The Treatment of Love and Marriage in Thomas Hardy's "Far from the Madding Crowd" and Henry James's "The Portrait of a Lady"

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THE TREATMENT OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN
THOMAS HARDY'S FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD AND
HENRY JAMES'S THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY

A Thesis
Presented to
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In Partial Fulfillment
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Master of Arts

by
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of
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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this paper to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Richard M. Lagatella, and to my grandmother, Mrs. John Thomas Barclay, in appreciation for their love and encouragement always and especially during the writing of this thesis.
ABSTRACT

Far From the Madding Crowd by Thomas Hardy and The Portrait of a Lady by Henry James were published seven years apart by authors who were well acquainted and who shared very similar views about the writing of fiction. The striking similarities in theme, characterization and imagery go so far as to suggest that Hardy's earlier work might have influenced that of James.

This paper, while not attempting to prove James's indebtedness to Hardy, focuses on the theme of love and marriage as developed in both novels. Particular attention is paid to the heroines - Bathsheba Everdene of Far From the Madding Crowd and Isabel Archer of The Portrait of a Lady - with their strong sense of independence, their desire to carve out their own destinies, and their acceptance of the consequences of their poor choices of husbands. Parallels also exist among the male characters. Both Bathsheba and Isabel have a male confidant, a very strong and forceful suitor, and a husband of good lineage but deceitful and egotistical nature.

The way in which each of the heroines responds to being enmeshed in an unsatisfactory marital union is evidence of Hardy's and James's differing views of marriage. The growth of Isabel through suffering as opposed to Bathsheba's static sameness, and Hardy's neat happy ending which is not found in James suggest that while Hardy's work might well have influenced James, James infused the basic theme with the life of his own particular vision.
THE TREATMENT OF LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN THOMAS HARDY'S *FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD* AND HENRY JAMES'S *THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY*
When Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd* appeared in 1874, Henry James, one of its reviewers, claimed that the novel was "inordinately diffuse and unsubstantial" and that "the only things we believe in are the sheep and the dogs."¹ He added, however, that certain passages and characters had a vividness of expression, and concluded by admitting that although the novel was unsuccessful in many respects, Hardy had "gone astray very cleverly."² That James reviewed Hardy's novel and did admire aspects of Hardy's characterization lends credence to the assumption that he possibly was influenced by it in writing his own novel, *The Portrait of a Lady*, which was published in 1881. Further support for this assumption is the fact that Thomas Hardy and Henry James were acquainted and perhaps discussed their work with each other at the time James was writing *The Portrait of a Lady*. Both writers were members of the Rabelais Club in London and there is record of James having later invited Hardy to dine with him at his house in De Vere Gardens in London on July 13, 1889.³

Interestingly enough, Hardy and James also share similar opinions on the writing of fiction. Hardy, in an essay entitled "The Science of Fiction," which appeared in the *New Review*, April, 1891, describes the necessary qualities of a literary artist. He is one who apprehends
by the "mental tactility that comes from a sympathetic appreciativeness of life in all of its manifestations" and has an "observative responsiveness to everything within the cycle of the suns that has to do with actual life." Hardy adds that "to see in half and quarter views the whole picture, to catch from a few bars the whole tune, is the intuitive power that supplies the would-be storywriter with the scientific basis for his pursuit."\(^4\)

James's view of the artist in "The Art of Fiction" (1884) is identical. James advises the would-be writer to "write from experience" and "be one of the people on whom nothing is lost!". He continues in the essay with a definition of experience that is remarkably similar to Hardy's idea of what constitutes the scientific basis of the artist's pursuit. James says, "the power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implication of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern, the condition of feeling life in general so completely that you are well on your way to knowing any particular corner of it - this cluster of gifts may almost be said to constitute experience."\(^5\)

To both writers, then, what is important is not the ability to scientifically photograph reality but rather, as Hardy says, to possess "a sight for the finer qualities of existence" which cannot be "acquired by the outer senses alone."\(^6\) Hardy continues that the artist who possesses this ability is "a more accurate delineator of human nature than many another with twice his powers and means of
external observation, but without that sympathy." Admitting that this ability may be impossible to learn, Hardy conjectures that "perhaps, true novelists, like poets, are born, not made."

James, too, feels that this sensibility is inborn. As he says, "it goes without saying that you will not write a good novel unless you possess the sense of reality; but it will be difficult to give you a recipe for calling that sense into being." According to James, the true artist is the one who writes from an experience which is "an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spiderweb of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue." James continues that this sensibility "is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative...it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations."

In spite of these similarities in the two authors' theories of fiction as well as the striking similarities in names, characters, situations, and even imagery in Far From the Madding Crowd and The Portrait of a Lady, it is impossible to prove that James was indebted to Hardy for his novel. James was influenced by many of his predecessors and was himself one of the most brilliant and original writers of his time. Assuming, however, that among all the possible literary influences of The Portrait of a Lady, Far From the Madding Crowd was one, and that
a comparison of the two novels is mutually illuminating re-
gardless of this possible influence, how is James's novel
similar to and different from Hardy's?

A most interesting point of comparison of the two novels
is Hardy's and James's treatment of love and marriage. In
both novels, two unusually independent women, Bathsheba
Everdene in *Far From the Madding Crowd* and Isabel Archer
in *The Portrait of a Lady*, are courted by three men; each
of these women has an adoring lover who watches over her;
and both women make the wrong choice of husband and exper-
ience unhappy marriages. Additionally, each of these women
has a strong sense of duty which forces her to remain with
her husband. Hardy and James in their respective novels
also seem to reach the same conclusion that marriage on the
whole is unsuccessful unless entered into in a spirit of
what Hardy terms "camaraderie."^{12}

Remarkably similar in nature, Bathsheba and Isabel
demonstrate a strong sense of independence. In one of the
first scenes of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Hardy shows
this in Bathsheba by describing her horsemanship. She
rides "in the manner demanded by the saddle, though hardly
expected of the woman." (p.26). Bathsheba enjoys her posi-
tion as an independent woman and she immediately corrects
any rumors of her having sweethearts because she despises
"to be thought men's property." (p.37). Isabel, too, is
this type of independent woman. She likes to judge things
for herself and says that "to judge wrong, I think" is more honourable than not to judge at all. I don't wish to be a mere sheep in the flock."13 Like Bathsheba, Isabel believes that a woman should be able to live to herself without the society of a "coarse-minded person of another sex." (p.52). As she tells Ralph Touchett, she is not a "candidate for adoption." (p.19).

This independent spirit of the two women is further evidenced through Hardy's and James's representation of Bathsheba and Isabel as Diana-figures. In Far From the Madding Crowd, Hardy states that Bathsheba, without realizing it, is a worshipper of Diana, the goddess of chastity, for Bathsheba believes that there is "a certain degradation in renouncing the simplicity of a maiden existence to become the humbler half of an indifferent matrimonial whole." (p.258). Isabel, like Bathsheba, also shies away from marriage. She feels that "a woman ought to be able to live to herself," and that it is quite possible to be happy without men. (p.52).

Diana's symbol is that of the moon, and both Bathsheba and Isabel, to a lesser degree, are connected with the moon. In Far From the Madding Crowd, after farmer Boldwood falls in love with Bathsheba, Hardy states that when Bathsheba's "figure shone upon the farmer's eyes it lighted him up as the moon lights up a great tower." (p.119). In The Portrait of a Lady, it is Osmond who is paired with the moon but it
is Isabel who attaches herself to Osmond thinking that one "should move in a realm of light." (p.49). In addition, James uses Isabel's last name, Archer, as a further link to Diana, goddess of the moon and the hunt.

In these independent women is a sense of honor which plays an important part in their love relationships and respective marriages. Both women hold as sacred the "spoken vow" or promise, and accept the responsibility of this vow. They also try, although unsuccessfully, to ignore ties which are present but which are not spoken promises. Bathsheba, although allowing Gabriel Oak to think of marriage with her, reminds him that she never said she would marry him. And again, although initiating a relationship with farmer Boldwood and also allowing him to think of marriage with her, she reminds him that she never promised him anything; however, she cannot ignore the intrinsic ties to Boldwood and her responsibility for his emotions. She feels that since by sending Boldwood the valentine, she precipitated his love, "she ought in honesty to accept the consequences." (p.127).

Isabel, too, insists on the spoken vow and attempts to ignore unspoken ties with Caspar Goodwood. At one point in the novel, Isabel encourages Goodwood to expect that she will not marry anyone else, but she hastily reminds him that she promises nothing; however, like Bathsheba with Boldwood, Isabel does realize her responsibility for Goodwood's emotions. "He was the only
person with an unsatisfied claim on her. She had made him unhappy." (Portrait, p.484). When Isabel does make a promise, though, it is irrevocable. The fact that she thinks a great deal of her promises is made clear in the reason for her return to Rome. For lack of a better reason, she says, "my having promised will do." (p.565).

In the two novels, the protagonists Bathsheba and Isabel have similar love experiences. Courted by Oak, Boldwood, and Troy, Bathsheba rejects Oak because he is not socially prominent enough for her and Boldwood because he is too insistent on marriage, but chooses Troy, the suitor with the most deficiencies, as her husband. In The Portrait of a Lady, Isabel, like Bathsheba, claims that she is looking for the best in a husband and avoids Goodwood and Warburton, who insist on marrying. She also eventually chooses the suitor with the most faults, Gilbert Osmond.

Like the heroines, the male characters of Hardy and James also share characteristics. Gabriel Oak and Ralph Touchett, for example, play similar roles of the adoring lover who watches over the protagonist. In Far From the Madding Crowd, Gabriel immediately announces himself as Bathsheba's protector by giving her toll money for the road to her aunt's house. This role expands as he later defends her to her employees and acts as her confidant and advisor. Aware that his own suit is impossible, he can give Bathsheba an honest opinion of her other suitors.
At the end of Far From the Madding Crowd, Gabriel's devotion is rewarded; he marries Bathsheba.

In The Portrait of a Lady, Ralph is Isabel's protector and, like Gabriel, he gives Isabel money which in a sense becomes the toll for her entrance to Europe. He watches over her and, again like Gabriel, becomes the confidant who offers opinions of Isabel's suitors. Ralph, too, at the end of The Portrait of a Lady is rewarded for his devotion by Isabel's confession to him of her unhappiness and her expression of love for him.

In James's novel, Caspar Goodwood seems to be a combination of the characteristics of Gabriel Oak and William Boldwood. The names "Goodwood" and "Oak" are obviously used to emphasize the sturdiness and enduring nature of the characters of the two men. Goodwood, however, is less gentle than Oak and instead has a passionate nature which resembles that of Boldwood. All three men are direct in their marriage proposals and sure of what they want. Boldwood and Goodwood do not accept refusals of marriage from Bathsheba and Isabel, and both Boldwood, after Troy's alleged death, and Goodwood, after Isabel's flight from Rome, offer themselves again as a means to salvation for the respective protagonists. Lord Warburton in The Portrait of a Lady also resembles Boldwood, for both are highly respected landowners who are considered good catches; and, like Boldwood with Bathsheba, Warburton rejects Isabel's refusal of him and tries several times to persuade her to marry him.
Close parallels also exist in Hardy's depiction of Sergeant Troy and James's depiction of Gilbert Osmond. Both "villains" are dashing gentlemen, dilettantes, flatterers, and tricksters. Sergeant Troy is a handsome man but one of dubious moral stature. As Hardy says, he is a liar whose "morals had hardly been applauded." (Crowd, p.161). Troy believes that with women the best course to follow is to flatter them, for, as he says, "the only alternative to flattery was cursing and swearing... 'Treat them fairly, and you are a lost man.'" (Crowd, p.162).

Although only a soldier, Troy's lineage is good. His father was a doctor, his mother a Parisienne, and he was fairly well-educated at a grammar school where he studied languages; however, according to local gossip, Troy "wasted his gifted lot" (p.159), and as Hardy says "his activities were less of a locomotive than a vegetative nature... whilst he sometimes reached the brilliant in speech because that was spontaneous, he fell below the commonplace in action, from inability to guide incipient effort." (Crowd, p.161).

An ambitious and conceited man, Troy cannot tolerate humiliation. After engaging in fornication with a village maid and bound by his word to marry her, he futilely waits for her at church, only to find out later that she had appeared at another church. Instead of pardoning the unfortunate girl, Troy, feeling himself ridiculed, leaves her. Then turning his attentions to the wealthy Bathsheba, he uses her jealous nature to his advantage and precipitates
their marriage in order to gain her farm and money.

Gilbert Osmond, like Troy, is also a fine looking man of foreign extraction, who, according to Madame Merle, is well-educated but indolent and in the words of Ralph Touchett is "a sterile dilettante." (Portrait, p.345).

Although not of the aristocracy, Osmond lives in the manner of a gentleman and has a "great dread of vulgarity." (p.247). He too is ambitious. His desire to marry Isabel stems from his love of the superior and the exquisite. Osmond "had never forgiven his star for not appointing him to an English dukedom" and he is therefore impressed with Isabel for refusing marriage with Lord Warburton. (p.303). An extremely egotistical man - although, as Isabel later realizes, "his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers" (p.429) - Osmond is pleased with Isabel's "quick fanciful mind which saved one repetitions and reflected one's thought on a polished, elegant surface." (p.349). Osmond, like Troy, was responsible for the birth of an illegitimate child, by Madame Merle whom he later both uses and despises. It is through the efforts of Madame Merle that Osmond obtains Isabel, her money, and her social position.

To an extent it is this very egotism of Troy and Osmond that attracts Bathsheba and Isabel. These two women quickly reject their insistent suitors but are compelled by the superior attitudes of Troy and Osmond. Instead of insisting that Bathsheba marry him, Troy tells her that he has seen a woman more beautiful than she and his constancy may not
be counted on unless Bathsheba marries him. Osmond appeals to Isabel because he is subtle in his attentions and seems to her to have one of the finest natures she has known. She defends his egotism to Ralph by saying that she does not blame Osmond for "his great respect for himself." (p.344).

Bathsheba and Isabel are also attracted to the exotic and sophisticated aspects of Troy and Osmond. For Bathsheba, the country girl, the first sight of Troy's "brass and scarlet...had upon her the effect of a fairy transformation." (p.156). She also falls under the spell of his flattering tongue. As she tells Troy, "if you can only fight half as winningly as you can talk, you are able to make a pleasure of a bayonet wound!" (p.167). Bathsheba cannot resist Troy's exotic appeal. During his performance of the sword exercise, Bathsheba is almost hypnotized. "She felt powerless to withstand or deny him. He was altogether too much for her..." (p.179). According to Richard Carpenter, Bathsheba has a "subconscious desire to be dominated." 14 As a young girl, Bathsheba was wild; and, even later in her life, she was too wild to be a governess. The fact that, as she tells Gabriel Oak, she wants somebody to tame her, accounts for her attraction to the passionate, dominating Troy.

Isabel is attracted to Osmond as to "a specimen apart... She had never met a person of so fine a grain." (p.260). As she tells Ralph, Osmond "knows everything, he understands everything, he has the kindest, gentlest, highest spirit." (p.346).
Isabel desires marriage with Osmond to unite herself with his spirit and also to be able to help him financially. After inheriting her fortune, Isabel begins to identify herself with her money. According to Isabel, her fortune "became to her mind a part of her better self." (p.223). However, this inheritance also becomes a burden for her and one which she desires to transfer "to some other conscience, to some more prepared receptacle." (p.426). As Bathsheba desires to be dominated by Troy, so does Isabel want Osmond to use her by using the fortune with which she associates herself. Isabel feels that Osmond "would use her fortune in a way that would make her think the better of it." (p.426). This is the reason that she can "surrender to him with a kind of humility...she was not only taking, she was giving." (p.352).

Opposition of others to their marriages only intensifies Bathsheba's and Isabel's determination to marry whom they choose. When Gabriel warns Bathsheba against Troy, Bathsheba claims that Troy "is as good as anybody in this parish!" (p.183). Ralph's accusations against Osmond bring a similar defence from Isabel and an assertion that "she married to please herself." (p. 348). The fact that opposition to her marriage existed actually gives Isabel pleasure. She realizes that "to prefer Gilbert Osmond as she preferred him was perforce to break all other ties" and "she tasted of the sweets of this preference." (p.349).
The marriages of the two protagonists, however, result in a curtailment of their former freedom and individuality. In Far From the Madding Crowd, Bathsheba becomes Troy's pawn. Thinking only of his own entertainment, Troy ignores Bathsheba's desires. On the night of the harvest dance, he sends Bathsheba to her room and then, with the farm workers, proceeds to get so drunk that he cannot help save the crops that are threatened by a severe storm. Likewise, against Bathsheba's wishes, he spends her money on bets at the horse races. As a result, the once-independent Bathsheba becomes insecure and, as Troy tells her, loses all her former "pluck and sauciness." (p.245). Bathsheba contemplates suicide, but realizing the weakness of this she becomes apathetic, and takes "no further interest in herself as a splendid woman," but decides to stand her ground. (p.303). "Perceiving clearly that her mistake had been a fatal one, she accepted her position, and waited coldly for the end." (p.303).

This depiction by Hardy of the effects of a restricting marriage on Bathsheba is not so detailed as is the account James gives of the effects on Isabel of a similar marriage. Unlike Hardy, James uses prison imagery to intensify the restricting nature of Isabel's marriage. Foreshadowing what Isabel will discover in marriage is her thought when she first sees Osmond's villa. It "looked somehow as if, once you were in, you would need an act of energy to get out." (p.252). Additionally, Ralph refers to her intended
marriage as a "cage" (p.340), and Countess Gemini considers it a "steel trap." (p.355). After marrying Osmond, Isabel does feel trapped as if she were proceeding down a "dark narrow alley with a dead wall at the end." (p.424).

As Bathsheba's marriage changes her, so does the marriage of Isabel and Osmond change Isabel. Ralph notices a new "violence in some of her impulses" and "crudity in some of her experiments." (p.392). At the same time, Isabel becomes apathetic. "Of old she had been curious, and now she was indifferent." For Ralph the "free, keen girl had become quite another person...she represented Gilbert Osmond." (p.393). Isabel no longer has freedom of choice. Her home is open only to those permitted by Osmond, who will not allow, for one, Isabel's old friend Henrietta. Isabel acquires a "deep distrust of her husband" which causes her previously spontaneous words and actions to be tempered with caution. (p.424). She realizes that the "real offence... was her having of mind of her own at all. Her mind was to be his." (p.431).

Although, like Bathsheba, Isabel feels that nothing is a pleasure anymore, she does feel bound to her husband. Osmond is her "appointed and Inscribed master," (p.461) and "marriage meant that a woman should cleave to the man with whom, uttering tremendous vows, she had stood at the altar." (p.540). Despite the fact that her husband is a bad one, Isabel believes that there are "certain obligations... in the very fact of marriage...quite independent of the
quantity of enjoyment extracted from it." (p.58C). Isabel, like Bathsheba, perceives that she has made a fatal mistake but accepts her position: "when a woman had made such a mistake, there was only one way to repair it—just immensely (oh, with the highest grandeur!) to accept it." (p.404).

Marriage, then, is not seen by either Hardy or James as a loving relationship. J. I. M. Stewart in examining Far From the Madding Crowd actually proposes that the theme of the novel is that marriage ties snuff out "spontaneity and cordiality and finally love." Hardy says in the novel that marriage is a short cut for getting out of love and illustrates this with the story of Bathsheba's father who loved a woman dearly until he married her, and then, to rekindle his affection, took off her wedding ring and called her by her maiden name. Even the rustic characters in Far From the Madding Crowd speak unfavorably of marriage. According to Pennyways, "a good wife is good, but the best wife is not so good as no wife at all." (p.341). In the novel, marriage curtails Troy's infatuation with Bathsheba. "All romances end at marriage," (p.254) he says, and he is no longer attracted by her beauty. He is not even affected when she very charmingly pleads with him to remain at home; however, as Hardy says, "had the woman not been his wife, Troy would have succumbed instantly." (p.254).

This same lack of love is present in the marriages shown in The Portrait of a Lady. Mr. and Mrs. Touchett, for example, have no real communication with each other. Mrs. Touchett is not even aware of the serious state of
her husband's health; and, after an absence of nearly a year, she can only talk with him one hour before exhausting their subjects of conversation. The Countess Gemini also is involved in a marriage without affection and claims that there are no good husbands. Marriage destroys any love and nearly all communication between Isabel and Osmond. After marrying, Isabel and Osmond live in a house of "darkness, dumbness, and suffocation." (p. 428).

One difference in the treatments of these unsatisfactory marriages is that Hardy concentrates on passion as a primary cause of the union while James's characters avoid passionate involvement. In Far From the Madding Crowd, Hardy emphasizes the passionate nature of his characters through sensual and sexual imagery. Bathsheba, who marries Troy as a result of her passion for him, is continually associated with the color red. She wears a crimson jacket and her face is "red and moist" like a "peony petal." (p. 36). Bathsheba appears in two overtly sexual scenes in the novel. In one, a scene which James particularly admired, Bathsheba stands with Gabriel on a rick during a thunderstorm. Here Hardy juxtaposes the phallic lightning flashes which split a tree so that it "seemed on fire to a white heat" (p. 237) with Bathsheba's warm arm which trembles in Gabriel's hand. In the second scene, Bathsheba participates with Troy in a performance of the sword exercise. While Troy brandishes his sword "like a living thing" around Bathsheba's body, she trembles and pants: "her breath came and went
quickly and her eyes shone with an infrequent light." (p.175). Instead of fleeing from Troy as Isabel did from Goodwood, Bathsheba remains on the scene after his kiss which "brought the blood beating into her face, set her stinging as if aflame...and enlarged emotion to a compass which quite swamped thought." (p.179).

In *The Portrait of a Lady*, on the other hand, Isabel actually shows a fear of passionate involvement with a man. She had perceived that "deep in her soul...lay a belief that if a certain light should dawn she could give herself completely; but this image, on the whole, was too formidable to be attractive." (p.52). Even Osmond's declaration of love for her fills her with the terror of "having to begin to spend" (p.309) the passion within her. Isabel is most repelled by the advances of Caspar Goodwood, the most passionate character in the novel. She dislikes his "disagreeably strong push, a kind of hardness of presence," (p.113) and at the end of the novel flees in terror from his "hard manhood." (p.590).

The case is the same with the male characters in the two novels. Troy, like Bathsheba, spontaneously falls in love as a result of a passion which quickly dissolves. Attracted to pretty women, he is more interested in the conquest than the prize. Osmond, on the other hand, although egotistical like Troy, is calculating and dispassionate. He views love as he views collecting works of art, and Isabel is another object for his collection.
Osmond, who is "fond of originals, of rarities, of the superior and the exquisite," appreciates Isabel because she has rejected Lord Warburton and has thereby "qualified herself to figure in his collection of choice objects." (p.303). For Osmond, the basis for his desire for Isabel is not passion but a need to succeed in obtaining another fine object.

In their depictions of unsuccessful marriages, Hardy and James likewise have differing emphases. Hardy concentrates on the characters having lost love through the marriage, while James turns his attention more to the characters having failed in marriage. In Far From the Madding Crowd, Bathsheba is distraught over the loss of Troy's love after their marriage. Begging her husband to stay away from the races she complains that she previously had been "far sweeter" than all his other pleasures but that now their "romance has come to an end." (p.254). In her jealousy over Fanny Robin she begs him to love her "better than any woman in the world," (p.256) and when he admits his love for Fanny, Bathsheba utters "a long, low cry of measureless despair and indignation, such a wail of anguish as had never before been heard within those old inhabited walls." (p.281).

In James's novel, Osmond and Isabel seem to be upset that the marriage has failed, not that tenderness is missing. As Ralph perceptively realizes, Osmond lives "exclusively for the world," and the degree of the world's attention
is his "only measure of success." (p.393). His marriage to Isabel brought him a woman who he thought would represent his own style and attain for him the success which he found so detestable to seek. The reason, then, that his marriage must continue despite a lack of love is so that he can retain this success and not fail. Osmond dreads the humiliation of defeat. Isabel, too, realizes that in their marriage "they had attempted only one thing, but that one thing was to have been exquisite. Once they missed it nothing else would do; there was no conceivable substitute for that success." (p.462).

As these differences suggest, Hardy seems less concerned with the conventional trappings of marriage than is James. For example, Hardy does not see the marriage contract as binding. In Far From the Madding Crowd, Hardy first suggests an idea which he later expounds in Jude the Obscure, that of "moral marriage." In Far From the Madding Crowd, Troy declares that although he did not legally marry her, Fanny Robin is actually his wife in the sight of Heaven. He says to Bathsheba that "a ceremony before a priest doesn't make a marriage. I am not morally yours." (p.282). In Jude the Obscure, the cousins Jude Fawley and Sue Bridehead live together without ever marrying each other although they had each been married before. When Sue requests permission to leave her husband Phillotson she tells him that living with him and not loving him is tantamount to committing adultery, and that even if they cannot cancel
their marriage legally they can cancel it morally. At the end of the novel, tragic circumstances cause Sue to leave Jude and return to her husband. Carrying the argument for "moral marriage" to its fullest extent in the novel, Jude tells Sue that although not legally married to Jude, she is his wife and that to return to Phillotson would be a "fanatic prostitution"; for as he says, "I loved you, and you loved me; and we closed with each other; and that made the marriage. We still love...therefore the marriage is not cancelled." 16

For James's characters the marriage contract is binding. In The Portrait of a Lady, Osmond feels that he and Isabel must accept the fact that they are "indissolubly united" even though they are "as perfectly apart in feeling as two disillusioned lovers had ever been." (p.536). This, however, does not preclude extra-marital relationships. James, in his concern with the difference in moral standards between Americans and Europeans, adds a dimension to his treatment of marriage in The Portrait of a Lady which is not included in Far From the Madding Crowd. In James's novel, disloyalty in marriage seems to be a European tradition which is shocking to American characters. For example, some of the ideas which the Europeanized Osmond expects Isabel to adopt are to her "hideously unclean." (p.431). Osmond, who seems to accept the fact that all women deceive their husbands, offends the American Isabel who believes in "such a thing as chastity and even as decency." (p.431). Henrietta, another American, is also shocked to discover this fact
about marriage. When the Countess Gemini tells her that all nice men make love to married women, Henrietta replies, "I should want my own husband; I shouldn't want anyone else's." (p.453).

Although in both novels, marriage is the "mise en scene" of Bathsheba's and Isabel's suffering, in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Bathsheba's suffering does not noticeably alter her, while in *The Portrait of a Lady*, Isabel's unfortunate experience affords her an opportunity for growth and development. For one thing, Bathsheba is not so sensitive a character as is Isabel. In the beginning of the novel, she selfishly sends a valentine to Boldwood without considering the consequences and at the end of the novel, after her miserable marriage experience, she just as selfishly marries Gabriel Oak in "hunger for pity and sympathy" (p.365) and so that she will not be alone. She is the same vain Bathsheba of the beginning of the novel, only more subdued.

Isabel, on the other hand, has a more sensitive and responsible nature, and, through her suffering, her consciousness is deepened. From the earliest parts of *The Portrait of a Lady*, Isabel indicates that she intuitively knows the necessity for suffering. "I can't escape unhappiness," she tells Lord Warburton, adding that to marry him would be an attempt to do this. Isabel feels that she cannot be happy by separating herself from "the usual chances and dangers, from what most people know and suffer." (p.131). Her marriage to Osmond is the chance she takes and one
which causes her to suffer. As a result of this unhappy marriage, Isabel, like Bathsheba, contemplates how peaceful it would be "to cease utterly, to give it all up and not know anything more." (p.560). Returning to Gardencourt and a dying Ralph, Isabel herself appears in a death-like state. "She sat in her corner, so motionless, so passive... that she recalled to herself one of those Etruscan figures couched upon the receptacle of their ashes." (p.560). Yet Isabel does not die nor is she able to "get quite away, really away...this privilege was evidently to be denied her." (p.561).

Instead, through her suffering Isabel is strengthened and regenerated. Even in her death-like state Isabel feels that "life would be her business for a long time to come" and that she "should some day be happy again." (p.561). Symbolic of Isabel's regeneration is her return in fair spring weather to Gardencourt, the scene of her first state of innocence, her "starting point." (p.560). Here in a final visit with Ralph, Isabel is able to declare her love for him and in their complete understanding and communication is able to find a moment of real happiness. In contrast with Mrs. Touchett, who, as Isabel says, "would have found it a blessing today to be able to feel a defeat, a mistake," to suffer in some way, Isabel, as a result of her marriage, has gained the "enrichments of consciousness" (p.570) which result from suffering. Because of this, Isabel's return on the "straight path" (p.591) to her
husband in Rome seems to be a decision made by a woman whose suffering has made her strong.

This leads us to perhaps the most striking difference between the two novels. At the end of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Bathsheba's decisions are made for her by Hardy. When Troy, who had been given up for dead, returns for Bathsheba, Boldwood, hoping to win Bathsheba for himself, shoots and kills Troy. Then, attempting to kill himself, Boldwood is apprehended and committed to a hospital. Hardy then marries Bathsheba to the only remaining but most suitable suitor, the faithful Gabriel. In contrast, James refuses to solve Isabel's problems by destroying Osmond. Isabel herself must solve her own dilemma. She must make the decision whether or not to accept Goodwood's offer or return to Rome and Osmond.

The difference in the nature of the endings of the two novels demonstrates that *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *The Portrait of a Lady* are products of opposing literary philosophies. Hardy's novel fits into the Victorian tradition of novel writing where authors constructed neatly "dovetailed plots" with no loose ends. The reading public wanted "restful" novels which, if they were tragic, could have "heartache" but not "heartbreak." Poetic justice was still very much upheld by authors who punished their wicked characters and rewarded their virtuous ones. Thus, at the end of Hardy's novel, Gabriel gets Bathsheba and the public is satisfied.
James, however, is not concerned with satisfying the public's demand for a happy ending to a novel, "a distribution at the last of prizes, pensions, husbands, wives, babies, millions, appended paragraphs, and cheerful remarks." It annoyed James that many readers viewed the novel's ending as they did a good dinner, "a course of dessert and ices." The modern critic, Frank Kermode, has called attention to James's criticism of the conventional ending and claims that it is the writers of the modern epoch like James who skeptically "discard the fictions that are too fully explanatory, too consoling" and instead write books that "move through time to an end, an end we must sense even if we cannot know it." Joseph Conrad, contemporary and friend of James, in 1905 preceded Mr. Kermode with a very similar observation. As Conrad says, "One is never set at rest by Mr. Henry James's novels. His books end as an episode in life ends. You remain with the sense of the life still going on; and even the subtle presence of the dead is felt in that silence that comes upon the artist's creation when the last word has been read. It is eminently satisfying, but it is not final."

Despite amazing similarities, Far From the Madding Crowd and The Portrait of a Lady offer the reader quite different conclusions. Hardy gives the last and final word, leaving his readers without any questions. James, however, leaves us full of doubts. Nothing is final. Instead, in James's novel, we move to an end we must sense rather than know.
NOTES


2. James, Literary Reviews and Essays, p.297.


6. Orel, p.137.

7. Ibid.


11. Ibid.


21) Ibid.


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