

*THE
THOMAS HARDY
JOURNAL*



AUTUMN 2018

VOL XXXIV

A Thomas Hardy Society Publication

ISSN 0268-5418

ISBN 0-904398-51-X

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Members of the THS during the Fiddler of the Reels walk, led by Tony Fincham, attempting a reel to the tunes of Ruth and Colin Thompson



The Mellstock Band – photo courtesy of Howard J Payton

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THE THOMAS HARDY JOURNAL

Volume XXXIV

AUTUMN 2018

Editor: Karin Koehler

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CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Welcome to this autumn *Thomas Hardy Journal*, the first under the stewardship of our new editor, Dr Karin Koehler. We all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Phillip Mallett for completing a whole decade as editor of the *THJ* and *THSJ*, continuously producing journals of such high quality. I have no doubt that Karin will, in her own way, carry the journal forward to new heights.

Office: As many of you will be aware, the Dorset County Museum closed at the end of September in order to undergo a major extension and refurbishment. The plan is that it should reopen in the summer of 2020, just in time for our next Hardy Festival/Conference. In the interim, the Hardy Society Office has been relocated in the Dorchester Town Council Office, just around the corner at 19 North Square. Telephone number and postal address remain unchanged. Mike Nixon and Dee Tolfree have coped magnificently with the move but as their storage space remains largely at the museum, to which they will only have occasional access, they have asked me to point out that there are likely to be delays in the dispatch of orders for publications and merchandise.

2018 Festival: is reported on in detail elsewhere in this journal. In simple terms, all seemed to go well, with the start at Kingston Maurward being generally appreciated as was the moving of all the 'Call for Papers' sessions to the morning. Mike Nixon gives details of the Festival feedback in his report, the main criticism being continued audibility problems in the United Church. Your Council of Management endeavours every conference to correct this complaint but has singularly failed to do so. We therefore plan to hold the 2020 Festival/Conference at a new venue and I'm actively working on this now.

Your Society Needs You! : Predictably, although disappointingly, the response to my appeal in Summer *THSJ* and to our collective appeals at the AGM has been minimal. We still need a treasurer, and more help in the office. Immediately following the AGM, two ladies separately offered such help. Foolishly in post-Stamp melee, I didn't write down any details – merely recommending that they make contact with Mike Nixon, which sadly has not yet happened. Out there somewhere, there must be a THS treasurer – it is not an onerous job.

North Dorchester: although in its terminal throes, West Dorset District Council (to be replaced by a new Unitary Authority in 2019) is currently revising the Local Plan to include provision for a new development of

at least 3,500 dwellings on the edge of the downland immediately north of Dorchester – the so-called ‘North Dorchester’ new town. Having in 2013 rejected the proposal to build at Conygar Hill (Came Down), on land immediately adjoining Max Gate and Barnes’ Rectory, it beggars belief that the same Council can now consider it appropriate to propose building a detached new town across the water meadows from the Roman northern boundary of Casterbridge. The view north across Dorchester has already been seriously scarred by that Disney-esque carbuncle on the landscape, known (incorrectly) as Poundbury. ‘North Dorchester’ would be a far, far more serious intrusion upon the landscape – ruining forever that unique town ‘as compact as a box of dominoes’, having ‘no suburbs in the ordinary sense’, where ‘Country and town met in a mathematical line’.

This proposed new development would link Stinsford and Charminster parishes in one hideous conurbation. Today the population of Stinsford Parish is no greater than it was in 1840, when Hardy was born there. We are therefore talking about the destruction of Hardy’s Mellstock – so vividly described in his poetry and early fiction, especially in *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Desperate Remedies*. Not only would the setting of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* be damaged irrevocably but this new town would destroy the heart of Hardy’s Wessex, impinging especially on the landscape of *Far from the Madding Crowd* and many of the short stories.

Needless to say, I have written in the strongest terms objecting to this proposal on behalf of the Thomas Hardy Society – as have the rest of the Council of Management and other local members. I have stressed the international significance of this landscape (hopefully to be included soon with a new National Park) – it is very helpful to the cause if members of the THS from around the world and from elsewhere in the UK can also write in expressing their concerns. With luck, many of you will have done so already in response to our autumn e-Newsletter or to information on our website/social media. Although the initial objection period is now over, you can keep updated by googling STAND (Save the Area North of Dorchester).

THS website: THS Council members Andrew Hewitt, Tracy Hayes and Mark North have been working continuously over the summer with Cirrus Web Design on the construction of our new website. Whilst retaining all that is best on the current website, the finished product will be a great improvement – significantly updated – and appropriate for taking the Society into the third decade of the twenty-first century.

Forward Thinking: Your Council of Management is busy at work on the programme for the next year or two: details of the 2019 programme will be included as a flyer in this journal. The intention is to make the year a celebration of the 105th anniversary of the publication of *Satires of Circumstance*, as well as acknowledging the 145th anniversary of *Far from the Madding Crowd* with the April Study Day. We are planning a joint event in Dorchester with the Philip Larkin Society over the weekend of Larkin's birthday, 9–11 August 2019, which also include the WHOTT coach outing (Sue Clarke led two historic coaches for a well-attended exploration of Egdon Heath and the Frome Valley in August this year). In addition, we are planning a London walk with the help of Professor Mark Ford (*Thomas Hardy – Half a Londoner*). A special celebration is planned for early March 2020 in St Juliot to mark the 150th anniversary of Hardy's initial visit to Cornwall. For those who like a longer walk, I'm working on a Sandbourne to Stonehenge walk in the footsteps of Tess and Angel Clare. The distance is around 50 miles and it would therefore involve two overnight stops; early expressions of interest would be helpful in deciding whether it is worthwhile investing the effort into planning this walk, which would probably take place in either April or August 2020.

TONY FINCHAM

EDITOR'S NOTES

I attended my first Thomas Hardy Conference and Festival in 2012, when I had completed one year of my PhD research at St Andrews University – supervised by Phillip Mallett, the previous editor of this journal. I hardly expected six years ago that by the time I would attend my fourth Conference and Festival, the twenty-third in the history of the Thomas Hardy Society, I would do so as the new editor. It is one of many pleasant surprises I have experienced since joining the THS, to which I owe many professional opportunities as well as, far more importantly, personal connections that extend beyond, but are deeply rooted in, a shared appreciation of Hardy's work.

I have accepted a formidable task in taking over the editorship from Phillip, who, for the past decade, invested vast amounts of time, attention, and energy into the project of making, to paraphrase Matthew Arnold very loosely, some of 'the best of what has been thought and said about Hardy', accessible to readers across the world. Without any shadow of a doubt he has, through this work, been absolutely vital in promoting the THS as well as knowledge of, and interest in, the work of Thomas Hardy. These are big shoes to fill, and my delight at becoming editor is, at the best of times, mixed with trepidation. Still, I did not hesitate for long when Phillip asked me whether I would consider the job, and, in the short months since I've begun, I have tremendously enjoyed the task.

I build on strong foundations and there is much that I wish to honour in the tradition of the society's journals. In particular, I am excited to promote dialogue and debate about Hardy, between 'general readers', academics from a range of disciplines (from the earliest stages of their careers to the most established), researchers, the heritage industry, creative writers, educators – anyone, in short, with a stake in the continuing literary and cultural legacy of Thomas Hardy. The journal is a place for celebrating the life and work of Thomas Hardy, and work about Hardy, but also to inspect and review it critically. The best service we can do Hardy, I think, is to read and re-read his words, to ask difficult questions about them, and to continually reflect on and re-evaluate their meaning.

The journal will continue to welcome a broad range of contributions, including academic essays, which are sent out for peer review; informal research articles that shed new light on any aspect of Thomas Hardy's life and work, or his enduring presence in Dorset life and landscape;

creative work; reports on events; personal reflections; parodies; and so on. I will also introduce gradual changes. For instance, working closely with the Hardy Society's Council of Management, I am hoping to give the journal a new look. The next journal (spring 2019) will feature a call for a new cover design, so look out for this (especially if you are blessed with artistic talent). Generally, I welcome readers' suggestions and input on any aspect of the journal. Please don't hesitate to contact me at the addresses (electronic and postal) provided at the back of the journal.

This issue features some essays that originate in lectures or papers given at the 23rd International Thomas Hardy Conference and Festival, including Linda M. Shires and Francis O'Gorman's insightful and inspiring keynotes on Hardy's poetry. Further papers from the conference will appear, in revised and expanded form, in the spring issue; I hope that more speakers will submit their work in the coming weeks. There are more detailed reports and several images from the conference elsewhere in this issue. It's hardly necessary for me to add my own comments and praise. And yet ... Jane Thomas, our Academic Director, once again curated an extraordinary lecture programme, while the Call for Paper sessions, impeccably organised by Mary Rimmer, showcased exciting and insightful scholarship. Glimpses from the Conference feedback, offered in Mike Nixon's secretary report and Brenda Parry's report, bear testimony to the success of the opening weekend at Kingston Maurward and to the popularity of the walks, tours, and evening entertainments, with particular praise for Terence Stamp's appearance at the end of the week. For my taste, Terence Stamp had, perhaps, a bit too much of the Sergeant Troy about him ... but then, of course, I am a 'millennial' and, as they say, 'snowflake'. As ever, it was a treat to meet old friends and new in Dorchester, and I already look forward to 2020.

The last few months have repeatedly, and sometimes painfully, brought home to me – and, no doubt, many other readers – the continuing resonance of Hardy's work. On a lighter note, the streaming service Netflix is currently airing a film called *Sierra Burgess is a Loser*. The premise: a teenage girl receives a text message from her crush. He had meant to text another, more popular (and presumably, according to the logic and standards of Hollywood production, more conventionally attractive) girl. The eponymous heroine seizes her chance, though, and draws the boy into a correspondence. He promptly falls in love with the image he

conjures up based on her words. This plot recalls Hardy's short story 'On the Western Circuit', since, like that older text, it explores the power of language to inspire emotion and sustain romantic and sexual attraction. Whether *Sierra Burgess is a Loser* succeeds, as 'On the Western Circuit' does, in combining this interest in the creative power of language with a trenchant exploration of the links between sexual attraction, romantic longing, economic inequality, and educational privilege is, of course, a different question.

It is *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, though, with which I have found myself grappling most frequently over the last months, because of, for instance, the case of Brock Turner, who sexually assaulted and raped an unconscious woman but was released after six months in jail; because of the #MeToo movement that rippled out from Hollywood into other sectors, including the academic world, highlighting the constant abuses of power that are still facilitated by hierarchical relationships; and because of the recent appointment of Brett Kavanaugh, who stands accused by Dr Christine Blasey Ford of sexual assault, to the US Supreme Court. Hardy's novel, though a product of its own moment, has lost none of its painful power, because, as these cases illustrate, socio-economic inequality still breeds sexual exploitation and protects abusers, and because we still need to confront what is central to the plot of *Tess*: that the absence of active protest or resistance does not signify consent (especially when a power disparity exists between the two people involved in a sexual encounter); that women's voices and experiences are silenced; and that when women break their silence, their accounts are often invalidated or ridiculed. If we are appalled by what *Tess Durbeyfield* suffers, we should not ignore the fact that, 128 years later, many of the structures that entrap this fictional character are still operational, albeit under different guises. Due to its sharp analysis of the operations of power, Hardy's work continues to provide us with a lens for thinking critically about our own moment, and this, no doubt, is one of the reasons for which it continues to generate exciting, challenging, and important scholarship.

Finally, a few brief announcements.

First, a report of this year's Dorchester Vintage Bus and Coat Running Day, which took place in August, is included in this journal. For the past two years, the Thomas Hardy Society has collaborated with the West Country Historic Omnibus and Transport Trust (WHOTT). Another similar event will take place in 2019. The date is 11 August 2019.

Second, the third annual Thomas Hardy Study Day will take place on 13 April 2019. More information and a Call for Papers are included in this issue. The Study Day will focus on *Far from the Madding Crowd* and already boasts an impressive line-up of speakers. It promises to be an exciting and engaging event and it would be great to see many members of the society there (and to publish the best papers in the journal).

Finally, please continue submitting your items, academic and otherwise, to the *Hardy Society Journal* and the *Thomas Hardy Journal*. This might be rather long notice, but the next *Thomas Hardy Journal*, which will be published in the autumn of 2019, will take a slightly different format from usual. It aims to collect reflections, by readers from across the world, on why ‘Hardy matters’ in the second decade of the twenty-first century. A call for papers will be published shortly. The deadline for contributions will be 15 August 2019.

The deadline for submitting items to the spring 2019 issue of the *Hardy Society Journal* is 10 February. It is politely requested that, despite the 145th anniversary of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, no readers send in mock valentines. I look forward to reading your submissions.

SECRETARY'S REPORT FROM CASTERBRIDGE

Rare Hardy letter

I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to buy a Hardy letter recently, and one that has not been included in the Purdy and Millgate magnificent *Collected Letters* volumes. When I met the seller they gave me some interesting background as to how they got it: A great aunt had written to Hardy, and even though his reply began 'Dear Sir' (!), it had been stored carefully for many years in the dark, hence the ink is still a pristine colour.

To be helpful, below is my transcript of the letter:

10.12.1907

Dear Sir

I was quite unable to reply to your letter of Nov.19.

I suppose that the "Poems of the Past & the Present" contain more vital matter than my other books. But this does not answer your question which is my best book.

I must ask you not to print this letter, though you may of course use the information by putting it into your own words, if it has the slightest interest for anybody.

Yours truly

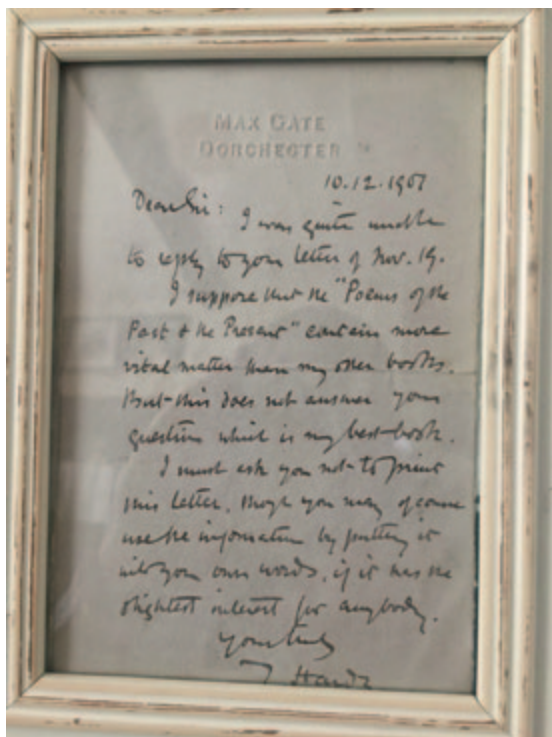
T Hardy

I have, of course, shared this with our Hardy letters expert, Keith Wilson, and any further information will be reported back via the Journals.

Frank Pinion Award

Many members will have been familiar with this award over a number of years. It was a fund set up by the Pinion family in honour of a well-respected Hardy scholar, Frank Pinion. He wrote one of *the* books, 'A Hardy Companion', which first appeared in 1968, and others of his books include: 'A Thomas Hardy Dictionary' and 'One Rare Fair Woman'. The award is administered by his daughter, Catherine.

The award was set up by students at the school where he was Headmaster from the 1950s until 1961, when Frank went to work at Sheffield University. The award was originally funded by former school children at his school, forty years after he died! One pupil organised the



Uncollected Letter from Thomas Hardy, dated 10 September 1907 – image courtesy of Mike Nixon.

raising of the money, then wrote to Catherine to set something up in his memory. The rest is history.

Looking back I know, even in my time of seven Conferences, the award made an enormous difference as to whether someone, often from abroad, could afford to make the trip to one of our Conferences. I'm sure Frank would have been proud to have helped a young person further their interest in Hardy, and our thanks go to him, and, just as importantly, to Catherine and all her colleagues she consulted in the Sheffield branch of the Society. A sincere thank you from us, and all those past recipients.

Conference 2018: Questionnaire feedback

This year's conference has been declared a resounding success! Forty-five people completed the feedback questionnaire and 91% considered the programme balance and 98% the organization 'excellent' or 'very good', the remaining assessments being 'good'. This is very gratifying,

as pulling it all together has been harder work this year and we picked up and rectified almost all the problems before they arose.

Many heartily approved the timetabling of 'call for papers' in the mornings (taking on board comments from the 2016 conference) as borne out by there being ten to thirteen delegates attending seven of the eight sessions – compared with 2016, where of the ten panels six were reviewed by one or two delegates with one reaching seven. There were many comments on the lines of 'so great to hear good papers from the next generation'.

We have some 'grade inflation' this year.... our '5' is now inadequate as our top rate of 'Excellent'. Several delegates have taken to giving the odd '5+' (13 awarded in all), QUESTION TIME got one of those plus a '10/5' and a 'heart', and a '5++' and an '11/5' for TERENCE STAMP! Other very highly rated entertainments were the WESSEX CONSORT CHOIR, the Leah's PORTRAIT OF TESS/Hardy's War, the film FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD, and of course TIM LAYCOCK & the MELLSTOCK BAND and the BARN DANCE (where the meal was much praised as well: 'Delicious' is not often attributed to corporate catering). On the subject of food, the light lunches at the Church attracted a lot of praise and thanks.

The sound system in the church was still heavily criticized. The demographics of our membership demands that we do more to solve this issue. Those with hearing aids on the LOOP found it made all the difference BUT several speakers were unwilling or unable to use the microphone which is an integral part of that system.

The five lectures all were very well reviewed for content. But whilst Profs Frances O'Gorman and Mark Ford came over very well, they probably benefitted from their male voices in the battle for audibility, as the female lecturers, mainly rated excellent, very good, and good, attracted most comments about inaudibility.

Kingston Maurward proved a popular venue, with uncertainty about transport being the only but significant issue: 'Shuttle service is a MUST'. The setting there for the New Hardy Players' Trumpet Major was idyllic but chilly, and many of our delegates would have liked chairs, or at least advice in the programme to bring their own. Those demographics again!

The Walks and Tours proved popular again, with highest praise for the St Juliot/Cornwall day trip, and the Casterbridge walk, followed by Fiddler of the Reels and Egdon Heath.

Most delegates thought the conference the right length though a significant cadre thought it could be shortened to save on accommodation and expenses as ‘not much happened the first weekend that couldn’t be put into the first day’. Accommodation costs are of concern. Apparently there used to be a ‘billeting system’ which we should try to reintroduce.

Many other suggestions and ideas to think about for next time have been offered and these will all be analysed and considered carefully by your Committee of Management over the coming months. Many thanks to all who came and made it such a memorable conference, and especially to those of you who took the trouble to leave feedback.

Books for sale

The following books are offered for sale to members.

The following are all bound copies of magazines where various Hardy short stories first appeared. The bindings are not of the best, but the content is in excellent condition. I’m afraid, as they are weighty tomes, we will have to charge postage and packaging in addition to the price of the volume.

<i>The English Illustrated Magazine</i>	1883–1884 (Interlopers at the Knap)	£20
Ditto	1891–1892 (On the Western Circuit)	£20
Ditto	1893–1894 (Ancient Earthworks at Casterbridge)	£20
<i>Harpers Monthly Magazine</i>	Dec.1889–May 1890 (The First Countess of Wessex). (A poor spine)	£20

Bargains – for a quick sale!

Leather Macmillan pocket edition:	<i>The Trumpet Major</i>	£10
Ditto:	<i>Life’s Little Ironies</i>	£10
Macmillan First Edition 1913:	<i>A Changed Man</i> . Poor spine, otherwise excellent	£30
Osgood edition 1896	<i>The Hand of Ethelberta</i> . Very good edition	£20
Two ‘Folio’ editions:	<i>Tess of the d’Urbervilles</i> . Excellent condition	£10
	<i>The Return of the Native</i> . In a slip case	£10

As usual, emails to the Hardy office please.

Collected Letters of Hardy. Volumes 1–7.

These are for sale through the Hardy office. Offers in excess of £300 please. All are VG+ copies.

MIKE NIXON

NEW MEMBERS

UK

Keith Brown	Northamptonshire
Susan Chorley	Liverpool
Sue Edney	Blagdon, Bristol
Sue Fulford	Blandford Forum
Prof Bernard and Dorothy Harrison	Lewes
Julian Herrington	Faversham, Kent
Dr Xianping Jiang	Cambridge
Ian Loats	Bristol
Allan MacPherson	Perth
Michelle Forest Marble	Somerton
Elizabeth O'Connell	Hampshire
*Alison and Howard Payton	Isle of Portland
John Kenneth Robertson	Bournemouth
Margaret Smith	Cardiff
Minna Vuohelainen	London
Peter Wild	Liskeard, Cornwall

Overseas

Sarah Dangelantonio	USA
Emily Halliwell-MacDonald	Toronto, Canada
Linda Shires	New Jersey, USA

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HARDY'S POEMS AND THE READER: THE POWER OF UNMAKING

LINDA M. SHIRES

The first word that came to mind when planning this lecture was *poesis*. From the Greek ποίησις, it means the 'activity in which a person brings something into being that did not exist before'.¹ In Latin, of course, *poesis* means poem or poetry. Yet in considering what Thomas Hardy's poems so powerfully offer to readers, no one word could sum it up. I settled momentarily on 'unmaking', – that Hardy's poems invite readers into a process, to unmake them – yet not to ruin or destroy. While Hardy encourages his readers to unmake in the sense of pick out or take apart – to ponder about what 'aureate nimb' (*CP*: 62) means, to hear, see and feel how wind oozes 'thin through the thorn' (*CP*: 346), to visualize how 'dead feet walked in' (*CP*: 166), – he does so in service to larger goals.² In the past, I have argued that Hardy's poems can offer social critiques through their interruptive demand that we pay attention to the histories and implications of individual words, rhymes, or meters that challenge our expectations. In two recent essays, I analysed Hardy's complex use of image and text in *Wessex Poems*.³ This lecture, examining several of Hardy's poems in detail, asks what larger goals and what different kinds of pleasure result from reading Hardy's poems.

Because so many of Hardy's poems illuminate how the past enters present consciousness and how the present reaches for but never truly recovers a past, I want to add a personal note. Fifty years ago, at age seventeen, I bought John Crowe Ransom's *Selected Poetry of Thomas Hardy*. At that time, I knew Hardy only as a novelist. The poem I puzzled over and remembered most was 'The Convergence of the Twain' (*Lines on the Loss of the "Titanic"*) (*CP*: 306–07). So today let me begin by revisiting a poem that pushed its way into this lecture, taking first place, because of the way it inaugurated a teenager's interest in Hardy's poetry and held it for half a century. Perhaps, even then, I vaguely sensed that part of the power of Hardy's poetry lay in collisions: physical, mental, and emotional.

Following upon a short review of Hardy's aesthetic and what I see as a requirement to read his poetry *with the grain* as much as *against the grain*, I will subsequently discuss, with differing amounts of

emphasis: ‘Heiress and Architect’ (CP: 75–6), ‘The Self-Unconscious’ (CP: 331–32), ‘Ah, Are you Digging on my Grave?’ (CP: 330–31), ‘The Darkling Thrush’ (CP: 150), ‘Afterwards’ (CP: 553), and ‘He Resolves to Say No More’ (CP: 929–30).⁴ By returning to some of Hardy’s best-known poems, juxtaposing them almost at random, as Hardy himself might have done, I hope to articulate what emerges from collision and unmaking.

In the last decades, numerous scholars have shown how Hardy’s anti-lyric lyricism brilliantly challenges a reader’s assumptions by creating both formal and ideological subversions of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century poetry.⁵ Unlike Romantic and Victorian predecessors, Hardy does not just reshape – but also destabilizes – the poetic voice. When reading Hardy attentively, we set to the side our traditional expectations about subject matter, the line, poetic form, rhyme, individual words, metrics, and tone. We understand that no statement about Hardy’s poetry can be all-inclusive since each work of art is premised on a moment of experience and since there are over a thousand poems, differing from each other despite patterns. It is clear that Hardy is keen to animate language, in his words: bring ‘life into the writing’ (LW: 107), akin to poet Robert Herrick’s ‘sweet disorder’.⁶ But I think Hardy’s lyrics, perhaps like – but also unlike – those of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Emily Dickinson, invite us to experience the sensation, sound, and meaning of words and phrases ‘leaping just beyond our capacity to know them for certain’.⁷

Just as Hardy ‘subverts’ traditional ‘aesthetic ideology’, the process of unmaking, I’d argue, is a particular method encouraged by Hardy’s texts.⁸ As a critical practice, Reading with the Grain ideally amounts to, in the words of critic Timothy Bewes: attending to ‘the singularity’ of the text in front of us, such that literature is engaged not as ‘the representation of thoughts’ or as an example of a theory, but *as thinking*.⁹ This method of reading at the same time is ‘always, in part, a reading of ourselves reading’.¹⁰ Our own history and own moment, become inseparable from the text as it comes ‘into being’ and as we are not certain, so take apart, put elements together, and see something new.¹¹ In the case of Thomas Hardy, I am talking about his establishment of a lyric intimacy with the unknown invisible reader – you and me – that includes our own unknowing.

Let’s turn to ‘The Convergence of the Twain (*Lines on the loss of the “Titanic”*)’

I

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches she.

II

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

III

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls – grotesque, slimed, dumb, indifferent.

IV

Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: ‘What does this vaingloriousness down here?’ ...

VI

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

VII

Prepared a sinister mate
For her – so gaily great –
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

IX

Alien they seemed to be:
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being anon twin halves of one august event,

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years
Said 'Now!' And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

Thomas Hardy was invited to write the poem, completed on 24 April 1912, for a Covent Garden dramatic and operatic matinee in honour of the 'Titanic' Disaster Fund. A week earlier over 1,500 people died when the reputedly unsinkable ship collided with an iceberg and went down. Composed of eleven three-line stanzas in an aaa, bbb etc. rhyme scheme with no regular metre, the poem was immediately interpreted as a rejection of mankind's pride and vanity that cannot withstand natural forces. According to J.O. Bailey, news and journal articles, to which Hardy had access, had emphasized the status and wealth of passengers as well as the supreme luxury of the ship.¹² Yet even though two of Hardy's acquaintances had perished, he avoids any expression of grief for the many lives lost or changed forever in the disaster. As is obvious from his references to the Immanent Will or Spinner of the Years, the poem is not an elegy but rather a philosophical statement of determinism.

Fifty years ago, I was drawn to this poem by not knowing a word such as 'thrid', by feeling the swallowing of Ti tanic into ti dal, and by puzzling over a phrase such as 'rhythmic tidal lyres'. Reading that phrase at seventeen, I heard waters move; I saw a musical instrument; I felt something fluid and solid, measured and vibrating; I sensed dark and glinting metal. But it took a while to comprehend that ocean waves here move through once-fiery steel ship engines connected to pistons and rods, making these areas of the wreck like stringed instruments. Moreover, with the emphasis on vanity and pride, there seemed to be a homophone in lyres of liars, a word evoked again two stanzas later by 'Jewels ... lie lightless'. But in addition to being drawn by words leaping beyond themselves, I felt I had become a questioning, unknowing, moon-eyed fish inspecting a wreck. That is what really grabbed me. I had never identified with a fish before in my readings, but now I was one, gazing at sunken mirrors and gilded objects.

For Gilles Deleuze Thought arises from 'an original violence inflicted', an 'encounter', which 'forces us to think by its unrecognizability,

sensory immediacy, by the powerlessness of recollection, imagination, or conceptualization in the face of it'.¹³ Just as the wreck of the Titanic destroyed the expectations of its makers and passengers, so reading the poem inflicts a situation on the reader that forces thinking. This implies a practice of reading that refuses the transfiguration of the work into something other than the work, or any foreclosure on its meaning. And so the first marvellous gift Hardy offers us is to remove us from what is recognizable, to make us think.

Reading 'The Convergence of the Twain' fifty years later, what struck me were words, sound symbolism, and the triplet structure. In contrast to other shipwreck poems with relatively straightforward narrative and comparatively unmemorable word choice, Hardy's poem layers meanings with its words such as maiden, evoking not only inaugural and unwed, but something made, or jars, a verb evoking the image of a sunken hull as a jar, or salamandrine, which links the flames of the ship to the amphibian sea worms it eventually houses underwater.

The rhythm and cadences work with the narrative to produce onomatopoeic effects and to offer a pattern for a reader's entering the scene. In the first five stanzas the ship is underwater and we hear sibilance – the hissing of fires going out in water, the rhythms of the sea. At the same time, the reader senses space and isolation. Solitude of the sea – the very length of the word and dactyl solitude increases our sense of vastness. Two syllable words, followed by one syllable, stilly couches she reduce the ship in power despite our knowledge of her enormous size. We then have an interplay among s sounds, hard and soft, as if one hard material form mixes with fluid or creatures of the sea: steel chambers, glass, grotesque, slimed, sea worm, jewels, sensuous, lightless, sparkles, fishes. Altogether, Hardy creates motions of rising and falling, blending, movements of light and dark; at the same time, the narrative focuses on a ship quietly resting, as if sleeping in the deep. 'Stilly couches she.' To couch means to express or utter something. In the first stanzas, before the fish question and a narrator answers them, the Titanic herself speaks to us in this poem, but in a dying whisper.

Yet why three lines and why a longer third line? It seems obvious that the three lines evoke the three chief figures in the poem: ship, iceberg, and Immanent Will. The only enjambment occurs between stanzas VI and VII. With Hardy's joining two stanzas as the poem offers an answer to the fishes' question, he visually joins the two previous entities into something larger, so that it represents the Immanent Will's action. Others

have noted the narrative itself is temporally in thirds: appearing as a completed disaster, flashing back to the time of the creation of the ship and of the iceberg, and moving to the moment of convergence.

The tercets recall Dante's tripartite *The Divine Comedy*, a verse epic in terza rima, three lines with a different rhyme scheme – but, if so, the relation also involves an opposition (the Titanic disaster is not a divine comedy but a Fated Tragedy). More relevant than other poems about shipwrecks or descents into a dark underworld, I felt, was Shakespeare's 1601 *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, about a destined love affair, which begins as a narrative in quatrains but ends with an elegy in triplets. As Ralph W. V. Elliott noted, in reading Hardy 'we are [often] in Shakespeare's company'.¹⁴ Akin to the consummation of the Titanic and the iceberg, Shakespeare images a sexual death embrace. Whereas Hardy's iceberg is male and the ship female, Shakespeare's Turtledove is male and the Phoenix female. Shakespeare writes; 'So they lov'd, as love in twain/ Had the essence but in one;/ Two distincts, division; none:/ Number there in love was slain' (25–28).¹⁵ Once two, twain, the Phoenix and the Turtle become one in love. 'Either was the other's mine' (36) and even the distance between them cannot keep them apart. As Shakespeare's two creatures consummate their love, they burst into flames and die. Hardy's poem dramatizes the aftermath of such a collision. Whereas the Turtle and Phoenix die in flames, the iceberg's deadly embrace of the ship buries her in water. But it is noteworthy that Shakespeare's colourful Phoenix, a long-lived bird, will return. The Turtledove won't. Moreover, in the Shakespeare play that Hardy most often quotes in all his works, Hamlet compares death to sleep and thinks of the end to pain and uncertainty dying might bring, '[t]he heartache, and the thousand natural shocks / That flesh is heir to' (III.1.70–71) 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished' (III.1.71–72).¹⁶ Hardy's last line is 'And consummation comes and jars two hemispheres'.

Hardy's triplets and his word echoes of Shakespeare confer a greater breadth to 'The Convergence of the Twain' and suggest that the poem goes beyond one historical event, beyond sparkles 'bleared', the Immanent Will, a collision, and death. For with the Phoenix in mind, a reader may realize that over time the Titanic in a new form will recur in history. While Hardy refuses to invoke religious or mythological returns, he does indicate cyclical, evolutionary regeneration. The dead, vain hulls of civilization may breed primal forms of life from which superior organisms may, once again, emerge in an endless rhythmic cycle.

Even as a reader's moment of reading collides with the moment depicted in a Hardy poem, part of the pleasure for a reader is recalling words like twain or consummation in prior classic texts, wondering about triplets, and sensing that what Hardy provides is always more than what at first appears. Art, like his poetry, that holds an unknown within it waiting to be verbalized in a new way, is art that lasts. When a reader approaches a Hardy poem, she does not know how the text is going to pull her in or push her away. And this is, I think, what makes him differ from many others. One wonders: how will he shatter my assumptions *this* time? It is highly engaging not to know, like a puzzle. When one confirms he's done it again, the reader shakes her head while chuckling in double or triple pleasure.

Although I have lectured and written on the 1867 poem 'Heiress and Architect', I return to it with a different emphasis. In the past, I have focused on the relationship of text to the paired illustration in *Wessex Poems*. Today, I shall discuss the poem as itself a discourse on poetry. Dedicated to Hardy's employer A.W. Bromfield, it depicts a conversation between a male architect and an idealistic, romantic female heiress who wants to resist the passage of time by commissioning a pleasure dome set in an Edenic garden. She requests a Gothic-inspired edifice with 'high halls' and open spaces to admit the songs of birds and fragrance of flowers. An 'Idle whim', the architect gruffly remarks. She diminishes her next request by asking for 'wide fronts of crystal glass' to display her charms to all who pass. The architect declines. Finally pleading for a reduced 'little chamber', she settles on 'some narrow winding turret, quite mine own,/ To reach a loft where I may grieve alone' (CP: 75-76).

Hardy relies on a pun to mark this process of reduction. The desire to rise aloft in fame, has been reduced to a loft, a room right under her roof. In dismissing her desires, the architect mentions the inevitability of aging: 'For you will fade' and 'For you will die'. The firm metrical rhythm of his realism also forces a narrowing of her wishes. Ultimately, this man 'of measuring eye' states that he will build, instead, just space enough to 'hale a coffined corpse adown the stairs'. The meanings of *hale*: able bodied, to fall or rain down, alongside the homonym *to hail* or greet or celebrate are all in tension. Her corpse will be hauled down by able-bodied persons as burial greets her. The only space she really needs is for the width of a coffin and its bearers.

Hardy's sense of irony is in play here. The dedication to Bromfield recalls an architect's subservience to clients' wishes. Despite its ostensible

mockery, however, the poem also addresses poetic fashions Hardy is eager to revise. The Heiress is clearly not just a romantic solipsist, but also enamoured of fixed shapes, like the female Soul in Tennyson's 'Palace of Art'. Preferring space over time, she cannot respond to whatever lies outside her field of perception. Although one may hear echoes of Milton, Coleridge, Keats, and Tennyson, the reader must also participate, stanza by stanza, in a journey of reduction and of unmaking. What the architect-poet Hardy finally offers his client is a passageway to leave-taking.

Faced with the construction and reduction of selfhood that is so prominent in Hardy's verses, his reader is subjected to a similar process of reconstruction. In writing what he calls a 'personative' lyric, by which he means both dramatic and personal, Hardy exposes the vulnerable, linguistic architecture of personhood.¹⁷ Our words make us mean. His texts disassemble in order to create commentaries on what constitutes a self.

'Self-Unconscious' (*CP*: 331–32), from *Satires of Circumstance* (1914), explores how point of view can both blend and splinter within a single consciousness. Hardy emphasizes how one mind might be involved in watching, be engrossed or disinterested, or become half-wrapt. Yet he also divorces that mind from absorption in a concrete, distinct moment of reality. Let me quote the first two and last two stanzas:

Along the way
He walked that day,
Watching shapes that reveries limn
And seldom he
Had eyes to see
The moment that encompassed him.

Bright yellowhammers
Made mirthful clamours,
And billed long straws with a bustling air,
And bearing their load
Flew up the road
That he followed, alone, without interest there.

. . . .

O it would have been good
Could he then have stood
At a clear-eyed distance, and conned the whole,
But now such vision
Is mere derision
Nor soothes his body nor saves his soul.

Not much, some may
Incline to say,
To see therein, had it all been seen,
Nay! he is aware
A thing was there
That loomed with an immortal mien.

The poem opens as if it were reported by a Wordsworthian wanderer (in poems such as ‘A Night-Piece’ or ‘I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud’). Hardy’s own pensive traveller also walks alone, although he is hardly electrified into any sort of revelation. He remains locked into ‘watching shapes that reveries limn’ (3). The line immediately interrupts the flow and stops the reader. ‘Watching shapes’ indicates that the wanderer’s mind, though engaged, dwells on phantoms. Limn comes from Middle English limnen, to illuminate, but the traveller’s light comes from reveries, not reality. The words chosen serve as a commentary on what Hardy means by ‘Self-Unconscious’. Through his emphasis on shapes, reveries and limn, Hardy indicates that there is never a perception of wholeness, since for him there is no whole. The self may function by creating, projecting, remembering, but it also relies on different levels of unawareness. Our view of reality relies on versions of an unreality.¹⁸

Thomas Hardy’s mode of unmaking is radical, forcing the reader to witness collisions and reductions, inviting her to take apart and dwell in multiple kinds of meanings, but always challenging her as well, to find pleasure in reconstitutions, such as those that reanimate ‘The Convergence of the Twain’. Such reconstitutions can also add the pleasure of humour. The ironic or humorous handling of a speaker, even one facing death, is hardly new in the Victorian poetic tradition. Tennyson’s ‘St. Simeon Stylites’ or Browning’s clergyman in ‘The Bishop Orders His Tomb’, for instance, evoke as much smiling as they do serious analysis. They are both, as speakers, a bit absurd. Yet Hardy goes further and much deeper (and I pun on purpose) in a well-known poem such as the 1914 ‘Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?’ (*CP*: 330–331), of which I read here only the first, fifth, and sixth final stanza. When Hardy enters the mind of a dead woman, who reacts to a digging into her burial plot, he treats her as if she were still alive by offering her a voice. Like most humans, she hopes to be remembered. She therefore wonders who might be paying tribute to her. Is it her grief-stricken beloved husband? Then she recalls he remarried the day before:

‘Ah, are you digging on my grave
My loved one? planting rue?’
– ‘No: yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred.
“It cannot hurt her now,” he said,
“That I should not be true.”’

Our dead speaker next imagines that her visitor is a relative or an old enemy, until she realizes love and hate often turn to indifference after a subject’s death. Ultimately, her need for fidelity makes her recognize the digging paws of her dog. The pet’s digging, in turn, reminds her that whereas *human* loyalty can be limited, a dog’s is eternal.

‘Ah, yes! You dig upon my grave. . . .
Why flashed it not on me
That one true heart was left behind!
What feeling do we ever find
To equal among human kind
A dog’s fidelity!’

But, oh, she is not remembered and the dog is just saving a bone there that it wants to dig up later. Whereas humans want honour in death, the dog is hiding a chewable:

‘Mistress, I dug upon your grave
To bury a bone, in case
I should be hungry near this spot
When passing on my daily trot.
I am sorry, but I quite forgot
It was your resting-place.’

Hardy here recalls Thomas Gray’s 1751 ‘Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’, a poem which honoured the lives and deaths of anonymous villagers who may have even included ‘some Mute inglorious Milton’ (59).¹⁹ Gray’s speaker, the obscure and anonymous poet whose own epitaph concludes the poem, recognizes that even those whose destiny is ‘obscure’ (30) yearn to be remembered with the ‘passing tribute of a sigh’ (80). Hardy’s poem offers no such sympathetic tributes. Indeed the woman’s dog takes over the poem. By redefining the grave as a good spot for hiding its bones, the dog has erased her consciousness. As in numerous earlier poems, Hardy dissects illusions about our past relationship to loved ones, whether dying or dead, and exposes our adherence to systems of belief that promise ever-lasting love and fidelity.

Yet how can one find pleasure or humour in an ironic corpse poem?²⁰ Such irony can lead to cynicism. Hardy invites the reader to identify

with both the dead and the living, with the desire to be remembered, with sadness at little to no fidelity, and with an animalistic urgency to pack away food for our next trot. In hearing the dog – and a polite one at that – we don't end just with corpse bones but with the need to live and thrive while we can. The dog in this poem is like the moon-eyed fish doing their thing around the *Titanic* or the bright yellowhammers making mirthful clamours in 'Self-Unconscious'. In many of the poems in which Hardy shows up the fragility and erasure of the human, he reinforces the strength of nature in ways that often are not too different from human consciousness. In other words, Hardy stands by his reader but also distances himself, challenging us to find the tiny, fleeting, but present moment of vision in his satires of circumstance or human shows.

Even with the end of a difficult Nineteenth Century, when the weather is windy and cloudy, the light is waning, the music of nature is broken, there are no Keatsian nightingales in sight, mankind has withdrawn, and the landscape looks like an aged corpse, Hardy hears the sweet song of a tiny being. 'Joy illimited' (20) bursts forth from the feeble, soulful darkling thrush (*CP*: 150):

An aged thrush, frail, gaunt and small,
 In blast-beruffled plume,
 Had chosen thus to fling his soul
 Upon the growing gloom.

 So little cause for carolings
 Of such ecstatic sound
 Was written on terrestrial things
 Afar or nigh around,
 That I could think there trembled through
 His happy good-night air
 Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew
 And I was unaware.

Thomas Hardy's poems challenge readers not only to unmake but to find and value something among fragments. He himself is not offering up harmony, ideal love, resurrection, redemption, or any lasting joy. 'I could think', he says, not 'I knew' or 'for certain'. While it would be easy to say that Hardy's very inclusion of 'joy illimited' and 'Hope' means that he trusts such sentiments, such an assertion would undo words and meaning. He states that he is unaware of why any creature, human or not, could feel joy or hope given the state of human civilization. But he does not rule it out. Readers may choose truth or illusions, laughter or sadness, modesty or vanity, soulful ecstasy or woe, sentiment or realism.

I'd like to close this lecture by considering Hardy's two valedictory poems of self-unmaking, 'Afterwards', from 1917, and 'He Resolves to Say No More' from 1927. I'd also like to comment upon what I see as Hardy's distinctive ethics.²¹ It has been argued that lyric poetry always conveys an ethical import whenever a speaker works through and elaborates emotions and thoughts triggered by another person, power, or thing – a lost love, a thrush, an ancient floor, the immanent will, the dead, or the self. Poetry critic Helen Vendler puts it this way: 'The tones summoned up characterize not only the utterer but also his relation to his addressee, creating on the page the nature of the ties between them.'²² She adds 'Just as every human relation of two entails an ethical dimension (of justice, estimation, reciprocity, sympathy), so, too, does every lyric representation of the linkage of two persons or [a person and a] thing.'²³ Nearly all poets, she argues, aim to establish 'in the reader's imagination a more admirable ethics of relation than exists on earth'.²⁴ To bring out salient differences in such relationships and ethics, I'd like to compare Hardy's two valedictory poems with one prior example of this genre, Alfred Lord Tennyson's 1889 'Crossing the Bar'.

Having recovered from a serious illness, Tennyson is said to have written the poem in twenty minutes while crossing the Solent at the Isle of Wight. Shortly before he died, Tennyson instructed his son Hallam to 'put "Crossing the Bar" at the end of all editions of my poems'.²⁵

Crossing the Bar
 Sunset and evening star,
 And one clear call for me!
 And may there be no moaning of the bar,
 When I put out to sea,

 But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam,
 When that which drew from out the boundless deep
 Turns again home.

 Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark!
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I embark;

 For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crost the bar.

As Alfred Lord Tennyson foresees his death he recalls the death of Arthur, not only of his beloved Arthur Hallam who died tragically on a sea voyage, but also his own King Arthur who went ‘from the great deep to the great deep’.²⁶ Christopher Ricks explains that the ‘call’ in stanza one is a marine term, a summons to duty, but it is clearly also the call of the sea and the call of the Creator to man. The bar is the sandbar that Tennyson hopes will be covered by a full tide and thus silenced. In desiring no moaning, however, he refers also to any mourners. He asks his reader for a dutiful acceptance of death when the call comes. While some readers identify the Pilot as God, citing 1 Corinthians 13, ‘For now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face’, others identify the Pilot as Jesus and others as Arthur Hallam.²⁷ Yet in 1892 Tennyson dismissed the notion of regarding the Pilot as a human. It was, for him, the Divine being that summons and guides.

Like much of Tennyson’s poetry, ‘Crossing the Bar’ has a clear shape with syntactical structures and with rhythms that parallel each other and support tonalities of harmony, balance, and seriousness. The first stanza works with a positive ‘one clear call’ and a negative ‘no moaning’, it builds additively with and, and. A push and pull takes over in the second stanza with description of water that moves but seems not to move, water that we see but do not hear, a tide that draws from the deep and turns back home to the deep. The opening of stanza three parallels that of the first. Its ‘twilight and evening bell’ matches the ‘Sunset and evening star’, but now the call is paralleled by the sense that the speaker will answer it by embarking on his last journey. Time is almost up. The doublings of and in the second and third lines of stanzas one and three are repeated, but now move towards the climax of stanza four. Each third line extends or opens an image – to moaning, to boundlessness, to sadness, to imagining a face-to-face encounter. Each last line parallels those before, building up emotion, and yet, in being shorter than the third lines, becomes more definite, more determined, less optional: ‘When I put out to sea;’ ‘turns again home;’ ‘when I embark;’ ‘when I have crost the bar.’ Moreover, three of the four uses of ‘I’ occur in those lines of emphasis and determination. Yet perhaps the most important unifying element of the poem, besides its shape, mirroring elements, strong ‘I’, and density, is the return of the AR rhyme at the close: star, bar, far, bar. The movement of the tongue up and back is like a wave. The repetition, also recalling Arthur, connects the poem’s ending with its beginning, linking the boundless deep with a removal of the earthly coordinates of Time and Place.

'I hope to see my Pilot face to face.' If Tennyson's understanding of nature were less scientific, less 'red in tooth and claw' (LVI, 15), he might have emulated William Wordsworth by claiming to feel mysterious forces in every movement of water or light.²⁸ If he had been less of an honest doubter, he might, like George Herbert, have asserted a more tender and a stronger intimacy with the Divine.

Unlike Tennyson, Thomas Hardy does not bother with even a tentative vertical relationship, but firmly stays within the horizontal bounds of human consciousness. Hardy's first self-elegy 'Afterwards' appeared during World War I, in 1917, to close the volume *Moments of Vision*. Thinking that he might not live to publish more poetry, Hardy is also playing with the poem's title. Afterwards is also after words, as if there can be no more words in store in the aftermath of a devastating war that will silence human utterance. Instead of a farewell about literary fame, instead of a quest to join something larger in the cosmos, the poem merely speculates how 'he' (the impersonal term) might be remembered justly by his neighbours. (Below the bolded words are my emphasis.)

When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,
And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,
'He was a man who used to notice such things'?

If it be in the dusk **when**, like an eyelid's soundless blink,
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,
'To him this must have been a familiar sight.'

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,
One may say, ‘He strove that such innocent creatures should come
to no harm,
But he could do little for them; and now he is gone.’

If, **when** hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,
'He was one who had an eye for such mysteries'?

And will any say **when** my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom,
'He hears it not now, but used to notice such things'?

Like Hardy's masterpiece 'During Wind and Rain', this poem is structured by seasons from Spring to Winter. Each stanza contains the word *when*, emphasizing the seasonal shift in time. The actor in stanza one is Time itself: 'when the Present has latched its postern'...the actor in the second stanza is the 'dewfall hawk'...in the third nature continues to take over ... it is 'the hedgehog'...in the fourth it is the neighbours hearing and speaking after his death. Notably, the tolling funeral bell of stanza five is interrupted, suggesting that mourning ends and life goes on. We close with life on earth. Hardy wonders if the living will recall his attentiveness to nature, his kindness towards vulnerable creatures, and his respect for mysteries.

In unmaking his literary fame, Hardy seems to identify with the private Shakespeare to whom he paid tribute in his 1916 poem 'To Shakespeare after Three Hundred Years' and whom he later invoked in 1927, the year before he died, when he gave a speech laying a stone for the Dorchester Grammar School. He writes of Shakespeare in his poem: 'Leaving no intimate word or personal trace/ Of high design outside the artistry/ Of thy penned dreams/ Still shalt remain at heart unread eternally'.²⁹ Hardy notes how Shakespeare's neighbours, who never really knew him or his work, might have spoken of him after death; while also remarking upon how Shakespeare might live on in the 'poesy'. This is the afterwards, the what comes after, the secular immortality of the greatest of our poets – that our world continues to have meaning in the eyes, ears, and hearts of readers because the poet showed them how to see and feel it consciously.

Having survived the war years, Hardy wrote a second poetic farewell in 1927 that became the final poem of his oeuvre.

He Resolves to Say No More
O my soul, keep the rest unknown!
It is too like a sound of moan
 When the charnel-eyed
 Pale Horse has nighed:
Yea, none shall gather what I hide!

Why load men's minds with more to bear
That bear already ails to spare?
 From now alway
 Till my last day
What I discern I will not say.

Let Time roll backward if it will;
 (Magians who drive the midnight quill
 With brain aglow
 Can see it so,)
 What I have learnt no man shall know.

 And if my vision range beyond
 The blinkered sight of souls in bond,
 – By truth made free –
 I'll let all be,
 And show to no man what I see.

Here Hardy addresses his soul with an apostrophe instructing it to say no more. Death will then stop speech permanently. To return to Vendler's claim: What 'ethics of relation' does Hardy leave 'in the reader's imagination'?³⁰ The intimacy with the reader that Hardy establishes in this final poem is a type of unintimacy; yet perhaps that is the greatest poetic address of all. For the poem pivots on the ethics of silence and truth. Hardy will not feed fashions or expectations. In using apostrophe to command silence, as John Paul Riquelme has noted, Hardy 'transforms a trope that traditionally implies the ability to speak'.³¹ Starting with self-address, Hardy quickly moves outward to protect other men's minds and souls. The poem progresses from a potential expression of regret, 'Oh my soul', to resolutions of inaction, unsaying, unsharing, and unshowing, lest he burden others with what he has learned in life. In moving from none, to not, to no, to no, while at the same time repeating the sound of O in the words 'soul', 'unknown', 'moan', 'aglow', 'so', 'souls', and 'show', Hardy strengthens the resolution to say no more before death, while creating a sense of both wonder and mystery.

In 1922 Hardy warned in his 'Apology' about 'the barbarizing of taste [...] the unabashed cultivation of selfishness in all classes, the plethoric growth of knowledge simultaneously with the stunting of wisdom', and, quoting Wordsworth, a "'a degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation'" (*CP*: 560). Hardy was surely right when he concluded that paragraph with this: 'we seem threatened with a new Dark Age' (*CP*: 560). The Second World War, countless genocides, the decreased influence of morality, religion used to hurt others as much as to guide. Hardy understood, from his own natural ambitions, the rise of the sciences, and from reading widely in many fields, the dangers of human pride and indifference to other creatures. And, for as much as he plumbed words, he shows us that the non-linguistic matters as much as human speech.

Writing this lecture allowed me to understand why Hardy's poetry lasted fifty years in my own case and reasserted why the fifty-year old labours of the Hardy Society remain essential today. Hardy directly faces the most difficult aspects of life. His poems offer no prescription for happiness, but nonetheless activate the values, limits, and intense pleasures of thinking, laughing, remembering, and witnessing.

NOTES

¹ Donald Polkinghorne, *Practice and the Human Sciences: The Case for a Judgement-Based Practice of Care* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), p. 115. See also <en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/poesis>.

² References to poems and prefaces are from *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*, ed. James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1976).

³ See Linda M. Shires, 'Hardy and Nineteenth Century Poetry', in Phillip Mallet, ed., *Advances in Thomas Hardy Studies* (New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 255–278; "'Saying that Now You are Not as You Were": Hardy's Poems of 1912–1913', in Tim Dolin and Peter Widdowson, eds., *Thomas Hardy and Contemporary Literary Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 138–152 and pp. 215–17; 'Hardy's Memorial Art: Image and Text in *Wessex Poems*', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 41 (2013), 743–64; and 'Matter, Consciousness, and the Human: Hardy's Image X Texts', *SEL*, 55 (2015), 899–924.

⁴ Timothy Bewes, 'Reading with the Grain: A New World in Literary Criticism', *differences*, 21.3 (2010), 1–33.

⁵ See, especially, Dennis Taylor's *Hardy's Meters and Victorian Prosody: With a Metrical Analysis of Hardy's Stanza Forms* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) and *Hardy's Literary Language and Victorian Philology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Pamela Dalziel and Michael Millgate, eds., *Thomas Hardy's 'Poetical Matter' Notebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); the classic by J. Hillis Miller, *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970); Tim Armstrong, *Haunted Hardy: Poetry, History, Memory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000); Susan M. Miller 'Thomas Hardy and the Impersonal Lyric', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 30 (2007), 95–115; and essays in Keith Wilson, ed., *A Companion to Thomas Hardy* (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

⁶ Robert Herrick, 'Delight in Disorder', <www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47285/delight-in-disorder>

⁷ James Longenbach, *The Resistance to Poetry* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004), p. 108.

⁸ J. Hillis Miller, 'Modernist Hardy', in Wilson, ed., *Companion to Thomas Hardy*, p. 434.

⁹ Bewes, 'Reading with the Grain', 28

- ¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² J.O. Bailey, *The Poetry of Thomas Hardy, A Handbook and Commentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 265.
- ¹³ Deleuze, as quoted in Bewes, 'Reading with the Grain', 14.
- ¹⁴ Ralph V.W. Elliot, *Thomas Hardy's English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), p. 126.
- ¹⁵ William Shakespeare, 'The Phoenix and the Turtle', <www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45085/the-phoenix-and-the-turtle-56d2246f86c06>
- ¹⁶ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, <<http://www.folgerdigitaltexts.org>>
- ¹⁷ Hardy, 'Preface' to *Wessex Poems* (CP: 6) and 'Preface' to *Poems of the Past and Present* (CP: 84).
- ¹⁸ Part of this analysis appears in a different context, to other ends, in my earlier essay 'Hardy's Browning: Refashioning the Lyric', *Victorian Poetry*, 50 (2012), p. 599.
- ¹⁹ Thomas Gray, 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', <www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44299/elegy-written-in-a-country-churchyard>
- ²⁰ For discussions of corpse poems, see Diana Fuss, *Dying Modern: A Meditation on Elegy* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2013).
- ²¹ It may be argued that reading 'with the grain' (see Bewes) should not include studying an ethical relationship to a reader. Yet, for some readers, lyric intimacy automatically involves ethics – as part of an ideological, if not an historical, location. Indeed, a reader may, in fact, be most drawn to those writers whose ethics speak directly to her or him.
- ²² Helen Vendler, *Invisible Listeners: Lyric Intimacy in Herbert, Whitman, and Ashbery* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 7.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Memoir*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), vol. 2, pp. 366–67.
- ²⁶ Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'The Passing of Arthur', in *Idylls of the King*, in Christopher Ricks, ed., *The Poems of Tennyson*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), Vol 3, pp. 547–61.
- ²⁷ <www.bible.com/bible/1/1CO.13.kjv>
- ²⁸ Tennyson, 'In Memoriam', in Ricks, ed., *Poems of Tennyson*, Vol. 2, p. 373.
- ²⁹ Unmaking his literary fame is a rhetorical gesture as much as a poetic one. In linking his own art to that of Shakespeare, Hardy pays tribute; yet it is also clear that he supports a type of privacy, and that he hopes his own poetry will last.
- ³⁰ Vendler, *Invisible Listeners*, p. 7.
- ³¹ John Paul Riquelme, 'The Modernity of Hardy's Poetry', in Dale Kramer, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 221.

HARDY GETTING OUT OF ...

FRANCIS O’GORMAN

When Pamela Dalziel and Michael Millgate published, from Oxford University Press, *Thomas Hardy’s ‘Poetical Matter’ Notebook* in 2009, the Press boldly reproduced the cover of the original as the cover of the edition.¹ Buyers purchasing this fascinating collection of notes, often the germs for poems later ‘worked up’, see, first of all, the daunting words of Hardy himself at the top of the cover: ‘This Book to be destroyed, | uncopied, at my death, | T.H.’. The act of purchasing, let alone of reading, is, under the unignorable clarity of these words that have been ignored, turned into something that feels like violation – like Louis overhearing the conversation between Swithin and the Bishop in *Two on a Tower* (1882). Our reading is an intrusion. John Stuart Mill, in ‘What is Poetry?’ (1833), thought about rhetoric as that which was heard and poetry that which was over-heard. But here is something, so to speak, that should not be heard.

Reading Dalziel and Millgate’s exemplary edition we come face to face with an ethical dilemma. It is not one peculiar to Hardy, for sure. The failure of executors to destroy papers though directed to by a will is, however awkward, not an uncommon practice – and scholars, readers, and biographers have much reason to be grateful for this. But it seems to me that opening Hardy’s *‘Poetical Matter’ Notebook* (which actually is based on microfilm copies of a now lost manuscript) provokes an interestingly Hardy-esque experience, or at least an experience in which Hardy might have been interested. Reading this book, we know that we are in contact with that which, in a literal sense, Hardy wanted to get out of. He did not, certainly, want the document to be part of his identity after his death. It was a book of his own notes; his preparation for poems. But he did not want anyone, it seems, to understand too much about his method of composition (his ‘experimenting’ on material, as he phrased it, to see if it could be made into verse). This was a document revealing something of the creative method in a way of which, it might be, Hardy was mildly ashamed (‘don’t find out how some of my poems began’). This was a literary method to be – at least supposedly – hidden forever on Hardy’s death in contrast to Anthony Trollope’s, which was only to be revealed on his death.

The cover of OUP's excellent edition is suggestive in itself. And it is also a prompt to think more generally about the fact of escape, evasion, avoidance, and diverted narratives in Hardy's writing – and his life. Hardy, I think, was absorbed by the complexities of getting out of things: of being free from histories, free from people, or free from the responsibilities of conforming to an expectation. A peculiarly stratified example to start with is *Jude the Obscure* (1895). At one level, this is most obviously a novel about trying to get *into* something. Jude's ambition for entry to Christminster is the propelling driver of the first half of the plot. Where Hardy felt himself entering a higher class of society in marrying Emma in 1874, he imaginatively re-works that defining fact – the plot of the lost first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady*² is recast throughout his career – in Jude's hope to become an undergraduate. The 'lady' to be courted here is, for once, not an actual woman but a university. Looking over the landscape to the distant forms of Christminster, Hardy's narrator spells out the nature of Jude's desire to belong. 'Jude continued his walk homeward alone', we read, 'pondering so deeply that he forgot to feel timid. He suddenly grew older. It had been the yearning of his heart to find something to anchor on, to cling to – for some place which he could call admirable' (*JO*: 49).³ Christminster is, so Jude at this point imagines, that place. This is a longing to go somewhere, to belong somewhere else. And it is also more evidently, perhaps, a longing to leave somewhere else behind. Hardy's language of ambition is about departing as much as it is about obtaining.

But Hardy's interest in *Jude* in the complexities of desires to belong and not to belong go further than this. For what he next stages in his doomed hero's life is the encounter with Arabella. She throws a barrow pig's penis at him – something that has been 'got out' of the pig though from which nothing fertile could be 'got out' of (a barrow pig is, of course, a castrated one). It is a missile not only of sexual provocation ('prove to me that you're more than a castrated penis') as much as it is a taunt about establishing a legacy – of belonging, of having heirs, a stable family line. Here, in terms of my topic, is the moment in the early stages of *Jude* when Jude's ambitions to get out of his current life and enter what the wind tells him are the 'happy' precincts of Christminster is troubled.

It would be easy to think that Hardy stages Arabella as the temptress who mischievously diverts the hero from his intentions – that she is, with all her sexual charisma, the obstacle. Arabella, we might suppose, is the agent that forces Jude out of what he does not want to be out of.

Initially, indeed, that is exactly what we are told. ‘The unvoiced call of woman to man’, the narrator remarks, ‘which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella’s personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention’ (*JO*: 64). His ‘intention’: Hardy dramatizes a moment in which, so it seems, a woman gets in the way of a man’s commitment to better himself. Arabella’s sheer sexiness, it appears, is a blight to Jude because her attractions are so powerful. And yet Hardy’s narrative is subtler than this. For what holds the novelist’s imagination is not merely a man deflected by thoughts of sex. It is also a man surprised to find that the original desire had not been enough, or not the only desire worth attention. Jude, we are told, as he sees Arabella, had ‘inhaled a single breath from a new atmosphere’ (*JO*: 65). The experience is oxygenating not stifling and shortly it becomes more than that. Hardy presents a psychology that is not merely tempted but extended:

He [Jude] saw this with his intellectual eye, just for a short, fleeting while, as by the light of a falling lamp one might momentarily see an inscription on a wall before being enshrouded in darkness. And then this passing discriminative power was withdrawn, and Jude was lost to all conditions of things in the advent of a fresh and wild pleasure, that of having found a new channel for emotional interest hitherto unsuspected, though it had lain close beside him. (*JO*: 65)

At one level, there is foreboding here. An inscription on a wall, for instance, might remind the reader of what Belshazzar read – an allusion made directly in Chapter 25 of *The Woodlanders* (1887). Yet here, in Hardy’s wording, is also a kind of Keatsian moment – Keats reading Chapman, I mean – where a figurative new planet swims into Jude’s ken. A ‘new channel’ opens up, an emotion ‘unsuspected’. Jude, plainly, is falling in love – or at least is sexually attracted to a woman. But he is also getting out again. He is finding the unexpected pleasures of not doing what he thought he should be doing. Hardy will imagine Jude getting out more dramatically, later, by drinking heavily and then by burning his books. But in this moment, the novelist seems subtly to invite us to think about the pleasures – the ‘fresh and wild pleasures’ – of not doing what we said we would, thought we would, or were somehow meant to.

Hardy fashions in *Jude* a narrative of a man in the grip of an imagined alternative life. This concept, persistently present in psychoanalytical comprehensions of how we narrate ourselves in reality, is that which the British psychoanalyst Adam Phillips so aptly describes in *Missing*

Out: In Praise of the Unlived Life (2012). For Phillips, the missed-out-on narrative is of permanent allure in many human explanations of what is wrong with us. Phillips points out just how frequently men and women construct narratives of their lives, and the disarray of those lives, in terms of what they could have had but did not (for this reason or that) or in terms of who they – we – might have been ‘if only ...’. Such narratives of ‘what might have been’ do complex psychic work. They might, for instance, articulate a genuine or at least a partial truth about the perceived shape of lives (if Jude were a real person we could imagine him saying: ‘if my school teacher hadn’t left to go to Oxford I might have stayed where I was and not have had a life spoilt by an ambition that was unrealistic’). But ‘if only’ narratives in actual lives can also provide a kind of evasion, an opportunity to enjoy the consolations of what ‘I might have been’ without the actual responsibilities of having been it. ‘I would have been a barrister if I had been taught better at school’ might conceivably have an element of truth in it. But it might have a good deal more fiction. Such narratives, as Phillips engagingly demonstrates, allow us to experience the pleasures of an unlived life that, most likely, we could not have lived anyway but can enjoy, and make use of, in their absence.

What is particularly interesting about *Jude the Obscure* in this sense is that it is not only Jude who has a desire to get out of where he is now. It is also Thomas Hardy. Hardy’s convictions, as expressed in *The Life of Thomas Hardy (1840–1928)* (1928–30), published under Florence’s name, included the fact that poetry had really been his first calling from the beginning. But, needing an income, not least as a married man, Hardy found fiction a more profitable way of making a career as a writer and keeping food on the table. After establishing his name as a novelist – the last of the great Victorian novelists as Somerset Maugham would imagine him in *Cakes and Ale: Or, The Skeleton in the Cupboard* (1930)⁴ – Hardy, as the *Life* frames it, turned willingly back to poetry. This return was, as it is presented there, a kind of return to a first love, a re-visitation of an unlived life that could actually now be lived. (It is, incidentally, notable that Hardy’s fascination with ‘getting out of’ included getting out of the responsibility for telling his own life story under his own name.) ‘Hardy the poet’ was not a fictive figure who provided an imaginary consolation but a real one. ‘Hardy the poet’ was an unlived life that was, unusually, liveable and, in fact, had privately been lived for a very long time.

Hardy in *Jude* narrates the story of a man getting out. But Hardy himself, describing years later the reception of the novel in the *Life*,

fashions a narrative in such a way as to try to explain, or at least give a cover-story for, Hardy's efforts to get out of fiction. Hardy was pleased, in the *Life*, to signify that the apparent critical storm over *Jude* was a reason to give up novels because the critics were still not ready for his views. Hardy presents, as I have discussed in another place,⁵ the alleged burning of a copy of *Jude* by William Walsham How (1823–97), then Bishop of Wakefield. This allegation (a burning on a domestic fire suspiciously alight in June) is, I think, the sharpest example, and probably invented, of the hostility that Hardy wants us to believe finally made him pack fiction in. '[It] appeared that, further,' Hardy remarks, documenting the disputes around *Jude*:

—to quote the testimony in the Bishop's *Life*—the scandalised prelate was not ashamed to deal a blow below the belt, but 'took an envelope out of his paper-stand and addressed it to W.F.D. Smith, Esq., M.P. The result was the quiet withdrawal of the book from the library, and an assurance that any other books by the same author would be carefully examined before they were allowed to be circulated[.]'⁶

My argument, made in that other piece, is that this is an unlikely story, and part of the texture of what are probably fictions told about *Jude* by its own author. Certainly, if the Smith narrative has empirical truth, it does not refer to *Jude* nor, probably, to Hardy at all. My general point has been that Hardy was retrospectively re-narrating criticism of his novel in order to divert attention from his private desire to move on from fiction anyway. And in order to create the illusion that others were to blame. A novel about a man musing in layered ways about what he wants to get out of, *Jude* is a text by a novelist who was also, silently, musing on the same difficult and, potentially, life-changing question.

Hardy's account of sexual relations in *Jude* might readily make one think that part of the cryptic emotional involvement of the author in a plot of 'getting-out-of' concerned getting out of marriage. And this is obliquely about the writer too. Hardy's marriage to Emma had, in its last years, deteriorated to such an extent that both husband and wife must have persistently wondered whether there was any way of relieving their situation. The grimmest part of the marriage plot in *Jude* is the decision of Sue to return to Phillotson and to allow him to have sex with her. Marriage here is figured as against nature, a form of mental torture. That Hardy was able imaginatively to conceive of a man, and reveal him in a novel, ready to have sex with a woman whom he knew was physically

repulsed by him suggests the depth to which *Jude* is a story born, at one level, simply from a distorted shock about the mess marriage can get people into: a mess transformed here into psychological awfulness. That dreadful moment, to me an almost unreadable scene in *Jude*, can only have come from a man whose imagination had acquired, or been compelled into, a strange and discomfiting relish for the cruel. It must have been a torment for Emma to have read *Jude*, if read it she really did. In her attic apartment at Max Gate, writing the journal on ‘What I think of my Husband’,⁷ Emma can only have wondered what it was that she had got herself into – or Hardy had got her into.

For Hardy himself, the emotional and literary demands, and their consequences, of getting out of things seem to me to be at their most complicated when Emma is the topic. And the climax of the psychic-literary business of feeling, as well as representing or disclosing, the meanings of escape on which I am reflecting here is after Emma’s unexpected death at Max Gate on 27 November 1912. It is in her husband’s ‘Poems of 1912–13’, published first in *Satires of Circumstance, Lyrics and Reveries with Miscellaneous Pieces* (1914), that ‘getting out’ takes on a remarkably plural set of meanings.⁸ One of those meanings is stark and raw. ‘Poems of 1912–13’ is in one very obvious sense about a getting-out-of: Emma has died. She has got out of life – and in a manner that is consistent, Hardy tells us, with her familiar way of literally going out. ‘It was your way, my dear,’ he writes in ‘Without Ceremony’, nicely punning on ‘way’ as at once a habit and a route, a custom and a path:

It was your way, my dear,
To vanish without a word
When callers, friends, or kin
Had left, and I hastened in
To rejoin you, as I inferred.

(SC: 104)

Emma had not got out of her habit of going out. She died as she had left – without notice. Usually, the poet’s act of ‘rejoining’ found only an absence, when Emma had left to ‘career | Off anywhere’ (SC: 104). But for all those unexpected vanishings, there was at least a return (though whether any meaningful ‘rejoining’ between husband and wife is another matter). The final act of ‘Going’ – to use the title of the first poem – is exceptional: a woman who persistently left without pre-announcement has now left permanently. And as so often with the suggestibility of Hardy’s language in these poems, it is hard to avoid thinking about

the language of 'going' in relation to religion.⁹ The participle invites a thought about Hardy's agnostic sense of where, in death, Emma has gone permanently *to*.¹⁰ He had carved on her tombstone, after all, nothing more promising of a future than: 'THIS IN REMEMBRANCE'. The theological gap in 'Without Ceremony' reminds us of the limits of the modern elegy to reassure, for the analogy between Emma going off, '— say to town—' (SC: 104), breaks down when she dies. Hardy's poem can say nothing about where she has gone — assuming for a moment that there remains after death a 'she' to go anywhere.

'Poems of 1912–13' faces, square on, a narrative of withdrawal, of someone 'getting out' in the most extreme sense. But Hardy's absorption with getting out — or, perhaps, my absorption with Hardy getting out — is more than this. For Emma's getting out is also, uncomfortably for the poet, a release, even a relief, for Hardy himself. Literature, as well as psychoanalysis, has almost nothing to say about what cannot be an entirely mythical phenomenon, a happy marriage. What might such a thing look like — be constituted by? We are remarkably impoverished in our languages to describe, with integrity, a happy relationship. How might an outsider, let alone an insider, know what such a thing is made up of? (This, incidentally, is one of the many thought-provoking questions posed by another British psychoanalyst, Darian Leader, in his *Why Women Write More Letters than they Post?* (1996)). But these are not questions for Hardy in 1912. 'Poems of 1912–13' belongs, however subtly, within that enormous corpus — both literary and psychoanalytical — of writing about the far more familiar concept, the unhappy marriage (a state that Hardy, of course, did peculiar work in making visible in his fiction matched only, perhaps, by George Gissing in this period). When Sue tells Jude, after the death of their children, that "'I *mustn't* — I *can't* go on with this!'" (JO: 395), she speaks some words that Emma, as she retreated to her attic rooms, might well have said, perhaps even literally. Hardy's bitterness about what he makes Jude call the 'clumsy contract' surfaces most obviously in his last written novel. But what about in the 'Emma poems' from *Satires of Circumstance*? A first question might be, then, to ask what it could look like, in the first place, to try to write elegiac poetry for someone with whom one had, let us say merely, no easy relationship? What does the elegy of equivocation look like?

A first answer might be to turn not to Hardy but to Yeats. 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory' commemorates Lady Gregory's son, whose plane was widely believed to have been shot down in an incident of

so-called ‘friendly fire’ above Padua on 23 January 1918.¹¹ But the poem remembers a man about whom Yeats had some doubts. For Lady Gregory, his close friend and ally, Yeats, publishing the poem in *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1917), nevertheless endeavoured to be kind. But the elegy is evasive (and its allusion to Dryden contains a sour implied rebuke). ‘In Memory of Major Robert Gregory’ is, in essence, a set of reflections on the companions of Yeats’ own youth, brought together in a poem as if to some actual party or social gathering. But when Yeats might have thought himself needing to speak more thoroughly of Gregory himself – figuratively to introduce him more thoroughly to the others in the party – the poet is saved from insincerity by the rhetorical device of ἀποσιώπησις, *aposiopesis*: the breaking-off of speech under the (in this case, apparent) strain of emotion: ‘I had thought’, Yeats says:

seeing how bitter is that wind
That shakes the shutter, to have brought to mind
All those that manhood tried, or childhood loved
Or boyish intellect approved,
With some appropriate commentary on each;
Until imagination brought
A fitter welcome; but a thought
Of that late death took all my heart for speech.¹²

At one level Yeats means simply that the remembrance of Gregory’s death overwhelms him so that he cannot say any more. But secreted in those last words is the possibility that Yeats, remembering he must now say something more about the dead man, is aware that he cannot in all conscience do very much. Yeats, overcome by a velleity, has got himself out of a responsibility to a grieving mother, and elegy has deftly got out of what might have been imagined as one of its principal and defining purposes.

Hardy, apparently writing elegies, gets out differently. His fundamental struggle, in ‘Poems of 1912–13’, is that between avoiding being candid about the failure of the marriage and being untruthful by presenting only affection or grief. What we read in turn is poetry negotiating between, and trying to get out of, both of these positions. The result is the peculiarly vacillating, peculiarly ‘in tension’, poetry of mixed feelings. If single-mindedness is of no use to a poet in general, Hardy’s ‘Poems of 1912–13’ is a distinctively visible version of what poetry looks like when it starts from division. The opening sentence of the first poem (‘The Going’) is characteristically surprising, if, looking at a group of poems on a dead

spouse, what we expect to find is grief at loss. The opening traffics with the hostile; a written act of blaming. 'Why', Hardy begins, as if annoyed that his wife has taken upon herself the decision to die without telling him,

did you give no hint that night
That quickly after the morrow's dawn,
And calmly, as if indifferent quite,
You would close your term here, up and be gone
Where I could not follow
With wing of swallow
To gain one glimpse of you ever anon!

(SC: 95)

As I have already said, Hardy was to resolve this question a little later, at least at a superficial level, by reminding himself that Emma was in the habit of leaving without notice anyway. But, here, Hardy's mode, and mood, is fissured. The first four lines are bothered. What Hardy is referring to is the fact he had not been able to say good-bye that early morning in Max Gate and that he had not taken Emma's apparently non-serious indisposition seriously enough. Yet his phrasing, with its tattoo of monosyllables, has a hint of the irritated not at himself, or fate, or the doctor – but at Emma. And, in the stanza's middle, there is that distracting statement, 'up and be gone', as if Hardy's poetry cannot completely avoid expressing fragments of a desire to be out of the marriage, to be somewhere else, to be with a different, happier, or *earlier* Emma – or perhaps simply alone.

What we have is not Yeats's strategy: we have Hardy regretting Emma's death by regretting the manner of it, somehow diverting his mixed feelings into a curious complaint. More often, Hardy's diversions involve the statement of a desire to be in an earlier condition of emotion, at least as it is reconceived or claimed to be remembered many years later. That was certainly the guilty evasion of Hardy's choice of words on the wreath for his dead wife. 'From her Lonely Husband,' he wrote, scrupulously avoiding the term 'widower', 'with the Old Affection'.¹³ These are words that say more about the husband than the wife. They try to persuade us of Hardy's desire to get out of the present and go back to former feelings but in the certain knowledge that such a thing is impossible. Hardy's words on the surface want to get out of the present – but they are also silently confident that the poet need do nothing of the sort because it is too late. An alternative life here is one that Hardy does not have the responsibility of having to live, or live up to. The lonely

widower does not have really to try to return to old feelings but can simply say in public, even literally on Emma's coffin, that he has.

And then there is the final line of 'Your Last Drive'. This is a curious poem of 'what didn't happen', recounting Emma's journey in a hired car past Stinsford Church where shortly she was to lie. She does not know this, of course, and as Hardy is not with her he cannot see his wife, as the poem puts it, not knowing that she was soon to die. Emma when dead comprehends, as the agnostic Hardy figures it, nothing. She belongs with what Plato's Socrates in *The Defence* describes when he, Socrates, presents death as the best, because completely untroubled, sleep. 'You are', Hardy says, spelling something of this unconsciousness out, 'past love, praise, indifference, blame' (SC: 98). At one level, this is getting in. Hardy is not escaping the presence of disagreement in his marriage: the fact that indifference and blame haunted them at the end remain preserved now in this statement of what Emma can no longer feel or be subject to. Hostility is not hidden. And Philip Mallett makes the powerful suggestion that we should attend here to the unspoken fifth term in a line that pivots on 'indifference', placing opposites on either side of it. 'Praise' is contrasted with 'blame': but what 'love' is contrasted with is tactfully avoided to all but the reader alert to the antonym's absence.¹⁴ This is the syntax of equivocation, or rather of contrary feelings. Even without that missing 'hate', the reader feels the poet's challenge in trying to deal with a poetic task that is not straightforward: how to write a poem to Emma that is not merely commemorative and not merely a getting out of a truth. 'Your Last Drive' is, one might say, a poem that makes one wonder if – as with Yeats and Robert Gregory – Hardy somehow would have liked to have got out of having to write it. Here is a poem that bespeaks something of how difficult it is to represent unhappy circumstances and the close of what had become an unhappy marriage which Hardy is now, awkwardly, out of.

These poems, remembering Hardy and Emma's unhappiness, take the reader off on unexpected and distracting tracks as the poet tries to get out of being either wholly truthful or wholly untruthful. One way is, at least to my ear, formally. Hardy's poetic forms can surprise us with a certain sense of dislocation, just as in the novels word-choice can surprise too, with a certain sense of mismatch. Yet the mismatch of form with sense in some of the 'Poems of 1912–13' might help, strange to say, Hardy to face – or rather get out of facing – a different kind of mismatch: that between his wife and himself. The verbal practices I describe here are not by any

means unique to ‘Poems of 1912–13’ but they do particularly suggestive work in that volume nevertheless. There is a thought-provoking example in the stanza from ‘The Going’, considered earlier. Emma has vanished, Hardy says, to ‘Where I could not follow | With wing of swallow’. The shorter lines and the prominent, even protruding, rhyme draw attention to themselves and we grasp form – the chiming of words – before we can free ourselves to consider sense. And it is a peculiar sense too – a distracting mental image of Hardy as a one-winged swallow, pursuing Emma into the ethereal, or wherever it is she has got out to. But the point is that the change from the implied language of blame to that of obtrusive chiming, to almost sing-song rhyme and rhythm, suddenly takes the reader down a different path, distracting him or her from the emotional work of the beginning and end of the stanza – its blaming and its missing. The ‘follow’/‘swallow’ lines, and their equivalents in the remaining stanzas, set us for a moment at a distance from the poem’s feelings and, more particularly, the poet’s feelings about Emma.

But form more richly ‘gets in the way’, or helps Hardy ‘get out of’, in a later poem of ‘1912–13’: ‘The Lament’. This is a title that, as far as English forms are concerned, is a surprise, because Hardy’s poem is notably successful in moving the reader on from an emotional sense of lament – of mourning, melancholy, grief, for example – into artifice. (Absorption into artifice is, as it happens, better known as Yeats’s aspiration in ‘Sailing to Byzantium’ (1928).) ‘The Lament’ might be regarded as another poem of ‘getting out of’, since form, and the reader’s consciousness of it, functions as a kind of emotional exit-route. The first stanza:

How she would have loved
 A party to-day!—
 Bright-hatted and gloved,
 With table and tray
 And chairs on the lawn
 Her smiles would have shone
 With welcomings. ... But
 She is shut, she is shut
 From friendship’s spell
 In the jailing shell
 Of her tiny cell.

(SC: 105)

Again, the language is divided. And the uses of division, to borrow John Bayley’s term,¹⁵ in these poems have to do with Hardy’s consciousness

of his own divided feelings in mourning Emma. Emma's clothes were, to start somewhere straightforward, a cause for remark. 'Bright-hatted and gloved' sounds innocent but Hardy knew he was writing about a topic that was not altogether comfortable. Emma's choice of clothes caused much, not always approving, comment. Nevertheless, the first portion manages what is offered to us as an affectionate memory: 'she would have liked a party'. Yet how curious the *volta* is, the turn of the stanza to a triplet of short lines (four, five, and five syllables) each with the same masculine rhyme. What the ear discerns here first is form, acoustic patterning, and, again, something of the sing-song. It is a strange direction to take in what might be expected to be elegiac – or if not elegiac then at least nostalgic. These chiming lines, and their equivalent in each of the other three stanzas, take us away from the feelings we might assume the poems would conjure with: grief, sorrow, loss. It is as if Hardy is, to an extent, achieving the equivalent of Yeats in 'In Memory of Major Robert Gregory' with the *aposiopesis*: he is getting out of an emotional situation *through* poetry. William Empson's ambiguity of the fifth type concerned the poet working to a gradual realisation of what he or she wanted to say, the slow uncovering of connections in a poem he or she did not initially appreciate were there. But Hardy's diversion is necessitated more by what the poet realises are there and would prefer that they weren't: divided feelings.

Hardy's ambiguities are elsewhere. When, in 'Beeny Cliff, March 1870-March 1913', he describes the 'woman whom I loved so, and who loyally loved me' (SC: 119), the attentive reader might wonder what work the past tense 'whom I loved so' was doing. Was the tense simply marking the fact that Emma was no more? Or did it also admit that Hardy's early love had waned? And what is that 'loyally' doing in the line: 'who loyally loved me'. 'I love you' is a different proposition from 'I loyally love you' for the second suggests that love is tested; that there are things going wrong which require endurance or determination. Hardy's 'loyally' admits, it might be, that loving Hardy was no easy business. (Matthew Arnold confesses a different version of the same problem in 'A Farewell' (published 1852): 'this heart,' Arnold sadly says, 'I know | To be long lov'd was never fram'd'.¹⁶) Equivocating words like 'loyally' permit the reader to sense the story that Hardy would have been pleased to get out of: the story of a marriage that didn't work.

Later verses of 'Poems of 1912-13' take another approach to that same story, the one implied by Hardy's note on the wreath. Hardy's

returns in the later poems are to the early days of his relationship with Emma Gifford and the landscapes they knew: Beeny Cliff, 'Castle Boterel' (Boscastle), Saint-Juliot, 'Vallency Valley' (Valency Valley). He steps out of time, back in memory to that moment of prospect, when both Hardy and Emma were young, and, as he observes in 'After a Journey', when 'Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers' (*SC*: 116). In one sense, such a memory undertakes simple therapeutic work: it enables Hardy to get out of his memory of when days were not a joy. It replaces, or tries to, the mixed feelings of recent years with the happier memory of the past. In another sense, though, even the acknowledgement of a time when 'Our days were a joy' implies Hardy has not quite got out of the present enough. Memory is only needed because recent times were miserable. And is it, at a more local level, too suspicious to wonder about that plural 'paths'? Certainly, 'our path through flowers' would have suggested a closer, more intimate past. But it seems that even in the salad days the young couple were plural, travelling along separate routes. Hardy offers us something different from Freud. It is not the past that keeps coming back here. It is the present.

'Poems of 1912–13' is a volume caught up with efforts to get out. And the final poem of Hardy's collection – in the last arrangement of 'Poems 1912–13' – leaves the reader with an image that gains its power precisely because it is the opposite of all of this. The last gesture of Hardy's volume of 'getting out of' poetry endeavours to get out of everything I have so far been describing. 'Where the Picnic Was' reads like this:

Where we made the fire
In the summer time
Of branch and briar
On the hill to the sea,
I slowly climb
Through winter mire,
And scan and trace
The forsaken place
Quite readily.

Now a cold wind blows,
And the grass is gray,
But the spot still shows
As a burnt circle—aye,
And stick-ends, charred,
Still strew the sward
Whereon I stand,

Last relic of the band
Who came that day!

Yes, I am here
Just as last year,
And the sea breathes brine
From its strange straight line
Up hither, the same
As when we four came.

—But two have wandered far
From this grassy rise
Into urban roar
Where no picnics are,
And one—has shut her eyes
For evermore.¹⁷

Hardy's Virgilian epigraph for 'Poems of 1912–13', 'Veteris vestigia flammae' (SC: 93) – Dido feeling 'the traces of an old flame' in encountering not Aeneas but her husband in the underworld – is ironically, painfully, materialised in this last poem. The old flame, literally the remains of the picnic fire from a year ago, has died. And the extinguished heat lingers in the poem as, it might be, an uncomfortable metaphor, a final answer to Dido, and a distressing emblem of an extinct marriage. The damaged grass is confirmation that, for all Hardy's attempts to get out of remembering the troubles of his life with Emma – and Emma's troubles with him – the material reminder of the now cold ashes is the reality of quenched love, the memory of which he cannot escape. In a sequence absorbed by getting out, a final meaning about Hardy's marriage is handed, with the volume's most notable moment of candour rather than vacillation, to that which has all too literally gone out.

All those with him on that picnic have, Hardy points out, gone away. Emma has 'shut her eyes | For evermore': life is no longer. And the two unnamed friends have got out not of life but, less dramatically, out of the countryside, 'Into urban roar | Where no picnics are'. They have left the rural scene of loss for modernity – as Sue Bridehead does and, in a sense, at least in her modern secular ideas learnt from Clare, Tess does too. What remains around the old picnic site in Hardy's poem is only the poet himself. It is an odd, though real, kind of heroic fortitude. He declares at the end of a collection intrigued by efforts to get out of things, the plainest grammatical sign not of getting out. That is, of simply being present, despite things: 'I am here'. There is no willed effort to

make away, to change the story, to hope something different could have happened. Rather, here is Hardy feeling himself left, in what Sir Frank Kermode would call the *middest*,¹⁸ the experienced moment, mapping his own life as best he can against that which painful experience has revealed or has simply been.

The psychic work of thinking about alternative lives, or of trying to make an alternative history of one's life, no longer appears available to Hardy at the end of 'Poems 1912–13'. He is left, so it seems, without the comforts or psychic compensations, or psychic rebukes, of something different from what was, literally, being alone in his own life.

And yet ...

Might this moment – the narrated aloneness of 'Where the Picnic Was' – reveal something important about the relationship of the self to what is presented of that self? Does Hardy offer his readers at the end not a 'conclusion' but simply a different version of another side to his life? Is he permitting us to see something of the plurality of whom he conceives himself to be, or wants us to conceive him to be, and more of the narrative obligations that such plurality requires? There is no real reason to think of the sequence of 'Poems 1912–13' as a *series*: as a 'development' or emotional plot imposed on time. James Booth valuably observes that there is *rhetorical* development – a kind of check-list of different rhetorical structures in the ghost poems, for instance.¹⁹ But who knows for sure that there is a psychological one? We do not necessarily see 'growth' or 'coming through' here though might accidentally think we do. It is, perhaps, psychically more credible to see these poems as revealing Hardy's constructions of facets of the same mind; a mind that, although of necessity expressed in a temporal sequence, is not merely reducible to a story or a scheme.

Certainly, it is confusing to regard 'Where the Picnic Was' as somehow the 'conclusion' of 'Poems of 1912–13', the resting place of a narrative of supposed development, an 'answer' to the impulses of 'getting out' that the previous poems have presented. What we have, if we decline the narrative of development, is another one of Hardy's selves and one that, it turns out, is still intrigued – despite appearances – by the lure, the necessity, of getting out. The last, sad lyric of 'Poems of 1912–13' is actually, though one might think the opposite at first, another way of escape. This time Hardy, in 'Where the Picnic Was', makes an attempt to get out of nothing less than narratives of getting out. He offers himself, alone, looking at a patch of burnt grass. He invites us to acknowledge

his own ‘thereness’. Hardy isn’t out there, but here. So being, the poet has momentarily presented himself as having got out of the attractions of evasion simply by asserting his presence, albeit far too late for him to do anything for Emma. Yet this is not a ‘conclusion’. Hardy appears to be doing something new in the last poem. But really what he is doing is yet another version of what he has been doing throughout the volume: here is another side to a habit not an end to it.

Thomas Hardy, even at the end, has not got out of the attraction of the ‘out’ at all.

NOTES

This article began as a lecture, ‘Hardy getting out of ...’, at the 50th Thomas Hardy Society Conference in United Church, South Street, Dorchester, on 19 July 2018. I am grateful to Professor Jane Thomas for asking me speak and to all those delegates who generously shared ideas and knowledge with me afterwards, including Dr Catherine Charlwood and Professor Roger Ebbatson, and those specifically thanked in the notes below. I would also like to thank Professor Dinah Birch, the late Professor Jon Stallworthy, and Kate Williams.

¹ See <<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/thomas-hardys-poetical-matter-notebook-9780199228492?cc=gb&lang=en&>>, last accessed 20 July 2018.

² Written in 1867 and not published. The MS is lost.

³ All quotations from *Jude the Obscure* are to the ‘New Wessex’ edition, General Editor P.N. Furbank (London: Macmillan, 1974), which has been made digitally available (and fully searchable) on <https://archive.org/stream/judeobscure01hard/judeobscure01hard_djvu.txt>, last accessed 23 July 2018.

⁴ I side-step here the fact that Somerset Maugham denied that Hardy was the model for Edward Driffield.

⁵ See Francis O’Gorman, ‘Thomas Hardy and the Bishop of Wakefield’, *Notes & Queries*, 61 (2014), 86–9.

⁶ ‘Florence Hardy’, *The Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840–1928*, two volumes in one (London: Studio, 1994), Vol. 2, p. 48.

⁷ Hardy got out of this too: he burned the journal after discovering it following Emma’s death.

⁸ All in-text references to ‘Poems of 1912–13’ are taken from this edition of *Satires of Circumstance*, published in London by Macmillan.

⁹ There is some brief consideration of this in relation to the postures of elegy in Jahan Ramazani, ‘Hardy and the Poetics of Melancholia: “Poems of 1912–13” and Other Elegies for Emma’, *ELH*, 58 (1991), 957–77.

¹⁰ Hardy and religion has been much thought about. A particularly fresh consideration is by Stephen Platten (as it happens, formerly Bishop of Wakefield) in Stephen Platten, “‘They Know Earth Secrets’: Thomas Hardy’s Tortured Vocation”, *Religion & Literature*, 45 (2013), 59–79.

¹¹ There are some grounds for believing that Gregory died in a ‘flying accident’ that was not understood at the time to be related to ‘friendly fire’.

¹² In Peter Allt and Russell King Alspach, eds., *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W.B. Yeats* (London: Macmillan, 1957), pp. 327–8. Variants are only a few minor punctuation changes.

¹³ See Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 447.

¹⁴ This observation was generously shared with me at the end of my talk.

¹⁵ See John Bayley, *The Uses of Division: Unity and Disharmony in Literature* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1976).

¹⁶ Kenneth Allott and Miriam Allott, eds., *The Poems of Matthew Arnold* (London: Longman, 1979), p. 132. Note that I have restored Arnold’s original contractions (<lov’d>, etc), removed in Longman Annotated Poets’ house style.

¹⁷ Thomas Hardy, *The Complete Poems* (New Wessex Edition), ed. James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 357–8.

¹⁸ A term particularly important to *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

¹⁹ This observation was generously shared with me at the end of my talk.

HARDY'S GOTHIC LENS: *TWO ON A TOWER* AND THE POST-DARWINIAN SUBLIME

RACHEL LOUISE MACE

In his 1985 essay 'Gothic Sublimity' David B. Morris identifies the differing principles of the eighteenth-century sublime, which he argues is 'fundamentally affective and pictorial', and the Romantic sublime which he deems 'fundamentally hermeneutic and visionary'.¹ He suggests that although the philosophy of the sublime, famously detailed in Edmund Burke's 1757 book *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, has previously been applied to analyses of Romantic texts, the Gothic presented a 'significant revision of the eighteenth-century sublime'.² What Morris's essay established was an intrinsic link between the Gothic novel, the philosophy that underpins the sublime, and the literary construction of terror that he surmises is the 'ruling principle of the sublime'.³ Whilst previous eighteenth-century definitions of the sublime focused on aspects of the natural world that invoked terror in humankind (such as expansive oceans or colossal mountain ranges), nineteenth-century perceptions of nature had progressed beyond this relatively simplistic view of the universe. Due to advances in the scientific study of nature, notably Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), the need to revise the critical approach to Gothic texts, or texts with Gothic elements, in relation to the sublime, by considering the period in which they were published, becomes necessary. This is particularly important with regard to texts published after Burke's *Enquiry* that experiment with the idea of the sublime, but in which terror is informed by later theory and criticism. In this essay, I will examine Hardy's *Two on a Tower* (1882) by exploring the significance of astronomy in this novel, and establishing the ways in which optical gadgetry such as the telescope shapes Hardy's representation of nature and the universe. Specifically, I aim to demonstrate that in Hardy's novel the perceiving eye as, or through, a lens is used as a mode of identifying sublimity that establishes a new form of terror, derived from the supposed necessity of determining 'truth' in an image. This desire for truth was influenced by Darwin's revelation that humankind possessed little control over the universe and that 'natural Selection produced an organization in which

the human had no separate or central place'.⁴ Therefore, methods of gaining a deeper understanding of nature as an independent force were beginning to be explored and were then translated into post-Darwinian literature and culture. In Hardy's novel, the lens of the telescope becomes a means of observation that simultaneously extends the possibility of observing nature and increases the viewer's own awareness of their apparent inferiority and/or mortality against the sublime backdrop of the universe.

In a more recent study of the sublime, Ann C. Colley examines public perceptions of the sublime 'during the second half of the nineteenth century', arguing that it 'was still very much a factor to be reckoned with' because society was still fascinated by anything that might, and often did, generate fear as a form of entertainment.⁵ For instance, Colley notes that the sublime was 'not only dependent on terror', much like the Gothic novel, but also 'produce[d] delight or a feeling of exhilaration for the individual released from his or her earthly limits'.⁶ However, Colley's suggestion that literary and public interpretation/declarations that explicitly identify with the sublime had begun to 'slip into a careless colloquial mode', seems too reductive.⁷ So too does the statement that 'the concept of the sublime seemed to be in the ascendancy' and 'was losing its power' by gradually 'sliding toward the commonplace, even toward the ludicrous'.⁸ Colley's comments specifically address late-Victorian perceptions of mountains and mountaineering, and she cites a wealth of evidence to support this interpretation. Yet, she does not consider the ways in which the Romantic sublime had evolved from its foundations in eighteenth-century philosophy and/or interpretations of nature, into a mid- to late-nineteenth-century literary and philosophical exploration of the natural world and the wider universe that relied as much on scientific advances as on aesthetics.

During the mid-nineteenth century writers such as John Ruskin were beginning to revisit the sublime, deeming it 'anything which elevates the mind', produced by 'the contemplation of greatness of any kind' and the subsequent 'effect of greatness upon the feelings'.⁹ Ruskin here applies the principles of the sublime to 'physical perception' and to the judgement of art and nature which uses the eye as a means of determining the properties of a given object, both aesthetically and literally.¹⁰ The term 'physical perception', as defined by Ruskin, describes the impact of a person's 'moral nature' on their 'perception of truth' which is in keeping with Morris's definition of eighteenth-century Gothic sublimity

as ‘affective’ and ‘pictorial’.¹¹ Perceiving and responding to examples of ‘greatness’, particularly in representations of the natural world, was still a Burkean concept.¹² However, in *Modern Painters, Vol. I* (1843) Ruskin also emphasizes the importance of observation, maintaining that it should be an ‘accurate science’ and not in line with the work of the ‘ancients’, which he argues resembles ‘the productions of mere children’ because of ‘feebly developed intelligence & ill-regulated observation’.¹³ Ruskin’s statement, then, implies that representations of nature should be informed by aesthetic judgement, yet must also conform to the code of scientific truth. In the two decades following the publication of Ruskin’s critical work, there were notable scientific developments that both altered what constituted ‘greatness’ within nature and extended humankind’s ability to observe and comprehend. The publication of Darwin’s influential text raised questions concerning ‘the very large and the very small, the near and the far’, as Gillian Beer suggests, and impacted how nature and the universe were perceived and interpreted in late-nineteenth-century literature.¹⁴

There are several notable critical studies concerning Hardy’s fictional eye and ‘pictorialism’, but there has not been an in-depth analysis of how Hardy’s own study of the sublime translates into a post-Darwinian representation of nature and construction of terror.¹⁵ J. B. Bullen suggests that in Hardy’s fiction ‘what may seem to be an objective record of a landscape, a building or a character is frequently charged with feeling and ideas which are not, strictly speaking, visual at all’.¹⁶ This implies that Hardy’s description of the physical world is charged with an externalised depiction of his characters’ otherwise internalised emotions, which transcends the mere relation of an aesthetic experience. With this in mind, the ‘visuality’ or ‘pictorialism’ of the narrative is substituted with a philosophical or theoretical approach to nature and the universe.¹⁷ However, Bullen’s analysis relies on the concept of a ‘retinal image’ being ‘translated into language’ by a ‘process of mental association’ using the eye as a vehicle, which he contends is often ‘fallible’, without considering the implication of scientific advances in astronomy, and other empirical sciences, that to an extent eradicate the supposed fallibility of the eye.¹⁸ Susan R. Horton notes that ‘from 1820 to 1840 huge numbers of experiments were conducted on the physiology of the eye and on the processes of vision; the more that was learned about vision, the more unreliable it seemed to be’.¹⁹ In Hardy’s novel, however, the ‘processes of vision’ are channelled through technology, which significantly decreases

the unreliability of the eye and optimises the subject's capacity to observe. Additionally, the possibility of cognition aided by scientific instruments such as the telescope and the 'equatorial' meant that 'greatness' became a term used to describe aspects of the natural world that far surpassed what eighteenth-century writers and theorists would have defined as 'great'.²⁰ Even Ruskin's 1843 observation that 'it is a strange thing how little in general people know about the sky' appears somewhat outdated in the early 1880s when Hardy was revisiting Ruskin's work and writing *Two on a Tower*.²¹ So too is Ruskin's suggestion that 'the sky is to be considered as a transparent blue liquid, in which [...] clouds are suspended', which does not consider the implications of science that to some degree disenchant the perception of nature as mysterious. The supposition that in nature 'you always see something, but you *never* see all', however, was to an extent contested in the decades following the publication of Ruskin's *Modern Painters, Vol. 1*.²² For instance, scientists like Darwin, Edward Clodd, and Herbert Spencer were effectively shedding light on the supposed secrets of nature, creating a dichotomy between the earlier reliance on 'sensory' experience to describe nature, particularly in Romantic poetry, and newly established 'theoretical and mathematical analyses' of the universe during the late nineteenth century.²³

In the preface to the 1895 edition of *Two on a Tower*, Hardy states that it was his intention to 'set the emotional history of two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe, and to impart to readers the sentiment that of these contrasting magnitudes the smaller might be the greater to them as men' (*TT*: 3). Expressed in this excerpt is the juxtaposition of the 'stupendous' universe, accessed through the astronomer's lens, and the seemingly 'infinitesimal' existence of humankind represented in the novel by the two lovers Swithin St Cleve and Lady Constantine. These 'contrasting magnitudes' are further emphasised by the symbolic tower of the novel's title. The tower acts as both an observatory for Swithin, who has ambitions to be an 'ASTRONOMER-ROYAL' (*TT*: 12), to study the heavens, and as a 'curious and suggestive' elevated beacon that intimidates by its mere presence, stretching 'above the trees' and 'into the sky [like] a bright and cheerful thing' (*TT*: 7). It also offers the inhabitants a bird's eye view of life below them, for when Swithin and Constantine's eyes are cast downwards they become the greater magnitude by virtue of their elevated position as spectators at the summit of the tower. Consequently,

the people they perceive below become minute entities that can be scrutinised and analysed in equal measure. An excerpt in *The Literary Notebooks*, copied by Hardy from an article in *World* (23 February 1881), summarises Ruskin's argument that in the work of the pre-Raphaelites 'absolute uncompromising truth' is 'obtained by working everything down to the most minute detail from Nature & from Nature only' (LN: 137).²⁴ The word 'minute' is particularly significant as it suggests a scientific approach to the scrutiny of nature that is largely achieved via scientific apparatus, whilst also alluding to the importance of size when determining the sublimity of an object. Immanuel Kant, another philosopher with whom Hardy was familiar at the time of writing *Two on a Tower*, discusses what he terms the 'mathematically sublime', which he defines as a logical determination of magnitude that is distinct from aesthetical judgement.²⁵ Kant stresses that to determine the 'magnitude of [a] unit' it must be cognitively measured.²⁶ In *Two on a Tower*, during an early exchange between Swithin and Lady Constantine, the former cautions the latter against disturbing her 'ignorance of the realities of astronomy' (TT: 13). Swithin then states that 'perhaps [he] shall not live' (TT: 13) due to the immensity of the subject that is gradually suppressing him. This statement alludes to the vastness of the universe that reduces the observer to infinitesimal proportions. It also suggests that 'enlightenment on the subject' (TT: 13) may result in terror, due to the sheer depth of knowledge possible and the magnitude of the heavens that seemingly dwarfs the observer.

Within the same passage, Swithin is described as having a mixture of 'scientific earnestness and [a] melancholy mistrust of all things human' (TT: 12). This character trait is later manifest when Swithin's pursuit of astronomy impairs his ability to form a viable romantic attachment with Lady Constantine. Swithin's 'mistrust of all things human' serves two purposes within *Two on a Tower*. Firstly, when observing the universe, the telescopic lens addresses the fallibility of the eye in its purest form. Yet once the optical gadgetry has been removed and Swithin's gaze is focused on his fellow man, his capacity to align the physical human form with scientific truth is compromised. Secondly, the idea that the sublime is merely 'affective' and 'pictorial' is called into question when emphasis is placed on the quantifiable matter of the universe, disrupting the link between consciousness and the material world. Bullen emphasizes the importance of physicality and physiognomy in Hardy's work, arguing that the 'visual image' is the 'primary vehicle for

the expression of ideas and sentiments'.²⁷ However, by foregrounding the science of astronomy, Hardy succeeds in diverting both Swithin's and the reader's attention *away* from the physical human form. This in turn establishes a distinction between cognition and imagination, defined by Kant as 'representations [that] are rational' and therefore logical, and 'aesthetical' judgements, which instigate an emotional response, such as 'pleasure or pain', in the viewer.²⁸ As such, the 'visual image' of the starry heavens is less an expression of a particular sentiment or the construction of an internal emotional narrative for the observer, and more a vehicle for communicating a process of scientifically aided cognition that is somewhat detached from humankind. Therefore, on one level the sublimity in *Two on a Tower* is derived from depictions of the 'great' universe that serves as the novel's backdrop against which the observer becomes the 'infinitely small'.²⁹ Yet on a deeper level, terror is elicited by Swithin's decision to neglect his conscious human existence (with a capacity to form emotional human connections via the process of vision that is in turn linked to his imagination) and earthly duty as Lady Constantine's lover, in favour of his study of astronomy and desire to find logical structure in nature. As a result, by only 'thinking of the heaven above' Swithin does not 'perceive—the [...E]arth beneath' (*TT*: 88). This dialogue between the two lovers, then, seemingly emphasizes that in Hardy's novel, at least for Swithin, the eye is less a means of making aesthetic judgements, and more a scientific lens used to identify scientific truth.

Ruskin's argument that 'the eye, like any other lens, must have its focus altered, in order to convey a distinct image of objects at different distances; so that it is totally impossible to see distinctly, at the same moment, two objects, one of which is much farther off than another' also warrants consideration.³⁰ Although Ruskin is here discussing the eye's physical limitations, his argument that by focusing one's attention on a distant object, the nearer loses its definition, has broader implications. When considered in relation to Hardy's novel, Ruskin's statement also suggests that the further Swithin gazes 'into other worlds' via his telescope, the less his imagination can comprehend 'the depths of other eyes' (*TT*: 44). This conflict of perception subsequently leads to his detachment from 'all things human'. Here, Swithin's lack of engagement with Lady Constantine, whose presence is overshadowed by the sublime universe once again, establishes a new perspective on terror, since the vastness of the heavens not only diminishes the physical human form

but also disrupts the emotional connection between two beings. Swithin rejects Lady Constantine because he does not possess ‘the eyes to understand as well as to see’ and cannot look beyond her ‘worn and faded aspect’ to observe the ‘more promising material underneath’ (*TT*: 278). This rejection ultimately leads to his lover’s death, and thus emphasises that his critical, scientific perception of a subject is removed from any emotional, aesthetic attachment that could transcend the mere perception of her physical form.

In May 1882, when Hardy had just begun his serialisation of *Two on a Tower*, *The Spectator* published an article entitled ‘Mr. Justice Fry on Materialism’, of which Hardy recorded a small portion in his notebook.³¹ Hardy’s excerpt reads

He felt it a striking fact that he, like others, was conscious of the same personality, the same individual consciousness now, that he had 30 yrs. ago, although meanwhile, according to the physiologists, the material portion of his being had completely changed every 7 years. Hence there was to be experienced a being within us separate from matter.³²

The separation of the ‘consciousness’ from the ‘material portion of [a] being’ creates a juxtaposition of imagination and logic which Hardy explores in *Two on a Tower*. In Hardy’s novel, imagination can be defined as a process of perception that, as detailed by Ruskin, requires ‘energy and passion’, which in turn implies an emotional attachment between the object and the observer.³³ Logic, on the other hand, is derived from Swithin’s ‘scientific earnestness’ which disrupts his ability to read and respond to physical signals projected by Lady Constantine. Their emotional connection, then, becomes severed and is often replaced by Swithin’s pursuit of quantifiable truths in the universe. For instance, in an early passage, Swithin is described as dwelling not on ‘woman’s looks’ but on ‘stellar aspects’ (*TT*: 44), suggesting that his scientific endeavours cloud his judgement of Lady Constantine’s physiognomy. Linked to the idea that consciousness and the materiality of the human body act as binaries within Hardy’s novel is Kant’s argument that the judgement of nature can be divided into ‘*aesthetical*’ and ‘*teleological*’ judgement.³⁴ Kant’s hypothesis outlines the need to make a distinction between imagination, or emotionally charged responses to the observation of nature, and judgement which, he states, is governed by determining the ‘purposiveness’ of an object through ‘Understanding’ and ‘Reason’.³⁵ As I have suggested, Swithin appears to be upholding these binaries by

separating the aesthetic judgement of his lover's physicality from the teleological judgement that is achieved through the lens of his telescope.

The idea that Swithin has established purposiveness in the stellar universe is further expressed within the following passage:

To his physical attractiveness was added the attractiveness of mental inaccessibility. The ennobling influence of scientific pursuits was demonstrated by the speculative purity which expressed itself in his eyes whenever he looked at her in speaking [...]. He had never, since becoming a man, looked even so low as to the level of Lady Constantine. His heaven was truly in the skies, and not in that other place where they say it can be found, in the eyes of some daughter of Eve (*TT*: 44).

The reference to eyes has significance beyond Swithin's anatomical ability to observe to which this excerpt alludes. It also suggests that the process of optically determining the physical qualities of a given object can be achieved independently of aesthetic judgement that is a product of emotionally affected perception. The description of Swithin's 'speculative purity' indicates his naivety with women, as well as expressing that he is only knowledgeable within the context of his 'scientific pursuits'. Furthermore, the analogy that the 'skies' are Swithin's 'heaven', or the focal point of his observation, implies that the channel of his vision is directed towards his preferred sublime object. Consequently, the alternative and much closer sublime subject of Lady Constantine is displaced by astronomy, resulting in Swithin's imaginative incapacity to determine greatness in his fellow human. Swithin's eye becomes a lens through which he examines nature, but the balance between determining reason and developing a mental attachment to Lady Constantine seems impossible when Swithin's role as a scientist takes precedence over his role as a lover. Colley argues that telescopes created an 'emotional distance' between the spectator and the subject, which 'disengaged the eye from the body' and meant that the viewer was having a 'vicarious experience'.³⁶ However, in *Two on a Tower* it is not only the eye that is disengaged from the object, but the entire capacity of the person attached to the eye to determine aesthetic value in an object. As such, the imagination's ability to process and interpret the image becomes severed. In Hardy's novel, the narrator refers to 'the voids and waste places of the sky' (*TT*: 33–4), which figures as a metaphor for Swithin's disenchanted imagination. Moreover, Swithin has found purposiveness in

nature beyond the earthly 'level' of Lady Constantine. This in turn causes his eye as lens to perceive nature largely via 'teleological' judgement, rather than interpreting it from an aesthetical perspective, which Kant concedes 'contributes nothing toward the knowledge of its objects'.³⁷ And it is 'knowledge' that Swithin desires above all else, even at the cost of his romantic attachment to Lady Constantine who seems to lack the purposiveness that Swithin seeks. In short, Swithin's desire to forge a career as an astronomer means he is governed by reason, and as such he is only prepared to observe the aspects of nature that provide truth and reason.

Ruskin's argument that 'we measure ourselves against nature' is also of interest here, because, as a theory, it is disseminated in *Two on a Tower* by the telescope and the architectural structure of the tower.³⁸ That a person can be interpreted as quantifiable matter, and measured against nature, again evokes Hardy's suggestion that his novel explores lesser and greater magnitudes. The scientific instrument of the telescope, and the naked eye that serves as a lens within itself, simultaneously emphasise the lack of control humankind has in relation to its sublime surroundings, largely due to the possible size comparison between the object (nature) and the observer (humankind). In *Modern Painters, Vol. I*, Ruskin states that a product of the 'measurement of doom' is terror, which he readily associates with the sublime. His definition is derived from the perception that the observer has 'little control' over what they are witnessing.³⁹ Colley dedicates an entire chapter in her book to Ruskin's exploration of the Alps and his subsequent scientific recordings of the wild environment. She notes that 'compensating for the imperfections of the eye and its susceptibility to deception, Ruskin spent a great deal of his time scrambling among the rocks measuring the angles at which the side of a mountain or a precipice slanted and stood in relation to others'.⁴⁰ To achieve this, Ruskin had to rely on 'anything mechanical' to aid his failing eyesight, and this also meant that he was consistently establishing comparisons between elements of nature that were both unstable and changeable.⁴¹ The possibility that the fallible eye may not detect an alteration within a natural landscape lead to what Colley argues was Ruskin's decision to use photography as a 'mechanistic substitute' for the eye in its purest form.⁴² By replacing the naked eye with an optical instrument, Ruskin (like Hardy, or rather his character) essentially establishes the need to observe nature scientifically, with less reliance on the subjective judgement of an unstable subject.

As a vantage point, the tower in Hardy's novel is both an observatory when the lens protrudes upwards and a means of transforming the eye into a microscopic lens when the eye is cast downwards. In the latter scenario, the perceived object is reduced to miniscule proportions, because the elevated position of the observer in the tower creates a notable distance between the observer and the object. For instance, when Swithin *does* divert his attention away from the sky towards Lady Constantine, her physical presence is reduced due to her supposed position within the confines of his eye as lens.⁴³ She is described as 'diminishing towards the fence', before becoming 'a dark spot on an area of brown' (*TT*: 13). On encountering another figure, Lady Constantine's companion is likened to the observer distinguishing 'the caterpillar from its leaf' (*TT*: 13).⁴⁴ The elevated tower gives Swithin the perspective of a scientist examining atoms under a microscope. Lady Constantine is both a blot on the surface of the literal and metaphorical 'field' of nature, and is judged comparatively to her surroundings. By association, she too can be read as an insect, lost within the vast expanse of the surrounding natural elements. There is, as a result, a further exploration of her fragility and insignificance because she is 'out of harmony' with the world around her – unlike her companion who fits comfortably into his surroundings.⁴⁵ She is also trapped within the frame of the lens, and appears like a particle that can easily be eradicated.

A similar scenario is famously played out in *The Return of the Native* (1878) when Mrs Yeobright is traversing the heath and observes an army of ants at her feet. The narrator relates that 'to look down upon them was like observing a city street from the top of a tower'.⁴⁶ The reference to the 'tower' again establishes the literal raised position of the observer, whilst also stressing a hierarchy of existence. Herbert Spencer, in his seminal work *The Principles of Biology, Vol. 1*, outlines this chain of existence by delineating the 'low and high forms of life' which he argues are in ascendancy.⁴⁷ This deems insects to be one of nature's lowest and simplest forms and humankind a higher, more heterogeneous form. Therefore, Mrs Yeobright not only has the proportional advantage, she also possesses the evolutionary one. Furthermore, like Lady Constantine who is reduced to an analogy of an insect – fragile and easily snuffed out – the ants are subject to Mrs Yeobright's decision to either destroy them or leave them to their 'low' existence. Swithin and Mrs Yeobright are both on the top of a tower, literally and metaphorically, and they both perceive objects below them as a scientist would study an atom.

The resulting sublime image is derived from nature being processed by the observer as terrifying, where lesser forms are engulfed and their mortality amplified.

Later in *Two on a Tower* the idea of opposing magnitudes is again revisited when the narrator relates that ‘the vastness of the field of astronomy reduces every terrestrial thing to atomic dimensions’ (*TT*: 221). This contrast can also be applied to the tower, which too reduces every terrestrial thing to atomic dimensions. The eye as lens, then, appears to serve two purposes in the novel. Firstly, when the observer is peering upwards they become the lesser magnitude by proxy of their position and inability to process the entire subject within the confines of one telescopic frame. This creates a terror of the sublime and unstable universe which disconcerts the individual – particularly when they seek knowledge through a lens depicting changeable matter, yet cannot frame a single, consistent image despite advances in optical equipment. Secondly, when projected downwards, the eye *can* frame an image. This gives the observer the stance of an omnipotent presence, with the ability to contain their subject within a lens. Kant argues that human purpose determines ‘the form as well as the size’ of an object or building, which implies that humankind has immediate control over their surroundings.⁴⁸ Yet this does not anticipate the possible terror that might ensue when the vastness of a manmade structure is used to determine the observer’s lesser magnitude, which is amplified by the vast universe that dwarfs them.

An entry in Hardy’s notebook, made on 1 July 1892, reads: ‘we don’t always remember as we should that in getting at the truth, we only get at the true nature of the impression that an object, etc., produces on us, the true thing in itself being still, as Kant shows, beyond our knowledge’.⁴⁹ The ‘impression’ to which Hardy here refers has implications of human subjectivity, which, as Kate Flint suggests, is ‘filtered through many cultural conventions’.⁵⁰ Therefore, the observer’s impression is culturally inscribed, largely by Darwinian theory, meaning that although judgement is an individual cognitive process, the determination of a universal truth in relation to nature or natural objects is achieved by humankind collectively.⁵¹ This idea is particularly important when considering late-nineteenth-century teleological judgement, achieved through a microscope or a telescope, which was both an individual endeavour and a collective process, underpinned by culturally inscribed scientific theory by popular scholars such as Darwin, Spencer and Clodd.⁵²

In *Two on a Tower*, Hardy's literary conception of the universe is realised by Swithin via his telescope, and, as such, it becomes this character's own psychological creation or 'truth'. Yet due to Swithin's scientific determination but distinct lack of professional and emotional experience the sublime universe becomes an unmanageable space that reflects his own turmoil and overwhelmed attitude. In his informative study concerning Hardy and Burke's 'sublime', S. F. Johnson notes that Hardy 'recurrently contrasts the vastness of the scene with the insignificance of man'.⁵³ In this case, the sublime can also be applied to the individual's imagination and their mental construction of the subject they are observing. Simultaneously, they are forced to consider the greater magnitude that dwarfs them, which perpetuates the idea that their physical and mental fragility is both inevitable and beyond their control. In her recent study of the sublime, Emily Brady suggests that for Kant 'the sublime, in its overwhelming magnitude or power, is associated with formlessness and limitlessness'.⁵⁴ The universe corresponds to this definition, as this scrutinised subject may be accessible through a lens, but the increased ability to perceive via technologies of vision confirms the true 'limitlessness' of nature. Brady also argues that Kant is 'using language where both nature and the mind are called sublime', which generates an agreement between the internal and external world.⁵⁵ Due to the dual aspect of the sublime within this context, the subject being observed is simultaneously unstable and constant; uncontained and confined; unframed and enclosed.

NOTES

¹ David B. Morris, 'Gothic Sublimity', *New Literary History*, 16 (1985), 299.

² Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (1759; London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987); Morris, *Gothic Sublimity*, p. 300.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Gillian Beer, introduction to Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, ed. Gillian Beer (1859; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. xxii.

⁵ Ann C. Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains: Sinking the Sublime* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), p. 2.

⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Vol. 1*, ed. by Lionel Cust (1843; London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1923), p. 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Burke argues that the ‘large and gigantic’ are ‘very compatible with the sublime’, and goes on to suggest that ‘the ideas we naturally annex to that size are those of tyranny, cruelty, injustice, and everything horrid and abominable’. See Burke, *Sublime*, pp. 157–8.

¹³ This quotation from Ruskin’s *Modern Painters, Vol. 1* is taken from an entry in Hardy’s notebook, which was copied from the original text in the early 1880s. See Hardy, *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Lennart A. Björk (London: Macmillan, 1985), p. 173.

¹⁴ Attention should also be paid here to Herbert Spencer’s work in the field of biology that Hardy would likely have been familiar with at this time. See Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Biology, Vol. 1* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1864).

¹⁵ See J. B. Bullen, *The Expressive Eye: Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Alastair Smart, ‘Pictorial Imagery in the Novels of Thomas Hardy’, *The Review of English Studies*, 12 (1961), 262–80; and Judith Bryant Wittenberg, ‘Early Hardy Novels and the Fictional Eye’, *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 16 (1983), 151–64. Critics have examined Hardy’s interpretation of both Darwinian theory and the Sublime, but have not established a correlation between the two theories. See Gillian Beer, *Darwin’s Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (1983; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and S. F. Johnson, ‘Hardy and Burke’s “Sublime”’, in Harold C. Martin, ed., *Style in Prose Fiction: English Institute Essays, 1958* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 55–86.

¹⁶ Bullen, *Expressive Eye*, p. vii.

¹⁷ Bullen suggests that there are two versions of Hardy, the “conscious” Hardy [who] is the polemicist’ and the “unconscious” Hardy [who] is the observer, the recorder of impressions’. *Expressive Eye*, p. 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 4.

¹⁹ Susan R. Horton, ‘Were They Having Fun Yet? Victorian Optical Gadgetry, Modernist Selves’, in Carol T. Christ and John O. Jordan, eds., *Victorian Literature and the Victorian Visual Imagination* (London: University of California Press, 1995), p. 3.

²⁰ Thomas Hardy, *Two on a Tower*, ed. by Suleiman M. Ahmad (1882; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 12. All further references are to this edition and are given parenthetically in the text.

²¹ Ruskin, *Modern Painters, Vol. 1*, p. 194.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 183.

²³ See Pamela Gossin, ‘Hardy’s Poetic Cosmology and the “New Astronomy”’, in Rosemarie Morgan, ed., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Thomas Hardy* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), p. 240.

- ²⁴ The article in question is 'Exhibition of Pictures by Mr. Millais', *World*, 23 February 1881, p. 8.
- ²⁵ Although Hardy's study of Kant seems to be via other contemporary articles and essays, he does note several references to the philosopher alongside his notes on Ruskin. For instance, see *LN*: 172–3; Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by J. H. Bernard (1790; London: Macmillan, 1914), p. 105.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 107.
- ²⁷ Bullen, *Expressive Eye*, p. 8.
- ²⁸ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 45–6.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- ³⁰ Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. 1, p. 176.
- ³¹ *Two on a Tower* was serially published between May and December 1882 in *Atlantic Monthly*.
- ³² This excerpt, originally taken from *The Spectator*, 20 May 1882, is reproduced in *LN*: 147–8.
- ³³ Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. 1, p. 48.
- ³⁴ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p. 36.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- ³⁶ Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains*, p. 68.
- ³⁷ Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, p. 38.
- ³⁸ Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. 1, p. 25.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- ⁴⁰ Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains*, p. 162.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 164. Ruskin also relied heavily on daguerreotype to stabilise the image for his paintings, which, like the telescope, helped to both frame and contain nature within imposed limits.
- ⁴² Colley, *Victorians in the Mountains*, p. 164.
- ⁴³ In *Thomas Hardy's Novel Universe: Astronomy, Cosmology, and Gender in the Post-Darwinian World* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), Pamela Gossin offers an alternative reading of Swithin's telescopic observation of Lady Constantine.
- ⁴⁴ The companion in question is Amos 'Haymoss' Fry, a labouring man whose apparel is 'in harmony with his environment' (p. 13).
- ⁴⁵ See Mark Asquith, 'Philosophy, Metaphysics and Music in Hardy's Cosmic Vision' in Morgan, ed., *Ashgate Research Companion*, p. 197.
- ⁴⁶ Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (1878; London: Penguin, 1994), p. 341.
- ⁴⁷ Spencer, *Principles of Biology*, p. 71.
- ⁴⁸ See Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, p. 113.
- ⁴⁹ Florence Emily Hardy, *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892–1928* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 9.
- ⁵⁰ Kate Flint, *The Victorians and the Visual Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 2.

⁵¹ See Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (1983; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), for a more in-depth exploration of how Darwinian theory fed 'an extraordinary range of disciplines beyond its own original biological field' (p. 13).

⁵² Similar to Darwin, Edward Clodd was also interested in evolutionary theory and biology. See *The Story of Creation: A Plain Account of Evolution* (London: Longmans, Green, And Co., 1888).

⁵³ Johnson, 'Hardy and Burke's "Sublime"', p. 66.

⁵⁴ Emily Brady, *The Sublime in Modern Philosophy: Aesthetics, Ethics, and Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 56.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

‘I AM ONE OF A LONG ROW ONLY’: CONTEMPORARY RETELLINGS OF HARDY’S *TESS OF THE D’URBERVILLES*

SHANTA DUTTA

This article will focus on two retellings of Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* which had been originally published, in both serial and book formats, in 1891. The first retelling was by one of Hardy’s younger contemporaries, George Moore (1852–1933), who found Hardy’s plot too sensational and attempted (what he considered) a realistic re-writing in *Esther Waters*, published in 1894, in order to demonstrate that not every seduced working-class girl ended up on the gallows.¹ Almost a century later, our own contemporary, Emma Tennant (1937–2017) – who specialized in revisionist narratives – offered a fascinating interweaving of biography and fiction in her novel *Tess*, published in 1993, a year after the death of Gertrude Bugler in 1992.

Tennant’s novel has almost two distinct strands. One strand presents an imaginative biographical reconstruction of a late phase in Hardy’s life when his feelings for Gertrude Bugler, the young and beautiful Dorchester actress playing Tess, upset his second wife, Florence, and resulted in some domestic disharmony. This is fairly well-researched but marred by a sensational presentation and an almost personal animus which can potentially alienate the reader. Readerly involvement is, however, ensured by the other strand which passionately vocalises Tennant’s protest against the victimisation of women throughout human history, down to the present day. If one can put aside Tennant’s rather devastating (and unfair) portrait of a misogynist, egotistic and even sadistic Thomas Hardy, her retelling of the basic *Tess* plot invites serious consideration. Tennant provides what she calls the eternal ‘story of love, revenge, betrayal and death’ with a grim and startling twist through the revelation of a dark secret in the closing pages.² As she herself explained in an interview in 1992:

I use existing texts as departure points for my novels — yes, but that’s not what seems to happen because I don’t feel I’m departing at all really, I’m coming full circle. I seem to have a strong urge to show the unchangingness of many things not perceived by those who think that ‘classics’ ... belong to history

and literature, and the plots and characters could never bear any relation to reality today.³

This cyclic repetition of events has inspired the title of this article, which is taken from a heart-wrenching utterance by Thomas Hardy's Tess in 'The Rally' phase, where Angel, during his courtship of Tess at Talbothays, urges her to take up any course of study, e.g. history. Tess wearily rejects the suggestion and her poignant justification is:

Because what's the use of learning that *I am one of a long row only* – finding out that there is set down in some old book somebody just like me, and to know that I shall only act her part; making me sad, that's all. The best is not to remember that your nature and your past doings have been just like thousands' and thousands', and that your coming life and doings'll be like thousands' and thousands'.⁴

This self-conscious analysis squarely places Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in the tradition of the 'fallen woman' narrative – in both the verbal and visual mediums – which focused on a social evil which was aggravated by the passing of the New Poor Law in 1834. This Act discontinued the earlier practice of granting outdoor relief to single unwed mothers with illegitimate babies. It effectively absolved the father of any legal, moral, social, and financial obligation to contribute to the maintenance of the child; and the mother, often abandoned by both her seducer and her family, had very limited options to keep both herself and her offspring alive. She could give up the unequal struggle and enter the workhouse (where she would, in all probability, be separated from her infant); or she could find herself sucked into the legions of prostitutes walking the streets of metropolises and small industrial towns (like Elizabeth Gaskell's Aunt Esther, in *Mary Barton*, and Lizzie Leigh); or she could surrender to despair and drown herself (as George Eliot's Hetty Sorrel is tempted to do at one stage). Countless nineteenth-century fictional narratives repeat – with some individual variations – this same story of seduction, betrayal, struggle, and death. As Dale Kramer has aptly put it: '*Tess* is the story *Ruth* might have been had Leonard died, just as [...] *Esther Waters* is the story of Tess had Sorrow lived.'⁵

Although Esther lacks the historical perspective and philosophical vision of Tess, in her own pragmatic and down-to-earth way, Esther too realises that her life story is not unique but, rather, one that is being played out by hundreds of abandoned young women like her. As she roams about the streets of London, searching in vain for a suitable job to

sustain herself and her young son Jackie, she sees other servant-girls in the same plight and reflects: '*Their stories were her story*. Each and all had been deserted; and perhaps each had a child to support.'⁶ The truth of this perception is borne out when Esther reconnects with her former Woodview fellow-servant, Margaret, who recounts to her 'how one of her masters had got her into trouble, [and] his wife had turned her out neck and crop' (*EW*: 166). Later, when Esther shares the sad story of her past life with Miss Rice, the most sympathetic and supportive of her many employers in the novel, Miss Rice too endorses Esther's awareness of its commonness: 'A very sad story – just such a story as happens every day.' (*EW*: 171)

Esther's synchronic sense of a shared female destiny may seem somewhat different from Tess's diachronic insight into female victimisation, but both are a powerful indictment of the gender injustices of patriarchy. This is much more trenchantly expressed in Emma Tenant's re-telling of the 'Tess' story where the narrator, Liza-Lu Hewitt (the sister of a twentieth-century incarnation of Tess), universalizes the history of women's lives: '[...] for all these women, the suffering and the song was the same: toil, childbirth, death; and for those who fell outside, another song repeated itself: rape, childbirth, desertion or betrayal [...]' (*Tess*: 14). In fact, Liza-Lu's narration begins with the realization that 'every single thing you do has the taste of being done by a woman standing just ahead of you: your mother and then her mother and all the mothers together, as they go back into the fog of their unchronicled days' (*Tess*: 3). In this emphasis on 'foremothers', the narrator goes back to the 'Celtic women warriors' like 'Boudicca' whose daughters were 'raped' by the invading Roman soldiers (*Tess*: 63); to the 'Roman matrons' (*Tess*: 141); to Lilith, Adam's rebellious first wife; and, inevitably, to Eve: 'You are the daughter of Eve – and she is the mother of us all, the reason for the need to punish Tess, and every Tess before her.' (*Tess*: 81)

Almost echoing Tess Durbeyfield's rueful words to Angel Clare in the Talbothays scene quoted above, Tennant chose as the epigraph to her novel a quotation (from Marguerite Yourcenar's *Two Lives and a Dream*, published in 1982) which underscores this sense of endless repetition: 'Everything has already been lived and relived a thousand times by those who have disappeared but whom we carry in the very fibres of our being, just as we also carry in us the thousands of beings who will one day live after us.' Within the plot of Tennant's *Tess*, set in the 1950s and '60s, Tess and Liza-Lu's mother (Mary Hewitt) is the

‘daughter of a long line of Ruined Maids, [and] mother of another’ (*Tess*: 95). Acting out this immemorial ‘ballad of love, betrayal, murder’, this modern day Tess knows that she has ‘been chosen as the next in a long line of Ruined Maids’ (*Tess*: 163, 186). This relentless cycle of endless repetition culminates in the violation of Tess’s daughter, little Mary, who ‘will have to go the same way as her mother and all the Tesses before her’ (*Tess*: 207).

In the earlier re-enactments of the quintessential ‘Tess’ plot throughout the nineteenth century, the protagonist is usually a young orphan girl like Gaskell’s Ruth or George Eliot’s Hetty Sorrel; or she has parent(s) who abdicate their nurturing responsibility, as in the case of Hardy’s Tess and Moore’s Esther; or she has left the security of the parental home in search of a better livelihood, as in the story of Lizzie Leigh by Gaskell. The young girl, usually sixteen or thereabouts, is seduced by an older man who is her superior in social and/or economic status, thus making her violation both a sexual and an economic exploitation. Although the word ‘seduction’ is used in most of these narratives, both in the fictional representations and in the factual records of the age, in most cases it would be now considered as statutory rape by the legal yardstick of our times, because one has to remember that the ‘age of consent’ was absurdly low in the first half of the nineteenth century. It was raised to twelve years only in 1861, then to thirteen years in 1875, before it was again raised to sixteen years by the Criminal Law Amendment Act in 1885 – largely as a result of the untiring efforts of Josephine Butler and the journalist W. T. Stead (editor of *The Pall Mall Gazette*) who ‘purchased’ a thirteen-year-old girl, Eliza Armstrong (the daughter of a chimney sweep), in order to prove that child prostitution existed and constituted the dark underbelly of Victorian England.⁷ It is interesting to recall that Hardy’s Tess is exactly sixteen years old and the narrator keeps the rape/seduction debate open by referring to Alec as Tess’s ‘seducer’, although the word ‘rapist’ had been coined a few years earlier – in 1883. Had Tess been a few months short of being sixteen years old during the incident in ‘The Chase’, the episode would have unequivocally qualified as rape in legal terms.

The seduction/rape usually took place outside the sanctity of the home, when the young girl ventured abroad to seek employment. After her ‘fall’, the ‘seduced’ girl would be too ashamed to return to the parental shelter, as is the case with Gaskell’s Lizzie Leigh or Aunt Esther, who are lost among the multitudes of prostitutes who haunt the streets

of Manchester. The return of the prodigal daughter was not exactly an occasion for family rejoicing and both Hardy's Tess and Moore's Esther are exceptionally fortunate and atypical in finding grudging acceptance within the domestic circle again. But this was usually not the fate of many a young girl who returned home only to find the door firmly shut on her. Richard Redgrave's iconic painting 'The Outcast' (1851) features a puritanical and unforgiving patriarch who sternly orders his 'fallen' daughter out into the snowy storm, while her mother and siblings plead in vain for clemency and exhibit various stages of despair. The doorway frames the young girl, protectively clutching her illegitimate but innocent baby, her hopes for a last-minute change of heart dashed, and having no choice but to step over the threshold into the physical and metaphoric wilderness outside the home.

Adrift in a hostile world – friendless, homeless, and penniless – the unwed mother could either abandon her infant, as Hetty does in *Adam Bede*, or she could deposit her baby in the basket at the gates of a foundling hospital.⁸ The Foundling Hospital in London, for example, accepted infants provided that the committee of inquiry was satisfied that the unwed mother had hitherto led a good moral life, that this was her first ever transgression, that both she and her baby had been abandoned by the putative father, and that she intended to go back to a honest livelihood once the infant was taken off her hands. In real life, however, it was not always easy for such unfortunate women to prove that they had hitherto led morally blameless lives. The other available alternative was to find a woman willing to take care of the child while the mother went out to work in order to support both herself and her offspring. This arrangement of 'baby farming' was widespread in urban Victorian England and the mother was expected to pay either on a weekly basis or make a one-time payment ranging from five to twelve pounds (which, in those days, was a considerable amount for a poor abandoned working-class girl). A more desperate option would be to enter the workhouse, and the spectre of this forbidding institution haunts Esther throughout the narrative. The much dreaded workhouse is referred to at least eleven times in just two pages in chapter 19, at the end of which Esther (along with her baby) actually enters Lambeth Workhouse. The most extreme option would be to commit suicide, either before the impending confinement or after the baby's death/ rehabilitation – as both Hetty and Esther are tempted to do at one stage – or even to murder the infant in order to remove the most tangible proof of her 'fall'.⁹

In fact, one of Hardy's biographers records that during a visit to Devon he was shown 'a bridge over which bastards were thrown and drowned'.¹⁰ On another occasion, in May 1891, just a couple of months before the serial publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was to begin, Hardy paid a visit to 'a large private lunatic asylum' in the company of his friend, Sir T. Clifford Allbutt, who was then a 'Commissioner in Lunacy'. As Hardy records in his disguised third-person autobiography, 'he had intended to stay only a quarter of an hour, but became so interested in the pathos of the cases that he remained the greater part of the day'. The human stories which probably moved Hardy the most were the women's 'stories of their seduction'.¹¹ It is such unsung and heart-wrenching stories of seduction and betrayal that Hardy felt called upon to voice in his novel *Tess* and in poems like 'A Sunday Morning Tragedy', whose sub-title '(Circa 186_)' suggests that it might have been based on a real life story that Hardy had heard of. As the most scholarly of Hardy's biographers sums up, '*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was driven into being by the surging and almost uncontrollable movement of human compassion which is detectable throughout the work in the narrator's scarcely disguised advocacy of the heroine's case, and which finally emerges in that polemical sub-title [...]' and also, one may suggest, in Hardy's toying with the idea of calling this novel 'Tess of the Hardys'.¹²

The plot trajectory of the lives of Tess and Esther is similar up to a point, that is, till the birth of their illegitimate babies (although Esther's baby is born in a charitable hospital and not at home). Both Hardy and Moore use the illegitimate baby to launch their critique of contemporary society. Hardy exposes the hypocritical narrow-mindedness of the likes of John Durbeyfield who denies baby Sorrow the ritual cleansing of baptism and a priest's final blessings while alive, because the baby is born outside so-called holy matrimony. For Tess, however, the 'baby's offence against society in coming into the world [is] forgotten' (*TD*: 72) and she is tormented only by the thought of her 'child consigned to the nethermost corner of hell as its double doom for lack of baptism and lack of legitimacy' (*TD*: 73). Being 'well grounded in the Holy Scriptures', Tess is passively resigned to her own fate of possibly having 'to burn for what she had done' (*TD*: 73); but the grieving 'girl-mother' is stirred to action when her vivid imagination conjures up the frightening vision of 'the arch-fiend tossing it [i.e. her baby] with his three-pronged fork, like the one they used for heating the oven on baking-days' (*TD*: 73). However, no such compunction or apprehensive solicitude disturbs

John Durbeyfield who is sensitive only to 'the *smudge* which Tess had set upon' his (false?) 'sense of the antique nobility of his family' and, therefore, he heartlessly locks the door on 'salvation' because he does not want the parson 'prying into his affairs, just then, when, by her *shame*, it had become more necessary than ever to hide them' (*TD*: 73; my italics). In death too, the poor infant is stealthily buried in a 'shabby corner' of the churchyard where 'all unbaptized infants, notorious drunkards, suicides, and others of the conjecturally damned are laid' (*TD*: 76). Tess's solemn baptising of her dying baby at night, her burial of him under cover of darkness – after she fails to persuade a priest to give him a proper Christian burial – with a hand-made cross bound with flowers, and her furtive entry into the churchyard to put flowers on his grave (in a marmalade jar), are some of the most emotionally charged episodes in the novel which imply Hardy's criticism of dogmatic clergymen and a futile religiosity which shuns the truly Christian virtue of 'loving-kindness' which Hardy, personally, so highly valued.

Moore's critique, however, is more on the pragmatic social plane rather than on the moral or altruistic one. He uses the plot prop of the illegitimate baby to expose the dangers of baby farms where conditions were so unhygienic and over-crowded that most infants did not survive long enough to be a perpetual burden to their struggling mothers. The more insidious evil of the widespread practice of baby farming was that there were greedy and unscrupulous professional foster mothers, like the fictional Mrs Spires in *Esther Waters*, who make veiled offers to kill off the inconvenient baby, not indeed by throttling it or poisoning it, but simply by planned neglect: keeping it underfed, diluting the milk or not warming it sufficiently, deliberately ignoring its minor ailments, saving money by not calling in a doctor, etc. In 1870, one such real life baby farmer, Margaret Waters, was brought to trial on five counts of wilful child murder. The investigating police officer retrieved nine emaciated and drugged (by laudanum) children from her house, nearly half of whom died shortly afterwards in the workhouse because they had been so systematically malnourished while in her care.¹³ She was ultimately executed and the shock waves triggered by this incident probably led to the passing of the Infant Life Protection Act of 1872, which was later given more teeth by an amendment of 1897 – i.e. after the publication of *Esther Waters*. Moore believed that his detailed and graphic exposure of the evils of baby farming led to stricter legislation on the issue and, with characteristic exaggeration, he proudly claimed

that his novel 'has perhaps done more good than any novel written in my generation'.¹⁴

Another feature common to most of these fallen woman narratives is that the 'seducer' figure returns in the life of the wronged maiden at some plot juncture – be it Henry Bellingham, Arthur Donnithorne, Arthur Dimmesdale, Alec d'Urberville, William Latch or Alec Field. Bellingham, in a way, is instrumental in providing Ruth with an opportunity to achieve martyrdom because it is while devotedly nursing him through a near-fatal illness that she catches the contagion and dies; a grateful community almost canonises her, in memory of her selfless hospital service during the devastating epidemic. A contrite Donnithorne rushes around to secure a royal pardon for Hetty and arrives with a last-minute reprieve to save her from being hanged, like Tess, for murder. Unlike Alec d'Urberville whose ill-timed and unrepentant returns ultimately destroy Tess, William Latch somewhat redeems himself by belatedly marrying Esther, which accounts for her re-integration into the social mainstream and which is a crucial factor behind Esther being perhaps the only 'fallen' woman in canonical Victorian fiction for whom the 'wages of sin' is *not* death, but who succeeds in her woman's mission of bringing up her son to a socially useful manhood (as a soldier). William Latch ultimately dies of consumption but Esther does not abandon him in his dying phase; rather, she lovingly nurses him till the very end just as Ruth had nursed Bellingham although he had made no gesture of reparation for the past wrong done to her. By contrast, Alec d'Urberville meets his retribution at the hands of the woman whose integrity he has repeatedly violated, and we expect his twentieth-century namesake to face a similar fate.

In fact, in the same 1992 interview mentioned earlier, when Tennant was questioned about the latest book she was writing, she revealed: 'It's about Tess — and Thomas Hardy — and Dorset, and there's a modern Tess and Alec story, with Alec murdered.' This summary does not prepare the reader for the novel's startling closure and either Tennant was being secretive about plot details or the story spun out of her control, with characters assuming an independent life of their own. As Hardy had realised several decades before, 'novels will take shapes of their own as the work goes on, almost independently of the writer's wish' (*LW*: 287).¹⁵ In Tennant's novel, Alec Field returns to claim his daughter by Tess Hewitt and take her to America, but the reader realises that little Mary's actual father is not Alec at all but her own grandfather who is also her biological father – i.e. John Hewitt. The novel's dark secret

is incest, and also paedophilia. Unlike her Victorian foremothers who were usually violated by strangers or casual acquaintances outside the home, this twentieth-century incarnation of Tess is repeatedly raped by her own father, within the supposed sanctity of her home, ever since she was seven years old. This ugly truth conforms to modern sociological research which has demonstrated that, in most cases, the perpetrators of child molestation are fathers, uncles, brothers, cousins, or close neighbours, i.e. people in whom the child/teenager blindly trusted. It is this violation of trust and family ties that infuriates Tess Hewitt when she learns that her father has been repeating the cycle of violation by abusing her six-year-old daughter Mary. Tess turns into a fiercely protective mother and sticks a vengeful knife into her father, with active help from her mother (who is considered half-mad by her neighbours). The two mothers become veritable avenging Furies and they collude in murdering the 'lover-father' (*Tess*: 207) and hiding his body in a shallow pit. With this act of retributive justice, it is hoped that the endlessly repetitive cycle of male domination and female victimization will end. The novel ends with Tess holding Baby Tess, her grand-daughter and Mary's daughter, in her arms, and we recall Liza-Lu's early apostrophe: 'Baby Tess, you are my hope. [...] you lead me to hope, to believe in a different future, in the ending of the endlessly repeating chain.' (*Tess*: 19–20)

NOTES

¹ For instance, Moore considered the scene of the wedding night confession in Hardy's novel too melodramatic and he swung to the opposite extreme in presenting an extremely bald and almost parodic version in Esther's confession of her past to the preacher Fred Parsons, a prospective husband.

² Emma Tennant, *Tess* (London: Flamingo (HarperCollins), 1993), p. 157. Since this text will be constantly referred to throughout this article, for the convenience of the reader, all future page references will be parenthetically incorporated within the text. The novel will be referred to as *Tess*, with Hardy's original text being designated *TD*.

³ Quoted from Gary Indiana's interview of Emma Tennant in the magazine *Bomb*, 1 April 1992.

⁴ Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1991), p. 99. My italics. All future page references will be parenthetically incorporated within the text. To distinguish it from Tennant's *Tess*, Hardy's novel will be parenthetically referred to as *TD*. [My italics]

⁵ Dale Kramer, *Thomas Hardy: 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 29.

⁶ George Moore, *Esther Waters* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1991), p. 164. My italics. All future page references will be parenthetically incorporated within the text, and the novel will be abbreviated as *EW*.

⁷ Stead's strategy (which would be the equivalent of a modern day 'sting operation'), for awakening the public conscience to the dangers of this widely prevalent social evil, incurred a brief three-month prison sentence.

⁸ Frederick Walker's 1863 painting, whose title 'The Lost Path' works at both the literal and figurative levels, illustrates the plight of another such 'outcast' unwed mother. The 1855 painting by Henry Nelson O'Neil, titled 'A mother depositing her child at a Foundling Hospital in Paris', is really more generic in essence and could be a picture of any city founding hospital.

⁹ George Frederick Watts's painting, titled 'Found Drowned' (c. 1848–50) – probably inspired by Thomas Hood's famous poem 'The Bridge of Sighs' – can be viewed as the final 'Station of the Cross' in the life of a 'fallen' woman, in the context of the series of paintings referred to before. Nobody can miss the visual suggestiveness of the outstretched arms of the young female corpse, at right angles to the body, implying that she has been crucified by an unfeeling patriarchy which absolves the man but makes the 'woman pay'.

¹⁰ Quoted in Robert Gittings, *The Older Hardy*, rev. edn. (London, New York: Penguin, 1980), p. 244.

¹¹ Thomas Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 247–48.

¹² Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 296, 294.

¹³ For a detailed discussion on baby farming, and especially the grim testimony of the police sergeant who entered the house of Mrs Waters to investigate the malpractice, see Jean S. Heywood's *Children in Care: The Development of the Service for the Deprived Child* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), pp. 95–96.

¹⁴ Quoted by Hilary Laurie in the 'Introduction' to the 1991 Everyman edition of *Esther Waters*, p. xii.

¹⁵ One is reminded of Tolstoy's famous comment about how he did not intend Vronsky to attempt suicide, but the character seemed to snatch the pen/ pistol from his hand and proceed to shoot himself!

‘THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT’: WINDOW PATTERNS IN HARDY’S POETRY

ROGER EBBATSON

In a number of characteristic poems Hardy deploys the image of the window in a mode which serves to explore the notion of the threshold and ways in which the window-pane may be construed as suspending or pausing narrative, leading to immobility and entrapment, and thereby problematising issues of space and time, identity and alterity. In these texts the window separates inside/outside whilst simultaneously connecting them, converting presence into absence, distance into proximity, with the result that, as Maurice Blanchot suggests, ‘Whoever has disappeared completely and is suddenly there before you, behind a pane of glass, becomes a sovereign figure’.¹ The key images of the threshold and the window-frame also work, Elaine Scarry notes, by permitting ‘the passage of one person into a space belonging to a person of another gender or of another class’.² However, whilst, as has been observed, the ‘threshold of the door represents a point of entry that one may pass over’, the threshold of the window offers ‘visibility rather than a passage through’, and this sense of access and blockage is crucial to a reading of Hardy’s window poems.³ In his essay on Freud’s wolf-man, Jacques Rancière maintains:

A window is a determined structure, a four-fold relationship: an inside and an outside, a sequence and an interruption. This relationship is a two-way one: the outsider can stand for reality, as opposed to the closing in on itself of the inside; but the inside can just as easily stand for the *hic* and *nunc*, the here and now, as opposed to the mirages of escape towards the outside.⁴

A reading of these Hardy poems might be further contextualised by reference to the concept of ‘human space’ propounded by the phenomenologist Otto Bollnow, who comments upon the ‘ability to see without being seen’, but also, in contradistinction, the feeling of exposure ‘in a brightly lit room at night’. He further notes a countervailing opening up of ‘the inner space to the world as a whole’: ‘Through the window one looks out into the open air, one sees the sky and the horizon [...]. So through the window the human inner space is observably and clearly positioned in the great order of horizontal and vertical’. When we look

through the window, Bollnow suggests, as opposed to passing through the door, 'the world recedes into the distance', so that the window-frame 'idealises the part of the world that is cut out and isolated in this way'.⁵

The Hardy poems under consideration here orchestrate and explore the types of literary window Rancière identifies with nineteenth-century French realism, 'where the division between outside and inside, dream and reality, passage and blockage blurs'.⁶ Rancière's notion that 'by going through the window, meaning either circulates or freezes'⁷ is suggestive for a reading of Hardy's 'The Face at the Casement', published in 1914, which takes the basic form of a monologue spoken by a male lover who, passing the home of a dying former suitor of his own now 'plighted Love', who accompanies him, glimpsed a 'white face, gazing at us/As we withdrew,' and thereupon 'deigned a deed of hell' by ostentatiously putting his arm round the young woman, though wholly 'unfired by lover's passion' (*CP*: 315–17).⁸ As a result the eclipsed suitor's 'pale face vanished quick,/As if blasted, from the casement', upon which the successful lover's 'shame and self-abasement began their prick'. There is a significant and unnerving polarity here between emotional attachment and distancing or separation, the rejected and now expiring former lover evincing a passion wholly absent in his lukewarm successor, his forlorn predicament as the 'travelled sun dropped/to the north-west, low and lower' embodying the argument propounded by Deleuze and Guattari that 'the face has a correlate of great importance in the landscape, which is not simply a milieu but a deterritorialised world'.⁹ Hardy's poem enacts that process of 'deterritorialisation' in its dramatic staging of the complex of love, possession and jealousy laid bare in a momentary but definitive gesture. The message which the young woman sends to her dying former admirer triggers an eloquent riposte:

For her call no words could thank her;
As his angel he must rank her
Till his life's spark fled.

This heartfelt effusion is immediately cancelled and obliterated when his successful rival turns his head and determines on his fateful gesture. The trusting response of the girl, as she 'smiled at [his] caress', is cynically demolished by her current lover's reflection:

[...] why came the soft embowerment
Of her shoulder at that moment
She did not guess.

Whilst this is a poem apparently freighted with a biographical resonance,¹⁰ ‘The Face at the Casement’, in its textual complexity, also bears out John Hughes’s argument that in Hardy’s work in both fiction and verse ‘events of looking, and of eye contact, take on a real centrality and importance’ – here with tragic implications since, as Hughes adds, ‘observation, and particularly observation of another person, is a privileged form of self-revelation’.¹¹

A countervailing ‘moment of vision’, from exterior to interior, marks another poem in *Satires of Circumstance*, ‘Outside the Window’ (CP: 419). Here the visiting male suitor, having forgotten his walking-stick, turns back to his fiancée’s house to retrieve it, only to see and hear her ‘rating her mother’ with ‘a vixen voice’. Reflecting that at last he has witnessed ‘her soul undraped’, he congratulates himself, ‘’tis but narrowly I have escaped’, and ‘steals off, leaving his stick unclaimed’. In this version of the window poem, it is telling that the harsh voice of the young woman ‘Comes out with the firelight through the pane’, the image the stunned lover sees being signalled by her ‘eyes aglare/For something said while he was there’. The man’s absent-mindedness over the stick leads, in this drama of sexual selection, to *deselection* in a text which hints at an antifeminist undertone, the implication being that the young woman deserves to be abandoned by her lover and as it were incarcerated in the familial domestic space whilst her admirer strides off towards unencumbered freedom. Sheila Berger has remarked how the ‘scene of the illuminated figure inside glimpsed by an unobserved watcher outside’ recurs in many of the novels, and she points out how, in this Hardy-esque scenario, the window’s ‘limited view provides strangeness, mystery, and emotional intensity’.¹² The gender politics of the poem, furthermore, might be read in light of Jane Thomas’s suggestion, in her examination of the contradictory ways in which, in Hardy’s work, ‘female desire is confined’, that such writing often centres upon an ‘exploration of how domestic space is shaped by the regulatory practices of patriarchy’.¹³ It might be argued that the girl’s contentiousness, in this poem, plays to a number of issues in the debate over the New Woman to which Hardy had given careful but ambiguously framed attention, and it could be said that here the visual and auditory evidence is of the type-cast New Woman, controversially characterised by Eliza Lynn Linton as ‘hardened’, ‘unsexed’ and ‘mannish’.¹⁴ It is notable in this connection that the phallic stick, which is left ‘unclaimed’, itself paradoxically registers both male domination and a sense of being unmanned, in a

staging of contemporary issues which, as Penny Boumelha observed, would lead to a complex of 'tensions and ambivalences' in Hardy's writing project.¹⁵ The young woman's self-revealing outburst here might be contextualised by Toril Moi's distinction between the cultural construct of the 'selfless' and quasi-angelic nineteenth-century woman and what she terms the 'monster', 'the woman who refuses to be selfless, acting on her own initiative', and thereby 'rejects the submissive role patriarchy has reserved for her'. The fiancée is thus aptly characterised as 'duplicitous, precisely because she has something to tell': 'The duplicitous woman is the one whose consciousness is opaque to man, whose mind will not let itself be penetrated by the phallic probings of masculine thought'.¹⁶ In this context the panicky abandonment of the walking-stick may be construed as sign and referent of the fear of phallic loss or castration which leads to the suitor's alarmed retreat. In this sense, 'Outside the Window' may be read as a text which stages and performs an episode which, in the unconscious of the text, gestures towards a femininity that strives to escape from a phallogcentrically controlling specularisation.

There are two window poems by Hardy closely associated with the figure of Emma. The first, 'We Sat at the Window', has the subtitle 'Bournemouth, 1875', and takes the form of a meditation upon a marriage which, after only one year, is already shadowed by failures of communication (*CP*: 428–29). The male narrator tells how the pair 'sat at the window looking out/And the rain came down like silken strings' on St Swithin's day. For the two of them there was 'Nothing to read, nothing to see', to the extent that they become 'irked by the scene' each unable or unwilling to conceive 'How much there was to read or guess' in the other, to the extent that

Wasted were two souls in their prime,
And great was the waste, that July time
When the rain came down.

The imperviousness of each marital partner mirrors and parodies the dismal view from the window, with each psychically imprisoned in his/her own consciousness, as they are physically trapped by the inclement weather. The act of looking out of the window may become, in Charles Bernstein's phrase, 'a paradigm for both reading a text and reading the world', and paradoxically reveals what Bernstein terms a 'sense of sealed-offness from other minds'.¹⁷ The blockage of communication in this marital impasse refracts or stages Bernstein's contention that

‘We all see words, but it is our usual practice to see *through* them’.¹⁸ Hardy’s poem focuses readerly attention not only on the theme of marital disillusionment but also on the text’s framing of a complex relation between past and present. The cheerless scene from the window, that is to say, illuminates Merleau-Ponty’s somewhat Proustian diagnosis of how, although ‘enclosed in [the] present’, the human subject constantly interacts with ‘imperceptible transitions, from the present to the past, from the recent to the remote’.¹⁹

The second window poem linked with Emma, first published in Hardy’s subsequent collection, *Moments of Vision* (1917), dramatically hints at the possibility that freedom from marital confinement is achievable only through death. ‘Something Tapped’ (CP: 464), dated from 1913, is directly related to the death of Emma and mobilises what may be defined as Lacanian concerns centred upon desire and the gaze. The poet, alerted by something which ‘tapped on the pane of my room/ When there was never a trace/Of wind or rain’, catches a glimpse of ‘My weary Belovéd’s face’. The woman complains of waiting, ‘So cold it is in my lonely bed/And I thought you would join me soon!’ As the poet responds to the deathly invitation, and ‘rose and neared the window-glass’, he realises it was ‘Only a pallid moth, alas,/Tapped at the pane for me’. In stressing a putative encounter with the gaze of the (dead) Other, the poem negates the possibility of being seen by that Other. As Annie Ramel has noted, in a Lacanian critique of Hardy, ‘Access to the other is always missed, the wall’s semblance divides the subject from the object of his desire’, with the result that, in these terms, ‘the Other’s gaze cannot reach me’.²⁰ The Lacanian *objet petit a* is here definable, like the woman’s image, as ‘an object which is forever missing’, her female identity now unrepresentable. Jane Thomas has remarked of the Emma sequence more generally how the pervasively present/absent ‘phantom female figure’ ‘is produced out of the inexpressible space of loss’, the ‘mourning subject’s longing for this spectral female’ symbolising a desire to return to a ‘pre-lingual realm, which is the space of dissolution, the realm of death’.²¹ The window-glass appears to offer access to Emma but resolves itself into the medium for a reversible relationship: Hardy’s predicament here echoes that of Orpheus, who in Blanchot’s reading of the myth, ‘wants to meet [Eurydice] not when she is visible, but when she is invisible’.²² In the contradictory representation of the poet’s relation to Emma, ‘Something Tapped’, like the sequence of 1912–13 poems as a whole, undermines the traditional pattern whereby the elegaic form is deployed

in a monumentalising mode, seeking, as Louisa Hall has noted, ‘to create a space (such as a tomb, a room, or a house) in which the spirit of the dead might reside, accessible to the living’.²³ Hardy here subconsciously perhaps recalls and rejects his early architectural career, so fatefully undertaken at St Juliot church, insisting instead ‘that the ghost of Emma exist outdoors, under a wider sky’, and thus, as Hall suggests, ‘refusing to capture a phantom in new, obliterating materials’, and sorrowfully refraining from ‘the luxury of consolation by light-vision’.²⁴ The figure of the dead woman, replaced by the moth, is thus, as in other poems of the sequence, ‘left in the wind [...] inexplicable and unenclosable’.²⁵ The window-frame signals invisibility, an undecipherable ambiguity in the broken relation between husband and wife registered in the disjunction and division between the stanzas, so that the overriding impression is of spatial and temporal distance, a denial of touch and the blank space of irrevocable separation. The beloved is now spectral, the self she once was transmuted into a fantasy impossible of materialisation, the stanzaic form itself insisting on this transference of the readable to the invisible, the gap between ‘distance and desire’ in the break between stanzas eliciting what may be termed the vision of a vision, in an endless postponement of desire mirrored and emblematised by the hapless fluttering of the ‘pallid moth’. Indeed, the moth may, as Ellen Lanzano proposes, ‘represent the tragedy of the soul escaping into ecstasis and incinerated by its own passion’ in a motif which signifies ‘the actual soul escaping the body after life’.²⁶

A poem from *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922), ‘Outside the Casement’, sounds a tragically ironic note, depicting a female figure, the cynosure of all eyes, situated alone beyond the window whilst the admiring observers within, having ‘praised her whom/We saw in the portico-shade outside’, then respond with grief at the news of her ‘evil fortune’, which they have just received (*CP*: 664–65). The poem is subtitled ‘A Reminiscence of the War’, the unstated implication being that the woman isolated from the company has lost her lover on the Western Front. The sympathetic observers cannot determine on a course of action, debating ‘Should we cloak the tidings, or call her and tell?’, but ‘spirit failed’, compelling them to ‘counterfeit/No knowledge of it,/And stay the stroke that would blanch and numb’. As a result the poem concludes with the ‘beguiled’ woman’s innocently unwitting response: ‘She now and again/Looked in, and smiled us another smile’. Whilst the young woman is the subject of admiring glances, her situation, excluded from the sheltered domestic

community, ominously refracts and mirrors that of the troops in the Great War, in ways which were tellingly adumbrated by Walter Benjamin:

A generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath these clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile human body.²⁷

There are unresolved tensions in the poem, centring upon the figure of the young woman who, though ostensibly admired, is the subject and focus of speculation by a group of non-combatants. In this sense the poem is a text which hints at the gender crisis motivated by the experience of mass warfare. The failure to communicate the tragic news by those safely ensconced behind the casement, whilst apparently benevolent, suggests a controlling and possibly misogynistic attitude. Gender was a significant issue during the Great War, and Trudi Tate has noted how ‘anxiety about the war’s violence is displaced on to women, and expressed as fear of women’s sexuality’, especially by those who linked the feminine ‘with the idea of someone whose body is not under threat’.²⁸ Positioned as she is in ‘the patio-shade outside’, the young woman is mid-way between the comfortable protection afforded by the home front and the blasted, open terrain of the Western Front, the scene of that ‘evil fortune’ which remains undisclosed. The text is characterised by a curious blandness or complacency of tone on the part of the narrator, a speaking voice, as Berger argues in relation to some of Hardy’s poetry, ‘anonymous in its indifference to the reader’s emotional response’.²⁹

Hardy’s window poems offer a textual configuration which moves towards a type of proto-modernist consciousness, as indicated in Hilary Thompson’s Benjaminian reading of Virginia Woolf:

[...] in the window you see someone ‘opposite’ seeing you, and these opposite figures, whether they put out the light or witness your fall, conjure up the other side of life for you, so that it sees you. We have the sight of something held within a frame yet impinging from the other side; it remains other but affords us a vision of ourselves beheld from beyond. We have the messianic not simply as time but as sight, human sight.³⁰

Hardy’s window poems serve to problematise and orchestrate the relation between perception and reality through the interposition, both emotional and linguistic, of a putative barrier which is erected between the agents

and the poet. In this sense Hardy is writing in a proto-modernist style in which words associated with the liminal space of the window gesture towards a movement of desire across the emotional/perceptual barrier, a gesture which all too often ends in lack or incompleteness. The window poems register absence or lack which is both internal and external. Hardy seeks to frame reality, but any totalising gesture is undermined by an alterity which is emblematised by the framing of experience which these texts attempt. The space offered by the apparent transparency of the glass works to obstruct stable identity, creating in its stead a zone of partial objectification and only semi-visible presence. In considering the epistemological dilemmas posed by the paradoxical aesthetics of the window, these texts often reverberate with the consciousness of what Derrida terms 'a past that has never been present'.³¹ Hardy's pervasively contradictory registration of presence and loss in this group of poems offers a proto-modernist model which offers marked parallels with the scenario of a group of Rilke's French poems entitled *Les Fenêtres*. Rilke, for instance, notes how a woman observed passing 'in a window frame' becomes 'the one we lose/just by seeing her appear'. As the woman 'lifts her arms/to tie her hair', Rilke muses, 'how much our loss gains/a sudden emphasis'. In the Rilkean (and we may suggest the Hardy-esque) imaginary, the question is crucially posed,

Aren't you our geometry,
window, very simple shape
circumscribing our enormous
life painlessly?

A lover's never so beautiful
as when we see her appear
framed by you; because, window,
you make her almost immortal.

The poets may be said to share what Rilke terms 'a window mood' in which 'to live seems just to look', or to do 'no more than to stare' in a structure of feeling characteristic of the modernist movement more generally.³² Hardy's imagination here seems attuned to the crucial imagistic and motivic significance of the window, and it may be suggested, in conclusion, that his window poems offer a poised reflexive balance between solipsism and relationship akin to that characteristic of being notably defined by Virginia Woolf as a 'queer amalgamation of dream and reality, that perpetual marriage of granite and rainbow'.³³

NOTES

- ¹ Maurice Blanchot, *Death Sentence*, trans. L. Davis (New York: Station Hill Press, 1978), p. 43.
- ² Elaine Scarry, *Resisting Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 49.
- ³ Jane Rendell, 'Thresholds, Passages and Surfaces', in A. Coles, ed., *The Optic of Walter Benjamin*, (London: Black Dog, 1999), p. 182.
- ⁴ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011), p. 151.
- ⁵ Otto Bollnow, *Human Space*, trans. C. Shuttleworth (London: Hyphen Press, 2011), 151, 152, 154.
- ⁶ Ranciere, *Politics of Literature*, p. 151.
- ⁷ Ibid., p. 151.
- ⁸ Quotations from Hardy's poetry are given from *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*, ed. J. Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1976).
- ⁹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 172.
- ¹⁰ The poem appears to refer to an incident in Cornwall when during their courtship Hardy and Emma Gifford passed the home of her former suitor, William Sergeant, who was now dying of TB.
- ¹¹ John Hughes, *The Expression of Things* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2018), p. 101.
- ¹² Sheila Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), p. 66.
- ¹³ Jane Thomas, *Thomas Hardy and Desire* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013), p. 41.
- ¹⁴ Cited in Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), p. 76.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 94. See also Carolyn Burdett, 'The New Woman', in Phillip Mallett, ed., *Thomas Hardy in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 363–73.
- ¹⁶ Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 58.
- ¹⁷ Charles Bernstein, *Content's Dream* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2001), p. 231.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p. 270.
- ¹⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. C. Smith (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 386.
- ²⁰ Annie Ramel, 'The Medusean Eye in Thomas Hardy', *The Thomas Hardy Review*, 19 (2017), 84.
- ²¹ Thomas, *Thomas Hardy and Desire*, pp. 171, 172.
- ²² Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. A. Smock (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), p. 172.

- ²³ Louisa Hall, 'An Alternative to the Architectural Elegy', *Victorian Poetry*, 50 (2012), 208.
- ²⁴ Ibid., pp. 210, 213.
- ²⁵ Ibid., p. 224.
- ²⁶ Ellen Anne Lanzano, *Hardy: The Temporal Poetics* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 113, 114.
- ²⁷ Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller', in *Illuminations*, trans. H. Zohn (London: Pimlico, 1999), 84.
- ²⁸ Trudi Tate, ed., *Women, Men and the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 4, 6.
- ²⁹ Berger, *Thomas Hardy and Visual Structures*, 139.
- ³⁰ Hilary Thompson, 'Time and its Countermeasures', in S. Ross, ed., *Modernism and Theory* (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 96.
- ³¹ Jacques Derrida, *Memoires for Paul de Man*, trans. C. Lindsay (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 58.
- ³² Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Complete French Poems*, trans. A. Poulin (St Paul: Graywolf Press, 2002), pp. 25, 35.
- ³³ *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. A. McNeillie, 6 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1994), Vol. 4, p. 474.

‘THE TWO BROTHERS’ AND MIDSUMMER DIVINATION: DORSET FOLKLORE IN *THE WOODLANDERS*

PETER ROBSON

‘The Two Brothers’

In chapter three of *The Woodlanders*, Mr Melbury may be found restlessly pacing his garden in the early hours of the morning. On being discovered and questioned by his wife he is not, at first, very forthcoming as to the source of his anxiety.

‘The lady at the Great House?’

‘No.’

‘The turnpike bonds?’

‘No.’

‘The ghosts of the Two Brothers?’

He shook his head.¹

Melbury’s possible anxieties regarding the Great House Lady, Mrs Charmond, on whom most of his business depends, are understandable. So are any concerns for the viability of his turnpike bonds, a valuable source of income. But who are the Two Brothers and why should he be perturbed at the thought of their ghosts?

Anna Burton in her perceptive article on the significance of woodscapes within Hardy’s larger portrayal of landscape quotes a passage from an early edition of *The Woodlanders*, which identifies the site of the haunting by the Two Brothers and which also, by the use of the term ‘fratricides’, suggests why the ghosts are likely to be malignant.² The passage reads as follows: ‘The mare paced along [...] towards Tutcombe Bottom, intensely dark now with overgrowth, and popularly supposed to be haunted by the spirits of the fratricides exorcised from Hintock House’.³ Burton goes on to point out that, in later editions of the novel, in which Hardy sought to move the action away from the area of Melbury House, this passage was modified to make the setting less easily identifiable. The revised passage, then, reads: ‘The mare paced along [...] towards Marshcombe Bottom, intensely dark now with overgrowth, and popularly supposed to be haunted by spirits’ (*W*: 229). Burton also suggests that ‘The mention of the “fratricides”, though vague in itself, is Hardy’s invention’.⁴ Hardy’s alterations do indeed alter the identifiable

place names 'Tutcombe Bottom' and 'Hintock House' and, immediately before the quoted passage, they also eliminate a mention of 'Great Willy', Hardy's pseudonym for the real tree 'Billy Wilkins' in Melbury Park. But why should he also delete his reference to the exorcised fratricides unless this belief was an actual one which also gave a clue as to the setting for the descriptive passage? I shall now consider whether the Two Brothers belief was indeed Hardy's invention or whether it was a genuine local tradition.

The Cockstride Ghost

The story of the Two Brothers is recalled elsewhere in *The Woodlanders* in chapter nineteen, in which Fitzpiers is eliciting local stories and beliefs from Mr Melbury and his employees. He is told the standard story

of the spirits of the Two Brothers who had fought and fallen, and had haunted King's Hintock Court a few miles off till they were exorcised by the priest, and compelled to retreat to a swamp, whence they were returning to their old quarters at the Court at the rate of a cock's stride every New Year's Day, Old Style; hence the local saying, 'On new year's tide, a cock's stride.' (*W*: 135)

The form of the Two Brothers story is traditional and is an example of a genre of folk belief known as the 'cockstride ghost', in which the spirits of deceased wrongdoers are exorcised and confined to a specific place, usually a pool or swamp, from which they can only escape at the rate of one cockstride per year.

For example, Robert Fry of Yarty, East Devon, died in 1725 but after his burial the mourners are supposed to have returned to his house to find him sitting by the fireside. Some clergy were called to exorcise him and they conjured him into a withy bed, from which he may return at the rate of a cockstride a year.⁵ Similarly, a Squire Fulford haunted his former home in Dunsford, Devon, and was exorcised by the local parson to some sand by the river from which, every night, he takes one cockstride nearer to Fulford House.⁶ Stories of this kind, apart from three Somerset examples,⁷ all come from Devon or Cornwall and the Devon folklorist Mark Norman, in searching for Dorset cockstride ghosts, reported 'I have checked just shy of four hundred records of Dorset haunting and have found none'.⁸ Since Hardy's first wife, Emma, was born in Devon and lived for several years in Cornwall, there must

be some question as to whether Hardy might have heard a cockstride ghost story from her and appropriated it for use in *The Woodlanders*. There are, of course, several examples of Hardy's fiction which are set in Devon or Cornwall. Nevertheless, these stories, such as *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and 'The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid' contain no evidence of Hardy having used folklore from Devon or Cornwall, since these works draw on Dorset folklore, which is transposed to new settings.

The Brouning Brothers

The case for the traditional origin of the Two Brothers story is confirmed in a 1996 local history which not only records a Dorset cockstride ghost tradition involving two brothers but also situates it at Melbury House, the setting for the Two Brothers story in *The Woodlanders*.

A story concerning the Brouning family, our 15th century Lords of the Manor, has it that two brothers fought a duel and killed each other in the deer park; each year they take a 'cockstride' nearer to the House and when they get there the House will return to the Brounings.⁹

Given Hardy's extensive use of folklore and the popularity in Dorset of his stories, there are a few instances in which folklore from his stories has found its way into local tradition. Nevertheless, in this case, I believe that there are sufficient differences between Hardy's version of the Two Brothers belief and that recorded locally to demonstrate that they are separate iterations of the same tradition rather than an initial invention followed by a local adoption and reworking. Hence Hardy does not mention the name of the brothers nor the tradition of the house returning to their family. Barter, on the other hand, omits the site of the brothers' imprisoned spirits, i.e. the swamp, and also the exorcism element of the story. It is interesting that Barter gives the origin of the haunting as being the fifteenth century, since it is believed, given the exorcism element in cockstride ghost stories, that they might reflect Roman Catholic beliefs and thus date from the pre-Reformation period, i.e. prior to the mid-sixteenth century.

Hardy's Sources for the Two Brothers Story

On the face of it, Hardy is most likely to have heard the Two Brothers story from his mother, who was born at Melbury Osmond and who, as a young woman, was employed in domestic service under the patronage

of Lord Ilchester of Melbury House. Although Jemima would have had ample opportunity to learn of and pass on local traditions, Hardy might have obtained at least part of his material more directly since, in the late nineteenth century, Rebekah Owen recorded that ‘Often Mr Hardy has got traditions from old people who got them from old family servants of the great families, whose representatives now think that Mr Hardy ought not to have published them.’¹⁰ The ‘great families’ included the Ilchesters, of whom Hardy wrote in his short story ‘The First Countess of Wessex’ in *A Group of Noble Dames*. Owen also wrote: ‘Mr Hardy told me to-day, Nov 12, 1896, that he has known eight of Betty’s [the Countess’s] descendants, from whom he has learned little facts which – had he known them at the time – he should like to have put into the story’.¹¹

On completing ‘The First Countess of Wessex’ in 1891 Hardy wrote to Lord Lytton and, referring to *A Group of Noble Dames*, told him that he took this collection of stories in hand

in a sort of desperation during a fit of low spirits – making use of some legendary notes I had taken down from the lips of aged people in a remote part of the country, where traditions of the local families linger on & are remembered by the yeomen and peasantry long after they are forgotten by the families concerned.¹²

There can be little doubt that the story of the Two Brothers was among the traditions learned from Betty’s descendants or ‘taken down from the lips of aged people’. Therefore Mr Melbury might reasonably have been concerned at the prospect of meeting the ghosts in Melbury Park, although, since they walked on New Year’s Eve, he was unlikely to see them during the autumn months in which the early chapters of *The Woodlanders* are set.

Midsummer Divination

A second supernatural tradition recorded in *The Woodlanders* is that of Midsummer divination. In chapter twenty, Fitzpiers is looking over his garden gate on a summer evening and sees a group of young women passing by. His landlady tells him that ‘it being Old Midsummer Eve they were about to attempt some spell or enchantment which would afford them a glimpse of their future partners for life’ (*W*: 140). Hardy goes on to reveal that ‘the particular form of black art to be practised on this occasion was one connected with the sowing of hempseed, a handful

of which was carried by each girl' (*W*: 140). Unfortunately the Hintock girls' courage fails and they flee before the ritual is completed so that the reader is left unaware of the significance of hempseed in the divination. Hardy does write of Midsummer divination elsewhere, in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, where Mrs Penny recalls: 'I put the bread-and-cheese and beer quite ready, as the witch's book ordered, and I opened the door, and I waited till the clock struck twelve [...] and behold I could see through the door a little small man in the lane wi' a shoemaker's apron on.'¹³ Clearly Mrs Penny was using an alternative form of divination in an attempt to identify (successfully in her case) her future husband. In order to ascertain the nature of the hempseed divination attempted by the Hintock girls we must turn to the recollections of William Barnes, who writes:

A maiden will walk through the garden with a rake on her left shoulder, and throw hemp-seed over her right, saying, at the same time,

Hemp-seed, I set, hemp-seed I sow,
The man that is my true love come after me and mow.¹⁴

Barnes goes on to observe, rather cynically, 'It is said by many who have never tried it, and some who have, without effect, that the future husband of the girl in question will appear behind her with a scythe'.¹⁵ The use of hemp-seed in divination was first recorded in 1685, when the rhyme was very similar to that quoted by Barnes some one hundred and fifty years later.¹⁶

During the Hintock girls' attempt at hempseed divination one of their number has second thoughts. Hardy writes: "'I wish we had not thought of trying this," said another, "but had contented ourselves with the hole-digging to-morrow, and hearing our husbands' trades. It is too much like having dealings with the evil one to try to raise their forms"' (*W*: 141). The custom of divination by hole-digging is described in an 1871 entry in Hardy's notebooks, which reads: 'on old Midsr. noon dig a hole in the grass plot, & place your ear thereon precisely at 12. The occupation of your future husband will be revealed by the noises heard.'¹⁷

Folklore and Function

The practices and beliefs of the type which I have described might easily be regarded as 'quaint old customs' but to their participants

they had a serious aspect. Indeed they would not have been regarded by them as ‘folklore’ but as having a rational purpose. For instance, so far as marriage was concerned, a young woman’s prospects in life were heavily dependent upon her husband and therefore some knowledge of his identity, or at least his occupation, was much to be desired. This is emphasised by William Barnes in his study of Dorset matrimonial divination customs:

When we think on the consequences of a woman’s marriage – that she may be dragged into a long train of evils, and her heart be broken by a profligate or indolent partner – or be led smiling in well-being through life by a man of virtue and good sense [...] we cannot be surprised that young females hanker to know what sort of men the fates have given them.¹⁸

The anxiety of young women to obtain a husband at any cost is reflected in the rhyme which was used by them at St. Catherine’s Chapel, Milton Abbas

A husband, St. Catherine,
A *good* one, St. Catherine,
But ar-a-one better than
Nar-a-one, St. Catherine.¹⁹

St. Catherine was the patron saint of spinsters.

As far as Midsummer divination is concerned it should be noted that hemp can produce hallucinogenic substances, so its supposed ability to generate visions of future husbands need not seem too surprising. Particularly in Ireland, certain holes or caves have traditionally been regarded as entrances to the Underworld or to Purgatory, so a belief in the production of supernatural noise from holes at a particular time of the year may be understood. In this context we might also think of the ‘music barrow’ on Bincombe Down near Weymouth, where music was said to be heard from the apex at mid-day.²⁰

To return to The Two Brothers, I have mentioned that their story might represent the post-Reformation survival of a belief in the efficacy of exorcism by priests. Indeed, some cockstride stories actually insist that the exorcising priest should be a Roman Catholic one. In the Melbury Osmond version of the story the motif of the return of the Brouning family may reflect a theme in folklore whereby a former golden age will return one day. This idea underlies the various legends in which figures such as King Arthur or King Alfred sleep under a hill ready to awake when England is in danger.

NOTES

- ¹ Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders*, New Wessex Edition (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 35. Subsequent quotations are given from this addition and cited in parentheses in the text. Where another edition is used, this will be signalled by an endnote.
- ² Anna Burton, 'Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders* and a Silvicultural Tradition', *Hardy Society Journal*, 13.2 (2016), 56–65.
- ³ Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders* (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 254. This edition is based on the text of the first (1887) edition of *The Woodlanders*. The New Wessex edition is based on the text of the later (1912) Wessex edition which included Hardy's topographical alterations.
- ⁴ Burton, 'Silvicultural Tradition', p. 60.
- ⁵ Theo Brown, *The Fate of the Dead. A Study in Folk Eschatology in the West Country after the Reformation* (Ipswich: D. S. Brewer for The Folklore Society, 1979), p. 24.
- ⁶ Brown, *Fate of the Dead*, p. 25.
- ⁷ R. Patten and J. Patten, 'Dorset Cock-Stride Ghosts', *FLS News*, November 2012, p. 8.
- ⁸ Mark Norman, 'Cockstrides and Carriages', unpublished paper, Joint Conference of The Folklore Society and The Thomas Hardy Society, Dorchester, April 2014.
- ⁹ Charles H. S. Barter, *Melbury Osmond. The Parish and Its People* (Melbury Osmond?: privately published, 1996), p. 53.
- ¹⁰ Carl J. Weber, *Rebekah Owen and Thomas Hardy* (Waterville, Maine: Colby College Library, 1939), p. 73.
- ¹¹ Weber, *Rebekah Owen and Thomas Hardy*, p. 74.
- ¹² Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), vol. I, pp. 239–240.
- ¹³ Thomas Hardy, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, New Wessex Edition (London: Macmillan, 1990), p. 72.
- ¹⁴ William Barnes, 'Dorsetshire Customs, &c.', in William Hone, ed. *The Year Book of Daily Recreation and Information* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1832), p. 1175.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Iona Opie and Moira Tatem, *A Dictionary of Superstitions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 196.
- ¹⁷ Thomas Hardy, *The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Richard H. Taylor (London: Macmillan, 1978), p. 10.
- ¹⁸ Barnes, p. 1174.
- ¹⁹ John Symonds Udall, *Dorsetshire Folk-lore* (Hertford: The Author, 1922), p. 116.
- ²⁰ Udall, *Dorsetshire Folk-lore*, p. 151.

CALL FOR PAPERS: ***FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD***

**A Thomas Hardy Society Study Day in association with the
University of Exeter**

**Saturday, 13 April 2019 at 10.00am
The Corn Exchange, Dorchester**

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

Trish Ferguson (Liverpool Hope University)

Paul Niemeyer (Texas A&M International University)

Tony Fincham (The Thomas Hardy Society)

Angelique Richardson (University of Exeter) and Helen Angear
(University of Exeter and DCM)

2019 will mark the 145th anniversary of the publication of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, the novel whose success allowed Hardy to give up architecture and become a full-time writer. In December 1874 *The Spectator* surmised that ‘either George Eliot had written it, or she had found her match’. Hardy’s delineation of character was divisive from the outset. R.H. Hutton declared Sergeant Troy and Farmer Boldwood to be ‘conceived and executed with very great power’, while Henry James memorably stated that ‘the only things we believe in are the sheep and the dogs’. It is a tale of sexual hypocrisy, female emancipation and male insanity, yet also contains passages of sparkling wit and humour, the rustics and the rural countryside being ‘painted with the pen of a considerable artist’ according to one contemporary critic. The Thomas Hardy Society warmly invites proposals for twenty-minute presentations on any aspect of *Far From the Madding Crowd* which may include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual double standards
- Feminism versus misogyny
- The concept of ‘Wessex’
- Rural values and the organic pastoral
- Realism within fiction
- Nature and empathy
- Science and cosmology
- Eros and Thanatos

To support attendance at this day designed to appeal to academics and general enthusiasts alike, the Society is once again offering two

bursaries of £50 each to students who would otherwise find travel or accommodation costs prohibitive. Please send proposals of not more than 350 words, and no later than 28 February 2019, along with a brief description, if you are a student, of how a bursary would benefit your studies, to Dr Tracy Hayes (THS Website and Social Media Advisor) at malady22@ntlworld.com

JUDE'S CORNER

TRACY HAYES

Welcome to this issue's column for students of Hardy, where we seek to disseminate the aims, knowledge and achievements of many passionate students and early career researchers worldwide. This July saw Dorchester hosting the 23rd International and 50th Anniversary Festival and Conference of the Thomas Hardy Society, and the sheer number of student and ECR delegates was both inspiring and heartwarming. The International call for papers panels were dominated by young academics from Australia, France, Canada, the United States, Singapore and China as well as the UK taking Hardy studies into exciting new directions. This year sessions were held in the mornings so as not to clash with afternoon excursions, which ensured that each speaker addressed a large and appreciative audience. Subjects included Little Father Time as a changeling child; the failure of immigration and imperial domesticity; Hardy's poetry, Hardy's musical memories and Hardy's rhythms; misogyny and the homosocial; colour; criminality; Soviet propaganda and censorship; education; boys' adventure stories; and a whole panel dedicated to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* where we heard papers on labour, body language, and bodily needs and functions in the novel.

Not every student who attended gave a paper; some came to exchange ideas and to engage with peers, and so the Postgraduate Seminar which took place on the Tuesday afternoon was a particularly enriching and rewarding event. Steph Meek, a first year PhD student at the University of Exeter, described her research into the Victorian circulating libraries and asked to what extent informal censorship had a productive effect on the development of the novel. Hélène Edelin-Joubert, currently finishing the third year of her PhD at Nantes University, is focussing on bodily needs and functions, including eating, drinking, breathing, sleeping, excretion and blood circulation, in *Tess*, Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, and *Foul Play* by Charles Reade. Ash Green, who is currently undertaking the third year of her PhD at the University of Melbourne, notes that novelists portrayed female criminals far more realistically than they were represented in the professional medical/psychological discourses of the nineteenth century. She studies female criminality and notions of degeneration in Victorian fiction and finds the reconciliation of Tess's purity with her status as a convicted criminal problematic. Emily Halliwell-McDonald

from the University of Toronto is investigating the aesthetics of labour in the Victorian novel and referring to Marxist discourse. She finds it interesting that while reports of working conditions proliferated during the nineteenth century, work itself wasn't truly represented in literature until the end of the period. Katrina Sire works and researches at Claremont Graduate University in California and is interested in colour and how it shapes narratives. She made the point that architecture and light are actually colour and hue. Becky Spence is an AHRC-funded PhD student at the University of Lancaster who is exploring what it actually means to 'lend a sympathetic ear'. Her work concentrates upon the physiological and imaginative models of sympathy and how they inform ways of listening; it views Hardy as being in dialogue with the Victorian evolutionary philosopher Herbert Spencer.

Yu Jing is based at the National University of Singapore where the subject of her research is Hardy and cosmopolitanism in the wider Victorian cultural landscape. She is interested in Hardy's engagement with globalization and Englishness, and how cultures interact with each other in his novels. However, also crucial to her work is examining the paucity of contemporary Hardy studies in Singapore, a line of enquiry she intends to pursue with vigour! Xiangping Jiang, originally from China but currently a visiting academic researcher at the University of Cambridge, is studying space and imagination in the Victorian novel, with particular reference to Hardy, Dickens, the Brontës, and George Eliot. Alyssa Leavell is a PhD student at the University of Georgia in the U.S., and is working on the short story collection *A Group of Noble Dames*. She is exploring Hardy's relationship with his publishers at the time of writing this volume of tales, and how censorship affected the textual changes he made. Helen Alexander is a part-time PhD student currently affiliated to the University of Hull, where she is looking at music psychology and special needs/music therapy in relation to music and sound in Hardy's life and work. Intriguingly she is compiling a musical biography of Hardy in order to create a much larger musical picture of the author than has previously been available. Emma Burris-Janssen, a familiar and very friendly face from a number of previous Hardy conferences, is a PhD candidate at the University of Connecticut where she is examining representations of abortion in nineteenth and twentieth century literature. And Sam Crain is based at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis where she is working on folk practices and folk narratives in Hardy and the Brontës. She wishes to expand upon

the point that even though the fairy/folk tales used by these authors are rich in metaphors and thus ripe for allegorical interpretation, they are not simply used as a means to an end.

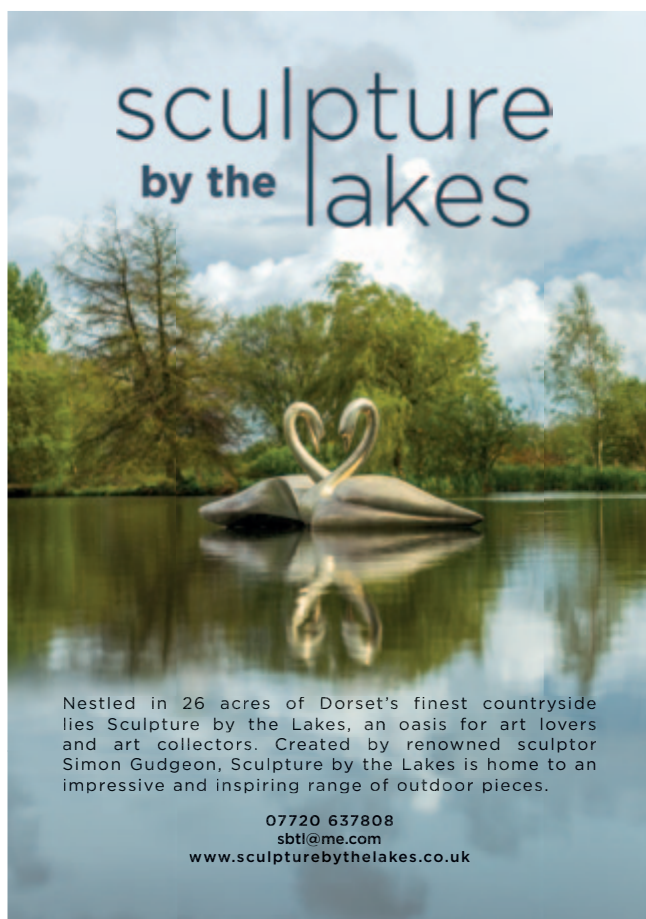
We were honoured to be joined during the seminar by such esteemed academics as Phillip Mallett, Jane Thomas, Angelique Richardson, Keith Wilson, and Roger Ebbatson, who imparted valuable advice regarding the life/study/work balance, and who commented on how encouraging is the sheer breadth and depth of Hardy studies among a new generation of scholars. The Society prides itself on promoting and disseminating the work of students worldwide, regardless of age, level of education, or life circumstances, and it was a privilege to award no less than seven student bursaries during the conference to researchers who would otherwise have found the cost of fees, travel and accommodation prohibitive. It was an enormous pleasure to be able to meet and share experiences with all who took part throughout the week, and I am looking forward to welcoming even more new scholars at future events.

Hardy was once again well represented at the annual BAVS (British Association for Victorian Studies) conference, this year held at the University of Exeter at the end of August. The topic was ‘Victorian Patterns’, and there were a number of familiar Hardyan faces among the delegates. Emma Burris-Janssen spoke on manly men, New Women, abortion and Britishness; Stephen Whiting from the University of Leeds gave a talk entitled ‘Women Reading and Unreadable Women in Thomas Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*’; Karin Koehler, lecturer at Bangor University and the new THS journal editor, presented a paper on gender and graphological discourse; Rena Jackson discussed failed immigration in Hardy’s short story ‘The Interlopers at the Knap’; Yuejie Liu from the University of Southampton, and a speaker at the inaugural Hardy Study Day in 2017, elaborated on ecological morality in *The Woodlanders*; Professor Roger Ebbatson of Lancaster University described window patterns in Hardy’s poetry; Natalie Jones from the University of Warwick offered a paper called ‘Tense Tessellations: The Dance of Maternal Resistance in Hardy’s *Return of the Native* and Eliot’s *Adam Bede*’; and Professor Angelique Richardson along with Helen Angear, both of the University of Exeter, ran a workshop which introduced the work currently being undertaken for the Hardy Archive Project, in conjunction with the Dorset County Museum.

After another successful THS Study Day earlier this year which focussed on *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, our study day for 2019, to be held on

Saturday April 13th, will celebrate what is my own personal favourite novel – *Far From the Madding Crowd*. The call for papers appears elsewhere in this journal. Open to all Hardy enthusiasts, I would like to encourage students in particular to send in proposals, since they have the chance to be awarded a bursary of £50 for the event. Please feel free to contact either myself or Andrew Hewitt, our THS Student Representative, with any student-related news or events in the world of Hardy studies, including details of your own research projects, so that the ongoing work of students everywhere can achieve the exposure and recognition that it deserves.

TRACY HAYES



MRS YEOBRIGHT'S LAST WALK – A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

JULIAN HERRINGTON

An immersion into the natural beauty of Dorset is all I expected to enjoy from this walk where '[t]he leaves of the hollyhocks hung like half-closed umbrellas, the sap almost simmered in the stems' (*RN*: 272).¹ The furze-cutter I knew that I would no longer see. We were reminded how Egdon Heath was once a heath with little in the way of trees as we left Hardy's Cottage, which was our first port of call having gathered at Thorncombe Wood Car Park. Constantly I tried to imagine how the heath once looked without the numerous trees and where limp brambles were 'cut from the bush during his [Mrs Yeobright's son's] halt and laid out straight beside the path' (*RN*: 270) to become furze-faggots, whatever they might be? On the knoll beside Clym's house I tried to imagine the 'perpetual moan' (*RN*: 272) of the pine trees as Tony Fincham read this passage. But no longer can they be viewed from a distance 'as a black spot in the air above the crown of the hill' (*RN*: 271) due to the backdrop of trees. The journey was almost complete.

I first found Thomas Hardy in my late teenage years and learned to love Dorset without hardly a visit – family holidays being taken in Devon and Cornwall driving through Dorset. Reading his books released me from the scientific rigours of my studies. But I then found the Paddington Bear stories for light relief. Amusing but equally as descriptive, particularly where Michael Bond painted the picture of a brown bear on a trip into the country, taking the Brown family through a gate into the field at a tight bend. He was following the amber B-road on the ordnance survey map to which a similarly coloured dried piece of marmalade had become stuck! But I digress; this was my first foray of my intention to return to Hardy's writings since then, touching only his poetry in the interval.

I arrived early at Cull-peppers Dish car park and read the 'Journey along the Heath' to set me in the mood and was enjoying the glorious description as the heat of the day's sun started to penetrate the car window; not though as hot as that fateful day on 31 August. I decided to loosen up and explore the Heath taking a footpath which lead down to cross a larger track which I discovered to be on the Hardy Way from a way sign. This is now very much part of my retirement project.

Returning to the car park I met the group that had since gathered to be warmly greeted by Tony and other intrepid explorers. To my surprise this was not a society made up of local enthusiasts but people had travelled long distances – West Midlands and Kent, which is my home county, to mention two. Helen and her fiancé had travelled from Manchester and I was further surprised to find that Helen is studying for a PhD on Hardy. I began to wish I had chosen to eat more fish the previous week.

As we walked in our twos and threes, I got to know the members of our group whose gaiety and friendliness helped me to settle my fears and feelings of intellectual inadequacy – Hardy would have been less clumsy with his description of these feelings, I feel. I listened to the gems of information dropped in my ear as we flitted from one aspect to another like ‘ephemerons [...] passing their time in mad carousal’ (RN: 270), reliving the scenes from Hardy with readings also from his poetry as we paused along the way.

There is not space to write of all the memories of my day. However, I plucked up courage at the end to talk to Hugh who had described himself earlier as a retired academic but still a workaholic. I did so as we descended from the moaning pines to discover Okers Pool tucked away amidst the bracken and heather – a highlight for me. He talked about Mrs Yeobright and her character. I felt I understood her personality well and why she stepped out that fateful day.

I can assure you that I was successfully re-immersed in Hardy – possibly a bit of a baptism of fire – and thank you all for making the day so enjoyable and I hope this description of my day encourages others to come along. Especial thanks to Tony for his time and for sharing his knowledge. I have been listening to Gustav Holst’s Egdon Heath for inspiration whilst writing this – another discovery!

SEPTEMBER 2018

NOTES

¹ All references to *The Return of the Native* are taken from the following edition: Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, eds. Penny Boumelha and Tony Slade (London: Penguin Classics, 1999).

ORIGINAL POETRY

MEETING ON BEENY CLIFF

On Beeny Cliff the flying irised rain
Turns to a battering onslaught, sideways on.
I crouch for shelter 'neath a clean-cut stile
In up-to-the-minute rain gear, crackling bright,
And swig some Lilt, the 'totally tropical' taste,
For hikers' handy use conveniently cased.

The muffled sound of hoof-beats pricks my ear:
That airy, air-blue gown! Ah! Can it be?
Yes, 'tis the ghost of Emma riding high!
Startled, she checks, – each hair stands stiff with fright –
Then urges, keen, her quaking steed to flee
This uncouth sprite of far futurity.

Rising, I rub my eyes, I shake my head:
Are all we nought but wraiths, both quick and dead?

Mavis Pilbeam c.1994, remembering my first walk on Beeny in 1988.

Revised 30 years later, July, 2018



BY HER GRAVE
ADRIAN STEELE

By this boundary
we are stopped, stilled, silenced –
an end of time and place for us
marked in gravel and tidied stone,
and any sense of your presence
must be only imagination.

But if such imagining could be strong enough
to bring clear a word, a glimpse –
would that ease this grieving,
bring comfort to know you are just as you were
though elsewhere?

There – I seem to see you,
hear you speak my name ...

Oh, my love, my love –
what more or otherwise
might I reply?

Adrian Steele

TWO YEAR IDYLL
NEVILLE OLSBERG

Can it really be two whole years?
Two whole years of perfect married bliss
Of happiness, supreme gladness, and sometimes tears,
Of heartbeats, heartbreaks that we'd never miss

So we entered this delightful married whirl,
Me a boy and you a stripling girl
Who regarded marriage as just a mere event
And not as a thing by angels sent

My very heart was in your tiny hand
Till you turned it over you didn't understand
That my love is the greatest thing of all
And so it shall remain until the final call

Then sobered and strengthened you freed your mind
To become noble, sweet, trustworthy, kind
Perfected yourself to suit my mode of life
And are now everything I want of a wife.

Written to Margaret Olsberg in 1944 (married in 1942) by Neville Olsberg (Officer Bomb Aimer / Navigator, Bomber Command, Squadron 103: Lancasters Second World War 1939–45).

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REPORTS ON EVENTS

The 23rd International Thomas Hardy Conference and Festival: 'The Joys of Hardy's Dorset'

What a way to celebrate fifty years of the Thomas Hardy Society – with a festival and conference launched in the Palladian splendour of Kingston Maurward and continuing through Mixen Lane into the very heart of Hardy's Casterbridge.

Once again, scholars and devotees of our great writer were able to immerse themselves in the beauty of the Dorset landscape of which he wrote so vividly, and to top it all they not only enjoyed a showing of the 1967 film of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, they were able to meet and celebrate the eightieth birthday of Terence Stamp, who starred in the film as the dashing and scheming Sergeant Troy.

In a series of carefully choreographed events the conference was to go on to be just as memorable as that of 1968 with its magnificent Victorian summer fair held in the grounds of Kingston Maurward House in temperatures hitting 30 degrees. But despite the heat and a good deal of quaffing of specially brewed Hardy's cyder (stet) nothing disrupted the great celebratory atmosphere.



23rd International Conference and Festival: Opening Weekend at Kingston Maurward



23rd International Conference and Festival: Hardy Country Fair

Blacksmiths and sculptors hammered and chiselled away, while a ring of Victorian-clad children danced around the maypole. However, all Alastair Chisholm's attempts to emulate the story of the Mayor of Casterbridge failed miserably. Nobody, it seemed, wanted to sell their wife or even their husband. Marilyn Leah made a brave attempt to sell Andrew, who strutted his stuff for some ten long minutes, showing off a fine pair of legs in his best summer shorts, but there were no bidders, and Marilyn had to buy him back! Whatever would TH have thought?

And again Kingston Maurward, now an agricultural college, provided a lakeside setting for the Hardy Players' performance of *The Trumpet Major* – the setting was magical, the performance terrific, even if the seating arrangements, for many on the grass, were somewhat unconventional.

The week was launched at a dinner during which speakers including BBC journalist Kate Adie, novelist Tracy Chevalier, Professor Keith Wilson and the principal of Kingston Maurward College, Luke Rake, extolled the beauties of Dorset and Hardy's work and how much they had influenced their lives.

Stuart Tunstall, who was responsible for discovering the altar piece designed by Hardy in All Saints Church, Windsor said that reading *The Mayor of Casterbridge* at his state school led him to read all the novels before he went up to Oxford, where he had to admit that the only novelist



23rd International Conference and Festival: Keynote Lecture by Professor Jane Thomas

he knew a great deal about was Thomas Hardy. Clearly, the university thought that was no bad thing for he won a place to read English. But then he became a management consultant and went to live in Windsor. He was shown some manuscripts that were hidden for some thirty, years which lead to his discovery of the Hardy 'Re-redos'. 'What a thrill that was.' He said it had now become a destination point for visitors to Windsor, and he thanked the society for sponsoring the restoration work.

Kate Adie, who now lives in Dorset, described it as a very special place. She was born and brought up in the industrial North East where there was plenty of work in the mines and the shipyards, while Dorset was bypassed by the industrial revolution so that agricultural workers struggled to earn a pittance on the land. In Hardy's day Dorset was one of the poorest areas in the country while the North East thrived. Hardy shone a light on the agricultural struggles as well as on the glories of the landscape. On VJ day, she said, the BBC had broadcast live the Voice of Rural England from the Piddle Valley

Tracy Chevalier who has written extensively about the Jurassic Coast said that she and her husband had been drawn to the county and bought a cottage in Plush some fourteen years ago. 'It is the most beautiful place', she said. 'If you have not visited, you must.'

Mike Irwin, former chairman of the society, urged younger members to come forward and join the seriously depleted council of management,



23rd International Conference and Festival: The Mellstock Band – photo courtesy of Howard J Payton

saying that Hardy's great strength was his diversity which attracted students from around the world. 'The society is looking for new leaders', he said.

Luke Rake, the principal of the college, said there had been great changes in the agricultural community in Hardy's day and there were even more today, but Hardy's view of both the land, animals and new methods remained today as students were taught to respect them all. The evening concluded with a concert of Hardy's poems set to music, and sung by the Wessex Consort.

It would be impossible to record the entire week – the superb selection of lectures, opened by academic director, Professor Jane Thomas, who enthralled the audience. What was made clear by all of them was that Hardy and his Dorset are special. Some of the lectures are printed in this journal.

Other highlights included a fascinating walk around Casterbridge – from the scene of broken marriage promises – All Saints and All Souls, to the bridge on the River Frome where Henchard saw his effigy, to Mixen Lane, to the hangman's cottage and more – all dramatically brought to life by Alastair Chisholm.

The evenings were awash with entertainments: the Leahs on Hardy's relationship with the Thorneycrofts; the always outstanding Tim Laycock with the Mellstock Band – straight out of *Under the Greenwood Tree* –



23rd International Conference and Festival: Terence Stamp and THS Secretary Mike Nixon – photo courtesy of Howard J Payton

not forgetting the late night poetry readings with Tony Fincham, the first of which took place in Hardy's drawing room at Max Gate – magic!

And of course the showing of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, topped only by the personal appearance of Terence Stamp, who amazed everyone when he said he was left-handed but had to do the skilful seduction scene with his sword in his right hand. 'That was a bit tricky', he confessed. Well, who would have known, except perhaps the beautiful Julie Christie, who must have been genuinely terrified despite being smitten. A packed house helped him to celebrate his eightieth birthday and a thrilling end to a fiftieth anniversary conference.

BRENDA PARRY

The West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust vintage running day: *Return of the Native* tour (12 August 2018)

For the second year running there was a link with the Hardy Society. Last year, two vehicles made a special trip to Melbury House, an area featured in Hardy's novel *The Woodlanders*. This year we headed out to Egdon Heath, where in the delightful countryside around Cull-peppers Dish we discovered areas featured in *The Return of the Native* and associations with *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The route took in Hardy's home at Max Gate and, further on, Clouds Hill, the home of Lawrence of Arabia. The

Hardy Society gave a commentary on the two coach trips at 11.45 and 14.00.

Sue Clarke reports on the morning:

11.30 a.m. and adults and children are all on board for the morning Hardy Tour. The bus, a former Western National 3307 (AFJ 727T), a Bristol LH611 with narrow Plaxton coachwork, is full. The rain is falling heavily and has been for several hours. We set off with driver and conductor – this year mainly to explore the country of *The Return of the Native*, the novel written 140 years ago. We travel south east through ‘Casterbridge’; then past Max Gate, Hardy’s final home; and then, seen through the developing mist on the windows, Woodsford Castle appears on the left. The weir in which Eustacia and Damon were both drowned is believed to lie below this building. This area is also *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* country. Here, Angel and Tess reputedly spent their happiest times together whilst living in the ‘Valley of the Great Dairies’ and they were married at *Froom-Everard* (West Stafford) church.

Soon we reach Moreton, known especially for the Frampton family and their relation to T.E. Lawrence, better known as ‘Lawrence of Arabia’. The coach pulls up outside the cemetery where Lawrence is buried and we step off. The lychgate structure was originally placed at the entrance to Moreton House Gardens circa 1800 and was installed here in 1950. In his later years, whilst living in Dorset, Lawrence was a great friend of Thomas and Florence Hardy and, as we are close to his birth date on 16 August 1888 (130 years ago) and in recognition of the centenary of the First World War as well as his work with the Arab Revolt, we take the opportunity to visit his grave. The grave displays Oxford University’s motto.

Onwards we travel; this green landscaped route could have been the one along which Angel and Tess brought the milk to put on the London train. We then pass Wellbridge (Woolbridge) Manor, where they spent their disastrous wedding night. Next, we turn into Bovington Camp, with its collection of tanks, before passing Clouds Hill, Lawrence’s home from 1923 to 1935 (the year of his fatal motorcycle accident). Robert Crawley, Chairman of WHOTT explains that ‘he died several days later of fatal wounds to his head and it was as a result of this that crash helmets were introduced for motor cyclists’. Interestingly, these did not become compulsory for motorcyclists until 1973.

The bus turns right over a cattle grid and the landscape changes as we enter the eastern part of Hardy’s Egdon Heath where most of the action



WHOTT Vintage Bus and Coach Running Day, 12 August 2018 – photo courtesy of David Ray

of *Return of the Native* is set. In Hardy's novel, the Heath becomes a dark and somewhat mysterious place with a character of its own. We briefly stop amongst the gorse and fir trees close by Cull-peppers Dish at the lonely house where Eustacia and Clym Yeobright reputedly lived, but it is too wet to get off the bus at this point. Onwards and onto the road where, to the left and nearer to the river, Mrs Yeobright lived at Blooms-End and where The Travellers Rest Inn stood by the roadside. To the right, across the heath, Captain Vye resided with his granddaughter Eustacia. Rainbarrows loom immediately to the right. These are three tumuli on the most prominent of which Eustacia is seen in the distance by Diggory Venn – and we are introduced to her in the novel. Here the local inhabitants are seen carrying bundles of furze for the Guy Fawkes celebrations and Eustacia later meets Damon Wildeve and, at yet a different time, Clym Yeobright. Here, at the end of the novel, after Eustacia's death, Clym starts his preaching career. In Hardy's poetry this is almost certainly the site of the beacon referred to in 'The Alarm', set around the period of the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

Not far away, at the edge of the heath, is the Cottage where Thomas Hardy was born in 1840. We are, at this point, about two miles from Dorchester and we are now travelling over Grey's Bridge and the River Frome. Many of Hardy's many fictional characters are reputed to have travelled this way, including Fanny Robin and Michael Henchard. Then, all too soon, we are motoring up the historic High Street of 'Casterbridge'

to return to the Top o' Town coach park. Here, by the roundabout, the statue of the great author and poet, sculpted by Eric Kennington, looks west. The same artist created the effigy of Lawrence which can be seen in the small Saxon church of St Martin in Wareham, but we will have to leave this to visit another day, when there is more time to spend. There are many Hardy associations to explore further, too interesting to miss.

The date for next year's annual Vintage Running Day is set for Sunday August 11th 2019.

The new book *Where Did They Run*, compiled by Geoff Hobbs, is available via the website: < www.busmuseum.org.uk/ >

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REVIEWS

Galia Benziman, *Thomas Hardy's Elegiac Poetry and Prose: Codes of Bereavement*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. vii + 173 pp. ISBN 978-1-137-50712-9. £79.99.

If, as Donovan Schaefer has suggested, borderlines may be construed as sites for the production of affect, then surely one of the most productive sites of all is that border-zone where the living encounter the dead.¹ Odysseus, face to face with the shades he has summoned from Erebus, is filled with pity, longing, grief, and fear. The dead have feelings too: pride (Antiope), grief and shame (Agamemnon), anger (Ajax), bitterness (Achilles), even delight (Achilles again, elated by what he learns from Odysseus about the courageous deeds of his son Neoptolemus).² Poets have long recognised the creative potential of such encounters with the dead. It is by contemplating the 'mute' occupants of a country churchyard that the speaker of Gray's famous *Elegy* (1751) finds his own voice. And the speaker of Philip Larkin's 'To write one song' (1945) declares that to 'visit the dead' is practically a pre-requisite for poetic composition: 'Headstone and wet cross, | Paths where the mourners tread, | A solitary bird, | These call up the shade of loss, | Shape word to word'.³

As Galia Benziman demonstrates in her absorbing new book, *Thomas Hardy's Elegiac Prose and Poetry: Codes of Bereavement* (2018), for the speakers of Hardy's poems and the characters of his fiction, it takes no special effort or preparation to mingle with the dead – no libations of milk and honey, no lingering by headstones ... Quite the opposite, in fact: 'Hardy often envisions the dead as nearby presences [...]. For Hardy, to be alive is to be surrounded by ephemeral dead forms [...] the dead are always present' (pp. 39–40). Visits to the burial ground are not abjured, but undertaken in a spirit of companionship, even conviviality. When the speaker of 'Paying Calls' goes to visit 'some friends', he finds them 'all at home', despite the lovely midsummer weather that might have tempted them out; only in the final stanza is it made clear that these friends are dead and buried, their 'home' a graveyard. As Benziman says, 'the presentation is so serene and undramatic that the fact of the friends' death evokes no profound emotion'; what the poem creates instead is a 'sense of continuity in separation' (p. 42).

Benziman's purpose is to deepen our understanding of Hardy as a key figure in the development of modern elegy:

Pre-twentieth century elegy often delineates a process undergone by the mourner to reach some consolation. [...] Hardy plays a vital role in the transition from a poetics of finite, healthy mourning to a representation of the relationship between the dead and the living as blurred and ambivalent. (p. 15)

Other critics have examined Hardy as elegist, focusing naturally enough on the *Poems of 1912–13*. Benziman draws in particular on Jahan Ramazani and Clifton R. Spargo, while going beyond their emphasis on ‘Hardy’s commitment to remembering the dead’ (p. 5) to explore the ambiguities and inconsistencies of his approach to elegy. As rich and fascinating as they are, the *Poems of 1912–13* – which Benziman, as a textual rather than biographical critic, carefully designates the ‘spousal elegies’, rather than label them with the name of a real person – are only a small part of Hardy’s elegiac output. Benziman makes reference to over one hundred Hardy poems, including many that were not familiar to me, such as ‘The Wistful Lady’, ‘The Re-enactment’, ‘The Workbox’, ‘The Pink Frock’. Not all the poems she chooses are ‘elegies’ as traditionally understood, but all ‘describe bereavement and address dilemmas related to memory and the writer’s elegiac commitment’ (p. 5). (A complete list of works by Hardy mentioned in the text would have been helpful; the index gives each title separately, but there is no overall list, as is sometimes provided in an entry under ‘Hardy – Works’ or the equivalent.) Benziman argues for the concept of elegy as *mode* rather than form. Her scope therefore includes novels and stories as well as poems. Her book thus offers a nuanced and comprehensive reading of Hardy as elegist, and makes a convincing case for his significance in the development of elegy away from canonical models like Shelley’s ‘Adonais’ or Tennyson’s ‘In Memoriam’ and towards twentieth-century figures such as Auden and Heaney.

The ongoing presence of the dead among the living is one factor in the ‘blurring’ of their relationship. Sometimes, this blurring is felt as positive – the dead may still be counted as friends, as in ‘Paying Calls’, or seen as giving life to the trees and grass, as in ‘Transformations’. At other times, however, it is cause for trepidation. Benziman’s second chapter (the Introduction is Chapter One) details many negative instances in Hardy of seeing the dead. The ghost of her husband’s former wife is a constant, critical presence to the female speaker of ‘The Wistful Lady’, while in ‘The Re-enactment’, the speaker unintentionally witnesses the intense drama of a tryst between two phantoms, the former occupant of

her house and his lover. When her own lover arrives, she finds that the ghosts have 'left no room for later passion': 'So came it that our fervours | Did quite fail...'. For Benziman, the absorption by an 'uninvited' ghost of the speaker's 'erotic energy' is part of a larger pattern whereby 'death's continued presence is often depressing rather than sustaining' (p. 54).

In Hardy, the dead are not only seen but heard; Benziman's third chapter is about Hardy's commitment to letting the dead speak. Mourning's status as an ethical act is a function of its focus on the lost other. An important aspect of Hardy's modernisation of elegy is his recognition of the *self-centredness* of the mourner/survivor. It is the perceived selfishness of the living that causes the dead, in Hardy's poems, to so often speak so bitterly. As Benziman points out, the dead resent the living 'for not acting on [their] behalf, for usurping their place and for giving them up far too soon' (p. 3). It is a development that greatly complicates the affective tone of Hardy's writing for and about the dead; if traditional elegy figures the 'return from the dead' as a 'fulfilment of survivors' desires to be reunited with their loved ones', in Hardy it is more often 'portrayed as an emotional or practical encumbrance that brings out our ambivalence vis-à-vis the dead' (p. 64). The dead are justified in accusing the living of neglect, while the living are inextricably mired in guilt.

The motif of the 'return of the dead' is as prevalent in Hardy's fiction as in his poetry. In her fourth chapter Benziman turns from poetry to prose to explore the elegiac qualities of a number of novels and stories, pointing out how 'Hardy's allegedly dead characters control and manipulate their survivors in various ways' (p. 80). Sergeant Troy, for example, deliberately stages his return to create 'the gruesome impression that he is indeed a cadaver returned from the grave' (p. 79), so as to shock Boldwood's guests into silence and fear, while Sir Blount's 'patriarchal supervision from afar' of his wife Viviette in *Two on a Tower* (1882) 'does not end with his "death"; indeed it is augmented' (p. 81). *Desperate Remedies* (1871) receives detailed scrutiny as an early demonstration of 'how one is permanently burdened by the real and figurative presence of the dead' (p. 90).

Benziman's fifth chapter reflects on the uses and benefits of death. Hardy may be the first poet in the elegiac tradition to dwell explicitly on the meaning of 'the material and artistic profit that the living may gain from the dead'. Benziman suggests that, for Hardy, 'to benefit from death and use the dead may be alternative means of enduring mortality'

(p. 113). Hence, the child-speakers of 'Unrealised' are seen to enjoy 'the benefits of orphanhood' – Mother won't ever be cross with them again for staying out in the snow or being late for school – because they have not yet realised its 'dismal implications' (p. 111), and the widow of 'Seen by the Waits' celebrates her new-found freedom from an unworthy husband by dancing ecstatically. It is 'in stark defiance of elegiac convention' to suggest that death may at times be 'convenient for the living' (p. 112), but this is typical of Hardy's commitment to exploring every possible side of the condition of bereavement. The dead are, of course, vulnerable to 'cynical and mercenary' (p. 116) uses too. In 'The Son's Portrait', the widow of a young soldier, now remarried, sells the portrait he gave her as a keepsake to a junk shop for a pittance, for the value of the frame – 'The picture's nothing'. This being Hardy, the next person to stumble across the discarded portrait is the soldier's mother. By contrast, the dead of 'Transformations' become an unproblematic source of new life ('Portion of this yew | Is a man my grandsire knew...'). This perspective, in which the dead are 'fused into other things' (p. 128), remaining 'a useful part of this world' (p. 130) rather than jumbled up in its rubbish like the discarded portrait of the soldier-son, accounts for the occasionally 'optimistic and carefree' (p. 129) tone of some of Hardy's poems on the subject.

In a final chapter Benziman considers the role of memory. Traditional elegy valorises memory and denounces forgetting 'as ungrateful and immoral, a betrayal of the dead' (p. 134) Benziman notes how in some poems, Hardy shows 'admiration for mourners committed to memory', but as ever, this is only part of the story: forgetting may have a positive value if it helps to relieve pain (p. 134). Hardy is also keenly aware of the unreliability of memory, which fades and is subject to falsification, and to the dangers of prolonged 'immersion in the past', which can be 'self-annihilating' (p. 140).

Some of Benziman's readings are quite brief, serving mainly to point out how a given poem fits into her overall account of Hardy's work. Others are more detailed, and bring numerous strands of argument together. Benziman's readings of 'The Shadow on the Stone' (pp. 46–47) and 'The Son's Portrait' (pp. 116–19) I found particularly absorbing. The latter poem, for example, allows scope for a consideration of the late-Victorian turn towards utilitarian notions of the superfluity of mourning, against the 'urge to feel deep and prolonged grief' (p. 117), embodied by the mother in the poem, who is prompted to buy the portrait of her

soldier-son discarded by his widow and bury it. Benziman uses the post-Freudian model of mourning developed by Abraham and Torok to explore why the mother *buries* the portrait, rather than retaining it (p. 118). She then draws out the ambiguity at the heart of the poem:

In ‘The Son’s Portrait’, the responses of the fickle widow and the loving mother appear to be in marked contrast, yet the poem subtly undermines the dichotomy, hinting that the living, even while devoted to the deceased, are always guilty in relation to them. The mother shares one crucial attribute with her daughter-in-law; she, too, is still alive, hence she can never be entirely faithful to her dead son. (p. 119)

Two works that are missing from Benziman’s book, though they might have come within her scope, are *The Trumpet-Major* and ‘The Melancholy Hussar of the German Legion’. The narrator’s anxiety to remain faithful to the dead is strongly marked in both, and the title of the short story references a concept, ‘melancholy’, whose development by Freud into ‘melancholia’ Benziman discusses at some length. With respect to the scholarly apparatus, I question the need for each chapter to have its own separate list of Works Cited; the bibliography at the end is sufficient, and the effect is to make each chapter seem like a stand-alone essay, when in fact, the book’s overall structure and organisation are strong and coherent.

Thomas Hardy’s Elegiac Prose and Poetry may be recommended for its account of the development of elegy and Hardy’s place in it, as well as its sensitive readings of numerous poems and prose works propelled by the complicated feelings that swirl around death and separation. It is an excellent guide to that borderland, rich in affect, where the dead and the living encounter one another.

ANDREW HEWITT

NOTES

¹ Donovan O. Schaefer, *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), p. 141.

² Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Viking Penguin, 1996) book 11.

³ Philip Larkin, ‘To write one song’, *The North Ship* (London: Faber, 1973), p. 29, ll. 7–12.

Kester Rattenbury, *Thomas Hardy, Architect: The Wessex Project*. London, Lund Humphries, 2018. 224 pp. ISBN 978-1-84822-250-2. £35

This book needs to be added to the list of Hardy's 'Great Things' – or at least the list of 'Great Things' about Hardy: a *must read* for anyone with an interest in Hardy. With remarkable skill and deep insight, Kester Rattenbury has laid open a whole new approach to Hardy's oeuvre – like a second post-mortem, where the Home Office Pathologist transforms a muddle of non-sequiturs into a coherent narrative.

We all knew that Hardy was an architect by profession, that Virginia Woolf had written about 'the architecting' of Hardy's novels, and that Claudius Beatty had researched the subject to death, producing one enormous tome and several smaller ones, stuffed full of information on Hardy, the architect. Somewhat dull, all that seemed. But Beatty was an English scholar, not an architect. Kester Rattenbury, Professor of Architecture at the University of Westminster, is the first architect to apply that specialist knowledge to Hardy's works – and the results are a true revelation.

Rattenbury's basic thesis is that Hardy was an architect, who 'did not leave architecture alone' throughout the whole of his long career as novelist and poet. 'In all his work he was using its visionary tools, its written polemic, its working details, its actual construction, its immersive experience, and its assembly of information' (p. 81). She considers that Hardy developed Wessex as though it were an 'architectural project', 'a very particular thing – the heart of architectural practice, teaching and thought'. She describes Hardy as an 'architectural radical' whose Wessex paradoxically is 'both an elegy for a vanishing world and a condemnation of its cruelties' (p. 11). Not only that, but Rattenbury interprets Wessex as 'the greatest, most influential and forward-looking conservation campaign of them all' (p. 103).

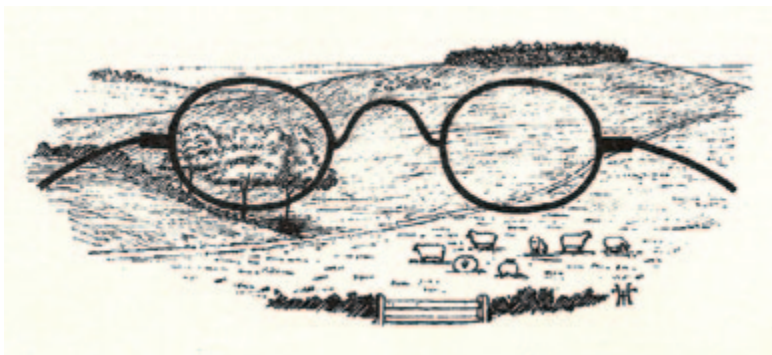
Rattenbury sees Casterbridge itself, with Hardy's detailed descriptions of the town's pubs, houses and cottages, as the most powerful PR for the early conservation movement. She points out that to us, Hardy's evocation of the past seems normal 'but that in Hardy's day this empathetic position was radical' (p. 104). This reappraisal of the rural vernacular starts in *Under the Greenwood Tree* and follows consistently through to *Jude the Obscure*, which Rattenbury construes as a great tirade against Ruskin: 'possibly the greatest piece of architectural criticism there has ever been – in popular fictional form' (p. 186). Hardy is thus a champion of a particular form of the rural vernacular, which was

not then known or appreciated at all – in direct opposition to Ruskin, who had condemned it outright. As she rightly observes ‘there could hardly be a stronger polemic against the cult of the picturesque than *The Return of the Native*’ – so far removed from ‘Ruskin’s smiling flower-strewn tapestries’ (p. 66).

Rattenbury’s text is chronologically based; her chapters working through Hardy’s life and publications sequentially – particular attention being paid to two of the so-called minor novels: *The Hand of Ethelberta*, which she describes as ‘a builder’s satire, aimed at the heart of the architectural debate’; and inevitably *A Laodicean*, where ‘Hardy is describing the world from inside an architect’s head’ (p. 58). Rattenbury considers that all four architectural workers in this novel can be regarded as different versions of Hardy’s architectural self, thus drawing parallels to ‘So Various’ (CP: 855) and the four variants of Hardy’s emotional self in *The Return of The Native*: Clym, Wildeve, Venn and Thomasin.

The book is illustrated throughout with Herman Lea’s photographs, mainly restored to their original uncropped state to capture ‘Hardy’s long-lens vision’ of vast empty landscapes. Both inside covers reproduce the full set of Hardy’s illustrations for *Wessex Poems*, which Rattenbury describes as very dramatic and extremely important. She reminds us that architectural books have always put pictures and texts together to generate more profound ideas. She sees these illustrations as ‘the visual key to Hardy’s ambitious construction of Wessex: definitely visual, architectural, cinematic’ (p. 192). Special attention is drawn to Hardy’s spectacles in the picture accompanying ‘In a Eweleaze near Weatherbury’, which she sees as part of a long architectural tradition: Wessex exists both through Hardy’s eyes and outside of them.

Overall, Rattenbury herself brings a new and highly original vision to Hardy’s Wessex; the book is laced with astute observations. Unlike Pevsner who dismissed Max Gate as having ‘no architectural qualities whatever’, Rattenbury describes Hardy’s house as ‘a deliberate architectural provocation’, which grew organically, succeeding ‘as an always changing workshop for the imagination’ (p. 208), shrewdly noting that that building displays in architectural form, the problems the Hardys were facing in their marriage: ‘the servants and the served’. Another connection, which I find particularly appealing, is her paralleling of *The Dynasts* – ‘a truly radical theatrical experience’ – with 1960s anti-war musical *Oh! What a Lovely War*.



On the negative side, this book contains one or two forgivable biographical errors. In three separate places, she states that Jemima Hardy grew up in Puddletown rather than Melbury Osmond – confusing Hardy’s mother with his paternal aunts. Secondly, she describes the Hardys’ Cottage as being built by Hardy’s grandfather, whilst in fact it was built by John Hardy (1755–1821), Hardy’s great-grandfather – to be occupied by Thomas Hardy the first – our Hardy’s grandfather. She also twice states that Hardy was living in Colliton House whilst Max Gate was being built, whilst in fact he was living in a much more modest house, long-since demolished, known rather grandly as Shire-Hall Place. It was a long narrow building to the north of Glyde Path Road, wedged between the houses on High West Street and the grounds of Colliton House. As Lucetta lived in High-Place Hall, which was modelled on Colliton House, this is an understandable confusion.

Leaving these minor issues to one side, Rattenbury has produced in this book a convincing argument to support her bold thesis that Hardy never gave up architecture – that ‘its ideas, theories, details, subjects and polemics are laced through his novels, poems and factual writing’ (p. 29). Hardy was an architect ‘a century ahead of the game’, ‘directly and deliberately the most influential writer on conservation there has ever been’, ‘the greatest conservation thinker and campaigner of all time, working in fictional and visionary form’. It is a convincing and revolutionary approach to Hardy – read, note, contemplate and understand!

TONY FINCHAM

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Sue Clarke is the Minutes Secretary of the Thomas Hardy Society and her report on this year's *Return of the Native* tour, jointly run by The West Country Historic Omnibus & Transport Trust and the Thomas Hardy Society, appears in this issue.

Shanta Dutta is a Professor at Presidency University, Kolkata, where her teaching and research focus primarily on Victorian literature, especially the novel. She is the author of *Ambivalence in Hardy: A Study of His Attitude to Women*, originally published in 2000 by Macmillan and issued in paperback format in 2007.

Roger Ebbatson is Visiting Professor at the University of Lancaster. His many publications include *The Evolutionary Self: Hardy, Forster, Lawrence* (1982), *Hardy: The Margin of the Unexpressed* (1993), *Heidegger's Bicycle* (2006), *Landscape and Literature, 1830–1914: Nature, Text, Aura* (1913), and, most recently, *Landscapes of Eternal Return: Tennyson to Hardy* (2016).

Tony Fincham is the Chairman of the Thomas Hardy Society and the author of *Hardy the Physician*, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2008, *Hardy's Landscape Revisited* (2010), and *Exploring Thomas Hardy's Wessex* (2016).

Andrew Hewitt is in his third year of a part-time PhD, which focuses on Hardy and affect. He is the Student Representative to the Council of Management of the Thomas Hardy Society and has spoken at conferences and published in the THS Journal.

Julian Herrington is a new member of the Thomas Hardy Society. His report on 'Mrs Yeobright's last walk', an event led by Tony Fincham in celebration of the 175th anniversary of *The Return of the Native*, appears in this issue.

Rachel Mace is a PhD candidate at the University of Leeds and her thesis is entitled 'Gothic Representation in the Work of Thomas Hardy'.

Francis O'Gorman is Saintsbury Professor of English Literature at the University of Edinburgh in 2016. He has particular interests in nineteenth-century literature, including Coleridge, Ruskin, Swinburne, and Trollope, and in psychoanalysis. He has written or edited twenty-four books (including six on or by Ruskin) and his most recent publications are editions of Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* (OUP, 2016) and *Orley Farm* (OUP, 2018). He is currently editing Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice*

and Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* for OUP and has just completed a book called *Liberalism in Education: The Monopoly of an Idea* for the New York Offices of Bloomsbury.

Neville Olsberg contributes a poem, originally written during the Second World War, to this journal.

Brenda Parry is a long-term member of the Society, who has reported on several previous conferences. Her report on the 23rd International Thomas Hardy Conference and Festival appears in this issue.

Mavis Pilbeam graduated from the English Department of University College London in 1967 but in 1977 obtained a BA in Japanese at SOAS London and in 1990 an MA from Sheffield. Her early Hardy Studies consisted of GCSE English, when she found him rather soppy. Her mind was changed by a Japanese friend – a member of the Thomas Hardy Society of Japan – who organised a private visit to the Birthplace, probably in the 80s. Mavis was introduced to the THS by Professor Bill Morgan, attending her first conference in 2008. She is particularly interested in Thomas Hardy and the natural world.

Peter Robson is a long-term member of the Thomas Hardy Society and he has presented his research on Thomas Hardy and Dorset folklore at many Society events as well as in previous publications in this journal.

Linda M. Shires, Gottesman Professor of English and Chair at Stern College, Yeshiva University, New York City, has published widely in Victorian studies, including numerous essays on the poetry and fiction of Hardy. Her most recent books are *Victorians Reading the Romantics: Essays by U.C. Knoepfelmacher*, Ed. and Introduction, 2016, and *Perspectives: Modes of Viewing and Knowing in 19th Century England*. 2009. Her current project treats image and text in Victorian self-illustrated books.

Adrian Steele contributes a poem to this issue of the journal.

THOMAS HARDY SOCIETY MERCHANDISE and PUBLICATIONS

**Celebrate the Society's 50th Anniversary with
Thomas Hardy**

	<p>TALL FINE CRYSTAL GLASS (50th Anniversary)</p> <p>Made and engraved for us by Glencairn Crystal. 14cm tall 'hi-ball' style</p> <p><i>Quotation:</i> 'Wessex....a partly real, partly dream country'</p> <p>'Cheers Mr Hardy!' £18.50</p>	
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Tea with Hardy



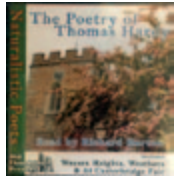
			
<p>GOLD MUG (50th Anniversary)</p> <p><i>Quotation:</i> <i>Weathers:</i> 'This is the weather the cuckoo likes And so do I; When showers betumble the chestnut spikes And nestlings fly.' £9</p>	<p>SILVER MUG (50th Anniversary)</p> <p><i>Quotation: Wessex Heights:</i> 'There are some heights in Wessex shaped as if by a kindly hand For thinking, dreaming, dying on.....' £9</p>	<p>GREEN MUG</p> <p><i>Quotation: Two on a Tower</i> 'Loving- kindness.... A sentiment perhaps in the long run more to be prized than lover's love.' £6</p>	<p>RED MUG</p> <p><i>Quotation:</i> <i>Personal Notebooks</i> 'Though a good deal is too strange to be believed, nothing is too strange to have happened.' £6</p>

Stationary

 <p>Hardy's Cottage Our ever-popular card £4.50 for pack of 10</p>	 <p>Spiral Notebook (50th Anniversary) £4.50</p>	 <p>Postcard 40p or 3 for £1</p>	 <p>Naughty Wessex attacks Postman Christmas Cards & Envelopes £3.50 for 5</p>
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CDs and Books

(more CDs, books, journals and publications are on our website).

 <p><i>Alan Chedzoy</i> reads 23 Dorset Poems by William Barnes and Thomas Hardy, with songs performed by the Yetties £7.50</p>	 <p><i>Furse Swann</i> reads from Hardy's poetry, punctuated by hymns and folk songs familiar to Hardy, performed by Tim Laycock & friends £7.50</p>	 <p><i>Richard Burton</i> reads 22 of Hardy's poems, including: Wessex Heights, The Voice, At Casterbridge Fair, and Old Furniture. <i>Originally recorded in 1958.</i> £7.50</p>
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 <p>Thomas Hardy's Wessex in the 21st Century by Dr Tony Fincham. Was £21, now £9.50</p>	 <p>Beautifully illustrated and easy to follow walks in Hardy's landscape, (by Dr Tony Fincham) £7.95</p>	 <p>Revised and reprinted in 2017, this booklet has colour photos and a new town walking map with places of interest. £3.50</p>	 <p>A best-selling pocket-sized selection of Hardy poems, (ed James Gibson) £4.00</p>
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(New stock just arrived: these very popular items have just been reprinted)



Tea Towels 100% Cotton

Hardy's Wessex Map
Blue, green or red £5

**Hessian Shopper £6**

Pink, Emerald Green,
Lime Green, Olive
Green, Orange, Red,
Violet, Chocolate
Brown, Natural

Calico Book Bag £2.50



You can order on line via our website www.hardysociety.org, or by emailing info@hardysociety.org (postage £4 UK or £12 abroad).

Hidden Language Hidden Trails



Whilst in Dorchester why not take a little time out to go on a voyage of rediscovery? The Dorchester BID with support from the Thomas Hardy & William Barnes societies have put together a series of 'clock plate' trails around town.

Each plate has an ancient Dorset dialect word with definition & the shops/businesses give out cards to collect. Once you have the complete set (43) you can **claim a limited edition pack of Dorset dialect playing cards** (also available to buy for £7.99 from the Tourist Information Centre who have the trail maps & more information) **Enjoy your visit to Dorchester!**



DorchesterDorset.com
Discover our secrets! 

ADDRESSES OF OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY

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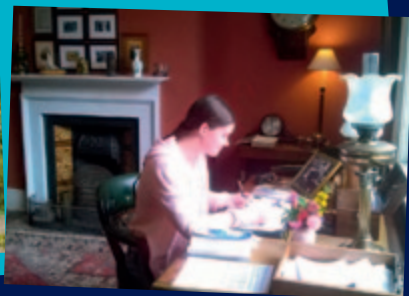
A list of the officers of the Society appears at the beginning of the issue.
All officers can be contacted at:

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The website of the Thomas Hardy Society is **www.hardysociety.org**



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Max Gate: the house he designed for himself and where he
wrote *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Jude the Obscure*, and most
of his poetry.

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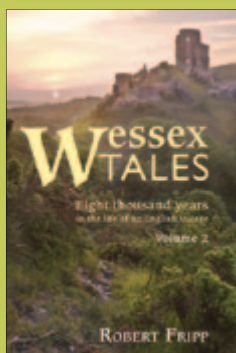
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Thomas Hardy published five stories in his first edition of *Wessex Tales* (1888). **Wessex is ready for more.**

Wessex TALES



Robert Fripp has written a series of 40 new stories set in the Blackmore Vale, the valley of the Dorset Stour, and the downs between Sturminster Newton and Blandford. As a teenager, he spent his holidays paddling a canoe on the Stour and walking the hill forts and hills.



Fripp's *Wessex Tales*, Volumes 1, and 2, share a subtitle: *Eight thousand years in the life of an English village*. The earliest tale, *The Infant and the Hare*, finds hunter-gatherers camped on Okeford Hill shortly after a tsunami sliced Britain away from Europe. The series ends with tales involving the Great War: *A Short Walk in France*, *Moving On*, *Gallipoli* and *Fair Welcome and Farewell*. (The books are dedicated to the men of Shillingstone who gave their lives.)

Thirty-five stories are set in the intervening millennia.

You can read excerpts from the new *Wessex Tales*, at www.robertfripp.ca/wessex-tales/
Scroll down to two PDF files:

- '40 new *Wessex Tales* stories described', and
- '*Wessex Tales*' (an essay in *The Dorset Year Book* 2016)

Wessex Tales Volume 1 and Volume 2 are available from: Waterstones, Amazon and other internet vendors. (An effective search term: *Wessex Tales Fripp*)

ABOUT THE THOMAS HARDY SOCIETY

The Society began its life in 1968 when, under the name 'The Thomas Hardy Festival Society', it was set up to organise the Festival marking the fortieth anniversary of Hardy's death. So successful was that event that the Society continued its existence as an organisation dedicated to advancing 'for the benefit of the public, education in the works of Thomas Hardy by promoting in every part of the World appreciation and study of these works'. It is a non-profit-making cultural organisation with the status of a Company limited by guarantee, and its officers are unpaid. It is governed by a Council of Management of between twelve and twenty Managers, including a Student Representative.

The Society is for anyone interested in Hardy's writings, life and times, and it takes pride in the way in which at its meetings and Conferences non-academics and academics have met together in a harmony which would have delighted Hardy himself. Among its members are many distinguished literary and academic figures, and many more who love and enjoy Hardy's work sufficiently to wish to meet fellow enthusiasts and develop their appreciation of it. Every other year the Society organises a Conference that attracts lecturers and students from all over the world, and it also arranges Hardy events not just in Wessex but in London and other centres. The *Hardy Society Journal*, issued twice a year, and the *Thomas Hardy Journal*, issued in Autumn, are free to members. Applications for membership are welcome and should be made to: The Thomas Hardy Society, c/o Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XA.

LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE JOURNALS PUBLISHED BY THE THOMAS HARDY SOCIETY

The *Hardy Society Journal* is published by the Thomas Hardy Society twice a year, in Spring and Summer. Its objective is to encourage and foster lively engagement and debate among general readers. Contributions – literary articles, reports, reviews, news, creative writing, reproducible illustrations, etc. – are welcomed. Articles should not normally exceed 5000 words, and will be subject to peer review. Book reviews are usually invited but may be volunteered; they should normally exceed 1000 words. The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

The *Thomas Hardy Journal* is published once a year, in Autumn. More specifically academic in content, this peer-reviewed Journal aims to be a force in international Hardy scholarship. Articles are refereed by an Editorial Advisory Board. Contributions should not normally exceed 8000 words.

Articles for publication in either Journal cannot be considered unless they are submitted in both hard copy and electronic format, *or* as an email attachment (Word document: articles *must* be double-spaced, use single quotation marks, and endnotes *not* footnotes). Please include a short entry for the 'Notes on Contributors' and a return postal address. Submissions will not be returned unless accompanied by the necessary postage. No payment is made for articles but writers have the satisfaction of publication in a periodical of authority and repute, and will receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their article appears.

Please send submissions to the Editor at The Thomas Hardy Society, c/o Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1XA, *or* by email to k.koehler@bangor.ac.uk. The deadline for the spring 2019 issue of the *Hardy Society Journal* is 10 February 2019.

