

Tess of the d'Urbervilles:

(e) Parallels with Genesis

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☞ refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore the subtext of the book of Genesis in the novel
 - Why does Hardy use this?
 - Would it have meant more to Victorian readers than it does to modern ones?
 - ❖ **Opening exercise:** Look at Alan and Janet Ahlberg's *The Jolly Postman*
 - Explore how it is necessary to know the nursery rhymes etc. which are referred to, in order to understand the book fully
 - Explore the idea and effect of a subtext.
 - ❖ **Discussion ideas:** Discuss the students' knowledge and understanding of the account of Adam and Eve
 - ☞ Aspects of Literature > Impact of the Bible > Big ideas from the Bible > Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, 'Second Adam'.
Make clear that this would have been a well-known and generally believed text in Hardy's day.
 - ☞ Narrative in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* > Subtexts in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*
 - ❖ **Textual examination:** Allocate the strips of paper cut out from **Worksheet e)j** around the group according to numbers
 - For each reference, students should report back on:
 - The context of the extract
 - The connection with the Genesis account (look carefully at the appropriate chapter)
 - What Hardy seems to be suggesting by the subtext
- It may be useful to have Bibles available.
- ☞ Synopses and commentary > [relevant chapters]
 - Try to formulate an overview of Hardy's use of Genesis in the novel.
 - The findings above could be presented as a poster-type display, or a PowerPoint presentation.
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Write a response to a Victorian publisher who will not publish the novel because he considers it contrary to the Bible and its teaching.
 - ☞ Subtexts in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* > The Bible
 - ☞ Themes in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* > Tess as a pure woman
- ❖ **Critical task:** How far is an understanding of Hardy's use of Genesis essential to an interpretation of the subtitle of the novel, *A Pure Woman*?
 - ☞ Subtexts in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* > *Paradise Lost* > Parallels between *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Genesis
 - ☞ Themes in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* > Tess as a pure woman
- ❖ **Extension task:** Research Hardy's views of traditional religion, and collect some quotations both from his fiction and his other writings.
 - ☞ The context of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* > Religious / philosophical context > Challenges to established religious belief