

Tony kytes the arch
deceiver, the son's
veto and the withered
arm, by thomas
hard...



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Tony Kytes the Arch Deceiver is a comedy based on a young man journeying through his village as he tries to deceive three women who clearly have feelings for him. It shows, how in the end, coincidence lets him down and he is caught out. The Son's Veto is a slightly longer story which explores the life of Sophy, a village girl, through many years of her life, concentrating on her son's prejudice and the result in which she suffers and dies unhappily. The Withered Arm is a longer story again, also charting a period of many years involving three people in which jealousy and witchcraft dominate. It finishes in a dramatic and tragic way.

The three stories tell very different tales and can therefore be seen as separate genres. Tony Kytes is clearly a comedy as it is a portrayal of ordinary life in which coincidence, intrigue and normal human behaviour is shown. No one suffers terribly, there is a fairly pleasant ending and Hardy gives the reader the chance to criticise the characters' personalities. The ending of this story is as much to do with coincidence and fate, as it is dependant on the characters attitudes. Hardy describes Sophy's story as a little 'tragicomedy' and this can be seen evidently in the genre of the story.

The Son's Veto is a mixture of genres i. e. tragedy and comedy. It includes elements of comedy, exploring Sophy's ordinary life and the behaviour of her son but we can see Sophy's suffering which gives the story an air of tragedy. The story portrays the downfall of Sophy through her lack of willpower and the trouble caused when she doesn't speak her mind. This flaw in Sophy's nature can be compared to the flaws in Shakespeare's tragic heroes, such as 'Macbeth' and his ambition, which results in his downfall In The Withered Arm the elements of tragedy are clear.

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Each character suffers extensively because of their actions. The story focuses on the relationship of Rhoda Brook and Gertrude Lodge. Hardy shows how their individual emotions and desires lead to the tragic ending and each individual suffers mainly from their own actions but also by the actions of others. Thomas Hardy was born at Upper Bockhampton, near Dorchester, Dorset, 2nd June, 1840. The 'village' was very small, just eight workers cottages with a total population of about 50 and at the age of nine he was sent to a church funded school there.

His education was continued at home where his ambitious (however, illiterate) mother insisted he continued to read a wide range of challenging books. He went to London to study architecture, winning prizes from the professional associations and working under Sir Arthur Blomfield. Hardy's real interest, however, was in literature, and he soon began to write. By the time Hardy returned to Dorchester in 1867 to work on designing and restoring churches, he had also begun writing novels. The background of the writer is reflected very much in the settings and characters. 'Wessex' is the setting for nearly all of Hardy's novels and short stories.

It is the name he gave to that part of southwest England, which includes Dorset, Somerset, Cornwall, Hampshire and Wiltshire. When Hardy was born in 1840, Dorset was very remote country, cut off from other parts of England. There were cart tracks rather than main roads and this is displayed in both Tony Kytes and The Withered Arm. Hardy would have grown up being surrounded by labourers, working on the land. Sheep and dairy farming were widespread, the farms being owned by middle class farmers who employed locals to work for them. This is reflected greatly in all three of the stories.

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Hardy was a Victorian writer but modern for his times and always challenging convention. Unlike other writers, he concentrated very much on his characters, their lives and the society they lived in. If other novelists were found to talk descriptively about society, it was from a superior moral viewpoint and the heroes and heroines were always middle or upper class, due to their audience being educated middle to upper class themselves. However, Hardy was born in Dorset, to an uneducated family of country labourers and his success as a writer was wholly due to educating himself and studying to give him a better start in life.

Hardy therefore includes large amounts of descriptive writing on the lower classes especially from his own knowledge and experience. He wrote about 'peasants' and these feature in all three of his stories that I have read, more so in Tony Kytes. Dialect is the specific use of language used by the people living in a specific region. Being so cut-off, Wessex villagers spoke a dialect, which would have been barely understood in nineteenth-century London. Hardy's parents both spoke 'broad Dorset' and therefore Hardy spent his childhood surrounded by the people he knew best speaking this dialect.

He, understandably, included such words in his stories as all three, have Dorset as a main location. Tony Kytes is a simple story. Hardy uses a narrative frame. The story is part of a sequence of stories told by different characters travelling to a Dorset village. We, the reader, do not meet them and they are not main characters in this story, however they give the reason for the often-used Dorset dialect. The action of the story takes place in a short period of time, just one afternoon, and the setting and location

changes little throughout the story. The story contains suspense and poses questions throughout.

It is clear we see things from Tony's viewpoint. " Tony covered her over, so that the wagon seemed to be empty for the tarpaulin; and then he drove on to meet Milly" The audience is made clear of his feelings and emotions at different points during the story. This affects the way we read the story and the way we feel towards the characters, as the reader tends to feel closer to Tony and therefore makes an effort to understand him. I ' m sure if it were written from the viewpoint of one of the girls, especially Milly, the audience's feelings for Tony would change dramatically.

Our attitude towards him would be much colder and certainly one of disgust. This story would have been perceived differently by audiences of Hardy's time. Then, the divide between men and women was explicit. Men always had the upper hand and the women followed with no mind of their own! . An alternative interpretation to this story might be to think of the position of the women. They are seen as manipulative, but also victims of Tony's lies. His charms are used to work his way around them and he exploits their trust, feelings, naivety and their innocence.

The Son's Veto is much more complex a story. It is told in the third person or ' impersonal narrator'. The story starts at one point but then uses a flashback, which intrigues the reader and makes a difference in a short story. It involves a multifarious array of locations and times and the language used is much more complex and sophisticated than Tony Kytes. The story is written from Sophy's viewpoint. " ' No Sam; you shan't! ', she cried, putting

her hand over his mouth, ' You ought to be more serious on a night as this. ' ” This story is clearly about class, the divisions of, and society and its values. Another clear theme is the downfall of Sophy - how she, an innocent young woman, suffers heartbreak because of her son's lack of compassion. It is similar to Tony Kytes where the women are shown as feeble and powerless against the men in their lives, but the story is also very dependent on Sophy's individual weakness rather than women as a whole. ' ' Say no more- perhaps I am wrong! I will struggle against it! ' she cried miserably ”

She is pressured into doing what other people tell her to do and pleasing everyone except herself, like Milly in Tony Kytes. Both characters are afraid of having minds of their own Finally, The Withered Arm is an extremely intricate short story, in fact it can be described as a ' novella'. Although it is classed as a short story its length and complexity mark it as more than retelling of one or two events. Like The Son's Veto the story ranges over a period of years but it is more sophisticated as the emotions and thoughts of the main characters are explored in greater depth.

However, both The Son's Veto and The Withered Arm are short stories in their restriction to a small number of main characters. The Withered Arm is narrated in the third person and its complexity is also shown in the climax of the story where Hardy's skill as a story-teller is shown in how he uses Rhoda's vision at the beginning of the story in a complete surprise for the audience at the end. In the first part of the story it is Rhoda's viewpoint that dominates up until the point where Gertrude learns the truth about Rhoda, then the story is seen very much in the eyes of Gertrude.

This allows the audience to have feelings for both women, which makes the ending a mixture of emotions. The Withered Arm is a much stronger portrayal of women (Rhoda Brook) than the other stories. We can see parallels between Gertrude and Sophy as victims, but because of the first viewpoint we can see Rhoda as a victim as well. She is the unmarried mother who is gossiped about by the village and who has been abandoned, left to suffer at the hand of a prosperous male farmer. There are many ways the audience can interpret the story.

Rhoda can be seen as a jealous witch, an abandoned mother, a poor dairy - milker and even a village outcast. Gertrude can be understood as a young wife, a victim of witchcraft, a wealthy dairy-owner, an un-loved cripple and a desperate paranoid woman. Farmer Lodge can be seen in two totally different lights. At points in the story he is quite obviously a father who rejects his son, a husband who rejects his wife, and at other points a self-satisfied and prosperous farmer. The community, in which the Tony Kytes is set, is similar to that of Hardy's when he was a child.

Hardy would have socialised with a community who knew everyone else's business and in Tony Kytes it is obvious to us that Tony's antics became common knowledge, as it is a villager who is narrating the story. Hardy's stories are based on his own social experience and context. In the 19th century, in Victorian England, respectability was very important and the concern about a girl's virginity reflects this. " ' She's as sound as a bell for me, that I'll swear! ' " , This means that the girl is a virgin as far as Tony is concerned.

Apart from this Tony Kytes does not include any more based on social or cultural background, there is not a mention of the different classes. However, in *The Son's Veto*, Hardy examines society in a great deal and also explores the problems that arise from a marriage between the different classes.

Sophy is a Dorset girl (again, a link to Hardy's background) who works as a parlour -maid for the vicar of the village. " It was her native village, Gaymead, and the first event bearing upon her present situation had occurred at that place when she was only a girl of nineteen. Through circumstances she becomes his wife and he commits ' social suicide' by marrying below himself and they then move away. Already, Hardy is addressing the discrimination of people in society and uses Sophy's downfall as an example, as she has a child, the vicar dies, and Sophy is left to bring up her son, who has (due to the vicar's wealth) been attending schools of the highest academic value. This creates a barrier and Hardy shows how class can divide even the bonds that should be strongest, between mother and child.

Randolph, Sophy's son, is embarrassed by his mother's background and feels she lowers the tone of his father's memory. When Sam, Sophy's childhood sweetheart, returns and declares his love for Sophy, she is held back from marrying Sam because of Randolph's prejudice. He ignores the fact that his father married down a class and forbids Sophy to do the same. He feels it would degrade him and shame him in front of all his well-educated friends. Hardy uses this discrimination to make a point of the prejudice and ignorance of the upper classes.

' I am ashamed of you! It will ruin me! It will degrade me in the eyes of all the gentlemen of England! ' " I think, reading this story in today's society the audience can see a big difference between the class divisions but I feel personally that class is still an issue in today's society, it just isn't published and expressed so openly as in *The Son's Veto*. In *The Withered Arm*, social background features prominently. Rhoda is an outcast and always the subject of village gossip due to her relationship with Farmer Lodge, a man of higher class.

This is shown by the way the farmer treats his (illegitimate) son, ignoring him and denying any relation to the boy, for he lives with Rhoda in a common, secluded cottage, hunting for their food. " She was with Mr Lodge, of course. What did he say or do? ' ' Just the same as usual. ' ' Took no notice of you? ' ' None. ' " Class segregation is also shown in Rhoda's jealousy, as one of the reasons for her to dislike Gertrude appears to be that Gertrude is obviously from an upper class background where-as Rhoda is lower class working in the dairy of her ex-lover and his beautiful wife.

The cultural background of Hardy's times seems to appear and affect events largely in this story. Magic plays a central part and Hardy was quick to claim not to have invented the ' magical' details of the story. He said they were all based on fact. Every village in Wessex was supposed to have its own witch who specialised in curses. Her services were often sought for casting ' the evil eye' at an enemy, which would result in injury. The ' good side' of witchcraft was in the hands of the village conjuror.

He could tell the future and help people who had been 'bewitched' find their enemy. Conjurors also lifted curses. These beliefs are the main element of The Withered Arm and obviously some of the audiences of Hardy's time would have found the story much more believable than we do now. Irony is the main aspect in Tony Kytes. The character of Tony, the main character, who after all the trials and tribulations of the story, where he tries to seduce all three girls, the story ends with him marrying his fiancée who he had in the beginning! It's ironic that having rejected his fiancée turns out she is the only one who will marry him. "

' It do seem as if fate has ordained that it should be you and I, or nobody. ' "

Coincidences also affect the ending of the story. The main one is obviously all three women being present on his journey, also the presence of Tony's father, the crash in which the girls are revealed and finally the arrival of Hannah's father as Hardy implies Hannah's answer to Tony's proposal would be different if her father wasn't there. " ' My daughter is not willing, sir! ' says Mr Jolliver, hot and strong "

In The Son's Veto the irony may be less obvious than Tony Kytes but it is there! Randolph sees it as a disgrace and shameful if Sophy decides to marry Sam, who comes from Sophy's original class, a boy she grew up with, however he forgets that the father he loved so much did exactly that which led to Sophy being his mother. There are, however, many coincidences which affect the story as well. Firstly Sophy and Sam have a disagreement, which leads Sophy to turn down his proposal, but their love is by no means finished. Sophy then falls and feels it would be best if she quit work.

This pushes the vicar to think of life alone and he proposes to her, and because Sophy has been brought to respect the higher classes she accepts out of respect and flattery. This decision leads to a life of regret and unhappiness. Having married the vicar she has a son and the vicar's wealth means he can be educated but because of her working class origin she is regarded with contempt by her grown up son. Later, through coincidence, by being kept awake at nights, she happens to see Sam in the early hours of the morning.

Their love is renewed, The air and Sam's presence had revived her; her cheeks were quite pink - almost beautiful " but Randolph disapproves and this leads to the overall irony of the ending. In *The Withered Arm*, irony results in the tragic ending for all. The fact that after seeing Rhoda's son in the street Gertrude strikes up a friendship with Rhoda is ironic. It is dramatic irony that allows the audience to be aware of Rhoda's possible responsibility for the affliction of which Gertrude has no idea. It is also ironic that it is Rhoda who accompanies Gertrude to the conjuror, which will result in Gertrude knowing that Rhoda is the cause.

There is irony in the way they are all brought together at the end, at the son's hanging (who brought the women together) which now exposes all three together for the first time since Gertrude found out and the shock results in Gertrude's death. Fate has worked unkindly for the characters in all three stories and it is Hardy's skill in combining psychologically realistic characters with coincidences of events, which emphasise their situation and motives that make his handling of irony so interesting. Dialect is the way people living in a specific region use language and is used in Tony Kytes. <https://assignbuster.com/tony-kytes-the-arch-deceiver-the-sons-veto-and-the-withered-arm-by-thomas-hardy-essay-sample/>

It is not standard English and often the grammar is different and they use different words for desirable things or feelings. An example of dialect is " ' nunny - watch' " , which is used by Tony to describe a difficult situation. This is an example of the grammar of the Broad - Dorset dialect. Hardy uses the ordinary expressions of ordinary people. The language in the Son's Veto is developed, sophisticated and complex. Concentrating on the first paragraph of the story Hardy uses very descriptive words in which he builds up a picture through increasing detail. To the eyes of a man viewing it from behind, the nut-brown hair was a wonder and a mystery.

Under the black beaver hat surmounted by its tuft of black feathers, the long locks, braided and twisted and coiled like the rushes of a basket, composed a rare, if somewhat barbaric, example of ingenious art. / One could understand such weavings and ceilings being wrought to last intact for a year/ or even a calendar month/ but that they should be all demolished regularly at bedtime/ after a single day of performance/ seemed a reckless waste of successful fabrication/

The words underlined are examples of how Hardy uses ' Latinate' words to increase the detail of his description. Hardy uses these rather than ' Anglo-Saxon' words which could replace them, but ' Latinate' words are polysyllabic and therefore give the impression of more descriptiveness. Surmounted can be replaced with ' on top of', demolished is replaced with ' undo' and fabricated has the same meaning as ' make'. The ' Latinate' vocabulary make the description a lot more complex and sophisticated. Hardy uses complex, long sentences containing many successive clauses.

This splits up the description. Hardy uses formal narration. The story is not told by a local as in Tony Kytes but by the author. The first paragraph is used to set the scene and formal narration shows it is written from an upper-class angle, again, different to Tony Kytes. The second paragraph, however tells us more about Sophy and the life she leads and is an example of Hardy's use of characterisation. " And she had done it all herself, poor thing. She had no maid, and it was almost the only accomplishment she could boast of.

Hence the unstinted pains. " Already Hardy is provoking sympathy from the audience towards Sophy as his main character, and explores that, in this stage of the story, Sophy has too much time on her hands. Even enough, to delicately weave her hair amazingly well, just to take it out at the end of the day. Hardy's language in this paragraph is then followed by Sophy, aged nineteen speaking. " ' Why Sam, how can you be so fast! I've never even said I liked ' ee; and it is all your own doing, coming after me! ' "

She uses every day speech, which is colloquial, and uses slang, and abbreviated words. If we compare Sophy's use of language when she is nineteen to that of her in her thirties, we can determine a significant difference between them. Sophy's speech becomes formal, standard English, which suggests an education and improved vocabulary. " ' O no! Not in one of those wretched holes! At public school - one of the most distinguished in England' " However, Sam's speech is informal, non-standard English and he uses slang. " ' Chok' it all! Of course!

I forgot, ma'am, that you've been a lady of class for so many years. ' " The use of dialect in the Son's Veto shows the origin or class of the person

speaking and the main purpose in this story might be to show Sophy's lack of education as in the first part of the story where her son corrects her grammar. " ' Has, dear mother, not have' " However, the use of Dialect used in *The Withered Arm* is for another purpose. Hardy uses it to set the scene by creating a visual insight for the audience into the lives of the characters and we are able to picture it more realistically.

In the first chapter of *The Withered Arm* Hardy uses dialect and jargon to add realism and make the reader aware of where the story is set, in Dorset. Only Dorset milkmaids would have used language such as " in full pail " , which means the cows are ready to be milked. It is jargon used to describe their occupation; it is their specialist language. An aspect of dialect is that instead of using standard grammar it has its own non - standard grammar. " ' He do bring home his bride tomorrow' "

Hardy also uses language to describe Rhoda's surroundings as the same as her feelings. He describes the isolation of her house and the surroundings of her and her son, and this language suggests also the emotional state of Rhoda. " to a lonely spot high above the water-meads " , I think the ending of *Tony Kytes* is dependable both on the characters weaknesses but also coincidence. Obviously, the fact that the trap overturns leads to the ending. If it did not, Tony could have finished his journey with each girl leaving not knowing what he was up to.

Also if Hannah's father had not appeared she could have willingly accepted his proposal and they could have had their banns put up the next Sunday rather than Milly. However, without the coincidence the story could have

ended just as differently. If the girls had not been so over-powered by Tony, they might have refused to hide, wanting to express their love for him and he would be placed in a difficult situation. An alternative ending to the story would be if Milly left Tony so he would end up with no one, which is what he deserved!

If the story ended like this, we could predict that his reputation as a lady's man would not be affected. And he probably wouldn't end up on his own if he manipulated and took advantage of yet another victim, the same way he did Milly, Unity and Hannah. But it is also possible that we would feel different about Tony and perhaps be sympathetic towards his situation, rather than with Milly's, or it would just make the ending more comical. Hardy gives the impression the story worked out well and everybody lived 'happily ever after'.

And then he kissed her, and put the wagon to rights, and they mounted together; and their banns were put up the very next Sunday" I feel audiences would not perceive this today. People would have a very different appreciation of the story. The women are certainly portrayed as somewhat weak-willed and Tony is the 'master', he makes the decisions. In today's society, feminists would be outraged with the way the women are treated as in these modern times women and men are seen (by most) as equals, although men still seem to have the upper-hand.

This may just be a biased response, but it is a fact that there is more domestic violence against women. I feel personally that this story was fairly predictable. Hardy gave the reader the feeling, by showing Tony's troubles,

that he would become unstuck and all his deceit would blow up in his face. As a short story I thought it contained a lot of action and I think Hardy was able to do this by his ability to include such a lot in his short descriptions. I don't think Milly, as a woman in today's society, would have accepted Tony's offer; in fact I think she would have vowed to wreak revenge for being treated so poorly !

The ending of *The Son's Veto* is a result of Sophy's weak character: rather than listen to her own conscience she depended on other people to tell her what to do. If she wasn't so weak characteristically, then she could have changed the storyline altogether. She might not have married the vicar out of respect, therefore not giving birth to Randolph and facing his prejudice. She may have continued on her relationship with Sam, they could have married, and she would stay the parlour - maid, working class girl she was.

If Sophy had gone ahead with the marriage but then realised she had been weak - willed, she could have put a stop to Randolph's behaviour and maybe even then find happiness again with Sam. From this the audience would have much more respect for Sophy and the issue of class and men/women would not be as prominent. The story would then not be seen as a tragic-comedy but as a comedy because if Sophy married Sam and the ending seemed happy, Hardy would probably not have written about Sophy's death.

In *The Withered Arm*, despite the supernatural element, it is the jealousy, envy, deceit and unhappiness in the characters that results in the ending of the story. If Farmer Lodge had married Gertrude out of love rather than because of her beauty he would have not openly expressed disappointment

about her disfigurement. This would have led her not to become paranoid and seek help from the conjurer. If Rhoda was content with life she would feel no need to curse Gertrude and then Gertrude might not have been crippled. Therefore the ending would not feature the death of the characters and the genre of the story would not be tragedy.

The audience might look more into the happy marriage of Farmer Lodge and Gertrude rather than Gertrude's insecurities and Rhoda's hatred and jealousy. I think that Tony Kytes was a predictable ending and from the situations portrayed by Hardy, looking at Tony's attempts to deceive and his quick-thinking, I could tell that somewhere along the line Tony would, eventually, be caught out. The Son's Veto's ending was very suited to the story as all along Hardy has concentrated on Sophy's weakness and the ending was a believable result of this.

I would have personally enjoyed the story more and found it more believable if, in the end, Sam had convinced Sophy to marry him. I understand though, that Hardy did not write stories that ended 'happily ever after' and this is one of his qualities as a writer. The Withered Arm had a dramatic and intense ending and because of this I found this ending my favourite. However, this ending was the most unbelievable of the three stories. I think Hardy took coincidence to the extreme in this case and only the most superstitious of person would find this ending anywhere near believable.

I would have found the story much more effective if maybe Hardy had not made the corpse the son of Rhoda and Farmer Lodge and if all three characters did not either die or fade away. It would have been interesting to

see the aftermath of this situation in at least one of the characters lives.

Ultimately it is Hardy's storytelling and his creation of such vivid characters that affects the reader. His choices regarding the endings of the stories reflect his viewpoint and purpose both in his novels and short stories.