

## Thomas Hardy and the History of Friendship Between the Sexes

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Friendship between men and women, as a widely accepted social possibility, is a contemporary phenomenon, one that dates back no farther than the early 20th century. The roots are in 19th century feminism, and it emerged in texts that feminism directly or indirectly produced. At the center—between the two centuries, between Victorian and modern social ideologies, and between liberal and radical phases of the feminist movement—is a novel that complexly engages the challenges of establishing friendships across gender lines: *Jude the Obscure*.

The ancient world knew nothing of friendship between the sexes, the medieval world knew very little, and the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries knew it only as a phenomenon in rarefied social and literary circles. Konstan argues convincingly against the existence of any idea of friendship between men and women, including spouses, in the classical philosophical tradition or in Greek or Roman social practice (70-72, 91, 146). Friendship between the sexes was sanctioned within the context of the new ideal of spiritual friendship in early Christian communities, while epistolary friendships between male and female monastics emerged in the late Middle Ages (McEvoy; McGuire). Women's entry into literary and court circles in post-Renaissance society gave rise to cross-sex friendships among the educated and/or well-born, but they were exceptional (Burke). As standard social practice as well as social ideology, friendship between the sexes appears to have been nonexistent before the 19th century.

The reasons for the absence of friendship between the sexes are in the basic structures of traditional European society: the subordination of women to men; the separation of male and female spheres; the confinement of women to the roles of daughter, wife, and mother. Men and women in traditional society had no opportunity to be friends and no reason to think of one another as potential friends. While cross-cultural comparisons are dangerous, of the many types of friendship Brain describes that are alien to modern assumptions about what that relationship entails, none of them involve the crossing of gender lines. Traditional societies differ in many respects, but this may be one respect in which they rarely or never do. To cite two witnesses of a particular non-Western traditional culture, in *A Passage to India* (1924), E.M. Forster has Aziz "envying the easy intercourse [between men and women] that is only possible in a nation whose women are free" (346), while Arundhati Roy in *The God of Small Things* (1977), says that Margaret, the Englishwoman he will later marry, is "the first female friend" Chacko had ever had, and that it is her self-sufficiency, "remarkable" to him even if not remarkable "in the average Englishwoman," that most draws him to her (233). In this essay, I shall attempt to show

how such friendship became possible in England, and how its development depended on women becoming both "free" and "self-sufficient."

Modern feminism begins with Mary Wollstonecraft (Caine 24), and so does the desire to reestablish gender relations on the basis of friendship. Wollstonecraft's critique of marriage in the *Vindication* centers on the role that sexual passion was supposed to play both in bringing marriages about and in sustaining them. The emphasis on what she calls "love," because it requires young women to devote themselves to arousing male sexual desire, degrades both female education and behavior, forcing women to learn and practice arts better fitted for the seraglio. The best that wives can expect under the prevailing system are "the lordly caresses of a protector." Nor will these last, for "[l]ove, from its very nature, must be transitory." A wife should aspire, instead, to "become the friend, and not the humble dependent of her husband," for "[f]riendship is. . .the most sublime of all affections." Marriages might begin in "love"—sexual desire—but in a good marriage, love will "subside into friendship," for "[f]riendship or indifference inevitably succeeds love." For Wollstonecraft, friendship entails "respect," "regard," and "confidence" as well as "calm tenderness"; if it is ever to be possible between spouses, women must be recognized as rational beings, their faculties and virtues allowed fully to develop (112-20, 170). In short, they must become the equals of men, and their bond with men must become a relationship of equals: friendship.

Because it concerns a relationship that begins in sex, Wollstonecraft's argument, might seem irrelevant to the genesis of contemporary male-female friendship, or what used be called "platonic friendship." In fact, Wollstonecraft specifically warns against such friendships in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, for "if a woman's heart is disengaged," "platonic attachments" easily lead to deeper passions, which circumstances may render disastrous. The fact that the term existed then at all suggests that non-sexual male-female friendships also existed, as Wollstonecraft avers: "Not that I mean to insinuate that there is no such thing as friendship between persons of different sexes; I am convinced of the contrary" (88). But the last clause throws the whole statement into a different light. If true "platonic friendships" were common and accepted as legitimate, Wollstonecraft would hardly need to say that she is "convinced" of their existence. Either she means that she's merely convinced of their possibility, for reasons she will later develop in the *Vindication* with respect to marital friendship, or more likely, that she is convinced, against the general run of opinion, that so-called friendships really can be non-sexual. For, as Luftig points

out, the term “platonic” in this connection was greeted with skepticism, if not sarcasm (22) Luftig is speaking of the 1860’s, but such irony is also present in Austen’s *Lady Susan* (55-56), likely drafted in 1793-94 (9), a text contemporary with Wollstonecraft,

Interestingly, in contemporary usage, the phrase “platonic friendship” is dropping out of the language since non-sexual male-female friendship is becoming accepted as both real and normal. The larger point, however, is that the contemporary situation has arisen through the intermediary of marital friendship. Indeed, even if contemporary discussions of cross-sex friendship leave out marriage, it is common practice to refer to one’s spouse as a “friend,” or even “best friend,” and to one’s lover as a “boyfriend” or “girlfriend”—terms that became established in the 1920’s and that suggest a wider assimilation of the idea that not only could sexual attraction and friendship coexist in the same bond, but that friendship is central to lasting erotic attachment. Once these ideas were established, the notion that men and women could be friends without being sexual at all became widespread. Contrary to what one might think, then, men and women learned to be friends in marriage first, in pre-marital sexual relationships second, and in non-sexual relationships last.

With regard to the emergence of marital friendship as Wollstonecraft and later feminists envisioned it, one needs to address the much-debated phenomenon of companionate marriage. Stone, in his monumental study, argues that an ideal of marriage based on affection, intimacy, and companionship, rather than on patriarchal ownership and subjection, began in England in the 17th century, becoming established by the middle of the 18th (135-38, 325-404). Many of his sources use the language of friendship to express this ideal: “first and dearest friend,” “bosom friend,” “conjugal friendship,” and so forth (327-28). Stone’s critics have argued, however, that his account of companionate marriage places its emergence both too late and too early. In the best-known critique of Stone’s work, MacFarlane shows that evidence of marital affection dates back to at least the 13th century (115), while Hammerton and Spring argue that marital affection does not imply equality or even decent treatment. The second point is the crucial one: companionate marriage may have used the language of friendship, but not in the sense of friendship in its modern usage or the way that Wollstonecraft and other feminists envisioned it. For Hammerton, “[c]ompanionate marriage constituted little more than a conditionally attenuated form of patriarchal marriage,” which was compatible, for example, with physical abuse (270). Stone’s own account is replete with qualifications, chief among them that the ideal of companionate marriage was never meant to challenge husbandly primacy, or what one of his sources calls “the monarchial constitution of matrimony” (342). Nor did that ideal challenge the segregation of social life into male and female spheres, a significant check on intimacy and the development of shared interests,

as some of Stone’s examples demonstrate (400-02). Given that Stone himself posits a reversal of the trend towards greater marital affection in the 19th century (patriarchal authority and the separation of spheres being among the chief pillars of Victorian domestic ideology [Davidoff and Hall 180-92]), one may conclude, with Spring, that there was no increase in marital affection through the 17th and 18th centuries (nor through most of the 19th) and, with Hammerton, that the practice of companionate marriage was a far from the ideal and an even further from anything that would be recognized as friendship in contemporary society.

Still, the literature of companionate marriage spoke the language of friendship, which cannot be dismissed out of hand. Whatever contemporary society, or Wollstonecraft, would have thought, there were 18th-century couples who regarded themselves as friends, and 18th-century writers who regarded friendship as the state towards which marriage should aspire. Reconciling them with the picture of companionate marriage I have just developed compels the recognition that friendship itself was different before the modern period, that that idea of friendship was beginning to change in Wollstonecraft’s time, as registered, among other places, in her writing. The key difference is that, in traditional usage, friendship could subsist between un-equals.

Unequal friendships existed in a variety of medieval contexts (Althoff; Barrow; Goetz); Brain cites cross-cultural examples in his chapter on “lopsided friendships.” In a usage that was still prominent in the 18th century, and survived until well into the 19th, “friends” stood for “relatives, kinsfolk” (OED), especially “that group of influential advisers who usually included most of the senior members of the kin” (Stone 5). A “friend” could thus be a patron, benefactor, or older relative as well as an equal. This background helps explain the language of friendship as it was used in a marital context before Wollstonecraft (and, for a long time after her; things didn’t change because she wanted them to). Given the true nature of companionate marriage at the time, one can conclude that 18th-century husband speaking of his wife as his “friend,” did not mean that she was his friend in the same sense that his male peers were his friends.

In other words, there is no continuity between companionate marriage and either friendship between the sexes in contemporary usage or the marital friendship Wollstonecraft argued for—which is precisely why she had to argue for it. In constructing her picture of a marriage of friends based on equality and mutual respect, she was not only redefining marriage but also she was helping to redefine friendship. The two revisionary acts proceeded from the same impulse: the revolutionary insistence on equality which was an essential characteristics of modernity and a hallmark of its onset. Wollstonecraft’s feminism, as expressed in the *Vindication*, was an extension of the Rights of Man, the belief in universal equality (Caine 4). Her insistence on friendship as a bond between equals, even in a traditionally hierarchical

relationship, was another extension. When, explicating her vision of marital friendship, she refers to friendship as “[t]he most holy band of society,” she is reflecting the Enlightenment belief that society is and should be bound together by horizontal rather than vertical ties. As this belief spread during the 19th century—as society gradually democratized—the hierarchical meanings of friendship died out. It became impossible to think of friends as superiors, or of superiors as friends. By the middle of the century, the notion that friendship required equality was generally accepted (Luftig 34). Wollstonecraft strikes an early note in this transformation, as she strikes the first note in the demand for female liberation. Her idea of marital friendship was a radical break from that of companionate marriage, whatever terms were used to describe it, and starts cross-sex friendship on the way to its contemporary form.

Fiction constituted one means by which questions about women’s place in society were debated between the French Revolution and the rise of an organized feminist movement in the 19th century (Caine 13). Wollstonecraft’s vision of marriage as a friendship of equals was taken up by two of the leading women novelists of the early 19th century, Jane Austen and Maria Edgeworth. Edgeworth in *Belinda* and Austen in most of her works extend Wollstonecraft’s ideas: imagining what marital friendship might look like, imagining the friendship between men and women outside of marriage, and even imagining male-female friendship that is not erotic. These last are always situated within a larger sphere of sociability, a cross-sex circle of adult friends that contrasts to the traditional notion of a hierarchical chain of superiors and dependents. In *Belinda*, the circle of friends coalesces around the Percival household, which while it exemplifies the nascent middle-class domestic ideal (Mason), its commitment to gender equality and rational discourse reflects the Enlightenment. At the meeting place of these two value-systems, in its union of intimacy and reason, stands the ideal of friendship in the novel.

The synthesis did not last. Wollstonecraft, Austen, and Edgeworth’s vision of friendship between the sexes stood little chance against Victorian domestic ideology, which dominated the 1830’s and ‘40’s through the writing of Sarah Ellis and others, and achieved its apotheosis in Coventry Patmore’s *The Angel in the House* (1854-56) (Davidoff and Hall 180-92). Women were seen as delicate creatures innocent of sexual desire, by both nature and duty chaste, passive, silent, and submissive (Harrison 157-58). Their place was the home, their role to create a domestic sphere of peace and moral purity for husband and children alike. Since women were regarded as sexless angels, the love of men for women was supposed to resemble a kind of worship (Houghton 354-55). Companionate marriage as it was known in the previous century—patriarchy in a velvet glove—remained the conjugal ideal (Hammerton 270), though men were expected to spend much more of their leisure time at home and, in their new role as *Paterfamilias*, to be more intimately involved in

supervising both wife and children (Houghton 341-42; Stone 677).

The result was a domestic climate that Stone called “explosive intimacy” (679). There was no room in this ideology for men and women, within marriage or outside it, to form friendships of equals or for women to receive the kind of education that would have made such friendships possible. As Julia Wedgewood wrote in 1869, the closing of careers to women made “friendship between men and women, for average specimens of both, impossible.” In conducting her relations with single men, the single woman had to keep marriage, her only possible “career,” uppermost in her mind. Such friendships exist, Wedgewood says, but as in the 17th and 18th centuries, “they belong only to the exceptions of humanity.” What is more, when domestic interests are the only common ground on which husbands and wives can meet, marriage itself “is apt to grow flat and dull,” becoming a poor thing when compared “with a marriage which is also a friendship” (261-62).

During the second quarter of the 19th century, only a few, isolated voices, generally those of utopian socialists, challenged the sexual status quo. But in the 1850’s and ‘60’s, a feminist movement emerged around demands for reform of divorce and marital-property laws and for improved access to employment and education (Caine 53, 88). Wollstonecraft’s criticisms of marriage and female education, as well as her vision of true marriage as a friendship of equals, were echoed, the same year as Wedgewood’s essay, in John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women*. *The Subjection*, in turn, became the bible of late-19th-century feminism (Cunningham 7). In the 1870’s, through the campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act, which punished prostitutes infected with venereal disease but imposed no sanctions on their clients, the drawing-room gatherings and small committees of genteel mid-century feminism, which had always emphasized its adherence to Victorian codes of propriety, became a large-scale, highly visible, and politically mobilized national movement dedicated to the transformation of society. By the 1890’s, questions of women’s rights and of marriage, gender, and sexuality had become matters of public debate—and not only because of feminism (Caine 108-09, 90-91, 131). It was the age of Decadence and *Degeneration*, of Krafft-Ebbing and Havelock Ellis, of the first London performances of Henrik Ibsen and the trials of Oscar Wilde. Access to education and employment had created an army of single young working women—shop-girls, office workers, newly professionalized nurses and teachers, the first “lady doctors”—and in which women outnumbered men in England and Wales by over a million. The invention of lighter bicycles gave women new freedom and mobility and led to the reform of dress (Harrison 165-69; Cunningham 2). A new figure had appeared on the scene: the modern, emancipated woman.

In 1894, she acquired the name that would come to define her: “the New Woman” (Caine 134). The term ap-

plied to real women and to their fictional counterparts in an outpouring of novels that placed them at the center (Ledger 1). The New Woman was intelligent, well-read, independent, strong-willed, idealistic, and outspoken, consciously defying convention and assertively speaking for advanced ideas about women's place in society. She became "the symbol all that was most challenging and dangerous" in the new and radical social thought of the *fin-de-siècle* (Cunningham 2). Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* (1883) was the most important fictional forerunner, which reached a height between 1893-95 with Sarah Grand's *Heavenly Twins* (who coined the term "New Woman"); Mona Caird's *Daughters of Danaus*; Grant Allen's *Woman Who Did* (the one novel by which the genre was remembered), and dozens of others. By 1896, having inspired outrage, parody, and debate, the phenomenon was spent; by 1899, the New Woman had become a comic stereotype (Cunningham 59, 78-79). Though the term "New Woman" had become *passé*, and the rhetorical excesses of the fiction that traveled under it discredited, the stereotype lived on in the new century as, among others, Vivie in *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1902), Ann in *Ann Veronica* (1909), and Ursula in *The Rainbow* (1915).

New Woman fiction was among the developments marking the transition to a radical phase of the feminist movement, a generational shift signaled by the creation of the term "feminism" itself in 1898. Implicit in the new radicalism was the belief that feminism involved "a personal revolt against conventional norms of womanhood" (Caine 143-46), an idea that New Woman fiction was best positioned to expound. New Woman novels were unanimous in rejecting conventional marriage. Some preached free love, others preached celibacy. All wanted to transform gender relations and to make that transformation central to the transformation of society as a whole. For the New Woman, relationships with men, whether or not they involved sex, had to involve mental companionship, freedom of choice, equality, and mutual respect. In short, men and women had to become "friends"—the word these novels used, with remarkable consistency and emphasis, repeatedly. Friendship constitutes their vision of the personal future as surely as suffrage and equal rights constitute their vision of the political future.

In making this demand for friendship, New Woman fiction reflected the feminist movement as a whole. In her 1888 essay on "Marriage," Caird wrote that "the world [will not] be a pleasant world while it continues to make friendship between persons of opposite sexes well nigh impossible, by insisting that they *are* so [sic]," a "false sentiment" that in turn "makes the ideal marriage—that is, a union prompted by harmony of nature and by friendship—almost beyond the reach of this generation" (103). The indictment reflects, incidentally, how little had changed in both marriage and male-female friendship since Wollstonecraft and Mill. In 1899-1900, the *Westminster Review* published three successive contributions debating the perils and possibilities of "Friendship Between the Sexes." In general, as Vicinus notes, the last two

decades of the century "were marked by the public and private discussion of . . . the importance of friendships across gender lines" (290).

But the most visible site of that discussion was New Woman fiction. For Lyndall in *The Story of an African Farm*, friendship is a way of transcending the body and the bodily love that defines gender relations. As she says to the passive and monkishly sexless Waldo, the one man she is able to befriend, "When I am with you I never know that I am a woman and you are a man; I only know that we are both things that think" (210). In *The Heavenly Twins*, Angelica disguises herself as a boy in order to develop a friendship with the Tenor that revolves around mental interchange rather than the sexual love he would have desired had he known her true identity (Ledger 117). For the first time, feminism was making friendship with men outside of marriage a central demand. And in *The Woman Who Did*, Allen created a heroine who delights in her body as well as her mind and who demands non-marital friendship that is also sexual. Not only does he not exclude sex from his vision of friendship, he has Herminia avow that "[t]he magic link of sex" is precisely what makes possible her spiritual connection with Alan, the man who will become her lover (66). Here, friendship doesn't lead to marriage, as it tends to in Austen and Edgeworth; it replaces it. Herminia will become Alan's lover, but not his wife or even his housemate, for "[w]hy should this friendship differ at all. . . in respect of time and place, from any other friendship?" (87). In contemporary society they might call themselves girlfriend and boyfriend, except that here, sex is subordinated to friendship, rather than the reverse. New Woman fiction reached the end of its popularity the year *The Woman Who Did* was published, the link between the emancipated young woman and the demand for friendship survived. It is at the start of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, when Vivie, who ultimately chooses to remain unattached and self-supporting, offers her friendship, along with a firm handshake to Praed, and it is in *Ann Veronica*, when Ann is betrayed by the false friendship of the predatory Ramage but rebounds to develop a deeply satisfying sexual friendship with Capes. New Woman fiction had succeeded in giving wide cultural visibility to feminism's insistence on friendship as the central term of a renegotiated sexual contract.

Still, New Woman novels leave something to be desired (Cunningham and Watts concur; Ardis and Boumelha do not). Leaving matters of form aside, their treatment of social and psychological plausibility tends to be perfunctory—one reason the genre was susceptible to parody and ridicule. Characters are one-dimensional, settings stylized, dialogue formulaic, plots melodramatic—all of them functions of ideology rather than observation. As a result, while New Woman novels succeed in articulating a set of ideals, because they make such scant contact with the real world, they cannot convey what happens when real people try to practice those ideals. But Hardy took the premise of New Woman fiction—an emancipated young woman searching for friendship with a

man that would evade the trap of conventional marriage and furnish spiritual if not sexual fulfillment—and the tested it in a fully realized fictional world. The result was *Jude the Obscure*. (For *Jude* as a New Woman novel and/or Sue Bridehead as a New Woman, Blake, Boumelha Cunningham, and Watts. For other discussions of friendship in the novel, Goode, Luftig, and Larson).

Like other New Women, Sue Bridehead is brilliant, intellectually daring, self-consciously unconventional, proudly modern. She calls herself a pagan, scoffs at Jude's pieties, and has lived alone in London, mixed with men "almost as one of their own sex" (147), and even shared lodgings, platonically, with an undergraduate. She regards marriage as a barbaric institution that reduces women to property and love to contract. The relationship she desires with men, of course, is friendship, a demand she repeats as she and Jude seek to negotiate their connection. Jude tries to think of himself as her friend, recognizing what a splendid comrade she'd make, even as he feels himself falling in love with her. Sue treats him with "the freedom of a friend" (100), then insists that friendship is all they will ever share when she perceives the sexual nature of his attraction. Nor is he the only man with whom she desires such a relationship. Trying to extricate herself from her disastrous marriage with Phillotson, she begs him to restore her freedom in the name of friendship, a friendship she hopes will continue once they go their separate ways. But her fullest articulation of the relationship she wants is the account of her "friendly intimacy" with the undergraduate. Having made clear that his sexual attraction was not reciprocated, she "shared [his] sitting room" and went about together as his equal, "like two men almost," for fifteen months (148). Hardy has her tell the story not only after she has taken refuge in Jude's own sitting room, but while wearing his clothes. Like Lyndall in *The Story of an African Farm*, Sue wishes to transcend gender by developing relationships with men that transcend sexuality.

But things, of course, are not that simple. The undergraduate dies of a broken heart. Jude, equally tormented by sexual frustration, tries to break off their friendship, accusing Sue of being sexless. It is a charge that was leveled against many New Women (sometimes, as with Lyndall, by the women themselves), and in Sue's case, it was to reverberate throughout the critical literature. Like Jude, many readers (though not all) have seen her as frigid, devoid of natural feelings, and, like Jude, many have seen her also as a flirt, exerting power by inciting desires she has no intention of fulfilling. But Hardy's novel would be less complex, and less interesting, if that judgment were true. Sue's dilemma is precisely that she is a sexually passionate woman. She wasn't attracted to the undergraduate, and she isn't attracted to the aging Phillotson, but lack of desire for particular men is hardly evidence of a lack of desire in general. She herself abjures the charge of being sexless, and as the unfolding of the plot makes clear, she is attracted to Jude himself. When she finally does allow their friendship to become sexual (and

even then it explicitly remains a friendship), she conceives three times in quick succession—the kind of fecundity that conventionally serves as a sign of sexual happiness. But those pregnancies convey all one needs to know about why she had resisted Jude for so long. Sex meant pregnancy, and pregnancy meant marriage—or, as Jude and Sue discover, disgrace. Sue never develops a particular professional ambition; Hardy's purpose here is to trace the consequences of trying to live by emancipated ideals for ordinary provincial people devoid of educational and financial advantages, not a privileged urban elite. But she does have enormous intellectual and social ambitions: to live like a man, think like a man, be free like a man. And she knows that she won't be able to do any of those things as a mother or a wife.

This ambivalence explains Sue's most infuriating characteristics: her neurotic sensitivity and endless vacillation. Her voice is tremulous, her motions nervous, her character fussy and irritable. Not a decision does she make that she doesn't regret and seek to reverse, only then to regret and seek to reverse her reversal, and so on, over and over, for hundreds of pages. She is, in short, what Hardy calls her in his 1912 "Postscript," an "emancipated bundle of nerves" (468). But the phrase expresses a two-part logic; Sue is a "bundle of nerves" *because* she is emancipated. Her physical desires pull her in one direction, her intellectual and social desires in the other. In terms of New Woman fiction, she is an unstable compound of the two characteristic types of heroine: the celibate and the "natural," Lyndall and Herminia, the woman with no sexual desires and the woman completely at peace with her sexual desires. Whatever she does, Sue can never make herself happy; no wonder she's neurotic. No wonder, too, that she does everything she can to make her body disappear. Sue is "light and slight," an "aërial being" (90, 216)—but not simply because she was born with a fast metabolism. More than once, she refuses to eat, skips breakfast, pushes her dinner around on her plate. To Jude, halfway through the novel, she is "hardly flesh at all" (244); to the Widow Edlin, near the end, she has "got no body to speak of" (393). She is, in other words, anorectic, though not from any of the causes to which that disorder is usually attributed. What she does in reaction to the death of her children she has done, all along: "wrestled and struggled" to "br[ing her] body into complete subjection" (388). If her body goes away, the conflict between her body and her mind will go away.

But Sue's dilemma—her struggle between body and soul, physical desire and spiritual companionship—is not particular to her. It expresses the conflict between a determining Darwinism and a doomed idealism with which Hardy opposes it. From the beginning, when he is hired to scare the rooks away from the cornfield, and soon thereafter, more spectacularly, when he is forced to kill the pig that he and Arabella have been fattening, Jude learns that the happiness of one natural creature is always purchased by the suffering of another, or as his ill-fated son says many years later, "Nature's law is universal butchery" (308). Arabella, Darwinism

incarnate, accepts this state of affairs without qualms: "Pigs must be killed" because "Poor folks must live" (65). For her, people are just another set of useful animals, and marriage is a "business" that regularizes their mutual exploitation. "Get the business legally done," she tells Sue, advising her to marry Jude at long last; "[l]ife with a man is more business-like after it, and money matters work better" (270). Her key term conflates social and biological Darwinism, for it turns out that the particular "business" that marriage involves is animal husbandry (a pun, that last word, that Hardy never makes but sometimes implies). "That's the only way with these fanciful women that chaw high," she tells Phillotson, chiding him for having let Sue go; "I should have kept her chained on—her spirit for kicking would have been broke soon enough!" (318). Love, for Arabella, is what Sue calls "animal desire" (167)—the kind Arabella aroused in Jude by hitting him in the ear with a pig's scrotum. Having spied on Sue and Jude at the Agricultural Show, where they seem a model of loving contentment despite not yet having become sexually intimate, she remains unimpressed: "As for that body with him—she don't know what love is—at least what I call love! I can see in her face she don't" (293-94). But Arabella is far from the only character to espouse a Darwinian view of life. Her friends from home, the ones who convince her to ensnare Jude with a false pregnancy do likewise, and so, albeit in more genteel form, does the friend of Phillotson who advises him to refuse Sue her freedom. A particular view of friendship, very different from the one I have been tracing, is implied by these counsels. Friends, on this account, are the worldlings who instruct one in the ways of "business." When Arabella tells Sue to "[g]et the business legally done," she does so, she says, "friendly, as woman to woman."

Jude's sorrows come from his refusal or inability to take this view of life. "Never such a tender fool as Jude is if a woman seems in trouble, and coaxes him a bit!" Arabella says in that same conversation with Sue, "[j]ust as he used to be about birds and things." The conflation of women and birds is characteristic of her, but it also points to the image-pattern that underlies this conflict of values. Jude does indeed begin his career of folly by taking pity on the rooks, just as Sue will free the poulterer's pigeons many pages later, but Sue is herself insistently figured as a bird: making herself a "nest," referred to as a "little bird [that] is caught at last," and so forth (221, 268). Her slight figure and nervous movements reinforce the connection. Birds and pigs (and earthworms and rabbits) are in one respect all similarly suffering animals, but bird and pig are also set against each other as symbols of these two approaches to life (which may be why Phillotson differentiates them, bidding young Jude to "be kind to animals and birds" [10]). Sue is a bird; Arabella, with her porcine sexuality, is a pig. The one seeks escape from earthly realities (only inevitably to be pulled down, like the rooks, by the "law [of] gravitation" [139]), the other wallows happily in the mud. Vilbert, that odious quack, claims that his love-philtre (which assuredly promotes Arabella's type of love, not Sue's) is made from "a distillation of the juices of doves'

hearts" (295), while Jude, having proclaimed to the Christminster crowd that one must be "as selfish as a pig" to be successful in the world (326), begs Sue not to abandon him, lest he become "another case of the pig that was washed turning back to his wallowing in the mire!" (353).

If the Hardy's name for the morality of Darwinism is "business," his name for the morality that opposes it is "loving-kindness." Each has its respective type of friendship. Anti-Darwinian friendship is the kind Jude feels towards the rooks, his "only friends" (for "a magic thread of fellow-feeling united his own life with theirs"), as well as the kind he is forced to betray in killing the pig, "a creature recognizing at last the treachery of those who had seemed his only friends" (15, 64). It is also the kind, as I noted, that he hopes at first to have with Sue, compounded partly of "a wish for intellectual sympathy" and partly of "a craving for loving-kindness" (98). But the most striking example of such friendship, because its most disinterested, comes when Sue, having left Phillotson but hearing that he has taken ill, returns for a visit. "[A]s I know that you recognize other feelings between man and woman than physical love, I have come." "My dear friend," he calls her in return, and she, speaking with "repentant kindness" assures him that he has been "such a kind friend" to her (as indeed, in letting her go, he has). And as the one favor she can offer him, she shifts his swing-glass so that its reflection gives him a view of the day's sunset, one that has been making the windows of the town look "like tongues of fire." "It is like heaven opened," she says, and it is not too much to conclude that Hardy's purpose here is to give his readers, too, a view of heaven (249-50). This is his vision of true friendship, "a magic thread of fellow-feeling" that unites otherwise antagonistic lives, and if platonic friendship is its highest exemplar, that is because, "recognizing other feelings between man and woman than physical love," it overcomes both the natural impulses and the social institutions that encourage men and women to treat each other like animals.

This is, of course, a gospel of love, and the novel repeatedly recollects that it is not the first time it has been preached. Both Sue and, especially, Jude are lavishly adorned with Christian imagery. I just quoted at the Pentecostal language in Sue's scene with Phillotson, one in which "her advent seemed ghostly." Jude, in his connection with Christminster and Easter, St. Stephen and "th' Martyrs'—burning-place," is an obvious Christ-figure (375). But these associations are not merely generic, and the larger symbolic structure in which they participate is signaled by the epigraph, "[t]he letter killeth." The rest of the tag is "but the spirit giveth life," the complete statement part of Paul's distinction between Old Testament and New Testament dispensations. The distinction runs throughout the novel. Paul identifies the Old Testament with law. "Nature's law is universal butchery"; "Get the business legally done." Arabella's advice to Phillotson includes the reminder that "you've got the laws on your side. Moses knew," to which he replies, "Cruelty

is the law pervading all nature and society.” Mosaic law was engraved on the Ten Commandments, the very text that Jude and Sue are “re-lettering” when they are discovered to be living out of wedlock and chased from town (300). As Freccero notes, the image of the Two Tablets gave Paul a further pair of oppositions: the law is engraved on stone, the spirit written on the heart (122). Stone, like law, is everywhere in *Jude*, very often in conjunction with ideas of law and of the dead weight of social institutions as they form obstacles to freedom and happiness. Arabella tells Phillotson that a husband must be “a stone-deaf taskmaster.” Sue, comparing Jude to St. Stephen, recalls that the latter was “ston[ed]” to death, while she herself is described, when first introduced, as having “nothing statuesque in her” (205, 90). Most conspicuous are the stone walls of Christminster colleges, which block Jude from exercising his talents, so that instead of entering them, he is only permitted the mason’s task of repairing them.

One of the colleges is called “Sarcophagus” (“the letter killeth”), and its outer walls are “silent, black and windowless” (332). *Jude* is also full of windows, openings in walls, ways of passing through them, the opposite of stones. Idlers outside the place where the children have been killed stand counting “the window-panes and the stones of the walls” (339). Windows are associated especially with Sue, with her unconventional, freedom seeking-behavior: she jumps out of them, in attempted escape, more than once, and more than once conducts colloquies with Jude through them. If walls are the Old Testament, with its killing laws, windows let in the New Testament’s life-giving spirit. But in the world of *Jude*, Old and New have become indistinguishable. Christ’s advent lies far in the past, and in the intervening centuries, Christianity itself has become a thing of walls and laws, stone churches and stone colleges from which the spirit has been driven. Christ has become Christminster. What is needed is a “new New Testament,” and that is exactly what Sue offers to make for Jude, “like the one I made for myself at Christminster” by cutting up the individual books and rearranging them chronologically by date of composition, an order that suggests a progressive and ever-evolving faith (152). Later, Jude asks Sue if she knows of “any good readable edition of the uncanonical books of the New Testament,” and the novel itself seems to be Hardy’s attempt to create his own “uncanonical” version of the gospel of love (205).

Sue’s vision of male-female friendship becomes the germ of this “new new” dispensation, but the latter does not stop there. Whereas Arabella says that Father Time “was my child, and naturally I feel for him” (347; my emphasis), that same boy’s appearance in Jude and Sue’s life, so unexpected that they aren’t even sure he is really Jude’s offspring, brings this expostulation from Jude: “The beggarly question of parentage—what is it, after all? What does it matter, when you come to think about it, whether a child is yours by blood or not? All the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time, and entitled to our general care.” (274) Sue passionately agrees with this declaration of

universal love, and the happiest time of their lives ensues: before their relationship becomes sexual, but after they have extended their platonic—or perhaps at this point we should say, their Christian—love to a third person, become non-biological parents (at least in Sue’s case) as well as non-sexual lovers (or, as they continue to call themselves, “friends”). But then comes sex, and pregnancy, and social stigma, and the horrifying denouement: natural and social law inevitably finding them out. Selfless, disinterested friendship, the one form of connection not based on “blood,” in one sense or the other, cannot survive, has no survival value, in a Darwinian universe. Or at least, not in the world as constituted—Hardy is ambivalent on this crucial point. Sometimes Jude and Sue speak as if the world will only get worse, sometimes as if they’d only been born too early, and future generations will be happier. The possibility of friendship between the sexes would certainly become greater as the 19th century passed into the 20th, then far more so with the arrival of a second and more thoroughly transformative wave of feminism in the 1960’s and ‘70’s. Meanwhile, at the end of the old century, Hardy had created a text in which he raised the question of such friendship, with all its attendant issues of equality and freedom and dignity, to the highest level of complexity and significance.

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