

Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*
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Introductory Questions

1. The novel's title was chosen over "The Simpletons" and several others. What associations would "Jude the Obscure" have had for Hardy's audience? To which aspects of the book does it draw attention?
2. Why may the novel have been divided into six "parts"?
3. According to Hardy's first preface, what were his aims? Do you believe that he has achieved these?
4. In his second preface, how does he respond to critics? Do any introduce responses with which you agree?

Part First: At Marygreen

Chapter 1

1. What are some features of Hardy's style? The narrative tone? The use of diction, pace of sentences, choice of images and descriptions? What kinds of intrusions are made by the narrator?
2. What do we learn about the schoolmaster from the opening chapter?
3. What do we learn about Jude's character and situation? What are some of the roles literature will play in his life?
4. What is significant about the physical environment of Marygreen?
5. What will be ironic about Phillotson's casual invitation to Jude to seek him out in Christminster?
6. How do the descriptions of the chapter reflect Hardy's views on historic preservation?

Chapter 2

1. What is Jude's family situation? What is his aunt's character and behavior toward him? What hints do we glean about his family and past in this chapter?
2. On what kinds of general principles does he reflect?
3. In what contexts is his past history evoked?
4. How do we hear of Sue Bridehead?
5. How is past history evoked in the narrator's description of the landscape?
6. How is his character shown in his behavior to the birds he is hired to scare off the farm?
7. What does Jude come to feel is a defect in the nature of things? (17) Would this have reflected nineteenth-century scientific ideas?

Chapter 3

1. What is the symbolic function of Jude's view of Christminster? (a religious vision) What are aspects of its description? (beautiful description, 19, constant biblical echoes, 20)
2. What purpose is served by his interview with the carters? What does he hear of Christminster by the man who has never been there?

Chapter 4

1. What means does Jude resort to obtain classical grammars? What in them brings him disappointment? (26) Does he persist?
2. What absence does the narrator observe as Jude sits grieving over his disappointment? (no one comes to cheer him, 27)

Chapter 5

1. What kind of scholar does Jude become
2. How does he decide on his life occupation?

Chapter 6

1. On what is Jude meditating when he encounters Arabella? What is the sexual symbolism of her advances, and why does he respond?
2. How is she described? Are there elements of her appearance which fit her character? Would this have reflected “scientific” views of the time?
3. What emotions does Jude feel at the prospect of their meeting?
4. How does the reader know that Arabella is not honest?
5. Why is Jude attracted to her? Does the narrator believe he is responsible for his attraction? Do you agree? What seems to be Hardy’s view of the ability to control sexual instinct?

Chapter 7

1. What do we learn about Arabella from their first outing together? In what ways is Jude the victim of entrapment? How do Jude and Arabella differ in their responses toward each other?

Chapter 8

1. What devices does she use to entice Jude into bed?

Chapter 9

1. How does Arabella deceive Jude into marriage? Had she been advised to feign pregnancy? Is it an extenuating circumstance that others prompt her?
2. In what other ways is Arabella deceitful?
3. What views does Jude/Hardy give on marriage? Do his remonstrances ignore any aspect of social responsibility?

Chapter 10

1. What is the significance of the pig-killing scene? To what level has their marriage descended?
2. How does the pig react to being slaughtered?
3. What are Jude’s attitudes toward the killing of animals? Are there any social movements of his time which embodied similar views?

Chapter 11

1. What seems to be Arabella’s motive in attempting to precipitate violence? What effect on the reader does this scene have?
2. What does Jude learn from his aunt about his parents? What are her opinions on the suitability of the Frawleys for marriage?
3. What self-destructive action does he attempt, and how does he interpret its failure?
4. What radical decision does Arabella make? How is the marriage finally dissolved? Do they quarrel over possessions?
5. What associations would Australia have had for Hardy’s audience? What final act of callousness breaks his emotional tie with her? After buying it, what does he do with the picture?
6. What new resolve does he take at the end of the book? What geographical positioning suggests the cyclical nature of human experience?
7. What expectations have been set up so far?

Part Second: At Christminster

Chapter 1

1. What kind of reception does Christminster give him?
2. What are his responses and reactions to the city? How is Christminster different by night and day?
3. What elements and historical events does he mention from Christminster’s (Oxford’s) past?
4. What seems indicated by the fact that he sends for Sue’s picture? (63) Why do you think his great-aunt is willing to send it, though she had not given it to him before his departure?

Chapter 2

1. How is Christminster described?

2. What is the significance of the fact that neo-Victorian Gothic architecture is passing from fashion?
3. What is shown by Jude's kissing of Sue's photograph? Is there irony to his aunt's criticism of her propriety?
4. Are there other ironic elements of his view of her?
5. How is Sue described? How is she contrasted with Arabella?

Chapter 3

1. What do we learn about Sue from her purchase of the statues and her covering of them? May this scene foreshadow later events?
2. What contrasts are apparent in Jude's reading and response to classical texts and contemporary works of literature?

Chapter 4

1. How does Sue first address Jude?
2. What is revealed about her character in their first meeting? What seems to be her attitude toward Jude? Why does Sue wish to change her occupation?
3. What disappointments does he suffer on meeting his old schoolmaster? Are these expressed?
4. For what job does he recommend Sue, and with what motives? Has Sue expressed enthusiasm about teaching? What will be some consequences of this action?

Chapter 5

1. How does Sue behave at the exhibition of Jerusalem, and what is the significance of the scene? What do you think of her manner toward her cousin? At this point, Phillotson begins to court Sue. Is he a likely suitor by Victorian standards?

Chapter 6

1. What does Jude learn from his aunt's friend about Sue's childhood, and what does the anecdote about the slide reveal about her character?
2. Why cannot Jude attend Christminster? What does Hardy think of the justice of his exclusion? What social attitudes are implied in the letter of rejection sent by the Master?

Chapter 7

1. What episode causes Jude to leave Christminster, and why is his leave taking symbolic? Why do you think Jude has no other human ties?

Part Third: At Melchester

Chapter 1

1. Jude moves to Melchester to be near Sue. Does this choice seem to make conflict inevitable?
2. How do you account for the frequent gloomy consequences of sexual relations in fiction toward the close of the century?
3. Under what circumstances does Sue announce her engagement? How do you judge her treatment of him?
4. What activities does Jude engage in to distract himself?
5. What qualities in Sue seem to attract Jude?

Chapter 2

1. What occurs on their expedition into the country? How does this episode resemble other moments in their relationship?

Chapter 3

1. What confines Sue to her room, and why does she escape? What is the gist of her remarks on the "weaker sex"? What seems the significance of the narrator's allusion to her "slightly independent tones"?
2. What are some connotations of her wearing of Jude's clothes?

Chapter 4

1. What do you make of Sue's conversation? On what subjects does it turn? (118, on herself and her disdain for sex) Are these appropriate subjects for discussion with a married man?
2. What do you make of her description of her past relationship with an undergraduate?
3. Does her conversation shift in tone? What are some of her ideas? What are her goals?

Chapter 5

1. What are Sue's comments on Phillotson? Who first mentions love?
2. What do you think are Sue's motives in sending her letter to Jude?
3. Does Hardy intend to present a favorable portrait of her?

Chapter 6

1. How is Phillotson described?
2. Does Jude give Sue a good account of his past?
3. What is Sue's response? On what grounds does Hardy find Sue's responses defensible?

Chapter 7

1. What are painful features of Sue's wedding to Phillotson? What are some of Jude's/Hardy's reflections on women? (140)
2. What kind of farewell do Sue and Jude have? (plays on his emotions, 139, emotion-fraught farewell, 140)

Chapter 8

1. In what hope does Jude remain at Christminster after Sue has left on her wedding trip? Is there any rationality to his hope that she may return?
2. Why does the thought of Sue's potential children bring him no satisfaction? Why does the narrator gloss this as recognition of "the scorn of Nature for man's finer emotions"?
3. What emotion causes him to enter a tavern? Is his behavior made more understandable by the fact that he is invited to drink by a friend?
4. Whom does he meet? Does he avoid an encounter? What does he propose that they do, and how does she respond?
5. Why doesn't he ask her for a divorce? What prompts Arabella to suggest their reunion? What prompts Jude to sleep with her? Does this make sense in view of his earlier expressed attitudes toward her?

Chapter 9

1. What new information does Arabella give Jude, and how does he respond?
2. What reaction does Jude feel at the memory of his act of the preceding night?
3. What interpretation does the narrator seem to place on Jude's constant shifts, and his choice of sexual partner?
4. Whom does he meet, and what reason does she give for having returned to seek him in Christminster?
5. Do you think Sue has been entirely motivated for concern for his welfare and potential gloom?
6. Is it conventional that Jude repeatedly addresses Sue as "dear"?
7. How is Sue's appearance contrasted with Arabella's?
8. How does Sue describe her 46 year old husband?
9. Who greets Sue on their arrival at Marygreen? What reaction to the news of Sue's marriage does she express? Would it seem conventional to insult someone's new husband as a bad choice?
10. What private emotion regarding her marriage does Sue confess to Jude?
11. What does she prohibit Jude to do?
12. At this juncture, what news does he hear from Arabella? Why doesn't Jude seek a divorce?

Chapter 10

1. What prompts Jude to live at Shaston? Does the desire to live near Sue bode well for their future separation?
2. What song seems to reflect Jude's emotional state, and what does he learn on visiting its

composer?

3. When Sue invites him to visit the day on which he has been absent, what is Jude's response? What does Sue indicate has caused her to change her mind?
4. Does this see propitious for their future restraint?
5. What role do letters play throughout the narrative?

Part Fourth: At Shaston

Chapter 1

1. With what ancient monuments is Shaston associated? Who meets him as he waits in the schoolroom? Why does Sue serve him tea there instead of in her home?
2. Does the narrator agree with her view of her home?
3. What information does Jude seek from Sue, and does this seem symbolic?
4. Of what does he accuse her, and how does she respond? Is his charge just?
5. To what confession does this prompt her, and under what conditions
6. Do you agree that social conventions are entirely to blame for her marriage?
7. What does Jude observe as he leaves? Is it appropriate for him to be watching her house unobserved?
8. How does Hardy view Jude's determination to see Sue?
9. Jude believes he cannot live up to the ideals of the Church fathers—would he also be judged by a lower standard?

Chapter 2

1. What letters do the two exchange, and with what submerged emotions?
2. What event brings Sue and Jude together again? What private information does Sue again impart about her marriage?
3. What can have been her motive for such a revelation, and to him?
4. What excuse does she give for this confession?
5. Would these be the views of a "new woman"? What did women reformers of the period advocate, and would their proposed reforms have helped Sue?
6. What does Jude regret he had not tried to do? Is there any indication that he could have done so successfully?
7. What does Sue threaten to do? Would this have been a kindness to Phillotson?
8. What news does Jude tell Sue, and does he give her a full account of his relationship to Arabella? Why do you think he claims a (then) non-existent relationship?
9. What is her response? Why does she choose this occasion to report even more explicitly her distaste for marital relationships? What does she blame?
10. What is Jude's response to all this?
11. What does Sue report of Phillotson's behavior to her? Do either Jude or Sue consider Phillotson's feelings in recognizing his wife's dislike?
12. Whom does he encounter as he attempts to put a trapped rabbit out of its misery?
13. What forms the topic of their discussion as she speaks to him from the window, and how do they part?

Chapter 3

1. Is it true that Christianity regarded sexual love as at worst a frailty
2. On what change in his occupational goals does Jude decide? Does he seem a likely clergyman in any case?
3. Are there any other occupations besides stone mason or clergyman to which he could have aspired?

4. Why does Jude consider that it is the “artificial system of society” which has turned his normal sex-impulses into devilish domestic gins and syringes”? Are there aspects of marriage which this ignores?
5. How does Sue behave on her return home? How does Phillotson react? What account does she give of her marriage, and how does she describe herself?
6. On what grounds does Phillotson attempt to persuade her to live with him?
7. What would be the consequences to him of his wife’s desertion without a divorce?
8. What does Sue tell her husband she wishes to do? How does she defend her choice? Is this a view to which she will hold?
9. Would this seem a tactful topic to bring up at the time? What do you make of the claim that she wouldn’t live as a partner with Jude? Has she consulted him?
10. Why do you think Hardy presents their negotiations through a series of letters?
11. Has Phillotson behaved well in this situation? Are they able to live apart in peace, and if not, why not?
12. Does it affect the reader’s sympathies that Jude Fawley is referred to by his first name but Richard Phillotson is “Phillotson”?

Chapter 4

1. To what does Phillotson agree, and on what terms?
2. Whom does he visit to report his situation? What has he decided about the nature of marriage, and his obligation to Sue?
3. What does Gillingham think of Phillotson’s reactions, and what does he advise? Why do you think this conversation is included?
4. How does Sue respond to Phillotson as she bids him farewell?
5. What final of renunciation does Phillotson perform, and what does this indicate?

Chapter 5

1. What does Sue announce when she meets Jude? What reason does she give for living apart from him? What are the contents of the letter Phillotson has sent Jude? Does this reflect well on him? How do Sue and Jude react?
2. What does Sue state are her feelings for Jude, and what does she demand?
3. Which of Jude’s statements upsets her to tears? What seems her response to all forms of criticism?
4. What coincidence causes Sue to learn of Jude’s night with Arabella? Does this seem an unusual intrusion for a bystander to make?
5. What is Sue’s response? Jude’s? Is she unreasonable? Does he in fact have anything to explain? What does he feel women can’t understand?
6. Does she seem sincere in her statement that she might otherwise have been willing to spend the night with Jude?
7. What news has he heard from Arabella? Will this relieve his and Sue’s painful situation?
8. What affirmations does she demand from him before they part? Why is absence of sexual desire identified with disembodied sweetness?

Chapter 6

1. How do the townspeople come to know that Phillotson had aided in his wife’s departure? What prompts him to tell them? Would the servant have known the contents of his letter?
2. Under what circumstances is Phillotson dismissed from his job? Who rises to his defense, and with what results?
3. Who notifies Sue of Phillotson’s sickness? What passes between them during her visit?
4. What information does she give him?
5. What details does she add, and why? What does she withhold? From Jude?
6. Do these behaviors fit into patterns?

Part Fifth: At Aldbrickham and Elsewhere

Chapter 1

1. After their respective divorces come through, why doesn't Sue wish to marry Jude? Do her fears seem rational? From what else does she wish release?
2. On what matter does Jude wish assurance, and does she provide this?
3. How has Jude changed his line of work, and for what purpose?

Chapter 2

1. Who has called for Jude in his absence, and how does Sue respond to her return? When Arabella returns, how does Jude respond?
2. On what grounds do Sue and Jude quarrel? Might some of their words have been wisely left unsaid? What change in their living situation does Sue promise in her distress?
3. On what pretext does Sue visit Arabella the next morning, and what news comes for Arabella during her visit? What advice does Arabella give her?
4. What implication may be suggested by Arabella's desire to speak to Jude on "unfinished business"?

Chapter 3

1. What has changed Sue's mind about the prospect of marriage? Does it seem coincidental that with Arabella no longer a threat, she again refuses to make a commitment?
2. How will the lives of these two be affected by the fact that they do not marry?
3. What startling news does Jude receive in a letter from Arabella, and how do he and Sue both respond? Is it certain that the child is Jude's?
4. How had Arabella behaved on the arrival of her son?
5. What do we learn of the child's temperament? How is he greeted by Sue and Jude, and what hopes does Jude express for him?
6. How does Sue respond to his desire to call her mother? What does she state that she thinks she and Jude should do? Does this happen?

Chapter 4

1. Who comes to witness their wedding, and what unpleasant legend of the past does she relate?
2. What events cause Sue to decide they should not marry at the registry, and again, at the church?
3. Does Jude agree with her? What apparently has persuaded him? Does this seem consistent with his views and attitude toward Sue on other occasions?
4. What do they predict will be the attitude of future generations toward marriage? Were they correct?
5. How does Widow Edlin react to the news of their non-marriage? From whom does Sue wish to conceal their decision?

Chapter 5

1. Who follows Jude and Sue in their expedition to the Agricultural Fair with little Jude/Father Time?
2. What do we learn of Arabella's present situation and the character of her husband? Of the relationship between Jude and Sue as described by the narrator?
3. Who else does Arabella encounter, and what do we learn from her conversation with each?
4. What does Sue most enjoy at the fair, and how does she respond to Jude's desire that she express happiness that they have shared this outing?
5. Is little Jude/Father Time able to enjoy the sights they see? What is his response to the sight of roses?

Chapter 6

1. What attempt do Jude and Sue make to conceal their unmarried state? Why doesn't this propitiate

their neighbors?

2. What embarrassing incident at a workplace causes them to feel unwanted? What effect does this have on little Jude/Time?
3. What is the effect of referring to the child with an epithet rather than his given name?
4. Why does Sue not wish them to move to London? Is this rational? What difficulties will this cause?
5. From participation in what organization is Jude excluded? Is this surprising?

Chapter 7

1. Who encounters Sue at the Kennetbridge fair? What has changed since about Sue and Jude's situation?
2. What has happened to Arabella in the meantime? What information does she glean from the unwary Sue?
3. Why do you think the narrator provides the information that Jude and Sue have had two children and are expecting another indirectly and in this context?
4. What emotion does Sue exhibit about the expected birth of another child?
5. What implicit threat is made by Arabella? What new professions does she now make

Chapter 8

1. What emotions regarding Jude does Arabella confide in her friend Anny? Does Anny approve?
2. What news does Arabella convey to Phillotson, and with what motive? Does it seem probable that this pair should have met, or that Arabella could have known the intimate details of Jude and Sue's private life?
3. Now that Sue and Jude have several children, should the issue of whether they had slept together before her divorce be relevant?
4. Where does Jude now purpose to go, and with what motive?
5. At the end of the novel's penultimate book, what problems have been foreshadowed which may affect the ending?

Part Sixth: At Christminster Again

Chapter 1

1. What symbolism is embedded in the return of Jude and his family to Christminster?
2. Is it significant that the narrator refers to the children according to whether they are Arabella's or Jude and Sue's? Why aren't their given names used?
3. What seems ominous about the description of the crimson robes of the Oxford graduates and dons?
4. What account does Jude give of himself to the Oxford crowd? Are his admissions embarrassing? Unusual?
5. What forces does he blame for his present situation? How do members of the crowd respond?
6. What does Jude find indicated by the scene in which the driver kicks his horse?
7. How does Sue respond to the sight of Richard among the onlookers in the crowd?
8. Why are the family forced to separate in their lodgings? What biblical story does their plight suggest?
9. Had this not occurred, might the tragic death of their children been prevented?
10. What confession does Sue make to the landlady? Could she have handled the situation differently? What had caused the landlady's suspicions?
11. What do you make of the claim that the couple should not marry because this is merely a conventional bond contrary by its nature to the essence of love?

12. Do Jude and Sue have different reasons for fearing that marriage might become an undesired obligation?

Chapter 2

1. What events and conversation precedes Father Time's horrific act? Might it help if Sue had tried to comfort him or express affection? What does she in fact say? What do you make of her claim that she is merely being honest with her step-son?
2. Does she answer little Jude's accusation that she is responsible for the birth of another unwanted child? Would birth control have been available by this time?
3. After the children have died, what arguments does Jude hear in the adjoining chamber?
4. Does Sue recount accurately to Jude her conversation with Father Time? What aspect of her words does she omit?
5. Does Jude ascribe to her any blame for what has happened? What authority does he adduce for interpreting his son's woes as a reflection of the times?
6. Why isn't Sue willing to attend her children's burial? What alternate behavior characterizes her grief?
7. Do you think Jude's and Sue's reactions to the deaths of three children seems realistic?
8. Does Sue consider that her children's deaths have been an unrelieved evil? (no, life is so unpleasant! 266)
9. Does she make a distinction between Father Time and her own children?
10. To what does she attribute her family's woes?

Chapter 3

1. How do Sue and Jude respond respectively to the deaths of their children? Why does Jude blame himself for her sense of guilt?
2. Why won't Sue marry Jude even though she has come to believe in the importance of the marriage tie? Does society in fact demand the remarriage of previously divorced persons?
3. What account does she give for her initial interest in Jude, and her former willingness to live with him? On what does she now insist?
4. What effect does the visit from Arabella have on Sue's mental state? What does she admit to Arabella, and from what motives? What consequences will ensue from Arabella's knowledge of this fact?
5. How has Sue come to interpret the deaths of her children?
6. What is her response to Jude when he attempts to reason with her?
7. What does she claim is the difference between men and women, and why are women's alleged reactions superior? Are any of her claims inconsistent?

Chapter 4

1. What has caused Phillotson to change his mind about his divorce? How does Sue respond to his invitation to reunite?
2. What are Jude's emotions on learning that Sue plans to leave him?

Chapter 5

1. When Sue returns to Phillotson, what kind of wedding does she propose? Are hints given of impending problems?
2. What advice is given by Mrs. Edlin to Sue? To Phillotson?
3. What role does she seem to play in this complicated set of relationships? What are her views intended to represent?
4. What are Phillotson's motives in seeking a renewed relationship with his former wife? How might he have gleaned a knowledge of her conflicted mental state?

Chapter 6

1. Under what pretext does Arabella ask Jude to take her in?
2. Why do you think she is interested in Jude once again? Does this seem plausible?
3. What painful news does she bring him?

4. Does it seem likely that Arabella would have wished to or been able to learn these details?
5. What means does she use to obtain Jude's company?

Chapter 7

1. Under what circumstances do Arabella and Jude marry?
2. Why has Jude been unable to resist something he claims to have found repellent?
3. Who objects to the union, and on what grounds? Would other grounds have been possible?
4. What effect does Jude's marriage have on the plot, and on his future?

Chapter 8

1. What unpleasant circumstances attend Jude and Arabella's marriage?
2. What does he request of Arabella, and on what grounds? When she refuses, what does he threaten?
3. Under what conditions does he visit Sue? For what does he reproach her, and how does she respond? What does he ask of her? Does this seem rational?

Chapter 9

1. What has caused Jude's health to worsen? What reason does he give for his expedition in inclement weather?
2. What causes Sue to decide to sleep with her husband? Does this motive include good will towards him?
3. What role does Mrs. Edlin play in this?
4. In offering herself to Phillotson, what does Sue tell him of her actions earlier in the day? What is his response?

Chapter 10

1. Who brings to Jude the information of Sue's decision?
2. What kind of health care is provided for Jude, and on what grounds does he reject it?
3. What do we assume from Arabella's relationship with the quack doctor?

Chapter 11

1. What forms of deprivation attend Jude's death? What does he regret as he dies?
2. What is added by the details that Arabella enjoys herself on an outing, knowing that her husband has already died?
3. What lie does Arabella tell Mrs. Edlin, and from what motive?
4. Why do you think Arabella is given the novel's final words? Do we assume that she is correct that Sue will never be happy?
5. Does this seem an appropriate closure for the plot?
6. What seem some of Hardy's main themes throughout the novel? Are the themes of intellectual and economic exclusion, sexual frustration and cross-purposes, and the difficulty of obtaining satisfaction or happiness in a disordered world mutually harmonized and reinforcing?

Novel as a Whole

1. What is the significance of Jude's name? His occupation?
2. What are some features of Jude's character? Does he seem consistent to you?
3. What is Sue Bridehead like? Do you agree with criticism of her as an "interesting girl," "the modern woman," and so on?
4. To what extent is Sue a portrayal of a "new woman"? How is she not? Is the novel intended to espouse the notion of "free love"?
5. Does Jude have the equivalent male Victorian complex--he sleeps with a woman he despises, contemns himself for the union, is a victim of un verbalized and unwanted drives, admires Sue for her frigidity even though he complains against, and interprets her changeability as inherently "feminine."

6. Do you think Hardy's treatment of Sue is adequate? What traits do Jude or the narrator specifically consider "womanly"?
7. What do you think of Sue's and Jude's response to marriage? Why do they finally decide against it?
8. Later, why does Sue finally decide to marry Jude? To sleep with him?
9. Are sex and companionship incompatible in this novel? Does the novel present any exceptions to these mutually exclusive alternatives?
10. Would the protagonists' problems have disappeared had they lived outside of "civilization"?
11. Do you think Arabella is consistently drawn?
12. What is the function of Old Testament references? The use of religious and traditional associations and structures for background?
13. How important is a sense of place to the novel's development of its themes?
14. What are some of the ways the novel uses irony, and to what ends?
15. How is Jude's child used symbolically?
16. Is Sue at all responsible for the murder?
17. What function is served by the widow Edlin?
18. If the novel is not specifically concerned with the marriage laws, what is the philosophic reason for presenting Jude and Sue's frustrations in marriage?
19. *The Return of the Native*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, and *Far from the Madding Crowd* are also preoccupied with the theme of an unfortunate early marriage. According to Albert Guerard (Hardy, 27), "For whatever reasons, Hardy conceived of marriage as a dramatic illustration of the human impulse to work at cross-purposes long before he wrote *Jude the Obscure*. Far more often than not it exemplified the 'circumstantial will against enjoyment' which ever frustrates the 'inherent will to enjoy.'"
20. What type of society does the novel represent?
21. Are Jude and Sue's problems individual, universal, or representative of the conditions of a particular time?
22. How are animals used in the novel?
23. What is the effect of the presence of children and their deaths on the plot?
24. What do you think of the book's improbabilities? Do these reinforce or detract from its basic themes?
25. What is the significance of the book's ending? What do you think of its consistency and appropriateness?

Some Final Questions:

1. What are some resemblances between *Jude the Obscure* and a Greek tragedy? Which aspects of Hardy's plot would Aristotle have found untragic?
2. In what ways may this novel be autobiographical (despite Hardy's disclaimers)?
3. How does this novel reflect aspects of late-Victorian views on sexuality?
4. What are some features of the novel's style? (e. g., its use of irony and parallelism, symmetry, limited range of characters, symbolic locations, reversals, coincidences, biblical and patristic allusions) Are these effective?
5. What role is played in the novel by the idea of "honesty"?
6. What are some of the best features and strengths of this novel? Its defects, if any? Do you find this a compelling book, and if so, in what ways?
7. What judgments does this novel present on human life? On the deflation of hopes?
8. What view does this novel present on the social determinants of happiness? To what extent can the hero affect his/her fate? How do Hardy's views resemble those of other Victorian novelists?