Thomas Hardy's "Jude the Obscure" and D. H. Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers": a psychological transition from Victorianism to Modernism

Abstract
Authors Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence were both influenced by the old traditions of the 19th century and the new ideals of the early 20th century. By comparing Hardy’s final novel, Jude the Obscure, originally published in 1895, to Lawrence’s early novel Sons and Lovers, released in 1913, one recognizes thematic similarities signifying the influence of Hardy on Lawrence’s work. This novel-to-novel approach allows for a tightly focused comparison between the two authors that reflects similarities found in their other bodies of work (including novels, poems, plays, and criticism), while the relative chronological closeness of the two novels—a mere eighteen years apart—emphasizes the authors’ function of providing a literary link between Victorian and Modernist ways of thought. By also examining the influence of psychoanalysis, and specifically Sigmund Freud, on Lawrence’s novel, one better understands the way in which this budding field of psychology enhanced the descriptive quality of writing and helped to distinguish Lawrence from Hardy. Hardy touched upon topics of sexuality and internal conflict that Lawrence later expanded upon in his own novels. Though both authors emphasized similar themes and character traits, Hardy proved unable to address them as thoroughly and lucidly as Lawrence because he lacked the critical psychological vocabulary to which Lawrence, as a Modernist, had access. At the same time, both writers addressed subject matters at odds with his society’s moral standards and gained notoriety due to the content of their novels. (Abstract shortened by UMI.)

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The novel Jude the Obscure, by Thomas Hardy, was first published unabridged in 1896. It narrates the doomed existence of the protagonist, Jude, from the moment he is still a boy at Marygreen and is inspired by a rural schoolmaster to think of a university education, to the moment in which he dies, alone and unattended. It tells the story of a man whose dreams and ambitions are gradually destroyed, and end up being shattered. Jude the Obscure - Thomas Hardy. Reviewed by Paul L. "This novel was one of the most distressing pieces of work I have ever read What grips me the most is Hardy's depiction of 'love' Hardy shows how forlorn Romanticism is in a Victorian age." From ReadLiterature.com. In Jude the Obscure, Hardy addresses the prevailing Victorian attitudes associated with social class and standing, educational opportunities, religion, the institution of marriage, and the influence of Darwinism on modern thought. First and foremost, this is a novel of ideas and ideals. Issues associated with Love and Marriage also dominate much of the novel's landscape. Modernization has come and displaced the old world romanticism of Jude Fawley and Thomas Hardy. THOMAS HARDY'S JUDE THE OBSCURE AND D.H. LAWRENCE'S SONS AND LOVERS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL TRANSITION FROM VICTORIANISM TO MODERNISM A Thesis by Emily Rose Christinat Bachelor of Arts, Wichita State University, 2002 Submitted to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the faculty of the Graduate School of Wichita State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree. of Master of Arts December 2005 THOMAS HARDY'S JUDE THE OBSCURE AND D.H. LAWRENCE'S SONS AND LOVERS: A PSYCHOLOGICAL TRANSITION FROM VICTORIANISM TO MODERNISM I have examined the final copy of this Thesis.