



University: University of Anbar
College: College of Arts
Department: Translation
Stage: Two
Subject: Novel
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Scientific Qualification: MA Holder
Specialty: English Language – Literature

الجامعة : جامعة الأنبار
الكلية: كلية الآداب
القسم: قسم الترجمة
المرحلة: الثانية
اسم المادة: الرواية
استاذ المادة: ضياء وحيد غفير
اللقب العلمي: مدرس مساعد
المؤهل العلمي (الشهادة): الماجستير
التخصص: اللغة الإنجليزية - الأدب

محاضرات مادة الرواية للمرحلة الثانية - قسم الترجمة

STUDY GUIDE
TO
THOMAS HARDY'S *THE RETURN OF*
THE NATIVE

BY
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This work is totally based on:
BRIGHT NOTES: The Return of the Native
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LECTURE 8: CHAPTER 5: PERPLEXITY AMONG HONEST PEOPLE

Thomasin tells her aunt that she is not married. Because of some irregularity in the license, the parson would not perform the ceremony. She had felt so humiliated that she ran away from her intended husband and, overtaking Diggory Venn, begged a ride home in his van. Mrs. Yeobright insists that they go into the Inn to confront Wildeve and hear his side of the story. Wildeve greets Thomasin with careless affection. He explains that

the license had been made out for Budmouth and the pastor at Anglebury would not honor it. Thomasin begs to speak with him alone, and they go into an adjoining room, where Thomasin apologizes for her behavior. She asks him if he means to marry her. He enjoys dangling the decision for a while to tantalize her, but finally, carelessly, agrees.

Just then, singing voices are heard outside. The men and boys have come to serenade the married couple. Mrs. Yeobright joins Thomasin in the back room while Wildeve goes to the door. He invites the men in for refreshment, and under the mellowing influence of the mead, the men reminisce among themselves about the fine musician Thomasin's father had been, and now he had died unexpectedly in early life. As they all get ready to leave, Timothy Fairway notes through the window the small bonfire still burning steadily over the heath at Captain Vye's. The simple Christian Cantle suggests, "Perhaps there's meaning in it." Wildeve turns on him sharply and asks how, but "Christian is too scattered to reply." Others mention that Captain Vye's granddaughter has been called a witch by some, but they all agree she is a handsome young woman. Wildeve goes out to see the singers off. Upon his return to the back room, he finds that the women have left by the window. Amused, he returns to the front room and, noticing a bottle of wine standing on the mantelpiece, starts off down the road with it tucked under his arm. (He remembers his promise to Olly Dowden's sick husband.) As he walks, however, he sees the bonfire winking at him. Olly's house has only a faint light in the upstairs window, so he enters the dark downstairs room and leaves the bottle on the table. Back outside again on the heath, he finds he must heed the bonfire's summons and "go to her."

Comment

Hardy, in one deft sentence, reveals Mrs. Yeobright's two-sided character: "I could almost say it serves you right-if I did not feel that you don't deserve it," is her first reaction to her niece's story. We smile at the contradiction and the human spirit of the woman. By dialogue (Thomasin with her aunt, Thomasin with Wildeve) Thomasin's character is now sketched into place. We see she is a gentle-spirited, romantic young girl, with a certain dogged determination. She has some amount of pride and a dignity that controls her emotions. She has a protective instinct toward those she loves. "I've

not let aunt know how much I have suffered today: and it is so hard to command my face and voice, and to smile as if it were a slight thing to me; but I try to do so, that she may not be still more indignant with you.” Thus she speaks to Wildeve. By his replies we recognize Wildeve as a lady killer, who toys with women’s affections. He is “one in whom no man would have seen anything to admire, and in whom no woman would have seen anything to dislike.” He also is proud, and his pride has been cut. He feels compelled to marry Thomasin to get even with her aunt for her public insult to him. Hardy again uses villagers’ gossip (when the men come for merry-making) to tell us bits about the major characters.