

# Comparing the Stories

- Moral/philosophical content
- Social/historical setting
- Inventiveness with language
- Choice of language/form
- Range of effects
- Structure
- Presentation

# Moral/Philosophical Content of the Stories

- Hardy's attitude to the contemporary treatment of women



# Comparison Phyllis Grove & Rhoda Brook

## Information in the Narrative

### Rhoda Brook

- ‘..a thin fading woman of thirty..somewhat apart from the rest.’ p.45
- ‘ .. There was more of the strength that endures in her well defined features and large frame ..’ p.52
- ‘Not to inform her of it seemed treachery in the presence of her friendliness ..’ p.55

### Phyllis Grove

- ‘ .. The uncertainty of her position, linked with the fact that there was not much passion in her thoughts of Humphrey, bred an indescribable dreariness in the heart of ..p.32
- ‘Phyllis held to her resolve ..’ p.40
- ‘Phyllis was so conscience-stricken ..’ p.39

# Comparison of Phyllis Grove and Rhoda Brook

## What Other Characters Say

### Rhoda Brook

- “Tis hard for she,’ signifying the worn milkmaid aforesaid.’ p.46
- ‘He ha’nt spoken to Rhoda Brook for years.’ p.46

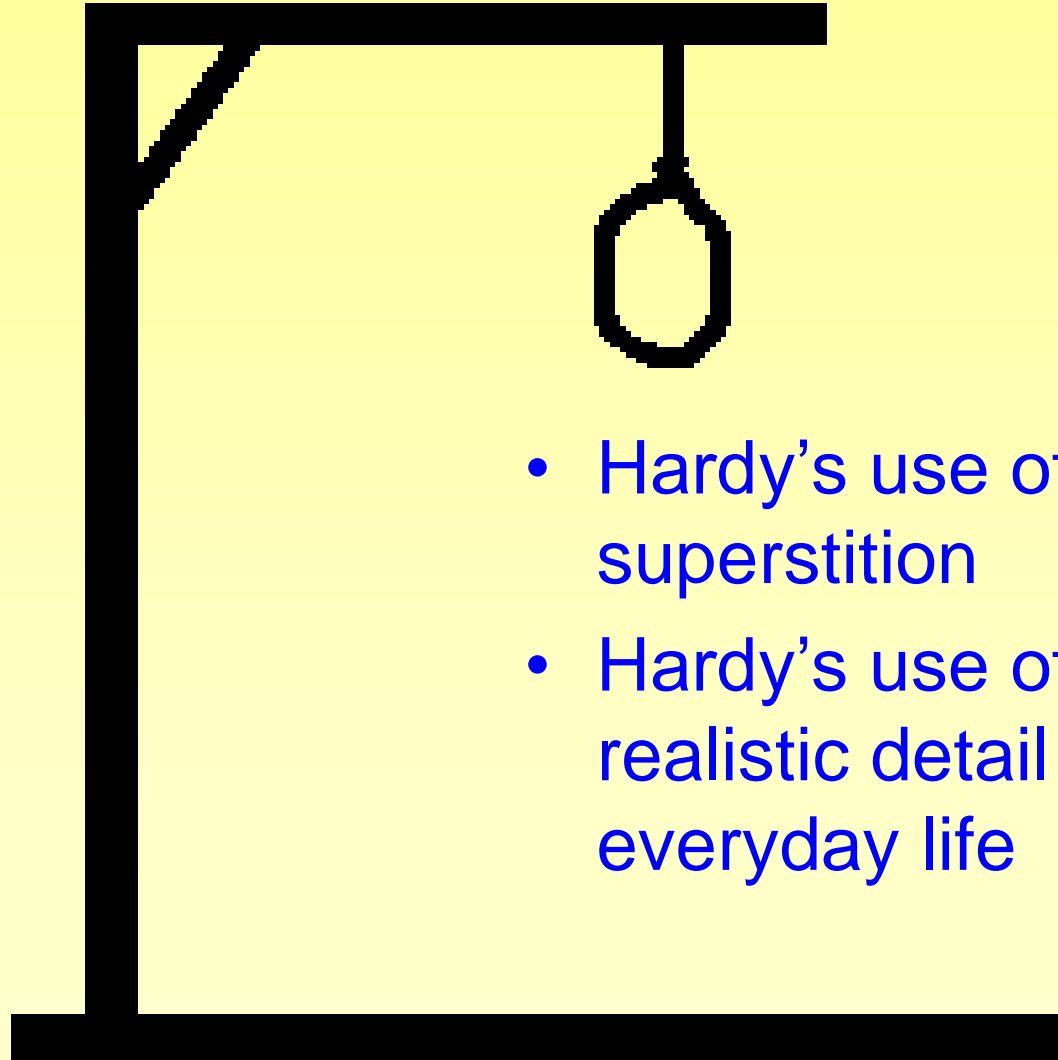


- ‘The dairyman .. With manly kindness always kept the gossip in the cow-barton from annoying Rhoda ..’ p.51

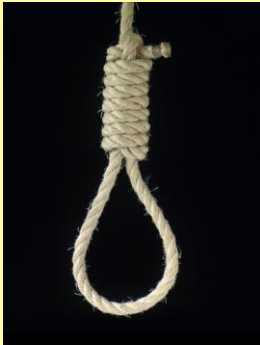
### Phyllis Grove

- ‘Don’t you ever set foot outside that garden fence without my permission.’ p.35
- ‘ I should have disappeared from the world some time ago if it had not been for two persons – my beloved, here; and my mother in Saarbruck.’ p.36
- ‘What woman would not be pleased with such a handsome peace-offering’ p.39

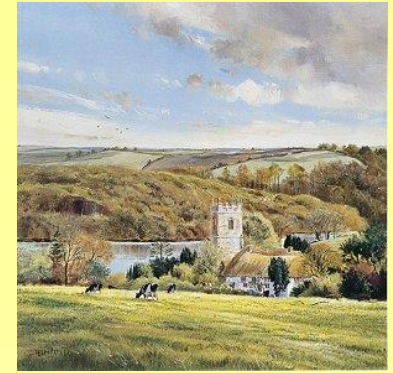
# Social/Historical Setting of the Stories



- Hardy's use of local superstition
- Hardy's use of realistic detail of everyday life



# Local Superstition



## The Withered Arm

- ‘This is in the nature of a blight .. and if you do throw it off it will be all at once ... there is only one chance of doing it known to me. It has never failed in kindred afflictions ... You must touch with the limb the neck of a man who’s been hanged...Before he’s cold – just after he’s cut down.’  
p.61

## The Superstitious Man’s Story

- ‘ ... on midsummer night it is believed hereabout that the faint shapes of all the folk in the parish who are going to be at death’s door within the year can be seen entering the church. Those who get over their illness come out again after awhile; those that are doomed to die do not return.’

# Realistic detail

## The Three Strangers

- ‘This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing ...’ p.5

# Realistic detail

## The Three Strangers

- ‘Now the old mead of those days, brewed of the purest first-year or maiden honey, four pounds to the gallon – with its due compliment of white of eggs, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, mace, rosemary, yeast, and process of working, bottling, and cellaring – tasted remarkably strong; but it did not taste so strong as it actually was.’ p11

## The Withered Arm

- ‘.. an old milkman near, in a long white pinafore or ‘wropper’, and with the brim of his hat tied down, so that he looked like a woman.’ p45
- ‘A white bonnet and a silver-coloured gownd. It whewed and whistled so loud when it rubbed up against the pews that the lady coloured up more than ever for very shame at the noise, and pulled it in to keep it from touching; but when she pushed into her seat, it whewed more than ever.’ p49



Hardy's  
Inventiveness with  
Language

*The Withered Arm:  
Rhoda's Dream*



## *The Withered Arm: Rhoda's dream*

Maddened mentally, and nearly suffocated by pressure, the sleeper struggled; the incubus, still regarding her, withdrew to the foot of the bed, only, however, to come forward by degrees, resume her seat, and flash her left hand as before.

Gasping for breath, Rhoda, in a last desperate effort, swung out her right hand, seized the confronting spectre by its obtrusive left arm and whirled it backward to the floor, starting up herself as she did so with a low cry.

'O, merciful heaven!' she cried, sitting on the edge of the bed in a cold seat; 'that was not a dream – she was here!'

She could feel her antagonist's arm within her grasp even now – the very flesh and bone of it, as it seemed. She looked on the floor whither she had whirled the spectre, but there was nothing to be seen.

*incubus – an evil spirit visiting a sleeping person*

Alliteration: adds sense of confusion

Semi-colon: distinct but short pause  
keeps the pace of the sentence fast

- ‘Maddened mentally, and nearly suffocated by pressure, the sleeper struggled; the incubus, still regarding her, withdrew to the foot of the bed, only, however, to come forward by degrees, resume her seat, and flash her left hand as before.’

Deliberate choice of vocabulary  
associated with witchcraft/  
evil

Commas: seven used in the second  
part of the sentence gives an unsettled  
disjointed effect – sense of words being  
gaspd in horror (?)

Commas: separate short phrases in the first part of the sentence to give a sense of the effort Rhoda is making

Vocabulary: emphasis given by intensifying adjective

- ‘Gasping for breath, Rhoda, in a last desperate effort, swung out her right hand, seized the confronting spectre by its obtrusive left arm and whirled it backward to the floor, starting up as she did so with a low cry.’

Verb tenses: present participles give a sense of immediacy

No punctuation in the part of the sentence which describes the action: gives a sense of speed

Conjunction: adds to sense of speed

# Choice of language

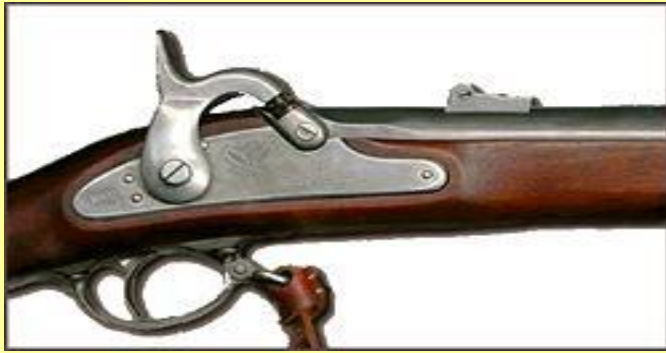
- ‘ .. a bachelor; a personage neither young nor old; neither good looking nor positively plain.’  
Humphrey Gould p31
- ‘All that day the foreigner’s face haunted Phyllis; its aspect was so striking, so handsome, and his eyes were so blue and sad and abstracted.’  
Matthaus Tina p33
- ‘ .. a yeoman in the prime of life, cleanly shaven like an actor ...’ Farmer Lodge p47
- ‘Her face too was fresh in colour ... soft and evanescent, like light under a heap of rose-petals.’ Gertrude Lodge p47



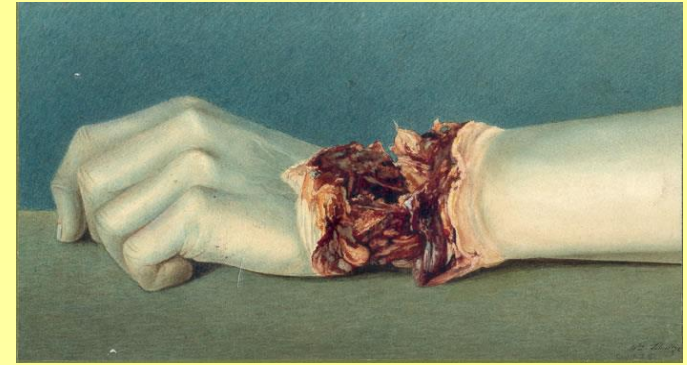
# Range of effects



- Horror
- Humour
- Setting (time & place)



# Horror



## The Melancholy Hussar

- ‘ ... the firing party discharged their volley. The two victims fell, one his face across his coffin, the other backwards... As the volley resounded there arose a shriek from the wall of Dr. Grove’s garden, and someone fell down inside ...’ p.43

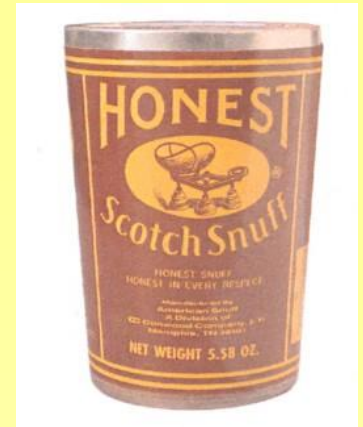
## The Withered Arm

- ‘She bared her poor curst arm; and Davies, uncovering the face of the corpse, took Gertrude’s hand and held it so that her arm lay across the dead man’s neck, upon a line, the colour of an unripe blackberry, which surrounded it....Gertrude shrieked... ’ p.69

# Humour

## The Three Strangers

- ‘Now then, all of ye – be ready. Have ye any lanterns?’
- ‘Yes – have ye any lanterns – I demand it,’ said the constable.
- ‘And the rest of you able bodied –’
- ‘Able-bodied men – yes – the rest of ye,’ said the constable.  
p17



## The Thieves Who Couldn't Help Sneezing

- ‘More snuff,’ said Sir Simon. Sir Simon’s man brought a huge jar of the best scented Scotch.
- Hubert once more charged the upper chink of the closet, and blew the snuff into the interior, as before. Again he charged, and again, emptying the whole contents of the jar. The tumult of sneezes became really extraordinary to listen to – there was no cessation.’



# Setting: place

## Three Strangers

- 'Among the few features of agricultural England which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries ..'
- 'In spite of its loneliness .. the spot.. was not much more than three miles from a county town'
- ' .. The house was exposed to the elements on all sides ..'



## Melancholy Hussar

- 'Here stretch the downs .. absolutely unchanged since those eventful days ..'
- ' .. small, dilapidated, half farm half manor house of this obscure inland nook ..'

# Structure



- Unexpected twists of the Plot
- 'Cliffhanger' endings to instalmentrs

# Structure

## Unexpected Twists of the Plot

- ‘Gertrude shrieked: ‘the turn o’ the blood predicted by the conjuror had taken place. But at that moment a second shriek rent the air ...’ Withered Arm p69
- ‘All I Know is that ‘taint the condemned man. He’s quite a different character from this one – gauntish fellow, with dark hair and eyes, rather good-looking, and with a musical bass voice that if you heard it once you’d never mistake it ..’ Three Strangers p20
- ‘On enquiry, it was found that William in body could not have stood by the spring being in the mead two miles off; and it also came out that the time at which he was seen at the spring was the very time when he died.’ Superstitious Man

# 'Cliffhanger' endings to instalments

## Melancholy Hussar

### Section 4

- 'She put on her bonnet and tippet, and when he arrived at the hour named she was at the door awaiting him.' p.41

## Withered Arm

### Section 5

- 'She Knew however that there must be a hangman, and to the hangman she determined to apply.' p.65



# Presentation

- Narrative Voice

# Narrative Voice



- ‘William, as you may know, was a curious, silent man ...’ Superstitious Man’s Story
- ‘Phyllis told me the story with her own lips ...’ Melancholy Hussar
- ‘Many years ago ...’ Thieves
- ‘Fifty years ago ...’ Three Strangers
- ‘It was an eighty cow dairy ...’ Withered Arm