



The Piping of the Shepherd: Meaning
as Myth in the Pastoral Novels of
Thomas Hardy.

by

David J. Biggs
B.A.(Hons) (Adelaide)

Submitted for the degree of
Master of Arts in the
Department of English
University of Adelaide
February, 1988.

CONTENTS

Summary	iv
Declaration	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Abbreviations	viii
<u>Introduction</u>	1
<u>Part 1: Hardy's Thought and Art</u>	
<u>1: Dualism and Hardy's Thought</u>	13
Distinction Between Man and Nature	16
Duality and the Recognition of Ambivalence	26
Transcendence of Dualism	34
<u>2: Narrative in Hardy's Novels</u>	40
Impressionism and Presence	41
Setting	46
Narrator's Knowledge	55
Narrative and Character	60
Descriptions of Character by Narrator	60
Point of View	66
<u>3: Meaning in Hardy's Novels</u>	71
Presence and Meaning	71
Story and Meaning	74
Discourse	78
Narrative Organisation	79
Narrative Commentary	82
Description	84
Story, Discourse, and Meaning	85
<u>Part 2: The Pastoral Novels of Thomas Hardy</u>	
<u>4: Under the Greenwood Tree</u>	91
<u>Under the Greenwood Tree</u> as Pastoral	91
Dick and Fancy	95
Maybold and the Quire	99
The Rural Community as Nature	103
Nature	108
Narrator and Characters	112
The Quire	113
Fancy	115
Maybold	118
Invasion as a Myth of Social Relations	120

<u>5: Far from the Madding Crowd</u>	128
<u>Far from the Madding Crowd</u> as Pastoral	128
Setting and the Rural-Urban Contrast	130
Oak's Relationship to Nature	133
Schematic Portrayal of Character	137
Boldwood	139
Bathsheba	143
Troy	150
Oak	156
Sympathy versus Judgement	160
<u>6: The Return of the Native</u>	168
<u>The Return of the Native</u> and Pastoral	168
I: Schematic Reading	170
Lawrence and Egdon	170
Character and Nature	175
II: "Alternative" Reading	182
Heath and Narrator	183
Heath and Character	184
Eustacia	185
Clym	192
Venn	197
Paganism of the Novel	202
<u>7: The Woodlanders</u>	206
<u>The Woodlanders</u> as Pastoral	206
Hintock and the Dual Perspective	207
Literal	209
Symbolic	210
Character as Reason-Passion	212
Giles Winterborne	213
Edred Fitzpiers	221
Grace Melbury	223
The "Unfulfilled Intention"	229
<u>Conclusion</u>	247
<u>Select Bibliography</u>	253
1: Works by Thomas Hardy	253
2: Biographical	254
3: Book Length Studies	255
4: Collections of Essays	258
5: Individual Essays	258
6: Other Works Cited	262

SUMMARY

The aim of the thesis is to demonstrate how narrative techniques in the pastoral novels of Thomas Hardy suggest initial schematic readings which on close analysis have the status of myth rather than truth. The argument falls into two parts.

First, it is suggested that the underlying basis of the schemes of the novels is to be found in the apparent dualism of Hardy's thought, which on closer reading is seen to be a representation of all-pervasive conflict rather than an account of its origin. The dualism of the human perspective is seen to be a function of man's limited knowledge, the notion of consciousness as foreign to the natural world being transcended by the notion of evolution of the "Immanent Will". The narrative techniques of Hardy's narrator are then shown to rely on a subjectivity which denies essential coherence in the texts. The contradictory aspects of narration undermine apparently clear schematic readings of the texts and lead to a recognition of essential conflict in the world of the novels. The initial reading retains the status of myth as a representation of conflict in simple binary terms, the reading process thus being analogous to the growth of Hardy's "philosophy".

The second part of the thesis consists of readings of Hardy's "pastoral" novels (Under the Greenwood Tree, Far from the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, and

The Woodlanders), demonstrating the breakdown of initial schematic readings in terms of nature and culture, simplicity and sophistication, and passion and reason. The dualism which underlies these readings and suggests classification of the novels as pastoral is also shown to become more explicitly central to the texts as the analogous divisions in the earlier novels are undermined. The reading of The Woodlanders shows it to be explicitly concerned with man's apparent dualism in terms of consciousness and unconsciousness, and with the failure of this concept to account for suffering in terms of origin. In the final analysis the novels suggest that man's reasoning is incapable of explanation, but is capable only of representation.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by any other person, except where due reference is made in the text.

I consent to this thesis being made available for photocopying and loan if accepted for the award of the degree.

Signed

Date 1 / 2 / 1988.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the staff of the Department of English for their help during research for this thesis. In particular, I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. David Smith and Mr. Tony Slade, for their patient assistance and advice, and especially for their own continuing enthusiasm for Hardy. I also thank other members of staff for their general friendliness and for their comments on aspects of parts of this thesis.

My deepest thanks are to my wife, Helen, for her patience and interest, both in discussing Hardy and in offering much constructive criticism of the thesis. Most of all I thank her for introducing me to Hardy.

ABBREVIATIONS

All references to Hardy's novels are to The New Wessex Edition of the Novels of Thomas Hardy, ed. P.N. Furbank et al., 14 vols (London: Macmillan, 1975). This edition was first published in paperback by Macmillan in 1974-5, and it should be noted that the pagination of the two forms varies, although the texts are the same.

References to the poetry are to The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy, ed. James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1976), and are by poem- rather than page-number.

The following abbreviations are used:

- CP -- The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy
FMC -- Far from the Madding Crowd
HE -- The Hand of Ethelberta
Jude -- Jude the Obscure
Life -- Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy 1840-1928 (London: Macmillan, 1962).
Mayor -- The Mayor of Casterbridge
RN -- The Return of the Native
Tess -- Tess of the d'Urbervilles
IM -- The Trumpet Major
IW -- The Woodlanders
UGT -- Under the Greenwood Tree