

Tony kytes the arch  
deceiver – by thomas  
hardy essay sample



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'The Seduction' is about a girl who has been 'seduced' by a boy which she meets at a party. They sleep together and afterwards she never sees him again. She then finds out she's pregnant. She realises that he had led her to believe that he would stay with her when really he had no intention of doing this. She is mad with herself for thinking that all those 'happily ever after' stories are true. 'Tony Kytes the Arch Deceiver' is about a man (Tony) who is engaged to a girl called Milly Richards. One day he is driving back to Longpuddle, his home. He sees an old sweetheart, Unity, and gives her a lift. Unity tries to persuade Tony that she would make a better wife than Milly. Tony then sees Milly so he asks Unity to hide. Then, he sees Hannah, his very first girlfriend so he asks Milly to hide as well. As he and Hannah talk, he wonders why he ever even thought of Milly or Unity when Hannah is so attractive. At the end, the wagon crashes and all three ladies fall out. Hannah's father witnesses this and urges Hannah to refuse him. She obeys her father's wishes and so Tony turns to Unity who also turns him down. He is left with Milly, who forgives him and so they are married.

In 'Tony Kytes the Arch Deceiver' although all of the young ladies are betrayed by Tony, it is Milly who is the most let down. -After all, it is her who is actually engaged to him. Not only did he talk of marriage to two other ladies, but also he asked both of them to marry him in front of her! Hannah and Unity are also betrayed as Tony mislead them into thinking that he hadn't settled his engagement with Milly, and could still be available. All three women are lied to. For Tony, lies just roll off the tip of his tongue as if it were natural. 'tis the axle, it do go like that sometimes in dry weather" " I wouldn't tell 'ee at first, because I wouldn't frighten 'ee.

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But Hannah, I've really a couple of ferrets in the bag under there, for rabbiting, and they quarrel sometimes. " Both these excuses are really to cover up the fact that he actually has two other women hiding in the cart! When Tony is found out at the end, he is shocked! It is almost as if he is totally oblivious to his unfaithful behaviour. " What, you won't have me, Hannah? ' says Tony, his jaw hanging down like a dead man's. " He cannot bring himself to believe that anyone could turn him down suggesting he is slightly conceited and arrogant. He just expected them all to forgive him and be just as willing as before. " Tony looked like a tree struck by lightning. "

At this point we have to laugh at his astonishment. Doesn't he realise how deceitful he has been? In ' The Seduction' it is the girl who is betrayed. She is used by the boy for sex and then left to fend for herself. He picked her out from the crowd early on in the evening and got her drunk. She is also ' betrayed' by magazines. They gave her ideas about marriage and commitment.

She is angry with herself for believing all the stories and being ' cheated by the promise of it all'. Unity and Tony had known each other from childhood. She was pretty, although until that day he had never looked at her like that. " I never knowed you was so pretty before! " She was quite persuasive in her manner. " You've never seen anything in me to complain of, have ye Tony? Now tell the truth to me! ... Can you say I'm not pretty Tony? Now look at me! " There is also a hint of forcefulness in her voice.

Milly is described as " a nice, light, small tender little thing". She seems very weak, lame and rather pathetic. She just accepts the fact that Tony had tried

to marry to other girls and takes him back. She goes along with everything he says. " If you like Tony. " When the three women find out about each other, Unity and Hannah refuse Tony, but Milly just sits there feebly crying in " watery steams". Hannah had been Tony's first love. She seems to look down on Tony. " She tossed her head a little disdainful and smiled off-hand. " She is quite rude.

" How can you be so stupid, Tony? " Well, aren't you going to be civil enough to ask me to ride home with you. " What she says suggests he isn't polite when, in fact, he is extremely so. He is slightly scared of her. "... what was I thinking of? ' said Tony in a flutter. " She is forceful, almost the ' man' in the relationship. She makes physical contact and she brings up marriage. She is vain. "... in a tantrum because of the discovery, and the scar that might be left on her face. " Ironically, for all her spirit, when Hannah finds she has a scratch on her face she runs to daddy!

The difference between them is that when the truth comes out at least Unity and Hannah turn Tony down. -Milly takes him back. The girl in the poem is nai?? ve. She has false hopes of marriage and experiencing a real life ' happily ever after' story. When meeting the boy and sleeping with him, she assumes this means he wants to marry her. Whereas Milly, Unity and Hannah have probably known Tony all of their lives, the girl in the poem only knew the boy for a few hours. None of the three girls in ' Tony Kytes the Arch Deceiver' were educated and had nothing else to do other than marry.

The girl in the poem had a life. -She was taking O-Levels and was probably planing on doing something with herself. The ninetieth century country girls

are presented as eager to marry. If they don't, they will not have any financial support and will end up caring for their parents as they grow old. They have no where near as many opportunities as the girl in 'The Seduction' does. They are just expected to marry, have children and become housewives. -Men almost saw it as women's function and duty to do so.

They shouldn't really be seen alone with men in less engaged to them. "... on't go driving about the country with the Joliver's daughter and making a scandal... if it had been Milly t'would have been quite proper; but you and Hannah Joliver going about by yourselves. " They're also under the control of their fathers. " My daughter is not willing sir! " The late twentieth century girl has much more freedom. She can go to parties. She went to Blackpool with her friends. She has more of a chance to live well without a man; she has done well at school and is taking O-Levels. -She has an education. But despite all this she is still expected to marry if she's pregnant.

It is still thought despicable to have sex before marriage and become a single parent. "... to have the neighbours whisper that ' you always looked the type. " Both pieces deal with issues which were typical of the time. In ' Tony Kytes the Arch Deceiver' Longpuddle is a small close community; the kind where everyone knows each other and are likely to know everyone else's affairs. "... a feather he knew well -the feather in Milly's hat... " It is a sunny daytime rural setting complete with wagons, trees, birds, insects and fields giving the place a feel of innocence and purity.

In ' The Seduction' there is an altogether different atmosphere; the anonymity of the city -no one else is aware of the goings on. "... the blind

windows of the tower blocks... " It is busy and industrialised. " the silver steam of traffic" Instead of images of cheery countryside, you think of the polluted town. " frightening scum on the water" " green as a septic wound" Tony is a charmer. He addresses the women by things such as " my dear", " my darling" and " my sweet".

He innocently flirts speaking in a tender voice and subtly having physical contact. So they sat a little closer and closer, their feet upon the foot-board and their shoulders touching... " He sounds like a bit of a ' lady's man', the type that is constantly trying to sweet talk you into his bed but in actual fact, when he flirts, it is all innocent. He wouldn't even think about seducing someone until he was married to her. He shows this when Hannah Joliver's father suggests that Tony and her might have slept together. " She's as sound as a bell for me, that I'll swear! ' says Tony, flaring up. " In contrast to Tony Kytes who is polite and respectful, the boy doesn't sound like a very appealing person at all.

He plays truant, reads pornographic magazines, sniffs solvents and smokes. He spits, his kisses taste of nicotine, he is not at all bright and all he's interested in is sex. Oppose to Tony, the boy had planned the whole seduction. When paying the girl lots of attention and making her feel special, he was not doing this because he had an alternate motive. Poor Tony was just unluckily to be a victim of such a situation. If the boy had liked her he would never have called her a ' little slag'. Tony seemed as though he didn't mean to hurt the girls' feelings and he felt bad about the whole thing.

Hardy's story is obviously written from a man's point of view. His presentation of women is that they are gullible, naive and silly. I imagine he would think something along the lines of 'it was the girls' own fault, they brought it upon themselves' or similar. McAuley's presentation of the girl is slightly different. Again, the girl is gullible and naive but she is not silly or stupid, she is a victim. There is sympathy evident for the girl whereas in 'Tony Kytes the Arch Deceiver', you can almost here Hardy and his mates cheering Tony on. The tones of the two pieces are completely different.