

**RELIGIOUS AND MORAL CONFLICTS IN THE FATE OF SUE
BRIDEHEAD IN JUDE THE OBSCURE**

Niyazova M.Kh.

Scientific supervisor, PhD, BukhSU

Baxshillayeva A.B.

Master student of BukhSU

Abstract. *This article examines the religious and moral conflicts faced by Sue Bridehead, a central character in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Sue's intellectual independence and emotional sensitivity place her in direct conflict with the rigid religious doctrines and moral expectations of Victorian society. By focusing on her personal relationships, internal struggles, and moral dilemmas, the article explores Hardy's critique of religious and moral orthodoxy and its destructive impact on individual autonomy and emotional well-being. Sue's resistance to conventional marriage, her questioning of religious authority, and her conscientious nature illustrate the broader tension between personal conscience and social conformity. Through Sue Bridehead's experiences, Hardy exposes the psychological suffering and social marginalization imposed by Victorian moral rigidity, presenting her tragedy as a reflection of the human cost of enforcing orthodoxy over individuality.*

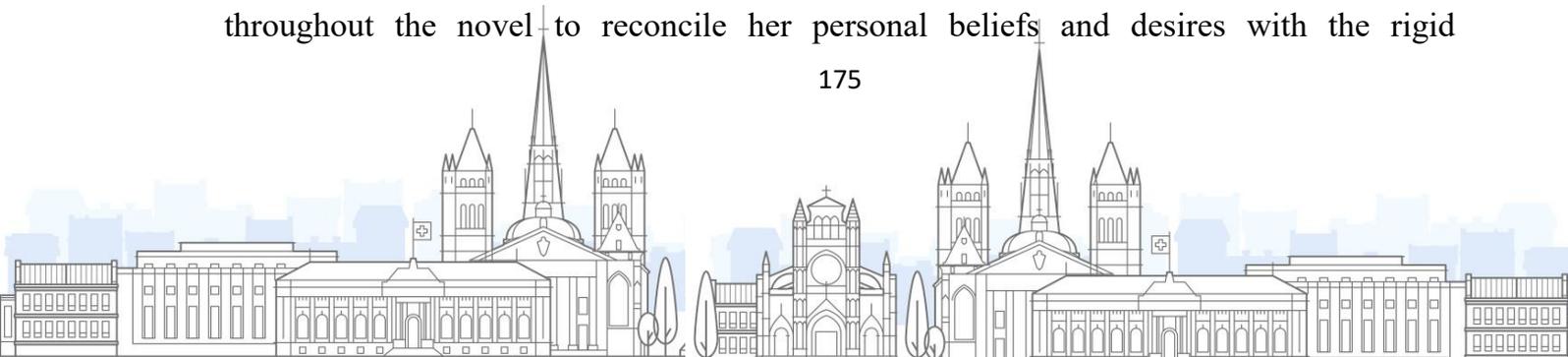
Introduction

This article examines the religious and moral conflicts faced by Sue Bridehead, a central character in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* (1895) [1]. Sue's intellectual independence and emotional sensitivity place her in direct conflict with the rigid religious doctrines and moral expectations of Victorian society. By exploring her relationships, personal dilemmas, and internal struggles, this article highlights how Hardy portrays the destructive impact of religious and moral orthodoxy on individual autonomy and personal fulfillment. Sue's experiences exemplify the broader societal tension between adherence to convention and the pursuit of authentic human experience [2][3].

In *Jude the Obscure*, Thomas Hardy presents Sue Bridehead as a character whose personal desires and intellectual independence consistently clash with Victorian religious and moral norms, demonstrating the profound consequences of such conflicts on individual freedom and emotional well-being [4].

Methods

Sue Bridehead, a highly intelligent and emotionally perceptive woman, struggles throughout the novel to reconcile her personal beliefs and desires with the rigid



expectations imposed by religion and society [1]. Hardy uses Sue's story to explore how Victorian moral and religious orthodoxy can conflict with individuality, creating tension and suffering for those who challenge established norms.

Sue's conflict with religion is central to her character. She questions the authority of the Church and the validity of its moral dictates, particularly those governing marriage and sexual conduct. Sue's intellectual curiosity and independent thought lead her to critique dogmatic religious beliefs, creating an internal struggle between her moral conscience and societal expectations [3]. Her refusal to fully submit to religious conventions—most notably in her unconventional domestic arrangements with Jude—places her in constant tension with both the Church and social opinion.

Results

Hardy presents her religious conflict as both personal and systemic: it is a reflection of her internal values as well as a critique of a society that enforces conformity through spiritual authority [4][1].

Alongside her religious doubts, Sue faces moral conflicts rooted in Victorian social expectations. She desires emotional and romantic fulfillment but is acutely aware of the moral codes that govern sexual and marital behavior. Her hesitation to marry Jude formally, despite loving him, illustrates the conflict between personal desire and moral restraint. These conflicts extend to her relationships with others, including her interactions with Arabella and other figures who embody conventional morality [3].

Sue's moral struggle is compounded by guilt, social judgment, and her own conscientious nature, highlighting Hardy's exploration of how moral orthodoxy can suppress authenticity and impose psychological suffering [4].

In Sue's life, religious and moral conflicts are inseparable. Victorian morality is deeply intertwined with religious belief, and Sue's rejection of one naturally challenges the other. Hardy portrays these conflicts as central to her tragedy: the societal insistence on moral and religious conformity prevents her from achieving personal freedom, intellectual expression, and emotional satisfaction [5]. Sue's fate demonstrates that rigid adherence to religious and moral codes can result in emotional repression, social isolation, and profound internal struggle.

Discussion

Sue Bridehead's experiences in *Jude the Obscure* exemplify the destructive consequences of religious and moral conflicts in Victorian society. Her intellectual independence and emotional sensitivity continually clash with the dominant codes of morality and religion, resulting in internal turmoil and social marginalization [2]. Through Sue, Hardy critiques the inflexibility of societal and religious expectations, emphasizing the human cost of enforcing orthodoxy over individuality. Her story remains

a powerful exploration of the tension between personal conscience and collective norms, revealing the enduring struggle between authenticity and societal constraint [3]

REFERENCES

1. Elbarbary, Samir. "Glimmerings of the Postmodern in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 46, no. 1, March 2018, pp. 201–219.
2. Saleh, N. Salman, and P. Abbasi. "The Ideological Questions of Marriage in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*." *k@ta: A Biannual Publication on the Study of Language and Literature*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2015, pp. 49–57.
3. Langland, Elizabeth. "Becoming a Man in *Jude the Obscure*." *eNotes*, 1993.
4. Heilman, Robert B. "Hardy's Sue Bridehead." *eNotes* (criticism of *Jude the Obscure*).
5. Hardy, Thomas. "Paganism in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*: The Possibility of Faith and Ethics in a Darwinian World." *OpenEdition Journals*.
6. Ögünç, Ömer. "The One Dimensional Man in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*." *Journal of Social Sciences, Uludağ University*, vol. 19, issue 34, 2018, pp. 323–354.
7. Khayatovna, Niyazova Mokhichekhra. "Commonalities of English and Uzbek blessings." *ACADEMICIA: An International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 12.5 (2022): 406-410.
8. Khayatovna, Niyazova Mokhichekhra. "UDC: 82-91 (= 512.133= 111): 177.7 INTERPRETATION OF BLESSINGS IN THE GENRES OF UZBEK AND ENGLISH FOLKLORE." *SCIENTIFIC REPORTS OF BUKHARA STATE UNIVERSITY* 211.
9. Khayatovna, Niyazova Mokhichekhra. "The Use of Riddles in the Speech of Characters in English and Uzbek Literature." *International Journal of Inclusive and Sustainable Education* 1.4 (2022): 60-65.

