

"BALLAD NARRATIVE" TECHNIQUES
IN THOMAS HARDY'S "WESSEX" NOVELS

by

JOANNE LYNNE BOOTH

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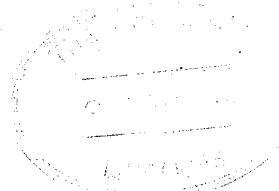
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Chapter I: Introduction

Various critical studies make a passing reference to the affinity of Thomas Hardy's "Wessex" novels with the structure of the traditional British ballad. For example, J.I.M. Stewart proposes that it "has become a critical commonplace that much incident and feeling in Hardy can be paralleled in the traditional ballads."¹ He goes on to state that "good critics may insist on the fabular basis of [The Mayor of Casterbridge] and its affinity with ballad"² No more is said on the subject, and thus, potentially promising material is discarded before the writer has taken advantage of the opportunity to develop it into an interesting topic. To my knowledge, no extensive study of the "Wessex" novels, from the point of view of their affinity with various aspects of the ballad, has ever been written. Donald Davidson, in his article concerning "The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction", offers a more detailed (though still undeveloped) comparison of Hardy's art and that of the traditional balladeer:

He wrote as a ballad-maker would write if a ballad-maker were to have to write novels³

The characteristic Hardy novel is conceived as a told (or sung) story it is an extension, in the form of a modern prose fiction, of a traditional

ballad or an oral tale. . . Hardy labours to establish, in his "Wessex", the kind of artistic climate and environment which enable him to handle his traditional story with conviction - a world in which typical ballad heroes and heroines can flourish with a thoroughly rationalized mythology to sustain them.⁴

The basis for the opinion that this statement of the affinity between the "Wessex" novels and the traditional ballad is "undeveloped" lies in the fact that even though a link is established between these two vastly different genres, no attempt is made to illustrate how the use of a "ballad-narrative" technique illuminates Hardy's novels, or augments our appreciation or understanding of them. It is the purpose of this thesis to present both a detailed study of the similarities between Hardy's "Wessex" novels and the British and Scottish ballads, and to illustrate how this affinity affects the artistic technique of the former. Although the world of ancient balladry may be seen to influence the "Wessex" novels in the realm of theme as well as technique, this thesis will be limited to a discussion of technique alone (most notably in the chapters dealing with fate and foreshadowing). The term "Wessex" first was employed by Hardy in Far From the Madding Crowd, to designate a legendary geographical area in England, and provide the setting from which the plot of the novel emerged.⁵

Those of Hardy's fictions that are most commonly accepted as being "Wessex" novels include Far From the Madding Crowd (1874), The Return of the Native (1878), The Life and Death of the Mayor

of Casterbridge (1886), and Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman (1891). Jude the Obscure (1895), while geographically a Wessex novel, has little in common with its predecessors, and I have elected to exclude it from this study because it does not lend itself favourably to a comparison with the traditional ballad, which relies chiefly on movement for its appeal. While the other four books depend on action for their main interest, with the entire sequence of events frequently hinging on a single incident (an unopened door, in the case of The Return of the Native), Jude is more of an in-depth psychological study. The chief focus is the state of mind of the protagonists, and the plot often serves to induce a lengthy description of the psychological effects of a certain event on either Jude or Sue Bridehead.

Hardy seems to have been acutely aware of the affinity of the four Wessex novels to be discussed in this thesis with the British ballad. Such similarities may be regarded as intentional on the part of the author, as J.I.M. Stewart, in his critical biography of Thomas Hardy, points out. Stewart states that "popular balladry and song had been around Hardy in childhood, and he himself frequently points out the affinity [between his novels and the traditional ballad] explicitly. . . ." ⁶ Bathsheba Everdene's singing the ballad of "The Banks of Allan Water", in Madding Crowd, is cited by Stewart as an example of this. Bathsheba's song anticipates the actual appearance of Sergeant

Troy in her life. The world of balladry and the events of the story become integrated and complementary to one another, for the events of the ballad influence the direction that the narrative of the novel will take. That Hardy was familiar with the old traditional ballads in his youth, and took great interest in them, is revealed by the "biographical", two volume study, The Life of Thomas Hardy⁷, attributed to Florence Emily Hardy, but believed to have been composed by Thomas Hardy himself. Hardy's mother "had an extraordinary store of local memories, reaching back to the days when the ancient ballads were everywhere heard at country feasts, in weaving shops, and at spinning wheels. . . ." ⁸ Young Thomas heard the old ballads sung, and he remembered "The Outlandish Knight" and "May Colvine" being rendered with great alacrity at harvest-supper dances.⁹ In 1871, Hardy spent several months in Dorset copying down "such snatches of old country ballads as he could hear from aged people."¹⁰ In all probability, Hardy planned to apply this research on the ballad to the writing of future works, such as the Wessex novels or various Wessex poems.

Bartlett Whiting, in his "Introduction" to the Croft edition of Traditional British Ballads, describes the somewhat elusive and undefinable ballad in the following manner:

A ballad is plain in diction and imagery, it tells an elemental story of universal appeal, it concentrates on a single incident, it is sparing in explanatory details and background, it often begins in medias res, it employs abrupt transitions, it makes free use of dialogue and calculated repetition. . . and it tells its

tale impersonally without author's asides or editorial comment. Generalizations. . . are rarely true, and definitions are often a Procrustean bed, so we must not be surprised...if exceptions...are shown. . . .¹¹

To this description of the ballad can be added another, by Thrall and Hibbard, in A Handbook to Literature:

Certain common characteristics of. . . early ballads should be noted: the supernatural is likely to play an important part in events, physical courage and love are frequent themes, the incidents are usually such as happen to common people. . . and often have to do with domestic episodes; slight attention is paid to character or description, transitions are abrupt, action is largely developed through dialogue, tragical situations are presented with the utmost simplicity. . . a single episode of highly dramatic nature is presented, and, often enough, the ballad is brought to a close with some sort of summary stanza.¹²

Obviously, not all of these characteristics apply to the genre of novel, especially to Hardy's Wessex novels. For example, concentration on a single incident, and the lack of emphasis on characterization or description, while very natural in the context of the relatively short ballad, cannot be included as successfully in a lengthy novel. Nevertheless, Hardy's novels, like the ballad, feature plain diction and imagery, the telling of a story of universal appeal (frequently involving wrongdoing and retribution, love and hatred) and extensive use of dialogue, and the importance of the supernatural element. Many of the features common to the traditional ballad also are incorporated into the Wessex novels: sharp delineation of scene (the description of Egdon Heath in Return of the Native), theme (the wronged maiden driven to kill and be killed in Tess), and a beginning

in medias res (Parson Tringham's meeting with John Durbeyfield, and his revelation of the latter's ancestry in Tess). Fate and foreshadowing, elements inherent in and important to both the ballad and Hardy's Wessex novels, surprisingly receive no mention in either of the preceding descriptions of the ballad. But an examination of the Child collection of The English and Scottish Popular Ballads reveals an extensive employment of the narrative techniques of foreshadowing, as well as the portrayal of the workings of chance and fate.¹³ Joseph Warren Beach, in The Technique of Thomas Hardy, comments that Hardy's "lavish use of accident is not unnatural. . . . He seems always to have been impressed with the tendency of circumstances to thwart happiness and the good intentions of men; and character and circumstance continue throughout his novels to collaborate in the production of tragedy."¹⁴ Consequently, Hardy's use of foreshadowing and fate is central to any investigation of the relationship between his novels and the traditional ballad.

One of the ways of determining how Hardy employs any of the ballad characteristics in his fiction (foreshadowing, for example) is to examine his narrative technique. As was stated earlier, one of the distinguishing characteristics of the ballad is the impersonal rendering of the tale, without any comments or asides on the part of the narrator. According to Wayne C. Booth, in The Rhetoric of Fiction¹⁵, "telling" in the process of narration has long been held inferior to the art of "showing". But

surely the kind and amount of commentary in a novel depends on the narrator himself, who may choose to combine telling and showing in varying proportions. Such is the case with ballad narrators as well as with the speakers in Hardy's novels. Hardy frequently has been considered to be a notably objective storyteller, or perhaps I should say that Hardy's "implied author" or "second-self" ("distinct from the real man. . . who creates a superior version of himself . . . as he creates his work")¹⁶ has been recognized for his seeming detachment in the process of narration. When Hardy or his narrator does intrude with commentary, it is often for the purpose of establishing a sense in the reader of foreshadowing action.

Reliable commentary may be used to inform the reader of facts of which he is not aware, but for the most part it is used to control the reader's expectations.¹⁷ For instance, the following quotation from Return of the Native, "Whether Eustacia was to add one other to the list of those who love too hotly to love long and well, the forthcoming event was certainly a ready way of proving"¹⁸, is an example of foreshadowing which leads the reader and shapes his expectations with regard to the course that the story will take. The same device is employed in numerous instances in the ballad, as an examination of "The Queen of Scotland", from the Motherwell Manuscript, will illustrate. While her king is absent, a queen invites young Troy Muir to share her bed. When he declines, the ill fortune that will befall the

youth is foreshadowed by the narrator's comment:

5 When that he had these words spoken,
She secretly did say,
Some evil she shall work, ¹⁹this man,
Before that it be day.

The queen sends Troy into her garden to lift a great stone, on the pretext that a fortune in gold lies beneath. It is not until seven stanzas later that Troy, removing the stone, comes to grief — fulfilling our expectations that he will be injured through the machinations of the queen:

12 He's taen the stane then by a ring,
And lifted manfullie;
A serpent that lang wanted meat
Round Troy Muir's middle did flee. ²⁰

In the interim between Troy's rejection of the queen and his being attacked by the snake, our expectations have been controlled by the device of foreshadowing as expressed by the narrator's "intrusion" into the tale. Suspense has been heightened by virtue of this technique, and interest in the story is sustained. The "audience" is encouraged to keep on listening (in the case of a ballad), or reading (if a novel is in question), to discover how the queen's avowed vengeance will be realized, or whether or not Eustacia will be a victim of an overly impassioned nature.

Just as foreshadowing is a technique employed by both ballad and novel narrators to manipulate their audiences, a description of the workings of fate can also be utilized as a means of controlling the reader's expectations and heightening his suspense. The prevalence of accident, chance, or fate is particular both to

the Wessex novels and to the ballad. The organization of fateful events is "positioned, timed, motivated and credibilized with an expertness leading us to accept each succeeding mischance as the necessary issue of the last."²¹ Hardy's characters repeatedly make an ill (rather than a wrong) choice, and frequently they make no choice at all. For example, in Madding Crowd, Bathsheba neither ultimately accepts nor rejects Boldwood's proposal subsequent to Troy's disappearance. Her ambivalent attitude toward his suit — her refusal to make a definite choice between accepting or spurning him — induces Boldwood to hope too much. And when Troy finally reappears, the shock of thwarted hope and desire is more than Boldwood's mind can sustain. The workings of chance and fate provide much by way of dramatic poignancy in an otherwise only interesting situation. In the "A" version of the Scottish ballad of "Child Maurice", for instance, the hero sends his page to the wife of John Steward, with tokens (a green mantle and a golden ring) and a plea to meet him in the silver wood. Steward overhears the conversation between Child Maurice's page and his wife, goes to the wood in her stead, and kills Child Maurice. He brings Maurice's head back to his wife and she dies of grief. So far, we have an interesting situation; but the real drama of the story lies in the fact that before dying, Steward's wife reveals to him that he has killed his only son — not her lover.²² It is the accident of circumstance — the chance occurrence that the man

Steward kills happens to be his only son -- that creates the sensational aspect of the tale.

Besides introducing fateful and chance occurrences into the plot to influence the course of events and heighten the tension, and controlling the reader's expectations through the judicious employment of foreshadowing techniques, both Hardy and the traditional balladeer make use of pathetic fallacy to heighten the impact of their narratives. Like foreshadowing and fate, pathetic fallacy (or the crediting of nature with human emotions) is not cited, in Whiting, Thrall and Hibbard, as one of the characteristics of the ballad; but an examination of the Child collection reveals that it plays a very prominent rôle in the traditional ballad as well as in the novel. In Kinloch's ancient Scottish ballad of "Bonnie Annie"²³, the guilty heroine, after stealing her parents' riches and eloping with her paramour, is confronted with a storm en route to Ireland. The raging of the churning and boiling seas reflects the guilty turmoil within Annie's own mind. Her guilt can be expiated only through sacrifice, and Annie yields her life to the sea.

The correspondence between the state of mind of a protagonist and external nature can thus be a very effective device in creating tension and shaping the course of the narrative. In Madding Crowd the narrator employs the following example of pathetic fallacy to foreshadow the turbulent storm that will threaten Bathsheba's harvest:

Time went on, and the moon vanished not to reappear. It was the farewell of the ambassador previous to war. The night had a haggard look, like a sick thing; and there came finally an utter expiration of air from the whole heaven in the form of a slow breeze, which might have been likened to a death.²⁴

Before proceeding into a discussion of the above-mentioned ballad characteristics in conjunction with the individual novels, it might be expedient to examine briefly what Hardy hoped to achieve by employing the techniques of the ballad narrator in his own stories. David Cecil, in his essay on "Hardy the Novelist", states that Hardy "liked a story to be a story. It should have a beginning and an end. It should be sufficiently unusual to arouse the interest of its hearers."²⁵ Hardy himself is quoted as saying that the purpose of fiction is "to give pleasure by gratifying the love of the uncommon in human experience"²⁶; and this he does by inserting into his stories instances of superstitious or supernatural import, in much the same way as does the traditional balladeer. To entertain, or "to give pleasure", is one important function of both the ballad and Hardy's novels. But besides giving pleasure to his readers, Hardy as a novelist is concerned with expressing his views on topics pertinent to the Victorian Period (such as the effects of urbanization on the rural population in Tess). This he does with the convincing impact of the balladeer's art. Hardy also strives to

create a structurally sound work of art that has the balance and logical progression that is inherent in the ballad. For example, The Return of the Native can boast both unity of place (Egdon Heath) and time (the action spans a year and a day).

All of the ballad characteristics that Hardy employs serve to fulfill the reader's expectations, as this novelist captures, holds, and augments his audience's interest in Far From the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge, and Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman.

Chapter II.

Far From the Madding Crowd, The Return of the Native, and The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge all evince, in numerous places, characteristics that are common to the ballad. These ballad traits have been sketched in the introductory chapter: sharp delineation of scene and background; pathetic fallacy, or the forging of sympathetic links between man and his environment; an extensive employment of the supernatural element and a heavy reliance on superstitious belief and ritual; the sharp twists and turns of the ballad narrative; incidents of a highly dramatic nature; and the narrative devices of fate and foreshadowing.

The opening stanzas of the traditional ballad frequently present a clearly-drawn description of the background or physical setting of a tale. This description can serve to inform us as to the season of the year, the state of the weather, the geographical or topographical location of the story, and even the time of day. These are all considered in the following illustrative opening lines of the ballad of "Jellon Grame", or "May-a-Row", as the "C" version to be considered here is called:

1 When spring appeared in all its bloom,
And flowers grew fresh and green,
As May-a-Row she set her down,
To lay gowd on her seam.

2 But word has come to that lady,
At evening when't was dark,
To meet her love in gude greenwood,
And bring to him a sark.

Hardy often uses the same technique. For example, early in Madding Crowd he presents a vivid portrayal of the setting:

It was nearly midnight on the eve of St Thomas's, the shortest day in the year. A desolating wind wandered from the north over the hill whereon Oak had watched the yellow waggon and its occupants in the sunshine of a few days earlier.

Norcombe Hill - not far from lonely Toller-Down - was one of the spots which suggest to a passer-by that he is in the presence of a shape approaching the indestructible as nearly as any to be found on earth. It was a featureless convexity of chalk and soil - an ordinary specimen of those smoothly-outlined protuberances of the globe which may remain undisturbed on some great day of confusion, when far grander heights and dizzy granite precipices topple down.

The hill was covered on its northern side by an ancient and decaying plantation of beeches, whose upper verge formed a line over the crest, fringing its arched curve against the sky, like a mane. Tonight these trees sheltered the southern slope from the keenest blasts, which smote the wood and floundered through it with a sound as of grumbling, or gushed over its crowning boughs in a weakened moan. The dry leaves in the ditch simmered and boiled in the same breezes, a tongue of air occasionally ferreting out a few, and sending them spinning across the grass. A group or two of the latest in date amongst the dead multitude had remained till this very mid-winter time on the twigs which bore them, and in falling rattled against the trunks with smart taps

The sky was clear - remarkably clear - and the twinkling of all the stars seemed to be but throbs of one body, timed by a common pulse. The North Star was directly in the wind's eye, and since evening the Bear had swung round it outwardly to the east, till he was now at a right angle with the meridian. A difference

of color in the stars - oftener read of than seen in England - was really perceptible here. The sovereign brilliancy of Sirius pierced the eye with a steely glitter, the star called Capella was yellow, Aldebaran and Betelgueux shone with a fiery red.²⁸

Besides providing us with pertinent facts regarding the terrain of the world of the novel, this description of the hill helps to establish a feeling of the serenity and isolation inherent in the grand aspects of "nature in the raw" - in all its majestic ruggedness. Sharp delineation of scene helps to depict character as well, in Madding Crowd. For example, Gabriel Oak, "an old-world shepherd. . . of pagan simplicity" is set amidst "romantic scenes redolent of Elizabethan pastoral life, and is surrounded by a picturesque background group of rustics, against whom Gabriel is in relief."²⁹ In Madding Crowd, scene or background becomes an integral part of the novel. Every incident is set against a landscape, and the narrative "marks time with the farming year."³⁰ And as was mentioned earlier, the entire first chapter of Return of the Native is devoted to a detailed and clearly-drawn description of Egdon Heath. The general trend that the chapter will follow is anticipated by the opening lines:

A Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath embrowned itself moment by moment. Overhead the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was as a tent which had the whole heath for its floor.

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation, their meeting-line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast

the heath wore the appearance of an installment of night which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come: darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky.³¹

Closely integrated in this description of the setting of the story are evidences of pathetic fallacy, wherein the heath is transformed into a "living being" with a distinct personality:

The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening; it could in a like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread

The place became full of a watchful intentness now; it seemed slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could await one last crisis — the final overthrow.³²

Hardy's use of pathetic fallacy in the Wessex novels serves to intensify the mood of the stories; Nature is seen as a "titanic form, a pagan personality, now quiescent, now rebellious, reflecting man's moods, defying him and inciting him to further revolt against inscrutable forces. Then when the elemental and emotional fury has abated, the succeeding lull is depicted. . . by scenes of tranquility and subdued emotion. . . ."³³

As a final example of the ballad characteristic of sharp delineation of scene, an illustrative passage from The Mayor of Casterbridge will be cited, wherein the narrator demonstrates his skill in presenting a succinct picture of the countryside through which the man with his ballad sheet, his wife, and child wearily progress.

The wife mostly kept her eyes fixed ahead, though with little interest - the scene for that matter being one that might have been matched at almost any spot in any county in England at this time of the year; road neither straight nor crooked, neither level nor hilly, bordered by hedges, trees, and other vegetation, which had entered the blackened-green colour that the doomed leaves pass through on their way to dingy, and yellow, and red. The grassy margin of the bank, and the nearest hedgerow boughs, were powdered by the dust that had been stirred over them by hasty vehicles, the same dust as it lay on the road deadening their footfalls like a carpet; and this, with the aforesaid total absence of conversation, allowed every extraneous sound to be heard.³⁴

In this example, and in numerous others, Hardy's "figures are always seen against a landscape, and the nature of that landscape will always have some effect. . . on the human actors."³⁵ Background is often symbolic. In this particular passage from Mayor of Casterbridge, the unmitigated "sameness" of the landscape is representative of the apathetic boredom of the two weary travellers, who journey side by side but share no feelings of companionship. Thus, by sharply delineating the scene from which the action evolves, the narrator subtly informs us of the sombre gloominess that envelops his characters and sets the mood for the forthcoming events that include the drunken sale of the young woman and baby by her husband.

Superstitious beliefs and supernatural occurrences figure largely in the traditional ballad. In the first, second, and fifth volumes of the Child collection of ballads, the most notable works dealing with magical phenomena fall roughly into three main categories: (1) ballads focussing upon mystical tokens

that have the power to alter with the changing emotions of the possessor ("Hind Horn", "The Boy and the Mantle", and "Bonny Bee Hom"); (2) ballads featuring transformations of shape, especially into birds ("The Twa Magicians", "The Bonny Birdie", and "The Gay Goss-Hawk"); (3) and ballads that describe commerce between the living and dead, or between mortals and members of fairyland ("King Orfeo", "The Queen of Elfan's Nourice", "Clerk Colveill", "Thomas Rymer", "Proud Lady Margaret", "Fair Margaret and Sweet William", "Sweet William's Ghost", "The Unquiet Grave", "The Wife of Usher's Well", and "The Suffolk Miracle"). An examination of "The Twa Magicians" will serve for illustrative purposes, as it embodies elements of the supernatural as well as the light touch of humour that often accompanies unearthly occurrences in Hardy's Wessex novels.

- 1 The lady stands in her bower door,
As straight as willow wand;
The blacksmith stood a little forebye,
Wi hammer in his hand.
- 2 'Weel may ye dress ye, lady fair,
Into your robes of red;
Before the morn at this same time,
I'll gain your maidenhead.'
- 3 'Awa, awa, ye coal-black smith,
Woud ye do me the wrong
To think to gain my maidenhead,
That I hae kept sae lang!'
- 4 Then she has hadden up her hand,
And she sware by the mold,
'I wudna be a blacksmith's wife
For the full o a chest o gold.

5 'I'd rather I were dead and gone,
And my body laid in grave,
Ere a rusty stock o coal-black smith
My maidenhead should have.'

6 But he has hadden up his hand,
And he sware by the mass,
'I'll cause ye be my light leman
For the hauf o that and less.'

O bide, lady, bide,
And aye he bade her bide;
The rusty smith your leman shall be,
For a' your muckly pride.

7 Then she became a turtle dow,
To fly up in the air,
And he became another dow,
And they flew pair by pair.
O bide, lady, bide, &c.

8 She turned hersell into an eel,
To swim into yon burn,
And he became a speckled trout,
To gie the eel a turn.
O bide, lady, bide, &c.

9 Then she became a duck, a duck,
To puddle in a peel,
And he became a rose-kaimed drake,
To gie the duck a dreel.
O bide, lady, bide, &c.

10 She turned hersell into a hare,
To rin upon yon hill,
And he became a gude grey-hound,
And boldly did he fill.
O bide, lady, bide, &c.

11 Then she became a gay grey mare,
And stood in yonder slack,
And he became a gilt saddle.
And sat upon her back.
Was she wae, he held her sae,
And still he bade her bide;
The rusty smith her leman was,
For a' her muckle pride.

- 12 Then she became a het girdle,
And he became a cake,
And a' the ways she turned hersell,
The blacksmith was her make.
Was she wae, &c.
- 13 She turnd hersell into a ship,
To sail out ower the flood;
He ca'ed a nail instill her tail,
And syne the ship she stood.
Was she wae, &c.
- 14 Then she became a silken plaid,
And stretchd upon a bed,
And he became a green covering,
And gained her maidenhead.
Was she wae, &c.³⁷

The fact of the lady's shape-changing, and the smith's counter-ing moves, is ample proof of the supernatural element inherent in this popular tale which appears in slightly altered versions in diverse languages.

The airing of superstitious beliefs among the rural folk may function as a type of foreshadowing (as in the case of Tess, to be discussed in the following chapter), but more frequently it serves to provide a touch of country flavour and humour to a situation and to furnish an intense or serious plot with a welcome oasis of comic relief. Joseph Poorgrass is the chief superstitious character in Madding Crowd, and once we are acquainted with his somewhat simple and fearful character, his forebodings seem as silly chatterings of a weak person rather than harbingers of pending evil:

'What a night of horrors!' murmured Joseph Poorgrass, waving his hands spasmodically. 'I've had the news-bell ringing in my left ear quite bad enough for a murder, and I've seen a magpie all alone!'³⁸

Christian Cantle is a more exaggerated counterpart of Joseph, in Return of the Native. Very early in the story, we discover the circumstances of Christian's birth which, being believed by him, have gone into shaping his timid and foolish character:

'But she [Mother] couldn't tell when [I was born] , save her life, except that there was no moon.'

'No moon: that's bad. Hey, neighbours, that's bad for him!'

'Yes, 'tis bad,' said Grandfer Cantle, shaking his head.

'Mother know'd 'twas no moon, for she asked another woman that had an almanac, as she did whenever a boy was born to her, because of the saying, "No moon, no man," which made her afeared every man-child she had. Do ye really think it serious, Mister Fairway, that there was no moon?"

'Yes; "No moon, no man." 'Tis one of the truest sayings ever spit out. The boy never comes to anything that's born at new moon. A bad job for thee, Christian, that you should have showed your nose then of all days of the month.'³⁹

Christian's claim to have witnessed inexplicable phenomena is a product of his fear and natural susceptibility to country superstitions:

'Coffins, where?' inquired Christian drawing nearer. 'Have the ghost of one appeared to anybody, Master Fairway?'

'No, no. Don't let your mind mislead your ears, Christian; and be a man,' said Timothy reproachfully.

'I will,' said Christian. 'But now I think o't my shadder last night seemed just the shape of a coffin. What is it a sign of when yourshade's like a coffin, neighbours? It can't be nothing to be afeared of, I suppose.'⁴⁰

Examples of superstition and the supernatural element appear with great frequency in Return of the Native, as well. For example,

Miss Eustacia Vye, by virtue of her elected isolation, awe-inspiring physical beauty, and "strangeness", is suspected by her neighbours of being a witch. Susan Nonsuch, one of the heath-folk, becomes convinced that Eustacia has put a curse on her young son. In an attempt to counteract the "malign spell", Susan undertakes to create a wax effigy of the supposed tormenter, complete with dark dress, scarlet "choker", sandals, and black snood. The voodoo-doll figure is then permeated with pins, and the entire bristling horror is immersed in a roaring turf fire:

And while she stood thus engaged there came from between her lips a murmur of words.

It was a strange jargon - the Lord's Prayer repeated backwards - the incantation usual in proceedings for obtaining unhallowed assistance against an enemy. Susan uttered the lugubrious discourse three times slowly, and when it was completed the image had considerably diminished. As the wax dropped into the fire a long flame arose from the spot, and curling its tongue around the figure eat [sic] still further into its substance; a pin occasionally dropped with the wax, and the embers heated it red as it lay. ⁴¹

Along the same macabre vein is the description, in Mayor of Casterbridge, of the Amphitheatre in which Henchard is to meet his long estranged wife. An aura of sinister foreboding envelops the spot like a nimbus, and causes considerable unease to any person forced to sojourn there. The facts of the Amphitheater's lugubrious history are reminiscent of the spectacular events featured in an old ballad of the hair-raising variety.

... for scores of years the town-gallows had stood at the

corner; ... in 1705 a woman who had murdered her husband was half-strangled and then burnt there in the presence of ten thousand spectators. Tradition reports that at a certain stage of the burning her heart burst and leapt out of her body, to the terror of them all, and that not one of the ten thousand people ever cared particularly for hot roast after that. In addition to these old tragedies, pugilistic encounters almost to the death had come off down to recent dates in that secluded arena [S]ome old people said that at certain moments in the summer time, in broad daylight, persons sitting with a book or dozing in the arena had ... beheld the slopes lined with a gazing legion of Hadrian's soldiery as if watching the gladiatorial combat; and had heard the roar of their excited voices; that the scene would remain but a moment, like a lightning flash, and then disappear.⁴²

Henchard is presented as a superstitious man, and his visit to the weather-prophet, while being a somewhat ludicrous action for a man of the Mayor's steel-like temperament to engage in, is not entirely unexpected. Henchard's "crown piece" elicits the following forecast from the prophet:

'By the sun, moon, and stars, by the clouds, the winds, the trees, and grass, the candle-flame and swallows, the smell of the herbs; likewise by the cats' eyes, the ravens, the leeches, the spiders, the dung-mixen, the last fortnight in August will be - rain and tempest.⁴³

All this seems to be a supernatural prophecy to Henchard, along with the old weather-man's "mysterious" knowledge of the Mayor's name. Although we probably could explain away the old man's acquaintance with certain facts (he could have seen Henchard abroad in the countryside, and inquired regarding his identity; also, living in such close harmony with Nature, the prophet conceivably may have learned to read the signs that are visible to the trained eye — signs which act as harbingers of tempests or

floods), Henchard is considerably steeped in the beliefs of his age and environment, and attributes the old man's knowledge to supernatural influences. The Mayor endeavours to convince himself that he does not believe the silly superstitions, but his thoughts following his visit to the weather-prophet, and the seeming disapproval of the old man's forecast, reveal otherwise:

'I wonder,' he asked himself with eerie misgiving; 'I wonder if it can be that someone has been roasting a waxen image of me, or stirring an unholy brew to confound me! I don't believe in such power; and yet - what if they should ha' been doing it!' ... These isolated hours of superstition came to Henchard in times of moody depression when all his practical largeness of view had oozed out of him. ⁴⁴

Superstitions and the rôle of the supernatural figure largely in the lives of Hardy's country folk as well as in the world of the traditional ballad. They serve the purpose of furnishing a quaint touch to the story, and provide a delightful ripple of terror to men of all eras, who have experienced a common compelling pre-occupation with matters of magic.

A ballad tells a story as briefly as possible, and if the story is a simple one, the stanzas of the ballad will follow logically and not give the impression of drastic condensation. But in the case of a more complex tale, the narrator must exclude certain portions — either leaving them up to our imaginations, or furnishing implausible or baffling motives and consequences. The sharp twists and turns of the ballad narrative are especially noticeable in the latter instance. For example, in the

"B" version of "Bonny Barbara Allen" (sometimes called "Barbara Allen's Cruelty"), no reason is given for Barbara's harsh treatment of the young man. Her hard-heartedness is confusing, and her hasty repentance and remorseful death are downright surprising. An examination of the actual ballad may reveal how the story-teller presents his tale, with its hair-pin turns of events:

- 1 In Scarlet Town, where I was bound,
There was a fair maid dwelling,
Whom I had chosen to be my own,
And her name it was Barbara Allen.
- 2 All in the merry month of May,
When green leaves they was springing,
This young man on his death-bed lay,
For the love of Barbara Allen.
- 3 He sent his man unto her then,
To the town where she was dwelling:
'You must come to my master dear.
If your name is Barbara Allen.
- 4 'For death is printed in his face,
And sorrow's in him dwelling:
And you must come to my master dear,
If your name be Barbara Allen.'
- 5 'If death be printed in his face,
And sorrow's in him dwelling:
Then little better shall he be
For bonny Barbara Allen.'
- 6 So slowly, slowly she got up,
And so slowly she came to him,
And all she said when she came there,
Young man, I think you are a dying.
- 7 He turnd his face unto her then:
'If you be Barbara Allen,
My dear,' said he, 'come pitty me,
As on my death-bed I am lying.'

- 8 'If on your death-bed you be lying,
What is that to Barbara Allen?
I cannot keep you from your death;
So farewell,' said Barbara Allen.
- 9 He turned his face unto the wall,
And death came creeping to him:
'Then adieu, adieu, and adieu to all,
And adieu to Barbara Allen!'
- 10 And as she was walking on a day,
She heard the bell a ringing,
And it did seem to ring to her
'Unworthy Barbara Allen.'
- 11 She turned herself round about,
And she spy'd the corps a coming:
'Lay down, lay down the corps of clay,
That I may look upon him.'
- 12 And all the while she looked on,
So loudly she lay laughing,
While all her friends cry's out amain,
'Unworthy Barbara Allen!'
- 13 When he was dead, and laid in grave,
Then death came creeping to she:
'O mother, mother, make my bed,
For his death has quite undone me.
- 14 'A hard-hearted creature that I was,
To slight one that lov'd me so dearly;
I wish I had been more kinder to him,
The time of his life when he was near me.'
- 15 So this maid she then did dye,
And desired to be buried by him,
And repented her self before she dy'd,
That ever she did deny him.⁴⁵

The most notable of the "hair-pin" turns in the narrative is found in Barbara's amazingly hasty repentance for her treatment of the dying man, and her own unbelievably rapid demise. The bulk of the tale focusses on Barbara's "cruelty", so her change of heart comes as a jolting surprise. Barbara must have enter-

tained at least a jot of sympathy, or at least interested curiosity, to bestir herself to visit the dying man; therefore, her ringing laugh in the face of his torment provides another shocking twist in the narrative, and serves to heighten the poignancy of the ballad.

A similar skillful twist is executed by the narrator of Mayor of Casterbridge, in the twenty-ninth chapter. Henchard has finally cornered Lucetta, his former mistress, and is trying to extract from her a promise to wed him. Lucetta's reply is probably as staggeringly unexpected to the reader as it is to Henchard:

'I cannot!' she insisted desperately.

'Why? When I have only within these few minutes released you from your promise to do the thing offhand.'

'Because - he was a witness!'

'Witness? Of what?'

'If I must tell you - . Don't don't upbraid me!'

'Well! Let's hear what you mean? [sic]'

'Witness of my marriage - Mr. Gower was!'

'Marriage?'

'Yes. With Mr. Farfrae. O Michael! I am already his wife. We were married this week at Port-Bredy. There were reasons against our doing it here. Mr. Gower was a witness because he happened to be at Port-Bredy at the time.'

Henchard stood as if idiotized. She was so alarmed at his silence that she murmured something about lending him sufficient money to tide over the perilous fortnight.

'Married him?' said Henchard at length. 'My good - what, married him whilst - bound to marry me?'⁴⁶

In this instance, the function of the narrator's employment of the device of sharply "twisting and turning" the events of the story, is to entertain through the elements of surprise and curiosity, leading to heightened interest. The narrator also es-

establishes a new springboard for the action, which can take off in a new and often totally unexpected direction.

Besides presenting sharp twists and turns in his narrative, the traditional balladeer, according to the previously cited definitive statement by Thrall and Hibbard, includes "episode[s] of highly dramatic nature." "Dramatic", in this context, most probably would refer to vivid incidents of a highly theatrical, often unusual, and memorable nature. For illustrative purposes there follows the "A" version of the Seventeenth Century ballad of "The Twa Sisters".

- 1 There were two sisters, they went playing,
With a hie downe downe a downe-a
To see their father's ships come sayling in.
With a hy downe downe a downe-a.
- 2 And when they came unto the sea-brym,
The elder did push the younger in.
- 3 'O sister, sister, take me by the gowne,
And drawe me up upon the dry ground.'
- 4 'O sister, sister, that may not bee,
Till salt and oatmeale grow both of a tree.
- 5 Somtymes she sanke, and somtymes she swam,
Until she came unto the mill-dam.
- 6 The miller runne hastily downe the cliffe,
And up he betook her withouten her life.
- 7 What did he doe with her breast-bone?
He made him a violll to play thereupon.
- 8 What did he doe with her fingers so small?
He made him peggs to his violll withall.
- 9 What did he doe with her nose-ridge?
Unto his violll he made him a bridge.

- 10 What did he doe with her veynes so blew?
He made him strings to his violll thereto.
- 11 What did he doe with her eyes so bright?
Upon his violll he played at first sight.
- 12 What did he doe with her tongue so rough?
Unto the violll it spake enough.
- 13 What did he doe with her two shinnes?
Unto the violll they danc'd Moll Syms.
- 14 Then bespake the treble string,
'O yonder is my father the king.'
- 15 Then bespake the second string,
'O yonder sitts my mother the queen.'
- 16 And then bespake the strings all three,
'O yonder is my sister that drowned mee.'
- 17 'Now pay the miller for his payne,
And let him bee gone in the divel's name.'⁴⁷

This ballad features two "dramatic" incidents, although one is undoubtedly subordinate to, or less intense than, the other. The miller's utilization of various parts of the younger sister's body to make his violll is an unusual, and vividly portrayed incident. But the chief dramatic situation, which makes the tale memorable, is the theatrical and emotionally-intense minute in which the violll makes its confounding revelation. Such an incident stands out from the story, gives it its individuality, and makes it more memorably entertaining.

Equally, or even more intensely, dramatic situations are portrayed in Hardy's Wessex novels. The famous description of the dice game between Wildeve and the Reddleman, in which the latter wins the fortune that the former had acquired by ignoble means

from a simpleton, is an excellent example to cite in Return of the Native. Although too lengthy to record in its entirety, there follows a sample portion that is representative of the dramatic quality of the entire passage:

Ten minutes passed away. Then a large death's head moth advanced from the obscure outer air, wheeled twice round the lantern, flew straight at the candle, and extinguished it by the force of the blow. Wildeve had just thrown, but had not lifted the box to see what he had cast; and now it was impossible.

'What the infernal!' he shrieked. 'Now, what shall we do? Perhaps I have thrown six - have you any matches?'

'None,' said Venn.

'Christian had some - I wonder where he is. Christian!'

But there was no reply to Wildeve's shout, save a mournful whining from the herons which were nesting lower down the vale. Both men looked blankly round without rising. As their eyes grew accustomed to the darkness they perceived faint greenish points of light among the grass and fern. These lights dotted the hillside like the stars of a low magnitude.

'Ah - glowworms,' said Wildeve. 'Wait a minute. We can continue the game.'

Venn sat still, and his companion went hither and thither till he had gathered thirteen glowworms - as many as he could find in a space of four or five minutes - upon a foxgrove leaf which he had pulled for the purpose. The reddlemen vented a low humorous laugh when he saw his adversary return with these. 'Determined to go on, then?' he said drily.

'I always am!' said Wildeve angrily. And shaking the glowworms from the leaf he ranged them with a trembling hand in a circle on the stone, leaving a space in the middle for the descent of the dice-box, over which the thirteen tiny lamps threw a pale phosphoric shine. The game was again renewed. It happened to be that season of the year at which glowworms put forth their greatest brilliancy, and the light they yielded was more than ample for the purpose, since it was possible on such nights to read the handwriting of a letter by the light of two or three....⁴⁰

The chief "technical" value of this scene lies in the undeniable fact of its strangeness, which makes it all the more inter-

esting and memorable to the reader. The narrator effectively contrasts the "obsessed intensity of passion animating the characters" and the "tranquil rural night scene under the open sky, with no other human sound... within miles."⁴⁹ He creates a series of "pictures" to tell his story; this is most advantageous, for it helps to establish the atmosphere quickly, and keep our attention engaged. We mentally view a scene, such as the night gambling tableau, and immediately question ourselves regarding its import.⁵⁰ Once curiosity is excited, we are compelled to read on to find the answers.

A situation of intensely dramatic import furnishes Madding Crowd with what is considered to be one of the high points or "peaks" in the narrative. I speak, of course, of the scene in which Bathsheba, candle in hand, pries open the coffin of Fanny Robin to ascertain whether or not the dead woman shares her final resting place with another body — that of a young babe, begotten by Bathsheba's husband, Troy. The incident is recorded in the chapter entitled "Fanny's Revenge":

'Would to God you would speak and tell me your secret, Fanny! ...O, I hope, hope it is not true that there are two of you! ... If I could only look upon you for one little minute, I should know all!'

A few moments passed, and she added, slowly, 'And I will.' Bathsheba in times after could never gauge the mood which carried her through the actions following this murmured resolution on this memorable evening of her life. At the end of a short though undefined time she found herself in the small room, quivering with emotion, a mist before her eyes, and an excruciating pulsation in her brain, standing beside the uncovered coffin of the girl whose conjectured end had so entirely engrossed her, and saying to herself in a husky

voice as she gazed within -

'It was best to know the worst, and I know it now!'

She was conscious of having brought about this situation by a series of actions done as by one in an extravagant dream; of following that idea as to method, which had burst upon her in the hall with glaring obviousness, by gliding to the top of the stairs, assuring herself by listening to the heavy breathing of her maids that they were asleep, gliding down again, turning the handle of the door within which the young girl lay, and deliberately setting herself to do what, if she had anticipated any such undertaking at night and alone, would have horrified her, but which, when done, was not so dreadful as was the conclusive proof of her husband's conduct which came with knowing beyond doubt the last chapter of Fanny's story.

Bathsheba's head sank upon her bosom, and the breath which had been bated in suspense, curiosity, and interest, was exhaled now in the form of a whispered wail: "Oh-h-h!" she said, and the silent room added length to her moan.

Her tears fell beside the unconscious pair in the coffin....

The narrator of Madding Crowd evokes a strange and ominous atmosphere in this passage, which is fraught with tension, fear, and uncertainty. The technique by which he achieves this is similar to that of the traditional balladeer. Both narrators achieve their "extraordinarily vivid visualizations mainly in two ways. First of all, their sheer ability to picture their scene completely, and make use of arresting similes."⁵² Although this particular passage from Madding Crowd does not particularly illustrate the second narrative device (i.e. utilization of surprising and original comparisons), a brief excerpt from the following chapter will be cited for illustrative purposes. In the scene between Troy and his wife over Fanny's coffin, Bathsheba flees to a nearby thicket and spends the night there. Upon waking, she inspects her surroundings and is horrified to discover "fungi [that] grew in all

manner of positions from rotting leaves and tree stumps, some exhibiting to her listless gaze their clammy tops, others their oozing gills. Some were marked with great splotches as red as arterial blood. . . ."⁵³ The vividness of this quotation lies in the strangeness of its comparisons between the fungi and "oozing gills" or "arterial Blood". David Cecil comments that Hardy's fancy is of a Gothic nature, and always runs to strangeness.⁵⁴

Besides employing techniques that are common to the ballad (such as the above mentioned presentation of "dramatic" incidents), Hardy's narrators cite snatches of ballads outright, and reinforce our awareness of the similarities between the Wessex novels and the traditional British and Scottish ballads. This overt mentioning of ballad verses serves to add a subtle touch of country flavour to the stories, to heighten the poignancy of an already emotional event (for example, Farfrae's singing of a ballad that awakens remorse in the revenge-driven Henchard), or to foreshadow events that will come to pass.

In the section describing "The Custom of the Country" in Return of the Native, the countryfold flitting around the leaping, roaring bonfire are treated to a ballad by the ancient Granfer Cattle:

'The king' call'd down' his no'-bles all,
By one, by two, by three;
Earl Mar-shal, I'll go shrive' the queen,
And thou' shalt wend' with me.

'A boon, a boon, quoth Earl Mar-shal,

And fell on his bend-ded knee,
That what-so-e'er the queen shall say,
No harm there-of may be.⁵⁵

This same old codger is the one to suggest that he and his cronies go to "wish joy" to the supposedly newly-wed Thomasin and Wildeve. When the others dissent, the exuberant, sprightly gentleman exclaims:

'No? Now, I thought we must. I must, or 'twould be very unlike me - the first in every spree that's going!
"Do thou put on a fri-ar's coat,
And I'll put on a-no-ther,
And we will to Queen Ele-anor go,⁵⁶
Like Fri-ar and his bro-ther."

Besides lending an aura of "country-feeling" to the Wessex tales, the rendering of a ballad verse by one of the characters can provide a touch of humour or comic relief to a situation. For example, just before Bathsheba's singing of the prophetic "The Banks of Allan Water", Joseph Poorgrass attempts to make his own contribution to the merriment:

'Now, Joseph, your song, please,' said Bathsheba, from the window.

'Well, really, ma'am,' he replied, in a yielding tone, 'I don't know what to say. It would be a poor plain ballet of my own composure.'

'Hear, hear' said the supper-party.

Poorgrass, thus assured, trilled forth a flickering yet commendable piece of sentiment, the tune of which consisted of the key-note and another, the latter being the sound chiefly dwelt upon. This was so successful that he rashly plunged into a second in the same breath, after a few false starts:

I sow-ed th'-e.....

I sow'-ed.....

I sow-ed the'-e seeds of love.

I-it was all I'-in the'-e spring,

I -in A'-pril, Ma'-ay, a-nd sun'-ny June,

When sma'-all bi'-irds they do sing.

'Well put out of hand,' said Coggan, at the end of the verse. 'They do sing' was a very taking paragraph. 'Ay; and there was a pretty place at "seeds of love", and 'twas well heaved out. Though "love" is a nasty high corner when a man's voice is getting crazed...'⁵⁷

The narrator skillfully follows this humorous situation with a description of Bathsheba, performing one of her favourite ballads. The lyrics of the song become even more meaningful if we recall them at a later date, when Bathsheba's entanglement with Sergeant Troy reaches its tragic dénouement.

In The Mayor of Casterbridge, Donald Farfrae wins his way into the hearts of the patrons of the Three Mariners by his emotional rendering of a ballad:

'It's hame, and it's hame, hame fain would I be,
O hame, hame, hame to my ain countree!
There's an eye that ever weeps, and a fair face will be fain,
As I pass through Annan Water with my bonnie bands again;
When the flower is in the bud, and the leaf upon the tree,
The larks shall sing me hame to my ain countree!'

...Young Farfrae repeated the last verse. It was plain that nothing so pathetic had been heard at the Three Mariners for a considerable time. The difference of accent, the excitability of the singer, the intense local feeling, and the seriousness with which he worked himself up to the climax, surprised this set of worthies, who were only too prone to shut up their emotions with caustic words.⁵⁸

Farfrae (and the narrator) know just how effectively a well-chosen ballad can express the sentiments of the singer, for the immediate attraction between the young Scotsman and Elizabeth-Jane is sentimentalized by the former through the medium of a ballad - to the confusion (and delight) of the latter:

When confronting her he smiled; and then, with the manner of a temporarily light-hearted man, who has started himself on

a flight of song whose momentum he cannot readily check, he softly tuned an old ditty that she seemed to suggest -

'As I came in my bower foor,
As day was waxin' wearie,
Oh wha came tripping down the stair
But bonnie Peg my dearie.'⁵⁹

By the overt mentioning of traditional ballads and the incorporation of them into the Wessex novels, Hardy's narrators establish a sense of continuity between past and present — the world of ancient balladry and that of the Wessex peasantry become fused and intermingled. And so it seems as though the inhabitants of Wessex, with their imperviousness to change, are an extension of — or perhaps even become — the ballad heroes and heroines about whom they sing.

Foreshadowing is another rhetorical device employed by the balladeer to manipulate his audiences by controlling suspense and shaping their expectations. Omens and premonitions on the part of the ballad protagonists are both included under the more general heading of foreshadowing. For example, excerpts from "Sir Patrick Spens" and "Lord Lovel" will be cited to illustrate the effectiveness of the narrator's strategic use of foreshadowing techniques (omens and premonitions, respectively):

- 3 The king has written a braid letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spence,
Was walking on the sand.
- 4 The first line that Sir Patrick red,
Aloud lauch lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

- 5 'O wha is this has don this deid,
This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yier,
To sail upon the se!
- 6 'Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
Our guid schip sails the morne:'
'O say na sae, my master deir,
For I feir a deadlie storme.
- 7 'Late late yestreen I saw the new moone,
Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
That we will cum to harme.'
- 8 O our Scots nobles we richt laith
To weet their cork-heild schoone;
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
Their hats they swam aboone.⁶⁰

Both Sir Patrick (as is evinced by his tears and reproachful words) and one of his sailors have a distinct feeling of unease upon being informed of the king's mission. The omen that is observed by the sailor is taken very seriously by him; it should not be dismissed by us either, for in a ballad (which features economy of words) every detail is significant. In "Lord Lovel", Nanciebel's statement that "seven, seven, seven long years" are far too long for her to wait foreshadows the actual turn of events. Lovel's premonition supports her haunting, repetitive plaint.

- 1 Lord Lovel stands at his stable-door,
Mounted upon a grey steed,
And bye cam Ladie Nanciebel,
And wished Lord Lovel much speed.
- 2 'O whare are ye going, Lord Lovel?
My dearest, tell unto me:'
'I am going a far journey,
Some strange countrey to see.

3 'But I'll return in seven long years,
Lady Nanciebel to see.'
'O seven, seven, seven long years,
They are much too long for me.'

* * * * *

4 He was gane about a year away,
A year but barely ane,
Whan a strange fancy cam intill his head
That fair Nanciebel was gane.

5 It's then he rade, and better rade,
Untill he cam to the toun,
And there he heard a dismal noise,
For the church bells au did soun.

6 He asked what the bells rang for;
They said, It's for Nanciebel;
She died for a discourteous squire, 61
And his name is Lord Lovel

In Hardy's Wessex novels, foreshadowing serves a similar purpose to the one that is outlined above in connection with the ballad. In Far From the Madding Crowd, one of Hardy's earliest novels, the technique of foreshadowing is not developed to as great an extent as it is in its successors, such as The Mayor of Casterbridge or Tess, but it nevertheless is an important feature of the work. Bathsheba's playful courting of Farmer Boldwood, and the tragic outcome of her thoughtless action, is hinted at quite early in the novel, as the narrator drops a word here, a line there (from his all-seeing, omniscient vantage point as story-teller), to whet our anticipation of future events: "Luckily for [Bathsheba's] present, unluckily for her future tranquility, her understanding had not yet told her what Boldwood was."⁶² Bathsheba had no way of knowing of the violent passions

that lurked dormant in the nature of this placid, undemonstrative farmer. Boldwood's suit for Bathsheba is interrupted by the arrival into the latter's life of the dashing and romantic Sergeant Troy. We are led to suspect the forthcoming liason between Bathsheba and Troy when the heroine sings the ballad "The Banks of Allan Water" - the events of which song come to parallel the state of affairs in her personal life:

She stood up in the window-opening, facing the men, the candles behind her, Gabriel on her right hand, immediately outside the sash-frame.... Her singing was soft and rather tremulous at first, but soon it swelled to a steady clearness. Subsequent events caused one of the verses to be remembered for many months, and even years, by more than one of those who were gathered there:

For his bride a soldier sought her,
And a winning tongue had he:
On the banks of Allan Water
None was gay as she! 63

Boldwood's furious threats against Troy's life occur frequently enough, and at strategically placed intervals, to convince us of their sincerity. There should be no difficulty on the part of the reader in correctly ascertaining the fate of Sergeant Frank Troy, when Boldwood cries:

' . . . I hope he may not return just yet. I pray God he may not come into my sight, for I may be tempted beyond myself. O, Bathsheba, keep him away - yes, keep him away from me!' 64

Troy accurately perceives that "upon [his] heart, women will be the death of [him] !" ⁶⁵ But when her husband is reported drowned, Mrs. Bathsheba Troy has a premonition that this is not so: "As if endowed with the spirit of prophecy, Bathsheba gasped out, 'No, it is not true; it cannot be true!' ⁶⁶ In view of the narrator's

broad hint, "as if endowed with the spirit of prophecy . . .", we too echo Bathsheba's avowal that "it is not true", for Troy could not have been claimed by the river when his fate was to lie in the hands of Boldwood, as the narrator has led us to expect. It is therefore no great surprise to learn that Troy is alive, and that he will reappear as suddenly into the life of Bathsheba as he first appeared many years ago. Troy's ultimate end is foreshadowed by a premonition he experiences, just prior to his astounding arrival at Boldwood's Christmas party:

'H'm, yes. I expect I shall not be a very welcome guest if he has her there,' said the sergeant, with a slight laugh. 'A sort of Alonzo the Brave; and when I go in the guests will sit in silence and fear, and all laughter and pleasure will be hushed, and the lights in the chamber burn blue, and the worms - Ugh, horrible! - Ring for some more brandy, Pennyways, I felt an awful shudder just then! . . . * 67

Troy's arrival at the party does create the stir that he had predicted, but after the initial shock has abated, and he tries to force Bathsheba to leave with him, there comes the dramatic climax that the narrator has conditioned us to anticipate:

The scream had been heard but a few seconds when it was followed by a sudden deafening report that echoed through the room and stupefied them all. The oak partition shook with the concussion, and the place was filled with grey smoke.

In bewilderment they turned their eyes to Boldwood. At his back, as he stood before the fireplace, was a gun-rack, as is usual in farmhouses, constructed to hold two guns. When Bathsheba had cried out in her husband's grasp, Boldwood's face of gnashing despair had changed. The veins had swollen, and a frenzied look had gleamed in his eye. He had turned quickly, taken one of the guns, cocked it, and at once discharged it at Troy.

Troy fell. The distance apart of the two men was so small that the charge of the shot did not spread in the

least, but passed like a bullet into his body. He uttered a long guttural sigh — there was a contraction — an extension — then his muscles relaxed, and he lay still. 68

Boldwood's murdering of Troy was an expected event, yet his own frenzied attempt to commit suicide may prove somewhat confusing unless we recall Troy's question about Boldwood earlier in the novel:

'Oh, Coggan,' said Troy, as if inspired by a recollection, 'do you know if insanity has ever appeared in Mr. Boldwood's family?'

Jan reflected for a moment.

'I once heard that an uncle of his was queer in his head, but I don't know the rights o't,' he said. 69

Like the balladeer, Hardy's narrator does not include details of this nature unless they have a significant bearing on the story. The fact that Boldwood's death sentence is commuted when he is judged insane supports Troy's offhand query, which can be regarded as an example of indirect foreshadowing.

The colour "red" first appears as a foreshadowing device in Far From the Madding Crowd. It is woven throughout the course of the novel as a minor theme, and serves the same emphasizing function as does the repetition of words, key phrases, or entire stanzas in the ballad. Colour is described with great frequency in traditional ballads, but green, rather than red, seems to be the predominating hue. When reds, scarlets, or crimsons are described in ballads as well as in Hardy's novels, it is usually to signify a malignant influence and often represents violence, passion, blood, or death. For example, "The Cherry Tree Carol" is

a ballad which features a dialogue between Joseph and Mary of Galilee, concerning the fact that Mary is carrying a child that is not her husband's. She requests that Joseph pluck her one cherry "as red as the blood". The colour red in the ballad is associated with the violence of Joseph's jealousy, the blood-letting connected with the supposedly violated maidenhead, the actual fruit on the branches, and the prophesied or foreshadowed bloody Passion of Good Friday.

Young Johnstone, in the ballad by that name, kills a young "Colonel" [sic] that refuses to wed Johnstone's sister. This "bloody squire" with "bloody, bloody hawks" and "bloody hounds" is betrayed by his lover for £9000. He stabs her through the heart, and watches "the red, red drops o [her] bonny heart's blood/Rin trinkling down [her] knee" ⁷⁰ Again, violence, treachery, and murder are the leitmotifs of the ballad. The repetition of the descriptive adjectives "bloody" and "red" serve to guide our expectations regarding the direction the story will take.

As a final example, excerpts from the "A" version of the broadside or stall copy of "Fair Margaret and Sweet William" will be examined. When William jilts his love, Margaret, to marry another woman, he fancies that Margaret comes to him in a dream-wishing him joy in his wedded life and forecasting her own sudden death. William is troubled by this dream -- this "spiritual meet-of souls" -- and reveals the highlights of the dream to his new

bride:

- 8 'I dreamd a dream, my dear lady;
Such dreams are never good;
I dreamd my bower was full of red swine,
And my bride-bed full of blood.' 71

The dream in its entirety foreshadows Fair Margaret's death, and William's own grief-induced demise. The tradition of the (red) rose and brier, signifying passion, true lover, and death, winds up the ballad:

- 18 Margaret was buried in the lower chancel,
Sweet William in the higher;
Out of her breast there sprung a rose,
And out of his a brier.
- 19 They grew as high as the church-top,
Till they could grow no higher,
And then they grew in a true lover's knot,
Which made all people admire. 72

In Madding Crowd, Bathsheba Everdene, when we first encounter her, is described in terms of the colour "red". The "sun lighted up to a scarlet glow the crimson jacket she wore."⁷³ Her countenance is susceptible to rather becoming blushes on certain occasions, and the encounter with Oak provokes a hue of "the deepest rose-colour":

From the Maiden's Blush, through all varieties of Provence down to the Crimson Tuscany, the countenance of Oak's acquaintance quickly graduated" 74

Bathsheba's association with the colour red is not an accident on the part of the narrator, for this device is used as well in the other Wessex novels to foreshadow the heroine's involvement with tragedy and blood-letting (especially in the case of Tess). Bath-

sheba's careless action of sending the valentine to Farmer Boldwood serves as a catalyst to a chain of events which terminates in the death of Frank Troy and the incarceration of Boldwood. The fateful valentine features a jingle that includes mention of a red rose, and it is closed with "a large red seal" that is emblazoned with the words, "Marry Me". The description of the valentine is followed by the narrator's hint: "So very idly and unreflectingly was this deed done. Of love as a spectacle Bathsheba had a fair knowledge; but of love subjectively she knew nothing."⁷⁵

Boldwood's receipt of the playfully-intended valentine, with the insistent red seal, is not as lighthearted as Bathsheba would have hoped. The glow of a "beaming fire of aged logs" illuminates the scarlet heart, "till the large red seal became as a blot of blood on the retina of his eye"⁷⁶ The association of the heart with blood is a skillful example of the foreshadowing of the sanguine events to follow.

Hardy's speakers frequently describe fire, which is emblematic of the colour red, and therefore of violence or passion, in conjunction with a sinister or tragic occurrence. The negative aspects of the event are transferred to the often innocuous fire, which is presented as a malignant force with, in certain cases, an impish or evil will of its own. The portrayal of the burning ricks, in the sixth chapter of Madding Crowd, illustrates this point in a limited manner:

This before Gabriel's eyes was a rick of straw, loosely put together, and the flames darted into it with lightning swiftness. It glowed on the windward side, rising and falling in intensity, like the coal of a cigar. Then a superincumbent bundle rolled down, with a whisking noise; flames elongated, and bent themselves about, with a quiet roar, but no crackle. Banks of smoke went off horizontally at the back like passing clouds, and behind these burned hidden pyres, illuminating the semi-transparent sheet of smoke to a lustrous yellow uniformity. Individual straws in the foreground were consumed in a creeping movement of ruddy heat, as if they were knots of red worms, and above shone imaginary fiery faces, tongues hanging from lips, glaring eyes, and other impish forms, from which at intervals sparks flew in clusters like birds from a nest. 77

The preponderance of red images is carried over into The Return of the Native, and also functions as a foreshadowing device. Very early in the novel, the portrayal of Eustacia Vye as "Queen of Night" is fraught with examples of the colour red used in conjunction with the idea of tempestuous passion. Her violent death in the freezing waters is foreshadowed by the scarlet images that are associated with her. The first full description of Eustacia is studded with images of fire, and beautiful and precious objects:

Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression Her presence brought memories of such things as Bourbon roses, rubies, and tropical midnights 78

Foreshadowing also takes the form of omens in Return of the Native. Clym Yeobright has a slightly distorted intuition of the events that occur while he is asleep, when Eustacia fails to admit her mother-in-law — precipitating the latter's death from a combination of exhaustion, a snake bite, and a broken heart. He

reveals to Eustacia that he has had a dream:

'It was about my mother. I dreamt that I took you to her house to make up differences, and when we got there we couldn't get in, though she kept on crying to us for help. However, dreams are dreams' 79

The dream device serves a similar function earlier in the story, when Eustacia envisions that a silver-armoured knight in her subconscious thoughts is Clym Yeobright. The fact that the idol-like figure falls to pieces is a significant example of foreshadowing, in view of the fact of Eustacia's subsequent disillusionment with Clym.

There was, however, gradually evolved from its transformation scenes a less extravagant episode, in which the heath dimly appeared behind the general brilliancy of the action. She was dancing to wondrous music, and her partner was the man in silver armour who had accompanied her through the previous fantastic changes, the visor of his helmet being closed. The mazes of the dance were ecstatic. Soft whispering came to her ear from under the radiant helmet, and she felt like a woman in Paradise. Suddenly these two wheeled out from the mass of dancers, dived into one of the pools of the heath, and came out somewhere beneath into an iridescent hollow, arched with rainbows. 'It must be here,' said the voice by her side, and blushing up she saw him removing his casque to kiss her. At that moment there was a crackling noise, and his figure fell into fragments like a pack of cards.

She cried aloud, 'O that I had seen his face!'
Eustacia awoke. The crackling had been that of the window-shutter downstairs, which the maid-servant was opening to let in the day 'O that I had seen his face!' she said again. 'Twas meant for Mr. Yeobright!' 80

Fate, and chance or accident play a prominent rôle in the other Wessex novels as well as in the traditional ballads. The balladeer employs the device of describing occurrences of fateful events (a favourite "tool of the trade") to complicate his

plot and heighten the interest of the reader. The early Eighteenth

Century ballad of "Babylon; or The Bonny Banks O Fordie" will be examined as an illustration of how the narrator relies on the occurrence of a fateful event to provide the emotional impact of the story. Three sisters encounter a banished man while they are picking flowers along the banks of a river. He admits that he is a robber, and threatens the eldest sister with death unless she marries him. When the lady refuses, the robber stabs and "lay [s] her by/For to bear the red rose company." The second sister rejects the robber as well, and meets the same end. A surprise awaits the "rank robber" when he accosts the youngest maiden:

- 11 He's taken the youngest ane by the hand.
And he's turned her round and made her
stand.
- 12 Says, 'Will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife?'
- 13 'I'll not be a rank robber's wife,
Nor will I die by your wee pen-knife.
- 14 'For I hae a brother in this wood.
And gin ye kill me, it's he'll kill thee.'
- 15 'What's thy brother's name? come tell to
me.'
'My brother's name is Baby Lon.'
- 16 'O sister, sister, what have I done!
O have I done this ill to thee!
- 17 'O since I've done this evil deed,
Good sall never be seen o me.'
- 18 He's taken out his wee pen-knife
And he's twyned himsel o his ane sweet life. 81

It is indeed a fateful incident that the "banisht-man" turns out

to be the long lost Babylon. This surprise element has altered the expected direction of the narrative (i.e. that the youngest girl would be murdered like her sisters), and has kept the interest of the audience. Suspense has been heightened through the introduction of the unusual into the tale. This has been achieved by the narrator's effective manipulation of the technical device of describing the workings of fate, as is evinced by the robber's discovery that the youngest of the maidens whom he has accosted is a relative of his. Hardy's narrator employs the same technique with a comparable degree of skill, but before examining pertinent examples from various Wessex novels, it is necessary first to determine exactly what is meant by "fate" in Hardy's narratives. According to H. C. Duffin, there is, in Hardy's novels, "a power—conscious or unconscious, personal or impersonal— that controls, influences, or at least hampers and hinders the doings of man."⁸² This power is designated as the "Immanent Will", an unconscious force "knowing neither good nor evil and gradually becoming aware of itself."⁸³ Duffin proposes that because not many readers could comprehend this view, Hardy used the old, readily accepted formula of "God as Fate, as Providence, as something to be circumvented or endured."⁸⁴ Since Fate is really an abstraction, it must be personified so that it can play an active part in a human drama. Hardy embodies Fate in various forms. David Cecil, in Hardy the Novelist, proposed that Hardy incarnates Fate as (1) a natural force (eg. the weather, when Henchard's plans are ruined

by a bad harvest), (2) a weakness of character (Eustacia's passionate, discontented temperament), and (3) chance and love.⁸⁵ For example, past actions - usually connected with love - are revealed by chance with tragic results. (Henchard's relationship with Susan and the subsequent sale is made public by the furmity woman, when she is by the merest chance brought before him to be tried for a public offence). Coincidences and chance are seen, by Albert Pettigrew Elliott, as manifestations of the Immanent Will, or "Fate"; they are not Fate itself.⁸⁶ Chance is "the power behind accidental happenings",⁸⁷ and Coincidence, "the noticeable or surprising concurrences of events."⁸⁸ Hardy's narrator uses these forces "not so much to interpret the unrelenting trend of his action, but to further it."⁸⁹ In referring to the numerous and varied events that are encompassed by chance, coincidence, or accident as manifestations of "Fate" (or the "great impersonal, primitive force, existing from all eternity, absolutely independent of human wills, superior even to any god whom humanity may have invented"⁹⁰ , I shall employ the term Fateful Incident.

In Madding Crowd one of the first major fateful incidents is Fanny Robin's mistaking All Souls Church for All Saints. This error is sufficient to wreck completely the lives of Boldwood, Troy and Fanny herself, and postpone the joy of two more. The fateful incident of Clym Yeobright's returning to Egdon Heath affects the futures of five people, in Return of the Native. It

serves to transfer Eustacia's affections from Wildeve to Clym, and Wildeve's back to Thomasin temporarily, for he still nurses a passion for Eustacia. Clym's return and his involvement with Eustacia causes a breach between him and his mother, which terminates in the death of the latter when she is denied admittance to the house in which her son lies in a deep sleep of exhaustion, and her daughter-in-law is closeted with her former lover, Wildeve. The examples cited from these two novels share a common purpose - to further the action. The element of surprise, as a result of fateful incident, can also be employed to carry the action. For example, the intermittent appearances of the furmity woman in Casterbridge disturb the course of events and redirect the narrative onto a new track. Our first encounter with this odious creature is at Weydon-Priors Fair, where she makes a living by peddling a concoction of grain, flour, currants, milk, and raisins that has been surreptitiously and generously laced with rum. This "spiking" of the furmity results in the inebriation of Michael Henchard, and the sale of his wife and infant daughter to a passing sailor. Twenty years later, the old crone again appears on the scene to furnish Susan and Elizabeth-Jane Newson with information regarding the whereabouts of their "relative", Michael Henchard. This revelation drastically alters the life of Henchard for the worse, as the reappearance of his family into his life marks the beginning of a downhill trend in his fortunes. Henchard sinks even lower after the furmity woman divulges the Mayor's

shameful, carefully preserved secret of the sale of his family, when she is brought before him in a court of justice. Henchard's honour will not allow him to deny the old woman's charge, and this results in his expulsion from the office of Mayor, as well as Lucetta's final abandonment of him. Thus, the appearances on the scene of the firmity woman at inopportune moments provide effective surprises that alter the direction of the narrative. This device serves to maintain (and augment) interest in the story and to charm the reader; it also functions as a unifying technique. For in the Early Life, Hardy is quoted as saying that "in a work of art it is the accident which Charms" ⁹¹, and to charm his audience was obviously one of Hardy's aims as a story-teller.

In The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge, Hardy quotes Novalis's contention that "Character is Fate." This view is certainly applicable in the case of Michael Henchard, for, as Arthur Mc Dowall states in Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study, Henchard's character is his fate. ⁹² The Mayor may choose safety or destruction according to his own free will; he chooses the latter, and the fateful incidents that ensue are his "reward". It is Henchard's own impulsive and forceful nature that induces him to use all his convincing charm to persuade Farfrae to remain in Casterbridge as his manager:

'Well, here's success to 'ee,' said Henchard, holding out his right hand and leaning with his left upon the wicket which protected the descent. In the act there was the elegance of one whose feelings are nipped and wishes defeated. 'I shall often think of this time, and of how you came at the

very moment to throw a light upon my difficulty.'

Still holding the young man's hand he paused, and then added deliberately: 'Now I am not the man to let a cause be lost for want of a word. And before ye are gone for ever I'll speak. Once more, will ye stay? There it is, flat and plain. You can see that it isn't all selfishness that makes me press 'ee; for my business is not quite so scientific as to require an intellect entirely out of the common. Others would do for the place without doubt. Some selfishness perhaps there is; it isn't for me to repeat what. Come bide with me - and name your own terms. I'll agree to 'em willingly and 'ithout a word of gainsaying; for, hang it, Farfrae, I like thee well!'

The Scotsman's hand remained steadily in Henchard's for a moment or two. He looked over the fertile country that stretched beneath them, then backward along the shaded walk reaching to the top of the town. His face flushed.

'I never expected this - I did not!' he said. 'It's Providence! Should any one go against it? No; I'll not go to America; I'll stay and be your man!' 93

The bond between the two men becomes so strong that Henchard unwisely confides to Farfrae the events of his past (omitting names, of course). The result of this confidence can be seen as follows:

On Henchard's part there was now again repose; and yet, whenever he thought of Farfrae, it was with a dim dread; and he often regretted that he had told the young man his whole heart, and confided to him the secrets of his life

On this account Henchard's manner towards Farfrae insensibly became more reserved 94

Thus emerge the beginnings of a passionate, one-sided feud that will blossom to as great an intensity as that of the former impulsive friendship. Henchard's fiery temper and his ability to nurse an unrelenting grudge gradually lead him to loath Farfrae as intensely as he had in the past loved him. This gnawing hatred eventually distorts Henchard's character; his actions become irrational and overly-hasty. His rejection of the weather prophet's advice (which leads to a premature sale of his harvest at a tre-

mendous financial loss) is an example of this. For according to Mc Dowall, "the strength of nature that gave stability to others was reversed in [Henchard] and became turbulence instead of calm."⁹⁵ The fateful incidents resulting from hasty actions that are the outcome of Henchard's forceful and impulsive character are integral to the structure of the novel, i.e. Hardy's drama turns on the conflict between man and the impersonal forces conditioning his fate. Henchard's is an internal struggle - the instinct of natural generosity, honesty, and lovingness against the fatefully destructive elements in his character - impetuosity, jealousy, and a ready temper. "Character and fatality are displayed in so close an inter-digitation that the inevitability of the tragedy seems to assert itself again and again as we read."⁹⁶ The effect of employing fateful incidents as one of the technical devices to further the action of the novel depends on the skill of the storyteller, and in the case of Hardy, "the organization of the novel as a dramatic spectacle is very notable indeed."⁹⁷ Each fateful incident follows as a natural and necessary issue of the preceding events, and the story progresses in a logical, step-by-step fashion to its inevitable conclusion.

And if they know my lot; and how
She feels who milks my favourite cow,
And takes my place at churn!

It wears me out to think of it,
To think of it;
I cannot bear my fate as writ,
I'd have my life unbe;
Would turn my memory to a blot,
make every relic of me rot,
My doings be as they were not
And gone all trace of me!

Thomas Hardy, Collected Poems.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman,⁹⁸ one of Hardy's

finest novels, has much in common with the traditional ballad. This is the book in which the devices of fate and foreshadowing, two of the most important elements featured in the ballad, in my opinion, are most fruitfully employed. Thus, these two narrative techniques will be discussed with greater detail in Tess than in any of the preceding novels. Besides fate and foreshadowing, included in Tess are all of the numerous ballad characteristics found in the other Wessex novels: sharp delineation of scene; abrupt twists in the narrative; direct citing of actual ballads; and pathetic fallacy.

Tess, like its predecessors, features the sharp twists and turns of ballad narrative. For exemplary purposes, there follows a brief examination of an incident that occurs near the end of "The Maiden". One minute, Tess is walking home with her fellow workers from an evening of merriment in Chaseborough. Most of the company is tipsy, a condition which rapidly turns into an ugly mood in the case of Car Darch. Car, the "Queen of Spades", loathes Tess for supplanting her in the affections of Alec, and she uses the excuse of Tess's laughing at her to

provoke a fight. In a split second, the laughing, jovial crowd becomes divided into two warring factions—one for and one against Tess. Alec then unexpectedly appears and whisks Tess away from the squabbling mob, on his horse. And thus, the stage is set for the night in the woods, and Tess's seduction. The narrator has shifted rapidly from one incident to another—each with its own particular mood which is often antithetical to the preceding one. The laughing joviality of Tess's companions offers an effective contrast to their open hostility, which is provoked by our heroine's foolish and too inclusive reference to them as a "whorage". Tess's feeling of primitive fear is juxtaposed with her giddy exhilaration and sense of triumphant relief when the narrator executes another "twist" in his story—making Alec arrive on the scene in the somewhat surprising rôle as saviour.

As in the previously discussed Wessex novels, snatches of ballads are cited outright in Tess. Joan Durbeyfield rocks her infant to sleep with ballad songs of seduction, adultery, and despair—such as "The Spotted Cow", for example: "I saw her lie do-own in yon-der green gro-ve;/Come, love, and I'll tell you where"(p. 20). Tess's friends make use of a ballad to tease her when she returns home with a fatherless child:

Tess's female companions sang songs, and showed themselves very sympathetic and glad at her reappearance out-of-doors, though they could not refrain from mischievously throwing in a few verses of the ballad about the maid who went to the merry green wood and came back a changed state (p. 118).

Once again the narrator calls our attention to the similarities between the world of ancient balladry and that of the Wessex peasants, which is a "primal world of love and grief, of omen and song."⁹⁹ In Tess, this artistic ploy serves the purpose of effectively reinforcing the differences between the traditionally-rooted quality of Wessex and the rapidly changing, modernized, "outside" world. We are being made aware gradually that Wessex, too, is subject to change. The effects of industrialization and urbanization are being experienced (by people like Tess) as the "ache of modernism",¹⁰⁰ and we begin to realize that the world of the ballad is rapidly passing away. This idea is central in the Wessex novels, but especially in Tess, for Hardy is concerned with the social problems of the time as well as with creating a structurally pleasing work of art that has many of the characteristics of ancient balladry.

Another ballad trait that Tess shares with the other novels is a clearly-cut portrayal of scene and background. The physical settings in Tess have a symbolic value, which is constituted "by the response required of the characters themselves in their relationship with the earth."¹⁰¹ Irving Howe elaborates on the symbolic value of physical setting in Tess by comparing the structure of this novel with a journey, at which each place of rest, with its particular scenery, becomes a test for the heroine. For example, a certain response--that of courage, fortitude, and patient endurance--is demanded of Tess during her residence at Flintcomb Ash, which is described to us in sharp detail in

order that the hardships that Tess is to experience there may be more real, more easily imagined, and more firmly rooted in the earth itself:

Here the air was dry and cold, and the long cart-roads were blown white and dusty again within a few hours after rain. There were few trees or none, those that would have grown in the hedges being mercilessly plashed down....

...Before her, in a slight depression, were the remains of a village. She had, in fact, reached Flintcomb Ash.... There seemed to be no help for it; hither she was doomed to come. The stubborn soil around her showed plainly enough that the kind of labour in demand here was of the roughest kind....[I]t began to rain (pp. 360-361).

A vastly different and contrasting stage of the journey is depicted by a clearly-cut portrayal of scene in the description of Talbothays Dairy, with its lush and fertile "verdant plains", ethereal, bracing air, and crystalline waters that are "clear as the pure River of Life". Tess's response to the atmosphere of The Valley of the Great Dairies is a feeling of peace and rebirth, which blossoms into a passionate and idyllic love. The narrator's sharp delineation of scene establishes a mood of tranquility and lazy sensuousness "that we assume to be ultimate or final, until it is shattered by a contrasting yet related scene having its own seeming finality."¹⁰² For exemplary purposes, one only has to contrast the joys of courtship at Talbothays with the horror of Tess's and Angel's wedding night. Tess's confession of her seduction, Angel's response of stupifaction and growing horror, and the aura of panic-stricken helplessness are all indelibly stamped in our minds by virtue of the unexpectedness of the whole scene. By preceding the wedding-night tableau with scenes redolent

of peace and happiness, the narrator imbues each contrasting "stage" of Tess's journey with a feeling of controlled dramatic impact. According to Albert J. La Valley, another purpose of the narrator in moving from one clearly-depicted scene to a contrasting one is to establish a sense of progression and maturation. These shifting scenes "bring the occasions of Tess's growth" and "point toward the ambivalent vision of life and nature at the novel's center."¹⁰³

Closely related to the ballad characteristic of sharp delineation of scene and background is the device of pathetic fallacy, whereby Nature is invested with human attributes and sensibilities. The following passage from the nineteenth chapter exemplifies this trait, which is (as was previously established) also common to the ballad:

The floating pollen seemed to be his notes made visible, and the dampness of the garden the weeping of the garden's sensibility. Though near nightfall, the rank-smelling weed-flowers glowed as if they would not close for intentness, and the waves of colour mixed with the waves of sound (p. 160).

This bestowing of human emotions on scenes of Nature is used very effectively by the narrator of Tess for the following purposes: it helps to establish quickly the atmosphere and mood of the tableau, and imbue it with a sense of palpitating emotion. The overgrown garden is transformed figuratively into a fairyland paradise; this reinforces Tess's own sense of enchantment and awe which is beginning to merge with scarcely realized feelings of physical and spiritual attraction toward Angel Clare.

Besides sharing with the other Wessex novels the ballad characteristics of sharp transitions, overtly mentioned ballad verses, clearly-cut portrayal of scene, and pathetic fallacy, Tess is especially notable for its numerous instances of foreshadowing--which take the form of omens, premonitions, and constantly recurring "motifs". Foreshadowing plays a very prominent rôle in the traditional ballad, as is exemplified by "The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry", in which the "Finn", or magical shape-changing seal, has a premonition of his son's and his own death:

- 6 An it sall come to pass on a simmer's day,
When the sin shines het on evera stane,
That I will tak my little young son,
An teach him for to swim the faem.

- 7 An thu sall marry a proud gunner,
An a proud gunner I'm sure he'll be,
An the very first schot that ere he schoots^{sa}
He'll schoot baith my young son and me.

There are a number of foreshadowing motifs, inherent in Tess, that help to reinforce the idea of a deterministic universe. These serve as an integrating factor in the novel, and are reminiscent of the constantly recurring ballad refrain. The colour "red"(as was mentioned in connection with ballad and novel in the preceding chapter), with its multitudinal and multidirectional implications, such as blood, violence, and passion, is chief among these motifs. It is closely connected with omens--a property of the supernatural that is featured in a ballad like "The Unquiet Grave". In this ballad, the fact that the hats of the

wife's three sons are of "birk", which is unseasonal in November (and which grows "at the gates o Paradise"), is an omen indicating that the boys' appearance is of a ghostly nature. The youths are not of flesh and blood, as their mother believes, but are only spectral visitants to their former abode.

We first encounter the "red" colour motif in connection with Tess, who is engaged in the ancient fertility rite of "club walking". All of the totally female group are clad in white, but Tess stands out from the rest by virtue of the red ribbon in her hair. She was "the only one of the white company who could boast such a pronounced adornment"(p. 10). The colour red recurs in a more sinister aspect when the Durbeyfield horse is fatally pierced by the shaft of a fleeting mail-cart, and his vital life blood spurts in a pulsing geyser onto the dusty, dawn-cold road:

In her despair Tess sprang forward and put her hand upon the hole, with the only result that she became splashed from face to skirt with the crimson drops. Then she stood helplessly looking on(p. 36).

The huge pool of coagulating blood offers a stark and horrifying image, with the prismatic colours that glance off it and seem to suggest the buzzing, iridescent flies that undoubtedly soon will be swarming over the bloated carcass of the horse. In this instance, Hardy's narrator uses the colour motif to augment the horror of the scene, and to intensify the atmosphere of death and decay. There is a profusion of "red" imagery in the description of Tess's arrival at the Stoke-D'Urberville estate. Even at this early stage in the novel, the bloody and tempestuous relationship be-

tween Tess and Alec is foreshadowed by the contrasting of the vital green hues with the passionate red ones:

The crimson brick lodge came first in sight, up to its eaves in dense evergreens. . . . It was of recent erection. . . and of the same rich red colour that formed such a contrast with the evergreens of the lodge. Far behind the corner of the house, which rose like a red geranium bloom against the subdued colours around, stretched the soft azure landscape of The Chase. . . . (p. 43).

Alec, the master of this estate, is quite enchanted by his fetching "cousin", and plies her with succulent scarlet strawberries and red roses. His eyes are riveted to her seductively mature figure, which contradicts the innocence and inexperience of her youth. Alec is described as the "blood-red ray in the spectrum of her young life"--not at all a flattering distinction, if one divines the narrator's meaning correctly (p. 48). When returning home from her excursion to Trantridge, Tess is accidentally pricked on the chin by the thorn of a scarlet rose that Alec had placed at her breast (p. 51). It draws blood, which Tess takes to be an ill omen. This incident helps to prepare us for a future scene of blood-letting, in which Alec is fatally stabbed by a distraught Tess.

A red ribbon again decks Tess's luxurious tresses when Joan adorns her daughter like the proverbial "fatted calf", subsequent to Tess's summons to Trantridge regarding employment on the D'Urberville estate (pp. 57-58). Tess protests that she is going to work there and need not arrive as a fashion plate, but Joan soon persuades her daughter to undergo a beautifying process, for, as

was remarked earlier, Tess may be "queer", but "tractable at bottom"(p. 30). The colour red again crops up in the section entitled "The Rally". During Tess's residence at Talbothays, there is the incident in the garden where Tess overhears Angel playing on his harp, and creeps closer so that she may listen undetected. In the process, she becomes besmirched with "sticky blights" that "made madder stains on her skin"(p. 60)—foreshadowing the blood that eventually is to stain her hands when she murders Alec. The colour motif is also evident in the scene following Angel's unexpected return to the dairy after a short journey home to disclose to his parents his love for Tess. He surprises Tess descending from her nap to commence skimming. "She was yawning, and he saw the red interior of her mouth as if it had been a snake's" (p. 219). The reference to the serpent calls to mind both Keats's Lamia, and the reptile of Eden; and Angel and Tess, in their pre-dawn excursions at the dairy, are not infrequently equated with Adam and Eve. Tess again is cast as Eve and Alec as "the old Other One, come to tempt [her]" by the red glow of the fire in the plot-burning scene of "The Convert"(p. 450).

The "red" imagery reaches its climax in "The Consequence", on Tess's and Angel's honeymoon, when the former sits, jewel-spangled, before the fire—prior to Angel's confession:

A steady glow from the now flameless embers painted the sides and back of the fireplace with its colour, and the well-polished andirons, and the old brass tongs that would not meet. The underside of the mantle-shelf was flushed with the high-coloured light, and the legs of the table nearest the fire. Tess's neck and face re-

flected the same warmth; which each gem turned an Aldebaran or a Sirius--a constellation of white, red, and green flashes, that interchanged their hues with her every pulsation(p. 287).

The harmless phenomenon of the fire in the grate seems to become even more lurid and horrifying after Tess's revelation:

Their hands were still joined. The ashes under the grate were lit by the fire vertically, like a torrid waste. Imagination might have beheld a Last-Day luridness in this red-coaled glow, which fell on his face and hand, and on hers, peering into the loose hair about her brow, and firing the delicate skin underneath. A large shadow of her shape rose upon the wall and ceiling. She bent forward, at which each diamond on her neck gave a sinister wink like a toad's. . .(p. 290).

The inevitable dénouement of Tess is foreshadowed when Alec, a convert no longer, pesters her to leave Flintcomb Ash and return to him. Tried beyond patience, Tess passionately cracks her leather glove across Alec's face:

Fancy might have regarded the act as the recrudescence of a trick in which her armed progenitors were not unpracticed. Alec fiercely started up from his reclining position. A scarlet oozing appeared where her blow had lighted, and in a moment the blood began dropping from his mouth upon the straw. . .(pp. 426-427).

This incident sets the stage for the final scene between Tess and Alec, in which she plunges a knife into his heart:

[The landlady]glanced casually over the ceiling [and was]arrested by a spot in the middle of its white surface which she had never noticed there before. It was about the size of a wafer when she first observed it, but it speedily grew as large as the palm of her hand, and then she could perceive that it was red. The oblong white ceiling, with this scarlet blot in the midst, had the appearance of a gigantic ace of hearts (p. 496).

Tess, the "queen of hearts"(including Alec's, Angel's, and many other country lads') is ultimately out-trumped by the telltale

red "ace" that resigns her to the hangman.

Besides the colour red, other peripheral foreshadowing "motifs" include the mistletoe, the tomb, and the mysterious D'Urberville Coach (all of which are connected with the idea of death). By Alec's home in The Chase (a tract of forest land), "druidical mistletoe was still found on aged oaks" (p. 44). It is in these woods that Tess's life takes a turn for the worse when Alec has his way with her. That the mistletoe was a symbol of the Druids is not mentioned without purpose by the narrator, for Tess lies as a sacrifice on a Druidical altar in the ruins of Stonehenge five years later, and comments, "So now I am at home" (p. 511). Mistletoe had been placed by Angel over his and Tess's bridal bed; it had no use after Tess's confession, and merely looked "foolish and inopportune" (p. 301). Tess desires to commit suicide under the mistletoe, so great is her misery and sense of guilty self-sacrifice, but she desists out of consideration for Angel's good name:

"What were you thinking of doing?" he inquired.

"Of putting an end to myself."

"When?"

She writhed under this inquisitorial manner of his.

"Last night," she answered.

"Where?"

"Under your mistletoe."

"My good--how?" he asked sternly.

"I'll tell you, sir, if you won't be angry with me!" she said, shrinking. "It was with the cord of my box. But I could not--do the last thing! I was afraid that it might cause a scandal to your good name" (p. 307).

Following the separation of Angel and Tess, the former returns to the site of their unconsummated honeymoon; "the mistletoe hung

under the tester just as he had placed it"(p. 343). But now it is wrinkled and discoloured, and Angel crushes it into the grate. This action is symbolic, because for the first time Angel doubts whether he has acted wisely or generously.

References to the tomb(or to coffin) appear with notable frequency in Tess, and, like the previously discussed mistletoe "motif", serve the purpose of foreshadowing events that will come to pass. The D'Urberville ancestors are described by John Durbeyfield as being weighted down by immense ropes of jewels, in their great stone sarcophagi. It is the desire for wealth that drags down the Durbeyfields; Tess seems to sense this, and seeks her place among her ancestors in death. In the sleep-walking scene, Angel places Tess in a coffin, for the ideal that he worshipped is, in reality, "dead" to him. Tess's feeble attempt at suicide, and her resignation as a sacrifice at Stonehenge(both previously mentioned) all support this movement toward a morbid death wish. When the unlucky Durbeyfields are evicted from their premises after the death of "Sir John", the last title holder to the property, they are forced to camp over their ancestral vaults at Kingsbere(p. 468). Tess, examining the tombs of the D'Urbervilles, is startled by the movement of one of the "effigies", who turns out to be none other than Alec, the spurious D'Urberville. Tess, considerably shaken, cries out, against the entrance to the crypts: "Why am I on the wrong side of this door!"(p. 470).

So far, only two of the three white coffins, or "altars" have been mentioned.¹⁰⁵ The third is the bed on which Alec is murdered, and here, the red(blood) and tomb(coffin)"motifs" are united to prepare us for the Stonehenge scene.¹⁰⁶ In this way, Hardy manages to get into this final scene a force or impact that has been gathering momentum throughout the course of the novel.

The coach of the D'Urbervilles introduces an unmistakable element of the supernatural into a ballad-narrative already fraught with omens and foreshadowings. Tess is decidedly uneasy about the wedding carriage that Angel has selected, and fancies that she has seen it in a dream. Angel reassures her that she must have heard the legend that concerned a dreadful crime of bygone times. Tess queries: "Is it when we are going to die, Angel, that members of my family see it, or is it when they have committed a crime?"(pp. 275-276). It turns out that both suppositions are true, for Tess hears the D'Urberville Coach prior to the stabbing of Alec, and her own execution.

"Didn't you see me?" asked D'Urberville.

"I was not attending," she said. "I heard you, I believe, though I fancied it was a carriage and horses. I was in a sort of dream."

"Ah! you heard the D'Urberville Coach, perhaps. You know the legend, I suppose?"

"No. My--somebody was going to tell it me once, but didn't."

"If you are a genuine D'Urberville I ought not to tell you either, I suppose. . . . It is that this sound of a non-existent coach can be heard by one of D'Urberville blood, and it is held to be of ill omen to the one that hears it. It has to do with a murder, committed by one of the family centuries ago. . . .

One of the family is said to have abducted some beautiful woman, who tried to escape from the coach in which he was carrying her off, and in the struggle. . . she killed him. . ." (p. 457).

The legend of the D'Urberville Coach is well placed in a story that is so deeply rooted in the ballad-like world of the Wessex peasantry. The legend has the function of foreshadowing events that will occur in the near future, and it provides the tale with a natural note of "old world" country superstition.

Besides skillfully employing the ballad characteristic of foreshadowing in his story, Hardy's narrator frequently relies on the presentation of "fateful incidents" to further the action of his narrative. Tess's intentions are continually being frustrated by an unexpected turn of events: this heightens suspense, and adds to the interest of the story.

The first fateful incident that we encounter in Tess is Parson Tringham's revelation to John Durbeyfield of the latter's noble ancestry. This induces John to become so drunk with celebration ale that he is unable to take the bee-hives to the market at Casterbridge (pp. 4,32). It then follows that Tess and Abraham, her young brother, are obliged to go, to spare their father the humiliation of being publically pronounced an incapable provider, as well as a drunkard. It is natural that Tess, after a long day and only three hours of rest, should fall asleep at the reins. But she blames herself for the death of the horse, the bread winner of a family of "hagglers": "'Tis all my doing--all mine! . . . No excuse for me--none. What will father and mother

live on now?"(p. 37). But "nobody blamed Tess as she blamed herself"(p. 38). It is this sense of self-abasement and feeling of responsibility that makes Tess so "tractable", and she undertakes the fateful mission to Trantridge to claim kin to her so-called rich relatives.

Another fateful incident occurs at Talbothays, and greatly affects the events that follow. Even though Tess finally agrees to wed her true love(p. 245), she makes a final attempt to reveal her background to Angel by writing him a letter. Tess is puzzled at Angel's lack of response to her missive, and goes to his room to investigate:

The carpet reached close to the sill, and under the edge of the carpet she discerned the faint white margin of the envelope containing her letter to him, which he obviously had never seen, owing to her having in her haste thrust it beneath the carpet as well as beneath the door.

With a feeling of faintness she withdrew the letter. There it was--sealed up, just as it had left her hands . . . [D]escending to her room, she destroyed the letter there(p. 272).

Tess again attempts to broach the subject of her confession, but her intentions are thwarted once more as Angel indicates his preference for silence on her part:

"I am so anxious to talk to you--I want to confess all my faults and blunders," she said, with attempted lightness.

"No, no--we can't have faults talked of--you must be deemed perfect today at least, Sweet," he cried. "We shall have plenty of time hereafter, I hope, to talk over our failings. . . ."

"But it would be better for me to do it now. . . so that you could not say --"

"Well, my anxious one, you shall tell me everything--say, as soon as we are settled in our lodging; not now... (pp. 272-273).

The fact of the Durbeyfield couple's "changing places" is another fateful incident that has serious, manifold ramifications. Joan, who had been almost hopelessly ill, recovers, and her husband dies. Because he had been the last lease holder to the Durbeyfield premises, the terms of his contract became void upon his death and caused the subsequent eviction of his "shiftless" family. It is her concern for her family's well-being that forces Tess to return to Alec as his mistress, in exchange for certain comforts extended towards the Durbeyfield widow and children.

Although one cannot claim that Character is Fate (as is the case in The Mayor of Casterbridge) when referring to Tess, the characters of Tess and Angel certainly have a fateful effect on the main incidents of the story. For example, Tess is so meek and self-sacrificing that she does not attempt to refute Angel's decision to leave her, subsequent to her confession. She does not seem to see that her misdemeanor, or "crime", and Angel's are of the same nature--only his is more damning, for he engaged in a dissipated affair of his own free will, while Tess was beguiled and taken advantage of. Tess agrees to live apart from Angel, even though every second of separation cuts like a coil of barbed wire around her heart. She undertakes inhuman physical labour in order to live; for she is too proud to ask the Clares for money with which to support herself, in accordance with Angel's instructions regarding her maintenance. In fact, Tess is

so long-suffering, that she surely transcends the stoicism of the folk-ballad heroine, Ellen, in "Child Waters". The following is an example of the trials that Ellen undergoes for the sake of her villainous sweetheart (also the father of the child she is carrying):

- 11 All this long day Child Waters rode,
She ran bare foote by his side;
Yett was he never so curteous a knight
To say, "Ellen, will you ryde?"
.....
- 12 "Ryde softley," shee said, "Child Waters;
Why doe you ryde soe fast?
The child which is no man's but yours
My bodye itt will burst."
- 14 He sayes, "See thou yonder water, Ellen,
That flowes from banke to brim?"
"I trust to God, Child Waters," shee said,
You will never see mee swime."
- 15 But when shee came to the waters side,
She sayled to the chinne:
"Except the lord of heaven be my speed,
Now must I learn to swime."¹⁰⁷

Although characterization is not an important feature of the ballad, the narrator occasionally takes the trouble briefly to state, for example, that Child Waters "was never soe curteous a knight" as to treat Ellen with the courtesy and respect that are her due. In this particular ballad, the protagonists are characterized mainly through their speech and actions. Hardy's narrator employs the same device, as the following quotation from Tess illustrates:

"I agree to the conditions, Angel; because you know best what my punishment ought to be; only--only--don't 'ee make it more than I can bear!"
That was all she said on the matter (p. 309).

Unlike the balladeer, however, Hardy's narrator comments directly on the characters' actions and words, offering insights that often are overlooked or not realized by the reader:

If Tess had been artful, had she made a scene, fainted, wept hysterically. . . he would probably not have withstood her. But her mood of long-suffering made his way easy for him. . . . Pride, too, entered in her submission . . . and the many effective chords which she could have stirred by an appeal were left untouched (p. 309).

When Tess finally realizes that Angel has meted out more punishment than she can bear, he, too, has a change of heart and decides to forgive and forget. Angel chooses to disregard the passionate outburst directed toward him:

"O, why have you treated me so monstrously, Angel! I do not deserve it. I have thought it all over carefully, and I can never, never forgive you! You know that I did not intend to wrong you--why have you so wronged me? You are cruel, cruel indeed! I will try to forget you. It is all injustice I have received at your hands!--T."
(p. 460)

Angel Clare's nature also requires investigation, for his own prejudices and quirks influence the course of the story in the same way as do Tess's. Angel's streak of stubborn determination has led him to thwart his father's desire that he become a man of the church; this fact has deprived Angel of the university education that was made available to his two orthodox brothers. Even though Angel sees the pain his refusal has caused his father, he perseveres in his decision (p. 129). Angel is decidedly an idealist; this is why he cannot relate to the church, and why he so heartlessly casts off Tess after her confession. He coldly avows:

"I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you."

"But who?"

"Another woman in your shape." (p. 295)

Angel has gone by appearances alone, and had commented, ironically, on Tess: "What a fresh and virginal daughter of Nature that milkmaid is!" (p. 157) He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other names of Greek goddesses; he saw her as a "visionary essence of woman--a whole sex condensed into one typical form" (p. 146). He does not realize that he actually has the pearl above price, and like a fool, he casts it away.

With all [Angel's] attempted independence of judgment, this advanced. . . young man. . . was yet the slave to custom and conventionality when surprised back into his early teachings. No prophet had told him, and he was not prophet enough to tell himself, that essentially this young wife of his was as deserving of the praise of King Lemuel as any other woman endowed with the same dislike of evil, her moral value having not to be reckoned by achievement but by tendency. . . . In considering what Tess was not, he overlooked what she was, and forgot that the defective can be more than the entire (p. 340).

Even after their quarrel, Angel is tempted to go to Tess, but he is fatefully checked when he sees, on the landing, the portraits of the sinister D'Urberville women to whom Tess bears such a marked resemblance (p. 302). His self-control, a quality so admirable in most men, does not stand Angel in good stead in this instance.

The natures of Angel and Tess are most effectively contrasted in "The Woman Pays":

Within the remote depths of [Angel's] constitution. . . there lay hidden a hard logical deposit, like a vein of metal in soft loam, which turned the edge of everything that attempted to traverse it. It had blocked his ac-

ceptance of the Church; it blocked his acceptance of Tess. Moreover, his affection itself was less fire than radiance, and, with regard to the other sex, when he ceased to believe he ceased to follow. . . .

. . .

There was, it is true, underneath, a back current of sympathy through which a woman of the world might have conquered him. But Tess did not think of this; she took everything as her deserts, and hardly opened her mouth. The firmness of her devotion to him was indeed almost pitiful. . . nothing that he could say made her unseemly; she sought not her own; was not provoked; thought no evil of his treatment of her. She might just now have been Apostolic Charity herself returned to a self-seeking modern world(pp. 310-311).

Thus, the characters of Tess and Angel, when regarded as fateful influences on the events of the story, become of great interest to the reader(who will be tempted to read on to discover the outcome).

Hardy's narrator, through the manipulation of fateful events, has allotted names to the chief characters in the novel, that have significant implications. Any student of the Black Arts will know that in magical theory, the real name of a person, for example, enshrines his power. An ancient Greek incantation to exorcise demons encompassed the idea that the name controls even the gods(or persons) themselves. I would like to relate this idea to fateful incident, stating that the meaning or implications of a name given to a person influences his personality, actions, and ideas. The traditional balladeer employed this idea to a great extent, as the ballad of "King Orfeo" illustrates. The name Orfeo is reminiscent of "Sir Orfeo" of the Twelfth Century Breton lay, and of Orpheus of the Ovidian

myth. (Orfeo, like his namesakes, is involved in a supernatural quest for his dead love, which culminates in their reunion).

Names function in much the same way in Hardy's Wessex novels—especially in Tess. First, the name "Tess" (a diminutive of Teresa or Theresa) will be examined. Saint Theresa of Avila was subject to trances, in which she experienced sharp pains seemingly caused by the tip of an angel's lance piercing her heart.¹⁰⁸ Tess Durbeyfield, too, experienced heartache due to a misnamed Angel, as a portion of one of her letters to him evinces:

"I must cry to you in my trouble—I have no one else.
. . . I think I must die if you do not come soon,
or tell me to come to you. . . . Please, please not
to be just—only a little kind to me. . . . If you
would come, I could die in your arms! I would be well
content to do that if so be you had not forgiven me.
. . . Think how it do hurt my heart not to see you ever—
ever! Ah, if I could only make your dear heart ache
one little minute of each day as mine does every day
and all day long, it might lead you to show pity to
your poor lonely one. . . ." (pp. 433-434)

Theresa was noted for her exemplary mode of living; Tess, too, was unimpeachable in her behaviour in spite of her experience with Alec. She had a natural morality that preserved her from spiritual corruption even though her body had been sullied. Saint Teresa of Lisieux, in her childlike simplicity and devotion to humble chores, is reminiscent of Tess's naïveté and her willingness to work as a tender of poultry, a dairymaid, and a swede-hacker.

The naming of Angel Clare was purely ironical on Hardy's

part, for in spite of the harp and the paradisaical setting in the lush garden, Angel is no "heavenly being". Clare, or the French clair, is also inappropriate, for the possessor of this name gropes in a type of spiritual, as well as moral, darkness.

Alec, or Alexander, conjures connotations of Alexander the Conqueror (of women, in this case), and Alexander the Great (with regard to the Stokes' pretensions of grandeur in assuming the D'Urberville name). Somehow, the name seems appropriate to the "smart aleck" melodramatic figure, who is presented as a typical ballad villain--with his swarthy good looks, "guidon" moustaches, tweed suit complete with walking cane, and his not too original: "Well, my Beauty. . ."(p. 45).

The excellence of Tess of the D'Urbervilles, which is simple in its plot (like the true ballad-narrative), lies in the portrayal of Tess's character--her spiritual and moral growth. This is the real heart of the novel--the pitting of this valiant woman-child against the unyielding forces of Fate, which take the form of other persons, the external environment, and the psychology of the heroine herself.¹⁰⁹ Hardy has made superb use of the archetype of the socially ruined woman in order to transcend it,¹¹⁰ for Tess's social "fall from grace" breeds the beginning of a new concept of morality that is able to withstand the buffets of an age of scepticism and change.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

There are two strains in Hardy's artistic imagination--the one relates to the poet and the other to the story-teller. His creative genius is most fully realized when he combines both his poetic and narrative talents in the composition of the Wessex novels. By skillfully employing the characteristics of the traditional ballad within the context of his novels, Hardy establishes a frame of reference from which he can build his fiction and expand it into a developed work of art. This approach is fruitful, for it roots the novel firmly in the Wessex countryside (with all its overtones of folk tradition and superstition); we then can accept Hardy's lack of "sophistication" as a story-teller without feeling prompted to supply excuses for it. In his "Wessex" milieu, Hardy works to construct a type of artistic environment that will allow him to manipulate his traditionally-rooted story with conviction--a world in which, according to Donald Davidson, typical ballad heroes and heroines can flourish with a thoroughly rationalized "mythology" to sustain them.

Hardy's basic narrative method centers on a series of confrontations--between man and fateful incidents (which may be embodied in interactions with other characters), with the physical

environment, or within the protagonist's own mind. The intertwining groups of events, the balancing of characters, the importance allotted to physical background and scenery, and the natural and human involving one another--all of these factors contribute to the vividness and life of Hardy's fiction. He achieves the dramatic impact of his Wessex novels through the skillful creation of tensions, and the power of each "tableau vivant" which he presents is directly proportional to the strength of the conflict between the protagonists. The intensity of each succeeding act is dependent upon the degree of the reader's interest surviving from that which has gone before.

Hardy's use of the "ballad-narrative" technique(which includes sharp transitions, clearly-cut portrayal of scene, pathetic fallacy, elements of the supernatural, overt mentioning of ballads, and the devices of fate and foreshadowing) aids in establishing a feeling of unity within each individual Wessex novel, and a sense of continuity among all four. Calculated repetitions, as evinced by the previously mentioned motifs in Tess of the tomb, mistletoe and D'Urberville Coach(death), and the colour "red"(blood), serve the same purpose as the constantly recurring ballad refrain;i.e., they function as unifying or cohesive agents in terms of the structure of the novel. Each story then can be regarded as a complete work of art rather than a series of independent episodes tacked together in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. For Hardy's Wessex novels do in fact comprise a sequence of

episodes, but they are all linked together by virtue of narrative devices also found in the ballad--foreshadowing, for example. That which the narrator hints at in one section of the novel invariably bears fruit in a later chapter--it comes to pass, as the omniscient story-teller has prophesied. The reader, by picking up the "clues" that the narrator has dropped, is filled with a feeling of anticipation which rapidly gives way to a pleasant satisfaction when he discovers that he has interpreted the hints correctly. In this way, the author, narrator and reader all become active participants in a common experience; their involvement in the story is shared, and the novel, the story itself, is the common denominator in these interactions of consciousness.

At this time, I would like to expand on a point that was touched on only briefly in the preceding chapter--Hardy's technique of characterization in the Wessex novels as compared with that of the traditional balladeer. This is a fairly central issue, as Hardy's novels are chiefly stories of character. For example, without Tess herself--without the narrator's portrayal of her moral and spiritual(as well as physical) development and growth--there would be no novel. The anonymous authors of the traditional ballads invariably preferred the art of "showing" to that of "telling" whenever they chose to develop characterization(although in ballads, portrayal of character is definitely subordinate to the relating of a story permeated with

brisk action). Ellen, in "Child Waters", for instance, is brought alive to the audience(or reader) chiefly through her actions. We make a fair assessment of her virtuous character through the trials that she undergoes, and her uncomplaining acceptance of them. By the same token, we can evaluate Child Waters' nature(which is thoughtless, arrogant, and cruel) by examining his actions. Hardy, too, develops his characterization by presenting the protagonists' actions and speech for our scrutiny, but unlike the balladeer, he is not averse to telling his readers(by allowing his narrator to intrude into the narrative) of certain motives, desires, and other factors that may influence his characters but may not be apparent from their actions or words. The previously cited section in Tess, that sheds light on Angel Clare's unrelenting rejection of the heroine(pp. 310-311; 340), is an excellent example of this.

In conclusion, it would not be amiss to state that Hardy (by a selective and judicious combination of two distinctly different genres of literature) has managed to create the excitingly unique Wessex novels, which are steeped in an old-world tradition which vies with the sense of a rapidly changing, "modernized and mechanized" order of things. This juxtaposition of old and new creates still more tensions that give the Wessex stories so much of their dramatic impact.

NOTES

¹J.I.M. Stewart, Thomas Hardy: A Critical Biography(N.Y.: Dodd, Mead & Co.), p. 79.

²Ibid., p. 115.

³Donald Davidson, "The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction". In The Southern Review(Summer 1949), p. 162

⁴Ibid., p. 15.

⁵There has been some controversy regarding the application of the term "Wessex" to Hardy's novels. It has been proposed that "Wessex" is indicative of a geographical location only, but in reality it has come to signify much more than a "physical background of landscapes and interiors, with enveloping conditions of climate and atmosphere"; it has an economic and social order as well, with its sharply-defined types and classes of men, and the manners and customs that have crystallized about this order.

⁶Stewart, p. 79.

⁷The Life was, in fact, held by numerous critics to have been composed by Thomas Hardy himself. Because he professed to deplore the writing of autobiographical materials, he is supposed to have encouraged his second wife, Florence Emily Hardy, to take the credit(or castigation) for the creation of the two volume study.

⁸Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy, Volume I, 1840-1891(London: Macmillan, 1933), p. 106.

⁹Ibid., pp. 25-26.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹Bartlett J. Whiting, ed., "Introduction", Traditional British Ballads(N.Y.: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), p. vii.

¹²W.F. Thrall and Addison Hibbard, A Handbook to Literature: With an Outline of Literary History English and American(N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1936), p. 38.

¹³Francis J. Child, ed., The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, 5 volumes(N.Y.: Folklore Press, 1957), I, II, and V.

¹⁴Joseph Warren Beach, The Technique of Thomas Hardy(N.Y.: Russell & Russell, 1962), p. 16

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- ¹⁵Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 8.
- ¹⁶Ibid., p. 151.
- ¹⁷Ibid., p. 169.
- ¹⁸Thomas Hardy, The Return of the Native(London: Macmillan, 1964), p. 275.
- ¹⁹Child, ed., I, 176-177.
- ²⁰Ibid.
- ²¹Stewart, p. 106.
- ²²Child, ed., II, 264-266.
- ²³Ibid., I, 245-246.
- ²⁴Thomas Hardy, Far From the Madding Crowd(London: Pan Books, 1973), p. 247.
- ²⁵David Cecil, Hardy the Novelist: An Essay in Criticism (London: Constable, 1942), p. 39.
- ²⁶Trevor Johnson, Literature in Perspective: Thomas Hardy (London: Evans Brothers, 1968), p. 89.
- ²⁷Child, ed., II, 306.
- ²⁸Thomas Hardy, Far From the Madding Crowd, pp. 16-17.
- ²⁹Randall Williams, The Wessex Novels of Thomas Hardy: An Appreciative Study(London: Dent, 1924), p. 72.
- ³⁰Johnson, p. 39.
- ³¹Hardy, The Return of the Native, p. 3.
- ³²Ibid., pp. 3-4.
- ³³Williams, pp. 67-68.
- ³⁴Thomas Hardy, The Life and Death of the Mayor of Casterbridge(London: Macmillan, 1972), pp. 8-9.

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- ³⁵Johnson, p. 108.
- ³⁶Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 29.
- ³⁷Child, ed., I, 402-403.
- ³⁸Madding Crowd, p. 75.
- ³⁹Return of the Native, pp. 27-28.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., p. 165.
- ⁴¹Return of the Native, pp. 424-425.
- ⁴²Casterbridge, pp. 74-75.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 188.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 191-192.
- ⁴⁵Child, ed., II, 277-278.
- ⁴⁶Casterbridge, p. 211.
- ⁴⁷Child, ed., I, 126.
- ⁴⁸Return of the Native, p. 274-275.
- ⁴⁹Cecil, pp. 62-63.
- ⁵⁰Ibid., p. 60.
- ⁵¹Madding Crowd, pp. 294-296.
- ⁵²Ibid., p. 59.
- ⁵³Ibid., p. 301.
- ⁵⁴Cecil, p. 59.
- ⁵⁵The Return of the Native, p. 19.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., p. 30.
- ⁵⁷Madding Crowd, pp. 156-157.

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- 58 Casterbridge, p. 55.
- 59 Ibid., p. 59.
- 60 Child, ed., II, 20.
- 61 Ibid., p. 209.
- 62 Madding Crowd, p. 124.
- 63 Ibid., pp. 158-159.
- 64 Ibid., p. 208.
- 65 Ibid., p. 272.
- 66 Ibid., p. 323.
- 67 Ibid., p. 363.
- 68 Ibid., p. 374.
- 69 Ibid., p. 238.
- 70 Child, ed., II, 289-291.
- 71 Ibid., p. 200-201.
- 72 Ibid.
- 73 Madding Crowd, p. 14.
- 74 Ibid., p. 27.
- 75 Ibid., p. 103.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid., p. 52.
- 78 Ibid., p. 76.
- 79 Ibid., p. 344.
- 80 Ibid., p. 138.

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- ⁸¹Child, ed., I, 173-174.
- ⁸²H.C. Duffin, Thomas Hardy: A Study of the Wessex Novels, the Poems, and 'The Dynasts' (Manchester: University Press, 1964), p. 193.
- ⁸³Ibid., p. 197.
- ⁸⁴Ibid.
- ⁸⁵Cecil, pp. 28-29.
- ⁸⁶Albert Pettigrew Elliott, Fatalism in the Works of Thomas Hardy (N.Y.: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. 57.
- ⁸⁷Harvey Curtis Webster, On a Darkling Plain (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), p. 58.
- ⁸⁸Elliott, p. 58.
- ⁸⁹Ibid., p. 59.
- ⁹⁰Ibid., p. 31.
- ⁹¹Florence Emily Hardy, Early Life, p. 251.
- ⁹²Arthur Mc Dowall, Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study (London: Faber & Faber, 1931), p. 118.
- ⁹³Casterbridge, pp. 67-68.
- ⁹⁴Ibid., p. 105.
- ⁹⁵Mc Dowall, p. 126.
- ⁹⁶Stewart, p. 106.
- ⁹⁷Ibid.
- ⁹⁸Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles: A Pure Woman (London: Macmillan, 1931). All subsequent quotations regarding Tess refer to this edition and will be annotated parenthetically.
- ⁹⁹Ian Gregor, "The Novel as Moral Protest: 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' ", The Moral and the Story by Ian Gregor and Brian Nicholas (London: Faber & Faber, 1962), p. 141.

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¹⁰⁰David J. De Laura, "'The Ache of Modernism' in Hardy's Later Novels", E.L.H., xxxiv(September, 1967), 380-382, 394-399.

¹⁰¹Dorothy Van Ghent, "On 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' ", The English Novel: Form and Function(N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1953), p. 203.

¹⁰²Albert J. La Valley, "Introduction", Twentieth Century Interpretations of 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles'(Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 7-8.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Child, ed., II, 86.

¹⁰⁵Bert G. Hornback, The Metaphor of Chance: Vision and Technique in the Works of Thomas Hardy(Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1971), p. 119.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Child, ed., II, 86.

¹⁰⁸"Saint Theresa" and "Saint Thérèse de Lisieux", Funk and Wagnalls New Encyclopedia. 1973. XXIII, 119.

¹⁰⁹La Valley, p. 6.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

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