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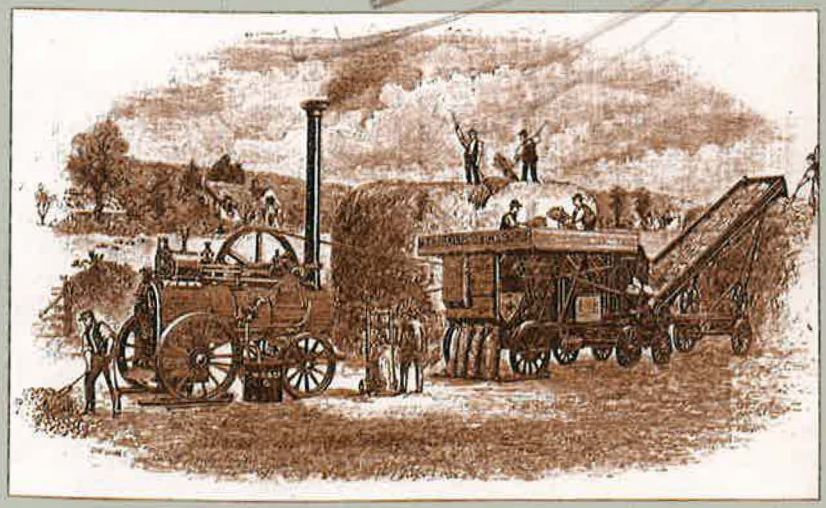
Jane Mattisson



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Jane Mattisson

101

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LUND STUDIES IN ENGLISH 101
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Jane Mattisson

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Jane Mattisson

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Introduction

The present-day reader of any nineteenth-century novelist's fiction will benefit from access to contextualising scholarship, but there are grounds for maintaining that Thomas Hardy was one of those writers in whose work the interplay of text and context is particularly fundamental. What still attracts many people to Hardy's fiction is its powerful delineation of individual characters and the vicissitudes of their lives, often shot through with tragedy. Fictional characters like Tess Durbeyfield/d'Urberville and Jude Fawley stand out in the memory as timeless artistic creations, and so they are; but it should be borne in mind that they were created in times whose special conditions and characteristics contributed to determining the course of their – fictional – lives. It is the purpose of this study to uncover some of these factors and show how they govern the fates and fortunes of Hardy characters. The choice of factors has been narrowed down to one particular category: aspects of education in a very wide sense, from the passing on of time-honoured rural skills to the acquisition of classical and scientific knowledge in institutions. Hardy's novels chronicle the passing of an era, and they do so with undertones of regret and apprehension while indirectly acknowledging the strength of the premisses which underpin the evolution of a society which even twenty-first-century readers recognise as comparatively modern. Those of his characters who are able to combine respect for the traditional with alertness – and willingness to adapt – to the new are those who survive. The following study of knowledge and survival in Hardy's fiction attempts to show what a vital undercurrent the issue of epistemological competence is, from the first and often neglected novels to the late masterpieces.

Two kinds of knowledge

The Industrial Revolution stimulated a steadily growing demand for formal academic/scientific knowledge. The nineteenth century witnessed an enormous expansion of formal education. Never before had knowledge been required or disseminated on such a massive scale. Those without formal academic/scientific knowledge were increasingly marginalised. Scientific facts were particularly highly prized as a source of rational entertainment and theological/moral improvement, a desirable accomplishment, a stimulus to technological advance, a reliever of social problems and as an intellectual justification of modern industrial society.[1] During the first half

[1] Jack Morrell and Arnold Thackray, *Gentlemen of Science. Early Years of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 12.

of the nineteenth century the early Victorians prioritised broad general knowledge, favouring synthesis rather than specialisation as a means of coping with the rapid expansion of knowledge. As the century progressed it became increasingly obvious that modern society needed the specialist in order to advance. The nineteenth century became more and more interested in uncovering and understanding the laws governing existence. In a sermon addressed to the University of Oxford, Frederick Temple, Headmaster of Rugby School, highlighted an interesting paradox: '[t]he evolution of nature results in the existence of forms which did not exist before; the evolution of knowledge results in the perception of laws which were already in existence.'[2] The all-important word here is 'perception.' A gulf opened in the nineteenth century between those who were educated not only to perceive but also to understand such laws, and those who were less privileged. It was primarily science which provided a model for acquiring knowledge and for establishing its cultural functions by disseminating the scientific paradigm which increasingly dominated intellectual activity.[3] As the impact of science increased throughout the nineteenth century, this model spread into a wide variety of areas.

The present thesis identifies two distinct forms of knowledge in Hardy's novels. The first is classified as 'everyday.'[4] This is clearly related to a limited local area – geographical, occupational and social. It is passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth or practical example. Everyday knowledge is closely linked to local tradition and folk lore. The second form of knowledge I call 'specialised.'[5] This is of a more universal nature, i.e. it is less bound to a specific local community. It is passed on via the printed word rather than orally, and is the product of institutionalised education rather than tradition or folk-lore. These two types of knowledge are reminiscent of the 'absolute' and 'relative' forms identified by Henri Bergson.[6] Bergson claimed that absolute knowledge is the result of intuition which leads to an experiencing of something from within. It is a form of intellectual sympathy. Relative knowledge, on the other hand, involves exploration of an object by means of symbols or words which cannot in themselves render the true nature of the object. Absolute knowledge was, for Bergson, the goal of philosophy. Everyday knowledge

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2 *The Relations between Religion and Science. Eight Lectures preached before the University of Oxford in the year 1884 on the foundation of the Late Rev. John Bampton M.A. Canon of Salisbury by the Right Rev. Frederick Temple, Bishop of Exeter* (London, 1884), 128–9.

3 T. W. Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 82.

4 This term is discussed by Basil Bernstein in *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity. Theory, Research and Critique* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1996), where it is defined as common-sense knowledge, 'local, segmental, context dependent, tacit, multi-layered, often contradictory across contexts but not within contexts', 170. Bernstein notes that everyday knowledge is oral-based rather than written. My use of the term is based on Bernstein's definition. For the relevance of Basil Bernstein's work to the subject of this thesis, see 35–38.

5 This term is also discussed by Bernstein in *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity* (170–171), where it is taken to mean the opposite of the everyday form of knowledge.

6 *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (Totowa: Littlefield, Adams, 1975), 23–26. First published in French in 1903.

as defined in this study is non-intellectual, however. It belongs to a pre-industrial, pre-scientific era. It is what William Barnes, one of Hardy's closest friends, described as '*folklore* [...] a body of home-taught lore, received by the younger folk from elder ones in common life, and in the forms of knowledge or faith, or mindskills and handskills.'[7] Specialised knowledge closely resembles what Barnes called 'book-learning', that is to say, 'the lore of schooling and books.' Barnes believed that society needed both kinds of learning: theory should be combined with the accumulated wisdom of previous praxis. The present thesis shows that Hardy sympathised with this view.

Intuitive everyday knowledge is the opposite of rational specialised knowledge. Hardy was not the only writer to show an interest in the preservation of everyday knowledge, as the following extract from George Bourne's *The Wheelwright's Shop* shows:[8]

> [w]hat we had to do was live up to the local wisdom of our kind; to follow the customs, and work to the measurements, which had been tested and corrected long before our time in every village shop all across the country. A wheelwright's brain had to fit itself to this by dint of growing into it, just as his back had to fit into the supplenesses needed on the saw-pit, or his hands into the movements that would plane a felloe 'true out o' wind' [. . .] *A good wheelwright knew by art but not by reasoning the proportion to keep between spokes and felloes* [...] *He felt it in his bones* [...] Every detail stood by itself, and had to be learnt *by trial and error or by tradition* (my italics, 19–20).

Hardy knew, however, that such methods of learning could not compete with more modern rational methods in the long run. Indeed his suspicions were confirmed within his own lifetime by such official surveys as that conducted by the Agricultural Economics Research Institute of Oxford.[9]

In order to judge the relative value of the two kinds of knowledge that feature in Hardy's novels it is important to take into consideration the practices or procedures which have given rise to them, and to consider their efficacy in the specific areas of use for which they are intended. As Barry Barnes argues,[10] the knowledge which

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[7] 'Fore-say' in John Symonds Udal, *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore* (Hertford: Stephen Austin, 1922), 1.

[8] Published by George Bourne under the name of George Sturt (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974; first published in 1923).

[9] See Helen E. FitzRandolph and M. Doriel Hay, *The Rural Industries of England and Wales. A Survey made on behalf of The Agricultural Economics Research Institute Oxford. 1: Timber and Underwood Industries and Some Village Workshops* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926). 'The old craftsmen, however great their skill, may be poor teachers, their rough and ready methods of imparting instruction may be distasteful to boys who have experienced better methods of teaching at school, and a learner might attain more quickly to efficiency under instruction on newer lines' (81).

Much interesting work has been done by modern historians and critics on the importance of not losing sight of the practical wisdom of the past. Brian P. Martin writes, for example, '[w]e can certainly learn a great deal from these men of yesteryear, if it is only about that very practical "greenness" which seemed to get lost in the advance of science. In the art of living, they have no peers.' See *Tales of the Old Countrymen* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1992), 9. Jerome Hamilton Buckley shows how Victorian poets and novelists 'deplored the indifference of the progressive scientific mind to the values of a past often rich beyond the present in art and ideas.' See *The Triumph of Time* (Cambridge/Mass.: Belknap, 1966), 64.

[10] *Companion to the History of Modern Science*, ed. by R. C. Olby et al. (London: Routledge, 1990), 61.

characterises more primitive tribal societies, whether it be of the technical kind required for hunting or agriculture or of a more general kind as specified in religion or cosmology, is highly localised, and it is evaluated in terms of specific local requirements and goals. The knowledge possessed by the inhabitants of the small rural communities of Wessex as represented in Hardy's novels had very limited local application. The formally educated characters in Hardy's novels, on the other hand, possess knowledge which is more universal in scope and application; and those with scientific knowledge, e.g. mathematics, geology, biology and medical science, possess the key to the future as their knowledge reveals the basic laws of existence, and has the highest status of all.

This introduces an important paradox in Hardy's prose: while Hardy recognised the importance of rational scientific knowledge he personally subscribed to an anti-rationalist view of human nature, a belief 'that the motive springs of human actions are to be found in the emotional rather than the rational faculty.'[11] Robin Gilmour even suggests that Hardy's novels are a ratification of emotional and spiritual values in a society which is increasingly drifting towards scientific determinism.[12] Hardy appreciated the importance of understanding the scientific laws which govern life. He was indeed clearly fascinated by the subject. At the same time he firmly believed in the value of the affective which in his own mind was most strongly associated with the everyday form of knowledge.

It is important to emphasise that while Hardy doubted the survival potential of 'everyday' rustic knowledge in the face of modern scientific developments, it was not his purpose to demonstrate this conviction in his writing. Indeed, he disliked literature whose purpose was to bring about social change.[13] As Chapter Two shows, Hardy regarded literature as a criticism of life; he did not, however, subscribe to the view that it has a clear social/political purpose.

As Jagdish Chandra Dave and other critics have shown, Hardy consistently tried to reflect an awareness of scientific developments in his writing as well as the importance of the emotional and spiritual.[14] Whereas Dave relates this attempt to Hardy's philosophy in general and to his view of human nature in particular, my ambition is to show how this struggle for reconciliation lies at the very basis of Hardy's view of knowledge as expressed in the twelve Wessex novels, *The Well-Beloved* and *Jude the Obscure.*

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[11] Lennart A. Björk, *Psychological Vision and Social Criticism in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1987. Stockholm Studies in English LXXV), 141.

[12] *The Novel in the Victorian Age. A Modern Introduction* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), 188.

[13] Indeed, Hardy seriously doubted mankind's ability to learn from one generation to the next. This doubt comes out clearly in *The Dynasts. An Epic-Drama of the War with Napoleon, in Three Parts, Nineteen Acts, & One Hundred & Thirty Scenes* (London: Macmillan, 1918), perhaps Hardy's clearest statement on the relationship between mankind and the universe. After Waterloo the Spirit of the Years states:

> So hath the Urging Immanence used to-day
> Its inadvertent might to field this fray;
> And Europe's wormy dynasties rerobe
> Themselves in their old gilt, to dazzle anew the globe! (III, vii, viii, 518).

[14] *The Human Predicament in Hardy's Novels* (London: Macmillan, 1985), 27.

Work as a metaphor for knowledge

The struggle for knowledge and the two different types of knowledge that are present in Hardy's novels are most clearly reflected in the type of work carried out by the different characters. Ian Gregor has already pointed out that for Hardy work was synonymous with learning.[15] Whereas Gregor specifically relates this comment to Hardy's later novels, the present study will show that it is equally applicable to the earlier ones. Indeed, work in Hardy's novels may be seen as a metaphor for knowledge. The value of work was emphasised by nineteenth-century commentators and reformers as an animator and a cementer of rural society. The importance of this function increased as the dissolution of traditional life and values became increasingly apparent.[16] As early as Aristotle, metaphor – the existence of models – had been identified as the primary cause or agent of knowledge. Metaphor for Aristotle lay midway between the unintelligible and the commonplace and as such was the prime producer of knowledge.[17] Hardy's contemporary, the Rev. Frederic W. Farrar, described metaphor as:

> a means whereby we observe and compare the analogous phenomena of the physical and intellectual world. It adds something of the grace, and charm, and mystery of nature to the thoughts of man. It is the very essence of our most poetical conceptions, and the best mode of shadowing forth our profoundest intuitions.[18]

More recently one scholar[19] has suggested that metaphor allows the imaginative juxtaposition of two ideas and gives corporeal form to what might otherwise remain inert knowledge. In the context of Hardy's fiction, such levels of meaning are to a certain extent hidden from the modern reader who lacks knowledge of nineteenth-century work tasks, procedures and expectations. A full understanding of the importance of work as a source of learning in Hardy's prose thus requires a third kind of knowledge, a form which I will shortly suggest can only be provided by historical context.

In discussing 'Darwin's Reading and the Fictions of Development',[20] Gillian Beer suggests that metaphor is a means of creating and controlling novelty. It allows the

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[15] *The Great Web. The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974), 109.

[16] For an interesting discussion of this point and its importance in the work of John Ruskin, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Carlyle, William Morris, George Sturt and Hardy, see Brian A. King, 'Hardy's Early Novels: The Role of the Objective World' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Arkansas, 1994), Chapter One, 'The Neglected Herd.'

[17] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* III, 141b. Quoted in Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology. Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 67.

[18] *Chapters on Language* (London, 1873), 214–5.

[19] Anthony Wall, 'Developing a Taste for Metaphors', quoted in *Literature and Science* ed. by Donald Bruce and Anthony Purdy (Amsterdam–Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1994), 56. A similar idea is expressed in Mikhail K. Ryklin, 'Bodies of Terror: Theses Toward a Logic of Violence', *New Literary History*, 24 (1993), 51–71. Ryklin uses the example of the pictorial imagery of the Stalinist metro and its rejoicing figures, 'whose absolute depersonalization lures the "spectators" into the maelstrom of their own nonexistence . . . they incarnate the reigning ideology of public-ness, bringing the nonindividuality of the masses to its logical conclusion', 58.

[20] *The Darwinian Heritage* ed. by David Kohn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 543–588.

reader to build up knowledge and fulfil expectations: '[m]etaphor, both in its residuum of the known and in its heuristic powers, offers a means to recognizable discovery.'[21] Applied to the concerns of this study, that insight implies that the modern reader must be presented with vital facts about work in the nineteenth century in order to attain the same level of understanding of Hardy's texts as that enjoyed by the contemporary reader. The modern reader, on the other hand, has the benefit of hindsight: he/she is able to look back on events at which Hardy could only guess. The aim of the present thesis is not, however, to prove whether Hardy was correct or incorrect in his fears, but quite simply to establish what these fears were.

Three social groups

One of the most salient features of Hardy's prose is the observation of individuals at work, be it in the home, in a workshop, in a studio or on the land. As George Levine notes, '[o]bservation privileges the particular over the general because the general is an induction from accumulated experiences – at least within the empiricist argument.'[22] At the same time, science was attempting to reconcile individual empirical observation with general scientific laws. As was suggested above, Hardy's prose gives powerful expression to this struggle for reconciliation. While he is very much concerned with individual characters, he also presents them in relation to three basic groups in society. These groups are characterised by clearly distinguishable skills, values, attitudes and principles of behaviour. The three groups – hereafter referred to as groups one, two and three – form the basis of the discussion of knowledge with which this study is primarily concerned.

Group one comprises the rustics (countrymen and labourers) and minor artisans who are either journeymen or self-employed, sometimes with a small business with no more than one employee. Group two is made up of the lower/middle class, whose education (self-education and/or institutionalised) is limited and who possess an appreciation of the value of education for social advancement, a degree of social/financial status based on ownership of property, and/or a business with more than one employee. Group three comprises a numerically small upper-middle class set of people whose social position is based not so much on ownership of land as on education and social connections. This group contains relatively few members of the old aristocracy.

This division into groups may be seen in the context of the Victorian desire to classify which arose as a result of the growing interest in science. That desire was particularly clearly reflected in the developing concern with the issues of race and class. It has been suggested that the new science of anthropology and the emergence

[21] Ibid., 573.

[22] *Darwin and the Novelists. Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 210.

of Darwinism destroyed belief in the equality of races and their common origins.[23] There was even a new awareness of differences within races. By 1824 the word 'class' had become 'a social label.'[24] Ten years later John Stuart Mill could remark that people

> revolve in their eternal circle of landlords, capitalists and labourers, until they seem to think of the distinction of society into those three classes as if it were one of God's ordinances not man's, and as little under human control as the division of day or night. Scarcely any one of them seems to have proposed to himself as a subject of inquiry, what changes the relations of those classes to one another are likely to undergo in the progress of society.[25]

As Briggs and Saville show, conflicts in pre-industrial society were not viewed in purely class terms. The adoption of the word 'class' in the early nineteenth century reflected a change not only in people's view of society, but in society itself.[26]

J.S. Mill raised an important point when he suggested that changing class relations are a result of developments in society. Marxist historians have tended to see such changes in the light of the individual's relationship to the modes of production. Debates on the transition from feudalism to capitalism have traditionally centred on economic issues. An excellent example in more recent times is the so-called Brenner debate.[27] While economic issues possess some relevance in the following discussion of the three groups of characters, they are subordinated to the issues of knowledge and education; the latter clearly have a far greater impact on Hardy's characters' social status and survival potential than purely economic factors.

The three groups identified in Hardy's novels do not represent rigid categories. They should be seen in terms of approximate divisions between three social classes with varying abilities to adapt to modern conditions as a result of biologically and socially determined characteristics – knowledge/education being one of the most important features. The relations between the three groups in Hardy's novels, and the connection between them and knowledge, represent a response to major scientific issues. These include the origin of life, a new awareness of man's relations with plants and animals, insight into the struggle for existence and the possibility of extinction, a

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[23] Douglas A. Lorimer, 'Science and the Secularization of Victorian Images of Race' in *Victorian Science in Context* ed. by Bernard Lightman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 212.

[24] *Essays in Labour History. In Memory of G.D.H. Cole 25 September 1889 –14 January 1959* ed. by Asa Briggs and John Saville (London: Macmillan, 1967), 43.

[25] *Monthly Repository* (1834), 320. Quoted in Briggs and Saville, *Essays in Labour History*, 43– 4.

[26] For an informative discussion of this point see Chapter 1, 'The Language of "Class" in Early Nineteenth-Century England' by Briggs in *Essays in Labour History*, 43–73.

[27] Robert Brenner published a hotly-disputed article entitled 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial England' in issue no. 70 of *Past and Present*, February 1976. Brenner defined class structure in two ways, in terms of 'the relations of the direct producers to one another, to their tools and to the land in the immediate process of production' and as part of 'the inherently conflictive relations of property [...] by which an unpaid-for part of the product is extracted from the direct producers by a class of non-producers'; see the reprint of 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial England' in *The Brenner Debate. Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe* ed. by T. H. Aston and C. H. E. Philpin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 11.

desire to control circumstances and predict the future, and the exploration of laws which transcend opposites and produce unity rather than conflict.[28] Of these concerns, it is the concepts of origins and transformation, the struggle for survival, the ability to analyse and predict and the desire to find unity which are of vital importance in understanding the relative strengths and weaknesses of the three groups identified above. These discoveries also explain why members of group two generally have the greatest potential for survival in a rapidly changing modern society.

Hardy believed in the collective personality of mankind, a conviction which Walter F. Wright shows that he maintained to the end of his writing career and which is demonstrated in *The Dynasts*.[29] This was linked to a belief in altruism, in which the suffering of others caused pain to the remaining members of the collective body of mankind. Applied to the context of Hardy's fiction, such notions imply that the three social groups were thus mutually dependent, and they need to be seen in relation to one another.

It is important to appreciate that however fluid the borders were becoming between the different classes in society at large – a fact to which well-known authors such as George Gissing testified in, for example, *Born in Exile*[30] – rural society was still strongly hierarchical for much of the nineteenth century. The nobility and gentry formed the rural élite. Below them were the parsons, large farmers, rural artisans, shopkeepers and smallholders. Agricultural labourers and their families were at the bottom of the social scale, below workers with certain skills such as thatchers, hedgers and railway workers with specialist skills.[31] The terms I use as designations for the different classes are of relatively recent origin and would not necessarily have been recognised by Hardy's contemporaries. The term 'upper middle classes', for example, was not used until the 1890s. The 'lower middle class' first came into use in the twentieth century.[32] For the sake of convenience I have decided to employ terms which are in themselves anachronistic, but which have a clear meaning for modern readers.

Discussion of the three groups focuses primarily on the situation of groups one and two as these are the two groups in which Hardy himself was most interested, and it is these which feature most strongly in his novels. It has been suggested that the rationalist, scientific modern society never understood the traditional rural one it replaced in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the words of a well-

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[28] J. A. V. Chapple, *Science and Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), 4.

[29] For a more detailed discussion of this point, see Walter F. Wright, *The Shaping of the Dynasts* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 60–61.

[30] London, 1892.

[31] Pamela Horn, *The Rural World 1780–1850. Social Change in the English Countryside* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 225. See also Daniel Pool, 'Who's Who in the Country' in *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew. From Fox Hunting to Whist – The Facts of Daily Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 163–166.

[32] For a description of the different forms of the word 'class' and their use from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries see Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society. Coleridge to Orwell* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1987), xv.

known historian, '[t]he England of the rationalists and the money-makers had no time to consider the England of the "yeoman and the ale house on the heath". It thus lost the key to its own past and future. Its divided posterity has been seeking it ever since.'[33] Hardy's novels are in general accord with that statement. For this reason, the positions of groups one and two are idealised to some extent. Certain features of rustic life are deliberately excluded as part of Hardy's literary purpose, an important point which is explored in greater detail later in this introduction.

Group one represents the traditional society and group two the modern. Group one is similar to the Gemeinschaft community of Ferdinand Tönnies.[34] Such communities are dominated by what Tönnies calls 'natural will', that is to say, a mode of thought and perception inherited from one's forebears. A relative equality of knowledge, power and authority is assumed in such communities, which enjoy a high degree of harmony. There are strong blood ties and people live in close physical proximity. The Gesellschaft community, on the other hand, is characterised to a greater extent by rational thinking, by what Tönnies calls the 'rational will.' There is less harmony in this type of society because individuals compete with one another for greater formal education, which is closely linked to material gains.

The traditional versus the modern

From the very beginning, critics have identified a traditional and a modern element in Hardy's nature. As early as 1921, for example, Samuel C. Chew stated that although Hardy's mind was immersed in modern ideas, his character was basically rustic and primitive.[35] More recently Lance St John Butler has introduced what he describes as 'the two sides of Hardy's thought: he regrets the passing of the old, he is aware of the misery of the new and he wants to go backwards and forwards at the same time, trying to find something as good as the old to replace the new.'[36] This is, of course, all part of a more general historical process. It is important to note that the nineteenth century regarded itself as history under production. Originality was eagerly desired by many. Continuity with the past was not considered important.[37] The middle period of Hardy's prose-writing career, the 1880s, has been specifically identified as a decade characterised by a '[a] sense of vagueness, of incoherence and indirection'; a period of struggle 'for a foothold in the swirl and wreckage of new ideas and old beliefs.'[38]

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[33] Arthur Bryant, *English Saga (1840–1940)* (London: Collins with Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1940), xi.

[34] *Community & Society* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957; first published as *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* in 1887).

[35] *Thomas Hardy. Poet & Novelist* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Bryn Mawr College, 1921), 106.

[36] In *Celebrating Thomas Hardy. Insights and Appreciations* ed. by Charles P.C. Pettit (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 46. Butler's chapter is entitled 'Stability and Subversion: Thomas Hardy's Voices', 39–53.

[37] Phoebe B. Stanton, 'Architecture, History, and the Spirit of the Age', quoted in *The Mind and Art of Victorian England* ed. by Josef L. Altholz (St. Paul: North Central Publishing Company, 1976), 147.

[38] G. M. Young, *Portrait of an Age. Victorian England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), 165.

The historical struggle outlined above is clearly reflected in Hardy himself, who consciously tried to escape the social, economic, intellectual and geographical limitations of his origins by means of education, training and marriage. As Harold Orel so clearly shows, '[t]he end result was something so close to detribalisation that guilt and remorse play very crucial roles in practically all the fictions that Hardy wrote after the mid-1870s.'[39] Peter Widdowson suggests that the same guilt and remorse are clearly evidenced in Hardy's ghost autobiography, which constitutes a 'many-layered and schizophrenic deception' created by Hardy as he drew attention to his humble origins while at the same time attempting to disguise them.[40] Hardy's oscillation between the traditional and the modern is, Widdowson contends, also the source of his creative impulse. Literature, for Hardy, constituted an opportunity to compete with the middle and upper classes on equal terms.[41]

It is indeed interesting, as Widdowson has pointed out, how few critics have considered Hardy 'seriously and historically as a social novelist concerned with the composition of the rural economy, with class, property, and gender relations.'[42] Still fewer have examined the significance of knowledge and education in his work. It is important to appreciate, however, that – as will be explained below – Hardy was not a realist in the conventional sense of the term. His novels are not, and never attempted to be, accurate historical records of the past. They are one artist's view of rural society from the first decade of the nineteenth century to the 1890s. Historical facts are presented in the present thesis, not as simple background but as an integral part of Hardy's vision of the importance of knowledge and education in determining the survival potential of three main social groups.[43]

Wessex and its rustics

Hardy's novels encompass a relatively restricted geographical area, usually referred to as Wessex. This comprised six counties in total, the County of Dorset being the chief.[44] It has been maintained that Hardy's best work is firmly rooted in the Dorset of his childhood, the area around such towns and villages as Stinsford, Puddletown and Dorchester.[45] Hardy expressed a firm belief that Wessex constituted a complete-

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[39] *The Final Years of Thomas Hardy 1912–1928* (Lawrence/Manhattan/Wichita: Macmillan, 1976), 7.

[40] *Hardy in History. A Study in Literary Sociology* (London: Routledge and New York, 1989), 147. Deborah L. Collins has even described Hardy as 'a human oxymoron, a man deeply aware and accepting of his own polyphony. He loved life, wishing heartily that he had never been born; loved tradition, thinking it largely stupid and crass; loved the Church, disbelieving that a merciful God had sanctified it', *Thomas Hardy and his God. A Liturgy of Unbelief* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), 12. (As will be shown, however, the belief that Hardy regarded tradition as merely crass is misguided.)

[41] Ibid., 131.

[42] *Hardy in History*, 27.

[43] The relationship between history and the fictional text will be discussed in detail later in this introduction, in relation to Hardy's views on art. See 39–41.

[44] A map may be found at the end of the Wessex edition of each of Hardy's novels. Both fictitious and real names are given.

[45] Michael Millgate has said that Hardy's Dorset roots were 'essential to the fullest and freest flow of creative impulse', *Thomas Hardy. A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 200.

ly satisfactory setting for his novels and short stories. He argued that 'the domestic emotions have throbbed in Wessex nooks with as much intensity as in the palaces of Europe, and that [...] there was quite enough human nature in Wessex for one man's literary purpose.'[46] This does not mean, however, that Hardy was unaware of the danger of isolation, a problem to which fellow author Richard Jefferies referred in his autobiography: '[i]t is injurious to the mind as well as to the body to be always in one place and always surrounded by the same circumstances.'[47] Hardy's periods of residence in London and occasional trips abroad prevented any stagnation of thought and served to heighten his appreciation of the special qualities of Wessex. E. W. Martin makes the important point that while Hardy concentrated on his local area 'he brought into that chosen district all that he had learned from books and men.'[48] Wessex became an increasingly important part of Hardy's novels; an indication to this effect can be seen in the fact that by the appearance of the first collected edition of his novels in 1895 the fictional county had become fully developed, constituting 'an identifiable equivalent of nineteenth-century south-western England.'[49]

Wessex is both a fictional creation and a historical reality. As Chapter Two shows, Dorset lagged behind socioeconomic developments in the country at large. It was a county on the periphery of changes which had been induced by the industrial revolution. Dorset responded less well than many other counties to the demands of the market economy.[50] As Raymond Chapman has shown, the reality of the traditional, unchanging Dorset of Hardy's childhood is combined in Hardy's work with an appreciation of the wider spans of time and space opened by modern science.[51] As Raymond Williams eloquently expresses it, 'the real Hardy country [...] is that border country so many of us have been living in: between custom and education, between work and ideas, between love of place and an experience of change.'[52] The Wessex of Hardy's novels is thus a product of an interplay between historical reality, the author's intellect and artistic concerns and the reader's own knowledge and experience. It is one of the aims of the present thesis to demonstrate the importance of this interplay in understanding the significance of the two kinds of knowledge identified earlier.

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[46] General Preface to the Novels and Poems (Wessex Edition, 1, 1912), reprinted in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings. Prefaces. Literary Opinions. Reminiscences* ed. by Harold Orel (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1967), 45.

[47] *The Story of My Heart. My Autobiography* (London: Staples Press, 1946; first published in 1883), 7.

[48] 'Thomas Hardy and the Rural Tradition', *Blackfriars* 30 (1949), 253.

[49] Simon Gatrell, editor's introduction to *The Return of the Native* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), xii.

[50] Mark Overton provides an excellent example. He compares the wolds of East Yorkshire with the Wessex downlands. These two areas are similar in terms of soil, topography and climate and both utilised a similar sheep-corn husbandry system until the end of the eighteenth century. The wolds prospered, however, while Wessex stood still largely because of differences in market demand: urban centres in the north created a strong demand for mutton, whereas there were no such centres in Wessex. See *The Agricultural Revolution in England. The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 196.

[51] *The Victorian Debate. English Literature and Society 1832 –1901* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 330.

[52] *The Country and the City* (Frogmore, St Albans: Paladin, 1975), 239.

The most prominent characters in Hardy's rural Wessex are the rustics of group one, and those people with rustic origins who belong to group two. Some literary critics and historians have regarded Hardy's rustics as anonymous members of a village chorus, distinguished primarily by their occupation rather than by any special individual characteristics.[53] There are relatively few agricultural labourers in the novels; most of the important rustics practise one specific trade such as trantering, shoemaking, shepherding, coppice management etc.[54] Hardy's rustics do not reflect historical reality in so far as these people are largely contented with life and appear to suffer none of the social and economic hardships which characterised many nineteenth-century Dorset villages.[55]

This book shows that while a number of Hardy's rustics are admittedly anonymous members of a village chorus, many are distinct individuals who have a vital contribution to make to the subject of the present investigation, both with respect to the discussion of knowledge and when it comes to the relation between knowledge and language. As Esther Beatrice Mendez Egle has said, '[the rustics'] conversation, full of pithy humour and proverbial wisdom [...], builds up a poetic texture of simple eternal values to live by that make limited opportunities endurable.'[56]

Hardy's understanding of the rustic characters had a powerful instinctive dimension which goes some way towards explaining the absence of lengthy accounts of their daily routines. William J. Hyde makes the interesting point that 'when the tone and spirit of rustic life are grasped from within, when the humor and turn of thought are realized, the emotions and interests understood, then the details of the human animal's routine, which a Jefferies might supply, become of less consequence.'[57] For Hardy this was certainly true. For the modern reader, however, the mapping of a historical context is, as the later discussion on the importance of history will show, an indispensable means of gaining insight into the kinds and levels of knowledge possessed by the different characters.

The rustics are members of self-sufficient rural communities which are capable of meeting almost all the day-to-day needs of their inhabitants. This is indeed why such villages and towns were characterised by a strong community life.[58] Hardy's rustics are secure and contented members of a tightly knit community which has changed but little over the past couple of hundred years. There is some similarity between Hardy's

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[53] See for example Frederick Ernest Green, *A History of the English Agricultural Labourer 1870–1920* (London: P. S. King, 1920), 13.

[54] Green (ibid.) points out that agricultural labourers were isolated and worked extremely long hours. They were thus unable to enter into the social life of the village. This circumstance could perhaps have something to do with the relative scarcity of labourers in Hardy's novels.

[55] See for example Barbara Kerr, *Bound to the Soil. A Social History of Dorset 1750 –1918* (Tiverton: Dorset Books, 1993), Chapter V1: 'Bere Regis: Various Species of Trade', 123–145.

[56] 'Hardy's Rhetoric and Reader Response in *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Graduate College of Texas A M University, 1981), 149.

[57] 'Hardy's View of Realism: A Key to the Rustic Characters', *Victorian Studies* II (September 1958), 56.

[58] Horn, *The Rural World 1780 –1850*, 50.

rustics and the New Guineans described by Jarred Diamond. The latter are characterised as 'potential Edisons.' Diamond shows, however, that their ingenuity has been directed towards the solution of technological problems relevant to their own particular situation: 'the problems of surviving without any imported items in the New Guinea Jungle, rather than the problem of inventing phonographs.'[59] Such societies find it difficult to adapt to changing conditions. As Peter Morton has said, 'rural decay is a direct function of its inability to cope with change, for adaptation to a particular way of life has caused fatal rigidities in structure and habit.'[60]

Like Diamond's New Guineans, Hardy's rustics possess special kinds of intelligence and wisdom. These are, however, directed towards survival in an isolated and backward nineteenth-century rural community. It is important to note that Hardy's attitude towards the rustics is not, as some critics have suggested,[61] in any way patronising, even if it is touched with humour on occasions. Indeed, the present thesis maintains that Hardy upheld the value of the rustics' traditional knowledge while recognising its lack of survival potential in modern industrialised and scientific nineteenth-century society. As a believer in evolution, Hardy knew that there could be no sudden or radical changes in the rustics' situation.[62] An additional factor, discerned by George Bourne writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, was the country people's lack of understanding of abstract principles and thought. Interviewing elderly villagers in Farnham, Bourne came to the conclusion that 'the modern mind has a habit of interpreting [...] phenomena by general ideas or abstract principles, or referring them to imaginations all out of sight or unmentioned; and into this region of thought the peasant's attention hardly penetrated at all.'[63] Bourne was quick to add, however, that 'we should be entirely wrong to infer that they [the elderly Farnham peasants] were naturally stupid, unless a man is to be called stupid because he does not cultivate every one of his inborn faculties.' In the following discussion of Pierre Bourdieu's and Basil Bernstein's contributions to this study, it will be emphasised that Hardy's rustics did indeed possess the faculties necessary for survival; however, they neither used nor developed them, primarily owing to social/environmental forces in general and to the educational system in particular.

Hardy believed that the Wessex rustics' failure to develop analytical skills was the key to their happiness in the short term, as it prevented them from gaining a deep insight into 'the conditions of existence' (this view was not limited to the literary

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[59] *Guns, Germs, and Steel. The Fates of Human Societies* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 264.

[60] *The Vital Science. Biology and the Literary Imagination, 1860–1900* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 204.

[61] Early critics were particularly apt to accuse Hardy of looking down on simple country folk. See for example Frank Chapman, 'Hardy the Novelist', *Scrutiny* 2 (June 1934): 'we are always aware of a patronizing attitude towards the rustics', 28.

[62] The link between evolution and Victorian writers' belief in gradual change is discussed by, among others, Tess Cosslett in *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature* (Brighton: Harvester, 1982).

[63] *Change in the Village* (London: Duckworth, 1955; first published in 1912), 131.

characters alone, as is indicated by Hardy's essay on 'The Dorsetshire Labourer'[64]). He was also keenly aware of the fact that this very tendency was a primary contributory factor to the downfall of the rustic characters – fictional as well as real – since it prevented them from taking advantage of modern scientific developments.

While the rustics both in and outside the novels were divorced from modern developments, they were becoming increasingly isolated from their traditional roots and knowledge as the century progressed. In a letter written to Rider Haggard in 1902,[65] Hardy lamented the loss of village tradition resulting from the tendency of younger families to migrate: 'there being no continuity of environment in their lives, there is no continuity of information, the names, stories, and relics of one place being speedily forgotten under the incoming facts of the next.' Hardy was thus keenly aware of a double tragedy: a loss of traditional knowledge and values combined with an exclusion from the advantages of modern society. By means of the focus on the strengths and importance of traditional skills, Hardy's educated and largely urban readers were encouraged to regard modern progress both as a loss and a gain.

John Holloway has said that it is neither the inappropriateness of traditional skills and knowledge nor the loss of them which is the root cause of the decline of the rustics, but a deficiency in inner resources.[66] His argument is primarily related to *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Henchard is regarded as a tamed animal, while Tess is a hunted animal who is driven to extinction. The present study shows that Holloway's argument may be sharpened by concentrating on the two distinct kinds of knowledge presented above.

It is no coincidence that the rustics play an important role in the early novels and that this gradually diminishes, particularly after the publication of *The Woodlanders*. Ian Gregor and other critics have suggested that this change is due to a shift in Hardy's interests and to changes in his fictional world, i.e. that he had started to focus attention on different levels of reality and to place increasing emphasis on the importance of the human will, as distinct from environmental influence.[67] As this book attempts to demonstrate, however, social and environmental factors continue to play an important role throughout Hardy's novel-writing career, and the novels reflect a growing awareness on Hardy's part of the increasingly untenable position of the rural people in a modern predictive society. As Chapter Four shows, Hardy's prose-writing career ended with a demonstration of the truth that the rustics – here

[64] *Longman's Magazine*, July 1883, 252–69. Reprinted in Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, 168–191.

[65] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy by Thomas Hardy* ed. by Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984), 335–337. Hereafter referred to as *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*.

[66] *The Chartered Mirror. Literary and Critical Essays* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 94–107. Roy Morrell has criticised Holloway for his belief in the natural goodness of the agricultural community and his underestimation of the importance 'of an effort or intelligence distinctively human.' See Roy Morrell, *Thomas Hardy. The Will and The Way* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965), 12–28. Morrell concludes, '[n]one of Holloway's distortions is large; but all are in the same direction of denying a margin for the exercise of human intelligence or freedom, till finally we are led well out of sight of the truth', 16.

[67] See, for example, Gregor, *The Great Web*, 165.

represented by Jude Fawley – had indeed the mental ability to survive, but that their knowledge no longer had any place in the modern world. The memorisation of classical texts had already been superseded by the analytical strengths of modern scientific knowledge. The fate of the rustics thus has a universal significance which goes beyond its purely provincial implications.

An issue which cannot be skirted in a study of this kind is the degree to which Hardy's rustics may be regarded as authentic or true to life. Albert J. Guerard has maintained that the rural characters are very much alive in that they have a past history and a distinct personality, 'they are not real human beings, [however,] shuffled and hedged in by circumstance.'[68] Guerard argues that it is only in the poems that we see the people of the countryside as real human beings, faced with difficult problems, and with a tendency to be perverse as well as innocent and coy. J. B. Bullen reminds readers that the literary text is an artefact, not a reproduction of reality.[69] This anticipates the discussion later in this introduction of Hardy's views on art which concludes that, for Hardy, realism was definitely not art. The rustics are, in fact, in one sense larger than life in that they represent what were for Hardy the most salient features of rustic life in all its strengths and weaknesses. K. D. M. Snell is less than just when he suggests that Hardy's novels lack a serious and sympathetic treatment of the values and subjective experience of the simple rural people.[70] This is, in fact, exactly what Hardy's novels do provide in their portrayal of the rustics at home and at work.

A vital question is the extent to which Hardy was familiar with all aspects of rustic ways of life and thought. Hardy's contemporaries at least were generally convinced that his writing was based on an intimate knowledge of rural society. J. M. Barrie, for instance, pronounced in 1889 that Hardy was the only author living 'who can scour the village and miss nothing; he knows the common as Mr. Jefferies knew it; but he knows the inhabitants, as well as the common.'[71] In consequence, according to Barrie, Hardy was able to preserve the 'truth' in his fiction: '[t]he truth lives on in literature, because it is felt to be true, and one knows that whoever reads of Dick Dewy in 1989 will feel as sure of him as we are of the Vicar of Wakefield.'

At the same time, critics such as Peter Widdowson have pointed to the significance of the fact that Hardy wrote from the point of view of an educated member of a metropolitan cultural class, and not as a rustic.[72] This produced a conflict which

[68] *Thomas Hardy. The Novels and Stories* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1949), 122.

[69] *The Expressive Eye. Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 6–7.

[70] *Annals of the Labouring Poor. Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Snell devotes a chapter to Hardy entitled 'Thomas Hardy, rural Dorset, and the family', 374–410.

[71] 'Thomas Hardy: the Historian of Wessex', *Contemporary Review*, LVI, 1889. Reprinted in *Thomas Hardy. The Critical Heritage*, ed. by R. G. Cox (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 158–9. Hereafter referred to as *The Critical Heritage*.

[72] Widdowson's comment is related to Hardy's essay on 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' but also applies to his novels and stories. See Widdowson's *Hardy in History*, 138.

was inherent in Hardy's social position as the educated son of a master builder.[73] An investigation of the details of that conflict falls outside the scope of this study. What is essential to establish, however, is that Hardy's prose reflects a familiarity with rustic life and principles that remained important to him throughout his prose-writing career. He was actually proud of the fact. This is clearly reflected in a little-known interview between himself and Joseph Arch, the founder of the Warwickshire Agricultural Labourers' Union in 1872: '[a]ll that I know about our Dorset labourers I gathered from living in the country as a child and from thoroughly knowing their dialect. You cannot get at the labourers otherwise, dialect is the only pass-key to anything like intimacy.'[74]

Hardy and dialect

Hardy thus identified language – and more specifically dialect – as fundamental to a proper understanding of the people of the countryside. It was through their dialogues that Hardy was able to 'articulate [the rustics'] souls.'[75] In his essay on 'The Dorsetshire Labourer', he was at pains to show that the rural population's 'chaotic corruption of regular language' has discouraged people from studying the dialogue of this group. The implication is that a vital source of knowledge has, as a result, remained untapped. Indeed it is in his speech that much of the countryman's sound common sense is revealed, a sense based on solid practical experience and tradition. In their dialogues, too, the reasons for Hardy's rustic characters' decline are particularly clearly demonstrated.

Hardy explained his policy as regards his recreation of the Dorset dialect in his reply to a review of *The Return of the Native* published in the *Athenaeum* on November 23, 1878.[76] Here he makes it clear that his aim is to 'convey the spirit of intelligent peasant talk' by retaining 'the idiom, compass, and characteristic expressions', while ignoring obsolete pronunciations. It was 'the men and their natures rather than their dialect forms' which were of paramount significance to Hardy. Critics have generally recognised, with a few notable exceptions,[77] that Hardy's rustic dialogue does bear a very close resemblance to the speech of Dorset peasants during the nineteenth century.[78] Raymond Chapman makes an essential point when he says

[73] Robert Gittings, *Young Thomas Hardy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978). Gittings writes that Hardy 'broke through from one class to another; but one can only guess what violence this did to his own nature', 19.

[74] Quoted in Simon Trezise, '"Here's zixpence towards that, please God!" Thomas Hardy, Joseph Arch and Hodge', *The Thomas Hardy Journal* VI. 2, (June 1990), 60.

[75] Martin Seymour-Smith, *Hardy* (London: Bloomsbury, 1994), 193.

[76] November 30, 1878, 688. Reprinted in Orel, *Hardy's Personal Writings*, 91.

[77] See, for example, Joe Fisher, *The Hidden Hardy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992). Fisher sees the County of Wessex and the local dialect as presented in the novels as conscious re-workings of reality to make Hardy's 'product' (which he describes as a 'traded text') more saleable on the literary market and to enhance the author's own career.

[78] See, for example, Ulla Baugner, 'A Study on the Use of Dialect in Thomas Hardy's Novels and Short Stories with Special Reference to Phonology and Vocabulary' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of

that Hardy's 'purpose was not to reproduce in the reader's imagining ear the precise aural experience of listening to Dorset peasants, but to give the impression of how the speech of certain characters differed from the educated norm',[79] thereby clearly indicating different relationships in the community. Language is a means of social and intellectual differentiation and is, as such, an invaluable aid in locating and distinguishing between the two different kinds of knowledge which form the subject of the present study. Exactly how language is used in this discussion, and the part which dialect plays, is explained shortly in the presentation of the Bernsteinian concepts of the restricted and elaborated codes.

Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein

In the ensuing chapters, the linguistic aspects of everyday and specialised knowledge are related to essential aspects of the social and intellectual environments of the three groups of characters I discuss. In order to clarify the connections, I use selected concepts taken from the work of the French sociologist/anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu. The most important features of Bourdieu's and Basil Bernstein's work from my point of view have been condensed into a model which is presented in the Appendix. In the spirit of Bourdieu, this is not intended as a rigid sociological model which attempts to mould all characters to fit certain pre-conceived patterns or explanations; instead, it is a set of guidelines which assists in the study both of the relationships between the three different groups of characters and of the two kinds of knowledge identified and discussed in the following chapters. Before reviewing the individual features of the model, it is important to establish certain general features of my argument and their relationship to the theories of Bourdieu and Bernstein.

Of the two theorists, it is Bourdieu who features more strongly here, but Bourdieu and Bernstein complement each other extremely well. Randal Johnson, the editor of Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production. Essays on Art and Literature*,[80] emphasises that Bourdieu's notions of habitus and field (explained below) allow works of literature to be read both on an internal and an external level: '[o]nly a method which retains a notion of intertextuality, seen as a system of differential stances, and reintroduces a notion of agent (i.e. producer), acting (consciously or unconsciously) within a specific set of social relations, can transcend the seemingly irreconcilable differences between internal and external readings of artistic works.' I have applied this remark both to Hardy himself, by taking into consideration the

Stockholm, 1972). Baugner concludes that 'it seems justifiable to accept Hardy as a trustworthy source of information as regards the dialect vocabulary of his native county' , 224. Marlene Springer argues in *Hardy's Use of Allusion* (London: Macmillan, 1983) that '[t]ime and communication have given credence to Hardy's portraits [of the rustics] as we have come to a better understanding of the linguistic [...] patterns of isolated regions' , 83.

[79] *The Language of Thomas Hardy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), 113.

[80] Cambridge: Polity, 1993. The quoted passage is on p.14.

society in which Hardy was born, lived and worked, and to the characters in the novels, whose lives, work and values are placed in a social/historical context.

The scope of this study is necessarily limited. I do not attempt to cover Hardy's entire œuvre as Bourdieu himself would advocate (the poetry and drama have largely been excluded). I have also chosen to concentrate on some key concepts from Bourdieu's work, starting with his early work on Algerian peasants from the 1960s, and including later publications on art and literature from the 1990s, selecting those concepts which I consider particularly relevant to the subject of my study. I argue that the two forms of attitude identified by Bourdieu, the traditionalist and the predictive, are also identifiable in Hardy's novels. Bourdieu concludes his essay on 'The Attitude of the Algerian Peasant Toward Time'[81] with the following words, which are highly pertinent to my study:

> everything holds together; in the traditionalist attitude, submission to the present 'datum', social or natural, the goal of a 'forthcoming' inherent in the present and anticipated according to models furnished by the past, distrust of the abstract future and possibilities; in the predictive attitude, the refusal to accept the present state of things, political or natural, the wish to fashion the present in the image of a projected future and to overcome the uncertainties of the future by calculated forecast. Each of these attitudes towards the world and time is the implicit basis of behaviour patterns, even the simplest ones, and the different forms which each takes according to its scope are all indissociably bound together.

The traditionalist attitude is associated with the everyday knowledge of traditional societies and the predictive with the specialised knowledge of modern society.

The four terms taken from Bourdieu's works which form the conceptual framework of my discussions are 'habitus', 'field', 'cultural capital' and 'hysteresis.' Each of these concepts appears in the ensuing chapters where appropriate, and where space may be saved by explicit mention; more often than not, however, they form the basis of the discussion by implication and do not always receive specific mention. This is not the place to go into a detailed description of how Bourdieu's use of those terms evolved.[82] It is more relevant to provide a general definition of each term as it is used in the ensuing chapters. It is worth noting that Bourdieu first used the habitus concept to explain the behaviour of Algerian peasants who were driven from the soil and found themselves on the periphery of modern society. He was particularly interested in these people because they found themselves in a transitional period. There are

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[81] In *Mediterranean Countrymen. Essays in the Social Anthropology of the Mediterranean* ed. by Julian Pitt-Rivers (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1977; first published as *Recherches méditerranéennes, Études* in 1963), 55–72. The quoted passage is on p. 72.

[82] Anyone interested in the evolution of the concept of habitus will find a useful source in Pierre Bourdieu and Channa Newman, 'The genesis of the concepts of "habitus" and "field"', *Sociocriticism* 2 (December 1985), 11–24; or Staf Callewaert, *Kultur, Pædagogik og Videnskab. Om Pierre Bourdieus Habitusbegreb og Praktikteori* (København: Akademisk Forlag, 1992). Callewaert shows how Bourdieu's use of the concept of habitus differs from similar concepts used by Husserl, Hegel, Weber, Durkheim and Mauss (see Chapter 3).

thus certain similarities between Bourdieu's subject and the position of groups one and two in Hardy's novels.

Bourdieu's philosophy is both relational, i.e. he accords primacy to human relationships, and positional in that he emphasises the potential power of agents.[83] The Bourdieuian concepts used in this book are thus a complement to the historical material presented, of which more later. History looks at facts, events and phenomena. Bourdieu allows one to look at the basis of social relations, particularly with respect to groups, i.e. how individuals relate to their own social class and to other groups. Bourdieu's concern is with social effects rather than events. Fundamental to Bourdieu's entire philosophy is the concept of habitus, which he defines as

> systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without in any way being the product of obedience to rules.[84]

Habitus is, in other words, a set of dispositions which is created and reformulated in the combination of objective structures and personal history. The individual acquires dispositions by means of social positions to which he or she adjusts. Habitus involves classification and may be described as orienting practices which allow a person to adjust to objective social structures and values without requiring formal rules. Habitus incorporates the individual's knowledge and understanding of the world. Such knowledge makes its own contribution to reality and is not merely a reflection of the world. Habitus is thus a generative structure and allows for individual invention and improvisation.

As Rogers Brubaker argues, Bourdieu's theory of habitus is more advanced and dynamic than, for example, Weber's, Durkheim's or Marx's theories of social behaviour because it takes into consideration both objective structures (environmental structures and factors) and individual response (internalised dispositions).[85] Bourdieu's use of habitus allows the critic to go beyond statements of fact and explore the mechanisms behind them. A statement such as the following one by Hardy's contemporary Richard Jefferies takes on a new meaning when analysed with the aid of the habitus concept: 'when a man and all his ancestors for generations have

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[83] For a further discussion of this point see the preface to Bourdieu's *Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998; first published as *Raisons Pratiques* in 1994).

[84] *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; first published as *Esquisse d'une Théorie de la Pratique, Précédé de Trois Études d'ethnologie Kabyle*, 1972), 72.

[85] 'Rethinking Classical Theory. The Sociological Vision of Pierre Bourdieu', *Theory and Society* 14 (1985), 723–744. The possibilities of such an approach have been noted by Hardy critics. As recently as 1999 Jane Thomas wrote in the introduction to her book on Hardy, femininity and dissent: '[t]he relationship between structure and agency must be grasped as dynamic, not static [...] The investigation of the dynamics of structure and agency in Hardy's novels – especially where the resistant female subject is concerned – opens them up to flexible and productive readings which stress the interactive relationship between the individual and the social structures in which she is enmeshed rather than the inevitable determinisms of Fate, Biology or the Evolutionary Process', *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 9–10.

been hewers of wood and drawers of water, it naturally follows that the present representative of the family holds strongly to the traditions, the instincts, acquired during the slow process of time.'[86] Here 'naturally' does not simply mean 'in accordance with nature'; it expresses a social process whereby the individual absorbs ideas, knowledge and skills which form the basis of how s/he perceives and responds to the environment. The habitus is continually modified by experience; indeed, Bourdieu provides the key to understanding the process which was the concern of so many novelists of Hardy's era, as it is of present-day writers, namely that 'of accommodating our changed and unchanged selves to changed and unchanged surroundings.'[87]

This is, of course, part of the nature/nurture controversy. Hardy demonstrated an awareness of the latter from his very first novella 'An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress',[88] which was based on his unpublished novel *The Poor Man and the Lady*. In the novella Geraldine tells Egbert in a letter, '[t]o be woven and tied in the world by blood, acquaintance, tradition, and external habit, is to a woman to be utterly at the beck of that world's customs' (131). Two years later, Hardy recorded at length a passage from J.S. Mill which summarises an attitude expressed throughout his novels:

> I have long felt [says J.S. Mill] that the prevailing tendency to regard all the marked distinctions of hum.^{n} char^{r}. as innate, & to ignore the irresistible proofs that by far the greater part of these differences, whether between individuals, races, or sexes, are such as not only might, but naturally would be, produced by diff.^{ces} in circ.^{ces}, is one of the chief hindrances to the rational treatment of great social questions, & one of the greatest stumbling blocks to a human improvement.[89]

Critics of Bourdieu have tended to emphasise the structuralist element of the habitus concept and to underplay the importance of agency.[90] Bourdieu has also been criticised for not explaining exactly how one's habitus originates and is formed; Erik Peurell,[91] for example, points out an apparent conflict between the view that the habitus is relatively flexible in adapting to experience and the environment and the contention that the primary habitus (i.e. patterns of thought and behaviour estab-

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[86] *The Toilers of the Field* (London: Longmans, Green, 1907; first published in 1892).

[87] Samuel Butler, *The Way of All Flesh* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966; first published in 1903), 327 .

[88] Reprinted in *Thomas Hardy. The Excluded and Collaborative Stories* ed. by Pamela Dalziel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). First published in 1878 in *New Quarterly* and *Harper's Weekly*.

[89] The passage was taken from Leslie Stephen, 'An Attempted Philosophy of History', *Fortnightly Review* XXVII (April 1880), 677. Quoted in *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy volume 1* and *volume 2* (hereafter referred to as *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1* and *The Literary Notebooks Volume 2*), volume 1, ed. by Lennart A. Björk (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), entry 1190, 132. This is in many ways a very modern insight. It is, for example, one of the basic arguments of Jarred Diamond (in *Guns, Germs, and Steel*), one of whose prime purposes in writing his book was to correct the racist-biological explanation that differences among people are innate. Diamond summarises his book in one sentence: '[h]istory followed different courses for different peoples because of differences among people's environments, not because of biological differences among peoples themselves' (25).

[90] For an illuminating discussion of this problem see Bo G. Ekelund, *In the Pathless Forest. John Gardner's Literary Project* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1995), 26.

[91] *En Författares Väg. Jan Fridegård i det litterära fältet* (Hedemora: Gidlunds Förlag, 1998), doctoral thesis in Comparative Literature, Uppsala University. This problem is discussed in Chapter Two of Peurell's thesis.

lished during early childhood) results in an inflexibility of attitude and response to the environment in adulthood. When applying Bourdieu's concept of habitus, however, it is important to understand that he does not claim that the primary habitus *determines* behaviour in adulthood, merely that it exercises considerable, though not absolute, influence over the way in which individuals both perceive and respond to the environment. Bourdieu is at pains to show that the habitus both consistently modifies and is itself modified by the external environment. Habitus is thus at root a dynamic rather than a static concept.[92]

The concept of habitus has been applied in the present thesis both to the characters in Hardy's fourteen published novels and to Hardy himself. This is not to say, however, that the novels are mere records of personal experience. They are works of art which both reflect and influence Hardy's experience in a variety of ways.[93] The story of Thomas Hardy's life is well known and need not be repeated here. It is nonetheless essential to emphasise that Hardy was able to draw on aspects of his childhood and the stories of his mother's youth, particularly when describing group one. He was also, as was pointed out earlier, an accepted member of metropolitan London society. This gave him special insights which are clearly reflected in, for example, *The Hand of Ethelberta* and *The Well-Beloved.* Chapter Two takes up aspects of Hardy's schooling and further education, as well as key works read by him both as a child and as an adult. Critics have shown how Hardy's childhood experiences, his architectural training, his autodidacticism and his knowledge of rural and metropolitan society are reflected in the content, characterisation[94] and language[95] of his prose and poetry. Of greater interest in the present context, however, is the development of Hardy's thoughts as regards the relative importance of the two kinds of knowledge, everyday and specialised. A close reading of the novels suggests that Hardy's views became increasingly complex as the process of social change accelerated in the second half of the nineteenth century. This in turn brought about significant changes in Hardy's habitus. From the very beginning of his career, Hardy's sympathies were with the rustics. He wrote for the middle class, however, whose values he clearly shared: 'order, progress, a more or less orthodox Christian morality,

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[92] This point is well argued in, among others, Peurell, *En Författares Väg,* 23 - 24. Peurell distinguishes between habit, which is a form of mechanical repetition, and habitus as a productive force which interplays with the forces which create it. The habitus influences these forces and in this way has an effect on the conditions of its own development, 23.

[93] This is also one of the basic arguments of, among others, Paul Turner in *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy. A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 1.

[94] For an early example see Ruth A. Firor, *Folkways in Thomas Hardy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931). Firor studied the influence of folk-lore and folk-custom on Hardy's works and concluded that '[h]is people are what they are because of their environment and ancestry', 306.

[95] Less attention has been paid to Hardy's language than to content. For four useful studies of Hardy's language and his background, see Raymond Chapman, *Forms of Speech in Victorian Fiction* (London: Longman, 1994); Raymond Chapman, *The Language of Thomas Hardy*; Ralph W. V. Elliott, *Thomas Hardy's English* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984); and Marlene Springer, *Hardy's Use of Allusion.*

productivity and self-help.'[96] Hardy came to see group two as holding the key to the future. As Chapter Four shows, however, successful adaptation to changing needs and values became increasingly difficult even for this group as the century progressed.

Incorporated within the habitus is the knowledge of what Bourdieu describes as 'the rules of the game', and of the stakes involved. The latter constitute an appropriate response in a particular situation, determining the individual's ability to respond successfully to different stimuli. The embodiment of the rules of the game in the habitus gives the habitus the power of anticipation.[97] Knowledge of the rules of the game is thus closely linked to survival, a concept which is in its turn associated with Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection, of which more below.

The rules of the game are, Bourdieu maintains, applied in specific so-called fields. These are arenas of defence and challenge which are related to particular areas of activity or interest, e.g. commerce, education and law. Positions and interrelations within a field are determined by the allocation of various kinds of resources, or 'capital', to use Bourdieu's term.[98] Individuals with different kinds of capital (economic, cultural or symbolic, i.e. status and prestige) struggle either to maintain or improve their position within the field.[99]

Of particular importance to the present study, as well as to Bourdieu himself, is the educational field. As Chapter One shows, developments in the educational system in England were rapid and far-reaching in the second half of the nineteenth century. At the same time, that period marked a clear change in attitude to the importance of educational qualifications as new career opportunities opened up, professional bodies which were created to protect various professions began to demand particular qualifications and an increasingly well-educated lower middle class strove for upward mobility. Bourdieu shows that children from lower socio-economic groups are at a disadvantage when competing for qualifications in the educational system. They do not possess the cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions necessary to succeed within the formal educational system. Children of higher socio-economic groups have these factors inculcated in them from childhood; they thus form part of such children's primary habitus. Bourdieu claims that the educa-

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[96] Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 37.

[97] Exactly how this mechanism works is explained by Bourdieu in *Practical Reason*, 80–81.

[98] Bourdieu defines 'capital' and its different forms in 'The Forms of Capital', in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986) ed. by John G. Richardson.

[99] Bo Ekelund says that the element of struggle in the concept of the field should not be allowed to disguise the fact that Bourdieu believes that conflicts arise more as a result of magnetic forces within the field, which pull individuals in certain directions, than as a consequence of personal ambition. Ekelund makes the point that relations in a field may also be neutral or altruistic, and that there are possibilities for alliances in fields. The question of where the critic ultimately places the emphasis is an empirical one (Ekelund's views as stated here were presented at a seminar at the University of Karlskrona/Ronneby on 2 December 1999, and in subsequent e-mail discussions with the author). Other critics, for example Alex Callinicos, emphasise the individual struggle aspect of Bourdieu's theory: see, for example, *Social Theory. A Historical Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1999).

tional system provides a practical justification of the established order while at the same time masking under the cover of formal equality the relationship between obtained educational qualifications and inherited cultural capital.[100] He even goes as far as to say that the school system is a form of 'social alchemy' in that it transforms arbitrary relations 'into officially recognized distinctions.'[101]

Evidence of the applicability of Bourdieu's views to nineteenth-century education is to be found in the work of various historians and educationalists/sociologists.[102] The nineteenth century gradually began to recognise that the lower socio-economic groups were less well adapted to the educational system, not least owing to the fact that the values and norms pervading school life were those of the middle class and were as such alien, even incomprehensible, to the poorer groups. Today, of course, this is a recognised and important field of study for sociologists and educationalists, a number of whom also demonstrate the potential of education as an agent of social control.[103]

Bourdieu makes an additional important point in relation to the school system when he shows that it is schools which are responsible for establishing the patterns of thought which come to characterise a particular age. This bears some similarity to the Foucauldian view that the thinking practice and knowledge of an era determine who may speak, what may be spoken, and how it may be said. Certain groups such as Hardy's rustic characters fall outside such practices. Knowledge is a tool of social control and a means of exercising power. By studying developments in the educational system, it is possible to identify the patterns informing the thought of a given period. The lack of scope for everyday knowledge in the compulsory school system of the nineteenth century, and the growing emphasis on the development of rational/scientific thought throughout that century, reflect substantial changes in social values. This study maintains that group one in Hardy's novels was less well equipped than the group-two characters to cope with such changes because its values and thought patterns were traditional rather than predictive.

Why then were the rustics of nineteenth-century Dorset unable to change? A

[100] For a more detailed discussion of this aspect of Bourdieu's philosophy, see Bourdieu's *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999; first published as *Le Sens Pratique* in 1980), Chapter 8 'Modes of Domination.'

[101] Ibid., 125.

[102] Steven Shapin and Barry Barnes point out, for example, that it was a widely-held belief in the mid-nineteenth century that '[t]he multitude's thinking was *superficial* rather than profound; it was based upon sense data rather than abstract organizing principles, and was accordingly *sensual* not rational; it was *inconsequential*, unlike the thought of the higher orders which took proper account of the consequences of action; it was *fragmented*, and failed to perceive those necessary connections between phenomena which gave the upper classes their integrated overall understanding of society', 'Science, nature and control: interpreting Mechanics' Institutes' in *A Sociological Reader* ed. by Roger Dale (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 57.

[103] See, for example, Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England', *Past and Present* 49 (1970), 96–119; Richard Johnson, 'Educating the Educators: "Experts" and the State 1833–9' in *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* ed. by A. P. Donajgrodzki (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 77–107.

major part of the explanation lies in what Bourdieu describes as the hysteresis effect. The term derives from a verb meaning 'to be too late; to lag behind.' In his early work *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Bourdieu supplies a fairly general definition of hysteresis. In the later *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*[104] the concept is related to education, more specifically to an inflation in study grades, as a result of which certain qualifications drop in value. Bourdieu argues that those who inherit a high cultural capital are better equipped to assess which courses provide the best career and financial advantages. This book follows Bourdieu's earlier and more general interpretation of hysteresis, namely, that objective conditions stimulate expectations and practices which are compatible with the requirements of such conditions. Some practices are regarded as improbable and thus excluded as unthinkable, being beyond what the individual believes is objectively possible given the prevailing conditions. Bourdieu also points to what he calls a 'double negation': that is, a virtue is made of necessity, the individual refuses what is already denied him or her and loves the inevitable. Practical estimates rather than scientific observations are made, and the primary habitus plays a crucial role in influencing perception and evaluating subsequent experience.

Bourdieu explains that in accordance with the hysteresis effect 'practices are always liable to incur negative sanctions when the environment with which they are actually confronted is too distant from that to which they are objectively fitted.'[105] A structural lag develops between opportunities and the disposition to grasp them. This may be specifically related to the idea of peasant fatalism noted by, among others, George Bourne: 'supported by an instinctive fatalism, the people have taken their plight [impoverishment and overwork] for granted, without harbouring resentment against the more fortunate'[106] who are seen as essential for providing work for the labourer. Peasant fatalism was not purely instinctive, it was also the result of environmental influence.

Bourdieu's definition of the hysteresis effect is developed in two different ways in the present study: firstly to show how Hardy's rustic characters are presented as being ill-equipped to take advantage of the developments in knowledge and education which characterised modern predictive society; and secondly to identify a particular form of hysteresis found in group three, namely, a lack of emotional development and maturity which prevents these characters from making full use of their social, educational and financial advantages.

In the same way as the hysteresis effect is closely related to the habitus, it is also clearly linked with what Bourdieu terms the linguistic habitus. The latter comprises dispositions which are acquired in the course of learning to speak in specific con-

[104] Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984; first published as *La Distinction* in 1979.
[105] *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 78.
[106] Quoted in J.P.D. Dunbabin, *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1974), 11.

texts, for instance in the family, with one's peer group, at school etc. Such dispositions steer one's subsequent linguistic practices as well as the anticipated value of linguistic products within a given situation or field, for example in the labour market or at an educational institution. The linguistic habitus implies a certain capacity to speak grammatically correctly as well as to use this skill in a specific situation. Individuals with a middle- or upper-class background are better equipped to deal with the linguistic demands of schools and institutions of higher education; in Bourdieuian terms, such individuals have greater symbolic power.[107] To illustrate this more clearly, I have chosen to apply two concepts launched by the sociologist-cum-linguist-cum-educationalist Basil Bernstein, namely, the 'restricted' and 'elaborated' codes.

In his definition of the two codes Bernstein stresses the semantic rather than the linguistic features, that is to say it is the orientation towards meaning which is the chief indicator of the type of code spoken.[108] Bernstein maintains that language classifies and frames, and in so doing regulates and organises the meanings of individuals in specific contexts. Like Bourdieu, he concludes that middle- and upper-class children are better adapted to understanding and using the codes of the school and are thus in a more powerful position with respect to these codes.[109] For Bernstein, linguistic codes are transmitters of a sub-culture, and the creators of social identity. Through language children learn to organise, structure and reinforce perception. Adults form a model by which the adequacy of the child's response is measured. Changes in a linguistic code cause modifications in the means by which order and relevance are generated. Changes in codes involve changes in role relationships and in methods of social control.

Bernstein's theories on the restricted and elaborated codes may be summarised as follows.[110] The restricted code is concrete and descriptive. There is a direct relation between meanings and a specific material base. Restrictive-code users share com-

[107] For a full explication of Bourdieu's views on symbolic power see his *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991). Bourdieu writes, '[t]he educational system, whose scale of operations grew in extent and intensity throughout the nineteenth century, no doubt directly helped to devalue popular modes of expression, dismissing them as "slang" and "gibberish" [...] and to impose recognition of the legitimate language', 49.

[108] See *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity*, 165. For a historical review of Bernstein's argument on the subject see his *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse. Volume IV Class, Codes and Control* (London: Routledge, 1990), 150–152.

[109] For a fuller discussion of this aspect of Bernstein's argument see ibid., 106–108. Bernstein points out that educationalists are elaborated-code users. They use a language which only they master and which, as the language of education, is forced on restricted-code users.

[110] Bernstein outlines some criticisms of his previous definitions of codes in the introduction to *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse*, 3–4. The concepts have undergone some revision since their original conception.

mon assumptions, expectations and interests. Meaning is frequently implicit rather than explicit. Extra-verbal channels such as intonation, pitch, rhythm and facial expression are extremely important as bearers of meaning. There is little attempt to elaborate on causes, processes and differences; language is rarely used for analytical purposes. Its symbolic features possess a low order of generality. Bernstein summarises as follows: '[t]he net effect of the constraint of a restricted code will be to depress potential linguistic ability, raise the relevance of the concrete and descriptive level of response and inhibit generalising ability at the higher ranges.'[111] To these characteristics Bourdieu would add that there is a pronounced tendency among restricted-code users to concentrate on the manipulation of objects as opposed to words. The word 'restricted' is thus used by Bernstein to mean a restricted tendency to use language in an abstract and analytical sense. Children from the lower social classes are exposed to the possibilities symbolised by the restricted code only. Children from the middle and upper classes have both codes at their disposal.

It is essential to understand that Bernstein uses the word 'restricted' to mean 'restricted in tendency to use language for rational, analytical thought or universal application', and not to suggest limited intellectual ability. Academics, for example, who operate within a strongly classified context, i.e. use a kind of shorthand in their theoretical discussion, are not using a restricted code because their orientation is, in fact, elaborated, i.e. universal and analytical; but this is not in itself a testimony to mental prowess. It is also important to establish that the restricted code should not be confused with dialect, which has its own developed grammar and wide range of meanings, albeit within a limited local area. Theoretically at least it is just as possible to analyse and use abstract concepts in dialect as in standard language; the difference is that only a limited number are able to understand its full implications. Dialect is thus not restricted in meaning or scope but in geographical range.

Historians reinforce the truth of Bernstein's reasoning without, of course, using his terminology. Thus, for example, one can read in a rural history of nineteenth-century Britain, in a discussion of the problems of rural education, that '[s]chool visitors commented on the blank, vacant looks on many of the faces [of the schoolchildren], the inability to grasp underlying general principles or abstract ideas.'[112] Specialists in Victorian speech also support Bernstein's findings. G. Glen Wickens shows, for example, that Hardy's contemporaries (e.g. Frederic Farrar) associated primitive languages with a low level of abstraction and the modern mind with analytical language.[113] Wickens concludes that '[t]he lower the social strata, the older its thought and language are.' Hardy's fiction represents a balance between different styles, suggests Wickens, the 'simple and sensuous' (Bernstein's restricted code) and the 'abstract and learned' (the elaborated code).

[111] 'Linguistic Codes, Hesitation Phenomena and Intelligence', *Language and Speech* 5 (1962), 36.
[112] G. E. Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England* (London: Heinemann, 1977), 196.
[113] 'Victorian Theories of Language and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Mosaic* XIX (1986), 99–115, (104 and 114).

For Bernstein, the abstract and rational elaborated code indicates a less direct relation between meanings and a specific material base than that characterising the restricted code. The elaborated code is also less closely related to the local area, culture and social structure. Unlike the restricted code, it involves no common assumptions, expectations and interests. Meaning is explicit rather than implicit. Elaborated-code users use language to discourse on causes, processes and differences. Language is employed for analytical purposes, and its symbolic features possess a high order of generality.[114] With the advancement of science during the nineteenth century and the increasing interest in discovering and analysing general laws and theories, the elaborated code was essential for taking part in modern developments. It was also, as mentioned earlier, the code used and reinforced in schools, placing middle- and upper-class children at an automatic advantage in the educational system. It is interesting to reflect on the degree to which Hardy himself was aware of the existence of two distinct linguistic codes. Although language development and specific linguistic features could not be studied scientifically in the nineteenth century in the way they can today, specialists in Victorian language have been able to show that the nineteenth century witnessed an increasing awareness of dialect and register for personal and social occasions during this period, and it seems likely that Hardy shared this insight. Raymond Chapman suggests that the dialogues in the novels are better planned and richer than real-life dialogues.[115] Certainly Victorian novelists in general – if one is to believe the reviewers – made every effort to honour the demand for convincing and realistic speech. As Chapman says, Victorian novelists did their utmost to fulfil the demands of realism 'but they used their art to economise, make more coherent, and sometimes exaggerate the facts of speech.' Bernstein's concepts of the restricted and elaborated codes are used in this book as linguistic tools which indicate the different levels of thought of the three social groups discussed here. My concern, like Bernstein's, is with the orientation of thought rather than with specific linguistic features.

The concepts selected from the works of Bourdieu and Bernstein thus complement one another.[116] Bourdieu provides the sociological tools, Bernstein the linguistic ones. In his introduction to *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse* volume IV, Bernstein himself points to certain similarities between his concept of code and Bourdieu's habitus, suggesting that 'code may be regarded as an attempt to write what may perhaps be called pedagogic grammars of specialized habituses and the forms of their transmission which attempt to regulate their acquisition.'[117] Bernstein

[114] In early publications Bernstein dubbed the elaborated code 'formal language' and identified very specific linguistic features. See, for example, 'Social Structure, Language and Learning', *Educational Research. The Journal of the NFER* 3 (1961), 163–176.

[115] See *Forms of Speech in Victorian Fiction*. The quotation is from p. 248.

[116] For a more general discussion of the relationship between Bourdieu and Bernstein and their relative importance in the international market, see *Discourse and Reproduction. Essays in Honor of Basil Bernstein* ed. by Paul Atkinson, Brian Davis and Sara Delamont (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1995), 4.

[117] London: Routledge, 1990, 3.

also shows, however, that the concepts of code and habitus differ in one important respect: inherent in the concept of code is a mechanism which permits a rearrangement or modification of the principles of order which are taken over in the code. A code thus has a greater potential for change than does habitus.

Bourdieu certainly seems to be very close to Bernstein in his *Academic Discourse*[118] when he emphasises the point that language is more than a vehicle of thought. It provides a system of categories which are more or less complex. The language in the family environment is decisive for the individual's ability to decode and manipulate complex structures. This language invariably transfers some of its characteristics to the language spoken and acquired at school. Bernstein has admitted that he has gained much from reading Bourdieu, particularly with respect to the concept of field. It is also important to recognise that both Bourdieu and Bernstein are required to understand fully the mechanism of hysteresis. Indeed, it is only by application of the restricted-code concept that hysteresis becomes fully intelligible. Bernstein shows that the restricted code is conservative, it builds on social cohesion and does not stimulate change; the more elaborated the code the more it contains the principles of disturbing and challenging its own basis. Restricted-code users are thus less inclined to change. The restricted code is a clear reflection of a more general tendency to fail to perceive and grab opportunities for improvement.

This is not to say, however, that there is complete agreement between Bourdieu and Bernstein or that the two are uncritical of each other. Bourdieu has criticised Bernstein, for example, for describing the characteristics of the elaborated code without properly relating them to the social conditions in which the code is produced. Bernstein, on the other hand, has criticised Bourdieu for failing to explain how a particular habitus is shaped: the generating rules which produce specific practices and strategies are a mystery, he maintains. This is not the place to go into a comparison of the development and explication of Bourdieu's and Bernstein's theories. Suffice it to say that for the purposes of the present investigation, the concepts selected and discussed in the following chapters together form a relatively comprehensive picture of the types and levels of knowledge that the three groups possess and are helpful when it comes to perceiving how these different manifestations of knowledge are reflected in life, work and language.

Unlike many critics, I do not aim to prove that Hardy was either a narrow pessimist or an idealist with an abiding faith in the goodness of nature and the traditional rural order. While it is true, as many critics have pointed out, that Hardy lived and wrote in a period of general and radical change, his views on knowledge and survival remain remarkably consistent: they mature and take on board new angles and perspectives, but they do not change in any fundamental sense. There is always the

[118] Written with Jean-Claude Passeron and Monique de Saint Martin, *Academic Discourse. Linguistic Misunderstanding and Professorial Power* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994; first published as *Rapport Pédagogique et Communication* in 1965).

danger in trying to trace developments in an artist's works that one will be accused of ignoring details in favour of proving a theory or thesis.[119] The use of Bourdieu and Bernstein does something to obviate this difficulty by making it possible to incorporate history, modern sociology and socio-linguistics into my argument. The concepts used here encourage the study of details as well as overriding themes by focusing attention on particular aspects of the fictional characters' environment, personality, profession and language. As Daniel Defoe wrote in *Robinson Crusoe*, '[t]o invent facts in order to justify a theory is one thing, – to apply facts fairly represented in a particular manner is quite another thing.'[120]

History, realism and social criticism

I hope to show that in one important respect at least J. Hillis Miller is not completely fair when he states that 'Hardy has no permanent personality, but changes from moment to moment according to his mood or his experience. His writing therefore can be nothing more than a discontinuous sequence of moments of vision, written as things seem first one way to him and then another.'[121] As was stated above, Hardy's view of knowledge was subject to continual modification, but not to radical transformation. By exploring this process of modification as it manifests itself in Hardy's novels, I hope to be able to convey fresh insight not only into the major novels but also, and perhaps more importantly, into the minor and all-too-frequently neglected ones.

A close reading of the novels shows how Hardy's views on writing and society matured with time. In this respect, the novels are a better source than either the short stories or poems. The greater length of a novel required Hardy to spend more time over a longer period developing his thoughts and ideas. By considering all fourteen published novels and not merely concentrating on the so-called major ones, I hope to show that each novel has a special and individual contribution to make to the subject of this book.[122] Peter Widdowson, in his discussion of who determines the meaning of Hardy's work (Hardy the *writer* or the Hardy *reader*), has described Hardy as 'one of the slipperiest practitioners in the game.'[123] A degree of

[119] This view has been put forward very recently by, for example, Robert Schweik in his chapter entitled 'Less than Faithfully Presented: Fictions in Modern Commentaries on Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*' in *Reading Thomas Hardy* ed. by Charles C. Pettit (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 53. Charles Lock put this more strongly when he wrote, 'any claim of integrity and wholeness [in content and thought in Hardy's novels] is an ideological hoax', *Criticism in Focus. Thomas Hardy* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992), 128.

[120] Quoted in Thomas Vargish, *The Providential Aesthetic in Victorian Fiction* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985), 14.

[121] *Thomas Hardy. Distance and Desire* (Cambridge/Mass.: Belknap, Harvard University Press, 1970), 44.

[122] Critics such as Richard H. Taylor have argued that it is only by studying all fourteen novels, that is the minor as well as the major ones, that one can avoid distorting Hardy's career and disguising 'the interpenetrating unities of his fiction'; see *The Neglected Hardy. Thomas Hardy's Lesser Novels* (London: Macmillan, 1982), 3.

[123] *On Thomas Hardy. Late Essays and Earlier* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 9.

certainty is introduced by studying the conditions in which the various characters described in the novel would have worked in reality and on linking these conditions with Hardy's views on art, presented below. Ideally, an investigation along these lines should also cover relevant details in Hardy's own life, as well as general social developments. Space does not allow this, however.

By drawing on historical documents, e.g. newspapers, log books and reports, I have tried to illuminate features of the fictional text the significance of which may be partially or wholly missed by the modern reader. My aim is to provide a historical context which performs the same function as that described by Richard Freadman and Seumas Miller under the heading of the hermeneutic context, i.e. that which 'enables the reader to determine what meanings are or are not conceivably present in the text.'[124] The historical and the fictional texts complement each other.[125] I have nonetheless been careful to distinguish between the two types of text by using the present tense for the novels and the past for historical documents. This is in no sense intended as an evaluation, merely a means of differentiating between the two kinds of text.

Underlying my discussion is the belief that the novels constitute 'concrete expressions of contemporary consciousness'[126] which cannot be found elsewhere. The modern reader needs some assistance, however, in rediscovering this consciousness. This is an integral part of the kind of knowledge that the reader him- or herself brings to the text. Of course, that is not to say that the contemporary reader's knowledge was necessarily complete either. The educated cosmopolitan Victorian may also have had very limited knowledge of conditions in rural Dorset. Even so, I believe – and I realise that there are many modern critics who would disagree with this – that the greater the reader's understanding of such conditions is, the closer s/he comes to understanding Hardy's texts as he himself intended them to be understood.

As was pointed out above, work was a major source of knowledge for Hardy. In view of this book's basic concerns, it is hence appropriate to devote considerable space to characters at work; this is, of course, what Hardy himself does in the majority of his novels. An additional and interesting project which lies beyond the scope of this study would be to consider the aesthetic use Hardy makes of work as a metaphor of knowledge. Even without expressly addressing this dimension, though, it is possi-

[124] *Re-Thinking Theory. A Critique of Contemporary Literary Theory and an Alternative Account* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 200.

[125] This is not to say that I subscribe to the Old Historicist view that historical documents are exclusively products and reflections of the social reality surrounding them, i.e. that there is a one-to-one relationship between verifiable elements which are identifiable in historical documents and elements in the literary work. Historical documents are accounts of phenomena as seen by the writer, who uses language to create certain effects. I have used contemporary accounts where available to come as close as possible to Hardy's contemporaries' views. These accounts are limited in number and not wholly objective. Nonetheless, they afford useful insights into contemporary conditions, thought and ideas. Modern historical studies are also useful as a complement both to older documents and to the literary text.

[126] This phrase is used by Jeanne Howard, 'Thomas Hardy's "Mellstock" and the Registrar General's Stinsford', *Literature and History* 6 (Autumn, 1977), 199.

ble to discern a consistency of thought in Hardy's novels which the author himself denied – Hardy repeatedly emphasised that his novels should not be read as an exemplification of a consistent philosophy – and one of which he was perhaps himself unaware.

As a means of tracing a course of development in Hardy's thought I have decided to discuss Hardy's novels in chronological order.[127] I have attempted to show how the novels relate to one another, although of course they are separate creations. By dealing with each novel as a work of fiction in its own right I hope to serve the interests of two groups of scholars: those interested in a specific novel, and the more 'general' Hardy scholar. Important details about the production and reception of each novel are provided where an understanding of these factors contributes to an appreciation of the subject of the present study. A summary of the main findings pertaining to each novel is provided at the end of each separate discussion. This is intended as an aid to the reader for whom it recapitulates the gist of the analysis devoted to that book, but also as a pointer for the scholar interested in how the novel in question relates specifically to the one that follows it or in some cases to other Hardy novels. The chronological method may be regarded as unduly pedantic and to a certain degree repetitive. It is, however, the most efficient method for tracing development of thought over time. My hope is that the use of the Bourdieuian and Bernsteinian concepts outlined above will help to convey sufficiently fresh insights into Hardy's novels for the issue of pedantry not to be a major stumbling-block to the reader, whatever his/her special interests.

Hardy's novels may be regarded as an exploration of points of contact between history and fiction. A myth has grown up in literary criticism, largely among postmodernists, that literary realism is both naive and uncritical. It has been criticised for a blind acceptance of reality without asking fundamental questions about the nature of this reality. This is not the place to enter into such a debate. Suffice it to say that I

[127] I realise that this is anathema to some practitioners of postmodern modes of thinking. Unlike Robert Kiely, I do not believe that the best way to illuminate a novel such as *The Woodlanders* is to compare it with a modern novel, e.g. Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*. Kiely deliberately reverses the chronological order and discusses the modern novel first and the older one afterwards; see Chapter Ten ('The Aesthetics of Solitude, the Politics of Exclusion: Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders* after Louise Erdrich's *Tracks*') in *Reverse Tradition. Postmodern Fictions and the Nineteenth Century Novel* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 235–256. John R. Searle convincingly argues that despite attempts made during the 1990s to suggest that 'reality' is a social construction which has no 'real' existence outside one's perception of it, there is quite clearly an objective reality – what Searle calls 'brute facts'– which has an independent existence outside man's perception of it. Searle also discusses what he regards as the false grounds on which postmodern criticism is based. Derrida is given special consideration (159–160). See *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin, 1995). These findings are also supported by, for example, Freadman and Miller in their stimulating re-evaluation of modern theory in *Re-Thinking Theory*. My argument in this book is based on the belief that there is an objective reality and that this is best studied by using a chronological approach which is supported by historical evidence outside the written text.

subscribe to the view presented by M. J. Devaney[128] that 'questions concerning, *inter alia*, the origins of knowledge, the kinds of knowledge that there are, and the limits of human knowledge have always been, and continue to be, critically reflected upon in realist novels.'

This is not to say, however – to reiterate a point made earlier – that Hardy should be regarded as a realist writer in the conventional sense of the word. As the following section on Hardy's views on art shows, the reconstruction of reality is only part of the story, albeit a crucial one. Nooral Hasan demonstrates that the Wessex of Hardy's novels presents a form of social reality not to be found or even felt by faithful historians.[129] He argues that the relationship between local history and the Wessex novels is 'genetic and organic.' The two are so interwoven that Hardy's novels are 'history *as* fiction, not history *and* fiction.' Hasan's views reinforce my contention that sociology and history are invaluable aids when it comes to increasing one's understanding of fiction. In the present context, the two disciplines allow the writer to look more neutrally at the positions of the three classes discussed, and to avoid the extremes of romanticising on the one hand and denigration on the other.

Major critics, including Raymond and Merryn Williams, Simon Gatrell, Douglas Brown, George Wotton and Peter Widdowson, have already noted the importance of the local community and the socio-economic realities of rural England in understanding and appreciating Hardy's novels. It should be mentioned, too, that the importance of education in Hardy's novels has also been observed by among others Simon Trezise, although the latter concentrates on *The Return of the Native*.[130] In addition, Rosemary Sumner has drawn attention to a link between intellect and poor ability to form normal relationships (the group-three form of hysteresis in the present study). Her treatment of the subject is, however, pronouncedly Freudian and concentrates on Knight in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Clym Yeobright in *The Return of the Native*, Angel Clare in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*.[131] This study attempts to offer an explanation as to *why* and *how* some of the features picked up by previous critics are important not only in specific novels but in all fourteen of the published ones; it also aims to show how these features come together in the development of one particular issue, namely knowledge.

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[128] *'Since at least Plato . . .' and Other Postmodernist Myths* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 120. Devaney's highly controversial book summarises the anti-realism persuasions of postmodernists and sharply criticises the grounds that those persuasions rest on.

[129] *Thomas Hardy. The Sociological Imagination* (London: Macmillan 1982), 185.

[130] 'Ways of Learning in "The Return of the Native", *The Thomas Hardy Journal* VII. 2 (May 1991), 56–65.

[131] *Thomas Hardy. Psychological Novelist* (London: Macmillan, 1981).

Literature, science and art in Hardy's fiction

One specific branch of knowledge – science – gained in status during the nineteenth century, and as Chapter Four shows it becomes increasingly predominant in the later Hardy novels.[132] It is interesting to note that the word 'science' was once applied to knowledge acquired by study, deriving from the Latin *scire*, to know, and *scientia*, meaning knowledge. The word 'scientist' was not actually used until 1840, when the term was coined by William Whewell 'to describe a cultivator of science in general',[133] thereby replacing the earlier term, 'natural philosopher.' In Hardy's novels the forms of scientific knowledge which are most prominent are geology, biology, astronomy, mathematics and medical science. Architecture may also be viewed as a kind of science because of its emphasis on accurate mathematical measurements. The later novels also show an increased interest in modern technology.

This book does not distinguish between pure and applied science, since little distinction was made between the two during Victorian times.[134] The frequent occurrence of scientific terminology in Hardy's novels has already been noted by, among others, Ann Whitlock.[135] By contrast, little attention has been devoted to the relationship between knowledge of science and survival. Science is a way of thinking and of expressing oneself. The popular school book on *The Elements of Algebra*[136] emphasised, on the very first page, that algebra is a science which uses the letters of the alphabet and other signs and symbols to reason about quantities and the way in which these are connected with one another. Science is a form of abstract thinking which requires an appropriate language, what Bernstein calls the elaborated code.

Scientific developments were an important part of Hardy's general awareness of change. They are incorporated in what John M. Robson describes as a sense of history, that is to say, the realisation that the present is different from the past.[137] Change may be seen as a process which is revealed through the study of history. For

[132] For an excellent summary of scientific developments in England during the nineteenth century, see D. S. L. Cardwell, *The Organisation of Science in England* (London: Heinemann, 1957; rev. 1972).

[133] William Whewell, *Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences.* Quoted in Chapple, *Science and Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, 1. A number of new sciences were born in the nineteenth century and were given names of their own, e.g. seismology, named in 1858, and embryology, named in 1859.

[134] See Peter Alter, *The Reluctant Patron. Science and the State in Britain 1850–1920* (Oxford: Berg, 1987), 1–2.

[135] *The Rhythm of Change. Science and Symbolism in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Darley Abbey, Derby: SBT, 1998). By noting scientific references and metaphors, Whitlock shows that the latter increase significantly in the novels published after *A Laodicean.* For a useful table comparing the novels, see page 67. Ralph W. V. Elliott has also researched the use of scientific terminology in Hardy's novels; see *Thomas Hardy's English*, Chapter Four, 'A Dictionary Word', 110 –170. For an informed survey of the portrayal of scientists in literature see Roslynn D. Haynes, *From Faust to Strangelove. Representations of the Scientist in Western Literature* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

[136] *The Elements of Algebra. Adapted for the Use of National and Adult Schools* by John William Colenso (London, 1855).

[137] 'Thoughts on Social Change and Political Accommodation in Victorian Britain' in *The Mind and Art of Victorian England*, ed. by Josef L. Altholz, 78–93 (79).

the Victorians process and progress were intimately connected.[138] Hardy's novels reflect a move away from the traditional rural society and its everyday knowledge towards the modern predictive society and its focus on specialised knowledge, particularly of the scientific kind. As my study shows, however, Hardy's feelings regarding the transformation were ambiguous: he recognised the need for change but regretted the loss of the favourable features of the traditional society, in particular its upholding of the importance of the qualities of the heart as well as the mind.[139]

The subject of my study and its concern with science may be seen in the context of a growing interest among literary scholars in the relationship between literature and science.[140] This trend is easy to understand in that science and culture were inextricably linked for the Victorians.[141] Critics such as George Levine have already demonstrated the strong association between Victorian literature and the extension of the authority of science into the realm of knowledge.[142] Levine shows that knowledge became an aspect of morality, making 'Truth' the highest Victorian virtue. Science was an essential part of a novelist's attempt to reflect reality, or at least selected features of it.

The association between science and literature is not new. In an essay on 'The Scientific Movement and Literature' from as early as 1877, Edward Dowden wrote:

> [a]ny inquiry at the present day into the relations of modern scientific thought with literature must in great part be guided by hints, signs and presages. The time has not yet come when it may be possible to perceive in complete outline the significance of science for the imagination and the emotions of men, but that the significance is large and deep we cannot doubt.[143]

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[138] For an informative discussion of this point see David Knight, *The Age of Science. The Scientific Worldview in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), Chapter X, 'The Triumphal Chariot', 168– 187.

[139] Donald Davie notes, among other things, how Hardy believed that applied science and technology had caused damage to the social and interpersonal relationships of traditional rural society. See Davie's introduction to *Thomas Hardy and British Poetry* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973). Davie concludes that 'if Hardy finally pins what hopes he has upon science, and upon the industrial technology which is science's concomitant, he does so in full knowledge of a human cost which he has counted' (11). For an anti-rationalistic approach to Hardy's view of human nature and its relation to his social criticism see Björk, *Psychological Vision and Social Criticism in the Novels of Thomas Hardy.*

[140] For details of this development see, for example, *Literature and Science. Theory and Practice*, ed. by Stuart Peterfreund (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1990), particularly the introduction.

[141] This is clearly shown in, for example, George Levine's chapter 'Defining Knowledge: An Introduction' in *Victorian Science in Context*, ed. by Bernard Lightman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997). Levine concludes that in the attempt to recreate reality, science began in the Victorian period 'to assume almost exclusive responsibility for reporting on the real' (12). Writers increasingly invoked scientific models and terminology in their novels as the century progressed.

[142] *Darwin and the Novelists. Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge/Mass.:Harvard University Press, 1988). Chapter One supplies an excellent resumé of Levine's thesis.

[143] *Studies in Literature, 1789–1877* (1889), 89. Quoted in Cosslett, *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature*, 3. Science and emotion have traditionally been viewed as opposites and Victorian literature portrayed scientists as unemotional, unsympathetic characters. Wilkie Collins's *Heart and Science* (Leipzig, 1883. 2 vols) is an excellent example. In describing the character of Mrs Galilee, Collins wrote, 'her scientific education left her as completely in the dark, where questions of sentiment were concerned, as if her experience of humanity, in its relation to love, had been experience in the cannibal islands', vol. 1, 54. For a useful review of scientific stereotypes see the introduction to Haynes, *From Faust to Strangelove.*

Modern critics such as Gillian Beer are more specific in their discussion of the similarities between the main procedures of scientific theorising and the making of fiction, pointing specifically to the following common features:

> hypothesising, a reliance upon the future for confirmation, projecting possibilities rather than confirmed data; replotting observed relations of cause and effect or of possibility; observation; perceiving underlying patterns by means of analogy; a pleasure in boldness, a sense of the insufficiency of present understanding, the recognition of a world beyond the compass of our present knowledge.[144]

While Beer's ideas are not universally accepted (T. W. Heyck, for example, contends that there were significant differences between scientists and writers, not least in their ideas of knowledge and how it is acquired),[145] my own findings suggest that Hardy certainly regarded the modern scientific/predictive society in very much the same way as that outlined by Gillian Beer. And it cannot be denied that science touched the imagination in a very special way by what G. M. Young calls its 'tangible results.'[146] The appeal of science to the artist is even more specific, as it acts as a confirmer of intuition, a deepener of insight and an extender of the artist's range of vision.[147]

Hardy and Darwinism

One of the most important ways in which science affected Hardy was via Darwinism – more specifically, the doctrines of evolution and natural selection. Science in general was a passion of Hardy's from an early age. His literary notebooks are full of references to various scientific works and aspects of scientific thought. There was a wide range of natural-science books available in English during the Victorian era.[148] From the 1860s science had become increasingly deterministic.[149] The search for general laws determining the origin and development of life caused educated people to look for laws governing and accounting for human behaviour. Like the fictional character Robert Elsmere,[150] Hardy used science 'to bring a little order into [his]

[144] *Darwin's Plots. Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 90.

[145] See *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 62–63.

[146] *Portrait of an Age*, 26.

[147] This point was made by Aldous Huxley in *Literature and Science* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963). Quoted in Peter Morton, *The Vital Science*, 212. It should be noted that Morton himself takes issue with this view, which he regards as over-simplistic.

[148] See David M. Knight, *Natural Science Books in English 1600–1900* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1972). Knight discusses the diffusion of science in the nineteenth century and provides a comprehensive list of books available with publication dates. Another useful reference, though of a more general nature, is Amy Cruse, *The Victorians and Their Books* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1935). Chapter Five is entitled 'Science and Religion' (84–107) and briefly reviews most of the major scientific publications of the Victorian period.

[149] Harvey Curtis Webster suggests that this tendency, combined with 'the natural direction' of Hardy's own thinking, accounts for what he describes as Hardy's deterministic outlook. See *The Art and Thought of Thomas Hardy. On a Darkling Plain* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1947), 158.

[150] Hardy noted down a number of quotations from Mrs Humphry Ward's book. See entries 1587–88 in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*.

notions'[151] not only of man's origins but also of his survival potential in the future.[152]

Darwin's doctrines of evolution and natural selection as exemplified in *The Origin of Species*[153] provided a biological base for Hardy's intuitions; they may, indeed, be seen as a biological complement to Bourdieu's theory of habitus.[154] This is not to say, however, that Hardy did not believe in the ability of a human being to exercise his/her will within the limitations imposed by the environment, social or geographical. Within the framework of certain overriding laws the individual is allowed an element of freedom. Jagdish Chandra Dave likens this freedom to Hardy's own definition of meliorism, which is 'actuated by the modicum of free will conjecturally possessed by organic life when the mighty necessitating forces – unconscious or other – that have "the balancing of clouds", happen to be in equilibrium, which may or may not be often.'[155] The number of occasions when Hardy characters exercise free will is surprisingly large considering Hardy's strong awareness of science's tendency – and that of evolutionary biology in particular – to look to the past as a key to the present.[156] The influence of genetic history is strong. At the same time man's mind and intelligence allow a number of alternatives to be explored. It is group two in Hardy's novels that is particularly successful in this respect.

Although Darwinism was not the dominant evolutionary hypothesis throughout the Victorian period, it is this version which clearly fascinated Hardy most.[157] Hardy was nineteen when *The Origin of Species* was published. He probably did not own a copy as he was too poor to buy one at the time,[158] and there is thus no extant annoted copy to supply any indications of Hardy's own reflections. What is clear, however, is that the links between evolution, natural selection, adaptation and survival were of special interest to Hardy. The functioning and importance of these

[151] Mrs Humphry Ward, *Robert Elsmere* (London, 1889), 278. Elsmere aims to investigate how modern science can help him to make sense of the Old Testament.

[152] Walter F. Wright also argues that Hardy used science to help him synthesise his own sensations of reality. He approached science as a poet rather than as a methodical student of science. See *The Shaping of the Dynasts*, 26.

[153] Edited and with an Introduction by Gillian Beer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996; first published in 1859).

[154] Evolution also taught Hardy to respect the past, of which the simple people of the countryside were an integral part. Evolution made it clear that the present is dependent on the past and that 'civilization was a branching plant which would droop and wither if its roots were neglected or dislodged': Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Triumph of Time*, 15.

[155] From Thomas Hardy's *Apology* in *Late Lyrics and Earlier*. Quoted in *The Human Predicament in Hardy's Novels*, 12.

[156] For a useful discussion of this point see Loren Eiseley, *Darwin's Century. Evolution and the Men Who Discovered It* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1959). Eiseley's main points are summarised in her conclusion, 337–352.

[157] For details of other evolutionary hypotheses see Martin Fichman, 'Darwinism, Lamarckism, and Social Evolutionism' in *Victorian Science in Context* ed. by Lightman, 96–118. Robert Young also gives an excellent account of the context of Darwinism. See *Darwin's Metaphor. Nature's Place in Victorian Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

[158] Professor Michael Millgate, who is currently working on an edition of Hardy's non-fictional writing, has many of Hardy's books in his possession and assures me that he has not come across any copy of the book owned by Hardy.

links are shown most clearly in his group-two characters, where the Darwinian issue of adaptation as successful problem-solving is most clearly seen.

Six editions of *The Origin of Species* were published between 1859 and 1872. Hardy maintained that he was one of the first and most avid readers of Darwin's highly controversial book. Unlike many writers and educated people, Hardy continued to believe in *The Origin of Species* for the rest of his life. Darwinism had a clear impact on social thought during the Victorian period. Indeed, it can be argued that evolutionary theory has been social from the very beginning, as it can never be wholly divorced from ideology.[159] The classic expression of Darwin's influence on social thought is Richard Hofstadter's *Social Darwinism in American Thought*,[160] which implied that individuals who were unable to cope with the lifestyle of the new industrialised society would gradually die of starvation. Hardy, like Darwin, was aware of the problem of imperfect adaptation. Darwin's theory of natural selection was even adapted to colonial theory as a means of justifying the preservation of favoured races and the inevitable extinction of so-called lower, less mentally developed populations with whom Europeans came into contact. The theories of evolution, natural selection and adaptation are most interesting in Hardy's novels when applied to groups one and two. While it must be acknowledged that Darwin intended his theories to apply primarily to species rather than individuals, they can nonetheless be usefully applied to these two social categories. For Hardy the recurring problem is, as Valentine Cunningham eloquently expresses it, 'the challenge to survival and understanding, meaning and coherence that is continually offered by mortality.'[161]

In his *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*[162], which, unlike *The Origin of Species,* deals specifically with mankind, Darwin discusses the issue of language and its importance for survival: '[t]hrough his [man's] powers of intellect, articulate language has been evolved; and on that his wonderful advancement has mainly depended.'[163] Language allows man to plan and invent. Darwin also links language to natural selection, suggesting that dominant languages and dialects spread while lesser known languages and dialects become extinct.[164] Darwin also believed in the value of education. He recognised, for example, that the Tierra del Fuego Indians who had no religion or moral code could be educated for a while in England and were capable of improvement.[165] Education is one means by which civilisation may, at least in theory, hold up the process of natural selection by pro-

[159] This is one of the underlying tenets of Andrea St. John, for example, in her doctoral thesis on 'Biology as Ideology: The Masking Discourse of Evolution in Hardy, Wells, and Conrad' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Miami, 1997).

[160] Boston: Beacon Press, 1955; revised edition. First published in 1944.

[161] *In the Reading Gaol*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 124.

[162] Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981; first published in 1871.

[163] 137.

[164] 60.

[165] See the 'Introduction' to *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* by John Tyler Bonner and Robert M. May, xvi–xvii.

tecting and furthering the interests of the weak and compensating for disadvantages of birth and social environment. However, historians and sociologists have shown that this is not unproblematic.

Hardy and the future

Whatever the strengths and weaknesses of Darwin's argument, which cannot be gone into here, it is clear from a study of the fourteen published novels that, as Roger Ebbatson writes, 'Hardy [...] views linguistic and social change through the lens of evolutionary law, developing sequentially with inevitable displacement and loss.'[166] Displacement is not necessarily negative. Progress has a price, however. For Hardy modern industrial society had made enormous leaps in understanding the laws of human existence through the advancement of science. It was, however, in danger of losing the valuable knowledge and affective values of tightly-knit traditional rural communities bonded by skills passed down from generation to generation and by concern for the individual members of the community. The pace of life was gradually increasing and left no time for quiet musing about the past and the lives of previous generations. As Hardy wrote in his poem 'Old Furniture', '[i]t is best to be up and doing,/[t]he world has no use for one to-day/[w]ho eyes things thus – no aim pursuing!.'[167] Hardy's feelings were, as is well known, confirmed by the events of the First World War. In 1919 he could write to Mrs Henniker, '[a]ll development is of a material and scientific kind – and scarcely any addition to our knowledge is applied to objects philanthropic and ameliorative.'[168]

Hardy's growing pessimism about the future can be clearly traced in the fourteen published novels. For Hardy art was 'a disproportioning – (i.e., distorting, throwing out of proportion) – of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially, might possibly be observed, but would more probably be overlooked.'[169] Hardy's art is thus not realism in the strict sense of the word. Art for Hardy was a reflection of what he called the author's 'idiosyncratic mode of regard.' Hardy's observations are thus based on fact, but certain features are deliberately exaggerated. He believed that it was important for the writer to evince 'a sympathetic appreciativeness of life in all of its manifestations', a special innate ability which is essential for the writer of fiction.[170] This ability is based on 'a power of observation informed by a living heart' ('The Science of

[166] *Hardy. The Margin of the Unexpressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1992), 131.

[167] Printed in *Thomas Hardy. The Complete Poems* ed. by James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1978), 485–6. Hereafter referred to as *The Complete Poems.*

[168] *One Rare Fair Woman. Thomas Hardy's Letters to Florence Henniker 1893–1922,* ed. by Evelyn Hardy and F. B. Pinion (London: Macmillan, 1972), 185. Footnote 590 shows that Hardy had expressed similar thoughts as early as 1910.

[169] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy,* 239. August 5, 1890.

[170] 'The Science of Fiction.' Hardy's contribution to a symposium in the *New Review,* April 1891, 315–319. Quoted in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings* ed. by Orel, 134–138.

Fiction', 138). For Hardy, the writer needed to combine the scientist's skills of observation with the affective strengths of the artist – a view which he extended to society in general. His literary texts thus reflect a sincerity which he believed most contemporaneous literature lacked. Hardy was not trying to convert his readers to his own view of the world; rather, as Harold Orel suggests, his writings represent an attempt to work out what this view was.[171] Hardy's writings are certainly far more than the mere 'impressions of the moment' of the 'General Preface to the Novels and Poems', Wessex Edition 1912.

The view of the simple people of the countryside, group one, that comes out in the novels thus reveals what were for Hardy the most important features of this group. As historians like M. Snell have shown, Hardy is accurate in what he represents; but he leaves out certain aspects of the peasants' lives, for example, poverty and the bitterness of class relations in Dorset.[172] This is all part of his desire to bring out the positive as well as the negative features of traditional rural society, and by concentrating on the former to reveal what the modern predictive society is in danger of losing in terms of knowledge and values. Hardy's method can be summed up in Damian Grant's definition of the coherence theory of realism: 'realism is achieved not by imitation, but by creation; a creation which, working with the materials of life, absolves these by the intercession of the imagination from mere factuality and translates them to a higher order.'[173] This is why the dialogues in Hardy's novels are so important and deserve special attention as part of the imaginative world of the author which we as readers consent to enter as part of the reading process.

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This study uses the Wessex Edition of Hardy's novels, except in the case of *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, where the scholarly editions edited by Dale Kramer (*The Woodlanders*) and Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*) were preferred.[174] The Wessex Edition of the short stories has also been used with the exception of the uncollected short stories, where Pamela Dalziel's *The Excluded and Collaborative Stories* was chosen. The Wessex Edition of 1912 represented what Simon Gatrell describes as 'Hardy's maturer vision' of Wessex after numerous revisions had been made.[175] Hardy took a great deal of trouble with the Wessex Edition, and it represents his own best and last attempt at a 'definitive' edi-

[171] 'The Wit and Wisdom of Thomas Hardy', in *Reading Thomas Hardy* ed. by Pettit, 252.

[172] *Annals of the Labouring Poor*. See 380, 385–386. Snell shows how George Sturt (Bourne) was much more balanced in his observations and how he criticised Hardy for his lack of realism, 398.

[173] *Realism* (London: Methuen, 1970), 15.

[174] These two editions have collated all manuscripts and editions, and procedures and decisions have been explained. They therefore take precedence over the Wessex edition. *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* are the only two novels which have been edited in this way.

[175] Gatrell discusses this point in *Hardy the Creator. A Textual Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 134.

tion.[176] My main justification for using this text is that it incorporates Hardy's latest revisions and is thus, as Millgate points out, in thorough accordance with the policy of rigorous editing which Hardy himself advocated. I have used Michael Gibson's *Thomas Hardy. The Complete Poems* when quoting Hardy's poetry, as this has generally been accepted as the standard reference text ever since its publication in Macmillan's New Wessex Edition in 1976.

Chapter One discusses developments in education in the nineteenth century and concentrates on the period covered by Hardy's novels, and on the aspects which possess direct relevance to the novels themselves. Although Hardy rarely refers directly to specific educational developments – his focus being on the effects of education and knowledge on the survival potential of adults – it is important to understand some of the main theories behind, and aims of, the construction of a national educational system in order to appreciate the relative positions of the three social groups in Hardy's society. Developments in science teaching are given special consideration. Chapter Two presents the state of educational theory and practice in Dorset and covers Hardy's own education as it was relevant to the ideas expressed in his novels. This chapter also includes a brief survey of Hardy's reading, highlighting those works which are particularly relevant to the topic of my study. Chapter Three discusses Hardy's early novels, from *Desperate Remedies* to *A Laodicean*. It is argued that the latter represents a transitional stage in Hardy's prose-writing career, marking a pronounced shift in focus from the traditional to the modern. The later novels are discussed in the final chapter. These novels reflect a growing interest on Hardy's part in science. It is no coincidence that the chapter opens with a discussion of *Two on a Tower*, whose very subject matter is, of course, astronomy. The book concludes with a brief summary of the main argument as well as some suggestions for future research.

[176] Michael Millgate argues that the Wessex edition is 'a reliable and [...] convenient point of reference' which has not been properly used by Hardy scholars. See Michael Millgate, 'The Making and Unmaking of Hardy's Wessex Edition' in *Editing Nineteenth-Century Fiction* ed. by Jane Millgate (New York: Garland, 1978), 65. Millgate concludes, 'Macmillan's Wessex Edition was a magnificent achievement for author and publisher alike, and it can be faulted only when measured against those ideal standards with which, as scholars, we must always be concerned' (80). For a useful description of the evolution and validity of the various editions, see also Michael Millgate, *Testamentary Acts. Browning, Tennyson, James, Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 110–138.

Chapter One

National developments in education 1840–1928

As already established, Thomas Hardy's life and career spanned an age characterised by change and uncertainty. His early childhood (he was born on 2 June 1840 in the remote Dorset village of Higher Bockhampton) coincided with the beginning of major developments in the educational system, exemplified by the introduction of the pupil-teacher system in 1846. By his death in 1928, England had witnessed the introduction of compulsory education for all children up to the age of twelve, the recognition of the right to secondary-school education from the age of eleven, and far-reaching reform of the English universities, both in terms of curriculum and teaching methods. Of humble middle-class origins – his mother had been forced into service at an early age by poverty; his father was a master stone-mason on a small scale – Hardy belonged to a class which knew how to make the most of nineteenth-century educational developments.

In less than 20 years – between 1859 and 1878 – milestones in the form of the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, the laying of the Atlantic Cable and the invention of the typewriter, the telephone and electric light had broadened man's knowledge and opened up possibilities which the schools and educational system could hardly ignore.[1] The middle of the nineteenth century witnessed considerable public interest in the development and reform of the education system, sparked off by the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the need for improved science and technology instruction.

The first national education exhibition ever to be held in Britain was organised by the Royal Society of Arts in 1854. The exhibition, which received royal patronage, illustrated the state of education at the time as well as new ideas and contemporary experiments. A number of public lectures were also held by well-known educationalists who drew attention to the urgent need for faster educational progress.[2] The 1850s and 1860s saw the great Royal Commissions on education, the movement towards a national system of education, increasing interest in a specifically middle-class education adapted to the commercial class and the incorporation of science into the curriculum. At the same time, the number of certificated teachers increased during the period (in 1849 there were 681 in schools; by 1859 this

[1] John W. Adamson, *English Education 1789–1902* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 295.
[2] W.A.C. Stewart and W.P. McCann, *The Educational Innovators 1750–1880* (London: Macmillan, 1967), 276.

number had risen to 6,878),[3] and the status of teachers was significantly improved. Education had received a new importance in society.

Educational developments and Hardy's novels

Hardy's fourteen published novels reflect a number of the major educational developments between the 1830s and 1890s. In these books the narrator associates education with social class, and it is regarded as a means of social advancement. This is very much in line with the findings of the Taunton Commission in 1867,[4] appointed to inspect endowed, proprietary and private schools for boys and girls, as well as to study parental demand for education and the degree to which this demand was met. After inspecting nearly 800 endowed schools, the Commission adopted a three-grade division of schools, 'based upon the presumed future occupations of the pupils.'[5]

Many characters in Hardy's novels belong to the Taunton Commission's third grade, that is, those intending to become 'small tenant farmers, small tradesmen and superior artisans.'[6] Those falling below this social level were not included in the Taunton categories, and they received little formal education, as Hardy's novels indicate. The two first grades are also represented in the novels: grade 1 schools, keeping their pupils to the age of eighteen or nineteen, were intended for those aiming at a university career. Grade 2 schools, which kept their pupils to the age of approximately sixteen, were considered to be adequate for those intending to enter 'all but the highest branches of the legal and medical professions, civil engineering, [and] many departments of the Civil Service.'[7]

Since compulsory education was not officially introduced until Forster's Education Act of 1870, and not practically implemented until the introduction of the School Attendance Committees of 1876 and the introduction of attendance bye-laws, it can be assumed that many of the characters portrayed in Hardy's novels were envisaged as having received little or no formal education. Hardy himself, however, was acutely aware of the progress of modern education and the accumulation of knowledge during the nineteenth century, experiencing, along with many other Victorians, a pervasive but unfocused anxiety about the direction this progress would take.[8]

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[3] Mary Sturt, *The Education of the People. A History of Primary Education in England and Wales in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 197.

[4] John Hurt points out that the Commission assumed that 'the educational system should be geared to the existing social strata.' The father's income and occupation constituted a reflection of his ability and willingness to keep his children on at school; the father's ability and willingness in turn determined the curriculum and pupils' career expectations. See *Education in Evolution. Church, State, Society and Popular Education 1800–1870* (London: Paladin, 1972), 116.

[5] Adamson, *English Education 1789–1902*, 259.

[6] Ibid., 260.

[7] Ibid., 259.

[8] See Robin Gilmour, *The Victorian Period. The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830–1890* (Harlow: Longman, 1993). Chapter 1, 'The Sense of Time and the Uses of History' and Chapter 3, 'Science: Re-imagining the Universe.'

That Hardy related such anxiety primarily to the rural population is hardly surprising given that he was born and lived most of his life in one of the most rural counties in England. The majority of his novels are set in his native Dorset, which was described in an 1856 guidebook as 'a bleak country of chalk downs and sandy heaths, thinly peopled, and below the average of the English counties in fertility', though with 'a certain charm in its very wildness and the forlorn aspect of its villages.'[9] Francis George Heath, conducting a survey of the labouring population of the West of England in 1872 and 1873, concluded that Dorset was one of the most depressed counties in the West, with one of the lowest wage levels and highest rates of pauperism:

> [t]he most dire distress has for years existed amongst the peasantry in each of the four great agricultural counties of the West of England – Somersetshire, Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, and Devonshire. This was, no doubt, true of that county up to within the last quarter of a century, and even within a more recent period there appears to have been some strong evidence of the existence there of exceptional distress.[10]

Heath adds that only Somerset was more depressed in the 1870s.

While it may be observed that there was much poverty in towns and cities too, as the Booth and Rowntree reports on poverty in urban areas in the 1880s were to show, its negative effect on educational developments in Dorset was certainly compounded by the county's remote situation, national measures for improvement taking some time to reach Dorset. While Hardy's prime interest was in the rural characters of his native county, he was nonetheless fully aware of important national developments thanks to his avid reading of magazines, newspapers and books, and to numerous periods of residence in London.

A number of features of the national educational system are reflected in Hardy's novels, for instance the pupil-teacher system, Queen's scholars, evening school, adult education classes, governesses, public school, and classical education at Oxford (Christminster). The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a survey of the major developments in the educational system in the nineteenth century, concentrating primarily on those of direct relevance to Hardy's own life and the world of the characters portrayed in his novels. I hope that a degree of familiarity with these features will enhance the reader's understanding of the discussions in Chapters Three and Four.

It is clear from inspectors' reports that from the 1830s onwards there was a significant increase in the number of children from labourers' homes attending school. A comparison between 1833 and 1851 shows that there was a national increase of over 23 % for children of the labouring classes as against 9 % for children from other

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[9] From Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and Somersetshire,* 54.Quoted in Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 31.

[10] *The English Peasantry* (London, 1874), 25.

homes.[11] During the same period, there was a 100 % rise in the number of scholars from the working classes, as against 13 % from other classes.[12] While it may be argued that education for the classes above the working class had been in existence for some years, and the growth in numbers would thus be expected to be less dramatic, the rise in the number of working-class children attending school is nonetheless impressive, and it is indicative of an increase in educational opportunities as well as a heightened awareness of the value of education in, and for the lower classes. There was still, however, considerable opposition among the higher classes to the provision of education for the poor. As Mary Sturt points out, it could still be said in 1832 that '[m]inisters and men in power, with nearly the whole body of those who are rich, dread the consequences of teaching the people more than they dread the effects of their ignorance.'[13]

A number of prominent politicians, among them Robert Lowe, Liberal, believed that political rights such as suffrage should be restricted to those with informed intelligence – in practice, educational attainments. In 1867, Lowe declared:

> The lower classes ought to be educated to discharge the duties cast upon them. They should also be educated that they may appreciate and defer to a high cultivation when they meet it, and the higher classes ought to be educated in a very different manner, in order that they may exhibit to the lower classes that higher education to which, if it were shown to them, they would bow down and defer.[14]

At the same time, there was a certain amount of opposition from the working class itself to formal education. Such hostility comes out in *The Return of the Native*, set in the 1840s and 1850s, where the country people around Egdon are described as suspicious of Clym Yeobright, the hero of the novel, whose 'strange notions' were said to be the result of schooling. In a conversation with two local men – Humphrey and Sam – and his granddaughter Eustacia Captain Vye remarks:

> Ah, there's too much of that sending to school in these days! It only does harm. Every gatepost and barn's door you come to is sure to have some bad word or other chalked upon it by the young rascals: a woman can hardly pass for shame sometimes. If they'd never been taught how to write they wouldn't have been able to scribble such villainy. Their fathers couldn't do it, and the country was all the better for it (Book Second, i, 12).

Humphrey and Sam have little to say against this.

Clym Yeobright dreams of providing a school staffed by teachers who really understand their humble pupils. When his mother suggests that if such a scheme were

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[11] *Reports from Commissioners, Inspectors and Others. Education. Special Reports. Session 8* February 1889–12 August 1898. Vol. XXIV, 446.

[12] Ibid., 446.

[13] *The Education of the People*, 14. Richard Johnson argues that among Tories 'there was an explicit disavowal of Reason [in the early part of the nineteenth century] – understanding or mental ability was seen as an insufficient source of sanctions and might, besides, be dangerous in other ways.' See 'Notes on the schooling of the English working class 1780–1850' in *A Sociological Reader* ed. by Dale, 48.

[14] David Sellman, *Devon Village Schools in the Nineteenth Century* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1967), inside front cover.

necessary, the universities would already have discovered the need, Clym's reply shows some insight and is suggestive of one of the fundamental problems of teaching working-class children at the time: '[n]ever mother. They cannot find it out, because their teachers don't come in contact with the class which demands such a system – that is, those who have had no preliminary teaching' (Book Third, v, 239). Working-class children, both urban and rural, are recognised as a special problem – one which, as Chapter Two shows, was only just beginning to receive attention at the time depicted in *The Return of the Native*.

New ideas versus old

Hardy's childhood years and early years of novel writing coincided with the mid-Victorian age of transition and belief in what Peter Keating describes as the 'long process of amelioration.'[15] This was a time which Hardy presented in *The Return of the Native* as a period when the human mind was 'adrift on change, and harassed by the irrepressible New' (Book First, i, 7). Hardy's conviction that modern ideas would replace old institutions and values intensified as his career progressed, and it is clearly voiced in his final novel, *Jude the Obscure*:

> [Jude] perceived that at best only copying, patching and imitating went on here [at Christminster]; which he fancied to be owing to some temporary and local cause. He did not at that time see that mediævalism was as dead as a fern-leaf in a lump of coal; that other developments were shaping in the world around him, in which Gothic architecture and its associations had no place. The deadly animosity of contemporary logic and vision towards so much of what he held in reverence was not yet revealed to him (Part Second, ii, 98–99).

New ideas and values are seen to be more powerful than traditional ones.

The shift in values emerged against a background of changing conceptions of knowledge and growing intellectual doubt. After the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, educated men such as Hardy became increasingly convinced that it was not possible to understand fully the evolution of life on earth. The bounds of knowledge had widened. No one person could hope to master all aspects of the known world, let alone solve all its mysteries. The 1830s marked the beginning of a period of moral and intellectual confusion, of the disappearance of old values and the incorporation of uncertain, new ones.[16] As Walter E. Houghton emphasises, the establishment of the bourgeois industrial society in the 1840s and 1850s had no counterpart in the intellectual world: the mid-Victorian age is still one 'of fusion and transition [...] Old formula [sic], old opinions, hoary systems are being thrown into

[15] *The Haunted Study. A Social History of the English Novel 1875–1914* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1983), 5.

[16] Thomas Arnold drew attention to this as early as 1838. See Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830–1870* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 8.

the smelting-pan; they are fusing – they must be cast anew: who can tell under what new shapes [...] they will come forth from the moulds'?[17] Doubt and uncertainty reigned, and by the 1880s J.A. Froude could talk of 'the disintegration of opinion' that was 'so rapid that wise men and foolish are equally ignorant where the close of this waning century will find us.'[18]

Many Victorians knew that a new modern world was in the making, the nature of which few, if any, could conceive. Hardy's vision of this new world remained consistently dark, and only six years before his death he wrote in his 'Apology' to *Late Lyrics and Earlier*:

> [w]hether owing to the barbarizing of taste in the younger minds by the dark madness of the late war, the unabashed cultivation of selfishness in all classes, *the plethoric growth of knowledge simultaneously with the stunting of wisdom,* 'a degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation' (to quote Wordsworth again), or from any other cause, we seem threatened with a new Dark Age (my italics).[19]

Hardy's dark vision clearly encompassed the world of education, to which he added not only the contemporary doubt and uncertainty as regards the direction of all forms of progress, but also, as Chapter Two will reveal, a certain lack of intellectual assurance due to his reliance on self-education and his lack of a university education.[20]

Education and religious conflict

The problem of educating the poorer classes in the 1830s and 1840s goes deeper than Clym Yeobright himself suggests. Educational development at the time was dogged by deep-rooted religious controversy: most schools were in the hands of a particular religious body – Anglican or Dissenter – which was unwilling to make compromises. Indeed religious rivalry was often a stronger factor than educational principle.[21] The Anglican schools were run under the auspices of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of

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[17] Hugh Stowell, 'The Age We Lived In', *Exeter Hall Lectures,* 6 (London, 1850–51), 45–6. Quoted in Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830–1870,* 9.

[18] Preface to *Short Studies,* 4, v-vi. Quoted in Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830–1870,* 9.

[19] *The Complete Poems,* 560.

[20] Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994; first published in 1971), 41.

[21] For examples of the detrimental effects of religious sectarianism on education, see Young, *Portrait of an Age,* 73–5 and G.M.Trevelyan, *English Social History. A Survey of Six Centuries. Chaucer to Queen Victoria* (London: Longmans, Green, 1942), 580–1. Trevelyan went as far as to say that '[t]he main reason why English Education lagged behind in the mid-Victorian period was that no government, Whig or Tory, could conceive a means of setting up a national system at the public expense that would not have given the bitterest offence either to the Dissenters or to the Established Church', 580. An excellent example from fiction of religious differences in relation to education is to be found in Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981; first published in 1849), vol. II, chapter vi, in which the 'unholy alliance' of school children of the 'Dissenting and Methodist schools' is forced to retreat as the Anglican children led by Helstone continue their procession, 303–5.

England throughout England and Wales, led by Dr Andrew Bell; the Dissenter schools were managed by the British and Foreign School Society, led by the Quaker Joseph Lancaster. Schools which were built and maintained by local subscription on a site donated by the local squire and run by the parish minister further inflamed the hostility between church and chapel.[22] Mutual suspicion was strong, and parents were anxious to ensure that their children went to a school with the 'correct' religious principles, irrespective of academic attainment. Hardy's mother was unusually broadminded in this respect, as she sent her son first to a National school and then to a Dissenter establishment – the choice being determined by educational rather than religious principles.

From 1833 onwards both the Anglican and Nonconformist schools received government grants, but little progress was made initially and development was more accidental than planned owing to the strong rivalry between Church and Chapel.[23] Considerable emphasis was given to Bible-reading and religious instruction in elementary education. There was a widespread fear among Anglicans and Nonconformists alike that if schools were controlled by 'the other side', children would be indoctrinated by the latter's method of worship. The struggle was extremely bitter and fraught with both fear and jealousy that too much State aid would be given to the opposing camp. As time went by, the demand for a national system of education increased, and education gradually became the responsibility of the State.

Early nineteenth-century educational institutions

In studying the development of education it is, as Pierre Bourdieu has pointed out, vital to avoid a purely functionalist approach. The different transformations of an educational system should also be studied if one is to understand the relationship between the development of the system and the way it was received and used by the general public.[24] What political and social factors affected the development of education, and what were the ideals behind the evolution of a national system of education?

Only ten years before Hardy's birth, the cheap popular press, created by William Cobbett and the working-class radicals, had already successfully promoted political and social reform. A number of popular movements had begun to be actively concerned with education from the 1820s onwards, stressing the importance of knowl-

[22] Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England*, 159.

[23] T. K. Derry and T.L. Jarman, *The Making of Modern Britain* (London: John Murray, 1962), 252.

[24] This point is discussed in detail in Chapter One of Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London and Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1977; first published in French in 1970 under the title of *La Réproduction*). Raymond Williams also suggests that a proper description of the development of an educational system should include social aspects (which govern practical organisation) and cultural forces (which determine content) and the organic relation between the two. See *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1961), 125. Only a few of the most important features can be introduced in a study of the present kind.

edge as a means of directing labour.[25] At the time of Hardy's birth, there was a wide range of educational measures for improvement, mainly concerned with the education of the adult, but also with schools and curricula. The most significant efforts shortly before Hardy's birth were the activities of the Owenite organisations, who were responsible for a range of publications and the opening of Sunday schools which combined both religious and secular tuition, the latter including reading, mathematics, drawing and political economy. Owenite halls were opened for adult education, offering classes, reading rooms and a library service. During the first ten years of Hardy's life, moves to reform education were taken over by among others the Chartists, whose 1841 document *Chartism; a New Organization of the People* contained a programme for the building of all kinds of schools and halls which would be sponsored by the government but run and maintained locally.[26] By the end of the decade, however, the force of Chartism was largely spent and education came more strongly under the influence of prominent educationalists both abroad and at home.

Nineteenth-century educational theory and practice

With the significant increase in life expectancy during the nineteenth century (for men it increased by eleven years between 1838 and 1902, for women by fourteen years),[27] education became a more important and long-term investment in the future. Developments in the nineteenth century may be viewed from two main perspectives: that supported by Pierre Bourdieu and many prominent historians of the nineteenth century, namely, that education is designed by those in power to reinforce class distinctions by training leaders and followers;[28] and that put forward by contemporary educational reformers who focused on the potential of education for intellectual and social development. Both perspectives may be found in Hardy's novels and are particularly interesting in relation to groups one and two.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries British education had been influenced by the ideas of such continental reformers as Jean Jacques Rousseau and Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg, as well as by prominent English theorists and reformers such as Herbert Spencer, Robert Owen and Matthew Arnold. A number of entries in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1* and *The Literary Notebooks Volume 2* bear

[25] See John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England* (London: Methuen, 1973), chapter 7, 'Education in a Changing Society 1780–1830', 226–266.

[26] Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 293.

[27] J. M. Goldstrom, *The Social Content of Education 1808–1870. A Study of the Working Class School Reader in England and Ireland* (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972), 1. Life expectancy for men was 39.9 and 41.9 for women between 1838 and 1854; in 1902 it had risen to 51.5 for men and 55.4 for women.

[28] See, for example, Helen Merrell Lynd, *England in the Eighteen-Eighties. Toward a Social Basis for Freedom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945), 360. Lynd writes, '[t]he aim of education, whatever form it took, was to train leaders and to train followers. Both obeyed the unstated rules of their society and of their position in it.'

witness to Hardy's interest in Rousseau. The latter is specifically mentioned in Hardy's works on two occasions, in *The Return of the Native* (Book Third, vi, 254) and in the short story 'The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid' (*A Changed Man*, 344).[29] Hardy owned an 1873 edition of Rousseau's *Confessions* and two volumes of John Morley's *Rousseau.*[30] In his own copy of the latter, he marked Morley's critical remark on Rousseau as a social thinker. This is highly relevant to the present study as it touches on the conflict between collective effort, which necessitates mutual values, and the freedom of the individual:

> [t]hus the modern question which is of such vital interest for all the foremost human societies, of the union of collective energy with the encouragement of individual freedom, is, if not wholly untouched, at least wholly unillumined by anything that Rousseau says.[31]

A fundamental question is the extent to which the modern educational system was able to serve the needs of all classes by developing the primary habitus of each individual, irrespective of social background, while at the same time meeting the needs of the nation and enabling the latter to compete internationally. This question is, as the following discussion shows, particularly important in the realm of science.

Rousseau's ideas as expounded in *Émile* (translated into English in 1762) gave new insights into the nature of children – more particularly, boys – and aimed at a more enlightened system of education. Rousseau stressed the need for freedom: '[t]hat man is truly free who desires what he is able to perform, and does what he desires. This is my fundamental maxim.'[32] The child was thought to be born with a perfect nature, and it was the task of education to preserve this from childhood through to adulthood. Accordingly, Rousseau believed in free play without any form of formal instruction for two- to twelve- year-olds. From the ages of twelve to fifteen, the child's own interests should be developed by the introduction of specific subjects such as geography, science and handicrafts. After fifteen, the main concern of education was the moral and social development of the child; emphasis was thus given to such subjects as religion, metaphysics, history, physical education and sex education.

Rousseau's ideas were violently opposed by the church, which upheld the doctrine of original sin and the fundamentally sinful nature of the child. Among those interested in the problems of public education, health, science and industry, Rousseau's ideas were generally well received, however. Rousseau challenged the view of education as a mere means of preparing the child for adult life and suggested that subjects taught provided a moral and intellectual training, the importance of which was far in excess of any academic value inherent in the subjects themselves.

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[29] Björk, *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, 308 (annotation 582).
[30] Ibid., 308.
[31] Ibid. Björk suggests that this annotation is an indication of Hardy's sociological interests.
[32] *Émile* (1762), 48. Quoted in Stewart and McCann, *The Educational Innovators,* 28.

Rousseau, who was much influenced by science, wished to understand the nature of children as part of his plan for developing them in a human and moral direction.[33] Although there was no great shift towards Rousseauism in Britain despite the new insights it brought, there was nonetheless a change of emphasis during the period 1760-1800 towards a greater interest in the nature and development of the child's personality and his potential for self-teaching. The memorisation of Greek and Latin texts became less important and physical punishment less common.[34] Although Rousseau's ideas were not established in England until the nineteenth century – and were even then only practised by a radical minority who were concerned with the education of the middle and upper classes – they influenced a number of well-known educationalists, among them Robert Owen, one of the pioneers of education for the working class.

Members of the working class had traditionally been offered an extremely narrow curriculum based on the idea of subservience and awareness of the proper position of the poor man in society. Teaching was based on rote learning of facts and subjects geared to a particular vocation. Children were taught according to the monitorial system introduced by Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster: able children were appointed as monitors to provide mechanical instruction in the elements of reading, writing, arithmetic and religion. Groups were large, and rigid discipline was necessary. Owen broke with this system in his schools in the New Lanark mill community, opened in 1816. His maxim was:

> Either give the poor a rational and useful learning, or mock not their ignorance, their poverty, and their misery, by merely instructing them to become conscious of the extent of the degradation under which they exist. And therefore, in pity to suffering humanity, either keep the poor, if you now can, in the state of the most abject ignorance, as near as possible to animal life, or at once determine to form them into rational beings, into useful and effective members of the state.[35]

Owen's aim was to produce useful members of society, who had been exposed to a stimulating curriculum designed to train rational thinking in accordance with the demands of nature. The pupil was thus not expected to learn a large number of facts from books until he had learned how to glean knowledge from conversations with teachers, and by studying his environment.

Particularly interesting from the point of view of the present thesis is Owen's awareness of the importance of science teaching for the working class. His message to William Lovett and other future leaders of the working-class movement was that human welfare could be improved by allowing labour to be directed by

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[33] Brian Simon, *Studies in the History of Education 1780–1870* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1960), 38. Reprinted under the new title of *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure, 1780–1870* (London: Lawrence & Wishart) in 1974; I have used the latter version.

[34] Stewart and McCann, *The Educational Innovators*, 35.

[35] Ibid., 60.

science, which could only be understood and appreciated by means of education.[36]

Owen believed that simple facts only should be presented initially, with the child up to the age of twelve gaining a general knowledge about the earth, and a little science and art sufficient to keep him usefully employed and enable him to enjoy his spare time. The children at Owen's school learned reading, writing and arithmetic, history, geography and natural history, religion, singing and dancing. In addition, the boys learned to march and the girls to sew. The rigid discipline which characterised most contemporary schools was absent. Moral education was considered to be particularly important, focusing on the well-being of all as opposed to that of the individual. Awareness of the needs of others was stressed, rather than the implementation of a series of rewards and punishments. Although the New Lanark experiment lasted only eight years, its ideals were to live on – not least in the body of social thought known as Owenism, which gave rise to a number of Owenite co-operative schools during the early nineteenth century.

While Owen had been conducting his experiment at New Lanark, continental influences had again begun to make inroads into Britain as a result of the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the resumption of continental travel after 1815. The two major continental reformers who had a direct impact on developments in Britain were Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg. Robert Owen was among the earliest visitors to Pestalozzi's institution at Yverdon and Fellenberg's at Hofwyl. For Pestalozzi, the primary aim of instruction was to develop a harmonious human nature by means of cultivation of the individual's particular powers and talents. This, he believed, could only be achieved by reducing a subject to its basic elements, which should be presented to the child first in their most basic form and gradually moving to the more complex.

Pestalozzi's ideas were recorded in his *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, which was published in 1801.[37] Along with *Émile,* it is one of the most significant nineteenth-century books on educational principles. Pestalozzi's ideas gave rise to the object lesson so much used throughout the nineteenth century. This lesson was based on the principle that a person when confronted with objects naturally attempts to identify the number and kinds of objects presented, their general appearance and their designation, that is, how they may be represented by sound or word (name). Fundamental to Pestalozzi's principles of learning were thus the concepts of Number, Form and Language. When being taught to read, for example, a child would be encouraged to break down words into separate sounds, which he would then repeat. This subsequently led to letters and words describing simple objects. In

[36] Simon, *The Two Nations*, 199.

[37] *How Gertrude Teaches her Children; an Attempt to help Mothers to Teach their own Children and an Account of the Method* ed. by Ebenezer Cooke and translated by Lucy E. Holland and Francis C. Turner (London: George Allen & Unwin; Syracuse, New York: C. W. Bardeen, 1915; first published as *Wie Gertrud ihre Kinder lehrt* in 1801).

the same way, the child learned arithmetic by adding and subtracting with pieces of cardboard showing printed letters of the alphabet.

A number of schools in England were run on Pestalozzian lines during the first half of the nineteenth century; one of the most interesting was in South Lambeth in the mid-1820s. An anonymous pamphlet describing the school's operations was published in 1826, showing – in true Pestalozzian fashion – that the curriculum was divided into physical, moral and intellectual activities. The school offered an unusually wide curriculum, including reading, writing and arithmetic, English literature, rhetoric, mythology, natural history and logic. A considerable number of languages were also offered, including Spanish, Italian, French, German, Hindustani, Persian, Russian, Latin and Greek. Another well-known establishment run along Pestalozzian lines was Alcott House, Surrey, founded in 1838, which attracted a good deal of attention in its short life of four years.

One of the best-known supporters of Pestalozzi's ideals was Dr Charles Mayo, whose famous school in Cheam lasted for twenty years, between 1826 and 1846. Pestalozzi's ideas were not only practised in this school but gained wider acceptance in the form of the object lesson already mentioned. Dr Mayo was one of the first to apply the idea in Britain. He realised that the system represented a considerable advance on the rote learning of the contemporary monitorial schools and that it was particularly suitable for teaching science, a fact acknowledged by James Currie in his *Common Education* (a popular teacher training manual towards the end of the century):

> The object should be exhibited, if it be a substance (such as glass or sugar), for the inspection of the class; and the qualities important to be noticed should be observed by the appropriate senses. The action of the several senses is not to be interchanged: thus a quality cognizable by touch alone, such as hardness, is not to be vouched for by the sight, but verified by the sense of touch. The actual inspection of the aggregate of the qualities must be so distributed over the class, that as little shall be taken by them on trust as possible.[38]

The method also had its limitations, however, as the amusing account of the object lesson on quadrupeds recorded in *The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green*[39] shows: when Mary asks her pupils to give examples of a quadruped Tommy Jones innocently suggests 'chairs and tables.'[40] Hardy adapts the term 'object lesson' in *Jude the Obscure* by applying it to the marriage that Jude and Sue are observing at the parish church (Part Fifth, iv, 344). Jude and Sue extrapolate the main features from the performance in front of them and apply them to their own situation just as the child at school was expected to do with the quadruped or any other object.

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[38] Quoted in Trevor May, *The Victorian Schoolroom* (Princes Risborough: Shire, 1995), 21–22.

[39] Cuthbert Bede (London: George Rutland and Sons, n.d.; reprinted in 2 volumes in 1909; first published in 1853–7). Cuthbert Bede was a pseudonym for Edward Bradley.

[40] The incident is described on page 8.

The ideas of both Rousseau and Pestalozzi were developed by Fellenberg, who was particularly keen to establish a link between agriculture and education. During the first forty years of the nineteenth century, Fellenberg founded five institutions on his estate at Hofwyl: a Scientific Educational Institution for the Higher Social Classes (1806); a Poor School (1810); a girls' school (1823); an intermediate school (1830), and a nursery school (1831).[41] Of the five institutions, the Institution and the Poor School had the greatest impact in Britain. These schools demonstrated Fellenberg's basic principle that education should be adapted to the needs of particular social classes: the highest social classes should, he maintained, be taught to be honest scientific agriculturalists with a strong sense of duty towards society and with a determination to instigate improvements. The education of the lower classes, on the other hand, should concentrate on adaptation to a more simple and economical way of life, in which self-discipline was paramount. The lower classes should be taught to make the most of their existence.

An echo of Fellenberg's philosophy is found at the end of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, in the philosophy of Elizabeth-Jane:

> [a]s the lively and sparkling emotions of her early married life cohered into an equable serenity, the finer movements of her nature found scope in discovering to the narrow-lived ones[42] around her the secret (as she once had learnt it) of making limited opportunities endurable; which she deemed to consist in the cunning enlargement, by a species of microscopic treatment, of those minute forms of satisfaction that offer themselves to everybody not in positive pain; which, thus handled, have much of the same inspiriting effect upon life as wider interests cursorily embraced (xlv, 385).

There was little in the way of 'wider interests' for the poor in the early part of the nineteenth century. It was the job of education to create these, and to teach the working class to make the best possible use of them.

Fellenberg's Poor School excited great interest in England and impressed prominent members of society such as Lady Byron and B.F. Duppa, a lawyer who became secretary of the Central Society of Education and who acted as Fellenberg's agent. Duppa published his views in *The Education of the Peasantry in England* in 1834, which propagated the need for intellectual training adapted to the individual's specific position in society, creating harmony between the individual and his societal role.

The ideas of Pestalozzi and Fellenberg found a ready voice in the form of James Kay (later Kay-Shuttleworth), one of the founding fathers of the English system of education. Kay-Shuttleworth initiated the appointment of school inspectors in 1839 and was an advocate of the system of pupil-teachers. He introduced the Queen's Scholarships for the training of young students of promise. The educational

[41] Stewart and McCann, *The Educational Innovators*, 142.

[42] This term may be taken to refer both to the less privileged members of society and to those who fail to make full use of their advantages.

institutions in which he had a controlling interest, the Norwood School of Industry and Battersea Normal College, were based on the principles of Pestalozzi and Fellenberg. Kay-Shuttleworth tried to increase state sponsorship of schools by increasing national financial support.

The fact that English educationalists were much under the influence of continental theorists during the nineteenth century should not be allowed to disguise the fact that there were also a number of English writers and theorists of national, even international, prominence.[43] Among such figures, Herbert Spencer and Matthew Arnold are of considerable importance. Both authors receive frequent mention in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1* and *The Literary Notebooks Volume 2* .[44] Spencer wrote four essays on education, which were published in a single volume in 1861. Aggressive and revolutionary in tone, many of Spencer's ideas on education had already been propounded by previous theorists, with one exception – the superiority of science to all other subjects. He argued that the sciences trained the memory better than any other subject, promoted powers of judgement and provided admirable moral and religious discipline: 'for discipline, as well as for guidance, science is of chiefest value. In all its effects, learning the meaning of things is better than learning the meaning of words.'[45]

In his essay entitled "On Education" Spencer wrote:

> The general problem which comprehends every special problem is – the right ruling of conduct in all directions under all circumstances. In what way to treat the body; in what way to treat the mind; in what way to manage our affairs; in what way to bring up a family; in what way to behave as a citizen; in what way to utilize those sources of happiness which nature supplies – how to use all our faculties to the greatest advantage of ourselves and others – how to live completely? And this being the great thing needful for us to learn, is, by consequence, the great thing which education has to teach. To prepare us for complete living is the function which education has to discharge; and the only rational mode of judging of an educational course is to judge in what degree it discharges such function.[46]

Spencer's insistence on the supreme value of science was unpopular with the establishment, whose members advocated Latin, Greek and mathematics as the proper staples of the educational system, particularly for those destined for public

[43] In fact, one of the most fashionable educational theories of the 1850s originated in Scotland. Known as the 'intellectual system', it represented an attack on rote learning by stressing the importance of children's understanding what is taught them. See Goldstrom, *The Social Content of Education 1808–1870*, 150.

[44] Although these references relate to philosophical and religious matters it seems likely that Hardy was aware of Spencer's and Arnold's views on education. See 335–6 (annotation 882) for a brief discussion of the traces of Spencer's influence on Hardy's writing and useful references on the subject. Spencer's influence on Hardy is also discussed in the chapter that follows this.

[45] *Essays on Education and Kindred Subjects* (London: Dent, Everyman's Library, 1911), editor's introduction, vii.

[46] Ibid., 6–7.

life and the learned professions. Spencer's notions of anti-authoritarian discipline were equally unpopular in such circles, as they challenged the conventional belief in authoritative education which took no account of the child's natural abilities and tendencies.

Spencer's theories regarding the study of science incorporated all who earned their living by using hand and eye, e.g. artisans, artists etc. Science and its theory were to be applied to all manual practitioners of art and trades. The study of science allowed instruction to be of direct practical relevance. At the same time, Spencer stressed that all instruction must be both pleasurable and interesting. The child must be encouraged to work from the simple to the complex, the concrete to the abstract, thereby developing himself in a pleasurable system of instruction designed to achieve the highest level of individual potential. These ideas are clearly reminiscent of those of Pestalozzi and Fellenberg, but Spencer's insistence on the value of science is new and anticipates developments in schools and universities in the second half of the nineteenth century. Hardy's novels clearly reflect the growing importance of science in education as well as in society at large, a reflection which becomes all the stronger in the later novels discussed in Chapter Four.

A contemporary of Spencer's, Matthew Arnold, was a theorist as well as practitioner of education.[47] After a not particularly distinguished career at Oxford, Arnold assisted in classical teaching at his father's school, Rugby. In 1851 he became an Inspector of Schools, a post which he held until 1886, when he retired from public service. On three occasions during his period as Inspector he made official enquiries into the state of education in foreign countries. His educational publications included *Democracy* (1858), *The Popular Education of France* (1861), *The Twice-Revised Code* (1862), *A French Eton; or, Middle Class Education and the State* (1864), and *Reports on Elementary Schools 1852–1882* (published in a collected edition in 1908). Arnold feared that England was losing its way 'for want of what I must still call ideas, for want of perceiving how the world is going and must go, and preparing herself accordingly.'[48] He described the mid-nineteenth century as a period of dissolution and transformation. It was the function of the educational system to make the contemporary Englishman aware of the qualities of the age.

The aristocracy were, in Arnold's opinion, responsible for a stunting of society due to their inability to absorb new ideas and to adapt. The working class, the 'populace' to use Arnold's term, was too brutalised by poverty to be able to effect changes in society. The greatest hope lay with the middle class, which showed a spirit and desire to bring about change lacking elsewhere in society. At the same time, Arnold

[47] The influence of Matthew Arnold on Hardy's work is discussed in Chapter Two. See 132–136.

[48] Letter to Arnold's sister Mary, November 1865. In Peter Smith and Geoffrey Summerfield, *Matthew Arnold and the Education of the New Order. A Selection of Arnold's Writings on Education* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 2.

was, as he shows in *Culture and Anarchy*, all too aware that the middle class had an unfortunate tendency to become totally absorbed in the workings of business during work time, and a social round of meetings and other less mind-broadening gatherings during their restricted leisure time.

Arnold was a firm believer in the teaching of formative subjects, such as English literature, as a means of developing pupils' taste and judgement. He advocated the teaching of geography, history and the branches of science as useful but not pretentious subjects which should be included in the curriculum of all elementary schools. In contrast to Spencer, he cautioned his audiences against an over-emphasis on science, although he regarded it as an important subject even at the primary level. Arnold believed that the humanities formed character and regulated life and were thus superior to the sciences. Education must open the mind, soul and imagination. This had implications for the teachers themselves: Arnold believed they should be intent on self-improvement; among other things he encouraged teachers to take a degree at the newly-opened London University.

Arnold never lost an opportunity to show the English how poorly educated they were in comparison with other nations. He wanted them to be discontented with their system of education. One of his major suggestions for the improvement of the system was the provision of effective secondary schools by the State. Arnold believed that State aid would ensure schools of a higher academic standard than those already provided by the private contributions of middle-class parents:

> [b]y public establishment they [the schools] may give securities for the culture offered in them being really good and sound, and the best that our time knows. By public establishment they may communicate to those reared in them the sense of being brought in contact with their country, with the national life, with the life of the world; and they will expand and dignify their spirits by communicating this sense to them. I can see no other mode of institution which will offer the same advantages in the same degree.[49]

From principle to practice

Working class

Dames' schools

The theoretical educational ideals described above were far removed from the reality of schools, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century. Education for the poorer classes was frequently carried out at small, private institutions which lacked firm educational ideals. Throughout the country there were a number of so-called

[49] *A French Eton*, in *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold* ed. by R. H. Super (1960, cop. 1977), 11 volumes, II, 322–3.

dames' schools, run, as their name suggests, by middle-aged or elderly women. Their function ranged from that of childminder to teacher of the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. These schools have been immortalised in the fiction of Charles Dickens, in such descriptions as that of Mr Wopsle's great-aunt's school in *Great Expectations,* published in 1860–61 (Chapters vii and x).

The *Reports from Commissioners, Inspectors, and Others*[50] state that as late as 1898, dames' schools posed a

> serious difficulty, inasmuch as the designation 'school' has been adopted for places where children were only 'minded', or taken care of during the absence of their parents at work. The so-called education commenced often at two years of age, often at eighteen months. These were the places where 'reading and writing' were supposed to be 'taught, the latter not always'; where, as one dame confessed, 'it is not so much they pay me, and it is not so much I teach them.'[51]

This is harsh judgement indeed. While many dames' schools may certainly have deserved much of the criticism levelled at them, it should be mentioned that several working-class autobiographies bear witness to the fact that a number of pupils retained happy memories of such institutions. One such example is William Andrews, whose diary records:

> [b]eing of a practical turn of mind, she [the Quakeress teacher] not only taught us her limited stock of knowledge, but instructed us – boys and girls alike – in the arts of sewing and knitting, and many others of a peculiarly feminine nature [...] Even now, as age advances I recall her gentle, placid face and her motherly kindness in dealing with the rough untutored natures committed to her care, her repugnance of physical force and her facile and winning mode of attracting attention.[52]

Charity schools

Some charity schools and endowed schools dating from the eighteenth century attempted to provide an education, albeit modest, which was superior to that provided at many dames' schools. Supported by endowments, private gifts or

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[50] 8 February 1898–12 August 1898, vol. XXIV.

[51] 447.

[52] *Master and Artisan in Victorian England. The Diary of William Andrews and the Autobiography of Joseph Gutteridge* ed. by Valerie E. Chancellor (London: Evelyn, Adams and Mackay, 1969), 84. A similarly complimentary account of a dame school may be found in Arthur Waugh, 'A Victorian Dame School. A Chapter from an Unfinished Volume of Reminiscences', *Fortnightly Review* CXXVII (January 1930), 41–56. Waugh claims that the dames' school was 'as wise an institution as any that could be contrived by the wit of man' (45); that '[o]ur instructresses did their duty by us. We were learning all the time' (47); and '[t]he work was regular and conscientious, and sometimes the lessons seemed difficult, but our governesses never shirked the business of explanation' (49). It is interesting to note that many working-class autobiographies refer to a dames' school; the name was, however, retrospectively applied, being a middle-class name subsequently learned by the author and applied to his experience of schooling. For a discussion of this point, see Phil Gardner, *The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England. The People's Education* (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 26.

church collections, their aim was defined by Bishop Butler as 'not in any sort to remove poor children out of the rank in which they were born, but, keeping them in it, to give them the assistance which their circumstances plainly called for, by educating them in the principles of religion as well as of civil life.'[53] As Philip Collins writes, 'the old Charity School regulations required that schoolmasters should be godly men with some aptitude for teaching and some rudiments of learning, but the list of qualifications for mistresses specifically excluded "that part which relates to the Writing a good hand, and understanding Arithmetic" .'[54] Subordination was emphasised.

Writing specifically about schools connected with the religious societies and the endowed schools, the compilers of the 1898 *Reports from Commissioners, Inspectors, and Others* remarked:

> we may form a notion of their unsatisfactory condition from the fact that in 1851, only 3,076 – or, if we add those the date of whose building was not given, only 3,574 – out of the 7,420 existing in 1833, were then standing, or had not been restored, or enlarged. Many of the schools were doubtless held in the upper room of a cottage, or in a room of the vicarage, in chapels, or in whatever building was obtainable. They were often deficient in books, ill-drained and imperfectly ventilated. Of the teachers we find few instances of their having been trained.[55]

Schools such as Christ's Hospital were, unfortunately, the exception rather than the rule.

Sunday schools

A more satisfactory working-class institution from an educational point of view was the Sunday school which, in addition to religious tuition, provided some intellectual instruction. The 'Rules and Regulations of the Sunday and Week-Day Schools, in the Parish of East Stoke',[56] Dorset, afford some insights into the aims and standards of such schools. These specify that teachers must be 'of good report for character and steadiness of conduct' and 'the most advanced as scholars.' Children were expected to attend regularly and 'any child absent without excuse, will be subject to punishment.' There is indeed much evidence to suggest that Sunday schools were highly effective. In some parts of the country they were, in fact, the only form of education provided; in others, they were the main ones.[57] The Sunday schools were responsible

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[53] In Sturt, *The Education of the People*, 6.

[54] George C.T. Bartley, *The Schools for the People*, 328. Quoted in Philip Collins, *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan, 1965), 95.

[55] 448.

[56] Dorset County Museum. The school was opened in April 1827.

[57] For details of the development of Sunday schools, attendance and geographical distribution see Thomas Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1962), 147–9.

for teaching many working-class children how to read fluently.[58] It became increasingly clear, however, that even by mid-century the Sunday schools were still, as the Central Society of Education recorded, 'doing the work of the day-school on the Sabbath.' [59]

It was not until the level of literacy increased in the 1870s that the Sunday schools returned to their original religious purpose. Given that Sunday schools played a particularly important role as an instrument of basic education in agricultural districts, it is interesting that Hardy makes no mention of them in his novels. One possible reason is, as already mentioned in the introduction, that he was not interested in children's education in itself, as was Dickens: his primary concern was the effects of education and different types of knowledge on the adult's ability to survive in modern society.

Some educationalists and historians are at pains to show that educational provision for the working class in the first few decades of the nineteenth century was not as gloomy as writers have traditionally made it out to be. Richard Johnson points out that private schooling for the working class 'was one of those indigenous working-class educational practices against which mass schooling was defined and which it was intended to replace.'[60] Phil Gardner has shown how a number of working-class private schools, of which the dames' schools formed a major part, did, in fact, successfully respond to the needs of the poor by teaching important basic instrumental skills, even if they were forced to accept that attendance was necessarily irregular because of economic factors.[61] Some contemporaries even suggested that such schools were characterised by extra vitality because spasmodic attendance was permitted. Phil Gardner argues that the private working-class schools were in close physical proximity to their users and thus particularly sensitive to the demands of the local community. Parents had considerable influence over what was taught, and teachers were frequently of the same social class as those they were teaching. The primary habitus of the pupils was thus well-adapted to such schools: 'the school was virtually an extension of the values and physical environment of the home.'[62] There was an implicit danger in this too, of course, in that the system provided little oppor-

[58] For further details about the effectiveness of many Sunday schools, see R. K. Webb, *The British Working Class Reader 1790–1848* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1955), 16.

[59] *Minutes 1846,* 11, 29. Quoted in Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England,* 281.

[60] 'Notes on the schooling of the English working class 1780–1850', 44. Johnson argues that private schooling had the approval of parents, whose support continued for some time after the introduction of a national system of education.

[61] *The Lost Elementary Schools,* Chapter 3, 81–106. Gardner argues that such schools have been unfairly treated by historians, who apply a middle-class perspective. Contemporaries also gave them such derogatory names as dames' schools, inferior schools, common day schools and adventure schools. Readers interested in the nomenclature of working-class schools are recommended to read the first chapter ('Names') of *The Lost Elementary Schools,* 15–44.

[62] Ibid., 97.

tunity for the working class to move beyond its inherent social limitations. The private working-class schools represented an acceptance of the status quo, and indeed contributed to a reinforcement of it. They had little chance of survival in the face of competition from the more efficient public sector after the 1870s.[63] By this time it was clear that a national system of education was required which could meet the needs of all social classes and enable the working class to move beyond the restrictions of birth. Before moving on to this system, it is useful to look at the private options open to the middle and upper classes.

The middle and upper classes

The governess

One form of middle/upper-class education which appears early on in Hardy's fiction is that provided by a governess. Hardy's first published novel, *Desperate Remedies* (published in 1871), records how the heroine Cytherea Graye advertises for a governess post. Socially, Cytherea is well-qualified as she does not, like many of her non-fictional counterparts, belong to the upper levels of working-class society.[64] Her qualifications are somewhat limited as compared to other governesses of the period, who were expected to 'teach the English, French and Italian languages, music, drawing, and the usual branches of a lady's education.'[65] Cytherea is merely 'competent to teach English, French, and Music' (ii, 19). It seems that her skills are not called for, and she is forced to re-advertise, this time as 'nursery governess or useful companion [...] Salary very moderate' (iii, 41). She adds for good measure that she is a 'good needlewoman.' The second advertisement meets with no greater success than the first, and it is only a third advertisement, as 'Lady's-Maid. Inexperienced' (iii, 54), which yields results. This fictional example may be viewed as an illustration of the situation of governesses in the 1870s: by that time the opportunities for governesses were beginning to decline as a more organised system of compulsory national education emerged.

Cytherea, like her counterparts in the real world, was educated in limited fields. It was not uncommon, for example, for governesses to rely heavily on question-and-answer books such as Richmal Magnall's *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions.*[66] A

[63] For details of the destruction of the private elementary schools, see Gardner, *The Lost Elementary Schools*, 188–210.

[64] She is not like Georgie in Richard Jefferies' *Hodge and His Masters* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1949; first published in 1880), for example, who learns at school to despise her agricultural background.

[65] A typical advertisement in *The Times* during the 1840s and 1850s (*The Times*, 24 September 1850). Reproduced in Kathryn Hughes, *The Victorian Governess* (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1993), 44.

[66] The full title of Magnall's book was *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions, for the Use of Young People; with a Selection of British, and General Biography* (London, 1824). For a description of the use of these questions, see Daniel Pool, *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew. From Fox Hunting to Whist – The Facts of Daily Life in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 224.

glance at the table of contents of this immensely successful book reveals that half the pages are devoted to Greek, Roman, French and English history. Interestingly, nearly twenty pages deal with the modern subject of astronomy before the book returns to the more traditional subjects of mythology and the history of the Old Testament.

Throughout the period covered by Hardy's novels, the governess continued to answer the needs of many an aristocratic and middle-class household not so much because of her educational qualifications as because she constituted a means of showing off the family's wealth and prestige. The moral qualities of the governess were indeed as important as the intellectual ones as she 'was responsible for the total welfare of her young charges.'[67] In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, increasing importance was being placed on the academic qualifications of the governess: only those who could provide language and music instruction could be sure of obtaining a post and a reasonable salary, supply greatly exceeding demand.[68]

The middle class whom the governess served was finding increasing opportunities in the national system of education, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century. Hardy's third novel, *Far From the Madding Crowd,* published in 1873 but set in the 1830s, implies that at this period opportunities existed for a suitably educated young governess with the correct code of conduct: Mrs Hurst assures Gabriel Oak, the shepherd, that her niece Bathsheba is ' an excellent scholar [...] – she was going to be a governess once, you know, only she was too wild' (iv, 30). Just ten years after the period portrayed in *Far From the Madding Crowd,* the Governesses' Benevolent Institution was founded in 1843. The latter opened Queen's College in London, for girls of twelve years of age or more. The curriculum offered there was very wide in range, including modern languages, English grammar with Latin, English literature, mechanics, geography with geology, botany, chemistry, political economy and philosophy. Further subjects were added later and evening classes were also introduced. No such standards existed in the period portrayed in *Far From the Madding Crowd.*

The profession of governess was one of the few reasonably respectable occupations for a middle-class lady in the nineteenth century. It offered a level of respectability, a small salary and the possibility of social betterment – benefits reflected in the career of Ethelberta Petherwin in *The Hand of Ethelberta* (published in 1876). While Ethelberta's marriage into the nobility was not the norm in reality, it is clear that her accomplishments play an important part in her marriage prospects:

> [s]he was the daughter of a gentleman who lived in a large house not his own [...] She became a teacher in a school, was praised by examiners, admired by gentlemen, not ad-

[67] Hughes, *The Victorian Governess,* 21.

[68] Cecilia Wadsö Lecaros points out that a governess's inability to teach a particular subject could seriously diminish her chances of securing employment. As evidence Lecaros quotes the *Guide to Service: The Governess* (1844), which recorded how a governess missed the opportunity of an engagement owing to her inability to teach German. See *The Victorian Governess Novel* (Lund: Lund University Press, Lund Studies in English 100, 2001), 64-65.

> mired by gentlemen, was touched up with accomplishments by masters who were coaxed into painstaking by her many graces, and, entering a mansion as governess to the daughter thereof, was stealthily married by the son (i,1).

The accomplishments of a governess were not considered sufficient in their own right for a lady of consequence, however, as indicated by the fact that Ethelberta was sent away for two or three years to a boarding school in Bonn to finish her education. Significantly, Hardy places infinitely greater emphasis on Ethelberta's social accomplishments than on her academic ones. Ethelberta's educational and literary achievements are used by Hardy as a device to explain why she finds herself in the tragic situation of a widow who is unacceptable to the society of which she has recently become a member and forced to abandon the society which she has left. Ethelberta's academic attainments are of little real interest in themselves.

The grammar school

Other institutions which answered the needs of the élite and are worthy of mention, even if they are not specifically named in Hardy's novels, include the grammar school. In real life, a man like Phillotson in *Jude the Obscure* would have developed his passion for the Classics at such a school, and in his capacity of teacher he would have passed on his enthusiasm to such receptive pupils as Jude Fawley. Grammar-school boys (girls were excluded) were mainly drawn from the respectable middle class, from the families of clerics, professional men, tradesmen and farmers.[69] Greek and Latin were the main subjects studied. These were normally learned by rote, pupils being required to recite and construe whole passages. With the Grammar Schools Act of 1840 it became possible to develop a wider curriculum, as grammar schools could now use their endowments to teach arithmetic, writing, literature and modern languages as a result of the reversal of the Eldon Judgement of 1805 against Leeds Grammar School.[70]

The development of the public examinations system also had an effect on grammar schools. The Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations were established in 1858. Examinations were offered by the Royal Society of Arts and other organisations. Competitive examinations for entrance to the civil service were introduced in the 1850s. The grammar schools played an important role in preparing pupils for these, which included arithmetic, spelling and writing.

Many of the pupils attending a grammar school in the nineteenth century would have gone on to university. A number of grammar-school children were, however,

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[69] G. E. Mingay points out that from the sixteenth century onwards, the lesser gentry turned increasingly to the minor grammar schools for the education of their sons. In families where elder sons went to university, younger sons would leave grammar school and go into apprenticeship. *The Gentry. The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class* (London and New York: Longman, 1976), 162–3.

[70] Stewart and Mc Cann, *The Educational Innovators*, 277.

unable to pursue a university career owing to lack of funds (going to university was an expensive business; Phillotson could perhaps be regarded as a fictional representative of such pupils), or to inadequate efforts by their local schoolmasters to maintain high academic standards.

The public school

Rivalling the grammar school during the nineteenth century was the public school, which fulfilled the educational needs of the aristocracy. The latter is represented in Hardy's novels by such characters as Lord Luxellian in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Sir Ralph Petherwin in *The Hand of Ethelberta,* Sir Blount Constantine in *Two on a Tower* and Captain de Stancy in *A Laodicean.* Designed primarily for the wealthiest section of the population, the public schools changed significantly from the 1830s onwards, thanks in no small measure to Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby School. Sound religious principles and gentlemanly conduct were the main priorities from the beginning. Character-building was extremely important: '[i]t was generally agreed [...] that the overriding purpose of education ought to be religious and moral; certainly not, except incidentally, to produce Indian administrators, engineer officers, doctors or lawyers.'[71]

The Squire's ambitions for Tom in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* are representative of the ideals of public schools in the middle of the nineteenth century: '[i]f he'll only turn out a brave, helpful, truth-telling Englishman, and a gentleman, and a Christian, that's all I want.'[72] As the century progressed, however, there was a shift of emphasis, increasing stress being placed on manliness and games. The Classics still formed the most important part of the curriculum, and pupils were expected to read widely (Owen Graye draws attention to this fact in *Desperate Remedies*, for example, when he remarks that Edward Springrove is unusually well-read for a non-public school boy, ii, 24); but modern developments in the form of, for example, branches of science were gradually being introduced in the 1860s, partly in consequence of the efforts of the Clarendon Commission.[73] It should be noted, however, that such 'modern' subjects as science remained optional at a number of public schools. G. Kitson Clark argues that the failure of the public schools to take up the teaching of science was not only serious for the future of the schools themselves but also for

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[71] David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning* (London: Cassell, 1961); Public Schools Commission, 1864 (the Clarendon Commission). Quoted in W. J. Reader, *Professional Men. The Rise of the Professional Classes in Nineteenth-Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 104.

[72] Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (Harmondsworth: Puffin Books, 1971; first published in 1857), 66. During his meditation on the subject of Tom's schooling, the squire also reflects that he does not 'care a straw for Greek particles, or the digamma' (66). Tom is not sent to school to be a good scholar.

[73] The Clarendon Commission recommended the introduction of, among other subjects, mathematics and natural science into the public-school curriculum. It is interesting to note, nonetheless, that the Commission recommended that the Classics should be allotted just over half the teaching time, and science a mere one-eighth; see Brian Simon, *The Two Nations*, 299–311.

Britain's future in that it became an important function of such schools to educate the future leaders of industry.[74]

Working-class/middle-class education – adult education

The vast majority of characters in Hardy's novels do not, however, belong to the élite; they are the products (in those cases where they had received any education at all) of the national system of education which was only just beginning to take shape in the middle of the century. Developments in the educational system in the first half of the century centred on adult education, the most important feature of which was the teaching of science.[75] The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge,[76] established in 1827, aimed at the dissemination of useful information and at teaching the scientific principles on which various trades were based.[77] Of special interest in the context of this study is the primary weakness in the Useful Knowledge Movement, namely, its distrust of the imagination. As Robin Gilmour points out, and as Hardy emphasised in his own writing, the movement's 'claim to the morally improving character of utilitarian knowledge could not be sustained if it failed to reach the depths of human nature that religion appealed to – in particular, the imagination.'[78] As an evolutionary meliorist (a self-assessment),[79] Hardy saw his writings as works of art whose function was to enlarge certain features of the real world and evoke reflection and/or response from his readers. He is recorded as saying in 1886, '[m]y art is to intensify the expression of things, as is done by Crivelli or Bellini, etc., so that the heart and inner meaning is made vividly visible.'[80] Hardy experienced a conflict in the field of knowledge, being unable to accept the rigid classical education of the grammar school on the one hand and the equally rigid, strictly utilitarian

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74 *The Making of Victorian England. Being the Ford Lectures Delivered Before The University of Oxford* (London: Methuen, 1962), 271–2. Peter Gordon and Denis Lawton draw a similar conclusion, observing that 'the public school classics-based curriculum transformed many of the potential technologists and industrial leaders into "gentlemen" who looked with disdain on the practical knowledge of science and engineering.' See *Curriculum Change in the Nineteenth & Twentieth Centuries* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), 3.

75 Thomas Kelly explains that science was so important in the adult education movement because it was so neglected at schools during the first half of the nineteenth century. Kelly also observes that there was a keen interest in science for its own sake. See *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain*, 112. In addition, Kelly also traces the development of science teaching at the adult level during the eighteenth century, 98–111.

76 For information on the work of the S.D.U.K. see R. K. Webb, *The British Working Class Reader 1790–1848*, 66–73, 85–90, 114–22.

77 For a description of more radical types of adult working-class education, see Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain*, 134–146.

78 *The Victorian Period*, 149.

79 See the 'Apology' to *Late Lyrics and Earlier*. Hardy defends himself against the epithet of pessimist by professing a belief in the importance of 'the exploration of reality, and its frank recognition stage by stage along the survey, with an eye to the best consummation possible: briefly, evolutionary meliorism.' See *The Complete Poems*, 557.

80 *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 183.

knowledge of contemporary educational movements on the other. Man should be encouraged to appreciate the value of tradition, but he should also be able to apply his knowledge to modern conditions.

Two extremely important developments in the adult-education movement were the mutual improvement societies and the Mechanics' Institutes, started in the 1820s and 1830s. Hardy made Jude Fawley a member of the Artisans' Mutual Improvement Society in fictive Marygreen. Members of such societies met in one another's houses or hired a room for the purpose. Together they drew up a few elementary rules and planned courses, essay-readings and meetings. Mutual improvement societies were particularly popular during times of depression. Many quickly dissolved when the initial enthusiasm had disappeared, or when employment increased.[81]

By the 1840s Mechanics' Institutes had become popular both as social and educational institutions. Their main purpose was the promotion of science. An early historian of the movement summarised the aims of its founders as follows:

(1) The rapid promotion of general science by the greater number of persons engaged in the observation of its phenomena. The lower ranks, who are chiefly engaged in manual labour, have frequent opportunities of making observations on certain peculiarities in the process of art, which often escape the notice of a superior rank, and thus the labouring classes of society would be rendered mutually useful, in uniting and concentrating the scattered rays of genius, which might otherwise be dissipated and lost to the scientific world.

(2) An extensive diffusion of rational information among the general mass of society.

(3) The creation of intellectual pleasures and refined amusements, tending to the general elevation of character.[82]

Brian Simon suggests that hidden behind these high-sounding words was a desire to exploit the workers' technical powers and provide distractions to prevent them from becoming involved in independent political activity. While this attitude may have been prevalent among some of the founders of the institutes it cannot be assumed that it applied to all, or even a majority. It is true nonetheless that for a number of educational reformers education was, as has already been pointed out in the introduction, a potentially useful means of social control.[83]

Whatever the real intentions behind the movement, the Institutes provided – at least initially – a valuable selection of science lectures combined with lectures on

[81] A. E. Dobbs, *Education and Social Movements 1700–1850* (London: Longmans, Green, 1919), 171–2.

[82] J. W. Hudson, *History of Adult Education* (1851), 54–5. Quoted in Simon, *The Two Nations*, 158.

[83] For an informative discussion of the role of Mechanics' Institutes as agents of social control, see Steven Shapin and Barry Barnes, 'Science, nature and control: interpreting Mechanics' Institutes', in *A Sociological Reader* ed. by Dale, 55–65.

drama and the fine arts, language and literature, vocal music and a range of elementary subjects.[84] However, the Mechanics' Institutes gradually became select institutions serving the needs of the middle and top layers of the working class, rather than the working class in general. By the 1850s there were few Mechanics' Institutes which remained faithful to their working-class origins: '[h]ence they suffered from the fears and prejudices of the privileged and the suspicion of the poor, the latter being the very class that the early enthusiasts had wanted to help.'[85] Cardwell argues that the Institutes actually had little chance of success from the beginning: '[o]nly an extreme individualist could believe that the mechanics could lift themselves and, at the same time, the standards of their industries, by their own shoe-strings.'[86] That the Mechanics' Institutes failed in their original enterprise is less interesting in the context of the present study than the fact that serious efforts were made to broaden the interests of the working class, particularly in the realm of science.

The 1830s and 1840s were generally characterised by a substantial growth in evening classes for adults and young people, many of which constituted individual or short series of lectures rather than full courses of study.[87] Hardy refers to such classes in *Under the Greenwood Tree* when describing Mr Spinks, who 'was considered to be a scholar, having once kept a nightschool, and always spoke up to that level' (Part First, iii, 17). Reference to such classes is also made in *Jude the Obscure,* where Jude attends lectures on ancient history (Part fifth, ii, 315). There were, indeed, an unusually large number of night schools in Dorset in the nineteenth century.[88] Courses of lectures were offered on a variety of subjects and at a price that the upper level of the working class could afford; for example, a 'course of miscellaneous

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[84] Dobbs, *Educational & Social Movements 1700–1850*, 174.

[85] M. Tylecote, *The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851* (Manchester, 1957). Referred to in Hurt, *Education in Evolution*, 116.

[86] *The Organisation of Science in England*, 82. In his reference to James Hole's essay, *An Essay on the History* and *Management of Literary, Scientific, & Mechanics' Institutions* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1970; first published in 1853), Cardwell also shows that without State aid the Institutes had little chance of success (82). By tracing the history of different Institutes, Hole shows that science lectures generally grew 'small by degrees and beautifully less' between 1835 and 1849. See Hole's *Essay*, 30. Hole recommended that members of the working class learn about the world, 'its physical character, its geological history, its relation to the other orbs of our solar system, and of that sidereal system of aggregated worlds in which it is but an atom. The man who is once admitted to this august temple of the universe [...] will not readily stoop to poorer pleasures' (45).

[87] For further details of these courses including membership and subjects taught, see Kelly, *A History of Adult Education in Great Britain*, 155–7. That such courses were still popular in the 1880s is evidenced by a reference in Hardy's ghost autobiography to his attending 'Ambulance Society lectures' with his first wife, Emma Gifford. The entry is marked 'December 1882' (*The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 163).

[88] Richard Heath quotes the comment of Mr Stanhope, the Government Commissioner, 'I noticed with pleasure the great desire for instruction among the labouring poor in this county [Dorset], one proof of which may be found in the fact that the proportion of parishes with night schools is unusually large. In Dorset there are forty-four night schools in 100 ecclesiastical districts; while in Kent, where the labourer is so well off in a money point of view, there are only twenty-six in an equal number.' See *The English Peasantry*, 129. For a table showing the numbers of pupils attending evening schools in 1858, see W. B. Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society, 1830–70: the geography of diversity in provincial England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), Appendix Q, 364.

lectures' at Bilston in Staffordshire cost 1 shilling for the season, attracting audiences of between three and seven hundred, of whom it was calculated that over two-thirds were artisans and colliers.[89] Evening classes were run by a number of schools, but they suffered considerably from lack of funding. Historians suggest that evening classes had little effect on educational standards.[90] Their value was given official recognition, however. The Newcastle Commission reported, for example, that sometimes 'a journeyman carpenter or shoemaker, having acquired a moderate education by his own perseverance, desires to help his fellows; he sets up a night school in his house or workshop; retired ink-jars hold the candles, and fingers act as snuffers [...] such a man is not to be despised.'[91]

The particular area of expertise of Mr Spinks in *Under the Greenwood Tree* is not made clear, but it seems he is primarily interested in educating young people, and Michael Mail expresses the feeling of Mellstock when he tells Spinks, 'all the parish knows, that ye've read sommat of everything a'most, and have been a great filler of young folks' brains. Learning's a worthy thing, and ye've got it, Master Spinks' (Part the First, iii, 20). From the 1840s onwards the number of adult evening courses was increased, and their scope developed. Teaching rather than lecturing was provided, the main emphasis being on occupational courses.

The popular movements of the 1830s and 1840s promoted the importance of self-education: 'the history of adult education is not only that of mechanics' institutes, but also that of small, informal, mutual improvement societies, reading societies, and men filching time to study their scanty supply of books and periodicals.'[92] Hardy was himself, of course, an excellent example of such an autodidact, although he was not indebted to any particular society.

The fictional characters Clym Yeobright (*The Return of the Native*) and Jude Fawley (*Jude the Obscure*) both attempt programmes of self-study. Jude achieves considerable success, to the extent that he is able to put the undergraduates in the tavern at Christminster to shame. Jude is challenged to recite the Articles of Belief in Latin. After a couple of lines, one of the undergraduates cries, 'Good! Excellent Latin!' (Part Second, vii, 144). We learn that the undergraduate 'had not the slightest conception of a single word.' On completion of his task, Jude shouts out desperately, '[y]ou pack of fools! [...] Which one of you knows whether I have said it or no? It might have been the Ratcatcher's Daughter in double Dutch for all your besotted heads can tell! See what I have brought myself to – the crew I have come among' (Part Second, vii, 144–5). Jude's superior knowledge, despite his lack of formal higher education, is clearly upheld.

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[89] *Minutes 1846*, I, 189–191. Quoted in Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 296.

[90] See, for example, Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society*, 262.

[91] Newcastle Commission, 1, 45. Quoted in Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 296.

[92] Ibid., 262.

Educational efforts in the 1830s and 1840s were thus still very much the result of popular movements, individual societies and reformers. Insufficient effort was made by the state to improve the system of education for children and adults, and a system of national education was still thirty years off: not until 1870 did primary education become the responsibility of the government, and it required several more acts before elementary schooling became available and compulsory for all children. Secondary education existed for the upper classes only, and the two universities of Oxford and Cambridge were in desperate need of reform. Teachers at all kinds of educational establishments were frequently inadequately educated themselves, and without any form of professional training or qualification.

National developments in education

Sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu have shown that two distinct and yet related fields determined the pattern of developments in the emergence of a national system of education: the social field, i.e. the values of particular groups and institutions, and the field of political, aesthetic, religious and other types of values.[93] There was an ambivalent attitude to education in the nineteenth century: 'it was frequently viewed as being either the inspiration of revolution or the alternative to it, the cause of violent change or the best way to avoid it.'[94] There were indeed two powerful reasons for *not* implementing a national system of education: the Victorians intensely disliked official control, particularly when it entailed financial contributions; and it was feared that a national system would increase conflict between the national church and Dissenters, not to mention the Catholics.[95]

Once the system of elementary education for all had been established,[96] it was blamed for, among other things, depopulating the villages by encouraging young people to move to towns in search of opportunities.[97] The results were also held to confirm the fact that teaching the children of the poor was a totally worthless exercise. A contributor to the magazine *Literature* wrote in 1898 that '[t]he key of knowledge has been handed over to the people. What do they unlock with it? To a large extent, no doubt, drawers empty or filled with rubbish.'[98]

At the same time, educationalists were not slow to realise the social control poten-

[93] For an informative explanation of this aspect of Bourdieu's philosophy, see Donald Broady, *Sociologi och epistemologi. Om Pierre Bourdieus författarskap och den historiska epistemologin* (Stockholm: HLS Förlag, 1990), 584.

[94] Trezise, 'Ways of Learning in "The Return of the Native"', 56.

[95] Reader cites these two reasons in relation to secondary education. They are, however, equally applicable to the establishment of a national system as a whole. See *Professional Men*, 114.

[96] For a useful summary of the various acts and commissions between 1802 and 1975, see Gordon and Lawton, *Curriculum Change in the Nineteenth & Twentieth Centuries*, 5–43.

[97] This view was expressed by, for example, J.L. Green, *The Rural Industries of England* (London, 1895), 5.

[98] Quoted in Keating, *The Haunted Study*, 450.

tial of a national system of education. It has been argued by a number of historians that national education promoted instruction rather than education.[99] Working-class pupils were trained in correct moral habits and equipped to fulfil the expectations and duties of their station. Not all observers shared this view, however. Those worried by the increase in theft and arson, particularly in the first half of the nineteenth century, began to see education as a necessary instrument for social discipline. Pamela Horn argues that this attitude was particularly relevant to rural education.[100]

The 1840s and '50s marked the height of popularity of Jeremy Bentham and the Utilitarians, whose well-known aim was to produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This philosophy had profound implications for national developments in education. The Benthamites' preoccupation with useful knowledge led to the establishment of monitorial schools for the poor (a system replaced in 1838 by the pupil-teacher system), and they also subsequently influenced secondary-school reform. The Utilitarians believed children should be educated for their specific social roles: the poor to work, and the middle classes to govern. John Stuart Mill, leading Utilitarian and a significant influence on Hardy, affirmed that with respect to ordinary people 'a very high degree is attainable by them [...] a firm foundation may be laid for a life of mental action, a life of wisdom, and reflection, and ingenuity, even in those by whom the most ordinary labour will fall to be performed.'[101] This represented a new way of thinking about education for the working class.

A further advance in thought is marked by the work of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, created in 1839. Improvements in school buildings, furniture and apparatus were made possible by grants awarded to the National and the British and Foreign Society Schools. It was this committee which also introduced a new era in teacher training with the inauguration of the pupil-teacher scheme, introduced just two years before Hardy himself started school at the Stinsford and Bockhampton National School. The introduction of pupil teachers marked the beginning of a new state concern for teaching standards.

The compilation of requirements drawn up for pupil-teacher candidates, who were to be not less than thirteen years of age, indicates the government's educational priorities in terms of the curriculum during this period, and thus deserves listing in full: to read with fluency, ease and expression; write in a neat hand, with correct spelling and punctuation, a simple prose narrative slowly read to them; write from dictation sums in the first four rules of arithmetic, simple and compound; to work them correctly, and to know the tables of weights and measures; point out the parts

[99] See, for example, Anne Digby and Peter Searby, *Children, School and Society in Nineteenth-Century England* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1981), 23–28.

[100] *The Rural World 1780–1850*, 136.

[101] 'Education', *Supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 18–19. Quoted in Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 231.

of speech in a simple sentence; possess an elementary knowledge of geography; in schools connected with the Church of England, to repeat the Catechism, and to show that they understand its meaning, and are acquainted with the outline of Scripture history; to teach a junior class to the satisfaction of the Inspector; and girls should be able to sew neatly and to knit.

After five years' apprenticeship, the pupils sat an examination in the following areas: in the composition of an essay on some subject connected with the art of teaching; in the rudiments of algebra, or the practice of land surveying and levelling; in syntax, etymology, and prosody; and in the use of globes, or in the geography of the British Empire and Europe, as connected with the outlines of English history. In the fifth year girls could be examined in the historical geography of Great Britain, and more completely in the Holy Scriptures, Liturgy, and Catechism in Church of England schools, the parochial clergyman assisting in the examination; they would also be tested for their ability to give a gallery lesson, and to conduct the instruction of the first class in any subject selected by the Inspector.[102]

This was the system – with its prioritisation of theoretical and scientific subjects for boys, and more practical and less academic subjects for girls – under which Hardy himself was taught, and his sisters qualified to become teachers. It was not to come to an end until the first decade of the twentieth century in urban areas, and not until the second decade in rural areas such as Dorset. The pupil-teacher system resulted in improved teaching standards, but it also entailed considerable sacrifice on the part of the candidate, whose duties included several hours of both teaching and study every day.

In 1862, sixteen years after the introduction of the pupil-teacher system, the Revised Code introduced the infamous payment-by-results scheme in a further attempt to improve educational standards.[103] The Newcastle Report had summed up the still somewhat unsatisfactory system of education in England in 1861 as follows:

> The presence of this proportion of the population in school implies [...] that almost everyone receives some amount of school education at some period or other, but it also implies that the average attendance is far shorter than it should be; and it is perfectly consistent with the incompetency of a large proportion of the schools in the country to give really useful instruction, or to have considerable influence in forming the character of those who attend them.[104]

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[102] R. W. Rich, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales During the Nineteenth Century* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1933), 120.

[103] Matthew Arnold was highly critical of the Revised Code, particularly when it came to the teaching of arithmetic. He wrote, '[t]o teach children to bring right two sums out of three without really knowing arithmetic seems hard . . . [a child] is taught the mechanical rule by which sums of this sort are worked, and sedulously practised all the year round in working them; arithmetical principles he is not taught, or introduced into the science of arithmetic.' *Report*, 1869. Quoted in Charles Birchenough, *History of Elementary Education in England and Wales from 1800 to the Present Day* (London: University Tutorial Press, 1927), 351.

[104] Adamson, *English Education 1789–1902*, 205.

Few children attended school past the age of twelve, and only a minority of older children – approximately 25 % in state-inspected schools – received an acceptable education.[105]

By the terms of the Revised Code, every child over the age of six earned the school a grant of 4s. based on attendance, and 8s. based on examination. Failure to satisfy the inspector's requirements in reading, writing and arithmetic resulted in the forfeiture of 2s. 8d per subject.

Tess Durbeyfield is a product of the Revised Code. The effects of the latter on her were so dramatic that they created a gulf between herself and her mother. Hardy makes this point clearly in the following, much-quoted passage:

> Between the mother, with her fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads, and the daughter, with her trained National teachings and Standard knowledge under an *infinitely* Revised Code, there was a gap of two hundred years as ordinarily understood. When they were together the Jacobean and Victorian ages were juxtaposed (my italics. Phase the First, iii, 32).

Here Hardy draws attention to a contrast between old and new values, the significance of which will be made apparent in the following chapters. Suffice it to say at this stage that the result of the system was an overwhelming concentration on the three Rs, with a concomitant deterioration of interest and achievement in other subjects.

The system also encouraged cramming and learning by rote. It was subsequently modified after 1868 by allowing an extra grant to be earned for specific subjects over and above the three Rs. A three-shilling grant was introduced in 1871 for successful performance in an examination in a maximum of two subjects, including algebra, geometry, geography, history, political economy, the natural sciences, languages, or any subject which could be graded according to level of difficulty. Apparently, though, the modified scheme had little long-term practical effect, as only 3 % of children on the registers were presented in specific subjects in the 1870s. It was further modified in 1875, just one year before Hardy started to draw up the educational plans of Clym Yeobright in *The Return of the Native.*

In addition to the grants for specific subjects, the Code of 1875 introduced extra grants based on class subjects, in which the proficiency of entire classes rather than individual pupils was assessed. The specific and class subjects were extended by the Code of 1882, and schools were graded 'fair', 'good' or 'excellent.'[106] The 1882 Code signalled the development of a new attitude to education. The National Union of Elementary Teachers campaigned consistently to undermine the 1862 Code,[107] and

[105] For further details of these figures and their implications, see Goldstrom, *The Social Content of Education*, 153–159.

[106] Adamson, *English Education 1789–1902*, 329.

[107] For a discussion of how the 1862 Code adversely affected teacher training, see Josephine Kamm, *Hope Deferred. Girls' Education in English History* (London: Methuen, 1965), 274–5.

by the publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in 1890, the payment-by-results scheme had largely disappeared, with only a fraction of the grant per child being dependent on individual examination. By 1898 inspectors were finally instructed to cease examining pupils in formal individual examinations. However, a 'real-life' Tess would, like many late-nineteenth-century children, have continued to feel the effects of the payment-by-results scheme since teachers had been trained for thirty years to prioritise the three Rs, to encourage rote learning and to ignore subjects for which no grant could be earned. Such habits were not easily forgotten.

In reality teachers such as Phillotson would have taught their pupils according to this method, and this, combined with the rote learning of the Classics mentioned earlier, perhaps accounts at least in part for the day scholars' lukewarm attitude towards Phillotson as he prepares to leave the village:

> [t]ears rose into the boy's [Jude's] eyes, for he was not among the regular day scholars, who came unromantically close to the schoolmaster's life, but one who had attended the night school only during the present teacher's term of office. The regular scholars, if the truth must be told, stood at the present moment afar off, like certain historic disciples, indisposed to any enthusiastic volunteering of aid (Part First, i, 4).

By the 1870s, when Hardy was producing his first novels, education had become an important part of social policy. Forster's Education Act of 1870 attempted to set up compulsory education in all districts, providing elementary schooling for those not already in receipt of such schooling. A number of nineteenth-century observers were suspicious of the principles behind the act, and H. G. Wells wrote in his autobiography that '[t]he Education Act of 1870 was not an act for a common universal education, it was an Act to educate the lower classes for employment on lower class lines.'[108] These schools required active support from the adult population as they were funded by rates. School boards supervised the building of new schools, and Hardy himself was actively involved in the scheme in his capacity as an architect, being requested by R. Roger Smith to assist in the preparation of an entry to the London School Board new school-design competition. The boards stipulated that a maximum fee of 9d. per week should be charged. They could remit the fees, or even pay the fees of poor children attending non-board schools.[109]

The composition of the boards proved to be a major obstacle in some districts, however, as the appointment of members with differing religious sympathies and backgrounds caused major divisions.[110] Some members actually sought appoint-

[108] *Experiment in Autobiography*, 1934. Quoted in Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870–1920* vol. 2 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974), 97. For an informative discussion of the limitations of the Act, see Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, 162–3.

[109] Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 317.

[110] A contemporary example in literature may be found in Jefferies, *Hodge and His Masters*, 278. For a discussion of the problem of religious dissension on the school boards, see James Murphy, *Church, State and Schools in Britain 1800–1970* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), 65–75.

ment in order to oppose the operation of the act. In rural districts, for example, local farmers of the type represented by Boldwood in *Far From the Madding Crowd* were likely to seek appointment to ensure that new schools were not built in order to safeguard their own livelihood, child labour being an indispensable complement to the farm workforce. While the act established the principle of compulsory attendance, it failed to make obligatory the election of school-attendance committees in districts not covered by school boards. This weakness was remedied by the Act of 1876. By 1880, however, no more than 450 of the 2,000 or so school boards and 20 of the 190 school attendance committees had enforced school attendance by adopting the necessary bye-laws. Such bye-laws were made obligatory by an Act passed the same year.[111]

It is interesting to note that schooling accounted for a very small part of the working-class family budget at the time when education became compulsory. The weekly budget of a labourer with an average family contained an income of seventeen shillings and sixpence.[112] Only three pennies went towards schooling, exactly half of what was spent, for example, on candles and soap. A closer analysis of the budget showed, however, that expenditure had been reduced to a minimum in the interests of economy. No money was wasted on extras or luxury items, and there were no safety margins. Sending children to school thus represented a considerable sacrifice even if the actual sum seems small.

The less than enthusiastic pupils of Phillotson in *Jude the Obscure* represent pupils who, in real life, would have been brought up during the period when the more stringent attendance laws were in force. Their parents would not, however, have been bound by any such laws when they attended school – if indeed they ever did – and would have felt little sympathy for boys with academic dreams. It is significant that in the very first chapter of *Jude the Obscure* we read that Jude is abruptly and rudely roused from his day dreaming about Phillotson's academic plans by one of the local women, whose loud, rough speech forms a sharp contrast to Jude's own quiet musing:

> He said to himself, in the melodramatic tones of a whimsical boy, that the schoolmaster had drawn at that well scores of times on a morning like this, and would never draw there any more. 'I've seen him look down into it, when he was tired with his drawing, just as I do now, and when he rested a bit before carrying the buckets home! But he was too clever to bide here any longer – a small sleepy place like this!' A tear rolled from his eye into the depths of the well. The morning was a little foggy, and the boy's breathing unfurled itself as a thicker fog upon the still and heavy air. His thoughts were interrupted by a sudden outcry: 'Bring on that water, will ye, you idle young harlican!' (Part First, i, 5–6)

[111] Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 321.

[112] *Parliamentary Reports, Commissioners* (1881), XV1, 310. Quoted in W. H. R. Curtler, *A Short History of English Agriculture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 356.

By 1871 the compulsory school subjects were reading, writing and arithmetic. Girls were also required to master needlework and cutting out, and boys to master drill. This is a limited curriculum by modern standards, and it was not significantly extended until 1896, one year after the publication of Hardy's final novel. Had they been 'real people' and not fictional figures, none of the characters in Hardy's novels would thus have benefitted from the new, extended curriculum, containing English, geography, history, science, drawing, singing, recitation and domestic economy. The specific subjects included chemistry, physics, agriculture, animal physiology, navigation, mechanics, languages and shorthand. Physical education was also included, and provision was made for visits to educational institutions. Another item that was added and that interested Hardy was art. An entry in *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy* for April 11, 1883 – in the form of a letter to one Miss Mary Christie – reads: 'I have read with great interest the account of your scheme for encouraging a feeling for art in National Schools, and if my name be of any service in support of the general proposition, I willingly consent to your using it.'[113]

The 1870 Act had brought to the fore the need for secondary education for all, and not just the élite in grammar and public schools.[114] Some school boards allowed elementary schools to keep children in higher grade classes, the courses varying according to employment opportunities in the district, but generally giving prominence to subjects of a scientific and practical nature. These schools could be used as a means of entering university, but they were more frequently a route into skilled/clerical professions. By 1902 and the Education Act of that year, concern for higher education had been combined with a new interest in the child as a person. Education had also come to be regarded as a science. This was largely due to developments in psychology, as well as to a pronounced desire to improve the general status of education.

The education of girls

Educational reformers in the first half of the nineteenth century were primarily concerned with boys rather than girls. In wealthy families, the emphasis in girls' upbringing was still on accomplishments rather than intellectual achievements. However, in the last quarter of the century attitudes were changing, particularly in relation to middle-class girls. Middle-class families were anxious to maintain their standard of living during a period of falling prices and profits. The new attitude to female education was voiced by Samuel Smiles, who wrote in 1878 that 'to instruct woman is to instruct man [...] to enlarge her mental freedom is to extend and secure

[113] 164–5.

[114] State secondary education began to be developed in 1882, with the addition of a seventh standard in elementary schools. The relatively late development of the system causes it to fall outside the scope of the present study.

that of the whole community. For Nations are but the outcomes of Homes, and People of Mothers.'[115]

The Taunton Commissioners had found only twelve endowed schools for girls in England. By the 1890s, this figure had risen to eighty. The establishment of the Women's Education Union in 1871 and its creation one year later of the Girls' Public Day School Company promoted the development of cheap and efficient day schools for girls. These schools made some provision for girls' domestic duties, but they worked within an academic framework similar to that of boys' secondary schools. The aim was to provide education for girls which was on a par with that of the boys.

From the late 1860s, classes for girls were introduced at London University. Special lectures were also organised at various educational establishments around the country. The Women's Education Union stimulated an interest in the training of female teachers, and in 1878 it opened Maria Grey College. Secondary and higher education for girls was generally not co-educational. Not until 1895 and the Bryce Commission was there official support for co-educational establishments.

Developments in science education

The first half of the nineteenth century has been defined as one of the most 'formative, searching, and basically determinative periods in the history of science.'[116] Most of the major problems had been raised by 1850, and the tools for solving them had already been invented. Professional scientific training had also taken great steps forward by the middle of the century. In the context of the present study it is important to establish to what extent schools kept up with these developments. In the following discussion, it should be borne in mind that access to scientific knowledge was determined by the upper class, who were responsible for assessing its suitability as a 'vehicle of order and stability.'[117]

T. H. Huxley, the great biologist and publicist, worked hard for the inclusion of science in the school curriculum.[118] Huxley was a Darwinian evolutionist and a member of the famous X Club, an influential circle of scientists, several of whom became Presidents of the Royal Society. Huxley believed in scientific knowledge for its own sake. He also realised that science had a considerable practical value by

[115] *Character* (London, 1878; 1905 edition), 64. Quoted in John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 341. The following account of female education is based on Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 341–344.

[116] Walter F. Cannon, 'History in Depth: The Early Victorian Period', *History of Science/A Review of Literature and Research in the History of Science, Medicine and Technology in its Intellectual and Social Context* 3 (1964), 20–38.

[117] This point is made by, among others, Christine M. Heward in 'Industry, cleanliness and godliness: sources for and problems in the history of scientific and technical education and the working classes, 1850–1910', *Studies in Science Education* 7 (1980), 100. Heward shows that rural schools were at a disadvantage in the competition for scientific resources and knowledge.

[118] As Chapter Two points out, Hardy was also interested in Huxley and his writings, even though his influence on Hardy's thought was not as marked as that of Spencer and Darwin.

enabling mankind to combat Nature. Material improvements in the standard of living were a direct consequence of science. For Huxley science was also a means of satisfying his love of simple knowledge. He supported liberal education, which should, he believed, reflect the principles on which the great scientists worked:

> That which stirs their [the scientists'] pulses is the love of knowledge and the joy of discovery of the cause of things sung by the old poet – the supreme delight of extending the realm of law and order even farther towards the unattainable goals of the infinitely great and the infinitely small, between which our little race of life is run.[119]

Huxley argued that science could give this satisfaction to everyone, and not just to the scientist. He maintained that science and literature formed the basis of a good liberal education. Huxley played an important part in the technical education movement, and he sat on a committee on education which produced a report later adopted by the British Association in 1867. The report specified five main reasons for including science in the curriculum of schools and colleges: it is the best source of discipline; it is a good stimulator of students bored by literary education; it gives access to modern philosophy; it provides considerable pleasure in later life; and it influences 'the present position and future progress of civilization.'[120]

During the 1830s and '40's little science was taught in schools – primarily because there was little recognition of the subject as a distinct mode of understanding, literacy levels were generally low, and there was a general and acute shortage of scientific equipment.[121] There were a number of books on science available in the 1850s; however, few of these were adapted to the special needs of the working-class reader.[122] Lectures on the importance of science were given at the Educational Exhibition of 1854. Science was not included in the Revised Code, though; neither was it an examinable subject.

There was no significant change in the development of science with the introduction of State education and the passing of the 1870 Act. The 1870s to 1880s were largely concerned with the teaching of the rudiments. By 1881, however, science and technical education began to make a greater impact on school curricula owing to the efforts of The Science and Art Department, the establishment of scientific bodies and associations, and the vigorous efforts of such scientists as Huxley.[123]

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[119] T. H. Huxley, 'The Progress of Science, 1837–1887', *Collected Essays*, 1 (1893), 56–57. Quoted in Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 103.

[120] 'Report of a Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science and Technology, on the Best Means for Promoting Scientific Education in the Schools', *Parliamentary Papers*, (vol. LIV, 1867–8), 3. Quoted in Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 103.

[121] For an informative discussion of the state of science in schools and the availability of scientific literature in the first half of the nineteenth century, see David Layton, *Science for the People. The Origins of the School Science Curriculum in England* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), 13–34.

[122] Ibid., 111–112.

[123] For a comprehensive description of developments, see Michael Argles, *South Kensington to Robbins. An Account of English Technical and Scientific Education since 1851* (London: Longmans, Green, 1964). My account of the development of technical instruction is based on Chapter Three of Argles's book.

The growth of industry in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and the concern that Britain was lagging behind other industrial nations, stimulated a new interest in technical instruction. The Royal Commission on Technical Instruction, appointed in 1881, recommended that school boards and local authorities should establish and maintain science classes, science teaching should be made more practical, the importance of science at teacher training colleges should be increased, and science teaching should be made more efficient. The Commission also advocated an increase in scientific and technical instruction in endowed secondary schools. The Royal Commission resulted in the foundation of the National Association for the Promotion of Technical Education in 1887. The Technical Instruction Act of 1889 entitled local authorities to raise a penny rate to support technical instruction. By 1898, all the counties and county boroughs in England had adopted the 1889 Act. Loans, Science and Art Department grants, donations and subscriptions were also used to further technical instruction.

An interesting reflection on the growth of scientific awareness during the nineteenth century is to be found in Hardy's second children's story, 'Our Exploits at West Poley',[124] which was sold in 1883 to a popular children's magazine, the *Youth's Companion.* Here the narrator remarks:

> [s]keletons of great extinct beasts, and the remains of prehistoric men have been found thereabouts since that time; but at the date of which I write [some time in the first half of the nineteenth century][125] science was not so ardent as she is now, in the pursuit of the unknown; and we boys could only conjecture on subjects in which the boys of the present generation are well-informed (172).

A start had indeed been made to improve scientific education. Standards were still generally low as compared with other countries, though.[126] By the end of the nineteenth century only a small percentage of working-class children received any kind of systematic scientific education.[127] Improvements were slow because of a shortage of science graduates able to teach, as well as strong social prejudice against science (less able pupils, for example, were generally encouraged to study science). The middle and upper classes continued to fear the effects of educating the lower classes to too high a level, a fear which extended into the realm of science teaching. The low social prestige of science ensured that it attracted less in the way of resources than the Classics.[128]

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[124] First published in 1892. Reprinted in *Thomas Hardy. The Excluded and Collaborative Stories* ed. by Dalziel, 155–214.

[125] In the very first paragraph, Hardy actually refuses to date his story.

[126] The situation was little better for the children of the middle and upper classes. The Devonshire Committee on Scientific Instruction and the Advancement of Science found in a survey in the early 1870s that of the 128 endowed schools studied, only half taught science at all, and 90 % of the institutions had no science laboratory. For a discussion of these findings, see Digby and Searby, *Children, School and Society in Nineteenth-Century England,* 32.

[127] Ibid., 32.

[128] Ibid., 32–33.

The universities

Enormous changes thus took place in the school system during the period covered by Hardy's novels. It is interesting to consider – not least with respect to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* – to what extent the universities kept pace with these changes. Writing in *The Edinburgh Review* of June 1831, Sir William Hamilton, Professor at Edinburgh, commented on Oxford University as follows:

> The University is in abeyance [...] In none of the faculties is it supposed that the professors any longer furnish the instruction necessary for a degree. Some chairs are even nominally extinct where an endowment has not perpetuated the sinecure; and the others betray, in general, their existence only through the Calendar. If the silence of the schools be occasionally broken by a formal lecture, or if on some popular subjects [...] a short course be usually delivered; attendance on these is not more required or expected, than attendance in the music-room [...] It is thus not even pretended that Oxford now supplies more than the preliminary of an academical education.[129]

Allowing for a degree of prejudice from an Edinburgh professor, there was undoubtedly a good deal of truth in this summary. That the two ancient universities were in need of reform had been recognised as early as the turn of the nineteenth century.

As the nineteenth century progressed the need for reform of the universities became increasingly apparent. In 1852, John Henry Newman published his *The Idea of a University: Defined and Illustrated.*[130] Newman advocated variety in the curriculum and recommended that all branches of knowledge be represented at a university, so that they balance one another and form a whole. He believed that in this way the student would form a philosophical habit of mind that would result in the complete cultivation of the intellect. Newman was opposed to the utilitarian approach to education: knowledge had intrinsic value. Not all reformers shared Newman's ideals, of course. Matthew Arnold, for example, stressed the need for a curriculum – both at school and university – which enabled the student 'to know himself and the world.'[131] This was, he believed, best achieved by studying the Classics as works of literature rather than as material for a philological discipline, and by increasing the amount of English literature studied.[132]

For Huxley, the greatest need for reform was in the area of the so-called 'scientific mentality', i.e. the desire to understand the world and the universe – a natural human desire which, he maintained, had gradually been stifled by religion. For Huxley, therefore, it was important to destroy the clerical monopoly on university appointments and curricula.[133] He also stressed the need to create career opportunities for

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[129] 'Universities of England - Oxford' in *The Edinburgh Review*, 53 (June 1831). Quoted in B. Dennis and D. Skilton, *Reform and Intellectual Debate in Victorian England* (New York: Croom Helm, 1987), 182–183.

[130] I have used the 1947 Longmans and Green reprint.

[131] W. F. Connell, *The Educational Thought and Influence of Matthew Arnold* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1971), 170.

[132] Ibid., 173–85.

[133] The following points are based on Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 105.

men of science and maintained that all students should study natural science. Universities should be the producers of new knowledge. Huxley knew, however, that the élite were not sufficiently appreciative of the importance of the scientific mentality. Huxley's insistence on the significance of science was not new. Samuel Butler, at that point Headmaster of Shrewsbury School, complained about the quality of mathematics teaching at Cambridge;[134] and the *Quarterly Journal of Education* established by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge attacked the unrealistic nature of the mathematical and physics problems set students at the universities.[135] Charles Babbage also issued warning notes, pointing out that the upper classes were being left behind in the race for scientific knowledge.[136]

Gradually four general areas of university reform emerged. It was decided that universities should be open to students of all religious persuasions; the curricula should be broadened to include 'modern' subjects such as natural science; the universities should be more productive and their education more useful; and they should be converted into research establishments. By the end of the century, a new idea of a university had emerged: it had become 'an institution that was national, secular, professional, and devoted in large measure to research.'[137]

For the main part of the nineteenth century, however, Oxford and Cambridge saw as their main function the provision of a liberal education to the sons of professional men and the social élite. Oxford concentrated on the Classics, while Cambridge focused on mathematics and theoretical physics. By the late 1850s and 1860s these subjects were more thoroughly taught, and the institutions became more professional.

Reform in science subjects had begun at Oxford as early as 1800, with the introduction of a school of mathematics and physics. The process of reform in the teaching of the sciences continued at both universities throughout the 1820s, particularly at Oxford, which improved its chemical research facilities. Cambridge also improved its teaching of geology.[138] Progress was slow, however. Two Royal Commissions reported on Oxford and Cambridge (on Oxford in 1852 and on Cambridge in 1852–3) and emphasised the importance of broadening the curricula to include a wide variety of modern subjects such as natural science, as well as the creation of professional careers in teaching and learning for the tutors. Honours examinations in mathematics and the natural sciences were established at Oxford in 1850, thereby ending the monopoly of classics; and in 1851 Cambridge complemented its mathematics degree course with one in the natural sciences.[139]

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[134] *Thoughts on the Present System of Academic Education in the University of Cambridge* (1822). Quoted in Simon, *The Two Nations*, 90–91.

[135] *Quarterly Journal of Education* IV (October 1832), 204. Quoted in Simon, *The Two Nations*, 91.

[136] *Quarterly Journal of Education* IV (October 1832), 197–8. Quoted in Simon, *The Two Nations*, 92.

[137] Simon, *The Two Nations*, 155.

[138] For a description of the teaching at Oxford and Cambridge in the 1830s, see Jack Morrell, *Science, Culture and Politics in Britain, 1750–1870* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997), 196–197.

[139] Olby et. al., *Companion to the History of Modern Science*, 952.

Attendance at science lectures at the two universities was poor, however, and few scholarships or fellowships went to students of science. At the same time it is important to understand that the new science degrees laid a solid foundation for the more laboratory-based and research-orientated science degrees of the 1880s.

The universities continued to draw the majority of their students from the privileged classes – i.e. the aristocracy and various professional groups – with only 10% coming from the poorer classes, whose status at both universities was considerably lower than that of the better-off students. Degrees from the two major universities were also very expensive.[140] The situation had changed little by the end of the century, as Sue Bridehead's bitter comment to Jude Fawley can be taken to illustrate:

> '[Christminster] is an ignorant place, except as to the townspeople, artizans, drunkards, and paupers,' she said, perverse still at his differing from her. '*They* see life as it is, of course; but few of the people in the colleges do. You prove it in your own person. You are one of the very men Christminster was intended for when the colleges were founded; a man with a passion for learning, but no money, or opportunities, or friends. But you were elbowed off the pavement by the millionaires' sons' (*Jude the Obscure*, Part Third, iv, 180–1).

Shortly before the publication of *Jude the Obscure*, the Cross Commission asked one of the chief inspectors: '[d]o you think that in the long run we do any real good to a clever boy belonging to the working classes if we give him an exhibition to the University, and lift him out of his own social station, and put him in one which is not congenial to him? – If it is not congenial to him you clearly have done him mischief.'[141] The reply Jude received in answer to his enquiry at Biblioll College is indicative of a similar attitude:

> Sir, – I have read your letter with interest; and, judging from your description of yourself as a working-man, I venture to think that you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade than by adopting any other course. That, therefore, is what I advise you to do (Part Second, vi, 138).

The letter was addressed to 'Mr J. Fawley, Stone-mason' (138), suggesting that Jude's occupation was part of his identity and also a major contributory factor to his exclusion from the College. Jude's 'sphere' was not Christminster's.

It is indicative of Hardy's sceptical attitude to university education for the rural working class that he chose Oxford, the less forward of the two old universities, as the setting of *Jude the Obscure,* and the object of Jude's admiration. By failing to mention the excellent extension work being carried out at the University from 1878 he also emphasised the closed, traditional nature of the University. For a man in Jude's situation, University College, London, offering academic education to the

[140] At Cambridge, which was slightly cheaper than Oxford, a degree cost between £300 and £400 excluding the cost of private tuition. See Hurt, *Education in Evolution,* 177 and 255.

[141] The Cross Commission, 1 (1886), 138. Quoted in Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England,* 340.

middle class, would have been an infinitely more suitable choice.[142] This institution was opened in 1828, and provided a broad curriculum which covered four years and offered as compulsory subjects Greek, Latin, mathematics, logic, chemistry and philosophy. Optional subjects included law, political economy, modern languages and English. Here a working-class man of Jude Fawley's calibre would have found an outlet for an interest in Latin and Greek (although these subjects were not, as the later discussion of *Jude the Obscure* shows, the key to success in the modern predictive society), and for a general passion for learning. He would also have been among men closer to his own social standing and values. As I argue later on, however, this is not the whole story: Jude is also doomed to failure because he chooses the Classics rather than science, the subject of the future.

Illiteracy and other educational problems

The nineteenth century saw a growing interest from a wide range of people in higher education, but who was academically eligible to fill the places in the evening classes and the various universities, traditional as well as new? It should be remembered that only a small percentage of the population in the first few decades of the century was literate. While it must be admitted that evidence regarding literacy is limited and generally inaccurate, those reports that do exist indicate that literacy levels were low, few adults in the first half of the century being able either to read or write. The 1851 census showed that in respect of marriages of minors carried out that year, 52.6 per cent were not able to sign their names. In the 13,879 dames' schools which completed Horace Mann's[143] census returns, 708 masters and mistresses signed with their *mark*.[144]

Evidence suggests that progress in the area of literacy was slow in the first half of the century: the *Minutes* of 1846 show that there was a mere 1.2 % increase in men and 1.1 % increase in women able to sign their names in the marriage register over the four years between 1840 and 1844.[145] The issue of being able to sign the marriage register is brought up in *The Return of the Native* when Fairway recollects how Humphrey's father put 'a terrible black cross' (Book First, iii, 25) on the register because he was unable to write. It seems that Humphrey is no more able to write his name than was his father.

An additional problem was that the population was growing rapidly: in England and Wales it increased by 4 million between 1831 and 1851, by which year it had reached 18 million. It was thus becoming increasingly difficult to retain even the current low rate of

[142] London was not the only choice, however, as a number of provincial university colleges were established from the 1870s onwards, including Armstrong College, Durham University; Birmingham Science College; Yorkshire College of Science; the University College of Nottingham etc. Most of these were in the north of England and thus far removed from Dorset. For further details of the provincial university colleges, see Cardwell, *The Organisation of Science in England*, 139–140.

[143] Census return compiler.

[144] *Education in Great Britain, Being the Official Report of Horace Mann*, xxxiii and xxxvi. Quoted in Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 278.

[145] Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 278.

literacy. By the final decades of the century, however, illiteracy as measured by the ability to sign the parish register had been almost completely eliminated:

> The gains were greatest for women. For the years 1871, 1881 and 1891 the registrar general gave a national literacy rate for males of approximately 80, 87 and 94 per cent respectively, and for females 73, 82 and 93 per cent. By the end of the century it was approximately 97 per cent in both cases.[146]

The 1870 Act was largely responsible for the improved literacy rates by increasing the number of school places available. School attendance was also better, though still far from satisfactory. The improvements in school education and literacy rates at the end of the century are not reflected in Hardy's novels, which primarily concentrate on the earlier and middle decades of the century.

The reasons for the poor educational attainments during the period covered by Hardy's novels are numerous. Among the foremost is the problem of absenteeism, both in urban and rural schools. The underlying reason was the same in both town and country: the need for child labour, either as a means of augmenting a meagre working-class wage, or, in the case of girls, as extra help at home in the event of illness, or the birth of a brother or sister. Educationalists such as Kay-Shuttleworth attributed poor attendance primarily to ignorance on the part of working-class parents. The practical reasons were either ignored or inadequately understood. Historical evidence also suggests that parents in rural areas – and Dorset was no exception – were unwilling to allow their children to receive more education than they themselves had had.[147] The opening pages of *Jude the Obscure* reveal that Jude Fawley was employed by Farmer Troutham to scare birds who would otherwise damage the crops, a common occupation for young boys in the nineteenth century. As an orphan at the mercy of poor relatives, Jude was forced to contribute to his keep. His great aunt explains to her friend, Mrs Williams: '[b]ut I've got him to stay with me till I can see what's to be done with un, though I am obliged to let him earn any penny he can. Just now he's a-scaring of birds for Farmer Troutham. It keeps him out of mischty' (Part First, ii, 9). Not only was he kept out of mischief, he was also kept out of school, being forced to attend night school instead.

Although the statistics imply a substantial improvement in attendance at all schools – rural and urban alike – as the century progressed,[148] Sir John Gorst, Conservative Vice-President of the Council on Education, told Parliament that in the mid-1890s there were still 'nearly three-quarters of a million of children whose names ought to be on the books of some elementary school, and who do not appear at all [...] Of those who are on the books of the elementary schools, nearly one-fifth

[146] Ibid., 324.

[147] See Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society*, 228.

[148] R. K. Webb shows that working-class families were increasingly able to afford the money for school fees, the social prestige of being able to read increased enormously and industrialisation put a premium on literacy and knowledge. See *The British Working Class Reader 1790–1848*, 15.

[149] Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 325.

are continually absent.'[149] Attendance officers failed to have much impact on the problem of truanting children, as local authorities were frequently reluctant to take parents to court. In rural areas, it was not uncommon for magistrates to sympathise with farm-workers who kept their children at home, or with farmers who needed child labour to man their farms. The Agricultural Children's Act of 1873 had little effect on attendance, as fines for truancy were so insignificant that they failed to act as a deterrent.

By the end of the century educationalists began to arrive at a better understanding of the reasons for poor child attendance at school. With reference to the period 1833–70, the compilers of the *Reports from Commissioners, Inspectors and Others*[150] described the problem as follows:

> Almost all the parents appreciate the importance of elementary education, and the respectable parents are anxious to obtain it for their children; but they are not prepared to sacrifice the earnings of their children for this purpose, and they accordingly remove them from school as soon as they have an opportunity of earning wages of an amount which adds in any considerable degree to the family income. Frequently the parents fail to appreciate the importance of regular attendance towards securing this result, or have not sufficient steadiness and self-denial to secure it, so that they keep children from school on trifling occasions.[151]

Tess Durbeyfield may be regarded as something of an exception, not being required to 'lend a hand at haymaking or harvesting on neighbouring farms; or [...] milking or butter processes' (Phase the First, v, 49) until she had left school.

An official attempt to solve the problem of the need for child labour was introduced in the form of the Factory Act of 1844, which stipulated that children must attend school three hours a day in textile mills. This system was not to disappear finally until 1918. The Agricultural Children Act of 1873 sought to regulate conditions in the country but was largely ineffective. The aim had been 'to prohibit the employment of children below the age of eight in agriculture, and to secure minimum school attendance for those aged eight to twelve.'[152]

An additional problem with respect to attendance was the fact that working-class parents, particularly in the country, tended to move frequently. Labourers were hired on an annual basis. As Hardy describes in his essay on 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' (1883), the countryside was full of wagons with families moving house after the annual hiring fair on Lady Day, April 6.[153] It was impossible to maintain continuity or reach high standards when '[t]he rural schoolmaster or mistress enters the schoolroom on the morning of the sixth of April, and finds that a whole flock of the brightest young people has suddenly flown away' (182). School log books throughout the country bear

[150] Vol. XXIV, 1898.
[151] 467.
[152] Pamela Horn, *The Victorian Country Child* (Gloucestershire: Alan Sutton, 1990), viii.
[153] Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*,168–195.

witness to the problem. It received official attention, too: for example, the compilers of *Reports from Commissioners, Inspectors and Others* remarked, when describing the school education situation between 1833 and 1870: '[a]nother great difficulty with which teachers have to struggle is the capricious removal of children from school to school. The extent to which this goes on is extraordinary.'[154]

A less well-known aspect of the custom of hiring labour is that of school masters working as day labourers at different seasons: 'the master made a practice of hiring himself out as a day labourer at harvest time and at other seasons of the year, *during school hours*, and sent the children to gather sticks for him, or to collect manure from the public roads' (my italics).[155] This was far from ideal either from an academic or a social point of view.

Even if the schoolmaster was fulfilling his academic duties to the best of his ability, two additional problems ensured that his would be a difficult task: first, there was an acute shortage of suitable books for different age groups; and second, the system of training teachers was, at least until the latter part of the nineteenth century, very inadequate. Dickens's amusing description of Mr Wopsle's great aunt's school in *Great Expectations*,[156] already mentioned in the discussion of dames' schools, illustrates the problem of books and poor teaching in the first half of the nineteenth century. A short extract will suffice to show the scale of the problem, the main details of which are, as Philip Collins[157] observes, also borne out by numerous inspectors' reports:

> The pupils ate apples and put straws down one another's backs, until Mr Wopsle's great-aunt collected her energies, and made an indiscriminate totter at them with a birch-rod. After receiving the charge with every mark of derision, the pupils formed in line and buzzingly passed a ragged book from hand to hand. The book had an alphabet in it, some figures and tables, and a little spelling – that is to say, it had had once.[158]

Pip's attempts at a letter to Joe are indicative of the standard of education received. It took him between one and two hours to produce the following: 'mI deEr JO i opE U r krWitE wEll i opE i shAl soN B haBelL 4 2 teeDge U JO aN theN wE shOrl b sO glOdd aN wEn i MpreNgtD 2 U JO woT larZ an blEvE ME inF xn PiP.'[159]

In 1847 official grants were made available for the purchase of 'the most approved lesson-books and maps for the use of the scholars, and of text-books for the teachers and pupil teachers'[160] in elementary schools. Between 1856 and 1859,

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[154] 468. While parents did not move great distances regular moves were sufficient to disrupt children's progress at school.

[155] *Minutes*, 1842, 54. Quoted in Sturt, *The Education of the People*, 105.

[156] My quotations are from the Penguin edition (Harmondsworth, 1965; first published in 1860–1).

[157] *Dickens and Education* (London: Macmillan, 1965), 95.

[158] x, 102. It is also interesting to note that the book had once contained a mixture of subjects.

[159] vii, 75. Pip's attempt at writing a letter - and more particularly his mixing up of capital and lower-case letters - suggests that he has little experience of reading.

[160] *Reports from Commissioners, Inspectors, and Others*, 506. For details of school books purchased in 1859, see Goldstrom, *The Social Content of Education*, 198–9.

902,926 reading lesson books, 104,974 grammar and English-language books and 135,323 arithmetic books were ordered through the Committee of Council on Education. In contrast, only 1,193 geology and mineralogy books were ordered, and 3,039 on chemistry and 6,712 on natural philosophy.[161] Such grants were, however, voted on the basis that 'two-thirds of the value be subscribed by the managers.'[162] This placed impecunious schools at an obvious disadvantage. Subsequent attempts to regulate reading material for children of different ages were frequently determined by availability and cost rather than by sound educational principle, with the result that children were required to read books which were out of date, or too difficult. One school inspector in the second half of the century commented on 'the extreme unsuitability of the books currently in use. The words are so long, the sentences so involved, the ideas so abstruse and the information so technical that the books are mere nonsense to children of 13 or 14 years of age.' [163]

That books were difficult to come by, particularly for poor children, and that unconventional means of purchase were occasionally necessary is seen clearly at the beginning of *Jude the Obscure*, where Jude Fawley tries to obtain grammar books from a quack doctor selling pills and salve in return for telling the 'doctor' 'the names and addresses of the cottages who were willing to test the virtues of the world-renowned pills' (Part First, iv, 27–29). When the doctor fails to produce the goods, Jude is forced to recognise the hopelessness of his situation:

> The disappointment was followed by an interval of blankness. He might, perhaps, have obtained grammars from Alfredston, but to do that required money, and *a knowledge of what books to order*; and though physically comfortable, he was in such absolute dependence as to be without a farthing of his own (my italics, 29).

Not only was Jude too poor to purchase books in the normal way, at a bookshop; he did not know *which* books to buy. In this Hardy's fictional character does not seem to differ greatly from nineteenth-century educational authorities.

That there were still considerable weaknesses in the national educational system at the end of the century is witnessed by H. Holman, who noted in 1898 that

> [i]t is still possible to find school buildings which would not be strange to the pupils of fifty years ago, school methods which would be perfectly familiar to them, and ideals thriving now which governed them then. To-day we have no less than forty-seven per cent of our teachers untrained, except that some of them have gone through the routine experiences of pupil-teachers.'[164]

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[161] Goldstrom, *The Social Content of Education*, Appendix III, 198–9.
[162] Ibid., 506.
[163] In Sturt, *The Education of the People*, 351.
[164] *English National Education. A Sketch of the Rise of Public Elementary Schools in England* (London, 1898), 239.

The teaching profession

As Pierre Bourdieu maintains in his *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, teachers are part of a system which legitimises itself. They undergo a kind of training which reproduces the intellectual and moral integration of the legitimate addressees. As the nineteenth century progressed and aims and methodology became established, it became increasingly clear that the function of teacher training was to impose middle-class norms and values on a largely working-class audience.[165] By the 1870s this process was clearly under way, coinciding with what John W. Adamson describes as 'a clearly discernible growth of the professional sense amongst schoolmasters and schoolmistresses.'[166]

During the first few decades of the nineteenth century, however, the teaching profession was so poorly organised that it was difficult to distinguish any particular principles or values. The profession was not taken seriously at first and lacked status owing to the large number of female teachers. Training was generally inadequate until the middle of the century, and it was difficult to attract knowledgeable and efficient teachers. Indeed, it was not always possible to find a teacher of any description, as was the case in Mellstock in 1839, and again in 1843 (*Under the Greenwood Tree*, Part the First, 28). A contributor to *Fraser's Magazine* described the situation in 1849 as follows: 'we are inundated with ill-educated, under-bred, weak-minded, inefficient teachers, who take up the profession of instruction merely because they can turn to nothing else for a livelihood.'[167] In 1848 the compilers of the *Reports from Commissioners, Inspectors and Others* wrote that 'a vast number of the teachers are still in a very inefficient state, both as regards their acquaintance with the various subjects of instruction, and still more as regards the method of communicating what knowledge they do possess to the children entrusted to their care.'[168] As late as 1892, P. Anderson Graham could write that the rural schoolmaster was all too frequently 'a stupid townsman, who would have taught in a town school if he had been clever enough to get the offer of a place in one.'[169]

Ten years later, the reports of the Assistant-Commissioners tell a similar story, as Henry Craik has shown (his book was published in 1896):

> The teachers were untrained, uneducated, recruited only from the ranks of those who had failed in other paths of life. Discharged servants, out-door paupers, cripples and consumptive patients, those weak with the decrepitude of age – to these and such as these,

[165] Asher Tropp observes that the teaching profession has been moulded by the 'struggle over the education of the poor.' Two questions have dogged the profession since the nineteenth century: 'Who educates whom for what?' and 'to whom do schools belong?' Tropp attempts to answer these two questions in *The School Teachers. The Growth of the Teaching Profession in England and Wales from 1800 to the present day* (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1957).

[166] *English Education 1789–1902*, 482.

[167] Vol. 40, July 1849. Quoted in *Reform and Intellectual Debate in Victorian England* ed. by Dennis and Skilton, 186.

[168] 448. This is the period which roughly approximates to that described in *Under the Greenwood Tree*.

[169] *The Rural Exodus. The Problem of the Village and the Town* (London, 1892), 76.

> dragging on a miserable and hopeless existence of the hardest drudgery, the education of nearly a third of the children of the country was entrusted.[170]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, indeed, little had changed from the eighteenth century, when the village schoolmaster acted as parish clerk, small-scale farmer, or even keeper of the village shop in addition to hiring himself out as a day labourer. He also helped illiterate members of the community with official functions such as reading the news in ale houses, gauging crops for reapers' pay etc.[171]

There was a growing awareness in the 1840s, however, that teacher training must be improved and the status of the profession raised. One such example may be found in the work of Derwent Coleridge, son of the famous Samuel Taylor, who became Principal of St. Mark's College in 1841. During the twenty-three years Derwent Coleridge occupied the post of Principal, he produced amazing results with semi-literate entrants. After only two years, one of the inspectors of the College remarked that the students 'will leave the college educated men; their [exam] papers show [...] a remarkable power of apprehension, habits of reflection, skill in discrimination and judgement.'[172] Three years later, the Rev. H. Moseley – discussed in more detail below – could say of the College in his capacity as inspector that 'this Institution has affixed a high standard to the education of the elementary schoolmaster, and prescribed an elaborate course for it.'[173] A second turning-point in the history of teacher training was the 1846 *Minutes* and the already-discussed recommendation to begin a system of pupil teachers to replace the old monitors of Bell and Lancaster.

In the majority of teacher-training colleges, however, the system of training was still along the lines of that described by Dickens in *Hard Times. For These Times.* The passage refers to the aptly named M'Choakumchild:

> He and some one hundred and forty other schoolmasters, had been lately turned at the same time, in the same factory, on the same principles, like so many pianoforte legs. He had been put through an immense variety of paces, and had answered volumes of head-breaking questions. Orthography, etymology, syntax, and prosody, biography, astronomy, geography, and general cosmography, the sciences of compound proportion, algebra, land-surveying and levelling, vocal music, and drawing from models, were all at the ends of his ten chilled fingers [. . .] He knew all about the Water Sheds of all the world (whatever they are), and all the histories of the peoples, and all the names of the rivers and mountains, and all the productions, manners, and customs of all the countries, and all their boundaries and bearings on the two-and-thirty points of the compass. Ah, rather overdone, M'Choakumchild. If he had only learnt a little less, how infinitely better he might have taught much more![174]

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[170] *The State in its Relation to Education* (London, 1884), 51.
[171] Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 190.
[172] Quoted in Godfrey Hainton and Raymonde Hainton, *The Unknown Coleridge. The Life and Times of Derwent Coleridge 1800–1883* (London: Janus, 1996), 200.
[173] Ibid., 200–201.
[174] London: Penguin, 1969; first published in 1854. Book the First, ii, 52–3

It was not until the 1860s, with the recommendations of the Newcastle Commission and an increased supply of trained teachers, that the teaching profession began to gain professional status. At the same time, it is true that the Revised Code of 1862 hit the teacher-training colleges hard by reducing their grant and the number of Queen's Scholars able to study at the colleges. The schools that were most strongly affected were those with children from the working class. The number of pupil teachers dropped from 14,000 in 1861 to 9,000 in 1866.[175] By 1870, there were just over 12,000 certificated teachers in England, approximately 50 % of whom were women. By 1880, the number had increased to 31,000, rising to almost 53,000 in 1895.[176] The creation of the school boards in 1870 had stimulated a great demand for teachers, though improvements in training were slow to come about. It should be noted that despite weaknesses in the teacher-training system, many of the candidates were idealistic and enthusiastic. When visiting two London training colleges for women in 1891, Hardy noted that the students' 'belief in circumstances, in convention, in the rightness of things, which you know to be not only wrong but damnably wrong, makes the heart ache, even when they are waspish and hard.'[177]

Until the 1890s, teacher training was monopolised by the voluntary religious agencies, who predictably gave low priority to secular subjects. The pupil-teacher system was increasingly criticised for the immaturity and lack of efficiency of the students practising in the classroom. Progression to teacher-training college meant little improvement in comfort.[178] Sue Bridehead's experiences at Melchester Normal School (Salisbury College) constitute a fictional representation of the students' unhappiness in these institutions:

> [Sue] told [Jude] about the school as it was at that date, and the rough living, and the mixed character of the fellow-students, gathered together from all parts of the diocese, and how she had to get up and work by gas-light in the early morning, with all the bitterness of a young person to whom restraint was new (*Jude the Obscure*, Part Third, i, 158).

It is likely that Hardy had heard such stories from his sisters, who had trained at Salisbury College.

It is again perhaps indicative of Hardy's increasingly sceptical attitude towards formal higher education that he selected Salisbury as Sue's college, in the same way as he had chosen the less forward Oxford as Jude's goal. One suspects that this is not

[175] Lawson and Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*, 292. For further details of how the Revised Code affected teacher training, see Tropp, *The School Teachers*, 95–103.

[176] Ibid., 332.

[177] Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. A Biography*, 315.

[178] The harsh conditions at teacher-training colleges are well-documented and include descriptions of the students' domestic duties, frugal diets, lack of recreation facilities and narrow curricula. See, for example, Hurt, *Education in Evolution*, 139–40; Kamm, *Hope Deferred*, 275; and May, *The Victorian Schoolroom*, 18. The day training colleges introduced in 1890 would have been a better alternative for students such as Sue Bridehead. For a description of such colleges and of how they differed from residential colleges, see Robert Gregory, *Elementary Education. Some Account of its Rise and Progress in England* (London, 1895), 155–6.

simply due to the fact that Salisbury was the college closest to Dorset, and the one with which he was best acquainted. It was also one of the least progressive colleges. A contemporary report reads:

> One servant only is employed, a plain cook. The pupils, who, according to the rules, are to assist in the work of the house as the governess shall direct, do, in fact, act as housemaids. It was intended that they should acquire the habits of industrious and well trained domestics, so far as should be found possible without interfering with their prescribed course of studies. Of course due care is taken to instruct the pupils in every department of needlework [.. .] The library contains few books, and is strikingly deficient in works of reference. The supply of apparatus proportionately scanty [...]The Time Table gives a complete account of the distribution of the lessons. But the interruptions to which the governess is exposed on account of domestic affairs and frequent visits of enquiry must render it a matter of extreme difficulty to adhere to this system.[179]

Even the arrangements for teaching practice were far from ideal, with a walk of nearly half a mile to the National School used for such purposes. Mary Sturt records that conditions were so hard at the college that a year before the report quoted above was compiled, two pupils had died and five had to discontinue their studies. As a college for women, Salisbury could be expected to offer less advantageous conditions: men's colleges tended to be housed in more modern and better-equipped buildings, and their food was usually of a higher standard. Nineteenth-century teacher-training colleges were indeed limited in outlook and accommodation, irrespective of the sex of the student, and were unlikely to produce broad-minded, ambitious teachers with a depth of knowledge and enquiring minds. Teacher training for infants was even further behind, as there were no colleges for this age range until 1854. Neither were there many schools for younger children.

Of special interest with respect to the subject of this study is the level of science instruction at nineteenth-century teacher-training colleges. With the appointment of Kay-Shuttleworth as secretary to the recently established Committee of Council in 1839, science was assured of a place in the elementary school curriculum. Kay-Shuttleworth proposed a curriculum for a training school in 1839 (this became the training college at Battersea) which included mathematics, industrial science, natural history, natural philosophy and agricultural chemistry.[180] He believed that science had a special educative value for children from all kinds of backgrounds.

Kay-Shuttleworth also brought about the appointment of the Rev. Henry Moseley as inspector to the Education Office. Moseley's task was to monitor curriculum developments in the field of science and mathematics, and Kay-Shuttleworth acted as Moseley's personal tutor. The latter recognised that children with a middle-class

[179] Anonymous report. Undated. Quoted in Sturt, *The Education of the People*, 148.

[180] David Layton, *Science for the People. The Origins of the School Science Curriculum in England* (London: George Allen & Unwin 1973), 77.

literary culture were better able to understand the concepts and language at school, and he was concerned that if changes were not made, the rational powers of the children of the labouring class would be inhibited.[181] Interestingly, Moseley anticipated the twentieth-century discussion of the restricted and elaborated codes, as the following passage reveals:

> Words familiar to the ears of our children, and recognized by them in their true meaning when they are first taught to read them, are strange to the children of a labourer, and unintelligible; and those more complicated modes of expression which are proper to elaborate forms of thought, and which exercise the reasoning faculties of our children from an early period, conceal effectively from the apprehension of the children of the poor the idea in the construction.[182]

Moseley also anticipates Bourdieu's concept of the primary habitus in recognising the importance of the family in early education. He remarked that while 'education for "our own children" occurred mainly through the "associations of home", "in respect of the child of labouring man, it must be done, if done at all, at school" .'[183] The 1846 *Minutes* attempted to establish systems of social control by which the teacher became a kind of social missionary and the school was to function as a 'centre of sound influences.'[184] Moseley believed that the character of the labourer would be elevated by studying the principles of science, the subject which most affected his welfare and occupation in the future. The need to train teachers of science was clearly perceived by the 1850s, in no small measure thanks to Moseley's efforts.

In 1853 physical science, geography and applied mathematics were included in the range of subjects recommended to the newly-appointed Committee of Council as being in need of improvement in the training schools and as being an essential element in the examination common to all male students in training schools. Grants were also made for the provision of scientific apparatus in schools. Progress was slow, however, because the movement lacked the support or sanction of the scientific community. The British Association for the Advancement of Science, for example, concentrated on the provision of science in public schools, the universities and adult education.

By 1856 the priority which Moseley gave to science had been neutralised; physical science had been demoted to one of four optional subjects offered at teacher-training colleges, and the number of students studying physical science there had declined appreciably. In other words, '[t]he most vital asset for the success of the

[181] Ibid., 85. Moseley also recognised that it was important for the school to compensate working-class children for the lack of education in the home.
[182] Quoted in Layton, *Science for the People*, 85.
[183] *Minutes*, 1845, i, 271. Quoted in Richard Johnson, 'Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England', *Past and Present. A Journal of Historical Studies* 49 (1970), 112.
[184] Johnson, 'Educational Policy', 116.

movement for teaching the science of common things, a supply of teachers qualified to take advantage of the scientific apparatus grant, had been drastically curtailed.'[185] By the 1870s and '80s it was officially recognised that 'the great national want was competent teachers of science.'[186] As a result, South Kensington College was reorganised to overcome that deficiency, and by the 1890s the number of students had increased enormously. Many of these students later became science teachers. All this was too late, of course, to have any real impact on Hardy's novels, although the general movement towards the prioritisation of science as a school and university subject was already obvious by the 1870s.

Summary

Such, in broad outline, was the situation in England in schools and training colleges at the time when Hardy was writing or revising his novels. There were few noticeable improvements until the 1890s. What was Hardy to think of a system which had gone through so many stages and reforms, caused so much division, and had so few positive effects in proportion to the amount of time and effort invested? A system which in 1895, after several decades of effort, could only boast 14 % attendance among children aged twelve and over at inspected schools, many of whom must have been 'either handicapped, or not very bright, or had suffered from defective schooling earlier',[187] as only 2.4 % of all the children registered sat an examination in a specific subject. While male literacy as measured by signatures in marriage registers was 95 % in 1895,[188] and writing and arithmetic had become standard elements of the elementary school curriculum, it must be admitted that improvements had been few:

> Education for the children of the labouring poor at the end of the nineteenth century was not so different from that at the beginning. The Rev. Henry Moseley's comment was still applicable: We break off a fragment from the education we give to our own children – its mechanical and technical part – and give it to the poor man's child in charity.[189]

The uncertain progress of the educational system both reflects, and is a product of, the spirit of uncertainty outlined at the beginning of the chapter. Hardy's novels reveal their author's increasing scepticism as to the value of modern education for members of the rural working class, divorced as it was from the working-class habitus shared by the majority of his fictional characters as well as by the inhabitants of Dorset with whom he had spent his childhood. A closer examination of developments in education in rural communities in general, and Dorset in particular, will show that Hardy's scepticism was justified.

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[185] Layton, *Science for the People*, 154.
[186] Cardwell, *The Organisation of Science in England*, 183.
[187] Gillian Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Historical Association, 1971), 44.
[188] Lawrence Stone, Parliamentary Paper, 1895. Quoted in Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century*, 45.
[189] Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century*, 45.

Chapter Two

Education in Dorset and the education of Thomas Hardy

The diversity of nineteenth-century educational practices at the national level that was outlined in the previous chapter is also apparent in the educational developments of rural communities throughout the century. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the major characteristics of the educational system in the county of Dorset, thereby providing a social and historical context for the education of Thomas Hardy and the forms of knowledge and education which characterised the society depicted in his novels. As Philip Collins points out,[1] Hardy experienced at first hand a considerable number of cultural and social transformations, and these are clearly represented in his texts. Indeed, it has been suggested that it is personal experience which makes the difference between Hardy's best and weakest novels, the existence of specific roots in the author's own background and experience being 'essential to the fullest and freest flow of his creative impulse.'[2]

Collins also maintains that novelists are least inventive and most dependent upon personal experience when describing transformations in the society of which they are themselves members:[3] a good understanding of educational developments in Dorset from the 1840s to the 1890s would thus seem indispensable to a reader who wants to grasp the full significance of references to educational developments and ideas in Hardy's fiction.

Hardy's own education highlights the significance of three particular aspects of nineteenth-century education. The first is the importance of parental ambition. Hardy's mother was well-read, and she both encouraged her son's reading at home and chose schools with a good academic reputation. The second aspect is the doctrine of self-help, applied by Hardy a full decade before the publication of Samuel Smiles's book *Self-help*. And finally, Hardy's education reflects the diversity of schools available in nineteenth-century England (he went to a National school and a Dissenter academy, and he also took private lessons in French). In the novels, parental ambition is clearly seen in such characters as Grace Melbury's father in *The*

1 Hardy and Education', in *Thomas Hardy. The Writer and his Background*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Bell & Hyman, 1980), 41–75.
2 Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. A Biography*, 200.
3 'Hardy and Education', 48.

Woodlanders. Jude Fawley in *Jude the Obscure* is a particularly striking example of self-help, though his efforts prove misguided. However, Hardy's fiction does not contain detailed references to specific kinds of schools: as already explained, Hardy was primarily concerned with the effects, not the process, of education. He will have assumed that the reader would be able to fill in the necessary details himself/herself: without such knowledge, he/she is unable to appreciate the relationship between education, social advancement and personal happiness that was so significant for Hardy both in his own life and in his prose.

Education in Dorset at the beginning of the nineteenth century

According to the 1818 Parliamentary Enquiry on schools in Dorset,[4] the most common type of school in the county at this time was the dames' school; there are 129 separate entries for such schools, and four entries vaguely indicating the existence of 'several' dames' schools in Dorset. In addition, 131 Sunday schools are recorded, as well as 47 charity schools. Of the remaining schools, the following are specified:

grammar schools – 3
free grammar school – 1
private classical academy – 1
private day school – 1
classical and commercial schools – 2
free school – 1
school for the higher classes – 1
school for boys' instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic – 1
schools (of unspecified type) for boys – 7; and 7 for girls
reading school – 1
evening schools – 7
school of industry – 1
Lancastrian school – 1
day schools – 61 (plus several entries where the exact number of day schools is not specified)
national schools – 7.

58 parishes are recorded as being without a school of any type. Children living in such areas were sent to a neighbouring parish. While statistics for the nineteenth century are notoriously unreliable – in particular in the early part of the century – the above figures serve to demonstrate the general pattern of educational provision in the county at the time.

[4] In W.F.E. Gibbs, 'The Development of Elementary Education in Dorset from the Early Nineteenth Century to 1870' (unpublished master's thesis. University of Southampton, 1960), 228–245. Statistics show that Dorset had a higher percentage of day-school pupils on the books on census day (measured as a percentage of the total population) than did Somerset, e.g. 1818: Dorset 8.0%; Somerset 5.4. In 1851 Dorset had 13.6, Somerset 12.1. See Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society*, Appendix J, 352.

The 1818 Parliamentary Enquiry also contains a number of interesting comments about specific problem areas. These include: 'local poverty prevents sending children to school'; 'fall in numbers due to parents' dissatisfaction with children's progress'; 'attempt to form a Sunday school failed as farmers were averse to it'; 'most children enter husbandry, no further education considered requisite'; 'attendance limited by space available in room used'; and 'poverty, local low moral standards, through smuggling habits.' The situation was probably not dissimilar to that of another rural county in the south of England – Devon – about which David Sellman observes that before the existence of the National and British and Foreign societies, schools were 'the chance creations of local benefactors or of vestries sufficiently concerned to use some of the poor-rate for their support.'[5] The education provided was limited: 'only a small proportion aimed to teach writing and "casting accounts" in addition to (in effect) religious instruction; and the period allowed for teaching, and the number of pupils, were both drastically reduced.'

Village schools during the nineteenth century were much influenced by the local parson. Some teachers welcomed the latter's support; Mary Hardy, for example, wrote in her diary that the children in her school were 'wonderfully forward having been brought on by the Vicar who came every morning to teach and whose influence and support assisted me continually.'[6] Others were suspicious of the local minister; they felt that he had a vested interest in ensuring that education took place 'in an atmosphere favourable to the existing social order.'[7] While some parsons were genuinely interested in providing as wide an education as possible for the poor, it is also true that a number deliberately resisted reforms in an effort to maintain the status quo.

The monitorial system also placed severe restrictions on village schools during the first half of the nineteenth century by allowing financial needs to take precedence over those of the children. W. F. E. Gibbs cites several examples of how the monitorial system affected education in Dorset adversely.[8] Even when the monitorial system was replaced by the pupil-teacher system in 1846, the method of instruction in Dorset schools remained basically catechetical. Lessons still primarily consisted of questions posed by the instructor and answers from the pupils.

Religious instruction continued to dominate the curriculum until the second half of the century, and the majority of school books were religious in character. Even reading and writing were initially used as vehicles of religious instruction, the

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5 *Devon Village Schools in the Nineteenth Century*, 20.

6 Diary notes written in January, February and March 1863 on taking up the post of schoolmistress at Denchworth, Berkshire. Private collection, H. D. F. Lock, Dorchester, Dorset. Michael Millgate records that Hardy visited Mary at Denchworth '[o]ne weekend in late April 1863.' See Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. A Biography*, 82.

7 This was written by an anonymous anti-clerical writer in the 1870s. Quoted in Dunbabin, *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 248.

8 See 'The Development of Elementary Education in Dorset', 125–128.

aim being to enable the children to read the Bible. Writing lessons consisted of copying passages from the Bible. Gibbs shows that the Revised Code significantly increased proficiency in reading, writing and arithmetic in a number of inspected schools in Dorset. He also observes, however, that standards were in all probability considerably lower in the uninspected schools (these comprised approximately half the denominational schools in the county). The best results were found in the more progressive schools located in the towns and in some of the populous villages.[9] The poorer villages attracted less competent teachers and were unable to afford modern text books and educational aids. The better schools with the more competent teachers made freer use of the object lesson as a means of stimulating the imagination and alleviating the boredom of rote learning.

Interestingly, it was in arithmetic, the third of the three Rs, that the poorest standards were attained. Gibbs shows that in Dorset teachers were still questioning the place of arithmetic in the curriculum as late as 1840. Poor results reflected the general ignorance of teachers as regards this subject. Many of the uncertificated teachers were indeed unable to advance instruction beyond the four rules of number.[10] However, by the end of the 1850s the situation had improved as a result of an increasing supply of well-qualified teachers and the operation of the Revised Code. Instruction was efficient within the examinable subjects. Even so, it was still to a considerable degree dependent on rote learning. Children learned facts by heart as opposed to understanding principles.[11]

Some indication of the aims and curricula operating in some Dorset schools before 1870 may be gained by looking at advertisements in the *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette.* Very small private schools/dames' schools are not represented as their 'teachers' had neither the funds nor the need to advertise their services, being well-known in their local community and drawing their pupils from a limited number of families in the parish. The advertisements are mainly for small private schools, catering primarily for the needs of middle-class children. Most of these were run by women. The July 9, 1835 issue contained, for example, the following advertisement for Blandford: 'THE MISSES BARTLETT beg respectfully to announce that the duties of their Establishment will be RESUMED ON MONDAY the 27th instant.'[12] In Dorchester, 'MISS HAZARD begs respectfully to inform her Friends and the Public generally, that her SCHOOL will RE-OPEN on MONDAY, July 20th. N.B. Miss H. will be happy to accommodate TWO Single

[9] Gibbs, 'The Development of Elementary Education in Dorset', 138.

[10] Ibid., 147–8 which gives several examples of individual teachers' inability in this area.

[11] That little had changed by the beginning of the twentieth century is shown in Laurie Lee's *Cider with Rosie* (London: Hogarth, 1965). Lee summarised his education as follows:'[s]o it was always; had been, would be for ever; we asked no questions; we didn't hear what we said; yet neither did we ever forget it', 62.

[12] Vol. XV, n.p.

LADIES with BOARD and LODGING, on reasonable terms.' The same newspaper also contains an advertisement for a seminary for young ladies run by the Misses Smith in Beaminster. Grace Melbury of *The Woodlanders* is a fictional representative of the kind of cultivated young lady produced by such an establishment.

Notices of the above kind continued to appear in the 1870s but were gradually replaced by advertisements for more conventional schools that were larger in size and placed greater emphasis on academic attainment. Advertisements specifying details of the school curriculum appeared as early as the 1830s, as the following advertisement on June 24 for Mr Daniel's 'Dorchester, Classical, Mathematical, French and Commercial Academy' shows:[13]

> The plan of instruction extends to a complete acquaintance with the Greek and Latin classics, including Composition in Prose and Verse,
> the Mathematics, with Algebra, Navigation, and Mensuration,
> Geography, the Use of the Globes and Mapping, the English
> Language, including the principles of Composition and Elocution,
> Book-keeping, Arithmetic, Writing &c. &c.
> The domestic arrangements are on a liberal scale, and the moral and religious habits, as well as the health and comfort of the Pupils are studiously attended to.

Exclusive schools were often for boys only and tended to be advertised in a generous fashion. Such schools boasted different departments, offering training for the universities, the army, navy and civil service. Boarders received vigilant and instructive companionship outside school hours. Those leaving home for the first time were assured of special attention.[14]

Among the various advertisements for the more exclusive schools appeared a few related to the needs of poor people's children, the *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette* regularly featuring advertisements from various West Country Poor Law Unions. The following advertisement for a teacher for the Chard Union appeared in the November 10, 1842 issue: '[the teacher] must be a Member of the Established Church, write a good hand, and be able to instruct the Children in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, and in the principles of the Christian Religion.'[15] The academic expectations are hence limited; indeed the advertisement specifies that '[a] Person by Trade a Tailor would be preferred.'

In addition to various advertisements for different kinds of schools, the *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette* contains private advertisements from, among others, clergymen offering private tuition in their homes for those preparing for entrance to public schools, the army or university. Obviously, there was no shortage of opportunities for those with financial means.

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[13] Vol. X, n.p.
[14] Outside tutors were often hired for such specialist subjects as drawing, modern languages and fencing.
[15] Vol. XXII, n.p.

Education in Dorset from 1870

Progress in education was slow in Dorset, both in terms of the building of new schools and in the raising of educational standards among pupils and teachers alike. According to the 'Preliminary Statements of Public Elementary Schools Dorset',[16] however, there were as many as 357 elementary schools in Dorset, although not all were in use at the same time. By 1870, the county was able to cater for the needs of most of the population. The fact that of the eleven school boards convened in Dorset by the terms of the 1870 Education Act, only four were elected for the express purpose of providing a school where none had existed previously, implies that progress had indeed been made since the 1840s. A number of unsatisfactory schools were also being replaced by more efficient ones.

The 1870 report on elementary schools gives a good indication of the professional qualifications of the teachers, and the age at which pupils left school. Of the 292 teachers mentioned in the report (the number and qualifications of the teachers are not specified in all cases), only 88 were certificated (32 male and 56 female); 118 teachers were uncertificated (27 male and 91 female). Of the 9 probationary teachers mentioned, 3 were male and 6 female. It seems that there was still a good deal to be done in Dorset as regards teacher qualifications eight years after the introduction of the Revised Code, with only just over one third of all teachers possessing a certificate and the remaining two thirds either without any formal qualification or in the process of acquiring one. *The Return of the Native* – which Hardy was writing in 1876 – does not state whether Clym Yeobright's six-month reading preparations for starting a school of his own in Budmouth lead to any formal qualification. It was not a prerequisite at the time, although a certificated teacher would have found it easier to attract pupils.

The leaving age of pupils varied between seven and fifteen years old, with many children leaving school as soon as they could acquire paid employment, or when they were needed at home. The report suggests that children of labourers' families left school earlier than the children of tradesmen: an interesting, though perhaps hardly surprising observation.

A Dorset village school

John C. Jenkin[17] has shown how school log books[18] and inspectors' reports can be

[16] Ed. 7/24. Dorchester County Record Office. In Ian Malcolm Hutson, 'Elementary Education in the Borough of Dorchester During the Period 1870–1902' (unpublished Certificate of Education thesis, Weymouth College of Education, 1975), 269–298. The Statements specify when schools were established, owners' names and the average leaving age of pupils. They also provide a variety of general comments on the schools.

[17] 'Elementary Education in Puddletown, 1864–1902' (unpublished Diploma in Education thesis, University of Southampton, School of Education, March 1971).

[18] The Revised Code of 1862 required all teachers to keep a log book, which contained a 'bare record' of events in the school and copies of the inspectors' reports. Teachers' private injunctions, though forbidden by the terms of the Revised Code, are also to be found in log books and are a valuable source of information for the historian. For a readily-available (fictitious) example of a Victorian school log book, see Barry Wheeler, *Spare the Rod. The Journal of a Victorian Schoolmaster in Dorset, 1863–64* (Bridport: Winterbourne Press, 1988).

used to good effect in elucidating the kind of education that would be provided by a small village school in the middle of the nineteenth century. Jenkin has studied Puddletown (the Weatherbury of Hardy's novels) National School. In the early 1870s the Puddletown curriculum provided for the drilling of children in the three Rs to enable them 'to read the Bible, recite the Catechism, add, subtract, multiply and divide, and write a simple piece of prose.'[19] Singing, religious knowledge and geography were also included in the curriculum. Needlework was provided for girls, and drill for boys. History was recognised as a grant-earning subject in 1867. A brief attempt was made in 1872 to introduce the subject in Puddletown; but it appears to have been unsuccessful since it is not mentioned again after this year. Freehand drawing was introduced in 1874.

The Code awarded a singing grant from 1874 and penalised schools by deducting from the grant where no singing was taught. The children learned a song at a time by heart. Poems were learned in the same way – poems of morality, sentiment and heroics being most frequently chosen. Learning poems by heart was also given as homework, though with little success. It seems that the children frequently refused to learn them. As in most elementary schools of the time, all subjects were taught using drills and mechanical methods of learning.

At first sight a greater level of initiative and ability to solve problems seemed to be required in mathematics, where children could be asked to solve such problems as 27358091 x 303, £102.15.3 d x 45 or 'An ironmonger had seven stones of shot in a drawer, which he took out with a scopp [sic] holding 11 ounces. How much remained in the drawer after taking out the scoop full 87 times?'[20] On closer examination of the school records, however, it seems that all sums were taught by rote, each step being drilled over and over again. All children worked on the same sum simultaneously and each step was copied off the board until the correct answer was arrived at. Rote learning was still much in evidence in the 1880s. Science appears not to have been included in the curriculum at all, and no priority seems to have been given to the development of children's intellectual/analytical abilities or their ability to set up propositions and test these by observation and experimentation. The situation in Dorset was thus very much in line with that in the country at large, as outlined in Chapter One.

Hardy's own school: Stinsford and Bockhampton National School

An examination of Registers of Admission, Progress and Withdrawal, and of Inspection Books, sheds light on attendance problems and on the standard of educational attainment. The Registers are thus a useful complement to log books and inspection reports. The Registers of Admission, Progress and Withdrawal for Stinsford and

[19] Jenkin, 'Elementary Education in Puddletown', 71.
[20] Ibid., 77 and 78.

Bockhampton National School state the age of children on admittance, their parents' occupation, and the children's previous schooling.[21] The first extant register for the school is from 1866, which, though well after Hardy's own schooldays, corresponds approximately to the chronological setting of several of his novels. The 1866 register shows that 19 new pupils were admitted, all between the ages of two and fourteen (the registers do not specify how many children attended the school at the time). The most frequently recorded ages were three (4 pupils) and five (4 pupils). As Pamela Horn points out, young children were accepted because it was recognised that the older ones would otherwise stay away to look after their younger siblings, or the school 'acted out of pity for a mother in obvious difficulty.'[22] Five of the new admissions had received no previous schooling. With regard to the fourteen children who had been to some sort of school before, the extent of their schooling varied between two months (1 pupil) and five years (4 pupils). The highest number – 7 pupils – had received two years of school instruction. A nine-year-old was admitted who had received a mere two months' previous schooling.

Of the parents' occupational status, the register records that there were 3 carters, 5 labourers, 2 watermen, 3 bailiffs, 2 grooms, 2 shepherds, one gardener and one parent working for the post office. One was deceased. Common comments in the register include 'came irregularly', 'wanted at home' and 'left the village.'

The number of new admissions to Stinsford and Bockhampton School remained fairly constant: in 1867 there were 18 (between the ages of two and twelve); in 1868, 27 (between the ages of two and eleven); and the last entry is for 1869, with 15 new admissions (between the ages of three and nine). Unfortunately there are no records for the 1870s, which makes it impossible to ascertain if there was any significant increase after the introduction of compulsory education. It is clear from the registers, however, that the majority of children belonged to the labouring class: general labourers, ploughmen, gardeners, dairymen and carters. Registers exist for the 1880s and '90s, but these no longer record the occupation of the father. Some indication of attendance levels and the standard of religious education/discipline at Stinsford and Bockhampton School may be gleaned from an examination of the diocesan inspection books. A number exist for the period 1881 to 1917.[23] A comparison of the registers for 1881 and 1882 shows that attendance had begun to improve: there were 83 on the books in 1881, and the average attendance was 60; by 1882, there were 86 on the books and the average attendance was 70. However, the statistics are clearly not reliable: the 1886 inspection book records 64 as being on the books, and the average attendance was

[21] The Register of Admissions, Progress and Withdrawal. Stinsford and Bockhampton National School, 1866–1885 is housed at the Dorset County Record Office, Dorchester.

[22] *The Victorian Country Child* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1990), 21.

[23] Housed at the Dorset County Record Office. Diocesan inspections for Church of England schools were introduced in 1874.

65! The same discrepancy can be noted for 1887 and 1889. This may reflect a degree of mobility, although the effects of the latter would have been more apparent at Michaelmas, when annually hired farm servants and labourers changed employment.[24] Was the school behind in its records? Or had siblings perhaps accompanied a younger brother and sister? This seems unlikely to have been permitted on inspection day, though. By 1894 attendance had improved radically, and the full quota of pupils, 65, were present on inspection day.

The headmistress or -master of Stinsford and Bockhampton School was almost invariably certificated, but the same could not be said for many of the schools in Dorset at the time. The mistress in 1881, A.B. Bascombe, held a first-class certificate; the mistress the following year, Catherine Luxton, held a second-class certificate, as did her successor, E.A.C. Dare. The latter held the post of head until at least 1915. The inspection book for 1906 indicates that Dare had improved his qualifications and was by this time in possession of a first-class certificate.

The inspectors assessed religious-knowledge instruction, discipline and 'tone' as well as 'repetition.' The school received consistently good reports for all areas, although there was a slight decline in written examination performance in 1893.The school log books[25] show, however, that there was one area where progress was consistently disappointing, namely arithmetic. The two earlier volumes of log books contain repeated references to 'the defective instruction in arithmetic' (July 24, 1866); 'the arithmetic requires more attention' (July 16, 1873); '[t]he Arithmetic in the III standard was almost a total failure' (March 31, 1883); and '[t]he Arithmetic still backward' (July 13, 1883). Rural children's ability to estimate, deduce and think logically was limited. Unfortunately, their teachers were often unable to help them in this respect. Even when the teacher was certificated, as at Stinsford and Bockhampton, he or she apparently experienced considerable difficulty in improving the children's mathematical ability. Urban middle- and upper-class children's superiority in arithmetic and rational thinking (surely due to better resources and more competent teachers rather than to any differences with regard to innate talent) made them better equipped to study the different branches of science that were introduced into the school curriculum in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Dorset and the 1870 Education Act

It has already been pointed out that attendance was a serious problem in rural schools, although a study of the number of children on the books of day schools between 1818 and 1833 and 1833 and 1851 shows, perhaps somewhat surprisingly,

[24] See Horn, *The Victorian Country Child,* 53–54, for examples of this phenomenon.

[25] There are three, covering 1862–1884; 1884–1900; 1900–1923. These are housed at the Dorset County Record Office.

that Dorset had 'much above' the national level on census day, 1851.[26] There was clearly room for improvement, nonetheless, and by 1870 it was obvious to educational reformers that attendance must be made compulsory if a child was to make any real progress at school. The interest of the county in the development of compulsory education is clearly reflected in the pages of the *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette*.[27] The 3 February 1870 issue contained a notice about a meeting of the Dorset National School Society, which concluded with a motion to support the National Educational Union in its efforts to uphold the current system of national education with regard to religion. Readers of the 10 February 1870 issue were informed of the meeting of the General Committee of the National Society in Westminster, at which it was resolved to co-operate with the Government. Exactly two weeks later, the newspaper published a report on the introduction of the Elementary Education Bill by the Hon. W. E. Forster. Readers were informed that school boards or local authorities could institute bye-laws requiring attendance at school for children between the ages of five and twelve years.

There follow numerous reports, letters and leaders dealing with the new Act. For example, Hutson quotes from the 10 March 1870 issue: '[c]oncern about the need to provide a religious frame-work – the National Schools must continue to be efficient and cheap, otherwise parents will send their children to secular rival schools if they are cheaper and efficient.'[28]

The editor of the *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette* was against the bill, it seems. The leader of 10 March 1870 contained the following uncompromising lines:

> It is a scheme for the gradual displacement of the present managers of schools and for putting in their place, local boards, acting under the supervision and control of the Committee of Council [...] The Committee of Council is not an independent body, but a political one, composed solely of party men, not fixed but fluctuating, varying with every change of Ministry and from which the religious element as such is carefully excluded [...] it will lead to one gigantic system of secular rate-supported education – a system sectarian in the most offensive sense of the word, secularly irreligious, tyrannical and compulsory .[29]

Opposition to the Bill was expressed on several subsequent occasions in the leader, and correspondents issued warnings regarding the danger to religious education.

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[26] Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society*, 249. Other western counties such as Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Shropshire were more or less at the national level. Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire and Herefordshire were much below. The figures are given as a proportion of the population on the books of day schools. See Appendix J, 352, 'County Statistics of Schooling, Sunday and day, 1818, 1833, 1851, 1858 (%).'

[27] The following description of the *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette's* coverage of the 1870 Act draws on Chapter 1V of Hutson, 'Elementary Education in the Borough of Dorset', 22–30.

[28] 24. The academic aspects of a school's efficiency are less clearly defined in such letters and articles.

[29] Hutson, 'Elementary Education in the Borough of Dorset', 24.

One Henry Blackstone Williams was particularly outspoken in his opposition: 'How [...] is the claim that "perfect liberty of religious teaching is guaranteed to School Managers" consistent with the enforced confinement of such teaching "to the first part of the school hours"? It seems to me very like the perfect liberty of inhabiting Dorchester which the inmates of our County Gaol enjoy.'[30]

Articles continued to appear in the newspaper right up to the passing of the Education Act in 1870, and also subsequent to its being made law. It was not until two years later that the Education Board was ready to deal with Dorset. The *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette* published figures showing that there was a deficiency of 419 places in Dorchester alone.[31] The paper continued to publish articles exhorting churchmen to plead the case of church schools. When the British School in Dorchester closed in June 1873, great efforts were made to raise funds to extend existing schools in order to prevent the setting up of a School Board, which would have threatened the Church of England schools and have resulted in the ratepayers being obliged to subsidise such a board. The proceeds of the fund-raising activities were recorded in the New Year's Day issue 1874 of the *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette,* a total of £506 having been raised. The money was used to refurbish existing schools, and a new room was built on to both the Girls' National School and the Boys' School. There was considerable general support for these measures, and individuals also made generous contributions.

Local support was sufficient to prevent the establishment of a School Board during the nineteenth century. The Education Act had two basic beneficial effects on education in Dorchester: all schools were forced to employ certificated teachers, and the inhabitants of Dorchester were encouraged to take a greater interest in their schools.[32]

Dorset as a county of educational innovation: the work of William Barnes

It is interesting to note that Dorchester was a centre of educational innovation in southern England during the early and middle part of the nineteenth century, a time when the county of Dorset was generally regarded as both backward and poor. Much of the educational innovation in Dorchester was the work of Hardy's mentor and friend, the Dorset dialect poet William Barnes, who not only produced the famous *Poems of Rural Life in the Dorset Dialect* (1844) but was a well-respected schoolmaster in Wiltshire and Dorset for over thirty years, and the author of numerous books for use in schools. Born into a farming family in Sturminster Newton, Dorset, in 1801, Barnes moved to Dorchester at the age of fourteen. At the age of twenty-two he opened his first school in Mere, Wiltshire. The school was moved to

[30] 24 April 1870. Quoted in Hutson, 'Elementary Education in the Borough of Dorset', 25.

[31] These places were distributed between the Boys' National School, the Girls' National School, Holy Trinity Infants', the British School and West Fordington School.

[32] Hutson, 'The Development of Elementary Education in the Borough of Dorset', 30.

Dorchester in 1835. One historian has described this remarkable man in the following terms:

> Poet, draughtsman, engraver, painter, mathematician, mechanic, carpenter, cabinet-maker, gardener, performer on the flute, violin and piano, archaeologist, philologist, master of fourteen languages, ancient, modern and oriental, there seemed nothing that this wonderfully accomplished and still more wonderfully industrious man could not master himself and then teach others. No man, not even Abraham Lincoln ever did more to train and discipline his own mind and hand, and it was this, and his gift of loving sympathy that made him such a wonderful teacher. He once told his fellow poet and pastor, the diarist Kilvert, that in all he had written there was not a line which was not inspired by love for, and kindly sympathy with, the things and people described. And what was true of the subjects of his poetry was true of those he taught, of his teaching and his whole life.[33]

Barnes believed in following Nature. In his poem 'Rustic Childhood', he stressed the advantages of the freedom and peace of a country childhood 'in woodland shades' as compared with the town, 'where splendour tries/ To draw the looks of gather'd eyes,/ And clocks, unheeded, fail to warn/ The loud-tongued party of the morn.'[34] Unlike most educational practitioners of the day, Barnes was anxious that children should learn about their environment; this must, he believed, come before more academic knowledge. He once told an audience at Sherborne:

> With children, we think world-knowledge – a knowledge of the world around them, in forms of life and land, growth and ground, birds, beasts, insects, trees and flowers, weeds and minerals – should be gathered before book learning [for] a good knowledge of open-world things is a good groundwork for the building of higher book-knowledge, and without it, the more foreign knowledge is less readily taken.[35]

This was a radical philosophy in an age characterised by mechanical rote learning and repetition. Equally radical was Barnes's belief in a balance between the activity of the mind, hand-skill and physical exercise. One of his maxims was, '[w]e should use all the powers of mind and of body we have to the utmost – and by using, we gain more.'[36] For the majority of pupils, Barnes's aim was to provide a balanced education which should allow for training rather than cramming and which would be an adequate preparation for adult life after school.

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[33] Arthur Bryant, foreword to Trevor Hearl, *William Barnes The Schoolmaster. A Study in the Life and Work of the Dorset Poet* (Dorchester: Longmans, 1966), xiv.

[34] In *Poems, Partly of Rural Life*, 1846. Reprinted in *The Poems of William Barnes* ed. by Jones, 643.

[35] Hearl, *William Barnes the Schoolmaster,* 66.

[36] Laura Barnes's personal MS. Notes. Dorset County Museum. Quoted in Hearl, *William Barnes the Schoolmaster,* 70.

Barnes was not interested in assisting his pupils (who were middle-class) to be materially successful and concentrate on amassing wealth: the study of art, literature, nature and other subjects regarded by some as not absolutely essential was, he believed, the only real source of happiness:

> It would bring us no harm if the up-growing generation of this 'Nation of Shopkeepers' could be brought to feel that there is a source of purer happiness than even that of converting four-penny pieces into sixpences.
>
> The end of wealth-getting must be happiness, but we think that the wearisome toils of the wealth-winner are not always the shortest way to it. The naturalist, wandering among his summer blossoms or glittering insects, or the poet or painter, with his heart leaping at the glories of God's earth, may have found it at much less cost of gold.[37]

The reference to the work of the naturalist is particularly interesting as he is placed on the same level of importance as the artist.

Barnes's first advertisement for his school in Mere is relatively modest in comparison with his later advertisements. The basic subjects offered included 'Reading, plain and ornamental Penmanship, Geography, Arithmetic and English Grammar', with additional optional subjects including 'Drawing, Music and Latin.'[38] The range of subjects offered was considerably increased at Chantry House School in the 1830s, including arithmetic, trigonometry, algebra, geometry, two ancient languages, eight modern languages, architectural drawing, mechanical drawing, painting and sketching, botany, geology, physics, geography, history, scripture, citizenship, English language and literature, drama, music, dancing and deportment.[39] It is interesting to note that several branches of science are included at a time when science as an academic subject and profession was at a low ebb nationally.[40]

The emphasis is nonetheless on the arts, though these were clearly linked to commerce, as the following notice appearing in the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* in January 1829 testifies: 'W.B. recommends his Establishment to the notice of parents connected with Foreign Commerce as he is capable of teaching the Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Portugese, German, Swedish and Danish languages.'[41] The school taught an astonishingly wide range of subjects for a small West Country educational establishment; even more incredible was that all subjects were taught by Barnes himself.

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[37] *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1848, 401–402. Quoted in Hearl, *William Barnes the Schoolmaster*, 80.

[38] *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 28 April 1823. Quoted in Hearl, *William Barnes the Schoolmaster*, 24.

[39] Hearl, *William Barnes the Schoolmaster*, 80.

[40] See, for example, Charles Babbage, *Reflections on the Decline of Science in England and on Some of its Causes* (London, 1830). Although Babbage's view that mathematics and physical science had declined consistently in England since the days of Isaac Newton is now thought to be exaggerated, his book indicates that there was much to be done in the realm of science instruction.

[41] Hearl, *William Barnes the Schoolmaster*, 45.

Like Hardy, Barnes was largely self-taught. Writing in the *Athenaeum* in 1886, the year of Barnes's death, Hardy had this to say of his friend:

> academic scholars sometimes remarked upon the unsystematic character of his linguistic attainments [...] it cannot be gainsaid that he was almost always ready with definite and often exclusive information on whatever slightly known form of human speech might occur to the mind of his questioner, from Persian to Welsh, from the contemporary vernaculars of India to the tongues of the ancient British tribes.[42]

Not only was Barnes unusual in his wide range of knowledge; he also believed that it was important for a schoolmaster to draw on practical experience for examples in the classroom, unlike most other teachers who relied on books and various academic theories.[43] The examples chosen were designed to arouse interest and to encourage the development of the pupils' powers of reasoning.[44] In the words of his daughter, Lucy Baxter: '[i]t was part of his poet nature to see the inner meanings of things, and so his conception of education took in more than mere putting of facts and rules into the boys' brains; it meant training them to be reasoning and reasonable men.'[45] The function of reasoning later became increasingly associated with scientific training and methodology. Barnes was aware of the importance of the latter at an early stage in the individual's development, and he was clearly before his time in this respect. It was neither advisable nor sufficient, he believed, to concentrate on the Classics at the expense of science.

The longest and most comprehensive published statement about Barnes's schools concerned his school in Durngate Street, Dorchester, in 1835. It is interesting to note that the scientific subjects come first and the art/classical ones after:

> for the Reception of a limited Number of select Pupils, to prepare them for Commercial, Mathematical, or Learned Professions, or the Naval or Military Colleges, or Universities.
>
> At this School Young Gentlemen intended for Professions connected with Civil or Military Engineering, Mechanics, Surveying, Architecture, or Navigation, may be prepared for their future Occupations by a regular Course of Mathematical Studies, including Drawing with Linear and Isometrical Perspective: and those who need

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[42] Ibid., 55–56.

[43] Barnes's ideas were in line with those of Pestalozzi. He maintained, however, that he deliberately developed his own theories and methods independently of contemporary reformers (Hearl, *William Barnes the Schoolmaster*, 65).

[44] Barnes was not, of course, the first to note the importance of developing rational faculties through education. This was, for example, the main message of Richard Carlile's *Address to the Men of Science* (London, 1821), written and published while Carlile was serving a six-year prison sentence in Dorchester Gaol. For a discussion of this pamphlet, see Simon, *The Two Nations*, 200–204. Science is seen as the key to knowledge and moral freedom, i.e. the basis of morality.

[45] *The Life of William Barnes, Poet and Philologist* (London, 1887), 44.

> a Classical Education, or be likely in future life to feel the necessity of understanding either of the useful Continental Tongues, may be conducted through a Course of Latin and Greek Reading, or acquire the French, Italian, German, or other modern European Language. And W.B. can render valuable service to Gentlemen going out to India, by teaching them to read the Asiatic Character, and the Rudiments of that essential and all-sufficient Language in Asia, the Persian, as well as of Hindoostanee.[46]

The principle of Christian piety formed the basis of both the arts and science subjects. The success of Barnes's educational programme can in part be measured by the number of pupils who subsequently became successful professional men: some four hundred boys went on to become lawyers, architects, doctors, bankers, engineers, surveyors, teachers and lecturers, army officers etc. Hearl specifically mentions those who became successful professionals abroad: a medical officer in South Africa, musicians and composers, an art critic, two distinguished naturalists, a geologist and even the most famous surgeon in the country, to mention but a few. Barnes's success was the result of a policy of combining published knowledge with traditional knowledge passed down from generation to generation – or folk-lore, as Barnes called it. This maxim was specifically applied to the teaching of science, for which he felt traditional wisdom was especially important. Barnes particularly admired the form of 'lore gathered and taught by our sportsmen, botanists and geologists who when "Old experience do attain/To something of prophetic strain" can guide themselves to the game, the rare plant or the sought fossil by tokens which to the untrained mind mean nothing.'[47] In describing folk-lore wisdom, Barnes observed:

> The weather wisdom gathered from book-taught observations is called Science, while the weather wisdom that is gathered and holden without book-learning by the common folk is not rated as Science. Why not? It is Science as far as it goes.
> From tokens given in transactions of a meteorological society it is holden that a storm is coming.
> That is Science.
> A friend who lives between two railways tells me, 'When we hear the trains very clearly on the other (track) we trust to fine weather.' That is Science also.[48]

The reader will recall similar examples in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, when the behaviour of the toad walking over the road, the presence of the garden slug indoors,

[46] Hearl, *William Barnes the Schoolmaster*, 114.
[47] Ibid., 168.
[48] Ibid., 168.

and the sheep crowded together are seen by Gabriel Oak as indications of the approaching storm.[49] Barnes, like Hardy, endeavoured to uphold the wisdom of the Dorset rustic.

Science was a highly practical subject in Barnes's schools. Almost every morning at 9 o'clock his pupils were given a lecture by their headmaster. These lectures were normally based on science. Illustrated by experiments, they were a much-appreciated part of the school day, as Barnes's daughter Lucy later recalled:

> The subject was varied every day of the week, and in turns botany, natural history, physics, chemistry, electricity and geology were all discussed. The lecture (which combined dictation, orthography and composition, in such a way as to make them all interesting) began with a short dictation; if on botany or natural history, the distinctive marks of an order or class formed the subject. Then some flowers or specimens were shown, and the boys had to find the distinctive marks of the class, or to reject the specimen as not apposite. This trained their discrimination; the master then gave a lecture on the subject and the boys were required to take notes, and write them out in a clear form as a composition for one of the daily tasks [...] There were, of course, in such a school as this all kinds of collections – birds' eggs, butterflies, fossils, dried flowers, etc.[50]

The content of such lectures was based on Barnes's own research at the Scientific Museum of King's College, his reading of scientific works and his powers of observation. Believing much of the published material for schools to be unsatisfactory, Barnes compiled books of his own, which were not only used in his own schools but were commercially available. In 1834 he published a pamphlet on mathematics, *A Few Words on the Advantages of a More Common Adoption of the Mathematics as a Branch of Education or Subject of Study.*[51] He described mathematics as 'the great science of lines, number, quantity, size, shape, distance, motion, and force', and contended that 'every object in nature or art' has 'either of those attributes [and] is evidently susceptible, in some way or another, of mathematical investigation.' Barnes continued:

> These branches or sciences are of two kinds; one called pure or speculative Mathematics; and the other mixed or practical Mathematics; the former teaching general principles as unapplied (though applicable) to distinct objects; as Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic; and the latter consisting in the use of those general principles as applied to some branch of science or art; as Astronomy, Navigation, Mechanics, Problematical Geography, Hydrostatics, and Hydraulics, Optics, Perspective and Architecture.[52]

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[49] Chapter XXXVI, 277–278.
[50] *The Life of William Barnes*, 48 and 51.
[51] London, 1834.
[52] 5–6. Barnes covered the majority of these branches of science in his own schools.

There are two pages on architecture as a mathematical art. On pages 21–22 the reader is then told that without some knowledge of mathematics 'one cannot easily comprehend even many allusions, terms, observations, and formulae, often met with in scientific (even though not technical) books; nor comprehend, or at least not describe, a thousand things about us in Mechanics, Architecture and the like.' Less commendable in the eyes of the present-day reader is, perhaps, the reservation made at the end of the pamphlet to the effect that mathematics is of little use to the poor and should not be taught as it was in National schools: the subject is considered suitable only for those who wish to follow a mathematical profession.

The small textbook published in 1844, *Exercises in Practical Science Containing the Main Principles of Dynamics, Statics, Hydrostatics, and Hydrodynamics; With more than 200 questions for Practice,*[53] was intended to be wider in its appeal. Barnes wrote in his preface:

> The Author having felt that some insight into Mechanical Science must at times be desirable in most classes of society, has written this little work chiefly for the larger number of school-boys, who may not be likely to take up a more complete system of Mechanics at the university or a naval or military college; or may not have time to go through such an one elsewhere. At the same time he believes it may afford no bad introduction to Mechanical Science for those who may have to stand before the chair of a Professor.

There are 25 pages of practical questions of different kinds, e.g. 'Required the weight of a block of Parian marble, whose length is 12 feet, and breadth and thickness each 6 feet, being the dimensions of one of the stones in the walls of Baltec?.' Should the reader be in any doubt as to the answer, this is provided (28 tons 4 cwt 12 lbs). Questions are asked requiring the retrieval of information from previous sections in the book, for instance, '[i]s there any metal heavier than gold?'[54] The pupil was presumably expected to look up the answer since none is provided.

Hardy, born nearly forty years after Barnes, was also to demonstrate an early awareness of the value and relevance of science, although his interests were of a personal rather than an educational nature. Both men evinced a strong desire to preserve traditional wisdom while at the same time demonstrating a concern to keep up with new scientific developments and writings. While Barnes applied his knowledge in practical educational contexts, Hardy used his interest in new scientific ideas and their connections with traditional wisdom to add an extra dimension to his writings. To understand how his ideas developed and were subsequently featured in his fiction, it is esssential to study Hardy's own education.

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[53] Published in Dorchester.

[54] These questions are posed on pp. 41 and 65 respectively.

The education of Thomas Hardy

Hardy's schooldays

Young Thomas Hardy was not sent to school until the age of eight, as he was a frail child and was not expected to survive to adulthood. His first school was Stinsford and Bockhampton National School, founded by Julia Augusta Martin, the lady of the manor of Kingston Maurward. Mrs Martin was fond of Hardy and sponsored the building of a village school to ensure that he would receive a formal school education. According to Hardy's ghost autobiography, the aim was for young Thomas 'to learn the rudiments before being sent further afield [...] Here he worked at Walkingame's Arithmetic and at geography, in both of which he excelled, though his handwriting was indifferent.'[55] Hardy's own memories of his year at the Stinsford school are preserved in his poem, 'He Revisits His First School', in which the speaker is depicted as sitting at his desk as 'in Walkingame he/Conned the grand Rule-of-Three/With the bent of a bee.'[56] Michael Millgate observes that '[i]n starting school Hardy encountered for the first time a sizeable group of his own contemporaries and became exposed to their habits, values, and attitudes.'[57] A number of these values reappear in his novels.

One year later Hardy was sent to Isaac Glandfield Last's British day school in Dorchester. Hardy's mother 'had learnt [Last] to be an exceptionally able man, and a good teacher of Latin.'[58] The academic reputation of the school and its master was such that Hardy's Anglican mother was prepared to ignore the fact that it was a Nonconformist school. The ghost autobiography notes that it was a measure of the honour of the school that Hardy did not discover the religious sympathies of the establishment until several months later. F. B. Pinion points out that one possible reason for Jemima Hardy's choosing Last's school in preference to the old grammar school (Hardye's) was that the latter had not enjoyed a good reputation for some time.[59] Millgate suggests that it may well have been Last's competence in technical as well as academic subjects that encouraged Hardy's parents to send their son to his school. It may also be speculated that Thomas Hardy was sent to Last's rather than William Barnes's school – which still enjoyed an excellent academic reputation – because Barnes was too High Church for Hardy's mother; or, as Evelyn Hardy suggests, because the fees were too high.[60] That Jemima Hardy was not against a school run by a Dissenter had already been shown by Hardy's attendance, during a brief visit to his aunt, at a school in Hatfield run by a Congregationalist minister named

[55] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 21.
[56] *The Complete Poems*, 511–12.
[57] *Thomas Hardy. A Biography*, 41.
[58] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 22.
[59] *Thomas Hardy: His Life and Friends* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 35.
[60] Evelyn Hardy, *Thomas Hardy. A Critical Biography* (London: Hogarth, 1954), 35.

Thomas Ray.[61] It may also be speculated that Jemima's hard, driving personality, sharpened by ambition for her eldest son and an anxiety that he should not experience poverty as she had done in her youth, would naturally be more sympathetic to a demanding Dissenter headmaster keen on strict discipline than a more easy-going Anglican master.

It seems that Hardy was not the only Stinsford boy to go to school in Dorchester. According to a memoir written in 1915 by someone who signed himself as 'P', he was accompanied on most days by a boy from his home area.[62] The picture painted is one of happy, careless boyhood:

> [Hardy] and I went as lads to the same school in Dorchester, and our homeward ways lay the same also [...] I can see us both as if it were yesterday – he swinging his satchel over his arm carelessly – he scarcely ever had it across his back – and I trudging idly alongside him with my own bag containing nearly as many 'trophies' of boyhood, in the shape of nests, marbles, a hedgehog, etc., as it did books!

In 1853, at the age of thirteen, Hardy changed schools yet again, in order to attend the new independent commercial Academy for older, more advanced pupils started by Last in Dorchester.[63] This was a major step for Hardy and his parents, as only 5 % of all pupils attending school up to 1861 continued after the age of eleven.[64]

At the Academy Hardy continued the Latin studies he had started in Last's first school, winning Beza's Latin Testament for his progress in the language. This was a pocket edition which he often carried with him.[65] At the Academy, Hardy studied the following subjects:

> elementary drawing, advanced arithmetic, geometry, and algebra, in which he was fairly good, always saying that he found a certain poetry in the rule for the extraction of the cube-root, owing to its rhythm, and in some of the 'Miscellaneous Questions' of Walkingame. In applied mathematics he worked completely through Tate's *Mechanics* and Nesbitt's *Mensuration*.[66]

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[61] Stephens notes that parents' religious preferences had little influence on the choice of school for their children and cites several examples from Dorset. He writes, for example, that 'in Sherborne (Dorset) nonconformist parents appear to have preferred a good National school to a British school thought less efficient, despite a newspaper campaign to persuade them to change their allegiance.' See *Education, Literacy and Society*, 224. Interestingly, Stephens's examples are of Dissenters attending National schools and not the other way around.

[62] 'My famous schoolfellows. Some interesting recollections of Thomas Hardy, Handley Moule (the present Bishop of Durham), William Barnes, and Others', *Sunday at Home*, May 1915, 32. Dorset County Museum, E. N. Sanders Collection. Michael Millgate is sceptical towards the memoir. James Gibson (ed.) quotes it in his *Thomas Hardy. Interviews and Recollections* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 1–2, where he describes it as an '[u]nidentifed and anonymous article', 1.

[63] The British day school could only provide education up to the age of twelve, with the exception of pupil-teachers.

[64] See Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 26 and 46.

[65] For a description of Hardy's Latin studies under the tutorship of Isaac Last, and their importance to the development of Hardy's thought, see Evelyn Hardy, *Thomas Hardy*, 35–38.

[66] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 29.

It is noteworthy that so much emphasis was placed on mathematical subjects at this, Hardy's last school. It was here that Hardy worked out a series of mathematical problems related to the building trades: bricklaying, carpentry and plumbing. His mathematics copybook for 4 December 1854, which is housed in the Dorset County Museum, gives a good indication of the types of problem on which Hardy worked at Last's Academy: '[i]f a man exerts a pressure of 60 lbs upon the handle of a windlass what weight will he raise when the length of the handle is 2 feet and the radius of the axle 3 inches'? Ans: 480lbs. Half a page of working out – meticulously written up – was required to reach this answer! Hardy also kept a notebook called 'Conic Sections and Their Solids', containing a number of practical problems.

Hardy's obvious passion for mathematics does not mean that he neglected the humanities. In 1854 he began French lessons under the guidance of a teacher at the Ladies' School, Dorchester. Throughout his school years and in later life Hardy demonstrated a thirst for knowledge which encompassed the arts and sciences alike. In later life he became increasingly keen to give the impression of having enjoyed a good basic formal education and a programme of higher education supervised by a Cambridge scholar (Horace Moule).[67] Indeed, his anxiety to demonstrate his learning led to an over-use of references to all kinds of works of literature and art in his novels. He was likely to have felt defensive about his lack of a proper university education at a time when writers were expected to have a good formal education.[68]

Hardy the autodidact

When Hardy left school at the age of sixteen,[69] he became apprenticed to the architect John Hicks of Dorchester and began a programme of study which he was to continue for the rest of his life. This was the age of self-help, so Hardy was far from unusual in this respect. The significance of Hardy's autodidacticism for his

[67] J. Gerard Dollar argues that revisions made to the first half of the ghost autobiography demonstrate Hardy's anxiety to enhance his image as a scholar. See 'The Upgrading of the Past: Revisions to the Typescripts of *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy*' in *The Thomas Hardy Yearbook* 19 ed. by J. Stevens Cox and G. Stevens Cox (Guernsey: Toucan Press, 1991), 8–10.

[68] For an interesting discussion of how Hardy's autodidacticism has affected scholarly judgement of his works see Charles Lock's review of five major works on Hardy entitled 'Too menny', *Essays in Criticism* 41 (January 1991), 68–87. Lock remarks that '[r]ealism depends on an image of the author as thoroughly immersed in empirical reality, and writing from the depths of immediacy. That is why it has been so important to play down Hardy's learning, and to remark condescendingly on the pedantry of his allusions and quotations, on the scholarly posturings of an "autodidact"' (81).

[69] It should be noted that it was unusual for children at this time to stay on at school so long. Statistics show that there was an unusually high percentage of ten–fourteen year olds occupied in Dorset in 1851 and 1871 as compared with, for example, Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. See Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society*, Table 6.1, 216. The picture is very similar with regard to the number of five–nine year olds occupied in 1851 and 1871. See Appendix B, which shows the numbers occupied as a percentage of an age group, 318. By 1871, the differences between the West Country counties had become less marked.

view of society and its portrayal in his novels may be elucidated with the aid of Pierre Bourdieu's theory on 'education and the autodidact.'[70] Bourdieu argues that it is only the formal educational system which can transmit legitimate knowledge. The latter cannot be acquired by self-learning, which, Bourdieu maintains, only results in

> a collection of unstrung pearls, accumulated in the course of an unchartered exploration, unchecked by the institutionalized, standardized stages and obstacles, the curricula and progressions which make scholastic culture a ranked and ranking set of interdependent levels and forms of knowledge.[71]

Hardy was keenly aware of the fact that much of his knowledge lacked the official stamp of approval.[72] He read voraciously in a wide variety of areas without becoming a specialist in any particular field. A number of the books he read are specifically named in his novels; others can be felt to have exercised an influence without actually being named or quoted from. Hardy's reading was an important source of knowledge[73] and played a significant part in shaping his view of the two kinds of knowledge which are central to the present study. His reading should be seen as a complement to, and not a denial of, his first-hand experience and observations. Only some of the most important works can be mentioned here, and primarily those with a direct bearing on subjects addressed in this book.[74]

As a young boy Hardy received from his mother a copy of Dryden's *Vergil, Rasselas*, a small book of words and pictures called *Cries of London,* and *The Rites and Worship of the Jews.* He also possessed Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul and Virginia* (Phillotson in *Jude the Obscure* compares Jude and Sue to Paul and Virginia. Part Fourth, iv, 279) and *The Exiles of Siberia.* By playing the violin at various local events

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[70] This is particularly clearly expressed in *Distinction*, 328–9.

[71] *Distinction*, 328. In annotation 1133 of *Literary Notebooks Volume I*, Björk draws attention to the fact that Hardy's essay on 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction' refers to Victor Hugo as 'a picker-up of trifles of useful knowledge, statistics, queer historic fact, such as sometimes occur in the pages of Hugo' (Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, 113). Björk comments, '[a]s several annotations in this edition suggest, the appeal of this particular element in Hugo's work is reflected in Hardy's own literary theory and practice', 359.

[72] Pamela Dalziel and Michael Millgate write in their introduction to *Thomas Hardy's Studies, Specimens &c.' Notebook* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) that 'there can be little doubt that [Hardy] felt hampered in his career and in his social relationships by what he had come to think of as the inadequacy and incompleteness of his education', xv.

[73] Michael Millgate discusses this point in greater detail in 'Thomas Hardy: the Biographical Sources' in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy* ed. by Dale Kramer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1–18.

[74] For informative discussions of Hardy's reading see Björk, 'Hardy's Reading' in *Thomas Hardy. The Writer and his Background* ed. by Norman Page, 102–27; Evelyn Hardy, *Thomas Hardy. A Critical Biography*; William R. Rutland, *Thomas Hardy. A Study of his Writings and their Background* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938); H. C. Webster, *On a Darkling Plain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947, rpt. 1964) and Wright, *The Shaping of the Dynasts. A Study in Thomas Hardy.* It has been preferred to review Hardy's reading here rather than in conjunction with the discussion of the novels as the focus of this book is on the development of Hardy's thought rather than on individual novels. By dealing with Hardy's reading in a separate section I have been able to include more detail than would have been possible if my discussion had been integrated into my treatment of the novels.

Hardy was able to scrape together the money for his first book with a scientific content, *The Boy's Own Book. A Complete Encyclopaedia of all the Diversions, Athletic, Scientific, and Recreative, of Boyhood and Youth.* By 1855, Hardy possessed three volumes (Volumes I, II and III, Christmas 1855) of *The Popular Educator*, a magazine covering a wide range of subjects.[75] Hardy's copies are preserved at the Dorset County Museum. Volume 1 contains the following headings: Lessons in Ancient History, Architecture, Arithmetic, Biography, Botany, English Grammar, English, French, Geography, Geology, Geometry, German, Latin, Music, Natural History, Physiology and Miscellanea. The headings for the following two volumes were similar, with the addition of penmanship and phonetic shorthand in volume II and of bookkeeping, chemistry, instrumental arithmetic and physical education as well as a few additional subjects in volume III.

Hardy's apprenticeship to John Hicks proved to be advantageous to his further education. Hicks was well-educated and he encouraged the pursuit of self-improvement among his employees. During his time with Hicks Hardy took up the study of Greek, and he studied the *Iliad* in 1858. He had always been an avid reader of the Bible. Like so many of his contemporaries he had also studied Keble's *The Christian Year,* from which Jude Fawley quotes when musing on famous figures associated with Christminster (*Jude the Obscure*, Part Second, i, 96) and which we are told Miss Fontover knew 'by heart' (*Jude the Obscure,* Part Second, iii, 110). Under the influence of Horace Moule, however, Hardy extended his range of reading and became acquainted with Jabez Hogg's *Elements of Experimental and Natural Philosophy.* And it was Moule who presented Hardy with the controversial *Essays and Reviews* in 1860: Hardy now had his own copy of one of the two major nineteenth-century publications destined to bring science to the forefront and challenge existing interpretations of the biblical account of creation and man's origins.[76]

By the 1860s Hardy was an aspiring author and was reading Shakespeare not only for the reading experience, but with a view to improving his own style. His preparations for a literary career also included the study of works of a more scientific nature. In 1863, for example, he was working his way through Samuel Neill's *The Art of Reasoning: A Popular Exposition of the Principles of Logic, Inductive and Deductive, with an Introductory Outline of the History of Logic.* In addition, his reading at this time included articles in various magazines such as *Fraser's*, the *Saturday Review* and the *Quarterly Review,* as well as the works of Spenser, Burns, Byron, Wordsworth, Scott, Shelley (of whose poetry he was especially fond), Tennyson and Swinburne. Lennart Björk points out that while Hardy's reading before 1865 had no

[75] As Janet Roebuck shows, this was first published in 1852 and combined an encyclopedia with a self-instruction course. It also included an illustrated history of England and an illustrated family Bible. By the time Hardy was reading the *Popular Educator* it was selling 25,000–30,000 copies per year. See *The Making of Modern English Society from 1850* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 44.

[76] The other publication was, of course, Darwin's *The Origin of Species.*

'immediately noticeable effects, it is nevertheless of significance, for it is possible to trace in it general stimuli for the orientation of his future reading as well as for some of the preoccupations in his own writing.' Björk selects the following as the most interesting individual works read by Hardy before 1865: Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*; *Essays and Reviews*;[77] Walter Bagehot's *Estimates of Some Englishmen and Scotchmen*; Ruskin's *Modern Painters*; and Charles Fourier's *The Passions of the Human Soul.* Leaving the religious implications of *The Origin of Species* and *Essays and Reviews* aside, it is clear, according to Björk, that Hardy 'was subjected to the principles of inductive science and the "historical method"'. The ideas and modes of thinking presented in these works prepare the 'young, orthodox and provincial Hardy' for his subsequent reading of the radical Comte, Spencer and other authors.[78]

In Walter Bagehot's *Estimates*,[79] Hardy may have been presented for the first time with a formal discussion of a number of the problems and ideas which fascinated him and which appeared in his own work, e.g. fate and free will, social radicalism and idealism, marriage and separation.[80] Of particular interest is Bagehot's focus on the writer's idiosyncratic vision and the primary role of the emotions,[81] two aspects of the writer's approach to his art on which Hardy placed considerable emphasis in his own literary essays and prefaces, and which are crucial to a proper understanding of his prose and poetry. Interestingly, Bagehot also wrote about the effects of Natural Selection and inheritance on a political society.[82] In this essay Bagehot argues that man has inherited from his uncivilised past a desire for quick action which has discouraged the thoughtful reflection and observation which form the foundation of the development of science.[83] For modern society to be successful, it requires

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[77] The importance of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* and *Essays and Reviews* as a turning-point in nineteenth-century thought will be dealt with later in this chapter.

[78] See 'Hardy's Reading', 104.

[79] *Estimates of Some Englishmen and Scotchmen. A Series of Articles Reprinted by Permission Principally from the National Review* (London, 1858).

[80] These themes were, as Björk points out in 'Hardy's Reading', discussed by Bagehot in relation to a number of Hardy's favourite writers, including Edward Gibbon and Percy Bysshe Shelley. The other writers discussed were William Cowper, Bishop Butler, William Shakespeare, Hartley Coleridge, Sir Robert Peel and Thomas Macaulay. Bagehot remarks of Shelley that he almost deified impulse, and believed that '[a] husband and wife ought to continue united only so long as they love each another. Any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration' (280). This comes close to Hardy's words in the 1912 Preface to *Jude the Obscure*: 'a marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties - being then essentially and morally no marriage' (x). In the essay on Gibbon, Hardy may have been impressed by Bagehot's criticism that Gibbon was not 'numbered among the great painters of human nature, for he has no sympathy with the heart and passions of our race' (158).

[81] This point is made by Björk in 'Hardy's Reading', 105.

[82] *Physics and Politics: Thoughts on the Application of the Principles of Natural Selection and Inheritance to a Political Society* (London, 1896). The first part of the essay was published in *The Fortnightly Review II* (November 1867). It was first published in book form in 1872.

[83] In an interview with William Archer, Hardy stated: 'war is doomed. It is doomed by the gradual growth of the introspective faculty in mankind – of their power of putting themselves in another's place, and taking a point of view that is not their own.' Quoted in *Thomas Hardy. Interviews and Recollections* ed. by Gibson, 70.

reflection, debate and abstract ideas. Discussion enables man to diminish his inherited defects and augment what Bagehot describes as 'a heritable excellence' or a 'vigorous moderateness'; modern man should aim to combine inherited spirit with the acquired ability to rationalise and discuss various alternatives. Bagehot was an excellent example of his own philosophy.[84]

In Ruskin Hardy found the dominant nineteenth-century idea of progress, as well as the suggestion that the period was less at peace with itself than previous historical epochs;[85] both elements are closely related to the two forms of knowledge which are the subject of the present thesis. Equally important from the point of view of Hardy's art is that Ruskin provided support for Hardy's anti-realistic view of literature.[86] From *Modern Painters* Hardy made a note of the comment that the aims of landscape painting are to represent thoughts as well as facts. A picture should reflect the feelings of the artist: '[c]oldness & want of passion in a picture are not signs of the accuracy but of the paucity of its statements' (*The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, entry 1381, 173–4). The true artist looks beyond the superficial visible features of an object and reproduces what he sees after protracted study and thought. He must, in other words, be able to see beyond that which is visible to the ordinary layman (*The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, entry 1382, 174). Similarly, Hardy was not content simply to describe the different social groups and their characteristic knowledge; as was pointed out above, his 'idiosyncratic mode of regard' caused him to concentrate on special distinguishing features, and to consider their consequences. In Ruskin's own words, which Hardy recorded in his notebook, '[t]he imaginative faculty "seizes outward things from within"' (*The Literary Notebooks Volume 2*, entry 2199, 130).

It also seems likely that the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier exercised some influence on Hardy.[87] While the references in the literary notebooks are not extensive, Hardy nonetheless felt that Fourier's ideas were sufficiently important to be worth saving in the form of charts and diagrams showing the human passions, mind and character.[88] Judging by the title of the drawings in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, 'Designed by Tho. Hardy 1863', Hardy modified Fourier's theories to suit his own.[89] The diagrams reflect Fourier's anti-rationalism, i.e. his belief that passion and not reason is the main motive power in human life.

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[84] For details of Walter Bagehot's life, thought and writings, see Norman St John-Stevas, *Walter Bagehot. A study of his life and thought together with a selection from his political writings* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1959).

[85] See Björk's discussion of Ruskin and Hardy in 'Hardy's Reading', 105.

[86] Björk makes this point in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, annotation 1218, 373.

[87] For a more detailed discussion of the influence of Fourier on Hardy, see Lennart Björk, 'Psychological Vision and Social Criticism in "Desperate Remedies" and "Jude the Obscure"' in *Budmouth Essays on Thomas Hardy* ed. by F.B. Pinion (Dorchester: The Thomas Hardy Society, 1976), 86–105.

[88] Fourier also reappears in Hardy's notes for *The Trumpet-Major. John Loveday. A Soldier in the War with Buonaparte and Robert his Brother. First Mate in the Merchant Service*, 27–28.

[89] The following outline of Fourier's views is based on Björk's 'Hardy's Reading'

Fourier believed that the modern social order was unable to fulfil the claims of the passions: modern intellectual/technological/scientific advancement was not sufficient to satisfy man's affective needs. Paula Power in *A Laodicean* is an excellent example of Fourier's anti-rationalism. Somerset has reminded her of her ancestors: 'Archimedes, Newcomen, Watt, Telford, Stephenson' (Book the First, xiv, 130): the classical mathematician; the inventor of an early steam-engine; the designer of steam-engines and a canal engineer; a bridge builder, road constructor and canal engineer; and one of the best-known railway-engine designers and railway constructors. But this is not enough for Paula, who also craves romance and tradition: 'I have a *prédilection d'artiste* for ancestors of the other sort, like the de Stancys' (Book the First, xiv, 130), the aristocratic owners of the castle for several generations. In Paula's mind, at least, their names are associated with pageantry, glory and adventure.

The reader is reminded of Hardy's deeply ironical poem 'Heiress and Architect',[90] in which the lady represents romance and dreams while the modern man stands for 'wise contrivance' and a 'cold, clear view' without sentiment. The architect succeeds in squashing every romantic architectural suggestion produced by the heiress. The poem ends with a cruel reminder by the architect that all must die, and that the 'narrow winding turret' suggested by the heiress in a last attempt to make the architect accept one of her suggestions is highly impractical as it will not allow for the passage of her own coffin. The poem presents a dismal prospect where modern design conducted on scientific principles leaves no room for good old-fashioned sentiment.

In addition to Fourier, there are a number of other philosophers and writers who should be mentioned in connection with Hardy's reading during the 1860s to 1890s. In the 1860s, for example, Hardy was reading some of the works of John Stuart Mill. He owned a copy of the 1867 edition of *Utilitarianism*. Fundamental to the Utilitarian creed was the belief that human character is formed by circumstances through the principle of association. This focused attention on education as a means of improving mankind morally and intellectually.[91] As an example of Hardy's indebtedness to Mill for the delineation of his fictional characters and their actions might be mentioned Ethelberta Petherwin, the heroine of *The Hand of Ethelberta*, who refers to utilitarianism when trying to decide if she should marry Lord Mountclere (xxxvi, 318–9) – a utilitarian marriage if ever there was one!

Hardy was, however, particularly familiar with *On Liberty*,[92] a work which may

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[90] *Wessex Poems*, in *The Complete Poems*, 75–76.

[91] 'Signs of the Times' (1829) in Thomas Carlyle, *Essays*, II, 80. Quoted in Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830–1870*, 28–29.

[92] Evelyn Hardy describes how heavily annotated and underlined was Hardy's copy of *On Liberty* (*Thomas Hardy*, 69–70). Critics have pointed to the influence of *On Liberty* on Hardy's novels. Chandra Dave, for example, discusses J. S. Mill and *The Hand of Ethelberta* in *The Human Predicament in Hardy's Novels*, 141–149; F.B. Pinion discusses *On Liberty* and *The Return of the Native* in *Thomas Hardy. Art and Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1977), 106–7; Simon Gatrell shows how Henchard's character is

have facilitated his subsequent acceptance of new ideas that challenged the more conventional views of his youth. Above all, Mill believed in the primacy of reason. The individual must enjoy the right of expression not only for his or her own sake, but for the sake of society as a whole. *On Liberty* constitutes a defence of intellectual freedom.[93] Again, Hardy's novels draw on it: for instance, Sue Bridehead quotes *On Liberty* when justifying her decision to leave Phillotson and live with Jude. Referring to Mill, Sue explains her breaking away from convention on intellectual grounds: '[s]he or he "who lets the world, or his own portion of it, choose his plan of life for him, has no need of any other faculty than the ape-like one of imitation"' (*Jude the Obscure*, Part Fourth, iii, 269). Phillotson, to whom she addresses these remarks, speaks from his heart rather than his head when he replies, 'What do I care about J.S. Mill!' (Part Fourth, iii, 269) – an obvious contrast to Sue's intellectual approach.

Sue uses *On Liberty* to tell Phillotson that conventionality and respectability are infinitely inferior to the development of the individual's potential in all its diversity.[94] In the passage to which Sue refers, Mill summarises the argument of Baron Wilhelm von Humboldt, philologist and Prussian educational reformer. Humboldt argued that man's highest aim is to produce 'a complete and consistent whole' which is dependent on 'the individuality of power and development.' There are two requisites for the latter, 'freedom and variety of situations', from which arise 'individual vigour and manifold diversity' combined in 'originality.'[95] This amounts to a plea for a rigorous pursuit of truth and individual exploration, as well as a refusal to accept conformity. In Hardy's fiction, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* represents an expansion of these lines of thought, emphasising the need of every person to fight for the freedom to live as an individual.

Throughout his prose-writing career Hardy also quoted liberally from Shelley and Swinburne, whom he read avidly in the 1860s. He was, as already stated, particularly fond of Shelley. Dr Fitzpiers quotes Shelley at length, and Hardy's final novel, *The Well-Beloved*, draws its epigraph from 'The Revolt of Islam', taking from Shelley the theme of brother-sister love. Particularly important for the subject of this book

influenced by reading *On Liberty* in *Thomas Hardy and the Proper Study of Mankind* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), 83–4; Roy Morrell considers the influence of Mill on Hardy's views on Nature in 'Hardy in the Tropics: Some implications of Hardy's attitude towards Nature', *Review of English Literature* 3 (January 1962), 11, reprinted with modifications in *The Will and the Way*; and Beer draws attention to the link between Mill's discussion of Wilhelm von Humboldt and Darwinism in *Darwin's Plots*,126.

[93] For a discussion of these ideas and their relation to the emergence of modern man, see Donald Stone, *Novelists in a Changing World. Meredith, James, and the Transformation of English Fiction in the 1880's* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 21–22.

[94] See Chapter 3, 'Of Individuality, as One of the Elements of Well-being' in *On Liberty and Other Essays* ed. by John Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). *On Liberty* was first published in 1859.

[95] Humboldt, *The Sphere and Duties of Government*. Translated from the German by Joseph Coultard (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1996; first published in 1854), 11–13.

are Shelley's and Swinburne's depictions of Ancient Greece, which, according to Björk, would have suggested to the young Hardy a picture of intellectual and moral freedom – prerequisites for the acceptance of the new scientific ideas current in the second half of the nineteenth century.

During the 1870s, Hardy struggled with a variety of radically different philosophies and creeds. His long experience of autodidacticism enabled him to cope with a number of conflicting theories simultaneously. His reading during this period included Aeschylus, Euripides, Horace, Lucretius and Milton's Paradise Lost, and the novels reflect it: Ethelberta quotes from Book 1 of *Paradise Lost* (*The Hand of Ethelberta*, xxvii, 215); Alec d'Urberville quotes from Book IX (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Phase the Sixth, i, 474); and the narrator of *The Well-Beloved* quotes from Book VI (Part First, v, 25). Hardy attempted to accommodate ideas ranging from the peasant fatalism with which he grew up (see, for example, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Phase the Fourth, xxxii, 289), to the human tragedy of the Greek dramatists.[96] He also spent much time re-reading the New Testament during these years and was particularly fond of quoting from Matthew, Corinthians 1 and 2 and Revelation as well as from his favourite books from the Old Testament: Genesis, Joshua, Psalms, Ecclesiastes and Isaiah.

Interestingly enough, Hardy's literary notebooks from the same period contain several pages of references to various scientific works, including John George Wood's *Insects at Home*[97] and *Common British Beetles*.[98] Hardy probably read these books around 1876, four years after the publication of *Insects at Home*. In these two books the importance of scientific discovery by means of the microscope is emphasised throughout, and it is interesting to note the frequent use of the word 'microscopic' in Hardy's prose. Indeed, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* ends with a tribute to the value of making maximum use of 'microscopic treatment' of intervals of happiness in the passage already quoted in Chapter One:

> [a]s the lively and sparkling emotions of her early married life cohered into an equable serenity, the finer movements of her nature found scope in discovering to the narrow-lived ones around her the secret (as she had once learnt it) of making limited opportunities endurable; which she deemed to consist in the cunning enlargement, by a species of microscopic treatment, of those minute forms of satisfaction that offer themselves to everybody not in positive pain; which, thus handled, have much of the same inspiriting effect upon life as wider interests cursorily embraced (xlv, 385).

The entire passage is steeped in the language of biology and scientific investigation. The use of the word 'species' is significant, too, as it constantly recurs in a wide variety of contexts in Hardy's prose. Hardy also read a number of other scientific

[96] Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. A Biography*, 132.
[97] London, 1872.
[98] London, n.d.

works during this period, including G. A. Mantell, *The Wonders of Geology* (1848), various books on astronomy and works of popular science.[99]

Markings in his literary notebooks and in the surviving books from his library show that during the late 1870s and early 1880s Hardy read numerous books and articles on a variety of philosophical, historical and literary topics. Authors included Mill, Comte, Arnold, Carlyle, Macaulay, Spencer and Stephen. Of particular relevance to the subject of this book is the influence on Hardy of Comte, Arnold and Spencer.

Auguste Comte

Hardy states in his ghost autobiography that he read the writings of Comte and the Positivists so extensively in the 1870s that his own vocabulary clearly reflected the positivist influence.[100] Indeed, it was Hardy's belief that *Far From the Madding Crowd* was attributed to George Eliot because of his recent reading of Comte's *System of Positive Philosophy*,[101] which Hardy read in the 1870s. Certainly it is not difficult to find Comtean notions of progress (discussed below) in *Far From the Madding Crowd;* Gabriel Oak is an excellent example of the human urge to improve one's condition socially and morally. *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1* also contains extracts from *Social Dynamics or The General Theory of Human Progress,* and the *System of Positive Polity.*

As a supporter of Darwin, Hardy is likely to have approved of Comte's assertion in the *Positive Philosophy* that the affective and intellectual aspects of human behaviour should be studied in relation to the structural conditions on which they depend.[102] A fictional example from *The Return of the Native* suggests as much: in a passage with both Comtean and Arnoldian undertones, Clym's plans for establishing a school among the rustics are said to be doomed to failure if he does not pay sufficient attention to the social environment:

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[99] 4 volumes (1875–7). Hardy had a copy of his own. See Patricia Ingham's article on the influence of Mantell's book on *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, 'Hardy and *The Wonders of Geology*', *Review of English Studies* 31 (February 1980), 59–64. Hardy also owned Richard A. Proctor's *Essays on Astronomy* (1872), and *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1* contains four extracts (entries 122, 125, 126, 1293) from different works by Proctor. For the influence of Proctor on *Two on a Tower* see, for example, Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist,* 187, 189. Hardy continued to read scientific books until the day of his death, when he was trying to read J. B. S. Haldane's latest book of popular science, *Possible Worlds.* See Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. A Biography,* 571.

[100] This point is reinforced by Pinion in *Thomas Hardy: Art and Thought,* 169. The Positive Philosophy of Comte had been made fashionable in the 1860s – particularly among English intellectuals – by J. S. Mill's exposition of it in the 1840s, George Henry Lewes' *Biographical History of Philosophy* (1845–6) and Harriet Martineau's translation of Comte in the 1850s. Comte was one of the founders of the science that he named sociology – the science of the laws of social evolution. Comte believed science had destroyed the old order and enabled all social phenomena to be reduced to Positive theories. Examples of Comte terminology in Hardy's novels are given by, among others, Elliott, *Thomas Hardy's English,* 139–40.

[101] See, for example, *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1,* entry 618, 64.

[102] This point is made by Björk in 'Hardy's Reading', 109.

> A man who advocates æsthetic effort and deprecates social effort is only likely to be understood by a class to which social effort has become a stale matter. To argue upon the possibility of culture before luxury to the bucolic world may be to argue truly, but it is an attempt to disturb a sequence to which humanity has been long accustomed. Yeobright preaching to the Egdon eremites that they might rise to a serene comprehensiveness without going through the process of enriching themselves, was not unlike arguing to ancient Chaldeans that in ascending from earth to the pure empyrean it was not necessary to pass first into the intervening heaven of ether (Book Third, ii, 204).

Björk relates the biological basis of Comte's psychology to entry 730 in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*: '"Biological Dependence" – "The nobler phenomena are everywhere subordinate to those which are grosser, but also simpler & more regular . . . Man is entirely subordinate to the World – each living being to its own environment".'[103] Entry 750 in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1* is taken from *Positive Polity* and reads: '[a] "Fatal Dependence" – That of the cerebral functions on the nutritive economy.'[104] Hardy had already revealed similar thoughts in *Far From the Madding Crowd*: 'Bathsheba was in a very peculiar state of mind, which showed how entirely the soul is the slave of the body, the ethereal spirit dependent for its quality upon the tangible flesh and blood' (li, 407).[105] The bond between man and his environment in Hardy's novels is all-important: the relationship between Clym Yeobright and Egdon Heath is an obvious example.[106]

Hardy was much in sympathy with the scientific orientation of Comte's psychology. He was equally fascinated by Comte's historical perspective on human psychology, particularly his famous psychological law of the three stages. This law is based on a realisation of the fact that without knowledge of the past, the present is incomprehensible:[107]

> seen in its full completeness the fundamental law of the Intellectual Evolution consists in the necessary passage of all human theories through three successive stages: first the Theological or fictitious, which is provisional; secondly, the Metaphysical or abstract, which is transitional; and thirdly, the Positive or scientific, which alone is definitive.[108]

Comte thus argues that the scientific stage is the final state of humanity. His argument may be summarised as follows:

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[103] 74.

[104] 76.

[105] This point is also made by Björk in annotation 730, *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, 321–2.

[106] For an interesting discussion of the influence of Comte on *The Return of the Native*, see Patricia O'Hara, 'Narrating the Narrative: Victorian Anthropology and Hardy's *The Return of the Native*', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts* 20 (1997), 153–4.

[107] For a discussion of this point, see Marjorie Silliman Harris, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte* (Hartford, Conn: The Case, Lockwood and Brainard, 1923). Doctoral thesis, Cornell University, 1921, 28–29.

[108] *The System of Positive Polity*, III, 23. See Björk, 'Hardy's Reading', 110. Björk points out that judging by his extant notes Hardy paid most attention to the theological stage. However, this does not alter the fact that Hardy appreciated that the future of modern society lay not in the first but in the third stage

> Emancipated from theological and metaphysical conceptions, civilized by the growth of science and industry, unified by a common allegiance to science and the scientific method, men would abandon their attempts to control each other and would unite in efforts to increase human happiness by controlling nature.[109]

Comte believed in the unlimited possibilities of human progress.[110] The achievement of the scientific state entailed the cessation of efforts to establish absolute causes; it would be replaced by a recognition of the laws of succession and relation which govern phenomena and which are the true object of knowledge.[111] Comte was interested in discovering the general principles which explain the 'fact' of human progress.[112] The methods of the physical sciences were invaluable: the logic of the mathematical sciences such as astronomy, the experimentation of chemistry and physics, and the comparative method of biology.[113] Experience alone allows man to discern the limitations of his knowledge. Like Darwin, Comte believed in the survival of the fittest; it was this, Comte maintained, which produces the present balance between life and the environment.

For Comte there were six fundamental sciences, which he classified according to the order in which they had reached the positive stage: Mathematics, Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Sociology. Each stage is more complex than the previous one, and has progressively greater human importance. Sociology was thus the most important science for Comte.[114] All six sciences are clearly represented in Hardy's prose – mathematics, astronomy and biology in particular.

Comte suggested that the different branches of thought are not at the same stage at the same time, with the result that traditional religious ideas and concepts have not kept pace with modern society. A corresponding discrepancy can be seen in many of Hardy's characters, particularly in the later novels. Angel Clare in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, for example, adheres to moral codes which belong to an older, pre-industrial generation. It takes the traveller he meets in Brazil to make him understand how provincial and inflexible his old-fashioned ideas on morality are: '[t]he cursory remarks of the large-minded stranger, of whom he knew absolutely nothing

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[109] John C. Greene, *Science, Ideology, and World View. Essays in the History of Evolutionary Ideas* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1981), 65.

[110] However, this is not to say that Comte believed that progress adheres to a straight line. Instead, he maintained that it followed a 'looped orbit.' Hardy refers to this aspect of Comte's philosophy in his 'Apology' *to Late Lyrics and Earlier*, in *The Complete Poems*, 562. Hardy even produced a diagrammatic representation of Comte's theory. See entry 749, *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, 76.

[111] Harris, *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, 13.

[112] As Abraham S. Blumberg points out in his introduction to the 1855 edition of *The Positive Philosophy* (New York: AMS Press, 1974, x), this aspect of Comte's philosophy became less important in his later thinking, but was prominent in the earlier works.

[113] For an informative discussion of this aspect of Comte's philosophy, see Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 133.

[114] Comte originally called sociology 'social physics.' In *The Positive Philosophy* (New York: Calvin Blanchard, 1855; translated by Harriet Martineau) he argued that '[a]s social conditions modify the operation of physiological laws, Social Physics must have a set of observations of its own', 46.

beyond a commonplace name, were sublimed by his death, and influenced Clare more than all the reasoned ethics of the philosophers. His own parochialism made him ashamed by its contrast' (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Phase the Sixth, xlix, 464).

Comte also believed that industrial evolution had caused a dissolution of social bonds owing to self-interest and class interest. The moral ties which unite society were, Comte maintained, gradually being loosened as a result of a division of labour in society. It was the task of social science to lay down the social remedies necessary for a successful functioning of society as a whole. A prerequisite was that the sociologist understood the relation between circumstances and human development. For Comte, circumstances were the occasion rather than the direct cause of development; it is these which determine how far the individual and society as a whole can develop. This line of thought has a good deal in common with Bourdieu's theory of habitus.

Although it is not possible to trace the exact influence of Comte on Hardy's thought, it 'seems [...] probable that [reading Comte] gave Hardy a general psychological/philosophical perspective on the uneven rate of development of different branches of thought, a phenomenon which is such a major source of tragedy in Hardy's writing.'[115] There would be no tragedy in *Two on a Tower*, for example, if Swithin had not advanced scientifically and logically during his period abroad, while Viviette Constantine had changed but little in her ideas, and even less in her devotion to her former 'husband'/lover. Her love was the same, but 'the Swithin who had returned was not quite the Swithin who had gone away [...] he could not now love her with the sort of love he had once bestowed' (xli, 312). It comes as no surprise that the unchanging lady must die while the advanced scientific thinker will not only survive, but will in all probability become a successful astronomer and enjoy a happy relationship with the accomplished Tabitha Lark.

The notebooks show that Hardy did not limit himself to studying Comte but read many other writers with positivist sympathies, including George Eliot, Frederic Harrison, G.H. Lewes, J.S. Mill, George Sand and Leslie Stephen. There are three clear tendencies in Hardy's notes: an emphasis on the importance of affective psychology, the supremacy of emotion over reason in determining human behaviour and the importance of the environment in influencing behaviour.

Matthew Arnold

Complementing Comte's affective psychology was the influence of Matthew Arnold, which, judging by the literary notebooks, was particularly strong during the late 1870s and early 1880s.[116] Hardy met Arnold in 1882 and 1884. He had read *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869, Arnold's essay on Wordsworth in 1879[117] and a

[115] Björk, 'Hardy's Reading', 111.

[116] The following discussion is based on Björk's study of 'Hardy's Reading', 102–127.

[117] Pinion notes that the idea which appealed to Hardy most in Arnold's essay, and the one which influenced *The Return of the Native*, was "the noble and profound application of ideas to life" which was "the most essential part of poetic genius." See *Thomas Hardy: His Life and Friends*, 165.

number of essays in Arnold's *Essays in Criticism* in 1876 and 1877, and he re-read the essays in 1880. Arnold, too, is present in Hardy's fiction; for instance, he is one of the celebrated figures Jude Fawley brings to mind when remembering famous people associated with Christminster (Oxford). Jude quotes from the preface to Arnold's *Essays in Criticism, First Series* (1865): '"Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene! . . . Her ineffable charm keeps ever calling us to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection"'(Part Second, i, 94–5).

Of particular interest to Hardy in *Culture and Anarchy* were the concepts of Hellenism, associated with spontaneity and the emotions and vibrant with life (characteristic of group one), and Hebraism, which emphasised the strictness of conscience and the importance of laws and is associated with moralism and obedience.[118] The juxtaposition of Hebrew and Hellene is seen in a number of Hardy's novels, for instance, in *Jude the Obscure*, where Arnold's observation quoted in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, that 'ideal, cheerful, sensuous pagan life is not sick or sorry',[119] is reflected in Sue's pronouncement at the agricultural show: 'I feel that we have returned to Greek joyousness, and have blinded ourselves to sickness and sorrow' (*Jude the Obscure*, Part Fifth, v, 358). Björk's thesis shows that 'Hardy's criticism of modern society moves in the direction of what, for want of a better term, [he] label[s] his "Hellenic" social criticism.'[120] Like Arnold, Hardy lamented the Philistinism, sectarianism and utilitarian materialism of the middle classes, as well as their inveterate imperviousness to ideas. The group-two characters in Hardy's novels do not reveal such weaknesses.

There are, as Björk points out, two quotations from Matthew Arnold in the literary notebooks which are particularly revealing as regards the relationship between the two authors and the direction of Hardy's thoughts at the end of the 70s and during the 80s. The first quotation develops Arnold's view of the modern spirit and comes from the essay on Heinrich Heine in *Essays on Criticism*:[121]

> [m]odern times find themselves with an immense system of institutions, established facts, accredited dogmas, customs, rules which have come to them from times not modern. In this system their life has to be carried forward; yet they have a sense that this system is not of their own creation, that it by no means corresponds exactly with the wants of their actual life, that, for them it is customary, not rational. The awakening of this sense is the awakening of the modern spirit. The modern spirit is now awake almost everywhere; the

[118] For an informative discussion of Arnold's vision of Greece and Hellenism, see Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority. Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 350–351. For a review of Hardy's reading of Greek and Latin works see Wright, *The Shaping of the Dynasts*, 5–12.

[119] *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, entry 1176, 129. From 'Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment' in *The Complete Works of Matthew Arnold* ed. by R.H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960), III, 222–231.

[120] *Psychological Vision and Social Criticism in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, 25.

[121] In *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold* ed. by Super, III, 109–32.

> sense of want of correspondence between the forms of modern Europe & its spirit, between the new wine of the eighteenth & nineteenth centuries, & the old bottles of the eleventh and twelfth centuries or even of the sixteenth & seventeenth centuries, almost everyone now perceives; it is no longer dangerous to affirm that this want of correspondence exists; people are even beginning to be shy of denying it. To remove this want of correspondence is beginning to be the settled endeavour of most persons of good sense. Dissolvents of the old European system of dominant ideas & facts we must all be, all of us who have any power of working; what we have to study is that we may not be acrid dissolvents of it (Hardy's underlining).[122]

The underlined section touches on the very essence of the rustics' situation as it was delineated by Hardy: the continued existence of an antiquated system which restricts freedom and precludes rational thought. In order to progress, man must rationalise and question so as to be able to bridge the gap between old and new. The first stage is, of course, to recognise the problem, and in this modern science was an invaluable aid. For Arnold, science was not so much a matter of knowledge as a way of thinking or knowing. Science was the systematic pursuit and empirical investigation of knowledge.[123] Despite his belief in the value of the classics and a literary education, Arnold was concerned that England was lagging behind the Continent in the prominence given to science at school.[124] The people of the countryside were even further removed from scientific study and developments than middle-class urban pupils. A fictional illustration of the fact that such pursuits had barely begun to make incursions into rural society is supplied by *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, which describes the rustics' amazed reaction to the new seed-drill (xxiv, 191–2).[125]

The second quotation of significance in the Hardy-Arnold relationship introduced earlier is entry 1180 in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1,* from Arnold's essay on Joubert.[126] It is one of the best-known of Arnold's dicta: 'the end & aim of all literature, if one considers it attentively is, in truth, *a criticism of life*' (Arnold's italics). Hardy writes in his essay 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction': 'Our true object [in writing literature] is a lesson in life, mental enlargement from elements essential to the narratives themselves and from the reflections they engender.'[127] In his 'Apology' to *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, Hardy quotes from his poem 'In Tenebris II', '[i]f way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst: that is to say, by the explora-

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[122] *The Literary Notebooks Volume I,* entry 1017, 105–6.

[123] Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England,* 138–9.

[124] Matthew Arnold, *Schools and Universities on the Continent,* 1868. Quoted in Argles, *South Kensington to Robbins,* 55. Arnold also recognised the importance of science in university reform.

[125] For an informative discussion of the problems of the modern condition and the importance of knowledge (the scientific) and its relation to faith (the religious) in *The Return of the Native, Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, see David John De Laura, '"The Ache of Modernism" in Hardy's Later Novels', *English Literary History* 34 (1967), 380–399.

[126] 130–1. In Super, *The Collected Works of Matthew Arnold,* III, 209.

[127] *Forum,* March 1888, 57–70. In *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings* ed. by Orel, 110–125 (114).

tion of reality, and its frank recognition stage by stage along the survey, with an eye to the best consummation possible: briefly, evolutionary meliorism.'[128] The concept of progress is closely linked with an attentive study of reality. It requires the scientist's eye to make maximum use of observations, to detect differences, to compare one stage to another, and, above all, not only to recognise, but openly embrace new ideas as a safeguard for the future.

The 'Apology' continues with a direct reference to Arnold in the form of a question: 'Should a shaper of such stuff as dreams are made on disregard considerations of what is customary and expected, and apply himself to the real function of poetry, the application of ideas to life (in Matthew Arnold's familiar phrase)?.'[129] The Arnoldian expression is taken from 'The Study of Poetry' in *Essays in Criticism*, in which, having quoted several passages from Burns's poetry, Arnold agrees that the application of ideas to life

> is a powerful one; made by a man of vigorous understanding, and (need I say?) a master of language. But for supreme poetical success more is required than the powerful application of ideas to life; it must be an application under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. Those laws fix as an essential condition, in the poet's treatment of such matters as are here in question, high seriousness; – the high seriousness which comes from absolute sincerity.[130]

The literary notebooks contain numerous additional references to works by Arnold, suggesting that there was a clear and definite kinship of ideas between the two authors.

There is also an affinity of thought between Arnold and Hardy as regards the individual writer's role in helping to dissolve 'the old European system of dominant ideas and facts' (from the essay on Henrich Heine, quoted earlier). In 1877, for example, Hardy noted down Arnold's definition of the basic thought process of the modern spirit, recorded in 'Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment': 'The poetry of later paganism lived by the senses & understanding, the poetry of medieval Christianity lived by the heart & imagination. But the main element of the modern spirit's life is neither the senses & understanding, nor the heart & imagination; it is the imaginative reason.'[131] The element of the modern spirit is central to *A Laodicean*, and the phrase 'imaginative reason' is actually used by Paula at the end of the novel when she and Somerset are discussing plans for rebuilding the burned-down castle:

> 'We will build a new house from the ground, eclectic in style. We will remove the ashes, charred wood, and so on from the ruin, and plant more ivy. The winter rains will soon wash the unsightly smoke from the walls, and Stancy Castle will be beautiful in its decay.

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[128] In *The Complete Poems*, 556–562 (557).
[129] Ibid., 558.
[130] Quoted in Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, 267.
[131] Entry 1018, *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*. From *Essays in Criticism*, 212–213. In Super, *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, III, 230–231.

> You, Paula, will be yourself again, and recover, if you have not already, from the warp given to your mind [...] by the mediævalism of that place.'
>
> 'And be a perfect representative of "the modern spirit"?' she inquired; 'representing neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination; but what a finished writer calls "the imaginative reason"?' (Book the Sixth, v, 481).

Paula Power cannot make up her mind where she stands. Should she build a new property incorporating all the comforts and improvements and technological developments of the nineteenth century? Should she marry the efficient and well-trained architect who loves her? The rational side of her nature dictates one answer. The romantic side of her nature yearns, however, for a romantic union with the historic de Stancy family.

A Laodicean is a turning-point in Hardy's writing in that it clearly shows the great potential power of modern science to produce improvements in standards of living and to increase comfort and efficiency. At the same time, the novel makes it clear that there is a danger that the affective element will be neglected in the general rush for progress. The senses, understanding, heart and imagination must all play their part in the life of modern man to ensure not only that progress will be made but that there will be harmony both on an individual and a social level. This required an emancipation of the intellect which Hardy felt could only be achieved by science. He found a foundation for this belief in the work of Herbert Spencer.

Herbert Spencer

Herbert Spencer has already been discussed in the previous chapter, in relation to his belief in the vital importance of science in the school curriculum. The exact influence of Spencer on Hardy's thought and writing is not clear-cut, however, and some critics suggest that caution should be taken in tracing the influence of Spencer in specific works of prose.[132] We know nonetheless that Hardy owned the three volumes of Spencer's *Essays: Scientific, Political and Speculative*[133] and the two volumes of his *Autobiography*.[134] Hardy himself suggested that Spencer was among those authors who influenced him most,[135] and Spencer is given several references in *The Life*

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[132] One example is Wright. See *The Shaping of the Dynasts*, 34.

[133] London: 1868–75. For an informative discussion of which works by Spencer Hardy read – and their impact on him, see Rutland, *Thomas Hardy. A Study of his Writings and their Background*, 56–58.

[134] London: Williams and Norgate, 1904.

[135] Hardy also identified Thomas Huxley, J.S. Mill, Comte and Darwin. *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1* and *The Literary Notebooks Volume 2* suggest that alongside Spencer, it was these four authors who intrigued Hardy most in terms of philosophy (influences on Hardy's literary style are beyond the scope of the present study). It is also these writers who are of greatest relevance to the subject of this book. Hardy met Huxley a few times. As Björk states, Hardy was most interested in Huxley's 'contributions to the contemporary discussion of religion' (*The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, annotation 1269, 377); but there is only one direct reference to Huxley in Hardy's creative writing. Huxley's influence on Hardy would hence appear to have been somewhat limited in scope and is of little relevance to the subject of the present book. Huxley made major contributions to the teaching of science in schools and at university level, however, and readers interested in this area of his work may find a useful summary in

and Work of Thomas Hardy.[136] W.R. Rutland[137] has convincingly shown the extent of the influence of Spencer's *First Principles*[138] – even to the actual use of specific words from the latter – on *The Dynasts*. A letter from Hardy to Lena Milman clearly demonstrates the general importance of *First Principles* to Hardy:

> I promised myself the pleasure of answering your letter on Spencer, &c., as soon as I could get into a quiet corner of the world, which I have at last done. I am glad to find that your [sic] are interested in 'First Principles' – a book which acts, or used to act, upon me as a sort of patent expander when I had been particularly narrowed down by the events of life. Whether the theories are true or false, their effect upon the imagination is unquestionable, and I think beneficial. You will soon get hold of the phraseology, for which he has been ridiculed by some critics; the fact being that it is a style of writing from which he could hardly escape in handling such subjects.[139]

What was it in *First Principles* in particular,[140] and in Spencer generally, that appealed so greatly to Hardy? Spencer was a leading evolutionary philosopher and one of the most enthusiastic and influential propagators of the theory of social development in terms of the division of labour.[141] Social progression from a primitive to advanced level, Spencer suggested, allows priestly medicine-men to become surgeons, and dancers and musicians to become orators and poets. Division of labour is a natural, inevitable and beneficial process. Evolutionary philosophy provided a model for social development which was hard to resist. Like many Victorians, Hardy both appreciated this phenomenon and accepted its inevitability.

Spencer believed that evolution was the unifying basis of all knowledge, defining it as an integration of matter and a resultant dissipation of emotion. During this process, he suggested, matter passes from an incoherent homogeneous state to a specific, coherent and heterogeneous one. The aim of the process is to reach equilibrium; when this stage is attained, the environment will ultimately cause disintegra-

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Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority. Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life*, 131–33. Thomas Carlyle also exercised an influence over Hardy, though primarily within the aesthetic rather than the intellectual realm (Hardy was sceptical about Carlyle's philosophy). Carlyle is thus referred to in passing here. Like Huxley, however, Carlyle made important contributions to science (see Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority*, 133–50).

[136] See 210, 214, 400.

[137] *Thomas Hardy: A Study of his Writings and their Background*, 56–59.

[138] New York: P. F. Collier, 1901.

[139] *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy* ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978–88, 7 vols.), II, 24–5.

[140] Timothy Hands suggests that one aspect of *First Principles* which particularly appealed to Hardy was the concept of 'the Unknowable', an inexplicable mystery behind the universe, from which all life emanates. See '"A Bewildered Child and his Conjurors": Hardy and the Ideas of his Time', in *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy* ed. by Charles P. C. Pettit (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 145. The vision of life presented in *First Principles* has much in common with Bourdieu's theory of habitus. Spencer writes: 'Life in all its manifestations, inclusive of Intelligence in its highest forms, consists in the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations' (97).

[141] For a discussion of Spencer as an evolutionary philosopher and his relations to other scientists, see Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 120–154.

tion. The law of evolution applies equally to the visible universe and to smaller aggregates: evolution has thus both occurred in the past, and will continue to do so in the future. This is the basis of Social Darwinism, a philosophy which was, in fact, worked out before the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*.[142] An investigation of Spencer's work is thus helpful before discussing Charles Darwin, since the latter drew on Spencer and not vice versa.[143]

Hardy refers to Spencer and his theory of integration and aggregates in *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, in an entry which dealt specifically with political integration and appeared as an article in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1881. The passage from Spencer's 'Political Integration' is of direct relevance to Hardy's view of the position of the simple people of the countryside contra the more educated classes and hence deserves to be quoted in full:

> When the aggregates are small the incorporation of materials for growth is carried on at one another's expense in feeble ways – by taking one another's game, by robbing one another of women, & occasionally by adopting one another's men. As larger aggregates are formed, incorporations proceed in more wholesale ways; first by enslaving the separate members of conquered tribes, & presently by the bodily annexation of such tribes. And as compound aggregates pass into doubly & trebly compound ones, there arise increasing desires to absorb adjacent smaller ~~ones~~ societies & so to form still larger aggregates . . . While the extent to which social integration can in each case be carried, depends in part on these conditions, it also depends in part upon the degree of likeness among the ~~unites~~ units . . . Only after adaptation to social life has made considerable progress does harmonious co-operation among those who are not of the same stock become practicable (entry 1216, 135–6).

The picture presented above is one of struggle for positions of domination and resembles Bourdieu's concept of the field. Hardy's prose contains numerous examples of poaching in more senses than one. There is a clear awareness in the novels of the superior insight and strength of the educated classes (Spencer's 'larger aggregates') relative to the rustics (who are in danger of becoming the 'conquered tribes'). It seems inevitable, for example, that Dr Fitzpiers in *The Woodlanders* will outlive rustic Giles Winterborne, and he appears likely to prosper despite the weaknesses in his character.

Very early on in his writing career, two major publications helped to convince Hardy of the crucial importance of science and of a critical, questioning and analytical attitude for the survival and development of mankind. The first of these publications is Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, published in 1859; the other is *Essays and Reviews*, which appeared just one year later.

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[142] Spencer was at pains to point out, in his preface to the fourth edition of *First Principles*, that his evolutionary theory was in existence before the publication of *The Origin of Species*.

[143] D. R. Oldroyd, *Darwinian Impacts. An Introduction to the Darwinian Revolution* (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1980), 204.

Charles Darwin and *The Origin of Species*

The Origin of Species forced on the nineteenth century a radical re-evaluation of the whole concept of man and his origins: man's existence was no longer a matter of some six thousand years, but of millions.[144] The ideas of Spencer and Comte were still popular in the second half of the nineteenth century; but some people, including Hardy himself, saw that the real hope for the future rested with the development of natural science and of the intellect.[145] Hardy and Darwin shared a common interest in the problem of adaptation, and both recognised that not only external but internal changes were necessary to ensure survival.[146] For this reason, Darwin had a greater impact on Hardy than almost any other single writer.

Specific elements of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* can be traced in Hardy's novels: the idea that organisms vary, and that selection is the key to biological change; the basic principle that life is a struggle for existence, in which individuals must compete for limited resources; the belief that all parts of a community interlock with one another in a dynamic equilibrium which is comparable to that of physical chemistry; and the mechanism of Natural Selection, the motor of evolutionary change (to be discussed in detail shortly). Hardy recognised that the implications of Darwinism reached far beyond natural history and extended to the realm of sociology.[147]

Like many thoughtful men of the nineteenth century, Hardy was made to change his view of Nature as a result of his encounter with Darwin. The mechanism of Natural Selection and survival of the fittest took away all suggestion of design in Nature as survival becomes a matter of chance rather than plan. Man is no more than an insignificant part of the universe, whatever his pretensions might be.[148]

As Roger Robinson demonstrates,[149] Hardy's writings not only evince a lasting belief in Darwin's ideas of disorientation, instability and, above all, man's own conviction of his reduced significance in the universe; they also constitute a clear and sustained response to those same ideas. Poems such as 'Drinking Song' in *Winter Words* express how man's importance is diminished in the universal timescale with each new scientific discovery. There is a dilemma here, for while man's significance is reduced as a result of scientific developments, his continued existence and hopes for progress are reliant on these very discoveries. The young Jude Fawley, scaring birds

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[144] For the general reception of *The Origin of Species* see Cruse, *The Victorians and their Books*, 93–7.

[145] This point is discussed by, among others, Perry Meisel, in *Thomas Hardy: the Return of the Repressed. A Study of the Major Fiction* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 28.

[146] This point is made by Meisel, *Thomas Hardy: The Return of the Repressed*, 5–6. The concentration on the structural and the internal subjective constitutes a similarity to Bourdieu's concept of habitus.

[147] *The Literary Notebooks Volume I*, entry 1193, 132, contains the following quotation from the *Fortnightly Review* (XXVII): 'Darwinism is as fruitful in its [...] bearing upon sociology as in its bearing upon natural history', 679.

[148] For a discussion of this point, see Laurence Lerner, *Thomas Hardy's The Mayor of Casterbridge. Tragedy or Social History?* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), 40–41.

[149] 'Hardy and Darwin', in *Thomas Hardy. The Writer and his Background*, ed. by Page, 128–150.

in a brown landscape lost in the mist; Tess and Marian almost swallowed up by the winter landscape at Flintcomb-Ash; and Swithin and Lady Viviette Constantine viewing from below the vast stellar universe – all lack orientation and distinctiveness. The natural environment is accepted rather than understood. Only science can change the feeling of stagnation by providing man with the opportunity to master his immediate environment.

Robinson suggests that 'the large-scale chronological background against which Hardy increasingly made his figures move' is Darwinian. The novels contain numerous references to ancient earthworks, Roman rings and medieval ruins. These serve to emphasise the short span of man's existence and his relative insignificance. What are the lives of Susan and Henchard in comparison with the sheer size, and the history, of Maumbury Ring? Henry Knight pales into insignificance in comparison with the fossilised trilobyte. Knight, on the other hand, is different in this respect: with his geological background, he is able to analyse his situation. While science may convince him of his insignificance, it also enables him to understand it.

In Darwin, Hardy also found confirmation of his belief in man's susceptibility to nature-bound mechanical forces beyond his control. Their characteristics change from context to context, from novel to novel, and go under different names, such as First Cause, Crass Casualty, Nature, Immanent Will etc. Hardy did not wish his portrayal of the mechanical forces to be seen as the result of a consistent philosophy on his part; instead, First Cause etc. should be regarded as attempts made at different stages of his career to explain man's fate.

Natural selection

Darwin called the mechanism for survival 'Natural Selection.' This concept represented one of the major advances in knowledge in the nineteenth century, as it constituted the first attempt at an explanation of how life evolved.[150] Significantly, Hardy refers to the mechanism in his very first published novel, *Desperate Remedies*.[151] In *The Origin of Species* Darwin defines Natural Selection as the 'preservation of favourable variations and the rejection of injurious variations', adding that '[v]ariations neither useful nor injurious would not be affected by natural selec-

[150] For an informative discussion of how the evolutionary concept challenged contemporary religious thought, see Chapter One 'Introductory' (10–20) of Clement C. J. Webb, *Religious Thought in England since 1850 being the Olaus Petri Lectures delivered at Upsala in 1932* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933). Webb argues that evolution presented a new perspective by suggesting that there are processes going on within the Universe which cannot be accounted for by an intelligent power beyond and above the Universe.

[151] '[Aeneas Manston's] previous experience of the effect of his form and features upon womankind *en masse*, had taught him to flatter himself that he could account by the same law of natural selection for the extraordinary interest Miss Aldclyffe had hitherto taken in him, as an unmarried man' (ix, 182). Another example occurs in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, where the crowd who disperse after the skimmington ride follow 'a process of natural selection' (xxxvii, 308).

tion.'[152] Multiple conditions determine natural selection. As Sir Gavin de Beer explains, although these conditions are more complicated than the laws governing the movement of the heavenly bodies they are every bit as exact.[153] It is not chance which determines the qualities governing survival: certain individuals are better equipped than others from birth to adapt and survive. It is this vital fact which Bourdieu also recognises in the concept of the primary habitus.

When Darwin adapted the theories presented in *The Origin of Species* to man himself, he emphasised the importance of intelligence – 'reasoning powers, instruction' – for the survival of the 'highest part of man's nature', i.e. the moral.[154] He also recognised the advantage of a good education in the early years, when the brain is most impressionable. Like *The Origin of Species, The Descent of Man* ends on an optimistic note:

> Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale; and the fact of his having thus risen, instead of having been aboriginally placed there, may give him hopes for a still higher destiny in the distant future (405).

As John Holloway has shown,[155] Hardy was concerned with survival in the particular environment in which individual characters find themselves. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* is an excellent fictional example of this. Henchard is an important Hardy character who fails to inherit certain characteristics necessary for survival. He belongs to a species doomed to extinction: he is impetuous, unthinking, non-analytical and inflexible to new ideas (hence his attitude to the new seed-drill). Jude Fawley also lacks such characteristics. He does not possess the personal qualities necessary for survival in academic Christminster: he is an idealist, blind to the harsh realities of social class and academic tradition.

One of the real survivors in Hardy's prose is Ethelberta Petherwin. Of humble origins, she marries into the well-to-do class, survives the death of her husband and the ensuing uncertainty and poverty, and ultimately marries the wealthy Lord Mountclere. Ethelberta not only survives, but prospers. She sees the weaknesses in the management of the Mountclere estate and sets them to rights: 'She's steward, and agent, and everything' (Sequel, 453), and indeed saves the estate from almost certain bankruptcy. The key to Ethelberta's success is that she is endowed with the qualities of a fighter who knows how to make maximum use of opportunities; and

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[152] P. 68 in the Oxford University Press edition.

[153] Foreword to Charles Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace, *Evolution by Natural Selection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 16.

[154] *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, II, 404. It is likely that Hardy, like other educated Victorians, was well acquainted with *The Descent of Man*, although the latter is not mentioned in any accounts of Hardy's reading. For financial reasons it is unlikely that Hardy owned either of Darwin's major works. He probably read them at a library, and followed their reviews in the press.

[155] 'Hardy's Major Fiction', in *The Chartered Mirror*, 94–107.

she also sees life as a kind of scientific experiment – an experiment which, despite its daily challenges, she attempts to view as optimistically as possible.

Heredity, natural selection and survival

Preoccupation with hereditary qualities and their ability to determine survival appeared relatively late in Hardy's prose-writing career. In his three final novels, however, ancestry became a key issue. It is the discovery of the Durbeyfields' pedigree which brings Tess into contact with Alec d'Urberville, thereby sealing her fate. When Tess makes her confession on their wedding night, Angel draws the conclusion that his wife's conduct is the result of her being descended from an extinct family, from which there is no escape: 'I cannot help associating your decline as a family with this other fact – of your want of firmness. Decrepit families imply decrepit wills, decrepit conduct. Heaven, why did you give me a handle for despising you more by informing me of your descent!' (xxxv, 330) Angel concludes his remarks on Tess's ancestry by describing her as 'the belated seedling of an effete aristocracy!' (330).

In *Jude the Obscure* hereditary characteristics are offered as at least a partial explanation of the failure of Jude and Sue's relationship, and their inability to take the formal marriage vows. Aunt Drusilla explains to Jude: '[t]he Fawleys were not made for wedlock: it never seemed to sit well upon us. There's sommat in our blood that won't take kindly to the notion of being bound to do what we do readily enough if not bound' (Part First, xi, 81).

In Hardy's penultimate novel, *The Well-Beloved*, the issue of heredity again comes to the fore. The uncanny likeness of Avice Caro, her daughter and granddaughter (even their teeth are arranged in the same way) forms the pivot of the story, a story which is, as Chapter Four shows, crucial to an understanding of Hardy's views on writing and art. The inhabitants of Portland share a mere half a dozen surnames, and the island is described as 'the isle of intermarriages' (Part Second, xiii, 139). The islanders have a quite characteristic appearance and strong family resemblances which

> were the outcome of the immemorial island customs of intermarriage and of prenuptial union, under which conditions the type of feature was almost uniform from parent to child through generations: so that, till quite latterly, to have seen one native man and woman was to have seen the whole population of that isolated rock, so nearly cut off from the mainland (Part Third, ii, 161).

Hardy learned from reading *The Origin of Species* that survival is closely linked to the gradual development of certain qualities at the expense of other, less vital characteristics. The process of natural selection is slow to operate; as Darwin emphasised, 'natural selection can act only by taking advantage of slight successive variations; she can never take a leap, but must advance by the shortest and slowest steps.'[156] Natural selection, Darwin suggested, works best in larger environments with a large population:

> For forms existing in larger numbers will always have a better chance, within any given period, of presenting further favourable variations for natural selection to seize on, than will the rarer forms which exist in lesser numbers. Hence, the more common forms, in the race for life, will tend to beat and supplant the less common forms, for these will be more slowly modified and improved (144–5).

Thus, where there are a limited number of modifications, there is limited opportunity for the development of those characteristics which best ensure survival. Portland, with its limited population both in terms of number and variety, was highly vulnerable from a survival point of view, and Hardy clearly foresees the depletion or extinction of the isolated island race and its few families.

Sexual selection

Hardy also explored a subsidiary hypothesis to natural selection, namely sexual selection, which was defined by Darwin in the following terms:

> This depends, not on a struggle for existence, but on a struggle between the males for possession of the females; the result is not death to the unsuccessful competitor, but few or no offspring. Sexual selection is, therefore, less rigorous than natural selection. Generally, the most vigorous males, those which are best fitted for their places in nature, will leave most progeny. But in many cases, victory depends not on general vigour, but on having special weapons, confined to the male sex.[157]

Hardy the novelist relates the principle of sexual selection to the human world and explores the male and female's potential skill in selecting a suitable partner. In several of the novels there is mention of fertility rites (even the sophisticated Grace Melbury in *The Woodlanders* enters into these), and various methods are described for foretelling future partners; in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, for example, Liddy and Bathsheba use the Bible (Ruth I.16) and a key to reveal their future partners (xiii, 107 - 8). In Hardy's first novel, *Desperate Remedies*, Aeneas Manston is not particularly adept at choosing a suitable mate; he only settles on the worthy Cytherea Graye after having married a woman with whom he had little in common, and then murdering her to make way for Cytherea. Donald Farfrae in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* also makes a mistake the first time round, but the death of Marcella after the skimmington ride makes a union with the more innocent and worthy Elizabeth-Jane possible. Giles Winterborne selects correctly (the reader feels sure Grace would have made him an excellent wife), but Melbury's ambitions ensure that a less worthy partner – in terms of character, at least – will be given precedence.

Hardy's female characters also enjoy varying degrees of success in the selection of their husbands. For example, Bathsheba Everdene is dazzled by the romantic and somewhat exotic Sergeant Troy. It is not until she has actually married him,

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[156] *The Origin of Species*, 158.
[157] Ibid., 73.

come close to losing her farm owing to Troy's gambling habits, discovered the full extent of his past relationship with Fanny Robin and (believing Troy to have disappeared for good) allowed farmer Boldwood to believe she will become his wife at some future date, that the sudden reappearance of Troy and his murder by Boldwood pave the way for a more prudent choice in the form of the faithful and steadfast Gabriel Oak. Eustacia Vye selects Clym Yeobright for the 'wrong' reasons: the prospect of wealth and the opportunity to travel and/or live abroad. She pays the ultimate price for her mistake. Paula Power comes close to making the 'wrong' choice in selecting the aristocratic Captain De Stancy; but she learns – though almost too late – the value of the more reliable, successful young architect, George Somerset.

Darwin and Hardy's scepticism

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Hardy did not lose his belief in Darwin's findings. Up to the very end of his prose-writing career, his novels and short stories constitute a response to, rather than an exposition of, the effects of the environment on the individual's behaviour and destiny; and they explore the degree to which heredity, natural selection and sexual selection shape the individual's life.

To Darwin's concepts, however, Hardy added his own brand of scepticism towards social conventions, which he felt were part of modern man's response to changing conditions. One of the most important conventions which Hardy attacked was the sacred, legal and moral complex of obligations associated with marriage and divorce. This is made very clear in the preface to *The Woodlanders*, one of the most Darwinian of Hardy's novels:

> In the present novel, as in one or two others of this series which involve the question of matrimonial divergence, the immortal puzzle – given the man and the woman, how to find a basis for their sexual relation – is left where it stood; and it is tacitly assumed for the purposes of the story that no doubt of the depravity of the erratic heart who feels some second person to be better suited to his or her tastes than the one with whom he has contracted to live, enters the head of reader or writer for a moment. From the point of view of marriage as a distinct covenant or undertaking, decided on by two people fully cognizant of all its possible issues, and competent to carry them through, this assumption is, of course, logical. Yet no thinking person supposes that, on the broader ground of how to afford the greatest happiness to the units of human society during their brief transit through this sorry world, there is no more to be said on this covenant; *and it is certainly not supposed by the writer of these pages* (my italics, vi, 3).

Hardy's controversial views regarding marriage and divorce are re-confirmed in the earlier quoted Postscript to *Jude the Obscure*, where he states: ' a marriage should be dissolvable as soon as it becomes a cruelty to either of the parties – being then essentially and morally no marriage' (x).

Religion had traditionally taught unquestioning acceptance of, and conformity

to, the teachings of the church. The Bible offered an account of man's origins and prescribed rules by which man should live. *The Origin of Species* and *Essays and Reviews* (discussed below) played a fundamental role in shaping the challenges to convention found in Hardy's novels.

Essays and Reviews, by which Hardy's ghost autobiography claims that he was greatly impressed,[158] emphasised the importance of a critical attitude and the necessity of questioning traditionally-accepted theories and facts. This came at a time when scientific discoveries were proving the falseness of a number of previously accepted assumptions. No educated and well-read writer with intellectual pretensions could fail to be influenced by the pervading attitude of questioning reflected in *Essays and Reviews*.

Essays and Reviews

Chapter Two of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* depicts Angel Clare and his brothers at Marlott discussing the activity for the evening: the reading of *A Counterblast to Agnosticism* (Phase the First, ii, 24). In the manuscript, the Clare family reads *Answers to 'Essays and Reviews'*, the title of which is very close to the actual *Replies to 'Essays and Reviews'* published in 1862 – a 'counterblast' to *Essays and Reviews*. The Clare brothers are reading the book out of a sense of duty: 'we must get through another chapter of *A Counterblast to Agnosticism*, now I [Felix] have taken the trouble to bring the book' (24). They feel they have some form of intellectual responsibility to plough their way through the controversial volume; but their minds are, as subsequent dialogues and narratorial comments show, more or less closed to the content.

Essays and Reviews, published in 1860, advocated the use of empirical methods as the legitimate method of all investigation. The Bible was one object of such investigation. As a document written by men it reflects the limitations of the period in which it was written. Geology and biology play no part in the Bible, whose relevance is moral, not intellectual or scientific. As Amy Cruse notes, the first readers of *Essays and Reviews* were the clergy. The book attracted little notice at first. A storm of protest soon followed, however, as the controversial contents and their authorship became known.[159] William Rutland suggests that it was as much the method – 'which was imported from science' – as the conclusions which made an impression on Hardy.[160] This is not to say that the conclusions lack significance, however. David

[158] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 37.

[159] For a description of how *Essays and Reviews* was received, see Amy Cruse, *The Victorians and their Books*, 99–105. Clement C. J. Webb suggests that the strength of the opposition to *Essays and Reviews* was due to the fact that it was written by clergymen (see *A Study of Religious Thought in England since 1850*, 72). For an informative discussion of the background to the reception of *Essays and Reviews*, see Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, Chapter Four, 'The Impact of Science on Victorian Intellectual Life', 81–119 .

[160] *Thomas Hardy. A Study of his Writings and their Background*, 53. Rutland gives as an example C. W. Goodwin's essay on 'The Mosaic Cosmogony.'

J. De Laura produces a convincing case that Hardy also reacted to the content of the essays with a presentiment that maintaining the moral component of Christianity would have disastrous consequences for mankind if it did not also include basic Christian dogma.[161] In his fiction that presentiment emerges particularly clearly in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

As Ieuan Ellis has shown – and as Mark Pattisson, one of the seven contributors to *Essays and Reviews*, pointed out at the time – the seven essays constituted 'the touchstone for a larger conflict, between a new liberal vision of society, scholarly in approach and European in sympathy, and an opposing conservative movement which drew on the most reactionary and anti-intellectual elements in the nation.'[162]

How could Angel's brothers, the 'starched and ironed' clerics (Phase the Fifth, xliv, 412), whose minds as well as hearts were closed to ideas beyond their experience and their conventional training ('hall-marked young men, correct to their remotest fibre; such unimpeachable models as are turned out yearly by the lathe of a systematic tuition', Phase the Fourth, xxv, 228), and who may be assumed to have taken the words of the Bible more or less literally, possibly understand the implications of *Essays and Reviews*?

The essay 'On the Study of the Evidences of Christianity' by Baden Powell,[163] one of the best-known contributors and an acknowledged authority on the relationship between religion and science, expresses concern about the unscientific nature of traditional biblical scholarship.[164] Baden Powell points out mistakes in Genesis – one of the Old Testatment books most often quoted by Hardy – and states that the book cannot be regarded as historical. Instead, Powell advocates an evolutionary view of Christian doctrine: '[t]he Bible professedly contains the account of progressive disclosures of Divine truth.' [165] This is a long way from the conventional scholarship and fixed interpretations of the Clare family.

In *Essays and Reviews*, the idea of progressiveness is present from the start. The introductory essay, Frederick Temple's 'The Education of the World', emphasised what was to become one of the most important themes of *Essays and Reviews*, namely, theology as a developing or progressive science. Modern man, Temple says, has a clearer understanding of the nature of truth than the early Christians did. The dogmatism of earlier ages must therefore be modified, as must the doctrine of revelation. The Bible should be studied from a philosophical, scientific and historical

[161] '"The Ache of Modernism" in Hardy's Later Novels', 388.

[162] *A Study of Essays and Reviews* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1980), Introduction (pages not numbered).

[163] Powell wrote, for example, *History of Natural Philosophy from the Earliest Periods to the Present Time* (London, 1842); *Essays on the Spirit of the Inductive Philosophy* (London, 1855); *State Education considered with reference to prevalent misconceptions on religious grounds* (London, 1840).

[164] For an informative summary of the Victorian crisis of faith over the historical accuracy of the Bible, see Stephen Prickett, *Romanticism and Religion. The Tradition of Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Victorian Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 262–3.

[165] Ieuan Ellis, *A Study of Essays and Reviews*, 19.

point of view. Temple suggests that it does not matter if mistakes in interpretation are made, provided the student is sincere.

Hardy's fictional character Sue Bridehead appears to be thinking along similar lines when she tells Jude that she had cut up her copy of the New Testament and re-arranged the books in accordance with the order in which they were written:

> I altered my old one [copy of the New Testament] by cutting up all the Epistles and Gospels into separate *brochures*, and re-arranging them in chronological order as written, beginning the book with Thessalonians, following on with the Epistles, and putting the Gospels much further on. Then I had the volume rebound [...] I know that reading it afterwards made it twice as interesting as before, and twice as understandable (Part Third, iv, 182).[166]

Sue hence adopts a historical approach and makes the texts more comprehensible to herself. Whether her interpretation is the 'right' one in any absolute sense is less important to her.

Hardy, like a number of his intellectual characters, was an avid student of the Bible and adopted a methodical and critical approach to the study of Biblical texts. An important part of his study of the Bible was the perusal of works of criticism. The issue of infant baptism is a case in point. As a pupil-architect in Dorchester he was friendly with another pupil named Bastow. The latter was a Baptist. Hardy was brought up in the tradition of infant baptism, but was so impressed by Bastow's earnestness that he seriously considered being re-baptised as an adult. Characteristically, the autodidact read up on the subject in order to gain a greater understanding of the issues involved. Hardy's ghost autobiography describes his changing beliefs as follows:

> His convictions on the necessity of adult baptism gradually wore out of him. *Though he was younger than his companions he seems to have possessed a breadth of mind which they lacked*; and while perceiving that there was not a shred of evidence for infant baptism in the New Testament, *he saw that Christianity did not hang on temporary details that expediency might modify, and that the practice of an isolated few in the early ages could not be binding on its multitudes in differing circumstances, when it had grown to be the religion of continents* (my italics).[167]

The reader is reminded of the argument in *A Laodicean* between Paula, the Baptist minister – Mr Woodwell – and George Somerset, in which the Bible is quoted at considerable length. When this leads nowhere, a wide range of theologians are quoted. After Somerset appears to have demolished the main arguments of the minister, Mr Woodwell accuses the young architect of closing his ears to the truth and lacking

[166] Stephen Prickett's *Origins of Narrative. The Romantic Appropriation of the Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) points out that the early Biblical stories were collected on loose parchments and not intended to be read in any particular order. Only gradually did Biblical scholars start to look for coherence and meaning and arrange the individual texts chronologically. See the Introduction, 2–3. Sue's action is thus in accordance with early Bible-reading praxis.

[167] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 34.

sincerity, and actually leaves before Somerset can respond adequately to his accusations. Somerset subsequently admits to Paula that he was not completely sincere, and both he and Paula regret their lack of 'real logical dogmatism' (vii, 68). It is the word 'logical' which is all-important here: truth is not a matter of unquestioning acceptance of traditional values or Biblical texts but a consequence of stringent reasoning, of sound investigation and the testing of hypotheses, all of which lead to a progressively deeper understanding of the Biblical text.

The second essay in the collection, by Rowland Williams and on the biblical researches of the radical German theologist Arnold Bunsen, continues to discuss the relevance of the use of reason in the study of the Scriptures contra an unquestioning acceptance of the literal truth of the Bible. The essay constituted a challenge to prevailing conceptions; it states, for instance, that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses and that the prophets were not divinely appointed to explain history. Modern man must extract the moral truths from the Bible and not be over-concerned with the literal/historical truth of the text. This idea was followed up in Henry Bristow Wilson's essay 'Séances Historiques de Genève', in which it is argued that the Church has no claims to absolute knowledge and that the Bible refers neither to historical certainties nor to literal facts.

The essay which followed Wilson's – C. W. Goodwin's 'On the Mosaic Cosmogony'- introduces the importance of geology to a proper understanding of the Biblical texts. As the following chapters show, the study of geology and geological terms is of considerable significance in Hardy's novels – the early novels and *The Well-Beloved* in particular.[168] Goodwin argues that it is impossible to reconcile Genesis and geology. Revelation is related to God's dealings with man as a moral being. The Bible is not intended as a presentation of physical science, and Genesis clearly does not provide a scientific description of creation, as is evidenced by the fact that there are two irreconcilable accounts. As Ieuan Ellis shows, Goodwin made use of the discoveries of nineteenth-century science in his argument:

> For Goodwin the best defence of Genesis must lie in some moral aspect, and he suggested that it was a useful first guess at the great truth established by nineteenth-century science, the universal sway of law, 'the highest revelation of modern inquiry – namely, the unity of the design of the world, and its subordination to one sole Maker and Lawgiver.'[169]

The Victorian public were thus being encouraged to make use of the discoveries of science to obtain a deeper and more penetrating understanding of religious 'truth.'

Hardy was painfully aware that science and scientific method could both permit insights into Biblical truth and destroy faith. He continued to read the Bible though

[168] Hardy had come across Sir Charles Lyell's (author of *Principles of Geology*) notions in *The Origin of Species*. Here he would have read about, among other things, Lyell's views on modern changes of the earth and the struggle for existence, on the imperfection of the geological record and on the appearance of species and distribution of shells.

[169] *A Study of Essays and Reviews*, 75.

no longer primarily as a source of absolute truths but as a means of cultivating an intelligent understanding and appreciation of religious dogma. One of the main barriers to any real understanding of the Bible was the development of an ecclesiastical language, which led to alienation and obscurity.

Understanding of the Bible is, as Mark Pattisson argues in the sixth essay – 'Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688–1750' – progressive. Pattisson believed that there are fundamental truths contained in the Bible which have become obscured because of the use of an ecclesiastical language. Again, *Jude the Obscure* provides a pertinent example of that conviction; Sue Bridehead maintains the same thing when discussing Solomon's Song with Jude: 'I won't say any more, except that people have no right to falsify the Bible. I *hate* such humbug as could attempt to plaster over with ecclesiastical abstractions such ecstatic, natural, human love as lies in the great and passionate song' (Part Third, iv, 182).

Pattisson attacked a rigid application of dogma, which he maintained had caused religion to become inflexible and over-reliant on phrases which stimulated reverence but blinded people to the reality of their own environment. This is surely what Jude is saying when he comments on the apparent argument of two clergymen which he and Sue overhear: '[t]hey are two clergymen of different views, arguing about the eastward position. Good God – the eastward position, and all creation groaning!' (*Jude the Obscure*, Part Sixth, ii, 407).[170]

An unthinking application of dogma which is unrelated to the real needs of the immediate environment is clearly attacked in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The sign-painter whom Tess encounters on her way back to Marlott after the rape is a good example of inflexible theology applied without thought. He travels throughout Wessex painting on stiles and gates such messages as 'THY, DAMNATION, SLUMBERETH, NOT' 2 Pet. II. 3 – adding a few extra commas for good measure. Hardy writes, '[s]ome people might have cried "Alas poor Theology!" at the hideous defacement – the last grotesque phase of a creed which had served mankind well in its time' (Phase the Second, xii, 113). When Tess asks, 'suppose your sin was not of your own seeking?' The sign-writer replies, 'I cannot split hairs on that burning query' (113). Religion without thought and without humanity was totally unacceptable to Hardy. The character of Mercy Chant, Angel Clare's intended before he met Tess, provides a fictional illustration of his repugnance; she is depicted as one steeped in mysticism and generally lacking in humanity (Phase the Fifth, xl, 370). The reader sympathises with Angel in his reluctance to make Mercy his wife, and is not unduly surprised when reading that Mercy has married Cuthbert Clare instead who 'was, upon the whole, the more liberal-minded' of Angel's two brothers (Phase the Fourth, xxv, 229).

[170] The editor of the New Wessex Edition explains that the eastward position refers to '[t]he practice of the celebrant of the Eucharist standing on the west side of the altar and facing east (i.e., with his back to the congregation).' There was much controversy about this practice, but in 1890 Archbishop E. W. Benson declared the eastward position to be compatible with the Book of Common Prayer rubric (355).

Essays and Reviews emphasised the importance of modern man's individual and open-minded response to the Bible. Benjamin Jowett, the final contributor, focuses on that response in his essay 'On the Interpretation of Scripture.'[171] Jowett maintains that a continual revision of interpretation would remove false interpretations of the past, as well as the dogmas and controversies under which the Church had laboured. He appeals to science to show the importance of open-minded criticism of the Bible. In natural science, according to Jowett, building on assumptions is regarded as useless; and in mathematics, if something is wrong, the entire theory or problem is dissected until the source of error is revealed. In theology, however, the exact opposite is the case: the massive superstructure is allowed to disguise false principles and assumptions, which are, he emphasises, allowed to continue unquestioned.

Jowett argues that while the various writers of the Bible were inspired, they were not infallible, and their contributions could only be judged with the aid of historical and scientific facts. Like his fellow contributors, Jowett was against fixed modes of thought which precluded open-mindedness and blurred the boundaries between objective truth and subjective interpretation. Jowett summarises the arguments of his fellow contributors, emphasising that the Bible is not a handbook of doctrine but a collection of texts which should be read with freedom by the unprejudiced reader. The truth can only be arrived at by sceptical textual examination, rigorous use of the historical method and a not-too-literal acceptance of the words of the text.

Jowett was voicing the opinions of his fellow contributors when he rejected the worship of sacred language and advocated a rational, logical and historical examination of the biblical texts. Something of this attitude appears to come out in Angel Clare, who tells his father that he is unable to become a minister of the Church because he is against too literal interpretations:

> I cannot underwrite Article Four[172] (leave alone the rest), taking it 'in the literal and grammatical sense' as required by the Declaration; and, therefore, I can't be a parson in the present state of affairs [...] *My whole instinct in matters of religion is towards reconstruction* [my italics]; to quote your favourite Epistle to the Hebrews, '*the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain*' (Phase the Third, xviii, 166).

That Clare's argument is not as new and broad-minded as it may seem is shown in Chapter Four below. Hardy was sceptical of the modernists' attempt to reconstruct the Church from within, and of their attempt to adapt Christianity to modern thought while still remaining within the Church. Angel's attitude implies an ability

[171] Benjamin Jowett was Master of Balliol College, Oxford, from 1870 to 1893. Jowett was also Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford. Martin Ray draws attention to the similarity between the names Balliol and Biblioll (the College to which Jude Fawley applied). The similarity is surely no coincidence. See Ray's article, '*Jude the Obscure* and Benjamin Jowett', *The Thomas Hardy Journal* XIV. 2 (1998), 79–80.

[172] The editor of the New Wessex edition explains that this is the fourth of the Thirty Nine articles of the Church of England. It states: 'Christ did truly rise again from Death, and took again his Body, with flesh, Bones, and all things appertaining to the Perfection of Man's Nature', 380.

on the part of the Church to grow and adapt. Hardy was less optimistic: he distrusted the uneasy peace with science that the *Essays and Reviews* advocated, and he believed that morality must have a more humane basis. In his discussion of modernism and Hardy, De Laura notes that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* may be seen as part of 'the late Victorian debate over modernism in the Churches; [...] it is a search which reveals Hardy as at once braver and more consistent than the majority of his fellow rationalists, almost none of whom challenged the ethics of Victorian Christianity frontally.'[173]

In the character of Angel, Hardy portrayed the modern compromise in religion for which he had genuine contempt: he felt that modern man was unable to accept either the 'fairy tale' approach of Genesis or a world without faith. The reader senses an authorial condemnation behind the following explication of Angel's views:

> Though I imagine my poor father fears that I am one of the eternally lost for my doctrines, I am, of course, a believer in good morals, Tess, as much as you. I used to wish to be a teacher of men, and it was a great disappointment to me when I found I could not enter the Church. I admired spotlessness, even though I could lay no claim to it, and hated impurity, as I hope I do now (Phase the Fourth, xxxiv, 317).

Angel's period in Brazil and the spiritual development he undergoes there is similar to that of many a nineteenth-century intellectual. Having already 'discredited the old systems of mysticism' Angel had begun to reject 'the old appraisements of morality', which he felt required adjusting. He concludes that '[t]he beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses; its true history lay not among things done, but among things willed' (Phase the Sixth, xlix, 462). It is Angel's 'Hellenic Paganism' which proves to be his true source of inspiration and insight, and which allows him to recognise that such an offence as the rape of Tess – which is due solely to treachery and not to personal fault, and in which Alec and Tess share the blame, the one as perpetrator and the other as victim – is open to correction: it was the creed of mysticism and its 'abhorrence of the un-intact state' (Phase the Sixth, xlix, 464) which had blinded him hitherto. But Angel's awakening comes too late; his confused idealism promises no happiness. De Laura suggests that '[i]n Angel, the "sample product" of a quarter-century of English intellectual life, Hardy conveys his judgement of the consequences of the residue of irrational idealism still infecting even advanced thought in the ethical sphere.'[174]

While Hardy cannot be said to have shared all the main ideas put forward in *Essays and Reviews*, his prose nonetheless reflects a tendency towards a sceptical/scientific approach to traditional teachings and values. Underlying Hardy's portrayal of modern educated characters such as Angel is a conflict within himself which is clearly reflected in the two forms of knowledge which play such an important role in his fiction and which form the subject of this book.

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[173] 'The "Ache of Modernism"', 388.
[174] Ibid., 39

Summary

As Hardy was born and spent much of his life in the backward county of Dorset while still being a successful writer with intellectual aspirations and a regular visitor to the capital, it is hardly surprising that he was keenly aware of a conflict of values between the modern and the traditional. His education and reading taught him the value of rational, analytical, scientific thinking. His family background and early experience emphasised the value of traditional knowledge and skills.

Rather than revealing any consistent philosophy, Hardy's prose consistently raises the question of how modern man is to survive in a constantly changing world. The 'answer', if indeed it is appropriate to speak of one, varies from book to book. The issue of what kind of knowledge is most likely to promote survival is dealt with differently in each novel, and it is subject to varying degrees of influence from the works discussed in this chapter. Common to all the novels, however, is a studied use of scientific terminology. In some cases, as in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the appearance of such terminology is not frequent, but it is significant. On some occasions the terminology can be directly traced to specific works; in other cases, it is the result of a more general influence. When, then, would Hardy use scientific terminology, and to what effect? And even more pertinent to the subject of this book: how did he use such terminology to illuminate the issue of the relationship between different forms of knowledge and man's potential for survival? Chapter Three looks at both these questions in relation to Hardy's early novels up to and including *A Laodicean*. The latter is, as already pointed out, a turning point not only because it was Hardy's eighth of his fourteen published novels but, more importantly, because it deals even more clearly than his previous books with a conflict between the modern and the traditional.

Chapter Three: The Early Novels

Introduction

From the time when he wrote his very first, unpublished novel *The Poor Man and the Lady; By the Poor Man,* Hardy was convinced of the importance of the aspects of 'position' and 'view' in literature. These two aspects feature in his portrayal of his characters and are a reflection of his own opinions as regards the relative location and social significance of three main groups. These groups are not absolute but relative categories which form useful guidelines for the discussion of Hardy's characters.[1] To recapitulate briefly, group one comprises the rustics (countrymen and labourers) and minor artisans who are either journeymen or self-employed people with small businesses and, at most, one full-time employee. Group two is made up of members of the lower/middle class who have limited education (self-education and/or institutionalised), an appreciation of the value of education for social advancement, and a degree of social/financial security based on ownership of property, and/or a business with more than one full-time employee. Group three comprises a numerically small upper-middle- to upper-class group whose social position is based not so much on ownership of land as on education and social connections. This group contains relatively few members of the old aristocracy. The group which receives the greatest amount of attention – the lower/middle class with limited education – is the one with which Hardy himself identified; it is also, of course, the group whose growing social significance was most pronounced in Victorian society. This is the most diffuse group also as it contains both educated rustics and educated middle-class characters who have declined in social status.

The aim of this chapter, and of the following one, is to relate the habitus of selected key characters in each of the three groups in Hardy's novels to the social and educational fields in which they find themselves. The extent to which the various

[1] Bourdieu observes that '[i]n the reality of the social world, there are no more clearcut boundaries, no more absolute breaks, than there are in the physical world.' See 'What Makes a Social Class? On the Theoretical and Practical Existence of Groups', *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 32 (1987), 13. It should be noted that individual characters do not always fulfil all the criteria for their particular group. In the later novels the desire for education becomes increasingly significant and commercial assets become relatively less important in group two. The importance of group three, which is relatively small in the early novels, is reduced still further in the later novels. Significantly, the prospects and status of group one remain largely unchanged from the earlier to the later novels.

characters' dialogues show an orientation towards the restricted or elaborated code will be used – along with authorial comments where relevant – as an indication of the form of knowledge (everyday or specialised) possessed by the character concerned, and of his/her cultural capital. It is argued that group one possesses the kind of knowledge which most easily fits into the category of 'everyday': its cultural capital has a low market value, and it is less inclined by disposition and situation to take advantage of opportunities and to enjoy the benefits of scientific/technological developments. This is a form of hysteresis primarily connected with educational and environmental factors.

Groups two and three, on the other hand, are more inclined towards the acquisition of specialised knowledge, and their cultural capital has a higher market value. They enjoy the advantages of formal education (state or private). They possess financial resources and see education as a means of acquiring social prestige. A more advanced system of general compulsory education brought a range of scientific/technological developments within the grasp of groups two and three.[2]

These two groups belong to the predictive society. Discussion of groups two and three is more problematic than the preceding division into three different groups may at first suggest, however, since group two comprises characters who possess both everyday and specialised knowledge, and they switch from the restricted to the elaborated code as the occasion demands. They are also capable of using dialect when talking to rustics. Group three comprises characters who would have enjoyed the benefit of an élite education in the real world – a few to university level. Their language is most often that of the elaborated code, and yet they clearly fail to make good use of their social and educational advantages. This, as the following discussion will show, is a form of hysteresis which is related to emotional factors. A question of some significance to the subject of the present thesis is why this problem is particularly apparent in group three. Some suggestions are offered below.

The two forms of hysteresis described in the following discussion reflect an ambivalent attitude on Hardy's part towards the relative value of the two forms of knowledge, their relation to individual happiness and their ability to promote successful adjustment to changing social needs and expectations. It is in his portrayal of the second group of characters – the lower/middle class – that Hardy's ambivalence comes most strongly to the fore. The chapter ends with a discussion of *A Laodicean*, as it is in this novel that Hardy openly addresses the clash of the traditional and the predictive for the first time. *A Laodicean* represents a transitional stage between the early novels, which concentrate primarily on the depiction of traditional rural society, and the emergence of the new predictive society closely linked with science and depicted for the first time by Hardy in *Two on a*

[2] This was in spite of the fact that conservative influences still upheld the importance of the Classics, particularly at the public schools and in the universities.

Tower. The number and the significance of scientific references increase noticeably in the novels which follow *A Laodicean*.

Key characters in the different novels are discussed individually and in turn. The selection of characters is based both on their relevance to the subject of the present thesis and on their importance to the plot. With the exception of a very small minority of the rustics, Hardy's characters are individuals as well as members of a particular class. While the three different groups are subject to similar environmental, social and educational factors and thus share a common habitus, they are also distinct personalities in whose lives the elements of chance and heredity are operative. Characters are thus discussed individually within the framework of their particular groups in order to show that while Hardy did indeed recognise the importance of habitus – although he would not, of course, have used that term himself – the concept was not sufficient in itself to explain the course of individual lives. Predetermined developments and the effects of chance combine in different ways, and at different times, to produce a mixture of predictable as well as idiosyncratic responses to the environment. Analysis of individual characters shows that the elements of predictability and chance vary in significance not only between the three groups but within them as well.

The novels and characters selected for discussion cover the entire period of Hardy's novel-writing career. They are discussed in chronological order to bring out the specific nature and development of Hardy's views on the relationship between knowledge and survival in a rapidly changing world. As Chapters One and Two show, the very foundations of the known world were gradually being undermined, or at least seriously challenged, by a range of scientific discoveries. The early novels discussed in this chapter reflect a society largely untouched by science and technology. The later novels reflect a more complex society in which science, technology and compulsory education have an increasingly strong influence on character development and choice of career. Hardy's main concern throughout his years as a novelist is with groups one and two. Group one's position remains static. Group two offers the greatest hope for the future with its ability to adjust to new conditions. The process of adjustment becomes more complex, however, as the nineteenth century progresses and science, technology and compulsory education increase in importance. It is no coincidence that Hardy's novel-writing career culminates in the portrayal of Jude Fawley, who not only fails – in spite of strenuous efforts – to obtain the education he so much desires, but indeed strives after the wrong sort of knowledge: the Classics have already had their day. Jude fails to see that it is science that counts in modern society.[3] *Jude the Obscure* marks the end of an era. It is the end of the nineteenth century as well as the end of Hardy's novel-writing career.

[3] The public schools which fed the universities perpetuated the belief that the Classics were more important than science as an intellectual pursuit suitable for a gentleman. For an informative discussion of this phenomenon see J. R. De S. Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe. The Development of the Victorian Public School* (London: Millington Books, 1977), 127–136.

The three groups

The rustics

It is a critical cliché that the rustics were the group which Hardy portrayed with the greatest feeling.[4] His fame as a writer became established with the publication of *Far From the Madding Crowd* in 1874, the novel which marked the first appearance of the semi-fictitious name of Wessex and in which the portrayal of rustic characters was so sympathetic as to excite comparisons with George Eliot.[5] K.C. Phillips suggests that for most Victorian authors, the rustic people were representatives of a picturesque category rather than a distinct social class.[6] In Hardy's novels, however, the rustics are more often than not distinct personalities. This is particularly true after the publication of *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Hardy was anxious to correct the popular image of the 'conventional Hodge [who] is a degraded being of uncouth manner and aspect, stolid understanding, and snail-like movement.'[7] Hardy's novels and short stories present rustics as limited in experience of the outside world and of modern educated society, but definitely not as unintelligent human beings. Christine in the short story 'The Waiting Supper' puts this perfectly when she tells the upper-class urbanite Mr Bellston: '[y]ou little think what they [the rustics] see and meditate! Their reasonings and emotions are as complicated as ours.'[8]

As the group closest to Hardy's heart, the rustics are given a special role in voicing his world view. It is they who comment on the action and the principal characters. Their thoughts and language are intimately bound up with the local area and its inhabitants.[9] Their concerns are largely with concrete, practical matters related to the immediate environment, and to specific individuals or families within the limited radius of the local village. The rustics' formal education is either non-existent – as is the case with older characters – or very limited as a result of family situation and attitudes, financial resources and the lack of provision of school education in the local area. Little mention is made of formal education in relation to this group. This may quite simply be because the reader is meant to assume that the rustics are largely

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4 John Bayley is a notable exception to the rule in this respect. He suggests, in my opinion unconvincingly, that Hardy 'never claims to be specially intimate' with the rustics or to have 'expert knowledge' of them, hiding behind surnames which are a kind of 'no-man's-land' and disguise the fact that he has no real knowledge of his characters: *An Essay on Hardy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 101.

5 A number of critics compared *Far From the Madding Crowd* with the work of George Eliot. See, for example, R. Hutton's review in the *Spectator*, reprinted in R.G. Cox, *The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 21–27; and the unsigned review in the *Westminster Review* (reprinted in R.G. Cox, *The Critical Heritage*, 31–35).

6 *Language and Class in Victorian England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 110.

7 This quotation appears at the beginning of Hardy's essay on 'The Dorsetshire Labourer', 168. Angel Clare in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* also reflects on the individual nature of Hodge, Phase the Third, xviii, 168–9.

8 *A Changed Man. The Waiting Supper and Other Tales* (London: Macmillan, 1914), 25–83 (41).

9 This is also reflected in Hardy's use of the Dorset dialect. Baugner ('A Study on the Use of Dialect in Thomas Hardy's Novels and Short Stories') provides ample evidence as to the authenticity of the dialect in Hardy's novels.

uneducated. It should also be remembered that Hardy's prime interest was not, as already pointed out in Chapter One, in the process of education itself, but in its effects. It will become apparent in the course of the following discussion that there are few references to science in descriptions of Hardy's rustic characters, or in the rustics' dialogues. Since Hardy himself was – as Chapter Two makes clear – familiar with scientific terminology, and put it to good use at key points in a story when describing the more educated characters, this can hardly be coincidental.

The rustics clearly belong to a traditional society: they are submissive to the present datum (social or natural); the future is modelled on the past, and there is an implicit distrust of the abstract future and its possibilities. Theirs is an everyday knowledge which is clearly reflected in their context-bound speech. To some extent the dialogues of the rustics confirm the Victorian proverb, 'Servants talk about People: Gentlefolk discuss Things.'[10] Rustic speech is strewn with references to local characters and events. Advanced discussion of general ideas, movements, processes etc. is reserved for the more educated characters. The code of the rustics is clearly 'restricted' in the Bernsteinian sense. The rustics of group one have access to the restricted code alone, which makes it extremely difficult for them to obtain and take advantage of formal education, the chief transmitter of the specialised knowledge of the predictive society. Groups two and three, on the other hand, are able to switch between the restricted and the elaborated codes at will.

The discourse of the rustics is neither artificial nor contrived, as some of the earlier reviewers of Hardy's work maintained, but constitutes 'authentic tones inherited from their ancestors who gained them from Church and Bible and enlarged them to cover the serious moments of their secular life.'[11] Rustic discourse is thus the result of an inherited as well as an environmentally determined language. It contains frequent allusions to ecclesiastical matters and to the Bible (often the only book owned by a rustic, probably the only one present in the childhood home and the one used most frequently in schools for reading and writing practice). This is not to suggest that the rustics were particularly religious: indeed, their allusions are very often related to secular matters. Rustic discourse reflects those issues which Hardy most wished to highlight as part of his 'idiosyncratic mode of regard', namely: the desirability of upholding practical skills and everyday knowledge; and the importance of the role of education (diffuse, family and institutionalised) in determining social status, attitudes, worldly success and the ability to form happy, harmonious human relationships, particularly with members of the opposite sex. This book attempts to make clear that the basic reason for the rustics' extinction is inherent in their discourse.

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[10] Young, *Portrait of an Age*, front cover.

[11] Springer, *Hardy's Use of Allusion*, 83. Hardy's use of Biblical allusions is well documented in Rutland, *Thomas Hardy. A Study of his Writings and their Background*, 1–8.

The lower/middle class

Not only is this the class which is most significant in Hardy's novels, it is also an extremely interesting group from the point of view of the present study, as it contains characters who have rustic origins but who have also received some form of education of either the self-help or the formal type. Characters in this group have a foot in two camps, as did Hardy himself. They are men of action who, like Clym Yeobright, are not content to remain in the same position ('[t]he only absolute certainty about him was that he would not stand still in the circumstances amid which he was born', *The Return of the Native*, Book Third, i, 198). The majority of the members of this group are in the process of trying to improve their circumstances, though their progress may be neither visible nor directly measurable and may be impeded to a greater or lesser extent by their environment. Members of group two recognise that effort may only result in remaining in the same position, although direct retrogression may at least be avoided. As Farmer Springrove in *Desperate Remedies* exclaims: '[t]here's a back'ard current in the world, and we must do our utmost to advance in order just to bide where we be' (xxi, 431). Despite the possibility of failure, most of the members of group two strive consciously to move beyond the present. Like Barnet in the short story 'Fellow-Townsmen', they have 'an inherited instinct' for action which is 'part of their natures.'[12]

As was pointed out earlier, Hardy himself belonged to group two. This is the group which most clearly appreciated the importance of investing in education as a means of social and intellectual improvement. It also understood the link between education and social status. To portray group two faithfully, it was thus important to give some attention to the educational/social aspirations of its members. That a large number of the novels and short stories give so much space to considering the effects of such aims shows that the latter were of crucial importance to Hardy; this is, significantly, the theme of his first (unpublished) novel and also his last published work of fiction. The same theme also occurs in a number of his short stories, from the early 'An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress'[13] to the much later 'To Please His Wife.'[14]

The early novels reflect an increasing awareness on Hardy's part of the relationship between education, scientific knowledge and social advancement. The implications of this relationship become increasingly tragic as Hardy's prose-writing career progresses. The national efforts in the 1870s and '80s to improve the availability and quality of compulsory education, outlined in Chapter One, ensured that formal education would become of increasing significance in the formation of group two members' habitus. The greater formal knowledge and more advanced linguistic skills of this group as compared with group one enabled individuals to take advan-

[12] *Wessex Tales*, (London: Macmillan, 1912), 111–173 (147).
[13] Reprinted in Dalziel, *The Excluded and Collaborative Stories*, 87–154.
[14] Collected in *Life's Little Ironies* (London: Macmillan, 1912), 141–161.

tage of changes and improvements and to adapt more easily to new conditions. There is little indication of hysteresis among members of group two and a distinct movement away from the traditional towards the modern predictive society. The characters in this group move with varying degrees of success towards an adoption of the predictive society. Personal fulfilment depends on an understanding of the demands and limitations of the environment, as well as on an ability to grasp opportunities as they arise.

The upper-middle/upper class

While superior in education and social status to both groups one and two, members of group three rank the lowest in Hardy's novels in terms of exciting the reader's interest and sympathy. Despite the advantages of wealth, connections and/or education, members of this group frequently fail to achieve either harmony with their environment or happiness. Their cultural capital does not lead to greater wisdom: there is, indeed, a marked lack of 'great natural insight' (Hardy's definition of knowledge in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, xiv) and contentment among the members of this group. There is also a pronounced and tragic inability to form loving and lasting relationships.

The members of group three who appear in Hardy's novels are not at the top of the social élite and, with the exception of Lord Mountclere (*The Hand of Ethelberta*), are more middle-to-upper-middle class than upper-class.[15] This may be due to the fact that Hardy had little direct personal experience of the higher echelons in society – a fact which Meredith was not slow to point out in his criticism of the young author's treatment of polite London society in *The Poor Man and the Lady* – but also, and more importantly, to his having been more interested in the middle-to-upper-middle class group which was trying to assert, or in some cases even re-assert, its claims to gentility. This group is essentially upper-middle class by aspiration or inheritance, rather than aristocratic. Figures such as Lord Mountclere and Baron von Xanten ('The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid'[16]) are rare. The ensuing discussion is hence chiefly concerned with the upper stratum of the middle class.

From the beginning of his writing career, Hardy took an interest in the emotional deficiencies of the upper levels of society, and those of the upper end of the middle class in particular. In *Desperate Remedies*, for example, he observed:

> It is a melancholy truth for the middle classes, that in proportion as they develop, by the study of poetry and art, their capacity for conjugal love of the highest and purest kind, they limit the possibility of their being able to exercise it – the very act putting out of their

[15] Interestingly, Dorset was one of the counties with the highest concentration of aristocratic seats in England in the second half of the nineteenth century. See J.H. Porter, 'The Development of Rural Society' in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. VI, 1750–1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 838.

[16] *A Changed Man*, 297–399.

> power the attainment of means sufficient for marriage. The man who works up a good income has had no time to learn to love to its solemn extreme; the man who has learnt that has had no time to get rich (*Desperate Remedies,* iii, 49).

A number of the characters discussed in the following analyses are interested in art and music and have romantic aspirations which remain largely unfulfilled. Some have a reasonable income; others are striving to attain one. Only Lord Mountclere has sufficient financial means and breeding to lift himself above any concern for status or wealth, and it is significant that it is only towards the end of his life that he marries a woman – and it should be noted that she is from group two and not group three – who is able to steer his life in a more favourable direction.

The characters belonging to group three comprise graduates (or their siblings) of Oxford or Cambridge; ministers of the church or their daughters; owners of relatively large farms or estates; and a peer of the realm. Representatives from all these walks of life were personal friends of Hardy's. In a number of cases, however, they did not become his friends until he had started to enjoy success as a writer and begun to spend prolonged periods of time in London. Hardy's treatment of group-three characters suggests that this is not a group with whom he found it easy to identify, or for whom he felt any particular sympathy.

The rustics miss opportunities because their lack of education and experience of the world outside the local community prevents them from either recognising chances when they arise or making use of them on the rare occasions when they actually appear. Group three misses opportunities because it is unable to take full advantage of its cultural capital, primarily owing to a failure to relate to fellow human beings or to an inability to express or steer emotion. As was pointed out above, this group is largely incapable of forming permanent and happy relationships. This is a very different form of hysteresis from that characterising group one. The consequences are, however, equally tragic for all concerned. They are also equally difficult to counteract, as neither group one nor group three recognises that it suffers from hysteresis. It is only group two that shows an awareness of its own basic weakness and succeeds in taking full advantage of chances as they present themselves. As members of group two show, true wisdom lies in a middle course which utilises, as far as possible, the advantages of both the traditional and the predictive societies.

Habitus and linguistic skills in groups one, two and three

The rustics of group one are commentators on human nature in a traditional society which is gradually being overtaken by the predictive. The most searching social comments come both from group one as defined above, which is outside the predictive society and thus has a measure of distance from it, and from group two, which has direct experience of both forms of society. The elaborated-code users of group three are less concerned with social comment and more inclined to use language to analyse their own particular situation. Their approach to language is more standard-

ised, makes more use of impersonal allusion and is generally less spontaneous. It is also devoid of dialect. While members of group one are 'commentators aware of the tragic action but not directly involved in it',[17] members of group three are so caught up in personal tragedies that they ultimately withdraw from society either literally or emotionally.

The novels reflect a clear awareness on Hardy's part of the relations between – to use Bourdieuian terms – the habitus (social and linguistic), the social and educational fields in which the characters move, the degree of cultural capital they possess and their identification with either the traditional or the predictive society. Hardy's treatment of the three groups suggests an ambivalent attitude towards contemporary society. A number of questions arise from a close study of the novels: Would modern predictive society live up to all that it promised? Would its progress entail the loss of the advantageous features of the traditional society, i.e. its humanity and stability based on tradition? Would membership of group two provide 'the best of both worlds', or would it lead to a split existence devoid of the advantages of clear identification with any particular group? To what extent was the predictive society with its promotion of abstract thinking, development of general scientific laws and emphasis on educational success capable of creating a habitus which also makes allowances for individual characteristics and differences? These issues are at the heart of Hardy's view of fiction as 'human nature and circumstances [...] *the codified law of things as they really are*' (my italics).[18]

In order to demonstrate the essential nature of these laws, Hardy deliberately exaggerated certain features and characteristics. He believed that what Bourdieu calls the primary habitus is of crucial importance in determining attitude and action. Ideas and principles established early in life and inculcated or reinforced by education (both informal and formal) direct individuals towards certain courses which they only occasionally deviate from as a result of the intervention of chance. Individual action is thus primarily the result of biological and social factors which, combined with the element of chance, determine happiness and the power to survive.[19] Despite Hardy's own assertions and those of a number of major Hardy critics, a chronological study of his novels does, in fact, reveal an increasingly clear and fundamentally pessimistic line of thought with regard to life in a rapidly changing world in which traditional values and skills are gradually disappearing and where the key to human improvement is available to a limited section of the population only.

The importance for Hardy of circumstance – personal, social and educational – as a determiner of behaviour is established early on in his writing career, and it is obvious in his first published novel. Indeed, the very first paragraph of *Desperate*

[17] Raymond Chapman, *Forms of Speech in Victorian Fiction*, 61.
[18] 'The Science of Fiction', 134.
[19] Darwin also linked happiness and survival: 'the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply', *The Origin of Species*, 66.

Remedies introduces the idea of the 'long and intricately inwrought chain of circumstance'(i,1) governing the experiences of the main characters. The individual is often seen as one in a long line: Miss Aldclyffe tells Cytherea, for example, that she is 'but a temporary link in a long chain of others like you: who only have your little day as they have had theirs' (*Desperate Remedies*, vi, 95). These words are later echoed by Tess and given even greater force in the famous discussion of the 'ache of modernism.' The characters in *Desperate Remedies* are regarded as 'real liven specimens' (sequel, 452), objects of scientific investigation. Hardy frequently shows that the knowledge of individual characters is related to their environment: he writes of Knollsea, for example, that '[t]he knowledge of the inhabitants was of the same special sort as their pursuits'(*The Hand of Ethelberta*, xxxi, 254). In *The Trumpet-Major*, which Hardy was at pains to emphasise is based 'on testimony – oral and written'(1895 preface, vii) of the Napoleonic Wars and thus 'authentic', it is the historical context which determines thought; we read, for example, that 'Widow Garland's thoughts were those of the period' (i, 6). And in the last novel to be analysed in this chapter, it is the force of circumstance which results in Paula Power's ultimate acceptance of herself as 'a perfect representative of "the modern spirit" [...] representing neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination; but what a finished writer calls "the imaginative reason"'(*A Laodicean*, Book the Sixth, v, 481) – although her personal inclination is to live in a castle and become a de Stancy. Significantly, however, modern consciousness ultimately takes precedence over historical romanticism.

DESPERATE REMEDIES

Desperate Remedies was probably begun in 1868, when Hardy was employed as an architectural assistant in Weymouth (referred to as Budmouth from the 1896 edition onwards, and one of the chief settings of the novel). The almost complete manuscript was sent to Alexander Macmillan, but it was rejected owing to its sensationalist character, a weakness attributed to the influence of George Meredith who had earlier read and rejected Hardy's *The Poor Man and the Lady*. *Desperate Remedies* was, however, accepted by Tinsley at the end of 1870 on condition that revisions were made and that Hardy paid £75 as a security against losses – a considerable sum for the young aspiring author to raise at such an early stage of his career.

Three important features are thus established early on in Hardy's prose-writing career: he had a preference for settings which were personally familiar to him (Hardy stayed on in Weymouth to complete *Desperate Remedies* even when his appointment as architectural assistant had expired); he was susceptible to criticism; and while diffident about his abilities as a writer, Hardy's keenness to establish himself as a prose writer was such that he was willing to invest a substantial part of his very limited means in the publication of his own writing.

Classical literature had a noticeable influence on the characters and issues ex-

plored in *Desperate Remedies*. As both Michael Millgate[20] and Mary Rimmer[21] point out, for example, Manston's Christian name – Aeneas – causes the reader to associate *Desperate Remedies* with the Dido and Venus legend (Cytherea is a common epithet for Venus).[22] Hardy even quotes (with a change of pronoun) from Book V of Dryden's translation of the *Aeneid* at a crucial point in the novel, when the desperate Manston chases Cytherea around the table before he is challenged by Springrove and finally captured (xx, 426). The relevance of the Aeneas/Venus legend to the relationship of Miss Aldclyffe and Manston will be discussed later in this chapter.

It is also no coincidence that Hardy was reading Shelley and Swinburne during the mid-1860s. These two poets taught him to associate ancient Greece with intellectual and moral freedom.[23] The career of Owen Graye reflects a struggle for intellectual freedom, as he progresses from the privileged existence of a public-school boy to that of a young man forced to make his own way in life on the death of his improvident father. The birth of the illegitimate Manston, and his subsequent protection by Cytherea Aldclyffe in the face of a murder charge, contrast strongly with conventional morality.

However, neither Hardy himself nor his reviewers were convinced that the sensation novel was the right arena for such a challenge. Hardy was notoriously evasive in his comments about his life and writing. The preface to the 1889 edition of *Desperate Remedies* nonetheless suggests that – at least later on in his career, if not at the time – he had real doubts about the plot and style of *Desperate Remedies*: '[t]he following novel, the first published by the author, was written nineteen years ago, at a time when he was feeling his way to a method' (*Desperate Remedies*, prefatory note, vii). Contemporary reviews emphasise the unevenness of the novel. An unsigned review in the *Athenaeum* of 1 April 1871, for example, describes it as 'an unpleasant story' though '[t]he characters are often exceedingly good.'[24] The reviewer concludes that if the author 'will purge himself' of his coarseness of expression 'we see no reason why he should not write novels only a little, if at all, inferior to the best of the present generation.' An unsigned review in the *Spectator* (22 April 1871)[25] regrets the absence of 'fine characters.' More importantly, however, it goes on to introduce a topic which is to be a major issue in many of the reviews of Hardy's subsequent novels, namely, the treatment of the rustics. Hardy is much praised for the faithfulness with which he recreates rural manners and language. The subject of rustic thought is also introduced. The reviewer questions whether the ideas and conceptions of the lower levels of the rural population can be 'dignified with the name' of

[20] *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 31.
[21] See her introduction to the Penguin edition of *Desperate Remedies*, xxv.
[22] As already pointed out in Chapter Two, Hardy owned a copy of Virgil's *Aeneid* (Dryden's translation). *The Life* shows that this text formed part of his Latin studies.
[23] See Björk, 'Hardy's Reading' , 106.
[24] *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox , 1–2.
[25] Ibid., 3–5.

thought. Hardy made it his task to counteract social prejudice by presenting the rustics as ordinary human beings with integrity and no small measure of skill within their limited areas. Hardy's early novels set out to destroy the popular image of Hodge, as did his later essay on 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' (1883).

Desperate Remedies attracted relatively little interest among reviewers and is generally regarded as a minor work of little interest: for example, Mary Rimmer writes in her introduction to the new Penguin edition of the novel that *Desperate Remedies* is '[d]ifficult to describe, to summarize or to fit neatly into generalisations about Hardy's novels, [and] has until recently resisted assimilation into critical discussions of Hardy except as a false start, or at best as a false start in which the seeds of the later "good" Hardy can be seen.'[26] The novel is thus noticeably absent from such well-known surveys of Hardy's fiction as that conducted by Ian Gregor.[27] Roy Morrell, on the other hand, has successfully counteracted the view that *Desperate Remedies* is a false start by showing that the novel establishes a pattern which continues throughout Hardy's novels, namely a duality resting on a tension between the ill-considered and not completely successful acts already committed and those which have not as yet been perpetrated.[28] Seen in this light, *Desperate Remedies* is, like Hardy's remaining novels, about opportunities missed owing to a failure of perception: the individual's habitus prevents him from recognising chances as they arise, or may even cause him to assess information inaccurately and draw the wrong conclusions. Life is a competitive game in which the most sought-after prizes are knowledge, wisdom and happiness. The overall goal is survival.

The rustics

The rustics are background figures in *Desperate Remedies* and are usually referred to simply as countrymen, or by their occupation, e.g. shepherd or grinder. The rustic possesses specific knowledge which is related to the countryside: he is, for example, able to form relatively accurate judgements of distance even when the road is winding (x, 199–200), and he can see if someone has passed through a field within the last half hour by the appearance of a three-to-four-yard-wide space running in a line through a flock of sheep (xx, 422).

The rustics appear in groups, and they are not always given individual names. They have the conventional appearance of country labourers and are described as 'brown-faced' and wearing 'smock-frocks embroidered on the shoulders with hearts and diamonds' (viii, 140). Roger Ebbatson argues that the rustics rarely come alive. Of the

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[26] xviii.

[27] *The Great Web*. Gregor has selected *Far From the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Woodlanders, Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure* as the major fiction which together constitutes 'a coherent imaginative journey' (19). This book will show that *Desperate Remedies* is an integral part of that journey, as it establishes a number of the principles on which the following novels build.

[28] *Thomas Hardy. The Will and The Way*, 53.

cider-making scene with Springrove, Crickett and Gad Weedy, for example, he writes that Hardy 'brings his working people briefly to life, only to destroy that way of life in the fire and abandon them in favour of the higher-class protagonists.'[29] This fails to do justice to the rustics' real function in the novel, which is to act as a chorus commenting on the principal characters and action (they are even described as a 'chorus of assistants' (viii,145) when they pronounce a joint opinion – a fact which has largely been overlooked by critics). While the rustics may not always be distinct individuals, they are certainly 'alive' and continue to make astute comments throughout the novel. One such occasion is the arrival of Manston at Knapwater House, where the conversation between Springrove's rustic assistants, Richard Crickett (the parish clerk) and Springrove himself provides valuable information about the new steward and his professional and personal weaknesses (viii, 140). The rustics have an intuitive understanding of people and are able to make astute judgements of character. In their initial description of Cytherea Graye, for example, they note both her 'stylish accoutrements' and her elegant figure, but they also note that 'she ha'n't a stick o' furniture to call her own' (viii, 143). Cytherea's beauty and her vulnerability as a young educated lady with no financial resources form an important key to understanding the misfortunes she must suffer before achieving happiness.

Hardy's awareness of the importance of language as an indicator of social and geographical allegiance is clearly marked in his treatment of the speech of the rustics in *Desperate Remedies.* The amount of dialect used by the latter varies in the different editions: in the 1896 Osgood, McIlvaine collected edition, for example, rustic dialect was increased, only to be reduced again in the 1912 Wessex edition. As *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far From the Madding Crowd* show, dialect is an invaluable aid in emphasising individual identity and idiosyncrasies.

One of the few rustic characters who are given an individual existence outside the rustic chorus is the postman – also known as 'letter carrier' – whom Manston dupes. The postman[30] was not a universally familiar figure in the countryside until the 1890s, when bicycling letter carriers delivered to the door of every household instead of, as previously, farmers and labourers having to collect letters from sub-post offices or receiving offices. He was also one of the few representatives of authority who were generally regarded as kindly and helpful.[31] Hardy's postman would thus have been viewed with favour by his readers. Postmen were expected to evince a minimal standard of literacy and numeracy and sat examinations in dictation, manuscript reading and simple arithmetic. In 1855–56, only 32 of the 509 applicants

[29] *Hardy. The Margin of the Unexpressed* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press), 30.

[30] It was not until 1883 that the term 'postman' came into use. Before this date postmen were known as letter carriers. See Hurt, *Education in Evolution,* 134. For useful details about the patronage of postmen, wages and security, see Pamela Horn, *The Rural World 1780–1850,* 227–228, and F. E. Baines, *Forty Years at the Post-Office* (London, 1895).

[31] F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society. A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830–1900* (London: Fontana Press, 1988), 358.

passed the examination; given that public examinations were rare at the time and the chance of success slim, candidates must have been extremely brave (or, perhaps, foolhardy). The examiners commented in 1855-56 that the ignorance of the candidates was such that 'both the Post Office and the public would have sustained great inconvenience.'[32] Standards were unlikely to be significantly different at the time when Hardy was writing – the chronological setting of the novel being somewhere between 1860 and 1870 – as most of the major changes in the educational system had not yet taken effect.

The postman in *Desperate Remedies* has attracted little critical attention, but he is in fact an important character. In him, Hardy introduces a number of the salient qualities and patterns of speech which are associated with the better-known rustic characters of the later novels. The limits of the postman's world are his 22-mile daily round. His conversation with Manston takes place on a concrete, practical level. His comments are related to his personal experience and expressed in the localised, context-bound restricted code. His views on Christianity are specifically related to his own parish ('Not one Christian in our parish would walk half a mile in a rain like this to know whether the Scripture had concluded him under sin or grace', xvii, 358), and God is seen in terms of a temporal ruler who may be dismissed at will: 'Ah, you may depend upon it they'll do away wi' Goda'mighty altogether before long, although we've had him over us so many years' (xviii, 358). When he considers that even the Queen herself may be done away with, it is significant that the postman's fears are not based on any vague feelings of patriotism, but on the purely practical concern that there will no longer be any head to put on the penny stamps!

With his concentration on the present and the known, the postman falls an easy victim to the more worldly-wise Manston. In his confused and drunken state, his natural reaction is to rely on the familiar concrete features of his limited existence. He fails to reason beyond the present situation and to find alternative solutions to his problems. Instead, he falls back on a meaningless, jumbled repetition of the official regulations for postmen: 'No, no. O no - no . . . As - one of - Majesty's servants – care - Majesty's mails - duty - put letters - own hands' (xvii, 361).

Whatever his limitations, however, the postman is intensely human; and despite his relatively brief appearance in the novel, his encounter with Manston is highly memorable and touches the sympathy of the reader. It also reveals Hardy's ability from an early stage in his writing career to portray rustics with sensitivity and feeling. It is important to note that there is no suggestion in the novel that the postman is stupid in any way: his restricted views are not a reflection of limited intelligence but of a primary habitus which has never been given the opportunity to develop beyond the limits of a narrow social existence. The contrast between the narrow

[32] *Second Report of Her Majesty's Civil Service Commissioners, Parliamentary Paper* 1857, III, ix (81).Quoted in Hurt, *Education in Evolution*, 134.

world of the rustics and the wider world of members of group two that is a characteristic feature of all Hardy's novels is thus readily apparent in this, his first published novel.

The lower/middle class

Unlike the rustics, the members of the lower/middle class portrayed in *Desperate Remedies* are clearly delineated characters with a well-defined habitus and a personal/professional career which reaches beyond the limitations of the home or the limited local environment. Part of the greater knowledge of the characters in group two is drawn from Hardy's own experience of life in London and of an architect's occupation. This experience is used to particularly good effect in the characters of Edward Springrove and Owen Graye (the latter belongs to group three).

Important details about Springrove's life and qualifications are supplied by a professional man, a lawyer, whose training and experience place him in an excellent position to judge the true worth of Springrove's merits. The lawyer selects Springrove as the most suitable candidate for the position of steward to the Aldclyffe estate, justifying his decision on the very logical and relevant grounds that '[h]e was bred a farmer, studied building affairs, served on an estate for some time, then went with an architect, and is now well qualified as architect, estate agent, and surveyor' (vii, 123). The extent of Springrove's training is unclear, however, as intimated by the vague words 'went with an architect.' Springrove's father also says that he intended to give his son a good education but adds the words 'I would have done it' (viii, 145), suggesting that his original intentions were not completely fulfilled for some reason. Springrove's father justifies his change of plan by suggesting that Edward's natural talents were such that it was unnecessary to invest in an expensive education. Springrove's subsequent career suggests that his father's faith in his ability was justified.

It is interesting to note that the Springroves' social position was modified in the 1889 Ward and Downey edition: Edward's origins, described as 'very' humble in the 1871 edition, are modified to 'rather' humble in that of 1889. Edward's father's speech also loses some of its dialect forms in the later edition, as a result of which the Springroves do not come across as being of local stock.[33] Edward Springrove understands, but is not tied to, the local community; his training outside Carriford is part of his efforts to put a distance between himself and his social origins. His broad qualifications form a cultural capital which not only makes him eligible for the post of steward but also enables him to compete with, and ultimately defeat, Manston, both professionally and personally.

The exact nature of Edward Springrove's qualifications is not specified. These are not necessary for the plot, and historical studies also show that the training of profes-

[33] 'A note on the history of the text.' Penguin edition to *Desperate Remedies* (1998) ed. by Mary Rimmer, xlvi.

sional men was in any case largely unregulated at the time. The period of apprenticeship for most professions was five years. Three years was an obligatory minimum for solicitors and barristers; but it was perfectly possible for an architect to start a practice with a short apprenticeship, or indeed to serve no apprenticeship at all.[34] And as compulsory examinations for architects were not introduced until a comparatively late date (examinations for membership of the Royal Institute of British Architects did not start until 1882),[35] Springrove was not necessarily at a disadvantage in competing for a steward's post. His qualifications, which seem to be based primarily on practical experience, were clearly sufficient to convince Miss Aldclyffe's lawyer of his eligibility for the post of steward.

It seems that Springrove is also relatively cultured. Owen Graye observes that he has read widely and is a sensitive reader. However, in Owen's eyes at least Springrove is not like most other professional men, as his knowledge is more general and less exclusive; in other words, he is more like the rural artisan than the urban professional. His rural origins are also emphasised as he investigates Anne Seaway's background: he is described as a countryman who has not yet learned to think before he speaks. When he visits Mr Raunham, he is compared to a wild animal in his complete lack of self-consciousness.

Springrove is something of an idealist who has a tendency to penetrate into the depths of things believing he will find perfection. It is this desire for truth which spurs him on in his investigations on Cytherea Graye's behalf. He takes on the formal role of a detective and even adopts the language of a professional investigator. His persuasively presented argument couched in terms of an initial 'assumption' which tallies well with the 'facts' of the case recently 'unearthed' by Springrove convinces the initially incredulous Raunham, for example, that the young architect has researched his case well, and that no other explanation is, in fact, possible however unlikely it may seem.

An anonymous reviewer for the *Saturday Review*[36] dismissed Springrove as 'not a particularly interesting character.' Perhaps what he meant was that Springrove is not a passionate lover who is prone to making elegant speeches or taking violent action. He certainly lacks dynamism. He is loyal, though – a quality which Hardy valued highly and which he almost invariably associated with his rustic characters. Springrove's fidelity to Cytherea Graye is a reflection of his rustic background. His relations with Miss Aldclyffe suggest, however, that he has begun to lose the traditional rustic respect for the upper classes. After the fire at the inn Springrove approaches Miss Aldclyffe with deference, he adopts a business-like tone when discussing the accident, and he is careful to address her as 'madam' (xi, 224). But when Miss Ald-

[34] Reader, *Professional Men*, 118.
[35] Ibid., 118.
[36] 30 September 1871. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 6.

clyffe attempts to persuade Springrove to marry Miss Hinton as part of her own scheme for the marriage of Manston and Cytherea, Springrove's tone and language change as he refuses what he calls Miss Aldclyffe's 'conditions of release' (xi, 225). The narratorial comment on the incident deserves quoting in full, as it expresses a theme which characterises all subsequent novels:

> Miss Aldclyffe, *like a good many others in her position*, had plainly not realized that a son of her tenant and inferior could have become an educated man, who had learnt to feel his individuality, to view society from a Bohemian standpoint, far outside the *farming grade* in Carriford Parish, and that hence he had all a *developed man's* unorthodox opinion about the subordination of the classes (my italics, xi, 225).

Miss Aldclyffe shares the habitus of others of her social class and turns a blind eye to changes which are unacceptable to her. Springrove has moved beyond 'the farming grade' into which he was born and his views have developed considerably as a result of his wider experience. He is a changed man, educated to regard himself as an individual rather than a member of the group of rustics to which his parents belong. His experience as an architect and steward has given him cultural capital and the confidence to act as Cytherea's champion. Like Dick Dewy and Gabriel Oak in subsequent books, he possesses a staunchness which is duly rewarded. There is a sting in the tale, however, for although Springrove ultimately marries Cytherea Graye, he does not become the owner of Knapwater Estate – he is appointed steward but can progress no further. Springrove's professional and personal qualifications are duly acknowledged. Socially, though, he is still a member of group two.

The rowing scene at the end of the novel not only re-enacts the earlier scene in Budmouth, it seems to suggest that nothing essential has changed. This is not completely true, of course. What the clerk sees is simply two happy newly-weds; the reporter for the *Casterbridge Chronicle*, on the other hand, views the scene from the point of view of the objective outsider, whose opinions are unclouded by personal feelings or associations. Springrove must remember that while his passionate feelings for Cytherea are in no doubt, his future happiness depends on his ability to take a cool look at the facts of his situation and keep the limits of his gains clearly in mind. He does not have the 'symbolic capital' of the title of lord of the estate. As long as he is content with being Cytherea's husband and steward, his happiness is assured. Edward has played the game and won the highest possible prize for one in his position, a fact which he has no problem in recognising or accepting. The difference between Edward and the rustics is that he has recognised both the promise and the limitations of his situation and taken full advantage of his opportunities. Springrove's future happiness seems assured because he combines the powers of reflection, abstract thought and the professional qualifications of the predictive society with the warmth and solidity of the rustic.

The upper-middle/upper class

The four main characters belonging to group three are Cytherea and Owen Graye, the educated offspring of a Cambridge graduate; Miss Aldclyffe, the proprietor of Knapwater Estate; and Miss Aldclyffe's illegitimate son, Aeneas Manston. The latter falls between two groups owing to the disadvantages of his birth; however, as the following discussion shows, he has more in common with group three than group two.

Cytherea and Owen Graye belong to the lower end of group three: they are relatively well-educated but have no fortune, title or security, as the sudden death of their impecunious architect father at the beginning of the novel clearly shows. As with so many of Hardy's characters, little detail is given of Owen's education; but it seems that he stayed at school until the age of seventeen – one year longer than Hardy himself, and, as already stated, rather old for the 1860s.[37] It seems that Owen spent some time at a public school, to judge from his comment about Springrove's lack of a public-school education. As Chapter One shows, his education would thus have been largely a classical one, with little emphasis on the sciences, and considerable stress on moral development. When his schooling is interrupted by the death of his mother in 1861, Owen starts to train as an architect at his father's office. Owing to the absence of formal regulations for apprenticeship and the lack of compulsory examinations, a correspondingly greater significance was placed on the name and reputation of the firm to which an apprentice was attached. Owen's decision to become an apprentice at his father's run-down practice was thus less than wise. Narratorial comment also suggests that the choice was unfortunate in a further respect: when the pupil is the son of the master, he lacks the necessary pressure to earn money which is a prerequisite for results. Owen's lack of progress as his father's apprentice seems to suggest an inadequacy in his previous education both with regard to mathematics and to character development: Owen's 'knowledge of plans, elevations, sections, and specifications, was not greater at the end of two years of probation than might easily have been acquired in six months by a youth of average ability – himself, for instance – amid a bustling London practice' (i, 16). It is only when his father dies and Owen is left with the responsibility of providing for both himself and his sister that he starts to take his profession seriously. That he is ultimately successful despite his unpromising beginning is borne out by the fact that he subsequently takes the first prize in an architectural competition (sequel, 452).

Owen's achievements on the personal side are less impressive, however. He finds it difficult to relate to other human beings and keeps them at a distance, classifying them much as a scientist classifies his specimens: as biological classes

[37] See Appendix B – 'Children returned as occupied in the censuses of 1851 and 1871' – in Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society*, 318.

rather than individuals with mixed characteristics. Owen's feelings are strictly disciplined. Narratorial comment reveals that he is acting on the advice of his father in his determination to '[c]ultivate the art of renunciation' (i, 13) in his relations with women. His inability to understand human motivation is clearly revealed in his detective efforts; he is, for example, unable to understand Springrove's suspicions regarding Manston as 'he had not till now been able to form the complicated set of ideas necessary for picturing the position' (xiv, 332). He also shows himself to be incapable of understanding his sister's feelings during Manston's courtship of her and directly after her marriage, when he accidentally discovers that Cytherea is still in love with Springrove. When he upbraids Cytherea for her attachment to the latter, Owen falls back on the elaborated code by talking in universal terms in order to separate himself as far as possible from what he regards as a shameful affair. He refers to the fate 'of many a good woman' in acting on impulses of the heart and appeals to Cytherea's sense of convention as well as to the importance of maintaining a good reputation and fulfilling one's 'duty to society' (xiii, 278). Characteristically, the emotional side of the affair is left untouched. A similar lack of human understanding later causes Owen to persuade Cytherea to postpone her visit to Miss Aldclyffe: Owen over-emphasises practical issues, such as the importance of keeping to the time already agreed upon and the problem of rousing the driver so early in the morning, with the result that Cytherea misses the opportunity to take a last farewell of Miss Aldclyffe.

Significantly, the reader's final insight into the character of Owen Graye is conveyed by the labourer Gad Weedy, who shows characteristic rustic warmth as well as astuteness in assessing character. As he is a restricted-code user, it is to be expected that Weedy's opinion is illustrated by a concrete incident, the effect of which is heightened by the use of dialect. Weedy's short speech is an excellent example of rustic wisdom, and it is used by Hardy to pinpoint what really differentiates Owen and Springrove:

> [w]ell, I seed Mr Owen Graye at last dressed up quite the dand. 'Well, Mr Graye', says I from the top o' church'ard wall, 'how's yerself'? Mr Graye never spoke – he'd prided away his hearing. Seize the man, I didn' want en to speak. Teddy hears it, and turns round: 'All right, Gad!' says he, and laughed like a boy. There's more in Teddy (sequel, 449).

Gad Weedy's assessment of Owen is characterised by sympathy and understanding and is clearly contrasted with Owen's decision to remain coldly silent. While Owen Graye has the advantage of an expensive education and is ultimately successful in his career, he is blessed with none of the insight into human nature which Gad Weedy possesses by instinct.

Cytherea is a complete contrast to her brother. She is a lady of poetry, motion and feeling. Her very quality of movement raises her above her immediate surroundings and distinguishes her from other young ladies. She possesses, as Shirley A. Stave points out, 'a sixth sense, an intuition, that allows for knowledge beyond what her

senses and her intellect can provide.'[38] As with Springrove and Owen, little concrete detail is supplied regarding Cytherea's schooling, although the reader is assured that she has been 'carefully educated' (i, 17). The options open to a young girl at the upper end of the middle class, with limited financial means, have already been explored in Chapter One.[39] It is interesting to note that when Cytherea advertises her services as a governess she offers a somewhat limited range of subjects, namely, English, French and music. When her first advertisement fails to produce a response, her reaction is not to make more of her academic qualifications (perhaps she could not do so in all honesty), but to make herself more competitive on the open market by emphasising that she only requires a 'moderate salary', adding that she is also able to offer her services as a needlewoman (iii, 41) for good measure.

When Cytherea ultimately accepts the position of a lady's maid she clearly regards her situation as one which seriously conflicts with her primary habitus, and she entertains 'many misgivings as to the policy of being over-hasty in establishing an independence at the expense of congruity with a cherished past' (v, 77). Cytherea must first decline socially before becoming a lady with social status and financial security.

Despite her social and educational background, Cytherea Graye is unlike most other members of group three in that she demonstrates a warmth of feeling for her fellow human beings which allows her to do greater justice to her inherited advantages. Cytherea Graye is one of the most successful – as well as the least typical – of Hardy's group-three characters. Her success is not won without considerable suffering, however. For much of the novel she is an outsider, occupying a position on the periphery of Owen's life and career in Budmouth, humiliated as a paid employee in Miss Alclyffe's household, and treated with suspicion by the rustic population.

The rustics attempt to account for the apparent incongruity of Cytherea's past and present life with the aid of a plant metaphor which bears very close resemblance to the biological and sociological features of the theory of habitus: '[i]f she wasn't of a bad stock at the outset she was bad in the planten, and if she wasn't bad in the planten, she was bad in the growen, and if not in the growen, she's made bad by what she's gone through since' (ix, 174). The adjective 'bad' is, of course, more a recognition of difference than of evil.

An element of difference is manifest in Cytherea's language, which places her in a class that clearly conflicts with her actual circumstances. Her language is that of a cultivated lady and yet her official title is lady's maid, a fact which is not missed by Gad Weedy: 'I could tell by the tongue of her that she didn't take her degrees in our county' (viii, 145). Those who deviate in Hardy's novels must suffer in their attempt

[38] *The Decline of the Goddess. Nature, Culture, and Women in Thomas Hardy's Fiction* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995).

[39] See 'The education of girls', 84–85.

to find a safe compromise between their own principles and social conventions. Cytherea's relationships first with Springrove and then with Aeneas Manston cause considerable anguish but ultimately result in personal enlightenment. Her fluctuations in feeling are described in terms of a painful surgical operation, which causes 'lacerating' (xii, 257) agony and which results in her being 'lanced' to the point of 'refined and special torture'(xiii, 285).

Cytherea Graye's empathy for, and ability to relate to, fellow human beings are unique among group-three characters in the early novels. It is these qualities, combined with the faithful love and professional/intellectual capability of Edward Springrove, that ultimately make happiness possible. Aeneas Manston and Miss Aldclyffe, the two final characters to be discussed in this section, are more typical of group three in their failure to form successful human relationships and their resultant inability to gain any benefit from their social, educational and intellectual advantages. While it is true that neither has a particularly privileged background (Miss Aldclyffe is not of gentle birth, though her parents were educated and had social pretensions; Manston is illegitimate), both are ultimately placed in positions of promise, with status and a good income. Manston and Miss Aldclyffe are intellectually capable and physically attractive. These advantages are, however, squandered owing to emotional weakness, and both meet an untimely death. In common with other characters in group three, Miss Aldclyffe and Aeneas Manston remain ignorant to the last of the real reason for their failure.

An early reviewer described Miss Aldclyffe as an '*un*married lady of position and fortune, [...] a miserable creation – uninteresting, unnatural, and nasty.'[40] While she is haughty, she can hardly be described as 'unnatural.' Perhaps what the reviewer is hinting at is Miss Aldclyffe's conduct in Cytherea's bedroom which can certainly be, and has been, interpreted as lesbian. However one views her, Miss Aldclyffe is clearly a disillusioned middle-aged lady who realises that her early unfortunate relationship with her cousin and the birth of an illegitimate son must be hidden from polite society at all costs. Her coldness and imperiousness are the result of alienation rather than of an absence of emotion: her feelings for old Mr Springrove show that she is capable of passion. Miss Aldclyffe is neither uninteresting nor nasty; she is simply incapable of finding a balance between a passionate nature and the restrictive demands of social convention. She disguises the true extent of her misery under a veil of conformity. The image she deliberately creates of a refined lady of property who has inherited her uncle's estate seems convincing to most outsiders, particularly once it has been given official recognition by its registration in *The Landed Gentry.* Miss Aldclyffe knows, however, that the revelation of the secrets of her past would ruin her social position at one blow and that her newly-won status is extremely vulnerable.

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[40] *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 5.

Ironically, Miss Aldclyffe's reliance on conventionality is broken down by her own actions. As Mary Rimmer suggests in the introduction to the Penguin Edition,[41] it is possible to see Miss Aldclyffe in terms of the Venus/Aeneas legend: Miss Aldclyffe plays the part of Venus to Aeneas as she schemes to ensure that her illegitimate son is appointed steward of her estate. Like the hero of the *Aeneid*, Manston comes from ruins (his illegitimate birth and uneven career corresponding to the ruin of Troy) to the apparently secure haven of Knapwater House (the Rome of the *Aeneid*). Miss Aldclyffe is clearly instrumental in bringing about her own downfall. The conflict which arises from playing the part of both the conventional lady of the manor and the mother of an illegitimate son – who also turns out to be a murderer and a bigamist to boot – ultimately breaks down Miss Aldclyffe's defence against society. She has failed to marry the father of her son, lost the man whom she truly loved, abandoned her son (only accepting responsibility for him when it is too late and also dangerous for her own position), and almost managed to destroy the life of the only woman for whom she ever felt any real affection. All her advantages of good looks and comfortable position come to nothing through emotional rather than intellectual weakness.

For all her emotional weakness Miss Aldclyffe is intellectually very sharp. When Mr Raunham comes to tell her of his suspicions regarding Manston and Anne Seaway, for example, her contributions to the dialogue reveal that she is perfectly capable of thinking clearly and logically: she insists on dealing with facts and requires 'absolute proof' in the absence of any clear motive as to Manston's behaviour. Despite her disbelief, Miss Aldclyffe assures the vicar that she will not rest until the matter is cleared up by her talking to Manston personally. She employs a biological metaphor as evidence of her concern for verifiable fact: 'I always let these things die of wholesome ventilation, as every fungus does' (xix, 398). This same concern causes her to press Manston extremely hard when interviewing him. Miss Aldclyffe is so sure of her case that she uses such confident expressions as 'I cannot believe it' and 'I am sure you didn't' (xix, 402). She is not attempting to persuade herself, but rather to emphasise her own confidence in her judgement. Miss Aldclyffe's logic and acumen are so powerful and her manner so relentless that Manston is finally forced to reveal the truth. Once this is revealed, however, the motherly desire to protect the son takes over and passion displaces all powers of reasoning and logic. Miss Aldclyffe's emotions lead her into a situation from which there is no honourable escape, and the emotional mistakes of the past have their inevitable consequences.

Miss Aldclyffe's weaknesses are continued in her son. Like his mother, Aeneas Manston is good-looking and has charm. He is artistic, too, and plays the organ. He is even an amateur composer. He also enjoys a measure of professional success hav-

[41] xxxi. Rimmer writes that Cytherea Aldclyffe plays 'the Venus-like role of imperious and hidden benefactress.'

ing managed, despite the disadvantages of his birth, to establish himself as an architect. It must be assumed that Manston possesses a number of the qualities specified in the advertisement placed in the *Field* and *Builder*, since the wording is largely Miss Aldclyffe's own. The advertisement specifies the following requirements '[a] gentleman of integrity and professional skill', with 'superior education' and 'an artistic as well as a practical knowledge of planning and laying out' (vii, 116). The job of a steward was indeed a demanding one and required wide knowledge of a variety of skills including timber management, drainage and irrigation and road repairs, as well as a degree of familiarity with economics and financial management.[42]

Manston is an analyser with a keen intellect. He is also a rebel by nature, with a tendency 'to kick against the pricks; the last man in the world to put up with a position because it seemed to be his destiny to do so' (viii, 150). Roger Ebbatson aptly describes Manston as 'an illegitimate and unacknowledged heir, [who] is associated with social resentment and subversion of familiar order.'[43] A passionate nature burns below the surface and conflicts with Manston's natural intellectual sharpness. Like his mother before him, he makes serious mistakes in his relationships: he marries the wrong woman, kills her – albeit unintentionally – owing to an outburst of passion, relentlessly pursues Cytherea Graye in opposition to her own feelings and his personal circumstances, and ultimately allows himself to be captured by weakly returning to Cytherea in the cottage, where his uncontrollable passion causes him to forfeit his one chance of escape.

His keen intellectual powers also contribute to his downfall by enabling him to manoeuvre events in a way which ultimately proves to be against his own interests. Language plays a major part in this process. For instance, Manston devises a cunning system of flattery which assists him in his attempt to win Cytherea's affections. The method is successful because it is so subtle that it is barely detectable, as Manston has correctly calculated. Manston even adopts the tones of the experienced philosopher-cum-poet when he explains to Cytherea that 'when I see you are a Lovely Nothing, I pity you, and the love I feel then is better and sounder, larger and more lasting than that I felt at the beginning' (xii, 244–5).[44] Manston's words appear to be the result of thorough reflection but are, of course, merely a lover's scheme to disguise the real nature and extent of his passion.

Manston resembles his mother in that his passion commits him to a course of action from which there is no easy or honourable withdrawal. The death-cell confession is extremely important in assessing Manston's character and life. Superficially he appears to renounce passion and turn to objective reasoning. Roger Ebbatson

[42] Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England*, 126–7.

[43] *Hardy. The Margin of the Unexpressed*, 28.

[44] Manston is presumably thinking of John Donne's poem, 'Air and Angels': '[s]ome lovely glorious nothing I did see.' Ironically, in this poem Donne assumes that women's love is less pure than men's.

suggests, in my opinion erroneously, that the confession neither accounts for nor explains anything because it is 'embodied in the deathly anonymity of language.'[45] For Ebbatson, who is influenced by Foucault, the confession is a mere repetition of words which have been used before and which will outlive the user; the latter is only permitted to borrow them but he will never possess them and make them his own. Ebbatson fails to recognise the true importance of Manston's final words, though. When Aeneas claims that the normal condition of men is dead even when they are still alive, and says that he is about to enter this same condition by putting an end to his own life, he is suggesting that his life of passion has hitherto raised him above the 'dead' condition of most of his fellow human beings. What he does not recognise is that it is this very passion, along with an inability to form stable, loving relationships, that is the real cause of his downfall.

Summary

The rustics in *Desperate Remedies* are primarily background figures whose function is to provide a commentary on the plot and characters. The postman is a good example of the type of rustic character who is to appear again and again in Hardy's novels: the humane worker with a sense of responsibility and limited experience of life outside the local village. His use of the restricted code reveals a concrete, non-analytical and non-universal view of life. His opinions are context-bound and related to personal experience rather than general phenomena. In common with the rustic characters who follow him, he is excluded from opportunities to improve his situation owing to his lack of education and inability to conceive of an alternative existence. His is a hysteresis based on exclusion and lack of awareness.

Edward Springrove is a typical example of group-two characters found in subsequent novels. His roots are rustic, he is intelligent and ambitious, and he invests in a training outside the local environment which provides him with the necessary cultural capital to make his way adequately in life. His lack of dialect marks a breaking away from his rustic background. He shows an ability to analyse and penetrate the surface of things which stands him in good stead both professionally and personally. His faithful love of Cytherea is duly rewarded in marriage. As long as he accepts the limits of his success, he is assured of happiness.

Group three contains one atypical and three typical characters. All four have a number of social and intellectual advantages. Only Cytherea Graye manages to make proper use of these, however, and gain the happiness she seeks. Owen Graye, Miss Aldclyffe and Aeneas Manston lead lives which are characterised by wasted opportunities and in which social and intellectual promise are either neutralised or destroyed by a failure to show or manage emotion. Owen Graye is unaware that he has missed opportunities by shutting himself off from humanity, and he is in this

[45] *Hardy. The Margin of the Unexpressed*, 59.

sense more typical than his sister of the group-three characters in Hardy's novels. Miss Aldclyffe and Manston miss opportunities owing to a failure to manage human relations: they show affection either at the wrong time or to the wrong person. Their undoubted talents are largely wasted. They use language both to express and reflect on the human condition which, as elaborated-code users, they are capable of seeing in both personal and universal terms; but they never achieve a real understanding of their own particular weakness.

Desperate Remedies is not just a sensation novel, although it certainly has some of the qualities associated with that genre. Far more importantly, Hardy's first published novel sets the pattern for his later fiction, and it clearly establishes the two kinds of knowledge as well as the two types of hysteresis which characterise all subsequent novels to a greater or lesser degree. As such, *Desperate Remedies* must be seen as an extremely important novel in any attempt to trace the development of Hardy's thoughts as regards the survival potential of the three different social groups in a rapidly changing world.

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

Under the Greenwood Tree was written in the summer of 1871, when Hardy was living at Weymouth and Higher Bockhampton. Part of the story was written as early as 1867, however, as some episodes – the Christmas Eve party at the tranter's house, for example – were originally included in the abandoned manuscript of *The Poor Man and the Lady.* Alexander Macmillan was not over-enthusiastic about the story, and it was finally published by William Tinsley in 1872. As Michael Millgate points out, the novel was originally published under the title of *Under the Greenwood Tree,* without the title 'The Mellstock Quire', which had been crossed out on the original title page. The preface to the 1912 edition explains that 'The Mellstock Quire' would, in fact, have been restored earlier, but Hardy was reluctant to change the title by which the book had become known. The choir and its fate is, of course, the real subject of the novel. By returning to Higher Bockhampton, his birthplace, Hardy deliberately put himself back in a rustic setting where he could re-live memories of playing in the village band, and where he could view at close quarters the rural characters who are the most important group in the novel.

Under the Greenwood Tree was generally given a more favourable reception by the critics than that accorded *Desperate Remedies.* The reviewer for the *Athenaeum,* for example, states that the author 'has worked principally that vein of genius which yields the best produce' instead of exploring the less satisfactory 'dark ways of human crime and folly' followed in *Desperate Remedies.*[46] Hardy is praised for producing such a compelling story on the basis of the 'simple materials' of a country romance. However, he is also criticised for inconsistency in his portrayal of the rustics, whose

[46] Unsigned review, 15 June 1872. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 9–10.

language, according to the reviewer, lapses into that of educated people. Hardy's friend, Horace Moule, wrote a long and encouraging review for the *Saturday Review*[47] in which he compared *Under the Greenwood Tree* favourably with *Desperate Remedies*, describing it as 'the best prose idyll that we have seen for a long while past.' Hardy is praised for the accuracy of his depictions of rustic characters and his sympathy with nature. Moule writes that *Under the Greenwood Tree* is full of humour, and yet it is also a serious work which would form an excellent manual for anyone wishing to learn about the day-to-day life of a rural parish. Moule concludes that *Under the Greenwood Tree* is a book 'of unusual merit in its own special line.'

Under the Greenwood Tree is normally regarded as a minor work and thus receives relatively little attention in works of criticism concerned with Hardy's fictional prose. Even in works on Hardy's less important fiction, however, the novel is sometimes treated very summarily. For example, Beat Riesen dismisses *Under the Greenwood Tree* with the sweeping statement that '[t]he simplicity of *Under the Greenwood Tree* leaves one with very little to say about it.'[48] While critics in the past have regarded *Under the Greenwood Tree* as a pastoral idyll and looked into social conditions in the 1830s, surprisingly little research has been devoted to the contemporary working conditions of the various artisans described in the novel. The following discussion will show that this dimension is of considerable significance when it comes to understanding the ideas and behaviour of the rustic characters in *Under the Greenwood Tree*. Neither has much attention been paid to the frame of reference (context-bound or context-independent) of the rustic dialogue; the greater share of critical interest as regards the linguistic aspect has been directed towards the issue of dialect and the extent to which this is 'genuine' or modified for literary purposes. It is argued in the section that follows that the social and professional positions of Hardy's characters, and the linguistic frame of reference of their speech, are crucial in understanding the main theme of *Under the Greenwood Tree*, namely the survival potential of the rustic population in an increasingly unstable and urbanised world.

The rustics

The review by Horace Moule quoted above praised 'the power and truthfulness' of the portrayal of the rural characters, who are endowed with 'shrewd common sense and insight.'[49] Other critics felt that the rustics were too shrewd to be truthful representatives of their counterparts in real life. Modern critics are, on the whole, inclined to praise Hardy's treatment of the rural population of Wessex: Frank B. Pinion, for example, notes that *Under the Greenwood Tree* is an early example of Hardy's ability to portray country persons who 'utter perennial sense in incomparable language

[47] 28 September 1872. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 11, 14.
[48] *Thomas Hardy's Minor Novels* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1990), 63.
[49] *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 11.

which raises a smile and goes straight to its mark.'[50] The two rustics discussed in the following section – Reuben Dewy and Mr Penny – are excellent examples of this kind of people.

Characteristically, Hardy claims in the preface to the 1912 edition that the reality reflected in *Under the Greenwood Tree* is treated too 'lightly', 'farcically' and 'flippantly', a more serious and deep treatment being 'unadvisable', though why this should be the case he does not attempt to explain. Hardy frequently used his prefaces to apologise – perhaps not always completely sincerely – for his work. Whatever Hardy's real feelings, it may be argued that it is the very light-heartedness of his treatment of the rustics that makes them so effective as characters: their warmth and sincerity and their colourful speech laced with dialect and humour serve to demonstrate their distance from the cold, calculating industrialised world. However, the 'perished band' and rustic society in general must ultimately share the same fate: theirs is the archaic language of a world doomed to extinction.

In his descriptions of the village characters it is, as Jeanne Howard shows,[51] clear that Hardy's use of such precise social vocabulary as 'gentleman', 'master', 'journeyman', 'apprentice', and 'workfolk' indicates that he 'had an exact social reference in mind.' It will be seen that each character's social standing is of crucial importance in understanding Hardy's views on the relationship between knowledge and survival in the three social groups represented in the novels.

Under the Greenwood Tree describes the society of the 1830s rather than the 1870s, when the book was published. By the time the novel appeared, Stinsford (on which Mellstock was largely based) had seen a decline in crafts and trades to the extent that there was only one apprentice left in the village, and that was to the grocery trade.[52] By 1871, the village had lost its only shoemaker. Hardy's portrayal of Mr Penny and the other artisans is thus a nostalgic one.

The first paragraph of the novel identifies the inhabitants of Mellstock as 'dwellers in a wood' who have a special ability to differentiate between different varieties of tree by the sound the wind makes in blowing through them. The inhabitants of Mellstock are like the trees surrounding them: they are subject to such common forces in nature as the ravages of winter, and yet they are also distinct individuals whose individual 'note' withstands the pressure to conform.

Of the two rustic characters discussed here, Reuben Dewy is the less interesting. In real life, tranters were more conformist, less outspoken and less critical of society than cobblers, and this is reflected in Hardy's portrayal of Dewy and Mr Penny, although it will be seen that the latter does not conform in all respects to the contemporary view of a shoemaker. Dewy has the typical florid rustic complexion. As an irregular carrier he lacks the security of trade enjoyed by the regular tradesmen

[50] *Hardy the Writer. Surveys and Assessments* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), 47.
[51] 'Thomas Hardy's "Mellstock"', 197.
[52] Ibid., 193.

and is more dependent on keeping on good terms with his neighbours, who are his main customers. He thus has a tendency to weigh up people carefully on first making their acquaintance. When in the company of his friends, however, he is warm and spontaneous. This is made clear in his very first speech, which is directed towards the choir members and much concerned with the details of the production of cider (he is struggling to open a cider barrel while talking). He punctuates his statements with 'a vehement gust of breath' (Part the First, ii, 9) which takes away the necessity of more intricate verbal description. His explanation of the cider-production process assumes some knowledge on the part of the listeners ('you d'mind the sort, Michael?' Part the First, ii, 9, he asks at one stage). As he is a restricted-code user, his description of the apples involved is of a practical rather than a scientific nature: '[a]nd there's a sprinkling of they that grow down by the orchard-rails – streaked ones – rail apples we d'call 'em, as 'tis by the rails they grow, and not knowing the right name' (Part the First, ii, 9). The use of dialect, combined with the mention of a specific local spot, reinforces the fact that Dewy's knowledge is of a local rather than a universal nature.

The language of the tranter and his wife is particularly interesting. The Dewys are at the top end of the rustic class. While Reuben is content with his lot, his wife dreams of a more elevated social position. She appreciates the importance of the role of language in defining social class, although she over-estimates the power of language *per se* to improve social status. Sociolinguistic research[53] shows that it is women rather than men who are interested in leading changes in language use towards a high-status variety or a national norm. Ann Dewy, like Mrs Smith in the later novel *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, is no exception. Her description of the socially acceptable form of the word potato ('[w]ith our family 'twas never less than "taters", and very often "pertatoes" outright', Part the First, viii, 59) is given in deadly earnest, although it has a touch of humour for the reader and perhaps for her husband too, who consistently and successfully ignores his wife's admonitions on the subject. Ann Dewy is blind to the fact that her use of non-standard grammar places her firmly in the lower social orders, however carefully her words may be chosen. She believes, like Cytherea Graye in *Desperate Remedies*, that her present mode of existence is a betrayal of her primary habitus ('there was no family in the parish that kept themselves up more than we', Part the First, viii, 59). What she fails to appreciate is that her style of language and the practical limitations of her day-to-day existence make it almost impossible to improve her position without the advantage of formal education.

The same is true of Reuben Dewy. While he has no social pretensions, he does see himself as a spokesman for the choir. He knows that the choir's visit to Maybold must be carefully planned and that his speech should be thoroughly rehearsed. He

[53] P. Trudghill, *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society* (London: Penguin, 1983), 92.

does not understand, however, that his limited experience – which is of the Mellstock group only – as well as his lack of familiarity with verbal negotiation put him at a serious disadvantage in the 'discussion' with Maybold, who is specially trained in the use of persuasive language and has a much wider experience of the world. Dewy is painfully inept in his attempts to explain his reasons for prolonging the life of the choir, because his language is rooted in the world of the practical worker. Like the other members of the choir, Dewy fails to realise that the days of local bands are numbered and that times have changed.[54]

In talking to Maybold, Dewy, as a restricted-code user, expresses himself in practical and concrete terms and at one stage even compares the Church with a practical trade ('Pa'son Mayble, every tradesman d'like to have his own way in his workshop, and Mellstock Church is yours', Part the Second, iii, 76) – a comparison which is hardly likely to impress the vicar. Dewy is clearly at a disadvantage throughout the conversation: the social distance between the speakers is marked by the tranter's use of 'sir' and by the fact that he apologises for his 'common way' of speaking on four separate occasions. Dewy is painfully conscious of the fact that he is being forced to play a part which is not natural to him. The conversation ends with an excellent example of rustic hysteresis when Dewy accepts the vicar's decision as inevitable: '[v]ery good, sir. *I suppose mortal men mustn't expect their own way entirely*, and I express in all our names that we'll make shift and be satisfied with what you say' (Part the Second, iv, 89–90, my italics). The superiority of Maybold in all respects – social, educational and linguistic – is made abundantly clear. The conclusion of the discussion is a natural and an inevitable one in Dewy's eyes and he is unable to conceive of any other alternative – a fact of which Maybold is not slow to take advantage.

Mr Penny, the cobbler, is also part of the choir but plays a passive role in the interview with Maybold. Knowledge of contemporary working conditions is particularly revealing when applied to the shoemaker. In real life shoemakers were often among the best-educated artisans in a village.[55] They were also frequently 'free-thinking' in religion and tended to regard themselves as neither Church of England nor Nonconformist.[56] It is perhaps no coincidence that boot- and shoemakers also tended to be the focus of, and spokesmen for, local discontent.[57] Interestingly, no mention is made of Mr Penny's education in the novel. Neither is there anything in

[54] The attitude of the Mellstock Choir may be compared with that of the Battersby-on-the-Hill choir in Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*. The narrator, Mr Overton, says of this choir, which was still performing in the 1830s, that '[t]hey were doomed and had a presentiment of evil', 93. The Mellstock Choir appears to have no such presentiment.

[55] For a discussion of the high level of literacy and intellectualism among shoemakers in the nineteenth century and the possible reasons for this, see E. J. Hobsbawm and Joan Wallach Scott, 'Political Shoemakers', *Past and Present* 89 (1980), 94–96.

[56] Young, *Portrait of an Age*, 76. The political radicalism of shoemakers is discussed in Hobsbawm and Scott, 'Political Shoemakers.'

[57] Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England*, 109.

his speech to indicate any formal schooling: the vocabulary is unsophisticated, as with restricted-code users in general, and references are to local events rather than to matters of general knowledge, cultural phenomena etc. His religious views do not appear to be particularly pronounced: he is more interested in keeping church influence in daily life to a minimum.

When it comes to being a focus of discontent, however, Mr Penny is more typical of contemporary shoemakers as he plays a leading role in the discussion of Maybold's shortcomings as a vicar (Part the Second, ii, 69–72) and eggs on the other rustics. His views are not radical, however, and rather than being fiercely independent, or even truculent as so many shoemakers were at the time,[58] he seems to be more willing to voice the general view. Why does Mr Penny bear a greater resemblance to the placid rustic than to the radical, discontented, vociferous shoemaker of the early nineteenth century? Before answering this question, I should like first to show in what ways Mr Penny conforms to the picture of the rustic artisan whose interests are primarily professional rather than political.

Mr Penny is proud of the fact that his business is well-established and that he does not need to resort to the vulgarity of advertising, his excellent reputation being sufficient to guarantee a regular clientele (Part the Second, ii, 69). He boasts of his intimate knowledge of the shape and characteristic features of his customers' feet and how he is able to identify a corpse by the shape of the feet (Part the First, iii, 20–21). It is Mr Penny's professional competence which is continually brought to the fore in the novel. The extent of this expertise cannot be fully understood by the modern reader without the aid of secondary material.[59] The rural boot- and shoemaker was, for much of the nineteenth century, responsible for every operation of his trade,[60] from the measuring of the boot, the production of the last, the selecting and cutting of the leather (this required considerable knowledge in order to select the correct qualities of leather for the different parts of the boot or shoe and ensure minimum wastage), bottoming (the shaping of the insoles, heels, middle and outer soles), stitching together, lasting, sewing and polishing. High standards were maintained by many nineteenth-century boot- and shoemakers: the workmanship was comparable to that of the best tradesmen in other branches, which may in part be accounted for by the fierce competition for patronage.[61]

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[58] 'As the blacksmith is always the prototype of strength and uprightness so the shoemaker stands for sturdy, not to say cantankerous, independence.' Ernest C. Pulbrook, *English Country Life and Work. An Account of some Past Aspects and some Present Features* (Wakefield: B.T. Batsford, 1976; first published in 1922).

[59] The Rural History Centre at Reading University houses an excellent collection of contemporary manuals and secondary material about cobblers as well as other rural crafts and professions.

[60] On the particulars of the cobbler's craft in the early and mid-1800s, see J. Geraint Jenkins, *Traditional Country Craftsmen* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978; first published in 1965), 230.

[61] R. A. Salaman, *Dictionary of Leather-Working Tools, c. 1700–1950 and the Tools of Allied Trades* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), 19.

In real life, a man like Mr Penny would probably have been one among several shoe-bootmakers/cobblers (Bere Regis had eighteen cobblers, for example, in the 1840s),[62] and the 1841 census shows that there were at least two shoemakers in Stinsford.[63] It was thus essential for shoemakers, like so many other tradesmen, to maintain the highest possible quality. Standards varied considerably from place to place and person to person, however. That Mr Penny is a superior boot- and shoemaker is evidenced by the fact that he chooses between two different fastening techniques: nailing boots for lower-class customers (such as Geoffrey Day, Part the First, iii, 18) and stitching them when the customer is of superior rank or more demanding (Part the Second, ii, 69).[64]

Mr Penny, his trade and the village are inseparable. As Andrew Enstice shows, the description of Mr Penny's workshop (in the basement of his own house), with the rows of lasts and the apprentice, form a frame in which '[m]en and materials merge into a larger picture, and are drawn out of the frame, into the life of the village, by the Wellington upper which breaks the artistic limits of the scene and links it to the men passing outside.'[65] Hardy chooses not to describe a conventional workshop, which would have been messy, crowded and untidy, and which would have had inadequate ventilation and inflicted harsh discipline on the young apprentices.[66] Instead, he gives a somewhat romanticised view, that of an author writing some forty years after the events being described and regretting the passing of an era. Even the rebellious qualities of the cobbler are toned down.

It can be speculated to what extent Hardy was drawing on personal experience in his description of Mr Penny. He had a relative, an uncle – John Antell – who was a shoemaker. Mr Penny bears little resemblance to Antell, however, who was allegedly unbalanced, a heavy drinker and a wife-beater.[67] Antell had one redeeming characteristic, nonetheless, which Mr Penny lacks, namely, a thirst for knowledge.[68] Indeed, John Antell seems to have been much more like the conventional shoemaker

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62 Desmond Sherry, *Dorset Crafts and Trades* (Swanage: The Purbeck Press, 1974), 18.

63 Howard, 'Thomas Hardy's "Mellstock" and the Registrar General's Stinsford', 188. The two shoemakers were father and son. It was common for sons to carry on their father's trade. Pamela Horn paints a similar picture for other parts of the country in *Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1976, 90-91). By 1889 there was only one boot- and shoemaker registered in Stinsford according to *Kelly's Directory of Dorsetshire* (London, 1889), 1295. This suggests that the effects of industrialisation had begun to make themselves felt in rural Dorset during the second half of the century.

64 'As a means of attachment, nails and rivets are usually regarded as inferior to stitching: but as Plucknett points out (1916, 257), '. . . it is the cheapest style of manufacture . . . and being easy to repair it is a popular attachment for low-priced goods where flexibility is of minor importance'" (Salaman, *Dictionary of Leather-Working Tools*, 156).

65 *Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 40.

66 See Salaman, *Dictionary of Leather-Working Tools*, for excellent descriptions of the working conditions in nineteenth-century boot and shoe workshops, 23.

67 Martin Seymour-Smith, *Hardy* (London: Bloomsbury, 1994), 8.

68 Ibid.

than Mr Penny.[69] While it is true that the latter does encourage the rustics to voice their discontent with Maybold, he is basically a conformer. At the end of the novel, immediately before the wedding, it is he who recommends the upholding of tradition by insisting that – in contrast with the prevailing practice at the time – all couples walk together after the ceremony, as they had always done.

Why is Mr Penny so unlike the majority of his 'real' fellow bootmakers in the period in which *Under the Greenwood Tree* was set? He is part of Hardy's general scheme to depict the benign, conformist rustic whose knowledge of life is limited to the local community. His thoughts and language express an admiration for the past and an acceptance of the present. He has little or no desire to instigate change and is unaware of alternative life-styles and ideas. These traits would have been particularly striking to the contemporary reader, as they contrasted so clearly with the popular conception of the average village boot- and shoemaker. By making Mr Penny atypical in his lack of criticism and in his tendency to conform, Hardy indicated the dangers of too ready acquiescence to the status quo. Mr Penny is thus a typical rustic in an atypical guise.

The lower/middle class

In *Under the Greenwood Tree* there is a clear contrast between the members of groups one and two. This distinction is based primarily on education. Group two shows a pronounced awareness of the link between education and social advancement. The two fathers Geoffrey Day and Reuben Dewy – both of whom are at the bottom end of group two owing to their limited education and lack of experience of the world – invest in the education of their offspring in order to give the latter advantages which they themselves never had. This pattern, which is established in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, assumes increasing importance in subsequent novels and culminates in *The Woodlanders*. For both men, the financial investment in their daughter's education is significant: they are quick to emphasise what financial sacrifices they have had to make. Their interest in education is thus both social and commercial. Ultimately each hopes for a satisfactory return on his investment by his daughter's marrying into a family with good social and financial prospects

Geoffrey Day is a much more prominent character than Reuben Dewy and is in some ways a prototype of Melbury in *The Woodlanders*. Both are well-respected members of the community, with intelligence, astuteness and some wealth. And both have a daughter in whom they hope to realise their ambition of social elevation via education. As part of his scheme of social advancement, Day endeavours to keep a distance between himself and the rustics. He avoids, for example, 'any indulgence in words as

[69] Shoemakers are rare in Hardy's fiction. The shoemaker in the boys' story 'Our Exploits at West Poley' (reprinted in *Thomas Hardy. The Excluded and Collaborative Stories* ed. by Dalziel, 155–214) is a minor and anonymous character. He believes in magic, and it is he who suggests that the villagers consult the white wizard when the river dries up (182).

courtesies' when out with Enoch, his trapper, as this is seen to be 'very damaging to the theory of master and man' (Part the Second, vi, 99). At the same time, however, Day's restricted code reveals that his origins are rustic. This is apparent, for example, in his characterisation of his second wife, whom he describes in startlingly honest and down-to-earth terms. The rustic nature of his language is emphasised by the use of non-standard grammar and dialect which he feels free to use when the only non-family member at the tea table is the unpretentious Dick. The final sentence of the description reveals the rustic tendency to hysteresis: 'And when I'd married her and found it [her headstrong nature] out, I thought, thinks I, " '*[t]is too late now to begin to cure 'ee"; and so I let her bide*' (Part the Second, vi, 100, my italics). Judging by the second Mrs Day's behaviour at the tea table, this is exactly what Geoffrey Day has done.

This is not to say that Day is a weak character. Indeed, rustic warmth and group-two ambition combine in him to produce a figure who represents some of the best qualities of both groups. His social ambitions for Fancy – admirable in themselves – initially cause him to reject Dick's request to be allowed to marry his daughter, the young school-teacher, who is clearly superior in both education and social accomplishments. When he discovers the full effect of his decision he is not slow to relent, however, and it is made clear that social aspirations are of less importance to Geoffrey Day than his daughter's happiness. His response is straightforward and genuine. The strength of emotion behind his retraction is indicated in his use of dialect, which contrasts so clearly with Fancy's own standardised language: '[m]y wish is, now I d'see how 'tis hurten thee to live without en, that he shall marry 'ee as soon as we've considered a little' (Part the Fourth, iv, 172–3). Ironically, as the following discussion shows, and as Geoffrey Day failed (perhaps understandably) to appreciate, it is Dick rather than Fancy who is the more worthy partner of the two.

Fancy Day vacillates between conformism and rebellion. The rustic side of her nature is illustrated by her familiarity with such day-to-day activities as bee-keeping and by the relative ease with which she fits into the family home on her return to the village. The other, and stronger, side of her nature is the result of her schooling outside the boundaries of the local community. Her education at her aunt's boarding school and her period of training at a teacher-training college, however modest the academic standards, have filled her with ideas that clearly conflict with those of the quaint village to which she returns. Fancy is portrayed as an ambitious and successful student: she was the best Queen's Scholar of her year and gained a first-class pass in her teacher-training certificate. Given the generally poor state of female education at the time and the rigorous conditions at teacher training colleges, this was no mean feat.[70]

[70] See Chapter One for descriptions of the Queen's Scholar system, and reviews of female education and teacher training in the relevant period, 84–85, 96–101.

But what were the rewards for such efforts? The appalling standards of many elementary schools has already been outlined in Chapter One. Elementary schools in the 1820s and 1830s were characterised by complacency and inertia as efforts were concentrated on an extension of the familiar monitorial system of education. The realisation that the poor needed a sound education was still a few years off; and significantly, there is no indication in *Under the Greenwood Tree* that decisive changes are on the way. The contrast between the life of a trainee teacher at an academic institution and the reality of a small village school must have been great for many newly-qualified teachers such as Fancy Day. A teacher in Fancy's position was likely to feel much as Mary Hardy did when teaching in Denchworth.[71] The low status of the profession and the small salary, particularly for women, did little to compensate for the poor working and living conditions of an elementary school-teacher. It is perhaps thus understandable that an attractive young lady with spirit and intelligence should wish to test the limits of conduct in the teaching profession. It is no coincidence that the young teacher who prefers to wear her hair loose and to show off her good looks at church by wearing fashionable dresses and hats and feathers (as opposed to the normal bonnet worn by a teacher in church) is called 'Fancy.'

It is interesting to note that Fancy's socio-economic status is raised in both the 1896 and 1912 editions by means of an improvement in her father's status. As Michael Millgate points out, this makes it possible to place Fancy closer to Maybold than to Dick, thereby making the vicar's proposal more credible.[72] It seems, however, that while Fancy is above Dick socially, she is clearly below Maybold, at least in the latter's eyes. However, her social inadequacies, though notable, are not irredeemable, as Maybold assures Fancy that 'you have enough in you for any society, *after a few months of travel with me*!' (Part the Fourth, vi, 183, my italics).[73] With the addition of the italicised words, Maybold is acknowledging that there are some qualities which cannot be gained by formal academic education alone: if Fancy wishes to acquire these, she must become part of the society which embodies them.

By ultimately rejecting Maybold and marrying Dick, Fancy confirms her adherence to group two. While 'the smooth turn of her tongue' (Part the Fourth, ii, 163) is a sure sign of her superior education, there are still traces of the traditionalist element to be found in her behaviour. This is brought out clearly in the wedding

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[71] Mary Hardy described the quaintness of the villagers and the 'dullness of [h]er surroundings.' 'One seems to live here in a period much earlier than our own.' Extract from Mary Hardy's diary, January–March 1863. Private collection, H. E. F. Lock, Dorchester.

[72] *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 53.

[73] It is doubtful if Fancy would have made a good minister's wife given that the latter was, as the Reverend Charles Bridges points out, expected to show 'gravity, self-control, sobriety of deportment, and faithful exhibition of relative and public duties' and 'preach worldly compliance with more success by her conduct, than her husband can preach the renunciation of the world by the most solemn discourses.' See *The Christian Ministry with an Enquiry into the Causes of its Inefficiency* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1967; first published in 1830), 168.

scene. While Fancy addresses the wedding guests in standard English dotted with such class-conscious words as 'respectable' and 'proper' (Part the Fifth, i, 202, 203), she also allows herself to be persuaded to adopt the earlier-mentioned traditional village custom of marching in pairs with one's spouse as opposed to the modern idea of members of the same sex joining together: 'I think I'd rather have it the way mother had it' (Part the Fifth, i, 204), she announces with little apparent reluctance.

Dick is also closest to group two, although not entirely of it. While there are still signs of his rustic origins he is also considered to be relatively well educated, having, according to his father, been given better schooling than any of his siblings.[74] Characteristically, Hardy gives us no details of what he was taught. As the description of 'private' schools for the working class given in Chapter One shows, standards varied enormously. And Reuben Dewy is perhaps, as an uneducated person himself, in no position to make a proper assessment of the extent of Dick's education. That Dick went to school at all in the 1830s, however, is significant given that so many children stayed at home.[75] His plans for an extension of the family's carrier business suggest ambition and some aptitude, too.

Simon Gatrell suggests that Dick displays an 'educated modernness', and that it is this which first attracts Fancy to him. His education is marked in his relatively economical use of dialect, according to Gatrell.[76] While this is certainly true, it is also interesting to observe that the dialect element in Dick's speech was significantly increased in the 1896 and 1912 editions.[77] Dick is in some respects in a 'no-man's-land' between the rustic class of his origins and the educated world of Fancy Day. This is indicated in the differences between his father and himself. Where Reuben Dewy is willing to trust to events (he assures his son that '[t]he world's a very sensible feller on things in jineral', Part the Second, viii, 112), Dick is more inclined to question accepted opinion. While his father's reasoning is slow and ponderous, Dick's is sharp and to the point. Reuben Dewy knows that he will not win any verbal duel with his son, and he is easily outwitted in the debate about Dick's marriage plans: Dick effectively puts an end to the pointless conversation when asked by his father why he wishes to marry at all with the simple reply, 'for about the same reason that you did, father' (Part the Second, viii, 113).

While Dick uses his wit as a defence against his father, he needs language as well

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[74] It is unclear if Dick's siblings were sisters, who would have been given low priority in any plans for schooling, or brothers who were presumably considered less able than Dick himself. It may simply be the case that Dick is envisaged as being the eldest child and thus privileged.

[75] 'Where manual labour was the only outlet, as in remote agricultural districts and districts of cottage industry, or where manual labour or work requiring acquired skills rather than formal education was easy to come by [...] there was less incentive to educate children than, for example, in or near ports, market towns and commercial centres where well-paid jobs [...] required or favoured some basic education', Stephens, *Education, Literacy and Society*, 51.

[76] *Thomas Hardy and the Proper Study of Mankind*, 17.

[77] Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 53.

as wit to further his relations with Fancy. On one particular occasion Dick chooses his words so carefully and defines them so exactly that Fancy remarks, '[m]ighty me, what a scholar you've grown!' (Part the Third, i, 123). Dick also chooses his metaphors well. Knowing Fancy's fondness for clothing, he deliberately compares her coldness towards him to getting dressed and undressed: '[w]hy, you make any one think that loving is a thing that can be done and undone, and put on and put off at a mere whim' (Part the Third, i, 125); the metaphor hits the mark just as Dick had calculated it would, and a few lines later Fancy admits for the first time that she loves the young tranter.

When Dick is unsure of himself, however, he is unable to use his mastery of language to good effect, not even when his linguistic skills are superior to those of the person to whom he is talking. In his interview with Fancy's father, for example, he becomes the rustic again in his unquestioning acceptance of Geoffrey Day's reasons for not allowing him to marry Fancy. He forgets his education and linguistic advantages and exhibits a form of rustic hysteresis in 'wondering at his presumption in asking for a woman whom he had seen from the beginning to be so superior to him' (Part the Fourth, ii, 164). Dick is unable to change the course of events by himself and must wait until Fancy's hunger strike has had the desired effect on her father.

Once Dick has married Fancy, however, the scales are turned and he is determined to exercise the authority of a husband and chief bread-winner. He wishes to know, for example, how much time Fancy needs to put on her hat before leaving the wedding party: '[b]eing now a man of business and married he was strong on the importance of time' (Part the Fifth, ii, 208). The added importance given to efficiency is also reflected in Dick's language: he 'doubled the emphasis of his words in conversing, and added vigour to his nods' (Part the Fifth, ii, 208). In marrying Fancy, Dick has secured a position in society. This gives him the confidence to make full use of his innate intelligence and business acumen, one tangible result of which is the extension of the carrier business.[78]

Dick appears to be blissfully happy in his new role as a married businessman. There is a hint, however, that his love is not blind as he challenges Fancy with the following words, '[w]e'll have no secrets from each other, darling, will we ever?' No qualifications or exceptions are permitted as Dick adds the following words for emphasis, 'no secret at all' (Part the Fifth, ii, 211). If anyone fails in the marriage, it will not be Dick. His rustic staunchness and his business talent promise well for the

[78] The transport and distributive services were among the trades which expanded most dramatically between 1750 and 1850. Dick is thus fortunate in his choice of trade. The carrying trade continued to grow after the arrival of the railways, particularly in isolated areas. J.A. Chartres shows, for example, that employment in the carrier trade increased from 82.40 in 1851 to 272.96 in 1901 (these figures are based on Census Reports). See 'Country Tradesmen' in G.E. Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), vol. I, 300–301.

future. Fancy's decision never to tell her secret raises doubt about the couple's future happiness, though. R. P. Draper[79] points out that the novel ends with an invitation to 'come hither' which would have been recognised by Hardy's sophisticated middle-class readers as the very words sung by Amiens in *As You Like It*:

> From a neighbouring thicket was suddenly heard to issue in a loud, musical, and liquid voice -
>
> 'Tippiwit! swe-e-et! ki-ki-ki! Come hither, come hither, come hither!'
>
> 'O, 'tis the nightingale', murmured she, and thought of a secret she would never tell (Part the Fifth, ii, 211).

To what extent are Fancy's feelings genuine, and to what extent is she acting a part? Does she have a disguise to throw off after the wedding? Whatever the outcome of the marriage, the very fact of its taking place is a triumph for Dick, and a recognition of the fact that he belongs more firmly to group two than group one.

The upper-middle/upper class

Parson Maybold belongs to a privileged section of society. His elevated social position, reinforced by education and learning, gives him considerable authority. A son's entry into the Church was often regarded as a sign that a family had risen in social status. As Jeanne Howard points out, Maybold's mother still lives in the stylish watering-town of Budmouth, and she keeps bees as a hobby rather than as an economy, which implies that Maybold is of a genteel family who have invested in their son's education to prepare him for a suitably genteel profession.[80] It is not clear if Maybold was driven by social ambition when entering the Church, but – as the earlier discussion of Fancy shows – he believes himself to be of the upper class and regards it as important that his wife adheres to the same social standards as he.[81] Maybold apparently believes that a minister should be a Christian scholar and a gentleman.

Parson Maybold would hardly be wealthy, however. An analysis of incomes of benefices carried out by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1836 showed that the stipends of the majority of ministers lay between £100 and £400, although there were enormous individual differences.[82] Judging by his elegant clothing, Maybold

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[79] 'Hardy and the Pastoral', *The Thomas Hardy Journal* XIV. 3 (October 1998), 44–56.

[80] 'Thomas Hardy's "Mellstock" and the Registrar General's Stinsford', 197.

[81] Hardy's short story 'A Tragedy of Two Ambitions' (*Life's Little Ironies*, 75–105) deals specifically with the issue of raising social status by means of a career in the Church. Barbara Kerr explains that the majority of nineteenth-century parsons enjoyed a 'generally accepted position as the apex of the village triangle [...] This ascendancy was due to an education which enabled them to play many parts, and due also to the stable social hierarchy which persisted in the village until the townward trek intensified in the latter part of the century.' See 'Country Professions' in Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside*, vol.1, 288–291 (289). R.W. Church described the nineteenth-century parson as 'the patriarch of his parish, its ruler, its doctor, its lawyer, its magistrate, as well as its teacher, before whom vice trembled and rebellion dared not show itself.' See *The Oxford Movement. Twelve Years 1833–1845* (London, 1892), 4.

[82] Reader, *Professional Men*, 199.

has a reasonable income. His lack of realism regarding the cost of repairing the village church also indicates that he is not used to scrimping and saving.

Like other members of group three, Maybold fails to make proper use of his advantages because he is unable to understand the feelings, needs and customs of those around him – in this case, his parishioners – and to adapt accordingly.[83] Neither is he able to steer his feelings for Fancy Day, which are – like those of farmer Boldwood for Bathsheba Everdene in *Far From the Madding Crowd* – obsessive rather than passionate. On both a professional and a social level Maybold is inadequate: a double failure which is reflected in his absence from Fancy's and Dick's marriage.

In church matters Maybold is too 'bold' for his conservative parishioners and compares unfavourably with the previous minister, Grinham, who at least had the good grace to leave his parishioners safely alone 'from year's end to year's end' (Part the Second, ii, 71 –2).[84] It must also be remembered that it was difficult for a parson to put a foot right. His right to collect tithes[85] made him unpopular with the farmers who had to pay them. The labourers suffered, too, as wages were held back in order to pay tithes. The parson was also unpopular because he was frequently a Justice of the Peace. Barbara Kerr observes that '[w]hen he became a magistrate a rector moved right outside the world of the poor parishioners.'[86] The position was impossible for the parson: '[i]f he battled for his rights he was worldly and avaricious, if he let them go he was shuffling and contemptible.'[87] At the same time, the parish priest was a law unto himself. While his actions might raise comments, 'they were received with the blind acquiescence generally reserved for the more obscure workings of Providence.'[88] It is not clear from the text if Maybold is unaware of his parishioners' feelings or if he is simply too self-assured to consider them a threat to his position. What is clear is that what the rustics regard as revolutionary views are accepted and inviolable dogma for Maybold.

The day the choir visits him to plead for their continued existence, Maybold is

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[83] Manuals on such subjects were readily available, e.g. J.J. Blunt's *The Acquirements and Principal Obligations and Duties of the Parish Priest* (London, 1856). It supplied guidelines on what the parish priest should read and how to conduct school and adult classes, as well as hints on social visiting and parochial duties in general.

[84] In this respect Grinham was more representative of clergy at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. For a discussion of the lack of religious zeal among country parsons, see Horn, *The Rural World 1780–1850*, 150–151.

[85] Tithes were levied in Dorset until 1868. For a description of how tithes affected the relationship between the parson and villagers in Dorset, see Chapter VIII ('Gillingham: The Priest and the Villager') of Kerr's *Bound to the Soil*, 167–197.

[86] 'The Dorset Agricultural Labourer 1750–1850', *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society* 84 (1962), 164. Kerr also shows that the rector exercised considerable influence over the administration of poor relief until the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. Memories die hard, not least in rural communities.

[87] Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, 168.

[88] C. K. Francis Brown, *A History of the English Clergy 1800–1900* (London: The Faith Press, 1953), 131. Brown comments that almost anything would be tolerated provided it did not smack of Rome or contrast unfavourably with dissent, 131–2.

initially surprised at the size of the turnout but quickly regains control of the situation as a social and spiritual superior. Old village choirs were notoriously difficult to handle, being 'all too frequently temperamental and awkward, combining the phlegm of the artist with the obstinacy of the villager.'[89] However, Maybold's rhetoric, which bears all the hallmarks of the elaborated code, proves to be invincible. The rustics are initially lulled into a false sense of security by Maybold's acknowledgement that their request is 'reasonable.' The vicar appears to be crediting both himself and them with having real 'convictions' as opposed to mere whims, but he reserves for himself the distinction of being a man 'with appreciativeness.' His arguments are well-balanced and consciously reinforced by the addition of such persuasive phrases as 'I shouldn't think of' and 'equal truth.' His words suggest that he is seriously weighing up the rustics' arguments. In reality, the decision is already made, and the 'right' he sees in the rustics is clearly of considerably less worth than the 'right in Shiner', the socially superior farmer. The final question of his magnificent speech, quoted below, leaves no alternative but for the choir to agree to his proposal:

> 'Quite, quite; and *I shouldn't think of* refusing to listen to such a reasonable request', the vicar replied [...] 'You know, Dewy, it is often said how difficult a matter it is to act up to our convictions and please all parties. It may be said with *equal truth*, that it is difficult for a man of any appreciativeness to have convictions at all. Now in my case, I see right in you, and right in Shiner. I see that violins are good, and that an organ is good; and when we introduce the organ it will not be that fiddles were bad, but than an organ was better. *That you'll clearly understand*, Dewy?' (Part the Second, iv, 87, my italics)

The rustics are ultimately persuaded that although their request is indeed reasonable, Shiner's is infinitely more reasonable – why, however, is never made clear. Maybold uses his symbolic capital to the full, and nowhere else in the novel is the rustics' lack of such capital made so abundantly clear.

Maybold's eloquence is of a practical and logical sort which serves him less well in his relations with Fancy. His increasingly obsessive feelings for the new organist – so inappropriate for a pillar of the Church and the establishment – cause him to lose face in the eyes of his parishioners, and his professional status is clearly damaged. At the same time he fails to reflect any warmth or strength of feeling in his proposal to Fancy, which is delivered as a logical argument couched in the analytical terms of a scientist: he has 'examined' his feelings and assures Fancy that they are completely 'rational' (Part the Fourth, vi, 183); there can be only one logical outcome, marriage. The increased social status which marriage to a vicar would have given Fancy almost

[89] A. Tindal Hart and Edward Carpenter, *The Nineteenth-Century Country Parson (circa. 1832–1900)* (Shrewsbury: Wilding, 1954), 17. J.H. Porter notes that local bands 'could be too independent for the tastes of increasingly gentlemanly rectors.' See 'The Development of Rural Society', in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, volume* vi, 1750–1850, 882. By the 1820s it was becoming increasingly common for local bands to be replaced by an organ. See, for example, J.H. Bettey, *Rural Life in Wessex 1500–1900* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1987), 91–92.

wins the day, but significantly it is Dick from group two who ultimately wins her. Maybold is part of a tradition in Hardy's prose: he is the educated minister who is socially and emotionally divorced from his immediate environment and who is emotionally unable to relate to members of the opposite sex, be it his mother ('The Son's Veto'),[90] his daughter (*A Pair of Blue Eyes*) or his future wife (*Two on a Tower*). His emotional inadequacies give no promise of future happiness, and his training and superior social status are largely wasted in a community which shows little appreciation of such qualities.

Summary

Under the Greenwood Tree is an important novel from the point of view of the present book in four main respects: it is the first of Hardy's novels to look back on the past and is thus an early attempt by the young author to 'understand his genetic history [...] This is the burden which science, and particularly evolutionary biology, has placed upon man's shoulders even as it has tried to free him from the shackles of superstition.'[91] While Eiseley goes on to suggest that looking into the past may cause man to take the view that his past was inferior, *Under the Greenwood Tree* shows that traditional society also has its strengths, not the least of them being harmony with the environment and stability. However, it also emerges from the novel that the reason for destruction – rustic hysteresis – was already an important feature of village life. The nature of rustic hysteresis and its relation to rustic speech and thought are explored in increasing detail in a number of the novels that follow *Under the Greenwood Tree*. The significance of *Under the Greenwood Tree* in establishing this theme should not be undervalued. Indeed, the novel increases in importance in the light of the novels that follow it.

The second reason why *Under the Greenwood Tree* is important is that it is the first Hardy novel to portray rustics as individuals with distinct identities and personalities. The rustics have humour, intelligence and expertise. While they are also seen to be limited in experience of the world outside the local community, they clearly do not conform to the popular conception of 'Hodge.' Their intelligence, pattern of thought and language function well in the restricted community of Mellstock but afford little scope for the more analytical, less context-bound language of the wider predictive society.

Under the Greenwood Tree is also important because it establishes a fundamental theme in all succeeding novels, namely the link between education and social advancement. *Under the Greenwood Tree* takes a relatively light-hearted view of the relationship, and Fancy wins her Dick despite the aspirations of the more wealthy and prestigious Shiner and Maybold. As his career progresses, however, Hardy

[90] *Life's Little Ironies*, 33–52.
[91] Eiseley, *Darwin's Century*, 344– 5.

takes an increasingly pessimistic view, which culminates in the depiction of the life of Jude Fawley.

Finally, *Under the Greenwood Tree* establishes the power of language as a means of controlling events. Maybold's analytical ability and superior command of language, presumably resulting from his privileged background and training at Oxford or Cambridge, give him enormous advantages over the rustics. Maybold's emotional weaknesses are all the more pronounced in contrast. This is frequently the case with vicars in subsequent novels.

The generally favourable reception of *Under the Greenwood Tree* in contrast with *Desperate Remedies* suggested to Hardy that he had found a formula likely to lead to a successful career as an author. *Under the Greenwood Tree* represents a tentative step towards the exploration of the themes which are to feature and be further developed in subsequent novels. Above all, *Under the Greenwood Tree* establishes a patent link between the primary habitus, knowledge (everyday or specialised), language, thought and survival.

A PAIR OF BLUE EYES

A Pair of Blue Eyes was Hardy's first attempt at a serial. It was published in twenty-page instalments in *Tinsley's Magazine* between September 1872 and July 1873, and as a novel in three volumes at the end of May 1873. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was written in London, Bockhampton and St. Juliot in Cornwall (where Hardy met his wife-to-be, Emma Lavinia Gifford, in March 1870), and makes considerable use of Hardy's own experiences in these three places. Michael Millgate suggests that the use of these three locations was a necessity given the speed at which each instalment had to be written (Hardy found it difficult to meet the printer's deadlines and was under constant pressure almost until the end of the serial). According to Millgate, it is the pressure of serialisation that accounts for the 'rag-bag' nature of the novel, 'the hastily inserted padding and ill-digested autobiography' and lack of clarity of the central theme.[92] At the same time it is, as Millgate also shows, the very rawness of the novel which makes it so interesting to the Hardy scholar, as it affords considerable insight into Hardy's thoughts and the workings of his creative imagination at the time.

A Pair of Blue Eyes coincides with two important stages in Hardy's life: his courtship,[93] and his decision to become a full-time author rather than pursuing his career as an architect. It is thus no coincidence that *A Pair of Blue Eyes* focuses on the courtship of a woman at a vicarage (Emma Gifford was living with her father at the vicarage at St. Juliot when Hardy first met her) and that one of the main characters is a young architect at the beginning of his profession.

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[92] *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 67.

[93] Richard Purdy and Michael Millgate show that Hardy wished to favour *A Pair of Blue Eyes* even if it proved unprofitable. They suggest the reason was that the novel was associated with Hardy's courtship of Emma Gifford; see *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, vol. I, 48.

An unsigned review of the novel in the *Saturday Review* praises Hardy for his 'singular purity of thought and intention' and his 'great power of imagination.' The reviewer does not define what he means by 'purity of intention', but it may be deduced from the remainder of the review that he is referring to what he earlier calls the production of a 'tragedy of circumstance' which illustrates how events affect different characters.[94] The following discussion will identify what some of these 'events' are, and show what happens when the personality and habitus of the main characters in each of the three groups come in contact with certain occurrences and forces.

In the 1895 preface (reprinted in the Wessex edition) Hardy draws attention to the importance of material circumstances in forming the emotions of Elfride Swancourt, Stephen Smith and Henry Knight. These circumstances are of two kinds: the remoteness of Cornwall, and the current passion for Gothic architecture among church restorers. Hardy likens the nineteenth-century attempts at church restoration to the reintroduction of 'the grey carcases of a medievalism whose spirit had fled'(vii). All three main characters ultimately become emotional 'carcases' and are forced to live in a world devoid of romance and passion. Of the three, Stephen Smith of group two is shown to be the best adapted to survive.

In his later preface to the Wessex edition of 1912, Hardy appears to be apologising for what he calls the 'immaturity' of the 'views of life' reflected in the novel (viii–ix). This is surely an attempt on Hardy's part to play down the autobiographical aspects of the novel. Hardy's apparent wish to detract attention from these features indicates that the views reflected in the novel were indeed highly personal. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is an excellent source of information about Hardy's early thoughts on the relationship between social class, knowledge, education and happiness.

A Pair of Blue Eyes is traditionally regarded as one of Hardy's so-called minor novels, and it had a very mixed reception from the first. One of Hardy's earliest biographers, Ernest Brennecke, described the novel as 'an orgy of tragic coincidences which batter the poor sufferers about with increasing savagery until the close, full of misery and irony.'[95] While criticising *A Pair of Blue Eyes* for an unbalanced overall structure and an inconsistency of mood, a more modern critic, Richard Taylor, also regards the novel as Hardy's 'first coherent attempt tentatively to define a reading of life.'[96] Seen in this light, *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is the story of how individuals are shaped by historical, social, biological, economic and educational factors. Timothy Hands describes *A Pair of Blue Eyes* as unrefined, with 'many prefigurations of the later fiction' but with a bizarreness of plot which Hardy 'has not yet learnt to accommodate.' Hands also criticises Hardy for mechanical descriptions of the rustics.[97] While

[94] 2 August 1873. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 15–18.
[95] *Thomas Hardy's Universe. A Study of a Poet's Mind* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1924), 37.
[96] *The Neglected Hardy: Thomas Hardy's Lesser Novels*, 55.
[97] *Thomas Hardy* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995), 12

there is evidence to support Hands's view of the group-one characters, the following discussion will show that the rural characters in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* make a vital contribution to the discussion of the relevance of everyday knowledge in a predictive society.

One of the most interesting insights into *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, and one of direct relevance to a discussion of knowledge in Hardy's novels, is that of Patricia Ingham in 'Hardy and *The Wonders of Geology*.' In this illuminating article Ingham convincingly demonstrates the influence of G.A. Mantell's *The Wonders of Geology* on *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Hardy owned Mantell's book and quoted from it in his literary notebooks. He adopted Mantell's scientific vocabulary (with words such as crustacean, trilobites, zoophytes and mollusca). Patricia Ingham also shows that there are clear similarities between passages in Mantell's book and *A Pair of Blue Eyes*. Of even greater interest, however, is the similarity between Mantell's description of trilobytes[98] and Knight's observations while hanging on the cliff face. The specific relevance of geology to the character of Knight will be discussed later.

Patricia Ingham concludes that Hardy read scientific literature in an intelligent and informed way, and that the scientific terminology which he introduced into his novels (*A Pair of Blue Eyes* is the first novel where he does this to any great extent) is accurate and allows the reader to gain a new and deeper perspective on life – a perspective which is clearly evolutionary. Hardy's reading of scientific literature and the theory of evolution, discussed in Chapter Two, are relevant to *A Pair of Blue Eyes* both with regard to plot and character. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* reflects a struggle for survival at all levels of society. Fitness is determined by inherited factors, social standing, education and the ability to adapt to the immediate environment. Sexual selection is also a key factor in explaining why Elfride Swancourt readily transfers her affections from one suitor to another.

The characters in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* are representatives of particular groups, symbolising types rather than constituting distinct individuals. They are presented with a scientific detachment which is content to identify distinguishing characteristics without offering any value judgement. The influence of science, both on character delineation and in the famous cliff scene, anticipates the later novels. Hardy himself was very fond of the story of *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, perhaps because of its closeness to events in his own life. Critics have not tended to share his enthusiasm. Whatever one feels about the story, the novel itself, and its use of science and scientific perspective, are of vital importance to the subject of the present study.

The rustics

As a novel which presents characters as types or specimens, it is not surprising that *A Pair of Blue Eyes* uses scientific terminology to a greater degree than previous novels

[98] Vol. II, 792–3.

in the description of characters. This also applies to the rustics, who are, of course, least affected by scientific developments. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is the first of Hardy's novels to use scientific concepts to describe the meeting of traditional rustic society with the modern predictive form. This meeting is seen most clearly in the character and life of John Smith, the stone-mason. Smith is described in biological and mathematical terms which categorise him as a type readily identifiable by contemporary society:

> John Smith – brown as autumn as to skin, white as winter as to clothes – was a satisfactory *specimen* of the village artificer in stone. In common with most rural mechanics, he had too much individuality to be a typical "working man" – a resultant of that beach-pebble attrition with his kind only to be experienced in large towns, which *metamorphoses* the unit Self into a *fraction* of the unit Class (x, 95–6, my italics).

Modern society is detrimental to individuality as the creator of uniformity which ultimately destroys traditional rustic qualities. It is also equated with standardisation, one of the most powerful instruments of which is the system of training and education developed for different professions and social groups. This view appears again and again in Hardy's novels, and becomes a key factor in determining the lives of both Grace Melbury of *The Woodlanders* and Avice Three of *The Well-Beloved.*

John Smith is a village craftsman of the old type. J. Geraint Jenkins shows that from the fourteenth century onwards, the stone-mason was a vitally important craftsman in a village, and that he did the work of the modern architect in designing buildings and supervising their erection.[99] There was no scope in a small village for specialisation. Considerable demands were made on the rural stone-mason's ability to carry out a wide range of tasks, each one of which required a high degree of skill.[100] Building in stone requires no small measure of professional expertise as the blocks are irregular in shape and vary greatly in size. The large variety of operations carried out by a traditional stone-mason cannot be described here in detail but they include tasks as diverse as cutting (the process varies greatly according to the type of stone, Dorset Purbeck being one of the most difficult), dressing (of which there are eight basic forms) and building (there are eight different methods of building walls alone). These operations demanded great dexterity in using a wide variety of tools which ranged from various forms of basic mallets, hammers and chisels to more sophisticated mathematical/scientific instruments such as set squares, plumb rules and compasses.[101]

Little detail is given of John Smith's business or his day-to-day work.[102] It is his

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[99] *Traditional Country Craftsmen,* 168–9.

[100] The work was also back breaking, as Hardy's poem 'The Old Workman' shows. See *The Complete Poems,* 663.

[101] See Jenkins, *Traditional Country Craftsmen,* for a more detailed description of tools and processes, 171 –178.

[102] Much less detail is provided about John Smith's work than about Mr Penny's, for example.

social position rather than his professional expertise which is of the greatest interest. He is clearly a respected member of the village community. In the eyes of the gentry, however, he will never be anything more than a skilful artisan who must be tolerated because he provides a useful service. The issue of social class becomes particularly important in relation to John's son, Edward. In the eyes of Parson Swancourt, Edward's social class is determined by the occupation of his father. As the son of a stone-mason, Edward is clearly an unsuitable son-in-law. The village doctor (who, like the parson, is at the top end of village society) also regards John Smith as a social inferior and treats the injured stone-mason with less care and concern than he would have given to someone of higher social rank. As a result, Smith's accident is dismissed in a couple of lines and is of no real interest except to the rustics: '[t]he details of the accident were then rehearsed by Stephen's father in the dramatic manner common to Martin Cannister, other individuals of the neighbourhood, and the rural world generally' (x, 97). Even the victim himself shows little concern. His only anxiety is 'the inconvenience to the world of his doing nothing for the next two days'(x, 95). Smith understands that his value to society is of a professional rather than a personal nature. He does not expect sympathy or superior medical care. He conforms to a way of life and a set of values which have the force of tradition behind them. He sees no reason for challenging what has been accepted for centuries.

Mrs Smith, however, is much less conformist in attitude and behaviour. Like Mrs Dewy in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, she is preoccupied with the thought of improving her social position. While Mrs Dewy focuses her attention on socially correct language, however, Mrs Smith adopts a more general scheme which incorporates both practical and linguistic factors. Mrs Smith makes a careful distinction between masters and journeymen:

> See how careful I am to keep myself up. I'm sure I never stop for more than a minute together to talk to any journeymen people; and I never invite anybody to our party o' Christmases who are not in business for themselves. And I talk to several carriage people that come to my lord's without saying ma'am or sir to 'em, and they take it as quiet as lambs (x, 98).

Whatever her pretensions, Mrs Smith is clearly a simple countrywoman. Her views of social distinction are extremely limited. As a restricted-code user, she does not attempt to rationalise her opinions but concentrates on purely practical issues. Her final remark is a good indication of her naïvety in matters of social advancement: she fails to see that she is making a fool of herself and that her ideas and expectations are both misguided and unrealistic. She is a rustic, and a rustic she will remain. Her meeting with Parson Swancourt, and the way in which she describes this, are a clear indication of her social class. When Mrs Smith describes Parson Swancourt as 'banging it into me and your father by side and by seam about his greatness [...] the tongue o'en flopping round his mouth like a mop-rag round a dairy' (x, 98) she clearly demonstrates for both Stephen and the reader the full extent of the gulf

between herself and the parson – a gulf which has definite implications for Stephen and his marriage plans.

Little actually changes when the Smiths move to a more comfortable dwelling in the larger town of St. Launces. The respect shown them by the middle classes is due entirely to their son's success in India, to Stephen's being 'hand in glove with nabobs' and his designing of important public buildings (xxxvi, 396). Such successes are soon forgotten, though, and can effect no permanent change in the way the Smiths are perceived by the respectable residents of St. Launces.

While the rustic group in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is dominated by the Smiths, there are two minor rustics who are worthy of mention at the bottom of this group: Robert Lickpan, Stephen's driver to Endelstow House; and William Worm, Parson Swancourt's servant. These two characters have attracted very little critical attention. One of the most interesting – if also somewhat misleading – commentaries on Lickpan and Worm comes from a lecturer in the Department of Economics and Related Studies at the University of York, who sees them as 'reassuringly comic and bovine stereotypes' whose 'names are matched by their stupid behaviour throughout.'[103] While it is certainly true that both Lickpan and Worm are very limited intellectually and clearly conform to middle-class expectations of the Dorset 'Hodge', it is important to understand that they are stereotypes rather than real characters. They function as a measure by which to judge the other, more important and better-developed Hardy rustics.

Lickpan has much in common with the rustic chorus in *Desperate Remedies* and the minor figures in *Under the Greenwood Tree* and *Far From the Madding Crowd* in that he evinces a contentment with life which is based on limited experience and expectations. He has no belief in the sacredness of accepted knowledge; instead he is content to rely on his powers of logic and reasoning. His conversation with Stephen Smith about King Charles is as tragic as it is humorous. Stephen protests mildly at the mention of Charles III, but when a Charles IV is introduced the young architect's sense of historical accuracy is outraged and he is forced to exclaim, 'I can't stand Charles the Fourth. Upon my word, that's too much' (ii, 7). Lickpan's response is delightfully illogical: '[w]hy? There was a George the Fourth, wasn't there? [...] Well, Charleses be as common as Georges' (ii, 7). Lickpan is willing to bend reality to fit his own idiosyncratic view and has little respect for recorded or scientific fact. There is no room in modern scientific society for Lickpan's view of life. His pragmatic approach to knowledge, which is the result of little or no education, is the primary reason for his marginalisation. As long as he refuses to recognise the inappropriateness of his attitude to knowledge in an industrial society which prioritises historically or scientifically verifiable facts, he

[103] Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor*, 390. See the introduction above for a discussion of the historical realism of Hardy's rustics and Snell's arguments on the subject, 39–41.

will never progress beyond the stage of 'licking the pans' of the more privileged in the hopes of picking up a few stray scraps.

William Worm is also on the periphery of mainstream society. He seems, however, to have a greater respect for the importance of established knowledge. He regrets, for example, that he 'can't read much' but adds that he 'can spell as well as some here and there' (iv, 29). Worm knows that his real strength lies in the practical domain, as his account of the making of the chapel chair indicates (iv, 30). This episode illustrates a number of important factors: it serves to emphasise the warmth and humour of the rustic, as well as his commonsense and astuteness in judging character (he knows full well that the parson was on the verge of swearing, for example). At the same time, Worm's description reveals the tragedy of the rustic situation: the repeated use of the word 'sir' emphasises the unbridgeable social gulf between the parson and himself; and the final sentence, 'I'm as wise as one here and there' (iv, 30) alerts the reader to the fact that Worm's definition of wise is different from that of middle-class urban society. His comment is both naïve and self-satisfied. The hysteresis which characterises both Lickpan's and Worm's situation stems from an inability to recognise the limitations of their particular situation combined with a satisfaction with life as it is which obviates any need for change. There is comfort to be derived from being able to ignore or twist uncomfortable facts to suit one's own views. It is comfort bought at a high price, however: in the long run, it results in exclusion from the predictive society.

The two kinds of rustic character in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* – the skilled but non-specialised artisan, and the unskilled servant – are presented as representatives of a type rather than as dynamic individuals with a moving story to tell. Their position in society and their limited prospects for the future are all the more obvious because the reader is not distracted by unnecessary personal details or a profusion of events. Hardy maintains a distance to his characters, who are manipulated as in a game of chess. Freedom of movement is determined by the individual's social position and knowledge.

The lower/middle class

The anonymous reviewer for the *Saturday Review* (2 August 1873) made an important obervation when he suggested that the character and career of Stephen Smith serve to illustrate the importance of 'the social barriers of actual life.'[104] The details of Smith's background and education are given with painstaking care and serve to show that the barrier between groups two and three which is created by class and maintained by education is insuperable. This is nothing new in Hardy's prose, of course, and will occur again and again in subsequent novels. What *is* new, however, is the relatively unhappy life of Stephen Smith as compared with other group-two

[104] Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 17.

characters. Why should this be the case? The main reason, as the following discussion shows, is that Smith's life is built on what must at best be regarded as an inadequate education: he knows how to play chess after a fashion and some Latin but he cannot ride a horse, for example. 'In short, though he has learning, he does not have education. His bits of knowledge do not add up to an organic whole.'[105] The young architect makes two fundamental errors: he attempts to deny his rustic background, and he takes short-cuts in his education which admittedly raise him above group one but clearly fall short of the requirements of group three. Stephen Smith is an illustration of what happens when a group-two character with talent enters the social game with a very inadequate understanding of the rules. Unlike Edward Springrove or Dick Dewy, Stephen Smith is not prepared to recognise the limits set by social convention. The odds are hopelessly stacked against him. Had he been content to raise his sights no higher than group two, and had he taken full advantage of his professional expertise, his life would have been a good deal happier. His mistake, as with Jude Fawley in the later novel, is to persist in a dream which has no chance of success. There is no escaping the fact that all dreams have social limitations.

There are similarities between the backgrounds of Stephen Smith and Hardy himself: both are sons of rural artisans with a small business, they are both autodidacts who are socially insecure, and both choose architecture as their profession. It is important to recognise, however, that Hardy strove to maintain a detachment from his hero. Hardy was not Stephen Smith.

Smith makes his first appearance in the novel at Endelstow Rectory. The Swancourts believe him to be a partner of the London architect Walter Hewby, who has given his young assistant an excellent introduction and recommended him as one on whose 'discernment in the matter of church architecture'(ii, 12) may be relied upon. The Swancourts expect an experienced, suave London architect and an educated man of the world. Stephen is forced to work hard to live up to this image when he discovers that his friendship with Elfride depends on it. He must keep the secret of his origins at all costs.

Stephen Smith appears to have the requisite accomplishments of a gentleman. One of the most important of these was the ability to quote works of literature, particularly the Classics. These allusions constituted a 'reference to a shared code; what had already been memorably expressed in the past could serve the needs of the present.'[106] Study of the Classics was, as already shown in Chapter One, the preserve of those educated at grammar schools, public schools and universities. Chapman suggests that Victorian novelists used classical allusions not only because this was typical of the educated classes at the time but also because such allusions accorded

[105] John Goode, *Thomas Hardy. The Offensive Truth* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 2. This comment is included in an extremely useful discussion of Hardy's writing career as 'A Scientific Game.'
[106] Raymond Chapman, *Forms of Speech in Victorian Fiction*, 194.

well with the Victorian nostalgia for the past. Hardy did not use classical allusions in this way in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, however. Stephen makes odd references to the Classics not as an expression of nostalgia for the past, but as part of the game of social recognition. When Stephen Smith quotes Horace's *Epodes*, the vicar is impressed with the swiftness and accuracy of Stephen's response. But Stephen is unable to play the game with conviction. His strange Latin pronunciation suggests to Parson Swancourt that there is something unconventional in his background, and the young architect is obliged to confess that he has learnt Latin and Greek by correspondence. A similar problem relates to Stephen's method of playing chess. He knows that this is the game of a gentleman and also one which enables the player to show off his/her intellectual prowess.[107] It soon becomes apparent, however, that Stephen handles the men in an unconventional way, and he has to explain that he has learnt how to play from a book and has never seen an actual game played. This is a totally incomprehensible situation to Elfride, who knows nothing of Stephen's background.

Parson Swancourt finds the incongruities in Stephen's behaviour baffling and disconcerting, and rather than risk digging more deeply into the young architect's past he takes refuge in the creation of a respectable fictitious history for his young guest, inventing a link between Stephen's family and that of the venerable Stephen Fitzmaurice Smiths of Caxbury Manor. Parson Swancourt feels secure when he finds an entry in the *Landed Gentry* which seems to support his hypothesis. Smith's feelings of discomfort are heightened when the vicar refers to him as 'sir' and compliments him on his blue blood. While it is true that the false picture of Stephen is created by Parson Swancourt himself and not by Stephen, the latter makes little or no effort to correct it. When the vicar discovers the truth about Stephen he shows no qualms in telling Elfride that '[h]e appeared a young man with well-to-do friends and a little property; but having neither, he is another man' (ix, 90). Who then is the real Stephen Smith? To what extent is identity the result of connections and possessions?

The adult Stephen Smith with whom the novel is concerned is a young intellectual, a product of the modern educational system and as such is envisaged as a man with factual knowledge but little creativity (x, 101–2). However, the young architect's not inconsiderable achievements in India suggest that this is not the whole story. Away from his home environment there are few limits to Smith's success because he is not hampered by his past. He enters the new society on his own terms

[107] '[C]hess was considered the severest test of the intellect, requiring a high degree of both logic and creative thinking'; Roslynn D. Haynes, *From Faust to Strangelove*, 146. Mary Rimmer notes that chess 'enjoyed considerable prestige, less from lingering aristocratic associations than from its status as an intellectual game, based on pure strategy rather than chance.' See 'Club Laws: Chess and the Construction of Gender in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*', in *The Sense of Sex. Feminist Perspectives on Hardy* ed. by Margaret Higonet (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 206.

and is judged according to his achievements rather than his birth. He builds up a completely new existence for himself based entirely on merit. In India he is in the right place at the right time, and shows himself more than a match for his task.

Stephen Smith is clearly not a failure as an architect. His weakness is that he is placed in a situation in England which he does not fully understand until it is too late, and he grossly underestimates the problems of fighting against conventions which have been in existence for centuries. Smith labours under an impossible dream which has no chance of fulfilment in conservative Cornwall. His background prevents him from competing on equal terms with the educated, socially superior Knight. His generosity and naïvety prevent him from pressing his advantage when he and Elfride elope to London. In Stephen Smith we see the characteristic group-two talent and ability, but it is also clear that these are in danger of being neutralised if the individual does not have a realistic view of society and its limitations. Group-two characters achieve most when they recognise not only the possibilities but also the limitations of their situation. Stephen Smith demonstrates both the potential and the limitations of group-two characters. The environment is a key factor in determining whether an individual will thrive or perish. While group two is clearly the most successful group in transcending restrictions and making maximum use of opportunities, not all group-two characters succeed in realising the limitations of their abilities in a particular situation. Stephen Smith is an extremely interesting group-two character because he shows the group's special ability to adapt and to prosper in the right circumstances; at the same time, he illustrates the potential danger of abandoning one's primary habitus.

The upper-middle/upper class

The three characters to be discussed in this group – Parson Swancourt, his daughter Elfride and Henry Knight – are, like the characters in the other two groups, specimens rather than individuals with whom the reader can readily identify. They are 'larger than life' because their limitations are accentuated. The professional and personal weaknesses already identified in parson Maybold in *Under the Greenwood Tree* are much emphasised in Swancourt, who has no redeeming features; the inability of Miss Aldclyffe in *Desperate Remedies* to manage emotions and the disastrous consequences are even more marked in Elfride Swancourt; and the emotional inadequacy and withdrawal from society which characterise the professional Owen Graye in *Desperate Remedies* are now clearly exhibited in the person of the lawyer and critic, Henry Knight.

Parson Swancourt is described by one of the earliest reviewers of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* as 'a worldly, gentlemanlike, commonplace parson of the old school.'[108] He was thus envisaged as an Oxford or Cambridge graduate with a not particularly distin-

[108] *Saturday Review* 2 August 1873. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 16.

guished degree[109] and with independent financial means.[110] His prime aim in life is to maintain his position as a gentleman, a goal made possible by education and the stable social hierarchy in villages until the final decades of the nineteenth century; religious obligations are clearly of secondary importance; he is perfectly content to allow Elfride to write his sermons[111] and it is significant that it is she who must tend to the needs of sick parishioners.[112] Swancourt is not involved in church reforms or in daily visits to parishioners as is Maybold. This may in part be explained by the fact that the clergy were, as already mentioned, generally resented because of their right to collect tithes.[113] Indeed, his only real contribution to church life is the initiation of the restoration of Endelstow Church, and even this he confesses is really a means of defence against the Dissenters. Conversation at the rectory revolves around ancestry, blue blood, property, cultured language, knowledge of the Classics, good food and wines, social connections and wealth. Ecclesiastical and spiritual matters are rarely given any mention.

It is important to note that parsons were frequently unfavourably portrayed in Victorian fiction, and that 'there are a great many unappealing and/or unsuccessful churchmen in Victorian fiction.'[114] Swancourt is not only intolerant of the lower social classes but also of all sects other than his own, Established Church. He is likened to a fossil (he even calls himself a 'fossilized Tory', vi, 50) who has become firmly embedded in his own intolerant views. He attempts to use rhetoric to disguise

[109] Hart and Carpenter note that parsons 'did not normally take very distinguished degrees.' See *The Nineteenth-Century Country Parson*, 41. J.H. Porter points out that the south attracted more Oxford and Cambridge graduates as ministers than the north, which was generally less deferential. See 'The Development of Rural Society' in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. vi, 1750–1850 ed. by Mingay, 883.

[110] It was only after the 1870s that all sources of a parson's income declined significantly as is shown by Peter C. Hammond in *The Parson and the Victorian Parish* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 29–44.

[111] Sermons were frequently of poor quality during the nineteenth century. There were, however, a number of manuals available providing hints about how to deliver a good sermon and suggesting useful embellishments to the sermon, e.g. *Sermons to a Country Congregation, Illustrative Anecdotes, Pulpit Aids, Fragments of Fancy and The Dictionary of Illustrations Adapted to Christian Teaching.* See Hammond, *The Parson and the Victorian Parish*, Chapter 5, 'The Sermon', 108–123. For an informative discussion of the Victorian sermon and fictional examples of ministers using sermon manuals, see Andrew L. Drummond, *The Churches in English Fiction. A Literary and Historical Study, from the Regency to the Present Time, of British and American fiction* (Leicester: Edgar Backus, 1950), 'The Sermon in Victorian Fiction', 308–18.

[112] Barbara Kerr shows how the clergy often did the work of doctors before the effects of state-subsidised medical schemes were felt. She gives as an example John Fisher of Gillingham who did 'wonders in cures' at innumerable cottages; see *Bound to the Soil*, 22. For an informative description of the minister's duties in visiting sick parishioners, see Hammond, *The Parson and the Victorian Parish*, 132–51.

[113] John Fisher of Gillingham, for example, was described as 'lonely, and in a melancholy place kf– there is not a creature near him who does not look on him as a robber come for the milk, butter, etc., etc. – but that is always the case' (Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, 22).

[114] This point is made by Marianne Thormählen, who observes that Dissenter writers had good reason for being critical of Church of England parsons. See *The Brontës and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 173. Drummond also shows that fiction tends to show 'the seamier side of the parson's life, especially in two aspects: the implications and effects of clerical poverty, and the bearing of personal character', *The Churches in English Fiction*, xi.

his bigoted opinions, telling Stephen, for example, that he uses the word 'Dissenter' in its scriptural sense and not as an expletive (iv, 25). It becomes increasingly clear, however, that Parson Swancourt is not being entirely honest here.

Swancourt uses derogatory and even offensive language when he feels that his social position is in danger of being compromised. His initially favourable opinion of Stephen changes radically once he discovers the latter's parentage, and the language he uses to describe the young architect is insultingly patronising: for example, he accuses him of various social offences, blaming him – among other things – for having an 'unedified palate', being unable to appreciate sauces and using a 'cut-and-dried' technique in quoting Latin (ix, 93). Parson Swancourt is completely intolerant of all that does not fit in with his well-ordered upper-middle-class existence.

The direction of Parson Swancourt's life is backwards rather than forwards. This is even reflected in his way of walking: Swancourt is 'a firm-standing perpendicular man, whose fall would have been backwards in direction if he had ever lost his balance' (iv, 23). The apparent social and financial advantages which marriage brings him prove to be of little value in the long term either to himself or to his daughter. At the end of the novel he is broken down with grief at Elfride's death and presents a sorry figure as he waits for his daughter's coffin to arrive by train from London. The family has already been split by distance; it is now split by death. With no son to inherit his name, the parson's plans to revive his family's former status come to nothing. He has failed both as a father and as a parson. His failure is greater than Maybold's because he has been unable to show even a modicum of concern or affection for anyone other than himself. While Maybold at least visits his parishioners and displays some feeling for Fancy – however inadequately this may have been expressed – Swancourt isolates himself from his parish and only submits to sharing his life with another when he thinks it may improve his social and financial status. Passion or love clearly has very little to do with the matter.

It is Parson Swancourt's rigid views and uncompromising attitude which are the major contributory factors to Elfride's emotional instability: because she does not understand herself sufficiently well, she is unable to form satisfactory relationships. Rosemarie Morgan suggests that this inability is heightened in her relationship with Knight, 'who is incapable of encompassing new directions despite his seniority and experience.'[115] This may be true in part; but Elfride's basic lack of ability is very much part of her primary habitus and has developed into an important feature of her personality as an adult. The narrator explains that her father's brain and ideas 'almost constituted her entire world' (xviii, 188) until Stephen Smith appears on the scene.

The parson continues to dominate Elfride's life as an adult woman. The two are opposites, however. Like Cytherea Graye, Elfride is a woman of motion and emo-

[115] *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge, 1988), 27.

tion. She is not cold and controlled like her father. On the very first page of the novel the reader is challenged to pay special attention to Elfride's emotions, which 'lay very near the surface', and to observe how these are modified by the effects of time. Elfride is described in terms reminiscent of chemistry; she 'is the combination of very interesting particulars, whose rarity, however, lay in the combination itself rather than in the individual elements combined' (i, 1). The combination of the elements forming her habitus is largely static at the beginning of the novel, though. The only real challenge to her father's influence is the cheap novels she reads. It is not until Stephen appears on the scene that 'a deeper current may be said to have permanently set in' (i, 2), a current for which, as subsequent events show, her rigid upbringing has left her ill-prepared.

While the parson thinks along straight and predictable lines, Elfride jumps erratically from one idea to the next, constantly 'perplexing her father by hypothetical questions, based on absurd conditions' (xi, 117). When she starts to explore the reality outside the boundaries of her own limited existence, she does not know what questions to ask of life or where to find the answers. Her father has not stifled her natural curiosity or her love for the countryside. She is, however, extremely vulnerable because she lacks self-assurance. Elfride has been brought up as a cultured young lady. She is thoroughly innocent, knowing nothing of social ills, crime and poverty. She is also unused to meeting strangers, and especially members of the opposite sex. This becomes particularly apparent in her relations with Knight. The games of chess she plays with him are symbolic of their future relations. Elfride is outwitted and dominated from the start. She shows an almost complete lack of awareness of her own limitations. Instead of gracefully accepting defeat and acknowledging Knight's greater skill and experience, she challenges him to a second game, having first worked herself up into an extreme state of mental tension. Elfride does not know the limits of her ability, and she only has her father's judgement to rely on. Lacking self-assurance, she has nothing to fall back on when previous experiences prove inadequate.

It takes an outsider like Mrs Swancourt to perceive that Elfride's horizons are dangerously limited. A quick cure is proposed in the form of an introduction to London society. This period has disastrous consequences for Elfride. Here, for example, she learns to view her relationship with Stephen as an insignificant part of a 'childish past' (xvi, 166). This causes her to underestimate the true strength of affection between herself and the young architect. While Elfride is busy in London learning the rules of the game of social advancement (this includes learning London manners, developing connections and adopting polite and fashionable forms of language – she is taught, for example, how to use the word 'gentleman' correctly[116]), she

[116] See Phillipps, *Language and Class in Victorian England*, 8, for an interesting discussion on this subject. Phillipps concludes that Hardy was familiar with social convention and that his views accord well with an anonymously published book, *Society, Small Talk, or What to Say and When to Say It* (1879).

learns to devalue her past. This is in marked contrast with her father, who exalts his origins, and Stephen, who consciously abandons his. Instead, Elfride acquires a number of prejudices which, added to those already instilled in her from childhood, make her increasingly incapable of either predicting or coping with problems in relationships.

Elfride's relations with Knight are doomed from the start because they involve the meeting of two individuals who, for different reasons, are emotionally insecure. Elfride has an abundance of emotion, but she is unable to channel it. This makes her blind both to the practical implications of her situation and the faults of her lover; Knight lacks any real emotion and is like the later figure Angel Clare, governed by an idealistic view of his partner which has little to do either with genuine passion or with reality.[117] Elfride's personality is overpowered by Knight's. She becomes completely subservient to his will. This is clearly reflected in her doubts about her ability to express herself adequately to him. Like the rustics, she apologises for her common way of speaking and for her 'badly selected and commonplace' words (xix, 207). As she attempts to convince Knight that her thoughts are more than 'commonplace' (xix, 207), she realises that in Knight's eyes she is limited both in worldly experience and sophistication. Elfride fails to appreciate, however, just how 'fragile and delicate' she actually is, and how she is 'liable to be overthrown in a moment by the coarse elements of accident' (xl, 430)[118] because her limited early experiences have failed to provide her with a stable basis on which to manage relationships. When she ultimately forms a secure and loving relationship with Lord Luxellian it is too late. She has finally attained the social status desired by her father and some measure of happiness. Unfortunately, however, she does not live long enough to reap any real benefit. Elfride Swancourt is an unusually tragic example of a group-three character whose social and educational advantages come to nothing owing to an inability to govern the emotional side of her life.

Knight is not only of crucial importance in understanding the fate of Elfride. He has an additional and very different significance in revealing the extent to which Hardy was influenced in the 1870s by scientific developments in general, and by evolution in particular. The anonymous reviewer for the *Saturday Review* (2 August, 1873) summed him up as 'the least natural character in the book'[119] and justified Knight's inclusion in the text on the grounds that such characters do actually exist in society at large. Knight's importance is infinitely greater than this comment suggests, though. His name, which is clearly ironical, is suggestive of medieval chivalry and romance. However, events reveal him to be a man of science who is guided by reason rather than passion or chivalry.

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[117] For both Knight and Clare the idealistic picture is replaced by genuine feeling too late to change the course of events. In this respect, Knight anticipates Angel Clare.

[118] It is Knight who finally realises this, albeit too late.

[119] *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 17.

Knight is remarkably like Lord Parkhurst in the later story 'The Spectre of the Real.'[120] Both characters are strict in their ideas, particularly about women. Both believe that their partner is an angel, and both are disappointed: Miss Ambrose is already the wife of Jim Durrant; Elfride was once engaged to Stephen Smith and almost married him. When Knight falls in love with Elfride he experiences a conflict between what he regards as his natural state as a bachelor living a calm existence untouched by the female sex, and his present irrational obsession with Elfride. Knight the analyst examines his feelings and attempts to assess 'the possible result of the introduction of this new force among the nicely adjusted ones of his ordinary life' (151).[121] It is only when the analytical stage has passed that Knight can give himself over to the more pleasurable activity of thinking of Elfride herself. In the space of a short visit to the rectory, Knight's firmly established expectations about his own life are turned upside down. This is not just a conflict between 'emotional desires' and former 'academic habits', as Timothy Hands suggests,[122] but a complete reversal of Knight's basic nature and view of himself. Knight is forced to question seriously his previous belief that he is a bachelor by nature, and to accept that, contrary to all his expectations, he shows all the normal symptoms of falling in love – a state which he has only ever envisaged on paper and never in real life.

Knight views life with the eyes of a scientist. He deliberately keeps himself at a distance from humanity, and he confesses to Stephen that '[a]ll I know about women, or men either, is a mass of generalities. I plod along, and occasionally lift my eyes and skim the weltering surface of mankind lying between me and the horizon, as a crow might; no more' (104). The reader is reminded of the famous passage in Wordsworth's 'Preface to *Lyrical Ballads, with Pastoral and Other Poems* (1802)[123] in which the solitary scientist is contrasted with the poet who rejoices with all mankind: '[t]he man of science seeks truth as a remote and unknown benefactor; he cherishes and loves it in his solitude: the Poet, singing a song in which all human beings join with him, rejoices in the presence of truth as our visible friend and

[120] Hardy collaborated with Florence Henniker on this story, which was published in 1894. The full story is published in Dalziel, *The Excluded and Collaborative Stories*, 299–331.

[121] This is remarkably similar to the description of Farmer Boldwood in *Far From the Madding Crowd* as a balance of positive and negative forces. In both Boldwood's and Knight's case, it is a woman who upsets the balance of their existence. See the discussion of Boldwood below. Jane Thomas posits an interesting theory when she suggests that Knight idolises Elfride as a response to Darwin's evolution, i.e. Victorians were anxious to increase the distance between themselves and their animal ancestors and love was one of the methods used. See *Thomas Hardy, Femininity and Dissent*, 77. The same argument could, of course, be applied to Angel Clare.

[122] *Thomas Hardy: Distracted Preacher? Hardy's Religious Biography and its Influence on his Novels* (Bath, Somerset: Adams & Dart, 1972), 61. Hands quotes the following passage in support of his thesis: '[w]hen he surveyed the volumes on his shelves – few of which had been opened since Elfride first took possession of his heart – their untouched and orderly arrangement reproached him as an apostate from the old faith of his youth and early manhood' (276).

[123] *Wordsworth and Coleridge Lyrical Ballads* 1798 ed. by W. J. B. Owen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 168.

hourly companion.' His rooms in London are dominated by the library, which reflects the two major interests in his life: books and science (the latter is represented by the aquarium filled with 'many-coloured zoophytes', xiii, 143). Books allow Knight to learn about mankind without having to become involved with its representatives at first hand. The zoophytes impinge little on Knight's daily routine as they only come to life for a few minutes each evening as the sun trains on the aquarium; they are otherwise dormant. While Knight writes about life and mankind, he keeps himself as far removed from other human beings as possible. His interest in books and science causes him to become introspective and critical.

Henry Knight is the main character in what is probably the most famous scene in the novel.[124] As Gillian Beer shows, the scene on the cliff clearly links Knight with the distant past and with his origins: the trilobyte is concrete evidence of a past which, thanks to the study of geology, was no longer completely unknown. Man's beginnings are too remote to exist in memory; concrete evidence thus assumes enormous importance. When Knight is brought face to face with the trilobyte he is forced to accept a kinship with the fossil.[125] He is indeed 'on the subjective receiving end of geological and physical facts he had previously studied objectively.'[126] He realises that he and the trilobyte 'share the not insubstantial fact that it too once had a body to save.'[127]

At the same time Knight knows that he and the trilobyte are worlds apart in terms of intelligence. Knight believes in evolution. As he hangs from the cliff face he considers how life on earth has evolved. Its finest product is, he believes, a human being as intelligent as himself. He comes to the somewhat pompous conclusion that his death would constitute an 'experiment in killing' which would have been better 'practised upon some less developed life' than his own (xxii, 245).

Knight clearly regards himself as a highly superior being. He has not yet understood the true power of Nature, though, and in this respect he is inferior to the rustics. The incident on the cliff face forces Knight to see for the first time that Nature 'is a person with a curious temper; [...] one who does not scatter kindnesses

[124] The cliff scene reflects the interest in geology that was particularly prevalent in the first half of the nineteenth century. Dennis R. Rean states that '[a]s a current, useful, easily intelligible science primarily concerned with nature, landscape, environment, and history, geology could hardly have been bettered in appealing to Victorian tastes.' See '"Through Science to Despair": Geology and the Victorians', in *Victorian Science and Victorian Values: Literary Perspectives* ed. by James Paradis and Thomas Postelwait (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1985), 111. Geology was considered to be a suitable science for a gentleman. For a discussion of this point, see Martin J. S. Rudwick, *The Great Devonian Controversy. The Shaping of Scientific Knowledge among Gentlemanly Specialists* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 3–5, 17–19. There were a large number of books on geology available from the 1830s; see Knight, *Natural Science Books in English 1600–1900*, 175–6.

[125] See 'Origins and Oblivion in Victorian Narrative' in R. B. Yeazell (ed.), *Sex, Politics, and Science in the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 63–87.

[126] Cosslett, *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature*, 138.

[127] Bruce Johnson, *True Correspondence. A Phenomenology of Thomas Hardy's Novels* (Florida: University Presses of Florida, 1993), 124.

and cruelties alternately, impartially, and in order, but heartless severities or overwhelming generosities in lawless caprice. Man's case is always that of the prodigal's favourite or the miser's pensioner' (xii, 243). Tess Cosslett shows that Knight's insight is in line with what she defines as a scientific world view, i.e. he is, like the true scientist, prepared to look hard facts in the face, however unpalatable. She argues that Hardy's sympathies are with the West Country folk and suggests that Hardy 'takes ironic pleasure' in making a scientific rationalist like Knight share such views about nature.'[128] Knight's new insight produces no radical change in attitude because the events on the cliff face serve only to confirm his scientific views. Knight certainly does not become more compassionate or understanding, as his subsequent treatment of Elfride shows. Neither does he gain any greater insight into human nature: it is not until he has wandered aimlessly on the continent that he begins to realise how little he understood the motives and character of Elfride, and how misguided his rejection of one so innocent was.

The incident on the cliff face is important not only for what it reveals about Knight himself but also for what it tells us about Hardy and his interest in science. As mentioned earlier, Patricia Ingham makes a convincing case for the influence of Mantell's book *The Wonders of Geology or A Familiar Exposition of Geological Phenomena* on Hardy's description of Knight on the Cliff without a Name.[129] The similarity between Mantell's and Hardy's terminology in the description of the trilobyte, and the detail provided in the elucidation of the process of evolution from primitive times up to the 'present and modern condition of things' (xxii, 242), reveal a concern on Hardy's part with scientific accuracy. Patricia Ingham's conclusion has implications for the novels which follow *A Pair of Blue Eyes*: '[p]utting Hardy's passages beside what was probably his source vindicates him in one instance from the charge of many early critics that his scientific terminology was a blot on the novels. Evidently this was not so, and perhaps not often.'[130] Scientific terminology is indeed no 'blot' on the novels, it is a crucial ingredient in Hardy's vision of society and an integral part of his language. *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is the first of Hardy's early novels to reflect Hardy's growing interest in science with unmistakable clarity. Nine years later science was to become the main subject of a novel.

Summary

A Pair of Blue Eyes is one of the novels about which Hardy had particularly strong feelings, perhaps for biographical rather than literary reasons. It is, however, an extremely important novel from the point of view of the present book in that it

[128] 148.

[129] Patricia Ingham states that '*The Wonders* is a book that Hardy not only owned at a formative period in his self-education, but clearly read' (61). Hardy signed his copy of both volumes of *The Wonders* when he was eighteen years of age, and the second volume even has a correction in his own hand (61).

[130] 64.

presents character types in whom the distinguishing features of the three groups are particularly clearly delineated. It also shows the influence of science on Hardy's writing for the first time, an influence which, interestingly enough, not only affects group two but also the rustics.

The rustics of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* are of two extreme types: a skilled master-mason at one end of the scale, and ordinary village labourers at the other. Hardy was primarily interested in rustics with special skills, as these were best suited to his literary purpose of highlighting the positive features of the fast-disappearing traditional society. John Smith is thus of much greater importance in the novel than either Worm or Lickpan.

The key figure in group two, Stephen Smith, is typical of his group in terms of his professional expertise, and in his determination to break with his origins and build a career of his own. Smith is an important character in that he evinces the possibilities as well as the limitations of his group. His successes in India show him to be a capable architect who is able to thrive in an environment which is not prejudiced against him. His rejection by Parson Swancourt once the truth of his origins is revealed shows that he will never be able to develop in his home environment. The ups and downs of his life are presented with a scientific detachment which reduces the narrator's and the reader's emotional involvement in his successes and failures. He is a specimen to be observed rather than pitied.

The characters comprising group three are also presented as specimens rather than distinct individuals, and are extreme examples of their type or class. Parson Swancourt, for example, is the epitome of the intellectual Church of England parson preoccupied with social status and financial security; he rarely mentions ecclesiastical or spiritual matters. He is emotionally inept and appears to have no redeeming qualities. As such he is an extreme form of the kind of parson who appears again and again in Hardy's novels and short stories.

Elfride Swancourt looks back to the emotional and sensual Cytherea Graye and forward to the passionate and self-sacrificing heroine of *Two on a Tower*, Lady Viviette Constantine. Both Elfride and Viviette are victims of their uncalculating love for intellectually talented but emotionally cold men. The course of Elfride's life suggests that there is little room for emotion in the modern scientific world. Her love of Henry Knight is thus particularly unfortunate. While Elfride shows warmth of feeling for her fellow human beings, Knight is determined to keep them at a distance. He is a scientist who analyses rather than feels. He has a theory of the ideal woman which has no foundation in reality, and he is thus doomed to disappointment in any relationship with a member of the opposite sex. Without feeling, his observations of life are worth nothing. He looks with the eyes but not with the heart.

The narrator and the reader of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* view people and events from a distance. The lack of emotional involvement in the lives of the different characters allows the reader to identify and consider distinguishing qualities and characteristics

and how these relate to, and are affected by, the environment. The link between science and lack of emotion which is established in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* is developed in the later novels. That this link is made early on in Hardy's writing career is an indication that it is a view which gradually developed over a period of years: it was not the result of some sudden revelation.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Far From the Madding Crowd was first published as a serial in the *Cornhill Magazine* in January 1874. The two-volume first edition of the novel appeared in the following November. *Far From the Madding Crowd* is normally regarded as Hardy's first major work, and it has been admired among other things for 'the bold theatricality of the narrative progression, the rich yet strictly functional evocation of setting, [and] the earth-bound poetry of the dialogue.'[131]

Far From the Madding Crowd drew both vehement criticism and lyrical praise from contemporary critics. The anonymous reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, for example, complained that one is 'alternately attracted and repelled by admirable delineations of man and nature on the one hand, and gross improbabilities on the other, till we lay it down, unable to say whether the author is an ill-regulated genius or a charlatan with some touches of cleverness.'[133] R. Hutton of the *Spectator*, on the other hand, describes it as a 'production of a very high order of ability and humour',[134] containing realistic and witty descriptions of Wessex rural life. *Far From the Madding Crowd* was also reviewed by Henry James, in the *Nation*,[135] who praised Hardy for his descriptions of rustic people but who then claimed that they are no more than imitations of George Eliot and bear no evidence of original talent. Henry James suggests that the 'over-use' of dialogue has resulted in a dull and unduly lengthy novel which is 'superficial' and which constitutes a 'really curious imitation of something better.' The anonymous reviewer for the *Westminster Review*[136] compares Hardy favourably with George Eliot, although he is also criticised for a certain sensationalism (Troy's sword-handling demonstration is cited as an example). One short comment at the very end of the review is of particular relevance to the present discussion; Hardy is accused of adopting 'a semi-scientific phraseology and a striving after a profundity of meaning.' What did the reviewer mean by 'semi-scientific'? As the following discussion shows, scientific terminology has an important function in *Far From the Madding Crowd*.

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[131] Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 80.

[132] Richard Little Purdy, *Thomas Hardy. A Bibliographical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 16.

[133] 5 December 1874. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 20.

[134] 19 December 1874. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 21.

[135] 24 December 1874. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 27–31. The quotation is from p. 31.

[136] January 1875. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 31–35. The quotation is from p. 34.

The rustics

A number of the characters belonging to this group are agricultural labourers. The novel is set in the 1830s. In the preface dated 1895–1902, Hardy acknowledged that the favourable reception of *Far From the Madding Crowd* was due in part to the general public's acceptance of an anachronistic Wessex 'of railways, the penny post, mowing and reaping machines, union workhouses, lucifer matches, labourers who could read and write, and National school children' (preface, vii). Hardy admitted that the county of Wessex is 'partly real, partly dream-country' (preface, viii) and warned readers against believing that 'there are any inhabitants of a Victorian Wessex outside these volumes in which their lives and conversations are detailed' (preface, viii). There is a marked tension between the real and the fictional throughout *Far From the Madding Crowd*. This is an important point which requires some elucidation before discussing Hardy's rustics and the contribution which *Far From the Madding Crowd* makes to the subject of this book.

The Dorset of 1830 was a much more depressed and turbulent county than Hardy's novel suggests. From the 1800s to the 1840s prices of wheat, barley, oats, mutton, beef and wool dropped between approximately 30% and 60% in round figures. Agricultural wages fell by about 20% during the same period.[137] An interesting insight into conditions in the county is given in *An Affectionate Warning to the Agricultural Labourers in the Parish of Preston-cum-Suton, in the County of Dorset*, which was sold in Weymouth and Dorchester. The writer, the Rev. Octavius Piers, urges labourers not to combine in order to raise wages or lower the price of bread. The pamphlet indicates the presence of a persistent desire to form unions in the county just four years after the transportation of the Tolpuddle Martyrs.[138] There is no intimation of such problems in Hardy's novel. On the contrary, the rural labourers are generally content with their lot. The novel gives no hint of the squalid living conditions, shortage of food or riots and rick burning[139] recorded by historians and economists.[140]

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[137] Overton, *The Agricultural Revolution in England*, 64. Overton concludes that real agricultural wages 'show a fall from 1500 to the early seventeenth century, a hesitant rise to the 1740s, but thereafter a continued fall as prices rose once again' (68). Agricultural wages in Dorset were even behind those of Cornwall, a notoriously depressed county. See Lord Rowland E. Prothero Ernle, *English Farming Past and Present* (London: Heinemann, 1961; first published in 1912), Appendix ix, 525. For details of the appalling living conditions of Dorset labourers at the time, see the medical officer's report in The *Victorian Novelist. Social Problems and Social Change* ed. by Kate Flint (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1987), 241–3.

[138] R. K. Webb, *The British Working Class Reader*, 150–1. J. P. D. Dunabin shows that there was a short-lived local union of agricultural workers at Montacute (Somerset) in the early 1850s and concludes that 'there may have been many such that perished leaving no memorial' ('The "Revolt of the Field": The Agricultural Labourers' Movement in the 1870s', *Past and Present* 26 (1963), 71. The number of unions had increased significantly by the 1870s.

[139] That Hardy was aware of the problems is illustrated in the short story 'The Withered Arm' (*Wessex Tales*, 67–71), in which Rhoda Brook's son is hanged after witnessing the burning of a rick.

[140] For a concise summary of conditions in rural Dorset during the 1840s see Roger Lowman, 'Thomas Hardy's Wessex Childhood', *The Hatcher Review* 4 (Spring 1991), 21–23. For a discussion of class relations, working conditions and unemployment in Dorset during the nineteenth century, see Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor*, chapter 8, 'Thomas Hardy, rural Dorset, and the family', 374–410.

As his setting Hardy chose 'Weatherbury', a traditional community modelled on the small town of Puddletown. Robert Gittings describes the latter as virtually untouched by the enclosure movement and with a stable population of artisans and small craftsmen, who served the farming community but who were largely unaffected by fluctuations in agriculture.[141] Puddletown was regarded as a thriving spot in the early nineteenth century. It was thus an almost ideal community to an observer who shared Hardy's social views: stable,[142] with a good economy and composed to an unusually high degree of contented workers.

In Weatherbury time stands still, and all turbulence is excluded. This does not only constitute a display of the favourable features of an old-style traditional rural community; it also demonstrates how the rustics are increasingly becoming the victims of a hysteresis which is neither recognised nor understood:

> In comparison with cities, Weatherbury was immutable. The citizen's *Then* is the rustic's *Now*. In London, twenty or thirty years ago are old times; in Paris ten years, or five; in Weatherbury three or four score years were included in the mere present, and nothing less than a century set a mark on its face or tone [...] In these Wessex nooks the busy outsider's ancient times are only old; his old times are still new; his present is futurity (xxii, 166).

The issue of hysteresis pervades *Far From the Madding Crowd*. It is reflected in the perception of time and even in the development of language; the narrator remarks, for example, that '[t]en generations failed to alter the turn of a single phrase' (xxii, 166).

It is important to note that while Hardy suggests that the rustics fail to keep up with modern developments, he does not mean to imply that they are stupid, and certainly not that they are the 'illiterate clods' described by the anonymous reviewer for the *Athenaeum*.[143] The rustic labourers belong to a particular 'class of society which casts its thoughts into the form of feeling, and its feelings into the form of commotion' (vi, 51). The emotional takes precedence over the rational. Cause and effect have little meaning: the rural labourers' response when Bathsheba's ricks are on fire or when her sheep have strayed into a field of clover[144] is to panic rather than take the appropriate action. On the first occasion, it is Oak who saves the day by weighing up the situation, deciding on and then implementing the correct action and generally taking control of the situation; on the second occasion, Bathsheba must take charge, though it is Oak's expertise which saves the lives of the sheep.

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[141] *Young Hardy*, 32. See also Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 100–103, for a more detailed description of Puddletown in the 1870s.

[142] There was a considerable influx of labourers into the county from outside Dorset. This trailed off by 1871; nonetheless, more than half the labourers in Puddletown in 1871 were from other parishes. See Howard, 'Thomas Hardy's "Mellstock" and the Registrar General's Stinsford', 194.

[143] Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 19.

[144] For a description of how clover was introduced into Dorset from abroad and its importance, see Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, 53– 54.

The rustics are vulnerable because they are not in control of their situation. Chance determines whether they find employment. Only those with special skills and with youth and fitness on their side are assured of being hired. This vulnerability is emphasised in the description of the annual hiring fair – a custom which had in fact virtually died out in the county by the middle of the century. The fair shows the rustics to be men of a particular 'stamp', for whom work 'suggests nothing worse than a wrestle with gravitation, and pleasure nothing better than a renunciation of the same' (vi, 43). The use of the modern word 'gravitation' suggests that the rustics' situation is the inevitable consequence of immutable scientific law.

Joseph Poorgrass is one of the best delineated and most representative of the rustic labourers.[145] His surname suggests a down-to-earthness which is linked with poverty – a poverty which is not only financial but also social. His favourite phrase is ''tis as 'tis, why, it might have been worse, and I feel my thanks accordingly.' It is significant that the novel ends with Joseph repeating these very words. Joseph responds to events in a spontaneous and non-analytical manner. His response to Bathsheba's plans for a supper for her workmen, for example, is purely physical and he assures Maryann 'in a pleasant, masticating manner of anticipation' that he will do his 'duty by it' (xxii, 174). Food is described in religious terms, as 'the gospel of the body' (xxii, 174). Poorgrass not only accepts but sublimates a basic human need. He fails to see the real purpose of the supper, which not only celebrates the passing of another successful year but is a means of reinforcing the prevailing class system: Bathsheba is the benefactor, her workmen are the grateful recipients.[146] The supper thus has a symbolic value which Poorgrass does not appreciate. His position relative to Bathsheba is accepted without question because it is seen as 'natural' and is reinforced by tradition.

Poorgrass's views on religion are also determined by custom and reinforced by limited experience of a small community largely untouched by events and developments outside its own boundaries. Joseph expresses his fears in a language firmly rooted in the traditional society: as a restricted-code user, his argument is couched in concrete terms, it is context-bound, disregards conventional grammar and relies heavily on dialect:

> Well, I hope Providence won't be in a way with me for my doings [...] I've been troubled with weak moments lately, 'tis true. I've been drinky once this month already, and I did

[145] Even his reading is typical of that of the working class: one of the few books Joseph knows is John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which was read by most working-class readers. See Paul Thomas Murphy, *Toward a Working-Class Canon. Literary Criticism in British Working-Class Periodicals, 1816–1858* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1994), 15.

[146] For a description of the relationship between paternalism and deference, see Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England*. Overton concludes that the relationship 'was still very evident well into the nineteenth century, especially in those communities with a resident landlord who dominated landholding and employment in the village', 185.

> not go to church a-Sunday, and I dropped a curse or two yesterday; so I don't want to go too far for my safety. Your next world is your next world, and not to be squandered offhand (xlii, 327).

Salvation is seen in highly simplistic terms, as the result of obedience to a specific set of rules. Joseph recognises that the rustic habit of drinking to excess is a threat to future salvation, but he is not always able to resist the temptation.[147] Bound by the traditions and way of life of his class, Joseph seems unable to see beyond his present situation.

The limited existence of the rustic is clearly indicated in the account of Cain Ball's visit to Bath. The spa city is regarded as the 'world' (xxxiii, 250) and those who visit the city are 'navigators' (xxxiii, 253). Cain's insularity is emphasised both by his use of dialect and the exaggerated, unscientific nature of the examples he gives of the way of life in Bath: 'the people of Bath [...] never need to light their fires except as a luxury, for the water springs up out of the earth ready boiled for use' (xxxiii, 253). As Joseph Poorgrass appreciates, visiting Bath may have educational value for the poor people of the countryside – ' 'tis for our good to gain knowledge of strange cities' (xxxiii, 253) – but without any real understanding of what they see, it has only limited value.

At the same time, the rustic is credited with common sense in respect to human relations. When Cain Ball tells his group of listeners that he has seen Bathsheba in the company of Sergeant Troy, Matthew Moon astutely remarks, '[a]h [...] she'll wish her cake dough if so be she's over intimate with that man' (xxxiii, 255). The echo from *Taming of the Shrew* Act 1, scene 1 – 'our cake's dough on both sides'[148] – would have given the comment added significance for the educated reader. Why did this astuteness not serve the rustic better in the long run? Part of the answer is suggested in the figure and attitudes of Henery Fray. Henery Fray has very decided views on life; he 'laid it down that the law of the world was bad, with a long-suffering look through his listeners at the world alluded to, as it presented itself to his imagination' (viii, 63). The expression 'laid it down' is significant: it suggests a closed and dictatorial attitude based on a particular perception – as the world 'presented itself to his imagination' – which is subjective and unreflecting. His attitude to life is summed up in his decision to spell his Christian name in a non-standard way, using an extra 'e.' He deliberately defies the system of formal education by ignoring the comments of schoolmasters and is unmoved by the argument that the spelling with an extra 'e' is old-fashioned. He has made up his mind, and that is the end of it.

The rustics of *Far From the Madding Crowd* have a limited view of the world

[147] For a description of the problem of drunkenness in rural England during the nineteenth century, see Horn, *Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside*, 152, 219, 222, 223, 236.

[148] Editor's note, New Wessex edition, 355.

outside their own community. They show a degree of astuteness in judging others, but their acceptance of the present datum and their lack of education exclude them from modern developments. They make no effort to improve their situation because they see no need to do so. Theirs is a hysteresis which is rooted in a very limited world view and which is symbolised by Weatherbury itself. They express a contentment with life which does not reflect historical reality. It is important for an understanding of Hardy's literary purpose to realise that the rustics of *Far From the Madding Crowd* represent the stable qualities of a life-style which had already largely disappeared.

The lower/middle class

The position, character and career of Gabriel Oak are much less clear-cut than those of the rustics. This is in part a reflection of what John Bayley describes as Hardy's 'tricky relation with Oak.'[149] Bayley sees a mixture of the heroic and the homely in Oak: the flute-playing faithful lover and the expert husbander who saves Bathsheba's corn from destruction by a storm. Bayley believes Hardy was in danger of patronising Oak because 'he is rather obviously mingled with the author', representing many of those qualities which Hardy himself so clearly admired. Oak has an uncomfortable position in group two because he is much more a rustic in terms of origins and knowledge than a member of the predictive society. He plays by his own rules, which involve neither the acquiescence of the rustic nor the educated ambition of group two; he is yesterday's man who, against all the odds, succeeds in building a future for himself based on traditional skills and knowledge. Oak's nature is primarily static: 'although if occasion demanded he could do or think a thing with as mercurial a dash as can the men of towns who are more to the manner born, his special power, morally, physically, and mentally, was static, owing little or nothing to momentum as a rule' (ii, 11). It is thus at first sight all the more surprising that Oak significantly improves his position by the end of the novel. There are good reasons for this, however, as the following discussion will show.

Oak belongs to a special class of human being whom Hardy describes as 'the even-tempered order of humanity' (v, 37). Paul Turner suggests that the influence of Comte can be clearly seen in the character of Oak as he struggles against the defects of the Natural Order. Hardy found in Comte's positivism a synthesis of all human conceptions, in which science and social reform were incorporated without any loss of imaginative or spiritual feeling. Oak is an altruist in his disinterested love for Bathsheba; a love which is crowned by good fellowship – the most promising basis for marriage, according to Comte.[150] Oak's very name suggests sturdiness. As Timothy Hands points out, Oak's Christian name means 'man of God' and his occupa-

[149] *An Essay on Hardy*, 108.
[150] See *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy. A Critical Biography*, 46.

tion as a shepherd has definite religious connotations.[151] Significantly, Oak's skills and knowledge come from outside Weatherbury, from the bleaker district of Norcombe.[152] He survives the loss of his sheep and even flourishes in the new community because he is 'in keeping with the principles of time and nature that still order life in the Weatherbury community.'[153] Oak is not the successful capitalistic shepherd envisaged by Rosemary Morgan: there is no fundamental and dramatic transformation from pastoral innocence to bourgeois capitalism as a farm manager turned property owner.[154] Superficially Oak has certainly changed status; intrinsically he is, however, the same man throughout. He is typical of group two in his successful adaptation to new challenges which bring him improved financial and social status; he is atypical in building this success on what are essentially rustic skills and knowledge. This knowledge is less easily replaced by modern technology than that of many of Hardy's rustic artisans: machines could take over the tasks of a shoemaker, but they could not at this early stage replace human knowledge of the weather or skill in using a piercing instrument. Science confirms and explains what Oak already knows instinctively. Knowledge of soils and fertilisers, medicines and improved equipment can increase Oak's efficiency as a farm manager or a shepherd; his sympathetic understanding of nature is still, however, adequate for Weatherbury, largely untouched as it is by modern scientific knowledge. Ultimately, of course, in the real world characters such as Oak will lose out, but not for a couple of decades to come, and certainly not within Oak's own lifetime.[155]

Oak makes his first appearance in the novel as a sheep farmer with a sizable flock.[156] Sheep-farming requires considerable skill. The shepherd's knowledge was passed down from generation to generation and was a closely guarded secret.[157] Some of the remedies used by nineteenth-century shepherds are still recognised as

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[151] *Thomas Hardy: Distracted Preacher?*, 63. Bryn Caless points out that the name Gabriel is often associated with 'Gawaine', one of the knights of the Arthur legends who sought the Holy Grail. Caless writes: 'Gawaine had to pass through the perils of earth, fire and water to attain his goal, and it is, perhaps, not pushing the linkage too far, to suggest that Gabriel, too, had to pass through the tests of earth, fire, and water to attain Bathsheba.' See 'Hardy's Characters and the Significance of their Names', *Thomas Hardy Yearbook* 4 ed. by James Stevens Cox (Guernsey: Toucan Press, 1973– 4), 12.

[152] Morrell stresses this point and draws the conclusion that it is this which allows Oak to breathe new life into the Weatherbury community (*Thomas Hardy. The Will and the Way*, 26). Oak does not reinvigorate the community, though: he adapts to its ways. The community remains fundamentally the same.

[153] D.B. Rosenberg, 'The Shifting Balance of Community, History, and Nature in Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels (1874–1896)', *Durham University Journal* 39 (1977), 61.

[154] *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, 41.

[155] The days of the shepherd were numbered by the end of the nineteenth century: '[s]hepherds found themselves superfluous not only in England but also in Australia where the sheep farmers were unwilling to employ them since "they always thought they knew better than their master" and preferred untrained men, "the drifts of English society", who obeyed without arguing' (Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, 162).

[156] The number of sheep kept in Dorset did not diminish until the general agricultural decline of the 1870s. Between 1870 and 1900 the number of sheep decreased by 40%. See Bettey, *Rural Life in Wessex 1500–1900*, 38.

[157] John Randall compares the shepherd's knowledge to 'a trade secret' jealously guarded from outsiders. See *Wattle Hurdles and Leather Gaiters* (Ipswich: Farming Press Books, 1995), 64.

effective today.[158] According to an expert in 1870, to be a good sheep-farmer it is necessary to 'keep each class in circumstances throughout the year most conducive to breeding, feeding, and wool; giving the right kind of food at proper times, avoiding extremes, and generally to be guided by lessons from nature.'[159] Twenty-three years later, John Wrightson could write that agricultural science and technology in the form of 'steam power and chemical manures, pedigree stock and iron fencing, weigh-bridges and milk registers'[160] were gradually taking the romance out of sheep-farming, but this was not yet apparent in the first half of the nineteenth century, the period in which *Far From the Madding Crowd* is set.

Hardy's knowledge of sheep-farming was more theoretical than practical. For example, Simon Gatrell states that he probably found it necessary to consult a shepherding manual or an encyclopedia about such problems as sheep-rot. Gatrell concludes that although Hardy was brought up in a rural environment, and was acquainted with many aspects of rural life, he would have found it necessary to reinforce his knowledge by referring to some authority.[161]

Hardy would have known that a sheep-farmer must be a good all-round farmer: of all classes of farm stock, sheep require the closest and most skilful management.[162] A shepherd was regarded as superior to other farm workers. His hours were long and his responsibilities considerable. A good shepherd had almost total control over his flock and regarded it as his own property;[163] small wonder, therefore, that Gabriel Oak resents any imperiousness from Bathsheba.

Not only does Oak have the practical skill expected of a shepherd, he has the group-two determination as well as ability to adapt and take advantage of opportunities. Roy Morrell sees Oak as one of the best examples in Hardy's fiction of 'evolutionary meliorism', which he defines as the denial of Providence and acceptance of nature as a disorderly combination of good and bad forces on which only man has the ability to impose some kind of order. As the incident of the sheep piercing indicates, Oak is indeed in sympathy with nature, but he also transcends it. His powers, likened to the skill of a surgeon, are beyond what is expected of an ordinary shepherd. Oak 'does not merely roll with the dumb forces of nature, [he] is a supremely strategic pragmatist.'[164] This ability is clearly demonstrated the night of the thunderstorm:

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[158] For a discussion of this point, see Randall, *Wattle Hurdles and Leather Gaiters*, 64–5.

[159] William Brown, *British Sheep Farming* (Edinburgh, 1870), 129.

[160] *Sheep. Breeds and Management* (London, 1893), 1.

[161] *Hardy the Creator. A Textual Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 53.

[162] Walter J. Malden, *Sheep Raising and Shepherding: A Handbook of Sheep Farming* (London, 1899), 1. James Caird explains that the loss of lambs was extremely high in Dorset owing to the habit of Dorset shepherds of 'driving the ewes while in lamb from the feeding ground to the fold and back again – often a mile or more each way.' See James Caird, *English Agriculture in 1850–1* (London, 1852), 63.

[163] Arthur Ingram, *Shepherding Tools and Customs* (Princes Risborough: Shire, 1989), 29.

[164] Bruce Johnson, *True Correspondence*, 28.

> Anyone who imagines Hardy is a fatalist should re-read the dozen pages that follow Oak's discovery of the drunken sleepers in the barn. By refusing to be discouraged, and yet by anticipating the worst that the storm can do, Oak keeps ahead of the risks all the time.[165]

Oak transcends the limitations of group one. He also rejects the superstition of the rustic population. This is clearly seen in his attitude to the toad on the path. As late as 1922, when John Symonds Udal's *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore* was published, it was still believed by the rural community of Dorset that toads were capable of exercising an evil influence over people and should therefore be spat upon or hit with a stone to counteract any evil influence which the sight of the toad might have.[166]

Interestingly, Oak is superior to both Boldwood and Bathsheba in the realisation of his true place in the order of things. He alone recognises 'that among the multitude of interests by which he was surrounded, those which affected his personal well-being were not the most absorbing and important' (xliii, 338). Oak's insight comes very close to what Hardy had read in Darwinian theory, which claimed that man is not able to fully understand the history of the development of life on earth 'and that he might not be central to that history.'[167]

From where does Oak's insight come? Oak's actions are largely determined by 'old habits and usages' (xlix, 381). He is a respecter of tradition. At the same time, he also has a clear appreciation of the value of the written word and has his own library. This includes a variety of works ranging from literature to science. Significantly all his books are old (two were written in the seventeenth century) and include *The Young Man's Best Companion, The Farrier's Sure Guide, The Veterinary Surgeon, Paradise Lost, The Pilgrim's Progress, Robinson Crusoe, Ash's Dictionary*, and the book which Hardy used at school and which is mentioned in his poem 'He Revisits His First School',[168] namely Walkingame's *Arithmetic*.[169] While this is not a large number of books, it seems that Oak made maximum use of them, acquiring 'more sound information by diligent perusal than many a man of opportunities has done from a furlong of laden shelves' (viii, 79). Oak has two natures: the 'intellectual and moral' and the 'instinctive';[170] these two harmonise to create one of the most humane and capable characters in Hardy's fiction.

Oak combines the qualities of groups one and two. The rustic side of his nature predominates as a rule; this is backed up, however, by an ability to predict and assess

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[165] Morrell, 'Hardy in the Tropics', 19.

[166] See page 249 for a full description of this belief.

[167] Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots*, 19.

[168] *The Complete Poems*, 511–12.

[169] This 'was first issued in 1751 and became the most popular arithmetic text-book for over a century afterward [...] Before the author died in 1783 there had been eighteen different editions, each comprising 5,000–10,000 copies, and successive editions continued to be published far into the nineteenth century.' See A. E. Musson and Eric Robinson, *Science and Technology in the Industrial Revolution* (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1989), 24–25.

[170] G. Glen Wickens, 'Literature and Science: Hardy's Response to Mill, Huxley and Darwin', *Mosaic* XIV (1981), 66.

causes and consequences where necessary. Oak's dual position is clearly reflected in his language, which contains some standard English but also a greater degree of dialect and non-standard English than that of most group-two characters. It is significant that in revising the text, Hardy increased the amount of dialect used by Oak when talking to Bathsheba. It has been proposed that he did so in order to emphasise Oak's social inferiority to Sergeant Troy.[171] That is not the whole story, though. It is with Bathsheba, of course, that Oak has his most important conversations, where his strongest feelings are expressed and where he is most conscious of the importance of what he says. It has already been established that dialect tends to be used at times of high emotion. This is certainly true in Oak's case. Gabriel is not as innocent as he appears, however, as he also uses his apparently less sophisticated language as a ploy, to flatter Bathsheba and to disguise his own strengths. At the beginning of the novel, Oak tells Bathsheba, for example, that 'I can't match you, I know, in mapping out my mind upon my tongue. I never was very clever in my inside' (iii, 25).

In fact, there are times when Oak is downright eloquent. On such occasions he frequently uses standard English to good effect, particularly when he wishes to stress that his present humble station does not do justice to his talents and ability:

> Sometimes I should be glad as a bird to leave the place – for don't suppose I'm content to be a nobody. I was made for better things. However, I don't like to see your concerns going to ruin, as they must if you keep in this mind . . . I hate taking my own measure so plain, but, upon my life, your provoking ways make a man say what he wouldn't dream of at other times! (xxix, 220).

On occasion Oak combines dialect with standard English when his relation to Bathsheba is confused. When, for example, he advises her about a possible engagement with Boldwood, he plays the part of lover, employee and philosopher all at the same time. The philosophical elements are expressed in standard English, and the emotional in dialect:

> Well, your want of love seems to me the one thing that takes away harm from such an agreement [to marry without love] with him. If wild heat had to do wi' it, making ye long to overcome the awkwardness about your husband's vanishing, it mid be wrong; but a cold-hearted agreement to oblige a man seems different, somehow. The real sin, ma'am, in my mind, lies in thinking of ever wedding wi' a man you don't love honest and true (li, 409).

When the situation is particularly painful, Oak alternates between standard English and dialect in order to mark his change in role. This allows him to express his own feelings as well as to give more objective advice.

Gabriel Oak is the 'honest and true' rustic with a special understanding of nature.

[171] Patricia Ingham, 'Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot', in *Literary English Since Shakespeare* ed. by George Watson (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 354.

He is also clearly a member of group two in his ability to take advantage of opportunities. He may still be yesterday's man at root but he has learned the rules of the game and adopts the characteristics of group two when these are necessary to achieve his ends. Oak incorporates much that Hardy admired in the traditional society. At the same time Hardy also allows Gabriel to transcend his humble origins. He marries Bathsheba and in so doing has reached the top of the social scale in Weatherbury. Oak reaches the limits of success for a man in his position. He is content to go no further. The local environment favours Oak in a way not experienced by Stephen Smith. Both men have talent and determination, but only one of them is lucky in his choice of community. And only one of them is given the traditional reward for group two: marriage to the woman he loves. This is a justifiable reward because Oak is an attractive and warm character who engages the reader's sympathies from the outset.

The upper-middle/upper class

In the preceding discussion of Gabriel Oak it was established that he is one of the few characters who are endowed with the special insight of appreciating that his personal well-being is not of central importance in the universe. This insight is clearly not shared by Bathsheba Everdene; indeed, it may be said that '[t]he limit of Bathsheba's knowledge is her self-containment, the restriction of her view to herself alone.'[172] It is no coincidence that she is first seen in the novel looking at herself in a mirror.

Bathsheba's place in society is confused. When seen on the cart, she appears to be a young attractive woman of humble station. A few pages later, however, the reader learns that she is well educated and 'an excellent scholar' (iv, 30) who was 'going to be a governess once [...] only she was too wild' (iv, 30). Presumably then, Bathsheba has acquired the usual accomplishments of a governess. Her superior education is clearly reflected in her language: '[y]ou speak like a lady – all the parish notice it' (iv, 35), Gabriel assures her. And yet Bathsheba Everdene is not a lady when she is first introduced to the reader, she is her aunt's assistant. She rides bareback, helps with the milking and flirts with Gabriel like any country maid with few, if any, inhibitions. Her education and lady-like ways are a thin veneer which is clearly incongruous in her present situation. Bathsheba's social status changes yet again when she becomes the inheritor of her uncle's farm. It is this vacillation between different existences which is at the root of Bathsheba's future problems.

As his name suggests, Oak's stable character is better able to cope with changing fortunes. Bathsheba, like her biblical counterpart, is largely unaware of her vulnerability and requires a Nathan to point out her danger and the correct course of ac-

[171] Patricia Ingham, 'Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot', in *Literary English Since Shakespeare* ed. by George Watson (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 354.
[172] McGinty, 'Thomas Hardy's Novels: Knowledge and Narration', 57.

tion.[173] She is presented as a character with restricted rational ability and a tendency to act illogically: '[m]any of her thoughts were perfect syllogisms; unluckily they always remained thoughts. Only a few were irrational assumptions; but, unfortunately, they were the ones which most frequently grew into deeds'(xx, 149). Bathsheba can give others sound advice but fails to practise what she preaches. This is very obvious in her relationship with Sergeant Troy, who is described as a foreign substance ('lymph on the dart of Eros', xxix, 214) which penetrates Bathsheba's 'intrinsic nature' (xxix, 214) and transforms it. Bathsheba's attraction to the glamorous Sergeant may be seen in the light of Darwin's sexual selection: Bathsheba is unable to withstand the lure of the brightly dressed, dashing Troy whose male prowess is so ostentatiously demonstrated in the sword display.[174]

Bathsheba Everdene is a woman in a man's world. This is to a certain extent her own choice, of course, but her decision to be her own bailiff is made without full possession of the facts of the situation. She has a very inadequate conception of what it really means for a woman to defy social convention and run her own farm single-handed. Her reception at the Corn Exchange is an indication of the difficulty of the task she has taken on.[175] The Exchange is one of the primary commercial institutions in Casterbridge, and a masculine domain. It follows established mathematical and scientific laws which by implication are more akin to the logical male nature than to the 'freakish' female character:

> Material causes and emotional effects are not to be arranged in regular equation. The result from capital employed in the production of any movement of a mental nature is sometimes as tremendous as the cause itself is absurdly minute. When women are in a freakish mood their usual intuition, either from carelessness or inherent defect, seemingly fails to teach them this, and hence it was that Bathsheba was *fated* to be astonished to-day (xvii, 133, my italics).

It seems that Bathsheba is doomed to failure from the start without competent and reliable male support.

It is Oak who provides the stability and the expertise which Bathsheba lacks. It is his knowledge and skill which prevent Bathsheba from losing her ricks in

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[173] See the First Book of Kings 1 and 2 for the story of how the prophet Nathan warns Bathsheba of the danger of Adonijah's power and impresses on her the necessity of Bathsheba supporting Solomon's (her own son's) claims.

[174] For a discussion of Bathsheba's relations with Troy and the principle of sexual selection, see Cosslett, *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature*, 158–159. See also Chapter Two of this book, 143–144.

[175] The Dorchester Corn Exchange is an example of a so-called sample market, where the seller brought only a hand sample to show purchasers, and once a price was agreed the remaining corn was delivered to the purchaser. The other kind of market common in the first part of the nineteenth century was the so-called pitched market, where the farmer displayed all the corn he was prepared to sell. To be successful in a sample market it was necessary to have a good reputation and to possess persuasive powers. For an interesting discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of these two kinds of market see Richard Perren, 'Markets and Marketing' in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, volume VI, 1750–1850 ed. by Mingay, 238–239.

the fire and later in the storm, and without him the farm would have fallen into ruin under Troy's management. Oak expects no rewards. It is only when 'her last old disciple' (lvi, 451) appears to be deserting her that she can bring herself to call on him in his own home. She is ill at ease on Oak's own territory and finds it difficult to show any warmth or affection even then. Bathsheba's experiences with Troy have drained any power she may once have had to show passion. By the end of the novel she has learned the value of devoted service and recognises that she cannot do without Oak's faithful support. Any warmth and affection in the relationship must, however, come from Oak himself. Their marriage is based on tried and tested friendship rather than on passionate love. While Gabriel Oak has finally realised his dream, it seems that emotionally Bathsheba has most to gain from the relationship. Oak is nonetheless clearly the happier of the two, and it is no coincidence that after the wedding the narrator remarks that whereas Oak can enjoy a good laugh, Bathsheba can merely smile ('she never laughed readily now', lvii, 463). Oak is content with his gains. He has learned to accept both success and failure and to smile at fortune. He does not have an inflated view of his position and is not dazzled by success. He remains constant to his dream because he knows what he wants. Bathsheba, on the other hand, is unsure of her position in society and as a woman. As a result, she challenges fate without either understanding or being able to accept the consequences. Without Gabriel Oak she is vulnerable both as a woman and as a farmer; she has little chance of success in either capacity.

Farmer Boldwood is also dependent on Oak both as counsellor and farm manager. Boldwood enjoys a privileged position in the Weatherbury community. He has power and influence as a landowner (Dorset farms were larger than most West Country ones,[176] and agriculture remained a profitable enterprise until the early 1870s); Bathsheba is the only member of the community who can approach him in either sophistication or status.[177] Farmer Boldwood is seen primarily in relation to the three main characters: Bathsheba, Troy and Oak. To the humble villagers, Boldwood is remote and unfathomable. He belongs to the class who in real life fought for protection and high corn prices, as opposed to the labourers, who were more inter-

[176] For a comparison of farm sizes in different parts of the country, see F. M. L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), Table II 'The Great Estates', 32.

[177] It was common practice for farmers to marry into a family of the same or similar social rank, 'usually from the same local district, a custom issuing from social and business contacts': Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society*, 100. A union of Boldwood and Bathsheba would be in accordance with social practice. Bathsheba would also have been able to fulfil the duties of the wife of a gentleman. These included running the village school or a clothing club and being present at a wide variety of social entertainments. For a description of the duties of a gentleman's wife, see Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*, 133–4.

ested in jobs and cheap bread.[178] It is only to Bathsheba, Troy and Oak that Boldwood reveals his true nature. Boldwood is described as a man of antagonistic forces and his personality is presented in terms reminiscent of science, 'the perfect balance of antagonistic forces – positives and negatives in fine adjustment' (xviii, 137).[179] Passion distorts what the narrator describes as 'the symmetry of [Boldwood's] existence' (xiv, 112). This balance is so precarious that one Valentine's card is sufficient to trigger a reaction which ultimately results in attempted suicide. Boldwood's education has taught him the importance of maintaining his position in society. He is a capable farmer with a well-run estate.[180] Like many group-three characters, however, he is unable to realise his full potential owing to emotional weakness.

Boldwood is clearly Troy's superior both socially and personally. Where Troy is unreliable and fickle, Boldwood is faithful and constant. Troy is able to flatter and impress by displays of masculinity such as the sword exercise; Boldwood refuses to stoop to such tactics. The sergeant plays with emotion to achieve his own ends. He knows that he is irresistible to women and, in accordance with the principles of sexual selection, dresses and behaves so as to make maximum use of his natural advantages. It is not until the Christmas party that Boldwood shows any real interest in his appearance, and then, characteristically, he goes to extremes. When Boldwood offers Troy money to marry Bathsheba, the Sergeant jests with him in a way that reinforces his inferiority to the farmer.

The relationship between Boldwood and Oak is very different. Superficially, it seems that Boldwood is Oak's superior in depth, height and strength of feeling (xliii, 338). Boldwood's feelings are, however, untried. He has never experienced failure, and he has never made himself vulnerable to another. When Oak meets Boldwood, he has already experienced the loss of his flock, and humbled himself to serve as shepherd to the woman who has rejected his proposal of marriage. Boldwood has always enjoyed the security of a respectable and lucrative livelihood. Oak understands that success is not necessarily permanent. Boldwood assumes that his farm will always prosper and that his social position is unshakable, based as it is on firm tradition. When the foundations of his existence begin to crumble, it is to Oak that Boldwood turns. Only Oak can manage Boldwood's

[178] Farmers with large estates often imposed strict conditions of service and were thus not always popular. An example of such conditions may be found in Horn, *Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside*, 86 - 7. Caird observed in the 1850s that '[t]he farmers of Dorset complain very bitterly of the present low prices, and see no relief except in protection. Being seldom disturbed by their landlords in the possession of their farms, and paying moderate rents, they expect little benefit from matters which in other counties are frequent topics of discussion, such as compensation for unexhausted improvements, a readjustment of the burdens on land, produce rents, and security of tenure.' See Caird, *English Agriculture 1850–1*, 73.

[179] Henry Knight is described in much the same way.

[180] In real life this became an increasingly difficult situation as labourers were drawn more and more to industry, leaving 'the more indolent and the more careless behind': Elie Halévy, *England in 1815* (London: Ernest Benn, 1949; first published in French in 1913), 242.

estate properly, and only he can advise the farmer about such a personal and delicate problem as Bathsheba.

Bathsheba introduces imbalance in Boldwood's orderly world. Significantly, her entry into the latter is described in terms of astronomy:

> To Boldwood women had been remote phenomena rather than necessary complements – comets of such uncertain aspect, movement, and permanence, that whether their orbits were as geometrical, unchangeable, and as subject to laws as his own, or as absolutely erratic as they superficially appeared, he had not deemed it his duty to consider (xvii, 133).

Boldwood understands the workings of natural law, and he feels secure. His approach to Bathsheba is initially rational and logical. While it remains on this level, he is able to maintain balance in his existence. This balance gradually diminishes, however, in proportion to the development of his infatuation with Bathsheba.

Interestingly, while Boldwood gradually loses control over his feelings, and ultimately over his very existence, this is never accompanied by a loss of power over language. He manages to present his passion in a rational and persuasive manner and produces delicately balanced speeches, the logic of which is hard to resist. When, for example, Boldwood tells Bathsheba that '[y]our dear love, Bathsheba, is such a vast thing beside your pity, that the loss of your pity as well as your love is no great addition to my sorrow, nor does the gain of your pity make it sensibly less' (xxxi, 232), the narrator explains that 'Bathsheba, in spite of her mettle, began to feel unmistakable signs that she was inherently the weaker vessel' (xxxi, 232).

It is this same power over language which results in Bathsheba's agreeing to consider Boldwood's renewed offer of marriage, and to give him an answer by Christmas. As an elaborated-code user, Boldwood is able to take both a universal and a personal view of his situation: first he refers to 'propriety' in general, and then proceeds to his own situation as a 'middle-aged man' (li, 406). He also reflects on Bathsheba's situation and manages to persuade her that 'there is no fault to be found with you as a woman' (li, 406). His questions focus on the weakness of Bathsheba's position: '[h]adn't I the first place beside you? Haven't you been almost mine once already?' (li, 406). Boldwood's speech touches Bathsheba's conscience, and it has the desired effect. While Bathsheba genuinely believes that Boldwood will become insane if she does not marry him, the main reason for her accepting his offer is – as she subsequently reveals to Oak – her sense of duty, the very feeling on which Boldwood has so successfully played.

While the contents of his locked closet – the clothes and jewellery labelled 'Bathsheba Boldwood' – suggest an unbalanced mind, it should be noted that the man who knew Boldwood best, Gabriel Oak, was convinced of his sanity. Boldwood was not mad when he shot Troy; his action was the only response within his reach to protect the one woman he had ever loved. Troy's reappearance destroyed Boldwood's vision of a future orderly existence with Bathsheba as his wife. As long as he is

confined in prison, she is beyond his appeals and influence. Prison is the ordered universe with its rules and routines which Boldwood has lacked since his becoming infatuated with Bathsheba. It is, however, an orderliness based on failure. Even the strongest of social advantages are unable to withstand the destructive effects of emotional weakness. Oak is Boldwood's superior in all but social status, and even in this respect the shepherd is ultimately the victor.

Summary

Far From the Madding Crowd is the story of a small rustic community which is unusually stable and insular. While the most important characters in the village of Puddletown were the artisans, the rustics play key roles in the fictitious village of Weatherbury. Hysteresis is an integral feature of the village itself as well as of its rural inhabitants.

Contentment is a striking quality among Hardy's rustics. The social discontent, starvation and hardship of Dorset in the 1830s and 1840s form no part of Weatherbury. The rustics are a homogeneous group. They rarely leave the village, and they receive few visitors from outside. This is all part of Hardy's fictional world, for in reality a large proportion of labourers in Puddletown came from outside the village. The rustics accept life as it is, and are indeed thankful that it is no worse.

The main character, Gabriel Oak, is also static by nature and yet he manages to overcome the limitations of his birth by staking out a position in society thanks both to his skill and to his faithful nature. His habitus accommodates the rustic traditions of his origins as well as a wider knowledge of society outside Dorset gleaned from limited, but careful reading. Gabriel Oak is yesterday's man. This presents no problems in a community as stable and as traditional as Weatherbury, however, since his talents and knowledge are given the scope they need to develop.

Bathsheba Everdene becomes increasingly dependent on Oak's knowledge, strength and stability. She is the opposite of the community in which she finds herself in that she is educated, impulsive, unconventional and unstable. She is also a woman in a predominantly patriarchal society. She has a very superficial understanding of how to succeed as a lady farmer. She knows she must exercise authority over her workers and that she must play her part at the Corn Exchange and elsewhere. She is not, however, in sympathy with the local Weatherbury environment. Both she and Oak come from outside the village. Whereas Oak shows an ability to adapt as well as a keen appreciation of the limits of an individual's importance, Bathsheba remains an outsider governed by an inflated view of her own importance. Together, Bathsheba and Oak are strong: Bathsheba because of her wealth and social position; Oak because of his knowledge and character.

Boldwood becomes increasingly dependent on Oak. The apparent balance in the farmer's life proves to be superficial, and it is easily destroyed by excess of passion. Unlike Oak, Boldwood has not learned to cope with failure, and he does not under-

stand how to put personal disappointments into a wider context. He is a good example of group-three hysteresis. Oak emerges as the strongest character in the novel. Many of his strengths are seen in the novel which follows: Ethelberta Petherwin successfully adapts to widely different circumstances and has an iron-grip over her emotions. Like Oak, she knows how to make the maximum use of opportunities and refuses to be daunted by failure.

THE HAND OF ETHELBERTA

The first chapters of *The Hand of Ethelberta* were completed by March 1875. Leslie Stephen had requested a new story for the *Cornhill Magazine* to follow the success of *Far From the Madding Crowd.* Hardy began writing in Surbiton and London, although much of the novel was written in Swanage, the Knollsea of the novel. *The Hand of Ethelberta* was completed in January 1876. Michael Millgate suggests that the story is largely based on Hardy's years in London, and that the glimpses of London society and the mildly socialistic character of Ethelberta's brothers may have their roots in *The Poor Man and the Lady.* London and the surrounding towns are the exact opposite of Weatherbury: they are enjoying a building boom and the benefits of improved communications thanks primarily to the railway. This is a world of change which even affects social aspirations, manners and language. *The Hand of Ethelberta* is a 'comedy in chapters' (Hardy's sub-title) about a rapidly changing modern society and how different characters cope with changing circumstances.

Contemporary reviews of *The Hand of Ethelberta* were very mixed. In *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* it was described as an 'improbable story' which requires 'no intellectual effort' to read and stimulates 'very little emotional excitement.'[181] The critic for the *Saturday Review*[182] regarded the novel as unworthy of Hardy, claiming that his style is pretentious and unrealistic. He also suggested that the language and ideas of the lower classes were unconvincing. Similiar criticisms were voiced in the *Athenaeum.* Here the critic drew attention to the dialogue, which he said 'might be the language of an ostler in Shakespeare, but would it be heard nowadays at a "Wessex" inn?.'[183] When the novel was praised by critics, there were important qualifications: while the critic for the *Spectator,* for example, described the novel as 'entertaining', 'original and very skilful', he/she also said that the characters were unimpressive 'shadows.' Reviewers felt that the view of society that emerged in the novel was too restricted, being limited to an unsatisfactorily small section of London society.[184] The anonymous reviewer for the *Academy* had little good to say about the book, though it was considered superior to *Far From the Madding Crowd* because it

[181] 'Editor's Literary Record', LIII (August 1876), 468. In H.E. Gerber and W.E. Davis, *Thomas Hardy. An Annotated Bibliography of Writings About Him* (Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 1973), 26.
[182] XLI (6 May 1876), 592–593. Reprinted in Gerber and Davis, *An Annotated Bibliography,* 27.
[183] No. 2529 (15 April 1876), 523. Reprinted in Gerber and Davis, *An Annotated Bibliography,* 27.
[184] XLIX (22 April 1876), 530–532. Reprinted in Gerber and Davis, *An Annotated Bibliography,* 26

contains less of what he/she called the 'laboured eccentricity' of style of the preceding novel.[185]

The Hand of Ethelberta fared little better with twentieth-century critics. Simon Chew dismissed the story as 'quite insignificant' in 1921.[186] Half a century later, Michael Millgate writes that the novel 'lacks that dense texture of personal experience which toughens all of Hardy's major fiction.'[187] In a fascinating chapter on *The Hand of Ethelberta* and J.S. Mill, Jagdish Chandra Dave shows that the novel is of considerable importance in revealing Hardy's line of thought in the 1870s.[188] It is Peter Widdowson, however, who has been largely responsible in modern times for demonstrating that *The Hand of Ethelberta* is actually an important part of Hardy's oeuvre and one that repays the careful attention of the scholar.[189] Widdowson identifies three important biographical facts which have a bearing on the subject and structure of *The Hand of Ethelberta*: the novel was written at a time when Hardy himself was first introduced into the intellectual upper-class circles in which he was to move throughout the remainder of his writing career; the young author was determined to prove that he was capable of describing modern urban as well as traditional rural life; and *The Hand of Ethelberta* asserts Hardy's views on character and class in a way which he had not dared to try since the failure of *The Poor Man and the Lady*, and which he was not to attempt again until some twenty years later in *Jude the Obscure*.

The Hand of Ethelberta has an extremely important contribution to make to this study, as it tackles head-on the dual issue of the influence of social class on the formation of character and the individual's ability to adapt to socially determined change. The novel tells the story of a fictional character who writes fiction based on real life. Widdowson is one of the few critics who have recognised this fact and understood its implications. He sums up his argument in the following way:

> [by] parading the fiction of class, and by articulating this in a fiction which foregrounds its own artifices, *Ethelberta* exposes both how destructive of the individual the class system is [...] and how illusory is the conception of 'character', of the unitary, efficacious human subject [...] the novel threatens the coterminous notions of 'the individual' and of 'character' which lie at the heart of bourgeois liberal-humanist ideology and its dominant literary form.[190]

Whether or not one accepts Widdowson's notion of bourgeois liberal-humanist ideology, it is clear that *The Hand of Ethelberta* develops the process which was begun in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, with the difference that while the earlier novel focuses on the characteristic and highly specific features of the three groups – even exaggerating

[185] IX (13 May 1876), 453–454. Reprinted in Gerber and Davis, *An Annotated Bibliography*, 27.
[186] *Thomas Hardy. Poet and Novelist*, 39.
[187] *Thomas Hardy. A Biography*, 174.
[188] *The Human Predicament in Hardy's Novels*, Chapter 16.
[189] *Hardy in History*.
[190] Ibid., 196.

them – *The Hand of Ethelberta* shows how these differences are socially created rather than biologically determined, and that they can be overcome with determination, knowledge and a little luck. This, however, applies to groups two and three only: group one shows very limited success in adapting to the demands of modern society.

The Hand of Ethelberta is thus definitely not as William Rutland described it, a 'diversion' in Hardy's career in which '[o]nly occasionally a hint of the real Hardy comes through all this trumpery.'[191] It contains the very essence of Hardy's thoughts about modern society and the kind of knowledge that is required for survival. *The Hand of Ethelberta* is about the game of life but, as F. B. Pinion succintly expresses it, '[i]n *The Hand of Ethelberta* the game is taken one remove from life (where it would be objectionable) and transferred with varying degrees of success to a plane of comic ideality.'[192]

The rustics

Chickerel, Ethelberta's butler father, is clearly aware of the rules of the game as far as social allegiance and advancement are concerned. An appreciation of the importance of these rules is fundamental to an understanding of the plot of *The Hand of Ethelberta*, as well as of the conduct of the characters in all three groups. It is interesting that it is Chickerel rather than a member of polite London society who describes the most important rules. He is perhaps best suited to the task: first, he belongs to the older generation who is critical of the ideas and practices of modern society; and second, he has witnessed in his own daughter the costs and rewards of defying convention by abandoning one's own social class and joining a higher one.

Chickerel appears to be unusually well-read for a butler (for example, he quotes from *Twelfth Night*). He writes in a confident and correct manner, paying careful attention to grammar and spelling. In a letter to Ethelberta at the beginning of the novel he surprises the reader by his eloquence. The letter contains a good deal of common sense and pinpoints a number of truths which are essential for a proper appreciation of the story. The most important of them is summarised as follows: '[o]ne thing above all others you'll have to mind, and it is that folk must continually strain to advance in order to remain where they are[193] [...] your best plan for lightness of heart is to raise yourself a little higher than your old mates, but not so high as to be quite out of their reach' (vii, 64). The wisdom of these words becomes increasingly apparent as the novel progresses.

Education and social advancement are very clearly linked in *The Hand of Ethelberta*. In the Chickerel family it is Ethelberta, and to a lesser degree her younger

[191] *Thomas Hardy. A Study of his Writings and their Background*, 176.
[192] *Thomas Hardy: Art and Thought*, 56.
[193] This is reminscent of Farmer Springrove's comment quoted earlier: '[t]here's a back'ard current in the world, and we must do our utmost to advance in order just to bide where we be' (*Desperate Remedies*, xxi, 431).

sister Picotee, who have been given the advantage of a good formal education. Gwendoline and Cornelia are largely uneducated and have none of the refinement of their sisters. They also make little effort to adapt to modern urban society. Gwendoline's greatest fault in Ethelberta's eyes is her 'wretched homeliness' (xxiii, 176), which is reinforced by her use of the Wessex dialect. Gwendoline appears incapable of adaptation as her powers of self-reflection are so poorly developed. She does not understand that she speaks the wrong language both literally and metaphorically. When she blames the London shop-keeper for not understanding the Dorset dialect word for onions – 'chippols'[194] – and petulantly makes up her mind not to take an onion even as a gift, she shows the rustic tendency to hysteresis: not only does she live in the past, she is actually proud of the fact. She is impervious to Ethelberta's rational arguments. Her response is emotional and unreflecting.

Cornelia also lives in the past and continues to adhere to Dorset traditions even when these clearly conflict with accepted London custom. The discussion between Cornelia and Ethelberta about what kind of Sunday hat to wear is a case in point. Cornelia's intransigent attitude is reflected in a pronounced use of dialect. Her reply to Ethelberta's more general statement that 'people in town never wear such bright contrasts as they do in the country' (xxiii, 177) is, as is to be expected from a restricted-code user, unreflective and concrete. It also effectively puts an end to any further discussion of the subject: '[i]f there's one thing I do glory in it is a nice flare-up about my head o' Sundays' (xxiii, 177). Cornelia models her behaviour on the past. Like Gwendoline, she does not respond to rational argumentation when this conflicts with her preconceived ideas. Both Gwendoline and Cornelia ignore the evidence of their senses. They make no effort to adapt to new ways largely because they see no need to do so.

Such is not the case with Ethelberta's brothers, however. Sol and Dan become typical London workers to the extent that they adopt the nine-hour day, thereby acknowledging modern industrial society's separation of work and leisure.[195] They even acquire 'some of the airs and manners of London workmen' (xxvi, 203). The youngest of the three brothers, Joey, is the least successful because he fails to accept the limitations of his position. He gives himself airs and has expectations which do not correspond with his limited education and rustic background. While he fulfils the basic requirements of a door attender and is efficient at his work, his refusal to modify his dialect ensures that he will be unable to progress beyond his present situation. He is proud of his intransigence and boastingly tells Picotee: 'if I talk the Wessex way 'tisn't for want of knowing better; 'tis because my staunch nater makes

[194] For an interesting article on the origin of the word 'chippol' and the significance of the term, see Desmond Hawkins, 'Knowing One's Onions', *The Thomas Hardy Journal* VI. 1 (February 1990), 34–35.

[195] For an informative discussion of the implications and consequences of this separation for social relations, see Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England. Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830–1885* (London: Methuen, 1978).

me bide faithful to our old ancient institutions' (xviii, 142). Joey is defensive and reactionary. He fails to understand – or refuses to recognise – the consequences of his irrational attitude. While boasting to Picotee that he is 'broke in' to modern London society he admits at the same time that his wages are 'terrible low, and barely pays for the tobacco I consooms' (xviii, 143). His wages are indeed a measure of his value in the eyes of modern cosmopolitan society. His capital is low both socially and economically. There is little prospect of this changing as long as Joey refuses to accept the rules of the game.

Joey's elder brothers take a more realistic view of their situation. They know it is too late for them to effect a radical change in their lives. Instead, they concentrate on adapting their existing skills to the needs of industrial society, recognising that the modern urban artisan must be more specialised than his rural counterpart. They are successful in finding good positions with a Pimlico builder (xxviii, 225), and their 'strength, industry and a desire to please' (xviii, 225) are appreciated by their employer. Both Sol and Dan recognise a growing trend for craftsmen to turn to building which offered greater opportunities for higher wages and better security.[196] Neither Sol nor Dan, however, has the social capital required to be accepted in society at large. In an art gallery or a French hotel they are clearly out of place. They cannot acknowledge their sister in public because it would 'demean her [...] two journeymen like us, that know nothing besides our trades' (xiv, iii). Their world and hence their conversation revolve around the family and their trades. They show no awareness of wider social, political or economic issues. They also prove completely incapable of understanding their elder sister's ambitions.

Sol, the more radical of the two brothers, is particularly disappointed in Ethelberta. When the latter marries Lord Mountclere he accuses her of 'creeping up among the useless lumber of our nation that'll be the first to burn if there comes a flare. I never see such a deserter of your own lot as you be! But you were always like it, Berta, and I am ashamed of 'ee' (xlvi, 424). For Sol, Ethelberta's primary sin is the betrayal of her class. While the remainder of Ethelberta's family see loyalty to their origins as a source of strength, Ethelberta sees it as a fundamental weakness. The Chickerel family as a whole fail to understand that adaptation is not a betrayal of one's class but a prerequisite for survival.

The lower/middle class

A number of critics have argued that there are strong autobiographical elements in

[196] For a discussion of how village craftsmen were obliged to turn to such trades as building, iron working and saddlery as the number of carpenters, brewers and innkeepers increased radically in the mid-nineteenth century, see Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, 132–3. J.A. Chartres and G.L. Turnbull discuss the expansion of job opportunities for carpenters due to urban growth. Census Reports between 1851 and 1901 show that the number of carpenters and joiners increased significantly during the second half of the nineteenth century, from 156.61 in 1851 to 270.71 in 1901. See 'Country Craftsmen' in Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside*, vol. 1, 314–317.

The Hand of Ethelberta and that the character of Ethelberta Petherwin has much in common with Hardy.[197] John Bayley even suggests that the heroine loses her identity to her creator: 'Ethelberta is too wholly his creature, as she is too vivaciously a creation.'[198] Bayley maintains that Ethelberta is too close to Hardy for her to be a 'proper heroine, but after her marriage to Lord Mountclere she is too far away to be imagined either by him or by us.' The reason for this, according to Bayley, is that *The Hand of Ethelberta* is Hardy's attempt to imagine the effects on himself of his success in the social and the literary field. While such arguments can neither be proved nor disproved, it is certainly clear that there is an affinity between Hardy's and Ethelberta's attitudes to life and society.

The Hand of Ethelberta is the story of a heroine's stories about herself. According to Edward Blishen, it is essentially artificial, as the novel focuses on ideas rather than on the creation of realistic characters and scenes.[199] The character of Ethelberta Petherwin is particularly important from the point of view of the present book as she plays many different roles. She is 'fashioned by circumstance, and is constituted by the social roles consequent on it.'[200] Her attitudes and actions are clearly influenced by her early upbringing as the daughter of a butler, her superior intelligence and education in comparison with her siblings, and the heavy responsibility of providing for a large family. She also bears the added burden of being a woman in a patriarchal society. As Roy Morrell has so perceptively shown, the duck scene at the beginning of the novel symbolises Ethelberta herself 'eluding the men and circumstances that will beset her. Finally she is caught; but, like Oak, once she faces reality, in the person of Mountclere, she masters it.'[201]

Ethelberta's marriage to Lord Mountclere is part of the social game in which the highest reward for a woman without social advantages is to make a 'good match' in marriage. Ethelberta is not a slave to convention, however, and would have agreed wholeheartedly with Lady Agnes Grove's affirmation that '[t]he worship of convention is a fetich as hydra-headed and as disintegrating, both to the individual and the community, as any other sinister idolatry openly recognized in its ugly, native monstrosity.'[202] While Ethelberta employs convention to her own advantage, she never becomes its victim.

Ethelberta's life is a struggle for existence for herself and for her family. Her fight

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[197] For a discussion of this aspect of *The Hand of Ethelberta* see Widdowson's *Hardy in History*, 158–159. Paul Turner also draws attention to the biographical similarities between Ethelberta and Hardy himself; see *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 52.

[198] *An Essay on Hardy*, 149–156.

[199] See 'Hardy, *The Hand of Ethelberta*, and Some Persisting English Discomforts' in *Celebrating Thomas Hardy* ed. by Pettit, for a discussion of the use of artificiality in *The Hand of Ethelberta*, 192–193.

[200] Widdowson, *Hardy in History*, 187.

[201] *The Will and the Way*, 98.

[202] *The Social Fetich* (London: Smith, Elder, 1907), VII. Dedicated to Hardy '[i]n grateful recognition of timely aid and counsel, and in memory of old and enduring friendship.'

for survival has much in common with the workings of Darwin's natural selection. Ethelberta is particularly sensitive to qualities and actions which promise success, and she learns from her mistakes: the young heroine of humble origins is a survivor. She compares life to a game of chess: '[l]ife is a battle, they say; but it is only so in the sense that a game of chess is a battle – there is no seriousness in it; it may be put an end to at any inconvenient moment by owning yourself beaten' (xvii, 131–2). It seems unlikely that Ethelberta really takes her 'experiments' so lightly. Her aim to provide for her large family is deathly serious, and it is rigorously pursued. She is a keen observer of opportunities. Where her hypotheses prove to be wrong – when, for example, she believed herself to be well provided for by her mother-in-law and is subsequently enlightened as to the true details of the will – she is undaunted and explores new prospects and methods. She plans and evaluates new ideas/alternatives with great skill, observes results, and makes her move with the certainty of one who has thoroughly analysed the consequences.

Tess Cosslett points out that Ethelberta's description of life as a chess game is reminiscent of T. H. Huxley's comparison of chess with fixed natural laws which are disobeyed at one's peril. Cosslett quotes the following lines from Huxley:

> The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance . . . one who plays ill is checkmated – without haste, but without remorse.[203]

The consequences of defiance have already been shown in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, when Knight momentarily forgets what he knows about science and foolishly follows his hat over the cliff.

For Gillian Beer the image of the chess game is an example of Hardy's ability to explore the 'boundaries of natural history and the place of the human within it',[204] an exploration which had become particularly critical as a result of Darwin's work. Beer takes an extract from George Eliot to demonstrate her thesis. The passage is also highly relevant to *The Hand of Ethelberta*:

> Fancy what a game of chess would be like if all the chessmen had passions and intellects, more or less small and cunning: if you were not only uncertain about your adversary's men, but a little uncertain also about your own; if your knight could shuffle himself on to a new square by the sly; if your bishop, in disgust at your castling, could wheedle your pawns out of their places; and if your pawns, hating you because they are pawns, could make away from their appointed posts that you might get checkmated on a sudden. You might be the longest-headed of deductive reasoners, and yet you might be beaten by your

[203] 'A Liberal Education' (1868), *Collected Essays* vol. III, 302. Reprinted in Cosslett, *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature*, 17.

[204] *Open Fields. Science in Cultural Encounter* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 3.

> own pawns. You would be especially likely to be beaten, if you depended arrogantly on your mathematical imagination, and regarded your passionate pieces with contempt.[205]

Ethelberta has no intention of being beaten. She is fully aware of the advantages of both mathematical reasoning and imagination, and she knows exactly how and when to apply these to good effect in the game of life.

The salient details of Ethelberta's primary habitus are quickly reviewed on the first page of the novel quoted earlier. These include her birth into a humble family, short career as a teacher, acquisition of different accomplishments, appointment as a governess in the Petherwin household, marriage to her employer's son, and the latter's sudden decease on the honeymoon. The tone of this short history is comical. Its content, however, is crucial to an understanding of the character Ethelberta Petherwin. It signals an appreciation on the heroine's part of the importance of education and culture in the game of social advancement. It also documents Ethelberta's ability to succeed. These points are made at the very beginning of the story and with a maximum of economy to produce the best effect.

At the same time it is clear, however, that Ethelberta's newly-acquired accomplishments have not yet become an integral part of her nature: when she is away from the influence of Mrs Petherwin or '[is] round corners or in little lanes which [demand] no repression of animal spirits' (i, 2), she sheds her dignity like a lizard sheds its skin. There is a conflict between Ethelberta's natural desire to be carefree and unsophisticated and her commitment to social improvement. Her scheme forces her to travel between two social worlds, that of her family and polite London society. She must combat feelings of 'disloyalty to her class and kin' (xxiii, 176) and play for high stakes in a field in which she is very much a beginner.

As she becomes increasingly committed to her scheme of social advancement, it is more and more impossible for her to return to her family's way of life. Like the d'Urbeyfields later on, the entire family is set on the same course: they all sit in the same boat and must ride the storm together, although it is Ethelberta who must bear the ultimate responsibility for the success or failure of her schemes. As a restricted-code user, Mrs Chickerel expresses the problem in narrow concrete terms when she and Ethelberta discuss moving the family to London: '[i]f we could get as we once were, I wouldn't mind that. But we shall have lost our character as simple country folk who know nothing, which are the only class of poor people that squires will give any help to' (xxiii, 178). While Ethelberta perceives possibilities beyond the immediate situation, Mrs Chickerel is unable to see beyond the present. Her model of the future is based on very limited experience in the past. Her mind is closed to the rational arguments of her daughter and she seems unwilling to use her imagination to envisage a future in an environment of which she has no direct personal experience. Ethelberta knows that

[205] *Felix Holt The Radical* ed. by Fred C. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 237. Quoted in Gillian Beer, *Open Fields*, 2–3.

she has the necessary cultural capital and talent to succeed. She also recognises, however, that there is an element of chance involved: not everything is calculable, and the occasional risk must be taken if progress is to be made.

It is also important to note that Ethelberta is hampered by a serious disadvantage in not having become properly initiated into the ways of London society. Her primary habitus – 'the years from her infancy to her first look into town'– contains 'her most vivid impressions of life and its ways' (xxvi, 210) and initially places her on the periphery of polite society. Ethelberta also appreciates that her success in society is dependent on her combating the fatalism of her class: 'English society appeared a gloomy concretion enough to abide in [...] yet, since its gloominess was less an essential quality than an accident of her point of view, that point of view she had determined to change' (xxxv, 312). Ethelberta is able to look at herself objectively and is 'as sensitive as a barometer on signs affecting her social condition' (xxxiii, 285). Her perception of the limitations as well as the opportunities of her social situation is as accurate as that of a scientist equipped with sensitive instruments of measurement. Appropriately, the keenness of her powers of perception is illustrated with the aid of a metaphor from geology. This same metaphor also clearly demonstrates that she and her mother belong to two different worlds:

> It was hopeless to attempt to explain to her mother that the oscillations of her mind might arise as naturally from the perfection of its balance, like those of a logan-stone, as from inherent lightness; and such an explanation, however comforting to its subject, was little better than none to simple hearts who only could look to tangible outcrops (xxxvi, 316–7).

While Ethelberta's mind is dynamic, her mother's is as static as a lump of rock.

This same contrast of energy and stasis is brought out in Ethelberta's relations with her father. She explains to him that success in life depends on the exercise of energy to produce reasonable forecasts; these must be distinguished from idle visions. Once a reasonable forecast has been made, it must be consistently adhered to. Her father's life is the exact opposite of her maxim: he has no need of forecasts because he is content to remain in service. He has no desire to initiate any changes to his situation and has no vision of the future beyond his present employment.

Ethelberta accepts that no matter how well one plans, it is necessary to take a chance when calculation fails. She admits to Picotee that in marrying Lord Mountclere she is taking a risk, but explains that in some circumstances 'chance is as trustworthy as calculation' (xliii, 391) and decides to take the plunge. Her courting of Lord Mountclere's favour has been 'a well-considered course' (xliii, 391). The consequences of the marriage are less easy to predict: last-minute misgivings must not be allowed to upset a clearly thought-out scheme. Having come so far, Ethelberta deliberately allows the rational to take precedence over the affective.

Ethelberta's ability to think rationally is reflected in her speech. When in the company of educated characters such as Picotee she uses an analytical language which bears all the hallmarks of the elaborated code. When, for example, she and

Picotee discuss Christopher Julian and the relationship between love and ceremony, Ethelberta's comments are both on a personal and a universal level: '*I feel, as many others do,* that a want of ceremony which is produced by abstraction of mind is no defect in a poet or musician, fatal as it may be to an ordinary man' (my italics, xxii, 162). The combination of the personal and the universal is also to be found in Ethelberta's conversations with Lady Petherwin. Even when she is being attacked for writing her book of poems and is blamed for showing lack of faith to her deceased husband, Ethelberta is able to keep a distance from the subject by referring to woman's situation in general, thereby successfully diverting attention away from her own particular situation as the widow of a young husband:

> don't be so unreasonable as to blame a live person for living! No woman's head is so small as to be filled for life by a memory of a few months. Over three years have passed since I last saw my boy-husband [...] Two years will exhaust the regrets of widows who have long been faithful wives; and ought I not to show a little new life when my husband died in the honeymoon? (x, 84–5).

She also quotes from the Bible to provide a wider context for her own actions and to avoid having to state unpleasant personal truths. For example, when Ladywell requires a definite answer from Ethelberta as to whether she intends to marry him or not, she quotes from Hosea, adding: '[i]t is a passage [...] which came to my mind, as possibly applicable to myself some day' (xxxv, 303). Ladywell wrongly interprets the quotation as a jest. In this way Ethelberta avoids having to state her fears for the future once the secret of her humble birth is revealed and her various lovers have lost all interest in her.

Language is thus an important part of Ethelberta's defences against the demands of polite society. It is part of her general tactics for survival and is a useful complement to her general firmness and efficiency. However, part of the price of Ethelberta's success in the game of life is the denial of her love of Christopher Julian. At the same time, it must be admitted that she achieves a high measure of personal satisfaction in not only becoming the wife of a peer of the realm but even, against all the odds, managing to dominate him. She runs the estate with remarkable firmness, winning her respect even among those who were once hostile to her. Her initial poverty has taught her how to make the most of opportunities, and by the end of the novel she has turned an estate which had been in decline for some years into an efficient and profitable working unit. Ethelberta is one of the best examples in Hardy's fiction of group two's ability to overcome the limitations and disadvantages of their birth. She is also one of the most adaptable of Hardy's group-two characters. *The Hand of Ethelberta* is very much the story of the story-teller who makes dreams come true.

The upper-middle/upper class

Although the fairy-tale princess sees her dreams come true, she does not find a

Prince Charming. Christopher Julian is the only possible candidate, but he is excluded on socio-economic grounds. Lord Mountclere possesses the requisite social status, title and wealth, but he is a somewhat eccentric old man (Picotee says he is old enough to be their grandfather) with a not untarnished past in his relations with women. Whatever his past and present faults, however, Lord Mountclere constitutes the only chance of survival for Ethelberta and her family.

Lord Mountclere is a mysterious character. Little is said about his background. He is a relatively isolated figure, with just one brother and a handful of friends and acquaintances. The novel says nothing about his early upbringing and education; a 'real-life' peer of the realm would, of course, have had a public-school education focusing on the Classics and character development. His life as an adult does not do credit to his privileged background: he drinks a good deal and has a succession of mistresses. Lord Mountclere's life and character are an excellent illustration of the fact that '[w]hat [*The Hand of Ethelberta*] emphasizes in particular about the upper classes is that their superiority is as much a fiction as Ethelberta's own.'[206]

Ethelberta is not deceived by Lord Mountclere's apparently gallant manners and actions. When, for example, he chops down a row of trees at Enckworth Court in obeisance to her spontaneous and unreflecting comment that they block the view of the sea, Lord Mountclere believes that he will make a grand impression on Ethelberta. Instead, she recognises the incident for what it is: a silly ploy to win her admiration. The incident is in itself unconvincing; indeed, it is its very artificiality which draws attention to the game itself.

Lord Mountclere proves to be as calculating as Ethelberta herself, though he plays his cards less skilfully. He has the advantage of wealth which allows him to purchase such modern conveniences as the aptly named yacht 'the Speedwell.' Lord Mountclere does not always show such good taste, however. His mansion, for example, is an unfortunate mixture of genuine medieval architecture and modern imitation. Like Lord Mountclere himself, it is neither committed to the traditional nor to the modern but is an unhappy mixture of the two.

This in-between position works to Ethelberta's advantage when it comes to confessing her origins. When she tells Lord Mountclere that her brothers are 'workmen', he shows unexpected broadmindedness, explaining to Ethelberta that

> [m]anufacture is the single vocation in which a man's prospects may be said to be illimitable. Hee-hee! - they [Ethelberta's brothers] may buy me up before they die! And now what stands in the way? It would take fifty alliances with fifty families so little disreputable as yours, darling, to drag mine down (xxxviii, 335).

If anyone is 'disreputable', however, it is Lord Mountclere himself. His drinking habits and immoral relations with women play a significant role in the almost com-

[206] Widdowson, *Hardy in History*, 186–187.

plete neglect of the Enckworth estate.[207] Lord Mountclere is a consumer of resources who lives for present comfort rather than future security. Ethelberta, on the other hand, is a producer rather than a consumer. Her concern is for the future. *The Hand of Ethelberta* bears witness to group two's superior survival potential and ability to take full advantage of opportunities in relation to group three.

Summary

The Hand of Ethelberta is a much underrated novel. While *A Pair of Blue Eyes* exaggerates and stereotypes the differences between social groups in rural Wessex and adopts the detached approach of the scientist, *The Hand of Ethelberta* illustrates the modern blurring of classes in urban society with the aid of a comedy which is in some respects truer than life and is the very essence of Hardy's own thoughts on knowledge, survival and class allegiance. *The Hand of Ethelberta* is about adaptation to changing needs and views, particularly with regard to groups two and three. Group one is still firmly rooted in the traditional society despite its removal to a modern urban environment. Ethelberta's family still view the present in terms of the past and adhere doggedly to traditional values. Their peripheral position is emphasised by a continued use of dialect, even when this causes misunderstanding and when it clearly conflicts with the demands of the individual's occupation. Social improvement is not regarded as progress but as a betrayal of one's origins.

Ethelberta is a fighter who first calculates the risks and then commits herself to action. A superior education combined with an iron will make her the only one of the Chickerels capable of enlarging the horizons of the family and improving their prospects for survival in a changing society. She is forced to lead a double life for the greater part of the novel, but she ultimately succeeds in throwing off the disadvantages of her birth and allying herself with the only one who can promise wealth, status and security. She has the courage to take advantage of opportunities and she makes relatively few mistakes. She has the ability to view her situation objectively, weigh up the chances of success, change course if necessary, and ride storms with an inner conviction of ultimate success. Ethelberta is extremely close to Hardy in social position, attitude and aspirations: *The Hand of Ethelberta* thus conveys valuable insights into Hardy's views on the prerequisites for survival in modern urban society. Institutionalised knowledge is useful as an introduction to society. It provides social recognition, but it is not sufficient in itself. Flexibility and adaptability are also required. Ethelberta survives because she has the necessary formal educational/cultural qualifications as well as the requisite personal characteristics. She is not as dependent on the right environment as are Stephen Smith or Gabriel Oak. Ethelberta meets head-on the challenge of a complex and rapidly changing modern society, and

[207] Lord Mountclere belongs to a class of nobility which is 'something of an anachronism in the England of Victoria – survivors from the heady and reckless days of the regency': Horn, *The Rural World*, 229.

she proves to be more than a match for the setbacks which she must face. She is highly creative, combining the feelings of an artist and the practical ability of a manager.

Lord Mountclere is representative of his group insofar as he is born with advantages and fails to make full use of these owing to a lack of emotional stability. However, he appears to be more liberal in attitude than most other members of group three and is clearly more willing to tolerate the lower classes. Like Ethelberta, he views life as a game. There is a fundamental difference between the two, however, for Ethelberta realises from the start that the stakes for her must be survival, whereas Lord Mountclere just plays for amusement. While Ethelberta understands the true value of her gains, Lord Mountclere sees his in terms of emotional gratification only: he has won the beautiful and talented young lady of his dreams. He has no idea that Ethelberta will also prove to be the means of saving his estate from ruin. It appears unlikely that the couple could ever attain the kind of happiness which the union of Christopher Julian and Picotee promises. Social success can only be achieved at a price, it seems. Ethelberta recognises this, and she is willing to take the consequences – the alternative is, as she is all too well aware, far worse.

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

The Return of the Native was written both in Sturminster Newton in Dorset and in London. Although there is no extant evidence as to when the novel was started and finished, the first seven chapters were completed by August 1877, and its publication as a serial began in the *Belgravia* in January of the following year.

The Return of the Native is the story of a man who finds that there is in fact no return for the native. While the heath remains unchanged, Clym Yeobright has altered considerably during his stay in Paris. *The Return of the Native* is the story of a native by a native: Clym and Hardy both moved away from Egdon Heath only to return. For Hardy the transition was easier and more successful than for Clym. Neither Hardy nor Clym can ever be an integral part of the local community as they once were. Hardy realised this and never desired it. Clym does not. Clym returns because he has rejected Paris. Hardy came back still very much part of modern urban society. While *The Hand of Ethelberta* is largely the story of the limitations and the possibilities of group two in modern society, *The Return of the Native* explores what happens when the rural dweller rejects modern values and adopts the positivist values of Comte.

By and large, *The Return of the Native* was not favourably reviewed by contemporary critics. The anonymous reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, for example, described it as clumsy and unconvincing: '[o]ne sees what he means, and is all the more disappointed at the clumsy way in which the meaning is expressed.'[208] The anonymous

[208] 23 November, 1878. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 46.

reviewer for the *Saturday Review* accused Hardy of having written a story which is 'intensely artificial' owing to the 'studied simplicity of its subject.'[209] The reviewer complains that the story abounds in coincidences and 'eccentric forms of expression' which obscure meaning. The majority of the characters are described as 'eccentric', and Clym himself is dismissed as a 'moon-struck dreamer.' The review concludes with the following patronising remarks, which reveal a total lack of understanding of the essence and purpose of *The Return of the Native*:

> There can be no doubt that Mr. Hardy has no ordinary talent; and we regret the more that he should not condescend to human frivolity, and exert his unquestionable powers in trying to be more natural and entertaining. We dare say the effort would soon easily come to him, and then our gratitude might give him less stinted praise.

A few, more perceptive critics such as the writer of the unsigned review in the *Spectator* (this is thought to have been R. H. Hutton) had a better grasp of the strengths of the novel, understanding the importance of character and destiny.[210] He appreciated that the purpose of *The Return of the Native* is not entertainment but the presentation of characters who are destined to suffer in a universe governed by inviolable natural, social and economic laws.

Modern critics have focused on different aspects of the novel. John Holloway, for example, stresses the emphasis on 'the revitalizing power of rural life, and [...] how its vitality is intrinsically greater than that of modernity.'[211] While this may be true, events show that this power must, if it exists at all, be very much on a theoretical rather than a practical level: life on Egdon Heath is essentially static and resistant to change. Vegetation grows and dies, people live and perish, but the heath and its inhabitants remain essentially the same. Life changes little from generation to generation and there is little indication of progress.

Simon Trezise looks at a totally different aspect of *The Return of the Native* and suggests that the novel should be seen as an attempt by Hardy to explore different ways of reading and learning. Trezise uses the word 'literacy' in the accepted sense of the word as well as to describe an ability to read places and people. The metaphor of reading and writing is, Trezise suggests, synonymous with an ability to understand people and the environment.[212] The metaphor of reading is also taken up by Gillian Beer in her discussion of the question 'Can the Native Return?'[213] Beer draws an interesting contrast between the act of reading by which the reader observes the action and the characters – a process which is very much the product of education – and the native inhabitants of Egdon, many of whom are uneducated: the book contains a large number of references, whose meaning can only be understood by

[209] Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 51–55.
[210] 8 February, 1879. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 55–59.
[211] *The Chartered Mirror*, 96.
[212] 'Ways of Learning in *The Return of the Native*', 56–65.
[213] *Open Fields*, 49–53.

people who have read widely. When Clym becomes blind, he is no longer able to read. The reader, however, goes on reading. He or she is essentially an outsider who is pushed towards the conclusion that for Hardy there is no return for the native 'without the idea of retrogression.' This is a negative form of survival which involves mere subsistence rather than actual progress.

In the discussion that follows, it is important to bear in mind that *The Return of the Native* was written at a time when Hardy was well acquainted with life in London and Europe. He had left Egdon Heath for London some fifteen years before. He had read widely in contemporary science and philosophy, and the world he recreated is a subtle blend of memories from childhood and adolescence, educated observation based primarily on the works of Fourier, Comte and Mill and personal experience of modern society acquired during his periods of residence in London.[214] Hardy is thus a native and yet not a native. The emphasis in *The Return of the Native* on the affective and instinctive aspects of human behaviour, and the importance of social conditions in determining human behaviour and development, have their origins in Hardy's reading at least as much as in his personal experience of Egdon Heath. Past and present are juxtaposed in the novel. To a greater extent than in any of the novels discussed so far, survival on Egdon Heath involves an understanding of, and total submission to, the demands of the natural environment. The native returning to the heath must abandon any notions gained from outside and submit to the demands and limitations of the heath itself. Hardy was a true native in that he understood these demands – in this sense he had much in common with Clym Yeobright; as an educated man of the world, however, he rejected the notion that it is necessary to submit to such demands. In this respect Hardy differed somewhat from Clym Yeobright.

The message of *The Return of the Native* is an extremely dark one. Egdon Heath stands outside all modern scientific and economic progress. Superstition thrives. The Egdon inhabitants cling to the old ways and refuse to be enlightened by modern education. Clym becomes an outsider. He has abandoned life on the heath in favour of a career in fashionable Paris; it is now the turn of the heath to abandon him. He is tolerated, even pitied, by the inhabitants of Egdon, but he is no longer one of them.

The rustic natives are the only ones who thrive on the heath. It is thus not surprising that *The Return of the Native* is Hardy's first novel without any group-three character. While Mrs Yeobright clearly has social pretensions and regards herself as superior to the other inhabitants of Egdon Heath, her marriage to a man below her own social station and his subsequent death have reduced her to a level only a little

[214] See Chapter Two, 'Hardy the autodidact', for a discussion of the influence of Fourier, Comte and J. S. Mill on Hardy, 121–136. Of particular interest are Fourier's emphasis on the affective, Comte's positivism and Mill's belief in the vigorous pursuit of truth and individual exploration.

above that of the other inhabitants of the heath. The character who perhaps comes closest to group three is Captain Vye. He plays a very small part in the novel, however. It is groups one and two who are of interest in *The Return of the Native*. Within these groups there are two major concerns: the power of the two groups to survive; and the extent to which this power is dependent on an understanding of the special demands of the environment. For Eustacia Vye the heath means death; for Diggory Venn it is the means of a new life. What determines the individual's ability to survive on the heath – and is the reward worth the effort?

The rustics

It is not inappropriate for simple country folk to play a major role in a novel whose very setting symbolises tradition and stasis. They are, as Donald Davison shows, not only a vital part of the critical action, they are also 'agents of destiny.'[215] It is Timothy Fairway, for example, who carries the letter which was never delivered. Young Johnny Nonsuch bears messages between Eustacia and Wildeve and in so doing helps to keep the fatal relationship alive. Christian Cantle is entrusted with Mrs Yeobright's guineas, the subsequent loss of which has enormous consequences for the Yeobrights. Susan Nonsuch has considerable influence over the lives of both Eustacia and Clym.

The rustics are, as Gillian Beer points out, 'the surviving and continuing representatives of earlier human life.'[216] They practise witchcraft and mumming and are much influenced by superstition. They accept unusual phenomena such as ghosts and hermaphrodites, exhibiting a 'matter-of-fact tolerance'[217] which is based on an identification with all that is native to Egdon Heath. This is a world so far removed from modern life that formal education has had very little impact and is little understood by the rustics. *The Return of the Native* is the first novel to make the issue of education and its suitability to the rustic a vital issue. As the novel progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that the rustics' ideas on education and its value are as vague as those of Yeobright himself. Neither understands the position of the other.

Olly, the besom-maker, has a highly simplistic view of education. She bases her opinion on a very limited view of literacy which, as a restricted-code user, she expresses in concrete, practical terms: '[t]he class of folk that couldn't use to make a round O to save their bones from the pit can write their names now without a sputter of the pen, oftentimes without a single blot [...] why, almost without a desk to lean their stomachs and elbows upon' (Book First, iii, 24). As the discussion of the signing of marriage registers in Chapter One shows, only about 50% of the population were able to sign their names in the 1850s. Clearly there was much left to be done; but it was not in everyone's interests that education should begin to broaden

[215] 'The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction', in *Hardy. A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Albert J. Guerard (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963), 21.
[216] *Open Fields*, 42.
[217] Ibid., 44.

the horizons of the working classes. Captain Vye, for example, expresses the feeling of a number of middle-class people of the time when he suggests that education may have detrimental effects on society if the rustics are educated beyond their station. He fears that the lower classes will no longer be as malleable and content with their lot once they have been made aware of the opportunities resulting from a formal education:[218]

> there's too much of that sending to school in these days! It only does harm. Every gatepost and barn's door you come to is sure to have some bad word or other chalked upon it by the young rascals: a woman can hardly pass for shame sometimes. If they'd never been taught how to write they wouldn't have been able to scribble such villainy. Their fathers couldn't do it, and the country was all the better for it (Book Second, i, 125).

'All the better for whom?' one might ask.

The rustics not only have very vague ideas about what formal education means in terms of knowledge and future prospects, they are also inclined to believe that it is not for the likes of them. As already shown, this is an important feature of hysteresis as defined by Bourdieu. The older inhabitants of Egdon Heath have little to gain from the development of a compulsory education system. Neither are they likely to take part in adult-education programmes as long as they believe that such efforts are not aimed at them. This produces a conflict because they also recognise that lack of education reduces one's value in the eyes of those who are educated. Humphrey's character and statements supply examples of this tension. He tells his fellow rustics that Clym can speak French fluently and adds, 'depend upon it we who have stayed at home shall seem no more than scroff in his eyes' (Book Second, i, 126). Humphrey acknowledges the social gulf which is heightened still further by education. His use of the dialect word 'scroff' (odds and ends/rubbish) serves to create distance, and to emphasise the social gulf between the educated and the non-educated.

Humphrey's somewhat deterministic view of education is also extended to religion: 'I ha'nt been [to church] these three years [...] for I'm so dead sleepy of a Sunday; and 'tis so terrible far to get there; and when you do get there 'tis such a mortal poor chance that you'll be chose for up above, when so many bain't, that I bide at home and don't go at all' (Book First, iii, 21). Humphrey accepts that neither education nor salvation is for him. If his social class and peasant fatalism are not enough to ensure that he will never advance from his present situation, his use of non-standard English is sufficient in itself to keep him on the periphery of the predictive society.

The rustics are generally sceptical about any plans to educate them. When Clym Yeobright thus announces that he intends to open a night-school in his mother's house, Fairway confidently assures his rustic friends that '[i]n a few weeks he'll learn

[218] See Chapter One, 'National developments in education', for a discussion of middle-upper class resistance to the education of the lower orders, 78–84.

to see things otherwise' (Book Third, i, 202). A fellow rustic, referred to merely as 'another', confirms Fairway's view and adds, 'for my part, I think he had better mind his business' (Book Third, i, 202). Subsequent events prove the rustics' scepticism to be well-grounded.

Why exactly were Yeobright's plans doomed to failure? The basic reason is in fact expressed in the narratorial comment. What Clym has forgotten in his zeal to improve society is that there can be no advances in education without a corresponding improvement in the social conditions of those to be educated: '[w]e can hardly imagine bucolic placidity quickening to intellectual aims without imagining social aims as the transitional phase' (Book Third, ii, 203). This is reminiscent of the view expressed by Comte in *Positive Philosophy*, which Hardy was reading in the early 1870s: affective and intellectual aspects of human behaviour must be studied in relation to 'the various organic conditions on which they depend.'[219] For the purposes of the ensuing discussion it is important to establish that there can be no substantial improvement in the educational status of the rustics without adequate attention being paid either to the conditions under which those who are to be educated live, or to the conditions which prevailed during the individual's childhood and which helped to produce his/her primary habitus. The starting-point must be the pupils themselves, their world-view and their linguistic limitations. Modern sociologists and educationalists recognise that education which merely imposes the values of a predictive society on a group firmly rooted in a traditional society has little chance of producing any significant or lasting changes in either outlook or behaviour. The picture painted in *The Return of the Native* of the rustic situation in the middle of the century is as dark as the heath itself. The witchcraft and superstition which continue to influence the lives of the Egdon rustics are symbolic of a firmly embedded hysteresis which forms an impenetrable barrier to social and educational advancement. Whereas the rustics in the previous novels are generally content with their situation, the rustics in *The Return of the Native* are more clearly the victims of circumstances which promise to perpetuate themselves because the victims are either unaware of the advantages of a proper education or because they actively reject it in a misguided belief that it is not for them. The gloomy environment of Egdon Heath serves to enhance the general tragedy of the rustics' situation. The stasis of Weatherbury has some charm; the stasis of Egdon Heath is one of irremediable bleakness.

The lower/middle class

The rustics are clearly part of the traditional world and have no prospect of leaving it in the foreseeable future. Clym Yeobright, on the other hand, wavers between the traditional and the predictive,[220] sometimes appearing to belong to the one and

[219] *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, 461–2. This point is also made by Björk in 'Hardy's Reading', 109.
[220] His surname itself is suggestive, 'yeo' implying 'yeoman' and 'bright' indicating intellectual acumen.

sometimes to the other. The rustics represent an earlier form of human life where developments have stood still for centuries. Clym's life is not static, however: he will not stand still on the same spot for long.[221] The life of Clym Yeobright is indeed a 'repeated enactment of cultural phases within the present of the reader.'[222] He abandons his traditional origins in favour of modern culture, which he ultimately rejects without having any definite alternative. He passes through a series of stages which cause him to question the very foundations of existence. His search for meaning brings him back to Egdon Heath. He is a native no longer, however, and like Hardy himself he looks with the eyes of an outsider who is no longer part of what he sees.[223] As the following discussion shows, Egdon Heath is the main reason for Clym's failure to make good use of his undoubted intelligence and talents.

It seems likely, as Björk suggests, that Hardy's reading of Comte's *Positive Philosophy* – and the aspect of biological dependence in particular – contributed to the formation of Clym's character. Entry 730 of *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1* reads, '[b]iological Dependence – The nobler phenomena are everywhere subordinate to those which are grosser, but also simpler and more regular [...] Man is entirely subordinate to the World – each living being to its own environment.' As Björk shows, the concept of biological dependence can also be applied to the relationship between man and his environment.[224] As a young man, Clym is described as an integral part of Egdon Heath. He is 'permeated with its scenes, with its substance, and with its odours. *He might be said to be its product.* His eyes had first opened thereon; with its appearance all the first images of his memory were mingled; his estimate of life had been coloured by it' (Book Third, ii, 205. My italics).[225] Clym's primary habitus is moulded by Egdon; he was indeed 'so inwoven with the heath in his boyhood that hardly anybody could look upon it without looking at him' (Book Third, i, 198). The period in Paris reinforces in Clym's mind the value of the stable qualities of life on the heath: life in Paris appears superficial in comparison. He believes that it is only on the heath that he can regain his self-respect.

Unlike those surrounding him, Clym embodies what Daniel Schwarz calls a modern consciousness; that is to say, he learns to differentiate between the individual's aspirations and the circumstances which govern his life.[226] As Schwarz shows,

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[221] This does not mean, however, that he is personally ambitious. His very Christian name is a Dorset derivative of 'Clem', which derives from 'Clement', meaning 'merciful' or 'mild' (Bryn Caless, 'Hardy's Characters and the Significance of their Names', 15).

[222] The allusion is to Edward B.Tylor's work on cultural phases (*Primitive Culture*, 2 vols., 1871), quoted in Gillian Beer, *Open Fields*, 45.

[223] For a discussion of the biographical similarities between Hardy and Clym, see Paul Turner, *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, 60.

[224] 'Hardy's Reading', 109.

[225] Thomasin, who is brought up with Clym, also has a special relationship with the heath; she suggests that an understanding of the heath must begin at an early age and gradually develop.

[226] 'Beginnings and Endings in Hardy's Major Fiction', in *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy* ed. by Dale Kramer (London: Macmillan, 1979), 17–35 (23).

by the end of the novel Clym shares the narrator's insight into life and comes to understand '[t]hat old-fashioned revelling in the general situation grows less and less possible as we uncover the defects of natural laws, and see the quandary that man is in by their operation' (Book Third, i, 197). Clym is part of what the narrator describes as the 'irrepressible New' (Book First, i, 7). However, he does not understand that Egdon is not yet ready, if indeed it ever will be, for new ideas.

Clym Yeobright proves incapable of harmonising the traditional and the predictive elements which struggle for precedence in his life. This becomes apparent in his attempts to establish himself as a teacher on Egdon Heath. His ideas lack substance; he plans to instil knowledge into the local population, but he never succeeds in defining what this knowledge should consist of. His programme of self-study results in a period of blindness which is of both a physical and a metaphorical nature. He can neither see to read nor see where he is going in life. His blindness forces him to look to the heath for subsistence. Clym finally finds peace working as a simple furze-cutter: in harmony with the values and pace of life of Egdon Heath, he has temporarily abandoned all his ideas of progress. Clym's peace is more of the character of escape than contentment, though.

Even so, Clym is essentially an altruist, and he is incapable of renouncing his ideas for social improvement for long. His vision of a new improved society, based on a triumph of social feeling over self-love, has much in common with Comte's positivism. His vision will never be realised in his lifetime, however, because – as has already been stated – Egdon was not ready for new ideas. At the same time, it is clear that Clym is the wrong man to introduce them. As D. H. Lawrence suggested, Clym's altruism is in part a reflection of an inner insecurity.[227] This insecurity becomes all the greater when he believes himself to be the cause of his mother's and his wife's death. Clym fails to appreciate that it is, in fact, Egdon Heath and its harsh weather conditions which are in no small measure responsible for the deaths of both women.

He is equally unaware that his education at the heath school did not equip him to create the kind of life he desires as an adult on the heath and to realise his plans for the Egdon rustics. It seems that Hardy was not satisfied with the subjects studied by his protagonist and changed his mind about them between the 1878 and 1895 editions. In the first edition, Clym was versed in the Classics. In the 1895 edition, these were replaced by the more modern subjects French and German. It is significant that science, the subject of the future, is not mentioned. An understanding of different branches of science would have been of infinitely greater practical value both to himself as an inhabitant of the heath and to the rustics whom he wishes to educate than the mastery of classical or modern languages.

Clym's very language indicates that his interest is in romance and the Classics

[227] See *A Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* ed. by Bruce Steele (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 24.

rather than in science. He is a man of dreams; but he lacks the practical ability to realise them. When he returns from Paris he is surrounded by an exotic aura which raises false expectations in the passionate, adventurous Eustacia Vye. Clym unwittingly reinforces this when he describes his life in the French capital in lyrical terms which prove irresistible to Eustacia. His description of the Galerie d'Apollon, for example, contains such expressions as 'blaze of splendour', rays which 'bristle and dart' from the gilding, and ornaments which 'form a perfect network of light which quite dazzles the eye' (Book Third, iv, 233). This is the world Clym has decided to abandon. It is, unfortunately, also the very one his wife-to-be wishes to enter. The two are drawn in totally different and conflicting directions.

Clym Yeobright's ideas on education are expressed in equally idealistic terms. When, for example, he talks of being 'a schoolmaster to the poor and ignorant' (Book Third, ii, 206) and teaching them what others refuse to teach them, he has little real conception of what this actually entails. He believes that after 'a little' study he will be able to open a night school and the villagers will flock to it. What he needs to study, and how he will convince the inhabitants of Egdon of the value of education, are two fundamental issues which appear to be given little if any consideration. He is also blind to the fact that Eustacia will never be part of his plans – indeed, she never takes them seriously.

Clym's career as an itinerant preacher on the heath is a compromise. He abandons his idealistic educational plans because his romantic idealism is no longer a part of his character. The deaths of his wife and his mother cause him to fall back on the safe ground of 'the opinions and actions common to all good men' (Book Sixth, iv, 485). He consciously limits himself to the dissemination of 'morally unimpeachable subjects' (Book Sixth, iv, 485) which involve no risks and are unlikely to excite any opposition. He has the authority of the Bible behind him and is assured of a warm welcome everywhere because the people of Egdon feel sorry for him. He tries to fulfil the needs of all those around him and consciously adapts his language to his audience, speaking a 'simple language' in the villages around Rainbarrow and 'a more cultivated strain elsewhere' (Book Sixth, iv, 485).

The final lines which describe Clym as a preacher may be read ironically or literally. Either way, it is clear that any compromise Clym manages to produce between the traditional and the predictive is highly dependent on the native community. Egdon Heath is clearly not ready for 'the irrepressible new' and will resist to the last. Clym's failure to become a teacher is the result both of his own blindness and of Egdon Heath's. Clym Yeobright is one of the least successful and harmonious of Hardy's group-two characters. This is due in part to personal weaknesses. Even more decisive, however, is the stultifying effect of the Heath and its inhabitants. Clym may preach all that he likes; Egdon Heath remains essentially the same, and while his listeners may appear to be sympathetic to him as a person, it is implied that his message has little chance of making any real impact on his listeners in either the

short or the long term. While Clym learns to adapt to changing circumstances and even win the regard of those around him, he falls far short of his own ideals. The reader understands that Clym's career as a preacher is a compromise and in some respects an inadequate substitute for his initial plans to become a teacher of the poor. At the same time, it is clear that he has managed to find a use for his experience and knowledge which fulfils not only a personal but also a social need.

Eustacia Vye is also in the wrong place at the wrong time.[228] She has none of Clym's adaptability or idealism, however. Neither does she understand the heath as do Clym and Thomasin, who have lived there since childhood.[229] She is indeed one of what Tess Cosslett calls Hardy's 'Promethean aspirers, [who are] destroyed finally by the limits they [do] not recognise.'[230] Rosemary Morgan shows how Eustacia's intelligence is frustrated and restricted by her 'unvarying, unchallenging, isolated existence' on Egdon Heath.[231] It is the heath which makes Eustacia a potentially tragic heroine. Simon Gatrell argues that without Egdon Heath Eustacia would be much like any other attractive young lady. The heath causes an intensification of sexual energy within Eustacia. She becomes convinced of her own dignity and feels superior to her environment, whose restrictions cause her to become desperate. She has, Gatrell concludes, none of the patient endurance of the native inhabitants which is a prerequisite for survival on Egdon Heath.[232] The latter is, as J. Hillis Miller shows, 'the embodiment of certain ways in which humans may exist. Diggory Venn and Eustacia Vye rise out of the heath as versions of two of these ways.'[233] For Diggory, as was pointed out above, the heath offers new opportunity; for Eustacia it means death.

Eustacia resists all influence from the heath. Her view of life is determined by her early experiences in Budmouth. She takes refuge in romantic images which belong to her past in an attempt to blot out the present.

> Budmouth esplanade, with military bands, officers, and gallants around, stood like gilded letters upon the dark tablet of surrounding Egdon. Every bizarre effect that could result from the random intertwining of watering-place glitter with the grand solemnity of a heath, was to be found in her (Book First, vii, 78).

Eustacia increasingly retreats into the past. Egdon Heath represents the opposite of all

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[228] Caless points out that the name 'Eustacia' means 'rich in corn' or 'fruitful': '[h]ere we have a complex symbolism. She is "Ceres" the Corn-Goddess, giver of life; she is the dormant and ripening sexuality of life - seed of the seasons - and also the idea of pregnancy – in its widest sense. Just as pregnancy is the incipient release of new life, so is there new life in Eustacia, waiting to be released by Clym or whoever will "love her to madness"' ('Hardy's Characters and the Significance of their Names', 13). There is no such person for Eustacia on Egdon Heath.

[229] 'To her [Thomasin] there were not, as to Eustacia, demons in the air, and malice in every bush and bough. The drops which lashed her face were not scorpions, but prosy rain; Egdon in the mass was no monster whatever, but impersonal open ground. Her fears of the place were rational, her dislikes of its worst moods reasonable (Book Fifth, viii, 433).

[230] *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature*, 153.

[231] *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, 59.

[232] *Thomas Hardy and the Proper Study of Mankind*, 48.

[233] *Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire*, 91.

that constitutes life for her: 'music, poetry, passion, war, and all the beating and pulsing that is going on in the great arteries of the world' (Book Fourth, vi, 335). The rustics recognise that Eustacia is different, and they fear this. She is regarded as a witch, something supernatural, unintelligible and therefore evil. Eustacia is both the rejector and the rejected. Her situation is untenable, and the one hope of escape – Clym Yeobright – ultimately proves to be as much a part of her prison as the heath itself.

The narrator sums up the unsuitability of Egdon Heath for Eustacia in the following words: '[a]n environment which would have made a contented woman a poet, a suffering woman a devotee, a pious woman a psalmist, even a giddy woman thoughtful, made a rebellious woman saturnine' (Book First, vii, 81). Eustacia is a rebel by nature. Convention and tradition are intolerable to her. A static life is poison for her, and she ultimately loses all powers of judgement in her obsession with escaping from the heath. She makes a series of wrong decisions which ultimately lead to her death: she marries Clym without considering the implications; she tries to run away with the aid of Wildeve, but underestimates the full force of the storm; she forgets basic practical steps such as taking money with her for the journey; and she persists in trying to find her own way in the dark and rain without asking for the help of Diggory Venn, whose van she actually passes. Like Clym, Eustacia is unable to bring about a compromise between aspirations and actual circumstances, and she is ultimately destroyed by an environment which she never understood.

The only character in the novel who really understands the heath, but is not overpowered by it, is Diggory Venn, the reddleman. Diggory is the most successful group-two character in *The Return of the Native.* He has learned to play the game of life successfully and it is no coincidence that he wins the game of dice with Wildeve, who is an acknowledged failure professionally, socially and emotionally. Venn is essentially an observer. For much of the novel he hides behind the colour of his trade.[234] Ironically it is his apparent anonymity which allows him to preserve his individuality against the conforming pressures of the heath. Venn is an expert in hiding in small valleys, under furze, and behind bushes. His expertise in disappearing and observing enables him to act as the eyes of the reader. Phillip Mallett even suggests that his blood-coloured body is symbolic of his role as the bringer of life and energy to the events in the plot.[235] Venn has a special vitality which is indicated in his very name, 'to work like Diggory' meaning 'to work with dogged determination.'[236]

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[234] Reddle or reddling is a red ochre, a mineral compound of iron, which was used for marking sheep.

[235] 'Thomas Hardy: An Idiosyncratic Mode of Regard' in *A Spacious Vision. Essays on Hardy* ed. by Phillip V. Mallett and Ronald P. Draper (Newmill: The Patten Press, 1994), 25.

[236] In Ruth A. Firor, *Folkways in Thomas Hardy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931), 309. Bryn Caless points out that '[t]he name "Diggory" comes from the old French "Degarre", meaning a "hero of Romance". Before that, however, it meant "an exposed person" or "wanderer" (from the word Egare, to stray). It is interesting that the meanings correspond with Diggory's format as a character. From being the embodiment of Supernature, the "wanderer", he gains a middle-class apotheosis and becomes the "hero of Romance" who suddenly achieves wealth and status and marries Thomasin' ('Hardy's Characters and the Significance of their Names'), 15.

The phrase is derived from folk-lore and custom, and it is an indication of Venn's close links with the people and ways of Egdon Heath.

Venn was, as Simon Gatrell has pointed out, a vagabond in the original version of *The Return of the Native*.[237] His social credentials were not fully established until the first collected edition of 1895, when he became a respectable member of the bourgeoisie. Venn is the son of a dairy farmer, and it is to this status and profession that he returns when he marries Thomasin. Although he works as an itinerant reddleman, he is always careful to keep himself apart from the lower orders. As the narrator shows, the reddleman belongs to a group of his own: he is in some ways similar to a gipsy, but he scorns such people; he is as thriving as itinerant basket and hat makers, but refuses to have anything to do with this class; his reddle is more valuable than pedlars' wares, but pedlars do not accept this and ignore him; his skin is such an unnatural colour that men working at fair grounds are gentlemanly in comparison, but the reddleman refuses to associate with this type of person. In other words, '[a]mong all these squatters and folks of the road the reddleman continually found himself; yet he was not of them. His occupation tended to isolate him, and isolated he was mostly seen to be' (Book First, ix, 90). Venn achieves an unusual feat for Hardy's group two characters: he relinquishes 'his proper station in life for want of interest in it' (Book First, ix, 90), and then re-adopts it, considerably the richer for the experience. He is richer financially because reddle was an expensive and necessary product for sheep farmers, and Venn's costs are low. He works alone and he is not reliant on the equipment or services of others. And Venn is also richer personally because his professional skills, integrity and reliability earn him the respect of the majority of the Egdon inhabitants. His selfless and consistent protection of Thomasin is given its due reward, and he settles down to the life of a happily married well-to-do dairy farmer. Interestingly, although the reader can assume that Venn was a capable and efficient dairy farmer and in touch with developments in modern dairy farming, it is his rustic skills and qualities which are emphasised.

When first rejected by Thomasin, Venn's main ambition is to disappear from society. He is introduced in Book First, ii. The Title of the chapter is 'Humanity Appears on the Scene', which is not just a reference to the appearance of people in general, but to the specifically humane nature of Diggory Venn. In his capacity as protector of Thomasin he is brought into close contact with all the main characters and proves himself to be superior to all. In fact he is very like Gabriel Oak: he acts consistently, paying little attention to his own needs and welfare, and is resilient to disaster thanks to his inner peace and security. Like Gabriel, he is also able to take advantage of, rather than fall victim to, an environment which resists change.

Venn's self-assurance and inner stability are reflected in his speech, which is deliberately contrasted with the 'deeper vein of talk' of Clym Yeobright (Book Fifth, ii,

[237] *Hardy the Creator. A Textual Biography*, 40.

378). Unlike Clym, Venn does not use language to express self-pity but to direct positive action. He consciously adapts his language to the situation and audience. This is seen, for example, when he attempts to persuade Eustacia to give up Wildeve. He uses 'subtle indirectness' when he flatters Eustacia, calling her 'the only lady on the heath' (Book First, x, 103) who has 'so much sway over us men-folk' (Book First, x, 103). He cautiously appeals to Eustacia's sense of 'honourable kindness' (Book First, x, 104). When Eustacia refuses to admit her guilt Venn becomes more emotional and starts to use dialect, adding the word ''ee' to his appeal: '[y]our comeliness is law with Mr Wildeve. It is law with all men who see 'ee' (Book First, x, 104). When subtlety has little effect Venn turns to plain reasoning. He provides a clear analysis of the situation and also suggests concrete action. He is careful to be consistently polite (he uses the polite addresses of 'Miss Vye' and 'Mr Wildeve', for example) and his speech has all the force of impeccable logic:

> I must speak, Miss Vye, in spite of paining you. What I would put before you is this. However it may come about – whether she [Thomasin] is to blame, or you – her case is without doubt worse than yours. Your giving up Mr. Wildeve will be a real advantage to you, for how could you marry him? Now she cannot get off so easily – everybody will blame her if she loses him. Then I ask you – not because her right is best, but because her situation is worst – to give him up to her (Book First, x, 105–6).

That the scheme fails is not due to a lack of persuasive ability or mental clarity – Venn quite simply underestimates Eustacia's intransigence and desire for romance.

The years covered by the novel produce significant changes in Venn. He successfully transcends the static quality of Egdon Heath by not being afraid to adopt a trade which, although it entails a decline in status, is highly profitable. He blooms while Clym declines. He outlives Wildeve and Eustacia. When he presents himself at the Yeobrights' cottage at the end of the novel he is a normal colour again: he has shed his red skin and abandoned for good his temporary role as a reddleman. He explains to Clym and Thomasin that he is now owner of his father's dairy herd, adding 'I always thought of getting to that place again if I changed at all; and now I am there' (Book Sixth, i, 457). Unlike Clym, he has attained his goal in full. Venn is an expert at grabbing opportunities, a strength which places him firmly in group two. His two chosen professions allow him to make ample use of his rustic closeness to nature. At the same time, this closeness offers status, security and the opportunity of further progress. And there is the all-important additional reward, of course, of marriage to Thomasin.

That Hardy was not entirely happy with this ending (he maintained it was forced on him by publishers) is made apparent in the footnote at the end of the third chapter (Book Sixth). Hardy's comment is so revealing that it deserves quoting in full:

> The writer may state here that the original conception of the story did not design a marriage between Thomasin and Venn. He was to have retained his isolated and weird

> character to the last, and to have disappeared mysteriously from the heath, nobody knowing whither – Thomasin remaining a widow. But certain circumstances of serial publication led to a change of intent.
>
> Readers can therefore choose between the endings, and those with an austere artistic code can assume the more consistent conclusion to be the true one (iii, 473).

Would departure on Venn's part have been more realistic and more in line with his character? As a rustic he might have lived on as an unmarried reddleman – perhaps in a new district – for as long as there was work to be found. But as the son of a dairyman with good future prospects and with reasonable financial resources he was in a position to settle down comfortably. The primary habitus takes over and Venn returns to the family profession and regains his original status, and as a result he has the necessary social and financial qualifications to claim the lady whom he has consistently loved and protected. Venn possesses all the necessary 'capital' in both the financial and social sense of the word. The ending of the novel is thus both consistent and emotionally satisfying. It is indeed what the observant reader has been prepared for all the way along. As such it does, in fact, constitute 'the more consistent conclusion' (Book Sixth, iii, 473).

Summary

Egdon Heath not only forms the setting of *The Return of the Native*; it is a major determiner of individuals' actions and of their ultimate survival. All characters are forced to conform to its standards to a greater or lesser degree, or run the risk of perishing. Any educational project must take into account the special influence of the heath on the lives of the Egdon inhabitants. The bleakness of the heath reinforces the determinism which is an important feature of the novel. The rustic characters are static and totally unable to see beyond the boundaries of the heath. Education, as an outside influence, is either seen in highly simplistic terms or viewed with considerable scepticism. Not until there is a radical improvement in the general quality of life on Egdon Heath can there be any hope of bringing about any major changes in the lives of the rustics by means of formal education. In previous novels, the rustics have been largely unaware of the advantages of education; in *The Return of the Native* they refuse to accept that it has any relevance to them personally or to the pattern of their existence on the heath.

Clym Yeobright is an unusual group-two character in that he lacks any ambition to progress; indeed, he returns to where he started and ultimately even regresses socially. His goals and his plans to achieve them are vague, and he seems unable to adapt his aspirations to circumstances. Unlike Diggory Venn, Clym cannot return without compromising his original aims and ambitions. The life and career of Clym Yeobright show that membership of group two is no guarantee for success either on a personal or a social level. Clym is an outsider, with no fixed roots. The career of an itinerant preacher is the only option left open to him if he is to remain on the heath

and retain at least part of his vision for a new, improved society. As a preacher, Clym returns to the security of established religious and moral truths; the latter provide a foundation on which to stand when all else is rootless. Clym is forced to give up the intellectual challenge of a teacher. He admittedly learns the art of modifying his language in order to influence his audience; his message is, nonetheless, traditional and predictable. Clym becomes a tolerated outcast in his own community and is the object of pity rather than admiration. His misfortune is that he attempts to implement modern ideas in a community which is not ready for them.

Diggory Venn succeeds where Clym fails because he does not plan any sweeping changes and offers no challenge to traditional values and beliefs. He is much more typical of group-two characters: he combines a sympathetic understanding of the environment with determination and an ability to take full advantage of opportunities. He is guided by a realistic assessment of both the potentialities and the limitations of his situation. Venn's ability to perceive that he is not the centre of things is reminiscent of Gabriel Oak, as is his ability to withstand the vicissitudes of fate thanks to inner security. Venn returns to where he started the richer in every sense: financially, socially, and emotionally. As in the case of Gabriel Oak before him, his perseverance and selflessness result in a marriage which promises security and contentment. Diggory Venn and not Clym Yeobright is the true hero of *The Return of the Native.*

THE TRUMPET-MAJOR

The Trumpet-Major was written at Upper Tooting, London. There is little evidence to show when Hardy began and finished the novel, although it seems likely that the entire story was written between 1879 and 1880. Hardy was extremely methodical in his investigation of the historical background and it is important to observe that the Victorians expected history to be accurate and based on fact.[238] The results of his research are to be seen in his note-book 'B^{sh} Museum. Notes taken for "Trumpet Major" & other books of time of Geo III. in (1878–1879 –)' which contains extracts copied from contemporary newspapers and various drawings.[239] Hardy also spent time interviewing war veterans as part of his efforts to attain historical authenticity.

The Trumpet-Major is, as Michael Millgate has stated, Hardy's 'nearest approximation to the classic English novel of manners.'[240] That Hardy should have decided to write such a novel may in part have been prompted by his life-style at the time. While at Upper Tooting he attended garden parties and dinner parties for the upper strata of society, including such famous writers as Tennyson, Matthew Arnold and Henry James. He also spent time in prestigious London clubs. Millgate suggests that such activities may have been uncomfortable for Hardy, who was unsure of his own status.

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[238] For a discussion of this point, see Jerome Hamilton Buckley, *The Triumph of Time,* 16.
[239] The notebook is housed at the Dorset County Museum.
[240] *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist,* 149.

The Trumpet-Major illustrates a wider variety of communities than any other Hardy novel, ranging as it does from the humble mill to that of a royal watering-place, from an army camp to the home of an admiral of the fleet. The novel is much concerned with how characters adapt to circumstances, and how social positions are negotiated when changing circumstances promise or threaten a change in social status. Social differentiation is thus a key issue in *The Trumpet-Major*.

The Trumpet-Major was generally well received in 1880. While contemporary reviewers criticised the allegedly unnatural dialogue of the rustics in the book they also praised the delineation of scene and character, as well as Hardy's ability to tell a good story. The anonymous reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, for example, concluded his review with the following statement: '*The Trumpet-Major*, while it is not one of those books which once begun make the reader forget all his duties until he has reached the end, is distinctly one which, having finished, he will be inclined to keep on his table and look back into once and again.'[241] Julian Hawthorne of the *Spectator* praised *The Trumpet-Major* for its subtle blend of tragedy and comedy.[242] He also complimented Hardy on his skill in organising events to produce a good story, concluding that 'if Mr. Hardy never writes a worse book than *The Trumpet-Major*, he will maintain a literary level which any contemporary writer of English prose fiction might be glad to attain.'

The Trumpet-Major is regarded as a minor novel and has in consequence been somewhat neglected by modern critics.[243] Hence it is interesting to note that the book receives special attention in Barbara Hardy's discussion of passion and feeling in Victorian literature.[244] Barbara Hardy makes an important point when she observes that *The Trumpet-Major* is no ordinary historical novel in its combination of elegy and historical record.[245] She points out that a special pathos is created because the reader is waiting for death throughout the story. Barbara Hardy shows that one of the great strengths of *The Trumpet-Major* is that it chronicles the past 'so reverently and compassionately that history is animated and explained from within.'[246]

The Overcombe community is an artistic recreation of a small rural community at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Hardy was both geographically and chronologically divorced from his subject. Emotionally, however, he was very close to it. *The*

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[241] 20 November 1880. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 73.

[242] 18 December 1880. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 73–77.

[243] H.A.T. Johnson is an exception. See 'In Defence of "The Trumpet-Major"' in *Budmouth Essays on Thomas Hardy* ed. by F.B. Pinion (Dorchester, Dorset: The Thomas Hardy Society, 1976), 39–59.

[244] *Forms of Feeling in Victorian Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1985), 180–190.

[245] 183. The story of a miller's son going to sea and serving under Captain Hardy reflects historical reality. Richard Roberts (1788–1842) was the son of a West Dorset miller under Captain Hardy's command. Kerr points to a tradition of West Dorset men serving at sea together (*Bound to the Soil*, Chapter IV, 69 – 89).

[246] Cunningham also singles out *The Trumpet-Major* for special attention in *In the Reading Gaol*, 96–128. Cunningham concludes that '[t]he text of history is woven inseparably into the fictional text. Neither text can exist separately from the other. No Nelson, *Victory* or Captain Hardy, no Bob or John Loveday' (113). Cunningham uses the scene at the Theatre Royal in Chapter 30 as an illustration.

Trumpet-Major reflects the view that '[t]hrough the ruins of vanished eras one could trace the silver thread of genetic continuity winding on toward the always looming and unknown future.'[247] The inhabitants of Overcombe inherit qualities and traditions which evolve but little because the community is such a small one.[248] Not only is the Overcombe community small; it is also self-contained and almost completely cut off from the outside world: all the main characters are local. No character of importance is brought in from outside, as in most other Hardy novels. The soldiers are temporary residents and have no permanent influence on the inhabitants of Overcombe. The arrival of a letter from outside the community is a major event. Newspapers are shared and are several days, or even weeks, old before they are read. It is the insular, stagnant quality of life in Overcombe which is emphasised; and herein lie the seeds of its ultimate destruction. Overcombe is an excellent illustration of the reasons why small rural communities were unable to cope with fast-developing modern industrial society. The novel is written from the point of view of one who had the advantage of hindsight. It also reflects a regret that the contentment with life which characterises the inhabitants of Overcombe could not be preserved.

The centre of action is Overcombe Mill, which is the home of the majority of the main characters. Groups one and two live side by side in the mill in an uneasy compromise which continues to work as long as both groups accept that they are different and do not try to change one another. Group three makes rare appearances: Squire Derriman is only a small landowner and plays a very minor role in the novel; King George and Admiral Hardy never enter Overcombe itself – although they are not far away – and they have little real impact on the main events and characters in the village.

The rustics

Miller Loveday is a key figure in group one.[249] He is, as Robert Taylor says, one in a long line of corn-grinders who have disappeared into oblivion: '[h]e stands for the timeworn and innocent serenity of Wessex, now as so often in the novels under threat of invasion and incipient fragmentation.'[250] Water mills were a familiar fea-

[247] Eiseley, *Darwin's Century*, 334.

[248] This reflects the Darwinian philosophy that large communities are more likely to initiate change than small ones. Darwin states in *The Origin of Species* that 'although small isolated areas probably have been in some respects highly favourable for the production of new species, yet that the course of modification will generally have been more rapid on large areas; and what is more important, that the new forms produced on large areas, which already have been victorious over many competitors, will be those that will spread most widely, will give rise to most new varieties and species, and will thus play an important part in the changing history of the organic world', 88.

[249] The miller is included in group one rather than group two because his background, attitudes, and language are clearly more rustic than middle-class. He is most at home with the humble villagers and his business is on a very modest scale, requiring only the occasional help of a hired hand. Although he invests in his sons' education, and is proud of their achievements, he does not have as pronounced social aspirations as Geoffrey Day, for example.

[250] *The Neglected Hardy*, 84.

ture of the countryside, and water-wheels were still in common use in the second half of the nineteenth century.[251] At the same time, grinding corn is a slow and laborious process which involves circular movement, a constant returning to the same spot. It is thus the very opposite of progress, which is lineal by definition.

The miller was regarded as an extremely important figure during the first half of the nineteenth century.[252] Almost every parish had its own mill.[253] The miller's tasks were numerous and varied. They included providing flour to bakers as well as villagers and fodder for both farm livestock and the cottagers' animals. He also ground the gleanings collected by women and children. The miller was not always a popular figure, as he was blamed for charging unnecessarily high prices and lining his own pockets. This was not a financial necessity, as the amount of capital needed to set up in business was relatively modest, particularly if he only intended to rent rather than purchase a mill: for example, Pamela Horn points out that a mill in Dorset was insured for as little as £60 in 1841.[254] A miller could thus become an important member of the community with very modest financial means. He needed to be skilled at his trade, but in all other respects he was an ordinary inhabitant of the village.

Millers rarely occur in Hardy's novels and short stories, and by the second half of the nineteenth century they had declined considerably in importance. Therefore it is signficant that the only other miller who plays an important part in Hardy's prose (in the short story for boys, 'Our Exploits at West Poley'[255]) is nothing like as easy-going and genial as Miller Loveday, who is depicted as a contented miller in a harmonious community in which traditional values still survive.

Miller Loveday belongs to an agrarian society which has changed but little over the years. His life is predictable. His general contentment is reflected in his surname: he does love the day and rarely looks beyond it. He sees no threat to his existence because he takes each day as it comes, and he makes little effort to extend his business as did many millers of the time, who also dabbled in the corn trade.[256] This is in

[251] Musson and Robinson point out that Joseph Glyn's book *On the Power of Water To Turn Mills* (1853) 'had run into five editions by 1875, show[ing] the continued importance of water power in this later period.' See *Science and Technology in the Industrial Revolution*, 69. Musson and Robinson's book contains an excellent description of the development of water power from the Domesday Book to the nineteenth century (67–71). Their account also shows how the days of water power were numbered as it was replaced by steam power during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

[252] B. A. Holderness explains that there were a large number of millers in the 1851 census owing to the fact that mills were small and localised and the technology of grinding by mill-stones inhibited the development of large-scale production. See 'Agriculture and Industrialization in the Victorian Economy' in Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian Countryside*, vol. I, 189.

[253] Jennifer Tann writes that '[t]he significance of the mill in the local economy was indicated by the centrality of its position and the continuity in the use of the site, many mid-eighteenth century mills standing on the sites of medieval or even earlier mills.' See *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, volume VI, 1750–1850 ed. by G.E. Mingay, 400. The corn-milling industry is described on pp 397–415 of *The Agrarian History*.

[254] *Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside*, 100.

[255] The story was written twelve years after the publication of *The Trumpet-Major*.

[256] See Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England*, 169.

part a reflection of his profession, as milling was one of the industries least affected by the upheavals of 1750–1850.[257] Indeed, there is only one threat as far as he is concerned, namely the possibility of invasion by Napoleon.[258] Even this has limited effect because it is shared with all the other members of the village. Not even the arrival of the army is able to upset the time-honoured cycle. Domestic issues clearly take precedence over military ones. National peril has little impact on the comfortable existence inside the protective walls of the mill.[259]

Miller Loveday is pictured from the very first chapter as a man of limited education. The chalked figures behind the mill door show that his 'youthful ciphering studies had not gone so far as Arabic figures' (ii, 11). Neither is he a good reader, as is revealed by his attempt to decipher the letter in which Bob announces his forthcoming marriage and his return home: '[d]id any of ye catch by my reading which day it is he means? What with making out the penmanship, my mind was drawn off from the sense here and there' (xiv, 118). He is deferential to the Garlands in recognition of their social and cultural superiority and is clearly much more at home fraternising with the soldiers and humble villagers.

The miller is a straightforward and genuine character who responds to others with spontaneity and warmth. He is not given to abstract discussions or hypotheses about the future. When, for example, Bob shows concern about the implications of the wording of the marriage licence, his father dismisses his fears with a few words of common sense that go straight to the heart of the matter.[260] He tells Bob that he would be better off without Matilda Johnson and reinforces his point with the aid of a nautical metaphor (he tells Bob that his brains are in danger of 'turning to water', xxii, 184) which he knows will have good effect on his sailor son. There is no attempt on the miller's part to enter into a more general discussion about the importance of choosing a suitable partner, or Bob's future role in the village. As a restricted-code user, Miller Loveday illustrates his argument with a concrete example which centres on his own family rather than on the community at large; he tells Bob quite simply that in moping about the disappearance of his fiancée he is making a fool of himself in the eyes of the other villagers. Bob responds to his father's straightforward arguments and manages to lift himself out of his despondency.

Miller Loveday accepts that education and worldly experience have produced a social gulf between himself and his sons. He does not see social differences as an insuperable barrier, however, and persists in his dream of marrying Mrs Garland.

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[257] For a concrete example, see Kerr's description of the Woolfreys' mill in Bere Regis, Dorset (*Bound to the Soil*, 132).

[258] For a description of how Dorset prepared for invasion by Napoleon and the incidence of false alarms, see J. H. Bettey, *Dorset* (Newton Abbot: David Charles, 1974), 119–120. See also Hardy's poem, 'One We Knew', in *The Complete Poems*, 274–5.

[259] This aspect of *The Trumpet-Major* is discussed by Ebbatson in *Hardy. The Margin of the Unexpressed*, 45.

[260] Cunningham suggests that Bob's reading of the marriage licence is an example of how '[t]exts tend in [*The Trumpet-Major*] to waste their readers' time, to turn into waste matters'; *In the Reading Gaol*, 111.

When Bob attempts to lay the blame for Matilda Johnson's disappearance on his father's uncouth manners, the miller is clearly hurt. However, his reply also shows that he has no intention of changing his ways. His intransigence is reflected in his use of dialect: '[i]f my manners be good enough for well-brought-up people like the Garlands, they be good enough for her' (xix, 163).

The miller has a highly pragmatic view of society. While he evinces no desire to adapt his own ideas and standards, he is nonetheless keen to keep up appearances. He is anxious to avoid being made a fool of in front of the other villagers, as his hasty marriage to Mrs Garland shows: indeed, what better method was there for avoiding the spread of rumours and wasting good food? The miller's practical nature is combined with genuine humanity. He expresses himself awkwardly, but his intentions are always good and his influence over people in his immediate environment is strong. When he tries to persuade Anne Garland to transfer her affections from Bob to John, for example, he shows genuine concern. His use of dialect reinforces his humanity:

> Now I've a plan for taking him [John] into the mill, and letting him have a comfortable time o't after his long knocking about; but so much depends upon you that I must bide a bit till I see what your pleasure is about the poor fellow. Mind, my dear, I don't want to force 'ee; I only just ask 'ee (xxxvii, 334).

The miller is persuasive and Anne is clearly moved by his words.

From this point on in the story he makes but rare appearances. Significantly he plays no part in the developing relationship between Anne and Robert. The miller knows that Anne is making a mistake. He also recognises that he is powerless to change the course of events and is silent. In the final paragraph of the story, the candle which Miller Loveday holds up to John's face as the latter makes his final departure from Overcombe Mill is symbolic of the miller's insight into events and character. He knows that the wrong man is leaving. He accepts the situation because he cannot change it. He is passive. Apart from his marriage – which is in fact only an official recognition of an already existing state of affairs – little has changed for Miller Loveday by the end of the novel. When he dies it seems likely that an established tradition will be broken, and the mill will pass into the hands of new owners as a result. But this is outside the scope of the novel. There is no vision of the future. Only Hardy himself and his readers know what awaits villages like Overcombe. Miller Loveday and his family are still blissfully unaware of the disappearance of tradition which is only a few decades away.

The stasis which characterises Overcombe is not only seen in the character of the miller but also in the two remaining rustics of any significance in the novel, namely David, the miller's servant-cum-odd-job man, and Cripplestraw, the servant of the Derriman household. David's situation has remained static for the past thirty-eight years: his sole experience of working life has been serving the miller. He has no special skills, and his duties are highly repetitive. His tasks are those of an unskilled

female servant. While he is entrusted with the household keys and is thus given a measure of responsibility, he is basically regarded as a child by his employer. It is no coincidence that he is treated by Mrs Garland as if he were her own child, a fact of which David is actually proud rather than ashamed.

David rarely moves beyond the confines of the Loveday household. For much of the novel he is a man in a woman's domain and is even described as a 'demi-woman' (xvii, 148). He is clearly not suited to the duties of a servant: his ways are rough and ready and he has little sense of social propriety, as his account of kicking in Matilda Johnson's door clearly indicates. For David national events are viewed from a narrow, domestic perspective. For example, his first concern before collecting his pike on the day of the supposed invasion by Napoleon is the disposal of the family's alcohol in an effort to ensure that it does not fall into the hands of Napoleon and his men. The subsequent scooping up of the drink from the floor and his suggestion that it is quite drinkable is David's spontaneous response to a situation which he is neither able to anticipate nor cope with in a rational manner. When he attempts to justify his action with the unconvincing statement that "[t]isn't bad drinking, though it do taste a little of the floor, that's true' (xxviii, 255), there is no suggestion that he has reflected on his conduct or regards it as inappropriate in any way. David is a restricted-code user, and his response is instinctive and defensive instead of analytical.

David serves as a measure by which to judge Miller Loveday and the Garlands. He is a reminder of the miller's rustic origins: the two understand and trust each other, and their lives are closely bound together. The Garlands are a threat to their established way of life. David's tasks must change as Mrs Garland takes over the running of the house. There is little attempt in the novel to show what modifications must be made; there is simply an implied threat that changes are on the way, and that David must somehow adapt. Again, the process of adaptation lies beyond the bounds of the novel. The way of life of the past thirty-eight years is about to change, but the question as to 'when' and 'how' remains unanswered – indeed, the question is never asked because society has not advanced far enough to even perceive its relevance.

The second rustic of any significance in *The Trumpet-Major*, Cripplestraw, is aptly named. The second part of his name, 'straw', suggests his main occupation, looking after the squire's livestock; 'cripple' suggests a mental and physical inability to initiate things. Like David, Cripplestraw is tied to a particular family and place. These form the boundaries of his existence. Squire Derriman is old and fragile; his property is antiquated and run down, and his nephew Festus is degenerate. In other words, Cripplestraw is bound to a family in decline. There are no prospects for an improvement in Cripplestraw's situation. As an uneducated farm hand with limited experience, he is particularly vulnerable.

Both David and Cripplestraw are victims of a social system which leaves little room for individual initiative and affords the lower classes few chances for improvement. Miller Loveday has his mill. His business is thriving; he has no need to see

beyond the confines of the mill. David and Cripplestraw, on the other hand, have no security and are almost totally dependent on the fortunes and the whims of one person. The miller seems assured of his mill for as long as he wants it. For David and Cripplestraw, on the other hand, the death of their master almost inevitably means a loss of the tenuous security they have enjoyed as full-time employees with a home and small income, a complete disruption of life as they know it, and abandonment to an extremely uncertain future.

Only group two is able to steer its own destiny, and even in this group the ability is more limited than it is among many other group-two characters in the Wessex novels. There is a sense in which *The Trumpet-Major* anticipates the famous lines from 'In Tenebris II', 'that if the way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst.'[261] *The Trumpet-Major* is 'the Worst' because it represents a stagnant society. Whereas the Weatherbury of *Far From the Madding Crowd* receives visitors and workers from outside, there is virtually no movement either in or out of Overcombe. The army is the only visitor to the village, its visit is short and there are no guarantees that it will ever return. The Loveday brothers are the only characters who manage to leave Overcombe and create an existence of their own elsewhere. When they return to the village their lives stand still again. By the end of the novel both of them realise that there is no future for them in the place of their birth.

The lower/middle class

The central relationship in the novel is that between the Garlands and the Lovedays. Both families are local, but here the likeness ends. Mrs Garland is introduced as the widow of a talented but impecunious landscape painter. Anne is her only daughter.[262] It is stressed early in the novel that the Garlands occupy 'a twilight rank between the benighted villagers and the well-informed gentry' (vi, 42). Their educated and genteel past contrasts strangely with their present existence as lodgers in a working mill, a symbol of labour and commerce. The effects of a superior education are gradually neutralised by the influence of the immediate environment.

The lack of society in Overcombe causes a 'gradual levelling of distinctions' (i, 3), and the Garlands are slowly losing their gentility. For instance, they finally go against their better judgement in socialising with the soldiers at the party held in honour of John Loveday's return to the village. Mrs Garland ultimately even marries the miller, although she is soon forced to acknowledge that she has married beneath her. The marriage has important implications when viewed in the light of the following comment made in Hardy's short story 'The Melancholy Hussar of the Ger-

[261] 1895–6. In *The Complete Poems*, 168.

[262] This is not the first time Hardy has presented the main character as being the son or daughter of an impoverished landscape painter. Egbert Mayne in 'An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress' is the son of a well-to-do painter with limited means.

man Legion': '[i]n those days unequal marriages were regarded rather as a violation of the laws of nature than a mere infringement of convention, the more modern view.'[263] Mrs Garland's marriage to the miller thus breaks two sets of laws: natural and social. Hardy wrote from the perspective of 'the modern view' of the 1880s. His concern is with the social differences between the two families and the way in which social aspirations may change according to circumstances. Language is shown to play an important part in maintaining social distinctions.

Mrs Garland is anxious to maintain a cultivated language despite her surroundings and is grieved when she discovers that Anne is gradually adopting the dialect words and accents of the miller and the local population. Only in the face of a life-threatening emergency such as an invasion by Napoleon will she drop her pretensions:

> Mrs Loveday thought how ridiculous a thing social ambition was in such a conjuncture as this, and vowed that she would leave Anne to love where she would. Anne, too, forgot the little peculiarities of speech and manner in Bob and his father, which sometimes jarred for a moment upon her more refined sense, and was thankful for their love and protection in this looming trouble (xxv, 219).

Convention and social aspirations are part of a social game whose rules and stakes are only fully understood by two participants, the Garlands. Martha and Anne find that their social and educational capital is of little value in a stagnant rustic society such as that of Overcombe. They cannot alter what appears to be immutable, and without support from outside the community they are forced to recognise that it is they themselves who must adapt.

Martha and Anne Garland's marriages are presented more as a surrender to circumstances than as a victory of love over social convention. Whereas Martha Garland at least has the consolation of knowing that her husband is industrious, faithful and sincere, Anne Garland sacrifices these advantages when she chooses the wrong brother.[264] She is fascinated by Robert Loveday's exploits, his uniform and his courage in war. Anne is an object of sexual selection. John, like Farmer Boldwood in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, refuses to stoop to such methods and is as self-effacing as his brother is ostentatious. Only on one occasion does John succumb to the temptation of displaying his advantages to the full, and this is when he proposes to Anne early on in the novel, before he has learned to despise (and see the inadequacy of) such methods as bragging about professional status and promotion. When John is

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[263] *Wessex Tales,* 43–66. The quotation is from p. 48. This story is also set in Wessex in the early nineteenth century.

[264] For an interesting discussion of the significance of the interaction and opposition of the two brothers, see J. M. Rignall, 'The Historical Double: *Waverley, Sylvia's Lovers, The Trumpet-Major*', *Essays in Criticism/A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism* 34 (1984), 14–32. Rignall writes: 'In the interaction and opposition of the doubled figures the complex relationship of fiction to history is intimated and the possibility of fissures in the narrative created, through which may be glimpsed a darkness which radically qualifies the project of the historical novelist', 14.

refused, he abandons this method for ever and takes refuge in an altruistic promotion of his brother's cause. When he leaves the mill, all hope for a secure future for the Loveday family disappears with him. Any hope of John's return is destroyed in the final lines of the novel, which predict his death in Spain. Overcombe is left in an all-pervading darkness which is only relieved by the miller's solitary candle. The energy with which John leaves Overcombe, marked by his 'smart step', stands in sharp contrast with the sleepy impenetrable black night which envelops the village. Everything stands still, except John.

The hero of the novel is John Loveday, who is the only character in the novel capable of selfless love. His love is not for the day, like his brother's, but for life, and it is capable of withstanding all trials and vicissitudes. It is significant that John's strengths and skills are developed outside Overcombe. The local village school in Overcombe recognised John's intelligence, but little is said of his education or academic prowess while he is still a resident of the village. It is the army which provides his first real opportunity for personal and social development. It recognises his powers of leadership and his musical talent and endows him with the respectability which Overcombe can never give him. When John discovers that his success has limited cultural capital in Overcombe and is clearly not sufficient to win the affections of Anne Garland, he is forced to recognise that the values of his home village and the world outside are incompatible. Anne is unable to see beyond the village and to contemplate a life which promises movement, a degree of unpredictability but also personal and social development. She also proves incapable of recognising true virtue when it is demonstrated over and over again both in word and action. Instead she succumbs to the superficial charms of Robert Loveday.

One reason why Anne falls for Robert rather than John is that the latter is almost too good to be true, even for the reader! It takes a woman more perceptive than Anne Garland to appreciate the true value of John Loveday's sacrifices, and to recognise the solid qualities which lie underneath the hero's self-effacing language. Indeed, the reader cannot help sympathising with Anne as it is not difficult to appreciate the charm of daring action at sea when viewed from the confines of dull Overcombe society. John is clearly better able to provide a secure existence, however, in his capacity as a respected trumpet-major or as proprietor of a well-established business. John's untimely death on a Spanish battlefield anticipates the Unfulfilled Intention of *The Woodlanders.* John Loveday is also a forerunner of Giles Winterborne; for both characters, selfless love leads to tragic death.

Bob Loveday is a total contrast to his brother. His very language is filled with passion, romance and action; it is dynamic but it also suggests inconstancy. He consciously creates an image of himself which is far removed from Overcombe. He tells stories which are strewn with naval terms, and his stories bear the hallmark of scientific fact: 'Bob sometimes told serious and correct stories about sea-captains, pilots, boatswains, mates, able seamen, and other curious *fauna of the marine world*'

(xxii, 189, my italics). Bob is largely unconscious of his use of nautical terms (only on one occasion does he explain what he means by a particular expression, and that is when he uses the word 'yaw' when trying to explain to Anne why he was temporarily attracted by Matilda Johnson, xix, 162). Bob's nautical terminology belongs to a world which is associated with virility, adventure, patriotism and romance. It is significant that John as a soldier has a more standard vocabulary which is little influenced by professional idioms.[265] His language is less energetic and forceful than Bob's. John's non-idiomatic language is in keeping with his tendency to avoid drawing attention to himself or distinguishing himself in any way. This is particularly interesting in view of the fact that Hardy was well acquainted with military terminology, both through talking to war veterans and as a result of his own research. While it is possible that Anne finds Bob's use of nautical terms quaint and perhaps even exaggerated on occasions, the general effect is to impress the young lady; her limited experience of the outside world has not equipped her to analyse and be critical of the unfamiliar. While the reader does not condone Anne's choice of husband, he/she certainly understands and regrets it.

Summary

The Trumpet-Major is Hardy's imaginative recreation of a dull and sluggish community which is almost completely isolated from the outside world. Overcombe is typical of small early nineteenth-century rustic communities which had changed but little for centuries. The mill wheel has rotated in the same way and on the same spot for generations. By the time *The Trumpet-Major* was written many of these mills had disappeared with the advent of industrialisation. Robert Loveday shows little interest in building up the family business. John, the more stable of the two brothers, leaves Overcombe never to return. There is no vision of the future, only survival in the present. The action of the novel is like the motion of the mill wheel, circular. No one succeeds in leaving the mill except to die. To remain at Overcombe mill is also a form of death, as it holds out no hope for the future.

The rustics in *The Trumpet-Major* are bound to the community of Overcombe, which forms the limits of their knowledge and experience. Their existence is precarious because their lack of education and vision makes them dependent on the fortunes of a single family in a community which cannot see beyond the present. David is totally dependent on the survival of the mill and of Miller Loveday. Cripplestraw is in an equally vulnerable position: Squire Derriman is old, the estate is run down and Festus shows little prospect of ever being able to shoulder responsibility. The position of the rustic has little to commend it in *The Trumpet-Major*. The rural

[265] Raymond Chapman shows that there is a tradition among novelists for sailors to use nautical idioms. Sailors spend a long time at sea and are cut off from the rest of civilisation. As a consequence they tend to develop their own language. This does not happen in the case of soldiers, as they are not isolated for long periods in the same way. See *Forms of Speech in Victorian Fiction*, 189–190.

population is content, however, because it has known nothing else and because it cannot visualise any alternative to the present.

Group-two characters in *The Trumpet-Major* are also affected by the isolation and lack of vision of the Overcombe community. The Garlands are gradually absorbed into the mill both in a physical and a social sense. They become part of the Loveday family, are dependent on its fortunes and even adopt some of the features of the Loveday speech. Mrs Garland recognises that she has married beneath her. Anne Garland is taken in by the superficial charms and heroic feats of Robert Loveday. By agreeing to marry him rather than John she unknowingly sacrifices her one real chance of a secure future. There is no place for John's talent and experience in Overcombe. He misses his one opportunity for happiness by persistently putting the interests of his brother before his own.

Just as Egdon Heath fails Clym Yeobright, Overcombe fails John Loveday. Neither community is ready to make a home for its returning native. Both *The Return of the Native* and *The Trumpet-Major* are the stories of communities which have remained static for centuries. *A Laodicean* reverses this trend and takes a decisive step into the modern scientific and technological world, a step which is all the more powerful when seen against the stagnant background of *The Return of the Native* and *The Trumpet-Major*. *A Laodicean* leaves unchanging agrarian society behind. The traditional and the predictive are juxtaposed, which implies new hope for the future.

A LAODICEAN

A Laodicean was written in the Hardys' London home at Upper Tooting. It was begun at some stage in 1880, and thirteen chapters had already been published in serial form when Hardy fell ill on 23 October.[266] Hardy was confined to bed and the remaining chapters were dictated to Emma Hardy over a period of five months.[267] The first draft of the novel was completed by 1 May 1881. The three-volume book version appeared in December 1881. Hardy's fear that he was dying led him, as he told the American scholar William Lyon Phelps, to put more autobiographical de-

[266] Hardy suffered violent pain on the 23rd and there were signs of internal bleeding. He was forced to choose between a dangerous operation and a prolonged period in bed. The severity of the illness is recorded in Hardy's poem 'A Wasted Illness', which includes the following stanza:

> 'Where lies the end
> To this foul way?' I asked with weakening breath.
> Thereon I saw a door extend –
> The door to Death.
> *The Complete Poems*, 152.

[267] Samuel Chew and R. D. Altick maintain that Hardy's illness and convalescence make criticism of *A Laodicean* superfluous: 'criticism of *A Laodicean* [...] is disarmed by the fact that, having been contracted for, it was composed during convalescence from a severe illness. It is quite worthless.' See Chapter xxxiv, *A Literary History of England* ed. by Albert C. Baugh (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 1466.

tail into *A Laodicean* than into any one of his previous novels.[268] It is impossible to establish how true this statement is; but, as the following discussion shows, *A Laodicean* certainly represents a turning-point in Hardy's thinking as regards the relationship between the traditional and the predictive. It is also significant that Hardy retained a life-long affection for *A Laodicean*: for example, he continued to send out presentation copies of the novel to friends until as late as 1922.

Robert Taylor and other critics have noted that while Hardy was composing *A Laodicean*, he made the following revealing notes on society:

> Discover for how many years, and on how many occasions, the organism, Society, has been standing, lying, etc., in varied positions, as if it were a tree or a man hit by vicissitudes.
>
> There would be found these periods:
>
> 1. Upright, normal or healthy periods.
> 2. Oblique or cramped periods.
> 3. Prostrate periods (intellect counterpoised by ignorance or narrowness, producing stagnation).
> 4. Drooping periods.
> 5. Inverted periods.[269]

Commenting on the notes above, Taylor observes that Hardy's use of his own illness as a metaphor for social analysis leads us to 'expect to learn something more unguardedly personal than usual about Hardy's diagnosis of the condition of society, and about his own uncertainties.' A close study of *A Laodicean* supports Taylor's hypothesis. It is all the more surprising, therefore, that critics have generally failed to understand the importance of the novel, and concentrated instead on weaknesses in the plot and style.[270]

A Laodicean was more highly thought of in the 1880s than it has been by more recent critics. Robert Taylor suggests that this is due to the fact that the intricacies of plot which are maligned today were originally preferred to the characters.[271] Havelock Ellis wrote in 1883, for example, that the novel was

> more faultless, and certainly less mannered, than anything that [Hardy] had yet produced [. . .] He has written no other novel which succeeds so entirely in satisfying the reader's emotional sense [. . .] it marks distinctly the continuous development and versatility of his genius.[272]

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[268] Phelps, *Autobiography with Letters* (1939), 391, 394. Quoted in Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 165.

[269] *The Neglected Hardy*, 100.

[270] Robert Taylor suggests that the modern view of *A Laodicean* was crystallising as early as 1889, when J. M. Barrie wrote of it, and *Two on a Tower*, 'they are both dull books: here and there nasty as well, and the besom of oblivion will soon pass over them' (*The Neglected Hardy*, 113). More recently, Lance St John Butler has dismissed *A Laodicean* in one paragraph, suggesting that it lacks unity and is merely a reflection of 'bits and pieces of Hardy's mind scattered about in a thin story', *Thomas Hardy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 154.

[271] *The Neglected Hardy*, 113.

[272] *Westminster Review*, April 1883. Reprinted in Taylor, *The Neglected Hardy*, 113.

The anonymous reviewer for the *Athenaeum* praised the sophistication of *A Laodicean*: he/she also compared it with *Desperate Remedies*, pointing out that both novels focus on architecture, both feature two characters who are mysteriously related to each other, and both afford little space to the simple people of the countryside.[273] The lack of attention given to the characters in the novel ensured that the all-important issue of the relations between the rational and the emotional, and what the present book refers to as the traditional and the predictive, went unnoticed by earlier critics.

A Laodicean is sub-titled 'A Story of To-Day' because it deals with the modern dichotomy between the emotional and the scientific.[274] Significantly, Hardy made the following notes just one week after completing *A Laodicean*:

> [a]fter infinite trying to reconcile a scientific view of life with the emotional and spiritual, so that they may not be interdestructive, I come to the following:-
>
> General Principles. Law has produced in man a child who cannot but constantly reproach its parent for doing much and yet not all, and constantly say to such parent that it would have been better never to have begun doing than to have *over*done so indecisively; that is, than to have created so far beyond all apparent first intention (on the emotional side), without mending matters by a second intent and execution, to eliminate the evils of the blunder of overdoing. The emotions have no place in a world of defect, and it is a cruel injustice that they should have developed in it.[275]

A Laodicean shows how the emotions have an insecure foothold in modern society. Paula Power's romantic dreams have little power when confronted with the obvious advantages of an alliance with the modern architect, George Somerset. As a novel primarily concerned with the development and effects of the so-called 'modern spirit', *A Laodicean* focuses on group-two characters and their attitudes to the rational versus the emotional. Groups one and three are only of interest in so far as their lives impinge on those of George Somerset (whose surname is identical to that of one of the most conservative rural counties in England) and Paula Power (whose surname serves as a reminder of her links with modern engineering and technology).

Hardy's thoughts on the relation between the emotional and the scientific are closely related to his reading of Matthew Arnold. As J. B. Bullen points out, for example, Hardy read Arnold's essay 'Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment' as part of his preparations for writing *A Laodicean*.[276] Hardy was particularly interested in Arnold's juxtaposition of paganism, associated with the senses and understand-

[273] 31 December, 1881. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 95–96.

[274] This has also been noted by, among others, Evelyn Hardy, in *Thomas Hardy: A Critical Biography*.

[275] In *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 153.

[276] *The Expressive Eye. Fiction and Perception in the Work of Thomas Hardy*, 131. Hardy copied large extracts from this essay into his notebook in 1880. See *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, entry 1176. The latter includes the following sentence: 'H. [human] nature is neither all senses & under^{stg}, nor all heart and imagin.^{n}', 130.

ing, and medievalism, characterised by the heart and the imagination. These two views are re-named Hebraism and Hellenism in *Culture and Anarchy*.[277] The question for both Hardy and Arnold is how modern man is to choose between these two contradictory views of life. The term 'imaginative reason', coined by Arnold and offered on the final page of *A Laodicean* as the answer to modern man's problems, represents what Bullen describes as only a 'tentative answer.'

There were two basic and conflicting views of the modern spirit in the second half of the nineteenth century: those of Walter Pater and Matthew Arnold. For Pater, the modern spirit was relative, 'truth itself is but a possibility, realisable not as a general conclusion, but rather as the elusive effect of a particular personal experience.' It 'must needs content itself with suspension of judgement, at the end of the intellectual journey.'[279] Hardy did not believe that the modern spirit was relative. His view was much closer to Matthew Arnold's. As was pointed out in Chapter Two above, Arnold maintained that traditional beliefs and institutions were inadequate as an embodiment of contemporary life. Modern man's tendency to question and rationalise was both a threat to traditional values and institutions and a prerequisite for progress. Can the rational and the affective live side by side in harmony, or must one develop at the expense of the other? *A Laodicean* is the first of Hardy's novels to tackle such questions openly and attempt to provide some sort of concrete answer.

The rustics

As the anonymous reviewer for the *Athenaeum* pointed out, rustic people play a very minor role in *A Laodicean*. One character of special interest, however, is the landlord of the inn at the aptly-named Sleeping-Green. Significantly, the telegraph – a symbol of modernisation and progress – does not reach as far as the village. Sleeping-Green appears to have very little contact with the outside world.

The landlord, who remains anonymous throughout the novel, is an important figure not because he has particular talents, powers or insight – indeed, he is almost devoid of these and as a consequence remains on the periphery of the action. His importance lies in his power to illustrate 'the incongruities that were daily shaping themselves in the world under the great modern fluctuations of classes and creeds' (Book the First, iv, 41). This becomes apparent in his conversation with George Somerset on the evening of the latter's first arrival at Sleeping-Green. During this conversation, the Established Church, representing tradition, and the Baptist Church, which questions these traditions, are polarised. The landlord's views are based entirely on personal experience. As a restricted-code user, he bases his argument on concrete events and avoids any generalised, abstract discussion of the prin-

[277] See Chapter Two for a discussion of the influence of *Culture and Anarchy* on Hardy.
[278] Thomas Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 151.
[279] See Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830–1870*, 17.

ciples and behaviour of the local Baptist community. His use of dialect serves to reinforce the local nature of his views:

> Even here, in my house, now [...] when folks get a drop of drink into 'em, and their feelings rise to a zong, some man will strike up a hymn by preference. But I find no fault with that; for though 'tis hardly human nature to be so calculating in yer cups, a feller may as well sing to gain something as sing to waste (Book the First, iv, 41).

The same practical view emerges in the landlord's opinions on different religions. He explains, for example, that he once became a Methodist[280] because he lived next door to the local chapel; he attended this for two years because it 'saved umbrellas on wet Zundays' (Book the First, iv, 42). He abandoned the Methodists as soon as this allegiance began to cost him money (the reader can only speculate in what way): 'I don't zee much difference: be you one, or be you t'other, you've got to get your living' (Book the First, iv, 42), he explains to Somerset.

The landlord's interests are centred on the inn and the immediate business of making a living. This is reinforced again at the end of the novel, when he shows little interest in discussing the fortunes of Paula Power and George Somerset. His comment 'I have something else to think of than new-married couples' (Book the Sixth, iv, 470) effectively ends all discussion on the subject and brings the participants back to practical reality. It is important to note that the landlord leaves the story at this stage. He plays no part in the events which close the novel and which produce the discussion between Paula and George Somerset in the course of which the modern spirit is defined. Indeed, it is notable that Paula and Somerset are actually walking away from the inn as they discuss the relationship between medievalism and the modern spirit.

The lower/middle class

The young architect, George Somerset, embodies a compromise between the traditional and the predictive. Robert Taylor suggests that the shedding of a number of 'illusory ideals' of Hardy's youth is mirrored in the character of Somerset, who gradually comes to recognise that 'in practice, art had at all times been as full of shifts and compromises as every other mundane thing; that ideal perfection was never achieved by Greek, Goth or Hebrew Jew, and never would be' (Book the First, i, 6).[281] Taylor claims that by the end of the novel Somerset has learned to adopt a variety of ideals and that his social vision is thus more mature and realistic than that presented in *The Hand of Ethelberta*. Somerset represents a constant striving for the new. He has no interest in rebuilding the old (although he wishes to honour it, as is seen in his plans for the burned-down castle); instead he plans to build something which breaks with tradition

[280] Kerr points out that by the 1860s and '70s methodist congregations and funds were increasing. The influence of Nonconformity did not start to wane in Dorset until the eve of the First World War. Nonconformists were often among the most intelligent citizens who wished to improve their material conditions and desired intellectual stimulus. See *Bound to the Soil*, 234–5.

[281] *The Neglected Hardy*, 110.

and which is 'eclectic in style' (Book the Sixth, v, 481). In the person of Somerset, *A Laodicean* offers a hope for the future which is clearly lacking in the two novels preceding it. Romance does not die, but finds a new place side-by-side with the rational. *A Laodicean* articulates a compromise between two different world views which manages to maintain the best of both worlds. It should be noted, however, that the successful conclusion is not won without cost. Somerset must suffer numerous trials before he is able to accept a view which incorporates both the traditional and the predictive. Equally importantly, tradition must ultimately yield: the rational and predictive clearly has the upper hand in modern society.

Somerset is first introduced as an outsider, a sketcher from London. He is a solitary and independent figure, an appreciator of beauty in art and nature. His main area of interest is Gothic architecture. As a Gothic architect he is interested in what Ruskin described as a 'careful distinction of species, and richness of delicate and undisturbed organisation.' Ruskin demonstrates a clear link between the Gothic architect's conscientious reproduction of petals and branches and the development of the natural sciences. Both studies require 'habitual tenderness' and 'subtle enquiry', and they share a common interest in what Ruskin describes as 'the history of rural thought.'[282] Gothic architecture thus combines an emotional/artistic response with a modern scientific interest in nature.

However, Somerset also has some of the negative qualities of modern man. Like Stephen Smith in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, he suffers from the modern tendency to absorb existing ideas rather than invent new ones of his own. His approach to his work is initially methodical rather than creative. He uses mathematical instruments to measure de Stancy Castle 'much as a comparative anatomist reconstructs an antediluvian from fragmentary bones and teeth' (Book the First, x, 89). The juxtaposition of the modern 'anatomist' and the 'antediluvian' is significant. Throughout much of the novel Somerset is concerned with re-construction rather than creation. This changes, however, when the castle is burned down and he is forced to build a brand-new property. The reader is convinced that he is equal to the task not only because of his impressive and demonstrable knowledge of architecture, and not even because his design is clearly superior to Havill's, but thanks to his wider experiences – personal as well as architectural – at de Stancy Castle and abroad.

With knowledge comes maturity. The youthful lack of diplomacy with which Somerset debates with Mr Woodwell about paedobaptism or with Havill about the date of the earliest part of the castle – a confidence which derives in part from his wide reading and from his superior training as an architect –[283] gives way to a grow-

[282] *The Stones of Venice* ed. by Jan Morris (London: Bellow, 1981; first published in 1851–3), 130.

[283] Somerset is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a Member – soon to be Fellow of – the Institute of British Architects. He belongs to a new generation of architects who undergo special training leading to recognised qualifications. Havill belongs to an older generation who picked up their knowledge on the job, and he has few, if any, professional qualifications.

ing ability to see a wider range of possibilities and to compromise. Maturity does not develop at the cost of passion, however, as his letters to Paula clearly demonstrate. Somerset's numerous demonstrations of his feelings for Paula are consistently rebuked in a way which anticipates Sue Bridehead in *Jude the Obscure*. When the situation becomes untenable for Somerset after Paula has seen Dare's forged photograph, however, he recognises that acceptance is the only possible solution. Interestingly, Hardy replaces the more usual term 'art' with 'science' as he describes Somerset's reaction, 'he set himself to learn the sad science of renunciation' (Book the Fifth, vi, 367). Science is clearly associated with control of passion. When Somerset makes a last attempt to extract one word of feeling from Paula and is again unsuccessful, he shows himself master of the occasion and of himself by refusing to be drawn into discussion with her. His remark that he has a 'deeper sense of woman's thoughtless trifling than time will ever eradicate' (Book the Fifth, vi, 370) is particularly powerful because it attacks Paula on both a universal and a personal level: her conduct is seen as characteristic of the female sex, but the blame must be shouldered by her alone.

It takes a serious illness and a reversal of roles as Paula pursues Somerset from England to France to bring about the union for which the reader has hoped all along. When Somerset tells Paula that he and she 'will build a new house from the ground' (Book the Sixth, v, 481) he is speaking metaphorically: the word 'house' refers not only to a domicile but to the creation of a completely new line of 'Somersets' who combine an emotional regard for the past with a modern rational insight into the value of creating something brand-new. This is the imaginative reason which is the foundation of the modern spirit and on which Somerset and Paula Power decide to base their future. It represents a looking forward which does not require a denial of the value of the past; instead it is an acknowledgement that with insight the present and future may learn from the past and in so doing produce something new and stronger for the future. In *A Laodicean*, Hardy offers a vision of how the emotional and the scientific may indeed combine, a union which offers hope for an eventual merging of the traditional and the predictive. Groups one and three are not allowed to obscure this vision. Hope for the future clearly lies with group two.

The defeat of Paula Power's laodiceanism takes on a new importance when seen in this light. It is a reflection of her position midway between two worlds. She is the product of what Somerset calls a 'circumscribed horizon' (Book the First, ii, 16), a Nonconformist background which restricts her freedom of action and binds her to the fulfilment of a vow which is foreign to her inclinations. Somerset notes at the same time that her experience extends beyond her present narrow circumstances, that she is 'living, a clandestine, stealthy inner life which had very little to do with her outward one' (Book the First, ii, 16). Her primary habitus is gradually modified by a completely new kind of existence at Castle de Stancy: 'the local habitation which accident had provided for Paula was perhaps acting as a solvent of the hard,

morbidly introspective views thrust upon her in early life' (Book the Third, v, 240). It is particularly appropriate that a metaphor from science should be used here, as it suggests that the process of modification follows natural laws and is thus inevitable. It is also a reflection of Paula's fascination with scientific developments.

As the daughter of an engineer, it is not surprising that Paula is interested in science and technology. She is also part of the industrial élite of engineers and mechanics who 'were in the forefront of progress and invention, and rejoiced in the sense of leading the new age.'[284] This is not the whole story, however, and it is perhaps not even the most important part as she also has a 'prédilection d'artiste' for the past. This is a purely emotional response which conflicts with the rational, scientific side of Paula's nature. She copes with the conflict between her primary habitus and her present existence with the aid of a two-sided philosophy which is based on a fundamental contradiction in principles: on the one hand she believes that 'to be happy, it is best to think that, as we are the product of events, events will continue to produce that which is in harmony with us' (Book the Fourth, i, 300); on the other, she is unwilling to leave things to chance – at least when it comes to such important issues as the choice of a partner. On such occasions she rejects any suggestion which does not fit in with her aims, as her Uncle Abner finds out to his cost when he tries to persuade her to marry Captain de Stancy.

Paula is an expert at disguising her real ideas and feelings. By choosing her words carefully, she manoeuvres events without committing herself to a particular line of thought or revealing her opinions. This is particularly apparent in her relations with George Somerset. Paula's apparent laodiceanism is as much a result of her desire to avoid committing herself as it is to a real lukewarmness of emotion. In the following representative example of Paula's way of manipulating situations and people, she subtly intimates her feelings without allowing herself to make an actual declaration of love. She gently suggests that Somerset is acting like a child when he fumes. Her reference, as an elaborated-code user, to the general conduct of women gives her comments the appearance of universal truth and makes them more acceptable. At the same time Paula is careful to use the personal pronoun 'I' sufficiently often to convince Somerset that she is expressing genuine regard for him without actually having to do so:

> Now, don't fume so, George Somerset, but hear me. My not owning all may not have the dreadful meaning you think, and therefore it may not be really such a grievous thing. There are genuine reasons for women's conduct in these matters as well as for men's, though it is sometimes supposed to be regulated entirely by caprice. And if I do not give way to every feeling – I mean demonstration – it is because I don't want to. There now, you know what that implies; and be content (Book the Third, ix, 271).

[284] Trevelyan, *English Social History*, 479.

Paula obviously has feelings for Somerset but the reader (and Somerset) must wait almost until the end of the novel before having this confirmed.

At the end of the novel Paula voices her desire to be a de Stancy, but she shows at the same time her determination to conquer this feeling: her decision to marry Somerset and to build a new home beside the burned-down castle provides the happy ending that Victorian readers desired. It also represents the successful co-existence of the affective and the rational.

The upper-middle/upper class

A Laodicean reflects the view that the days of the old aristocracy are numbered. Castle de Stancy and the de Stancy family belong to a traditional way of life which is resistant to new ideas and as such threatened with extinction. The castle is described in uncompromising terms as 'the hoary memorial of a stolid antagonism to the interchange of ideas' (Book the First, ii, 22). It is thus at first sight ironical that de Stancy Castle should be the destination of the telegraph, 'a machine which beyond everything may be said to symbolize cosmopolitan views and the intellectual and moral kinship of all mankind' (Book the First, ii, 22). It comes as no surprise that the telegraph belongs to Paula and has, in fact, nothing to do with the Castle itself.

The most interesting member of the de Stancy family is the Captain. As Roy Morrell points out, Captain de Stancy is a pessimist 'who sees *only* the worst, and lacks the resilience and courage that might enable him to see and take advantage of a tide in his favour.'[285] He is a man with a 'peculiarly bifold nature', a mixture of 'black and white qualities without coalescence', a 'moral chequer-work' (Book the Third, iv, 236–7) which promises stagnation rather than progress. Unlike Paula and Somerset, he has not learned to compromise. Because his views are not based on sound reasoning or impartial reflection he is vulnerable, a weakness of which his illegitimate son, William Dare, is not slow to take advantage. The Captain's life resembles an experiment in which his son is the chief scientist. It is no coincidence that Dare describes his plans for his father's marriage to Paula in terms of a chemical process: '[a] fermentation is beginning in him [...] a purely chemical process; and when it is complete he will probably be clear, and fiery, and sparkling, and quite another man than the good, weak, easy fellow that he was' (Book the Second, vii, 196). The Captain is particularly vulnerable emotionally, like so many other members of group three, and this is the cause of his downfall on two decisive occasions: first, when he makes Dare's mother pregnant and fails to marry her; and secondly, when he falls in love with Paula Power and becomes hopelessly ensnared in Dare's scheme.

Captain de Stancy lives in the past. His life is wasted in repenting a sin committed many years ago. He admits to Dare that 'I respect so little among the living that all my reverence is for my own dead' (Book the Second, v, 185). His vision of the future

[285] *Thomas Hardy. The Will and the Way*, 178.

is vague and escapist: he believes the only hope for himself and his illegitimate son is to flee as far away as possible from the known world, to Australia or New Zealand. When he finally begins to assume responsibility for his own destiny and to use his undoubted charms as an aristocrat – who has the added appeal of history and tradition behind him as well as an innate capacity for romance and charm – the situation is already beyond his control. The sins of the past are inescapable, and the Captain is ultimately forced to recognise that Dare is destined to be the cause of his downfall. He fails to understand, however, that it is not Dare himself who is the problem but his own emotional weakness. This does not mean that the Captain will shirk his responsibility for Dare: indeed, it is thanks to him that the latter finally escapes the legal consequences of his actions.

Marriage to Paula Power was the de Stancy family's last chance to regain some of its former glory and social position. Dare is the only member of the family both to recognise and accept the truth:

> We de Stancys are a worn-out old party – that's the long and the short of it. We represent conditions of life that have had their day – especially me. Our one remaining chance was an alliance with new aristocrats; and we have failed. We are past and done for. Our line has had five hundred years of glory, and we ought to be content. *Enfin les renards se trouvent chez le pelletier* (Book the Sixth, iv, 472– 3).

The de Stancy fox is indeed well and truly skinned. There is no space left for the family in an eclectic world which requires a combination of tradition and scientific reasoning for survival.

Summary

A Laodicean shows more clearly than any other novel before it that groups one and three belong to the past because they are situated outside the arena of change, which is dominated by group two. The landlord of the inn at Sleeping-Green is preoccupied with his business, which forms the boundaries of his experience and interests. The modern spirit does not belong here and cannot even be discussed within its confines.

All energy and vision belong to group two. Paula Power and George Somerset mature and learn to take an eclectic attitude which successfully combines the traditional and the predictive. The emotional and the rational join forces. They are mutually dependent and together constitute a sound foundation on which to build in the future.

The de Stancy family are forced to recognise that they have had their day and lost their one chance of survival. The emotional mistakes of the past live on in the present and exact their full punishment. The charm of the traditional, potent as it is for one of Paula Power's susceptibilities, is insufficient in itself. Significantly it is only the illegitimate member of the family who is able to look facts in the face and draw the correct conclusions.

Written on what he thought might have been his deathbed, *A Laodicean* is Hardy's idea of the future as he perceived it in 1881. As such it is not only 'A Story of To-Day', but a vision of tomorrow. The late novels are much concerned with the effects of science, technology and compulsory education on the lives of members of all three groups. Group two still shows the greatest potential for adaptation and survival. Hardy's final novel, *Jude the Obscure*, adds an additional perspective to the discussion. The tragedy of Jude Fawley is that his obvious talents are not directed towards a project which offers any real chance of success: it is not his intellectual capacity which fails him but his subservience to an impossible dream. Hardy's final novel shows that talent and determination are not sufficient in themselves in an increasingly complex modern society.

Throughout Hardy's fourteen published novels it is group two which is best able to adapt to modern conditions. As the following chapter shows, however, the task of adaptation becomes increasingly difficult the more complex society becomes. Talent, determination and hard work are no longer enough. Insight into the nature of what constitutes modern knowledge is also required. When Hardy finished his novel-writing career, compulsory education had only been in force for little over a decade; scientific development was so rapid that schools had difficulty in keeping pace with changes; and older teachers of the kind represented by Phillotson in *Jude the Obscure* still believed in a classical education. In the next century, most talented and educated characters of Jude's social class will turn their talents to science and technology and become the mainstay of modern industrial development. In 1896, however, the time was not yet quite ripe.

Jude the Obscure is a testimony to the potential powers as well as the weaknesses of group two on the eve of the twentieth century. None of the pessimistic side of this view appears in *A Laodicean*, because Hardy still sees the possibility of a compromise for group two based on a merging of the affective with the rational. The later novels reflect Hardy's declining faith in this possibility as science and the Christian morality of the end of the century gain in ascendancy. Group two still has the best chance of survival in modern society; but it must pay an increasingly high price for survival.

Chapter Four: The Late Novels

Introduction

Knowledge, science and technology are both more intimately and more obviously linked with survival in Hardy's later novels than in the earlier ones up to 1882. The ability to think rationally was increasingly prized in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Science was more and more seen to be the key to the future and an essential part of the cultural capital of any individual aspiring to improve his/her social position. While Hardy's late novels clearly reflect these trends, they also show them to be related to the wider issue of whether the traditional society can continue to exist side by side with the modern predictive society. The conflict between the affective and the rational which permeates the earlier novels gains in importance in the later novels. The latter not only reflect the existence of, but also explore the consequences of, such a conflict for the future. In the later novels, Hardy's maturing response to modern society is steered by the possibilities as well as the limitations of scientific and technological knowledge and expertise. The traditional agrarian society is clearly losing ground to the modern industrial. The shift has important consequences for education, as the latter must be able to respond to the numerous and far-reaching changes in society. This aspect becomes increasingly important in Hardy's later novels. Education is seen to reinforce rather than break down social barriers; compulsory education does not represent equal opportunities for all, and higher education is seen to be for the élite only. Traditional knowledge becomes increasingly marginalised. The whole issue of the importance and value of formal education becomes more complex in Hardy's later fiction. In the earlier novels education is accepted as a necessary prerequisite for social advancement; in the later ones it is no longer a question of acquiring knowledge and culture, but of choosing the correct subjects and the most suitable educational institution.

The aim of this chapter is to explore how the two kinds of knowledge identified above are influenced by a growing interest in science and technology in the latter part of the nineteenth century, both on the part of society at large and on the part of Thomas Hardy, novelist. A key issue is the extent to which formal education succeeds in equipping individuals to adapt to the specific requirements of modern society. The position of group two as presented with reference to Hardy's earlier novels

becomes modified in the later ones as a result of the increasing complexity of modern society. While group two is still the most successful in adapting to modern needs, thanks to the intellectual and personal qualities already identified in the previous chapter, the later novels show that these two kinds of qualities are no longer sufficient in themselves. Formal education plays an increasingly important role in determining the individual's ability to adapt to the demands of the modern predictive society. Traditional knowledge passed on from generation to generation is fast becoming redundant. Successful adaptation is dependent on the educational system to fulfill certain criteria: it must promote knowledge which not only provides intellectual satisfaction but satisfies established and very specific needs in society; it must take current requirements and values into account; and it must recognise the importance of, as well as utilise, the individual's own experience. The importance of these issues comes to the fore particularly strongly in the later novels, and above all in *Jude the Obscure*: Jude Fawley's vision of the modern world is obscured by his dreams and earlier experience which are firmly rooted in the traditional society.

There is a strong emphasis in Hardy's later novels on the distance between the objective world – that is to say the reality which exists independently of one's perception of it[1] and which 'has accidents on its side in addition to its natural strength' (*Two on a Tower*, v, 43) – and the individual. The individual, who often acts with 'ill-judged execution', has little power against what Hardy ironically describes as the 'well-judged plan of things' (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Phase the First, iv, 57). Education and science are upheld as important, but at the same time they are part of the general progress of civilisation which thwarts natural instincts (*Jude the Obscure*, Part Sixth, ii, 408–9).

The increased use of scientific terminology in the later novels serves to emphasise to a greater extent than in the earlier ones the influence of inexorable laws on the direction of individuals' lives. The peasant fatalism expressed in the phrase 'it was to be' is contrasted with the scientific knowledge of such characters as Dr Fitzpiers in *The Woodlanders*, a knowledge which – on a theoretical level at least – enables the possessor to predict the future with some accuracy. Science does not, however, allow individuals to transcend the consequences of circumstance or their own decisions. Education and science provide insight but are no panacea for happiness – they may even be the direct cause of unhappiness for such characters as Grace Melbury. The warmth and humanity of the group-one characters are contrasted more strongly than previously with the rational thinking of the scientist: '[t]here is something in the inexorably simple logic of such men which partakes of the cruelty of the natural laws that are their study' (*Two on a Tower*, xli, 312).

The hysteresis of communities as diverse as Casterbridge in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and Little Hintock in *The Woodlanders* is all the more marked when contrast-

[1] The 'brute facts' of John R. Searle. See the discussion of theory in the introduction, 40–42.

ed with new scientific developments such as Farfrae's drill or Fitzpiers' medical experiments. Modern life stretches out its feelers to the different communities and then withdraws 'as if what it touched had been uncongenial' (*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Phase the Fourth, xxx, 268); 'news from the outer world' enters and expires 'like the exhausted swell of a wave in some innermost cavern of some innermost creek of an embayed sea' (*The Woodlanders*, xxiv, 162). Science, circumstance and fatalism are intimately related and point to a deterministic view of life in which human development is governed by laws over which man has little control.

We may improve our understanding of such laws with the aid of education, but our ability to control circumstances remains limited, particularly where progress takes place at the expense of the affective. As was pointed out above, the promise held out in *A Laodicean* is not realised in the later novels. The six novels discussed here suggest that Hardy became pessimistic as the century progressed and as he recognised that modern society had an increasingly narrow view of what constituted success or failure. Hardy was suspicious of progress that showed insufficient regard for traditional values and strengths. Classical values and knowledge are doomed to extinction as they are swallowed up by science. At the same time, progress is impossible without science. The tragic consequences of this paradox for the individual emerge in Hardy's later novels.

It is significant that by March 1886 – at the beginning of the period under discussion here – Hardy could write that '[n]ovel-writing as an art cannot go backward. Having reached the analytic stage it must transcend it by going still further in the same direction.'[2] Each of the six novels that are reviewed in this chapter has its own special contribution to make to the discussion of the relative value of the two different kinds of knowledge which are the subject of the present book. While the early novels are set in a traditional society largely untouched by modern developments, the later ones bear witness to the emergence of a more complex predictive society based on scientific knowledge and rationality. Hardy maintained that his purpose as an author was to emphasise certain features of life which deserve special attention:

> Art is a changing of the actual proportions and order of things, so as to bring out more forcibly than might otherwise be done that feature in them which appeals most strongly to the idiosyncrasy of the artist. . . . Art is a disproportioning – (i.e., distorting, throwing out of proportion) – of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially, might possibly be observed, but would more probably be overlooked.[3]

This note is from August 1890. *Two on a Tower*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *The Woodlanders* had already been published; *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *The Well-Beloved*

[2] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 183.
[3] Ibid., 239.

and *Jude the Obscure* were still to come. Hardy's interest in the analytical approach thus coincided with increased interest in rational thinking and scientific study. More interesting still, however, is the fact that analysis became increasingly equated in Hardy's mind with art, which he believed necessitated a fine balance between accurate observation and feeling. The artist must be capable of 'observation informed by a living heart', to use Hardy's own phrase from his essay on 'The Science of Fiction',[4] published just one year after he wrote the above statement about art as a disproportioning of realities.

In Hardy's final two novels, a search for fulfilment in art (sculpturing and the study of classical art subjects) becomes a means of illuminating the weaknesses of modern society. The harmony of the traditional society is conspicuous by its absence in Christminster. The University represents tradition at its worst. Christminster rejects the rational. It also turns its back on talent when possessed by one of the wrong social class. The later novels are increasingly sceptical as regards the ability of man to balance the positive features of the traditional society against the needs of the modern predictive society. Because the society portrayed in the later novels is much more complex than that of the earlier novels, the situation of the most important group – group two – has become more problematic. The greater potential survival power of group two is still apparent; but it is now affected by a wider variety of factors which are beyond the individual's control. The later novels express Hardy's thoughts on the direction of society as he saw it in the latter part of the nineteenth century – thoughts which were increasingly gloomy, but which had not yet reached quite the level of despair produced by the sufferings and carnage of the First World War.

TWO ON A TOWER

Two on a Tower was written in Wimborne, Dorset, in response to an enquiry in September 1881 from the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*. It is not known exactly when the novel was written, but it is clear that Hardy was already making preparations at the end of the year: in November he stated in his ghost autobiography that he inspected the Royal Observatory at Greenwich[5] and in December he had written to W. C. Unwin about the grinding of lenses and the making of telescopes. Chapters i - ix were finished by 8 March 1882 and the concluding part had been sent off by 19 September. *Two on a Tower* was published in book form at the end of October, 1882. Hardy told Edmund Gosse that the novel had been written in haste, 'though the plan of the story was carefully thought out.'[6]

Two on a Tower was not generally well received by contemporary critics. The

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[4] 138.

[5] Michael Beech points out that the visitors' book does not support Hardy's claim that he visited the Royal Observatory while preparing *Two on a Tower*. See 'Thomas Hardy: Far From the Royal Observatory, Greenwich?', *The Observatory* 110 (December 1990), 185–187.

[6] Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 183.

anonymous reviewer for the *Saturday Review*, for example, blamed Hardy for 'too much incongruity in the treatment [of the peculiar circumstances of the characters], too little explanation of motives and reconciling of seeming discrepancies.'[7] These alleged flaws were partly attributed to Hardy's propensity for amateurish 'analytical discussion of mental processes.' The concluding paragraph sums up *Two on a Tower* as an 'extremely disappointing' novel. Harry Quilter of the *Spectator* was even more damning: 'this is a story as unpleasant as it is practically impossible.'[8] He went on to say that the novel 'is melodramatic without strength, extravagant without object, and objectionable without truth.' Havelock Ellis was also critical, claiming that *Two on a Tower* lacked inspiration. However, he also observed that the novel 'is still the work of a writer who has a finer sense of his art than any living English novelist.'[9]

What none of the contemporary reviewers could know was that *Two on a Tower* holds a very special place in Hardy's novel-writing career. Not only was it is written exactly twelve years after his first published novel and twelve years before his last, it represents a turning-point in Hardy's career. In *Two on a Tower* Hardy explores the effects of a scientific perspective on the individual for the first time in a work of art. Critics have generally failed to appreciate the importance of Hardy's increased insight into the human condition which underlies *Two on a Tower*. In the 1895 preface Hardy wrote that '[t]his slightly-built romance was the outcome of a wish 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.'[10] This is a high-sounding aim indeed. Nonetheless, *Two on a Tower* is generally regarded as a minor novel. Only a few critics, among them Paul Ward, have attempted to show that the novel has been underrated. Ward states that 'in no novel so much as in *Two on a Tower* is the social order so clearly invalidated by constant reference to a perspective which shows it to be as groundless as, ultimately speaking, it is.'[11] He makes an extremely important point in the conclusion to his article: in *Two on a Tower*, the individual's private emotions are rarely in tune with the forces which dominate the social world, particularly when these are viewed in the light of 'the stupendous stellar universe':

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7 18 November 1882. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 97–100.

8 3 February 1883. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 101–102.

9 'Thomas Hardy's Novels', *Westminster Review*, April 1883. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 125.

10 vii. A similar idea is explored in Hardy's poem 'At a Lunar Eclipse' in *Poems of the Past and Present*, 1901; see *The Complete Poems*, 116. Victorian readers were familiar with such ideas from Tennyson's 'In Memoriam.' From the 1850s astronomy and biology became the cause of general anxiety about the enormity of the universe. Human scales and values became insignificant in the light of astronomical time scales and distance. The security of the Newtonian model of the solar system was destroyed by Thomas Henderson's discovery in 1831 that the nearest star to the sun was twenty-four trillion miles distant. The significance of these and other scientific facts is discussed in Haynes, *From Faust to Strangelove*, 104–127.

11 '*Two on a Tower* - A Critical Revaluation', in *The Thomas Hardy Yearbook* 8 ed. by James Stevens Cox (Guernsey: Toucan Press, 1978), 33–34.

'[f]rom this point of view alone, *Two on a Tower* deserves higher acclaim than it has [...] been given.'

Robert Taylor also draws attention to the importance of the emotional element in *Two on a Tower*, but he sounds a more optimistic note than Ward when suggesting that the novel affords a rare glimpse of 'Hardy championing man's chances against the impersonal universe.'[12] *Two on a Tower* establishes the importance of emotional values. At the same time it shows that these are vulnerable in a way that astronomical/scientific facts can never be. The struggle between the scientific and the emotional is played out in the character of Swithin St Cleeve, who is initially dominated by his relationship with the stars he studies but who gradually begins to realise that human relationships may be equally powerful. Swithin continually 'fluctuates between the pull of the two strong forces.'[13]

The relative importance of science and the emotions changes between the 1882 and 1912 versions. Hardy told his friend Edmund Gosse that his aim in *Two on a Tower* was 'to make science, not the mere padding of a romance' but its 'actual vehicle.'[14] Simon Gatrell shows that Hardy moved away from the astronomical theme in the 1912 version and focused more sharply on the human dilemma of Viviette Constantine. The 1882 version reflects Hardy's intense interest in science (he had studied R. A. Proctor's *Essays in Astronomy*, 1872, for example). At the same time, the revisions for the 1912 version indicate that Hardy maintained his belief in the value of the affective. *Two on a Tower* emphasises the importance of a co-existence between the rational (head) and the affective (heart), as Lennart Björk has already pointed out.

Hardy had taken an interest in astronomy since boyhood. A friend of his at Last's Academy had allowed him to look through his telescope. As a young boy, he had studied science in Cassell's *Popular Educator*. F. B. Pinion suggests that the erection of Handley Moule's three-inch achromatic telescope on the vicarage roof stimulated Hardy's interest in astronomy still further.[15] Interestingly, however, the views of the stellar universe reflected in *Two on a Tower* are not completely up-to-date. In a fascinating article entitled 'Hardy's Astronomy',[16] Martin Beech demonstrates that *Two on a Tower* is based on the universal model of William Herschel (1738–1822).[17] Put

[12] *The Neglected Hardy*, 128.

[13] Gatrell, *Hardy the Creator. A Textual Biography*, 190.

[14] Purdy, *Thomas Hardy: A Bibliographical Study*, 44 n.

[15] *Thomas Hardy: His Life and Friends*, 53. Hardy also did personal research in preparation for *Two on a Tower*, writing in 1881 to the Astronomer Royal for permission to see the Greenwich observatory: '[h]e therefore drew up a scientific letter, the gist of which was that he wished to ascertain if it would be possible for him to adapt an old tower, built in a plantation in the West of England for other objects, to the requirements of a telescopic study of the stars by a young man very ardent in that pursuit (this being the imagined situation in the proposed novel)', *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 155–156. Hardy observed a comet from his conservatory in June 1881. Carl J. Weber shows that this was Tebbutt's Comet, which is described (though not named) in Chapter xii of *Two on a Tower*. See 'Hardy's Comet', *English Language Notes* I (1963–4), 215–218.

[16] *The Thomas Hardy Year Book* 19 ed. by J. Stevens Cox (Guernsey: Toucan Press, 1991), 18–30.

[17] The following discussion on Hardy's knowledge of astronomy is based on Beech's article.

simply, Herschel believed that all the stars are of the same brightness and that they are scattered at random in space. He suggested that the size of the universe is indicated by the number of stars in any one direction. The sun was embedded in a circular disc made up of stars. This is the view presented by Swithin to Lady Constantine in Chapter iv.[18] The discussion about the sun between Swithin and Lady Constantine is particularly revealing as it shows that the picture given in *Two on a Tower* was not in tune with modern astronomical developments. Swithin tells Lady Constantine that he is observing a 'cyclone in the Sun', that is, a sunspot or collection of sunspots. The remarks which follow do not take account of the contemporary debate on the source of the sun's energy.[19] Beech shows that a number of Swithin's comments on various stars are erroneous. At the same time, however, Swithin evinces a sound knowledge of some of the more obscure facts about comets.[20] Beech concludes that on balance 'the majority of [Hardy's] astronomical passages, technical and non-technical, are correct and relevant.'[21] The important word here is 'relevant.' Relevant to whom and what? Swithin's study of astronomy reveals Hardy's views in the 1880s on the strengths and limitations of science in aiding man's understanding of the universe and his place in it. Science is a prerequisite for survival in the future. It is not, however, sufficient in itself. Harmony with the environment presupposes a balance between rational scientific understanding and human love. *Two on a Tower* is the story of how one man, Swithin St. Cleeve, learns this lesson by a long process of trial and error. By the end of the novel he has acquired 'a power of observation informed by a living heart' which makes him not only a greater scientist but also an infinitely more satisfactory human being in so far as he is now able to express and respond to human feeling.

The rustics

Frank B. Pinion has suggested that the rustic characters play a very minor role in *Two on a Tower* because the novel is so short.[22] However, *Two on a Tower* is in fact almost exactly the same length as *Under the Greenwood Tree*, the novel in which such characters form the prime subject. In *Two on a Tower* the rustics are on the periphery. They are largely untouched by modern developments. In one sense, their lack of presence in the novel is as significant as their predominance in the earlier novel.

Generally speaking, there are few descriptions of country people in *Two on a Tower*. One exception is Chapter x, which opens with an account of the inhabitants of Welland. The first adjective used to describe this group is 'placid' (78). The wag-

[18] For a discussion of the importance of Herschel's theory and its relation to *Two on a Tower* see Robert Schweik, 'The Influence of Religion, Science, and Philosophy on Hardy's Writings', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy* ed. by Kramer, 55.

[19] For specific details, see Beech, 'Hardy's Astronomy', 22–23.

[20] Beech, 'Hardy's Astronomy', 26.

[21] 28.

[22] *Thomas Hardy: His Life and Friends*, 183.

goners, shepherds, ploughmen, blacksmith, carpenter and gardener are depicted as an anonymous group awaiting the announcement of St. Cleeve's death. They are recipients, not instigators.

One of the few rustics to receive individual attention is Haymoss Fry, a barley driller. Haymoss is 'one of a dying-out generation who retained the principle, nearly unlearnt now, that a man's habiliments should be in harmony with his environment' (i, 10–11). It is not just Haymoss himself who is threatened with extinction, it is the basic principle that man and his environment are one. Modern man has lost sight of that essential truth. In the very first chapter of the novel, this important fact is revealed to the reader through the narrator's comments on Swithin St. Cleeve, who is looking down on Haymoss from the vantage point of the column known as Rings-Hill Speer, the main symbol of modern science in the novel.

Haymoss makes it clear to Lady Constantine that he is older than she, thereby implying that he possesses the wisdom which comes of old age. His conversation with Lady Constantine makes it clear that he holds useful information about local inhabitants, and it is he who is able to reveal to Viviette the important details about Swithin's origins. The language which he uses to do this, and the comments he makes about formal education, emphasise the considerable distance between the rustics and modern society. His explanation to Lady Constantine is one of the few examples in Hardy's prose of a concentrated use of pure dialect which actually requires editorial comment in order to understand all the references. Haymoss's language is far removed from the standard English of the national school. As a restricted-code user, he employs similes belonging to the countryside with which he is familiar; they bespeak a knowledge of plant growth which is based on traditional practice rather than on scientific study. Haymoss apologises in typical rustic fashion for his 'common way' of expressing himself. When he takes up the matter of education in answer to Lady Constantine's question about Swithin's schooling, he makes it clear that grammar-school education is not an option for one of his humble origins:

> At Warborne, – a place where they draw up young gam'sters' brains like rhubarb under a ninepenny pan, my lady, excusing my common way. They hit so much learning into en that 'a could talk like the day of Pentecost; which is a wonderful thing for a simple boy, and his mother only the plainest ciphering woman in the world (i, 11).

Haymoss hits the nail on the head when he suggests that one of Swithin's most basic problems is the discrepancy in the social status of his parents: 'what with having two stations of life in his blood he's good for nothing, my lady' (i, 12). As Haymoss tells Lady Constantine, Swithin's mother was a 'homespun woman' and his father a curate. Although expressed in simple terms, the remark is extremely perceptive.

The period before Lady Constantine's acquaintance with Welland is described as 'merry' by Haymoss, whereas the present is a matter for 'moping.' Haymoss does not wish to be part of modern society. He is blissfully ignorant of the future. Haymoss is not interested in anticipation; his concern is purely with the present.

His explanation to the parson about his stiff joints – cast in the concrete terms of the restricted-code user – is representative of his life as a whole as well as that of the other rustics:

> 'Tis only my jints that have kept me from assembling myself [for choir practice] long ago. I'd assemble upon the top of Welland Steeple, if 'tweren't for my jints. I assure 'ee, Pa'son Tarkenham, that in the clitch o' my knees, where the rain used to come through when I was cutting clots for the new lawn in old my lady's time, 'tis as if rats wez gnawing every now and then. When a feller's young he's too small in the brain to see how soon a constitution can be squandered, worse luck! (ii, 19).

It is not just Haymoss's 'constitution' which is squandered, however. His future has also been wasted because his life is immutable. He was born a labourer, and a labourer he will remain because he has none of the capital recognised by modern society: education, qualifications or the ability to think in abstract and rational terms. The situation of the majority of the other rustics making up the choir is still less promising because they have not as yet even 'developed into such distinctive units of society as to require particularizing' (ii, 17). Haymoss at least has a name and an identity.

The old barley driller looks constantly to the past to explain the mysteries of the present. His long knowledge of music, for example, is measured by reference to past inhabitants of the parish ('I've knowed music early in life and late, – in short, ever since Luke Sneap broke his new fiddle-bow in the wedding psalm, when Pa'son Wilton brought home his bride', ii, 21); and to traditional expressions such as A, B and C to denote the musical notes. He thus finds it impossible to understand, let alone accept, the parson's suggestion that the choir should adopt the 'more recent [sol-fa] system.' Haymoss refuses to listen to reason: 'you can't alter a old-established note that's A or B by nater.' He is determined to show Parson Torkingham 'the true way' (ii, 21). He refuses to consider any other alternative and is staunchly supported by Sammy Blore. The Parson is clearly outnumbered and it is fortunate for him that at least on this occasion he is suddenly called away to see Lady Constantine.

The clash of the traditional and the modern is postponed for a period; it is not, however, cancelled. The reader suspects that the choir will disappear when – like Fancy Day in *Under the Greenwood Tree* – Tabitha Lark, an accomplished musician, returns to her native village. Tabitha is a much more accomplished young lady than Fancy Day: she has studied music in London, where she has enjoyed considerable success and has 'joined the phalanx of Wonderful Women who had resolved to eclipse masculine genius altogether, and humiliate the brutal sex to the dust' (xli, 307). This is the beginning of a whole new era which leaves no room for the likes of Haymoss Fry. The traditional values of the male patriarchal society have been turned upside down. At the end of the novel, the narrator reminds the reader that Haymoss belongs to the old school. Swithin finds him carrying wood

on his back, walking 'homeward' (xli, 307–8); his direction is one of return rather than advance. Haymoss never moves beyond the confines of the village. The world of the tower and astronomy is alien to him. The stellar universe has little interest for, or power over, him: he is very much part of the terrestial world. He leaves the novel 'enveloped in total darkness' – a darkness which is both physical and metaphorical and which is far removed from the bright heavenly bodies revealed through Swithin's telescope.

The lower/middle class

At the beginning of the novel, Swithin St Cleeve is totally taken up with his scientific studies and is 'living on in a primitive Eden of unconsciousness' (i, 12). He has not yet eaten of the fruit which produces knowledge of himself as a man and is not yet vulnerable because he has never been in love. Like Edmond Willowes in the short story 'Barbara of the House of Grebe',[23] Swithin is an innocent, physically attractive youth with a classical appearance. Edmond falls in love with a woman who is his social superior and who sends him abroad to be educated. For Edmond Willowes, however, the consequences of being sent away are tragic; for Swithin they are the start of a new life.

Swithin is one of Hardy's agnostics. He is an unbeliever who has Christianity in his blood,[24] the son of a curate and 'a devotee to science' (xii, 90). Hardy's agnostics are associated with the future. They regard orthodox belief as an anachronism. Swithin only becomes confirmed in obedience to Lady Constantine's wishes, not through any real conviction of his own. Interest in science or socio-political idealism generally replaces traditional Christianity. His studies of the stars initially leave no space for human devotion, let alone a meaningful relationship with a member of the opposite sex. He is a rational thinker bent on discovering objective truth. By the end of the novel, however, he discovers that this is no substitute for a wife. As Simon Gatrell shows, Swithin represents Hardy's belief in the value of science as a means of expanding knowledge even if it also precludes human relationships.[25] Roslynn Haynes puts this in a rather different way when she suggests that both in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and *Two on a Tower*

> Hardy questions the alleged objectivity of scientists, the apparent complacency with which they discuss the immensities of time and space and the transitoriness of man's existence. Swithin is forced to acknowledge his suppressed fears and to espouse a more subjective position – to accept his humanity. [26]

Haynes suggests that Swithin is an example of the Romantic stereotype of the emotionally inadequate scientist who puts work before human relationships. As

[23] *A Group of Noble Dames* (London: Macmillan, 1912), 53–92.
[24] Hands, *Thomas Hardy. Distracted Preacher?*, 60–62.
[25] *Thomas Hardy and the Proper Study of Mankind*, 60–61.
[26] *From Faust to Strangelove*, 124.

a consequence he is blind to the feelings of those around him. At the beginning of the novel the tower raises him above human emotion and invests him with supernatural power ('the temple of that sublime mystery on whose threshold he stood as priest', viii, 65). It is not until he accidentally overhears a group of rustics discussing himself and Lady Constantine that he realises that the latter is in love with him. It is important to recognise, however, that by the end of the novel Swithin has in fact learned how to love. He has become a successful scientist with national and international experience and is fortunate in finding a partner who, like himself, has learned to transcend the limitations of her origins and return to the place of her birth with new insight and knowledge. While Swithin embodies Hardy's ambivalent attitude towards science for much of the novel, he also ultimately confirms Hardy's belief that specialised knowledge which transcends local boundaries and promotes rational thought and prediction is the key to survival. Swithin is unlike most of Hardy's group-two characters because he is emotionally undeveloped at the beginning of the novel. In common with other members of his group, however, he is a good learner and proves himself able to adapt to changing circumstances.

The Swithin who returns to Viviette in the tower is clearly a changed man: he has learned to distinguish between enduring loving kindness and the transitory love of the lover (xli, 312–3). The impetuousness of the young lover is replaced by the mature reflection and consideration of a young man who has developed rationally and emotionally. While Swithin is too late to make amends to Viviette, he has learned a lesson which bodes well for his relationship with Tabitha Lark. By the end of the novel, Swithin manages to combine the advantages of the traditional and the predictive. Only Swithin and Tabitha are able to make the transition to modern society.

The following discussion attempts to explore how this transition came about, and to identify the prerequisites for success. *Two on a Tower* evolves a view of group two in modern society which establishes a pattern for the novels which follow it. The rules of the game of survival have become much more complex than those that feature in the earlier novels. The importance of predictive ability based on rational analysis receives greater emphasis in the later novels because changes in society are increasingly fast and far-reaching.

It is emphasised at the beginning of the novel that time is short. Science, on the other hand, is infinite. Swithin is first seen looking into his telescope, a lonely figure in the centre of the tower. Lady Constantine's first meeting with Swithin causes her to reflect on the 'odd mixture of scientific earnestness and melancholy mistrust of all things human'(i, 9). For Viviette, the young astronomer is a 'curious juxtaposition of youthful ardour and old despair' (iv, 28). Science has taught Swithin that the universe was not made for man.[27] He believes that survival is dependent on an understanding of astronomy and in consequence he limits his reading to books on that

subject. This is part of modern specialisation, which Swithin expresses in the analytical terms of the elaborated-code user: '[i]n these days the secret of productive study is to avoid well' (vii, 57). Swithin is not initially aware that he has any needs outside his study of science, explaining to Viviette that '[a] beloved science is enough wife for me, – combined, perhaps, with a little warm friendship with one of kindred pursuits' (viii, 67). He is shortly to learn, however, that the science to which he has dedicated his life is totally unable to sustain him in despair.

At the same time Swithin finds it difficult to abandon his 'scientific practicability' (xv, 115) even at the height of his passion for Viviette. In explaining his views on borrowing Sir Blount Constantine's coat, for example, he states that '[n]othing is ominous in serene philosophy [...] Things are either causes, or they are not causes' (xxiii, 168). Swithin's views are cut-and-dried and admit of no compromise. He studies cause and effect as isolated phenomena, without giving due consideration to non-tangible or non-rational factors such as social or moral issues. In such areas Viviette is clearly his superior.

Swithin's studies abroad prove to be a turning point, however. During the period away from Viviette, the young astronomer moves – albeit unconsciously – to a realisation that intellectual/scientific success is not sufficient in its own right: 'the sympathetic instincts which create the changes in a life' (xli, 300) are an important prerequisite for happiness. As the narrator explains, '[t]o altered circumstances inevitably followed altered views' (xl, 292). Ironically, a period of total dedication to astronomy causes Swithin to modify his hitherto uncompromising attitude to life. As a result, Swithin no longer takes Viviette's command not to write literally and decides to send her a letter. When he learns the truth about Viviette's situation he is compared to an 'awakened somnambulist' (xl, 296). He learns that the world is infinitely more complex and strange than he had thought as a young man living at home with his grandmother. He does not return immediately to Welland when he learns of the Bishop's death, because he recognises that the past cannot be altered and that 'he could not long afford to give to the past the days that were meant for the future' (xl, 297). Morally, Swithin belongs to Viviette and he is resigned to doing his duty. Emotionally, however, he belongs to Tabitha Lark, who is more compatible with him in terms of age and background and whose education allows her to assist him in his studies.

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[27] The stellar universe was not always associated with alienation in Hardy's mind. The poem 'For Life I Had Never Cared Greatly', included in *Moments of Vision* (1917), describes the 'uncloaking' of a star, which is discussed in the final stanza in the following way:

> 'And so, the rough highway forgetting,
> I pace hill and dale
> Regarding the sky,
> Regarding the vision on high,
> And thus re-illumined have no humour for letting
> My pilgrimage fail.'
> *The Complete Poems*, 537.

The narrator emphasises the scientific, logical nature of Swithin's language and responses in relation to Viviette. When he first meets Lady Constantine, Swithin uses a number of astronomical terms which are incomprehensible to a non-scientist. When he falls in love with her, his words reflect a factual, logical nature which is unpractised in the art of wooing a woman. Later he freely admits to Viviette that in the excitement of the coming Transit of Venus he had temporarily forgotten the question of their re-marriage: 'I had not forgotten it, dear Viviette – or at least only for a few minutes' (xxxiv, 246). Throughout their relationship it is Lady Constantine who has the greater power over words. This never changes, in fact, as the final scene on the tower illustrates.

For most of the novel, Swithin is linguistically most confident when he confines himself to discussing astronomical topics of a universal nature rather than personal matters. In his relationship with Viviette, Swithin initially uses scientific metaphor as an intellectual and emotional defence. When, for example, Viviette accuses him of immaturity, his immediate response is: 'you will never realise that an incident which filled but a degree in the circle of your thoughts covered the whole circumference of mine. No person can see exactly what and where another's horizon is' (vi, 49). The universal and scientific obviate the need for personal involvement. This kind of response becomes increasingly difficult as Swithin's feelings for Viviette develop. He makes several attempts at impassioned speeches, but consistently falls back on conventional phrases which reveal his inexperience and his inability to express his true feelings. When he derides, for example, such phrases as 'I give myself entirely to you' and 'you have my devotion, my highest homage' (iv, 106), telling Viviette that '[t]hose words have been used so frequently in a flippant manner that honest use of them is not distinguishable from the unreal', he nonetheless follows up this statement with a highly conventional and equally meaningless metaphor: '[y]our eyes are to be my stars for the future' (iv, 106). The experienced astronomer makes poor use indeed of his scientific knowledge. Swithin's assertions of love lack the strength of Viviette's. This becomes clearly apparent after the couple's last night together. As the narrator explains, 'Swithin, who was stable as a giant in all that appertained to nature and life outside humanity, was a mere pupil in domestic matters' (xxxvi, 267). He does not know how to respond and leaves, thereby demonstrating that mastery of the elaborated code is no guarantee in itself of success. The user must know how to make the best use of it too.

On his return Swithin has no problems in establishing a harmonious relationship with Tabitha Lark. During their first meeting after Swithin's return the two 'chat with vivacity' for some time (xli, 307). Significantly, it is only 'by degrees' that he introduces the subject of his work. Swithin has a new life ahead of him as soon as his relations with Viviette are concluded. There are no details of the conversation between the two young lovers; this belongs to a new chapter of Swithin's life which falls

outside the scope of *Two on a Tower*. The important fact is that Swithin has changed. Science has found room for emotion. Logical language has been replaced by an emotive idiom. In the novel which follows *Two on a Tower*, Farfrae, one of the main group-two characters, possesses scientific knowledge while at the same time being a successful lover.

Two on a Tower shows that a scientific, logical attitude to life does not necessarily lead to disaster. It is essential, however, that the individual appreciates the importance of both the intellectual and the affective for survival and happiness. For Swithin St. Cleeve it takes almost the entire novel to learn this lesson. The most harmonious and temporally successful characters in the later novels are those who manage the transition to the modern scientific world while maintaining the affective strengths of the traditional society. There are fewer characters in the later novels who are successful in this respect. The final decade of Hardy's novel-writing career reflects a growing fear on Hardy's part that the traditional society will not only ultimately become extinct; before that happens it will be so weakened that the modern predictive society will fail to appreciate and assimilate its strengths before it is too late.

The upper-middle/upper class

The two most important characters in this group are Lady Viviette Constantine and Bishop Helmsdale. There are few moments of joy or tranquillity in Viviette Constantine's life. Her miserable marriage to Sir Blount and her emotional vulnerability lead her into a relationship with Swithin St. Cleeve which has little promise of future happiness owing to substantial differences in age, social standing, character and experience. Lady Constantine is portrayed as a victim of convention: she respects her promise to her husband of living the life of a 'cloistered nun' during his absence even when this is clearly ridiculous, and she consents to marry the Bishop so that her child will be born in wedlock. At the same time the narrator points out that '[h]er instincts did not square well with the formalities of her existence' (vi, 50). At the beginning of the novel her emotions are 'cribbed and confined' (vi, 53). She is 'a woman of bounding intellect and venturesome fancy' (vi, 53) who finds herself imprisoned by an unbearable existence. It seems, however, that her subservience to convention is relatively recent and is not part of her primary habitus: when she and Swithin are trapped in the tower and the rustics are waiting outside she murmurs, '[t]hat envied power of self-control, where is it? That power of concealment which a woman should have – where? To run such risks, to come here alone, – O, if it were known! But I was always so, – always!' (xii, 94). It is this tendency to impetuousness which leads to her marriage to Swithin in the first place.

An equally important part of her nature, however, is her inborn regard for others which causes her to undervalue herself. The narrator reveals some knowledge of

psychology[28] as he explains that this tendency gives rise to a desire for annihilation in moments of despair, when the individual ceases to believe in him- or herself (xxxv, 255). As the novel progresses, Viviette increasingly retreats into the past and into herself. She has lost Swithin, the bulk of her estate as well as her social position in Welland, and she has been forced into marriage with a highly unsuitable partner. She has, however, matured as a result of these experiences. While Swithin is shocked by her altered appearance when he returns from the Cape the narrator remarks that 'the chastened pensiveness of her once handsome features revealed more promising material beneath than ever youth had done' (xli, 311). The age difference between Swithin and Lady Constantine seems greater than ever and this fact blinds Swithin to what the narrator describes as 'the more promising material.' As long as Viviette continues to live in the past and to believe that Swithin will return to her unchanged she has hope. This hope is built on shaky foundations, however, a fact which is underlined by a quotation from the Bible: 'great is thy faith if thou believest a junior lover's love will last five years' (xli, 312, – an echo of Matthew:15. 28).

The scientific and the human meet in the final scene. Swithin is confronted with Lady Constantine's undying love and is initially unable to respond. When he is dismissed, he takes Viviette's words literally and starts to descend the stairs of the tower. He has gained a new insight into human nature while away, however, because he now realises for the first time that Viviette does not always mean what she says, and he returns. The passion he shows comes too late and too fast: '[s]udden joy and despair had touched an over-strained heart too smartly' (xli, 314) and Viviette dies. The past is now a closed chapter with the death of Viviette and the Bishop. The 'bounding tread' of Tabitha Lark as she approaches the tower represents life and the future.

The Bishop's death is not merely a narrative necessity, it symbolises the inadequacy of religion and uncompromising moral standards in a rapidly changing modern society. Bishop Helmsdale does not make his appearance until the middle of the novel. He has an unsympathetic exterior with a 'dark complexion' and is described as 'tall and imposing' in his robes (xxiv, 176). He adopts an analytical approach to his fellow human beings and appears to be more interested in their careers and outward behaviour than in their personalities. His language reflects an interest in philosophical analysis. He regards Swithin as a case rather than a person: he compares him, for example, to a man of genius who fails to gain recognition in his lifetime but who nonetheless must not be classified as 'an instance of wasted material' (xxv, 182).

The Bishop plays two contrasting roles in *Two on a Tower*: he is both the uncompromising religious leader and Viviette Constantine's wooer. When talking to Viviette he laughs and chats gaily and even enjoys a game of bowls on the green. A few

[28] Hardy's knowledge of psychology is clearly apparent in *Jude the Obscure* above all other novels and is discussed below in relation to Jude Fawley's vision of society and knowledge.

minutes later he has regained the familiar 'episcopal countenance': 'the lines of his face were firm; his dark eyes and whiskers were overspread with gravity' and he is compared to an 'evangelised King of Spades come to have it out with the Knave of Hearts' (xxvii, 197). The odds are heavily stacked in the Bishop's favour: he has authority, status and wealth. He stands behind his status and authority as he reprimands Swithin for hiding a lady in his cabin; he considers this to be his right and his duty, which clearly does not extend to investigating the true facts of the situation. The Bishop talks in terms of 'social decorum' and the obligations of the 'ordinance of confirmation';[29] Swithin, on the other hand, shows emotion and regret. Bishop Helmsdale is unable to deal with the situation on a human level and retreats to the security of the vicarage.

The Bishop is equally cold in his courtship of Lady Constantine. Although he smiles and talks cheerfully when in her company it is significant that he makes his first proposal of marriage by letter. He does not offer love, but a chance for Viviette to relieve his 'household loneliness' (xxxi, 227). She is invited to be a 'consort [who] infuses life into episcopal influence and teaching' (xxi, 228). The Bishop admits that his 'habits and experience' prevent him from using the ardent language of a lover. Instead, he tells Viviette that he plans to present her with 'practical rules which I have interested myself in drawing up for our future guidance' (xxxi, 228). When the Bishop discovers that Sir Blount had died more recently than originally believed his response is cold and conventional.

The Bishop believes that Viviette ultimately agrees to be his wife as the result of 'trained logical reasoning' (xxxix, 291): his offer is quite simply a sensible and logical solution to the widow's present situation. While the Bishop could not be expected to understand the real reason for Viviette's acceptance, he is condemned in the reader's eyes for failing to show any real human understanding or pity. He regards himself as 'Heaven's gift'; it is a gift, however, which brings no more happiness to Viviette than her first marriage. The Bishop not only earns the growing disfavour of the reader, he is even criticised by one of his own profession. Parson Torkingham condemns him for arrogance and for not living up to the dignity of the episcopal office. Bishop Helmsdale is a failure both professionally and personally. Only one person courts his favour, Viviette's brother Louis, and this is purely for personal gain. His death passes almost unnoticed and is of little significance except in so far as it affects the lives of Viviette and Swithin.

[29] The importance of the preparation of candidates for confirmation is shown by the records of Samuel Wilberforce (*Oxford Diocesan Papers*), discussed in Brown, *A History of the English Clergy 1800– 1900*, 153–4. Brown states that after 1845 the clergy of the Church of England strove after higher standards of efficiency and that bishops led the way in this process, 146. Brown also refers to Hardy's Bishop Helmsdale, concluding that his 'instincts are generous and his entire character merit [sic] the respect due to a spiritually-minded prelate whose village confirmation was marked by reverence and devotion', 212.

Summary

As Hardy himself stated, science in *Two on a Tower* is much more than 'the mere padding of a romance', it is its 'actual vehicle.'[30] The rustics are excluded from the scientific discussion which pervades the book and it is significant that they are even locked out of the tower in Chapter xiii. When Nat Chapman says that comets only appear for the delight of 'born gentlemen' and not 'folks with ten or a dozen shillings a week', he is expressing in very concrete terms the rustic reaction to modern society. Haymoss Fry and the other rustics accept that science is not for them. This is a given social fact which they never think to challenge. The hysteresis which characterises them thus appears to be partially of their own making. It is society, however, which has both created and promoted this view, to which the rustics are forced to conform; they are unaware that their hysteresis is a social construction which is neither God-given nor irreversible.

The relationship between Swithin St. Cleeve and Lady Constantine explores the conflict between the scientific, rational view of life promoted by the predictive society and the more humane view which characterises traditional society. Swithin is almost totally preoccupied with astronomy for much of the novel. His 'inexorably simple logic' is put down to 'the cruelty of the natural laws' (xli, 312) that he studies. He is thus unable to understand the warmer, less logical nature of Viviette. Swithin matures as the novel progresses, however. There are two major turning points in his life: when he makes his discovery but is beaten to the post by another astronomer and he realises that science is unable to sustain him in despair; and when he studies abroad. While at the Cape Swithin learns that science is no substitute for a loving relationship. He still has a tendency to think too logically, as the final scene on the tower shows, although he ultimately realises his mistake and returns to Viviette. While it is too late for Viviette, the Swithin who has returned to Welland is capable of entering into a relaxed and happy relationship with Tabitha Lark.

Viviette is governed by her emotions, which are directed towards people rather than objects. While her marriage to Sir Blount temporarily stifled the emotional side of her nature, it is clearly ready to re-surface given the right conditions. Viviette cannot understand Swithin's passion for astronomy, particularly when it blinds him to the needs and responses of those around him. Her age and social class are an additional barrier between the couple. Viviette lives in the past, which, once Swithin disappears, constitutes a form of refuge from the turbulence of the present. Where Swithin moves forward, gaining new experience and insight, Viviette is still sitting on the tower at the end of the novel. Life has stood still for her. The human and the scientific meet in her death: 'joy and despair' are juxtaposed with the scientific explanation of 'an over-strained heart' (xli, 314).

[30] Hardy's comment to Edmund Gosse. In Purdy, *Thomas Hardy: A Bibliographical* Study, 44 n.

Bishop Helmsdale has none of the warmth and sympathy of the traditional society nor the rational strength of the modern predictive society. His views are bigoted and admit of no discussion, let alone analysis. As the reader expects, he proves to be an unsatisfactory husband and is even found lacking on the professional level. Viviette is emotionally vulnerable. The Bishop is inadequate because he has little feeling. The only sign of 'colour and animation' (xli, 313) at the end of the novel is Tabitha Lark. She promises to be a good wife, and presumably even stepmother to Viviette's and Swithin's son. The latter is anonymous because he must create a new identity in a new family. The union of Tabitha and Swithin promises to realise in a very literal sense the ideal of 'loving kindness, operating through scientific knowledge' which Hardy offers as a solution for reducing mankind's pain in a rapidly changing modern world.[31]

Science and emotion struggle for ascendancy in *Two on a Tower*. Neither is ultimately the victor as the one is seen to require the other to ensure successful adaptation to modern predictive society. The rustics form no part of this compromise and are thus consistently placed on the periphery of the action. The novel which follows *Two on a Tower* shows science working in a more down-to-earth situation. Donald Farfrae harnesses science in the service of man. Science and technology are closely linked. Theory becomes practice in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and is seen to have a benevolent as well as a sinister side.

THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE

The manuscript of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was finished by April 17, 1885. Serial publication began on 2 January 1886, and the two-volume first edition was brought out on 10 May 1886.[32] The novel was written in Dorchester, to which Hardy had moved in 1883 and where he was to live for the rest of his life, apart from the regular periods of residence in London. In July 1883 Hardy published his essay on 'The Dorsetshire Labourer', which commemorates the passing of a traditional way of life as well as recognises the need for improvements in the working conditions of rural labourers. In this essay Hardy makes a clear distinction between unskilled labourers and skilled artisans. Hardy's sympathies were, as stated earlier, clearly with the latter, who formed the major part of the population of Dorchester (the Casterbridge of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*). At the same time, Hardy revealed a regret that the countryside was being invaded by crude, commercial values which originated in the new industrialism and which destroyed the coherence of traditional society as well as its intimate knowledge of local history, traditions and customs.

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[31] This phrase occurs in Hardy's 'Apology' to *Late Lyrics and Earlier* (1922). *The Complete Poems*, 556–562 (558).

[32] Hardy's house at Max Gate was under construction during the writing of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*.

The Mayor of Casterbridge represents the social and economic life of Casterbridge and the intimate relationship between the county town and the surrounding countryside. The main features of Henchard's character are revealed in his relationship with the town and in his changing status from labourer to mayor and finally to labourer again. Attention is centred on groups one and two. Group three is not represented; the publisher's reader, James Payn (of Smith, Elder) actually expressed reservations on this point, believing that such an omission would reduce reader appeal.

As Laurence Lerner and John Holmstrom show,[33] *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was generally unfavourably compared with *Far From the Madding Crowd*. The anonymous reviewer for the *Saturday Review*,[34] for example, described the story as 'very slight and devoid of interest.' The main characters are described as unrealistic and unconvincing. Praise was, however, given for Hardy's portrayal of the rustic, his 'ways of thought, and his mode of speech.' Hardy is said to have a 'keen insight into the character of the rural poor.' R. H. Hutton of *The Spectator*[35] concentrated on the portrayal of Michael Henchard which he remarked is characterised by 'a curiously strong impression of reality, as well as of homely grandeur.' While Hutton criticised Hardy for introducing what he called a misleading 'fashionable pessimism' into the character of Henchard, he also concluded by reiterating his praise of Hardy's 'grandeur of conception', which he likened to that of Sir Walter Scott.

Most modern Hardy critics regard *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as one of Hardy's major novels. Roy Morrell's analysis of the novel is particularly important for the subject of the present book.[36] Comparing the characters of Henchard and Farfrae, he writes:

> Henchard fails to cope with circumstances, nature, the chances of changing rural conditions. Farfrae shows what can be done with exactly the same set of circumstances. But he is not just a foil. He not only *shows* Henchard, but also provides him with the means of *doing*: of fulfilling his great possibilities. Hardy is not just condemning the old (in Henchard) and advocating the new (in Farfrae), or vice versa. He was exploring the possibilities of helping the other, and suggesting that the new might help the old to survive.

Morrell adds an important footnote to the above comment in the form of a note written by Hardy in February 1881, approximately three years before *The Mayor of Casterbridge* was begun: 'Conservatism is not estimable in itself, nor is change, or Radicalism. To conserve the existing good, to supplant the existing bad by good, is to act on a true political principle, which is neither Conservative nor Radical.'[37] This

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[33] *Thomas Hardy and His Readers. A Selection of Contemporary Reviews* (London: The Bodley Head, 1968), 49–54.

[34] 29 May, 1886. Lerner and Holmstrom, *Thomas Hardy and His Readers*, 49–50.

[35] 5 June, 1886. Lerner and Holmstrom, *Thomas Hardy and His Readers*, 51–53.

[36] *Thomas Hardy. The Will and the Way*. All quotations are from p. 25.

[37] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 152.

is one of the underlying principles of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The new scientific methods of Farfrae replace the rule-of-thumb methods of Henchard. New technology and ideas come from outside Casterbridge and indeed it is a well-known historical fact that labour was imported into the county from the north during the mid-nineteenth century. Roy Morrell rightly takes John Holloway to task when the latter claims that Henchard's course is consistently downward. Morrell concludes his argument with the all-important observation that '[i]t is only when Henchard's way of life *rejects* the new, and continues to reject it, that it is defeated.'

Noorul Hasan[38] discusses *The Mayor of Casterbridge* against the background of Ferdinand Tönnies' *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (*Community and Association*), which was published just one year after *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and which is briefly discussed in the introduction. Hasan argues that Henchard's character is rooted in the Gemeinschaft (a harmonious society bound together by language, traditions, customs and beliefs – what I have called the traditional society), while Casterbridge is part of the newer Gesellschaft (a less homogeneous, more mobile community growing out of business, travel and science – what is referred to in this book as the predictive society). As Hasan points out, Tönnies made it clear that two such contrasting versions of society rarely exist in their pure forms: 'But fictional societies, I think, should lend themselves better to Tönnies's categories for they too, like the ideal types of the sociologist, are mental constructs reflecting certain social-moral attitudes.' As the following discussion shows, Henchard and Farfrae represent two clearly differentiated societies: Henchard belongs to the old Casterbridge, Farfrae to the new. The new Casterbridge reflects a modern view of change: '[t]he concept of a static world in which changes are only superficial was being replaced by the evolutionary concept of change as ultimate reality.'[39]

As Merryn Williams has pointed out, the very title of *The Mayor of Casterbridge: The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge. A Story of a Man of Character* illustrates the extent to which the social and the personal are fused in the novel.[40] This applies not only to Henchard, however, but to all the characters to a greater or lesser extent, including the rustics. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, as in the earlier novels, it is made abundantly clear that the individual's habitus is the result of a combination of social and personal characteristics; what becomes particularly apparent in the novel, however, is that social changes require adaptation not only in terms of action but also of attitude. Such adaptation requires deep-rooted change: survival calls for wholehearted conviction, a fundamental commitment to the new.

In certain important respects Casterbridge was ideally suited to be a centre of change. Dorchester farmers with large holdings on the chalk hills surrounding the

[38] *Thomas Hardy. The Sociological Imagination*, 58–81.
[39] Jean R. Brooks, *Thomas Hardy. The Poetic Structure* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1971), 196.
[40] *Thomas Hardy and Rural England* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 146.

town were known for their willingness to try new methods and machinery and to take risks. As Barbara Kerr writes, 'readiness to experiment and the nature of the chalkland terrain were encouraging to contractors and engineers, many of whom made Dorchester their centre, bringing both lustre and profit to the county town.'[41]

At the same time, it should be pointed out that the opportunities for adaptation are limited in a society which is as primitively hierarchic as that of Casterbridge. While Casterbridge may indeed have some of the qualities of Gesellschaft it is also, as John Paterson shows, based on an 'agrarian economy, with its merchant aristocracy and its rude population of mechanics, artisans, and laborers.'[42] While the commercial activity and invasion of technology represented by, among other things, the seed-drill suggest a more modern society, the rigid social divisions which characterise the town are those of an earlier and more primitive community. Old customs are still apparent in the town, and simple justice in the form of skimmington rides is still practised by the inhabitants of Peter's Finger.[43]

The rustics

The Mayor of Casterbridge represents the culmination of two basic strengths in Hardy's writing: the presentation of a confined, homogeneous community which is closely knit and in which all aspects of its social and economic life are displayed; and the positioning of that community at the very centre of a clearly conceived Wessex.[44] Millgate states that by the time Hardy came to write *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, he had learnt that

> his popularity depended largely upon his comic rustics, and he had managed to squeeze a few of them into almost every book. But he also knew that they only really 'worked' as elements within a larger fiction when presented as part of a community to which they naturally and inevitably belonged.

The rustics of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* belong to Casterbridge, where they are pictured doing business with one another, going to church, attending local festivities such as dances, observing the Mayor on official occasions, discussing topics of the day such as the quality of wheat and wheat prices,[45] and working in paid employ-

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[41] *Bound to the Soil*, 229. Farms on chalk-derived soils were frequently over 500 acres and were thus larger than those in other parts of the county. The financial resources of such farmers were therefore greater and they were in a better position to experiment than smaller farmers with less financial security.

[42] *'The Mayor of Casterbridge* as Tragedy', in *Hardy. A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Guerard, 101.

[43] For an interesting discussion of skimmington rides, local justice and the rôle of the village pub, see Mick Reed, 'The Peasantry of Nineteenth-Century England: a Neglected Class?', *History Workshop Journal* 18 (1984), 66. Ralph Elliott points out that a skimmington ride took place in Whitchurch Canonicorum, west of Dorchester, in 1884, while Hardy was working on *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. See 'Hardy and the Middle Ages', *The Thomas Hardy Journal* VI. 2 (June 1990), 97–108 (104). Bettey also describes skimmington rides in *Rural Life in Wessex*, 10–12.

[44] Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. A Biography*, 249.

[45] After the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, grain prices fell sharply between 1848 and 1852, and grain imports rose substantially between the 1850s and 1870s. Generally, however, the price of wheat remained stable between the 1850s and 1880s. For a discussion of grain prices during the mid-nineteenth century, see J. D. Chambers and G. E. Mingay, *The Agricultural Revolution 1750–1880* (London: Batsford, 1966), 157–9.

ment. Even those rustics who find employment outside Casterbridge are still obliged to come to the town to do business or give account of their actions, as demonstrated by the trial of the furmity woman.

The rustics are an integral part of everyday Casterbridge life. The townsfolk themselves are intimately connected with the rustics because 'every fluctuation in the rustic's condition [...] affected their receipts as much as the labourer's' (ix, 70); and the topics of conversation at professional families' dinner parties were 'corn, cattle-disease, sowing and reaping, fencing and planting' (ix, 70). The basic honesty of the town and its low rate of crime are related to the influence of the business practices of the 'yeomen, farmers, dairymen, and townsfolk' who market their wares and livestock in Casterbridge. The very walk of these people reflects 'honest homeliness' (xx, 154). Such standards of honesty belong to the countryside and are contrasted with those of the manufacturing towns, which are described as 'foreign bodies set down, like boulders on a plain, in a green world with which they have nothing in common' (ix, 70).

The rustics are in harmony with nature as well as dependent on its whims. They have a very special relationship with the weather, for example. The farmer is described as a 'flesh-barometer' who puts out special feelers to the sky and wind (xxvi, 211). He is only interested in the climate in and around Casterbridge: all other areas are a 'matter of indifference' to him (xxvi, 211). The narrator explains that the rustics' worship of the god of the weather differentiates them from 'modern' man, who is, he says, largely unaffected by changes in weather.

Few rustics are singled out for individual treatment. They are frequently presented as members of a group. They voice general rather than individual opinions about religion, science and practical everyday problems. The rustics are creatures of habit: work, leisure and church attendance are governed by strict routine. The sermon is regarded as 'a scientific feat or performance' which has little to do with their everyday lives but which provides a useful topic of conversation different from the everyday conversation of the remaining days of the week.[46] Drinking is also part of the rustic's routine: half a pint of liquor is consumed on Sundays, which is drunk out of identical cups provided by the landlord of the local pub. Only very special occasions are allowed to upset routines, and when it happens it is just for a brief period of time: change is clearly associated with risk. On the visit of the King, for example, Solomon Longways, Christopher Coney, Buzzford and the other rustics 'showed their sense of the occasion by advancing their customary eleven o'clock pint to half-past-ten; from which they found a difficulty in getting back to the proper hour for several days' (xxxvii, 304). There was no question of changing drinking times on a permanent basis.

[46] Hammond describes various attempts in the nineteenth century to adapt sermons to the needs and interests of the country population, adaptations which also involved linguistic considerations, e.g. the use of words of Anglo-Saxon origin rather than Latin. See *The Parson and the Victorian Parish*, Chapter 5, 'The sermon.'

The rustics value inner peace and harmony above wealth. When Farfrae takes over Henchard's business, for example, Abel Whittle is paid a shilling a week less but observes, 'I'm the richer man; for what's all the world if yer mind is always in a larry?' (xxxi, 255). The rustics are clearly not part of the modern commercial world and its worship of money. Their values belong to a past time, when peace and fidelity were valued more highly than success. It is thus no surprise that Abel is the one person who remains faithful to Henchard despite the latter's cruel treatment of him. Henchard is surprised at Abel's loyalty. For Abel, the matter is simple, as is his manner of expression, which reflects the concrete, non-analytical mode of the restricted code: 'I see things be bad with 'ee, and ye were kind-like to mother if ye were rough to me, and I would fain be kind-like to you' (xlv, 383). At the same time, Abel is not sentimental. His description of Henchard's death is very matter-of-fact and to the point. His attempts to assist Henchard are dictated by fidelity rather than compassion.

The rustics have no illusions about life. They accept inequalities as a natural part of existence. Those who have fallen on hard times and who have a wider experience of people outside their own local community are even a little cynical. The furmity woman, for example, has a 'cosmopolitan largeness of idea' which enables her to defend herself in court (xxxvi, 297). She has known 'the town's taste' as well as 'the country's taste'(iii, 24). Life has taught her that 'the world's no memory; straightforward dealings don't bring profit – 'tis the sly and the underhand that get on in these times' (iii, 24). The rustics whose experience is limited to Casterbridge, on the other hand, show no bitterness: they are in harmony with their environment and their fellow human beings.They share a common understanding and a language adapted to the particular demands of doing business in Casterbridge:

> [h]ere the face, the arms, the hat, the stick, the body throughout spoke equally with the tongue. To express satisfaction the Casterbridge market-man added to his utterance a broadening of the cheeks, a crevicing of the eyes, a throwing back of the shoulders, which was intelligible from the other end of the street (ix, 69).

The language of the rustic makes a basis for mutual sympathy and is contrasted with the 'chicanery, subterfuge' (ix, 70) which exists elsewhere. Extra-verbal channels have a special importance in a society dominated by practical business matters. The Casterbridge rustics have little need of analysis. There is even a suggestion that their communication is in some respects superior to that of the urban dwellers: '[n]ot to hear the words of your interlocutor in metropolitan centres is to know nothing of his meaning' (ix, 69); the rustic suffers from no such restrictions.

The rustics' verbal communication is strewn with metaphors drawn from their concrete everyday experience. When, for example, Susan leaves the furmity tent with the sailor Newsom after the sale of herself and Elizabeth-Jane, one of the rustic witnesses observes that '[w]ell, the woman will be better off [...] For seafaring natures be very good shelter for shorn lambs, and the man do seem to have plenty of money, which is what she's not been used to lately, by all showings' (i, 14). This is

exactly the point, of course. Susan needs above all else security for herself and her daughter.

Money is seen by the rustics as something of consequence which belongs to others. Solomon Longways, for example, expresses no bitterness when he observes that Henchard is 'worth ever so much a minute [...] When a man is said to be worth so much a minute, he's a man to be considered!' (xiii, 96). Longways knows that he is not 'a man to be considered', and has no prospect of ever becoming one. For him money is a rare commodity which should be grabbed if the opportunity presents itself and nobody else is hurt in the process. He thus sees nothing wrong in Christopher Coney's stealing and spending of the four ounce pennies saved by Susan Henchard for placing on her eyes after her death: 'money is scarce, and throats get dry. Why *should* death rob life o' fourpence. I say there was no treason in it' (xviii, 137–8).

It was essential for employers to understand the special qualities and values of the Casterbridge rustics. This is indeed an important difference between Henchard and Farfrae: Henchard makes no attempt to understand his workers and shows little kindness (Abel's mother is an exception); Farfrae expects the rustics to work hard but takes pains to avoid offending or humiliating them. There is some justice in the fact that it is Henchard who employs the one dishonest rustic in the novel, Jopp (who, significantly, comes from outside Casterbridge), and he pays the penalty. While Farfrae is also an outsider, he has numerous redeeming qualities: he represents modern commerce and technology at their best, he respects his workers and he understands his fellow human beings. The rustics recognise these qualities and accordingly transfer their loyalties from Henchard to Farfrae.

The lower/middle class

The Mayor of Casterbridge is above all the story of Henchard's life and character. The majority of the characters are seen in relation to him. Towards the end of Chapter xvii his character is equated with his destiny: '[c]haracter is Fate, said Novalis, and Farfrae's character was just the reverse of Henchard's, who might not inaptly be described as Faust has been described – as a vehement gloomy being who had quitted the ways of vulgar men, without light to guide him on a better way' (131). This is a misquotation from Novalis' (Friedrich von Hardenburg's) play *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. The actual words read in translation, 'Fate and Character are the same conception.' It is likely that Hardy found the quotation in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, where it is rendered as 'character is destiny.'[47] W. E. Yuill shows that George Eliot goes on to deny the truth of the saying. More important, however, is Yuill's explanation of the word 'Character': 'Novalis is thinking less of the dramatic interaction of personality and circumstance than of some cosmic design of which the indi-

[47] W. E. Yuill, '"Character is Fate": A Note on Thomas Hardy, George Eliot and Novalis', *Modern Language Review* LVII (1962), 401.

vidual and the world around him are aspects or manifestations.'[48] The events of Henchard's life are very much portrayed as the consequence of genetic and environmental factors. At the same time his fate seems to be sealed: he enters and leaves the novel as a labourer on the road with neither home nor employment and with all his worldly possessions on his back.

John Holloway suggests that Henchard's course in the novel is basically downward: his ideas and values are consistently challenged and prove inadequate as they confront modern society. This is, Holloway explains, the essence of Hardy's moral insight in the novel.[49] As evidence of this general trend Holloway cites Hardy's frequent use of animal metaphors when describing Henchard. He draws the conclusion that by the end of the novel Henchard becomes domesticated, like the lion whose fangs are drawn and who is no longer able to bite. While Holloway admittedly differentiates between metaphor and literal truth, his view of Henchard is too simplistic: it suggests a uniform process of annihilation with few if any intervening periods of compromise or modification of behaviour. Holloway's general conclusion is, nonetheless, of considerable importance to the present discussion, even though it does not go quite far enough: '[t]he work of his [Hardy's] novel, focused in the metaphor of man and beast, is to depict and narrate the conquest and domestication of one way of life.'[50] The traditional way of life is not tamed, it is replaced by the scientific/technological predictive society represented by Donald Farfrae. Henchard represents the old, Farfrae the new.[51] The important thing is not to establish that the old has been replaced by the new, but to understand exactly why a character such as Michael Henchard has no future in modern society. *The Mayor of Casterbridge* suggests a variety of reasons for Henchard's predicament; his animal instincts are only one.

It seems that Hardy's view of Henchard became more complex as he revised the text of the novel. Hardy gradually reduced the amount of dialect spoken by Henchard, and a heavily dialectal speech made by him as mayor was removed from Chapter v. Patricia Ingham deduces from these facts that 'Hardy's conception of the character shifted somewhat, and wishing to build up Henchard's stature in order to make him more of a tragic figure, he felt the need to stress his provincialism less, particularly when showing him at the height of his success.'[52] It can be argued that Henchard's tragedy is of a personal rather than a social nature; his loss of Elizabeth-Jane, for example, is infinitely more serious than his decline in social position. By reducing the dialectal element in Henchard's speech Hardy appears to have brought the Mayor more into line with his improved social position. The latter is not, however, in harmony with his rustic roots,

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[48] Ibid., 401.

[49] *The Chartered Mirror*, 102.

[50] Ibid., 104.

[51] Henchard is in this respect similar to John Gourlay of John Douglas's *The House with the Green Shutters* (London, 189?). Gourlay is described as 'owre dour to abandon the auld way', 11.

[52] 'Dialect in the Novels of Hardy and George Eliot', in *Literary English Since Shakespeare* ed. by Watson, 354.

which are being denied in this essential respect. It is not just that the picture of Henchard has become more complex; greater emphasis is placed on an important source of conflict inherent in Henchard's position.

Henchard is a man of extremes. His social position changes from skilled craftsman to successful businessman and mayor to labourer with no employment prospects. He is presented variously as an irresponsible wife-seller, a respected public official with the finest property in town and an unemployed corn dealer living in the working-class area of Casterbridge. Henchard is also a man of extremes when it comes to personality. He is clearly not willing to compromise, a fact which is emphasised in the use of a metaphor from physics: 'the momentum of his character knew no patience' (xxvii, 219). His vow of abstinence is a drastic response to an ill-considered decision to sell his wife and daughter to Newsom. Henchard regards himself as a man of the 'sort' likely to make mistakes. Deep down he is a man of action whose outward appearance disguises the 'unruly volcanic stuff' (xvii, 129) which makes up his true nature.

Counterbalancing his tendency to act in a violent and unpremeditated manner, however, is Henchard's peasant fatalism: '[h]is usual habit was not to consider whether destiny were hard upon him or not – the shape of his ideas in cases of affliction being simply a moody "I am to suffer, I perceive"' (xix, 143). Misery teaches Henchard 'nothing more than defiant endurance of it' (xix, 144). In this way his suffering is reduced to bearable proportions.

Henchard also seeks security in superstition. The narrator's explanation of this fact indicates an interest in psychology: it is, he suggests, a common feature with headstrong characters. Henchard is prone to 'isolated hours of superstition' when depressed. At such times 'all his practical largeness of view had oozed out of him' (xxvii, 219).

Henchard acts by instinct rather than reasoning. This is particularly clear when Farfrae starts to show an interest in Elizabeth-Jane. This gives rise to the following narratorial comment:

> Thereupon promptly came to the surface that idiosyncrasy of Henchard's which had ruled his courses from the beginning and *had mainly made him what he was.* Instead of thinking that a union between his cherished stepdaughter and the energetic thriving Donald was a thing to be desired for her good and his own, he hated the very possibility (xlii, 350, my italics).

Henchard makes no attempt to rationalise the situation or to study advantages and disadvantages. He is continually torn between different primary emotions: violent action, hate, love, pessimism, superstition and general weariness of the world. The result is that his actions are inconsistent and unpredictable. At the same time as he needs someone to love, he progressively isolates himself from those closest to him. He is his own worst enemy and does not realise this until fairly late in the novel.

Critics have tended to concentrate on Henchard's personal and social decline and

have failed to see that he does in fact change by the end of the novel. He finally comes to understand that it is his own pride and not the jealousy or ambition of others that has driven him away from Casterbridge. He realises, albeit too late, that he does indeed love Elizabeth-Jane: his feelings are far from tamed; they are purified and strengthened, and are ultimately selfless.[53] Throughout the novel Henchard develops an increasingly clear understanding of his own failings. His weaknesses are those of the traditional society from which he originates and to which he finally returns at the end of the novel. Like the rustics around him he places his trust in the wisdom of the rustic community as represented by Conjuror Fall rather than in scientific knowledge and equipment.[54] Through Henchard and his relationship with Donald Farfrae, the reader gains a good insight into why the traditional society could not survive in its present form. Henchard occupies an uneasy position in group two: he proves himself capable of achieving success as a businessman and as a public official, but his success is clearly qualified. This is partly because he rejects the principles of integrity and honesty with which he was brought up; but even more importantly, it is because he shares with the rustics a rule-of-thumb attitude towards life which proves thoroughly inadequate in modern business. Henchard gradually realises that 'strength and bustle' (vii, 55) are no longer sufficient for survival in the modern commercial world: 'judgement and knowledge' are also required (vii, 55). By knowledge Henchard means science. He knows that without Farfrae's technological and mathematical skills his business cannot expand. For Henchard 'penmanship [is] a tantalizing art' (xii, 87). His books are in a muddle and full of 'numerical fogs' which are so severe as 'almost to baffle the Scotchman's perspicacity' (xii, 87). Whereas Henchard relies on his strength and energy and is 'mentally and physically unfit for grubbing subtleties from coiled paper' (xii, 87), Farfrae compensates for his lack of physical strength with mental alertness, technological knowledge and rational thinking.

Henchard and Farfrae are potentially ideal partners, as they complement each other well; but Henchard's above-mentioned 'idiosyncrasy' gradually destroys their relationship. He allows his jealousy to blind him to the advantages of a partnership with Farfrae. Henchard lacks tact and is 'the last man to act stealthily, for good or evil' (xlii, 351): he is clumsy in word and action. Much as he wishes to befriend Farfrae, he sees him as a threat to his own status, veering violently between devotion

[53] Elaine Showalter comes to much the same conclusion, though as a feminist critic she expresses it in feminist terms: 'Henchard's efforts, first to deny and divorce his passional self, and ultimately to accept and educate it, involve him in a pilgrimage of "unmanning" which is a movement towards both self-discovery and tragic vulnerability.' See 'The Unmanning of the Mayor of Casterbridge' in *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy* ed. by Kramer, 101–102. Showalter argues that Henchard is an example of the New Man who is forced to recognise the inadequacy of his own codes through the influence of women.

[54] For an interesting discussion of Henchard's relationship with the Conjuror, see Fisher, *The Hidden Hardy*, 123–126.

and hate. Rosemary Sumner suggests that Hardy's portrayal of Henchard anticipates Lawrence in portraying 'the complex psychological experiences of an inarticulate and apparently simple man.'[55] Henchard is indeed simple in the sense that his emotions move from one extreme to another, and he lacks the ability to analyse and rationalise. His aggressiveness is a reflection of his inability to verbalise his thoughts and bring out the best in those around him. He is very much a man of action rather than words. The first words he speaks in the novel are representative of his attitude that language is a purely practical tool on which it is unnecessary to waste any subtlety: four words – 'Any trade doing here?'(i, 3) – are considered sufficient to elicit the desired information. When he pleads with Farfrae to stay in Casterbridge he asks 'flat and plain' (ix, 72). He fails to make it clear exactly *why* Farfrae should stay and does not attempt to justify his appeal in any way.

As the tension grows between Henchard and Farfrae, Henchard's lack of ability to use language to smooth over differences becomes increasingly apparent. Language becomes a tool of threat rather than conciliation; it is, for example, Henchard's clumsy and petulant pronouncement that 'Mr Farfrae's time as my manager is drawing to a close' (xvi, 123) which sets in train the series of events that eventually lead to Farfrae's taking over Henchard's business.

Henchard is equally clumsy with Elizabeth-Jane. Language becomes a source of alienation and actually forms one of the major areas of disagreement between the two. Despite the fact that Henchard himself uses dialect when talking to his workmen and to Farfrae, he severely criticises Elizabeth-Jane for 'her occasional pretty and picturesque use of dialect words – those terrible marks of the beast to the truly genteel' (xx, 148). On such occasions Henchard shows no wish to discuss the matter. His language is vehement and offensive and relies on the local, concrete images of the restricted-code user: 'Good God, are you only fit to carry wash to a pig-trough, that ye use such words as those?' (xx, 148). When Henchard criticises Elizabeth-Jane he is really criticising himself. He is painfully conscious of his own origins and knows that his 'accents and manner' (xxv, 202) are inadequate when in the presence of a lady such as Lucetta Templeman, for example. His language becomes a source of internal conflict as he realises the importance of being able to express himself in all situations and as he notes his inability to do so. This handicap remains with Henchard until his death. Whereas he gradually learns to curb his aggression and to understand the true value of Elizabeth-Jane, he never acquires the ability to express himself adequately in words or in writing. When he returns for Elizabeth-Jane's wedding and pleads with her not to give all her thought to Newsom, he sounds like a rejected child who is blind to all others but himself. He does not enlighten Elizabeth-Jane about his motives. The narrator explains that this is due in part

[55] *Thomas Hardy. Psychological Novelist*, 80.

to the fact 'that he did not sufficiently value himself to lessen his sufferings by strenuous appeal or elaborate argument' (xliv, 377). It is also, of course, because he finds it difficult to verbalise thoughts and feelings.

His last words as recorded in his will are like the very first ones he speaks at the beginning of the novel; they are a reminder that he is a man of action who has little time for subtleties of thought or word. The directions, with their misspellings and uncompromising presentation, are, as Elizabeth-Jane understands all too well, 'a piece of the same stuff that his whole life was made of' (xlv, 384–5), and they should thus be taken seriously however inappropriate they may seem.

Henchard has none of the advantages of modern education. For this he pays a heavy price both commercially and in his relations with others. Even if he is a 'changed man' (xlv, 380) by the end of the novel and learns to love Elizabeth-Jane for who she is, and even if he has tasted success in the past, he clearly has no place in modern society. He temporarily manages to transcend the disadvantages of his origins and become a successful member of group two – but for a limited period only. When circumstances change on the arrival of Farfrae he shows his inability to adapt. He fights against change with a passion that precludes all rational response. In the modern world it is not physical strength and aggression which count, but rational analysis, logical response, and the ability to compromise. Henchard is successful as long as Casterbridge lives in the past. When modern technology and science become part of everyday life his days are numbered. Michael Henchard may be termed a psychological study which takes advantage of modern scientific insight to reveal the weaknesses of the traditional society.

Conversely, Farfrae embodies the strengths of the modern predictive society. His success as a businessman and as a lover derives from his ability to combine the rational elements of the predictive society with the affective strengths of the traditional one.[56] He is Henchard's superior in everything but physical strength, which is in no way decisive. Farfrae is an agriculturalist, but of the modern kind: he understands chemistry, machinery and elementary economics. Barbara Kerr points out that for Dorset families Scotland was associated with progress and profitability.[57] Farfrae grasps opportunities as they arise, seeing them as acts of Providence which should not be ignored (when he finally gives in to Henchard's entreaties, for example, and becomes his manager, he responds with the words, 'Providence! Should anyone go against it?', ix, 73). This is not the depressed, moody fatalism of Henchard: it reflects an optimistic belief in the future based on a determination to take advantage of opportunities and a willingness to create openings where none present themselves. Even when disappointment strikes, he remains calm and never descends

[56] According to Jean Brooks, Farfrae maintains a 'delicate balance between humanity and business. It is in the market place, appropriately, that he shows respect for the family unit of the old shepherd as well as for the revolutionary seed-drill.' See *Thomas Hardy. The Poetic Structure*, 208.

[57] *Bound to the Soil*, 78.

into 'the blackness of hell' (xii, 90) which Henchard experiences in similar circumstances. When Henchard dismisses him, for example, his 'native sagacity' (xvii, 131) allows him to see that the town is large enough for the two of them. As long as Casterbridge offers opportunities Farfrae will stay.

Farfrae has a deep-rooted desire to understand people and things. Originally named Alan Stansbie, he is, as his name suggests, a northerner who has 'the wistfulness of a Scot, "far frae hame".'[58] Farfrae breathes new life into Casterbridge. Although he is an outsider, he manages to become an integral part of the Casterbridge community: 'he is *for* the agricultural community, not a disrupter; he holds a hope of renovation in his skills and intelligence.'[59] He wins the support of all classes by dint of his outgoing nature, charm (which is particularly appreciated by the women) and fair dealing in business and human relations. He supports the weak, such as Abel Whittle, and even shows consideration for Henchard by attempting to start him up in a new business as well as offering him accommodation in his old house. A rational and analytical attitude does not lead to inhumanity in Farfrae as it does in a number of Hardy's other characters. He is a mixture of 'hyperborean crispness, stringency, and charm, as of a well-braced musical instrument' (xxiii, 180–1). He can act impulsively and unfairly, but he is also 'one of those men upon whom an incident is never absolutely lost': he has a tendency to revise impressions 'from a subsequent point of view' (xxxiv, 276) and to learn by experience.

The rational and the human are finely balanced in Farfrae. This is clearly apparent in his language. When he discusses the properties of corn and the uses of mechanical equipment, for instance, he skilfully combines scientific fact with the benefits for mankind. When he restores Henchard's corn he takes pains to inform him about Nature's laws without using terms or describing processes which he knows Henchard will not understand; at the same time he shows respect by addressing the mayor as 'sir' and finishes on a note which expresses genuine warmth and generosity:

> Quite enough restored to make good seconds out of it [...] To fetch it back entirely is impossible; Nature won't stand so much as that, but heere you go a great way towards it. Well, sir, that's the process; I don't value it, for it can be but of little use in countries where the weather is more settled than in ours; and I'll be only too glad if it's of service to you (vii, 53).

In a similar way, he avoids technical explanations when discussing the seed-drill with Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane. He introduces a biblical parable (the sower) to explain the principle of the machine, which is quite simply to maximise efficiency and min-

[58] In Elliott, *Thomas Hardy's English*, 298.

[59] J. C. Maxwell, 'The "Sociological" Approach to *The Mayor of Casterbridge*', in *Imagined Worlds. Essays on some English Novels and Novelists in Honour of John Butt* ed. by Maynard Mack and Ian Gregor (London: Methuen, 1968), 228.

imise wastage.[60] Farfrae explains that change is a necessity. He does not advocate it for its own sake but adds 'apologetically' that 'the machines are already very common in the East and North of England' (xxiv, 194). Farfrae welcomes change when he sees that it fulfils a useful purpose. Henchard, on the other hand, rejects it out of hand ("tis impossible it should act' he says without in fact having the remotest understanding of the function of the drill; xxiv, 193).[61]

Like Swithin St. Cleeve in *Two on a Tower*, Farfrae has the scientist's tendency to take things literally. He finds it difficult to accept general statements, and his response to Lucetta's comment that 'Scotchmen are always lucky' is typical: '[n]o, not always! [...] I know many who have not been so! There was Sandy Macfarlane, who started to America to try his fortune, and he was drowned; and Archibald Leith, he was murdered! And poor Willie Dunbleeze – they fell into bad courses, and went the way of all such!' (xxxiv, 278). Characteristically, Farfrae follows this statement with a comprehensive description of his regret that he has lost the friendship and respect of Henchard. His regret is emphasised by the use of Scottish dialect in such phrases as 'couldna sing to-night' and 'cannet see a reason for the whole intensity of what he feels.'

Farfrae knows when to give way to feeling and when to allow himself to be ruled by insight. He gradually ceases to regret Henchard's animosity and resolves to concentrate on his own career and marriage. This same process is repeated when Lucetta dies. He does not allow himself to wallow in misery; his insight and powers of logical thinking allow him to cast off 'the dead blank which his loss threw about him. He could not but perceive that by the death of Lucetta he had exchanged a looming misery for a simple sorrow' (xlii, 348). He recognises that past history would eventually have caught up with her and destroyed any hopes of future happiness.

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[60] For a short description of the evolution of the seed drill, see Overton, *Agricultural* Revolution in England,122. The earliest seed drill, invented by Jethro Tull in 1731, 'used only 30 per cent of the normal seed requirement' (122). A report on the exhibition of machines at the Royal Agricultural Society's show at Bristol in 1842 noted that '[d]rills have already penetrated into districts where, three years since, their purpose, and even the name of the implement, were scarcely known.' See 'Arable Farming. Farming practices' in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, volume vi, 1750 –1850 ed. by Mingay, 288. By the middle of the century, seed drills 'were now recognized as efficient implements, adaptable to most types of seed, able to distribute seed with a fair amount of accuracy, and often capable of distributing artificial manures as well.' See Jonothan Brown and H.A. Beecham, 'Implements and machines' in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, volume vi, 1750 –1850, 305. Dorset readers of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* would have remembered the introduction of Francis Eddison's steam plough in August 1870 and the establishment of the Fordington Works in Dorchester. Although the latter proved to be an unsuitable site, contemporary readers would, with the benefit of hindsight, have understood the importance of the arrival of new technology. See Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, for a description of the establishment of the steam ploughing works at Dorchester (238–244).

[61] Again, Henchard may be compared with John Gourlay of *The House with the Green Shutters*. The narrator explains that John's 'lack of understanding made his affectation of contempt the easier. A Man can never sneer at a thing which he really understands. Gourlay, understanding nothing, was able to sneer at everything', 23.

Ironically, the one key to happiness for both Henchard and Farfrae is Elizabeth-Jane. Significantly, it is Farfrae who first realises this and takes the appropriate steps to win her affection. By the time Henchard appreciates the value of his step-daughter it is already too late: Farfrae dances with joy at his wedding; Henchard leaves the house, rejected by the one human being whose affection he still desires.

Elizabeth-Jane voices the views of the narrator. She thirsts for knowledge; her greatest desire is 'to see, to hear, and to understand' (iv, 28). She possesses 'great natural insight' (xiv, 99) as a result of reading. She initially lacks 'learning; accomplishments' (xiv, 99), however. These she gradually acquires by remaining on the periphery and observing 'from afar, like the evangelist who had to write it down' (xxvi, 208). She lacks the graces of Lucetta Templeman, but in her 'general vision she seemed more of the sage' (xxii, 172).

Suffering and poverty teach Elizabeth-Jane how to make the most of opportunities. While she is being rejected by Henchard, she is building up a new existence of her own surrounded by books and knowledge. When she realises that she is apparently unable to win Henchard's affection, she takes the opportunity offered by Lucetta Templeman. When the latter dies, she allows Farfrae to help her increase her knowledge still further by purchasing the books which she cannot afford to buy herself. She harbours no bitterness against the man who once abandoned her for another and takes the opportunity to gain the happiness and security which she has lacked all her life. The secret of Elizabeth-Jane's success is apparent to the reader from an early stage. It is reinforced at the end of the novel with the aid of a metaphor from science (the one area, interestingly, that Elizabeth-Jane appears to show no interest in). The passage deserves quoting once more:

> the finer movements of her nature found scope in discovering to the narrow-lived ones around her the secret (as she had once learnt it) of making limited opportunities endurable;[62] which she deemed to consist in the cunning enlargement, by a species of microscopic treatment, of those minute forms of satisfaction that offer themselves to everybody not in positive pain; which, thus handled, have much of the same inspiriting effect upon life as wider interests cursorily embraced (xlv, 285–6).

Elizabeth-Jane finally understands that a maximum use of opportunity may produce happiness and reverse the fortunes of one who had once believed 'that happiness was but the occasional episode in a general drama of pain' (286). *The Mayor of Casterbridge* does not end on a depressing note or express a generally pessimistic view of life. Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane are free to build a new future together undisturbed by the past. Both have proved themselves able to adapt and take advantage of

[62] Jean Brooks uses the expression to 'make limited opportunities endurable' in connection with the building up of 'simple eternal values' as reflected in the language of the rustics. See *Thomas Hardy. The Poetic Structure*, 174. Here it is a question of a more general survival skill related not specifically to language but to all aspects of life.

new ideas. Farfrae's combination of rational/scientific and humane qualities ensure that he will prove a good husband financially as well as personally.

Summary

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* the reader's attention is focused on the careers and fates of Henchard, Farfrae and Elizabeth-Jane. With the exception of Jopp the rustics have little impact on the action. Their knowledge of the world outside Casterbridge is severely limited. They share an intuitive understanding of their environment and one another's needs which neither requires analytical skills nor analytical language. The rustics accept their situation because they can conceive of no other. They see no reason to introduce change.

Group two, on the other hand, recognises the need for change and development. Henchard is an exception, and he pays the penalty. His uneducated and rough-and-ready ways prove adequate as long as he does not come in contact with modern scientific developments. When Farfrae enters Casterbridge, everything changes. This does not mean, however, that Henchard is incapable of enjoying success or of learning the error of his ways. His insight comes too late, however. His pride, jealousy, stubbornness and peasant fatalism act as fatal obstacles in both his professional and social life. Still, that is not the whole story, as the emergence of the modern predictive society, for which Henchard is largely unprepared, also plays a vital role. Not so Farfrae, who manages to combine the affective qualities of the traditional society with the rational scientific attitude of the modern predictive society. Farfrae's insight is of an intellectual as well as an emotional nature. He is thus able to take maximum advantage of opportunities in both his professional and emotional life.

Elizabeth-Jane is the one who brings together the lessons of the novel in the final two paragraphs. It is no coincidence that these lessons are presented with the aid of a metaphor from science. Through Elizabeth-Jane the reader observes and assesses. Her judgement is trustworthy because it is based on experience as well as on objective observation. The two final paragraphs of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* offer hope for the future. The task of modern society is to ensure that opportunities are placed in the way of all social classes and that, once presented, they are utilised to the full. Group two is clearly the most able to take full advantage of modern developments even if its members enjoy very different levels of success. The importance of modern knowledge and rational/scientific thought for survival is further reinforced in the novel which follows *The Mayor of Casterbridge.*

THE WOODLANDERS

The Woodlanders was written at Hardy's new house, Max Gate. He had had a woodland story in mind as early as 1874, but the project was temporarily abandoned in favour of *The Hand of Ethelberta.* Hardy did not start writing *The Woodlanders* until

November 1885. Publication began in *Macmillan's Magazine* in May 1886. The novel was not finished, however, until February 1887. Hardy is known to have devoted considerable thought and energy to *The Woodlanders*.

The Woodlanders was favourably received by a number of critics. The anonymous reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, for example, described it as a 'masterly work' in which every incident and the woodland scenery are skilfully combined to sustain the perfectly constructed story.[63] R. H. Hutton of the *Spectator*[64] described *The Woodlanders* as 'powerful' though also 'disagreeable' with its 'picture of shameless falsehood, levity and infidelity.' He praised Hardy's ability to recreate genuine rural life and cited Melbury as a particularly successful example of a well-drawn rural character. Hardy's descriptions of Nature – the woodlands in particular – are also lyrically praised. William Wallace of the *Academy* congratulated Hardy on producing a moving as well as displeasing novel.[65] Wallace argued that Fitzpiers is one of the most 'exasperating scoundrel[s]' to be found in recent fiction. In Wallace's view, *The Woodlanders* is a melancholy story of Unfulfilled Intention. At the same time it is a magnificent work of art containing numerous passages that provide welcome relief from tragedy, giving instead 'the pensive contentment of a Coleridgean sabbath of the soul.'

Modern critics have observed that Hardy was much interested in painting and sculpture during the period when he was writing *The Woodlanders*,[66] a time when he was also particularly concerned with the nature of reality. Shortly before completing *The Woodlanders*, he noted that 'I don't want to see landscapes, *i.e.*, scenic paintings of them, because I don't want to see the original realities – as optical effects, that is. I want to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imaginings.'[67] On 3 January 1886, just one year before the publication of *The Woodlanders*, Hardy wrote that '[m]y art is to intensify the expression of things, as is done by Crivelli, Bellini, &c. so that the heart and inner meaning is made vividly visible.'[68] While it is possible to see *The Woodlanders* as a realistic novel and even as a kind of companion to such works as George Sturt's *The Wheelwright's Shop*, the novel is essentially about 'the deeper reality' of static rural society in a rapidly changing modern society. Perfect harmony with nature is clearly contrasted with the discord and dislocation produced by modern science as represented by Dr Fitzpiers. At the same time it is science which holds the key to the future.

The Woodlanders depicts a world already extinct. The exact period covered by the

[63] 26 March 1887. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 141–2.
[64] 26 March 1887. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 142–5.
[65] 9 April 1887. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 153–5.
[66] See, for instance, Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography*, 284.
[67] Ibid., 284.
[68] Ibid., 183.

book has been hotly debated. It is impossible to establish categorically, owing to anomalies in the text.[69] The setting is clearly, however, somewhere in the second half of the nineteenth century, between the 1860s and 1870s. As Hardy explains in the 1912 preface: 'the adoption of iron utensils and implements in agriculture, and the discontinuance of thatched roofs for cottages, have almost extinguished the handicrafts classed formerly as "copsework", and the type of men who engaged in them'(4). The setting, Little Hintock, is 'one of those sequestered spots outside the gates of the world where may usually be found more meditation than action, and more listlessness than meditation; where reasoning proceeds on narrow premisses' (i, 8). Like Portland in *The Well-Beloved*, Hintock is a small community with a high incidence of intermarriage. Evolution is slow in such communities in consequence of the restricted scope for differentiation. It is noteworthy that Hardy looks to the past and to a dynasty which has lost its former glory for a metaphor to describe the high rate of intermarriage in Little Hintock: it was 'of Hapsburgian frequency among the inhabitants' (iv, 27). This is an isolated community totally absorbed in its own affairs, where individual human tragedies serve to deflect attention from the basic and most significant tragedy of the village as a whole, its hysteresis. However, Hardy's attitude to Little Hintock is not unambivalent, as Donald Stone suggests.[70] While Hardy is clearly convinced of 'the superiority of the simple and uncultivated life'[71] when it comes to such basic human values as generosity, fidelity and love, there is a clear undertone of disquiet. It is apparent that the rustic secret of happiness – a limitation of aspirations so that thoughts are 'conterminous with the margin of the Hintock woodlands' (xix, 130–1) – is a short-sighted policy which pays little regard to the long-term future. This should not be confused with Elizabeth-Jane's making the most of limited opportunities in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, because the short-sightedness of the Little Hintock community involves a restriction – unconscious though it may be – of opportunity.

The rustics

In contrast with *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, people belonging to group one play a key role in *The Woodlanders*. A number of the primary characters are to be found in this group, including Marty South and Giles Winterborne.[72] There are also a number of minor characters who, though of little significance to the action itself, are extremely

[69] For a summary of this debate see 'The Time-scheme in *The Woodlanders*' at the end of the New Wessex Edition of the novel, 390–392. The exact time scheme is not important: it is the isolation of the village and its separation from modern developments which are the focus of attention.

[70] Donald Stone, *Novelists in a Changing World*, 75.

[71] Ibid., 75.

[72] Although Giles has a small business and can afford to hire Robert Creedle, he is without material security, and his thoughts, values and skills are clearly rustic. He never achieves any status and is more at home with the simple country folk and the wildlife of Little Hintock than in Melbury's parlour or in a hotel or restaurant.

important as examples of an increasingly marginalised form of everyday rustic knowledge. They are part of the society with which Marty and Giles are familiar and with which they feel affinity.

The minor rustics are frequently seen in groups together carrying out some practical task. Little background information is given about these characters. Some, like the hollow-turner, have served a lengthy apprenticeship ('I served that master of mine six years, and three hundred and fourteen days', iv, 30); others come across as unskilled workmen. Occasionally one rustic is singled out for attention. Robert Creedle, for example, is first introduced as a member of a group comprising Melbury's hands and itinerant journey-workers. He is the only one of the group worthy of 'any remark' (iv, 28). All details provided point to the past: he is old, he is wearing a soldier's jacket which has been 'cast-off' and has seen 'hot service.' Words such as 'memoir' and 'chronicles' direct attention towards a former existence which bears little relation to the present. Not even his boots, pocket knife etc. stimulate reflection; Creedle 'thought nothing of their associations or their stories.' They are 'silent testimonies' which have no lesson to teach those who do not ponder their meaning. Creedle is a practical, spontaneous man who is suspicious of all methods which seek to educate individuals beyond the expectations of their environment. This is particularly clear in his remarks about the education of Grace Melbury, which are imbued with the peasant fatalism of Little Hintock. As a restricted-code user, Creedle picks examples which are concrete and personal, and his use of dialect serves to emphasise the distance between himself and those he is describing: 'learning is better than houses and lands. But to keep a maid at school till she is taller out of pattens than her mother was in 'em – 'tis a tempting Providence' (iv, 30).

Creedle's conduct at the Christmas Party suggests a lack of concern for social propriety. His comments at the end, however, when he is discussing Grace with Giles, reveal a profound insight into human nature. Creedle's final comment goes straight to the point and suggests the very essence of Grace's tragedy, although it offers no real explanation: 'she ought to hob-and-nob elsewhere. They shouldn't have schooled her so monstrous high, or else bachelor-men shouldn't give randys, or if they do give 'em, only to their own race' (x, 78). Creedle knows that he belongs to a different 'race' from Grace: he speaks a different language and lives in a different social world. It is perhaps because he is on the periphery of polite society that he is able to view the latter more objectively than Giles himself, who occupies an uneasy position between two different social worlds.

At the same time, Creedle's observations are limited because his attempts to explain events are couched in concrete terms which, though perfectly adequate for presenting the facts, fail to penetrate the root causes and the links between them. Creedle's restricted code gives little scope for causal analysis: he understands the 'what' but not the 'why.' As a result, he identifies Grace as the cause of all the setbacks in Giles's life; his language fails to show *how* this is true, however:

> 'Tis my thoughts – 'tis my thoughts! . . . Yes, ye've lost a hundred load o' timber well seasoned; ye've lost five hundred pound in good money; ye've lost the stone-windered house that's big enough to hold a dozen families; ye've lost your share of half-a-dozen good waggons and their horses; – all lost! – through your letting slip she that was once yer own! (xxv, 167).

Creedle relies more heavily on rhetoric (hence, for example, the anaphora of 'ye've lost') than analysis to give force to his argument. He has already shown that he comprehends, if only to a limited degree, the relative value of property ownership and of education. He does not, however, apply this knowledge in his presentation of Giles's situation after Grace's and Dr Fitzpiers' wedding. Creedle shows himself capable of human sympathy; but his unsubtle listing of the various tragedies of Giles's life only serves to aggravate the situation. Creedle is Giles's closest companion: they work together as a team but are intellectually and linguistically far removed from each other. This is also to a certain extent true of Giles's relationship with Marty South.

Before moving on to a discussion of Marty South – one of the most important rustic characters in the novel – some consideration should be given to the case of Mr and Mrs Melbury. Despite their relatively comfortable position economically, the couple belong – as the following discussion shows – to the rustic group. Of the two, it is Mr Melbury who receives more attention. His wife is an unobtrusive character and is largely silent, though when she does speak she reveals a sound practical attitude to life, as is witnessed very early on in the novel in her conversation with her husband about the possible marriage of Grace and Giles (iii, 20–22). Grace's father is of special interest in the context of the present study because his life and fortunes reveal the importance of the primary habitus. Fred Beaucock, the lawyer, remarks that '[a]n idea implanted early in life is difficult to uproot' (xxxvii, 252). Melbury proves the truth of this maxim. His feelings of shame due to his lack of proper schooling form the basis of his educational plans for Grace and are thus at the root of his ultimate misery and failure as a father. Melbury has a childlike faith in the ability of education to raise social status and thereby increase the individual's chance of happiness. Education has a commercial as well as a social value; this is why Melbury relates how much money he has invested in his daughter's schooling on numerous occasions. Education also holds a particular fascination for Melbury because he regards it as a closed society and actually compares it to the free-masons, from whom he is, of course, excluded.

It is clear that Melbury has very little understanding of the principles and content of a sound education. He does not speak the language of the educated, a fact emphasised in his failure to understand the use of the word 'chattel', which he describes as a 'dictionary word' and hence beyond his range of experience. Melbury is out of touch with the world outside Little Hintock and rarely sees a newspaper (it is also questionable if a man of Melbury's type would have been able to read sufficiently well to have made good use of one had he had access to it).

Melbury clings to tradition; he is, for example, one of the few who still use horse

bells, and his library is full of obsolete books. A 'severely correct man in his habits' (xxxvii, 252), he also exhibits a naïve faith in the value of long-established families such as that of the Fitzpierses. Melbury is unwilling to reflect on, let alone accept, new ideas and values. It thus seems all the more surprising that he is aware of the growing interest in phrenology, and actually employs a phrenologist to examine Grace's head. It is, however, important to note that Melbury accepts the new pseudo-science without question. He is vulnerable because he judges according to his own, unquestioning standards. He is thus deeply shocked when Dr Fitzpiers proves unfaithful to Grace. The idea that a man could commit adultery has never occurred to him because it is beyond his range of experience. It is Melbury's lack of recognition of the possibility which leaves him so unprepared to manage the consequences. He ultimately loses faith in his judgement, 'which he had relied [on] for so many years [and which] seemed recently, like a false companion unmasked, to have disclosed unexpected depths of hypocrisy and speciousness where all had seemed solidity' (xxxi, 210). Melbury's firmness of opinion and values is rooted in his primary habitus; it is based on premisses which bear little relation to his present situation, influenced by the modern ideas and practices introduced by such characters as Dr Fitzpiers and Mrs Charmond. He recognises this fact too late because he is not equipped with the means with which to predict.

This weakness is related to his language. Interestingly, the narrator comments that when Dr Fitzpiers visits the Melbury home he consciously adapts his speech to what he imagines to be the level of thought in a timber merchant's family. As a restricted-code user, Melbury discusses concrete events rather than ideas. He tends to take words at their face value: '[h]ow should I know what folk mean if they don't say?' he asks Giles at the latter's Christmas party. Melbury's language is colourful and down-to-earth, and like many rustics he uses dialect when he wishes to express emotion. An excellent example is when Melbury suggests an explanation of the huntsman's rude behaviour towards Grace:

> I've noticed it many times, that a woman takes her colour from the man she's walking with. The woman who looks an unquestionable lady when she's with a polished-up fellow looks a tawdry imitation article when she's hobbing and nobbing with a homely blade (xii, 85).

The reference to 'imitation article' shows that Melbury is still thinking in terms of the financial/commercial value of social status. He is preoccupied with the idea of appearances and status and does not realise until almost the end of the novel that it is Giles's very homeliness which is most likely to bring Grace happiness.

It is not until the final chapter of the book that Melbury attempts to use language as an aid to analysis and prediction, and then it comes in the form of voiced thoughts rather than dialogue. He knows that the main threat to his daughter's future happiness comes not from social or financial insecurity but from her husband's fickleness:

> Well – he's her husband [...] and let her take him back to her bed if she will! . . . But let her bear in mind that the woman walks and laughs somewhere at this very moment whose neck he'll be coling next year as he does hers tonight; and as he did Felice Charmond's last year; and Suke Damson's the year afore! . . . It's a forlorn hope for her; and God knows how it will end! (xlviii, 335)

At the same time, Melbury also recognises that taking her husband back is Grace's only hope.

Marty South shows a sound common sense and a sensitivity to her environment which Melbury lacks. She embodies the same strong qualities as Giles Winterborne. Critics have generally paid too little attention to the life and character of Marty, who tends to be overshadowed by Giles, Grace and Dr Fitzpiers. Marty's qualities and skills are a vital part of *The Woodlanders*, and it is no coincidence that the surname of the young girl with the beautiful red hair suggests sunlight and growth.[73] Creedle and his friends, Marty and Giles are part of a communal bond which is reflected in work and social life and which is rooted in a harmonious relationship with the environment.[74] Melbury is not part of this group. Neither are groups two and three because they are to a greater or lesser extent alienated from their surroundings. The only real and lasting source of happiness in the isolated community of Little Hintock is a close bonding with the natural environment and its values, a union which is reflected in work as much as it is in social life.

The main feature of the natural environment is the woods. Villages such as Little Hintock developed their own economy on the basis of what Raphael Samuel describes as 'a kind of inverted seasonality of employment.'[75] The woodlands provided ample opportunities for paid employment at times when agriculture offered comparatively few. The two native harvests, fern-cutting and bark-stripping, were autumn and spring events. There was also plenty of employment in the woods during the winter. During the summer, however, there was little to do – the very opposite situation, in other words, to that pertaining to agriculture. The narrator actually alludes to this fact when he explains the working relationship between Melbury and Giles. The latter is more in touch with nature because he not only follows the seasons of the copse-worker but also that of the cider-maker. Little Hintock is thus a special community in which the majority of the inhabitants have a work cycle which runs contrary to that of most agricultural labourers.

Woodland communities such as Little Hintock needed to adapt in order to sur-

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[73] This has been pointed out by, among others, Andrew Enstice, in *Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 103.

[74] This has been noted by Hasan (*Thomas Hardy: The Sociological Imagination*) who suggests, for example, that Marty's taking over the cider-press is an expression of 'the novel's profound belief in the continuing validity of the communal bonds and forms of action' (98).

[75] *Village Life and Labour* ed. by Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 7.

vive.[76] By the 1850s, most of Dorset woodland was man-managed copse in which timber trees were grown with underwood and felled to produce poles, rods and – where oak was concerned – bark for tanning.[77] The inhabitants of Little Hintock are engaged in a trade which is threatened by extinction: reduced tariffs on imports caused a serious decline in the economic value of copses.[78] Instead, the latter gained a new social value in the middle of the century as coverts for landowners' sport.[79] It is significant that little mention is made of this new use of woodland (apart from the already-mentioned incident when Grace and her father meet a member of a hunt while out for a walk); it is the old ways and uses which persist in Little Hintock. The village is thus out of rhythm with the surrounding agricultural communities as well as with changing social and economic values.

The management of woods and coppices was a highly skilled task passed down from generation to generation. West Country woods are much more mixed than those generally found in the south, containing everything from oak, ash, willow, hazel and wych-elm to larch, spruce, pines and beech. It takes considerable expertise to ensure that the correct environment is chosen for each kind of wood and that the latter is cut at the right time, i.e. the correct year depending on the type of wood required and the goods to be produced: '[t]his type of forestry clearly needs an intelligence and care far greater than ranked plantations of spruce or hazel or chestnut that will be felled together.'[80] As the following discussion shows, both Giles Winterborne and Marty South possess this 'intelligence and care' to a degree which is unusual even in woodland villages.

Marty South is first presented in the novel '[w]ith a bill-hook in one hand and a leather glove much too large for her on the other' (ii, 11). The reader's attention is focused on the equipment she needs for making spars (the spicks or broaches used for pegging thatch). Her living-room has been transformed into a place of work. She is described as 'dexterous.' Destiny has ordained that Marty South shall be a manual labourer and not a lady. She accepts her fate and is determined to make the best of

[76] For a description of how woodland was preserved in Britain between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Overton, *The Agricultural Revolution in England*, 90. Overton concludes that 'woodlands were preserved rather than destroyed during these centuries' (90). The problem was how to make woodland management an economically viable venture.

[77] Kerr, *Bound to the Soil*, 150–151.

[78] E.J.T. Collins notes that coppice trades noticeably declined in the second half of the nineteenth century, and particularly after the 1880s, when 'the downward slide was irreversible and [...] depressingly swift.' See 'The Coppice and Underwood Trades', in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, volume vi, 1750–1850 ed. by Mingay, 500.

[79] Ibid., 150–151. It should also be mentioned that game preservation caused underwood to drop in price as young shoots were eaten off by rabbits etc. This caused the wood to become 'poor, knotty and crooked' (K. S. Woods, *The Rural Industries Round Oxford. A* Survey made on behalf of the Institute for Research in Agricultural Economics. University of Oxford. London: Oxford University Press, 1921, 83).

[80] K. S. Woods, *Rural Crafts of England. A Study of Skilled Workmanship* (London: George G. Harrap, 1949). See Chapter ix, 'The Care of the Woods', for a detailed description of wood management from the seventeenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, 144–156.

her situation. Marty is no ordinary peasant. The craft of spar-making requires practice and manual dexterity as well as a good deal of self-discipline, as it is necessary for the spar-maker to sit in one position for long periods without losing concentration. Marty masters the skill in one night. She only has a traditional bill-hook as an aid. With this she produces sharp-pointed spars of exactly the right size. The most difficult aspect of spar-making is the splitting of each spar gadd along its grain.[81] The spar-maker must use his/her thumb as a guide while splitting each rod. Each gadd must be split into two halves of exactly equal size, whereafter each half-gadd is split into three. All rough edges and irregularities must then be removed before spars are bound into bundles of one hundred or more and sold to thatchers. Marty makes five hundred spars a night, having first had the task of shaping the gadds and bringing them home. For this she is paid nine pence – a mere trifle when compared with the two golden sovereigns offered her by barber Percomb.

It is significant that it is Giles who appreciates Marty's skill and sacrifice. He understands that spar-making is a trade which requires years of practice for most makers. Marty, like Giles, has an affinity with nature which enables her to understand how to make the best use of natural products. It is no idle boast when she tells Giles she could learn the sparmaking trade in two hours. And only Giles understands why she can produce better spars after one night of practice than her father could in forty years of working at the trade.

Marty is willing to turn her hand to anything. She is heroic and capable of almost boundless self-sacrifice. For example, illness and misery do not prevent her from turning out to help Giles in planting trees. She knows that she is unimportant in the eyes of the world and that her qualities – though recognised by Giles – are not properly valued. She lives a self-contained life close to nature. Marty neither asks for nor receives help except when it is to benefit another. She thinks little of her dexterity in handling tools. Her reply to Dr Fitzpiers's comment that she must have a better tool than the other bark strippers is characteristic of her general attitude to life: '[n]o, sir [...] 'tis only that they've less patience with the twigs, because their time is worth more than mine' (xix, 130). Marty marks the social distance between herself and Fitzpiers with the word 'sir' – a distance which is further emphasised by her use of dialect.

Marty is a woman of few words. Her intuitive understanding of people and nature is expressed in action rather than in verbal communication. This is particularly apparent in her relationship with Giles. The first time they are seen together in the novel they exchange only a few words. This done, they proceed to the cart-house in silence: '[t]hey had no remarks to make to each other, and they uttered none' (iii, 24). Far from being a reflection of detachment their silence is, as the narrator ex-

[81] For a description of the work of the spar-maker, see Jenkins, *Traditional Country Craftsmen*, 39–41; and Judy Nash, *Thatchers and Thatching* (London: Batsford, 1991), 56–74.

plains, 'part of the pattern in the great web of human doings then weaving in both hemispheres, from the White Sea to Cape Horn' (iii, 24). Marty's feelings for Giles which remain unexpressed are a reflection of a fundamental affinity between the two. They both share what the narrator describes as an 'intelligent intercourse with Nature' (xliv, 306). Marty is Giles's 'true complement in the other sex, [she] had lived as his counterpart, had subjoined her thoughts to his as a corollary' (xliv, 306). Giles's and Marty's relationship with the woods is expressed in terms of a silent language which only they themselves understand: they 'read' the 'hieroglyphs' of nature as if they were 'ordinary writing.' The various sounds of the woods in different weathers and seasons are 'simple occurrences whose origin, continuance, and laws they foreknew' (xliv, 306). The passing of the seasons and the years is compared to 'signs and symbols' which together form 'an alphabet' (xliv, 306). Grace acknowledges that Giles and Marty 'could speak in a tongue that nobody else knew [. . .] the tongue of the trees and fruits and flowers themselves' (xliv, 307).

Not only is the language of Giles and Marty unknown to others, it is valued by few because it is 'the artisan's knowledge of his material, an empirical, sensuous knowledge'[82] which is far removed from the rational, scientific knowledge of the predictive society. It belongs to a world and a set of values which are fast disappearing. Marty's vision and knowledge are restricted to the Hintock woodlands. She blends into her environment, sees and hears all that is going on but is a silent observer for much of the novel. At the end of the story, she is as 'solitary and silent' as she was at the beginning. She represents a pure form of humanity, untainted by the outside world. The final picture of Marty standing at Giles's grave, bathed in moonlight – the symbol of chastity – slim and undeveloped as a woman represents what the narrator describes as 'abstract humanism' (xlviii, 338), the very essence of prelapsarian humanity. The words she addresses to the deceased Giles are elegiac: she finds her true voice in communing with the dead, not the living. Her words belong to the world of the woods. They are concerned with recalling the past, which is associated with all that is good. Marty sees her life in terms of a repetition of past acts both of her own (planting trees and splitting gadds) and Giles (turning the cider wring). As a restricted-code user, Marty has a limited and repetitive vocabulary. Her use of non-standard English emphasises the strength and sincerity of her feelings. It also serves, however, to set her apart from the modern world. It is with the following words of Marty's that the novel ends:

> [n]ow, my own, own love [. . .] you are mine, and only mine; for she [Grace] has forgot 'ee at last, although for her you died! But I – whenever I get up I'll think of 'ee, and whenever I lie down I'll think of 'ee again. Whenever I plant the young larches I'll think that none can plant as you planted; and whenever I split a gadd, whenever I turn the cider wring, I'll

[82] George Wotton, *Thomas Hardy: Towards a Materialist Criticism* (Goldenbridge: Gill and Macmillan, 1985), 57.

> say none could do it like you. If ever I forget your name let me forget home and heaven! . . . But no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee; for you was a good man, and did good things! (xlviii, 338–9).

Only Marty, and to a certain extent Robert Creedle, understands the real value of Giles Winterborne. Only she is fitted to preserve the values and way of life for which Giles stood. When she dies there will be no one to continue the intercourse with nature which Giles and Marty alone embody. The Little Hintock woods are doomed to become a resource to be exploited by modern society for as long as they fulfil a useful function and are economically viable. Human feeling will disappear as surely as the woods deteriorate and the flowers perish on Giles's grave.

Even more than Marty, Giles is, in the words of the anonymous critic for the *Saturday Review*,[83] 'the incarnation of a phase of village civilization.' John Bayley has described Winterborne as a silent, unobtrusive observer who is as such similar to Hardy himself.[84] It is through Giles Winterborne more than any other character in *The Woodlanders* that Hardy's deepest fears for the traditional society are demonstrated. Tess Cosslett suggests that Winterborne's careful planting of trees to ensure that the maximum number survive is working against the cosmic process (survival of the fittest) using the ethical process ('the fitting of as many as possible to survive').[85] As Cosslett emphasises, 'such action can only be effective when based on a sympathetic understanding of the way the cosmic process works.' Giles clearly possesses this understanding. He represents the 'organic relationship' with Nature of the traditional society; Fitzpiers is part of 'a malfunctioning world of Necessity and Circumstance' in which Nature 'has lost its soul to modern science.'[86]

Giles lives in harmony with the seasons. He helps Melbury with his timber business as required and makes cider when the timber season is slack. He works where he is needed and as the demands of the different seasons dictate. Giles is a skilled hurdle maker and it is significant that he makes so-called wattle hurdles, the most difficult kind to produce (gate hurdles are much simpler in design). Wattle hurdles 'are close-work screens of round and cleft rods, woven together by a skilled technique that demands a long apprenticeship.'[87] H. L. Edlin compares the building of a hurdle with the dexterity of birds building nests and emphasises the point that such skills were not learned from books. 'Poise, balance, muscular power, and an apt co-ordina-

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[83] 2 April, 1887. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 153.

[84] *An Essay on Hardy*, 9.

[85] Cosslett has borrowed Huxley's terminology here; see *The 'Scientific Movement' and Victorian Literature*, 161–2.

[86] Mary Jacobus, 'Tree and Machine: *The Woodlanders*', in *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy* ed. by Kramer, 117.

[87] H. L. Edlin, *Woodland Crafts in Britain. An Account of the Traditional Uses of Trees and Timbers in the British Countryside* (London: Batsford, 1949), 70. Edlin gives a full description of how hurdles are made, and his book contains a number of interesting photographs (see xii, 'Hazel hurdles, hoops and crates'). Edlin's presentation forms a useful complement to the description of Giles making hazel wattle hurdles in xxxi, 243.

tion of hand and eye, have all played their part in the building of [the hurdle maker's] rustic masterpiece.'[88]

Giles Winterborne also plays a key part in the local cider industry by growing, selling and crushing the apples.[89] The quality of the apples is essential: they should be clean and free from mould. The earliest maturing varieties, i.e. those harvested before October, should be washed and processed within a week of their being picked, since they tend to rot easily.[90] The cider-presser must know which varieties of apple may be pressed together to produce the particular kind of cider desired: Giles, for example, presses a mixture of 'streaked-jacks, codlins, costards, stubbards, ratheripes' (xxv, 166). Hygiene is all-important throughout the pressing operation so that bacteria do not multiply (for this reason the pomance must be quickly disposed of by the presser to prevent it becoming a breeding ground for the fruit flies which spread vinegar bacteria).[91]

The pressing of the apples is the most important process in cider-making. Hardy knew as he was writing in the 1880s that such knowledge would soon be lost: the cider-making industry was already in decline in the nineteenth century because of the taxation on cider, the preference of the higher social classes for wine as well as the availability of cheap gin. Cider-making was thus one more traditional skill in danger of being lost in the wake of modern developments.

Giles is a silent figure whose deepest feelings are expressed in action rather than words. Life has taught him to adopt a 'taciturn hesitancy' (xxxvii, 254) towards others. He is a man 'who had been unfortunate in his worldly transactions' (xxx, 206–7) and has learned to bear suffering with 'sublimity' (xxx, 207). His suffering does not stem from the hardships of the natural environment but from the demands of a society from which he is excluded but by whose rules he is nonetheless governed. Over and again Giles's social inadequacies are emphasised. His very Christian name suggests allegiance to the farming community. At the beginning of the novel, when he meets Grace at Sherton Abbas, he is made to feel conscious of his rough yeoman appearance; his Christmas party serves to demonstrate the enormous social gulf between himself and Grace; he is unable to afford the elegant hotels and restaurants frequented by Grace, and at least as important as all these factors, he does not speak the sophisticated language of modern educated society. When Grace talks about travel writers Giles understands nothing. His response – '[s]uppose you talk over my head a little longer, Miss Grace Melbury' (ix, 67) – is not bitter. Giles recognises that he belongs to a different world, and it is to Marty that he turns for advice about the Christmas party.

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[88] Ibid., 71.

[89] For pictures of the kind of cider-making equipment operated by Winterborne, see R. K. French, *The History and Virtues of Cyder* (London: Robert Hale, 1982), 92–3.

[90] Alfred Pollard and Frederick Walter Beech, *Cider-Making* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1957), 53–4.

[91] Ibid., 56.

Giles belongs to the world of trees, with which he has a mutual understanding: they provide timber and the apples that make the cider; Giles brings them into being. The trees also provide a refuge from the pain inflicted by fellow human beings. As Giles trims the tree outside John South's house he feels at home. He calls to Grace from a position of apparent superiority. When he is ignored he understands Grace's silent message and retreats further and further up into the tree, cutting away as he does so his links with the world below him. Harold E. Tolliver suggests that Giles 'is disinheriting himself all the while, cutting himself into obscurity.'[92] He does so again when he retreats to his cottage in the woods after having lost his house. Giles withdraws from human company in general and surrounds himself with the creatures of the wood. His only regular contact with the 'outside world' is with Creedle.

Trees are part of Winterborne's imagery as well as his profession. When talking about Grace with Fitzpiers, for example, he retreats behind the image of a tree in order to alleviate a painful situation: '[w]hat difference can it make, if she's [Grace's] only the tree your rainbow falls on?' (xvi, 114). Giles is more at home interpreting the sounds of the trees than talking with his fellow human beings. Dialogues involving Giles are almost invariably short. With Creedle and Marty he discusses the woodlands and the everyday affairs of Little Hintock. With Grace he also concentrates on practical issues and events. He refuses to use conventional expressions of love either when talking to or about Grace. Giles buries his true feelings and uses language to deprecate himself in an effort to justify a situation which appears to be irreversible. When Melbury attempts to describe Grace's feelings for her former sweetheart, Giles protects himself by saying, 'I was not well enough educated: too rough in short. I couldn't have surrounded her with the refinements she looked for, anyhow at all' (xxxi, 213). It is not until Melbury asks Giles about Mrs Charmond that he reveals that she has been a charmer of men in the past, and was once an actress. The way in which Giles expresses these facts constitutes one of the rare occasions when he demonstrates real verbal skill – he is indeed almost poetical: '[a] body who has smiled where she has not loved, and loved where she has not married' (xxxi, 214).

As a restricted-code user, however, Giles generally employs a kind of language which describes concrete, practical issues; he avoids deep discussions which involve analysis. This is partly a reflection of his inflexible nature ('[h]e was not versatile, but one in whom a hope or belief which had once had its rise, meridian, and decline, seldom again exactly recurred, as in the breasts of more sanguine mortals', xxxix, 266). He shows himself unwilling to use language as a means of persuasion. When he and Grace are tentatively discussing the new divorce laws, for example, the narrator comments that 'Winterborne was too straightforward to influence her [Grace] further against her better judgement'(xxxviii, 263), and Giles characteristically

[92] 'The Dance under the Greenwood Tree: Hardy's Bucolics', *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* XVII (1962), 58.

brings the subject round to the more concrete issue of the need to obtain some dinner. Giles has an intuitive understanding of his environment which does not lend itself to verbal expression. When he does consider problems, he expresses his feelings openly and without sophistication. When, for example, he sees Grace's discomfort at the 'old commercial tavern' in Sherton, he does not mince words: 'I did not remember that what was good enough for me was not good enough for you' (xxxviii, 265). He does not attempt to discuss the matter with Grace and ascertain if her feelings have undergone any change since Fitzpiers's departure. Instead, he refers to past incidents and draws his own conclusions, which are presented as incontrovertible facts. Significantly, Giles's last words uttered before he lost consciousness are practical and self-effacing. Despite his condition, he tells Grace: 'I am alright [...] It is not necessary for me to come. Good night! good night!' (xli, 287).

Grace believes that it is 'cruel propriety' (xlii, 290) which kills Giles. This is only part of the truth, however. While the rules of social convention oblige him to abandon his hut to Grace, this is not sufficient reason for his death. George Levine[93] suggests that Giles in his 'quiet protective observation of Grace Melbury [...] dies for respectability; he dies acting out the idea of disinterested observation.' While this is certainly true it fails to recognise the vital fact that for the first time Giles is not only confronted with the alienation of society, he must also withstand the hostile forces of Nature. For the first time in the novel, Giles is out of harmony with Nature. He realises and accepts that his time has come. Interestingly enough, only Marty has understood the true state of affairs during Grace's occupation of Giles's hut; but she is powerless to intervene. Nature is seen to run its course and reclaim its ally. There is a certain irony in the fact that Giles dies of typhoid, when the drink he produced was considered to be a relatively safe alternative to drinking pure water thanks to the high acidity of apple juice which destroyed germs in polluted water. Giles is a victim of convention. His ideas and speech belong to a disappearing way of life. His knowledge and principles belong to a community already threatened with extinction. Partly because of the current divorce laws he has no future with Grace Melbury. His business is, by his own admission, extremely small. His home has been taken away from him. His plight is known by few, and he is alone in fighting typhoid. At the end of the novel Giles is as isolated as his surroundings and his fate anticipates that of many small communities at the beginning of the twentieth century. His death clears the way for the main group-two and -three characters, Grace and Dr Fitzpiers.

The lower/middle class

In her father's eyes, Grace is both a means of reparation to the Winterborne family and an investment in the future. Melbury is carrying on the tradition already established by the Days, Dewys, Smiths and Everdenes of investing in the education of sons or

[93] *Darwin and the Novelists. Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction*, 233.

daughters as a means of gaining social advancement and escaping from the restrictions of one's primary habitus. The life of Grace Melbury shows that the successful accomplishment of such schemes does not necessarily lead to happiness. The polish which Grace has gained at school makes her attractive first to Mrs Charmond and then to Fitzpiers. It also separates her from Giles Winterborne. Melbury fears above all that Grace will, once she has returned to Little Hintock, 'gradually sink down to our [Mr and Mrs Melbury's] level again, and catch our manners and way of speaking' (xi, 79). Not until the end of the novel does he understand that education may also have the negative effect of alienating one from all that is familiar and secure.

Grace is suspended between two cultures, between her 'modern nerves' and her 'primitive feelings', 'the one giving her an almost painful awareness of herself as subject, the other subduing that self in a powerful but indefinable longing for community.'[94] According to Rosemary Sumner, Grace is

> the focus of the novel because she is torn between the world of the woods and the world outside; her two lovers personify the split. The problems of marriage and divorce, education and the social structure are all related to her. In contrast, all the other characters belong in either the outer world or the woodlands, and only she is involved in all the problems the book raises.[95]

Grace Melbury is a typical group-two character in that she is a survivor. She manages to find a compromise between the woodland values and ways of her origins and the demands of the modern predictive society mediated by her education and embodied in her husband.

At the beginning of the novel it is the distance which has developed between Grace and Little Hintock society which is emphasised. This is put down to her genteel education: 'cultivation had so far advanced in the soil of Miss Melbury's mind as to lead her to talk of anything save of that she knew well, and had the greatest interest in developing: herself. She had fallen from the good old Hintock ways' (vi, 45). The narrator clearly identifies with 'the soil' and earthy ways of Little Hintock. It is not superior knowledge which has caused the gulf between Grace and her origins, it is 'cultivation', the gentility of polite society which is the real cause of the estrangement. While Grace has gained in cultivation she appears to have lost in local knowledge, as evidenced by the fact that she can no longer distinguish between different varieties of apple. Such knowledge is gradually regained, though, so that by the time she occupies Giles's cottage she knows full well how to make a meal with the simple means Giles places at her disposal.

When Grace returns from school she appears to be preoccupied with maintaining status and sophistication, and she views her first visit to Mrs Charmond's as a sign 'of being properly appreciated on her own native soil' (viii, 58). Why, then, does

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[94] Ian Gregor, 'Hardy's World', *English Literary History* 38 (1971), 283.
[95] *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist*, 83.

she allow herself to be drawn into such activities as the old Midsummer Eve festivities, which she declares are an 'ungodly performance' (xx, 138) but which she nonetheless enters into 'with some excitement' (xx, 139)? Interestingly, it is Marty who holds herself aloof, proclaiming without any affectation that she does not believe in such customs. Marty transcends all such superstitions and obeys the evidence of her senses instead. Grace has been taught to denigrate her rural roots and to rely on convention rather than on her own faculties. Even so, the latter are not permanently defeated, merely temporarily suppressed.

Grace gradually comes to realise that happiness lies in yielding to feelings rather than obeying convention. Her marriage to Fitzpiers has taught her that 'the veneer of artificiality which she had acquired at the fashionable schools' has never become a real part of her. On the failure of her marriage and the re-awakening of her feelings for Giles, she is content to revert to 'the crude country girl of her latent, early instincts' (xxviii, 193): her primary habitus takes over, and while this is in command she experiences – albeit for a limited period only – true happiness. With the death of Giles, she gradually returns to Fitzpiers and sophisticated life. This is her only chance of survival, as she has no future in Little Hintock without Giles. She understands that it is her superior education which has led her into the wrong path. Interestingly, she tells her father that she would have been happier working in the woods, like Marty South. Again, Marty stands for what is genuine and solid, and all that has been rejected by polite society.

By the end of the novel Grace has been reminded of the virtues of the traditional Hintock way of life. At the same time, she knows she must look forwards rather than backwards. While Marty stands at Giles's graveside planning a continuation of a traditional pattern of life, Grace and Fitzpiers are planning a future away from Little Hintock – a future based on modern medical knowledge. This time Grace does not enter blindly into a relationship with Fitzpiers; she realises that it is the only solution for a married woman who has been educated in accordance with the demands of the modern predictive society. There is no return for Grace, only advance. This does not entail a final rejection of her roots, merely a recognition of the fact that Little Hintock's days are numbered. The future lies in the 'dictionary words' of modern educated society and not in the rustic ways and language of the isolated woodland village.

The future of the couple is uncertain, however. While it is clear after the man-trap incident that there is still some warmth of feeling between Grace and Fitzpiers, the latter's constancy cannot be relied upon. It is significant that it is the rustics – Creedle, Farmer Cawtree, the bark-ripper, the hollow-turner, and John Upjohn – who voice this insight. They perceive the future dangers and express them in characteristically clear and concrete terms. Grace knows that her life will not be a bed of roses, but she is determined to make the best of her only real option. Her grace and sophistication are well suited to the life of a doctor's wife, and her knowledge may

perhaps be seen as embodying a potential compensation for some of the shortcomings of her husband. As with Ethelberta, marriage is not necessarily the key to happiness; but it is certainly her only means of survival.

The upper-middle/upper class

Robert Kiely suggests that it is Grace and Fitzpiers who are the two real survivors in the novel. This is because they 'are best equipped to adjust to new circumstances', as they have both experienced major changes in social status (Grace from country girl to leisured lady; Fizpiers from aristocrat to physician):

> Each can be plain or attractive; warm or cold; idealistic or practical. Neither is so attached to one person or place as to be incapable of transplantation. The secret of their survival is mobility and a reliance not on a lover's heart or laborer's hand but on the observer's eye always on the lookout for a new opportunity to assume the place of another.[96]

The 'lover's heart or laborer's hand' is part of the traditional society, characterised by prioritisation of the affective on the one hand and by hysteresis on the other. The 'observer's eye' is part of the rationalistic predictive society which is based on analysis and associated with the ability to recognise and even predict opportunities and consequences. Both Grace and Fitzpiers are temporarily caught up in the static way of life of Little Hintock and are in fact relatively content for a short period. Both learn valuable lessons about the nature of man and his relationship with the environment while residing in the village. Both ultimately come to realise, however, that they have been educated to take their place in the wider world outside Little Hintock. The relationship between Grace and Fitzpiers embodies 'the deeper reality', to use Hardy's own phrase quoted earlier, of the meeting of the traditional and the predictive.

Both Grace and Fitzpiers are products of the modern educational system, although their knowledge and experience are very different. Their education has weakened the bonds between themselves and the natural environment. This is particularly serious in the case of Fitzpiers, whose task it is to heal the sick. While he understands modern medicine (saving Grace's life, for example, with the medicine he leaves behind for her), he kills John South because he fails to recognise the bond between the old man and the tree. Neither does he feel remorse. However, Fitzpiers is certainly not completely contemptible, as Martin Seymour Smith suggests.[97] True, he lacks the stability and integrity of Giles Winterborne; but he ultimately learns the hard lesson of humility and patiently endures his punishment for his affair with Mrs Charmond. He does not die, but makes up his mind to build a new future elsewhere. It is the foundation of this future which is of interest to the present discussion, rather than the issue of whether the future may be expected to bring happiness or success.

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[96] 'The Menace of Solitude: The Politics and Aesthetics of Exclusion in *The Woodlanders*', in *The Sense of Sex. Feminist Perspectives on Hardy* ed. by Margaret R. Higonet, 199.

[97] *Thomas Hardy*, 371.

Critics have pointed out that the name Fitzpiers is associated with weakness. J.O. Bailey, for example, tells us that the prefix 'Fitz' used to suggest illegitimacy. As Harold Orel remarks, 'the infidelity of Fitzpiers [...] becomes understandable in a context far more interesting than that of the popular fiction of Hardy's age.'[98] The name Edred Fitzpiers is suggestive of 'the conventional cigar-smoking libertine.'[99] At the same time, the young doctor has a profession which had gradually gained in prestige. To understand Fitzpiers's status fully it is necessary to review briefly the training of doctors in the nineteenth century. During the first half of the nineteenth century medical training had been a haphazard affair, but major improvements were made in the second half. As Linda K. Robertson has shown,[100] in the opening years of the century most medical teaching was in the hands of individual doctors and surgeons at hospitals. Towards the end of the 1820s new university medical schools were established. Few doctors attended either Oxford or Cambridge, and in 1827 the Council of the University of London declared:

> about one hundred only of all physicians now practising in England have been educated at Oxford and Cambridge, while there are more than three hundred licentiates of the College of Physicians, besides as many hundreds of country practitioners who have never been candidates for the privilege of the licentiate. There are now six thousand members of the College of Surgeons, not six of whom, it has been stated, have graduated at our universities.[101]

Although a university degree was necessary for becoming a member of the Royal College of Physicians, it was not obligatory for medical practice.[102] Qualifications were not controlled until the Medical Act of 1858.[103] With this act medical training became more scientific and lost its apprenticeship character. The doctor's professional status was recognised by the State and medical education became more standardised, although there continued to be variations in physicians' education for a number of years. Equally important was that a statutory recognition of the rights of the duly qualified practitioner was articulated, 'with severe sanctions against the unregistered. This is what every professional man and would-be professional man longs for: the closed shop with an Act of Parliament to lock the door.'[104]

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[98] *The Final Years of Thomas Hardy 1912–1928*, 17.

[99] Frank Ernest Halliday, *Thomas Hardy: His Life and Work* (1972), 110. Quoted in Orel, *The Final Years of Thomas Hardy 1912–1928*, 17.

[100] *The Power of Knowledge. George Eliot and Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997). The summary of medical education in this paragraph is largely based on Robertson's research.

[101] Ibid., 91.

[102] Reader points out that many medical practitioners in the first half of the nineteenth century had little or no education and in some cases were barely able to read or write. See *Professional Men*, 41–43.

[103] The Act created the 'registered medical practitioner', who satisfied one or more of twenty-one existing licensing bodies by means of examination 'that he was fit to practise' (Reader, *Professional Men*, 66). Of later relevance, in *Jude the Obscure*, is the fact that Parliament refused to outlaw quacks, thereby making it possible for people like Vilbert to operate.

[104] Reader, *Professional Men*, 68.

Fitzpiers is variously described as a doctor and as a surgeon. A physician, it should be noted, he is not: such a man was, strictly speaking, a fellow or licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of London or a member of a similar college in Dublin or Edinburgh, for example. The title could also be adopted by holders of a degree in physics from the universities. Physicians were essentially gentlemen at the top of their profession. Surgeons had a lower social and professional standing. They learned their profession in a practical manner, by being apprenticed to a practising surgeon. Surgeons were to be found more frequently in the provinces than in towns. They had little contact with their colleagues and were, despite their more thorough practical training, snubbed by the physicians who were intent on preserving their superior status.

The status of the surgeon was given a boost in 1832 with the establishment of the body that was to become the British Medical Association. This organisation was concerned with medical education, improvement of the doctor's standing in the community and the use of political means to achieve professional aims. Poor status and the need for financial backing made it difficult for a doctor to establish himself in a community. The opportunities created by the new Poor Law Act of 1834 were thus extremely important. It now became possible to obtain employment – albeit frequently poorly paid – at the local workhouse, as Fitzpiers does.

By the mid-century considerable improvements had been made in the status of the medical profession. W. J. Reader concludes:

> Whatever reservations the country gentry might have, there is little doubt that in the furiously growing urban society of Victorian England the lawyer and the doctor took the lead among the middle classes and could with some conviction make a claim to gentility in the High Street of Middlemarch or in the suburbs of London or Birmingham, even if not in the mess of a fashionable regiment, in the wardrooms of Her Majesty's ships, or in the drawing-rooms of great country houses.[105]

Fitzpiers enjoys high status in Little Hintock, where he is regarded as 'a specimen of creation altogether unusual in that locality' (xviii, 122): his standing and scientific knowledge along with his family connections make him distinct from the other inhabitants.

One circumstance that would enhance the status of a rural practitioner such as Fitzpiers is the fact that in the second half of the nineteenth century medical examinations became increasingly rigorous. At the same time, apprenticeship was commuted into studentship. Trainee doctors followed a regular academic course for which fees were charged: for regular demonstrations, dissections and all the other requisite elements of a medical training.[106] It was thus necessary for the trainee doctor to be a man of means. Competition for practices was keen, and it was some years

[105] Ibid., 68.
[106] Ibid., 122–23.

before a new doctor was able to make a good living. In 1883, for instance, *The Lancet* medical magazine pointed out that a young doctor buying a half share in a practice of £1,200 or £2,000 gross receipts a year would lose approximately one third in working expenses.[107] At the same time, he must retain his social position. It was thus not uncommon for doctors to run up considerable debts. After three or four years, though, when debts for books purchased and other debts had been paid, doctors could usually start to enjoy a secure social and financial position. They could gradually expect a comfortable if not affluent life as owners, or part-owners, of a practice.

It was important for a doctor to have a wife. This was indeed a social expectation even if it was, of course, also an additional expenditure. Fitzpiers shows himself to be fully aware of the importance of a wife as he negotiates for a practice. His legacy relieves him of some of the financial problems in obtaining a practice as a young, unknown doctor. With Grace as a wife he is clearly more respectable and socially acceptable.

The country practitioner of the middle and second half of the nineteenth century was not always a man of science. Lydgate in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1872) sums up the position as follows:

> With our present medical rules and education, one must be satisfied now and then to meet with a fair practitioner. As to all the higher questions which determine the starting-point of a diagnosis – as to the philosophy of medical evidence – any glimmering of these can can only come from a scientific culture of which country practitioners have usually no more notion than the man in the moon.[108]

Fitzpiers's superiority to the average country practitioner is asserted early on in *The Woodlanders*, where he is described as 'a gentleman fond of science and philosophy, and poetry, and, in fact, every kind of knowledge' (iv, 33). Fitzpiers claims that 'there's nobody can match me in the whole county of South Wessex as a scientist' (xxxv, 237). David J. De Laura describes Fitzpiers as the 'only fully-fledged intellectual in the Wessex novels',[109] claiming at the same time that Hardy is condescending in his attitude to the doctor's intellectual claims. The latter charge seems somewhat unfair, though. Like Lydgate, Fitzpiers is critical of the non-scientific methods of the country practitioner (he tells Giles, for example, that 'medical practice in places like this is a very rule of thumb matter', xvi, 114). David Lodge does him less than justice when describing him as 'a kind of third-rate Shelley (a poet Fitzpiers is fond of quoting): an idealist, a dabbler in science, philosophy, literature; idle, fickle, egocentric, selfish as a child.'[110] Fitzpiers does more than dabble in science, he is 'a nucleus

[107] Ibid., 192.

[108] Ch. 13, 123. Quoted in Robertson, *The Power of Knowledge*, 93–4. See Mingay, *Rural Life in Victorian England*, 164–7 for details of the responsibilities, knowledge and working conditions of the country doctor.

[109] 'The "Ache of Modernism"', 392–4.

[110] Introduction to *The Woodlanders*, New Wessex Edition (London: Macmillan, 1974), with an Introduction by David Lodge, 16.

of advanced ideas and practices' (vi, 51). His '[c]hemical experiments, anatomical projects, and metaphysical conceptions'(vi, 51) clearly do not belong to the conservative world of Little Hintock. Fitzpiers is aware of the fact that without better equipment his knowledge will not progress significantly if he remains in Little Hintock. An extremely important question with respect to the present study is if Fitzpiers's habitus is adequate for a medical man. Is he a professional and/or personal failure, as a cursory reading of the novel would seem to suggest, or does he have the makings of a successful medical man if given the right partner and environment? His knowledge belongs to the predictive world; his personal flaws are characteristic of members of group three.

As a doctor, Fitzpiers suffers from three major weaknesses: he is more interested in the discovery of principles than in their actual application; he lacks the rigorous discipline required to pursue an idea ('[h]ad his persistence equalled his insight instead of being the spasmodic and fitful thing it was, fame and fortune need never have remained a wish with him', xlii, 292); and he shows little understanding of the affective side of his professional duties. Fitzpiers prefers the ideal world to the real: conjecture interests him more than action.

As already stated, Fitzpiers is the direct cause of John South's death. This becomes an opportunity for scientific investigation; it is not a reason for remorse. Fitzpiers does not hesitate to show Grace a section of John South's brain under his microscope. He is amused when Grace is startled. His response is representative of his attitude both to his career and to mankind in general, and it is couched in the analytical terms of the elaborated-code user: '[h]ere am I [...] endeavouring to carry on simultaneously the study of physiology and transcendental philosophy, the material world and the ideal, so as to discover if possible a point of contact between them; and your finer sense is quite offended!' (xviii, 126–7). The spontaneous human reaction is regarded as inferior to the serious investigations of the scientist. Fitzpiers has the habitus of a scientist. He has studied in Heidelberg and read widely. He is up-to-date with recent works and theories, as is shown in his explanation to Grammer Oliver of the difference in size between a man's and a woman's brain.[111] Little Hintock and Grace Melbury become objects of investigation for him. His scientific investigation is closely mingled with idealism, however. This strange mixture is described by the narrator as follows:

> Fitzpiers was in a distinct degree scientific, being ready and zealous to interrogate all physical manifestations; but primarily he was an idealist. He believed that behind the imperfect lay the perfect; that rare things were to be discovered amidst a bulk of commonplace; that results in a new and untried case might be different from those in other cases where the material conditions had been precisely similar (xix, 128).

[111] This is posited by Charles Darwin, for example, in *The Descent of Man*: '[m]an is more courageous, pugnacious, and energetic than woman, and has a more inventive genius. His brain is absolutely larger, but whether or not proportionately to his larger body, has not, I believe, been fully ascertained' (580).

Grace thus becomes an object of scientific investigation. She is the apparently 'perfect' among the 'commonplace.' She must be studied in order to prove his hypothesis. Fitzpiers has no intention of becoming seriously involved emotionally and certainly not of making a life-long commitment. Grace is for Fitzpiers 'the Idea [which] had for once completely fulfilled itself in the objective substance – (which he had hitherto deemed an impossibility)' (xx, 137). As long as Grace is merely an object of scientific study, no harm is done. It is not science itself which causes suffering, it is the mixture of science and mismanaged human emotion. Fitzpiers believes that he can continue his study of Grace dispassionately, his high social aims protecting him from any thought of alliance with someone of Grace's inferior social position. He seriously underestimates the human side of his nature.

Fitzpiers's experiments require sacrifice, be it John South's or Mrs Charmond's life, Grammer Oliver's brain or Grace's happiness. As with Henry Knight in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, observation of and involvement with humanity are from a distance. Where the scientist becomes personally involved, disaster ensues. Neither the geologist in the earlier novel nor the doctor in the later one is, it seems, able to separate science and love. Whereas Knight retreats to the continent and discovers his mistake too late, Fitzpiers learns repentance and discovers in time the true value of what he has lost. The man who shortly after his marriage to Grace could blame himself for consistently failing to recognise an opportunity until it is too late learns by the end of the novel – just as Swithin St. Cleeve had done in *Two on a Tower* – that it is necessary to be true to both science and human love. The turning-point is the trap incident: the doctor who in the past has merely examined such instruments in order to ascertain their effect is now given cause to relate his knowledge to a specific victim, the wife whom he had come close to losing. Love is no longer an explosion in a Leyden jar, 'joy accompanied by an idea which we project against any suitable object in the line of our vision' (xvi, 113) but a personal commitment to a fellow human being.

The physical attraction which Fitzpiers first feels towards Grace and then towards Mrs Charmond (who has the additional advantage of wealth and status) is a form of sexual selection which is not, as the scientist discovers, synonymous with lasting happiness. The doctor who initially regards himself as a superior species to all other inhabitants of Little Hintock finds that he has failed to appreciate the true virtues of the latter. He knows he can never be a second Giles Winterborne. At the same time, he knows that there is no future for the Giles Winterbornes of this world. All hope for his own future lies in a medical practice as far away from Little Hintock as possible. Melbury and the other village inhabitants know that Grace is taking a risk in returning to a husband who has already proved unreliable. At the same time, it is a calculated risk: Fitzpiers has knowledge, expertise, and a degree of financial security on his side. He is also firmly anchored in the modern predictive society. Grace brings traditional virtues and knowledge as well as survival potential to the partnership. Together, they possess many of the best qualities of both forms of society.

Fitzpiers's language suggests that he has learned to combine the modern scientific objective understanding of the world with the more humane traditional response to the human and natural environment. The inhabitants of Little Hintock are unwilling to believe that such a lesson can be learned by an outsider. By contrast, contemporary and modern educated readers were and are willing, indeed anxious, to admit of such a possibility. The sensitive reader notes with satisfaction that the Fitzpiers of the early part of the novel, who could describe John South as 'an extraordinary case' and quickly dismiss his death with a mere '[d]amned if my remedy hasn't killed him!' (iv, 101) without any evidence of remorse or thought for the consequences for Marty South, is actually capable of sympathy and concern when the situation involves his estranged wife tending her former fiancé on his deathbed. Even so, he is still the professional when he describes Giles's condition, as evidenced in his use of such expressions as '[t]he extremities are dead already' and '[t]his seems like what we call a sequel, which has followed some previous disorder – possibly typhoid' (note the use of the pronoun 'we', which shows Fitzpiers's identification with his profession, xliii, 297).

The greatest threat for the couple is that Fitzpiers will again prove unfaithful. At the same time, his affair with Mrs Charmond has taught Fitzpiers to see beyond the surface beauty of his wife and appreciate her real qualities. He tells Grace that he is 'a vagabond – a brute – not worthy to possess the smallest fragment of you' (xliii, 297); and even when he is led to believe that Grace and Giles have been living in the cottage as lovers, he responds with sadness and humility rather than bitterness, explaining to Grace that 'I came back to try to make it up with you – but –' (xliii, 298). He cannot bring himself to finish the sentence and temporarily hides behind his profession as he advises Grace to take some of the medicine he leaves for her. The tone of his advice is not doctor to patient but repentant husband to lost wife.

It is not until nearly the end of the novel (ch. xlv) that Fitzpiers utters words of true love for Grace, in the form of a letter abounding in such emphatic and apparently sincere statements as 'I have never loved any woman alive or dead as I love, respect, and honour you at this present moment' (xlv, 311). The letter is so persuasive that Grace is forced to admit that Fitzpiers is indeed a skilful letter-writer. The full meaning of the final sentence – '[b]elieve me, in spite of all you may do or feel, your lover always (once your husband)'– goes unnoticed by Grace though the reader is later given cause to remember it and to wonder at the change in the once cold, rational doctor. The words of love which Fitzpiers utters to Felice Charmond are conventional; his letter to Grace, timed to arrive on St. Valentine's Day, is the product of considerable thought. It is this letter which ultimately makes the reunion of the couple possible.

In the final dialogue between Grace and Fitzpiers the latter shows an ability not only to reason and argue but even to consider the position of another. He tells Grace that he can never live in Little Hintock again 'as much for your sake as for mine'

(xlvii, 330). When he tells her about his inheritance, he describes his aunt as '[m]y *poor old* great-aunt' (xlviii, 330. My italics) – she is not merely referred to as a benefactor. Fitzpiers asks Grace 'to let me take care of you' in an effort to give rather than claim any rights. Although there are no guarantees that he will not look at other women in the future, there is every reason to believe that his intentions are good, and that he has all the necessary prerequisites to make a success of his practice. Grace can hardly do better than trust her future to Fitzpiers. Indeed, she appears to have little choice as there is clearly no future for her in Little Hintock.

Summary

Little Hintock is an isolated village, 'where reasoning proceeds on narrow premisses' (i, 8) and where there is a high degree of inter-marriage. As a result, change is slow and the process of natural selection is given little scope. The rustics form an amorphous group, amongst whom, according to the narrator, few are worthy of individual mention. At the same time, it is in this group that we find two of the most important characters: Giles Winterborne and Marty South.

Giles belongs to the past: his skills and values relate to the early part of the century. His work is determined by the seasons. He understands the language of the wildlife around him, and his understanding of nature is almost unique (only Marty can rival him in this respect). When nature herself also turns against him, he is unable to resist. Only one person – Marty South – knows of his suffering and she is powerless to intervene. Marty sees and hears what others miss. She is, however, less sensitive to the limitations of her own situation. It is Marty who opens and closes the novel: at the beginning she is seen sitting in the living-room, making spars, surrounded by darkness and silence. At the end of the novel, she is bent over Giles's grave. Here she vows to continue the traditions and rhythms of the past. She consistently looks backwards rather than forwards.

Grace and Fitzpiers, on the other hand, look ahead, to a future based on a modern career in an industrialised area far removed from Little Hintock. Modern education has entailed losses for both characters, though both recognise that this is part of the price of progress. Grace learns first to reject but then to re-examine the principles and values of the traditional society. She still has some affection for the latter while recognising at the same time that it has no place in the modern industrial world. Through Grace Fitzpiers gains new insight into human nature. His cold analytical manner is gradually modified to incorporate a better understanding of human feelings: the affective takes its place side by side with the rational. Hardy did not speculate as to Grace and Fitzpiers's future prospects: the couple's life outside Little Hintock is another story. *The Woodlanders ends* on a hopeful note as far as the doctor and his wife are concerned; they have all the prerequisites for success: financial security, a commitment to each other and modern knowledge. In the same way as the nineteenth-century scientist was concerned with 'the study of the world as a going con-

cern'[112] and not with predicting the future, the reader of *The Woodlanders* is invited to share in a view of the traditional and the predictive societies as they were around the middle of the century, not as they are about to become by the end of the century. Grace is a survivor. Supported by a suitable spouse and by the advantages of modern knowledge, a character such as Fitzpiers would have had every chance of becoming a successful member of the predictive society.

TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES

Written at Max Gate, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was probably started in the autumn of 1888. The serial was originally to be published by Tillotson's. However, the latter was horrified by the first few scenes, which included Tess's seduction by Alec and the midnight baptism. Tillotson's urged Hardy to recast the story and to remove a number of the scenes and incidents. When Hardy refused to do this, he was informed that the story could not be issued although the fee already agreed upon would be paid. Hardy suggested that the agreement be cancelled and offered the serial version both to *Murray's Magazine* and *Macmillan's Magazine*, both of whom, however, rejected it. It was finally accepted by *The Graphic*, where it appeared in 1891 in a much bowdlerised form.[113] The novel version was published at the end of November 1891 and a new edition appeared in 1892.

This was a highly productive period in Hardy's life. It saw the publication of the two important essays: 'Candour in English Fiction', published in January 1890, and 'The Science of Fiction', published in April 1891; the writing of most of the stories later collected in *Life's Little Ironies* (1894); as well as the collection and publication of the volume known as *A Group of Noble Dames* (1891).

As Michael Millgate points out, the writing of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* also coincides with the reading of a paper by J. S. Udal – 'Dorsetshire Folk-Speech and Superstitions relating to Natural History' – to the Dorset Natural History and Antiquarian Field Club on 13 February 1889.[114] Hardy was a member of this club. Udal's paper described the decline of traditional beliefs as a result of compulsory education and the influence of the Board Schools. His paper also listed a number of Dorset superstitions, including the belief that hearing a cock crow in the afternoon (such as that heard by Tess and Angel Clare as they leave Talbothays) was indicative of impending disaster.

It is well known that Hardy drew on important parts of his essay 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' for some sections of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, such as Angel Clare's

[112] Knight, *The Age of Science*,161. Knight shows that nineteenth-century scientists were not specifically concerned with prediction of the future until the end of the century, although analysis of the present is obviously a step in this direction.

[113] For details of the changes made, see James Gibson's introduction to the New Wessex Edition, 13.

[114] *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 264. The paper was printed in the *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette*, 28 February 1889, 5.

discovery while staying at Talbothays that rustic speech and manners have a value of their own which is not always recognised because of the Hodge stereotype and the description of the Old Lady-Day ceremony in Phase the Sixth. In this essay Hardy was at pains to show that Dorset labourers were individuals who, though their means were limited and their security almost non-existent, were harmonious beings with integrity, and whose thoughts and language should not be denigrated. The essay also expresses regret at the disappearance of old ways and knowledge as a result of labourers travelling further in search of work. The position of the female labourer is also discussed. A number of the typical female jobs mentioned in the essay occur in the novel, too. Tess is described hay-making, for example, a task which the essay describes as 'quite a science, though it appears the easiest thing in the world to toss hay about in the sun.'[115] A further point made in 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' which is of direct relevance to the following discussion is the disappearance from country villages of what Hardy describes as 'the better-informed class', namely the artisans. The latter were forced to leave their homes on the expiry of their leases. The essay concludes with the following reflection, '[b]ut the question of the Dorset cottager here merges in that of all the houseless and landless poor, and the vast topic of the Rights of Man, to consider which is beyond the scope of a merely descriptive article.'[116] This is not, however, beyond the scope of the full-length novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles.*

The issue of labourers' rights and the disappearance of traditional values and ways of life were largely ignored by contemporary reviewers, who preferred to concentrate on the 'purity' of Tess and on her tragic life as well as on various faults in Hardy's style. Many critics agreed that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was Hardy's best novel so far, although their reasons varied considerably. Richard le Gallienne of the *Star*, for example, praised Hardy for 'the permeating healthy sweetness of his descriptions, the idyllic charm and yet the reality of his figures, his apple-sweet women, his old men, rich with character as old oaks, his love-making, his fields, his sympathetic atmosphere' etc.[117] At the same time, he criticised Hardy for 'the imperfect digestion of certain modern science and philosophy, which is becoming somewhat too obtrusive through the apple-cheek outline of Mr Hardy's work.' As an example Gallienne draws attention to how 'a little boy talks to his sister, "rather for the pleasure of utterance than for audition" .' R. H. Hutton made a similar point in the *Spectator* when he wrote that '[t]he only fault in Mr. Hardy's style is an excess of pedantic phraseology in various parts of the book, which reminds us of George Eliot in her scientific mood.'[118] It is interesting that critics such as le Gallienne and R. H. Hutton should regard it as inappropriate for Hardy to use 'scientific terminology' in his

[115] Reprinted in Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, 186.
[116] Ibid., 189.
[117] 23 December 1891. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 178–180.
[118] 23 January 1892. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 194.

prose. Was this because they objected to the words themselves (which were admittedly long, complicated and sometimes pretentious), or because they felt such words were inappropriate for describing rural Wessex? Perhaps it was a combination of both. As the following discussion shows, science – and biology in particular – is an integral part of both the structure and the language of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles.*

For Clementina Black of the *Illustrated London News* it was neither the scientific content nor the descriptions of Wessex but the moral quality of the novel which was of prime importance. She described *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as Hardy's finest novel to date owing 'to a profound moral earnestness which has not always been conspicuous in his writing.'[119] The essence of the novel, Black suggested, 'lies in the perception that a woman's moral worth is measurable not by any one deed, but by the whole aim and tendency of her life and nature.' For the anonymous reviewer of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was primarily the story of a woman's tragedy, and as such it can only be fully appreciated by female readers 'in its intimate and profound interpretation of the woman's heart through the pure and beautiful and heroic Tess.'[120]

However, the novel was clearly not appreciated by Mowbray Mellis, editor of *Macmillan's Magazine.* Morris had refused serial publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, and in a review in the *Quarterly Review* he stated that 'Mr. Hardy has told an extremely disagreeable story in an extremely disagreeable manner.'[121] Hardy is accused of producing a number of ridiculous scenes such as that of Angel Clare helping the dairy maids over the flooded road, and of having lost all zest for life, which has resulted in a 'clumsy sordid tale of boorish brutality and lust.' The responses to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* thus ranged from euphoria to disgust, and one may well ask what evoked such extreme and vehement feelings.

Modern critics have concentrated on the portrayal of Tess as a victim or on Tess's internal life, seeing *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as a psychological novel which follows the pure and innocent milkmaid's journey through life. This journey has not infrequently given rise to a discussion of the relationship between the physical setting of the novel and character.

Hardy wrote in the 1882 preface 'that a novel is an impression, not an argument.' Whatever one may wish to call it, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* presents one man's conviction that the end of the traditional society is in sight. Tess must die, Angel Clare lives on. It is no coincidence that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is Hardy's last Wessex novel.[122] It is also important to note that the novel is divided up into phases, a term borrowed

[119] 9 January 1982. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 186–7.
[120] 31 December 1891. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 180–183.
[121] April 1892. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 219.
[122] Ian Gregor describes *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* as 'the apotheosis of the Wessex novels in that Hardy writes for the last time with a backward glance', '*Jude the Obscure*' in *Imagined Worlds* ed. by Mack and Gregor, 243.

from history and natural history and perhaps indicative of the way in which Hardy was thinking at the time.[123] The use of the word 'phases' suggests that the events of the novel adhere to natural laws, that there is a scientific inevitability about the course of the lives of the various characters. The scientific and the social are more closely intertwined in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* than in any previous Hardy novel: the habitus of each character is seen more clearly than elsewhere in Hardy's fiction to become modified in accordance with the particular phase (biological as well as social) in which the individual finds him- or herself.

Critics have noted that the forces of heredity and environment are particularly strong in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Michael Millgate, for example, argues that accidents in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* 'are rarely if ever a product of the random inexplicable intrusion of fate but rather of the inevitable – or at least, credible – outcome of the immediate narrative context of their own personalities as conditioned and limited by the forces of heredity and environment.'[124] Hardy supported the naturalist's view that invoking chance is merely an admission of ignorance of the causal chain in nature. More than in any other Hardy novel, the actions of the characters in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* are determined by biologically inherited qualities combined with socially determined factors, e.g. religion, conventions, education which serve to limit the individual's perception of his/her environment and the opportunities presented by the latter.

The issue of heredity appears on the very first page of the novel, in Parson Tringham's revelation that Tess's family descend from 'the ancient and knightly family of the d'Urbervilles' (Phase the First, i, 14). Peter Morton, among others, has devoted considerable attention to the influence of biology and, in particular, of heredity on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.[125] This is obviously a significant line of research; the issue became increasingly important to Hardy as the century progressed. Indeed William Greenslade makes the point that in the 1889 version of the novel 'there is little sign of the determining influence of heredity working through a decayed family.'[126] Only nine months after the publication of the first edition of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Hardy stated in an interview that '[t]he murder that Tess commits is the hereditary quality, to which I more than once allude, working out in this impoverished descendant of a once noble family. That is logical. And again, it is but a simple tran-

[123] This has also been noted by, among others, John Holloway in 'Hardy's Major Fiction', in *Hardy. A Collection of Critical Essays* ed. by Guerard, 60.

[124] *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 272.

[125] Morton discusses, for example, the influence of Darwin and Weismann *(Essays upon Heredity)* on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and (to a lesser extent) other Hardy novels in *The Vital Science*. For an interesting discussion of the issue of heredity in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* see Jerome H. Buckley, 'Tess and the d'Urbervilles, *Victorians Institute Journal* 20 (1992), 1-12. Buckley does not argue from a biological point of view. Instead he concentrates on the issue of what he describes as 'the aristocratic d'Urberville myth' and Tess's ambivalent response to this.

[126] *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel 1880–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 162.

scription of the obvious that she should make reparation for her sin.'[127] Heredity is thus of considerable importance in understanding *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. While critics have recognised this, they have not paid sufficient attention to how inherited factors combine with social ones in the formation of the habitus of each character, how the habitus influences the course of different characters' lives and how it is modified as a result of environmental factors.

The rustics

The rustics of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* belong to two basic groups: labourers and farmers. Of these two groups it is the latter who receive most attention. The labourers form a more or less anonymous group of 'smockfrocked arithmeticians'[128] who show little concern for the future: they even refuse to try to put aside a little for their old age, believing that 'parish relief was a fuller provision for a man in his old age than any which could result from savings out of their wages during a whole lifetime' (Phase the First, x, 83). The rustics live in the present. They are concerned with survival on a day-to-day basis. The ironical use of the term 'arithmetician' suggests that the rustics have little ability to calculate; they are more at home with their 'ploughs or hoes' (77). Their 'calculations of great nicety' are exercises in self-deception to protect themselves from the harsh reality of their situation. At the same time, ignorance is bliss. Dairyman Crick's milkmaids, for example, are described as a fortunate group: '[t]heir position was perhaps the happiest of all positions in the social scale, being above the line at which neediness ends, and below the line at which the *convenances*[129] begin to cramp natural feeling, and the stress of threadbare modishness makes too little of enough' (Phase the Third, xx, 183). The events of the novel show, however, that the days of this group are numbered. The milkmaids' serene existence is soon to cease: contentment disappears as Tess falls in love with Angel Clare, the dreams of her fellow dairymaids are shattered for ever and death and disaster are imminent. The harmonious existence in the present cannot last because it takes no account of the future. Thought and conversation revolve around day-to-day matters and feelings (the health of the dairy cows, butter production, love). Even the approaching winter, with the drying up of the cows and a decline in job opportunities, hardly features in the girls' dialogues. It is not until towards the end of the novel, in the writing of the letter to Angel Clare, that Izz and Marian attempt to steer fate, and then, characteristically, it is for Tess's benefit rather than their own. The language and punctuation of the letter are clumsy but the generosity and sincerity of the 'two well-wishers' are beyond doubt.

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[127] Ibid., 162–3.

[128] The narrator later notes that smockfrocks were only worn 'by the most old-fashioned of the labourers' (329). The ability to make calculations belongs to the modern predictive world.

[129] (French) proprieties. Editor's note, New Wessex Edition, 381.

Of somewhat higher social standing than paid hands were so-called life-holders[130] such as Tess's father. Once a minor tradesman, with his own horse and cart, he gradually declines in position owing to laziness and an inability to control his drinking habits. Until Parson Tringham informs him of his ancestry, Tess's father accepts his declining status and income. He drags down with him his entire family, who are likened, as earlier stated, to helpless 'passengers in the Durbeyfield ship' (Phase the First, iii, 33). Tess is seen from the very beginning of the novel as a 'passenger', a 'captive', tied to a hopeless situation. The Durbeyfield parents pin all their hopes on Tess and her ability to take advantage of a past which has long since been forgotten. Even when the hope proves false, Durbeyfield is unable to relinquish his dream, telling Tess shortly before his death:

> I'm thinking of sending round to all the old antiqueerians in this part of England [...] asking them to subscribe to a fund to maintain me. I'm sure they'd see it as a romantical, artistical, and proper thing to do. They spend lots o' money in keeping up old ruins, and finding the bones o' things, and such like; and living remains must be more interesting to 'em still, if they only knowed of me. Would that somebody would go round and tell 'em what there is living among 'em, and they thinking nothing of him! If Pa'son Tringham, who discovered me, had lived, he'd ha' done it, I'm sure (Phase the Sixth, l, 471).

Durbeyfield's use of non-standard English and his inability to use the correct form of 'antiquarian' serve to demonstrate the hopelessness of his scheme. His dependence, as a restricted-code user, on concrete images also hampers a more analytical and self-critical assessment of his situation. His faith in Parson Tringham is pathetic. Durbeyfield shows no understanding of the aims and methods of modern archaeology. Durbeyfield expects others to take the initiative on his behalf: he waits to be 'discovered' rather than take action himself. His early death is as much a social and a narrative inevitability as it is a physical one.

Durbeyfield once belonged to what is described in Chapter li as 'the better-informed' class, which included the carpenter, the shoemaker etc. Simon Gatrell points out[131] that when Hardy was reviewing the 1892 manuscript, he added that these artisans 'had formed the backbone of the village life in the past' and 'were the depositaries of the village traditions.'[132] Gatrell suggests that the addition of these words is an indication of Hardy's desire to play the role of the village historian. While that may well have been the case, the importance Hardy attaches to the pres-

[130] The tenant had the right to live in his cottage for the duration of his/her life. This right could be extended to include the children of the tenant. Allusions to life-holders are made in, for example, *Desperate Remedies*, *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

[131] *Hardy the Creator*, 103.

[132] Gatrell defines these traditions in his *Thomas Hardy and the Proper Study of Mankind*: 'We should interpret such traditions broadly, as traditional patterns of thought and behaviour as well as local historical and topographical lore' (156). Gatrell concludes that when this group was forced to move to the towns 'it marked the end of village community as Hardy had understood it and explored it in his first novels' (156).

ervation of tradition is also noteworthy. It is, as already pointed out, the disappearance of the latter caused by the mobility of the rural workforce which was one of Hardy's major sources of regret in the essay on 'The Dorsetshire Labourer.' The death of Durbeyfield results not only in the loss of a home for the family, it is the end of an era. The Durbeyfields are soon forgotten – even their name is 'a fading memory' (Phase the Seventh, liv, 506) – as Angel Clare's enquiries all too clearly show. The new family occupying the cottage has a short and insignificant history in comparison with that of the Durbeyfields: '[t]he new residents were in the garden, taking as much interest in their own doings as if the homestead had never passed its primal time in conjunction with the histories of others, beside which (to him) the histories of these were but as a tale told by an idiot' (Phase the Seventh, liv, 505–6). The Durbeyfields and other dispossessed families were reduced to a life of wandering in the countryside or eking out an existence in the insalubrious working-class quarters of a town or city. Only those families who could successfully adapt their traditional skills to modern conditions and who could accept a transformation of their traditional way of life were able to survive.

The lower/middle class

One such family is that of Dairyman Crick. Crick is a specialist dairyman who manages nearly one hundred milkers. In real life such a man would have hired his herd from a farmer – a system already well-established by the beginning of the eighteenth century.[133] The dairyman frequently paid his rent on a quarterly basis, and deductions were made if the cows calved late or in the event of any other unforeseen mishap. The dairyman agreed not to milk the cows for more than forty weeks in the year, dating from calving. Towards the end of the nineteenth century he was also expected to provide additional fodder for the cattle at his own expense.

The system had certain clear advantages for the dairyman. As Pamela Horn points out, only limited capital was needed: all the dairyman required 'was enough cash to pay his first quarter's rent and to provide the dairy utensils needed.'[134] This, however, was no great problem since such equipment was simple.[135] On the negative side, though, the dairyman stood to lose his life savings if he failed. The position of the dairyman was hence precarious and this is probably why, as Pamela Horn says,

[133] For further details of the Dorset dairy system see Pamela Horn's article of the same name in *The Agricultural History Review* 26 (1978), pt 2, 100–107.

[134] Ibid., 104.

[135] For details of dairy equipment and processes see J. P. Sheldon, *Dairy Farming. Being the Theory, Practice, And Methods of Dairying* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, n.d.). Sheldon's book was published sometime in the early part of the twentieth century. In his introduction he wrote that 'while it is true that several eminent men have devoted much scientific investigation to cheese and butter making, the teachings of science in these industries have not been by any means generally accepted, and the great bulk of cheese and butter makers are working still in their forefathers' groove' (xi). Lists of dairy equipment are to be found in the *Dorset County Chronicle, Somersetshire Gazette.* One such list is reproduced by Pamela Horn ('The Dorset Dairy System', 104) who in turn quotes Kerr, *Bound to the Soil,* 56.

'Dorset dairymen and their families were renowned for their "sobriety, honesty and industry".'[136] Dairyman Crick is clearly no exception. He expects his staff to work hard and maintain good standards of hygiene, but he is a fair and considerate employer who is capable of showing compassion when appropriate.

One of the chief products of Crick's dairy is butter.[137] At the beginning of the twentieth century, J. L. Green could still write that '[t]he county of Dorset is famous now – as it long has been – for what goes by the name of "Dorset" butter, the principal characteristic of which is the large amount of salt, combined with the well "worked" butter.'[138] During the nineteenth century butter-making was a 'primitive, simple sort of business.'[139] Butter-makers knew little of the importance of scientific principles such as the maintenance of the correct temperature to ensure that the cream rises properly. Indeed, a good deal of superstition was still attached to the actual process of butter-making. When the butter will not come, for example, Crick considers consulting Conjuror Trendle's son in Egdon. Characteristically, he – like Henchard – denies having any faith in such characters, admitting at the same time that 'I shall have to go to 'n, if this sort of thing continnys!' (Phase the Third, xxi, 188). The use of dialect here emphasises that such beliefs are in harmony with the local environment. Mrs Crick believes that the problem is that 'somebody in the house is in love' (Phase the Third, xxi, 189), a theory denied by Crick himself. When the milk in the revolving churn suddenly starts to make the right 'flick-flack' sound no one can account for the sudden change, though all accept it gratefully.

The element of superstition attached to butter-making at the time should not be allowed to disguise the fact that Dorset butter-makers were knowledgeable about their trade and unusually skilful. They churned the cream every day. Milk pans and other vessels were kept extremely clean in order to keep the cream sweet. The barrel-churn was washed carefully to remove all traces of butter-milk and avoid the light-coloured streaks that characterise poorly made butter. The coldest, clearest water was used for the purpose. Sheldon explains that the Dorset dairymaids were particularly skilful in gauging the correct amount of salt to be added to the butter:

> the dairymaid generally guesses the quantity of salt to be used, and an experienced and careful person can guess it with surprising accuracy [...] the Dorset dairymaids have got into a better system of butter-making than most of their sisterhood in other parts of the country have done, for Dorset butter has a popularity greater than the butter of any other county.[140]

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[136] 'The Dorset Dairy System', 104. Horn quotes as her source W. Stevenson, *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Dorset* (1812), 453.

[137] Bettey notes that, because of imports of cheese from America at the end of the 1870s, farmers were forced to reduce cheese and butter production and concentrate on the sale of liquid milk. The Cricks do not conform to this pattern. See *Rural Life in Wessex 1500–1900*, 38.

[138] *The Rural Industries of England* (London, 1895), 75.

[139] Sheldon, *Dairy Farming*, 291.

[140] *Dairy Farming*, 320.

In the Cricks' dairy it is Mrs Crick who is mainly responsible for ensuring that standards are maintained. Dairymaids come and go with the seasons. Mrs Crick is a constant source of knowledge and expertise. Like her husband, she is good-natured and takes a personal interest in her employees, doing her utmost, for example, to ensure that Angel Clare's suit succeeds. It is also she who notes that all is not well between the young married couple when they return to Talbothays for the last time together. As she is a restricted-code user, her language is based on concrete personal experience, and her use of dialect suggests warmth and concern. The 'waxen images' simile is extremely evocative and is reminiscent of the images made by such characters as Susan Nonsuch in *The Return of the Native*; Tess and Angel Clare appear to be victims of witchcraft, innocent characters on whom an evil spell has been cast:

> How onnatural the brightness of her eyes did seem, and how they stood like waxen images and talked as if they were in a dream! Didn't it strike 'ee that 'twas so? Tess had always sommat strange in her, and she's not now quite like the proud young bride of a well-be-doing man (Phase the Fifth, xxxvii, 354).

The peace which Tess had experienced at Talbothays was not to return until her short sojourn with Clare at Bramshurst Court at the very end of the novel.

The Cricks enjoy a harmonious existence which is only occasionally disturbed by such events as the tainting of the butter by garlic or a near miss of the London train taking the milk to market. The world outside the valley rarely impinges on their existence. There is no mention in the novel of problems in paying for the hire of the cattle, for example, or disease, discord or discontent among the workers. It is only when Angel Clare enters the dairy that imbalance is introduced: Clare's higher social status introduces segregation into the otherwise homogeneous home, and the dairymaids embark on an infatuation which ultimately leads to their downfall.

Dairy procedure changed but little until the middle of the twentieth century, which means that dairy farmers led secure lives untouched by the modern industrial world long after the exigencies of this world had transformed most other rural occupations. The Cricks are shielded from the suffering around them. The only cloud on their horizon is the fact that they seem to have no son to take over after them. Even this does not appear to affect them unduly, and as they are hirers rather than owners an heir is not a necessity.

Tess, though effectively belonging to the same social class as the Cricks, is forced to leave the traditional society with which she is familiar and confront the modern predictive society. This is a process which starts with her schooling and terminates in her relationship with Angel Clare. Knowledge acquisition does not follow a predictable linear path. As G. Glen Wickens points out, Hardy's fascination with Comte's idea that 'advance is never in a straight line, but in a looped orbit'[141] is in evidence

[141] 'Victorian Theories of Language and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', 112. The quotation from Comte is taken from Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, 58.

throughout *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Predictably, feminist critics such as Margaret R. Higonet have tended to view Tess's relationship with modern society in terms of gender: Tess is seen primarily as a resister against 'men's values and actions.'[142] She represents, according to Higonet, 'the limits of conventional understanding and points to her own unspoken experiences that lie beyond the boundary of the text.' These experiences are not, however, merely – perhaps not even primarily – of a sexual nature. They are best understood in the light of a struggle for survival where survival itself is based on heredity, knowledge, adaptation and language. Tess is an extremely interesting example of how the primary habitus influences the individual's response to environmental and cultural factors and how it can be modified in response to changing conditions, favourable as well as adverse. The sentence '[p]hases of her childhood lurked in her aspect still' (Phase the First, ii, 23) haunts the reader, who understands more and more that it is Tess's childhood experiences which steer her conduct and determine her ultimate fate.

Tess has learned to accept responsibility from an early age. Her mother is weak and her father lazy and inept. She has an ability to learn and a physical beauty which distinguish her from her siblings and indeed from the majority of the village inhabitants. While her name, which is a form of Theresa (Greek for "to glean" or "to reap"),[143] links Tess with Nature, she is also very much a product of the modern civilised society's payment-by-results-system. She has learned the three Rs thoroughly and committed volumes of facts to memory without necessarily understanding them.[144] She continues to learn facts by heart rather than analyse. This is why she is able to repeat word-for-word to Alec d'Urberville Angel's interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. The narrator explains that Tess has an 'acute memory for the letter of Angel Clare's remarks, even when she did not comprehend their spirit' (Phase the Sixth, xlvi, 439). Tess has not been taught to criticise or question, merely to accept without regard to cause, effect or process. While her education has taught her to disregard the 'fast-perishing lumber of superstitions, folk-lore, dialect, and orally transmitted ballads' (Phase the First, iii, 32) of her mother,[145] it has not replaced these with any meaningful or lasting alternative explanation to the mysteries of life. Tess absorbs facts and others' interpretations of them without question because she has not been taught to think for herself.

Her education is not the only reason why Tess is inadequately prepared for the modern predictive society. Her '[p]edigree, ancestral skeletons, monumental record,

[142] 'A Woman's Story: Tess and the Problem of Voice', in *The Sense of Sex. Feminist Perspectives on Hardy*, 15.

[143] R. N. G. Marken, '"Sick for Home": The Theme of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *English Studies in Canada* 4 (Fall 1978), 320. Quoted in Shirley Stave, *The Decline of the Goddess*, 106.

[144] Chapter One shows that the number of subjects covered by the system was gradually increased in 1868, 1871 and 1882. See Chapter One for the subjects included in the system, 80–82.

[145] This is not to deny that Tess, as Dorothy Van Ghent argues, springs from the 'instinctivism', 'fatalism' and 'magic' of folk culture (*The English Novel: Form and Function*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1953, 195–209). She ultimately rejects these under the influence of modern education.

the d'Urberville lineaments' (Phase the First, ii, 25) also play their part. On a very obvious and concrete level, it is Tess's family connections which drive her to Trantridge Farm, where she is seduced by Alec d'Urberville. More subtly, Angel Clare suggests that it is Tess's membership of the 'effete aristocracy' which accounts for her 'want of firmness' in her relations with Alec and her subsequent seduction. As Phillip Mallett points out, this is extremely close to the biological determinism of Maudsley and Weismann.[146] Tess's life may be seen as a concrete example of Weismann's theory of the 'germ plasm', according to which essential characteristics are passed intact from one generation to another. The individual's thoughts, actions and responses are determined by the plasm. The latter has precedence over the individual, whose highly specific skills are not passed on to the next generation.

Tess is thus set apart from Mr and Mrs Crick in two important respects: she has a modern education and she is related to one of the ancient aristocratic families of Dorset. Theoretically these are advantages, although both are ultimately major contributors to Tess's undoing. Tess's formal knowledge not only proves of little use in her adult life, it actually works against her both by giving rise to expectations which do not correspond with her social position and by encouraging her to accept and memorise rather than question and analyse. Ironically her education reinforces rather than counteracts her peasant fatalism and her innate conventionality (see Phase the Second, xiv, 128). She accepts her lot. Tess has little confidence in herself. She has been taught to respect figures of authority and to trust their judgement before her own. She recognises that her connections with the d'Urberville family are too distant to be of any practical relevance. For Tess history serves only to emphasise the insignificance of the individual:

> 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' (Phase the Third, xix, 180)

she tells Angel Clare. This comes close to a recognition of a Darwinian world in which the human element is of limited value.[147] Even more important is the fact that Tess does not see that she is definitely not like thousands and thousands before and after her, that her situation *is* different because she occupies an uncomfortable in-between position, a no-man's land between her aristocratic lineage and her peasant existence.

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[146] 'Hardy and Time', in *Reading Thomas Hardy* ed. by Pettit, 168. Mallett points out that Hardy was reading Weismann's *Essay on Heredity* in 1890. As Mallett shows, Weismann's ideas are clearly reflected in Hardy's poem 'The Pedigree', dated 1916 and published in *Moments of Vision* (1917). What Mallett does not bring out, however, is that the date of 'The Pedigree' suggests a lasting interest on Hardy's part in the issue of biological determinism.

[147] For an excellent discussion of this aspect of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* see Peter R. Morton, '*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*: a Neo-Darwinian Reading', *Southern Review* VII (1974), 38–50.

Tess is haunted by her 'implacable' past which ultimately forces her to recognise that '[b]ygones would never be bygones till she was a bygone herself' (Phase the Sixth, xlv, 421). For a short while she is able to forget her past and fall in love with Angel. At the same time she is subject to what the narrator describes as 'the ache of modernism', the tendency of the age 'to see numbers of to-morrows just all in a line, the first of them the biggest and clearest, the others getting smaller and smaller as they stand farther away; but they all seem very fierce and cruel and as if they said "I'm coming! Beware of me! Beware of me!"' (Phase the Third, xix, 177). Tess's pain is caused by what David J. De Laura calls in his famous essay entitled '"The Ache of Modernism in Hardy's Later Novels"' the 'major ethical contrast' between Nature, which represents a more 'genuine and personal ethical mode', and 'Civilisation', represented by 'social law, convention, and in the last analysis the moral and intellectual constraints of Christianity.'[148] While it is true, as the narrator shows, that Tess cannot escape the consequences of the ache of modernism – she recognises, for example, that her pregnancy breaks a social law but not a natural one – her problems go much deeper than this. Her primary habitus does not equip her for bridging the gulf either between her historical roots and her present situation or between the demands of Nature and those of modern educated society.

Experience of life does not cause a modification of Tess's habitus and lead to an increased ability to cope with problems, as it does with the majority of group-two characters. Instead, she is actually incapacitated by experience. The reference to Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster* at the beginning of Chapter XV is highly significant. The quotation – '"[b]y experience", says Roger Ascham, "we find a short way by a long wandering"' (Phase the Second, 138) – is part of a criticism of experience as a method of teaching. Ascham wrote:

> Learning teacheth more in one year than experience in twenty, and learning teacheth safely, when experience maketh more miserable than wise. He hazardeth sore that waxeth wise by experience [...] We know by experience itself that it is a marvellous pain to find out but a short way by long wandering.[149]

It has already been shown, however, that the teaching Tess receives at the National school is not of the kind to enable her to solve problems and survive in an unstable modern world.

The indeterminacy of Tess's position is clearly reflected in her language. It has been mentioned that in the so-called 'Fifth Edition' of 1895 and in the Macmillan Wessex Edition of 1912 Hardy reduced Tess's use of dialect 'to give her a more ambivalent linguistic position.' As has been noted by many critics, Tess speaks two languages, the dialect spoken at home and standard English, which she had learnt at school. She has little use for standard English until she meets Angel Clare, from

[148] *English Literary History* 34 (1967), 397.

[149] *The Schoolmaster* ed. by Lawrence V. Ryan (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967; first published in 1570), 50.

whom she picks up vocabulary as well as his accent. As Hardy himself stated, Tess only uses dialect when excited by joy, surprise, or grief. As G. Wickens says, the two distinct languages in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* may be classified as 'the simple and sensuous' and 'the abstract and learned.'[150] The two forms blend together. Whereas Wickens focuses on Hardy's style in the novel as a whole and pays less attention to the speech of individual characters, the following discussion will show that Tess's language repays examination in its own right.

With her mother, Tess discusses practical, day-to-day issues. Her language is interspersed with dialect, particularly when discussing emotive issues, and she makes considerable use of the first person singular. She uses the restricted code to explain personal facts rather than to discuss issues of a more general nature. When Joan d'Urberville, for example, tells Tess that she should have been more careful if she had not intended to marry Alec d'Urberville, she replies:

> How could I be expected to know? I was a child when I left this house four months ago. Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men-folk? Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to fend against, because they read novels that tell them of these tricks; but I never had the chance o'learning in that way, and you did not help me! (Phase the Second, xii, 117).

Tess's lack of knowledge about the ways of the world is emphasised in her use of non-standard English. After the loss of Sorrow, she takes a more philosophical view of life. Her language is almost poetic as she explains to Angel Clare, '[m]y life looks as if it had been wasted for want of chances! When I see what you know, what you have read, and seen, and thought, I feel what a nothing I am!' (Phase the Third, xix, 179). Tess again makes repeated use of the first person singular, but this time to look out from herself to a wider world of knowledge and experience. Only at the very end of the novel, during the stay at Bramshurst Court, does Tess realise that her only chance of happiness is to dismiss the past. In her attempt to do this she makes the present into a tangible presence: 'I am not going to think outside of now' (Phase the Seventh, lviii, 530). This is not the comment of a restricted-code user, as it represents Tess's conscious choice to limit her field of vision and self-expression. She uses language to reinforce the physical separation from the outside world which Bramshurst Court represents: '[a]ll is trouble outside there: inside here content' (Phase the Seventh, lviii, 531), words which both echo at the same time as they contradict the two lines from Browning's *Pippa Passes* which Angel Clare cites as Tess leaves him after their short honeymoon: 'God's *not* in his heaven: all's *wrong* with the world!' (Phase the Fifth, xxxvii, 356).

Tess's final words are, significantly, 'I am ready' (Phase the Seventh, lviii, 539). She gives herself up to her fate: '[i]t is as it should be' (Phase the Seventh, lviii, 539),

[150] J. T. Laird, *The Shaping of 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles'* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 184–5. Quoted in Wickens, 'Victorian Theories of Language and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', 102 and 115.

she tells Angel Clare. These last simple words contain the core of Tess's philosophy. She does not question if she has acted wisely or if the world has been just to her. She seeks no alternative to the present but calmly – indeed almost with joy – accepts her fate. It is a destiny which her education and heredity together have produced for her. It is not, as Tony Tanner suggests, that Alec and Angel drive Tess to her death.[151] Nor is it basically that Tess falls short of her potentialities, as Roy Morrell suggests,[152] although she certainly possesses considerable ones. Tess is not a survivor. She has not been taught to find the answer to difficulties. Darwin's *The Descent of Man* points out that for a woman to reach the same standard as a man, she must be 'trained to energy and perseverance, and [...] have her reason and imagination exercised to the highest point.'[153] While Tess has learned the importance of energy and long suffering, she has not cultivated her ability to reason and imagine. Throughout the novel she is portrayed as a victim of her past. She does not understand this until the end of the novel (while staying at Bramshurst Court) by which time it is too late to divert the course of events. Tess recognises this fact and indeed finds some comfort in it. In one sense, of course, Tess is as much a victim of the novel and of the narrator's agenda as she is of her past because it is she who is given the task of making the reasons for Angel Clare's inability to adapt both clear and comprehensible to the reader. Tess's sacrifice is both literal and narrative. It is one of the ironies of the novel that while Tess herself asks few questions and shows little tendency to analyse, her life history is in itself the key to understanding what is required for survival in the modern predictive society.

The upper-middle/upper class

Angel Clare's weaknesses are rooted in his family background. His primary habitus acts as an obstacle to insight well into manhood. The Clare family has a geocentric, pre-Copernican view of life which becomes increasingly foreign to Angel, particularly after his experiences at Talbothays. Angel's father is a type of clergyman who 'within the last twenty years, has well-nigh dropped out of contemporary life' (Phase the Fourth, xxv, 225). The vicarage is divorced from modern life. Even more significant is the fact that from his youth old Mr Clare had already made up his mind about the deeper questions of life 'and admitted no further reasoning on them thenceforward' (Phase the Fourth, xxv, 226). Principles have lost all significance in his energetic application of an unquestioning philosophy. Mr Clare belongs to the

[151] 'Colour and movement in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Critical Quarterly* X (1968), reprinted in *Hardy. The Tragic Novels* ed. by Draper, 182–208.

[152] *Thomas Hardy. The Will and the Way*, 34. Morrell maintains that Hardy 'is clearly keen to suggest a curious mingling of strength and weakness [...] in her [Tess's] will; and to indicate how far Tess fell short of her considerable potentialities' (34). The latter consist in 'physical strength and stoical endurance' (33). These are, however, insufficient for survival without the ability to rationalise and solve problems rather than merely endure.

[153] Vol. II, *Selection in Relation to Sex*, 329.

Calvinist school and believes in predestination. Determinism in all its aspects rules his life. His is a consistency based on a form of self-inflicted blindness.

As Chapter Two has already briefly indicated in its discussion of *Essays and Reviews*, Angel's brothers are also rigid in their views. It is suggested that it is the pastoral training – which is compared to a mechanical process ('the lathe of a systematic tuition', Phase the Fourth, xxv, 228) – that is responsible for Felix and Cuthbert's unquestioning conformity. The brothers' short-sightedness is of both a physical and a metaphorical nature and reflects 'growing mental limitations' (Phase the Fourth, xxv, 228). Felix is totally preoccupied with the Church, Cuthbert with Cambridge. Those outside these two realms 'were to be tolerated rather than reckoned with and respected' (Phase the Fourth, xxv, 229). Neither brother has the heart and warmth of his father. Both Cuthbert and Felix are thus weak intellectually as well as emotionally and have none of the advantages of either the rationalist modern predictive society or the humane traditional society.

Angel Clare also has a strong conventional streak. David J. De Laura suggests that in this respect he is associated with J. S. Mill and Matthew Arnold: his 'sin, like that of the later Arnold, is precisely his imperfect modernism, his slavery in the ethical sphere to "custom and conventionality"'. De Laura concludes that Angel Clare becomes for Hardy 'the representative of a whole generation of "advanced" but misdirected thought.'[154] This comes out most clearly in Clare's views on religion, which absorbed Hardy from the very early stages of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.[155] Clare represents an uneasy modern compromise between the scientific and the religious, the educated and the traditional. For much of the novel he is a misfit: he becomes increasingly estranged from members of his family; his privileged position at Talbothays isolates him from all except Tess; he rejects the role of a husband, and he fails miserably in Brazil. Clare is unable to commit himself wholeheartedly to any one cause because the dictates of his religious upbringing and his modern education pull him in different directions. Not until the very end of the novel does he finally find happiness in abandoning himself completely to Tess. There is no compromise here, and the joy which results is unqualified.

From an early age Clare is brought up to be intolerant of all that does not fit in with the narrow views of his parents. His own studies also lead to a form of rejection: at the same time as he gradually begins to realise the restrictions of the conventionality and extreme religious views of his parents, he feels growing aversion to the principles and values of modern urban society. It is difficult for Clare to find a compromise between the old and the new. He suffers from a form of rootlessness for which modern education is unable to compensate. Clare does not believe that education has the power to affect more than the surface of the individual's thoughts and ideas. Interestingly, this

[154] '"The Ache of Modernism"', 382 and 385.
[155] Ibid., 388–9.

aspect of Clare's character is expressed in the form of a biological metaphor in which education is compared to the epidermis or outer layer of skin:

> He held that education had as yet but little affected the beats of emotion and impulse on which domestic happiness depends. It was probable that, in the lapse of ages, improved systems of moral and intellectual training would appreciably, perhaps considerably, elevate the involuntary and even the unconscious instincts of human nature; but up to the present day culture, as far as he could see, might be said to have affected only the mental epiderm of those lives which had been brought under its influence (Phase the Fourth, xvi, 236–7).

It is the primary habitus which has the most powerful influence on the individual. This is why Clare finds it difficult to shake off the conformism of his upbringing. He believes that what he values most is 'intellectual liberty' (Phase the Third, xviii, 168). Yet he is to a considerable degree bound by convention. He believes that as a result of his experiences at Talbothay he sees 'something new in life and humanity' (Phase the Third, xviii, 169), and yet he persists in judging Tess in the light of his parents' principles and prejudices.

The 'hard logical deposit' of Angel's character is indeed no more than a euphemism for his embedded prejudices. Hardy hints at the depth of these by means of a geological metaphor: 'Within the remoter depths of his constitution, so gentle and affectionate as he was in general, there lay hidden a hard logical deposit, like a vein of metal in a soft loam, which turned the edge of everything that attempted to traverse it. It had blocked his acceptance of the Church; it blocked his acceptance of Tess' (Phase the Fifth, xxxvi, 340). That Clare refuses to underwrite Article Four appears at least on the surface to be an indication of modern liberated views on religion in the spirit of the *Essays and Reviews*.[156] The justification of his views to his father which follows immediately after, however, shows that such is not the case: Clare quotes the Epistle to the Hebrews to explain that his 'whole instinct in matters of religion is towards reconstruction' (Phase the Third, xviii, 166), but what he means by reconstruction is in fact conservation, preservation of '*those things which cannot be shaken*' (Phase the Third, xviii, 166).[157] It is essentially a highly conservative view of

[156] By refusing to subscribe to the articles Clare also forfeited his right to go to university, at least in his father's eyes. For a description of the regulations regarding subscription to the articles and admission to the two universities, see Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, 169–70. After 1856 B.A. students were not required to subscribe to the articles. This did not apply to advanced degrees and fellowships, however, where the rule was not relaxed until 1871. In writing about the clergy in the nineteenth century, Brown observes: 'In an age when vocation was not stressed as much as it is today a man might "take orders" without so much searching of conscience, especially when public opinion among his social equals set a high value upon the duty of filling family livings, of at least continuing a family tradition.' See *A History of the English Clergy 1800–1900*, 128.

[157] Bruce Johnson suggests that 'the idea of constructing, or building, or in general *restoring*, religion is uncongenial to Hardy. Angel's cold application of intellect to the evolved body of religion makes it seem to easy to "reconstruct", to subtract and demolish, as though one were working with a badly constructed building.' See 'The Perfection of Species' in *Nature and the Victorian Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) ed. by U. C. Knoepflmacher and G. B. Tennyson, 265.

reconstruction that Clare adopts. This is also true of his rejection of Tess. He does not deny the respectability of his young wife: it is the 'principle' that Tess is not the innocent, virginal rustic he had assumed her to be that causes him to cast her off. One unfortunate past experience colours his entire vision of Tess. Clare refuses to see that Tess is still the loving and trusting woman that he married. He has a fixed picture of the young dairymaid, a dream based on what he has been taught to believe are the necessary qualities of a young wife, and he proves unable to face up to the true facts of the situation. Clare is too insecure in himself to accept responsibility for the consequences of his decision to marry Tess. Propriety dictates that the two must live together for a few days after the marriage. When this period is over Clare feels free to abandon Tess to her fate and he retreats to Brazil where he believes his past will not be able to catch up with him. He thinks he is seeking revenge on society: the truth is that he is merely running away.

The turning-point is the conversation with the stranger in Brazil. Only now does Angel realise that he has been ruled by rigid 'general principles' which have clouded his vision and blinded him to 'the particular instance' (Phase the Sixth, xlix, 465). His reunion with Tess represents an abandonment of the principles of his past and a new insight into the value of the present. Angel now looks with his heart rather than his intellect. The husband who could utter the simple words '[l]et her finish her sleep' (Phase the Seventh, lviii, 538) to the police at Stonehenge is very different from the lover whose flowery words at Talbothays were based on a vision which had little foundation in reality. At the end of the novel Clare obeys his passion rather than the codes and conventions ingrained in him from the past.

Unlike Alec d'Urberville, Angel Clare changes and is rewarded with happiness, albeit for a short period only. He is powerless to withstand the dictates of social justice, and Tess must die as a result of her crime. At the same time, he ultimately proves himself capable of recognising the limitations and even falsity of the ingrained principles which have steered his own life thus far. Tess is the sacrifice needed to bring about this new insight. Even now, however, Angel is seen to need the support of a Durbeyfield: he is pictured at the end of the novel walking 'hand in hand' (Phase the Seventh, lix, 541) with Liza-Lu, the 'spiritualized image of Tess' who is Clare's natural companion both during and after the execution (Phase the Seventh, lix, 541). There is a feeling that Tess lives on in her sister, united with a transformed Angel Clare who has the potential to provide security and happiness because he has finally experienced both for the first time in his life. Tess is the reason that Angel Clare is given a new start in life. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is one of Hardy's most pronounced affirmations in the belief of the law of the survival of the fittest. At the same time it demonstrates that fitness is not wholly a matter of inheritance but may also be learned, or not learned, as the case may be.

Summary

Despite the fact that *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* is concerned with characters in an agricultural community, rustics play a minor part in the novel. Their clothing and attitudes relate them to a past which is already becoming extinct. Even the dairymaids – who have, the narrator suggests, a comfortable position in society – have no future. Their jobs disappear at the end of the season. Of the three closest to Tess, one commits suicide and the other two are reduced to eking out a subsistence as field labourers.

The couple who are most in harmony with their environment and consistently most content are the Cricks. They enjoy the relative security of established dairy farmers in a particularly lush part of Dorset. They are isolated from the problems of modern society. This does not mean, however, that they are unable to take advantage of modern developments such as the railway and the larger markets which had opened up as a result of the latter. The Cricks combine the chief advantages of the traditional society with the opportunities offered by modern society. As long as dairy practice remains largely unchanged and they are able to pay the rent of the herd, there is no real threat to their existence. Significant changes in dairying are a long way off in the future, and the Cricks seem assured of a successful and contented existence at least for the remainder of their working lives. Thus far group two conforms to the picture presented in Hardy's earlier novels.

The pattern changes with the introduction of Tess, who is one of the few group-two characters who are not survivors. Heredity and education combine in Tess to produce a character who is destined to be a victim – 'once a victim, always a victim', as Tess herself affirms. She freely offers her life at Stonehenge ostensibly in payment of a debt to society, but in reality as the price that must be paid for a new life for her husband and Liza-Lu. In one sense Angel Clare makes himself worthy of such a sacrifice by finally managing to cast off the conventions and rigid principles of his past and see Tess for who she really is. The reader nonetheless regrets that such a sacrifice must be made as part of the law of the survival of the fittest. An essential difference between Tess and Angel is that Angel learns to solve problems by analysing and adapting. Tess passively accepts the course of events as her destiny. It is significant that Hardy's final novel, *Jude the Obscure*, repeats the idea that when education does not reflect the needs of modern man and develop the skills needed by society, it has a negative influence on the individual emotionally, intellectually and socially. This is particularly important for the rustics, for whom education represents the sole means of entering the modern predictive society. The lives of Tess and Jude bear witness to this cruel but inescapable fact.

THE WELL-BELOVED

Not long after Hardy and Tillotson's had cancelled their agreement for the publication of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in September 1889, Tillotson's requested a new 60,000-word serial (half the length of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*), which should be light

and divisible into twelve parts. An agreement to this effect was signed on 14 February 1890. Hardy had started working on the new serial – entitled 'The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved' – at the end of 1891, although rudiments of it can be found in his diary in 1884 and 1889.[158] The serial was published on a weekly basis in the *Illustrated London News* from October to December 1882. It was substantially revised and published in book form in March 1897.[159]

The Well-Beloved was generally favourably reviewed. The reviewer for the *Academy* praised Hardy for his 'perfection of directness' in presenting the extreme case of a sculptor who falls in love with three generations of Avices: 'never at any moment does the narrative verge on the ludicrous, comic though the scheme of it is in the abstract.'[160] Not all readers find the narrative convincing, of course. Indeed, the point is that Hardy never meant it to be realistic. *The Well-Beloved* should be read against the background of the following lines about the relationship between art and realism, written by Hardy in 1890 and already quoted above:

> Art is a disproportioning – (i.e. distorting, throwing out of proportion) – of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities, which, if merely copied or reported inventorially, might possibly be observed, but would more probably be overlooked. Hence 'realism' is not Art.[161]

These lines are, as Michael Millgate has pointed out, particularly relevant to *The Well-Beloved*. They explain the following remark in the 1912 Preface to the novel: 'the interest aimed at is of an ideal or subjective nature, and frankly imaginative, verisimilitude in the sequence of events has been subordinated to the said aim' (Preface, viii). The reviewer for the *World* viewed the novel both as a piece of realism *and* fiction and used this as the basis of one of his major criticisms of the novel: '[o]f all forms of sex-mania in fiction we have no hesitation in pronouncing the most unpleasant to be the Wessex-mania of Thomas Hardy.'[162] Critics who criticise *The Well-Beloved* for its lack of realism have missed one of the most salient features of the novel. *The Well-Beloved* is clearly part of a general social and philosophical movement which had begun in the 1880s and had come to a peak in the 1890s, a movement described by Donald David Stone as 'subjectivity.'[163] Stone suggests that it originated with Walter Pater, who shifted emphasis away from 'the primacy of objective reality to the primacy of the individual's singular awareness of reality.' Through

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[158] See *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 171 and 226.

[159] The main changes between the two versions are outlined in the New Wessex Edition (161–191), in which substantial sections from the *Illustrated London News* are reprinted. These changes are also discussed in J. Hillis Miller's *Fiction and Repetition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), 147–75. My discussion of *The Well-Beloved* is based on the revised 1897 book version, although a short comparison of the two versions, based on Gatrell's account in *Hardy the Creator. A Textual Biography*, 141–164, is included before the discussion of the three groups in order to identify Hardy's priorities in the 1897 version.

[160] March 27 1897, 345. In Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 294.

[161] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 239.

[162] March 24 1897, 13. In *Thomas Hardy. His Career as a Novelist*, 295.

[163] *Novelists in a Changing World*. The discussion of subjectivity is on p.19.

Pierston Hardy revealed the special qualities of his subjective awareness of reality and his own creativity in a story which is both larger and smaller than real life. By Hardy's own definition *The Well-Beloved* is primarily a work of art about art. At the same time it is also a story about knowledge.

A brief review of Hardy's revisions of the 'Pursuit of the Well-Beloved' text – the most extensive ones that Hardy made to any of his serial texts for book publication – sheds light on the way his mind was working in the late 1890s and may lend some assistance to a comprehension of *Jude the Obscure*.[164] Gatrell shows that both the serial and the book describe one man's search for an idealised form of the loved one and that this search centres round three generations of the same family. The major difference between the two versions lies in how the reader is encouraged to perceive the concept of the well-beloved. At the same time, Hardy endeavoured to make the narrative more credible, hence the removal of Pearston's (as the name was spelt in the serial) two marriages and his attempted suicide. The criticism of the institution of marriage which is contained in the serial is modified in the book version, and the picture of Wessex is brought into line with the coherent view of Wessex which developed as a result of the Osgood, McIlvaine edition. Gatrell argues that some of the changes were motivated by a desire to remove poorly conceived and written sentences and passages. The 1897 version is more confident and reflects a consistency of thought which is missing in the serial version.

A number of changes are of direct relevance to the concerns addressed in this book. Unlike the serial version, *The Well-Beloved* introduces Pierston (as the name is now spelt) as a man who 'differed from the local wayfarers', Part First, i, 3). The sense of Wessex as a definable place is much more apparent in the book version: Portland is described in the present rather than the past tense used in the serial version. As the following discussion shows, the special nature of Portland and its customs is highly relevant to the subject of the present book.

Unlike the serial version, the very first chapter of the novel introduces Pierston as a man who has experienced 'contrasting societies, peoples, manners, and scenes' (Part First, i, 3). This experience is briefly passed over in very general terms in the serial, but in the novel it is crucial to an understanding of Pierston's adult relationship with the island of his birth. Pierston wavers between the sophisticated urbanism of his professional life and the inward-looking, conservative ways of the island of his birth. In his discussion of the changes made in the first chapter's third paragraph, Gatrell maintains that these are part of 'an attempt to reinforce the reader's awareness of the roots the man has in the "longely rock"' of Portland. The 'otherness' of Portland, the uneasy mingling of the past with the present and the uniqueness of the peninsula's appearance are much more strongly emphasised in the book version than in the earlier serial.

[164] For this reason alone it makes more sense to discuss *The Well-Beloved* before *Jude the Obscure*. *Jude the Obscure* also constitutes a more natural conclusion to the discussion of the development of Hardy's views on knowledge as it is reflected in his fourteen published novels.

Gatrell suggests that this is part of Hardy's attempt to make 'more probable the strange nature and experiences of the returning man.' As the following discussion will show, Gatrell's conclusion is correct as far as it goes, but it does not go quite far enough: it is only when the special nature of Portland society is put in the context of Darwin's theory of natural selection that an important part of the meaning of the novel and how this relates to the subject of this book become apparent.

Summarising the changes in the first chapter of *The Well-Beloved*, Gatrell concludes that the revisions, though not major, are highly significant. Of the first three chapters of the novel he writes: 'there are now embedded two important fresh ideas – uncertainty about the essential qualities of the journeying man, and the ambiguity of the environment to which he is returning.' Additions to subsequent chapters establish a harmony between the pagan nature of the island and what Gatrell describes as 'the quality of the mind' of the protagonist Pierston, born and brought up on the Isle of Slingers. The implications of this comment are investigated in the later discussion of Pierston's habitus and its effect on his conduct.

It is impossible to appreciate fully what Hardy is saying about knowledge and survival in *The Well-Beloved* without understanding the special nature of the Isle of Slingers (Portland). The latter is presented as a piece of immutable history: '[m]ore than ever the spot seemed what it was said once to have been, the ancient Vindilia Island, and the Home of the Slingers' (Part First, i, 3). Hardy looks back to Roman times (Vindilia is the Roman name for Portland). 'The Slingers were the ancient defenders of the isle, who used slings as weapons.'[165] Portland is an ancient geological feature, part of the mainland and yet separate from it. At the same time it has human features, with a 'personal temperature' (measured by the sun on the rock); it even 'snores' (the sounds of the quarrymen and stone sawyers). The reader is reminded of the earlier animation of Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native*, which is also a symbol of an immutable past.[166]

The Isle of Slingers is an excellent setting for a tale which is based on historical continuity, on a repetition of a pattern of events and phenomena which could only recur in a small isolated community characterised by a high rate of intermarriage between families (as evidence of the latter Hardy emphasises the fact that there is an extreme paucity of surnames on the peninsula – 'there being but half-a-dozen christian and surnames in the whole island' (Part First, i, 4) – and that the inhabitants

[165] Editor's footnote. New Wessex Edition, 152.

[166] D. H. Lawrence's description of animated Egdon Heath points to an important difference between the heath and Portland. Whereas the former is fertile and productive, the latter is largely sterile, its one 'crop' being stone: 'What matters if some are drowned or dead, and others preaching or married: what matter, any more than the withering heath, the reddening berries, the seedy furze, and the dead fern of one autumn afternoon of Egdon? The Heath persists. Its body is strong and fecund, it will bear many more crops beside this. Here is the sombre, latent power that will go on producing, no matter what happen [sic] to the product.' See *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays* ed. by Steele, 25. The Isle of Slingers has no such 'sombre, latent power.'

have a remarkably similar appearance). John Symonds Udal pointed out that the Isle of Portland repelled influence from outside: '[t]he inhabitants, who say that they are Phoenicians, have never, until lately, allowed any English, or "foreigners", as they term us, to hold land in their territory, but have kept themselves a distinct people.'[167] Hardy describes the inhabitants of the Isle of Slingers as 'a curious and well-nigh distinct people, cherishing strange beliefs and singular customs, now for the most part obsolescent.'[168]

Pierston clearly recognises that he belongs to a race set apart. He describes his descent and birthplace as 'weird' and his race as 'strange' and 'visionary.' His primary habitus is formed by experiences and influences which deviate significantly from the mainland. The Isle of Slingers is essential for the realisation of his creative power. It is also, however, one of the main reasons why this power is threatened. The influence of the theory of Natural Selection is apparent in the presentation of the Isle of Slingers and Pierston's relations with the latter. As it is a small community with a high incidence of inbreeding, the opportunities for diversification and the development of variants with a strong survival potential are limited. As long as Pierston's creative power is bound up with repeated generations of the same family it is doomed. One is reminded of the conclusion to Darwin's discussion of Natural Selection already quoted above:

> although small isolated areas probably have been in some respects highly favourable for the production of new species, yet [...] the course of modification will generally have been more rapid on large areas; and what is more important, [...] the new forms produced on large areas, which already have been victorious over many competitors, will be those that will spread most widely, will give rise to most new varieties and species, and will thus play an important part in the changing history of the organic world.[169]

Pierston's creativity thus had very limited prospects for expansion as long as it was reliant on a few select inhabitants of the four-mile long peninsula of the Isle of Slingers.

Critics have compared the creativity of Pierston with that of Hardy himself. J. B. Bullen, for example, suggests that *The Well-Beloved* is inspired by 'the close link between the erotic and the creative in Hardy's mind.'[170] He concludes that '[i]n this respect *The Well-Beloved* comes closer to the sources of Hardy's own creative life than his other novels.' Pierston's romantic fascination with the three Avices and its link with creativity comes, to use Bullen's own words, from 'Hardy's inner life.' It is also possible that Hardy gained inspiration from the work of Rossetti, whose work was familiar to him and who created a type of female loveliness similar to that pursued

[167] Udal, whose book *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore* was published in 1922, is quoting from *Angels, Cherubim, and Gods* (1861), no page.The quotation is from p. 120 of *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore.*
[168] 1912 preface.
[169] *The Origin of Species*, 88.
[170] *The Expressive Eye*, 229 and 231.

by Pierston.[171] While Bullen admits that 'Pierston is not a portrait of Rossetti' he contends that 'there are sufficient correspondences between the life of the sculptor and the life of the painter to suggest an analogy.'

Rather more convincing is the analysis presented by John Fowles in his essay 'Hardy and the Hag.'[172] Fowles relates his comments on *The Well-Beloved* to Gilbert J. Rose's psychological discussion of Fowles's own novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Rose maintained that some children remember particularly well the transformation from extreme infancy, in which the child's identity is closely bound to the mother's, to the first consciousness of a separate identity and the beginnings of an adult sense of reality. Fowles summarises Rose's findings as follows:

> what seemingly stamps itself indelibly on this kind of infant psyche is a pleasure in the fluid, polymorphic nature of the sensuous impressions, visual, tactile, auditory and the rest, that he receives; and so profoundly that he cannot, even when the detail of this intensely auto-erotic experience has retreated into the unconscious, refrain from tampering with reality – from trying to recover, in other words, the early oneness with the mother that granted this ability to make the world mysteriously and deliciously change meaning and appearance. He was once a magician with a wand; and given the right other predisposing and environmental factors, he will one day devote his life to trying to regain the unity and the power by recreating adult versions of the experience [...] he will be an artist.[173]

The artist strives after the unattainable just as Pierston strives after an impossible dream: the closer Pierston appears to come to fulfilling his dream, the less desirable it becomes. Fowles suggests that growing tensions between Hardy and his wife Emma also played their part, and that these encouraged Hardy to pursue his dreams in his writing.

Fowles emphasises the importance of Hardy's mother in stimulating and encouraging creativity. Gittings makes a similar point, says Fowles, when he points out that Hardy repeatedly created the same kind of woman who was a replica of his mother. Fowles concludes that the three Avices are 'maternal muses who grant the power to comprehend and palliate the universal condition of mankind, which is, given the ability of the human mind to choose and imagine other than the chosen or the actual course of events, a permanent state of loss.'[174] This is an immensely interesting theory, and it is particularly pertinent to the subject of the present study. What Fowles is suggesting, although he does not of course use these words, is that Hardy's primary habitus was an integral part of his creativity and of his perception of how man knows and understands the world. It is highly significant that in this, his penul-

[171] For a succinct discussion of the similarities between Rossetti and Hardy see Bullen, *The Expressive Eye*, 229–31.
[172] In *Thomas Hardy After Fifty Years* ed. by Lance St John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1977), 28–42.
[173] 31.
[174] 49.

timate novel, Hardy focuses his attention exclusively on group two. In the real world, too, the class element had less impact on relations on the Isle of Slingers (Portland) where all families were interrelated. The rich members of the community such as the Bencombs have already left the peninsula. The only mention of poverty or distress is on the very last page, in the form of the picturesque but insanitary Elizabethan cottages to be pulled down by Pierston. The few characters in more humble circumstances are either so peripheral as to be of little importance to the narrative or, as in the case of the second Avice, have little real existence outside their relations with Pierston.

The Well-Beloved is particularly valuable as an indication of Hardy's self-knowledge as an artist, and it also sheds light on how he explored the nature and role of knowledge in the modern predictive society in his final novel. Both *The Well-Beloved* and *Jude the Obscure* deal with the crushing of a dream which culminates in destruction as well as revelation: Pierston lives on, but loses his artistic power. His loss is also a gain, as he learns the value of true friendship as opposed to love. Jude dies having finally been forced to accept that his dreams of knowledge are not compatible with the values of the modern world. His loss is total. Both characters work in stone, a hard and unyielding material. Both are skilful and yet neither reaches his full potential because he is trapped in a dream which is doomed from the start. Neither Pierston nor Jude lives in the 'real' world of the present. Both are firmly rooted in the past, although tragically neither sees this until the end. Hardy used the special isolated and antiquarian nature of the Isle of Slingers and Christminster to reinforce this fact. His last two novels present group-two characters with very special qualities and strengths. These are, however, out of harmony with the demands of the modern predictive society. Neither can survive without sacrificing a vital part of his personality. Pierston makes this sacrifice, albeit unwittingly; Jude does not.

Pierston and Jude reflect the response of Hardy the author and Hardy the man to the demands of the modern predictive society. After the publication of *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy the author returned to what he considered the more congenial as well as safer genre of poetry, in which he felt able to express his thoughts in a form less likely to be attacked by the general public.[175] Hardy the man spent two to three weeks in London and then retreated from Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations to 'the charm of a lonely Continent',[176] crossing the Channel to France and proceeding to Switzerland. While in Lausanne he composed the poem 'Lausanne.

[175] Hardy recorded in *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy* on October 17 1896: '[p]oetry. Perhaps I can express more fully in verse ideas and emotions which run counter to the inert crystallized opinion – hard as a rock – which the vast body of men have vested interests in supporting. To cry out in a passionate poem that (for instance) the Supreme Mover of Movers, the Prime Force or Forces, must be either limited in power, unknowing or cruel [...] will cause them merely a shake of the head; but to put it in argumentative prose will make them sneer, or foam, and set all the literary contortionists jumping upon me, a harmless agnostic, as if I were a clamorous atheist . . .', 302.

[176] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 310.

In Gibbon's old garden: 11–12 p.m. June 27: 1897', the final lines of which are a quotation from Milton's *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*: '[t]ruth like a bastard comes into the world/Never without ill-fame to him who gives her birth.'[177] In *The Well-Beloved* Hardy tells the truth about himself as an artist; in *Jude the Obscure* he is concerned with the truth about the destruction of the traditional society by modern society. Both kinds of truth constitute a form of knowledge which involves risks in its revelation: *The Well-Beloved* is a rare example of Hardy exposing his inner self to the public; *Jude the Obscure* is a daring exposure of the limitations of a class-bound educational and social system, and of the convention of marriage. Both types of exposure are clear indications of what Hardy felt to be the general direction of society at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The following discussion of *The Well-Beloved* centres on Pierston and his relationships with the three Avices. These also provide some indication of the source, nature and development of Hardy's creativity. The latter is a highly diffuse and transitory quality, as reflected by the Christian name 'Avice', which means 'migratory' bird ('avis' in Latin). 'Caro' suggests 'flesh.' Avice Caro is the embodiment of Pierston's creativity.[178] A triangular relationship thus appears in the novel whereby Pierston embodies Hardy's creativity just as Avice embodies Pierston's. As J. Hillis Miller wrote in the introduction to the New Wessex edition of the novel, '[i]n *The Well-Beloved* [...] love is intensified when the beloved is the repetition of an earlier beloved, and this fact is obscurely associated with the artist's powers of representation.'[179] The three Avices represent three different levels of knowledge and education and stimulate contrasting responses from Pierston. The following discussion ends with an examination of Pierston's relationship with Marcia, which marks the end of the protagonist's infatuation with the beloved and hence of his creativity.

All of the main characters belong to the lower, middle or upper end of the middle class. The closest one comes to a group-one character is the second Avice, who takes in other people's laundry and is clearly used to hardship. The family had, however, been running a stone business for generations. It is Avice's membership of one of the three major families on the peninsula which is emphasised rather than her limited circumstances as a laundress. There are also a number of society people mentioned; they only make brief appearances, however, and have little permanent effect on the action.[180] *The Well-Beloved* has a good deal to say about knowledge and education; indeed, the novel explores three different perspectives on the educational system and its effects on the individual: (a) a standardised education (Avice One); (b) a lack of

[177] *The Complete Poems*, 106.

[178] Paul Turner, *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, 157.

[179] Introduction, xiii.

[180] Hardy does mention the so-called 'well-to-do' but observes that there is little difference between them and the other inhabitants of the peninsula when it comes to general manners: '[t]he manners of the isle were primitive and straight-forward, even among the well-to-do', 6.

education (Avice Two) and (c) a superior education (Avice Three). The level of education and the extent to which it is a genuine part of the individual's habitus have profound implications for the way in which Pierston relates to the three Avices and the extent to which the latter have an influence on his creativity.

Pierston and Avice One

Pierston is introduced as a solitary individual, a bachelor 'floating in society without any soul-anchorage or shrine that he could call his own' (Part First, ix, 49). Sophie Gilmartin makes the interesting point that Pierston is introduced as a compromise between an island person and a cosmopolitan. He is like Portland itself, a peninsula which is part land and part sea.[181] He is an 'ever-bubbling spring of emotion' (Part First, ix, 49) which involves him in an endless search for the ideal partner. The latter takes the form of a memory which is constantly revived in the numerous sculptures that fill Pierston's studio.

The three Avices as creatures of flesh and blood are temporary resting-places for the ideal partner. They possess the ability to fascinate Pierston for a short period and to spur him on in his search for the Well-Beloved; they are too earthly, however, to transfix his interest on a more permanent basis.

Avice One is in some respects a surprising choice for Pierston. While she obviously possesses beauty she is very much the product of a standard education. She reflects a general 'tendency of the age' to produce citizens who conform to specific expectations which leave little room for individuality. Pierston is not entirely blind to Avice's limitations and reflects on the results of her education as follows:

> He observed that every aim of those who had brought her up had been to get her away mentally as far as possible from her natural and individual life as an inhabitant of a peculiar island: to make her an exact copy of tens of thousands of other people, in whose circumstances there was nothing special, distinctive, or picturesque; to teach her to forget all the experiences of her ancestors; to drown the local ballads by songs purchased at the Budmouth fashionable music-sellers', and the local vocabulary by a governess-tongue of no country at all (Part First, ii, 13).

What Pierston thus regrets most of all is the erosion of local qualities, including the distinctive local speech patterns and vocabulary. Pierston is involved in an insoluble conflict: his well-beloved must be both refined *and* from the peninsula, although he does not realise this himself until after the death of the first Avice. Only then '[h]e began to divine the truth' that 'though he might never love a woman of the island race, for lack in her of the desired refinement, he could not love long a kimberlin – a woman other than of the island race, for her lack of this groundwork of character' (Part Second, iii, 76). The death of the first Avice also causes Pierston to reflect on what the narrator describes as 'an artist's superstition' (53): Avice's family name

[181] *Ancestry and Narrative in Nineteenth-Century British Literature. Blood Relations from Edgeworth to Hardy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 230.

'Caro' suggests to Pierston a Roman lineage, linked with an island tradition of the building of a temple to Venus at the top of the Roman road on the isle. Pierston concludes, '[w]hat so natural as that the true star of his soul would be found nowhere but in one of the old island breed'? (Part Second, iii, 76).

The first Avice's provincial nature is emphasised from the first. The very first words she utters are '[w]hy, '*tis* dear Joce!' (Part First, i, 5, Hardy's emphasis). She is reprimanded by her mother for kissing Pierston not just because her action is inappropriate for a young girl who has recently become an adult, but because it transgresses the laws of propriety which operate outside the Isle of Slingers and which are most relevant for Pierston as a man of the world. When Pierston and Avice meet for the second time, the young woman reveals her ability to recite poetry. It is also apparent that this is basically a seasonal occupation and reflects a lack of other pastimes during the winter as much as a genuine interest: 'we are quite intellectual now. In the winter particularly' (Part First, ii, 10). The use of the pronoun 'we' also suggests that Avice is but one of several who resort to poetry during the winter and that she is thus not exceptional in this respect.

Avice is happier quoting others than voicing her own thoughts. She is indeed a person of few words and there are very few dialogues between her and Pierston. Her longest and most revealing statement is made in writing, in the form of the letter which she sends to Pierston to explain why she will not meet him before he departs from the peninsula. Avice is unable to rationalise her opposition to the so-called 'Island Custom' by which traditionally the man ascertained if the woman was fertile before marrying her.[182] She merely remarks, 'I do not think it good, even where there is property, as in your case, to justify it, in a measure' (Part First, iv, 18). Avice shows that she does not understand the extent to which Pierston is influenced by modern society. To him the 'island custom' is mere 'bygone barbarism' (Part First, iv, 19). While Avice at least superficially appears to be able to look into the future by anticipating what would happen should she and Pierston conform to 'island custom' and she not prove fertile, her views are nonetheless firmly rooted in the past. She believes her ideas to be modern; in reality they are very traditional. The narrator takes the opportunity to comment at this point that it is strange '[h]ow the old ideas survived under the new education' (Part First, iv, 19). The reader is asked to remember that the action takes place 'more than forty years ago', around 1850. Avice is thus made to represent a time and a set of customs which have already had their day.

The stable qualities which the first Avice represents are soon forgotten by Pierston at the sight of the more modern Marcia. The narrator explains Pierston's change of affection in terms of education rather than physical attraction: '[b]ut he,

[182] Sophie Gilmartin points out that Hardy would have read about the custom either in John Smeaton's *A Narrative of the Building and a Description of the Construction of the Edystone Lighthouse with Stone* (1791) or in John Hutchin's *History and Antiquities of Dorset* (1861–70). See *Ancestry and Narrative in Nineteenth-Century British Literature*, 239.

in fact, more than she [Avice], had been educated out of the island innocence that had upheld old manners' (Part First, v, 28). Education is thus a destroyer of innocence and custom as well as of individuality. Destruction of the first two qualities is not wholly favourable; destruction of individuality, on the other hand, is shown to be infinitely more serious.

It is noteworthy that Pierston and Avice do not discuss the former's career as an artist. For Avice, Pierston is the son of the stone merchant, a childhood companion who has grown up and moved away to the big city. To her, London exists only in pictures of suburban villas which she has laboriously copied in her efforts to learn how to draw. Perhaps the only approach she is able to make towards creativity belies it in that painstaking copying is all she is capable of. Pierston's talent is genuine and springs from passion. As Avice becomes increasingly reserved, Pierston searches for alternative outlets for his creativity. Marcia, as the later discussion shows, arrives at the point where Pierston realises that Avice is too conventional for his creative nature, that she is a compromise between the traditional innocence of the Isle of Slingers dweller and a modern educated young lady. She is unable to excite in Pierston the strong emotions which are the basis of his creativity. Ironically, these emotions are only stimulated by the first Avice once she is dead, when Pierston realises that she is the only woman he never really valued 'and therefore the only one I shall ever regret' (Part Second, iii, 73).

It is interesting that Pierston receives the announcement of Avice's death while attending an elegant dinner party in London, an event far removed from the Isle of Slingers. The party is immediately blocked out of his mind by the news:

> Art drew near to him in the person of the most distinguished of portrait painters; *but there was only one painter for Jocelyn – his own memory.* All that was eminent in European surgery addressed him in the person of that harmless and unassuming fogey whose hands had been inside the bodies of hundreds of living men; but the lily-white corpse of an obscure country-girl chilled the interest of discourse with such a king of operators (Part Second, iii, 73, my italics).

Avice in death thus supplies the necessary artistic inspiration for Pierston which in life she proved unable to provide.

The description of Pierston contemplating the photograph of the dead Avice serves to confirm that his creativity springs from the past rather than the present:

> He loved the woman dead and inaccessible as he had never loved her in life. He had thought of her but at distant intervals during the twenty years since that parting occurred, and only as somebody he could have wedded. Yet now the times of youthful friendship with her, in which he had learnt every note of her innocent nature, flamed up into a yearning and passionate attachment, embittered by regret beyond words (Part Second, iii, 74–75).

In life Avice 'only' represents a possible marriage partner. Her appeal is merely physical and not artistic. The hollowness of polite London society gradually teaches Pierston the value of the solid innocence of the young girl from the Isle of Slingers.

This lesson is learned in retrospect and is part of a retroactive process which is repeated over and over again and which is symbolic of Hardy's prose-writing career: the point Pierston reaches with the first Avice seems remarkably similar to the one he attains with the third. It is, however, significantly different. Pierston/Hardy appears to return to the same point; this is an illusion, however, since it is neither the identical point nor is it seen in the same way.

Pierston and Avice Two

Early on in Pierston's relationship with Avice Two, the narrator emphasises that the middle-aged sculptor is very different from the twenty-year-old suitor of the first Avice. Pierston has become more rational and more objective in his love. He is capable of observing himself and analysing his own reactions: '[t]here was a strange difference in his regard of his present folly and of his love in his youthful time. Now he could be mad with method, knowing it to be madness: then he was compelled to make believe his madness wisdom' (Part Second, vii, 102). Pierston no longer fears 'any flash of reason upon his loved one's imperfections' because he has begun to accept that he is 'the creature of a tendency.' He now understands for the first time that his search for the well-beloved is part of what is referred to in this book as his habitus; it is what shapes his view of the world and is the force which drives him personally and professionally.

Considerably more narrative space is given to the delineation of the second Avice's character than that of the first despite the fact that the daughter is less reflecting and cultivated than her mother, and potentially a less interesting person. Pierston notes with disappointment that the second Avice has none of the poetic quality of her mother. The likeness between mother and daughter is both biological (inherited) and intellectual in the sense that it is also a function of what the narrator describes as Pierston's 'unifying mood' (Part Second, v, 86). Pierston's fascination with the second Avice is in part a creation of his imagination. The latter does not, however, prevent him from using his newly-developed critical faculties; his 'honest perception' tells him, for example, that the second Avice, 'fairer than her mother in face and form, was her inferior in soul and understanding' (Part Second, v, 88). Why then is the second Avice capable of arousing such strong passion in Pierston? He is irresistibly drawn towards her as to a 'mystic magnet', not for her own qualities but because she is an embodiment of the first Avice who is to Pierston 'more real, more interpenetrating' than the living daughter. Pierston is in love with a memory which displaces reality. This is why the second Avice is, despite her own lack of refinement, able to inspire him as an artist.

The imperviousness of the second Avice causes Pierston to analyse the very nature of passion by trying to penetrate the 'epiderm of her [the second Avice's] nature' (Part Second, vi, 93). The metaphor from biology implies that Pierston's perspective is scientific even if his subject is artistic. He increasingly compares himself with other

middle-aged men who have settled down and concludes that the conventional way of life is 'vanity' (Part Second, vi, 94). He feels terror at the prospect of uniting himself with a being whom 'his intellect despised' (Part Second, vi, 95). At the same time Pierston is forced to confess to himself that it is Avice's very shortcomings which appeal to him most and which are responsible for his rejuvenation.

Her voice and melody when talking also exercise power over Pierston. Avice combines 'the slight rural monotony' (Part Second, vii, 97) of narrative speech with a musical ability to modulate her voice which the narrator compares with the curves produced by Pierston's pencil. Avice is innocently unaware of her power. When she reveals to Pierston that she too is in search of the well-beloved, he is shocked not just because he thought himself unique in this respect but because his female counterpart is such an innocent, unrefined and unreflecting person. Somers, Pierston's artist friend, makes an important point when he observes that part of the second Avice's attraction for Pierston is the Isle of Slingers itself: '[w]hat a romantic place! – and this island altogether. A man might love a scarecrow or turnip-lantern here' (Part Second, ix, 110). In London, the second Avice has no special powers. She is unable to share in Pierston's work, her task is merely to dust the sculptures. While Pierston is filled with romantic notions and even chooses his studio as the scene of his proposal, Avice is practical and down-to-earth. Her response to Pierston's proposal demonstrates the enormous gulf between the two; the four words 'Mr Pierston, what nonsense!' show Pierston that Avice has none of the sensitivity he is looking for in a woman. It is highly significant that while struggling to free herself from Pierston's embrace, Avice knocks over the sculpture of the Empress Faustina which echoes the theme of Pierston's subjection to Aphrodite.[183] When Avice reveals that she is married to Isaac Pierston and had even submitted to the barbaric 'island custom', Pierston's passion is completely crushed; he will only call her 'dear Avice' for her mother's sake and not for her own. Again it is emphasised that the memory of the first Avice is a more powerful stimulus to Pierston than the actual presence of her daughter.

On numerous occasions Avice reveals that she thinks almost exclusively in the present. Pierston notes with regret that she deliberately restricts her interests while in London and refuses to recognise the opportunities for the future offered by a close relationship with him. Avice's reactions and language are consistently inward-looking. Nowhere does this come out more strongly than in the proposal scene. While Avice retorts that 'I said it was nonsense in you to want to have me! [...] and, even if I hadn't been married to that horrid Isaac Pierston, I couldn't have married you after you told me that you was the man who ran away from my mother' (Part Second, xii, 134), she is totally preoccupied with her own situation and her provinciality is emphasised by the non-standard use of the preterite form of 'to be.' Pierston, on the other hand, as an elaborated-code user, takes a universal as well as a personal view of

[183] Edward Mendelson, editor's note, New Wessex Edition, 157.

the situation when he tells Avice that '[m]en of my sort always get the worst of it somehow' (Part Second, xii, 134). This statement also reveals Pierston's ability to analyse, compare and synthesise: rational observation has taught him that he is not unique. He has gradually learned to accept that the emotion which is the root of his creativity is also a weakness in his relations with women. Here there are very obvious parallels with Hardy himself, and the narrator's comment that 'Pierston sighed, for emotionally he was not much older than she [the second Avice]. That hitch in his development, rendering him the most lopsided of God's creatures, was his standing misfortune' (Part Second, xii, 136) is reminiscent of Hardy's comment in his ghost autobiography, 'I was a child until I was 16; a youth till I was 25; a young man till I was 40 or 50.'[184]

The reunion of Avice and Isaac Pierston marks the end of a dream. Another twenty years are to elapse – the identical period to that between the first and second Avice – before the third Avice appears on the scene. The narrator introduces the final version of Avice with the telling remark that 'the hoary peninsula called an island looked just the same as before', and he observes that only marginally less dialect is used by the islanders (Part Third, i, 145). The Isle of Slingers is an integral part of Pierston's revival of feeling for Avice.

Pierston and Avice Three

During the intervening twenty years Pierston has travelled a good deal and lived abroad for long spells. Part Third opens with him in the cultural mecca of Rome. Avice is a constantly recurring memory. The stone ruins of Rome remind Pierston of 'the quarries of maiden rock at home' (Part Third, i, 146). He is peculiarly sensitive to any references to his native isle. When a letter arrives from Avice, Pierston is quick to respond. He has matured in the last twenty years. His views of women have changed considerably and he no longer regards an individual purely in terms of a temporary residence for the ideal. He is now capable of feeling devotion for one who is less than perfect. The use of the biological term 'specimen' ('now his heart showed its bent to be a growing fidelity to the specimen, with all her pathetic flaws of detail', Part Third, i, 150) reinforces the already noted tendency to observe mankind with the eye of the scientist as well as that of the artist.

On meeting the second Avice and noting the changes in her over the years, Pierston reflects on his own inability to age. The use of the biological term 'ossify' in this connection reflects the mid- and late-nineteenth century interest in biology and suggests that Pierston is a man of his time. The general message of the paragraph is, however, that Pierston is strangely untouched by time: 'this inability to ossify with the rest of his generation threw him out of proportion with the time' (Part Third, i, 150). This begs the question, 'why is it that Pierston does not ossify like other men'?

[184] *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, 408.

His search for the well-beloved acts as a form of regeneration not only in an artistic but even in a very physical sense. However, while it leads to a high degree of artistic and professional success, it is clearly a tragedy on a personal level.

Pierston is also a victim in that his vulnerability is used by the second Avice as a means of providing security for her daughter. The third Avice makes a brief first appearance and tantalisingly disappears out of sight almost immediately. Her mother in describing her daughter carefully brings out the qualities which she knows Pierston values in a woman: education and refinement. Her beauty, she knows, speaks for itself. In describing her daughter's schooling, the second Avice is careful to emphasise the fact that '[h]er education was very thorough – better even than her grandmother's' (Part Second, i, 153). The attainments and knowledge of a governess are part of the habitus of Avice Three; these qualities are an integral part of her personality and not a superficial gloss as they had been with the first Avice. The result of the third Avice's appearance is to cause Pierston to re-enter the world of dreams. A spell has been cast upon him by the second Avice and a process is set in train which began in Rome: '[t]he renewed study of his art in Rome without any counterbalancing practical pursuit had nourished and developed his natural responsiveness to impressions' (Part Second, ii, 155- 6). He is doomed to follow his natural impulses 'like a blind ram' (Part Second, ii, 156); his artistic habitus propels him relentlessly and he accepts that he has no choice but to yield.

In their first encounter, when Avice's boot has become wedged in the crevice of a rock, Pierston consciously adopts the role of a young lover in a play. Avice, however, is her 'natural' self, that is to say, the 'self' created by her education at Sandbourne which the narrator describes as '[t]he flippant, harmless freedom of the watering-place Miss' (Part Second, ii, 160). The scene in the play is all-important because it is only in the Isle of Slingers that the 'conflux of circumstances' (Part Second, ii, 161), in this case a high incidence of intermarriage, can occur which is necessary to produce three generations of Avices with almost identical features. The narrator adds that Pierston's 'predisposition and the sense of his early faithlessness [to the first Avice] did all the rest' (Part Second, ii, 161). Pierston's courtship of the third Avice involves him in self-conscious role play stimulated by revived instincts which can never be fulfilled by a woman forty years his junior – however compatible she may appear in terms of cultural and artistic interests and accomplishments. Pierston must act out a role based on a quality buried deep in what the narrator describes as 'the substratum' of his memory; as with a geologist Pierston's response to the present is based on the stored evidence of the past. What Pierston does not understand at this stage is that this evidence cannot be brought to life: the third Avice is not the first Avice and Pierston is not the same man as the young sculptor of twenty years of age. When he finally learns this lesson, his creativity becomes buried with his memory. The third Avice brings Pierston's career as a sculptor to an end.

As the courtship progresses, Avice is also forced to act out a role which becomes

increasingly absurd. While Pierston suspects that his continued attraction for Avice may be unwise, Avice herself becomes more and more aware that a union with Pierston is unnatural and even repugnant in view of her feelings for Leverre. Her education has given her the means, however, of continuing the play, for it has given her both the knowledge and the language to hold her own with a widely travelled man of culture. Education is also in one sense the reason for the game, as Avice recognises the truth of her mother's comment that her expensive education is wasted in the Isle of Slingers and would be put to better use in London, as the attribute of the wife of an eminent and wealthy sculptor.

As the third Avice feels increasingly manoeuvred by circumstances, she attempts to create a logic in her situation with the aid of language. When she explains to her mother, for example, that 'I feel I ought to agree to marry him [Pierston], since you tell me to [...] I see that it would be a wise thing to do, and that you wish it, and that Mr Pierston really does – like me' (Part Third, iv, 174), she is endeavouring to rationalise a situation which is basically irrational. Her logic appears to be impeccable and yet it is clear that her feelings are of a very different nature. As an elaborated-code user, she is able to employ neutral, correct language to disguise depth of feeling. Pierston recognises the game she is playing but will not allow himself to renounce Avice. When the latter thus tells him, after she has discovered Pierston's age, '[m]y manner was hasty and thoughtless this morning [...] Please pardon me. I wish to abide by my promise' (Part Third, iv, 179), Pierston knows that his continuation of the courtship is a yielding to desire 'in the face of his understanding' (Part Third, iv, 179). When Avice elopes with Leverre Pierston takes the blame because he knows that it was he who created the circumstances and not Avice herself.

Avice's disappearance has a profound effect on Pierston's view of his artistic career. This is illustrated in his realisation, for the first time, that the subjects of his sculptures have 'weaknesses, and stains.' Their power over him is weakened, and '[h]is life seemed no longer a professional man's experience' (Part Third, vii, 202). The process is completed by the fever which brings Marcia to his bedside. The woman who had taken Pierston away from the first Avice returns when the three Avices have either died or forsaken him. Marcia may be seen as a complement to the three Avices. Like them, she is an islander but she has been living in London for many years and is described as a 'London product' (Part First, vi, 30) when she first meets Pierston. She lacks the innocence of the Avices and has adopted the haughtiness of a London society lady. The two part as the result of a correspondence which is characterised more by 'serious reasoning' than warmth and passion. Pierston is disillusioned rather than heartbroken. The artistic successes (including his becoming an Associate of the Royal Academy) which follow the years after Marcia's departure are not directly related to Marcia's influence, but rather to a vacuum created by a general lack of opportunity to channel emotions in any other direction than an artistic one. He is temporarily distracted by a face on a bus or in a crowd but is always disappointed

when he comes close enough to view the person in detail. He is drawn back to the Isle of Slingers and to the memory of Avice Caro. Marcia disappears from the story. Why, then, is it she who finally becomes Pierston's wife? Why does Marcia play such a major role in Pierston's realisation that he has lost his artistic power?

Like Pierston himself, Marcia has enjoyed the advantages of cultivated urban life. She has, however, consciously forsaken these in favour of the Isle of Slingers, thereby proving herself to be a true native of the peninsula who is bound to return to her natural habitat. Unlike the Avices, it is Marcia who comes to Pierston. She is with him for some time before he even recognises her. She is incapable of exciting erotic fancy. Her revelation of her true self without make-up destroys the memory of the classical beauty of the young woman with whom Pierston had once fallen in love. This coincides with Pierston's intellectual revelation that 'he could no longer attach a definite sentiment to images of beauty recalled from the past' (Part Third, viii, 209). His appreciation of beauty in art as well as nature is 'absolutely extinct' (Part Third, viii, 214); it has died because it cannot adapt itself to changing circumstances. It is indeed no longer relevant to existence. Marcia is an embodiment of Pierston's new state and she puts into practice the truth by which he now wishes to live, namely, that good qualities are more important than appearance. Pierston's world of dreams has disappeared for good. He does not love Marcia, but he is able to offer lasting and sincere friendship based on acceptance of life as it is rather than how it might be. For the first time in his life Pierston is now able to age like an ordinary man.

There are two very tangible results of Pierston's new state: with Marcia's help he is able to effect a reunion between the third Avice and Leverre; and he sets about destroying the picturesque though unhealthy Elizabethan cottages on the Isle of Slingers. The latter procedure is particularly significant. It is presented as the act of a modern and enlightened man. More important, however, it represents a conscious determination to relinquish the hold of a romantic view of the past on the present (it is interesting to note that one of the cottages was apparently occupied by the Caro family, Part Second, vi, 89). Pierston's creativity has been replaced by a modern utilitarianism. By the final paragraph Pierston has become 'the late Mr Pierston' (Part Third, viii, 218). The narrator suggests that Pierston's genius was never fully acknowledged either during his lifetime or after his death. The novel *The Well-Beloved* is, however, in itself a permanent monument to Hardy's genius and gives us valuable insights into the nature of that genius, as well as an indication of its origins.

Summary

The Well-Beloved represents a significant deviation from a pattern in Hardy's fiction in two major respects: it concentrates almost exclusively on group two; and it illuminates, more than any other of Hardy's novels, how for Hardy creativity was associated with erotic love and memory. *The Well-Beloved* corresponds extremely closely with Hardy's view of art as a reflection of the artist's idiosyncratic mode of regard.

The novel conforms to Hardy's previous novels in showing how group two is the group most able to adapt to changing circumstances. Pierston brings modern improvements to the Isle of Slingers, but the price he must pay is the loss of his creativity. It has been emphasised in respect of previous novels that 'modern' characters like Stephen Smith are well educated but lack creativity. In *The Well-Beloved* the loss of artistic powers is not linked to education but to the destruction of memory based on an ideal picture of a woman. While education is blamed for producing standardisation and lack of individuality in *The Well-Beloved*, it is also admired for the refinement it creates in the third Avice.

Artistic creation is associated with pain as well as joy. Memory reminds the individual of lost opportunities and failure to live up to one's obligations. It also has a tendency to idealise or sentimentalise the past. Hardy was always keenly aware of this danger. It is no coincidence that *The Well-Beloved* was written after *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the last novel to look back in time, and before *Jude the Obscure*, which clearly reflects late-nineteenth-century ideas and fears for the future.

In Pierston Hardy pays tribute to the source of his own artistic power. Erotic love, memory, imagination and education are an essential part of the artistic process. All four elements are combined in Hardy's final novel, which represents both a culmination and a return to the beginning; the story of the lower-class Jude Fawley is remarkably similar to that of Egbert Mayne in *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress*. *Jude the Obscure*, however, was written by a much more experienced author who had developed considerably greater insight into his own and his characters' aspirations, fears, strengths and weaknesses. Society has also become infinitely more complex since the 1860s.

JUDE THE OBSCURE

In the Preface to the First Edition, Hardy explained that the main plot-line of *Jude the Obscure* was drafted in 1890. It was based on notes made from 1887 onwards, 'some of the circumstances being suggested by the death of a woman in the former year.'[185] The woman may have been Hardy's cousin Tryphena Sparks, with whom he is said to have had some kind of erotic relationship on the lines of that delineated in *The Well-Beloved*.[186] Serial publication – under the title of 'The Simpletons' – began at the end of 1893 in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. The novel was finished by

[185] New Wessex Edition, xxviii.

[186] For details of this relationship see Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy. A Biography*, 105–107. Millgate makes the interesting comment that the publication of the poem 'Thoughts of Phena: At News of her Death' as early as 1898 'is evidence in itself that his affectionate memories of his dead cousin were unclouded by guilt or self-reproach – *except in so far as* the unhappiness of his own marriage had given him cause to regret past failures to claim Tryphena or Louisa Harding or either of the Nicholls sisters or any of the other *young women his idealizing memory transformed into "lost prizes"*' (105–6, my italics). It should be said at the same time that Millgate makes much less of this relationship than does Gittings (see the latter's *Young Thomas Hardy*, Chapter 11, 'Tryphena and the Sparkses').

March 1895. As the serial progressed and became more controversial in its portrayal of the various relationships between the couples and in its reflections on the institution of marriage, Hardy anticipated vehement reaction and was thus not surprised when he was forced to revise and bowdlerise to meet the expectations of the Victorian reading public. The novel was restored to its original form in 1895.

A number of the changes made from the serial to the novel are highly relevant to the present discussion. Simon Gatrell shows how the view of marriage reflected in the novel is more personalised and gives greater prominence to the love between Jude and Sue than that presented in the serial.[187] More significant with regard to the present book, however, are the alterations made in the presentation of the city of Christminster and the University. Gatrell draws attention to the alteration made to the last paragraph of the fifth part of the novel, which describes Jude and Sue's return to Christminster. In the serial version the walls of the city are described as 'abraded'; in the novel this is changed to 'wasting.' Not only is the effect of the word 'wasting' increased by the use of alliteration (wasting walls), the continuous tense suggests that the decay is an ongoing process. Gatrell concludes, '[t]he present participle has the energy of a continuing process of degradation, and one that in the context of the novel is to be applied to the institutions as well as the walls that surround them.' Gatrell further suggests that the novel form reinforces more strongly than the serial the calm detachment with which Jude views his obsession with Christminster as he approaches death.

Hardy told Edmund Gosse in November 1895 that *Jude the Obscure* was 'really sent out to those into whose souls the iron has entered, and has entered deeply at some time of their lives.'[188] A similar idea was expressed to Florence Henniker, to whom Hardy explained that the novel 'can hardly be congenial to self-indulgent persons of ease & affluence.'[189] That the novel was clearly anything but 'congenial' to many contemporaries is suggested by a number of contemporary reviews.

The reviewer for the *Athenaeum*, for example, claimed that *Jude the Obscure* is an example of 'Mr. Hardy running mad in right royal fashion.'[190] He suggested that the novel reflects an impossible and primitive view of the universe in which a weak individual, Jude, is subjected to the whims of a 'savage deity' which 'lies in wait to trip him up.' The characters are mere puppets in the hands of their author, who uses them to illustrate a moral rather than provide a convincing story. Commenting on the novel in *Blackwood's Magazine*, Mrs Oliphant condemned Hardy for using fiction to preach about marriage and 'the very hideous circumstances of guilt' with relation to the children of Jude and Sue.[191] Edmund Gosse of the *Cosmopolis*, while

[187] *Hardy the Creator*, 158–60. Gatrell also considers changes in the relationship between Sue and Jude, and Sue and Phillotson. See 160–64.
[188] In Seymour-Smith, *Hardy*, 505.
[189] Ibid., 506.
[190] The reviewer was possibly B. Williams, 23 November 1895. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 249.
[191] January 1896. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 257.

acknowledging that Hardy was one of the three greatest writers of the nineteenth century (George Meredith and Robert Louis Stevenson being the other two), criticised *Jude the Obscure* for expressing a 'jarring note of rebellion' and asked the question, '[w]hat has Providence done to Mr. Hardy that he should rise up in the arable land of Wessex and shake his fist at his Creator?'[192] The 'calm and lovely pantheism' of the early romances has disappeared, Gosse declared, and the reader wishes that Hardy would return to Egdon Heath 'and listen to the singing in the heather.'

Not all criticism of *Jude the Obscure* was unfavourable, however. W. D. Howell of *Harper's Weekly*, for instance, praised the novel for its 'artistic excellence.'[193] D. F. Hannigan of the *Westminster Review* pronounced *Jude the Obscure* 'the best English novel which has appeared since *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.'[194] The anonymous reviewer for the *Saturday Review* described the novel as 'the last and most splendid of all the books that Mr. Hardy has given the world.'[195]

Why did *Jude the Obscure* excite such diverse and strong reactions? A simple answer, of course, is that the novel touched on two highly sensitive areas: the frustrated dreams of a lower-class man seeking higher education at one of the major universities, and marriage and divorce.[196] Twentieth-century critics have also seen *Jude the Obscure* as a story of frustration in the area of sex and have highlighted the deviations from the conventional norms of sexual behaviour which the novel explores. This angle is certainly relevant to any analysis of Jude Fawley's motives and actions, but Hardy's scope is a good deal wider than that. Readers sensed that *Jude the Obscure* 'opened up perspectives which go beyond the individual tragedy, which reveal the individual as belonging to a wider history, and that it is Jude's singular achievement, despite his personal suffering, to have perceived this.'[197] This 'wider history' is man's struggle against social, economic and intellectual factors which hinder development and adaptation. The simplistic view of this struggle presented in *The Poor Man and the Lady* is replaced by a sophisticated and moving exposition not only of the fact that knowledge and education are essential for survival, but that they must be in agreement with the needs of contemporary society to be of any value. The message is all the stronger precisely because *Jude the Obscure*, in contrast to many of Hardy's previous novels, provides 'no background at all of nature or of a harmonious common life in accord with it.'[198] John Holloway argues that this adds

[192] January 1896. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 269.
[193] 7 December 1895. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 255.
[194] January 1896. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 273.
[195] 8 February 1896. Reprinted in *The Critical Heritage* ed. by R.G. Cox, 279.
[196] This is stressed by, among others, Carl J. Weber in his 'Introduction' to *Jude the Obscure* (New York: Harper's, 1957), vii–xvii.
[197] Gregor, *The Great Web*, 227–8.
[198] John Holloway, *The Victorian Sage. Studies in Argument* (London: Macmillan, 1953), 288. This is not, of course, to say that knowledge and survival are the only major issues in the novel. Lennart Björk has, for example, shown that *Jude the Obscure* 'marks the clearest and most poignant rendering in prose of Hardy's psychological vision with its two-fold division of emotion and intellect.' See *Psychological Vision and Social Criticism in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, 117–129.

to the agitation and bitterness of the novel. Perhaps so, but more importantly from the point of view of this study, it serves to emphasise the lack of harmony between the rustic Jude's naïve views of knowledge and those of the educated élite. Neither view, as it turns out, is in harmony with the needs of the modern predictive society. Hardy wrote *Jude the Obscure* knowing that the Wessex of his earlier fiction 'was no longer viable, and where it survived, was living on borrowed time.'[199]

Jude the Obscure should be read against the background of the late-nineteenth-century conflict between the Classics and science. J. R. De S. Honey argues that 'the position of the classics, in public schools and in English education in general was if anything more powerful at the end of the nineteenth century than it had been at the beginning.'[200] The Classics were associated with the mystique of being a gentleman and thus formed the ideal basis of the curriculum in schools and universities. This situation was self-perpetuating as the Classics required long training and were thus, in J. R. De S. Honey's words, 'a good excluder.'

As Chapter One shows, the universities were backward in introducing science in the curriculum. The Classics were given priority at both Oxford and Cambridge. Both universities resisted the spirit of rationalism which pervaded contemporary intellectual life. This is clearly seen in their rejection of George Grote's twelve-volume *History of Greece* (1845 - 56) and his three-volume *Plato, and the other companions of Socrates* (1865). Frank M. Turner argues that Grote's 'voluminous mid-century writings posed to the world of classical scholarship the same challenge of critical rationalism that Darwin and the advocates of scientific naturalism posed to contemporary Anglican-dominated science.'[201]

Grote's volumes were the work of a gifted and dedicated scholar. In his *History of Greece* Grote drew to a considerable extent on Enlightenment rationalism and advanced German historical and philological scholarship. His interpretation of Greek society was based on 'radical democratic politics, utilitarian ethics, and thoroughly naturalistic science designed to challenge conservative British institutions in general and contemporary Christianity in particular.'[202] Throughout his volumes on Plato Grote upheld scepticism and the importance of the independence of the individual mind. The reaction of both Oxford and Cambridge to Grote's two works was to ignore, refute or assimilate the views expressed there in order to destroy their inherent radicalism. Turner concludes that 'perhaps only more impressive than the scholarship of George Grote was its failure to capture the minds and imaginations of the learned British world.' Both Oxford and Cambridge retained and taught the traditional view of the Classics which had existed at the Universities for centuries. The

[199] Simon Gatrell, 'Wessex', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy* ed. by Kramer, 28.
[200] *Tom Brown's Universe*, 128. For a useful discussion of the Classics, see 128–33.
[201] *Contesting Cultural Authority*, 326–7. Grote's works are discussed in detail on 326–349.
[202] Ibid., 328–9.

rationalistic approach of Grote was rejected out of hand despite the fact that both Universities awarded Grote honorary degrees. This rejection was long-lasting: conservative classicists continued to dominate teaching and scholarship at Oxford and Cambridge until well into the twentieth century. Grote drew a comparison between the fate of the Classics and that of science. Both were under the control of Anglican scholars. In the case of science, however, independent professional institutions were established which became a respected and established feature of Victorian intellectual life. In the case of the Classics, Grote argued, the hold of conservative scholars effectively hampered progress throughout the nineteenth century.

For many Victorian readers Oxford and Cambridge were not primarily the chief seats of academic/intellectual study and research. The Victorian public's views of Oxford had been influenced by Cuthbert Bede's *The Adventures of Mr Verdant Green.* That book testifies to the lack of concern with academic knowledge and the rigid class divisions at the University as it follows the various exploits of the young wealthy protagonist, from his early days as a freshman at 'Brazenface College' to his award of a bachelor's degree. Green only has a superficial knowledge of the Classics. Science is of no significance. Almost to the end of his studies, Green is concerned with social activities, playing pranks and running up enormous debts with local tradesmen. Bede's novel reflects the state of affairs at the university colleges during the major part of the nineteenth century. The exclusive nature of the colleges is also addressed in *The Adventures of Mr Verdant Green.* Indeed the situation in the 1890s seems little different from that described in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1831:

> Oxford and Cambridge, as establishments for education, consist of two parts, of the *Universities proper*, and of the *Colleges.* The former, original and essential, is founded, controlled and privileged by public authority, for the advantage of the state. The latter, accessory and contingent, are created, regulated, and endowed by private munificence, for the interest of certain favoured individuals [...] The former, founded solely for education, exists only as it accomplishes the end of its institution; the latter, founded principally for aliment and habitation, would still exist, were all education abandoned within their walls. The University, as a national establishment, is necessarily open to the lieges in general; the Colleges, as private institutions, might universally do as some have actually done – close their gates upon all, except their foundation members.[203]

By trying to be admitted to a college Jude not only attempts the socially impossible; he also makes a very unwise decision from an academic point of view. In their rejection of new perspectives and exclusion of all but the wealthiest sections of the population, the two major universities were clearly an unsuitable choice for Jude Fawley. Hardy had had this fact impressed on him as early as 1887, after having read John

[203] Sir William Hamilton, quoted in John Dougill, *Oxford in English Literature. The Making, and Undoing, of 'The English Athens'* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), 3.

Morley's address 'On the Study of Literature' to University Extension students,[204] the main message of which was the exclusiveness of both Oxford and Cambridge as far as lower-class students were concerned.

Perhaps it was this very exclusiveness which made Oxford and Cambridge such cherished national institutions. As John Dougill shows, the 1890s marked the peak of the British Empire. It was a time when Gladstone was declaring that to be an Oxford man was the greatest compliment that could be paid to a human being. Hardy must have known that he was opening himself up to vehement criticism from the establishment by associating Christminster with immorality and atheism. The extreme reaction of the Bishop of Wakefield in burning *Jude the Obscure* nonetheless hurt him enormously.[205]

Jude the Obscure is a farewell. As Jean R. Brooks has pointed out, Phillotson's farewell to Marygreen 'starts a novel that was Hardy's farewell to novel-writing, to his lyrical evocation of nature, to the comic relief of the Wessex chorus [...] to the traditional beliefs and securities of unreflective rural life, and to the nineteenth century.'[206] *Jude the Obscure* says farewell to the traditional society in a very literal sense by excluding the traditional rural scenes normally favoured by Hardy and focusing on urban Oxford instead. At the same time *Jude the Obscure* exposes the inadequacy of rustic assumptions in the modern world. Jude lives in a world of dreams based on unrealistic preconceptions and aspirations. He exchanges the narrow rural world of Marygreen for an equally narrow academic environment which stubbornly resists pressure from the modern world. Neither existence fosters the rational approach that is part and parcel of the modern predictive society. Jude's habitus rejects Marygreen and is ill-equipped to adapt to the demands of élitist Christminster. This is not, however, the basic reason why Jude fails to survive. The real problem is that he has been taught, both at evening classes and by the example of Phillotson himself, to aspire to a form of life which is already threatened with extinction because the form of knowledge it fosters is becoming increasingly divorced from modern society. Like other members of group two, Jude is clever and talented within his own trade. He has an enormous capacity for learning, and he is sensitive and creative. It is not for personal reasons that he fails. His tragedy is that he does not recognise the general direction of modern society. This is particularly apparent in *Jude the Obscure*, not because Jude is an especially weak example of a group-two character but because the rational nature of modern society has

[204] This was printed in the *Daily News*, 28 February 1887. See Anthony Kearney, 'John Morley's "On the Study of Literature" and Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', *Notes and Queries* 34 (1987), 499. Hardy recorded part of John Morley's Address in his notebook; see *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1*, entry 1400, 178.

[205] For a further discussion of this point and the issue of university reform, see Dougill, *Oxford in English Literature*, 192–196.

[206] *Thomas Hardy. The Poetic Structure*, 254. Philip M. Weinstein regards Hardy's last novel from a different point of view which, although lying outside the framework of the present discussion, deserves to be mentioned. Weinstein argues that *Jude the* Obscure is primarily about the inadequacy of language as a frame or reference for the actions of the different characters. Jude and Sue are viewed as borrowers of discourse: their language is 'already coopted by an alien culture.' See *The Semantics of Desire: Changing Models of Identity from Dickens to Joyce* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 128.

progressed so far by the end of the century that failure to recognise its importance is more obvious and serious. It is no longer sufficient to be well-educated in traditional subjects. Education must be thoroughly in touch with the demands of modern society and must adapt to general social and academic as well as individual requirements. *Jude the Obscure* is not an indictment of the educational ability of group two but of the system of education at the end of the nineteenth century.

The following discussion primarily concerns groups one and two, group three (in the form of university dons and parsons) being very much in the background. The boundary between groups one and two is more fluid than in the previous novels: the major character in group one, Arabella, is clearly rustic in ideas, manner and language but manages to achieve group-two status by marriage. Jude and Sue have rustic roots; but in education, manners and ideas they belong to group two. Jude and Sue reject their primary habitus and have pronounced intellectual and cultural aspirations. The group relationships depicted in *Jude the Obscure* have much in common with Darwin's theory of ecological interrelationship as presented in Chapter III of *The Origin of Species*. In this chapter Darwin argued that all the individual elements of a community 'interlock' with one other in a manner similar to that of the 'dynamic equilibrium' of physical chemistry. When changes take place in a system, new conditions of equilibrium result. The entire system may also gradually evolve in time. Darwin's theory is thus dynamic; there is no rigid hierarchy of relationships such as that which characterises the Linnéan system. Although Darwin's theory is related to the biological world, it has definite implications for social relationships. Hardy's final novel demonstrates how the future survival of group one depends on its merging with group two. The different groups must learn to adjust to new ideas and be prepared to welcome new members from other classes. Exclusion of new talent has negative implications not only for the one excluded but also for the group which has closed its doors: Jude's knowledge of the Classics, for instance, is far superior to that of the undergraduates he meets. The latter would have benefited by his greater knowledge.

The element of exclusion is ever-present in *Jude the Obscure* and is symbolised by the large number of walls which feature in the story. Education is a key factor. Not only does it raise false expectations, it becomes a means of exclusion and disillusionment. Education is not wrong *per se*, but it must be adapted to the needs of the individual and to society at large. Christminster's hierarchical system is threatened by social changes which increasingly reflect a desire to break down class barriers. *Jude the Obscure* belongs to a transitional period which bridges the gap between the old and the new.[207]

[207] Harold Orel argues that it cannot be taken for granted, as many critics have done, that by 1895 Hardy 'had accomplished all that he wanted to do in the world of prose fiction, and that *Jude* had been sent to the press as a self-conscious final statement.' See Orel's introduction to the New Wessex Edition of *The Dynasts* (London: Macmillan, 1978), X. Orel argues that Hardy renounced novel-writing after the publication of *Jude the Obscure* because he was now financially independent and could concentrate on poetry writing and the completion of *The Dynasts*.

The rustics

As Andrew Enstice demonstrates, the rustics in *Jude the Obscure* have a very different role from the part played by rural characters in any of the previous novels. Hardy's last novel is the first to portray rustics as completely disassociated from the rural setting. They are introduced in large numbers, but 'without reference to their role in any particular landscape [...] there is a plentiful supply of unrepeated references to people unconnected with the main drama.'[208] Farmer Troutham, Mrs Williams, the farm bailiff, the miller at Cresscombe, the carter, the local policeman, the villagers whom Jude supplies on his bread-round, the Artisans' Mutual Improvement Society – all these characters and groups have little if any impact on the plot itself. According to Enstice, this is because they are designed 'to preserve the anonymity of the settings and their inhabitants, and in particular to destroy any sense of communal effort or support.' The groups of people with whom Jude and Sue associate reveal that freedom of action and thought is only acceptable providing it conforms to the prevailing social norms: '[t]hese well-meaning, upright people form, in their amorphous mass, part of the new landscapes of the mind. They are the bigotry of society at large, which survives by destroying all incipient aberration within itself.'[209] Enstice suggests that the minor rustics are reminiscent of the animal spirit which characterises an unpleasant rural underworld far removed from the harmonious communities of the earlier novels. Vilbert the quack doctor is an excellent example of the sinister quality of the rural community portrayed in *Jude the Obscure*. Impervious to human misery, he is determined to survive by taking advantage of the weaknesses of others. Like Arabella, to whom he is attracted, his survival is on a low level.

Arabella is first introduced as 'a complete and substantial female animal' (Part First, vi, 42) surrounded by pig chitterlings. Jude is transfixed by her almost against his will. She becomes the reason for his neglecting his studies. Arabella is likened to an 'extraordinary muscular power [...] which had nothing in common with the spirits and influence that had moved him hitherto' (Part First, vii, 48). Her natural qualities – what John Bayley describes as her 'simple instincts of nature'[210] – draw Jude like a magnet. It is these same instincts which are the reason for her survival. As Bayley says, Arabella's 'eminently natural self makes her easily able to accommodate any social arrangement.' The daughter of a pig breeder/butcher is able to turn her hand to bar tending, she emigrates to Australia, defies marriage laws by committing bigamy, dabbles with religion for a while but drops it when it suits her, traps Jude into marrying her a second time and hedges her bets by courting the favour of Vilbert when it seems likely that she is about to become a widow. The words Arabella says to herself when Vilbert visits Jude shortly before his death are representative of her general attitude to life: 'Weak women must provide for a rainy day. And if my

[208] Enstice, *Thomas Hardy: Landscapes of the Mind*, 170–171.
[209] Ibid., 170.
[210] *An Essay on Hardy*, 177.

poor fellow upstairs do go off – as I suppose he will soon – it's well to keep chances open. And I can't pick and choose now as I could when I was younger. And one must take the old if one can't get the young' (Part Sixth, x, 485). These words reflect a rustic acceptance of life as it is. Future survival depends on making the maximum use of present opportunities. Arabella's words do not reflect a real vision of the future. Neither do they suggest that she has the power to steer her own destiny, which is largely determined by the opportunities presented by others such as Jude and Vilbert. As a lower-class woman with no special education or talent, Arabella has not been brought up to expect anything else.

Virtually no mention is made of Arabella's education. The reader learns that she was taught by Phillotson, who was supposed to be a better teacher than the local mistress at Cresscombe. She has little respect for books, and it is this deficiency which brings about her separation from Jude shortly after their marriage: Jude becomes 'incensed beyond bearing' (Part First, xi, 79) when Arabella throws his books on the floor and covers them with lard. His outburst causes Arabella to leave the cottage the same evening. From the beginning of the novel, education and learning are associated with suffering and separation.

Throughout Arabella displays the rustic ability to observe and judge character. She recognises that Jude is essentially honourable and unlikely to fail her. Initially she underestimates his love of learning but soon recognises that this cannot be combated. She leaves with no regrets and is unhampered by sentimentality, as her discarding of Jude's photograph shows. When she sees Jude and Sue together, she is quick to assess the true nature of their relations, and she perceives that Phillotson is ignorant of it. She knows instinctively how to manoeuvre Jude into re-marrying her. It is no coincidence that the very last words in the novel are uttered by Arabella, who expresses – in a characteristically direct and unrefined manner – the truth that not even Mrs Edlin has divined, namely, that Sue will never find peace until death. When Mrs Edlin suggests that Sue had at last found some tranquillity in her remarriage to Phillotson, Arabella retorts: '[s]he may swear that on her knees to the holy cross upon her necklace till she's hoarse, but it won't be true [...] She's never found peace since she left his [Jude's] arms, and never will again till she's as he is now!' (Part Sixth, xi, 494). The use of a concrete image (of the kneeling woman) characteristic of the restricted-code user is put to particularly good effect here. Arabella has no need to analyse; her knowledge is instinctive and gives her special insights which are not shared by a number of the more sophisticated characters.

Arabella remains true to the image of the animal presented at the beginning of the novel. Her responses are uncultivated and governed by the will to survive rather than by any wish to improve herself. She is not, however, without feelings for her fellow men. Although she twice leads Jude into marriage under false pretences she is not malicious. Even though she knows Jude has deliberately shortened his own life by making the journey to see Sue her response is not unsympathetic. In characteris-

tic fashion she reacts to Jude's 'lofty' description of his motives and declares that she has no interest in the former famous inhabitants of Christminster. She only sees Jude's present needs and encourages him to take a warm drink to alleviate his physical suffering, which is the only form of suffering she understands. For all her limitations, the reader cannot help admiring Arabella's ability to grasp opportunities. Her strong survival instincts enable her to leave behind the limited existence of rural Wessex and create a new life for herself in the very different cities of London and Christminster. Her lack of education and sophistication limits her opportunities to participate in the refined side of city life. Her natural instincts, on the other hand, ensure that she will survive somehow. Arabella transcends group one, with whom she has most in common, but lacks the necessary education and linguistic skills to join group two. She has no real aspirations and hence rarely experiences disappointment. For all its hardships her life is more serene than that of any of those belonging to group two. Survival in the present is sufficient. The past is of no significance. The future is neither equated with progress nor the realisation of dreams. It is not something which can be steered by the individual. This is not sufficient for Phillotson, Jude and Sue, who aim beyond the present. Their goal is to transcend their primary habitus with the aid of intellectual study leading to social and intellectual progress.

The lower/middle class

The following discussion focuses on Sue Bridehead and Jude Fawley. Sue is the second love of Jude's life. Although she never becomes the 'bride' of the first part of her surname, she comes closest to Jude intellectually and culturally. Whereas Arabella is sensual and her attractions purely physical, Sue is intellectual (hence the second part of her surname) and her appeal is of a mental as well as a physical nature. Pamela Dalziel also points out that Sue's second name, Florence, is identical with that of Florence Henniker with whom Hardy was collaborating in 1893 (the result was the story 'The Spectre of the Real').[211] During this collaboration Hardy criticised Florence Henniker for her conventional views. One of the most interesting aspects of Sue Bridehead is her vacillation between conventionality and unorthodoxy.

Hardy admitted to Edmund Gosse that he had always been attraced to Sue's type of woman, although he had never been able to depict her before writing *Jude the Obscure*. What 'type of woman' is Sue? Critics have provided different answers. Kate Millett, for example, suggests that Sue's dilemma is that she has understood the world and its propositions and is overpowered by a sense of guilt which precipitates self-hatred. Her only alternative is to destroy herself.[212] For D.H. Lawrence Sue was never part of the real physical world:

> One of the supremest products of our civilization is Sue [...] the female was atrophied in her [...] she could only *live* in the mind [...] She knew well enough that she was not alive

[211] *Thomas Hardy. The Excluded and Collaborative Stories* ed. by Dalziel, 265.
[212] *Sexual Politics* (London: Abacus, 1972), 130–4.

> in the ordinary human sense. She did not, like an ordinary woman, receive all she knew through her senses, her instincts, but through her consciousness [...] For the senses, the body, did not exist in her; she existed as a consciousness [...] She was unhappy every moment of her life, poor Sue, with the knowledge of her own nonexistence within life [...] she was a void unto herself.[213]

Bruce Johnson suggests that there are similarities between Bathsheba Everdene and Sue, particularly with regard to Sue's refusal to define herself by love for a man and marriage. Sue rejects modernism as well as medievalism; her only desire is 'the freedom to submit both to independent inquiry and judgement.'[214]

Robert Gittings attaches considerable importance to Sue's intellectual attitude, as evinced by her reading and quotations from J.S. Mill.[215] Gittings shows how Sue follows the teaching and even the language of the Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte which had been made fashionable by J. S. Mill's exposition of it in the 1840s and Harriet Martineau's two-volume translation in the 1850s. Sue regards the theology of Oxford as anti-intellectual; she mocks Jude for belonging to a later era of Comte's religious history, assuming that 'even in slow process, he will grow out of religion itself, as she has already done.'[216] Sue is clearly in the scientific 'positive' phase, the definitive stage of intellectual evolution according to Comte.

For Ian Gregor Sue represents 'the complementary truth to Father Time.' It is Sue who feels the presence of the young boy most keenly because there is a conflict within her 'between her insatiable desire to transcend time, to belong to an ethereal order of beings and her rootedness within the idiosyncrasies of her own temperament and the attitudes of her own time.'[217] This comment is particularly interesting from the point of view of the present study, as it suggests that Sue tries to force the adaptation of her habitus to present conditions rather than allowing it to adjust gradually. Her knowledge of the world is theoretical rather than practical. Sue is an analyst rather than a participator. She obeys her mind rather than her heart. She thus makes a mental resolution to adapt without making the necessary emotional adjustments. As a result she vacillates between extremes and is constantly pulled in conflicting directions. Because her primary habitus is, as the following discussion shows, confused, Sue finds no firm foothold in life. Only death offers freedom from the internal struggle that almost constantly dominates her life.

Sue and Jude are cousins and both are products of unhappy marriages. Sue, it seems, was an unusual child. Aunt Drusilla implies in her description of Sue's childhood that she suffered considerably as a result of the split between her parents: '[a]h,

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[213] *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence* ed. by Edward D. McDonald (London: Heinemann, 1936), 501–2.
[214] *True Correspondence*, 139.
[215] *Young Thomas Hardy*, 139–41.
[216] Ibid., 140.
[217] 'Jude the Obscure' in *Imagined Worlds* ed. by Mack and Gregor, 251.

that a little maid should know such changes' (Part First, ii, 9), she tells Jude. Her childhood fostered hatred, particularly of Jude's family. From the earliest days Sue was, according to Aunt Drusilla, nervous as well as rebellious: '[w]hy, one day when she was walking into the pond with her shoes and stockings off, and her petticoats pulled above her knees, afore I could cry out for shame, she said: "Move on, aunty! This is no sight for modest eyes"' (Part Second, vi, 131). At school Sue was different from the other children. According to Aunt Drusilla, she appeared to live much of the time in an imaginary world, where she enjoyed rendering such poems as 'The Raven': '[s]he'd bring up the nasty carrion bird that clear [...] as she stood there in her little sash and things, that you could see un a'most before your very eyes' (Part Second, vi, 132). Aunt Drusilla adds the all-important words: '[y]ou too, Jude, had the same trick as a child of seeming to see things in the air' (Part Second, vi, 132). Both Sue and Jude live in a dream world.

Aunt Drusilla also suggests that the child Sue, in addition to being different from her peers, failed to conform to the expected behaviour of her sex. She was a tomboy who even managed to impress boys with her antics. After such escapades, she would retreat, refusing to re-appear despite coaxing from the boys. Sue's relations with Jude and Phillotson follow the same pattern: unexpected actions followed by retreat and deliberate isolation.

As an adult Sue retains elements of her rustic past. Jude recognises that 'she was a country-girl at bottom' (Part Second, ii, 104) but that some years in London as a girl and her young womanhood in Christminster 'had taken all rawness out of her' (Part Second, ii, 104). Even so, while Sue is clearly sophisticated and well educated, the traits which she exhibited at Marygreen are an integral part of her adult personality.

Sue is capable of throwing herself into a new project with enormous enthusiasm and her sharp intelligence enables her to make fast progress. After only three or four weeks Phillotson realises that she is an excellent teacher. Her unwillingness to conform creeps in even here, however, as the visit to the itinerant exhibition in Christminster shows. Phillotson acknowledges her cleverness, albeit a little facetiously, and believes this to be the reason why Sue is so critical of the exhibition. Characteristically, as soon as Sue is praised for her cleverness she is alarmed and anxious to refute it because she believes it makes her like all other clever young girls.

That Sue is clever, however, is witnessed by the fact that she wins a Queen's Scholarship and enters Melchester Normal School. Although she is clearly educated and well-read enough to cope with the studies, the college is unsuited to one of Sue's temperament. As Chapter One above pointed out, the rules were extremely strict, and Sue adopts 'the air of a woman clipped and pruned by severe discipline' (Part Third, i, 157). Significantly, however, the narrator notes that there was 'an underbrightness shining through from the depths which that discipline had not yet been able to reach' (Part Third, i, 157). It is this 'underbrightness' which causes Sue to

rebel against the college and escape. Her escape and crossing of the river are reminiscent of her daring exploits with the boys during her childhood.

Sue's basic instinct is to refuse to conform, but she lacks the courage of her convictions. Intellectually she recognises 'that the social moulds civilization fits us into have no more relation to our actual shapes than the conventional shapes of the constellations have to the real star-patterns' (Part Fourth, i, 246–7). She feels free to experiment with different ideas and principles as long as she does not need to become emotionally involved. Her ideal relationship between man and woman is one of 'mental communion, and no more' (Part Sixth, iii, 425). She regards her union with Jude and the births of their children as a 'false position' (Part Sixth, iii, 425) created by jealousy of Arabella. As an elaborated-code user, Sue describes her situation in analytical rather than emotional terms and relates her feelings to the universal position of women rather than to the specific circumstances of herself and Jude. When Jude tells her, for example, that he and she could not continue to live as lovers, Sue responds: 'Women could: men can't, because they – won't. An average woman is in this superior to an average man – that she never instigates, only responds (Part Sixth, iii, 425).' Sue appears to be willing to take the blame for the unsatisfactory relations between herself and Jude but, as the following extract shows, she really believes Jude to be most at fault. This fact is disguised in the form of an apparently rational argument which manages to side-step the real issue, namely, Sue's difficulty in loving Jude:

> Your wickedness was only the natural man's desire to possess the woman. Mine was not the reciprocal wish till envy stimulated me to oust Arabella. I had thought I ought in charity to let you approach me – that it was damnably selfish to torture you as I did my other friend. But I shouldn't have given way if you hadn't broken me down by making me fear you would go back to her (Part Sixth, iii, 426).

Sue analyses the different stages of her feelings for Jude with a coldness which shocks Jude. She universalises her position by comparing herself to those who have an 'inborn craving which undermines some women's morals almost more than unbridled passion – the craving to attract and captivate' (Part Sixth, iii, 426). She thus tries to defend herself by pretending that she has only acted in accordance with basic female instinct. At the same time she preaches the doctrine of 'self-mastery' to Jude. By this Sue means conformity, which is her refuge when she is in danger of having to commit herself emotionally. Her re-marriage to Phillotson is ironically a means of avoiding commitment to another. Sue hides behind the terms of the marriage contract – the cold letter of the law – because this is less painful than committing herself fully to Jude. This also has the additional merit of having the stamp of social approval.

By selling herself to conventionality Sue disobeys her basic instinct to rebel and places herself in a situation from which only death can provide an escape. Her shining intellect is thoroughly stifled and life promises only misery. While it is certainly true that Sue does not have Arabella's robust ability to adapt, there is a more impor-

tant reason why she fails to find happiness and peace: her ideals are out of harmony with the times. Jude concludes that his and Sue's ideas 'were fifty years too soon to be any good to us. And so the resistance they met with brought reaction in her, and ruin on me!' (Part Sixth, x, 484). These strong social reasons combined with her tendency to retreat into conformity as a means of avoiding emotional involvement make Sue one of the most unfulfilled of Hardy's group-two characters, if not *the* most unfulfilled. One of the reasons why she is an important character is that she represents Hardy's fears for the intellectual woman at the turn of the century. She is the first and last of her type in Hardy's novels,

> the woman of the feminist movement – the slight, pale 'bachelor' girl – the intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing, mainly in cities as yet; who does not recognise the necessity for most of her sex to follow marriage as a profession, and boast themselves as superior people because they are licensed to be loved on the premises.[218]

In one sense, then, Sue is very much of her times. She recognises and even practises modern feminist ideas for a while, but is not sufficiently strong to adhere to them when her emotional independence is threatened. She both relies on and rejects convention and fails to find a balance between her conflicting impulses. Not only she but Jude and Phillotson must pay a heavy price for her failure.

This does not mean, however, that Jude's failure to adapt to the socio-economic restrictions of his situation is the fault of either Sue or Phillotson. The latter are indeed as much victims of their situation as Jude himself. Jude Fawley has become representative of the problematical relationship of the working class to the demands and expectations of the educational system: for example, Richard Hoggart writing in the 1950s could still refer to the 'Jude-the-Obscure aspect of working people' in his well-known examination of the working classes and their relations to literature and public entertainment.[219] The publication of *Jude the Obscure* has even been regarded as a landmark because 'it was the first sustained examination of the university from the viewpoint of the downtrodden.'[220] Education, and the working classes' problematical relationship with it, are part of an exploration of the human condition. As Ian Gregor shows, *Jude the Obscure* 'is concerned with an internal quest for the reality of the self. As the narrative develops, it mines deeper into the meaning of this. Education, which begins as a matter of being "crazy for books", leads into trying to understand the nature of the human condition.'[221] It is Jude who gains the deepest insight of all Hardy's major characters into the place of man in society. Jude's journey of exploration has added significance because it takes place at the turn of the

[218] 1912 Preface, xii.
[219] *The Uses of Literacy. Aspects of Working-class Life with Special Reference to Publications and Entertainments* (Harmonsdsworth Books: Penguin Books in Association with Chatto & Windus, 1957), 16.
[220] Dougill, *Oxford in English Literature*, 182.
[221] 'Jude the Obscure' in *Imagined Worlds* ed. by Mack and Gregor, 246.

century, at the end of the Victorian period and the beginning of the modern technological era. This is not the same, however, as saying that it is external events and changes which matter most in *Jude the Obscure*: as Irving Howe shows, Jude's 'very being constitutes a kind of battlefield, and [he] matters, consequently, more for what happens within him than for what happens to him.'[222] The weaknesses of the educational system and the élitist nature of society have all the greater impact on the reader because their consequences are personalised: they do not constitute generalised social facts but are an integral part of the tragedy of one man, Jude Fawley, who is transformed from an idealist whose view of Christminster and university education belongs to the world of dreams to a disillusioned outcast who is forced to recognise the reactionary nature of Christminster society and education.

The following discussion considers the all-important issue of whether Jude's failure in Christminster was inevitable, and it endeavours to identify the major contributory factors – social, psychological, economic – to his inability to realise his dreams. As a counterbalance to the story of Jude a brief presentation of a real-life story may be useful, and Joseph Wright of Bradford provides an example.[223] Wright was born in 1855. His parents were extremely poor, and he spent his early childhood in a workhouse; his father had deserted the family. At the early age of six Joseph started work as a donkey driver at a local stone quarry. At seven he started work at a mill. His three or four years' education at the latter did not teach him how to read or write: he merely knew the alphabet and had a smattering of arithmetic. It was not until 1870 that he decided to teach himself to read and write after having heard others speak of reading about the Franco-Prussian war in the newspapers. Wright used the Bible and *The Pilgrim's Progress* as reading books. Like Jude Fawley, he began to attend a night school, and like Hardy himself, he studied Cassell's *Popular Educator*. Wright also became passionately keen on languages and studied French and German. After a twelve-hour day at the mill he would come home at 6 p.m. and study until 2 a.m. After three hours' sleep he would be back at the mill again to start work at 6 a.m.! Wright ultimately left the mill to become a schoolteacher and was subsequently to occupy the Chair of Comparative Philology at Oxford. Why, then, did Hardy not allow Jude to enjoy the same success?

Joseph Wright is, of course, an extreme case. It is not the only success story, however. One only needs to study the life of Hugh Miller,[224] the poor son of a stone mason who finally became a bank accountant and a successful publisher of biology books to see that Jude's position is not utterly impossible even if the particular nature

[222] Irving Howe, *Thomas Hardy* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), 141.

[223] The following account is based on that given in J. F. C. Harrison's *Learning and Living 1790–1960. A Study in the History of the English Adult Education Movement* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 46–47.

[224] Miller's education, aspirations and achievements are recorded in his own *My Schools and Schoolmasters; or, The Story of My Education* (Edinburgh, 1854). Miller wrote at length about his geological discoveries and was able to demonstrate how inaccurate the findings of the old geologists were.

of his dream is. The majority of Jude's class had neither the motivation nor the ability to follow in the footsteps of Wright. Jude, however, had both. Why then did he fail? The obvious answer is that society was still not willing to admit members of the working classes to education beyond the primary school stage. This is not quite correct, however. In April 1888 *The Times* included a report on a Commons speech arguing for improved secondary day schools in rural districts: without these there was no hope for talented rural children to be admitted to university.[225] The speech concluded that 'there were large numbers among the working classes who could be helped to rise to most important positions [...] and we ought to be aware of stifling talent among them.' As Chapter One indicates, there were indeed considerable improvements in secondary education in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Yet there is no mention of formal secondary education for Jude: he goes first to a night school because he works during the day, and he is subsequently left to his own devices to study at home with little idea of what to study or even of how to obtain the necessary books.

The system is even more closed when it comes to the university itself. As John Dougill points out, while *Jude the Obscure* is set temporally in the 1880s, the 'prevailing atmosphere suggests that it more properly belongs to the 1860s.'[226] Hardy himself knew, as he later admitted to his friend and mentor Horace Moule, that the 1860s to '70s was a period when it was almost impossible for poor men to enter the university. The atmosphere of *Jude the Obscure* dates back to the period before extension lectures (these started in 1878) and is reminiscent of the exclusive nature of the university described in *The Adventures of Mr Verdant Green.*

At least as important as the social and educational restrictions on Jude's ability to realise his dreams are psychological factors which have a direct influence on his view of Christminster and education and on his relationships with Arabella and Sue. Hardy's interest in psychology has already been discussed by, for instance, Patricia Gallivan; however, insufficient attention has been given to the link between Hardy's reading of works of psychology and Jude's educational aspirations. Gallivan[227] shows that while working out the plot of *Jude the Obscure* Hardy made notes from an article by Paul Janet on the establishment of a chair of experimental and comparative psychology at the Collège de France.[228] From this article, Hardy selected information on contagious rather than hereditary madness, hypnotic suggestion and suicide. Of even greater relevance to the character of Jude Fawley, however, was Henry Maudsley's *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings.*[229] Hardy noted down several

[225] 28 April 1888, 9. Quoted in Turner, *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, 141.
[226] *Oxford in English Literature*, 193.
[227] 'Science and Art in *Jude the Obscure*' in *The Novels of Thomas Hardy* ed. by Anne Smith (London: Vision Press, 1979), 126–144.
[228] The article was entitled 'Une Chaire de Psychologie' and appeared in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1 April 1888, 518–49.
[229] London, 1886.

extracts from this book, filling eight pages of his literary notebooks with them. Two thirds of Maudsley's book were devoted to 'Fallacies Incident to the Natural Operations of Sound Mind' and to 'Unsound Mental Actions.' For Maudsley the healthy mind is continuously developing and still retains traces of earlier stages. The mind is subject to error from causes which originate in the more primitive stages of its development. Imagination causes the healthy human mind to make mistakes in observation by filling gaps in knowledge with fictions. Hardy makes lengthy notes from pages 33–36 of Maudsley, in which the latter stresses the importance of early experience in shaping perception. Maudsley's theory has much in common with Bourdieu's concept of the primary habitus. Of particular relevance to the subject of the present thesis is Maudsley's theory of the link between thought, experience and adaptation. Hardy's notes read as follows:

> To everyone a thing is neither more nor less than what he thinks it – in effect, a think; and to think a new thing he must first use the old thought. How can he do otherwise before new experience has enabled him to organize a new think? The old thing or think represents object plus subject; the new thing, therefore, is no thing to him until it is asselfed in a think, for until then it is object minus subject . . . In applying, then, the old notion to a new fact (as he must necessarily apply some notion to it in order to observe it intelligently at all) he uses a notion which, not fitting the fact exactly, comes between him & it, in so far as it is unfit, & so hinders him from getting into exact & faithful converse with it; *instead of being a completely fitting instrument to accomplish the adaptation, it is an interposing obstacle, to the extent of its unsuitableness [...] which hinders his mind from moulding itself plastically to the fact* (my italics).[230]

This is the key to understanding Jude's misguided educational aspirations: his view of Christminster is permanently coloured by the false picture gained from Phillotson – a view subsequently reinforced by the rustics whom he chances to meet on the road from Christminster.

It is not until the very end of the novel that Jude moulds himself 'plastically to the fact' that the educational system is not yet ready to receive the likes of him. At the same time he fails to perceive that what he is striving for is not only impossible, it is actually undesirable from a survival point of view: the Classics as taught at Christminster have already had their day.[231] This, and not the various deaths and unsuccessful marriages, is the real tragedy of the novel. Jude has enormous intelligence and determination; his primary habitus, however, prevents him from looking facts in the face and making the correct decisions for survival. His relationships first with Arabella and then with Sue do nothing to reduce his misapprehensions: Arabella is

[230] *The Literary Notebooks Volume 1.* Entry 1495, 195–6.

[231] This fact had been recognised as early as 1821, in Robert Carlile's *An Address to the Men of Science* (London, 1821). Carlile asked the question, '[w]hat is the knowledge of the present school-boy, in what is called classical literature, when compared with a useful instruction in Chemistry and the Laws of Nature'? (4).

antagonistic to learning and books; Sue drains Jude of much of his energy and causes him to live on in false hope. Phillotson, the one person whose own experience could have opened Jude's mind to reality, becomes his rival in love and is incapable of acting as a mentor. Both Jude and Phillotson must learn the same lesson about Christminster. Both lose Sue, but neither is able fully to relinquish the imaginative world in which he lives.

Jude is first presented as a dreamer, a 'whimsical' young boy who stares down a well, the object of his gaze being one hundred feet down and thus beyond his reach. Jude barely sees the water, however, because he is preoccupied with visions of Phillotson and Christminster. This time he is brought back to reality by the sharp scream of his great-aunt. The dream is, however, firmly embedded in Jude's mind and colours all thoughts and decisions from this point onwards. Jude's fascination with the city is as inevitable and as irresistible as a recognised scientific process: 'the city acquired a tangibility, a permanence, a hold on his life, mainly from the one nucleus of fact that the man for whose knowledge and purposes he had so much reverence was actually living there' (Part First, iii, 20). Jude's programme of self-education is also out of touch with reality. His ideas about grammar are 'childish': he believes in the existence of a law of transmutation by which 'the words of the required language were always to be found somewhere latent in the words of the given language' (Part First, iv, 30–1). He has no educated relative or mentor to guide him, and he appears to be unaware of the fact that his task is especially hard given that the period between 1854 and 1904 was the most difficult time for a poor scholar to gain a place at either Cambridge or Oxford owing to the reforms at the time.[232] When Jude realises that he has been deluded, he still does not give up his dream. In a scene similar to that described in Hardy's ghost autobiography, he is pictured with his face covered by his hat, peering out at the world through the pieces of straw. He wishes himself out of the world. Jude's disillusionment only serves to heighten his determination and becomes 'the means of still further glorifying the erudition of Christminster' (Part First, v, 33).

Jude's first view of Christminster is from a distance; his vision is even obscured by mist. When he finally enters the city itself he sees visions of the famous men who had once lived in Oxford and he does not see what the narrator points out so carefully to the reader, namely that the city is 'extinct', 'rotten', 'decrepit' and 'superseded.' Christminster is full of medieval architecture; the narrator points out significantly

[232] Brian Simon points out that the decision to admit more middle-class students, particularly from the developing proprietary boarding schools such as Cheltenham, to the Universities and thereby 'to turn their attention from the narrow concerns of prelates and clerics to the great world outside [...] made the universities more exclusive in terms of class than they had ever been. From 1854 to 1904 was the most difficult time for the poor scholar to make his way to Oxford and Cambridge.' Simon concludes that 'the objective result of [the university reforms] was the creation of new and impassable class barriers which prevented the entry of the poor scholar. So far as the working class were concerned, for one exclusive monopoly was substituted another, even harder to break.' See Simon, *The Two Nations*, 298.

that Jude 'did not see that mediævalism was as dead as a fern-leaf in a lump of coal' (Part Second, ii, 99). Old architecture, and more importantly what it symbolises, i.e. religion has no place in the modern world. The narrator emphasises that '[t]he deadly animosity of contemporary logic and vision towards so much of what he held in reverence was not yet revealed to him' (Part Second, ii, 99).

As disappointment follows disappointment Jude refuses to see that there is no place for one of his class in Christminster. When a rustic in Marygreen tells him '[s]uch places be not for such as you – only for them with plenty o' money' (Part Second, vi, 133), Jude bitterly contradicts him. Jude has moments of objective reflection, but these are few and far between and lead only to a new determination to pursue his dreams. For much of the novel Jude lives in an 'imaginative world [...] in which an abstract figure, more or less himself, was steeping his mind in a sublimation of the arts and sciences, and making his calling and election sure to a seat in the paradise of the learned' (Part Second, vi, 133). Jude gradually recognises that he must have formal tuition if he is to have any hope of gaining a degree at Christminster. His thoughts on autodidacticism are identical with Hardy's own and also bear a strong resemblance to Bourdieu's thoughts on the subject.[233] Jude's application to Biblioll College is preceded by the realisation that '[i]t was next to impossible that a man reading on his own system, however widely and thoroughly, even over the prolonged period of ten years, should be able to compete with those who had passed their lives under trained teachers and had worked to ordained lives' (Part Second, vi, 136).

Jude's studies to date had included the Classics, mathematics/algebra and history. His efforts are unfocused, though, as they lack the guidance of a tutor. Jude does not know that the primary function of the colleges was to launch the sons of the well-to-do into secure and respectable positions in the church, law or government and not to provide an academically challenging career. The Oxford of *The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green* was beyond Jude's wildest imagination.

Only after considerable suffering and humiliation is Jude forced to acknowledge that an academic career at Christminster is not for him. Patricia Alden argues that Jude's situation is aggravated by the contradiction between the reality – a class structure using the educational system to maintain and reinforce class differences – and the ideology which authorises upward mobility and which claimed liberal education as a classless value. Apologists for the Idea of the University – men like Arnold, Newman, Jowett, and Pattisson – helped to legitimate the authority of educational institutions, thus confirming their role in defining a privileged elite.[234]

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[233] See Chapter Two for a discussion of these views, 121–124.

[234] *Social Mobility in the English Bildungsroman. Gissing, Hardy, Bennett, and Lawrence* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1986), 57. An editorial in the *English Mechanic* of 1895 stated that it was impossible for the working classes to be admitted to either Oxford or Cambridge. The same editorial noted that the working class's university was the Science and Art Department, South Kensington. See Alan Sutton, *A Victorian World of Science. A Collection of Unusual Items and Anecdotes connected with Ideas about Science and its Applications in Victorian Times* (Bristol: Adam Hilger, 1986), 4.

Just as Jude's original fascination with Christminster is expressed in scientific terms (the 'nucleus of fact', Part First, iii, 20), his view of 'the procession of Heads of Houses and new Doctors' is compared with the astronomer's view through a telescope: the graduates are 'like inaccessible planets across an object glass' (Part Sixth, 1, 395). It is important to note the use of the word 'inaccessible.' After catching snatches of the speeches Jude proclaims the truth that his early dream and vision of Christminster have prevented him from seeing, namely that 'I'm an outsider to the end of my days' (Part Sixth, i, 396). Christminster has become transformed from the celestial city to an 'infernal, cursed place' (Part Sixth, i, 396). The murder/suicide of the children and Sue's return to Phillotson complete the tragedy.

Jude's insight at the end of the novel is clearly reflected in his language. Throughout much of the novel Jude expresses his dreams and visions in lofty terms which present an idealised picture of Christminster. By Part Sixth Jude's language reflects a degree of objective analysis largely absent until now. His speech to the crowd on Remembrance Day shows that Jude is at last able to face the facts and, as an elaborated-code user, he is even able to rationalise them:

> I am in a chaos of principles – groping in the dark – acting by instinct and not after example. Eight or nine years ago when I came here first, I had a neat stock of fixed opinions, but they dropped away one by one; and the further I get the less sure I am [...] I perceive there is something wrong somewhere in our social formulas: what it is can only be discovered by men or women with greater insight than mine, – if, indeed, they ever discover it – at least in our time (Part Sixth, i, 394).

Jude concludes his speech with a quotation from Ecclesiastes VI.12 which puts his reasoning in a universal context: '[f]or who knoweth what is good for man in this life? - and who can tell a man what shall be after him under the sun?' (Part Sixth, i, 394). Jude has sufficient knowledge and insight to pose such a question. Neither he nor Christminster has the answer. A differently conceived Jude Fawley, a character who was not blinded by a vision but content to – say – opt for studying science at London University, which welcomed working-class students, would have been able to give at least a partial answer to such a question.[235] As the preceding pages have tried to show, Jude fails to realise his dream and becomes a sacrifice to the educational system not because he lacks intelligence, ability, talent or motivation but because his vision does not correspond with the complex social and educational realities of late-nineteenth-century England.

[235] The London University syllabus included chemistry, botany, economics and the Classics. It also taught a form of applied science. See D.S.L. Cardwell, *The Organisation of Science in England*, 45–50. Scientists had been arguing since the 1860s that a classical education in the older endowed schools, public schools and universities 'did not, and could never, provide a complete training for the Mind.' For a discussion of this point, see William H. Brock, *Science for All. Studies in the History of Victorian Science and Education* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), chapter xii.

Summary

Jude the Obscure is in many ways the bleakest of Hardy's novels. There is no harmonious rustic community to provide light or even comic relief. The most significant rustic character, Arabella, is a survivor, though only at a basic animal level. Her concern is with survival in the present: she has no real plans for the future and no interest in intellectual/cultural improvement.

The two main characters in group two, Jude and Sue, are both intellectually advanced. Sue is critical by nature but lacks the courage of her convictions and recedes into conformity as a protection. She and Jude take part in an experiment which is half a century before its time. Jude marks a return to the theme Hardy explored in his very first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady*: the working-class educated man who is excluded on the grounds of class. The exploration of the theme is infinitely more complex in the later novel, partly because it benefited from Hardy's reading, relatively late in life, of psychology and in particular of Maudsley's *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*. *Jude the Obscure* is Hardy's most powerful and most complex exploration of the link between knowledge, adaptation and survival. Of all the characters in *Jude the Obscure* Jude Fawley is the best equipped intellectually to survive in the modern world. Through Jude, his last major character in prose, Hardy poses a strong and talented group-two character against the prejudices and exclusiveness of late-nineteenth-century society. The infinitely simpler societies of the previous novels have allowed group-two characters to adapt and progress with relatively little difficulty. *Jude the Obscure* shows how the situation has changed at the end of the nineteenth century: knowledge is no longer enough in its own right. It must be knowledge of the right sort. Only formal education has the ability to put pupils on the right track from the very beginning: traditional skills and self-education belong to a past way of life which has no place in modern society. *Jude the Obscure* is the culmination of over twenty years of prose writing which features a variety of approaches to the relationship between the traditional and the predictive society. The novel was never universally popular, perhaps because its message is uncomfortable not only for the Grundyists but for all those concerned with education and its role of equipping man for survival in modern society.

Concluding remarks

I hope to have demonstrated that historical research and sociological/sociolinguistic theory are useful aids in illuminating salient features of literary texts and in revealing a pattern of development in a writer's thoughts as they take form in his/her literary creations. It has been suggested that various versions of New Historicist theory – be they in their Foucauldian, Marxist or Feminist forms – have made theory into a business in its own right: '[y]et by its very dedication to historical contingency, in the end it must argue against the need to theorize at all.'[1] I do not subscribe to this view, since all writers must select historical material on the basis of what seems 'relevant.' The selection process necessitates principles of inclusion or exclusion; these are in turn based on a theory of what is essential/inessential. A theory has fulfilled its purpose if it rationalises one's assumptions about the text and its relations to its author, its readers, and its culture as a whole.

All texts are creations, be they historical, sociological or literary. Each text has its particular angle of vision and is vested in specific interests. The writers of the different texts examined in and consulted for the present study had dissimilar purposes in writing: to provide a historical record, to understand the origin and evolution of life and how the universe works, to illuminate sociological features, to explain characteristics of speech and linguistic behaviour and to entertain, and so on. The various texts used here complement one another. They should not be regarded as fixed instruments to be employed in unlocking the meaning of the other texts, presupposing in so doing that one kind of text is in itself more significant or prestigious. Rather, each text should be read as one individual's attempt to delineate a particular phenomenon or situation with the aid of special expertise and interests.

The application of sociology and sociolinguistics to literary studies enriches the reading experience and opens up new possibilities. It also allows the literary text to generate and cope with complexities which may neither be anticipated nor revealed by a purely historical approach. Bourdieu's theories of habitus and hysteresis, for example, allow one to go beyond the historical 'fact' of the underprivileged position of the Dorset rustic during the nineteenth century and understand *why* this was so. Bernstein's theories of the restricted and elaborated codes allow one to understand

[1] See Murray Krieger, *The Institution of Theory* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 14. It should be pointed out that this is not the argument of Krieger himself, who is interested in tracing the transformation of literary theory into critical theory and relating such a transformation to changes in the place of literature at large.

how the rustics' tendency to think in concrete terms was expressed in their speech, and how this put them at a disadvantage at school and in relation to the development of rational scientific thinking which dominated the second half of the nineteenth century.

A close examination of Hardy's novels – major as well as minor – suggests that Hardy was keenly aware of the increasing segregation of society which was to a large extent based on the two kinds of knowledge discussed here, the everyday and the specialised. By the time he wrote *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy was convinced that the Wessex of the early novels was no longer viable. Jude Fawley's concentration on the Classics, whose days were numbered, has a bearing on the rustics' fate at large in the modern predictive society. Jude lacks neither intelligence nor diligence but guidance from someone who understands the demands of higher education. Outside the educational system, he persists in clinging to a dream which belongs to the past rather than to the future.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, the task of adaptation had become increasingly difficult owing to the growing complexity of society. Jude initially fails to recognise that his dream has no chance of fulfilment. When it gradually becomes clear to him that he will never be admitted to any of the colleges, he refuses to recognise the truth until it is too late to change course. There is no place for a self-educated Wessex rustic in Christminster. Jude never considers the possibility of London University and a broader degree better adapted to the demands of industrial society. Whatever one may believe about the presence or otherwise of autobiographical elements in *Jude the Obscure*, it is clear that Hardy's sympathies lay very much with Jude – his final, and perhaps most tragic, rustic character.

Hardy's fourteen novels suggest that it is, in Hardy's eyes at least, the social stratum which I have referred to as group two which possesses the greatest chance of survival. This group has the education and ability to adapt which are the basic prerequisites for survival. It does not suffer from the hysteresis of group one, and rarely exhibits the emotional weaknesses of group three. History also bears out the fact that it was the middle class which prospered most during the nineteenth century and provided the driving force for the industrial revolution. It is also this class which had most to gain from the change from a rural to an industrial society.

In Hardy's novels, group two retains the strong affective values of the traditional society. Members of this group are usually capable of showing and governing emotion, and they are normally faithful to their partners. They retain a respect for their environment and exhibit an understanding of that environment which is absent from group three. The local area is seen to present opportunities which require cultivation. For group two the world extends beyond the boundaries of the local village. Knowledge is not restricted to the everyday variety handed down from generation to generation, but is sought from books and various kinds of educational/training programmes as well as acquired while travelling. Group two's wider experience and its

ability to think analytically allow it to anticipate future needs and problems. As a member of this group, Hardy himself had a special understanding of the values and problems of this class.

It is not possible to cover all the characters in the fourteen published novels, and their careers, within the scope of a project of this kind. New material is also constantly appearing which may influence the conclusions drawn. I am convinced, for example, that Michael Millgate's comprehensive study of Hardy's non-fictional texts – to be published next year – will contribute a great deal of insight into the field explored in this book.

Despite the enormous amount of critical interest in Hardy's fiction, and the volume of critical material published, there remain, surprisingly, a number of areas left uncovered. I should like to conclude by suggesting some possible subjects for future research.

Harold Orel has already speculated on some aspects of Hardy's life and career of which comparatively little is known.[2] There is still, for example, scope for a close examination of Hardy's architectural career, and of how it influenced his writing. The pertinence of this area of enquiry is apparent not only in the careers of such characters as Stephen Smith and Owen Graye, but in the attention paid to the appearance of different buildings and their various functions. The shearing barn in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Enckworth Court and the Melburys' home are just a few examples which spring to mind. Homes are extensions of personality as well as architectural creations. They are an essential source of information about values and lifestyles. Public buildings reveal much about the economic status of a community, its occupations and the importance of different skills and trades. At the same time, Hardy emphasises the human influence on architecture: a building has little value in its own right; it is how it is used and what evidence is left on it of human (and even animal) occupation which matter most to Hardy. The balance between the relative importance of the architectural and personal elements is thus a potentially fruitful research topic.

Peter Widdowson has also recently drawn attention to a number of promising areas of study which are largely untouched by Hardy scholars.[3] He mentions, for example, the lack of post-colonial criticism on Hardy, suggesting that Hardy's contribution to the constructions of 'Englishness' and 'English Literature' are areas which deserve critical attention.

Widdowson also notes that there is as yet no gay or lesbian criticism of Hardy's texts. Among the other issues he raises is the growing interest in the repro-

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2 *The Unknown Thomas Hardy. Lesser-Known Aspects of Hardy's Life and Career* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987). Orel suggests that there are two main areas of interest: Hardy's knowledge and experience of the career of an architect, and his interest in the law.

3 'Hardy and Critical Theory', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy* ed. by Kramer, 73–92 (89).

duction of Hardy's work in the visual media.[4] He points out that there is no critical praxis for coping with this phenomenon. What is the relationship between written and visually reproduced texts? How will new generations' views of Hardy be affected by film versions of the novels? How are social meanings encoded into these productions?

A very different line of investigation is suggested by Pierre Bourdieu's recently published *Acts of Resistance*.[5] In his discussion of Neo-liberalism, Bourdieu notes that

> [t]he practical instituting of a Darwinian[6] world in which the springs of commitment to the job and the company are found in insecurity, suffering and stress would undoubtedly not succeed so completely if it did not benefit from the complicity of the destabilized habitus produced by insecurity and the existence – at all levels of the hierarchy, even the highest [...] – of a reserve army of labour made docile by insecure employment and the permanent threat of unemployment.

Can this phenomenon of turning workers into docile employees be applied to pre-industrial communities as well; and is there any evidence, fictional or non-fictional, of Hardy's awareness of its existence or implications? I would submit that the answer is affirmative in both cases. Two forms of insecurity are clearly portrayed in the novels: the first is related to employment and bears out Bourdieu's fears as outlined above (there are several examples of characters losing their jobs or finding it difficult to gain their livelihoods, as well as of characters who are dependent on the good will of an employer to retain their job); and the second form is insecurity related to ownership of property, which is partly a function of employment agreements (the Durbeyfields' eviction is an excellent example) and partly of specific social factors such as insurance cover (old Mr Springrove in *Desperate Remedies* is an early example). Again, such a discussion would benefit from an investigation into the relevant historical conditions, for instance the availability of labour within specific trades, price levels, rules and regulations and the degree to which employees were dependent on benefits from their employers.

Surprisingly little attention has been paid to the conflict inherent in Hardy's social position as the educated son of a master builder.[7] The details of this conflict, and how it influenced Hardy's career as a writer, are interesting lines of approach. To what extent did the conflict influence Hardy's fears about the future development of

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4 The film version of *The Woodlanders* was shown on British television Christmas 2000. One might ask how many viewers have read the novel, and why *The Woodlanders* was chosen in preference to Hardy's better-known novels.

5 *Acts of Resistance. Against the Tyranny of the Market* (New York: The New Press, 1998). First published as *Contre-feux* in 1998. The quoted passage is found on p. 98.

6 'Darwinian' seems an unfortunate adjective here. Darwin did not, of course, concern himself primarily with insecurity, suffering and stress but with the prerequisites for survival and how these come about. Darwin offers hope for mankind, as is evidenced, for example, by the final sentence of *The Origin of Species* and the final paragraph of *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex.*

7 This was touched on in the introduction.

society in general, and the survival potential of simple country people in particular? A study of this kind should not be limited to the novels and short stories but should include works produced during the twentieth century, by which time Hardy had become extremely pessimistic about man's future, particularly after the suffering and destruction of the First World War.

Hardy's view of society was related to his conception of history. He described the latter as a stream which runs in a variety of directions, first one way and then another. One might wonder how this idea relates to Auguste Comte's representation of progress as a 'looped orbit', a notion with which Hardy expressed considerable sympathy. The historical contexts presented in Hardy's novels span nearly a century. It would be interesting to investigate the patterns of human development – social, economic, intellectual – during this period.

Hardy's novels frequently start with a character approaching a village or a town. Immigration and emigration play an important role in most of the novels. A fascinating study could be made of the kind of characters who immigrate and emigrate, their social and professional backgrounds, and their influence on the communities they leave and join. A study of this kind could usefully include a comparison with novels by contemporary writers such as Richard Jefferies.

The increasing emigration from villages worried Hardy, because he believed it would result in a loss of tradition and a lack of familiarity with the rural environment. An extremely interesting study could be made of the place of superstition and local custom in Hardy's prose: what part do these play in the continued existence and unity of village communities, and how is their importance used by Hardy for literary purposes?

Another area which has been neglected by Hardy scholars is the use of dialect in the novels and short stories. Critics have tended to concentrate on phonology and vocabulary. Little attention has been paid to the function of dialect in Hardy's texts, the extent to which dialect is influenced by gender, and how dialect affects relationships at home and at work.

Last, but certainly not least, I believe there is still much work to be done on the incidence and application of scientific terminology in Hardy's prose. The later novels in particular are rich in scientific metaphor. What are the sources of these metaphors, and to what uses are they put?[8] To what extent is scientific terminology tailored to particular characters, and how does it affect our view of them? An interdisciplinary approach would be most useful here, combining the strengths of science, history and literature.

[8] Some interesting insights into this aspect of Hardy's writing may be found in Ann Whitlock's article 'Science and Symbolism in the Language of Hardy's Novels.' See *The Thomas Hardy Journal* XVI. 1 (February 2000), 84–92. Whitlock concludes that while Hardy's characters 'have their counterparts in other novels of the period' it is Hardy's 'poetic use of scientific *language*' which differentiates his work from that of his contemporaries, 84.

Hardy's writing career spanned one of the most exciting eras in the history of mankind, with major developments in science and technology. It was a period which witnessed a revolution in man's view of his origins, as well as the transformation from a rural to an industrial society. Hardy acknowledged that imagination 'is conditioned by its surroundings like a river-stream.'[9] To understand his imagination, we must understand what helped to condition it. If, as Hardy scholars, we are to accept Hardy's definition that fiction is 'the codified law of things as they really are', and that the function of the artist is to be 'more truthful than truth'[10], the critic must come as close as possible to the writer's subject in order to grasp his/her particular perspective on it. It is then easier – though not without its problems – to discern what was important to the writer. I have tried to do this in one particular area, namely Hardy's view of knowledge and its relation to the individual's survival potential. I started out by maintaining that this was an area which had not come in for a great deal of attention from Hardy critics. While I hope to have addressed its most important aspects, epistemology in fiction is such a varied and multi-faceted subject that no single academic work can claim to have exhausted even a narrowly delimited section of it. There will surely be many more studies of the ways in which Hardy's fictional characters comprehend and try to cope with the demands of life in a changing world.

[9] 'Candour in English Fiction.' Printed in the *New Review*, January 1890. Reprinted in Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, 125–138 (125).

[10] 'The Science of Fiction', reprinted in Orel, *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, 134.

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