A New Wessex: The Influence on Shakespeare on Genre in the Novels of Thomas Hardy

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Abstract
Shakespeare’s influence on the writings of Victorian novelist and poet Thomas Hardy is the topic of much of Hardy scholarship. Hardy’s numerous, overt references to Shakespearean tragedy in particular tend to cast him as a primarily tragic writer, most notably in novels such as The Mayor of Casterbridge and Jude the Obscure. This thesis presents a different view, examining Hardy’s heavy reliance on Shakespearean comedy and romance, rather than tragedy, throughout his career as a novelist. In doing so, this paper questions the accuracy of Hardy scholarship that confines him to the genre of tragedy, and instead poses an analysis of his novels that accounts for his explorations in genre.

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