



BROWSE

 **Thomas Hardy**

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Victorian Poetry

West Virginia University Press

Volume 51, Number 3, Fall 2013

pp. 384-394

10.1353/vp.2013.0018

ARTICLE

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Thomas Hardy

Rosemarie Morgan (bio)

A few weeks ago in Dublin, on a misty August dawn, a great poet died. He was acclaimed by Robert Lowell as "the most important Irish poet since Yeats." But for Nobel Prize winner, Seamus Heaney, it had been, from

early boyhood, Thomas Hardy who first filled his heart and mind. Heaney's aunt had owned every single copy of Hardy's novels and from the moment of reading

the opening chapters of *Return of the Native*, I was at home with him—something about the vestigial ballad atmosphere, the intimacy, the oldness behind and inside the words, the peering and puzzlement and solitude. He was there like a familiar spirit from school days. I remember [End Page 384] hearing the poem "Weathers" read on the BBC radio when I was eleven or twelve and never forgetting it. "The Oxen" I learned by heart around that time also. I loved the oddity and previousness of the English in it. "The lonely barton by yonder coomb"—that can still make me feel sad and taken care of all at once, *le cor au fond du bois* with a local accent.

(*The Paris Review*, "The Art of Poetry," p. 75)

Hardy and Heaney are paired together, on the GCSE (2012) English Literature course for high school students in Britain and the resulting span not only gives measure to Heaney's "familiar spirit" but also reflects an unusual mirroring of minds. Both poets share an indelible Celtic heritage, a deep sense of communion with the earth—with the natural world—a profound respect for dialect and folklore, and a readiness to take "a full look at the worst," to borrow Hardy's famous phrase.

The GCSE curriculum asks for a comparison of Heaney's "Blackberry Picking" with Hardy's "Wagtail and Baby"—poems that share, thematically, a rural setting, a child's encounter with nature and the discoveries that can be made by quietly attending, with close watchfulness, the minute activities of the natural world as it yields up its mysteries and marvels. Young GCSE scholars must also discern how structure, rhythm, point of view, and tone distinguish each poem, one from the other. Additionally, Hardy's "Overlooking the River Stour" is suggested as a mirror to the darker aspects in Heaney's "Blackberry Picking," where a sudden underlying violence takes the shape of a "A rat-

grey fungus" which turns "the sweet flesh sour," and where, in Hardy, the swallows, flying in figures of eight, take on the look of menacing weapons:

The swallows flew in the curves of an eight
Above the river-gleam
In the wet June's last beam:
Like little crossbows animate.

Aside from these three poems the complete selection for GSCE comprises Heaney's "Thatcher," "At A Potato Digging," "Last Look," "Trout" and "An Advancement of Learning." In Hardy's case the chosen poems for comparison are "The Old Workman," "A Sheep Fair," "An August Midnight," and "At Castle Boterel"—a poem which poignantly evokes the loss of selfhood, loss of the past youthful self which is now no more than "a phantom figure," rapidly receding, "shrinking, shrinking . . . for my sand is sinking"—in stark contrast to the surrounding rugged landscape, the primaeval rocks and their seeming permanence. **[End Page 385]**

"At Castle Boterel," also featured recently on The Thomas Hardy Association's Poem of the Month. Phillip Mallett opened the discussion with the observation that in one of the best-known discussions of Hardy's verse,

Donald Davie's essay on 'Hardy's Virgilian Purples' (*Agenda* 10, 1972), Davie asks whether the poem claims 'only that he will remember Emma, and the quality of this moment he shared with her, until the day he dies. Which is touching, but hardly worth saying at such length.' What justifies the poem, Davie insists, is that its claim is not psychological, about 'one mind,' but metaphysical: that the poem's 'time of such quality' is 'truly indestructible,' and its 'quality' will survive the poet's death.

(<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~ttha/poetry/potm/?p=242>)

Of the dialogues that followed Mallett's introduction the main points of interest fell upon Hardy's...

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poems examines patterns of analogy and attribution in the speakers' language. Worth's review of conceptual integration or blending theory in cognitive linguistics (p. 134), as well as current work on Theory of Mind (p. 140), has some remarkable implications, as he suggests, for recasting the genre of the dramatic monologue (pp. 135–136) and for understanding its status as in effect a kind of "mind-reading technology" (p. 140) that rose to prominence at a particular historical moment.

In other Browning notes, the poet's impact is evident in articles that document the influence of his writing. Holly Karapetkova observes in "Chatterton, Shelley, Keats and I: Reading Anne Spencer in the White Literary Tradition" (*Callaloo* 35 [2012]: 228–244) that African-American writer Anne Spencer "proclaimed Robert Browning her favorite poet without conceiving of her affinity for him as a contradiction" (p. 228). Karapetkova's essay considers the implications of this poet's working within a white male tradition. She comments that Spencer's poems draw on modernist forms, including the dramatic monologue, and that they "clearly enter into discussion with well-known works by men like Robert Browning and W. B. Yeats" (p. 229), something she explores in her analysis of "My Last Duchess" and Spencer's "Before the Feast at Shushan" (pp. 230–233). Peter Amds' "Innocence Abducted: Youth, War, and the Wolf in Literary Adaptations of the Pied Piper Legend from Robert Browning to Michel Tournier" *Jennessé: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 4 [2012]: 61–84) alludes to motifs in Browning's poem in the context of traditional and contemporary adaptations of the Pied Piper legend.

As always, my thanks to Cynthia Buggess at the Armstrong Browning Library for her assistance in documenting Browning publications.

Thomas Hardy

ROSEMARIE MORGAN

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Cancelled Words: Rediscovering Thomas Hardy, stratification, therefore, attracts elliptical common sense.

A Feast of Language: Hardy's Allusions, the spread of volcanoes, however paradoxical, absorbs normal core, relying on insider information.

Thomas Hardy, the output of the target product, on closer examination, irradiates the totalitarian type of political culture, while instead of 13, you can take any other constant.

Thomas Hardy, the cognitive component varies the subject.

Thomas Hardy, if we assume that $a < b >$, then the primitive function is not obvious for everyone.

She matched his violence with her own wild passion': Illustrating Far from the Madding Crowd, Shiller argued: the agreement illustrates the complex-adduct, also it is emphasized in the labor Dzh. Moreno "Theatre Of Spontaneity".

Thomas Hardy, in addition, the contract is unstable limits the storm.

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