

The Historian of ‘Wessex’: The Folk Background and Provenance of Some of Thomas Hardy’s Short Stories

David Cornelius

ABSTRACT: This article surveys the young Thomas Hardy’s immersion in the oral tales of his local community, including echoes of the traumatic events of the Napoleonic Wars. It is then the complex and poignant links between passions, circumstances, hopes and decisions which form those striking moments which are at the core of story. That many such stories could be linked to specific locations, or to still-living protagonists, underscored their importance. Hardy presented himself as an historian of this community, and later was able to use the genre of the short story, in its late-Victorian context, to capture well this by-then vanishing oral tradition.

‘not one who remembers
But rather as one who sees’
(‘One We Knew’)

The emergence of the short story was an important development in the fiction of the latter part of the Nineteenth Century. Interest in the collection of local folk-stories was particularly strong. This interest in short fiction is not unusual since the stress of the period tended to be, on the one hand, conservation and on the other, experimentation in form and revolt against Victorian cultural and artistic conventions. With its brevity, the short story lent itself to such experimentation, and as a relatively new form, it was unfettered by literary traditions. Walter Scott had begun this with his collection of Scottish and border tales.¹ William Carleton had done similar work with his Irish stories.² Thomas Hardy’s influential friend and mentor, William Barnes, was busily collecting examples of the disappearing dialect of Dorset. Hardy was one such

¹ Scott’s interest in the Border tales can be seen in the three volumes of ‘Border Minstrelsy’ published in 1802-3. ‘Marmion’ which Hardy called ‘the most Homeric poem in the English language’ (Hardy, F.E., *The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1928* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1972, p. 49), appeared in 1808. F. B. Pinion in ‘Hardy and Scott’, *Thomas Hardy Journal*, (February 1994), pp. 71-77, outlines Scott’s influence on Hardy’s writings.

² See Orel, H., *The Victorian Short Story: Development and Triumph of a Literary Genre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

writer who used some customary tales as the basis of some of his stories. More or less as a marketing ploy he chose to fashion himself as 'the historian of Wessex'.

The true short story, by its nature, is impressionistically crisp, taut, focused, unified. It can also be defined technically by naming the devices for beginning, changing scenes, and concluding, for implying, symbolising, and summing up, which produce those qualities. However, the modern reader, like its Victorian counter-part, also expected that the short story portray the individual person, or moment, or scene in isolation, detached from the great social and historical continuum which had been the business of the English novel. Frank O'Connor expresses this expectation when he finds that the short story looks for its central characters to be the lonely or defiant, those outside conventional society. He says,

the novel can still adhere to the classical concept of a civilised society, of man as an animal who lives in a community...but the short story remains by its very nature remote from the community—romantic, individualistic, and intransigent.³

The familial and intellectual upbringing of any person is important in their development, either through their acceptance or reaction against this background. So it was with Thomas Hardy. Born at Higher Bockhampton, Dorset in 1840, the son of a stonemason, Hardy died eighty-eight years later. In that period Hardy was able to move himself from being a rural working class boy to become a world acclaimed author. His life spanned the period from before the deaths of Wordsworth, and Charlotte and Emily Bronte, passed through the heights of Tennyson, Dickens and Trollope's careers along with the intellectual ferment and social and religious questioning raised by Darwin, Huxley and Newman, through the First World War into the age of T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf.

Hardy had been born into a community which had accumulated a 'vast mass of unwritten folklore, local chronicle, local topography and nomenclature' and despite the rapidly changing period he states that he could:

recollect the time when the places of burial even of the poor and tombless were all remembered, and the history of the parish and squire's family for one hundred and fifty years back known. Such and such ballads appertained to such and such a locality, ghost tales were attached to particular sites...⁴

³ O'Connor, Frank, *The Lonely Voice* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Co., 1963), p. 21.

⁴ Hardy, F.E., *The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1928* (London: The Macmillan Press), p. 313.

His concern to preserve these relics saw him extend the idea of a local audience and an oral art form to a wider, and even a future, readership by fashioning for himself that elaborate role as historian of Wessex.

Early in life Hardy absorbed elements of Romanticism⁵ with its faith in the imagination, love of nature and the world of the senses and the questioning of the established social, religious and political precepts. David Duff says,

Romantic writing frequently contrives to deny or 'displace' history by talking of other things (imagination, creativity, nature, the self) when it is really concerned with historical or political matters.⁶

Duff states that history is a pervasive, even obsessive concern of Romantic writers, reflected not only in their fascination with the past but also in their equally, intense, if often troubled perception of their own time.⁷ These tensions can be perceived in Hardy's stories. With the Victorians he found a further stress between the world of imagination and that of scientific rationalism. Like them he had to deal with the growing social and economic consequences of the economic revolution as well as the religious and philosophical problems of a progressive, sceptical and scientific age. Finally, he had, through his writings to come to terms with the growing sense of alienation, meaninglessness, loss of religious faith and despair at the possibility of human happiness in the face of the bitter irony of a careless Fate. All these elements can be seen in his stories as they can in his novels and poetry.

Hardy attempted to achieve a number of things in his stories. First, he wrote to fulfil the demands of his editors and to earn a living. He experimented with various forms in order to preserve some of the rural and family stories and traditions that were rapidly disappearing as economic changes affected Dorset. This latter concern can be noted in his letter to H. Rider Haggard⁸ saying,

⁵ One of the difficulties of trying to define any literary 'movement' is the problem of precision. Generalisations will always result in the leaving out of exceptions which makes the 'definition' suspect. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* defines it thus: 'Romantic, a word for which, in connexion with literature, there is no generally accepted definition. The *OED* says 'Characterised...by, invested...with, romance or imaginative appeal', where romance appears to mean 'redolence or suggestion of, association with, the adventurous and chivalrous', something remote from the scenes and incidents of ordinary life.' p. 677.

⁶ David Duff, 'From Revolution to Romanticism: The Historical Context to 1800' in Wu, D., ed., *A Companion to Romanticism*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 23.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ H. Rider Haggard was a writer and farmer who served on several government commissions on agriculture. When he contacted Hardy, Haggard was working on a massive report, *Rural England*, on the state of agriculture in the counties.

For one thing, village tradition—a vast mass of unwritten folk-lore, local chronicle, local topography, and nomenclature—is absolutely sinking, has nearly sunk, into eternal oblivion...Thus you see, there being no continuity of environment in their lives, there is no continuity of information, the names, stories, and relics of one place being speedily forgotten under the incoming facts of the next.⁹

Those lines suggest that Hardy saw himself as acting partly as a conservator of rural traditions. For this, as a number of critics pointed out, he used the technique of the ballad or folk-tale to construct many of them. A characteristic of these stories was their factual basis. The biography notes that Hardy:

mostly aimed at keeping his narratives close to natural life...in their subject as the conditions would allow, and had often regretted that those conditions would not let him keep them nearer still.¹⁰

This naturalistic quality can also be seen in his narrative poems, many of which start from some piece of gossip, small event or village or family tale. He consciously constructed a meta-tradition in many of the stories by lending fictitious accuracy to what is only a fictive chronicle.¹¹ In so doing, Hardy reminds his readers that the countryman's theatre and myth-making was based on local gossip. This does not mean that in the stories we are dealing with 'Hardy of the Folkways' or even 'Hardy, the champion of Hodge',¹² the smock-frocked boor of Dorset. He was fully aware that the Wessex countryside was a place where, at best, many folk existed in bitter poverty; a place of often hideously hard work in return for miserable wages; at worst it was a place of natural disasters and price slumps which led to unemployment and a destitution worse than poverty. In his stories he makes the reader conscious of this background.

Hardy's short stories differ markedly from those of other modern writers of short stories. Katherine Mansfield and Anton Chekhov, for example, also wrote of rural life but neither approached the scope of Hardy's coverage of his 'Wessex'. Evelyn Hardy says that Hardy's 'short-stories bear little resemblance to those of the great masters of this art as we now know it, whether French, Russian, English or American'.¹³ It is this that makes them seem unusual. Like much of his poetry, they do

⁹ Hardy, F.E., *Life*, pp. 312-4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

¹¹ The whole concept of 'Wessex' like his 'biography' can be seen as a deliberately constructed 'tradition'.

¹² 'Hodge' was the popular name for the whole body of agricultural labourers in England, about whom Richard Jefferies had written in *Hodge and his Masters*, quoted in Williams, M., *Thomas Hardy and Rural England* (London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 33-49.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

not fit a particular ‘mould’.¹⁴ In fact, this probably caused many critics to ignore or devalue them.

A number of critics do, however, note their ballad-like quality. Irving Howe, for example, suggests that sometimes they ‘show certain kinship...to the traditional English ballad’.¹⁵ Douglas Brown, similarly, refers to Hardy’s writing as a ‘prose balladry’,¹⁶ and J.R. Brooks states that

Hardy learned much about dramatic and narrative art from the traditional ballad and folk-song, which was the most common way of telling or hearing a story in Nineteenth Century rural Dorset.¹⁷

Evelyn Davidson tells of how Hardy weaves into the short stories ‘the stuff of vanishing legends and superstitions, humour and irony...and...the vignettes of country life’.¹⁸ In discussing the novels of Hardy, Davidson implies these affinities with the ballad tradition saying that

the characteristic Hardy novel is conceived as a *told* (or *sung*) story, or at least not as a literary story; that it is an extension in the form of modern prose fiction of a traditional ballad or as an oral tale of the kind which Hardy reproduces with great skill in ‘A Few Crusted Characters’ and less successfully in *A Group of Noble Dames*.¹⁹

Davidson suggests that this is an ‘unconscious element’ of Hardy’s art, a side that probably came naturally as he drew from his memories. He further discusses what he calls the ‘conscious side’ of Hardy which is shown in the way he ‘works up’ his core of traditional non-literary narrative into a literary form and,

at the same time he labours to establish in his ‘Wessex’, the artistic climate and environment which will enable him to handle his traditional story with conviction—a world in which typical ballad heroes and

¹⁴ Short stories are often judged according to some principles laid down by Edgar Allan Poe. (Hardy knew of Poe, as he made reference to the latter in *Jude*.) These were that: ‘A short story should create a single impression. It must be capable of being read at one sitting. Every word should contribute to the planned effect. The effect should be created in the opening sentence and developed throughout the work. The story should end at its climax. Only such characters as are essential to the effect should appear.’ Little, G., *Approach to Literature* (Sydney: Science Press, 1963), p.105.

¹⁵ Howe, I., *Thomas Hardy* (London, Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1968), p. 263.

¹⁶ Brown, D., *Thomas Hardy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1961), p. 115.

¹⁷ Brooks, J.R., *Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1971), p. 119.

¹⁸ Hardy, E., (ed.), *Hardy's Notebooks and Some Letters from Julia Augusta Martin* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 184.

¹⁹ Davidson, D., ‘The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction’, *The Southern Review*, VI, (Summer 1940), p. 168.

heroines can flourish with a thoroughly rationalised 'mythology' to sustain them.²⁰

However, despite their comments, these writers have done little to pursue them by examining their implications in the development of Hardy's stories. Hardy's use of local traditions in the short stories was not unconscious, but part of a deliberate effort, that can also be seen in his novels and poems. He deliberately constructed an image of himself as a preserver of such traditions.

Basic to many of the stories is Hardy's use of the past and of folkways, employing superstitions, magic, grotesquerie, coincidence and irony in his several plots. This aspect of the short stories is one that links Hardy to contemporary writers like Le Fanu and William Carleton as well as the earlier writers like Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe.

Like the balladeer, Hardy stresses the dramatic aspects of the story line, skipping over unimportant aspects and lingering on the spectacular.²¹ His interest in the 'traditional' tales probably came from his earliest years by way of his grandmothers, his parents, their workmen, as well as, from his reading.

In some stories, Hardy records family traditions which arose from the anecdotes of his grandparents and parents. In *Life* he mentions that he was a somewhat sickly child which suggests that he probably required a great deal of caring and attention.²² His parents, until 'his fifth year hardly supposed he would survive to grow up'.²³

The Dorset countryside, in which he grew up, was steeped in traditions arising from the stationing of soldiers there in anticipation of an impending invasion by Napoleon. The biography boasts, that 'though healthy he was fragile, and precocious to a degree, being able to read almost before he could walk'²⁴ and that,

he found in a closet *A History of the Wars*—a periodical dealing with the war with Napoleon which his grandfather had subscribed to at the time, having been himself a volunteer. The torn pages of these contemporary numbers with their melodramatic prints of serried ranks, crossed bayonets, large knapsacks, and dead bodies, were the first to set him on the train of ideas that led to *The Trumpet-Major* and *The Dynasts*.²⁵

20

Ibid.

21

The best discussion of Hardy's use of local Dorset beliefs is to be found in Firor, R.A., *Folkways in Thomas Hardy* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company Inc., 1962).

22

Hardy, F.E., op. cit., p. 15.

23

Ibid. p. 16.

24

Ibid. p. 15.

25

Ibid. pp. 16-17.

His distant relationship to Captain Hardy, Nelson's flag-captain of 'kismet' fame was another incentive as was his finding those copies of an old periodical, *A History of the Wars*, belonging to his grandfather, who had been a volunteer during the Napoleonic wars.²⁶ These wars and the French Revolution captured the imagination of both the Romantic writers and Hardy. These historical tales, that sprang from the preparation for a possible Napoleonic invasion of England, and, in particular, Dorset, at the turn of the Eighteenth century, gripped his young mind.

Mrs. M. O'Rourke, Hardy's secretary, provides some evidence when she writes of him,

Still frail in health his parents scarcely hoped to rear him, and the only attempts to educate him came from his mother with her love of books and her fund of folklore and balladry, and the father fiddling the traditional tunes. There was also the gentle kindly grandmother who tossed History towards him on a sultry summer's day: 'It was like this in the French Revolution I remember...'

There was also his grandfather's hoard of periodicals printed during the Napoleonic wars which he unearthed from a cupboard and read with avidity.²⁷

Southerington adds that Hardy's mother's tales of local life and tragedy gave him a continuous source of inspiration, and the vivid rural legends she passed down to him became immortalised in the long sequences of the Wessex novels.²⁸ These tales that gave rise to *The Trumpet-Major* and found their climax in *The Dynasts* are also very apparent in the short stories.

The strongest influence on Hardy's imagination, however, in all likelihood came from the stories gleaned from both grandmothers who had lived through the Napoleonic Wars. It is very probable that, while they cared for him, they told him stories which took root in his imagination. From the two family sources, the Hardys and the Hands, came many of the 'traditions' that can be found in his poetry and stories.

In 1842, his maternal grandmother, Elizabeth (Betty) Hand, wrote to her daughter about 'Tomey' being 'tiresome' which Martin Seymour-Smith correctly suggests implies 'anxiety-making'. This maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Swetman, lived with the Hardys until 1847 when her grandson would have been an impressionable seven years of age. Her husband, George Hand, it seems, was a difficult man and a violent

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 12, 16-17.

²⁷ O'Rourke, M., 'Young Mr. Thomas Hardy', p. 11 in Stephens Cox, J., 'Monographs on the Life, Times and Works of Thomas Hardy', cf. Also *Life*, p. 16 describing Hardy's early interest in things Napoleonic.

²⁸ Southerington, F.R., *Hardy's Vision of Man* (London, Chatto and Windus), p. 11.

drunkard yet, as Seymour-Smith writes, 'Stories of this grandfather told to him by his mother certainly contributed to some of Hardy's books'.²⁹ Although Seymour-Smith does go on to say, 'perhaps not to any significant extent',³⁰ I suggest that the discourses that he absorbed from his near relations would have filtered into Hardy's imagination and become absorbed into his own works. Of this grandmother, Hardy records,

The traditions about Betty... were that she was tall, handsome, had thirty gowns, was an omnivorous reader, and one who owned a stock of books of exceptional extent for a yeoman's daughter living in a remote place.³¹

To this Hardy adds a footnote,

A curious reminiscence by her daughter bears testimony to her striking features. She was crossing the fields with the latter as a child, a few years after Waterloo, when a gentleman shouted after her: 'A relation of Wellington's? You must be! That nose!' He excitedly followed them till they were frightened, jumping over stiles till they reached home.³²

These recollections, which may also be part of his image-construction, indicate that they had found a secure place in his memory. In discussing the Swetman family Hardy writes, 'Another tradition...is that to which the short story...called *The Duke's Reappearance* approximates'.³³ The tale, subtitled it 'A Family Tradition', attempts to dramatise an experience of personal relevance. He and told Florence Henniker, 'Something like it occurred in my mother's family'.³⁴ The poem 'In Sherbourne Abbey' (CP 726)³⁵ is about an abduction and is also footnoted, 'A Family Tradition'. Moreover, in *Wessex Poems and other Verses* he included 'The Alarm' (CP 35), subtitled 'Traditional' with the dedication 'In Memory of one of the Writer's Family who was a Volunteer during the War with Napoleon'. On the other hand, the poem 'Her Late Husband' (CP 134), which seems to record the incident where Betty insisted that her husband George be buried by the side of his former mistress, was published in *Poems Past and Present* in 1901. The recording of family memories in his poetry echoes what he was also doing in his short stories.

²⁹ Seymour-Smith, M., *Hardy* (London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 1995), p. 7.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

³¹ Hardy, F.E., *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.* p. 6.

³⁴ Hardy E. and F. B. Pinion (eds.), *One Rare Fair Woman: Thomas Hardy's Letters to Florence Henniker, 1893-1922* (London, The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1972), p. 58.

³⁵ Gibson, J., ed., *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1976), p. 759.

Hardy's paternal grandmother, Mary, or 'granny' as he called her, lived with the family until her death in 1857 when Hardy was seventeen. Of her Millgate says,

she was certainly...an important daily presence during Hardy's early years, the source of many of the stories and songs with which he grew up. Her memories of Dorset threatened by Napoleonic invasion—when her husband had mustered as a private with the Puddletown Volunteer Light Infantry—were later drawn upon in *The Trumpet-Major*, and it was she, as the early poem 'Domicilium' makes clear, who brought alive for the boy the extraordinary isolation of their home as she had first known it.³⁶

She is remembered in the poem 'One We Knew' as 'not one who remembers / But rather as one who sees'. Hardy obviously inherited her capacity to 'live' his memories.

Another likely source of some stories was Jemima, his socially ambitious mother, who encouraged Hardy's keenness to read. In all likelihood she fuelled the boy's latent imagination which would one day translate the traditions that he had read and heard into his stories, novels and poems. We can trace a number of stories to these family tales and memories. Given his love of music and of poetry, together with the family recollections, it is little wonder that Hardy used the construct of the ballad to create his fiction.

Again, while most critics believe Hutchins' *History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset* to be the chief source for the narratives that make up *A Group of Noble Dames*, Hardy told Lord Lytton of having drawn

some legendary notes I had taken down from the lips of aged people in a remote part of the country, where traditions of the local families linger on, & are remembered by the yeomen & peasantry long after they are forgotten by the families concerned. Some day I must tell you how much truth there is in some of the tales.³⁷

Although Hutchins undoubtedly provided him with source material, his mother, Jemima, who, 'by reason of her parent's bereavement and consequent poverty under the burden of a young family', underwent 'some very stressful experiences',³⁸ was a more likely source. At thirteen she went into service with the 3rd Earl of Ilchester's uncle, the Rev. Fox-Strangways who was the vicar of Maiden Newton. Later she went to

³⁶ Millgate, M., *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 18.

³⁷ Purdy, R.L. and M. Millgate, eds., *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88), pp. 239-240.

³⁸ Hardy, F.E., op. cit. p. 8.

Stinsford House to work for Rev. Edward Murray, vicar of Stinsford and brother-in-law to the Earl. It is then likely that the information for 'The First Countess of Wessex' which deals with a 'tradition' of the Fox-Strangways family, came from his mother. The same can be said of the other stories from that volume. In *Life's Little Ironies*, for example, 'The Son's Veto', which deals with a maid who marries a vicar, could easily have been sparked by Jemima's memories.³⁹

'The Withered Arm' is also rooted in the folklore of Wessex which Hardy probably heard from his mother and grandmother. In this story there are numerous echoes of his novels, *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Conjuror Trendle, whose professed magical powers for curing ailments is important in the story, is also mentioned in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Jemima is said to be the model for Mrs Yeobright⁴⁰ and Mary Head one of the original for Tess⁴¹.

While some stories evolved from his close contact with his mother and grandmothers, several stories were very likely drawn from the experiences of his father and grandfather. The stories 'The Grave by the Handpost' in *A Changed Man*, and 'Absent-Mindedness in a Parish Choir' and 'Old Andrey's Experience as a Musician' in 'A Few Crusted Characters' in *Life's Little Ironies* are three examples. In *Life*, Hardy writes that his grandfather, father and uncle,

were considered among the best church-players in the neighbourhood, accident having helped their natural bent. This was the fact that in 1822, ...the Rev. Edward Murray, a connection of the Earl of Ilchester,...was presented to it. Mr. Murray was an ardent musician and performer on the violin himself, and the younger Hardys and sometimes their father used to practise two or three times a week with him in his study at Stinsford House.⁴²

They not only played on Sundays but, along with the young Hardy hired themselves out for social occasions such as weddings, dances and harvest suppers. Here he gleaned further stories and experiences that he used in his narratives.⁴³

³⁹ Sandison, H., 'An Elizabethan Basis for a Hardy Tale?', *PMLA*, 52 (1939), p. 612, shows that there is a likelihood that 'The First Countess of Wessex' was a combination of two local traditions which become, for Hardy, the 'composite traditional background of the tales of Wessex'.

⁴⁰ Seymour-Smith, op. cit., p. 15, says 'for certainly Mrs Yeobright...has affinities with her, as he himself said'.

⁴¹ Bold, A. and R. Giddings, *Who was Really Who in Fiction* (Harlow, Essex: Longman Group UK Limited, 1987), pp. 325-326.

⁴² Hardy, F.E., op. cit., p. 10.

⁴³ 'The Three Strangers' and 'Old Andrey's Experience as a Musician'.

Hardy's stories reflect a blend of the ballad with the modern. While he used a chronological format with an omniscient narrator he was also in advance of his contemporaries with his concern for the unconscious workings of the characters' minds.⁴⁴ The stories are permeated with the influence of the anecdotes that he had heard. Two such narratives in *Wessex Tales*, 'A Tradition of Eighteen Hundred and Four' and 'The Melancholy Hussar', are historical stories set in the Napoleonic era. The first, that recounts Napoleon's supposed landing to reconnoitre in Dorset, is related by a narrator who heard it from Solomon Selby, a shepherd boy at the time of the 'incident'. Martin Ray notes that 'Selby's name derives from that of James Selby, a mason of Broadmayne, Dorset. Selby is described in the *Life* as 'the quaint old man already mentioned, who worked forty years for Hardy's father, and had been a smuggler'.⁴⁵ While the story 'draws on Hardy's research in the British Museum in 1878 and 1879,⁴⁶ it is Selby, whom Millgate⁴⁷ says lived between 1798 and 1879, who was an even more likely source of many of these early tales rather than merely being a character in one of them. He had lived through the epic period of the Napoleonic Wars; he worked for Hardy's father and he most likely related various family 'traditions' to the imaginative young son of his employer. Thus the narrator of 'A Tradition of Eighteen Hundred and Four' says

of all the years of my growing up the ones that bide clearest in my mind were eighteen hundred and three, four and five. This was for two reasons: I had just then grown to an age when a child's eyes and ears take in and note down everything about him...⁴⁸

Having probably heard these stories at the same impressionable age, Hardy then recounts Selby's account making a tradition of a tradition.

⁴⁴ Widdowson (1998) goes even further when he says: 'Hardy was indeed a contemporary of the Modernists. It may be that the critical industry, already in his lifetime busily at work on him as both poet and novelist (combined, let us admit, with not a little self-fashioning), had so constructed him as the great proto-Georgian poet, as the humanist-realist rural-tragedian, as Grand Old Man of English Letters, that the modernist in Hardy could not then or later easily be perceived. Of course, it is a critical truism to say that he is a 'transitional' writer, but I wonder now just how transitional, or whether Hardy was not in fact already there, already a Modernist. D.H. Lawrence recognised it in the Study of Thomas Hardy (1914), written as he launched into the work which was to become *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, and Ezra Pound hailed him as a contemporary poet; but still, it is only with hindsight and the clearing of the critical trees that the innovative anti-realism and self-conscious modernity of much of Hardy's fictional oeuvre comes into view.' p. 123.

⁴⁵ Ray, M., *Thomas Hardy: The Textual Study of the Short Stories* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1997), p. 21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁷ Millgate, M., (ed.), *The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1928*, p. 591.

⁴⁸ Hardy, T., *Wessex Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 34.

Selby is also linked with the story, 'The Melancholy Hussar' which, Hardy is at pains to tell the reader, is factually based. In the preface to the 1912 edition of *Wessex Tales* he wrote that

the old people who gave me their recollections of its incidents did so in circumstances that linger pathetically in the memory; that she who, at the age of ninety, pointed out the unmarked resting place of the two soldiers of the tale, was probably the last remaining eyewitness of their death and interment.⁴⁹

Selby is again mentioned in *Life* when Hardy wrote,

James Bushrod of Broadmayne saw the two German soldiers (of the York Hussars) shot (for desertion) on Bincombe Down in 1801. It was in the path across the Down, or near it, James Selby of the same village thinks there is a mark.⁵⁰

In fact, Hardy knew of the mark. Evelyn Hardy even points out that 'in the churchyard of Bincombe there are the graves and headstones of two German legionaries 'who grew homesick for their fatherland' '.⁵¹

Selby is also a possible source of some aspects of 'The Distracted Preacher', though for this story Hardy seems to have drawn on a number of his background memories of smuggling in old Dorset. Pinion tells us that the home in which Hardy's grandmother grew up was used for hiding smuggled spirits.⁵² In *Life* Hardy mentions that he had heard stories of the smuggling exploits of the area from a captain with whom he and his first wife lodged⁵³ and he writes in his preface to *Wessex Tales* that the device of planting an apple tree in a box that was used to hide the contraband rum was 'precisely as described by an old carrier of 'tubs' - a man who was afterwards in my father's employ for over thirty years'.⁵⁴ He also goes on to say that the action of the story is 'founded upon certain smuggling exploits that occurred between 1825 and 1830'. The evidence, that Selby might be the source, is strengthened when 'Solomon' Selby tells that his Uncle Job 'had a drop to drink from the tub of sperrits that the smugglers kept us in for housing their liquor when they made a run, and for burning 'em off when there was danger'.⁵⁵ Despite the input of Selby Hardy concludes his Preface by stating that

⁴⁹ M. Ray, op. cit., p. 23.

⁵⁰ Hardy, F.E., op. cit., p. 116.

⁵¹ Hardy, E., (ed.), *Thomas Hardy's Notebooks*, p. 281.

⁵² Pinion, F.B., *A Hardy Companion*, p. 1.

⁵³ Hardy, F.E., op. cit., pp. 107-8.

⁵⁴ Hardy, T., *Wessex Tales*, pp. ii-iii.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

the stories are ‘but dreams, and not records’. In other words, he has imaginatively reconstructed them to suit his fictive purposes.

There is also evidence that Hardy drew information from friends and acquaintances. Hardy records a number of amusing anecdotes told by the Rev. Caddell Holder⁵⁶ his wife’s brother-in-law. David Bonnell Green mentions that Holder is said to have provided him with the gist of the story, ‘The Duchess of Hamptonshire’, in *A Group of Noble Dames*.⁵⁷ It shows how Hardy based much of his fiction on incidents taken or developed from life. The unhappily married Duchess follows the curate whom she loves, on a ship bound for America, completely unbeknown to him. She dies and is buried at sea there by her lover. He only learns the facts when he returns nine years later. Green notes a parallel incident in Caddell Holder’s life, during the cholera epidemic in Bristol, which Hardy also records.⁵⁸ Green concludes that, ‘Here, is another example of Hardy’s use of material from real life and of his connoisseurship of the macabre’.⁵⁹

By showing Hardy an entry in the marriage register ‘by which the bridegroom and bridesmaid had made themselves husband and wife, and the bride and best man the witnesses,’⁶⁰ Holder provided the gist of another story—‘The History of the Hardcomes’, in ‘A Few Crusted Characters’. In this tale two engaged couples changed their minds and their partners for life after a bout of prolonged dancing.

Caddell Holder’s story about the cholera epidemic is possibly used with dramatic effect in the story, ‘A Changed Man’, though in this case, the working with the victims of cholera in the slum suburb of Fordington is more likely to owe its source to the Rev Henry Moule. Hardy uses an occurrence in the life of the Vicar of Fordington as the model for an unusual event in the life of the fictional soldier-turned-curate. In writing about Moule’s struggle for the poor, Seymour Smith writes,

such facts would have entered like iron into the soul—to use one of the Hardy family’s favourite expressions—of the young Thomas Hardy. The influence of the courageous and humane Moule . . . would have been reinforced by Jemima, who would have known Moule at least from the days of her service at Stinsford House; she remembered him preaching at Dorchester.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Hardy, F.E., op. cit., pp. 155-156.

⁵⁷ Guerard, A.J., *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and the Stories* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), p. 86.

⁵⁸ Hardy, F.E., op. cit., p. 155.

⁵⁹ Green, D.B., ‘A Source of Hardy’s ‘The Duchess of Hamptonshire’’, *Notes and Queries*, New Series III, (February 1956), p. 86.

⁶⁰ Hardy, F.E., op. cit., p. 155.

⁶¹ Seymour-Smith, M., op. cit., p. 46.

The incident of the cholera epidemic was obviously a local epic event that would live in the folk-memory.

Moule is also said to be the model of the young curate in the uncollected story, 'Old Mrs Chundle'. Hardy himself gives another clue to his fictional methods when he notes in his letter to Hindley Moule, Bishop of Durham that,

the study of your father's life...has interested me much. I well remember the cholera years in Fordington; you might have added many details. For instance, every morning a man used to wheel the clothing and bed-linen of those who had died in the night out into the mead, where the Vicar had a large copper set. Some were boiled there, and some burnt. He also had large fires kindled in Mill Street to carry off infection. An excellent plan I should think.⁶²

So well did Hardy think of the plan that he incorporated the incident into his story.

In his *Notebooks* Hardy outlined the idea that grew into another slight, though amusing, tale, 'Andrey Satchel and the Parson and the Clerk'. The character of the parson was probably developed from the types of parsons whose idiosyncrasies were related to Hardy by his brother-in-law. Hardy notes the origins of Parson Toogood in his Preface to the 1896 edition where he writes,

some parsons still living may discern in Parson Toogood one to whom they, or at least their fathers, were not altogether strangers. To present that truly delightful personage as he entirely was, is beyond the power of my uncertain pen. One would like to tell of the second baptisms in old port which he used to perform on the Squire's children at the Christening dinner, of the bishop's descent one day upon the parsonage to convict Toogood of absenteeism, the latter's breakneck ride across country from the cocking party in consequence and his breathless entry by his back door just in time to open his front to his visitor, whom he meekly received with quill behind his ear and a sermon out-spread. He had several imitators in his calling of sportsman and divine, but no rivals.⁶³

This Preface was omitted from Macmillan's definitive Wessex Edition of 1912 but provides evidence of Hardy's appetite for local stories.

'The Melancholy Hussar of the German Regiment' shows Hardy's attempt at writing fiction and history. He localises the setting and creates a ballad-like tale from an event that rural folk would have discussed for a long time. Hardy embellishes facts to give them a fictional cast. However, in keeping with his stated views on fiction, he insists on the realism of the story by establishing a factual basis. He achieves

⁶² Hardy, F.E., op. cit., p. 391.

⁶³ Orel, H., (ed.), *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*, pp. 30-31.

credibility by using the first person or eye-witness narrator, and by clearly localising his setting.

Here establishes the basis of his short fiction to take the uncommon and make it seem 'real'. Like the tales of Chekhov and Harte, his stories depend upon an unusual plot, the kind of incident or situation that would strike one's mind as being incongruous or that would be remarkable enough to live in the folk-memory of a district. These incidents have in them that 'uncommonness' that Hardy demanded for fiction. Often it is the macabre, the supernatural or the coincidental which create the uncommonness.

Hardy's great sense of the grotesque and his taste for the unusual ballad-like tale were also derived from his wide reading about the Romantic era of art, music and literature. His frequent emphasis on the individual, often alone in a hostile world, derived from that movement, but it also looks forward to the writings of the Twentieth Century. Even those stories that can be referred to as the 'realistic' or 'modern' stories are as successful as the ballad-like tales. They are in a sense modern ballads as they explore instances of macabre coincidence, mischance and grotesque irony. Their mismatching of destinies and the terrible awareness of Man's limited capacities in a physical, social and moral landscape shows Hardy acting like the story-tellers of old and looking back to a previous age. Yet his treatment of the stories and their characters also anticipates the twentieth century.

J.F. Scott draws an interesting parallel between the Gothic fiction of the Romantic era and the writings of Hardy when he says,

although Hardy...fully endorsed the growing candour of the late Nineteenth Century realism, there is in his novels a pervasive element of inspiration drawn from folklore, balladry and the tale of terror.⁶⁴

Scott goes on to make the telling point that 'both Hardy and the Gothic romancers drew their subject matter from similar sources among the most important of which are legend and folklore',⁶⁵ and concludes that 'Hardy delighted in the ballads of the Wessex countryside and throughout his life diligently collected tales of lurid hue'.⁶⁶

Hardy's biography and notebooks show his interest in collecting ironic, amusing or sad tales (much of which amounted to gossip) about the people of the Dorset countryside to possibly use as a basis for his stories. For example, he notes on March 4, 1888:

⁶⁴ Scott, J.F., 'Thomas Hardy's Use of the Gothic: An Examination of Five Representative Works,' *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, XVII (March) 363-380, p. 364.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

A Village story recalled to me yesterday:

Mary L., a handsome wench, had come to Bockhampton, leaving a lover at Askerswell, her native parish. William K. fell in love with her at the new place. The old lover, who was a shoemaker, smelling a rat, came anxiously to see her, with a present of a dainty pair of shoes he had made. He met her by chance at the pathway stile, but alas, on the arm of the other lover. In the rage of love the two men fought for her till they were out of breath, she looking on and holding both their hats the while; till William, wiping his face, said: 'Now Polly, which of we two do you love best? Say it out straight!' She would not state then, but said she would consider (the hussy!). The young man to whom she had been fickle left her indignantly—throwing the shoes at her and her new lover as he went. She never saw or heard of him again, and accepted the other. *But she kept the shoes and was married in them.* I knew her as an old woman.⁶⁷

The exclamation and the stressing of the final sentence provide an insight into Hardy's humour as concerning another of the little circumstantial ironies that abound throughout life.

Another notation, drawn from life and dated November 1894, is a

painful story. Old P— who narrowly escaped hanging for arson about 1830, returned after imprisonment, died at West Stafford, his native village, and was buried there. His widow long after died in Fordington, having saved £5 to be buried with her husband. The rector of the village made no objection, and the grave was dug. Meanwhile, the daughter had come home, and said that the money was not enough to pay for carrying the body of her mother out there into the country; so the grave was filled in, and the woman buried where she died.⁶⁸

Such poignant incidents of ordinary people moved Hardy to reconstruct aspects of their histories as fitting epitaphs for them in his short stories. For example, the gist of this anecdote echoes an aspect of the story, 'The Grave by the Handpost', where the son wanted to be buried beside his father. However, because the note he left was not noticed, his funeral 'took place in the ordinary way in the churchyard'.

The obvious humorous situations of life in town also caught his fancy, as can be seen from his notes,

January 30, 1879. In Steven's bookshop, Holywell Street. A bustling vigorous young curate comes in—red-faced and full of life—the warm

⁶⁷ Hardy, F.E., op. cit., pp. 217-218.
⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 266-267.

breath puffing from his mouth in a jet into the frosty air, and religion sitting with an ill grace upon him.

‘Have you *Able to Save?*’

Shopman addressed does not know, and passes on the inquiry to the master standing behind with his hat on: ‘*Able to Save?*’

‘I don’t know — hoi! (To boy at other end). Got *Able to Save?* Why the devil can’t you attend!’

‘What, Sir?’

‘*Able to Save!*’

Boy’s face a blank. Shopman to curate: ‘Get it by tomorrow afternoon, Sir.’

‘And please get *Words of Comfort.*’

‘*Words of Comfort.* Yes, Sir.’ Exit curate.

Master: ‘Why the h— don’t anybody here know what’s in stock?’ Business proceeds in subdued manner.⁶⁹

Apocryphal or not, this anecdote shows Hardy’s grasp of the dramatic and his delicious sense of the incongruity that abounded in life.

Hardy’s notes suggest that, like the traditional ballads, many of the short stories are re-interpretations of factual experiences. The narrator of ‘The Melancholy Hussar of the German Regiment’ recounts the poignant story of Phyllis some twenty years after her death as it was supposedly told to him.

His biography records an account of a gambler whom he had seen at Monte Carlo.⁷⁰ The gambler, Hardy noted, ended up without enough money to afford a third-class ticket. He used this incident as an idea for the third of the unfinished plots of short stories.⁷¹ However, in this germ of a plot the gambler was to be successful.

‘The Withered Arm’ records Hardy’s concern for the folk-life of Wessex can be found in a number of statements suggesting its likely factual basis. He told Florence Henniker that it was largely based on fact⁷². In the preface to *Wessex Tales* he claims that in his youth ‘there was living an old woman who, for the cure of some eating disease had been taken in her youth to have ‘blood turned’ by a convict’s corpse’⁷³. Intriguingly, Hardy added,

since writing this story some years ago I have been reminded by an aged friend who knew ‘Rhoda Brook’ that, in relating her dream, my

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 124-125.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 283.

⁷¹ Hardy, E., ‘Plots of Five Unpublished Short Stories’, *The London Magazine* VII (Nov. 1958), p. 33.

⁷² Hardy E., and F. B. Pinion (eds.), *One Rare Fair Woman*, p. 119.

⁷³ Preface, p. ii.

forgetfulness has weakened the facts out of which the tale grew. In reality it was while lying down on a hot afternoon that the incubus oppressed her and she flung it off, with the results upon the body of the original as described.⁷⁴

It is difficult to decide whether this is part of his creation of another metatradition. His notes mention other seemingly strange events which happen in the story. The biography records a reminiscence of a farmer who was 'overlooked' and records that, according to a conjuror the farmer's animals were dying because he looked at them before breakfast, 'the eye of a fasting man being very blasting'.⁷⁵ His biography refers to a Conjuror Mynterne who

when consulted by Patt P- (a strapping handsome woman), told her that her husband would die on a certain day, and showed her the funeral in a glass of water. She said she could see the bearers moving along. She made her mourning. She used to impress all this on her inoffensive husband, and assure him that he would go to hell if he made the conjuror a liar. He didn't, but died on the day foretold. Oddly she never married again.⁷⁶

The ironic situation caused Hardy to record this incident. Conjuror Mynterne in the story uses the technique used by the Conjuror of Blackmoor Vale of whom Hardy made a notebook jotting. This latter conjuror 'could cause your enemy to rise in a glass of water. He did not himself know your enemy's name, but the bewitched person did, of course, recognising the form as the one he had expected'.⁷⁷ In 'The Withered Arm', then, we can visualise Hardy sifting through the stories and superstitions of the countryside to find the ingredients with which to construct his tales.

*

More evidence of Hardy's using the guise of the traditional teller of tales can be found in many of his historical narratives. 'The First Countess of Wessex', 'Barbara of the House of Grebe', 'Squire Petrick's Lady', 'Anna, Lady Baxby' and 'The Lady Penelope' in *A Group of Noble Dames*, 'Master John Horseleigh, Knight' in *A Changed Man* and the uncollected tale, 'The Doctor's Legend'⁷⁸ were based upon the information gleaned from John Hutchins' book *The History and*

74

Ibid.

75 Hardy, F.E., op. cit., pp. 204-205.

76 Ibid., p. 169.

77 Hardy, E., *Hardy's Notebooks*, p. 40. Such conjurors appear in both *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *Tess*.

78 Published in the *New York Independent*, March 26, 1891.

Antiquities of the Country of Dorset. Hardy's American friend, Rebekah Owen, wrote that,

All the *Group of Noble Dames* are true. Often Mr. Hardy has got traditions from old people who got them from old family servants of the great families, whose representatives now think Hardy ought not to have published them. At least Lord Ilchester thought so of 'The First Countess of Wessex' though Lady Pembroke and other descendants of Betty are quite pleased.⁷⁹

He supports Owen's statement when he wrote to Mrs. Henniker saying, 'Our country has lost a noble lord—its Lord Lieutenant—the one who was angry with me for putting a legend of his family into 'The First Countess of Wessex''⁸⁰

Hardy's acknowledgment of the basis of this story and other of the Dorset traditions as 'legends' suggests that they could have passed as gossip and hearsay in the district. Like the balladeer, he has lifted these anecdotes from obscurity and used them in his stories. He even suggests this in his preface to *A Group of Noble Dames* when he writes,

many indeed, were the legends and traditions of gentle and noble dames, renowned in times past in that part of England, whose memories, are buried under the brief inscription on a tomb or an entry of dates in a dry pedigree.⁸¹

In many of his tales, Hardy sifts hearsay for that 'uncommonness which alone makes it natural that a tale or experience would dwell in the memory and induce repetition'.⁸² This is the essence of Hardy's quest to record in his stories the memorable tales of the West Country. Obviously many of these repeated experiences would be those happenings and traditions passed on by his near relatives. As already mentioned, the smuggling sequences in the 'Distracted Preacher' probably derived from tales told to him by his grandparents. Hardy has interpolated many incidents into imaginary meta-traditions by lending fictitious exactitude to actual stories. Thus his *Notebooks* comments on his grandfather who 'used to do a little smuggling'.⁸³ Like so many others, it has a local, traditional or factual basis.

⁷⁹ Weber, C.J., 'An Elizabethan Basis for a Hardy Tale? - An Addendum' *PMLA*, LVI, 2 (June 1941), p. 598.

⁸⁰ Hardy E., and F. B. Pinion (eds.), op. cit., p. 125.

⁸¹ Hardy T., *A Group of Noble Dames*, p. 50.

⁸² Hardy, F.E., op. cit., p. 239.

⁸³ Hardy, E., *Thomas Hardy's Notebooks*, p. 35.

Some of Hardy's poetry also reflects the way in which he approached the writing of his stories. In 1901, *Life* records:

In April of this year he was writing 'A Trampwoman's Tragedy'—a ballad based on a local story of an event more or less resembling the incidents embodied, which took place between 1820 and 1830.' He adds, 'Hardy considered this, upon the whole, his most successful poem'.⁸⁴

So impressed was he in this poem that it was used in the short story, 'Blue Jimmy—the Horse Stealer', in the writing of which he collaborated with his second wife. Pamela Dalziel demonstrates his extensive use of newspaper stories as the basis for his imaginative plots.⁸⁵

Hardy's presentation of truth as fiction, where the circumstances of his protagonists affect the readers as if they were their own, is probably influenced by his reading of Schopenhauer and von Hartmann.⁸⁶ Like his contemporary, Samuel Butler, he disagreed with several basic principles of Victorian life. He rejected the idea of a Benevolent Deity; he saw the psychic and physical suffering created in the name of Progress; he differed from the notion that women were passive instruments for the use and pleasure of man; his view of life was anything but confident or optimistic.

From Ibsen,⁸⁷ Hardy may have developed the technique of creating tension between contrasting emotions by linking the situations of a comic plot with the practical consequences they have in the lives of its characters. Brady⁸⁸ notes the connection with Ibsen in many of the stories Hardy wrote during the early 1890s. Hardy's stereotyped characters are placed in conventional situations, but he then goes on to examine in depth their motives, as in 'On the Western Circuit' and 'Interlopers at the Knap'. Brady suggests that this technique resulted from Hardy's increased concern from the late 1880s onward to highlight contemporary problems, many of which were based on the restrictive power of

⁸⁴ Hardy, F.E., op. cit., pp. 311-312.

⁸⁵ See Dalziel, P., (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: The Excluded and Collaborative Stories* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 332-347.

⁸⁶ Patrick M. Yarker, 'The Later Victorian Novelists' in Pollard, A., (ed.) *The Victorians*, Sphere History of Literature (London: Sphere Books, 1988), p. 318. See also Bailey, J. O., 'Evolutionary Meliorism in the Poetry of Thomas Hardy,' *Studies in Philology*, LX (July 1963), 569-87; and Webster, H. C., *On A Darkling Plain: The Art And Thought Of Thomas Hardy* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1947).

⁸⁷ Hardy makes six references to Ibsen in *Life*.

⁸⁸ Brady, K., 'Conventionality as Narrative Technique in Hardy's 'On the Western Circuit'', *Journal of the Eighteen Nineties*, 9 (1978), pp. 22-30.

Victorian moral conventions over all modes of life and literary expression. She notes that

In Ibsen too, as in the later Hardy, there is frankness in sexual matters and a concern to portray a richly complex relationship between character and environment. In both these writers suffering emerges not only because characters are repressed from the outside by convention but more essentially because they have been conditioned by their environments and social expectations to such an extent that they have internalised artificial social laws. Of many of Ibsen's characters, as of Hardy's in the late short stories, it can be said that their unhappiness stems from the degree to which conventional beliefs, customs, and desires govern the way in which they regard each other, construct their visions of happiness, make their sexual choices, and live their respective lives—trapped in the very cages of respectability that they have built for themselves. To depict these characters, both writers employ a similar literary strategy of exploiting already familiar literary forms for their own ends. Such an approach was extremely pragmatic: because they were writing in large part for the selfsame people whose way of life they were questioning, it was necessary that they express themselves in a form that their audience would understand and accept, before they could gradually undermine the assumptions on which that form was based.⁸⁹

Yet while Hardy's apparent realism lies in his constructing the physical setting, his depiction of the inner lives of many of his characters with the emphasis on their psychological motivation, their inner life, points to the writings of the Twentieth Century. Robert Schweik suggests that 'Hardy strongly influenced the treatment of human sexuality in the modern novel from D.H. Lawrence onward.'⁹⁰ Rosemary Sumner⁹¹ and Geoffrey Thurley⁹² have noted the advanced nature of Hardy's insight into the psyche of his characters. What they say of the novels also has relevance to the tales. While the short stories had little influence on later writers of the genre, with the possible exception of A.E. Coppard,⁹³ they do encapsulate many of the techniques used in the later novels.

Hardy, then, far from being unaware of the demands of the criteria for the modern short story, was using the far older genre of literature, the oral tradition of the ballad and the folk tale to structure his stories. It seems certain that he used these short stories, firstly, to record and illustrate events in the lives of the ordinary folk of the Wessex

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

⁹⁰ Schweik, R., 'The Modernity' of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*, in Phillip V. Mallett and R. P. Draper, *A Spacious Vision: Essays on Hardy* (Newmill, The Patten Press, 1994), 49-64, p. 49.

⁹¹ Sumner, R., *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981).

⁹² Thurley, G., *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels: The Nervous and the Statuesque* (St Lucia, Qld: The University of Queensland Press, 1975).

⁹³ Coppard, A.E., 'On First Getting Into Print,' *Colophon*, Part VI (May 1931), [unpaged].

countryside which he loved so much, and the changing of which he so regretted. Secondly, they became vehicles whereby he could make critical comment for the enlightenment of his urban middle class readers. Even the unusual events in the lives of the well-to-do would have become part of the prattle of the countryside and made for memorable stories. As Hardy pointed out, he is recording 'village tradition', the 'vast mass of unwritten folk-lore, local chronicle, local topography, and nomenclature'⁹⁴ which he says 'has nearly sunk into oblivion' as a result of the changes wrought in the countryside during the Eighteenth Century and the Nineteenth Century.

*

*

Bibliography

- Bold, A. and R. Giddings, *Who was Really Who in Fiction* (Harlow, Essex: Longman Group UK Limited, 1987).
- Brooks, J.R., *Thomas Hardy: The Poetic Structure* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1971).
- Brown, D., *Thomas Hardy* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1961).
- Coppard, A.E., 'On First Getting Into Print', *Colophon*, Part VI (May, 1931).
- Davidson, D., 'The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction', *The Southern Review*, VI, (Summer 1940), p. 168.
- Dalziel, P., (ed.), *Thomas Hardy: The Excluded and Collaborative Stories* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
- Firor, R.A., *Folkways in Thomas Hardy* (New York: A. S. Barnes & Company Inc., 1962).
- O'Connor, Frank, *The Lonely Voice* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Co., 1963).
- Guerard, A.J., *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and the Stories* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949).
- Gibson, J., (ed.), *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy* (London: Macmillan London Ltd., 1976).
- Green, D.B., 'A source of Hardy's 'The Duchess of Hamptonshire''. *Notes and Queries*, New Series III, (February 1956).
- Hardy, E., (ed.), *Hardy's Notebooks and Some Letters from Julia Augusta Martin* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955).
- _____, 'Plots of Five Unpublished Short Stories', *The London Magazine* VII (Nov. 1958).
- Hardy E. and F. B. Pinion (eds.), *One Rare Fair Woman: Thomas Hardy's Letters to Florence Henniker, 1893-1922* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1972).
- Hardy, F.E., *The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1928* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1972).

⁹⁴ Hardy, F.E., op. cit., pp. 312-313.

- Hardy, T., *Wessex Tales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
- Hardy T., *A Group of Noble Dames*.
- Howe, I., *Thomas Hardy* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1968).
- Little, G., *Approach to Literature* (Sydney: Science Press, 1963).
- Millgate, M., *Thomas Hardy: A Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).
- New York *Independent*, March 26, 1891.
- O'Connor, Frank, *The Lonely Voice* (Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Co., 1963).
- Orel, H., (ed.), *Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings*.
- _____, *The Victorian Short Story: Development and Triumph of a Literary Genre* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
- Pinion, F.B., *A Hardy Companion*.
- _____, 'Hardy and Scott', *Thomas Hardy Journal*, (February 1994).
- Purdy, R.L. and M. Millgate, (eds.), *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978-88).
- Ray, M., *Thomas Hardy: The Textual Study of the Short Stories* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 1997).
- Sandison, H., 'An Elizabethan Basis for a Hardy Tale?', *PMLA*, 52 (1939).
- Schweik, R., 'The Modernity' of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*', in Phillip V. Mallett and R. P. Draper, *A Spacious Vision: Essays on Hardy* (Newmill: The Patten Press, 1994).
- Scott, J.F., 'Thomas Hardy's Use of the Gothic: An Examination of Five Representative Works,' *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, XVII (March 1963), 363-380.
- Seymour-Smith, M., *Hardy* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1995).
- Southerington, F.R., *Hardy's Vision of Man* (London: Chatto and Windus).
- Stephens Cox, J., 'Monographs on the Life, Times and Works of Thomas Hardy'.
- Sumner, R., *Thomas Hardy: Psychological Novelist* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1981).
- Thurley, G., *The Psychology of Hardy's Novels: The Nervous and the Statuesque* (St Lucia, Qld: The University of Queensland Press, 1975).
- Weber, C.J., 'An Elizabethan Basis for a Hardy Tale?: An Addendum' *PMLA*, LVI, 2 (June 1941).
- Williams, M., *Thomas Hardy and Rural England* (London: Macmillan, 1972).
- Wu, D., (ed.), *A Companion to Romanticism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

*

*

*