Thomas Hardy’s Use of Traditional Song
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Much criticism of the works of Thomas Hardy has been based on the recognition of his interest in music. He was responsive to a wide variety of musical genres, but it was the traditional music and song of his own region that stirred him most deeply. This interest was maintained throughout his life. As a boy, alone or in the company of his father, he played the fiddle at rural celebrations.1 At the age of seventy-seven he demonstrated fiddle tunes and dance steps for the local dramatic society, and in his eighties he played traditional dance tunes and discussed folk music with Jessica Vera Stevens.2 His ear was exceptionally acute and his sensitivity to musical influence abnormally marked.3 This latter peculiarity provided him with definitive images and situations for use in both verse and prose, and these have been extensively but by no means exhaustively discussed by previous critics.

Such investigations tend to fall into three main categories: first, the amassing of lists of songs referred to in his novels; secondly, the noting of musical metaphors and the discussion of possible analogues between his literary work and music; and thirdly, the study of thematic and structural analogues between

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2J. Vera Mardon, Thomas Hardy as a Musician, Hardy Monograph series no. 15, General Editor J. Stevens Cox (Beaminster, Dorset: Toucan Press, 1964), pp. 8–12, 20–21.
3See Life, pp. 22, 15.

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his work and "the ballad as such." The first operates by quantity rather than by assessing the quality of Hardy's use of musical reference; the other two suffer from a lack of specificity, and may even mislead the reader about the nature of the formative musical influences on Hardy and the use he makes of them. My concern is largely with the third category, though my discussion recognizes that the use of folk songs can only be seen in terms of Hardy's response to a whole traditional musical milieu. We need, therefore, to know what this milieu was.

A folk song can be defined as a composition of moderate (i.e., easily memorable) length in a metrical form designed to fit the musical phrasing of usually a fairly limited number of patterns. Its author is likely to be an otherwise ordinary member of the community that forms his audience. Traditional folk songs, carols, and instrumental tunes are performed, being handed down, shaped, and partially re-created through transmission by ear. This mode of preservation may be modified by cross-fertilization with printed texts on broadsides and elsewhere. Also songs originally from other sources can be subjected to traditional processes of transmission and re-creation. Though definition through a qualitative preference for certain forms or subjects is suspect, we can distinguish between the narrative ballad, with its typically dramatic presentation, its progression through incremental repetition, its direct and uncompromising concentration on action, and the lyric, which concentrates on a mood resulting from circumstances described only briefly, if at all, and which often reflects on the position of the speaker with the aid of a subtle natural symbolism. Both types contain a wide range of mood, by no means always tragic. There are also celebrations of seasons and festivals (including carols), as well as more jocular pieces, such as drinking songs. Sometimes we need to call in distinctions of this sort when talking about Hardy, but Hardy himself did not make them, nor did he wish to. Neither


5See Life, p. 359.
did the original singers make such distinctions; they sang what they liked when it came their way, whatever its source. Their performance was one part of the expression of communal coherency in a relatively stable and culturally homogeneous community life with its own dances, church choirs, seasonal festivals, and convivial social gatherings at the alehouse.

Although there was far more literacy in both words and music than is sometimes assumed, and although ordinary working people, especially in the nineteenth century, were capable of enjoying and playing the music popular in higher classes than their own, the most widespread and deeply permeating music and song culture of people like Hardy’s main characters was passed on by ear, not picked up solely from printed texts. Hardy himself was part of this culture, not just an interested observer like other regional novelists such as Mrs. Gaskell.

Critics discussing the influence of folk song on Hardy have stressed his debt to the traditional ballad. Insofar as the ballad is, like the novel, an essentially verbal art, this emphasis is appropriate. The point of this article is not to suggest that the comparisons made are false, for they can often be extremely illuminating, but to try to show more precisely what the influences of verbal music on Hardy really were and what he did with them.

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7Possession of family manuscript books by village musicians like the Hardys or John Clare was not uncommon. Obviously, this implies a degree of musical literacy. Roger Elbourne’s Music and Tradition in Early Industrial Lancashire 1780–1840 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: D. S. Brewer, 1980) provides provocative and well-documented discussion of the vexed topic of traditionality; for evidence of the performance of art music, see pp. 35–36. See also Albert Lancaster Lloyd, Folk Song in England (St. Albans: Paladin, 1975), pp. 20–21, for a general discussion.

in specific terms. Discussions of Hardy such as those by Thom Gunn or Donald Davidson, which reinforce their generalizations about ballads by reference to particular examples, tend to use, as standard, examples from the Scottish border. If references are given they are usually to the standard edition of such ballads by Professor F.J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882–98). However, as the very title suggests, these ballads have a geographical bias. If we are to do as Davidson suggests and “make a justifiable inference from the snatches of balladry in the novels and tales” (p. 13), we certainly can not conclude that he owed much to ballads like “Sir Patrick Spens,” “Edward,” or “The Laily Worm and the Machrel of the Sea” as they are recorded by Child. The first, “Sir Patrick Spens” (Child 58), is represented by eighteen versions, all Scottish; “Edward” (Child 13) by three, all Scottish; and “The Laily Worm” (Child 36) by one, also Scottish. What is more, Child himself had very definite ideas about what constituted a ballad, ideas that demonstrate biases resulting from his position as a middle-class American literary scholar. In spite of his sporadic praise of oral tradition, he frequently distrusted it and showed little sense of its creative potential. Dave Harker comes to the conclusion that

we may continue to use the texts as highly mediated examples of the kinds of songs described by late nineteenth century English-speaking literary scholars as “ballads”. About the lives, interests and general culture of the people who made, remade and used these songs, however, a compilation such as Child’s can tell us almost nothing.

Indeed, it does not even tell us anything about non-balladic traditional song and music which may have been just as important a part of Hardy’s background.

Another objection to the use of references to Child alone must be obvious. Hardy’s opportunities of being influenced during his formative years by Border ballads were virtually non-

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10 Francis James Child and the ‘Ballad Consensus,’ *Folk Music Journal*, 4 (1980–84), 163. Harker quotes and discusses the examples from Child used in this paragraph and provides a more detailed discussion of Child’s limitations. See also his *Fakesong*, chapters 5 and 6.
existential. It is therefore necessary for the critic to show that the examples used for comparison were current in some cognate form in mid-nineteenth-century Dorset. In his creative published work and in his Life, Hardy quotes or refers to some forty-eight songs, some only in a very fragmentary form, which might loosely be classified as folk songs, that is, songs originally composed by authors now anonymous, or working in or close to traditional songs that apparently have a life of their own, being reproduced by oral tradition and developing different variants over time. He also mentions nine carols and forty-seven tunes likely to be in the repertoire of a traditional performer of the early nineteenth century. Hardy's selection of songs has a wide range of tone and apparent provenance. Seven of them are heavily and obviously associated with Scotland. These are "O Waly, Waly," "O Nannie," "It's Hame and it's Hame," "The Lass of Gowrie," "Auld Lang Syne," "Bonnie Peg," and "Tibbie Towler" (or "Fowler"). All but the first—an epigraph for chapter 32 of A Pair of Blue Eyes—are sung by Farfrae. The last four are attributed to known authors or adaptors: Lady Nairne and (for the last three) Burns. "O Waly, Waly" is a lyrical piece associated with "Jamie Douglas" (Child 204), which had been widely printed. Another five songs are Irish, but none of these is included in Child's standard collection since he was not concerned there either with lyrical pieces or with Ireland.11 Of the remaining songs, four can be compared to ballads in Child. "The Light of the Moon," used by Hardy in The Dynasts, is a lyrical version of the song sometimes known as "The Grey Cock" (Child 248). "The Boy and the Mantle" is Child 29 and "Queen Eleanor's Confession" is Child 156. What seems to have been Hardy's favorite ballad, "The Outlandish Knight," is Child 4.12 Considering the claims that are made about Hardy and the ballad, this seems a disappointingly meager haul.

11See also Thomas Hardy, The Complete Poems, ed. James Gibson (London: Macmillan, 1981), pp. 456, 797. Some of these titles belong both to a folk song and to one or more art songs.

In later years he certainly displayed an interest in printed ballad texts, including Child’s. Hardy owned a copy of *The Ballad Minstrelsy of Scotland*, now in the Dorset County Museum, that he annotated with variants from his own locality.\(^\text{13}\) However, it cannot be shown that Hardy used this book in his writing. As his annotations show, such collections merely reinforced what he already knew from his own experience.

To what, then, can Hardy’s use of traditional music and song be traced? There are four main categories of source with which such links can be made: *some* printed texts in edited collections, family manuscript books, a collection made by Hardy himself, and songs from Wessex taken down from oral tradition by later collectors.

First, printed sources known to have been in Hardy’s possession and now in the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection in the Dorset County Museum: these are Thomas Percy’s 1765 *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, ed. Rev. Robert Aris Willmott (London: Routledge, n. d.) and John Hullah’s *The Song Book* (London: Macmillan, 1866). His copy of the *Reliques* is only slightly marked by him. Apart from “O Waly, Waly,” he seems to have used it for the text of Mrs. Durbeyfield’s “ballad of the mystic robe” in chapter 32 of *Tess* (p. 234). In the serial version of the novel he quotes two extra verses very close to Percy.\(^\text{14}\) “Queen Eleanor’s Confession” in *The Return of the Native* (pp. 46–47, 54) probably also came from Percy. Hullah’s *Song Book* is a collection of supposedly national songs, heavily reliant on William Chappell’s *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (1855–57) and reproducing from it several traditional songs used by Hardy. Hardy’s copy of Hullah has copious pencil notes, mostly in the English section, apparently in-

\(^{13}\) *The Ballad Minstrelsy of Scotland*, no editor given (Glasgow: Maurice Ogle and Company, n. d.). Inscribed “Sgt. Major . . . McKay . . . Jamaica 1880.” Pencil note states that the book was later published by Alexander Gardner, Paisley and Pater-

d.protic singers of the various songs known to him. If he had wanted them he could have found in the Song Book texts of "Auld Lang Syne" and "Tibbie Fowler." Though we cannot be sure when he acquired the book there is little doubt that he used it in his old age when pressed for a text for songs. The Album Book, H/1956.101.1 in the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection in Dorset County Museum, contains tunes, songs, and dance notations provided by Hardy for the Hardy players.15 "'Twas Down in Cupid's Garden" (Return of the Native, p. 399; Tess, pp. 294, 365) bears the note "as sung at Casterbridge, Mellstock, Weatherbury and Longpuddle, down to 1840-50," but the text given is almost word for word from Hullah, and the tune too has obviously been copied straight out, even though there is a version in one of the family manuscript books discussed below. Even the note just quoted is one made in pencil in Hullah (p. 94). The Song Book is also the likely source for the Wedding Song sung to Wildeve and Tamsin in The Return of the Native (p. 71),16 though Hardy has refashioned it to give an impression of happiness foreign to the original.

The fact that a song can be found in a printed source owned and even annotated by Hardy does not, of course, prove that he used that version. He had other, older, more intimate sources. Some notion of the musical traditions he could have absorbed from his family can be seen in the manuscript books belonging to them and now preserved in the Dorset County Museum.17 Among these are a book of carols and songs belonging to his

15I am indebted to the Trustees of the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection in the Dorset County Museum for permission to use material in their custody. For details of Hardy's assistance in local productions, see E. J. Stevens, Hardy as I Knew Him, Hardy Monograph series no. 61 (Guernsey: Toucan Press, 1969).

16See Hullah, Song Book, pp. 84-85, for the song beginning "As down in the meadows." According to Chappell, this was used in Polly in 1729. It is to be found in several collections and on many broadsides.

17Other descriptions (not always accurate) of these manuscript books can be found in William R. Rutland, Thomas Hardy: A Study of his Writings and Their Background (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1938), pp. 154-58, and in Elna Sherman's "Thomas Hardy: Lyricist, Symphonist," Music & Letters, 21 (1940), 148-50, and "Music in Thomas Hardy's Life and Work," Musical Quarterly, 26 (1940), 421-23. Hardy also owned an early printed music book of tunes (1793-94) and a fragmentary carol book. All these are now available on microfilm, together with other materials from the collection (Wakefield: E. P. Microform Ltd., 1975), film no. 96939, reel 10.
grandfather containing bass parts and a carol book of his father's with fuller part settings. As Hardy explains in the preface to *Under the Greenwood Tree*, it was the custom to use one end of such books for sacred music and the other for secular (p. 28); the first of these manuscript collections is in this format. There is also a book of tunes and songs copied from a compilation by James Hook, probably made about 1820. As well as these, tunes familiar to Hardy may be found in a manuscript collection belonging to the family called *Tunes for the Violin*, which is in the Lock Collection in the Dorset County Library, Dorchester.18 Between them these four volumes provide evidence of the Hardy family's knowledge of eight out of his nine carols, thirty-four out of the forty-seven dance and march tunes, and six of the forty-eight folk songs.19

These books were not made for each musician to play from directly, but rather served more as memorials. The reason for the low proportion of folk songs is not far to seek. The books did not set out to record what was common knowledge around them in the way of song, and in spite of the Hardy family's instrumental prowess none were noted singers. There are a few pieces that achieved oral currency, but the songs are heavily influenced by art songs, that is, songs with a known author and composer, usually designed for instrumental accompaniment, for town rather than country consumption, and for the more prosperous levels of society. Examples include such favorites of Hardy's mother as "Why are you wandering here, I pray?" which Fancy sings to Dick in *Under the Greenwood Tree* (p. 146).20 Some of these more artificially contrived songs were obviously beginning the process of oral diversification. "O Nannie" in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (p. 83) is an English song adopted by the Scots.21 "Jockey to the Fair" is a set of rather artificial words set to a preexisting tune, which is played by Gabriel Oak at the hiring

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18I am indebted to Mr. H. E. F. Lock for permission to make use of this collection.
19Some of the "songs" are in tune form only. For a technical examination of the music I must thank Mr. A. D. Townsend, coproducer with me of a long-playing record entitled *The Mellstock Quire* (Poole, Dorset: Forest Tracks, 1980) which presents music and song of various kinds associated with Hardy.
fair and in the malthouse in *Far From the Madding Crowd* (pp. 75, 97), probably as just a tune.\(^{22}\)

The third kind of record of music influences on Hardy was made by the novelist himself. He heard what were undoubtedly traditional ballads and songs from his mother and people like the fieldwomen mentioned in the *Life* “who had been young women of about twenty when he was a child” (p. 223). Hardy made his own small collection that he titled “Country Songs of 1820 onward—killed by the Comic Songs of the Music Hall,” which was finally put together in 1926 though it was probably made piecemeal over some years.\(^{23}\) By 1871 he was already “writing down such snatches of the old country ballads as he could hear from aged people” (*Life*, p. 84). His diary for 11 November 1894 notes several fragments such as a couple of lines of a song known as “Gown of Green”: “Somebody here has been/Or else some charming shepherdess/That wears the gown of green” (*Life*, p. 267). Hardy’s little collection includes fragments of twenty-three songs, without tunes. Only two of them coincide with entries in Child (Child 250 and 289). Probably Hardy did not record songs that he knew well; he certainly knew many more than these twenty-three, of which he only uses two in his work; nor are the three mentioned in the diary entry found in this collection.

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Hardy’s own efforts as a recorder were too little, but not entirely too late, though he thought so. He records with a particular insistence in the *Life* his attendance in 1847 at a harvest supper, “among the last at which the old traditional ballads were sung, the railway having been extended to Dorchester just then, and the orally transmitted ditties of centuries being

\(^{22}\)Information from Mr. A. D. Townsend, pers. comm. The song text is in Hardy’s grandfather’s manuscript book in the Dorset County Museum, secular songs end, p. 16.

\(^{23}\)In the Thomas Hardy Memorial Collection. Although my own work has been conducted independently of it, R. J. Elliott’s unpublished B. Litt. thesis *Thomas Hardy and the Ballad* (Oxford, 1974) also discusses Hardy’s collection and some parallels with Henry Hammond.
slain at a stroke by the London comic songs that were introduced” (p. 20). This notion, fruitful as it was for the development of themes of social conflict in his novels, was overdramatic. However, Hardy certainly saw a significant transformation in traditional modes of social music during his lifetime. Indeed, Cecil Sharp, one of the most authoritative of later collectors, shared his view, noting that “the last generation of folk-singers must have been born not later than sixty or seventy years ago—say 1840.”

Eighteen forty, of course, was the year of Hardy’s birth. But this “last generation” survived into the twentieth century and provides the fourth and in some ways most important clue to what may have influenced Hardy. From 1905 to 1908 Henry Denison Hammond, assisted by his brother Robert and by George B. Gardiner, collected 918 versions of folk songs from the southwest of England, 764 of them from Dorset. Many of them came from people of Hardy’s own age and up to twenty years older. Gardiner himself collected over one thousand further song versions from other counties in or near Hardy’s Wessex. Some of their findings have been published, but often in collated forms. In this discussion, however, I refer to the versions in manuscript and typescript in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at the headquarters of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in London.

One of Hammond’s best informants was Robert Barrett (or Barratt; the spelling of the name is variable). Barrett came from Puddletown (Hardy’s “Weatherbury”) and was some four years older than Hardy. One of the fieldwomen Hardy says that he heard songs from was Anna Barrett; she and most of those he

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26I am indebted to the librarians there for their help and to Mrs. Ursula Vaughan Williams for permission to make use of the material. My references consist of the number given to each item by Frank Purslow in his catalog, prefixed by the initial of the county in which it was noted. In the main I shall deal with material collected by Hammond within twenty miles of Dorchester. This distance would represent a good day’s walk, and coincides fairly closely with the county boundary.
mentions are traceable in the records for the parish of Puddletown now in the County Records Office in Dorchester. The 1851 census records an Ann Barrett of the right age (the only one in the village) living next door to Robert Barrett; she may have been his sister, or possibly his aunt. Hardy mentions four of the songs that Hammond later collected from Barrett, and the lines he quotes from “Gown of Green” in the Life are identical with those in the version collected by Hammond from Barrett. The three lines sung by the Deserter in The Dynasts are very similar to the ending of verse four of Barrett’s rendering of “The Grey Cock” (D 248). The sources of Hammond’s collection, then, probably include informants from whom Hardy himself could have heard songs.

The work of Hammond in Dorset (and of Hammond and Gardiner elsewhere) shows that traditional songs in Wessex had a wide range of tone and apparent provenance. Hardy’s choice of material is an accurate reflection of this. Hammond confirms the currency in Dorset of such great standard tragic ballads as “Lord Randal” (Child 12), “Lord Thomas and Fair Eleanor” (Child 73), and “The Unquiet Grave” (Child 78). Both Hardy and Hammond collected versions of “Henry Martin” (Child 250), “Polly Vaughan,” and “Scilly Rocks.” Another thirteen of Hardy’s “Country Songs” seem to be ballads, not necessarily tragic. None of these is in Child but seven of them were found by Hammond or Gardiner. For one fragment I have found only one analogue anywhere, and for another set of five and a half verses none at all. This suggests that Hardy knew some ballads local to his area but not common elsewhere. When discussing how he responded to song tradition, therefore, it would be more useful critically to cite versions of songs that he is likely to have been familiar with. This is particularly important since many of these ballads have been pared down to a lyric (“The Grey Cock” / “The Light of the Moon” is a good example), as is typical of Southern tradition in the nineteenth century. We also find in Hammond large numbers of lyrical pieces (with which Child was

not concerned). Many of the Hammond songs were Irish in origin, probably picked up from itinerant workers, but there was very little Scottish influence. There is a fair sprinkling of composed pieces being subjected to the diversifying processes of oral transmission, like some of those in the Hardy family manuscript books.

Given that a search in Child for analogues of the forty-eight folk songs Hardy used directly is surprisingly unrewarding, we must see what a comparison with the Hammond material involves. Admitting the fragmentary nature of some, it seems reasonable to connect twenty of those forty-eight with Hammond’s Dorset collection, often in more than one version, and a further nine with Hammond and Gardiner’s work in nearby counties (mostly Irish songs). Remove the seven specifically Scottish songs used by Hardy and the two ballads he seems to have had only literary sources for, and we can link twenty-nine songs out of thirty-nine with locally collected versions. Of the twenty-three songs in “Country Songs” two are found in Child but fourteen were collected by Hammond in Dorset.

Clearly, then, we can gain a much better idea of the formative folk song influences on Hardy by studying these four groups of material. If we add a few broadsides in miscellaneous collections we can gain a virtually complete view. Then it is possible to look in more detail at the very significant ways in which Hardy uses references to the individual pieces and to their precise social context in his novels. We can begin by noting what he left out. The five conspicuously Irish songs (four found by Hammond or Gardiner in tradition) he only mentions in his poems “Donaghadee” and “Sitting on the Bridge. In spite of their frequency in the tradition and their occurrence in his *Country Songs* Hardy never uses traditional sea songs, even

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See *Complete Poems*, p. 796. The songs are “Irish Molly-O”: H (Hampshire) 256, H 287, H 1182; “Kathleen Mavourneen”: H 525; “Kitty of Coleraine”: D 146 (the tune alone is no. 112 in James Hook’s compilation); “Susan, Pride of Kildare”: H 58, H 250, H 354, H 575, Miscellaneous 91. For “Take Me, Paddy, Will You Now” see note to “My Husband’s Got No Courage in Him” in *Wanton Seed*, p. 137.
in *The Trumpet-Major*. By these omissions he is shaping the outlines of his Wessex—essentially English, looking inward, sufficient unto itself.

Hardy’s Wessex, in fact, is overflowing with characters with the same sensibilities as the author. Musicality is a prominent feature in most of the novels, and in *The Hand of Ethelberta* the hero is a musician. Though it is difficult for us to feel that the characters in the minor novels are motivated by a peculiar passion, in the Novels of Character and Environment this is a major factor in character presentation, motivation, and thematic development. Not only do we meet personalities like William Dewy or Laban Tall, who cannot tear himself away from Oak’s music, but many of Hardy’s characters are actually betrayed by their sensibility. Tess’s “innate love of melody, which she had inherited from her ballad-singing mother, gave the simplest music a power over her which could well-nigh drag her heart out of her bosom” (p. 113). She and Angel are mutually attracted through susceptibility to sound. He is looking over music when he notices her “fluty voice” (p. 147), and she is fascinated by his harp playing, bad as it is (p. 150). In *The Mayor of Casterbridge* it is Farfrae’s readiness with a song that wins him acceptance into the local community, that helps to entrance Lucetta, and that binds Henchard to him. As Henchard later claims, “it was partly by his songs that he got over me, and heaved me out” (p. 243). Moreover, in each of these novels, as in others, the type of music to which the characters respond is a very precise moral and social touchstone.

To understand fully what Hardy is doing it is necessary to examine the origin and range of his references. In this analysis I shall concentrate on Hardy’s use of orally transmitted song and its likely audience and producers. Since carols occur only in the context of the playing of various village bands, notably those of Mellstock and Longpuddle, and since the nonverbal nature of the dance tunes allows for less subtlety of development in the context of a novel, a detailed treatment of these forms is less profitable.

As far as the songs go, we need to consider not only what was sung but who was likely to sing it. Hardy’s female characters are distinguished with particular niceness through his choice of
the songs they sing, which often mark the slight elevation in social position that makes them seem unattainable to their worthier but lower-class suitors. As mentioned earlier, Hardy heard songs from local fieldwomen and from his mother. Pencil jottings in his copy of Hullah and in his own song collection, together with the very humble social circumstances of Mrs. Hardy as a child, suggest that his mother's and the fieldwomen's repertoires were similar. But the socially ambitious Hardy did not want to put his own origins on the same level as those of agricultural laborers and the result of this is the calculated and deceptive ambiguity of his account of his mother in the *Life*. Thus he describes her as "a woman with 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" (p. 321). He avoids saying that she sang them; instead, he selects as parts of her repertoire composed art songs like "Isle of Beauty" or "Why are you wandering here, I pray?" (p. 14). Songs like these were also popular with ordinary village singers, but what is important is that Hardy has chosen to mention only those that also formed part of a genteel repertoire.

The conflict Hardy seems to have felt between cultural tradition and social aspiration is dramatized in the pattern of courtship so often noted in his novels. The "fieldwoman" type is found in minor characters like Joan Durbeyfield, who picks up songs by ear with amazing rapidity from local residents or passing travelers (*Tess*, p. 45). But most of Hardy's heroines are at the level of aspirations to a pianoforte at least. As one rises up the social scale, reliance on oral tradition as a mode of learning decreases and reliance on written material increases. In *Under the Greenwood Tree*, for example, Fancy Day sings "Why are you wandering here, I pray?" to Dick (p. 146) but is too genteel to sing the kind of songs he does. (As Michael Millgate points out, Hardy's revisions to the text increased the social gap between Dick and Fancy.)

Bathsheba's performance of "The Banks of Allan Water" at the shearing supper in *Far From the Madding Crowd* is greeted with "that buzz of pleasure which is the attar of applause" (p. 179).

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This, however, is quite different from the “silently appreciative gaze” that greets Coggan’s performance a little earlier. What she sings is not really a folk song, having been composed by “Monk” Lewis (1775–1818), but it does rely heavily on ballad situations and it was probably set to a ballad tune.30 The verse sung by Bathsheba is entirely appropriate to her present situation: gaiety at being flattered by a soldier’s winning tongue. What Hardy omits to quote, however, is more ominous. It is an exact description of Fanny Robin’s fate; she is deserted by Troy and dies in winter, and at least partly because of the weather. The words of the song, however, specify only that the girl’s sorrow is caused by the soldier’s falsity—no mention is made of her pregnancy. This softening of the usual folk theme is a common feature of composed pieces with a traditional basis, and Hardy’s choice of this song for Bathsheba is appropriate to her social status and also to the later attempt by Gabriel to conceal knowledge of Fanny’s child from her.

Eustacia Vye in The Return of the Native is supposed to sing ballads on Sundays, but we never hear her do so; she is associated by Hardy with military music, and, in a strained and artificial comparison, with the “march in ‘Athalie’” and “the viola” (p. 90). When Anne Garland affects indifference to the news of Bob Loveday’s engagement in chapter 35 of The Trumpet-Major she sings “Shall we go dance the round?” (p. 288). Hardy found this song in Hullah, but although it is old—dating back to 1609 at least—it is an elegant little art song, not a folk song. Tess Durbeyfield is obviously the exceptional heroine/singer here. Hardy’s breaking of his usual pattern of higher-placed heroine and lower-placed true lover is one indication of the new radicalism of Tess. Her songs will be discussed in more detail later.

It might be argued that Hardy’s choice of songs for heroines is influenced not only by a desire for accuracy but also by a desire to enlist the reader’s sympathetic recognition, for the split between lower-class and genteel culture was a widening one. Traditional folk material was part of the knowledge of a residual rural poor but increasingly separated from the knowledge of

likely novel readers. In 1838 William Gardiner could repeat with some sympathy the claim that “England has no national music; that it has neither poetry nor songs. But . . . Scotland [has] ever been famous for songs.”31 And Gardiner himself had heard traditional songs at harvest homes and singing sessions in public houses, which he had joined in with in his youth. This obtuseness is linked to a patronizing refusal to acknowledge the merits of an alternative culture at one’s doorstep, which was accompanied by a sentimental idealization of alternatives as long as they were comfortably distanced. This commonly meant Scotland. Scottish songs are well represented in music collections of the mid-nineteenth century, while the common songs of servants and the urban or rural poor are not. On the other hand, the collections of Hammond and Gardiner, though they include many songs tinged by the conscious art of the composer, do not include comparable Scottish pieces.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Hardy had little use for Scottish songs in his creation of Wessex except in his treatment of the Scottish character Farfrae. Here his sources seem to have been literary and nonlocal, except for “O Nannie,” and one finds it difficult to imagine that song being widely sung by Wessex laborers, partly because of the range and elaboration of the tune, and partly because of the artificiality of the words. The version given as no. 136 in Hook’s compilation has obviously not passed far through the process of oral diversification, though it has been Scotticized. Another of Farfrae’s songs, “It’s Hame and it’s Hame,” is an anonymous Jacobite song. Even though Farfrae may wallow in imaginings of the “noble martyrs, who died for loyaltie,” their fate has nothing to do with his own nature or occupations.32

As Ian Gregor points out in the New Wessex edition of The Mayor of Casterbridge, Hardy is being ironic in making Farfrae sing “The Lass of Gowrie” just as Lucetta appears in a “braw new gown” (p. 184). However, to say that it is a traditional Scottish ballad is misleading. Lady Nairne (if she was indeed the author)

32For a full text and a tune, see William Mitchison, Hand-Book of the Songs of Scotland (Glasgow: Morison Kyle, n. d. but post-1850), p. 100. This also includes “The Lass of Gowrie,” p. 114.
was working, like Burns, in a vein that was popular in Scotland in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. But the lighthearted, perfunctory tone of the wooing and the vocabulary of “rosebud ting’d wi’ morning shower / Blooms fresh within the sunny bow’r” are of an order of conventionalization quite alien to the formulaic phrases of the Scottish narrative ballad.

The three Burns songs, on the other hand, are part of a tradition that Burns may in some measure be said to have created, by adapting (and often trivializing and sentimentalizing) images and situations from the traditional songs of the Scottish countryside. “Auld Lang Syne” needs no comment, except to note that since the customers of the Three Mariners earnestly request Farfrae to sing it (p. 83), this song at least is presumably already a recognized part of their own cultural knowledge. The adaptations of Burns’s “Bonnie Peg” as sung by Farfrae (pp. 85 and 119) suggest the beginnings of oral diffusion—though not in Wessex. The third Burns song is that requested by Lucetta when Farfrae is depressed by Henchard’s antagonism to him (p. 249). It is not, as the note in the New Wessex edition suggests, a variant of “Bonnie Peg,” but of “Tibbie Towler,” which Hardy could have found in Hullah (pp. 176–77). Lucetta is thinking of verses three and five:

There’s seven butt, and seven ben,
Seven in the pantry wi’ her;
Twenty head about the door,
There’s one-and-forty wooin’ at her . . .

She’s got pendles in her lugs,
Cockle shells wad set her better;
High-heel’d shoon and siller tags
And a’ the lads are wooing at her.

Since it is about a woman with a multiplicity of lovers Lucetta shows some obtuseness in requesting it. The song is comic, but represents Burns in a slightly caustic vein, castigating the value of money in attracting wooers—neither Henchard nor Farfrae is quite indifferent to Lucetta’s wealth. The reference to the ballad and its “owre mony” wooers is made specially pointed by the fact that Henchard arrives a few pages later to retrieve Lucetta’s
compromising letters and reads extracts from them to Farfrae (p. 252).

But in spite of their individual appropriateness, the main point of Hardy's use of Scottish songs is to mark Farfrae out as an alien and perhaps to suggest the slightly superficial or ersatz quality of his feelings, which purport to be expressed in verse that builds on or parasitizes older and deeper traditions and that in any case is not an accurate expression of his own nature. The clientele of the Three Mariners notice this. If they receive him with applause and "a deep silence which was even more eloquent than the applause," some of them at least are also capable of the recognition "be dazed, if I loved my country half as well as the young feller do, I'd live by claning my neighbour's pigsties afore I'd go away!" (pp. 81, 82).

Farfrae's kind of music is set against Henchard's. He, though sensitive to all types, is characterized by his feeling for psalms. The grim, dark tones of the Old Testament, particularly those parts associated with Job and Cain, with which Hardy connects Henchard in order to give him the tragic stature of a man of ancient times left stranded by the tides of the present, are reinforced by the psalm Henchard forces the choir to sing in chapter 33. The two men are linked by their sensitivity to song—Farfrae's rendering of "Auld Lang Syne" in chapter 38 almost deters Henchard from fighting him—but are distinguished by the types of song they choose.

If concentrating on Scotland was one way of distancing popular material, another was to reduce it from live performance to printed texts. These could be consumed by a readership that had no interest in the circumstances of their production. As far as the standard narrative ballads went, this was a process well advanced by the time Hardy wrote his novels. The heroine of Mrs. Craik's The Woman's Kingdom (1869) must have been typical; her fantasies of service to the man she loves include "do[ing] him good in any way; ay, in the pathetic way of some ballad heroine she had read of—making the house ready for his bride, and helping to rear and cherish his children."33

The operative word here is "read." Some of Hardy's allusions to ballads are essentially literary allusions for a literary audience. For example, the choice of "The Boy and the Mantle" as a song in Mrs. Durbeyfield's repertoire seems an odd one. This "ballad of the mystic robe 'That never would become that wife / That had once done amiss'" (Tess, p. 234) is an Arthurian story of probable minstrel origin that does not seem to have gained oral currency, and the two extra verses Hardy quoted to make his point clear in the serial version of Tess would sound improbable on her lips. However, the choice is, thematically, extremely appropriate. Tess is reminded of the words by trying on Angel's gift of wedding clothes and fancying they might betray her by changing color, as the mysterious gift of the robe found out the ladies of King Arthur's court. In the ballad all ends well for Craddocke's wife, because when the robe begins to crinkle at the hem she confesses to her one sexual misdemeanor—having kissed her husband before they were married. Tess's story ends as it does because she confesses too late; she is not, like Craddocke's lady, instantaneously candid when the need arises. On the other hand, like the lady, Tess is essentially a pure woman in spite of the misdemeanor. The possible changing of the color of the robe represents the fluctuations of opinion in the eyes of the world as it discovers outward facts about a woman's sexual experience without considering the nature of her inner response and responsibility. Tess's mother could sing this song "blithely and archly," but Tess's response to the basic situation it deals with, though in a far different world, involves a perception of tragedy not found in this particular ballad.

Hardy's text of "Queen Eleanor's Confession" (sung by Granfer Cantle in The Return of the Native, p. 46) is so close to that of Percy that it seems most likely that this was his source, especially since Hammond did not record any version. Hardy's use of it has a three-fold purpose: to suggest that Granfer Cantle is a silly old codger whose love of showing off exceeds his capacity

to impress; to make the point obliquely through the caustic remarks of the rustics that he is in fact the superannuated representative of a type rapidly becoming extinct and that insofar as he is typical this loss is in some ways to be regretted; and to reflect proleptically, through a disinterested and ironically inappropriate medium, on the main plot situation, the love triangle between Wildeve, Eustacia, and Clym. Cantle has a real choric function here.

The point of the ballad is that Queen Eleanor has been seduced before her marriage to King Henry by the Earl Marshall. This she confesses to them when they visit her disguised as friars. She also reveals that one of her two sons is the king's and one the Earl Marshall's. Understandably, the king is less than pleased, and only the promise cleverly extorted by the Earl Marshall prevents his execution. Now confession is precisely what Eustacia is bad at, and she not unnaturally fears Clym's wrath, though he, as Hardy insists, is a modern type and hence unlikely to take the drastic courses of action adopted by ballad figures. No mother figure is present in the ballad, the main situation of which allows Hardy one more subtle way of hinting what he could not state openly—that Eustacia had been Wildeve's mistress before her marriage.

Such a technique of oblique reference is common enough in Victorian literature. It was especially useful in dealing with taboo subjects like sexual behavior. However, allusion to ballads is not common; the alternative culture referred to is often classical or historical. It was often useful to be able to have several layers of reference in a novel so that only those more educated and less vulnerable readers (i.e. upper- and middle-class classically educated men) would understand. Hardy's use of classical allusion in a sexual context is limited but it does occur, for example, in chapter 10 of *Tess*, where he writes of "Lotis attempting to elude Priapus and always failing" (p. 91) when what he is talking about is the sexual pairings that take place at a Trantridge village dance. But because of his social origins Hardy was both predisposed toward and had access to alternative sources of allusion, some of which were "below" rather than beyond the cultural aspirations of his readers.

Folk songs were growing less and less familiar to Hardy's
likely audiences. The “ancient ballads” were no longer “everywhere heard,” though versions of their words (often Scottish or Scotticized) might be available to mildly scholarly readers. Many songs were given a wider currency through printed collections, but this was a comparatively new source. It is not until the 1840s that we find many printed collections of songs with music at a reasonable price, in publications like Davidson’s Universal Melodist (1847). An examination of the Universal Melodist would confirm Hardy’s accuracy in selecting popular songs with a wide social currency when reference to these was appropriate. It includes “In the Downhills of Life,” “O Nanny,” “O Waly, Waly,” “The Banks of Allan Water,” “Auld Lang Syne,” “Such a Beauty I Did Grow,” and “The Lass of Gowrie.” The high proportion of Scottish or supposedly Scottish songs is interesting. What is even more interesting is what the Universal Melodist does not include—the older songs typical of established rural tradition. Except for a few songs like “The Seeds of Love,” which were anthologized, the largely middle-class readership that acquired its music in this way would have had no means of knowing many of the songs Hardy mentions without access to rural tradition. This is particularly true of the lyrical pieces rather than the ballads. By 1866 it still seemed a novel venture for John Hullah to popularize such material, and even he thought that Chappell had included in Popular Music of the Olden Time “the majority of those English songs and tunes . . . which are still current and popular.” This was not the case. However, outside the tradition most of them remained at best scholars’ material until the first decade of this century, the era of Cecil Sharp and (heavily bowdlerized) folk songs for schools. Even then their appearance was much me-

35See the preface to Davidson’s Universal Melodist, Consisting of the Music and Words of Popular Standard and Original Songs, 2 vols. (London: G. H. Davidson, 1847); and also the anonymous A Short History of Cheap Music, as Exemplified in the Records of the House of Novello, Ewer & Co. (London and New York: Novello, Ewer, 1887), which claims that “the people” were longing for music but did not have any: “There were no cheap publications, and there were no cheap concerts. The taxes on knowledge and the vexatious rules observed by the printing trades laid an embargo upon all attempts at reform in this direction” (p. 22). Davidson’s Universal Melodist was issued in weekly parts at threepence each or monthly parts at a shilling; the two volumes contain about sixteen hundred songs (not all different!) so one got about a hundred and twenty-five songs for one’s shilling.
diated in the interests of a dominant middle class, as Dave Harker has convincingly shown.\textsuperscript{36} This has, of course, important bearings on the way in which we can read Hardy's references. Michael Millgate assumes, no doubt correctly, that “Hardy must have expected some at least of his readers to know” that the ballad Shiner sings in Fancy’s presence was a coarse one (Thomas Hardy, p. 47). Yet how many of his readers would that “some” consist of? Such a question is, finally, unanswerable, yet it is reasonable to suppose also that many of his readers could be expected \textit{not} to know what he was referring to. The way in which Hardy exploits the possibilities of both knowledge and ignorance, the way in which his selection of appropriate songs is far more copious and far more accurate than that of almost any other regional novelist, and yet also makes concessions to the myth of an unproblematic pastoral—these hint at a radical ambivalence in Hardy toward the fruits of his traditional heritage, an ambivalence that needs to be examined in more detail.

An interesting point that arises from a study of the narrative ballads Hardy uses is that, contrary to expectation, he does not refer unequivocally in his creative prose or verse to any ballad of any antiquity that is in fact fully tragic. We know Hardy knew plenty at first hand and that Hammond found standard tragic ballads current in Dorset even in the early years of this century. The critical commonplace that Hardy's work is much influenced in tone and structure by the traditional ballads heard in his youth can certainly be supported by such evidence. Yet the ballads he referred to specifically were not tragic. The only exception to this is the “cheerful ballad about a murderer” sung in chapter 17 of \textit{Tess} to make the cows give down their milk (p. 138). This is grim enough, and it has an obvious relevance to the plot insofar as it tells of a lover who murders his partner and is executed. However, this is the only

\textsuperscript{36}See \textit{Fakesong}, chapters 8 and 9.
example and it seems to be a comparatively late, eighteenth-
century composition.37

Much of the world of the earlier ballads is not of much use to Hardy. However grim his world may be, his infanticides are less prominent than in the world of the earlier ballads (except in Jude the Obscure, which is not comparable), his “suicides” more the result of a continued death wish than of sudden passion, his murders few. Nor does his world consist of fratricide and incest. However, in some areas both ballads and songs did allow him to refer to kinds of experience that would not bear open discussion before a Victorian public.

The frank folk song acceptance of human passion and its consequences was something Hardy did find inspiring. His own collection contains snippets that he might well have put to use but never did, such as “Miller Brice’s song” about going to the green grove on the pretext of listening to the nightingale (D 556 and D 678 are other versions of this well-known song, “The Sweet Nightingale”). The “ballad about the maid who went to the merry green wood and came back a changed state” in Tess (p. 120) need not be tragic. Indeed, since the girls who sing it are sympathetic to Tess while they tease her, it probably is not.38 Hardy only wants to use the widespread metaphor that associates the green of natural growth with human fertility; going to the green wood (like getting a green gown in the song both Barrett and Hardy knew) is a standard traditional way of suggesting the loss of virginity. This is something that these girls accept much more readily and naturally than Tess does. The gap between them and their mothers seems much less wide than the two hundred years that according to Hardy lie between Tess and her own mother in terms of experience; why is another question.

If, then, Hardy did not use allusion to traditional material to create an atmosphere of gloom and despondency, what sorts

37Wanton Seed, p. 94. Hammond collected three versions of this and Hardy two lines. It goes under various titles, such as “The Prentice Boy” and “The Wexford Girl.”

38Possible analogues of varying tones can be found in D 97, D 246, D 564, or D 719.
of other uses did he put the material to? It is now worth looking at his uses of local ballads and songs in specific novels.

The songs in *Under the Greenwood Tree* are used to characterize Fancy's two rustic lovers. When Dick and Shiner vie with each other over her at the honey-taking, Shiner sings "King Arthur he had three sons" to demonstrate his command of the situation (p. 151). One hopes that in Fancy's presence Shiner did not sing the words that Hardy himself recorded in September 1889 (*Letters*, I, 198):

```
King Arthur he had three sons,  
Big rogues as ever did swing,  
He had three sons of wh———s  
And he kicked them all three out-of-doors  
Because they could not sing
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but something more like the words of Hammond's D 117:

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So in old King Henery's days,  
And a good old king was he,  
And the old sons of old [sic] they were turnéd out of doors  
Because they could not sing.
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However, Hardy's greater familiarity with it makes the first version more likely. Dick has come to ask for Fancy's hand, but her father wants her to wait for a gentleman. Shiner is proving that, even if better qualified in worldly terms, he is no gentleman, as Michael Millgate points out (*Thomas Hardy*, p. 47).

It is also worth noting the purely comic treatment of this scene. In a similar situation in *The Woodlanders* (to be discussed later) the folk song used as a reminder of the honest forthrightness of traditional expression is a source of real social embarrassment. Dick, however, is turned into a sort of Arcadian woodlander on the very first page through the decorative pastoral of the sheep-shearing song he sings. Hammond collected three songs like this; if we examine D 358 we can see a sweetly pastoral opening:

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Here's the rosebud in June, the sweet meadows in bloom  
violets  
And the birds singing gaily on every green bough  
The pink and the lily and the daffy down dilly
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To adorn and perfume the sweet meadows in June  
Whilst out o' the plough the fat oxen go slow  
And the lads and the lasses a-sheep-shearing go.

But this is followed by emphasis on “the cleanly milk pail . . . full of brown ale” and

Now the shepherds have sheared all their jolly jolly sheep  
What joy can be greater than to talk of the increase?  
Here's the ewes and the lambs, the hogs and the rams  
The fat wethers too, they'll make a fine show.

Hardy has pruned away the more solidly practical emphasis on work, drink, and stock-breeding.

The slight romanticizing of the hero is a process found also in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, another novel with a title taken from the literary pastoral. For all its near-tragic passions, for all its human clashes with a threatening natural world and the fate behind it, this novel also tries to convey the picture of a rural life that is part of a satisfying cycle of seasonal fertility. Consequently it contains quotations from more traditional English folk songs than any other of Hardy’s novels. All the rustics seem to sing, from the ploughboy, who is as natural a part of the sound landscape as the sparrows, finches, squirrels, and robins, to Gabriel, who plays lighthearted songs of multiple courtship like “Dame Durden” (p. 97). The song that Jan Coggan sings in his cups when he should be delivering poor Fanny’s corpse is a good example of the way in which “traditional” singers will unconsciously adopt any song they happen to care for. This is a version of “The Old Man's Song,” an early music-hall piece that was widespread in spite of its rather affected words. Hardy may have pared away the more literary-sounding parts; the corresponding verse of the version Hammond collected in Blandford workhouse ends with words nearly identical to those Hardy quotes, but begins

From the bleak northern blast may my cot be completely  
Secured by a neighbouring hill,  
And at night may repose steal upon me more sweetly  
By the sound of a murmuring rill.

39D 105 in Hammond. See *The Foggy Dew*, p. 22.
For both Jan Coggan and Joseph Poorgrass, song is a natural mode of expression even when the singer is completely incompetent. At the shearing supper in chapter 23 Jan sings the fragment “I've lost my love and I care not” “without reference to listeners.” Joseph is persuaded to render one of the most beautiful of all lyrics of deserted love, “I Sowed the Seeds of Love.” Chappell says in *Popular Music of the Olden Time* that this, “Cupid’s Garden” (discussed below), and “Early One Morning” are “three of the most popular songs among the servant-maids of the present generation” (p. 735). (This social placing of the song hardly makes it more likely that middle-class young ladies would wish to learn it.) Hammond, who noted it five times, thought it sufficiently popular not to record the words on each occasion, but here is part of D 485:

I sowed the seeds of Love  
And I sowed them in the Spring,  
And I gathered it up in the morning so soon,  
While the small birds sweetly did sing [bis].

My garden was planted well  
With flowers everywhere  
But I have not the liberty to choose it for myself  
Oh! the flower that I love best.

My gardener was standing by  
And I asked him to choose for me  
He chose me the violet, the lily and the pink,  
But I refused all three.

The violet I did not like  
Because it fades so soon  
The lily and the pink I really overlooked,  
And I vowed I’d stay till June.

In June there's a red rosebud  
And that's the flower for me,  
And I've oftentimes plucked at the red rose-bush,  
Till I gained the willow-tree. . . .

Come all you false young men  
Don't leave me here to repine,  
For the grass that be often trampled underfoot  
Give it time it will rise up again.
Here we can see the standard metaphors of sowing the seed and of the rose for sexual experience, and that of the willow as a symbol for deserted love. The last line offers us an image of the natural regeneration of human emotion even after the most distressing of experiences (this song is an exact model of what Tess goes through). Hardy is very daring in allowing Poorgrass to sing it; he is not mocking Poorgrass for trying, and he is certainly not trying to ridicule the song itself, which is thematically appropriate to *Far From the Madding Crowd* in several ways. Part of the strength of the image of timeless pastoral offered (though not unproblematically) in the novel is that even the Poorgrasses accept this level of poetic expression as normal. Hardy knows this but perhaps lacks the final courage to make the claim stronger by open quotation.

The same is true of Granfer Cantle in *The Return of the Native*, who can sing “‘Twas Down in Cupid’s Garden,” which uses the same imagery. (Hammond collected this as D 370 and if we compare the Hammond tune with no. 60 in Hook’s compilation there are only tiny differences, though the two are separated by at least eighty years.) The irrepressible Granfer’s repertoire includes not only love songs like this and “The Foggy Dew” and ballads like those already discussed but standard drinking songs like “The Barley Mow” (p. 399):

Here’s a good health to the barley mow  
The nipperkin and the brown bowl.

(D 475)

In the ignorant, superstitious, backward but resilient life of the Heath, the life of song is not so moribund as its chief representative would suggest. Even little Johnny Nunsuch sings “about a sailor-boy and a fair one and bright gold in store.” The way in which Clym’s life is detached from that of the Heath by his experience of the world, even when he seems closest to it, is best illustrated by the fact that when he is furze-cutting he sings a


41*The Return of the Native*, p. 95. Such a common theme could be found in D 808, D 867, D 585, D 541, D 479, D 378, or D 343.
song from an alien genre (comic opera) and even in an alien tongue, “Le point du jour” (p. 263).

In The Woodlanders the same natural world of song, a world that accepts ungrudgingly characters like the Cantles, has become an embarrassment and a threat to the genteel moneyed world that is eventually to destroy it. When Giles’s guests sing

said she

A maid again I never shall be
Till apples grow on an orange tree

Melbury’s hesitations are over. He puts particular stress on the unsuitability of the song for the new type of propriety Grace represents: “for us old folk it didn’t matter; but for Grace—Giles should have known better” (p. 105). What Cawtree and the hollow turner are singing is the standard form of folk lyric lament for lost virginity. It is a floater, that is, a formulaic expression for a particular situation found in a wide range of songs. It is not, of course, in the least indecent, merely direct; Hardy is showing up the desperate sensitivity of the socially ambitious Melbury. Yet even in a serious collection of folk songs published in 1891 Frank Kidson felt unable to mention the concept of lost maidenhood in this way and bowdlerized the offending lines.42 The struggle between natural impulse and stringent middle-class morality is a major theme of the novel; Hardy stresses the strains imposed by the latter. He does not, however, advocate complete surrender to the former. Suke Damson’s impulsive sexuality (and lack of honesty about it) sours her marriage to Tim Tangs. Hardy gives us evidence as to her nature and to what happens between her and Fitzpiers in her musical invitation to him in chapter 20 (p. 172). “The Foggy Dew” was what Granfer Cantle proposed as a serenade for the newly married Venns in The Return of the Native (p. 399). The exact significance of the “foggy dew” itself has been much debated, but certainly coming in from it involves the loss of virginity.43 In the standard version of the song, as found in D 406, it is the girl who seduces the young man, and the result is as in The Woodlanders:

42Traditional Tunes, p. 45; cf. D 767.
In the first part of the night we did both sport and play,
And in the latter part of the night she slept in my arms till day.

Such sexual spontaneity causes awkward problems in human relationships, it is true, but its naturalness is some guarantee of its worth. This is especially so when it occurs in conjunction with a morally sensitive and responsible character like Tess, the “pure woman” whom Hardy had originally intended to be seduced instead of possibly raped. Hardy attempts to distill the quintessence of Tess's pastoral charm by quoting extensively one of the songs that attracted Angel:

\begin{verbatim}
Arise, arise, arise!
And pick your love a posy,
All o' the sweetest flowers
That in the garden grow.
The turtle doves and sma' birds
In every bough a-building,
So early in the May-time
At the break o' the day!
\end{verbatim}

This is a collation of lines from a semi-complete version of a song that Hardy himself collected as an “Old Song sung at Melbury Osmond about 1820” and annotated with his mother's initials. Hammond also collected a version that ends with a poignant suggestion of the lovers' parting not found in Hardy's version (D 779). What we do find in Hardy's original version is the conclusion

\begin{verbatim}
So then he played it over
All on the pipes of ivory
So early in the morning
At the break of the day.
\end{verbatim}

Hardy has excised this delicate euphemism for lovemaking (which is also found in other versions of the song collected elsewhere). Here he wants nothing but the purest pastoral pathos.

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He was, however, probably safe enough. Angel would presumably not have liked the song if he had understood the reference, and Hardy's audience would not have done so either. Hardy seems to have felt it safe to include the flower-gathering symbolism discussed under "The Seeds of Love," which has the same sort of underlying significance. It would not be necessary for the audience to respond consciously for such imagery to be successful, as the success of poems like Tennyson's *Maud* would indicate. Hardy is engaged in a delicate balancing act between acceptable pastoral and realism. Another example would be the mention of Mrs. Durbeyfield's "The Spotted Cow," which turns on the pretext of a lover going to the green grove to look for a girl's lost cow. Needless to say, the cow is soon forgotten, though the title might lull Hardy's readers into a false sense of security.

Other tunes Angel liked were the ubiquitous "'Twas Down in Cupid's Garden" and "I Have Parks, I Have Hounds." The first, as copied by Hardy from Hullah, begins

"Twas down in Cupid's Garden
For pleasure I did go
To see the fairest flowers
That in that garden grow
The first, it was the jessamine,
The lily, pink and rose.

The second is a version of "The Farmer's Toast," which Gardiner found in Portsmouth (H 912). It is an idealized celebration of agricultural prosperity:

I have lawns, I have bowers, I have fruits, I have flowers,
The lark is my daily alarmer,
So, my jolly boys, now that follows the plough
Drink health and success to the farmer.

But Angel is a selective critic; he likes the songs that Tess sings to put forward this sort of image and does not care for the pieces of lighthearted nonsense that are also part of her repertoire, and part of her simplicity. From the critical point of view we can agree with him to some extent, but not humanly. "The Tailor's Breeches" is just a farcical story about a tailor that was collected by Hammond in two versions, one from Robert Barrett
(D 238): a tailor proposes to dance in the clothes of a young woman who then runs off with his trousers and valuables. "Such a Beauty I Did Grow" is an artistically worthless ditty Hardy would have known from his father's manuscript book (pp. 80–81; see Tess, p. 365). It was certainly found in local tradition, for Hammond recorded a rather different version from Wiltshire (Wr 308). The family version begins

When I was a little boy Some twenty years ago
I was the pride of Mammy's heart she made me quite a Show
Such a Beauty I ded grow, ded grow, ded grow . . .

Straight hair I had and goggle eyes with such a roguish leer
A broad flat nose turn'd up beside a mouth from Ear to Ear . . .

Ruth A. Firor points out that many of the songs Hardy uses are "degenerate broadsides," but does not make it clear whether she thinks that all broadside versions are degenerate, or means that the "original" texts have degenerated. Yet she is quite wrong to suggest that "we don't hear the later 'ballads' on Tess's lips."46 We do, insofar as we "hear" any except for "The Break of the Day." The image Firor tries to present of Tess is Angel's image, not Hardy's. Songs like these were alive in the Dorset of Hardy's early years, and an unsophisticated enjoyment of simple nonsense is part of Tess's rustic character, just as much as her ability to convey artless and natural sexuality through the more lyrical songs. Hardy knows well enough and in this late novel shows that Tess's cultural roots are not all amenable to genteel sentimentalization.

Some of Hardy's works have been conspicuous by their absence from this discussion of folk song and there is good reason for this. All the Novels of Character and Environment except Jude the Obscure use folk song references; none of the Romances and Fantasies or Novels of Ingenuity does so with any high degree of significance. Greatness in Hardy's fiction up to Jude largely coincides with the thematic use of the songs that conjured up for him the stable possibilities of a rural environment he half-remembered, half-created. The great condemnation of the world of Jude is that it has no spontaneous song in it. Jude sug-

gests that the creed he has just recited might just as well have been “The Ratcatcher’s Daughter” (p. 143), a music-hall song written by E. Bradley and first published in 1854. 47 Jude’s disgust at this sort of harmless production is of a piece with Hardy’s. It is not true, as Joan Grundy suggests, that Hardy’s rustics are all marked out by their love of music (Hardy and the Sister Arts, p. 137). It is difficult to imagine Widow Edlin giving a catchy rendering of “The Spotted Cow,” yet she would be older than Mrs. Durbeyfield. As Hardy became more and more interested in the social and economic exploitation of the ordinary man he was less and less able either to create what sometimes looks like a separable chorus of quaint, lovable rustics or to allow his main characters to escape into a world that is less and less that of the present. As he develops as a novelist in the Novels of Character and Environment, his settings creep nearer and nearer in both time and feeling to contemporary life. By the time he was writing Jude his concern with the injustices of the present made him abandon, however reluctantly, the world that was two hundred years (as he saw it) behind even Tess. Indeed, he wrote his farewell to that world in chapter 2 of Jude, when he notes that every field had really a rich texture of human associations but that this tradition was simply not available to the young Jude (pp. 38–39). Jude’s deracination has its cultural aspect as well.

However, it must be said in conclusion that Hardy’s feelings about rendering the culture of his boyhood were deeply ambivalent. What he wanted to say about it in his novels could not be separated from the implications his knowledge and sympathy had for his stance as novelist and as aspirant to adoption by the dominant culture of his day. His prentice work “The Poor Man and the Lady” (which Hardy completed in 1868) was supposedly by the Poor Man, “the tendency of the writing being socialistic, not to say revolutionary.” Its rejection by Meredith and by Macmillan made it clear that this was not the way even to publication, let alone success, though Macmillan praised the description of country life among working men as “admirable, and . . . palpably

truthful.”

This note was continued by reviewers of the early published novels, which made it clear that picturesqueness was saleable, but anger was not. Hardy was undoubtedly influenced by such views, writing to Macmillan on 17 August 1871 to say that “upon the whole a pastoral story would be the safest venture” (Letters, I, 12). On the other hand, he retained an impulse to see justice done by his workfolk, expressing a hope for the illustrations to Far From the Madding Crowd “that the rustics, although quaint, may be made to appear intelligent & not boorish at all” (Letters, I, 25). Reviewers, especially in The Athenæum, palpably resisted this enterprise. For example, one fairly favorable review objected that the language of Far From the Madding Crowd was not “possible from the illiterate clods whom he describes” (Critical Heritage, p. 19).

With friends like these Hardy had no need to seek for enemies. His essay “The Dorsetshire Labourer” (1883) adopts familiar subterfuges to mediate his ploughman’s opinions. He cites the radical voice of one dead long enough to be respectfully literary: “in times of special . . . stress the ‘Complaint of Piers the Ploughman’ is still echoed in his heart.” Rebellion is privatized, confined “in his heart”; no hint is given here of any potential for common action. The records of social trivia in the Life and his attempts to raise his family’s status suggest that Hardy had internalized many of the values of his urban middle-class audience. But he never fully capitulated. “The Dorsetshire Labourer” treats Joseph Arch sympathetically. Dealing with the complaint that country folk are not what they used to be, Hardy says sharply, “it is too much to expect them to remain stagnant and old-fashioned for the pleasure of romantic spectators” (Personal Writings, p.181). It is true that he partly betrays the culture he celebrates by the conventions of his mediation, but that betrayal is only partial.

Though he is selective about what he chooses to represent


that culture, he is too honest and too indebted to it to subdue and trivialize it irredeemably. We cannot know whether the ironies implicit in his choice of texts that could not be fully quoted were intentional, but if they were not their appropriateness is extraordinary. At any rate, they produced two centrally important successes for his art: a thorough and intimate record of at least a section of the ordinary man’s rural culture, and the integration of references to that culture into patterns of significance central to the novels. These claims could not be made of any other major nineteenth-century English novelist. Paradoxically, the informed modern reader is probably in a better position to appreciate Hardy’s meticulous system of covert allusion than his original audience, although the life he represented still existed in their day. I think this is an irony Hardy would have appreciated.

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