

The Decline of the Goddess: Nature, Culture, and Women in Thomas Hardy's Fiction (Contributions to the Study of World Literature)

Shirley A. Stave



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This timely book treats Hardy's recurring use of one of the major informing myths of Western culture?that of a collision between a solar god and an earth goddess. Stave uses a chronological examination of Hardy's Wessex novels to highlight the author's evolving consciousness of the connections among patriarchy, Christianity, sexism, and classism. From the gentle affirmation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* to the grim *Jude the Obscure*, Stave paints a world in which the goddess figures die out, displaced by messianic gods, and a Pagan worldview gives way to a world devoid of spiritual meaning.

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