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远离尘嚣

FAR FROM THE
MADDING CROWD
THOMAS HARDY

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FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Thomas Hardy

With an Introduction by

Simon Gatrell

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托马斯·哈代(1840—1928),英国最杰出的乡土小说家、诗人。1840年6月生于英国西南部的多西特郡,父亲是建筑业小业主,爱好音乐的母亲培养了哈代对文学的兴趣。青年时期的哈代学习建筑,搞过房屋设计和教堂修缮,后因健康恶化回到家乡。1874年结婚,婚后成为专业作家。

19世纪60年代,哈代创作了大量诗歌,其中有些诗如《中间音调》可列入最佳和最有特色的诗作。但在以后的20多年里,他主要从事长篇和短篇小说的创作。1871年,哈代发表了第一部小说《计出无奈》,毁誉参半,接着是《一双湛蓝的眼睛》(1872—1873)和《远离尘嚣》(1874)。哈代最动人的作品大多是以威塞克斯(他的家乡多西特郡一带)为背景的乡土小说。1878—1895年是其取得辉煌成就的阶段,在此期间他先后发表了《还乡》、《卡斯特桥市长》、《德伯家的苔丝》和《无名的裘德》等佳作。其中《德伯家的苔丝》和《无名的裘德》使他的小说达到了艺术的顶峰。

由于《无名的裘德》被当时社会上一些卫道士指责为“有伤风化”,哈代愤而不再写小说,转而以全部精力写诗。1898年他的《威塞克斯诗集》发表;1901年又出版了《今昔诗篇》,1903—1908年哈代关于拿破仑侵略战争的历史诗剧《列王》问世。

1928年1月,哈代去世,死后葬于伦敦威斯敏斯特教堂的诗人之角。

《远离尘嚣》是哈代最优秀的作品之一。故事发生在19世纪中叶英格兰西南部的威塞克农村地区,那儿的农业生产是由大小不等的农场主雇用农业工人经营的。少女芭西芭·艾维汀父母双亡,寄住在姑母家,后来继承舅父的遗产担任了威热坝上农场的农场主。她年轻、美丽、有才干,但虚荣心强,希望得到男人们的倾慕。年轻人奥克曾是一个小小牧场的农场主,一次突然事故使他破了产,于是他受雇做了芭西芭农场的牧人。奥克爱上了芭西芭,但不善表达自己的感情,爱慕虚荣的芭西芭拒绝了他。此时,另一位与芭西芭相邻的农场主威廉·博尔德伍德也疯狂追求芭西芭。但姑娘却醉心于唐璜式的风流军士特罗伊。他学过几种语言,风流潇洒,曾欺骗过纯洁少女范妮·罗宾,后来又抛弃了她,范妮怀孕,惨死在救济院。芭西芭很快与他结了婚,然而婚后生活并不快乐。不久特罗伊厌倦了农庄生活,出走到海边游泳,遇险被搭救后,一年多没有音信,博尔德伍德三番五次向她求婚,芭西芭被迫答应,正当博尔德伍德举行晚会之时,特罗伊突然出现了。博尔德伍德感到希望破灭,开枪杀死了特罗伊,自己也神经错乱,被终生监禁。最后芭西芭与勤劳善良的牧人奥克结了婚。他们的婚礼完全没有声张,可是,当天晚上,农场的工人们却自动组织了乐队来到他们的门前祝贺。

THE WORLD'S CLASSICS

FAR FROM THE
MADDING CROWD

THOMAS HARDY was born in Higher Bockhampton, Dorset, on 2 June 1840; his father was a builder in a small way of business, and he was educated locally and in Dorchester before being articled to an architect. After sixteen years in that profession and the publication of his earliest novel *Desperate Remedies* (1871), he determined to make his career in literature; not, however, before his work as an architect had led to his meeting, at St Juliot in Cornwall, Emma Gifford, who became his first wife in 1874.

In the 1860s Hardy had written a substantial amount of unpublished verse, but during the next twenty years almost all his creative effort went into novels and short stories. *Jude the Obscure*, the last written of his novels, came out in 1895, closing a sequence of fiction that includes *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *Two on a Tower* (1882), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891).

Hardy maintained in later life that only in poetry could he truly express his ideas; and the more than nine hundred poems in his collected verse (almost all published after 1898) possess great individuality and power.

In 1910 Hardy was awarded the Order of Merit; in 1912 Emma died and two years later he married Florence Dugdale. Thomas Hardy died in January 1928; the work he left behind—the novels, the poetry, and the epic drama *The Dynasts*—forms one of the supreme achievements in English imaginative literature.

* SUZANNE B. FALCK-YI Studied the texts of *Far from the Madding Crowd* for her Ph.D. at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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The following libraries and estates have granted permission for use of their materials here: the Trustees of the Thomas Hardy Estate; the Trustees of the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection in the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, Dorset; the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; the Curators of the Signet Library, Edinburgh; the British Library Board and Macmillan Press, Ltd; the Trustees of the National Library of Scotland.

SUZANNE B. FALCK-YI

GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE first concern in The World's Classics editions of Hardy's works has been with the texts. Individual editors have compared every version of the novel or stories that Hardy might have revised, and have noted variant readings in words, punctuation, and styling in each of these substantive texts; they have thus been able to exclude much that their experience suggests that Hardy did not intend. In some cases, this is the first time that the novel has appeared in a critical edition purged of errors and oversights; where possible Hardy's manuscript punctuation is used, rather than what his compositors thought he should have written.

Some account of the editor's discoveries will be found in the Note on the Text in each volume, while the most interesting revisions their work has revealed are included as an element of the Explanatory Notes. In some cases a Clarendon Press edition of the novel provides a wealth of further material for the reader interested in the way Hardy's writing developed from manuscript to final collected edition.

SIMON GATRELI

HARDY'S WESSEX

OF THE NOVELS AND POEMS



The Channel

INTRODUCTION

Far from the Madding Crowd is a relatively early novel in Hardy's career as a writer, the fourth he completed in his first four years as a published novelist. It is also the first in which the narrative structure is developed around one character—a pattern of organization subsequently repeated in all of the most frequently read of his novels. The earliest indication that survives of Hardy's ideas about the story comes in correspondence with Leslie Stephen, the editor of *Cornhill*, who had asked him about a possible serial for his magazine. Hardy replied that he was intending to write “a pastoral tale with the title of *Far from the Madding Crowd*—and that the chief characters would probably be a young woman-farmer, a shepherd, and a sergeant of cavalry”.¹ This outline shows that Bathsheba Everdene/Troy, Gabriel Oak, and Frank Troy were already in Hardy's imagination, but there is no suggestion of the centrality in the narrative of the “young woman-farmer”. The sketch also reveals that William Boldwood was a relatively late complication in the plot (something corroborated by evidence in the novel's manuscript), and it seems probable that Bathsheba's role evolved gradually as Hardy worked on the story that essentially becomes her story. For a while, as one reads the novel, it is possible to sustain the notion that Gabriel Oak is a character of comparable significance to Bathsheba, but such a proposition has ceased to be viable by the time Frank Troy enters Bathsheba's life. And though many other tempting issues are raised in *Far from the Madding Crowd*—the relationship, for instance, between town and country in the perception of the narrator and the novelist (what one might call the “far from the madding crowd” aspect of the novel), or the radical change in the characterization of Gabriel—the most pressing need in a critical introduction seems to be an understanding of Hardy's conception of Bathsheba.

(Hardy's final design for his novel is one in which a woman

¹ *The Life and Works of Thomas Hardy*, ed. M. Millgate (Athens, Ga., 1985), 97.

has to deal with three men, each of whom loves her in a quite different way, and each of whom produces a quite different response in her. In a narrative strategy both thoughtful and well-suited to the serial mode of publication, Hardy builds this plot in layers until the half-way point of the novel. The story begins with what amounts almost to a prelude in the rapid sequence of Gabriel's attraction to Bathsheba, his naïve proposal of marriage, Bathsheba's heart-free refusal of it, and Gabriel's instant acceptance of her decision (while reserving the right to love her as long as he lives). These early chapters, culminating in the destruction of Gabriel's flock of sheep, are separated from the remainder of the novel by a period of months about which we know nothing, and separated equally clearly by a change in tone. When we encounter her again Bathsheba, almost miraculously to Gabriel's (and our) eyes, has become a managing farmer. He, having in the interim descended to and apparently emerged from some unexpressed "slime-pits of Siddim", becomes her shepherd.

The second layer of the narrative begins, as the first did, with a man's response to Bathsheba's vanity, pride, and stunning beauty. Where Gabriel had examined her in secret—through hedges, chinks in walls, and so on—Boldwood ignores her completely, doesn't even see her in front of his nose: "The farmer had never turned his head once, but with eyes fixed on the most advanced point along the road, passed as unconsciously and abstractedly as if Bathsheba and her charms were thin air" (pp. 96-7). This insensitivity prompts Bathsheba to act. Only partly in premeditation, only partly through her own will prompted by vanity, she sends a valentine to Boldwood in an envelope sealed with the words *MARRY ME*. The notion of sending the valentine was first suggested by her companion Liddy (who sees Boldwood as an unreasonably unconscious matrimonial target for all the eligible neighbouring young women), and though Bathsheba warms to the idea, the decision is made ultimately at the dictate of chance, as a book is tossed to decide whether it should be sent to Boldwood or little Teddy Coggan. Hardy is at pains to show how little deliberate intention to attract Boldwood there was in the whole enterprise, but also how little thought of possible consequences

there was in the gesture. It is on the valentine and the seal on its envelope, and on Boldwood's nature, that much of the remaining action turns.

Boldwood is thereby driven to look at Bathsheba, and as he does so, like Gabriel, he unconsciously forms a resolution to love her until he dies. Bathsheba is caught between the obsessive passion of a wealthy middle-aged man in love for the first time in his life—a passion for which she acknowledges herself in part at least responsible—and the critical moral rectitude of the man she has already refused. Between them they harry her to the brink of promising herself in marriage to Boldwood. The narrator pauses occasionally during the action to direct the reader to consider whether she is being treated fairly by the characters, or by the conventional social expectations on which Boldwood and Gabriel rely; whether her crime in sending the valentine so thoughtlessly, with such piqued vanity, deserves the punishment of marriage, perpetual subjection, to a man she does not love.

In discussing Bathsheba's response to Boldwood's initial marriage proposal, the narrator makes a confident generalization concerning the reasons why men and women continue to commit themselves to matrimony:

It appears that ordinary men take wives because possession is not possible without marriage, and that ordinary women accept husbands because marriage is not possible without possession; with totally differing aims the method is the same on both sides. But the understood incentive on the woman's part was wanting here. (p. 136)

It is the narrator's perception that most women agree to the conditions of marriage because they want the material security, the social prestige that marriage brings, and they put up with being bound to live with one man, bound to sexual relations with him, for the sake of these benefits. And that when men want a woman sexually, they have to marry her in order to obtain her (though Fanny Robin's case seems perhaps to imply, in this novel at least, a class limitation to the generalization). The man possesses, the woman is possessed. There is no sense of outrage at this state of affairs as there will be in Sue Bridehead and the narrator of *Jude the Obscure*. Bathsheba,

however, has "no wish whatever for the married state in the abstract", as she has already demonstrated in refusing Gabriel. Thus she is an exception to this rule, as to several other commonplace and patronizing generalizations about women offered from time to time by the narrator—as, for example, the early note that Bathsheba was "that novelty among women—one who finished a thought before beginning the sentence which was to convey it" (p. 23). The dictum about marriage, however, is particularly important, because Bathsheba not only represents an exception to it, but eventually embodies a reversal of it.

The evening of the shearing-supper, the same evening that she is almost forced by repetitive pressure to come to terms with Boldwood, Hardy introduces the third layer of Bathsheba's narrative. Sergeant Frank Troy and Bathsheba, caught in the blaze of a lantern, gaze at each other, exchange eyes. For the first time in her life Bathsheba feels sexual attraction to a man, a novel disturbance of her mind and blood. Though it is described in different terms, the effect of this revelation upon her personality and her daily life is similar to the revelation experienced by Boldwood when he looked at her. In a very simple way the narrator summarizes the differences between Boldwood (and Gabriel) and Frank: "It was a fatal omission of Boldwood's that he had never once told her she was beautiful." It is not only that Boldwood has no idea how to conduct a courtship save by persistent sincerity supported by the weight of conventional social expectation, but also that Frank understands that women too have sexual natures, and that Bathsheba needs to be stimulated by flagrant admiration and compliments unmistakably erotic in origin before she can be carried out of her self-sufficiency.

Bathsheba's arousal is completed in Frank's famous display of swordsmanship, a Victorian writer's substitute for direct presentation of the sexual aspect of courtship as powerful as the dance, Hardy's more frequently presented surrogate activity. Hardy has Frank's *aurora militaris* scintillating within a "hollow amid the ferns", one of the large sink-holes so common on Puddletown Heath—a vividly erotic site for the sword-player to penetrate—and his description, from the palpitation

and quick breath of Bathsheba as she nears the hollow, to the kiss at the end (which in another century must have led to their making love amid the ferns) is full of the suppressed sexual desire in Bathsheba, and of Frank's open invitation, not to say coercion. The sergeant has provided a situation in which Bathsheba's independence is fully disabled, in which it is submerged in sensual awe and arousal. She finds him irresistible, as in his own way Boldwood does her.

In the central chapters of the novel the overlapping of Bathsheba's three lovers is completed. Hardy contrives to present in fairly rapid sequence three unmistakable (though radically different) avowals of love for her—Frank's kiss in Chapter XXVIII, Gabriel's "You know, mistress, that I love you, and shall love you always" in Chapter XXIX, and Boldwood's description of his feeling for her as a "thing strong as death" in Chapter XXXI. In the gap between Chapters XXXI and XXXII (Bathsheba acts to resolve the situation, and her marriage with Frank is the novel's decisive act. The remainder of the book accounts for the act, and describes its consequences.

For the narrator, Bathsheba's love for Frank is "folly" entering her nature "as lymph on the dart of Eros" and spreading through her whole constitution. The close connection here proposed between sexual responsiveness and folly brings into an intertextual relationship with the novel Goldsmith's famous lyric from *The Vicar of Wakefield*:

When lovely woman stoops to folly
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover
And wring his bosom—is to die.

(It may not be too much to say that the remainder of the novel plays twin Victorian variations on this theme of Goldsmith. The more straightforward of the two is in the history of Fanny Robin, the more oblique, inverted variation runs through

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Bathsheba's story.) The connection between the song and Bathsheba is made explicit in her words of regret at having married Frank: "O if she had never stooped to folly of this kind, respectable as it was . . ." (p. 285).

(After introducing the notion that Bathsheba's emotional response to Frank should be regarded as folly, Hardy's narrator adds that her love "was entire as a child's, and though warm as summer it was fresh as spring." Her culpability lay in her making no attempt to control feeling by subtle and careful inquiry into consequences" (pp. 198-9). She is not only foolish, but also guilty; guilty of the irrational thoughtless desire which leads not to the folly of which Goldsmith speaks and to which Fanny has been persuaded, but to the rash and unconsidered marriage which, we may think (and Hardy by implication proposes), will lead to as much melancholy. We may also note that what in Bathsheba (and presumably Fanny) is thought of as folly is regarded as madness in Boldwood and natural and instinctive in Frank, who is constitutionally incapable of making "subtle and careful inquiry into consequences". There is also the question of Bathsheba's "culpability": the narrator finds her guilty and the reader is encouraged to share in the judgement, but it is not immediately clear against whom or what she has committed her crime. Against her better self, perhaps; but the subsequent development of the triangular relationship between Bathsheba, Frank, and Boldwood, based entirely on lack of emotional control, seems to imply that the unrestrained exercise of sexual desire is to be regarded as dangerous not only to the individual, but also to society, and ultimately to civilization, since it ends in murder and imprisonment. By contrast Gabriel, since his rash proposal of marriage to Bathsheba, has learned to control his feelings. This control is enduring, held to be admirable, and ultimately rewarded.

The account in the narratorial voice (or in one of the narratorial voices) of Bathsheba's folly in loving Frank is a good example of another kind of tension that develops in the novel, in this case between what the narrator says about the characters, and what the novelist shows through dialogue and action. The analytic narrator invented for Hardy's perceived

audience has always been more at home within current social conventions than the novelist-narrator, and more apt to assert their value; in this matter of the opposition of passion and reason which permeates the second half of the novel the two aspects of Hardy's creative intelligence are most clearly at odds.

What we see next is that Bathsheba marries Frank because she cannot bear not to have him, because reason simply cannot meet the case when sexual desire, however foolish, floods the being; in doing so she is, as pointed out above, reversing the narrator's conventional wisdom on marriage offered earlier in the novel (though the narrator cannot acknowledge it). When Bathsheba marries it is not because she wants to be a wife, but for the theoretically male reason that she cannot possess her beloved sexually without marrying him. However, her exceptional behaviour only leads to misery, because she is a woman.

In the interval between her July wedding and the October day on which Bathsheba and her husband encounter Fanny on Yalbury Hill she begins to discover, like Clym Yeobright or Jude Fawley, that sexual attraction is a poor basis for a permanent relationship. It is during the acrimonious wrangle she has with Frank over the money he secretly intends to take to Fanny at the workhouse in Casterbridge that Bathsheba first accepts that sexual desire is no longer a power to unite her with Frank, and she regrets that her romance has come to an end. When Frank answers, in what will become a Hardyian cliché, "All romances end at marriage," his words signal Bathsheba's discovery, "too late", that she is beginning her journey on the frequently travelled Victorian road of leisurely and painful repentance for a hasty, irrational marriage. She forces Frank to admit that the money is for a woman to whom he has "ties" and whom he was once going to marry, and her repentance of her union with him is deep and painful.

It is only to be expected that such a recognition of "folly" should in some degree alter Bathsheba's perception of herself, but the paragraph in which the narrator describes her response to Frank's admission is revisionist in the extreme, and raises a fundamental question about Hardy's conception of Bathsheba's character: