THOMAS HARDY AS

DRAMATIST

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D Phil Thesis

Thomas Hardy as dramatist

Abstract (Rosalyn Gregory, St Anne's College, D Phil in English, Michaelmas 2011).

This thesis traces Hardy's involvement in the theatre from the 1880s to the 1920s. The narrative of Hardy's relationship with the theatre is set against an analysis of the changing nature of the stage during this period, though I acknowledge throughout the thesis the fact that Hardy's awareness of the theatre did not perfectly keep pace with its evolution. The aim of the thesis is to examine the motivations determining Hardy's work in the theatre in light of the fact that he seemed so dismissive of its efficacy. I trace the history of Hardy's adaptations of his work for the stage, before setting the scripts against the novels in order to weigh the extent to which the novels resist translation into a different medium – whether there is something integral to Hardy's plots that cannot be conveyed on stage.

I have chosen to focus predominantly on material that made it beyond a rough sketch on a scrap of paper, on projects that reached the stage of rewritings and commercial negotiations - often years before they were produced. My selection has been determined by the belief that the material is indicative of the development of Hardy's understanding of the relationship between his work and the possibilities adaptation offered. My first chapter, on the history of an adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* in 1882, argues that Hardy's collaboration with J. Comyns Carr on the script was driven by his desire to assert his copyright over the novel's afterlife. The adaptation may never have been performed, but simply have been registered with the Lord Chamberlain as a deterrent against unauthorised adapters. It was the plagiarism row over Arthur Wing Pinero's possible theft of Hardy's plot in his popular pastoral play, *The Squire*, that pushed Hardy and Carr to stage their version. My second chapter looks at the history of Hardy's adaptations of *Tess*. I am interested primarily in his writing of two scripts in the mid-1890s, and his negotiations with leading actresses in response to their interest in creating the part of Tess. The chapter then looks at the circumstances leading to the eventual staging of the play in the 1920s, focusing on the difficulties posed by producing a script which was by then thirty years old, and showing its age.

In the third chapter I concentrate on plans to stage two novels, *The Woodlanders* and *Jude*. Neither was produced, but both are evidence of Hardy's increasing interest in the possibility of selecting from his material, rather than compressing it into the time available. The two adaptations allied Hardy much more closely with the *avant garde* than his earlier work had done – *The Woodlanders* was begun in 1889 at the suggestion of J. T. Grein and C. W. Jarvis, two men who would later found the Independent Theatre, a private subscription society which pioneered the staging of Ibsen in England. Hardy's own sketches for adapting *Jude* (1895, 1897, 1910, 1926) concentrated on Sue's position. I set Hardy's realignment of *Jude* against a focus on the place of women in unhappy marriages, drawing principally on Hardy's contribution to a debate about the role of wives in the *New Review* for June 1894 and a *Westminster Review* article by the feminist Mona Caird (August 1888), which provoked three months of debate (and 27,000 letters) in *The Daily Telegraph* on the question 'Is Marriage a Failure?' Caird's ideal dovetails with Sue's views on marriage as 'legalized prostitution' and her revulsion from 'the dreadful contract to feel in a particular way in a matter whose essence is its voluntariness!'[1]

The final chapter of the thesis looks at two adaptations of *The Dynasts*. The first is a wartime entertainment staged by Harley Granville Barker in 1914, the second is Hardy's own adaptation for Dorset amateur actors (the Hardy Players) to perform in 1916, which concentrated on the impact of the war on the local populace. I then turn to the premiere of Hardy's only full-length drama written specifically for the stage – the one-act Arthurian play *The Queen of Cornwall* (1923). I argue in this final chapter that Hardy was beginning to move from the role of reluctant adapter to that of director, conscious of the boundaries imposed by the stage and experimenting with how to craft his work to fit within them, rather than abridging his material indiscriminately.

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1 *Jude the Obscure* (1895), ed. Patricia Ingham (Oxford: World's Classics, 1985), p. 223.

Thomas Hardy as dramatist

For my Mum, who taught me to read Hardy, and to Iain, for everything.

Table of Contents

A note on references

All material quoted from the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection, Dorset County Museum, is cited by date only. The cataloguing of the collection is only partial (due largely to funding constraints) and as such it seemed more comprehensible to leave all sources noted simply by origin and date (abbreviated to DCM after their first citation).

All material cited from contemporary newspapers and periodicals is dated and given a page number where applicable. Material from contemporary periodicals cited in the first chapter (from the British Library's Digital Archive) is unpaginated and hence is referred to by date only.

All material quoted from the Purdy Collection, Beinecke Library is cited with the full information given on the item itself and identified by folder number.

Other archival sources consulted

Victoria and Albert Museum Theatre Collection

Mander and Mitchenson Collection

Garrick Club Library

Dorset County Library

Dorchester County Record Office

British Library

Russell Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth

Private Archive of Rev. Dr J.C. Travell (Dorchester)

Additional material accessed from

Berg Collection, New York Public Library

T.H. Tilley Papers, University of California, Riverside

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For Kirsty Rolfe, Lara Atkin, Jemima Matthews and Kirsty Martin – for reading this, and putting up with me during the writing of it.

Introduction

My aim throughout the thesis is to evaluate the extent to which Hardy matured as a dramatist. My title, rather than referring to Hardy by the professional term 'playwright', is indicative of the extent to which I am intrigued not only by Hardy's involvement in negotiating with actors and theatre managers but by the impact of this immersion in an unfamiliar world on Hardy's attitude to the plots themselves. This is, at its simplest, a question of what attracted him to adapting the novels in the first place – what potential did he see in their situations for the stage? More widely, I explore the extent to which the plots resist adaptation – whether there is something sewn into their fabric which cannot be realised on the boards of a stage, but instead relies on the audience's prior knowledge to supplement the shift in atmosphere from Wessex to the theatre. Hardy was, publicly at least, adamant that adaptation did a disservice to its source. He dismissed the minor actor Charles Cartwright's desire to adapt *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in 1908, granting permission with a dash of cold water:

> Knowing how my novels are ransacked for situations by dramatists I have sometimes thought of trying my hand at that one. But as most novels become mere melodrama in acting, and as moreover everything connected with the stage is so shifty and uncertain, I have not been tempted to set about it.[1]

In the first two chapters of the thesis I consider the extent to which Hardy's contentment with producing a 'mere melodrama' in his adaptations of *Far From the Madding Crowd*

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1 'To C. Cartwright', 20/02/1908, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy,* eds. Richard Little Purdy & Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), 7 vols., III, pp. 297-8 (afterwards *Collected Letters*).

(1882) and *Tess* (1890s) coloured his attitude to the theatre.[2] Seventeen years after his dismissal of Cartwright's plans, Hardy was still emphatic that 'provided a play has a good story at the back of it, the details of construction are not important [...] The dramatization of a novel is really only a piece of ingenious carpentry'.[3] His response may have been influenced by his correspondent's less than tactful way of presenting his suggested alterations to Hardy's script for *Tess*: he proposed that he 'use what technical knowledge I have to correct any little clumsinesses in stage construction due to your lack of acquaintance with plays'.[4]

Hardy and the theatre

This thesis examines the ways in which Hardy's familiarity with the theatre was far greater than such statements imply. Hardy spent the years 1862-7 as an architect's assistant in London. During this time he went to the theatre regularly with his colleagues - he would watch Samuel Phelps from the pit, volume of Shakespeare in hand.[5] He even took a walk-on part in an amateur production of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*.[6] At this stage in his life Hardy viewed the theatre as something more than a source of entertainment - he weighed

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2 Hardy's attitude may also have been affected by the fact that Cartwright had acted in the 1882 *Far From the Madding Crowd*, a relationship he acknowledged in his reply.

3 'To St. J. Ervine', 19/02/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 312.

4 'To Hardy', 12/02/1925, now in the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection, Dorset County Museum (afterwards DCM).

5 *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 54 (afterwards *Life*). The *Life* was published posthumously – ostensibly the work of his second wife Florence Hardy it was in fact largely compiled by Hardy himself. As such it offers a unique angle on Hardy's impressions of life and literature, albeit one perpetually alert to the line between suppression and disclosure. For more on the circumstances of the biography's composition see Millgate's introduction to *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) (afterwards *Biography*) and his chapter on Hardy in *Testamentary Acts: Browning, Tennyson, James, Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

6 This experience is recorded in the chapter of the *Life* on London, but it is not dated.

up the advisability of writing for the stage. He went so far as to get an introduction to the manager of the Haymarket, but he was advised that the theatre was a perilous profession:

> he had formed an idea of writing plays in blank verse – and had planned to try the stage as a supernumerary for six or twelve months, to acquire technical skill in their construction. [The manager of the Haymarket] rather damped the young man's ardour by reminding him that the elder Mathews had said he would not let a dog of his go on the stage, and that he himself, much as he personally liked the art of acting, would rather see a daughter of his in her grave than on the boards of a theatre.[7]

His consideration of playwriting as a potential career seems to have waned rapidly, but throughout his life he maintained an active intellectual interest in the theatre.

Hardy's engagement with the theatre was quite consciously that of the curious amateur, rather than the wily professional. Throughout his years as a novelist he went to the theatre regularly, but he always seemed bemused at requests for his views on playwriting. He resisted the notion that there was an automatic relationship between being a writer and being able to write for the stage. His response to the somewhat anodyne brief of the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1892, to clarify why 'I Don't Write Plays', was to expose the commercial theatre as a self-serving institution dominated by actor-managers interested only in securing a plum part for themselves, by a fascination with spectacle, by the moulding of parts to suit actors' characteristic “types”.[8]

Hardy may have been disenchanted with the theatre, but he was a frequent theatre-goer and his correspondence never really gives the impression he was doing this simply to

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7 *Life*, p. 55.

8 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 31st August 1892, reprinted in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice: The Essays, Speeches and Miscellaneous Prose*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), pp. 120-1.

gather evidence to substantiate his anger at its failings. Hardy and Emma took in the shows on their annual visits to London.[9] Hardy wrote to obtain tickets from managers and playwrights regularly, asking for seats for Henry Arthur Jones's plays *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1893) and *The Masqueraders* (1894).[10] The tenor of these visits is caught in a letter of 1895 – he and Emma 'saw *Romeo & Juliet* by the invitation of Forbes-Robertson, afterwards we had supper with him & Mrs P. Campbell, who was most amusing'.[11] In 1901 he dropped in casually to Irving's *Coriolanus*, and 'did not regret going, though the theatre was not quite full – it being a dull play to the ordinary goer'.[12] If *Coriolanus* was caviar to the general, Hardy clearly did not consider himself an 'ordinary goer'. Twenty-three years earlier, he had visited Irving in his dressing room after a performance and drunk champagne with the actor: 'we went to his dressing room; - found him naked to the waist: champagne in tumblers'.[13] Reflecting on his knowledge of Irving, Hardy was angered by his egotism: 'actors never see a play as a whole in its true perspective, but in a false perspective from the shifting point of their own part in it'.[14] Hardy enjoyed the theatre: he happily escorted his friend Lady Jeune's young daughters to plays and tried to use a performance of Ibsen's *The Master Builder* (1893)

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9 A sample from Hardy's *Collected Letters* (Volume II) reveals that in 1893-5 Hardy records visits to Daly's Theatre to see Ada Rehan in *The Taming of the Shrew* (p. 11); J.M. Barrie's *Walker London* (Toole's Theatre) (pp. 13-14); Hardy's own *The Three Wayfarers* (Terry's) (p. 16); Eleanora Duse in *La Dame aux Camélias* (Lyric) (p .21); to the theatre with Lady Jeune's daughters (p .52); Rehan in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (p. 81) and Mrs Pat Campbell and Johnston Forbes-Robertson's *Romeo & Juliet* (Lyceum) (p. 100) during his residences in London during the Season.

10 *Collected Letters*, II, p. 58; IV, p. 98.

11 'To Sir G. Douglas', 09/12/1895, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 100. Hardy's relationship with Forbes Robertson and Mrs Patrick Campbell (and its impact on the staging of *Tess*) is explored in greater detail in Chapter Two, pp. 88-165.

12 'To E.L. Hardy', 26/04/1901, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 285.

13 *Life*, p. 125.

14 *Life*, p. 125.

as a weapon in his war to persuade his friend, the writer Florence Henniker, that they should begin an affair. In this he was singularly unsuccessful, but it does not seem to have dampened his enthusiasm for Ibsen.[15]

Hardy corresponded throughout his life with playwrights, even writing to Arthur Wing Pinero to ask his advice on professional matters, despite their earlier dispute over Pinero's alleged appropriation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* in his pastoral play *The Squire* – a row at the centre of the first chapter of this thesis.[16] With Henry Arthur Jones he was far more friendly – requesting theatre tickets, politely declining to attend one of Jones's play readings, asking his advice on the ramifications of staging *Tess*, first in America and later in London.[17] Jones returned the professional compliment by asking Hardy to put his name to the petition in 1909 for an enquiry into the validity of theatrical censorship. Hardy wrote of his admiration for Jones's *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1893). Hardy's comment on *Susan* is indicative of his alertness to the changing nature of the stage. Writing of Jones's play almost thirty years after its premiere, Hardy noted that Jones was confined by the theatre's moral codes – the heroine of his play could not be seen to have had a love affair in revenge for her husband's philandering. Instead she forms a sentimental attachment to another man, which is abruptly ended when he forgets all about her and marries someone else – though her grief is only

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15 See 'To F. Henniker', 10/06/1893, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 14; 'To E.L. Hardy', 03/03/1894, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 52. For an analysis of this interest in Ibsen as symptomatic of 'the erotic effect drama always had on Hardy' see Ralph Pite, *Thomas Hardy: The Guarded Life* (London: Picador, 2006), pp. 359-61 and passim Chapters Three and Four of this thesis.

16 For his correspondence with Pinero see *Collected Letters*, III, p. 157, IV, p. 247, V, p. 14.

17 See letter from George Alexander to Hardy, 21/02/1897, now in the DCM.

really explicable in terms of a sexual betrayal. Hardy's hope was that 'events can be allowed to develope [sic] on the stage as they would in real life'.[18] In the second chapter of the thesis I look at the extent to which this freedom was recognised, but not really exploited, in the productions of *Tess*, which relied on a script written thirty years earlier.[19]

Hardy enjoyed his most sustained theatrical correspondence with Harley Granville Barker. The two men began writing to each other when Barker asked permission to adapt *The Dynasts* for the Kingsway Theatre in 1914. When the Hardy Players staged *The Queen of Cornwall* in 1923 Hardy obtained lengthy advice from Barker, advice he reciprocated after reading Barker's play *Waste* in 1927, which had been extensively revised after referring too explicitly to a married woman procuring an abortion after a brief affair with a politician. Hardy maintained that '[*Waste*] is so much like a novel in the reading that I could not help wishing it had been one. It holds you to the end – just as a good novel does',[20] perhaps a recognition that Barker's attempts to convey the debates of politicians over the viability of a church disestablishment bill would have been better served by prose.

Writing to Barker, Hardy insisted that 'to attempt to put a novel on the stage is hopeless, and altogether a mistake in art'.[21] In a later letter he was adamant that the audience 'are not very perceptive, except the few who don't count among the mass'.[22] Despite this dismissiveness, Hardy was involved in the theatre throughout his life in four

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18 'To H. A. Jones', 13/09/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 352. See also II, p. 113, p. 147.

19 Jones duly praised *Tess* when it was staged in London in 1925; see Doris Jones, *The Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1930), p. 165.

20 'To H. Granville Barker', 23/05/1927, *Collected Letters*, VII, p. 67.

21 'To H. Granville Barker', 20/10/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 362.

22 'To H. Granville Barker', 19/12/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 373.

distinct ways. In addition to his theatre going, Hardy handled negotiations for the staging of his novels and tried to secure their financial health, he wrote numerous sketches for the adaptation of his prose into plays and he acted as patron and publicist for the Dorchester Debating and Dramatic Society (known from 1916 as the Hardy Players), who put on adaptations of his work in Dorchester between 1908 and 1924. All of this makes his defensive claim in 1925 that 'I know nothing whatever of the English theatre' difficult to credit, until it is placed in context: he added 'to-day [...] not having been inside one for many years except our small local buildings'.[23] By the end of his life Hardy had turned away from the commercial theatre, preferring to half-flatter, half-cajole the London critics into reviewing the Hardy Players' productions in Dorchester.[24]

Hardy's relationship with the theatre follows a trajectory from the production of a version of *Far From the Madding Crowd* in 1882 through to the amateurs' premiere of Hardy's one-act Arthurian play *The Queen of Cornwall* in 1923. The examination of Hardy's relationship with the contemporary stage has to acknowledge the shifting theatrical conditions during the forty-one year span of material covered by the thesis. When Hardy began to consider adapting his work for the stage in the early 1880s he drew on his knowledge of the London theatre.[25] The flaw in this design was that Hardy's greatest

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23 'To G. Maxwell', 09/04/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 319.

24 See in particular his correspondence with Harold Child, the *Times*'s drama critic.

25 This overview of the nature of the theatre is, of necessity, brief. For further details on contemporary criticism of the stage see William Archer, *English Dramatists of To-day* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1882); *The Eighteen-Seventies: Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature*, ed. Harley Granville Barker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1929); Henry Arthur Jones, *The Renascence of the English Drama: Essays, Lectures and Fragments relating to the Modern English Stage, written and delivered in the years 1883-1894* (London: Macmillan, 1895); Arthur Wing Pinero, 'R.L. Stevenson: the Dramatist' (London: Chiswick Press, 1903); Clement Scott, *From The Bells to King Arthur:*

familiarity with the fashions of the stage was fifteen to twenty years out of date. The adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* was a melodrama pitched to a market increasingly interested not in a contest between vice and virtue, but in domestic dramas. The 1880s saw the rise of two playwrights – Arthur Wing Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones. Pinero's most popular works in this period were his farces for the Court theatre, *The Magistrate* (1885), *Dandy Dick* (1887) and later *The Schoolmistress* (1894). Jones was best known for *The Silver King* (1882), a spectacular drama of sin and redemption, and for *Saints and Sinners* (1884), an exposé of the hypocrisies of a religious community. Both men would go on to write plays which attempted to synthesise the new model offered by Ibsen. Pinero's *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (1893) tackles the plight of a woman with a dubious sexual history struggling to start her life afresh as a wife. Jones's *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1894) shows how a wife reacts to the news of her husband's infidelity.

Neither play achieves a sustained engagement with what George Bernard Shaw defined as Ibsen's rewriting of the structure of the play to encompass 'exposition, situation and discussion […] the discussion is the test of the playwright'.[26] Shaw's prescription

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A Critical Record of the First-Night Productions at the Lyceum Theatre from 1871-1895 (London: John MacQueen, 1896); George Bernard Shaw, *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (London: Constable, 1932), 3 vols. For overviews of the achievements of the theatre in this period see *British Theatre in the 1890s*, ed. Richard Foulks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Allardyce Nicholl, *History of English Drama 1660-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 6 vols.; *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. Kerry Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For the economics of the stage see Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); John Russell Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright (British Theatre 1800-1900)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For specifics on staging techniques see Michael R. Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre 1850-1910* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981);Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth Century England* (Princeton: University Press, 1983). For the role of women in the theatre in this period see Katherine Newey, *Women's Theatre Writing in Victorian Britain* (London: Macmillan, 2005); Kerry Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

26 George Bernard Shaw, 'The Quintessence of Ibsenism' (1891), in *Major Critical Essays*, ed. Michael

positions the theatre as an arena for the evolution of a debate, rather than simply the presentation of it. Shaw was indignant at the disparity between the potential both Pinero and Jones possessed to use the stage as a platform for the birth of a new kind of drama, and their timidity of execution. In his review of the published script of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* Shaw argued that Pinero's play was a bold construction, but that its execution was cowardly. Pinero had created a novel scenario and then run away from the consequences of his own daring. Shaw's Paula would have faced her husband and maintained that 'she remains perfectly valid to herself, and despises herself, if she sincerely does so at all, for the hypocrisy that the world forces on her instead of for being what she is'.[27] Pinero succeeded in establishing good professional relationships with actor-managers whilst retaining an autocratic hold on the direction of his plays. He added to this a determination to satisfy the audience's demand for an elegantly structured plot, providing them with a well-made play seasoned with an attention-holding dose of melodrama. Shaw could not quite forgive him for such canny professionalism.

In the second chapter of my thesis I assess the extent to which Hardy's desire to see a famous name as Tess Durbeyfield was stymied by the preoccupations of London actor-managers, who were reluctant to stage a play in which 'Tess herself predominates the piece – she practically doing the whole tragedy'.[28] Hardy's knowledge of the theatre in this decade ran in two parallel strands – he continued to market his play to the larger London theatres, but he was also involved in a project to stage an adaptation of *The Woodlanders*. This was

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Holroyd (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 160.

27 G. B. Shaw, *Our Theatres in the Nineties*, I, p. 47.

28 'To Laurence Alma-Tadema', 30/03/1896, *Collected Letters*, VII, p. 129.

begun at the request of J. T. Grein and C. W. Jarvis, who would later found the Independent Theatre, which staged work by writers such as Ibsen, Zola, Maupassant and Strindberg. They were responsible for the English premiere of Ibsen's *Ghosts* in 1891.[29] Such a division is indicative, I would argue, of Hardy's increasing intellectual engagement with the possibilities the theatre offered. Hardy was enthusiastic about the efforts of the Independent Theatre, but he seems to have taken little notice of the much larger efforts to build on Grein and Jarvis's work, in the Stage Society (founded 1899) for example. The surviving record indicates that Hardy attended pioneering productions, but only those which had obtained a licence from the Lord Chamberlain - he recorded his impressions of the premieres of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (1891) and *The Master Builder* (1893), with Elizabeth Robins in the roles of Hedda and Hilde Wangel.[30] Hardy's interest in the relationship between theories of reform and the constraints of practice, whether in the commercial or *avant-garde* theatre, was sporadic rather than sustained.

Earlier I noted Hardy's disclaimer that he knew nothing of the theatre in the early twentieth century, and had only been involved with local productions. Hardy's distance from developments in the capital in these years was partly the result of age – he no longer spent a portion of the Season in London, after years of doing so. Emma's death in 1912, and the 1914-18 war, seems to have brought about a natural end to Hardy's annual visits. This

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29 For further details see *The Daily Telegraph*, editorial comment, 14/03/1891, p. 5 – unsigned, but probably the work of the paper's drama critic, Clement Scott.

30 These outings were at the invitation of Edmund Gosse, who had been involved in preparing the translations. See 'To E.L. Hardy', 03/03/1894, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 52; 'To F. Henniker', 10/06/1893, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 14. For a reflection on the impact of these performances see Henry James, 'On the occasion of *Hedda Gabler*', *New Review*, IV (June 1891), pp. 519-30; 'Ibsen's New Play', *Pall Mall Gazette*, LVI (17/02/1893), pp. 1-2.

geographical distancing did not, however, altogether end Hardy's awareness of the theatrical world. He still visited the theatre occasionally, and his friendship with Harley Granville Barker ensured that he was familiar with changes in the contours of the theatrical landscape. Barker's pioneering productions at the Court Theatre from 1904-7 attempted to establish a repertory system with a rolling stock of plays by Ibsen, Shaw and Gilbert Murray's translations of Euripides, alongside Barker's own plays.[31] This, and Barker's later productions of *A Winter's Tale* (1912) and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1914) at the Savoy, established him as a powerful intellectual voice in the theatre. As discussed above, Hardy began to correspond with Barker in 1914 and over the next fourteen years they debated the merits of the theatre as a discipline – Barker advised on Hardy Players' productions and watched the private performances given by the Balliol Players in the Max Gate garden in the late 1920s of *The Curse of the House of Atreus* (*The Oresteia*, 1924), *Hippolytus* (1926) and *Iphigenia in Aulis* (1927). I would argue that by the early years of the twentieth century Hardy's awareness of the nature of the theatre was increasingly intellectually engaged. He no longer viewed the theatre as a monolithic medium, an approach which had inhibited his early adaptations of his novels for the stage, which he had treated as potentially profitable adjuncts to his novels rather than as discrete artistic projects.

Critical field

As Keith Wilson rightly highlighted in his 2007 'Hardy Birthday Lecture', readers of Hardy are

31 Hardy was a subscriber to the Independent Theatre and his correspondence with Barker is evidence of his interest in theatrical innovation – there is, however, no surviving evidence that he attended Independent Theatre productions.

conversant with Hardy and the dramatic, they are less familiar with Hardy and the theatre. It is, in terms of a critical tradition, a narrow field.[32] The topic of Hardy and the theatre has to date produced three books and a handful of scholarly articles. These outline the facts of a production and Hardy's involvement in it, and offer some discussion of potential motives, rather than any sustained analysis of the relationship between the adaptations and their sources.[33] My analysis is distinct because the interaction between adaptation, source and cultural context is placed firmly in dialogue with Hardy's shifting attitudes to the theatre. The popular interest in Hardy and the theatre, particularly at a local level, is partly an accident of history. The survival of one of the Hardy Players, Mrs Woodhall (born 1906) has in recent years led to a revival in Dorchester in celebration of her life, both through the reforming of the Players themselves (now the New Hardy Players) and through efforts to preserve and expand the drama collection at the Dorset County Museum.[34]

Whilst I have drawn on the articles listed below in offering scholarly support for my chapters, they are documentary records of projects, rather than analyses of their wider

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32 Keith Wilson, 'Thomas Hardy and the Stage', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 23:2 (Autumn 2007), 22-38.

33 Suleiman M. Ahmad, '*Far From the Madding Crowd* in the Provincial Theatre', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 16:1 (2000), 70-83; Pamela Dalziel, 'Whose *Mistress*? Thomas Hardy's theatrical collaboration', *Studies in Bibliography*, 48 (1995), 248-59; Richard James Hand, *Self-Adaptation: The Stage Dramatisation of Fiction by Novelists.* (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1996), http://theses.gla.ac.uk/1912/01/1996handphd.pdf [accessed 11/05/2011]; Trevor Johnson, 'Thomas Hardy Birthday Lecture 2004', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 20:3 (Oct 2004), 160-76; Richard Nemesvari '"Genres are not to be mixed...I will not mix them" Discourse, Ideology and Hybridity in Hardy's fiction', in *A Companion to Thomas Hardy*, ed. Keith Wilson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 102-117; Marguerite Roberts, *Tess in the Theatre* (Toronto: University Press, 1950), Marguerite Roberts, *Hardy's Poetic Drama and the Theatre* (New York: Pageant Press, 1965); James Stottlar, 'Hardy vs. Pinero: Two Stage Versions of *Far From the Madding Crowd*', *Theatre Survey*, 18 (November 1977), 23-43; Keith Wilson, *Thomas Hardy on Stage* (London and New York: Macmillan and St. Martin's, 1995).

34 For further details see:

http://www.hardyonline.org/21027.html;http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/media_releases/7666.aspx; http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/dorset/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8598000/8598561.stm; http://www.dorsetcountymuseum.org/?location_id=91 [accessed 24/05/2011].

resonance. James Stottlar, and more recently Suleiman M. Ahmad and Pamela Dalziel, have written articles which compare Pinero's play *The Squire* with *Far From the Madding Crowd*.[35] None of these trace back the adaptation, other than glancingly, to Hardy's motivations for undertaking the project in the first place, or to the dramatic potential the novel possesses, as the first chapter of my thesis attempts to do. Criticism on *Tess* in the theatre has been predominantly preoccupied with Gertrude Bugler's career as the Dorchester Tess – Marguerite Robert's *Tess in the Theatre* is a compilation of the surviving scripts with a lengthy, largely biographical, introduction.[36] By tracing Hardy's involvement with the staging of the novel back to the 1890s, I demonstrate how Hardy's negotiations reflect his determination to see a celebrated actress as Tess. The staging of the play in Dorchester in 1924 may have been the fulfilment of a lifelong ambition, but in the second chapter of the thesis I argue that it says far less about Hardy's view of the theatre than do his efforts throughout the 1890s to see his play on the stage. In addition to placing the effort to stage *Tess* firmly in the context of Hardy's ambitions for the project, this chapter of the thesis attempts a synthesis of the complex bibliographical material. I examine the two scripts Hardy wrote during the late 1890s, before looking at the modifications to this script for the performances during the 1920s: the first for Dorchester in 1924, the second for London in 1925. In addition to this I draw on three further scripts – the first script to be staged, an 1897 version which premiered in New York using Hardy's scripts as a basis, and two pirated

35 For Stottlar and Dalziel see footnote 33. Suleiman M. Ahmad, 'The Debt of Hardy and Carr's *Far From the Madding Crowd* to Pinero's *The Squire*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 15:2 (May 1999), 82-84.

36 On Gertrude Bugler see the indexes to Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Martin Seymour Smith, *Hardy* (London: Bloomsbury, 1995); Claire Tomalin, *Thomas Hardy: The Time Torn Man* (London: Viking, 2006).

versions.[37] The only existing printed versions of Hardy's scripts, in Roberts's edition, contain multiple textual inaccuracies – the result of her reliance on Florence Hardy's goodwill for access to the Max Gate library.

Hardy drafted a number of dramatic schemes for adapting his work for the stage – often these are sketches on the back of receipts, on tradesmen's catalogues, on envelopes.[38] My thesis does not cover every adaptation that Hardy drafted. Instead I have chosen my material on the basis of what I believe it reveals about Hardy's development of a sophisticated attitude to the theatre. This predominantly means that I dwell at length on those projects which produced a completed script, and which were discussed at length in Hardy's correspondence.[39] In the case of the first two chapters I am additionally interested in establishing the textual accuracy of the scripts – the adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* survives in only one copy, in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection, and the number of scripts for *Tess* are recorded only in Roberts's inaccurate printed edition. I have returned to the manuscript sources in all cases.

The material for my third chapter differs in that it is based on a script for *The Woodlanders* which survives only in Hardy's synopsis and in references in letters, and on

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37 Hardy's scripts are held in the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection, Dorset County Museum. The modifications for the London performance are additionally held in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection (British Library Lord Chamberlain's Plays, 1924/34, licensed 05/11/1924), along with the pirated scripts (British Library, Lord Chamberlain's Plays,1900/02 (licensed 15/02/1900) and British Library (Add MS 53701 U licensing no. 261) and Lorimer Stoddard's American version (British Library, Add MS 53625, licensing no. 88).

38 Hardy's dramatic schemes for *Jude*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *Two on a Tower, The Dynasts* and his short stories 'Enter a Dragoon' (*A Changed Man*), 'The History of the Hardcomes' (*Life's Little Ironies*) and 'The Duchess of Hamptonshire' (*A Group of Noble Dames*) are in the Dorset County Museum.

39 I have drawn on material from both the *Collected Letters* and manuscripts held in the Dorset County Museum, and the Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library).

Hardy's dramatic schemes for *Jude*, which were realised only as sketches. This material is used because it is symptomatic of Hardy's interest in the emergence of the *avant-garde* theatre in the 1880s and 1890s. The last chapter of the thesis concentrates on Hardy's original dramas, *The Dynasts* and *The Queen of Cornwall*. I have chosen the first because it offers the clearest example of Hardy's experiment with what can be classified as drama. I concentrate on the adaptations of *The Dynasts* – Harley Granville Barker's 1914 London production and Hardy's own bowdlerisation of the text as *Wessex Scenes from The Dynasts* (1916). In doing so I forge a connection between the origins of Hardy's Napoleonic interests, in stories heard in childhood, and his willingness to adapt the material for a local audience. *The Queen* was Hardy's only full-length drama written for the theatre. Thus its importance to the development of Hardy's career as a dramatist is axiomatic. I am principally interested in the extent to which it represents a synthesis of Hardy's views on the practical innovations the stage should adopt, as it draws on a view he expressed in the 1880s, that the stage should be stripped down to 'the form of an old Roman amphitheatre [...] the scenery being simply a piece of canvas'.[40] Keith Wilson's book *Thomas Hardy on Stage* (1995) covers some of the same territory as the last chapter of my thesis, on *The Dynasts* and *The Queen of Cornwall*, but his emphasis is primarily historical – tracing the dates, places and correspondence surrounding the productions. Though I have drawn on Wilson's material as a stimulus, the argument of my thesis differs in that it extends beyond lighting marginal areas of Hardy's career, and analyses the impact of this interest on the evolution of Hardy's attitude to what the theatre was capable of articulating.

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40 *Public Voice*, pp. 93-4.

In support of my case for Hardy's intellectual engagement with the theatre I draw on published sources, but rely heavily on archival material drawn from Dorchester's County Museum, County Library and County Record Office, the British Library's manuscript room and the Purdy Collection at Yale's Beinecke Library. This is supplemented by material from the Victoria and Albert Museum's Theatre Collection, the Mander and Mitchenson Collection, the Garrick Club Library and the Russell Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth.

The first three chapters of the thesis begin with an examination of the historical circumstances behind Hardy's efforts to stage four novels, *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), *The Woodlanders* (1887) and *Jude* (1895), before considering the distinction between the demands of the working theatre and Hardy's recognition of the dramatic potential of his plots. In his earliest attempts to adapt his work for the stage Hardy seems to have believed that a plot crafted to accentuate its dramatic power was automatically suited to the stage. The third chapter of the thesis looks at a shift in Hardy's attitude – a conversion to the virtues of selecting from a plot rather than attempting to compress the whole into a playable length. The final chapter of the thesis charts Hardy's attempts to redefine the dramatic – first in the ambitions of *The Dynasts* (1906-8), his sprawling Napoleonic drama 'for mental performance',[41] then in his exploitation of the interpretative possibilities of the spare stage in *The Queen of Cornwall* (1923).

41 This is Hardy's description, taken from the Preface to *The Dynasts*, *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Samuel Hynes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 5 vols., IV, p. 8.

Chapter One: *Far From the Madding Crowd*

This chapter examines Hardy's attitude to the theatre in the late 1870s and early 1880s by tracing the history of Hardy's adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd*. This was Hardy's first attempt at adapting his work for the stage. I would argue that Hardy saw playwriting at this point in his career not as a different medium whose language and technicalities he had to master, but as a means of capitalising on the popularity of his novel. This attitude was one he later began to question. By 1889, when he worked on an adaptation of *The Woodlanders* in collaboration with the founders of the Independent Theatre, J. T. Grein and C. W. Jarvis, and in 1895 and 1897 when he came to sketch out plans for adapting *Jude* into a play, he had become much more concerned with selecting themes from his novels and thinking about how they could be presented on the stage. In order to understand how Hardy arrived at his later views his previous exposure to the process of adapting his novels is significant, largely because it taught him how not to do it. Hardy began adapting *Far From the Madding Crowd* from a shaky premise: he believed that the task of the novelist and the dramatist were fundamentally the same thing and that he could take on the second role with little or no preparation, beyond a sense that his plot offered a 'promising theme for the stage'.[1] In the course of this chapter I seek to elucidate the impact of the adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* on Hardy's attitude to the theatre. In order to assess how the adaptation influenced Hardy's views on what the theatre could, and could not, achieve it is necessary to

1 Letter by Hardy to *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6.

trace the process by which the adaptation reached the stage. Having outlined this, I then tease out Hardy's shifts in motive towards the project during its life-span.

The novel from publication to the stage

Far From the Madding Crowd was serialised in the *Cornhill* magazine from January to December 1874 at the invitation of its editor, Leslie Stephen. It was published in volume form in November 1874. The critical reception of the novel was not uniformly adulatory: Henry James was famously dismissive of the novel in *The Nation*, ending his review by asserting that 'the only thing we believe in are the sheep and the dogs'.[2] Andrew Lang's review for the *Academy* was less vehement, but he nonetheless judged that 'its brilliant qualities are likely to neutralize the glare of its equally prominent faults'.[3] In spite of these demurs, the novel's reception enabled Hardy to quell any remaining doubts about turning to authorship full-time. When writing his first three novels - *Desperate Remedies* (1871), *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) and *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873) - Hardy had rather uneasily combined writing with piecemeal work as an architect. Stephen paid Hardy £400 for *Madding Crowd*, which enabled him to give up architecture, and to marry.[4] According to *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy,* Hardy seems to have been convinced of the novel's success by an accidental observation - he

2 Henry James, *Nation*, 24/12/1874, reprinted in *Literary Reviews and Essays: On American, French and English Literature,* ed. Albert Mordell (New York: Twayne, 1957), pp. 91-97.

3 Andrew Lang, *Academy*, VII (02/01/1875), 9.

4 See Stephen to Hardy, 06/10/1874, Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection, Dorset County Museum (afterwards DCM); 'To Smith, Elder & Co.', *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, eds. Richard Little Purdy & Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), 7 vols., I, pp. 22-3 (afterwards *Collected Letters*).

and Emma saw 'with unusual frequency during their journeys to and from London, ladies carrying about copies of it, with Mudie's label on the covers'.[5] Hardy wrote a version of his novel for the stage, entitling it *The Mistress of the Farm: A Pastoral Drama*.[6] There is no evidence extant for when he began this script, other than his biographical entry in the compendium *Men of the Time*, where Hardy states that he began the script in 1879.[7] At some point J. Comyns Carr, a critic with ambitions as a playwright, came on board as Hardy's collaborator. By November 1880 the two men had a script ready to pitch to the St. James's Theatre.[8] It was accepted, and then subsequently rejected.[9]

On 29th December 1881 the management of the St. James's, John Hare and William and Madge Kendal, staged the premiere of Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Squire,* with Madge Kendal in the title role of the woman farmer, Kate Verity. The play's clever cocktail of indiscretions and unrequited love proved popular, but the critics were swift to highlight the plot's resemblance to *Far From the Madding Crowd*.[10] Prominent among those pitting

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5 *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 104 (afterwards *Life*).

6 The significance of labelling the script as a 'Pastoral Drama' is drawn out later in the chapter, when I examine the script in greater detail.

7 *Men and Women of the Time: A Dictionary of Contemporaries*, ed. T. Cooper (London: George Routledge & Sons, 11th edition, 1884), p. 525.

8 In a later letter outlining the stages by which the script arrived at the St. James's, Carr said that the project began in the spring of 1880, and that he submitted the play for consideration on 11th November – see his letter in *The Era*, 07/01/1882 (Issue no. 2259, British Library Nineteenth Century Newspapers Collection, http://find.galegroup.com/bncn [accessed 01/11/2010]. All contemporary newspapers footnoted with an issue number are from this collection).

9 When discussing the script I consistently refer it as the 'Carr-Hardy script' in the body of the text and, for the purposes of direct quotation, as *Madding Crowd* (LCP). If '*The Mistress*' is used, this refers to the surviving typescript only.

10 For further details of contemporary responses to the parallels between *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *The Squire* see *The Daily News* 30/12/1881, Issue no. 11141; *The Era,* 31/12/1881, Issue no. 2258; *The Illustrated London News*, 21/01/1882, vol. 54.

Pinero's play against Hardy's novel was *The Daily News* journalist William Moy Thomas. In his review of *The Squire* he argued that Pinero had 'treated Mr Hardy with what in England is considered scant courtesy, and in other countries where authors' inventions are more strictly guarded [it] would be downright illegal'.[11]

Hardy responded indignantly to the terms of Thomas's review in a letter written on the day the piece was published. According to Hardy's paraphrase of it, Thomas's review had claimed that in *The Squire* 'the dramatic & narrative methods of presenting a story are so widely different that the dramatist might well afford to own his obligations to the novel'.[12] Hardy corrected the false premise from which Thomas was arguing. He revealed the history of his adaptation, *The Mistress of the Farm*, and Hare and the Kendals' knowledge of it: 'you probably write thus in ignorance of the fact that “Far From the Madding Crowd” exists also as a play – that the play was submitted to the management of the St. James's Theatre, was actually put in rehearsal by them, & then rejected'.[13] In this initial account of the project, Hardy was quick to claim the script submitted to the St. James's was based on his 'alone and unassisted' initial efforts: 'Mr Comyns Carr asked if I had ever thought of dramatising the story, when I sent him the play as I had written it. He modified it in places, to suit modern stage carpentry &c. & offered it to the St. James's. I leave you to draw your own inference'.[14] There is no other evidence that the St. James's management had got as far as putting the play in rehearsal. The remark is suggestive, and not entirely in ways which aid Hardy's case. It

11 *The Daily News*, 30/12/1881.

12 Thomas's review was printed in *The Daily News*, 30/12/1881.

13 'To W. Moy Thomas', 30/12/1881*, Collected Letters*, I, p. 99.

14 'To W. Moy Thomas', 30/12/1881*, Collected Letters*, I, p. 99.

provokes a question about whether something in the quality of the piece led Hare and the Kendals to turn down the play once they saw how the script worked on the stage.

In his reply to Hardy, Thomas wrote that 'if *The Squire* is not an adaptation of your novel then must we suppose, not a miracle only, but twenty miracles'.[15] He urged Hardy to attend a performance and

> note all the points of coincidence the evidence of "somnambulism" would, I believe, be found to be overwhelming. For myself, I am convinced that the wholesale obligations to the novel are absolutely demonstrable and would abundantly satisfy a jury if there were a legal remedy.[16]

Thomas's use of 'somnambulism' to describe Pinero's behaviour implies that Pinero had, with the disassociation of a sleepwalker, replicated his reading - placing *Far From the Madding Crowd*'s plot on stage in a superficially new guise as *The Squire*. Such a description seems to exonerate Pinero by suggesting that he had acted unconsciously. Thomas does not, however, acknowledge the justice of Hardy's case. In concentrating on the similarities between *The Squire* and the novel Thomas avoids confirming or countering Hardy's argument that the resemblance was all the greater because Pinero had taken material directly from his play.

Moy Thomas's letter was not Hardy's first news of *The Squire.* Comyns Carr had attended the opening night.[17] On the day Thomas's review appeared, Carr wrote to Hardy:

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15 'To Hardy', 01/01/1882 (DCM).

16 Emphasis in original. 'To Hardy', 01/01/1882 (DCM). This sentiment was picked up by Carr, who called Pinero a 'literary somnambulist who trespasses on other men's dramas'., *The Daily News*, 02/01/1882, Issue no. 11143.

17 As a theatre critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, see *Mrs J. Comyns Carr's Reminiscences*, ed. Eve Adam (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1925), p. 76.

> I am more indignant than I can tell you about this and I mean to make the whole thing public - You remember the circumstances under which our play was accepted [...] and then rejected on the caprice of Mrs Kendal. It is perfectly obvious to me that some one who heard our play has given the theme to Pinero.[18]

Thomas's warnings prompted Hardy and Carr to reveal the history of their adaptation, and most importantly Hare and the Kendals' part in it, to the press more widely. Carr ended his letter by asking Hardy

> to write me a letter by return saying that you learn with surprise that a play founded on *Far From the Madding Crowd* has been produced and that it is entirely without your authority or assent that you yourself had prepared [...] a dramatic version of the novel [...] and you wish it to be known that this is the only play bearing upon your novel which is in any way authorized by you.[19]

Carr entered into a public debate about *The Squire* in *The Daily News* of 1st January 1882. Here he stated baldly that Pinero had been 'supplied with some details of the rejected play' when he wrote *The Squire*.[20] Hardy answered Carr's call for the two of them to articulate their case trenchantly by sending a letter to both *The Daily News* and *The Times*. In his letter Hardy stated that he 'had long been impressed with the notion that the central idea of the story – a woman ruling a farm and marrying a soldier secretly, while unselfishly beloved through evil and good report by her shepherd or bailiff – afforded a promising

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18 'To Hardy', 30/12/1881 (DCM) – the dating for the Carr letters is based on the incomplete cataloguing, and is thus conjectural. In defence of the adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* Carr referred to the protection afforded by the drive for the 'new copyright bill': it is unclear what piece of legislation he was invoking here.

19 'To Hardy', 30/12/1881 (DCM). In a letter to *The Daily News* (04/01/1882, Issue no.11145) Carr was less circumspect – he threatened to 'publicly state and prove' Hare's reasons for rejecting the play.

20 *The Daily News*, 01/01/1882, Issue no.11143.

theme for the stage'.[21] It is significant, however, that in a private letter to William Black written three days later Hardy was more equivocal. He admitted that 'as Carr was the go-between throughout I should have some difficulty in proving that conversations were reported to the management'.[22] Black had passed on to Hardy the opinion of a magistrate friend of his that Hardy had a case for damages against the St. James's Theatre. At this stage Hardy did not act on the information. Instead he thanked Black for the advice and said that 'it accords with that of several legal people who have communicated with me'.[23] Precisely who he was referring to here is unclear, but Hardy had consulted his friend Henry Tindal Atkinson, a County Court judge - the possibility of legal redress was in Hardy's mind from the beginning of the dispute. Hardy's letter to Atkinson does not survive. Hardy must have written to him almost immediately on receipt of Carr's letter of 30th December 1881 about *The Squire*, as Atkinson's reply is dated 31st December.[24] Hardy went to the St. James's Theatre on 2nd January 1882 with George Lewis to see *The Squire*.[25] George Lewis was a much sought-after litigation lawyer: his obituary described him as being 'not so much a lawyer as a shrewd private inquiry agent; audacious, playing the game often in defiance of the rules and relying on his audacity to carry him through'.[26] Hardy's private conclusions are not known, but no

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21 *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6.

22 'To W. Black', 05/01/1882, *Collected Letters,* I, p. 100. See also Michael Millgate, *Thomas Hardy: A Biography Revisited* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) (afterwards *Biography*), pp. 210-11.

23 'To W. Black', 05/01/1882, *Collected Letters,* I, p. 100.

24 Black's letter to Hardy was dated 02/01/1882 and is now in the Dorset County Museum. For Tindal Atkinson's advice see letter of 31/12/1881 (DCM).

25 This date is the one cited by Carr in his letter to *The Daily News* (09/01/1882, Issue no. 11149). For corroborating evidence of this visit, if not of the date, see Madge Kendal, *Dame Madge Kendal by herself* (London: John Murray, 1933), p. 144.

26 *The Times*, 08/12/1911, p. 11.

case was brought.

Once Carr and Hardy had begun to weigh in, the newspapers' opinion columns shifted their focus to whether or not Pinero had known of Hardy's play and had borrowed its plot. Carr's letter to *The Times*, printed on 2nd January 1882, made the commercial case:

> We have the undisputed fact that Mr Hardy's literary creation has been openly appropriated without his consent or approval and that Mr Hardy's own acting version of his work has been ousted by the unacknowledged work of another hand.[27]

The scrupulously weighted reference to an 'undisputed fact' was deliberately confrontational. It is significant that Carr was careful with his wording here – he referred to Pinero and the St. James's as having made unauthorised use of 'Mr Hardy's literary creation'. By alluding to both Hardy's 'literary creation' and the 'acting version' he brought the two into juxtaposition but restricted himself to claiming that Hare and Kendal had condoned Pinero's unauthorised appropriation of *Far From the Madding Crowd*'s plot. He stopped short of accusing them outright of aiding Pinero's theft of parts of the *script.*

Hardy was less cautious. He was adamant that Pinero had been given covert access to the script of *Far From the Madding Crowd*. In the same issue of *The Times*, Hardy began boldly, claiming this secret knowledge had taught Pinero 'how sundry differences of the novel were to be got over for the stage'.[28] Such an extravagant claim is backed by evidence which is not so much clinching as arguably accidental: 'a gypsy, who does not exist in the

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27 *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6. For further details on the detrimental commercial impact of *The Squire* on the Carr-Hardy adaptation see Carr's letter to *The Daily News*, 02/01/1882. For a skit on the commercial benefits of the row see 'Inharmonious Concert at St. James's Theatre', *Punch*, 14/01/1882, p. 16.

28 *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6.

novel, was introduced into our play, and I see that a gypsy figures in *The Squire*'.[29] Hardy is alluding here to two characters from *The Squire*, Izod and Christiana Haggerston. Only Izod is described as 'half cad, half gipsy', but his sister, Kate's maid, is of the same blood.[30] Hardy's inaccurate information can only have come from Carr. Hardy's letter was printed in *The Times* on 2nd January 1882 and it was not until that night that he saw the play for himself.

The substance of Hardy and Carr's accusations was puzzlingly tentative. They never explicitly stated that Pinero had written his play with a clandestine copy of their script at his elbow. To do so would have been to make accusations without verifiable documentary evidence. Instead they confined themselves to hinting at conversations in which the Kendals had passed the germ of the plot on to Pinero.[31] Hardy's letter to *The Times* was somewhat more intemperate: he was playing upon his rights as an author astutely in his assertion that 'the whole transaction of producing *The Squire* without my knowledge [...] is quite unjustifiable, and would be a discredit to the management of any theatre'.[32] Hare and William Kendal wrote a breathless reply to these accusations. Its endlessly accumulating sequence of denials leaves the reader feeling that the defence could continue indefinitely, if only the column had space to contain it: 'that [Carr's script] was ever accepted we emphatically deny [...] we also emphatically deny that Mr Pinero's writing a play in which the

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29 *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6. In *The Era* on the same day Carr suggested that the resemblances were all the closer because Hardy had suggested that the social status of the characters might be raised for the adaptation, and *The Squire* featured a Lieutenant.

30 Arthur Wing Pinero, *The Squire* (London: J. Miles & Co., 1881), p. 2 - subsequent references are to this edition, incorporated in the body of the text.

31 For details of the Kendals' role in alerting Pinero to the existence of their script see Carr to Hardy, 30/12/1881 (DCM); 'To W. Black', 05/01/1882, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 100.

32 *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6.

critics perceive a resemblance to Mr Hardy's novel arose from any hint, suggestion, or act of ours [...] it was entirely and purely a coincidence'.[33] Hare and Kendal stated that Carr and Hardy's letters to the newspapers were the first evidence they had that Hardy was involved in the adaptation at all. Given the furore it is possible they were being disingenuous, but Carr may have presented himself as the novel's adapter. Carr's comment in his letter to Hardy of 30th December on the script having being 'authorized by you' refers to their collaboration over modifying *The Mistress*, but it is a term Hare and Kendal could have misinterpreted easily.

Pinero's initial response to the accusations was combative, and somewhat dismissive. He argued that Carr was aggrieved simply because he 'shares with all authors of rejected plays the bitterness of ill-success'.[34] The debate was extensively covered by the theatrical press. In February 1882 the journal *Theatre* included a symposium designed to determine the extent of Pinero's "appropriation" of Hardy's novel.[35] The question of Pinero's use of the script was never raised. The article began with a declaration that placing *The Squire* against *Far From the Madding Crowd* revealed that the 'resemblances are so numerous that the probability that they are due to design rather than accident gains force more and more'.[36] Retreating rapidly from the logical deduction to be drawn from this hypothesis, that Pinero

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33 *The Times*, 03/01/1882, p. 8. See also John Dawick, *Pinero: A Theatrical Life* (Colorado: University Press, 1993), p. 91. For Carr's assertion that Hare had viewed the play with favour but was overruled by the Kendals see Carr to Hardy, 30/12/1881 (DCM).

34 *The Daily News*, 02/01/1882.

35 'Plays, Plagiarism and Mr Pinero: Who is Right and Who is Wrong?', *Theatre*, ed. Clement Scott, Feb 1882 (Vol. V, Jan-June 1882), pp. 65-73. The April issue debated 'The Case of Mr Pinero', placing the similarities of the two plays in parallel columns (pp. 202-4).

36 *Theatre*, p. 68. The debate reached as far as Bristol - *Bristol Mercury and Daily Post* (12/01/1882, Issue no. 10503); Aberdeen - 'A Literary Squabble', *Aberdeen Weekly*, (03/01/1882, Issue no. 6992) and Newcastle – *Newcastle Weekly Courant* (06/01/1882, Issue no. 10801).

was guilty of borrowing, the article's conclusion was altogether more uncertain. The journalist observed simply that Pinero had 'overvalued his own inventiveness and underrated the sources of his inspiration'.[37] Pinero's response to the symposium was somewhat less intemperate than his earlier statements had been. He reiterated his earlier insistence that 'my play originated from no suggestion made to me at any time by Mr Hare or Mr Kendal, but was solely the result of my own plan and purpose'.[38] His assertion was, playfully or otherwise, qualified by the comment that if he had been intent on stealing from Hardy he would have disguised his theft with more skill. It is ultimately impossible to prove whether or not Pinero was guilty of the charges against him. Instead I will focus in this chapter on two things: firstly what the row over *The Squire* reveals about Hardy's attitude to adapting *Far From the Madding Crowd*, and secondly what *The Squire* had to offer its audiences that the Carr-Hardy version of *Madding Crowd* did not.

Hardy's attitude to adapting *Far From the Madding Crowd* was shaped by his experiences as a novelist. This influenced both his perspective on the process of putting his plot on the stage, as I outline later in the chapter, and his approach to the financial implications of the exercise. Hardy had ill-advisedly accepted his publisher's offer of £30 for the copyright of his second novel *Under the Greenwood Tree* in April 1872: when Hardy tried to get back the copyright three years later Tinsley said he would only surrender it for £300. In later negotiations Hardy was far more circumspect – disposing of the rights to the serialisation and

37 *Theatre*, p. 68.

38 *The Daily News*, 04/01/1882 (Issue no. 11146).

the rights to the three-volume edition for a year only for both *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1872) and *Far From the Madding Crowd*.[39] Hardy's account in the *Life* of his negotiations over *A Pair of Blue Eyes* does not have to be entirely true for its force to be felt: determined not to be outmanoeuvred by his publisher again he went out and bought a copy of the standard work on copyright law, Copinger's *The Law of Copyright in Works of Literature and Art*. Hardy 'sat up half the night studying it. Next day he called on Tinsley and said he would write the story for the sum mentioned, it being understood that the amount paid was for the magazine issue solely, after which publication all rights were to return to the author'.[40] Hardy records that his pique took political shape in May 1875 when he 'formed one of a deputation to Mr Disraeli in support of a motion for a Select Committee to inquire into the state of Copyright Law'.[41] Hardy was constantly conscious of the profits, and losses, writing could make - a practical approach he much later in his life characterised as an awareness of the need to 'keep base life afoot'.[42]

I want to argue that Hardy brought the same mindset to staging *Far From the Madding Crowd*. In approaching the theatrical world Hardy had only his understanding of the value of his novels in publishers' terms to guide him. By 1880-2, the period in which the controversy over *The Squire* took place, Hardy had published four further novels - *The Hand of Ethelberta* (1875); *The Return of the Native* (1878); *The Trumpet-Major* (1880) and *A Laodicean* (1881).

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39 See letter 'To W. Tinsley', 22/04/1872, 03/01/1875, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 16, p. 34 and *Life*, p. 91, p. 104; 'To Smith, Elder & Co.', 20/11/1873, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 22.

40 *Life*, p. 92.

41 Moy Thomas, as Secretary of the Copyright Association, formed part of the same delegation. See 'To W. Moy Thomas', 27/03/1875, 12/08/1882, *Collected Letters*, I, p.36, p. 108; *Life*, p. 108.

42 *Life*, p. 105.

With each novel his sense of his market value seems to have increased incrementally - his negotiations with publishers became more assured, even urbane, in tone. Writing to Smith & Elder over *Ethelberta*, Hardy managed to sound both well-practised as a negotiator and secure in his sense of his own worth: 'it would be greatly to the advantage of the tale if we could get this cause of distraction cleared out of the way; and I have thought that you would probably take the same view of the matter on my mentioning it to you'.[43] The price paid for his novels fluctuated alarmingly: £700 for *Ethelberta*; £240 for serial of the *Native*; £200 for the first edition of *The Trumpet-Major*.[44] Yet Hardy was buoyant enough to negotiate a deal with Harper Brothers which earned him £1,300 just for the serial rights to *A Laodicean.*[45]

Hardy's increasingly canny negotiating bolstered his belief that his work had a definite market value. His later account of the origins of *The Mistress* suggests that he began it desultorily, with little more than an academic interest in testing out its 'promising theme for the stage'.[46] But his translation of this idea into action by sending the script to Carr and agreeing to the play being pitched to the St. James's proves that his involvement was greater than he later claimed. I would argue that *The Mistress of the Farm* was begun by Hardy with a view to asserting his copyright over the plot of his novel. Novelists in this period had no effective protection against their work being staged. Any adapter could take the plot of a novel and put it on the stage without authorisation. This could happen even whilst the novel was still being serialised, as Dickens found when *Nicholas Nickleby* was adapted in November

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43 'To Smith, Elder & Co.', 27/02/1875, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 35. For *A Laodicean* see 'To Harper & Brothers', 16/04/1880, *Collected Letters*., I, p. 72.

44 'To Smith, Elder & Co.', 28/10/1880, *Collected Letters*, p. 81.

45 With an additional £550 for the American serial rights. See Michael Millgate, *Biography*, p. 195.

46 Letter to *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6.

1838. At this stage only eight parts of the novel had been printed, so the adapter had obligingly finished off the plot for him.[47] Dickens has a thinly disguised rant at this practice when Nicholas delivers an angry speech to a "literary gentleman" in defence of authors: 'you take the uncompleted books of living authors, fresh from their hands, wet from the press, cut, hack, and carve them to the powers and capacities of your actors, and the capabilities of your theatres, finish unfinished works [...] do your utmost to anticipate his plot – all this without his permission, and against his will'.[48] The only means by which an author could establish their right over the performance of their plot was to write a version for the stage themselves. The novelist had a vested interest in registering an adaptation with the Lord Chamberlain for licensing, in however unformed a state.[49] Alternatively, they could simply announce that an adaptation was being prepared for the press, as Wilkie Collins did at the close of his serialisation of *No Name* in 1863 – the threat itself could be a sufficient deterrent.[50] There was no absolute necessity that these scripts be staged, though eight adaptations by Wilkie Collins of his novels were performed between 1857 and 1885.[51]

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47 For further details of this see the note to Dickens's letter to Frederick Yates, c. 29/11/1838, *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, I (1820-1839), eds. Madeline House & Graham Storey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 463.

48 Charles Dickens, *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), ed. Mark Ford (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 598. See further note to Dickens's letter to John Forster, 07/09/1837, *Letters of Charles Dickens*, p. 304.

49 For further discussion of this see John Russell Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright (British Theatre 1800-1900)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 106.

50 In *All The Year Round*, 27/12/1862, p. 361. For details of Collins's circumvention of the copyright law see *No Name* (1863), ed. Virginia Blain (Oxford: World's Classics, 2008), xxiii-xxiv.

51 In addition to the eight adaptations (two of *Armadale* (1866, 1875); *No Name* (1870); *The Woman in White* (1871); *Man and Wife* (1873); *The New Magdalen* (1873); *The Moonstone* (1877); *The Evil Genius* (1885) Collins wrote seven other plays in this period, three in association with Dickens (*The Frozen Deep* (1857), *The Lighthouse* (1857) and *No Thoroughfare* (1867)). For a full listing see Allardyce Nicholl, *A History of English Drama 1660-1900*, 6 vols., V, Late Nineteenth Century Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 318.

Thomas Hardy as dramatist

Hardy's composition of *The Mistress* was a politic response to contemporary copyright laws.[52] As outlined above, novelists exercised rights only over their printed narrative. They had little effective control over the afterlife of their plots, a position acknowledged in Moy Thomas's reference to the absence of a 'legal remedy' for Hardy's situation. This freedom was one adapters were swift to capitalise on. Only the individual efforts of novelists offered a concerted challenge to the obscurities of the legal situation.[53] The Dramatic Copyright Act (1833) had attempted to gain surety for adaptations as works considered legally discrete from their sources, but its success was only partial. The difficulties were compounded by the nature of the material. Tracy C. Davis's pithy diagnosis of the nature of theatrical performance is helpful here - it is inherently ephemeral, 'expunged as it is performed'.[54] If an adapter published his/her script then the original author of the work had some right to challenge its existence, but if the adapter simply put on an adaptation of a novel which left no print traces, other than the script submitted for licensing to the Lord Chamberlain, there was no real likelihood of legal repercussions.[55]

Particular cases set precedents. The stand they took was symbolically significant, but their practical application was less lasting. The 1863 case against William Suter's versions of *Lady Audley's Secret* and *Aurora Floyd* (*Tinsley* v. *Lacy*) established that Suter had encroached

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52 In this period the standard reference work was Walter Arthur Copinger's *The Law of Copyright in Works of Literature and Art* (London: Stevens and Haynes, 1870) – a copy of which was in Hardy's library at Max Gate, see library catalogue assembled by Michael Millgate http://www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/hardy/hardycataz.html [accessed 05/02/2010].

53 For further details on the history of theatrical copyright law see Nicholl, *History of English Drama 1660-1900*, V, passim.; Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright*, pp. 84-115.

54 Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000), p. 334 (see further pp. 335-362).

55 Though even this printed evidence of the play is not applicable to productions, particularly in provincial theatres, which were performed without a licence from the Lord Chamberlain.

on Mary Elizabeth Braddon's rights because his scripts were too closely derived from their sources: they 'included dialogue lifted from the novels and made substantial use of the most striking incidents in the originals'.[56] Braddon's victory was a formality with few practical consequences. She later complained that she lacked any real authority over 'a valuable portion of my copyright, the exclusive right to dramatise my own creations'.[57] Carr entered into this debate explicitly in his defence of Hardy's rights over the plot of *Far From the Madding Crowd*. He claimed that 'Mr Hardy is absolutely powerless to act in the matter, his own authorised version of his own work is ousted from the first place by the unacknowledged and unauthorised work of another hand'.[58]

In 1888 the novelist Frances Hodgson Burnett succeeded in expunging Edward Seebohm's take on *Little Lord Fauntleroy* from the Lord Chamberlain's records. Burnett won her case against Seebohm by the exercise of some assured legal footwork. Adapters only infringed the law if they published a portion of their adaptation. Burnett's lawyers argued that when 'copies of a work were made for the purposes of representation on stage [it constituted] multiplication': therefore Seebohm was guilty of stealing substantially from the novel.[59] The removal of the adaptation from the Lord Chamberlain's records was an official indicator of its disgrace, though the existence of the copy submitted for licensing was not

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56 Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright*, p. 49. Suter's adaptation of *Lady Audley's Secret* was staged at the Queen's Theatre in February 1863; his version of *Aurora Floyd* was put on by the same theatre in March 1863 – see Katherine Newey, *Women's Theatre Writing in Victorian Britain* (London: Macmillan, 2005), p. 89; Kerry Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 98-9.

57 Observation dated 1874, cited in Robert Lee Wolff, *Sensational Victorian: The Life and Fiction o M.E. Braddon* (New York: Garland, 1979), p. 142, but no source is given.

58 *The Daily News*, 02/01/1882.

59 Law Report, *The Times*, 25/04/1888, p. 11, cited in Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, p. 115.

used by Burnett's lawyers as evidence of the script's 'multiplication'. Burnett's legal victory forcefully demonstrates novelists' continued efforts to bolster a perilous position. *The Sunday Times* claimed that Burnett had 'practically secure[d] to a novelist [...] the right of dramatising his own story'.[60] Her victory established the author's ownership of exclusive *intellectual* rights to their plot – its practical implications were less sure. *The Sunday Times*'s judgement overlooks a considerable caveat: the nature of the dispute could never constitute a guarantee. This legal wrangle post-dates the debate surrounding *The Squire.* However, Seebohm's unequivocal statement of his position encapsulates the powerlessness of the novelist faced with an unauthorised adapter:

> By the English law anyone may adapt for stage representation any novel, story or tale published either by itself or in a magazine or journal. The author of the story can prevent the play from being printed and sold as a book, but he or she cannot prevent it being acted.[61]

In the chapter thus far I have sought to establish the successive stages of Hardy's involvement in adapting his novel for the stage. I have argued that Hardy began to adapt *Far From the Madding Crowd* as a private exercise: the first version of *The Mistress* was an attempt to make something of the plot's 'promising theme for the stage'.[62] When Carr became involved in the project it became much more explicitly about protecting the novel's copyright. Handing over the logistics, and some of the writing, to Carr allowed Hardy to feel secure that an authorised adaptation was underway without him having to participate too

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60 Undated quotation from *The Sunday Times*, cited in Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre,* p. 121. For an analysis of the case see Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, pp. 115-121.

61 Law Report, *The Times*, 25/04/1888, p. 11, cited in Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre*, p. 115.

62 *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6.

actively in the process. The fact that Carr and Hardy did not attempt to stage their play in the thirteen months between their initial pitch to the St. James's in November 1880 and the staging of *The Squire* in December 1881 is indicative of Hardy's lack of investment in seeing the play performed. Hardy had an acute sense of the market value of his novels, but I would argue that rather than attempting to understand the subtleties of the theatrical market Hardy began the adaptation in order to insure his plot against theft by unauthorised adapters.

The wrangle over the extent of Pinero's debt to Hardy's novel and script resists unravelling. The evidence is not conclusive enough to acquit or convict Pinero of debts to the novel, or of covertly stealing from the script. More concretely, I want to focus on the practical consequences of the row. Hardy candidly addressed the financial implications of the controversy over *The Squire*, carefully calculating his potential losses: 'My drama is now rendered useless, for it is obviously not worthwhile for a manager to risk producing a piece if the whole gist of it is already to be seen by the public at another theatre'.[63] Hardy's concern here is with his script's status as an unprofitable business venture in the wake of *The Squire*. The *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* captured this side of the debate by posing a pertinent rhetorical question: 'Would Messrs Hardy and Carr have publicly recognised that similarity, or accused Mr Pinero of plagiarism, had *The Squire* been a failure?'[64] Carr and Hardy would not have embarked upon the plagiarism debate quite so energetically if *The Squire* had been less

63 *The Times* 02/01/1882, p.6. For further evidence of Hardy's attempts to extract a profit from the production see 'To Sampson, Low, Marston & Co.', 03/03/1882, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 94.

64 *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, 16/01/1882, Issue no. 6994.

of a success.

Hardy was interested in playing with the possibilities of staging his plot, and asserting his copyright over it: neither exercise necessitated the play actually being staged. The advent of *The Squire* was a catalyst for the performance of the Carr-Hardy script, which was registered with the Lord Chamberlain on 25th February 1882 and first staged at the Prince of Wales Theatre in Liverpool two days later. The play later went on a northern provincial tour – to Bradford, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Newcastle. Carr handed over control of the productions after the Liverpool performances to Charles Kelly, the experienced actor playing Gabriel Oak. After some cast changes the play was brought to London, opening at the Globe Theatre on 29th April 1882, where it ran to mixed reviews for ten weeks. It achieved a total of 49 provincial performances and 120 in London.[65]

The Squire was still on at the St. James's when Carr's company came to London. *The Squire* ran until the end of the season, for a total of 170 performances. [66] By placing the two plays in visible competition with each other I want to suggest that Carr was attempting to reinvigorate a debate which by the April of 1882 had begun to lose something of its momentum. Hardy's letters to Carr for this period are not extant, but Carr's correspondence with Hardy shows that it was Carr who pushed Hardy to assert their case by staging their

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65 It was staged at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool (from 27/02-11/03 1882); The Theatre Royal, Bradford (13/03-18/03); The Gaiety Theatre, Glasgow (20/03-01/04); The Royal Princess Theatre, Edinburgh (03/04-15/04); and The Tyne Theatre, Newcastle (17/04-22/04). In London it was staged at The Globe Theatre (29/04-08/07) then from 18/09-23/09 at The National Standard Theatre, Bishopsgate. See further S.M. Ahmad, '*Far From the Madding Crowd* in the British Provincial Theatre', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 16:1 (February 2000), 70-84.

66 According to John Dawick, *Pinero: A Theatrical Life* (Colorado: University Press, 1993), p. 103 and James Stottlar, 'Hardy vs. Pinero: Two Stage Versions of *Far From the Madding Crowd*', *Theatre Survey*, 18 (November 1977), 23-43 (24).

script, marketing it as the “original” to Pinero's spurious version. He reminded Hardy of the party line: 'you wish it to be known that this is the only play bearing upon your novel which is in any way authorized by you'.[67] It is possible that having dropped the idea of suing the St. James's management, Carr was trying to make his case in the only way he could – by placing the two plays in competition with each other. In a letter printed in *The Era* on 5th January 1882, Pinero had challenged Carr to put on his play, provoking him by arguing that surely they were even if each had a part of the novel in their play – one the plot, one the dialogue: 'I have no warmer wish than that Mr Carr's play should see the light; its production will be my best defence'.[68]

In his correspondence with Hardy, Carr was clear 'in launching this play I took half the responsibility of loss upon myself. I felt that as I had made myself responsible to you in fixing its final shape it was only right that any risk should be mine and not yours'.[69] Carr made substantial changes to the script during its rehearsals in Liverpool before the play was submitted for licensing and many of these alterations echo *The Squire*'s scene settings, and occasionally snatches of dialogue. Carr's motives for heightening the resemblance between the two plays can only be guessed at, but they seem to represent an attempt to prove the justice of Carr and Hardy's case for plagiarism by emphasising the plays' shared themes. Instead of corroborating his case, these retrospective revisions are evidence of Carr's covert attempt to capitalise on *The Squire*'s popularity. In my discussion of the script later in the chapter I examine these alterations in greater detail: at this stage it is sufficient to suggest

67 'To Hardy', 30/12/1881 (DCM).

68 *The Era*, 05/01/1882 (reprinted in *The Daily News* on the same date).

69 'To Hardy', 28/02/1882 (DCM).

Carr's motives for agitating for the play to be performed.

Hardy was evidently reluctant for the play to be called *Far From the Madding Crowd*, and even for his name to appear on the licensing script and the playbills. By extrapolating from the terms of Carr's letter of 20th January 1882 it is apparent that Hardy had lost faith in the project. Carr protested at Hardy's desire for the 'authorship of the play to remain anonymous, and its title to be something other than *Far From the Madding Crowd*'.[70] Carr won. The playbills marketed the play as 'by Thomas Hardy and J. Comyns Carr'.[71] Hardy may simply have been sickened by the publicity over Pinero's play, but I conjecture that this weariness reinforced his earlier views for the work. Hardy had began adapting the novel partly as a private exercise, to see if he could do anything with its 'promising theme',[72] but he was principally interested in producing a script that would establish his copyright. Performance of the play interested Hardy only slightly, and after his initial anger at the behaviour of the St. James's management had dissipated, he was content to let Carr fight alone – it is noticeable that the press debate narrowed after Hardy's contribution to an increasingly acrimonious spat between Carr and Pinero.[73]

The details of the plagiarism row are ultimately less intriguing than an effort to decide the nature of Pinero's offence. *The Squire*'s possible borrowing from Hardy was particularly embarrassing for Pinero because *The Squire* came at such an early stage in his playwriting

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70 See Pamela Dalziel, 'Whose *Mistress*? Thomas Hardy's theatrical collaboration', *Studies in Bibliography*, 48 (1995), 248-59 (251); see further Carr to Hardy, 20/01/1882 (DCM).

71 S. M. Ahmad, 'Hardy and Liverpool', *Thomas Hardy Society Review*, 1:4 (1978), 119-123 (119).

72 *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6.

73 See for example Pinero's letter to *The Daily News*, 02/01/1882.

career – it was only his fourth full-length play. The accusation that he was nothing more than an opportunistic culler of other people's plots could have curtailed his career before it had begun.[74] Pinero initially responded to the accusations with a mixture of indignation and logic chopping. He insisted that 'I merely put my horse's head to the open country and take the same hedges and ditches'.[75] Pinero always maintained that he came to his plot unaided, citing the germ of *The Squire* in an old sketch: 'a young couple secretly married – the girl about to become a mother, finding that a former wife is in existence. The heroine amongst those who respect and love her. The fury of a rejected lover, who believes her to be a good woman'.[76] In his contribution to the *Theatre* symposium, Pinero was adamant that the allegations against him were both personally and, more significantly, professionally offensive: 'it is simply preposterous that I am liable to the charge of pilfering from a novel and an unskilled playwright the secret of what makes a play acceptable to an audience'.[77] Pinero cited Samuel Johnson's observations in *The Rambler* on the 'common stock of images, and a beaten track of transition, which all authors suppose themselves at liberty to use'.[78] Johnson was defending authors against petty accusations of plagiarism by arguing that apparent resemblances were an occupational inevitability: 'many subjects fall under the consideration of an author, which being limited by nature can admit of only slight and accidental

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74 *The Squire* followed on from *La Comète*, *The Money-Spinner* and *Imprudence* (for a list see Dawick, *Pinero*, pp. 404-9).

75 *The Daily News*, 30/12/1881.

76 *The Daily News*, 02/01/1882.

77 *Theatre* (February 1882), p. 72. For a reflection on Pinero's early understanding of the audience see the review of his first play for the Kendals, (*The Money Spinner*, January 1881) in *The Illustrated London News*, 15/01/1881, p. 113.

78 *The Theatre*, p. 73.

diversities'.[79] Pinero appropriated Johnson's argument for the legitimate deployment of 'the general magazine of literature' to justify *The Squire's* relationship to *Far From the Madding Crowd*'s plot.[80]

A close reading of *The Squire* justifies the strength of Pinero's rebuttals of any accusations of plagiarism. Pinero's Kate Verity is beloved by her farm manager, Gilbert Hythe: he swears he is 'weak enough to crawl about this place for the sake of a look from you. Strong enough to love you with all my soul; weak enough not to hate you for wrecking my life' (p. 16). These amorous affairs are little more than distractions from Kate's governing anxiety: the necessity of concealing her marriage to the feckless soldier Eric Thorndyke. Pinero set his heroine's plight against a carefully constructed framework of multiple misunderstandings. Pinero is exercised by the cost of Kate's false situation. Eric's frequent visits to the farm cause Kate's maid, Christiana Haggerston, to hint darkly at the possibilities of blackmail: 'your precious love secret is known to my brother and me [...] we can spell the name of the man who is the most welcome guest here, in broad daylight when doors are open, and in the dead of night when doors are locked' (p. 59). The news of Kate's pregnancy prompts Eric to reveal their marriage.

In an impeccably staged, but nonetheless hoary, plot twist it is revealed that Eric has a first wife - French and therefore naturally wicked. This plotline superficially conforms to a melodramatic convention, somewhat satirically described by Jerome K. Jerome as the inevitable re-appearance of a wife the hero has 'married, when a boy, and forgotten all

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79 Pinero was citing *The Rambler,* No. 143 (30/07/1751)*, Yale Edition of the Works ofSamuel Johnson*, general editor John H. Middendorf (Yale: University Press, 1969), 18 vols., V, pp. 393-401 (395).

80 *Works of Samuel Johnson*, p. 395.

about'.[81] However, Pinero's orchestration of this crisis reveals his capacity for the intelligent employment of a theatrical cliché. He uses the revelation as the impetus for a scene between the newly estranged couple, their separation serving to emphasise the truth of Kate's judgement that 'we were wedded in happiness, we are divorced in grief' (p. 47). Eric's wife, a singer with the fitting stage name of *La Sirène*, then obligingly collapses and dies. This allows the lovers to honestly fulfil their vows. *The Squire* is primarily a portrait of a happy marriage thwarted by Eric's youthful follies. All is resolved with satisfying symmetry, but the ending is nonetheless a daring conceit. The heroine of the play is pregnant and unmarried – the curtain falls with the local Parson pledging to marry her to Eric forthwith as a Chorus of Villagers offer up a Harvest blessing for the farm.

The Squire's similarities to Hardy's novel, the first thing the critics noticed, are more easily established than the conflicting claims over Pinero's knowledge of Carr and Hardy's script. Pinero closes Act Two of *The Squire* with a confrontation scene: Gilbert Hythe accuses Eric Thorndyke of compromising Kate Verity's reputation by visiting her at night alone. The apparatus of the scene aids the atmosphere of heightened emotion: Gilbert rushes to defend Kate's honour brandishing a shotgun.[82] Such gestures are counterbalanced by the play's emotional gravity, which rests on Kate and Eric's love for each other. This is conveyed through dialogue between the pair which is overwhelmingly domestic in character. A few moments before Gilbert enters in anger Kate has learnt from the local Parson of the existence of Eric's

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81 Jerome K. Jerome, *Stage-Land: Curious Habits and Customs of its Inhabitants* (Bath: Chatto &Windus, 1890), p. 20.

82 William Archer was dismissive of this technique, declaring that 'Gilbert Hythe drags about with him through the first two acts a great double-barrelled gun for no conceivable reason, except that he must have the wherewithal to shoot Thorndyke at the end of the second act', William Archer, *English Dramatists of To-day* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1882), pp. 287-8.

first wife and realised that she is, in law at least, unmarried. Her response is not to accuse Eric, who has silently witnessed the previous scene, but to begin burning the evidence that could incriminate him. Eric witnesses her methodical destruction of everything that reminds her of her marriage. Both are stunned by events - neither knows how to comfort the other, though they long to: '*Kate*: We are suffering so much together, aren't we? I don't know what I've said to you, but it is no fault of yours, dear' (p. 47). Eric reacts to Gilbert's intrusion with dignity, declaring that 'you are in the presence of a sorrow too profound to be disturbed by sharp questions and hot answers' (p. 48). Gilbert is only enraged by such a measured reply:

> *Gilbert*: Heaven forgive you – stand back! [*He raises his gun. KATE moves forward with a cry, and catches his uplifted arm.*]
>
> *Kate*: Gilbert! Gilbert! The Father of my Child! [*She falls in a swoon at his feet*] (p. 49).

Gilbert's intemperate response serves to bring the act to a close. The tonal shift from private mourning to public accusations is dramatically effective, but nonetheless jarring. It is impossible to determine precisely to what extent Carr revised the script of *Far From the Madding Crowd* during rehearsals in Liverpool, but the resemblance between Pinero's confrontation scene and the close of Act Two of *Far From the Madding Crowd* is striking: Bathsheba stands between Troy and Gabriel, silencing the latter's anger by declaring 'Hold, Gabriel – hold, I say! You must not, He is my husband!'[83]

I have chosen to focus on this scene from *The Squire* because it ably demonstrates the surface similarities to Hardy's novel which the critics seized on. To a theatre critic, writing

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83 British Library Add MS 53267 J (licensed by the Lord Chamberlain 25/02/1882), II, fo. 33^{r}. Subsequent references to this text are footnoted as '*Madding Crowd* (LCP)'.

copy to a deadline and anxious to have something arresting to say about the play, this scene could easily be mistaken for a collage of parts of Hardy's novel. Gilbert Hythe threatening Eric Thorndyke sounds a little like Boldwood castigating Troy for his treatment of Bathsheba in Chapter 34, 'Home Again – A Trickster', when he instantly believes Troy's insinuations that Bathsheba cannot 'be saved now unless I marry her'.[84] Boldwood's credulousness proves how far his love for Bathsheba has derailed his judgement, as even Troy recognises: 'You say you love Bathsheba; yet on the merest apparent evidence you instantly believe in her dishonour. A fig for such love!' (p. 230). Gilbert does not react in the least like this – convinced of the strength of their mutual love he sets aside his own feelings for Kate and works to bring the lovers together. He becomes their champion. Eric's position in this scene is superficially similar to Troy's, but he answers Gilbert's peremptory question 'Is that lady your wife?' (p. 49) with an equivocation that has none of Troy's relish for riddling shrift to it:

> *Eric*: Then, sir, in the sight of Heaven, Yes.
>
> *Gilbert*: In the sight of the Law?
>
> *Eric*: No (p. 49).[85]

Pinero later admitted that Mrs Kendal had discussed the Carr-Hardy play with him. Whilst this proves his knowledge of the script, it does not prove his borrowing from it.[86] The

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84 *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), ed. Suzanne B. Falck-Yi (Oxford: World's Classics, reprinted in 2002), p. 228; subsequent references are to this edition, incorporated in the body of the text.

85 Eric's 'in the sight of heaven' mirrors Troy's penitent words as he stands by Fanny's coffin: '"But never mind, darling," he said; "In the sight of heaven you are my very, very wife"' (p. 263) but this parallel is the repetition of a common phrase, rather than evidence of Pinero borrowing from the novel.

86 See Richard Little Purdy, *Thomas Hardy: A Bibliographical Study* (London: Oak Knoll Press, originally published in 1954, reprinted in 2002), p. 30. If this is the case then by not putting Mrs Kendal's name on their letter to the paper Hare and Kendal were telling the truth. For speculation about the possible

evidence for the resemblance between Hardy's novel, Carr and Hardy's script and *The Squire* is, as outlined above, a matter of weighing in the balance a rapid-fire sequence of claims whose veracity is impossible to establish conclusively. The conflicting explanations for the origins of the dispute testify to each participant's sense of the value of their professional reputations, but they cannot be reconciled with each other. Rather than attempt to adjudicate between the competing testimonies I intend to examine why *The Squire* succeeds in capitalising on a market for rural drama which Carr and Hardy's script failed to respond to. *The Squire*'s success cannot be attributed to the appeal for the audience of seeing a play by an established theatrical name. Pinero's success was, I would suggest, founded on his experiences as an actor - he had learned to be sensitive to how an audience responded to a play. As a result he was determined to provide them with what they wanted: a strong and emotionally complicated central drama set against a rural backdrop.

In his first intervention in the debate Pinero described his method in *The Squire* as an experiment – he thought 'it was worthwhile [...] to try and get the scent of the hay over the footlights'.[87] His emphasis here on capturing 'the scent of the hay' gestures towards the theatre's capacity to dramatise a flavour of rural life, to evoke a sense of continuity and tradition in a few carefully selected scenes. Pinero's awareness of the potential of rural drama may have been shaped by his background in the theatre. He was an actor at the

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impact of Mrs Kendal on the row see a letter from the playwright Sidney Grundy to the critic William Archer: 'Madge in a fit of righteous indignation would have been a real happiness to me.' (British Library Add MS 45291).

87 *The Daily News*, 02/01/1882. He claimed that he was drawing on the rural themes begun in his play *Hester's Mystery* (staged at the Folly Theatre in 1880). See also William Archer, *English Dramatists of Today*, pp. 282-8.

Lyceum from 1876-1881, during which time he wrote three one-act plays for Henry Irving.[88] Ellen Terry had joined the Lyceum company in 1878 at a salary of 40 guineas a week on the strength of her performance as Olivia Primrose in W. G. Wills's *Olivia* - a version of Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* staged at the Royal Court Theatre under John Hare's management in 1878. It was a hit: according to Ellen Terry's account of the play 'Everyone was “Olivia” mad'.[89] These historical coincidences – Hare staging *Olivia* in 1878 and then staging *The Squire* in 1881 – are not evidence of *The Squire*'s direct debt to *Olivia*, particularly as *Olivia* was not revived at the Lyceum until 1887.[90] However, the reviews of the first production of *Olivia* do offer insights into the desired relationship between a source text and its adaptation and the popularity of rural drama with theatre audiences.

Reviewers of *Olivia* highlighted the success with which Wills had dramatised a portion of Goldsmith's text, rather than attempting to compress the whole plot. This canny manoeuvre ensured that the play was able to draw on the audience's affection for the novel, but was not governed by too close a comparison with the source as a whole. The physical details of the staging aided Wills's text in its evocation of a bygone atmosphere. *The Era*'s review focused particularly on the staging of the parlour: 'the perfection of detail [...] everything is in harmony: from the oak wainscot to the cuckoo clock; from the old-fashioned arm-chairs to the tinkling harpischord.[91] *The Graphic* summarised the play's achievements as

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88 *Two Can Play at that Game* (1878); *Daisy's Escape* (1879) and *Bygones* (1880).

89 Ellen Terry, *The Story of my Life* (1908), intro. by Ian McKellen (Suffolk: Boydell Press, reprinted in 1982), p. 90; Michael Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their remarkable families* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), p. 115.

90 See Clement Scott, *From The Bells to King Arthur: A Critical Record of The First-Night Productions at the Lyceum Theatre from 1871-1895* (London: John MacQueen, 1896), pp. 275-282.

91 *The Era*, 07/04/1878 – a reprint from a review earlier in the week, Issue no. 2063.

the staging of 'numerous pictures of English life and habits a century and more ago [which] are presented here with such careful attention to detail and as a result are so full of charm for the eye'.[92] The play's first scene is set in the Vicarage orchard, where the 'boughs [are] laden with apples – orange light behind – approaching sunset'.[93] The plot of the First Act is built around the celebrations of the Vicar's silver wedding. The dialogue - discussions of Olivia and Squire Thornhill's relationship, of Mrs Primrose's snobbery - are the backdrop to the play's evocation of village traditions. In the course of the Act the village children sing in celebration of the Vicar's virtue and bless his future: 'May joy kiss his cheek tomorrow / And peace close his eyes tonight'.[94] The acting itself enhanced the appearance of naturalness: both *The Examiner* and *The Era* praised Ellen Terry's emotional *tour de force*. *The Examiner* commented that 'Miss Terry acts so naturally that she does not seem to be acting'.[95] *The Era* waxed lyrical on the subject of her defence of Squire Thornhill's love for her – it was, according to the reviewer, 'illogical reasoning perhaps, but how womanly'.[96] They ended their review with an exhortation: 'could anything possibly be more tenderly delicious, more exquisitely pathetic, more beautifully natural'.[97]

Responses to *The Squire* emphasised its qualities in markedly similar terms. All of the reviews of *The Squire* placed it in the context of the plagiarism row, but they saw this as

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92 'Theatres', *The Graphic*, 06/04/1878, Issue no. 436.

93 W. G. Wills, *Olivia*, British Library Add. MS 53200K, licensed 27/03/1878, I, fo. 3^{r}.

94 *Olivia*, fo. 12^{r}.

95 'Court Theatre: *Olivia', The Examiner*, 06/04/1878, Issue no. 3662.

96 '*Olivia* at the Court', *The Era*, 14/07/1878, Issue no. 2077.

97 '*Olivia* at the Court', *The Era*, 14/07/1878, Issue no. 2077.

incidental.[98] *The Era* comments on the play's 'healthiness of tone, now bright and witty, and now sad and tear-begetting [in its] display of womanly tenderness and the natural illustration of womanly grief'.[99] Mrs Kendal's performance was crucial to this effect. Her highly emotional acting easily engaged the audience's sympathies – the *Pall Mall Gazette* noted her 'successive outbursts of sorrow and despair, or the species of subsequent stupor under the influence of which she able to go through her self-appointed tasks'.[100] Mrs Kendal was supported by a cast trained to get 'the scent of the hay over the footlights':[101] 'each head of the group of farm labourers was a study' and the 'rustic grace of Miss Brereton' (as the heroine's maid Felicity Gunnion) was particularly praised.[102]

Pinero was tapping into a market for rural drama which the Carr-Hardy script failed to appeal to. Kate Verity's troubles are embedded in an environment in which little changes, in which traditions and anecdotes continue at a pace far slower than the shocks provided by the bigamy plot. In Hardy's novel, the rhythms of Weatherbury life are juxtaposed with the traumas of Bathsheba's entanglement with both Troy and Boldwood. The object of this analysis of rural drama has been to illustrate both that there was a market for theatrical representations of rural nostalgia and that the stage could portray the passage of time effectively, using judicious selection to evoke a whole way of life.

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98 Available through a search of the collection of British Library Nineteenth Century Newspapers.

99 *The Era*, 31/12/1881, Issue no. 2258.

100 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 02/01/1882, Issue no. 5257.

101 Pinero in *The Daily News*, 02/01/1882.

102 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 02/01/1882, Issue no. 5257.

Hardy and Carr's collaboration

The physical state of the one surviving copy of the play, the Lord Chamberlain's licensing script, illustrates how the adaptation of *Madding Crowd* misfired. The script is a bewildering palimpsest of typescript and handwritten scenes preserved in two partially filled notebooks - the first contains Acts One and Two and the second Act Three.[103] The opening scene is in Carr's hand and the rest of Acts One and Two are made up of a typescript of Hardy's first effort, *The Mistress of the Farm*, some of the dialogue having been amplified by Carr. Act Three is handwritten by both Carr and various unidentifiable hands, with only three pages of Act IV of *The Mistress* being interleaved into the script.[104] The extent to which the typescript represents the version Hardy handed to Carr is uncertain. Their first attempt underwent modifications before being submitted to the St. James's - a second layer of revisions was added as the script was prepared for licensing in the wake of *The Squire*. This bibliographical detail was outlined in an article by Pamela Dalziel, but her detective work has not been set in the context of what it reveals about Hardy's attitude to the play, as my chapter aims to do.[105]

Carr and Hardy decided at an early stage of their collaboration, according to a letter from Carr to Hardy dated c. December 1880, to scrap *The Mistress*'s First Act, so it is impossible to know whether Hardy originally meant to preserve anything more of Weatherbury's routines.[106] Carr's handwritten first scene serves to move the script forward

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103 British Library Add MS 53267 J, licensed by the Lord Chamberlain 25/02/1882.

104 For further details see Dalziel, 'Whose *Mistress*?', 248-59.

105 Dalziel, 'Whose *Mistress*?, 248-59.

106 The letter is now in the Dorset County Museum's Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection.

before relying for the rest of the notebook on the typescript of *The Mistress*. The scene is symptomatic of the script's attitude to its source. The stage directions are precise – we are on '*A village road. Background of fir woods, with wheat ricks in distance* [...] *the malthouse – red glow coming from the inside. Table and settles outside the door on stage*'.[107] The scene opens with some dialogue taken straight from the novel, as Joseph Poorgrass tries to reconcile his drinking with his piety with the thought that 'yer next world *is* yer next world'.[108] This is a modification of part of his speech from much later in the novel, when he is drinking at the Buck's Head having abandoned Fanny's coffin outside in the waggon. He ponders his failings and resolves to make amends: 'I've been drinky once this month already, and I did not go to church a-Sunday, and I dropped a curse or two yesterday; so I don't want to go too far for my safety. Your next world is your world, and not to be squandered offhand' (p. 278). Carr's use of a portion of this speech tries to draw the audience in with a short phrase. This is a shortcut not so much to the character, but to a defining feature of the novel – the meditative, digressive and frequently circuitous comments by the villagers on the unfolding action. A swift summary of events follows: Gabriel's farm has already failed, Fanny has run away and Bathsheba is scandalising the neighbourhood by associating with Troy: 'if she means to play a Master's part she'd do better not to go traipsing round the country wi' that upstart Sergeant o' Dragoons so much'.[109]

Carr opens in Warren's Malthouse in order to appeal to an audience familiar with the novel, in effect assuring them that they are in Weatherbury. But the summary of the plot

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107 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), I, fo.1^{v}.

108 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), I, fo. 2^{v}.

109 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), I, fo. 1^{v}.

offered by the characters sitting around drinking cider works against this premise. In trying to cram so much into the play Carr and Hardy relied heavily on the audience's prior knowledge of the plot to make sense of its abbreviations, its allusions to past events. Rather than select a theme and pursue it, they tried to compress it. Pivots in the plot, such as the rick fire, take place off-stage. The action moves at a relentlessly rapid pace - Bathsheba and Liddy run on to the stage as '*a red glow has been rising at the back of the scene* [which] *has grown gradually stronger*'.[110] The identity of the man working to save the farm from the fire is obscured by a smoke so thick that even his voice is muffled, but Bathsheba is convinced it is Troy: 'How can I have been so wicked as to say I hated him, when all the time he was risking his life to save my property'.[111] Her recognition of Gabriel's chivalrous service is tempered by her disappointment at mistaking one man for another.

Pinero understood how to make a single scene represent a community; Carr and Hardy floundered over their attitude to the adaptation and its likely audience. *The Squire* stages a rural fête in the final act, which serves as the unchanging backdrop to the rush of revelations which bring the plot to its close. Kate's parting with Eric is framed by her participation in the Harvest Feast, her fears for her lonely future as an unmarried mother set aside for a moment as she acknowledges the villagers' salutes and takes a toddler on her knee. Carr revised *Far From the Madding Crowd* during the play's rehearsals. A closer examination of Act Three reveals the process by which Carr synthesised three sources – his own ideas for the play, the typescript of *The Mistress* and his desire to heighten the resemblance between the script and

110 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), I, fo. 19^{r}.

111 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), I, fo. 20^{v}.

The Squire by bringing the two closer together after the fact.

Act Three contains only three pages of *The Mistress*'s typescript - the rest is handwritten. I want to focus on how Carr's parts of the script make use of the interleaved pages of typescript. Though we cannot be certain whether *The Mistress* was extensively revised by Carr before being printed, or whether it preserves Hardy's original script, the two men did agree on its contents.[112] Act Three of the script was sent by Carr to Hardy during rehearsals for the production in Liverpool. Hardy annotated it, the only instances of his handwriting on the script. As such I draw a distinction between Carr's intentions for the Act, represented by the handwritten pages, and Hardy's - apparent in both the typescript and his pencil annotations to the script. Carr has Jan Coggan and Matthew Moon reluctantly telling Bathsheba of the rumours in Weatherbury. They assure her that if she is inclined to marry Oak then they would accept him as a master willingly. They leave. Gabriel enters and the two briefly discuss arrangements for the Haymaking Feast – Bathsheba declares that 'the workfolk must have a feast of course when the crop is all in. 'Tis a good year is it not'.[113] They begin to discuss Gabriel's plans to emigrate.

At this point Carr switched to *The Mistress*'s typescript. The dialogue is a mixture of material abbreviated from the novel and explanatory elaboration. Gabriel and Bathsheba briefly quibble over whether the idea of them marrying is 'too absurd' or 'too soon' before Bathsheba explains her dependence on Gabriel's perpetual presence on the farm:

If you go away, Gabriel, it'll be a worse trouble than any that's gone before! Aye,

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112 On this see in particular Carr's letter to Hardy 28/02/1882 (DCM).

113 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 59^{r}.

> it will. We've known each other so long now – bright times and dark times, rough sides and smooth sides, labouring and pleasuring alike – I don't believe we could ever live apart – I don't indeed! There's no one I can look to for advice as I can look to you Gabriel, Don't go away![114]

I earlier argued that Hardy saw the play as little more than a summary of the novel – here unambiguous statement is favoured over suggestion. Bathsheba obligingly outlines not only her love for Gabriel, but chides herself for her former faults: 'sometimes I do think I've loved ye all along. 'Twas vanity that was my ruin; but ye've been true to me through it all – thank God for that!' Gabriel responds by filling in parts of the plot the play has not shown: 'True to ye? Aye, I've been that! No praise to me, I couldn't help it. Why ever since I first saw you sittin' on the top of a hay waggon, and looking at yerself in a bit of looking-glass I've loved ye'.[115]

The script then reverts to Carr's designs for it. There is a Haymakers' Chorus in the background as the lovers talk, the men come in and Bathsheba announces 'there'll never be any other Master on Weatherbury Farm'. This is the cue for a disguised Troy to come forward from the back of the crowd.[116] Carr heightened the resemblance to *The Squire* by writing the words to the Haymakers' Chorus after the play was licensed, thereby echoing Pinero's Chorus of the Villagers in praise of Kate Verity's husbandry. Carr underlined this kinship in the play's publicity, outlining its stages for the playbills by placing them loosely against the agricultural calendar: Act One became 'The Wheat Ricks'; Act Two 'Christmas'; Act Three 'The Hay

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114 *Madding Crowd* (LCP),III, fo. 62^{r}.

115 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 63^{r}.

116 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 66^{r}.

Making'.[117] Such last minute manoeuvres may have brought the play superficially closer to *The Squire*, but it did little to disguise the script's distance from the rural world.

Hardy's sustained knowledge of the theatre stemmed from his years in London working as an architectural draughtsman from 1861-7. Thus, his familiarity with the London stage was at least ten years out of date when he began contemplating the adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd*. In making this judgement I draw on James Stottlar's article on the script. Stottlar argues that Carr and Hardy were out of touch with theatrical fashion – in approaching the St. James's in 1880 they were offering a melodrama to a theatre with wealthy clientele for whom plays were an intellectual commodity.[118]

Whether Hardy approached Carr at the beginning of their collaboration, or vice versa, is unclear. When writing to the press, Carr painted himself as Hardy's agent - a man of business advising an unworldly writer. Mrs Carr was later to muddy matters further by claiming that she had begun adapting *Far From the Madding Crowd* and then her husband had taken over the task.[119] In an attempt to navigate through these competing claims, Richard Little Purdy, in his *Thomas Hardy: A Bibliographical Study*, judged that Hardy and Carr had written separate scripts, then Hardy had later been approached by Carr and taken him on as the novel's authorised adapter.[120] Both Carr's self-fashioning and Purdy's

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117 See S. M. Ahmad, 'The Debt of Hardy and Carr's *Far From the Madding Crowd* to Pinero's *The Squire*', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, 15:2 (May 1999), 82-84.

118 James Stottlar, 'Hardy vs Pinero', 23-43. Stottlar's test case for this is the rewriting of Douglas Jerrold's popular melodrama *Black Eyed Susan* (1829) for the St. James's by W. G. Wills as *William and Susan* (53239 I (Lic. no. 148), dated 07/10/1880 – 'for private circulation only').

119 Alice Comyns Carr, *J Comyns Carr: Stray Memories by his Wife* (London: Macmillan, 1920), p. 83.

120 Purdy, *Bibliographical Study*, pp. 28-30.

assessment implicitly make a statement about the authorship of the script, but it is easy to miss. Carr had a vested interest in playing the role of indignant defender of the author's rights: thus he implied that Hardy was the sole author of the script. Purdy distanced Hardy from the script altogether: he had simply authorised Carr to adapt his plot. Purdy acknowledges the existence of *The Mistress*, Hardy's script of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, but suggests that it was discarded altogether and that Carr created the final script from the novel. Purdy drew on the *Life*, which is unequivocal in its separation of Hardy from the play, as it was 'not sufficiently near the novel to be to Hardy's liking'.[121] Hardy's retrospective judgement on the adaptation was to deny involvement altogether, a technique designed to distance him from any role in bringing his novel to the stage. Carr's correspondence with Hardy, and the script itself, contradict Hardy's self-protective stance. They reveal, albeit with frustrating silences at points, how far Hardy was invested in the adaptation.

Carr and Hardy staged their play in the wake of the publicity over *The Squire* and Carr's letters to Hardy indicate that they both relied on attracting an audience who knew the novel. The play's mixed reviews puzzled them. Carr was inclined to blame the critics who had read up on the novel and felt the play was lacking by comparison; Hardy blamed Carr both for his mishandling of the actors and his hasty alterations to the script. The extent of Hardy's involvement in preparing the play has to be inferred from Carr's letters. These, frustratingly, fail to begin at the beginning: in his first surviving letter Carr describes himself as in the midst

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121 *Life,* p. 158. See also the amended entry for the fifteenth edition of *Men and Women of the Time: A Dictionary of Contemporaries* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1899). Despite this disparagement of the venture the *Life* records the Hardys' journey to Liverpool to see the play (p. 158). For further details see E. McClung Fleming, *R.R. Bowker: Militant Liberal* (Oklahoma: University Press, 1952), p. 152; Emma Hardy to A.H. Evans, 21/11/1909, in *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 46; Michael Millgate, *Biography*, pp. 210-11.

of modifying the script.[122] The letters only coherently chart the progress of the adaptation once the play was in rehearsal in Liverpool.[123] Carr complained that his audience were unduly bookish. Primed by the press reports, the critics read the novel immediately before attending the performance 'and therefore instead of judging the drama solely on its own merits [...] they have been wholly absorbed in making minute comparisons between the story and the piece which are quite inappropriate and which I venture to think no drama could possibly stand'.[124] Carr's comment suggests that there is a division between legitimate and illegitimate comparisons. His impatience with an audience who were simply attending the play in order to diagnose the extent to which it deviated from the novel is understandable, but he failed to acknowledge that their audience was drawn from an existing readership who were, naturally enough, inclined to pit novel against play. It is impossible to be certain whether Carr had a specific review in mind here, but the *Liverpool Echo* comes close to the terms of his complaint. The reviewer notes that the play's 'characters are only half-developed, some of them are fused into one in a way which places them almost out of the range of identification, and incidents which made the deepest impression on the reader are passed over or treated very ineffectively'.[125] It ends with a paradox which captures the contradictory attitudes to the play very neatly: 'Judged, however,

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122 c. Dec 1880 (DCM).

123 For details of the construction of the production see Carr to Hardy 30/01/1882 (DCM) and *Mrs J Comyns Carr's Reminiscences*, p. 78. For Hardy's concern with the presentation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* see 'To Smith, Elder & Co.', c. mid-Dec 1873, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 25; 'To H. Allingham,' 07/05/1874, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 30; 'To H. Pouncy', 03/02/1907, *Collected Letters*., III, p. 247; 'To A.H. Evans', 17/09/1909, *Collected Letters*, IV, p. 46.

124 'To Hardy', 28/02/1882 (DCM). For a reviewer's proving of Carr's point see '*Far From the Madding Crowd* at the Theatre Royal', 14/03/1882, *Bradford Chronicle and Mail*, p. 2.

125 'Prince of Wales Theatre: *Far From the Madding Crowd*', *Liverpool Echo*, 28/02/1882, p. 4.

without any reference to the novel, the play is likely to be a great success.'[126]

Reading one side of a correspondence necessitates, to a certain extent, speculation about the unseen letters, a filling of a silence. From the tone of Carr's responses it is apparent that Hardy was concerned by the criticism the play had received. Carr was polite, but emphatic: 'you do not, any more than the critics themselves, give quite sufficient weight to the widely different conditions of fiction and drama'.[127] The script for *Far From the Madding Crowd* failed to adequately address these 'different conditions'. Carr counselled Hardy that any adaptation of the novel was condemned to be an inadequate cipher of the original: 'you cannot supply in the written words of a drama all the light and shade that is possible in a story and it is the actor alone who can add the subtlety necessary to give refinement and delicacy to the brief abstract dialogue of the stage'.[128] Whilst there is a self-evident truth to the judgement of acting as the amplification of the 'brief abstract dialogue of the stage', the fault lines in the Carr-Hardy production cannot solely be attributed to what Carr preferred to see as inadequacies in the Liverpool company.

The critics of the play raised two principal questions: firstly, what audience was the play designed for, and secondly what was its relationship to the novel? The conflicting nature of the evidence is born of its awkward status somewhere between provincial play and London production. Carr and Hardy had originally intended their play for the St. James's and

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126 'Prince of Wales Theatre: *Far From the Madding Crowd*', *Liverpool Echo*, 28/02/1882, p. 4. See further 'The Theatres', *Saturday Review*, 53: 1 (04/03/1882, Issue no. 375); 'Prince of Wales Theatre: *Far From the Madding Crowd*', *Musical and Theatrical World*, , II:2 (04/03/1882); ' Gaiety Theatre: *Far From the Madding Crowd ', Glasgow Evening Citizen* (21/03/1882); 'The Theatres: *Far From the Madding Crowd* at the Gaiety', *Northern British Daily Mail*, 21/03/1882, p. 2; *Morning Post* (01/05/1882, Issue no. 34274); *Standard* (01/05/1882, Issue no. 18029).

127 'To Hardy', 28/02/1882 (DCM).

128 'To Hardy', 28/02/1882 (DCM).

the debate over *The Squire* placed the row in a firmly metropolitan context, but the play ended up on a provincial tour. It attracted predominantly local notices, but it was also reviewed by the London papers. Clement Scott in *Theatre* weighed it in the balance against what *The Squire* had to offer its audiences: *Far From the Madding Crowd* 'suits a miscellaneous rather than a select audience; whilst on the other hand *The Squire* appeals to spectators of somewhat refined tastes and a company gifted with a sensitive power of absorption and appreciation [...] one is a pastoral play, the other is a miniature melodrama'.[129] *The Graphic* called *Madding Crowd* a play of 'singularly attractive beauty [...] a dramatic idyll'.[130] These conflicting assessments illustrate the play's uncertainty as to what market it was trying to appeal to: the hybrid of melodrama and rural setting failed to commit to either side.

The local critics were exercised more by the impact of this uncertainty on the play's language: the *Bradford Telegraph* noted that 'specimens of country simplicity and dialect' would be more appropriate than the swift alterations in mode the play offers.[131] Writing a month later, the *Bradford Observer* was more emphatic that the 'dialogue possesses neither the flavour of wit nor humour, and while their prosy, long drawn-out conversations are taking place, the action of the piece drags very much'.[132] The fault lay for these critics in the play's too close adherence to its source: the *Glasgow News* noted that 'the mere keeping of what has made its success in the former shape – the perfect portraiture of country life in a little-

129 Clement Scott, '*Far From the Madding Crowd* in Liverpool', *Theatre* (April 1882), p. 246.

130 *The Graphic*, 04/03/1882, Issue no. 640.

131 'Amusements', *Bradford Telegraph*, 14/03/1882, p. 2.

132 '*Far From the Madding Crowd* at the Theatre Royal', *Bradford Observer*, 04/04/1882, p. 7.

known region – detracts from its power with an audience.'[133] The script fails to support this critic's view. The 'perfect portraiture of country life' is, as outlined above, merely gestured towards. The adaptation began life as *The Mistress of the Farm: A Pastoral Drama* but the terms of Clement Scott's review demonstrate how far the script had shifted from its origins: the play is a 'miniature melodrama [...] the scent of the hay is there, but the smell of the powder is stronger'.[134]

I want to turn now to examine the consequences of this uncertainty for the play. In order to understand the play's vexed relationship to the novel it is necessary to evaluate the major alterations from novel to script: chiefly the scrapping of Boldwood from the cast and his replacement by a new character, Fanny's brother Will Robin, who shoots Troy to avenge her death.[135] Fanny, pregnant and deserted by Troy, has earlier drowned herself in despair. Will's speeches exhibit an incurable fondness for outlining the progress of the plot in exhaustive detail. He invariably appears without warning from the wings, spending much of his time on stage announcing his vengeful schemes to Joseph Poorgrass before binding him to silence with physical threats: 'Hold your noise you shivering skeercrow or I'll squeeze the breath out of your body'.[136] Will haunts the site of Fanny's suicide, 'the old pond, where she

133 'The Theatres: *Far From the Madding Crowd* at the Gaiety', *Glasgow News*, 21/03/1882, p. 414.

134 *The Theatre*, 01/04/1882, p. 245.

135 In *The Mistress* both Will and Fanny were given the surname Boldwood, presumably for economy's sake. Such economical casting has no ostensible point, beyond a half-memory of the novel's association of Fanny with Boldwood: 'as she had no friends in her childhood, [Boldwood] took her and put her to school, and got her her place here under your uncle', p. 84.

136 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 43^{r}. Hardy annotated this speech 'Will Robin is a little too violent here and elsewhere. He should not be offensive to audience'.

used to play when she was a wee bit of thing & we were motherless children'.[137] His threats to Troy are motivated by his regrets for his sister's fate: 'I han't but one wish left and that is to blast the life o' the blackguard that lost her [when] his false face lies dead at my feet [...] they may do what they like with crazy Will'.[138]

I want to argue that these alterations are evidence of Hardy's willingness to cut parts of the plot which he believed to be too complex for the stage to convey. Boldwood's purely functional role in the plot, the shooting of Troy, is easily transferred to a far more self-consciously dramatic storyline. In shooting Troy, Will acts as the avenger of Fanny's sullied innocence. Thus the play departs from the novel, where the shooting of Troy is the last act in Boldwood's perpetually thwarted love for Bathsheba. Boldwood's slow disintegration through love for Bathsheba was something Hardy felt was beyond the actors' range. This was a judgement based on a lack of knowledge and, more crucially, a lack of interest at this stage in the life of the adaptation - a motive explored in my analysis of Carr's letters to Hardy.

The script's ill-handling of the scenarios in which Boldwood should play a part highlights what is lost in the transition from novel to play. In the novel's take on thegulling scene, a staple of Elizabethan drama, Troy plays with Boldwood, tricking him into the belief that Bathsheba is a “loose” woman with his loaded retort: 'I don't wish to secure her in any new way' (p. 229).[139] He reduces Boldwood to impotent fury: 'Devil, you torture me! [...] You

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137 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), II, fo.31^{r}.

138 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo.49^{r}.

139 Compare to *Othello*, IV, I, in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Peter Alexander (London: Collins, 1974), pp. 1139-43. For Liddy's inadvertently apt allusion to the parallel between Bathsheba's suffering at the hands of Boldwood's titanic jealousy and 'that story of the black man who murdered his wife Desdemona?' see *Far From the Madding Crowd*, p. 300. See further Joan Grundy, *Thomas Hardy and the Sister Arts* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 80. For more on the echoes of Elizabethan drama at work here

juggler of Satan! You black hound! But I'll punish you yet; mark me, I'll punish you yet!'(p. 228, p. 231). Boldwood's hyperbolic exclamations are embedded in the novel's analysis of the painful process of his disintegration; as the absolute quality of his love leaves him with 'a fearful sense of exposure' (p. 123). Shifted to the stage this scene takes place in the farm kitchen. Gabriel assumes Boldwood's role as enforced listener, as Bathsheba ostensibly offers herself to Troy:

> *Troy*: If you'll stand aside you shall judge for yourself (*Whistles softly*)
>
> *Gabriel*: I'll not believe it, ye lying scoundrel!
>
> *Bathsheba*: (*without*) Frank, are you alone?
>
> *Gabriel*: Good God! (*Exits behind window*)
>
> *Troy*: Yes, love.
>
> *Bathsheba*: There won't be a soul but me in the house this evening. I've packed them all off, so noone [sic] will know when you come. The men's quarters are so far off; that you can live with me here for two or three days, no one [sic] will suspect you have not gone home to the barracks as usual. (*Exit BATHSHEBA*)
>
> *Gabriel*: (*springing in upon* TROY) You double-faced blackguard, you (*Seizes him* [...] *shaking him*) Devil that you are![140]

This comes close to Bathsheba's words in the novel: 'It is so lucky! There's not a soul in my house but me to-night. I've packed them all off, so nobody on earth will know of your visit to your lady's bower' (p. 227). Yet in substituting Gabriel for Boldwood in this scene the Carr-Hardy script produces little but outraged exclamations, 'you double-faced blackguard [...]

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see J.I.M. Stewart, *Thomas Hardy: A Critical Biography* (London: Longman, 1971), p. 80.

140 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), II, fos. 28^{r}-29^{r}.

Devil that you are'.[141]

Hardy's original intention for the adaptation of the novel, surviving in the extant typescript of *The Mistress*, was to have Act Two end with Bathsheba's defence of Troy to an audience of assembled rustics when,

> *[a] form appears in the falling snow. TROY gives a cry and staggers backward, pointing to the window. The others are about to rush forward, but before they can look to the window BOLDWOOD* [the original name given to Fanny's brother] *has raised his gun and fired. TROY utters a cry and falls dead. OAK, who had run to the window, sees the departing figure of BOLDWOOD. BATHSHEBA has fallen on the prostrate body.*
>
> *Gabriel*: Aye, its [sic] Will Boldwood's revenge'.[142]

Pamela Dalziel judges that in revising the script Carr delayed the death of Troy to avoid a last act in which 'little would seem to have remained [...] other than the slow and not especially dramatic process of Oak and Bathsheba's resumption of courtship and eventual marriage'.[143] The revised script concludes Act Two with the revelation of Bathsheba's marriage to Troy, news which provokes a chorus of portentous incredulity: 'Your husband [*murmurs around*] may God help us all!'[144] The Third Act opens with Bathsheba alone on stage, delivering a summary speech to carry the audience through the intervening events – Troy's disappearance, his presumed drowning, her apparent widowhood.

Hardy's annotations reveal that he objected to the contrivance at work here, noting on the page opposite Bathsheba's soliloquy 'would it not be more natural if they had been

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141 For a complimentary critique of this scene see *The Times*, 01/05/1882, p. 5.

142 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), II, fo.33^{r-v}, an interleaving of p. 58 of *The Mistress*'s typescript.

143 Dalziel, 'Whose Mistress?', 254.

144 *Madding Crowd* (LCP) II, fo.33^{r}.

married 2 or 3 months. The object of making it on the wedding day is plain enough – but of little consequence in the circumstances'.[145] According to Pamela Dalziel, Hardy's objection overlooked 'the pains that had been taken in the preceding act to suggest that Troy and Bathsheba, though married, had not in fact spent a night together'.[146] The adaptation incorporates nothing of Hardy's experiment in the novel in presenting a woman who exhibits her 'nature truly & simply'[147] – Hardy insists on Bathsheba's right to exercise her sexual choice, whatever the consequences. In the novel she admits her impetuosity to Gabriel: 'then, between jealousy and distraction, I married him!' (p. 249). Carr's choice to present Troy and Bathsheba's marriage as unconsummated sacrifices the novel's emphasis on the strength of Bathsheba's sexual responsiveness to Troy. In the novel Gabriel's love for Bathsheba is strengthened by his complete knowledge of her. At the close he marries a woman who has been shaped by her experiences of both Troy's casual cruelties and Boldwood's monomaniacal intensity, if not broken by them. Carr's insistence that Bathsheba remain a virgin despite her marriage casts Troy as nothing more than a villainous interruption to Bathsheba's ultimate recognition of Gabriel's 'true heart'.[148] In altering the novel to this extent, Carr reveals the strength of the play's sexual conservatism. In preserving his heroine inviolate he rewrites the plot as an unambiguous triumph for Gabriel's patient, watchful care. Hardy recognised Carr's 'object' in separating husband and wife, but in expressing no more than brief disagreement at Carr's conventionality he failed to act as an adequate advocate for

145 *Madding Crowd* (LCP)III, fo.36^{r}.

146 Dalziel, 'Whose *Mistress*?', 256.

147 'To K. S. Macquoid', 17/11/1874, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 33.

148 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 70^{r}.

Bathsheba's right to exercise sexual choice.

Hardy's unfamiliarity with the stage is attested to by his efforts to make Carr spell things out even more than the script does already. Hardy wrote a speech on the script of Act Three in which Will Robin hides a helmet in Bathsheba's cupboard, planting a clue which she duly discovers and puzzles over. Hardy and Carr may have shied away from the technical complexities of staging Troy's drowning but the device of the helmet, planted as a clue to Troy's imminent return, is an ineffectual substitute.[149] Carr has Will conjuring up the spectre of Troy to scare the credulous Joseph Poorgrass. Hardy suggested that Will come on stage 'carrying in his hand a soldier's hat and plume'.[150] He added to Will's insulting reference to Troy '*the owner of this* [*producing helmet*]'.[151] Hardy's annotation has Will offering a handy summary of past events for the audience:

> Now hark at this. Last Sunday night I was on the path that leads from the back door at Buck's Head. A soldier passed me. He was drunk & staggering (outside) like he lost his hat – being his top heavy one, which they wear on Sundays. I had my suspicions & picked it up & found my gentleman Troy's name & number inside. Seeing is believing: here `tis `till wanted [*puts the helmet in Bathsheba's cupboard*].[152]

The concealed helmet duly emerges to puzzle Bathsheba. Reaching into the cupboard for

149 The omission of the scene of Troy's drowning illustrates how Carr and Hardy failed to capitalise on the vogue for spectacular staging in the period. For the history of such devices see Michael R. Booth, *English Melodrama* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1965); Michael R. Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre*,passim; Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright*, pp. 53-7. For a modern instance of staging the chapter 'Adventures by the Shore' see the production of *Far From the Madding Crowd* adapted by Mark Healy for the English Touring Theatre (London: Nick Hern publications, 2009).

150 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo.41^{v}.

151 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo.41^{v}.

152 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo.45^{v}.

'something good' with which to toast Gabriel, who she has just appointed the farm's bailiff, '*she goes to the cupboard – sees helmet – is bewildered*'.[153]

None of these alterations were adopted. Carr defended his dismissal of Hardy's suggestions by shifting the blame, albeit fractionally:

> I quite understand your disappointment that the suggestions made by you were not carried out. Had I not expected that you would have been able to come to town for the rehearsals I would have written you [sic] fully on the subject. When I found you could not come it was already too late to embody some of them as the actors had already learned their parts and the others were only abandoned after very long and very anxious consideration between Mr Kelly and myself [...] There was no time for varied experiment or alteration. Upon all debatable points I was forced to take a prompt decision.[154]

In her later account of the play Mrs Carr used the business over the helmet as evidence of Hardy's incompetence as a dramatist:

> It was the first time that Hardy had had anything to do with a theatrical venture, and some of his suggestions would not stand the test of an audience with a sense of humour. For instance, Hardy wanted the heroine, Bathsheba, to discover a shako concealed in a cupboard when she realises that she has been jilted by the faithless sergeant, but when Joe objected, “I think it might evoke laughter from the gallery”, he gave up the idea.[155]

Inevitably, this evidence was coloured by Mrs Carr's desire to defend her husband's part in the play. As such she was eager to expose Hardy's failings as a dramatist. Hardy's suggestion is an unsubtle piece of stage business, but it is born of the need to engineer a revenge plot which lacks its primary motivation. The axing of Boldwood ensures that the play substitutes

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153 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo.65^{v}.

154 'To Hardy', 28/02/1882 (DCM).

155 *Mrs J. Comyns Carr's Reminiscences*, p. 76.

for the novel's anatomization of sexual jealousy a far more clear-cut cause and effect: Troy's brutal treatment of Fanny arouses Will's wrath and leads inexorably to the concluding shooting scene.

Hardy annotated the play's last scene. The script has Troy entering the farm's Christmas supper in disguise: '*a cloaked and muffled figure* [who] *steps out from among the crowd*'.[156] Hardy wanted Troy to speak directly to the audience at this point, to provide them with an overview of intervening events: 'After a time I felt drawn again to the army & re-enlisted in another dragoon regiment in another name – & that's why I'm only a private now'.[157] Instead of explaining his past Troy pounces rapidly on Gabriel and Bathsheba, exclaiming 'I knew if I did but wait my time I should take you & her [...] in your shame'.[158] Gabriel does not blush at the insult. Rather he is wrought to a morally loaded pitch: 'she who bears the brand of your worthless name is pure beyond the thought of your low deceitful brain'.[159] Troy's insinuation provokes Bathsheba to a tirade against her worthless spouse: 'Two years ago you chained me with soft speech & I would have followed you to the end of the world. But that time has past. The love you had of me is dead & changed to scorn!'[160] This trading in histrionics forms the prelude to the shooting of Troy by the vengeful Will Robin.

James Stottlar has argued that Will Robin fails to convince because his ostensibly

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156 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo.67^{r}.

157 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo.66^{v}.

158 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo.68^{r}.

159 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 69^{r}- 70^{r}.

160 *Madding Crowd* (LCP).,III, fo. 70^{r}.

patient pursuit of Troy is contradicted by his behaviour - by shooting Troy in such a public context, at the Christmas supper, he is inevitably caught in the act.[161] The play's interest in Will as nothing more than a plot device ensures that it never troubles to provide the consistent characterisation Stottlar demands from the play. Will's final entry as avenging angel is undeniably overwritten. His entrance is prepared for with a quick commentary: 'he's terrible mad and wild and he's running towards the house with a gun'.[162] Gabriel exclaims, 'Great God there'll be bloodshed and [Bathsheba] is with him'.[163] Carr allows no space for the novel's delicate drawing of Bathsheba's shift from stupefaction to serenity: 'her mind was for the minute totally deprived of light at the same time that no obscuration was apparent from without [...] deeds of endurance, which seem ordinary in philosophy, are rare in conduct, and Bathsheba was astonishing all around her now, for her philosophy was her conduct, and she seldom thought practicable what she did not practise'(p. 368). In the script Bathsheba's reaction is faultlessly histrionic: '*she staggers to the front of the stage and falls fainting to the ground*'.[164] Gabriel is given an appropriately reassuring curtain line: 'Have no fear I shall be with her always. My business with her is only postponed'.[165]

As outlined above, Hardy's annotations on the manuscript of Act Three show that he was dissatisfied with Carr's deviations from the novel. Hardy's frustration is most apparent in his comments on Carr's version of Fanny's death. Carr's choice of death by drowning for Fanny

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161 James Stottlar, 'Hardy vs Pinero', 23-43.

162 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo.71^{r}.

163 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 71^{r}.

164 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 72^{r}.

165 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 72^{r}.

perpetuates a stereotype of the inevitable end for a woman who has lost her character.[166]

Fanny's suicide letter is read aloud on stage:

> DEAR MISTRESS. I have walked a long way to give you a warning, and now that I am by, I fear to come in lest he should be there. He has threatened to murder me if I tell you; but I hope this will reach you in time to save you from Sergeant Troy. Do not trust him, for he will deceive you as he has deceived me. When you read this I shall have drowned myself for the sake of his unborn child.[167]

Troy's reaction is a masterpiece of brevity; his only response is 'the devil'.[168] Bathsheba is incredulous: 'Fanny dead! Yes, but not for you! Oh, no, not for you!'[169] She immediately defends Troy:

> he is brave and good and generous, and to bring me to such shame before you all would be cruel and vile! [...] He could have done with me what he willed, though all the world were against him, and he knew this. Think of it, and you will see it *cannot* be![170]

Affrighted at the prospect of Troy's guilt she exclaims, 'Oh, God [...] if I could believe you'd made me the means of ruining the poor wench that I loved, I should spurn you and loathe

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166 The conventionally catastrophic conclusions to the career of a "fallen" woman are articulated in the novel only in the consciously over-played responses of the rustics to the news of her disappearance:

"O – 'tis burned – 'tis burned!" came from Joseph Poorgrass's dry lips.

"No – 'tis drowned! said Tall.

"Or 'tis her father's razor! suggested Billy Smallbury with a vivid sense of detail (*Far From the Madding Crowd*, p. 70).

167 *Madding Crowd* (LCP) II, fo.32^{r}.

168 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), II, fo.32^{r}.

169 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), II, fo. 32^{v}.

170 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), II, fo. 32^{v}.

you, ay – even as I've loved you till now!'[171]

The stage-Bathsheba is greatly preoccupied with Fanny's welfare. In Carr's version Bathsheba hears that Fanny's seducer is in Troy's regiment. She pleads with Troy to expose his fellow soldier's conduct. Troy peremptorily dismisses the subject as nothing more than 'the folly of a foolish serving maid'.[172] Gabriel later uses this emotional tie in an attempt to force Troy to confess his part in Fanny's downfall, informing him that Bathsheba would 'have given half her farm to save [Fanny]'.[173] Bathsheba's Christmas speech to her labourers makes poignant allusions to Fanny's history: 'to-night, when you sing presently of peace and good-will, do not forget her, or cast a slur upon your remembrance of her, for perhaps by this time she is suffering for her fault, who knows?'[174] None of this has any basis in the novel: after Fanny's death Bathsheba cannot even recall what she looked like, asking Liddy 'What was the colour of poor Fanny Robin's hair? Do you know? I cannot recollect - I only saw her for a day or two' (p. 272).

Carr's awkward handling of Fanny's death clearly troubled Hardy. His annotations to the revelation of her suicide are the only instance of him troubling to reiterate his discomfort with the script's deviation from the novel. This is evidence first of Hardy's impatience with Carr's work, but more importantly it is indicative of something I outlined at the beginning of this chapter: Hardy's confusion of the roles of dramatist and novelist. In recognising the potential in his novel Hardy felt he had gone as far as he needed to do – the novel's version

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171 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), II, fo.33^{r}.

172 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), I, fo.15^{r}.

173 *Madding Crowd* (LCP) ,II, fo.28^{r}.

174 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), II, fo.30^{v}.

of Fanny's death was sufficiently dramatic to be transferred straight to the stage so why was Carr failing to do this? His first annotation - 'Why not died in workhouse, or hung herself in the workhouse? I should much prefer keeping as near to the book as possible' - was reinforced by a second, now largely erased, note: ''Why not died (in?) workhouse & brought home &c. as in book?'[175]

Hardy's reference to the workhouse here is revealing. His first annotation, with the suggestion of Fanny hanging herself, stands out. If Hardy had simply thought that the novel was sufficient and that Carr should not attempt to deviate from it, then why does he open up the possibility of Fanny committing suicide? The sudden gesture towards a naturalist starkness of effect jars. Hardy's comment is an impatient aside on the script, so its implications should not be overstated. In Hardy's *Desperate Remedies*, Aeneas Manston commits suicide in prison, but he is a villain in a Sensation plot and thus easily disposed of. In projecting a lonely, despairing death for Fanny, Hardy momentarily anticipates the nihilism of *Jude*.

In both annotations Hardy suggests the stigma and fear the workhouse provoked – an emotion much more readily associated with the Dickens of *Oliver Twist* or *Our Mutual Friend*, where Betty Higden flees in terror from the shame the workhouse represents.[176] In the novel Hardy's description of the Casterbridge workhouse is predominantly architectural, but he does dwell on the building's forbidding associations: 'the grim character of what was beneath showed through, as the shape of a body is visible under a winding sheet' (p. 263). Hardy's

175 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), III, fo. 43^{r} ; III, fo. 44^{r}.

176 For Betty Higden see *Our Mutual Friend* (1868), ed. Adrian Poole (London: Penguin, 2004), Book Three, Chapter Eight 'The End of a Long Journey'.

second annotation gestures far more towards the novel's reintegration of Fanny into the Weatherbury community she exiled herself from in search of Troy. When the news of her death reaches the farm she is marked out as an outcast: she belongs 'by law to our Parish' (p. 270) but she is buried by the rites 'of the Board of Guardians' (p. 270). Bathsheba briefly fights against Boldwood's interference, asserting her right over 'an old servant of the family' (p. 270). In inheriting the farm Bathsheba has inherited the workforce. Throughout the novel she insists that though she has come into an unconventional position, she means to perform her duty punctiliously. The workers may grumble about the indignity of serving under a woman, but in spite of themselves many come to admire her determination to apprentice herself to agriculture, even if they are chiefly swayed by her comeliness: 'These middle-aged men have been pulling her over the coals for pride and vanity [...] But I say, let her have rope enough. Bless her pretty face' (p. 108). Bathsheba's desire to reclaim a right to Fanny's body is thus both an act of compassion and an insistence on her status as head of Weatherbury Farm.

The consequences of this wrangle are discussed in more detail later in the chapter. Here I want to focus on Bathsheba's efforts to counteract the misery of Fanny's death. In the novel, both before the body is returned, and after the revelations when she lifts the coffin lid on Fanny and her child, Bathsheba turns to flowers: first as a substitute for emotion and later as a balm for it. She instructs Joseph to deck out the waggon, burying the institutional 'threadbare but decent' black cloth completely: 'Get some boughs of laurustinus, and variegated box, and yew, and boy's love, ay, and some bunches of chrysanthemum. And let old Pleasant draw her: she knew him so well' (p. 270). She later attempts to atone for her feverish curiosity by taking 'flowers from a vase by the window, and laying them around the

dead girl's head. Bathsheba knew no other way of showing kindness to persons departed than by giving them flowers'(p. 291). Her actions find an echo in Troy's frenzied desire to make reparation for his treatment of Fanny: in spite of his haste he methodically plants up her grave-mound with 'bundles of snowdrop, hyacinth and crocus bulbs, violets and double daisies, which were to bloom in early spring, and carnations, pinks, picotees, lilies of the valley, forget me not, summer's farewell, meadow-saffron and others, for the later seasons of the year' (p. 305).

When his planting scheme is washed away by the gargoyle's flood Bathsheba instinctively repairs the damage: 'with the superfluous magnanimity of a woman whose narrower instincts have brought down bitterness upon her instead of love, she wiped the mud spots from the tomb as if she rather liked its words than otherwise' (p. 312). This is something more than her earlier, childlike conviction that flowers are an expected tribute to the dead. It is an act of restitution, insisting on the dignity in death of a girl who dies in the workhouse and whose sexual history has condemned her to the area of the churchyard reserved for 'pauper, poacher and other sinners of undignified sins' (p. 307). In later burying Troy in the same grave Bathsheba is making a statement about the lovers' right to lie together, a right which at first sickened her. Time and distance forces her to acknowledge that the child Fanny bears binds her to Troy indissolubly.

These scenes are a rapid-fire succession of crises in the plot, but they also meditate on the place of both Fanny and Bathsheba in the gradations of the farm's social, and economic, network. Fanny's disappearance soon after Bathsheba's arrival, and the emotional impact of her re-entry on the scene frame Bathsheba's career as a woman farmer. For Bathsheba, Fanny moves from employee to rival to victim in the course of a few chapters. She is a rival all

the more powerful because she cannot be screamed at. The two women are in the same scene only once before the coffin is brought into the front parlour: when Bathsheba is unceremoniously pushed on her way up Yellowhammer Hill in the carriage so that Troy can speak to Fanny, who stands waiting at the side of the road. In this first sight of Troy since their parting at the gate of All Saints' Church, Fanny is wholly unaware of the woman at his side. The script's removal of any of these scenes from the plot is symptomatic of its erasure of telling detail. The adaptation turns its face away from anything which requires reflection on how the past of these characters conditions their responses to their immediate situation.

The novel's potential as a script

The next part of this chapter seeks to establish what the novel has to offer as the basis of a script. I explore whether there is any truth in Hardy's feeling that it possessed promise - even if, as I illustrated above, he mishandled the material. It is easy to view *Far From the Madding Crowd*'s atmosphere as unsuitable for the theatre, that stripping it of its descriptions of landscape and rural life for the stage leaves it barren. There was a theatrical market in this period for the representation of aspects of rural life. Carr and Hardy's mistake was to assume the theatre could not convey anything of this and to pare down their play to a coincidence-ridden plot, which they thickened with additions which unambiguously tell the audience what is happening. In my discussion below I look in some detail at the novel's handling of Fanny's death and its impact on Troy and Bathsheba's relationship. Taking Hardy's complaint to Carr as a cue, I explore how the problems posed by the scene of Fanny's progress to the workhouse and the later confrontation of husband and wife by her coffin are not inherently

untranslatable. They are the raw materials out of which Hardy could have chosen to write a play which selected this triangular relationship and conveyed its rapid emotional fluctuations, rather than cut it indiscriminately and put a revenge plot in its place.

Troy's love for Fanny is, however fitfully, his strongest emotion. The chapter 'All Saints and All Souls', which interrupts the exploration of Boldwood's growing fascination with Bathsheba, did not form part of the holograph manuscript, but was added to the April instalment of the *Cornhill*.[177] In this chapter, Hardy corroborates his casting of Troy as more than a casual seducer both through his willingness to marry Fanny and his later insistence to Boldwood that 'Fanny has long ago left me. I don't know where she is. I have searched everywhere' (p. 230). The short interpolated scene of their failed wedding is a play-in-little, opening with the anonymous entrance of the cavalry Sergeant to face an audience of dawdling worshippers. The mounting impatience of the waiting groom is emphasised both by the whispered reactions of the congregation - 'Where's the woman? [...] I wonder where the woman is!' (p. 116) - and the repeated ticking of the clock, whose 'striking of the quarters seem[ed] to quicken the flight of time' (p. 116). Troy is not identified until the close, as Fanny appeals to him for forgiveness: 'O, Frank – I made a mistake' (p. 117). Fanny is never named, but is simply 'a little woman' (p. 117). Hardy heightens suspense by making this the only scene in the novel which approximates to the passage of real time, forcing the reader to attend to every second of the unfolding action.

Fanny's journey towards the Casterbridge workhouse resists translation into the

177 For a history of the addition to the text see Rosemarie Morgan's edition of the novel (London: Penguin, 2000), xxxiv. The original is in the Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library, Gen MSS 307, Folders 49-50) and was consulted in the preparation of this chapter.

metaphoric language of the stage, where one scene can convey repeated experience. In the theatre it would risk falling into bathos - any staging would have to confront the question of how the dog contrives to support Fanny's weight, however emaciated she is. The scene is all about slowness, as Fanny drags herself step by step towards Casterbridge's lights. How would the length of the journey be represented? Would she go off stage and re-emerge, still supported, however improbably, by the stray dog? The challenge Carr and Hardy shirked was how to wrench Fanny's journey out of the novel's descriptive terms. Fanny's slow, painful progress to the Casterbridge workhouse is a satire on time's imperviousness to suffering. Hardy offers us a sudden, almost unbearably intimate, access to Fanny's consciousness. Fanny gulls herself in the belief that her journey is shorter than it really is, breaking it up in to pieces she can just about manage to stomach. Such interior access is a deliberately sprung shock – Fanny has previously been little more than a name on people's lips.[178] Even in her encounter with Bathsheba and Troy on the turnpike road, her facelessness is insisted upon. She is an abstract figure - Bathsheba notes only 'the extreme poverty of the woman's garb, and the sadness of her face' (p. 256). Troy 'start[s] visibly at the sound of her voice', but the full impact of identification is saved for Fanny, as she assumes an expression 'which had gladness and agony both among its elements. She uttered an hysterical cry, and fell down' (p. 256).

This is a moment of horrified recognition, but it is also evidence of the narrative's sleight of hand. Hardy's evasiveness amply illustrates his refusal to countenance a rhetoric of sexual sinfulness and shame. Neither Bathsheba nor Troy notice that Fanny is heavily

178 See the chapters 'The Malthouse-The Chat-News', 'Homestead- A Visitor- Half-Confidences' and 'A Morning Meeting- The Letter Again' for Fanny as the subject of conjecture.

pregnant, and the painful slowness of her progress to Casterbridge dwells hardly at all on the motive for her solitary battle other than to suggest that in shrinking from human contact 'it was evident that she had an object in keeping her presence on the road and her forlorn state unknown' (p. 262). Hardy deleted from the finished manuscript of the novel a device which too obviously underlines Fanny's sexual “fall”, an expansion of the shearing supper scene in which the disgraced Bailiff Pennyways reports his sighting of Fanny in Melchester dressed 'too well-off to be anything but a ruined woman'.[179] Such revisions are more than a prudent veiling of sordid details. Rather, Hardy's interest lies in the ingenuity Fanny displays in her struggle for survival, as she fashions a crutch and tricks herself into the belief that the distance is much less than it is – a '[s]elf-beguilement which gives her the strength to come over half a mile that she would have been powerless to face in the lump' (p. 261).

Throughout the novel, Hardy establishes Troy as an unthinking sensualist who flatters women without considering the consequences. His relationship with Fanny qualifies this uninteresting, if superficially seductive, portrait. Carr allows no stage time to the novel's interest in exposing the disparity between Troy's automatic recourse to redundant phrasing and his flashes of feeling – instantaneous apprehensions whose brevity only enhances their strength. His lightning sense that Bathsheba's 'alluring beauty bore out so fully the epithets he had bestowed upon it that he was quite startled at his temerity in advancing them as false' (p. 176) illustrates Hardy's eye for Troy's oscillation between inconsequential flattery and conviction. It is in his relation to Fanny that Troy's capacity for sustained emotion is most palpable. Meeting Fanny on the turnpike road his self-castigating characterisation does not

179 This version is reprinted in Rosemarie Morgan's edition of the novel, p. 400 - the original is in the Dorset County Museum's Collection.

detract from his solicitude. He declares 'I am a brute' (p. 257), but his earlier speech is softer: '"How on earth did you come here? I thought you were miles away, or dead! Why didn't you write to me?" said Troy to the woman, in a strangely gentle, yet hurried voice, as he lifted her up' (p. 256). Hardy insists on precisely catching the fluctuations in Troy's tone here. He is both uncharacteristically, 'strangely', tender and conscious of the pressure of time. Such careful qualifications betray an interest in Troy's tie to Fanny which Carr fails to heed, the script simply has Gabriel threaten Troy with having 'found ye out in your dark ways of villainy'.[180]

In the novel the confrontation of husband and wife by Fanny's coffin is the raw material of an effective, and affecting, scene, which the Carr-Hardy script failed to capitalise on. Carr awkwardly attempts to forge a connection between Bathsheba and Fanny - in the novel their fates are delicately juxtaposed. This shadowy paralleling culminates in the coffin scene, where Fanny is granted an unconscious victory over the agonised Bathsheba: 'the one feat alone – that of dying – by which a mean condition could be resolved into a grand one, Fanny had achieved' (p. 290).[181] Troy is moved to 'illimitable sadness' by the sight of Fanny and the child in the coffin. Perhaps for the first time in his life he is telling the truth to a woman: 'This woman is more to me, dead as she is, than ever you were, or are, or can be. If Satan had not tempted me with that face of yours, and those cursed coquetries, I should have married her. I never had another thought till you came in my way' (p. 293). The clash by

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180 *Madding Crowd* (LCP), II, fo.28[v].

181 For details of A.H. Evans' s adaptation of the novel for performance by the Dorchester Debating and Dramatic Society (1909),which engineered the confrontation of husband and wife by bringing the coffin on stage, see 'To E. Clodd', 03/11/1909, *Collected Letters*, IV, p. 56; *The Times,* 18/11/1909, p. 12; ''Far From the Madding Crowd' in London!', *The Dorset Year Book*, (1910-11), p. 35; Evelyn L. Evans, *My Father Produced Hardy's Plays* (Beaminster: Toucan Press, 1964), p. 13.

the coffin's side is the culmination of the narrative's stealthy time trick. Hardy contrives to suggest, by the practised weariness with which husband and wife taunt each other with their loss of love, that their discontent is born of long years of being yoked unhappily together. Yet such disillusionment has grown up in the short space between the parting of Troy and Fanny at the church door and Fanny's death in childbirth.

The adaptation wrenches the plot away from its embedding in a sensuously realised poetic landscape, which elevates the novel above its expertly manipulated machinery. In later life Hardy was frustratingly reticent about how the precise textual relationship between prose and poetry worked. Hardy dismissed his first published novel, *Desperate Remedies*. It was only valuable because it allowed him to preserve some early poems, which were scattered throughout the text: 'as the author could not get them printed, he incontinently used here whatever of their content came into his head as being apt for the purpose – after dissolving it into prose'.[182] This description is misleading, suggesting that poems are scattered throughout the text. In fact it is written entirely in prose. Hardy meant simply that the kernel of poetic ideas survives in the plot, but they were strewn haphazardly and readers are not given any information which would encourage them to play detective, searching for early drafts of the poetry behind the rapid-fire shocks of *Desperate Remedies*'s sensation plot. Such gestures were part of Hardy's rewriting of his past, with the novels dismissed as journeyman's work undertaken solely for the money.

In *Far From the Madding Crowd* the overtly sensational plot is tempered by the

182 Preface to *Desperate Remedies* for the Wessex edition (1912), in *Thomas Hardy: Personal Writings*, ed. Harold Orel (London: Macmillan, 1967), p. 4 (afterwards *Personal Writings*).

narrative's capacity to light on an image and to suspend time whilst it is contemplated with due care. In its piece on the novel *The Westminster Review* was adamant that it was the power of the writing that elevated it above its 'succession of sensation scenes'.[183] This view was more succinctly expressed by Henry James. James's argument was that the power of the individual scenes was such that they placed undue pressure on the plot which framed them, they exposed the fact that 'he rarely gets beyond ambitious artifice – the mechanical simulation of heat and depth and wisdom that are absent'.[184] Throughout the novel Hardy is attentive to the memory's capacity for retaining images which seem to encapsulate a much wider experience. When his sheep have fallen over the cliff, marshalled by the over-zealous sheepdog, Gabriel stares blankly at the scene: 'The pool glittered like a dead man's eye, and as the world awoke a breeze blew, shaking and elongating the reflection of the moon without breaking it, and turning the image of the star to a phosphoric streak upon the water. All this Oak saw and remembered' (p. 41). This 'dead man's eye' is a stark warning. Its more obvious implications, the lure of suicide to a man who now has nothing, are left undeveloped. A corpse can appear to be looking at you, but it is an illusion merely. It is a peculiar, arresting image to use in a passage which is so much about the power of sight. Instead it is the trick of the light which stays with Gabriel, the distortion of the moon as it stretches and shifts until it becomes a 'phosphoric streak'. The strength of one particular image, its capacity to arrest the attention and alter a course of action, is used with comparable force in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, as Henchard's resolve to kill himself is halted by the apparition of the

183 *The Westminster Review*, ciii: xlvii (Jan 1875) p. 265.

184 *Nation*, 24/12/1874, in Mordell, *Literary Reviews*, p. 97.

skimmington effigy in the water:

> he perceived with a sense of horror that it was himself. Not a man somewhat resembling him, but one in all respects his counterpart, his actual double, was floating as if dead in Ten Hatches Hole. The sense of the supernatural was strong in this unhappy man, and he turned away as one might have done in the actual presence of an appalling miracle. [185]

In Boldwood's case the searing power of one particular image possesses the power to stain his sight, and to derail his life irrecoverably. He broods on Bathsheba's Valentine until he can see nothing else. It has become part of his body: 'the large red seal became as a blot of blood on the retina of his eye' (p. 99). These examples amply illustrate the poetic resonance of Hardy's prose, its lighting on images which possess a potency which resists prosaic explanations.

Bathsheba is, throughout the novel, conscious of her power over the men around her – a strength she exerts at the outset in a private performance for her own pleasure as, looking-glass in hand, she surveys herself attentively: 'whether the smile began as a factitious one, to test her capacity in that art, - nobody knows; it ended certainly in a real smile' (p. 12). The speed of this transition illustrates something of what draws her to Troy: who is startled by his modulation from simulation to sincerity: 'her beauty, which, whilst it had been quiescent, he had praised in jest, had in its animated phases moved him to earnest' (p. 175). Bathsheba's half-knowing, half-innocent vanity motivates her girlish indulgence of visionary possibilities of 'far-off though likely dramas in which men would play a part – vistas of probable triumphs the smiles being of a phase suggesting that [...] hearts were [...]

185 *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), ed. Martin Seymour Smith (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 372.

imagined as lost and won' (p. 12). She is ostensibly equipped to play the part of the inconsiderate flirt; a deduction the narrative is quick to deny: 'a censor's experience on seeing an actual flirt after observing her would have been a feeling of surprise that Bathsheba could be different from such a one, and yet so like what a flirt is supposed to be' (p. 124).

Bathsheba's unorthodoxy, her assertions that she hates to be 'thought men's property' (p. 33) and that 'I shouldn't mind being a bride at a wedding if I could be one without having the trouble of a husband' (p. 35) are not consciously insincere, but they are deliberately provocative. Hardy subjects Bathsheba to two tests of the strength of her protestations: the first 'her spoliation by marriage with a less pure nature than her own' (p. 268); the second her perpetual obligation to Boldwood for sending him an ill-considered Valentine in her 'insensibility to the possibly great issues of little beginnings' (p. 119). Bathsheba's reproaches to Troy for his careless treatment of her are compromised by her realisation that in marrying him in a mood 'of self-sacrifice' (p. 268) she has pledged herself to be obedient to her husband 'in all changes, in all disgraces'.[186] Her paralysing position is confirmed by her awareness that she has abdicated the right to 'dare Troy or any other man to pollute a hair of her head by his interference' (p. 268).

Her one overtly flirtatious action, the posting of the Valentine to Boldwood, extracts a payment far in excess of the offence. Ignorant of the inflammatory character of this 'hotbed of tropic intensity' (p. 122) Bathsheba spends much of the novel atoning for her thoughtlessness. She protests to Boldwood that she has no capacity for softness: 'an

186 Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), eds. Juliet Grindle & Simon Gatrell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 325.

unprotected childhood in a cold world has beaten gentleness out of me' (p. 202). This is an uncharacteristically disingenuous attempt to cloak the strength of her love for Troy. Despite such dissembling, she retains a constant consciousness of 'her pity for the man who so persistently loved on to his own injury and permanent gloom' (p. 341). In pledging herself to marry Boldwood after Troy has disappeared she is adamant that 'Love is an utterly bygone, sorry, worn-out, miserable thing with me' (p. 345). Hardy never securely defines how far Bathsheba is being punished for her impetuosity and how far she is struggling 'to make amends without thinking whether the sin quite deserved the penalty she was schooling herself to pay' (p. 159). This ambivalence is captured by the choric voice of the men waiting outside Boldwood's Christmas party and discussing the reports of Troy's return from apparent death: 'If 'tis really true, 'tis too hard a punishment, and more than she ought to hae [sic]' (p. 358).

Bathsheba is not a woman designed for the equivocal rewards of single blessedness. Despite her chafing against marriage, her desire to be a bride at a wedding without the trouble of a husband, she finds herself engaged three times: once 'between jealousy and distraction' (p. 249); once 'fairly beaten into non-resistance' (p. 364) by Boldwood's persistence. In the last instance the roles are reversed, she finds herself proposing to Gabriel, even if she does not quite frame the words:

> “Marrying me! I didn't know it was that you meant," she said, quietly. “Such a thing as that is too absurd - too soon - to think of, by far!”
>
> “Yes; of course, it is too absurd. I don't desire any such thing; I should think that was plain enough by this time. Surely, surely you be the last person in the world I think of marrying. It is too absurd, as you say.”
>
> “'Too – s-s-soon' were the words I used.”

> “I must beg your pardon for correcting you, but you said, 'too absurd,' and so do I.”
>
> “I beg your pardon too!” she returned, with tears in her eyes. “‘Too soon' was what I said” (p. 382).

Trapped in such an earnest, and yet faintly absurd, argument over interpretation the pair prove Bathsheba's point: at crucial junctures it is impossible for a woman 'to define her feelings in language which is chiefly made by men to express theirs' (p. 342). Gabriel's quiet satisfaction is that of virtue rewarded: '“quite right too,” said Oak. “I've danced at your skittish heels, my beautiful Bathsheba, for many a long mile, and many a long day; and it is hard to begrudge me this one visit”' (p. 383).

Carr and Hardy could have chosen to dwell on Gabriel Oak's enduring love for Bathsheba, as this neatly combines an appreciation of the rhythms of rural life, an evocation of the passage of time and a powerful emotional interest. Gabriel Oak's careful husbandry, a delicate pun on Hardy's part in a novel so preoccupied with husband-hunting, yields a realisation of what will endure beyond the unnatural shocks of the romance plot: 'he stood still after looking at the sky as a useful instrument, and regarded it in an appreciative spirit, as a work of art superlatively beautiful [...] Human shapes, interferences, troubles and joys were all as if they were not' (p. 18). It is characteristic of Hardy's levelling view of existence that 'troubles and joys' are left untangled, undifferentiated. Gabriel is later distinguished by Bathsheba precisely for his ability to endure. Such stoicism is figured in terms of his treatment of time, and not simply in the sense that he is willing to wait for Bathsheba, even if he angers her by failing to tell her so. He is first seen with a pocket watch, but the reader is swiftly assured that he sets greater store by horizon scanning – the patterning of the novel by

the agricultural calendar is a structural clue to Gabriel's eventual success. He is a man perpetually attuned to time's passing. Troy can only conceive of the world in instantaneous flashes of feeling; Boldwood's infatuation leads him to project everything on to the future, a future in which Bathsheba Boldwood will be more than a creation of his fevered brain.

Bathsheba's marriage to Gabriel is born of an admission of the solid worth of a love that endures precisely because it is based on similarity and on familiarity: 'the romance growing up in the interstices of a mass of hard prosaic reality' (p. 383). In ending with 'the most private, secret, plainest wedding that it is possible to have' (p. 385) Hardy offers one of his most unambiguously hopeful conclusions.[187] This emphasis on quietness, on stability, rescues Bathsheba from the plot's outwardly sensational pattern. Bathsheba has accepted the comfort to be found in the ideal of matrimony Gabriel offered her at the beginning of the novel: 'Whenever you look up, there I shall be – and whenever I look up, there will be you'(p. 34). Yet there is a hint of some disquiet - her contentment does not express itself exuberantly: 'Bathsheba smiled (for she never laughed readily now)' (p. 389). Bathsheba's emotional education proves on the pulse the truth of Hardy's contention that the 'elementary passions [...] have throbbed in Wessex nooks with as much intensity as in the palaces of Europe'.[188]

I want to conclude by examining the implications of my contention that Hardy confused the dramatic with the theatrical in his handling of the adaptation. His annotation expressing

187 Though for a contrary reading of Bathsheba's "taming" in marriage to Gabriel see Rosemarie Morgan, *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge,1988); Rosemarie Morgan, *Cancelled Words: Rediscovering Thomas Hardy* (London: Routledge, 1992).

188 'General Preface to the Novels and Poems', Wessex Edition [1912], in *Personal Writings*, p. 45.

dismay at Carr's decision to stage Fanny's drowning, rather than her death in childbirth, is the frustration of the novelist who could not comprehend why his plot is not good enough as it stands – why couldn't Carr simply return to the novel? Hardy was confusing the novelist's ability to write for the reader's imagination with the techniques a good playwright can draw on. Hardy's talents lay not in the adaptation of his plot for the stage, but in his acute sense of dramatic situation. *Far From the Madding Crowd*'s adeptly crafted marriage of the melodramatic and pastoral showcases Hardy's great stylistic confidence. In the construction of this novel Hardy is an heir of Harrison Ainsworth – he shared his recognition that,

> The novelist is precisely in the position of the dramatist. He has, or should have, his stage, his machinery, his actors. His representation should address itself as vividly to the reader's mental retina as the theatre exhibits to the spectator [...] It is a drama with descriptions to supply the place of scenery.[189]

Ainsworth claims that the novelist adapts the dramatist's technique: he creates a drama where descriptions 'supply the place of scenery'. The danger here is that Ainsworth conflates the physical impact of scenery on a stage with the figurative potential of prose, its power to act on the reader's imagination. The exhibition of scenery to a theatre audience is, by definition, a visible artistic process, the outcome of a sequence of decisions made by the theatre company. The impact of a novel on the 'reader's mental retina' is a private process, hidden even from the writer who provokes it.

Hardy's error was his application of Ainsworth's view of the novelist-as-natural-

189 Preface to *Rookwood* (London, privately printed, 1834), cited in Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth Century England* (Princeton: University Press, 1983), pp. 65-6.

dramatist to the adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Adapting a novel is not simply a question of using scenery to supply the mental pictures a novelist can paint.[190] Hardy fully realises the full performative potential of the 'circumscribed scene [...] forced upon himself from judgement'[191] in the novel. His mistake was to believe that these dramatic characteristics were theatrical by default. Despite his recognition of *Far From the Madding* Crowd's 'promising theme for the stage'[192] Hardy did not, at this stage in his writing career, attempt to translate this raw material into an effective piece of theatre.

In 1903 Pinero gave a lecture on the dangers of novelists believing they can become dramatists with little or no effort. Pinero did not mention the controversy over *The Squire* directly, but he aired a lifetime's professional anger at the presumption of novelists who think their skills are the same, and are dismissive of the playwright's discrete art. In his lecture, on the plays of Robert Louis Stevenson, Pinero argued that novelists make poor playwrights because they confuse their ability to write dramatically with an innate understanding of theatrical effects: they possess 'the power to project characters, and to cause them to tell an interesting story through the medium of dialogue' but they have no understanding of how this will look on a stage.[193] In summary, Pinero argued that novelists' grasp of 'stage strategy', the creation of a plot, was not matched by a corresponding feel for

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190 Many of the reviewers of the Liverpool production of *Madding Crowd* commented on its beautiful scenery - see *The Era* (04/03/1882, Issue no. 2267) and the *Edinburgh Evening News* ('*Far From the Madding Crowd*', 04/04/1882, p. 2.

191 'General Preface to the Novels and Poems', Wessex Edition (1912), in *Personal Writings*, p. 45.

192 *The Times*, 02/01/1882, p. 6.

193 Arthur Wing Pinero, 'R.L. Stevenson: the Dramatist' (London: Chiswick Press, 1903), p. 7 (afterwards 'Stevenson').

'stage tactics'.[194] For Pinero, playwriting was endlessly exacting: 'no amount of talent, of genius, will [...] enable a dramatist to dispense with a concentration of thought, a sustained intensity of mental effort'.[195] He was blunt in his dismissal of novelists turned dramatists: 'they have one and all failed, not only to achieve theatrical success but even, in any appreciable degree, to ennoble our dramatic literature'.[196]

Pinero proposed an authoritative division between the skills of the dramatist and the discrete, and by implication more pedestrian, field of the novelist: a mere architect of 'ordinary narrative'.[197] Any assessment of Pinero's perspective has to acknowledge the revolution in the playwright's profession between the scandal surrounding *The Squire* and the date of Pinero's lecture. By 1903 Pinero's position at the forefront of his profession was assured – both socially and materially.[198] Speaking from his influential position Pinero aptly, if somewhat unoriginally, cited Hamlet: for the modern dramatist the 'form and pressure' are, more prosaically, 'the conditions that hold good for his own age and generation'.[199] Pinero railed against novelists who imagined that they could transform themselves in an instant into dramatists, that 'you can turn out a good play with far less mental effort than [writing] a

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194 'Stevenson', p. 6.

195 'Stevenson'., p. 7.

196 'Stevenson', p. 4. Support for Pinero's championing of the playwright's perspective is found in Henry Arthur Jones, 'The Literary Drama', *New Review* (January 1892), reprinted in *The Renascence of the English Drama: Essays, Lectures and Fragments relating to the Modern English Stage, written and delivered in the years 1883-1894* (London: Macmillan, 1895), pp. 108-9.

197 'Stevenson', p. 28.

198 Pinero was knighted in 1909. He made £30,000 from *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (1893) alone (figures taken from Stephens, *The Profession of the Playwright*, p. 77). For further details on the shifting status of the playwright see Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage*, pp. 334-362; Stephens, passim. For a reflection on Pinero's attitudes to the theatre see John Peter Wearing, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 10, *Modern British Dramatists 1900-45* (Michigan: Thomson Gale, 1982), p. 109.

199 'Stevenson', p. 6.

good novel'.[200]

In 1907 a Dorset man, Harry Pouncy, gave a lecture in Dorchester entitled 'Hours in Hardyland', which concluded with some dramatised scenes from *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Hardy wrote a letter to Pouncy congratulating him on the evening's success. Hardy suggested that the entertainment, though good, could be improved as 'the people round me [...] were somewhat puzzled as to the situation in each case, & did not realise that each man was a different lover'.[201] Hardy was still struggling with how to body forth the narrative of *Far From the Madding Crowd* on stage. His solution was to place before the audience a physical reminder: 'an explanation of the dramatic scenes by a lecturer, at the beginning of each, is necessary or at least desirable'.[202] Given that Pouncy was selecting scenes from the novel, a connecting thread placing the scenes in context may have helped to give the piece coherence. Hardy's recourse to the need for an 'explanation' here is not absolutely inappropriate. In subsequent chapters I argue for Hardy's increasing awareness of the need to adapt himself in light of the realisation that writing for the stage exerted pressures on a playwright distinct from those brought to bear on a novelist. However, his advice to Pouncy indicates his persistent uneasiness faced with the process of adapting his novel for the stage. Later projects taught him to draw out themes from his novels, of the virtues of selection rather than compression of the whole plot into a playable length. Despite this, Hardy retained a distrust of the audience. They could not be allowed to exercise their imaginations, in case they became 'somewhat puzzled', but should be patiently guided through each stage

200 'Stevenson', p. 30.

201 'To H. Pouncy', 21/10/1907, *Collected Letters*, III, p. 280.

202 'To H. Pouncy', 21/10/1907, *Collected Letters*, III, p. 280.

of the plot.

Chapter Two: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*

This chapter traces the history of Hardy's attempts to put *Tess* on the stage. When Hardy began adapting *Tess* for the theatre in 1894 his only previous experience of writing a full-length adaptation was his collaboration with J. Comyns Carr on a version of *Far From the Madding Crowd* in 1880-2. I argued in Chapter One that this experience left Hardy suspicious of the stage's capacity to represent adequately the descriptive texture of a novel. In later chapters I will make the case for Hardy's conversion to the virtues of selection when adapting his novels – for his awareness of the need to dramatise telling details rather than compress the whole plot into a playable length.

In this chapter I am interested in Hardy's decision to stage *Tess* in the light of his experiences with staging *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Hardy's emotional investment in the novel both motivated his desire to see *Tess* in the theatre and inhibited his adaptation of the plot. When Hardy began writing a version of *Tess* his difficulties were partially attributable to his lack of theatrical experience. However, this is not sufficient as an explanation of the inadequacies of the script. The novel's conflicted presentation of Tess's guilt or innocence poses a puzzle for the adapter. In the final version of the novel the reader is forced to act as moral arbiter of Tess's actions, a challenge which is at its most provocative in the subtitle 'a pure woman faithfully presented by Thomas Hardy'. Hardy's narrative pacing allows little space for reflection. The division of the book into Phases allowed Hardy to emphasise the disjunction between different stages of the plot.

In the silence between 'Maiden' and 'Maiden No More' Tess moves from the scene in

the Chase to the road back to Marlott; between 'The Woman Pays' and 'Fulfilment' she shifts from kneeling at the door of the d'Urberville crypt at Kingsbere to the lodging house at Sandbourne. Readers of the novel are presented with the consequences of these unseen actions, rather than being alerted to the moments of decision directly. The emotional intensity of Hardy's evocation of Tess is such that the reader is never encouraged to judge Tess's decisions.

Versions of the novel

In adapting the novel for the stage Hardy reverted to the cruder characterisations of his earlier versions of *Tess*. Before looking in detail at Hardy's attitude to adapting the novel it is necessary to examine Hardy's construction of Tess as the manuscript was revised at each stage of publication. *Tess* had a tortuous publication history. Hardy originally agreed in June 1887 with the firm Tillotson & Sons that they would publish the novel – he sent them roughly half the manuscript on 8th September 1889.[1] The publishers were unhappy with the emerging direction of the story. The evidence for the nature of these objections does not survive. The only clues come in Richard Little Purdy's bibliographical history of Hardy. Purdy notes that a secretary in the Tillotson firm remembered these doubts surfacing only after the story had begun to be printed: 'it was not until the proofs were in their hands that the Tillotsons realised the nature of the story they had agreed to publish [...] they at once suggested that the story should be recast and certain scenes and incidents deleted entirely.

1 *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, eds. Richard Little Purdy & Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), 7 vols., I, p. 200 (afterwards *Collected Letters*).

Hardy would not agree to this'.[2] Nonetheless Tillotsons offered to pay Hardy the money they had agreed and the contract was cancelled. Hardy began negotiations for the novel to appear as a serial in *The Graphic*, agreeing in a letter of 18th November 1889 to begin the serial in July 1891.[3] The editor does not seem to have requested sight of the manuscript as it then stood. Thus, Hardy reserved the right to make any changes for serialisation at his own pace. Simultaneously Hardy offered the manuscript to *Murray's Magazine*.[4] The editor of *Murray's*, Edward Arnold, rejected the offer. Hardy immediately wrote to *Macmillan's Magazine*. The novel was rejected in a lengthy letter by the editor Mowbray Morris. Simon Gatrell has plausibly set the tendering of the novel to *Murray's* and *Macmillan's* in the context of Hardy's essay 'Candour in English Fiction' (1890).[5] However, Gatrell argues that both sets of negotiations were intended solely to supply material for Hardy's case for the narrow-mindedness of the publishing world. It seems to me uncharacteristic that Hardy would send his work out simply to invite rejection, even if such dismissals would fuel the anger evident in his essay. The novel was extensively revised by Hardy after serialisation and published by Osgood McIlvaine & Co. in December 1891.

In order to substantiate my reading of the novel I will focus on the scene in the Chase and its aftermath. The text Hardy prepared for *The Graphic* removed both the scene in

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2 Richard Little Purdy, *Thomas Hardy: A Bibliographical Study* (London: Oak Knoll Press, originally published in 1954, reprinted in 2002), p.72. See also Hardy's letter in *The Westminster Gazette*, 10/05/1893, p. 2, reprinted in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice: The Essays, Speeches and Miscellaneous Prose,* ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), p. 127 (afterwards *Public Voice*).

3 'To A. Locker', 18/11/1889, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 202.

4 For a succinct outline of the successive versions of the novel see J.T. Laird, *The Shaping of Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

5 In the introduction to his edition of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, edited by Simon Gatrell & Juliet Grindle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 8-9.

Cranborne Chase and Tess's baptism of her dying baby, Sorrow. Hardy's self-censorship of the manuscript was an expedient manoeuvre - he arranged for both passages to be printed separately. Tess's christening of her dying son was printed as 'A Midnight Baptism' in *The Fortnightly Review* in May 1891. It was subtitled 'a study in Christianity'. When arranging the details of publication with the *Review*'s editor Hardy had in mind a blunter epithet: it was originally titled 'The Bastard's Baptism'.[6] The scene in the Chase was published in the *National Observer* on 14th November 1891, under the title 'Saturday Night in Arcady'. My analysis begins with 'Saturday Night in Arcady', before examining Hardy's alterations to the manuscript. I then look at the two serialised versions of this scene – the first for the American magazine *Harper's* and the second for *The Graphic*.[7] The aim of this bibliographical excavation is to illustrate how the relationship between Alec and Tess became progressively less sharply defined. In the manuscript Tess is drugged and taken advantage of; in *Harper's* the sexual relationship ratifies a promise to marry at a later date; in *The Graphic* she takes part in a marriage ceremony which she only later finds out to have been illegal. These shifting motives are realised in the novel as an atmospheric indistinctness, as the mistiness of the Chase veils the details from the reader.

When preparing 'Saturday Night in Arcady' for publication Hardy revised the piece extensively. Both Tess and Alec are turned into types, designated only as 'Big Beauty' and 'the son of her employer'.[8] Hardy still does not explicitly define the events in the Chase – in

6 For corroboration of this see the letter from the *Review*'s assistant editor, John Vanbrugh, to Hardy, 14/04/1891 in the Dorset County Museum's Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection (afterwards DCM).

7 Serialised in *The Graphic* 14th July-26th December 1891; in *Harper's* 15th July-26th December 1891.

8 Printed in the *National Observer*'s Special Literary Supplement, VI: 156 (14/11/1891), pp. 673-5 (673).

this version the narrative turns its face away from the pair the moment they enter the woods.[9] The description shifts: momentarily inhabiting the viewpoint of a passing stranger who sees the couple as they 'ascended the white road higher and higher, until they suddenly disappeared from the moonlight and were absorbed into the shade of the trees [...] from that moment no living soul saw either of the pair until noon on the day following' (p. 675). Such a distancing trick is far less startling than the revisions to Tess's attitude to Alec. Here she is shown to be pathetically dependent on Alec's attentions: 'when he joked jokes of the most excruciating quality she laughed with a childlike belief in them' (p. 675). When she has to return home to assist at a family crisis she gives 'him her mouth to kiss, not her cheek as at one time. She implored him not to desert her. He said that he would not; that their parting would not be for long; that he should soon come to see her. But he never went' (p. 675). The picture of Tess as supplicant reverses their quarrels in the final version of the novel over her unwillingness to be kissed. Alec's later mastery over her is signalled by his ability to make her receive a kiss from him, though her cold manner suggests a less than complete victory: 'she turned her head in the same passive way, as one might turn at the request of a sketcher or hairdresser, and he kissed the other side, his lips touching cheeks that were as damp and smoothly chill as the skin of the mushrooms in the fields around'.[10]

In the manuscript Hardy is more concerned with painting Alec unambiguously as the despoiler of Tess's innocence. In this version the pair enter Cranborne Chase and they quickly

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9 See Hardy's letters to Emma of 13th, 16th and 18th of April 1891, *Collected Letters*, I, pp. 232-3; 'To R. Tomson', 14/ 12/1891,*Collected Letters*, I, p. 249.

10 *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), p. 111. All quotations from the novel in the chapter are taken from the edition edited by Simon Gatrell & Juliet Grindle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), unless otherwise indicated.

lose their way. Alec leaves Tess behind whilst he goes in search of landmarks. Wrapping Tess protectively in his overcoat, Alec returns to the gig in search of 'a stimulant for the weary Tess'. Hardy was uncertain as to Alec's subsequent behaviour. He experimented with variations on the means – but in all cases Tess is drugged. The stealthily procured liquid is variously his 'mother's household spirit jar', a 'two gallon jar of spirits' and a 'well-known cordial [in a] druggist's bottle'.[11] I would argue that Hardy deleted this section not simply because he began to regard Alec as something more than an opportunistic sensualist, but because it offers an overly literal explanation for Tess's state.[12]

I want to turn now to how both serialised versions of the novel treat the aftermath of the night in the Chase. In the American serialised version of the novel, printed in installments in *Harpers's Magazine* from 15th July to 26th December 1891, Alec has not resorted to drugging Tess. Instead she has had sex with him in the belief that doing so ratified his proposal of marriage.[13] In this version Tess is gulled by the apparent ease with which Joan's dreams of her daughter's aristocratic marriage are realised: 'He made love to me, as you said he would do; and he asked me to marry him, also just as you declared he would. I never have

11 British Library (Add. MS 38182), p. 79. For a reading of the overtones of Gothic melodrama at work in this manuscript version see Tim Dolin and Margaret Higonnet's edition of *Tess* (London: Penguin, 1998), pp. xix-lxviii.

12 In his article '"The immortal puzzle": Hardy and Sexuality', Phillip Mallett suggests that Hardy may have revised Alec's method in response to the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which made such means of procuring 'carnal connexion' illegal, unless the woman were a prostitute (*Palgrave Advances in Thomas Hardy Studies*, ed. Phillip Mallett (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 181-203 (p. 189, 199)).

13 All references to *Harper*'s text are taken from the Grindle & Gatrell edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983). For more on the sexual mores of the period, in particularly evidence of the rates of pre-marital sex, see Michael Mason, *The Making of Victorian Sexuality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) and *The Making of Victorian Sexual Attitudes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

liked him; but at last I agreed, knowing you'd be angry if I didn't' (p. 115).[14] Tess refers fleetingly to Alec's wish for secrecy and for a special marriage licence. Tess relates that Alec promised her marriage but that 'it came to nothing, and then he pestered and persecuted me - and I was in his power – and you may guess the rest. Since then I have been staying on at Trantridge. But at last I felt it was wrong' (p. 115).[15] There is great pressure placed on precisely what Tess is leaving unsaid in her last sentence, particularly with the belatedness of 'at last'. Tess's hesitant reasoning, her tardy recognition that her behaviour is 'wrong', leaves the reader to guess how long her realisation was delayed.

Joan Durbeyfield's response to Tess's confession is initially indignant: she is adamant that 'he can be prosecuted for this' (p. 115). Hardy does not specify what offence Joan wishes to indict Alec for, perhaps because she is herself uncertain. Tess would, in this version of events, have been able to sue Alec for breaching his promise to marry her – a civil, rather than a criminal, action. Breach of promise cases were one of the few legal options open to women, particularly of the lower classes. Provided that the woman could prove the man had proposed, she could sue for damages when he reneged on his word, regardless of whether the promise had led to a sexual relationship or not.[16] Joan's brief anger is replaced by a

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14 The novel in its final form retains the implication of Joan's responsibility with a meta-fictional act of distancing, drawing the reader's attention to the fiction with Tess's admonishment: 'Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to fend hands against because they read novels that tell them of these tricks, but I never had the chance o' learning in that way, and you did not help me' (p. 117).

15 For a possible source for this device, neatly combining drugging and a false ceremony, see Hardy's preservation in his *'Facts' Notebook*, ed. William Greenslade (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), of a piece from *The Times* (29/07/1881): 'Husband, to induce wife to marry without settlement insists on her drinking some liquid – ceremony of marriage gone through – she does not know what she is doing', pp. 27-8. Emphasis in original.

16 Breach of promise remained on the Statute Book until 1970. For the history of such actions see Ginger S. Frost, *Promises Broken: Courtship, Class and Gender in Victorian England* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995); Saskia Lettmaier, *Broken Engagements: The Action for Breach of Promise of*

return of the unreflecting opportunism that motivated her sending Tess to the Slopes to claim kin. Joan's plans anticipate the method pursued with greater persistence by Arabella Donn in her efforts to keep Jude – "catching" a man by becoming pregnant (or pretending to be so) will shame him, sooner or later, into marriage. Joan 'could not help asking herself if it might not result in a marriage, after all? Stranger things had been known' (p. 115).

The English serialisation, printed in *The Graphic* between 4th July and 26th December 1891, is even more leaden-footed. Tess acts in the full belief that she is Alec's legal wife: 'I drove with him to Melchester, and there in a private room I went through the form of marriage with him before a registrar'.[17] Inevitably, she discovers the truth: 'a few weeks after, I found out that it was not the registrar's house we had gone to, as I had supposed, but the house of a friend of his who had played the part of the registrar'.[18] Her revulsion is instantaneous 'I then came away from Trantridge instantly, though he wished me to stay; and here I am'. Joan is left pondering 'if it might not be a legal marriage after all?'[19] This prepares the reader for Tess's confession to Angel in the October number, where she refers to her 'abiding sense of the moral validity of the contract, and her wicked flying in the face of that conviction by wedding again'.[20]

The manuscript and the serialised versions of the novel treat Tess's relations with Alec in legal terms. As Simon Gatrell notes, the aftermath of Tess's confession to Angel is drained

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Marriage and the Feminine Ideal 1800-1940 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

17 *The Graphic* (London), 01/08/1891, p. 136.

18 *The Graphic* (London), 01/08/1891, p. 136.

19 *The Graphic* (London), 01/08/1891, p. 136.

20 *The Graphic* (London), 10/10/1891, p. 422.

of all emotional weight if 'Tess's agony of conscience and Angel's revulsion of horror derive from the possible legal validity of a marriage service which both know to have been a charade'.[21] The mock marriage plot was erased from the volume texts because it would have diluted the strength of Tess's revulsion from the idea of marrying Alec as a 'convulsive snatching at social salvation [...] get Alec d'Urberville in the mind to marry her. He marry her. On matrimony he had never once said a word. And what if he had?' (p. 116) The later texts are much more concerned with Tess's sense that she is bound to Alec corporeally, rather than contractually. In Tess's mind the child she bore Alec has indelibly marked her flesh, she can never rid herself of the traces of the past. The mock-marriage plot oversimplifies Tess's sense throughout the novel that Alec is her 'husband in nature' (p. 342). This feeling of being physically constricted by the past emerges most forcibly much later in the novel, as Tess is rooted to the spot by the sight of Alec's reincarnation as a preacher, gripped by 'an almost physical sense of an implacable past which still engirdled her' (p. 421).

When the first novel edition of *Tess* was published in 1891 Hardy appended a brief 'Explanatory Note', defending the novel by reference to its inviolate truth: it is 'an attempt to give artistic form to a true sequence of things [...] if an offence comes out of the truth, better it is that the offence come than that the truth be concealed'.[22] In a Preface added to the text in 1892 Hardy fleetingly lent *Tess* the air of a sociological tract with his insistence that there was 'something more to be said in fiction than had been said about the shaded side of a well-

21 In the introduction to the Clarendon Press edition of the novel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), eds. Grindle & Gatrell, p. 36.

22 *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (London: Osgood, Mc Ilvaine &Co. 1891), Prefatory material.

known catastrophe'.[23] In the 1892 'Preface', Hardy referred to those reviewers who had appreciated the author's intention justly: they have 'only too largely repaired my defects of narration by their own imaginative intuition'. In casting the act of novel writing as a collaborative process Hardy drew on the premise of his essay 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction' (1888). In this essay he argued that readers should exercise a 'generous imaginativeness, which shall find in a tale not only all that was put there by the author [...] but which shall find there what was never inserted by him, never foreseen, never contemplated'.[24] For Hardy such intuitive sympathy had to be active: 'these additions which are woven around a work of fiction by the intensitive power of the reader's own imagination are the finest parts of the scenery'.[25] 'Intensitive' is a deliberate archaism, Hardy demands of the reader a commitment for which 'intense' is not intense enough. His unease in the role of a commentator on the writing process is less in evidence here than it is in his later essays, perhaps because he is making a case for the limitations of fiction.[26]

In the Preface Hardy defined *Tess* as 'in the scenic parts [...] representative simply, and in the contemplative [...] oftener charged with impressions than with convictions'. [27] In doing so I would argue that Hardy was retreating from the novel's provocative nature, placing the

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23 1892 Preface, prefatory material.

24 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction' (1888), in *Public Voice*, pp. 75-88 (76). This imaginative habit was noted by Virginia Woolf in her essay on Hardy: 'his consciousness held more than he could produce, and he left it for his readers to make out his full meaning and to supplement it from their own experience', Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy', in *The Second Common Reader: Annotated Edition*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Mariner Books, 2003), pp. 245-58 (240).

25 'Profitable Reading', p. 76.

26 The later essays are 'Candour in English Fiction' (January 1890), and 'The Science of Fiction' (April 1891) , both in *The New Review,* reprinted in *Public Voice*, pp. 95-102; 106-10.

27 1892 Preface.

emphasis firmly on the impressionistic as opposed to the combative side of his definition of the novel. The separation of 'impressions' from 'convictions' is unhelpful precisely because it militates against the reader's experience of the novel, where the sympathy generated by the strength of imaginative impressions is stronger than any argument for the novel's purpose. For all Hardy's self-defensive protestations that the novel is 'an impression, not an argument', *Tess* is far more than an impressionistic picture.[28] The novel is a passionate plea which aims to destabilise any coldly rational weighing in the balance of Tess's faults and failings.

In the novel itself the impact of Tess's transcendent purity of heart is blunted by Hardy's awkward attempts at distancing himself from her immediate situation. There is a palpable self-consciousness to the passages in which Hardy credits Tess with abstract musings on her position, 'Was once lost always lost really true of chastity? [...] the recuperative power which pervaded organic nature was surely not denied to maidenhood alone' (p. 140). The opening of Phase the Second emphasises the progress of a solitary figure not instantly identifiable as Tess: 'the basket was heavy and the bundle was large, but she lugged them along like a person who did not find her especial burden in material things'(p. 108). The power of this image is dissipated by the later commentary on Tess's anomalous position: 'she looked upon herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence. But all the while she was making a distinction where there was no difference' (p. 121). Hardy describes Tess's use of two voices at Marlott: 'the dialect at home, more or less; ordinary English abroad and to persons of quality' (p. 29). Her divided tongue is matched by Hardy's uneasy negotiation between his instinctive inhabitation of Tess's situation and his reflections

28 1892 Preface.

upon it.

In 1912 Hardy added a final Preface to the novel. Reflecting on the controversy caused by the novel twenty-one years earlier, Hardy claimed that he was ignorant of the impact the subtitle would have on his readers. He denied that he had intended to be in any way inflammatory when he added to the novel's title the statement that Tess was 'a pure woman faithfully presented'. According to Hardy this description was 'appended at the last moment, after reading the final proofs, as being the estimate left in a candid mind of the heroine's character – an estimate that nobody would be likely to dispute'.[29] Hardy seems to have been belatedly entering into a dispute with the *Quarterly Review*'s assessment of the novel, which ended its demolition job by declaring that 'it is indisputably open to Mr Hardy to call his heroine a pure woman; but he has no less certainly offered many inducements to his readers to refuse her that name'.[30] There is an element of performance, a forced naivety, to Hardy's incredulity here. Given the pressure placed on purity within the novel itself, it is difficult to read the statement as anything other than a challenge to the reader's narrow sense of what it is to be 'pure'. The provocation offered by the first part of the subtitle is such that the latter part has gone relatively unnoticed. I am intrigued by the assertion that Tess has been 'faithfully presented' by the author, almost as if he were under oath to provide a character reference for his heroine. It is this stress on 'faithfully presented' which inhibited Hardy when he came to adapt the novel for the stage. He felt too great a responsibility towards his

29 Preface to the 1912 edition of the novel (London: Macmillan), the Wessex edition.

30 The reviewer was subsequently identified as Mowbray Morris, who had rejected the novel for *Macmillans' Magazine*. See further 'Culture and Anarchy', *Quarterly Review*, 174 (April 1892), pp. 317-26 (326).

heroine to transfigure her for a theatre audience.

Tess's relationship with Alec opens up a debate over guilt and innocence, but it does so in terms which resist clear-cut judgement for either side of the case. This uncertainty is the product of Hardy's own ambivalent attitude. Hardy's statements of the disparity between the grandeur of his original concept and the failings of the final product were a predictable post-publication refrain.[31] In defending the dying fall of his prose, Hardy invariably bemoaned the publishing market's impossibly restrictive moral standards. Hardy plays with the idea of casting Tess as helpless victim and Alec as irredeemable villain in Tess's outburst on the rick at Flintcomb Ash: 'once victim, always victim: that's the law' (p. 453). The desire for moral compartmentalisation of this kind is flirted with throughout the novel, but never whole-heartedly committed to. *Tess* generates such intense debate precisely because Hardy poses a puzzle which the plot never resolves. The plot invites a legalistic division into right and wrong, an urge apparent not only in the insoluble rape/seduction question but in the attempts to act as the judge in Tess's trial for the murder of Alec.

Hardy removes these pivotal scenes from the narrative. I would argue that such strategic silences are not simply a prudent veiling of contentious material. The emotional pull of the narrative suggests a much more intriguing thesis: the extent to which guilt or innocence matter. Hardy is insistent throughout on the division between Tess's awareness of her sexuality and her refusal to exploit it. Such fine distinctions are symptomatic of the novel's method. The hiatuses in the narrative disrupt the novel's linear progression. The tide

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31 For Hardy's regretful comments on the failings of his novels see 'To. J. Addington Symonds', 14/04/1889, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 191 (on *The Woodlanders*); 'To T. Macquoid', 29/10/1891, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 245, 'To. G. Allen', 16/07/1892, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 297 (on *Tess*); 'To. G. Douglas', 20/11/1895, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 98, 'To. E. Gosse', 20/11/1895, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 99 (on *Jude*).

of the narrative aims to carry the reader past the points at which Tess's guilt or innocence is defined. Any judgement of her conduct is retrospective. Rather than pause the action to offer any defence of Tess, Hardy instead turns his face away from any explicit delineation of the scene in the Chase, or the confrontation behind the closed door of the lodging house at Sandbourne. To have done so would have been to raise questions which threaten to disturb the reader's belief in Tess's purity of emotion, her innocent intentions – what Angel belatedly recognises as the need to judge by 'things willed', rather than things done (p. 462).

As Hardy revised the novel his presentation of Tess's actions became progressively less distinct. The narrative turns its face away from the precise words of her confession to Angel, just as it later shuts the door on the bedroom at Sandbourne. It is not so much that in the revised version Hardy falsifies the issue: rather that the novel is punctuated by telling silences, absences which license speculation. This technique is most apparent in the presentation of Alec and Tess. Smoke forms the backdrop to Alec's every appearance in the novel's first Phase – a device caught somewhere between a personal microclimate and a clumsy use of pathetic fallacy. The 'vegeto-human pollen' (p. 86) thrown up by the feet of the carousing villagers in their Saturday night revels is an effect of a different order.[32] Hardy veils the scene in the Chase through the use of atmospheric indicators. Alec returns to the wood to find 'a pale nebulousness at his feet, which represented the white muslin figure he had left upon the dead leaves' (p. 102). At her moment of greatest crisis Tess is nothing more than a facsimile of herself – she has become, however temporarily, disassociated from her body.

The narrative gap between Phases One and Two courts conjecture as to the precise

32 For an analysis of the motives for such indirections see Hardy's letter to Millicent Garrett Fawcett, 14/04/1892, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 264.

nature of Tess's feelings for Alec.[33] That Tess remains as Alec's mistress for a period 'of some few weeks subsequent to the night ride in the Chase' (p. 107) is all that Hardy is prepared to offer the reader at this stage of the novel. Challenged to define her feelings, Tess refers to her present lack of love: 'if I had ever sincerely loved you, if I loved you still, I should not so loathe and hate myself for my weakness as I do now!' (p. 109). Implicit in this is a reluctant admission that she was momentarily dazed, dazzled by Alec's attentions. The closest Hardy comes to defining Tess's contradictory impulses towards Alec occurs in a segment of the narrative peculiarly poised between distance from and direct access to Tess's consciousness. Returning to Marlott she can assess her experience only as an accumulation of instinctual reactions: 'she had dreaded him, winced before him, succumbed to adroit advantages he took of her helplessness; then temporarily blinded by his ardent manners, had been stirred to confused surrender awhile' (p. 117). Much later in the novel Tess can only ever define her feelings as an absence: 'I never said you were Satan or thought it. I don't think of you in that way at all. My thoughts of you are quite cold, except when you affront me' (p. 474).

It is only when Tess meets Alec in his guise as an evangelical preacher that they begin to wrangle over the details of their relationship. As a result the reader is given information, albeit belatedly, about the time at Trantridge. This filling of a silence could push the reader backwards to the earlier events of the novel, leading him/her to weigh it against his/her later knowledge. The narrative resists such forensic assessments, striving for a pacing of the plot which plays upon the readers' emotional responses. At this stage in the novel the focus falls much more on the threat posed by Alec's return. In the spiritless atmosphere of Flintcomb

33 For a reading of Tess's responses to Alec in this vein see Kristen Brady, 'Tess and Alec: Rape or Seduction?', *Thomas Hardy Annual*, IV (1986), ed. Norman Page, 127-48.

Ash, Tess's return to Alec becomes progressively less a fate to be fought against and more a dull, hopeless inevitability. Alec refers to 'the whole unconventional business of our time at Trantridge' and his admiration for Tess as 'unsmirched in spite of all' (p. 441).[34] Alec praises Tess for her abandonment of him: 'you did not remain at my pleasure, so that there was one petticoat in the world for whom I had no contempt' (p. 441). At first sight these are little more than the conventional phrases of half-mocking, allusive flattery that the reader is accustomed to hear falling from Alec's lips, the memory of which assails Tess as she stands in the tent listening to him preach. Even in the guise of a 'ranter' (p. 414) Alec has lost none of his relish for playing a part. Hardy's investment in Alec as more than a stock seducer is nowhere more evident than in this placing of his conviction of Tess's purity in Alec's mouth.

In his rejection letter to Hardy the editor of *Murray's*, Edward Arnold, was adamant that 'it is quite possible and very desirable for women to grow up and pass through life without the knowledge' of what he termed the daily 'tragedies' of sexual frailty and faithlessness. Arnold tempered this criticism with admiration for what Hardy was trying to achieve: 'I honour your motive which is, as you told me, to spare many girls the misery of unhappy marriages made in ignorance of how wicked men can be'.[35] Arnold's reference to 'wicked men' was a revision – he had originally written of the dangers of 'marriages made in ignorance of the true

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34 Hardy's original version of Alec's self-castigation was much more rhetorically patterned: '"Tess", he added, with a sigh that verged on a groan, "yours was the very worst case I ever was concerned in. Wretch that I was to jest with that innocent life. The whole blame was mine; the whole blackness of the sin, the awful, awful iniquity. You, too, the real blood of which I am but the counterfeit. What a blind young thing you were as to possibilities! I say in all earnestness that it is a sinful shame for parents bring up their girls in such dangerous ignorance of the gins and nets that the wicked may set for them, whether their motive be a good one, or the result of simple indifference"' (British Library Add. MS 38182, pp. 412-13).

35 'To Hardy', 15/11/1889 (DCM).

character of men'. Disappointingly, he does not specify whether he is referring to Alec or Angel here.

The surviving manuscript supports Arnold's praise for the novel's social conscience. In revising the manuscript, Hardy removed the opening for the novel's final chapter. It originally read:

> The humble delineator of human character and human contingencies, whether his narrative deal with the actual or with the typical only, must primarily and above all things be sincere, however terrible sincerity may be [...] In typical history with all its liberty, there are, as in real history, features which can never be distorted with impunity, and issues which should never be falsified [which] may acquire some art in shielding from like misfortunes those who have yet to be born. If truth requires justification, surely this is an ample one.[36]

Hardy's removal of this passage suggests that he was ill-at-ease articulating such an earnest purpose for art. The passage is an exercise in defensiveness, a task which always produced his most stilted phrasing.

In rejecting the novel for *Macmillans' Magazine* Mowbray Morris complained that Tess's downfall was inevitable: 'the mother [...] does not seem to mind much, consoling herself with the somewhat cynical reflection that she may be made a lady after if not before [...] It is obvious from the first page what is to be Tess's fate at Trantridge [...] All the first part therefore is a sort of Prologue to the girl's seduction which is hardly ever & can hardly ever be out of the reader's mind'.[37] Morris's later article in the *Quarterly Review* dismissed *Tess* as

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36 This extract was printed in the *Sydney Mail*'s serialisation of the novel and is reprinted in the Grindle & Gatrell edition, p. 540. See further J.T. Laird, 'New Light on the evolution of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Review of English Studies* 31-4 (November 1980), 414-35 (423-4).

37 'To Hardy', 25/11/1889 (DCM). Emphasis in original.

> a clumsy sordid tale of boorish brutality and lust [...] a coarse disagreeable story [told] in a coarse disagreeable manner [...] Poor Tess's sensual qualifications for the part of heroine are paraded over and over again with a persistence like that of a horse-dealer egging on some wavering customer to a deal, or a slave-dealer appraising his wares to some full-blooded pasha.[38]

Hardy's response to this attack was an angry rejection of novel-writing: 'a man must be a fool to deliberately stand up and be shot at'.[39] Yet Morris's identification of Tess's capacity for both 'stirring & by implication for gratifying', precisely captures the duality of the narrative's perspective.[40] In Adrian Poole's reading of the novel he refers to 'the threat and invitation of Tess's body'.[41] This tension underscores Hardy's attitude to Tess: his insistence throughout the novel on her trembling physicality is counterbalanced by her own refusal of the weakness of vanity. In her determination to be faithful to the absent Angel she exacts a physical penalty from her too tempting flesh. Having hacked off her eyebrows in an effort to disfigure herself, and thereby escape coarse compliments, she put 'her hand to her brow, felt its curve and the edge of her eye sockets and thought as she did so that a time would come when that bone would be bare' (p. 384).

In his book *Hardy and the Erotic* Terry Wright comments that 'Tess cannot escape her role as an object of erotic fascination'.[42] This is an overly simplistic definition which omits any appreciation of how Hardy's argument for Tess's purity relies on a much finer distinction: on her failure to exploit her attractions. The narrative never rests content with depicting Tess as

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38 Mowbray Morris, 'Culture and Anarchy', *Quarterly Review*, 174 (April 1892), 317-26 (326).

39 Thomas Hardy, *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy* (1928), ed. Michael Millgate (London:Macmillan, 1984) (afterwards *Life*), p. 259.

40 'To Hardy', 25/11/1889 (DCM).

41 Adrian Poole, '"Men's words" and Hardy's women', *Essays in Criticism*, 31:4 (1981), 328-45 (338).

42 Terry Wright, *Hardy and the Erotic* (London: Palgrave, 1989), p. 118.

innocent of any awareness of her sexuality. At its most imaginatively unsuggestive Tess's awkward awareness of her attractiveness is realised simply as a failure to capitalise on a situation. Tess is stunned by Angel's absolute disavowal of their love: 'the woman I have been loving is not you' (p. 325). Hardy uses Tess's 'dumb and vacant fidelity' (p. 328) as a marker of her devotion to Angel. Yet, Hardy insists that there was some hope. Tess could have argued that geographical distance should bring with it a capacity for forgetting: 'On an Australian upland or Texan plain who is to know or care about my misfortunes, or to reproach me or you?' (p. 344). At its subtlest Tess's uneasy awareness is shown in her attempts to distance herself from Angel at Talbothays. She is aware that she is combating 'their convergence, under an irresistible law, as surely as two streams in one vale' (p. 133), but she generously tries to place the other dairymaids before her: praising their merits, and meaning it.

In his analysis of melodrama, Martin Meisel emphasises the genre's economical employment of clichés: 'in the iconography of character external marks – such as a man's fur collar and cigar or a woman's full bosom – came to signal not merely moral qualities, but predictable functions in plot and situation'.[43] I want to end this section by applying Meisel's template to Hardy's novel. Tess may possess the 'full bosom' which Meisel notes as an inevitable indicator of a sexual fall, but Hardy insists on the disparity between the 'luxuriance of aspect, a fulness of growth' and Tess's unease at the inadvertent invitation it offers: 'she had inherited the feature from her mother without the quality it denoted'. (p. 56) In establishing Tess's awkward awareness of her appearance, Hardy does more than simply suggest that she is innocent of its import. Rather, she is too acutely alert to its implications.

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43 Martin Meisel, *Realizations: Narrative, Pictorial and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth Century England* (Princeton: University Press, 1983), p. 5.

Only in death can Tess escape her entrapment in what Hardy, in an oddly quaint, yet nonetheless evocative, piece of phrasing calls 'the fleshly tabernacle with which Nature had endowed her' (p. 425). This is starkly realised at her re-encounter with Alec in his guise as convert, remonstrating with him, she is 'quite unconscious of her action and mien' until she perceives its effect on Alec, when she 'instantly withdrew the large dark gaze of her eyes' (p. 425). Hardy is insistent on the agonising gap between Tess's 'luxuriance of aspect' and its consequences.

Adapting *Tess*

The first part of this chapter has explored the ways in which Hardy's view of Tess underwent a series of small, but nonetheless decisive, shifts as he revised the novel. Having looked in detail at the subtleties of the relationship between Alec and Tess, I want to draw outwards from this to consider the problem this posed when Hardy came to adapt his novel for the stage. Precisely at what point Hardy began to adapt *Tess* into a play is impossible to determine. In 1894 Hardy began two scripts – the first was never performed in its entirety, the second was labelled by Hardy 'one of two prepared in 1894-5 [...] an experiment, not for publication'.[44] The first script was not performed until 1924.[45] Hardy used the second script

44 I distinguish between these scripts by calling them *Tess*MS1 and *Tess*MS2. *Tess*MS1 was in four acts with an 'Afterscene' set at Stonehenge; *Tess*MS2 was in five acts: 'The Maiden', 'Maiden No More' (both set in Marlott), 'The Rally' (at Talbothays), 'The Woman Pays' (at Wellbridge) and 'The Consequence' (at Marlott and Sandbourne), with an 'Afterscene' set at Stonehenge. MS1 was labelled *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* - A Tragedy in 4 Acts and a Fore and After- Scene, founded on Mr Thomas Hardy's novel of that title. MS2 was labelled *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* - A Tragedy in 5 Acts presented in the Old English Manner. MS3 (the script for the London performance) was designated the rough study copy – with an additional note that green alterations and deletions were not in London performance. All three manuscripts are now in the Dorset County Museum's Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection, though

as the basis for his negotiations with the London theatrical world in the 1890s. He later claimed that he began adapting the novel 'having being tempted by many “leading ladies” of the 90s' to let them create the part of Tess on stage.[46] However, in 1895 when Hardy began negotiations with the actors Johnston Forbes-Robertson and Mrs Patrick Campbell over putting on *Tess*, the script still seems to have been in a state of flux.[47] Hardy had bowdlerized the manuscript of *Tess* for the purposes of getting it serialised – his pitching of the project to Forbes-Robertson suggests that he believed the stage could be more explicit about Tess's sexual history. There are references in the correspondence to details which no longer survive in the script. It appears that Hardy originally intended to focus more explicitly on the birth and death of baby Sorrow and on the conflict between Alec and Tess, though no details are given as to how Hardy envisaged this as playing out on the stage. Forbes-Robertson expressed his discomfort with 'the 1st and 2nd acts. It seems to me that the seduction & the coming child, are dwelt on too much'.[48] This emphasis is elided in the final version of the script, though Robertson's preference for a drama centring around 'the duel between the man & the woman' was not adopted.[49] Hardy's willingness to accept advice indicates that he was uncertain as to the limits of what could be said on the stage.

The negotiations over Mrs Pat playing Tess dragged on for four years. In March 1896

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*Tess*MS1 and 3 are also deposited in the Lord Chamberlain's Collection (British Library).

45 Though he did send the script to his American publishers, Harper & Bros. See 'To Harper & Bros.', 09/02/1896, *Collected Letters*, II, pp. 109-10.

46 'To H. Granville Barker', 20/10/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 362.

47 I refer to the actress Stella Campbell by her stage name (Mrs Patrick Campbell) throughout the chapter, though I abbreviate this to its popular form (Mrs Pat) on occasion.

48 'To Hardy', 03/06/1895 (DCM).

49 'To Hardy', 03/06/1895 (DCM).

Hardy was evidently still considering the financial feasibility of letting Forbes-Robertson stage the play. He wrote to Henry Arthur Jones outlining the royalties he had been offered, depending on the size of the audience, and asking whether these rates were to be expected.[50] In August of the same year Hardy changed his mind, writing to Mrs Pat of his unwillingness to proceed further, but it was only in 1897 that Hardy confirmed he was no longer interested in the possibility of Mrs Pat in the part.[51] He did so in response to her discovery that the St. James's Theatre had a copy of the script. In fact they were not about to put on a run of the play. They were merely staging a copyright performance so that the production of a version of Hardy's script could be staged in America.

Hardy had never had to arrange a copyright performance before. On 16th February he wrote to Jones again, mocking his own ignorance and asking for advice: 'are there people who take it in hand for so much? Some time ago several people well known in London society said they wd [sic] like to take part in such a performance: “it wd be such fun” & no doubt they wd still; but fancy me getting up a play!'[52] On the same day he wrote to his friend, Lady Jeune, that 'I have not the remotest idea how one sets about such a thing'.[53] She offered to approach Mrs Pat, but Hardy rejected this idea and George Alexander was chosen in preference.[54] Hardy wrote of the event itself somewhat ruefully to Emma**:** 'Mrs & Mrs McIlvaine & a friend were “the audience” & duly paid 2 guineas each for their seats. It is a

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50 'To H. A. Jones', 15/03/1896, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 113.

51 'To Mrs P. Campbell', 07/08/1896, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 128.

52 'To H. A. Jones', 16/02/1897, *Collected Letters*, pp. 147-8.

53 'To Lady Jeune', 16/02/1897, *Collected Letters*, p. 147.

54 'To Lady Jeune', 19/02/1897, *Collected Letters*, pp. 148-9.

farce which will cost me more than twenty pounds'.[55]

Hardy had sent his unabridged script (*Tess*MS1) to Harper Brothers on 9th February 1896, instructing them to act as his theatrical agents and obtain 'an independent contract with an American company on good terms'.[56] Hardy recommended that they begin with Harrison Grey-Fiske, who had written to Harper's expressing an interest in producing the play. Five days later Hardy dispatched the script with a letter setting out the adaptation's credentials: 'as this has been read & approved here by one of our most eminent dramatic critics, & two eminent actors, I think any manager wd [sic] be ill advised in making more than trifling alterations'.[57] The production company owned by the actress Minnie Maddern Fiske and her husband agreed to stage the play, and they brought in the playwright Lorimer Stoddard to adapt Hardy's script for their purposes. A review of the play's New York premiere noted that Stoddard had retained the 'pathos and terror' of the novel, but had 'eliminated the psychology which would seem to make the book utterly impossible for stage treatment'.[58] Stoddard chose to structure his acts around key scenes, rather than attempt to cram all the substance of the novel into the available space: the First Act covers the time at Talbothays; the second the confession at Wellbridge; the third Tess's surrender to Alec; the fourth the death of Alec and Tess's arrest at Stonehenge.[59] The Third Act shows Tess's

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55 'To E. L. Hardy', 02/03/1897, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 149.

56 'To Harper & Bros.', 09/02/1896, *Collected Letters*, II, pp. 109-10.

57 'To Harper & Bros.', 14/02/1896, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 111. The 'eminent actors ' were, presumably, Forbes-Robertson and Mrs Patrick Campbell.

58 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 26/10/1897, cited in Marguerite Roberts, *Tess in the Theatre* (Toronto: University Press, 1950), xlvii.

59 The script submitted to the Lord Chamberlain before a performance at the St. James's Theatre in order to secure copyright was licensed on 31/03/1897 (British Library Add MS 53625, licensing no. 88).

motives as unambiguously economic – the bailiffs are at the door, her siblings are starving, Liza Lu enters to say that the horse, Prince, is dead. Such swiftly mounting misery is not quite enough. Alec administers the final turn of the screw by pretending to Tess that Angel is dead – she instantly gives in.

In this part of the chapter the American production is pertinent only in so far as it allowed Hardy to disappoint Forbes-Robertson's continued requests for the rights to the play. In 1899 Hardy excused himself by claiming that Minnie Maddern Fiske was interested in bringing her successful production to England, though she never did so. The play ran for eleven weeks in its initial run, opening on 2nd March 1897, before going on tour across the States, returning to New York in March 1898. Hardy wrote to Lady Jeune in February 1898 that the company were to bring the production to England, but nothing came of it.[60]

In 1900 an adaptation of *Tess* was put on at the Coronet Theatre in London, written by Hugh Arthur Kennedy.[61] It was unauthorised.[62] In November 1899 Hardy had written to Harper Brothers, who seem to have received an enquiry from Kennedy about the rights to the play, but he explained that the Fiskes retained the rights to put the play on in both the

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60 'To Lady Jeune', 22/02/1898, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 186.

61 For the script itself see British Library, Lord Chamberlain's Plays (afterwards LCP), 1900/02 (licensed 15/02/1900).

62 In the Lord Chamberlain's Plays there exists another script for *Tess*. There are no extant references to this version in the *Collected Letters* or biographies of Hardy (it is not listed in Allardyce Nicholl's *History of English Drama*), from which I conclude that he was not aware of its existence. It was written by Harry Mountford for the Grand Theatre, Blackpool and was licensed on 28/12/1899 (British Library Add MS 53701 U Lic. no. 261). In this version at Cranborne Tess is hit over the head with a bottle by Car Darch [one of Alec's former lovers and a servant at Trantridge] and raped whilst lying in a stupor. At Sandbourne Alec and Angel confront each other, before Tess asks Angel to leave and return in ten minutes. In those ten minutes she discovers that Alec faked the telegram which convinced her Angel was dead and that he had arranged for the eviction of her family so that they would be dependent on his aid. She lures Alec to sit in front of the mirror, claiming that she is to kiss him, before cutting his throat with a razor. Angel re-enters and the two escape. In the final scene at Stonehenge Tess falls back in Angel's arms, dying just before justice can catch up with her.

provinces and London: 'until I know whether this arrangement is to be carried out – I have my doubts if it will be – I am not free to treat with anyone for an English version'.[63] *The Times'*s review of the Kennedy production concentrated on the disparity between 'the quality of suggestiveness' offered by the novel and the tastes of the Coronet's audience 'the regular suburban audience, out for the evening – punctuating serious scenes with unseasonable guffaws, hissing the villain'.[64] Hardy wrote a very brief letter to *The Times* denying any part in the play.[65]

This was a more muted response than that provoked by the staging of Pinero's *The Squire*.[66] A legal distinction can be drawn between the two cases – Mrs Fiske obtained an injunction against the play as it infringed her rights, and potentially jeopardized any future profits from a staging of the play in London. I argued in my first chapter that Comyns Carr was instrumental in fuelling the row over *The Squire*. Thus, Hardy's relative silence over Kennedy's clear-cut theft of his plot may simply have been because he had no collaborator to publicise his case. The row over *The Squire* was both less legally clear-cut and far more financially motivated. Hardy's position in 1900 was more secure than it had been in 1882. *Tess* had made him a rich man, and financial security brought with it a more stable sense of his own value as a novelist: a value that was artistic more than it was commercial. Rather than wrangle over Kennedy's debt to the novel, Hardy decided to capitalise on the renewed

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63 'To Harper & Bros.', 24/11/1899, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 239.

64 *The Times*, 20/02/ 1900, p. 9 (Issue 36070).

65 Printed in *The Times* 21/02/1900, p. 4 (Issue no. 36071).

66 Hardy also wrote a letter (conjectured by the letter's editors to be to Max Beerbohm), thanking him for his review of the Kennedy production, and saying that 'I have forwarded it to Mr Fiske, who had written to me on that very subject', 03/03/1900, *Collected Letters*, VII, p. 133.

interest in *Tess* amongst the press and the theatre-going public. Kennedy's adaptation was staged in March 1900. In the July Hardy noted with pleasure the success of a new venture – the publication of a sixpenny edition of *Tess* by Harper Brothers. The firm printed a hundred thousand copies.[67]

Hardy returned to his first script (*Tess*MS1) in 1924. He did so because he had decided to allow a group of amateur actors, the Hardy Players, to perform *Tess* in Dorchester. The success of the amateur production was widely publicised – Hardy made sure every major London theatre critic was aware of the performance and many of them travelled to Dorchester to report on the event. Writing to *The Times* theatre critic, Harold Child, Hardy begged that he would 'have mercy on the shortcomings of a job I undertook entirely by request 30 years ago – a job I should not think of doing now, which the company are going to act unaltered'.[68] Hardy retained the structure of the adaptation he had marketed in the mid 1890s (*Tess*MS2), though the first two acts were amalgamated. Later in this chapter I will draw out Hardy's motives for giving his script to the Players, as well as the effect on the staging of the play of returning to a script which was by then thirty years old.

In 1925 the producer Phillip Ridgeway approached Hardy with an offer to put on the Dorchester script (*Tess*MS1) professionally. It was staged at the Barnes's Theatre, with Gwen Ffrangçon Davies as Tess, though Hardy saw the production only when the cast travelled to

67 See 'To F. Macmillan', 03/07/1900, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 263; 'To F. Henniker', 29/07/1900 , *Collected Letters*, II, p. 265.

68 'To H. Child', 13/11/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, pp. 285-6.

Max Gate and performed the play in the drawing room.[69] Gwen Ffrangçon Davies's experience of rehearsing and playing the part led her to write to Hardy. She suggested that the script be modified. She recommended the inclusion of more detail about the reasons for Tess's return to Alec after Angel has abandoned her, so that the audience could not misconstrue her motives and think she gives in too easily. Hardy readily agreed, offering to resurrect scenes which had been pencilled out of the Dorchester performance – though in the event he preferred the actress's own attempt at adapting the novel to include a scene of Tess's sufferings at Flintcomb Ash.[70] In a later interview about her role, Gwen Ffrangçon Davies talked about how far her understanding of the part relied on the novel, rather than on the script: 'every movement, thought, and emotion of the girl receives its space in the novel, so that when rehearsing a scene in the play I had merely to read the similar passage in the novel to gain all the material I needed for the proper revealing of the character'.[71] This description of her method pulls in two not wholly discrete directions. In returning to the novel, she was in one sense simply doing her research thoroughly. What she gleaned from this process is more suggestive. Her comparisons hinge on the recognition that Tess's 'every movement, thought and emotion' are tracked in the novel, thus she could return there to flesh out the skeleton the play provides. The difficulty is not so much that the play relied on the novel's plot so closely, but rather that it stripped away its narrative and failed to treat the

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69 For further details see 'To R. Golding Bright', 15/12/1925 , *Collected Letters*, VI, p.372; *Life*, pp. 462-3.

70 For the London performances a Fore Scene was added to the script, dramatising the encounter between Jack Durbeyfield and Parson Tringham. The script was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain for approval (British Library LCP, 1924/34, licensed 05/11/1924). The additions to the script by Gwen Ffrangçon Davies were approved on 17/11/1925. These additional scenes are designated *Tess*MS3.

71 'The task of playing "Tess": Collaborating with Thomas Hardy' by Gwen Ffrangçon Davies, *John O' London's Weekly,* 05/09/1925, 704.

script as something to be performed.

I want to end this section by drawing out the significance of Hardy's refusal to publish the Dorchester script because he felt that 'its publication might injure the novel, by being read as a short cut to the gist of the tale, saving the trouble of wading through the much longer narration of it'.[72] Hardy acknowledged that the adaptation was in places 'word for word' lifted from the novel.[73] In 1925 *Tess* was reserialised in the cheap periodical *John O'London's Weekly* to coincide with the production at the Barnes's Theatre. I would suggest that in agreeing to this arrangement Hardy attempted both to make a further profit from the novel and to address his anxiety that the play's audience would not go back to the source.[74] In spite of his admissions of their interdependency, Hardy was indignant that the critics had allied the play so closely to the novel: 'it is not quite fair criticism to say she is unlike the Tess of the novel, as the play ought to be judged as a play and without reference to anything else'.[75] Yet, Hardy agreed to the serialisation in *John O'London's*. A year earlier Hardy had attempted to make a much closer link between novel and play by actively promoting the publication of an illustrated edition. He wrote to his publisher to suggest that the illustrator come to see Gertrude Bugler in the Dorchester production and base her pictures directly on this particular girl as she is 'the very incarnation of [Tess]. A meeting with her privately, which I could arrange, might perhaps suffice, but a better thing would be for her to see her in dairy

72 'To F. Macmillan', 29/11/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 289.

73 'To F. Macmillan', 29/11/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 289.

74 The serial ran from 24/10/1925-25/07/1926.

75 'To S. Cockerell', 22/10/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 230.

costume on the stage'.[76]

Hardy's framings of Tess resist reduction to a clear-cut interpretation a theatre audience could readily comprehend. In adapting *Tess* for the stage Hardy chose to revert to the crude stereotypes of the manuscript – with Tess as the victim and Alec as the exploitative seducer. In all versions of his adaptation of the novel Hardy's heavy-handed legibility reduces the possible readings of Tess's guilt or innocence to a one-dimensional uniformity.[77] Hardy failed to find a means of rendering anything of the novel's uncertainties of tone, as its rhetoric veers between sympathy for Tess's sense of having set herself apart by her sin and assertions of Tess's sinlessness. On the evidence of his scripts for *Tess* it is apparent that Hardy believed a play could accommodate only a straightforward plotline in which motives are diametrically opposed, rather than blended as they are in the novel.

In all versions of the play the presentation of Alec closes off the competing interpretations of his character opened up by the novel. Earlier in the chapter I examined how the incremental layers of the manuscript alterations are evidence of Hardy's increasingly nuanced sense of Alec's character. In adapting the novel for the stage Hardy cast Alec as little

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76 'To F. Macmillan', 04/12/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 292. The edition was published in 1926. 3000 copies were printed, illustrated with 41 woodcuts by Vivien Gribble – a further special edition of 325 copies were printed and signed by Hardy. In his review of Gertrude Bugler's professional performance in 1929 James Agate noted that 'to play Tess properly it is not necessary to know the workings of a dairy; probably the less the actress knows about dairies the better', 'The Dramatic World – The New Tess', *Sunday Times*, 28/07/1929, p. 6.

77 The three scripts referred to are Hardy's unabridged version, begun in 1894 (designated *Tess*MS1), his second version of the script begun at approximately the same time (*Tess*MS2) and the alterations to this script for performance in the professional production in London in 1925 (designated *Tess*MS3). I am quoting from *Tess*MS2 here because it is the version Hardy used as the basis for his negotiations with the theatrical world in the 1890s.

more than a 'splendid heartbreaker' (*Tess*MS2, p. 21), a casual capitaliser on Tess's compromised position. Tess is the passive foil to Alec's exploitative behaviour. In the First Act the audience eavesdrop on a conversation between Joan and an inquisitive neighbour – we hear that Alec 'is struck with her' (p. 6). Immediately afterwards Alec enters the cottage at Marlott 'in driving costume' equipped with 'a cigarette, and a little basket of strawberries' (p. 7). Originally a gift for her mother, the fruit is pressed on Tess and she 'laughs distressfully, and takes it with her lips as offered' (p. 8). Tess suspects that Mrs d'Urberville knows nothing of Alec's offer to employ her at Trantridge's poultry farm. She attempts to evade Alec's insistence on 'one little kiss on those cherry lips – in my mother's name - of course – just to seal the agreement' (p. 9). Tess's movements are nearer to farcical physical comedy than the delicate blend of distress and ignorance shown in the novel. In rapid succession Tess draws back, 'dodges round the table in the shed, and overturns it to check him (p. 7), 'eludes him again' (p. 9), exclaims '[*tearfully, her breast heaving*] But I don't want anybody to kiss me, Sir!', and 'slips her handkerchief between her cheek and his lips' (p. 10).

Finding such tentative tricks ineffective, she resorts to fleeing: 'wait just a moment, then, while I get my hat, in case I should catch cold out here [*she slips into the cottage, and is heard bolting the door*]' (p. 10). This tactic is partly taken from the novel, but it is drained of Tess's firmness of purpose as she stands in the road, having retrieved her escaped hat, and refuses to remount beside Alec and be driven to Trantridge. At this point in the script Hardy inserted an action from much later in the novel, but in doing so removes any sense that Tess is driven beyond endurance. In the novel she 'with stormy eyes pulled the stay-bar quickly, and in doing so caught his arm between the casement and the stone mullion' (p. 482). Here the action is rewritten as farce, as Tess pulls down the casement to stall Alec 'as he tries to

get in at the window' (pp. 10-11). For all his volley of insults, 'You devil! You confounded, artful, impertinent, damned -' (p. 11), Alec is more aroused by such provocation than otherwise: 'I like you better for this skittishness, upon my soul' (p. 11). He ends with the verdict that Tess is a 'damned hussy, pretty as she is! ... Her spirit wants breaking a bit. And I'll do it before I've done!' (p. 11).

Hardy understood how to create *dramatic* situations, it was in translating them for the stage that he failed to recognise his material's potential. The stage's use of a language of gesture to communicate character suggests a means of moulding Alec and Angel for the stage. In the novel both men are given actions to perform which reveal their character, and their attitude to Tess, without recourse to lengthy explanatory passages. Alec refuses to let Tess take the strawberries with her own hand, instead forcing her to open her lips and bite the fruit. Using the fruit in this way communicates the balance of power without recourse to what Hardy, in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, calls 'the coarse meshes of language'.[78] Though this scene is used in the adaptation, the strawberries are little more than a handy prop. In the novel Angel's sleep-walking and his internment of Tess in the abbot's coffin are a painstakingly performed means of burying his love for her. Visually, his actions provide a stark contrast to Alec's startling Tess by leaping up from his pose as a d'Urberville effigy. Both the scene at Wellbridge and at Kingsbere are absent from the script.

In her review of the novel for *Blackwood's Magazine*, Mrs Oliphant questioned the necessity of Hardy's explicit defence of Tess's purity, viewing it as extraneous to the central narrative:

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78 *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), ed. Suzanne B. Falck-Yi (Oxford: World's Classics, reprinted in 2002), p. 26.

'It is sad to think that he is too didactic, and has a meaning [...] a text from which he preaches, but at all events [...] we have many opportunities of forgetting that'.[79] Rather than react with righteous indignation to the night in the Chase, or the birth of Sorrow, Mrs Oliphant lighted on what she viewed as the narrative's greatest incongruity: Tess's return to Alec. Hardy's insistence on the virtue of purity in these circumstances was for Mrs Oliphant wholly implausible. It violated her conviction, expressed in her indictment of Sensation Novels, that the 'wickedness of the woman' was infinitely greater than the man's in such cases because of the woman's 'duty of being pure'.[80] The only conclusion Oliphant draws from *Tess*'s plot is that Tess is 'at twenty a much inferior creature to the unawakened Tess at sixteen who would not live upon the wages of iniquity'.[81]

This is astute, in so far as it recognises the jarring effect the image of Tess trapped in a 'stylish lodging house' (p. 512) has on the reader. However, in emphasising the discordance of Tess's capitulation to Alec, Mrs Oliphant neglected the extent to which Tess has been broken by her sufferings. Tess's appeals to Angel are explicitly concerned with the danger of backsliding:

> It cannot be that I shall yield one inch, yet I am in terror as to what an accident

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79 *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (March, 1892), reprinted in *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R.G. Cox (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 219-229 (220). For a verbatim record of Hardy's defence of his position in *Tess* see further Elliot Felkin, 'Days with Thomas Hardy' in *Thomas Hardy Remembered*, ed. Martin Ray (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2007), pp. 199-211.

80 Margaret Oliphant, 'Novels', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 102 (September 1867), reprinted in *Varieties of Women's Sensation Fiction 1855-1890*, ed. Andrew Maunder (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2004), 6 vols., I, pp. 171-91 (187).

81 *Blackwood's* (1892), in *Critical Heritage*, p. 227. Mrs Oliphant may have been thinking of the resisted emotional, and material, temptations held out by the disgraced Edward Vernon to Hester in her 1883 novel *Hester*, particularly the chapters 'The Crisis' and 'Under the Holly', ed. Jenny Uglow (London: Virago, 1984).

> might lead to, and I so defenceless on account of my first error [...] if I break down by falling into some fearful snare my last state will be worse than my first. O God – I cannot think of it! (p. 459).

This lapsarian rhetoric recurs in Tess's disjointed speech at Sandbourne, only half-addressed to the presumably sleeping Alec, 'you have torn my life to pieces [...] made me what I prayed you in pity not to make me be again!' (p. 518).

In maintaining that 'a pure woman is not betrayed into fine living and fine clothes as the mistress of her seducer by any stress of poverty or misery', Mrs Oliphant elided the distinction between Tess's sense of duty towards her family and her misery – the latter is a far more potent explanation for Tess's behaviour.[82] Mrs Oliphant was adamant that Tess 'according to any natural interpretation, and of all we know of her, must have died of shame rather than meet the eyes of her husband clothed in the embroideries of the nightgown'.[83] This is only a partial reading of the situation. The pathos of the interview between Tess and Angel stems from Angel's awareness that 'Tess had spiritually ceased to recognise the body before him as hers – allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction disassociated from its living will' (p. 515). Tess has accepted the material indicators of her compromised position because she has long since ceased to regard her body as having any tangible connection to her sense of self. In the baldest way possible, she has proved to Angel the truth of the speech which first attracted his attention to her: '"I don't know about ghosts," she was saying. "But I do know that our souls can be made to go outside our bodies

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82 *Blackwood's* (1892), in *Critical Heritage*, p. 226.

83 *Blackwood's* (1892), in *Critical Heritage*, p. 226.

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when we are alive”' (p. 171).

The handling of Alec's death offers ample evidence of the effects of the transition from the novel to the theatre. To gloss the murder of Alec as the eruption of an aberration in the d'Urberville blood hints at something of its unexpectedness, even its gratuitousness. The progress of the novel's Phases from fall to fulfilment is inexorable, but Hardy complicates the picture by refusing to identify precisely what Tess is being punished for. In legal terms Tess is condemned for killing Alec, but if the murder of Alec were the sole transgression for which Tess was brought to justice then Hardy could have chosen to lay more emphasis on the legal process. There is no trial scene, a convention exploited repeatedly in the Victorian novel: the use of the trial scene as dramatic climax is exemplified by Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848) and George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859).[84] This absence demonstrates Hardy's lack of interest in supplying the chain of evidence that would allow the reader to exonerate or convict Tess. She is executed for killing Alec, but her death raises more questions than it answers. Readers of the novel wrote to Hardy questioning Tess's conviction and reviewers speculated about its likelihood, but Hardy maintained that 'a Home Secretary informed me that he would have seen no reason for interfering with her sentence'.[85]

In collapsing the boundaries between literature and life the readers who wrote to

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84 On this see Josephine McDonagh, 'Child-Murder Narratives in George Eliot's *Adam Bede*: Embedded Histories and Fictional Representation', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 56:2 (September 2001), 228-259; Sally Ledger, '“Mere dull melodrama”? *Mary Barton* and *Hard Times*' http://rhulvictorian.wordpress.com/mere-dull-melodrama-mary-barton-and-hard-times-by-sally-ledger. [accessed 07/05/2010].

85 'To. J. K. Jerome', 26/10/1894, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 62. In the *Life* he records 'receiving strange letters - some from husbands whose experiences had borne a resemblance to that of Angel Clare, though more, many more, from wives with a past like that of Tess; but who had *not* told their husbands, and asking for his counsel under the burden of their concealment'., p. 257.

Hardy tried to assess the plot in legal terms. But they applied this reasoning to the ending only, rather than interrogating the stages by which the ending was arrived at. In their terms Tess is guiltless because she is Alec's victim. But Tess does not stab Alec in the Chase or during her time at Trantridge. She retaliates twice prior to the scene at Sandbourne, but her actions are uncharacteristically swift, almost petulant. Tess strikes Alec on the mouth with her glove on the hay-rick at Flintcomb Ash when he taunts her about the past – an action which is retrospectively viewed as a prolepsis of the murder. Tess acknowledges this connection when she tells Angel 'I feared long ago, when I struck him on the mouth with my glove, that I might do it some day for the trap he set for me in my simple youth' (p. 523). The second incident is at Kingsbere. When Alec tempts Tess with the prospect of an immediate remedy to her family's troubles if she will come back to him, she shuts 'the stay-bar quickly, and, in doing so [catches Alec's] arm between the casement and the stone mullion' (p. 482). Her actions at Sandbourne are the culmination of a slow process, rather than an instantaneous retaliation for a wrong. The power of the murder scene derives from its presentation as a succession of discrete images. In the novel the murder is filtered through the keyhole, as the inquisitive landlady spies on Tess. This peculiar perspective demonstrates Hardy's ability to recalibrate the narrative in performative terms: though the perspective is proto-cinematic, rather than theatrical. By choosing to convey the scene in snatches Hardy fuses the language of theatrical gesture with an anticipation of the flexibility afforded by a camera angle – 'in writhing, with her head on the chair, she turned her face towards the door, and Mrs Brooks could see the pain upon it; and that her lips were bleeding from the clench of her teeth upon them, and that the long lashes of her closed eyes stuck in wet tags to her cheeks' (p. 518). The perspective on Tess's position is proto-cinematic, yet the

narrative's description of her agonised involuntary movements draws on a pictorial style of acting which employed many of the stylised gestures of the dumb show – a technique in which the stage picture 'had to carry the full weight of passion and narrative'.[86] Tess remains motionless, her face bowed over the seat of the chair, 'her hands clasped over her head, the skirts of her dressing-gown and the embroidery of her night-gown flowed upon the floor behind her, and her stockingless feet, from which the slippers had fallen, protruded upon the carpet' (p. 517). Tess's disjointed 'dirge rather than a soliloquy' (p. 517) is conveyed in snatches of half-apprehended thoughts: at this point in the novel, language can only brokenly capture her despair.

There is an abrupt disjunction between the unrelieved tragedy symbolised by the sight of Tess's suffering face and the grand guignol of the blood extending across Mrs Brooks's ceiling until it forms 'a gigantic ace of hearts' (p. 520). There is something excessive in this image, as if Hardy had momentarily adopted Edgar Allan Poe's prose style.[87] There is a touch of Poe's 'The Tell-Tale Heart' as Mrs Brooks listens at the door, unable to steel herself to enter: 'She listened. The dead silence within was broken only by a regular beat. Drip, drip, drip' (p. 520). Hardy does not go so far as to have Tess tormented by 'the beating of [his] hideous heart'.[88] But in refusing to securely define the nature of Tess's mental disturbance at the moment she stabs Alec, Hardy leaves open the possibility that she has completed the

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86 Michael R. Booth, 'Ellen Terry', in John Stokes, Michael R. Booth, Susan Bassnett, *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in her Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 80. For more on the grand scale of the Victorian theatre see Michael R. Booth, *Victorian Spectacular Theatre 1850-1910* (Boston: Routledge, 1981).

87 For a reading of this scene see Tony Tanner, 'Colour and movement in Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', *Critical Quarterly*, 10:3 (1968), 219-239 (226).

88 Edgar Allan Poe, *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843) (North Carolina: Hayes Barton Press, 1967), p. 6.

disassociation of her soul from her body to the point of alienating her faculties altogether.

The device of the blood spreading across the ceiling is a substitute for any dissection of the murder itself.[89] The narrative refuses to satisfy the reader's curiosity by detailing precisely what occurred behind the closed doors of the lodging house. Its contribution to the novel's tussle over guilt and innocence is ultimately more interesting. This interpretative challenge relies on the absence of definition, an obscurity which the illustration accompanying the serialisation of this episode in *The Graphic* works against, as it shows Alec lying in bed with the dagger apparently embedded in his diaphragm.[90] In moving so rapidly into the reunion of Tess and Angel, and to Tess's unsatisfactory, incoherent account of her actions, Hardy allows the reader only a retrospective judgement on the extent to which guilt or innocence are any longer applicable to Tess's situation. The sympathetic identification demanded of the reader throughout the narrative precludes such clinical distinctions.

Throughout the novel Hardy emphasises the absolute nature of Tess's love for Angel, her ability to abdicate herself to the extent that she can assure him that 'I have no wish opposed to yours' (p. 338). Her adoration of him is such that she considers him in a wholly uncritical light, with a vision blinkered by 'a triumphant simplicity of faith [...] that the most perfect man could hardly have deserved, much less her husband' (p. 338). It is this unquestioning faith in the rightness of her husband's judgement which motivates the

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89 See 'To R. Noel', 17/05/1892, *Collected Letters*, I, pp. 267-8. The device of the blood seeping through the ceiling was taken from a report in the *Dorset County Chronicle* (02/08/1888, p. 12) of a suicide: 'another person was at breakfast in the house, and observed blood dripping from the ceiling'. The inquest's verdict was that the victim, Captain de Burgess Hodge, was in a state of temporary insanity.

90 "He lay on his back as if he had scarcely moved" by Hubert Von Herkomer, Plate 23 19 December 1891, http://www.victorianweb.org/art/illustration/herkomer/23.html [accessed 25/02/2010, webpage credit Phillip V. Allingham, copyright granted for scholarly purposes solely].

murder. In her disjointed account of the quarrel, Tess says that she was incensed not by any violence towards her, but by Alec calling Angel a 'foul name' (p. 524). This insult prompts in her overwrought brain a rationale for her actions founded on a memory of Angel's conviction that they are divided 'whilst that man lives' (p. 342). Her words to Angel at their reunion seem the ravings of an intellect stretched beyond endurance until it has lost any capacity for coherent reasoning: 'Angel, will you forgive me my sin against you, now that I have killed him? I thought as I ran along that you would be sure to forgive me now I have done that. It came to me as a shining light that I should get you back that way'(pp. 523-4).[91]

Yet her rationale is not wholly warped. Rather she has acted on Angel's words as he justifies his repudiation of her: 'And let me speak plainly, or you may not see all my difficulties. How can we live together while that man lives? - he being your husband in Nature, and not I. If he were dead it might be different'(p. 342). It is on this difference that Tess's hope hinges, though she is aware of the transient nature of her snatched happiness. This transience lends her final days with Angel much of their sweetness, founded as they are on her recognition not only that 'What must come will come' (p. 531), but that she does not wish to outlive such intensity: 'This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me' (p. 539).

The ending of *Tess* is deliberately disconcerting. The novel's first readers debated whether Tess would have been hanged for murdering Alec; even whether Angel could have been present on the hill above Wintoncester, as he would surely have been imprisoned as an accessory. Such quibbles are superfluous distractions from the discomforting nature of the

91 A view endorsed by Rosemary Benzing's 'In Defence of Tess', *Contemporary Review* (April 1971), 218-263.

ending. In pursuing minutiae they evade the significance of the picture of Liza-Lu and Angel bowing their heads in prayer before 'they arose, joined hands again, and went on' (p. 542).[92] Hardy's consistently low estimate of the quality of Angel's love for Tess in the novel is questioned by the introduction of Liza-Lu at the close. The narrative censures Angel's infirmities of purpose after Tess's confession, and his tardy repentance for his loss of faith. Hardy's apparent endorsement of the rightness of Angel's views on purity springs the greatest shock on the reader, leaving an overpowering sense of undeserved reward.[93] His appearance with Liza-Lu collapses all this criticism with the hint at a future union which would fulfil Angel's earlier dreams of marriage, his desire to 'secure rustic innocence, as surely as I should secure pink cheeks' (p. 336).

Perhaps this is precisely the point. The ending of the novel is a subtly orchestrated double irony: ostensibly Tess's wishes are fulfilled as her adored Angel is given a second chance at moulding his ideal. Liza-Lu is young and inexperienced enough to accept Angel as an oracle. Yet this possibility brings with it a powerful, though largely latent, suggestion. If Angel has taken by the hand a second chance, he has learnt little from his childlike haven in the deserted mansion with Tess. In choosing Tess's 'spiritualized image' (p. 541) as a companion he is not so much repairing an old injury as being sentenced, or licensed, by Hardy to repeat it.

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92 See 'To W. Morrison', 24/11/1892, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 290.

93 For a reading of this as a joke at the expense of the fiction market see Andrew Radford, *Thomas Hardy and the Survivals of Time* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003) where he discusses 'Angel's 'irrecoverable loss [...] a deliberately attenuated finale [...] a Hardyan jibe at the hackneyed romantic conclusion, a law of genre imposed by the lending libraries' (p. 184).

In all three versions of the script, the murder scene no longer begins with the eavesdropping landlady squinting at Tess through the keyhole (*Tess*MS1, 2 and 3). The novel moves from this voyeurism to the blood-stain spreading across the ceiling - a symbolic substitute for presenting the scene directly. As I argued above, this is an evasion which refuses to allow the reader to weigh Tess's guilt or innocence in the balance. But it also presented a problem when Hardy came to adapt the novel. Though representing a ceiling on a stage-set with the blood dripping through it would have been a considerable technical challenge, Hardy could have chosen other methods of having the blood pour onto the stage. In the adaptation Hardy does none of this. Instead the focus is solely on Tess, who disappears silently through the bedroom door after her interview with Angel and re-emerges moments later. The scene concentrates on her methodically putting on her coat and hat – only speaking at the end to assure herself that she is free to follow Angel. What interests me here is what this reveals about Hardy's attitude to the audience. He seems to have assumed, not unreasonably, that they were aware of the novel. Keeping the death itself off-stage could offer an audience a blank space to fill with their own interpretations, but Hardy was relying on the audience to fill the silence with the details of the novel. In both the novel and the adaptation we are pushed past a scene which could define Tess's guilt or innocence explicitly.

Joan and Angel enter the lodging house together. Joan is understandably evasive as to Tess's precise position in the household and content to stand aside whilst Angel unburdens himself of a monologue which handily summarises his motivations for rejecting Tess; his wrestles with his conscience; his renewed love. Joan disappears in fright, leaving Angel to confront Tess. Horrified at her altered position, Angel exits expressing his conviction that 'I

am an outcast and accursed – she has no kiss left for me' (*Tess*MS2, p. 89). [94] In the script he marketed to the theatrical world in the 1890s Hardy included a scene of expostulation, in which Alec and Tess fling accusations at each other. Alec reminds her of the good he has done her family. Alec angrily claims that she is shamming shame:

> Damn it, I tell you I am your husband, at any rate just now. Don't be so infernally virtuous! If you hadn't been willing to sell yourself, you wouldn't have been here, you little humbug! [...] Then get along back to him! I don't want you any more, come to that. Or perhaps he came to make a quiet arrangement, for a consideration. A virtuous pair – you and he (*Tess*MS2, p. 90).

In the murder scene Hardy oscillates wildly between overly-literal explanation and a subtler sense of how to stage the novel at the moment of the murder itself. As I argued earlier, the narrative eye remains focalised through Mrs Brooks's blinkered sightline, refusing to follow Tess through the bedroom door. This hiatus in the action is pointedly ambiguous, refusing to define for the reader precisely what occurs in the next few moments. In the script Hardy is able to reproduce this suggestiveness through his stage directions. His ability to do this is not surprising. Writing lengthy stage directions allowed Hardy to exploit their potential as brief prose narratives – he used them in this instance to supply suspense by minutely choreographing Tess's movements. Tess follows Alec into their room

> [*snatching up knife in passing the table. A rustling follows: then a silence. In a minute she comes back to the front room, her countenance changed to a pallor. She carries in her arms her out-door garments. She closes the door behind her, and quietly dresses herself before the chimney-glass. When she has put on her hat and taken up her sunshade, she looks out of the window*]

94 Emphasis in original.

> I am coming, my love! You will love me now! He doesn't live, and you are not an outcast any more! (*Tess*MS2, p. 90).[95]

Angel immediately comes back on stage. Tess declares 'He is dead' [...] May I go with you? We can hide in the New Forest. I'll tell you as we go. I am free'. Angel is, understandably, bewildered: 'I don't understand. But, anyhow, come with me' (*Tess*MS3, p. 65).[96] Hardy's original intention was far less confused – in a section erased from the script Angel and Tess meet on a 'highway out of Sandbourne' and Tess's defence follows her speech in the novel closely. In both the Dorchester and London performances this was all the audience were given. The scripts (TessMS1, MS2 and 3) supply Hardy's vision of the aftermath of the murder: a scene which was never performed. Mrs Brooks knocks on the door to tell Tess that there is 'something soaking through. Drip, drip, drip, as red as blood!' (*Tess*MS2, p. 91), in the process reducing Hardy's eerie image to little more than an inconvenient domestic accident. To the stunned crowd that assemble around her she delivers a compact statement: 'I listened at the keyhole, and heard him call her names. She's not his wife, after all: and she has done it to get back her husband, whom she loves very dearly!' (*Tess*MS2, p. 91).[97]

For much of the adaptation Hardy chose to represent the events of the novel with dogged literal-mindedness. Events which were cut in order to make the adaptation of a playable length are frequently replaced with the reading onstage of elaborate explanatory

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95 In the US version Lorimer Stoddard retained the automaton quality to this as Tess 'fixes her hair in the glass, begins to take off her wrapper, puts it on again, pins up the train of the skirt, takes a long cloak with a cape from behind the screen, puts it on, also her hat. All with great deliberation' (British Library Add. MS 53625, IV, i, p. 8).

96 On the script this scene was marked as not having being used in performance.

97 In MS3 there is an addition to the scene: ' O what has happened! Good God – the gentleman in bed is dying, or dead. He has been murdered. And the lady is not there', p. 76A.

letters: a technique used to cover Angel's time in Brazil and his transformation through suffering, for example. The script groans under the weight of the letters characters flourish at each other and proceed to read from at length. At Wellbridge Tess reads out the entirety of her mother's letter counselling that she keep silent about her relationship with Alec on the unflatteringly practical principle that if Angel ever discovers her secret 'it will not be for some months, when you've been married long enough for him to get tired of 'ee, and not to care one straw whether anything happened in your past life or not' (*Tess*MS2, p. 58). The substitution of narration for action is contagious – Hardy compresses the plot rather than selects from it. Rather than simply explain to Tess his parents' attitude to their marriage Angel is supplied with supporting documentation in the shape of letters from both his father and mother.

This technique tips into the absurd when Joan explains to Marian and Izz Tess's return to Alec by reading to them a letter from Alec she happens to have stumbled across:

> Tess my chick: Are you going to give me an answer or not? Why should such a sweet old girl as she go working in the fields again when she is shaped by nature to adorn any man's home in the world. Tess, remember the old time – the short old time – when we were all to each other – at least, when you were all to me. Ever since I set eyes on you again, after our long separation, I have been on fire with love of you! You little wretch to leave me! Well, I did wrong you, that I know, but come to me again, and I'll make it all up to you. You goose! what's the use of waiting for one who will never come back? He's not half so full of love for you as I, or he would not be able to remain away. You must come, Tess; yes, you must. I am dying to possess you again – to have you again for my own, as at that former time. Say you will – I insist madam – you belong to me. I shall come to you in a day or two for your answer, which I won't allow to be anything but – "Yes" (*Tess*MS2, p. 75).

This scene was never performed – an omission which indicates that on returning to his script Hardy may have recognised the device's lack of theatrical impact. Despite this epistolary

fever Hardy chose not to stage the novel's pivotal use of a letter - Tess's terror as she realises that her faith in Angel's absolute love for her is founded on his ignorance of the past: 'under the edge of the carpet she discerned the faint white margin of the envelope containing her letter to him, which he obviously never had seen, owing to her having in her haste thrust it beneath the carpet as well as beneath the door' (p. 299).

The confession scene is crucial because adapting it for the stage was not simply a matter of returning to the novel for copy. The words of Tess's confession are never given. The reader sees only the aftermath, the words themselves are spoken in the silence of the shift from one Phase of the novel to the next – the only clue we have is that we have moved inexorably from 'The Rally' to 'The Woman Pays'. Precisely because the novel is tantalising silent on the formulation of Tess's confession to Angel the dialogue supplied for the adaptation has a starkness which makes a powerful argument for the eloquence of silence:

> *Tess*: I was sent away – where there was a fast young man – and not understanding his meaning till it was too late – I – gave - way to him.
>
> *Angel*: (*starting up*) You mean me to understand that the man seduced you?
>
> *Tess*: (*retaining her seat and looking into the fire*) I do.
>
> *Angel*: My God! (*he walks away to the other end of the room, turns, and regards her*)
>
> And what – and what -
>
> *Tess:* (*still looking at the fire*) And I had a child.
>
> *Angel*: You had a child by him?
>
> *Tess*: Yes (*Tess*MS2, p. 63).

The adaptation gets closer to the novel when Tess performs her abjection: she '*slips down upon her knees against his foot, and crouches in a heap* [...] *clings to his knees as he stands and weeps passionately a long time* '(*Tess*MS2, p. 64). Hardy risks trivialising Tess's plight, as the pair are locked in a childish game of assertion and counter-assertion:

> *Tess*: I never meant to keep it secret.
>
> *Angel*: But you did keep it secret.
>
> *Tess*: I mean, I didn't -
>
> *Angel*: (*emphatically*) But you did.
>
> *Tess*: Not to keep the secret longer than-
>
> *Angel*: (*yet louder*) But you did! (*Tess*MS2, p. 66).

When Hardy came to revise his adaptation for the production in Dorchester in 1924 he expanded the confession scene.[98] In this expanded version, on the wedding night at Wellbridge Angel kisses Tess and leaves in search of their luggage. In doing so he obligingly clears the stage for Alec's unexpected entrance. Hardy chose not to include in his script Alec's conversion to evangelising. The apparatus surrounding 'The Convert' is a little too neat. Tess meets Alec on the road back from her abortive trip to Emminster. Her hopes for a reunion with Angel are haemorrhaging away. She uses Angel's philosophical arguments to counter Alec's case; she later discovers that Alec was converted by Angel's father. Yet Hardy's handling of the scenario is not as heavy-handed as this might suggest. Alec's conversion may seem psychologically improbable, but it is driven by an attraction to emotional extremes.

98 The material was later used in the London performances (1925).

Remorse has pushed Alec into repentance, but he rapidly discovers the perverse 'pleasure of having a good slap at yourself' (p. 424).

Having cut out this Phase of the novel from the script Hardy faced a problem. He needed to bring Alec into the play, but had to invent a means. The method chosen was to have Alec pursue Tess, and for him to just happen to catch up with her on her wedding night. Alec comes to warn Tess 'I was the owner of that pretty figure once, remember […] I am the only husband you've really had' (*Tess*MS3, p. 48). Alec is not initially aware that Tess is married. Swiftly corrected, he divines that Tess has not told Angel of the past. Alec taunts Tess, accusing her of 'playing the maid again' (*Tess*MS3, p. 49). Alec's lines are a bewildering blend of assertions of Tess's power over him and banalities: 'I cannot stand your looks – they bewitch me! There never were such eyes before, surely!' (*Tess*MS3, p. 50). In the novel Alec comments on the seductiveness of the field woman's garb: 'that bright pinafore thing sets it off, and that wing bonnet' (p. 450). In the script such sentiments are reduced to an inventory of Tess's appearance which demonstrates all the sophistication of a style supplement: 'that nice frock sets it off, and that way of doing your hair suits you [...] and what a swell hat and hand-bag!' (*Tess*MS3, p. 50). This appreciation instantly rebounds on him. Tess is unable to stand his assertions that 'the upright, educated man won't bring his name into disrepute by living long with my Tess' (*Tess*MS3, p. 50) and later that she would be better off coming 'back to your own nest – come! [...] Leave that stick you call husband, for ever' (*Tess*MS3, p. 50). In retaliation Tess *'suddenly hits him in the mouth either with muff, gloves, or handbag she has retained in her hand*' (*Tess*MS3, p. 50). This gesture derives from the novel, where Tess strikes Alec with her glove on the rick at Flintcomb Ash, but the action has been reduced to a petulant, ineffectual swipe from a woman whose behaviour does nothing to counteract

Alec's judgement of her as 'Miss Insolence [...] Miss Sulky' (*Tess*MS3, p. 51).

When the play had its professional premiere at the Barnes's Theatre, Alec's sudden appearance was questioned by one of the audience, the playwright Henry Arthur Jones. In a letter to Hardy he wrote that he reacted with feelings of the 'deepest, deepest pity' to the play, but

> I challenged the appearance of Alec on the bridal night before the confession. It disturbed the unity of impression that the scene in the novel had left in my mind. It makes a double distraction in Tess's already too distracted heart, it divides the volume of interest and movement towards the dreadful moment of the confession.[99]

Jones accurately diagnoses the awkwardness of the device. The entrance of Alec not only disrupts the 'unity of impression' left by the novel, it is made to carry a weight it is ill-equipped to support. Hardy intended it as a succinct means of conveying to the audience Tess's compromised position. His original means of indicating this had been to focus at greater length on the familial and economic pressures Tess is subjected to. Doing so would have offered at least some indication of how Tess's practical position intensifies her sexual vulnerability.

The device of Alec's entrance on the wedding night is as heavy-handed as the cutting of Boldwood in favour of Fanny Robin's brother in the adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd*, which I discussed in the first chapter. Will Robin's shooting of Troy frees Bathsheba to marry Gabriel but allows the script to avoid having to represent anything of the monomania of Boldwood's love for Bathsheba and his resulting disintegration. In later chapters of the

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99 Doris Jones, *Life and Letters of Henry Arthur Jones* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1930), pp. 354-8.

thesis I make a case for Hardy's increasingly sophisticated attitude to the staging of his work, largely as a result of his awareness of the value of using telling details rather than feeling the need to present the whole plot at break-neck speed. His reversion to his cruder adaptation techniques as late as 1924-5 was partly the product of the fact that the script he was working with was thirty years old, and it was easier to fall in with its methods of presentation rather than overhaul them. Hardy's assessment of the significance of the Dorchester production was understated:'I dug [it] out of a drawer where it had lain for 30 years, merely to please the players here'.[100] He insisted that the resurrection of the script had not rekindled his interest in altering it: 'quite by accident, & at the request of the amateur players here, I looked it up, I found I could not get back to the subject closely enough to handle it anew'.[101]

More speculatively, there is a sense throughout Hardy's involvement with staging *Tess* that he felt a loyalty to the emotional truth of the lead actress's performance, almost to the exclusion of the quality of the script. In the 1890s Hardy was, I contend, motivated by the possibility of profit. His decision to gift the premiere of his adaptation to the Hardy Players was a gesture of good will, but it was also an opportunity for Hardy. He was less interested by then in the theatrical potential of the play: his motives were more emotional.

Playing Tess

When Hardy agreed to let the Players put on *Tess* he set out the terms under which the

100 'To J. W. Mackail,' 24/12/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 299. See further 'To J. M. Barrie', 19/12/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 299; 'To S. Cockerell', 28/09/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 359.

101 'To H. A. Jones', 13/09/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, pp. 351-2.

production could proceed. He stipulated that performances could take place only in Dorchester and that

> every announcement of the play is to include the statement that it was dramatised from the novel in 1894-5 (without stating by whom) [...] The cast decided on is to have Mr Hardy's sanction, who is to be entitled to reject any actor that in his opinion is unfitted for the part, though this is not likely [...] no more dialect or local accent than is written in the play is to be introduced by the performers, each part being spoken exactly as it is set down.[102]

Hardy's contradictory impulses towards the play are amply in evidence here – asking for anonymity and absolute control in the same breath. Hardy's interest was primarily in Gertrude Bugler's performance as Tess, though he noted that she was frightened at the scale of the undertaking and dubious about the part: 'she does not like the Tess of the play so well as the Tess of the book (which is intelligent criticism)'.[103]

As early as 1896 Hardy had expressed his frustration with the misfit between his desires and the demands of the market: 'the play as I have arranged it is preeminently a “starring” drama – a certain difficulty I have about it with London actor-managers lying in the very fact that Tess herself predominates the piece – she practically doing the whole tragedy'.[104] These comments were written in the context of an enquiry about the possibility of Hardy's adaptation receiving its premiere in Italian, with Eleanora Duse in the title role.[105] Hardy's anger was, in part, the product of trying to sell a play to a market dominated by male

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102 'To T. H. Tilley', 24/08/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 269.

103 'To F. Hardy', 05/10/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 279.

104 'To Laurence Alma-Tadema', 30/03/1896, *Collected Letters*, VII, p. 129.

105 See 'To Laurence Alma-Tadema', 29/01/1896, *Collected Letters*, VII, p. 128.

actor-managers on the look-out not only for a commercially viable project but also a script with a choice role for themselves as lead actor. The idea of a woman at the centre of the play interested Hardy in terms of the "star quality" they could bring to the part. It was only watching Gertrude Bugler's development into the emotional heart of the Players' productions from her debut in 1913 that convinced Hardy of the possibilities of another kind of stage Tess: he would later state that the necessary qualities were 'A fair amount of experience on the stage. A bright intelligence. Good looks. A pathetic voice'.[106]

The Dorchester production was born of Hardy's desire to see his version of *Tess* on the stage, but it also provided him with the occasion to act as *de facto* director. Hardy's reliance on the Players' compliance with his wishes enabled him to circumvent the need to accommodate his script to the demands of London actor-managers. He could create a production in which Tess's plight dominated over the creaky machinery of the script. The murder scene was cited by Florence Hardy as evidence of Hardy's involvement in directing the play. She recorded J. M. Barrie's view of the professional production at the Barnes's Theatre. He preferred the Dorchester production's handling of the murder scene:

> [Gertrude Bugler] came back into the room dressed, in walking dress, but holding her hat. Her face was very pale. She stood before the mirror – sideways to the audience – and slowly coiled her hair – all this like one in a dream. Then she turned to the audience, and with an ecstatic smile said "I am coming my love". T.H. showed her how to do it, but it was really a wonderful bit of acting, and more than one who saw it Colonel T.E. Lawrence of Arabia – and others – thought her supreme in that'.[107]

106 'To P. Ridgeway', 21/07/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 336.

107 'To P. Ridgeway', 16/03/1926, *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 238. See also Interview with Gertrude Bugler (1992, Hardy Society DVD).

When Gertrude Bugler finally got to play the part in London in 1929, Florence wrote to her that 'I hope you will not alter the way you played the murder scene. Keep that quiet determined way. You were better in that than Miss G. F-D – men whose judgement is beyond question told me that – emphatically. I am sure it is a mistake to show terror after the murder'.[108]

The Dorchester production attracted the attention of the actress Sybil Thorndike and her husband, actor and director Lewis Casson. Hardy wrote to Sybil Thorndike that 'I have no particular wish to get the play acted on the regular stage at all – indeed I should never have thought of it again since the time when many years ago I was inclined to try it as a experiment [...] I daresay that a practical eye could gather from the inexperienced acting an idea whether the adaptation was successful as a turning of the tragedy from narrative to dramatic form'.[109] Casson came to see a performance in Dorchester and negotiations began for the rights to a professional production. Florence Hardy summarised the situation in a letter to Sydney Cockerell, confident that he would agree with her: 'it could never be produced in London in its present form – it would not run a fortnight, so I am told, by a leading producer. My husband was even discussing who should make the alterations as he did not feel competent to do it himself - and indeed it is obvious he has no knowledge of stagecraft'.[110] It has to be acknowledged that her perspective was not an objective one – she

108 'To G. Bugler', 11/07/1929, *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, p. 296. A critic who saw her performance at the Duke of York's theatre wrote of the inhibiting effect of such unfeigned emotion: 'When she wept her body shook, and one knew that she had not ordered its shaking', James Agate, 'The Dramatic World – The New Tess', *Sunday Times*,28/07/1929, p. 6.

109 'To S. Thorndike', 02/11/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, pp. 284-5.

110 'To S. Cockerell', 02/12/1924, in *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, p. 215.

had come to hate the Players' annual productions and harboured particular animus against Gertrude Bugler.[111]

A day later Hardy wrote to the director Harley Granville Barker, a friend since they had worked on a stage version of *The Dynasts* in 1914: 'knowing the difficulties of dramatization I think it may be made worse it [sic] tinkered: at any rate, if it is announced as my doing I shall not let it be re-written. I am not at all anxious to get it performed in London, and don't mind if it is never done there'.[112] Two months later Hardy had agreed to hand over his script (*Tess*MS1) to St. John Ervine. Though he was still eager that any new production would use his script as much as possible, he was adamant that he could do little more than sanction the project: 'I am too old to do anything more with the play, such as to collaborate in preparing a new version. But that I should be happy to have you do it entirely, in a way different from mine, on the condition that it should be announced as your dramatization alone'.[113] In the same letter he persisted in defending the emotional power of his script: 'Barrie (who came down to the performance) wrote to Mrs G. B. Shaw that the play acted here '"got home again and again in queer, inexplicable ways" (whatever that meant)'.[114]

To Granville Barker Hardy insisted that his version was both commercially and

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111 On this see Gertrude Bugler's correspondence (DCM); Gertrude Bugler, *Personal Recollections of Thomas Hardy* (Dorchester: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 1964); Norrie Woodhall, *Norrie's Tale: An Autobiography of the Last of the Hardy Players* (privately printed, 2006); private conversations with Norrie Woodhall (July 2008, 2009). In a letter to Arthur Wing Pinero after Hardy's death Florence maintained that 'I have always thought that my husband's heart was weakened by excitements connected with the production here in Dorset, & had it not been for that I think he might have been alive now'., 01/08/1929, *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, p. 297.

112 'To H. Granville Barker', 03/12/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 291.

113 'To St. J. Ervine', 03/02/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 306.

114 'To St. J. Ervine', 03/02/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 306.

artistically sound: 'the public would be far more interested in my dramatization than in any other: thus there seems to be a commercial reason for sticking to mine. The minor point that the public would consider my version to be unactable I should not much mind, though the critics who saw it here agreed that the story was well-adapted'.[115] Negotiations stalled, partly as a result of Sybil Thorndike's other commitments, and partly because of Hardy's ambivalent attitude to the process. Florence Hardy reported, again to Cockerell, that Sybil Thorndike was wavering, she 'is dubious now about the play. Barrie is very emphatic about the merits of the play and says that he is sure it is a good play, and he is emphatically against anyone but T.H. touching it'.[116] Hardy vacillated, but he formally withdrew any plans to produce the play professionally in a letter to his theatrical agent, R. Golding Bright on 12th June 1925.[117] As noted earlier in the chapter, negotiations over the professional performance of *Tess* were revived rather rapidly. A month after withdrawing the script from consideration Hardy was approached by the producer Phillip Ridgeway. He agreed to a production going ahead, though he expressed reservations about the casting: 'owing to its being a “star” play, and a satisfactory heroine being almost impossible to find'.[118]

The final act of Hardy's script (*Tess*MS1) opens with Angel arriving at Sandbourne to find Tess installed as Alec's mistress. The speed of this transition casts aside the novel's juxtaposition of symbolic signalling and heavy-handed hints: in the novel Tess sinks to her knees in front of the d'Urberville vault and Marian and Izz write to obliquely warn Angel of the danger she

115 'To H. Granville Barker', 10/02/1925, *Collected Letters*, p. 310.

116 'To S. Cockerell', 10/03/1925, in *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, p. 221.

117 See *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 330.

118 'To P. Ridgeway', 16/07/1925, *Collected Letters*, p. 334.

faces: 'she is sore put to by an Enemy in the shape of a Friend' (pp. 493-4). Gwen Ffrangçon Davies wrote to Hardy to express her discomfort at the speed with which Tess capitulates to Alec. Her desire for cutting this scene stemmed from the fact that 'I always find it rather difficult to avoid the suggestion of melodrama which it does seem to involve'.[119] Ffrangçon Davies strengthened her case by referring to Tess's 'desperate struggle & bitter despair when [Angel] does not answer her appeals for help' in the novel. Remembering that Hardy had expressed disquiet at Alec's entrance onto the wedding night at Wellbridge she asked that 'If you could remove Alec from the wedding night scene, my joy would be complete!'[120]

Hardy's reply agreed that the shift was too swift, recognising 'the desirability of showing more clearly the stress she was put to before she went back to Alec'.[121] In acknowledging this Hardy referred to an earlier draft of the play:

> in which this was shown by a scene or two combining the swede-hacking with the bailiff coming for her mother's furniture. But this was omitted as making the play too long, & the effect was endeavoured to be obtained by substituting Alec's call on Tess on the evening of her marriage, & the discussion of her poverty by her mother & Angel, which I thought made her situation sufficiently clear.[122]

Hardy was unable to locate his 'old draft', but he offered to reconstruct his original intention. The authorship of the additional scenes is uncertain. Michael Millgate's annotation to this

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119 'To Hardy', 14/10/1925 (DCM). The revised script for performance in London, with the incorporation of Gwen Ffrangçon Davies's suggestions, is now in the British Library.

120 'To Hardy', 14/10/1925 (DCM).

121 For more on Hardy's willingness to accommodate Miss Ffrangçon-Davies see his letters to her of 13/08/1925 and 17/10/1925 (DCM). Harley Granville Barker wrote to Hardy praising Miss Davies: 'she is about the best Tess on the market I should say, there is what the Americans now call an "otherness" about her which should really be Tess's hall-mark'., 16/08/1925 (DCM).

122 'To G. Ffrangçon Davies', 17/10/1925 (DCM).

letter asserts that Hardy 'does appear to have supplied the text for the additional scene between Tess and Alec' but the letter itself suggests that although he may have done so, it was never performed. Hardy offered his approval of Miss Ffrangçon Davies's arrangement: 'yours has the same effect, & does not require more scenery, as my arrangement would have done'.[123] Florence Hardy, who had largely taken on the onerous task of corresponding with Ridgeway, set out the official line: 'my husband says that it is possible that a little scene inserted, showing her being tried beyond her strength by Alec, might improve the play, if Alec was left in the confession scene. However he agrees with you that it would be a great pity for anything more to be put in the papers about it, so the impression was given that it was a bad play that had to be patched up'.[124]

Gwen Ffrangçon Davies made two additions to the script. The first reintroduced the gift of the jewels on the wedding night at Wellbridge, the second supplemented Tess's collapse in despair at Angel's departure at the close of Act Three (*Tess*MS3). In an attempt to marry the economic and sexual threats facing Tess this second scene culls from the novel much of the exchange with Alec at Kingsbere, as he offers her the prospect of security for her family if she will return to him, though the script emphasises Tess's desperate condition by supplying some back history. In an unpaginated section of MS3 a dialogue between Alec and Tess is supplied: 'How do your hands come chapped like that?' 'It was swede hacking in the frost that did it. But they don't bleed now as they did'. Hardy noted on the script the scenes were adopted 'to emphasise Tess's poverty before going back to Alec. In this, the entry of

123 'To G. Ffrangçon Davies', 17/10/1925 (DCM).

124 'To P. Ridgeway', 29/11/1925, *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, p. 231.

Alec D on the evening of the wedding might be omitted.[125] In Ffrangçon Davies's supplementary scene Alec then insults Angel, provoking Tess to strike him. This time her weapon is somewhat more effective: she hits him with her gloved hand rather than resorting to wielding a handbag. The Lord Chamberlain allowed the additions, though he commented that the play was 'not, I think, a good version'.[126] They were only used for two matinee performances at the Garrick.

Despite this, the rationale behind the alterations was sound, as Ffrangçon Davies relied both on her feeling for the part and her observation of the audience's reactions: 'I feel a wave of surprise & almost disapproval meet me when I come on in Act III now [...] there is often a titter which, I am sure, only comes because they think from Tess going so rapidly (or so it seems in the play) from one man to another, that the whole thing is reduced to the level of a “triangle” drama & the bigness & tragedy of the situation is considerably lessened'.[127] Earlier in the chapter I explored the impact of Hardy's decision to have Alec re-enter the play on Tess's wedding night. In cutting Alec's conversion out of the plot, the play retains only the pressure Alec puts Tess under to return to him without its penitent impetus. Ffrangçon Davies's description of the audience's incredulity is evidence of the challenge of putting the novel on the stage. Hardy compresses the plot, rather than troubling to think about how to convey the passage of time on stage: thus Tess’s return to Alec is shockingly swift. The gaps between Phases in the book open out an interpretative space for the reader – their

125 Hardy evidently preferred his own version of this scene, annotating his copy of the London script: 'the churchyard scene in the unabridged play is best'.

126 See Lord Chamberlain's correspondence, 04/11/1924 (British Library).

127 'To Hardy', 14/10/1925 (DCM).

knowledge only of the consequences of what happens in these blanks jolting them into a belated awareness of what the narrative is not telling them. The reduction of this to a tussle between Tess and Alec at Sandbourne over her motives for becoming Alec's mistress drains the plot of its emotional scale and impact: it loses 'the bigness & tragedy'.[128]

The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy records that 'Hardy received letters or oral messages from almost every actress of note in Europe asking for an opportunity of appearing in the part of "Tess" – among them being Mrs Patrick Campbell, Ellen Terry, Sarah Bernhardt, and Eleanora Duse'.[129] I have chosen to trace the history of the attempts to stage *Tess* by focusing on Ellen Terry and Mrs Patrick Campbell because their candidacies were the most protracted, and the most extensively documented. In the course of this section I want to emphasise the emotional intensity of each actress's involvement with the project.

Ellen Terry wrote to Hardy in 1894. Her enthusiasm for Hardy's work was unabashed: she begged him to let her 'play one of your women'.[130] As noted earlier, in 1897 Hardy wrote to his friend Lady Jeune asking advice about the feasibility of arranging a copyright performance to secure the rights of the American production of *Tess*. He observed that 'you might be seeing Sir H. Irving or Miss Terry, & wd [sic] not mind gathering from either any particulars. Miss T. has often said she wd [sic] like to play Tess over here, & therefore might be interested in giving counsel'.[131] Ellen Terry had eloped from her first marriage with the

128 'To Hardy', 14/10/1925 (DCM).

129 *Life*, p. 282.

130 'To Hardy', 04/10/1894 (DCM).

131 'To Lady Jeune', 16/02/1897, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 147.

designer Edward Godwin and had two children by him, and a sexual relationship between her and Irving was always tacitly assumed, if never proven. I am not suggesting that either Terry or Hardy drew a straightforward connection between life and art here. Rather, the role of Tess may have appealed to Terry precisely because it anatomised in such agonised detail the effect of a sexual past, something her previous roles at the Lyceum had not confronted. On Hardy's side, Terry's considerable professional experience may have weighed more heavily than any awareness of her age. With Ellen Terry creating the part of Tess, the adaptation could have capitalised on the peculiarly intense emotional hold Terry exercised over her audiences. [132]

When she wrote to Hardy, Ellen Terry had been at the Lyceum Theatre as Henry Irving's leading lady since 1878. She had played largely Shakespearean roles, though she had also acted in plays by W. G. Wills, Charles Reade and Tennyson. Terry was given little choice over the parts she played, as Irving exercised control over every aspect of the productions. However, he scarcely ever interfered with her acting. In the 1890s she was facing pressure both from her son, stage designer Edward Gordon Craig, and from George Bernard Shaw to break away from the Lyceum.[133] Playing Tess would have allowed her to control a production in which the woman dominated, rather than being sidelined by Irving's performance. She had made some attempts to escape her image as 'our Lady of the Lyceum'; the title Oscar

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132 Terry was famous for her ability to cry real tears on stage – see Ellen Terry, *The Story of my Life* (1908) (Suffolk: Boydell, reprinted in 1982), p. 90.

133 For both men's contrasting motivations see Edward Gordon Craig, *Ellen Terry and her Secret Self* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Co., 1931), pp. 77-173 and ' A Plea for G.B.S'; *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence*, ed. Christopher St. John (London, Constable and Co., 1931); Michael Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their remarkable families* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), pp. 266-283.

Wilde gave her.[134] In 1888 her Lady Macbeth had been an experiment, testing the audience's reaction to the prospect of her as something other than a woman of verbal wit and great personal charm – a Beatrice or a Portia. Yet Terry played Lady Macbeth as a woman deeply in love with her husband: all her actions in the play stemmed from this emotional loyalty. Terry had challenged Irving by her support for his son's *avant-garde* plays. When she wrote to Hardy in 1894 she was yet to take a decisive step – she did not stage Laurence Irving's *Godefroi And Yolande* until 1895 and she only did so in New Orleans, where the Lyceum company were on tour.

Terry was forty seven when she wrote to Hardy, an age gap which could have pulled in opposite directions. Either playing Tess would have called for an illusion of youth, the kind of agelessness that playing Olivia Primrose, the lead in W. G. Wills's *Olivia*, as late as 1897 demanded. Terry acknowledged to Bernard Shaw that 'I feel quite young all the time I am playing in a young part, but [the audience] won't know how young I feel if I can't *look* young'.[135] Conversely, Terry could have brought a maturity to the role, particularly a sexual maturity. Hardy was not averse to an experiment of this kind – in 1901 he wrote a fan letter wistfully asking the fifty seven-year-old Sarah Bernhardt to play Tess.[136] The possibility of Terry (or Bernhardt) as Tess is, in part, evidence for the way in which the stage demands of its audience a belief that the age of the actor is immaterial: a convention that conflicts with how intensely physically realised Tess is throughout the novel.

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134 Wilde also wrote three sonnets to Ellen Terry – for details see Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History*, pp. 124-5.

135 'To G. B. Shaw', 13/06/1906, *Ellen Terry: A Correspondence*, p. 346. Emphasis in original.

136 'To S. Bernhardt', 25/06/1901, *Collected Letters*, III, p. 291.

Any assessment of Terry's abilities as an actress is inhibited by the way in which, according to the contemporary critic Charles Hiatt, her 'magnetic personality [...] disarmed cold and searching criticism'.[137] Ellen Terry's capacity to disarm theatre critics is amply illustrated by her effect on two men whose opinions on the theatre were otherwise antithetical. In his record of the Lyceum's performances, the critic Clement Scott's appreciation of Ellen did not attempt to disguise its adulatory, bordering at times on the sycophantic, attitude to its subject: she is 'the perfection of charm', a 'poem that lived and breathed' with her 'poetry of movement [her] wonderful deep-toned voice that has a heart-throb in it'.[138] Bernard Shaw was equally floored, though in public he expressed his captivation in somewhat more measured terms: 'Miss Ellen Terry [...] invariably fascinates me so much that I have not the smallest confidence in my own judgement respecting her'.[139]

In his compilation of reviews of Lyceum productions, Clement Scott praised Terry's talent for conveying both emotional intensity and mirth on stage – in *The Merchant of Venice* (1879) 'the love is more expressive and tender, the gaiety more wilful and abandoned, the style more pronounced'; in *Much Ado About Nothing* (1882) she has a 'singular charm and gaiety'.[140] Terry's roles, particularly Portia and Beatrice, had allowed her to combine her natural grace on stage with her gift for verbally quick, intellectually mobile comedy. Her

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137 Charles Hiatt, *Ellen Terry and her Impersonations* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1898), pp. 266-7. For an assessment of Terry's effect on her audiences see Michael Booth's chapter on her in *Bernhardt, Terry, Duse: The Actress in her Time*.

138 Clement Scott, *Ellen Terry* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes & Co., 1900), pp. 17-19.

139 'Blaming the Bard', review of *Cymbeline* at the Lyceum (26th September, 1896), reprinted in George Bernard Shaw, *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (London: Constable, 1932), 3 vols., II, p. 201.

140 Clement Scott, *From The Bells to King Arthur: A Critical Record of the First-Night Productions at the Lyceum Theatre from 1871-1895* (London: John MacQueen, 1896), p. 168, p. 249.

Ophelia, the first part she played at the Lyceum, was a triumph. Her subsequent tragic heroines were less successful. In Scott's review of her 1882 Juliet there are signs of doubt about her abilities as a tragic heroine. She easily offers the audience 'the playful girlish ways of which Miss Ellen Terry is mistress', but she lacks 'an emotional fervour and a passionate force'.[141] *King Lear* (1892), and Terry's Cordelia, was one of the Company's few failures.[142] I want to suggest that playing Tess attracted Terry partly because it would have provided her with the scope to test out her range as an actress – to try for the 'emotional fervour and [...] passionate force' Irving, and the Lyceum's audience, were reluctant to allow her.

On its publication *Tess* generated a debate so intense it divided society dinner tables. The controversy secured Hardy a place in the consciousnesses of society hostesses that his social gaucherie had never previously granted him. In the *Life* Hardy records the experience of the Duchess of Abercorn: 'What she says now to them is 'Do you support [Tess] or not?' If they say "No indeed. She deserved hanging: a little harlot!" she puts them in one group. If they say "Poor wronged innocent!" and pity her, she puts them in the other group, where she is herself'.[143] The society Hardy alluded to tolerated its "naughty" women if, in Bernard Shaw's diagnosis, they were 'pretty and expensively dressed'.[144] If Hardy had selected Mrs Patrick Campbell from his list of potential Tesses he would have ensured precisely the calibre of audience the novel had attracted: privileged women who liked to think of themselves as

141 *From The Bells to King Arthur*, p. 240.

142 Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History*, pp. 231-3.

143 *Life,* p. 258.

144 George Bernard Shaw, *Three Plays for Puritans* (Harvard: H.S. Stone & Co., 1901), Preface.

intellectually progressive. Mrs Pat was the perfect actress for this audience. She was undoubtedly beautifully dressed and accomplished, yet somehow risqué: the critics could never quite decide whether she a genius or an actress only capable of playing the part of a "woman with a past".

The negotiations over the possibility of Mrs Pat playing Tess were protracted. In May 1895, writing about his London lodgings to Emma, Hardy's pedestrian domestic details are relieved by the inclusion of one practical benefit of the location: 'One advantage of the Flat is that Mrs Patrick Campbell lives in an adjoining block - & if the play goes on that may be convenient for the work'.[145] 'The play' is a reference to the negotiations over a London production of *Tess*, with Mrs Pat as Tess and Johnston Forbes-Robertson as Angel – a possibility I discussed earlier in relation to Hardy's revisions of the script. Hardy reported in July, again to Emma, that 'I am going to meet Mr Forbes-Robertson at his house to-morrow morning about the play – if all goes well I shall have to see his solicitor &c. - so it shall be some days before anything is settled I suppose'.[146] Hardy's correspondence is silent on the results of these talks. The letters offer some evidence that the project was stalled by a misunderstanding over the nature of the play. Writing to William Archer, Hardy added a postscript, assuming a suddenly confidential tone, implying that Forbes-Robertson had refused the play as there was 'no hero in it, that the manager cd [sic] personate & bring down the gallery. A manager owned it to me'.[147] This was an argument Hardy repeated over

145 'To E. L. Hardy', 08/05/1895, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 76.

146 'To E. L. Hardy', 24/07/1895, *Collected Letters*., p. 82. See also J. Forbes-Robertson to Hardy, 14/02/1896 (DCM).

147 'To W. Archer', 17/02/1904, *Collected Letters*, III, p. 107. For Forbes-Robertson's own comments on his discomfort with the part of Angel see his letter to Hardy, 08/11/1895 (DCM).

twenty years later: the venture came to nothing because 'the courage of managers did not equal that of the would-be Tesses, and they put the extinguisher on my effort, in the interests of propriety'.[148]

As I outlined earlier in the chapter, the extant letters hint that Hardy's adaptation was a work in progress. Further evidence for the embryonic state of the script is provided by Hardy's intense, if intermittent, correspondence with Mrs Pat – in her first surviving letter to Hardy she referred to 'what you have done to Tess, or thought about with regard to the first act'.[149] Hardy initially responded to such overtures with an uncharacteristic injection of theatrical gushing, assuring Mrs Pat that 'You must be the Tess now we have got so far'.[150] In later letters Mrs Pat framed her interest in the part in terms of a space in her schedule: 'if you have “Tess” still on your hands it may interest you to know that I have arranged nothing so far for the Autumn & Winter'.[151] She made a lightning visit to Dorchester in January 1896, accompanied by her daughter, testing the effect of a personal interview in her efforts to secure the script. Hardy subsequently visited Mrs Pat, though the only evidence for their discussions is, again, found in a dutiful report to Emma of his experiences in London: 'I called on Mrs Pat this aftn. [sic] I am to call again Thursdy [sic] & try to settle about the play'.[152] Aside from a letter expressing regret at the end of her 'friendly visits', no further

148 'To H. Granville Barker', 20/10/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 362.

149 'To Hardy', 30/06/1895 (DCM).

150 'To Mrs P. Campbell', 10/07/1895, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 81.

151 'To Hardy', 31/08/1895 (DCM) - though she opened at the Lyceum as Juliet to Forbes-Robertson's Romeo in September 1895, a performance Hardy saw in the December, see 'To G. Douglas', 09/12/1895, *Collected Letters,* II, p. 100.

152 'To E.L. Hardy', 03/02/1896, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 109.

correspondence survives until Hardy wrote to veto the prospect of the production altogether.[153] Mrs Pat had written on 6th July 1896, saddened that that her commitment to the project had been disregarded: 'Loving “Tess” as I do & having for 10 months unceasingly begged & implored my managers to produce it'[…] 'how I long to play Tess and how straightened are my means!'.[154] Hardy's reply cited 'other reasons than dramatic ones why I don't care to go on with it', without feeling the need to elaborate further.[155]

In 1897, hearing that George Alexander had the script, Mrs Pat assumed that a London production was once again a possibility. Hardy wrote to assure her that the St. James's was merely hosting a performance in order to protect the copyright of Lorimer Stoddard's version in the States. Hardy cast himself for Mrs Pat's benefit as powerless to intervene: 'I threw up the whole matter (feeling rightly or wrongly that the dramatizing of novels was questionable art) & sent my experimental play to my American agents, to do what they liked with it'.[156] Hardy's lack of any real investment in the possibility of Mrs Pat playing Tess is evident from his failure to approach her when organising the copyright reading, and his later quashing of the Robertsons' revived interest in the play: both because of the possibility of Minnie Maddern Fiske bringing her production to England and on the somewhat more tenuous grounds of his having 'promised elsewhere the refusal of a dramatic version based on mine'.[157]

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153 'To Mrs P. Campbell', 23/01/1896, , *Collected Letters*, II, p. 107.

154 'To Hardy', 06/07/1896, 04/08/1896(DCM).

155 'To Mrs P. Campbell', 07/08/1896. A draft of this letter accompanies Mrs Pat's original (in DCM); reproduced in *Collected Letters*, II, p. 128.

156 07/03/1897, *Collected Letters*, pp.150-1, though the County Museum dates Mrs Pat's enquiry 09/03/1897.

157 See *Collected Letters*, II, p. 48; 'To I. Forbes-Robertson', 02/01/1899, *Collected Letters*, pp. 209-10, where

My focus on Mrs Pat's desire to play Tess is designed to draw out the appeal of the part to an actress accustomed to being cast as the "woman with a past".[158] I would argue that Mrs Pat's wish to play Tess sprang from a sense that the part of Tess Durbeyfield offered the potential to build on her previous stage experience. In the role of Tess she could have drawn on her reading of the part of Paula in Pinero's *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (1893). Paula has married Aubrey Tanqueray for love, but she is in flight from her past life as mistress to a succession of men. She finds her dearly bought security threatened: insidiously by her husband's distrust at her suitability as an example for his daughter and dramatically by the revelation that her step-daughter's fiancé is one of her former clients. Horrified at the inescapability of the past, Paula kills herself. Mrs Pat wished to play Paula as 'not merely a neurotic type; to give her a conscience, a soul', because she believed that her love for Aubrey 'lit up the dark recesses of her nature, illuminating her soul'.[159] Playing Tess would have taken Mrs Pat into new, but not altogether unrecognisable, territory: freeing her of the need to play the succession of febrile parts she had been offered after her success as Paula Tanqueray. The plotline of *Tess* does pivot on the return of a hidden past. Yet the strength of Hardy's emotional advocacy of Tess's case is such that the possibility of condemning Tess is never squarely faced. This is not the case with Paula Tanqueray. Her suicide at the close of the play both confirms her acceptance

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Hardy assesses his adaptation 'which I do not like as it stands' (original letter consulted in the Purdy Collection, Beinecke Library (Gen MSS 111, Folder 147)). As late as 1900 Mrs Pat was asking Hardy for the opportunity to play 'one of your beautiful romances' (DCM). In the same letter she refers to Hardy having read out a script to her at her London home.

158 See Elaine Aston, '"Studies in hysteria": Actress and Courtesan, Sarah Bernhardt and Mrs Patrick Campbell', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Actress*, eds. Maggie B. Gale & John Stokes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), [Cambridge Collections Online [18 February 2011 DOI:10.1017/CCOL9780521846066.014]

159 Stella Campbell, *My Life and some Letters* (London: Hutchinson, 1921), p. 70, p. 72.

of herself as damaged goods and relieves the audience of the need to contemplate her future. As Sos Eltis notes, they are 'free to indulge whatever degree of pity she has inspired without being challenged to find a place for her in their social and moral scheme'.[160]

The attraction of playing a strong female part to a woman who had become frustrated with the confines of stardom was a powerful motive, as it was with Ellen Terry. However, I would argue that it was the lack of vulgarity in Tess that was the most potent incentive. Mrs Pat had hated her role as the barmaid Dulcie Larondie in Henry Arthur Jones's *The Masqueraders* (1894) and had similar reservations about the part of Kate Cloud in Herbert Beerbohm Tree's production of *John a Dreams* by C. Haddon Chambers (1894): of Dulcie she said that 'my part struck me as unreal, and much of the play in bad taste'.[161] Agnes in Pinero's *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith* (1895) seemed to offer greater emotional scope, as she moves from proselytiser for women's freedom to a woman tempted to become a discreet mistress with a separate establishment from her married lover. Yet the final act, in which Agnes rejects Lucas Cleeve and retreats into a life of silent "good works", angered Mrs Pat: 'I knew that such an Agnes in life could not have drifted into the Bible-reading inertia of the woman she became in the last act: for her earlier vitality, with its mental and emotional activity, gave the lie to it'.[162]

Mrs Pat then went on to a season at the Lyceum, Forbes-Robertson having leased the theatre from Irving whilst the company were on tour. She played Juliet to his Romeo, a

160 Sos Eltis, 'The Fallen Woman on Stage', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. Kerry Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 229.

161 *My Life and some Letters*, p. 95.

162 *My Life and some Letters*, p. 98.

production Hardy saw, before Forbes-Robertson began to consider staging Henry Arthur Jones's *Michael and his Lost Angel*.[163] She resigned the part of the 'Angel', Audrie, on 1st January - leaving Marion Terry to take over the role in a production which only managed to stay open for ten nights.[164] She later explained that she 'felt my part in this play was vulgar, and it did not interest me'.[165] Mrs Pat travelled to Dorchester to try and persuade Hardy she should put on *Tess* later that month.[166] The possibility of collaborating with Hardy on the creation of Tess allowed Mrs Pat to believe that she could advocate Tess's innocence onstage.

Hardy began adapting the novel for the stage in the mid 1890s seduced by the prospect of seeing a famous actress create the part. His vacillations over which actress to choose were born of his emotional attachment to the character – he could not quite bear to define Tess as one woman over another. In 1924 Forbes-Robertson approached Hardy asking for the script for his wife, the actress Gertrude Elliott. Hardy was in the midst of preparations for the Dorchester *Tess*, and had to reply that both Gertrude Bugler and Sybil Thorndike had prior claims on the part. Nonetheless, his reply sounds regretful: 'alas, years & years ago, you ought to have been Angel Clare, & she Tess'.[167] The sincerity of Hardy's flattery was later corroborated by one of the few comments Hardy made on how he felt his characters could

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163 See 'To G. Douglas', 09/12/1895, *Collected Letters,* II, p. 100.

164 For more on the scheduling of a production of *Tess* in relation to *Michael* see J. Forbes-Robertson to Hardy (26/12/1895, 03/01/1896, January 1896, (DCM)); Mrs Pat to Sara Coleridge, 12/01/1896 (DCM). In his review of Mrs Pat in Coppée's *For the Crown*, Bernard Shaw referred to the mood of the audience on the first night of *Michael and his Lost Angel*: 'What a ballad could have been written then with the title Come back from Dorchester; and what terrible heart twistings we suffered when we knew she would not come unless we gave her Henry Arthur Jones's head on a charger!', *Saturday Review*, 07/03/1896, in *Our Theatres in the Nineties*, II, p. 65.

165 *My Life and Some Letters*, p. 109.

166 'To Mrs P. Campbell', 23/01/1896, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 107.

167 'To J. Forbes-Robertson', 29/11/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 288.

translate to the stage. In a letter to Philip Ridgeway during the preparation for the Barnes's Theatre production of Tess (1925) Hardy wrote that 'Angel Clare is, of course, an austere kind of lover – something as Forbes-Robertson was in his younger days'.[168] The revival of interest in staging the play in 1924-5 was the product of Hardy's belief that Gertrude Bugler had the capacity to *be* Tess on stage – her acting possessed a simplicity and an unconsciousness of effect which captivated the audience. The magnetism of this central performance was all. He acknowledged this in a letter to the producer Frederick Harrison, who was considering putting Bugler on the London stage, that the Dorchester audience 'were much moved by her performance, although it is so artless, or perhaps because of it'.[169]

When Hardy explained the genesis of the American production of *Tess* to Mrs Pat he was trying to soothe her, to soften the admission that he had lost interest in the idea of her playing Tess. He portrayed himself as an innocent, sending his script (*Tess*MS1) to his American publishers with no real idea of the consequences. In explaining his conduct he referred to it as his 'experimental play'. In my analysis of the scripts I have refuted the idea that Hardy's methods were 'experimental'. Rather, they are stilted and linguistically awkward: offering the audience large sections of undigested plot, telling rather than showing them how to interpret the material. In this section of the chapter I explore the ways in which Hardy could have handled his material experimentally.

I want to briefly set Hardy's ambitions for staging *Tess* against Hardy's decision to

168 'To P. Ridgeway', 23/07/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 339.

169 'To F. Harrison', 13/12/1924, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 296.

abandon his plans for a one-act play called 'Birthwort'. Hardy sketched an outline for staging 'Birthwort' in 1893.[170] Hardy intended the action of the play to centre on the accidental death of a young pregnant girl. The girl's lover comes to the house with the offer of marriage he has hesitated over, only to find the girl is dying. Her mother has attempted to save her daughter's reputation by giving her an abortifacient. Hardy later rewrote the plot as a ballad, 'A Sunday Morning Tragedy', and printed it in his 1904 volume of poetry *Time's Laughingstocks*.

Hardy drafted dramatic schemes for adapting a number of his novels for the stage. They are rarely more than a page in length and often written on the back of envelopes or discarded business letters.[171] 'Birthwort' is the longest of these schemes. Hardy's schemes are invariably fragmentary: they divide the proposed play into acts, jot down the principal plot points and occasionally note down lines of dialogue. 'Birthwort' is not quite like this. Hardy has carefully noted exits and entrances, he tries out the effect of the action building to a dramatic dénouement. At the close a doctor is brought on the stage who pronounces a death sentence on the girl. The mother is understandably distraught – she 'flings herself on floor –"I did it for the best"'. This curtain line may be melodramatic, but, notwithstanding this, Hardy has begun to approach his material differently. He is choreographing the action, thinking of it as a piece to be performed. This is, in part, because he is not inhibited by the need to adapt a whole novel for the stage. He notes that there should be a way of conveying

170 He revised it in 1907. Both are in the Dorset County Museum.

171 Hardy's dramatic schemes for *Jude*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *Two on a Tower, The Dynasts* and his short stories 'Enter a Dragoon' (*A Changed Man*), 'The History of the Hardcomes' (*Life's Little Ironies*) and 'The Duchess of Hamptonshire' (*A Group of Noble Dames*) are in the Dorset County Museum.

the fact that the shepherd 'has been sent for – that mother is in trouble about daughter'. The timing of the piece is calculated: there is 'an interval of time for herb to work'. Slight though the evidence is, I would argue that Hardy was beginning to assess the expressive possibilities the theatre offered. He was experimenting with the limits of what the stage can be allowed to treat, acting in the naïve belief that the stage was less inhibited by censorship restrictions than the publishing market.[172] Hardy returned to 'Birthwort' in 1907 and in 1909 he used the history of this piece when asked to comment publicly on the pernicious effects of theatrical censorship. His contribution to the debate, printed in *The Times*, reflected on the reasons for his aborted project. He was convinced that 'the subject – one in which the fear of transgressing convention overrules natural feeling to the extent of bringing dire disaster – an eminently proper and moral subject – would prevent my ever getting it on the boards, so I abandoned it'.[173]

The version of *Tess* Hardy initially proposed to Forbes-Robertson was, I would argue, hampered by its flirtation with subjects better suited to the aims of smaller subscription based theatrical societies such as the Independent Theatre. The Independent Theatre was established by a Dutch-born journalist and theatrical enthusiast, J.T. Grein, with the aim of promoting plays which were of a 'literary and artistic, rather than a commercial value'.[174] Grein's ultimate ambition was the promotion of work by British playwrights – he and his

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172 This is to ignore the impact of the Lord Chamberlain on the freedoms of the stage. For the history of the impact of the Lord Chamberlain on the theatre in the period see Dominic Shellard, Steve Nicholson, Miriam Handley, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets: British Stage Censorship and Readers' Reports from 1824 to 1968* (London: British Library, 2004) and for contemporary attacks on theatre censorship see George Bernard Shaw's *Our Theatres in the Nineties*.

173 *The Times*, 13/08/1909, p. 4.

174 Flyer outlining their aims, undated (Mander & Mitchenson collection).

business partner C. W. Jarvis wrote to Hardy in 1890 asking if he had any material available. Hardy's reply was non-committal: 'I fear I have nothing dramatic that will be of much use: but I will see if anything worth considering is among my MS., when I get to the country'.[175] He subscribed to the Society, but there is no extant evidence he attended any performances.

He was, however, aware of their work. Whether he ever believed that his one-act play about the procuration of an abortifacient and accidental filicide would be aired is impossible to answer. He may have been encouraged by the Independent Theatre's staging of the anonymous *Alan's Wife* (1893), a play later revealed to be the work of Elizabeth Robins and Florence Bell.[176] In the 1890s the actress, Elizabeth Robins, was being considered for the part of Tess. The evidence for this is inconclusive. In February 1896 Hardy wrote to Emma from London that he had met the actress during a social call on his acquaintance Blanche Crackanthorpe. Hardy reported that 'Miss Robins came away with me, & we walked together nearly to Hyde Park Corner'.[177] What they talked of can only be guessed at, but the following month Robins wrote to Hardy. She was puzzled at reports that Mrs Patrick Campbell was to play Tess because of what she called Hardy's 'repeated assurances that you were looking to me to interpret the part'.[178] Robins was the impetus behind much of the *avant-garde* theatre in London in this period – she campaigned for, and starred in, the first English performances of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (1891), *The Master Builder* (1893) and *Little Eyolf* (1896). She would

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175 'To J. T. Grein', 24/07/1890, Purdy Collection, Beinecke Library, (Gen MS 111, Folder 157).

176 See further Katherine E. Kelly *'Alan's Wife:* Mother Love and Theatrical Sociability in the London of the 1890s', *Modernism/modernity*, 11: 3 (September 2004), 539-560; Catherine Wiley, 'Staging Infanticide: The Refusal of Representation in Elizabeth Robins's "Alan's Wife"', *Theatre Journal*, 42:4 (December 1990), 432-446.

177 'To E. L. Hardy', 02/02/1896, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 108.

178 'To Hardy', 18/03/1896 (DCM).

have made a passionate case for Tess, both intellectually and emotionally.

The critic William Archer had provided a Preface for the printed edition of *Alan's Wife* and he wrote to Hardy asking for his help in clearing up a question of the source for an ostensibly shared incident. *Alan's Wife* was based on a story called 'Befriad' by a Swedish writer, Elin Ameen, and Ameen was unhappy with what the play had done to her plot – partly because its existence anticipated her own dramatic version of the story.[179] This accusation of a debt was extended in the press to include *Tess*, as all three texts contain scenes in which a mother baptises her child. Hardy wrote to *The Westminster Gazette* in response to Archer's letter, acknowledging the loose similarities between Ameen's story and the scene of Tess's baptism of Sorrow.[180] Hardy was clear, nonetheless, that there could be no direct relationship. As noted earlier, Hardy had excised the scene of Tess's baptism of Sorrow from the manuscript and printed it in the *Fortnightly Review* in May 1891 as 'The Midnight Baptism: A Study in Christianity'. As such it predates both 'Befriad' and *Alan's Wife*.

In *Alan's Wife* Robins's pregnant heroine Jean loses her husband in a mining accident. Her baby is born severely disabled. Her grief at the loss of her husband is compounded by her realisation that her child will never live anything but a half-life. She suffocates him as he is sleeping and the last act of the play finds her in prison awaiting execution the next morning. Jean is unflinching in accepting responsibility for her actions. She insists that killing her crippled son is the defining act of her life: in no way ideally beautiful, but necessary. She

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179 On this see Angela V. John, *Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 87-90. See also A. B. Walkley's review of *Alan's Wife* in *The Speaker* (May 1893), reprinted in an appendix to the play (for edition used see footnote below).

180 Hardy's letter was reprinted in Archer's edition of the play, Elizabeth Robins & Florence Bell, *Alan's Wife* (London: Henry & Co., 1893), p. 55. See further 'To W. Archer', 07/05/1893, *Collected Letters,* II, p. 8.

will not capitulate to the demands of both her mother and the prison warders that she should argue for a lesser sentence by pleading temporary insanity. Jean, like Hardy's anonymous mother in 'Birthwort', prays for 'no mercy', if for very different reasons. She is adamant that her act was justified. Her grief for husband has lent a stark clarity to her view of life's purposelessness in a world which can be drained of love in an instant. In her last scene Jean remains silent on stage. Elizabeth Robins had to body forth her feelings solely through her expressions. Articulating consent or denial silently is not particularly difficult perhaps, but the script poses greater challenges – Jean has to convey her belief that 'I shall not die unforgiven' without opening her mouth.[181] Such sustained silence offers a great challenge to the actress's emotional range, but it does so by insisting on her stillness, her apparent imperturbability. The reader of the play is given an insight denied to the original audience. However I would argue that the stage directions offer a gloss on an absence, rather than an instruction manual for the actress – they compensate the reader for the loss of Elizabeth Robins's performance as Jean:

> *Jean*: (*silent – smiles strangely*) I don't want mercy.
>
> *Mrs Holroyd*: You're not afraid to die with your sins about ye?
>
> *Jean*: (*silent – shakes her head*) No, I am not afraid.[182]

It is only at the close that she gives her sorrow words: 'I've had courage just once in my life –

181 *Alan's Wife*, p. 43.

182 *Alan's Wife*, p. 43.

just once in my life I've been strong and kind – and it was the night I killed my child!'[183]

Max Beerbohm's review of Hugh Arthur Kennedy's 1900 unauthorised adaptation of *Tess* aptly encapsulates the perils of adapting the novel. Beerbohm extrapolated from his low estimate of the production to argue that the novel should be preserved from the stage:

> "Tess", as a book, is full of melodrama [...] One sees it softened and ennobled through a haze of poetry. One would vow, in reading it, that it was sublime tragedy. But come the adapter, however reverent, and how fearfully one's eyes are opened! A seduction, a deception, an intercepted letter, a confession, a parting, a broker in the house, a relapse into impropriety, a taunt, a murder, a reunion, a death scene – that is all that "Tess" is when it is translated to the stage. A wronged heroine, a villain, a prig, some comic rustics – these, and nothing more![184]

Hardy's own scripts for *Tess* are stripped of the novel's strategic structural silences. These are tactical withdrawals of information which challenge the reader to fill them with their own interpretations, and yet do not carve out the space in which they could do so. This relentless narrative pacing could have been heightened in performance – a reader can choose to shut up the book. A theatre audience cannot escape so instantly.

Hardy's mistake when approaching *Tess* was his failure to recognise that the theatre could dramatise ambiguity. Earlier in the chapter I analysed the ways in which the transition from novel to script produced a one-dimensional, morally unambiguous version of Tess's relationship with Alec. The capacity of the stage to distil a single gesture, and exploit it as an index of character, illuminates something of the challenge of adapting the novel for the

183 *Alan's Wife,* p. 45, p. 47.

184 *Saturday Review*, 03/03/1900, reprinted in *Around Theatres* (London: Hart Davis, 1953), pp. 65-9 (69).

theatre. In the novel Hardy offers multiple, and often competing, framings of Tess. In adapting *Tess* for the stage Hardy chose to revert to the crude stereotypes of the manuscript – with Tess as the victim and Alec as the exploitative seducer. The adaptation's heavy-handed legibility sacrifices the dramatic potential of the novel, reducing the readings of Tess's guilt or innocence to a uniform, and ultimately uninvolving, interpretation.

In an article in *The Guardian* (July 2009) David Edgar laid out the building blocks of a play. He discussed the playwright's manipulation of the relationship between theatrical time and the audience's experience of chronological time. In doing so he cited Sophocles' *Oedipus*, reading it as the exemplar of

> The effect of starting late. This strategy works - it only works, in fact - when it involves the past coming to life in the present and creating drama [...] The backstory is not something we need to know before the present-tense story can begin; its revelation is the drama because it brings about what happens in front of us. So while the plot of many Ibsen plays covers no more than a couple of days, the story starts years before. Almost every mature Ibsen plot hinges on a revelation from the past.[185]

Hardy could have begun his adaptation with Tess's agonies of conscience over marrying Angel. A version of *Tess* confined to the manor at Wellbridge would have played out the tensions of the novel with far greater subtlety. The plot would have pivoted on 'a revelation from the past' by forcing the audience to construct the precise relations between Tess, Angel and Alec without relying on the sudden appearance of Alec at the backdoor to underline the

185 http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/jul/11/drama-edgar-plays-theatre [accessed 22/02/2010]. In a letter to Harley Granville Barker William Archer argued that Ibsen 'withdrew veil after veil from the happenings of the past. They might be external happenings or happenings in the soul, but they were events, not mere ideas', *Harley Granville Barker and his Correspondents*, ed. Eric Salmon (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1968), p. 99.

impact of the past on the present so heavy-handedly.

In suggesting the kind of play Hardy could have made of *Tess* I draw on Declan Donnellan's contention that plays take place in a perpetual present tense.[186] What matters to the audience is not the history that has brought the characters to their particular scene. The task of the performance is to convey the realisation of the effects of this past on stage, as Ibsen does. The elaborate explanatory passages, in which Hardy attempted to supply the absence of narrative by telling the audience all that had gone before, are extraneous. The theatrical power of the play should reside in the interaction between the characters, played as if the moments unfolding in the scene are all that they have. Tess's sense of the potency of the present is, somewhat conversely, the attribute which makes her a natural actress. At Talbothays she expresses a wish to live in defiance of time: 'then it would always be summer and autumn, and you always courting me, and always thinking as much of me as you have done through the past summer-time' (p. 288). Her desire is born of fear. In Donnellan's analysis the past is an arena of guilt, the future one of apprehension. Hardy's depiction of Tess's love fits this theatrical model. Her adoration of Angel is intensified by her knowledge of the shadows which its strength temporarily lightens: 'the gloomy spectres that would persist in their attempts to touch her – doubt, fear, moodiness, care, shame. She knew that they were waiting like wolves just outside the circumscribing light, but she had long spells of power to keep them in hungry subjection there' (p. 280).

In September 1925, Hardy admitted that 'no doubt if I had to dramatize [*Tess*] now I should

186 Taken from a talk on 'Staging Greek Plays' given by Declan Donnellan (10/03/2009) in the Classics Faculty (Oxford).

do it differently'.[187] In February 1925 Hardy had written to St. John Ervine about the possibility of alterations to the adaptation for Sybil Thorndike. He maintained that 'provided a play has a good story at the back of it, the details of construction are not important [...] the dramatization of a novel is really only a piece of ingenious carpentry'.[188] Seven months later there were indications that Hardy was not quite so dismissive of the art of adaptation, but his comments are regretful rather than constructive. In a letter to Henry Arthur Jones, he acknowledged that his script was showing its age, and more importantly that it no longer represented his views of the theatre. In spite of this admission, he failed to go into detail about his new convictions: 'it was written thirty years ago, when both you & I were younger, & our views of the theatre – at any rate mine – were not quite the same as they are now'.[189] My next chapter teases out what Hardy's 'views of the theatre' were in the late 1880s and 1890s, the 'thirty years ago' Hardy alludes to here, and their impact upon his attitude to adapting his novels.

187 'To St. J. Ervine', 13/09/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 351.

188 'To St. J. Ervine', 19/02/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 312.

189 'To H. A. Jones', 13/09/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 312.

Chapter Three: *The Woodlanders* and *Jude the Obscure*

In this third chapter I explore Hardy's interest in the *avant garde* by outlining the development of plans to stage *The Woodlanders* and *Jude the Obscure* in the 1880s and 1890s. I define the *avant-garde* theatre as the effort to stage plays which were interested in opening out a forum for intellectual debate – privileging the education of the audience over their entertainment. I treat these projects as indicative of Hardy's reassessment of the relationship between the theatre and the adaptation of his novels. Hardy became preoccupied with the idea that the stage could articulate plotlines he had half-heartedly veiled in his novels: in *The Woodlanders*, Grace's motives for returning to Fitzpiers and her future as the wife of an habitual adulterer; and in *Jude*, Sue's attitude to Phillotson. Hardy recognised the value of picking a dramatic thread from his plot and crafting it for the stage, rather than compressing his plot into a playable length. The latter approach resulted in the substitutions and confusions I examine in the first two chapters of the thesis, on the adaptation of *Far From the Madding Crowd* and *Tess*. In the course of this chapter I assess the degree to which Hardy's belief in the greater freedom of expression possible on the stage was hopeful, indeed somewhat naïve, given the degree of censorship in the theatre of this period.

In the previous chapter I explored the ways in which Hardy's script for *Tess* was restricted by his decision to compress his plot, rather than select from it. Later in that chapter I laid out the possibilities which could have been opened out by recalibrating *Tess* so that it treated drama as the playing out of the past in the present. Within this analysis I drew on David Edgar's model of a play, where 'the backstory is not something we need to know

before the present-tense story can begin; its revelation is the drama because it brings about what happens in front of us'.[1] Hardy used this model in his plans for adapting *The Woodlanders* and *Jude*. He agreed to the adaptation of *The Woodlanders* in 1889, and negotiations for its performance lasted into the 1890s. Hardy's first scheme for adapting *Jude* for the stage was written in 1895, his second in 1897. Thus, these two projects ran concurrently with the negotiations over the performance of *Tess* on the London stage. This simultaneity points to a disjunction between Hardy's approach to the commercial stage and his awareness of other kinds of theatre, a dual interest I discuss at greater length later in this chapter.

I ended Chapter Two by quoting Hardy's admission in 1925 to a mismatch between his past practice and his current views of the theatre: '[the script of *Tess*] was written thirty years ago, when both you & I were younger, & our views of the theatre – at any rate mine – were not quite the same as they are now'.[2] Frustratingly, he does not go on to say anything more than this: there is no attempt to define how his views have altered. He seems content simply to state that he no longer holds the same opinions, without going into further detail. In the immediate context of the letter, such vagueness is appropriate. Hardy was writing principally about the degree to which censorship acts to curb the dramatist's tongue, though he seems to have believed that the period between the 1890s and the 1920s had brought about a revolution in what could and could not be said in the theatre. In making this judgement Hardy could have been influenced by his awareness of contemporary campaigns for change

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1 http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/jul/11/drama-edgar-plays-theatre [accessed 22/02/2010].

2 'To H. A. Jones', 13/09/1925, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy,* eds. Richard Little Purdy & Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), 7 vols., VII, p. 312 (afterwards *Collected Letters*).

in the theatre. As discussed in the previous chapter, Hardy was a subscriber to the Independent Theatre, which was founded in 1891 – it principally staged plays which had failed to receive a licence from the Lord Chamberlain. Their efforts were built upon by the much larger Stage Society, founded in 1899, which put on plays by writers such as Shaw, Chekhov and Ibsen. Hardy was interested in both Harley Granville Barker and William Archer's case for the founding of a National Theatre in 1903 and the parliamentary enquiry into the censorship of the stage in 1909 – John Galsworthy asked him to contribute evidence to the latter.[3] The National Theatre was not operational until 1963, and the Lord Chamberlain's office exercised the right to censor scripts until 1968. Hardy may have preferred to read the symptoms of reform as definitive rather than indicative. His optimism was reinforced by his distance from current commercial practice – in 1925 he admitted that he had stopped going to the London theatre: 'I know nothing whatever of the English theatre to-day [...] not having been inside one for many years except our small local buildings'.[4]

Hardy's involvement in the possibility of staging *The Woodlanders* and *Jude* is evidence of a development in his attitude to the adaptation of his novels, which ran alongside the plans to stage *Tess* in London. In pursuing the possibility of staging all three novels Hardy was alert both to the restrictions of the leading theatres and the interpretative field opened out by the *avant garde*. He was supportive of the activities of theatre subscription societies, whose “members only” performances allowed them to circumvent the necessity of a Lord

3 On the National Theatre see William Archer & Harley Granville Barker, *A National Theatre: Schemes and Estimates* (privately printed, 1903); on censorship see Hardy's letter to *The Times*, 13/08/1909, p. 4.

4 'To G. Maxwell', 09/04/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 319. In the next chapter of the thesis I explore the extent to which Hardy had abandoned the commercial theatre in favour of 'small local buildings'.

Chamberlain's licence and stage works by Ibsen, Strindberg and Zola, amongst others. Despite this interest, the only record that survives of Hardy attending pioneering productions was of performances which had managed to obtain a licence. He recorded his impressions of the premieres of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (1891) and *The Master Builder* (1893), with Elizabeth Robins in the roles of Hedda and Hilde Wangel.[5] His awareness of theatrical innovation impacted upon his attitude to the adaptation of his plots for the stage. He wanted *Tess* to be staged with a leading lady in the main role. For *The Woodlanders* and *Jude* Hardy was intrigued by the possibility of staging particular themes from the novels – specifically the anatomization of miserable marriages.

Hardy's distrust of the commercial theatre in this period was most explicitly offered in his response to the question 'Why I Don't Write Plays', published in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1892. In this article he comprehensively dismissed the theatre: for its devotion to spectacle; its parading of what he called 'sham-real appurtenances' at the expense of any interest in character or emotion; actor-managers' rejection of originality for a financially lucrative productions; the creation of parts to fit the idiosyncrasies of actors.[6] Hardy argued that the actor-managers were frightened of staging a 'truly original play' – preferring a spectacular production to an intellectual challenge. In this view Hardy echoed William Archer, a critic and translator of Ibsen, who assessed the tastes of the London play-going public in 1882 thus:

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5 These outings were at the invitation of Edmund Gosse, who had been involved in preparing the translations. See 'To E.L. Hardy', 03/03/1894, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 52; 'To F. Henniker', 10/06/1893, II, p. 14. For a reflection on the impact of these performances see Henry James, 'On the occasion of *Hedda Gabler*', *New Review*, IV (June 1891), 519-30; 'Ibsen's New Play', *Pall Mall Gazette*, LVI (17/02/1893), 1-2.

6 *Pall Mall Gazette*, 31st August, 1892, reprinted in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), pp. 120-1 (afterwards *Public Voice*).

> A drama which opens the slightest intellectual, moral or political question is certain to fail. The public will accept open vice, but it will have nothing to do with a moral problem. It likes to go to the theatre to-night, and to forget the name, plot, and characters of the piece to-morrow.[7]

Both positions are polemical, but they do say something pertinent about the intellectual stagnation of the mainstream theatre in this period. Hardy's preoccupation with staging *The Woodlanders* and *Jude* is evidence of his commitment to using the theatre as a forum for 'intellectual [and] moral [...] question[s]'. Hardy sets current practice against the possibility of a 'truly original play', though he says nothing more about what this might consist of.[8]

This frustration with the limitations of the theatrical market had implications for Hardy's plans for the staging of *The Woodlanders*. In 1889 Hardy was approached by J. T. Grein and C. W. Jarvis, the editors of a periodical called *The Weekly Comedy*. The two men wanted to adapt *The Woodlanders*. Jarvis and Grein's zeal for reforming the theatre led to the establishment of the Independent Theatre in 1891, a subscription society which put on performances of plays banned by the Lord Chamberlain. Their productions were controversial - particularly the English premiere of *Ghosts* in 1891. Ibsen's play dramatises a mother's thwarted attempts to protect her son from the knowledge of his father's debauched past, and her son's confession that he is dying of syphilis. *The Daily Telegraph* described the production, in an infamously quotable phrase, as 'a loathsome sore

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7 William Archer, *English Dramatists of To-day* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1882), p. 9.

8 In the next chapter I will assess whether *The Dynasts* (1914) and *The Queen of Cornwall* (1923) are Hardy's 'truly original' plays.

unbandaged [...] a dirty act done publicly [...] a lazar-house with all its doors and windows open'.[9] The plays were performed for a private audience of subscribers in theatres lent for the occasion – they proselytised for the cause of the *avant garde*, but they did so to a committed congregation.

Hardy was enthusiastic about the projected adaptation of *The Woodlanders*, because he believed that it could emphasise what the novel had remained reticent about:

> You have probably observed that the ending of the story, as hinted rather than stated, is that the heroine is doomed to an unhappy life with an inconstant husband. I could not accent this strongly in the book; by reason of the conventions of libraries &c. Since the story was written however truth to life is not considered quite such a crime in literature as it was formerly: & it is therefore a question for you whether you will accent this ending; or prefer to obscure it.[10]

Hardy does not elaborate upon what he means by 'truth to life' here, and he writes in sweeping terms of a change in what literature can treat. There is a tension between the universality of what Hardy seems to be claiming here, that literature can articulate 'truth to life', and the specificity of the example – in this letter 'truth to life' is narrowed down to Grace's refusal to return to Fitzpiers.

The Woodlanders fitted with the material the Independent Theatre was interested in producing. Judging by the sample I took from the Lord Chamberlain's Plays – *A Man's Love* (1889)*, Reparation* (1892) and *Makebeliefs* (1892) - their plays typically concerned sexual

9 From an editorial comment, 14/03/1891, p. 5 – unsigned, but probably the work of the paper's drama critic, Clement Scott.

10 'To C. W. Jarvis', 19/07/1889, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 195.

mores.[11] The plays invariably build to a dramatic climax pivoting on an ethical decision, often a decision brought about by a miserable marriage - what the central character in one of Grein's plays, *Makebeliefs*, calls a collective blindness about the state of marriage: 'every marriage is considered happy in which man and wife don't actually run away from each other'.[12] Hardy's insistence that the adaptation of *The Woodlanders* expose the definition of a happy marriage made it fertile material for Jarvis and Grein's approach to the theatre.

Hardy commented on the progress of *The Woodlanders*' script and wrote a synopsis of the plot to help the adapters navigate through the material. The resulting script concentrated, according to the synopsis and the surviving correspondence, on the cost of Grace's decision to go back to Fitzpiers. Despite his enthusiasm, Hardy was not wholly confident that an adaptation could make the clear-cut argument for Grace's rights within her marriage. Hardy wrote to the theatre critic William Moy Thomas about the project, largely because Thomas had vouched for Grein and Jarvis's credentials:

> If the collaborators can manage to keep out of the excessively conventional grooves in which most English adaptations are made to run they may produce an interesting piece of work. In the story the reunited husband & wife are supposed to live ever after *un*happily! - or at any rate not quite happily: how that would seem on stage I am at a loss to say. Still anything would be better

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11 See *A Man's Love* (1889), Lord Chamberlain's Plays (afterwards LCP), British Library, 53431 A; (Licensing no. 127, licensed June-July 1889); *Reparation*, LCP 53499A (Licensing no. 114, licensed May 1892) and *Makebeliefs*, D. Holberg and J. T. Grein, LCP 53501F (Licensing no. 148, licensed May-June 1892). For more on the production of *The Woodlanders* see Michael Orme, *J.T. Grein: The Story of a Pioneer 1862-1935* (London: John Murray, 1936). For the Independent Theatre's productions see the appendices to John Stokes, *Resistible Theatres: Enterprise and Experiment in the Late Nineteenth Century* (London: Paul Elek Books Ltd., 1972); Tracy C. Davis, 'The Independent Theatre Society's Revolutionary Scheme for an Uncommercial Theater', *Theatre Journal*, 42:4 (December 1990), 447-454.

12 Licensed for Terry's theatre, 02/06/1892, Lord Chamberlain's Plays (British Library) LCP 53501F, unpaginated.

than the old old style.[13]

That 'not quite happily' is a characteristic stylistic tic: a sorrowing partial withdrawal of hope. Hardy does little to define what he means here by 'the old old style'. A clue is given in his later rebarbative essay 'Candour in English Fiction' (1890), where Hardy highlighted the constraints placed on fiction. The application of Hardy's views on fiction to the possibility of adaptation is appropriate because in his letter to Thomas he seems to be arguing from fictional examples and setting the stage aside: 'how that would seem on stage I am at a loss to say'. In 'Candour' Hardy argued that fiction writers who were intent on the pursuit of originality, on tarnishing the 'regulation finish' of a happy-ever-after, faced a stark choice – to 'whip and scourge [their] characters into doing something contrary to their natures' or to face accusations of immorality.[14] In his plans for the adaptation of *The Woodlanders* Hardy was intent on avoiding the prescriptive pattern of the 'old old style', which dictated that a happy-ever-after was a prerequisite for a successful plot. In his scenario Grace does not return to Fitzpiers, and even had she done so she would have faced a lifetime of compromises with both Fitzpiers's philandering and her own knowledge of his infidelity.

The Woodlanders fitted with the immediate aims of Jarvis and Grein. Both men were determined to attract English writers, regardless of whether they had written plays before, to become both practically and intellectually engaged in the theatre. Hardy corresponded with both men over the progress of *The Woodlanders*' adaptation, but he also gave some thought

13 07/08/1889, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 196. Moy Thomas had written to Hardy that Grein and Jarvis were 'clever capable men who may be relied on to observe your wishes', 25/07/1889, Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection, Dorset County Museum (afterwards DCM).

14 *Public Voice*, p. 99.

to the practicalities of staging. *The Weekly Comedy* campaigned for an English version of the Parisian Théâtre Libre, which operated outside the control of the censor as a private subscription theatre. Hardy's response to this project was supportive, but he used his letter to the paper to consider not the material a free theatre could stage, but how the production itself might look. He included a sketch with his letter to support his idea that 'a mere curtain representing scenery would be attractive – People are getting rather tired of the cumbersome *mise-en-scene*'.[15]

Adapting *The Woodlanders* and *Jude*

I want to treat Hardy's 1889 synopsis of *The Woodlanders* and his dramatic schemes for staging *Jude* as symptoms of his interest in selecting from his plots, rather than compressing them into a playable length. In both these plans for adapting the novels Hardy was almost exclusively concerned with the stage's capacity to explore the miseries of marriage. Grace is transformed into a far more emancipated woman than the novel suggests: particularly if Grein and Jarvis paid attention to Hardy's insistence that Grace 'will not be reconciled to Fitzpiers on her father's urging'. [16] Hardy's synopsis of *The Woodlanders* is, inevitably, stripped of much detail. It gives only a sketchy sense of how Hardy conceived of the play's scenarios, but the skeleton indicates that he wished the play to be structured as a sequence

15 'To C.W. Jarvis', 24/07/1890, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 213. In my next chapter I consider the ways in which Hardy's vision of a stage stripped of 'the cumbersome *mise-en-scene*' was realised in Hardy 's only full-length original play, *The Queen of Cornwall* (1923).

16 Synopsis c. 1889 (DCM).

of confrontations. In Act II

> Grace finds it untrue about tooth. An accident without. Mrs Charmond brought in – She and Fitzpiers recognize each other (Grace has gone to bed). Fitzpiers decides not to go. Grace discovers reason.

In quick succession Grace discovers not only that her husband had slept with Suke Damson and lied about it, but that he is infatuated on sight with Mrs Charmond – to the extent that he abandons his professional ambitions and elects to stay in Little Hintock. Act III climaxes with the confrontation between Grace and Mrs Charmond: 'Argument between her and Mrs Charmond. Mrs Charmond reveals relation to Fitzpiers'. The adapters would have had to find the words for Mrs Charmond to confess to Grace – at the vital moment in the novel she whispers in her ear. It is Grace who cuts through Felice's tortuous references to guilt and love and confronts the sexual dependency Mrs Charmond cannot quite bring herself to refer to. The instruction 'Mrs Charmond reveals relation to Fitzpiers' would have posed a challenge to the adapters' frankness. Abstracting the scene from the novel means incorporating Grace's shocked bluntness: '"O my great God!" she exclaimed, thunderstruck at a revelation transcending her utmost suspicion "He's had you! Can it be – can it be!"'[17] In the novel Grace's sudden shift in tone, the directness with which she speaks, is shocking - largely because we see in that one moment how absolutely her ignorance has ended. The prospect of an actress saying such things on the stage indicates how far Hardy was committed to the adaptation confronting the miseries of mismatched marriages.

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17 *The Woodlanders* (1887), ed. Dale Kramer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 227-8; subsequent references are to this edition, incorporated in the body of the text.

Grace's relationship with Fitzpiers is most starkly presented in Hardy's plan for Act IV. Here Hardy opts for an assertion of Grace's independent-minded refusal to be reconciled to her husband: in the first scene Grace runs away from her father, who 'urges her to live with Fitzpiers again'. Hardy's synopsis concentrates on Grace's situation, dwelling particularly on the significance of Grace's claim to Fitzpiers that she has been sleeping with Giles in the nights she has spent in his hut after fleeing from the prospect of being made to return to her husband. Giles has died after chivalrously surrendering his shelter to Grace: she may call on him to come in, but he never does so. Grace's evasiveness is an understandable equivocation and Fitzpiers, however much he later denies it, believes her. Grace's bravado is characteristic of her desire to make Fitzpiers realise that she cannot be treated lightly, that her words are not empty posturing. In the projected adaptation she does not retract her claims.

Hardy's four handwritten schemes for *Jude* are dated October 24th 1895, 1897, May 21st 1910 (subtitled 'Without Arabella'), July 8th 1926 (subtitled 'With Arabella') - the first scheme predates the publication of the novel in volume form. I would argue that this evidence, though slight, is indicative of Hardy's interest in how his plots might work as pieces of theatre. The dramatic schemes focus on Sue's struggles with her feelings for both Phillotson and Jude. In doing so Hardy was not intensifying the attitudes of the novel: rather he chose to highlight one particular thread and contemplate how to stage it. The 1895 scheme is in three acts. In the First Act 'Sue [is] arranging separation. "She may let us know she has asked before". The packing'. In the second 'Sue and Jude [are] living together'. Hardy's plans are then a little more tentative: 'Suicide of the children? Sue says she must go back. Ph. agrees (by letter?) to take her'. The sketch for the Third Act is the most detailed:

> Sue arrives – Jude arrives after her – Implores her not to – Exit Jude.
>
> Enter Ph. Sue abjectly begs to be allowed to enter – Exit Ph. - She talks to Mrs Edlin. Goes into bedroom. Comes out in dressing gown. Knocks at Ph's door. He takes her in.[18]

Sue's stance is static: the action is shifted into implication, a future about to unfold on the other side of the door. The 1897 scheme elaborates on this by including snatches of dialogue: 'We are so happy now. Why try to be like other married couples?' In the 1910 version Sue is shown hesitating outside the house on her return from church, overcome by her inability to escape from her situation: 'She faints, [Phillotson] carries her upstairs', a tableau which provokes Widow Edlin's comment that 'It's prostitution'.[19] Later in the chapter I consider how far Hardy's decision to concentrate on Sue's situation situated his plot in a wider debate about the state of contemporary marriage legislation. The schemes were never staged.

In drafting schemes for adapting *Jude*, Hardy chose to isolate Sue's position, rather than stage the whole plot. Some of the dangers of adapting the novel in its entirety were highlighted by St. John Ervine, a critic and dramatist who considered writing a script for *Jude* and wrote to Hardy in 1926 asking for his permission. In response, Hardy debated how the motive force behind the narrative could be realised on stage: 'Would not Arabella be the villain of the piece? - or Jude's personal constitution? - so far as there is any villain more than blind Chance'.[20] Ervine decided not to proceed with the project and a year later he reflected on the challenges writing the script would have posed:

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18 The scheme is dated October 24th, and is labelled 'by request' (DCM).

19 Dated May 21st 1910 (DCM).

20 *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 467 (afterwards *Life*).

> [some] passages would seriously disturb the audience which would not be able to rid itself of the feeling that the speeches were unreal, too set, too well-made, too priggish. An audience might even assure itself that the persons in the plight in which Jude and Sue were would not speak in that careful, precise and bookish way. This speech made by Jude [on the parallels of their situation to the *Agamemnon*] has the sound and the appearance of a passage in an essay, rather than the sound and the appearance of a remark made by a young monumental mason to a young elementary school-teacher.[21]

Ervine's greatest quarrel was with the scene in which Sue and Jude try desperately to find an analogy which will capture anything of the aftermath of the children's deaths:

> "Nothing can be done," he replied. "Things are as they are, and will be brought to their destined issue."
>
> She paused. "Yes! Who said that?" she asked heavily.
>
> "It comes in the chorus of the Agamemnon. It has been in my mind continually since this happened."
>
> "My poor Jude - how you've missed everything! - you more than I, for I did get you! To think you should know that by your unassisted reading, and yet be in poverty and despair!"[22]

Ervine objected to the academic allusiveness of Jude's tone here. He did not allow for the extent to which Jude is reverting to his habitual mindset – in quoting in this way he is all the more alert to the fact that the words are nothing more than citations. They resonate as a gloss on the situation, but they can do nothing to ameliorate it.

Claire Tomalin described the process of reading *Jude* as 'like being hit in the face over

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21 St. John Ervine in *T.P.'s Weekly*, 19/11/1927, p. 43.

22 Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (1895) ed. Patricia Ingham (Oxford:World's Classics, 1985), p. 358; subsequent references are to this edition, incorporated in the body of the text.

and over again [it is] a clear instance of Hardy "coercing his plots" and piling on the agony'.[23] The most unflinching example of Hardy 'piling on the agony' is the murder of the children and the suicide of Father Time. As Sally Shuttleworth notes, in her recent study of Victorian child psychology, we cannot escape the details of the scene: 'we are to be allowed no respite, no easy retreat into cathartic sympathy. We quickly learn the bodies are scarcely cold: Hardy refuses to spare us'.[24] In his first scheme (1895) for adapting the novel Hardy included the suicide. The 1897 scheme simplifies matters so that Sue is now grieving over a miscarriage, rewriting the plot as if the death of her third child were her only loss. Hardy could have chosen to adopt the novel's odd angle, with the focus moving from Jude calmly timing eggs with his back to the door and the inferences he has to make from the silent scene half-glimpsed as Sue lies in hysterics at the entrance. He need not have taken the audience beyond the entrance to the room.

I would argue that Hardy was increasingly evasive in his treatment of this part of the plot because he could not envisage how it could be played out on the stage. The problem was compounded by the absence of precedents – Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* (1884) climaxes with a child suicide, but Hedvig shoots herself off-stage.[25] If Hardy were faithful to his plot he would have had to exhibit three corpses on the stage hanging side by side. Hardy's decision to gradually erase the deaths of the children may have been, in part, because he hesitated over testing the audience's stomach so extravagantly. The *grand guignol* excessiveness of the

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23 Claire Tomalin, *Thomas Hardy: The Time Torn Man* (London: Viking, 2006) pp. 254-5.

24 Sally Shuttleworth, *The Mind of the Child: Child Development in Literature, Science and Medicine 1840-1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 348.

25 Hardy owned a copy of the play – see the online catalogue of the Max Gate Library http://www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/hardy/hardycataz.html [accessed 22/03/2011].

children's bodies, contemplated with a dull sense of inevitability by their dazed parents, would have chimed even more discordantly on the stage than it does in the novel. Sally Shuttleworth draws attention to the horrified laughter this scene might provoke.[26] Contemporary reviewers were equally quick to point to the farcical potential of the scenario.[27] A theatre audience faced with the scene could respond with appalled laughter – a reaction to the performance which would have irrecoverably damaged its impact.

Staging *The Woodlanders*

Grein and Jarvis began with the intention of revolutionising the theatre from within. They aimed to approach the largest commercial managements with original plays in an effort to persuade them to take on new projects, if only as matinees alongside their main production. The script for *The Woodlanders* remained in Grein and Jarvis's cache when they founded the Independent Theatre only because they had failed in their first ambition – to interest a mainstream management in collaborating with the newer voices in the theatrical world. Their earliest plans for *The Woodlanders* were, I would argue, all the more revolutionary for attempting to operate within the system. In doing so they would have been able to reach not only a larger audience, but one far less familiar with their aims, and more resistant to them. Grein and Jarvis hawked the adaptation of *The Woodlanders* around London with great tenacity. They approached the great names - the Bancrofts, Henry Irving, George Alexander,

26 *The Mind of the Child*, p. 336.

27 For an illustrative example see Margaret Oliphant, 'The Anti-Marriage League', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 159 (1896), pp. 135-49.

Herbert Beerbohm Tree - and were rejected by all of them.[28] I examine two intended destinations for the script because I am intrigued by the performances such alternatives could have produced. I begin with Jarvis and Grein's pitching of the script to Henry Irving at the Lyceum and then turn to their desire to attract the actresses Elizabeth Robins and Marion Lea to the project, in the wake of the actresses' successful gamble in staging Ibsen by self-financing their production of *Hedda Gabler* (1891).

Jarvis suggested to Hardy that Irving would be ideal for the play: 'Mr Melbury would be an excellent part for Irving and Grace for Miss Terry'.[29] Irving wrote to Hardy, politely declining the script:

> I have read your play with much interest. Any drama which presented the spirit of your work, would deserve serious attention - but I am afraid “The Woodlanders” does not lend itself to the present purpose I have in view & therefore I reluctantly return it.[30]

Hardy responded to Irving’s letter with great practicality, perhaps because he recognised the incompatibility between the play and the Lyceum's repertoire: 'I told [the adapters] I thought the subject had too much actuality in it for the romantic Lyceum stage; and it is therefore all the more kind of you to consider the play so carefully'.[31] Hardy's comments on the disparity between the 'actuality' of the script and the 'romantic' traditions of the Lyceum illustrate

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28 Hardy wrote to Jarvis promising to promote the play: 'I met a friend of Mr Tree's: & he said he would remind Mr Tree of the play. This being a much better channel of communication I did not write to Mr Bancroft', 14/07/1890, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 212. Jarvis later reported in a letter to Hardy that Alexander had 'pronounced the play to be “very clever” but could not see his way to producing it', 01/04/1891 (DCM).

29 Not securely dated (DCM).

30 Not securely dated (DCM).

31 05/05/1891, V & A theatre collection. An unpublished letter reproduced with the permission of Professor Michael Millgate and with gratitude to the E.A. Dugdale Will Trust.

both his familiarity with the Lyceum's stock-in-trade and, implicitly at least, his commitment to the 'actuality' of *The Woodlanders*' script. Hardy was aware of Irving's reputation for dominating any production: he once attempted to persuade him of the intellectual interest to be gained from playing Jaques in *As You Like It*. Irving's refusal to consider such a suggestion convinced Hardy that 'actors never see a play as a whole in its true perspective, but in a false perspective from the shifting point of their own part in it'.[32] Irving was notoriously unwilling to surrender the limelight. In his biography of Irving his grandson Laurence acknowledged that 'Irving found that the lack of a dominating character for himself to play was a graver fault than the play's realism'.[33]

Staging *The Woodlanders* at the Lyceum would have left Irving with a stark choice. Would he have opted to play Melbury or would he have taken the riskier course of personating Fitzpiers? Irving as the leading man was not impossible, in spite of the recent lukewarm reception given to his performance as Romeo to Terry's Juliet (1883) – their later pairing as Benedick and Beatrice was highly popular. I would argue that the prospect of playing Melbury - an important role, but not the central one - helps explain his rejection of the play. Irving had played Lear to Terry's Cordelia, but the experience was not a happy one.[34]

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32 *Life*, p. 349.

33 Laurence Irving, *Henry Irving: The Actor and his World* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951), p. 535.

34 For more on this see the chapter 'Shakespeare's Women' in Michael Holroyd, *A Strange Eventful History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their remarkable families* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008). Irving would, instead, have suited roles Hardy never had the opportunity to offer him. Irving died in 1905. Hardy only drafted an Act List, with snatches of dialogue and the skeleton of a plot, for *The Mayor of Casterbridge* in 1908. Irving would have made an excellent Henchard, as the narrative's emphasis on the power of paternal love, on guilt, on the return of the past, echoes Irving's breakthrough role - Mathias in *The Bells* (1871). *The Bells* was Irving's first big success, and one of his most repeated roles. Mathias has murdered a guest at his inn fifteen years before the play begins, destroying the body in a limekiln. In the course of the play he falters under the strain of concealing his crime. As he becomes possessed by the idea that he is about to be caught, he confesses. Whilst I am not suggesting that this

Grein and Jarvis were on surer ground offering the script to Elizabeth Robins and Marion Lea, choosing to do so just at the time the pair were being simultaneously fêted and derided for their production of *Hedda Gabler* at the Vaudeville Theatre (1891).[35] Jarvis presented the idea of Robins and Lea taking on the project as the opposite of selling it to Irving: 'the equality of the principal female parts, which no doubt had weight with Irving, will recommend itself on the other hand to these ladies'.[36] The reference to the script's equality of female parts is ambiguous. The surviving synopsis makes no mention of Marty South, only Grace and Mrs Charmond are referred to, and it is difficult to imagine how far the two rivals would have shared the play equally. If Robins and Lea had staged *The Woodlanders* it would have been placed firmly in the *avant-garde* camp, rather than the commercial sector. The Grace of Hardy's synopsis, the wife who refuses to return to her unhappy marriage, would have offered a challenge of a quality the theatre had largely failed to hold out to Robins and Lea. After *Hedda Gabler* they were still being presented with roles which Robins dismissed as 'pretty little dears however much they were called heroines or leading parts'.[37] Robins was most active, and most eloquent, as an actress in Ibsen's plays. She relished the challenge Ibsen offered actresses, most notably in her performances as Hedda Gabler and as Hilde

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tale of possession by the past precisely mirrors Henchard's shame at his drunken selling of his wife, the same well-springs of emotional intensity could have been drawn on in both cases. In both roles Irving could have capitalised on what Ellen Terry called his 'peculiar fascination' for melancholic subjects (cited in *A Strange Eventful History*, p. 119 (source unspecified in original)).

35 A production Hardy attended at the invitation of Edmund Gosse, one of the play's translators. Gosse's article 'Ibsen, the Norwegian satirist', *Fortnightly Review* (January 1873, pp. 74-88) was one of the first to recognise Ibsen in England. See also 'To E.L. Hardy', 15/04/1891, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 233.

36 'To Hardy', 06/05/1891 (DCM).

37 Elizabeth Robins, 'Heights and Depths' (MS Fales Library, New York), cited in Kerry Powell, 'New Women, New Plays and Shaw in the 1890s', in *The Cambridge Companion to George Bernard Shaw,* ed. Christopher Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 80.

Wangel in *The Master Builder*. Elizabeth Robins's recognition of the power of Ibsen's writing about, and for, women, was outlined in her short book, *Ibsen and the Actress* (1928), years after her career on the stage was over. She defined Ibsen's gift as the power of giving actresses space: of forcing them to think about their character, to inhabit the silences, to show the mobility of their intelligence on stage.

In *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, Hardy records that the adaptation by Jarvis and Grein was never staged because 'no English manager at this date would venture to defy the formalities to such an extent as was required by the novel, in which some of the situations were approximately of the kind afterwards introduced to English playgoers by translations from Ibsen'.[38] George Bernard Shaw's defence of Ibsen's dramaturgy offers a way into the implications of Hardy's aligning of *The Woodlanders* with Ibsen. In 'The Quintessence of Ibsenism' (1891) Bernard Shaw explained the impact of Ibsen on a play's structure by establishing a contrast between the "well-made play" and Ibsen's art: 'formerly you had in what was called a well made play an exposition in the first act, a situation in the second, and an unravelling in the third. Now you have exposition, situation and discussion; and the discussion is the test of the playwright'.[39] Shaw's formulation emphasised the theatre's mobility – its freedom to reinvent the stage as an arena for debate rather than as a space for its easy resolution. Later in the chapter I examine Hardy's plans for adapting *Jude* as evidence of his awareness of this fluidity – he represents the plot not simply by reducing it down to Sue's situation, but by constraining the action. The scene demands a great deal of

38 *Life*, p. 231.

39 George Bernard Shaw, 'The Quintessence of Ibsenism' (1891), in *Major Critical Essays*, ed. Michael Holroyd (London: Penguin, 1986), p. 160.

the audience, requiring them to be gripped by the silent playing out of an internal dilemma, as Sue debates whether or not she can bear to sleep with her husband.

Shaw's emphasis on the centrality of discussion to a play is highly pertinent to Hardy's view of the adaptation of *The Woodlanders*. Hardy insisted that in the novel Grace 'is doomed to an unhappy life with an inconstant husband'.[40] His suggestion that the adaptation close with Grace refusing to return to her husband opens out a discussion because it refuses to resolve the questions it poses. She has not capitulated but, as with Nora Helmer at the close of *A Doll's House* (1879), Grace's gesture is the ending of the play - in neither case do we pursue the uncertain consequences of this independent stance. *The Woodlanders*'s script is no longer extant. It is in such unfulfilled intentions, in the drafts and projected possibilities, that Hardy felt most able to play with shaping his plots for the stage.

I want to look briefly at two examples of plays contemporary to the efforts to adapt and produce *The Woodlanders*: Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Profligate* (1889) and Henry Arthur Jones's *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1893). Both plays deal with the revelation of a husband's dubious sexual past and the wife's attempts to reassess the terms of her marriage in the light of this knowledge: as a stage version of *The Woodlanders* would have done. Yet both plays were written for the mainstream commercial market. *The Profligate* was first performed in 1889 at the Garrick Theatre, with Johnston Forbes-Robertson as the reformed rake Dunstan Renshaw. Dunstan marries Leslie, and her youth, innocence and absolute trust in him transform him: 'I married her, as it were, in darkness: she seemed to take me by the

40 'To J. T. Grein & C. W. Jarvis', 19/07/1889, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 195.

hand and to lead me out into the light'.[41] When his past returns in the shape of Janet Preece, a girl he has seduced, his wife throws him out. The original script has him commit suicide at the close of the play. The manager of the theatre, John Hare, pressed for a re-write and in the premiere husband and wife were reconciled, pledging to 'start life anew – always seeking for the best that we can do, always trying to repair the worst that we have done' (p. viii). In *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, Susan has been burned by her efforts to pay her adulterous husband back in kind on a vacation to Cairo. She wanted to 'find a little romance, and introduce it into our married life', but has only succeeded in falling in love with a man who proves fickle.[42] Susan and her husband end the play circuitously negotiating the terms on which their marriage will resume – he demands that she tell him everything about her past, yet is horrified when she expects the same honesty from him. Her husband believes that they are disagreeing over their lives during their separation and considers his doubts about his wife's innocence to be pivotal. She, in contrast, is using her temporary tactical advantage to discover the truth about her husband, who she knows has been repeatedly unfaithful.

In a review of *The Woodlanders*, Coventry Patmore thought that the ending required too much of the reader, asking them to believe 'in that incredible event, the abiding repentance and amendment of a flippant profligate'.[43] As in Pinero's and Jones's plays, the unhappy future Hardy insisted on is founded on compromise: Fitzpiers's repentance is not so much abiding as expedient. Whilst *The Woodlanders* is unequivocal about the fact that Grace has not committed adultery, Hardy is equally emphatic about her desires. In recommending

41 Arthur Wing Pinero, *The Profligate* (1889) (London: William Heinemann, 1892), p. 67.

42 Henry Arthur Jones, *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1893) (London: Macmillan, 1901), p. 35.

43 Coventry Patmore in 'Hardy's Novels', *St. James's Gazette*, 02/04/1887, pp. 6-7.

to Grein and Jarvis that Grace refuse to return to Fitzpiers, Hardy was leaving open the suggestion, not that her 'retaliatory fiction' (p. 312) of an affair with Giles might be true, but that she wishes Fitzpiers to continue believing that it is.

I draw on these plays because they are representative of contemporary theatrical scenarios which struggle with how to stage the breakdown of a marriage. In 1925, Hardy wrote to Jones, praising *Susan* but noting that it could not be as candid as it needed to be: now 'events can be allowed to develope [sic] on the stage as they would in real life'.[44] Hardy was adamant that the adaptation of *The Woodlanders* would not compromise in this sense – he saw no potential for either wifely forgiveness or half-reluctant pragmatism in Grace Melbury, at least on stage. His synopsis of the plot for Jarvis and Grein was unequivocal: Grace 'will not be reconciled to Fitzpiers on her father's urging'.[45] Jarvis & Grein's first sketch for the adaptation shies away from such an assertion:

> *Fitzpiers*: You will come back to me?
>
> *Grace*: What else can I do? My father says so, he tells me, everybody tells me – to be unhappy.[46]

When he read the script, Hardy was unhappy with this alteration. As a compromise he suggested a slight slanting of the material, Melbury could hint that 'In two or three years, maybe, you'll bring yourself to live with him again'.[47] This desire to reconfigure the

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44 'To H. A. Jones', 13/09/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 352. See also II, p. 113, p. 147.

45 c. 1889 (DCM).

46 'To Hardy', 16/09/1889 (DCM).

47 'To C. W. Jarvis', 31/03/1890, *Collected Letters*, I, pp. 210-11.

possibilities open to Grace stems from Hardy's frustrations with what the novel could not be explicit about. Hardy's clearest view on the discrepancy between his intention for the novel and the achievement of the text was offered in a private conversation:

> Hardy said that Grace never interested him much; he was provoked with her all along. If she would have done a really self-abandoned, impassioned thing (gone off with Giles), he could have made a fine tragic ending to the book, but she was too commonplace and strait-laced and he could not make her.[48]

Hardy admits that Grace has taken on an independent life, that he could not write her into the plot he wanted to – the plot in which she eloped with Giles. The adaptation did not redress this balance absolutely, but Hardy's insistence that Grace refuse to return to Fitzpiers gestures towards the 'fine tragic ending' Hardy had envisaged for the narrative. In the absence of further evidence it is impossible to securely define what Hardy thought 'a fine tragic ending' for the book would be, but in underscoring the fact that Grace remains apart from Fitzpiers Hardy turns the plot into a drama of renunciation and loss far more unambiguously than he does in the novel.

Hardy wrote to Grein and Jarvis after reading the script as far as it had progressed. His comments were encouraging, but he expressed some reservations about the veiling of Fitzpiers's seduction of Suke Damson. This fits with his determination that the adaptation would be able to be more explicit about Fitzpiers's infidelities. Hardy insisted that the adaptation emphasise the significance of the scene in which Grace stands at her bedroom window and sees Suke leaving Fitzpiers's house in the early hours, his presence signalled only

48 From a conversation recorded by an assiduous fan of Hardy's, Rebekah Owen. Cited in Carl J. Weber, *Hardy and the Lady from Madison Square* (1952) (New York: Kennikat Press, reprinted in 1973), p. 89.

by his dressing gown sleeve. In the novel this revelation of her fiancé's infidelity confirms Grace's indistinct fears about the wisdom of her engagement. She attempts to break it off, but is thwarted by a powerful combination of her father's indignation at her flightiness and Fitzpiers's skilled evasions. Hardy was right to identify this as a pivotal point in the novel's sexual psychology, writing of 'the suspense which the aforesaid revelation of Fitzpiers's character engenders'.[49] Hardy was able to recognise the dramatic potential for this scene, but his technical suggestions were somewhat heavy-handed: 'I don't see how this is to be done, except by dumb-show through a window – or by some unusual means'.[50] Hardy fails to define any more precisely the ways in which this situation could be capitalised on, particularly what 'some unusual means' might be. Hardy's suggestion of a dumb show seems at first to be a crude way of solving the delivery of information, but it is apposite to the scene. Grace's recognition of the significance of the event in front of her is all the more powerful because she cannot speak to Fitzpiers. She is a spectator in a scene whose contents she can piece together - but she can see only bits of the story, and has to infer the rest.

Hardy's only other extended comment on the script concerned the scene in which Giles kisses Grace, moments after he has found that she cannot be divorced from Fitzpiers. Hardy advocated that the adaptation remove the ambiguity of Giles's motives. The play should depart

> from the details of the novel in this case, wh. [sic] are too complicated for the stage. Giles, thinking she will be free, makes love honestly. Then Melbury's "take away that arm" comes as a shock to characters as well as to audience. This love

49 'To C. W. Jarvis', 31/03/1890, *Collected Letters*, I, pp. 210-11.

50 'To C. W. Jarvis', 31/03/1890, *Collected Letters*, I, pp. 210-11.

> scene, being an emotional climax, might be made longer, & very warm, to add pathos to what follows.[51]

Hardy shows an eye for the emotional impact of how this shared misunderstanding might be played out on the stage, but at the same time he seems to mistrust the actor's interpretative power. At this moment in the novel Giles's turmoil is internal: 'Grace, deeming herself free to do it, was virtually asking him to demonstrate that he loved her – since he could demonstrate it only too truly [...] he gave way to the temptation, notwithstanding that he perfectly well knew her to be wedded irrecoverably to Fitzpiers' (p. 270). The narrative voice here is difficult to determine. We are somewhere close to Giles's thought patterns, but held at a distance – the syntax's hesitancy tries to mirror Giles's reticence, but the grammatical fragmentariness is alienating. The narrative shifts from Grace's appeal to Giles's confused response – but between her question and his kiss there is a paragraph of deliberation which cannot quite decide whether it is assessing the situation or is caught up in it. We are told Giles 'betrayed a man's weakness' (p. 270) before we see that weakness in formation: 'he cared for nothing past or future, simply accepting the present and what it brought' (p. 270). In cutting this wavering, Hardy betrays his lack of belief in the theatre's capacity to stage a character's emotional fluctuations.

In the next part of the chapter I explore in greater detail Hardy's recalibration of the plots of both novels in terms that allowed him to capitalise on their potential for the theatre, though I concentrate principally on *Jude*. *The Woodlanders* turns on the consequences of reforms to

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51 'To C. W. Jarvis', 31/03/1890, *Collected Letters*, I, pp. 210-11.

the divorce legislation in light of Grace's horrified realisation that she is still in love with Giles: 'She had made a discovery – one which to a girl of her nature was almost appalling. She had looked into her heart, and found that her early interest in Giles Winterborne had become revitalized into growth by her widening perceptions of what was great and little in life' (p. 249). As discussed earlier in the chapter, Hardy was insistent that the adaptation should emphasise that Grace does not return to Fitzpiers: or that if she does so, she acts under duress. He felt that the stage could articulate much more clearly something that the novel left in a teasing obscurity. Hardy believed that a play could emphasise unambiguously that Grace's decision to return is not the beginning of a new marriage but the repetition of an old error. She marries Fitzpiers, in part at least, because she is both excited by and afraid of her attraction to him: 'Fitzpiers acted on her like a dram, throwing her into a novel atmosphere which biased her doings until the influence was over' (p. 150). In the novel her father suggests that the sexual attraction between the pair is not enough to sustain their relationship – that Fitzpiers will inevitably be unfaithful again:

> “Well – he’s her husband, Melbury said to himself, “and let her take him back to her bed if she will! [...] But let her bear in mind that the woman walks and laughs somewhere at this very moment whose neck he’ll be coling next year as he does hers to-night; and as he did Felice Charmond’s last year; and Suke Damson’s the year afore![...] It’s a forlorn hope for her; and God knows how it will end!” (p. 335).

Despite this warning, we are left with no sustained sense of Grace's future. In clarifying the lines of argument for the adaptation Hardy placed his faith in the theatre's capacity for forthright statement. His belief was misconceived, but it is nonetheless significant that he was convinced that the stage could say things the novel could not, and approached the

adaptation of his novels on this basis. The synopsis he wrote for Jarvis and Grein concentrates on reconfiguring the ending – partly, of course, because the adaptation was building towards a climax, forcing the audience to contemplate the consequences of Grace's decision. I want to turn to consider what the ending had to offer the adapters of the novel.

The novel is preoccupied with the nature of romantic love, constantly questioning whether Grace ever really commits her heart to Fitzpiers's careless keeping.[52] The ending is a genre-bending experiment – George Levine calls the novel 'a narrative that refuses to stand still for genre, that breaks the boundaries between tragic and comic, farce and melodrama, and that repudiates the tragic even as it enacts it'.[53] The farce and the melodrama come from the physical details of the scene itself - as Grace manages to extract herself from the mantrap, leaving herself in the embarrassing position of hiding half-clothed until she can be sure the man on the road is Fitzpiers. The tragedy is easier to define in the light of Hardy's plans for the adaptation. In his discussion of the novel Hardy emphasised that 'Fitzpiers goes on all his life in his bad way and that in returning to him Grace meets her retribution “for not sticking to Giles”. Her father hints at it in one sentence, or forebodes it, but the matter is not made manifest'.[54] This unambiguous statement of the cost of Grace's decision underscores the significance of the rewriting for the adaptation – that Grace will not return to her husband.

Reviewing *The Woodlanders*, the *Academy* was indignant at the flimsiness of the

52 See John Bayley, *An Essay on Hardy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 131.

53 George Levine, '*The Woodlanders* and the Darwinian Grotesque', in *Thomas Hardy Reappraised: Essays in Honour of Michael Millgate,* ed. Keith Wilson (Toronto: University Press, 2006), pp. 174-199 (196).

54 *Hardy and the Lady from Madison Square*, p. 90.

ending: the mantrap is 'too obviously a piece of hurried stage “business” to bring Edred and Grace together again'.[55] *The Spectator* railed against the 'shameless falsehood, levity and infidelity, followed by no true repentance, and yet crowned at the end with perfect success', but it nonetheless recognised something fundamental to Hardy's exploration of sexual psychology in the novel – the fact that Fitzpiers is 'almost more attracted at the close by his mistaken belief in his wife's infidelity to him, than he was at first by her purity and innocence'.[56] 'Purity and innocence' are not potent attractions for Fitzpiers, but he is floored by Grace's admission of infidelity. Though he later denies that he ever believed her, Hardy interrupts the text of his letter to insist that his claims are untrue: 'What you told me in the pride and naughtiness of your heart I never believed [this by the way was not strictly true]' (p. 311). The adaptation would have emphasised the strength of Grace's 'retaliatory fiction', precisely because in this version she does not retract it.

In insisting that Grace refuses to return to her husband, Hardy lifts Grace out of her legal situation – she can end the play obdurate, and the curtain drops before the consequences of this can be explored. In contrast, the novel exercises itself over the repercussions of alterations to divorce legislation. Fitzpiers has cheated on Grace, and deserted her. But this is not enough – release from her marriage would only have come with additional offences: bigamy, sodomy, incest, cruelty.[57] Melbury gets caught up in the

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55 William Wallace, review in *Academy*, 09/04/1887, pp. 251-2, reprinted in *Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage*, ed. R. G. Cox (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), pp. 153-5 (155).

56 R. H. Hutton, in *The Spectator*, 26/03/1887, pp. 419-20, reprinted in *Critical Heritage*, pp. 142-5 (142-3).

57 See further Laurence Stone, *The Road to Divorce*: *England 1520-1987* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); Maureen Waller, *The English Marriage: Tales of Love, Money and Adultery* (London: John Murray, 2009); Phillip Mallett '“ Smacked, and Brought to Her Senses”: Hardy and the Clitheroe Abduction Case', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, VIII (May 1992), 70-3; Nicole Westmarland, 'Rape Law Reform in England and

prospect, however nebulous, of Grace being able to divorce Fitzpiers. His belated realisation of the impossibility of this pushes Giles and Grace into a peculiar position – they love each other and begin to contemplate the possibility of marrying, then they are forced apart. I discussed earlier in the chapter Hardy's suggestions for simplifying the emotional motivation behind Giles's decision not to tell Grace that she has to remain married to Fitzpiers. In suggesting that Grace should remain apart from Fitzpiers at the end of the adaptation, Hardy was drawing attention to her fidelity to Giles in a way that the novel does not. The Grace of the adaptation fills something of the place occupied by Marty South, whose threnody over Giles's grave brings the novel to such a quiet conclusion – simultaneously affirmative and self-defeating: 'If ever I forget your name, let me forget home and Heaven [...] But no no, my love, I never can forget 'ee; for you was a good man, and did good things!' (pp. 338-9). In the adaptation Grace would have been allowed to declare her love for Giles and her distaste for the compromises of her marriage unambiguously.

Placing Sue centre-stage

This section of the chapter considers the implications of Hardy's decision to distill his dramatic schemes for *Jude* down to Sue's position. In choosing to streamline his plot down to Sue's predicament Hardy was not going beyond the argument of the novel – rather he was building the drama around the question of a woman's right to act independently within marriage. His 1895 scheme is subtitled 'a latter day woman', 'the new woman', 'a woman

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Wales', *Bristol School for Policy Studies Working Papers' Series*, 7 (April 2004).

with ideas' – phrases which gesture much more unambiguously towards Sue's independent stance. In order to understand the significance of Hardy's decision to concentrate on Sue's position, it is necessary to set this against the debate over Sue's character immediately after the novel's publication. Writing to Hardy, the novelist George Egerton praised Sue as 'a marvellously true psychological study of a temperament less rare than the ordinary male observer supposes. I am not sure that she is not the most intuitively drawn of all your wonderful women'.[58] Egerton's views were echoed by Ellen Terry, who wrote to Hardy of her love for the novel in spite of what she saw as its coarseness. Sue was, in her eyes, an unparalleled achievement: 'never was there drawn a more life-like true picture of a woman'.[59] Replying to Egerton, Hardy acknowledged that Sue was a type of woman who held a particular interest for him and who represented a type 'comparatively common and getting commoner' - though he did not say whether he meant in literature or in life.[60]

I want to set Hardy's creation of Sue in a wider context, by looking briefly at a George Egerton story which Hardy praised. 'Virgin Soil' was published in her 1894 collection *Discords*. The story narrates the return of a married daughter to her mother's house. She accuses her mother of having poisoned her life. By sending her to the altar with nothing more substantial than 'a white gauze [...] of maiden purity as a shield' the mother has ensured that her daughter's innocence masks ignorance: 'I simply did not know what I was signing my name

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58 'To Hardy', 22/11/1895 (DCM).

59 'To Hardy', 28/11/1895 (DCM). Though Nina Auerbach records a variation on this - 'I think Jude the Obscure is dreadfully shocking now & again (sometimes unnecessarily) but I think it is magnificent – finer than "Tess" & I do think never was there a truer life painting than the portrait of "Sue" - But oh, what-a-pity-she-is-so-coarse – on purpose it seems to me now & again', Nina Auerbach, *Ellen Terry: Player in her Time* (London: J.M Dent & Sons, 1987), p. 164, emphasis in original.

60 'To G. Egerton', 22/12/1895, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 102.

to, or what I was vowing to do'.[61] Her marriage is miserable: she is glad when her husband disappears with one of his mistresses because at least she no longer has to sleep with him. Her mother can barely credit her daughter's claims that 'marriage becomes for many women a legal prostitution, a nightly degradation, a hateful yoke under which they age' (p. 109). I want to set this story against Sue's reluctant admission that she knew the sexual implications of marriage but that 'before I married [Phillotson] I had never thought out fully what marriage meant, even though I knew' (p. 226). It is the difference between theoretical knowledge and physical intimacy that terrifies Sue - she is horrified at the disjunction between her respect for Phillotson as a teacher and her revulsion from him as a husband. She stresses her sexual distaste, though she cannot find quite the right words for it: 'a physical objection – a fastidiousness, or whatever it may be called' (p. 221). Sue argues cogently that sexual desire is voluntary. Her problem lies in her lack of desire for her husband, and her feeling that a contractual obligation cannot create what her body spurns. It is the surrendering of this position which makes the final pages of the novel so painful.

This debate over the position of women in marriage demands to be put on a wider canvas. Sue's outspoken views on marriage can be profitably set in the context of a journalistic debate about the value of marriage in *The Westminster Review* (August 1888) by the writer and feminist Mona Caird. The article provoked three months of debate, and 27,000 letters, in *The Daily Telegraph* on the question 'Is Marriage a Failure?' The

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61 Reprinted in *Women Who Did: Stories by Men and Women 1890-1914*, ed. Angelique Richardson (London: Penguin, 2002), p. 111, p. 109. Compare this to Tess's anger at her mother's self-serving silence, 'Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to fend hands against because they read novels that tell them of these tricks, but I never had the chance o'learning in that way, and you did not help me', *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), eds. Juliet Grindle & Simon Gatrell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 117.

correspondents to *The Daily Telegraph* assumed aliases - 'British Matron'; 'Perplexed Bachelor'; 'A Matrimonial Failure'; 'A Reformer' - and were predominantly horrified at the free unions they thought Caird was campaigning for.[62]

Caird argued not, as might be expected, for the abolition of marriage, but in favour of a bond of 'love and trust and friendship' as the basis of a new kind of marriage. Caird's view of marriage in its current state was that it was little better than 'legalized prostitution' - a view echoed by Sue both in her revulsion from the sorry state of the couples queuing in the registry office and her assertion to Phillotson that to continue living with him when she feels as she does is impossible. To Jude she emphasises her physical shrinking, though she cannot articulate its source:

> What tortures me so much is the necessity of being responsive to this man whenever he wishes, good as he is morally! - the dreadful contract to feel in a particular way in a matter whose essence is its voluntariness! (p. 223).

Hardy's publicly expressed views on marriage echo Caird's.[63] Hardy's opinions on the subject were most succinctly offered in his contribution to a debate in the *New Review* (June 1894), entitled 'The Tree of Knowledge'. The forum was principally concerned with judging how far brides should be enlightened about sex before their weddings. In his response Hardy opened by claiming that marriage was beyond the scope of the discussion, before asking whether marriage was 'such a desirable goal for a woman as it is assumed to be' in a society which 'has never succeeded in creating that homely thing, a satisfactory scheme for the conjunction

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62 The names are taken from a random sample, the editions for 10th and 11th August 1888, p. 6.

63 Hardy knew Caird slightly, and wrote in support of her article on 'Evolution in Marriage' being published – see *Collected Letters*, I, p. 207.

of the sexes'.[64]

Hardy's attempts to dramatise both *The Woodlanders* and *Jude* were interventions in a wider debate about the role of a wife in marriage, a legal and social bond which allowed her little or no autonomy. In choosing to select material from his plots Hardy demonstrated not only a greater awareness of what could be coherently portrayed in the course of a play, but an enthusiasm for the theatre's powers of expression. Hardy was convinced that the stage had the capacity to articulate what the novel could only gesture towards. In the 1880s and 1890s he became preoccupied with his efforts to test the theatre – to distil his plots down to a trenchant argument about the position of women trapped in miserable marriages and trying to withstand the erasure of their identity. I have argued in the course of this chapter that Hardy thought of such scenarios as suited to the *avant garde*.

This sense of a natural fit between his adapted plots and the *avant-garde* theatre was partly a practical response to the prospect of a stage freed from the control exercised by actor-managers looking for a starring role, as his adaptations were dominated by their female leads. In this new kind of theatre women such as Elizabeth Robins, Marion Lea, Janet Achurch and Florence Farr were the professional pioneers as well as the lead actresses. Yet I would argue that Hardy's turning to other possibilities for producing his plays is indicative of his wider commitment to the artistic world outside the mainstream – a belief in the theatre as an arena for debate as much as a source of entertainment. In Chapter Two I charted Hardy's gradual disenchantment with the commercial possibilities for *Tess* in favour of a performance

64 Reprinted in *Public Voice*, p. 132.

by the Hardy Players: a production of great emotional intensity, rather than great marketability. In the next chapter I explore the ways in which Hardy began to redefine the boundaries of what a play could encompass in his adaptation of *The Dynasts* and his one-act play *The Queen of Cornwall* for the amateur stage.

Chapter Four: *The Dynasts* and *The Queen of Cornwall*

This chapter traces Hardy's involvement with the theatre in the first two decades of the twentieth century. In the previous chapter I explored Hardy's interest in the *avant garde* as a symptom of his frustration with the commercial theatre. In this chapter I examine Hardy's turning away from the possibility of adapting his novels for London audiences. Rather than align himself unequivocally with the *avant garde*, in the early twentieth century Hardy chose to explore an alternative theatre – that of the Dorset Debating and Dramatic Society (known from 1916 as the Hardy Players), who put on productions in Dorchester's Corn Exchange from 1908-1924. Becoming involved with the Players' work enabled Hardy to exercise a greater degree of control over the staging of his work than his previous experience of the theatre had granted him. In allowing the Hardy Players to stage versions of his work Hardy was able to act as *de facto* director. Though he did not attend to the minutiae of every adaptation, he exercised a power of veto over the Players' work. The Players' enthusiasm for the productions, and the public interest in them, was heightened by Hardy's patronage of their efforts.

The Players put on adaptations of Hardy's work for sixteen years, but these were predominantly scripted by the men in charge of the group, A.H. Evans and T. H. Tilley. Hardy occupied the position of benign, but somewhat detached, patron of their efforts – he would read the script, suggest dances and songs for the performances and write to London theatre critics to alert them to the production. His recommendations were not unqualified: of their first production, *The Trumpet-Major* in 1908, Hardy cautioned that 'as a play, the action will

not be very coherent but the humours of the characters may be amusing' – this is less direct than his earlier view that 'none of the young men have any skill in dramatizing that I know of'.[1] The later years of Hardy's involvement with the Players are the most significant – from 1916 onwards Hardy's interest in the group widened, and he began to offer them original scripts to work from. In making the case for Hardy's involvement in this kind of theatre I concentrate on two versions of *The Dynasts* – the first staged as a wartime benefit by Harley Granville Barker in 1914; the second Hardy's own adaptation of the text for the Hardy Players in 1916 as a series of vignettes brought together under the title *Wessex Scenes from The Dynasts*. I then examine the process by which Hardy's only original full-length play, *The Queen of Cornwall*, came to be staged by the Hardy Players in 1923.[2]

Staging *The Dynasts*

The Dynasts, Hardy's Napoleonic verse epic, is an experiment with what can be classified as drama. Hardy played with various means of bodying forth *The Dynasts*'s theme, their stages noted apparently haphazardly in the pages of the *Life*. In 1889 he thought of the scope of the project as demanding almost a new astral plane to succeed: 'I feel continually that I require a larger canvas [...] A spectral tone must be adopted [...] Royal ghosts...'.[3] Visiting the

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1 'To H. Child', 21/10/1908, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, eds. Richard Little Purdy & Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), 7 vols., III, p. 349 (afterwards *Collected Letters*); 'To G. Macmillan', 27/02/1908, *Collected Letters*, II, p. 300.

2 Hardy had allowed the Players to perform *The Three Wayfarers*, his version of his short story 'The Three Strangers' (from *Wessex Tales*) in 1911, as part of a double bill with Evans's script for *The Distracted Preacher*. This had already been performed professionally at Terry's Theatre in 1893. As discussed in Chapter Two, Hardy gave the Players his script for *Tess* in 1924.

3 *The Life and Work of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (London: Macmillan, 1984), p. 231 (afterwards

battlefield of Waterloo in 1896 Hardy grandly entitled his project 'Europe in throes'. Beyond this he recorded little, noting only time's indifferent erasing of the Duchess's ball the night before the battle: 'the event happened less than a century ago, but the spot is almost as phantasmal in its elusive mystery as towered Camelot, the Palace of Priam, or the Hill of Calvary'.[4] *The Dynasts* occupies an ambiguous position between poetry and play. Hardy refused to be drawn definitively on whether it could be categorised as a drama, and if so, what this revealed about its relationship to the working theatre. He always denied that he intended *The Dynasts* to be staged. In 1908 Hardy debated the feasibility of staging his sprawling work:

> If the millionaire were to appear, & it were to be staged, it wd[sic] be an amusing answer to my contention that it could not possibly be acted, indeed, as I said in the Preface, I only called it a drama for want of a better name, & I thought at the time of sending a copy to all the actor managers, defying the powers of any of them to produce it – just as a refreshing change for them from the supplications they usually receive. But I felt that they were not worth powder or shot.[5]

I want to examine this statement in the context of the scale of *The Dynasts*, before analysing the significance of Hardy's decision to sanction Harley Granville Barker's staging of parts of the work in London in 1914. This apparent contradiction, between initial public denial and later private sanction of an apparently impossible project, is indicative of Hardy's desire to challenge the restrictive boundaries of what could and could not be physically

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Life).

4 *Life*, p. 381.

5 'To L. Parker', 21/02/1908, *Collected Letters*, IV, p. 88. See further the reviews and correspondence in the *Times Literary Supplement*, February 1904.

realised in the theatre. Later in this section I look more closely at the disjunction between Hardy's vision of the impact of an interested millionaire on the staging of *The Dynasts* and the circumstances under which it was ultimately produced – by the fringe director Harley Granville Barker and by the Players in Dorchester. Hardy's suggestion that the production would need a millionaire's backing equates the sweep of the work with the need to stage it on an epic scale – he rather jokingly makes a connection between the vast cast and continent-spanning setting and the vast funds needed to make this happen. Hardy was not, in any real sense, weighing up how the production could be performed. Rather, he was venting his frustration at the actor-managers' strangle-hold on the market by pondering the impact of staging something with the reach of *The Dynasts*. Both Granville Barker's production and the Players' piece were performed on a stripped-down stage. This was not simply a result of the lack of resources, but a recognition that *The Dynasts*' narrative was best served by a clear, documentary style rather than a spectacular setting.

Before examining these production decisions in greater detail I want to turn to Hardy's admission that *The Dynasts* blurred generic boundaries. It created the need for a 'theatre under his own management',[6] something I would argue Hardy achieved with the Players. The day-to-day work of bringing the Players' adaptations to the stage was undertaken by the members, but Hardy's approval was crucial to the success of the productions. Prior to *The Dynasts*' publication Hardy was undecided about how to label it, vacillating between 'a mental drama, a vision drama, a closet-drama, an epical drama & c. A chronicle poem of the

6 'To H. Newbolt', 16/01/1909, *Collected Letters*, IV, p. 5.

Napc [sic] wars, under the similitude of a drama.'[7] *The Dynasts* was only designated an epic when it was reprinted in 1910. Hardy's attempts to define the genre he was working in were given additional impetus by the critical debate surrounding *The Dynasts* when it was first published. The drama critic A. B. Walkley reviewed it in the *Times Literary Supplement*. He praised its ambitious scope, but argued that it was uncomfortably caught between genres, and uncertain of what it wanted to be: 'it is bad architecture to build a book according to the methods of a play, or a play according to the methods of a book'.[8] Walkley was adamant that there was a distinction to be drawn between methods suitable for the page and for the stage, but he did not attempt to define what these might be.

Walkley's solution was that *The Dynasts* should be staged as a puppet show. On first reading this sounds facetious, but I think that it succeeds in wrestling with the vexed question of how to put the Spirits on the stage. The Spirits are the philosophical Chorus to the action – the medium Hardy uses to convey much of his commentary on the progress of the drama. Hardy later assessed his characters as acting with 'motion mostly automatic, reflexive movement etc. Not the result of what is called motive, though always ostensibly so, even to the actor's own consciousness'.[9] This sense of movement without volition could be realised by puppets – performers who need to be thought of as approximating to Gordon Craig's Übermarionettes, rather than the slapstick of a Punch and Judy show. Craig's ideal was for puppets to replace actors altogether, to body forth the story without the clouding

7 'To H. Newbolt', 16/01/1909, *Collected Letters*, IV, p. 5.

8 *Times Literary Supplement*, 05/02/1904, p. 36.

9 *Life*, p. 148.

influence of the actors' personalities.[10] Casting the Spirits as puppets in Craig's sense would have reinforced their distance from the characters on the stage, a separation which John Bayley characterised as 'the enclosure of the metaphysical representatives in a sort of VIP lounge, from which they can watch, and we with them, the unfolding of events'.[11] Craig's theories were promulgated four years after Walkley's review was published, so there can be no direct link between his suggestion and Craig's theory. Instead, the parallel is indicative of Hardy's persistent questioning of what was possible within the limits of a drama. Walkley was articulating his unease at the philosophical weight the Spirits bring to the drama – recognising their significance without being entirely sure what role they play.

Rather than engage with Walkley's suggestive appraisal, Hardy was defensive. He claimed the right to experiment with generic boundaries, to test their limits. Hardy argued for the affinity between prose narrative and plays: he insisted that calling a work a 'drama' was simply a label, on the grounds that it is the privilege of art to exercise caprice in testing the limits of different forms. He went on to suggest that both prose and plays were not sufficient in themselves, but merely the 'means of producing a representation' for their audience. For Hardy the forms were united by their shared

> instinctive, primitive narrative shape. In legends and old ballads, in the telling of an "owre true tale" by country-folks on winter nights over a dying fire, the place and time are briefly indicated in almost all cases; and then the body of the story follows as what he said and what she said, the action being often suggested by the speeches alone.[12]

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10 Edward Gordon Craig, 'The Actor and the Übermarionette', *The Mask* (1908), reprinted in Gordon Craig, *On Movement and Dance*, ed. Arnold Rood (London: Dance Books, 1978), pp. 37-58.

11 John Bayley, *An Essay on Hardy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p. 229.

12 *TLS*, 05/02/1904, pp. 36-7.

This line of defence is more intriguing than Hardy's insistence in the Preface that *The Dynasts* was for 'mental performance' only.[13] I want to draw outwards from Hardy's equation of oral storytelling with plays and consider how far Hardy's knowledge of oral narratives shaped his construction of *The Dynasts*. Hardy's fascination with the arc of a "owre true tale" informs his most prescriptive definition of the art of fiction: 'a story must be exceptional enough to justify its telling. We tale-tellers are all Ancient Mariners, and none of us is warranted in stopping Wedding Guests (in other words, the hurrying public) unless he has something more unusual to relate than the experience of every average man and woman'.[14] I would argue that Hardy's definition of a tale exceptional enough to detain the listener was conditioned by his ear for the narratives he heard as a child, and assiduously recorded as an adult – most obviously in his attempt to bind together the awkward structure of the *Life* with carefully chosen anecdotes, but also in his *Facts Notebook*, much of the material for which he purloined from the pages of the *Dorset County Chronicle*.[15]

Hardy's knowledge of the Napoleonic period was shaped by his paternal grandmother's stories. His awareness of the absorbing power of a narrative is apparent in the poem he dedicated to her, 'One We Knew (M.H. 1772-1857)'. Here Hardy recognises that her powers of imaginative recall are greater than her absorption in the present: 'She would dwell on such dead themes, not as one who remembers,/ But rather as one who sees [...] Past things retold were to her as things existent,/Things present but as a tale'.[16] In the course of the poem

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13 Hardy's comment on *The Dynasts* in the Preface.

14 *Life*, p. 268.

15 See further *Thomas Hardy's 'Facts' Notebook*, ed. William Greenslade (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004).

16 *Thomas Hardy: The Complete Poems,* ed. James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1976), ll. 27-8,31-2, p. 275.

Hardy conjures up his childish wonder at the confluence of personal memory and European history:

> She told of that far-back day when they learnt astounded
> Of the death of the King of France:
> Of the Terror; and then of Bonaparte's unbounded
> Ambition and arrogance.
> Of how his threats woke warlike preparations
> Along the southern strand,
> And how each night brought tremors and trepidations
> Lest morning should see him land (ll.13-20).

Hardy captures the rhythms of his grandmother's narrative – the way in which her own memory has become the community's, with each person's fear subsumed under a collective conviction that they are under siege. In his biography of Hardy, Ralph Pite reads this as more than a lesson in storytelling, a retreat from life into narrative: 'he had grown up in a house where nothing was said about what really mattered – where history filled the silence and annals of the parish supplanted personal lives'.[17]

Hardy's absorption of the tales of Napoleon was not so much a replacement for life as

17 Ralph Pite, *Thomas Hardy: The Guarded Life* (London, Picador, 2006), p. 59. For a counter-argument see Claire Tomalin's interpretation of Sydney Cockerell's diary entry for a visit in 1913: 'Hardy responded with stories of his own, and there was laughter all evening. It seems to have been the jolliest weekend ever recorded at Max Gate', Claire Tomalin, *Thomas Hardy: The Time Torn Man* (London: Viking, 2006), p. 329, citing British Library Add MS 53650 (diary for 1913). Cockerell's entry for 21/06/1913 reads 'Strang in high spirits & very amusing – Hardy responded – told story for story & it was a merry evening' (fo.36^{r}). On 22nd he noted that 'The evening was still more hilarious than the last, both Hardy and Strang being in excellent form' (fo. 36^{v}-37^{r}). Hardy gave him a copy of *The Dynasts*, which he read on the beach, finishing it in five days with nothing to say about it beyond the fact that it is 'a very noble work' (29/06/1913, 37^{v}).

an embracing of it – a way of making vivid the present with a tantalising, almost tangible sense of the past. In contrast, Claire Tomalin reads Hardy's memories of his paternal grandmother as indicative of his insistence on the single, telling detail:

> His grandmother delighted him by remarking, one particularly hot and thundery day, 'It was like this in the French Revolution, I remember.' She had been a young woman in the 1790s; and she also described how she had been ironing her best muslin dress when news came of the beheading of the Queen of France. She had put down the iron and stood still on hearing of such a momentous event, she said, and she could still call up the exact pattern of the muslin in her mind's eye.[18]

Something of his memories of fireside storytelling shaped his description of the Immanent Will as a 'knitter drowsed,/Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness',[19] an image whose domesticity succeeds in softening its implications: that mankind is being skilfully ignored by an indifferent power. Hardy became entranced not just by his grandmother's stories, but by his paternal grandfather's small place in history. Tomalin writes that

> Looking in a cupboard one day, he discovered an old periodical called *A History of the Wars*, full of pictures of soldiers, melodramatic prints of serried ranks, crossed bayonets, huge knapsacks, and dead bodies. He was enthralled, the more so when he was told that his grandfather Hardy had subscribed to it thirty years ago when he was a volunteer, at the time it was feared that the French were likely to land on the Dorset coast.[20]

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18 Tomalin, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 21. Tomalin is paraphrasing the *Life* here. Hardy removes himself through sedimentary stages of storytelling from the events themselves. He records his mother telling him about his grandmother telling her about ironing her best dress when the news came of Marie Antoinette's execution.

19 Thomas Hardy, *The Dynasts*, *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Samuel Hynes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 5 vols., IV, p. 15.

20 Tomalin, p. 21, quoting from *Life*, p. 21.

Personal, physical evidence was far more eloquent to Hardy than any academic recitation of the facts, though he joked in a letter to Edward Clodd that 'I have been living in Wellington's campaigns so much lately that [...] I am almost positive that I took part in the battle of Waterloo, & have written of it from memory'.[21] As Pite acknowledges, *The Dynasts* was a chance for Hardy to immerse himself in 'the heroic actions that had thrilled his boyhood' with impunity - '*The Dynasts* took up all of his mind as he worked on it. The historical events that he had got to know so fully became a world that he lived in, wandered over his thoughts and saw before him, both in remarkable detail and as a single whole'.[22]

Samuel Hynes, in an essay on Hardy's attitude to war, writes of his lifelong preoccupation with 'the old men's memories and the bullet-riddled door, and of the sense of a long-past time when war was epic'.[23] Hynes is citing the Preface to Hardy's slight historical novel *The Trumpet-Major* here

> down to the middle of this century, and later, there were not wanting, in the neighbourhood of the places more or less clearly indicated herein, casual relics of the circumstances amid which the action moves [...] an outhouse door riddled with bullet-holes, which had been extemporized by a solitary man as a target for firelock practice when the landing was hourly expected [...] fragments of volunteer uniform, and other such lingering remains, brought to my imagination in early childhood the state of affairs at the date of the war more vividly than volumes of history could have done.[24]

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21 'To E. Clodd', 31/12/1907, *Collected Letters*, III, p. 287.

22 Pite, *Thomas Hardy*, pp. 384-5.

23 'Hardy and the Battle God', in *Thomas Hardy Reappraised: Essays in Honour of Michael Millgate* ed. Keith Wilson (Toronto: University Press, 2006), pp. 245-62 (247).

24 Thomas Hardy, *The Trumpet-Major* (1880), ed. Richard Nemesvari (Oxford: World's Classics, 1998), p. 3.

Hardy never lost his childhood desire for a sensory connection to the past - 'the wear on a threshold, or the print of a hand'[25] was always more potent, more suggestive, to Hardy than externally corroborated evidence – precisely because it left room for the exercise of the imagination. Such impulses drove his visits to the Chelsea Pensioners on military anniversaries. In the *Life* Hardy records one soldier's memories of a thwarted love affair, though he chooses to do so at one remove, recounting the hesitancies of the soldier's 'peculiar tenderness' of tone through Emma's imperfect recollection of it: 'at Christmas he was – Mrs Hardy forgot where'. [26] Rather than note his own responses, the *Life* dramatises Hardy telling in later years of his image of Emma, caught round the waist and complimented as 'my dear young woman' and acting as a sympathetic ear for the soldier's reminiscences. Hardy's private conviction of his duty to record the minutiae of local history, to foreground the 'casual relics of the circumstances amid which the action moves', helps to explain his willingness to adapt *The Dynasts* for a Dorchester audience.

In spite of his imaginative investment in *The Dynasts*, Hardy did not write the first adaptation - he placed himself in Granville Barker's hands, begging him to 'cut where you wish, for it would never do to make the play boring'.[27] He did, however, keep up an almost daily correspondence with Granville Barker as the play was being prepared. He attended closely to the script as it developed, and made minute suggestions for the performance's music and the

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25 *Life,* p. 120. For Hardy's method here see Sophie Gilmartin, 'Storms and Teacups: Hardy's Quiet Catastrophes', lecture given at the Thomas Hardy Society Conference (29/07/2010) and her chapter on *Wessex Tales* in Sophie Gilmartin & Rod Mengham, *Thomas Hardy's Shorter Fiction: A Critical Study* (Edinburgh: University Press, 2007).

26 *Life*, p. 109.

27 'To H. Granville Barker', 15/10/1914, *Collected Letters*, V, p. 55.

movement of the actors around the stage.[28] The resulting series of scenes – snapshots from the work rather than an attempt to capture anything of its sweep and scale - was a popular success. It chimed well with audiences in 1914: eager to view war as a noble project, to look to history for exemplars of martial valour.

Much later in his relationship with Hardy, Granville Barker admitted that he had always believed the stage should not attempt adaptations: 'I was almost savagely against the adaptation of books into plays – I contended that the approach to the writing of each must be so different'.[29] He acknowledged that there were exceptions – but he praised the example he cited precisely because its selection had been presented verbatim from the novel, Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. This belief in the text as something sacred conditioned how Granville Barker approached the staging of *The Dynasts*. Barker highlighted as far as possible the narrative origins of the material. In his letters to Hardy over the course of the adaptation, he stressed the fact that he was determined that the work 'move us as much in action as in reading it has done'.[30] He believed that the way to achieve this was to make the viewing experience as close to reading as possible. Despite his efforts, Granville Barker worried that the text should have been left untouched - that Hardy's creations were the preserve of his readers' imaginations, creatures called up in fireside readings.[31] This is, in part, nothing more than a compliment to *The Dynasts*, but it also contrives to gesture towards something which always intrigued Hardy – the reader's response to a text, which

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28 See correspondence in the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection, Dorset County Museum (afterwards DCM).

29 'To Hardy', 13/02/1925 (DCM).

30 'To Hardy', c. 1914 (DCM).

31 'To Hardy', 13/02/1925 (DCM).

much earlier in his writing career he had defined as the exercise of a 'generous imaginativeness, which shall find in a tale not only all that was put there by the author [...] but which shall find there what was never inserted by him, never foreseen, never contemplated'.[32]

Granville Barker's disquiet was, in part at least, born of the scale of the undertaking: how do you stage Waterloo? Writing to Hardy, he laid out his qualms: 'The Battle of Waterloo nearly stumped me, but I think I can manage even that'.[33] Barker decided that the play would be structured around key battles: the three acts were built around Trafalgar, the Peninsular Wars and Waterloo – a framework which 'tenders to its dignity best by keeping it simple'.[34] Rather than attempt to synthesise the work's elaborate philosophical machinery, Barker opted to place the burden of narration on a Reader: whose role was not only to supplement the action, but in many places to substitute for it.[35] The Reader controlled the narration of climactic events, such as the death of Nelson or the progress of the Peninsular Wars: thus emphasising unambiguously for the audience the play's narrative origins. In Chapter One I discussed the implications of Hardy's wish to make *Far From the Madding Crowd* more comprehensible to an audience by having a Reader to supply the narrative links. Granville Barker's introduction of the Reader fulfilled something of the same function – but the actor was placed centre stage, dominating the play's landscape as completely as he did

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32 'The Profitable Reading of Fiction' (1888), in *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice: The Essays, Speeches and Miscellaneous Prose,* ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), pp. 75-88 (76) (afterwards *Public Voice*).

33 'To Hardy', 25/09/1914 (DCM).

34 'To Hardy', Sept/Oct 1914 (DCM).

35 This approach was influenced by the Moscow Theatre's *Karamazov* (1910): where the Reader delivered 'the necessary descriptions of what happened in between so they managed to put the book itself – nothing at least that was not a part of it – upon the stage', 'To Hardy', 13/02/1925 (DCM).

the script.

The Reader acts as both interpreter and apologist during the unfolding of the action. His stance unsurprisingly echoes *Henry V*, as he invites the audience to piece out the inevitable imperfections of the play. The focus throughout is on the play as a collective imaginative endeavour. This is apparent both through the promises to draw the audience close to the action: 'through space and time to each cardinal scene of this eventful drama' and in the acknowledgement that they are all being 'transported on the wings of fancy to the other side of the valley in the twinkling of an eye'.[36] The Reader performs a dual function: setting the scene for the audience and formalising the structural division in the original text between the action and the Spirits' commentary upon it.

Granville Barker decided to stylise the action to the extent of having the battles play out silently. This was received with some disquiet by *The Daily Telegraph*'s reporter: 'Trafalgar is fought without smoke and sound [...] we behold Nelson smitten from an invisible ship by a noiseless shot'.[37] *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* argued that the Reader was too pedagogical:

> you feel that you are a pupil in a history class, with Mr Henry Ainley as your musically voiced school master, and when he stops his lecture and the curtain draws apart you are reminded of charades. Then, just as you wake up to what is going forward on the stage, the curtain closes again and blots out the performance, so that you feel as though you were in a Picture Palace. You have three hours of this, the Reader telling you what has happened, is happening and is going to happen.[38]

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36 This is in the Dorset County Museum's Collection, Act III, p. 8, p. 23 (all subsequent references to the script are in parenthesis by Act and page number).

37 'The Drama', *The Daily Telegraph*, 26/11/1914, p. 3.

38 'Our Captious Critic: "The Dynasts" at the Kingsway Theatre', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*

The Globe pointed out more serious flaws in the production, describing it as a 'wholly undramatic entertainment [...] unsuited to the stage, and be the adapter ever so skilful, the power and sweep of the written word is lost in the theatre [...] When you go to the Kingsway you must take with you your imagination in its keenest and most responsive moods'.[39] Despite these demurs, the production was welcomed, as Hardy had anticipated in his initial correspondence with Barker, as a timely and patriotic venture: *The Athenaeum* praised it as 'a visible and audible creation [able to] stir the imagination and steel the heart more than any other representation of English courage and greatness'.[40] *The Athenaeum*'s review captures the purpose behind the production very succinctly. It is revealing that both this review and *The Globe*'s refer to the performance's power over the imagination, that it makes its audience work to create the effect of the play. To object to a play for losing 'the power [...] of the written word'[41] is to balk at the transition from one medium to another, treating them as interanimating, rather than discrete.

Hardy's role in the preparation for the Kingsway production was largely an advisory one. However, his attention to the details of the script suggest that he was flattered at the prospect of seeing *The Dynasts* in the theatre. The annotations to Lillah McCarthy's typescript of the adaptation indicate that Hardy was thinking about the practicalities of staging the work. Hardy noted down more than once a query about the number of actors on

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(19/12/1914), p. 46. In addition to this, photographs of the play took up the front cover of the issue. For further reviews of the possibility of *The Dynasts* as a play see John Pollock, '*The Dynasts*', *Independent Review*, IV, October 1904 (1904-5), pp. 149-55.

39 *The Globe*, 28/11/1914, p. 572, a cutting preserved in the Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library), Gen MSS 111. Folder 842.

40 *The Athenaeum* (28/11/1914, p. 572). However, it was generally unfavourable in its judgement of the consequences of Hardy's experimentation, dismissing the idea of mummery as a means of presentation.

41 *The Globe*, see footnote 39.

the stage at any one time, testing the effect to be gained by the massing of a large crowd or the concentration on single figures. His imaginative interest in precisely how a given scene would play out is evident in his note to the scene of the young girl hiding from the sight of the army marching out of Brussels: he observed that a greater impact might be achieved if 'drums, fifes, pipes etc. are heard softly from different places all through this scene' (III, p. 15). This contrasts with his apparent willingness to abstain from involvement altogether, assuring Barker that 'you know best'.[42] Despite maintaining that Barker was in sole charge of the script, Hardy took an active interest in its development, worrying away at the problems it posed. Hardy was anxious to establish how the script would treat the Spirits, a problem that was revisited when the Oxford University Dramatic Society (OUDS) came to adapt the play in 1920. He recommended to OUDS that the scenery should be kept as spare as possible, with the use of a back cloth 'coloured greyish-blue and a floor cloth coloured greenish-grey, a purely conventional representation for all open air scenes [...] Strophe and Anti-Strophe unseen, and as it were, speaking from the sky'.[43] He was gratified that the students had decided on a single roll of scenery, 'so that by turning a handle the scene can be a pure seascape, a landscene or a sky-scene or either of these together'.[44]

By settling for simple scenery the production was free to place the emphasis firmly on the action. This accords with the model Hardy had proposed in the 1890s, when he dismissed the stage's penchant for 'the presentation of mountains, cities, clothes, furniture, plate, jewels, and other real and sham-real appurtenances, to the neglect of the principle

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42 'To H. Granville Barker', 28/10/1914, *Collected Letters*, V, p. 56.

43 Cited in *Life*, p. 426.

44 See letter from Maurice Colbourne to Thomas Hardy, 08/12/1919 (DCM).

that the material stage should be a conventional or figurative arena, in which accessories are kept down to the mere suggestions of place and time'.[45] The strength of Hardy's objections to Granville Barker's version is difficult to determine. The fault seems principally to have lain with the stage design. Florence Hardy recollected 'how thoroughly TH disliked the architectural setting to Granville Barker's production of "Dynasts" – so much so that when Norman Wilkinson, who produced it, was presented to him after a performance, he turned away and refused to speak to him'.[46] This could be nothing more than one of Florence's customary querulous exaggerations. Yet, Hardy's comments to OUDS suggest that he was not altogether satisfied with the production.

Hardy's own account of the play is both more measured and far-sighted:

> The one feature he could particularly have wished altered was that of retaining indoor architecture for outdoor scenes, it being difficult for the spectator to realize – say in the Battle of Waterloo – that an open field was represented when pillars and architraves hemmed it in [...] One trembles to think what would have occurred had the whole philosophy of the play been put in; but Mr Barker, remembering what happened to Ibsen in this country, was too wise to represent the thought of the age in an English theatre at the beginning of the twentieth century and during a war.[47]

Hardy's solution, for OUDS at least, was to replace representative scenery with coloured backcloths – a stripping down of the stage Hardy was later to experiment with in *The Queen of Cornwall*, which was designed to be played 'without theatre or scenery'.[48] In his assessment of the adaptation of *The Dynasts*, Hardy acknowledges that the audience could

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45 'Why I Don't Write Plays', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 31st August 1892, reprinted in *Public Voice*, pp. 120-1.

46 Letter to John Hornby, 18/05/1929, Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library), Gen MSS 111, Folder 702.

47 *Life*, p. 397.

48 Hardy's note on the play's title-page.

be bewildered by the persistence of the architecture of an interior scene during the fighting of a battle. This practical recognition of the limits of the spectators' imaginative reach is less interesting than his loose equation between his work and Ibsen's. The description is too clipped for it to be entirely clear how far Hardy was committed to the comparison. On a first reading it seems as if Hardy is saying *The Dynasts* is like Ibsen – a provocative, but not particularly apposite, juxtaposition. I would argue that Hardy brought the two together because they offer their audiences a theatre of ideas. Rather than probe with any degree of precision the ideas in question, Hardy settles for a generalisation – Ibsen was ridiculed because he mirrored 'the thought of the age'. This says nothing of those who championed Ibsen, or the degree to which his detractors recognised that he had something urgent to say, even if they disagreed with it. Instead, Hardy is invoking Ibsen as a shorthand for intellectually combative drama. In Chapter Three I analyse how the reception of Ibsen ignited a debate about the theatre's suitability as an arena for intellectual discussion – the extent to which he represented 'the thought of the age'. In his adaptations of *The Woodlanders* and *Jude* Hardy experimented with how far Ibsen could be used as a blueprint for how to put a novel on the stage. His comment on *The Dynasts*'s dramatic potential illustrates how persistently Hardy thought of the theatre in terms of Ibsen, but the juxtaposition itself is not particularly revealing.

Hardy equates the theatre with entertainment – an arena in which the public are uncomfortable with confronting 'the thought of the age'. Hardy uses Ibsen to stand in for a new, intellectually engaged theatre – something he argues that Granville Barker chose to avoid with *The Dynasts*. In retreating from the 'whole philosophy' of the drama Hardy seems to be saying, with the wisdom of hindsight, that if represented in its entirety *The Dynasts*

would have represented 'the thought of the age'. He says nothing about how the philosophy could have been bodied forth for the audience. Granville Barker decided to remove the Chorus of the Spirits, leaving only a small number of speeches to be delivered by a Strophe and Anti-Strophe standing on either side of the Reader. This stripping away of the intellectual framework reconfigured the play an historical chronicle, supplemented by explanatory passages from the Reader. This approach appears to recognise the primacy of action over contemplation in this production, with much of the military activity being reported by the Reader. The removal of the Spirits excises the philosophical dimension of the drama at one stroke. This has the effect of clarifying the narrative line but erasing much of the ambitious discursiveness of the original text however disconcertingly mannered it feels: more like a versification of an over-earnest undergraduate debate on the meaning of life, or rather what Hardy imagined one would sound like. The fact that Hardy was prepared to sanction the removal of the Spirits from the cast altogether is indicative of his commitment to a more rigorous, even ruthless, adaptation process. He recognised the need to select, rather than compress the material for the stage.

Wessex Scenes from The Dynasts

Hardy built on Granville Barker's production when he wrote a short piece for the Hardy Players – a selection from *The Dynasts* of scenes set in Wessex, performed in aid of the war effort in 1916.[49] Hardy's involvement in this slight project is evidence of his willingness to

49 In the interval between Granville Barker's production and *Wessex Scenes* Hardy drafted a scheme for adapting *The Dynasts* – titled ' “The Dynasts” - The Fall of Prussia & Austria (selected from “The Dynasts”

identify himself much more closely with the efforts of the Players than he had hitherto done. It was the first time he had written anything new for them to perform: his involvement prior to this point had been restricted to sanctioning their own adaptations of his novels, and attendance at some of their rehearsals. The fact that he was prepared to treat his text precisely as a *source* for a play, rather than trying to cram the action into the available space, indicates that he was now prepared to think of the staging of his writing as more than simply a matter of abridging the originals.

The Players' first production, an adaptation of *The Trumpet-Major* staged in 1908 and revived in 1912, had its genesis in a lecture given in Dorchester in May 1908 on 'Napoleon and the Invasion of England'.[50] The lecture was accompanied by dramatised tableaux from *The Dynasts*. Hardy wrote in praise of the lecture, and readily approved the plan to adapt his Napoleonic light romance on the strength of the public interest in the period. He seems to have viewed it as an antiquarian piece, little more than an animated history lesson – his marketing of the production to *The Times*' drama critic emphasises that 'the cast represented traditions little changed from those of the characters, and the production itself made use of real pikes, firelocks &c.'.[51] The production was highly popular, and the Players went on to stage *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1909), *The Mellstock Quire* (1910), *The Three Wayfarers* and *The Distracted Preacher* (1911) and *The Woodlanders* (1913).

Hardy's *Wessex Scenes from The Dynasts* was designed for a local audience only: in his

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for Acting)', which is in the DCM. It is labelled as having being designed for reading only.

50 See *Collected Letters* III, p. 286, 294. The first performance of scenes from *The Dynasts* was in May 1908, though this was not done under the auspices of the Dorchester Dramatic Society (report from the *Dorset County Chronicle*, 15/11/1909, p. 6).

51 'To H. Child', 16/11/1908, *Collected Letters*, III, p. 356.

memoranda drawn up for the Players Hardy was very specific, insisting that dances be included, and that the piece could be performed by the troupe only in Dorchester, Weymouth, Parkstone or for the Society of Dorset Men in London. This was, in part, an insurance against failure. But it was also an acknowledgement of the degree of control he exercised over the Players – it was his patronage of their efforts that ensured the amateur troupe coverage in the London papers and an audience comprised not only of locals but of figures such as T. E. Lawrence, J. M. Barrie, Granville Barker and Edmund Gosse. In preparing his script Hardy appropriated the Prologue and Epilogue he had written for Granville Barker's production and penned speeches for local grandees to deliver at the opening of the matinee and evening performances. Despite the care he gave to packaging the piece, Hardy dismissed it as 'rather a patchwork affair, for the occasion [presenting] the humours of the characters who we knew in private life as matter-of -fact shopkeepers & clerks'.[52]

Hardy's *Scenes* were chosen to emphasise the association between the macrocosm of military history and the mundanities of everyday life. *Wessex Scenes* is in two acts: the first set in 1805, the second in 1815. The scenes are entirely restricted to Wessex. The first scene of the Second Act is set in the same spot as the last scene of the First Act, a somewhat clumsy device which relies on the actors applying enough makeup in the interval to make them look ten years older. The compression of the action, so that it solely concentrates on the Wessex response to the threat represented by Napoleon, enabled Hardy to emphasise a peculiarly local blend of humour and fear. Hardy uses a quarrel between two beacon keepers to dramatise the nebulous, but nonetheless powerful, threat of an invasion of England from

52 'To F. Hardy', 28/06/1916, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 166.

the South Coast; the almost pantomimic grotesqueness of Napoleon is captured by the misunderstandings of an old man, who believes that the public burning of an effigy is in fact the execution of Napoleon, recaptured after his escape from Elba.

In his note to the script Hardy discussed at length his decision to restrict the scenes, describing them as an attempt at 'interesting and impressing the spectator by exhibiting the reflex action on these characters of the great events which the spectator does not himself witness – tidings being brought either by those who have taken part in them or have learnt of them', whilst providing 'an envious sense of closeness to the action'.[53] The 'sense of closeness' is largely psychological, the audience are privy to an atmosphere of perpetual nerviness, an uncomfortable alertness to the possibility of war becoming something more than a rumour. *The Times'* reviewer noticed that the production was successful in restricting itself to 'scenes of rural and country-town interest, racy with local character and humour [...] showing how the common folk of the land were affected by the tremendous events of the time'.[54] This miniature canvas sets itself a challenge, and succeeds within its narrow scope, but the overall effect is caught uneasily between drama and a series of scenes loosely strung together, with a messenger entering to enlighten the enthralled on-stage audience about events beyond their ken.

Hardy justified the expansion of the part of the soldier's sweetheart, who in *The Dynasts* itself is only required to sing 'My Love's gone a-fighting', because it provided a delicate contrast to the martial background. The amplification was also practical – it gave a

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53 The script is labelled 'Temporary adaptation only. Not to be printed. With additions by Mr T. H. Tilley.' The memoranda for performance is in the DCM.

54 *The Times*, 23/06/1916, p. 11.

more substantial role to the rising star of the troupe, the young Gertrude Bugler who had made an affecting debut as Marty South in the Players' production of *The Woodlanders* (1913). Hardy indulged himself by writing a part for his favourite actress. But he was also underscoring his belief that human love is not only thrown into relief by wartime, it outlasts it – a conviction captured in his poem 'In the time of "The Breaking of Nations"': 'Yonder a maid and her wight / Come whispering by:/ War's annals will cloud into night/ Ere their story die'.[55] Both the *Dorset County Chronicle* and the *Dorset Year Book* noted the muted tone of the play. They praised Gertrude Bugler's performance, backed up by a reference to J. M. Barrie's admiration of it, but commented that that the times were unpropitious – a production could not attract the fanfare it did in peacetime.[56]

The Hardy Players and *The Queen of Cornwall*

The next section of the chapter looks in more detail at Hardy's involvement with the Players. The aim of this analysis is to set Hardy's relationship with the Players against the backdrop of his decision to gift to them the premiere of *The Queen of Cornwall* in 1923. This was, in part at least, a practical response to the fact that their 1922 production, a version of Hardy's sensation novel *Desperate Remedies*, had been poorly received and they were searching around for a new play. Yet it was more than this – it was an act of faith in a group who had proved loyal to Hardy's works for fifteen years. The Players were never anything more than an amateur group of enthusiasts, but their leading lady was something different. Gertrude

55 Published in 1915, but written from a memory of a scene during the Franco-Prussian war. 'In the Time of "The Breaking of Nations"', *Complete Poems*, ll. 9-12, p. 543.

56 *Dorset Year Book* for 1915-16, pp. 10-11; *Dorset County Chronicle*, 14/12/1916, p. 6.

Bugler's ability to emotionally inhabit her roles as Hardy's women – Marty South, Bathsheba Everdene, Fancy Day, Eustacia Vye – convinced Hardy that adaptations of his novels could be made to work as emotional journeys for the audience, that something of the spirit of the texts could be bodied forth with a simplicity that confounded his earlier desire to see his heroines realised by star actresses. It was this belief that led to Gertrude's performance as Tess in 1924, a decision I discussed in Chapter Two. Gertrude was pregnant in 1923 and unable to play a part in *The Queen*, but she was, nonetheless, the impetus behind Hardy's interest in the Players – he had wanted her for Iseult the White Handed and tried to persuade her to appear as Merlin, in a cloak.

Hardy began his involvement with the Players by casting himself in the role of antiquarian assistant. He offered to act as a choreographer for *The Mellstock Quire* (1910): 'I am familiar with both the country dances “The College Hornpipe” & “Haste to the Wedding” & will teach them to the Company with pleasure'[57] and promised to lend them music for *The Three Wayfarers* (1911) - 'if your orchestra has not the tune of “The College Hornpipe” I can send it. I enclose herewith the tune to which the hangman’s song was sung, as nearly as I can remember it'.[58] He became more actively involved in providing material for them to perform as their productions began to be criticised. In 1920 the Hardy Players produced a version of *The Return of the Native,* adapted by T.H. Tilley. It was not a success, largely because of the practicalities of fitting the cast to the parts. Whilst Gertrude Bugler was praised for her performance as Eustacia, the men in the play were not treated so generously. The age gaps

57 'To A.H. Evans', 24/10/1910, *Collected Letters*, IV, p. 126.

58 'To H.A. Martin', 07/10/1911, *Collected Letters*, IV, p. 179.

between the performers, always an occupational hazard in amateur dramatics, was becoming more obvious – the 1918 revival of *The Mellstock Quire* (first performed in 1910) highlighted the difficulties of suspending disbelief when Fancy Day (the twenty-one-year-old Gertrude Bugler) was paired with a middle aged Dick Dewy.[59] 1922's *A Desperate Remedy* was poorly received. The adverse reviews prompted questions about the viability of continuing an enterprise whose repertoire relied solely on the truncation of Hardy's texts.

The reviewer of *The Dynasts* in the *Bookman* had suggested that Hardy's talents lay in another direction, in working to 'the old plan of a little drama, limited in space and circumstance, which suggests a vast whole'.[60] In doing so, the reviewer offered an inadvertently apt blueprint for Hardy's venture into play writing. *The Queen of Cornwall* – which Hardy called 'a little thing I have had lying about for years in outline' - had its origins in his courtship of Emma Gifford.[61] Hardy did not begin writing the play until 1916, four years after Emma's death, when he returned to Cornwall on a pilgrimage accompanied by his new wife, Florence. At this stage Hardy specifically denied that he had any literary intentions: 'I fear your hopes of a poem on Iseult […] will be disappointed: I visited the place 44 years ago with a Iseult of my own, & of course she was mixed in the vision of the other'.[62] In the *Life*, Hardy makes the equation between his own experience and the play explicit. He recalls an

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59 For more on this see passim Gertrude Bugler, *Personal Recollections of Thomas Hardy* (Dorchester: Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society, 1964); Norrie Woodhall, *Norrie's Tale: An Autobiography of the Last of the Hardy Players* (privately printed, 2006).

60 A. Macdonell, 'Mr Hardy's Experiment', *Bookman*, 25:149 (February 1904) , pp. 221-3.

61 'To H. Granville Barker', 02/07/1923, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 203.

62 'To S. Cockerell', 20/09/1916, *Collected Letters*, V, p. 179. Florence's account is somewhat different, she assured Cockerell that 'he has found the germ of an Iseult poem' in this pilgrimage, *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, ed. Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 120.

expedition to Tintagel, where

> owing to their lingering too long among the ruins, they found themselves locked in, only narrowly escaping being imprisoned there for the night by much signalling with their handkerchiefs to cottagers in the valley. The lingering might have been considered prophetic, seeing that, after smouldering in his mind for between forty and fifty years, he constructed *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* from the legends connected with that romantic spot.[63]

Whether or not Hardy speeded up the polishing of his scattered thoughts in response to the Players's difficulties is impossible to prove, but it seems likely that he wished to place the premiere of his play in the hands of a company he could influence. Autocratic intentions, however benignly exercised, were evidently exerted over the Players – the *Dorset County Chronicle*'s review was insistent that 'every wish that [Hardy] expressed was sacrosanct'.[64] The Players allowed Hardy to experiment with his theories about how a play should be staged without having to conform to the strictures of the commercial theatre. In my previous chapter I explored the extent to which Hardy aligned himself with *avant-garde* developments in the theatre. In this section of the chapter I examine how far Hardy was interested in implementing his own reformed ideas of how a play should be staged in a context over which he had a greater degree of control than he could have exercised in the London theatre. When working with the Players he was secure in the knowledge that they were anxious to implement his wishes. The Players' productions enabled Hardy to insulate himself from the mainstream theatre altogether. In response to a request for a view on the contemporary

63 *Life*, p. 81.

64 This is a view supported by the 2007 Thomas Hardy Birthday Lecture (to the Hardy Society) on Hardy and the Players (Dr J. T. Travell, copy given by the author). See further *Dorset Year Book* (1924), pp. 110-15.

stage he declined by professing ignorance: 'I know nothing whatever of the English theatre of to-day, & could have told you nothing, not having been inside one for many years'.[65] He denied a knowledge of the contemporary theatre, but he restricted himself to commenting on the commercial market, revealing nothing of his interest in other kinds of theatre.

The Queen of Cornwall is a one-act play dramatising the last hours of Tristram and Iseult at Tintagel Castle. Hardy designed the play to fit a model he had learned from watching Ibsen – after seeing Elizabeth Robins as Hedda Gabler in 1891 he noted the possibilities of a play which contains 'no scene which would not be physically possible in the time of acting'.[66] *The Queen* is structured so that the scenes are 'physically possible in the time of acting', yet Hardy chose to write his play in verse, using as his chief source Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485), a diffuse prose chronicle of the Arthurian court. In this section of the chapter I want to examine the impact of these conflicting influences on the construction of the text before moving on to consider the challenge it posed as a performance.

In preparing *The Queen*, Hardy carefully studied his copy of Malory, following the progress of Tristram and Isode's[67] love through the diffuse, digressive narrative. There is a sharp disjunction between Hardy's source and the nature of his self-imposed task. In Malory, Tristram's narrative is spread unevenly throughout the text, snatches of the story are recalled by others at intervals, rather than being confronted directly. Taking a prose source and turning it into a poetic play is not foolhardy by definition – Shakespeare transformed the

65 'To G. Maxwell', 09/04/1925, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 320.

66 *Life*, p. 245.

67 This is Malory's spelling of the name.

plodding narrative of Arthur Brooke's *Tragical History* into *Romeo and Juliet* – but the source has to be an impetus rather than a blueprint. Hardy retains parts of Malory's story in undigested lumps of speech, but offers no context for them – the Chanters describe Tristram as 'gloom-born / In his mother's death, and reared mid vows / Of poison by a later spouse'.[68] This would bewilder an audience unfamiliar with the legend: they would be unaware that Tristram's mother died giving birth to him and that his stepmother plotted to have him killed. In including half-digested narratives of this kind Hardy asks, albeit implicitly, how far the audience have to be aware of stories outside the stage's tightly controlled time-frame.

Allusions to other parts of a narrative, but a refusal to explain them, raise an intriguing question about how far an audience need to understand everything. Reflecting on the performance, Sydney Cockerell noted that 'I had read the book several times, but I was not sure that my neighbours who had not done so could always follow the explanatory words of the Chorus. All the same I and they enjoyed it thoroughly'.[69] The fact that a lack of total comprehension did not impede enjoyment of the play is suggestive – the audience may even have been content that some of the play was opaque to them, their interest lying in the overall effect rather than the minutiae. T. E. Lawrence was adamant that what mattered more than anything were the words: 'What took away my mind, so that I could only stammer to you in the hall, was the beauty & power of the verse'.[70] The verse in the play is an irregular mix of incantations for the Chanters and blank verse for the principals, though both Tristram

68 Thomas Hardy, *The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall* (London: Macmillan, 1923), p. 19; subsequent references are to this edition, incorporated in the body of the text.

69 Letter of 28/12/1923 to Florence Hardy, Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library), Gen MS 111, Folder 731.

70 Letter of 28/11/1923 to Florence Hardy, Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library), Gen MS 111, Folder 454.

and Iseult break into song at irregular intervals:

> Lean ye down, my Love:
> I'll touch to thee my very own old tune.
> I came in harper-guise, unweeting what
> The hazardry of our divided days
> Might have brought forth for us!
> *He takes the harp. QUEEN ISEULT reclines* (p. 40).

In his essay on the fluid relationship between poetry and drama, T. S. Eliot insisted that verse 'must justify itself dramatically, and not merely be fine poetry shaped into dramatic form. From this it follows that no play should be written in verse for which prose is dramatically adequate'.[71] Eliot's definition is pertinent to Hardy's decision to distinguish between different levels of poetic discourse in the play – Merlin and the Chanters speak in a self-consciously elevated register, the dialogue is rendered in conversational rhythms, the lovers move into lyrics at moments of heightened emotion. In one speech Iseult moves from pragmatism ('O I would even condone/ His bringing her, would he not come without; / I've said it ever since I've known of her'), to song ('Could he but live for me / A day, yea, even an hour / Its petty span would be / Steeped in felicity'), whilst the Chanters reflect on the wider narrative:

> Quite else her father, who on sight
> Was fain for Tristram as his son,

71 T. S. Eliot, *Poetry and Drama* (London: Faber & Faber, 1951), pp. 10-11.

> Not Mark. But woe, his word was won
>
> Alas, should wrong vow stand as right? (p. 27, p. 29).

The reaction of one of the original audience, T.E. Lawrence, highlights the degree to which the play's language dominated its reception. Immediately after the performance he wrote to Florence Hardy that 'the action is swift and strong without interruption, the poetry is clear-cut and precise as all of Hardy's poetry is precise and charged with passion and dramatic beauty. At the same time, this is a play that would stand any possible degree of elaboration and splendour in setting'.[72] Lawrence seems to have adopted Hardy's pragmatic position here – the play itself is an experiment with a marriage between dense, elaborate language and a pared down setting, but it is precisely this sparsity that lends itself to reinterpretation. Lawrence viewed the play as standing somewhat aloof from its setting, that it could be put in any guise and the language would be unaffected. In a later letter Lawrence was more voluble, quoting at length from his discussions with a fellow soldier:

> I asked Russell his mind. He said, again, that the audience were unworthy: that they interrupted his notice of the play. He much liked the Chorus: its slow speech, and the continuity it gave the action, & the brevity. The two songs were "luvely": the words spoken in the balcony were superfluous. A look & gesture would have been enough. (I, too, felt that the Queen's "I can't bear this" was dangerously near common speech.) [...] The phrases preserved their full force in that artless limpid speech of the actors and I've never heard finer English spoken [...] That's the profit of the simple acting […] your people had no technique, no arts and graces, to put between their "book" and us. It took my breath away.[73]

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72 Letter of 28/11/1923 to Florence Hardy, Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library), Gen MS 111, Folder 454.

73 Letter of 02/12/1923 to Florence Hardy, Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library), Gen MS. 111, Folder 266.

Both men were alert to the elocutionary power of the performance - the disquieting switch from 'artless limpid speech' to 'common speech'. The exclamation Lawrence highlights comes as Iseult overhears the emotionally fraught reunion of husband and wife. Her frustration falls dully in a scene dominated by the couple's elaborately wrought syntax. Iseult the White Handed tries to win over Tristram by assuring him that:

> Could you but be the woman, I the man,
> I would not fly from you or banish you
> For fault so small as mine. O do not think
> It was so vile a thing (p. 54).

Lawrence's appraisal reads rather as if he were reporting on a play-reading rather than a play, where the absence of learnt technique throws the language into relief. It is intriguing that Lawrence saw the audience as somehow intellectually unworthy of the piece in front of them – unappreciative and potentially disruptive. Some of this mutinous approach may have been due to a lack of comprehension: the audience not so much awed by the play as discomforted by it, uncertain of how they were to respond.

On its first performance, *The Queen* lasted approximately an hour – the whole event was recorded by the BBC's fledgling Bournemouth studios.[74] The play was followed by two short pieces – 'O Jan! O Jan!' and 'The Play of St George'. 'Jan' is a folk piece for three voices assembled by Hardy from his recollections of performances in and around Bockhampton

74 One of the first recordings of original drama – though according to the BBC's archives (Reading), the reel no longer exists.

during his childhood, and the 'St George' is Hardy's expanded version of the Christmas play performed at Bloom's End in *The Return of the Native*. 'Jan' follows a gentleman's unsuccessful attempts to woo a fashionable lady – he begins to gain ground only through listening to his far more intelligent servant's suggestions. The piece was played in full eighteenth-century costumes – in the script Hardy sketched out the positions in which the three were to stand, and ideas for dance-tunes that could be used to accompany them: Calder Fair, Nancy's Fancy, Fairy Dance, Soldier's Joy, Speed the Plough.

'St George' is a play for mummers. It is a slight piece of entertainment – a Christmas spectacle in which St George succeeds in vanquishing his enemies. The play began life as part of the Players' adaptation of *The Return of the Native* (1920), but it was revived as a Christmas entertainment at Max Gate, where the Players 'sang carols outside – the real old Bockhampton carols. Then they came and had refreshments in the dining room & we had a very delightful time with them'.[75] Florence Hardy then arranged for the text to be privately published.[76] It was performed in mummers' dress, as was *The Queen*. In *The Return of the Native* the emphasis is laid on the visual spectacle the mummers present. Crossing the heath the mummers are 'fantastic figures […] whose plumes and ribbons rustled in their walk like autumnal leaves'.[77] These ribbons lend Eustacia the necessary anonymity in her mission to spy on Clym unseen, though they pose practical problems. She can seat herself amongst the mummers but she cannot join in the feasting: 'Eustacia could not eat without uncovering her

75 'To S. Cockerell', 26/12/1920, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 171.

76 Letter to Sydney Cockerell, 24/03/1921, Purdy Collection, (Beinecke Library), Gen MS 111, Folder 69.

77 Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (1878), ed. Simon Gatrell (Oxford: World's Classics, 2005), p. 128 subsequent references are to this edition, incorporated in the body of the text.

face' (p. 139). This discomfort is confirmed by Gertrude Bugler's recollections of the performance of 'St George'. Gertrude noted that their helmets were made to Hardy's own design so accurately that she was able to replicate Eustacia's physical constriction 'as our visors were just coloured ribbons attached to the large helmets, our faces were obscured, and eating and drinking, made difficult'.[78]

In *The Return of the Native* the mummers are described as 'moved by a inner compulsion to say and do their allotted parts whether they will or no. This unweeting manner of performance is the true ring by which, in this refurbishing age, a fossilized survival may be known from a spurious reproduction' (p. 120). I am not suggesting that the difficulties of interpreting *The Queen* can be swept aside by dwelling on its automatic delivery, but they do go some way towards explaining the audience's acceptance of the play as a traditional narrative, and therefore not one to be questioned. The visual details of the mumming are significant. In the stage directions Hardy specified that the Players wear 'bright linen fabrics, trimmed with ribbon, as in the old mumming shows'[79] and when they were performing in London, Hardy wrote to remind them not to 'forget to take the mumming costumes, swords & staves'.[80] Mumming relies on the performance of set movements at precise moments, and the right costumes – a continuity between appearance and action. In his defence of *The Dynasts* in the *TLS*, Hardy argued that he had called it a 'drama' because it served as a shorthand for the compression of space and time, noting also that its material would be appropriate for mummers' methods. It was only in *The Queen* that Hardy

78 'Christmas Night at Max Gate' *Thomas Hardy Society Review*, I: 5 (1982), 235-7 (237).

79 Note on title-page.

80 'To T.H. Tilley', 25/01/1921, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 66.

succeeded in experimenting with the mummers' rote-style delivery as the model for a play.

In order to elucidate the challenge the play presented I want to focus on two things – the language and how the performance was designed to be staged. Hardy intended the play to require 'no theatre or scenery',[81] though he acknowledged that the Players were unlikely to obey his instructions, as 'they love all the conventions of the stage, and will duly maintain them'.[82] Hardy opens *The Queen* with what seems at first to be a detailed sense of how the stage is supposed to look:

> The Stage is any large room; round or at the end of which the audience sits. It is assumed to be the interior of the Great Hall of Tintagel Castle: that the floor is strewn with rushes: that there is an arch in the back-centre (a doorway or other opening may counterfeit this) through which the Atlantic is visible across an outer ward and over the ramparts of the strong-hold: that a door is on the left, and one on the right (curtains, screens or chairs may denote these); that a settle spread with skins is among the moveables: that above at the back is a gallery (which may be represented by any elevated piece of furniture in which two actors can stand, in a corner of the room screened off).

There is something odd about this as a description of a stage set. The parentheses visually mark out the qualifications to the design – offering practical alternatives, something else that may be used as a substitute. The description is, in fact, even more tentative than this would suggest. The whole thing is an act of imagination – 'it is assumed to be the interior of the Great Hall'. Hardy chose to minutely describe something which is defined by its absence, and to include a sketch of what the hall might look like. It is uncertain who this elaborate pinning down of a dreamscape is designed for. The reader of the play is given a

81 Instruction on the title page.

82 'To H. Child', 11/11/1923, *Collected Letters*, VI, p. 221.

sense of the stage – in most instances this would compensate for not having seen the play performed. But the original audience were never intended to see this either. Hardy seems to be privileging the reader over the audience member, though he acknowledged that the play would never be as stripped down as he intended – the Players were too fond of the impedimenta of the theatre. Thirty years before writing *The Queen* Hardy had speculated about the possibility of a bare stage, because 'a mere curtain representing scenery would be attractive – People are getting rather tired of the cumbersome *mise-en-scene*'.[83] Hardy's vision of an uncluttered theatre was realised in *The Queen*, on paper at least. The minimalist stage was, Hardy insisted, a revival rather an innovation: 'Gordon Craig was quite right in advocating simplicity, but the old people were much more simple even than Mr Craig. The more scenery, the less drama, and vice versa – that was an obvious axiom.'[84] Hardy's puncturing of Craig's reforming claims is less interesting than the conclusions he drew from it, that an excess of scenery stifles the drama it is meant to illuminate. Hardy is foregrounding the words at the expense of the spectacle, controlling what the audience sees and in the process inducting them into a theatre of ideas, rather than an elaborate display, in the belief that this will concentrate their minds on the narrative.

Hardy sent the script to Granville Barker, asking for his assessment of the likelihood of it succeeding: 'Do you think they could do it – I will not say well, but middling?'[85] Barker's first query was structural, he needed to envisage where the Chanters would be placed:

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83 'To C.W. Jarvis', 24/07/1890, *Collected Letters*, I, p. 213.

84 Unattributed quotation cited in Keith Wilson, 'Thomas Hardy and the Stage', *Thomas Hardy Journal* 23 (Autumn 2007), 22-38 (36).

85 'To H. Granville Barker', 02/07/1923 (DCM).

> Do you mean them to be upon a sort of front stage? I suppose so; and it would be best. They could stand on each side of the main playing stage in front of black – or dark – proscenium wings. The great thing will be to forbid them to move about while they are chanting.[86]

As with *The Dynasts*, Barker returned to the model of a play with an explicitly explanatory frame. Instructing the audience through the stages of the play allows for a directness of presentation that circumvents the Players' lack of experience. To body forth the language they have to 'feel it deeply, speak it truly and don't move except when they've reason for moving'.[87]

The Players' Iseult the White Handed, Ethel Fare, gained the most praise. Queen Iseult, an army officer's wife called Kathleen Hirst, was barely noted - thus displacing the Queen of Cornwall from her own play. Ethel Fare's appearance as a rival to Gertrude Bugler was relished by Florence Hardy at her most bitter:

> Poor Gertrude Bugler seems to have suffered agonies at being cut out by a rival leading lady, Ethel Fare, & the tragic climax is that she had a still-born son on the day of the performance. What a gossip I am.[88]

Ethel Fare's performance was noted for its innocence and freshness. As the sidelined wife to the intransigent Tristram she was the 'perfect representation of clinging, distraught and none too trustworthy womanhood' (*Morning Post*); 'as near an actress of genius as we can look for in a company of zealous amateurs in a country town' (*TP's Weekly*); 'one of the saddest

86 'To Hardy', 06/07/1923 (DCM), emphasis in original.

87 'To Hardy', 06/07/1923 (DCM), emphasis in original.

88 'To S. Cockerell', 26/11/1923, *Letters of Emma and Florence Hardy*, p. 193.

figures in romance [...] her anguished cri de coeur brought tears to many eyes [...] rendered desperate by the tumult of her distress, [she] makes a brave struggle to win her beloved lord back to her' (*Dorset County Chronicle*).[89]

More serious doubts about the quality of the play surfaced in a disagreement about the relative merits of the Chanters. *The Telegraph* devoted a quite considerable section of their review to discussing the designation of the play as a work for mummers. Both *The Telegraph* and the *Daily Express* agreed that the potential represented by the Chanters could only be served by a professional cast: 'they succeeded not at all in getting down to the depths of passion which I feel this play might reveal in the hands of a fine professional company under a producer of mark' (*Daily Telegraph*); ' it needs experienced actors and actresses, it requires men and women who can speak blank verse, and who can “put over the flats” love and hate, joy and sorrow, hope and despair, pity and tragedy' (*Daily Express*).[90] This latter contribution is particularly intriguing in the light of Hardy's emphasis on the emotionlessness of the mummers' delivery. *The Morning Post* was more straightforwardly critical of the standard of their contribution: they 'intone syllabically. It is monotone throughout [...] the result is that you do not always hear them well, and when you do hear them the words mean nothing'.[91] As discussed above, it is questionable whether every word of the play was designed to be individually attended to. Instead, the Chanters offer not so

89 All contemporary journals connected with the first performance of *The Queen* are from the private archive of Rev. Dr J.C. Travell (Dorchester), by permission of the owner. In her own recollections of her acting Ethel Fare admitted only that 'I found this role a demanding one' ('Some Reminiscences', Fare Papers, in private archive).

90 Private archive (by permission of Rev. Dr. J.C. Travell).

91 Private archive (by permission of Rev. Dr. J.C. Travell).

much a commentary on the action as a hypnotic verbal music as an accompaniment to the play. The fullest assessment of the production came in the *Dorset Year Boo*k: they praised the melding of the Chanters into the scenery 'creeping out of the walls, and the walls, that had looked on these deeds, became eyes and ears and melancholy voices'. [92] The effect of otherworldly, mystical observers of the action is closer to Hardy's intention than the declamatory authority the London critics were searching for.

In the final section of the chapter I examine how far *The Queen* allowed Hardy to stage variations on themes he had explored throughout his novels. Staging the struggle between the two Iseults in the confined timescale and setting of *The Queen* forced Hardy to confront their emotions directly. From the outset Hardy shows Iseult defining herself in relation to her rival. Believing that Tristram is dead, she wonders which of them he watches over; later she ponders whether she is willing to have both of them at Tintagel – to ensure Tristram's presence she will tolerate his wife. The Queen is an almost silent witness to the tussle between husband and wife – only when she believes her rival to have gained ground does she intervene: 'He's softening to her. Come! / Let us go down, and face this agony!' (p. 56). The play is built on the struggle between the two women for Tristram's love, but the only time they are directly confronted with each other the younger woman faints and has to be led off stage. It takes Iseult's death for her rival to be able to give the lovers a narrative – rather as Arabella offers the epitaph on Jude and Sue, or Marty South makes a claim for the durability of her love over Grace's. Tristram's plight, caught between two women, is

92 Private archive (by permission of Rev. Dr. J.C. Travell).

ostensibly the more dramatic, but Hardy was intrigued by the rivalry between the women. In his novels Hardy frequently anatomises what makes for survival – for Thomasin, for Elizabeth-Jane, endurance is an accommodation with surroundings, a rational appraisal of life's limitations. Iseult shares with these women the physical fact of her survival, but she lacks the sense of scope – the ability, in Thomasin's case, to appreciate the fact that 'the worst had once been matter of trembling conjecture; it was now matter of reason only, a limited badness' (p. 365).

I want to set the treatment of sexual jealousy in *The Queen* against illustrative examples from the novels – beginning with Hardy's evasion of the expected scene in *The Return of the Native*, where the quarrel is between Eustacia and Mrs Yeobright over Clym, rather than Eustacia and Thomasin over Wildeve. In *Return*, jealousy is always sublimated, twisted in unexpected directions. Mrs Yeobright's distrust of Eustacia is sexual, though never simplistically so. She resents Eustacia because her son has fallen in love with her, because she wanted him to marry Thomasin, because she suspects Eustacia is having (or has had) an affair with Wildeve. She is an injured mother who believes that her daughter-in-law is not a good woman. Yet her suspicions create their own story – failing to distribute the guineas fairly, refusing to treat Eustacia as anything other than an interloper. The verbal fight between the two women in their one meeting is all the more intense because it is not the confrontation we are expecting. Thomasin and Eustacia, the more obvious rivals, never speak.[93] When Clym accuses Eustacia he does so in a scene of heightened theatricality, but low emotional intensity. Both seem to be mouthing lines they have imperfectly learnt by

93 Though Eustacia is a surprise witness at Thomasin's wedding.

heart:

> "There's reason for ghastliness. Eustacia; you have held my happiness in the hollow of your hand, and like a devil you have dashed it down!"
>
> [...] "Ah! You think to frighten me" she said, with a slight laugh. "Is it worth while? I am undefended, and alone" (p. 314).

Hardy based the scene on a lovers' quarrel in John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612), and though the sense of playing a part adds to the distance between the couple, it helps to drain the sympathy from them too. Instead the jealousy driving so much of the novel is conveyed by indirections – Eustacia and Mrs Yeobright by the pool, locked together by their love of Clym but determined to treat their meeting as a skirmish in a territorial war; Wildeve and Venn gambling with increasing intensity by the light of the glow-worms, so absorbed that they become oblivious not only to their physical surroundings, but to what they are competing for.

In both *The Woodlanders* and *Jude*, Hardy begins with an ostensibly more straightforward premise – two women competing for the love of the same man. Between Grace and Mrs Charmond there is a peculiar blend of dependency and distrust – even when wounding Grace by carrying on an affair with her husband Mrs Charmond cannot quite stop treating Grace as somehow beneath her. Orchestrating the plot so that the women are forced to cling together, lost in the woods, Hardy makes the distinction between the two clear, even at their most vulnerable. Mrs Charmond cannot quite admit, even to herself, that her sexual relationship with Fitzpiers has left her dependent on him. Grace insists on confronting the situation: '"O my great God!" she exclaimed, thunderstruck at a revelation transcending her

utmost suspicion "He's had you! Can it be – can it be!"'[94] Grace rapidly realises that what she feels is not precisely jealousy – she does not love her husband enough to feel overpoweringly possessive towards him. Sue's jealousy of Arabella is the catalyst in her sexual relationship with Jude. Rather than let him go out and help Arabella, she agrees to sleep with him - the correlation between jealousy and sex is one Arabella notes amusedly the morning afterwards, when a contrite Sue goes to visit her. It is a relationship Arabella understands. She wants Jude all the more when she cannot have him, tracking Jude and Sue with pathetic persistence around the agricultural fair.[95] Arabella is a self-interested survivor, but she lacks Marty or Elizabeth-Jane's elegiac quality. Only at the close of the novel does she assume, somewhat ill-fittingly, the cloak of commentator on the action, offering the verdict on Jude and Sue: 'She's never found peace since she left his arms, and never will again till she's as he is now!' (p. 431). Arabella's anger feels right, her elegiac tone jars – another instance of the dissonance that drives Sue and Jude apart, and leaves Sue in perpetual death-in-life at the close of the novel.

In the novels, the death-scenes are invariably wordless, or narrated by someone at one remove. An assessment of the opening of Hardy's first novel, where the heroine watches through a window as her father falls to his death, notes that 'neither the reader nor Cytherea sees Mr Graye hit the ground: he merely disappears downwards. His death, like that of others in *Desperate Remedies* – like the great majority of deaths in Hardy – takes place just

94 *The Woodlanders* (1887), ed. Dale Kramer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 227-8 - subsequent references are to this edition, incorporated in the body of the text.

95 See Thomas Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (1895), ed. Patricia Ingham (Oxford, World's Classics, 1985), p. 309 - subsequent references are to this edition, incorporated in the body of the text.

off-stage'.[96] When Troy is shot at the Christmas party we see the stages from his entrance to his death with the clarity of an inescapable act, but it is a scene with a peculiar, slow-motion intensity in which victim and perpetrator are curiously detached from themselves. Eustacia falls into Shadwater Weir, but we only hear the splash as her body hits the water. The aftermath is a Boy's Own adventure as all three men plunge into the weir. Only after her body is lying in the Quiet Woman does Eustacia come back into focus, she has 'at last found an artistically happy background' (p. 361). She is far more potent as a story than she was in life – she no longer has to face the prospect of a life of 'years of wrinkles, neglect, and decay' (p. 365). We see Henchard creeping away from Casterbridge, but we have lost the taut emotional thread that leads us to sympathise with his need to be near Elizabeth. We are left with Whittle as the uncomprehending Fool to Henchard's Lear; with the raging of Henchard's final will and testament. All we have of Tess is the raised flag which substitutes for the sight of her hanging body. Giles Winterborne and Jude are full of words as they lie dying – but Giles is delirious and Jude is speaking to a silent room.

I want to place these private deaths against the public arena in which Tristram and Iseult are forced to play out their last moments. My aim in doing so is to consider the extent to which writing a script, rather than adapting the plot of the novel, allowed Hardy to imagine death as a spectacle, not as something to be approached through a narrative voice. Prose narrative can occupy a distance from the events being narrated - it can choose to draw back from the moment of death itself; to place the characters firmly inside descriptive passages, rather than granting them dialogue. The starkest examples of this come with the

96 Michael Irwin & Ian Gregor, 'Either Side of Wessex', *Thomas Hardy After Fifty Years*, ed. Lance St. John Butler (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 104-116 (108).

narration of violent deaths – with Alec suddenly becoming an anonymous corpse in a lodging house bed, with Mrs Charmond as the victim of a shooting: 'She was shot by a disappointed lover. It occurred in Germany. The unfortunate man shot himself afterwards' (p. 302). Hardy's decision to stage the last hours of Tristram and Iseult meant that he had inevitably to confront their death scenes. Tristram is given a lingering death – complete with a speech which attempts to assess the significance of his life and the manner of his death:

> Fair Knights, bethink ye what
> I've done for Cornwall, -
> Its fate was on my shoulder – and I saved it! (pp. 71-2).[97]

Iseult exits the back of the stage whilst those left comment on her progress towards the cliff-face – she throws herself off, followed closely by her pet dog: 'She's leapt the ledge and fallen / Into the loud black bay [...] And the little hound her friend / Has made with her its end!' (p. 75). Hardy compromises between the methods of narration and the techniques of a play with Iseult's death. But in doing so he is risking alienating the audience, who are left unsure as to where they are placed in relation to the on-stage audience: who are themselves powerless to alter the action taking place off-stage,

> *They turn and look. QUEEN ISEULT's form is seen in the gloom to be mounting the parapet. Standing on it she turns, and waves her arm towards the Castle, as though bidding it farewell. She then faces the Atlantic, and leaps over. A cry of dismay comes from all* (p. 74).

97 The *Dorset Year Book* could only praise the performance of the local doctor's Tristram as 'pathologically accurate', 1924, pp. 110-115.

The purpose of this analysis is to assess the degree to which Hardy had begun to consider the effect of an incident on the audience. In his overview of the script Granville Barker warned that to have both Tristram's wife and the maid Brangwain stumble upon the bodies at the close of the play was too much: the prospect of ' two people seeing the corpses that we have been looking at for some minutes [would risk] untimely giggles'.[98] The scene was amended, so as not to risk inappropriate laughter. In spite of these precautions, the performance did provoke some ill-timed mirth. T. E. Lawrence noted of the first night that 'the two silly people behind you began to giggle. I suppose they have had no agony in their own lives, & cannot see tragedy in others even when it is great & very greatly put'.[99] Disappointingly he does not specify which point in the play tipped the audience over into laughter.

Hardy's interest in writing drama for an amateur company was born of his dissatisfaction with the limitations of the London stage. Hardy began by sanctioning Granville Barker's adaptation of *The Dynasts*: a director he trusted not to produce a star-laden piece, stifled by the kind of 'sham-real appurtenances' he had argued against in the 1890s.[100] Hardy remarked somewhat ruefully that the adaptation had the effect of making him appear as 'orthodox as a church-warden' - he was not entirely happy with the staging, largely because it failed to give an adequate sense of setting.[101] For Hardy the set fell somewhere between representation

98 'To Hardy', 28/10/1923 (DCM).

99 Letter of 02/12/1923 to Florence Hardy, Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library), Gen MS. 111, Folder 266.

100 'Why I Don't Write Plays', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 31st August 1892, reprinted in *Public Voice*, pp. 120-1.

101 'To E. Gosse', 01/12/1914, *Collected Letters*, V, pp. 65-6.

and abstraction, and succeeded at neither.[102] Hardy preferred to use the Hardy Players' productions as a test ground for what could be said within the space of a play. The scripts I study in this chapter are both operating under imposed restrictions - one geographical, one temporal. Hardy confined his version of *The Dynasts* to Wessex, and *The Queen* stages only the last hours of Tristram and Iseult. In the early twentieth century, Hardy became more alert to the boundaries imposed by the theatre – he began to experiment with how to convey a story within the space offered by the stage, rather than attempting to compress a plot into the time available. In writing both *Wessex Scenes* and *The Queen* Hardy thought like a director, instead of a reluctant adapter – working with the Players he was able to find a setting in which he could dramatise his material, rather than simply abridge it.

Throughout my thesis I have set the history of the adaptations against their sources, probing the ways in which there is something in the plots which resists translation to the stage, at least when using the methods of abbreviation and ellipsis Hardy attempted in his first adaptations. Realising the atmosphere of Wessex in the theatre was one challenge faced by the prospect of putting the novels on the stage, another was the emotional range of the characters. Released from their settings their relationships possess an operatic quality. This potential was realised by two librettists – Luigi Ilica in his version of *Tess*, performed at Covent Garden in 1909 to critical acclaim, if not popular success, and Rutland Boughton, whose *Queen of Cornwall* premiered at Glastonbury in 1924. Hardy was delighted with both

102 For more on this see Florence Hardy's letter to John Hornby, 18/05/1929, Purdy Collection (Beinecke Library), Gen MSS 111, Folder 702.

– no doubt somewhat bemused by the fact that his work had attracted the attention of both a professional operatic company and inspired a talented but itinerant Communist, who wanted the *Queen* to begin a revolution which was not merely musical, but social as well.

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Chapter 1 appendix – Comparative data on the composition of the Lord Chamberlain's script of *Far From the Madding Crowd*

Far From the Madding Crowd **(Lord Chamberlain's Script [LCP] 53267 Licensing number 29, licensed 25/02/1882)**	***The Mistress of the Farm*** **typescript, interleaved into the LCP script**
Act 1	**Act 2 [NB Act 1 of *The Mistress* was scrapped at an early stage in the revisions of the script]**
5^{v}	p. 20
8^{r}	p. 21
8^{v}	p. 22
10^{r} and 10^{v}	pp. 23-4
13^{r} and 13^{v}	pp. 25-6
15^{r} and 15^{v}	pp. 27-8
17^{r} and 17^{v}	pp. 29-30
19^{r} and 19^{v}	pp. 31-2
20^{r} and 20^{v}	pp. 33-4
21^{r} and 21^{v}	pp. 35-6
Act 2	**Act 3**
22^{r} and 22^{v}	pp. 37-8
23^{r} and 23^{v}	pp. 39-40
24^{r} and 24^{v}	pp. 41-2
25^{r} and 25^{v}	pp. 43-4
26^{r} and 26^{v}	pp. 45-6
27^{r} and 27^{v}	pp. 47-8
28^{r} and 28^{v}	pp. 49-50
29^{r} and 29^{v}	pp. 51-2
30^{r} and 30^{v}	pp. 53-4
32^{r} and 32^{v}	pp. 55-6
33^{r} and 33^{v}	pp. 57-8
Act 3	**Act 4**
61-3^{r}	pp. 64-5

Chapter 2 appendix – *Tess*'s publication and performance history

Date	**Publication details**
May 1891	'The Midnight Baptism: a study in Christianity', *The Fortnightly Review*
14th July-26th December 1891	Serialisation of *Tess* in *The Graphic*
15th July-26th December 1891	Serialisation of *Tess* in *Harper's Magazine*
14th November 1891	'Saturday Night in Arcady', *National Observer Special Literary Supplement*
December 1891	Publication of the novel by Osgood McIlvaine & Co.
c. 1894-5	Composition of the longer script adapting *Tess* for the stage (*Tess*MS1)
c. 1894-5	Composition of the shorter script adapting *Tess* for the stage (*Tess*MS2)
March 1897	First performance in New York of Lorimer Stoddard's version (based on Hardy's script), with Minnie Maddern Fiske as Tess
March 1900	First performance of an unauthorised version of the novel, adapted by Hugh Arthur Kennedy
November 1924	First performance of Hardy's adaptation of *Tess* at Dorchester's Corn Exchange, with Gertrude Bugler as Tess (*Tess*MS1).
September 1925	First performance of Hardy's adaptation of *Tess* at the Barnes Theatre (and later at the Garrick) with Gwen Ffrangçon Davies as Tess. In 1926 it went on tour, with Christine Silver as Tess (*Tess*MS3).
July 1929	Gertrude Bugler's professional debut as Tess at the Duke of York's Theatre