

## **Thomas Hardy and Education**

Submitted by Jonathan Godshaw Memel to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English in September 2015.

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## **Abstract**

Thomas Hardy wrote during a time of extraordinary growth in British education when the purposes of learning were being passionately questioned. This thesis situates Hardy's writing both within and beyond these debates, showing how his writing avows a Victorian fascination with education while contesting its often rigid actualization in nineteenth-century society. This project places new emphasis on the range of educationalists that Hardy counted as friends. These included the dialect poet and early-Victorian schoolmaster, William Barnes; the influential architect of the 1870s board schools, Thomas Roger Smith; and the leader of late-century reforms to female teacher training colleges, Joshua Fitch.

Caught between life in rural surroundings and systemized forms of education, Hardy's characters frequently endure dislocation from community and estrangement from natural environments as penalties of their intellectual development. Much previous scholarship has for this reason claimed education as a source of despair in Hardy's writing. However, this thesis reveals the people and experiences which rigid institutions exclude, and foregrounds Hardy's depiction of the natural environment as an alternative source of learning.

Exploring Hardy's representations of education as both reflective of contemporary change and suggestive of new possibilities, chapters focus on aspects of education most resonant with Hardy's own life and central to his fiction, including the professionalization and training of schoolmistresses, the working-class movement for liberal education, educational architecture, and rural forms of education. By exploring connections between fiction and social and political concerns, the thesis demonstrates how the idea of education relates to some key characteristics of Hardy's writing, for example the observant onlooker and the native returned.

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## 1. Introduction

Thomas Hardy wrote during a time of extraordinary growth in British education. Various institutions were created and the purposes of learning were passionately debated. Hardy drew on interests in literary aesthetics, philosophy, religion, and science to take an active part in these discussions. Among other subjects, he expressed opinions on the use of artwork in teaching, changes to spelling and grammar, the educational value of literature, the establishment of a university in southwest England, the effect of education on rural life, and the physical settings of schools.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis situates Hardy's writing both within and beyond these debates, showing how his writing avows a Victorian fascination with education while contesting its often rigid actualization in nineteenth-century society. Hardy responded to the insights of key educational thinkers from John Stuart Mill to Matthew Arnold, and, as this thesis demonstrates, challenged their claims of social progress and national civilisation in his literary explorations of the issue. This project also places new emphasis on the influence of a range of figures involved in the practical work of education, including the dialect poet and early-Victorian schoolmaster, William Barnes; the influential architect of the 1870s board schools, Thomas Roger Smith; and the leader of late-century reforms to female teacher training colleges, Joshua Fitch. This thesis demonstrates that Hardy drew on the commitment of these educationalists while imaginatively expanding their critiques, whether of ill-designed schoolrooms or unfair discipline.

Hardy's formal education lasted for eight years. At the age of eight he attended the newly built National School in his home parish of Bockhampton. Hardy moved two years later to the nonconformist British School in Greyhound Yard, Dorchester, and after three years began studies at an independent commercial academy run by Isaac Last, also in Dorchester. His education came to an end at the age of sixteen following three further years of study here. Hardy quickly became acquainted with the three core tenets of a Victorian elementary

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<sup>1</sup> Hardy was not the intensely private figure he is sometimes considered to be. See *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

education—reading, writing, and arithmetic—and gained competency in geography, Latin, drawing, geometry, algebra, applied mathematics, French, and German. He read a range of literary texts from a young age and also had a good knowledge of religious matters, memorizing church services and extensive sections of the Psalms by heart. Hardy came into contact with various institutions of higher education: he attended evening classes in French at King’s College as a young architectural apprentice in London, and he went on to receive honorary doctorates from the universities of Aberdeen, Cambridge, and Oxford. He was well acquainted with the pioneering forms of professional education and training of the nineteenth century and won prizes from the Royal Institute of British Architects.<sup>2</sup> Several of his relations passed through the residential teacher training colleges that received government support in this period. Hardy’s fiction makes reference to grammar schools, theological colleges, medical schools, and mutual improvement societies, and includes two short stories for children, ‘The Thieves Who Couldn’t Help Sneezing’ (1877) and ‘Our Exploits at West Poley’ (1892).<sup>3</sup>

Notwithstanding this engagement, Hardy has generally been situated at odds with developments in nineteenth-century education. Biographers have tended to locate Hardy’s writing outside of the Victorian literary and educational establishment. Hardy opposed this placement and in his own lifetime challenged a description of himself as ‘ce Saxon autodidact’: ‘This is not literary criticism, but impertinent personality & untrue, as he was taught Latin & French at School [sic] and college’, he objected in the margins of F. A. Hedgcock’s *Thomas Hardy, penseur et artiste* (1911).<sup>4</sup> Although the response is accurate, subsequent biographers have interpreted such comments as Hardy overstating his formal education and denying his social background. The other aspect of

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy, a Biography Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), chap. 1–4.

<sup>3</sup> I consider the more successful of these two story stories, ‘Our Exploits at West Poley’, in my conclusion. Its six monthly instalments appeared in the Boston magazine *Household* in November 1892, nine years after their creation, and were rediscovered by Richard Little Purdy in 1952.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Millgate, ‘“Ce Saxon Autodidacte”: A Matter of Education’, in *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 36–54 (p. 38). ‘College’ refers to Hardy’s time learning French at King’s College, London, not, as Robert Gittings has argued, at Last’s academy. See Robert Gittings, *Young Thomas Hardy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 46.

Hardy's note—that estimations of his education fall beyond the scope of critical interest ('this is not literary criticism')—went unheeded.

The decision by the influential literary critic F.R. Leavis to exclude Hardy from *The Great Tradition* (1948) was made on the basis of his unconventional use of language. However, the judgment that *Jude the Obscure* (1895) was 'impressive' only 'in its clumsy way' brought Hardy's reputation as an autodidact into close dialogue with assessments of his style. His literary achievement was commended *in spite of* his unusual background, continuing the patronizing tone with which Henry James had earlier found the 'singular charm' of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) to be 'chock-full of faults and falsity'.<sup>5</sup> The association of Hardy with an imperfect style has since been pervasive. In his 1993 study, Dennis Taylor takes the 'awkwardness of Hardy's literary language' as the starting point for his contextualization of the Dorset writer within philological debates. Literary criticism which otherwise admires Hardy's craft has continued to explain its deficiencies by alluding to the writer's lack of formal education. Michael Millgate names sections of *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* 'apprenticeship', 'achievement', 'renewal', and 'fulfilment' in celebration of the writer's successes, yet explanations of weaknesses are largely reserved for the first section. Millgate traces the 'ponderous allusions' that Hardy makes to literary, classical, and biblical texts to a painstaking process of reading for miscellaneous information to adapt in the fiction.<sup>6</sup>

Raymond Williams challenged the criticism of Hardy's own educational efforts by proposing a revised canon to that suggested by Leavis. Hardy figured centrally alongside Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and D. H. Lawrence in *The English Novel: From Dickens to Lawrence* (1970), in which Williams argues that these writers established and continued the nineteenth-century tradition of the novel, yet, in varying ways, wrote with some separation from the dominant

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<sup>5</sup> F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (1948; New York: George W. Stewart, 1950), pp. 23, 22. James's comment is quoted in this section.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis Taylor, *Hardy's Literary Language and Victorian Philology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 1; Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 39. Hardy's reading is recorded in Thomas Hardy, *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Lennart A. Björk, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1985). The 1830s copies of the *Dorset County Chronicle* which Hardy studied for unusual details are one among the range of diverse sources which he saw fit for literary adaptation. See *Thomas Hardy's 'Facts' Notebook: A Critical Edition*, ed. by William Greenslade (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

social and literary culture. All had been associated with the term 'autodidact', which for Williams is 'interesting as an indication of what, in England, a recognized education has been supposed to be.' In Williams's view, the term had been applied to anyone taught outside 'the pattern of boarding school and Oxford or Cambridge which by the end of the century was being regarded not simply as a kind of education but as education itself'.<sup>7</sup> The description of Hardy as uneducated revealed the narrowness of the term in certain nineteenth-century milieus. As this thesis will show, it was the task of Hardy's fiction to challenge such definitions.

Williams sought to understand the strengths rather than the weaknesses of writing from outside of the educated establishment:

What others have seen as their awkwardness, their failures of tone, their persistent and now apologised-for concern with social history and ideas, can be seen, from where we are living, as their original, disturbing and yet finally convincing substance.<sup>8</sup>

This was to place Hardy within a radical novelistic tradition that stretched back to the early-nineteenth century. The radicalism depended for Williams on the challenge this writing posed to the conception that verbose culture and education were located only in the well-known hubs, such as London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Rural areas underwent processes of change and modernisation equivalent to those in towns and cities: patterns of work were transformed, interpersonal relationships changed, and levels of education had grown. Hardy was able to document the effect of these developments on the identity of people and their relationship to surroundings by writing at this time. Defining Hardy an autodidact is for Williams linked to a wider project in which the countryside is idealized as an unchanging pastoral idyll; a backward, uneducated, yet picturesque, realm. This critical position had understood education as one of the various modern forces intruding on the otherwise stable rural world of Hardy's novels. But, as Williams responds, this means ignoring the modernity in which both the writer and his imagined world were implicated.

This thesis will follow Williams's formulation by considering education as a process occurring within the consciousness of Hardy's characters and initiated in the settings of the novels themselves. My approach understands

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<sup>7</sup> Raymond Williams, 'Thomas Hardy', *Critical Quarterly*, 6 (1964), 341–51 (p. 341).

<sup>8</sup> Williams, 'Hardy', p. 351.



Hardy's writing as a document of its time. Rather than considering literary texts separately from the historical moment in which they are produced, the principle has been to begin by focusing on sections of Hardy's writing that depict contemporary concerns about education most vividly, and then drawing connections with writing about education in other forms. For example, the description of Sue as 'a woman clipped and pruned by severe discipline' underlies the sixth chapter's investigation of conditions at the residential training colleges and its consideration of such non-fictional texts as Joshua Fitch's report on residential colleges.<sup>9</sup> Literature is just one textual form among a wide range of written and visual records of the past; as Stephen Greenblatt writes persuasively, it can 'reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic, cultural forces from which it has emerged'.<sup>10</sup> Issues that appear in different forms across such a broad range of material are the preoccupations of a society at a particular time: education was one such vexing issue for the Victorians, described, discussed and critiqued in a range of mediums, including, as this thesis demonstrates, in Hardy's writing. Where my investigation departs from literary texts, I have often still applied techniques of analysis associated with the discipline of English studies. My close reading of the Stockwell students' round robin petition aims to capture both its intended function as a written protest and its arresting effect as a record of the past. By reading this text alongside Sue's fictional struggle against similar forces of systematic inequality I aim to demonstrate the effect of a larger movement in female professionalization on the more specific frame of lived experience.

While I refer to histories of education that trace institutional and organizational developments in the late-nineteenth-century, this study focuses primarily on the effect of these collective developments upon the individual. My choice to investigate sources at the Dorset County Museum, the British and Foreign School Society Archive, and the Hampshire Record Office was primarily determined by Hardy's writing. By pursuing sources about education in relation

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, ed. by Dennis Taylor (1895; London: Penguin, 1998), p. 132. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by I. Karp and S. Levine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 42-56 (p.42).

to a particular novel or poem it might be claimed that this study compromises a larger goal of understanding the more general historical situation. By relating the narrative description of Sue at Melchester to the lives of Tryphena Sparks at Stockwell and Hardy's sisters at Salisbury, I intentionally limit my scope to the dimension of experience: prioritizing the actions, hardships, and expression of real or fictional people. In this way I intend this thesis to make a focused contribution to a more general history of Victorian education. In the process, I hope to demonstrate the value of literary sources for complementing other records, leading to a wide and varied view of the past.

This project, jointly funded by Great Western Research and the National Trust, included collaborative work with a range of educational and heritage organizations, including the Dorset County Museum, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the National Trust. These collaborations aimed to extend understanding of local cultural heritage among 11-18 year olds in the South West and informed the content of this thesis in two ways. Firstly, they deepened my understanding of the above relationship between literary representation and forms of lived experience. Just as the thesis depends on the fruitful exchange between imagined perspectives and historical reality, the success of literary heritage organizations depends on a creative transformation of current material surroundings in to the realm of poetry and fiction. When devising the National Trust's learning offer that now underpins visits to Hardy's Cottage from GCSE and A-Level students, I relied upon the existence of a range of physical surroundings to anchor student understandings of the poems and novels. I organized my resources around a learning trail that drew on particular features of the National Trust site to introduce extracts from Hardy's writing and other contextual materials. Much of this content was based on the research that follows. For instance, changes to construction were introduced by comparing the cob cottage that still stands to an equivalent building in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, as well as to Hardy's own plans of laborer cottages discussed in my third chapter. By encouraging young people to interpret their current surroundings in relation to the literary heritage with which it has become associated, I found myself working in what Hardy himself called a 'partly real,

partly dream-country',<sup>11</sup> a mutually reinforced realm of real Dorset and imaginary Wessex. In a series of A-Level workshops I delivered in collaboration with the Dorset County Museum, I showed how Hardy transformed popular, everyday texts from Dorset for literary inspiration. Students learnt how Hardy drew on unusual incidents from the 1830s as they were reported in the *Dorset County Chronicle* when writing *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1887). Hardy was ambivalent about the confluences of fiction with fact however, and in 1912 he wrote that he had 'been honored by so many inquiries for the true name and exact locality' of his novels, adding in good humor that he could not provide any more precise details to his readers than 'in the pages of the narrative'.<sup>12</sup> Buoyed by subsequent film adaptations and re-publications, Wessex nonetheless still informs twenty-first century impressions of Dorset, offering a rich association from which I drew when creating the National Trust learning offer.

The second way in which the collaborative work influenced my research is through exposure to the latest thinking on education in the heritage industry. Informal education has always been a central feature of The National Trust's remit, but where this once assumed an intrinsic understanding of heritage that focused on the cultural value of the organization's properties and collections, more emphasis is now being placed on individual experience and the discovery of outdoor environments. In a recent plan of its ten-year strategy, the National Trust hopes that their sites can teach visitors how to 'make sense of a rapidly changing world', helping 'people interpret the world around them through their experiences of the places we look after'.<sup>13</sup> These ideas informed my contributions to the National Trust's educational work when I organized an Apple Day in autumn 2014 at Hardy's cottage. This involved visitors in the process of apple pressing in the property's orchard, where the Dorset County Museum's original oak press was displayed alongside an apple identification table courtesy of Kingston Maurward College, a nearby land-based studies centre. This emphasis also prompted me to think about experiential learning in the Victorian period and I became interested in equivalent examples of

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<sup>11</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Preface From 1912 Wessex Edition' in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan (1873; London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 392-94 (p. 393).

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Additional Postscript to 1912 Edition' in *The Woodlanders*, ed. by Patricia Ingham (1887; London: Penguin, 1998), p. 369.

<sup>13</sup> National Trust, *Playing Our Part* (2015), p. 4.

immersive education in *The Woodlanders*, while also noticing such ideals in John Ruskin's commentaries on education discussed in the next chapter of this thesis. If the National Trust is now reemphasizing their founding principles -- enabling access to culture, education and green space for all -- working in the context of outdoor learning also increased my awareness of these kinds of ideas in Hardy's writing.

It would be a mistake to align Hardy simplistically with the kinds of learning described above, however. Numerous conceptions of education and definitions of knowledge exist concurrently in Hardy's novels. Norman Page finds in Hardy's work a 'questioning of the value of education, or at least of its worldly rewards in the shape of social advancement and economic success'.<sup>14</sup> Some of Hardy's passages about education focus on its attraction to the individual, some on the systematic priorities of a government or institution, while others concentrate on its relationship to the particularities of a localized place. Rather than emphasize one's inevitable dominance over another (the subordination of rural life to urban education, for example) this study intends to map the often-uncomfortable coexistence of varying notions of education in Hardy's writing.

This is to acknowledge that ambivalent, contradictory, ideas exist within the texts themselves. But such complexity also corresponds with the historical situation in which Hardy was writing. Nineteenth-century Dorset was subject to a complex range of influences, and Dorchester was as much a hub of learning as it was a rural backwater. As Robert Gittings shows, Hardy benefited from the town's position as 'a growing centre of education' in the 1850s.<sup>15</sup> The railway line brought books, newspapers, and opportunities in this period, while schools of various forms were opened. This growth contributed to the significant level of education that Hardy was able to obtain. He was the first boy to arrive at a newly built school, described in 1852 as 'very creditable', while for the four

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<sup>14</sup> Norman Page, 'Education', in *Oxford Reader's Companion to Hardy*, ed. by Norman Page (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 118–23 (p. 122).

<sup>15</sup> Gittings, p. 45.

years of his later schooling he was indebted to the enthusiasms of local Congregationalists.<sup>16</sup>

In my second chapter I show how Hardy drew on these experiences in his writing to challenge dominant standards of education. His novels are imaginative demonstrations of the notion of provincialism. They re-centre peripheral cultures, peoples, and ideas to claim regional places as legitimate sites for literary creation: 'The domestic emotions have throbbled in Wessex nooks with as much intensity as in the palaces of Europe', wrote Hardy in 1912.<sup>17</sup> Frequently, characters unconcerned by their lack of formal education reveal themselves to be the carriers of real insight in Hardy's fiction. Such individuals hold other priorities and emphasize observation and experience over more conventional knowledge acquisition. The novels draw the reader's focus towards the margins, and, in so doing, question some of the Victorian faith in progressive institutions.

In the first volume of his autobiography, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy* (hereafter *Life*), Hardy associates his early years with these broader notions of learning. The book describes the wide range of influences on Hardy's early education, both within and beyond formal settings. His bad health initially prevented him from attending school, but he seems to have thrived following his arrival at the age of eight. His most influential teacher was the talented Isaac Last, who found in Hardy an 'apt pupil who galloped unconcernedly over the ordinary school.'<sup>18</sup> In the autobiography, Hardy is described as a 'born bookworm' who learnt to read 'almost before he could walk' (pp. 31, 19). He studies translations of Virgil, Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas*, and other texts from

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<sup>16</sup> 'My Famous Schoolfellows', ed. by J. Stevens Cox and G. Stevens Cox, *The Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 5 (1976), 6–12 (p. 12). The Congregationalists were a particularly influential group west of Dorchester, and their support of Isaac Last's private, fee-paying school allowed Hardy to extend his education beyond the usual age, which at elementary schools was often aged twelve or thirteen. See Gittings, p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'General Preface to the Novels and Poems, Wessex Edition', in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. by Harold Orel (1912; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), pp. 44–49 (p. 45).

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 27, (hereafter *Life*); see also Charles Lacey, 'Memories of Thomas Hardy as a Schoolboy', *Monographs on the Life, Times, and Works of Thomas Hardy*, 44 (1968), 101–7; Llewelyn Powys, 'At the Unveiling of the Memorial Statue of Thomas Hardy, 1931', *Monographs on the Life, Times, and Works of Thomas Hardy*, 70 (1971), 484–88.

a young age, including a history of the Napoleonic Wars that he describes finding in the closet. In a written recollection, a school friend confirms Hardy's inclination towards solitary reading by describing the extensive periods he tended to spend alone. Hardy also recalls that his 'adventures with the fiddle' were permitted by his ambitious mother, 'Possibly', he reflects, 'from a feeling that they would help to teach him what life was' (p. 28).

At this early stage, Hardy found that crucial aspects of learning took place beyond the confines of educational institutions. He travelled with his mother to Hertfordshire at the age of nine and spent some time in a private school. But it was passing through the capital on the return journey that provided more of an impression: he 'looked back at the *outside* of London creeping towards them across green fields' (p. 22, emphasis in original). The distant view of a place of education was to be reimagined later in *Jude the Obscure*, when the protagonist gazes on the spires of Christminster from the fields near Marygreen to see a heavenly apparition of a 'place that teachers of men spring from and go to' (p. 26). Passages in *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* depict similar scenes, as if this detached viewpoint corresponded with Hardy's recollections of his own education, as Ralph Pite suggests.<sup>19</sup> Pite's research reveals a small watercolour painted by Hardy in 1871 (see Figure 1), in which Dorchester is seen from the top of Stinsford Hill. Its caption is 'The Playground of TH's Childhood'. The viewer's eye is drawn from a monument in the far distance to a valley in which the clear silhouette of Dorchester can be seen, containing the schools that Hardy attended. A small gap in the hedgerow brings the line of sight to the fore of the painting, encouraging the viewer to conceive of the 'Playground' as a passing through of a divide between rural and urban.

The surrounding rural environment is shown in *Life* as equally important for Hardy's early education as books and study. The regular journeys began in 1850, when he started at Isaac Last's British School in Dorchester, and continued for the following ten years of his education and training. The multiple routes provided varying associations: as Pite observes, the 'attachment to the area between home and school' gave Hardy a 'sense of possessing it personally'.<sup>20</sup> Walking to and from Dorchester provided an outdoor schoolroom

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<sup>19</sup> Ralph Pite, *Thomas Hardy: The Guarded Life* (London: Picador, 2006), p. 64.

<sup>20</sup> Pite, *Guarded Life*, p. 63.

and impressed Hardy with the vitality of natural environments. As my third chapter shows, Hardy reflected back upon these early experiences during a speech of 1927 following the relocation of Dorchester Grammar School. From his early career in architecture, which included work on the innovative London board schools of the 1870s, Hardy understood that natural and artificial environments affected the inner workings of human experience in important ways.

In his autobiography, Hardy conceives of his education as the bringing together of distinct domains of influence. Dorchester's town life had 'advanced to railways and telegraphs and daily London papers', while home was 'a world of shepherds and ploughmen in a hamlet three miles off' (p. 36). Hardy summarizes the eclecticism of his upbringing as follows:

To these externals may be added the peculiarities of his inner life, which might almost have been called academic—a triple existence unusual for a young man—what he used to call, in looking back, a life twisted of three strands—the professional life, the scholar's life, and the rustic life, combined in the twenty-four hours of one day. (p. 36)

Hardy's growing consciousness of 'the peculiarities of his inner life' is here shaped by the varied influences that surround him. His fiction was later to draw attention to the perils of an education focused too greatly in any one direction, particularly when that direction prioritized ideas over direct experience. When Hardy turned sixteen 'the question arose of a profession or business' (p. 31), but in the autobiography it is the continuation of a broad outlook and maintenance of diverse stimuli which are valued in his apprenticeship to the architect John Hicks. Hardy finds companionship with another trainee, Henry Bastow, who, he is pleased to find, is well educated and has active interests beyond architecture. Over the years, the pair discuss books more often than they focus on drawings: a practice in many ways encouraged by Hicks, who is described as 'exceptionally well educated, for an ordinary country architect' (p. 32). It seems that this lively, eclectic, and sometimes competitive discursive environment became central to Hardy's early development as a writer.

The dialect poet, philologist, and teacher, William Barnes, ran his school next door to Hicks's office, and was one of several well-educated mentors from whom Hardy benefited during this period. Barnes frequently responded to the young writer's questions about Latin and Greek. Another influence was the

idealistic student, Horace Moule, who recommended reading and offered advice to young Hardy; he was 'a man whose insight and kindly counsel gave direction to the energies of more than one Dorchester youth', Hardy wrote in 1883.<sup>21</sup> Barnes and Moule represented a world of intellect and ideas beyond Dorchester. The former had studied for a Cambridge Doctorate as a ten-year scholar, while the latter had spent time at both Oxford and Cambridge as an undergraduate. Yet neither man was a straightforward advocate of these institutions, and they worked in different ways against the universities' association with elitism. Barnes drew parallels between the scientific forms of knowledge emerging from Cambridge and the folk customs of Dorset, while Moule supported moves to make these institutions more accessible to wider society.

Hooper Tolbort was another bright young student who studied under the mentorship of Moule and Barnes at this time. He finished top in the Oxford Middle Class Examinations in 1859, and repeated the achievement three years later in the Indian Civil Service Examinations. Hardy recognized the Victorian ideal of merit in Tolbort. In his obituary, published in the *Dorset County Chronicle* in 1883, Hardy describes him as a 'remarkable man' and recalls his incredible commitment to study. Although 'a supreme product of the great modern apparatus, competitive examination, he was by no means a mere thing of its manufacture', Hardy concluded.<sup>22</sup> Tolbort came from a similar background to Hardy, but his talent was more quickly recognized through the new methods of assessment for public office that emerged in the middle of the century.<sup>23</sup>

Tolbort became the inspiration for 'Destiny and a Blue Coat' (1874), a little-known short story which demonstrates the simultaneous meanings education holds in Hardy's work. Its protagonist, Oswald Winwood, is an advocate of the new competitive examinations and applauds the challenge to social privilege that they represent. Through rigorous testing, raw talent could now be identified in students from all social classes: as Winwood says, 'what a great thing competitive examination is; it will put good men in good places, and

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<sup>21</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'The Late Mr. T. W. H. Tolbort, B.C.S.', in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (1883; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 57–60 (p. 58).

<sup>22</sup> Hardy, 'Tolbort', p. 60.

<sup>23</sup> See John Roach, *Public Examinations in England, 1850-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 77–99.



make inferior men move lower down; all bureaucratic jobbery will be swept away'.<sup>24</sup> This was the progressive belief in an education that would transform society, enabling the progress of individuals through the discovery and encouragement of their talents. Another version of the same idea is Jude's dilemma, of 'whether to follow uncritically the track he finds himself in, without considering his aptness for it, or to consider what his aptness or bent may be, and re-shape his course accordingly' (p. 326). While Jude is denied the worldly success realized by Winwood and real-life Tolbort, he still identifies himself as an educated individual overcoming the stifling rigidities of social custom.

It is typical of Hardy's treatment of education to qualify these apparently progressive ideas with counterexamples within the same story. Victorian education was transforming circumstances and creating new opportunities, but this had an effect on the continuities of existing relationships. When Winwood tells his fiancée, Agatha Pollin, that 'It is better to do well in India than badly here', she responds, 'I hope you'll fail!'. 'You would come home again then!', she explains (p. 15). Pollin views the allure of social mobility from a critical distance, in part because it will take her lover away from her, but also because its rewards are so distant and uncertain.

Furthermore, she realizes that the ideal of an educational meritocracy is undercut by the potentially more pervasive influence of social privilege. She applauds her lover's success when the results of the Indian Civil Service Examination arrive, but notes that the institutions at which the applicants have been prepared determine the more general pattern:

In the Spring came the examination. One morning a newspaper directed by Oswald was placed in her hands, and she opened it to find it was a copy of the *Times*. In the middle of the sheet, in the most conspicuous place, in the excellent neighbourhood of the leading articles, was a list of names, and the first on the list was Oswald Winwood. Attached to his name, as showing where he was educated, was the simple title of some obscure little academy, while underneath came public school and college men in shoals. Such a case occurs sometimes, and it occurred then. (p. 16)

Educational success overlaps closely with assumptions of social class here.

The passage is sympathetic to the virtuous effort through which individual talent

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Destiny and a Blue Cloak', in *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress and Other Stories*, ed. by Pamela Dalziel (1874; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 11–35 (p. 15). Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

can trump wealth, and it compares Winwood's achievement as a migration into the prosperous areas of a city in which his name appears in the prestigious 'neighbourhood of the leading articles'. Even so, the importance of more traditional measures of education—the public schools and colleges—remains clear. This particular episode corresponds closely to a story Hardy retold in his 1886 obituary to Barnes. When the retired schoolmaster received news that Tolbort, his ex-pupil, had finished at the top of the Indian examination list, he was inundated with letters from ambitious parents across the country, asking that he bring about the same result for their own children. Barnes responded: 'it took two to do it', thereby balancing the influence of both motivation and conditions.<sup>25</sup>

The above passage demonstrates the typically close relationship between education and social position in nineteenth-century writing. In this context, Jane Mattison has recently identified both progressive and conservative conceptions of education in Hardy's work.<sup>26</sup> On the one hand, education was understood as a means of furthering separation along class lines. Learning provision varied according to parental occupation, which tended to favour those in positions of power. The reformist view, on the other hand, posited education as an instrument of social development that would destabilize existing divisions and enable new channels of mobility.

Both views are depicted in Hardy's novels, most often when characters seek to rise from working-class origins to a middle-class position, with their education either enabling or restricting the course. Much of the interest comes from the romantic dilemmas that such changes bring about. For instance, in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), Stephen Smith finds education leading him towards the career and the marriage partner he desires. The novel draws closely on the form of the *Bildungsroman*, whereby the plot tracks the development and fulfilment of Smith's character within a social order. But if this endorses a progressive view of education, it was not an ideal to which Hardy was wholly committed. In a letter of 1883, Hardy denied the suggestion, made by the social

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<sup>25</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'The Rev. William Barnes, B.D.', in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (1886; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 65–71 (p. 69).

<sup>26</sup> Jane Mattison, 'Education and Social Class', in *Thomas Hardy in Context*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 188–97; Jane Mattison, *Knowledge and Survival in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, Lund Studies in English (Lund: Lund University Press, 2002).

reformer and physician Henry Havelock Ellis, that meritocratic Smith was a typical figure in his work:

in speaking of men of the Wilhelm Meister & Daniel Deronda class as being my favourite heroes, you are only saying in another way that these men are the modern man—the type to which the great mass of educated modern men of ordinary capacity are assimilating more or less.<sup>27</sup>

The conservative view of learning can also be found in Hardy's work. In the collection, *Life's Little Ironies* (1894), characters largely pursue education for the acquisition, or, more often, maintenance of social status. This is most clear in 'The Son's Veto', where a public-school student corrects his mother's dialect speech and forbids her re-marriage to a man below her new social position. She is described as a 'mother whose mistakes and origin it was his painful lot as a gentleman to blush for'. His concern about social perceptions is the direct product of a certain form of schooling, which has stifled the more pleasant aspects of his character: 'his education had by this time sufficiently ousted his humanity'. The concern that social ambition might harm the instinct for kindness runs throughout Hardy's writing, and is expressed here by recalling the 'wide infantine sympathies' which have been destroyed by the son's upbringing.<sup>28</sup>

Mattison's study suggests that this conservative view of education dominates Hardy's work, where, she argues, the ability of education to alter circumstances is ultimately denied. As she writes, 'The view of education offered in Hardy's novels is consistently dark', and 'characters are more often than not victims of the educational system rather than beneficiaries'. Education is largely pursued for social position, which either results in failure or 'painful dislocation from one's environment, values and traditions'.<sup>29</sup> In my fourth chapter, I explore this close relationship between education and loss in Hardy's writing. Caught between informal processes of learning situated in rural surroundings and the standardized emphasis of institutional education, Hardy characters frequently endure separation from community and estrangement from natural environment as penalties of their intellectual development. The

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<sup>27</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to Havelock Ellis, 29 April 1883', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), I (1978), 117–18.

<sup>28</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'The Son's Veto', in *The Distracted Preacher, and Other Tales*, ed. by Susan Hill (1891; London: Penguin, 1979), pp. 270–85 (pp. 277, 284).

<sup>29</sup> Mattisson, 'Education', p. 188.

Avice sisters, Tess, Elizabeth-Jane, and others all undergo painful forms of education, which, I argue, foreground other sources of learning.

Disappointments and injustice also underlie my fifth chapter, where the influence of class is shown as central to the representation of liberal education in *Jude the Obscure*. However, although the goals of intellectual training and individual fulfilment have socially divisive implications, I also argue that the novel anticipates more progressive developments to higher education in the twentieth century. *Jude the Obscure* also figures centrally in Phillip Collins's important analysis of education in Hardy's writing. For Collins, the theme is most often equated with 'rising in the world', which he argues was an issue which occupied Hardy throughout this career. Collins provides excellent detail, although education is again 'one more of the abundant causes of unhappiness in the Hardy world'.<sup>30</sup> Matthew Potolsky finds Hardy's depiction of education equally pessimistic, writing that 'it would be wrong to suggest that Hardy simply subscribed to Little Father Time's grim view of education, but it is clear...that he was deeply suspicious of the grand claims made by nineteenth-century educational reformers and their eighteenth-century forerunners'.<sup>31</sup>

Collins explains Hardy's negative depictions of learning by the Dorset writer's own experiences. Education is 'manifestly bound up with his own experience and personality' argues Collins, tracing this concern most closely to the character of Jude:

There was enough similarity in temperament and disposition between character and creator to help Hardy to imagine Jude with special thoroughness. This is the only Hardy character whose childhood and adolescence, as well as adult life, are shown, and it constitutes much his best presentation of childhood—very dependent, of course, upon introspection and memory, for almost every item of Jude's reading (and of Sue's too), besides many particular episodes and moods, can be traced to Hardy himself, as the Life, the Literary Notes, and other evidence, clearly show.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Phillip Collins, 'Hardy and Education', in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Bell and Hyman, 1980), pp. 41–75 (pp. 41, 59).

<sup>31</sup> Matthew Potolsky, 'Hardy, Shaftesbury, and Aesthetic Education', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 46 (2006), 863–78 (p. 875).

<sup>32</sup> Phillip Collins, p. 66. Collins follows the view of Hardy as self-educated, although he qualifies the judgment as follows: 'we dons who write about Hardy must beware of patronizing him, for, lacking the advantages which we have enjoyed, he read and pondered much that it would do us good to master' (p.51).

The claim that Hardy's representation of education is rooted in his own reading and experiences is well supported, and throughout this thesis I include various biographical details when tracing Hardy's position. However, I remain more wary than Collins of equating Jude's rejection from Christminster with Hardy's own apparent disappointments in education. Focusing on unfulfilled opportunities neglects Hardy's more covert representations of education as nascent sources of insight.

These less prominent conceptions of education can be seen throughout Hardy's writing, for example in 'Destiny and a Blue Cloak', considered earlier. Pollin contests her fiancé's focus on worldly success, which is driven by a type of education to which she feels at odds and is oftentimes critical. She waits for his return among the natural surroundings of their home. Pollin undertakes a quieter, more reflective process of learning during this period:

At length he had arrived in India, and now Agatha had only to work and wait; and the former made the latter more easy. In her spare hours she would wander about the river brinks and into the coppices and there weave thoughts of him by processes that young women understand so well. She kept a diary, and in this, since there were few events to chronicle in her daily life, she sketched the changes of the landscape, noted the arrival and departure of birds of passage, the times of storms and foul weather - all which information, being mixed up with her life and taking colour from it, she sent as scraps in her letters to him, deriving most of her enjoyment in contemplating his. (p. 17)

The real potential of Pollin's activities is disguised here by the more obvious attraction of her partner's return. Nonetheless, several questions might be posed: what role does observation play in education? What function does Pollin's detailed chronicling of wildlife and changing weather patterns—all practices 'taking colour' from her own life—have? How does her study of natural processes complicate, challenge, and even undermine, the human process of education?

Pollin's consideration of her surroundings might be confused with idle waiting, yet it is with these attempts to learn more of the subtleties of herself and her place that the reader sympathizes. In contrast, the aspirations of her fiancé seem distant and detached. Repeatedly, Hardy's fiction returns to the kind of situation in which Pollin finds herself: depicting states of mind and ways of life otherwise dismissed by worldly priorities, in the quiet places to one side of the thrust of Victorian progress. The accompanying concern, which Hardy articulates again and again, relates to the effect which unaccommodating

modern education might have on these less robust modes of being. In 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction', for example, Hardy writes that 'education has as yet but little broken or modified the waves of human impulse on which deeds and words depend'.<sup>33</sup> This celebrates the view that the eradication of instinctual processes remains incomplete. Hardy expanded this consideration in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, when he repeats a similar claim, that education 'had as yet but little affected the beats of emotion and impulse on which domestic happiness depends', but looks ahead to a time when 'improved systems of moral and intellectual training would appreciably, perhaps considerably, elevate the involuntary, and even the unconscious, instincts of human nature'.<sup>34</sup> If Hardy expects that 'improved systems' will soon transform nature for the good, my sixth chapter shows how passages in *Jude the Obscure* oppose the employment of biologicistic understandings for less progressive ends. I argue that Melchester College compromises the liberating potential of the female teaching profession through a restrictive course of training, driven by established notions of class and gender, and justified by new ideas in biology.

Hardy's writing is often drawn towards a tension between, on the one hand, the progressive movement of culture, and, on the other, the authenticity of natural impulse. That opposition was also central to nineteenth-century debates on education.<sup>35</sup> The belief in nature as a continuing source of value was countered by the Victorian optimism that man-made systems would improve the nation through the upbringing of its young. Hardy understood that such hopes often brought stifling, restrictive results, and indicated that a compromise between individual difference and collective progress might resolve the conflict. Hardy's various allusions to 'beats of emotion and impulse', 'waves of human impulse', and 'latent, earliest instincts' suggest a far wider conception of human nature than that presumed in more instrumentalist conceptions of

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction', in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (1888; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 75–88 (p. 87).

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, ed. by Tim Dolin (1891; London: Penguin, 1998), p. 165. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>35</sup> For a discussion of the competing influence of nature and culture in Hardy's writing see Angelique Richardson, 'Hardy and the Place of Culture', in *A Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Keith Wilson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 54–70.

learning.<sup>36</sup> It is by highlighting these easily forgotten elements of feeling and experience that Hardy's critique becomes suggestive of alternatives. As Dinah Birch argues, the Victorians were working 'towards the spread of serious and well-informed factual training, while also reaching for the liberation of feeling and imagination that would represent a complete education'. Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* (1854) not only revealed a narrow, fact-based approach to education: it also demonstrated the worth of 'other values [which] might be lost, harder to identify or quantify'.<sup>37</sup> In showing the continued misdirection of education later in the century, Hardy also reveals aspects of localized experience, feeling, and knowledge which contemporary learning seemed to neglect.

In *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, Hardy shows the shortcomings of Stephen Smith's narrow upbringing in this context. Smith is characterized by an education that enables progress and development, but Hardy shows how younger, more curious modes of being have been excluded in the process. We read how Smith's education has numbed his capacity for appreciation and observation:

Stephen walked back to the vicarage through the meadows, as he had come, surrounded by the soft musical purl of the water through little weirs, the modest light of the moon, the freshening smell of the dews out-spread around. It was a time when mere seeing is meditation, and meditation peace. Stephen was hardly philosopher enough to avail himself of Nature's offer. His constitution was made up of very simple particulars; was one which, rare in the spring-time of civilizations, seems to grow abundant as a nation gets older, individuality fades, and education spreads; that is, his brain had extraordinary receptive powers, and no great creativeness. Quickly acquiring any kind of knowledge he saw around him, and having a plastic adaptability more common in woman than in man, he changed colour like a chameleon as the society he found himself in assumed a higher and more artificial tone. He had not many original ideas, and yet there was scarcely an idea to which, under proper training, he could not have added a respectable co-ordinate.<sup>38</sup>

Smith is taken as a representative of a late-stage of civilization, defined by its developed methods of education. Although the narrator points to the benefits of

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<sup>36</sup> Hardy, *Tess*, p. 165; Hardy, 'Profitable', p. 87; Thomas Hardy, *The Woodlanders*, ed. by Patricia Ingham (1887; London: Penguin, 1998), p. 210. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>37</sup> Dinah Birch, *Our Victorian Education* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 41, 21.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Hardy, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, ed. by Pamela Dalziel (1873; London: Penguin, 1998), p. 94. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

this stage of learning, for Smith is both intelligent and flexible in adapting to circumstances, the 'higher and more artificial tone' of his society has nurtured 'receptive powers' to the detriment of other capacities. The comment echoes one made by Hardy in his obituary for Tolbort: 'his genius, as far as it showed itself, was receptive rather than productive'.<sup>39</sup> If Smith also lacks such 'productive' faculties, it is because he is unable to make sensory discriminations in ways that experience and active perception allow: his incapacity 'to avail himself of Nature's offer' becomes the tragic result. Smith's loss is most felt on his senses, for he is numb to the sound of flowing water, the light from the moon, and the smell of grass dew.

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<sup>39</sup> Hardy, 'Tolbort', p. 60.



## 2. Culture and Aesthetic Education

To get rid of provinciality is a certain stage of culture.

Matthew Arnold<sup>1</sup>

True education, then, has respect, first to the ends which are proposable to the man, or attainable by him, and, secondly, to the material of which the man is made.

John Ruskin<sup>2</sup>

In the spring of 1876, Thomas Hardy wrote to the writer, critic, and then editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*, Leslie Stephen. Hardy was despondent following the bad reception of *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876) and asked Stephen to suggest literary criticism in order to improve his writing. 'But if you mean seriously to ask me what critical books I recommend,' Stephen responded, 'I can only say that I recommend none. I think as a critic that the less authors read of criticism the better.' He assured Hardy that he had 'a perfectly fresh and original vein', advising him that 'the less you bother yourself about critical canons the less chance there is of your becoming self-conscious and cramped'.<sup>3</sup> Stephen evaded the role of cultural authority, realizing that Hardy needed to pursue other means of inspiration than the prevalent taste of the day.

The concern underlying the exchange survived well beyond these initial years of Hardy's literary aspiration. Was artistic effort best pursued according to

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold, *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. by Robert H. Super, 11 vols. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960-77), III (1962), 245.

<sup>2</sup> John Ruskin, *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. by Edward Tyas Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols. (London: George Allen, 1903-1912), XI (1904), 238.

<sup>3</sup> Leslie Stephen, *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen*, ed. by Frederic William Maitland (1906; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 290. In Frank M. Turner's edited collection, the Victorians are shown to challenge existing cultural authority in various ways, see *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

shared notions of culture, or the more varied priorities of the individual?<sup>4</sup> Hardy was sympathetic to both positions at different points throughout his career. His earliest cultural influences were particular to the time and location in which he was raised: rooted in the landscape which enclosed his family's cottage, traditions of folk music learnt while playing the violin, and the anecdotes of local life passed down from family-elders. Hardy's return to the Dorchester area in 1883 between the early achievements of *The Return of the Native* (1878) and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1887) marked the establishment of an artistic sensibility inspired by these sources. Following years of hard study and pained attempts at appropriation, he came to realize that his artistic worth was better sourced from these unique histories and surroundings.<sup>5</sup>

Hardy also lived in London, having moved there for architectural work in 1862. His cultural outlook changed dramatically as he discovered that 'the aim of every provincial, from the squire to the rustic, [was] to get rid of his local articulation at the earliest moment'.<sup>6</sup> Hardy encountered the unified display of an emerging civic culture in the capital, as the arts were given an increasingly central role by government. The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce had gained its royal charter in 1847, enabling the Great Exhibition of 1851 to showcase the glories of advancing culture and technology to the nation. Young Hardy felt compelled to attend when the International Exhibition was organized along similar lines in 1862, later stating in *Life* that it may have 'influenced him in the choice of a date for his migration' (p. 40). As Linda Dowling has shown, this 1860s period marked the beginnings of the Aesthetic Movement in which the common experience of culture was invoked to unite a democracy otherwise in strife.<sup>7</sup> While developing his individual style as a writer, Hardy was influenced by the previously distant

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<sup>4</sup> In *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976), Raymond Williams provides three definitions of 'culture': my discussion here relates to a 'general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development' (p.91).

<sup>5</sup> For both urban and rural influences on Hardy's writing see Keith Wilson, 'Thomas Hardy of London', in *A Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Keith Wilson (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), pp. 146–61.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Dorset in London', in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 276–83 (p. 277).

<sup>7</sup> Linda C. Dowling, *The Vulgarization of Art: The Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996), pp. 2–3.

museums, galleries, and other cultural institutions symbolic of this national effort.

This was also a decade in which the idea of a national education system was conceived, prior to the vast expansion of 1870 that ensured schooling for children aged between five and thirteen. The 'infinitely Revised Code' to which Tess is subject was challenged by the advocates of aesthetic education (p. 23), who insisted that culture should have an integral place in the teaching of the nation's young. The more conservative aesthetic educators believed that canonical works of art would refine the sense of social morality, and bring citizens into line with the highest standards of conduct. The more liberal proponents of culture held onto this moral potential of an aesthetic education, but were less inclined to define which artworks would provide it.

Dowling relates this nineteenth-century interest to a longer tradition of 'Whig Aesthetics' stretching back to the eighteenth century. In doing so, she draws on the work of Leslie Stephen, Hardy's mentor. Three years before he advised the young writer, Stephen recognized in the writing of the philosopher Anthony Ashley Cooper, third earl of Shaftesbury, a notion that had continued to intrigue nineteenth-century thinkers.<sup>8</sup> Shaftesbury's idea was that the basis for moral and social harmony was to be found in the apprehension and appreciation of the beautiful. For Stephen, the nineteenth-century interest in beauty as a moral guiding force originated in Shaftesbury's writing and emerged at a time in which the unifying potential of a shared aesthetic sense was similarly appealing. 'The faculty of moral approbation is the same faculty which judges of the fine arts', writes Stephen, summarizing the central argument of Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711). The consequence for education was that a flourishing society could be brought about through the proper training of taste. As Shaftesbury argues: 'Virtue is a reality, and can be discovered by all who will go through the necessary process of self-culture'.<sup>9</sup> Stephen shows that Shaftesbury was an early proponent of the belief that a moral capacity to appreciate beauty was, under the right circumstances, a possibility open to all.

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<sup>8</sup> Hardy associates Shaftesbury with other notable people of Dorset origin, see Hardy, 'Dorset in London', p. 281.

<sup>9</sup> Leslie Stephen, 'Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*', *Fraser's Magazine*, 7 (1873), 76–93 (pp. 91, 92).

Later in his article, Stephen describes Shaftesbury as ‘the Matthew Arnold of Queen Anne’s reign’, finding in both writers an emphasis ‘upon the importance of cultivating a refined taste, as the sole guide in art and philosophy’.<sup>10</sup> As a poet, writer, and inspector of schools, Arnold was a key advocate of nineteenth-century efforts towards aesthetic education. In the 1860s, Arnold travelled extensively in France on behalf of the Education Commission ‘to consider and report what measures, if any, are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people.’ Arnold appreciated an ‘instinct of intelligence and mobility’ in the French, against what he understood in 1864 as a British ‘spirit not very open to new ideas, and not easily ravished by them’. ‘Culture’ would help remedy the deficiency, and, as Arnold wrote, ‘make man the friend of ideals’.<sup>11</sup> He understood a number of influences by which culture was imparted in France, but schools figured centrally and were for Arnold a means by which the widely held capacity to appreciate and respond to beauty could be nurtured. Education and social order were closely related, and the urge for improved standards of teaching in schools had consequences for the unity of the nation. The aesthetic sense could help remedy what Arnold understood as the excesses of political liberalism introduced through the Reform Bills, healing the political crisis by reinstating a sense of harmony which he saw challenged in the Hyde Park riots of July 1866. Such ideas drew responses from Stephen and Hardy, among many others. It is by studying such responses to Arnold and his ideas that the Dorset writer’s changing attitudes to aesthetic development can be better understood.

Stephen also anticipated the challenges to aesthetic education within eighteenth-century debates. An ethical framework based on definitions of beauty was prone to fluctuating standards of right and wrong, or moral relativism. Even if an objective basis for taste could be established (if beauty resided in the object rather than the beholder, for example), altering levels of upbringing and education would make certain members of society better able to discern beauty and act morally than others. As Stephen writes in terms which now sound disparaging, ‘Cultivation of the taste is a very excellent thing, but not

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<sup>10</sup> Stephen, ‘Shaftesbury’s *Characteristics*’, p. 81.

<sup>11</sup> Arnold, II (1962), 328, 306, 307.

quite applicable to the ploughmen and seamstresses'.<sup>12</sup> Hardy reserved his strongest opposition to such claims that virtue and artistic appreciation were class-bound qualities and available only to those educated along certain lines. His writing shows that aesthetic education could become divorced from its moral aim when the process of cultivation became too closely limited within the parameters of class. Matthew Potolsky reads Hardy's short story 'Barbara and the House of Grebe'—published in *A Group of Noble Dames* (1890)—in such terms, arguing that it 'casts aesthetic education as a form of brutal discipline and challenges the notion that the appreciation of beauty is bound in any inevitable way to moral improvement.' Victorian pedagogies that centred on works of art, literary or otherwise, tended to subdue the individual temperament by imposing a 'social harmony that sacrifices the individual to the needs of the collective'.<sup>13</sup>

Aesthetic education remained an appealing idea to Hardy despite such challenges. Firstly, as this chapter shows, he supported a more inclusive definition than was often assumed by the proponents of culture. In 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' (1883), for example, Hardy argues that rural workers were as individual and varied as city-dwellers, questioning if their capacities could be 'estimated aright by philosophers who look down upon that class from the Olympian heights of society.' He challenges the assumption that low material conditions caused lives devoid of beauty and pleasure, emphasizing the 'characters, capacities, and interests' of labourers. Hardy suggests that a more contextual understanding of manual workers' lives allows their relative prosperity to be appreciated, suggesting that 'it is among such communities as these that happiness will find her last refuge on earth'.<sup>14</sup> There is a clear sense in which Hardy is disputing the judgments of the urban elite who, by defining themselves at the pinnacle of their own definition of cultural advancement, are able to justify the subsequent imposition of their own ideas, tastes, and values.

Moreover, the principle of aesthetic education resonated with Hardy's own personal experiences, for a certain conception of the beautiful was required for his development as an author. Hardy was greatly affected by literary writing

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<sup>12</sup> Stephen, 'Shaftesbury's *Characteristics*', p. 93.

<sup>13</sup> Potolsky, pp. 864, 874.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'The Dorsetshire Labourer', in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 37–56 (pp. 41, 40, 39).

as well as other forms of art, from which he was able to draw moral lessons. In *Life*, Hardy recalls reading in 1868 passages by Wordsworth and Mill, titled 'Resolution and Independence' and 'Individuality' respectively, commenting that they were 'cures for despair' (p. 59). Stephen's warning of 'becoming selfconscious and cramped' may well have reminded Hardy of the debilitating effect that prescribed reading might have, but he found refuge in texts which emphasized a form of culture which could be nurtured from within rather than obtained from outside.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.1 'The pursuit of perfection'

*The Hand of Ethelberta* (1876) is an early example of Hardy's interest with the related issues of culture and education. The novel charts the career of a young woman from a working-class background in Dorset, who finds social and artistic success by her writing in London. The plot questions the substance of such progress and asks if the increasing recognition of Ethelberta's aesthetic capacity is related to her moral development. Hardy has us dispute the quality of the verse by reproducing her public readings in the narrative itself. The possibility is raised that Ethelberta's success depends more on an astute appropriation of upper-class tastes than it does on her artistic ability. She draws on her reputation in order to secure a marriage with Lord Mountclere, raising further doubts that her early artistic output holds significance beyond its immediate status. By scrutinizing the close connection between taste and social position, the novel shows how aesthetic standards were often conflated with definitions of class.

Ethelberta intends to replicate her own development when she invites her brothers, Sol and Dan, to the newly established National Gallery in London, also visited by Jocelyn in *The Well-Beloved* (1897). The narrator reveals opposing conceptions of aesthetic education as the brothers are guided through the gallery. The focus is initially on the ethical potential of beauty:

Ethelberta was a firm believer in the kindly effects of artistic education upon the masses. She held that defilement of mind often arose from ignorance of eye; and her philanthropy being, by the simple force of her situation, of that sort

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<sup>15</sup> For consideration of this issue in relation to contemporary ideas in science, see Richardson, 'Hardy and the Place of Culture.'

which lingers in the neighbourhood of home, she concentrated her efforts in this kind upon Sol and Dan.<sup>16</sup>

Here Ethelberta professes a disinterested enthusiasm for aesthetic education, valuing works of art as educational sources. Improving the capacity of the 'eye' to notice beauty leads to an individual's advancement in the 'mind'. Soon after, 'Catalogue in hand she took the two brothers through the galleries'. The narrator depicts Ethelberta 'teaching them in whispers as they walked, and occasionally correcting them' (p. 179). The benefits of cultivation begin to be complicated by the imposition of judgment.

The brothers soon discover a second conception of aesthetic education in which they are taught to recognize a notion of beauty that is socially defined. Sol and Dan's social background soon overshadow any moralistic aim, as Ethelberta's role transforms into teaching the manners and behaviours expected within the gallery. She corrects them for 'too reverential a bearing towards the well-dressed crowd' and their contrite manner 'of meek people in church' (p. 179). Hardy demonstrates astutely here, how, in spite of its intentions, an aesthetic education often meant the oppressive enforcement of the values of one class upon another. Certainly, restriction rather than harmony is Dan's experience of the day, as he learns to subdue his own opinion and accept a discourse of the educated. Dan reassures his sister that he will not reveal her identity: 'Don't you be afeard about that. I feel that I baint upon my own ground to-day; and wouldn't do anything to cause an upset, drown me if I would. Would you, Sol?' (p. 180). A well-intentioned lesson in artistic taste becomes a process of silencing, as those who are not formally educated find themselves subdued to the judgments and opinions of the surrounding upper- and middle-class public.

Hardy was familiar with the type of situation in which Ethelberta and her brothers find themselves. In 1908 he reflected upon changes to London since his early years and concluded that, now, 'Incomers are allowed to preserve personal peculiarities that they formerly were compelled to stifle if they wished to be accepted'.<sup>17</sup> However, although formalized culture often brought conformity, it also promised advancement. For aspiring critics and writers of the

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<sup>16</sup> Thomas Hardy, *The Hand of Ethelberta: A Comedy in Chapters*, ed. by Tim Dolin (1876; London: Penguin, 1997), p. 179. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>17</sup> Hardy, 'Dorset in London', p. 277.

lower-middle class—a group in which Hardy might identify—a familiarity with the arts represented a means to unprecedented social mobility. Hardy records the encouragement of his mother, Jemima, in this direction from a young age, as she urged her son towards extensive reading. His autobiography continually conflates his own education in classic and renaissance literature with social advance.

Hardy was pursuing employment as a trainee architect by his teenage years, yet in his autobiography he describes a continued, self-disciplined study of classical literature. From the age of sixteen, Hardy's reading 'was done between five and eight in the morning before he left home for the office', and it included 'a moderately good number of the usual classical pages—several books of the *Aeneid*, some Horace and Ovid, etc.' (p. 32). The arts remained a priority for Hardy and his knowledge was tested through friendly competition with his colleagues at John Hicks's architectural office. Although 'Hicks was ahead of them in Greek', the trainees 'beat him in Latin' (p. 34). And where disagreements arose, the Dorset poet and schoolmaster William Barnes would be consulted next door to decide the outcome of debates between Hardy and his fellow-pupils. The language of confrontation continues when the pupils are described debating religious matters, and, 'to add to the heat', two of the Dorchester Baptist Minister's sons 'joined in the controversy'. Hardy 'fought on with his back to the wall as it were—working at night at the Greek Testament to confute his opponents' (p. 502).<sup>18</sup> The scene is described as a provincial dispute between budding intellectuals, judged according to their knowledge of an academic, classical culture from which they were in varying degrees at odds.

Such early experiences may have informed Hardy's representation of the classical languages in his fiction. In *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), Parson Swancourt quotes from Latin and Greek to assert his social position as equal to Stephen Smith, who he judges 'is gentleman and scholar enough to continue a quotation' (p. 52). His opinion changes once he realizes Smith's knowledge comes from self-study and not formal education. Indeed, the classical languages were by the mid-century in high demand, due to their esteem in

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<sup>18</sup> The detail on Barnes was added by Florence Hardy between her husband's death and the first publication of the autobiography, see *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928), pp. 35–36.



society. The presence of the learned figures, Isaac Last, William Barnes, and Henry Moule were crucial to this aspect of Hardy's education.<sup>19</sup>

Moule was Vicar of Fordington and his educational efforts were just one of the various philanthropic activities he conducted in the community. The legacy carried to his sons, and in 1858 Hardy was present at Horace Moule's lecture, 'Oxford and the Middle Class Examinations', delivered before the local Working Men's Mutual Improvement Society in Dorchester. The speech anticipated arguments Matthew Arnold was then just conceiving: associating the study of classical literature with the cultural and educational aspirations of the working and middle classes. Spoken by a member of the learned elite, the lecture set out clearly the terms on which class mobility was to be possible. As Millgate has argued, it 'spoke powerfully to the kind of aspiration that was moving Hardy' and set definitions of the beautiful in literature and art which were to influence him for many years to come.<sup>20</sup> The subsequent report of the lecture in the *Dorset County Chronicle* emphasized how the audience, many of whom came from the lower professional and labouring classes of the area, reacted with enthusiasm to Moule's words. The description highlights the importance of the classical languages in Moule's speech and reports that he 'warmed into an eloquence which carried his audience away with him, and he sat down amid loud applause'.<sup>21</sup> In reality, only the most privileged learners were likely to gain full competence in the classical languages, as Latin and Greek were practically inaccessible to those outside of the elite educational institutions. Such emphasis meant arguments for culture became 'caught in the snares of social divisions', as Dinah Birch has shown.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, according to the journalist, the audience in Dorchester were persuaded that studying the literature of 'a remote and ancient people' held benefit.

When Hardy moved to London the classics continued to take precedence along the lines set out in Moule's lecture. There is little evidence that pleasure was a determining factor in Hardy's reading in these early years; instead, the acquisition of culture seems still to have been motivated by the will for social advancement. Efforts to imitate the tastes of those who were more educated

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<sup>19</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, p. 54.

<sup>20</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, p. 67.

<sup>21</sup> 'Oxford and the Middle Class Examinations', *Dorset County Chronicle*, 18 November 1858.

<sup>22</sup> Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, p. 29.

are traceable in Hardy's diary entries of the time. He maintained frequent correspondence with Horace Moule who provided further advice on reading: as a student at Cambridge Moule was a model of what Hardy 'most deeply desired to become', as Millgate writes.<sup>23</sup> Hardy took Moule's advice seriously, and a note in *Life* from the summer of 1865 reads: 'Worked at J. H. Newman's *Apologia*, which we have all been talking about lately. A great desire to be convinced by him, because H.M.M. likes him so much' (p. 50). That Hardy described the process of reading as something to be 'worked at' reveals the sense of compulsion and conformity through which he hoped to improve his tastes. Throughout the winter of 1886 Hardy furthered his interest in Roman poetry, and the command to 'Read some more Horace' appears repeatedly in his records. At a time in which he also 'began to practise orthodoxy' (p. 53), cultural advancement is characterized in restrained terms.

If Hardy found entrance into a literary culture a stifling experience, other forms of art were less restrictive. Shortly after his arrival in London he pursued his interest in the visual arts, which, since 1863, had been recorded through regular entries in a 'Schools of Painting' notebook.<sup>24</sup> In an 1865 visit to the National Gallery, however, Hardy took the opposite course to that described in *The Hand of Ethelberta*: evading guidebooks, or indeed any other written interpretation of the art that he was to behold. In his autobiography he recalls finding an unmediated approach more conducive to his learning, devoting

twenty minutes after lunch to an inspection of the masters hung there, confining his attention to a single master on each visit, and forbidding his eyes to stray to any other. He went there from sheer liking, and not with any practical object; but he used to recommend the plan to young people, telling them that they would insensibly acquire a greater insight into schools and styles by this means than from any guide-books to the painters' works and manners. (p. 53)

Keen to exploit the offerings of the capital, Hardy here cultivates an appreciation for painting through direct observation. He strives to understand the qualities of each piece by perceiving it alone, away from any extra information or interpretation. Unlike the fictional Dan and Sol, who find artwork judged by pre-determined definitions of beauty and inflexible to their own situation, Hardy suggests here a notion of aesthetic appreciation in which the individual can

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<sup>23</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Schools of Painting Notebook', in *The Personal Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard H. Taylor (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

directly observe the immutable qualities of a work of art. The judgments of others are in this way avoided and the importance of an extensive prior education in the arts lessened. Hardy recommends his own method of observation as a 'plan to young people', thereby divorcing his own estimation of an aesthetic education from any institution or established cultural authority.

Hardy's gallery visits convinced him that the most profitable interactions between art and viewer were unmediated. However, liberty of judgment was less common a concern for those campaigning to place culture at the centre of nineteenth-century education. Hardy discovered this through a personal encounter with one such aesthete, Matthew Arnold, in February 1880. Unlike Stephen, *Life* depicts Arnold adopting a position of authority when he met Hardy at a London dinner. Arnold took the position of educator during their conversation, readily offering his critical opinion that 'the best man to read for style—narrative style—was Swift'. Hardy only later challenged the advice, describing it after the event as 'an opinion that may well be questioned, like many more of Arnold's pronouncements'. For Hardy, Arnold 'had a manner of having made up his mind upon everything years ago, so that it was a pleasing futility for his interlocutor to begin thinking new ideas, different from his own, at that time of day' (p. 137). This written account suggests a frustrated young writer who felt his opinion stifled, though the view of Arnold as proudly unreceptive to opinions other than his own was shared by others. Stephen was Arnold's rival as principal critic of the Victorian period, and he judged his character in similar terms:

Arnold, as at once poet and critic, has the special gift—if I may trust my own experience—of making one feel silly and tasteless when one has uttered a narrow-minded, crude, or ungenerous sentiment; and I dip into his writing to receive a shock, unpleasant at times, but excellent in its effects as an intellectual tonic.<sup>25</sup>

More than twenty years after the pair's intellectual disputes of the 1860s, Stephen finds reason to value Arnold's teasingly superior attitude, but the memory of feeling 'silly and tasteless' would have been far more recent in 1876, when Stephen showed Hardy such generosity.

Stephen conflates Arnold's personal manner with his intellectual approach. For Hardy, too, it was Arnold's uncompromising view of culture that

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<sup>25</sup> Leslie Stephen, 'Matthew Arnold', *National Review*, December 1893, p. 477.

troubled him; he insisted 'somewhat too strenuously on the purely intellectual & moral aspects of art'.<sup>26</sup> When Hardy met the author Walter Pater, another key figure in the Aesthetic Movement, he found his manner remarkably similar to Arnold, writing in the autobiography it was like 'that of one carrying weighty ideas without spilling them' (p. 187). Both Arnold and Pater were characteristic of an elitist tendency in Victorian criticism which challenged the idea that every man should be free to say what he liked, unless, in Arnold's words, 'what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying—has good in it, and more good than bad'.<sup>27</sup> Women are implicitly excluded from Arnold's formulation in which some men's utterances are to be judged more highly than others. Meanwhile, Hardy felt himself to have 'a widely different way of regarding the same subject matter, which [...] dwells upon sensuous presentation, emotional suggest<sup>n</sup> [*sic*']'.<sup>28</sup>

Hardy shows the easy slide from discriminating taste to people in another scene in *The Hand of Ethelberta*, when the protagonist's verse is discussed in a drawing room. A lady admits that 'I don't understand high art, and am utterly in the dark on what are the true laws of criticism.' She nonetheless posits her own criteria of enjoyment: 'I know that I have derived an unusual amount of amusement from these verses, and I am heartily thankful to "E" for them'. The formal rules for valuing art are here measured against the marginalized value of subjective enjoyment. A gentlemanly figure then intervenes to insist that 'an estimate which depends upon feeling in that way is not to be trusted as a permanent opinion' (p.58). The initial speaker is condemned for taking her standards of beauty from her own inner reactions, much as Hardy had advocated from his visit to the National Gallery.

Throughout the novel there is a resignation regarding the ownership of judgments made about the arts. Ethelberta finds success from her storytelling among elite London circles, and she must remain within this social stratum as long as she wants to continue her creative endeavour. She exists within a highly educated minority who in Arnold's top-down formulation of culture are delegated the task of disseminating their taste to the less-educated majority, including her own working-class family. In *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), Arnold wrote that 'the

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<sup>26</sup> Hardy, *Literary Notebooks* II, 42.

<sup>27</sup> Arnold, V (1965), 96.

<sup>28</sup> Hardy, *Literary Notebooks*, II, 42.

sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light'. This is the 'pursuit of perfection': the imperative to bring about social harmony through aesthetic unity.<sup>29</sup>

Arnold turned to the state to replace the declining aristocratic influence of 'the few', having begun in *The Popular Education of France* (1861) his overarching argument that government should increase its control over education to ensure the nation's cultural prosperity. He argued that the British elite had long held an 'influence in many respects elevating and beneficial' upon other classes and, since an important aspect of this influence had made itself felt through classical literature and art, state education should focus on equivalent cultural work.<sup>30</sup> An education in the arts would enable the multifarious middle and working classes to suppress their differences, bringing a national flourishing rather than a decisive revolution. To bring citizens into closer contact with 'the best which has been thought and said in the world' was to ensure that one view, not many, of the world prevailed, enlarging the aesthetic capacity of all and so resisting the numbing effect of an industrial society prone to 'fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery'.<sup>31</sup>

Hardy read much of Arnold's writing on education in 1877 during a period of intense scholarship, undertaken to better understand the tastes of the literary elite. The reading likely influenced Hardy's description of Clym Yeobright in *The Return of the Native*, which appeared the following year.<sup>32</sup> Clym wants to help others and work as a 'schoolmaster to the poor and ignorant', despite his reputation for individualism among Egdon inhabitants, who expect him to 'be invading some region of singularity, good or bad'. Clym's aim is to 'argue upon the possibility of culture' to his rural students, reflecting an Arnoldian mission to instil morality through education inspired by 'ethical systems popular at the

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<sup>29</sup> Arnold, V, 112.

<sup>30</sup> Arnold, II, 16.

<sup>31</sup> Arnold, V, 233, 100.

<sup>32</sup> For the influence of Arnold's ideas on Hardy, see David J De Laura, "The Ache of Modernism" in Hardy's Later Novels', *English Literary History*, 1967, 390–99. For Hardy's reading more generally, including Ruskin, see Lennart A. Björk, 'Hardy's Reading', in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Bell & Hyman, 1980), pp. 102–27.

time'.<sup>33</sup> His educational scheme is associated with an urban set of ideas and experiences, for the movement of culture was in this period most often imagined from the centre outwards: from where the arts were understood, in the cities, to where they were not, in the countryside.

Arnold drew on continental examples to argue that the quality of literature, as one marker of culture, suffered in proportion to the extent to which it deviated from tastes prescribed in hubs of civilization. 'The less a literature has felt the influence of a supposed centre of correct information, correct judgment, correct taste,' Arnold argued, 'the more we shall find in it this note of provinciality'. Writers wrote in vain unless they pursued these 'correct' aesthetics, which trickled down from universities, museums, galleries and other cultural institutions housed in London, Oxford, Cambridge and other towns. Arnold advised inhabitants of the provinces to suppress local influences, to 'check in himself the provincial spirit', and work 'steadily to widen his culture'.<sup>34</sup> In *Jude the Obscure*, the lore of academic Christminster depends upon its distinction from rural forms of work and culture. Jude leaves rural Marygreen in order to live among the intellectual thinkers of the day, having 'read and learnt almost all that could be read and learnt by one in his position' (p. 80). When he arrives in the university town, the narrator invokes Arnold through lines borrowed directly from the essay he had read years earlier: 'Beautiful city! [...] calling us to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection' (p. 81). This reverence was originally for Oxford, but for Arnold, as for Jude, the ideal held a far wider resonance.

The use to which the Christminster quotation is put aligns Arnold's more general 'social idea' with the reality of an expanding, increasingly centralized, education system. In *The Return of the Native*, Mrs Yeobright, Clym's mother, suggests that universities could take up the responsibility of educating the nation. She questions her son's project for its idealism—'Dreams, dreams!'—and insists that 'If there had been any other system left to be invented they would have found it out at the Universities long before this time'. 'They cannot find it out', Clym responds, 'because their teachers don't come in contact with the class which demands such a system'. His unusual idea is that those with no

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, ed. by Tony Slade (1878; London: Penguin Books, 1999), p. 172. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>34</sup> Arnold, III, 245, 257.

previous association with education, 'that is, those who have had no preliminary training', are best placed to take up higher forms of knowledge; Clym's plan is to instil 'high knowledge into empty minds without first cramming them with what has to be uncrammed again before true study begins' (p. 20).

Clym's educational scheme is challenged by the narrator for its underlying motivation, as well as its idealism. He initially claims altruism, and we are told by the narrator that 'He wished to raise the class at the expense of individuals rather than individuals at the expense of the class. What was more, he was ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed' (p. 171). Hardy had read stern declarations in *Culture and Anarchy* to subdue personal wants for the sake of the community: 'The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection'.<sup>35</sup> For Arnold, conformity was prized at the expense of a severe inhibition of the individual's sensibility, and there is often in his work a sense of urgency to convince a nation that submission to a national culture should take precedence over individual liberty. In Clym's case, however, the prosperity of the group is not easily divorced from his own ambition, as the idea of a school reveals itself to be a far more egotistical enterprise. His plan soon becomes to 'establish a good private school for farmers' sons', and, as worldly success soon proves to be the primary motivation, Clym declares that 'I shall ultimately, I hope, be at the head of one of the best schools in the county' (p. 191). In his consideration of the various forms of learning represented in the novel, Simon Trezise identifies Clym as 'more interested in his own advancement than the advancement of others', and these later actions force us to reconsider the sincerity of his earlier, loftier claims to reform Egdon.<sup>36</sup>

Clym's struggle between individual and communal priorities is typical of a tension within Aestheticism more generally. The hope was that the transformative potential of culture would find appeal across the social order, yet this relied on what was essentially a private experience of beauty; as Arnold admitted, 'the culture we recommend is, above all, an inward operation'.<sup>37</sup> 'What, in a word, is the general tendency of "Culture"', the poet and literary scholar William John Courthope responded in 1874, 'but to encourage a

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<sup>35</sup> Arnold, V, 94.

<sup>36</sup> Simon Trezise, 'Ways of Learning in "The Return of the Native"', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 7 (1991), 56–65 (p. 58).

<sup>37</sup> Arnold, V, 234.

passion for private and impossible ideals?'. Courthope hoped for a revised conception of culture 'that shall be breathed from the common air, not elaborated out of the individual mind'.<sup>38</sup>

However, the challenges to achieving Courthope's widespread enthusiasm were extensive. The failure of Clym's educational plan results in part from his belief that 'high knowledge' will benefit those working and living in Egdon (p. 200). The heath dwellers require a more practicable education than that gained by Clym, or indeed Damon Wildeve, the engineer turned innkeeper, whose 'learning was no use to him at all' (p. 26). According to Olly, the besom-maker, education rarely provides a vocational outlet:

And yet how people do strive after it and get it! The class of folk that couldn't use to make a round O to save their bones from the pit of salvation can write their names now without a sputter of the pen, oftentimes without a single blot. (p. 26)

Although literacy does not seem to improve material prospects or have any tangible function on the heath, it is at least valued for signing the marriage certificate. Any higher cultural aims prove elusive, largely because of the natural setting, shown so persistently resistant to human effort throughout the story. Clym initially aims for his school to provide an environment in which human lives can flourish; yet it is because the conditions of Egdon are so 'untameable' that the plan fails. The omnipotent influence of the heath is the real presiding force over the characters' lives, and Clym's plan seems unlikely to influence the inhabitants' thoughts and actions in a place which holds 'Civilisation' as 'its enemy' (p. 12).

Hardy extends the challenge to Arnold's view of culture in his later work novel, *The Woodlanders* (1887). The novel suggests that the more prestigious forms of Victorian schooling valued social advancement to the detriment of other capacities. Mr Melbury is a prosperous timber merchant who holds great ambitions for his daughter, Grace, and his wealth has 'purchased for her the means of intellectual light and culture far beyond those of any other native of the village'. The disinterested pursuit of Arnoldian perfection has a monetary value here, and Grace's visible cultivation allows her to move away from the situation into which she was born: a process described as the 'flight of her

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<sup>38</sup> William John Courthope, 'Modern Culture', *Quarterly Review*, 137 (1874), 389–415 (pp. 413, 414). See also Dowling, p. 23.



future interests above and away from the local life' (p. 62). As I show later in this thesis, for much of the century female education was directed towards such accomplishments, deemed of value in securing a marriage partner. Grace finds that the 'freemasonry of education' brings her into new networks of social relations (p. 56), for example with Mrs Charmond.<sup>39</sup> Hardy deviates from other literary examples, such as *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), by charting the advance of a female character through education in this way. In George Eliot's earlier novel, Mr Tulliver endows on Tom rather than Maggie the privilege of an expensive education. He is in many ways Mr Melbury's predecessor, as a successful tradesman who values education for its social status. Tulliver pays for his son to be schooled so that 'he might be up to the tricks o' these fellows as talk fine and write wi' a flourish'.<sup>40</sup>

In Hardy's novel, the marriage of Grace to the doctor, Edred Fitzpiers, confirms her father's expectations of a traditional education in the arts. However, Hardy asks what losses accompany these worldly benefits of culture. The visible signs of cultivation justify the social status of Fitzpiers, Charmond and Grace to the other residents of Hintock, but these characters also find their experiences of the surrounding world diminished by their apparent development. Mrs Charmond adopts the language of Arnold during one of her particularly melancholic moments in order to reject the claim that arts can improve society: the belief 'that society may tend to perfection' is 'an end which I don't care for in the least', she proclaims (p. 197). There is little evidence of the wide, unifying benefits to which Arnold alludes among those who, like Grace, have been 'trained socially and educated intellectually' (p. 164).

Because this formal education in the arts has prioritized ideas and values that jar with immediate surroundings, its students seem uninterested with the actual experience of beauty in the woodland. It becomes clear that Grace's boarding school has taught her little to help her better understand her home environment and has instead actively diminished her capacity for appreciation. The process numbs rather than cultivates Grace's aesthetic sense, and she can no longer distinguish between apple varieties, for 'the knowledge and interests that had formerly moved Grace's mind had quite died away from her' (p. 42). In

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<sup>39</sup> Hardy, *Woodlanders*, pp. 62, 56.

<sup>40</sup> George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, ed. by A. S. Byatt (1860; London: Penguin, 2003), p. 11.

this sense, the plot is comparable to Hardy's 'Barbara of the House of Grebe', where, as Potolsky shows, 'Aesthetic education destroys the student's ability to experience aesthetic pleasure'.<sup>41</sup> Later in *The Woodlanders*, Grace realizes the mistake and wishes that her father 'had never, never thought of educating me!'. Her education has only brought her 'inconveniences and troubles' (p. 221), estranging Grace from once-familiar people and places.

## 2.2 'The material of which the man is made'

Both *The Return of the Native* and *The Woodlanders* scrutinize the relationship between learning and improvement, raising doubts as to the effectiveness of education in bringing about human flourishing. Hardy was negotiating his own position in relation to the dominant culture of the day during the decade between the publication of these novels. His writing style became more individualized and his outlook more idiosyncratic as a return to the landscape of his childhood conjured up inspiring associations. In the opening chapter of the earlier novel, Hardy interrogated changing aesthetic definitions of beauty, asking 'if the exclusive reign of this orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter.' The changing, grim atmosphere on Egdon Heath bears down upon individuals such that 'human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things' (p. 10). The natural world becomes a source of beauty in itself, yet its aesthetic standards remain ungovernable by human beings. The realm of the beautiful is widened, as the influence of the landscape, 'absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind' (pp. 10-11), supersedes all else. This is a place in which it is futile to claim that beauty can be fixed in enduring works of art.<sup>42</sup>

Egdon Heath was a setting in which an alternative, even unfashionable, aesthetics could be imagined. By 1883, Hardy was willing to recommend his embrace of nonconformity to the young when, alongside other prominent figures, he was asked by the teacher Miss Mary Christie to support 'a scheme for supplying elementary schools with photographs and engravings of good

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<sup>41</sup> Potolsky, p. 868.

<sup>42</sup> This interpretation of Hardy's aesthetics follows that suggested by Norman Page, see 'Art and Aesthetics', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Dale Kramer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 38–53.

pictures'.<sup>43</sup> Hardy's response reveals his attitude to aesthetic education at the time:

Dear Madam,

I have read with great interest the account of your scheme to encourage a feeling for art in National schools, & if my name be of any service in support of the general proposition I willingly consent to your using it.

As to the details of such a scheme, my views differ somewhat from your own. For instance I think that for children between 9 & 12 or 13—the great mass of those in elementary schools—fairly good engravings, such as those in the *Graphic*, *Illustrated News* &c [sic.] (not the coloured pictures) to be as conducive to the end desired as good photographs or more finished pictures. A child's imagination is powerful, & only requires the idea to set it to work: & hence a dozen suggestions of scenes & persons by as many prints would seem to me to be of more value in the case than the perfect representation of one—while the latter would cost as much as the former. This however is altogether a secondary point, & I daresay that if we were to talk over the subject we should soon be quite at one about it.

With best wishes for your success in the project

I am, dear Madam

Yours truly

Thomas Hardy.<sup>44</sup>

Childless Hardy supports the principle of aesthetic education here by endorsing the placement of artwork in schools, while his knowledge of the typical age of schoolchildren at the time is notable. His suggestion is to display a number of varying images to stimulate the children's imagination, placing greater value on the 'dozen suggestions' in the students' response than any innate quality in the works of art themselves. 'The beauty of association is entirely superior to the beauty of aspect, and a beloved relative's old battered tankard to the finest Greek vase', Hardy noted six years earlier in his autobiography (p. 124). His rejection of perfect representations reads as an endorsement of an alternative aesthetic to that championed by Arnold.

By the early 1880s, Hardy's altered view of culture had begun to resemble that of John Ruskin, the social critic and reformer, who was greatly

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<sup>43</sup> Mary Christie, *A Tardiness in Nature and Other Papers*, ed. by Maude Withers (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1907), p. 23.

<sup>44</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to Mary Christie, 11 April 1883', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), I (1978), 116–17.

influential in the related areas of education and painting. Ruskin understood art as 'fragments full of imperfection' to be shared and appreciated by all. Like Stephen and Arnold, he related aesthetic values closely to moral ones.<sup>45</sup> He was involved with the Kyrle Society, which aimed to bring domestic beauty to the poor, and his efforts in education dated back to his role in the 1850s at the Working Men's College, which had focused upon working-class adults, and a Professorship at Oxford teaching undergraduates from 1869. Ruskin was also the first President of the Art for Schools Association which was established by Christie to circulate prints to schools following her contact with Hardy and others, recorded in a letter printed in the *Journal of Education* on 1 June 1883. Like Hardy, Ruskin had advised modesty in response to Christie's request, asking her to consider 'the material there is for such instruction in merely domestic scenes, the peasant life of different countries, if it were all rightly painted'.<sup>46</sup> Ruskin was aware that many more children in rural areas were attending schools following the expansion of provision under the Education Act of 1870, and his wish was for schoolrooms to display scenes bearing a close relation to the lives of these learners. In 1888 such pleas gained recognition from government when the Education Department equipped the London Board Schools with greater resources for drawing.<sup>47</sup>

Ruskin believed that a child's material surroundings were central to their education. In 1857 he asked the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition 'whether we may not wisely introduce some great changes in the way of school decoration'. Ruskin notes the austere design of schoolrooms in his lecture, published a year later as *A Joy for Ever*, arguing that 'the notion of fixing the attention by keeping the room empty is a wholly mistaken one'. He envisages beauty as a rite of passage that is to begin once a student feels that pleasant surroundings will further benefit their thought processes. 'When that time comes, he ought to be advanced into the decorated schools', Ruskin proposes, 'and this advance ought to be one of the important and honourable epochs of

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<sup>45</sup> Ruskin, X (1904), 190; Eleanor McNeese, 'The Stephen Inheritance: Virginia Woolf and the Burden of the Arnoldian Critic', *The Cambridge Quarterly*, 44 (2015), 119–45 (p. 132). For an in-depth study of Ruskin and education see Sara Atwood, *Ruskin's Educational Ideals* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

<sup>46</sup> Ruskin, XXVII (1907), lxix.

<sup>47</sup> Malcolm Seaborne, *The English School: Its Architecture and Organization (1870-1970)*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1977), II, 27.

his life'.<sup>48</sup> Such comments show an interest in environment's influence on the young.

Although Ruskin and Hardy encouraged schools to account for creativity, they shared a more general scepticism regarding institutionalized forms of education. In *The Stones of Venice* (1853)—a book which Hardy would likely have read as an architectural apprentice—Ruskin wrote that the call for universal education, 'which is heard every day more widely and loudly, is a wise and a sacred cry', but he also raised doubts that an education system could account for the varied circumstances of learners. He argued that the material of learning should be determined by the particular demands and situation of each learner, 'with definite respect to the work each man has to do, and the substance of which he is made'.<sup>49</sup> An important aspect of this argument was its defence of regional culture and variety against calls to standardize education nationally. It also challenged Arnold's insistence that an arts education should begin from a 'centre of correct information, correct judgment, correct taste'.<sup>50</sup> In *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin transforms Arnold's metaphor to challenge the primacy of one definition of beauty: the 'great fallacy into which men are apt to fall' was to believe that 'light, as such, is always good; and darkness, as such, always evil'. Instead of expecting elite taste to hold value across all circumstances, Ruskin suggests that the particularities of a learner's world alter the way that beauty is understood, as it is the 'circumstances of the individual' that determine the 'faculties of mind capable of being developed'. 'The main thing to be understood', Ruskin writes, 'is that a man is not educated, in any sense whatsoever, because he can read Latin, or write English, or can behave well in a drawing-room'. In urging for a more individualized process of learning, Ruskin challenged hegemonic notions of the best material to be taught in schools. Any system which ignores human variation is futile: 'every man is

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<sup>48</sup> Ruskin, XVI (1905), 89-90. For the effect in America of Ruskin's ideas on school decoration, see Mary Ann Stankiewicz, "'The Eye Is a Nobler Organ": Ruskin and American Art Education', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 18 (1984), 51-64. Douglas Mao shows that interest in environment increased throughout the last part of the nineteenth century and first part of the twentieth: see *Fateful Beauty: Aesthetic Environments, Juvenile Development, and Literature 1860-1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>49</sup> Ruskin, XI (1904), 262.

<sup>50</sup> Arnold, III, 245.

essentially different from every other, so that no training, no forming, nor informing, will ever make two persons alike in thought or in power.<sup>51</sup>

To acknowledge the significant variety of individuals was for many to give up on the unifying hope of culture all together. For this reason, Arnold selected Ruskin as an enemy of progress, claiming elements of his writing as imbalanced and characterized by 'the note of provinciality'.<sup>52</sup> When Hardy read this condemnation in November 1880, he responded in the clearest terms, asserting in *Life* that 'Arnold is wrong about provincialism'. Hardy held a reservation that one class's tastes, knowledge and art should hold primacy over those of another. Furthermore, Hardy had a clear interest in defending the local perspective with which his writing was becoming associated. He wrote that 'A certain provincialism of feeling is invaluable. It is of the essence of individuality, and is largely made up of that crude enthusiasm without which no great thoughts are thought, no great deeds done' (p. 151).<sup>53</sup> Echoing Ruskin's ideas, Hardy embraces the autonomy and variety of a regional aesthetics. The call for harmony in beauty became complicated when a multiplicity of understandings of place entailed a diversity of cultures. But, as far as Hardy was concerned, an imperfect array of perspectives at least avoided the danger of homogeneity. As Ralph Pite argues, 'this competition between differing perspectives on "the same landscape" is less problematic than its opposite: the obstruction of individual perspectives by the cultural dominance of a single, central one.'<sup>54</sup>

Ruskin was concerned that schools take account of such local variation. Learning was to enable students to be happy and effective in whatever activities they were inclined to pursue, but, Ruskin warned, anticipating the type of experience to which Grace is subject, to educate 'in any other sense may very often be productive of a precisely opposite result'.<sup>55</sup> Hardy explores in his fiction what this more localized education might entail, suggesting a distinctly aesthetic variety of learning in the natural setting of *The Woodlanders*. This education emerges from an alternative view of culture than that associated with Grace's boarding school and prioritizes perception and understanding of the world

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<sup>51</sup> Ruskin, XI, 262, 263.

<sup>52</sup> Arnold, III, 252.

<sup>53</sup> See also Yvonne Bezrucka, 'The Well-Beloved: Thomas Hardy's Manifesto of "Regional Aesthetics"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 36 (2008), 227–45.

<sup>54</sup> Ralph Pite, *Hardy's Geography: Wessex and the Regional Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 49.

<sup>55</sup> Ruskin, XI, 263.

around. Hardy encourages us to imagine the woodland as a site of learning, in part through the frequent appearance of words and phrases associated with education in his descriptions of the setting. Giles stumbles across a tree and faggot auction in a woodland corner, which the narrator describes as the 'shady groves of the lyceum', while an auctioneer is 'like some philosopher of the Peripatetic school delivering his lectures' (p. 53).

Later, Giles is the first to 'adopt the Socratic εἰρωνεία [irony] with such well-assumed simplicity' whilst in conversation with Fitzpiers (p. 115), despite his lack of formal education. Such lessons are undertaken on different terms than in institutional environments, as this is a small hamlet

where reasoning proceeds on narrow premisses, and results in inferences wildly imaginative; yet where, from time to time, no less than in other places, dramas of a grandeur and unity truly Sophoclean are enacted in the real, by virtue of the concentrated passions and closely-knit interdependence of the lives therein. (p. 8)

Seclusion permits an alternative way of understanding the world to continue. Inductive, rather than deductive, reasoning is what establishes knowledge in Little Hintock, and, crucially, it incorporates unobserved, imagined elements. 'Outside the gates of the world', the village has preserved its own epistemological limits and 'dramas' of 'grandeur' and 'unity' can remain (p. 8).

In this setting, Hardy has his two most economically impoverished characters develop their aesthetic capacities through a more subtle form of education, bringing learners into closer harmony with the surrounding woodland. He has us see the 'wondrous world of sap and leaves' of the woodland through the eyes of Giles and Marty, who perceive the surrounding natural beauty as 'a clear gaze' (p. 330). They are able to sense 'its finer mysteries as of commonplace knowledge' and 'read its hieroglyphs as ordinary writing' (p. 331). While their unmediated, unseen, glimpses into the woodland do not earn social prestige, they nurture an inner sensibility of far more value. Giles and Marty are at the bottom of the social ladder, yet they are the most aesthetically advanced through their awareness of the rich and subtle beauty of the natural environment. Hardy suggests such appreciation of natural beauty might remain most alive among groups otherwise unacquainted with the touchstones of culture.

Despite their distance from popular taste, Giles and Marty accord with the hopes of aesthetic education by embodying the causal relation between

morality and beauty often invoked at this time. The pair are virtuous throughout the story: Giles sacrifices his hut to Grace to preserve her dignity, while Marty refuses to jeopardize that relationship, in spite of her feelings. Giles's sense of virtue seems to derive in some way from his ability to sense the natural environment: there is 'a sort of sympathy between himself and the fir, oak, or beech' (p. 63). Grace's 'discovery' towards the end of the story is that such a version of culture is ultimately more beneficial. From Giles, she has learnt 'what was great and little in life', whose 'comparative want of so-called culture did not now jar on her intellect; his country dress even pleased her eye; his exterior roughness fascinated her' (p. 219). The focus here is on the visual appearance of rural life, as the pleasing qualities of clothing come to denote a change to a moral outlook. Grace's return to Little Hintock recovers an aesthetic perspective through which the values and approaches instilled at the boarding school can be critiqued. She re-embraces the habitual culture of the woodland, and, in the process, comes to refute the model of progress instilled in her by her father.

The Victorians saw immense educational potential in the type of natural environment familiar to Giles and Marty. Wordsworth's advice earlier in the century to 'Let Nature be your teacher' was particularly appealing, especially to those in positions at odds from the nineteenth-century cultural establishment.<sup>56</sup> Exposure to nature could provide students with the type of aesthetic benefit more commonly associated with artwork. 'My own belief', writes Ruskin, 'is that the best study of all is the most beautiful; and that a quiet glade of forest, or the nook of a lake shore, are worth all the schoolrooms in Christendom, when once you are past the multiplication table'.<sup>57</sup> The transition here from Mathematics at the desk to awe outdoors reveals the breadth of Ruskin's educational ideals. Hardy's writing encourages a similarly broad view of learning.

Hardy places great importance on the capacity of Giles and Marty to see and feel in vital ways.<sup>58</sup> He had earlier underlined that 'it is the privilege and proper condition of a human being, arrived at the maturity of his faculties, to use and interpret experience in his own way' in his copy of Mill's *On Liberty*

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<sup>56</sup> J. P. Ward, "'Came from Yon Fountain": Wordsworth's Influence on Victorian Educators', *Victorian Studies*, 29 (1986), 405–36.

<sup>57</sup> Ruskin, XVI, 90.

<sup>58</sup> Gillian Beer comments on the 'the native inhabitants' power to make 'sensory discriminations'. See 'Can the Native Return?', in *Open Fields: Science in Cultural Encounter* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 31–54 (p. 48). I consider this topic further in my conclusion.



(1859).<sup>59</sup> A liberal politics favoured observation as a means towards aesthetic judgment that preserved the individual's autonomy, as seen in Hardy's opposition to guidebooks at the National Gallery. For Ruskin, direct exposure to both nature and art as sources of beauty would take students 'further towards a power of understanding the design of the great masters than he could by reading many volumes of criticism'.<sup>60</sup> The natural world was a source of beauty and truth derived from God, accessible to all through contemplation. Aesthetic judgments became as available to the artistically uninitiated as apparent connoisseurs. However, this was not to entirely abandon all standards and measures in art, as Ruskin explained to an evening class in Mansfield:

Examine, after every period of renewed industry, how far you have enlarged your faculty of *admiration*. Consider how much more you can see, to reverence, in the work of masters; and how much more to love, in the work of nature. This is the only constant and infallible test of progress. That you wonder more at the work of great men, and that you care more for natural objects.<sup>61</sup>

By making 'admiration' the key outcome of his pedagogical approach, Ruskin suggests here that the cultivation and appreciation of beauty be the paradigm for worthwhile education. 'Progress' in the arts was asserted as an inner development of taste, rather than an outer display of cultivation.

If Giles and Marty progress according to Ruskin's definition, in *The Return of the Native* the potential for such reverence of the natural environment remains far from fulfilled. The heath's particular beauty goes unnoticed, as it is 'an obsolete thing and few cared to study it' (p. 189). The pool outside Eustacia's house elicits the narrator's curiosity, seeming 'as dead and desolate as ever to an observer who moved and made noises in his observation, [but it] would gradually disclose a state of great animation when silently watched awhile' (p. 173). Unfortunately there is little sign of any such silent observer in a novel in which readers are asked to recognize the obscure beauty of the heath from the outset, whilst the inhabitants live, love and die in the same environment, unaware of its aesthetic virtue. The tragic failure of any character

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<sup>59</sup> For the relation of Hardy's fiction to Liberal politics see Tim Dolin, 'The Contemporary, the All: Liberal Politics and the Origins of Wessex', in *Thomas Hardy and Contemporary Literary Studies*, ed. by Tim Dolin and Peter Widdowson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 116–37.

<sup>60</sup> Ruskin, XVI, 149.

<sup>61</sup> Ruskin, XVI, 154.

to abstract themselves from their surroundings compromises their ability to observe or learn from the natural world.

By the end of the novel, Clym has 'found his vocation in the career of an itinerant open-air preacher and lecturer on morally unimpeachable subjects' (p. 336). The manner of this teaching suggests a form of learning more grounded in local surroundings: Clym has 'left alone creeds and systems of philosophy' in favour of the 'opinions and actions common to all good men' and moved towards an education which Trezise describes as 'based on the deeds and words of the everyday world'.<sup>62</sup> This reverses Clym's earlier model by which he hoped to educate his neighbours towards a state 'abreast with the central town thinkers', bringing Egdon's inhabitants from 'the bucolic to the intellectual life' (pp. 171, 172). This late embrace of the common and the natural is less convincing than that in *The Woodlanders*, however, as it depends too closely on the failure of other alternatives. Clym has become an increasingly isolated figure on the heath and lacks the support or infrastructure to introduce the type of education he desires. The continued apathy towards the man who 'advocates æsthetic effort' suggests the futility of his Arnoldian mission to instil high thought and taste in a 'rural world [which] was not ripe for him' (p. 172), and Clym's late activities are more indicative of his tragic fate than they are of any pedagogical alternative.

Hardy met with more success when re-embracing the rural milieu into which he was born. He returned to his home county in 1876 at the time of writing *The Return of the Native* to live in Sturminster Newton, where, as Millgate observes, he developed an 'active and outgoing appetite for whatever was lively, local, and curious'. Pursuing artwork and aesthetic sources particular to his own inclination and character, Hardy then moved to Dorchester in 1883, where he became interested in 'the intense interests, passions, and strategy that throb through the commonest lives'.<sup>63</sup> Following the suicide of his friend Horace Moule while at university ten years earlier, he selected his own reading and followed with great resolution his own path as a writer. His notebooks and diaries became more personal as they began focusing upon subjective impressions of scenery rather than the listing of literary titles and authors. All of these factors suggest that by this time Hardy had found an artistic sensibility

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<sup>62</sup> Trezise, p. 60.

<sup>63</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, pp. 172, 217.

which was based upon 'criteria that are subjective, even secret, rather than those shared by any school, movement, period, or culture', as Page puts it.<sup>64</sup>

As Hardy came to associate his life in Dorset with his best writing, his novels increasingly foregrounded the beauty and tradition residing in the county. Hardy recalled this period when he became President of the Society of Dorset Men in London for 1907–8, suggesting that its members would discover, as he had, that 'their true locality and anchorage is where what they can do best can best be done'.<sup>65</sup> In contrast to the philosophical and aesthetic studies of 1877, Hardy drew on localized written records shortly after returning to live in Dorchester while preparing his next book from 1884 to 1885. He studied 1820s copies of the *Dorset County Chronicle* for interesting detail for his fiction. Records of Hardy's notes at this time demonstrate his interest in the many scandalous, shocking events from this local history.<sup>66</sup> He found inspiration for the wife-sale which begins *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in local newspapers and levelled the distinction between popular and literary writing by transferring plots between them. This was telling proof that Hardy was at his creative best in writing that emerged from familiar contexts. Although Arnold had criticized popular newspapers for their 'short, highly charged, heavy shotted articles', inferior to the high taste of the 'intelligent and urbane', such pronouncements were becoming less significant for Hardy.<sup>67</sup>

A growing reputation allowed Hardy to challenge ideas that he had previously found limited him. His autobiography explains that by 1901 he had come to understand the limitations of received wisdom:

After reading various philosophic systems, and being struck with their futilities, I have come to this: – *Let every man make a philosophy for himself out of his own experience.* He will not be able to escape using terms and phraseology from earlier philosophers, but let him avoid adopting their theories if he values his own mental life. Let him avoid the fate of Coleridge, and save years of labour by working out his own views as given by his surroundings. (p. 333, emphasis in original)

The importance of knowledge grounded in experience emerged as a central idea in Hardy's work, and, as this thesis demonstrates, it influenced his outlook on education. Philosophical theories were borne from abstraction, while Hardy

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<sup>64</sup> Page, 'Art and Aesthetics', p. 38.

<sup>65</sup> Hardy, 'Dorset in London', p. 283.

<sup>66</sup> See Hardy, *Facts*.

<sup>67</sup> Arnold III, 249.

increasingly endorsed localized surroundings as a more viable source of truth and art. In the preface to the 1912 Wessex Edition of his work, Hardy extended his endorsement of provincialism in terms which directly contest the assumptions of established, urban culture 'amid towns and cities', which had for so long pulled Hardy away from Dorset. Although the 'magnificent heritage from the Greeks in dramatic literature' is to be valued, Hardy wrote that the 'domestic emotions have throbbed in Wessex nooks with as much intensity as in the palaces of Europe, and that, anyhow, there was quite enough human nature in Wessex for one man's literary purpose.'<sup>68</sup> Hardy was now able to dismiss the association between the countryside and low taste, endorsing his creation of an imaginary rural landscape as a literary achievement.

Hardy had become more assured in his own capacities, arguing with confidence that beauty was to be sought from the near and the local. In 1904 he felt able to recommend his cousin, James Sparks, 'As an artist whose work is known to me, & of whose competency I have a high opinion' to the Plymouth School of Art.<sup>69</sup> Hardy is modest in justifying his opinion based only on his previous work with illustrators. A record for 1890 in *Life* describes art as 'depicting the common events of life as to bring out the features which illustrate the author's idiosyncratic mode of regard' (p. 235). Aesthetic value was neither prescriptive nor defined by centres of cultural expertise, but instead had an individual and provincial character, developed through inner transformation rather than outer acquisition. In these terms, education amounted to a capacity to see and appreciate in one's own way rather than the way of others. Eclectic sources of beauty, from paintings of working life to engravings in the popular press, were for Ruskin and Hardy best placed to encourage the individual's own aesthetic sensibility. The natural environment was also a rich source of truth and beauty.

This late embrace of the imperfect depended upon Hardy's retreat from the socially established sources of culture, in which measures of class and aesthetics had become conflated. Hardy's earlier outlook had been characterized by the pursuit of established cultural standards: an ultimately

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<sup>68</sup> Hardy, 'General Preface to the Novels and Poems, Wessex Edition', p. 45.

<sup>69</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to The Committee of the Plymouth School of Art, 3 February 1904', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), III (1982), 103.

frustrating experience of assimilation that threatened to stifle his emerging sense of creativity. Educating along conventional lines was not only futile: it often inhibited other, more creative, faculties. Hardy came to challenge the idea that the moral and social benefits of the arts—the cultivation of the individual and the cohesion of society—should depend on a singular, homogenous conception of culture.

Returning home to a familiar landscape provoked aesthetic capacities previously held dormant: a process explored in *The Woodlanders* through the character of Grace, who must unlearn the tenets of high culture before she can see once again ‘these well-known peculiarities’ of Little Hintock ‘as an old painting restored’. Formal education provides a framework for the reader and for Grace to understand such changes to her cognition. The onset of winter is described as a ‘sudden lapse from the ornate to the primitive on Nature’s canvas’, as judgments usually made of artwork are brought to bear upon the woodland. Its appearance is ‘comparable to a retrogressive step from the art of an advanced school of painting to that of the Pacific Islander’ (p. 51). However, these linear notions of cultural advancement are brought under strain through Grace’s rediscovery of beauty and virtue in unexpected places. Hardy’s plot redefines advancement according to the measure of natural reverence, and, in the process, questions a key aspect of Victorian education.

### 3. Educational Space

'Now we'll have some tea', announces Sue midway through *Jude the Obscure* (1895). 'Shall we have it here instead of in my house?' she asks Jude, adding, 'It is no trouble to get the kettle and things brought in' (p. 202). The deliberation brings her to compare the relative merit of a schoolroom to a house:

We don't live at the school, you know, but in that ancient dwelling across the way called Old-Grove's Place. It is so antique and dismal that it depresses me dreadfully. Such houses are very well to visit, but not to live in—I feel crushed into the earth by the weight of so many previous lives there spent. In a new place like these schools there is only your own life to support. Sit down, and I'll tell Ada to bring the tea-things across. (pp. 202-03)

We follow Sue's deliberation here, as her initially tentative suggestion to bring tea from the 'antique' and 'dismal' building becomes decided resolution. The conviction with which she commands Jude and her servant in the schoolroom results from her feeling 'crushed into the earth' in contemplating the alternative. By having Sue employ the physical language of force here, Hardy brings considerations of external environment to bear on the inner workings of human experience. A schoolroom in which 'there is only your own life to support' becomes a relief of pressure and eases the past burdens with which the house is associated.

The phrase, 'a new place like these schools', held particular associations in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Sue's comment draws on the work of a number of architects who designed new schools in the years prior to and following the Education Act of 1870. Improvements in education were increasingly associated with transformations to the built environment; as the historian Malcolm Seaborne has shown, 'during this period the school building itself came to be seen as important in its own right'.<sup>1</sup> In 1868, the Schools Enquiry Commission had stated that 'next to a good master there is nothing more important for a school than a good site and buildings. Health, order, dignity, good teaching and good learning are all intimately concerned with the

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<sup>1</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)* II, 4.

aspect and accommodation of the school itself.’<sup>2</sup> ‘Order’, ‘dignity’, ‘good teaching’, and ‘good learning’ are imperatives given a physical location here, as the schoolroom and its surroundings come to be imagined as a nexus of moral influence. E. R. Robson became the best-known architect to respond to this call and was influential in insisting on a clear break with the ‘semi-ecclesiastical’ school design of the past. In 1874 he insisted that a new building style be established to ‘mark the great change which is coming over the education of the country’.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter demonstrates Hardy’s significant involvement with this bold movement in school design and places new emphasis on his relationship to T. Roger Smith and Henry Bastow, who were at the centre of developments in secular educational architecture. From many years working as an architectural assistant, Hardy was also acquainted with an earlier tradition in which schoolrooms stood to invoke religious history. The weighty atmosphere that Sue describes relates to Hardy’s own experiences in Dorset restoring and building schools in the Gothic style. These older buildings become settings of burdensome regret and nostalgia in his poetry, as Hardy understood the myriad of subjective reactions that an educational building could elicit. I relate such literary representations of educational space to the range of Hardy’s schoolroom plans, exploring how hopes of individual and social transformation were built into both forms. To read literary texts in light of these buildings is to further study a tension, recently highlighted by Benjamin Cannon, between Hardy’s ‘fictional narrative and the material histories that are embodied in historical architecture’.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.1 Human Associations

A text which introduces both the potential and the complications of an educational space is Hardy’s poem, ‘He Revisits his First School’ (1917). The poem depicts the material contingencies of a human life converging on a

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<sup>2</sup> Schools Inquiry Commission, *Report of the Commissioners (Taunton Report)*, 21 vols. (London: HMSO, 1868) I, 276.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Robert Robson, *School Architecture*, ed. by Malcolm Seaborne (1874; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1972), p. 321.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Cannon, “‘The True Meaning of the Word Restoration’: Architecture and Obsolescence in *Jude the Obscure*”, *Victorian Studies*, 56 (2014), 201–24 (p. 203). See also Samantha Briggs, ‘Thomas Hardy and the Evolution of Architecture’, *AA Files*, 67 (2013), 29–35.

schoolroom: a place in which a particular type of transformation is brought about. The verse troubles over visiting the school while such changes are still in process, and, in the opening lines, regrets returning there altogether:

I should not have shown in the flesh,  
I ought to have gone as a ghost ;  
It was awkward, unseemly almost,  
Standing solidly there as when fresh.<sup>5</sup>

The speaker wonders if the best state in which to revisit is as a spirit. Present, past and future selves are described in material, bodily terms in the space around. The 'ghost' is contrasted to the speaker's body, which stands 'solidly' as a seemingly distasteful reminder of feeling 'fresh' while in a younger state. Such childhood memories are compared to the exposure a young bird feels prior to its flight from the nest:

Pink, tiny, crisp-curled,  
My pinions yet furled  
From the winds of the world. (l. 5-7)

The middle line combines the promise of growth with the threat of immobility, given that 'pinions' denote both the freedom of wings in flight and the artificial restriction of that capacity through cutting. 'Furled' suggests the tight binding of a ship's sail and raises similar possibilities of both freedom and constraint.

In childhood the allure of flight into the 'winds of the world' remains alive, but in older age this is replaced by a more reclusive impulse. For 'one wanzing weak', the schoolroom promises a place of retreat from 'life's roar and reek' (l. 12-13). But, even here, peace is threatened by the judgment of onlookers: 'When they'd cry, perhaps, "There sits his shade | In his olden haunt—just as he was' (l. 17-18). The concern at exposure becomes the focus of a decline from promising childhood to jaded adulthood. The physicality of the room in which the speaker stands becomes another source of unwanted attention. As rays pass through the windows' 'quaint quarried glass' to bounce off and through

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'He Revisits His First School', in *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 481 (l. 1–4). Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.



successive apparitions of a man's life, the present 'aspect of hollow-eyed care' is made to 'show in the afternoon sun' (l. 15, l. 22-23). This light suggests the physical surroundings of the space, but an actual description of the schoolroom is prevented by the speaker's bodily uneasiness at the premature return. Instead, the self-conscious narrator remains fixated on his own presence, which is felt to be too obtrusive and 'a garish thing, better undone' (l. 25).

In *Jude the Obscure*, Sue's schoolroom is similarly described as a place of recalled experience. There is an atmosphere of suspense as 'Jude went into the empty schoolroom and sat down', waiting for Sue's return. Once again, the windows figure centrally as surfaces through which light passes. Jude's gaze falls on to a piano, which he associates with his earliest school memories at Marygreen, and, 'Though the dark afternoon almost prevented him seeing the notes Jude touched them in his humble way' (p. 201). The introduction of music enables past feeling to more positively inform the present and future. Sue then quietly enters the schoolroom 'and laid her fingers lightly upon his bass hand'. The melody appeals to her own memories of education, as she remarks: 'I like it. I learnt it before I left Melchester. They used to play it in the Training School'. The schoolroom and its piano elicit a special form of intimacy and shared experience as the couple clasp their hands together with an 'unpremeditated instinct'. The space seems capable of provoking past emotional responses otherwise ignored, as Sue 'was evidently touched - to her own surprise - by the recalled air' (p. 202). Although such recollections are pleasant, in Sue's surprise there are traces of the temporal disruption that so dominates 'He Revisits His First School'. Hardy's interest with mutability is also shown in 'The High-School Lawn' (1925), where a detached observer anticipates a class of female students in old age, having admired the colour and vitality of their present movement.

Where does the curious mix of isolation, intimacy, concealment, and exposure originate? We should remember that Hardy had his own experiences of school to draw upon. He was a shy, lonely child. He seems to have disliked being touched by his fellow pupils, who made him the subject of ironic rhymes.<sup>6</sup> In *Life*, Hardy was to later provide a vivid recollection of his first moments in a schoolroom:

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<sup>6</sup> See Millgate, *Biography*, pp. 44-45.

By a curious coincidence he was the first pupil to enter the new school-building, arriving on the day of opening, and awaiting tremulously and alone, in the empty room, the formal entry of the other scholars two-and-two with the schoolmaster and mistress from the temporary premises near. The school is still standing much in its original condition. (p. 21)

The passage turns from the noticeably marginal experience of young Hardy to the external condition of the school building. The perspective is of a self-aware observer in an unoccupied, barren space, where Hardy awaits the other pupils 'tremulously and alone'. His isolation contrasts the 'entry of the other scholars two-and-two with the schoolmaster', which refers to the system of mutual instruction in Church of England schools founded by the National Society for Promoting Religious Education, also known as National schools. The idea was to educate large numbers of children by assigning paired roles of 'pupil' and 'tutor', so that the more capable could aid the weak.<sup>7</sup> Inevitably, odd numbers would have forced some children to be left without a partner.

The physical structure of the schoolroom makes it unwelcoming to Hardy, who seems lost within its walls. Isolation was likely a common experience for children in mid nineteenth-century elementary schools where vast numbers of pupils were often taught by only one schoolmaster or schoolmistress in one large hall. The standard schoolroom was built for a maximum of 120 students but examples existed with far greater capacity, especially in the northern towns.<sup>8</sup> The mere size of the room would have likely felt quite anonymous.

The 'empty room' that Hardy describes at Lower Bockhampton was newly built and only opened on his first day at school in 1848 (see Figure 2). Hardy wrote in his autobiography that the building was 'far superior to an ordinary village school' (p. 23), and it contributed to the expanding network of elementary schools, which, prior to 1870, were administered by Christian societies to provide basic instruction and encourage religious behaviour among young children of all social backgrounds. The 1840s and 1850s were active decades for building across the country following the announcement of government grants to the National Society, as well as the non-sectarian British and Foreign School Society. An important distinction was the more open layout of the national schools, in which the edges of the room were free of furniture

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<sup>7</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, p. 138.

<sup>8</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, p. 199.

and allowed students to stand unobstructed.<sup>9</sup> The National Society specified that their schoolrooms be 'left as open as possible, to allow full space for the classes to form and the children to pass freely to and from their places.'<sup>10</sup> In September 1850 Hardy was to move to the British School in Dorchester, which, in contrast, would have had desks installed in rows facing the schoolmaster. Hardy was familiar with a range of layouts during this period, as for a short time in the Autumn of 1849 he had attended a school in Hatfield kept by a Congregationalist minister, though, being a private school, it was free from the guidelines of either religious society.<sup>11</sup>

One year before Hardy's first school was opened, Henry Kendall published *Designs for Schools and School Houses* (1847). Kendall, the son of a founder of the Institute for British Architects, called for the employment of professionals in the design and construction of elementary schools in the Gothic style. This followed Augustus Pugin's *Contrasts* (1836), which had identified thirteenth- and fourteenth-century style as a means for spreading revived religious enthusiasm. It now became 'desirable that the school buildings should themselves reflect the religious aspirations of their founders'.<sup>12</sup> Hardy was to later draw on these close associations between education and tradition in his depiction of Melchester Training College in *Jude the Obscure*, which he described as 'an ancient edifice of the fifteenth century, once a palace, now a training-school, with mullioned and transomed windows, and a courtyard in front shut in from the road by a wall' (p. 201).<sup>13</sup>

The religious societies adopted the Gothic style made famous by the public and grammar schools, in part for an impressive, if overbearing, effect. 'The almighty wall' remarked Edward Thring, headmaster of Uppingham School from 1853, is

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<sup>9</sup> For an in-depth comparison of the National and British Society schoolrooms see Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, pp. 136–40.

<sup>10</sup> National Society for Promoting Religious Education, *Fourth Annual Report* (London: The Free-School (Whitechapel), 1816), pp. 93–94. See also Malcolm Seaborne, *The English School: Its Architecture and Organization (1370-1870)*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge, 1971) I, 139.

<sup>11</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, pp. 47, 51.

<sup>12</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, p. 211.

<sup>13</sup> In 'Sisters: Mary and Kate Hardy as Teachers', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 25 (2009), 4–24. Michael Millgate and Stephen Mottram note further changes to the College between Mary and Kate's time there.

‘the supreme and final arbiter of schools’. A good school building influences pupils through its imposing presence, as

no living power in the world can overcome the dead, unfeeling, everlasting pressure of the permanent structure, of the permanent conditions under which work has to be done. [...] Never rest till you have got the almighty wall on your side, and not against you.<sup>14</sup>

Thring emphasizes the permanence of a building’s influence on pupils, such that it supersedes the more changeable conditions of the day. For Hardy, the past was to inform the present in more humane ways, as shown in *Shaston* when Jude waits for the school day to end on the ‘level terrace where the abbey gardens once had spread’, observing ‘girls in white pinafores over red and blue frocks’ who appear ‘dancing along the paths which the abbess, prioress, subprioress, and fifty nuns had demurely paced three centuries earlier’ (p. 201). Nonetheless, both Hardy and Thring invoke the influence of the past, bringing to mind the way in which Victorian school buildings were imagined, designed, and restored to resonate with centuries of religious feeling.

With his own formal education complete, sixteen-year-old Hardy was in 1856 recruited into the context of the Victorian Gothic by the Dorchester architect John Hicks. The requirements of religious and educational architecture were closely aligned, and Hicks was often assigned the task of building or restoring church-commissioned schools in the Gothic style. He specialized in provincial work, and, as his office was relatively small, Hardy would likely have assisted with the majority of the seven schools which are currently known to have been designed by the Dorchester architect. The majority of Hicks’s commissions depended on his good relationship with the local Anglican administration and the recommendation of his elder brother, James, who was the Vicar of Piddletrenthide at this time. In his recent book on the architectural work of Hicks, T.P. O’Connor emphasizes the crucial role of the local newspaper, the *Dorset Country Chronicle*, in advancing the careers of both brothers. Describing itself as ‘thoroughly Conservative in politics and purely Church of England in religion’, the *Chronicle* admired ‘chastened good taste in architecture [...] of a former and distant generation’ and encouraged the efforts of both James and John. Hicks’s designs corresponded with the accepted style

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<sup>14</sup> George R. Parkin, *Edward Thring: Headmaster of Uppingham School*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1900), pp. 217, 217–18.

of Gothic revivalism, with detail ‘nobly imitated and wisely copied from unsurpassable prototypes’ endorsed by the Anglican standards of the paper.<sup>15</sup> The *Chronicle* found its model case in April 1852 when James commissioned his younger brother to restore the church of his parish at Piddletrenthide. The project was followed some years later in 1860 when Hicks built a new school nearby at Piddlehinton. According to O’Connor, the *Chronicle* celebrated ‘the architectural setting of religious belief, particularly valued by high churchmen’ in such buildings, and in 1852 the paper wrote that ‘few things can speak more eloquently of the work doing in the Church of England than the little history connected with the restoration of this sacred edifice’.<sup>16</sup>

In all these educational buildings the emphasis would have been on evoking devout faith through the use of decorated- or early-English Gothic styles.<sup>17</sup> The Church of England drew on this historical atmosphere in response to mid-century challenges, which came from secular government and other Protestant denominations as well as from the Catholic Church. For architects like Hicks, National school buildings were material educators in the principles of high Anglicanism. Schools were often built adjacent to, or in the grounds of, existing churches. This was the case at Denchworth where the school was built behind the village churchyard, as Hardy’s sketch shows (see Figure 3). Hardy visited his sister Mary while she was schoolmistress here from 1863, in her first job following completion of her training in 1862.<sup>18</sup> Ten years earlier the prominent architect George Edmund Street had combined the building of the school with restoration of the older church building. In this period Street also

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<sup>15</sup> T. P. O’Connor, *Thomas Hardy’s Master: John Hicks, Architect* (Dorchester: Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society, 2014), pp. 16, 4. Although records of Hicks’s secular work are less complete than that on ecclesiastical buildings, O’Connor (pp. 46-51) shows that Hardy was working while Hicks designed schools at Long Bredy (1854–1857), Piddlehinton (June–July 1860), Symondsburry (June 1865–May 1868), Walditch (1859) and West Lulworth (March 1859–Jun 1859).

<sup>16</sup> *Dorset County Chronicle*, 5 January 1865; 14 November 1850; 14 April 1853.

<sup>17</sup> O’Connor, p.16.

<sup>18</sup> C. J. P. Beatty, ‘Introduction’, in *The Architectural Notebook of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by C. J. P. Beatty (Dorchester: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 1966), pp. 1–39 (pp. 14–15). For further details on the Denchworth School building see English Heritage, ‘The Old Schoolhouse, Denchworth’, *The National Heritage List for England* <<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1368440>> [accessed 27 May 2014].

replaced the medieval church at Fawley, Hardy's Marygreen, with a neo-Gothic building.<sup>19</sup>

It is this combined enthusiasm for religion and education that underlies the new building provided for Phillotson, the 'National schoolmaster', in *Jude the Obscure*. He is described 'settling down in the new schoolhouse at Shaston. All the furniture being fixed, the books shelved, and the nails driven, he had begun to sit in his parlour during the dark winter nights' (p. 160). This school was based on an equivalent institution on Abbey Walk in Shaftesbury, Dorset, where the National Society opened two new school buildings in 1847 and 1871 with the intention of reviving Anglican feeling on Abbey Walk—a site that held a particular Catholic history.<sup>20</sup> In the novel, the pupils are dwarfed by the overbearing structure of the schoolroom in which Sue comes to teach. Extensive detail of the building's design is provided due to Jude's profession as a stonemason. As he looks 'within the mullioned and transomed windows'—which is to say through the stone supports for the windows' glass—he finds that the faces of the young pupils are obscured, and he is only able to see 'the black, brown, and flaxen crowns of the scholars over the sills' (p. 201). In most elementary schools windows were grand, ornamental features and installed so high as to restrict light towards children.

The relationship between the ecclesiastical features of a building and the faith and moral character of the people within it characterizes Hardy's presentation of a local Baptist minister, Mr Woodwell, in *A Laodicean* (1881). Woodwell's religious position distances him from traditionally Catholic or medieval design. Nonconformist churches and schools tended to employ barer, less ornate versions of the Gothic style. The organizers of nonconformist schools and independent academies, such as those in which Hardy thrived after 1849, took an active concern in distancing the style of their buildings from the established schools of the National Society. Although Hardy noted in *Life* that the decision to move to the British School at Dorchester was 'made on educational rather than religious grounds' (p. 22), the arrangement and

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<sup>19</sup> 'Architecture', in *A Thomas Hardy Dictionary*, ed. by F. B. Pinion (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), p. 175.

<sup>20</sup> Claire Pinder, 'Historical Analysis - Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century', The Dorset Historic Towns Project Report on Shaftesbury <<https://www.dorsetforyou.com/396399>> [accessed 27 May 2014]. A new school was built in 1871 for girls and boys, while the earlier 1847 premises became used for infants.

appearance of the space would have differed from the National School at Bockhampton. Hardy was well aware of such distinctions between schools, and in a letter of 1904 he corrected a journalist's claim that he had attended a school run by the National Society in Dorchester.<sup>21</sup> These differences become important for Woodwell in *A Laodicean* when he attempts to persuade Paula back into his Baptist congregation. He worries about the effect that her residence at the medieval De Stancy castle has had on her inner faith: 'Sometimes I think those Stancy towers and lands will be a curse to her', he confides to the architect Somerset. Woodwell expresses his concern that the 'spirit of old papistical times still lingers in the nooks of those silent walls, like a bad odour in a still atmosphere, dulling the iconoclastic emotions of the true Puritan'.<sup>22</sup> Although his faith differs from men like Hicks, Woodwell subscribes to the widely held belief that the 'spirit' contained within buildings would affect the 'emotions' and so influence religious faith.

Like Hardy, Somerset is one of a new generation of professional architects encouraged to conceive of buildings in these changed terms. Religious architecture required prior training and is in the novel depicted as a superior domain from that in which provincial builders, the merely 'practical men' (p. 62), work. Architects were expected to have knowledge of medieval forms, but also understand the effect that such ornamentation was to have on people. Early in the story we are told that Somerset appreciates architecture in ways more 'than the purely aesthetic' (p. 9), and, upon entering Woodwell's chapel, is 'arrested by the intense and busy energy': it is the 'living human interest' that occupies Somerset in the space (p. 10). Paula comes to value Somerset for his awareness of such aspects of a building. At Stancy Castle he appreciates what Woodwell is to later call 'the force of her surroundings' (p. 228). As Timothy Hands has noted, the concluding moments of the novel

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<sup>21</sup> Millgate, p. 48; 'Thomas Hardy to Clement Shorter, 8 April 1904', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), III (1982), 202–3. The British schools were part of a wider enthusiasm for education among nonconformists, emerging in part from the opening of London's University College in 1826.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Hardy, *A Laodicean*, ed. by John Schad (1881; London: Penguin, 1997), p. 54. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

profess the moral effect of buildings and articulate the ways in which a built environment has become synonymous with an individual psyche:

The winter rains will soon wash the unsightly smoke from the walls, and Stancy Castle will be beautiful in its decay. You, Paula, will be yourself again, and recover, if you have not already, from the warp given to your mind (according to Woodwell) by the medievalism of that place. (pp. 378-79)

Somerset's comment about 'being yourself again' reminds us of the human, as well as religious, dimension of buildings.<sup>23</sup>

The personal associations of schools are considered in 'A Tragedy of Two Ambitions', a short story published in Hardy's collection, *Life's Little Ironies* (1894). Hardy's description challenges Thring's emphasis on 'the dead, unfeeling, everlasting pressure of the permanent structure' (see above at n. 14) by foregrounding the varied, subjective responses to school architecture. When Joshua returns to his childhood school to visit his younger brother, Cornelius, who is teaching there, he is wary of past associations. His 'limited human sympathies' prevent him from responding to the sentimental surroundings in ways that Jude, Sue, or, indeed, his brother, are able. As the men 'looked round the school they were in', Joshua, like Grace in *The Woodlanders*, finds that education has changed his point-of-view: 'the sight jarred unpleasantly, as being that of something he had left behind'.<sup>24</sup> Schools are intrinsically associated with the transformation of the pupils' lives within them, and the setting becomes for Joshua an uncomfortable place in which to encounter the past.

Because the school triggers such personal reactions, the surface of the building becomes imbued with a variety of subjective memories and histories. The narrator takes special note of the school architecture following Joshua's arrival from the railway station:

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<sup>23</sup> O'Connor gives an account of the emerging distinction between builders and architects in mid-century Dorset. He explains that Hicks 'positioned himself between the wide-ranging practice of Ferrey or Wyatt', who were based in London, 'and the parochial world of builder/architects like Mondey or Gregory' (p.15), who were based in Dorset. For Hands's comment see 'Architecture', in *Oxford Reader's Companion to Hardy*, ed. by Norman Page (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'A Tragedy of Two Ambitions', in *The Fiddler of the Reels and Other Stories, 1888-1900*, ed. by Keith Wilson and Kristin Brady (1894; London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 22-47 (p. 170). Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.



After entering the town, he turned into a back street, and then into a yard, keeping his book before him till he set foot under the arch of the latter place. Round the arch was written 'National School', and the stonework of the jambs was worn away as nothing but boys and the waves of ocean will wear it. (p. 168)

The narrative focuses on the way that the movement of young people through the educational space affects the materiality of the school. The jambs—a technical term for a vertical section of the doorframe—exhibit a visible trace of the pressure from students' bodies in previous years. These marks correspond to the experience of the school by the people that have used it, and relate to Hardy's more general depiction of buildings, which often pay particular attention to such human associations.

Hardy had gained practical experience in Dorset, Cornwall, and London of the need for subtle restoration that preserved the human past, as traceable on a building's surface.<sup>25</sup> Whereas the intrinsic worth of a building was commonly invoked in arguments defending sensitive restoration, Hardy wrote in 'Memories of Church Restoration' (1906) that 'The protection of an ancient edifice against renewal in fresh materials is, in fact, even more of a social—I may say a humane—duty than an aesthetic one. It is the preservation of memories, history, fellowship, fraternities.'<sup>26</sup> For Hardy, the retention of a building's historic material was socially important. The detail of a doorframe wearing from the repeated brush of schoolboys' shoulders constituted the emotional stamp of human beings' presence upon the built environment.

We gain a further insight into Hardy's interest with this seemingly arbitrary doorframe on page thirty-six of *The Architectural Notebook of Thomas Hardy* (1966). The book contains various drawings produced between 1862 and 1872, with most relating to Hardy's time with Weymouth architect G. R. Crickmay between May and December 1869, continuing intermittently until 1872.<sup>27</sup> Crickmay undertook a greater range of work than the ecclesiastical

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<sup>25</sup> John Ruskin championed this approach and declared in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) that forms of restoration were a 'Lie from beginning to end'. See , VIII (1903), 244.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Memories of Church Restoration', in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 239–53 (p. 251).

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Hardy, *The Architectural Notebook of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by C. J. P. Beatty (Dorchester: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 1966), p. 5.

focus of Hicks, and Hardy's assistance was required for a number of school designs in this period. Hardy was for the first time in his architectural career given an 'almost free hand', as Millgate notes.<sup>28</sup> Nonetheless, his supporting role required him to focus on the more detailed aspects of building design. The *Architectural Notebook* reveals how an early professional focus on aspects of school design—a school bench, lighting fixture, and roof, for example—inform the specificity with which Hardy was later to describe educational buildings and their particular human interest. As an obituary in *The Builder*, a leading architectural journal, points out, Hardy's practical employment on buildings gave him a 'mastery of [...] various material detail', which then became 'a valuable resource in his novels and his other writings'.<sup>29</sup>

As Figure 4 shows, in this period Hardy sketched the 'angle-bead' of a door in minute detail while planning work on a schoolroom in Radipole, Dorset. His handwriting notes: 'Portland cement angles inside school door – beads kicked away – best simply rounded', emphasizing the future evidence of life in the school through curved irregularity.<sup>30</sup> Radipole School was located in the outskirts of Weymouth and just a few miles from the sea, which perhaps holds some significance for Hardy's later comparison with sea waves. Such technical features affecting the lives of the children were to become standardized in the board school era, when Hardy's rounded corners were to be contrasted by a continental emphasis on rationally organised space, with Robson stating in 1874 that 'right angles and square corners are always preferable for the interior working of a school'.

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<sup>28</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, p. 107.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Edmund Blunden, *Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 35.

<sup>30</sup> See also Hardy, *Architectural Notebook*, pp. 33, 35.

### 3.2 'Inner lives of dreams'

The editor of the *Architectural Notebook*, C.J. P. Beatty, emphasizes 'the importance of function in architecture' among Hardy's collected drawings, admiring the designs for non-ecclesiastical buildings and the practical considerations that they encompass.<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of the collection, in-depth plans of labourers' cottages reveal Hardy's concern at how buildings might best accommodate the needs of the human beings within them.<sup>2</sup> In calculating the dimensions of the cottages, Hardy lists the standard per-person recommendations provided by various public authorities. He begins with the specification of the West of England Sanatorium, where there is 'a minimum of 850 cubic feet of air for each inmate in dormitories', and then lists comparisons with barracks, police stations, and other buildings, noting that 'in Prisons, 800 c ft. is the recognized space' (see Figure 5).<sup>3</sup> In 1864 Hardy was required to dismantle the St. Pancras churchyard for the Midland Railway Company while working for the architect Arthur William Blomfield, and, as Catherine Robson has shown, was made aware of new thinking in this area, including the one-body-one-grave policy.<sup>4</sup> In the *Architectural Notebook*, Hardy combines such requirements with consideration of the lives of the labourers in the cottages. He reflects that a downstairs bedroom will for a labourer be required 'at one stage of his family's growth', suggesting that in later years 'it then may be used for a lodger or otherwise'.<sup>5</sup> Hardy intended to submit these plans to a competition 'for the most approved Designs for Cottages for the Labouring Classes' in 1863. On 18 May of that year, he was presented a silver medal at the general meeting of the Royal Institute of British Architects (R.I.B.A) for his essay 'On the Application of Coloured Bricks and Terra Cotta to Modern Architecture'.<sup>6</sup> The essay title reflects Hardy's interest in civic architecture, as bricks were

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<sup>1</sup> Beatty, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Hardy, *Architectural Notebook*, pp. 79–80.

<sup>3</sup> See also Hardy, *Architectural Notebook*, pp. 163–64.

<sup>4</sup> Catherine Robson, "'Where Heaves the Turf': Thomas Hardy and the Boundaries of the Earth", *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 32 (2004), 495–503 (p. 500). Hardy later wrote about the effect of reforms to graveyards in his poem 'In the Cemetery' (1914).

<sup>5</sup> Hardy, *Architectural Notebook*, p. 164.

<sup>6</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, pp. 77–8.

increasingly being used for prominent public buildings such as the Royal Albert Hall, which was to open in 1871.

Educational debates throughout the century discussed the appropriate allocation of space per pupil. From early in the century it had been recommended that seven square feet be allowed for each child in a schoolroom, but, by the middle of the century, this had dropped to six. In 1888 the Cross Commission deemed that ten square feet were required.<sup>7</sup> Hardy gained an appreciation for how such seemingly arbitrary statistics affected the behaviour and health of the students from the personal testimony of his sister. When Mary arrived at North Waltham School on Monday 4 June 1866, she found a schoolroom measuring 'twenty-eight and a half feet by eighteen and a half feet', as Michael Millgate and Stephen Mottram have noted. She recorded the following in the school logbook:

The present Mistress took charge of the school this morning for the first time, without the help of Pupil Teachers or monitors. The number present was 66. There is hardly a trace of order or discipline. The children are very much behind in every subject.<sup>8</sup>

This meant that each pupil had around eight square feet, which was within the requirement. Nonetheless, Mary's place of work was evidently a crowded, chaotic space, which compromised 'order and discipline'.

Mary also notes the lack of assistance from 'Pupil Teachers or monitors'. In the 1850s the government had attempted to modernize teaching practices by recommending the 'simultaneous method'. The large hall area was to be divided into sub-sections, each the responsibility of a pupil teacher, with Mary's role being one of superintendence. With sufficient pupil and assistant teachers, 'the concentration of the attention of the teacher upon his own separate class, and of the class upon its teacher' would be ensured in each section.<sup>9</sup> The rural elementary schools suffered extensive staff shortages however, and the out-dated facilities combined to mean that Mary was barely able to teach as she had been trained. The logbook refers to the subsequent bad discipline of the

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<sup>7</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1370-1870)* p.210; Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)* p.11.

<sup>8</sup> Winchester, Hampshire Record Office, North Waltham School Log-Book (4 June 1866–21 December 1866); see also Millgate and Mottram, pp. 10–14.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Seaborne, *English School (1370-1870)*, p. 207; R. W. Rich, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp. 91–92.

pupils. Just three days after Mary's arrival the children are 'kept standing an hour this afternoon for being noisy', while, soon after, a pupil named James Row is caned for eating in school. The Reverend Carey intervened on 17 January 1867, noting that Mary had 'entirely lost the affection of the Scholars through excess of severity'.<sup>10</sup>

Complaints about out-dated schoolrooms reached a height in the years following Mary's employment at North Waltham, with a school inspector asking in 1871 whether the ornate Gothic style was the most appropriate style for National Schools. He wondered if 'the pseudo-Gothic form of school room should be abandoned' and criticized 'the high pointed roof, the narrow lofty windows, and the leaded panes', concluding that they were 'totally unsuited for school work'.<sup>11</sup> In 1870 the Education Act transformed expectations in this area. As Elizabeth Gargano shows in her examination of schoolroom scenes in nineteenth-century novels: 'proponents of the new pedagogy cast their arguments in terms of efficiency and functionalism, deploring the useless ornamentation associated with older educational sites'.<sup>12</sup> In 1876 Hardy read an article by the journalist H. H. Statham that argued that the architect should 'commence first from the basis of practical consideration'.<sup>13</sup>

However, the functional requirements which drove changes to school design did not prevent architects claiming larger purposes for their new buildings. Schools were an important part of the unprecedented expansion in Victorian infrastructure described by Somerset in *A Laodicean* as 'the march of mind - the steamship, and the railway, and the thoughts that shake mankind' (p. 92). As Alice Jenkins has shown, a range of fictional, scientific, and journalistic texts imagined the centuries' work as the 'march of mind', a metaphor which she suggests, 'seemed to be bound up with new spatial practices', as it is in Hardy's novel.<sup>14</sup> Somerset debates the worth of building 'a great tunnel and railway' compared to 'a great castle', and comes to realize that the technical expertise required by the former building is worthy of the esteem once endowed

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<sup>10</sup> 'North Waltham Log-Book.'

<sup>11</sup> Committee of Council on Education, *Report: 1870-71* (London: HMSO, 1871), p. 114.

<sup>12</sup> Gargano, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> H. H. Statham, 'Modern English Architecture', *Fortnightly Review*, 1876; Hands, 'Architecture', p. 16.

<sup>14</sup> Alice Jenkins, *Space and the 'March of Mind': Literature and the Physical Sciences in Britain, 1815-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 17.

on more historic architecture. Looking 'down on the mouth of the tunnel', he realizes the 'absurdity of the popular commonplace that science, steam, and travel must always be unromantic and hideous'. Somerset appreciates the sublime power of these monuments of engineering and 'conscientiously admired the construction of the massive archivault, and the majesty of its nude ungarnished walls' (p. 93). The tunnel signifies the dream of human progress and for Somerset brings about a sense of wonder previously reserved for religious buildings.

Both Paula and Somerset end the novel looking forward to a new house 'representative of "the modern spirit"' (p. 379). Modern architecture is 'unencumbered with the ghosts of an unfortunate line' (p. 378), and attractive for its distance from past influences. Space remains associated with human change, but while in older styles the collective are inspired by past faith, new buildings bring about transformations in and from the human mind. In seeking to relieve a mental unease by which Paula has been affected, Somerset prescribes an adjustment to environment as a cure, hoping that new surroundings will help her recover from a 'warp given to the mind'. The De Stancys struggle more generally against genealogical determinants and look to spaces in which their present selves can thrive, away from the medieval castle of which they are historic guardians. Paula says that Miss De Stancy has a 'joyous freshness of her nature, which precludes her from dwelling on the past' (p. 378), referring in part to her willingness to abandon family attachments in favour of more progressive alternatives.

Hardy reflects further on the idea that a building could positively determine one's character in his poem 'Architectural Masks', published in *Poems of the Past and the Present* (1901). The poem is a polemic which questions received ideas about old architecture, asking why an 'old mansion mossed and fair' should necessarily instil 'poetic souls' in its occupants. The middle stanza suggests that new buildings might bring about human flourishing, too:

In blazing brick and plated show  
Not far away a 'villa' gleams,  
And here a family few may know,  
With book and pencil, viol and bow,

Lead inner lives of dreams.<sup>15</sup>

The prospect of nourishing ‘inner lives of dreams’ became the mission of the architects of new educational buildings, who set about designing spaces in which the minds of the future were to be fostered. The Gothic style had by the 1870s become out-dated, as an increasingly forward-looking society came to rethink the environments in which its young were educated. While existing elementary schools had symbolized the hope that an educational building would influence the inner lives of its students, the emphasis of this influence changed from religious to secular.

### 3.3 Johnson Street School, Stepney

When Hardy returned to London for his final period of architectural employment it was to work designing innovative schools, having become aware of existing limitations from his own and his sister’s experience. In March 1872 he was recruited to the Bedford Street offices of T. Roger Smith, who was busy submitting designs to the London School Board. Smith had recently returned from India working on various iconic public buildings.<sup>16</sup> Plans for secular school buildings were in very high demand following the Education Act introduced two years earlier. The particular requirements became clear in this spring of 1872 when it was calculated that new buildings would be required for 103,863 school places. ‘The proverbial new broom was sweeping large spaces clear in the city for the purpose of these erections,’ wrote Hardy of these developments in his autobiography (p. 89). Yet the design of these new schools had not yet been established.<sup>17</sup>

This was an opportunity for Hardy to realize the growing enthusiasm for public building that he had developed throughout the 1860s, and to help design schools that were to influence educational architecture for many years to come.

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Hardy, ‘Architectural Masks’, in *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 147 (l. 6–10).

<sup>16</sup> ‘Smith, Thomas Roger (1830–1903)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/36163>>; Millgate, *Biography*, p. 129; ‘Thomas Hardy to William Tinsley, 19 March 1872’, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), I (1978), 16. Smith’s work in Bombay included the Post Office and the British Hospital.

<sup>17</sup> See also Stuart Maclure, *One Hundred Years of London Education, 1870-1970* (London: Penguin, 1970), pp. 22–25.

Smith's position in the field would have made his office an exciting place in which to work. Hardy described the atmosphere in positive terms, later remembering this time in *Life* as 'an extremely pleasant if short professional connection with an able and amiable man' (p. 94). Hardy was joined in the office by other junior architects who were to quickly rise to prominence. John Slater was seven years younger than Hardy, but he was to become vice-president of the R.I.B.A in 1900, offering Hardy the honour of becoming Fellow in 1920. Another colleague was nineteen-year-old Josiah Conder, who Hardy remembered having a 'keen sense of humour'. Just four years after working at Smith's office, Conder became a professor of architecture at the Imperial College of Engineering in Tokyo, Japan.<sup>18</sup>

It was Victorian practice to hold architectural competitions in cases where a particular design brief was unprecedented, as shown in the various plans to restore Stancy Castle in *A Laodicean*. This was the case for the London School Board, who had only the out-dated schools of the religious societies as models. In *School Architecture* (1874), E. R. Robson, who was to later become the Chief Architect of the London School Boards, stated that 'there are no English Elementary school of the precise kind so suddenly required in large numbers by our School Boards'.<sup>19</sup> Between 3 May 1871 and 31 July 1872, the designs of twenty-seven schools were selected for construction, each addressing the requirements of the day in varied ways. This was a significant period in which various characteristics of modern schools were decided, as architects drew on examples from America, France, Germany and Austria. Smith submitted one of the most influential plans in late 1871, with minor aspects of the design still being finalized by the time of Hardy's employment as assistant.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to John Slater, 7 March 1920', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), VI (1987), 11.; 'Conder, Josiah (1852–1920)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/73023>>.

<sup>19</sup> Edward Robert Robson, p. 160.

<sup>20</sup> Due to a lack of information regarding the construction of the Johnson Street School, Hardy's particular involvement cannot yet be established. It may be that his work from March to July 1872 was on later versions or revisions to the initial submitted plans. Robson provides a thorough analysis of the Johnson Street School, describing it as an 'experiment in the erection of a complete specimen' (pp. 299-304). As Maclure shows (p.30), Smith's school has since been recognized as a crucial influence on the adoption of classrooms in English schools.



The school in question was the Johnson Street School at Stepney. Hardy's experience as Gothic draughtsmen would have been valuable, as, unlike many of the other board schools, Smith continued to use the traditional pointed character with grey stock brick (see Figure 6).<sup>21</sup> However, in other ways, this was a highly experimental project for the London School board to undertake. It provided accommodation for 1,675 students, which made it the largest school to be built in this period of expansion. But its true innovation was in the layout of its rooms, which addressed the kind of problems faced by Mary Hardy. The Johnson Street School was known as the 'Experimental School' by the London School Board as it was the first to introduce separate classrooms, each accommodating up to eighty students and a certified teacher.<sup>22</sup> The Board had appointed a minor subcommittee to discuss this new layout, which was largely inspired by Prussian models. In 1872 they concluded that 'the separation or isolation of classes in separate rooms has an important bearing on results'.<sup>23</sup> While the subcommittee raised concerns at staffing expenses, it was agreed that Smith's 'Experimental School' would be built to most fully test the principle.

Gargano draws on the ideas of Michael Foucault, Henri Lefebvre and others to show that in this period 'the lucid linearity of classroom space facilitates (and is mirrored by) the pupils' orchestrated, collective movements'.<sup>24</sup> By naming a school 'experimental', the board imagined the space as a site of scientific practice, in which the development of students was determined by rational understanding. This was to progress beyond the earlier logic of the schoolroom, in which a large hall was divided by separate partitions. According to its supporters, this method combined the advantages of isolation and superintendence, but, as a passage in *Jude the Obscure* demonstrates, often proved to be ineffective. Mr Phillotson is able to watch his wife, Sue, according

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<sup>21</sup> The Queen Anne style instead became associated with the Board Schools. See Mark Girouard, *Sweetness and Light: The Queen Anne Movement, 1860-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); H. S. Goodhart-Rendel, *English Architecture since the Regency: An Interpretation* (London: Century/National Trust, 1989), p. 163.

<sup>22</sup> John T. Smith, *Methodism and Education, 1849-1902* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 94-95; Tim Walder, 'Architectural Competitions', *Victorian Schools in London: 1870-1914*, 2011 <<http://www.victorianschoolslondon.org.uk/About-Us/Architects/Architectural-Competitions.htm>> [accessed 17 August 2015].

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Maclure, p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> Gargano, p. 24.

to this layout: as a schoolmaster 'he could see the back of her head through the glass partition whenever he turned his eyes that way'. In this scene, the couple pass notes to each other across the divide following an earlier dispute, employing pupils as messengers: 'Phillotson saw his wife turn and take the note, and the bend of her pretty head as she read it, her lips slightly crisped' (p. 224). Once the written communication ceases, 'Phillotson bent a dazed regard upon her through the glazed partition' for the rest of the day (p. 225). The passage parodies the idea of combining superintendence' and isolation in a way which benefits the actual teaching of children. Phillotson misuses the increased visibility of the room's layout as he gazes at his lover, while the supposed privacy afforded to the students is disrupted by the demand of carrying notes.

The use of partitions was long out-dated by 1895, as the divides had shown to contribute far less to student education than the classroom model with which Hardy was himself involved. After lobbying the Education Department, the London School Board received extra grants to support this arrangement and the practice was formalized in London and many other large towns in 1891.<sup>25</sup> The new layout placed children and their experiences of education at the centre of how a school building was designed.<sup>26</sup> Classrooms not only provided greater space in which to teach: according to Seaborne, they made English schools 'more receptive to developments in educational thinking'.<sup>27</sup> Where the design of denominational schools had drawn on past models, these new schools were monuments to a brighter future for the children that they accommodated. In 'The Adventure of the Naval Treaty' (1893) for example, Sherlock Holmes describes the board schools as 'brick islands in a lead-coloured sea' and 'Capsules, with hundreds of bright little seeds in each, out of which will spring the wiser, better England of the future'. Pupils often came from poor areas of East London, and

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<sup>25</sup> Edward Robert Robson, p. 17. For design of Board Schools post-1874 see Thomas Alfred Spalding, *The Work of the London School Board* (London: P.S. King, 1900), p. 68; *Final Report of the School Board for London, 1870-1904*, 2nd edn (London: P.S. King, 1904), pp. 34–77.

<sup>26</sup> Recent work in the History of Education has traced this development through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See for example Catherine Burke and Ian Grosvenor, *School* (London: Reaktion, 2009); *Rethinking the History of Education: Transnational Perspectives on Its Questions, Methods, and Knowledge*, ed. by Thomas S. Popkewitz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, pp. 24–5.

these 'Beacons of the future' were thought to symbolize the prosperous society that they would help create.<sup>28</sup>

The bold change in legislation inspired similar developments around the world. In 1872 Hardy had reason to note the passing of a similar act in the Australian state of Victoria as his close friend, Henry Robert Bastow, was to become its chief architect. The legislation was welcomed in similarly enthusiastic terms as 'a measure which marks a new era in our social history', providing a commitment to education which would 'promote the happiness, intelligence, and prosperity of the people'.<sup>29</sup> Hundreds of schools were now required from urban Melbourne to remote agricultural areas, and in 1873 thirty-three year old Bastow was appointed Architect and Surveyor for the Victorian State Schools Division to lead the operation. Hardy and Bastow were working towards similar briefs on opposite sides of the world many years after their days of apprenticeship under Hicks in Dorchester. Bastow led a remarkable five-year period of construction during which time 615 schools were built following a series of design competitions. Like Hardy's new employer, Smith, Bastow continued to incorporate Gothic features such as spires and bell turrets, and, as an example in Queensberry Street, North Melbourne shows, he was also innovative in building tall, commanding schools as bold statements (see Figure 7). Bastow's design combined the more tradition schoolroom arrangement with the innovative classroom model with which Hardy had become familiar.<sup>30</sup>

Hardy and Bastow corresponded throughout the 1860s following their close friendship at Hicks's office. Much of the interaction concerned their differences in religion: Bastow was a Baptist whose commitment to personal salvation and adult baptism tempted Hardy away from his Anglican belief for a short time. Upon leaving Dorchester for a new life and career in Tasmania, Bastow pleaded with Hardy by letter to continue his commitment to Jesus. But their exchanges concerned more worldly topics, too, as in May 1861 when

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<sup>28</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, 'The Naval Treaty', in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes and the Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, ed. by Iain Pears and Ed Glinert (1893; London: Penguin, 2001), pp. 454–87 (p. 469).

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Jenny Gardner, *Bastow Legacy* (Melbourne: Office for Government School Education, 2010), p. 4. The Governor of Victoria Sir John Manners-Sutton made this comment at the passing of the *Education Act* in 18 December 1872.

<sup>30</sup> Lawrence Burchell, *Victorian Schools: A Study in Colonial Government Architecture, 1837-1900* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1980); Gardner, pp. 1–14.

Bastow lamented his move to Tasmania, asking Hardy to 'Let me hear what you are doing and what you think of doing?'. In 1863 Bastow expressed surprise that Hardy was beginning to consider 'the pen as one of the weapons of your struggle for life', but in subsequent letters of 1865 and 1907 he discussed his Australian architectural career in the language of a friend rather than colleague.<sup>31</sup> Hardy combined Bastow's nonconformist enthusiasm and interest in buildings in his later depiction of the Baptist minister, Woodwell, in *A Laodicean*.

Unlike Bastow, Hardy's involvement with school architecture ended soon after it began. In early September 1872 Hardy's work was given due credit in a letter from Smith 'informing him that another of the six Board school competitions for which Hardy had helped him to prepare designs had been successful' (p. 93), as he recounts in *Life*. Hardy described his involvement with the school designs as an 'architectural success, for which he would have given much had it come sooner' (p. 94). The short contract had provided a direct experience of an aspirational, human-centred form of building that he had anticipated in some of his earlier sketches.<sup>32</sup> In early July, weeks before the last school competition entries were submitted, Hardy received an offer from Tinsley to write a serialization of what later became *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873). Hardy was for the first time able to enact the future that his own work and education had in many ways prepared him. Following a final conversation with Smith, Hardy returned to Westbourne Park to write the first chapters of the story. Its protagonist, Stephen Smith, was named after his recent employer, whose character embodied the potential of professional architecture to fashion a prosperous future.

### **3.4 Dorchester Grammar School**

From 1872 the subject of school buildings stopped being one of Hardy's immediate considerations as his writing career distanced him from developments in the national system of education. But Hardy's involvement with school architecture came to inform the novels and poems which he subsequently produced, until, in his very final public appearance, he was given

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<sup>31</sup> 'Henry Bastow to Thomas Hardy, 20 May 1861; 23 Dec 1863; 1865 [n.d.]; 28 May 1907', Dorset County Museum, Dorchester.

<sup>32</sup> See Millgate, *Biography*, pp. 129–31.

the opportunity to speak openly about the importance of educational environments. The occasion was the relocation of the Dorchester Grammar School in 1927, and, despite having relinquished his role as governor in January 1926, Hardy agreed to speak at the ceremony on 21 July 1927 attended by the Prince of Wales (see Figure 8).<sup>33</sup> Since Hardy's own childhood, the school had come to represent a similar spirit of opportunity that he found in 1870s London. Due to the growing influence of the Labour Party in the Board of Education, such grammar schools had been reformed to encourage class mobility, offering a traditional liberal education to a larger demographic. As Seaborne describes, 'between 1870 and 1939 the grammar schools geared themselves to the establishment of a meritocratic society by introducing increasing numbers of "first generation" grammar-school children to a liberal education through a broad, academic curriculum.'<sup>34</sup> This is the educational plight of Sergeant Troy in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1873), who, after being 'sent to Casterbridge Grammar School', has 'learnt all languages' and 'got on so far that he could take down Chinese in shorthand'.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, Hardy was 'an apt pupil who galloped unconcernedly over the ordinary school lessons', and attended a private academy founded by Isaac Last. In *Life*, Hardy explains his reason for attending Last's school: 'the Grammar-school founded by his namesake being reported to be indifferent just then' (p. 29).

As Dorchester Grammar relied on endowments rather than government funds, its buildings were subject to less regulation than the elementary schools on which Hardy worked as a young architect. Grammar schools tended to preserve their historic buildings wherever possible, as they were signs of prestige associated with the public school model. In 1904, Mary Hardy wrote to her younger sister from Rugby noting the 'great number of school buildings' and reminding Kate of the town's association with 'its large public school'. Mary also alluded to the representation of such an institution in Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days*.<sup>36</sup> Grammar schools appeared in other nineteenth-century novels, such as Charles Dickens's *The Life and*

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<sup>33</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, pp. 525–26.

<sup>34</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, p. 146.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, ed. by Rosemarie Morgan (1873; London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 144–45. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>36</sup> 'Mary Hardy to Kate Hardy, 24 August 1904', Dorset County Museum, Dorchester.

*Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit* (1844) where a young apprentice is told by an architect, Pecksniff: 'you're ambitious, and are a very neat draughtsman, you shall - ha ha! - you shall try your hand on these proposals for a grammar-school'.<sup>37</sup> While Pecksniff's credentials are questionable, the highly ornate style of grammar school buildings attracted the leading architects such as Blomfield, who Hardy assisted. Demand increased following the Taunton Report of 1868, in which the Government called on middle- and upper class schools to improve premises or reconsider their location in order to provide greater outdoor space. The report specified that, among the many factors to consider, getting 'a good playground in a new site is quite a sufficient reason' for schools to relocate away from a town centre.<sup>38</sup>

In the decades following Taunton's recommendations, the endowed schools placed particular emphasis on the natural, outdoor elements of their sites. It was often more feasible for the public schools to relocate as the students were able to board or had greater flexibility in travel. Blomfield was assigned one such relocation at Shrewsbury in 1882. The move was controversial as it involved migrating the school to the far bank of the river Severn. As Seaborne describes, 'the selection of this site represented something of a compromise, for it placated those vigorous opponents who had feared that the new site might be too distant for town boys conveniently to attend the school.'<sup>39</sup>

Such considerations of walking distance were even more pressing for the grammar schools, as they were required to maintain provision for less-privileged students from the local area. The plans for relocation first suggested by Dorchester Grammar School in this period were refused for this reason, although the façade was replaced on the South Street site between 1879 and 1883. Hardy noted this history when the school finally moved in 1927:

I must have been living in London or elsewhere when the existing school was altered; & I was not aware till now that the question of a new site had arisen so

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<sup>37</sup> Charles Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, ed. by Patricia Ingham (1844; London: Penguin, 2004), p. 94.

<sup>38</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, p. 42.

long ago as that. Of course, I understand the burghers' sentimental feeling for the old site—which, indeed, I have shared; but the old order changeth.<sup>40</sup>

Hardy acknowledges here the wish to retain the old associations of the grammar school building, though, by 1927, accepts the greater need for a modernized educational environment.

Hardy's speech largely focuses on the physical aspects of the school environment. He estimates that the Dorchester site 'can hardly be surpassed in England for health, with its open surroundings, elevated and bracing situation and dry subsoil, while it is near enough to the sea to get very distinct whiffs of marine air.'<sup>41</sup> Hardy places the situation of the pupils in their wider natural landscape, as the comparison to the sea again alludes to his earlier comparison of the shoulders of schoolboys with waves in the sea. He surveys the surroundings as a professional architect might: first considering the durability of the ground and then evaluating the benefits of the area to human health. Hardy had clearly maintained some knowledge of 'modern ideas on education within the limits of good judgement' to which he alludes later in the speech. The emphasis on well-ventilated, clean schools began in the board school era, at which time it was hoped that healthy schoolrooms might at least partially compensate the low living conditions of the urban poor. The agendas of public health and education were brought closer following Hardy's retirement from architecture, gaining momentum after the publication of Clement Duke's *Health at School Considered in its Mental, Moral and Physical Aspects* (1887) which claimed to be the first full-length study of the subject. Throughout the early years of the twentieth century there had been 'a growing public debate on what constituted a healthy school'.<sup>42</sup> These discussions drew on the advice of medical practitioners in order to design schools with extensive access to open spaces. Although the focus on hygiene and ventilation had originated in the state-funded sector, concern reached the more traditional grammar schools following the 1924 request by Sir Charles Philips Treveleyn, the President of the Board of Education, 'to encourage the building of new schools, and the

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<sup>40</sup> 'Thomas Hardy To Robert Edgcumbe, 24 June 1927', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), VII (1988), 69.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'On Laying the Commemoration Stone of the New Dorchester Grammar School', in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 462–64 (p. 464).

<sup>42</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, p. 80.

replacement of the old insanitary schools.<sup>43</sup> Such developments likely underlay the pleasure Hardy expresses at the 'open surroundings' of the new school. We know that his interest in school architecture had at least partially remained from a recommendation in 1906 to his youngest sister, Kate, to read 'this weeks [sic.] discussion on Ed. Bill in D. M. as it bears on the question of new buildgs [sic.] at D. schools'.<sup>44</sup>

Later in his speech, Hardy alludes to the difficulties of location to which Blomfield and other architects were subject, but notes that the Dorchester school 'is not so far from the centre of the borough as to be beyond the walking powers of the smallest boy'.<sup>45</sup> Millgate relates this detail to Hardy's earliest recollections of school journeys, which seem in *Life* to have been important experiences for shaping Hardy's perceptions of a world outside the schoolroom. Hardy returns to a perspective grounded in a localized environment by recalling his three-mile walk from family cottage to school in Dorchester.<sup>46</sup> As Hardy writes, 'Walking in every day from a world of shepherds and ploughmen in a hamlet three miles off', allowed him to see 'rustic and borough doings in a juxtaposition' (p. 36). In the first decade of the twentieth century, schools had attempted to incorporate such walks among natural surroundings into their teaching patterns through the rise in 'nature study walks in the country'. There was an increased focus on non-human environments within the classroom, too, as Geography took a more central place on the curriculum and some schools provided specialist rooms for the subject. Finally, the 1911 report of the Board of Education included measures to increase pupils' knowledge of their local area, such as 'constructing maps of the immediate environment to scale'.<sup>47</sup>

Education was taking a greater account of the relationship between students and the places around them. The environmental dimension of education was for Hardy always very broad, as it encompassed a range of both man-made and natural spaces. These settings inspired both regret and hope

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<sup>43</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, p. 115.

<sup>44</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to Kate Hardy, 23 May 1906', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), III (1982), 207. 'D. M.' refers to an article, 'Education Bill in Committee', in the *Daily Mail* on 22 May 1906. Various members of parliament called for an easing of state regulation to school buildings following the 1902 Education Bill.

<sup>45</sup> Hardy, 'Dorchester Grammar', p. 464.

<sup>46</sup> See Millgate, *Biography*, p. 526.

<sup>47</sup> Seaborne, *English School (1870-1970)*, pp. 82, 144, 69.



among the people within them, and they became important sources for Hardy's fiction and poetry.

#### 4. Rural Knowledge

How the old ideas survived under the new education!

Thomas Hardy<sup>1</sup>

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Hardy describes a particularly troubling image of nineteenth-century education. Elizabeth-Jane has undergone a sustained period of study, anticipating the ‘years of plodding’ which Hardy was to have Jude endure nine years later. If the Latin and Greek grammars contain Jude’s aspirations, at least for a while, the ‘silent hours’ of Elizabeth-Jane’s ‘self-imposed task’ bring a profound sadness:

‘If I am not well-informed it shall be by no fault of my own,’ she would say to herself through the tears that would occasionally glide down her peachy cheeks when she was fairly baffled by the portentous obscurity of many of these educational works. (p. 131)

Being ‘informed’ is prioritized above either Elizabeth-Jane’s interest in the books or her general wellbeing. Hardy presents the costs of this type of education, which, it soon emerges, is felt through Elizabeth-Jane’s separation from her previous way of life. A modern education leads her away from past thoughts and ways of speaking, to be replaced by ideas and language that she reads in texts.

Hardy returned to the evocative figure of a young woman’s tears falling onto a book in *The Well-Beloved* (1897), based on his earlier work, *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved* (1892). When the sculptor Jocelyn Pierston hosts Avice Caro in his London apartment, he finds her similarly bound into an unwanted process of education. There are indications that the local character of her upbringing is threatened by her learning: ‘your expensive education is wasted down here!’ (p. 304), her Mother warns her on the Isle of Slingers. Upon returning to his studio in the capital, Jocelyn finds Avice ‘weeping silently’ and

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Hardy, ‘The Well-Beloved’, in *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved and The Well-Beloved*, ed. by Patricia Ingham (1897; London: Penguin, 1997), p. 190. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

'holding her handkerchief to her eyes'. The narrator then reflects on the situation: 'For a school-girl—which she virtually was—to weep over a school-book was strange. Could she have been affected by some subject in the readings? Impossible' (p. 309).

This close description of Avice's reading demonstrates the 'fascination with the woman's mental processes' that Kate Flint reads across many nineteenth-century novels.<sup>2</sup> Flint associates such interest with the changing gender roles of the period. She emphasizes the visible effects of reading and contrasts the emotional reactions put forward in sensation fiction with the intellectual focus of 1890s 'New Woman' writing. How might we understand Avice's tears in this context? And what makes her experience of reading so miserable?

The descriptions of education in *Tess of The d'Urbervilles* may provide an insight. Tess finds that her schooling allows access to a greater section of society after she is employed to tend fowls on the d'Urberville estate. But it also separates her from the community in which she was born, and brings misery by denying her recourse to the past practices and beliefs of the Vale of Blackmoor. Early in the novel, Tess is 'a mere vessel of emotion untinged by experience' living undisturbed in her 'engirdled and secluded region'. The surrounding villagers speak with a 'characteristic intonation' (p. 12). This is a dialect particular to the district that is 'as rich an utterance as any to be found in human speech'. This speech encapsulates feelings and experiences which originate in surroundings, and which are individualized and particular to Tess: 'every contour of the surrounding hills was as personal to her as that of her relatives' faces' (p.15). From this harmonized description of individual, surroundings, and language, we sense that the novel's tragedy will hinge on the loss of these connections. The severance of Tess's attachment to her close relations and place will, we are warned, be bound up with her schooling. As with Elizabeth-Jane and Avice, education will figure as a loss. The loss will be felt in her language, for, we are told, 'the dialect was on her tongue to some extent, *despite* the village school' (p. 37, emphasis added). Certain types of reading and learning will draw Tess away from her local place and her family, disrupting

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<sup>2</sup> Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader, 1837-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 4.

her sense of her own and her region's past. The very survival of local speeches and cultures seems threatened by education.

In this chapter I will explore the conflicts and continuities in Hardy's fiction between education, on the one hand, and rural speech, knowledge, and custom on the other. The new system of schooling was often perceived in smaller rural communities as an imposition of values, language, and knowledge from elsewhere. The dialect poet, William Barnes, ran a boys school in Dorchester at the time of these changes, and wrote publicly about the effect they were to have on rural areas. He taught with innovative pedagogies which recognized the persistence of tradition in new currents of thought, always starting 'with more homely before more foreign knowledge'.<sup>3</sup> Barnes aimed to teach in ways that complemented rural culture by employing local and familiar points of reference grounded in the 'lore' of the past. Although it is unlikely Hardy experienced this teaching directly, the breadth of Barnes's interests certainly influenced him. Hardy's writing relates past continuities to present concerns—recalling the dialect poet quite distinctly.

#### **4.1 National Education and 'Hodge'**

The 'village school' mentioned in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* recalls the growing number of such institutions from the early 1800s, which increased further in the middle of the century. The elementary schools taught a more standardized curriculum following the systemization of the 1860s and 1870s, which gave instruction 'a mechanical turn', according to Matthew Arnold, who was employed as a government school inspector at the time.<sup>4</sup> Quantifiable knowledge was encouraged and exams results soon became a measure of value from which government spending was allocated. The Education Act of 1870 established a network of elementary schools that would provide basic education to every parish in the country. 'Our object is to complete the present voluntary system, to fill up gaps', announced Forster, explaining the measures that sought to improve the nation's economic capacity by spreading education

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Lucy Baxter, *The Life of William Barnes: Poet and Philologist* (London: Macmillan, 1887), p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Committee of Council on Education 1868-69* (London: HMSO, 1869), p. 447.

to the marginal parts of the country. Additional secular, elementary schools were created to bring 'elementary education within the reach of every English home'.<sup>5</sup>

The Education Act claimed to bring all corners of the nation up to a standard of learning and refinement. A national network of schools would address the problem of the Liberal party that 'many of our labourers are utterly uneducated', with education providing the hope of establishing cohesion and 'national power' in an emerging democracy. 'Now that we have given them political power', Forster continues, 'we must not wait any longer to give them education'. Opponents were persuaded by economic arguments as, if the British were to compete internationally, the schools would first need to unify the population through a common level of education. As Forster put it:

Civilized Communities throughout the world are massing themselves together, each mass being measured by its force; and if we are to hold our position among men of our own race or among the nations of the world we must make up the smallness of our numbers by increasing the intellectual force of the individual.<sup>6</sup>

Six days before Forster announced this plan for education, Hardy received a letter from his employer, the Dorchester architect John Hicks, included in *Life*: 'Can you go into Cornwall for me, to take a plan and particulars of a church I am about to rebuild there?' (p. 66). Therefore, while Forster was advocating education as a way of the nation 'massing themselves together', Hardy was in the rural parish of St Juliot, which could not have been further away from such a mass. Besides being 'sixteen miles away from a station', it was a place 'where newspapers rarely penetrated' and 'where new books rarely came' (p. 70). This was to be where Hardy met his first wife, Emma, and in her account of the village, reprinted in the autobiography, she describes an antithesis of the modern, intellectual nation that the proponents of universal education were advocating. The disparity of educational levels and the feasibility of bringing about Forster's 'civilized community' would have held particular resonance. It was a place in which modern knowledge was undercut by a 'belief in witchcraft', which, as Emma recalls, 'was carried out in actual practice among the primitive inhabitants' (p. 70). When Hardy arrives for the

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<sup>5</sup> 'Speech by Mr. W. E. Forster Introducing Elementary Education Bill (17 February, 1870)', in *Educational Documents: England and Wales 1816-1967*, ed. by Stuart Maclure, 2nd edn (London: Methuen Educational, 1968), pp. 98–105 (p. 105).

<sup>6</sup> Forster, p. 105.

church restoration, Emma describes him as a civilized outsider and associates him with other professional visitors: 'an occasional *locum-tenens*, a school-inspector, a stray missionary, or school-lecturer' (p.72). Hardy embodies a move away from previous stages of civilization and a break with the past for Emma, who, following his arrival, writes that 'my life now began' (p.71).<sup>7</sup>

Emma distinguishes herself from her rural neighbours by describing them as 'primitive inhabitants'. In this period this was one among many negative stereotypes that defined rural people as uncivilized. The historian Mark Freeman has shown that during the 1880s a more specific figure of the uneducated labourer—'Hodge'—became popular. Hodge was 'unimaginative, ill-clothed, ill-educated, ill-paid, ignorant of all that is taking place beyond his own village'.<sup>8</sup> These were associations of which Hardy was aware upon writing his well-known Boer War poem of 1899. But Hardy had earlier felt compelled to challenge the label in a notable article in *Longman's Magazine*.

Hardy's purpose in 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' (1883) was to challenge the unpleasant associations of the Hodge stereotype as they had been advanced in Richard Jefferies's *Hodge and his Masters* (1880). Hardy opposes the image of the rural worker as a 'degraded being of uncouth manner and aspect, stolid understanding, and snail-like movement'. Although it admits that some rural workers exhibit such characteristics, the article is more concerned with challenging in the idea that *all* labourers, in what Hardy terms an 'uneducated community', meet this description. Hardy's argument allows for the existence of particular illiterate or uneducated individuals, but also urges for a more nuanced understanding of a community 'assumed to be a uniform collection of concrete Hodges.' Some rural people, 'having attended the National School', know 'the printed tongue', while they also retain the richness of regional language: 'the unwritten, dying, Wessex English'.<sup>9</sup>

'It seldom happens that a nickname which affects to portray a class is honestly indicative of the individuals composing that class', Hardy reminds us. Interestingly, this plea for anti-essentialism is aimed specifically at 'thoughtful

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<sup>7</sup> Hardy, *Life*, pp. 69–75. These descriptions of St. Juliot are taken from Emma Hardy's notes as they are reprinted in Hardy's autobiography.

<sup>8</sup> Mark Freeman, 'The Agricultural Labourer and the "Hodge" Stereotype, C. 1850-1914', *The Agricultural History Review*, 49 (2001), 172–86 (p. 173); J. Dent, 'The Present Condition of the English Agricultural Labourer', *JRASE*, 7 (1871), 343–44.

<sup>9</sup> Hardy, 'Labourer', p. 38.

persons'. Hardy plays on the progressive impulse with which he identifies in order to argue against deriding those who stand to benefit from reforms. Upon meeting the 'supposed real but highly conventional Hodge', Hardy writes, 'few persons of progressive aims consider it worthwhile to enquire what views, if any, of life, of nature, or of society' he holds. 'This wild colouring of so-called typical portraits' troubles Hardy for ignoring a reality in which 'variety had taken the place of monotony', and where the labourer is 'somehow not typical of anyone but himself'.<sup>10</sup> Hardy's piece emphasizes the diversity and interest of the real people living behind terms such as 'Hodge' and 'Labourer', and suggests that disregarded rural customs might be worthy of further consideration.

Hardy was in close correspondence with 'persons of progressive aims' at the time of writing 'The Dorsetshire Labourer'. It is of interest that Hardy enclosed a copy of the article in his 1883 correspondence to the liberal politician and educational campaigner, John Morley. 'I make no apology for drawing your attention to the article. A copy is sent herewith', he wrote at the end of his letter.<sup>11</sup> During a period since described by Tim Dolin as 'Hardy's most direct engagement with politics', the Dorset writer had written to Morley as 'a Liberal' to express support for the political rights and education of rural labourers.<sup>12</sup> In the letter, Hardy refers to the campaigns of Joseph Chamberlain, who, alongside Morley, was a member of the nonconformist pressure group, the National Education League (NEL). The group had been instrumental in the introduction of the 1870 Act, and in subsequent years had actively campaigned for the extension of its terms. Later, in 1895, Hardy met with Morley and another Liberal-party minister, Thomas Acland, who had devoted his career to 'the

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<sup>10</sup> Hardy, 'Labourer', p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to John Morley, 25 June 1883', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), I (1978), 118–19 (p. 119). Hardy writes that his view 'harmonizes with what was said at Birmingham', to which he refers to Chamberlain's speech during celebrations honouring John Bright, M.P. for Birmingham, in mid-June 1883. Chamberlain related Joseph Arch, a radical campaigner who Hardy admired, to the position of the Agricultural Labourer: both issues covered in Hardy's 'paper on these identical subjects in the number of *Longman's Magazine* which appears to-day'. See also 'Morley, John (1838–1923)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/35110>>.

<sup>12</sup> Dolin, p. 118.

provision of greater educational opportunity'.<sup>13</sup> These politicians had continued to advance the interests of the secular, non-denominational schools, and had recently come under attack from the conservatives on the topic of voluntary schools, as Hardy noted in a letter at the time.

Hardy identified with the Liberal's approach to education and later stated that he believed 'only in the secular solution in Education', thereby distancing himself from the Anglican tradition of schooling.<sup>14</sup> But he also held particular reasons for including 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' with 'no apology' with his 1883 letter to Morley. In their urge for progress and reform, liberal campaigners had tended to draw on unpleasant stereotypes of those lacking education, the franchise, and other rights. From the distance of London, where the education acts were conceived, the interests of peripheral culture could be ignored, derided, and relegated as inferior. Hardy was wary of the rhetoric employed by some liberals on matters of education, and included his writing to show that he opposed the caricatures of rural labourers commonly used in campaigns by the NEL. In Morley's book, *The Struggle for National Education* (1873), for example, arguments for the extension of educational reforms had been interwoven with disparaging references to rural workers. Morley lamented that the English poor were dissimilar to the Scottish:

It would be a most substantial gain if our labouring class in England could all talk as articulately, as rationally, and as instructedly, and could take care of their interests as acutely, as you may trust the labouring class in Scotland to do.<sup>15</sup>

Besides the unusual term—'instructedly'—the other noticeable aspect of Morley's writing is its broad generalisation of working-class people.<sup>16</sup> The image shows the urgent need for a 'substantial gain' in education, but homogenizes a class of people in the process. As Dolin notes, Hardy's decision to send 'The

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<sup>13</sup> 'Acland, Sir Thomas Dyke (1809-1898)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/67>>.

<sup>14</sup> "Thomas Hardy To Agnes Grove, 22 June 1896", in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), II (1980), 124; 'Thomas Hardy to Edward Clodd, 8 April 1908', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), III (1982), 311. Hardy notes 'the clamour about the Education Bill' in his letter to Grove.

<sup>15</sup> John Morley, *The Struggle for National Education* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1873), p. 116.

<sup>16</sup> The only example of this word provided in the *OED* is this by Morley in 1873.



Dorsetshire Labourer' to Morley in protest was indicative of his 'desire to have it read as the intervention of a literary man and a Dorset man into the public debate'.<sup>17</sup>

## 4.2 Progress

In certain nineteenth-century discourses the standards of education were invoked to differentiate rural and urban people, or written and oral cultures. Learned characters in *The Well-Beloved* distinguish themselves from other residents of the isle in this way. Hardy relates advancement in education to the standards of cultural progress in his depiction of three generations of Avice women. The narrator recalls that the youngest member of the Caro family, Avice the third, has been 'educated at Sandbourne' and given 'the best instruction that masters could give' (p. 291). Avice the second, meanwhile, complains that 'she was the neglected one', but says of Avice the third that 'her education was very thorough—better even than her grandmother's'. The women's status is so tied to their relationship with education that they come to embody the very texts that constitute that learning. Avice the third is described as 'a still more modernized, up-to-date edition of the two Avices of that blood' (p. 289). Education becomes a way of shaping essential characteristics and of bringing 'blood' into line with the 'modernized' moment of birth. Educational attainments not only distinguish the Avice women from the other inhabitants of Slingers, they also bring their speech, behaviour, and interests 'up-to-date' with the rest of the nation.

Emma describes the 'primitive inhabitants' of her locale to understand the parish life that she was leaving behind. Hardy, like education itself, becomes the means for a transformation into the wider world of 'Civilized Communities'. Schools were seen as cures for the superstition and irrationality most often associated with the countryside. The Baptist preacher and religious writer Charles Haddon Spurgeon reminded the British and Foreign School Society of 'the importance of education as a check to superstition' in 1864. The premise of Spurgeon's argument for an increase in basic schooling was 'the extent to which there was a belief in witchcraft'. Like Susan Nunsuch's fear of bewitching

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<sup>17</sup> Dolin, p. 122.

in *The Return of the Native*, he said this was found 'especially in the rural districts'.<sup>18</sup>

In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, education affects the superstitious beliefs present in the area. The pedigree of Tess's family is understood within a developmental framework, such that her modern and her mother's customary knowledge are contrasted sharply:

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 the Victorian ages were juxtaposed. (p. 23)

The thoughts and words of Tess's mother are described as 'lumber': defined as 'useless or cumbrous material', remaining in an era beyond their relevance.<sup>19</sup> Lumber also alludes to wood, which for Hardy may have related to the novel's various descriptions of trees as carriers of past human culture. Early in the story, we're told 'the forests have departed, but some old customs of their shades remain. Many, however, linger only in a metamorphosed or disguised form' (p. 13). 'Superstitions linger longest on these heavy soils' towards the end of the novel, 'Having once been forest, at this shadowy time it seemed to assert something of its old character, the far and the near being blended, and every tree and tall hedge making the most of its presence'. The narrator describes 'The harts that had been hunted here, the witches that had been pricked and ducked, the green-spangled fairies that "whickered" at you as you passed', to provide a vivid account of a 'place teemed with beliefs in them still' (p. 345).

The 'gap of two hundred years' between the out-dated practices of Tess's mother and the 'juxtaposed' modern alternative suggests that these two worlds are incompatible. The instruments of the new state system of learning – 'National Teachings', 'Standard knowledge', and the 'Revised Code'—are endowed with capital letters, while the rural mediums of knowledge transmission remain without them. A hierarchy of distinct stages of culture separates the Victorian from the Jacobean age.

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<sup>18</sup> British and Foreign School Society, *Educational Record*, IV (1864), pp. 79, 80.

<sup>19</sup> 'Lumber, n.1', ed. by Angus Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Tess is presented as modern where her mother is not, although they live in the same village and fulfil many of the same domestic duties. The difference has to do with Tess's access to the latest education from the newly established network of schools. Hardy similarly benefitted from elementary education, while, at home, his mother and visitors 'repeated tales from the local repertoire, and sang the songs their parents and grandparents had taught them', as Millgate has shown.<sup>20</sup> Unlike Hardy's, Tess's school teaches knowledge according to the requirements of the Revised Code. Hardy had just arrived in London at the age of twenty-one when Robert Lowe introduced this measure in March 1862, which made government grants dependent on schools results across the country. For many in the countryside, the code represented an imposition by the government into the workings of rural life.<sup>21</sup> The specification that state payments to schools depend upon the achievement of pupils in the most basic areas of study—reading, writing, and arithmetic—had a dramatic effect on rural schools.

Manual exercises, handicrafts, and other subjects that related to the lives and work of labouring communities were discontinued, as they no longer contributed to the school revenue. Lowe was clear that this focus on the rudiments of learning intended to bring schools into line with the same national standard, and spoke openly of a need for the government to influence the workings of rural schools.<sup>22</sup> As Sue discovers in *Jude the Obscure* when the 'the king of terrors' enters her classroom (p. 108), HMI Inspectors were known to make surprise visits to assess the efficiency of state spending. Student attainments were either adequate and the educational standard judged sufficient, or inadequate, in which case the budget was cut and the teacher's job threatened.

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<sup>20</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, p. 40.

<sup>21</sup> Pamela Horn, *Education in Rural England, 1800-1914* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1978), p. 182; J. W. Adamson, 'The Revised Code', *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*, Ed. by A. W. Ward and A. R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907-21), p. , XIV (1917). The revised code was resented by many teachers, whose jobs were put under increasing pressure to produce good exam results.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Lowe, 'The Revised Code (1862)', in *Educational Documents: England and Wales 1816-1967*, ed. by Stuart Maclure, 2nd edn (London: Methuen Educational, 1968), pp. 79–80. Lowe listed, county-by-county, the 'connection' of 'parishes' to the 'privy council'. Dorset fared particularly low in this regard where 'out of 179 parishes, only ten are in connection with [the privy council]'.

Definitions of the educated and the non-educated were brought more sharply into focus by acts such as the Revised Code. The urge to standardize education represented a will to bring all children up to a minimum level of literacy and mental attainment. Charles Kingsley, whose novels anticipated some of Hardy's themes, had a year earlier written that the labourer's education should be 'one fit for a civilized being'. Kingsley argued for a state-funded system of education on the grounds that the government had 'no right to compel the mass of citizens to receive among them every year a fresh crop of savages'.<sup>23</sup> This responsibility is felt by Clym Yeobright in *The Return of the Native* (1878), who returns from Paris to find his fellow heath-dwellers 'going to ruin for want of somebody to buckle-to and teach 'em how to breast the misery they are born to' (p. 175). His hopes education will 'raise the class at the expense of individuals' (p. 171)—a laudable aim never wholly endorsed by the narrator, who describes Clym as 'unfortunate' for advocating his culture scheme in a 'rural world' which is 'not ripe for him'. Rather than help the 'Egdon eremites' (p. 172), Clym's mother urges him to focus on an individualistic course that will 'lift you out of this life into something higher' and distinguish him from his neighbours (p. 177). A version of education which raises 'individuals at the expense of the class' is more generally found among Hardy characters, who find the benefits of schooling in their own, rather than their neighbours, lives. Although those benefits include greater opportunities for employment and a wider perspective, they are diminished by a sense of separation from others in the community.

In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Elizabeth-Jane shares an intellectual curiosity with Clym, and in Henchard she also has a parent overly concerned with the possible status education can enable. Henchard incites Elizabeth-Jane's tears when he breaks 'out into open chiding' of her dialect, categorizing her as non-human for exhibiting traces of a rural upbringing. 'Those terrible marks of the beast to the truly genteel' are local words associated with manual, rural work, and so the opposite of that emphasized in a modern education. Henchard asks his daughter if she is 'only fit to carry wash to a pig-trough, that ye use such words as those?' (p. 126). His discomfort originates in a projected unease about his own lack of learning. Like Mr Melbury in *The Woodlanders*,

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Frederick Augustus Maxse, *National Education and Its Opponents* (London: T. Brettell, 1877), p. 16.

Henchard is commercially successful but insistent that his daughter will become refined. He forces language, skills, and knowledge that are opposed to her early upbringing. Although Elizabeth-Jane ‘lapses’ in falling away from the standard and using local words, she soon adopts the ‘improvements’ of regular speech. By substituting traditional words for modern ones, Elizabeth-Jane’s education means ‘she grew to talk of “greggles” as “wild hyacinths”’, and ““humble bees”’, not “dumbledores”’ (p. 127).<sup>24</sup> Her learning becomes an imposition of standards from afar upon those nearby.

Hardy was fluent in the rural speech of his native Bockhampton, as well as the standard English learnt at school. In 1862, Hardy wrote to his sister, Mary, while she was completing her teacher training, mocking the Dorset dialect in a manner more humorous than his creation, Henchard. Hardy describes his father’s rare visit to the capital and imitates his localized way of speaking: ‘she zid a lot of others’.<sup>25</sup> Hardy alludes to a common educated identity with his sister by mimicking the speech patterns of their own rural home. Hardy was accessing unprecedented opportunities in these years, while his sister was among the first all-female cohorts of teaching professionals. These possibilities were unavailable for Hardy’s parents, and so dialect becomes a way of marking the difference between generations, as well as indicating educational and social standing.

Rural education was a prominent issue during the period in which Hardy was writing *The Mayor of Casterbridge* between the spring of 1884 and 1885. He would have read that the vote had extended to the rural working classes while residing at Shire Hall Place in Dorchester. Following the Third Reform Act, which came into effect on 1 January 1885, there was widespread speculation about the educational levels of the new voters, akin to that which followed the previous acts. Some argued that agricultural labourers had benefitted from the changes in 1870 and were now educated to the standard expected of voters. The journalist T.H.S. Escott travelled around the West Country in 1879 to find the ‘average country labourer’ to be ‘no longer the dull, despondent being that

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<sup>24</sup> For further discussion of the encounter between Elizabeth-Jane and Henchard see Alan Chedzoy, “Those Terrible Marks of the Beast”: Barnes, Hardy, and the Dorset Dialect’, *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 4 (2008), 46–60.

<sup>25</sup> “Thomas Hardy to Mary Hardy, 3 November 1862’, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), I (1978), 2–3.

he was a decade since'. While the 'boundaries of his parish' were previously 'the horizon of his views and knowledge', since the establishment of elementary schools the labourer's 'senses have been quickened, his moral and mental nature has been breathed upon with the breath of life.'<sup>26</sup> But others disagreed with this account.

### 4.3 Victorian Anthropology

Following the reform act, the *Saturday Review* wrote in 1887 of rural labourers as primitive and unenlightened in familiar terms, questioning why their education had not 'raised them above the influence of the grosser and more vulgar forms of superstition'. The writer insists that the 'old-fashioned belief in ghosts, witches, wizards and "uncanniness"' continued despite the efforts of schools. With its 'wonderful sketch of a local soothsayer', Hardy's recent novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, is cited for evidence. Hardy becomes associated with a particular insight into rural life, possessing, the piece asserts, 'an unusual knowledge of rustic life and habits of thought'.<sup>27</sup>

In the following year Edmund Gosse consulted Hardy again regarding country life. Gosse was editing a recollection of his father's schooldays in Poole, Dorset, which was to be published in *Longman's Magazine* under the title 'A Country Day-School Seventy Years Ago'. The article recalls a rural education of the 1820s when both the Dorset dialect and the belief in folklore were still common. Philip Henry Gosse remembers the practice of wart rubbing at this time, in which his hand would be rubbed with cheese and then buried secretly—as it decayed, the wart would disappear. Hardy is present in the footnotes, where he comments on the accuracy of the details and explains their contemporary significance. Hardy confirms that the game 'long-galls' is still played 'in the interior of the county' under the name 'cobbs off', and informs readers that dialect words such as 'Ich Woll', 'er woll', and 'er war' are 'still used by old people in north-west Dorset and Somerset'.<sup>28</sup> Philip Henry Gosse describes school that predates the influence of the Revised Code and the 1870 Act. Rural life seems to permeate into the knowledge and teachings of the

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas Hay Sweet Escott, *England: Its People, Polity, and Pursuits*, 2 vols. (1879; London: Cassell, 1881), I, 341.

<sup>27</sup> 'Rustic Superstition', *Saturday Review*, 63 (1887), 155–56 (p. 156).

<sup>28</sup> P. H. Gosse, 'A Country Day-School Seventy Years Ago', *Longman's Magazine*, 13 (1889), 512–24 (pp. 516, 518, 523).

classroom in the account. Edmund Gosse reminding us of the changes which have occurred since this time, describing his father's writing as 'a sketch of conditions which are as extinct to-day [sic.] as the dodo is, and almost as remote'.<sup>29</sup>

Hardy continued to be consulted as an authority on the fading traditions of rural life, anticipating his comment in 1912 upon the collected publication of his fiction: 'things were like that in Wessex: the inhabitants lived in certain ways, engaged in certain occupations, kept alive certain customs, just as they are shown doing in these pages'.<sup>30</sup> The popular anthropologist Edmund Clodd sent a copy of his latest book, *Tom Tit Tom: An Essay on Savage Philosophy in Folk-Tale*, to Hardy in 1898. Clodd was interested in understanding 'barbaric' culture by cataloguing versions of the same spoken children's story in various traditions, from Scottish to Basque. In his response, Hardy related the 'body of unwritten human experience' of these foreign peoples to the tales with which he was familiar in Dorset. A particular rural tradition became typical of non-standard traditions around the world. 'To be let into this subterranean world of impressions, fancies, & knowledge', Hardy wrote to Clodd, only required becoming 'familiar with the outlying cottagers of a remote district'.<sup>31</sup>

These letters remind us that, in this period, the 'impressions, fancies, & knowledge' of rural labourers were compared with other non-dominant cultural groups around the world. Whereas that comparison had tended to deride both groups, there is in Hardy's letter an interest and respect for marginal beliefs and knowledge. His fiction placed the disregarded, marginal knowledge of less-educated rural communities at the centre of literary life, reversing the dismissal of places like Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native* 'which had slipped out of its century generations ago' (p. 173). Andrew Radford allies Hardy with a group

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<sup>29</sup> P. H. Gosse, p. 512; see also Thomas Hardy, 'Thomas Hardy to Edmund Gosse, 26 October 1888', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), I (1978), 181.

<sup>30</sup> Hardy, 'General Preface to the Novels and Poems, Wessex Edition', p. 46.

<sup>31</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to Edward Clodd, 7 October 1898', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), II (1980), 202; 'Thomas Hardy to Edward Clodd, 30 October 1896', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), II (1980), 136. In the earlier letter Hardy explains another folklore to tradition to Clodd, challenging him to 'say exactly where it belongs in the evolutionary Chain of Folk Lore.'

who understood 'contemporary peasant customs' as 'an object of keen scientific curiosity', rather than 'the worthless wreckage cast aside by progressive culture'.<sup>32</sup> Following the example of E.B. Tylor, this early group of anthropologists and folklorists were influenced by geology and Darwin's theory of evolution, and they studied rural British life with an antiquarian interest.

The Victorian anthropologists were interested in establishing a universal scale onto which particular cultural developments could be plotted, as that which passes from 'the bucolic to the intellectual' in *The Return of the Native* (p. 171). Human progress was linear and had reached its latest phase in late nineteenth-century Europe, while marginal cultures existed further from this pinnacle of civilization and were associated with the past. In *Primitive Culture* (1871), Tylor called for European peasant behaviour to be considered alongside tribal life:

Look at the modern European peasant using his hatchet and his hoe [...] hear his tale of the ghost in the nearest haunted house, and of the farmer's niece who was bewitched with knots inside till she fell into fits and died [...] [things] have altered little in the long course of centuries [...], there shall be scarce a hand's breadth of difference between an English ploughman and a negro in Central Africa.<sup>33</sup>

According to Tylor's formulation, human society evolved in much the same way across the world. Hardy read sections of Tylor's work, and, as Radford shows, his theory of 'survivals' influenced elements of the later fiction. The persistence of 'primitive' habits, language, metaphors, and customs in otherwise 'civilized' nations reveals the 'continuity between early and more developed forms of civilization' in Hardy's writing.<sup>34</sup>

This evolutionary view of human culture is evident in *The Well-Beloved*. Like the 'barbarous satisfaction' with which Clym observes the ancient furze-tufts 'stubbornly reasserting themselves' in spite of attempts to cultivate Egdon Heath (p. 173), the distant past informs and affects contemporary events in *The Well-Beloved*. Nichola Pine-Avon adopts the language of anthropology to distinguish herself from the inhabitants of Portland when visiting from the

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<sup>32</sup> Andrew Radford, *Thomas Hardy and the Survivals of Time* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, 2 vols. (1871; London: Murray, 1903), I, p.6.

<sup>34</sup> Hardy, *Literary Notebooks*, I, 1336; Radford, p. 22.



capital. She asks Jocelyn why he has ‘come away to this outlandish rock, to live with barbarians in the midst of the London season?’ (p. 259). In the book’s preface, Hardy describes the isle as ‘for centuries immemorial the home of a curious and well-nigh distinct people, cherishing strange beliefs and singular customs’. These are ‘now for the most part obsolescent’ (p. 171), but a distinctive aspect of the novel remains the continued presence of this history as an imaginative influence in the current time.

Through his protagonist, Jocelyn, Hardy relays a fascination and respect for the survivals of folklore that make the island ‘strange’ (p. 200). A traditional marriage custom described as ‘the primitive betrothal’ is still practised (p. 233), while Avic the second invokes local cures when suffering from ‘paroxysms’ and ‘angina pectoris’: ‘I ought to get rid of all outside anxieties, folk say’ (p. 303). Jocelyn’s ‘genealogical passion’ has him scrutinize this provincial past as an anthropologist might (p. 304). He pursues an ‘essence’ believed to have survived across three generations of the Caro family (p. 291). It is in the youngest of the women that Jocelyn finds the ideal balance of past and present influences: her ‘modern sympathies’ mean that ‘one hand touched the educated middle-class’, and the other, ‘the rude and simple inhabitants of the isle’ (p. 299). The influence of the isle’s particular local history is omnipotent and enduring, and it resurges throughout the novel.

Radford considers how Hardy’s writing was affected by ‘Tylor’s concept of the untutored rural masses as a limitless archive of cultural antiquities’, suggesting that it ‘may have had a profound effect on Hardy’s imaginative reconstruction of Wessex Village life’.<sup>35</sup> Anthropology understood the speech, beliefs, and customs of rural people as ‘knowledge of the now forgotten past’, a notion that for some transformed the derision of the countryside into curiosity at its fading rural heritage.<sup>36</sup> A case emerged for Hardy’s writing to scrutinize modern schooling, which, in its most unaccommodating form, was felt to threaten such vanishing culture.

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<sup>35</sup> Radford, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> W. H. Smith, ‘Wilson’s *Prehistoric Man*’, *Blackwood’s Magazine*, 93 (1863), 526–27.

#### 4.4 'To Teach Her to Forget'

It was particularly 'in what are called centres of education' that traditional forms of speech and knowledge were most quickly disappearing. Hardy recorded his concern at the decreasing use of dialect in a letter to an American phonetician in 1927. He noted a 'gradual silencing' where established words replaced local ones and dialect became 'tabooed'.<sup>37</sup> The comment recalls Hardy's earlier representation of Elizabeth-Jane, where Henchard prohibits rural speech in the name of education. Her face 'reddened with shame and sadness' as her tears fell onto a book (p.127). The sadness came from the lost feelings so bound up in her upbringing. When study is borne from such a place, and when learning is excising the past and replacing it with something thought to be better, education becomes a process of loss.

Elsewhere in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Elizabeth-Jane is represented as an inquisitive and thoughtful reader whose education provides her with independence, perspective, and respect from her surrounding community. But learning is here a repression of 'deep-feeling' rather than a nourishing process: 'mastering facts with painful laboriousness', she continues to take 'notes incessantly' (p. 131). Latent tendencies in Elizabeth-Jane's speech, behaviour, and belief associated with a particular place are violently denied.

Why were feeling and rural culture so closely related for Hardy? Did dialect speech express particular emotions? Did education harm all of these? Hardy shared the concern of many Victorians that 'the wrong kind of learning might destroy the right kind of feeling', as Birch writes.<sup>38</sup> The Gradgrind approach to education which taught nothing but facts left the spiritual and emotion dimension of human character unaccounted for, if not actively impeded. Writing in 1888, Hardy judged that this stifling process was still underway, although 'education has as yet but little broken or modified the waves of human impulse on which deeds and words depend'.<sup>39</sup> The 'waves of human impulse' are posed as out-dated survivals in a late-Victorian world. Not since Wordsworth's day, perhaps, had learning accounted for such complex feeling.

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<sup>37</sup> "Thomas Hardy to John Kenyon, 23 June 1927", in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), VII (1988), 68.

<sup>38</sup> Dinah Birch, *Our Victorian Education* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p. 12.

<sup>39</sup> Hardy, 'Profitable', p. 87.

The poet, philologist, and teacher William Barnes suggested that feelings were intimately related to the human capacity for language. Choices of words were tied to a speaker's understanding of the world. Barnes opposed the idea that dialect was a vulgarization of standard English and he published most of his poems in the traditional Dorset tongue. His academic work attempted to show a clear linguistic relationship between the language and earlier Saxon.<sup>40</sup> For Barnes, the journey towards modern English was seen as a degenerative retreat from a richer and more nuanced version of the language. It was richer and more nuanced, he argued, because it was better able to communicate the particular feelings and experiences of its users. Dialect was tied up with a way of seeing and being in the world known only to select speakers: as Hardy wrote in an introduction to Barnes's poems, it had a 'delicate ability to express the doings, joys and jests, trouble, sorrows, needs and sicknesses of life in the rural world'.<sup>41</sup> Put this way, local variations of speech become expressive of distinct sensibilities, and a standard model of English a threat to a unique view of the world.

The source of Elizabeth-Jane's torment becomes clearer. Her tears could represent a semantic loss in which previously available meanings are discarded alongside the lost signifiers. Of course, some of her dialect words are replaced straightforwardly with newer versions. We are told that Elizabeth-Jane has learnt to say 'succeed' instead of its alternative, 'fay'. But her education is ill equipped to provide words for all of her thoughts and beliefs.<sup>42</sup> To give one such example, after a bad night's sleep Elizabeth-Jane 'did not quaintly tell the servants next morning that she had been "hag-rid," but that she had "suffered from indigestion"' (p. 127). The change from one term to another constitutes a transformation in the way that Elizabeth-Jane understands and explains phenomena. 'Hag-rid' and 'indigestion' serve equivalent functions in explaining her lack of sleep, but where the second assumes a biomedical understanding of

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<sup>40</sup> William Barnes, *A Philological Grammar* (London: John Russell Smith, 1854); *A View of the Roots and Stems of the English as a Teutonic Tongue* (London: John Russell Smith, 1862); *A Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* (London: A. Asher for the Philological Society, 1863).

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Preface to *Select Poems of William Barnes*', in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. by Harold Orel (1908; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), pp. 76–82 (p. 79).

<sup>42</sup> See William Abberley, 'Narrator as Time-Travelling Philologist in *Wessex Tales*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 6 (2010), 71–81 (pp. 74–75).

the body, the first is predicted on a folklore belief. Barnes explains the meaning of 'hag-rid' in *A Grammar and Glossary of the Dorset Dialect* (1863). The sufferer's nightmare is 'attributed to the supernatural presence of a witch or *hag*, by whom one is *ridden* in sleep.'<sup>43</sup> The two available explanations hinge on incompatible causes, representing a chasm between nineteenth-century science and the much older belief in witchcraft. Elizabeth-Jane's education brings about a fundamental change in worldview and affects her more profoundly than a changed use of words might suggest.

The various beliefs on which dialect words ground their meaning appear throughout *The Mayor of Casterbridge* as prevalent features of the rural community. When Henchard challenges the trade of his rival, Farfrae, he hopes that by predicting future weather conditions he will better predict demands for corn. By setting his novel 'before the present century had reached its thirtieth year' (p. 3), Hardy recalls an era in which familiar judgments are made on radically different premises than at the end of the century. In the area surrounding Casterbridge, farmers rely on their senses as 'a sort of flesh-barometer, with feelers always directed to the sky and wind around'. 'The rural multitude' tend to 'prostrate themselves in lamentation before untimely rains and tempests', and from their pre-scientific understandings they believe in a 'god of the weather' (p. 183).

Henchard is characterized by this faith in the immaterial. He is 'superstitious' in ways which contradict his professed alignment with the modern and the rational in matters of education. In secret, Henchard visits 'a man of curious repute as a forecaster or weather-prophet' (p 184). This local expert demonstrates the pervasive influence of 'fundamental belief' and traditional knowledge beneath the veneer of modernity. His predictions of the weather are quietly respected and he is 'enabled to live' by the local population, who support him 'with their backs turned'. The authority of the weather-prophet survives the arrival of newer ideas, and his position in the 'secret hearts' of the local people ensures his continued influence. Tylor's theory of survivals is recast in Hardy's fiction, as we are told that the weather-prophet 'was sometimes astonished that men could profess so little and believe so much at his house, when at church they professed so much and believed so little' (p. 185).

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<sup>43</sup> Barnes, *Dialect*, p. 61.

From 1878, the Folklore Society set out about recording such examples of vernacular culture that were thought to be threatened by newer systems of belief. One such folklorist, J. S Udal, shared his collected efforts in the 1922 publication, *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore*. Barnes had prepared an introduction to the volume before his death. He explained the decrease in such rural beliefs by the rise of modern education. 'The lore of schooling and books, which is often called by the people "book-learning"' is, he argued, to be distinguished from its opposite: 'home-taught lore'. Barnes explains how folklore is disseminated within a community through its own patterns of knowledge transmission: beginning with 'elder ones', the beliefs are then 'received by the younger folk' through the daily recourse of 'common life'.<sup>44</sup> He focuses on the processes by which folklore is reproduced, revealing his interests in pedagogy and education more generally. Besides this heterogeneous understanding of learning is the sharp, frank dismissal of more established systems of education. Udal extends Barnes's argument when contemplating the folklore that no 'longer exists'. Modern processes have brought about their extinction: 'our Board Schools have seen to that!', he writes.<sup>45</sup>

In *The Well-Beloved* education is presented as a primary cause for the disappearance of local habits, as schooling extracts habitants from experiences associated with their native island. Avice still has an 'impulsive innocence' in the opening chapter of the novel, but when she kisses Jocelyn, a 'man fresh from towns' (p. 180), she is chided by those around her. Himself a native of the isle, Jocelyn has learnt to restrain his feelings since moving away to the capital. He notices that Avice is invested in a similar process of education that will draw her away from her local culture:

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. (p. 186)

Upbringing serves to disrupt the idiosyncratic in favour of making an 'exact copy', bringing Avice away from the unique features of the island. This type of education is an unhealthy abstraction from real surroundings, which enforces a

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<sup>44</sup> William Barnes, 'Introduction', in *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore* (Hertford: Austin, 1922), p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> John Symonds Udal, *Dorsetshire Folk-Lore* (Hertford: Austin, 1922), p. xi.

generic standard. As the passage continues, we come to understand what is lost in such a process. Avice's education has served

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. (p. 186)

The language of learning is inverted, as Avice is taught to 'forget' rather than remember. Education becomes a process of prohibition rather than liberation. The verb 'to drown' brings us to think about loss by way of a violent imposition of one set of ideas and practices on another. And somewhere between the experiences of Avice's ancestors and the local ballads is a way of seeing, understanding, and conceptualizing the world which the established education cannot accommodate.

The replacement of 'local ballads' by purchased songs recalls a comment in Hardy's autobiography in which, upon the arrival of the new railway line in Dorchester, the ancient Dorset folk songs are 'slain at a stroke by the London comic songs that were introduced' (p. 25). Like 'drown', 'Slain' is a word associated with violence and confrontation. Hardy draws upon these meanings to describe the feeling of rupture with which new forces encroached upon local cultures. Modern schooling comes to threaten the customs and feelings that are associated with the places in which characters are raised. In his retrospective preface to *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Hardy describes 'Legend, folklore, close inter-social relations, and eccentric individualities' as among the various facets of rural life brought under threat.<sup>46</sup>

It seems very likely that Hardy drew his reticence towards standardized education from Barnes, who showed an acute appreciation of the local, distinctive character of his surroundings. Upon his death, Hardy wrote Barnes's obituary and described him as a 'repertory of forgotten manners, words, and sentiments'. Barnes's localism was related to his awareness that education could threaten rural folklore and dialect. Hardy chose the following words to summarize Barnes's legacy:

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Preface to the 1895 Edition of *Far From the Madding Crowd*', in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. by Harold Orel (1895; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), pp. 10–11.

Since his death, education in the west of England as elsewhere has gone on with its silent and inevitable effacements, reducing the speech of this country to uniformity, and obliterating every year many a fine old local word.<sup>47</sup>

Hardy seems to dissociate himself from the liberalism that had underpinned his views on education in earlier life. Modern schooling has reached a later stage in its efforts at 'reducing the speech of this country to uniformity'. We get the surest sense of its uncontested force on rural ways here: it is 'silent', 'inevitable', and its effects deepen 'every year'.<sup>48</sup>

During his lifetime, Barnes held an ambivalent attitude towards reforms in education. Although he joined Hardy in signing a county petition to Forster on 9 May 1870 'accepting the principle of the Elementary Education Bill', he disagreed with the government regulation that came with this growth in schooling.<sup>49</sup> Unlike Hardy, Barnes was opposed to secular education and he signed an additional clause proposing 'perfect liberty of Religious Teaching'. When Barnes was forced for financial reasons to accept government grants under the terms of the Revised Code, he attempted to evade the various efforts at standardization that accompanied the support.<sup>50</sup> In Barnes's views, such measures usurped the rights of rural communities to determine their own children's upbringing. Barnes opposed any undue government interference from fear that, to borrow Hardy's phrase in *The Well-Beloved*, the 'governess-tongue of no country at all' be extended further (p. 186). Calls to make education compulsory, a stipulation left out of the 1870 Act, met with similar disapproval from Barnes. The issue was particularly controversial in the countryside, where children often provided important seasonal labour for agricultural families. In January 1873 Barnes wrote in support of the existing voluntary system and expressed the following suspicion: 'If the law goes into a man's house and drags his children to school [...] he is taught to feel that it is the law that wants the teaching of them for its own good and not his'.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Hardy, 'Barnes', p. 101.

<sup>48</sup> Hardy, 'Preface to *Select Poems of William Barnes*', p. 76.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Hearl, p. 313.

<sup>50</sup> When the code specified that his teachers be certified by the Government's standards, Barnes wrote to Whitehall to enquire how his own apprentices could receive a certificate without going to the state-funded training colleges. Barnes also dismissed the school boards as 'flagrantly expensive' in the *Dorset County Chronicle*. See Hearl, p.313.

<sup>51</sup> William Barnes, 'Direct Compulsion on School Attendance', *Dorset County Chronicle*, 4 January 1871.

Barnes's dialect poetry contested the superiority of urban perspectives in itself. He insisted that the traditional language of Dorset was as equipped in expressing subtle feeling and unique experience as the standard English more generally associated with literature. Dialect problematized the claim of national education to improve the lives of all through its spread of urban, written culture indiscriminately across the nation. Writing in a rural language of the past allowed for the rethinking of ideas about progress, challenging those who 'find it very hard to conceive that wisdom and goodness would be found speaking in a dialect which may seem to them a fit vehicle only for the animal wants and passions of a boor'.<sup>52</sup> For Barnes, reviving the oral culture of the countryside cast a challenge to 'the not uncommon notion that every change from the plough towards the desk, or from the desk towards the couch of empty-handed idleness, is an onward step towards happiness and intellectual and moral excellence.'<sup>53</sup> Like Hardy, Barnes's livelihood was closely implicated in the activities of the 'desk', but he nonetheless opposed the expectation that this would bring about uncomplicated progress for all. The derision of the 'plough' and its associations allowed for the advancement of more modern technologies and ideas, but Barnes noticed the losses sustained during the 'two-hundred year gap' that Hardy mentions in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (p. 23). Barnes disagreed that present achievement need rely on the dismissal of the past, worrying upon the publication of Macaulay's *The History of England* that it would become more common to imagine previous centuries as 'most excessively below ours.' The Victorians held a predilection for incorporating history into grand narratives of modern progress, but it was a mistake, Barnes wrote, to suppose that a gap of one-hundred-and-fifty years in history was sufficient to 'have raised us by 150 happy differences to a much higher pitch of happiness, wisdom or goodness'.<sup>54</sup>

#### **4.5 Barnes's Rural Pedagogy**

As T. W. Hearl has noted in his biography of Barnes as an educationalist, the Dorset poet urged his readers to 'commend the skills of primitive peoples,

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<sup>52</sup> William Barnes, *Poems of Rural Life* (London: J.R. Smith, 1844), p. 36.

<sup>53</sup> Barnes, *Rural*, p. 49.

<sup>54</sup> William Barnes, 'Comments on Mr Richards's Diary', *Poole Herald*, 25 October 1849.



worthy of admiration by a society which had lost many by civilization'.<sup>55</sup> In Barnes's view, it was invaluable to study these historical origins as a basis for contemporary thought and education, which otherwise excluded the study of past ideas by over prioritizing present concerns. He satirized the modern view that 'ignorant generations' around the world were waiting to 'have their worthlessness discovered by the surpassing knowledge and wisdom of two or three modern nations'. Being learned did not mean prioritizing one's present definition of 'civilized' beyond all else, but was valuable in understanding the complex development of ideas and practices across time and place. Culture and knowledge lived on in the remoter parts of England and the world. When 'the inhabitants of Europe were wild in the woods', Barnes writes, the 'ancient Egyptians and Hindoos' were nations 'learned in the Sciences'.<sup>56</sup> In linking his defence of non-European cultures to his promotion of rural dialect and folklore, Barnes sought to expose the misdirected superiority with which education was being implemented in the countryside and, by implication, in the imperial colonies.

Barnes understood a common wisdom in all traditional forms of knowledge. He drew on discourses of progress and imperialism in order to reverse the negative stereotypes with which reformers compared rural labourers to colonial subjects. He argued that such wisdom should form a basis for the emerging scientific disciplines, of which, perhaps surprisingly, he was an early supporter. In 1835, Barnes established an academy on Durngate Street, Dorchester. Students were drawn from rural communities possessing historic customs, in which totalizing theories of knowledge that held no basis in this tradition were met with suspicion. Yet this was also an era before standard and folk knowledge were so sharply distinguished, and Barnes aimed to incorporate these newer ideas into the established framework of existing beliefs, so pervasive in the countryside surrounding his school. Barnes taught 'book learning' with close reference to existent ideas in the countryside. He took his schoolchildren on walks of up to eight miles in order to expose them to familiar,

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<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Hearl, p. 246.

<sup>56</sup> William Barnes, 'Education in Words and in Things', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1841, 22–24 (pp. 22, 24).

tangible elements in their studies of nature, sketching, geology, and even weather-lore.<sup>57</sup>

Barnes believed that familiar concepts should underlie the teaching of more complicated ones. In 1870, the year of Forster's act, he justified his pedagogy as follows:

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.'<sup>58</sup>

New ideas and creations only have meaning for learners when they proceed from older premises, as, central to Barnes's approach was the need to 'start with more homely before more foreign knowledge'. Tess's early thoughts are grounded in her village locality, which has 'its idiosyncrasy, its constitution, often its own code of morality' (p. 63), in this way. Although 'what lay beyond her judgment depended on the teaching of the village school' (p. 37), initial principles emerge from natural surroundings, local history and the folklore which previous generations have endowed in a place. 'One day becomes the teacher to the following one', Barnes argued elsewhere, suggesting that 'the experience of the past is a guide for the future.'<sup>59</sup> Abstract ideas were best established upon the existing knowledge and ideas of a local community, its place and its past.

Barnes was 'the most interesting link between present and past forms of rural life that England possessed', according to Hardy. Fictional Wessex became influenced by such ideas, between familiarity and novelty, and the local and the foreign.<sup>60</sup> Gifted, educated individuals find themselves caught between their attachment to a native community and a modern outlook, provided by their schooling. Schooling extracts the individual from the particularities of time and place, bringing confusion and loneliness, but is also able to draw from more familiar beliefs in the family. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, the protagonist embodies a liminal position by speaking two distinct languages, the dialect of

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<sup>57</sup> Hearl, p. 66.

<sup>58</sup> William Barnes, 'Lecture on Education, Sherborne', *Dorset County Chronicle*, 17 February 1870.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Hearl, p. 69.

<sup>60</sup> Hardy, 'Barnes', p. 66.

the family home and the standard English of the school. Having ‘passed the sixth standard in the National school’ (p 21), she finds herself invested in two distinct, but not always complementary, systems of knowledge. Her lover, Angel Clare, is introduced as a ‘tentative student’ partly occupied by reading (p. 22), while at home Tess’s mother consults ‘*The Complete Fortune-Teller*’ for reference. Each book contains a relative worldview: one of an educated modernity, the other the received wisdom of the folk. Barnes insisted that such distinct systems be compared in their own terms, and when Tess’s father sits in drinking ‘an occidental glow’ mulling over concerns which have ‘a metaphysical impalpability’ (p. 16), the reader is asked to view ordinary life in elevated terms.

The cognitive dissonance between customary and scientific views of the world is brought into productive relation later in the novel. Tess and her brother, Abraham, remain submerged in dreams when they awake at night to begin delivery of their beehives. Tess is ‘lost in a vague interspace’ while her brother is ‘still mentally in the other world’ (p. 29). They lean upon one of the hives in a state of dream-like curiosity. Abraham asks his sister about the night sky. Her response incorporates natural concepts into the scientific:

“Did you say the stars were worlds, Tess?”

“Yes.”

“All like ours?”

“I don’t know; but I think so. They sometimes seem to be like the apples on our stubborn-tree. Most of them splendid and sound—a few blighted.”

“Which do we live on – a splendid one or a blighted one?”. (p. 31)

In this exchange, Tess draws on surrounding reference points in order to explain the less tangible subject about which her brother inquires. Although Tess relays an inaccuracy (of course, stars are not planets) the familiarity of the apple grounds Abraham’s understanding of an abstract reality. Science need not exclude the particulars of the sibling’s local situation, and is here instead able to draw on localized elements.

Such crossovers between scientific and lay knowledge were crucial to Barnes’s practice as a teacher. In the late 1840s he travelled between his school in Dorchester and college at Cambridge, where he was studying for a doctorate. Barnes regularly compared the weather conditions on journeys between the two towns. The *Daily News* had published the first public reports in

August 1848, which Barnes's compared to the 'weather-lore' of which many of his students were familiar. He challenged the assumption that such explanations were inferior to the latest explanations of meteorology:

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.<sup>61</sup>

Science need not supersede local knowledge here, but can be acknowledged alongside it as an alternative way of anticipating weather. As Hardy showed in his description of a weather-prophet, numerous explanations of external events could exist alongside one another, with some professed openly and others remaining secret. In *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the market town publicly endorses the modern outlook of science, and, when the King arrives on a parade its corporation acknowledges 'the great services he had rendered to agricultural science and economics'. The townspeople express their thanks for 'his zealous promotion of designs for placing the art of farming on a more scientific footing' (p. 259).<sup>62</sup> In their 'secret hearts' (p. 184), however, we know that much of the crowd visit the weather-prophet to predict their crop growth. Unlike the 'indifference of the public to harvest weather' that Hardy identified in 1895, this 1830s community anticipate the good conditions to come, 'for they were practised in weather-lore' (p. 260).

#### **4.6 Survivals and Excavation**

'As in a geological fault', Hardy writes in 'The Fiddler of the Reels', 'we had presented to us a sudden bringing of ancient and modern into absolute contact'.<sup>63</sup> The struggle of the historic and the customary against the intrusive tendency of modern knowledge occurs throughout Hardy's fiction. However at

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<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Hearl, p. 168.

<sup>62</sup> The comment alludes to the origins of the Royal Agricultural Society in 1838 which, carrying the motto 'practice with Science', aimed to promote the scientific development of agriculture.

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Fiddler of the Reels', in *The Fiddler of the Reels and Other Stories, 1888-1900*, ed. by Keith Wilson and Kristin Brady (1893; London: Penguin, 2003), pp. 191–208 (p. 191).

such moments as that quoted above, the past is enlivened in the present through productive synthesis. While the dynamic growth of scientific thinking promised new bases for knowledge, the fields of geology, archaeology, and other disciplines scrutinized the past for deeper understandings. When the geologist Henry Knight hangs from a cliff in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, he fears for his life and comes 'face to face with the beginning and all the intermediate centuries simultaneously' (p. 214). In *The Well-Beloved*, Jocelyn is fascinated by the re-emergence of local beliefs in the modern present: 'antiquated simplicity' and 'bygone barbarism' become all the more intriguing from his separate educated viewpoint (p. 189). Despite her modern schooling, such customs as the Portland marriage-rite remain important for Avice. 'How the old ideas survived under the new education!' (p. 190), the narrator remarks. With its exclamation mark, the phrase announces the prevalence of past customs in a newer world. The focus turns from mourning losses wrought by modern change to marvelling at the stubborn survival of old concepts.

One task of a national education system was to efface such evidence of a primitive past. Jocelyn has 'weaknesses as a citizen and a national-unit' and so retains sympathy for these rural customs (p. 251). He is fascinated that the instruments of new education have not yet completed their work of erasure. We are told that there 'seemed to linger as an aroma all the charm of his youth and his early home' in the Caro women. Jocelyn holds an erotic preoccupation with their essence, which he believes has endured successive generations. Jocelyn supports education if hints of distinctive origins are able to remain, for he finds the transformational process otherwise desirable for bringing the women towards his idealized, abstract ideal of them. In the case of Avice the second, the least educated of the three, the possibilities of transformation are the most clear. While 'stimulated' by 'ancient memories', he reflects that 'he could pack her off to school for two or three years, marry her, [and] enlarge her mind by a little travel' (p. 255). The selfish intention to fashion another person is troubling, but the wish accords with Jocelyn's 'susceptibilities not only innate but cultivated' (p. 251).

The process of acquisition and education is related to Jocelyn's professional association with the isle's stone, which must be mined and shaped in the methods of his sculpture. He is aware of both the origins and the use of stone, like Hardy, influenced by both stonemasonry and architecture. When

Jocelyn reflects on his interest with three generations of women, romantic considerations mix with creative ones:

This Caro family—though it might not for centuries, or ever, furbish up an individual nature which would exactly, ideally, supplement his own imperfect one and round with it the perfect whole—was yet the only family he had ever met, or was likely to meet, which possessed the materials for her making. It was as if the Caros had found the clay but not the potter, while other families whose daughters might attract him had found the potter but not the clay. (p. 251)

Making and sculpting become metaphors for the education of the Avices, who may come to embody the result of moulding a product to a required specification. Innate influences are compared to learnt ones, as, disconcertingly, Jocelyn compares the formation of a wife to the production of artistic installations. Stone is associated with the women's early upbringing and association with a particular memory of place, while sculpting becomes a metaphor for instruction and cultivation. When, later in the story, Avice the third finds 'a refined kinship with sculpture, and a proportionate aloofness from mere quarrying' (p. 324), it is to comment on the results of her cultivation.

Hardy drew on personal experience when questioning the extent to which current processes could transcend past influence in the novel. A large excavation project began in Dorchester when Hardy was aged five. The 'Railway Mania' of 1845 followed the publication of plans to build lines from Dorchester to Southampton and Yeovil. The railway had become a symbol of advancing modernization and these suggestions initially proposed to destroy two heritage sites in the area: Maumbury Rings, a Roman amphitheatre, and Poundbury hill, a Bronze Age fort. The proposals were rejected by petition because of the town's ancient past, and a compromise was accepted to divert the line's course around the historic areas. While this emblem of progress navigated within and around the rural town's history, a letter from Barnes shows that it also served to excavate undiscovered artefacts from that past. Digging for the railway line had brought evidence of previous cultures and civilizations to the surface. Barnes sensed the educational opportunity immediately:

At this time when the disturbance of the surface of the country in the formation of railroads is likely to bring to light specimens of interest [...] with respect to Natural History and both British and Roman antiquities [...] [it is advisable] to

take immediate steps for the establishment of an institution in this town containing a Museum and Library for the County of Dorset.<sup>64</sup>

This anticipated the foundation of the Dorset County Museum and Library, which moved to its present building on Dorchester's High Street in 1881. Records of the county's natural history, antiquarian, and literary history were collected there.

Barnes drew further on the educational opportunity by leading his own schoolchildren on expeditions among the foundations of the railway line, searching for fossils and rock samples. Students were encouraged to form collections in addition to those held at the school and the museum, and write letters to experts at the Geological Society. Hearl notes that Barnes delighted in this type of teaching, for it combined 'the practical and the academic, in which his pupils learnt, not Words, but Things, from their own observations and efforts'.<sup>65</sup> While modern forces drove the excavations, the schoolchildren recovered vestiges of Dorset's past in the process.

#### **4.7 'Conscious education'**

By the 1890s, there was a growing recognition that schooling needed to take greater account of the lives and background knowledge of rural pupils. The restrictive effect of 1860s and 1870s educational policy in rural areas was acknowledged. The resentment caused by the narrow focus of the 'payment by results' system was eased when Hardy's acquaintance, Acland, reversed the policy in 1895. The Liberal minister added more practical subjects to the curriculum because, as Pamela Horn notes, 'There was a growing anxiety to make elementary schooling more "relevant" to the children's day-to-day life'.<sup>66</sup> Rural students were now able to study cottage gardening, dairy work, and housewifery. By 1900, the Board of Education was advising school managers that teaching was to be 'more consonant with the environment of the scholars'. They recommended outdoor walks in various seasons of the year where pupils could learn 'about animals in the fields and farmyards, about ploughing and sowing, about fruit trees and forest trees, about birds, insects and flowers, and

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<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Hearl, p. 211. Barnes explained to early supporters of the museum and library that 'our object is to make the Institution as useful and accessible to the public as possible' (p.212).

<sup>65</sup> Hearl, p. 213.

<sup>66</sup> Horn, p. 255.

other objects of interest.<sup>67</sup> Dorset schools quickly took up the recommendations. The headmaster of a Catholic school in Marnhull urged children to keep diaries of 'nature study developments' as Barnes had done. 'Weather changes and similar matters', he notes 'could form the basis of oral composition lessons.'<sup>68</sup>

The countryside became a setting in which alternatives to prescriptive and standardized method of schooling could be explored. The infrastructure of state education had advanced progressive standards for future citizens to work towards, which, in rural areas, were often understood as prescriptions of cultural superiority. Civilizing narratives had garnered important support for these educational reforms, but had set out a framework in which remnants of the past, especially the rural past, featured as primitive and inferior.

Hardy noted from Comte that 'the empire of the past' was one that 'the present can modify but can never escape'.<sup>69</sup> He criticized the most uncompromising, systematic aspects of contemporary education, which oftentimes ignored Comte's insight. In response, Hardy's fiction developed Barnes's alternative version of modern thought, in which new knowledge was established with reference to, and reverence for, the past. When Barnes's pupils hunted for fossils beside an emerging railway line, continuities and divisions in human understanding were revealed as new knowledge met with past evidence. The disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, and folklore studies informed this perspective, as fading memories of custom, dialect, and storytelling were accorded unprecedented recognition by these new approaches.<sup>70</sup> As Zeitler suggests, Hardy's 'interest in folklore, customs, myth, ritual archaeology, and communal narrative history' may represent 'the most "modern" aspect of his thinking'.

This chapter has sought to establish learning as a mediated process in Hardy's novels, characterized by the conflicting experiences of loss and increased awareness. Raymond Williams writes of Hardy's fiction that 'there is always a great deal in them of an old rural world.' 'Old in custom and in

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<sup>67</sup> Board of Education, *The Curriculum of the Rural School* (London: H.M.S.O, 1900); quoted in Horn, pp. 256, 330.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Horn, p. 258.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Michael A. Zeitler, *Representations of Culture* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007), p. 13.

<sup>70</sup> See also Jane L. Bownas, *Thomas Hardy and Empire* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).



memory', he continues, but old, too, 'in a sense that belongs to the new times of conscious education, the oldness of history and prehistory: the educated consciousness of the facts of change'. Education instigates a movement away from an assured position in rural custom, but with that movement comes a new appreciation of that past. For Williams, this 'border country' lies between 'custom and education', or, 'love of place and an experience of change'.<sup>71</sup> Williams's emphasis on education as a transitory process recalls the earlier image of tears falling upon books. The painful study comes as characters attempt to reconcile their thoughts and feelings with a world transforming around them.

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<sup>71</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 197.

## 5. Liberal Education

What is our ideal of a thoroughly liberal education?

Thomas Huxley<sup>1</sup>

In April 1912 Hardy acknowledged the suggestion by some readers that Ruskin College 'should have been called the College of Jude the Obscure'.<sup>2</sup> Hardy's last major novel was published four years before the college's foundation and had imaginatively looked forward to the issue of educational access for which it was built. The aim of the college was to provide higher education to those who had previously been denied it. While Hardy's comment has been interpreted as self-flattering, the legacy of *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy's most lasting contribution to educational debates, was to pervade the twentieth century. References to the novel have appeared in government reports, newspaper articles, and academic papers, as the novel's title continues to feature in popular discourse, usually to represent the Victorian elitism to which Britain's current education system is contrasted.<sup>3</sup>

Jude openly anticipates his future legacy: 'Our ideas were fifty years too soon to be any good to us' (p. 400). Indeed, it took little more than the predicted timeframe for the Robbins Report to be published in 1963, with its aim to enable those with both the ability and the wish to pursue higher education to do so. But it was in the earlier Crowther Report of 1959, a post-war investigation into the progression of eleven to eighteen year olds beyond regular schooling, that Jude was invoked directly. The report takes Christminster as a symbol of the Victorian past from which modern reforms can both trace their origins and measure themselves against. In its opening chapter it recalls the 'distance that we as a nation have come in the last hundred years' and describes educational opportunities in the 1890s of Hardy's novel: 'The door was not closed on a poor

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Henry Huxley, 'A Liberal Education, and Where to Find It', in *Science and Education: Essays* (1868; London: Macmillan, 1893), pp. 76–110 (p. 81).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Postscript to 1912 Wessex Edition', in *Jude the Obscure*, ed. by Dennis Taylor (1912; London: Penguin, 1998), pp. 466–68 (p. 467).

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Godshaw Memel, "'Making the University Less Exclusive": The Legacy of *Jude the Obscure*', *Neo-Victorian Studies*, 9:1 (2016).

boy of talent, but it was not open very far. Jude was still likely to remain obscure.<sup>4</sup> More recently, the historian of education Lawrence Goldman begins his history of university adult education by recognizing this influence:

It would be impossible to write about Oxford and adult education without being conscious, at almost every turn, of Thomas Hardy's Jude *the Obscure* and Jude's vain struggle, over several years, to study at Oxford [...] Jude reinforced a prevalent view of the university's exclusivity and sums what is still a common image.<sup>5</sup>

We are reminded that current perceptions of universities continue to be informed by nineteenth-century representations. Yet Hardy was wary of equating his fictional critique with contemporary Oxford.<sup>6</sup> In 1925 he widened the association, to include Cambridge, Durham, and possibly the University of London. In *Life*, he writes that Christminster

is not meant to be exclusively Oxford, but any old-fashioned university about the date of the story, 1860-70, before there were such chances for poor men as there are now. (p. 467)

By considering the state of, and ideas present at, an 'old-fashioned university' of this period, I will explore the notion of liberal education: an enigmatic idea from which the Victorian ideal of higher education drew much of its inspiration. Liberal education became integral to various defences of the university against reform; it was summoned in support of the classical subjects, the autonomy of the colleges, and, significantly, the continuation of the elite student demographic. But as this chapter will show, the meaning of the term was contested as it soon became central to the movement for working-class education.

## 5.1 Newman's Idea

In 1852 the cardinal and theologian John Henry Newman delivered a series of lectures following the recent establishment of a catholic university in Dublin. In *The Idea of a University*, Newman outlined a seminal definition of liberal education at a time when the function and role of universities were actively

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<sup>4</sup> Central Advisory Council for Education, *The Crowther Report: 15 to 18* (London: HMSO, 1959), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Lawrence Goldman, *Dons and Workers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> Timothy Hands, 'Jude in Oxford', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 11 (1995), 61–65.

debated. One question concerned the importance of teaching over that of research. The universities in Scotland, Germany, and France were largely becoming centralized research institutes, but Newman's traditional account avowed teaching as the primary focus. He posited higher education as a wider pursuit than the acquisition of increasingly specialized knowledge. In Newman's view, the object of universities was the diffusion rather than the advancement of knowledge. Moreover, the effect of knowledge—felt in the spiritual and personal growth of the individual—was of more value than the knowledge itself. Students were expected to gain a familiarity with classical literature and theological reading because it expanded the mind, not because it led to new intellectual discoveries or had any applicable purpose. Study was only one aspect of a university education: personal advancement was also brought about by exposure to new environments and relationships. Oxford and Cambridge's reputation for cultivating distinguished gentlemen required an extensive program of socialisation as well as study. In 1843 a German visitor noted how these extra-curricular activities differed from the priorities of research institutions in his own country, remarking that 'in all the world one cannot be in better company than upon the books of the larger Oxford or Cambridge colleges.'<sup>7</sup>

Oxford and Cambridge were understood as unique environments in which a particular type of personal transformation from boy to gentleman was made possible. The colleges were thought to contain an intangible atmosphere through which great men had passed previously. Newman argued that true learning depended on such sacred environments in order to foster unprecedented thoughts and insights. To explain this point, he describes a student raised 'in a quiet village' who travels to a 'great metropolis' for the first time. The new setting brings about a new perspective: 'a feeling not in addition or increase of former feelings, but of something different in its nature'. Although the boy may 'find for a time that he has lost his bearings', the process is educative as he soon discovers a 'consciousness of mental enlargement'. As Newman writes, 'he does not stand where he did, he has a new centre, and a range of thoughts to which he was before a stranger'.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Victor Aimé Huber, *The English Universities*, 2 vols. (London: Pickering, 1843), II, 324.

<sup>8</sup> John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, ed. by Frank M. Turner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), p. 96.

We read of this unsettling but enabling effect early in *Jude the Obscure* when the protagonist walks from his native village of Marygreen to behold the town of Christminster. In Jude's mind the cognition of new surroundings stimulates an awareness of new possibilities. The mental enlargement occurs independently of material reality: he has become 'entirely lost to his bodily situation during this mental leap' (p. 23). The impression is recorded in Jude's mind beyond its initial apprehension, as 'the halo had been to his eyes when gazing at it a quarter of an hour earlier, so was the spot mentally to him as he pursued his dark way' (p. 25). This lively evocation of an educational place is perhaps the most important stage in Jude's intellectual development. Hardy describes how this memorable view of Christminster establishes Jude's early esteem for education and closely affects his sensibility and priorities. He 'smiled with that singularly beautiful irradiation' in the following weeks: an effect, which, we are told, comes to 'young faces at the inception of some glorious idea'. The experience prompts Jude's world to be transformed by a 'flattering fancy' (p. 28).

Jude soon pursues the education endorsed by a university he so admires. Newman commends this type of self-motivated learning and suggests that 'Enlarging the mind' is best achieved with no direct influence over method or reading. An individual must learn to interpret, order, and comprehend ideas in order to establish a 'formative power.' Newman argues that the content of knowledge is of less importance than 'Making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own'.<sup>9</sup> When Jude obtains a mass of texts four years after his first sight of Christminster, the narrator invites us to cast doubt on the value of the reading in itself. 'Those dusty volumes called the classics' are a 'mountain weight of material under which the ideas lay'. Their material surfaces are contested by conflicting value judgments. While the books' wrapping 'bore the postmark of Christminster', the pages are 'soiled, scribbled wantonly over with a strange name in every variety of enmity to the letterpress' (p. 30). Their educative value emerges only when Jude sets about interpreting the texts. He reads

in his purblind stumbling way, and with an expenditure of labour that would have made a tender-hearted pedagogue shed tears; yet somehow getting at the meaning of what he read, and divining rather than beholding the spirit of the

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<sup>9</sup> Newman, *Idea*, p. 98.

original, which often to his mind was something else than that which he was taught to look for. (p. 32)

This idiosyncratic process of study is arduous and often misleading, but it is required for Jude to establish his own meaning from the reading. There are traces of the spiritual and unmediated study of the bible in the passage, which presents liberal education as acquirable without guidance.

Prior to his descent into Christminster, Jude anticipates a university that will further nurture this process of self-education. Alumni figure as 'echoes of whose teachings had influenced him even in his obscure home'. The ideals of 'the founders of the religious school called Tractarian' are 'the most real to Jude Fawley' of these (p. 80). Jude's vague sense of a unifying academic spirit soon becomes aligned with the conceptions of Newman, as well as Keble and Pusey with whom he was associated. These leading Tractarians relayed the image of Oxford's spiritual, intellectual atmosphere with committed vigour. Jude's migration to the town is 'more nearly related to the emotional side of him than to the intellectual' (p. 77), and even this recalls the emotional and spiritual dimension of learning which these men emphasized. Matthew Arnold's eulogy of Newman's Oxford is soon relayed:

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. (p. 81)

For Arnold, Newman 'conveyed to us in his genius that same charm, that same ineffable sentiment which this exquisite place itself conveys'.<sup>10</sup> Christminster takes on the imaginative associations of Victorian Oxford, which was idealized as a refuge from worldly concerns. The town becomes a place where an individual transcends the material priorities of wider society into a spiritual past preserved in its historical foundations. Jude identifies personally with this tradition and feels solidarity with the deceased university men who have admired Oxford in similar terms. His own identity becomes increasingly inseparable from the allure of the place with his own identity: 'the Christminster "sentiment," as it had been called, ate further and further into him' (p. 86). Educational aspirations are relayed in affective terms, as Jude's ambitions become fixated on this particular image of intellectual life.

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<sup>10</sup> Arnold III, 244.

As Jude intensifies his efforts, the reality of the university moves further from the ideal to which he remains committed. We are warned early in the story that he is relatively unaware of the institution's entry requirements. The narrator observes that 'he may have had little chance of becoming a scholar by these rough and ready means' (p. 32), as focused preparation seems to trump aspiration. Jude only questions if he is 'reading quite the right books for his object in life' after several years, when his dedication to classical texts is suddenly questioned: 'there seemed little harmony between this pagan literature and the medieval colleges at Christminster' (p. 34). He alters his reading list upon detecting this disjuncture between his own intellectual interests and the demands of the university.

Newman was concerned that overly prescriptive reading requirements would inhibit development. He applauds 'self-education in any shape' and sides with the type of effort with which Jude is engaged over much taught instruction. Despite 'professing so much', institutional methods often do 'so little for the mind', he writes. Newman prizes space to allow free intellectual exploration. His argument embraces a form of autodidact activity when it asks 'how much more profitable for the independent mind' it is 'to range through a library at random, taking down books as they meet him, and pursuing the trains of thought which his mother wit suggests!'. Newman wonders if it may even be better to 'eschew the college and university altogether'.<sup>11</sup>

*The Idea of the University* became the nineteenth-century touchstone for traditional Oxford principles yet surprisingly contains frequent valorisation of the working-class pursuit of education. Newman recalls the description of a poor boy in George Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall* (1819) and explains that his study from a limited selection of books is 'much more genuine an education' than more direct instruction.<sup>12</sup> The values of independent, self-directed learning were celebrated in numerous working-class autobiographies that form the focus of studies by John Burnett and David Vincent, in which working-class children

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<sup>11</sup> Newman, *Idea*, p. 108.

<sup>12</sup> Newman, *Idea*, p. 107. By the 1850s Oxford and Cambridge were being sharply criticized for low levels of instruction at their colleges. Students understood that private tutors were to be hired to provide teaching where it was lacking from the college fellows. See Sheldon Rothblatt, *Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974); Sheldon Rothblatt, *The Revolution of the Dons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

grow towards a love of the classics.<sup>13</sup> In the Methodist Minister Joseph Barker's memoirs, for example, Latin books are propped up on jenny gallows while he weaves.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the image became recurrent of the intellectually-minded worker pursuing studies in spite of practical obstacles. Hardy draws on this archetype when Jude delivers bread in Marygreen:

As soon as the horse had learnt the road and the houses at which he was to pause awhile, the boy, seated in front, would slip the reins over his arm, ingeniously fix open, by means of a strap attached to the tilt, the volume he was reading, spread the dictionary on his knees and plunge into the simpler passages from Caesar, Virgil, or Horace. (p. 32)

Rather than the content of study itself, it is the overcoming of challenges that is admired here. The narrator emphasizes the character traits that this sort of sustained reading instils and emphasizes the ingenuity with which Jude attaches the books to his cart, such that it becomes his 'private study'.

Determination, resolve, and resourcefulness were all traits encouraged in Samuel Smiles's best-selling book, *Self-Help* (1859), which began with the quotation 'heaven helps those who help themselves'.<sup>15</sup> The book's premise was that no government, organisation, or privileged individual could aid a student to the extent that he could aid himself, which in many ways corresponded to Newman's earlier aversion to over-instruction. But learning in spite of obstacles and without dependence might also require support from peers. Smiles has since been associated with the growth of middle-class individualism but in its original spirit the book drew on cooperative ideals on education.<sup>16</sup>

In his introduction, Smiles describes how 'two or three men of the humblest rank' formed the origins of what would become a mutual improvement society: a group of working men interested in furthering their education and 'exchanging knowledge with each other'.<sup>17</sup> Jude's attendance at the 'Artizans Mutual Improvement Society' follows his abandonment of the university,

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<sup>13</sup> John Burnett, *Destiny Obscure: Autobiographies of Childhood, Education and Family from the 1820s to the 1920s* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984); David Vincent, *Bread, Knowledge and Freedom: A Study of Nineteenth-Century Working Class Autobiography* (London: Europa, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Barker, *The Life of Joseph Barker, Written by Himself* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1880). For other examples see Burnett and Vincent above, as well as J. F. C. Harrison, *Learning and Living, 1790-1960* (London: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (London: John Murray, 1859), p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Harrison, p. 54.

<sup>17</sup> Smiles, p. iii.



although the description of autonomous, intellectual practice draws on a similar ideal of liberal education (p. 304). Jude finds the group while still possessing 'a pretty zeal in the cause of education' when employed as an itinerant stone-worker. The Society meets for no other reason than for learning: the 'common wish to enlarge their minds forming a sufficiently close bond of union'. Jude is soon invited to become a committee member by virtue of his 'singular intuition on what to read and how to set about it.' Again, the focus comes to be on character development through the value of 'singular intuition', more than the books themselves. 'Years of struggle against malignant stars' are what equip Jude to choose the books most beneficial to the group (p. 304).

Many such societies recorded impressive progress by their students, leading to an interest in university admission for the most able. In 1858 the Cambridge graduate Horace Moule was invited to give an evening lecture to the Dorchester Working Men's Mutual Improvement Society, attended by Hardy. The *Dorset County Chronicle* reported Moule's talk, which gave details of the recently introduced local examinations through which Oxford would recognize the achievements of high-achieving pupils at the endowed schools. There had been opposition, and one Cambridge fellow wrote to *The Times* to challenge the decision to 'authorize a host of half-educated striplings to take the name of one of our great seats of learning'. The audience would have included the workingmen who formed the society and is described as 'large and highly respectable'.<sup>18</sup> Moule's esteem for Oxford hinges upon its traditional curriculum 'of a foreign literature, particularly that of a remote and ancient people like the Greeks.' The report describes the shared enthusiasm of this ideal between speaker and audience. By the close of the talk Moule had 'carried his audience away with him, and he sat down amid loud applause'.<sup>19</sup> The mystical allure to which Jude is attracted is at play here, but so too is an esteem for the type of education that many workingmen were actually studying towards.

Hardy admired such commitment to learning when he wrote to local schoolmaster and government official Thomas Middleton Dron in 1890 acknowledging his lecture delivered to the Congregational Mutual Improvement Society in Dorchester. Dron's talk on 'The Wit and Wisdom of the Dorset Novelist' was unprecedented in attracting local, working people to Hardy's

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<sup>18</sup> 'Local Examinations', *The Times*, 24 June 1857.

<sup>19</sup> 'Oxford and the Middle Class Examinations'; Millgate, *Biography*, p. 67.

novels: 'though the novels have been read from, and lectured on in other parts of England, and in the United States', Hardy writes, the Dorset public had 'not received that honour hereabout till now'.<sup>20</sup> By the end of the century mutual improvement societies supported liberal study across the country, and, in 1894, an inaugural conference was held in Bradford.<sup>21</sup>

Newman's acknowledgment of the increasingly dynamic working-class movement for liberal education was due to the particular circumstances of the catholic university, which he was to establish. Ireland lacked the privileged classes from which Oxford drew its intake, and so Newman was required to pitch his liberal education to those working in agriculture across the area. In 'Discipline of Mind: An Address to the Evening Classes', he acknowledged that various working-class educational schemes meant such groups were not necessarily unfamiliar with the classical languages. He addresses 'the extension of knowledge among those classes in society whom you represent' directly, and particularly admires the 'energy and bravery with which you have undertaken the work of self-improvement.'<sup>22</sup> This shared pursuit of education was enthusiastically advanced by those Oxbridge intellectuals who believed that liberal study could ease social divides. The common appreciation of literature and the classical languages was increasingly posited as a cure for strife. The Christian Socialists established the Working Men's College in the same year as Newman's university. The professors and working male students were to acquire knowledge co-operatively, and, in so doing, oppose a philistine culture that was felt to be fracturing society.

## 5.2 Social Division

A sense of this intellectual solidarity is evident in Hardy's novel. Jude aligns his learning with the privileged students at Christminster while walking through the town for work. He senses that 'the conversation of some of the more thoughtful among them' seems 'peculiarly akin to his own thoughts'. Although education

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<sup>20</sup> 'Thomas Hardy To T. M. Dron, 24 January 1890', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), VII (1988), 112–13; Harrison, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup> Harrison, p. 57.

<sup>22</sup> John Henry Newman, 'Discipline of Mind: An Address to the Evening Classes', in *The Idea of a University*, ed. by Ian Turnbull Ker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 392, 405.

promises to unify people from very different social backgrounds, it is threatened by entrenched divisions. Intellectual segregation is enforced by physical separations in the town, as, although the built structures of the colleges remain as tantalizing obstacles, 'Only a thickness of wall divided them' (p. 86). Hardy repeats these allusions to spatial segregation between Jude and the undergraduates throughout the novel. Jude initially feels 'as far from them as if he had been at the antipodes', and when he is resident at the 'narrow lane close to the back of a college' they remain 'so far removed from that of the people in the lane as if it had been on opposite sides of the globe' (p. 329).<sup>23</sup>

Although a thick, medieval wall denotes entrenched separation, non-physical transgressions remain possible. The spectres of the colleges' past merge with the music from church-bells as suggestions of unity in common thought. It was through more practical efforts that such ideals came close to being realized in the nineteenth century. In the 1880s, the Oxford settlement movement developed the work of the extension lectures by establishing centres of learning in poor neighbourhoods. Canon Barnett established settlements in the East End of London, such as Toynbee Hall in 1884 where graduates from Oxford and Cambridge resided to provide instruction in the area. History, economics, English, French, German, Italian, Latin, Greek literature, and natural science were all offered. *The Universities and the Social Problem* (1895) posited such extended liberal education as a solution to social division in the same year as Hardy's novel. Settlement houses represented 'the necessity of applying knowledge and research to solve the social problems of the day.' Although these aims were only partially fulfilled, the experiment demonstrated that the wide appeal of abstract study transcended class boundaries. It challenged various prejudices, such as that revealed by the Conservative MP Sir John Gorst's surprise: 'it is remarkable that the desire, even of the poorer workers, for knowledge seems to be directed towards abstract science and

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<sup>23</sup> See also Roger Ebbatson, "'A Thickness of Wall": Hardy and Class', in *A Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Keith Wilson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 162–77.

general culture, rather than towards those studies which could be turned to practical use in manufacturing industry.<sup>24</sup>

Despite such efforts to connect their activities to wider society, the ancient universities largely drew undergraduate students from the upper- and upper-middle class public schools.<sup>25</sup> That appeals for reform excluded working-class students is demonstrated by an 1891 contribution to the *British Architect* expressing the desire of ‘thousands of middle-class parents’ for their sons and daughters matriculation, thereby qualifying its title, ‘Popular University Education’.<sup>26</sup> The working classes faced continued institutional exclusion, despite the increased enthusiasm for liberal education among that group. When Jude is discouraged from his dream of admission, we see how a traditional liberal education often became an instrument of division:

#### BIBLIOLL COLLEGE

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. Yours faithfully,

T. TETUPHENAY.

To Mr J. Fawley, Stone-cutter. (p. 117)

Although Tetuphenay’s writing is straightforward and civil, it puts forward a seemingly unchallengeable relation between social background, education, and occupation. The letter insists upon a determinism whereby ‘success’ can only be achieved within a certain ‘sphere’ rather than through another ‘course’. An 1894 edition of *The Journal of Education* reminds us that in this period university prepared students from well-positioned families for influential occupations. The journal reports that all of the ten ‘class I clerkships’ for the

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<sup>24</sup> John Gorst, ‘Introduction: “Settlements” in England and America’, in *The Universities and the Social Problem*, ed. by John M. Knapp (London: Rivington, 1895), pp. 1–30 (p. 17). Living conditions of the poor in London had come to public attention following the publication of *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1886).

<sup>25</sup> Between 1850 and 1899 over four-fifths of students came from public schools. See Hester Jenkins and G. Caradog Jones, ‘The Social Class of Cambridge University Alumni of the 18th and 19th Centuries’, *British Journal of Sociology*, 1 (1950), 93–116.

<sup>26</sup> James Hayman, ‘Popular University Education’, *British Architect*, 25 September 1891, p. 227.

English Civil Service have been awarded to 'university graduates, most of them having had a distinguished university career', with Oxford gaining five places and Cambridge four.<sup>27</sup> The means by which Jude is dissuaded from Christminster suggests that Hardy had associations between classical education and the country's elite in mind.

As Martin Ray has shown, the master of 'Biblioll College' to which Jude addresses his request refers to the prominent master of Balliol College, Benjamin Jowett.<sup>28</sup> Jowett served as Master of Balliol College from 1870 to 1893, in which time he undertook continued efforts to connect 'university education with a man's future career', as the social reformer Florence Nightingale recorded his achievement.<sup>29</sup> His outlook was typical of a view, endorsed by J.S Mill and others, in which the intrinsic value of a humanities degree combined with its worth in professional preparation.<sup>30</sup> Jowett supported the settlement movement, but his primary concern remained with the Balliol's matriculated students. Jowett told the Warden of Toynbee Hall, Mrs Barnett, 'I used to be afraid of sending my men to you [...] not knowing what you would do with them; but now I safely send them, for you are ambitious *for* them. A man's career should be his first concern'.<sup>31</sup> The settlement houses represented good worldly preparation for the public roles his undergraduates were to assume, and in later years he was pleased to see ex-Toynbee residents achieve fame in parliament, the civil service, commerce, and industry.

Tetuphenay's exclusion of Jude evokes Jowett's concern to direct an Oxford degree towards the training of a particular social group. Education is here prohibitive of mobility, reversing earlier rhetoric in which the working classes were to be prepared for governance roles. The narrator's ironic acceptance of Tetuphenay's advice as 'terribly sensible' sets up an opposition

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<sup>27</sup> 'Civil Service Clerkships', *The Journal of Education*, 1 June 1894.

<sup>28</sup> Martin Ray, 'Jude the Obscure and Benjamin Jowett', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 14:2 (1998), p. 79.

<sup>29</sup> Benjamin Jowett and Florence Nightingale, *Dear Miss Nightingale: A Selection of Benjamin Jowett's Letters to Florence Nightingale 1860-1893*, ed. by John M. Prest and Vincent Quinn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. xxv.

<sup>30</sup> Newman also suggested the benefit of intellectual training as allowing students to begin most professions 'with an ease, or grace, a versatility, and a success, to which another is a stranger'. See Newman, *Idea*, p. 145.

<sup>31</sup> Henrietta Octavia Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1918) II, 415.

to the educational hierarchy in the text, as in George Eliot's social novel, *Felix Holt: The Radical* (1866). Jude comes to accept the logic of the Christminster master, however, if continuing to defy such exclusion in principle.

Jude is continually reminded that the liberal education to which he aspires is inappropriate for one of his social background. The pronouncement is also made by those who lack power, in contrast to the college master. When Jude returns to Marygreen after his first period at Christminster, the villagers with whom he grew up discuss the university town, telling him that 'such places be not for such as you.' Jude refuses, 'They are for such ones!' (p. 113): nonetheless, the comment accords with the education system of the time, which was organized along class lines.

### 5.3 Preparation

A child of Jude's background would have been discouraged from pursuing anything beyond an elementary education. Discouragement was often framed as friendly advice, as in Tetuphenay's letter. Higher education which gave a student unrealistic expectations was thought to be unfair, as in remarks by the President of Corpus Christi, Reverend Thomas Fowler, in 1895: 'it is a cruelty to tempt poor men without ability, without connexions, and without any personal recommendations, to spend three or four years at a university. The usual result is bitter disappointment, and often a blasted life.'<sup>32</sup> Although Forster's 1870 act widened provision, the content and length of schooling varied widely according to the occupation of one's parents. Public schools prepared the upper classes for university with an extensive, classical education until the age of eighteen, while the working classes could attend elementary schools until aged fourteen, where the curriculum was limited to a basic competency in literacy, numeracy and reading. Middle-class students were understood between these two groups in pursuing education at secondary schools, the subject of the Schools Inquiry Commission, which began in 1864.

The subsequent Taunton Report (1868) explains how the social and economic background of students came to determine the subjects that they would study. Parents are divided into three 'grades'. 'First grade' parents have 'no wish to displace the classics from their present position in the forefront of

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<sup>32</sup> Royal Commission on Secondary Education, *Report of the Commissioners* (London: HMSO, 1895), p. 219.

English education', and do not require their children's education to directly prepare them for work. Although 'Second grade' parents similarly required a liberal education, it was to also include 'a thorough knowledge of those subjects which can be turned to practical use in business'. Finally 'Third Grade' parents were from a 'class distinctly lower in the scale', or 'small tenant farmers, small tradesmen, and superior artisans'. Their children would complete their education at the age of fourteen and would not be taught the classical languages. Status is accorded to students who are able to study non-applied subjects for the longest. And the selection of students allowed to 'continue their education for a longer time' hinges on the existing position of their families, or those parents 'who can afford to pay more for their children's education will'.<sup>33</sup>

Following this grading of schools by the government, head teachers from the first grade secondary schools sought to associate themselves with the older public schools, and, in 1869, formed the Headmasters' Conference for this purpose. This elite group of eighty-nine schools prepared over half of Oxbridge students by the 1890s.<sup>34</sup> Wealthy middle-class students were for the first time able to enter the ancient universities through association with the prestigious public schools, who had long raised the country's ruling elite. Jude notices the generational shift when he watches the parade of graduates at Remembrance Day. 'Meekly ignorant parents who had known no college in their youth' follow their sons, whose admission had mostly likely followed from such preparation at secondary school. The status associated with extended study in the classical subjects, which was written into the Taunton Report, is relayed by these students' conviction that 'no properly qualified human beings had lived on earth till they came to grace it here and now'. Jude blames himself for not walking alongside 'every one of those young fellows' and finds that his 'failure is reflected' in their success (p. 323).

Lacking secondary school education entirely, Jude's admission to Christminster would be an extraordinary achievement. He finishes his schooling only 'a little boy of eleven' so as to earn money for his great-aunt, and, before that, his schooling is only by way of 'the night school'. Given that Jude has come over from Mellstock 'about a year ago' (p. 10), his full-time schooling only

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<sup>33</sup> Schools Inquiry Commission, Report of the Commissioners (Taunton Report), 21 vols. (London: HMSO, 1868) XXVIII, 94, 95.

<sup>34</sup> Royal Commission on Secondary Education, p. 426.

lasts until he is aged ten, at the very most. This situation was not unusual. In 1895 only fourteen per cent of children on the registers of inspected elementary schools were aged twelve or over. Such low levels of early education meant that very few students from elementary schools progressed as far as university: only two per cent of Oxbridge graduates came from the ranks of pupil teachers, teacher training colleges, or public elementary schools at this time. The revaluation of the system in 1895 found only minor problems in the existing structure of preparation. 'It is obvious,' the commission stated, 'that these distinctions correspond roughly, but by no means exactly, to the gradations of society.'<sup>35</sup> Very few places existed in schools that focused on university admission. For every 1,000 members of the population, secondary education was to be made available to just ten children, of whom eight would be in the vocational emphasis of the third grade.<sup>36</sup>

Assessments for admission to the traditional universities were made more stringent as demand increased. The first grade secondary schools were best placed to prepare students with their high leaving ages and classical syllabuses. Jude discovers that he 'must get a grammar of each tongue' for entry to Christminster many years after he has left school (p. 27). Jude has abundant enthusiasm to gain proficiency in these areas but his lack of secondary schooling means that he tragically lacks the necessary guidance and instruction. But when he realizes the extent of memorization required in the classical language, he questions his own ability rather than his lack of learning environment: 'What brains they must have in Christminster and the great schools, he presently thought, to learn words one by one up to tens of thousands! There were no brains in his head equal to this business' (p. 31). At this crucial stage, Jude accepts the hierarchical assumptions of his society that justified its divided education system by existing divisions in work, property, and wealth.

Jude gradually discovers his disadvantage, as he is made aware that the systemic causes of his struggle are not his own fault. The narrative tends to separate itself from its protagonist's increasing consciousness, recording at one moment in the story that 'somebody might have come along that way who

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<sup>35</sup> Royal Commission on Secondary Education, p. 131. See also Gillian Sutherland, *Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Historical Association, 1971), p. 44.

<sup>36</sup> Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Penguin, 1965), p. 139.



would have asked him his trouble, and might have cheered him by saying that his notions were further advanced than those of his grammarian' (p. 31). Posing the possibility of Jude's educational plight against its actuality, the narrative device exposes the flaws in preparation that make it difficult for Jude to continue with belief and direction. His autodidactic hopes fail him here. Although it enables intellectual exploration, Jude's self-directed study leaves him pursuing admission criteria too vaguely, 'without seeing clearly where I am going or what I am aiming at' (p. 113). He finds that 'certain open scholarships' for working-class students are available upon application, but these are claimed by secondary school pupils: 'those who had passed their lives under trained teachers and had worked to ordained lines'. 'Reading on his own system', Jude realizes that his only route is 'of buying himself in'. This poses its own obvious problems, as his lowly paid work as a stonemason dictates that 'fifteen years must elapse' before entrance (p. 115).

Jude's independent study loses out to the more efficient preparation of middle and upper class students. Stories did emerge, however, of those with a very limited initial education advancing to the ancient universities. Six years after the novel's publication, Joseph Wright became the Oxford Professor of Comparative Philology, having been born the son of a weaver in 1855. Wright worked leading a donkey-drawn cart from the age of six and gained little formal schooling, and his achievements depended on studying in his own time. Such cases were rare, but they served as aspirational models and were rebuttals to the claim that low-quality early schooling hampered prospects. Perhaps it is with such examples in mind that, soon after first seeing Christminster, Jude exclaims 'I'll be D.D. before I have done!' (p. 37). Institutional failures were not questioned while such prodigals demonstrated that success was possible.

In nineteenth-century literary circles a common response to the novel was to reject Jude's failure as unrealistic. The American novelist William Dean Howells wrote in 1895: "Commonly, the boy of Jude's strong aspiration and steadfast ambition succeeds and becomes in some measure the sort of man he dreamed of being".<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, the British writer Margaret Oliphant thought Jude had a "conviction of being able to triumph" which had "often in real life

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<sup>37</sup> W. D. Howells, 'Review in *Harper's Weekly*', in *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by R. G. Cox (7 December 1895; London: Routledge, 1979), pp. 253–56 (pp. 254–55).

succeeded”.<sup>38</sup> Edmund Gosse, a critic and friend of Hardy’s, observed Jude’s “brightness” in 1896 and concluded, “this young man might have become fairly distinguished as a scholar”.<sup>39</sup> Virginia Woolf repeated the charge many years later. As ‘Jude carries on his miserable contest against the deans of colleges and the conventions of sophisticated society’, she writes, ‘we feel that the case against society is not being argued fairly or with profound understanding of the facts’.<sup>40</sup> Evident in all of these accounts is the implication that Hardy exaggerated his critique of Oxford and the education system that supported it.

Hardy responded to the charge that Jude’s failure was unrepresentative in a letter to Gosse following the novel’s publication. ‘One cannot choose one’s readers’, he writes regretfully. Critics had allowed their own positive experiences to affect their judgment of contemporary education. Hardy intends his novel to be read by those ‘into whose souls the iron has entered, and has entered deeply at some time of their lives’.<sup>41</sup> The testimony of the period’s educationalists and ex-elementary pupils support the outlook suggested by Jude’s experience. A representative of the London Trades Council Thomas Smyth was asked about the future prospects of working-class students in the current system by the 1887 Cross Commission: ‘it would be next to expecting a boy out of a London School Board school to take wings as to expect him to advance by his own efforts to the university’, he responds. Smyth demonstrates that those from unprivileged backgrounds largely had their educational prospects determined for them. Even the best elementary schools in the country avoided the liberal subjects required for university, instructing students in ‘the

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<sup>38</sup> Margaret Oliphant, ‘The Anti-Marriage League’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, January 1896, pp. 135–49 (p. 139).

<sup>39</sup> Edmund Gosse, ‘Review in *Cosmopolis*’, in *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by R. G. Cox (January 1896; London: Routledge, 1979), pp. 262–70 (p. 266). Anthony Kearney has shown that Gosse had particular cause to oppose the widening of entry to Oxford, explaining his dismissal of Jude and Sue’s efforts. See ‘Edmund Gosse, Hardy’s *Jude the Obscure*, and the Repercussions of 1886’, *Notes and Queries*, 47.3 (2000), 332–34.

<sup>40</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader: Second Series* (London: Hogarth Press, 1932), p. 250.

<sup>41</sup> ‘Thomas Hardy to Edmund Gosse, 10 November 1895’, in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), II (1980), 93.

use of the lever, the screw jack, inclined planes, pulleys, blocks and falls' instead.<sup>42</sup>

#### 5.4 'Remoteness from the occupations'

School curriculums tended to be split into 'technical' and 'liberal' subjects depending on a pupil's backgrounds, rather than their talents or interests.<sup>43</sup> Jude is aligned with a practical career in stonemasonry early in the story, which is a decision made irrespective of his capacities. It is in jest that Jude's great Aunt suggests that Mr Phillotson 'take 'ee to Christminster wi'un, and make a scholar of 'ee'. Although she recognizes his intellectual ability—'I'm sure he couldn't ha' took a better one' (p. 13)—Jude remains in the village to work. The distinction between practical work and thought becomes apparent at numerous times throughout the novel. Jude learns of his expected occupational role from two coal carters while gazing down at Christminster. These labourers profess strict divisions between occupations which are then employed to account for different educational paths. Academic teaching is akin to any other form of work, as it is 'their business, like anybody else's', although the scholars 'never look at anything that folks like we can understand', the carters say. Mind and body constitute two ways of earning a living—'we be here in our bodies on this high ground, so be they in their minds'—and when Jude reaches Christminster he considers that the two roles may exist harmoniously. Without the stoneworkers, 'the hard readers could not read nor the high thinkers live', he reflects (p. 116).

The tension emerges from the relative value accorded to these distinct occupational areas. The carters have heard that 'some of 'em [are] able to earn hundreds by thinking out loud', while the utility of building work remains 'unrecognized' by society (p. 25). It is the arbitrary nature of this division that defines Jude's tragedy, as his occupation runs against his aspiration. Hardy was subject to similar assumptions upon his arrival in London. He recalls in his autobiography that he was told that 'only practical men are wanted here' (p. 73), despite his literary ambitions. But, unlike his creator, Jude's work is in the long

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<sup>42</sup> Royal Commission on the Elementary Education Acts, *Third Report of the Commissioners* (London: HMSO, 1887), p. 379.

<sup>43</sup> For social implications of distinctions between classical and applied subjects see Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), p. 164.

term unfulfilling, as he becomes increasingly aware that his talents have gone unrealized. 'Every man has some little power in some one direction', he reflects later, 'I felt I could do one thing [...] I could accumulate ideas, and impart them to others'. Instead, he finds himself working a trade that he 'was never really stout enough for' (p. 398).

Jude separates himself from the practically focused rural environment of his upbringing in pursuing a form of education for which he feels more suited. It was in the countryside that calls for universal education were most strongly resisted, and opposition was particularly strong to teaching liberal subjects which failed to provide new skills or improve agricultural processes.<sup>44</sup> After noting that 'the schoolmaster was leaving the village' (p. 9), the opening chapter of *Jude the Obscure* describes the importance of the rural economy in Marygreen. The landscape has been cultivated for maximum productivity and a comparison is made with other material commodities: the fields surrounding Jude's home have 'fresh harrow-lines [which] seemed to stretch like the channelling in a piece of new corduroy'. The work of the plough contributes to 'a meanly utilitarian air' (p. 14), which is worsened by the unkindness of the farmer and the jarringly new village buildings.

Jude's role is defined within an economic framework from the early stages of the story. His aunt estimates his value according to his output, and she announces that 'I am obliged to let him earn any penny he can' (p. 13). In 1866 the schools inspector Reverend George French observed that demand for child labour significantly affected the education of the rural young, as when 'a farmer can find employment for them, the schoolroom is emptied; and then the troubles of the teachers begin'. French reports that, from the age of eight, boys are drawn away to tasks such as 'frightening birds off the fields of ripening corn'.<sup>45</sup> Jude's aunt assigns him this role, and, after he shows compassion to the animals, asks him 'If you can't skeer birds, what can ye do?' (p. 17). He declines to comment, and, 'feeling more than ever his existence to be an undemanded one', asks for the direction of Christminster (p. 18). Intellectual learning is positioned in direct opposition to a utilitarian outlook that denies Jude the rudiments of education.

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<sup>44</sup> See Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement 1870-1920* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965), 165-7.

<sup>45</sup> Committee of Council on Education, Report: 1865-66 (London: HMSO, 1866), p.60.

In *Jude the Obscure* we get little sense of forms of education that relate to such practical issues of life at Marygreen. There had been an increase in training and research applicable to agriculture and industry throughout the second half of the century. When Jude and Sue visit the Wessex Agricultural Show, the traditional parades of animals are accompanied by the latest farming technology. Such events intended to educate young farmers in the latest methods. Sue is probably ironic in her suggestion that the 'steam-ploughs', 'threshing machines', and 'chaff-cutters' are 'improving my mind', but remains interested in the benefits of practical advancements in machinery (p. 297). In 1889 and 1892 government passed acts to improve the effect of education on the nation's economy. Although this brought increased educational opportunity for many working-class people, it further embedded the association of that group with applied, useful knowledge. A commission of 1888 became concerned that the lowest-tiered secondary schools no longer had a sufficiently 'practical and scientific spirit'. Elementary schools have, the report states, 'too literary a character, and lead the children too exclusively to the contemplation of a clerk's life as the object of their youthful ambition.'<sup>46</sup> Pupils from Jude's background were to be discouraged from studying liberal subjects. The Headmasters' Conference also encouraged increased distinction between practical and intellectual training, and wrote to the Bryce Commission in 1896 recommending that the elementary schools have 'a definitely practical character, as intended for hand-workers rather than headworkers'.<sup>47</sup>

These were regressive steps for those hoping to diversify the intake at the universities. Profiting from the relative autonomy of the school-board system, since 1870 the upper-elementary schools had provided some hope. These schools had benefited from grants from the Science and Art Department and achieved impressive results from students. Unlike other working-class schools, their curriculum was not limited to the sciences, and included some subjects relevant to university requirements. For a few decades, the upper-elementary schools provided a much-needed bridge between basic elementary provision and higher study. Many of their students were admitted to the science-led universities in London and Manchester, and in 1894 one headmaster said

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<sup>46</sup> Royal Commission on the Working of the Elementary Education, *Final Report of the Commissioners* (London: HMSO, 1888), p. 183.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Olive Banks, *Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education* (London: Routledge, 1963), p. 16.

that his students ‘may soon be battering at the doors of the ancient Universities themselves.’<sup>48</sup> The timing of the comment was unfortunate. By the publication of Hardy’s novel in 1895, the Royal Commission on Secondary Education had introduced restrictions on these schools. Purely technical preparation now seemed to be the more likely option for working-class students.

Newman’s conception of liberal education had distinguished esteemed, non-applied subjects from more practical equivalents. The difference between ‘useful’ and other forms of knowledge was central to the argument of *The Idea of a University*. Newman readily admits that Oxford studies have ‘remoteness from the occupations and duties of life’, which he later calls ‘in other words, their *inutility*.’<sup>49</sup> The prevalent Oxbridge model had been challenged in these terms earlier in the century. The cleric Sydney Smith had drawn on the contributions of engineer and educational writer Richard Lovell Edgeworth to demand a liberal education that gave practical benefit. Although Smith anticipated that Oxford would lose some prestige as a result, he suggested provocatively that ‘when an university has been doing useless things for a long time, it appears at first degrading to them to be useful.’<sup>50</sup> Although Newman’s response fifty years later gives persuasive reasons for valuing a cultivation of the intellect above material application, dedicated mind training is clearly only for the privileged. Practical work is, on the other hand, ‘the duty of the many.’ Newman anticipates the subsequent growth in technical education, allowing that ‘life could not go on without’ this type of practical training, but insists that his liberal approach deserves the greater esteem.<sup>51</sup>

## 5.5 Radical Suggestions

Despite his enthusiasm, Jude finds that he is unable to continue his academic learning. The ideological distinction between mind and body is integral to the tradition that Christminster holds dear, and is prevalent, too, in the educational system which prepares its students. Jude’s struggle for intellectual growth is set against the occupational path determined for him. However, at certain moments the story moves away from its critical registering of existing inequalities towards

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<sup>48</sup> Royal Commission on Secondary Education, p. 162.

<sup>49</sup> Newman, *Idea*, p. 15, emphasis in original.

<sup>50</sup> Sydney Smith, ‘Professional Education’, *Edinburgh Review*, 15 (1809), 40–53 (p. 52).

<sup>51</sup> Newman, *Idea*, p. 104.

more radical suggestions. The working-class movement for liberal education had grown throughout the nineteenth century and was to find institutional acknowledgment in the years following the novel. The novel invites us to consider the relationship between the university and less-privileged members of society in this context, and, in so doing, raises complex questions about the public role of the academy.

This turn from critique to solution is most noticeable when Jude and Sue debate the type of institution they would like to see Christminster become. Jude is the cautious reformer who refuses suggestions that the university change significantly and his own failure does not diminish his respect for what the university represents: 'I still think Christminster has much that is glorious; though I was resentful because I couldn't get there' (p. 150). Just as Jonathan Rose's study of working-class reading practices reveals a sustained pursuit of elite culture by all levels of society, Jude remains committed to a traditional form of education and only hopes its benefit be spread to a wider demographic.<sup>52</sup>

Most of Jude's suggestions are already underway. The need for reform has seemingly been noted. He refers to such changes when considering the future prospects of his son, 'Little Father Time'. They are 'making it easier for poor students now', he enthuses, as Jude plans his son's life accordingly: 'We'll educate and train him with a view to the university' (p. 278). The renewed enthusiasm originates in his dissatisfaction at his own insufficient preparation towards a scholarship. Measures are also underway in this area: either to make such awards more numerous, or their acquisition easier in competition with those from secondary schools. It is strange that when Jude returns to the subject of university reform later in the story, he adopts the future tense: 'I hear that soon there is going to be a better chance for such helpless students as I was. There are schemes afoot for making the university less exclusive, and extending its influence' (p. 399). At least the belief that present circumstances have improved avoids the recognition of past sorrow. Regardless, Hardy's use of 'Extending' suggests the ambitious scheme of regional university lectures that began in 1880s. 'We know nothing about social classes in university

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<sup>52</sup> Jonathan Rose, *The Intellectual Life of the British Working Classes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

extension' wrote Richard Green Moulton, its most popular lecturer.<sup>53</sup> But extension offered little prospect of matriculation to its working-class audiences.

If these suggestions aim to widen educational benefit, they avoid more profound questions as to the function, structure, and character of the university. Jude moves closer to the more radical questions that were being asked of Oxford in the 1890s while feverishly ill. He insists that he knows how Christminster 'hates all men like me – the so-called self-taught, - how it scorns our laboured acquisitions, when it should be the first to respect them' (p. 320). The university 'hates' those without formal preparation and who study from their own enthusiasm and direction. By using the auxiliary 'should', Hardy endows a moral imperative on these suggestions that Christminster has lost sense of its principles. Not only does Jude demand greater 'respect' for struggling students; he leaves open the possibility that 'laboured acquisitions' be brought closer to its central outlook.

Other contemporary voices argued that the traditional universities needed to fundamentally adjust their priorities in order to become democratic institutions. Sue is convinced that such changes are necessary. She states that Christminster's commitment to Christian traditions has compromised efforts at modernization. Its dogma holds no relevance to surrounding life, in her view. This threatens the very existence of the university: 'Intellect at Christminster is new wine in old bottles. The medievalism of Christminster must go, be sloughed off, or Christminster itself will have to go' (p. 150). The image suggests a flawed organisation in need of radical overhaul. Sue thinks it 'an ignorant place', except for those who live outside its walls. Here we glimpse at her solution, for it is 'the townspeople, artizans, drunkards, and paupers' who possess a more enlightened view than those in the university: '*They* see life as it is, of course; but few of the people in the colleges do' (p. 151).

Later, Sue challenges Jude to adopt her way of thinking. 'You are in the Tractarian stage just now, are you not?' (p. 151), she asks. This poses her more progressive outlook against his own position, and, in so doing, dismisses his commitment to Newman's principle as mindless adherence to a past ideal. Christminster has become divorced from the surrounding world to which it should draw its support and transmit its benefit. Sue suggests that a more

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<sup>53</sup> Richard Green Moulton, *On the University Extension Movement* (Philadelphia: Society for the Extension of University Teaching, 1890), p. 10.



outward-looking university, in which public perspectives are at the centre of practice, represents the highest evolution from its origins.

John Ruskin, who began a student road-building project following his appointment as the first Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford in 1870, had in some ways anticipated Sue's suggestions. Ruskin believed in unifying upper-class intellectual thought with practical work. His teaching at the Working Men's College was undertaken in the spirit of fellowship, and had taught its instructors as much about the value of working life as it had its students about the academic subjects. The Hinksey Road project, in which Ruskin and twelve Balliol undergraduates repaired a route through a poor suburb of Oxford, was intended to demonstrate that 'in all labour there was something noble', as Oscar Wilde recorded many years after his involvement.<sup>54</sup> The project was met with ridicule from others at the university for falling outside the proper activities of a professor and students. The conservationist Hardwicke Rawnsley noted Ruskin's concern that 'the academic mind might cry out that he was crazy, or think that he had turned to this experiment of engineering because he could not do the work of his chair.'<sup>55</sup> However, Ruskin's experiment anticipated a more significant intervention at the end of the century in which university professors would also mix with working men.

## **5.6 Workers Education**

Although the establishment of the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) came eight years after the publication of *Jude the Obscure*, many of its concerns had been anticipated in Hardy's novel. The WEA demanded Oxford provide education to working people. It also called for its own practices and priorities to influence the character of the university itself. The association emerged from the Labour movement, which had grown significantly in the final decades of the nineteenth century. Its co-founder, Albert Mansbridge, built upon the 'shared liberal-humanist outlook' that had been established between university professors and workers in the extension lectures. While those efforts were initiated by existing lecturers, however, the initiative for the WEA had

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<sup>54</sup> Oscar Wilde, 'Art and the Handicraftsman', in *Oscar Wilde's Essays and Lectures* (1881; Rockville (MA): Arc Manor, 2008), pp. 87–97 (p. 96).

<sup>55</sup> Hardwicke Rawnsley, *Atlantic Monthly*, 85 (1900).

'been taken by the working men themselves.'<sup>56</sup> Mansbridge drew upon support from trade unions and the co-operative movement in order to establish the association in 1903, when it quickly gained support from key figures at Oxford.

Following the Labour victories of 1906, the movement rose to greater prominence and in December 1908 the university committed to profound reform in *Oxford and Working Class Education*. There are two ways in which this report addressed suggestions made in Hardy's novel. Firstly, it responded to Jude's central challenge in preparing for application to university. It recognized that varied school provision was the major obstacle to more diverse admission. The report also noted that existing scholarships were often taken up by middle-class students working to 'ordained lines' (p. 115), as Hardy's novel describes. Tutorial classes were introduced across the country to help remedy the situation. Secondly, the report addressed Sue's concern that the university had become divorced from working lives. This was most clearly reflected in the traditional focus on classical languages. A trade-union leader insisted on the widely-held view that it was 'inadvisable to send working men students to colleges until the curriculum is made suitable.' The final report took account of such challenges and admitted that 'higher education cannot be imposed upon workpeople from above.' It proposed another system of tutorial classes at Oxford that would represent a union between the perspectives of the working classes and the liberal traditions of the institution. The report highlighted that 'the selection of curricula and guidance in reading' would be 'the duty of the university acting in co-operation with work-people.'<sup>57</sup> Working concerns were to influence an Oxford liberal education for the first time.

Jude briefly glimpses the interest of life beyond the university. Dejected by Christminster's ideals, he comes to see that 'the town life was a book of humanity infinitely more palpitating, varied, and compendious than the gown life'. While he searches for work as a stonemason, he also senses that the

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<sup>56</sup> Brian Simon, *Education and the Labour Movement, 1870-1920* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1965), pp. 304, 307.

<sup>57</sup> University of Oxford and Workers' Educational Association, *Oxford and Working-Class Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909), pp. 57, 58. The changes did not satisfy all campaigners. A hard-line opposition congregated around Ruskin College which had come to symbolize efforts to align workers with established Oxford. It was said that 'you cannot recreate Oxford by an infusion of working men [...] Oxford will assimilate them, not they Oxford'. Quoted in H.P. Smith, *Labour and Learning* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), p. 76.

industry and manufacturing of the town hold as much importance as the university. He visits a stone yard, which is described as a 'little centre of regeneration'. Initially, he is opposed to such renovation which replaces the university's 'old walls'—characterized by 'jagged curves, disdain of precision, irregularity, disarray'—with a more modern 'precision, mathematical straightness, smoothness, exactitude' (p. 84). But as the gothic origins of Christminster fade from his present concerns, he comes to value the skilled work of the workmen before him:

For a moment there fell on Jude a true illumination; that here in the stone yard was a centre of effort as worthy as that dignified by the name of scholarly study within the noblest of the colleges. But he lost it under stress of his old idea. (p. 84)

Jude is clearly struggling here to reconcile two points of view. Labour becomes more than a means for supporting traditional study, as he considers the possibility that practical work is equal in importance to the intellectual thought housed in the university. Although the insight quickly fades, the passage suggests an emerging dialogue between distinct traditions of manual work and intellectual thought.

A number of new universities aimed to synthesize learning and application at this time. Diverging from traditional classicism, the provincial universities in Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff, Leeds, Liverpool, as well as Royal Holloway in London, were established with grants from local industrialists and all given a royal charter in the period between 1880 and the early 1900s. Forward-thinking manufacturers had become concerned that their workforce and methods were uncompetitive compared to continental Europe. The new institutions found applications for their research in the public sphere and worked towards scientific findings to make working practices more efficient. Furthermore, they developed teaching programmes suited to best serve the public good. The University of London underwent a period of restructuring during the 1890s, as calls were made to create a centralized university for teaching.<sup>58</sup> The literary critic John Churton Collins realized such an institution would have to avoid overly applied methods to serve the real educational needs

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<sup>58</sup> See William Playfair, 'A Great University for London', *The Nineteenth Century*, 38 (1895), 699–705.

of its public, and campaigned throughout the 1890s to introduce a modernized version of a liberal curriculum at the University of London.<sup>59</sup>

### 5.7 'I am the one to show it to them'

Although Hardy never studied for a full university degree, he was actively involved in various campaigns for higher education. He favoured the idea of a public university modelled in Scotland and France, and in 1892 he wrote to Professor Karl Pearson to record his support.<sup>60</sup> This followed developments through the second half of the century to make higher education accessible to working people in the city. Birkbeck was the main provider of part-time university education, but King's College opened an evening department in 1856 to supplement its provision to those required to work in the daytime. Fees were far lower and the classes were available in close to all subjects, taught by existing professors and lecturers. In 1865 Hardy attended French evening classes under Professor Stievenard while employed as a trainee architect. Although, as Hardy recounted in *Life*, he was 'so deeply immersed in the practice and study of English poetry that he gave but a perfunctory attention to his French readings' (p. 65), he was himself engaged in a form of workers education at this time.

If Hardy became publicly associated with working-class educational efforts, his geographical origins lent another association to the expansion of universities. Following the First World War, calls for the establishment of a university in southwest England increased. The area had been served by various extension lecture schemes and university colleges, but lacked an institution for itself. The university teacher and administrator Arthur Eustace Morgan, who at this time was lecturing at University College, Exeter, first approached Hardy in 1917. Morgan enlisted Hardy's support for the campaign to improve facilities in the area, and the Dorset writer soon joined the 'Provisional Committee to further University Education in the South-West'. In 1921 he was contacted for similar reasons by the Reverend Albert A. Cock, who was Professor of Education and Philosophy at University College,

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<sup>59</sup> John Churton Collins, 'The "Ideal" University', *The Nineteenth Century*, 31 (1892), 243–54.

<sup>60</sup> "Thomas Hardy to Karl Pearson, 13 April 1892", in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), I (1978), 263.

Southampton. Cock proposed the formation of a self-governing 'University of Wessex', where he also anticipated the foundation of a 'Thomas Hardy Chair of English Literature'.<sup>61</sup> Hardy responded to Cock on 14 January of that year:

I have read with much interest the outline you send of the project which would be carried out in establishing a University for this part of England. That I approve of such a proposal, if practicable, I need not assure you, particularly as you tell me that it would work in harmony with a possible University further West, having it centre at Exeter—an idea which unfortunately is for the present, I believe, in a state of suspension.

That the name of the University should be "Wessex" strikes me as being almost a necessity, no other short & easy name existing, so far as I see, that would denote a sphere of influence roughly conterminous with that of the ancient kingdom of the same title, & covering five or six counties.<sup>62</sup>

Hardy is aware of the conflicting demands of both Exeter and Southampton, but again lends his support to this cause for 'the intellectual & moral betterment of the counties' with which he identifies. He accepts the use of the Wessex name for historical and geographical reasons, but is more reluctant that a Professorial Chair be named in his honour:

That a Chair of English Literature should be founded in my name is a point on which I can express no opinion, but so far as my sanction is needed I cannot of course withhold it, if such a step should be considered advisable at any time in the progress of the University, seeing that it would be truly an honour—though an undeserved one I fear.<sup>63</sup>

In April 1925 Cock was in contact again for renewed support. Although neither the plans for the University of Wessex nor those for the Hardy Chair came to fruition, the proposals demonstrated that academic institutions were increasingly valuing the merit and distinction of those from all social backgrounds.

By the early twentieth century the contributions of previously excluded working-class students were beginning to claim a stake at the ancient

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<sup>61</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Support for University Education in South-West England', in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (1917; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 381; Thomas Hardy, 'Proposed University for Wessex', in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. by Michael Millgate (1921; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 407.

<sup>62</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to Revd. Albert Cock, 14 January 1921', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), VI (1987), 62–63 (p. 62).

<sup>63</sup> Hardy, 'Thomas Hardy to Revd. Albert Cock, 14 January 1921', p. 63.

universities. The tiered system of Victorian education had made it nearly impossible to gain necessary preparation in the classical subjects. Meanwhile, the WEA challenged the association between practical work and technical education by promoting liberal studies for working men and women. Through the tutorial classes at Oxford, this development brought another, related, tradition of intellectual inquiry into the established liberal education, traceable in the mutual improvement societies and the working men's college.

When outlining his ideal university, Newman had found frequent opportunities for admiring the commitment and independence of learners beyond its bounds. In many ways Jude embodies the tense dynamic between the appeal of an institution and the lived values according to which it is formed. Sue holds far less sympathy for Tractarian ideals. She aligns herself with the movement to link intellectual study with the public good, criticizing the university tradition as out-dated and blind to the contemporary world which surrounds it. Sue's comments resonate with the aims of the newer universities and, later, the WEA. A stranger to conformity, she also speaks to a radical current in the late nineteenth century that sought to address social questions through intellectual discussion.

Hardy's position on these issues is far less consistent than either Jude or Sue. It has often been suggested that his note of 28 April 1888 provides grounds for relating Christminster to his own life.<sup>64</sup> The diary entry in *Life* provides a faint outline of the future novel, anticipating

A short story of a young man—"who could not go to Oxford"—His struggles and ultimate failure. Suicide. [Probably the germ of *Jude the Obscure*]. There is something [in this] the world ought to be shown, and I am the one to show it to them—though I was not altogether hindered going, at least to Cambridge, and could have gone up easily at five-and-twenty. (p. 216)

We are first asked to liken Jude to Hardy, as both understand the 'something' which the novel is to set right, but are then discouraged from the comparison. The comment retreats from the defiance with which it begins, to reach the almost nonchalant tone of going 'up easily at five-and twenty'. Hardy seems characteristically unsure at revealing details that would commit him to a particular position or cause.

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<sup>64</sup> See for example Phillip Collins.

The need for such explanation recedes when the novel is considered in light of its imaginative exploration of the new directions which higher learning was to take. The critic Phillip Collins reads working-life challenging university culture in the novel, but regrets that Hardy 'is incapable of pursuing this idea to the point where it might become interesting, let alone challenging.'<sup>65</sup> But these more radical moments possess greater interest for their not being fully explored, and the last intention of the novel was to provide a clear purpose.

Throughout *Jude the Obscure* there is a sense of characters struggling with an inherited ideal of liberal education. Intellectual training and individual fulfilment continue to be worthy goals as they were in Newman's time, but by the end of the 1890s it had become clear that the ideal had often been realized with socially divisive implications. In spite of this, the novel shows that liberal thought resided on both sides of the college walls, and its influence was claimed by a great range of nineteenth-century people and organizations, from the headmasters of elite schools to the working men in mutual improvement societies. The idea of liberal education transformed as it spread. Its function was, as the novel shows, understood concurrently as a training of the mind, a preparation for public life, an instrument of social division, and a means towards self-improvement. While holding the more traditional meanings dear, *Jude the Obscure* also anticipated those who were to reclaim the term.

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<sup>65</sup> Phillip Collins, 'Hardy and Education', in *Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background*, ed. by Norman Page (London: Bell and Hyman, 1980), pp. 41–75 (p. 70).

## 6. Schoolmistress Training

In the archive of the British and Foreign School Society (BFSS), protected within a polyester sleeve, there is a circular piece of old and yellowing paper (see Figure 9). Around its perimeter are 111 meticulous signatures: the names of the majority of students attending Stockwell College, a residential teacher training facility for women. Underneath the date, 'May 27<sup>th</sup> 1871', a statement in the centre of the circle in neat and clear handwriting begins by addressing 'the Committee of Stockwell College'. 'We, the Students of Stockwell College' write to 'petition that the Committee will allow the coming Midsummer Holidays to be extended one week'. In polite yet assertive style the handwritten sentences refer to the longer holidays at the equivalent college for male students, Borough Road, which until 1861 also housed women.<sup>1</sup> The future schoolmistresses declare that 'we think that we require quite as much rest from lessons as they'. The statement goes on to record the recent bad health of several among them and explains to the Committee that 'coming back a week earlier will have a depressing effect on those who have homes at a distance'.<sup>2</sup>

Such round robin petitions arrange signatures in a circular pattern to avoid exposing the ringleaders. The petition assertively demands equal treatment, shows concern at the health of all the college's female students, and is a measured challenge characteristic of a generation of schoolmistresses growing in confidence and collective identity. The document relates to the common purpose which female teaching professionals were realizing across the country at this time, but is also significant for its likeness to the round robin described in *Jude the Obscure*, when seventy students at Melchester Training

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<sup>1</sup> Existing accommodation at Borough Road College had become insufficient. The college was co-educational until this time, although it showed greater concern for the selection and training of its male trainees. See G. F. Bartle, 'Early Applications by Women Candidates to the Borough Road Normal College', *History of Education Society Bulletin*, 1976, 35–41. Richard Aldrich, 'The British and Foreign School Society, Past and Present', *History of Education Researcher*, 2013, 5–12 (p. 8).

<sup>2</sup> 'To the Committee of Stockwell College', 27 May 1871', London, Brunel University Archives, Archive of the British and Foreign School Society. There were 127 students entering Stockwell in spring 1871: sixty nine in their first year and fifty eight in their second. For lists of admitted students 1870-71 see *The Educational Record* (1871) in the same archive.



College challenge the harsh punishment given to Sue Bridehead for her absence at night-time. Hardy's cousin, Tryphena Sparks, the 'T. Sparks' signed at a position of 110 degrees on the circular petition, was at this time completing her studies at Stockwell, before taking up a position as schoolmistress in Plymouth in early 1872. Her death in 1890 coincided with Hardy's initial plans for the novel, which, he explains in the preface to the first edition, were 'jotted down in 1890, from notes made in 1887 and onwards, some of the circumstances being suggested by the death of a woman in the former year'.<sup>3</sup>

On 24 June 1891, Hardy visited Stockwell College in person.<sup>4</sup> It is unknown if he was then shown the petition which his cousin had supported. But the demands of the Stockwell women resonate with depictions of schoolmistresses in *Jude the Obscure* and *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872). The teaching profession promises both Sue Bridehead and Fancy Day a greater independence from the predictable roles expected of their class and gender, and introduces them to potentially liberating female educational environments. But this new figure of the professional woman attracted virulent attacks, as established ideas of the female role were reasserted in the home, classroom, and training institution.

## 6.1 Independence

The round robin petition shows that the residential teacher training colleges had a potential to bring women of similar age and aspirations together, so that a

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<sup>3</sup> Some critics disagree that this refers to Tryphena Sparks. See for example Millgate, *Biography*, p. 318.

<sup>4</sup> In the *Report of the British and Foreign School Society, 1892* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1892) Hardy is listed alongside other distinguished visitors to the college in the previous year. Robert Gittings mentions Tryphena's involvement with the petition in the context of her life and relationship to Hardy at the time, see Gittings, p. 175. Amanda Claybaugh's reading of the girls' protest builds on that by Laura Green, see 'Jude the Obscure: The Irrelevance of Marriage Law', in *Subversion and Sympathy*, ed. by Martha C. Nussbaum and Alison L. LaCroix (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 48–62; Laura Morgan Green, *Educating Women: Cultural Conflict and Victorian Literature* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001).

new sense of confidence and justice could be discovered collectively.<sup>5</sup> Unlike medicine, law, architecture, and accountancy, teaching was a profession accessible to women and, from around the middle of the nineteenth century, increasing numbers trained as schoolmistresses. Teaching promised a sense of autonomy from established female roles, and, for the young women undertaking careers in education, expectations of marriage and family became less urgent. In *Jude the Obscure*, Sue Bridehead is notably resistant to a conception of marriage where she is kept at home. Her motivation for a profession in education is to train for 'an occupation in which I shall be more independent' (p. 103). Meanwhile in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, a novel set in the 1840s, school allows Fancy Day to at least temporarily evade the demands to marry.<sup>6</sup> In both cases, the attraction of the teaching profession is that it gives a relatively secure economic and social position, thereby allowing Fancy and Sue to exercise greater freedom.

One of the ways in which Fancy Day proclaims this newly-found freedom is through her choice of dress. On her way to Mellstock Church she is described as having 'floated down those school steps in the form of a nebulous collection of colours inclining to blue', after being asked to play the organ, a duty often expected of teachers in rural areas. Her clothing astounds the other villagers, including her suitor, Dick Dewey. Fancy delights in her opportunity to dress up following the teaching week, and her clothing enacts a noticeable effect on those around her. Her hat, feather, and hair all denote the kind of grace expected of a lady, signifying the 'luxuriant condition of freedom' which Fancy, born the daughter of a gamekeeper, is accorded by her profession.<sup>7</sup> The narrator likens Fancy's status to that of a privileged figure of leisure: her father's earnings make 'her profession not altogether one of necessity' (p. 132). Fancy

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<sup>5</sup> Martha Vicinus's *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (London: Virago, 1985) studies the way communal life enabled greater support and possibilities for Victorian middle-class women. The first chapter, 'The Revolt against Redundancy', provides a good overview of the rise of the female professions from the mid-century. For the rise of teaching for women see Christina de Bellaigue, 'The Development of Teaching as a Profession for Women before 1870', *The Historical Journal*, 44 (2001), 963–88.

<sup>6</sup> Tim Dolin concludes in his edition of the text that it is set in either 1845 or 1846. See Thomas Hardy, *Under the Greenwood Tree: A Rural Painting of the Dutch School*, ed. by Tim Dolin (1872; London: Penguin, 1998), p. 213. Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>7</sup> Horn, pp. 187–88.

can draw on the respected education of her mother, who, Geoffrey explains, was a 'governess in a county family', as well as that of her Aunt, who ran a boarding school which Fancy attended. She is provided a set of accomplishments described as 'good manners, the smooth turn of her tongue, her musical skill, and her knowledge of books' by these female relatives (p. 123). Rather than the useful training which prepares Fancy for her profession, these earlier educational memories provide what the historian Sara Delamont has argued was 'an education which prepared girls to catch husbands'.<sup>8</sup>

Despite her lady-like behaviour, Fancy's social position also depends upon her current profession. The original 1872 edition of *Under the Greenwood Tree* emphasizes the boldness of this self-fashioning by remarking on Fancy's 'audacity unparalleled in the whole history of schoolmistresses' (p. 132), but this is made more specific in the 1912 edition with the additions of the words 'village' and 'at this date'. That Hardy specifies the audacity as unparalleled in the 'whole history of *village*-schoolmistresses *at this date*' suggests that Fancy's professional rise is a distinctly mid-century occurrence which the novel seeks to record (p. 214, emphasis added). The introduction of an ambitious professional woman to a rural community was one aspect of the novel's 'fairly true picture' of life 'fifty years ago' described in Hardy's preface of 1896 (p. xxiv).

Hardy's sisters both pursued careers in teaching, and their example provided an understanding of the profession as well as its status in rural communities. Options of employment were limited for both Mary and Katherine (better known as Kate) Hardy. An early marriage would typically have been expected of two daughters of a stonemason but their mother, Jemima, held reservations about its suitability. As a result, the sisters were encouraged to find their own livelihood, and the rise of the elementary schools which required teachers from working-class backgrounds became an appealing professional opportunity for both sisters. Kate's career followed the more typical path.

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<sup>8</sup> Sara Delamont, 'The Contradictions in Ladies' Education', in *The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World*, ed. by Lorna Duffin and Sara Delamont (London: Croom Helm, 1978), pp. 134–87 (p. 136). For the changing definition of 'the governess' at this time see Joyce Senders Pedersen, 'Schoolmistresses and Headmistresses: Elites and Education in Nineteenth-Century England', *Journal of British Studies*, 15 (1975), 135–62; Jeanne Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society', in *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*, ed. by Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), pp. 3–19.

Herself a student at an elementary school, in April 1872 Kate became a pupil-teacher under Mary's guidance at Piddlehinton School, where the pair worked together for five years. This constituted the standard period of apprenticeship required for Kate to sit examinations for training college, and she then attended the College of Sarum St. Michael, better known as Salisbury Training College, in January 1877 as a state-funded Queen's Scholar. The combination of pupil-teaching and Queen's Scholarship enabled working-class girls to gain the necessary experience and training to command the fixed minimum salary of a government-certificated teacher.<sup>9</sup> Within this framework, examination results and statements of progress were markers of prestige. Mary's college records generally assess her achievement between 'Good' and 'Moderate', while her character is described as 'Diligent', 'Improving slowly', or 'Persevering'. Kate's record is clearly weaker, though measured under a different system, as her work in class is only 'fair'. Meanwhile Kate's conduct is 'Good' while her 'industrial work' rose steadily from 'Fair' to 'Very Good'.<sup>10</sup>

For schoolmistresses in rural areas the main form of social contact was the local clergy. Vicars were often involved in the management of schoolmistresses, and their support was considered one advantage of a rural appointment when compared to the better-paid urban positions.<sup>11</sup> Fancy's teaching work brings her in to contact with Vicar Maybold, and their exchanges are one of many regular conversations which characterize Fancy's sociable, independent life in Mellstock. Clergy provided rare interaction for Hardy's sisters. In a letter of 1862, Mary writes to her brother with news of her first teaching appointment in Denchworth, Berkshire, describing the dinners to which she is invited by the local vicar, Thomas Samuel Fraser Rawlins. She goes on to describe numerous other challenges but highlights these occasions as 'the

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<sup>9</sup> Frances Widdowson, *Going Up Into the Next Class: Women and Elementary Teacher Training, 1840-1914* (London: Women's Research and Resources Centre, 1980), p. 14. For the history of the College of Sarum St Michael, or Salisbury Training College, see Lucy Sanderson Taylor, *College in the Close: Salisbury Diocesan Training College, Sarum St. Michael, 1841-1978* (Wrinton: G. & M. Organ, 1988); Jenny Head and Anne Johns, *Inspired to Teach: The Story of the College of Sarum St. Michael (Salisbury Training College) 1841-1978* (Bradford on Avon: ELSP, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> Student records, College of Sarum St Michael, Salisbury, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre.

<sup>11</sup> Horn, pp. 151–76.

pleasantest part of my dull life as I considered it'.<sup>12</sup> The involvement of Reverend Carey and his wife is also mentioned in North Waltham, where conditions were even tougher, while the local rector John Truman also visits at her third appointment in Minterne Magna. From a similar appointment in Sandford Orcas, Dorset, Kate wrote of her secluded life early in her career. Kate describes the involvement and collegiality of the vicar William Esdaile and his wife as relief from the inactivity and boredom of the place.<sup>13</sup>

## 6.2 Imposition of Class Categories

In *The Church and the School* (1868), H.W. Bellairs notes the 'solitariness to which so many elementary teachers, especially in remote rural districts, are subjected', and urges vicars to 'show little acts of hospitality and kindness' with young teachers, who have 'strong claims upon the clergy for sympathy'.<sup>14</sup> The prominent educationalist Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth noted that such care was extended more readily to women. He recalls 'several instances of the schoolmistress being received at the clergyman's table', but far fewer occasions 'of a clergyman's shaking hands with, or even talking familiarly with, the parochial schoolmaster'.<sup>15</sup> In 1853, the anonymous author of *The Schoolmaster's Difficulties Abroad and at Home* confirmed the problems faced by teachers socialising with more prosperous members of his village. He imagined the position of the teacher as like 'the solitary bee, or the wasp of the place', adding that 'it is almost a marvellous event in his life to be kindly asked out to dinner, or coaxed home to tea by any of his decent and well-to-do neighbours'.<sup>16</sup> Distinctions of class underlie the expectation of sociability in such comments, showing that a free lifestyle was often quite challenging to realize for teachers in rural areas. One school inspector identified the ambiguous status of

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<sup>12</sup> Millgate and Mottram, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Millgate and Mottram, pp. 18–19.

<sup>14</sup> Henry Walford Bellairs, *The Church and the School; Or, Hints on Clerical Life* (London: James Parker, 1868), p. 160.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Nancy Ball, *Her Majesty's Inspectorate, 1839-1849* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), p. 220; see also Neil J. Smelser, *Social Paralysis and Social Change: British Working-Class Education in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 339.

<sup>16</sup> *A Schoolmaster's Difficulties, Abroad and at Home* (London: Longman, 1853), pp. 135–38 (p. 135). See also John Hurt, *Education in Evolution: Church, State, Society and Popular Education, 1800-1870* (London: Hart-Davis, 1971), pp. 140–41.

the schoolmistress as cause of her isolation: the profession 'separated her very much from the class to which she had originally belonged, while it did not bring her socially into contact with a different class'.<sup>17</sup>

In *Under the Greenwood Tree*, Fancy tells Dick that 'nobody comes to see if I have returned—not even the vicar' (p. 83). Even Fancy reports experiences of neglect despite the apparent attention paid to her from afar, and, later in the story, the narrator reports 'how weary she was of living alone' (p. 134). Hardy's sisters expressed very similar troubles in their letters. During her final post as headmistress at the National School in Bell Street, Dorchester, Mary recalls a prominent family inviting her for 'a very good dinner in elegant style' but notes, with a tone of frustration, that 'it is the best place I go to here. Nobody else asks me to dinner or treats me like a lady'. Kate, known for being the more sociable of the two sisters, includes a similar complaint in a letter to Emma:

I've got such a pretty hat for every day. Trimmed with India muslin and lined with old gold plush. It's a Rubens I think—at least that is what such ones are called in the fashion book. I look very tempting in it I assure you but what's the use.<sup>18</sup>

Bought with the wages from her new profession, Kate's hat is both an expression of individuality and a plea for recognition. But her professional status is unable to provide the attention that Kate desires here and, as Michael Millgate and Stephen Mottram comment on Mary's position in later life, there is a disappointment that teaching does not enable 'a higher social status and greater respect'.<sup>19</sup> Hardy was to later remark in his autobiography that his sister was 'doomed to schoolteaching and organ-playing in this or that village church, during all her active years' (p. 402), showing sympathy for her position.

Despite such frequent attempts to contain her position, Fancy evades simple categorization and for large parts of the novel exists in a social role which is relatively undefined. The choir worry that she 'sneers at our doings' early in the story (p. 24), yet Fancy largely refuses to assume such superiority over others. Unlike Kate's hat, Fancy's clothing is challenged by members of the Parish church, as her muslin dress is thought to be 'unfit for common wear for girls below clerical condition' (p. 82). But by the end of the story she has

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Horn, p. 159.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Millgate and Mottram, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> Hardy, *Life*, p. 402; Millgate and Mottram, p. 21.

accepted certain restrictions, when she acknowledges: 'through keeping this miserable school I mustn't wear my hair in curls!' (p. 103). The church authorities are aware of the social implications that dress holds in the village, and Fancy's struggle to appear as she deems suitable is synoptic of wider contestations of power in which her status as a schoolmistress is challenged by the expectations of the church. A female correspondent in a similar position to Fancy wrote to the *Educational Guardian* in 1861 and relayed the general sense that the rural teacher 'must not dress above her station'. 'Consequently', she writes, 'the new mistress is subjected to the painfully unpleasant process of analysis, and being pronounced guilty of "dressing as well as themselves"', and, the writer continues, 'is punished by being made to feel her inferiority in ways too numerous to mention.'<sup>20</sup>

Another subtle way in which Fancy finds definitions of class imposed on her is through the allocation of her lodgings. She is provided with a schoolhouse but the interior is intentionally left incomplete:

She had originally found in her sitting-room, to bear out the expression 'nearly furnished' which the school-manager had used in his letter to her, a table, three chairs, a fender, and a piece of carpet. This 'nearly' had been supplemented hitherto by a kind friend, who had lent her fire-irons and crockery until she should fetch some from home. (pp. 80–81)

From the conception of teacher's accommodation in 1843, the intention had been to leave quarters below a standard expected of the middle classes. James Stuart Wortley, first Baron Wharnccliffe and President of the Council on Education, asserted in 1844 that a teacher's house should be 'by no means too large', for fear of exalting teachers 'too much in the scale of society'.<sup>21</sup> The attempt to limit Fancy's estimation of herself is felt when she is forced to stir her tea with a knife because of inadequate cutlery. The other side of the teacher's social position was considered by a correspondent to *The School and the Teacher* in January 1855, who argued that lodgings, while not overly luxurious, should be 'calculated to make those persons lower than himself, inclined to show a proper feeling of respect for the schoolmaster who teaches their children.'<sup>22</sup> Fancy becomes frustrated by limits on her freedom and the attempts to control her behaviour in her lodgings. She dislikes Maybold visiting her home,

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Horn, p. 158.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Horn, p. 152.

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Hurt, pp. 70–71.

‘so miserable and awkward when one’s house is in a muddle’, and describes his manner as typical of vicars more generally, ‘walking about, and making impossible suggestions in quaint academic phrases till your flesh creeps and you wish them dead’ (p. 83).

Definitions of class affect Fancy’s dealings with the clergy, but in Hardy’s short story, ‘An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress’, a male school teacher encounters far more pervasive social limitations. First published in the July 1878 edition of the *New Quarterly Magazine*, the story begins by noting the categorization of teaching as a working-class occupation. After falling in love with the genteel Geraldine Allenville, Egbert Mayne worries about the status of his profession during their first conversation together. He judges her tone of voice to indicate that, had she been in his position, ‘she would have done something much better than teaching’.<sup>23</sup> There are further indications of what Mayne understands as the lowly social status of the ‘office of village schoolmaster’, described as a ‘narrow path’ in his life. The occupation is a ‘stop-gap for a while’, at a time in his life when ‘it was necessary to read, mark, learn, and look around him’. In contrast, he holds ‘ambitious notions of adopting a literary profession, or entering the Church, or doing something congenial to his tastes’ (p. 51). Such pursuits become more necessary as Mayne pursues his dream of marrying Allenville, and the plot follows the schoolmaster’s efforts to acquire prestige and recognition through literary work outside the schoolroom. Mayne attempts to transcend his association with the ‘indiscretion’ in which, as the story’s title suggests, his courtship is implicated.

As a schoolteacher, Mayne finds that he identifies with two distinct groups in the village. This liminal position is shown in a passage in which Mayne’s romantic attachment merges into a protective concern for his pupils:

Much as he loved her, his liking for the peasantry about him—his mother’s ancestry—caused him sometimes a twinge of self-reproach for thinking of her so exclusively, and nearly forgetting his old acquaintances, neighbours, and his grandfather’s familiar friends, with their rough but honest ways. To further

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Hardy, ‘An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress’, in *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress and Other Stories*, ed. by Pamela Dalziel (1878; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 43–113 (p. 50). Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text. This story is a fragment taken from Hardy’s first novel, ‘The Poor Man and the Lady’, written in 1867, other sections being incorporated into early novels including *Under the Greenwood Tree*.



complicate his feelings tonight there was the sight, on the one hand, of the young lady with her warm rich dress and glowing future, and on the other of the weak little boys and girls—some only five years old, and none more than twelve, going off in their different directions in the pelting rain, some for a walk of more than two miles, with the certainty of being drenched to the skin, and with no change of clothes when they reached their home. He watched the rain spots thickening upon the faded frocks, worn-out tippets, yellow straw hats and bonnets, and coarse pinafores of his unprotected little flock as they walked down the path, and was thereby reminded of the hopelessness of his attachment, by perceiving how much more nearly akin was his lot to theirs than to hers. (p. 57)

Mayne remains sensitive to his past and empathizes with the feeling of relentless winter rain on rural dress. The sight of his many pupils seems to evoke memories of the people and experiences of his own childhood. This detail comes to Mayne's attention, who is otherwise drawn to romantic attachment and a 'glowing future', despite 'nearly forgetting' his past, and it serves to 'further complicate' both his own identity and the way in which he sees his pupils. The narrative voice almost seamlessly merges into the language of his beloved. From the more privileged viewpoint which he assumes, pupils become a 'little flock' and objects of paternal care.

Hardy's sisters may have felt some loyalty to the 'rough but honest ways' with which Mayne finds himself associating. Conditions were worse in the school villages than they had been in Higher Bockhampton. Mary describes her students' difficulties accessing clean water and proper food, while Kate writes of her pupils living in impoverished conditions.<sup>24</sup> Through their teaching, both sisters demonstrated resolve to help the students in these conditions, but the shocked tone in their letters suggests that they also felt somewhat removed from the tough lives of these labouring families. In a plea for both professional support and personal companionship, Kate applied on 3 June 1889 to the Committee of the Dorchester National Schools, asking to 'help my sister in the long hours which she spends attending to the needlework etc. which take up most of her spare time after the other teachers have gone home'. Although the profession remained somewhat disappointing, Mary and Kate found companionship by living together through the later stages of their careers and into retirement, first at Wollaston Road and later at Talbothays.<sup>25</sup> For other

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<sup>24</sup> Millgate and Mottram, p. 20; Millgate, *Biography*, p. 465.

<sup>25</sup> 'Katherine Hardy to the Committee of the Dorchester National Schools, 3 June 1882', Dorset County Museum, Dorchester.

schoolmistresses, however, an ambivalent professional position could be resolved through marriage.

### 6.3 Imposition of Domestic Categories

Early female teaching professionals were subject not only to contemporary expectations of class, but also those of gender and the logic of 'separate spheres'. Women were traditionally associated with the domestic space and the role of wife and mother within it. Fancy's half-finished schoolhouse in *Under the Greenwood Tree* is also significant for this reason, as schoolmistresses were expected to eventually find a situation of married domesticity. Various male characters express their romantic intentions to Fancy in knowledge that her freedom to live alone is only temporary. Her continual evasion of male interest is a running theme of the book as she reasserts her liberty against attempts to placate and control it. Dick remains a committed suitor and frequently laments her professional advance when it seems to jeopardize his interests. He is frustrated at her negotiation with Maybold and says that he 'rather wished she had never thought of managing vicars' (p. 82).

The true advocates of Fancy's domestic role are her father, Geoffrey, and deceased mother. The description of their cottage reveals the extent to which Fancy's future marriage has been prepared. Embedded within the arrangement of the home is 'the forethought of Fancy's mother, exercised from the date of Fancy's birthday onwards', which determines her daughter's future role as wife and mother. The furniture is arranged in sets of two 'as provision for Fancy, when she would marry' (p. 73). This action of doubling is a naturalized anticipation of Fancy's inevitable future life, and so residual that its precedent is to be found in biblical times: the arrangement is 'a repetition upon inanimate objects of the old principle introduced by Noah, consisting for the most part of two articles of every sort.' The narrator focuses on two clocks, which are 'chief specimens of the marriage provision', but elsewhere there are 'a couple of well-stocked kitchen dressers', as well as 'two dumb-waiters, two family Bibles, two warming-pans, and two intermixed sets of chairs'. Such intentions could easily feel overwhelming, but the space curiously limits views of alternatives. The windows are made from a 'knotty glass' and 'nothing was better known to Fancy than the extravagant manner in which these circular knots or eyes distorted everything seen through them from the outside' (p. 73). Fancy's domestic role is

determined by this furniture and thick glass. Both are reminders that, regardless of Fancy's activities outside the household, her eventual destiny is expected to be in a relationship within it. Although her profession may improve her prospects in marriage, teaching is never a serious alternative to the more traditional fate Geoffrey expects for his daughter.

It is with future marriage opportunities in mind that Fancy's attainments at college become sources of pride to her father. Geoffrey asks Dick Dewey, Fancy's suitor: 'Did ye know that then she went to the training-school, and that her name stood first among the Queen's scholars of her year?'.<sup>26</sup> Following Dick's acknowledgment, Geoffrey goes on to ask if Dick knows 'that when she sat for her certificate as government teacher, she had the highest of the first class?' (p. 124). Fancy's college results become new markers of her social status which Geoffrey expects to consolidate by her marrying into a more prosperous class. With such a development in mind, Harriet Martineau wrote of a growing number of 'tradesmen and farmers' who reserved spare income to 'educate their daughters for governesses' in an 1859 edition of the *Edinburgh Review*.<sup>27</sup> Like Mr Melbury in *The Woodlanders*, Geoffrey Day provides support for his daughter's education largely because of its attraction to her suitors. He continues to justify his rationale to Dick:

'Well, and do ye know what I live in such a miserly way for when I've got enough to do without it, and why I make her work as a schoolmistress instead of living here?'

'No.'

'That if any gentleman, who sees her to be his equal in polish, should want to marry her, and she want to marry him, he sha'n't be superior to her in pocket.' (p. 124)

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<sup>26</sup> Fancy's Queen's Scholarship demonstrates the emerging social mobility of the time, but is surprising for two reasons. Firstly, as David Wright notes in his 1978 edition of *Under the Greenwood Tree* (London: Penguin, 1978), the scheme was not instituted until 1846, around the same time that the novel is thought to take place. Secondly, Fancy's early education does not seem to include time as a pupil teacher at an elementary school, which was required to qualify for the scholarship, as Mary Hardy's entrance on a fee-paying basis shows.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Jeanne Peterson, 'The Victorian Governess', in *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*, ed. by Martha Vicinus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 7.

The 'polish' which characterized Fancy's earlier education is here thought valuable for its prestige and value in the marriage market, drawing on Fancy's professional qualifications as reason to dismiss Dick's prospective courtship.

If preparation for marriage tended to dominate the education of girls at this time, anxiety was only increased by contributions such as that in 1862 by the essayist William Rathbone Greg, which, in a tone of alarm, announced the 'enormous and increasing number of single women in the nation'. In 'Why are Women Redundant?' Greg regretfully acknowledges the increase in female professionals who, he understands, have taken up work because of a lack of men to marry.<sup>28</sup> Fancy's own career challenges the idea that female work should only be pursued as an alternative to marriage. She combines her teaching responsibilities with the attentions of numerous male suitors— attentions which, despite her father's more immediate wishes, Fancy is in no rush to reciprocate fully through marriage. She enjoys a fairly independent existence based in her own lodgings and enjoys the periodical social events of the village.

The notion that the teaching profession was only valuable inasmuch as it extended women's marriage opportunities was widespread, and it threatened to undermine the achievements of this first generation of female teachers. Hardy's short story 'A Mere Interlude' interrogates this question by documenting the courtship of a young schoolmistress, Baptista Trewthen. This sad, often desperate, story begins by following Baptista's strained attempt to find a satisfying existence beyond the overwhelming pressure to be a wife. Like Fancy, Baptista must balance the competing demands of education and marriage, though her prospects in both realms are far more limited. 'I simply hate school', she asserts at the beginning of the story, the reasons for her aversion having to do both with her disinclination for children and the demands of the government inspectorate.<sup>29</sup>

While for Hardy's sisters the stress and isolation of a teaching career was eased through mutual companionship, here Baptista is encouraged to

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<sup>28</sup> William Rathbone Greg, 'Why Are Women Redundant?', *National Review*, 14 (1862), 434–60 (p. 436).

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'A Mere Interlude', in *The Distracted Preacher, and Other Tales*, ed. by Susan Hill (1885; London: Penguin Books, 1979), pp. 99–133 (p. 100). Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text. For the challenges faced by rural teachers from inspection and the Revised Code see Horn, pp. 125–36.

consider marriage as a solution. The wealthy Mr Heddegan is the choice of her parents, but Baptista only has lukewarm feelings towards him: 'I like him better than school; but I don't like him quite so much as to wish to marry him' (p. 101). This unfortunate dilemma between the demands of a flawed livelihood, on the one hand, and an unwanted marriage, on the other, demonstrates the awkward position in which many schoolmistress found themselves. The schoolmaster Charley, a companion of Baptista's from training school, laments this urge of hers 'to be somebody's wife or other—anything's wife rather than nobody's' and dismisses her professional difficulties as her destiny to 'be a failure in education' (p. 105). The story denies either marriage or teaching as sources of financial and personal security to Baptista, whose urge for satisfaction is sadly unfulfilled. The immediacy with which Baptista abandons education for a husband is indicative of the contemporary expectations to which she is subject.

Fancy performs the roles expected of her in the home while continuing to exist freely beyond it. As Dolin has noted, she 'is represented largely through different, often contradictory, paradigms and stereotypes of femininity'. In one particular scene, the view of Fancy as a working professional is contrasted against that of her in the home.<sup>30</sup> Dick visits her father's cottage for tea during the early stages of their courtship. Geoffrey alludes quickly to the schedule of the running of the household, and notices that Fancy has prepared dinner 'a little earlier than usual' (p. 75). With this domestic agenda accepted, the two men quickly begin their dialogue in which wives are referred to as 'a provoking class of society'. The conversation continues, despite Fancy seeming 'uneasy under the infliction of this household moralising' (p. 76), until the arrival of her stepmother. Mrs. Day has 'an ordinary woman's face' with 'iron-gray hair, hardly any hips, and a great deal of cleanliness in a broad white apron-string, as it appeared upon the waist of her dark stuff dress' (p. 78). She appears a stifled and suppressed character whose anxious behaviour originates in her obsessive concern for domestic order. Mrs. Day worries with little justification that the state of her table cloths, knives, and forks will be judged by the surrounding village. It is soon explained that her eccentricity results from misfortunes in a previous marriage, yet she remains in the scene as a victim of a domestic ideology and a village society in which 'Everybody must be managed' (p. 70).

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<sup>30</sup> Hardy, *Greenwood*, p. 196.

Fancy is implicated in a similar association with the domestic space and she soon offers to set the table herself. This is a rural world where, so the opening of the novel testifies, men roam freely and raucously through the village while women remain out of sight. Fancy acknowledges certain expectations in the home, admitting 'I ought to have laid out better things, I suppose' (p. 79). However, she soon qualifies that expectation:

'But' (here she enlarged her looks so as to include Dick) 'I have been away from home a good deal, and I make shocking blunders in my housekeeping.' Smiles and suavity were then dispensed all around by the bright little bird. (pp. 79-80)

Fancy distances herself from the domestic sphere cleverly, parodying the claim of 'shocking blunders' on account of her professional life 'away from home'. Her playful behaviour both reveals and evades the pressures put on her to conform to the norms of domestic femininity.

The teaching profession is for Fancy a means of resisting traditional gender roles. In 1862 Frances Power Cobbe, writer and campaigner, endorsed women like Fancy who were pursuing professions outside the domestic sphere. Cobbe published 'What Shall We Do With Our Old Maids?' in response to Greg's earlier contribution. She argued in favour of professional female employment and challenged the conservative assumption that women's happiest state was in marriage. Fancy's playful comment suggests that the draws of work and the home could be combined, refuting the charge which was to increase throughout the century that, by combining professional and family responsibilities, women were 'serving two masters'.<sup>31</sup> Geoffrey notices that Fancy's 'dead silence' challenges both his attempts to see her married and a more generally embedded social expectation. Sensing 'that something in his words did not agree with her educated ideas' (p. 76), he soon changes the conversation.

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<sup>31</sup> Dina M. Copelman finds the phrase 'serving two masters' in discourse between 1870 and 1914. See *London's Women Teachers: Gender, Class and Feminism 1870-1930* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 176-95.. More generally, Copelman considers the experiences of married women teachers in 'going against the dictates of Victorian ideology' (p.177). Ideals of female domesticity and education were often posed as opposites in the nineteenth century. For a collection of essays which explores this tension across a longer time period see *Lessons for Life: The Schooling of Girls and Women 1850-1950*, ed. by Felicity Hunt (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

In carefully balancing both her professional and domestic identities, Fancy matches the efforts of female campaigners who from the 1860s sought to legitimize women's desire for meaningful work. Louisa Hubbard was a typical example who campaigned throughout the 1870s and 1880s to make work respectable for middle class, single women. As the historian Dina Copelman notes, those attempting to reform attitudes in this area had a difficult task, and were 'caught between trying to reassure the public that they were not seeking to abolish the institutions of marriage and family, and (less frequently) arguing against viewing women's work as temporary because of marriage.'<sup>32</sup> If early feminists were united in urging for greater freedom for women to work, this shows the process of mediation through which entrenched notions of their role were negotiated in order to achieve this goal. Fancy's housekeeping and attractive dress please male expectations and thereby legitimize the important matter of her professional life, which she conducts in a manner subtly resistant to the surrounding ideology.

Women's progress in the professional sphere depended to some extent on placating male anxieties. Headmistresses and educational campaigners sought to 'underplay the threat women's advanced education posed to conventional femininity.'<sup>33</sup> Many female professionals appeased their critics by emphasizing that domestic traits, which were thought to come naturally to women, could be pursued in working environments such as the schoolroom. The idea that teaching developed innate maternal instincts was continually asserted to appease prevalent concerns surrounding the professional schoolmistress and her commitment to domestic values. An 1882 contribution to *The Schoolmistress*, a journal for female teachers, sought in this spirit to merge the professional and domestic realms entirely:

were the duties of the two spheres of 'school' and 'home' diametrically opposed then no argument could be brought forward for the retention of married mistresses. But what is a school in its highest sense? Is it not an enlarged home?'<sup>34</sup>

The 'enlarged home' continues a naturalized conception of women as domestic and nurturing as they moved into the professional sphere. Imagining the classroom as a homely space could, in part, appease concerns over the

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<sup>32</sup> Copelman, p. 177.

<sup>33</sup> Copelman, p. 21.

<sup>34</sup> 'Married or Single?', *The Schoolmistress*, 25 May 1882, p. 147.

unprecedented freedom afforded to schoolmistresses from a range of backgrounds. Dorothea Beale was the headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies College from 1858 and understood both concerns. Beale reformed the school to prepare women for financial and emotional independence, having inherited an institution which focused on accomplishments, household tasks, and educating girls to be 'a wife, mother and friend, the natural companion and helpmate for men'.<sup>35</sup> Beale faced criticisms that this form of education was either morally or physically damaging her female students, despite the apparent success of her alternative approach.

Fancy's education is understood as strengthening, rather than weakening, her potential as a wife and mother. For this reason her father lends his full support. Progressive women convinced conservative voices to support female education in this way, arguing, as Carol Dyhouse has observed, that 'Women needed education not for revolutionary ends, but in order to fit them to become better wives and mothers, better companions for men.'<sup>36</sup> The notion that schools should mirror the home in advancing domestic morality was well supported more generally. In a widely-read contribution to educational debates, Herbert Spencer argued that 'the welfare of the family underlies the welfare of society'.<sup>37</sup> This chimed with the religious, especially Anglican, conventions of elementary education, which understood school as a way of instilling moral values in students from families where this was thought to be lacking. Regardless of their sex, teachers were held as figures of virtue and harshly punished when implicated in errant behaviour.

This question of a teacher's morality is well highlighted in *Jude the Obscure*. The relationship between Phillotson and Sue conflates professional and domestic roles, as he is both her schoolmaster and husband. Phillotson agrees to separate when the marriage is threatened by Sue's romance with Jude. The unorthodox domestic arrangement is aggressively challenged by Gillingham, Phillotson's friend and colleague, by appealing to professional responsibilities. Gillingham explains that for a teacher there is always 'the question of neighbours and society' to consider (p. 230). The role of the

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, p. 88.

<sup>36</sup> Carol Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London: Routledge, 1981), p. 140.

<sup>37</sup> Herbert Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral, and Physical* (1860; London: G. Manwaring, 1861), p. 9.



educator as arbiter of social morality underlies Gillingham's shocking suggestion to Phillotson: 'I think she ought to be smacked, and brought to her senses'. Such violence is thought justified to avoid 'general domestic disintegration'. If all men allowed their wives to live freely outside of the home, 'The family would no longer be the social unit' pleads Gillingham (p. 231), appealing to the wider values which Phillotson's personal behaviour undermines. Phillotson describes his action at a disciplinary hearing as 'giving my tortured wife her liberty', but this is contradicted by the claims of the School Committee, who judge his actions equal to 'condoning her adultery' (p. 248). His resignation is requested as the committee show their uneasiness with unconventional behaviour and determination to penalize moral deviance. The committee's justification depends on the extent to which a teacher was required to maintain conventional ethical standards. Phillotson argues for the independence of professional and domestic realms, and attempts to persuade the managers that 'the matter was a domestic theory which did not concern them'. By 'insisting that the private eccentricities of a teacher came quite within their sphere of control, as it touched the morals of those he taught' (p. 247) the committee are, however, able to force Phillotson's dismissal.<sup>38</sup>

Nineteenth-century teachers were expected to follow conventional domestic morality and often faced disciplinary action or even dismissal if suspected of wrongdoing in their personal lives.<sup>39</sup> Hardy's sister, Mary, was dismissed from North Waltham for insufficient inspections. Many teachers like Phillotson deemed such incidents unfair. By the 1890s such cases of unfair dismissal became subject to action by the National Union, but until that time the isolation and low status of rural teachers left them with little support in

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<sup>38</sup> Hardy, *Jude*, pp. 230–31, 247–48. For further discussion on domestic norms in Hardy's work see Lois Bethe Schoenfeld, *Dysfunctional Families in the Wessex Novels of Thomas Hardy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005).

<sup>39</sup> It is likely that female teachers were held to stricter standards in terms of conduct. Horn mentions one dismissal in Berkshire in February 1886 of a schoolmistress, Miss Stow: 'Revd. Canon Slatter called and reported that The Managers had decided on giving Miss Stowe a month's notice as they were not satisfied with her conduct out of school.' (p.189) The cause of Mary Hardy's dismissal from the school at North Waltham remains unestablished, although Millgate and Mottram (p.13-14) suggest that pressure from inspectors and the government grant played a part.

appeals.<sup>40</sup> With no such backing, Phillotson can only draw on the consolatory sympathy of a spontaneous crowd whose 'own domestic experiences had been not without vicissitude' (p. 248). For Rosemarie Morgan this scene dramatizes the encroachment of institutional values upon individual liberty: certainly the incident demonstrates the force with which teachers' freedoms could be circumscribed and disciplined when the established structures and morals of domestic life were questioned.<sup>41</sup> The episode has a wider significance in the novel as a whole, in bringing its two major themes to bear on each other. A restrictive conception of education is disciplined on the same lines as the narrow institution of marriage.

#### **6.4 'The sex wherein they were moulded'**

As has been seen, schoolmistresses were subject to restrictions on the grounds of class and gender, despite the promise of independence which a teaching profession offered. The residential training colleges were established to train future teachers along the same restrictive lines. Often single-sex, they enabled a generation of female teachers to acquire the freedoms of a professional life, and might therefore have become symbols of liberal possibility. But, in reality, they were crudely authoritarian environments which moulded future teachers according to the standard of 'humble femininity'.<sup>42</sup>

The Melchester Training College described in *Jude the Obscure* is the most well-known fictional representation of such an institution. In contrast to Christminster, Melchester is described as a place where 'worldly learning and intellectual smartness had no establishment', and the college a 'species of nunnery' which enforces a restricted, monastic life (p. 130). The religious societies paid close attention to training, administering government grants to run institutions which focused on instilling moral values in the teachers of the future.<sup>43</sup> According to the founder of the early Battersea College, the educationalist James Phillips Kay-Shuttleworth, they were to prioritize the

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<sup>40</sup> Horn, p. 178.

<sup>41</sup> Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 93.

<sup>42</sup> Copelman, p. 171.

<sup>43</sup> The residential colleges were phased out following the Cross Commission (1886-88), at which time training was brought closer to the universities. See Rich, pp. 221-47.

'formation of the character of the schoolmaster' above intellectual demands.<sup>44</sup> This was true at Salisbury Training College, which Mary and Kate Hardy attended in 1860 and 1877 respectively.<sup>45</sup> Salisbury practised an anti-intellectualism which continued until at least 1885 according to the testimony of headmistress and settlement worker, Clara Grant, who was hauled up in front of the principal for reading a novel by Dickens.<sup>46</sup> For women, training was associated with a gendered, working-class view of life in the home: chores, cooking, and manual work were assigned a central role in the colleges from the outset, so that teachers could go 'forth into the world, humble, industrious and instructed', in the words of Kay-Shuttleworth.<sup>47</sup> In the male colleges these manual chores and domestic work were soon phased out, while for the women they remained a central element in the training, and were considered an important preparation for married life.<sup>48</sup>

Characterized by quick wit and independent thought, Sue is clearly not suited to such an environment. She says that she 'hated the place she was in' and finds 'the rules of the establishment [...] strict to a degree' (p. 131), alluding to a regime of 'rough living' which includes a formidable routine of early lessons by gas-light, tough domestic chores, and little food. She reveals to Jude 'with something of shame, that she was dreadfully hungry'. The narrator goes on to explain that she had been 'kept on very short allowances in the College, and a dinner, tea and supper all in one was the present she most desired in the world' (p. 133). This schedule was typical of nineteenth-century training colleges where such routines were designed to establish obedience and discipline.<sup>49</sup> The day typically began at six in the morning and ended at ten in the evening, with seven or eight hours of lectures and private study. Food was minimal, bread

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Horn, p. 89.

<sup>45</sup> Lowe's Revised Code (1862) would have changed college life in other respects, however. A greater emphasis was placed on mechanical exercises in mental arithmetic and repetition from memory. Kate may also have been subject to more severe chores, as Millgate and Mottram suggest (p.17). For effects of the Revised Code on the training colleges see Josephine Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girls Education in English History* (London: Methuen, 1965), p. 279; Widdowson, p. 47.

<sup>46</sup> Clara E. Grant, *Farthing Bundles* (London, 1929), p. 31.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Hurt, p. 118. See also Horn, p. 91.

<sup>48</sup> Kamm, p. 274; Widdowson, p. 83.

<sup>49</sup> Food has been used in educational settings to teach the 'exercise of will over desire'. See Catherine Burke, 'Contested Desires: The Edible Landscape of School', *Paedagogica Historica*, 41 (2005), 571–87.

and cheese common, while accommodation was in small cubicles separated only by wooden partitions.<sup>50</sup>

The narrator explores in some detail the personal effect that this routine has on the distinctive feelings and appearance of Sue. These are points of interest to Jude who is 'quite overcome with emotion' from being desperately in love with her. The college exacts a form of training which disciplines Sue's individuality and spontaneity. The narrator describes that 'all her bounding manner was gone; her curves of motion had become subdued lines. The screens and subtleties of convention had likewise disappeared' (p. 132). The description aestheticizes Sue, comparing the changes wrought by the harsh training to successive sketches in which 'curves' become 'subdued lines'. For Jude the transformation is particularly noticeable as he is desperate to re-establish the image of his love which remains in his mind, after a sustained period apart. This particular form of teacher preparation intends to 'train young women in humble femininity', as Copelman shows.<sup>51</sup> The gendered character of the Melchester course is in clear contrast to the romanticized view of Sue which Jude remembers.

When Jude collects Sue in a 'nunlike simplicity of costume' (p. 136), he is quietly pleased that 'the charms those habiliments subdued' are known only to him (p. 137). Nonetheless, her changed appearance has a strong effect:

She wore a murrey-coloured gown with a little lace collar. It was made quite plain, and hung about her slight figure with clinging gracefulness. Her hair, which formerly she had worn according to the custom of the day, was now twisted up tightly, and she had altogether the air of a woman clipped and pruned by severe discipline, an under-brightness shining through from the depth which that discipline had not yet been able to reach. (p. 132)

The appearance of the schoolmistress is brought under strict expectations and restricted with greater force here than in the case of Fancy Day. Sue's hair is 'twisted up tightly', and her appearance is otherwise governed in ways which seem to link inner and outer forms of repression. This discipline affects Sue such that her 'under-brightness' is nearly subsumed by the emotional effect of work and study. Sue soon takes Jude's hands to notice the effect of stonework on them, admiring the way that they have been 'subdued to what he works in'

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<sup>50</sup> Widdowson, p. 47.

<sup>51</sup> Copelman, p. 137.

(p. 133). For both characters, the cost of a professional identity is the extinction of a younger and more fragile sense of self.

The comparison of Sue's appearance with her inner life suggests a correlation between the moral and physical emphasis of the training process. Strict codes of dress were enforced in the colleges, with frequent reference to the type of character which such conformity in appearance encouraged. Hardy would have witnessed this during his 1891 visit to Stockwell, where his cousin Tryphena Sparks had trained from 1870 to 1872. At that time the Ladies' Committee wished 'it to be distinctly understood by all candidates for admission that they consider neatness and plainness of dress incumbent on those who undertake the instruction of the young', specifying that 'no flowers, ornaments, or other finery should be worn.'<sup>52</sup> 'Instruction of the young' alludes here to the kind of ethical imperative invoked by Gillingham. The conflation of social morality and the young women's dress seems all the more authoritative once their impressionable pupils are invoked.

The interests of the trainee teachers themselves were often cited in college guidelines. As Copelman argues, an 'emphasis on religion, discipline and protection from harmful influences also reinforced the colleges mission to promote humility and appropriate gender behaviour.'<sup>53</sup> Female education was at the time widely associated with a sense of protectionism against harmful male influence. Calls for female surveillance and chaperoning between lectures had been accepted at the new female university colleges in Oxford, Cambridge and London, where concerns were regularly expressed that educational opportunity would compromise feminine morality. George Eliot visited Girton College, Cambridge, and was made well aware of this emphasis on morality when prevented from signing the visitors book on the grounds of her unconventional relationships.<sup>54</sup>

Female students at teacher training colleges saw their behaviour governed more severely than at the universities, however. Copelman describes monitored walks outside of the grounds as the main form of exercise beyond

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<sup>52</sup> *Report of the British and Foreign School Society, 1871* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1871); Kamm, p. 275.

<sup>53</sup> Copelman, p. 138.

<sup>54</sup> See Sara A. Burstall and Michael Sadler, *Retrospect and Prospect: Sixty Years of Women's Education* (London: Longmans, 1933), pp. 77–8; Copelman, pp. 20–21.

the premises, and these were often undertaken in formation.<sup>55</sup> The restrictions at Melchester College are extensive, and Sue is forced to meet up with Jude at night-time in defiance of college rules. When her name is called three times on the register with no response, 'Sue Bridehead had not come in at closing-time' becomes the only topic of discussion among the trainees. Sue's personal bed space is even inspected and portraits on her table are scrutinized out of fear that another 'lamentable seduction' had taken place (p. 140).

Student records at Whitelands College—another institution which Hardy visited in this period—allude to the restrictions on contact with the opposite sex and describe the upset caused from limited contact with lovers. In an event which closely recalls Sue's experience, a young woman is recorded as staying out all night and then being expelled.<sup>56</sup> In Hardy's novel, the harsh guidelines seek to suppress the women's sexual feelings, but, despite this, some students admire Sue's actions and feel that 'they would not mind risking her punishment for the pleasure of being kissed' (p. 140). The force with which Sue's transgression is punished demonstrates the college's concern at restricting physical and sexual exploration. Although Sue comes bitterly to oppose what she understands as unjust limitations on her behaviour, she earlier considers the necessity of these restrictions. 'See how independent I shall be after the two years' training!' she exclaims, countering her own doubts (p. 133). Although Martha Vicinus suggests that such discipline enabled educated women to 'behave in a rational, professional manner both personally and publicly', resulting in 'freedom for the independent single woman', Sue quickly comes to question the liberating potential of the harsh programme.<sup>57</sup> The emphasis at Melchester on controlling the free movement suggests that the colleges were working within, rather than against, Victorian gendered codes. In contrast to the middle-class institutions which form the focus of Vicinus's study, here teacher training accords with growing anxieties over female autonomy and sexuality, characteristic of the decade in which the novel was published.

The testimony of Hardy's relatives, most especially Kate, suggest that it was the costs of this type of teacher training that were felt more vividly. Millgate

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<sup>55</sup> Copelman, p. 138. Gittings cites a list of rules at Stockwell College in the 1870s, which includes the following command: 'If you go for a walk with a young gentleman always leave at the corner' (p.175).

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Copelman, p. 143.

<sup>57</sup> Vicinus, p. 178.

judges Kate's college life to be 'desperately unhappy, fretting rebelliously against the stern discipline and obligatory performance of domestic duties'.<sup>58</sup> Letters exchanged between Kate and Hardy's first wife Emma allude to a difficult time requiring frequent reassurance.<sup>59</sup> Kate's experience of college life clearly had an enduring emotional effect, given that she still discussed conditions at Salisbury many years after her departure. A notable letter of 1882 anticipates the later representation of Melchester: 'I don't mind if Tom publishes how badly we were used', Kate writes, adding a note of authenticity to Sue's later fictional struggles.<sup>60</sup> Following the publication of the novel, Hardy wrote from Salisbury in 1897 inviting her to meet, close to twenty years after Kate's own experiences. Their relationship was close at this time, in part because of their mother's illness, but also because of both sisters' retirement from the teaching profession. Aware of the difficult feelings still attached to the college, Hardy reassures Kate that the building is 'emptied for the holidays, so you wd [sic.] have no unpleasant reminders.'<sup>61</sup> Hardy shows awareness as to how the strict routines of the college could bring about long-lasting emotional effects, both in this letter and his representation of Sue.

The regime at Melchester has an inhibiting effect on Sue's individuality. There is good reason to think that Kate's experiences were similar. Sue's struggle reveals an ideology to which schoolmistresses were subject more generally, although Hardy is careful to indicate that the college itself is described in specific terms. He has Sue tell her lover 'about the school as it was', with the important addition, 'at that date' (p. 133). Nonetheless, Melchester College was generally representative of such Victorian institutions; Copelman, for example, describes its 'family resemblance to many late-Victorian training colleges.'<sup>62</sup> The novel places a greater focus on the emotional effect of training and discipline than it does on the physical descriptions of the college. Sue was once described by Hardy as 'a woman of the feminist movement' (p. xxv), and, although her relationship to the *fin-de-siècle* figure of the New Woman is not straightforward, her college experience certainly accords

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<sup>58</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, p. 199.

<sup>59</sup> See Pite, *Guarded Life*, p. 84.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Millgate, *Biography*, p. 358.

<sup>61</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to Kate Hardy, 7 August 1897', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), II (1980), 172.

<sup>62</sup> Copelman, p. 136.

with the widespread anxiety with which that new and liberating figure was associated.<sup>63</sup>

The social historian Frances Widdowson focuses on Hardy's material descriptions of the college rather than Sue's similarity to other cultural representations, and claims that by the time of *Jude the Obscure* in 1895 'the life-denying atmosphere which Sue Bridehead encounters' is outdated in light of the college reforms of the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>64</sup> As Widdowson acknowledges elsewhere, however, colleges were even in this reformed era far more restrictive for women than they were for men, and teacher training was still largely determined by limiting conceptions of gender.

Kate and Hardy were nonetheless aware of efforts to improve external conditions at the training colleges. In 1882, Kate recounted a discussion with a recent Salisbury graduate, suggesting that trainees were now 'having rather better times than we used to have'.<sup>65</sup> This reveals at least minor reforms to the college in the intervening three years, although Clara Grant was to still report negatively of Salisbury in 1885. By the 1890s most female colleges had undertaken substantial reforms and, in this period, Hardy became friendly with the key figure of change, the educationalist Joshua Fitch. Fitch began his career at Borough Road College and was well aware of the narrow tradition Hardy was to later describe as the 'species of nunnery known as the Training-School'. As the inspector of women's training colleges from 1885 until his retirement in 1894 Fitch was at the forefront of efforts to advocate better practice.<sup>66</sup> The Cross Commission of 1888 had identified the spartan conditions of the colleges,

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<sup>63</sup> For discussions of Sue in relation to more general literary representations of the 'new woman' see Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, *The New Woman in Fiction and Fact: Fin-de-Siècle Feminisms* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001); Ann Heilmann, *New Woman Fiction: Women Writing First-Wave Feminism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000); Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin-de-Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Carolyn Burdett, 'The New Woman', in *Thomas Hardy in Context*, ed. by Phillip Mallett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 363–73.

<sup>64</sup> Widdowson, p. 56. In addition to Grant's account, Eglantine Jebb recounts a 'cold shudder' at Stockwell in the 1890s: quoted in Widdowson, p.53.

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Millgate, *Biography*, p. 199.

<sup>66</sup> A. B. Robertson, 'Fitch, Sir Joshua Girling (1824–1903)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/33149>>. The pair met at the Athenaeum Club following Hardy's election in late April 1891. See Hardy, *Life*, p. 246; Widdowson, p. 52.



including the long hours and pressure on work.<sup>67</sup> When Fitch came to summarize to the Committee of Council the changes he had overseen, he focused on the actual experiences of schoolmistresses at college and recorded proudly that, compared to 1885, teachers would leave with 'happier and more dignified memories of their college life'.<sup>68</sup> He lists various changes to the organization of the colleges which had by this time been undertaken to create a more leisured and comfortable environment. Fitch dedicates a section of his report to the lifting of 'restraints on the freedom of students', and, in the process, summarizes the key aspects of an earlier era of training:

I have pleasure in recording a distinct gain to the students during the last few years in regard to their own personal freedom, and the cultivation among them of the art of self-government. I found prevalent in some of the colleges petty and unwise rules regulating the dress of the students, requiring them when walking out to march two and two, in procession, as if they were in a girls' boarding school or an asylum, and imposing upon them a needless amount of domestic service. Some of these usages seemed to me to have been deliberately designed *many* years ago to give to the young people a humble view of their office and to check undue ambition [...] But it is now generally admitted that, since these young people will ere long be thrown on their own resources, and will be entrusted with the responsibility of managing their own life and disposing of their leisure, they should while at college be trained and accustomed to use as much freedom as is compatible with reasonable discipline. The guarded and sheltered life [...] is not altogether a healthy life for young people at the age of 20, who have to be trained for self-government and for the duties of a liberal profession.<sup>69</sup>

Fitch recalls here the various features of college life experienced by Hardy's female relations, acknowledging the drive for a 'humble view' which would 'check undue ambition'. Advocating teaching as a 'liberal profession', Fitch, in contrast to the inhibiting experience of Sue's training, encourages the colleges to nurture independence and develop character.

In 1891, Fitch and Hardy visited Whitelands College on the King's Road in Chelsea. Fitch was midway through his spell as inspector, while Hardy had already begun planning what would later become *Jude the Obscure*. It is very likely that they discussed the training of female teachers. Whitelands was known for preparing middle-class girls for teaching and was organized

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<sup>67</sup> Kamm, p. 275.

<sup>68</sup> J. G. Fitch, 'Report for the Year 1893 on the Training Colleges for Schoolmistresses', in *Report of the Committee of Council on Education, 1893-94* (London: HMSO, 1894), pp. 155–204 (p. 159); Rich, p. 210.

<sup>69</sup> Fitch, p. 159.

according to less humbling principles than Salisbury and other colleges. Fitch seemed to see in Whitelands an example of what all training colleges could become, and he celebrated 'the mental activity and the spirit of work which pervade it', as well as 'the attention paid to the development of the artistic sense among the students'. If the social background of the women was a less prominent factor in life at Whitelands, the gender of these future teachers still influenced their training. Fitch notes the 'evident anxiety of the Principal and his assistants to try new and promising experiments' in this context.<sup>70</sup> One such example was the May Queen Ritual, the performance of which coincided with Hardy's visit. This tradition had been instigated in 1881 by John Ruskin, whose sustained support for women's education has recently been shown by Dinah Birch.<sup>71</sup> Students nominated one of their group as Queen, who was then paraded through the college grounds in a picturesque ceremony. Hardy later gave an account of the event in his autobiography:

A community of women, especially young women, inspires not reverence but protective tenderness in the breast of one who views them. Their 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.... You feel how entirely the difference of their ideas from yours is of the nature of misunderstanding... There is much that is pathetic about these girls, and I wouldn't have missed the visit for anything. How far nobler in its aspirations in the life here than the life of those I met at the crush two nights back! (pp. 246-47)

The 'pathetic' girls elicit 'protective tenderness' from Hardy, who is clearly influenced here by the paternalistic rhetoric, evident both in the symbolism of the ceremony and in contemporary discourse on female education more generally. He notes the students' 'belief in circumstances, in convention, in the rightness of things', which suggests a limitation of perspective in favour of unpractical, though noble, ideals. Fitch observed in 1890 that the girls were 'subjected to a judicious and watchful discipline' upon inspecting the college, further supporting Hardy's sense that independent judgment was subject to measures of control.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Fitch, p. 204.

<sup>71</sup> Dinah Birch, "'What Teachers Do You Give Your Girls?'" Ruskin and Women's Education', in *Ruskin and Gender*, ed. by Francis O'Gorman and Dinah Birch (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 121–36; see also Malcolm Coe, *May Queen Festival* (London: Whitelands College, 1981).

<sup>72</sup> Kamm, p. 279.

In the comments of both Hardy and Fitch, idealized notions of girlhood depend upon the caring but controlling observation of men. In *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy seems more aware of the limitations of this gaze. The women at Melchester College are described in a way which satirizes the paternal attitudes of its traditions, and, like Fitch, the narrator emphasizes the independence and freedom of the students:

Half an hour later they all lay in their cubicles, their tender feminine faces upturned to the flaring gas-jets which at intervals stretched down the long dormitories, every face bearing the legend "The Weaker" upon it, as the penalty of the sex wherein they were moulded, which by no possible exertion of their willing hearts and abilities could be made strong while the inexorable laws of nature remain what they are. They formed a pretty, suggestive, pathetic sight, of whose pathos and beauty they were themselves unconscious, and would not discover till, amid the storms and strains of after-years, with their injustice, loneliness, child-bearing, and bereavement, their minds would revert to this experience as to something which had been allowed to slip past them insufficiently regarded. (pp. 140-41)

This passage shares many similarities to Hardy's earlier comment at Whitelands. The adjective 'pathetic' is repeated and the collective vulnerability of the young women is similarly evident. The narrative observer notices a 'pathos and beauty' in the trainee teachers which is once again beyond their own recognition. However, a greater emphasis is placed here on the way in which such gendered conventions have come to be, when the process of training is likened to being 'moulded' according to 'inexorable laws of nature'. The verb 'moulded' suggests a more focused interest in the process by which feminine traits are instilled, and it questions the assumptions underlying a course of training determined so specifically upon gendered associations. Such an education transforms the faces of the women such that they are captioned 'The Weaker': a definition which, it is claimed in a provocative tone, 'no possible exertion of their willing hearts and abilities' can change. The passage notes a tendency to naturalize differences between the sexes and draws attention to the sense of imposition and conformity which characterized the training of female teachers.

## **6.5 Sex in Education**

Following Sue's departure from Melchester College, Jude comes to question 'the artificial system of things, under which the normal sex-impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who

want to progress' (p. 217). Sexuality is here misused to justify a regressive politics, restricting those men and women interested in improving the lives of themselves and the societies in which they live. As Carol Dyhouse has argued, "biological" definitions of femininity accorded very closely indeed with the cultural prescriptions of femininity cherished by mid-Victorian Society'.<sup>73</sup> The presentation of Melchester College shows that educational institutions played a key role in reproducing such cultural prescriptions. Despite being built for the apparently progressive cause of education, with the support of contemporary scientific discourse such places could further embed apparent differences between the genders. Biological evidence was invoked to strengthen the traditional ideology of separate spheres, which sometimes urged for the exclusion of women from education entirely. In *Sex in Education* (1873) the Harvard physician Edward H. Clarke expressed concern at the physical distress brought on girls by intellectual work, while in 1874 the physician Henry Maudsley published 'Sex in Mind and in Education' which furthered British interest in the effect of sexual difference on learning. Maudsley argued that women's reproductive function put specific demands on their brains, arguing that 'sex is fundamental, lies deeper than culture, cannot be ignored or defied with impunity'.<sup>74</sup> Sue experiences adverse physical effects following her time at college, but her 'subdued lines' result from a harsh environment of training rather than the intellectual pursuits which Maudsley and Clarke proposed were damaging women's bodies (p. 132).

One response to Maudsley and Clarke was to argue that women's intellectual development could be undertaken in harmony with their physical health. In *A Laodicean*, Paula Power responds to the scientific thinking of the day in these terms. She 'holds advanced views on social and other matters' and is a strong advocate of 'the higher education of women', who combines her support for intellectual learning with an interest in 'the physical training of the

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<sup>73</sup> Dyhouse, p. 153. As Angelique Richardson has shown, however, female education was opposed by arguments in which 'the sexes were increasingly differentiated along biological lines'. See *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century: Rational Reproduction and the New Woman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 39–40.

<sup>74</sup> Henry Maudsley, 'Sex in Mind and Education', *Fortnightly Review*, 1874, 466–83 (p. 474). In the 1880s Sidgwick and Pfeiffer set out to discover if education had any significantly damaging effects on women's health. See Dyhouse, pp. 157–8.

Greeks'. Paula reads with interest 'Every philosopher and man of science who ventilates his theories in the monthly reviews' and the 'subject of the physical development of her sex has had its turn with other things in her mind.' Upon arriving at her new home, she draws on these ideas by making arrangements for a gymnasium to be built. The building is designed 'in imitation of those at the new colleges for women' (p. 150). The example demonstrates a more enabling influence of contemporary scientific thinking on female education.

The education of boys was also influenced by definitions of gender. Upon failing to enter Christminster, Jude becomes aware of the masculinized tendencies of his own schooling. A true expression of his disappointment would, he imagines, allow him to have 'screamed under the nervous tension which he was now undergoing.' This is a 'relief being denied to his virility,' and only possible 'if he had been a woman'. Jude is shaped by a deeply repressive education, in which gendered norms cause him to have 'clenched his teeth in misery' and accept the 'corrugations between his brows' (p. 124). Jude first learns the effect that his sexual feelings are to have on him earlier in the narrative, when Arabella's presence interrupts his calm reading. Jude feels forced to pursue his desire, despite these other interests:

In short, as if materially, a compelling arm of extraordinary muscular power seized hold of him, something which had nothing in common with the spirits and influences that had moved him hitherto. This seemed to care little for his reason and his will, nothing for his so-called elevated intentions, and moved him along, as a violent schoolmaster a schoolboy he has seized by the collar, in a direction which tended towards the embrace of a woman. (p. 44)

The passage combines two conceptions of learning, in which 'elevated intentions' fall foul of the sexualized force of a 'violent schoolmaster'. The human figure of the educator problematizes what otherwise seems an inevitable and natural urge on Jude's part. Contrary to the 'afternoon's reading' which might otherwise occupy Jude's mind, the urge to pursue Arabella is in the above passage imagined as a gruff schooling: an impulse provoked by the learnt influence of gender.

Hardy describes Jude struggling with an 'internal warfare between flesh and spirit' in his novel (p. 193). With the above passage in mind, it would be a mistake to align representations of education exclusively with the latter force. The exchange of abstract ideas at Christminster is countered by the encouragement of sexual desire in the above scene, and in the novel more

generally education can both support and inhibit human drives. Hardy was wary of associating such impulses with existing gender expectations, recording his disagreement with the idea of an 'untamed primitive savage temperament that lurks in the mildest, best woman' which he found in his copy of *Keynotes* (1893), a work by the radical writer George Egerton. Egerton's emphasis on distinctly female characteristics seemed to hold conservative social implications for Hardy. Egerton dismissed existing forms of women's education for compromising what she understood as the distinct nature of women, arguing instead for the 'development from within out as a female', and prioritizing innate impulses in a similar manner to the gendered learning by which Jude is influenced.<sup>75</sup>

Although Hardy opposed education determined by conservative views of gender, his earlier contribution to the *New Review* addressed the current teaching of the sexual process. In June 1894, alongside Hall Caine, Ellen Gosse, Israel Zangwill, Walter Besant, and others, he contributed to the magazine's piece entitled 'The Tree of Knowledge', which discussed the means by which the physiological basis of marriage could be better educated. Although gender was not to determine teaching, Hardy agreed that a frank knowledge of sex and its consequences should be included in schooling. He wrote that for women 'a full knowledge of her probable future' in marriage was necessary, suggesting a 'plain handbook on natural process' to be prepared for 'innocent youths.'<sup>76</sup> Hardy's proposals acknowledge the reality of sex and gender in ways which would liberate, rather than restrict, women. In 'Candour in English Fiction' (1890), Hardy had suggested that novels increase knowledge about sex: a contribution which allied itself with a progressive movement to address Victorian anxieties through increased discussion in the cultural sphere.<sup>77</sup>

Despite Hardy's support of a frank treatment of sex for young women, Sue is noticeably unsusceptible to desire and has a 'curious unconsciousness of gender' (p. 149). Through Sue's character, Hardy explores the possibility that learning could unite similar minds through the exercise of intellect, regardless of

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<sup>75</sup> Quoted in Richardson, *Love and Eugenics*, pp. 164–65.

<sup>76</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'The Tree of Knowledge', *The New Review*, 10 (1894), 675–90 (p. 675); Thomas Hardy, 'Candour in English Fiction', *New Review*, 2 (1890), 6–21.

<sup>77</sup> Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science, and Medicine 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 210.

sex or gender. Her relationship with Jude is described as 'partly a wish for intellectual sympathy,' and both he and Phillotson have cause to describe Sue as 'exceptionally bright' (p. 98). Hardy later described her as an 'intellectualized, emancipated bundle of nerves'.<sup>78</sup> In the novel she discusses a past friendship with an undergraduate involving walking and reading tours, undertaken 'like two men almost' (p. 148). Sue's appetite for ideas and knowledge consolidates her opposition to gendered segregation, and, although her lifestyle is associated with the New Woman, she distances herself from such a figure by denying that she is 'a clever girl' as 'there are too many of that sort now!' (p. 107).<sup>79</sup> The image of childhood is more suitable for Sue, and, at one point in the story, she claims the goal of her education to be getting 'back to the life of my infancy and its freedom'. The village school and its surroundings are recalled as a productive space of learning which evade the structures of gendered difference which Sue finds that the modern system of education is based upon.<sup>80</sup> The nurse of Sue's aunt recalls her entering a pond as a young girl in file with the other students, 'all boys except herself', and otherwise being 'not exactly a tomboy' but doing 'things that only boys do'. Although sexual attention ultimately forces Sue's separation from the male pupils, these 'retrospective visions' nonetheless point to a process of education less tainted by assumptions of gender (p. 112).

## 6.6 Resistance

This chapter has considered the ways in which the seemingly liberating claims of the teaching profession were compromised by restrictions placed upon an early generation of schoolmistresses. These restrictions drew for justification on established notions of class and gender, as well as new ideas in biology. Female characters in *Jude the Obscure*, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, 'Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress', and 'A Mere Interlude'—as well as Mary and Kate, Hardy's sisters—are subjected in varied ways to control, restraint,

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<sup>78</sup> Hardy, *Jude*, p. 468.

<sup>79</sup> Free, intellectual conversations across the sexes are shown in Olive Schriener's *Story of an African Farm* (1883), Sarah Grand's *The Heavenly Twins* (1893), and Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (London: John Lane, 1895).

<sup>80</sup> For a consideration of school gardens and their connection to assumptions about how nature, culture, and gender shape human character see Gargano, pp. 89–124; Shuttleworth, pp. 207–220.

and attempts at moulding in their professional lives. Hardy shows these forces affecting not only the patterns and routines of their daily work, but also their inner subjectivity.

The effect is seen most clearly when Sue, 'a woman clipped and pruned' by the collective routines of the training college, resists the college authorities by meeting with Jude at night-time (p. 132). Her punishment is much worse than her fellow students anticipate. The command that 'nobody was to speak to Bridehead without permission' is ordered, and the trainees soon discover that she has been severely reprimanded. Sue is assigned solitary confinement for a week, where she is to take her meals and conduct all her reading. Her peers show their opposition to the punishment: 'the seventy murmured, the sentence being, they thought, too severe.' They sit in geography class with their arms folded and remain 'stolid and motionless' despite appeals from teaching staff. Finally, 'a round robin was prepared and sent in to the Principal, asking for a remission of Sue's punishment' (p. 142). As noted earlier, the young women at Stockwell training college prepared a similar petition and, as such, are an important inspiration for this fictional round robin.

This silent act of solidarity is remarkable, especially as its consequence in the novel's plot is limited. Sue does not acknowledge the support of the other students and she instead escapes from the college in an individual act of protest. Amanda Claybaugh compares this collective protest to Phillotson's court case which, as has been seen, is another instance in which a punishing education system is challenged. Claybaugh argues for 'the possibility that women's training schools might shelter a new kind of collectivity', suggesting the student protest as a rare moment of togetherness in the otherwise isolated world in *Jude the Obscure*. 'Through their motionlessness and through their silence', Claybaugh shows that the seventy girls 'hold the space of the classroom open within the narrative by refusing to allow any plot to fill it,' and suggests that the event holds a significance beyond its effect on events and characters in the novel.<sup>81</sup> This is indeed a radical moment, which points towards opportunities for greater female confidence and unity in education. Although fictional, the act of resistance accords with the wider struggles of schoolmistresses in the nineteenth century, who were forced to frequently assert and defend their position against constraint and restriction.

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<sup>81</sup> Claybaugh, p. 60.



Another round robin petition exists in the Stockwell collection. A circle of neat signatures similarly borders this appeal although the statement of demands appears outside its perimeter. The language is notably more forceful. The students challenge the ruling of a strict matron after their 'conduct is reported as disorderly' for 'speaking in a moderate tone, when passing up & down stairs'. A common student identity is asserted in ways which also resonate with 'the seventy' who oppose Sue's punishment. 'We are compelled to listen to unjust accusations respecting our fellow-students', the Stockwell trainees explain. They sign the round robin in memorable terms, as 'Students & inmates of this Institution', the latter a word used four times in *Jude the Obscure*, once when Jude observes life in the college through its windows.<sup>82</sup> With its emotive comparison of the college to a prison, this second petition is a more radical assertion of resistance than the first, and it documents the Stockwell students finding a stronger collective voice. Its significance lies in wider efforts throughout the country to increase the importance of teaching as a profession for women and consolidate a shared identity among practitioners. Schoolmistresses associations had developed around the country in the 1860s, most notably those begun by Emily Davies in 1866, and in 1872 the National Union for the Education of Women was founded. The National Union of Students was dominated by men and only properly opened its campaigns to women in the 1890s.<sup>83</sup> Female professionals were supported in unequal terms than to men, as the petition of the Stockwell trainees asserts.

Given the involvement of Hardy's cousin, Tryphena Sparks, in the collective petition of 1871, the events at Stockwell were an important precedent for similar efforts by Sue's colleagues in the novel. Although the relationship of Salisbury to Melchester College has been well recognized, neither Kate nor Mary resisted conditions in a comparable way while at college there, as F. B. Pinion has observed.<sup>84</sup> Meanwhile, the round robin petitions show Stockwell as

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<sup>82</sup> 'To the Committee of Stockwell College, 27 May 1871', London, Brunel University Archives, Archive of the British and Foreign School Society.

<sup>83</sup> Bellaigue, p. 977; Kamm, p. 281. As Copelman shows (pp. 201-02), in 1896 the NUT launched a campaign to attract women to the union, yet its first female executive had only been introduced a decade earlier.

<sup>84</sup> F.B. Pinion, 'The Hardys and Salisbury', *Thomas Hardy Year Book*, 2 (1971), p. 84. For an earlier consideration of Melchester's source see Carl Jefferson Weber, *Hardy of Wessex: His Life and Literary Career* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), pp. 200-03.

a place in which students opposed the unjust treatment to which they were subject. Tryphena had entered the college in January 1870 independently of the pupil-teacher training system due to letters of recommendation, which likely came from schools at Coryates, near Weymouth, at which she had been teaching, and at Atelhampton, which she attended as a child.<sup>85</sup> Because of discredited theories regarding a romance with Tryphena, Hardy's visit to Stockwell College in June 1891 has largely been interpreted as motivated by sentimental reasons. His concern with the institution's educational work has been little considered.<sup>86</sup>

In his account of the visit to Stockwell, Hardy records an interest in the support network of the trainee teachers. Mary had found that her friendship with another student, Annie Lanham, helped to ease the tough conditions at Salisbury.<sup>87</sup> In *Life*, Hardy notes a custom among the Stockwell students of 'choosing a *daughter* from the list of junior girls who are coming. The senior is *mother* to the daughter for the whole year, and looks after her (p. 248, emphasis in original). The focus on friendly sisterhood here develops Hardy's experiences at Whitelands a few months earlier. Although, as Richard Dellamora has noted, Hardy largely avoids providing the novel's characters with supportive same-sex friendships, the act of solidarity at Melchester would for Hardy have been

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<sup>85</sup> This was despite her years of experience in that role at Puddletown National School until 1868. Tryphena performed well at Stockwell and in January 1872 secured an impressive appointment as principal teacher at Plymouth Public Free School. See G. F. Bartle, 'Some Fresh Information About Tryphena Sparks : Thomas Hardy's Cousin', *Notes and Queries*, 30 (1983), 320–22.

<sup>86</sup> Lois Deacon and Terry Coleman's *Providence and Mr. Hardy* (London: Hutchinson, 1966) claimed a romance and subsequent illegitimate child between Hardy and his cousin. The theory was refuted most convincingly and conclusively in 1975 by Robert Gittings in *Young Thomas Hardy*. Deacon's research methods have since been questioned, leading the influence of Stockwell to be dismissed altogether. Gittings acknowledges Hardy's visits to Whiteland and Stockwell in 1891, but concludes that Salisbury was the only source for Melchester College. Again, Claire Tomalin follows Millgate's (pp. 322–23) focus on Salisbury, although she also emphasizes that 'these young women were pioneers'. See *Thomas Hardy: The Time-Torn Man* (London: Viking, 2006), p. 59.

<sup>87</sup> 'Mary Hardy to Nathaniel Sparks, 26 November 1907', Eton College Archives, Windsor. Lanham later married Mary's cousin, Nathaniel (Tryphena's brother). See Celia Barclay, 'Mary Hardy and Annie Lanham', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 12 (1996), 57–61.

associated with these London colleges.<sup>88</sup> Tryphena wishes to 'feel that I am still attached to Stockwell and not forgotten' in a letter sent to the college's principal upon her appointment at Plymouth.<sup>89</sup> According to Fitch's report, both Stockwell and Whitelands were leading reforms to improve life for their female students, in part by nurturing this sense of collective care and corporal identity.<sup>90</sup> They were greatly influenced by the pioneering example of the university colleges, described evocatively by Martha Vicinus as places of 'lifelong friendships and a community of united women.'<sup>91</sup> In 1890 a contributor to *The Schoolmistress* noted the tradition described by Hardy, that 'each new student thus becomes a member of a family when she enters the college.'<sup>92</sup>

The strong sense of comradery was only one aspect of the university's influence on the training colleges, however. In this period women associated with female higher education were increasingly involved in social activism. The humanitarian pioneer Eglantyne Jebb attended Stockwell College in 1898 following her time at Oxford, where she had been encouraged to teach in an elementary school.<sup>93</sup> The college attracted interest from other such prominent women, and Stockwell records show twenty six other distinguished visitors in 1891 including the social reformer Octavia Hill, who visited on the same day as Hardy.<sup>94</sup> Women at both types of institutions were empowered by what Dyhouse describes as 'the discovery of angers shared and commitment to a common cause'.<sup>95</sup>

In a scene comparable to the collective protest at Melchester, Fancy Day leads her students to oppose the gender roles which her and other young women are allotted in Mellstock. Fancy has passed through the college

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<sup>88</sup> Richard Dellamora, 'Male Relations in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 27 (1991), 453–72 (pp. 152–53).

<sup>89</sup> Bartle, 'Tryphena', p. 321.

<sup>90</sup> Fitch admires Whitelands, as has been seen, and describes Stockwell maintaining its 'position in the foremost rank'. Meanwhile, he is forced to discuss 'two or three minor details' with the Salisbury managers. See Fitch, pp. 198, 200, 204.

<sup>91</sup> Vicinus, p. 142.

<sup>92</sup> For this and other examples of comradery in the teacher training colleges see Copelman, pp. 136–44.

<sup>93</sup> Dyhouse, pp. 75–6.

<sup>94</sup> British and Foreign School Society, *Report: 1892*.

<sup>95</sup> Dyhouse, p. 173. Dyhouse acknowledges that working-class women, leaving fewer written records than their middle classes counterparts, are more likely to be 'hidden from history'. Kate's brief mention of her time at College, with its plea for Hardy to record her experiences, is significant in this regard.

atmosphere described in this chapter, and, upon her return home, unites the girls at her own school. This takes place during the Christmas service at Mellstock Church, which is an event anticipated throughout the year and closely associated with the traditions of the village. The church gallery, which has a 'status and sentiment of its own' (p. 32), houses the eccentric all-male parish band; as fierce defenders of the village's customs they lightly disobey the reformist agenda of the new vicar. Their jovial conversation is appealing though sentimentalized, and their right to lead the accompaniment with ill-tuned instruments and husky voices, although 'frequently below the standard of church-performances at other times', seems to be accepted by all in the congregation. With a well-prepared forcefulness akin to the petition of the Stockwell women, Fancy Day directs her female students to interrupt the gallery's contribution with a 'strong and shrill reinforcement' from 'the school-girls' aisle'. Hardy's amendments are again revealing of the gender dynamics at play, as in his original edition this is described more generally as the 'school-children's aisle'. The voice of these young women grows 'bolder and more distinct', as, in comparison to the male gallery, their singing has 'a time, a key, almost a tune of its own' (p. 33).

The action of Fancy's choir is an unprecedented display of female unity, which shocks the small rural community. The 'intrusive feminine voices' surprise the villagers' expectations, as, so the narrator explains, 'this had never happened before within the memory of man' (p. 33). The conflict here between new, educated ideas and older, rural custom is also evident in Hardy's preface to the 1896 edition of the novel, where he comments that with 'a musical executive limited, as it is mostly limited now, to the parson's wife or daughter and the school-children, or to the school-teacher and the children, an important union of interests had disappeared.'<sup>96</sup>

Hardy understood the importance of women gaining valued positions in society from his sisters, but he nonetheless records the upset that an usurpation of familiar roles brings about. Following the performance, the old choir feel like 'useless ones', a statement under which there is a 'horrible bitterness of irony that lurked'. The threat to the 'union of interests' is felt strongly by the male villagers, who undermine their cause by calling the schoolgirls 'Brazen-faced hussies' following the singing. This challenge to customary female roles, is most

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<sup>96</sup> Hardy, *Greenwood*, p. 161.

fully recognized when one member of the old choir, Mr Spinks, asks if 'anything bolder be found than united woman?' (p. 34). But the subordination to which the students have been subject is explained by the narrator:

the girls had always been humble and respectful followers of the gallery; singing at sixes and sevens if without gallery leaders; never interfering with the ordinances of these practises artists—having no will, union, power, or proclivity except it was given them from the established choir enthroned above them. (p. 34)

Such emphasis on being 'humble' and 'respectful' anticipates the character of life at training college which Hardy was to later explore in greater detail. The discovery of a shared 'will, union, power' unites a collective resistance to injustice, realized through education. The schoolgirls are able to demand a less restricted role in the rural community under Fancy's leadership. In a similar scene that closes the novel, the narrator heralds the defiant females as pioneers who represent a 'new order of things' (p. 134).

## 7. Conclusion

Education. – The ordinary method is to imprint ideas & opinions, in the strict sense of the word prejudices on the mind of the child before it has had any but a very few particular observations... Afterwards views the world through the medium of these ready made ideas.

Thomas Hardy<sup>1</sup>

disi'llusion, *v. trans.* To free from illusion; to disenchant, undeceive, disillusionize.

OED<sup>2</sup>

My first epigraph may seem an unlikely source to begin this consideration of Hardy's more redemptive view of education, based as it is on Arthur Schopenhauer's work on pessimism, *Parerga and Paralipomena* (1851).<sup>3</sup> Hardy copied the passage from the chapter, 'On Education', in which Schopenhauer criticizes the process whereby students obtain broad concepts before particular observation. For Schopenhauer, this 'artificial education' is akin to 'putting the cart before the horse', limiting experience and prioritizing the ideas found in books over new impressions and discoveries outside of them. His chief concern is the effect of this process on perception. An artificial education results in a kind of learned ignorance, where the world becomes predetermined according to the concepts which are looked for in that world. This method is 'to hear what other people say, to learn and to read, and so to get your head crammed full of general ideas before you have any sort of extended acquaintance with the world as it is, and as you may see it for yourself.'<sup>4</sup> The learner inherits concepts, words, and values which form the common acquisition of a society in ways which stifle their relation to the world. The values of a culture are imposed before their bearing on actual life has been properly understood.

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<sup>1</sup> Hardy, *Literary Notebooks*, II, 30, emphasis in original.

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of English*, ed. by Angus Stevenson, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *Studies in Pessimism*, trans. by T. Bailey Saunders (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1891); Originally published in German as Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga Und Paralipomena*, 2 vols. (Berlin: A.W. Hahn, 1851).

<sup>4</sup> Schopenhauer, *Pessimism*, p. 91.

This was a concern that moved Hardy. He was troubled by the notion that generalized ideas and opinions were taught with no acknowledged relation to the experiences of an individual or a rural community. As my fourth chapter demonstrates, dialect and folklore were among the forms through which the particularities of local surroundings could be expressed. These were traditions, which, in Hardy's view, new forms of education were hampering. The 'trained National teachings and Standard knowledge' provide for Tess an alternative language in which to speak (p. 23), but they also divorce her from more immediate, observable truths. In *The Well-Beloved*, Avicce undergoes an education which has taught 'her to forget all the experiences of her ancestors' (p. 186), and similarly finds distant concepts imprinted upon local knowledge. Hardy's writing shows that accepting ideas wholesale from the minds of others inhibits an individual's curiosity and prevents recourse to experience. This idea held special resonance during Hardy's early literary career: a period in which he felt pressured to imitate the work and lives of urban others, such as Matthew Arnold. The literary project of Wessex to emerge was coloured by Hardy's underdetermined observation of his native Dorset, conceived in separation from the more pervasive views of the city.

If 'the best which has been thought and said in the world' was met with somewhat less enthusiasm in Dorset schoolrooms than it was in London ones, Hardy's work suggests alternative forms of learning which hold a closer correspondence to the sensibilities of rural life.<sup>5</sup> Hardy's representations of education remind us to account for the particularity of local surroundings and human lives. In 'Nature's Questioning' (1898), a range of natural species are endowed with human characteristics in order to make this point. In the poem, Hardy expresses his recurring concern at learning which leaves crucial differences unaccounted for. In the opening lines, the view of education as a force threatening some more delicate essence is described:

When I look forth at dawning, pool,  
Field, flock, and lonely tree,  
All seem to gaze at me  
Like chastened children sitting silent in a school ;

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<sup>5</sup> Arnold, V, 233.

Their faces dulled, constrained, and worn,  
As though the master's ways  
Through the long teaching days  
Had cowed them till their early zest was overborne.<sup>6</sup>

The challenge to 'early zest' is not only the monotony of the 'long teaching days', but the force with which difference is 'cowed' by the 'master's ways'. The verse gives voice to typically Ruskinian concerns here, and his plea to think of education as a 'training which makes men happiest in themselves', because 'one man is unlike another', is often resonant in Hardy's work.<sup>7</sup> If Hardy and Ruskin shared an ambivalent attitude towards national instruction, it was because they also shared a vital awareness of such variety in human character.

Although Hardy's writing emphasizes the role of difference in education, it also alerts us to the dangers of any system or organization presuming what such differences entail. Hardy opposed those forms of education which tended to consolidate distinctions of class and gender, and his writing raises suspicion as to the role of contemporary educational institutions in reproducing existing social relations. Universities and training colleges are integral to 'the artificial system of things under which the normal sex-impulses are turned into devilish domestic gins and springes to noose and hold back those who want to progress' (p. 217), described in *Jude the Obscure*. In my sixth chapter, Melchester is shown to mould schoolmistresses according to gendered definitions of role and capacity, and in my fifth chapter Christminster endorses similarly essentialist distinctions along class lines, shown through Tetuphenay's advice to Jude of 'remaining in your own sphere and sticking to your trade' (p. 117). Hardy grows more distant from Ruskin in both cases, whose forecast of a future society where 'there shall be as much difference between the well-bred and ill-bred human creature (whatever pains be taken with their education)' demonstrates a social conservatism especially jarring to the perspective of the late Wessex novels.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Nature's Questioning', in *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1930), pp. 58–59 (l. 1–8).

<sup>7</sup> Ruskin, XI, 261–62.

<sup>8</sup> Ruskin, VII, 344.



Hardy's writing becomes particularly lively when exposing the more conservative strains of Victorian education. At such moments Hardy moves far closer to the optimism of philosopher J. S. Mill, as Phillip Mallett shows. Mill's confidence that education would transcend rather than reinforce natural differences was unprecedented: 'The power of education is almost boundless', he proclaimed in the 1850s. If Hardy was uncomfortable with the ideological work of institutions, Mill's 'intentional self-modelling according to an ideal' is the basis from which Jude and others find motivation for their education.<sup>9</sup> The nineteenth-century was enlivened by the hope that learning could overcome all other determinants of character, and, as Angelique Richardson has illustrated, 'Hardy resists biologicistic understandings of character, suggesting education has a larger influence'.<sup>10</sup> The potential of education depends on taking seriously the influence of environment, and, as my third chapter shows, Hardy's early architectural career provided him with practical demonstrations of the idea that a building could positively determine character. His involvement in the design of the new 1870s board schools was part of an exciting moment in the history of education, when society came to rethink the environments in which its young were educated.

Education is subject to continued scrutiny in Hardy's work. Its character is neither stable nor its consequences predictable: Hardy challenges systematic uniformity when distinctiveness and particularity are under threat, but then critiques essentialism in the backward work of institutions.<sup>11</sup> In *The Woodlanders*, Hardy imagined a setting within which these contesting views of education could be explored, alongside his interest with perception cited earlier. Hardy's representation of a doctor, Fitzpiers, shows the pitfalls of an intellect severely divorced from experience, and foregrounds observation as central to the issue of education. We are told that Fitzpiers 'was not a practical man,

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<sup>9</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Nature, The Utility of Religion, and Theism* (London: Longman, 1874), pp. 82, 50. Although Hardy was often reluctant to assume firm philosophical positions, Phillip Mallett, 'Hardy and Philosophy', in *A Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Keith Wilson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 21–35.

<sup>10</sup> Richardson, 'Hardy and the Place of Culture', p. 63. Richardson also accounts for instinct in Hardy's writing here (pp.60-62).

<sup>11</sup> I borrow this emphasis on 'distinctiveness' and 'particularity' from the work of Common Ground, a charity that explores the relationship between nature and culture. See Susan Clifford and Angela King, *Local Distinctiveness: Place, Particularity and Identity* (London: Common Ground, 1993).

except by fits, and much preferred the ideal world to the real, and the discovery of principles to their application' (p. 112). He theorizes from his isolated cottage and excuses his lack of empirical curiosity on having no equipment. Fitzpiers dislikes moving within the natural world where he is employed, and, when called to patients at night-time, is said to have 'hated the solitary midnight woodland' (p. 113). On arrival, he shows disdain towards the ill villagers among whom his medical training finds its application. 'Looking round towards the patient with that preoccupied gaze' (p. 154), he enters the sick-chamber of South, unaware of the dangers that this abstracted viewpoint poses. The patient's fate is in some way related to that of the tree growing outside his window, as Marty, his daughter, attempts to explain. The lives of woodland species and people are woven closely throughout the novel, perhaps to the extent that 'it demands a reorientation of ideas about what constitutes nature and how we understand the human', as William A. Cohen has argued recently.<sup>12</sup> It is Fitzpiers's separation from such interdependency that is central to this particular scene. His isolated view of things becomes a source of intrigue to the narrator, who provides us with the following description:

His eyes were dark and impressive, and beamed with the light either of energy or of susceptibility—it was difficult to say which; it might have been a little of both. That quick, glittering, practical eye, sharp for the surface of things and for nothing beneath it, he had not. But whether his apparent depth of vision was real, or only an artistic accident of his corporeal moulding, nothing but his deeds could reveal. (p. 100)

The doubts over perception are multiple. Fitzpiers's eyes are either sources of vitality or evidence of sensitivity: the limit of the narrator's own vision makes it difficult to establish which. The doctor has an 'apparent depth of vision', and so his singular way of seeing the room is a potential medium for profound insight. Or, the depth may be illusion: only 'artistic accident'. The scientific knowledge which authorizes Fitzpiers's gaze is inaccessible to the reader and the community in which he works and so can provide a basis for claims of either discovery or deception; 'deeds' will determine which. Fitzpiers orders South's tree to be felled, yet in recommending this remedy he troubles a reciprocal relationship for which his learning has left him unprepared. When South dies,

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<sup>12</sup> William A. Cohen, 'Arborealities: The Tactile Ecology of Hardy's *Woodlanders*', *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 19 (2014), p. 2 <<http://dx.doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.16995/ntn.690>>.

the doctor experiences an epistemic shock, and 'his whole system seemed paralysed by amazement' (p. 102). The connection between the life of the tree and the life of the man is unacknowledged, and this locates a flaw in the Doctor's gaze: a narrow line of sight unaccommodating to the surrounding forces of life.

Fitzpiers's amazement draws our attention to the limitations of any one area of knowledge to explain events fully. His mind prioritizes evidence which supports his preconceptions. It becomes clear in *The Woodlanders* that a restriction of vision is the chief symptom of those who are educated according to conventional standards. Conceptions of truth first establish themselves in the mind, only then to project outwards and colour all subsequent experiences. Despite occasional shocks, for Fitzpiers this gaze is enduring and affects even his ability to love: embellishing his inner vision, he finds an object onto which he can project a yearning. Fitzpiers comes to suffer from his idealism when he realizes that it hampers the reciprocity of human contact. His lover, Grace Melbury, is victim to a similar fate. Her return from boarding school leads to delusion, as she looks for suburban villas within her native woodland. Unlike Giles Winterbourne, her powers of observation have been lost: 'where he was seeing John-apples and farm-buildings she was beholding a much contrasting scene'. Grace's view is 'a visioned scene' (p. 42), but her delusion demonstrates Hardy's central suggestion: an education focused on one fixed point of view excludes the more immediate pleasures of local observation.

The opening passages of Hardy's novels make especially interesting reading for this reason, characterized as they are by a narrative perspective, or more often perspectives, with claims to such empirical mastery. *The Woodlanders* begins by adopting the viewpoint of a touring walker:

The rambler who, for old association's sake, should trace the forsaken coach-road running almost in a meridional line from Bristol to the south shore of England, would find himself during the latter half of his journey in the vicinity of some extensive woodlands, interspersed with apple-orchards. (p. 5)

The 'meridional line' governs the passage here, structuring a journey with a far more general range than the limited 'vicinity of some extensive woodlands'. We follow an eye looking on a map, noticing the apple orchards interspersed in the region, until the confidence of this viewpoint fades. We are then invited to notice the particular and the anomalous: a woodland which is soon described as 'one

of those sequestered spots outside the gates of the world' (p. 8). John Barrell examines this common feature of Hardy's language, 'rich in cartographical, geological and pictorial reference', in his consideration of subjective geographies as modes of cognition. For Barrell, such language identifies the reader as a literate traveller and holder of a wider, regional, and more educated perspective than the natives of the particular landscape about which he or she reads. The narrative promises breadth and depth through its learned terms, but the reader soon realizes the limitations of this view when compared to the more nuanced observation of Hardy's natives. In his reading of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, Barrell argues that 'the secrets of the Vale of Blackmoor cannot be "read", or certainly not by such a reader as this language constructs, one whose knowledge is customarily derived from reading'.<sup>13</sup> The narrator's task of mediating between such differing perspectives becomes impossible. As Schopenhauer reminds us, books are no substitute for real experience. There are limits to what we can learn by reading.

Barrell's reading invokes a binary of two quite incompatible perspectives by dividing the viewpoint of a native so decisively from that of an educated reader. The localized knowledge can nonetheless expand to a more general view, as Hardy describes in 'The Dorsetshire Labourer' when summarizing transformed patterns of rural work. 'Change is also a certain sort of education,' he writes, identifying the new generation of migrating labourers as 'shrewder and sharper men of the world' who 'have learnt how to hold their own with firmness and judgment'. When compared with 'the old-fashioned stationary sort', Hardy writes that it is 'impossible not to perceive that the former is much more wide awake than his fellow-worker, astonishing him with stories of the wide world comprised in a twenty-mile radius from their homes.'<sup>14</sup> Hardy sounds

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<sup>13</sup> John Barrell, 'Geographies of Hardy's Wessex', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 8 (1982), 347–61 (p. 356). In *Hardy's Geography: Wessex and the Regional Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), Ralph Pite writes of Barrell's argument: 'nothing is allowed to occupy a middle ground between the two poles of local and general: the reader is shown to be a violator whenever he or she attempts to acquire local knowledge; the good reader will learn from this and withdraw' (p. 13). Eve Sorum and Simon Trezise have, in separate articles, noted the educational potential of Hardy's narratives, focusing on character empathy and comprehensions of nature respectively. See Eve Sorum, 'Hardy's Geography of Narrative Empathy', *Studies in the Novel*, 43 (2011), 179–99; Trezise, p. 60.

<sup>14</sup> Hardy, 'Labourer', pp. 48, 49.

optimistic here that modernizing forces will bring some benefit to rural areas, but in the article he also acknowledges the reverse movement, in which an educated mind benefits from a more humble way of life. He imagines a Londoner, one of 'many thoughtful persons', taking a six-month visit to Dorset to experience life in an 'uneducated community'. This ethnographical style imagines an 'investigator' insistent that the Labourer 'he had encountered exhibited a suspicious blankness of gaze'. Yet, in time, the urban observer's view changes as he learns to see life as others around him: 'As, to the eye of a diver, contrasting colours shine out by degrees from what has originally painted itself of an unrelieved earthy hue, so would shine out the characters, capacities, and interests of these people to him.'<sup>15</sup> In Hardy's article, both the labourer and the interested tourist find their opinions and judgments transformed by their experience of unfamiliar surroundings. Oppositions between near and far, rural and urban, and educated and non-educated seem here to be flexible planes across which individuals are capable of travel. This is to problematize easy definitions of education by showing that a subject is capable of flickering between multiple positions. Grace's new way of seeing the woodlands is temporary, conditional, and liable to change: indeed, her frequent digressions back to forgotten viewpoints become sources of learning in themselves.

Hardy's writing presents learning as a process: a six-month inquiry into rural Dorset, a season labouring in an adjacent valley, or, indeed, evenings spent studying German philosophy. But if change is a certain sort of education, education is also a certain sort of change. Regardless of whether this education provides a wider or a more narrow view, Hardy's skill is to station his characters and narrator beyond these shifting parameters so that we can observe the transformation and realize the critique. Giles Winterbourne serves precisely this function in *The Woodlanders*. While conversing with Fitzpiers, we are told that he

did not enter into this view of the case; what he had been struck with was the curious parallelism between Mr. Fitzpiers's manner and Grace's, as shown by the fact of both of them straying into a subject of discourse so engrossing to themselves that it made them forget it was foreign to him. (pp.115–16)

Giles's resistance to the surgeon's reasoning is central to the nuance of this scene. This is to overcome the expectation of internal focalization and instead

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<sup>15</sup> Hardy, 'Labourer', pp. 48, 49, 39, 40.

to allow Giles to notice a 'curious parallelism' between Grace and Fitzpiers, which is a shared lack of awareness and preoccupation with their own ideas. Giles is positioned outside of Fitzpiers's narrow focus and imagines himself a foreigner to his particular thought process, thereby establishing a critical position from which this form of education can be challenged. The source of real learning now lies in Giles's skills in observation. His critical inquiry begins quietly here, but its theme—the limitations of a formalized education—comes to figure centrally in the story.

In 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction' (1888), Hardy considers the educational potential of novels and locates his literary project in a position not dissimilar to Giles's observation of Fitzpiers. He writes of 'the humanizing education found in fictitious narrative': the moral purpose of writing which teaches a reader to imaginatively occupy a different viewpoint. In Hardy's view, a book should transport the reader into a hitherto unknown, and provide a 'shifting of the mental perspective into a fictitious world'. His essay challenges 'the assumption that a novel is the thing, and not a view of the thing'. The learning comes by altering the values which determine what is interesting to look at: 'the eye sees that which it brings with it the means of seeing', Hardy ends, quoting from Thomas Carlyle.<sup>16</sup> An earthy hue is transformed into contrasting colours when a narrative temporarily adjusts the reader's cultural viewpoint. Just a few months after this essay was published, Hardy began work on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, a novel which asks further questions of narrative position and education.

From early in the story, education is related to perspectives beyond the immediacies of Tess's valley: 'every contour of the surrounding hills was as personal to her as that of her relatives' faces; but for what lay beyond her judgment was dependent on the teaching of the village school' (p. 37). But it is through Tess's lover, Angel Clare, that Hardy explores the more radical questions of perspective highlighted in 1888. Angel is, like Giles, an observer who comes to occupy changing points of view. He has been educated along traditional lines, yet his deviation from expectations provides a critical space from which he reflects back on his upbringing and the assumptions which it has

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<sup>16</sup> Hardy, 'Profitable', pp. 83, 88. Hardy's quotation is from Part First, Book 1, ch. 2 of Carlyle's *The French Revolution* (1837). In her discussion of Anthony Trollope, Dinah Birch highlights the educative potential of nineteenth-century literature in this context. See Birch, *Our Victorian Education*, pp. 5–8.

instilled. This begins early in the story, when Angel and his two brothers undertake a walking tour through Wessex. Unlike Hardy's investigator in 'The Dorsetshire Labourer', the view of the landscape and the local people remains conditioned by their educated values. Real-life encounters represent interludes between chapters of a book, *A Counterblast to Agnosticism*, which they read as they walk. Angel threatens to turn his view away from the page, however. When he notices some girls dancing before him in the village, he insists that he join in. For Angel to deflect focus from a book to the world is to undermine his education and the expectation which it places upon him. Unlike his brothers, there is in Angel 'an uncribbed, uncabined, aspect in his eyes and attire, implying that he had hardly as yet found the entrance to his professional groove' (p. 16). The reference to the 'aspect' of Angel's eyes repositions external judgments of class, education and identity towards an exploration of those same categories from a more subtle, internal perspective. Later, we are told that 'many besides Angel have learnt that the magnitude of lives is not as to their external displacement, but as to their subjective experiences' (p. 154).

Angel's mind deviates from the stable position to which he has been educated at this early stage of the novel, as his aberrant vision creates a space from which the contingencies of conventional perspectives can be seen. This transgression is to be taken seriously, and Hardy borrowed the adjectives through which he describes Angel's gaze—'uncribbed, uncabined'—from a moment in *Macbeth*. In the scene, the protagonist receives news that Banquo's son remains alive, which threatens the security of his position:

MACBETH                    Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect,  
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,  
As broad and general as the casing air:  
But now I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confined, bound in  
To saucy doubts and fears.

(*Macbeth*, III. 4. 22-26)<sup>17</sup>

The return of 'doubts and fears' are severe for Macbeth, as his psychological doubt is compared to the restrictions of a closed, domestic space. Hardy

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<sup>17</sup> *The Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. by William George Clark, 9 vols. (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1863-1866), VII: *Macbeth* (1865).

reverses such epistemological questions by negating the adjectives—‘uncribbed, uncabined’—so that Angel’s hesitations focus instead on the loss of the binding certainties of the home.

Fancy Day found that to look outwards from the home was to find her view distorted by domestic expectations. Later in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, Angel returns to his family’s house to confront this same possibility. Home has become a place in which, to recall Hardy’s note on Schopenhauer, the ‘prejudices of the mind of the child’ are instilled:

Angel sat down, and the place felt like home; yet he did not so much as formerly feel himself one of the family gathered there. Every time that he returned hither he was conscious of this divergence, and since he had last shared in the Vicarage life it had grown even more distinctly foreign to his own than usual. Its transcendental aspirations—still unconsciously based on the geocentric view of things, a zenithal paradise, a nadiral hell—were as foreign to his own as if they had been the dreams of people on another planet. Latterly he had seen only Life, felt only the great passionate pulse of existence, unwarped, uncontroverted, untrammelled by those creeds which futilely attempt to check what wisdom would be content to regulate. (p. 158)

Angel’s growing insight depends on the dynamic tension of his homecoming, captured in that phrase: ‘every time he returned hither he was conscious of this divergence’. Hardy repeats the prefix ‘un’, although, while this earlier drew on the Shakespearean allusions to the restrictions of the home, here the adjectives ‘unwarped, uncontroverted, untrammelled’ place direct emphasis on the intellectual limitations within which Angel now knows he has been raised.

As Angel dissociates himself from his upbringing—‘the manner of the scholar had nearly disappeared; still more the manner of the drawing-room young man’ (p. 158)—the tentativeness with which the narrator first has us see Angel’s erring aspect is strengthened. The fixedness of his brothers’ vision was earlier associated with future accomplishment, but is now seen by Angel as drastically limited. He compares their view of the world to blindness:

After breakfast he walked with his two brothers, non-evangelical, well-educated, hall-marked young men, correct to their remotest fibre, such unimpeachable models as are turned out yearly by the lathe of a systematic tuition. They were both somewhat short-sighted, and when it was the custom to wear a single eyeglass and string they wore a single eyeglass and string; when it was the custom to wear a double glass they wore a double glass; when it was the custom to wear spectacles they wore spectacles straightway, all without reference to the particular variety of defect in their own vision. (p. 159)



Hardy's critique of education is rarely shown as clearly as this. The brothers' adherence to formalized patterns of thought undermines their sight, while Angel's vision broadens. Shortly after the above passage, he notices 'their growing mental limitations. Felix seemed to him all Church; Cuthbert all College' (p. 159). His gain has come through the true observation of the life and people which surround him. This late education of Angel is undertaken along quite different lines than that of his brothers:

As they walked along the hillside Angel's former feeling revived in him—that whatever their advantages by comparison with himself, neither saw or set forth life as it really was lived. Perhaps, as with many men, their opportunities of observation were not so good as their opportunities of expression. Neither had an adequate conception of the complicated forces at work outside the smooth and gentle current in which they and their associates floated. Neither saw the difference between local truth and universal truth; that what the inner world said in their clerical and academic hearing was quite a different thing from what the outer world was thinking. (pp. 159–60)

Angel is granted another type of learning here, predicated on a raised consciousness of the world. 'Opportunities of observation' become the measure for a real education; seeing 'life as it really was lived' is posed as the radical alternative to the blinding effect of systematic instruction.

Hardy explored similar concerns about education in the two short stories that he wrote for children. 'The Thieves Who Couldn't Help Sneezing' (1877) is a short fable of a boy, Hubert, whose horse is stolen one Christmas Eve while fulfilling an errand for his father. Finding refuge in a nearby mansion, Hubert performs a magical trick to his upper-class audience by blowing snuff in to a hidden corner of the house, thereby revealing the hiding place of the criminals. The story gained little recognition from readers of *Father Christmas*, a children's magazine closely associated with the *Illustrated London News* in which the story was published. Neither the plot nor the characterisation are particularly successful, but by situating the story 'Many years ago, when oak-trees now past their prime were about as large as elderly gentlemen's walking-sticks'<sup>18</sup>, Hardy demonstrates an interest in appropriating near-distant eras for imaginative effect: a technique that he was to continue in his more successful attempt at writing for children.

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'The Thieves Who Couldn't Help Sneezing' in *The Excluded and Collaborative Stories*, ed. by Pamela Dalziel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 59-65 (p. 59).

'Our Exploits at West Poley' (1892) was published eight years after its submission to *Youth's Companion* in 1883, the most popular American publication for families in this period. The story takes place when science was 'not so ardent as she is now', in the recent past when the Mendip Hills were 'little examined by tourists and men of science'.<sup>19</sup> For the two main teenage characters, 'the pursuit of the unknown' must be undertaken in other, more imaginative, ways (p. 172). In their adventures in to hidden caves they discover a stream serving as the primary water supply to their village. By diverting its course through shovelling, they accidentally divert all water to East Poley, causing the river in their own village to run dry.

Hardy was uncertain about his purpose when writing this story for children. He had promised the *Companion* his 'best efforts to please your numerous readers',<sup>20</sup> but in a letter enclosed with the manuscript he also reassured the editors that the story's enjoyable elements would not detract from its moral and educational purpose:

In constructing the story I have been careful to avoid making it a mere precept in narrative—a fatal defect, to my thinking, in tales for the young, or for the old. That it carries with it, nevertheless, a sufficiently apparent moral, will I think be admitted.<sup>21</sup>

Although Hardy came to oppose the principle of social morality constraining literature in his article 'Candour in English Fiction' (1890), 'Our Exploits at West Poley' claims its moral purpose by demonstrating the harmful consequences of rash actions. The wise figure known as 'the Man who had Failed' announces that it is 'next to impossible to do good to one set of folks without doing harm to another' (p. 187), an idea anticipated by the boys' earlier consideration of their actions as a 'problem in utilitarian philosophy' that may have 'done more good than harm' (p. 182). If the communities in which the boys live believe that people should not go 'out of their way to meddle with what they don't

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'Our Exploits at West Poley' in *The Excluded and Collaborative Stories*, ed. by Pamela Dalziel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 169-214 (p. 171). Further references [to this edition, etc.] are given after quotations in the text.

<sup>20</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to Perry Mason & Co., 5 April 1883', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), I (1978), 116.

<sup>21</sup> 'Thomas Hardy to Perry Mason & Co., 5 Nov. 1883', in *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978–1988), I (1978), 123.

understand' (p. 214), the narrator's admiration for the risky, uncalculated actions of the boys undermines any full endorsement of this maxim. In this sense, the story tends to complicate rather than simplify moral issues, as Pamela Dalziel argues.<sup>22</sup> The story retains its underlying fascination with actions undertaken outside the bounds of rational, and therefore moral, calculation: 'we were lost in wonder at what we had unwittingly done' (p. 180), announces the chief culprit of the disruption.

If the story fails to offer the reader a clear moral education, various references to science and engineering promise another sort of learning. The debris blocking the river from further intervention is described at the end of the story as 'three thousand, four hundred and fifty tons of rock and earth--- according to calculations made by an experienced engineer a short time afterwards' (p. 214). And earlier in the story the narrator adopts the register of the classroom teacher when contextualizing the flow of water within the cave:

Such instances of a slight obstruction diverting a sustained onset often occur in nature on a much larger scale. The Chesil Bank, for example, connecting the peninsula in Portland, in Dorsetshire, with the mainland, is a mere string of loos pebbles; yet it resists, by its shelving surface and easy curve, the mighty roll of the Channel seas, when urged upon the bank by the most furious southwest gales. (pp. 173-74)

The passage is unconvincing in its attempt to draw a general conclusion from a particular instance. Instead, the story stakes its real claim to education when drawing away from broader generalization back towards a more vivid present. As they enter the cave, one of the boys retrospectively draws on a number of abstract, imaginative allusions, speculating that 'had my thoughts been in my books, I might have supposed we had descended to the nether regions, and had reached the Stygian shore'. But he then adds that 'it was out of sight, out of mind, with my classical studies then', and, as the focus returns to the immediate materiality of the cave, he notices 'a delightful recess in the crystallized stone work, like the apse of a Gothic church' (p. 173). Surroundings are interpreted through the synthesis of what Barnes describes as 'book-knowledge' and

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<sup>22</sup> Pamela Dalziel, 'Introduction' in *The Excluded and Collaborative Stories* (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1992), pp. 155-166 (p. 162).

'world-knowledge':<sup>23</sup> geological specimens are embellished by the 'dim sparkle of stalactite' in the 'beautiful natural ornaments of the niche' (p. 172, p. 174). Where the text fails to provide any moral or scientific education, the reader learns what the young protagonist most prizes, an 'appreciation for the features of his native district' (p. 170).

The prioritization of direct observation became an important aspect of Hardy's outlook on education. Schopenhauer's 'On Education' foregrounds the plural, wide perspective championed in 'Our Exploits at West Poley' and learnt by Giles and Angel in the passages above. In contrast to an artificial education, a natural education originates in attentive experience living in the physical world. As with the pedagogy of Barnes, in which things are put before ideas, Schopenhauer suggests that natural education can resist the negative effects of teaching ideas before things. Schopenhauer recommends that ideas be introduced according to the steps in which they were originally conceived. The child's mind is naturally curious and particularly susceptible to the power of observations, so young students are first urged to acquaint themselves with the world as it is, from which ideas can then be derived or checked against.

Crucially, the curiosity of an infant can be recovered in later life, as true perception comes to correct an adult mind full of false notions. As Schopenhauer writes, 'a man sees a great many things when he looks at the world for himself, and he sees them from many sides'.<sup>24</sup> The idea of a mature, jaded adult returning to young vitality through recourse to the world must have intrigued Hardy, for the following was his final note from 'On Education':

Our abstract ideas, wh. are merely phrases fixed in the mind: real knowledge = result of our own observ. . . . A man's knowledge may be said to be mature when he has corrected his abst. Ideas by obs.<sup>25</sup>

The abbreviations and varied punctuation suggest that this section of the essay provoked an active response from Hardy. The theme runs throughout much of his writing, in which real-life observation is posited as a potentially corrective influence on the educated mind. Fitzpiers's paralysis of amazement in *The Woodlanders* is one of many examples in which a conventional education is shown to be nullifying, exclusive, or restrictive. Although the doctor's mind-set

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<sup>23</sup> William Barnes, 'Lecture on Education, Sherborne', *Dorset County Chronicle*, 17 February 1870.

<sup>24</sup> Schopenhauer, *Pessimism*, p. 94.

<sup>25</sup> Hardy, *Literary Notebooks*, II, 30.

seems unchanged, many other characters seek to recover elements beyond the reach of their formal education, whether that is an aspect of their identity, a way of life in a particular place, a view the world, or, indeed, susceptibility to feeling.

This emphasis on recovering from mistaken priorities goes against the bleaker view of education put forward in much existing critical work. Disappointment, alienation, and sorrow are more commonly understood as the distinguishing features of Hardy's presentation of the theme. However, despite the institutional ills to which Hardy's characters are subject and the sense of loss with which they associate their schooling, the difficult process and consequences of education are suggestive of progressive alternatives. As Hardy wrote in his poem 'In Tenebris, II': 'if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look | at the Worst'.<sup>26</sup> Bleak views of education allow for the discovery of other processes, which in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* are likened to recovering from blindness. Such processes are characterized by perceptions of variety, particularity, and beauty in the world.

That phrase, 'every time he returned hither he was conscious of this divergence', is again significant here. This reverses the direction of Angel's walking and reading tour undertaken with his brothers: a clear trajectory determined by knowledge from other minds. The correction occurs on the journey back; returning home with no map and no book: noticing how the page had limited the route. The narrator describes a subsequent return by Angel, which, this time, is to the Vale of Blackmore:

It was with a sense of luxury that he recognized his power of viewing life here from its inner side, in a way that had been quite foreign to him in his student-days; and, much as he loved his parents, he could not help being aware that to come here, as now, after an experience of home-life, affected him like throwing off splints and bandages. (p. 168)

This return figures as an awakening of sensation. Supple flesh protected by fabric is flung open to the elements, widening Angel's education beyond mere ideas towards sensual receptivity. To come to this secluded valley is to be stimulated again by a natural world which his education has made foreign.

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<sup>26</sup> Thomas Hardy, 'In Tenebris, II', in *The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy* (1901; London: Macmillan, 1930), p. 154 (l. 26–27); For Hardy's response to the charge of pessimism see also 'Preface to "Late Lyrics and Earlier"', in *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. by Harold Orel, 2nd rev. ed (1922; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990), pp. 50–58; Millgate, *Biography*, pp. 378–93.

As Phillip Mallett shows, the physiological and the affective are brought into intimate relation in Hardy's work.<sup>27</sup> In Grant Allen's 'Tropical Education' (1889), a text which Hardy read and took notes from, the type of exotic, sensuous encounter which Angel finds in Dorset migrates to other continents. 'We must forget all this formal modern life; we must break away from this cramped, cold, northern world', Allen writes, posing the tropics as a destination from which to learn 'underlying truths of simple naked nature', later described as 'a sort of moral and intellectual cold shower-bath, a nervous shock to the system'.<sup>28</sup> In the eighteenth century, Lawrence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey* (1768) depicts this type of sensual education in foreign travel through Italy and France.

But if Angel's return carries such traces of the curious tourist, what kind of recovery is available to an actual native? Hardy explores the educative potential of homecoming most fully in *The Return of the Native*, and, as Gillian Beer's reading of the novel makes clear, the joy of return is anticipated by the new modes of cognition which it will enable. The process is at least partially fulfilled by Clym Yeobright, who rediscovers a sensitivity lost to him in Paris. Clym's educational plans alter in accordance with these changes, as his aim of 'instilling high knowledge into empty minds' seems to leave little room for direct experience. Although the closing moments of the novel describe Clym existing in tragic obscurity, his teachings have become grounded in knowledge accessible to the people around him; he has 'left alone creeds and systems of philosophy, finding more than enough to occupy his tongue in the opinions and actions common to all good men' (p. 396).

Clym's return is accompanied by his increased appreciation of the natural environment. Hardy frequently posits opportunities for learning from the heathland, and the landscape is described with words normally associated with books, as we are told that 'few cared to study' the heath, a place on which 'records had perished long ago by the plough' (p. 173). The effect of human activity is preserved like a written manuscript: 'Those of the dyed barbarians who had chosen the cultivable tracts were, in comparison with those who had left their marks here, as writers on paper beside writers on parchment' (p. 373).

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<sup>27</sup> Mallett, p. 26.

<sup>28</sup> Grant Allen, 'Tropical Education', in *Science in Arcady* (1889; London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1892), pp. 21–39 (pp. 30, 32).

In Egdon, the young are taught to observe the particular details of this environment, and few appreciate its variation more than Clym:

If anyone knew the heath well it was Clym. He was 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. (p. 173)

The priority which Schopenhauer gives to early memory and unmediated perception is traceable in this passage. Clym has been granted an epistemic base in the 'scenes', 'substance', and 'odours' of the heathland, from which his later 'estimate of life' can be drawn. The 'odours' remind us of the affective potential of other senses than sight. As Beer writes of the novel, 'Making the reader a native is brought about by invoking sound, touch, smell, temperature, body-weight, occasionally taste'.<sup>29</sup> If wearing spectacles symbolized an attempt by the Clare brothers to preserve a narrow vision, Clym's increasing blindness might signify the rebirth of other senses:

By such means as repeated sensory description, and particularly by awakening the senses usually muffled in reading process, such as touch and to some degree hearing, the novel suggests a kinship of fugitive recall between narrative and characters. That is, the work enters a claim to be at home on the heath on behalf of writer, and reader.<sup>30</sup>

Nonetheless, Clym's sensory return is incomplete, and the narrative remains somewhat troubled by the detachment from the experience it describes. For Barrell, the ultimate inaccessibility of the reader to this type of sensory perception undermines the narrative's attempt entirely. I understand such occasional glimpses of receptivity as productive in themselves, enabling the literate reader to conceive of perceptions and experiences excluded from the more narrow formulation of education in which they are implicated.

'Intermittently we enter the sensory state of being a native', Beer writes, 'The paradox remains that we do so by means of the process of reading, itself an outcome of an education most of these native inhabitants do not share'.<sup>31</sup>

A similarly tactile evocation is described in *The Woodlanders*. The richer view is provided by Giles and Marty, whose understanding of the woodland surroundings has presumably lasted the length of the novel. Their sight of the

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<sup>29</sup> Beer, p. 49.

<sup>30</sup> Beer, p. 48.

<sup>31</sup> Beer, p. 49.

'wondrous world of sap and leaves' as a 'clear gaze' is only revealed to us in the closing moments of the narrative, however. The trees are by most people only given 'casual glimpses' (p. 330)—a tendency to which, as readers, we might have suspected ourselves guilty. Grace longs for the receptivity of the other woodlanders, particularly Giles, and asserts 'I am what I feel' (p. 220). But she is unable to recover from the limited view which the boarding school has instilled, and for this, among other reasons, she exclaims to her father: 'I wish you had never, never thought of educating me' (p. 221). The wish is unlikely to be shared by many readers, but at least the plot of return helps us to understand such an urge for renewed appreciation. Such imaginative suggestions enliven the critique of nineteenth-century education with which Hardy's narratives engage and shift emphasis away from the page towards experience in the world. As Tinker Taylor tells Jude, 'I always saw there was more to be learnt outside a book than in' (p. 120).



## Appendix: Selected Extract from National Trust Learning Offer



### Background

This workshop was developed for the 'Hardy Country' partnership: a group of organisations including the University of Exeter, the National Trust, Dorset County Museum, Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Thomas Hardy Society, and Bath Spa University who are working to widen the appeal of Hardy to people in Dorset and the rest of the UK. Jonathan Memel prepared the materials, and then delivered the sessions alongside Nicola Berry (Learning Officer, Dorset County Museum) to five schools across Dorset, Devon, and Somerset: Thomas Hardye School, Dorchester; Holyrood Academy, Chard; Axe Valley Community College, Axminster; Huish Episcopi Academy, Longport; and Gryphon School, Sherborne. This touring workshop was generously supported by the University of Exeter's Widening Participation Office and the Dorset County Museum. From January 2016, these materials will be incorporated into the National Trust's permanent learning offer for A-Level and undergraduate students at Max Gate, Dorchester. Hardy designed Max Gate himself during the mid-1880s—the same period in which he was carrying out the research below.<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

In this two-hour workshop we will investigate Hardy's composition of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. This is a novel which draws closely on actual historical events in nineteenth-century Dorset. Hardy scrutinized editions of a local newspaper, *The Dorset County Chronicle*, in order to find unusual or distinctive events on which he could base his story. By focusing on two of Hardy's finds—one man's

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<sup>1</sup> Millgate, *Biography*, pp. 231, 238.

selling of his wife and another's pledge to abstain from drinking—students will consider the process by which fact is transformed into fiction. Groups will consider the original newspaper articles, Hardy's notebook in which he interpreted the events, and the first two chapters from the final novel of 1887. Students will interpret their findings in a short presentation to the rest of the class. As a follow-up activity, students will draft ideas for their own rewriting of news stories taken from current newspapers.

### **Learning Objectives**

In this workshop students will:

- *Consider* how a local writer engages with ongoing themes and issues across distinct time periods.
- *Outline* Thomas Hardy's process of writing *The Mayor of Casterbridge*: including his use of primary sources in the *Dorset County Chronicle*, his editing and modification of these events in his notebooks, and, finally, their fictionalization in the novel.
- *Reflect* on the conventions of form, structure and language in distinct genres of writing: e.g. journalistic vs. fictional.

By considering writing of different genres across different time-periods, we intend this workshop to complement the AQA 'Love Through the Ages' syllabus. Teachers can follow these workshops with a creative writing task in subsequent sessions, where students can develop their ideas for rewriting modern newspaper stories.

### **Outcome**

Following one of the workshops, an A-Level English teacher commented that it was 'reassuring for the students to meet academics who were engaging and approachable'. She also noted that the session was 'helpful for developing students debating and analytical skills'.

### Source 1: 'Sobriety and its consequences'

- *Dorset County Chronicle*, 9 July 1829 (see Figure 11).
- Section 111d from Hardy's notebook, 'Facts, from Newspapers, Histories, Biographies, & other Chronicles— (mainly Local)' (see Figure 10).<sup>2</sup>
- Chapter 2 of *Mayor of Casterbridge* as it appeared in *The Graphic*, 9 January 1886 (see Figure 12).

"I, Michael Henchard, on this morning of the sixteenth of September, do take an oath before God here in this solemn place that I will avoid all strong liquors for the space of twenty-one years to come, being a year for every year that I have lived. And this I swear upon the book before me; and may I be strook dumb, blind, and helpless, if I break th

### Source 2: 'Sale of Wife, At Stamford'

- *Dorset County Chronicle*, 1 October 1829.
- Section 116c from Hardy's 'Facts' notebook.<sup>3</sup>
- Chapter 1 of *Mayor of Casterbridge* as it appeared in *The Graphic*, 2 January 1886.

"Now," said the woman, breaking the silence, so that her low dry voice sounded quite loud, "before you go further, Michael, listen to me. If you touch that money, I and this girl go with the man. Mind, it is a joke no longer."

"A joke? Of course it is not a joke!" shouted her husband, his resentment rising at her suggestion. "I take the money; the sailor takes you. That's plain enough. It has been done elsewhere—and why not here?"<sup>4</sup>

**'...reassuring for the students to meet academics who were engaging and approachable...helpful for developing students debating and analytical skills'.** (A-Level English Teacher)

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<sup>2</sup> Hardy, *Facts*, p. 336.

<sup>3</sup> See Hardy, *Facts*, pp. 172–73.

<sup>4</sup> Hardy, *Casterbridge*, p. 13.

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