Harcourt, 2005.