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The Sons veto and survival are set in very different times. How far are each women's actions governed by social expectations of women in each period?

Thomas Hardy's 'The Sons Veto' was written and set in 1891 when the expectations of women, were very different to how they are today. Women were expected to be domestic, to cook and clean so therefore to have no job or income of their own. They were to be completely reliant on their husband's money. Their role in life was to produce a male heir. Women had no vote and no power over anything important. They were to dress formally with hardly any skin showing. They rarely had a formal education, men always got the priority.

When 'Survival' was written in the 1950's conditions for women had not changed drastically. Society recognised two types of women. The meek, mild domestic homely type and the tarty, blond popular kind. Women were still thought to be weak and unable to last long under tough conditions. They were not supposed to be self confident, and men still took a leading role.

The main difference between 'The Son's Veto' and 'Survival' is that Sophy lived up to her expectations and didn't stand up for herself. She did as she was told and was very docile and so never made a fuss. Alice on the other hand was very different but at first came over as the same. Her mother described her as a mouse and this gives us the impression of her being quiet and obedient.

" Not like my little mouse at all"

This is a major contrast because at the end of the story she proves herself to be strong and brave, more like a lion.

This shows a change in Alice. She says, "Perhaps you don't know me quite as well as you imagine you do mother"

This shows she clearly isn't as timid as we may have thought. If she was like Sophy, she would have gone along with what her mother thought was right for a woman of her age and not argued about it. Because she doesn't do this, it makes her mother very jealous of her son in law, who is in her opinion taking her daughter away from her.

"She kept her eyes averted, boring jealousy into the back of her son in laws head."

"He's taken you right away from me"

Alice has quite a lot of self-confidence. She continues to stand up to her mother.

"That's not true mother...I'm a woman with a life of my own to live."

Sophy never stands up for herself. She demonstrates this right at the beginning when her son Randolph corrects her grammar. "His mother hastily adopted the correction and did not resent his making it, or retaliate."

She had good reason to retaliate because her son had crumbs round his mouth from a cake he had tried to conceal in his pocket.

"She might well have done, by bidding him to wipe that crumby mouth of his, whose condition had been caused by surreptitious attempts to eat a piece of cake without taking it out the pocket wherein it lay concealed."

If she cannot even stand up and take control of her own son then what hope does she have? Even though she out ranks her son in age she still doesn't feel like she can have any kind of rule over him.

Sophy was not even sure she loved the vicar when she said she would marry him. It was more out of respect.

"Sophy did not exactly love him, but she had a respect for him which almost amounted to veneration"

I was like she couldn't dare to say no to such a socially high man. She couldn't let such an opportunity pass by.

" She hardly dared refuse a parsonage so reverend."

When Sophy agrees to marry the vicar, her husband is so ashamed of her that he moves to London so he can get away from people who may know him.

"Mr Twycott new perfectly well he had committed social suicide by this step"

He is embarrassed because of Sophy's social class. He has no thought for Sophy, he does what is best for him and that is moving to London even though that means taking Sophy away from her family and friends. She has to adapt to a restricted life style because of her being lame. She is trapped in a high social class in which she does not belong.

"Sophy the woman was as charming a partner as any man could possess but Sophy the lady had her deficiencies . She showed aptitude for little domestic refinements so far as related to things and manners; but in what is called culture she was less intuitive."

We can tell that a life in London is not in Sophy's best interests.

"Thus she lived on in the city and wasted hours in braiding her beautiful hair, till her once apple cheeks waned to pink of the very faintest."

When the vicar dies Sophy had no control over any thing the vicar owned.

"She was left with no control over anything that had been her husbands."

Her own son is ashamed of her. She and him drifted farther and farther apart as he became a man of high social status and she remained as she always was in his opinion, uneducated and of low social class.

"And became-in her sons eyes-a mother whose mistakes and origin it was his painful lot as a gentleman to blush for."

Sophy has a boring and pointless life, which she makes no move to change by asking for her sons help.

"Her life became insupportably dreary"

She longs to be back in Albrickham.

"Thinking of the village in which she had been born, and whether she would have gone back-O how gladly! -even to work in the fields."

Her life is slightly revived when she sees Sam Hobson a man from her past walking down the street in front of her villa selling fruit and vegetables.

"The man alongside was as she had fancied, Sam Hobson"

Sophy wonders if she had made a mistake in marrying the vicar. She probably would have had a much happier life with Sam even though at the time she did not love him, but she was young and naive back then.

"She had occasionally thought of him, and wondered if life in a cottage with him would not have been a lot happier than the one she had accepted."

"She had not thought of him passionately, but her now dismal situation lent to his resurrection-a tender interest which it is impossible to exaggerate"

You might almost say she was desperate. She was so bored and lonely that Sam suddenly looked attractive to her. She obviously wants to see Sam again, because she wonders what time the wagons walk back down the street.

"When did these market gardeners, who travelled up to town so regularly at one or two in the morning, come back?"

Sophy shows signs of romantic interests when she pretends to sew while all the time watching the road to see if Sam comes back. She is like a young schoolgirl pretending to

read or something, while shyly peeking over the cover every so often to catch a glimpse of the one she desires.

She wants to see him but she would feel guilty about it because of the way she is governed by society.

"She affected to sew but her eyes never left the street."

"Between ten and eleven, the **desired** wagon, now unladen, reappeared on its return journey."

She is out so early in the morning because she is desperate to catch a glimpse of Sam. The word desired shows that this is the wagon she was waiting for while she was pretending to sew. It is obviously the wagon belonging to Sam.

She admits to Sam that she longs for her home back in Albrictham and that she is terribly unhappy.

"Yes Sam I long for home-our home!"

But she can't have it because society and Randolph forbids it.

Sophy shows signs of having been with high-class people to long. When asked if her son goes to a local school she replies,

"O no! Not in one of those retched holes! At a public school-one of the most distinguished in England."

She has adopted a slightly snobbish personality because the local school would not be good enough. She denies however being a lady. She also realises that Randolph's being a gentleman will present problems for her.

"No, I am not a lady, I never shall be. But he's a gentleman, and that-makes it-O how difficult for me!"

Alice on the other hand would not let anything stand in her way.

She pleaded with Randolph to let her re-marry to Sam. At first he is interested to hear that his mother wishes to re-marry. As soon as he finds out it's just a country man, Sam, he changes his mind and becomes very emotional.

"The youths face remained fixed for a moment; then he flushed, lent on the table and burst into passionate tears."

After she tries him again and he storms off to his room he says sternly to her:

"I am ashamed of you! It will ruin me! A miserable boor! A churl! A clown! It will degrade me in the eyes of all the men in England."

Sophy falls under his rule and agrees with him.

"Say no more- perhaps I'm wrong! I will struggle against it! She cried miserably" over the years she tried with him again and again but to no avail.

"Thus the gentle creature reasoned and pleaded till four or five long years had passed." He eventually makes Sophy swear on the cross that she will not marry Sam. This is very important because any flicker of hope Sophy ever had of marrying Sam is now erased because when you swear on the cross you cannot go back on your word because that is breaking a promise to God.

"And finally taking her before a little cross and altar he had erected in his bedroom for his private devotions, there he bade her kneel, and swear that she would not marry Samuel Hobson without his consent."

"I owe this to my father" he said

Sophy really wishes she was confident enough to stand up to Randolph and not do as he told her to.

"She seemed to be pining her heart away. "Why mayn't I say to Sam that I'll marry him? Why mayn't I?" she would murmur plaintively to herself when no one was near"

The word pining suggests that she wanted to marry Sam so much that it hurt. She murmurs **plaintively**. She feels like a victim.

Sophy eventually dies, sad, alone and unhappy. She dies like this because of the way society governed her life.

In 'Survival' Alice is completely outnumbered by men who clearly think she won't survive more than a few days when the space ship she is on is stranded in space and there is no food. The captain says she should be at home knitting.

"What she ought to be doing is sitting in some village back home and knitting."

"She should be in her own kitchen"

He obviously has a stereotypical view of women. She is able to triumph over these attitudes. The captain worries that the men will protect her first. He thinks she should be given no privileges and they should all be equal. This is ironic because in the real world women are not treated equally at all but as soon as he feels threatened by her she is equal. The captain knows women are likely to cause trouble: why? Because they are women so are fussy.

The ship is found to be broken down and will not land or change course. Some of the passengers including a man called Bowman go out to try and fix the port laterals. Bowman dies while trying to fix them. This gives Alice the idea that she should get his rations. She shows her confidence when she asks the captain for more food. As soon as she asks, the captain changes completely. He starts by talking in a friendly gentle manner. When he finds out what she wants his facial expressions change.

"The kindly concern froze out of his face."

He asked her to leave but Alice makes no move.

"But Alice Morgan made no move to go."

"She said stubbornly 'I haven't asked for any privilege until now, Captain. I wouldn't ask you now if it weren't absolutely necessary. I must have more food'"

She won't take no for an answer. She emphasises the word must. This shows she is very persistent.

She doesn't request the food, she demands it.

"I've got to have more food she said intensely"

Not at all like Sophy.

Alice does what she has to do to keep herself and her baby alive. There is confusion as to whether Alice truly wants to do anything to keep her baby alive or if she is just using it as a good excuse to keep herself alive. Evidently the only way to keep anyone alive is to feed off other passengers on the ship. She stubbornly refuses to take part in the game which chooses who is next to take part. She doesn't weaken and is strong and adamant.

"Alice sat embarrassed under the combined gaze, but she held herself steady and her mouth was set in a straight line."

She takes huge advantage of her pregnant situation and appeals to the men's sympathy for herself but mainly for her un-born child.

"But if I draw it two must die."

This is very clever because she tries to make the men feel bad for expecting her to take part. She knows they will feel guilty.

Alice shows she is not afraid to stand up to men by speaking in a clear controlled voice.

"'Eight' said Alice Morgan's voice **sharply**"

The word sharply shows she knows what she wants and is in charge.

"All the heads turned towards her as if pulled by strings"

Her acting so unladylike astonishes the men.

"The faces looked startled as if the owners had heard a turtle dove roar."

At the beginning she is portrayed as a mouse, now she is like a lion.

Alice shows she has confidence as she has a good answer for everything the men throw at her.

"I'm denying the equity of that you call your game."

"The big man fumbled. For once he was at a loss for words."

In this situation Sophy would not have been able to hold her own.

Alice continues to argue her case when she targets the men's sympathy further. She gives them imaginary newspaper headlines to give them an idea of what will happen.

"GIRL-WIFE IN DOOM ROCKET, WOMAN'S SPACEWRECK ORDEAL, that sort of thing."

She uses the word girl because it makes her sound more fragile, innocent and more of a victim.

"Trapped in their living space, a girl and fifteen men now wheel helplessly around the planet Mars."

She refers to them as men. This makes them look like bullies around this little girl.

She uses the stereotypical view of women to her advantage.

"I am a woman, therefore my position is romantic, so I am young, glamorous beautiful..."

She seems to be a bit bigheaded.

"I am a heroine"

She sees herself as being far more important than these men.

"All of you are just men, hulks like the ship"

She wins them over and they all sit astonished at what a little woman has just said. A pathetic housewife, weak and harmless had just stopped all of them in their tracks.

Alice is not governed by society's rules for women at all. She has just proved that.

"There was silence in the room as she finished speaking. Most of the faces showed the astonishment of men ferociously attacked by a Pekinese, and at a loss for suitable comment."

She is described as a Pekinese, because they look cute and harmless but are fierce and vicious really.

Alice turns out to be the only one left on the ship. What does that say about society's expectations of women? Out of fifteen men and one woman she wins, she survives. Alice is not governed by society in any way shape or form. She is the exact opposite of Sophy who let her life be run the way men and society assumed it should be.