

Two Poems of Time and Memory_____

John Rignall

In his novels Thomas Hardy is not much concerned with individual memory, unlike, for instance, Charles Dickens and George Eliot from the earlier generation of English novelists. In the second chapter of Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849–50) David draws on his memory to conjure up the world of his early childhood:

Looking back [. . .] into the blank of my infancy, the first objects that I can remember as standing out by themselves from the confusion of things, are my mother and Peggotty. What else do I remember? Let me see.

There comes out of the cloud, our house— not new to me, but quite familiar in its earliest remembrance. . . . (25)

In *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) Eliot not only draws on the memory of her own childhood in bringing to life that of Maggie and Tom Tulliver, but in a passage that struck a chord in that great novelist of memory Marcel Proust, she has her narrator reflect upon the way in which our earliest memories are of fundamental importance in coloring our response to the world in the present:

Our delight in the sunshine on the deep bladed grass today, might be no more than the faint perception of wearied souls, if it were not for the sunshine and the grass in the far-off years, which still live in us and transform our perception into love. (42)

1900 nearly 100 percent wore whiskers in some form.” Christopher Oldstone-Moore notes that the beard movement began in earnest during the 1850s when the editors of *Tait’s Edinburgh Magazine* declared themselves “champions of the long beard” (Oldstone-Moore 7). He observes that when discussing manliness and facial hair one can perceive the emergence of “a new perspective on mid-Victorian perceptions of gender,” and a “greater understanding of how and why concepts of masculinity reformulated in this period” (7). An “ideology of beards” began to be articulated, with a number of publications (see, for instance, “All about Hair,” “The Bar,” “The Beard and Moustache,” and “Beards”) claiming beards to be an integral element of masculinity for two particular reasons: “first by contributing to men’s health and vitality, and second by serving as the outward mark of inward qualities—particularly independence, hardiness, and decisiveness—that were the foundations of masculine authority” (8). Beards signified “the natural superiority of men over women, and more vigorous men over their effete counterparts” (8). Oldstone-Moore presents a common argument for the adoption of the beard in the mid-nineteenth century: it was seen as “a filter against bad air and disease . . . no doubt as a result of the Victorian fixation on the deleterious effects of impure air” (21). Theology also played a part, with Oldstone-Moore describing one author (see Magister) as finding it “fitting that God had provided protection to the voices of men, who, in contrast to women, were called to be teachers and preachers” (22). Indeed in *Far from the Madding Crowd* Cainy Ball describes how “the new style of pa’sons wear moustarchers and long beards . . . and look like Moses and Aaron complete, and make we fokes in the congregation feel all over like the children of Israel” (*FFMC* 220). Richard Evans (“The Victorians”) writes that “virtually all the great Victorians” expressed their manliness physically in the form of beards and moustaches, citing Tennyson, Leslie Stephen, John Ruskin, and the Prime Minister Lord Salisbury as exemplars of the sporting of facial hair. He also notes that “Ideals of masculinity, such as big-game hunters, or explorers, or fashionable pioneers of Alpine mountaineering wore beards of necessity, but their image was undoubtedly influential in spreading the fashion” (Evans,

The Well-Beloved as Anima: A Sketch of a Psychological Archetype

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Ever since the 1890s, people have been debating whether Thomas Hardy's *The Well-Beloved: A Sketch of a Temperament* was his last novel. It came out as a single volume in 1897, which would chronologically make it his final novel, following *Jude the Obscure*. But it first appeared before *Jude* in serialized form in 1892, in the *Illustrated London News*, as *Pursuit of the Well-Beloved*. Textual differences between the two versions show a significant amount of revision occurred after *Jude*, and so it holds a curious, paradoxical position in Hardy's oeuvre as his last novel that was also not truly his last novel.

Today readers can purchase both versions in one volume, offering the opportunity to apprise them together or individually. Critical edition editor Patricia Ingham argues for them to be read as "two linked novels making up a unique metatext which reflects on all Hardy's preceding novels" (xix). This is certainly an endeavor worthy of one's time because she is correct in her claims. But it is also important to acknowledge that the 1897 version comprises Hardy's final word on the story at hand, being the revised version he authorized for publication as a book. Most readers in 1897 and for a hundred years after would have read the latter, forgoing the considerable effort necessary in tracking down the 1892 serial in crumbling back issues of *Illustrated London News*. By comparison with an artistic trend in our time, we might think about the way a theatrical release of a film and a later director's cut of the same film can vary significantly. A good example of this is Ridley Scott's film *Blade Runner*. The original 1982 version shown in cinemas included narration by star Harrison Ford, while the 1992 *Director's Cut* eliminated it, profoundly altered one's sense of Ford's character,

6. The Laocoön is a sculpture attributed to Hagesander, Polydorus and Athenodorus of Rhodes in the 1st century BC and is now part of the Vatican collection. It depicts Laocoön and his two brothers being squeezed to death by serpents for having offended Apollo by seeking to prevent the entry of the Wooden Horse into Troy. After the publication of philosopher and art critic Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Laocoön, Or the Limits of Poetry and Painting* (1836) in which he discusses Johann Winkelmann's theories on the "noble simplicity" and "tranquil grandeur" of Grecian statuary such as exhibited in this piece, the Laocoön held a central place in nineteenth-century aesthetic debates.

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book, some sense of renewal and some sort of a happy ending (xxii). As a proto-modernist writer, Hardy moves the marriage of Clym and Eustacia to the middle of the book, “where passion and grief can be subject to analysis,” as can Eustacia’s foiled romantic ideals (xxiii) and then Clym’s as well (xxiii–xxiv). Even the novel’s happy ending has a “satiric edge” that “undercuts both tragedy and romance.” Moreover, “[r]are is the novel that draws out such an extended portrait of grief” as this one does in depicting the grieving Clym (xxiv). Eventually, and ironically, he becomes “a failed yet devoted husband” to the dead Eustacia, but eventually, again, he seeks and achieves “disillusioned endurance” (xxv). The book’s own narrator, however, seems ambivalent regarding the major characters. Rather than expressing himself unambiguously, he supplies multiple, often competing, perspectives, as is often true in modern art (xxv–xxvii).

Lauren Walsh’s Introduction to the Barnes and Noble Classics Edition (2005)

Lauren Walsh notes that illustrations accompanying the first serialized installments of the novel failed to emphasize Eustacia (xiii), perhaps because she was so difficult to draw: “she is both charming and rebellious, as well as cruel and also pitiable, sophisticated and naïve, sensuous and aloof” (xiv). (Interestingly, Hardy himself drew the illustration of the land [xiv].) Concerning the design of the book itself, Hardy intended a five-part, tightly unified novel—like a classical play—with the peasants resembling a classical chorus and the whole plan underscored by classical allusions (xiv–xv). His book, however, emphasizes “the force of Nature” rather than classical gods (xv)

Hardy altered his view of Eustacia as he wrote: she seemed more sinister and witch-like at first—traits that diminished as the book developed but that never quite disappeared (xv–xvi), partly because she is depicted as a Queen of Night, although she is also presented as tragically trapped on the heath (xvi). Her “self-serving and changeable nature” has led “many critics to view Eustacia as petulant and adolescent,” and she does, in fact, sometimes seem whiny and self-absorbed. Nevertheless, “Hardy respects Eustacia,”

“advanced” toward the world of spirit (16). Discussing religion, Watts thinks “Hardy’s attitudes include the agnostic, the atheistic, the antitheistic, the nostalgic, and what he termed ‘the churchy’” (17), this term latter partly in the sense of being preoccupied with religious questions and able to relate many problems to passages in the Bible (20). Sue, like Hardy, can be both nostalgic and an admirer of Algernon Swinburne’s modern verse (21), while the novel as a whole can be read as a kind of *Pilgrim’s Progress* (a book Hardy knew well) “rewritten by a sceptic,” a narrative toward “the nirvana of death” in a universe that can seem “uncaring or hostile” and abandoned by God (22). Watts next discusses tensions in the book between classical and “Hebraic” influences (22–24) and then turns to the issue of “The New Woman” (24–27), with Hardy apparently endorsing some aspects of women’s liberation while also endorsing “some traditional stereotypes” and with *Jude* as generally “more vivid, intense, and moving” than other novels of his day written about the “New Woman” topic (27).

But the book, Watts concludes, is—despite its strengths—“certainly flawed,” partly by the way coincidences, parallels, and symmetries dictate maximum pain, and partly by the way the satire is sometimes too blatant, so that the narrative seems rigged. The pessimism sometimes seems self-pitying and the characterization, especially in the second half, sometimes seems implausible or thin (28). Hardy weakened some of the book’s arguments about marriage and other social conventions by pushing them too hard and too obviously, so that instead of creating a tragedy he sometimes created melodrama. Nonetheless, *Jude* “remains great” and strongly influenced later writers, especially D. H. Lawrence (29), whose works often seem in dialog with Hardy’s (30).

Norman Vance’s Introduction to the Wordsworth Edition (2000)

Norman Vance notes that early condemnation of the book as a work of “smut” helped boost its sales (v). He observes that each of Hardy’s books had been more popular than its predecessor; that *Jude* first appeared in an American magazine; that Hardy marked in colored

The 2015 Film of Thomas Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*: A Survey of Reviews

Jordan Bailey

When word got out that Danish director Thomas Vinterberg was planning, in the early 2010s, to release a new film version of Thomas Hardy's classic novel *Far from the Madding Crowd*, many people were skeptical. After all, that novel had been filmed as a "talkie" twice before—once in 1967 by famed director John Schlesinger and once again, in 1998, under director Nicholas Renton, as a television miniseries. Skeptics thought it unlikely that Vinterberg's effort could ever equal—let alone excel—the 1967 Schlesinger film. That film (a three-hour "epic" with a musical overture and an intermission) had featured several of the biggest stars of its era. Julie Christie had played Bathsheba Everdene; Alan Bates had played Gabriel Oak; Peter Finch had played William Boldwood; and Terence Stamp had played Francis "Frank" Troy. In Hardy's first truly successful novel, all three of these very different men seek to marry Bathsheba. She eventually does choose the young, handsome, dashing Troy, but their marriage soon turns into a romantic and financial disaster. When Troy goes missing, presumably through suicide, the aging Boldwood steps up his own frustrated courtship. But when Troy suddenly reappears and tries to reclaim his wife and her fortune, Boldwood shoots and kills him and is then himself consigned to prison. Finally, at the end of the film, Bathsheba decides to marry Gabriel Oak, the patient, reliable, mature young man she should probably have chosen to begin with.

Many critics—but hardly all—considered the 1967 movie a classic film. Thomas Vinterberg, it seemed, would be taking an enormous risk by releasing his own version. But Vinterberg persisted, and the gamble paid off. His film, which appeared in 2015, was very positively reviewed, and in fact some commentators (but

from Routledge. She is also the author of numerous essays about Hardy and his times, including “‘Nothing but a cast of the die of destiny’: Liminal Womanhood in the Novels of Thomas Hardy”; “Darkest Wessex: Hardy, the Gothic Short Story, and Masculinity”; “Thomas Hardy and His Men”; “Thomas Hardy’s Unmen and Othered Men”; “‘As a man is rarely adored by another’: Misogyny and the Homosocial in *A Pair of Blue Eyes*”; “‘The Fangless Lion’: Michael Henchard—Portrait of an Aggressive Melancholic”; “‘An Unpedestalled Dionysus’: The Alpha-male as Androgyne in *Desperate Remedies* and *A Laodicean*”; “The Red Ghost and the No-Moon Man: Masculinity as Other in *The Return of the Native*”; “‘Only the rames of a man’: Hardy’s Unmen and Others”; “‘Fallen Wessex’: How Thomas Hardy Subverts Milton’s *Paradise Lost* in Three Novels”; and “‘What the Waves Were Always Saying’: Little Paul Dombey and Little Father Time, and Why Their Deaths Were Necessary.” Her work has appeared in such periodicals as the *Hardy Review*, the *Hardy Society Journal*, and *Victorian Popular Fictions*.

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