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THOMAS HARDY IN CONTEXT

This collection covers the range of Thomas Hardy's works and their social and intellectual contexts, providing a comprehensive introduction to Hardy's life and times. Featuring short, lively contributions from forty-four international scholars, the volume explores the processes by which Hardy the man became Hardy the published writer; the changing critical responses to his work; his response to the social and political challenges of his time; his engagement with contemporary intellectual debate; and his legacy in the twentieth century and after. Emphasizing the subtle and ongoing interaction between Hardy's life, his creative achievement, and the unique historical moment, the collection also examines Hardy's relationship to such issues as class, education, folklore, archaeology and anthropology, evolution, marriage and masculinity, empire, and the arts. A valuable contextual reference for scholars of Victorian and modernist literature, the collection will also prove accessible for the general reader of Hardy.

Phillip Mallett is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of St Andrews. He has edited a number of collections of essays, including *Satire, Kipling Considered*, *Thomas Hardy: Texts and Contexts*, and *The Achievement of Thomas Hardy*, as well as critical editions of both *The Return of the Native* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. His book, *Rudyard Kipling: A Literary Life*, was published in 2003.

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University of St Andrews, Scotland



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The Waves (with Susan Sellers), and of *D. H. Lawrence: Selected Critical Writings* for Oxford World's Classics.

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PREFACE

In a Preface written for the Osgood, McIlvaine edition of *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Thomas Hardy recalled that it was in the pages of this novel, in 1874, that he had first ‘disinterred’ the ancient name of Wessex, in order to give ‘territorial definition’ to the region of southwest England that was to preoccupy him throughout his long writing career, and thanked the press and public that had willingly joined him in ‘the anachronism of imagining a Wessex population living under Queen Victoria; – a modern Wessex of railways, the penny post, mowing and reaping machines, union workhouses, lucifer matches, labourers who could read and write, and National school children’. In 1912, in the General Preface to the Macmillan Wessex Edition of his work, he went further, insisting that his novels provided ‘a fairly true record of a vanishing life’. When writing them, he had ‘instituted inquiries to correct tricks of memory’ and ‘striven against temptations to exaggerate’: ‘At the dates represented in the various narrations 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.’

But by 1912, Hardy’s Wessex was no longer ‘modern’. The railway had first arrived in Dorchester in 1847, though as one of the two main routes from London to the southwest passed to the north of the city, and the other to the south, the effect initially had been to make Dorchester a backwater. The union workhouses, set up under the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, were still in existence in 1912 – some 600 of them, with more than 200,000 inmates – but in 1929, the year after Hardy’s death, they were abolished by the Local Government Act. Friction matches had been invented by John Walker in 1826–7; his discovery was copied and patented by Samuel Jones, and the first ‘lucifer matches’ were sold under that name around 1829. Rowland Hill’s Penny Post, introduced in 1840,

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the year of Hardy's birth, provided for letters to be carried at uniform rates based on weight, with the cost paid by the sender rather than the recipient. It was an almost immediate success – in 1840 the average adult received about four letters a year; by the 1890s, when Hardy closed his career as a novelist, the average had risen to around sixty – and letters lost, hidden, misdelivered, stolen, read by the wrong person or at the wrong time feature throughout his fiction. The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church in England and Wales began work in 1811, and by the 1840s offered education to around one million children, including the young Thomas Hardy. It continues in existence, but by the time Hardy's sister Kate entered the Salisbury Diocesan Training College for Schoolmistresses, in the years following Forster's Elementary Education Act of 1870, there had evolved a dual system of Church and State, with the latter now accepting responsibility for the compulsory schooling of all children.

Thomas Hardy in Context is largely concerned with how 'things were like that' in Wessex, and how they changed over the span of Hardy's long life, and there are essays here on class, education, and the conditions of the rural labourer. But in the mid-1860s Hardy began a habit of reading and notetaking that was never to leave him. He considered himself one of the 'earliest acclaimers' of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, listed Mill's essay *On Liberty* among his 'Cures for despair', read and was unpersuaded by Newman's *Apologia pro vita sua*, read and gave at least partial assent to Auguste Comte's *A General View of Positivism*, and discussed the impact of science upon theology with Leslie Stephen. At his London clubs, the Savile and the Athenaeum, he met and talked with scientists, philosophers, artists, medical men, folklorists, and anthropologists, as well as with soldiers, politicians, and imperialists. The time has long gone when Hardy could be patronised as 'self-educated' (as if there were any other kind of education), and the range and depth of his engagement in the wider intellectual life of late Victorian, Edwardian, and Georgian England is also reflected on in these essays.

The volume is divided into five sections, with the first three closely linked. *Life and Works* explores issues of biography, and the processes by which Thomas Hardy the man became Thomas

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Hardy the published writer. *Critical Fortunes* examines changing responses to his work as both novelist and poet. The third section, *The Literary Scene*, considers the kinds of expectations, about genre, and about the nature of both prose fiction and poetry, that Hardy encountered, and that continue to shape our understanding of his work. The larger part of the volume then addresses *The Historical and Cultural Context*: If this is a portmanteau designation, Hardy's development as a writer and a public figure itself suggests the interpenetration of many nominally discrete 'contexts'. The fifth and final section, *Legacies*, looks at what D. H. Lawrence, Philip Larkin, and the twentieth-century film industry have made of Hardy, and how in turn he may be said to have helped make them.

The suggestions for Further Reading consist mainly of book-length studies, selected both for their own merits and in order to represent the widest possible range of views and approaches. For the most part, chapters and periodical articles have been included where they themselves serve as take-off points for further study.

The photographs of the illustrations to Hardy's work, which accompany the essay on 'Illustration' by Pamela Dalziel, have been prepared by Bayne Stanley, to whom, as to the patient and generous-spirited contributors to this volume, I offer my thanks. I owe lasting debts of gratitude and friendship to Pamela Dalziel, Angelique Richardson, Mary Rimmer, Jane Thomas, and Keith Wilson. The deepest and warmest thanks of all go to Mollie Craven-Mallett.

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A NOTE ON THE EDITIONS

Except where otherwise indicated, references in this volume to Hardy's novels and short stories are to the twenty-four-volume Macmillan Wessex Edition of 1912–31. His poems are cited either from *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*, edited by James Gibson for Macmillan (London: 1976), or from *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy*, edited by Samuel Hynes, 5 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982–95). References to *The Dynasts* are to volumes 4 and 5 of Hynes's edition.

Gibson took as his copy text Hardy's *Collected Poems* of 1928 and 1930, the former overseen by Hardy himself, the latter differing from it in the correction of some obvious errors, and the inclusion of a few revisions found in Hardy's *Chosen Poems*, prepared just before his death but not published until 1929.¹ Hynes used as his copy text the first editions of Hardy's first seven volumes of verse and the holograph of the posthumously published *Winter Words*, incorporating corrections made to reprints of the separate editions, and where there exists more than one revision taking that which appears to be the latest (and where the evidence as to date is uncertain, relying on his own critical judgement).² Hynes excludes revisions found in the printed edition of *Winter Words* and from the third edition of *Collected Poems*, both published after Hardy's death and so not overseen by him, and those in *Chosen Poems*, where the printer's copy suggests that Florence Hardy and an unknown editor made decisions contrary to Hardy's own. The textual differences between the two editions are real and interesting, but they are also relatively small: Hardy was a lifelong reviser of his texts, but the changes made to the poems rarely extend beyond the rewriting of a line or a word. Both editions are regularly cited, and the choice of which to use has been left to individual authors.

The textual differences between various editions of the fiction, however, are another matter. In the General Preface to the Wessex

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Edition, Hardy described this as the ‘definite edition’. Most readers, following Richard Little Purdy’s foundational *Thomas Hardy: A Bibliographical Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954), have taken this to mean definitive, and definitive has been taken to mean authoritative – authoritative enough to provide the copy text for most of the editions currently available. But as Andrew Nash explains in his essay in this volume, all of Hardy’s novels had a complicated publishing history, allowing for significant changes to be made at a number of stages and over a number of years. These stages typically include a serial version (the exceptions are *Desperate Remedies* and *Under the Greenwood Tree*), often substantially revised from the manuscript to comply with the demands of editors, or Hardy’s attempts to anticipate what those demands might be; a first volume edition, in which the text was revised back towards its pre-serial form, or more precisely – since Hardy’s manuscripts show frequent evidence of false starts, or at least of a wish to keep open several possible lines of development – back towards some parts of the pre-serial form; and then the two collected editions, the ‘Wessex Novels’ edition from Osgood, McIlvaine in 1895–6, and the ‘Wessex Edition’ from Macmillan in 1912, each marked by extensive revisions, some local and some substantial.

This is complex enough, even if one sets aside the numerous alterations made at the manuscript stage, but in broad terms, one can distinguish three orders of change in the complicated textual history of the novels, overlapping but analytically distinct. There are, first, those made by Hardy’s own decision, most of them for the 1895–6 and 1912 editions, in an effort to impose, retrospectively, a unified idea of ‘Wessex’, which had in fact developed in piecemeal fashion, or in response to criticism of his prose style, occasional sol-ecisms, or handling of dialect. Second, there are those that reflect the need to avoid offending the more prudish readers of the serial versions, represented by their guardians, the magazine editors (Leslie Stephen’s anxiety over the treatment of Fanny’s maternity in *Far from the Madding Crowd* provides a familiar example). This was a pressure Hardy came increasingly to resent, and one that contributed to his decision to abandon novel writing after the hostile reception given in some quarters to *Jude the Obscure*: the chapter of the *Life* that deals with *Jude* is titled ‘Another Novel Finished, Mutilated, and Restored’. Third, and most fascinating, are those

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changes that reflect a refuelling of Hardy's creative energies as he worked on the texts, and felt compelled to reimagine and rewrite characters and situations.

The Return of the Native, first published in 1878, provides examples of all three kinds of change. When Hardy began work on the novel, he had no reason to think that for the next twenty years he would restrict his focus to the southwestern counties of England. But 'Wessex' soon became an expected as well as a marketable feature of his fiction, and in the process of revising the *Return* for the Osgood, McIlvaine edition of 1895, he incorporated a number of place names that had over the years become familiar to his readers – Anglebury (Wareham), Casterbridge (Dorchester), and Weatherbury (Puddletown) – which played no part in the novel in 1878. These serve to locate Egdon Heath, the arena of the novel's action, more precisely in relation to other parts of Wessex; they also qualify the sense of its size, age, and remoteness, and not all readers have welcomed the change.

Other and larger changes affected plot and characterisation, most notably in the relation between Wildeva and Eustacia towards the close of the novel. Wildeva's conduct during their final interview, in Book Fifth, Chapter V, is more scrupulous in 1878 than in the 1895–6 edition, and Eustacia is correspondingly more alive to his continued sexual interest in her in the later text. In 1878 she tells him that she needs time to consider:

'I will think of this,' she said hurriedly. 'Whether I can honestly make use of you as a friend – that is what I must ask myself.'

In 1895 this becomes:

'I will think of this,' she said hurriedly. 'Whether I can honestly make use of you as a friend, or must close with you as a lover – that is what I must ask myself.'

In effect, in the 1878 edition Eustacia is beaten down by the thought of leaving Egdon and England alone, and without money, for an uncertain future; in 1895, what defeats her is the recognition that if she leaves she will do so as Wildeva's mistress.

Whether the later version presents what Hardy had always intended but in 1878 had not dared offer to the public, or whether it reflects a change in his view of Eustacia, or of the dynamics of the

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novel, must remain an open question. The mere fact of such a question, however, makes it difficult to consider any text as 'definite', or fixed. The Wessex Edition, rather than being definitive, can be seen as the last-produced layer in a record or palimpsest of Hardy's creative moods and decisions at different phases of his working life: in the 1870s and 1880s as a relative newcomer to novel writing, still, as he acknowledged, unsure of his way and constrained by the need to write nothing that might alarm the publishers and reviewers; later, as an experienced hand at the form, grown impatient with the demands of his audience, and emboldened by the sexual radicalism of the 1890s; and finally as the Grand Old Man of Letters, recipient of the Order of Merit and the author of three volumes of poetry as well as a verse-epic, *The Dynasts*, who had long since turned his back on prose fiction.

This might suggest an argument for citing the first volume edition: free from the constraints of serial publication, but free too from later accretions. This is the principle behind the recent Penguin editions of the novels (several of them edited by contributors to this volume), and clearly it can be argued that the Hardy who revised *The Return of the Native* in 1912 was not the same man who wrote it in 1878, and that we should turn to the earlier version for the 'real' novel, just as we might go by choice to the 1805 rather than the 1850 text of Wordsworth's *The Prelude*. There are, however, countervailing arguments, not least that Hardy did not always return to his original conception so soon as the first volume edition. In the serial version of the *Mayor*, for example, Henchard and Lucetta marry on the mistaken assumption that Henchard is a widower; in the first book version, they have a nonsexual relationship; and it was not until the Osgood, McIlvaine edition of 1895 that they have the irregular sexual liaison Hardy seems initially to have intended.

Fortunately, unlike the architectural restorations that Hardy had a hand in but later came to regret, revisions to the text of a novel do not entail the destruction of its previous forms, and those who wish to consult earlier or later versions of Hardy's novels are able to do so. The forthcoming Cambridge edition of the novels will go a long way to resolve these problems, but in the meantime the decision has been taken here to use the Wessex Edition: not on the assumption that it is 'definitive', but because it is the text usually cited in contemporary critical discussion, and the form in which the novels

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and stories have most often been encountered, read, adapted, loved, and hated for the past century. For ease of reference, citations are to the chapter in which a quoted passage occurs, or, following the layout of the Wessex Edition, to the chapter and section (*Desperate Remedies*), to the Book and chapter (*The Return of the Native*), or Part and chapter (*Under the Greenwood Tree*, *Jude the Obscure*, *The Well-Beloved*). Page references to the Wessex Edition are used for quotations from the short stories.

David Amigoni's essay in this volume discusses the two volumes that appeared over the name of Florence Emily Hardy in 1928 and 1930 as *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840–1891* and *The Later Years of Thomas Hardy, 1892–1928* and that were merged into a one-volume edition in 1962. The subterfuge of Florence's authorship was successfully maintained until 1940, three years after her death (and it would be an unkind reader who grudged her this small satisfaction), but in fact the work was very largely Hardy's own. Since then Michael Millgate has sought to get behind the various post mortem omissions and additions made by Florence (generally on the advice of Sir James Barrie), and to restore the text as closely as possible to what seem to have been Hardy's intentions. Millgate's edition was published under the title *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, with Hardy identified as the author (London: Macmillan, 1984). While some scholars have expressed reservations about this edition, it is the form in which the *Life* is now generally read, and unless otherwise indicated it is the one cited here, abbreviated as *LW*.

NOTES

- 1 Gibson's editorial policy is set out in the 'Introduction' to his *The Variorum Edition of the Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy* (Macmillan: London, 1979), pp. xix–xxxii.
- 2 See Hynes's 'Note on the Present Edition', pp. xxiv–xxviii in Volume I of *CPW*.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- AL* *A Laodicean*
CH R. G. Cox, ed. *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*
 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970)
CL *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Richard Little
 Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon
 Press, 1978–88)
CP *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*, ed. James Gibson
 (London: Macmillan, 1976)
CPW *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Samuel
 Hynes. 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982–95)
D *The Dynasts*
DR *Desperate Remedies*
FFMC *Far from the Madding Crowd*
HE *The Hand of Ethelberta*
HS *Human Shows*
IR *Thomas Hardy: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. James
 Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1999)
Jude *Jude the Obscure*
LLE *Late Lyrics and Earlier*
LLI *Life's Little Ironies*
LN *The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Lennart A.
 Björk, 2 vols (London: Macmillan, 1985)
LW *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, by Thomas Hardy, ed.
 Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984)
MC *The Mayor of Casterbridge*
MV *Moments of Vision*
PBE *A Pair of Blue Eyes*
PM Pamela Dalziel and Michael Millgate, eds. *Thomas
 Hardy's 'Poetical Matter' Notebook* (Oxford: Oxford
 University Press, 2009)
PN Richard H. Taylor, ed. *The Personal Notebooks of Thomas
 Hardy* (London: Macmillan, 1979)

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List of Abbreviations

- PPP* *Poems of the Past and the Present*
PWB *The Pursuit of the Well-Beloved*
RN *The Return of the Native*
SC *Satires of Circumstance*
Tess *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*
THPV *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice: The Essays, Speeches, and Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001)
THPW *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, ed. Harold Orel (London: Macmillan, 1967)
TL *Time's Laughingstocks*
TM *The Trumpet-Major*
TT *Two on a Tower*
UGT *Under the Greenwood Tree*
W *The Woodlanders*
WB *The Well-Beloved*
WP *Wessex Poems*
WT *Wessex Tales*
WW *Winter Words*

CHRONOLOGY

- 1840

2 June

Thomas Hardy is born at Higher Bockhampton, near Dorchester, the first of four children of Thomas Hardy, mason, and his wife Jemima, née Hand. Three other children follow: Mary (1841–1915), Henry (1851–1928), and Katharine, usually called Kate (1856–1940). None of the three marry.

Rowland Hill's *Penny Post* (January) revolutionises communication within Britain. Queen Victoria marries Prince Albert.
- 1842

The Chartists' 'People's Petition' is submitted to and rejected by Parliament; widespread strikes and numerous arrests follow.

The *Illustrated London News* begins publication. Charles Mudie opens his circulating library; it expands rapidly and dominates the market for fiction until the late 1880s.
- 1846

May

The repeal of the Corn Laws helps reduce the cost of bread on the mainland. Potato blight in Ireland exacerbates an ongoing famine; between 1845 and 1849 around 800,000 die of starvation, and 1.5 million emigrate.
- 1847

The railway reaches Dorchester; however, the two main routes from London to the southwest run to the north and south of the city, leaving it a backwater.

[Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*; Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*; Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*]

Chronology

1848

Hardy (TH) enters the newly established National (Church of England) School in Lower Bockhampton; one of the founders of the school, and lady of the manor, Mrs Julia Augusta Martin, takes a special interest in him.

Queen's College, London, offers higher education to women.

Following an outbreak of cholera, the first Public Health Act sets up a Central Board of Health, charged with improving sanitation.

Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and John Everett Millais form the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. W. H. Smith opens the first railway station bookstall at Euston.

Nationalist and democratic uprisings take place in a number of European countries, including France, Italy, Denmark, the German states, and much of the Habsburg empire, in the short term with little success.

[Dickens, *Dombey & Son*; Mrs Gaskell, *Mary Barton*]

1849

TH passes through London, while travelling with his mother to stay with her sister at Hatfield in Hertfordshire.

1850

September

TH enters the British School in Dorchester, run on Nonconformist lines by Isaac Last. He excels in arithmetic and geography; begins to learn Latin.

The restoration of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in England and Wales prompts anti-Catholic demonstrations in Dorchester as elsewhere.

[Dickens, *David Copperfield*; Tennyson, *In Memoriam*]

1851

May

The Great Exhibition opens in Hyde Park (1 May–15 October), attracting six million visitors.

William Thomson (later Lord Kelvin) publishes the first and second laws of thermodynamics.