

Edited by
Charles P. C. Pettit

**READING
THOMAS HARDY**

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palgrave

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Preface

Like its two predecessors, *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy* and *Celebrating Thomas Hardy, Reading Thomas Hardy* brings together the papers given at one of the Thomas Hardy Society's biennial Conferences, in this case the Twelfth International Conference which was held in Dorchester, Dorset, in the summer of 1996. Yet again, the Society succeeded in attracting a team of lecturers which can be described without hyperbole as a selection of the world's leading Hardy scholars, and for the first time we have been able to include all twelve of the main lectures in the subsequent book. There is no overall theme to restrict the contributors, and the variety of approaches and topics form an appropriate response to Hardy's own range and versatility. What the papers have in common, apart from a keen understanding of their subject, is accessibility: the origin of the book in lectures delivered to an audience largely composed of Hardy enthusiasts (rather than academics) ensures that even those papers whose new research makes a real contribution to Hardy scholarship are eminently readable. It can be said of the book, as of the Conference itself, that it contains something for anyone interested in Hardy, whether student, academic or enthusiast.

The volume opens with four papers which concentrate on specific Hardy works, then moves out to consideration of key Hardy themes (love, tragedy, death) and out again to Hardy and other artists (Yeats, Elgar). Finally the focus is on Hardy the man, the volume rounding off with Harold Orel's 'The Wit and Wisdom of Thomas Hardy'. However, these loose groupings are no more than an attempt to give the book a helpful shape for the reader, and each paper is strikingly and stimulatingly individual. The arrangement is well exemplified by the first four chapters. While all are concerned with specific Hardy works, Pamela Dalziel's fascinating contribution examines the influence of *Far from the Madding Crowd's* first illustrator (with reproductions of some of the illustrations), Robert Schweik perceptively assesses recent critical writings on *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, John Doheny focuses illuminatingly on Hardy's characterization in *Jude the Obscure*, while Charles Lock's major piece on *The Dynasts* is a challenging reassessment of the

entire work. And so the volume continues, in variety and in quality. Small wonder that the lecture programme was welcomed so warmly by those attending the Conference; it is now a pleasure to make the papers available to all those who could not be in Dorchester that week.

In view of the large number of editions of Hardy now available, chapter references are given for all citations of Hardy's novels, and the edition used by each contributor is identified in the end-notes to each chapter.

I would like to thank Macmillan Publishers Ltd for permission to quote from Hardy. The credit for assembling such an impressive array of Hardy scholars belongs rightly to James Gibson, who created the lecture programme for the Conference before he handed over the role of Academic Director to me; I am most grateful to him. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my family for all kinds of support throughout the period of Conference organization and book editing (not to mention at other times!): my wife Judith, my children Richard and Claire, and my parents.

CHARLES P. C. PETTIT

Notes on the Contributors

Joanna Cullen Brown studied at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and after some years spent bringing up three children and in various forms of teaching she published three books on Hardy: *Figures in a Wessex Landscape* (1987), *Let Me Enjoy the Earth* (1990) and *A Journey into Thomas Hardy's Poetry* (1989). She leads various summer schools on Hardy and is a Tutor for the Department of Continuing Education of the University of Bristol.

Raymond Chapman is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of London, and Lecturer and Academic Adviser at the London Centre of the Institute of European Studies. He has written a number of books on Victorian literature and the language of literature, including *The Victorian Debate* (1968), *Faith and Revolt: Studies in the Literature of the Oxford Movement* (1970), *The Sense of the Past in Victorian Literature* (1986), *The Language of Thomas Hardy* (1990), and *Forms of Speech in Victorian Fiction* (1994), and was an associate editor and contributor to the *Oxford Companion to the English Language* (1992). He was a contributor to *New Perspectives on Thomas Hardy*.

Pamela Dalziel is Associate Professor of English at the University of British Columbia. She lectured at the Thomas Hardy Society's Tenth International Conference (1992). Her publications include numerous articles on Hardy and editions of *Thomas Hardy: The Excluded and Collaborative Stories* (1992), *Thomas Hardy's 'Studies, Specimens Etc.' Notebook* (with Michael Millgate, 1994), *An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress and Other Stories* (1994), and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1998). She is currently completing a book on the visual representation of Hardy's works.

John R. Doheny is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of British Columbia. He has written on D. H. Lawrence, Herbert Read, the philosophy of anarchism and the education of the poor in the nineteenth century. His work on Hardy includes essays on *Far from the Madding Crowd* and on Hardy's Swetman ancestors, and

two biographical monographs: *The Youth of Thomas Hardy* (1984) and *Thomas Hardy's Relatives and their Times* (1989).

Ralph W. V. Elliott is Visiting Professor in English and Honorary Librarian at the Humanities Research Centre, the Australian National University, where he was Master of University House for thirteen years. He has also taught at the Universities of St Andrews, Keele, Adelaide, Flinders and the Australian National University. He has published numerous articles and reviews in his main fields of interest, which include the history and character of the English language, medieval English literature, runes, and Hardy. His books include *Chaucer's English* (1974), *The Gawain Country* (1984), *Runes: An Introduction* (1959, 1989) and *Thomas Hardy's English* (1984). He is a Vice-President of the Thomas Hardy Society of North America.

Samuel Hynes is Professor Emeritus of Literature at Princeton University. His books include *The Edwardian Turn of Mind* (1968), *Edwardian Occasions* (1972) and *The Auden Generation* (1976), and editions of T. E. Hulme, Arnold Bennett and Conrad. His most recent publication is *The Soldiers' Tale*, a study of twentieth-century war memoirs. His work on Hardy began with *The Pattern of Hardy's Poetry* (1961) and has culminated in his authoritative five-volume edition of *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy* (1982–95). He is an Honorary Vice-President of the Thomas Hardy Society.

Michael Irwin is Professor of English Literature at the University of Kent. His chief academic interest is in the area of fictional technique, and he has written a study of Fielding's novels, and *Picturing: Description and Illusion in the Nineteenth-Century Novel*. He has also written two novels, translated numerous operas and written the libretto for an oratorio about Jonah which was performed in Canterbury Cathedral. He has recently completed a book provisionally entitled *Reading Hardy's Landscapes*.

Charles Lock is Professor of English Literature at the University of Copenhagen, and has held teaching appointments at the Universities of Karlstad and Toronto. He has published on John Cowper Powys, Hopkins, Dostoevsky, Bakhtin, iconography and

petroglyphs. His study of the critical reception of Hardy, *Thomas Hardy: Criticism in Focus*, was published in 1992.

Phillip Mallett is Senior Lecturer in English at the University of St Andrews. He has published articles on various authors, and has edited collections of essays on Kipling and on European satire. He edited (with Ronald Draper) *A Spacious Vision: Essays on Hardy* (1994), to which he also contributed a paper. He is currently working on a study and anthology of Ruskin.

Michael Millgate is University Professor of English Emeritus of the University of Toronto. Although most of his early work was on William Faulkner, his principal contributions in more recent years have been to the study of Hardy – among them *Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist* (1971, 1994), *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy* (7 volumes, co-edited, 1978–88), *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (1982), *Thomas Hardy: Selected Letters* (edited, 1990), *Thomas Hardy's 'Studies, Specimens Etc.' Notebook* (co-edited, 1994) and *The Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy* (edited, 1996). His editing for Macmillan of Hardy's ghost-written *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy* (1984) led to the wider exploration of authorial deaths and literary estates which formed the subject of his *Testamentary Acts: Browning, Tennyson, James, Hardy* (1992). He is an Honorary Vice-President of the Thomas Hardy Society, and was a contributor to *Celebrating Thomas Hardy*.

Harold Orel is University Distinguished Professor of English Emeritus at the University of Kansas, and has held teaching appointments at the Universities of Michigan and Maryland, and in Germany, Austria and England. He is active in the study of Irish literature, and has published on a wide variety of authors, including Synge, Browning, Byron, Wordsworth, Edith Sitwell and Rebecca West. His extensive work on Hardy includes *Thomas Hardy's Epic-Drama 'The Dynasts'* (1963), *The Final Years of Thomas Hardy 1912–28* (1976), *The Unknown Thomas Hardy* (1987) and *Critical Essays on Thomas Hardy's Poetry* (1995). He has edited Hardy's *Personal Writings* (1966) and *The Dynasts* (1978). He is an Honorary Vice-President of the Thomas Hardy Society, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Robert Schweik, an Honorary Vice-President of the Thomas Hardy Society, is Distinguished Teaching Professor of English Emeritus of

the State University of New York, and has been Visiting Professor at the University of Trier, and at Stockholm University. He is editor of the Norton Critical Edition of *Far from the Madding Crowd*; author of *Reference Sources in English and American Literature* and of *Hart Crane: A Descriptive Bibliography*; a contributor to fourteen other books; and author of over sixty other studies of Hardy, Tennyson, Browning, Mill, analytic bibliography, language and rhetoric, and cultural history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is currently writing an analysis of the rhetoric of twentieth-century art criticism.

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List of Illustrations

Helen Paterson's illustrations for *Far from the Madding Crowd*
(serialised in the *Cornhill Magazine*, 1874)

- | | | |
|----|--|----|
| 1 | Hands were loosening his neckerchief.
<i>Cornhill</i> , January 1874. | 4 |
| 2 | <i>Cornhill</i> , January 1874. | 6 |
| 3 | 'Do you happen to want a shepherd, Ma'am?'
<i>Cornhill</i> , February 1874. | 8 |
| 4 | 'Get the front door key.' Liddy fetched it.
<i>Cornhill</i> , March 1874. | 10 |
| 5 | She stood up in the window-opening, facing the men.
<i>Cornhill</i> , May 1874. | 12 |
| 6 | <i>Cornhill</i> , June 1874. | 13 |
| 7 | She opened a gate within which was a haystack,
under this she sat down.
<i>Cornhill</i> , September 1874 | 15 |
| 8 | 'There's not a soul in my house but me to-night.'
<i>Cornhill</i> , August 1874. | 20 |
| 9 | She took up her position as directed.
<i>Cornhill</i> , June 1874. | 22 |
| 10 | Her tears fell fast beside the unconscious pair.
<i>Cornhill</i> , October 1874. | 23 |

1

'She matched his violence with her own wild passion': Illustrating *Far from the Madding Crowd*

PAMELA DALZIEL

First to my title, for which you will search the text of *Far from the Madding Crowd* – I dare say that of the entire Hardy oeuvre – in vain. It comes from a poster for John Schlesinger's 1967 film version of *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Peter Lennon, Hardy collector and proprietor of Casterbridge Books in Chicago, sent me a photograph of it some years ago, with the comment that it would have 'befuddled Hardy'.¹ Indeed. Headed "Zhivago's" Lara meets "Georgy Girl's" guy ... in the love story of the year!, the poster contains four colour illustrations. One is of a rather smudgy-faced Julie Christie (Bathsheba) clinging tightly to an even smudgier Alan Bates (Gabriel Oak) as they escape from a raging conflagration: the caption reads, 'She was sure of his love ... in spite of her other men!' In another illustration a coquettish Christie permits a worshipful Peter Finch (Boldwood) to kiss her hand; in a third a windblown Christie runs through a field, her cleavage prominent and knee-length skirt riding high up stockingless thigh. Finally, the caption that has supplied me with my title, 'She matched his violence with her own wild passion', accompanies the image of Christie, distinctly *déshabillé*, in the arms of a certainly shirtless and possibly naked Terence Stamp (Troy).²

The ludicrous aspects of the poster are obvious enough, and by invoking one of its captions in my title I am of course drawing deliberate attention to a distorted reading of Hardy's novel – and indeed of Schlesinger's film. It is significant that the poster's images are 'artists' impressions' (as they say), not photographs or stills: none of these scenes in fact occurs in the film, nor does Julie

Christie – who was never so buxom – ever appear in it with bare shoulders and legs. And if you are looking for scenes of bodice ripping such as those verbally and visually suggested by ‘She matched his violence with her own wild passion’ and its accompanying illustration, you will have to look elsewhere.

The film does of course possess a powerful sexual dynamic, but for most viewers it is dominated by its pervasive pastoralism – or so at least the numerous commentators on it (both Hardyian and non-Hardyian) would suggest.³ The judgement reached by the *Daily Cinema* critic is typical: ‘Bound to evoke the nostalgia for the simple life of the countryside which nestles in the hearts of the most unlikely of city-dwellers.’⁴ If such an assessment seems unsurprising, that is because it reiterates a perception of *Far from the Madding Crowd* as rural idyll which has dominated the novel’s visual representation from the very beginning, to the point that my own instinctive response to the film poster as a misreading of Hardy may itself have been conditioned by the prevalence of book covers implicitly positing the narrative as some kind of Arcadian romance. Many editions of *Far from the Madding Crowd* are adorned with images of picturesque cottages and country churches,⁵ and if rural swains lounging in idyllic landscapes have in recent years largely given place to representations of rural labour, the idealization none the less remains, as do those indispensable mainstays of traditional pastoral idyll, sheep.⁶

In one respect, this predominance of the pastoral is scarcely surprising: the novel is, after all, called *Far from the Madding Crowd* and set in rural Dorset, and one of its principal characters is a shepherd. Moreover, as recent critics such as Peter Widdowson have demonstrated, the production of Hardy as the nostalgic chronicler of a vanished rural world is very common,⁷ and leads naturally to sheep-filled covers, even for novels such as *The Return of the Native*⁸ in which there is not so much as a whiff of the ovine to be caught (unless it is attached to Diggory Venn’s clothes). Even so, what is unusual about *Far from the Madding Crowd* is the consistency with which it has had this particular visual reading imposed upon it. Other Hardy novels – with the notable but predictable exception of *Under the Greenwood Tree* – are represented variously on book covers: sometimes as rural idylls, but on other occasions as novels of sensation, as tales of the tormented psyche, or, most frequently, as passionate love stories somewhat of the Mills & Boon variety.⁹ But *Far from the Madding Crowd* never seems to change, even though it, too, con-

tains passionate love, psychological torment, and sensational action – to a greater degree, indeed, than many of Hardy's other novels. This supposed pastoral idyll does, after all, contain everything from life-threatening natural disasters to a coffin-opening and a murder.

To recognize the presence of such elements in *Far from the Madding Crowd* is inevitably to call into question my original response to the film poster: for all its over-heightened emphases and obvious departures from the actual film (let alone from the novel), it is perhaps not quite so absurd a reading of Hardy as I initially assumed. In many respects *Far from the Madding Crowd* – Hardy's version as well as Schlesinger's – can quite appropriately be called (to quote the poster) a 'dramatic love story'. One of the contemporary reviewers of the novel said that it could have been called 'Bathsheba and her Lovers',¹⁰ and 'Bathsheba Everdene and Her Lovers' was in fact the title given to a dramatization of scenes from the novel performed by the Hardy Players in 1919.¹¹ Bathsheba can – again to quote the poster – be 'sure of [Gabriel's] love', even if it is difficult to imagine them in quite such a passionate embrace. Critics have long drawn attention to Troy's violence and Bathsheba's passion (to return to my title once more), and many would doubtless agree with the poster's caption to the Bathsheba–Boldwood illustration: 'She could destroy this man obsessed with love for her.' Above all, perhaps, the backgrounds of the poster frames point to a more complex representation of the novel than can be suggested by pastoral imagery alone: Bathsheba and Troy have an as yet unrumpled bed immediately behind them; gathering storm clouds darken the ostensibly idyllic English countryside as Boldwood courts Bathsheba; and the lurid conflagration from which Bathsheba and Gabriel have escaped is suggestive of that violence of nature ignored by so many of Hardy's illustrators but never by Hardy himself.

If the film poster, for all its exaggerations, constitutes in some respects a less distorted reading of *Far from the Madding Crowd* than the conventional visual representation of the novel as pastoral idyll, a question inevitably arises as to why that convention has established such a tenacious hold. The answer, as I believe and hope to demonstrate, can in part be found in the convention's original source: Helen Paterson's illustrations for the January–December 1874 serialization of the novel in the *Cornhill Magazine*.

Hardy's own response to the first of these illustrations (see Figure 1) was evidently positive, though doubtless he would in any



Figure 1 Hands were loosening his neckerchief.
Corrhill, January 1874.

case have been relieved to be spared the ravages of someone like J. A. Pasquier, the illustrator of *A Pair of Blue Eyes* for *Tinsley's Magazine* (September 1872–July 1873) and the only artist who had previously illustrated Hardy's work. More than forty years later, in the autobiographical *Life*, Hardy wrote:

returning from Cornwall on a fine December noontide (being New Year's Eve 1873–74), he opened on Plymouth Hoe a copy of the *Cornhill* that he had bought at the station, and there to his surprise saw his story placed at the beginning of the magazine, with a striking illustration, the artist being – also to his surprise – not a man but a woman, Miss Helen Paterson. He had only expected from the undistinguished rank of the characters in the tale that it would be put at the end, and possibly without a picture.¹²

The illustration is 'striking', not least because it is quite sensational. There is nothing of the rural idyll in this image, though the rural itself is suggested by the overturned bucket of milk. Gabriel would seem to be dead – the potential horror of the situation being undercut only by the serenity of Bathsheba's expression and by the caption, 'Hands were loosening his neckerchief', which posits Gabriel as the originator of the thought, hence as a conscious, or at least semi-conscious, being. Also of significance in this opening image is the representation of Bathsheba as attractive in a conventional 'womanly' way. Her face suggests both tenderness and innocence, and she is appropriately occupied in a caregiver role. At the same time her depiction as literally (physically) above Gabriel effectively emphasizes her dominant ('unwomanly') position in relation to him at this time (she will soon refuse his marriage proposal). Such visual reinforcement of the nature of Bathsheba's shifting relationships with her lovers is, throughout the serialization, one of the consistent strengths of Paterson's illustrations.

Paterson's vignette initial for the first instalment depicts Bathsheba alone (see Figure 2), though the first-time reader of *Far from the Madding Crowd* could be forgiven for not recognizing this figure, with her rounded face and dark hair, as the same character depicted in the facing full-page illustration. The differences may be attributable in part to poor engraving – Paterson complained throughout her life of having 'suffered agonies from wood engravers (even from the best) all the years [she] drew on wood'¹³ – but more significant, in any case, than the physical discrepancies