[2] J. Hillis Miller, '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*, the Persistence of the Past, and the Dance of Desire,' *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, ed. Julian Wolfreys, New Casebooks (New York: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 24.

[3] See, for example, John Paterson, '*The Mayor of Casterbridge* as Tragedy', *Victorian Studies* 3.2 (1959), pp. 151–172.

[4] See Robert Langbaum, 'The Minimisation of Sexuality', in Wolfreys, ed., *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, p. 130.

[5] See Elaine Showalter, 'The Unmanning of the Mayor of Casterbridge,' *Critical Approaches to the Fiction of Thomas Hardy*, ed. Dale Kramer (London: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 101–2.

[6] *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, ed. Dale Kramer (Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 187. Subsequent references to this edition are given parenthetically in the text.

[7] Dale Kramer, note on the text, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, ed. cit., p. xxxix.

[8] Bruce Johnson, '*The Mayor of Casterbridge*', in Wolfreys, ed., *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, p. 34.

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 Edition 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 centenarian.

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 concentrated and determined way for the two major British collected editions, one published by Osgood, McIlvaine from 1895–7, 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 begetter 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 *Tess* 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 increasingly 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 this essential conception was not instantaneous, and rethinking 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 freedom 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 ferocious 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 thirties.

Tim

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'.[1] 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'.[2] Thirty-four years later, there are now real questions about what constitute 'the best contemporary standards'. In 1978, textual scholarship was still to face 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 green-jacketed 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.[3] 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 reference texts 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 Simon has given. There have been some significant exceptions to this. The only scholarly editions 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 *Tess*, ever saw the light of day. They rejected the principle of using a late-authorial edition like the Wessex Edition as copy-text in favour of using the manuscript for the punctuation and rebuilding 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 cogent 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, Patricia Ingham, 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 approach 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 Simon has shown elsewhere, Hardy imposed a uniform imaginary topography that strongly conformed with the observable landscape: the 'utilitarian region which people can go to, take a house in, and write to the papers from'.[4] By 1896 but definitely by 1912 readers had become accustomed to view the real and fictional places interchangeably; but in 1880 that was not the case.

So what do we miss by reading *The Trumpet-Major* in its Wessex Edition version rather than its first-volume edition? This is Hardy's only explicitly historical romance of the type we recognise from Sir Walter Scott: a novel that integrates fictional personages and real historical personages, and fictional and real places and events. As in his other writing, Hardy's venture into this genre is exploratory and generically destabilizing, and this novel is less easily assimilable to the Wessex idea than many others. Alterations to place-names and topographical relationships only uncomfortably shoe-horn *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 deliberate aim here had been to suggest that the action was taking place on a kind of minimalist and hence universal stage – an anywhere – that is simultaneously an edge-land, sparsely supporting its exiles and captives, its outré figures and peculiar goings-on. In the Wessex Edition, by contrast, Egdon Heath becomes a representative Wessex landscape, known and knowable. In the process, Hardy paradoxically domesticates it, replacing its weirdness and extremity with a more familiarly tragic atmosphere which confines and limits the novel's meanings, as Simon argued in his World's Classics edition of the novel, which also presents the words of the first edition, though combined 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 Fantasies', 'Novels of Ingenuity', and 'Mixed Novels'. He doesn't say as 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

514 *Thomas Hardy*

down by illness? You are not so fickle—I am come on purpose for you—my mother and father will welcome you now."

"Yes—O yes, yes! But I say, I say, it is too late." She seemed to feel like a fugitive in a dream, who tries to move away, but cannot. "Don't you know all—don't you know it? Yet how do you come here if you do not know?"

"I inquired here and there—and I found the way."

"I waited and waited for you," she went on, her tones suddenly resuming their old fluty pathos. "But you did not come. And I wrote to you; and you did not come. He kept on saying you would never come any more, and that I was a foolish woman. He was very kind to me, and to mother, and to all of us after father's death. He—"

"I don't understand?"

"He has won me back—to him."

Clare looked at her keenly, then gathering her meaning flagged like one plague-stricken, and his glance sank: it fell on her hands, which, once rosy, were now white and more delicate.

She continued: "He is upstairs. I hate him now, because he told me a lie—that you would not come again; and you *have* come! These clothes are what he's put upon me: I didn't care what he did wi' me! The step back to him was not so great as it seems. He had been as husband to me: you never had! But—will you go away, Angel, please, and never come any more?"

They stood, fixed, their baffled hearts looking out of their eyes with a joylessness pitiful to see. Both seemed to implore something to shelter them from reality.

"Ah—it is my fault!" said Clare.

3 "Yes—MS(2)] "Yes, yes—MS(1) 3 late." 95] late!" she almost shrieked. MS 3–4 seemed to feel like a fugitive 91,H] seemed like a frail fugitive G] seemed like a phantom MS(2)] seemed like a frail phantom NG,MS(1) 4 tries . . . cannot. 12,00] tried to move away, but could not. 02,G] tried to come near, but could not. MS 8 went on, MS(2)] rejoined, MS(1) 9 fluty pathos G] pathos MS 11–12 to mother, and to all 92] mother, and to all G,NG] mother, to all MS(2)] to all MS(1) 12 He—" 91,MS(2)] He—brought me." H] He bought me." US1,MS(1) 14 "He has won me back—to him." 91,H,MS(3)] "He has won me—to be friends with him." G,MS(2)*b*] "I have gone back—to him." MS(1) [marked for restoration before the third reading was added] 15 looked . . . meaning, MS *added* 16–17 plague-stricken . . . delicate: 92] . . . white and delicate. MS(3)] . . . glance drooped: it fell to her hands, which, once coral [*altered on same line to* rosy . . .] MS(2)] plague-stricken. MS(1) 18 She continued: . . . hate him now, 91] She continued: "He is upstairs now. . . . I hate him all at once H] . . . is here now . . . US1] She continued: "I hate him, MS(2)] "He is upstairs now," she continued: "I hate him, MS(1) 19 again; . . . come! 91] again. MS 19–20 These clothes . . . did wi' me! 92] *not in* MS 20–22 The step . . . never had! *T.H.12*] *not in* MS

Tess of the d'Urbervilles 515

But he could not get on. Speech was as inexpressive as silence. But he had a vague consciousness of one thing, though it was not clear to him till later; that his original Tess had spiritually ceased to recognize the body before him as hers—allowing it to drift, like a corpse upon the current, in a direction dissociated from its living will.

A few instants passed, and he found that Tess was gone. His face grew colder and more shrunken 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 whither.

1–5 But he had a vague . . . living will. 92] *not in* MS 6 A few . . . that MS(2)] The next moment MS(1)

Abbreviations in the annotation:
MS(1)=first reading in manuscript; MS(2)=second reading [etc] ;
NG=*Nottinghamshire Guardian* serialisation;
G=*The Graphic* serialisation; H=*Harper's Bazar* American serialisation; 91=First edition in 3 volumes (1891);
US1=First American edition (1891); 92=Second edition (1892);
95=Osgood, McIlvaine collected edition;
00=paperback edition (1900); 02=Macmillan Uniform edition (1902); 12=Wessex edition (1912)
T.H.12 Hardy's study-copy of 12; *b* indicates a manuscript alteration in blue ink.

Figure 1.

concentration, trace accurately change in the work over time. What you don't see at the foot of the page are changes in punctuation and paragraphing, differences in spelling and the like, which are collected together in appendices, 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. Volumes of the Cambridge edition will look quite similar to this.

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

As Tim has said, one of the first and most hotly debated issues the Cambridge editorial board had to face was which of the several plausible possibilities should provide the copy-text, the base text for the edition as a whole. Should it be the Wessex Edition in its initial or its revised form, or the Mellstock 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 serialisation, 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, *Under 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 Tranter Dewy's cottage in the second chapter is quoted, it is from the Wessex Edition that the words are most often taken, and the building's close reflection of Hardy's birthplace is noted. But the description 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 a work' unless a compelling case could be made for not doing so.

But then the next issue for the editorial board to decide was the edition's theoretical basis. The already existing critical editions of *The Woodlanders* and *Tess* offer almost entirely the words of the revised version of the Wessex Edition, but they use almost all of the manuscript punctuation, thus producing eclectic versions of the novel that had never existed before. The eclecticism that underpinned the critical editions of many canonical authors in the 1970s and early 80s 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 an editor of his or her work should abide by that decision, but 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 the interference of the compositors who first set the work in type.

To give you some idea of what the compositors did, here are a few examples; I've mixed the order up an leave you to judge which punctuation works better to illuminate the context.

In the first Tess is responding sharply to Alec d'Urberville's offer to give her 'a lesson or two' in whistling:

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

In the second, Tess makes a very long and fruitless journey to the home of her parents-in-law, and on her return, the narrator tells us that

> 2a: Along the tedious length of Benvill Lane she began to grow tired, and she leant upon gates and paused by milestones.
>
> 2b: Along the tedious length of Benvill Lane she began to grow tired; and she leant upon gates, and paused by milestones.

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

> 3a: "But, Tess!" he said, amazed at her reply, and holding her still more greedily close.
>
> 3b: "But Tess!" he said, amazed 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 shrunken 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 whither.
>
> 4b: His face grew colder and more shrunken 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 whither.

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 compositor as always felt free to alter the punctuation so that it conformed to his expectations for a written sentence, treating punctuation as a mechanism, rather than the equivalent of musical notation. Hardy's punctuation throughout his career as a novelist was in general sparer than that imposed on his manuscripts by his printers, and examples 1b 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 4a show, when the context demands longer or more frequent pauses than convention requires, Hardy will provide them, and the compositors will erode them. Of course I chose these examples because they show my argument clearly – but there are in *Tess* hundreds of instances of similar force. It is for this reason that I integrated the punctuation of the manuscript with Hardy's latest words.

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, perhaps, despising you.

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 that many places in *Tess* where a change in punctuation by the compositors creates so decisive a change in meaning (and one can be sure that Hardy did not make the change in proof because the comma appears in those serialised versions of the work set from uncorrected proof), but even a handful is more than I care to 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

Simon has given good reasons why the Cambridge edition should be an eclectic edition, as the Clarendon Hardys were: that is, it should create

a new (never previously published) version of the work using the 1912 Wessex Edition for its authoritative wording because that was the last edition Hardy proofread; but use the manuscript as copytext (where available) because of the authority of its punctuation.[6] As we've said, the Cambridge edition won't be an authorial eclectic edition like this, but an historicist 'social moment' edition; and Simon implies that it *can't be* eclectic because, as he puts it, that's now 'theoretically unacceptable'. My aim in this part of our discussion is not to defend the decision of the board on the grounds that social-textual editing is better. In fact, I think it creates a lot of problems for print editions.[7] Rather, my object is to demonstrate why I think Simon's preferred approach is problematic too. To begin with, let me summarize the long and acrimonious 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 Juliet and Simon's Clarendon *Tess* was published (1983).[8] They have never been satisfactorily resolved one way or another, and are still the occasion of argument and rancour.[9] There are strong grounds, then, for Simon'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.

As all students of Hardy know, there has been a general movement away from author-centred and text-centred approaches in literary studies since about 1980. It is that same movement, towards historical and political readings, that elevated critical interest in Hardy's representations of class and gender, and shifted the evaluative ground from high-modernist criteria like aesthetic unity and tragic vision (e.g. Ian Gregor, Dale Kramer) to postmodernist criteria like generic instability, extreme self-consciousness, and quiet transgression (e.g. Peter Widdowson).[10] Ironically, however, the emergence of the new theoretical-critical paradigms in literary studies of the past thirty years or more, which subordinated the author to history and to the reader, has not coincided with the conscious rejection of authorial texts by readers and critics. They simply haven't noticed this irony, being busy heaping derision on the stick-in-the-mud, dyed-in-the-wool authorial textual editors. But what else could editors have done? The death of the author was fundamentally at odds with editors' obligations 'to account for the existence and demonstrate the provenance of the manuscript, typescript and proof materials from which the text of the printed editions can be proved to have derived'.[11] Whatever an editor's views of cultural production and the nature of authorship, their work necessarily involves

them most deeply in the identification and interpretation of textual marks: who is responsible for them? should we accept their claim to authority as rightfully a part of the work? and what is their relation to other marks?

In response to the charges of critics, and in keeping with the growing disaffection with intentionalism and formalism in the discipline as a whole, there arose an influential counteractive theoretical movement in textual studies. To the new social-textual critics, as they are known, intentionalist editing – the conviction that an edition should be the representation of a literary work as its author intended it to be, cleared as much as possible of the interventions of editors, compositors and publishers by an editor's rigorous and informed analysis and evaluation of all the available documents of the work – was profoundly unhistorical. It took refuge in a de-socialised, disembodied, Romantic idea of the author whose intentions were inferred and reconstructed from documents whose material historicity was effaced. Yet social-textualism and other revisionist theories of editing have largely failed 'to address in practical terms the very problems they posit: while perhaps effectively describing the textual phenomena, [they] have not yet produced a critical vehicle for representing them in a scholarly edition.'[12] This indicates something more than the technological incapacity of the printed book to represent social textual production. Jerome McGann argued in 1985 that textual and bibliographical studies were vital to literary criticism because they were 'the only disciplines that can elucidate the complex network of people, materials, and events that have produced and that continue to reproduce ... literary works'.[13] This meant reconceptualising textual criticism 'along lines that transcend an editorial theory' and drawing the field closer to book history,[14] as D. F. McKenzie had done when he proposed that documents were 'complex semiotic fields', 'fields of relations' that 'bear within themselves the evidence of their social emergence'.[15]

Condemned by social-textualists for the perpetuation of Romantic ideology in the subjective unity of the author, intentionalist editors, committed in the Anglophone tradition and the print medium to the establishment of an authoritative text (or occasionally parallel texts), responded by defending the author against what they perceived to be an assault from postmodern Marxism. John Sutherland famously dismissed McGann's theory of social text as an 'unattributed gloss' on the Marxist idea that 'the work is not *created* by an intention (subjective or objective) but is *produced* under determinate circumstances'.[16] By assuming antithetical extremes of autonomous creation and determinate production,

both ideologies came to reinforce each other, so that editors must choose: is the text a product of authorial agents or social agents? The controversies that have dogged textual and bibliographical studies for so long broadly represent these two deeply entrenched, directly opposed positions, which have, in truth, now both hardened into dogmatism. A thoroughgoing, hardline sociological textual criticism (one that is profoundly, stubbornly anti-authorial) may well be practically unusable in the making of editions, as Peter Shillingsburg has demonstrated in his reappraisal of McKenzie's well-known and much repeated concept of the sociology of text. On the other hand, intentionalist authorial editing remains willfully, combatively blind to its own limitations and inadequacies. As I see it, the problems with the Clarendon approach to Hardy do not arise from Simon's perfectly reasonable belief that authors are the efficient cause of their works, and that if they alter the texts of those works, or have them changed by others against their will, editors should respect those alterations, and remove those changes. The problems arise rather from the idealist theoretical assumptions informing those beliefs.

Let me explain what I mean by referring back to Simon's image of the page from the Clarendon *Tess*. Scholarly editions tell the story of the work's composition and gradual evolution through successive versions in a general introduction and provide evidence for that story in the apparatus, which is here placed at the bottom of each page (where it records only changes to wording, not to punctuation, spelling and so forth). Fortified by this formidable thicket of variants, the body-text above it declares itself to be what it is: a critically informed version of *Tess* prepared by an editor – one of many possible versions, but complete and hopefully error-free. Every critical edition presents and defends the theoretical basis for its approach and procedures, but most readers will not encounter this edition here on this page. It will be in a clear-text edition, where it won't be presented as a version of the work but as *the work*: a platonic entity 'that transcends its particular versions ... a unity that subsumes difference'.[17]

As Eggert argues, an intentionalist editor is 'primarily interested in only one category of textual evidence': that which situates authority not 'in the contractual agreement between publisher and author' but in the author alone.[18] That is because for intentionalists it is self-evidently mistaken to accord textual agents other than the author a commensurate degree of textual authority, especially the lesser coadjutors in production (pre-eminently typesetters in Hardy's case). But the real question is not

whether a work is exactly coextensive with what we can determine are the writer's own words and own punctuation. Rather, in cultures where the author-function is dominant[19] the task of textual criticism is to subject the actual historical operation of that function to the most rigorous examination.[20] Textual criticism reconstructs practices of authorship from the evidence of textual change. It brings to the foreground, and requires us to analyse, the actions of textual agents over time, their agency in those actions, and the way textual authority is exercised over time.[21] In doing so we have to try to explain 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, informed critical attention to the sequence 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 *Tess*. 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 conditions 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 print scholarly edition does two contradictory things: it invites readers to use the footnotes to reconstruct other equally plausible alternative reconstructions of the work; but makes it perfectly clear that a choice has to be made, and that the choice represents what for the editor constitutes 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 magnified in eclectic editions, where editors are unequivocally committed to taking on the task of recovering the work in an ideal form that was denied to the author in their own lifetime.

Returning to the manuscript punctuation is the expression of this commitment in Simon's Hardy editions. The punctuation is so important to him, I'd argue, because punctuation is an affirmable, recoverable authorial signature: as distinctive and unreplicable as a fingerprint. Compositors don't intentionally change substantives (words) but they do impose house-styling on the accidentals (punctuation) – although not consistently among themselves. Simon's argument about punctuation is an argument about its integrity to the creative act. For him, accidentals

are substantive: they have significant bearing on the *meaning* of Tess. Hardy's light punctuation is distinctive, coherent and most of all consistent because it carries meanings that are willfully obscured by ignorant tradesmen 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'.[22] Yet, for whatever reasons, Hardy sometimes chose not to restore substantive changes he had 'made or accepted under pressures of various kinds'.[23] It is also the case that Hardy made very careful corrections to the punctuation for the Wessex Edition; but again, for many different reasons, no doubt, he did not, and could not consistently, return to the texts' much lighter manuscript punctuation. Simon's practice therefore characterizes Hardy as he often characterized himself: as a solitary embattled author struggling to assert his artistic autonomy against a hidebound orthodoxy. So Simon here takes on himself what Hardy did not or could not do for reasons which must always be inferred (as forgetfulness, weariness, caution, pressure of time, over-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. I think rather that it's a *misguided* enterprise, because to redeem Hardy's work from its fallen textual condition is fundamentally at odds with its entire imaginative project, which is to examine what it is to live in an unredemptive universe and in a condition of irreversible social change. If Hardy liked to characterize himself in his (self-ghosted) auto/biography as a truth-teller harassed and misunderstood by the moral majority, in practice he often behaved very like the man who would gladly sacrifice his 'higher aims' to be known as 'a good hand at a serial'.[24] He worked all his life with the consciousness that his intentions would and must 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 he says of *Jude*, 'between the ideal life a man wished to lead ... & the ... real life he was fated to lead'.[25] The Cambridge edition should therefore represent the necessary futility (and Hardy's consciousness of the necessary

futility) 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.

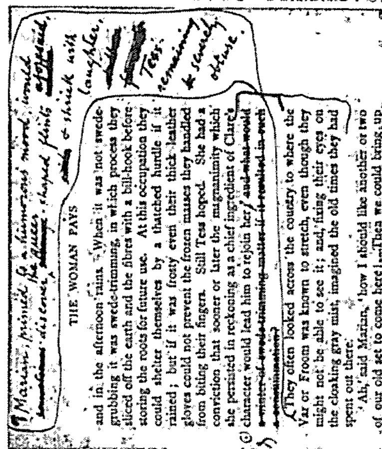
Simon

So, in reflection of this spirit of compromised intention and desire, and because this will be a critical edition, the Cambridge Hardy will call upon the critical judgement of its editors. They will be required 'to edit the copy-text's "moment" in order to achieve the best balance between authorial desire and authorial acquiescence to 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 that print editions oblige editors to choose between different versions of literary authority, authorial 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 web-based 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: editors will be relieved of adjudicating some difficult issues. Let me take *Tess* again and show you just one example of very many.

When the novel appeared in both the first collected edition of Hardy's work in 1895 and its reissue by another publisher in 1902, it was printed from the plates made of the type-setting of the first one-volume edition of 1892; but though the printers weren't using movable type, Hardy revised the text for both these new editions, and this situation creates issues for an editor who is planning to use the Wessex Edition as copy-text. We are lucky that the copy of the one-volume edition of 1892 survives on which Hardy wrote revisions for the Osgood McIlvaine edition of 1895. On the facing page (Figure 2) is a fragment from it, with the 1895 text next to it.

Hardy was 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 risqué 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 caused the text to be reset, Hardy would not have deleted anything. If the Wessex Edition had been the copy-text an editor would have been forced to decide what to



¶ Marian, primed to a humorous mood, would discover the queer-shaped flints aforesaid, & shriek with laughter, Tess remaining severely obtuse.

THE WOMAN PAYS

and in the afternoon rains. When it was not swede-grubbing it was swede-trimming, in which process they sliced off the earth and the fibres with a bill-hook before storing the roots for future use. At this occupation they could shelter themselves by a thatched hurdle if it rained; but if it was frosty even their thick leather gloves could not prevent the frozen masses they handled from biting their fingers. Still Tess hoped. She had a conviction that sooner or later the magnanimity which she persisted in reckoning as a chief ingredient of Clare's character would lead him to rejoin her ~~and what would a winter of swede-trimming matter if it resulted in such a consummation?~~

They often looked across the country to where the Var or Froom was known to stretch, even though they might not be able to see it; and, fixing their eyes on the cloaking gray mist, imagined the old times they had spent out there.

'Ah,' said Marian, 'how I should like another or two of our old set to come here!...Then we could bring up

from biting their fingers. Still Tess hoped. She had a conviction that sooner or later the magnanimity which she persisted in reckoning as a chief ingredient of Clare's character would lead him to rejoin her.

Marian, primed to a humorous mood, would discover the queer-shaped flints aforesaid, and shriek with laughter, Tess remaining severely obtuse. They often looked across the country to where the Var or Froom was known to stretch, even though they might not be able to see it; and, fixing their eyes on the cloaking gray mist, imagined the old times they had spent out there.

'Ah,' said Marian, 'how I should like another or two of our old set to come here! Then we could bring up

Figure 2.

do here. 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 situation 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 514 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 embodiments of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. I'm still more or less satisfied with the edition Juliet and I produced 30 years ago, and I believe that there will be a usership for such print editions for a while to come. A print scholarly edition such as this is a miracle that needs to be celebrated continually despite the antiquity of the book as a medium, for in one 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, some 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 lurking beneath them inviolable 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-involved 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 transcriptions 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 heretofore, 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 undone at will in the archive for the satisfaction of individual, that is liberating. I

remain an unreconstructed author-centred editor, but of course in editing *Under the Greenwood Tree* I am following the procedure laid down for the Cambridge edition. But in the archive I can produce the edition of the novel I think best serves Hardy.

All editors understand there is pressure on them to try to efface themselves behind general theories or conventions, to try to be impartial and consistent; but in attempting to do so we deceive ourselves. The archive would offer me the only honest course, the radical one: to come out into the open, to acknowledge from the start that instead of hiding behind theories I would rather hide behind the unfortunately defunct author, to be the facilitator of his wishes for the work, so far as I can discover them or with justification propose them. Here's what I want to do: to try to heal the stressed and wounded manuscript; to brush from the path of the work through time the activities of compositors – peons who take it upon themselves to know better what is required than the author – and the interference of publishers and editors, anxious to cover themselves from the opprobrium of their markets, anxious to make as much money, and to save as much money as possible; to track Hardy's responses in the work to the commentary of contemporary critics and friends, to resolve the competing claims of unresolved issues, by the light of a long and intimate familiarity with Hardy's approach to change in all his work.

Well, that's a romantic ambition – heroic, as Tim disparagingly noted earlier – or lunatic, perhaps you are thinking. But the work involved would not be heroic. Every instance of change would have to be examined, evaluated, and a decision made concerning it. Each time the only consideration would be, what evidence is there to propose that Hardy would have preferred one reading to another if the choice were presented to him?

I'm aware of many grounds on which such a procedure would be attacked, and I have thought of responses to some, and recognised the strength of others. But what's the point of knowing the evolution of Hardy's work inside out if you don't use that knowledge on behalf of the work? At any rate such an edition would provide as author-centred a text as possible; it would provide a view of the work that made Hardy's ideas of the work the driving force, and if you think this anarchy or madness, your recourse is straightforward: open the archive, and edit the work yourself.

But this is potential, and though I am excited about it, I keep reminding myself that a book may endure for hundreds of years without any special care, but digital platforms are transformed every year or two, and who will maintain a Hardy knowledge site over such transformations for even twenty years?

Tim

Simon is right. Over coming decades, it is safely predicted, 'all the editions, every print book, every manuscript – are going to be remade in digital form. Indeed, this process has gone so far already that it needs no argument.'[26] Whatever the future for Hardy studies may be, therefore, it will certainly be digital; but it is also true is that, whatever the digital future looks like, interpretation will remain, as it is today, the core business of Hardy studies. We will continue to need and demand stable and reliable reading texts of his works, in digital as well as print form; and we will also increasingly want resources that offer us new and productive ways of understanding and interpreting those works by allowing us to exploit the capacity of digital media to store and rapidly manipulate large sets of data, and of telecommunications systems to transmit those data globally and instantaneously. The challenge for textual and bibliographical studies, then, is enormous: the ongoing provision of sound, trustworthy texts; and the design and development of innovative literary research tools. How is the first to be reconciled with the second? How will the clean 'reading text' be related to that heteroglossia of 'interlinked textual and contextual study' that is 'the multi-connectable virtuality of the digital medium'?[27]

And more to the point, perhaps, how can we be sure that a digital Hardy edition or knowledge site will be as durable, or even as efficient, as scholarly editions have been? For more than two decades now electronic text has promised to transform the way we edit and interpret literary works. However, despite significant advances in digital technologies and digital editorial techniques – text-encoding protocols, high-quality image capture, increasingly sophisticated interfaces and editing tools, and the ease and power of web distribution – these utopian visions are still a long way from being realised. Large electronic text projects have grown steadily in number and sophistication and a substantial body of critical and theoretical discourse has grown with them. As important as these projects are, though, they remain by any sober measure peripheral to literary studies. Though electronic texts are now being used very much more widely by readers, students, and critics, they are almost certain to

be unedited texts sourced from (for example) Amazon or elsewhere that are being used as reading texts or, when they are used as study texts, for their relatively crude searching, bookmarking, and annotating capacities. These electronic resources do not identify their source material text, or present a textually accurate copy of their source text: they provide only a transcription, as if the material medium of the text were negligible, and frequently begin with source texts of no textual significance or accuracy.

A great deal of work has been done recently to ensure that electronic texts are durable and accessible for textual collaboration using such technical innovations as stand-off mark-up (where separate layers of encoding and annotation can be attached to texts without being embedded in them). Yet so far collaboration has been imagined only as collaboration in textual scholarship, something that is reserved for those with specialist skills and knowledges, and with an understandably specialised view of the possibilities and limits of digital texts. To them, the ideal user is a reader imagined in their own image, as *editor*. The presumption that readers and literary critics will be motivated to participate in electronic editions in this way will, alas, only prolong the history of mutual misunderstanding and prejudice between textualists and critics. Indeed, it can be counter-argued that the entire enterprise of the fluid, co-operative, distributed text is being placed in jeopardy even before it can be realised by this too-narrow conception of editorial-critical interaction. If electronic texts are to endure by being used, there is an acute need to rethink their design and modes of use, 'to find ways of bringing the insights of recent editorial theorizing to readers not yet ready to "unedit" the text'.[28]

This requires us to produce something that supersedes the print edition – and that 'sits above' it, in the etymological sense of supersede – because it offers an enriched textual research experience to both scholars and critics. Digital textual histories can capture the dynamics of textual production in a way that print editions cannot: capture, that is, the thoroughly historical emergence of the work and author, but where history is figured as a 'lateral dance' of writers, texts, works, and critics.[29] This will allow us to move beyond the authorial-social binary that has been impeding progress in textual and bibliographical studies, and encourage us to be more closely attentive to the conditions under which a writer like Hardy experienced authorship. All that remains is to make a start. With luck, we might have something by the next significant anniversary in 2028.

NOTES

[1] Michael Millgate, 'The Making and Unmaking of Hardy's Wessex Edition' in Jane Millgate, ed., *Editing Nineteenth-Century Fiction: Papers Given at the Thirteenth Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto, 4–5 November, 1977* (New York: Garland Pub. Co., 1978), p. 78.

[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.

[4] Simon Gatrell, *Thomas Hardy's Vision of Wessex* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); 'Preface from the 1912 Wessex Edition', *Far from the Madding Crowd*, eds. Rosemarie Morgan and Shannon Russell (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p. 393.

[5] Patricia Ingham, 'General Editor's Preface', *Far from the Madding Crowd*, eds. Morgan and Russell, p. vii.

[6] Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell, 'General Introduction', *Tess of the d'urbervilles*, eds. Juliet Grindle and Simon Gatrell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 70.

[7] See Peter Shillingsburg, 'The Semiotics of Bibliography', *Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts, Interpretation* 6:1 (2011): 11–25.

[8] See Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[9] See David C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York: Garland, 1992) and Greetham, 'What Is Textual Scholarship?', in Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose, eds., *A Companion to the History of the Book* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), pp. 24–32. Hans Walter Gabler, 'Theorizing the Digital Scholarly Edition', *Literature Compass*, 7: 2 (2010): pp. 43–56; Shillingsburg, *op. cit.*

[10] Ian Gregor, *The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction* (London: Faber, 1974); Dale Kramer, *Thomas Hardy: The Forms of Tragedy* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975); Peter Widdowson, 'Hardy in History: A Case Study in the Sociology of Literature', *Literature and History* 9:1 (1983): 3–16.

[11] Paul Eggert, 'Opening up the Text: The Case of *Sons and Lovers*', in Keith Brown, ed., *Rethinking Lawrence* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1990), p. 40.

[12] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, p. 354.

[13] McGann, 'The Monks and the Giants: Textual and Bibliographical Studies and the Interpretation of Literary Works', in McGann, ed., *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation* (University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 191.

[14] Ibid, p. 190.

[15] Dino Buzzetti and Jerome McGann, 'Critical Editing in a Digital Horizon', in Lou Burnard, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, and John Unsworth, eds., *Electronic Textual Editing* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2006), p. 57; D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (London: The British Library, 1986).

[16] Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction*, p. 337.

[17] Julie Rivkin, 'Doctoring the Text: Henry James and Revision', in David McWhirter, ed., *Henry James's New York Edition: The Construction of Authorship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), p. 145.

[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 David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, eds.. *The Book History Reader* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 225. Contra Foucault, Alexander Nehamas argues: 'What probably did occur at that time was the identification of the author-figure, which appeared in different forms at different times, with the actual historical agent causally and legally responsible for the text.' See Alexander Nehamas, 'What an Author Is', *The Journal of Philosophy* 83:11 (1986), p. 690.

[20] Eggert, p. 41.

[21] Rivkin, p. 143.

[22] Millgate, p. 62.

[23] Millgate, p. 78.

[24] Florence Emily Hardy, *The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840–1891* (London: Macmillan, 1928).

[25] *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, eds. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), II.93.

[26] Peter Robinson, 'Editing without Walls', *Literature Compass* 7:2 (2010), p. 58.

[27] Gabler, p. 46.

[28] Michael Best, 'Standing in rich place: electrifying the multiple-text edition or, every text is multiple', *College Literature* 36:1 (2009), p. 31.
[29] J. Hillis Miller, 'Fiction and Repetition: *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*', in A. W. Friedman, ed., *Forms of Modern British Fiction* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), p. 59.

THE 20TH INTERNATIONAL THOMAS HARDY CONFERENCE & FESTIVAL

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 Thomas. Discuss but do not dissect too much or that will spoil your enjoyment, and then take a walk into the countryside that inspired the work. Repeat with a poem or collection of poems. For any follower of 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 alternatives were available at the 20th Thomas Hardy Conference and Festival, held in Dorchester 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 attended enough to know that the magic never diminishes. I feel sure Hardy would have loved our conferences. And wouldn't he have roared with delight as the inimitable Posy Simmonds showed us her drawings for her *Guardian* literary supplement cartoon, 'Tamara Drewe', based on *Far from the Madding Crowd*, which was to become a crowd-pulling film. The film was a hoot, the cartoon was terrific and the talented Posy (I bet Hardy would envy her 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 Posy's characters.

I fear 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 workshop, to some of the quite superb papers given by postgraduate students from around the world. And probably the most popular event of the week, Tim Laycock and the New Scorpion Band. 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