EDITING HARDY NOW: A DEBATE

SIMON GATRELL AND TIM DOLIN

Simon

Tim and I have two goals today. You will, I know, be interested to learn that Cambridge University Press is planning to publish a complete critical edition of Thomas Hardy's prose fiction. We'll talk much more about this later, but also 2012 is the hundredth anniversary of the publication of the Wessex Editions of Hardy's work, and as an introduction to some of the issues involved in working with Hardy's texts, we'd like to begin by considering the virtues and deficiencies of the centenary.

When you begin working on a critical or a scholarly edition of a Hardy novel one of the things you have to decide is which of the many versions of the work that were published over Hardy's lifetime you are going to use as the base text to which you will key the footnotes that present all the alterations over time that he made to it. Which moment in the development of the work you will privilege over all the others by using its words to represent the novel. Some of his novels and stories exist in full or partial manuscript, many of them were first published in magazines or newspapers in Britain, in America, in Australia — and most often each of these is different. Similarly, for the novels, there were almost always British and American first editions, swiftly followed in the UK by cheaper popular editions. Until the last years of his life Hardy invariably revised his work to some degree, whenever publishers offered him the opportunity, but he did so in a more uncontentious and determined way for the two major British collected editions, one published by Osgood, McIlvaine from 1893–7, the other Macmillan’s Wessex Edition of 1912 that we are going to concentrate on today. Even later, when he was 80, he made changes to his work for the de luxe Mellstock edition of 1920—particularly for A Pair of Blue Eyes.

So you can see that as a critical editor you are often spoilt for choice. Though the editor of Under the Greenwood Tree is faced by only six choices, when you turn to Tess of the d’Urbervilles you have to decide amongst a lot more. In practice though, for almost all of Hardy’s fiction there are only six or seven really plausible possibilities, and in the forefront of these is the Wessex Edition.
For Hardy, this was the definitive edition of his work. Whenever people wrote to ask permission to quote from his writing he stipulated that the material should be taken from the Wessex Edition. It seems remarkable that, at the age of 71, he should have contemplated the process of reading through all his fiction and the poetry he had published up till then, thinking about it, revising it, and then checking the proofs; but two factors make this effort less surprising.

When he was offered in 1894 by James Osgood the chance to see his fiction published in a collected edition, he saw it as an opportunity to establish himself once and for all as the only begotten of nineteenth-century Wessex; but beyond establishing his brand-name, he recognised that what he meant by Wessex had radically changed since the early 1870s when he began to use the place-name, and in this edition he would be able to bring earlier work into the developed conception that had emerged with the publication of Jude and its accompanying publicity of review and interview. The integral elements of the culture, history and environment of Wessex would enable both Hardy and his readers to revision each of his novels and stories as elements in a century-long process of slow but incalculably rapid change that took place in an England intimately parallel with that of everyday experience – a move that Philip Pullman gave vivid life to in the His Dark Materials trilogy.

But the maturation of his essential concern was not instantaneous, and refining his work for this first collected edition was a complicated process undertaken in a relatively short space of time; inevitably the assimilation of the earlier fiction into his new understanding of things was imperfect, and the Wessex Edition sixteen years later gave him the opportunity to fix what he had overlooked in the 1890s.

A second important element in the revision Hardy made for the first collected edition came as a consequence of the gradual and limited growth over the last quarter of the nineteenth century of the freedoms authors had to express truths about sexual relationships. Hardy wrote passionately at the beginning of the 1890s about the difficulties writers experienced in this respect; but nevertheless he still felt able by the middle of the decade to be a little more explicit about pre-marital and extra-marital relationships, about pregnancy and child birth and similar matters. There is little doubt in my mind that if he had thought he could escape yet more strenuous censure he would have told the whole truth as he saw it, and by 1912 more still was possible. He was not James Joyce or D. H. Lawrence; but both novelists acknowledged that without Hardy’s pressing against Victorian moral censorship they could hardly have completed the task, and in 1912 Hardy went a few steps further.

So it is my conclusion that the many-times revised texts of the Wessex Edition reflect as fully as possible Hardy’s desires for his work. He had great imaginative and intellectual stamina, and though he was by no means the same man in 1912 that he had been in 1872, yet I would argue that the ‘Poems of 1912-13’ show that in his seventies he remained to a very unusual degree in full command of the thoughts and experiences of his earlier life.

This is indeed a significant anniversary, and it reminds me that back in 1978, on another significant anniversary, Michael Millgate expressed a cautious ‘longer-term’ hope for a complete scholarly edition of Hardy’s fiction ‘prepared in accordance with the best contemporary standards’. Millgate argued then that ‘Macmillan’s Wessex Edition was a magnificent achievement for author and publisher alike’, and could be faulted only when measured against those ideal standards with which, as scholars, we must always be concerned. Thirty-four years later, there are now real questions about what constitute ‘the best contemporary standards’. In 1978, textual scholarship was still in the decades of upheaval in literary studies: high theory, new historicism, and cultural materialism; postmodernism and postcolonialism; gender studies and queer theory; and of course the digital revolution.

So let me respond to Simon first of all by saying that, like Millgate, I think the Wessex Edition is a remarkable achievement, and since we’ve had to go without a complete scholarly edition of Hardy’s fiction for a hundred years, we’ve been very lucky to have it. Hardy was a fine editor of his own work; ironically, I suppose he is still his own greatest editor. And thinking about it, it’s a bit of a scandal that he’s still waiting, a century later, for a proper scholarly edition. Of course his readers and critics have benefited enormously from the insight and judgment of generations of bibliographical scholars and critics. But if critical reputations were measured by complete scholarly editions alone, then Hardy would rank alongside Meredith and Gissing, important but relatively neglected, not Conrad and James – both of whom have Cambridge editions. Hardy’s reputation has never really gone into decline, so why hasn’t it risen to the eminence of a scholarly edition?
To be fair, since 1912 there have been several attempts to remedy this omission. In the mid-70s Macmillan put out its recognizable greenbound New Wessex Edition, which tried to do pretty much what Hardy and Macmillan had done in the 1910s. By giving the impression that “Wessex” was an exclusive commercial property, they tried to maintain control of the market after Hardy’s copyrights had passed from Macmillan’s hands into the public domain in 1978, fifty years after Hardy’s death.1 But the New Wessex Edition in fact has no textual authority, having simply reproduced (and introduced errors into) the 1920 impression of the Wessex Edition. It has not been widely used in classrooms or as a reference text in Hardy criticism for many years.

Nevertheless, a lot of modern reading editions have continued to rely on 1912 for their texts, for reasons that Simons has given. There have been some significant exceptions to this. The only scholarly edition published so far, by Oxford’s Clarendon Press, were never part of a commissioned complete edition but were rather a volume by volume proposition, and only two volumes, The Woodlanders and Jude, were ever run the light of day. They rejected the principle of using a late-authorial edition like the Wessex Edition as copy-text in favor of using the manuscript for the punctuation and rephrasing on its foundation what is called an “authorial final intentions” text for the words. I will have more to say about these interesting editions shortly.

The only other exceptions have been the Oxford World’s Classics and Penguin Hardys, which were not scholarly editions. They had a vaguer editorial rationale, and undertook some original textual scholarship, made an argument about the textual history of the novels, and added textual notes to their explanatory notes. But they did not include a collation or apparatus of textual variants, and were designed for readers to use, not scholars and critics. The general editor of the Penguin edition, Patrick Tighe, also made the then-radical decision to use the first volume editions of the novels (in most cases) in the production of what is called a “social moment” edition. Again, I’ll have something more to say about this idea of social editing below.

This raises two questions: if the Wessex Edition was such a magnificent achievement, why wouldn’t we want to use it as the basis for the new Cambridge edition? And if not, how to choose between the approaches taken in the Clarendon Hardys and that taken in the Penguins? The answer to the first question usually goes something like this. The Trumpet-Major (for example) is a novel of 1880, but the work that exists in the manuscript, serial, and first-volume texts from 1879 and 1880 has a very significant difference from the work that exists in the Wessex Edition. The earlier texts all use Dorset place-names, not the Wessex place-names that became an essential part of Hardy’s chief unifying device for his fiction in 1912. As Simons has shown elsewhere, Hardy imposed a uniform imaginary topography that strongly confirmed with the observable landscape: the “utilisation region” whilst people can go to, take a house in, and write to the papers from.” By 1880 but definitely by 1912 readers had become accustomed to view the real and fictional places interchangeably; but in 1850 that was not the case.

So what do we make by reading The Trumpet-Major in its Wessex Edition versus rather than its first-volume edition? This is Hardy’s only explicitly historical imposures of the type we recognize from Sir Walter Scott: a novel that integrates fictional personalities and real historical personalities, and fictional and real places and events. As in his other writing, Hardy’s venture into this genre is exploratory and experimentally disarming, and this novel is less easily assimilable to the Wessex idea than many others. Alterations to place-names and topographical relationships only uncomfortably show here how The Trumpet-Major into the bigger scheme, but in doing so they sacrifice something that is vital to our understanding of this novel’s place in the history of Hardy’s fiction.

In The Return of the Native, too, there are no Wessex place-names in the early editions. Indeed Hardy’s plan here had been to suggest that the action was taking place on a kind of miniature and hence universal stage – an anywhere – that is simultaneously an edge-land, sparsely supporting its fiddles and captives, its court figures and provincial goings-on. In the Wessex Edition, by contrast, Egdon Heath becomes a representational Wessex landscape, known and knowable. In the process, Hardy paradoxically demonstrates it, replacing its wilderness and extremity with a more familiarly tragic atmosphere which confines and limits the novel’s movements, as Simons argued in his World’s Classics edition of the novel, which also presents the words of the first edition, though complemented with the punctuation of the manuscript.

At the same time, in 1912 Hardy sub-divided the fiction into four principal categories: Novels of Character and Environment, Romances and Romances, and Novels of Flegm, and Mixed Novels. He didn’t say much, but this has since acted as a dividing line between perceived ‘major’ and ‘minor’ novels. The Return of the Native takes its place in the top rank among the nine Novels of Character and Environment.
but *Trumpet-Major* is relegated to the second-rank ‘Romances and Fantasies’. To set aside the Wessex Edition in favour of earlier editions is to rediscover just how experimental and various Hardy’s fiction was during the middle period between two of the big Wessex set pieces – *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874) and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886); and to see *The Return of the Native* (1878) in the context of that experimentation and generic variety, not as simply one of the great tragic Wessex novels.

So while I agree that the many-times revised texts of the Wessex Edition reflect the development of Hardy’s desires for his work, there’s obviously a case for presenting ‘each novel as the creation of its own period and without revisions of later times, since these versions have an integrity and value of their own’.5

**Simon**

So which approach should we take? Before we debate some of the theoretical issues behind this decision, I want to give, for those unfamiliar with the concept, some sense of what a critical edition looks like. The idea of a critical edition is to provide students and lovers of Hardy with all the materials they need to understand how each of Hardy’s novels was a work in flux, from the moment the idea for the plot occurred to him, to the last jottings for changes that he made two years before his death in copies of the Wessex Edition he kept beside him in his study at Max Gate, and which are preserved in the Dorset County Museum. Here is a page from my and the late Juliet Grindle’s edition of *Tess*. Let me give you just one example of how it works (those who have used the edition will have to skip this part).

The entries in the footnotes are presented in reverse chronological order, so that if you take the entry for lines 3–4, for instance, the reading in the edited text ‘seemed to feel like a fugitive’ first appeared in the novel in the first edition and the American serial; ‘seemed like a frail fugitive’ was the reading in *The Graphic* serialisation; in the manuscript Hardy first wrote ‘seemed like a frail phantom’ but later cancelled ‘frail’; and finally the earlier manuscript reading appeared in the serialisation in *The Nottinghamshire Guardian*, which was set from unrevised *Graphic* proofs. There are several features of this sequence that an editor would need to explain, since they do not conform to the chronology of composition and publication established for the work as a whole. But my main goal is to show you that, using these notes, you can, with some
convention, some accurately change in the work over time. What you don't see at first is the change in pronunciation and paragraphing, differences in spelling and the like, which are collected together in appendixes, nor do you see the introductory material that outlines the history of writing and publication and discusses the revisions that Hardy made to the work over thirty years and more. Volume I of the Cambridge edition will look quite similar to this.

The text presented by the Cambridge edition, however, will be different, and it is in this difference, and the reasons for it, that we'd like to consider now.

As Tim has said, one of the first and most hardy debates over the Cambridge editorial board had to do with which of the several plausible possibilities should provide the copy-text, the basic text for the edition as a whole. Should it be the Western Edition in its initial or its revised form, or the Mellistock Edition, any of which could be argued to offer Hardy's ultimate thoughts about his work, or should we return to one of the earlier moments in the work's development - the manuscript, for instance, when most of his novels and stories first saw print, or the first book edition? To do this would make sense from the point of view that Tim has outlined. To give another example, Undine the Greenwood Tree is always thought of as an early novel, a novel of 1872, the date of its first publication; but, to take one small instance from the novel, when the description of Trench Dooey's cottage in the second chapter is quoted, it is from the Western Edition that the words are most often cited. Thus, the building's clear reflection of Hardy's house in Botherbury is noted. But the manuscript had been substantially revised by 1912 in a way quite alien from Hardy's initial intention, which was to disguise the connection as far as he could.

With these issues in mind, the Cambridge board decided, after lengthy debate, that its editors would adopt the text of the first published book edition of each work, unless compelling evidence could be made for not doing so.

But then the next issue for the editorial board to decide was the editor's theoretical basis. The already existing critical editions of The Woodlanders and Tess offer almost entirely the words of the revised version of the Western Edition, but they use almost all of the manuscript punctuation, thus producing eclectic versions of the novel that had never existed before. The collectionists that underpin the critical editions of many canonical authors in the 1970s and early 1980s was the product of a belief on the one hand that if authors wish to alter the texts of their work, they have the right to do so, and on the other that an editor should attempt to remove from the text interference from individuals involved in the production and consumption of the completed work - in this case, interference of the composers who first set the work in type.

To give you some idea of what the composers did, here are a few examples: I've mixed the order up so leave you to judge which pronunciation works better to illuminate the context.

In the first Text, 19 is responding to Alec d'Urberville's offer to give her 'a benefice or two' in Whittington:

1a: "O, no, you won't," said Tess, withdrawing towards the door.
1b: "Oh, you won't," and Tess withdrawing towards the door.

In the second, Tess makes a very long and intricate journey to the home of her guardian, and in her return, the narrator tells us that

2a: Along the tedious length of Bemhill Lane she began to grow tired, and she bent upon gates and paused by

2b: Along the tedious length of Bemhill Lane she began to grow tired, and she bent upon gates, and paused by

In the third, Tess has just refined Angel's offer of marriage:

3a: "But, Tess?" he said, grave at her reply, and holding her still more greedily close.
3b: "But Tess?" he said, grave at her reply, and holding her still more greedily close.

In the last the narrator describes Angel after his brief and disorientating meeting with his wife Tess on the steps of the lodging-house at Sandbourne, where she is sharing a room with Alec d'Urberville:

4a: His face grew colder and more shadowed as he stood concentrated on the moment, and a minute or two after he found himself in the street, walking along, he did not know whether

4b: His face grew colder and more shadowed as he stood concentrated on the moment, and a minute or two after he found himself in the street, walking along, he did not know whether.
Part of my argument is that when writing the manuscript, Hardy in general punctuated his words to produce the rhythm and intonation he heard in his head as he put the sentence on the page. In these examples the compositors always felt free to alter the punctuation so that it conformed to his expectations for a written sentence, tending punctuations as a mechanism, rather than the equivalent of musical notation. Hardy's punctuations throughout his career as a novelist was in general more free than that imposed on his manuscripts by his printers, and examples 3b and 3b are characteristic of this. The compositors do what their rules suggest; Hardy pays attention to context, and when he hears something spoken without a pause, he gives it without a pause. But as examples 2b and 1a show, when the context demands a longer or more frequent pause than convention requires, Hardy will provide them, and the compositors will erase them. Of course I choose two examples because they show my argument clearly—but there are in fact hundreds of instances of similar force. It is in this respect that I integrated the punctuations of the manuscript with Hardy's breviary.

But then consider this example: When Tess says to Angel ('in the days after her confession') that she supposes he will not live with her for long, Angel answers:

5a: I cannot, . . . without despising myself, and what is worse, perhaps despising you.
5b: I cannot, . . . without despising myself, and what is worse.

The comma which appears in the Graphic after 'perhaps' makes Angel say something much more unpleasant: not that he might despise Tess, which would be worse than despising himself, but that he would despise Tess, which might be worse than despising himself. There are not many places in Tess where a change in punctuation by the compositors creates no decisive change in meaning (and one can be sure that Hardy did not make the change in proof because the comma appears in these so-called 'versions' of the work set from uncorrected proof), but even a handful is more than one can have.

But, as Tim will explain, this bringing together of material from different stages in the development of the work is, sadly, no longer theoretically acceptable.

Tim

Sisson has given good reasons why the Cambridge edition should be an eclectic edition, as the Clarendon Hardy was. That is, it should create a new (never previously published) version of the work using the 1912 Western Editions for its narrative wording because that was the last edition Hardy himself, but use the manuscript as an appendix (where available) because of the authority of its punctuation. As we've said, the Cambridge edition won't be an authorial eclectic edition like this, but an historian 'social normative' edition; and Sisson implies that it can't be eclectic because, as we put it, that's now 'theoretically unacceptable'. My aim in this part of our discussion is not to defend the decision of the text on the grounds that social-textual editing is better. In fact, I think it creates a lot of problems for print editions. Rather, my object is to demonstrate why I think Sisson's preferred approach is problematic too. To begin with, let me summarize the long and arduous history of debates and disputes amongst textual theorists about authorship, intentionality, and the social life of texts. These debates, inaugurated by the new historicism, started in the year that Sisson's Clarendon Text was published (1993). They have never been satisfactorily resolved one way or another, and are still the occasion of argument and manoeuvre. There are strong grounds, then, for Sisson's feeling that his Clarendon approach is more than anything a victim of changing critical fashions. Here's why I think there's more to it than this.

At all of Hardy's novels, there has been a general movement away from author-centered and text-centered approaches to literary studies since about 1980. It is this movement, towards historical and sociocultural readings, that elevated critical interest in Hardy's representations of class and gender, and shifted the exclusive ground of high-modernist criticism like aesthetic unity and tragic vision (e.g., I. Gosling, Dale Knausen) to postmodernist criteria like generic instability, extreme self-consciousness, and quiet transgression (e.g., Peter Wilders). Ironically, however, the emergence of the new theoretical-critical paradigms in literary studies of the past thirty years or more, which reconstituted the author in history and to the reader, has not coincided with the conscious rejection of authorial texts by readers and critics. They simply have not noticed this irony. Being trapped on the stick-in-the-middle, the text-oriented and standard editions. But what else could editors have done? The details of the author's work are fundamentally at odds with editors' obligations to account for the existence and disseminate the presence of the manuscript, typescript and proof materials from which the text of the printed editions can be proved to have derived. Whether a critic's views of cultural production and the nature of authorship, their work successively involves
them much more deeply in the identification and interpretation of textual works: who is responsible for them? Should we accept their claim to autonomy as rightfully a part of the text? or is it false to what it refers to other works?

In response to these challenges of critics, and to arguments against textual authority, the concept of traditional authorship as a literary work. As we see it, the problem of textual authority remains fundamentally unresolved. The idea of the work having an autonomous character and an independent existence within the time it is produced, and ultimately in the history of its production and reception, remains a valid and important concept in literary studies.
whether a work is exactly congruent with what we can determine are the writer's own words and their punctuation. Rather, in cultures where the author-function is dominant, the task of textual criticism is to subject the actual historical operation of that function to the most rigorous examination. Textual criticism reconstructs practices of authorship from the evidence of textual change. It brings to the foreground, and requires us to analyze, the actions of textual agents over time, their agency in some actions, and the way textual authority is exercised over time. In doing so we have to try to explicate the conditions under which those changes were made, and more particularly the institutional structures, social and cultural norms, semantic regimes, and struggles that frame them — again, over time. Close, scrupulous critical attention to the various or sequences of texts that comprise a work's history is necessary for us to distinguish authorial from non-authorial changes, as Simon has demonstrated with Hess. But that is only the beginning of our work, since the meaning of a change is not explained by an act of attribution. To understand what textual changes signify involves us in other kinds of questions. These are the questions that will advance our knowledge about writers' engagements with the condition of authorship.

For this task something more than an edition is required, something like a virtual textual history (see below). But equally, perhaps, something less than an edition is required, since a single scholarly edition does two contradictory things: it invites readers to reconstruct authorship through piecemeal intuitive reconstructions of the work, but makes it perfectly clear that a choice has to be made, and that the choice represents what the editor sometimes not a text of the work but the work itself. Print editions inevitably perpetuate the illusion that works exist independently of their many versions, in other words. This illusion is canonical in eclectic editions, where editors are unequivocally committed to taking on the task of rewriting the work in an ideal form that was denied to the author in their own lifetime.

Returning to the manuscript or copytext is the expression of this commitment in Simon's Hardy editions. The production of a copytext is crucial to him, and this is because punctuation is an affable, recoverable infinitesimal signature, as distinctive and unobtrusive as a fingerprint. Copytexts don't intentionally change substantives (words) but they do impose house-style on the ancillary (punctuation) — although not consistently among themselves. Simon's argument about punctuation is an argument about its integrity to the creative act. For him, ancillary are substantive; they have significant bearing on the reading of texts. Hardy's light punctuation is distinctive, coherent and most of all consistent because it carries meanings that are willfully obscured by ignorant tradition mechanically imposing their standards. Now Hardy was a meticulous editor of his own work — someone who could 'never quite reconcile himself ... to the unreliability of printers and always made a point of reading and correcting his own proofs.' "Yes, for whatever reasons, Hardy sometimes chose not to restore substantive changes he had made or accepted under pressure of various kinds.'

It is also the case that Hardy made very careful connections to the punctuation for the Wessex Editions; but again, for many different reasons, no doubt, he did not, and could not consistently, return to the texts' actual lighter manuscript punctuation. Simon's practice therefore characterizes Hardy as he often characterized himself: as a solitary established author struggling to assert his entire autonomy against a bureauclaud orthodoxy. So Simon here takes it as granted what Hardy did not or could not do for reasons which must always be informed (as they are, for instance, caution, pressure of time, even familiarity). The eclectic editor heroically reclaims Hardy's autonomy for him, and realizes his unrealized intentions for him: produces the text Hardy never could and never did produce.

The question for me is not whether an idealist edition of Hardy — one that seeks to realize Hardy's unrealized intentions for his own work - is a theoretically defensible enterprise, but rather whether it's a misguided enterprise, because it returns Hardy's work from its fallen textual condition is fundamentally at odds with its entire imaginative project, which is to examine what is to live in an undetermined universe and in a condition of inevitable social change. If Hardy liked to characterize himself in his (self-consciously) meta-field of his work as a multi-teller throned and surrounded by the moral majority, in practice he often behaved very like the man who would gleefully sacrifice his 'higher aim' to be known as 'a good host at a social.' He worked all his life with the consciousness that his intentions would not always be compromised. For him, fiction (not poetry) was subject to corruption and decay in the material realities of the literary market-place. His own novel-writing career was marked by the contrast, as his says of Jude, 'between the Ideal life a man wished to lead ... & the ... real life he was fated to lead.' The Cambridge edition should therefore represent the necessary fidelity (and Hardy's consciousness of the necessary
utility of retrieving an ideal text of the work. It must reflect the state of compromised intentions under which Hardy’s art developed and, let us not forget, flourished.

It must be noted that, in the spirit of compromise, intention and desire, and because this will be a critical edition, the Cambridge Hardy will put upon the critical judgement of its editors. They will be required to make the copy-text “suitable” in order to achieve the best balance between authorial desire and authorial acquaintance with the realities of publication. They also have the “responsibility to negotiate between what they may deduce to be Hardy’s desire for the text at the moment of that version’s publication, and what is known to be the production result.” Given this point, editors will be required to choose between different versions of literary authority, aesthetic or social, this is the best outcome, since it will represent the text as the product of a struggle for authority.

And before we move on to talk about the ideal realm of a well-behaved knowledge site that Tim has already mentioned, I want to point out one of the implications of the decision to use the first edition of most novels as copy-text for the Cambridge edition: editions will be released of adjudicating some difficult issues. Let me take Tess again and show you just one example of very many.

When the narrative of the first collected edition of Hardy’s work in 1895 and its reissue by another publisher in 1896, it was printed from the same plates used for the first complete edition of 1892, but though the printer was not using text-sectent, Hardy revised the text for both these new editions, and this situation creates issues for this study of the text of the first edition. We are lucky that the copy-text of the one-volume edition of 1895 survives on which Hardy wrote revisions for the Osgood McIlvain edition of 1895. On the facing page (Figure 2) is a fragment from it, with the 1895 text next to it.

Hardy well aware of the financial cost of altering the plates, cutting bits out and soldering other bits in, and it is no coincidence that in order to fit in the new, slightly larger material with the minimum of disturbance he has deleted a passage of the appropriate length. I suggest that it is almost certain that, if the publisher had ceased the work to be exact, Hardy would not have deleted anything. If the Western Edition had been the copy-text an editor would have been forced to decide what to delete.
... as it is, the Cambridge editor will not; he will merely note what happened at the foot of the page and move on (though he will probably discuss the intention in the introduction).

I might just add that Hardy kept on making revisions to the copy of the Wessex Edition he kept in his study; the note to lines 20-22 of page 314 on fig. 1 identifies an example. The Cambridge editor, however, will not have to decide whether to include this and other unpublished changes in the edited text.

These examples offer just a taste of the textual complexity provided by the material conditions of time and place. It is still possible to make the edited version and I produced 30 years ago, and I believe that there will be a consensus for such print editions for a while to come. A print scholars edition such as this is a miracle that needs to be celebrated continually despite the antiquity of the book; as a medium, for its compact portable package is contained all the evidence concerning the work over time that anyone would require to interpret Hardy's changes to it.

But of course such books no longer exist in isolation, and, parallel with the establishment of the Cambridge edition, more of us have been working on the preliminary steps towards a digital archive that will present high-definition images of material witnesses to Hardy's fiction, and linking beyond the visible transcripts that will, in copies, be available to any user to add to the archive whatever they choose. It is primarily because of the potential of this archive that I have re-visited myself with editing Hardy's novels.

The digital archive will enable editors of print editions to discuss the material aspects of textual transmission without doing so in a vacuum (though a digital image of a thing is not the thing, even if in some ways it is more useful than the thing). Textual critics and scholars in general will be able to use the transcripts in all sorts of interesting and fertile ways, and the effect will be a cumulative addition of knowledge. The archive will also allow users of the print edition to check the work of the editor much more readily than hitherto, and to see directly and assess with confidence the evidence that went into making editorial decisions.

It is the prospect of everything being available to everyone, that decisions made in the relative permanence of print can be visualized as well in the archive for the satisfaction of individual, that is liberating. I

...
But this is potential, and though I am excited about it, I keep reminding myself that it is not easy. To do this kind of work requires a lot of time, and it is not always clear that it will pay off in the end. However, the results are worth it, and I am looking forward to seeing where this research takes me in the future.

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NOTES
2 Ibid., p. 80.
3 To that end Macmillan also misleadingly recycled the distinctive TH insignia from the earlier edition, as if to declare the authority of their enterprise.
5 Patricia Ingham, 'General Editor's Preface', Far from the Madding Crowd, ed. Romano Guardini and Marion Roselli, p. viii.
12 Gatrell, Textual Scholarship: An Introduction, p. 34.
14 Ibid., p. 190.
16 Gatrell, Textual Scholarship: An Introduction, p. 337.
18 Eggert, p. 40.
19 The term is from Foucault, who argued influentially that authorship constitutes a privileged moment of individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, literature, philosophy, and the sciences. See Michel Foucault, 'What is an Author?', in Daniel Fichot and Alain Meclorey, eds., The Book History Reader (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 223. Contra Foucault, Alexander Nehamas argues that what counts at that time was the recognition of the anonymous, which appeared in different forms at different times, with the actual historical agent crucial and legally responsible for the text. See Alexander Nehemas, 'What an Author Is', The Journal of Philosophy 83/11 (1986), p. 699.
20 Eggert, p. 41.
21 Cook, p. 143.
22 Milligate, p. 62.
23 Milligate, p. 78.
27 Gabler, p. 46.
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TWO REVIEWS

A recipe for the optimum enjoyment of Thomas Hardy

Take a Hardy novel, read and then discuss with your favourite Hardy scholar. It could be Michael Irwin or Herbert Tucker, with perhaps a pinch of Marion Shaw or Jane Thurnam. Discussants do not do justice to too much or too little food for thought. Now take a walk into the countryside that inspired the work. Repeat with a poem or collection of poems. For my taste, Hardy, an academic, a lay reader or someone who has read the odd novel and has a liking for Wessex, it is an infallible recipe for pure enjoyment. And all of these ingredients with a great selection of luncheons were available at the 20th Thomas Hardy Conference and Festival, held in December in August. For anyone who loves Hardy or even has a passing interest, the society’s bi-annual conferences are a must and this year’s was no exception.

I was fortunate enough to be in at the beginning, in 1968, but I admit to missing quite a few conferences in the intervening years. But I have intended enough to know that the magic never diminishes. I feel sure Hardy would have loved our conferences. And wouldn’t he have scored with delight as the inimitable Pony Simmonds showed us her drawings for her Guardian literary supplement cartoon, “Travels In Wessex,” based on Far from the Madding Crowd, which was to become a crowd-pulling film. The film was a hoot, the cartoons were terrific and the talented Pony (her bet Hardy would envy her graphic skills) delighted the conference goers. Hardy may have been a fine architect, but I doubt his sense of humour would have extended to Pony’s cartoons.

If you can already imagine what the high spots of the conference were for me, but there were so many and you will all have your favourites, from Roger McGough’s poignant and amusing words at the launch, to the late night poetry sessions, to the creative writing workshops, to some of the quiet suppers given by postgraduate students from around the world. And probably the most popular event of the week, Tim Laycock and the New Scroop Island. They never fail to please, but this year was outstanding. The Corn Exchange was packed not only with conference goers, but half of the local population as well. Tim, you